

# **VICTIMS, HEROES, SURVIVORS**

SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON THE EASTERN FRONT DURING WORLD WAR II

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Wendy Jo Gertjeanssen

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Eric D. Weitz

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Dedicated  
to  
Randi Laura  
Mother and Teacher,

who faced her untimely passing  
with such courage and humor.

We miss you...



## ABSTRACT

The German military, Red Army, and partisans inflicted a massive amount of sexual violence onto unarmed civilians on the eastern front during World War II. Under the German occupation, civilians were driven into prostitutional relationships and prostitution, which caused widespread venereal disease. The Germans established military brothels and forced females to serve, indirectly by starvation or directly by gunpoint. Unarmed civilians were raped, mutilated, and often died. Abuse of alcohol was widespread among perpetrators from all sides.

The wide variety of sexual activities lie on a continuum of sexual desire and sexuality. These activities and abuses of power often were motivated partially by sexual desire, including brothel visits, prostitutional relationships, rape, and sexual harassment. The sexual crimes were crimes of gender that intersect with other war crimes. Violations of racial laws by Germans were widespread. The Soviets also seem to have raped indiscriminately. Both sides raped females, whether Jewish, Slavic, Christian, or Baltic. The Germans recruited this same variety of females into their brothels. Males also suffered sexual abuse, and some perpetrators, especially in camps, were female. Rape likely was not a military strategy. However, both leaderships were complicit in their condoning of mass rape. Both have yet to accept responsibility for the rapes, and the Germans for their extensive system of sexual slavery. Neither side was prosecuted after the war for the vast sexual crimes they committed.

Those targeted for sexual violence demonstrated incredible fortitude and innovation by camouflage, other acts of deception, and heroic acts of self-sacrifice. During the last half century, many survivors slowly and courageously revealed their stories in various ways. Although felt, the shame many victims and survivors have experienced is misplaced. It belongs instead to the perpetrators in all their civilian, political, and military forms. The long-standing, deafening, and pervasive silence surrounding the topic of sexual violence has served well the perpetrators and others inclined to disbelief. Despite the abundance of documentation – in German and east European documents, memoirs, testimonies, and novels – scholars, witnesses, and officials chose to ignore these crimes. This dissertation is also based on dozens of interviews conducted by the

author.

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## GLOSSARY

Arzt	Doctor
Dirne	Whore
Feldkommandant	Field Commander
Fr.	Frame
Generalgouvernement, General Government	Administrative region established in occupied central Poland in 1939
Gulag	Extensive system of prisons in the Soviet Union
Judenrat	Jewish Council
NKVD	Name of Soviet Secret Police during WWII
Oberfeldkommandantur, OFK	Military government area headquarters
Oberkommando des Heeres, OKH	High Command of the Army
Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, OKW	Supreme Command of the Armed Forces
Ost	East
Ostarbeiter	Forced laborer from the east. Usually wore OST on clothing to identify from the rest of the workers.
POW	Prisoner of War
Rassenschande	Racial Defilement
RG	Record Group
SA (Sturmabteilung)	Nazi Party Storm Troopers (Brown Shirts)
SD (Sicherheitsdienst der SS)	SS Security Service or Security Police

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*“Man shall be trained for war and woman for the recreation of the warrior: All else is folly.”*<sup>1</sup>

#### **Gender, Desire, Alcohol, Similarities, Complicity, and Denial**

Sexual violence during World War II was a reality for hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people, primarily women and girls, on the eastern front. These crimes were in the form of sexual harassment and abuse, forced abduction into military and concentration camp brothels, rape, and mutilation. The deliberate starvation by the Germans of people in the east led to a less obvious, but altogether important crime: the willingness to exchange live-saving materials only with those desperate enough to sell their bodies. The experiences of the people in eastern Europe during World War II were enormously diverse and were greatly influenced by their historical, political, and cultural relationships to Germany and Russia.<sup>2</sup> The geographical

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<sup>1</sup> Thus Spake Zarathustra, Friedrich Nietzsche, Chapter 18, Old and Young Women, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that despite the colossal impact the war had on the entire Soviet Union, there has not been as great an amount of literature by western scholars of Soviet history on the war as there has been on the Revolution, the Civil War, or the Great Terror. In addition to a useful literature review of scholarship on the war and its effects in the Soviet Union, historian Amir Weiner discusses the reasons for its relegation “to the margins of historiography.” Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 12-21. A few general works on the Soviet experience in the Second World War follow. It is of note and telling that there is minimal mention of sexual violence in this body of knowledge. N. Barou, *The Soviet Home Front*, Research Series No. 671942, London: Victor Gollancz and The Fabian Society. Vasilii Ivanovich Alekseev, *The Great Revival: the Russian Church under German Occupation* (Minneapolis: Burgess Pub. Co., 1976); John Barber and Mark Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941-1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II* (London and New York: Longman, 1991); Harvey Fireside, *Icon and Swastika: The Russian Orthodox Church under Nazi and Soviet Control* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971); J. Garrard and C. Garrard, eds., *WWII and the Soviet People, World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1993); John N. Hazard, "Soviet Wartime Legislation," *Russian Review* 2, no. 1 (1942); Ivan S. Lubachko, *Belorussia Under Soviet Rule 1917-1957* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972); Kazys Pakstas, *Lithuania and WWII* (Chicago: Lithuanian Cultural Institute, 1947); John Swettenham, *The Tragedy of*

scope of this dissertation is broad, covering virtually the entire eastern front. This is because the topic of sexual violence in the east has been understudied, especially in regard to German violations.<sup>3</sup>

The eastern front crystalizes the argument that gender is by far the key category in situations of sexual violence.<sup>4</sup> Men from different sides of the many-sided armed conflict in the east targeted women and girls (and sometimes men or boys), regardless of “whose side” they were on. The many combinations of culture, ethnicity, religion, political alliance, or nationality between the perpetrators and the victims suggest that a major factor in determining whether a rape or recruitment into a brothel would occur was the victim’s gender rather than her or his culture, ethnicity, religion, political alliance, or nationality. Furthermore, even when examining the mass murder Germans committed against people they viewed as “racially inferior,” the sexual crimes were related – but distinct – crimes perpetrated because of the victims’ gender: “Rape and genocide are separate atrocities.”<sup>5</sup> Professor of law Rhonda Copelon argues that “persecution

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*the Baltic States* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1952); Alexander Werth, *Russia at War 1941-1945* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1964). The amount of scholarship on World War II completed by Soviet scholars is extensive, but based on Soviet-published documents and memoirs, which, according to historian Karel Berkhoff, were “heavily censored.” See Karel Berkhoff, “Ukraine under Nazi Rule: (1941-1944): Sources and Finding Aids [Part I & Part II],” in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* (Stuttgart: 1997), 274-276, 288-290.

<sup>3</sup> There are only a couple of studies that have concentrated on sexual violence, venereal disease, or prostitution and which also have some emphasis on the eastern front. Historians mentioning the topic of brothels or venereal diseases most heavily rely on historian Franz Seidler, who has published dozens of documents in his study of homosexuality, prostitution, and venereal disease. Quite a few of the documents, and thus Seidler’s analysis, deal specifically on the eastern front, however his focus is the military state and military members. Franz Seidler, *Prostitution, Homosexualität, Selbstverstümmelung: Probleme der deutschen Sanitätsführung 1939-1945* (Neckargemünd: Kurt Vowinkel Verlag, 1977). Additional works will be illuminated in the present discussion.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (Ballantine Books: New York, 1975). The whole phenomenon of sexual violence on the eastern front includes people from different cultures, nations, religions, and political backgrounds, and thus people had numerous ways of defining or identifying one another. However, despite these complexities, Marilyn Frye’s words on sexism still seem to ring true: “Sex-identification intrudes into every moment of our lives and discourses, no matter what the supposedly primary focus or topic of the moment is. Elaborate, systematic, ubiquitous and redundant marking of a distinction between two sexes of humans and most animals is customary and obligatory...The frequency with which our behavior marks the sexes of those we interact with cannot be exaggerated. The phenomenon is absolutely pervasive and deeply entrenched in all the patterns of behavior which are habitual, customary, acceptable, tolerable and intelligible...Closely connected with habitual and obligatory sex-marking is a constant and urgent need to know or be able to guess the sex of every single person with whom one has the slightest or most remote contact or interaction.” Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Freedom, California: The Crossing Press, 1983), 19-22.

<sup>5</sup> As professor of law Rhonda Copelon explains, “Genocide involves the infliction of all forms of violence to destroy a people based on its identity as a people, while rape is sexualized violence that seeks to destroy a woman based on her identity as a woman.” Rhonda Copelon, “Surfacing Gender: Reengraving Crimes Against Women in Humanitarian Law,” in *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted With or Without Consent*, ed. Nicole Ann Dombrowski (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999), 334. Another formulation of the intersection of ethnic conflict and rape as a crime of gender is from journalist Alexandra Stiglmeier. Specifically referring to the war



based on gender must be recognized as its own category of crimes against humanity.” The idea of crimes against humanity is “popularly associated with religious and ethnic genocide...Without recognition of gender as a basis for persecution, sexual slavery would escape condemnation as a crime against humanity when it was shown that nationality or ethnicity was incidental.”<sup>6</sup> The massive amounts of sexual violence the Germans committed on the eastern front intersects with the murder and starvation of millions of Jews, Slavic peoples, Gypsies, and others in the east, just as the Soviet rape and murder of “enemies of the state” intersect with one another. However, the recruitment of women into brothels, the sexual harassment, and the rapes committed by Germans, Soviets, and others need to be characterized as crimes of gender.<sup>7</sup>

Further, the wide scope and the nature of the evidence presented in this dissertation suggest that while any individual perpetrator may have had specific rationalizations for targeting a certain person, the overall pattern of sexual violence is one of military members, usually armed men, targeting women and girls often because the perpetrator wanted to engage in some kind of sexual activity with a female. Indeed, in the cases where boys and men were targeted for sexual abuse, it is likely that they too were targeted because of their gender, because the perpetrator wanted to engage in sexual activity with a male.<sup>8</sup> The perpetrators were usually – but not exclusively – male, often they were armed with a weapon, were endowed with positions of power, or they had access to life-sustaining resources. This power was abused in their attempt to engage in sexual activity.

Perpetrators were motivated to partake in coerced sexual activity either out of a desire

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in the former Yugoslavia, Stiglmeier writes that “in Bosnia-Herzegovina a war is being waged against women. Not because they are women, but because they are Muslim, Croatian, or Serbian women. Yet because they are women, men are using against them their most effective weapon: rape.” Alexandra Stiglmeier, “The Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” in *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, ed. Alexandra Stiglmeier (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 84.

<sup>6</sup> Copelon, “Surfacing,” 344.

<sup>7</sup> In an effort to discontinue the international tendency to treat the rapes in the former Yugoslavia as an “inevitable by-product of war except when it is a vehicle of genocide,” the Women’s Coalition Against Crimes Against Women in the Former Yugoslavia “characterized rape as a weapon of war, whether used to dilute ethnic identity, destabilize the civilian population, or reward soldiers.” Copelon, “Surfacing,” 333.

<sup>8</sup> Copelon does not seem to include the desire for sexual activity in her definition of rape, but she also characterizes rape of men and boys as crimes of gender: “when a man is raped, the humiliation is accomplished by reducing him to the status of a woman. For this reason, rape, whether carried out against women or men, is a crime of gender.” Copelon, “Surfacing,” 350 [n.12]. On male rape, see, for example, Damon Mitchell, Richard Hirschman, and Gordon C. Nagayama Hall, “Attributions of Victim Responsibility, Pleasure, and Trauma in Male Rape,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 36, no. 4 (1999).

for sexual activity, such as but not limited to sexual intercourse, or for an enhancement of their own feelings of power. The evidence presented here points to the importance of sexual activity to the perpetrator, that is, the rape and sexual abuse of others does not seem to have been exclusively motivated by a desire for power, a desire to express power, or a desire to feel more control. The cases in which there were other kinds of violence in addition to rape, such as mutilation or severe beatings suggest such a dynamic. Such crimes could have originated out of a desire for sexual activity, but then turned into something more brutal.<sup>9</sup> Although future detailed studies of sexual violence in individual regions of the eastern front will reveal more specifics, at this point what is most evident is the enormous importance of sexual activity (often in the form of coerced sexual activity or sexual sadism), especially to armed men, but sometimes also to female perpetrators (for example, in the camps), and that it was the weaker and the unarmed who were the victims of sexual violence.<sup>10</sup> Usually these victims were women and girls, but especially in the camps, men and boys also became targets of sadistic sexual violence. The sexual violence clearly was an abuse of power, but often a primary motivation was intrinsically connected to the perpetrator's desire to engage in sexual activity.

That a primary motivation for rape and other forms of sexual harassment was sexual desire is evident in a variety of ways in the cases studied. That sexual desire is often a primary motivating force in cases of rape is evident in that the act of rape lies within a continuum of sexual expressions. It is not entirely clear, however, where sexual desire begins and ends on this continuum. Discussed in this dissertation are sexual expressions ranging from entering into a prostitutional relationship,<sup>11</sup> to soliciting sex for food or money, to raping. Many – but by no means all – of the cases of rape in this dissertation seem not to have included excessive violence

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<sup>9</sup> The statistics for how many rapes which included excessive violence outside of what was required to accomplish the rape are not available for the eastern front. According to biologist Randy Thornhill, one survey of rape in peacetime claims that only fifteen percent of the victims reported that the rapists engaged in "gratuitous violence," that is eighty-five percent of the victims reported that the rapist limited "themselves to the force required to subdue or control their victims." Another study of 1,401 rape victims (during peacetime) found a similar percentage – twenty-two percent or less. Randy Thornhill, "Why Men Rape," *The Sciences* 40, no. 1 (2000).

<sup>10</sup> There is some literature available which discusses female perpetrators of male victims outside of armed conflict: R.E. Smith, Pine, C. J., & Hawley, M. E., "Social cognitions about adult male victims of female sexual assault," *The Journal of Sex Research*, 24, (1988) 101-112; C. Struckman-Johnson, "Forced sex on dates: It happens to men, too." *The Journal of Sex Research*, 24, (1988) 234-241; C. Struckman-Johnson, & Struckman-Johnson, D. "Men pressured and forced into sexual experience." *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 23, 93-114 (1994).

<sup>11</sup> A sexual relationship established between someone who has access to food or other life-saving materials and someone who needs those materials.

outside of what was needed to complete the rape, which often allows for the inclusion of sexual desire as a motivation for the perpetrator.<sup>12</sup> The motivations for various sexual expressions are confounded by the fact that they often included the desire for power, the desire to humiliate another, or the desire for more control.

I argue that thousands of men visited military brothels to have sexual intercourse was in part because of their sexual desires. The long lines recorded at many German brothels reveal how important sexual activity was to men. Although some cases of sexual harassment seem to indicate only a desire to humiliate (or to exert power over), and some instances indicate that the primary motivation could have been either sexual activity or power, there are a few cases which strongly indicate that the perpetrator was motivated by a desire for sexual activity. Furthermore, the rampant spread of sexually transmitted diseases on the eastern front and throughout German-occupied territory and the indisputable evidence of widespread independent prostitution and prostitutional relationships in both camp and non-camp settings clearly suggest that men on the eastern front placed a high priority on sexual activity. All of these sexual expressions are different manifestations of sexual desire, lying on a continuum. In this context, it would seem implausible to argue that raping had nothing to do with sexual desire for the perpetrator.

The feminist argument that rape has nothing to do with sexual desire is suspect in many of the cases discussed here. To elaborate, scholars of sexual violence historically have often argued that rape is not a manifestation of sexuality (or, in other words, that rape has nothing to do with sexual desire or sexuality). Perhaps this formulation is favored because it is easier to accept than a definition which includes sexual desire as a primary (or even secondary) aspect of the motive for rape, even if only the perpetrator experiences the sexual desire. If one considers that rape involves sexuality, it becomes easier to falsely conclude that the victim somehow also had sexual desire, or that he or she participated willingly.<sup>13</sup> Another possible reason feminists

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<sup>12</sup> However, I have found dozens of sources which describe either one or several rapes, or state that “many” females were raped, but which do not provide sufficient details to ascertain the primary motives of the perpetrators or to determine if there was excessive violence outside of what was needed to accomplish the rapes.

<sup>13</sup> Relatedly, it can be more difficult for rape survivors who had an orgasm or whose bodies otherwise responded during a rape to deal with their victimization. Such survivors often feel ashamed and believe that they were not raped because they allegedly had “enjoyed” it. The complete falsehood of this is most obvious when it is a child who has an orgasm while being sexually abused by an adult. One survivor related, “He liked to make me have orgasms. It made him think he was a great lover, satisfying his consenting daughter. I suffered from intense guilt for not having made him stop.” Another woman had similar difficulties: “I remember times when I became sexually excited during the abuse. Afterwards, I’d feel so upset, ashamed, and disgusted with myself. I felt like such a bad girl. Now when I become sexually excited with my husband, I’ll freeze as if to stop myself from having any pleasure during sex.” Wendy Maltz, *The Sexual Healing Journey: A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), 112-

have been hesitant to argue that a motivating factor in rape is a desire for sexual activity is because such an assertion consequently links the perpetrators' sexuality to dominance and power. Considering that the majority of abusers are male, if one is male or in a sexual relationship with a male, an assertion linking male sexuality to power conceivably could foster self-analysis, which could be unwelcome. If the perpetrator of sexual violence is a female, linking rape and other forms of sexual violence to sexuality also could be unwelcome. In other words, the separation of one's own sexuality or one's own sexual relationships with others and what one views as rape could be more difficult if we link rape to sexuality (and not only to power) because the dividing line between the two situations (one's own situation and what one considers to be rape) is not as clear.

One researcher who has written that rape is primarily about power is, for example, Pamela Washburn, who writes that it is a myth that "the primary motive behind sexual assault is sex," and that "A sense of power and a need for control are *the motivating factors* in sexual assault. The assumption [that the primary motive behind sexual assault is sex] more than any other allows society to blame the victim. The intent [of a sexual assault] is to humiliate, overpower, and degrade the victim" (emphasis added).<sup>14</sup> With the use of the word "primary," Washburn leaves room for part of the motive to be about sex. Yet the rest of her formulation does not ring completely true. In some cases, it is more the result of the abuse – not necessarily the motive of the perpetrator – that the victims have feelings of humiliation, powerlessness, and perhaps also of degradation. Conversely, a significant aspect of the motivation is connected to the perpetrator's (not the victim's) sexual desire. Claiming this does not blame the victim and should not make it easier for society to do so. Furthermore, claiming this does not ignore that sexual violence is also an abuse of power, especially in cases of armed conflict where the majority of the sexual perpetrators are armed men who rape or otherwise sexually harm unarmed women and girls.

Two fairly recent examples of the opinion that rape is not about sexuality are from researchers of the rapes in the former Yugoslavia. Unlike what seems to have been the situation

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113. Similarly, "rape victims suffer less emotional distress when they are subjected to more violence." Thornhill, "Why Men Rape." One rape survivor told me how in her attempt to understand and come to terms with her own rapes she was "so relieved" when a psychologist told her during a session that "rape doesn't have anything to do with sex. It's all about power."

<sup>14</sup> Pamela Washburn, "Why me? Addressing the spiritual and emotional trauma of sexual assault," *Topics in Emergency Medicine* 25, no. 3 (2003).

on the eastern front, in this armed conflict military members were ordered to rape, whether they wanted to or not. Here rape and sexual violence were part of a deliberate military and genocidal strategy, which thus far does not seem to have been the case for either the Germans or the Soviets in the east during World War II. The intersection of rape and military strategy brings additional dimensions to the motivating factors behind the rapes, which, however, remain crimes of gender. Sociologist Ruth Seifert, writes in her insightful article on Bosnia that

there are good reasons to assume that rapes do not have much to do either with nature or with sexuality. Rather, they are acts of extreme violence implemented, of course, by sexual means. Studies show that rape is not an aggressive manifestation of sexuality, but rather a sexual manifestation of aggression. In the perpetrator's psyche it serves no sexual purpose but is the expression of rage, violence, and dominance over a woman.<sup>15</sup>

In a similar vein, journalist Alexandra Stiglmayer argues that a man rapes

because he wants to engage in violence. He rapes because he wants to demonstrate his power. He rapes because he is the victor. He rapes because the woman is the enemy's woman, and he wants to humiliate and annihilate the enemy. He rapes because the woman is herself the enemy whom he wishes to humiliate and annihilate. He rapes because he despises women. He rapes to prove his virility. He rapes because the acquisition of the female body means a piece of territory conquered. He rapes to take out on someone else the humiliation he has suffered in the war. He rapes to work off his fears.<sup>16</sup>

Another example of such an argument comes from historian Norman Naimark's chapter on rape by the Red Army. Naimark writes, "German claims of superiority during the war drove the Russians to rape, but their continued arrogance – despite their fear of the occupiers – made the Soviets' need to dishonor Germans all the greater." The men in the Red Army had an "inferiority complex" because of all the wealth they saw in Germany. Thus, "the Russian soldier's desire for revenge was fed by his desire to restore his honor and manhood, to erase doubts about

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<sup>15</sup> From the context of this passage, it seems that Seifert applies this formulation of rape generally and not just to the rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Seifert cites Nicholas Groth and William Hobson, "Die Dynamik sexueller Gewalt," in *Vergewaltigung: Die Opfer und die Täter*, ed. Jürgen Heinrichs (Braunschweig, 1986), p.88. Ruth Seifert, "War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis," in *Mass Rape: The War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, ed. Alexandra Stiglmayer (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 69.

<sup>16</sup> Stiglmayer also writes, "He rapes because war, a man's business, has awakened his aggressiveness, and he directs it at those who play a subordinate role in the world of war." While I agree war can awaken men's aggressiveness, the soldier who feels his aggressiveness sometimes rapes because he wants to humiliate those in subordinate positions, but he also could rape because he wants to have sexual activity. In this list of motives, Stiglmayer adds that rape is "really only some 'fun' with the guys." This reason hints at military culture, peer pressure, and the implications of having groups of exhausted, relieved, terrified, or intoxicated men together. Stiglmayer, "The Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina," 84.

inferiority that were exacerbated by German well-being and self-satisfaction."<sup>17</sup> This explanation of the rapes of German women and girls does not explain the mass rapes of Soviet, east European, or Slavic women and girls by members of the Red Army. Additionally, none of the motives for rape from these scholars include sexuality or sexual desire.

Some argue there are biological components involved in the phenomena of sexual violence. For example, studies which investigate the biological phenomenon of sexual arousal to violence are extremely important.<sup>18</sup> Since numerous biological factors are the same in various current and historical conflicts, such as alcohol, armed men, periods of sexual abstinence, life-threatening situations which result in high stress levels, and unarmed civilians who become victims of sexual torture, this is a valid avenue of questioning that needs further exploration in our attempts to end this kind of persecution. Some research has shown that rape and (some) men's wish to dominate women is not instinctual.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, because of the great ability of humans to choose to follow all or none of their many instincts or desires, considering biological influences does not in any way minimize the responsibility of the perpetrators. This kind of research and discussion can add to our knowledge of why people commit such horrific crimes, thus making it more of a possibility to prevent them.

The argument that men view women of the enemy side as an "other," and therefore, a "whore," and therefore rapeable,<sup>20</sup> only partially applies to the eastern front if one considers the wide range of sexual violence. In some cases this argument could be applied, but the mass rapes by the Soviet soldiers, for example, undermine this argument because the Soviet soldiers did not

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<sup>17</sup> Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 114-115.

<sup>18</sup> Randy Thornhill and Craig T. Palmer, *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> See Lloyd Vogelmann, *The Sexual Face of Violence: Rapists on Rape* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1990), 37-60, 198.

<sup>20</sup> For example, researcher Astrid Aafjes and member of Women, Law & Development International, notes that the Special Rapporteur found that "in the legal codes of many societies, prostitutes "are seen as being outside the boundaries of what could constitute rape, as 'unrapable.'" Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, E/CN.4/1997/47, Report on Violence in the Community, 12 February 1997, para. 34, quoted in Astrid Aafjes, *Gender Violence: The Hidden War Crime* (Washington, D.C.: Women, Law and Development International, 1998), 2. Conversely, for images used to incite feelings of the need to "protect our women" see Susan Gubar, "'This Is My Rifle, This Is My Gun': World War II and the Blitz on Women," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, ed. Margaret Randolph Higdonnet, et al. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 232-234.

only rape German or non-communist women.<sup>21</sup> The Red Army consisted of various national and cultural groups, and as they headed west they committed mass rapes against Soviet (their “own”) and non-Soviet, Slavic, Jewish, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, and German women and girls, seemingly regardless of their religious or political beliefs. Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians all suffered from rape by the often intoxicated Red Army men. In some cases a Red Army member may have raped because the woman or girl allegedly “collaborated” with the Germans, which could indicate a political rather than a sexual motive, but even in these cases the men could have found other ways to “punish” besides forcing sexual activity. Because the female was an alleged enemy (a German collaborator) she was targeted for punishment, but because she was a woman the punishment was sexual. Still, it is clear that the Soviets did not only rape “enemy” women.

The argument that only enemy women are defined as “whores” and raped partially applies to the cases of sexual violence by Germans, but the different situations across the eastern front make this analysis a bit complex. The Germans occupied areas of the eastern front for a number of years, and at least initially this was accompanied with a plan to stay.<sup>22</sup> Except for the

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<sup>21</sup> The scholarly literature which focuses on rapes by Red Army members of east Europeans is quite small, but more work is appearing. Antony Beevor frequently returns to the topic of rape, and quite a few paragraphs are devoted to the rape of Soviet and east European women and girls. Antony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002). See also Marlene Epp, “The Memory of Violence: Soviet and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War,” *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 1 (Spring) (1997). Jolluck includes the topic of sexual violence to a great extent in her research on Polish women in the Soviet Gulag. Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union During World War II*, ed. Editor Jonathan Harris, *Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002). More research has been completed on the rapes of German women by members of the Red Army. For example, see Atina Grossmann, “Eine Frage des Schweigens: Die Vergewaltigung deutscher Frauen durch Besatzungssoldaten,” *Frauen und Film* 54/55 (1994); Stuart Liebman and Annette Michelson, “After the Fall: Women in the House of the Hangmen,” *October* 72, no. Berlin 1945: Liberation and Rape, A Special Issue (1995); Richard W. McCormick, “Rape and War, Gender and Nation, Victims and Victimized: Helke Sander's *Befreier und Befreite*,” *Camera Obscura* 46 16, no. 1 (2001); Naimark, *Russians*; Helke Sander, “Remembering/Forgetting,” *October* 72, no. Berlin 1945: Liberation and Rape, A Special Issue (1995); Helke Sander, “A Response to My Critics,” *October* 72, no. Berlin 1945: Liberation and Rape, A Special Issue (1995); Helke Sander and Barbara Johr, eds., *Befreier und Befreite: Krieg, Vergewaltigungen, Kinder* (Munich: Kunstmann, 1992). See Chapter Six for a discussion on the rapes committed by the Red Army.

<sup>22</sup> For recent overview of the German occupation with extensive literature reviews throughout, see Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). See also Rolf-Dieter Müller and Gerhard R. Überschaer, *Hitler's War in the East, 1941-1945. A Critical Assessment* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997). Another less recent, but helpful review on the large body of literature on the German occupation, see Theo J. Schulte, *The German Army and Nazi Policies in Occupied Russia* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1989), 1-27. (None of these works expand on the sexual violence during the German occupation.) The literature on the German occupation in the east is enormous. To name just a few, Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, *Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. Wolfgang Schumann und Gerhart Hass, 6 vols. (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1974-1985); Truman Oliver Anderson, “The Conduct of Reprisals by the German Army of Occupation in the Southern USSR, 1941-1943” (University of Chicago, 1995); Rüdiger Baar, *Die Wehrmacht und die nationalsozialistischen Verbrechen an der Zivilbevölkerung der Sowjetunion*, ed. Rüdiger Baar, *Die Ost-Reihe/Neue Folge*; 5 (Hamburg: Dt. Ges. für Osteuropakunde, Zweigstelle Hamburg, 1997); Bernhard Chiari, *Alltag hinter der Front: Besatzung, Kollaboration und Widerstand in Weißrußland 1941-1944* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998); Alexander Dallin, *German Rule*

pivotal periods of invasion and retreat, these goals set up a different dynamic from that of the situation for the Red Army when it pushed its way toward Berlin. As will become clear in Chapter Two, the written rules of the Third Reich which forbade Germans to have sex with non-Germans in the east were, for the most part, a reality only on paper, and the leadership acknowledged this.<sup>23</sup> On the eastern front, where the Germans viewed nearly all of the people as “inferior,” the situation was different from in the west where the people were not as low on the Nazi hierarchy of race and where perhaps these laws had more of an effect.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the Germans had sex and sexual relationships with many non-German women and girls of different backgrounds, they raped many non-German women and girls of different backgrounds,<sup>25</sup> and they

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*in Russia, 1941-1945: A Study in Occupation Policy* (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd., 1957); Ihor Kamenetsky, *Hitler's Occupation of Ukraine, 1941-1944: A Study of Totalitarian Imperialism* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1956); Peter Klein, ed., *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42: die Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1997); Wolodymyr Kosyk, *The Third Reich and Ukraine* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993); Lubachko, *Belorussia Under Soviet Rule 1917-1957*; James Lucas, *War on the Eastern Front, 1941-1945: The German Soldier in Russia* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1979); Rolf-Dieter Müller, "Das Scheitern der wirtschaftlichen 'Blitzkriegsstrategie'," in *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, ed. Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983); Rolf-Dieter Müller, *Die Deutsche Wirtschaftspolitik in den besetzten sowjetischen Gebieten 1941-1943: der Abschlussbericht des Wirtschaftsstabes Ost und Aufzeichnungen eines Angehörigen des Wirtschaftskommandos Kiew* (Boppard am Rhein: H. Boldt, 1991); Rolf-Dieter Müller, "Raub, Vernichtung, Kolonisierung: Die deutsche Wirtschaftspolitik in den besetzten sowjetischen Gebieten 1941-1944," in *22. Juni 1941. Der Überfall auf die Sowjetunion*, ed. Hans Schafranek and Robert Streibel (Vienna: 1991); Timothy Mulligan, *The Politics of Illusion and Empire: German Occupation Policy in the Soviet Union, 1942-1943* (New York: Praeger, 1988); Pakstas, *Lithuania and WWII*; Julius Slavenas, "Nazi Ideology and Policy in the Baltic States," *Lituanas* 11, no. Spring (1965); Jonathan Steinberg, "The Third Reich Reflected: German Civil Administration in the Occupied Soviet Union, 1941-4," *English Historical Review* 110 (1995); Wolfram Wette, "Erobern, zerstören, auslöschen. Die verdrängte Last von 1941: Der Rußland Feldzug war ein Raub - und Vernichtungskrieg von Anfang an," *Die Zeit*, 20 November 1987; Theresa Wobbe, *Nach Osten: verdeckte Spuren Nationalsozialistische Verbrechen* (Frankfurt/M: Neue Kritik, 1992).

<sup>23</sup> There are many sources for this assertion which will be cited in Chapter Two.

<sup>24</sup> Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941-45: German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 29, 116, 127, 256-257.

<sup>25</sup> Despite the large body of literature on the German occupation of the east, there has not been a great amount of research on the rapes the Germans there. For a comparison of rape cases in the east and the west, see historian Birgit Beck's forthcoming dissertation and Birgit Beck, "Rape: The Military Trials of Sexual Crimes Committed by Soldiers in the Wehrmacht, 1939-1944," in *Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002). Omer Bartov recognizes the occurrence of sexual violence in his work. Omer Bartov, "The Conduct of War: Soldiers and the Barbarization of Warfare," *The Journal of Modern History* 64 (1992); Omer Bartov, "Kitsch and Sadism in Kaczynski's Other Planet: Israeli Youth Imagine the Holocaust," *Jewish Social Studies* 3, no. 2 (1997). Many other primary sources in the form of documents, autobiographies, novels, memoirs, interviews, and testimonies document rapes by Germans and are provided and discussed in Chapter Six. Despite the inattention to sexual violence in general, the myth of the unblemished Wehrmacht soldier has been discarded – at least by scholars – since the 1980s, but the myth still influences popular beliefs. For an insightful discussion, see Klaus Naumann, "The 'Unblemished' Wehrmacht: The Social History of a Myth," in *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II, 1941-1944*, ed. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000).



established a large system of sexual slavery primarily intended to serve the soldiers and officers of the Wehrmacht and the SS.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, German policies purposefully caused the starvation of millions of people in the east,<sup>27</sup> which subsequently forced an unknown number of women and girls into prostitution and prostitutional relationships, often with Germans who were forbidden to have such relationships. These various forms of sexual activity – rapes, forced prostitution, and prostitutional relationships – could have been about defining the enemy women as “whores,” and therefore rapeable or at least “usable.”<sup>28</sup>

Yet additional dynamics were at play during the German occupation. Indeed, it seems to have been the case that the perpetrator’s desire for sexual activity played a significant role, as did the assumption that men require heterosexual activity.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, as researcher and author Darius M. Rejali points out, the argument about defining the enemy women as “whores” places rape in a male-male conflict, rather than a male-female conflict. While the issues of male-male conflict is important, the reality of rape and other kinds of sexual exploitation and violence during wartime is more complex, as we will also see here. Additionally, the dynamics between

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<sup>26</sup> In addition to primary sources for the documentation of the German military brothels, there has already been some scholarship completed on the topic, some of which also concerns the brothels in the concentration camps. Insa Meinen, *Wehrmacht und Prostitution in besetzten Frankreich* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2002); Christa Paul, *Zwangsprostitution: staatliche bordelle im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1994); Max Plassmann, "Wehrmachtbordelle. Anmerkungen zu einem Quellenfund im Universitätsarchiv Düsseldorf," *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 62 (2003); Seidler, *Prostitution*. The following works focus on the brothels in the concentration camps: Hans-Peter Klausch, "Das Lagerbordell von Flossenbürg," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* (1992); Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*; Rupprecht Podszun, "'Sonderbau': Das Häftlingsbordell im Konzentrationslager Buchenwald," (Buchenwald: Buchenwald Denkmal, 1995); Christa Schulz, "Weibliche Häftlinge aus Ravensbrück in Bordellen der Männerkonzentrationslager," in *Frauen in Konzentrationslagern*, ed. Claus Füllberg-Stolberg (Bremen: Temmen, 1994); Nicole Volpert, *Der Sonderbau* (1997), Film; Christl Wickert, "'Das große Schweigen'. Zwangsprostitution im Dritten Reich," *WerkstattGeschichte* 13 (1996). See also Chapter Five of this dissertation.

<sup>27</sup> Müller, "Das Scheitern der wirtschaftlichen 'Blitzkriegsstrategie'."; Müller, "Raub, Vernichtung, Kolonisierung: Die deutsche Wirtschaftspolitik in den besetzten sowjetischen Gebieten 1941-1944.," Schulte, *German Army*, 17-18, 86-116; Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1978).

<sup>28</sup> The idea of seeing the enemy’s women as “other” largely comes from Susan Brownmiller’s work.

<sup>29</sup> Historian Cynthia Enloe wrote an article about the 1995 U.S. rape of a Japanese twelve-year-old girl and commented that “There is a widespread belief that soldiers’ sexuality is determined by uncontrollable ‘drives.’ Any military’s fighting effectiveness, this theory holds, is jeopardized if those soldierly sex drives are not accommodated. U.S. base commanders have often worked closely with local and national officials to provide their male troops with ‘safe’ commercialized sex – even, as in Japan, where prostitution is illegal.” Cynthia Enloe, "Spoils of War: Soldier's Perception of Women's Sexuality," *Ms.*, Mar-Apr 1996, 15. It could be true that the desire for sexual activity and the belief that men require heterosexual activity played a significant role mostly during the German occupation, but not as much during the German invasion or retreat, when it seems that the armed men became more brutal.

men include more kinds of relationships than the categories of friend and enemy.<sup>30</sup>

In the case of the German perpetrator, there still is hesitancy among many scholars to believe the Germans committed sexual violence against Jews because of the idea of “racial defilement,” (Rassenschande).<sup>31</sup> Due to the nature of the topic, non-Jewish survivors of sexual abuse have a difficult time coming forward for all kinds of reasons, one of them being the fear that people would not believe their story. But because of the importance scholars and others have placed on the German Rassenschande laws, this probably has rendered it even more difficult for Jewish survivors to come forth for fear of being labeled a liar. Others who have spoken of or written on the topic have been accused of being voyeuristic or irresponsible.<sup>32</sup> Although it is impossible to quantify how many Jews suffered from sexual violence committed by the Germans, it will become clear in the following chapters that it was a significant number of people,

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<sup>30</sup> Darius M. Rejali, "After Feminist Analysis of Bosnian Violence," in *The Women and War Reader*, ed. Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 27-29. Historian Naimark places the rapes by Soviets of German women (Naimark downplays the rapes of Slavic and other Soviet women) into a male-male conflict: “Only by the total humiliation of the enemy, one might hypothesize – in this case, by completely dishonoring him with the rape of his women – could the deeply dishonored Russian nation win the war, with what Lerner calls ‘the final act of male domination.’” Naimark, *Russians*, 78. Naimark cites Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 2 vols., vol. 1, *Women and History* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 78.

<sup>31</sup> The amount of scholarship on World War II in general, and on the war in the east in particular, is monumentally large but with very minimal focus – let alone mention – of sexual violence against unarmed civilians. In general, the silence surrounding and the loud denial of sexual violence committed by the Germans against the Jews is exceptionally noticeable, but the reason behind the silence is not because it did not happen. Writing about the atrocities the Germans committed, historian Hannes Heer argues that “It almost seems that, as if by gentlemen’s agreement, many historians observe an internalized limit: not to describe the Wehrmacht as the apparatus of a violence-oriented society nor war as its natural expression.” Heer does not discuss sexual violence, but his argument rings true to this topic. (Heer summarizes different arguments of various scholars who have written about the Wehrmacht in the east. Some of the limits Heer refers to are that, for example, the crimes originated out of “anti-Jewish tendencies in the Eastern Army” (Krausnik), or from an “ideological background” (Förster), or from “anti-Bolshevism” (Streit). Hannes Heer, “Killing Fields: The Wehrmacht and the Holocaust in Belorussia, 1941-42,” in *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II, 1941-1944*, ed. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000), 73. (Heer refers to the following works: J. Förster, “Die Discherung des Lebensraumes,” in *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, ed. Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt (1979), 1044; H. Krausnick, *Hitlers Einsatzgruppen: Die Truppen des Weltanschauungskrieges 1938-1942* (Frankfurt am Mein: 1985), 189; Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, 242ff.)

<sup>32</sup> Historian Sybil Milton writes that the idea that Jewish women were forced to serve in SS brothels was a “popular postwar myth, sometimes exploited and sensationalized,” and was “a macabre postwar misuse of the Holocaust for popular titillation.” Sybil Milton, “Women and the Holocaust: The Case of German and German-Jewish Women,” in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 230-231. Although Milton does not supply examples of such “misuse,” others have followed her argument without questioning. For example, professor of English Myrna Goldenberg writes that “Although rape by the SS in the death camps was rare [here Goldenberg cites Milton], the women were terrorized by rumors or threats of rape.” Myrna Goldenberg, “Memoirs of Auschwitz Survivors,” in *Women in the Holocaust*, ed. Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 336. Furthermore, if certain readers use memoirs or novels which include reports of sexual violence as a form of entertainment, this often is more a reflection on the readers, not on the source.

indicating that these were not exceptions by any means.

In light of the many different forms of sexual abuse on the eastern front and the multitude of combinations of identity markers of perpetrators and victims, it is difficult to find specific patterns that include certain nationalities, political alliances, cultures, ethnicities, or religions. Further, specific rules or determinations concerning the identity markers of the females by which perpetrators chose their victims do not seem to emerge. For example, at this point in my research there are no indications that a certain ethnic group was more likely than another group to have been gangraped, raped by one man, forced into prostitution, or to have been raped and then murdered. The sampling of data from the various regions is insufficient to make those distinctions.<sup>33</sup>

The mass rapes in individual conflicts of, for example, Bengali women in Bangladesh or Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, certainly highlight the relationship between ethnic conflict, genocide, and sexual violence.<sup>34</sup> A few examples from the eastern front also indicate that the

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<sup>33</sup> For example, without pure speculation, there is not enough information at this point to conclude that, for example, the Germans were more likely to rape a Jew before a certain point in their occupation, or that a German or Soviet man was more likely to murder his rape victim if she or he were of a certain cultural group, or that a German would rape a Slavic female *because* she was Slavic. We could speculate that, for example, because Germans viewed Latvians and Estonians differently than they did the Slavic peoples, this influenced the kinds or numbers of cases of sexual violence in Latvia and Estonia compared to areas of Slavic populations. At a certain point in the war one document states that the German ban against having sex with Latvians and Estonians was lifted (Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb.Nr. II 56/43 Aol5, Feld-Kommandostelle, 8 September 1943, BAB NS19/382, doc. 130), but this does not necessarily imply that there were more or fewer rapes by Germans of Latvians and Estonians. A thorough study of Latvia and Estonia needs to be completed to better understand how much and what kinds of sexual violence occurred at the hands of the Germans in these countries compared to other areas of the eastern occupied territories. There are numerous examples from police cases in Latvia which highlight the animosity between the Germans and the Latvians (see Chapter Two), and there seems to have been question as to whether women and girls from Estonia and Latvia who were forced laborers in Germany were to be treated as "the women from the east," though that seems not to have been the wish from the Reichsführer SS in August 1943. See Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb.Nr. 1724, Feld-Kommandostelle, Letter to the Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, August 1943, signed SS-Obersturmbannführer, BAB NS19/382, doc. 133; Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb.Nr. 1724/43, Feld-Kommandostelle, Letter to SS-Obergruppenführer Berger, Chef des SS-Hauptamtes, 21 August 1943, BAB, NS19/382, doc. 134; Der Reichsführer-SS, Chef des SS-Hauptamtes, Aktenvermerk, signed SS-Obergruppenführer Berger, Berlin, 14 July 1943, BAB 19/382, docs. 137-139.

<sup>34</sup> On the rapes in the former Yugoslavia, see Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Donna M. Hughes and Kathleen Foster, "War, Nationalism and Rape: Women Responded by Opening a Center Against Sexual Violence in Belgrade, Serbia," *Women's Studies International Forum* 19, no. 1-2 (1996); Susan S. (Susan Stokes) Lambert, "Covering Rape in Ethnic Conflict: the Case of the Bosnian War, a Content Analysis of The New York Times' Coverage of Rape for the Years 1992 and 1993" (M.A., Indiana University, 1996); Catherine N. Niarchos, "Women, War and Rape: Challenges Facing the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia" (Masters of Laws, Columbia University, 1994); Sophia Rose Phillips, "The Systematic Rape of Bosnia's Muslims: Genocide, the Physical and Psychological Effects on the Victim and the Victim and the Community, and the Morality of Indifference" (M.T.S., Emory University, 1997); Todd A. Salzman, "Rape Camps as a Means of Ethnic Cleansing: Religious, Cultural, and Ethical Responses to Rape Victims in the Former Yugoslavia," *Human Rights Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (1998); World Council of Churches. Ecumenical Women's Team, "Rape of Women in War: Report of the Ecumenical Women's Team Visit - Zagreb, December 1992," (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches. Ecumenical Women's Team,

perpetrator's motivation to commit sexual violence was partially because of the identity markers of the victim, but overall it is not clear. It will become clear in the following discussion that Jewish women and girls were victims of sexual violence by Germans. However, it is difficult to determine whether, for example, a Slavic person's Jewishness affected a German perpetrator's decision to rape or not to rape more than a Baltic person's Jewishness, or, for example, whether a Slavic Jew or a Slavic Orthodox Christian were more likely to be raped.

Such speculation comes from historian Doris Bergen, who claims in her study that after 1942, when the Germans had moved into full-scale genocide, "Even Germans who defied their orders and raped Jewish women would immediately have destroyed the evidence by killing their victims."<sup>35</sup> Bergen conceived of the theory that those who suffered the most sexual violence by the Germans were the people the Germans had "targeted for enslavement – above all, Slavs" rather than "Jews, Gypsies, and people deemed handicapped," who were "slated for destruction." Additionally, "Jewish women, like their Roma counterparts, remained vulnerable to sexual abuses too, but of different, often even more deadly, kinds in keeping with the goals of genocide."<sup>36</sup> (It is not clear if those "deemed handicapped" are included in this more deadly form of sexual violence.) Furthermore, Bergen contends that sexual violence against Jews, while not unfounded, was motivated not by the desire for sexual activity, but by the desire for the "dehumanization and destruction of the victims."<sup>37</sup> Here, it is not entirely clear if she includes those deemed handicapped and the Gypsies with the Jews, whose sexual violence allegedly was not motivated by sexual desire. Nor is it entirely clear whether sexual abuse by Germans of non-Jews, non-handicapped, and non-Gypsy (for example, Slavic Orthodox people, Latvian Protestants, Lithuanian Catholics, Estonian Protestants, etc.) was motivated by sexual desire or by "dehumanization and destruction of the victims."

While Bergen should be applauded to include Jews, Gypsies, and those deemed

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1992); Seada Vranic, *Breaking the Wall of Silence: the Voices of Raped Bosnia* (Zagreb: Izdanja Antibarbarus, 1996). On the rapes of Bengali women, see Brownmiller, *Against*, 78-86. Copelon includes the rapes of Yuracruz women as genocidal rapes. See Presentation of Guadelupe Leon, Panel on Military Violence and Sexual Slavery, 1993 U.N. Conference on Human Rights, NGO Parallel Activities, June 1993, quoted in Copelon, "Surfacing," 350, n. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Doris Bergen, "Sex, Blood, and Vulnerability: Women Outsiders in German-Occupied Europe," in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, ed. Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 277.

<sup>36</sup> Bergen, "Sex, Blood," 278.

<sup>37</sup> Bergen, "Sex, Blood," 278.

handicapped as having suffered sexually by the Germans, her conclusions on sexual violence support conventional understandings of the Holocaust, and this is accomplished at the probable risk of simplifying what could have been the realities of many different people. Furthermore, these assumptions are based on a very small sampling of data: Bergen cites a single rape case from 1940 of a Jew raped by a German. No other rape cases by Germans of Slavic Orthodox, Baltic, Gypsy, or handicapped people, whether before or after 1942 are cited. Bergen's discussion of Nazi racism and sexism aside, it is not clear how a theory on rapes by the Germans, the motivations thereof, the outcomes thereof (whether the victim is murdered), and the timing thereof, can be based on one rape case. At this point in my research, although I could speculate, it is difficult to define patterns and causes as Bergen has when many sources indicate little information beyond the fact that specific crimes occurred. Furthermore, there are many more examples across the eastern front that refuse to become part of an easily identified pattern denoting a close relationship between ethnicity and sexual violence, as can be the case in armed conflicts.

Despite the great diversity of experiences across the eastern front, the irony in trying to make sense of all the combinations of identity markers between perpetrators and victims is that the perpetrators were frequently under the influence of alcohol. This very likely could have made them more willing to commit sexual violence against people they normally would not have, or to break regulations they normally would not have. In addition, since the differentiations (between, for example, Jew, Orthodox Russian, or Latvian, etc.) did not always involve external distinctions to make it obvious to which "group" the victim belonged, alcohol would have rendered it even more difficult for perpetrators to calculate how they should exploit, humiliate, murder, or rape the person. Some of the perpetrators' beliefs could have become more accentuated with alcohol, while others could have become less important, though historians debate the extent of the belief in Nazi ideology among the rank and file.<sup>38</sup> In addition to cultural norms, bodily functions such as sexual desire are often more enhanced with alcohol.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> There is not a definitive answer as to whether the majority of Germans in the east believed Nazi ideology. Further, if they did believe in some of it, it is not clear which parts of Nazi ideology they believed. For example, historian Christopher Browning downplays the role of ideology in his work, while historian Omer Bartov highlights it. Bartov, "Conduct."; Bartov, *Eastern Front*; Omer Bartov, "Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich," *The Journal of Modern History* 63, no. 1 (1991); Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

<sup>39</sup> On the role of alcohol and sexual abuse, see Diana Scully, *Understanding Sexual Violence: A Study of Convicted Rapists* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 120-125.

Furthermore, some people while under the influence of alcohol experience heightened emotions, such as anger, love, or dejection.

A survey of sexual violence on the eastern front highlights many of the same issues of sexual violence and armed conflicts throughout the world. In light of the horrors of the Bosnian rape camps, the widespread raping in various armed conflicts in Africa,<sup>40</sup> the affirmation of rape as an international war crime, the news reports on the Japanese soldiers and the Korean "comfort women,"<sup>41</sup> it is difficult to deny the omnipresence of sexual violence throughout history and throughout the world, although some conflicts have been noted not to have had large numbers of rapes.<sup>42</sup> Even in times of peace, rape and sexual torture have been rampant in the countries

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<sup>40</sup> Human Rights Watch/Africa and Human Rights Watch Women's Rights Project, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath* (New York, Washington, London, Brussels: Human Rights Watch, 1996); James C. McKinley, Jr., "Legacy of Rwanda Violence: the Thousands Born of Rape," *The New York Times*, September 23 1996; Meredith Turshen, "The Political Economy of Rape: An Analysis of Systematic Rape and Sexual Abuse of Women during Armed Conflict in Africa," in *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, ed. Caroline O.N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark (London and New York: Zed Books, 2001).

<sup>41</sup> David Boling, *Mass Rape, Enforced Prostitution, and the Japanese Imperial Army: Japan Eschews International Legal Responsibility?* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 1995); Ustinia Dolgopol, "Women's Voices, Women's Pain," *Human Rights Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1995); G. Hicks, *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995); John Lie, "The State as Pimp: Prostitution and the Patriarchal State in Japan in the 1940s," *The Sociological Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1997); Yuki Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996); Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution During World War II and the US Occupation*, ed. Mark Selden, *Asia's Transformations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); United States Office of War Information Psychological Warfare Team Attached to U.S. Army Forces India-Burma Theater APO 689, "Japanese Prisoner of War Interrogation Report No. 49," (Ledo Stookade: United States Office of War Information Psychological Warfare Team Attached to U.S. Army Forces India-Burma Theater APO 689. By T/3 Alex Yorichi, 1944); Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*, ed. Carol Gluck, trans. Suzanne O'Brien, *Asia Perspectives: History, Society, and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

<sup>42</sup> On the history of patriarchy see Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Brownmiller provides examples from around the world: Brownmiller, *Against*. See also Leon Friedmann, *The Law of War: A Documentary History*, vol. II (New York, 1972), 1060ff; Leslie Wirpsa, "New study documents abuses of women's rights worldwide (The Human Rights Watch Global Report on Women's Human Rights)," *National Catholic Reporter*, Sept 29 1995; Women's Rights Project (Human Rights Watch) and Human Rights Watch (Organization), "The Human Rights Watch Global Report on Women's Human Rights," (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1995). On the absence of rape, Brownmiller reported that rape was almost absent among the Vietcong during the Vietnam War. Brownmiller, *Against*, 90, 92. In many North American cultures, rape was virtually unknown. See Thomas S. Abler, "Scalping, Torture, Cannibalism and Rape: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Conflicting Cultural Values in War," *Anthropologica* XXXIV (1992); Karen Artchoker and Marlin Mousseau, "Violence Against Oglala Women is Not Traditional," (Cangleska Inc., 1993); James Axtell, ed., *The Indian Peoples of Eastern America: A Documentary History of the Sexes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, eds., *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Richard Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press and Polity Press, 1995). Professor of Law Rebecca Tsosie writes that historically among the Navajos, rape was "almost unheard of," but that in modern times there has been a dramatic increase of rapes. One Native explained, "For the Indian male, the only route to be successful, to be good, to be right, and to have an identity was to be as much like

examined in this research, as well as, for example, in the United States, western Europe, and elsewhere.<sup>43</sup> The fact that sexual violence has occurred in so many armed conflicts throughout the world and throughout the centuries refutes arguments which only dwell on the historical specificities as the primary reasons for these crimes and substantiates the argument that rape, forced prostitution, and other such crimes are crimes of gender that can intersect with crimes based on other categories, such as ethnicity, religion, or political alliance. Comparisons and analyses of people's specific histories are useful to further illuminate crimes against humanity, but if we investigate a broader picture (which this dissertation does), then historic specificities fade in the more obvious light of the similarities. Having gathered evidence from such a wide variety of sources, what I highlight in this dissertation are the many similarities for they are at once revealing and foreboding.

Highlighting gender and the similarities of women's and girls' experiences as sexual targets does not essentialize or totalize the female experience if we acknowledge the differences that existed. A Latvian woman's experience in Latvia was different from a Russian woman's experience in Latvia or in Russia, and a Galician woman's experience was yet another unique experience. A Jewish woman experienced the war differently than did a Protestant woman. If we research the mass murders the Germans committed in the east, we would mostly highlight the Jewish and Gypsy experience, since they were targeted for complete annihilation.<sup>44</sup> Such

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the white man as he could." Paula Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 192.

<sup>43</sup> Ulla Ohse, *Forced Prostitution and Traffic in Women in West Germany* (Edinburgh: Human Rights Group, 1984). Examples of scholarship on the U.S.: Susan Faludi, *The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York and London: Anchor Books, 1991); Marilyn French, *The War Against Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992); Mariah Burton Nelson, *The Stronger Women Get, the More Men Love Football: Sexism and the American Culture of Sports* (New York: Avon Books, 1994); Martha Roth, "Transforming the Rape Culture That Lives in My Skull," in *Transforming a Rape Culture*, ed. Emilie Buchwald, Pamela R. Fletcher, and Martha Roth (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1993); Scully, *Understanding Sexual Violence: A Study of Convicted Rapists*. For South Africa, see Vogelmann, *The Sexual*, 1-2.

<sup>44</sup> For general works on the Holocaust, especially in the east, see Bartov, *Germany's War*; David Budnik, *Nichto ne zabyto: evreiskie sudb y v Kieve = Nichts ist vergessen: jüdische schicksale in Kiev = Nothing is forgotten: Jewish fates in Kiev, 1941-1943* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 1993); Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey S. Gurock, eds., *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Studies and Sources on the Destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-Occupied Territories of the USSR, 1941-1945* (Armonk, New York; London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 1993); Andrew Ezergailis, *The Holocaust in Latvia 1941-1944* (Riga: Riga Model Printing House, 1996); Zvi Gitelman, ed., *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Raul Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews*, Third ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003); Gertrude Schneider, ed., *The Unfinished Road: Jewish Survivors of Latvia Look Back* (New York: Praeger, 1991). On the Gypsy experience see Ian Hancock, "Responses to the Porrajmos: The Romani Holocaust," in *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, ed. Alan S. Rosenbaum (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998). For a brief overview, see

immediately genocidal plans notwithstanding, millions of Slavic people, including POWs and civilians, were purposefully murdered, worked to death, or left to perish by starvation and deprivation.<sup>45</sup> A large number of non-Jewish people were murdered because they were accused of being Jews who were not wearing the required stars,<sup>46</sup> or even on the pretext that they were Jewish.<sup>47</sup> The Germans forced unbearable conditions upon Soviet POWs, for example, to live not in barracks but in holes in the ground exposed to the elements.<sup>48</sup> Historian Gerhard Weinberg suggests that despite not having an immediate extermination plan for Slavic people, the Germans planned on the eventual extinction of Slavic people.

Moscow and Leningrad were to disappear...In addition to the [genocide against the Jews and Gypsies, the] mentally ill, the sick, and the elderly among them were to be killed...The bulk of the population was expected to be dramatically reduced by starvation....cities in the Ukraine and the whole food-deficit area in the north were to be deprived of food...<sup>49</sup>

Weinberg mentions the German mass sterilization program, which, he argues, “could not have been intended for the Jews, who were to be exterminated. Nor could it be for the slave laborers or the POWs, who also were only seen as a ‘temporary aberration.’” Rather, Weinberg argues that

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Donald Niewyk and Francis Nicosia, *The Columbia Guide to the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 47-48. For research on women and the Holocaust and WWII, see, for example, Judith Tydor Baumel, *Double Jeopardy: Gender and the Holocaust* (London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998); Jutta T. Bendremer, *Women Surviving the Holocaust In Spite of the Horror*, vol. 43, *Symposium Series* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997); Gisela Bock, *Zwangssterilisation im Nationalsozialismus. Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik* (Opladen: 1986); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Woman, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981); Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman, eds., *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven and London, 1998: Yale University Press, 1998); Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, eds., *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* (New York: Paragon House, 1993). The scholarly works on gender and the Holocaust are more likely to mention sexual violence than are the general works, but some also omit reference.

<sup>45</sup> See page 46ff. for a more detailed discussion of the treatment of POWs, Slavs, and other civilians in the east. There has been a significant amount of research completed on the plight of the Soviet POWs, for example, Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 107-119; G. Reitlinger, *The House Built on Sand: The Conflicts of German Policy in Russia* (New York: Viking Press, 1960), 95-127, 257-284; Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, 109ff; Christian Streit, "Soviet Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Wehrmacht," in *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II 1941-1944*, ed. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000); Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 300. Some scholars would include the Soviet POWs and the Slavic peoples among the victims of the Holocaust. For a brief historiographical discussion, see Niewyk and Nicosia, *Columbia Guide*, 48-50.

<sup>46</sup> Minskij ad. Vospominanija pedagoga Sof'i Ozerskoj, in: Neizvestnaja černaja kniga, 246-250, quoted in Chiari, *Alltag*, 246.

<sup>47</sup> Reitlinger, *The House*, 86.

<sup>48</sup> *Racism versus Pragmatism: Soviet Prisoners of War as Forced Labor in Germany, 1941-1942* Rolf Keller, Presentation given at the USHMM CAHS Forced and Slave Labor in Nazi-Dominated Europe, October 24, 2002.

<sup>49</sup> Weinberg, *A World*, 304.



the "intended victims of these procedures were segments of the Slavic population of occupied Eastern Europe, whose labor could still be utilized in anticipation of their disappearance from the scene."<sup>50</sup> Indeed, as Weinberg also writes, "The Germans had no intention of 'freeing' anybody. On the contrary, the Baltic States and the Ukraine, as well as other portions of the occupied territories, were to be settled by Germans."<sup>51</sup>

There was almost no place on the eastern front where all people could feel safe, although under both the Germans and the Soviets there were varying degrees of safety at different times for different groups. For example, when the Soviets arrived for the first or second attempt to push the Germans west, some of the identity markers one had under the Germans, such as Jew or communist, became less relevant, while others became life-threatening, such as non-communist, collaborator, or even translator.<sup>52</sup> Still, no one was safe from indiscriminate and often drunken acts of sexual and non-sexual violence. In sum, it is clear from the evidence that the Germans murdered people with a wide variety of identity markers. We will see in the following chapters that they also targeted a wide variety of unarmed civilians, primarily women and girls, as sexual objects. Under Soviet military control, civilians with a variety of identity markers also were targeted for rape or sexual exploitation.

This project has a wide geographical scope and covers examples from at least eleven countries across the eastern front.<sup>53</sup> This study also incorporates evidence of sexual violence from a wide variety of sources, which will be illuminated in the next section on methodology. Because of the lack of scholarship completed on the topic of sexual violence on the eastern front at the time of this research, it was not feasible to do a micro-study of one village or one cluster of villages in one of the many countries in this area of Europe. A broad study such as this one brings forth conclusions which are naturally broad in scope and accentuate the similarities rather

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<sup>50</sup> Weinberg, *A World*, 304-305.

<sup>51</sup> Weinberg, *A World*, 267.

<sup>52</sup> Other ways to explain this could be the following: A male homosexual, non-communist Latvian, for example, may have been tortured by the Germans because he was homosexual, while a Latvian non-communist heterosexual may have gone through the German occupation relatively safely. Yet in many cases it is not entirely accurate to argue that the more "negative" markers or identifiers one had, the worst the experience. That is, a homosexual, non-communist Latvian could have suffered under the Germans more than a heterosexual, non-communist Latvian. But when the Soviets reentered both of them could easily have been murdered for any non-communist or fascist activity they had engaged in previously.

<sup>53</sup> There are examples of sexual violence in this dissertation from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Belorussia, Rumania, Hungary, Germany, and Czechoslovakia.

than the differences. Until more studies are completed of the individual areas across the eastern front, a study such as this is able to make only tentative claims about many particularities or differences across the political, religious, ethnic, cultural, and historical borders. What is possible, however, is to see similarities, which are important to our understanding of sexual violence in other armed conflicts and to the establishment of international laws and customs in an attempt to eradicate rape, forced prostitution, forced impregnation, and other forms of sexual violence from this world. In a study such as this one, the differences and particularities are many, but the actual data points for each are few in number. The similarities clearly emerge because they have more data points, and yet this does not need to essentialize or totalize the female experience.

Furthermore, despite the limited resources and the desperate conditions, victims and survivors of sexual violence showed remarkable courage, innovativeness, strength, and agency, often in their own individual manner. As historian Linda Gordon writes, using the “‘powers of the weak’...attempting to replace with creativity and stubbornness what they lacked in resources, they manipulated every device at their disposal to free themselves from abuse.”<sup>54</sup> Researcher Travis-Robyns argued that women should be considered veterans of war even if they have not been in combat. Her research of a Vietnamese American named Xuan shows how her entire life was about surviving the violence of others. “In some respects, Xuan's experiences parallel those of U.S. veterans: The war became the defining experience of her life, and, having lived the first twenty years of her life in a perpetual state of war, she has had difficulty adjusting to life in peacetime and still struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)...But many of Xuan's experiences are in marked contrast to those of U.S. veterans.” She did not throw grenades or fly planes and drop bombs, she ran from them. “She did not fight for an ideology or a boundary, but fought to keep her family of origin and her children alive.”<sup>55</sup> In an attempt not only to help themselves survive, but frequently also to protect their loved ones, women and girls of different backgrounds were not only victims, but they were also actors and heroes, and this will become clear in the subsequent chapters.

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<sup>54</sup> Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (New York: Viking, 1988), 290. The phrase “powers of the weak” comes from Elizabeth Janeway's *Powers of the Weak* (New York: Knopf, 1980).

<sup>55</sup> Suzan Ruth Travis-Robyns, “What is Winning Anyway? Redefining Veteran: A Vietnamese American Woman's Experiences in War and Peace,” *Frontiers* 18, no. 1 (January-April) (1997): 146-147.

Both the German and Soviet military powers committed enormous amounts of sexual violence in the east, and although neither military used rape as a formal military strategy, they certainly contributed to creating an atmosphere in which rape and sexual torture of other humans could thrive. Both the German and the Soviet leadership provided the blessing to rape. There does not seem to have been a specific order from either the German or the Soviet side that rape be used as a terror tactic or a weapon to destroy a population. Nevertheless, in 1941 with what became known as the Commissar Order, Hitler gave specific instructions to treat the population in the east with complete ruthlessness, and Stalin, for the most part, laughed about the “fun” his men were having.<sup>56</sup> Researcher Jeanne Vickers highlights the complicity of both the Germans and the Soviets to the present day in her comment on the prevalence of rape and war in the world: “Official failure to condemn or punish rape gives it an overt political sanction, which allows rape and other forms of torture and ill-treatment to become tools of military strategy.”<sup>57</sup>

The sexual crimes committed primarily against women and girls by Germans and Soviets during World War II were not included in investigations of war crimes, and neither side has ever taken responsibility for their serious crimes against humanity in the form of gender violence.<sup>58</sup> Relatively recently the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of

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<sup>56</sup> There is some evidence that a few officers shot Red Army soldiers for raping, but for the most part this was not the reality, in part because so many officers took part in the rape and plunder. Among others, see Beevor, *Berlin*, 30; Naimark, *Russians*. On Hitler’s 1941 Commissar Order, see Streit, *Kameraden*, pp. 28-61; Jacobsen, ‘*Kommissarbefehl*’, pp. 170-182; Jacobsen, *1939-1945*, pp. 441-516; Krausnick, ‘*Kommissarbefehl*’; A. Roberts and R. Guelff (eds), *Documents on the Laws of War* (Oxford, 1982) pp. 1-22, 43-59, 153-6; D. Schindler and J. Toman (eds), *The Laws of Armed Conflicts* (Geneva, 1973) pp. 247-88. Military aspects of the Barbarossa Orders in H.R. Trevor-Roper (ed.), *Hitler’s War Directives*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1978) [n. 1], quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 106. Also Schulte, *German Army*, 1-17. However, it is important to note that it is relatively rare to find lengthy connections made by scholars between the Commissar Order and sexual violence, outside of, for example, the historian Omer Bartov. Bartov never concentrates on sexual violence, but he mentions rape quite often in his discussions of German brutality toward civilians in the east. See Chapter Six for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>57</sup> Jeanne Vickers, *Women and War* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1993), 21. Similarly, concerning the U.S. military’s indifference toward the Japanese sexual slaves (“comfort women”), Yuki Tanaka writes that the “US forces widely used organized prostitution, controlled by themselves, as a VD prevention method during the war. They saw organized prostitution also as a means to improve troop morale with relative safety...It was therefore quite natural that they were completely unable to discern the criminal nature of the comfort women system implemented by the Japanese Imperial forces during the war – one of the most significant crimes against humanity in our history.” Tanaka, *Comfort Women*, 109. Also see Beth Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1992).

<sup>58</sup> As Copelon reports, “The London Charter, which created the Nuremberg Tribunal, did not list rape as an offense. Local Council Law No. 10, which was the basis for the prosecution of lower-level Nazis, did list rape as a crime against humanity. See Agreement on Punishment of Persons Guilty of War Crimes, January 31, 1946, Control Council for Germany, No. 3, 50-55 (adopted by the Allied powers on December 20, 1945, establishing the jurisdiction of military tribunals operating in the occupation zones). But no cases were brought on this ground, perhaps because the Allied forces were not innocent of this particular atrocity.” Copelon, “Surfacing,” 348, n.2. Copelon points the reader

Discrimination and Protection of Minorities decided to delete any historical references to sexual violence and armed conflict in its Report of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.<sup>59</sup> A preliminary draft of the report included information on the massive sexual violence that had occurred in the world. The omission of sexual violence came about in part because former German soldiers complained to their government, which subsequently filed a protest with the U.N. sub-commission.<sup>60</sup> Publication of such historical information in a public United Nations document is essential.

Still, with the relatively recent worldwide press coverage of sexual violence and armed conflicts, great changes have been made in international humanitarian law.<sup>61</sup> Organizations such as Women, Law & Development International and the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan, along with other activists, scholars, and survivors are working toward obtaining international and national legislation to ensure the prevention of sexual violence during war. Historically, in international humanitarian law, rape has not been treated as a serious crime.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, in the last century, when rape was defined as a crime, it was not viewed as a brutal attack, but as a provocation to honor. This is seen in the Hague Regulation of 1907, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the 1977 Geneva protocols protecting civilians in

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to consult generally, Adalbert Ruckerl, *The Investigation of Nazi War Crimes 1945-1978: A Documentation* (Heidelberg: C.F. Muller, 1979) and Brownmiller, *Against*, 31-113. As victors in the war, members of the Red Army also were not prosecuted for sexual crimes.

<sup>59</sup> Chavez, Linda. 1996. *Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery and Slavery-like Practices During Periods of Armed Conflict* 4, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/26.

<sup>60</sup> Personal communication with Professor of Law David Weissbrodt, who later became a member of the U.N. Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

<sup>61</sup> Journalist Antjie Krog reports how the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa had problems in the Human Rights Violation hearings because there simply was no mention of sexual violence in the TRC legislation, "forcing the TRC to deal with it under the heading: 'severe ill-treatment.'" Furthermore, despite the wide range of sexual persecution human beings have inflicted upon one another, "South African law defines rape as occurring only between a man and a woman and involving the penetration of the vagina by the penis." Naturally, this caused problems for those on the TRC in their work on behalf of the victims of sexual violence. Antjie Krog, "Locked into Loss and Silence: Testimonies of Gender and Violence at the South Africa Truth Commission," in *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, ed. Caroline O.N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark (London & New York: Zed Books, 2001), 206-208.

<sup>62</sup> As researcher Astrid Aafjes explains, "The 1907 Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its accompanying Regulations do not mention rape or other forms of sexual assault at all. Instead, Article 46 of the Convention's Regulations states obliquely that 'family honour and rights, the lives of persons, and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice, must be respected....'" Hague Convention Regulations Respecting the Law and Customs of War on Land, October 8, 1907, in International Committee of the Red Cross, *International Law Concerning the Conduct of Hostilities: Collection of Hague Conventions and Some Other Treaties* (1989), quoted in Aafjes, *Gender Violence*.

war, as well as the 1958 Red Cross Commentary on the Fourth Geneva Convention.<sup>63</sup> For the first time, in various international documents in the 1990s the connection between rape and honor has been eradicated, and rape has been defined as a brutal crime against humanity without any reference to honor.<sup>64</sup> However, on the national level, both legally and culturally, this connection between rape and honor still needs to be abolished. Astrid Aafjes, a member of the organization Women, Law & Development International, writes that “The ultimate goal is the elimination of violence and not merely its prosecution. Combating sexual violence during time of war will require breaking the link between sexual assault and victim morality at the *national* level. It will require changing many countries’ domestic law, and changing the way that members of many communities think about victims of sexual assault” [*italics in original*].<sup>65</sup>

Even to this day scholars, who one would think ought to know better, make odd

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<sup>63</sup> Aafjes, *Gender Violence*, 2-3, 26-27. For example, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 states that “Women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault.” Article 147 of the same convention, however, states that “torture or inhuman treatment” and “willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health” are war crimes. The latter describes a rape, but was not necessarily intended as such. The Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, August 12, 1949 [Fourth Geneva Convention], arts.27, 147, 75 U.N.T.S. 287, quoted in Human Rights Watch/Africa and Human Rights Watch Women's Rights Project, *Shattered Lives*, 30 n. 46. See Theodor Meron, “War Crimes in Yugoslavia and the Development of International Law,” *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 88, no.1, January 1994, pp. 84-87. See also Center for Human Rights, *Human Rights: A Compilation of International Instruments*, vol. 1, 799939 (1993). Copelon explains that the problem in legal texts is that there exists ambiguity whether rape is defined as a “grave breach” which is the most serious crime under international law. Article 2 of the Geneva convention defined grave breaches as “(a) wilful killing; (b) torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments; (c) wilfully causing great suffering or serious bodily injury to body or health.” Report of the Secretary-General 10, para. 40 [n.44], quoted in Copelon, “Surfacing,” 338. See also Youngira Khushalani, *Dignity and Honour of Women as Basic and Fundamental Human Rights* (The Hague; Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982). According to Aafjes, the “ICRC declared that the grave breach of Article 147 [of the Fourth Geneva Convention] covers rape” and cites ICRC, Aide-Memoire, 3 December 1992. Furthermore, according to Aafjes, “the U.S. Department of State also declared that rape is a war crime or a grave breach under customary international law and the Geneva Conventions and can be prosecuted as such.” Aafjes, *Gender Violence*, n. 73, p. 28.

<sup>64</sup> For example, the statute of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and other international documents have no mention of honor in connection to the war crime rape. Aafjes, *Gender Violence*, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Aafjes, *Gender Violence*, 4. Also see Copelon’s article for a discussion of the consequences of defining rape as a crime against a woman’s honor. Copelon shows that “where rape has been treated as a grave crime in domestic laws, it has often been because it violates the honor of the man and his exclusive right to sexual possession of his woman as property,” and she cites the example of the rape of white women (white man’s property) by black men. Additionally, this is tied to the concept that the soldier rapes the “enemy’s women.” Copelon writes, “The enemy in this formulation is the male combatant in the seemingly all-male national, religious” or ethnic group. Furthermore, “Where rape is treated as a crime against honor, the honor of women is called into question and virginity or chastity is often a precondition. Honor implies the loss of station or respect; it reinforces the social view, internalized by women, that the raped woman is dishonorable.” Copelon, “Surfacing,” 335-336.

connections between people's honor and rape or other kinds of sexual violence. In addition to entirely minimizing the immensely brutal assault on the body and psyche, when rape is defined merely or even primarily as a violation of a person's honor, not her or his person, survivors are discouraged from coming forward and prosecutors are less likely to litigate. As scholars, we need to recognize the difficulties people have in discussing the topic of sexual violence, especially if it happened to them, but we should not perpetuate the myth that a woman's or a man's honor is any less than before she or he was raped, forced into prostitution, or otherwise sexually mishandled. On the contrary, it should be clear that the perpetrator's honor is damaged after he or she commits a brutal crime against another human being. As one researcher wrote, rape is a "humiliating act of violence, but no mark of dishonor to be kept secret."<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the sexual crimes committed on the eastern front, very often under the influence of alcohol, offer an underexplored territory of analysis for those interested in understanding and analyzing the sexual violence and armed conflict so prevalent in our world today.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, this study of sexual violence on the eastern front, including the addition of sexual desire to the perpetrator's motive to rape or otherwise sexually coerce another, connects sexual violence in armed conflicts to sexual violence in times of peace. In other words, the various forms of sexual violence that occur during war (including prostitutional relationships or purchasing sexual services on the street or in a brothel) do not happen merely because of the horrors of war. Rape, sexual abuse (and non-sexual abuse for that matter) of prisoners, civilians,

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<sup>66</sup> Stiglmayer, "The Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina," 83.

<sup>67</sup> In part because of the growing awareness of sexual torture in armed conflicts throughout the world, there has been a surge of research completed on sexual violence and war from many different areas of conflict: Anne Llewellyn Barstow, ed., *War's Dirty Secret: Rape, Prostitution, and Other Crimes Against Women* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2000); Ute Bechdolf, "Grenzerfahrungen von Frauen. Vergewaltigungen beim Einmarsch der französischen Besatzungstruppen in Südwestdeutschland," in *Kleiner Grenzverkehr: Deutsch-französische Kulturanalysen*, ed. U. Jeggle and F. Raphaël (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1997); Claudia Card, "Rape as a Weapon of War," *Hypatia* 11, no. 4 (1996); Sheila Coronel and Ninotchka Rosca, "For the Boys: Filipinas Expose Years of Sexual Slavery by the United States and Japan," *Ms.*, Nov-Dec 1993; Enloe, "Spoils of War."; Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Ruth Harris, "The 'Child of the Barbarian': Rape, Race and Nationalism in France during the First World War," *Past and Present* 141 (1993); Susanne Kappeler, Mira Renka, and Melanie Beyer, eds., *Vergewaltigung, Krieg, Nationalismus: Eine Feministische Kritik* (Munich: Verlag Frauenoffensive, 1994); Elizabeth Jane Kemmer, *Rape and Rape-related Issues* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977); Ronald Littlewood, "Military Rape," *Anthropology Today* 13, no. 2 (1997); Caroline O.N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark, eds., *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2001); Carolyn Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); Carolyn Nordstrom, *Rape: Politics, and Theory in War and Peace* (Canberra: Peace Research Centre, 1994); Alexandra Stiglmayer, ed., *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Women's Rights Project (Human Rights Watch) and Human Rights Watch (Organization), "Global Report."

partisans, and so-called “enemy combatants” occur in part because of what the perpetrator brings with himself or herself from home. Part of the excessive violence in armed conflicts finds its roots in the perpetrators' own backyards (perpetrators includes, for example, all who contribute to systems of violence either by promoting or condoning violence, ordering it, or actually committing acts of terror. In other words, this would include prison guards, rank and file soldiers, officers, security staff members, top military, civilian, political leadership, the media, etc.). What we often find at home are similar or parallel – but perhaps less explosive, less contagious, and less obvious – social, cultural, political, and economic realities that have the potential to cause great harm. These realities include, for example, a dysfunctional or somehow injured sexuality, violent sexual experiences as a victim or as a perpetrator, a lack of sensitivity toward those less fortunate or those in need, a lack of critical thinking skills, or the inability to view the world, its inhabitants, and political, military, or civilian situations in anything but simplistic terms. As such, complex situations are reduced to either-or, black-and-white generalities. In times of peace these factors cause great damage to people and societies in general, but are less noticeable, easier to ignore, or otherwise to justify. In times of war, these so-called roots of violence explode into mass violence. Indeed, war in many ways provides the venue for extreme expressions of these dysfunctions in the form of mass rape and other sexual and non-sexual crimes, but we need to look closer to home for some of the underlying causes. This applies to current political and military situations as well, for example, how we raise our children (how emotionally connected we are to them, for instance), how we fund and teach in all of our schools for all of our children, how we teach our children about sex and sexuality, how we deal with and view our own fortunes and misfortunes, and how we view and treat those who are either different or less fortunate. Finally, but not exclusively, as an historian, I would add – how much history we teach ourselves and our children.<sup>68</sup>

To understand the plight of civilians in the east, in Chapter Two we will look at the starvation and hardship that resulted because of the Germans' deliberate policy of confiscation and starvation against the people in the east. This suffering led an unknown number of women and girls from different countries to prostitute themselves or enter into prostitutional

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<sup>68</sup> On the specific problem of healing a society from sexual dysfunction see, for example, Emilie Buchwald, Pamela R. Fletcher, and Martha Roth, eds., *Transforming a Rape Culture* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Productions, 1993).

relationships in an attempt to survive.<sup>69</sup> In addition, because the Germans viewed the people in the east as “inferior” to the Germans, sex with non-German locals was not allowed for soldiers and officers in the Wehrmacht and the SS.<sup>70</sup> However, the importance of sex to the men motivated them to break the rules, so much that even the German leadership was well aware of these “offenses” by its own men. Furthermore, as in other armed conflicts and in times of peace, alcohol greatly contributed to people's ability to hurt one another, sexually and non-sexually.

The large number of sexual offenses led to a rapid spread of venereal disease among the occupiers and the occupied, which was a great factor in the German leadership's decision to establish hundreds of brothels throughout its occupied territory. While the German preoccupation with controlling the spread of venereal disease is covered in Chapter Three “Sex and Disease,”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> There has been little research completed by western scholars on the topic of independent prostitution during the war in the east. The evidence given for this in Chapter Two is primarily from German documents which comment on the prostitution as a problem, in addition to oral history interviews, and memoirs. For a history of prostitution in the Russian Empire and in the Soviet Union, see Laurie Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Herbert Dyson Carter, *Sin and Science* (New York: Heck-Cattell Publishing Company, Inc., 1946); Barbara Alpern Engel, “St. Petersburg Prostitutes in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Personal and Social Profile,” *Russian Review* 48, no. 1 (1989); Laura Engelstein, “Gender and the Juridical Subject: Prostitution and Rape in Nineteenth-Century Russian Criminal Codes,” *The Journal of Modern History* 60, no. 3 (1988); Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992); Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), esp. 118ff; Eve Levin, *Sex and Society in the World of the Orthodox Slavs, 900-1700* (Ithaca: 1989); John Quigley, “The Dilemma of Prostitution Law Reform: Lessons from the Soviet Russian Experiment,” *The American Criminal Law Review* 29, no. 4 (1992); Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). Despite his focus on women, historian Alfred Meyer only mentions that during World War I many women were forced into prostitution. Alfred G. Meyer, “The Impact of World War I on Russian Women's Lives,” in *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, ed. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel, and Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), 216. For a relatively recent review article on prostitution in history, see Timothy J. Gilfoyle, “Prostitutes in History: From Parables of Pornography to Metaphors of Modernity,” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 1 (1999). Other works on prostitution in Europe include: Lynn Abrams, “Prostitutes in Imperial Germany, 1870-1918: Working Girls or Social Outcasts,” in *The German Underworld: Deviants and Outcasts in German History*, ed. Richard J. Evans (London: Routledge, 1988); Willi Bauer, *Geschichte und Wesen der Prostitution* (Stuttgart: Weltspiegel Verlag, 1956); Sybille Krafft, *Zucht und Unzucht: Prostitution und Sittenpolizei in München der Jahrhundertwende* (München: Hugendubel, c1996); Stanley D. Nash, *Prostitution in Great Britain: An Annotated Bibliography* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1994).

<sup>70</sup> For works on national socialism and sexuality, see for example, Elizabeth D. Heineman, “Sexuality and Nazism: the Doubly Unspeakable?,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* (2002); Dagmar Herzog, “Pleasure, sex, and politics belong together: post-Holocaust memory and the sexual revolution in West Germany,” *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (1998); George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1985).

<sup>71</sup> For a history of venereal diseases and Nazi policy, but not specifically in the east, see Annette F. Timm, “The Politics of Fertility: Population Politics and Health Care in Berlin, 1919-1972” (PhD, The University of Chicago, 1999). For a history of venereal disease in Europe, see Wilhelm Haberling, “Army Prostitution and Its Control: An Historical Study,” in *Morals in Wartime: General Survey from Ancient Times, Morals in the First World War, Morals in the Second World War*, ed. M.D. Victor Robinson (New York: Publishers Foundation, 1943).



Germany's extensive system of sexual slavery is covered in Chapters Four and Five.<sup>72</sup> An unknown number of women and girls of different backgrounds were enlisted – often by force, or due to starvation, deprivation, and the subsequent will to survive – to serve the Germans sexually, in brothels situated in villages, towns, cities, and in areas near the front (field brothels). The German leadership acknowledged that throughout the Reich “inferior” women and girls, including Jews and Blacks, worked in the brothels serving the German military.<sup>73</sup> In various concentration camps, brothels were established for the German military, as well as for camp inmates.

Finally, Chapter Six addresses the fact that for unarmed women and girls all over the eastern front, fear of rape was a reality. Some went to great lengths to camouflage themselves, pretending to be ill, to be menstruating, or they made themselves look plain, ugly, and old. Despite the great and innovative attempts at camouflage and other kinds of deception, probably millions of women and girls were raped by armed men, men of the German army and SS, members of the Red Army, or even by partisans, who also were often armed.<sup>74</sup> Germans raped Jews and other females deemed “inferior,” and the Soviet soldiers and officers raped Soviet women and girls. Neither military leadership did much to prevent these crimes from occurring. Rather they gave a tacit blessing to rape; the Germans by a widespread belief in the necessity of sex for men and in the inferiority of so many people in the east, as well as in the form of the Commissar Order, which gave license to extensive crimes against unarmed civilians. The Soviet leaders and officers gave a tacit blessing to rape by not challenging the widespread belief that

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<sup>72</sup> In addition to other works already cited, there has been a growing amount of research on military prostitution and sexual slavery outside of the German system. For example: Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1984); Kathleen Barry, *The Prostitution of Slavery* (1995); Coronel and Rosca, "For the Boys."; Thomas Power Lowry, *The Civil War Bawdy Houses of Washington, D.C.* (Fredericksburg, VA: Sergeant Kirkland's, 1997); Katharine H.S. Moon, *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in United States-Korean Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); John Kim Munholland, "Donald Duck in the South Pacific or the 'Americanization' of New Caledonia, 1942-1945," (41st Annual Meeting of the Society for French Historical Studies at Emory University, Atlanta, GA, March 23-25, 1995); Ugo Pirro, *The Camp Followers* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1958); Trexler, *Sex*; Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter Four for a discussion of the women and girls who worked in the military brothels.

<sup>74</sup> There is a large body of literature on the partisans in the east. See, for example, Kazimiera J. Cottam, ed., *Defending Leningrad: Women Behind Enemy Lines* (Nepean: New Military Publishing, 1998); Lester Samuel Eckman, *The Jewish Resistance: The History of the Jewish Partisans in Lithuania and White Russia During the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1945* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1977); Leonid D. Grenkevich, *The Soviet Partisan Movement, 1941-1944: A Critical Historiographical Analysis* (London; Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999).

raping a woman was a traditional “reward” for men who have been fighting, especially for men on the “victorious” side.

The time frame for this project covers the entire German occupation in the east through the Soviet push toward Berlin. Consequently, the bulk of the examples on sexual violence covered here are crimes committed by the Germans. There are a few references to cases of sexual violence before the beginning of the Russo-German war in 1941, for example, Poland in 1939. There also is only brief mention of the Soviet crimes in countries they invaded prior to the German invasion, such as the 1940 Soviet invasion of the Baltic states. Rapes or other sexual crimes the Soviets committed prior to the German occupation have not been researched or included in this project, but there is some analysis of the rapes the Soviets committed during the war and during their push to the west, although there is no concentration on the events in Berlin in the spring of 1945.

### **Methodology**

In doing history on marginal or taboo topics such as sexual violence, it is essential to investigate a wide variety of sources. The traditional historians’ reliance on “official” documents does not reveal adequate information on topics which did not interest officials.<sup>75</sup> Details in any kind of source can be falsified, exaggerated, or overlooked. Furthermore, “official” sources, as traditional kinds of documents, are usually written by men and often by men of the same nationality and culture as the perpetrators. Thus the incentive to include facts on sexual violence is even smaller than in other kinds of sources. In addition, official documentation is clouded with both gender-biased and political notions about women in general and especially about women of the enemy nation. Consequently, many “official” primary sources are gender-, nationally-, and culturally- biased and need to be examined as cautiously as one would examine an interview, a novel, a memoir, or a photograph. The field of history is greatly disadvantaged by the insistence of many upon the notion that traditional kinds of documents are somehow “better” or “more factual” than other kinds of sources. As Omer Bartov writes in his defense of the use of photographs by historians, “Official documentation is no more reliable or any less misleading

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<sup>75</sup> Official documents can be quite unreliable, if one studies, for example, the Gulf of Tonkin resolution or Watergate in U.S. history.

than photographs; both are biased sources that must be carefully examined.”<sup>76</sup> The same is true for novels, interviews, memoirs, autobiographies, and various kinds of testimonies. If we want to understand sexual violence from the perspective of the victims and survivors, then different kinds of sources, especially those coming directly from the victims and survivors, demand our attention and careful scrutiny.

Furthermore, it is more likely that a survivor of sexual abuse, if able to record his or her experiences, is better able to reveal both the details and the essence of what happened if he or she writes anonymously or in a novel format. When doing history on marginal and taboo topics, one needs to take those sources seriously which give a voice to those who have been silent. In many parts of the world, sexuality and sexual violence are topics people do not discuss, or they discuss their experiences or knowledge only anonymously. Many authors have chosen to do this, and this is why novels also need to be taken seriously as historical sources. The compilation of diaries from a woman who survived the Soviet “liberation” of Berlin was published, but without the author’s name. She documented painful topics of sexual violence such as mass rapes and prostitutional relationships.<sup>77</sup> Many authors write on topics they have researched or they have personally experienced. Leslie Feinberg’s *Stone Butch Blues: A Novel* is noted to have been autobiographical, but this is not entirely clear in the book.<sup>78</sup> The prolific feminist essayist Audre Lorde called her book, *Zami: My New Name* a “biomythography,” indicating that it is indeed about her life, but that she is not willing to specify which details are true and which details are added or exchanged for others.<sup>79</sup>

Yehiel Dinur, who was forced to identify himself as the writer Ka-Tzetnik 135633 at the Eichmann trial in 1961, wrote extensively about heterosexual and homosexual sadism in German concentration camps in the novel format. Dinur explained to the judge that what he had written was a chronicle, not a novel, and that he did not view himself “as an author who writes

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<sup>76</sup> Omer Bartov, “The Wehrmacht Exhibition Controversy: The Politics of Evidence,” in *Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Omer Bartov, Atina Grossman, and Mary Nolan (New York: The New Press, 2002), 58.

<sup>77</sup> Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1954).

<sup>78</sup> Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues: A Novel* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Firebrand Books, 1993).

<sup>79</sup> Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name, A Biomythography* (Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press, 1982). In her acknowledgments of all those who have helped her in her life, she writes “From the bottom of my heart I thank each woman who shared any piece of the dreams/myths/histories that give this book shape.” Lorde ends the acknowledgments by thanking the “others who I can not yet afford to name.”

literature.”<sup>80</sup> He explained that he could only write in the third person and anonymously, and that had he not done this he probably would not have written at all.<sup>81</sup>

Established historians also use fiction as valuable primary sources, recognizing the benefits of doing so. Jan Gross uses it to help describe the experiences of people in Galicia, recognizing that some parts of accounts are fictionalized but that they can be “undoubtedly grounded in the everyday experiences of many,” as Gross writes about a Polish school composition.<sup>82</sup> The silence that has pervaded the massive sexual atrocities committed on the eastern front is a signal that this is not an ordinary topic, and that we need to listen to those who are willing to speak, even when they do so through fiction. We simply would not have this kind of documentation of sexual horrors if survivors and witnesses did not write anonymously or in a novel format. Indeed, novels and testimonies such as Dinur’s should not be carelessly discounted by scholars and others in our attempt to not only understand but to transform our world.

Memoirs and autobiographies also should be taken as seriously as any other historical document. Again, the people who have experienced the pain often are the ones who have had no voice. For the most part, Soviet women’s experiences were written out of official history, except what is proudly told about their heroic efforts in saving the harvest, hiding food from the invaders, and supporting the partisans.<sup>83</sup> If the specific experiences of sexual violence of so many thousands, if not millions of people, have been written out of “official” sources, and we know it to have happened, then these sources are indeed extremely biased. It is possible that a motivation for writing about sexual violence was to dramatize the “story” or to titillate or sexually arouse the reader, but the writing should not be condemned before any analysis of it. Furthermore, if material on this topic does sexually arouse the reader, that does not necessarily mean that this was the intention of the author, especially considering the fact that much of the world lives in cultures which both experience yet deny the existence of sexual violence and which embrace the connection of violence and sex through television, movies, media, radio, news, games, and more.

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<sup>80</sup> Eichmann Trial Blurb [n. 25], quoted in Bartov, “Kitsch,” 54.

<sup>81</sup> *Ha-tsofen*, 22-24, quoted in Bartov, “Kitsch,” 77-78. For more on Dinur’s work, see page 107ff.

<sup>82</sup> Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 46-47.

<sup>83</sup> Mary Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1989); Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

Indeed, we live in a “rape culture.”<sup>84</sup>

As an historian I was told by several historians that I needed to have more material than my oral history interviews, that I needed “real documentation.”<sup>85</sup> This is because of the “known” unreliability of oral history interviews, and the “known” ability of people to distort their memory of events that happened over fifty years ago (even though the events were traumatic and life-changing, thus very memorable – “as though they happened yesterday”). People make mistakes, and their memories fail them. One woman, interviewed in the 1990s may remember that in the 1940s each woman in a camp brothel served six men a day, while in reality it was four men. Others testifying just after the war may also get the number wrong, however, for several reasons: they were still traumatized from their war experiences, they were nervous about being on the witness stand, or they felt the need to protect themselves or someone else. These kinds of details are just as likely to be incorrect in a case report written by a disinterested bureaucrat who perhaps was counting the days before his or her leave. Historians and others need to examine all sources with much care. Scholars need to try and understand the larger context. Any source can contain incorrect details, but this is less problematic if numerous examples contain similar content. What is important is the overall pattern and the key points that oral histories and other kinds of sources coming directly from survivors provide.

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<sup>84</sup> Roth, “Transforming.” An example of how so much evidence has been wrongly attributed to pornography is the debate surrounding World War I atrocities. Scholar Susan Kingsley Kent writes in her insightful article about the role of British press that the Bryce Report, which includes many testimonies of rape torture committed by the Germans in World War I, “can be described only as a kind of pornographic orgy that fostered voyeurism and made war sexually ‘exciting.’” Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: the Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 24. Yet regardless of how the press and popular media used the report (which is Kent’s primary and valid focus), the Bryce report was and is an important historical document that details atrocities committed by the Germans. This and other reports were used by the propaganda machinery throughout World War I, which for the first time in a major war had the power of reaching the masses through the mass printing of pamphlets, postcards, newspapers, and newsletters, but that does not discount the alleged crimes. In addition, such material needs to be read as any other report documenting war crimes. The parts that entail sexual crimes should not be prematurely condemned as propaganda or pornography. Rather, they should be investigated and analyzed as are other documents. Often, such descriptions are crimes that really happened to women, children, and some men and boys. Just because they are unimaginably grotesque, violently sexual, and preposterous does not mean the accused did not commit them. Investigator J.H. Morgan was correct when he wrote about these crimes “The public has been shocked by the evidence, accepted by the Committee as genuine, which tells of such mutilations of women and children as only the Kurds of Asia Minor had been thought capable of perpetrating.” John Hartman Morgan, *German Atrocities: An Official Investigation* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1916), 88.

<sup>85</sup> The widespread declassification of documents and the opening of archives previously inaccessible, especially to outsiders, has made for an tremendous growth in research in Russian and Soviet history. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *A Researcher's Guide to Sources on Soviet Social History in the 1930s* (Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 1990). With glasnost having established itself as a seemingly permanent feature in post-Soviet societies, many more people are willing to talk about their experiences in the twentieth century, which makes for exciting material for those engaged in oral history.

For this project, I conducted a few interviews in Latvia and a few in the Twin Cities, Minnesota. The bulk of interview material, however, comes from over thirty interviews in the Cherkassy region of Ukraine. Most of the interviewees spoke in a rural Ukrainian dialect which also had Russian words throughout. A few people were educated, and they spoke either Russian or an urban or standardized form of Ukrainian. However, most had their education interrupted with the German invasion in 1941, and having never returned to school out of the necessity to work, their language reflected this.<sup>86</sup> Many of the interviewees could understand Russian, but could not speak it as well as Ukrainian. (Just a few interviews were conducted primarily in Russian.) Because this dialect of Ukrainian is so different from Russian, which is the Slavic language I know best, I worked with a local, educated, and bilingual Ukrainian man from the town of Moshni. We conducted the interviews in Moshni and several surrounding villages. Sometimes my assistant arranged the interviews beforehand. Other times, we approached people on the street, or on numerous occasions interviewees told us about someone they knew who was still alive and in the area, and that would be our next interview. My assistant always approached the people first, asked permission, and explained who I was and why I was there. Sometimes, after we started the interview he left me with the interviewee. This was with the hope that the woman would feel more at ease talking about sex if a man were not present.

One historian had warned me before my research trip that one simply does not go to an interview and start asking about sexual violence, but this is exactly what we did. It was the most honest and forthright way, because the people then could decide if they wanted to talk to us or not. Not a single person said she or he did not want to talk, and only a couple seemed hesitant though they too agreed to talk. It also was the most efficient way to conduct the interviews. People of that generation have so much to tell: some started with the Civil War and worked up to the famines of the 1930s, before getting to World War II. Some of the women and men talked to us for hours. Most of the women and men were thrilled to talk to both my local Ukrainian assistant and to me, an American. Very often we only had to introduce ourselves, explain the project, and they would start talking unceasingly. Some cried, yelled, and gestured as they told us about their experiences. One woman danced. Another woman talked so loudly and incessantly

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<sup>86</sup> In some areas, schools did reopen after the Germans had “settled in,” but as the Russian social worker Oleg Anisimov recorded from his travels, “The Supreme Command of the German Wehrmacht was interested in fighting a war, not in educating Russian children.” Oleg Anisimov, *The German Occupation in Northern Russia During World War II: Political and Administrative Aspects*, vol. 56 (New York: Research Program on the U.S.S.R. (East European Fund, Inc.), 1954), 22.

for three hours that neither my assistant nor I could hardly get a word in edgewise. At one point in the interview she said, “I want to say so much.”<sup>87</sup> In a seemingly unending stream of consciousness, she interrupted herself now and then to yell at the chickens squawking in her yard to be quiet, but she would immediately continue again at the same fast pace. I had a terrible headache afterward, but she made the interview a memorable event and shared so much of her life with us.

In contrast, with just a couple of people it was quite clear that although they agreed to be interviewed, they really did not want to talk once we had started. There could have been a few reasons for this. Perhaps the women did not feel comfortable talking about sexual violence because they had survived some kind of sexual crime themselves and felt ashamed to reveal this. The shame could have stemmed from their belief that they were somehow dirty or marred because of this kind of crime. They may have thought that we would view them as being tarnished. It is also possible that they had not survived a sexual crime, but still felt embarrassed to talk about such things. Yet another possible reason stems from the political realities they had lived through in their long and crisis-ridden lives. They could have feared talking because they believed we would “report” them for saying something “wrong.” These people had lived the majority of their years under the repressive Soviet state, so that for some perhaps, the decade or so of glasnost was not enough for them to trust their political freedoms. Furthermore, some, but not all, knew my assistant, since he was local, but they had never met me. Other scholars who spoke with Russians in the countryside had similar experiences.<sup>88</sup> This hesitancy on the part of only a few to speak openly reveals some of the difficulties of researching sexual violence, and also in interviewing people in the former Soviet Union. In general, however, people spoke quite freely, and their stories corroborate other sources. In addition to the interviews conducted for this project, I also visited archives, including the State Historical Archives and the State Archives in Latvia, the Tallinn City Archives and the State Archives in Estonia, the Bundesarchiv in Berlin and the National Archives and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives in the United States.

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<sup>87</sup> No. 18, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>88</sup> Daria Khubova, Andrei Ivankiev, and Tonia Sharova, "After Glasnost: Oral History in the Soviet Union," in *Memory and Totalitarianism*, ed. Luisa Passerini, *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

## Issues Specific to Researching Sexual Violence

### Disbelief

One of the first issues a researcher of sexual violence has is that many people believe brutal sexual crimes could not have happened, perhaps because such sexual crimes have been used as propaganda in times of war. Thus, many choose not to believe allegations of sexual violence, thinking that all allegations are propaganda, or perhaps because they are so horrifying in nature. Or they believe that “well, of course, the soldiers raped a few women.” However, even if certain crimes were used as propaganda, this does not mean that the crimes did not take place. Nor does it mean that other similar crimes did not occur. The debate over World War I German atrocities is a case in point. An increasing number of scholars are beginning to believe the “propaganda” and atrocity reports about the many violent sexual crimes Germans committed in World War I.<sup>89</sup> As Nicoletta F. Gullace shows in her study of propaganda in World War I, England used the horrid reports of violent sexual crimes by German soldiers coming out of Belgium to help win local support for the war effort.<sup>90</sup> Depictions of sexually violated or maimed women were fairly widespread in the British media.<sup>91</sup> Yet this does not mean that the stories were not true. Conversely, among western scholars there does not seem to be any denial that the Russians committed such atrocities either in World War I or World War II, perhaps because the

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<sup>89</sup> For example, see John Horne, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001); John Horne and Alan Kramer, “German “Atrocities” and Franco-German Opinion, 1914: The Evidence of German Soldiers’ Diaries,” *The Journal of Modern History* 66, no. 1 (1994).

<sup>90</sup> Nicoletta F. Gullace, “Sexual Violence and Family Honor: British Propaganda and International Law during the First World War,” *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (1997). Gullace cites many original publishers of German atrocities, such as C. Sheridan Jones, *The Unspeakable Prussian* (London, 1914); The Daily Chronicle, *In the Trail of the Germany Army* (London, 1914); W.N. Willis, *The Kaiser and His Barbarians* (London, [1914?]); Committee on Alleged Outrages, *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages* (London, 1915); Committee on Alleged Outrages, *Appendix to the Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages* (London, 1915); The Daily Chronicle, *Where the German Army Has Passed* (London, 1915); Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, *The Truth about German Atrocities*, Parliamentary Recruiting Committee no. 43 (London, [1915]); William Thompson Hill, *The Martyrdom of Nurse Cavell* (London, 1915); Jean Massart, *Belgians under the German Eagle* (London, 1916); Major-General Sir George Aston, K.C.B., *The Triangle of Terror in Belgium* (London, 1918); Theodore A. Cook, *The Crimes of Germany: Being an Illustrated Synopsis of the Violations of International Law and of Humanity by the Armed Forces of the German Empire* (London, [1915, 1916, 1917, 1918]). See also Joseph Bédier, *German Atrocities from German Evidence* (Paris: A. Colin, 1915); Commission instituée en vue de constater les actes commis par l’ennemi en violation du droit des gens, “German Atrocities in France: A Translation of the Official Report of the French Commission,” (London: Impr. United newspapers, Ltd, 1915); Morgan, *German Atrocities*; William Le Queuz, *German Atrocities: A Record of Shameless Deeds* (London: 1914).

<sup>91</sup> Kent, *Making Peace*, 12-30.



Russians have long been viewed as “backwards” or “barbaric.” This arrogance on the part of westerners is too blatant to be taken seriously, especially considering the “barbaric” atrocities the Germans are known to have committed during World War II.

Regardless of the identity of the perpetrators, in some cases people simply refuse to believe the horrific extent of certain crimes. Investigative journalist Alexander Werth wrote a detailed report of what he saw at the concentration camp Madjanek, which was two miles outside of Lublin, Poland. Werth claims he sent the report to the BBC, which subsequently refused to print it, thinking it was merely Soviet propaganda. Only after British and American troops also reported what they found at the concentration camps of Buchenwald, Dachau, and Belsen did the BBC and others believe what Werth had written about Madjanek. The Soviet journalist Simonov also reported to *Pravda* what he saw when he was at the camp on July 23, 1944, the same day Lublin was liberated. But the western press also ignored his account.<sup>92</sup> For historians, just telling stories of sexual violence is not enough, but the first step is to tell the stories and to have them taken seriously.

### Silence

Silence pervades the topic of sexual violence for many reasons, and because of the silence many survivors endure a second tragedy – the painful denial and lack of acknowledgment following the crimes they experienced. Survivors live with their memories alone, often believing that most people would not want to know about their suffering. The silence following Soviet and east European women’s and girls’ experiences is not unique to this part of the world. In some cultures there may be more opportunities to come forth, depending on how that culture or society views survivors of sexual violence. Historian Atina Grossmann argues that German survivors of rape by Red Army members were finally able to let go of feelings of guilt and come forth with their painful stories,<sup>93</sup> although this only happened decades after the events in Germany during the Soviet occupation.<sup>94</sup> Conversely, historian Katherine Jolluck argues that coming forth was not possible for Polish women brought up in strict Polish Catholic culture. Jolluck writes,

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<sup>92</sup> Werth, *Russia*, 890.

<sup>93</sup> Atina Grossmann, "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers," *October* 72, no. Berlin 1945: Liberation and Rape, A Special Issue (1995): 62.

<sup>94</sup> Sander and Johr, eds., *Befreier*.

Polish women's documents suggest that collectively and individually they were not able to make that detachment. The female body, wrapped in traditional Catholic taboos, remained at the core of their sense of self, their sexuality a source of guilt and shame, something to be denied or ignored. Unable to separate their sexual honor from their identity, Polish women of this period did not find a voice that would enable them to talk openly of what they suffered at the hands of Soviet men.<sup>95</sup>

The silence surrounding sexual violence has been pervasive, trans-historical, and indeed common throughout the world. For example, professor of law Catharine A. MacKinnon found in her study of pornography and sexual violence in Serbia that "even though women in rape/death camps know that the same things are being done to other women, and sometimes are even forced to watch them, still the sense of isolation is total."<sup>96</sup> Historian Darlene Clark Hine wrote that Black women have often kept their sexual experiences secret, including any rapes or harassment they experienced, because that is how they find the strength to move through life.<sup>97</sup> Male survivors of sexual violence are also silent. Researcher Dubravka Zarkov reveals how even the media silenced male victims of sexual violence in former Yugoslavia.<sup>98</sup>

Furthermore, women and men remember and retell their experiences of sexual humiliation differently. In the Soviet Gulag during World War II, Polish women and girls endured searches, usually performed by men, and in some camps they were frequent – every few

<sup>95</sup> Jolluck, *Exile*, 175. Jolluck cites Margaret Miles as the source for this idea. Miles writes, "that adequate self-representation requires two conditions: public space and collective voice." Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 84.

<sup>96</sup> Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Turning Rape into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide," in *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, ed. Alexandra Stiglsmayer (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 81.

<sup>97</sup> Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance," in *Unequal Sisters: a Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, ed. Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz (New York: Routledge, 1990), 344. See also Roxanne Donovan and Michelle Williams, "Living at the Intersection: the Effects of Racism and Sexism on Black Rape Survivors," *Women & Therapy* 25, no. 3 (2002). Author Hazel Carby appropriately proclaimed that "The institutionalized rape of black women has never been as powerful a symbol of black oppression as the spectacle of lynching." Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 39, quoted in Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives," 342. Highlighting the silence that surrounded the rapes of black slaves in the United States, Mary Boykin Chestnut wrote, "Like the patriarchs of old our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines, and the mulattoes one sees in every family exactly resemble the white children – and every lady tells you who is the father of all the mulatto children in everybody's household, but those in her own she seems to think drop from the clouds, or pretends so to think." Mary Boykin Miller Chestnut, *Mary Chestnut's Civil War*, ed. C. Vann Woodward (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 29-31.

<sup>98</sup> Dubravka Zarkov, "The Body of the Other Man: Sexual Violence and the Construction of Masculinity, Sexuality and Ethnicity in the Croatian Media," in *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, ed. Caroline O.N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark (New York and London: Zed Books, 2001). Another interesting study which documents the silence surrounding sexual violence is: Krog, "Loss and Silence."

days. Jolluck found in her research that the females retold their stories differently than did males who also underwent such searches. Men who told about their searches also obviously felt discomfort and shame, but they told more details, mentioned body parts or even phrases such as, they searched in the “most unspeakable places.” In contrast, the women were vague and cursory about the searches and did not mention body parts or any details, which reveals the shame and the internalization of the personal intrusion. Jolluck speculates that it was the woman who was responsible for protecting her purity so that when her body was violated she felt that she was to blame. The women Jolluck researched seemed to have done this, that is, they blamed themselves for the personal intrusions they suffered.<sup>99</sup>

Elderly Orthodox Ukrainian women were not brought up to talk openly about sex. Yet those I spoke with gifted to me so many of their stories, of themselves, and of others. Even when their stories were of other people, or so they claimed, they revealed emotion to me. Many explained to me that when they were young they would cry a lot, but they learned from their mothers to hide it.<sup>100</sup> When asked about the silence which surrounded the topic of sexual violence during World War II, one woman said “you know, for some reason, it wasn’t talked about.”<sup>101</sup> Another acknowledged that many women are and were simply too ashamed to talk about gender violence. She told me only one story about Ukrainian women who slept with Frenchmen in Germany in exchange for food. Otherwise she denied that any kind of sexual abuse ever happened, in essence, verifying her own discomfort with the topic.<sup>102</sup> Yet another interviewee told us, “Afterward people didn’t talk about it. No one put [a specific rape survivor] down. There were many people who had the same sadness, so nobody could judge her.”<sup>103</sup> Even if nobody judged them, many rape survivors probably kept their pain to themselves for the rest of their lives.

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<sup>99</sup> Jolluck also compared the retelling of searches to experiences women had in the bathhouses, and the women told these humiliating experiences very differently. Although they had negative experiences in the bathhouses, their personal bodies were not invaded, and their personal space was not hurt or degraded so they were able to discuss this with anger, not with shame. In contrast, when the females talked or wrote about the searches there was no anger. Jolluck, *Exile*, 161-164.

<sup>100</sup> No. 6, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>101</sup> No. 28, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>102</sup> No. 7, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>103</sup> No. 8, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

After the war, despite the widespread occurrence and knowledge of such crimes, people did not talk about this pain, especially if it happened to themselves. Even people who have not been victims of sexual violence find it hard to speak on the topic. One man was a bit uncomfortable in the beginning of an interview, and after an initial attempt to discuss he promptly changed the topic: “Yes, yes, see. And, also they forced several to live together with them, you know, well, where they were stationed... Well, if there were young women there, there were occasions where they forced them into cohabitation or they raped them. There was everything, yes. But people don’t talk much about that.” Here the gentle man laughed and said, “I guess people are too uncomfortable.” I asked, “Why? Why uncomfortable?” He replied, “Well, it seems there’s some kind of shame, if there is, well, I know, if there were such incidents, if there were, that is, if they succeeded in that. Then...” At that point he switched our conversation to the topic of the front and building trenches.<sup>104</sup> As the interview progressed, this man became more comfortable and reported quite a few incidents on my topic.

Indeed, most of the women and men were so open about the topic with us. Few people related anything that happened to them, but people told many stories of what happened to others. Perhaps it was a relief finally to tell some of the stories, or to talk in general terms on the topic. Perhaps because some were so old by 1998, they felt they had nothing to lose or the pain had lessened enough so that talking was possible.

One memoirist eloquently describes how painful the silence can be. Latvian Agate Nesaule writes about how after the war she wished for silence, and she wished that her mother would not tell what had happened to them in a basement where they had hid during the war. In a conversation with others about women’s and men’s experiences of the war at a Latvian gathering in the U.S. after the war, one woman named Miss Regna said, “A man at least had a gun in his hand. What did we have? ... We had nothing.” Others responded that she did not have any statistics for how many women were killed or wounded and that she was dramatizing. She started to respond, but just looked down. Nesaule writes that her mother filled the awkward silence loudly with, “Other things happened to women, terrible things, more destructive in their own way.” Someone asked what could be worse than being wounded or killed. Agate’s mother

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<sup>104</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

repeated, “Terrible things.”<sup>105</sup> Nesaule writes,

It sounds lame, even to me. “Rape” is an unsayable word in mixed company; people have been shocked that it has actually been printed in a recent controversial novel. I hope my mother does not say it out loud, I hope she does not *tell* anything. It sounds as if she is making light of the suffering of the men, which is very real. Is she trying to take something away from them? Why has she spoken at all? I am embarrassed for her, I must defend the men against her.<sup>106</sup>

Yet highlighting one party’s suffering does not take away from another party’s claim to suffering. The fear revealed here is a fear of a hierarchy of suffering, but such a hierarchy is not necessary. Legitimizing one group’s pain does not necessarily lessen another group’s pain. It is usually better to give voice to all experience than to falsely preserve the ownership of pain and suffering for only one or a few groups. Nesaule writes, “But even as I wish my mother had stayed silent, I feel an overwhelming desire to speak myself, to shout at everyone, to make them see what happened to women and girls. My chest is tight with tension, my head filled with images to bursting.” The tension between wanting to scream to the world what one has experienced and feeling the pressure to remain silent is familiar. Nesaule continues, “I do not say anything, but only in part because I would be shouted down too. I am ashamed of the basement; everyone would despise me if they knew what the soldiers did. They would ostracize my mother too. I will never tell.”<sup>107</sup> The irony here is blatant – those who hear the stories should hate the soldiers, not the women and girls who were victimized there. Nesaule continues,

“Men have a harder time,” is voted the winning proposition. The women and girls raise their hands to indicate agreement. Miss Reg na continues polishing her rings as if she had not heard the question, but when it is repeated, she shrugs and raises her hand too, making it clear it does not matter to her one way or the other.<sup>108</sup>

This, too, is all too familiar. One needs to pretend that one has no pain, or else one feels too vulnerable and as though one has even less power.

My mother sits stubbornly looking down at her clenched hands. I vote with the winning side. I glance at my mother’s flushed face and wish she were different. Longing washes over me to see her smiling directly into Snieg’s brooding eyes, accepting a flower from

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<sup>105</sup> Agate Nesaule, *A Woman in Amber: Healing the Trauma of War and Exile*, 1 ed. (New York: Soho Press, Inc., 1995), 182.

<sup>106</sup> Nesaule, *A Woman*, 182.

<sup>107</sup> Nesaule, *A Woman*, 182-183.

<sup>108</sup> Nesaule, *A Woman*, 183.

Pastor Braun's outstretched hand, laughing with my father about a funny story he has just told. As much as I would then resent my mother's inattention to me, I prefer her previous compliance to men to this bitter resistance.

But the men's victory pleases no one. The men stand about looking awkward and defiant, while the women file out silently. The chief spokesman for the men pushes papers around irritably and kicks at a chair. The tightness stays in my jaw and chest as my mother and I walk home without referring to what has happened.<sup>109</sup>

It is so painful not to tell. Here Nesaule has brilliantly captured the pressure people feel to keep quiet about the topic of sexual violence. In her example, the women who have known sexual violence during the war feel pressure to remain silent. Nesaule herself, although she witnessed multiple rapes of Latvian women by the Red Army, feels disappointment toward her mother, who does not conform to the group. As they leave, she describes how the tightness affects her: "I am familiar with that tightness, I feel it every day. Only when I was sick did it abate. Now I am paralyzed by my desire to make others see and my absolute need to conceal."<sup>110</sup> Indeed, this is something survivors from many different cultures experience.

But the silence is not only pervasive among those who have themselves survived sexual violence. Others also choose not to speak. As Ruth Seifert writes about the mass rapes by Soviet soldiers at the end of World War II, this silence "can in no way be attributed to coincidence, embarrassment, or the pain of the women in question."<sup>111</sup> This kind of suffering was not discussed in the Soviet public realm. In the official Soviet language of World War II, women were praised for their equal contribution to the war and to the economy: "Soviet woman has proved that she has passed the examination with honour. At the front and in the hinterland, side by side with men, and shoulder to shoulder, equal with them, she helps to forge victory over the enemy." As Mary Buckley points out, "during the war years it was suggested that Soviet superwomen could do anything" and they did.<sup>112</sup> They fought alongside men, worked in mines, fought with the partisans, worked hard labor in factories, and harvested the crops. Similar to the silence that followed the "shame of 1941," there was no room for any specific suffering Soviet

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<sup>109</sup> Nesaule, *A Woman*, 183.

<sup>110</sup> Nesaule, *A Woman*, 183.

<sup>111</sup> Seifert, "War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis," 66. Also available in German: Ruth Seifert, "Krieg und Vergewaltigung. Ansätze zu einer Analyse," in *Massenvergewaltigungen. Krieg gegen die Frauen*, ed. A. Stiglmeier (Freiburg/Breisgau: 1993).

<sup>112</sup> *Pravda*, 8 March 1942, quoted in Buckley, *Women and Ideology*, 121.

Jews endured,<sup>113</sup> and within Soviet ideology there was no room for any kind of specific suffering that women endured. There was only room for their heroic efforts. In addition, within most eastern European cultures there were not many cultural or psychological mechanisms that would allow for discussion, public or even private, of the sexual violation of so many women. Sexual crimes that had been directed toward men were also stifled. Furthermore, the mass rapes committed by the Red Army of Slavic, Baltic, and other east European women and girls were not recognized publicly – neither by the perpetrators, nor by the victims.

Especially during the war and shortly thereafter, there was much evidence validating sexual violence, but politicians, bureaucrats, judges, officials, military members, family members, friends, and historians purposely chose to ignore it. Often scholars omit references to sexual violence, even when it is obvious. One example is from an article on survival strategies in besieged Leningrad, which includes cannibalism and other strategies, but it does not mention prostitution.<sup>114</sup> A myriad of books on the Holocaust and World War II do not have rape in the index, and scholars gloss over it as something “normal” but unresearchable.<sup>115</sup> Perhaps due to the omnipresence of sexual violence and the general fear people, especially women, carry with them even in times of peace, some choose to avoid analysis of obvious sexual crimes. For example, historian Joan Ringelheim concedes to not knowing how to handle an interview in which the woman admitted she had been raped. She writes, “I believe we avoid listening to stories we do not want to hear. Sometimes we avoid listening because we are afraid; sometimes we avoid

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<sup>113</sup> Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia*, 49-51. The Germans were not the only people guilty of anti-Semitism. For discussions of Nazi collaborators see, for example, Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), especially 115-121, 191-235, 287-297, 375-377.

<sup>114</sup> Richard Bidlack, “Survival Strategies in Leningrad,” in *The People's War: Responses to World War II in the Soviet Union*, ed. Robert W. Thurston and Bernd Bonwetsch (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 99.

<sup>115</sup> Epp, “The Memory of Violence: Soviet and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War,” 60. Many, if not most of the scholarly books on the Holocaust or the German occupation do not have the words rape, brothel, or prostitution in the index (some have references to prostitutes who were incarcerated in the German system, but no reference to the German system of sexual slavery). For example, see Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996); Niewyk and Nicosia, *Columbia Guide*; Reitlinger, *The House*. Historian Gerhard L. Weinberg's 1997 article does not mention anything on the topic except for the “comfort women” of the Japanese. Gerhard L. Weinberg, “World War II Scholarship, Now and in the Future,” *The Journal of Military History* 61, no. 2 (1997). The recent and insightful volume edited by Omer Bartov, Atina Grossmann, and Mary Nolan does not have rape, prostitution, sex, or brothel in the index, but it does list Korean “comfort women,” who are mentioned on one page in an article by historian John W. Dower. Omer Bartov, Atina Grossmann, and Mary Nolan, eds., *Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New Press, 2002). Even works focusing on women or on sexuality do not always have rape in the indexes. For example, Mosse, *Nationalism*; Rittner and Roth, eds., *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*.

listening because we don't understand the importance of what is being said. Without a place for a particular memory, without a conceptual framework, a possibly significant piece of information will not be pursued."<sup>116</sup> I argue that this position and failure to listen is no longer defensible. We need to listen to all stories and validate the importance of all kinds of hurt, regardless of the perpetrators' and the victims' identity markers. If we did listen, we would realize the incredibly high percentage of people we know who have been sexually assaulted even in peacetime, let alone in armed conflicts. A likely result of this knowledge would be a heightened awareness and even the motivation to research this topic further. Indeed the silence is not only pervasive, it is not incidental.

### Caught in the Middle: Eastern Europe

In general, one could say that all of eastern Europe has experienced a long history of conflict, patriarchy, and upheaval. Certainly, the Russians, Ukrainians, and other Slavic peoples who were a part of the Soviet empire have. For example, even in the 1930s some argued that the rampant sexism was because the *Domostroi*, the sixteenth-century misogynist handbook on family and households issued from the Orthodox church, still had great influence over this part of the world.<sup>117</sup> This misogyny held tight into the late Imperial and the first decades of the Soviet period despite the landmark and unique progress the Soviets had in women's rights in

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<sup>116</sup> Joan Ringelheim, "The Split between Gender and the Holocaust," in *Women in the Holocaust*, ed. Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 342.

<sup>117</sup> *Pravda*, July 24, 1937, p.2., quoted in Roberta T. Manning, "Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II, 1935-1940," in *Russian Peasant Women*, ed. Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 225. Among other forms of women's subordination to men, the *Domostroi* advocated wife beating. Despite the misogyny present in the medieval eastern Slavic world, the Kievan and Muscovite civil and church laws offered some legal protection against rape because of the strong religious view that sex outside of marriage or for purposes other than conception was sinful, especially for women. Rape was considered a serious crime, not because it was a brutal crime against another human being, but because of the shame it brought on the woman and her family. (One of the most substantial contributions to the discussion of sexuality in the Slavic world, which includes entire chapters on rape and incest, is Levin, *Sex*.) There are several cases on file from pre-Petrine Russia where women successfully sued and won cases of rape. See Nancy Shields Kollman, "Women's Honor in Early Modern Russia," in *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, ed. Barbara Alpern Engel Barbara Evans Clements, Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), 65-67. According to historians Christine D. Worobec and Laura Engelstein, rape also reflected badly on the victim's male kin who were unable to protect her from the rapist. Engelstein, "Gender."; Engelstein, *Keys*; Christine D. Worobec, "Accommodation and Resistance," in *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, ed. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel, and Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), 22. Yet we do not know how much women really were protected from rape in medieval times, despite the existence of the laws. As historian Kollman writes, "in a patriarchal sense of its own honor, its distrust of women's sexuality, and its desire to perpetuate the male line, we find the rationale behind women's enhanced honor and status in Muscovy's patriarchal society." Kollman, "Women's Honor," 72. Kollman also provides many bibliographical references to works on honor and shame outside of Russia.



comparison with other countries. The founding Soviet communists believed that women's subordinate position was inherent to capitalism and would "wither away" with the state as socialism developed. Early Soviet legislation included some of the most progressive steps for women's rights that any country had taken in the world. Abortion was legalized, divorce rights made more equitable and easier to obtain, giant steps were taken to help prostitutes, who were characterized as victims and "fallen women,"<sup>118</sup> and women began to enter the workforce as trained professionals.<sup>119</sup> During the retreat to capitalism in the 1920s, the period known as NEP (New Economic Policy) in the Soviet Union, however, many women and girls were forced into prostitution due to hardship.

Early Soviet theorists and politicians argued that rape was something only connected with capitalism. In 1923 the legal definition of rape was expanded to include taking advantage of a woman's subordinate position at home or at work to force her into sexual relations.<sup>120</sup> Despite this and other progressive legislation, rape certainly was a problem in the Soviet Union. According to Eric Naiman's research, the rape and physical abuse of women by men was used in Russian culture as a symbolic way to express political and moral views.<sup>121</sup> During the period of War Communism (1917-1921), rape became a positive symbol of tearing down society in order

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<sup>118</sup> Elizabeth A. Wood, "Prostitution Unbound: Representations of Sexual and Political Anxieties in Postrevolutionary Russia," in *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture*, ed. Jane T. Costlow, Stephanie Sandler, and Judith Vowles (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 126. Lenin and other Soviet Marxists viewed prostitutes as victims of the capitalist system, as "double victims" who would gain freedom with the abolishment of the capitalist system. A prostitute was "a victim both of the bourgeois property system and of its moral hypocrisy." Wood, "Prostitution Unbound," 126-127. During the period of NEP, when unemployment was widespread, the Bolshevik state established medical houses known as *profilatorii* in which former prostitutes were housed, treated for any illnesses, and provided with training for a new type of work. Wood, "Prostitution Unbound," 132. For a detailed and interesting discussion of the Soviet fight against venereal disease and prostitution, see also Carter, *Sin*; Quigley, "Dilemma."

<sup>119</sup> For an overview of the attitudes toward sex and sexuality in the early Soviet state, see Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 329-334; Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism 1860-1930*, especially Part Four. For an interesting article on Russian women's emancipation prior to 1917, see Linda Edmondson, "Equality and Difference in Women's History: Where does Russia Fit In?," in *Women in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Rosalind Marsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>120</sup> This sexual crime rendered no less than three years in prison, the same as rape. Later marital or work-related rape was separated from the rape law and provided up to three years in prison. Decree of July 10, 1923, RCC (1922) Article 169a, *Sbornik dokumentov*, p. 165, quoted in Peter H. Juviler, "Women and Sex in Soviet Law," in *Women in Russia*, ed. Alexander Dallin Dorothy Atkinson, Gail Warshofsky Lapidus (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 245.

<sup>121</sup> Naiman mentions authors, such as Nikolai Nekrasov, Gorky, Aleksandr Kuprin, Artsybashev, and Mayakovsky. Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: the Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 287n. Naiman explains that Mayakovsky retreated from his earlier portrayals of rape and wrote a poem about the horrors of rape in Soviet society.

to build a new proletarian world. This image was perhaps an inheritance from the Futurists who had portrayed violent rape positively. Even in 1924, a few years into NEP, Ilya Sadoviev wrote a poem entitled “Listen,” in which he urged Red Army soldiers to “uphold Soviet power and preserve their ideological virtue” by “publicly” raping the daughter of a tavern keeper.<sup>122</sup>

The famous case of Chubarov Alley, where a gang of “forty hooligans” raped a young girl and the ensuing press campaign by the Party revealed not only the serious problem with rape in Soviet society in the 1920s, but also much of the lack of concern over the “sharing” of one woman by many Komsomol members (*komsomoltsy*). Rather than addressing more fundamental and relevant aspects of the problem of sexual violence, Soviet officials chose to view the case of this violent crime as an example of the work still needed to be done to eradicate capitalism from Soviet society.<sup>123</sup>

In the 1930s Stalin initiated a policy retreat, made divorce more difficult to obtain, abortion illegal, and installed economic and other incentives for women to have many children. Motherhood was put on a pedestal. The state took steps to subdue the free love and sex experimentation in culture, literature, and in society in general.<sup>124</sup> The progress made to train prostitutes in another profession was slowly reversed, and although a high percentage of the Soviet workforce was female (higher than in any other country), women suffered from the double burden of full time work outside the home and full time work in the home.

World War II was another catastrophe for those in the east, many of whom in the 1930s and first years of the 1940s experienced forced collectivization, famine, or Soviet invasion. Depending on the movement of Soviet forces prior to the German invasion and depending on the movement of the front as the war progressed, many people in eastern Europe did not experience

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<sup>122</sup> Naiman, *Sex in Public: the Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology*, 287n.

<sup>123</sup> Naiman, *Sex in Public: the Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology*, Chapter 7.

<sup>124</sup> Historian Janet Evans argues that although the 1936 changes in family policy seem to have been a setback for women, “it appears rather simplistic to regard it as a retreat or simply a reversal of previous policy.” Some women welcomed it. “The new developments must be interpreted in the light of the Communist Party’s contradictory position on the ‘women’s question.’ It assumed that the employment of women in itself would ensure their liberation. They also had no commitment to the promotion of the use of contraceptives and abortion as one of the means of women’s emancipation. The obsession with the economic oppression of women, to the exclusion of other forms of discrimination, helped legitimize the persistence of traditional views concerned with the female role within the family – both within the Party and without.” Janet Evans, “The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Women’s Question: The Case of the 1936 Decree ‘In Defence of the Mother and Child,’” *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 4 (1981): 765, 771-772. See also Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936*.

only one occupation, but two or three. Some people experienced a horrific and violent Soviet occupation prior to the German invasion. After the Germans occupied and eventually retreated in the final stages of the war, the Soviets again took control. Other places were already part of the Soviet empire, and as the front moved towns were abandoned and then retaken by the Germans. People in each country in the east had differing political opinions toward the occupying military powers. In Soviet occupied countries there were loyal Soviet citizens and believers in communism. Others did not believe in the system but kept an outward appearance of political loyalty. There were also nationalists and real or potential “enemies of the Soviet state.” In the areas the Soviets occupied before the German invasion, such as Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Galicia (western Ukraine), there was the same mix of opinions. Regardless of their beliefs, out of fear many “went with the flow” in an attempt to keep themselves and their families alive. Many were caught in the middle: being a Communist Party member under the Germans was dangerous, and conversely, having had anything to do with the Germans was dangerous under the Soviets.

It depended on where one was and what one’s political stance was whether a Soviet or German invasion would be more welcomed. Some people wanted neither, but wanted independence. The Lithuanian Frieda Frome wrote in her post-war memoir, “Once, not so many years before, Lithuania had been a happy land where people of many nationalities and races lived together in harmony. But that country was small and unable to withstand the attack of the mighty forces of Russia and Germany. All was now changed.”<sup>125</sup> Later, she explained that they merely exchanged one invader for another:

Through the camp’s grapevine, I heard of the activities of an organization of anti-German, Russian sympathizers who called themselves the “Red Partisans.” They were hiding in the mountains and forests around Kaunas and had underground forces nearly everywhere. “Red Partisans” became magic words to the oppressed. We had no love for the Russian rulers, but we felt we would be better off under them than under the Germans.<sup>126</sup>

Frome’s paragraph highlights the difficulty small countries had and how people weighed the circumstances in their decision to support either the Soviets or the Germans. Frome, a Jewish woman, also compared German and Soviet cruelty:

Was there a difference between German and Russian treatment of a conquered people? In manner, at least, there was a difference. The Germans were almost invariably polite. When

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<sup>125</sup> Frieda Frome, *Some Dare to Dream: Frieda Frome's Escape from Lithuania* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 56.

<sup>126</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 81.

they took men and women away to be “liquidated,” they said they were merely taking them to live in a place where conditions would be better for their care, or they made some such excuse. They talked smoothly. The Russians, on the other hand, were blunt and brutal in speech.<sup>127</sup>

The differences Frome points out are meaningless if we look at the end result. Sexual violence, murder, and other kinds of crimes resulted whether the perpetrators were polite or unmannerly.

Nina Markovna, the Russian memoirist, describes how the people so naively trusted the Germans as they entered their city of Feodosia in the Crimea.<sup>128</sup> Similarly, memoirist Marie Avinov writes,

That blind naïveté which let one misconceive of Hitler as a potential liberator was not an uncommon affliction. The vast majority of my compatriots had also been kept in ignorance of what was going on in the outside world. The Soviet Press had always slanted its foreign news items to such a degree that we had grown accustomed to believing the reverse of whatever we read. But just how accurate this method was, no one could rightly tell.<sup>129</sup>

Indeed, it is understandable that some people in the east would welcome the Germans. Well-known pictures in museums around the world reveal Latvians warmly welcoming the Germans. This was because of the horror experienced under the Soviets who invaded in 1940. Yet even where the Germans initially were welcomed, resentment grew as people realized they had traded one brutal occupier for another. As the Germans started murdering Jews, Communists, and many others, people recognized the horror of both occupiers: “Certainly the national aspirations of the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union were not to be met. Ironically, those who were most inclined to welcome the initial German invasion because of their hopes of national revival, people in the Baltic States and the Ukraine, lived in regions designed for German settlement and were therefore quickly disabused of their hopes.”<sup>130</sup>

Omer Bartov outlines how the Germans indiscriminately and cruelly murdered

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<sup>127</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 43.

<sup>128</sup> Nina Markovna, *Nina's Journey: A Memoir of Stalin's Russia and the Second World War* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1989), 177-180.

<sup>129</sup> Avinov continues, “As the world crisis of the late thirties grew, news items became so blatantly self-contradictory that they left us hopelessly confused. At first, the Nazis had been “Brown Devils,” “Fascist Bandits,” or “Scum of the Earth.” After the Hitler-Stalin pact was signed, we were to understand that our gentlemanly allies were reluctantly participating in the rape of Poland.” The apparent universal nickname for the Soviet news at the time was “Liar.” Paul Chavchavadze, *Marie Avinov: Pilgrimage Through Hell* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 193.

<sup>130</sup> Weinberg, *A World*, 530.

civilians who were “potential political and racial enemies of the Reich - Bolsheviks and Jews.” German combat troops, not just the *Einsatzgruppen* and the SS, murdered many civilians only on suspicion that they were partisans. They shot Russian soldiers in uniform on the pretext that they were partisan. Later in 1941, the 16<sup>th</sup> Army murdered 387 civilians in a mere six days for allegedly being partisans, “at a total cost of ten killed and eleven wounded Germans.”<sup>131</sup> As Oleg Anisimov, the head of a wartime Russian welfare committee, traveled through German occupied zones during the war he found that “In Pskov, the German troops – by way of warning – hanged ten alleged partisans in the market place on the very day of their arrival, a fact that is hardly indicative of any friendly feeling between the local population and the German troops. This was by no means the only case of summary execution of alleged partisans on the grounds of mere suspicion.”<sup>132</sup>

Similarly, Comrade Grechanik recorded that anyone who had opposed the German authorities was incarcerated in the camp on Shirokaya Street in Minsk, Belorussia. The “Germans put some 'Westerner' in charge of the camp. He made no distinctions: he beat everyone, both Jews and Russians. In the camp they would shoot people for the slightest step out of line...”<sup>133</sup> In these cases there was little distinction between Jews or Soviets. In Russia “the category of ‘enemies of the Reich’ was much more sweeping [than elsewhere], and it included, apart from Jews and ‘Bolsheviks’, also the intelligentsia and the generally defined ‘*Untermenschen*’, of the east. Hermann Göring was utterly serious when he declared that it would be only for the better if ‘many scores of millions’ of Russians died of starvation.”<sup>134</sup> According to historian Reitlinger's research, Russian prisoners in concentration camps were gassed and murdered with phenol injections and by the Sachsenhausen *Genickschuss* apparatus. The Gestapo in Russia murdered wounded prisoners for no reason except that they were not needed.<sup>135</sup>

The plight of the Soviet POWs is also indicative of the general violence against all

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<sup>131</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 118-129, especially 122.

<sup>132</sup> Anisimov, *German Occupation*, 6.

<sup>133</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry*, trans. David Patterson (New Brunswick (U.S.) and London (U.K.): Transaction Publishers, 2002), 117-118.

<sup>134</sup> Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, 66, quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 111.

<sup>135</sup> Reitlinger, *The House*, 95-127, 257-284.

people in the east. According to one estimate, “Of the 5,700,000 Soviet soldiers who surrendered to the Germans during World War II, more than 3,000,000 were either shot shortly after capture, starved to death in prisoner of war camps, gassed in extermination camps, or worked to death in concentration camps.” Citing himself, Streit writes, “The horror of the fate suffered by Soviet prisoners becomes even clearer when one considers that, of the 232,000 English and American soldiers in German hands, 8,348 (or 3.5 percent) died. In the autumn of 1941 8,348 Soviet prisoners died on a single day.”<sup>136</sup> Another way to view the atrocities against the Soviet POWs is as follows: “By February 1942, of the 3.9 million Soviet soldiers captured up to then by the Germans, the vast majority, some 2.8 million were dead. At least a quarter million had been shot; the others had died under the horrible conditions imposed on them by the Germans.”<sup>137</sup> Weinberg continues, “whatever fairy tales were put out by those involved in these horrors or apologists for them, careful scrutiny of the contemporary evidence makes it clear that this atrocity of vast proportions was carried out with the willing, even enthusiastic, participation of German army, police, and civilian authorities.”<sup>138</sup>

Agate Nesaule, a Latvian survivor of the war, describes how she and her family left their homeland before the Soviets came back because they did not want to get caught in the crossfire. They hated and feared both armies. Mrs. Detlava, her new maid and caretaker said: “If you step outside this door, you’ll die. It’s as simple as that. There are German hooligans, the cursed Nazis are out there, just waiting to catch Latvian children, and the Russians, those godless Communists, are not far away.”<sup>139</sup> Indeed, in Latvia it was reported that “On [3 July 1941] fifty pairs of people bound back to back were brought out into the courtyard of the Riga prison; each pair had one Jew and one Latvian... ‘You wanted equality,’ said the Untersturmführer who was conducting the execution. ‘Now you will have it.’ One hundred people bound in pairs – Jews and Latvians – were shot.” Captain E. Gekthman, who recorded these crimes, recorded that the Latvian Elvira Damber and the Jew Yakov Abesgauz were the first pair. Additionally, the captain wrote that “In those days cruel violence was done not only to the Jews but also to everyone whom the Germans suspected of being sympathetic toward the Soviet authorities. Jews were shot

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<sup>136</sup> Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, 293; 128-137, quoted in Streit, “Soviet POWs,” 81.

<sup>137</sup> Here Weinberg cites Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, Chapters 6-7.

<sup>138</sup> Weinberg, *A World*, 300. Also see Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 107-119.

<sup>139</sup> Nesaule, *A Woman*, 38-39.

for being Jews. Latvians were found guilty mainly of one thing: good relations with the Soviet authorities. This made both nationalities the same in the eyes of the executioners.”<sup>140</sup>

In Lithuania, the “Master of Ponary,” SS-Hauptscharführer Martin Weiss “was not prejudiced with regard to nationalities. When it came to killing, he did not make any distinctions among people.” According to one report, “He took five hundred Polish priests and monks from the Benedictine monastery, led them to the Lukishki Prison, and ordered them to undress. After taking away their clothes, he made them put on outfits with a yellow badge on the chest; the new clothes had just been taken from murdered Jews. Then Weiss hauled them off to Ponary and shot them as Jews.”<sup>141</sup> This shows not only the Lithuanians caught in the crossfire, but also the indiscriminate killing by the Germans.

Another illustration of people caught in the crossfire is from the Ministry of Propaganda in Minsk: “If I stay with the Germans I will be killed by the Bolsheviks when they come. Should the Bolsheviks not come I’ll get killed by the Germans sooner or later. Therefore, staying with the Germans means certain death, joining the partisans most probably salvation.”<sup>142</sup>

Larissa Kotyeva, a Ukrainian caught in the middle, wrote in her memoir:

I would have preferred to see Hitler eliminate Stalin and his regime first, and then to destroy himself by spreading German forces too thinly over the vast space of the Soviet Union and not being able to control the people in the conquered territories. The Russian land would then have been free, first from Stalin, and then from Hitler. But it did not happen that way.<sup>143</sup>

Like Kotyeva, millions of people were caught in the crossfire between the Red Army and the Germans.

The complexity in people’s experiences with the Germans and the Soviets is also

<sup>140</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 384.

<sup>141</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 251. This testimony was from Solomon Garbel, who reported that a Jew named Brenaizen told him about the murder of the priests and monks at Ponary. Another testimony from Lithuania comes from A. Sutskever who was forced to dig out mass graves and burn the bodies. According to the testimony, “The fourth and largest mass grave contained 24,000 bodies. There were non-Jews buried in that grave: priests, nuns, Poles, some uniformed German, and many Soviet prisoners of war.” It is not clear from the testimony how many of the bodies were non-Jews. Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 292.

<sup>142</sup> Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945: A Study in Occupation Policy*, 231, quoted in Uwe Gartenschläger, “Living and Surviving in Occupied Minsk,” in *The People's War: Responses to World War II in the Soviet Union*, ed. Robert W. Thurston and Bernd Bonwetsch (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 20.

<sup>143</sup> Larissa Kotyeva, *Three Worlds of Larissa: A Story of Survival* (Brunswick, Maine: Biddle Publishing Company, 1993), 128.

evident when one starts asking about rape. Protestant Latvians and Orthodox Ukrainians each had their own versions of which army raped more. Although I only spoke with a few Latvians, they were mostly enraged by the Soviet rapes and told me the Germans did not rape while they were there. The Ukrainians told many more stories about German rapes than they did about Soviet rapes, but they included quite a number of stories or comments about violence from “their” side. In Ukraine, several people told me on a number of occasions that it would be good to do a comparative study in West Ukraine, or Galicia, where the stories would be almost completely opposite of those that I heard in the Cherkassy region, which had been a part of the Russian empire for centuries. I was told that in West Ukraine people would tell me the Soviets raped more than the Germans. This could be viewed as hearsay and also not a proper sampling of the population since I could only speak with so many people. Still, it matches the political realities of these geographical areas. The Ukrainian nationalist movement was much stronger in West Ukraine, which had not always been a part of Russia or the Soviet Union. When the Soviets invaded this part of Ukraine during World War II, the West Ukrainians (or eastern Galicians) resisted. The Red Army probably expected this, and was prepared to violently put down any opposition.<sup>144</sup>

Similarly, because Latvia had also been independent of both Germany and Russia during the inter-war period, the reestablishment of Soviet power in 1940 on Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian soil was extremely violent. Although the Germans proceeded to commit atrocities in Latvia against Jews, Gypsies, partisans, Latvian civilians, and others, the Germans did not view the Latvians and the Estonians with as much hatred as they did the Slavic people in the east. The Germans had more in common with the Latvians and Estonians culturally, and they had a long history together, though this did not prevent the Germans from establishing military brothels there, and it is not clear how much they raped in these countries. In contrast, in the Cherkassy region of Ukraine where I conducted most of my interviews, people viewed themselves as one with the Russians, and therefore as one with the Soviets during the war. Although many told stories of cruelty by their “own,” they seemed to have more antagonistic feelings toward the Germans. When they spoke of the approaching Red Army and their liberation from the Germans they spoke with genuine happiness, “ours, ours came!” The political history matches what the women and men told me about which armies committed more rapes.

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<sup>144</sup> Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*.



Yet if the sexual violence in the east had been exclusively politically or ideologically motivated (and not at all motivated by sexually desire) could we more positively rely on the political and cultural history to explain the realities for different groups of survivors and victims. In other words, the reality was even more complex. The silence surrounding these issues of sex, prostitution, and rape also probably has influenced which stories are safe for survivors, witnesses, and others to tell. Furthermore, the evidence in this dissertation reveals a tangle of identity markers among perpetrators and victims and is provided by a myriad of sources. Thus, the complexity of “who it telling what and why” and “what really happened” is daunting.

Undoubtedly the people in eastern Europe have had a tumultuous history, and during World War II, they certainly were caught in the middle of the Russo-German war. This brief outline helps to illuminate the various cultural and political histories of this complex region; however, when it comes to determining which kinds of sexual crimes took place, for example, when, by whom, and how often, such specific particularities are more difficult to assert. In sum, what emerges in the many cases of sexual violence across the eastern front is the key position of gender over other identity markers, the importance of sexual desire as a motivating factor, the abuse of power by armed and often intoxicated men of unarmed civilians, and the blessing given by both military leaderships to use and abuse women and girls in a sexual manner. This blessing helped to create an atmosphere in which the sexual desires of armed men (and a small number of women) were of paramount importance and to be respected, as opposed to the needs, desires, and even the lives of unarmed civilians, which too often were overlooked, stifled, or destroyed. In spite of everything, the evidence presented in this dissertation reveals that those who were targeted for sexual violence showed remarkable courage, inventiveness, and innovation. It certainly is their stories that fuel this research.

## CHAPTER 2

### SEX, ALCOHOL, HUNGER, AND PROSTITUTION

Sex thrived in both camp and non-camp settings, despite the intense hardships people endured because of circumstances Germans purposefully inflicted on people in the east. Much of the sex was prohibited for the Germans, but evidence shows that many were willing to break regulations and that the leadership was well aware of offenses among both the rank and file and among officers. Many people abused alcohol as a way to cope with their realities or to pass time. A multitude of police reports for serious crimes such as rape, as well as less serious crimes such as “scandalizing,” mention that the offenders were intoxicated at the time of their disobedience. Because of the widespread abuse of alcohol, it seems fair to argue that drunkenness contributed to many of the sexual activities and offenses covered in this dissertation.

Although there certainly must have been love affairs, the evidence shows that much sex was provided by women and girls, and sometimes by men and boys, to Germans and others who had access to more resources, and that the sex was in exchange for live-saving goods, such as food and clothing. Although the laws changed during the war, and there was confusion among regional commanders about which kinds of women with whom their men could be sexual, German regulations forbade having sex with women in the east, whether they were Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, Gypsy, Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, except for German females and apparently the Latvians and Estonians after September 1943, all of the people in the east

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<sup>1</sup> There are many examples given throughout this chapter. See for example, Wehrmacht-Ortskommandantur Riga Kommandanturbefehl Nr. 21/43, USHMM Record Group 18.002M, Selected Records from the Latvian Central State Historical Archive, Riga, Latvia [microform], Reel 14, Fond R-752, Opis 2, Folder 1, Riga, 13 May 1943, docs. 104 - 104b; Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, H.Qu., Nr. 02 550/42 g./WP(?)St/Qu. (II), 15 September 1942, BAB NS19/1971; Oberkommando des Heeres, n.d., NARA T 78, R. 189, Frs. 6130654-55; SS-Sturmabführer, Der Reichsführer-SS Hauptamt SS-Gericht, München, Letter to SS-Sturmabführer Bender, 12 December 1940, BAB NS7/265, doc. 1. One report states that entering houses of foreigners was forbidden with no exceptions. Kdt. St. Qul, rückw. Armeegebiet 585, Abt.Qu. Kommandanturbefehl Nr. 5, 6 February 1942, NARA RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Frs. 334-338.

were off-limits.<sup>2</sup> Still, these were the women and girls, who entered into relationships with men, often times Germans, in the hopes to survive, whether they were starving in a Russian village or in a camp. These same kinds of prostitutional arrangements occurred between men and boys as well, and sometimes the person with more resources was a female who took advantage of another female or a male, often in a camp setting. There is less evidence of this, but some evidence suggests that even if the number of incidents was smaller, the processes were similar, including regulations not being followed and similar motivations for the people to enter into such arrangements. According to officials, unregulated prostitution thrived, and this was a concern because of the great spread of venereal diseases, which could seriously damage the fighting power of the German military.<sup>3</sup> Yet even high-ranking officials admitted that the prohibitions against having sex with women and girls in the east, women of other “races,” were a reality only on paper.

### **The Virtual Rules of the Third Reich**

Despite the regulations against having sex with the people the Germans occupied, it happened. It did not happen only occasionally, but it happened frequently. This is evident in several ways. German officials often wrote about the topic as a problem, and they felt a need to repeatedly post rules and regulations forbidding contact between the Germans and the east Europeans. Complaints by officials of men having prohibited sex were not uncommon, and the offenders were not only soldiers, but officers and members of the SS as well. It was clear to the German leadership that the large amount of fraternization between the Germans and the locals had led to the high rates of venereal disease. The spread of sexually transmitted diseases was one of the main reasons to establish military brothels throughout the Reich, including the eastern occupied areas.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, as we will see below, despite the rules explicitly forbidding this, Germans not only had sex with Orthodox or Protestant women and girls from the east, but also with Jewish women and girls.

Nazi racial ideology claimed that having intimate relations with “inferior” people, such

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<sup>2</sup> The ban against having sex with Latvians and Estonians apparently was lifted in the fall of 1943. See Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb.Nr. II 56/43 Aol5, Feld-Kommandostelle, 8 September 1943, BAB NS19/382, doc. 130.

<sup>3</sup> A detailed discussion of the spread of venereal diseases throughout the eastern front is provided in Chapter Three.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter Four.

as Poles or Jews, would contaminate German blood.<sup>5</sup> In April 1939, Himmler made it clear in his order on the self-esteem of the folk (*Befehl über die völkische Selbstachtung*) that any connection with those of non-German populations was forbidden for members of the SS and police.

According to the law, all sexual relations with women and girls of another “racial” population was a sin against German blood. Himmler threatened demotion and discharge for those who did not obey the law because anyone guilty of this showed their misunderstanding of the principles of National Socialism.<sup>6</sup> In light of “certain incidents,” in January 1941 he repeated that sex with Poles or Czechs was strictly forbidden for members of the SS and police.<sup>7</sup> The “certain incidents” that led Himmler to reiterate that sex with Poles and Czechs was forbidden likely had something to do with someone (who was not supposed to) having sex with a Pole or a Czech.

It is true that pamphlets distributed or posted on barrack walls and throughout the city warned both Germans and the local population of the dangers associated with unprotected sexual intercourse. Regulations designed to minimize contact between Wehrmacht soldiers and the local civilian population also were posted. Often bars and restaurants were designated for one or the other, but not for both. Picking up local hitchhikers or walking with a civilian in the street was forbidden, and in the east, having relations or sexual intercourse with a non-German civilian was prohibited.<sup>8</sup>

Historian Theo Schulte writes in his monograph on the German occupation that because Russian girls had eavesdropped on German soldiers, a ban against fraternization was imposed on the men of Korück 582. Schulte writes, “opportunities for contact – which by all accounts do not seem to have been that well developed – were further reduced by restrictions which forbade soldiers in certain locations to be billeted with the local population.”<sup>9</sup> Yet we

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<sup>5</sup> Also see Anordnung A 33/40 der NSDAP, Institute für Zeitgeschichte, Mikrofilm MA 127/1, ohne pag. [n. 115], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 180.

<sup>6</sup> Vgl. SS-Hauptamt ZK Az. II/a vom 19.4.1939, in: Die SS- und Polizeigerichtsbarkeit, Ein Leitfaden, hrsg. vom Hauptamt SS-Gericht, Juli 1944, S.26 [n. 118], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 180-181.

<sup>7</sup> Hauptamt SS-Gericht Az. 7. SE Ziff. 2 v. 6.5.1941, in: Die SS- und Polizeigerichtsbarkeit, Ein Leitfaden, hrsg. vom Hauptamt SS-Gericht, Juli 1944, S. 49 [n. 119], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 181. Rules against sex with native women were common in pamphlets as well. For just one example, see Oberkommando des Heeres, General z b V b OKH/Heereswes.Abt. Az.III Nr. 130/6.42.g., Abschrift, H.Qu., 8 June 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Latvian Central State Historical Archive (Riga) records, 1941-1945, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 80, doc. 25.

<sup>8</sup> See footnote no. 1 in this chapter.

<sup>9</sup> Schulte, *German Army*, 169-170.

should not equate the existence of rules with the reality. The desired effect of these bans established by the German leadership never became reality. In fact, the “endless repetitions of these warnings” is a clue that the goal was not achieved.<sup>10</sup> In the east especially, these prohibitions were a reality primarily on paper. Opportunities for contact were many, and the establishment and posting of rules did not significantly curtail those opportunities or the soldiers’ behavior. The leadership put much energy into the issue of fraternization, but as we will see below, the leadership acknowledged this was not a controllable situation.

There are many examples which reveal the great amount of contact there was between soldiers and civilians in the east. The leadership attempted to keep track of where soldiers and officers resided, but apparently men moved around enough to cause concern about their whereabouts. In Riga, Latvia a special order (*Sonderbefehl*) was issued in 1942 which stated that if soldiers or officers moved, they were to report to the Wehrmacht housing department (*Quartieramt*). There they were to provide their name, rank, the new address, apartment number, the name of the owner and if he or she were Russian or Latvian.<sup>11</sup> Many of the people I interviewed in Ukraine told me and my assistant about contact with Germans during work or elsewhere in the villages.<sup>12</sup> Germans often resided in people's homes, and sometimes the locals were allowed to remain in their own homes and sleep on the floor or elsewhere. Various memoirs mention this, as does the award-winning novel *Rainbow*.<sup>13</sup> In August 1942 it was even reported in a *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten* that the close daily living situation with the Russian population and how this had caused widespread sexually transmitted diseases in Russia, especially among women.<sup>14</sup>

According to this same report, the various laws that forbade members of the

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<sup>10</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 129.

<sup>11</sup> Wehrmacht-Ortskommandantur Riga, Tgb.Nr. 1752/42, geheim, Kommandantur-Sonderbefehl, 17 November 1942, USHMMA, Record group 18.002M, Selected Records from the Latvian Central State Historical Archive, Riga, Latvia [microform], Reel 14, Fond R-752, Opis 2, Folder 1, doc. 53.

<sup>12</sup> Interviews by author, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Wanda Wasilewska, *The Rainbow*, trans. Edith Bone (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944); Tatjana Wassiljewa, *Hostage to War: A True Story*, trans. Anna Trenter (New York: Scholastic Inc., 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, Kommandostab, geheim, Berlin, 28 August 1942, *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*. Nr. 18, USHMMA, RG-31.002M, Reichskommissariat für die Ukraine and Einsatzstab Rosenberg records from the Ukraine Central State Archive, 1940-1945 [microform], Reel 11, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, doc. 34.

Wehrmacht from having sexual intercourse with Russian women and girls had so far had no real influence. Indicative of this was the saying from the soldiers "Better three days in prison than giving up pleasure" (*Lieber drei Tage im Bau als auf das Vergnügen verzichten!*).<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, reports from Mogilew, Orel, Wjasma, and Rschew, revealed that the Russian females apparently were very willing to give themselves to the German soldiers, and this naturally had led to a recent increase in venereal diseases.<sup>16</sup> In addition to the high rates of venereal diseases, there were also high rates of birth.<sup>17</sup> Since most native men were away from home this indicates that there was much fraternization between the occupied and the occupiers.

Other documents point to a similar reality. For example, in 1943 Fritz Kranefuss in Berlin wrote to SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr. Rudolf Brandt that the relationships between officers of the Waffen-SS and Russian women bothered him, and that he did not consider himself a moralist, but that he had become aware of yet another social evil. Kranefuss included a report that noted that German Landser had been seen with Russian women, almost always walking together closely. The Russian women who could speak good German and who were dressed in the latest fashions were not seen "with typical Landser," but with other ranks. It was claimed that the Russian women who had been brought from the city of Charkow were "doing the wash."<sup>18</sup>

Wehrmacht soldiers, officers, and SS members repeatedly broke the rules in Warsaw and had sex in places other than the official German military brothels. In fact, according to one report, the numbers of soldiers with Polish prostitutes and in private brothels intended mostly for Wehrmacht members apparently was larger than the visitor numbers in the Warsaw military brothels. Many times in Warsaw, officers and officials were found in cheap hotels with Polish prostitutes.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*, Nr. 18, USHMMA, RG-31.002M, Reel 11, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, doc. 32.

<sup>16</sup> USHMMA, RG-31.002M, Reel 11, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, doc. 32.

<sup>17</sup> In the area of Feldkommandantur 756 in July 1942 it was reported that the civilian birth rate exceeded the death rate by a good one third. Der Leit. San. Offz. beim Kommandanten rückw. Armeegebiet 585, O.U. 17 July 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 531-534. For a discussion of the probability that over a million children were born to Russian women, fathered by German soldiers, see also Sander and Johr, eds., *Befreier*, 14-15.

<sup>18</sup> Fritz Kranefuss, Memo to SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr. Rudolf Brandt, Persönlicher Stab des Reichsführers SS, Berlin, 16 September 1943, Berlin, BAB NS19/2220.

<sup>19</sup> Kommandeur des Heeresstreifendienstes, beim Mil. Befh. Im Gen. Gouv. Nr. 442 / 42 geh. Erfahrungs- und Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. – 31. Juli 1942, Tomaszow, Maz., 14 August 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 667. This was likely because it was a "nicer" experience in a private brothel. In the military brothels, there

Despite the Rassenschande laws, Germans also had sex with Jewish women. Sex with Jews, even in brothels, was not allowed for any German military members. Seidler writes that Wehrmacht members who knew the person with whom they were sexual was Jewish faced “serious consequences.” SS officers, police officers, and police officials with officers’ rank faced the death sentence.<sup>20</sup> Still, a man had to know that the woman was Jewish to be punished. Therefore, if someone claimed he was unaware of the woman’s Jewishness – he was not punished. In his research, Seidler found that this is what happened for most offenses. If a man was caught he simply had to say he did not realize the “whore”<sup>21</sup> was Jewish, since it was not always obvious by outward appearance.

One raid of the Hotel Bristol in Warsaw in early October 1939 revealed that in the rooms of forty officers, one of whom was a Generalmajor, were thirty-four Jewish women. None of the officers received any kind of punishment. Since Jews at this time were not marked, the men simply pleaded ignorance.<sup>22</sup> Assuming the story was not fabricated (perhaps by someone looking for more discipline), it is not surprising that the men were not punished. Considering the evidence available there seems to have been much weight put on deciding whether or not an accused person knew the woman he was with was Jewish or not. Seidler only provided this one example, but I found two more examples of cases which highlight the significance put on this clause in the law.

This clause in the law comes up in a couple of Hohensalza Special Court (*Sondergericht*) cases where the question of the accused’s knowledge of the woman’s Jewishness was taken into deep consideration. The first was the 1941 case against the Baltic German Henning brothers for “racial defilement” (*Rassenschande*) for which each brother was sentenced to one year in prison plus the cost of the legal proceedings. Ludwig (an SA member) and Egon

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were often very long lines, and both before and after the sexual intercourse the men were forced to go through a sanitation process which involved having a cleansing liquid injected into the penis. This was done in the presence of other soldiers having the same procedure. In addition to the sanitation process, the men also were supposed to wear condoms. It is possible that the condoms during the war were not as effective as what is available today, which would explain the extra precautions with sanitation. As we will see in Chapter Four, there are several different sources indicating that the condom regulation was not always followed.

<sup>20</sup> Hinweise für den SS-Richter, hrsg. vom Hauptamt SS-Gericht, Heft 1/1944, S. 5 [n. 121], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 181.

<sup>21</sup> Seidler frequently uses the term “whore” (*Dirne*).

<sup>22</sup> Vgl. Der Reichsführer-SS B Nr. I 2382/39 Ads. vom 24.10.1939, Bundesarchiv R 19/403-1 [n. 122], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 181-182.

lived together in an apartment in Leslau, and the latter knew a Jewish woman at his work. The woman asked Egon for money on one occasion, and on another she told him she had nothing to eat. Subsequently, Egon had the woman to his apartment many times where he gave her food. Three or four times she stayed overnight, and they apparently had sex on two occasions. Ludwig also had sex one time with the same woman.<sup>23</sup>

The report states that both of the brothers “knew that sexual intercourse with Jews was forbidden,” but in their defense claimed that they did not know she was Jewish. In the case report there is quite a lengthy discussion about whether or not their explanation was true. The report states that “at first glance” one cannot tell this woman was Jewish, since she had been seen on the street without her yellow star. Still, the report states that was unlikely that the woman would go to her work at the police station without the yellow star, and that because Egon had gone to work together with the woman on several occasions, it was highly unlikely that he would not have seen the yellow star. Furthermore, the woman had long black hair, spoke Yiddish German, and, the report continues, the two brothers, having lived in the region for a long time, surely should have been able to differentiate between a Jew and a non-Jew. The ensuing discussion reveals that had the evidence been slightly different and the accused men could have proven that they did not know the woman was Jewish, the brothers may not have been sentenced.<sup>24</sup>

Another such case that shows how important it was to determine if the accused knew the person was Jewish is the case against Ruwell for bribing an official. In this story, a Jewish woman was involved with Ruwell and wanted him to help her husband. Apparently Ruwell bribed an official in his attempt to help the woman’s spouse. The case is forty-two pages long, single spaced, and it repeatedly explains that although Ruwell bribed an official, he did not know that this woman was Jewish. She did not wear the Jewish star and spoke excellent German with no Yiddish. In addition, she was dressed well, one time with an “elegant blue-colored summer coat and a big hat.” The repeated explanation about how Ruwell was unaware the woman was Jewish and that he thought she was German (a *Volksdeutsche*) suggests that the man would have received a much harder punishment if it could have been proven that he did know she was

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<sup>23</sup> Strafsache against Ludwig Henning and Egon Henning, USHMMA, RG-15.014M, Sondergericht Hohensalza records, 1940-1943, Reel 2, Group Od. Nr. 400, do nr. 454, 1941, docs. 32-35.

<sup>24</sup> Strafsache against Ludwig Henning and Egon Henning, USHMMA, RG-15.014M, Sondergericht Hohensalza records, 1940-1943, Reel 2, Group Od. Nr. 400, do nr. 454, 1941, docs. 32-35.



Jewish.<sup>25</sup>

Both of these cases reveal the importance of the clause in the law concerning whether or not an accused person knew the woman he was with was Jewish, and they support the idea that this clause was important enough to let the large number of officers found with Jewish women in the Hotel Bristol to go unpunished. But what is more interesting is whether this clause was really important to those at the top of command who put it in the law or if the clause was there only as an out, as a way to “save face” if such scandals occurred. It is clear that the clause was important to the people lower in command writing up each case report. In the two cases above, much time was spent carefully outlining all of the evidence to determine if the accused was actually ignorant of the fact that the woman was Jewish. But that does not mean the clause was actually important to those higher in command. Still, had that clause not existed and the officers could not plead ignorance, the Nazi leadership would have had to punish all of them. Without this clause to justify non-punishment, unless they wanted to look completely powerless and ridiculous, they would have had to punish.

The other interesting aspect of this example from the Hotel Bristol is that the ratio of Jews to men is extremely high. Thirty-four Jewish women in forty rooms could not have been a random pick from the civilian population. It really does suggest that the officers, despite their knowledge of the laws (or because they were well aware of the “just plead ignorance” clause), purposefully sought Jewish women out. More research needs to be done, of course, to verify how large a role the intrigue of the untouchables played.<sup>26</sup>

Nonetheless, there are many examples of Germans having sex with Jews, for example, in Poland, army commander Johannes Blaskowitz reported that an SS officer was living in an

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<sup>25</sup> Strafsache gegen Helmut Ruwell, USHMMA, RG-15.014M, Sondergericht Hohensalza records, 1940-1943, Reel 3, Group Nos. not provided, 1942, docs. 34-75.

<sup>26</sup> This certainly parallels the research completed on interracial sex in the U.S. south. I want to thank historian Mari Trine for pointing this out to me. An anecdote revealing the intrigue of “another kind” comes from a memoir: a German officer on a train to Berlin out of Russia sat down next to Marie Avinov in the dark, boldly felt her body up and down and said, “What luck for me, *Gnädige Frau!* I think Russian women are divine, the most enchanting in the world! They are clever, courageous and – ah, so beautiful! Roses in bloom, I call them. It has always been my dream to get to know a Russian woman real well. And now – ah, and by our general’s orders, too – if you would only condescend ... What bliss! Two days and two whole nights together!” In the morning, when he saw her (at this time a thin, “wan” middle-aged woman with graying hair) in the daylight Avinov writes that he “stiffened, his smile froze, and his face fell in disappointment and – I’ll admit – disgust.” Chavchavadze, *Marie*, 254-256.

apartment with a Jewish woman, which of course was prohibited.<sup>27</sup> Historian Omer Bartov mentions that the Twelfth Infantry Division reported that “lately women have been repeatedly found in the barracks. Those are almost always Jewish females...always women whose Jewish origin cannot be seen.”<sup>28</sup>

Frieda Frome, a Jewish author who wrote her memoirs just a couple of years after the war, reported a story of a German noncommissioned officer who was very willing to break the rules to have a sexual relationship. The German had been watching Frome while she worked (for the Germans), and at one point ordered her to go to his house to clean for him. She had no choice and went despite her fear. There, he asked if she wanted some of the cake that was on the table, but put his arms around her and made it clear there would be a price to pay. They struggled, she screamed a number of times, and at one point a man from outside shouted something. The German with Frome stopped then and started pushing her out of his apartment, yelling loudly that she was a thief. In retrospect, Frome wrote that she thought she did the right thing. She knew that many girls had decided to “eat the cake,” but were murdered after the Germans tired of them.<sup>29</sup> Throughout this dissertation there are many examples of Germans having forbidden sex with Jewish women or girls. Germans raped Jewish women and girls, and they had sexual intercourse with them in brothels, despite the rules explicitly forbidding sexual intercourse with females the Germans considered “inferior.”

Furthermore, as the example of the Hotel Bristol suggests, it was not only the rank and file who ignored the regulations. The notes from a judicial conference in May 1943 clearly indicate that leaders of the SS from all around the Reich knew that German military members were having forbidden sex, and they even observed that the prohibitions against sex were a reality merely on paper. The overall conclusion from the meeting was that the leadership deemed it urgent to bring about a change in the Reichsführer-SS's order, since the order was only

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<sup>27</sup> Notes for an oral report prepared by Blaskowitz, Feb. 6, 1940, NO-3011, quoted in Hilberg, *Destruction*, 191. (NO refers to Nuremberg documents (organizations of Nazi party and SS.) Researcher Alexander Rossino's argues that Blaskowitz's complaint that “the brutal activities of the SS disgusted German troops seems more an expression of his own opinion rather than genuine opposition among the rank and file.” Alexander B. Rossino, “Destructive Impulses: German Soldiers and the Conquest of Poland,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 11, no. 3 (1997): 356.

<sup>28</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 126.

<sup>29</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 64-68. She wrote that this kind of treatment of women and girls was not only true for the Germans, but also for Lithuanian partisans and the Russians as well.

theoretical.<sup>30</sup>

At that 1943 conference, SS-Sturmbannführer Greineder of the Leibstandarte SS "Adolf Hitler" (First Division of the Waffen SS, LSSAH) related that the men of the First Division of the Waffen SS had sex with women of other "races very, very often." This apparently was because the supply formations and other similar units employed many non-German women. According to the SS-Sturmbannführer, it could almost be described as a concubinage. SS-Sturmbannführer Pfau of the Division "Reich" said that the situation in his division was similar. SS-Sturmbannführer Heinz of the SS and police court (*Polizeigericht*) in Kiev, Ukraine was of the opinion that at least fifty percent of all SS and police members had violated the order banning sex with women in the east. Heinz knew of a case where the commander of the LSSAH allegedly had explained that for his units this law simply did not exist, that "this order was made by people who only knew about the problem theoretically." In other words, the commander himself ignored the regulations, knowing it was not realistic to enforce them.<sup>31</sup>

SS-Sturmbannführer Kaminski of the SS and police court in Russia-Middle (*Russland Mitte*) reported that SS-Obergruppenführer von dem Back turned a blind eye to Germans having sex with non-Germans, as he also does to the problem of § 175 (law against homosexuality). Someone had suggested to the Obergruppenführer von dem Back to therefore establish brothels, a solution that was to be used quite often in the east (see Chapter Four).<sup>32</sup>

SS-Hauptsturmführer Aumund of the Division "Reich" alleged that SS-Gruppenführer Krüger had ordered that legal punishments (*gerichtliche Bestrafungen*) for disobedience against the regulation concerning having sex with non-Germans were not in question. If discipline had to be enforced, then it would be done only on paper to adhere to form. SS-Sturmbannführer Zentgraf of the police division reported that the procedure for the police division was the same. Thus, at least two SS leaders at this conference admitted to creating false paper trails for the

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<sup>30</sup> Feldkommandostelle, Vermerk, Betr.: Geschlechtsverkehr mit andersrassigen Frauen, 13 May 1943, BAB NS7/13, docs. 7-9. Also found in Zit. Nach Adalbert Rückerl (Hg.), NS-Prozesse. Nach 25 Jahren Strafverfolgung: Möglichkeiten - Grenzen - Ergebnisse, Karlsruhe 1971, S. 140, quoted in Birgit Beck, "Vergewaltigung von Frauen als Kriegsstrategie im Zweiten Weltkrieg?," in *Gewalt im Krieg. Ausübung, Erfahrung und Verweigerung von Gewalt in Kriegen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: A. Gestrich (Jahrbuch für Historische Friedensforschung, 1995), 43.

<sup>31</sup> BAB NS7/13, docs. 7-9.

<sup>32</sup> BAB NS7/13, docs. 7-9.

Third Reich.<sup>33</sup>

SS-Hauptsturmführer Siedel of the Second Brigade reported during this same meeting of SS officers that the troops were in total disagreement with the law and the punishment because the latter did not serve its intended purpose to end these kinds of relationships.

SS-Hauptsturmführer Sachs of the SS and police court in Krakau, Poland also agreed that the situation in the General Government was untenable in relation to the law against sex with non-German women and girls. A few careless ones were caught and punished, but the cunning men who continually broke the law or had steady relationships were not arrested and therefore also not punished. A suitable or just treatment could not be guaranteed. Sachs reported that for these reasons alone, the troops would never adhere to the rule.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the minutes from this conference of SS leaders also revealed that almost every leader of both the Cavalry E unit and the Cavalry Division were having forbidden sex with a Pole or other non-Germans. SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinz related to the others at the conference that on his way to the meeting he traveled through Warsaw, and had heard from leaders of the Cavalry-E Unit that they had come to some realizations about this problem. It was very frankly explained to him that the Reichsführer-SS had changed his mind about this matter, and also in regard to the abortion law. Accordingly, relationships and sex were allowed, but there were not to be any “consequences.” If there were consequences, then an abortion was to be performed.<sup>35</sup>

To close the meeting, according to the minutes taken, SS-Standartenführer Dr. Reineke summed up the opinion that clearly the law against sex with women of other “races” existed only on paper, and that it should be repealed. SS-Gruppenführer Breithaupt explained that he would discuss this problem with the Reichsführer-SS at their next meeting. The notes from this meeting of SS officers reveal the total disregard of the regulations prohibiting sex with non-Germans or allegedly “inferior” women and girls even by the SS. The military members wanted sex, and they were getting it, often by flaunting a law that was impractical and typically unenforced. One person suggested the men visit brothels, others admitted to ignoring the rules, two SS leaders admitted to falsifying papers to allege their compliance with official procedures of discipline in these matters, but no one discussed how to enforce these rules. There seemed to have been

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<sup>33</sup> BAB NS7/13, docs. 7-9.

<sup>34</sup> BAB NS7/13, docs. 7-9.

<sup>35</sup> BAB NS7/13, docs. 7-9.

complete agreement that the rules were a reality only on paper.<sup>36</sup>

Another aspect of the regulations surrounding sex with people other than Germans was that there was confusion throughout the war about which people were forbidden as sexual partners, because the definitions were unclear, and also because the rules tended to change. On one occasion in 1941, the Reichsführer-SS made it clear that he wanted to see all cases that involved members of the SS having sex with Russians, Ukrainians, “etc.” though he did not indicate in this memo how many cases he had already seen.<sup>37</sup> Despite Himmler’s emphasis, throughout the war there was confusion about which kinds of women the Waffen SS were allowed to choose as sexual partners. In one letter, SS-Sturmbannführer Dr. Klahre wrote to the Main Department of the SS court (*Hauptamt SS-Gericht*) in München asking for clarification. Klahre wrote that he understood that sexual intercourse was forbidden with Poles and Czechs, but asked if it was also forbidden with Ukrainians and Russians. He thought it was forbidden with the Russians, but wanted clarification on the Ukrainian case, since their position in the fight against Bolshevism at times had been favorable to the German position, indicating that politics, not just “race” may have influenced the regulations on sex. Klahre reminded the court in his letter that sex with Ukrainian nationals for members of the Waffen SS and police was not forbidden before World War II in the General Government.<sup>38</sup> The terse answer he received was that Ukrainian women also fell under the term “women of another racial population.”<sup>39</sup>

Another memo from the Reichsführer-SS noted that while sex with Croatian women was allowed for members of the SS and police (*grundsätzlich nicht verboten*), it needed to be clarified if this included “racially inferior” Croatians (*rassisch minderwertigen Kroatinnen*), and if so, then how was one supposed to know the difference between the two groups of Croatians.<sup>40</sup> The answer to this question was that the Reichsführer-SS had decided that sex with Croatian

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<sup>36</sup> BAB NS7/13, docs. 7-9.

<sup>37</sup> Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb.Nr. AR/568/51, Führer-Hauptquartier, Letter from Himmler to Bender, October 1941, BAB NS7/265, doc. 17.

<sup>38</sup> Dr. Klahre SS-Sturmbannführer, St. Qu., Abschrift, Betrifft: Geschlechtsverkehr mit Ukrainerinnen und Russinnen, 24 November 1941, BAB NS7/265, docs. 26-27.

<sup>39</sup> Der SS-Richter beim Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei, Tbg. Nr. 210/41 geh., Im Felde, 28 December 1941, BAB NS7/265, doc. 28.

<sup>40</sup> Der Reichsführer-SS Hauptamt SS-Gericht, Ia. 128 Nr. 3, Prien a.Ch., 5 January 1945, BAB NS7/265, doc. 29.

females was not forbidden for members of the SS and Police, and that sex with “racially inferior” Croats simply was not desirable (*nur unerwünscht sei*).<sup>41</sup> SS-Oberführer Bender passed the information on to his associates that they could have sex with all Croats, including those who were “racially inferior,” even though that was difficult to differentiate.<sup>42</sup> Only adding to the confusion, one document from Himmler is an order to lift the ban against having sex with Estonians and Latvians in September 1943, but to keep the ban against sex with Lithuanians in place. This was because the Lithuanians were “a people which behaved badly and had little racial worth.”<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, it is clear that even those involved were not sure of the regulations, and that the regulations changed throughout the war.

The evidence shown thus far clearly indicates that there was a significant amount of contact between the Germans and those they occupied in the east. Furthermore, the German leadership knew that much of this contact was sexual, despite regulations against having sexual intercourse with “racially inferior” people. Many German military members, rank and file soldiers, as well as officers in the army, SS officers and members of the police, broke the regulations, and at least some of the German leadership regarded the sexual laws with little respect. In addition, part of the sexual behavior probably was related to the large amounts of alcohol consumed by the occupiers.

### **Alcohol and Animosity**

Alcohol played a large role in the behavior of soldiers on the eastern front, and it helped fuel people’s animosity already present in war-torn eastern Europe. It not only was something that many men used as a way to pass time, but it also helped people cope with their day-to-day existence during the war. German officials often warned against the dangers of

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<sup>41</sup> Graf von Korff, SS-Sturmabführer an SS-Oberführer Bender, Birkenwald, 21 January 1945, BAB NS7/265, doc. 30.

<sup>42</sup> Tgb.Nr.VI 676/44 g Be/Wi. Feldkommandostelle, 29 January 1945, BAB NS7/265, doc. 31.

<sup>43</sup> Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb.Nr. II 56/43 Aol5, Feld-Kommandostelle, 8 September 1943, BAB NS19/382, doc. 130. Himmler did not clarify in this memo if the ban was lifted only for SS members or also for members of the Wehrmacht. See also Telegram to the Reichsführer SS Persönlicher Stab. Z.HD. V. SS-Ostuf. Brandt, 26 August 1943, BAB NS19 382, docs. 128-129.

alcohol, which suggests that the men used it frequently.<sup>44</sup> References to SS guards in concentration camps being drunk are numerous, and memoirs and other kinds of testimonies often comment on the large amounts of alcohol consumed by people, especially men, on the eastern front. Members of the SS and the Wehrmacht used alcohol to participate in the murders of the thousands of civilians.<sup>45</sup> Historian Birgit Beck found in her comparison of rape cases on the eastern and western fronts that alcohol was involved in many cases.<sup>46</sup> The German records of a highly visible rape of a Polish woman by two Germans, Oskar Schulz and Karl Kurowski, also described great detail about the large amounts of alcohol involved.<sup>47</sup> Historian Geoffrey J. Giles found in his research of Nazi homophobia that “Hundreds of defendants blamed their [homosexual] sexual activity on the effects of drink.”<sup>48</sup> Still, even though some sexual offenders (or men accused of homosexual activity – a crime) may have exaggerated how much alcohol they drank with the hopes of getting a lighter sentence, other evidence suggests that alcohol certainly was involved in many crimes of sexual violence. In addition to the many reports documenting the

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<sup>44</sup> One of many examples is a brochure (*Merkblatt*) dated 6 June 1942 on the behavior of German soldiers in the occupied eastern territories. Among other warnings, it states that alcohol should not be abused. See USHMM, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 80, doc. 25. In one monthly report, alcohol and drunkenness was the contributing factor in twenty percent of military discipline cases in Lublin. See OFK 372 Abt.Ia – Nr. 1543/43 geh. an Wehrkreiskommando Generalgouvernement Spala, Monatsbericht, p. 8, St.Qu.Lublin, 26 March 43, RG 242, T 501, R. 217, Fr. 311-31.

<sup>45</sup> References to drunken Germans are frequent in the many testimonies from Slavic and Baltic peoples found in *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry*. A few examples follow: “The Germans' drunken orgies were terrible” (p. 80); “But suddenly [Weiss] came up to us, drunk, and said, 'You are the only ones ever to visit Ponary and return home'” (p. 249); “On the morning of 2 March 1942 cars filled with Gestapo agents pulled up to the ghetto; among them was Obersturmführer Schmidt, who was completely drunk” (p. 122); “The terrible, unprecedented pogrom] lasted from 28 July until 1:00 P.M. on 31 July. During their brief pauses the executioners drank and caroused” (p. 127); “The drunken Hattenbach, Richter, Rade, and others would pronounce the sentence: 'Cut off the nose and ears,' 'Beat them to death with fists and whips,' and so on” (p. 130); “Before the eyes of mothers, who either fainted or went insane, the drunken Germans and policeman raped young girls without a trace of shame either in front of each other or in front of onlookers” (p. 130); “The guards were getting drunk for the holiday occasion, and the singing and shouting of the drunken Germans drowned out the sounds made by the escapees” (p. 323); “Gestapo men were drinking on the other side of the wall all night long. The main staircase smelled of vodka and beer” (p. 358); “All the murderers were drunk” (p. 362); “There were many drunken soldiers” (p. 366); “On the other side of the wall drunken Germans are carousing, screaming, yelling, singing in their coarse voices” (p. 367); “Half an hour later the commander of the SS unit showed up completely drunk” (p. 382). Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*.

<sup>46</sup> Beck, “Rape,” 259.

<sup>47</sup> Strafsache gegen Oskar Schulz and Karl Kurowski, USHMM, RG-15.014M, Records of the Sondergericht Hohensalza (Inowrocław), Institute of National Memory, Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation, Warsaw, Reel 2, Group Od nr. 51, do nr 100, 1941, docs. 1-17.

<sup>48</sup> Geoffrey J. Giles, “The Institutionalization of Homosexual Panic in the Third Reich,” in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, ed. Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 247.

drunkenness of the soldiers in Latvia, there are also many from Poland.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, historian Omer Bartov reports that a large number of the cases of disciplinary offenses by the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division “had been caused by drunkenness.”<sup>50</sup> Historian Christopher Browning has demonstrated how alcohol helped German soldiers commit atrocities day after day.<sup>51</sup> Historian Christian Streit mentions that alcohol rations were increased to help the men at the Stalags cope.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, alcohol was a coping mechanism for millions of military members on the eastern front during the war.

However, it was not only the Germans who used alcohol on the eastern front: partisans, Red Army members, and local police forces also used alcohol to cope. In his study of the local police in Belorussia and Ukraine, historian Martin Dean repeatedly mentions that the police were drinking.<sup>53</sup> The head of a Russian wartime welfare committee, Oleg Anisimov, observed in his many travels throughout the German occupied territories that among the local administration and members of the German military government there was much graft and corruption, and that “drinking parties followed each other in close succession. In many respects the whole situation bore a haunting resemblance to the conditions described in Gogol’s ‘The Inspector General.’”<sup>54</sup> Frieda Frome, survivor, wrote her memoirs shortly after the war and mentioned that Lithuanian guards were drunk when they tortured prison inmates.<sup>55</sup> The Red Army consumed massive amounts of alcohol as it fought in extraordinary conditions against the Germans. Veteran officer Lev Kopelev recorded that “the constant inebriation from all the cognacs, schnapps and liqueurs, and the biting smoke of those powerful cigars, seemed to steady us against the nastiness of what

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<sup>49</sup> Just one example of this is a document reporting drunkenness involved in various crimes: OFK 372, Abt. Ia Nr. 359/41, An Militärbefehlshaber im Gen.Grouv., Spala, p. 4 of report, St. Qu., 21 December 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1017.

<sup>50</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 27.

<sup>51</sup> Browning, *Ordinary*.

<sup>52</sup> Streit, ‘Die Behandlung der sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen’, p. 210, quoted in Regina Schulte, *Sperrbezirke, Tugendhaftigkeit und Prostitution in der buergerlichen Welt*, 2nd ed. (Hamburg: 1994), 196.

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, Chapter Four in Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941-44* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 2000).

<sup>54</sup> Anisimov, *German Occupation*, 21.

<sup>55</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 35-36.



was going on all around.”<sup>56</sup> Russian survivor and memoirist Nina Markovna wrote that the Soviet soldiers who took Feodosia by surprise with its 1941 nighttime invasion had a drunken orgy of rape for a couple of days after the initial military sweep of the city.<sup>57</sup> Historian Antony Beevor writes that the Red Army soldiers were often primed with alcohol.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, the use and abuse of alcohol was a widespread phenomena, especially among armed men, and it significantly contributed to the amount and the kinds of crimes they committed.

Furthermore, alcohol was not used only to commit mass murder or fight for long lengths of time under great duress. It was also used by many to pass the time and to evade emotions that the realities of war and occupation produced in them. This is evident in police cases and other disciplinary reports from German-occupied Latvia which give a sense of how often alcohol was involved in ordinary disturbances. Police cases from German-occupied Latvia show that life, most often during the evenings, was not safe because of the offenses people committed, often when they were under the influence of alcohol.<sup>59</sup> The following examples were not isolated events, and the notes German authorities wrote about the loss of discipline and drunkenness among military members reveal this. One report from April 1943 complains about the lack of discipline among the Latvian troops and states that “everywhere there are complaints” that these members were drunk and roaming the streets. In Ludzas (Ludsen), there was a Latvian battalion with little discipline and they were often drunk.”<sup>60</sup> A handwritten report translated from Latvian into German, stamped August 26, 1942, discusses two incidents of intoxicated men roaming the streets and causing trouble in Liepaja. In the first incident, two of the men were in German soldiers’ uniforms, but they spoke Latvian. In the second incident one of the men was in

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<sup>56</sup> Kopelev also refers to the comforting effects of nicotine: “Our German anti-Fascists were startled to see us Russians taking deep drags at the cigars; you’re not supposed to inhale, they said. But we went on treating these cigars as though they were our own cheap makhorka.” Lev Kopelev, *No Jail for Thought*, trans. Anthony Austin (London: Secker & Warburg, 1975), 53.

<sup>57</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 218-225.

<sup>58</sup> Beevor, *Berlin*, 30.

<sup>59</sup> There are many documents about the black market of alcohol. For many examples, see USHMM, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, especially Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 204.

<sup>60</sup> Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Ostland, Kommandeur Heeresstreifendienst (Aufgabengebiet Gen.z.b.V.) Az.XVIII Br.B.Nr.197/43, geheim, Bericht Nr. 6, Riga, 10 April 1943, USHMM, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 80, doc. 47.

a German uniform, and the other in civilian clothes. Both spoke Latvian.<sup>61</sup>

However, it was not only the so-called “voluntary” troops who were roaming the streets intoxicated. One report from Liepaja describes an incident where there were three men, a German soldier, Feldwebel Borowsky, with two civilians, who were banging on three different houses on Straut street because they were intoxicated and looking for prostitutes. No one answered the doors, and so they started shooting in the air. Then they proceeded to shoot through three windows on another street.<sup>62</sup>

The Germans were concerned about the image they portrayed to those they occupied, and this is revealed in several different ways. Here and in subsequent chapters it will become clear how important that image was in cases of homosexual relationships, other forbidden sexual relationships, rape, and in the running of German military brothels. The importance of image is also evident in the cases on file from Latvia of drunkenness and of crimes such as robbery or assault. For example, on April 9, 1942, a letter from the office of the Reichsminister for the Occupied Eastern Territories addressed to several German officials noted that it had been reported that Germans were whipping and beating the Latvian population as a method of discipline. This behavior, according to the Reichsminister office, was unworthy of Germans, and it made the Germans look less worthy of the Latvians’ respect and hurt their relationship with the Latvian population.<sup>63</sup> A member of the police, Schöneck, wrote up a report against the military German man Fesch (also spelled Tesch) because he jumped over several rows of seats in the theater trying to get a spot. Schöneck noted that his behavior had tarnished the image of the German Wehrmacht.<sup>64</sup> The report mentioned above from April 1943 which stated that there were complaints everywhere about the drunkenness of the Latvian troops went on to say that by doing so, the men were damaging the image of their formations, and consequently the image of the

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<sup>61</sup> Gefreiter Janis Fridenborgs, Handwritten translation from Latvian to German, Libau, 26 August 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 200, doc. 75b.

<sup>62</sup> Report addressed to Herrn Chef der Schutzpolizei, No 153/III, Liepaja, Latvia, 13 October 1941, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 206, docs. 1-2.

<sup>63</sup> Meyer, Gauleiter und Reichsstatthalter, Der Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete, I/17/42, Abschrift, Riga, 9 April 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 80, doc.18.

<sup>64</sup> Schöneck, Oberw.d.Sch, Schutzpolizei-Dienstabetilung, Libau, 5 January 1943, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, doc. 254.

Wehrmacht as well.<sup>65</sup>

In many police cases the animosity between the occupied and the occupiers is evident, even when there was no alcohol mentioned. A commandant in Riga wrote in November 1942 that the number of clashes between German soldiers and Latvian civilians had increased. According to the note, Latvians had taken advantage of the dark, had attacked Germans who were walking alone and had shot at the Germans.<sup>66</sup> In another case with several witness statements, apparently Latvian guards (*Schutzleute*) stopped a German and asked the Baltic German woman he was escorting for her identification, which she did not have. While they were talking, the German man tried to interfere, but he was shoved aside. Apparently the Latvians said things like, “just because you are with a German we will take you in!” and “there will come a time when the Germans will flee.”<sup>67</sup>

Gefreiter Höfner apparently threatened a “female person” with a pistol in April 1942, though no other details are given.<sup>68</sup> Further, it was reported on November 11, 1942 in Liepaja that a local Latvian woman, Meta Widucks, insulted two German Wehrmacht soldiers, Obergefreite Oskar Peters and Obergefreiter Jakob Bohsmann. Widucks told them, “my husband is a Communist, and you guys are pigs.” She kicked one of them and hit the other. Although the men then grabbed her, Widucks managed to escape through the window “into the darkness.” Here, too, nothing is stated about the alcohol, but the animosity between the Germans and Latvians is apparent.<sup>69</sup> Finally, on January 4, 1943, a member of the security police, Schöneck, was on his way to work in the early evening when he saw three “Latvian male persons” on the corner urinating. Schöneck told them that their behavior was improper, and they laughed at him.

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<sup>65</sup> USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 80, doc. 47.

<sup>66</sup> Meister d. Schutzpolizei, Kommandant des Sicherungsgebietes Lettland, Abt. Ia/Ia/Nr.3978/1724/42 geh., Abschrift, Riga, 23 November 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 80, doc. 28.

<sup>67</sup> Case documents of three Latvian soldiers Paunzemis, Marzintens, and Arents, Libau, April 1943, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 200, docs. 91-96b.

<sup>68</sup> Rev.-Oberwachtm.d.Sch., Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Libau, 25 April 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, doc.153-153b. No alcohol is mentioned.

<sup>69</sup> Wachtm.d. Sch., Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Bericht, Libau, 7 November 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, doc. 242. Other examples of animosity between Latvians and German military men: Lemke, Hauptwachtmeister d. Sch., Abschrift, Libau, 13 May 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 168-168b; A mad Wehrmacht soldier swore at a Latvian “You (people) are all shitheads, kiss my ass” (*Ihr seid alle Scheißer, leckt mich am Arsch*) in Liepaja, March 1943: USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, doc. 276. These reports do not mention if alcohol was involved.

Schöneck reported the first and last names, nationalities, birthdates, and addresses of the three offenders.<sup>70</sup>

In the reports where the presence of alcohol is mentioned animosity also was very evident between locals and Germans.<sup>71</sup> In one example from Estonia, a couple of intoxicated Estonians had screamed insults to Germans. One yelled “To the devil with the Germans!” (*geben wir jetzt dem Teufel, dem Deutschen*) and hit a German in the face.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, group of intoxicated, young Latvians apparently caused trouble for the Germans late one evening in March 1943. According to the report, the group escaped but there was some shooting.<sup>73</sup> Another example of conflict probably enhanced by alcohol is from the military member Wolfgang Jaeger, who was very intoxicated one evening in April 1942 when he entered the Kino Palast in the Korn Street without an entrance ticket. Naturally Jaeger was asked to provide a ticket, and he answered that he was a German and could do what he wanted. According to the report, the Latvians present did not respond. Muchalowski, a member of the security police (*Schutzpolizei*), was on duty at the time, and he led Jaeger out of the theater to the street, where the latter “scandalized.”<sup>74</sup>

There are a couple of examples of conflicts between women and men as well, often, but not always, involving a German man and a Latvian woman. In April 1942 an intoxicated German Wehrmacht soldier in Liepaja followed a Latvian woman to her apartment, started to make a scene and was beating on the furniture.<sup>75</sup> Another example from a police report states that in

<sup>70</sup> Schöneck, Oberw.d.Sch., Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Libau, 5 January 1943, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 253-253b. Another conflict between German and Latvian military members from March 1943 can be found: Sohr, Polizei-Revier, Bericht, Libau, 15 March 1943, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, doc. 275.

<sup>71</sup> For a conflict between intoxicated Germans and Latvians in Liepaja, August 1942, see USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 214-214b. An intoxicated Latvian apparently threatened a German Gefreite in Liepaja, September 1942: Falk, Obw.d.Sch., Abschrift, Libau, 7 September 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 220-221.

<sup>72</sup> Der Generalkommissar in Reval Koide 1942-44, 9 March 1944, ESA, Fond R65s, Opis 1s, Del 1380.

<sup>73</sup> Hauptwachman Lietzau, Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Bericht, Libau, 22 March 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 279-279b. A member of the security police reported that an intoxicated Latvian man suddenly shot his pistol one evening. He was arrested. See USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 280-280b.

<sup>74</sup> Muchalowski, Rev. Obw.d.Sch. Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Bericht, Libau, 18 April 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, doc. 144.

<sup>75</sup> Oberw. der Schp., Bericht, Libau, 26 April 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, doc. 152. A somewhat humorous story of animosity between occupied and occupiers comes from a Ukrainian woman I interviewed: “When I was in Kymeiki and I was wounded I was told that there was a well in a corner of town.

September 1942 a “very intoxicated” Latvian Unteroffizier harrassed a German woman and succeeded in ripping her jacket.<sup>76</sup>

The Germans fought among themselves as well. In May 1942 a drunk German, Steuermann Ackermann from the German Dampfer “Gordias,” harassed another German who was subsequently taken to the hospital.<sup>77</sup> In November 1942 a Frau Gräbener reported to the police that one evening while she walked with her two sons through Liepaja, a drunk Unteroffizier of the German Wehrmacht attacked them with a cane.<sup>78</sup> Apparently two other intoxicated Germans were “scandalizing” that same week in November in the Hotel Petersburger-Hof.<sup>79</sup>

Soldiers were intoxicated all over the eastern front, not only in the Baltic. Alcohol kept the men going under stressful conditions, helped the Wehrmacht and SS to murder, rape, take control of villages, or run the camps. Under the German occupation, there were periods of relative quiet, but even during times of reprieve from the violence, the men were still able to cope better with alcohol. Alcohol also helped the Red Army to keep moving west as the members experienced massive death and destruction, and references to the Red Army and intoxication are prevalent in documents from the war, memoirs, monographs, and other literature. Not only were the soldiers and officers able to commit atrocities more easily, but in all likelihood they would have been more willing to break rules to be sexual or to rape. As is evident in the next section, several of the sexual encounters were made under the influence of alcohol. Furthermore, many people, especially women and girls, knew that sexual gratification was important to those with more power than them, and therefore, they frequently offered themselves in a sexual manner in exchange for food or other essential goods. In the German occupied regions, in camp and non-

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Well, some Germans had an argument with the landlady or somebody, I don't know who. So it was said that there were some girls who came over to have a good time and [the girls] tied them up and they threw them down in the well.” No. 3, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>76</sup> Lietzau, Hauptw. D. Sch., Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Bericht, Libau, 8 September 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 222-222b.

<sup>77</sup> Hauptwachtman Hage, Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Abschreibung, Libau, 31 May 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 185-185b.

<sup>78</sup> Hauptwachtman Schor, Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Libau, 8 November 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, doc. 244.

<sup>79</sup> Burkhard, Rev. Oberw.d.Sch., Schutzpolizei-Deinstabteilung, Bericht (Abschrift), Libau, 15 November 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 246-246b.

camp settings, people suffered from starvation and watched as their friends and relatives perished due to deliberate German policies. In this kind of desperation, prostitution and prostitutional relationships thrived, and those with more power were willing to take advantage of the sexual opportunities which arose for them due to their privileged positions.

### German-Caused Starvation

In both the German occupied and non-occupied zones, Soviet and east European citizens perished from starvation, malnourishment, and cold. The traditional apologist argument among historians and others downplayed any starvation that occurred or linked it to more innocent factors, for example, starvation in the cities was argued to have been due to other factors, such as poor planning, bad weather, etc.<sup>80</sup> However, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, other scholars argued that the Germans instigated a deliberate policy of confiscation and starvation. Historian Rolf-Dieter Müller called what happened in the east a “deliberate extermination policy” (*bewußtpraktizierte Vernichtungspolitik*) in the form of a hunger strategy (*Hungerstrategie*), though he was unsure about the extent of starvation among the civilians.<sup>81</sup> Historian Karel Berkhoff writes that the “Nazi German regime implemented a ruthless starvation policy vis-à-vis the population of Kiev that achieved significant success.”<sup>82</sup> Memoirs, novels, and oral interviews document how the Germans stole people’s only means of survival – their grain and other food, chickens or any large animals they possessed, such as cows or pigs. In addition, the Germans stole clothing boots, cooking utensils, and other important materials for survival. People desperately tried to hide whatever they had. Almost all of the people I interviewed in the Cherkassy region of Ukraine told me about how the Germans stole all their food. Many still cried about this, and it was very apparent that they had suffered tremendously because of this lack of

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<sup>80</sup> For example, two scholars who, for a variety of reasons, downplay the famine in Kiev are John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 3rd ed. (Englewood: Ukrainian Academic Press, 1990); Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945: A Study in Occupation Policy*; Mulligan, *Politics*. For a discussion, see Karel Berkhoff, "Hitler's Clean Slate: Everyday Life in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine, 1941-1944," (Toronto: 1998), 144ff.

<sup>81</sup> Müller, "Das Scheitern der wirtschaftlichen 'Blitzkriegsstrategie'."; Müller, "Raub, Vernichtung, Kolonisierung: Die deutsche Wirtschaftspolitik in den besetzten sowjetischen Gebieten 1941-1944."; Schulte, *German Army*, 86-116; Streit, *Keine Kameraden*.

<sup>82</sup> Berkhoff, "Hitler's Clean Slate," 144. Also see Berkhoff's forthcoming book based on his dissertation.

sustenance.<sup>83</sup>

Under the German occupation, it is impossible to quantify exactly how many people perished from hunger, but presumably millions did, and this was the intent of the Germans. In his monumental work on White Russia, historian Christian Gerlach discusses a document dated February 1942 from economic inspector General Weigand, who claimed that starving people were not to be found. Another document from the same month, however, claimed that indeed at this time there were starving people in Minsk.<sup>84</sup> Gerlach also mentions an early document from the Reich which stated that by the third year of the war the entire Wehrmacht should be fed by Russia, even though this would surely mean that “uncountable millions (*zig millionen*)” of people would starve.<sup>85</sup> Another example comes from the head of the civil administration in Ukraine, Erich Koch, who was known for his hatred of Ukrainians and who stated in August 1942 that Ukraine must be exploited so that Germany could be fed: “In view of this task [of supplying Germany with food] the feeding of the Ukrainian civilian population is of absolutely no concern.”<sup>86</sup>

Historian Christian Streit found that the German leadership repeated to the rank and file soldiers that when they saw starving people in the east they were to remember to not give even a gram of bread to the local population because this would deprive the German people.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, in his detailed study of three German military divisions in the east, historian Omer Bartov documented how the Germans went to the east with very few supplies and with the orders that they were to live off the land, despite the poverty in the east and despite the starvation that this would cause. The Germans justified these deliberate actions on the grounds that the Russians

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<sup>83</sup> Interviews by author in Cherkassy region of Ukraine, 1998. Also see Barber and Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941-1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II*, especially 86-90.

<sup>84</sup> [WiRüAmt.] Stab Ia, Niederschrift über die Besprechung mit den Inspektoren Ost v. 23.2.1942, BA-MA (BarchP)F 42743, Bl. 586 [n.379], Kube an Lohse v. 6.2.1942, IfZ Fb 104/2 [n. 380], quoted in Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999), 289.

<sup>85</sup> Aktennotiz über Ergebnis der heutigen Besprechung mit den Staatssekretären über Barbarossa v. 2.5.1941, in: IMT, Bd. 31, S. 84 [n.55], quoted in Gerlach, *Kalkulierte*, 46.

<sup>86</sup> International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, 42 vols. (Nuremberg, 1947-0), 25: 317-18. Translated by Roman Waschuk. Koch's speech was included in a secret, unsigned note about a conference held in Rivne on 26-28 August. This document is also published in Yuri Boshyk, ed., *Ukraine During W.W.II: History and its Aftermath, A Symposium* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), 180.

<sup>87</sup> Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, 162.

and other Slavic peoples were “inferior” (*Untermenschen*) and not worthy of life.<sup>88</sup>

The Germans’ priority was their comfort and well-being at the fatal expense of so many others. Marie Avinov tells in her memoir how the people of Vyazna, in the Smolensk Province of Russia, were near starvation after having lived under the Germans. There, while the Russians starved, the Germans had painted the walls and ceilings of their new offices in the former city hall, expecting to stay a long time.<sup>89</sup>

Another reason for the starvation in the cities was the German ban on travel. In his research, Oleg Anisimov found that in northern Russia the retreating Red Army had destroyed all reserve food supplies, and that the Germans looted whatever remained. To receive authorization from the German occupiers to leave one’s town was extremely difficult, and this prevented the townspeople from the only remaining way of obtaining food. In “times of trouble” it was common to travel to the countryside and barter one’s personal goods with the peasants in exchange for food. According to Anisimov, early in the occupation in northern Russia it was only possible to obtain enough food by working for the German administration.<sup>90</sup>

If one compares the large scale epidemics of disease and starvation in the German occupied regions with the unoccupied parts of the Soviet Union where this was not the case (despite people’s hardships), it is evident that the Germans did not try to prevent the starvation of millions of Russians and other Soviet citizens. From the onset of the German occupation, people began to suffer from malnourishment which quickly led to the spread of disease and to many deaths due to people’s weakened physical conditions. The Soviet authorities quickly set up sanitation stations throughout the unoccupied areas, often on trains, to check people for diseases, and put a widespread immunization program into effect. In addition, the national budget for healthcare was increased dramatically to help combat the wartime shortages of medicine, supplies, and doctors. Because of these great efforts, there were no large-scale epidemics except in the German occupied territories where epidemics of disease and starvation were not uncommon.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 129-141. Also see Lucas, *War*, 15.

<sup>89</sup> Chavchavadze, *Marie*, 243.

<sup>90</sup> Anisimov, *German Occupation*, 27.

<sup>91</sup> Barber and Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941-1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II*, 87-89.



Historian Karel Berkhoff fully discusses the hunger and deprivation due to German policies, having found documents attesting to the deliberate policy of starvation implemented by the German army in the east from the beginning of the German-Soviet war. Göring, who was an enthusiastic supporter of depriving civilians of food, said “The fate of the large cities, especially Leningrad, is entirely alien to [me]. This war will witness the greatest starvation since the Thirty-Years’ War.”<sup>92</sup> The Germans attempted to prevent any food from entering Kiev, and they banned delivery of food to the stores. Already by the fall of 1941 the city was starving:

Kiev was a dead city. Besides Germans and policemen, one rarely met a passer-by in the street. Those whom I happened to see were all mainly disabled old men and women. Emaciated or swollen from hunger, they roam the streets, going from house to house, searching for charity. Kiev has become a city of beggars...Walking on Kirov Street, I saw worn and dirty men, women, and children. They begged anyone getting closer to them for charity, but did not receive it. There I also came across people who were lying and sitting; they were so emaciated that they were unable to move.<sup>93</sup>

Likewise, Anatoly Kuznetsov also attests to the same grim pictures of starvation in Kiev in his work on the atrocities committed at Babi Yar.<sup>94</sup>

Reports from Krakau stated that the civilian population did not have enough food to meet minimum existence requirements.<sup>95</sup> Children, pregnant women, and the elderly all suffered terribly because of deliberate German policies: one report related how starving civilians begged the Germans either for relief or to be shot.<sup>96</sup> During the blockade of Leningrad, cannibalism was a large problem, and a separate department was set up to deal with the crime, referred to as “banditism.” About fifteen hundred were arrested for cannibalism during the Leningrad ordeal, and most of them were “young, unemployed women...who were simply pursuing any means

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<sup>92</sup> Document from the Chief of Staff of WiStabOst, 13 November 1941, in Überschar, “Ausgewählte Dokumente,” pp.385-386, Author unknown, quoted in Berkhoff, “Hitler’s Clean Slate,” 157.

<sup>93</sup> Mikhail Iakovlevich Gerenrot, quoted in Chepurnoi, “Informatsiia o sostoianii raboty kievskoi podpol’noi organizatsii KP/b/U,” *Starobil’s’k*, 26 March 1943, TsDAHOU, f. 1, op. 22, d. 11,1.3., quoted in Berkhoff, “Hitler’s Clean Slate,” 161.

<sup>94</sup> Anatoly Kuznetsov, *Babi Yar: A Documentary Novel*, trans. Jacob Guralsky (New York: The Dial Press, 1967), 197.

<sup>95</sup> Kommandantur Krakau Abt.Ia Nr. /41, Monatsbericht, Krakau, p. 22, 19 November 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1167. Also see other monthly reports on this reel, for example, starting with Fr. 1238.

<sup>96</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 129-141.

possible to feed themselves and their children.”<sup>97</sup>

Elsewhere in occupied territory, the conditions were just as grim. Elena Kozhina remembers in her memoir how she and her family starved during the German occupation of Russia:

I heard a scream. It was such a scream...even I perked up, and weakly screamed something in reply. I tried to get up—but could not.

Mama ran out into the yard with Tanya in her arms. My little sister's head was lolling on Mama's shoulder, her eyes already closed. Only her tiny mouth was still moving, trying to open, gasping for air.

“My little bird! My little bird, don't fly away!”

And with her last remaining strength, Mama was raising Tanya's tiny body up, up to the blackened sky, full of smoke and thunder, as if there she might breathe easier.

“My little bird!”

But my little sister was already dead.<sup>98</sup>

Likewise, the Ukrainian woman who worked with me translating my Ukrainian interviews told me how her baby sister died because her mother had no milk for her. In her memoir, Tatjana Wassiljewa recorded how in the Russian village of Wyritya all the dogs disappeared, and how at one point she and her family stayed alive because her mother killed and made a soup out of their beloved cat, Mashka.<sup>99</sup> Researcher Uwe Gartenschläger studied the living conditions in Minsk, Belorussia and also found that food was difficult to obtain. Gartenschläger writes, “Throughout the occupation finding food remained a precarious activity. It is hard to estimate what this meant individually, but in general those without special connections, skills, luck, or items to trade fared poorly or simply starved.”<sup>100</sup>

Other examples also point to how those who were weaker, who were very often female, had a more difficult time obtaining food. Elena Skrzybina wrote in her diary about the hunger and how often women were left out of the supply lines. The bread ration in Leningrad had dropped to 125 grams for white-collar workers and dependents and 250 for manual laborers.

The potatoes ran out today. Our grain supply gave out earlier. It is impossible to get

<sup>97</sup> Bidlack, “Survival,” 99. It is odd that Bidlack writes of all kinds of survival strategies, including cannibalism, but does not mention prostitution. Also see Harrison Evans Salisbury, *The 900 Days: the Siege of Leningrad* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

<sup>98</sup> Elena Kozhina, *Through the Burning Steppe: A Wartime Memoir*, trans. Vadim Mahmoudov (New York: Riverhead Books, 2000), 43-44.

<sup>99</sup> Wassiljewa, *Hostage*, 12-13.

<sup>100</sup> Gartenschläger, “Living,” 17-18.

anything in the cooperatives by ration card. And the lines are colossal whenever anything edible does appear on sale, even if it's not very nourishing. The strong defeat the weak. Women almost never get into the stores. Sometimes the lines start at four in the morning.<sup>101</sup>

When an economy slows or evolves to an occupied wartime economy, women are the first to lose their income.<sup>102</sup> Often women have children to support, and with or without a partner, they still lose their employment. In sum, it is clear that due to deliberate German policies, people in the east were starving not long after the German invasion. Women especially were desperate and frantically searched for ways to keep themselves and their families alive.

### **Independent Prostitution**

Because of the extreme deprivation the Germans imposed on people throughout the Reich, but especially in the camps and in the occupied east, countless women and girls were desperate enough to prostitute themselves in an attempt to stay alive. At the beginning of World War II, the Nazis defined a prostitute as "a female person who has frequent sexual intercourse for a fee, who through her behavior openly invites this, and with this activity is able to entirely or for the most part support herself or others."<sup>103</sup> This definition does not include those whom the Germans enslaved as prostitutes, nor did it recognize German responsibility for pushing many females and some males into sex work. During World War II there were many forms of prostitution ranging from exchanging sexual favors for food or money to forced sexual slavery in general camp settings, in camp brothels, and in Wehrmacht, SS, and field brothels. Here we will look at street prostitution and prostitutional relationships, the latter of which an unknown number of people entered in camp and non-camp settings as a strategy to survive. Prostitution in German-regulated brothels will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Independent, or unregulated, prostitution flourished under the German occupation. Due to the nature of the topic, it is difficult to find memoirs or testimony from women or girls who prostituted themselves on the streets or in private brothels. However, evidence from the vantage

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<sup>101</sup> Elena Skrabina, *Siege and Survival: The Odyssey of a Leningrader* (Los Angeles: Pinnacle Books, 1971), 46.

<sup>102</sup> In contrast, during both World War I and World War II, the U.S. experienced boom economies, in which women became employed at a higher rate than prior to the wars, but the U.S. was not occupied territory.

<sup>103</sup> Der Reichsminister des Innern, Abschrift, Pols. S-Kr.3 Nr. 2217/39, Berlin, 9 September 1939, USHMM, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 237, doc. 18.

point of men does exist. For example, there are a large number of venereal disease case studies from Riga, Latvia, which provide some insight into sexual relations under the German occupation.<sup>104</sup> The documents, many of which I illuminate below, clearly indicate that soldiers, many of them German members of the Wehrmacht, were having sex with women or girls they had just met. The picture one gets from reading the files is almost surreal in contrast to what one would expect from reading the leadership's rules of conduct. Men roamed the streets at night looking for women, and when they found one, although they often did not admit to having paid her with cash or in kind, they admitted to having sex, on a bench, in a corner at the railroad station, on the street, or in an apartment. These kinds of meetings differ from prostitutional relationships in that they were probably one-time occurrences, although it is entirely possible that some of these infected men did have long term relationships with women, but did not provide this information to the authorities. A Gefreiter Henry Wilde told his doctor that a Russian woman, Alexi, was probably his source of syphilis, since she used to work in the garrison (*Soldatenheim*) where, "according to the patient, she knew everyone."<sup>105</sup> The derision in his comment about the woman reveals the lack of emotional intimacy in their encounter, and thus suggests that it could have been a prostitutional arrangement. Indeed, quite a few patients reveal very little about the sexual encounter, and some falsely accuse healthy woman of being the source of infection.

The doctors filled out standard forms (in different formats) as they asked patients questions about how they became infected with a venereal disease. In an attempt to find the alleged source of infection, i.e., the female, the doctor posed questions about her, such as where she lived, where she worked, and what she looked like. Often the forms indicate that the patient provided a relatively large amount of detail on how the woman was dressed. This could have been because many people only had one, two, or three outfits and were expected to wear the same thing many times. Therefore the doctors probably asked for detail, making her more likely to be caught by the German morality police, known as the *Sittenpolizei*. For most of the cases, the alleged source of infection probably was never found. If she was found, then she was forced to be checked for venereal diseases, and if she did have one, then she was forced to have treatment. Still, in quite a few of the cases, the doctor took great care in trying to figure out who

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<sup>104</sup> BAB R92/10036.

<sup>105</sup> Dr. Stöhl, Signed VD form, Riga, 25 November 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 252-253.

the alleged source of infection was, that is, the sex partner of the man.

The doctors also asked questions about sexual procedures that were required for most military men. The men were supposed to use a condom for all sexual intercourse, regardless whether the sexual intercourse was with a “forbidden” woman. Additionally, there were regulations concerning the process of sanitation. I will provide more detail in Chapter Three, but suffice it to say that sanitation was an uncomfortable procedure for the men. This was required for most military members in addition to the use of a condom, probably because a condom did not provide protection as good as it does today. Furthermore, these regulations were taken seriously by the German leadership because of the damage venereal disease could cause to their overall military capabilities. During World War II there was no penicillin to fight syphilis and gonorrhea, and therefore, the length of treatment was much longer than it is today.

Thus, the doctors also asked if the man had used a condom and if he had completed sanitation. Some men reported having used a condom, but most men did not sanitize after they had sexual relations. This was because it meant traveling to a sanitation station, often in a bus, and often across town. Most men would not want to go to such trouble, especially if they were intoxicated, which many of the men were, or if it were late at night. Some men alleged that they had sanitized themselves, but could not provide the sanitation verification form. Although many of the situations suggest prostitution, most of the men denied having paid for sex, though the doctor did not ask if the patient had paid in kind. These were the kinds of detailed questions the doctors posed.

It is not clear how my first example turned out, but the patient seemed to remember quite a bit, and he admitted to having sex with a woman who spoke broken German, most certainly implying that she was non-German. The patient did not provide the woman’s name, but claimed she had an apartment in Liepaja, was slim, had an oval face, blond hair, was about twenty years old, had a dark blue coat, no hat, and black shoes. They had sexual intercourse on May 9, 1943, at about ten in the evening in the train station. Although having sex in the train station hints at prostitution, the man reported that the sex was not paid for with money, but again it is not clear if payment had been in another form. There is a hand-drawn map on the questionnaire which explains exactly where the sex took place in relation to the main train station building: a structure somehow was attached to the train station, and on this part of the map is a dark dot. To the side is a miniature legend with the dot followed by the words “place of

intercourse” (*Ort der Verkehr*).<sup>106</sup> It is not certain if German officials ever used the map to locate the place where the sex took place or to question people at the scene. Indeed, it is not certain the woman was ever found, despite the care taken to draw the map.

Another man, Unterfeldwebel Wilhelm Brauch, remembered quite a bit about his sexual encounter, but this case also has no ending recorded. Brauch was infected with gonorrhea sometime in mid-December 1942, allegedly by a Lyvia (last name unknown). She lived in Riga on Gertrudes Street and apparently was like many of the women the Germans chose: 165 centimeters tall, slim, twenty-one years old with an oval-shaped face, gray-green eyes, lightly shaved eyebrows (*leicht rasierte augenbrauen*), blond half-length hair, waved and parted in the middle. She did not cover her head and wore a blue coat, a white blouse, and a blue skirt. She was Latvian, spoke broken German, and worked in an office. The patient did not sanitize himself after the sexual intercourse, but used a condom. He did not report himself to the doctor until the end of May 1943, and by this time he was in Vienna, Austria. In this case the doctor probably was concerned that the soldier and the woman had infected others between December and May. The health department in Vienna had sent the report to Riga with the hope of finding Lyvia.<sup>107</sup> It is not clear if the Germans ever found her.

More common seem to have been encounters where the soldier knew much less about the person he had been with. One soldier, R. Lübke, infected with “fresh” gonorrhea, knew that the woman was named Ursel, but did not know her last name. Lübke knew her general appearance: she was of medium height, about eighteen years old with an oval-shaped face, blue eyes, and she wore a gray coat. They met and had sexual intercourse on an unnamed street, at an unknown time. He did not pay her with money, and he gave the doctor no other details. The doctor hand-wrote that finding the woman was not possible.<sup>108</sup>

Yet another man, name unknown, could hardly remember anything about his sexual encounter. The questionnaire for his case is missing the first page, which probably had the information on the male patient. The second page shows the few details he could remember about his alleged source of infection. Translation of this form follows, and almost every blank of

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<sup>106</sup> Blatt 2 (only information on top, presumably from Liepaja, May 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 83.

<sup>107</sup> Vienna Health Department, STD report about Feldw. Brauch Wilhelm, 31 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 84-85.

<sup>108</sup> Dr. Scholz, Questionnaire for VD, Riga, 13 May 1943, BAB R92 10036, docs. 50-52.

the form was filled with “unknown” (*unbekannt*). The man knew that he met his partner in the theater, had sex on May 4, 1943, somewhere in Liepaja, and that he had not exchanged payment for the sex, but he knew – or admitted – nothing else.

- Page 2 -

I. Name: unknown First Name unknown

Apartment: Libau? [*Liepaja*] unknown

Height: unknown Face: unknown

Hair Color: unknown

Estimated Age: unknown

Eye Color: unknown

Other Details: (especially clothing):

unknown

II. More precise details about the sexual intercourse which led to infection:

a) Where did you meet: in the theater [*Kino*]

b) Time of the sexual intercourse: 4.5.43 [*May 4, 1943*]

c) Place of the sexual intercourse: Libau

d) Was the sexual intercourse done in exchange for payment:

no

III. Is there something about the position or profession of the infected one to report:

Patient cannot give any details.<sup>109</sup>

Similarly, in another form submitted to the health department in Riga dated May 20, 1943, a male gonorrhea patient, Kurt Thormann, reported that he did not know the first or last

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<sup>109</sup> Blatt 2 (only information on top, presumably from Liepaja, May 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 82.

name of his sexual partner. The doctor, Dr. Arnold Scholz, put in double question marks in these blanks. Then he underlined the typed line on the form and wrote, “Patient apparently does not want to give the name of the source” and “?!”. The patient alleged that his partner was in her late twenties, had an oval-shaped face, and wore dark clothes. They met “on the street” and had sexual intercourse at nine in the evening on May 12, 1943, in the woman’s apartment. The man admitted that he paid the woman, but the amount was not recorded on the form. Question marks were entered in the blanks for other information on the alleged source of infection.<sup>110</sup> Based on the details given, it is very likely the woman was never found.

In the following cases, the patients also remembered almost nothing, or at least that is what they told the doctor. Ottfried Steindecker named two women, Erika and Susie, but he was unable to provide their last names. In Liepeja Dr. Vedigs wrote to the chief doctor (*Leitender Arzt*) by the commissioner general in Riga that he was unable to find the women.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, Heinrich Böbbber, a member of the Navy, was allegedly infected by a Latvian. He did not use a condom, nor did he sanitize himself. The doctor wrote that Böbbber admitted that he met the woman while he was intoxicated so that he could only remember approximately what happened, and no more details than those that he provided.<sup>112</sup> Likewise, a Franz Schwarz, Flechter, claimed he was infected with gonorrhea from his experience on a park bench with a woman from Riga. He was unable to tell his doctor anything about his partner.<sup>113</sup> Another similar case was of the Obergefreiter Rudolf Thau who contracted syphilis allegedly from his sexual experience in the woods in Riga with an eighteen-year-old Latvian woman. Here too, is a hand-drawn map complete with legend explaining where the intercourse took place.<sup>114</sup> There is no evidence that the doctors made any headway in finding the alleged sources of infection in these cases.

In addition to adding to our knowledge of the widespread prostitution and the lack of adherence to the rules on the part of military men, other venereal disease cases from Riga reveal

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<sup>110</sup> Dr. Scholz, Handwritten questionnaire for VD, Riga, 20 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 67-68.

<sup>111</sup> Dr. J. Vedigs, Signed letter from the Sanitätsabteilung Libau to the Leitenden Arzt b. Generalkommissariat in Riga, No. 1245, 24 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 65.

<sup>112</sup> Unterarzt and Stationsarzt, Illegibly signed VD report sent to Chief Doctor of the General Kommissariat in Riga, 24 June 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 101-102.

<sup>113</sup> Venereal Disease form, Riga, 8 July 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 108.

<sup>114</sup> Stabsarzt, Signed Meldung über Geschlechtskranke, 14 September 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 218-219.



the extent to which officials went to find the alleged sources of infection. Unteroffizier Paul Witte had sex on July 4, 1943, with someone named Alma in the apartment of Feldwebel Mai. Witte was already in Marburg when he went to the doctor on July 14. The patient admitted the “successful infection was under the influence of alcohol.” He could not remember her last name, nor did he know where she lived. He thought she was between thirty and thirty-two years old. She had a small and healthy face, was 1.72 meters high, thin with dark blond hair, and good teeth. Witte used a condom, but did not complete sanitation. When asked why not, the patient answered that it was because he used a condom. Witte told the doctor that Mai, who owned the apartment in which the sex took place, knew the woman better, and the doctor therefore summoned Mai for questioning. Apparently there was no chance of another source, and Witte’s wife was already in the care of a doctor. She apparently was infected by her husband.<sup>115</sup>

One week later Dr. Marnitz received information from Marburg,<sup>116</sup> and on July 28 he requested Feldwebel Mai to report to him.<sup>117</sup> Mai called on the fifth of August to say that the woman’s full name was Alma M. and that she lived in the Hotel Saulite in Room 54. He also reported the case to the morality police in Riga who subsequently arrested Alma and brought her to the control station for an examination. If she was found to have an infection she would have been admitted to the hospital.<sup>118</sup> Unfortunately, there are no other documents to finish this dramatic story.

Some of the answers the patients provided are a bit difficult to consider seriously. For example, it is not clear how some of the patients remembered the exact heights of their partners. Witte, above, reported that his partner was 1.72 meters high. Brauch, also above, reported that his partner was 165 centimeters tall. Likewise, the doctor in charge of Cwanski, a case below, wrote that the patient’s partner was 160 centimeters tall. It is not clear how a man could remember so few details about the woman, but allegedly knew her exact height. It could suggest that none of what the patient claimed was true. Indeed, as in a couple of the examples above and

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<sup>115</sup> Venereal Disease Questionnaire, Marburg, 14 July 1943, signed illegibly, BAB R92/10036, docs. 161-162.

<sup>116</sup> Der Reichskommissar für das Ostland, Abteilung II, Gesundheit und Volkspflege, Memo to Dr. Marnitz, Riga, 22 July 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 163.

<sup>117</sup> Der Amtsarzt, Dr. Marnitz, Short letter to Feldwebel Mai, 28 July 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 164.

<sup>118</sup> Vermerk, illegibly signed, two separate notes, Riga, both dated 5 August 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 165.

below, the men who remembered any details about their partner for sexual activity, claimed she had been a tall, attractive woman who gave herself freely to the man. This could have been the truth, but it also could have been what the patient wished had been his reality.

One case is an example of how a large military and bureaucratic system could work against itself, with one end not knowing what the other end was doing. Gefreiter Heinrich Becker of the German air force was allegedly infected by a Russian, Sina-Ida, who, like the other alleged sources, was tall, thin, had dark brown hair and good teeth. Becker did not use any protection, nor did he sanitize himself. Apparently Sina-Ida spoke German well. The health and military authorities had a challenge finding her, because when Becker reported this woman as his source she had been “evacuated” and no longer lived on Pleskauer Street Number 41. The officials then began questioning when and with which train the alleged source of infection was transported.<sup>119</sup> It is not clear if the German officials in charge of finding sources of venereal disease found out to where other officials had evacuated the woman.

There were also several examples in the case files of possible non-German military members who must have been stationed in Riga. Sometimes the files state that the man is a *Hilfswilliger*,<sup>120</sup> but not always. Also, occasionally the name appears to be from a nationality other than German, but it would be difficult to track the names down and determine who the patient was. Even if their names could be researched, sometimes the soldiers or doctors used a different spelling than the actual person did. For example, there are several Latvian names that could also be German names. The only difference is a slight pronunciation and slightly different spelling. A German who did not know how to speak Latvian could have assumed the German pronunciation and spelling, and if the doctor was German it would have been even more likely that a German spelling would have been recorded. In a few cases, the correct spelling is noted. A few examples which have names that are not obviously German follow. In these cases, there are also a high percentage of false accusations of women who later were reported to have been healthy.

An Obergefreiter Franz Ciecholewski had sex in Lecava (Eckau) with someone possibly named Julie, who was slim, blond, had good teeth, and was thirty-one years old. She

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<sup>119</sup> Meldung über Geschlechtskranke, O.U., November 1943, signed Facharzt für Haut-u. Geschl.-Krankheiten with additional note on bottom Armeearzt beim AOK I8, R92/10036, doc. 262.

<sup>120</sup> The term implies being a volunteer for the German army, but this was not always the case. They often were Soviet POWs.

apparently was married to a fifty-year-old man and had a fifteen-year-old son. Sanitation was not performed, and condoms were not used. The doctor hand wrote that this case could not be solved.<sup>121</sup>

Erich Cwanski allegedly was infected with gonorrhea in March 1943 by a woman who was 160 centimeters tall, plump, dark blond, and lived in Riga at Jorks Street 28.<sup>122</sup> Perhaps because Cwanski was German and did not want to be caught breaking the laws regarding having sex with Latvians, he told the doctor that his sexual partner was Elfriede Reichmann, even though her name turned out to be Elfride S. (with a Latvian last name), though she did live at the address he had told. Despite finding this alleged source, the mystery continued because this woman was healthy.<sup>123</sup>

Oskar Mrocek accused a Wehrmacht brothel women, Gita, to be the source of infection for his disease. She was checked three times weekly and never found to be sick. The doctors wrote that it should be checked with which other women this man had been sleeping since she was never found positive with gonorrhea.<sup>124</sup> Another example of a false accusation is the case of Villi Patzke who falsely accused Else V. of being his source. Her name is spelled both starting with a “V” and with a “W” in the documents, indicating the difficulty with names and nationalities discussed above. After a forced examination, she too was found to be healthy.<sup>125</sup>

A syphilis patient, Schtz. Karl Kuschewski visited a woman in the Riga Wehrmacht Brothel, Room 24, who was approximately 155 centimeters tall, plump, light blond, and allegedly his source of infection. The woman was twenty-seven years old and had a full face, but the patient could not remember the color of her eyes. She wore a flowered summer dress, light colored stockings, and black sandals (*Halbschuhe*). Kuschewski had sex with her for fifteen Reichsmarks on the twenty-eighth of April 1943, at 5:10 in the evening. The doctor wrote that

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<sup>121</sup> Meldung über Geschlechtskranke, Riga, May 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 57.

<sup>122</sup> Oberstabsarzt, Letter to the Health Department in Riga, 30 March 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc.69.

<sup>123</sup> Typed letter to Herrn kommissarische Oberbürgermeister of Riga, 7 June 1943, signed Dr. H. Kirschentals, Director, BAB R92/10036, doc. 71.

<sup>124</sup> Wehrm.-Orts-Kommandantur Riga, Abt. Ivb – Standortarzt. Letter, Tageb. Nr. 3893/43, signed in Riga, Stabsarzt and Standortarzt, to the res. Lazarett 1167 in Berlin, 17 August 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 168.

<sup>125</sup> Series of documents begin with a Vermerk, signed by Betty Schmidt in Riga, 30 September 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 233-236.

this patient was believable,<sup>126</sup> but apparently the patient's accusation was proven false.

The next documents in the archive folder highlighted another false accusation of a Wehrmacht prostitute. Due to the order in the archive file, this could be the end of the Karl Kuschewski case, but it is not entirely clear. It states that on May 24, 1943, the Stabsarzt Trek was told that the head of the Wehrmacht brothel in Riga had called to say that the "girl" in question was examined and found to be healthy, free of any sexually transmitted diseases. Further, it had been found that the soldier who had named her as the source of infection had visited a different brothel in a private hotel (*Privathotel*) the day before his visit to the Wehrmacht brothel.<sup>127</sup> The false accusation would not have surprised the officials, though, since Wehrmacht brothels were the smallest sources of infection (unregulated prostitution being the largest).<sup>128</sup>

These case studies are only the highlights of what is available in the archive. Although each case is only a couple of pages in length, the information as a whole paints a picture of many women who were willing to sell their bodies to many German and other soldiers and officers. Because of the German occupation and the economic chaos it caused, the women and girls were desperate enough to sell their bodies to their occupiers. Many women prostituted themselves outside of official brothels in exchange for goods or money from military men. Even though some people had steady prostitutional relationships, either the man or the woman could spread venereal disease if they had other partners. Such prostitution very likely could have been a large source for the venereal disease problem, and the German leadership spent a lot of energy attempting to get unregulated prostitution under their control.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, despite the widespread exchanging of sex with goods, services, or even money, the men – for some reason –

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<sup>126</sup> Questionnaire for STDs, an den Lt. Arzt beim zuständigen General-Kommissariat in Lettland mit Sitz in Riga, signed by the Lt. Arzt der Kr. Abtl. III, Oberarzt, Tapiau, 19 May 1943 BAB R92/10036, docs. 62-63.

<sup>127</sup> Vermerk, Riga, 24 May 1943, illegible signature, also initialed typed note included, 26 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 64.

<sup>128</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 117, 122. There were some complaints elsewhere that the exams were not always correct. See Vgl. z. B. Bericht Oberfeldarzt Dr. Schmidt, Heeresgruppe C, Bundesarchiv / Militärarchiv H 20/148, [n. 37] and Vgl. z.B. Bericht Oberfeldarzt Dr. Schmidt, Heeresgruppe C, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/148, n37, and Anlage 14 der Richtlinien für die Einrichtung und Überwachung von Wehrmachtsbordellen in den besetzten Westgebieten, aa.O., [n. 38], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 149.

<sup>129</sup> This seems clear from the documents I have used. For the same conclusion on World War I, see also Magnus Hirschfeld and Andreas Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 2nd ed. (Hanau: Müller & Kiepenheuer, o.J.). Venereal diseases will be discussed more fully in Chapter Three.

were not willing to admit they had taken such actions. Their willingness to exchange life-saving goods or money only with those desperate enough to sell their bodies surely cannot have been part of the image the Germans were trying to keep.

Despite it having been against the rules, many of the German soldiers had sex with local women. Despite it having been against the rules, they did not always use a condom, and finally despite the requirement of sanitation, they also did not complete the required sanitation procedure. Although many men denied paying for the sex, other evidence, such as the many sources stating a rapid growth in prostitution under the German occupation, suggests that the men just did not want to tell the truth. The numerous false accusations indicate that an unknown number of men probably lied about their sexual activities. In addition, the evidence of food rationing and other essential items, and with the fact that so many military men met the women while intoxicated, had sex within a few hours, and then could not remember who she was or where she lived – all point to a strong possibility that these soldiers did pay for sex whether with cash or in kind. Furthermore, it is clear they did much of what they wanted: Wehrmacht and SS members were not abstinent, they had unprotected extramarital sex with “forbidden” women and girls, they did not sanitize themselves, they did not always report if they were sick, and finally, as we have seen here (and as we will see more of in Chapter Three), they did not always comply with the search for their recent sexual partners.

The evidence from these cases clearly shows that many German military members had sex with east European women and girls whom they viewed as “inferior,” despite so many of them allegedly being tall, attractive, and with good teeth, and despite the rules against these sexual encounters. Most of the women in these cases were Latvian, but some of them seem to have been Russian. Whether Latvian or Russian, it was against the rules. The ban against having sex with Latvians and Estonians (but not Lithuanians) was not lifted until September 1943, and these cases mostly took place during the spring and summer of 1943. Perhaps the widespread knowledge that the regulations were not being followed influenced the decision to lift the ban. The Germans did not view the Latvians as being quite as “inferior” as the Slavic people, but they were still “inferior.”<sup>130</sup> Indeed, there is much evidence that this same kind of situation was happening in other areas of the eastern front, even where the women and girls were viewed as “more inferior” than the Latvians. This will become clear below and in subsequent chapters.

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<sup>130</sup> The ban against sex with Russians, Ukrainians and other Slavic peoples was, to my knowledge, never lifted.

Thus, the evidence presented here, including the notes from the SS judicial conference, points to great challenges on the part of the German leadership to control the behavior of its men during wartime occupation and suggests that the local leaders were well aware they had little control over the sex lives of the men. In the one case above, the doctor wrote “?!” in the blank, suggesting his irritation with and disbelief of the patient.<sup>131</sup> Historian Franz Seidler found notes from an angry chief sanitation officer who complained about the irresponsibility of the soldiers who, “Through blind drunkenness or stupid indifference” could only remember some of the basic facts. “It is not seldom that the infected one does not know the town, let alone the street or the house number in which the sexual intercourse took place.”<sup>132</sup> The case above of the woman who was deported on a train is a clear example of one hand not knowing what the other hand was doing, despite how serious the leadership viewed the problem of venereal disease.<sup>133</sup> Before penicillin, sexually transmitted diseases were a great threat to military power, but it is difficult to believe that the Germans followed the alleged source of infection who was deported: she could have been deported by the Germans to a factory or farm in Germany or to a concentration camp anywhere in the east. But this shows the effort the leadership put into trying to find the sources of infection and into trying to have their men’s compliance with the various regulations surrounding sexual activity.

Finally, these cases reveal how important sex, usually reported as having been in the form of sexual intercourse, was to the men, regardless of the rules and regardless of who the women were. In these cases, the woman was willing – though probably only out of desperation – to sell her body. The importance of sexual intercourse – whether truly consensual or not – to men becomes clearer when we look at the extremely high numbers of German military members who visited brothels. Some of the many thousands of men had to know that these women and girls were not working in the brothels because they liked that kind of work, that many of the women and girls had been brought in at gunpoint, or that many of the women and girls had been starving and therefore resorted to prostitution. Even if some of the men knew this, perhaps they viewed the woman or girl not as a human being forced into prostitution out of desperation, but simply as

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<sup>131</sup> Dr. Scholz, Handwritten questionnaire for VD, Riga, 20 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 67-68.

<sup>132</sup> Der Chef des Militärverwaltungsbezirks A – Leitender Sanitätsoffizier – Az. 49r vom 23.8.1941, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v. 491, [n. 159], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 119.

<sup>133</sup> Meldung über Geschlechtskranke, O.U., November 1943, signed Facharzt für Haut-u. Geschl.-Krankheiten with additional note on bottom Armeearzt beim AOK I8, R92/10036, doc. 262.

someone not deserving of respect. However men justified their actions, and some probably felt no need to justify their visits, the long lines reported at many of the brothels reveals that sexual intercourse with a woman or girl was quite important to the men. Further, we will see the importance of sexual activity to men when we start analyzing the extremely high number of rapes on the eastern front. In both the brothel and the rape situations, men's attitude toward their sexual rights, and their insistence that they have what they want becomes very obvious. This insistence leads to their abuse of power in their attempt to have sexual activity. In the following section, the desperation of many people is obvious when again, those with the access to resources use their advantage to procure sexual activity and the companionship of another human being, albeit a desperate one.

### **Prostitutional Relationships**

A widespread form of prostitution in the occupied regions of the Reich was the prostitutional relationship in which a woman or girl (or occasionally a man or boy) became someone's lover with the expectation that she could save herself and her family. Women and girls entered into sexual relationships with those who had more power (usually the Germans, but not always) in exchange for a higher living standard: more food, clothing, shelter, and protection from harassment (including sexual assault) from others. These kinds of relationships occurred in both camp and non-camp settings. This was perhaps the most prevalent form of prostitution during the war, and one form that has been the least documented.

The term prostitutional relationship is not meant to be derogatory or to demean those who chose or were forced to choose such a relationship.<sup>134</sup> The term itself is problematic because it is difficult to know exactly what kinds of emotions or motives were involved. Some couples must have fallen in love: it has been reported that some of these relationships ended in marriage after the war.<sup>135</sup> There exists a collection of very romantic love letters in German from a German man to a Ukrainian woman. Having read these, it is hard to believe he really did not love her,

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<sup>134</sup> As survivor Olga Lengyel writes, "It would be heartless to condemn women who had to sink so low for a half crust of bread. The responsibility for the degradation of the internees rested with the camp administration." Olga Lengyel, "Scientific Experiments," in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 127.

<sup>135</sup> Felicja Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna Slave Labor Camp*, trans. Sara Kitai (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996), 116.

though there is no information available from her perspective.<sup>136</sup> Perhaps because of the lack of data, Felicja Karay, survivor and historian, does not differentiate between love and semi-prostitutional relationships in her writing.<sup>137</sup> The distinctions between love and prostitutional relationships blur, depending on who tells the story. Placing individual terms on complex social relationships that occurred under extremely stressful conditions (total war) can be inaccurate, and yet terms are necessary in order to discuss what happened. For example, at first glance a relationship between a starving woman and a German officer appears to be a prostitutional relationship, but without the people here to confirm this, we have to rely on the sources available that describe the relationship. It is possible that what developed is something that those people defined as real love, and perhaps in such a sad world sex made them feel hope or love.

Post-war marriages seem to be about real love, happiness, and freedom. But if people married quickly after the war, hoping to fill the void of their lost loved ones and to start life anew, their initial feelings could have changed. Frances Penney, survivor and memoirist, described how a man named Stan proposed to her after they managed to escape and the war was close to ending. Frances was indebted to him for helping her escape, but she hardly even knew where she was in the present, and her future was even less sure. Stan had wanted her to answer him “immediately, so that he could plan his next move for his and [her] future.”<sup>138</sup> The way the author described it, Stan’s proposal, recited to her, seemed to come more out of desperation and a need for certainty in the future rather than out of any kind of true love. With the continued hardships and uncertainty which faced millions of people throughout post-war Europe, it is understandable that people would reach out for some kind of certainty, such as marriage sometimes can offer.

Even in marriage, what one person calls love, another might call subjugation. For example, not everyone defines real love to be about a non-hierarchical, romantic relationship. Christian doctrine insists that marriage is about procreation (and thus same sex marriage is invalid), and many Christian marriage ceremonies highlight the hierarchical nature of the union.

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<sup>136</sup> The Ukrainian woman worked as a translator for the Germans in Nemirow and Vinnitsa at least from May 1942 through July 1943. In this archive folder are many long and romantic letters to her, written in German. USHMM RG-31.011M, Reel 1, Selected Records from the Vinnytsia (Vinnitsa) State Oblast Archive, Ukraine, 1312c-1c-8.

<sup>137</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 95-96, 209. See also Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 213.

<sup>138</sup> Frances Penney, *I Was There*, trans. Zofia Griffen (New York: Shengold Publishers, Inc., 1988), 136-137.



Marital rape is still common throughout the world, but not always recognized as such. Indeed, early American women's liberationists, such as the group The Feminists, defined marriage as prostitution.<sup>139</sup> Thus, even in an established and generally respected institution such as marriage, one could argue that in many instances there remains a degree of sexual slavery.

Indeed, although we know that true love and self-sacrifice existed outside of family ties, such as the love between a mother and child, or a daughter and father, in a total war situation it is difficult to not view some degree of sexual slavery in all of the sexual relationships covered in this dissertation. This is especially true because there is so much evidence revealing the complete desperation people experienced. Some people reached out for non-familial love and intimacy with another person in their desperation, but many people focused on survival strategies. Indeed, if a woman could only see one method as a way to avoid starvation – finding a sexual partner – this is most certainly a form of sexual slavery. That women took such steps, however, highlights their agency and ability to use resources available to them – sometimes including their bodies – to try to survive or save their families. This was true in occupied villages or cities, in camps and prisons, and it is similar to the agency women demonstrate in other abusive situations or settings.<sup>140</sup> In all of these settings, especially in camps or prisons, there were few choices, and despite their limits and their victimization, women and girls demonstrated heroic, self-sacrificing ability as they used their bodies to help themselves and their families survive. In other words, naming sexual crimes inflicted on women and girls and describing events that have been silenced by survivors, perpetrators, and witnesses more than fifty years after the fact does not mean that all females were victims of all males, or that women's experiences were all the same. This is especially true if we include what we can about sexual crimes committed against boys and men, and if we invite others to share their knowledge of additional sexual crimes. The evidence shows that sexual activity was a valuable commodity and

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<sup>139</sup> As Historian Echols writes, "Contending that the institution of marriage was 'inherently inequitable' and that 'the rejection of this institution both in theory and in practice [was] a primary mark of the radical feminist,' they decreed that: "no more than one-third of our membership can be participants in either a formal (with legal contract) or informal (e.g., living with a man) instance of the institution of marriage." Echols cites, "The Feminists: A Political Organization to Annihilate Sex Roles," in Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt eds. *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation* (1970), pp. 116-117. See Alice Echols, *Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1969-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 176.

<sup>140</sup> Historian Linda Gordon writes about women in abusive and violent families, "Using the 'powers of the weak,' to cite Elizabeth Janeway again, attempting to replace with creativity and stubbornness what they lacked in resources, they manipulated every device at their disposal to free themselves from abuse." Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence*, 290.

therefore, an unknown – but large – number of people in their struggle to survive were somehow enslaved in a sexual manner in both camp and non-camp settings.

### Non-camp Settings

In the German-occupied east there were plenty of opportunities for a young woman to enter into a prostitutional relationship, especially if she lived where soldiers were stationed or passed through. In *Kharkiv*, an historical novel, there is a description of the occupied city in Ukraine:

Oh, how many armed people there are here, that walk in green-blue uniforms and converse in a language incomprehensible to most people!... Entire army regiments come to the large city from the front, to rest.... They look for amusement, and young female bodies.... And these they find easily, because they can pay, with bread, food...<sup>141</sup>

The author Zvychaina writes,

During the first two months of German occupation, while Katrusia still had enough food and still looked like a very interesting young woman, there was no shortage of opportunities to become a German's lover; in fact, such propositions crossed her every step; they seemed to stick to her.<sup>142</sup>

As the novel *Kharkiv* suggested, these opportunities arose in many places, and a great many people in the Cherkassy region of Ukraine told me and my assistant this as well. For example, one woman said "Whoever wanted to, they looked for Germans for themselves and lived with them. There were such girls who said, Germans: they aren't Ukrainians because they are feeding us."<sup>143</sup> She and the other woman in the interview gave us the name of a different woman they remembered who had done this. One woman said, "Yea, yea. There were such ones. They would get together with them. You know, he will go to the market in a uniform. If she wanted, he took her, and he gave her [sex]. There were such instances."<sup>144</sup> Apparently, women in Kymeika, Ukraine would give their house numbers to the Germans during the day at work, and then the

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<sup>141</sup> Olena Zvychaina, *Kharkiv*, trans. J. Zurowsky (Summerland, BC: Ethnic Enterprises Publishing Division, 1996), 20-21. Thank you to Karel Berkhoff for pointing me to this source.

<sup>142</sup> Zvychaina, *Kharkiv*, 30.

<sup>143</sup> No. 10, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>144</sup> No. 28, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Another woman also confirmed that she had heard that women lived with Germans in order to obtain food and other items. She remembered that one had a child because of the arrangement. No. 31, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

Germans would come at night (sometimes just one, sometimes "two, or five") to the woman. The arrangement would be made when one was digging trenches and happened to stand alone with a German.<sup>145</sup> There seem to have been many opportunities for people to make such arrangements.

Other women used their knowledge of German to help guarantee their survival. Several different people told us about an interpreter from Moshni, Ukraine. Her name was Marysya, and she was "young and beautiful."<sup>146</sup> One man from Moshni reported that this interpreter had a child by a German officer. Because of this she apparently was ridiculed after the war, and worse, she never married because "nobody wanted her."<sup>147</sup> Another couple confirmed her name, but thought that she was not judged, but they did not comment on why she never married.<sup>148</sup> More than this we were unable to find out about Marysya, but it seems plausible that she indeed used her language skills and possibly her body to survive.

For many women, "choosing" to work as a prostitute was the biggest sacrifice they could make for their families. Olena Zvychaina wrote about how hunger created a new morality. During the war, the city appeared to be dead, but this was misleading. Behind the dark windows there was still life. She wrote that there

[are] people, who haven't died yet, and who do not want to die...People, who at all costs want to appease their animalistic hunger and warm their tortured bodies, tortured with everlasting cold...People, who create for themselves a new morality that justifies every evil deed, and which can be proclaimed with these few words: 'Everything is good which allows me the opportunity not to die of hunger....'

Those who travel on this path survive, and some even become rich; those who protest and waver and try to avoid this new 'morality' systematically die...<sup>149</sup>

Zvychaina wrote that one could tell who had embraced this "new morality" and had a German lover – because of the clothes the woman wore, the food she ate or how plump, skinny, or bloated (sign of starvation) she was. Katrusia, the main character in the historical novel, did everything she could to avoid prostituting herself. She had promised the father of her unborn

<sup>145</sup> No. 16, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. She did not explain what the male to female ratio was. When asked if the men brought something, she replied, "I wasn't there."

<sup>146</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Another also confirmed the interpreter's existence: No. 25, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>147</sup> No. 21, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>148</sup> No. 19, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>149</sup> Zvychaina, *Kharkiv*, 23-24.

child that she would not abort and wanted to keep this promise and remain faithful to him. She did everything she could to not compromise herself with prostitution, despite being in the middle stages of her pregnancy and having the onset of bloating from starvation. Something inside of her kept her from giving in in this way. Zvychaina writes, “That shameful possibility was locked away from her; a single thought about it filled her soul with disgust. Did she, a Ukrainian woman living in Ukraine, in order not to die from hunger, have to become a German soldier's lover who would be paid for her body with a piece of stolen Ukrainian bread?”<sup>150</sup> It is not clear how many women in her position would not have embraced the “new morality,” but it certainly would have been a great sacrifice for this woman.

Nevertheless, people were willing to sacrifice their bodies in a desperate attempt to receive food. One woman named Xorochipka apparently went to the Germans voluntarily and lived with them in order to have more food and to survive. “They used to say then that if you want to get dressed then go to the soldiers,” meaning if one needed clothes or food one needed to enter into such a relationship.<sup>151</sup> One man also confirmed the need for such exchanges because of the lack of food. This interviewee pointed out that many people were not sure if the Soviets were going to “win” the war, and that this likely affected their decision making. He said about the women and girls who had entered relationships with the Germans,

When the Germans left they were lamenting after those Germans. All the way to Verbichki they were crying, all the way over there they were going and crying. Those were the war ones who were going to the frontier. Will you come back or not? But nobody knew that this war, maybe, that the war would end up with out victory. Nobody knew....So she fell in love, understand?<sup>152</sup>

Then this man told us about one woman who contracted “sin” from such a relationship, by which he meant a venereal disease. Apparently her husband did not want her when he came back, and she spent her life alone. She was dead already at the time of the interview. He continued, “Sometimes it happens to a person...They fed her well. They used to give dry toast [zwieback]...So they would give her food, don’t you understand?”<sup>153</sup> Perhaps she had bargained

<sup>150</sup> Zvychaina, *Kharkiv*, 30-31.

<sup>151</sup> No. 10, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>152</sup> No. 21, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>153</sup> No. 21, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. This same man also told us about women, possibly three, who had been in relationships with the Germans, and that when the Germans were retreating they started to go with the Germans, but for some reason it turned sour and the men apparently

that the Germans would “win” and she needed food to survive regardless. This interviewee also hinted at the possibility of love having developed out of these relationships.

In other interviews we conducted, women and men confirmed this. A man told us about a relationship which ended in marriage. “Oh, and still another, yes, she did get married, I know of one girl who was with the Germans, who left with the Germans. She got married and lived, she had kids, yes, yes so it was.”<sup>154</sup> One interviewee told us that there were quite a few women who found German lovers, but did not explain why.<sup>155</sup> Three other women in two separate interviews confirmed that there were women who lived or were sexual with Germans in exchange for chocolate, food, etc.<sup>156</sup> In another interview, a woman told us that “...I know that this Manka, Manka the one who was married to Tolik the one that died....That one wasn’t afraid of Germans. She used to go to them. And they would give her everything. And we, no, we’d run away.”<sup>157</sup> She continued,

There were such girls, there were girls who wanted to be with them like friends, you understand? They were having a good time. They would meet each other... They went willingly with them. And there were those who hid, and [if] they were found they were tortured. There were such things.<sup>158</sup>

In this passage the woman provided two opposites, the kind of “girls” who went willingly and the kind who hid from the armed men, and she added that if the one who hid was found, she was raped. The woman explained that the girls who went willingly to the Germans did this because

they were young. There were no boys. There were no young people. And those girls were friends with them... They gave them, you understand, groceries. They gave them clothing.

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murdered the women. The interviewee said he saw the women’s graves, but not the murders. Another man confirmed that during the retreat, the situation became violent: “And we heard about such incidents like that [rapes] in every village, it was. And it was especially, especially dangerous on the eve of the Germans evacuation from the village. You know, see, for example, as our army was already advancing, there were battles right close, and the Germans were still here. At that time it was better to not be caught. They became cruel, even more cruel, you know, with their power and killing, and everything, and rape.” No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>154</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. We had also talked about how people had viewed another woman with contempt because she had gone to the Germans willingly. Perhaps this woman who married the German really loved the man, and she also could have been escaping the contempt she feared she would face had she remained in her own village.

<sup>155</sup> No. 1, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>156</sup> Nos. 15 and 30, interviews by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>157</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>158</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

You see they will take from me and then they will give to them so that she will just meet them. You understand? That's how it was.<sup>159</sup>

Here she understood how armed men transferred wealth from the less desirable women and girls to those who were more desirable, and that the men would receive their payment from the stolen goods in kind: sex.

Another interview blatantly revealed one of the reasons people only discuss this topic anonymously or in the third person. In this case, a Ukrainian knew a woman who got a venereal disease from "those Germans." During the war her husband was at the front. She was hungry, and the Germans apparently fed her well. The interviewee would not reveal the woman's name because her son was still alive.<sup>160</sup> This testimony reiterates the widespread and cross-cultural fact that many people do not want to talk about the topic of sex and sexual violence, unless they can do so anonymously. The woman I spoke with did not want to expose the woman's story to her son. Others do not want to expose themselves or their own family members. Patterns such as these are precisely why we need to consider all kinds of sources seriously, whether they are court testimonies, novels, memoirs, public speeches, or private interviews. When trying to understand a marginal, taboo topic such as sexual violence, we will hardly learn the essence of what has happened if we only rely on traditional historical sources. Sources which come directly from survivors of sexual violence themselves very often will be written anonymously or in novel format.

*Kharkiv* is an example of such a novel that leaves the reader questioning what the author's experience was during the war. It is clear from the text that the author understood a lot about the dynamics of starving, occupied people, but she does not inform the reader if she or her mother or her sister or anyone else she knows or knew is represented in one of the characters. As feminist scholar Audre Lorde suggested in her biomythography, the author of *Kharkiv* probably could not "afford" to do that.<sup>161</sup> Indeed, Zvychainsa's description of the many people starving and thus prostituting themselves in Kharkiv does not contradict any of the other sources here. That

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<sup>159</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>160</sup> No. 21, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Film maker and researcher Helke Sander tells the story of the woman who was in her documentary on the rapes of German women by Red Army members. On the opening night of the film the old woman told her son who had asked if she was going out that yes, she was going out. The son asked, "Where?" "To a movie...I'm in it..." "Really?" "Yes, I was raped during the war."

<sup>161</sup> Lorde, *Zami*, in acknowledgements.

food was the primary motivation for the “new morality” is very clear in this novel: “Halya believed that her main weapon was her luxurious body, which she always and very conscientiously cared for.” Not wanting to lose weight,

Halya became acquainted with 'Herr Fritz' who worked in the supply division, and very quickly became his lover. Being Fritz's lover, she not only had enough bread, but also the opportunity to obtain other things like sausage, butter and sugar. And this provided the opportunity to retain her luxurious body. Among other things, Halya had a husband who was someplace on the front but this did not prevent her from being Fritz's lover.<sup>162</sup>

The narrator almost derides Halya for wanting to maintain her luxurious lover, yet it is also clear in the passage that Halya's husband was not helping her to survive in the short term, and Halya was calculating how to get “enough bread” and other “things like sausage, butter and sugar.”

Thus, it seems there really was a “new morality” in Kharkiv, and considering the circumstances (and the evidence) throughout the east, the situation could not have been much different elsewhere. The situation for Ukrainian women in Kiev was similar: women were seen walking arm in arm with German soldiers. This was one way to avoid the starvation that had plagued the historic city since the fall of 1941. Karel Berkhoff documented many accounts (all provided by men) of Kiev and smaller surrounding towns such as Chyhyryn. The security police (SD) reported in 1943 that “Often native women [in the cities] try to establish relations with Germans or allies, in order to obtain some kind of food.”<sup>163</sup>

In Russia, even to the German officials, it was already clear by March 1942 that food was used as payment for prostitution “very often.”<sup>164</sup> In a 1942 *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten* it was reported that the “willingness” on the part of Russian women to “give themselves” to German soldiers very often was because they wanted food or to otherwise improve their unfavorable situation.<sup>165</sup> In Lvov, Poland, the chief sanitation officer wrote in August 1942 that it was surely due to the economic conditions that unregulated prostitution had

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<sup>162</sup> Zvychaina, *Kharkiv*, 34.

<sup>163</sup> *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*, 41 (12 February 1943), p.17, United States National Archives, T-175, Roll 236, quoted in Berkhoff, “Hitler's Clean Slate,” 187.

<sup>164</sup> OKH Generalquartiermeister Az. 1271 IV b (IIa) Nr. I/13017/42 vom 20.3.1942, Betr.: Prostitution und Bordellwesen in den besetzten Ostgebieten, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n.8], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 139.

<sup>165</sup> *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*, Nr. 18, 28 August 1942, USHMM, RG-31.002M, Reel 11, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, doc. 32.

spread.<sup>166</sup> One report from Estonia notes that the relationship between the civilian population and the Germans was "as always" a friendly one. However, people disapproved of how so many Estonian women were involved with German Wehrmacht soldiers. According to the document, in such difficult times it seemed that prostitution had a negative effect on the morale of the population, especially for young girls and the youth. This same report acknowledged that unemployment had affected women the most,<sup>167</sup> evidence that many women probably were desperate. The Latvian author Uldis Germanis wrote in his 1987 novel that when the Wehrmacht brothel opened in Riga there were throngs of women who wanted to get a job as a prostitute,<sup>168</sup> probably because of the economic conditions.

Guy Sajer, veteran and memoirist, remarks that in 1944 it seemed as though "most of the women" were prostitutes. Civilian life in Rumania was in chaos, and there were many "raids for food and supplies."<sup>169</sup> Sajer also tells about his German soldier friend who "fell in love" several times with different women on the eastern front. The first mention is with a Russian girl who, it seems, was prostituting herself for some kind of gain:

Hals had made the acquaintance of a Russian girl, with whom he was able to arrange a mutually profitable relationship. It turned out he was not the only one to enjoy the good woman's favors. One evening he arrived to find himself part of a troika. The other masculine member was the Catholic chaplain, who had survived hell and was indulging a few sins of the flesh as his consciousness of life returned, hoping they would be pardoned because they were so rare.<sup>170</sup>

In this example, it is easy to understand why a soldier would break the rules and have sex with an unregulated prostitute since the chaplain was also taking part. More importantly is that Sajer writes with such ease about how his friend took advantage of a woman who needed whatever Hals had to offer. Sajer's writing reveals this soldier's actions were common occurrences, not to be regarded with any judgment.

In another example, it is not clear if Hals gifted things in exchange for sex with the

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<sup>166</sup> OFK 365, Leitender Sanitäts Offizier, Anlage 3 zu OFK 365 Ia Nr. 334 1/42 geh. Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 17 August 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 1375.

<sup>167</sup> Letter to SS-Sturmbannführer Herrn Dr. Sandberger, Reval, no date, ESA Fond R819s, Opis 2, Estnischen Sicherheitspolizei, Del 8, doc. 7.

<sup>168</sup> Uldis Germanis, *Pakāpies Tornī* (Brooklyn, New York: Gramatu Draugs, 1987).

<sup>169</sup> Guy Sajer, *The Forgotten Soldier: The Classic WWII Autobiography* (1967), 387.

<sup>170</sup> Sajer, *The Forgotten*, 219.



woman or not, and the woman's perspective or reasons for entering into the relationship are not given, though she is referred to as a "whore": this not only reveals the men's ability to whitewash their actions by naming the woman a "whore," but also suggests some kind of exchange of goods:

Hals had made himself scarce for the last few days: his girl, who helped him forget the war, had absorbed him almost entirely. He had just reappeared with one of his comrades in sin. His forehead was creased by an anxious frown, and he couldn't stop fretting. He unburdened himself to Grauer and me: "If Captain Wesreidau won't let Emi come with us, the Reds will kill her. We can't let that happen."

"I understand how you feel," I said to Hals.

Woortenbeck and the veteran, who were amused by our innocence, roared with laughter.

"If everyone in the company brought along the girl he's sleeping with, there wouldn't be enough transportation in the whole division."

"But there's no question of that, you bastards."

"Don't cry over it. You'll have plenty of time to do the same thing somewhere else."

"You're too thick to understand what I'm talking about."

There were many jokes on this subject, which Hals did not find funny.

"Are you in love with her, Hals?" I asked, quite by chance, understanding, because of Paula, what "being in love" meant.

Hals continued to bristle.

"Because it would certainly be possible to fall in love with a whore."

"Sure. Why not?" said Grauer, who undoubtedly was about as experienced in these matters as I.

Hals calmed down somewhat.

"Let's go for a walk," he said, taking us each by the shoulder. "With you two, at least, it's possible to talk."

When we had drawn apart, he unburdened himself. He had fallen head over heels in love and was certain he could never love anyone else.<sup>171</sup>

According to the author and veteran, Sajer, Hals enjoyed being with "his girl" because she helped him forget the war, that is, to Hals women were not soldiers, and they were not the war. Of course, from the female perspective, the women and girls certainly "were" the war, just as "were" the armed men.

Another point this passage brings up is the widespread knowledge that almost everyone in the company, or at least a large percentage, had a girl. That is, the comment that there was not enough transportation for everyone's girl insinuates that many men of the German army were involved with local "girls," despite it being prohibited, and it does not seem that Sajer or his fellow military men were concerned with any prohibitions surrounding sexual activity. The religion, ethnicity, or nationality of the women or girls really are not mentioned or dwelled upon.

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<sup>171</sup> Sajer, *The Forgotten*, 224-225.

Hals was inconsolable after they left the area they were in, and he was sure of Emi's fate with the Red Army. Later he fell in love with a Polish woman.<sup>172</sup> One can only hope that this love-sick soldier treated his "whores" with kindness and respect.

Finally, one last example of a prostitutional relationship comes from the German army commander Blaskowitz who prepared a report in February 1940 on SS crimes in Poland. Item eight on his list of complaints was that a certain SS-Untersturmführer Werner was living under an assumed name in an apartment in Warsaw with the Jewish actress, Johanna Epstein.<sup>173</sup> This, of course, was a case of *Rassenschande*. No other details were provided, and it is not known if any disciplinary action was taken. Still, the example shows an SS officer's willingness to co-habitate with a Jew. Indeed, this echoes the willingness of the German officer who allegedly approached the Jewish woman Frieda Frome while he had her cornered in his apartment.<sup>174</sup>

The occupying German forces had a deliberate policy of starvation in the east, and so it is no surprise that all of the previous examples, from Poland, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Russia, suggest that an unknown number of women and girls were interested in sexual relationships with occupying forces primarily because they needed food or other essential items, and that men used their economic advantages to obtain a sexual relationship from these women and girls. There were plenty of opportunities for females who hoped to save themselves and their loved ones with their bodies. This does not preclude women wanting sexual relationships for other reasons, such as needing physical or emotional intimacy. Many women on the eastern front (and elsewhere) were without their husbands and boyfriends for a number of years. For many, this meant loneliness and the desire for male intimate contact. Some women who chose to be with "foreign" men were (and are) seen by many as having had less than high-standing morals.

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<sup>172</sup> Sajer, *The Forgotten*, 359. On November 6, 1942, it was reported by a member of the security police (Schutzpolizei) that a Wehrmacht member Anton Koslowski was walking with a briefcase (Akten tasche) of twelve packs of Bringmann-Spezial tobacco and one case of forty four cigars. According to the report, when asked where he was going with all the tobacco, he apparently answered, "I'm bringing the smoking goods to my chick" (*Mädel*). The official reporting the incident was concerned that he was trading the tobacco on the black market. Koslowski's answer reveals how commonplace it was for men to be walking with goods they were going to bring to their sexual partners. That is, he very well could have been on his way to sell the tobacco on the black market, but that he considered answering the official with what could have been considered such an obvious and yet untrue answer (for example, "I'm bringing it to my mother"), suggests that it was indeed very common. See, USHMM, RG-18.002M Reel 11 R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, doc. 243.

<sup>173</sup> Notes for an oral report prepared by Blaskowitz, Feb. 6, 1940, NO-3011, quoted in Hilberg, *Destruction*, 191.

<sup>174</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 64-68. See above, page 60.

Some were viewed as being traitors to their country. In some Russian songs and poems there was bitterness about women who did not wait for their men.<sup>175</sup> But there is certainly much evidence to show that women and girls under the German occupation were forced into economic despair and thereby were willing to take what were and are viewed as drastic steps in order to feed themselves and their families.<sup>176</sup>

### Camp Settings

Just as in non-camp settings, in the camps prostitution thrived. Because of the lack of food and other essential items in the camps, too, many people were desperate enough to enter into an arrangement exchanging sex for something else. As in the non-camp settings, it is difficult to determine in how many of these situations there were other motives, such as the desire for intimate human contact, love, and support. Nevertheless, it is clear that because of the horror the Germans inflicted on people, many prisoners were willing to sell their bodies with the hopes of surviving.

Many survivors of concentration camps mention that it was not uncommon that prisoners experienced a decrease in their sexual desire while living in the concentration camps. Some say that saltpeter was added to the turnip soup the Germans gave the prisoners of Auschwitz.<sup>177</sup> Others were not sure. Dr. Micheels, camp survivor and memoirist, recorded the

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<sup>175</sup> One example of this was the sad song "Dark Night," which, as Beevor writes, was "about a soldier's wife standing beside their child's cot 'secretly wiping her tears.'" This was turned into "secretly taking her streptocide," which was the Soviet medicine used at the time against venereal disease. Beevor, *Berlin*, 212-213.

<sup>176</sup> An example of this kind of sacrifice was told by a Romanian survivor who told that a German officer was going to kill him and his family. An attractive neighbor woman told the officer she would sleep with him if he let them go. The Romanian man said to the audience at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's forced labor symposium on October 24, 2002, "She was our hero and our savior."

<sup>177</sup> Survivor Pelagia Lewinska remembered that the "first spoonful of soup" at camp tasted of saltpeter, and that the "food, impregnated with saltpeter, burned our entrails and set our mouths afire." Pelagia Lewinska, "Twenty Months at Auschwitz," in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 89. Survivor Olga Lengyel confirms that the camp gossip at Auschwitz was that "certain powders were mixed" into their food to destroy the sex organs. Lengyel, "Scientific Experiments," 126. Survivor Livia E. Bitton Jackson wrote that there was bromide in their food. Livia E. Bitton Jackson, "Coming of Age," in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 80. Another reference to this comes from Laska, survivor and recorder: Vera Laska, "Women in the Resistance and in the Holocaust," in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 263. Fania Fénelon, survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau, also heard that something was added to their soup. She wrote that it was just as well that many women did not menstruate in the camp "for [in the beginning] those who did have their periods, the situation was awkward; nothing to wash themselves with, nothing to wear." Fania Fénelon, *The Musicians of Auschwitz*, trans. Judith Landry (London: Sphere Books Limited, 1977), 94. Dr. Perl thought that women did not menstruate in Auschwitz mostly due to the stressful circumstances they were experiencing, not because

following:

At the end of March 1943, it seemed that as the food improved, romances and sexual affairs among the staff became more commonplace. Perhaps it was the spring weather. For almost ten months I had experienced little sexual desire, and Nora had not either. Others reported similar reactions, and we wondered whether this was due to some additive to our soup or simply because of the generally deficient diet.<sup>178</sup>

On one occasion, Dr. Micheels's friend, Nora, told him about a Russian who had exposed himself to her in Auschwitz. He speculated that the man must have been getting more food to increase his sexual drive. The doctor had noticed this himself since he had been eating better.<sup>179</sup>

Sex was one of the most basic and strongest urges, and so despite any additive it still thrived in the camps, and thus there are many accounts of prostitutional relationships in which people bartered sexual favors for food, clothing, or other goods in the camps, with others, usually men, who were prisoners and non-prisoners with more power. Although boys and young men engaged in this as well, either with older men or with women, more research needs to be completed to determine how frequent this was, and how many men and boys also had such experiences. In general, it seems that those with more power or connections were the ones to demand sex in exchange for some goods or service. In an obvious allusion to prostitution in the camps, Nora told her boyfriend, Dr. Micheels, that "some of the women acted seductively to get extra bread or other food."<sup>180</sup> According to Felicja Karay, survivor and historian, the Skar ysko-Kamienna slave labor camp in Poland, "sex was forbidden by the authorities and was in fact of little interest to people who were starving," and yet it still thrived there.<sup>181</sup> The memoirs

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of the saltpeter added to their diets. Gisela Perl, *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz* (New York: International Universities Press, 1948), 67. Cessation of menstruation certainly occurred without saltpeter. Many women and girls under the German occupation ceased menstruation. This was also true for others on the eastern front, even if they remained in their own villages. Lucille Eichengreen, memoirist, noted that women in the Lodz ghetto also no longer menstruated in the ghetto due to poor nutrition. Richard Lourie found in his research that women stopped menstruating in Leningrad during the siege. Richard Lourie, *Russia Speaks: An Oral History from the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Edward Burlingame Books, 1991), 233. Memoirist Nina Markovna writes that women in Feodosia in the Crimea complained of many problems, such as the cessation of menstruation or continuous menstruation while they were forced to build barricades in preparation for the German occupation. Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 155.

<sup>178</sup> Louis J. Micheels, *Doctor #117641: A Holocaust Memoir* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 60.

<sup>179</sup> Micheels, *Doctor*, 93.

<sup>180</sup> Micheels, *Doctor*, 93.

<sup>181</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 115.

of two sisters who survived the camp confirm this.<sup>182</sup> Karay wrote that in one section of the Skar ysko-Kamienna camp, “the poor were most dependent on the rich, and this fact was even apparent in their sex life. More and more private corners were closed off in the women’s barracks and love-life flowered.”<sup>183</sup>

As in the non-camp settings, food was a primary motivation. Fania Fénelon, a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau and member of the camp orchestra, writes about prostitution throughout her memoir. One of her friends, a half-Jewish and French woman named Clara, prostituted herself with various men, and on another occasion they played music for a gathering of drink, music, and sex, which was attended by “real, well-paid prostitutes.”<sup>184</sup> Olga Lengyel, camp survivor and memoirist, wrote that at lunchtime, the women would gather around the men who had food to eat and beg. Some would sing to try and attract the attention of a generous male. Sometimes this would work, but the best way to get food was to be willing to trade your body for some of the man’s food because “food was the coin that paid for sexual privileges.” Lengyel remembered that “prostitution with all its lamentable consequences: venereal diseases, pimps, etc., was an ordinary phenomenon at Birkenau.”<sup>185</sup>

Many survivors have described how the latrines were the meeting place for all kinds of social interactions and economic exchanges, including ones that involved sexual activities. Women exchanged sex for goods, money, or a piece of bread in the latrines. Very often men were better able to acquire such items, and they then used this advantage to fulfill their own sexual desires. One example is from Dr. Gisela Perl’s memoir:

Stealing became an art, a virtue, something to be proud of. We called it “organization.” Those who were working near the crematories had an opportunity to “organize” an occasional can of food, a pair of shoes, a dress, a cooking pot, a comb, which they then sold on the black market operating in the latrine for food, for special favors, and - if the buyers were men - for “love.”<sup>186</sup>

She described it further:

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<sup>182</sup> Sara Getzler, *Story of Two Sisters*, Typed memoir, USHMM, RG-02-168.

<sup>183</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 209.

<sup>184</sup> Fénelon, *The Musicians of Auschwitz*, especially 27, 111, 120, 184, 208-215.

<sup>185</sup> Lengyel, “Scientific Experiments,” 127. In contrast, Vera Laska, writer, argues that prostitution was “exceptional,” but she also argues that only a “small percentage” of Jewish females were raped. Laska, “Women,” 265. See Chapter Six for more about rape of Jews by Germans.

<sup>186</sup> Perl, *Doctor*. Writer Vera Laska also mentions about “organization.” Laska, “Women,” 264.

The latrine also served as a “love-nest.” It was here that male and female prisoners met for a furtive moment of joyless sexual intercourse in which the body was used as a commodity with which to pay for the badly needed items the men were able to steal from the warehouses.<sup>187</sup>

Similarly, Dr. Perl described an incident that was clearly an opportunity for her to prostitute herself. Because of the horrific conditions in the camps, people likely faced these opportunities frequently. Perl badly needed a piece of string to tie her size ten men’s shoes so that they would not fall off. She was thoroughly excited when a friend told her that a Polish prisoner who worked around the latrines had a piece for her.

I snatched up my bread ration for the day and ran. The man with the string, my prospective savior, was a short, stocky, pock-marked man with wild eyes and a ferocious expression. The Inferno Auschwitz had succeeded in depriving him of his last vestige of human dignity.

I stopped beside him, held out my bread and asked him, begged him to give me a piece of string in exchange for it. He looked me over from head to foot, carefully, then grabbed me by the shoulder and hissed in my ear: “I don’t want your bread...You can keep your bread...I will give you a piece of string but first I want you...you...”

For a second I didn’t understand what he meant. I asked him again, smiling, gently, to give me a piece of string...My feet were killing me...The shoes were useless without string...It might save my life...

He wasn’t listening to me. “Hurry up...hurry up...” he said hoarsely. His hand, filthy with the human excrement he was working in, reached out for my womanhood, rudely, insistently.<sup>188</sup>

Dr. Perl chose to forego the man's offer and the desperately needed string, but knowing what life-saving commodities shoes were, one could understand had she chosen otherwise.

The Skar ysko-Kamienna camp is rife with documented examples of prostitutional relationships among the prisoners. Here when a person took a lover and earned money or food from this relationship, such a lover was referred to as “cousin.” Hela Sherf of the Markowitz family in Poland wrote in her memoir that there were “quite a number of these women who slept with those ‘cousins,’ and for this service, they received a slice of bread and some soup.”<sup>189</sup> In her monograph *Death Comes in Yellow*, Flicja Karay writes that the term came from the Polish words *kuzyn* or *kuzynka*, a term used for an unmarried couple living together.<sup>190</sup> Karay explains

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<sup>187</sup> Perl, *Doctor*, 76, 78.

<sup>188</sup> Perl, *Doctor*, 57-58.

<sup>189</sup> Getzler, USHMMA, RG-02-168, p.20.

<sup>190</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 115-116. Thank you to the researcher in CAHS for the reference to this book.

that, “the lack of fences separating the men’s and women’s barracks, the young age of the prisoners, loneliness, and most of all, hunger, impelled many girls to seek the patronage of one of the *prominenten* by becoming his *kzyynka*.”<sup>191</sup> According to Karay’s research and experience, about eighty percent of the camp population was involved in prostitutional relationships, which clearly suggests that this was a common arrangement, regardless of the exact percentage.<sup>192</sup> During one six month period, it was “such a common arrangement...that no one thought anything of it anymore.”<sup>193</sup> Karaj's book repeatedly returns to this topic. For example, Karaj writes that from June to late November 1943 prisoners were brought from the Majdenek concentration camp. The mortality rate of these men was so high that the demand for cousins rose. Apparently, the men took advantage of their advantaged situation. In the camp newspaper was written:

Come and I'll whisper a secret in your ear:  
Pickings are pretty slim with the “cousins” here!  
They have their cake and they eat it too,  
“Kuzynka” makes one and their wife makes two!<sup>194</sup>

However, in a different part of the camp, werk b, in many cases it was the women who worked near the food, and so they could choose “‘cousins’ for themselves from among the young men in the camp.”<sup>195</sup> This reiterates that the one who gets to choose their sexual partner is the one who has the access to the resources.

Most women who had such “cousins” in the Skar ysko-Kamienna labor camp would visit them in the men's section of the camp, but apparently one woman had cordoned off her bed to receive her lover. The others were afraid to complain about the arrangement assuming the Jewish policeman would report anyone who complained to the German authorities. This young woman was "very beautiful" and received items which other inmates considered to be "treasures."<sup>196</sup>

Not only could family members and loved ones benefit from such relationships, but

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<sup>191</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 245.

<sup>192</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 158.

<sup>193</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 209.

<sup>194</sup> Fela Blum, Testimony, YV, 0-33/1839, cited in Karay, *Death Comes*, 109.

<sup>195</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 158.

<sup>196</sup> Getzler, USHMM, RG-02-168.

others could benefit indirectly as well. An example of this comes from the Sharf sisters' memoir. One of the Jewish sisters, Rela, had loaned her warm blue coat to the woman who had taken the Jewish policeman as a lover. After the coat was returned, Rela "found money in one of her pockets, money, no doubt, which this woman had earned from the 'cousin.'" Later, the woman asked Rela to return it, but

Rela pretended that she was unaware of the money. This was the first time that Rela stole but she had no conscience because the woman could not remember whether, in fact, she did leave money in the pocket and felt that she may have dropped it. The money bought Rela and I slices of bread. We had no other money at that time.<sup>197</sup>

Frances Penney wrote that some Latvian Jewish men in the Kaiserwald concentration camp outside of Riga received packages of food from Gentile friends of theirs. They would share their goods with women "with whom they had formed close relationships." One day a friend approached Frances with some food, but she refused, stating that she did not wish to enter such a relationship. Penney also tells of a "good-looking blonde" in their group who had befriended a Jewish man who had access to a lot of food since he worked in the kitchen. They would engorge themselves in the evening in her "straw pallet," and then they would have sex. Penney wrote, "Their feasting and love-making made everybody around them nauseous."<sup>198</sup>

One woman sold her body for the benefit of another. A woman named Kati in Auschwitz who did every thing she could to save the life of a fifteen-year-old girl whom she had found beaten mercilessly, lying in a puddle of mud and blood. Kati had what they called a *kohana*, a lover, who was a German prisoner with more privileges than she. Kati had been planning on ending her prostitutional relationship, but after she found the girl she reconsidered. The man had "good connections" at the crematory, and so Kati continued to sell her body in exchange for food which she gave to the girl. Dr. Perl reported, "One day I saw them both in a cattle car carrying workers to Germany. They were holding on to each other's hands and I knew that whatever the cost, Kati would save the life of that little girl..."<sup>199</sup>

Historian Katherine Jolluck found a similar situation among Polish women in the Soviet gulag during World War II. Here it was the common phenomena to have a "camp husband" (*lagernyi muzh*). This man would protect his woman or girl in exchange for sex, and

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<sup>197</sup> Getzler, USHMMA, RG-02-168, pp. 20-21.

<sup>198</sup> Penney, *I Was There*, 96-97.

<sup>199</sup> Perl, *Doctor*, 89-91.



would help her meet her work ratio by falsifying papers, which helped her get more food. If a woman or girl did not have a camp husband she was prey to other men, and thus most females tried to find one. Potential attackers would respect the “property” of another male and would leave the woman or girl alone.<sup>200</sup>

Survivor and author Eugen Kogon wrote on the subject of young Poles, Russians, and Ukrainians, and about the alleged “sexual starvation” that men in prison experience. The brothel in the concentration camp Buchenwald

by no means satisfied this hunger. Unprincipled prisoners, including many confined for political reasons, created a cesspool of depravity, first by means of homosexuality, and later on, when the boys had arrived, by pederasty. The so-called “Doll Boys,” [Puppenjungen] unable to resist such temptation as good food, sometimes forcibly seduced by immoral Senior Block Inmates and Prisoner Foremen, soon played a vicious role everywhere. In Buchenwald this reached its climax in 1943 under Senior Camp Inmate Wolff, a former cavalry captain and German nationalist, who outrageously misused his position. More and more he took the part of the SS against his own comrades, until he was finally deposed by the camp itself.<sup>201</sup>

Kogon’s testimony does not contradict other testimony on the “doll boys” (also referred to as “dolly boys”) below. Indeed, Kogon seems to be repulsed by these prostitutional homosexual relationships. Conversely, the homosexual survivor and anonymous memoirist Heinz Heger writes about the same exact kinds of relationships, also naming them “dolly boys,” yet he writes from the perspective of an insider, one who took part in prostitutional relationships.<sup>202</sup>

Furthermore, there exists the novel *Piepel*, which was written anonymously under the pseudonym Ka-Tzetnik 135633 (translated Concentration Camp Prisoner 135633) by Yehiel Dinur. Though written in a novel form, this source corroborates Kogon’s testimony above and Heger’s reports below. Dinur was also a survivor, and like Heger, wrote anonymously, probably

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<sup>200</sup> Jolluck, *Exile*, 166-167. Another example of a women prostituting themselves to protect themselves from rape by Red Army members. Natalya Viktorovna, an educated Russian journalist who wrote under the pseudonym Nikolai Viktorov as she traveled with the Red Army during World War II wrote that women would enter into prostitutional relationships for protection from other rapists. She reported that after the initial days of mass raping there were mad passionate love affairs, but considering the circumstances we know the women had little choice: “But after those few days it would all be brought to a stop with an iron hand. And then the officers would begin having mad, passionate affairs with the German women. So much Slavic blood was mixed with German...” Lourie, *Russia*, 253-254.

<sup>201</sup> Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System Behind Them*, trans. Heinz Norden (New York: Berkley Publishing Corporation, 1958), 47-48.

<sup>202</sup> Heinz Heger, *The Men with the Pink Triangle: The True, Life-and-death Story of Homosexuals in the Nazi Death Camps*, trans. David Fernbach (Boston: Alyson Publications, Inc., 1980).

because of the extreme pain involved, and also probably because he wrote candidly about sexual matters. Dinur also wrote about the young sexual slaves in Auschwitz in other books.<sup>203</sup> The heart-wrenching novel *Piepel* is about one of these young boys who was forced to become a Piepel, a “doll boy,” a bed partner of an SS officer in a concentration camp. It was his only way to survive, but he had an extremely difficult time being the victim of such sexual abuse by the German.<sup>204</sup> Another novel by Dinur, *Doll's House*, has a character named Fella, who strategically became a personal “slave” to avoid being man-handled from multiple men in the field brothel. She talked her way into the position that she thought was better for herself.<sup>205</sup>

It is unfortunate that Dinur's writing has been so carelessly discarded by people, scholars especially, who have claimed his work is voyeuristic and unsound. It is true, pre-1967 Israeli youth, which had no access to the pornographic magazines, television, movies, and other pornographic material that is widespread in Israel today, characterized his work as “soft porn.” Indeed, Dinur's literature was a type of “illegitimate,” semi-pornographic literature on the Holocaust that circulated in pre-1967 Israel.<sup>206</sup> Yet this phenomena of Israeli youth reading for sexual sadistic pleasure in no way is a reason not to consider Dinur. Neither is the fact that his writing has been left on the fringes, unlike, for example, Elie Wiesel's writing of Auschwitz. Dinur's ultimate message is disturbing and suggests that we need to take responsibility for our own actions, which is probably the reason for his marginalization. Yet we need to examine his and other such sources closer if want to understand the violence rampant in the world today.

The novel format does not necessarily indicate fiction. It can indicate fiction, but as I have argued in Chapter One, very often authors use this format because writing, for example, an autobiography or a memoir, would be too painful, too risky, or too revealing. Yehiel Dinur, who wrote anonymously until the Eichmann trial in 1961, during which he was forced to reveal that he had written under the pen-name Ka-Tzetnik 135633. In response to the judge's question why

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<sup>203</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *Shivitti: A Vision*, trans. Eliyah Nike De-Nur and Lisa Herman (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

<sup>204</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *Piepel*, trans. Moshe M. Kohn (London: Anthony Blond Ltd, 1961).

<sup>205</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House of Dolls* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), 194-198.

<sup>206</sup> Bartov writes that “Nothing could be a greater taboo than deriving sexual pleasure from pornography in the context of the Holocaust; hence nothing could be as exciting. That Israeli youth learned about sex and perversity, and derived sexual gratification, from books describing the manner in which Nazis tortured Jews, is all the more disturbing, considering that we are speaking about a society a large proportion of whose population consisted of Holocaust survivors and their offspring. Bartov, “Kitsch,” 49.

he “hid” behind a pen-name, Dinur replied:

This is not a pen-name. I do not see myself as an author who writes literature. This is a chronicle from the planet of Auschwitz, whose inhabitants had no names, they were neither born nor bore any children; they were neither alive nor dead. They breathed according to different laws of nature. Every fraction of a minute there revolved on a different time scale. They were called Ka-Tzetnik, they were skeletons with numbers.<sup>207</sup>

Shortly thereafter he collapsed in the courtroom. Indeed, Dinur’s ability to write so honestly and intimately about the horrors of Auschwitz, with all its sexual torture, violence, and sadism, was only possible as an anonymous writer. Dinur wrote about his own experiences, and what (probably) his younger brother experienced as a sexual slave or a *Piepel*, and what (probably) his sister experienced as a “field whore.” The first five books of his sextet are also written in the third person. It was not until forty years after Auschwitz that he finally fused together his experiences in Auschwitz and his reality after the war. This is when Dinur started to use the first person. He writes in *Ha-tsofen* (*Shivitti*),

I look at the number written at the top of the page on which I am writing these lines, and I cannot believe my eyes: I have already covered scores of pages with tiny letters and have not noticed the innovation in them. I have never written on this subject in the first person. In all my books I wrote in the third person, although that form of writing was difficult for me, since all I wrote was a kind of personal diary, a testimony: I saw these things, I experienced these experiences, I lived through the events, I, I, I, and yet while writing I had to transform the “I” into “he.” I felt a splitting, a discomfort, a strangeness, and worst of all – I felt myself, God forbid, as if I were preoccupied with literature. Yet I know that if I did not write in the third person I might have not been able to write at all.<sup>208</sup>

After forty years of struggling and psychotherapy, he writes, “And all of a sudden, without even noticing it, for the very first time, and already in the first line: ‘I, I, I...’”<sup>209</sup>

Historian Omer Bartov argues that it was because of Dinur’s ability to write so honestly about the horrors of Auschwitz, especially about the sexual sadism and violence (Bartov argues that Dinur’s writing collapses into kitsch when he writes about normal conditions), that he was able to come to terms with his experiences, and with the fact that Auschwitz was *not* another planet, that it was indeed something that humans did, that humans created, and that humans

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<sup>207</sup> Eichmann Trial Blurb [n. 25], quoted in Bartov, “Kitsch,” 54.

<sup>208</sup> *Ha-tsofen*, 22-24, quoted in Bartov, “Kitsch,” 77-78.

<sup>209</sup> *Ha-tsofen*, 22-24, quoted in Bartov, “Kitsch,” 77-78.

continue to create in the present.<sup>210</sup> Unlike the survivor and author Primo Levi, who took his own life in 1987, and who was often called an “optimist” and a defender of humanism, Bartov writes that Dinur was “overtaken by a sense of depression and hopelessness, both about his ability truthfully to reconstruct the experience of the Holocaust and about transmitting it to others in a meaningful way.”<sup>211</sup> Levi did not write in great detail about sexual violence as Dinur chose to do. Indeed, Dinur truthfully has transmitted his experiences of Auschwitz, but his audience has chosen not to accept his writing.

Furthermore, Bartov explains how the cores of survivor and writer Eli Wiesel’s and Dinur’s writing are remarkably similar in that the “very core of these two writers’ oeuvres is almost uncannily alike, to the extent that they seem to present two versions of the same experience.”<sup>212</sup> Yet, as Bartov explains, because Wiesel’s writing uses “didactic rhetoric” and is more “contrived...well-crafted, skillful,” and he tries to distance himself from Auschwitz to gain perspective in his writing, he has a very wide and international audience. Conversely, when Dinur writes about “this planet” and normal human relationships his writing is contrived. It is when he writes about Auschwitz and the horror he experienced that his writing is not at all contrived. Dinur “is almost never able to distance himself from the experience of the camps,” and

his writing becomes more brutally explicit and free of all euphemism and distance than almost any other such text on the Holocaust. At the same time it reflects the writer’s complete inability to take delight in the pain and perversion he so meticulously describes (although it has the potential of evoking such a voyeuristic urge in its readers). Hence also the paradoxical outcome that, whenever Ka-Tzetnik writes about “our” planet, namely, describes “normal” events and relationships, his prose is so replete with kitsch and clichés that it can only appeal to a juvenile audience; but once he plunges into that “other” planet, that very predilection toward the banal makes possible a remarkable transformation whereby the author achieves devastating insights into the human condition that have been barred to far more sophisticated writers – not least, perhaps, due to their greater concern for the aesthetic aspects and moral effect of their work.<sup>213</sup>

Thus Dinur, for the most part, has been relegated to the fringes, the “lunatic fringe” of Holocaust

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<sup>210</sup> Bartov discusses how Holocaust victims themselves have turned into perpetrators in the years since Auschwitz, and how Dinur, after years of psychotherapy finally reconciles his memories of the “other planet” with his reality on “this planet,” and based on contemporary political and military realities, Dinur concludes that they are one and the same.

<sup>211</sup> Bartov, “Kitsch,” 52-53.

<sup>212</sup> Bartov, “Kitsch,” 53.

<sup>213</sup> Bartov, “Kitsch,” 51.

literature. Furthermore, unlike other texts on the Holocaust, Dinur writes in an “uninhibited” manner, and he has a “raw nature.” Thereby “his representation of evil is not only disturbing but in many ways annihilating of the manner in which we all desire to see and understand the interaction between humanity and the Holocaust.”<sup>214</sup> In other words, Dinur comes to no easy conclusion about humanity, and especially if one reads as far as his sixth volume, his conclusions are immensely disturbing (one of which is that victims do not necessarily remain victims), and one is forced to look at oneself, our present military and political realities, and humanity in general.

Having suffered the way Dinur did, and the way we know so many camp survivors did, in addition to what we know from other sources about camp and military brothels, prostitution, and German sexual abuse of others, it is difficult to argue convincingly that his novels are unsound, especially on the basis of no or little evidence. Rather, the evidence points to how sound his novels are. If a detail or two are fiction, it is likely they are in the spirit of what was reality for some – if not for many – people, and thus, as scholars and people who do not want to repeat these horrors, as a whole we need to take these kinds of sources seriously, rather than dismiss them unfairly.

Heinz Heger also provides much insight into the intimate details of the sexual violence people experienced during the war. He wrote candidly, but anonymously in his memoir on homosexuality and the Holocaust, about his own and other people’s prostitutional relationships in Flossenbürg, including about the so-called “dolly boys.” This is rare to find, and even more rare in memoirs by women. When Heger first arrived in the homosexual wing, the capos apparently looked him and the others up and down to see who could be a new lover for them. He was clearly a popular choice, because he still did not have a full beard and was not yet too thin. The block senior, a professional criminal from Hamburg, chose him. Though many feared him, Heger claims that this man saved Heger’s life “more than ten times over,” even after Heger had become camp senior and moved to a different block. Even though this was a relationship that “sprang from self-preservation” it was a sad parting. Heger writes:

he assured me he would always be grateful for my loyalty, above all for my silence, and would still keep an eye on me, also that I could always count on him for help...He continued to help me in the remaining years I was in the camp, whenever I got into trouble or was threatened with punishment. He never broke the promise he gave me when we

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<sup>214</sup> Bartov, “Kitsch,” 52.

parted. He remains in my eyes an honorable man, even if he was a safecracker and burglar by trade, and possibly still is today.<sup>215</sup>

That Heger considered this kind of man as honorable could be a sign of a “new morality” that appears in desperate situations.<sup>216</sup> After this parting, Heger knew he needed to find another relationship if he were to survive life in the camp. Once again, the writing is very candid, and it is easy to see his rationalization for entering into a prostitutional relationship.

In order to keep my good position as a clerk, and to receive additional food that was necessary to stay alive, I was forced by necessity to enter into a new relationship. It was hardly possible, in fact, to refuse, for the Capos knew about my relationship with the new camp senior, which had lasted several months, and he had told them about my discretion as well as my “valuable services” in bed. On top of this, rejection of such an offer would immediately have brought down on me the hatred of all the Capos and a persecution that would surely have led to my death. So there was no other choice but to place myself once again under the protection of a block senior or Capo, who would fend off other propositions, provide me with additional rations, and also make sure that I kept my desk job. In return I had to be lover and bed partner at any time when my protector had the desire. Everything has its price.<sup>217</sup>

Heger apparently had three capos arguing over him, and a Hungarian Gypsy finally “won” him because he was able to offer the other two men a sufficient sum of money. The Gypsy fell in love with Heger “after only a few days” and “met every wish that [he] uttered in terms of clothing or food.” When Heger became a capo himself, he had secured enough connections to food, gifts, and services by paying with non-sexual favors (he protected the male prostitutes (dolly boys) of the other “dignitaries”). Because of this, he no longer needed such a relationship. After this he entered a relationship based on “mutual understanding and trust,” not on desperation.<sup>218</sup>

Heger also wrote about the young men who came to Flossenbürg starting in the winter of 1940-1941 and who were known as the dolly boys. Within just a few days after the arrival of the first transport, all of the block seniors or capos had one of the young boys as a “cleaner,” whose real purpose was to be their bed partner. Their ages ranged from sixteen to twenty, and they were known by this name in other camps as well, as we have seen above. Because of the

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<sup>215</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 61.

<sup>216</sup> See above, discussion of the novel *Kharkiv*.

<sup>217</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 61.

<sup>218</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 60-62, 94-95.

life-saving rewards this brought, according to Heger, these young Poles, and later Russians “gladly accepted any proposals that meant both easier work and a full stomach.” Heger’s story is that these boys also became quite arrogant, but that no one could do anything about it because they feared reprisal from their masters. The boys even fought among themselves if one was interested in someone else’s boss who was perhaps more generous. Although he had a such a relationship of convenience himself, Heger wrote with something close to derision that “these young Poles soon grew to be a plump as capos, while thousands of other prisoners in the same camp were starving.” Despite the sense of derision in this comment, Heger writes in another part of his memoir that he “treated them with great understanding, for until [his] appointment as Capo [he] had [himself] been in the same position, from the same need for good food and easy work.”<sup>219</sup>

According to Heger’s memoir, the SS and others knew about these sexual relationships, but did nothing about it, despite the rules against homosexual activities. The exception was only if a particular couple’s relations somehow became known publicly. This does not contradict other evidence shown throughout this dissertation – German officials knew many regulations were broken but seemed to only have reacted if their image was at stake.<sup>220</sup> Prisoners with the pink triangles were “filthy queers,” but the boys and men in these prostitutional relationships were not viewed as such. As Heger reported,

What in one case is accepted with a smile is completely forbidden when it is openly proclaimed or made public. Homosexual behavior between two “normal” men is considered an emergency outlet, while the same thing between two gay men, who both feel deeply for one another, is something “filthy” and repulsive.<sup>221</sup>

In the same light, Heger explained that when he became a capo himself block seniors and other capos had their dolly boys assigned to his team since he was known as a trustworthy capo. The others knew that Heger would not cause problems with the SS who, although they knew of these relationships in general, would only prosecute (vigorously) if any one particular relationship came to light.<sup>222</sup> As with the prohibition against having sex with women of a

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<sup>219</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 93.

<sup>220</sup> We have seen this above, and this will also be argued with the establishment of military brothels in Chapter Four, and with certain rape and other criminal cases in Chapter Six.

<sup>221</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 60.

<sup>222</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 59-60, 92-93.

cultural, religious, or national group the Germans deemed “inferior,” the regulations against such hierarchical homosexual relationships mostly seem to have been a reality on paper. In other words, the real rules were simply “don’t get caught.” Still, as Heger wrote, these men were tortured horrendously merely for being homosexual, and this is documented in other memoirs and by other researchers.<sup>223</sup>

Heinz Heger is not the actual name of the anonymous survivor. Few people have written on the topic Heger does, and this indicates that we should take his memoir seriously. Heger's anonymity shows the difficulty of writing about sex and what one knows and has experienced. Anonymity allows honesty in a memoir format. Alternatively, other authors – often survivors of various kinds of abuse – obscure themselves behind the novel format. As with any kind of document, some details may be out of place, but for the most part these sources need to be honored as valid, especially when attempting to understand such marginal topics as sexual violence. Furthermore, Heger was not the only person to write on the topic of the doll boys, but we have seen Kogon’s report on the topic from an entirely different perspective, and Dinur’s detailed writing as well. Indeed, the three sources describe similar processes occurring at three different camps.

Some examples of forced prostitutional relationships should be defined as outright sexual slavery and rape, in which the source describes it not as a person who volunteered to exchange sex for food, but as a person who was chosen by someone with more power to be their sexual partner. The victim became a sexual slave because the choices were immediate – suicide, immediate execution, or compliance. In other examples, the person seems to have initiated the selling of his or her own body in an overall attempt to save her or his life. It is difficult to differentiate between the levels of initiation or slavery on the part of the victim, but a few examples exist which suggest an extreme. If one did initiate, it not only shows how desperate the person was, but also that they were able to strategize, come forward, and take chances. In the cases of total war and of the camps, however, any agency the person showed was within extreme limits.

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<sup>223</sup> According to historians Donald Niewyk and Francis Nicosia, the German laws discriminating against homosexuals led to “between 50,000 and 63,000 gay men [being] sentenced by Nazi courts. Of these, fewer than one quarter – between 5,000 and 15,000 – were sent to concentration camps after serving their regular prison sentences. There they were treated with particular brutality by both guards and fellow inmates. As many as 60 percent of those sent to concentration camps died, a higher percentage than among the political prisoners and religious dissenters.” Niewyk and Nicosia, *Columbia Guide*, 51.



In addition to what seems to have been the situation for some doll boys in Auschwitz (Dinur), Flossenbürg (Heger) and Buchenwald (Kogon), another example of a such a life and death situation is of lesbian sexual slavery and comes from the Skar ysko-Kamienna labor camp in Poland, which the Sharf sisters experienced and recorded:

There were women the likes of which we never knew existed such as German women who were Lesbians and who used to escort us to work. They lived on the ground floor in large rooms. They chose young pretty women to sleep with them and in return these girls received more soup and bread. There was no question of the girls refusing or resisting because if they did, it would result in death.<sup>224</sup>

Historian and survivor Felicja Karay also recorded that in the same camp, the Skar ysko-Kamienna labor camp, a Polish man named Dziwi cki would “select an attractive girl to ‘work with him’ in the greenhouse. Even those who were disgusted by the insistent manager’s advances were afraid to refuse.”<sup>225</sup>

In addition to Kogon and Heger’s testimony, Dinur’s novels, the two Sharf sisters, there exists additional testimony of the SS choosing their personal female sexual slaves. They were chosen based on how pretty they were. At the war crimes trials at Nuremberg Mme. Vaillant-Couturier testified that whenever the SS in Auschwitz needed “servants,” presumably for house-keeping, they would view the “girls” during the disinfection process. They would point to a “young girl,” who was brought to them, and the SS “would look her over and make jokes about her physique; and if she was pretty and they liked her, they would hire her as a maid with the consent of the Oberaufseherin, who would tell her that she was to obey them absolutely no matter what they asked of her.” It is quite certain that these women did more than mop the floors or wash these men’s clothes. In the Nuremberg interrogations the Mme. was asked why the SS went to choose the women during the disinfection process, and she replied because the women were naked. These new arrivals would have been “fresh,” probably not yet too boney, disease-ridden or stinky. She also testified that although Auschwitz may have been one of the harshest camps, this process happened in all the camps with certain variations. She went to Ravensbrück where there also had been a “house of ill fame” and where they recruited females. She also had talked to others who had come from camps she had not visited, and it was the “same thing

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<sup>224</sup> Getzler, USHMMA, RG-02-168, pp. 27-28.

<sup>225</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 152.

everywhere.”<sup>226</sup> Vaillant-Couturier’s testimony in court supports the other sources here.

In most of these examples it is not always clear who the men were or if the women were from an “inferior” group, thus possibly turning the sex into what the Nazis deemed a crime of “racial defilement” (Rassenschande). The above example of Kati who wanted to save the young girl she found badly beaten could very well be a Jewish woman with a German prisoner, since the author, Dr. Perl, was an Hungarian Jew in a part of Auschwitz (Camp C) that housed all the Hungarian Jewish women. But there are examples which specifically include the Jewishness of the woman as a detail. Thus, despite the laws forbidding such practices, Jewish prisoners did have prostitutional relationships with Germans.

Lucille Eichengreen, a Jewish survivor of the war, wrote about a Slavic capo named Maja at Auschwitz. It is not stated whether Maja was Jewish, but Lucille’s anger toward this woman hints that she very likely could have been. Maja told her in 1949 that she had slept with an SS man every night. In exchange for her sexual services she was well fed and was never sent to the gas chambers. Maja told Lucille that, “A nameless, faceless SS man came every night. I feared for my life and thought it would ensure my survival in Auschwitz. I loathed him then; I knew that he was a criminal and a killer. But as the months went by, I got used to him. He kept me out of the gas chamber. He gave me food...Whatever I did was my way of surviving.” After the war Maja married this same man. He found her, and she claimed she was tired of running and hiding from her past. He knew her past, and they “decided to start a new life together.”<sup>227</sup>

Lucille Eichengreen also relates a story about one of her Jewish girlfriends, Celia, who was a young woman living in the Lodz ghetto. Celia wanted to warn Lucille about her boyfriend Szaja, but Lucille told her she would not discuss it. Lucille felt that Celia had no right to intervene on such matters since she was sleeping with a German Wachtmeister in exchange for food and would meet him “wherever he [was] stationed for his two-hour guard duty.” She stayed with him in his guardhouse on Baluter Ring. Lucille accused Celia of prostituting herself because she could not “possibly care for a German who keeps his gun loaded against us.”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> International Military Tribunal, “44<sup>th</sup> Day January 28, 1946, Part 6,” in Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal. Volume VI. Proceedings: 1/2/1946-2/4/1946. [Official text in the English language.] Nuremberg: IMT, 1947, pp 213-215.

<sup>227</sup> Lucille Eichengreen, *From Ashes to Life: My Memories of the Holocaust* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1994), 188-191.

<sup>228</sup> Eichengreen, *Ashes*, 68.

Another example of a German-Jewish relationship is from Dr. Micheels's memoir. Fuggert was a member of the SS at Auschwitz, someone reported to be "totally unscrupulous," and "something of a Don Juan." It was rumored that he was having an affair with a Jewish woman in Auschwitz and that she received special privileges for "her favors." L.J. Micheels wrote, "I don't know if this was true, but he certainly was capable of it, despite or possibly because of his anti-Semitism."<sup>229</sup> Micheels's comment suggests that Jewish women and girls could have been targets of sexual violence precisely because they were Jews and viewed as being so inferior.

According to historian Karay, in the Skar ysko-Kamienna labor camp apparently "everyone knew of the torrid love affair between the manager Walter Glaue and a Jewish girl."<sup>230</sup> Another example that became well known around the same camp reveals the both the denial and the insistence of innocence, in addition to the problem of image for the Germans. Karay reported as follows:

One love affair that sent shockwaves throughout the German staff took place in the Autumn of 1943. Hugo Ruebesamen's colleagues in the *Werkzeugbau* began to whisper amongst themselves that he had succeeded in "becoming friendly" with the most beautiful Jewish girl in the department. Hellmut Porzig was especially envious, as he too had dreamed of getting his hands on one of the women. One day, when the girl was not at her machine, Porzig decided to play the detective and discovered that she was in the manager's office with the door closed, and that Ruesbesamen had also disappeared. He rushed to tell the others about "that pig Ruebesamen," and the rumor finally reached Seidel. In order to get the girl to confess that she had had sexual relations with Ruebesamen, Seidel beat her until she lost consciousness. He promised Ruebesamen immunity from prosecution if he confessed his guilt. The girl was taken to the Radom Gestapo. Ruebesamen was arrested and despite his professions of innocence was sentenced to prison. Typically, even at the Leipzig trials where he appeared for the prosecution, Ruebesamen continued to maintain that he had never had sexual relations with a Jew. The girl's fate is unknown.<sup>231</sup>

In this case legal action was taken, but it shows the willingness of two Germans, Ruebesamen and Porzig, to have sexual relations with a Jewish woman despite the laws. Somehow their relationship became well known, and thus the Nazis prosecuted. It is likely that had the affair been kept more of a secret, nothing would have been done.

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<sup>229</sup> Micheels, *Doctor*, 102.

<sup>230</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 152-153.

<sup>231</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 96.

Frances Penney, a Polish Jew and survivor of concentration camps, told of a German man named Hans, who worked in the Kaiserwald concentration camp in Latvia and who was “noticeably attracted to” a Jewish teenager, who “was a beautiful girl.” Penny wrote in her memoir that it “seemed to me that this girl had awakened genuine affection in Hans. The feelings which Hans bestowed on Zhenia, I am sure, made all of us look more human in his eyes; it also inspired him to look for ways to improve our general conditions.” Hans organized an infirmary for the prisoners and also encouraged some of the prisoners to organize a performing group. On Sundays, they would perform in secret in front of the other prisoners and “contributed to some moments of escape from reality.”<sup>232</sup> Later, he saved many of the older and youngsters at a selection by ordering the able-bodied to march naked in front of the officers again and again. Those who would have been chosen to die hid, and Hans instructed Frances and the others to change their expression or mess up their hair each time they marched in front of those who chose who lived or died.<sup>233</sup>

Even after the war, prostitutional sex continued. In liberated Bergen Belsen, Gisela Perl writes that “love” was cheap there. There were “some who sold their bodies for cigarettes, chocolate and other small comforts.” There was an Abbé who was very saddened watching this open prostitution. He set out to stop it by talking when he found a couple locked in such an embrace. He would have them tell their stories and then remind them that they were free and that they had their future to think about. Some laughed at him of course, but “his pockets were always full of cigarettes and chocolate and many a time he prevented prostitution by giving generously and freely...He never gave up, and the results of his relentless work could soon be felt throughout the entire camp.”<sup>234</sup> The effects of the German occupation and war continued after also. Frieda Frome writes that just after the war ended, everyone in Kaunas, Lithuania was starving. She asked around but was told very clearly not to ask the Soviet soldiers because they “asked too

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<sup>232</sup> Penney, *I Was There*, 95.

<sup>233</sup> Penney, *I Was There*, 98-99. An example of the female knowledge that providing sexual services can save one's life comes from Felicia Berland Hyatt, an Orthodox Jew from Chelm, Poland, whose mother told her to “do anything anybody asks you to do, just so you save your life...If a man wants to hide you and he asks you for anything, you just go ahead and give it to him if it means you can save yourself.” Her mother's words “were truly a revelation” to her, but they later helped her when she needed to make a snap decision about whether to give herself sexually. Felicia Berland-Hyatt, *Close Calls: Memoirs of a Survivor* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1991), 76-77.

<sup>234</sup> Perl, *Doctor*, 182-183.

much in return.”<sup>235</sup>

Despite the seemingly large number of opportunities for women and girls in the camps, it is more common to read from a survivor who saw this happening rather than from a survivor who actually took part in this kind of prostitution. This is certainly due to the shame and therefore silence surrounding such activity, but that it happened is mentioned in many memoirs. As scholars we need to support an environment which allows remaining survivors to come forth, rather than to stifle their stories with unsound arguments. Writer Vera Laska writes that prostitutional lesbian relationships occurred, often between women who had not had sexual relations with other women before they were incarcerated. Yet when discussing heterosexual relations, Laska writes that “such situations” where sex was paid with “goods or favors...were exceptional.”<sup>236</sup> This denial of heterosexual prostitution and prostitutional relationships hampers not only scholars, but also other survivors who may be even more afraid to tell their story, for fear of it being branded “exceptional,” when in fact it seems to have been very common, as it is in most settings when basic necessities, such as food, clothing, or freedom of movement are difficult to obtain.

Just as sex and prostitution between all different kinds of people thrived under the German occupation in non-camp settings, it also thrived in the camps. Indeed, sex and prostitution were a large part of daily reality for many people under the German occupation, whether they were starving in a city, a village, or in a camp. Their desperate situation was due to deliberate German policies, which caused the deaths of millions of people in the east. Although for various reasons the German leadership had regulations designed to minimize contact between the allegedly “superior” Germans and others, such ordinances were broken throughout the Reich and throughout the war. Many German men displayed animosity and frustration toward those they occupied and toward their situations far from home, and they used alcohol to escape their realities, carry out their duties of war, or merely to pass the time. The widespread use of alcohol influenced people's behavior. The German leadership knew their regulations were not followed, and thus, they often repeated themselves, they discussed the widespread noncompliance with each another, and their image and the image of the German occupier seemed to have influenced

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<sup>235</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 118-119.

<sup>236</sup> Laska, “Women,” 263-265. She admits the documentation on lesbian relationships is very rare and does not come forth with her own source.

whether or not they would otherwise react.

Sexual activity was important to people, and this dissertation shows how it was especially important to men. They do not seem to have been overly concerned with following regulations intended to control their sexual activity. The importance of sex to men drove them to exchange goods, often stolen goods, with women and girls, and sometimes boys and men, who desperately needed essential items, it drove them to visit brothels where women were forced to work as sexual slaves, and it was a large part of the motivation for men to rape. The culture, ethnicity, religion, or national background of the female with whom the men wanted sexual activity does not seem to have been as important as was the fact that she was a female and a potential sexual outlet. In cases of homosexual coerced sexual activity, this also seems to be the case, that is, the most important factor was not “who” the person was, rather that he was a potential sexual outlet. This will be reiterated in the subsequent chapters.

## CHAPTER 3

### SEX AND DISEASE

*There are parts of the front here where every fourth or fifth man has a venereal disease.*<sup>1</sup>

In past wars, more people typically have died from disease than from battle.<sup>2</sup> The numbers of sexually transmitted disease cases invariably rise when one country invades another. Syphilis probably appeared in Europe at the end of the fifteenth century. According to Haberling's study of army prostitution, it was in the first part of the sixteenth century when many European writings appeared on the topic of syphilis, lending credence to the theory that it was a new disease on the European continent around this time. It was a disease that spread rapidly and with disastrous results, especially if there were armies moving in an area. Historically, prostitutes, not the soldiers or men, have been blamed for venereal diseases. Women infected were punished severely for "wilfully contract[ing] the disease, and women and men alike were banished outside the city walls with the lepers to live and suffer on their own."<sup>3</sup>

Despite the growing knowledge of the relationship between military life, prostitution and venereal disease, there were only a few attempts at regulating prostitution by the end of the

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<sup>1</sup> Rote Kreuz-Schwester, SD-Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, p. 4, 11 November 1943, BAB R58/190, doc. 6. Original as follows: *Es gibt Frontabschnitte, in denen heute jeder vierte oder fünfte Mann geschlechtskrankt ist.*

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Civil War, for example: 224,580 deaths from disease, 110,100 killed in action (*Time-Life Books: The Civil War* series). World War I: "Of every 100 American soldiers and sailors, who served in the war with Germany, two were killed or died of disease during the period of hostilities...In this war the death rate from disease was lower, and the death rate from battle was higher than in any other previous American war. Pneumonia killed more soldiers than were killed in battle. Meningitis was the next most serious disease." Colonel Leonard P. Ayres, General Staff, "The War with Germany: A Statistical Summary," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919). See also Seidler, *Prostitution*, 59-61.

<sup>3</sup> Haberling, "Morals," 30. In fin-de-siècle Russia, prostitutes also were viewed as agents in the spread of venereal diseases, while men were allowed to circulate freely without being forced to medical examinations. Engelstein, *Keys*, especially Chapters Two and Five.

sixteenth century in various European countries.<sup>4</sup> It was not until the seventeenth century that decrees began to emerge which either banned prostitutes from following armies or allowed a soldier to marry a prostitute and thus be able to keep his new wife with him.<sup>5</sup> By the eighteenth century, this began to change. The large numbers of women were seen as a burden to military movement, and fewer and fewer were allowed to travel with the men. At the same time the numbers of brothels around garrisons increased, and some decrees in German states supported a certain number of prostitutes who were obligated to follow the military in war, and thus prevent an outbreak of syphilis in an entire village.<sup>6</sup>

During the First World War, German doctors suggested abstinence for soldiers in the field, thinking that soldiers would understand this was for their own well-being. Since so many considered abstinence to be “against soldierly feeling,” by 1915 there were brothels on all sections of both fronts.<sup>7</sup> During the Great War, the Kaiser’s army contracted two million cases of syphilis or gonorrhea. This had a dramatic effect on the fighting ability of the army due to the large numbers of men rendered unfit for battle.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps because of their experiences both in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and the First World War, Germany was the first country to experience great advances in the treatment of venereal diseases.<sup>9</sup>

During the Second World War the number of infected soldiers was halved because of the great effort on the part of the German leadership to avoid the high numbers of World War I. Despite the lower numbers, however, venereal diseases still had a tremendous negative impact on

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<sup>4</sup> According to Haberling, Germany did the least of any European country. Haberling, "Morals," 39.

<sup>5</sup> Haberling, "Morals," 47.

<sup>6</sup> Haberling, "Morals," 57-60. For more information, see also Abrams, "Prostitutes in Imperial Germany, 1870-1918: Working Girls or Social Outcasts."; Richard J. Evans, "Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany," *Past and Present* 70 (1976).

<sup>7</sup> Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 233-234.

<sup>8</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 126-127.

<sup>9</sup> The numbers in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871 were also extremely high. For this war and WWI information on Germany’s preparation see Haberling "Morals," 78-79; Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 172; Reay Tannahill, *Sex in History* (London: Scarborough House, 1992), 369.



the German military.<sup>10</sup> A memo from the inspector of medical affairs for the air force warned about the relationship between sexually transmitted diseases and suicide. Apparently, the number of cases in which a real or an imaginary sexually transmitted disease was put forth as the reason for suicide was comparatively large.<sup>11</sup> Whether this was due to the fear of punishment, or embarrassment and shame, it was clear that gonorrhea or syphilis could ruin an army. Penicillin was not yet discovered by World War II, so treatment of venereal diseases required considerable time. During the war, the average length of gonorrhea treatment was three weeks. A soldier infected with syphilis was away from the front for up to half a year. At any given time, the average number of those away from duty being treated was the same as fourteen battalions of Wehrmacht soldiers. Approximately seven thousand soldiers were constantly in treatment.<sup>12</sup> The problem continued for the Germans until the end of the war. Even in 1945 General Staff Doctor Wissemann wrote a three page report to Dr. Löhe, who was the Army Medical Inspector Advising Dermatologist, and commented that “the cases of sexually transmitted diseases are increasing and mean a growing danger for the training and timely assignment of front replacements.”<sup>13</sup> A complete statistical assessment of venereal disease cases throughout the entire eastern front remains to be completed, though Seidler has provided many statistics in his work. Because of the volume of documents which discuss the topic, it is clear this was a major concern, which is demonstrated in the following discussion.

Syphilis and gonorrhea were the primary venereal diseases the German Army dealt with in World War II. They are painful, and in men cause symptoms such as pain with urination, itching or burning at the urethral opening, and a watery discharge from the penis, which if left untreated, will become a thick yellow/green discharge. Untreated gonorrhea will eventually cause

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<sup>10</sup> There was a rapid increase in the numbers of Wehrmacht members infected with sexually transmitted diseases through 1945. Seidler estimates that during World War II an approximate 706,000 German soldiers were infected with gonorrhea or syphilis. In addition, there could have been an approximate one million who either tried to cure themselves or who never reported their illness. The treatment was more difficult without antibiotics, and thus the soldiers could be away from their duties for weeks. For statistics on venereal diseases, see Seidler, *Prostitution*, 65-77.

<sup>11</sup> Der Inspekteur des Sanitätswesens der Luftwaffe, Anweisung für Truppenärzte über Verhütung von Selbstmord, Berlin, 6 October 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 192, Fr. 6135832.

<sup>12</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 126-127. Among others Seidler mentions, also see D.C. Wheeler, “Physical Standards in Allied and Enemy Armies during World War II,” in *Military Medicine* 9/1965.

<sup>13</sup> Generalstabsarzt a.D. Wissemann, Report on Sexually Transmitted Diseases to Generalarzt Prof. Dr. Löhe, Beratender Dermatologe des Heeres-Sanitätsinspektors, Berlin, 20 January 1945, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R189, Fr. 6130752-55. Also see, Stabsarzt Dr. Julius Mayr, Vierteljahresbericht, München, 3 July 1944, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130735-38.

damage to the urogenital system of both men and women, frequently leading to infertility. Although most common in the genital system, gonorrhea can also infect and cause damage to the eyes, throat and rectum. Untreated people are also at risk for a syndrome known as disseminated gonococcal infection, a form of blood poisoning that can lead to arthritis, skin problems and heart and brain infections. Babies born to infected mothers are at risk of developing blindness due to infection of the eyes during birth. Without antibiotics, infants' eyes could not be treated for this immediately following birth as they are today.

Depending on the stage of syphilis, symptoms for this bacterial infection range from having a chancre (small, round sore spot) to flu-like symptoms or ulcers. Untreated syphilis can eventually lead to brain damage, psychosis, heart disease, organ damage, paralysis, blindness and death. In pregnant women, it can lead to miscarriage as well as severe birth defects.<sup>14</sup> The German leadership wanted a healthy Aryan nation with a high birth rate, as well as healthy soldiers to fight for the Reich, but the alarming numbers of cases of sexually transmitted diseases threatened their racial and military plans. It was a catch twenty-two, however, because in their attempt to achieve their arrogant racial and military plans, the Germans created social and economic chaos that made controlling these diseases very difficult. There arose an unwanted social crisis caused by German soldiers, married and unmarried, who had sexual relations with native women in large numbers, despite the rules against this. High birth rates and the massive spread of venereal diseases were the consequences.

Wartime destruction and the relocation of large numbers of people caused economic chaos that hindered the control of sexually transmitted diseases. Several documents exist which testify to the lack of a sufficient number of hospitals and doctors to treat the infected patients. As early as 1940, it was reported that the bureaucracy was inhibiting the control of venereal diseases. Patients "whose hospital treatment was absolutely necessary could have had an opportunity to overcome the illness" had their payments come through earlier.<sup>15</sup> On May 19, 1942, the Oberfeldarzt of rear area 585 reported that the civilian hospitals were in bad shape: There were few doctors, and the number of sexually transmitted disease cases was growing.<sup>16</sup> In

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<sup>14</sup> Sawhorse Enterprises, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* [Web page] (2003 [cited April 24, 2003]); available from <http://www.mypleasure.com/education/stds/index.asp>.

<sup>15</sup> Meldungen aus dem Reich, 8 April 1940, BAB R58/150, doc. 65.

<sup>16</sup> Leitende Sanitation Offizier beim Kommandanten rückw. Armeegebiete 585, Tätigkeitsbericht, May 19, 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 321-322.

June 1942 the Eupatoria Sanitätsoberfeldwebel in occupied Russia wrote that “Especially noteworthy is the frequent occurrence of venereal diseases lately. Treating these cases causes great difficulty because of the shortage of medicine.”<sup>17</sup> Although Seidler found that condoms were plentiful throughout the war,<sup>18</sup> in the east there were shortages.<sup>19</sup> Another problem was that the diagnoses of disease were not always accurate.<sup>20</sup>

It is true that the concern over venereal diseases went as high as Himmler and Hitler. Many reports originating in Berlin were sent to all areas of the Reich. These concerned the dangers of venereal diseases and the threat they caused to Nazi Germany's health, vitality, and military strength. For example, Alfred Rosenberg, Reichsminister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, warned about the Polish women whom he thought were especially politically active.<sup>21</sup> The Germans enacted the death penalty in February 1940 for any non-German who infected a

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<sup>17</sup> Sanitätsoberfeldwebel, Feldkommandantur (V) 810, Tätigkeitsbericht, Eupatoria, 14 June 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 164-165.

<sup>18</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 168.

<sup>19</sup> Der Reichsgesundheitsführer, Correspondence to the Reichsführer SS, Berlin, 9 November 1942, BAB NS 19/1886; Leitender Sanitäts Offizier b.d. OKF 365, Az.: 449.s.(I).Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 14 September 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 520-524; Also see, Stabsarzt Dr. Julius Mayr, Vierteljahresbericht, München, 3 July 1944, NARA, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130735-38.

<sup>20</sup> Vgl. z.B. Bericht Oberfeldarzt Dr. Schmidt, Heeresgruppe C, Bundesarchiv/ Militärarchiv H 20/148, n37, and Anlage 14 der Richtlinien für die Einrichtung und Überwachung von Wehrmachtsbordellen in den besetzten Westgebieten, aa.O., [n. 38], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 149.

<sup>21</sup> Centr istoriko-documental'nych kollekciy (CIDK, former “Osobyj archiv,” Moscow) 504-2-7, Bl. 5-7, quoted in Chiari, *Alltag*, 270. In a *Meldungen aus dem Reich*, there is a copy of a document, allegedly a 1941 Danzig pamphlet entitled “The Holy Duties of the Pole.” The Germans very likely forged this in their attempt to control the sexual activities of the soldiers and officers. The pamphlet urged Poles to not feel they were powerless, to give their lives “now” rather than be killed by a German later, and to take all chances to help save their country. The first instruction was to women: “Your weapons are the venereal diseases. Polish girls, if you are sick [with a sexually transmitted disease] it is your duty to have intercourse with German soldiers and infect them. May this superior weapon decimate their army! It is stronger than airplanes, cannons or ships.” *Meldungen aus dem Reich*, Nr. 197, 25 June 1941, BAB R58/161, docs. 168-170 (also briefly discussed in Timm, “Politics”, 402-403.) But urging women to infect the enemy was not a new tactic. The French had distributed a pamphlet in the 1870 Franco-Prussian war entitled “Charivari,” which urged the prostitutes in the German occupied areas to do their national duty and infect German soldiers en masse. Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 173. Whether this type of propaganda increased the number of sexually transmitted disease cases is not clear. There are also examples of warnings about women who were dangerous and could infect men. A U.S. anti-war cartoon from 1937 warned men of the dangers of syphilitic women, while a British poster also threatened men about “easy” women who could infect them with syphilis and gonorrhoea. In both depictions, the woman's face is a skull, and in the poster, she wears a veil with a flower on it. See Gubar, “This is My Rifle,” 244-245.

German in the General Government.<sup>22</sup> In November 1942 Hitler ordered that immediate measures be taken to fight a further increase of sexually transmitted diseases, including the procurement of condoms. Without condoms, the numbers of sexually transmitted diseases would surely rise in the occupied territories.<sup>23</sup>

In August 1942 Reinhard Heydrich, Chief of Security Police and Security Service, discussed the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in Russia, especially among women. According to his report this was due to the close daily living situations with the Russian population.<sup>24</sup> By the fall of 1943 Himmler wrote that it was the duty of every member of the SS and police to do everything possible to avoid a sexually transmitted disease. This included following sanitation guidelines immediately following sexual intercourse. Those who did not fulfill this duty put the vitality of the German folk at risk.<sup>25</sup>

But many did not fulfill their duty, and there were several reasons for this. One official wrote, "A whole string of reports point to the continual spreading of gonorrhea. The source is an irresponsible indifference of the men towards the infections, a shortage of condoms, and inadequate or lack of sanitation [after sexual intercourse]."<sup>26</sup> The correlation between high numbers of sexually transmitted disease cases and soldiers during wartime, a centuries-old problem, still threatened the modern army despite the integrated and organized attempt to reduce the spread of such diseases.

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<sup>22</sup> "Gesetze und Verordnungen. Verordnung über die Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten im Generalgouvernement. Vom 22.II.1940," *Der öffentliche Gesundheitsdienst* 6 (1940/41): 127-128 [n. 56], quoted in Timm, "Politics", 403.

<sup>23</sup> Der Reichsgesundheitsführer, Letter to the Reichsführer SS, Berlin, 9 November 1942, BAB NS19/1886. Historian Timm provides an interesting discussion of Nazi birth control policy and notes that with the banning of all birth control within the Reich except for condoms, "the evidence for the desire to preserve male control while removing all but indirect protection from women (they would be forced to rely on male consent to use a condom) is incontrovertible." Timm, "Politics", 407-408.

<sup>24</sup> *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*, Nr. 18., 28 August 1942, USHMMA, RG-31.002M, Reel 11, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, docs. 16-17.

<sup>25</sup> Himmler, Memo to Russland Mitte, Berlin, 9 September 1943, BAB NS7/1084.

<sup>26</sup> This report claims that a von Hattingberg found in one area in the east in the period between 20 April and 30 June, 153 patients registered with a sexually transmitted disease, and out of those 136 used no protection during sexual intercourse and 149 did not sanitize themselves, according to German regulations. Zeiss, Oberstarzt, Der Beratende Hygieniker beim Heeres-Sanitätsinspekteur, Sammelbericht über Kriegserfahrungen der Beratenden Hygieniker to the Beratenden Hygieniker des Feld- und Ersatzheeres, part 3, pp. 10-11, 20 January 1944, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6131272-73.

### The Fight Against Sexually Transmitted Diseases

In November 1941 the Generalmajor of the Administrative Headquarters in Occupied Territory, OFK 379 wrote that despite great measures taken in the relevant reporting period the number of sexually transmitted diseases had risen so much that “energetic protective measures [had] become necessary.” A new pamphlet about the fight against sexually transmitted diseases was handed out. Other measures to be taken included keeping track of who attended health classes, punishing those who could not prove that they followed the sanitation duty, as well as those who could not prove who their source of infection was.<sup>27</sup>

Informational pamphlets, health classes, sanitation, and determination of the source of infection were all strategies Germany used to help curtail the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Other measures included newsletters and lectures to the soldiers about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases, required physical examinations before soldiers entered the homeland on leave, and the use of oil, boron vaseline (*Borvaselin*) or condoms (if available). Similar to previous conflicts, women were primarily targeted as the carriers of sexually transmitted diseases, and thus fell victim to raids and surveillance, as we shall see in the following discussion. An example of this bias comes from a report in a *Meldungen aus dem Reich* from January 1942 which argued that there was “an increasing necessity to punish 'women' for spreading venereal disease, presumably because they were infecting German soldiers.”<sup>28</sup> Civilian women continued to be targeted for compulsory examination and treatment.<sup>29</sup>

### Education

The German leadership attempted to educate soldiers about the dangers of infectious diseases and the threat this posed to their health and to the health of the German nation. Commanders often reported that educational lectures (*Belehrungen*) were held on a regular

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<sup>27</sup> Generalmajor, OFK 379, O.U., Abt. Ia Br.B.Nr. 3996/41 geh. Monatsbericht, 20 November 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1209.

<sup>28</sup> *Meldungen aus dem Reich* (Jan. 1942):22-3, Barch(P) R 58/168, Bl.1 62-163, quoted in Timm, "Politics", 408.

<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, I have not found much material on or from the women who were forced to have treatment, or who were accused of being “sources of infection.” The sources used here are mostly sources from the German occupier’s point of view.

basis.<sup>30</sup> Pamphlets were distributed and posted throughout the occupied territories in the east and the west.

One leaflet frequently mentioned in German documents is called “German Soldier” (*Deutscher Soldat*).<sup>31</sup> Every unit leader (*Einheitsführer*) was responsible for ensuring that soldiers were educated by their troop doctor and sanitation officer about the nature and consequences of venereal disease as described in this pamphlet.<sup>32</sup> It warned the soldiers about sexual excesses, about alcohol, referred to as the “Father of Sexually Transmitted Diseases,” about the dangers of venereal diseases, and about “loose” or thoughtless women, who were “almost always infected.” It also advised soldiers who had extramarital sexual intercourse to be sanitized because this could prevent an infection if it were done in a timely manner. If soldiers were sick they were not to attempt to treat themselves (as many did<sup>33</sup>), but were to trust their troop doctor and report themselves immediately.

Another set of rules which specifically concerned venereal diseases shows a slight bow to sexual abstinence and then the homage paid to reality:

1. Every extramarital sexual intercourse is a potential infection.
2. The best protection against infection is therefore abstinence. Temporary abstinence is not dangerous to your health.
3. After having extramarital intercourse, soldiers must present themselves immediately for preventative treatment at the appropriate local health clinic (*Stube*). Otherwise preventative treatment is unsuccessful.
4. Gonorrhea and syphilis are curable if treatment begins immediately...[list of symptoms]...If any of these symptoms occur, even if they are not causing any trouble, immediate reporting to the local sanitation officer must take place...

The spreading of a sexually transmitted disease can be regarded as negligence or deliberate bodily injury.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For example, Oberfeldarzt, (Der Chief Sanitation Officer of the Kommandanten of the rückw. Armeegebiet 585), Letter to the Army Doctor of the A.O.K. 6, 20 September 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 499-502.

<sup>31</sup> For example, see Leitender Sanitäts Offizier b.d. OFK 365 Az.: 449.s.(I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 14 September 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 520-524; Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 January 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 501-504; Leitender Sanitäts Offizier b.d. OFK 365, Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 14 September 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 520-524. For a copy of one from Paris, see Seidler, *Prostitution*, 172.

<sup>32</sup> Stabsarzt Dr. Julius Mayr, Vierteljahresbericht, München, 3 July 1944, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130735-38.

<sup>33</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 97.

<sup>34</sup> Beilage zum Merkblatt über Infektionskrankheiten (Anlage 1), Geschlechtskrankheiten, (no date; could be 1939), NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 211, Fr. 317.

A set of rules for German soldiers in Poland which attempted to control their activities warned that the danger of venereal diseases was extraordinarily high in Warsaw, and that everyone was responsible for staying healthy for their family and their people (*Volk*). It also cautioned that alcohol and drunkenness were dangerous.<sup>35</sup> Other rules posted included regulations which attempted to keep distance between workers from the east, Poles, and any prisoners of war. German women, mostly on the home front, were to keep distance from such people, and to think of their husbands on the front lines.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the wide variety of educational measures, compliance by soldiers with the regulations surrounding sexually transmitted diseases remained a continual goal for the authorities throughout the war. Because it was clear the men were having forbidden, unprotected sex with native women, the military leadership attempted to convince them to sanitize themselves after sexual intercourse. Despite the pamphlets, posted rules, lectures and threat of punishment, the sanitation rules were also ignored. After complaining that the soldiers evaded the required sanitation after sexual intercourse a colonel stationed in Russia wrote that the guilty needed to be called to account, and that it needed to be pointed out "over and over again" the meaning of protective measures and prompt sanitation.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Kommandantur Warschau, Merkblatt für einzelne, nach oder durch Warschau reisende Wehrmachtangehörige, Warschau, März 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 213, Fr. 1113-1114.

<sup>36</sup> Merkblatt, no date, NARA, RG 242, T 454, R. 16, Fr. 667. In addition to regulations and warnings, one form of educational tactic was the hygiene poem, which was a humorous jingle that rhymed and encouraged the soldier to follow the rules surrounding safe sex. An example of an original from World War I is as follows: "Willst du gesund sein, frisch und froh, Nicht krank und überhaupt und so, So halte fern dich jedem Weibe, Bleib jedem Weib drei Schritt vom Leibe! Doch sind zu stark der Liebe Triebe, Sei klug! Sehr große Vorsicht übe! Du holst dir sonst 'ne Krankheit flink! Das Ende ist „ein böses Ding“. Hast ohne Gummi du geliebt, Und keine Vorsicht mal geübt - - Desgleichen - ist solch Ding geplatzt - - So wasch' dich, sonst bis du verratz! Wasch' dir dein Glied recht gründlich rings, Desinfizier' dein ganzes Dings, Nimm dann die Harnröhre beim Köpfchen, Und spritz' die Protargolschutztröpfchen! Befolge diese Vorschrift peinlich, Halt immer sauber dich und reinlich! Nur so bewahrst du dich gewiß Vor Tripper, Schanker, Syphilis! Noch eins, laß zeigen immer dir Des Weibs Gesundheitszeugnis hier! Merk' dir die Nummer, um vor Schaden, Zu schützen deine Kameraden. Hat sich ein Schmerz mal angekündigt, Am Glied, mit dem du hast gesündigt, Zeigt Ausfluß - - Ausschlag jene Stelle, So geh zum Arzte, aber schnelle. Nur wenn sofort etwas geschieht, Wird schnell gesund dein krankes Glied! Merk' dir - - je schneller, um so besser!!! Den Rat erteilt dir Stabsarzt Messer." Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 175.

<sup>37</sup> Kdt. St. Qul, rückw. Armeegebiet 585, Abt.Qu. Kommandanturbefehl Nr. 5, 6 February 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 334-338.

## Sanitation

Since 1938 the German military leadership began installing sanitation stations for soldiers and officers. It was believed that proper and timely sanitation prevented venereal diseases.<sup>38</sup> After completing an official sanitation, a man received a slip which verified this. Sanitation consisted of the “cleansing of the glans and foreskin with water, if possible also with soap. Then urination, the insertion of a three centimeter long needle with a cleansing solution into the urethra and finally, swabbing with a cotton ball.”<sup>39</sup>

The laws concerning sanitation for soldiers and members of the SS changed throughout the war. Since 1939 all Wehrmacht soldiers were required to sanitize after any extramarital sex.<sup>40</sup> The SS were required to do so only after unprotected sex or after sexual intercourse during which the condom broke. Since 1938 a sanitation room near all SS barracks was required.<sup>41</sup> In June 1943 Himmler, the Reich Leader of the SS, issued a new law that also required members of the SS and police to sanitize after any sexual intercourse under threat of punishment.<sup>42</sup> However, in July of the same year, an unpublicized appendix (*Zusatz*) was added. Himmler had decided that the failure to sanitize oneself should not be punishable, because if it were punishable then the danger existed that out of fear of discipline men would not report themselves as infected. However, Himmler ordered that those SS men who did not report themselves as sick were to be punished.<sup>43</sup> It was most important to have everyone treated and to gather information on the source of infection. This also was a change from the order from March 26, 1943, which stated

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<sup>38</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 107, 110.

<sup>39</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 107. For World War I sanitation methods, see Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 174.

<sup>40</sup> OKW ChHrüst und BdE Az. 49r 50 AHA/SIn Abt. H Nr. 2605.11.39 vom 2.12.1939, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/58 und H 20/840 [n. 130], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 107.

<sup>41</sup> Ausbildungsbrief Nr. 5 des SS-Sanitätsamtes vom 15.11.1938, S. 13, Bundesarchiv Sammlung Schumacher Nr. 442, [n. 131], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 107.

<sup>42</sup> SS-Obersturmbannführer und SS-Richter, p. 2 of report, n.d., BAB NS19/536 Persönlicher Stab Reichsführer-SS, doc. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Jüttner, Der Chef des SS-Führungshauptamtes, Abschrift Betr., Verhütung von Geschlechtskrankheiten (Sanierungsbefehl Reichsführer SS), Berlin-Wilmersdorf, 9 September 1943, BAB NS7/1084, doc. 6 [the Zusatz from 4 July 1943 is included in this Abschrift from 9 September 1943]; SS-Obersturmbannführer und SS-Richter, p. 2 of report, n.d., BAB NS19/536 Persönlicher Stab Reichsführer-SS, doc. 1. For discussion of this law, also see Seidler, *Prostitution*, 112-113.



that the SS and police were not required to report their venereal disease.<sup>44</sup> This ruling for the SS and police was different than the law for the Wehrmacht which allowed for punishment merely if the soldier evaded sanitation.<sup>45</sup> Still, even the Wehrmacht soldier could get a lighter punishment if he cooperated in the search for his source of infection.<sup>46</sup>

As mentioned previously, in the fall of 1943 Himmler reemphasized the danger of sexually transmitted diseases and the responsibility of the SS to also take heed. He wrote that it was the duty of every member of the SS and Police to do everything possible avoid a sexually transmitted disease, including following sanitation guidelines immediately following extramarital sexual intercourse. Those who did not fulfill this duty put the vitality of the German folk at risk.<sup>47</sup> On October 25, 1943, the OKW (High Command of the Armed Forces) issued a new law concerning the fight against sexually transmitted diseases for both the Waffen-SS and the Wehrmacht. Now members of the SS, who were treated for a sexually transmitted disease in a reserve hospital of the Wehrmacht could also be punished merely for not following sanitation procedures.<sup>48</sup> These multiple changes in the law highlight the leadership's continual struggle to control a probably uncontrollable situation. It also is another indication of the non-compliance of rules of conduct by soldiers and officers, including members of the SS.

This routine evasion of the procedure of sanitation frustrated health officials and military leaders. At least for one army group, the failure to comply usually was met with shabby excuses.<sup>49</sup> A memo from late 1944 clearly shows frustration with soldiers not reporting for sanitation after having sexual intercourse. It states that every division's member was required to

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<sup>44</sup> SS-Obersturmbannführer und SS-Richter, p. 2 of report, n.d., BAB NS19/536, doc. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Der Chef des Sanitätswesens der Waffen-SS Gez. Dr. Genzken, Oberstabsarzt, Letter to the Chef des Wehrmachtsanitätswesens, Generaloberstabsarzt Prof.Dr.Handloser, 21 February 1944, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 188, Records of Headquarters, German Army High Command Fr. 6129274.

<sup>46</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 127.

<sup>47</sup> Jüttner, Der Chef des SS-Führungshauptamtes, Abschrift Betr., Verhütung von Geschlechtskrankheiten (Sanierungsbefehl Reichsführer SS), Berlin-Wilmersdorf, 9 September 1943, BAB NS7/1084, doc. 6; Also see Stabsarzt Dr. Julius Mayr, Vierteljahresbericht, München, 3 July 1944, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R189, Fr. 6130735-38.

<sup>48</sup> Der Chef des Sanitätswesens der Waffen-SS Gez. Dr. Genzken, Oberstabsarzt, Letter to the Chef des Wehrmachtsanitätswesens, Generaloberstabsarzt Prof.Dr.Handloser, 21 February 1944, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 188, Records of Headquarters, German Army High Command, Fr. 6129274.

<sup>49</sup> Kdt. St. Qul, rückw. Armeegebiet 585, Abt.Qu. Kommandanturbefehl Nr. 5, 6 February 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 334-338. This document also states that "the importance of protection and timely sanitation must be continually pointed out"

be sanitized at an official sanitation office after sexual intercourse. According to the memo, "self sanitizing is not enough!" and whoever did not follow this rule and became infected with a venereal disease was to be punished. The punishment was not to be only on the basis of insubordination, but also for subversion of the military power. In such cases the law provided for a prison sentence (*Gefängnisstrafe*) as well as penal servitude (*Zuchthausstrafe*).<sup>50</sup>

Even at the end of the war, German officials were still trying to persuade the soldiers to sanitize. Oberstabsarzt Professor Dr. Greipl, advising dermatologist (*beratender Dermatologe*) to doctors in the military areas of Böhmen und Mähren, wrote to Dr. Löhe that "Again and again the reason given for not sanitizing is that there were difficulties getting to the sanitation station. Another reason often given is that the overall good impression of the partner seemed to render sanitation unnecessary." Dr. Greipl concluded with the comment that he would consider the problem of sanitation and if he came up with any ideas he would write.<sup>51</sup> By this time officials were realizing that it was unlikely a soldier would leave their partner immediately after sexual intercourse to cross town and have themselves sanitized. The sanitation examples show how the rules were ignored by many in the east. Another area into which officials put much energy was in finding the alleged "sources of infection" (*Infektionsquellen*), and there were problems with compliance here as well.

### Source of Infection

As mentioned previously, women had been targeted as sexually transmitted disease sources by health officials for centuries before the world wars. However, with the high rates of infection during World War I, the German leadership issued the 1918 Emergency Decree on sexually transmitted disease control, which granted officials power to forcibly examine any individual suspected of carrying a venereal disease. The law emphasized prostitutes as carriers, but included males as potential sources in its definition as well.<sup>52</sup> This inclusion of men continued in the 1927 venereal disease law and during World War II as well. However, as

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<sup>50</sup> Meldung und Befehlsersuchen des Gerichts der 256. Volks-Granadier-Division, Div.St.Qu., 23 December 1944, BAB NS7/266, doc. 2. *Zuchthaus* was "an imprisonment that included dismissal from the army and loss of pay," and thus was more severe than a prison sentence (*Gefängnisstrafe*). Definition quoted from Beck, "Rape," 270, n.8.

<sup>51</sup> Oberstabsarzt Prof.Dr.Greipl beratender Dermatologe beim Wehrkreisarzt Böhmen und Mähren, Letter to Herrn Generalarzt Prof.Dr. Löhe, Berlin – Dahlen, Miquelstrasse 11, Prague, 25 January 1945, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130817.

<sup>52</sup> Timm, "Politics", 408. Also see Chapter One and Chapter Two in Timm, "Politics".

historian Annette Timm has found, the phrasing by various officials highlights the assumption that it was primarily women who were to blame for endangering society.<sup>53</sup> The targeting of women as the source of venereal disease was not unique to Germany. In World War I England the Defense of the Realm Act (DORA) was passed. This law prohibited women who were listed with the police from being out between the hours of eight in the evening until seven in the morning. The act was issued by the military as early as November 1914, and by December many women had already been detained and some sentenced to hard labor. According to Colonel East, who issued the act, it was to protect the health of the soldiers. Feminists protested that it was simply a reinstatement of the nineteenth-century Contagious Diseases Act which targeted women as sources of venereal disease. The activist C. Nina Boyle argued in a suffragette periodical that “prostitution typically went unnoticed, but ‘[w]hen inconvenient and dangerous – to men, not to girls – there is an immediate resort to persecution of a peculiarly dastardly kind.’”<sup>54</sup> In literature from various countries, including the U.S., men “contract” the diseases, while women “give” them.<sup>55</sup>

Shortly after World War II ended, Darson Carter wrote about the hypocrisy of so many who talked about syphilis as a social evil, but blame only the women instead of all society. In the U.S. during World War II the “Victory Women” (young, mostly teenage prostitutes who took the place of the older, professional prostitutes) were blamed for spreading infection among American soldiers. As Carter wrote,

Apparently the crusaders against venereal disease suffer from a peculiar form of one-eyed sight. With unerring accuracy they can trace infection to women and girls. They can even calculate with precision the number of times per night a Victory Girl is capable of violating human dignity. But when it comes to investigating the other partner in sex they can only blink and pass by. Outraged by the infected, irresponsible, delinquent girl, these vice-blind reformers pound the table for action. Speak of women, and we get cleanup

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<sup>53</sup> Timm, "Politics", 408-409.

<sup>54</sup> C. Nina Boyle, "The Prime Minister and a 'Scrap of Paper'. C.D. Acts Re-established in a New Form," *The Vote* (December 1914), quoted in Susan R. Grayzel, "The Enemy Within: The Problem of British Women's Sexuality During the First World War" in Nicole Ann Dombrowski, ed., *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted with or without Consent*, vol. 13, *Women's History and Culture* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999), 73. Also see Ann Taylor Allen, "Feminism, Venereal Diseases, and the State of Germany, 1890-1918," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, no. 1 (1993).

<sup>55</sup> Carter, *Sin*. The woman invariably was viewed as the source of infection, not the other way around. This correlated with the historical view of the prostitute being the criminal. See Haberling, "Morals." There were also female Wehrmacht members who contracted venereal diseases, but not much is known about these cases. See Seidler, *Prostitution*, 96.

campaigns. But mention the men - and they are merely statistics! Girls must be chased, arrested, sentenced, reformed. Men simply have to be cured, warned, handed a prophylactic kit, or a sermon.”<sup>56</sup>

On the eastern front during World War II the situation was similar, and the German leadership spent considerable energy to find the female sources of infection. Male military personnel who were ill or had signs of a venereal disease were to report to a doctor immediately. They could receive treatment and diminish the chances of spreading the disease to future sex partners. One of the first things the physician wanted to know was the “source of infection” because this source required treatment to help stop the spread of whatever disease had been transmitted. If civilian sources of venereal disease were found, this was important and positive information to report to senior officials. The number of such sources was very often included in World War II monthly reports (*Monatsberichte*) immediately following the lists of the numbers of new sexually transmitted disease cases. One doctor wrote that “next to sanitation the determination of the source of infection is the most important preventative measure in the fight against the spread of this epidemic.” Doctors were to question soldiers about sexual partners immediately after determining that there was a venereal disease,<sup>57</sup> and they and other officials, including the morality police (*Sittenpolizei*), were vigilant in finding these sources. Having a venereal disease and having sex with a German was a crime. Women found with German soldiers were to be immediately handed over to the police on ‘security’ grounds.<sup>58</sup> They then faced up to three years imprisonment.<sup>59</sup> As previously mentioned, in Poland a non-German who infected a German faced the death penalty.<sup>60</sup> As with other methods to control the military’s sexual behavior, the German leadership was not successful in matching their regulations to wartime

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<sup>56</sup> Carter, *Sin*, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Generalstabsarzt a.D. Wissemann, Three page report on VD to Generalarzt Prof. Dr. Löhe, Beratender Dermatologe des Heeres-Stantitätsinspektors, Berlin, 20 January 1945, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130752-55.

<sup>58</sup> BA-MA RH27-18/177, 17.11.41, quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 127. In northwest France a woman caught without an identification card who had been with a German was punished. In special cases the crime was construed as a subversive crime against the military and handed to the secret state police. See *Verordnungsblatt für den Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich* Nr. 8/1940 [ns. 106, 107], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 178.

<sup>59</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 116. For additional background, see Haberling, “Morals.” Again, unfortunately I have not found voice to any women who were arrested for these alleged crimes.

<sup>60</sup> Timm, “Politics”, 144.

reality.<sup>61</sup>

Still, a search for the alleged source could not begin until the men reported themselves to the doctor, but as with the sanitation rule, many did not comply. Field Commander 608 reported in 1942 that in the former region of the Feldkommandantur where it was required to report to the hospital, every opportunity was taken to evade treatment.<sup>62</sup> When this happened, there were generally three results: first, the infected soldier could spread the disease to someone new; second, because of the delay, treatment became more difficult; and third, the recent sex partners of the soldier or officer would likely spread the disease as well.

But there were several reasons not to report. Some soldiers wanted to stay where they were instead of being shipped to a hospital in a far away, even more unfamiliar place. Many also feared the ban against vacation for those infected with a sexually transmitted disease.<sup>63</sup> Others wanted to avoid any kind of civil divorce case, and there were those who wanted to protect their partner.<sup>64</sup> Finally, many wanted to avoid the punishment for not sanitizing.

Administrators and army leadership experimented with different ways to ensure the soldiers would report their illness and their source of infection. Soldiers were to be encouraged to report themselves and to be told that partners would be prosecuted only if they could not show that they were being treated by a doctor.<sup>65</sup> The threat of punishment also was used to persuade

<sup>61</sup> This was not a new tactic either. Haberling writes that "In compliance with the Regulative of August 8th, 1835, when treating venereal disease, physicians, civilian and military surgeons of Prussia in each case were obliged to ascertain the source of infection and report it to the police. 'Dissolute persons through whom syphilis may be spread are to be watched by the police.'" Haberling, "Morals," 78.

<sup>62</sup> Major and Kommandant, Feldkommandantur 608, Ia/Br.B.Nr. 386/42, Tätigkeitsbericht an Korück 553, Simferopol, O.U., 14 June 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 135-138.

<sup>63</sup> With gonorrhea soldiers were banned from a vacation to their home for two months, and with syphilis until the treatment was finished. Zeiss, Oberstarzt, Der Beratende Hygieniker beim Heeres-Sanitätsinspekteur, Sammelbericht über Kriegserfahrungen der Beratenden Hygieniker to the Beratenden Hygieniker des Feld- und Ersatzheeres, part 3, pp. 10-11, 20 January 1944, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6131272-73. Also see Seidler, *Prostitution*, 97, 122. Still, Seidler also found that many men were infected while at home on leave. Toward the end of the war, in an attempt to forego punishment soldiers also falsely accused their own wives of being the source of their infection, knowing that the investigation would take longer.

<sup>64</sup> Generalstabsarzt a.D. Wissemann, Three page report on VD to Generalarzt Prof. Dr. Löhe, Beratender Dermatologe des Heeres-Sanitätsinspektors, Berlin, 20 January 1945, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130752-55.

<sup>65</sup> Generalstabsarzt a.D. Wissemann, Three page report on VD to Generalarzt Prof. Dr. Löhe, Beratender Dermatologe des Heeres-Sanitätsinspektors, Berlin, 20 January 1945, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130752-55.

soldiers to comply with the rules.<sup>66</sup> One example of experimentation comes from an air force division, which apparently had success finding the female sources of infection. The troop doctor had his senior office produce a bulletin in the form of a questionnaire which included information on the latest instruction and on which measures would be taken according to disciplinary code. Every case came before the division commander, and since the soldiers feared being known as trouble-makers, they complied with the rules. Apparently, this division saw a sixty-percent decrease in the number of sexually transmitted disease cases.<sup>67</sup>

When an infected soldier met with his doctor, one standard method used to find the source of infection was a questionnaire filled out by the soldier. There were different versions of such forms, but basically it consisted of questions concerning the soldier's most recent sexual partner, where she lived, what she looked like, when and where the sexual intercourse had taken place, and other such information. However, it was common that a soldier could not remember much about the woman with whom he had sexual intercourse. Sometimes, at best, he knew her first name, where she lived, or at least where they had sex. This frustrated the sanitation officers, whose job it was to curtail the spread of disease. One angry chief sanitation officer complained about the irresponsibility of the soldiers who, "through blind drunkenness or stupid indifference" could only remember some of the basic facts. "It is not seldom that the infected one does not know the town, let alone the street or the house number in which the sexual intercourse took place."<sup>68</sup>

Women frequently sold sex in places other than their own apartment,<sup>69</sup> so even if the soldier was lucid enough to remember where he had been, this did not always help the officials who then searched for the woman, often in vain. This reveals the leadership's ongoing struggle with the reality that prostitution was very widespread, much of it was unregulated, and the men of whom they were in charge were very often intoxicated and not interested in complying with

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<sup>66</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Merkblatt für durchziehende Truppen im Distrikt Galizien, Lemberg, 1 January 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 505-506.

<sup>67</sup> Anweisung für Truppenärzte, Einzelanordnungen Nr. 8, Berlin, 31 October 1943, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 192, Fr. 6135726.

<sup>68</sup> Der Chef des Militärverwaltungsbezirks A – Leitender Sanitätsoffizier – Az. 49r vom 23.8.1941, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v. 491, [n. 159], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 119.

<sup>69</sup> Wehrkreisarzt XVIII Az.:49r50 Ref.Ch/Hug, Salzburg, 3 January 1945, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130761-62. Also see Seidler, *Prostitution*, 121.

the rules surrounding their sexual behavior.

In addition to not being able to provide enough information on the source of infection, soldiers also lied about who their sex partners were. This could have been to protect their real partner who for some reason wanted to avoid treatment, to avoid punishment if the military member slept with someone of an illegal race or nationality, or the man simply could have been mistaken. As a result, women were falsely “accused.” An example of this comes from the documents surrounding the cannoneer Alfons Haupt. He had given a woman’s first name as his source of infection and claimed she lived on Kork Street in Liepaja. His physician, Dr. Vedigs, wrote a letter to the Leitender Arzt (chief doctor) saying there was no such street in Libau and that even the description of the alleged woman’s place of residence was of no help.<sup>70</sup> A Marta B., with a Latvian last name, was falsely accused of infecting someone with gonorrhea. She was forced to be examined, but found to be healthy.<sup>71</sup> A Wehrmacht soldier in Hannover reported in July 1943 that a woman named Frau Anna W. in Latvia infected him with syphilis. Her name was prefaced with the German “Frau” and the family name also appeared to be German, with the exception that it ended in “s.” But either he misunderstood the pronunciation of her last name or he purposely tried to hide the fact that she was a Latvian woman. Her name actually started with a V. and was spelled with a Latvian spelling. By September 1943 it was finally reported that she was healthy.<sup>72</sup> A Salomeja N., with a non-German name, who worked in the German lazarett in Balvia, Latvia, also was falsely accused. A Dr. J. L. cis performed two different tests on her to determine that she was healthy.<sup>73</sup> A Lisa S. in Jelgava (*Mitau*) had three different tests performed on her and was found to be healthy each time, despite the accusation that she infected a military man with the last name Gehsel.<sup>74</sup> Dr. Kirschentals wrote that a Marianna B. was

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<sup>70</sup> Letter from the Sanitätsabteilung Libau to the Leitenden Arzt b. Generalkommissariat in Riga, No. 1244 signed Dr. J. Vedigs, 24 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc.66.

<sup>71</sup> Dr. H. Kirschentals, director of the Riga Health Department, Memo to Herr Kommissarische Oberbürgermeister, 12 February 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc.22.

<sup>72</sup> Venereal Disease Form, signed, Hannover, 16 July 1943; Dr. Marnitz, Letter to the Health Department in Riga, signed, 27 July 1943; Dr. T. Wankin, Letter to Dr. Marnitz, signed, 10 September 1943; all in BAB R92/10036, doc. 199-202.

<sup>73</sup> Dr. Th. Wankin, Letter to Dr. Marnitz, Riga, September 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 198.

<sup>74</sup> Oberarzt, Two page venereal disease questionnaire, signed, 4 May 1943; Dr. Marnitz, Letter to Herr Dr. Dargewitz in Mitau, 12 May 1943; Dr. A. Dargewitz, Memo to Dr. Marnitz, 5 July 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 104-107.

examined and found to be healthy.<sup>75</sup> A Welta O. in Riga was also falsely accused by someone but later, after forced examination, found to be “innocent.”<sup>76</sup>

A late-September 1943 case of a forced examination that generated considerable paperwork and ended with the conclusion that the accused woman was healthy is that of the married Unteroffizier Alfred Fick. He accused a Russian woman, Anni P. of being his source, despite his use of a condom. He did not know if other people had slept with her or not. Apparently he had spent the night in the room of a man named Schutzmann, who knew Anni better than Fick did. A Reichsangestellte (bureaucrat) in Department II Z (B) wrote to a Mr. Bornheim in the same department that Anni worked for them. The bureaucrat had spoken to her, and even though she denied having had sexual relations with Fick, she was told she needed to be examined. The other women apparently said about Anni that Fick “did not bother himself about anyone like he did her. He always sat in the kitchen with her and even ate there.”<sup>77</sup> Two days later, Bornheim wrote back repeating the story that Fick had been at the apartment of the head of his Lager and had sexual intercourse with Anni. He demanded that Anni be examined by the Latvian health department and that the results be sent to him. In addition, if Anni P. were found to be healthy, then he suggested that all twenty-one Russian women in the Lager be examined.<sup>78</sup> By October 8, Dr. Marnitz, the Amtsarzt in Riga, was involved. He wrote to Dr. Kiršentals in the Riga health department that Anni P. needed to be examined and the details sent to him.<sup>79</sup> Finally, on November 19 and again on December 15, Kiršentals wrote to the Herr Kommissarische Oberbürgermeister in Riga that Anna P. was examined at the venereal department of the hospital at Alexanderhöhe and was found to be healthy.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Dr. Kirschentals, Letter to Herrn Kommissarische Oberbürgermeister of Riga, 22 October 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 244.

<sup>76</sup> Venereal Disease Form from Staatliche Kommunale Gesundheitsamt, 2 pages, signed in Riga, 27 April 1943; Memo from Dr.H.Kirschentals to Herr kommissarische Oberbürgermeister in Riga, 27 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 53-55.

<sup>77</sup> Reichsangestellte, Letter to Herr Bornheim, signed illegibly, Riga, 2 October 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 224-225.

<sup>78</sup> Reichsangestellte, Letter to Abteilung II Gesund im Hause from Bomheim, signed illegibly, Riga, 4 October 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 226.

<sup>79</sup> Dr. Marnitz, Signed letter to Dr. Kiršentals, Riga, 8 October 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 228.

<sup>80</sup> Dr. Kirschentals, Letter to Herr Kommissarische Oberbürgermeister in Riga, signed, 15 December 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 229 and 246.



A male patient infected with gonorrhea had sex with a woman (first and last name unknown) in her apartment on Lasdonas Street, 9, Apartment 4 on February 21, 1943, around ten to eleven in the evening. Like many women in the case studies, she was young (twenty-three years of age), tall and slim with a round face, and had light blond hair and spoke broken German. He could not remember the color of her eyes, but thought she worked in a factory. The patient (unnamed) told the doctor in the *Reservelazarett* in Riesenberg<sup>81</sup> that he had used a condom, but had not sanitized himself afterward. The doctor did not write that the patient was trustworthy, but in that blank on the questionnaire wrote that the patient had been told that if he was lying he would be punished.<sup>82</sup> Seventeen days later, on May 19, 1943, there is a note that says the health department had reported by telephone that the “one infected with gonorrhea” who lives at Lasdonas Street 9 had been summoned for medical examination. The health department had believed the man and blamed her as being the source of infection.<sup>83</sup> On June 8 Dr. H. Kirschentals wrote that the woman who lived at Lasdonas Street 9, who was incidentally named Pauline K., had been examined and was found to be healthy. No other comments were made.<sup>84</sup> Women and girls had to endure these forced, often repeated, and probably humiliating gynecological examinations under the male leadership in their countries.

In addition to lying, another problem was that the soldier would only name the last partner he had, but not all previous partners. At least by 1945, doctors finally were instructed to ask about additional partners, especially if the soldier first placed blame on a prostitute in a Wehrmacht brothel.<sup>85</sup> Two examples follow. It is also evident that if an accused woman were found to be innocent (meaning free of infection), at least in Riga, the soldier was to be interrogated further. Additionally, having weekly checkups and being registered with the German officials did sometimes help to clear a prostitute's name of having a venereal disease.

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<sup>81</sup> I cannot find the Latvian name for this.

<sup>82</sup> Oberstabsarzt and Chefarzt at the Reservelazarett Riesenburg, Krankenabteilung III, VD form from the Health Department, illegible signature, 2 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 75-76.

<sup>83</sup> Vermerk, signed illegibly, Riga, 19 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 73.

<sup>84</sup> Dr. H. Kirschentals, Director, Letter to the Herr kommissarische Oberbürgermeister of Riga, 8 June 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 79.

<sup>85</sup> Generalstabsarzt a.D. Wissemann, Three page report on VD to Generalarzt Prof. Dr. Löhe, Beratender Dermatologe des Heeres-Stanitätsinspektors, Berlin, 20 January 1945, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130752-55. Also see Der Chef des Militärverwaltungsbezirks A – Leitender Sanitätsoffizier – Az. 49r vom 23.8.1941, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v. 491, [n. 158], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 119.

Sometime between the 27<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1943, Peter Arras visited the military brothel in Riga on Park Street, Number 4 and had sex with a “brothel girl” (*Bordellmädchen*) named Vera (last name unknown). She was over thirty years old, one and a half meters tall, with a full face and light blond hair. He paid fifteen Reichsmarks. The patient told the doctor that he had sanitized himself after the visit to the brothel, but that he had destroyed the sanitation verification slip (*Sanierschein*). Having had sex with no one else, Vera was most probably the source of his infection.<sup>86</sup>

That Peter Arras had visited the Wehrmacht brothel would have been verifiable since all soldiers were required to sign in at the door. Based on what was done elsewhere in the Reich, it is likely that it was also checked by his name if he had been given a condom.<sup>87</sup> Whether Vera had been his only partner of course was not verifiable. Vera, however, was examined at the thrice weekly examinations by the brothel doctors, but not once found to be infected with a venereal disease. Doctors at the brothel wrote that this proved that the infected Wehrmacht member was entirely unreliable, and that the affected Wehrmacht member was to be questioned about which other women he had had sex within the possible incubation period.<sup>88</sup>

Unteroffizier Richard Labeit, infected with gonorrhea, named a prostitute in the Park Street Wehrmacht brothel in Riga who was registered under the name of "Fenja" Number 13 as his source of infection. In July 1943 the Oberarzt and Standortarzt reported that Fenja had been clean of any venereal disease since November 1942. The doctors argued that all of the women in that brothel were checked three times a week by a specialist, and that sexual intercourse was only allowed with condoms. There was “no question” that "Fenja" was not the "source of infection" (underline in original). They requested that Labeit should be thoroughly questioned about which other women he had had sex with.<sup>89</sup>

Apparently desperate for new strategies, Dr. Wissemann, General Staff Doctor, wrote in his 1945 three-page report on sexually transmitted diseases that additional questions be posed

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<sup>86</sup> Lt. Arzt des Generalkommissariates, VD questionnaire, Riga, 19 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 58-59.

<sup>87</sup> Bericht Oberfeldarzt Dr. Schmidt, Heeresgruppe C, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/148, [n. 87], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 167.

<sup>88</sup> Wehrm.-Orts-Kommandantur Rig Abt.: IV b- Standortarzt, Br. Tageb. Nr. 3907/43, signed Stabsarzt and Standortarzt, 17 August 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 167.

<sup>89</sup> Oberarzt and Standortarzt, Letter to Reserve Lazarett III, Department III in Königsberg, Riga, 23 July 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 142. Emphasis in original.

in an attempt to jog the memory of the soldier, questions such as “After the intercourse, did the soldier bring the stranger (*Unbekannte*) home? In which direction did the road travel (into or out of town)? Did they use a streetcar (which line, direction)? Position of the home (far/near to the stop, left/right of the traveling direction, corner house, attached or single-family house)?” Other suggestions included asking “What did the stranger tell about her personal relations? Kind of employment, place of work, if her father or brother was wounded or killed in action. Approximate age, size?” Additional questions were even more detailed: “Did the stranger have any distinguishing features? (Hair light blond, dark black, how it was parted, etc.; eye color; eyebrows natural/painted; teeth nice/with holes/gold teeth; earrings; finger nails natural or polished; hands well-kept/soft/rough and hard; speech refined/not refined; dialect from the Rhine/Saxony, Bavaria, etc.)”<sup>90</sup> It is not clear if there was any success in jogging the memories of the men with these questions or if these suggestions were carried out at all. But it is clear from the wording that the leadership acknowledged that the men had sex with strangers, which probably meant that many of them paid for the sex, even if on the forms they denied this.

In all fairness, there are a few cases on file which ended with the Germans successfully finding an infected female accused by the patient. For example, Otto Pomorin worked for the Germans in Riga and was infected ten days before he went to the doctor on March 30, 1943. Although he did not divulge how long he had known his partner, he did know her name and claimed he was infected by an Elisabeth B., who lived on Brückenstreet 20 in Riga.<sup>91</sup> By the eighth of May 1943, Dr. H. Kirschentals, Director of the Health Department in Riga, wrote that she had been let out of the Alexanderhöhe hospital and had been treated for gonorrhea.<sup>92</sup> Such cases probably proved to the Germans that the woman was the source of infection, yet the woman also could have been infected by the man.

Another successful case was that of the military man Gerhard Meier who named an Irma K. as his source. She was a twenty-six-year-old Latvian. They used no protection and he did

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<sup>90</sup> Generalstabsarzt a.D. Wissemann, Three page report on VD to Generalarzt Prof. Dr. Löhe, Beratender Dermatologe des Heeres-Stanitätsinspektors, Berlin, 20 January 1945, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130752-55.

<sup>91</sup> Dr. Lange, Anzeige, 30 March 1943, signed, BAB R92/10036, doc.47.

<sup>92</sup> Dr.H. Kirschentals, Director of Gesundheitsamt, Letter to the Herrn komm. Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Riga, 8 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc.46.

not sanitize himself.<sup>93</sup> Dr. Marnitz, Amtsarzt, wrote to the health department in Riga on August 30 describing Irma K., her address, and asking that she be found and checked for gonorrhea. On September 30, Dr. Th. Wankin, Director of the Health Department, wrote back to Dr. Marnitz to tell him her name was actually Irina K., with a very Latvian spelling, not with the obvious German spelling originally given. She was examined, had gonorrhea and was being treated.

Outside of establishing medically supervised military brothels, the final step for the officials to try to control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases was to force “suspicious” women to have medical exams and treatment if necessary, and to gain control of the unregulated or unofficial prostitution that flourished in the wartime economy. According to Seidler, the spread of venereal diseases would have been much greater had there not been so much energy placed on finding the sources of infection. To encourage soldiers to reveal their sexual partners, lighter sentences were offered if they cooperated with the search. The most effective method to reduce the incidence of venereal diseases was to establish Wehrmacht brothels, but since the soldiers fraternized with women outside these official German houses of prostitution, energy was put into finding these sources.<sup>94</sup> If the search for the female source was successful, from the German point of view, the leadership forced the woman or girl into having a gynecological examination. If an infection was found, treatment was required.

#### Forced Examination and Treatment

Prostitutes and women suspected of having a venereal disease have been subjected to humiliating genital exams performed by men for centuries. Feminists in Germany had denounced this treatment and denigration of women since the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially since men were not forced to be examined for venereal diseases.<sup>95</sup> During World War I women were denigrated in pamphlets warning soldiers about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. Accordingly, people were infected with sexually transmitted diseases by “foolish girls and women” who because of their “loose” lifestyle were almost all sick and who then infect the

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<sup>93</sup> Meldung über Geschlechtskranke, 22 August 1943, Handwritten, signed illegibly Stabsarzt, BAB R92/10036, doc. 213; Dr. Marnitz, Letter to the Health Department in Riga, 30 August 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 214; Dr. Th. Wankin, Health Department in Riga, Letter to Dr. Marnitz, 30 August 1943, BAB R92/10036, doc. 215.

<sup>94</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 126-127.

<sup>95</sup> Mosse, *Nationalism*, 110. Also see Haberling’s study, which has examples of many decrees to force medical examinations. Among other places, see especially pages 60-67.

men with whom they consort.<sup>96</sup>

As with so many aspects of the topic of sexual violence and disease, blaming the prostitute was not unique to Germany. In the U.S. a 1936 magazine article by a former surgeon general of the United States Public Health Service shocked millions of Americans who read for the first time facts about the spread of venereal disease in the U.S. among all levels of the population. What had been unspeakable and only viewed as a “moral sin” suddenly became a social problem that needed to be solved. Despite the attempts after this article by researchers, doctors, editors, members of the clergy, and others to wipe out syphilis and gonorrhea, little progress was made. In 1942 it was clear that any progress that had been made was being reversed with the number of cases rising again. At this time, the military stepped in to “clean up” and, as Carter writes, “blind to the lessons of the past they decided to chase sin with patrol wagons. Very soon they whipped up a chase after that perennial scapegoat, the prostitute.”<sup>97</sup>

In German-occupied territory during World War II some prostitutes worked either on their own or with a pimp or a madam, but were not regulated by the Germans. Some of these women could have been prostitutes before the German occupation. Many women in German occupied areas, as well as in labor and concentration camps, entered sexual relationships only because of the needed material goods it would bring. As the German officials tried to gain control of the independent prostitutes and have them be medically controlled, women who worked as prostitutes on the streets or in private brothels were the target of denigration, raids, forced treatment, and arrest. They were commonly referred to in German documents as the *Dirnenunwesen* (whore menace) and were blamed for the widespread venereal diseases among the Nazi soldiers, officers, and bureaucrats. Primarily because of the rapid spread of sexually transmitted diseases, German authorities quickly moved to control unregulated prostitution and the men who visited “black” (*schwarzen*) or independent brothels instead of the official German ones. The solution to the venereal disease problem was thought to be to gain control over these women, establish official brothels, and discourage soldiers from anything other than safe sex in medically supervised brothels. It is not clear from the evidence I found how many women and girls in the east came under German control, but still worked the streets or in other brothels

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<sup>96</sup> Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 174.

<sup>97</sup> Carter, *Sin*, 5.

outside the German state-run military brothel system.

In addition to relying on soldiers to report their venereal disease source truthfully, another way to limit the spreading venereal diseases among the Wehrmacht was to conduct raids on the suspicious women, who would then be brought to an army hospital for forced examination and if necessary, treatment. Not all local commanders were concerned with conducting raids and enforcing examinations on unregulated women. In his study of the eastern front, Theo Schulte provides one example from Korück 582 where the commander declared that women need not be forcibly hospitalized. In this case, it was suggested that the authorities deal with the German soldiers who were paying for sex with their black leather boots.<sup>98</sup> This, however, was not the rule. There are abundant examples of doctors and commanders who often wrote about forced examination and raids. If anything, the example by Schulte again shows us how military authorities grappled with the problem of sex between the occupiers and the native women. Various methods were attempted, including questioning the soldiers, raids on the women, and the forced examination and treatment of “suspicious” women.<sup>99</sup> Specific case studies of occupied countries follow.

### Occupied Poland

In Poland, fighting unregulated prostitution was a considerable problem in 1941 and 1942.<sup>100</sup> The authorities carried out systematic raids in the large cities such as Warsaw, Lvov, and Krakau. This was usually done in the evening hours when men were visiting women for paid sex.

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<sup>98</sup> Korück 582, OK Witebsk, Standertarzt, 'Maßnahmen zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung übertragbarer Krankheiten: 4', dated 25.08.1941, quoted in Schulte, *German Army*, 168.

<sup>99</sup> Forty-eight percent of all women treated at the Leipziger University Skin Clinic from 1938-1940 had been arrested during raids. The marines also conducted many raids in the harbors before allowing the soldiers to land. This was believed to help limit the spread of disease. See Der Heeressanitätsinspekteur 1910/40 vom 20.12.1940, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v.491 [n. 108], and Vgl. Kriegstagebuch des Leitenden Sanitäts-offiziers beim Marineoberkommando Süd, Eintragung vom 8.1.1945, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv K 70-1/2 [n. 110], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 178.

<sup>100</sup> This is repeated in several documents. For example, Leitender Sanitäts Offizier b.d. OFK 365 Az.: 449.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 14 September 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 520-524; Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 18 November 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1240-1243; Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49. s. (I), Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 18 December 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1055-1057; NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 872. Tomaszow/Maz., den 10.7.42 Kommandeur des Heeresstreifendienstes beim Mil. Befh. Im Gen.Gouv. Nr. 404 / 42 geh. Erfahrungs – und Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. – 30. 6. 1942; Leitender San.-Offizier, OFK 365, Anlage 2 zum Monatsbericht Mai 1941, Az. 49.s. (I), Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 16. April bis 15. Mai 1941, St. Qu., 17 May 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 329.

Polish-speaking soldiers would accompany the morality police (*Sittenpolizei*) to cheap hotels, private apartments of suspicious women and known "black brothels."<sup>101</sup>

The Lvov monthly reports from chief sanitation officer, Dr. Fahr between early 1941 and spring of 1943 show that the spread of sexually transmitted diseases was of a primary concern to OFK 365. The numbers of cases of sexually transmitted diseases in Lvov climbed throughout the war.<sup>102</sup> There was also concern about the rising number of cases among the civilian population. Often Dr. Fahr assured his reader that "as usual" the fight against prostitution and sexually transmitted diseases was given high priority.<sup>103</sup> Officials generated large amounts of paperwork in their continued attempt to resolve the venereal disease problem.

In March 1941 a private brothel in Mielec at Zermoskiego Number 188 was cause for concern for hygienic and for moral policing reasons because of its "indefensible" conditions. Despite various petitions from the Ortskommandantur to shut down the place, the brothel stayed open. The author of one report wrote that the series of events surrounding this brothel was being sent to the OFK 365 with the request for a further investigation.<sup>104</sup>

In May 1941 according to Dr. Fahr, raids regularly took place in all locations to fight secret prostitution, and the numbers of those with a sexually transmitted disease had been reduced considerably. The reporting officer seemed proud to announce that in the towns of Tarnow, Jaroslau, Krosno, and Rudnik there had not been a single case of a sexually transmitted disease reported, and in Przemyśl and Rzeszow just one case each.<sup>105</sup>

The Standortarzt in Lvov wrote another optimistic report in August 1941 that all

<sup>101</sup> Tomaszow/Maz., den 10.7.42 Kommandeur des Heeresstreifendienstes beim Mil. Befh. Im Gen.Gouv. Nr. 404 / 42 geh. Erfahrungs- und Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. – 30. 6. 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 872.

<sup>102</sup> Leitender San.- Offizier OFK 365, Ax.: 49 s (I/F), Monatsbericht, Anlage 4 to OFK 365 Ia Nr.6020/43, geh. Lemberg, 15 December 1943, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 217, Fr. 846; Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s. Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 March 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 102-104; Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s. (I), Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 16 February 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 323. Also see Seidler's chapters One and Two on sexually transmitted diseases which include statistics that cover the entire Reich and war on this topic.

<sup>103</sup> Übersicht of gemeldeten Seuchenerkrankungen in der Zivilbevölkerung im Bereich OFK 365, O.U., 6 Januar 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 501-504.

<sup>104</sup> Kommandantur Truppenübungsplatz Süd Abt. Ia Aktenz. 4. Monatsberichte An Militärbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement in Spala, Deba, 19 March 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 213, Fr. 1107-1108.

<sup>105</sup> Leitender San.-Offizier, OFK 365, Anlage 2 zum Monatsbericht Mai 1941, Az. 49.s. (I), Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 16. April bis 15. Mai 1941, St. Qu., 17 May 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 329.

venereal disease sources were registered with him and were forcibly brought to treatment through the field police (*Feldgendarmarie*).<sup>106</sup> Just one month later, in September 1941, the chief sanitation officer had a much bleaker report. Raids still were carried out, but only periodically and with the help of German police and the Ukrainian Militia. "Suspicious" women were watched and then put under control through the district hospitals. Presumably this meant that the women were then registered and required to be examined regularly or risk arrest and imprisonment. Although he wrote that all "suspicious" women were registered after being examined, the registration of the many prostitutes needed to be completed before an official brothel in Lvov would be opened.<sup>107</sup> By November 1941 the chief sanitation officer in OFK 365 wrote that sexually transmitted diseases had spread tremendously, and the troops were being made aware of this increased danger. In addition, "suspicious female persons" were registered with the public health officials and their compliance in the hospitals was rigorously watched.<sup>108</sup>

German military leaders, usually sanitation officers, reported on a weekly basis about the fight against secret prostitution, the numbers of women who had been arrested and how many of those were sick. In Tarnopol, Poland in a two week span in 1941 thirty-eight "suspicious" women were brought in for examination, and twenty-four of them were found to be infected with a sexually transmitted disease. Controls and control books (*Kontrollbücher*) of the "suspicious ones" were being put in place everywhere.<sup>109</sup> The control books referred to a book prostitutes were then required to have with them at all times. Their examination results were recorded in the book by the physician.

As awareness over the problem grew, so too did the number of cases. In December 1941 Dr. Fahr reported that they were giving, as usual, high priority to the fight against sexually transmitted diseases, and that the numbers of soldiers being caught was growing.<sup>110</sup> In February

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<sup>106</sup> Standortarzt, O.U., Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 17 August 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 724-725.

<sup>107</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier b.d. OFK 365 Az.: 449.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 14 September 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 520-524.

<sup>108</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s.(I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 18 November 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1240-1243.

<sup>109</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 18 October 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1405-1408.

<sup>110</sup> NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1055-1057.



1942 he repeated that the fight against the prostitution menace (*Dirnenunwesens*) was as before being conducted vigorously. They conducted raids and picked up “suspicious” women for examinations.<sup>111</sup>

The chief sanitation officer in Lvov reported in March 1942 that their fight against the *Dirnenunwesens* (whore menace) was conducted in cooperation with the civilian authorities. Because of the strong controls over the independent prostitution, most of the professional prostitutes had been caught. In the first months,<sup>112</sup> between 140 to 180 street prostitutes were registered and brought under control, but by the time of this report the monthly number had been reduced to around fifteen. All arrested prostitutes were to be examined two times a week. Showing the necessity of this examination schedule, Fahr explained that a raid in Tarnopol that produced 120 examined women revealed that eleven of them had "fresh" gonorrhea and four "fresh" syphilis.<sup>113</sup> Street or independent prostitutes risked arrest if they did not comply with the required examinations.

By April 1942 German officials, presumably frustrated with trying to catch all the women, resorted to forcing women into being examined by withholding their food ration cards. The chief sanitation officer of OFK 365, Dr. Fahr, reported that at the request of the Standortarzt (station surgeon) the distribution of food ration cards was dependent on the woman undergoing a medical examination for sexually transmitted diseases. More than eight hundred women who obviously depended on their food ration cards were examined, sixty-three of whom were found to have a sexually transmitted disease (thirty-three women had syphilis, and thirty had gonorrhea).<sup>114</sup> From the tone of this document, this apparently was a significant number of sources to find. Considering that the strength of the German people (*Volk*) was at risk, there was of course no mention of any ethical issues surrounding forced medical examinations of that nature.

On May 5, 1942, it was reported that Wehrmacht soldiers in Tomaszow were

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<sup>111</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier, Lemberg, Monatsbericht, 16 February 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 323.

<sup>112</sup> Presumably “in the first months” referred to the first months of the occupation.

<sup>113</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s., Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 March 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 102-104.

<sup>114</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier, Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 April 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 208.

overstepping their vacation allowances. It was mostly the rank and file (*Unteroffiziere* and *Mannschaften*) who were living with Polish women in hotels or guesthouses without any authorization. Compliance was being achieved through increased raids of the hotels at irregular times conducted in conjunction with the field police. With the cooperation of the security service (*Sicherheitsdienst* or SD) a whole array of so-called black brothels were found through these controls. It was reported that permanent monitoring was secured through the use of registration and lists.<sup>115</sup> Another problem the authorities had was soldiers who picked up civilians, especially female civilians. In just one month, April 1942, there were eighty-five complaints in Tomaszow alone.<sup>116</sup>

In Kielce, Poland raids were carried out in 1942 in cooperation with the field police and the criminal police. On August 19, 1942, a widespread raid was carried out on "suspicious female persons" that resulted in "complete success." In addition, on September 21, 1942, in the regions of the individual *Ortskommandanturen* "moral controls" (*Sittenkontrollen*) were carried out, from which many infected girls were taken to undergo forced treatment.<sup>117</sup>

As we have seen, in many Polish cities, the Germans had considerable difficulties controlling the independent prostitutes, the soldiers, and even officers. Soldiers and officers continued to visit independent brothels instead of the state-run brothels which were being established in all cities (see Chapter Four). A report from Tomaszow, dated August 14, 1942 reads:

The arrests of the still large number of soldiers who stayed out past curfew happened mostly because of the systematic combing of black brothels and cheap hotels, less of the public localities (*Lokalen*). The number of soldiers who visit Polish prostitutes and mostly unworthy private brothels for Wehrmacht members far outnumbers the visitor numbers in the Wehrmacht brothel. Besides regular soldiers, increasing numbers of officers and officials in Warsaw are caught in cheap hotels with Polish prostitutes.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Kommandeur des Heeresstreifendienstes beim Mil.Befh. im Gen. Gouv. Nr. 342 / 42 geh. Erfahrungs – und Tätigkeitsbericht, Tomaszow/Maz., 15 May 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 112.

<sup>116</sup> Kommandeur des Heeresstreifendienstes beim Mil.Befh. im Gen. Gouv. Nr. 342 / 42 geh. Erfahrungs – und Tätigkeitsbericht, Anlage 1, Tomaszow/Maz., 15 May 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 112.

<sup>117</sup> OFK 372 Abt. Ia-Nr.3512/42 geh., St.Qu.Kielce, 21 September 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 1164.

<sup>118</sup> Kommandeur des Heeresstreifendienstes, beim Mil. Befh. im Gen. Gouv. Nr. 442 / 42 geh. Erfahrungs – und Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. – 31. Juli 1942, Tomaszow, Maz., 14 August 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 667.

This was something that was known to have been a regular occurrence throughout the entire Reich,<sup>119</sup> despite the widespread repetition by authorities and knowledge by all military members of the rules against sex with “women of another race” (*Geschlechtsverkehr mit andersrassigen Frauen*). The same process occurring in Poland also happened in Ukraine and Russia. With my initial investigation, there was less documentation from these areas than from Poland, but I am confident many documents still exist, though unfortunately the voices of the women and girls are mostly silent. Some examples from occupied Russia, Ukraine, and Latvia follow.

### Occupied Russia and Ukraine

In June 1942 the Leutnant of the field police in Kerch, Ukraine wrote that in “recent times there has been the appearance of sexually transmitted diseases in large numbers. Within just a few days five female persons with venereal diseases were picked up and brought to the local doctor. Immediate measures also were being taken to secure any suspicious people possibly infected with a sexually transmitted disease.”<sup>120</sup> Elsewhere, in the Crimean city of Karasubasar and the surrounding region, four women infected with sexually transmitted diseases were arrested and escorted to the venereal disease hospital in June 1942.<sup>121</sup> In June 1942 the Sixteenth Army in Russia also conducted effective raids against “women who hung out and turned up at notorious meeting places.” Those who were arrested had forced gynecological examinations by Russian doctors under German control and supervision. If there was even the slightest sign of venereal disease they were brought to the women’s hospital.<sup>122</sup>

In the area of Feldkommandantur 756 in July 1942, it was reported that the civilian birth rate exceeded the death rate by a good one third. Only a few sexually transmitted disease cases were reported. The forced treatment of the infected women showed good results and was

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<sup>119</sup> Feldkommandostelle, Vermerk, Betr.: Geschlechtsverkehr mit andersrassigen Frauen, 13 May 1943, BAB NS7/13, docs. 7-9; Vgl. Der Reichsführer-SS B Nr. I 2382/39 Ads. vom 24.10.1939, Bundesarchiv R. 19/403-1, [n. 122], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 181-182.

<sup>120</sup> Leutnant d. Feldgendarmarie, Tgb.Nr. 248/42, Tätigkeitsbericht, illegible signature, Kertsch, 30 June 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 284-287.

<sup>121</sup> Ortskommandantur II/937/V, Tätigkeitsbericht, Karasubasar, 12 June 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 196.

<sup>122</sup> Vgl. Bericht IV b vom 15.6.1942, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv AOK 16/23467/28, [n. 111], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 178.

drawing to a close.<sup>123</sup> A fairly conservative report from February 1943 states that “obviously, sexually transmitted diseases are slowly on the rise in the east. The sources of infection were in part from France and in part from Warsaw.” It had also been reported that there also was an increase in underground prostitution in Russia.<sup>124</sup> Thus, the reports from this area are similar to those in Poland. The same attempt to control independent prostitution also took place in the Baltic.

### **Occupied Latvia**

Organizing a system of officially regulated prostitution in Riga, Latvia was probably not as difficult as elsewhere in the occupied eastern territories. Before the German occupation during World War II, there had been a long-standing system of regulated prostitution,<sup>125</sup> and Dr. Marnitz, Riga's *Amtarzt*, wanted to reestablish this system.<sup>126</sup>

Already in December 1941, Dr. Marnitz was concerned with the numbers of sexually transmitted disease cases in the German occupied city of Riga, Latvia. He wrote that the number of cases was a very high one, and that to decrease the danger to both the civilian population and the Wehrmacht it was necessary to get the considerably widespread prostitution under supervision.<sup>127</sup> Another report states that “in the last six months of the year 1941 the police escorted more than four hundred female persons to the Riga control ambulatory (*Kontrollambulanz*), many of whom had already done this repeated times, and a large portion of them proved to be sick.”<sup>128</sup> But they did not always get it right. A *Vetra O.* (also spelled *Welta* in the documents) was accused of being someone’s source of infection and was therefore forced to

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<sup>123</sup> Der Leit. San. Offz. Beim Kommandanten rückw. Armeegebiet 585, O.U. 17 July 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 531-534.

<sup>124</sup> Der Beratende Hygieniker beim Heeres-Sanitätsinspekteur, Letter to the Beratenden Hygieniker des Feld- und Ersatheeres, signed Zeiss, Oberstarzt, Berlin, 10 February 1943, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6131247-48.

<sup>125</sup> This is shown not only by what the WWII German documents suggest, but also by the large amount of documents on the prostitutes prior to World War II. See LSHA Fond 1376, Opis, 2s, Del 18128.

<sup>126</sup> BAB R92/10036.

<sup>127</sup> Dr. Marnitz, Gesundheit und Volkspflege, Abtlg. II d, Two page letter to Herr Gebietskokmmissar Riga-Stadt und k. Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Riga, 13 December 1941, BAB R92/558.

<sup>128</sup> P. Dreijmanis, Stellv. Stadthalter and Dr. H. Kirschentals, Leiter des Gesundheitsamtes i.V., Letter, Riga, March 1942, BAB R92/558.

have a gynecological exam. She was found to be healthy.<sup>129</sup>

An example of the independent prostitution in Latvia was the known and unofficial brothel in Liepaja that a woman had been running with her son since before the war through to at least February 1942. The business was in her apartment on Michael Street, Number 4. Even prior to the German occupation she lured girls from her circle of friends into her apartment with the promise that men visited regularly, and there, according to the German report, she apparently "led them to immorality." The girls paid half of the money they received from the men to Ms. Mockus. In addition, Mockus received money and bartered goods from the men. She charged the men various prices, ranging from two to five Reichsmarks. Of the ten who worked there, the girls' and women's ages ranged from fifteen to thirty-five. Two of them were apparently sick with a venereal disease. The infirmary contacted Dr. Straumann in Liepaja with this information because of the concern that these women would spread the diseases. None of them possessed a control book, and they and Mockus were still "running free."<sup>130</sup>

In light of circumstances, a commission to fight sexually transmitted diseases was established on February 12, 1942. In the first meeting thirty prostitutes were registered and twenty-one Jewish women were removed from the list. With this commission the authorities had a total of 266 prostitutes registered in sixteen days by the twenty-eighth of February. Police action was called to continue to bring the situation under control.<sup>131</sup>

In April 1943 it was reported that the number of the 165 prostitutes had not changed, and that since the criminal police had taken over the fight against sexually transmitted diseases more cases had been found. For example, in January 1943 there had only been six new cases, while in February there were already twenty-three new cases of infection.<sup>132</sup> Even the Latvian

<sup>129</sup> Reichsangestellte, Vermerk, Riga, April 28, 1943, signed illegibly; Staatliche Kommunale Gesundheitsamt, Signed VD form, Riga, 27 April 1943; Dr. H. Kirscentals, Short letter to Herr kommissarische Oberbürgermeister of Riga, 24 May 1943, BAB R92/10036, docs. 52-55.

<sup>130</sup> Lemke, Hauptwachmeister d. Sch., Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Signed Police Review, Libau, 11 February 1942, USHMMA, RG-18.002M, Reel 11, R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 107-107b.

<sup>131</sup> P. Dreijmanis. Stellv. Stadthalter and Dr. H. Kirscentals, Leiter des Gesundheitsamtes i.V., Letter, Riga, March 1942, BAB R92/558.

<sup>132</sup> This report concerning the month of March states that there were forty-six cases of syphilis and 151 of gonorrhea. Der Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und d. SD Lettland, Stimmungs- und Lagebericht für die Zeit vom 1. Bis 31. März 1943, Riga, 1 April 1943, LSHA P 82, Opis 1, Del 39, doc. 196. The 165 prostitutes likely meant those registered with the police. In February 1942 it was reported that there were 266 prostitutes registered with the Rigaer Prefektur. Dr. H. Kirscentals, Leiter des Gesundheitsamtes, i.V., Rigaer Stadverwaltung, Gesundheitsamt, Letter with two Anlagen to Herr Gebietskommissar and kom. Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Riga, Riga,

women's police was to help control prostitution. In the Women's Criminal Police newsletter it mentions that "special attention is being paid to the female youth who have aroused suspicion for hanging out with men and practicing prostitution."<sup>133</sup>

Several disparate documents hint at the debate surrounding some aspects of the process to control disease. Mayor Bonner in Liepaja agreed with the new regulations on obligatory health examinations and other control measures, but he did not think that the ordinance would have any practical meaning outside of the city limits.<sup>134</sup> In July 1942 the head of the health department in Liepaja felt that the three doctors working on sexually transmitted diseases should be enough for the time being.<sup>135</sup> But another letter from the mayor of Liepaja to the General Director of the Interior in Riga, on the same date, is full of panic and states that measures need to be taken immediately. According to the letter, without immediate measures against prostitution there will be an even wider spread of sexually transmitted diseases in the city. As Dr. Marnitz also wrote, the mayor questioned if the old Soviet system of prostitution should be reinstated throughout the entire *Generalbezirk* Latvia.<sup>136</sup>

### Conclusion

The evidence surrounding the attempts to control venereal disease points to a loss of control on the part of the German leadership. The authorities had great challenges in their efforts to control the behavior of men during wartime occupation. It is clear that soldiers and officers did much of what they wanted despite the many rules of conduct: soldiers and members of the SS were not abstinent, they had unprotected extramarital sex with non-German women in the countries they occupied, they did not sanitize themselves, they did not always report if they were sick, and finally, they did not always comply with the search for their recent sexual partners. This struggle with compliance with the rules of conduct was a continual process in the east during the

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March 1942, BAB R92/558.

<sup>133</sup> Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland, 17 August 1943, BAB R90/243.

<sup>134</sup> Bürgermeister Bönner, Letter from, Riga, 12 June 1942, BAB R92/558.

<sup>135</sup> Abt.II c., Vermerk, Riga, 17 July 1942, BAB R92/558. This was a concern elsewhere, too. For example in France there was discussion to increase the number of exams for the women each week, but this would mean an increase in the numbers of doctors.

<sup>136</sup> Mayor of Libau, letter to General Director of the Interior in Riga, 17 July 1942, BAB R92/558.

war in all areas of the occupation. The case mentioned in Chapter Two of the woman who was accused of being a soldier's source of infection and who was deported on a train is a clear example of one hand of the leadership not knowing what the other hand was doing. Did the Germans try to follow the source of infection to Germany and a factory or farm where she was forced to work? Or did the source of infection end up in a concentration camp? This woman, likely someone who had been desperate enough to prostitute herself to a military man, had a fate that we will never know.

It is also clear from the previous discussion that many women continued to prostitute themselves outside of official control in exchange for goods from the occupying powers. Even though some people had steady relationships of this sort, either the man or the woman could spread venereal disease if they had other partners, and many women probably prostituted themselves by working on the streets or in private brothels. Women and girls throughout the east were under much economic pressure and obviously felt compelled to prostitution to help themselves and their families. In addition, the German leadership knew women were dependent on their food ration cards, and thus very easily forced hundreds into gynecological exams. Such prostitution out of desperation very likely could have been a major source of the venereal disease problem,<sup>137</sup> though definitive numbers are hard to estimate for the eastern front. Furthermore, it also is not clear how many women and girls engaged in prostitution on a regular basis, seldom, or once or twice. In addition to the numerous methods used to control venereal diseases, the German state established a widespread system of sexual slavery, consisting of state-run official military brothels, which were medically supervised. These official brothels were considered to be the best way to control venereal diseases and women and girls of various backgrounds were forced to serve the Germans sexually.

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<sup>137</sup> For the same conclusion on World War I, see also Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 186.

## CHAPTER 4

### GERMAN MILITARY BROTHELS

The Japanese army was not unique in its practice of sexual slavery during World War II. So too did the Germany army. Women and girls in the east were forced into such fates because of the lack of food due to the German invasion, subsequent occupation, and deliberate policy of starvation. Other women and girls were forced into this kind of work at gunpoint. Still others were given the so-called choice of living (and dying) in a concentration camp or working in a brothel. Regardless of how they entered the system, women and girls endured repetitive assaults on their bodies by men who came to the German brothels each day. There were rules of conduct for both the soldiers and prostitutes which were not always followed. There is little evidence to suggest that the women and girls in the east received any remuneration for the most tragic kinds of assault on their bodies and psyche. There is some evidence to suggest that the women and girls received payment in kind, probably in food. In the east, where most brothels were newly established, where the occupation was so vast, affecting millions of people on both sides, and where the war was so violently brutal, women and girls of various cultural, religious, ethnic, and political backgrounds, including Jews and non-Jewish Slavic women, were among the victims of German state-run sexual slavery. This will become evident below.

Because of the destruction of so many documents toward the end of the war, because Soviet-controlled archives were closed until late in the century, and because so many people chose to ignore the topic, the tragic fate of the victims of the extensive German brothel system in the east has not yet been fully researched. Presently it is not widely known among scholars of World War II and the Holocaust that the Germans are guilty of these crimes. Just one example of a scholarly excerpt on the topic of sexual slavery from the late 1990s is as follows: “Alone among the belligerents in World War II, the Japanese military aggressively conscripted women to



provide sex for its soldiers.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, because of Nazi racial laws, many still believe that Jewish women and men would not have been victims of such sexual violence. Among the general public the facts presented here are even less known. In addition, the current German government has not acknowledged the victims of sexual violence and military prostitution as it has other wartime victims, nor has it acknowledged its complicity in these kinds of sexual crimes. Prostitutes are grouped together with the disabled, homosexuals, the homeless, Jehovah Witnesses, the swing youth, and those who were forcibly sterilized as the “forgotten victims” by the Project Group for the Forgotten Victims of the NS Regime in Hamburg (*Projektgruppe für die vergessenen Opfer des NS-Regimes*).<sup>2</sup>

Yet it is not the case that there is no documentation on the topic: That I found as many German documents about the military brothels as I did in what was a relatively short amount of time, points to the massive amount of documentation on this topic, probably a majority of which has not been seen by scholars interested in furthering this discussion. The information available is not neat and compact, and it involves much searching, but the evidence is there. In addition to the vast amount of German documentation, there exist the large number of Soviet interrogations of civilians both during and after the war. Some of these documents have only recently become available in archives in countries such as Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, and Russia. Many of these are available at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Finally, a multitude of novels and memoirs exist. More and more of these will become available in multiple languages, ensuring a wider audience. As to the veracity of the novel form, many writers use the novel form because it is easier to tell the whole story in such a format.<sup>3</sup> We need to consider these sources seriously, especially since often that is the only insight into the perspectives of victims and survivors.

People in the east, having already experienced over thirty-five years of turmoil that included revolution, war, forced collectivization and industrialization, purges, invasion, and widespread famine, were forced to face new challenges during the brutal war and the German occupation. Women and girls throughout much of the east, but especially in the Russian

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<sup>1</sup> An example of Linda Grant De Pauw, *Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in War from Prehistory to the Present* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 259.

<sup>2</sup> “Beratung für Verfolgte des NS-Regimes”, BwA 56-8-5, quoted in Podszun, “Sonderbau”, 13.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the novel form as a source for historians, see the section on methodology in Chapter One (p. 28ff) and page 107ff in Chapter Two.

dominated areas, had long suffered from discrimination, beatings, and rapes under a strong patriarchal state and society, but it is probable that they had not yet experienced the kind of sexual assault they would encounter in the next four years. Furthermore, because of the extremely high numbers of girls and women involved, the stories of the women in military and camp brothels are not unique stories.

Finally, after the war in the Soviet Union the tragedies women and men endured throughout the entire war and the massive failures at the onset of the war were erased from official memory.<sup>4</sup> This meant that many people's stories were not included in television or radio programs, official parades or demonstrations, in school textbooks, in academic lectures, or other venues the state used to spread its pro-Soviet messages. In part because the Soviet Union lost an approximately thirty million people through battle, starvation, and deprivation, crimes based on gender and the genocide specifically directed toward Jews, Gypsies, and others was excluded from public discourse. Except at home, young people who did not know the war first hand from family members only learned heroic stories of self-sacrifice and official Soviet propaganda which had replaced so much of the tragic reality people had experienced. Even at home, it is likely survivors of the war may have not wanted to explain all they had lived through, especially if it concerned sexual violence. Many of those forced into German hands were publicly condemned as traitors to the communist cause, and if they dared return home after the war they were shot or exiled. Anything fascist was seen and spoken of as evil throughout Soviet occupied territory, but many of the German (and Soviet) crimes were not a part of any public discourse.

The strength and pervasiveness of the Soviet state silenced any sexual victimization of people. However, the stories here were silenced also because of societal or cultural influences. Whether Slavic, Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, women were either "good" or "bad," and often, having been raped or having been a prostitute, even if forced, made one a "bad" woman, a woman with no honor or dignity. One man told me in an interview, "several...lived together, several, I know specifically of two...[The Germans], you know, fed them, gave them some kind of presents... But those kinds, those were bad women."<sup>5</sup> As we will see in Chapter Six, the

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<sup>4</sup> Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia*, 50. Tumarkin's entire book provides an insightful discussion on World War II in Soviet memory.

<sup>5</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. This man was educated, and very kind and gentle. I think if I would have challenged him on his choice of words, he may have reworded it. Indeed, later in the interview as he spoke about how hungry people had been and how the Germans had taken everyone's food, I sensed that he came to some kind of realization that the women really weren't "that bad." Still,

Germans raped two women on Ukrainian soil who returned to their compatriots only to tell them they had been sent to the German “headquarters.”<sup>6</sup> To have admitted that they had been raped, even when it was probably quite obvious, and even though it was completely forced upon them, was too much. Another example is the story of a young Jewish woman from Lithuania forced into a brothel by the Germans. She returned to her husband after the war, but they needed to ask their rabbi if it was right for the husband to accept her, even though she had been forced.<sup>7</sup> Thus, by both state and societal pressures, these stories were silenced.

The sexual slavery practiced during World War II was not something invented in the 1930s and 1940s. Women, often under coercion, have been provided to armies for centuries for various reasons: as an outlet for a basic human urge, to contain venereal diseases, and to prevent mass rape.<sup>8</sup> In the nineteenth century, German military officials were ordered to “join forces” with civilian doctors where brothels were located in order to help prevent the spread of disease. It was presumed either that the military would assume control of the house or that it would close.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the rapes the German army committed during World War I,<sup>10</sup> the Germans also established medically supervised brothels throughout the territories they occupied and along both fronts. Sometimes these were mobile brothels that followed the troops. Those with red lights

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the example shows how natural categorizations of “good” and “bad” come to people as they remember and talk about sex.

<sup>6</sup> No. 12, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Harry Gersh, *The Sacred Books of the Jews*, New York: Stein and Day, 1968, pp. 181-183, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 54.

<sup>8</sup> Brownmiller, *Against*; De Pauw, *Battle Cries*. For a discussion of male prostitution and the relationship between providing women and curtailing homosexual behavior among men, see Trexler, *Sex*, especially 128-134.

<sup>9</sup> Haberling, “Morals,” 79.

<sup>10</sup> For a more complete list of the many sources documenting German atrocities in World War I, see Gullace, “Sexual Violence.” Some of the more well known reports are the Bryce Report, René Dubois, “Obstetrical Cases in Wartime,” in *Morals in Wartime*, ed. Wilhelm Haberling (New York: Publishers Foundation, 1943); Haberling, “Morals.”; A. Hergott, “Woman, Victim of War,” in *Morals in Wartime*, ed. Wilhelm Haberling (New York: Publishers Foundation, 1943); Morgan, *German Atrocities*; Étienne Rabaud, “Maternal Impregnation in Wartime,” in *Morals in Wartime*, ed. Wilhelm Haberling (New York: Publishers Foundation, 1943). For a long time, pro-German scholars refused to believe the reports of atrocities committed in Belgium by the German military forces. However, more scholars have now begun to argue that there is merit in the accounts, basing their arguments on all kinds of evidence, including German soldier’s and officer’s diaries. See, for example Horne and Kramer, “German ‘Atrocities’ and Franco-German Opinion, 1914.”; Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986). Like many scholars, Horne and Kramer do not spend much time on the topic of sexual violence, but they conclude that the Germans’ military conduct truly is “a case of morally indefensible ‘barbarism’” (p.33).

were for non-commissioned officers and private soldiers, and the blue light ones were for officers. According to a London newspaper, a medical officer from Mitau, Poland, reported that one of the girls who worked in the brothel received thirty-two visits between four and nine o'clock in the evening. Others averaged between six and twelve visitors a day. Because of the high demand in some brothels, the men were limited to ten minutes before the duty sergeant yelled "Next!"<sup>11</sup> Whether these exact details are accurate is difficult to determine, but there exists a photograph of such a mobile brothel.<sup>12</sup> In any case, there is supporting evidence that the Germans were well versed in sexual slavery by World War II.

The Nazi state exhibited opposing messages about prostitution. Prostitution was condemned as immoral and something an Aryan man should not engage in, especially if he were married.<sup>13</sup> Historian Annette Timm writes, "Early pronouncements against the scourge of prostitution, emanating from Adolf Hitler himself, misled anti-prostitution activists into assuming that the new regime would not tolerate extra-marital sexual activity in any form."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, under Hitler's regime the family was valorized, and Aryan German women were encouraged to be faithful to their husbands and the National Socialist state by having children. In Germany proper, prostitution was only allowed in certain areas that had been officially recognized, and this could not be in buildings or houses where children resided.<sup>15</sup> If not criminalized, women who engaged in such work were regularly denounced or insulted. Moral reasons against using prostitutes hardly appear in the discussions about establishing military brothels, and often, the women were referred to as "whores," and the houses sometimes as *Freudenhäuser* (joy houses). Nothing ever really appears in the documents about women's needs or sexuality. Despite the contradictions, German officials admitted they desperately needed prostitutes for political and military purposes. This sanctimony has been the case throughout

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<sup>11</sup> W. Frischauer, "The Brothel Brigade," *Sunday Times*, Color Supplement, April 30 1972; Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 231ff.

<sup>12</sup> Frischauer, "The Brothel Brigade."; Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*, 240-245.

<sup>13</sup> Mosse, *Nationalism*, 167.

<sup>14</sup> See "Die Prostitutionsfrage," *AgfV Mitteilungen* no.3 (14 February 1934):6; "Die Prostitutionsfrage," *AgfV Mitteilungen* no.3 (14 February 1934):1-9; "Stellungnahme zur Prostitutionsfrage," *Christliche AgfV Mitteilungen* no.21 (1 September 1937):1-3, quoted in Timm, "Politics", 426.

<sup>15</sup> Clifford Kirkpatrick, *Nazi Germany: Its Women and Family Life* (Indianapolis, NY: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1938), 141-2, [n. 59], quoted in Mosse, *Nationalism*, 167.

history: prostitutes have been blamed for spreading venereal disease, but the military has looked to them to protect their men from disease.<sup>16</sup> Revealing acknowledgment of the contradictions between ideology and reality, one official wrote that it must be avoided that the regulations surrounding preventative sanitation be seen as an implicit condoning or even invitation to have extramarital sexual intercourse.<sup>17</sup>

Military brothels were established throughout the Third Reich because the military could not control their soldiers' sexual behavior despite the many rules and regulations intended for this purpose. As we have seen, venereal disease was widespread among both the military and civilian populations, and in their attempt to control these diseases the German state established state-run brothels for the Wehrmacht, SS, and other members of the German military. The sexual exploitation of women and girls "enlisted with or without consent"<sup>18</sup> into the war on the eastern front was possible because of entrenched misogynist beliefs about male sexuality and what kinds of "rewards" soldiers who risk their lives in war deserve.<sup>19</sup> As with other systems of sexual slavery, the German system of state-run military brothels viewed the women and girls therein as "whores," that is, they were first and foremost viewed as useful, but tainted females who could fulfil the military men's desires for sexual intercourse.

The primary reason behind establishing military brothels that was expressed by Germans was the preservation of the German race. Aryan soldiers and officers were to stay healthy and active. Arguments against alcohol and nicotine abuse were common,<sup>20</sup> and officials

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<sup>16</sup> For example, see Susan R. Grayzel, "The Enemy Within: The Problem of British Women's Sexuality During the First World War," in *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted with or without Consent*, ed. Nicole Ann Dombrowski (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999); Haberling, "Morals."

<sup>17</sup> Stabsarzt Dr. Julius Mayr., Vierteljahresbericht, München, 3 July 1944, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130735-38.

<sup>18</sup> Dombrowski, ed., *Enlisted*.

<sup>19</sup> Historian Linda Grant De Pauw writes that during World War I it was expected by the English and Americans that "company commanders were responsible for providing their soldiers with safe sex." De Pauw, *Battle Cries*, 220. It is interesting to note that the Germans even supplied their forced foreign laborers brothels in the German homeland. The rationale was to protect the German women from rape and to encourage men to go to the brothels. In comparison, in the American south, white men did not provide brothels for black men if they had sex with a white woman: they lynched them. Granted, the one situation is armed conflict, while the other is not necessarily, but both situations have to do with racism, bigotry, and coerced labor.

<sup>20</sup> Warnings against the abuse of alcohol and its tie to crimes is mentioned in many documents. For example, Dr. Joachim Rost, Oberfeldarzt im Stabe eines Befehlshabers, Article in *Wehrmedizin* titled "Sexuelle Probleme im Feld," 1944, BAB NS7/267; Oberkommando des Heeres, General z b v b OKH/Heereswes.Abt. Az III Nr. 130/6.42.g., Abschrift, H.Qu., 8 June 1942, USHMM, RG-18.002M, Latvian Central State Historical Archive (Riga) records,

noted that where alcohol was abused so too were the regulations concerning sexual intercourse with native women.<sup>21</sup> Related to keeping the “master race” healthy was the attempt to maintain control over the off-duty activities of the men. Embedded in this goal were several arguments rationalizing the process of establishing military brothels. The control of sexually transmitted diseases was the primary reason behind establishing brothels, but there were a few other considerations as well, such as the threat of spy activities and rampant homophobia.<sup>22</sup>

Although one might guess that one of the main reasons for the German military to establish official brothels would be to control rape, as we will see in detail in Chapter Six, the Germans were not very anxious with the problem of rape, despite its prevalence. This is substantiated by the lack of German documentation and by the large numbers of witnesses who described rapes, together indicating the Germans' complete lack of concern over how much their soldiers raped. Primarily, the little concern there was seems to have been linked to Germany's image, although there are a few cases where the “defilement of the races” is stated as a reason. However, there are still many more examples of brutal rape than there are documents discussing the needed cessation of rape. Documents linking the establishment of official military brothels and the prevention of rape seem, at this point, to be almost nonexistent. More research needs to be done to supplement historians Seidler's, Paul's, and Beck's work to determine how much of a concern this was, but as will be shown in Chapter Six, the laws themselves reflect a complete disregard of the problem of rape, despite the related health risks or the obvious moral questions.<sup>23</sup>

It also must be pointed out that the German army did not view prostitution as rape, even

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1941-1945, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 80, doc. 25. Also on the dangers of alcohol and nicotine to the health of the Aryan race, see Vgl. Weisung des Reichsministers der Luftfahrt und Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe, Luftwaffenverordnungsblatt A vom 3.4.1939, [n. 12], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 140.

<sup>21</sup> For example, Oberkommando des Heeres, no date, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6130654-55; NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 213, Fr. 1113-1114.

<sup>22</sup> Brothels in the camps were established primarily to increase prison workers' productivity, and there were official brothels for foreign workers on German soil to protect German women from rape. See below for information on camp brothels.

<sup>23</sup> Rape was rendered a “petitioned crime” (*Antragsdelikt*) after October 1940, which meant that punishment had to be requested. Reichsgesetzblatt I, S.1347; vgl auch Rudolf Absolon, *Das Wehrmachtsstrafrecht im 2. Weltkrieg*, Kornelimünster 1958, S. 35 [n. 13], Otto Henricke, *Auszüge aus der Wehrmacht kriminalstatistik*, in: *Zeitschrift für Militärgeschichte* 1966, S. 454 [n. 14], HA. SS-Gericht – 6. S.E., Ziffer 23 vom 15.12.1940, in: *Sammelerlasse des Reichsführers-SS, Hauptamt SS-Gericht vom 1.8.1944*, S. 102, Bundesarchiv NSD 41/312 [n.15], all quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 140-141. As Paul writes, this resulted in “a nearly complete absence of prosecution and punishment for rapes.” Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 102. How many women would come forth in occupied territory to complain? See Chapter Six for more information on rape.

if the women and girls were forced into their positions of sexually servicing military men. That the Germans believed it was okay to force sex upon someone (to rape) if the man believed the woman to be a prostitute is evident in a 1944 rape case from Estonia. The victim, Klawdija B., sold two Estonian men liquor and followed them from her house down to the beach. According to the German case report, because of her actions and because she had been drinking the men viewed her as a “whore,” who only refused to have sex because she was menstruating. According to the case report, it was because of the men’s belief that she was a prostitute that they forced her, and apparently this was understandable. No action was taken by the German police, and there were many reasons in the men’s favor, according to the German viewpoint. To start, one of the men had a knife on him, but there was no evidence that he used it to force her into sex (this would have made a difference<sup>24</sup>). The men were all young Wehrmacht members and had never been charged with anything before (Tsarew was nineteen years, Röhn twenty, and Harew seventeen). Finally, because Tsarew tried to place his penis in the woman’s mouth it supported the argument that he did not view her as a “proper” lady.<sup>25</sup>

The case of Klawdija B. is indicative of the widespread belief that a man can rape anyone he deems not proper.<sup>26</sup> Because men usually viewed prostitutes as improper, men visiting brothels would not have considered their actions to be rape. In the German state-run military brothels we will see that women from all kinds of cultural backgrounds, including Germans, were forced into prostitution. In the cases where the prostitute was German, a German soldier probably still viewed her with disdain since she was a sex worker.<sup>27</sup> Historically, and especially under

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<sup>24</sup> HA. SS-Gericht – 6. S.E., Ziffer 23 vom 15.12.1940, in: Sammelerlasse des Reichsführers-SS, Hauptamt SS-Gericht vom 1.8.1944, S. 102, Bundesarchiv NSD 41/312 [n.15], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 141-142.

<sup>25</sup> Leiter der Staatsanwaltschaft beim Deutschen Gericht, Police report to Herr Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD. Estland – Abt. AV, Reval, 10 May 1944 to 4 June 1944, ESA Fond R65s, Opis 1s, Del 1278, docs. 1-4. At the end of the report it states that this was about a typical rape case, that both the injured and the accused were natives, and that German interests were not affected. Therefore there existed no reason to bring the case before a *Sondergericht* (special court).

<sup>26</sup> This will come up again in Chapter Six, for example in one rape case where the men knew they were raping a Jew but thought that because the sexual intercourse was not consensual that it was not against the German laws about having sex with other “races.” See Rape Case Documents, Kielce, 29 September 1939, NARA, RG 242, T 311, R. 244, Fr. 267-277.

<sup>27</sup> Related to how people in general (not just men) view prostitutes, Cynthia Enloe explains that the U.S. historically has made sure that soldiers are provided with “safe” sex, and part of the reason is because this will not make headlines, as did, for example, the rape by an American soldier of a Japanese girl on Okinawa in 1995. Enloe remarks that “The conventional wisdom is, therefore, that a woman who is raped by a U.S. soldier is deserving of headlines and, if necessary, official apologies. By contrast, the woman paid to dance nude at the bar outside the base or to have sex in a bar’s ‘dark corner’ is considered unworthy, not only of our sympathy, but of our attention.” Enloe,

National Socialism, women who worked in prostitution were seen as being lost to society and labeled “asocials.”<sup>28</sup> In the east, the majority of the women and girls were not German, and therefore, they were also exploitable because in addition to being female and prostitutes, they were also non-Germans. Regardless of the military view that the men who came to the brothels were “visitors” and not rapists, from the perspective of the one without the power they most certainly could have been viewed as rapists. Furthermore, regardless of whether the motive of the men was simply to “pass the time” or to “try something new,” this still indicates a dysfunctional attitude toward male and female sexuality, dysfunctional because an unknown number of women and girls were hurt psychologically and physically in German military brothels because of these attitudes.

A subordinate scientific reason for controlling prostitution was Himmler’s interest in collecting sperm for his research on race. In some brothels, for example, the one in Stuttgart on Kloster Street, the women, who were only allowed intercourse with a condom, were ordered to place the filled condom in a special container to be picked up later.<sup>29</sup> It is not clear how many brothels were involved in this project.

Yet another aspect of Nazi sexual policy that has been linked to the establishment of a widespread system of military brothels was homophobia. German persecution of homosexuals led many people to camps or to their deaths, thus if a man was suspected of engaging in homosexual activities, his life could be in danger.<sup>30</sup> Hanns Christian Witt testified to the United

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"Spoils of War."

<sup>28</sup> See Gisela Bock, *Zwangssterilisation*, 401ff, quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Vgl. Willi Bauer, *Geschichte und Wesen der Prostitution*, Stuttgart 1956, S. 105 f., quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 135.

<sup>30</sup> The numbers of homosexuals murdered by the Germans is disputed. Historian Günter Grau seems to exclude homosexuals from his definition of the Holocaust. Günter Grau, "Final Solution of the Homosexual Question? The Antihomosexual Policies of the Nazis and the Social Consequences for Homosexual Men," in *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998). Nevertheless, Grau writes that "The declared aim of the Nazi regime was to eradicate homosexuality. To this end homosexuals were watched, arrested, registered, prosecuted and segregated; they were to be reeducated, castrated and – if this was unsuccessful – exterminated." Grau argues that the "key concern was 're-education,'" rather than extermination, but that the everyday life of all homosexuals – whether gays or lesbians – was powerfully shaped by the official policy of repression." For a discussion of the differences in how the Nazi regime viewed and treated homosexuals and Jews, see Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust?* (London and New York: Cassell, 1995), 4-7. See also Giles, "Homosexual Panic."; Erwin J. Haeberle, "Swastika, Pink Triangle, and Yellow Star: The Destruction of Sexology and the Persecution of Homosexuals in Nazi Germany," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr. (New York: NAL Books, 1989); Rüdiger Lautmann, "The Pink Triangle: Homosexuals as



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especially barbaric was the treatment of the Polish, Russian, Jewish and political prisoners who had offended against §175. Suspicion alone could lead to cruel death. Ninety five percent of all prisoners regardless of nationality who had been deposited in the [Hamburg-Neuengamme] concentration camp on ground of §175, died within an alarmingly short time without trial or justice because of the sadistic and bestial lust of the SS-Gangsters who indulged in (literally "INTOXICATED") satisfying their sadistic desire by watching the slow death agonies of their victims.<sup>31</sup>

Cases against German military men accused of homosexual activities are not difficult to find, and the research that reveals the treatment of homosexuals is growing. Himmler believed that if soldiers visited prostitutes this would help deter them from becoming homosexual.<sup>32</sup> This stemmed from his belief that "homosexuality was acquired through lack of feminine contact."<sup>33</sup> Homosexuals in certain concentration camps were forced "to lie with a woman and freed or killed according to their sexual reactions."<sup>34</sup> In addition, despite his belief that homosexuals were "sick," Himmler thought they could be cured.<sup>35</sup> Rudolf Hess described in his autobiography "tests" conducted in concentration camps in which prostitutes approached homosexual men in

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'Enemies of the State', in *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998); Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: the Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (New York: H. Holt, 1986); Frank Rector, *The Nazi Extermination of Homosexuals* (New York: Stein and Day, 1981).

<sup>31</sup> Hanns Christian Witt, POW soldier, Testimony, page 2 of testimony, USHMMA, Record Group 06.005.05M, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, United States Army Commands, Concentration Camp Cases Not Tried, Reel 5. The "(literally 'INTOXICATED'))" is in original, probably a note from the translator. Heinz Heger also testifies in his anonymous memoir about the treatment of homosexuals in concentration camps. Heger, *Pink Triangle*. Yehiel Dinur also recorded material on the prostitutional relationships between men in Auschwitz. Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *Piepel*, trans. Moshe M. Kohn (London: Anthony Blond Ltd, 1961). See also Chapter Two for more detailed discussion of this aspect of camp life.

<sup>32</sup> Several people have written on this: Mosse, *Nationalism*, 166-167. Himmler wrote extensively on the threat homosexuality posed to the masculine German state: See Hans Peter Bleuel, *Sex and Society in Nazi Germany*, trans. J. Maxwell Brownjohn (New York: Dorset Press, 1973); Andrew Hewitt, *Political Inversions: Homosexuality, Fascism & the Modernist Imaginary* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Andreas Huyssen, "Fortifying the Heart -- Totally: Ernst Juenger's Armored Texts," *New German Critique* 59, no. 2- 23 (Spring/Summer 1993); Joerg Meve, "Homosexuelle Nazis". *Ein Stereotyp in Politik und Literatur des Exils* (Hamburg: Maennerschwarm Skript, 1990); Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*; Plant, *Pink Triangle*; Wolfgang Roll, "Homosexual Inmates in the Buchenwald Concentration Camp," *Journal of Homosexuality* 31, no. 4 (1996); Seidler, *Prostitution*.

<sup>33</sup> Mosse, *Nationalism*, 167.

<sup>34</sup> Barry D. Adam, *The Survival of Domination, Inferiorization and Everyday Life* (New York, 1978) [...] 40, 41 [n. 70], quoted in Mosse, *Nationalism*, 168-169. Mosse writes that "Himmler considered homosexuality an illness that poisoned the entire body and mind. If the homosexual could not be cured, he must be killed" (p. 169).

<sup>35</sup> Himmler, Bad Tölz Speech, 58, [n. 69], quoted in Mosse, *Nationalism*, 168.

the Nazi hope to cure them from homosexuality. After these attempts apparently failed it was decided that brothels be established in an attempt to prevent male homosexuality.<sup>36</sup> Heinz Heger, a homosexual and camp survivor, reports that he was forced to visit the camp brothel at Flossenbürg as part of his “rehabilitation.”<sup>37</sup> This fear of homosexuality, especially in the military, even if only an underlying reason, was part of the drive to establish official houses of prostitution for the occupying soldiers and officers.<sup>38</sup>

Another concern for the German leadership was that without readily available sexual intercourse provided in official brothels, German men would form romantic relationships or friendships with native women who could be spies. This was seen as a potential threat to security during the war.<sup>39</sup> This was a plausible concern because most of the civilian population in the east were women, and therefore they were the main source of help to the partisans (male and female) throughout the east. Furthermore, there are several documents attesting to the alleged connection of women, sex, and spies. In “The Story of a Daughter,” A. Konstantinov wrote about one female partisan’s experiences. Ina “was awakened by a noise; two women and a girl were brought in. They told her that the Germans were searching intensively for girl partisans...so they were grabbing all, even slightly suspicious-looking women. For example, the women were arrested for pushing away a soldier who had been bothering a girl.”<sup>40</sup>

Another example of a woman who is recorded as having been a spy comes from the memoirist Nina Markovna, a Russian survivor of the German and Soviet wrath. She wrote about a beautiful young woman she knew as a young girl in Feodosia. Her name was Nadia, and Markovna reports that Nadia purposely flirted and became close with the Germans during their first occupation of Feodosia in the Crimea. Any information she was able to get from the Germans she passed on to the Soviet partisans. Apparently the Germans knew an attack would be coming from the Soviet navy in the Black Sea in December 1941, but they were not sure of the

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<sup>36</sup> Rudolf Hess, *The Autobiography of Rudolf Hess*, trans. C. FitzGibbon (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1960), quoted in Rubeigh James Minney, *I Shall Fear No Evil: the Story of Dr. Alina Brewda* (London: Kimber, 1966), 142-143.

<sup>37</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 98-107.

<sup>38</sup> For historical examples of military prostitution and homosexuality, see Trexler, *Sex*.

<sup>39</sup> For images depicting women as potential betrayers of wartime secrets, see Gubar, “This is My Rifle,” 241-243.

<sup>40</sup> Cottam, ed., *Defending*, 90.

exact location. Nadia knew Feodosia would be one of the cities to be hit, and she planned a party for the townspeople and the Germans on the evening prior to the planned attack, perhaps to help distract the soldiers even more.<sup>41</sup>

Marie Avinov wrote in her memoir about Russian women who were the wives and mistresses of NKVD members and communist officials who were hiding in the woods after the German occupation. At the initial stages of the German occupation in Zubtsov (located in the Tver province of Russia), Marie was ignorant of German barbarism and being anti-Soviet willingly became an interpreter for the Germans. At night the women would run to the Russians with secrets they had gathered from the Germans. Marie told the Germans, who had only hired the prettiest and well dressed women to work for them that only women connected with Bolshevik upper-ups had such good clothes. She said,

“You can’t see what’s happening right under noses! When they’re off duty, your chambermaids go into the woods to ‘gather mushrooms,’ and that’s where their men are hiding! Why do you think the Russian planes are bombing only the most significant targets?” Gradually, reluctantly, all “lovely girls with candid blue eyes” were weeded out from the barracks, and the accuracy of Russian bombing attacks promptly declined.<sup>42</sup>

Further examples connecting women and spies come from German documentation. For example, in a report stressing the need for military brothels, the Oberkommando des Heeres warned on March 20, 1942, that the massive spread of wild or secret prostitution carried with it not only the possibility of infection, but also the “negligent betrayal of military secrets.”<sup>43</sup> On August 28, 1942, in a report from the occupied eastern territories, there was a discussion of the dangers that had arisen from the daily cohabitation of German people with Russian people. The possibility of spy activity and the necessity of keeping distant from the Russian people had prompted the suggestion to seriously consider establishing Wehrmacht brothels in various

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<sup>41</sup> According to Markovna, despite her pro-Soviet efforts, Nadia was brutally gang raped and partially maimed by the Soviet soldiers after the Germans had been cleared from Feodosia. She survived and eventually proved to the Soviets her support of the partisans. She retreated with the Red Army when the Germans retook the city. Markovna, *Nina's Journey*.

<sup>42</sup> Chavchavadze, *Marie*, 213.

<sup>43</sup> OKH Generalquartiermeister Az. 1271 IV b (IIa) Nr. I/13017/42 vom 20.3.1942, Betr.: Prostitution und Bordellwesen in den besetzten Ostgebieten, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 8], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 139.

cities.<sup>44</sup> Another report from 1942 states that there had been an increase in the number of cases where Wehrmacht members were together with Russians, either in houses or walking along the streets (“even arm in arm”). According to the report, “Regardless of how meaningless contact with Russian females is, the German also cannot be sure whether the male partner of this person is not fighting against us in the Russian Army...”<sup>45</sup>

The 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division warned that “the carrying of information is mostly done by youngsters in the ages of 11-14,” that “the Russians were liars, ‘especially the women...a few powerful pats on the back will shorten’ the process [of interrogation] considerably.”<sup>46</sup> Historian Omer Bartov quotes another document that shows the concern among officers that soldiers would fall victim to female spies:

Lately venereal diseases have been discovered for the first time as a result of contacts with the female Russian population. Instruction to the troops should stress that intercourse with female civilians is not only unworthy of the German soldier, but also carries with it the danger of being exploited or harmed by a spy, of falling into the hands of a female partisan and of being terribly mutilated or infected with VD or other infectious diseases.

According to this same document from 1941, women caught with German soldiers were to be delivered to the police on “security” grounds.<sup>47</sup>

The Grossdeutschland Division wrote about the “dangers” of fraternizing with Russian women not only because of the high rates of venereal disease, but also because they might be agents. A pamphlet was issued that warned about “men of all ages, good-looking women and particularly young girls and lads” who could be spies.<sup>48</sup> The division tried to solve the problem by evicting all native peoples out of their homes where Germans were staying,<sup>49</sup> but this did not stop all contact between German soldiers and native women, since many women had taken jobs

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<sup>44</sup> Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, -Kommandostab, *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*. Nr. 18, 28 August 1942, USHMMA, RG-31.002M, Selected Records from the Central State Archive of Higher Government Organizations of Ukraine (formerly Central State Archive of the October Revolution of Ukraine), Kiev, 1940-1945, Reel 11, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, docs. 16-17.

<sup>45</sup> Kdt. St. Qul, rückw. Armeegebiet 585, Abt.Qu. Kommandanturbefehl Nr. 5, 6 February 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 65, Fr. 334-338.

<sup>46</sup> BA-MA RH26-12/245, 13.10.41, [n. 117], quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 126.

<sup>47</sup> BA-MA RH27-18/177, 17.11.41, [n. 119], quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 126-127.

<sup>48</sup> BA-MA RH26-1005/42, 22.10.42, [n. 120], quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 127.

<sup>49</sup> BA-MA RH26-1005/42, 31.10.42, [n. 121], quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 127.

from the German Army. So, as Bartov reports, the XXXXVI. Panzer Corps told the men of the 18.Pz.Div. in April 1943 that “the Russian woman is prepared to make unscrupulous use of her physical advantages and of our soldiers’ confidence for purposes of espionage in the interest of the war.” The troops were to exercise “strict self-control” and if caught having sexual relations with a Russian woman they would be suspected of working for the Red Army’s intelligence services. Severe punishment was threatened.<sup>50</sup>

Although homophobia, Himmler’s interest in collecting sperm, and the fear of spy activities among females were all reasons which existed for the establishment of military brothels, there are many more documents which tie the anxiety about the tremendous spread of sexually transmitted diseases to Germany’s decision to establish state-run prostitution.<sup>51</sup> Brauchitsch, Oberbefehlshabers of the Wehrmacht, summed this up when he wrote in his order to establish military brothels in the west that the question of the “tensions and needs” of human sexuality would not be solved by a law against sexual activity in the occupied regions (he was only referring to men, despite the use of the gender-neutral word human (*Mensch*)). Such a rule, according to Brauchitsch, in addition to the other disadvantages (not named), would raise the number of rapes committed and the danger of violations of the law against homosexuality. The possibility of vacations home for the men would also only minimally help the situation. According to Brauchitsch, “the health of the soldier now plays an important role, because in France, especially in the larger cities, the sexually transmitted diseases had spread tremendously.” He then repeated himself: It was already clear that “the number of sexually transmitted disease cases in the recent period has increased considerably.” Brauchitsch continued, “I do not think it is necessary to say what kind of damaging and unforeseeable consequences this epidemic would bring to the health of the folk and to the fighting power of the army.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, although Brauchitsch gave an uncommon mention of rape, his primary concern seems to have been the spread of venereal diseases. This official was fully aware that the men would seek out sexual activity with females regardless of how forbidden the women or girls were.

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<sup>50</sup> BA-MA RH27-18/164, 30.4.43, [n. 122], quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 127.

<sup>51</sup> Apparently it was widely agreed that the numbers of sexually transmitted disease cases would have been much higher had the Wehrmacht not had its own brothels. See Seidler, *Prostitution*, 145.

<sup>52</sup> Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 6], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 136-137.

As the Germans occupied the east (and all other territories), sexually transmitted diseases among the military and the civilian populations spread at a tremendous rate. In addition to education, sanitation rules and procedures, exhaustive searches for “sources of infection,” raids, and the forced examination and treatment of women, the German state established military brothels. State-run brothels were medically supervised and were hoped to solve or at least minimize the venereal disease problem. An example of a “successful” story is from the marines, who demanded medically supervised brothels in large numbers. In all the harbors controlled houses were set up, and apparently this yielded positive results for them: hardly ever did venereal diseases spread after the establishment of state-run brothels.<sup>53</sup> The women who worked in state-run brothels were registered with the Germans and were checked for diseases between one and three times a week. Soldiers were questioned and registered upon entrance of a house, and they were sanitized before and after sexual intercourse.

Organizing such a system varied from region to region. It depended on many factors, and most importantly perhaps, it depended on whether such a system had existed prior to the German occupation. In Poland the establishment, opening, and running of brothels even varied from city to city. This depended on the local doctors, and military and civilian leaders. Sometimes the Wehrmacht had more control, and sometimes the local leadership (*Zivilverwaltung*) did.<sup>54</sup> In some cases the German authorities organized new brothels, and in others they took over brothels that were already in business before the war. These were then medically supervised.<sup>55</sup>

Even where there were challenges, the Germans managed to establish what they wanted. It is likely that there were brothels in all major cities, towns, and even villages. In addition, there exist references to field brothels situated close to the front.<sup>56</sup> During the war

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<sup>53</sup> Marinegruppenkommando Süd Az. B. Nr. Oqu. G 4996 G vom 12.3.1943, Betr.: Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/1082-2 [n. 11], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 140.

<sup>54</sup> Leitender Sanitätsoffizier beim Militärbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement vom 2.10.1940, Bericht über Bordelle für Heeresangehörige im Gen.-Gouv., Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 7], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 138.

<sup>55</sup> For example there were two in Wrzesnia, Poland which were medically supervised, but this seems to have been true generally because of the risk of disease. Generalarzt Dr.Obwald, Stabsarzt Dr.Elsaesser, Besichtigungsfahrt am 27 September 1939, Fahrt über Wreschen, NARA, RG 242, T 311, R. 244, Fr. 893-894.

<sup>56</sup> Arnošt Lustig, *Lovely Green Eyes: A Novel*, trans. Ewald Osers (New York: Arcade Publishing, Inc., 2000); Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *Das Puppenhaus* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955). These will be discussed more fully below.

Germany controlled at least 569 military brothels throughout the entire Reich in which I believe at least 50,000 women worked.<sup>57</sup> Brothels were in all corners of the occupied war zones, in France, the Balkans, Italy, the Netherlands, and in the east in Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Latvia, and elsewhere. The marines had brothels in every harbor they controlled. Paris had nineteen brothels just in the inner city. In my research, I found documentation of many more brothels in the east. Historian Christa Paul conservatively estimated that 34,140 women worked in German state-run brothels, but I think the number is much higher. This unwritten chapter of Soviet and east European women's history is only beginning to be told.

### **Establishment of Military Brothels**

On September 9, 1939, SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich issued an order concerning the regulation of prostitution in all areas occupied by the Wehrmacht.<sup>58</sup> His order went into effect on March 16, 1940, throughout the entire Reich with the exception of the protectorates Böhmen and Mähnen.<sup>59</sup> The police were to catch all prostitutes and ensure their medical supervision through the health officials. Prostitution on the streets and in houses or inns was forbidden.

In July 1940 an order was issued to take control of brothels in France. They were only to be used by German soldiers stationed in the country. Brauchitsch wrote that sex with female persons who were not "controlled" was to be eradicated. Because of hygiene and disciplinary reasons it seemed the most useful to Brauchitsch to offer the medically supervised brothels to German soldiers for free.<sup>60</sup> Thus, by the summer of 1940 the first Wehrmacht brothels were in place in the west.

In Poland the process of establishing military brothels was a bit more difficult. The

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<sup>57</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*; Seidler, *Prostitution*. For a more detailed discussion of the scope of German sexual slavery begins see page 220.

<sup>58</sup> Der Reichesminister des Innern, Pol. S-Kr 3 Nr. 2217/39 vom 9.9.1939, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840; vgl. Anlage S [n. 1], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 135.

<sup>59</sup> Der Reichsminister des Innern, Pol.-SVB 1 Nr. 355/40 Betr.: Polizeiliche Behandlung der Prostitution, Bundesarchiv R22/970 [n. 2], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 135.

<sup>60</sup> BA/MA H 20/840, Letter from the Oberbefehlshabers der Wehrmacht, Brauchitsch, July 31, 1940, quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 136-137. For information on brothels in France, also see Meinen, *Wehrmacht*; David Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich: A History of the German Occupation, 1940-1944* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981). For documents on prostitution and German brothels in France, see also NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 191.

chief sanitation officer in Lvov commented that "since under the Russian government prostitutes were not forced to register themselves a control system had to be built from scratch."<sup>61</sup> In the spring of 1940 the military authorities agreed with the civil administration in the General Government that "where there was need" military brothels would be established. The chief sanitation officer by the commander in chief in the General Government wrote on October 2, 1940, that the establishment of Wehrmacht brothels – on a very large scale – was absolutely essential, and that already in most large cities brothels were established or were planned. His letter began with the statement that sexually transmitted diseases had reached alarming proportions. He reported that in Poland the civilian authorities supplied the brothels. Sometimes they were opened in previous brothels or in Warsaw, in cheap hotels (*Absteigequartiere*). There were also many Jewish homes, Jewish dormitories, or other such places which were conveniently available for the Germans for such use due to their massive deportation and murder of innocent Jewish inhabitants and owners. The furnishings were organized by the civil administration and partly came from Jewish apartments and partly from the military housing administration.<sup>62</sup>

In Russia the process of state sexual slavery also began not long after the German occupation. By March 1942 unregulated prostitution had grown tremendously. There were many secret brothels in larger cities, and the Oberkommando des Heeres noted that this was a result of the desperation women felt due to the lack of food available to people.<sup>63</sup> Venereal disease cases were very high in both the urban and rural areas, and the chief representative of the army medical department at the High Command of the Army (*Heeresarzt in OKH*) ordered medically supervised brothels to be established for the use by German soldiers only. Russian doctors, under the supervision of German sanitation officers, were to conduct all examinations. If no Russian doctors were available, the sanitation officers were to do it themselves.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier b.d. OFK 365 Az.: 449.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 14 September 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 520-524.

<sup>62</sup> Leitender Sanitätsoffizier beim Militärbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement vom 2.10.1940, Bericht über Bordelle für Heeresangehörige im Gen.-Gouv., Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 7], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 138.

<sup>63</sup> OKH Generalquartiermeister Az. 1271 IV b (IIa) Nr. I/13017/42 vom 20.3.1942, Betr.: Prostitution und Bordellwesen in den besetzten Ostgebieten, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 8], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 139.

<sup>64</sup> Der Heeresarzt im OKH, GenStdH/GenQu Az. 1271 (IIa) Nr. I/13017/42 vom 20.3.1942, Betr.: Prostitution und Bordellwesen im besetzten Gebiet in Sowjetrußland, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/825 [n. 9], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 139.



After a discussion of the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in Smolensk and other Russian cities where many women had become infected through their close daily contact with Wehrmacht soldiers, one report from August 1942 explains that because of the spread of disease and also the possibility of spy activities against the Germans many cities had planned to open brothels.<sup>65</sup> In Mogilew and Gomel the preparations were almost complete at the time of the report. However, in the heated discussions that were taking place it was clearly doubted that public houses and putting a group of Russian women under official control would break up an already existing but disguised sort of prostitution. Apart from their political leanings, it was believed that Russian women apparently had psychological reasons not to want to comply. Characteristic of this opinion was a saying about Russian women that had become well known: "they would rather commit suicide than go into a brothel."<sup>66</sup> Other German officers believed Russian women to live "morally irreproachable" lives.<sup>67</sup> In light of such considerations apparently an increasing number had taken the view that with the establishment of brothels the occupants should be gathered from the Polish population of the General Government.<sup>68</sup> It is unclear if his suggestion was taken seriously, or if the belief that Polish women were better suited than Russian women for military brothels was widespread.<sup>69</sup>

Usually the field commander (*Feldkommandant*) in any given area was in charge of the Wehrmacht brothels in his area,<sup>70</sup> and he worked together with the company and sanitation

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<sup>65</sup> Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, -Kommandostab, *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*, Nr. 18, 28 August 1942, USHMMA, RG-31.002M, Selected Records from the Central State Archive of Higher Government Organizations of Ukraine (formerly Central State Archive of the October Revolution of Ukraine), Kiev, 1940-1945, Reel 11, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, doc. 34.

<sup>66</sup> Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*, Nr. 18, Berlin, 28 August 1942, USHMMA, RG-31.002M, Selected Records from the Central State Archive of Higher Government Organizations of Ukraine (formerly Central State Archive of the October Revolution of Ukraine), Kyiv, Reel 11, Reichskommissariat für die Ukraine and Einsatzstab Rosenberg records, 1940-1945, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, docs. 34-35.

<sup>67</sup> Toppe, Alfred et al., 'Kriegsverwaltung' PO33, 1949, in Guides to Foreign Military Studies Historical Division HQ, US Army Europe, 1954: GFMS, PO33, 1949 BA/MA, Freiburg, quoted in Schulte, *German Army*, 165.

<sup>68</sup> USHMMA, RG-31.002M Reel 11, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, doc. 35. The suggestion that Polish women be used instead of Russian women is not mentioned in any other documents I have seen.

<sup>69</sup> Perhaps the German occupiers were aware of the Soviet fairly radical attempt to eradicate prostitution in the 1920s. See Carter, *Sin*; Quigley, "Dilemma."

<sup>70</sup> Bestimmungen für Wehrmachtsbordelle, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v. 317 [n. 22], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 145.

officers.<sup>71</sup> In Poland the brothels were run by civilian authorities but were assigned a military administrator. Military members arranged the medical staff and the town or station commanders (*Ortskommandanten*) were in charge of their supervision.<sup>72</sup> In May 1941 it was noted in an activity report of OFK 365 that in each of the brothels in Rzeszow and Jaroslau a leaseholder (*Pächter*) had been employed so that the Wehrmacht only had to arrange the sanitation duty.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, “someone named Leskauskas, a man with a wife and five children, was appointed director” of the Gestapo and SS brothel at No. 9 Suboch Street in Vilna, Lithuania.<sup>74</sup>

Establishing brothels was not completed without problems. In May 1941 the brothel in Rzeszow, Poland was temporarily closed due to necessary construction changes and repairs. It apparently was only closed a short while. The brothel in Jaroslau also was closed in May 1941 because it had been determined that there was syphilis among the occupants. In addition, the planned brothel in Mielec had many problems. Those in charge reported to the chief sanitation officer that they had selected a house, but for some reason it was not opened. As a solution the only suggestion to the chief sanitation officer was to set up a barracks as a brothel. Apparently they were in “desperate need,” and there was great pressure to open a brothel.<sup>75</sup>

In November 1941 negotiations concerning the establishment of brothels in Stanislaw and Drohobycz, Poland were still being conducted. Before being recruited, the women underwent thorough examinations, including testing for sexually transmitted diseases. The reporting officer wrote that this was very necessary and that the results of the examinations proved this. Out of two hundred women examined, fourteen were found to have syphilis, and they were reported to the public health officer.<sup>76</sup> Apparently fourteen (seven percent) was considered a high number.

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<sup>71</sup> Vgl. OKH GenQu Az. 1271 IV b (IIa) Nr. I/13 016/42 vom 20.3.1942, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 23], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 145.

<sup>72</sup> Militärbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement – Leitender Sanitätsoffizier – Az. 592/40 geh. (IV) vom 12.8.1940, Betr.: Einrichtung von Bordellen, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 24], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 145.

<sup>73</sup> Leitender San.-Offizier, OFK 365, Anlage 2 zum Monatsbericht Mai 1941, Az. 49.s (I), Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 16. April bis 15. Mai 1941, St. Qu., 17 May 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 329.

<sup>74</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 351.

<sup>75</sup> Leitender San.-Offizier, OFK 365, Anlage 2 zum Monatsbericht Mai 1941, Az. 49.s (I), Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 16. April bis 15. Mai 1941, St. Qu., 17 May 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 329.

<sup>76</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 18 November 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1240-1243.

In mid-November 1941 the chief sanitation officer in Lvov wrote that the negotiations for the establishment of brothels in Lvov kept coming up against problems. The civil administration worked so slowly and, according to the reporting officer, did not seem to have the correct understanding for this task.<sup>77</sup> In mid-January 1942 it was reported that the brothel in Lvov, Poland would be in business by the end of the month. The officials were having problems obtaining the necessary materials.<sup>78</sup> In mid-March 1942 the chief sanitation officer wrote that the brothel in Lvov still was not in business. Even after the weather warmed up, construction had proceeded slowly, but at the time of the report only beds and linens were missing. Apparently they had worked things out with the civil administration. The opening of a second brothel would still take a few weeks to pull together.<sup>79</sup> Finally, in April 1942 a Wehrmacht brothel was opened at Wienerstrasse (Vienna Street) 46.<sup>80</sup> It is not clear from the documents if this was the first or second brothel in Lvov.

The brothel in Tarnopol, Poland was closed in March 1942 because of spotted fever, but it was to reopen after only a few days. In the same month, the brothel in Drohobycz had been renovated and was "in business."<sup>81</sup> Later, the brothel in Tarnopol was opened again after a complete renovation.<sup>82</sup>

In August 1942 the chief sanitation officer reported that new brothels were not being established, and that because of the visitor numbers an additional brothel in Lvov did not seem

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<sup>77</sup> NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1240-1243.

<sup>78</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s.(I), Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 January 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 501-504.

<sup>79</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s., Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 March 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 102-104.

<sup>80</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier, Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 April 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 208.

<sup>81</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s., Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 March 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 102-104.

<sup>82</sup> NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 208.

necessary.<sup>83</sup> This is repeated in the September monthly report as well.<sup>84</sup> Unregistered prostitutes still caused problems to the officials in both August and September. Raids continued to be carried out, and women sick with venereal diseases were forced to undergo treatment.<sup>85</sup> Thus, even though demand was not rising for Wehrmacht brothels in Lvov, military men were still having sex with native women and unregistered prostitutes.

Perhaps it was the bureaucracy, paperwork, and required sanitation that compelled men to seek sex elsewhere. The numbers of soldiers with Polish prostitutes and in private brothels intended mostly for Wehrmacht members was larger than the visitor numbers in the Warsaw military brothels, indicating that many men did choose to have sex elsewhere. Many times in Warsaw officers and officials were found in cheap hotels with Polish prostitutes. Still, in August 1942 it was reported that in some places in the General Government the increased number of brothels under the Wehrmacht's control had hindered "health and other disadvantages," though the report does not clarify exactly what the "other disadvantages" were. The report continued that it was difficult at times to control discipline in Warsaw, despite intensive control of pubs, hotels, and brothels.<sup>86</sup>

There exist references in novels to field brothels established near the front or perhaps temporarily in places where there were large movements of military men. It is not clear how many of these there were. Yehiel Dinur's novel *Doll House* concerns the field brothel near the camp Niederwalden,<sup>87</sup> and his description of the brothel matches a description of a brothel planned to be established in Mielec, Poland in a temporary barracks.<sup>88</sup> Lustig's novel about a Jewish girl's experience as a fifteen-year-old Jewish girl describes forced prostitution in the German's Field Brothel #232 Ost (east) in the "agricultural estate by the River San" in Poland.

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<sup>83</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier, OFK 365, Anlage 3 zu OFK 365 Ia Nr. 3341 /42 geh. Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 17 August 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 1375. It still is not clear how many brothels were already established in Lvov at this time.

<sup>84</sup> Leitender San.-Offizier, OFK 365, Anlage 4 zu OFK 365 Ia Nr. 3808/42 geh. Az.: 49s (F) (I) Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 16 September 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 1203.

<sup>85</sup> NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 1375.

<sup>86</sup> Kommandeur des Heeresstreifendienstes, Beim Mil. Befh. Im Gen. Gouv. Nr. 442 / 42 geh. Erfahrungs – und Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. – 31. Juli 1942, Tomaszow, Maz., 14 August 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 667.

<sup>87</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *Das Puppenhaus*.

<sup>88</sup> NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 329.

As the front moved west, the brothel was dismantled. In the story SS-Oberführer Dr. Helmuth Gustav Schimmelpfennig was the commandant in charge.<sup>89</sup> From the evidence available, field brothels existed but there is less known about them.

### SS and Officer Brothels

In 1940 Brauchitsch issued a secret order that concerned officers, who were required to handle themselves in the sexual realm with great self-discipline and restraint. Their uniform and position came with special responsibilities. Wherever there were free brothels, officers were not to enter. Nor were they to frequent inferior or dubious pubs. The order was directed at all officers.<sup>90</sup> At the same time, Brauchitsch issued rules concerning the establishment of “hotels” for traveling officers. These were usually in larger cities where there was expected to be a lot of traffic of officers. They were not to be near Wehrmacht brothels or soldier barracks. These brothels did not have sanitation rooms next door, but there was to be a sign warning that sex was only allowed with a condom and explaining where the nearest sanitation station was. Another sign was to state that only officers were allowed to use the brothel. The women were to be medically controlled, though they did not have to live in the house.<sup>91</sup>

These orders were not followed in all cases. According to Solomon Garbel, who recorded various crimes in Lithuania, the women and girls of the brothel at No. 9 Suboch Street brothel in Vilna, Lithuania, provided exclusively for the use of the Gestapo and the SS, were “not allowed to set foot outside of the 'house.' They were awarded medals for good behavior. In order to keep them from running away, they had a special sign branded into their legs.”<sup>92</sup> In Poland there were brothels that the SS, the air force, and the Wehrmacht used. For example, in Krosno

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<sup>89</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*. Presently, Lustig is a professor at American University in Washington D.C. For more information on these two novels which document field brothels, see below.

<sup>90</sup> Der Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres, GenQu GenStdH, Nr. 11 671/40 geh. H. Qu., den 7. August 1940, Bezug: Der Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres/GenQu/ GenStdH Nr. 18 497/40 vom 31.7.1940, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 93], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 169.

<sup>91</sup> Oberkommando des Heeres GenQu GenStdH Nr. 11 672/40 geh. H. Qu., den 7. August 1940, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 94], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 169-171.

<sup>92</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 251.

the air force shared a brothel with the Wehrmacht, and in Lublin the SS did.<sup>93</sup> In places where there were non-German soldiers the rules varied. Some brothels allowed them unrestricted access, and others had certain hours set aside. Where there were large enough numbers of legionnaires or *Osttruppen* (eastern troops), brothels were established especially for them.<sup>94</sup>

In addition, there were also brothels specifically for the SS in or nearby concentration camps. In Ravensbrück women were selected and sent to brothels, “the ‘best’ for the SS and officers, those of lesser quality for the prisoners.”<sup>95</sup> The known ones were in Buchenwald, Dora-Mittelbau,<sup>96</sup> Flossenbürg, and Auschwitz.<sup>97</sup> The SS visited the prisoner brothels in the camps, despite the rules against this, and they frequented field brothels, according to the survivors Yehiel Dinur and Arnošt Lustig,<sup>98</sup> but in general less is known about the SS brothels.

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<sup>93</sup> Leitender Sanitätsoffizier beim Militärbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement vom 2.10.1940, Bericht über Bordelle für Heeresangehörige im Gen.-Gouv., Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 7], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*.

<sup>94</sup> Der Heeresgruppenarzt beim Oberkommando Heeresgruppe D Az. 49/44 – II/Derm. Vom 28.4.1944, Betr.: Bordelle für Osttruppen, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v.491 [n. 126], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 183. It is not clear how many eastern troops they were, but they were made up of former Soviet and non-Soviet people from eastern Slavic and non-Slavic areas, including Galicians, the Balts, Azerbaijanis, Turkmen, Cossacks, Armenians, Georgians and others. A Russian historian estimates the number of Osttruppen of all Soviet nationalities to be at most 45,000, while another historian believes there were 250,000 southern and eastern nationalities, but not Slavic peoples fighting for the Germans. See Robert W. Thurston, “Soviet Soldiers’ Behavior,” in *The People’s War: Responses to World War II in the Soviet Union*, ed. Robert W. Thurston and Bernd Bonwetsch (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 242.

<sup>95</sup> Archiv Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück, Dok. 17/51, S.9 [n. 35], quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 106.

<sup>96</sup> Buchenwald: Interview with Frau D, in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 107-113. However, it is interesting to note that Max Oswald Beulig, who was the Blockführer in the prisoner brothel (*Häftlingsbordell*) in Buchenwald, testified in his post-war interrogation that there was no brothel at Buchenwald for German SS, only one for the SS Wachen, who were Ukrainian. According to Beulig, two Polish women worked in this brothel, and the German Sturmscharführer Partun was in charge. Beulig testified that Sturmbannführer Schober “inspected” the brothel every week, and that Schutzhaftlagerführer Obersturmführer Gust and Schutzhaftlagerführer Obersturmführer Merbach visited, as did Rapportführer Hofschulte, and Hauptscharführer Friedrich Wilhelm, but that no other SS visited because it was forbidden. See Military Government Court, Max Beulig testimony, 24 April 1947, USHMM, RG.06.005.05M, Reel 1, US Army Cases not Tried. Dora-Mittelbau: Bornemann, Manfred, Broszat, Martin, Das KL Dora-Mittelbaus, in *Studien zur Geschichte der Konzentrationslager, Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* Nr. 21, Stuttgart 1970, 172 [n. 40], quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 106.

<sup>97</sup> Flossenbürg: Jack Eisner, *The Survivor* (London: 1982), 223. Auschwitz: The Trial of German Major War Criminals: Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal, Vol. 6 Forty-fourth Day, Monday, 28 January 1946, Part 6, Morning Session, Mme. Vaillant-Couturier’s testimony, Nuremberg: IMT, 1947, p. 213. See below in the Camp Brothel section for more information.

<sup>98</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*; Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*.

### Recruitment of Girls and Women

Germans relied on various methods to staff their military brothels. To begin, they recruited women and girls who were already working as prostitutes and forced them to work on Nazi terms. Some females auditioned or applied to work as a prostitute, believing this could save their own or their family's life. Other women and girls were forced, either by gunpoint or by being given the choice of death or work as a prostitute. New women and girls were constantly recruited. Women and girls forced to serve military men sexually did not always live that long due to illness, pregnancy, suicide, and murder. As will become evident below, the women and girls were of different backgrounds and cultural groups, including Jews, Gypsies, Blacks, and Slavic women. Due to the health risks involved in the German occupation of the east, the military leadership was more interested in fully staffing their brothels than in abiding by their own bans against having sex with non-German women. As the war progressed and the contradiction between rules and reality became known to more people, even Himmler and other officials suggested that sexual intercourse in a brothel with a person of another "race" did not harm the German folk.<sup>99</sup> It will become evident in the following pages that in World War II the Germans established an extensive system of sexual slavery in which women and girls were forced to be sexual slaves for their military machine. The women and girls, many of them from eastern Europe, were expected to perform with the constant threat of murder or concentration camps.

When the Germans occupied a village or city they routinely assessed the local population, established ghettos for the Jews, and forcibly recruited able-bodied women and men for labor. In addition to digging trenches, doing agricultural work or being maids, women also were forced to be sexual slaves for the Germans. Very often these women were "young and pretty" whom the Germans picked from their well-organized and long lines of local civilians. The references to this are many, as will be clear below. Often there is no reference to how a story ended, and often nothing more is known except that the girls or women never returned, suggesting that they perished while in German captivity.

On January 7, 1942, Vyacheslav M. Molotov, People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, made public a report about German atrocities since the beginning of their invasion. His report became known as "The Molotov Note," and was included in the Nuremberg

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<sup>99</sup> See footnotes 143 and 141 in this chapter.

trial proceedings of 1946. According to this report, “in the village of Berezovka, in the region of Smolensk, drunken German soldiers assaulted and carried off all the women and girls between the ages of sixteen and thirty.”<sup>100</sup> Having left Grabowiec, Poland, Dr. Temchin, memoir author and one of the few partisan doctors to survive the war in the east, witnessed how the Germans conducted a selection for free labor at the Mionchin railroad station: “A few young, good-looking girls were separated from the group and turned over to the German blonde. For what purpose, one could only surmise.”<sup>101</sup>

SS-Sturmbannführer Schwalm, in charge of the kidnaping program in Lodz, Poland and a Chief of the Office for Race and Settlement (RuSHA, *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt*), signed a number of reports that included long lists of people transported. Many young girls and boys traveled unaccompanied by family members. “Girls of fifteen years of age were shipped and there were quite a number of eighteen and nineteen-year-old girls.”<sup>102</sup> It is not clear if these young girls the Germans kidnaped in the name of the RuSHA had a different fate than their male counterparts.

One man I interviewed told us that “there were foreigners who came [to Moshni, Ukraine], the Germans brought them with, by force, it was clear, but I don’t know what, what their fate was.”<sup>103</sup> Frances Penney, a Polish Jew and survivor of concentration camps, wrote in her memoir that in June 1941, when the Germans first occupied Vilna, Poland they quickly restricted Jewish rights, and “At the same time, word got around that Jews, especially young women, were being nabbed off the streets and were disappearing without a trace.”<sup>104</sup> Later, while working for the Germans and living in the ghetto in Vilna, there was “an order to take several young women to an unknown destination.” Penney’s name was on the list, but she managed to escape being taken with the help of a German.<sup>105</sup> Having survived the extermination camp

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<sup>100</sup> Nuremberg U.S.S.R. Exhibit No. 51, prepared by V.M. Molotov, January 1942, entered as “The Molotov Note.” Also found here: “Fifty-ninth Day, Thursday, 2/14/1946, Part 19,” in Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, Volume VII, Nuremberg: IMT, 1947, p. 456.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Temchin M.D., *The Witch Doctor: Memoirs of a Partisan* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1983).

<sup>102</sup> NMT, Green Series, Vol. 4, Case No. 8, The “RuSHA Case” United States against Ulrich Greifelt, et al., pp. 107-108.

<sup>103</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>104</sup> Penney, *I Was There*, 45.

<sup>105</sup> Penney, *I Was There*, 67-68.



Stutthof, Penney was brought to work in a factory in the German city of Magdeburg where there was also recruitment of the “best-looking girls and young women.” German officers came to the barrack where she slept and ordered everyone to be x-rayed. The excuse was to stop the spread of tuberculosis, but this was a sham, and apparently the whole charade was only to select attractive women “for an unknown destination.” Among them was “a pretty blonde” whom Penney knew.<sup>106</sup>

Yet other sources specifically and clearly articulate that the Germans practiced sexual slavery with the girls and women they recruited. An article in *Spiegel* from 1965 stated that young girls were forced to work in Wehrmacht brothels. The Germans simply picked the good-looking women out of the lines in front of the employment offices.<sup>107</sup> The sources used for this article are not indicated, but the article corroborates other evidence provided here. For example, one testimony from Lithuania in the *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry* states that the SS officer Martin Weiss and “his gang surrounded the Zeleny Luch café one night and took away all the girls and women, whether they were accompanied by men or not.”<sup>108</sup> The Lithuanian doctor Elena Buividaite-Kutorgene recorded in her diary in 1941 that “in Slobodka every third home has been ransacked. Truckloads of Jewish women are headed somewhere...”<sup>109</sup> Later she wrote, “In the evenings [Kovno] is empty, dark, and fearsome; young women are afraid to go out, since it is said that they are picked up and taken to brothels. Such establishments of various sorts have been very carefully organized, for the commanders and for the soldiers.”<sup>110</sup>

In addition to other crimes named in the Molotov Note, it reports that “in the city of Smolensk the German command opened a brothel for officers in one of the hotels into which hundreds of women and girls were driven. They were mercilessly dragged down the street by their arms and hair.”<sup>111</sup> This statement and the mention of an officer brothel in a hotel in

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<sup>106</sup> Penney, *I Was There*, 124. Unfortunately, in neither passage does Penney elaborate on what she thought or had heard about these “unknown destinations.”

<sup>107</sup> Andreas Gaspar, E.F. Ziehlke, and H. Rothweiler, *Sittengeschichte der Zweiten Weltkriege: die tausend Jahre von 1933 - 1945: Nachdr. d. 2., neubearb. Aufl.* (Hanau: Müller & Kiepenheuer, o.J.), 341-342.

<sup>108</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 251. It is not clear who the girls and women were.

<sup>109</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 345.

<sup>110</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 365.

<sup>111</sup> “Fifty-ninth Day, Thursday, 2/14/1946, Part 19,” in Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, Volume VII, Nuremberg: IMT, 1947, p. 456.

Smolensk could be considered propaganda, in the sense it could be exaggerated and untrue, but it is better described as a cry for help. The report was sent to all countries with which the Soviet Union had diplomatic ties. This account also corroborates other evidence: for example, we know that women and girls were forced to work in brothels, that there were brothels specifically for the SS and Wehrmacht officers, and finally, that Brauchitsch himself ordered SS brothels to be set up in hotels.<sup>112</sup> This is another example of the often forced and brutal enslavement of east European women into Germany's state-run brothels.

One Ukrainian interviewee was told by a commander of a Trofena group about a brothel in Batashani, Rumania. The man said he was brought to the brothel with his superior. The light was red, and everything was official. A doctor was there to see if one was infected, and the men went through a medical procedure. They also only took money with a picture of Lenin on it. The commander of the Trofena group told him about the girl he was with. She was sixteen or seventeen years old, orphaned at fifteen, and was from someplace in southern Rumania. At this young age she was all alone and had only managed to find prostitution to survive, since she had no money. This same interviewee could not confirm if this was a brothel from the German occupation or if it was a Soviet setup. He was unaware of the German brothels throughout the east, but said that although he could not confirm this, he did hear that the Germans gathered Ukrainian women and sent them to officers.<sup>113</sup> Although this example could be interpreted as unreliable because of its hearsay nature, it only corroborates other kinds of evidence.

One woman we interviewed in the Cherkassy region of Ukraine attested that there was a so-called "Casino" on Gagarina Street near 17<sup>th</sup> in the town of Yasnoziria. The Germans only wanted young women and searched the town for them. This woman was lucky enough to have hid herself successfully and so escaped the fate of others.<sup>114</sup> Another person reported to us that there was another such place in Bezobrazia, Ukraine.<sup>115</sup> Another example is a brief reference from the memoir of a Russian partisan who survived the war. She describes her escape from the fate of other females who were picked by the Germans to be sexual slaves.

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<sup>112</sup> See the section in this chapter titled "SS and Officer Brothels."

<sup>113</sup> No. 19, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. It is also possible that the Soviets took over the German brothels as they headed west.

<sup>114</sup> No. 26, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>115</sup> No. 28, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

Once she was detected by an enemy patrol. The soldiers, accompanied by dogs, pursued her to a village near the front, where she was taken prisoner. The enemy troops were rounding up Soviet women, to select those suitable for brothels. In a former club, the women were subjected to a humiliating inspection. When Masha's turn came, a Russian doctor looked her over and said to a middle-aged German captain: 'Too thin; nothing but skin and bones.'<sup>116</sup>

There is also evidence that the Germans had people apply for this type of work. In the historical novel, *Kharkiv*, there is a long scene about how the Germans picked despairing women and girls who had come to audition for work. Many, but not all, knew what kind of business it was, but because the women and girls were desperate and hungry, they tried very hard to please the men, hoping they would get the "job." They wore high-heeled shoes, stockings, and dresses. With a couple of exceptions, most of the females fixing themselves up before the Germans arrived were "aged about twenty and younger; some were markedly thin from hunger, while a few still looked fairly healthy."<sup>117</sup> The German official in charge of the auditions carefully placed the young and good-looking girls on ladders and had them slowly wipe the walls and windows.

Generally it was strange; why had the Women's Labor Bureau sent so many girls? ... It seemed to Katrusia that to get the dining hall in order, four women would have been enough. Yet here there were amassed twenty-five...

But when the youngest girl of those working on the windows jumped down and said to Fritz that work on the windows was done, Fritz shouted at her, ordering her to climb up to the same window sill and clean it "noch einmal."

The girl was small and poorly-dressed, age about thirteen, with a very thin, pretty face with two large cheekbones. She had tried to do her work quickly and well, to earn the praise of the German authority. When the confused girl climbed back up to the window sill, her neighbor, a robust girl of eighteen said: "Don't be stupid; work slowly. Don't you see how everybody else works?"<sup>118</sup>

The older, less attractive women dressed for cleaning were placed to wash the floor. When German officials came in, there was laughter and talk as they pointed and talked to and about the young girls.

The officers stopped near the window and with interest examined the girls who stood on the window sills in short dresses and high-heeled shoes. Everyone's gaze was directed to the spot where the distinguished guests stared. This truly was not a bad showcase of women's legs which Fritz had masterfully selected. On the six window sills in the hall

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<sup>116</sup> Cottam, ed., *Defending*, 124.

<sup>117</sup> Zvychaina, *Kharkiv*, 45, See 43-53.

<sup>118</sup> Zvychaina, *Kharkiv*, 49.

stood twelve pretty and very young girls. There were blondes, brunettes, red-heads. There was even a fairly robust one, unusual in starving Kharkiv...

Here, wrapped in multicolored spider-web stockings, were various sizes and styles of women's legs, which on the high window sill pedestals under the bright rays of the February sun, could be satisfactorily observed. Oh, Fritz knew what he was doing when he put the best girls on the sill! Only the small poorly-dressed girl with the large cheekbones was a sad stain on this bright canvas. But even she had her own value; she was the bud of a future flower; she was a green strawberry, which still had a bitter taste.

The officers unceremoniously evaluated the goods in detail, examining the girls from head to foot, from foot to head, and exchanged amongst themselves pointed questions which brought from them friendly laughter.

They moved from one window sill to the next, evaluating, testing, joking, asking each girl her name and whether she knew German.

The oldest officer noticed the little girl, who stood on the last window sill with wide-open, childish eyes, fixedly staring at the officer.

"How are you to be called, little one?" he asked in German.

"Irene," the girl's thin answer echoed in the huge hall.

"Can you speak German?"

"Yes, sir. My mother taught me German."

"Ah! Do you have a mother, a father?"

"No sir. My father died a long time ago, while my mother died a week ago of hunger."

"Ah, so," the senior officer said to Irene. Turning to Fritz, he ordered: "Little Irene shall serve at my table." The oldest officer, it seemed, liked the bitter taste of unripe strawberries.

Katrusia well understood this conversation, and she was as engrossed in the proceedings as were the others.<sup>119</sup>

At the end of this process, the older women and one girl were sent home. The young girl had been on a ladder, but she was too skinny for the Germans.<sup>120</sup> It is clear from this example that the kind of work was sexual in nature. The reference to "serving at a table" hints that they would be assigned to specific men rather than work in a brothel. Of course, their fate could have been merely serving on a wait staff, but this is highly doubtful. This scene in this historical novel does not contradict other evidence available, and it could very well could have been the experience of the author.

A Latvian writer, Uldis Germanis, wrote in his historical novel, *Pakāpies Tornī*, about an incident which highlights that women could apply for a position in the Riga Wehrmacht brothel. A Latvian soldier told his fellow servicemen about how he managed to disguise himself as a Wehrmacht soldier in a stolen uniform, and with stolen documents gained entrance and the

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<sup>119</sup> Zvychaina, *Kharkiv*, 50-51.

<sup>120</sup> Zvychaina, *Kharkiv*, 52-53.

“rights” to a woman in the Wehrmacht brothel. The woman he was with was Latvian. According to the novel, there were throngs of women in search of work lined up outside the brothel when it opened.<sup>121</sup> This account also does not contradict other evidence that shows many women were rendered desperate enough to try prostitution.

Women and girls were also recruited by force from the vast supply of people in various camps. Some females in camps “volunteered,” thinking that it might save their life. In his short story, “Latviesi,” Aivars Rungis tells of a story of a young country school teacher named Aina who lived in Latvia during the German occupation. Two men were in love with Aina, and the loser in the competition for her affections became spiteful. He denounced Aina to the German authorities on a bogus charge. Aina was arrested and put into Salispils, a concentration camp ten or fifteen miles upstream from Riga. After some time in the camp, the Germans offered Aina the “opportunity” of working in one of the brothels in Riga, instead of continuing to work in Salispils. She was even given the choice of which brothel to work in: one of the brothels for German officers or in the one for Latvian servicemen. Rather than serve in one of the houses for German officers, she chose to work for her own “boys,” and was sent to work at the brothel for Latvian servicemen at Parka iela 4 (Park Street Number 4).<sup>122</sup> Aivars Rungis wrote to me that he based his story on oral interviews. There exists little reason to doubt this author or his sources. In her study of the Wehrmacht and prostitution in France, historian Insa Meinen found many similar cases in France in which the Wehrmacht would release a woman from arrest only if she worked in a Wehrmacht brothel. That was the one opportunity to escape internment camp life.<sup>123</sup> Historian Diemut Majer quotes a woman who was forced to choose between the brothel and death in a concentration camp.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Germanis, *Pakāpies*. Unfortunately, Germanis had already passed on before I could question him about the sources he used for this novel. Thank you to historian Arnold Lelis for referring me to this source and to Aivars Rungis's book as well.

<sup>122</sup> Aivars Rungis, “Latviesi,” in *Tik pie Gaujas, tik pie gaujas: tautas un cilvēku likteni laikmetu griežos*, ed. Aivars Rungis (Brooklyn, New York: Gramatu Draugs, 1968). The brothel on Park street is referred to several times in the folder BAB R92/10036 as a Wehrmacht brothel. It is likely that the Wehrmacht “shared” the brothel with the Latvian “volunteer” military men. I have not yet seen other references to a brothel in Riga for officers, but it is likely that one existed.

<sup>123</sup> Meinen, *Wehrmacht*, 179-192, 204-206.

<sup>124</sup> Diemut Majer, *“Fremdvölkische” im Dritten Reich: ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Rechtssetzung und Rechtspraxis in Verwaltung und Justiz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der eingegliederten Ostgebiete und des Generalgouvernements* (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1981), 365, n.36.

Volunteering to become a prostitute when one is otherwise threatened with death probably was not uncommon. One example of this comes from the novel *Lovely Green Eyes*, written by the survivor Arnošt Lustig. Although Lustig has written about prostitution in the novel format, the author stated in an interview, “Look, every writer can write only about what he is familiar with, what's under his skin. So I write about what I really know. I could write about anything. But why would I write about everything when I can write about something in-depth?”<sup>125</sup> As with Dinur's writing about sexual violence, I think we need to consider this material as valuable in our understanding of some of the tragedy endured by many people during the war.<sup>126</sup> A fifteen-year-old Jewish girl named Hanka Kaudersová, nicknamed “Lovely Green Eyes,” auditioned in Auschwitz and became a prostitute in an SS field brothel on the eastern front, Number #232 Ost. The women were supposed to be eighteen and Aryan, but she lied and was accepted, hoping this would save her life. Already she had lost her mother and younger brother to the gas chambers and her father to suicide. When it looked as though she would lose her job as a cleaner for Dr. Krueger, Kaudersová decided to “apply” to become a prostitute. Faced with all of this, she strategically chose a path that she thought could – and in fact, did – save her life. Unlike some other cases, Kaudersová hid the fact that she was Jewish for fear that this would ruin her. Arnošt Lustig visualized what was Kaudersová's reasoning for volunteering to become a prostitute instead of staying in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The captain had satisfied himself. It did not matter to him who it was. But it was she, the youngest girl in No. 232 Ost. Not that bad really, but not all that good either.

“You’re not very good, but you’re better than bad,” he said.

It was something between a commendation, a reproach and a warning. She did not know what she could have done better. She had simply been there, letting him maul and grind her body. She was with him, he was with her. That was what was keeping her alive, just as her work in Dr Krueger’s surgery had done at Auschwitz-Birkenau, or the work on the railway carriages, or catching fish, collecting eggs from gulls’ nests, or pulling drowned bodies from the Harmanze pond. She wondered if it was worth the price paid for it, but she was better off than tens of thousands of others. She kept repeating this to herself. She was better off. She was paying for her life with her crotch, her thighs, her arms, legs, lips, fingers, tongue - and her soul.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Pavlina Kostková, “A Small Stone in a Big Mosaic: Arnošt Lustig on why he is more than just a writer on the Holocaust,” *Central Europe Review* 3, no. 28 (2001).

<sup>126</sup> For more information on Yehiel Dinur's work, see page 107ff.

<sup>127</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 39.

Kaudersová was to have been imprisoned by the Germans and forced into various kinds of labor. Within her enslavement this character chose one method of existence over another, in this case sexual slavery, with the thought that it could save her life. Neither the fact that she “chose” this existence instead of staying in Auschwitz, nor the fact that her body saved her life by its sexual exploitation, in any way lessen the severity of what she endured. Neither distinction diminishes or changes the fact that this was a form of sexual slavery, consisting of continual and repetitive rapes. This kind of rape is different from the rape discussed in Chapter Six, but it was still rape, somehow justified in the minds of the perpetrators. Lustig created a character whose emotional, psychological, and even sexual world seems exceedingly realistic, and much of the detail matches what we can find in other sources.

There is still more evidence of the Germans picking women from camps to staff brothels, often in the east. Christa Paul found in the *Häftlingsberichten* of former inmates of the women’s concentration camp Ravensbrück relevant references to women who were taken from that camp to work in Wehrmacht brothels.<sup>128</sup> This reference also corresponds with statements from women who were selected for brothels in concentration camps and in SS brothels. “They were sought out by the doctor and commander, went on a transport, the ‘best’ for the SS and officers, those of ‘lesser quality’ for prisoners.”<sup>129</sup> Auschwitz survivor Judith Isaacson, mentions that upon arrival at Auschwitz there were three different directions the prisoners were directed: “Straight ahead – slave labor. To the left – death. To the right – mass rape at the Russian front,”<sup>130</sup> which suggests a field brothel. A former Ravensbrücker Revierschreiberin stated in a letter that women were chosen in the camp for Wehrmacht brothels.<sup>131</sup> Erika Buchmann in her book on Ravensbrück wrote that “the Wehrmacht and the SS demanded women.”<sup>132</sup> Finally, Anna Nieznana’s (pseudonym) also reported to American newspaper journalist John Creecy that

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<sup>128</sup> Archiv Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück (AR) Dok. 17/51, 42/986, 15/17 S.6, Lingens-Reiner, S.104 (über das Frauenlager Auschwitz-Birkenau) [n. 34], quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 106.

<sup>129</sup> Archiv Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück, Dok. 17/51, S.9 [n. 35], quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 106.

<sup>130</sup> Judith Magyar Isaacson, *Seed of Sarah* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 85.

<sup>131</sup> Antonia Bruha, Brief[Letter] vom 18.3.1991 [n. 36], quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 106.

<sup>132</sup> Erika Buchman, *Die Frauen von Ravensbrück*, Kongress-Verlag, 1960, 85 [n. 37], quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 106.

the Nazis picked women from Ravensbrück for brothels.<sup>133</sup>

### **Brothel Sex and Inner Bonds Do Not Mix**

The Germans were seemingly indiscriminate in choosing their sexual slaves. This has great implications for our understanding of sexual violence and war because the apparent random picking underscores a commonality between east European women and girls of different backgrounds who experienced sexual objectification. This led to their ultimate victimization by German military sexual practices, which were crimes based on gender. The Germans rationalized that because sex in a brothel did not foster “inner bonding,” it did not matter to the Germans what identity markers the person had. It really only mattered that she had a vagina. This is not to say that all women experienced the German occupation the same, for example, Latvian Protestants perhaps were harassed in a different way from that experienced by Slavic Orthodox women. As stated above, at least one German document suggests that the ban against having sex with Latvians and Estonians was lifted in 1943,<sup>134</sup> and although German racial theory would suggest that the Germans would treat the Latvians and Estonians with more respect, I did not yet find enough evidence to concretely state that this assumption based on German racial theory also played out in the sexual arena. For example, it is not clear how German racial theory affected the numbers of Baltic women Germans sexually harassed, raped, or by various means forcibly recruited into their brothels. There was also much hostility in the Baltic, and the Germans fought Russian and Baltic partisans and murdered Jews and other civilians there as they did in other areas of the east.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> John Creecy, Article for International News Service and The Detroit Times, “How the Nazis Abuse Women in Their Concentration Camps,” by Anna Nieznana (pseudonym), article not dated, stamped 20 March 1945, USHMM, RG-06.005.05M, United States Army Commands, Concentration Camp Cases Not Tried, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Reel 5.

<sup>134</sup> Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb.Nr. II 56/43 Aol5, Feld-Kommandostelle, 8 September 1943, BAB NS19/382, doc. 130.

<sup>135</sup> One case in Latvia shows that the Latvian woman felt confident enough to contact officials about her need for a stroller (*Kinderwagen*). She had an affair with a married German man and needed the stroller for her baby. There is mention by the German official in one document that it was too late for discipline to happen, but it seems the woman actually received her stroller. See Helena Bogdans Case Papers, LSA, Fond P69, Opis 4, Del 108, docs. 3-17b. However, another document from October 1942 from Berlin to the Reichskommissar for the Eastern Territories in Riga discusses how Germans should not have sexual relationships with women in the east because of the danger it posed to German blood. See Dr. Runter, Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete, II 5 d 3470, 610/42, Abschrift to Herr Reichskommissar für das Ostland Riga, Berlin, 9 October 1942, LSA, Fond P69, Opis 4, Del 105, docs. 2-2b.



The evidence thus far collected, however, suggests that when we focus on the experiences of the victim or survivor of sexual violence probably the most important factor was the gender of the targeted victims. The victims were primarily female, and the armed men sought out females as outlets for their sexual desires.<sup>136</sup> In the case of the brothels, the fact that the victims were women and girls was the most important, and that was the primary reason for their fate. Nazi documents suggest that the German leadership likely would have protected its “own” women from being victims of its own sexual exploitation – the few “pure” Aryan Germans living in eastern Europe who did not belong to any other “inferior” group, such as prostitutes or politically “criminal” women. But there is some evidence that Protestant Latvians and Estonians, probably the highest on the Nazi racial scale of peoples in the east, worked in German military brothels, though it is not clear if such females were there due to starvation and deprivation or if they were forced at gunpoint. Still, all kinds of women experienced being defined first and foremost as a sexual object for the use by men.

Sources mentioned in the recruitment section indicate that females were taken from camps or villages for use as sexual slaves for the Germans, but few indicate who these women were. The United States Army investigating war crimes after the war documented that in 1941 the Nazis began to recruit “young and pretty girls” from the Ravensbrück concentration camp for houses of prostitution on the eastern front, primarily in areas occupied by the SS. Approximately 4,000-5,000 were forced to go, and many committed suicide, knowing their fate.<sup>137</sup> This U.S. army investigation example describes the “girls” as being “of all nationalities but mostly German.” It is certainly the case that the women were “of all nationalities,” but considering the numbers involved, the women, whether chosen from Ravensbrück, other camps, or from civilian areas in occupied territories, probably were not “mostly German.” This is not said to diminish any German woman’s experience as a sexual slave, camp inmate, or rape victim or survivor, but we need to include the others. Thus, despite traditional beliefs based on German racial laws, Jewish, Polish, and other alleged “inferior” women were included in this kind of sexual slavery, and the German leadership was aware of this.

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<sup>136</sup> In cases of sexual exploitation or rape of males, the gender of the targeted victim seems to be the most important. If we consider the importance of sexual activity to the perpetrator, then it makes sense that the gender also would be important to the perpetrator.

<sup>137</sup> USHMMMA, RG-06.005.05M Reel 8 US Army Cases Not Tried. Both the original German text and the English translation exist on this reel.

Indeed, there were regulations against using women of “inferior” races as sexual slaves. Yet as we saw with the regulations against having sex with women of the occupied territories (Chapter Two), these laws were at best a reality on paper, and the leadership grappled with how to deal with the contradictions. Since 1939 Jewish prostitutes were supposed to be excluded from any police regulated brothels.<sup>138</sup> After the establishment of Wehrmacht brothels, the High Command of the Germany Army (OKH) ordered in March 1942 that the use of Jewish women in these brothels was forbidden, and it was reiterated that “sex with members of other races” was forbidden, including Jewish, Black, and Gypsy women.<sup>139</sup> This order was written two years after the first Wehrmacht brothels had been established, presumably because there were such “inferior” women already in brothels. Otherwise, there would have been no need for the OKH to emphasize this.

The laws issued from the top of German command changed as the war progressed. Sex with non-Germans in brothels became legal since so many people were doing this despite the regulations. Local commanders, apparently desperate for females, “employed” any females they were able to round up. As we have seen in Chapter Two, even the SS leadership was well aware that its men were having sex with women of “other races” (*anderrassigen Frauen*),<sup>140</sup> and the same must have held true about the state-run brothels. The many people who were in charge of recruiting for the brothels would have known what “kinds” of women and girls worked there. Especially sanitation officers or other people who worked in the brothels (taking money, serving drinks, cleaning, making signs, delivering laundry or condoms, etc.) very well could have known.

Thus, as the war progressed and chaos ensued, the leadership reasserted its power by acting as though it were in control. The obvious contradiction between regulations and reality in the brothels was justified with the view that a twenty to thirty minute visit to a brothel was not a social relationship, but a “material and economic” one. It was different than other kinds of

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<sup>138</sup> Office of Der Reichsminister des Innern. Pols. S-Kr.3 Nr.2217/39, Abschrift out of Berlin titled “Polizeiliche Behandlung der Prostitution,” 9 September 1939, USHMM, RG-18.002M, Latvian Central State Historical Archive (Riga) records, 1941-1945, Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 237, docs. 18-18b.

<sup>139</sup> Vgl. Der Heeresarzt im OKH vom 20.3.1942, a.a.O., vgl. Belegstelle 35 [n. 48], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 154. Also see Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, signed i.A. Dr. Handloser, to various, including OKH/S In; OKM/AMA/G; Reichsführer SS; Wehrmachtbefehlshaber, Berlin, 27 January 1943, in various places, 4-5, AP Poznan/299/2161, pp.23-24, [n. 14], quoted in Bergen, “Sex, Blood,” 277.

<sup>140</sup> Feldkommandostelle, Vermerk. Betr.: Geschlechtsverkehr mit andersrassigen Frauen, 13 May 1943, BAB NS7/13, docs. 7-9.

meetings. As Seidler wrote, “sex in brothels with Poles, Russians, Greeks, French and Yugoslavians was not viewed as a social relationship.” A report from the chief sanitation officer in Poland as early as October 1940 read as follows:

The relationships of the whores [*Dirnen*] to the rotating visitors, sometimes from twenty to thirty each day, are of the material and economic kind. They do not have the social impact that other kinds of public acquaintance making has, for example, on the street, in a red light district [*am Strich*] or other ways of meeting. Social communication presupposes a certain amount of mutual respect and spiritual relationship that is not present in the brothels.<sup>141</sup>

The chief sanitation officer was probably correct, in that most of these women and girls (probably not all) who were forced to work for the Germans had no respect for or spiritual connection with their rapists, though it must have happened.<sup>142</sup>

Concerning this same issue of the identities of the women and girls forced to work in the military brothels, in 1942 Himmler issued the qualification to earlier statements on interracial sex that prostitutes were excluded from these laws. His order concerning sexual intercourse with people of “another race” for members of the SS and police in the General Government reads as follows:

Sexual intercourse by a member of the SS or police with a Polish woman is a military insubordination and will be punished in court (*gerichtlich bestraft*). I approve a disciplinary punishment only in very special cases....I do not underestimate the social difficulties the men of the SS and police are having in the General Gouvernement. Therefore, I do not object to intercourse in brothels or with prostitutes who are under official and medical control, because in these situations there is no fathering or any kind of inner bond.

In so far as a member of the SS or police has had sex with a woman of another race since the beginning of the operation in the east (*Osteinsatz*), it remains, according to my order, that every such case should be presented to me for a ruling.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Bericht des Leitenden Sanitätsoffiziers beim Militärbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement vom 2.10.1940, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 116], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 180.

<sup>142</sup> Frau D. notes that once in a while a woman or girl received chocolate from the officers they serviced in the SS brothel where she was. The recipient would eat the chocolate alone so that no one would ask any questions, since such things were forbidden. Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 111. In France when prostitutes were found with photos of German soldiers in their rooms the *Feldkommandanten* were warned that soldiers must be told they were forbidden to give the “whores” any photos, because “the impression is of an inner connection.” Der Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich IIa (Z) Nr. 778/43 vom 31.10.1943, Betr.: Fotografien deutscher Soldaten in Bordellen, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v. 317 [n. 117], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 180.

<sup>143</sup> Befehl des Reichsführers SS vom 30.6.1942, in: Die SS- und Polizeigerichtsbarkeit, Ein Leitfaden, hrsg. vom Hauptamt SS-Gericht, Juli 1944, S. 49 [n. 120], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 181. As an example of prostitutes being used to preserve race, historian John Dower relates how the Japanese Home Ministry chose young, poor women in August 1945 to protect the race of their nation by “servicing the GIs” who were arriving after the collapse of Japan.

This statement from Himmler is problematic. It is not clear if in his last sentence he means sex with medically-controlled prostitutes (which he had just allowed in the sentence previous to this one) or with girls and women of another race who were not medically controlled. Still, it shows the acknowledgment from the top of German power that sex with non-German women and girls, at least in brothels, could not be avoided because of the sexual behavior of German military men, including members of the SS and police. The excuse used was the lack of an inner bond. It also shows that there was a clear understanding that women and girls in general were needed for sexual exploitation because they were female, regardless of other identity markers they had.

### **“Inferior” Females**

Historian Sybil Milton wrote in 1993 that the idea that Jewish women were forced to serve in SS brothels was a “popular postwar myth, sometimes exploited and sensationalized,” and was “a macabre postwar misuse of the Holocaust for popular titillation.”<sup>144</sup> Kitty Hart, to whom Milton also refers, wrote that these ideas are “sexual fantasies of postwar literature and television [and are] ‘ridiculous misconceptions.’”<sup>145</sup> Yet the research completed so far indicates that enough Jewish women and girls were involved in military and camp brothels to consider their victimization in this sexual manner as well. Despite the many regulations surrounding sex with non-German, non-Aryan women and girls and the widespread knowledge of them, the reality seems to have been much different, especially if we examine the situation from the female perspective. There are many references to the fact that in the east racial laws meant much less than did the real rules about the availability of many different females for exploitation by the occupying power. In his pioneering research on venereal disease and prostitution, Seidler found that it was unimportant to the Germans if the women chosen for the Wehrmacht brothels were

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Approximately thirty women, many orphaned or widowed by the war, were “given a formal inauguration in front of the Imperial Palace...in extremely ornate language, to sacrifice themselves to ‘maintain and cultivate the pure blood of the race for hundred of years into the future’, thereby contributing to the tranquillity of the society and helping to ensure the preservation of the national polity. The women had no previous experience as prostitutes – but, of course, the young men chosen only a short while earlier to protect the purity of the Yamato race as kamikaze pilots also had had no prior experience of being expended for the country’s sake.” John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 308.

<sup>144</sup> Milton, “Women,” 230-231.

<sup>145</sup> Hart, *Return to Auschwitz*, p. 122, quoted in Milton, “Women,” 231.

Aryan or Semitic. What was important was that they were attractive.<sup>146</sup> This implies that both Aryan and Semitic women and girls experienced having themselves reduced to a sexual object for the use by the German military. No matter how differently the women and girls defined themselves or what other experiences they had during the war, in this situation of being a potential candidate for a brothel, their experiences were similar in that they were viewed first as potential sexual objects for the use by Germans.

There are additional reports indicating that other kinds of women and girls, otherwise viewed differently by the Germans, were first chosen as forced sex workers based on their physical characteristics. According to an inspection report of July 25, 1941, the Oberarzt Dr. Schreiber wrote that the brothels for the African Corps were not in great demand. He mentioned that the few Caucasian women they had there were “quite old.” Plus it was hot, which Schreiber thought may have lessened the sexual energy of the men. Still, he did not fail to mention that despite the strict laws the Arabic brothels were very popular with the German soldiers because of the “young attractive girls” there.<sup>147</sup> In France it also became known that Jews and Blacks were staffed in the brothels.<sup>148</sup> Despite the laws, soldiers in Africa visited native brothels staffed with African women.<sup>149</sup> In Lustig’s novel, SS-Oberführer Schimmelpfennig threatened the females in Field Brothel #232 Ost to bring in Gypsy women as replacements. Schimmelpfennig said he “knew of at least five brothels in Bessarabia where they were employed. ‘No-one here is indispensable,’ he said.”<sup>150</sup> Peter O. Vlcko, survivor, recorded in his papers that in Slovakia the “the deportation of all Jewish girls was initiated...Those who were beautiful were sent to the East Front, where they were induced to amuse German officers in military brothels.”<sup>151</sup> A.A. Ruzkenski, born 1924, testified in his witness statement on December 16, 1945, that in the first days when the Germans arrived in Lvov in 1941 they opened a brothel for the SS soldiers on

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<sup>146</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 154.

<sup>147</sup> Bericht über die Dienstreise zum Afrikakorps von Oberstarzt Dr. Schreiber vom 25.7.1941, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 24-200/96 [n. 33], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 147.

<sup>148</sup> Kreiskommandantur Fougères vom 1.3.1941, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v. 317 [n. 61], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 158.

<sup>149</sup> Bericht über die Dienstreise zum Afrikakorps von Oberstarzt Dr. Schreiber vom 25.7.1941, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 24-200/96 [n. 33], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 147.

<sup>150</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 5.

<sup>151</sup> Peter O. Vlcko Papers 1991, USHMM RG -20.015\*01.

Grodyetskoi Street. They caught Jewish girls on the street and grabbed them from their apartments, forcibly brought them to the brothel and after two to three days there, they shot them.<sup>152</sup> Survivor Olga Lengyel recorded “so that the SS might not become overly excited by the presence of many young and beautiful internees whom they saw naked and in every degree of exposure, there were brothels supplying German prostitutes for their use. Despite the Nazi theories on racial pollution, we heard that a number of attractive internees were drafted for these brothels.”<sup>153</sup>

But there are still additional examples of Jewish women being used in German brothels. According to Susan Brownmiller, a document in the Vatican archives states that as early as March 1942, “the papal envoy in Bratislava, Archbishop Giuseppe Burzio, informed Pope Pius XII that the Nazis were taking young Jewish women from their families to make them prostitutes for German soldiers on the eastern front and were preparing for the total deportation of all other Jews.”<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, a series of depositions that the members of the Warsaw Jewish Council (*Judenrat*) collected indicate that the German army pressured the council to help staff a brothel with Jewish girls. The brothel was to have two parts, one for officers, the other for soldiers. The council refused to cooperate, and the brothel in the ghetto apparently was never established.<sup>155</sup> This report, in *The Black Book of Polish Jewry*, was written in 1943 before the ghetto in Warsaw had even been liquidated or the war was over. In her defense of this source, Brownmiller remarks that “curiously” it is difficult to find post-war sources telling about the rape or abuse of Jewish women in the Warsaw ghetto. She suggests this could be an “historic oversight” or that the “awful destruction of the ghetto and the last bit of heroic resistance on the part of the Jews has overshadowed early stories of the rape of women.” Closer to the truth, Brownmiller argues, is that “*The Black Book of Polish Jewry* was published as a propaganda

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<sup>152</sup> A.A. Ruzkenskii, Copy of statement by witness, 16 December 1945, 2 pp., USHMM, RG-06.025\*02, Central Archives of the Federal Security Services (former KGB) of the Russian Federation records relating to war crime trials in the Soviet Union, 1939-1992 (bulk dates 1945-1947), Kiev, 1945-1946, N-18762, tom 12, del 255.

<sup>153</sup> Lengyel, “Scientific Experiments,” 126.

<sup>154</sup> Brownmiller, *Against*, 63. Investigative reporter Brownmiller cites the following in the note to this document on Burzio: Vatican archives: Paul Hoffman, “Pius Knew in 1941 of Drive on Jews,” *New York Times*, Apr. 27, 1974. This exchange of correspondence, including reports of denials by the Slovak government, is contained in *The Holy See and the War Victims, January 1941-December 1942*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1974, pp. 470, 475, 504, 543-544.

<sup>155</sup> *The Black Book of Polish Jewry*, ed. Jacob Apenszlak, (New York: The American Federation for Polish Jews), 1943, pp. 25-29, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 52-53.

volume, a cry for help. After the war was over perhaps it was no longer politically necessary to believe the word of women, or to consider the special fate of females a matter of importance or significance.”<sup>156</sup> With the amount of corroborative evidence available, it is very difficult not to agree with her statement.

One moving example of forced prostitution of Jews is from the writer who uses the pseudonym Ka-Tzetnik #135633. Yehiel Dinur, survivor of Auschwitz, wrote in various novels about a Wehrmacht brothel which was attached to a labor camp. Wehrmacht soldiers waiting to go to the eastern front came to visit for sex, and the Jewish women, under threat of death would serve them sexually. In *Doll House*, Daniella was forced to work in a field brothel near the labor camp Niederwalden. From the ghetto where she lived in Poland, she was taken on a transport that was different than all the ones before. It was very strict, and it had only the best looking and healthiest girls in the ghetto. Usually the labor commissioner was involved with the transports, and those with money could buy their way out by bribing the Jewish Council. For this transport, only the Gestapo had been involved, which signified its secret importance. When the girls arrived at the camp they were still clueless to their fate.<sup>157</sup>

This source is an historical novel, but that is no reason to doubt its validity. The sections concerning Daniella, presumably Dinur’s sister, are based on her diary, which she gave to a friend before committing suicide. Perhaps small details here and there are incorrect, just as in other kinds of documents, but in its totality it needs to be taken seriously. The author was the only survivor of his family who were murdered at Auschwitz. He writes at the end of the book,

Having completed this book, I cannot leave without mentioning Dr. Yosef and Mrs. Malka Asherman, Tel Aviv. They found me when I was floundering in a sea of ashes - the ashes to which all my family and world were reduced in the crematorium of Auschwitz - and reached out devoted arms to me as parents to their child, and spared nothing to make it possible for me to go on living in this world.

These cannot be the words of a person who would write novels filled only with lies or exaggerations. Yehiel Dinur tells in *Shivitti*, published in the 1980s, how he hid his sister’s diary

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<sup>156</sup> Brownmiller, *Against*, 53.

<sup>157</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 133. For more on Daniella’s experience, see Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *Shivitti: A Vision*. The knowledge Dinur had about his sister’s fate as a “field whore” haunted him long after the war had ended.

in the ghetto.<sup>158</sup> Brownmiller also very appropriately defends the use of this source when she writes, that “despite his use of the novel form - some things are still too horrible for nonfiction - there is not much reason to doubt that the House of Dolls existed.”<sup>159</sup> Other scholars defend the validity of this novel as well.<sup>160</sup>

In his novel, *Kaputt*, there is a chapter entitled “The Soroca Girls,” where Curzio Malaparte writes of attractive young Jewish girls in Bessarabia who hid from German soldiers in the fields to escape being raped. He tells how the Department of Sanitation of the Eleventh German Army opened a military brothel in Soroca. SS soldiers forced the young Jewish girls to work at gunpoint.<sup>161</sup> Again, I argue that in light of all the other examples, this source is also a valid one. There are no compelling reasons why Malaparte would not tell the truth as he knows it. If the story told is not exact, that is expected, but the overall picture is one that needs to be considered along with other evidence. The brothel in Soroca could be verified if documents are available or if people who knew of its existence are still alive and can be found. Researcher Dr. Andreas Gaspar wrote about this novel as well: “The novel is of course not a document. But it can illuminate what a history of morality in the Second World War encompasses. He convincingly shows that a war inevitably causes a sexual degeneration and tears down every moral barrier.”<sup>162</sup> In addition, it is another example of Jewish women being exploited in a sexual manner.

Often in the sources it was not stated what nationality or religion the women were. Sometimes the nationality is stated, but it is not clear if the women were Jewish. One example which leaves the question of Jewishness open is from Latvia: In a post-war interrogation, the witness D.V. Galperns attested to the Soviet authorities that every night Germans would come to the synagogue and would pick out young Latvian girls who never returned. It is possible that the girls were non-Jewish, but because it is a synagogue mentioned it is of course highly probable

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<sup>158</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *Shivitti: A Vision*, 17. See page 107 for a lengthier discussion of Dinur's work.

<sup>159</sup> Brownmiller, *Against*, 64.

<sup>160</sup> Gaspar, Ziehlke, and Rothweiler, *Sittengeschichte der Zweiten Weltkrieges: die tausend Jahre von 1933 - 1945: Nachdr. d. 2., neubearb. Aufl.*

<sup>161</sup> C. Malaparte, *Kaputt* (London; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1948).

<sup>162</sup> Gaspar, Ziehlke, and Rothweiler, *Sittengeschichte der Zweiten Weltkrieges: die tausend Jahre von 1933 - 1945: Nachdr. d. 2., neubearb. Aufl.*, 342.



that they were in fact Jewish.<sup>163</sup>

Another example which hints that the women could have been Jewish, but it is not certain is from Dr. Michael Temchin's memoir. He writes that Ele Baumsecer was a Jewish collaborator who recruited women for the SS. Baumsecer was a criminal in Warsaw's prewar underworld and then worked for the SS and other guards getting them "good food, alcohol and girls." Temchin writes that in return Ele was given "certain privileges and sometimes was able to help his fellow prisoners." These fellow prisoners apparently did not include the women he led to the Germans.<sup>164</sup> Because Ele was Jewish and familiar with Warsaw's Jewish community, it is very possible that the girls he recruited were also Jewish. The girls might not have been Jewish, but it is unscholarly to default to the traditional idea that "of course they were not Jewish because of the Nazi racial laws." It is clear that in the east the real rules about having sex with non-Germans were different when it came to sexual exploitation, and the real rules did not correspond to what was on paper.

Slavic women were also viewed as inferior to the Germans, but they were used as prostitutes as well. Women and men wearing the insignia OST – marking an worker from the east (*Ostarbeiter*) – were treated extremely inhumanely. Slavic people in general were starved, beaten, murdered, deported, and forced into slavery by the Germans in conditions under which hundreds of thousands perished. Still, as we have seen, sex with Slavic women was very common, and they were also forced into German state-run brothels. Women and children living in Smolensk Russia, presumably Slavic women, were forced to work in a brothel there, according to the Molotov Note discussed previously.<sup>165</sup> Anatoly Kuznetsov wrote in *Babi Yar* that a woman in Germany stood a good chance to be a concubine if she wore the letters OST.<sup>166</sup>

In Poland during October 1940, when there were already brothels in most large cities the chief sanitation officer reported that the "girls" in the brothels were Polish women. Or additional females were found through the application process for the brothels. They were mostly

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<sup>163</sup> D.V. Galperns, Witness statement, 27 December 1945, USHMM, RG-06.025\*01 RIGA N-18313, Tom 3/46, p. 2.

<sup>164</sup> Temchin M.D., *Witch Doctor*, 165.

<sup>165</sup> "Fifty-ninth Day, Thursday, 2/14/1946, Part 19," in Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, Volume VII, Nuremberg: IMT, 1947, p. 456.

<sup>166</sup> Kuznetsov, *Babi Yar*.

between twenty and twenty-five and had to be politically “unsuspicious” to get the job.<sup>167</sup> In occupied Poland, Polish women who had broken the law and had sex with a German were forced to work in brothels. The Gestapo in Posen wrote to the criminal police in Posen on November 11, 1940, that a Maria K. was arrested because she again had been with a soldier. She was in the temporary prison fort number seven and was to be transferred to a brothel. Maria K. explained in a statement that she was given regulations for behavior in the brothel, and without her compliance she was threatened with a transfer to a concentration camp.<sup>168</sup>

Despite all the exceptions, there are a couple of examples which document Jewish prostitutes being excluded from brothels, presumably because of the German laws. There is an example from OFK 365 where the “wild” prostitutes were being rounded up and registered with the police. The Jewish women were let go and replaced with Ukrainians and Polish women in November 1941.<sup>169</sup> In Latvia, 1942, it also was noted in the process of registering independent prostitutes that twenty-one Jewish women were removed from the list.<sup>170</sup> Still, the examples documenting Jews and other “inferiors” having a presence in the brothels far outnumber these two.

### Work Quotas

Once the girls and women were situated in a brothel and understood what was expected of them, the kind of sex they were forced to endure in German state-run brothels was not something most would have chosen to do on their own. The repetitive assault on their bodies and souls could have been routine and mundane, but the sex acts forced upon them because of the perceived need of military men to have sexual intercourse with a female were life-threatening. That the German state established official military brothels staffed by women and girls of the

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<sup>167</sup> Leitender Sanitätsoffizier beim Militärbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement vom 2.10.1940, Bericht über Bordelle für Heeresangehörige im Gen.-Gouv., Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 7], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 138. The way the German is phrased it is not clear if these girls and women who were “referred” were also Polish. Original is as follows: ...oder sie wurde durch Bekanntgabe zur Meldung für die Bordelle gewonnen.

<sup>168</sup> Majer, *Fremdvölkische*, 364-365. She was at a brothel on Fischeri Street No. 19, probably in Posen.

<sup>169</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 18 November 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1240-1243.

<sup>170</sup> Letter from P. Dreijmanis. Stellv. Stadthalter and Dr. H. Kirscentals, Leiter des Gesundheitsamtes i.V., Riga, March 1942. BAB R92/558.

countries they occupied and exploited adds to the perception of force. In this sense of being forced, what the women and girls endured were repetitive rapes, officially sanctioned by the Germans. That the men who came to the brothels and that the German state did not view these actions as rape does not discount the women's and girls' experiences of being forced to have sex with multiple men they had never met before. Lustig wrote about what Hanka Kaudersová's thoughts were while she was in bed with a German officer in Field Brothel #232 Ost, and the words illustrate the aspect of rape, which certainly was the reality of so many women and girls forced into prostitution during the war: "She thought of the engineer who had complained that she was lying there like a frightened cat. She did not wish to punish her body for what she could not change. She forced herself not to resist...she knew it could not be otherwise because that otherwise meant the gas chamber, the crematorium and ashes."<sup>171</sup>

The number of rapes women had to endure while forced to work in the German state-run brothels is only partially documented, but the evidence available points to an unimaginable amount of abuse of which the German leadership was aware and for which they were responsible. According to a report from OFK 372, the demands on the women and girls brothels had become so extraordinary that it had caused tremendous difficulties, especially in Lublin's Wehrmacht brothel where between 120 and 150 men came each day, and there were only four or five "girls" available. The author of the report requested more girls, pointing to the constant recruitment of new girls and women.<sup>172</sup> These numbers reflect an average of anywhere between 24 and 37.5 rapes for each woman, each day. This is an inconceivable demand on the girls' and women's bodies and psyches. Because of the amount of paperwork there is no doubt that anyone working in a brothel or any officials in charge knew about the numbers of rapes women endured each day, since in many reports officials mention numbers of men who came to the brothel. Almost as an aside, a chief sanitation officer in Poland mentioned in 1940 that there were often twenty to thirty men for each woman or girl in the brothels each day.<sup>173</sup>

A report almost a year later states that the local doctor (*Standortarzt*) in Lublin arranged to have four "brothel girls" picked out of the group of local prostitutes for the disposal

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<sup>171</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 36-40.

<sup>172</sup> Maier, OFK 372, Monatsbericht, Lublin, 24 February 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 218, Fr. 336.

<sup>173</sup> Bericht des Leitenden Sanitätsoffiziers beim Militärbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement vom 2.10.1940, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 116], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 180.

of the reopened Lublin Wehrmacht brothel at Zamosc Number 4.<sup>174</sup> It is not clear if the brothel at Zamosc Number 4 is the same one that reported such high visitors the year before. But this does hint that there may have been at least two brothels in Lublin, though the “group of local prostitutes” referred to could have been medically supervised prostitutes who were not in the military brothels. Also, no visitor numbers are mentioned for the reopened brothel. Still, this also points to either a turnover in women and girls or to a growing demand.

An example from a military report from the 162<sup>nd</sup> infantry division doctor shows how the numbers of men changed or were expected to change because of movement of troops. On the military training area in Neuhammer there was one brothel in both the east and the west camps. Twenty prostitutes were planned for the one in the west camp and twelve for the other. However, only fifteen and eight arrived in each camp, respectively. The brothels opened on March 4, 1943, and in only the first week, from March 4 to March 10 each prostitute each day in the east camp sexually serviced an average of 22.6 men, and in the west camp an average of 25.7 men. On Sunday, March 7, 1943, the brothels reached the highest number of men with each woman servicing 27.6 men in the west and in the east, 46.5 men each.

Dr. Linnemann, Oberarzt and Adjutant, explained that since there always was a number of women who could not work because of menstruation, the actual numbers per woman were higher than what he had stated above. Since they were expecting seven thousand additional legionnaires to arrive at the military training camp in Neuhammer, the doctor requested ten more prostitutes.<sup>175</sup> It is not clear from the request of ten additional females and the expected seven thousand troops what kind of workload Linnemann figured the women and girls could bear. That women were released from the forced sex if they were menstruating is mentioned in a couple of other places, but it is not possible to state whether this was the case in all brothels. Frau D., a prostitute in the SS brothel in the Buchenwald concentration camp, mentioned that she always avoided reporting herself as sick, even when she had her period.<sup>176</sup> Many females probably ceased menstruating due to the stress they experienced. Again, the silence of the female perspective in the documents and the silence of the women and girls is deafening.

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<sup>174</sup> OFK 372 Abt.Ia – Nr. 1543/43 geh. Monatsbericht an Wehrkreiskommando Generalgouvernement Spala, p. 8 of report, St.Qu.Lublin, 26 March 1943, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 217, Fr. 311-312.

<sup>175</sup> Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv 162. Inf.Div. Nr. 3442/6 [n. 45], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 152.

<sup>176</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 111.

The following are the monthly visitor numbers for the brothels in Lublin, Cholm, and Zamosc for July 1943: Lublin: 2820, Cholm 4081, and Zamosc (brothel for Wehrmacht soldiers) 678 and in the brothel for the eastern troops (*Osttruppen*), which in its eleven days of business (it had just been opened) already had 355 visitors. Unfortunately, I do not know how many women and girls worked in these brothels. Some of the women in the Cholm and Zamosc brothels were sick with gonorrhea, and the doctors were trying to make sure that the women did not seek work elsewhere. Being ill, they were forbidden to work in the official brothels, but because they needed work, it was suspected they would seek it elsewhere. Because of these considerations the brothel in Lublin had already arranged with the economic department (*Wirtschaftsamt*) for the granting of special allotments.<sup>177</sup> This points to the leadership realizing these women and girls were doing this out of economic desperation.

In the summer of 1943 the visitor numbers in the Lvov Wehrmacht brothel soared, and the Germans were faced with the brothel becoming highly visible. The chief sanitation officer reported that it was absolutely necessary to expand the Wehrmacht brothels, but that they were having problems due to the lack of competence (*Verständnislosigkeit*) on the part of the civilian officials. Apparently there was difficulty determining which house to use as the brothel. The security police (SD) declared one potential house to be unsuitable, but the reasons for this were not clear. Other houses were suggested, including the military quarters (*Quartieramtes*), but there were problems with these buildings as well. The housing office declined approval for several reasons, including the lack of or small size of a waiting room and also for hygienic conditions. The chief sanitation officer wrote that "in the present condition the whole business in the Wehrmacht brothel can be declared unworthy of the Wehrmacht." The waiting room was approximately twelve by four meters and held about one hundred people. But during the lunch hours and sometimes also in the evening the visitor line stretched down the street. The daily visitor number was between six hundred and eight hundred men. The report states, "we must calculate that these numbers are only going to get higher in the future." The general for special task assignments (*Generals z.b.V.I.*) ordered the establishment of an officer's entertainment house (*Offiziersunterhaltungshaus*), but this too could not be built because the suggestion of the

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<sup>177</sup> OFK 372, St.Qu. Lublin, Abt. Ia Nr. 3 615/43 geh., Monatsbericht, An Wehrkreiskommando Gen.Gouv, Krakau, p. 11 of report, 21 August 1943, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 217, Fr. 524, 532-533.

housing department had also been declined.<sup>178</sup> Thus, it seems that the number of Wehrmacht soldiers using the Lvov Wehrmacht brothel remained tragically high for the women and girls there, and it is not known how many of them perished because of this abuse. It is not yet clear how the problem was solved, but it must be noted that the problem for the Germans was not the fate of the women forced into so much sexual activity, but that the brothel with its hundreds of men and long lines extending down the street was very visible publicly.

Visiting a prostitute forced into sexual slavery by their own military forces was worthy of a Wehrmacht soldier, but waiting in such a crowded room was not. This was also the case in Bucharest, Romania, where according to the local order (*Standortbefehl*) number 63, the Wehrmacht brothel at Splaiul Independentei Street, Number 2 was only to have ten soldiers waiting in the waiting room at any given time. Lines in front of the brothel were forbidden, and Wehrmacht vehicles were not to be parked in front. This brothel was open from two in the afternoon until eleven in the evening. The sanitation room was open one hour prior to the brothel opening and one hour after the brothel closed.<sup>179</sup> These rules give the impression that the local military officials did not want any “scenes.” Crowded waiting rooms of soldiers, often under the influence of alcohol, long lines, or honking cars would make the brothels well known to the civilian inhabitants of the area.<sup>180</sup> As historian Christa Paul writes, “Prostitution was viewed as being particularly necessary, but it was not to be obvious.”<sup>181</sup>

Despite the fluctuations in visitor numbers, the numbers shown here are generally extremely high and suggest an unimaginable amount of sexual activity for the women and girls involved. What needs to be done is to compare these numbers with the movement of various divisions of men. In contrast to the many examples of high numbers of men coming to the

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<sup>178</sup> Leitender San.-Offizier, OFK 365, Az.: 49 s (I/F) Monatsbericht, geh., Anlage 3 zu OFK 365 Ia Nr.1286/43, pp. 1-2, Lemberg, 15 March 1943, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 217, Fr. 338.

<sup>179</sup> Standortbefehl Nr. 63 vom 2.4.1941 der Standortkommandantur Bukarest, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/1082/2 [n. 32], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 146-147.

<sup>180</sup> This issue is not unique to the German occupation in World War II. American commander General John Joseph Pershing regulated prostitutes in the Philippines, and later in Mexico he arranged a similar system before the U.S. entered the European conflict. There the women were set up in shacks “inside the support camp, where they would not be readily visible to visitors and reporters but would be close enough for easy access.” The military was in charge of medically examining the women, and a civilian actually ran the brothels, hiring women and managing the business. Here the men received thirty minutes with a woman for two dollars. In France Pershing was unable to set up the same kind of system. See James A. Sandos, “Prostitution and Drugs: The United States Army on the Mexican-American Border, 1916-1917,” *Pacific Historical Review* (1980): 621-45, quoted in De Pauw, 220.

<sup>181</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*.

brothels, there are only two examples of low numbers that I was able to find. The first example is a brothel the Germans opened in February 1942 in Stanislaw.<sup>182</sup> Apparently, however, the commander of the Polish battalion had forbidden his soldiers to visit it, and the strength of the remaining forces was not large enough to keep up a brothel business.<sup>183</sup> It closed in the spring.

The second example reveals low numbers in one brothel but the “necessity” of an additional brothel elsewhere, again revealing fluctuations in the demand for females on the part of the military. One document from OFK 365 reports that the Wehrmacht brothel in Tarnopol, Poland was closed because the visitor number had diminished to three or four daily. The visitor numbers prior to this drop are not mentioned. It was not worth the effort to keep it open. These lower numbers seem to be the exception, however, and not the rule. This same document also discloses that in Drohobycz “yet another” brothel was going to be opened.<sup>184</sup>

Yet even if scholars never determine the exact visitor numbers or the exact numbers of rapes each woman had to endure each day, it is clear that this was not a small system of sexual slavery. On the contrary, this was an extremely large system with a minimum of tens of thousands of women, many of whom endured on a daily basis repetitive physical rapes and the accompanying psychological and emotional pain. It was also a large-scale system that involved people from all levels of the German bureaucracy and military, including people from the occupied territories.

Arnošt Lustig writes in his novel that Hanka Kaudersová serviced twelve men each day, sometimes more. This is a much lower physical demand than being raped thirty or forty times each day. But Lustig shows very clearly both the physical and the psychological pain that she experienced. Having never had sexual intercourse before, her skin was bloody and raw after the first day. Then she was raped again the next day as many times, not giving her body any time to heal. This continued for the twenty-one days she was captive in the field brothel, except sometimes on Sundays when there were no men. In addition, psychologically and emotionally she was devastated. Lustig also wrote that if Kaudersová serviced an officer, the officer could

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<sup>182</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s. (I), Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 16 February 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 323.

<sup>183</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s., Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 March 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 102-104.

<sup>184</sup> Leitender San.-Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49 s, S(1) Monatsbericht, Anlage 2 zu OFK 365 Ia Nr.4312/42 geh., Lemberg, 14 October 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 1066.

stay as long as he wanted. Although forced to remain with a new man, she was not forced to service as many others. The downfall for this was that she was very nervous, for if she displeased an officer he could complain which would threaten her life.<sup>185</sup> While survivors of such sexual exploitation and horror have mostly remained silent, the detail Lustig provides is surprisingly realistic if we think about survivors of sexual violence in other armed conflicts. Furthermore, Lustig's representation of Kaudersová's psychological experiences are quite similar to what others have written or reported.<sup>186</sup> This detail provides us with some insight into the tragedy that an unknown number of females experienced, many of whom probably died in the process.

### Military Brothel “Visits”

In the west it is clear that there was a lot of paper work for each visit and for each man. If this was the case for all brothels, including those on the eastern front, and even the field (or temporary) brothels, then it is not clear what happened to this vast collection of papers. When a soldier went to a brothel he signed in and paid if payment was required. Then he would be led to a smaller room to be sanitized. This was also noted. Then, depending on the number of men, he would sit and wait to be assigned a room. After he visited a woman, whose name and room number was recorded, he would again go to the sanitation room. Having completed the procedure, the man would receive a certificate stating that he had completed the required sanitation. Apparently, members of the Gestapo and the SS “paid with coupons that they received with their food ration cards” to enter the brothel at No. 9 Suboch Street in Vilna, Lithuania.<sup>187</sup> To my knowledge, no one has found any sizeable number of such papers from the east, yet because so many other aspects of state-run brothels were the same, I suspect much of the paperwork was the same as well.

In the west, every brothel had a set of rules (*Hausordnung*) posted, with the field

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<sup>185</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 26-27.

<sup>186</sup> Sources which corroborate Lustig's book are for example, Yehiel Dinur's representation of Daniella in Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *Das Puppenhaus*.; what a prisoner told survivor Jack Eisner, Jack Eisner, *The Survivor* (London: 1982).; what Maria learned about her mother, who was a prostitute for the SS, Nea Weissberg-Bob, *Als man Juden alles, sogar das Leben raubte* (1996) [thank you Kenneth Kronenberg (trans. 1997) for this source]; or what Frau D., a survivor interviewed by historian Christa Paul, experienced as well, Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*.

<sup>187</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 251.



commandant's signature visible, in the waiting room.<sup>188</sup> Other rules that were posted in the west were also posted in the east. Thus, it is very likely the brothels in the east also had such a set of rules. One of the rules was that sex was only allowed with a condom. Even members of the SS were required by law to have in their possession several condoms whenever they were off duty and left the barracks.<sup>189</sup> For this reason condom vending machines were to be installed in all barracks. Condoms were considered as part of the military man's daily toiletry needs, with other items such as toothpaste, sewing needles, buttons, and tobacco. The methods of obtaining them for the troops was regulated since 1942,<sup>190</sup> and the price was even fixed.<sup>191</sup>

Seidler found that condoms were available until the last day of the war, but his comment was likely based on documents from the west.<sup>192</sup> I came across at least two documents mentioning the shortage of condoms, indicating that there were could have been more shortages in the east.<sup>193</sup> Still, Seidler is correct when he writes that in light of the massive amounts of rubber needed for wartime production it is a "curious phenomenon" that there was an unending supply of condoms (even if only in the west).<sup>194</sup> There was some preparation for condom shortages, however. During the war Army Medical Inspector Advising Dermatologist, Professor Löhle, explained that in case of condom shortages men could rub themselves for a couple of minutes with a medicated salve or oil before and after sexual intercourse. This and sanitation had been shown to protect against both syphilis and gonorrhea. With gonorrhea it was recommended to urinate after the intercourse as well, but that was part of the sanitation routine anyhow. To

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<sup>188</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 146.

<sup>189</sup> Ausbildungsbrief Nr. 5 des SS-Sanitätsamtes vom 15.5.1938, S. 13, Bundesarchiv, Sammlung Schumacher Nr. 442 [n. 91], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 168.

<sup>190</sup> Vgl. OKH ChHRüst u BdE Az. 62m - V3 (VII d) vom 30.9.1942, Allgemeine Heeresmitteilungen 1942, S. 445 f. [n. 89], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 168.

<sup>191</sup> Vgl. OKH ChHRüst u BdE Az. 62m - V3 (VII d) vom 30.9.1942, Allgemeine Heeresmitteilungen 1942, S. 445 f. [n. 90], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 168.

<sup>192</sup> Seidler cites: Vgl. KTB des Leitenden Sanitätsoffiziers beim Marinenoberkommando Süd, Eintragung v. 8.1.1945, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv K 70-1/2 [n. 86]. See Seidler, *Prostitution*, 167.

<sup>193</sup> One example is from: Leitender Sanitäts Offizier b.d. OFK 365 Az.: 449.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 14 September 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 520-524. Another example: Zeiss, Oberstarzt, Der Beratende Hygieniker beim Heeres-Sanitätsinspekteur, Sammelbericht über Kriegserfahrungen der Beratenden Hygieniker to the Beratenden Hygieniker des Feld- und Ersatzheeres, part 3, pp. 10-11, 20 January 1944, NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 189, Fr. 6131272-73.

<sup>194</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 168.

further prevent infection, the man was not to urinate for at least thirty minutes after sanitation was completed.<sup>195</sup>

Of course, there was pressure on the prostitutes to use a condom even if the soldier or officer did not want this. Some women who worked in the Wehrmacht brothel in Zagreb (Agram) surprisingly were found to be infected. When questioned, they admitted they had sex without protection. They apparently had been offered large sums of money to have sex without a condom.<sup>196</sup>

Apparently in the brothels in the west beer and wine were served,<sup>197</sup> which the men presumably drank while waiting for their turn for sex. After having sex with a woman or girl, the man would be directed to the sanitation room for his post-intercourse cleansing. Seidler found a memoir from a former soldier who reminisced about his job in a sanitation room. He was very busy and helped five men at a time through each step of the sanitation. The men would become impatient, as they stood there, pants open. Apparently this soldier went to the brothel for a glass of wine before his duty, but could not imagine visiting a woman and then working his shift in the next room. His colleagues however, visited the first thing each morning.<sup>198</sup>

### Who Visited and Why

As with many aspects of this topic, more research needs to be completed to better understand the desires and motives of the men who visited brothels in wartime. Some of the men had of course taken part in front line actions. Others were likely bureaucrats in the occupation having had no such trauma. The majority had left their families on the home front. It is not too much to speculate that some men would have visited brothels even in peacetime. Still, depending on their circumstances, many probably would not have done so had it not been for dislocation, trauma, stress, loneliness, alcohol, or boredom. Soldiers, officers, members of the SS and police, legionnaires, and eastern troops all visited, but despite the hundreds of thousands or even

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<sup>195</sup> Generalarzt Prof. Löhe vom 12.11.1944, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/2002 [n. 88], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 167-168.

<sup>196</sup> Bericht des Beratenden Dermatologen beim Panzerarmeearzt 2 vom 9.11.1944, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/497 [n. 21], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 144.

<sup>197</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 157. See also Meinen, *Wehrmacht*.

<sup>198</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 164-165.

millions of men who had such an experience it is difficult to find any military men who will discuss why they went.

One ex-marine wrote a lengthy description of the brothel in Brest. He remembered that it stank of sweat, perfume, semen, wine, and alcohol.<sup>199</sup> Reading his fairly lengthy description did not bring me any closer to understanding the “why” aspect of this topic. Other pieces of literature which attempt to describe a brothel scene and touch on who visited and why are from the novelist Sven Hassel. The women and their needs, desires, experiences or world-views are completely absent, but the narrative descriptions from Hassel give the reader perhaps only a little insight.

An MP with a head-hunter crescent on a chain around his neck stood outside the brothel to show us in. Just inside the entrance sat another MP to inspect our pay books. Then we were turned over to a medical sergeant who checked us for venereal disease...

A soldier was thrown out by the man in charge, who shouted with a schoolmaster's voice after him, “Disappear, baby, before I throw you in the can. We don't allow children under eighteen in here.”

Comically enough, soldiers under eighteen were not allowed to smoke, drink, or have anything to do with women. Rule breakers were heavily punished. But they were allowed to kill or be killed. The Fatherland is often fastidious.<sup>200</sup>

These kinds of men were involved in the war, and surely they visited brothels, but this description also does not give a full picture.

Elsewhere, Hassel hints at why men visited a brothel. This description is plausible because it evokes the sympathy in the reader for the young man caught in the horror of war, murder, and pain.

We stayed together all night on the big circular bed under its snow-white canopy. At dawn we woke up and bathed in a scented bath. The carnage of war seemed very far away and long ago. The shrieks of men in agony no longer pierced my eardrums, and the blood of the dying seemed not so red as once it had been.

‘I should like to stay in this room for ever,’ I said.<sup>201</sup>

This scene could have been the reality of some men who found comfort away from the war, though the setting is different than the crowded military brothels. Perhaps the sex and physical touch evoked memories of a loved one at home. Because the woman is absent in the description,

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<sup>199</sup> Lothar-Günther Buchheim, *Das Boot*, München 1973, S. 520ff. [n. 84], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 165-167. Presumably this was the Brest in the west, but it is not clarified.

<sup>200</sup> Sven Hassel, *Wheels of Terror* (New York: Lancer Books, 1967), 123-124.

<sup>201</sup> Sven Hassel, *Reign of Hell* (London: Transworld Publishers Ltd., 1973), 227.

what seems most relevant is the reprieve from war.<sup>202</sup> Still, in most state-run brothels men were not allowed even thirty minutes with a woman, and usually it was much less time. In that sense, this description is far from reality for most brothel visitors, especially the rank and file. If anything, this passage better describes the motivation for removing oneself from the horror of war and finding comfort with a woman. Hassel could have taken more liberties with his writing, though parts of these examples seem to ring true.

One example of an officer who could demand more time and sex from a woman comes from Arnošt Lustig's novel about a Jewish girl in a German field brothel. One day she had an officer visit which relieved her of servicing other men, but she was then forced to spend a long time with one officer, Wehrmacht Captain Daniel August Hentschel. She thought to herself, "Was Madam Kulikowa trying to do her a favour by sending her an officer after only six days of full service, each day twelve men and on one occasion fourteen and on another fifteen? Did it mean she would have no-one else for the rest of the day? Would she be relieved of a further eleven bodies, faces, hands and feet? Hairy chests and bellies?"<sup>203</sup> Another day she sexually serviced SS-Obersturmführer Stefan Sarazin, who had her tie him to the bed, be sexual with him while he was tied, and listen to him tell about the piles of corpses and the stench of burning human flesh. Later he threatened her with a pistol pinning her down to the bed. Afterward she still was forced to have intercourse with him, during which "oil brought her some relief from his desperate efforts." Finally, he played with his pistol more, giving it to her on one occasion and ordering her to shoot him.<sup>204</sup> This lengthy scene reveals a very sick SS man who also in some ways escapes from the war in the brothel, but continues the abuse and dysfunction so prevalent in his life.

In Lustig's novel, Wehrmacht Captain Daniel August Hentschel also told Kaudersová why he thought men went to brothels during wartime. Hentschel said, "Do you know why a soldier most wants a woman before battle? Or immediately after battle? It's a reward, or a token

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<sup>202</sup> For other examples of men seeking comfort away from the war and with a prostitute, see Gubar, "This is My Rifle," 248-249. Gubar mentions several works in English, such as Richard Wilbur, "Place Pigalle," in *The Beautiful Changes* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1947), 12; Major Fred B. Shaw, Jr., "Lydia of Libya," in *Reveille: War Poems by Members of Our Armed Forces*, ed. Daniel Henderson, John Kieran, and Grantland Rice (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1943), 217; Keith Douglas, "Cairo Jag," in *Complete Poems*, 97; Bernard Gutteridge, "Sunday Promenade: Antisirane," originally published in *Traveller's Eye* (1947), reprinted in *Old Damson-Face: Poems, 1934-1974* (London: London Magazine Editions, 1975), 43.

<sup>203</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 26.

<sup>204</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 99-143.

of a reward, the one thing that frees him from his bonds. You know, to his mother, his father, or to his children, his wife and family, his country and all his worries.”<sup>205</sup> This echoed what the madam in the house had told Kaudersová when she arrived, “a man is like a child and generally behaves like one. He expects to get everything he wants. He will expect you to treat him unselfishly, like a mother.”<sup>206</sup> For those who saw the horror of the front lines perhaps it was a mother they really needed but could not have.

What Lustig describes in his novel again is not that dissimilar to what one of the few survivors of prostitution has reported. Frau D. spoke with Christa Paul about all the memories and scenes in her head that are so unimaginable she cannot describe them to anyone. She said that the men harassed the women so much and were so “perverse and rotten” when they were alone with them. At the time of the interview Frau D. still had a hard time telling anyone what all happened to her. She said, “no one would believe it. So many things happened that if one would tell everything, the impression would be that that person is the perverse or abnormal one.” Then she thinks of one incident which she has the nerve to tell. It had to do with a larger-sized SS man who had a button sewn onto his testicles and ran around for a couple of hours before returning and having someone in the brothel take it off of him.<sup>207</sup> Perhaps this man satisfied some kind of childish, but sexual need. Perhaps this need was smaller or nonexistent before the stress of war. The horror of war and the responsibility of being an officer, the fear perhaps of being sent to the front, boredom, or gross indifference – all of these factors could have contributed to this SS man’s behavior.

### **Cost and Money Earned**

The evidence for the prices of brothel visits is scattered and minimal. Local commandants and the chief sanitary officers usually decided on the price for the men, and perhaps this is the reason for the variance. In the west, the first brothels were free,<sup>208</sup> and

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<sup>205</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 48-49.

<sup>206</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 5.

<sup>207</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 109.

<sup>208</sup> Der Heeresarzt im Oberkommando des Heeres, Az. 265 Nr. 17150/40 vom 16.7.1940, Betr.: Prostitution und Bordellwesen im besetzten Gebiet Frankreichs, Bundesarchiv/ Militärarchiv H 20/825 [n. 4] and OKH GenStdH / GenQu Az. 265, IV vNr. 11244/40 geheim vom 29.7.1940, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 5], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 136-137.

thereafter, the price was between two and three Reichsmarks. In really “nice” brothels the commandant could set the price up to five Reichsmarks.<sup>209</sup> Where the brothels were too expensive, however, underground prostitution spread because it was cheaper. The chief sanitation officer in Rumania complained in February 1941 that venereal disease had spread because of the traffic with secret prostitutes. The Wehrmacht brothel in Constanza was hardly visited because the price was too high. A consequence of the small number of visitors was that the twenty women in the brothel did not want to work for the Germans anymore since they were earning so little. To help solve the problem, the local doctor (*Standortarzt*) in Constanza pushed through a plan in March to give the women a flat rate of 1500 Lei, which was the same as serving fifteen visitors each day.<sup>210</sup> This example is interesting because it not only hints that the women successfully pressured the Germans for more payment, but it also indicates that prior to the arrangement of March 1941, the women earned something for every rape they endured. There are not many references to women bargaining for payment or to women receiving a flat rate, so it is difficult to determine how widespread such arrangements were.

In the east, even if women “volunteered” because they were starving, there is little evidence that they were paid. If they were paid with food or money, it probably was a very minimal amount.<sup>211</sup> Especially where the women were forced, it would make no sense for the Germans to pay someone they were only planning to use until they murdered them. The other example that indicates the women and girls at least received enough payment to keep them from seeking additional work elsewhere is that of the brothel in Lublin. Here the officials wanted to prevent the women and girls from working elsewhere if they became infected with a venereal disease and temporarily were unable to work in the state-run military brothels. Therefore they made an arrangement with the economic department (*Wirtschaftsamt*) for the granting of special

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<sup>209</sup> Anlage 6 der Richtlinien für die Einrichtung und Überwachung von Wehrmachtsbordellen in den besetzten Westgebieten, Oberkommando Heeresgruppe D, Der Oberquartiermeister West IV b, NfD, vom Juni 1943, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v.317 [n. 30], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 146.

<sup>210</sup> Vgl. Leitender Sanitätsoffizier bei der Deutschen Heersmission in Rumänien vom 12.6.1941 und Leitender Sanitätsoffizier beim Oberkommando der Truppen des Deutschen Heeres in Rumänien vom 25.2.1941, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/1082/2 [n. 31], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 146.

<sup>211</sup> Germans paid with food for other kinds of work, so it is possible that this was the form of payment instead of money in some brothels.

allotments in such cases.<sup>212</sup> Still, these examples are the only documentation I found on this aspect of the military brothels.

There also is not much evidence on pricing or earnings from Latvia. There exist two documents that each state a price of fifteen Reichsmarks.<sup>213</sup> Both documents are from 1943 and concern a Wehrmacht brothel in Riga. But another document states that a private or “black” brothel in Riga allegedly charged only two to three Reichsmarks.<sup>214</sup> Unregulated prostitution was cheaper than the military brothels. That was allegedly part of the attraction. Still, this is a large price difference – between the state-run and the underground prostitution, but fifteen Reichsmarks is also higher than what seems to have been the price in the military brothels in the west. Finally, in the report documenting the independent brothel in Liepaja run by Ms. Mockus it states that the women earned half of the price charged to the men.<sup>215</sup> However, it is critical to note that nothing is stated about the women earning any money at all in the official brothels. Especially if the females were kidnaped and forced to work as prostitutes as apparently so many were in the east, it is unlikely the Germans paid them any kind of salary. It is more likely that if they complained they would be “removed” or murdered, as was the fate of so many women who worked in camp brothels. It is clear that more research needs to be done to determine the monetary aspects of the brothels throughout the east.

The tragic and violent fate of so many human beings has been swept aside in the annals of history. An example of poor analysis of a document on the topic of prostitution is from historian Hans Bleuel. In his book on sex and society in Nazi Germany, Bleuel recites from a security police report (SD *Meldung*) almost entirely without questioning its veracity. The report states, and Bleuel repeats, that the women who staffed the brothels were free to return home at any time. Bleuel does not point to any supporting evidence. Also, according to this report from

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<sup>212</sup> OFK 372 Abt. Ia Nr. 3615/43 geh., Monthly report to Wehrkreiskommando Gen.Gouv. Krakau, St.Qu.Lublin, 21 August 1943, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 217, Fr. 524, 532-533.

<sup>213</sup> Lt. Arzt des Generalkommissariates, Two-page STD questionnaire, Riga, 19 May 1943, BAB R92/10036; Lt. Arzt der Kr. Abtl. III, Oberarzt, STD questionnaire to den Lt. Arzt beim zuständigen General-Kommissariat in Lettland mit Sitz in Riga, Tapiau, 19 May 1943, BAB R92/10036.

<sup>214</sup> Lemke, Hauptwachmeister d. Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Polizei-Review, Bericht, Libau, 11 February 1942, USHMM RG-18.002M, Latvian Central State Historical Archive (Riga) records, 1941-1945, Reel 11, R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 107-107b. See page 151 for the complete story.

<sup>215</sup> Lemke, Hauptwachmeister d. Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung, Polizei-Review, Bericht, Libau, 11 February 1942, USHMM RG-18.002M, Latvian Central State Historical Archive (Riga) records, 1941-1945, Reel 11, R-83, Opis 1, Del 207, docs. 107-107b.

late 1943, the women paid a daily fee for housing and linens, but they generally made a tremendous amount of money. Apparently a French woman in a brothel in Bitterfeld declared that she sometimes made up to two hundred Reichsmarks a day. She allegedly owned property in Paris and was planning on purchasing more when she returned home after her contract time ran out at the brothel. Bleuel does concede that the “SD report undoubtedly erred on the bright side and glossed over the cruel fate of many brothel inmates.” Still, he then continues to write that “there is no doubt that a shrewd professional could earn enough to retire on” and mentions that from Frankfurt it was reported that the Poles did not earn much, but the French women could send home one thousand Reichsmarks each month. The prices for a visit ranged from three Reichsmarks to five Reichsmarks. None of the “whores,” (*Dirnen*), as this scholar calls the women, earnings were taxed.<sup>216</sup>

It is not clear what Bleuel’s interpretation is, but his treatment of the topic is superficial and degrading to the women and girls who worked as prostitutes. Somehow highlighting a few cases where a woman or girl allegedly earned a lot of money is easier or more attractive for Bleuel than delving deeper into the topic. Once again, we simply do not know enough. It is very possible women in the west earned something, but it seems less likely that this was the case for those in the east, especially those who had been forced at gunpoint into this kind of slavery. It is unclear what circumstances determined who would get paid what. Still, Germanis writes in his historical novel that women were lined up in hopes of getting a job in the Wehrmacht brothel in Riga, Latvia. Because of their economic desperation, they must have had hopes of receiving some kind of remuneration, whether it was in cash or in kind.<sup>217</sup> But was this the case for non-Latvians in Latvia as well? Or for Jews in Ukraine? Or Russians in Russia? We need to have more examples to understand the complexity of the German system of state-run military brothels.

### **Life for Women and Girls in Wehrmacht and SS Brothels**

Despite the silence of so many survivors of German state-run sexual slavery, there are quite a few aspects of their experiences to contemplate. This would include basic living conditions, where the girls and women were forced to have sex, rules of conduct, gynecological

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<sup>216</sup> BAB R58/190 doc.110 Berlin SW 11, den 29. Nov. 1943, Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, Amt III., quoted in Bleuel, *Sex*, 228.

<sup>217</sup> Germanis, *Pakāpies*.



examinations, the threat of death, physical pain and discomfort, feelings of shame and fear, and whether they were tattooed as a “whore.” The following discussion is based on a wide range of sources. Hopefully a fuller picture will emerge in the future.

One reference to clothes and food in the military brothels is from the novel *Doll House*. The women and girls received new clothes, and every week, clean underwear, and they received more food as a “field whore” than did prisoners in the labor camp nearby.<sup>218</sup> When Kaudersová had to service the German officer in the eastern field brothel she was “issued perfume, oil, fresh clothes, underwear and shoes.”<sup>219</sup> But Lustig does not write more details about this or about how much food she received. There are several times when the setting of the discussion in the novel is in the bathtubs. This is also another example of how realistic Lustig's writing is: there is certainly evidence that the women and girls received more food, and it would make sense that those running the brothels would want (or need) to keep the females clean for the men visiting.

The Germans established brothels in all kinds of buildings, depending on what was available or suitable. One of the more depressing brothel setups described is in Yehiel Dinur's historical novel, *Doll House*. The brothel was in one large room, presumably some kind of barracks. There were fifty beds to a block with twenty-five on each wall. The men entered at two o'clock each day. Each woman sat on her bed all facing the same direction. This way no one had to look anyone else in the eye as they waited for their “work” to begin. With all the women in one large room being raped at once, and being forced to endure it repeatedly and with a smile, it is really impossible to imagine the sounds, smells, the sight, or the experience.<sup>220</sup>

While the idea of fifty beds of Germans with women forced to have sex with them all in one room seems unlikely, that does not mean it did not happen. For one, the brothel was called a “field brothel” and was presumably near the front. This would have meant that it was temporary depending on how the front moved, and thus the Germans established the brothel in what sounds like a barracks. Furthermore, this is not the only reference to such a setup. There is a German document attesting to plans to allocate a barracks in Mielec, Poland for use as a Wehrmacht brothel because no other building could be found and because the demand and

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<sup>218</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 174, 178.

<sup>219</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 23.

<sup>220</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 183-187.

pressure for a brothel was so high.<sup>221</sup> There are likely other brothels which were set up this way. We simply have not found the evidence yet, but it does not make sense to default automatically to the argument that Yehiel Dinur's novels are untrustworthy before fully investigating the circumstances does not make sense.

Prostitutes in military brothels had rules to follow. Many of the rules for prostitutes in Liepaja, Latvia coincide with details from elsewhere. A prostitute who worked in the Wehrmacht brothel in this city had a control book (*Kontrollbuch*) which she was to keep with her at all times. Her picture and registration number were entered, but her name did not need to be in this book. When the woman had an examination the doctor would mark the results in her book. Upon request, the book also was shown to the visitors of the prostitute.<sup>222</sup>

According to one document, registered prostitutes in Liepaja, Latvia were not allowed to live in inns, restaurants, guesthouses, furnished room, or rest areas. The owners or accountable leaders of restaurants, theaters, clubs, coffee houses, bakeries, grocery stores, confectionaries, sausage makers, rest areas, and hair salons, for example, the places where prostitutes were not allowed to work, needed to be careful that in their establishment there was not anyone with a sexually transmitted disease in the contagious stages. Based on suspicion alone, an order from the city health department or the medical doctor (*Sanitätsarzt*) could be requested for a forced examination. This prescription for an exam was to be filled within three days and was to show whether or not a sexually transmitted disease was found. If the woman did have a disease, she was to pay for the examination, but if no disease was found the city government paid. All doctors who knew of a person sick with a sexually transmitted disease and who also worked as a prostitute in one of the above mentioned places was to tell the medical doctors of the city health department immediately. Anyone who did not follow these rules was punished.<sup>223</sup> These rules were similar in other places the Germans occupied. They reflect the great concern for the spread of venereal disease and the great disregard for women's and girls' privacy.

Prostitutes in brothels were forced to have examinations on a regular basis. Numerous

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<sup>221</sup> Leitender San.-Offizier, OFK 365, Anlage 2 zum Monatsbericht Mai 1941 Az. 49.s (I) Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 16. April bis 15. Mai 1941, St. Qu., 17 May 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 329.

<sup>222</sup> "Kurzemes Vards" 30.X 41.g.104.nr. Amtliche Verordnung über die Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten in Libau, USHMMA, RG-18.002M Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 237, doc. 17.

<sup>223</sup> "Kurzemes Vards" 30.X 41.g.104.nr. Amtliche Verordnung über die Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten in Libau, USHMMA, RG-18.002M Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 237, doc. 17b. This is very similar to what was reported on France. See NARA, RG 242, T 78, R. 191.

reports from Riga reveal that the prostitutes in the Wehrmacht brothel there were checked three times each week.<sup>224</sup> In Lvov, Poland it was ordered that all prostitutes be checked two times each week.<sup>225</sup> In 1941, before there were state-run brothels in Lvov, there was a separate place for women with a venereal disease to be treated and for men with a venereal disease to be treated. The women went to the city health department which had a station for them at Dwernitzki Street, Number 54, and the men went to a station at Potockiego Number 48. Police-regulated prostitutes had an outpatient clinic specifically for their mandatory exams on the Fredrygasse. They went two times a week, and the women had to produce their police identification card at each visit.<sup>226</sup>

There is some evidence of more dire consequences for contracting a sexually transmitted disease. For example, in the field brothel Yehiel Dinur describes, a Slovakian doctor checked the girls and women once a week. They were forced to wait naked in line with the others for their exam. If the women contracted a venereal disease, they were sent to the hospital, which was greatly feared because “no one sent there [had] ever yet come back,”<sup>227</sup> insinuating that they were murdered. This corresponds with other testimony about women in camp brothels (Chapter Five). Similarly, the Lithuanian Dr. Elena Buividaite-Kutorgene wrote in her diary that in Kovno young women were scared to go out in the evenings for fear of being abducted and taken to a brothel to work. There, “women who come down with venereal diseases are not treated but are simply shot; after all, they belong to 'inferior races' – Jews, Poles, and Russians.”<sup>228</sup>

Lustig wrote in his novel recounting a Jewish girl's experience that at the field brothel in Poland where she worked regulations were posted. “The soldier is always right. Kissing is forbidden. Unconditional obedience is demanded. You must not ask for anything.”<sup>229</sup> The women

<sup>224</sup> BAB R92/10036. See Chapter Two.

<sup>225</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s., Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 15 March 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 102-104.

<sup>226</sup> Standortarzt, O.U., Monatsbericht, Lemberg, 17 August 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 724-725. I do not know how many police-regulated prostitutes worked outside of military brothels.

<sup>227</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 202-205, 207-208.

<sup>228</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 365.

<sup>229</sup> The SS-Oberführer in the brothel had the following rules “posted on the doors of the cubicles in the waiting room and in the washroom. With immediate effect, it is forbidden to provide services without a rubber sheath. Most strictly prohibited are: Anal, oral or brutal intercourse; To take urine or semen into the mouth or anus; To re-use contraceptives. Lustig, *Lovely*, 5. Lustig wrote that a German officer kissed Hanka despite the rule against this. Only intercourse was allowed, but the men demanded other kinds of sexual favors. When Hanka was with SS-Obersturmführer Stefan Sarazin he asked her to do something forbidden, and she resisted. He insisted and said ““Don’t

in Field Brothel #232 Ost also lived under the threat of death, which is probably a realistic portrayal. An SS-Untersführer who was thirty-seven years older than a woman or girl nick-named “Long-legs” complained that she had not cooperated with him. “He had been fighting since 1939” and deserved more, he said. The Germans executed her, naked except her boots and standing by a wall.<sup>230</sup> Although this material comes from a novel, allegedly fiction, much of it does not contradict other evidence of German military brothels in the east. As Lustig stated in an interview, “I try to be as honest as possible.”<sup>231</sup>

The girls and women in Daniella’s field brothel also lived under much pressure. As did the prostitutes in the Wehrmacht brothel in Riga who had numbers assigned to their rooms,<sup>232</sup> each bed in the large room had the corresponding woman’s number on it. The woman had to make the beds perfectly, and if they did not, they were forced to kneel until two in the afternoon when then Germans would arrive. After kneeling for such a long time the pain from cramps would be so great it was difficult to please the men.<sup>233</sup> They were only allowed three complaints from the soldiers, and after that they were murdered.<sup>234</sup> One time, Daniella could hear the woman next to her out of fear of receiving a complaint ask the man if he were satisfied.

In a nearby bed the German gets up, makes ready to leave. The girl’s arms, white and naked, cling to him. Her face twists into a smile as her lips whisper, “Please sir, was the gentleman satisfied?”

The German shoves her away, spits, walks off. The girl sits there, her naked white arms hanging spiritlessly from her knees. She looks to him. He is going away, carrying in his pocket the fate of her polluted life. The Execution Square looms before her eyes.<sup>235</sup>

Yehiel Dinur wrote about the executions of ten girls at this field brothel who were marched into

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you think you should do it for me?’ ‘What you want is forbidden. It’s on the notice on the door.’ ‘You expect me to stick to notices?’ In his squeaky voice she could hear the knowledge that he could get whatever he wanted.” Lustig, *Lovely*, 126.

<sup>230</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 226. SS-Obersturmführer Stefan Sarazin told Hanka, a Jewish girl, that in western Ukraine “they” murdered “a whore who turned out to be a Jewess. [He] thrust a hand grenade between her legs.” Lustig, *Lovely*, 131.

<sup>231</sup> Kostková, “Small Stone.”

<sup>232</sup> BAB R92/10036.

<sup>233</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 179-182.

<sup>234</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 174.

<sup>235</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 187.

the execution square, naked. When the executioners arrived the girls were tied to the stools, “hands to the forelegs, feet to the rear legs” and shot with machine guns all at the same time. The dead girls were tossed into a van and taken away. The other prostitutes were forced to witness the executions.<sup>236</sup> One of the German SS women who worked in the brothel was named Elsa. Apparently, she also was not afraid of any racial laws. After the German men left,

Elsa stalks through the camp like a frenzied beast in heat. The girls all quake in terror. First the Germans, now Elsa. Out of one hell and into the next. Every so often Elsa gets hold of one of the girls, drags her into her room, throws herself upon her and sniffs all over her body, drinking into her nostrils the scent of the man who had just detached himself from the girl. Woe betide the girl who does not fulfill all Elsa’s desires.<sup>237</sup>

Yet another brothel named was about two miles outside of Lublin was just off the Chelm Highway. Along the Chelm highway there were also

rows of neat houses with neat little front gardens, with seats and benches knocked together from birch sticks. These are the dwellings of the SS guard and the administration. Here is also the *Soldatenheim*, a specially constructed small building in which the brothel serving the guard is situated. The women for it were taken solely from among the prisoners, and as soon as one of them became pregnant she was exterminated.<sup>238</sup>

People of all different nationalities were at that camp, but Simonov did not provide other details about the brothel in his report.

The girls and women who were raped each day multiple times experienced much physical pain. Frau D. reported that she had experienced a lot of pain as a twenty-two-year-old woman in the Buchenwald concentration camp for the SS. She arrived having had no sexual intercourse before in her life. There was a hospital, but no one wanted to go out of fear of being “pawed” even more than they were otherwise. Even when she had her period she did not tell. Sometimes she had pains in her lower abdomen, that she still had as an older woman. She cried from pain, and sometimes she would bite into a pillow, but she never betrayed herself.<sup>239</sup>

Perla S., a young Jewish girl forced into prostitution in the Terezin concentration camp

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<sup>236</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 202-206.

<sup>237</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 176.

<sup>238</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg and Konstantin Simonov, *In One Newspaper: A Chronicle of Unforgettable Years*, trans. Anatol Kagan (New York: Sphinx Press, 1985), 412-413.

<sup>239</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 107-113.

where she serviced many military men, mentioned diarrhea in her diary often,<sup>240</sup> and in Lustig's novel he repeatedly writes about Kaudersová's diarrhea and stomach pains.<sup>241</sup> Apparently some women condemned to prostitution were sterilized without anesthesia.<sup>242</sup> This would have prevented any children from all the intercourse. With the lack of research done on the topic of forced prostitution, it is not clear at all if certain groups were allowed to use condoms instead of being sterilized and if others were forced to be sterilized. It also is not clear how many prostitutes became pregnant. One source states that pregnant women were to be "removed" from the brothel after the third month of pregnancy.<sup>243</sup>

It is apparent from the stories that even in the camp brothels women tried to hide any illness, not only out of fear of being "pawed" in the hospital as Frau D. was, but also because of the fear they would be deemed unfit for their work and they would be murdered.<sup>244</sup> One document Seidler found in his research states that if a woman became sick with a venereal disease she was treated and only allowed to return to work after a specific time, depending on the disease she had contracted.<sup>245</sup> This also could have been the case for the brothel in Riga.<sup>246</sup> But evidence from other brothels suggests the consequences were more severe. Perhaps it depended on who was running the brothel, what kind of woman the prostitute was, or where the brothel was. If the women in the Riga brothel(s) were of Nordic descent, Latvian, and Protestant, then perhaps the Germans in charge were less likely to murder them. There is a document that states

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<sup>240</sup> Arnošt Lustig, *The Unloved: From the Diary of Perla S. [Z deniku sedmnactilete Perly Sch.]*, trans. Arnošt Lustig, Rev. ed. (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1996).

<sup>241</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*.

<sup>242</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 168. Also see Bock, *Zwangssterilisation*.

<sup>243</sup> Der Oberbefehlshaber Südwest und Oberbefehlshaber Heeresgruppe C IV b Az. 49 r 10 vom 11.1.1945, Betr.: Bekämpfung von Geschlechtskrankheiten, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/1093 [n. 57], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 157.

<sup>244</sup> The survival rates for the eastern front are unknown, but it is clear many did not last long and if they became ill or sick the Germans often murdered them instead of being treated. It is believed that one out of three women and girls forced into sexual slavery for the Japanese army died during their enslavement. See Hyun-Kyung Chung, "Your Comfort Vs. My Death: A Korean Woman's Reflection on Military Sexual Slavery by Japan," *Minjung-Theology, Korea Association of Minjung Theology* 1 (1995).

<sup>245</sup> Anlage 14 der Richtlinien für die Einrichtung und Überwachung von Wehrmachtsbordellen in den besetzten Westgebieten, a.a.O., [n. 59], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 157-158.

<sup>246</sup> Various documents in BAB R92/10036.

the Jewish prostitutes were removed from the list of registered prostitutes (mentioned above),<sup>247</sup> so it is possible that most of the prostitutes were Latvian and Protestant, but they also could have been Slavic since there were Russian families and their descendants in Latvia having been there since World War I and earlier. Again, more research is needed to make any definite conclusions.

In addition to the physical pain, some women and girls who had not had previous sexual experiences were confused and scared in the beginning. Frau D. describes in her interview with Christa Paul various aspects of her experience as a sexual slave for SS officers from 1943 to 1945 in the Buchenwald concentration camp. She arrived not understanding at all where she was or why. She asked the other women in the barracks what kind of “club” it was, and they told her that she would find out. There was another barracks next door with more women. They were for the prisoners, and the two groups had nothing to do with each other. Two days later it started. She says she was “so dumb, she had no idea” what was going on. In 1943 she was twenty-two years old and had never had sexual intercourse before. She was beaten many times because of how she acted. She had to be ready at all times, day and night, in summer and winter. Even in the middle of the night she could be forced to endure another rape. Echoing another woman whom Christa Paul interviewed about her experience in a camp brothel, Frau D. said she became like a robot, automatically doing the moves.<sup>248</sup> This echoes Hanka Kaudersová's alleged experience in a field brothel. According to Lustig, Kaudersová “didn’t give the soldiers in her cubicle more attention than she had to. It was an indifference with which she armed herself and which deadened her.”<sup>249</sup>

Kaudersová, like Frau D., also had never had sexual intercourse before, so she experienced a lot of pain. After her first day she “wiped off the dried blood from the inside of her thighs. She had been afraid to look at her crotch, which resembled a raw, bleeding gum.”<sup>250</sup> When she had to service her first officer, she was so nervous she forgot the oil for lubrication. She glanced at the bottle, but the German officer asked if she thought they needed that. She

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<sup>247</sup> Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 18 November 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1240-1243.

<sup>248</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 107-113.

<sup>249</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 28.

<sup>250</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 149.

“forced herself not to resist.”<sup>251</sup>

With his palms he parted her legs. He half opened his mouth. She could see his strong white teeth. He was breathing hard. He pressed down on her with his chest so that she felt the wood of the bed on her back and hands. She knew he would manage even without the oil. She knew by now what the strength of a man meant, multiplied by anger...She was falling into a void, into darkness, into a chill that was different from the outside air. She felt a pain in her crotch, a swelling of her skin. Everything was the captain's body and then her body. Behind her she heard the voices of her father, mother, her brother. She did not want that. She shut her eyes, but she could not shut her ears. She thought of Big Leopolda Kulikowa's advice. The soldier is a snake; the girl is a gullet. She felt in herself water, emptiness. Then fire, friction, pain. ...

The captain's breathing was getting louder and faster. She thought of steep slopes, of flat fallow fields, of the abandoned mines at Auschwitz-Birkenau. She thought of the bloody skin of animals. ...

“Would you like some oil?”

“No.”

“Do I seem too big to you?” he whispered. “Too rough?”

He seemed to her like a hunk of raw meat.<sup>252</sup>

It is almost uncanny how Lustig captures the extreme lack of emotional intimacy, despite the sexual act of intercourse.

Most young girls and women had to deal with feelings of shame. Although they were forced to do what they did not want to do, their upbringing, society's expectations, and the way they were treated reinforced feelings of shame and guilt. From Lustig again,

Was she pleasing him by undressing quickly? She was losing the last sense of shame, and that sense of shame was different now. She ought to be glad that she was with a German officer. But her brother and father were watching her from somewhere above...Twelve times a day - by way of exception today only once with the captain - she let a stranger do with her body whatever he liked. She felt ashamed not only for herself, even though there were no witnesses. She must not show it. She must not think of whose turn it would be next. The second, the third, the twelfth man. She concentrated on the fire in the stove, on the firewood she had put on it. She had diarrhoea and a headache...Was she to tell him that, during the act, her blood hammered at her temples? That she had continuous pangs of conscience and moments of panic about being found out. That at each act of intercourse her father, mother and brother were present? They watched so that she should not forget them - and to judge her.<sup>253</sup>

Frau D. lived under such pressure and fear for those years in the SS brothel in

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<sup>251</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 36.

<sup>252</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 37-39.

<sup>253</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 31ff.



Buchenwald. She coped with it alone. Her conversations with the other women were superficial, and she said they never spoke about anything important or of significance from their past. She thought this perhaps was to keep their anonymity. But they comforted one another and helped each other. One of the women committed suicide while working as a prostitute. Frau D. attempted suicide two times later in life. In *Doll House*, seventeen-year-old Daniella also committed suicide by walking beyond the point permissible and was shot by a guard. Just before she did this, she begged her friend Fella to get her journal to her brother, who was in the neighboring camp. Fulfilling her promise to Daniella became her friend's main goal who witnessed Daniella's suicide.<sup>254</sup> Lustig also felt compelled to add to his novel that a prostitute nick-named "Beautiful" committed suicide just days before the Field Brothel #232 Ost was abandoned, while Hanka, the main character, started her way to safety.<sup>255</sup>

One of the many sad dimensions for some women was the permanent tattoo in German of the word *Feldhure* (field whore). In my research I have found five separate references to this, but it is not at all clear how many women were marked this way. In *Doll House*, based on Dinur's sister's diary, Dinur writes that the Jewish women were forced to work in a field brothel close to the front for German soldiers and officers. They were branded with *Feldhure* and then a number in the middle of their chest. The women were required to memorize their number, but this was difficult since it was hard to see their own stamp. Daniella's number was FELD-HURE A13653, and her friend Fella's number was FELD-HURE A13652.<sup>256</sup>

In Lustig's historical novel about Hanka Kaudersová's experience as a Jewish prostitute, *Lovely Green Eyes*, Kaudersová's and another slave's *Feldhure* tattoo are mentioned. Lustig writes that after the war Kaudersová "was meticulously dressed and made up, the sleeves of her blouses always down to her wrists [she was also in Auschwitz so probably had a tattoo on her wrist], and she was determined not to show her stomach to anyone."<sup>257</sup>

A third reference to tattooing is from Solomon Garbel, who recorded that the girls in

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<sup>254</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 244-2 45. Apparently, Fella was successful.

<sup>255</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 221-223.

<sup>256</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 136-140.

<sup>257</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 245.

the Gestapo and SS brothel in Vilna “had a special sign branded into their legs.”<sup>258</sup> Further, a colleague who had done research for the German magazine *Spiegel* had seen a photograph of a woman with the term “*Feldhure*” stamped across her chest.<sup>259</sup> Unfortunately, I was unable to locate this picture.

Yet another source is from a rabbi in the Kovno ghetto in Lithuania. A young woman survived the war but returned home to her husband with her arm tattooed “Whore for Hitler’s Troops.”<sup>260</sup> The husband was taken aback and they sought the rabbi out for advice. The rabbi encouraged the husband to stay with his wife, and argued that it was reprehensible to abandon her for what she could not help. Instead of having the tattoo removed, the rabbi suggested she should keep it as a sign of honor and courage.<sup>261</sup> This last aspect of the horrifying experience women and girls endured in the German state-run brothels is another piece of evidence that needs to be researched further.

### Scope of German Sexual Slavery

It is safe to assume from the evidence available that the Germans enslaved at least 50,000 women into sexual slavery during World War II, but it is likely that the number is far higher. Seidler refers to the establishment of brothels in Poland, France, Scandinavia, the Balkans, and Russia,<sup>262</sup> but he cites brothels in other locations as well, such Italy and Africa. The documentation of military brothels is far richer for the west. However, there is no reason to believe that the lack of “official German” documents means there were fewer brothels and thus fewer women subjected to sexual terror in the east. Either the documents were destroyed or they remain buried in archives in the former Soviet Union. In his study on this topic, Franz Seidler also guessed that the numbers in the east must have been similar to those in the west, even

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<sup>258</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 351.

<sup>259</sup> Personal communication of author with Spiegel investigator.

<sup>260</sup> The source only has the English translation, not the German word or words.

<sup>261</sup> Harry Gersh, *The Sacred Books of the Jews*, New York: Stein and Day, 1968, pp. 181-183, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 53-54.

<sup>262</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 145. Writer and survivor Arnošt Lustig mentions “at least five” brothels in Bessarabia, but it is not clear what his source is for this statement. Lustig, *Lovely*, 5.

though much documentation is missing.<sup>263</sup> If this is true, then his own estimate that the Nazi state controlled more than five hundred Wehrmacht brothels throughout the Reich in 1942 could be far too few.<sup>264</sup>

The Germans controlled brothels in every harbor for the marines during World War II.<sup>265</sup> The Commandant in Paris alone controlled nineteen brothels in the inner city in April 1941, with ten more brothels planned.<sup>266</sup> In Caen the field commander (*Feldkommandant*) supervised eleven Wehrmacht brothels.<sup>267</sup> By October 1940 there were brothels established or planned in most big cities in the General Government.<sup>268</sup> It is likely that every major city throughout the entire German Reich had at least one brothel, and that a large percentage of smaller towns and villages also had brothels.

The research completed for this dissertation did not include a thorough assessment of all areas of the eastern front and of all the German and Soviet documents recently made available. Despite this, in addition to the brothels in concentration camps, I quite easily found references to military brothels in the following Polish cities: Tarnopol, Lvov (several?), Mogilew, Gomel, Wrzesnia (two brothels),<sup>269</sup> Lublin (found several references, and it is not clear if there were three separate brothels or not: one at Zamosc Number 4,<sup>270</sup> another one of which

<sup>263</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 145.

<sup>264</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 186.

<sup>265</sup> Marinegruppenkommando Süd Az. B. Nr. Oqu. G 4996 G vom 12.3.1943, Betr.: Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/1082-2 [n. 11], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 140.

<sup>266</sup> Vgl. Kommandanturbefehl Groß-Paris Nr. 27/1941, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v.18 [n. 26], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 145.

<sup>267</sup> Vgl. Meldung vom 7.6.1941 an Leitenden Sanitätsoffizier beim Wehrmacht-Bezirkschef A, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv RH 36/v. 491 [n. 28], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 145.

<sup>268</sup> Leitender Sanitätsoffizier beim Militärbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement vom 2.10.1940, Bericht über Bordelle für Heeresangehörige im Gen.-Gouv., Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv H 20/840 [n. 7], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 138.

<sup>269</sup> Tarnopol: NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 520-524; NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 102-104. Lvov is mentioned in many documents, and probably had several brothels. For example: NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 102-104; NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 208. Mogilew: USHMM, RG-31.002M, Reel 11, 1940-1945, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, docs. 34-35. Gomel: USHMM, RG-31.002M, Reel 11, Fond 3676, Opis 4, Del 105, docs. 34-35. Wrzesnia: NARA, RG 242, T 311, R. 244, Fr. 893-894.

<sup>270</sup> NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 217, Fr. 311-312.

Maier was in charge and which needed more “girls” in February 1942,<sup>271</sup> and one two miles outside of Lublin off the Chelm Highway<sup>272</sup>), Brody, Stanislaw, Cholm,<sup>273</sup> Zamosc (one for Wehrmacht soldiers and one for the east troops (*Osttruppen*)),<sup>274</sup> Deblin, Rzeszow, Jaroslau, Rudnik (opened 1941), Mielec.<sup>275</sup> Military brothels were planned in Przemysl and Rozwadow.<sup>276</sup> There were at least two brothels in Drohobycz.<sup>277</sup> In Latvia there were brothels in Riga (probably at least two, one at Park Street Number 4, the other for officers, address unknown) and Liepaja (Michaelstrasse 4).<sup>278</sup> Finally, I found references to Yasnoziria, and Bezobrazia, Ukraine,<sup>279</sup> in Smolensk, Russia,<sup>280</sup> and in Vilna, Lithuania (No. 9 Suboch Street).<sup>281</sup> From novels, I found references to brothels in Tjestnanovna, Rumania, Moshni, Ukraine (field brothel), and the River San (Field Brothel #232 Ost) in Poland.<sup>282</sup> This list of references from various types of sources does not include camp brothels, nor does it include an assessment or investigation of the various references to sources that state there were brothels established in “most major cities,” but do not

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<sup>271</sup> Maier, OFK 372, Monatsbericht, Lublin, 24 February 1942, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 218, Fr. 336.

<sup>272</sup> Ehrenburg and Simonov, *In One Newspaper: A Chronicle of Unforgettable Years*, 412-413.

<sup>273</sup> Brody: NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1405-1408. Stanislaw: NARA, RG 242, T 501 R. 216, Fr. 1066; NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 323. Cholm: NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 217, Fr. 524, 532-533.

<sup>274</sup> The visitor numbers for both brothels are mentioned here: NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 217, Fr. 524, 532-533.

<sup>275</sup> It is not clear if the planned brothel in Mielec was ever opened. It was planned, and a barracks was requested to be allocated for this brothel since no other building could be arranged. Those plans and the brothels in Deblin, Rzeszow, Jaroslau, and Rudnik, are all mentioned here: NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 329. Mielec is mentioned also here: NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 213, Fr. 1440.

<sup>276</sup> NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 213, Fr. 1440.

<sup>277</sup> NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 216, Fr. 1066; NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 323; NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 215, Fr. 102-104.

<sup>278</sup> Riga is mentioned several times in this folder: BAB R92/10036. Liepaja: USHMMA, RG-18.002M Reel 11, Fond R-83, Opis 1, Del 237, doc. 17.

<sup>279</sup> Yasnozir: No. 26, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Bezobrazia: No. 28, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>280</sup> Nuremberg U.S.S.R. Exhibit No. 51, prepared by V.M. Molotov, January 1942, entered as “The Molotov Note.”

<sup>281</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 251.

<sup>282</sup> Tjestnanovna: Sven Hassel, *March Battalion*, trans. Jean Ure (London: Transworld Publishers Ltd., 1970), 175. Moshni: Hassel, *Wheels of Terror*, 116. River San: Lustig, *Lovely*.

include names or an exact number. Finally, for several locations I omitted multiple references, but they are cited throughout the dissertation.

In her work, Christa Paul conservatively estimated that a minimum of 34,140 women worked in state-run brothels.<sup>283</sup> Paul arrived at that number from the following calculations. In November 1941 there were sixty brothels for foreign and forced laborers, with approximately 600 prostitutes. There were nine brothels in concentration camps that year and an unknown number of SS brothels. Including the 500 Wehrmacht brothels Seidler estimated for 1942, that totals 569 brothels. If each brothel had an average of ten women who were replaced with new women every six months for three years, the total is 34,140. But this number is extremely low, considering that the calculations do not include the number of brothels for foreign and slave laborers from 1943 to 1945, for the Wehrmacht from 1943 to 1945, and for the SS for the entire war.<sup>284</sup> It is safe to assume that as the war progressed some brothels were closed and others opened as the front and the position of troops moved.<sup>285</sup> There needs to be substantially more work done to estimate the real numbers of women forced into state-run German military brothels, but it already is clear that the Germans committed extensive sexual crimes against women and girls, especially in the east.

### Conclusion

Although Seidler mentions that women were forced to work in the German military brothels, reading his work on prostitution in World War II, one gets a sense of the soldiers being victimized by having their sexual and private lives intruded upon and regulated by the official military brothels and the bureaucracy that accompanied these visits.<sup>286</sup> Seidler does not really consider the plight of the women and girls forced to work as prostitutes. Perhaps this is because there is an assumption that men's sexuality is different from women's. Accordingly, men need a

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<sup>283</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 135.

<sup>284</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 135.

<sup>285</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 102.

<sup>286</sup> This is reminiscent of Vance Bourjaily's *Confessions of a Spent Youth*, where the hero considers penicillin to be a more important invention than the atom bomb, radar, etc. because his most traumatic experience in the war was in "the bathroom of a hospital in which hundreds of men infected with gonorrhea and syphilis [stood], 'each with a tortured penis in his hand'" (New York: Dial, 1960, 322, 345, 353, quoted in Gubar, "This is My Rifle," 249-250.

sexual outlet in another human, but women do not.<sup>287</sup> The German documents reveal this very assumption and show little regard for the welfare of the girls and women, regardless of who they were. Either out of economic desperation due to the German occupation or because they were forced at gunpoint, women and girls sexually served military men throughout the occupied eastern territories, and often they lost their lives in the process.

Racial arrogance was a factor in Germany's invasion of the eastern countries, and this affected how the Germans viewed people in the east. However, if we compare what we know about how Germans selected women and girls to work in German brothels, there does not seem to be an overwhelmingly strong connection between Nazi theories of race and victims and survivors of German brothels on the eastern front. Indeed, to the German who believed in Aryan superiority, the majority of the women in the east were inferior, and to the German who did not believe in Nazi rhetoric women and girls still were available to him for sexual exploitation. The Germans targeted Jewish and Gypsy people for complete annihilation, Slavic people for starvation, and all people in the east for economic exploitation. Anyone suspected of being a partisan was threatened with immediate execution.<sup>288</sup> This leaves but a minority who could feel relatively safe under the German occupation. Furthermore, this heinous criminal reality notwithstanding, when one considers the plight of women and girls in German military brothels, the evidence available thus far points to women and girls in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic countries, Poland, and elsewhere having been drafted into sexual slavery for the Germans primarily because they were female.

Women and girls were targets of sexual violence often regardless of their identity markers. All the females seem to have been potential fodder for the German army, and with so many brothels and high rates of attrition, organizers requested many women and girls. In addition, the background of a woman or girl was not always obvious from outward appearances. Soldiers and officers used this as their excuse if they were questioned about being with an "inferior" person. As Germans entered villages it was a given that these people were "inferior," and the girls and women had reason to fear them. For their brothels, the Germans wanted

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<sup>287</sup> Related to men's sexual discipline in war, it is possibly true that during the First World War soldiers were subjected to the infamous "Prick Parades" (*Schwanzparade*). There is also reference to this in World War II Italy. Hirschfeld and Gaspar, eds., *Sittengeschichte der Erste Weltkrieges. Nachdruck der 2. neubearbeiteten Auflage*. For the World War II reference, see Seidler, *Prostitution*, 179.

<sup>288</sup> On the fate of those suspected of being partial to the Soviets, see page 25.

“pretty” females, and the examples here have shown that the women and girls working in German military brothels were Lithuanian, Latvian, German, Polish, Ukrainian, Slavic, Russian, Bessarabian, Rumanian, and quite a few of whom seem also to have been Jewish (Czechoslovakian Jews, Polish Jews, Latvian Jews, etc.), and there is at least one reference to Gypsy females. Despite the regulations, I only found two examples of Jewish females being excluded.<sup>289</sup> Based on the examples shown thus far, and especially in light of the fact that the German leadership itself acknowledged Jews and other “inferior” people worked in their military brothels, it is hard to believe this was not at least fairly widespread.

To have been forced into prostitution meant having experienced multiple rapes each day for however many days they survived. The few who did survive the war experienced physical, psychological, and emotional injury from the repetitive assaults to their bodies and psyches, to an extent which probably rarely was overcome. Relevant to the crimes here, the German government to date has not acknowledged these offenses, and few women ever received any kind of remuneration during or after the war. The silence of the perpetrators, any witnesses, and even scholars who have disrespectfully treated the topic or who have believed the victims and survivors have had their dignity or honor disgraced has only helped to perpetuate the silence. Countless women and girls died having never told their story because they believed that their honor or dignity had been violated, when it was only the perpetrator’s honor that was violated by committing such crimes.

The establishment of brothels by the Germans, however, went further than for the military. Indeed, as we will see in the next chapter, the Germans also established many brothels in various concentration camps. These were for the use of the Germans, but primarily intended for the prisoners who could “earn” the privilege of “visiting.” Here too, women and girls were forced to work. Although they often had more food and clothing than did other prisoners, they suffered terribly as sexual providers. Indeed, the Germans instituted a wide system of sexual slavery for which they have never taken responsibility.

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<sup>289</sup> One example was from OFK 365 where Jewish prostitutes were let go and replaced with non-Jewish Ukrainian and Polish prostitutes Leitender Sanitäts Offizier OFK 365, Az.: 49.s. (I), Monatsbericht, St. Qu., 18 November 1941, NARA, RG 242, T 501, R. 214, Fr. 1240-1243. The other example was of Jewish women and girls who were removed from a list of registered independent prostitutes in Latvia. Letter from P. Dreijmanis. Stellv. Stadthalter and Dr. H. Kirschentals, Leiter des Gesundheitsamtes i.V., Riga, March 1942, BAB R92/558.

## CHAPTER 5

### SEXUAL SLAVERY IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Another understudied aspect of sexual violence on the eastern front is the brothels in the many German concentration camps. Officers and soldiers of the Wehrmacht and SS and productive or well-behaved prisoners frequented these. Women of all different backgrounds were forced into positions of prostitution in camps throughout the German Reich.

#### **Establishment and Timeline**

In June 1941 during an inspection of concentration camp Mauthausen Himmler made a decision to build a brothel for the prisoners.<sup>1</sup> During the summer of 1942 the brothel in Mauthausen was the first brothel to be set up in a concentration camp, and in December 1942 another brothel in Außenlager Mauthausen-Gusen opened. At about the same time, IG Farben conducted discussions on how to raise the work potential of its workers. In a 1942 weekly company newsletter the idea was put forth to promise the workers in Auschwitz certain things such as bonus meal allowances or visits to “women’s houses” (*Frauenhäusern*) as a reward for reaching certain production goals.<sup>2</sup> After a visit to Buchenwald, Himmler complained in a letter that there had not been a brothel opened in that concentration camp: “In every camp the third level [of incentives] must be the possibility for the man to visit the camp brothel one or two times in the week.”<sup>3</sup> Thereafter, the general order for the introduction of the system of incentives was issued in May 1943. The fifth incentive listed was a visit to the camp brothel.

According to historian Christa Paul's research, during 1943 brothels were opened in the

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<sup>1</sup> Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Schiedlausky, ehemaliger Lagerarzt des KZ Mauthausen, vom 4.3.1947, Archiv Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück Dok. 44/1052, quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Wochenbericht der I.G. Farben, Nr.54, June 2, 1942. Archiv Muzeum Oswiecim, D-Au III/4/2, Nr.in w. 151234, quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Himmler to Oswald Pohl, March 5, 1943, IfZ, MA 304, Bl. 0812ff, quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 24.



following camps: Auschwitz-Stammlager (June 30, 1943), Buchenwald (July 15, 1943), and Sachsenhausen (August, 8 1944). In 1944 Neuengamme (Spring 1944), Flossenbürg (March 25, 1944), Dachau (May 1944, closed January 1945<sup>4</sup>), and Mittelbau-Dora (late summer 1944) opened brothels.<sup>5</sup> It is not certain when the brothels in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Auschwitz-Monowitz opened. There likely were brothels in other camps throughout the Reich.

In addition to incentivizing prisoners to work harder, there were other reasons why the Germans established camp brothels. Evidence exists that shows some hope among leading Germans to undermine homosexuality, providing a kind of deterrence from this kind of alleged depravity for the prisoners.<sup>6</sup> One less obvious reason for establishing the brothels came out of cruelty of the leadership of the camps. It humored the SS and others to watch the prisoners fight among themselves, become depressed, or act in ways they perhaps otherwise would not if they were not in prison. The SS could simply have wanted to corrupt the prisoners or wear them down psychologically, for example, to torment the men who were hoping their wives were waiting for them on the outside. The leadership thought that the introduction of brothels would stimulate gossip about extra-marital sex, teasing, or fights among the prisoners. This could have been part of a strategy to minimize any kind of rebellion, that is, the SS would rather have prisoners fight among themselves instead of working together to rebel against the camp leadership. In at least one case (Buchenwald) the SS hoped to learn about secret organizations through the women who were with political prisoners.<sup>7</sup> Survivor and researcher Eugen Kogon wrote that camp gossip in Buchenwald was that men who went to the brothel were shameless, especially if they used money their wives and daughters had sent. Kogon also claimed that the purpose of the brothels

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<sup>4</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 64. Also see Robert Jan van Pelt and Deborah Dwork, *Auschwitz Von 1270 bis heute* (Zurich: Pendo Verlag AG, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 23-28.

<sup>6</sup> Podszun, "'Sonderbau'", 5. Hermann Langbein, an Auschwitz survivor, affirms this. Kassing, R./Paul, C.: *Bordelle in deutschen Konzentrationslagern in: K(r)ampfad - Kasseler Frauenmagazin Nr. 1/91, BwA 56-8-5, s. 26*, quoted in Podszun, "'Sonderbau'", 5. Heinz Heger, anonymous survivor, was a homosexual who wore the pink triangle in the concentration camp Flossenbürg, and he writes in his memoir that he went to the brothel there on numerous occasions as part of his "rehabilitation." H. Heger: *Die Männer mit dem Rosa Winkel. Der Bericht eines Homosexuellen über seine KZ-Haft 1939-1945*, Hamburg 1979, page 137, quoted in Klausch, "Lagerbordell," 90. Finally, Hans Marsalek testified in a post-war investigation that the reason for establishing the brothels was to "stop sexual intercourse between prisoners of the same sex." US Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, "Document 3870-PS: Affidavit of Hans Marsalek, Part 02 [translation]", in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression. Volume VI: Documents 33-3-PS-3901-PS; C-2-C-195; D-39-D-281*. District of Columbia: GPO, 1946. pp. 794-796.

<sup>7</sup> Podszun, "'Sonderbau'", 5-6.

was to corrupt the political prisoners, but said that those the SS pressured to visit the brothel went only one time (instead of many times) so that their goal was not met.<sup>8</sup>

### **“Inferior” Females**

Women and girls in camp brothels primarily originated from Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ravensbrück.<sup>9</sup> From there, prisoners went to work in the camp brothels in Mauthausen, Gusen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Dora-Mittelbau, Flossenbürg, Neuengamme, and Sachsenhausen, and conceivably further east as well – to brothels in the cities, field brothels, and perhaps other camp brothels. Anna Nieznana's (pseudonym) story reported by John Creecy of the King Features Syndicate also tells of Ravensbrück's "recruiting program," as she called it. According to Nieznana, twenty women a day were shipped to brothels for the soldiers. "As inducements to volunteers, the prisoners were promised 'good food and beautiful clothes.' It was seldom, however, that any except the German girls in the camp volunteered for this assignment."<sup>10</sup> Additionally, Dorothea Binz, one of the SS in charge at Ravensbrück, admitted to the US Army after the war to having sent women from Ravensbrück to brothels throughout the Reich.<sup>11</sup>

Christa Paul found that in the camps on German soil the Germans usually sought out German prisoners. A list from December 1944 of the prostitutes in the brothel in Dachau has nationalities on it. Twelve of the thirteen women are German, and one is Polish. At one point in Mauthausen, eight of the ten women were German, but for a long time a Pole and a Gypsy worked in the brothel there. In A-Stammlager (Auschwitz Main Camp) most of the women and

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<sup>8</sup> Kogon, *Theory*, 135-136. Based on a document on Erich Reschke, historian Lutz Niethammer questions whether anyone was forced to visit the brothel. Lutz Niethammer, ed., *Der 'gesäuberte' Antifaschismus: Die SED und die roten Kapos von Buchenwald, Dokumente* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), 48, 310.

<sup>9</sup> For information on brothels in the concentration camps: Klausch, "Lagerbordell."; Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*; Podszun, "'Sonderbau'."; Schulz, "Weibliche."; Volpert, *Der Sonderbau*; Wickert, "'Das große Schweigen'. Zwangsprostitution im Dritten Reich."

<sup>10</sup> John Creecy, Article for International News Service and The Detroit Times, "How the Nazis Abuse Women in Their Concentration Camps," by Anna Nieznana (pseudonym), article not dated, stamped 20 March 1945, USHMMA, RG-06.005.05M, United States Army Commands, Concentration Camp Cases Not Tried, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Reel 5.

<sup>11</sup> Earl W. Bachelor, Headquarters Third US Army and Eastern Military District Office of the Commanding General, Two-page Report of War Crime to Deputy Theater Judge Advocate, War Crimes Branch US Army APO 633, USHMMA, RG-06.005.05M, United States Army Commands, Concentration Camp Cases Not Tried, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Reel 5. In some documents her name is spelled Benz. It also says "houses of prostitution" but does not specify if this only means camp brothels. Since women were sent from Ravensbrück to different kinds of brothels, it could also mean to field brothels as well.

girls were German, some from Poland and a few from Russia.<sup>12</sup> Primo Levi, in his description of who lived in the different blocks, wrote that Polish women worked in the brothel in A-Monowitz. According to Levi, Block 29, which "always [had] its windows closed as it [was] the Frauenblock, the camp brothel, served by Polish Häftling [prisoner] girls, and reserved for the Reichsdeutsche."<sup>13</sup> He also mentions the market of exchange in the camp and how that was related to the brothel:

Another boom period occurred for a singular reason: the arrival of a fresh contingent of robust Polish girls in place of the old inmates of the Frauenblock. In fact, as the prize-coupon is valid for entry to the Frauenblock (for the criminals and the politicals; not for the Jews, who on the other hand, do not feel affected by this restriction), those interested actively and rapidly cornered the market: hence the revaluation, which in any case, did not last long.<sup>14</sup>

As with so many aspects of the brothels in the concentration camps, it is difficult to determine who the women and girls were, but just as in the military brothels throughout the Reich, there were also "inferior" women who were prostitutes in the camps, not only in the brothels for the prisoners, but also for German soldiers and officers. It seems that the issue of Rassenschande and having sex with Jewish or other "inferior" persons did not always make a difference.

One example of a German Luftwaffe officer who had a relationship with a Jewish girl is included in a recently-published, long, and detailed diary. Perla, a seventeen-year-old prostitute in the Terezin concentration camp outside of Prague, recorded how she often met with a German Luftwaffe officer, who knew she was a Jew. One time she recorded that he called her "You little Jewish whore, you,"<sup>15</sup> but he was as kind to her as the circumstances allowed: he was not excessively cruel to her and did not beat her. On their last night together, he said that he was surprised she was still alive. Indeed, he did not save her from her transport even though he probably had the ability to do so.<sup>16</sup>

Another example of a Jewish prostitute comes from Maria's story. Maria recorded to a researcher her first meeting with her Jewish Polish mother who was forced into prostitution at

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<sup>12</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 43.

<sup>13</sup> Primo Levi, *If This Is A Man*, trans. Stuart Woolf (London: The Bodley Head, 1960), 29.

<sup>14</sup> Levi, *If This*, 91.

<sup>15</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 163.

<sup>16</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 152.

Auschwitz. Her beauty had saved her because SS men constantly sought her out despite being Jewish. According to this account, new women were constantly brought in, and "experienced" women were selected for the gas chambers. Maria's mother survived five selections, and she made it out alive.<sup>17</sup> Heinz Heger mentions in his anonymous memoir that his Hungarian friend found a "gypsy girl whom he regularly visited" in the brothel at Flossenbürg, and that in general, most of the women in that brothel were Jews and Gypsies.<sup>18</sup> As mentioned previously, Olga Lengyel, survivor and author, wrote that the camp gossip was that the SS had German prostitutes provided for their sexual use, but that "Despite the Nazi theories on racial pollution, we heard that a number of attractive internees were drafted for these brothels."<sup>19</sup>

Podszun found that the SS visited the brothel in the Buchenwald camp brothel every three or four weeks and on these evenings the brothel was closed to prisoners. They would bring alcohol and food and would end up intoxicated and loud.<sup>20</sup> Historians Robert Jan van Pelt and Deborah Dwork wrote that although it was a crime for the SS, it was not a crime for German capos, *Funktionshäftlinge*, or especially productive "Aryan" prisoners to have sex with Jews. The brothel openly sought out Jewish women for this purpose.<sup>21</sup> As mentioned above, Levi also reported that the Polish girls in Auschwitz were "reserved" for the ethnic Germans.<sup>22</sup> Thus, as we saw in the case of the German military brothels outside of the camps, the authorities were aware that Jewish and other "inferior" women were worked as prostitutes, and that often German or "superior" men were having sex with them, but this did not stop the sexual intercourse from taking place.

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<sup>17</sup> Weissberg-Bob, *Als man*.

<sup>18</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 77, 99.

<sup>19</sup> Lengyel, "Scientific Experiments," 126. It is not clear if the brothels Lengyel hear about were in the camps.

<sup>20</sup> Bericht der LAG, a.a.O. S.7, quoted in Podszun, "'Sonderbau'," 17.

<sup>21</sup> Pelt and Dwork, *Auschwitz*. Tafelteil (no page number given).

<sup>22</sup> Levi, *If This*, 28-29.

### Forced Laborers

*'And how do you think we got here?' demanded Nelly. 'You think we're just whores, born and bred? Well, we're not. We were dragged here by the Gestapo. We weren't given any choice in the matter.'*

*'Not unless we were Jews,' added the other girl, bitterly. 'If we were Jews we were allowed to choose between a brothel or the gas chamber.'*<sup>23</sup>

Living in a concentration camp was something that many of us do not believe we could have endured. Many people have written and wondered why some people managed to survive and others did not. People have commented that it depended on the person's will to live, that some people gave up more easily than others, though of course, some people had much graver circumstances than others. The question of why some people survived and others did not probably will never be answered. Still, it is clear that there were choices available to some prisoners, whether by chance or because the prisoner really manipulated her or his surroundings. Some people became thieves, robbers, and bullies, and survived by being ruthless toward fellow prisoners. Others survived by being thrifty, smart, or by creating a network of people who helped one another. Still others probably survived out of sheer luck, because they entered the camps later in the war, or because they somehow had connections already when they came in.

A Nordic-looking woman was asked why she volunteered to be a prostitute, and she said "rather half a year in a brothel than half a year in a concentration camp."<sup>24</sup> In his historical work, Kogon wrote that the women in the Buchenwald brothel were promised that they would be free after six months service as a prostitute.<sup>25</sup> From January 1944 to April 1945 Max Oswald Beulig was the Blockführer in the prisoner brothel (*Häftlingsbordell*) in Buchenwald. In his post-war interrogation, Beulig testified that the women all came from Ravensbrück, and that they all "volunteered" by seeking the commander of Buchenwald, Oberführer Pister out. Apparently, the

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<sup>23</sup> Hassel, *March Battalion*, 195.

<sup>24</sup> "IV: Opening Statement of the prosecution by Brigadier General Telford Taylor, 12/9/1946 [Tr. pp. 12-74]: Crimes of Mass Extermination: Summary: Part 2", in *Trials of War Criminals Before the Nürnberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No. 10. Vol. 1: United States of America v. Karl Brandt, et.al. (Case 1: 'Medical Case').* District of Columbia: GPO, N.D. [1949]. Pp. 67-74. Apparently Dr. Rascher, who conducted these experiments discussed this with Oswald Pohl because she was to be released from this work. An explanation of the freezing experiments is on page 236.

<sup>25</sup> Kogon, *Theory*, 135.

women wanted this job because they were promised that they would be set free after one year.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps not “all” of the women volunteered, but Pister himself said that he went to Ravensbrück and looked for volunteers.<sup>27</sup> Heinz Heger also claimed the SS had promised women from Ravensbrück that they would be free after six months of sex work in Flossenbürg.<sup>28</sup>

Historian Christa Paul has taken issue with the suggestion by some of the women prisoners she interviewed who thought that the women who became prostitutes chose to do this because they allegedly believed that being a prostitute was an honor. Although Paul was unable to determine the proportions, women also were regularly picked to work in the brothels. That is, some women “volunteered” to work in the brothels, but others were picked. She also found in prisoner memoirs (*Häftlingsberichten*) that women who “volunteered” did so because they were promised that after three to six months work in a brothel they would be set free. The evidence suggests that as the war dragged on fewer signed up, and more knew that the promise was a hoax. Thus, the Germans increasingly resorted to selecting the women themselves, mostly from the Asozialenblock.<sup>29</sup>

Paul also points out that with no other kind of work does anyone talk about it being voluntary. Only with working in the brothels do people discuss whether this was voluntary or whether the women were forced into this. Women and men did it to better their conditions primarily with the hope to get more food or essential clothing to survive. Christl Wickert is another scholar who has taken issue with this idea of volunteerism. Wickert insists that we cannot speak about voluntary work and prostitution.<sup>30</sup>

Survivor Odd Nansen noted in his diary about the establishment of the brothel in Sachsenhausen, writing sarcastically that these poor women had “voluntarily” signed up for the positions because they were supposed to be let go early. According to Nansen, there were ten

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<sup>26</sup> Military Government Court, Max Beulig testimony, p. 3, 24 April 1947, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>27</sup> Eidesstattliche Erklärung im Dachauer Buchenwald-Prozeß am 3.3.1947; BwA 82-15-1, quoted in Podszun, “Sonderbau,” 9.

<sup>28</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 99.

<sup>29</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 42-43.

<sup>30</sup> Wickert, “Das große Schweigen”. *Zwangsprostitution im Dritten Reich*.

“whores” who came from Ravensbrück.<sup>31</sup> Writing about women in the concentration camp Flossenbürg, historian Klausch also writes that we cannot in any way speak about choice when talking about prostitution in the camps.<sup>32</sup>

Apparently Himmler was not responsible for this empty promise of freedom in exchange for brothel work, but he was aware of it and wrote to SS-Obersturmbahnführer Oswald Pohl on November 16, 1942, that “some madmen” had promised the women that they would be released after half a year of work as a prostitute.<sup>33</sup> Thus, it is fairly certain that despite the promises, the women who worked in the various camp brothels were not set free after six months (or one year) work as a prostitute.<sup>34</sup> Survivor Hermann Kaienburg also reported that the SS in Neuengamme never once fulfilled the promise of letting the women go after six months.<sup>35</sup> Antonia Bruha, an Austrian, who worked in the *Revier* also reported that the women were not set free. If anything, they were sent back to the camp, often infected with gonorrhea or syphilis.<sup>36</sup>

Survivor of forced prostitution Frau B. said in her interview that her number was simply called, but she was not told why. She apparently was not promised that she would be set free after six months. She was merely given the assignment to work in the brothel at Mittelbau-Dora. They were sent on a special job (*Sonderkommando*), but were not told what that meant, and Frau B. reported that she had no idea that there were brothels.<sup>37</sup> In sum, some women could

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<sup>31</sup> O. Nansen: Von Tag zu Tag. Ein Tagebuch, Hamburg 1949, S. 187 f., quoted in Klausch, “Lagerbordell,” 87.

<sup>32</sup> Klausch, “Lagerbordell,” 91. In Anna Nieznana’s (pseudonym) report, there is mention of a Russian volunteer from Ravensbrück: “I knew one Russian girl who volunteered. She had been so weakened and terrified by her experiences at the camp that she was willing to go to any lengths to get away. But I saw the faces of her countrywomen when she stepped forward to volunteer. Next morning I was not surprised to learn she had been beaten to death in her dormitory during the night.” Creecy, USHMMA, RG-06.005.05M, US Army Commands, Concentration Camp Cases Not Tried, NARA, Reel 5.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, “Doc 1583-PS (translation)” in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Volume IV: Documents 1409-PS-2373-PS, District of Columbia: GPO, 1947, 115-116.

<sup>34</sup> Podszun, “Sonderbau,” 9. Podszun brings up an interesting point in her discussion at this point, and that is that if the male prisoners assumed the women “volunteered” for this work, perhaps they thought it to not be immoral or exploitative to visit the women. More research would need to be done to assess this. Still, as Paul, Kassing, and Podszun have written the choice between death by work in a labor camp or work in a camp brothel is really no choice at all.

<sup>35</sup> H. Kaienburg: “Vernichtung durch Arbeit” ..., S. 411, quoted in Klausch, “Lagerbordell,” 88.

<sup>36</sup> Antonia Bruha, in: Berger (1987), S. 149, quoted in Schulz, “Weibliche,” 139.

<sup>37</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 45.

have volunteered to work in camp brothels under a false promise of freedom that was never fulfilled. Other women did choose to sell their bodies because they were starving, or because they needed to somehow save their lives. Neither of these choices are really choices.

### **Living Conditions**

Brothel living conditions varied from camp to camp, but in general, except for their sex work, the living conditions were better than they were for other prisoners. Prostitutes were provided with sufficient food to maintain desirable bodies for the men who visited them. Frau W. arrived at Buchenwald sick, but healed with the hot water and food the SS kitchen provided.<sup>38</sup> As previously mentioned, Beulig was the Blockführer from January 1944 to April 1945 in the Buchenwald prisoner brothel, which was opened in July 1943 by order of the camp commander, Pister. Beulig also reported that the women ate the same food as the SS.<sup>39</sup> Frau B. reported that in the concentration camp Mittelbau-Dora they received good food, “at least better than at Ravensbrück,” and although they had to get up and stand by the window to watch the roll call of the other prisoners, they did not have to stand at any roll call.<sup>40</sup> Nanda Herbermann, a survivor of Ravensbrück, also wrote that the women who came back from Mauthausen or other camps told her that they had received somewhat better food, that they did not have to do any other kind of work, and that they had real beds instead of planks.<sup>41</sup>

Because of her working and romantic relationship with Mr. L., Perla enjoyed a better lifestyle than others in the Terezin concentration camp. Another prisoner told her once that she should find work like the other girls in the camp, but Mr. L. was with the Council of Elders, and she wrote in her diary that because of him: “I never had to watch the clock, report to work to the foreman of the block, the house, the room. I didn't have to pay or receive anything from anybody. And I liked to be with him more often than with anybody else.”<sup>42</sup> In addition, “other than roll

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<sup>38</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 54.

<sup>39</sup> Beulig, USHMM, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>40</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 47.

<sup>41</sup> N. Herbermann, *Der gesegnete Abgrund. Schutzhäftling Nr. 6582 im Frauenkonzentrationslager Ravensbrück* (Glock & Lutz Verlag, 1946), 89-90.

<sup>42</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 114.



call" Perla could go anywhere she wanted.<sup>43</sup> Most other prisoners in the camps did not know such freedom while incarcerated.

One source reports that in Buchenwald the women wore their own civilian clothes during the day and at night a colorful blouse from their own wardrobe. The camp provided those who were working with a short, white linen skirt. They also wore underwear.<sup>44</sup> However, Frau W. reported that in Buchenwald they wore a white pleated skirt, small panties (or knickers) and a bra. No shirt is mentioned.<sup>45</sup>

The women in camp brothels had less cramped living space than in other barracks. Perla lived by herself. In 1943 she slept in "the attic next to the Fire House on L Street" where Mr. L. had fixed up a garret for her.<sup>46</sup> From there she could see the delousing station and the Hamburg barracks, where the transports left and arrived. In a brothel, the women usually slept two to a room and had one working room of their own. The brothel barrack in the Buchenwald camp somehow seemed friendlier and more humane (*menschlicher*) to Frau W. when she arrived. It had benches, tables, and windows. She thought that because it looked so different from the other barracks that it could not be for prisoners, but that it must be for the SS. Each woman had her own working room with a couch, a small table, a window, wash basin, and two doors, one that opened to the sleeping quarters, the other to the main floor. They had bathrooms with a bidet and toilet, plus water to use for washing. She reported that they had everything they needed to keep clean.<sup>47</sup> Frau B. reported similar conditions concerning the brothel at Mittelbau-Dora, where she worked. She basically said it "was not that great,"<sup>48</sup> but compared to the crowded camp conditions, these were much less cramped living quarters.

In his description of the women's living quarters, Max Beulig almost matches the previous testimony exactly. He testified that the women in the Buchenwald brothel slept two to a room, but each had their own small room or "cubicle" in which they received the male prisoners.

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<sup>43</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 16.

<sup>44</sup> Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>45</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 48-57.

<sup>46</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 53-54.

<sup>48</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 47.

Their bedrooms had two beds, one dresser, one table, two chairs, a sink with running cold and warm water, pictures, and flowers. The working rooms were smaller than the bedrooms, and they had a chaise longue, a chair, pictures, a vase with flowers and a sink with running cold and warm water.<sup>49</sup>

Many rooms had spy windows (e.g., in Mittelbau-Dora, Sachsenhausen), which was another way the Germans invaded the women's privacy. There were rules about the kinds of sexual contact that was allowed, and apparently the leadership wanted to be able to spot check this or just to watch for the fun of it. Usually only sexual intercourse was allowed and then only while lying down, and kissing was sometimes forbidden. Frau W. reported that when a friend visited the women they would cover the holes, but one time the Rapportführer Hofschulte, "that pig" was looking through all the holes one night with the SS man named Blank. Two women that evening had covered their holes and were punished.<sup>50</sup>

### **Pregnancy, Birth Control, Illness, Beatings, Death**

Women in the camp brothels had to endure more than sexual slavery. They also had to endure abortions, medical experiments, forced sterilizations, beatings, and other forms of abuse. Another example of the sexual perversion of the Germans comes from one of the many different kinds of "scientific" experiments. To test how much exposure to cold a human being could take Nazi physicians submerged (threw) men into cold water at temperatures ranging from thirty-nine to forty-eight degrees Fahrenheit. Afterward, they used naked women to warm the men. According to Kogon, sometimes, they used one woman, other times two. Perhaps due to less inhibition, the men apparently would warm up faster with only one woman, with whom they practiced sexual intercourse.<sup>51</sup>

In addition, the SS in Ravensbrück forced the women chosen to work as prostitutes to

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<sup>49</sup> Beulig, USHMM, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>50</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 56.

<sup>51</sup> Kogon, *Theory*, 165-166. In the Nuremberg Trial testimonies, it states that Himmler wrote to Pohl after a visit to Dachau in November 1942, and that he "ordered suitable women" to be used, and that "fair girls were set aside who were in the concentration camp for loose morals because as prostitutes they were a potential source of infection." Himmler finished the paragraph commenting that he did not think a German prostitute should be used in the experiments. "Twenty-Fourth Day, Thursday, 12/20/1945, Part 05", in Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal. Volume IV. Proceedings: 12/17/1945-1/8/1946. Nuremberg: IMT, 1947. Pp. 204-206.

strip and bear insults from the men.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, women who worked as prostitutes were subject to beatings. An example of this kind of abuse comes from post-war trials, where it is written about how

members of the guard detail of the former concentration camp at Bredow, near Stettin, completely stripped a prostitute who had an argument with one of them and beat her with whips and cowhides in such a fashion that the woman two months later still showed two open and infected wounds.<sup>53</sup>

The SS did not provide birth control or protection from venereal diseases to the women. It is generally known that many women lost their periods during internment, likely due to the stress of the situation. This probably helped some women to survive, because being as weak as they were a loss of blood would have weakened them further.<sup>54</sup> If not menstruating prevented a woman from becoming pregnant, this was certainly a positive outcome, because often a woman was killed if a pregnancy or birth was discovered.<sup>55</sup>

Frau W. said that they were not provided any kind of protection and that to help prevent pregnancy after each sexual intercourse “we had to go to the bidet right away and wash, wash and wash again.” Just rinsing did not always prevent pregnancy, and some women became pregnant. Frau W. reported that she knew of one woman who became pregnant three times and was brought to the hospital, presumably for an abortion. She finally never came back.<sup>56</sup> Beulig knew of two German women who became pregnant and had abortions performed after the third

<sup>52</sup> R. Kassing and Christa Paul, "Bordelle in deutschen Konzentrationslagern," *Kasseler Frauenmagazin* 1 (1991): 27.

<sup>53</sup> International Military Tribunal, "One Hundred and Fourteenth Day, Thursday, 4/25/1946, Part 25", in Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal. Volume XII. Proceedings: 4/18/1946-5/2/1946. [Official text in the English language.] Nuremberg, IMT, 1947. Pp. 256-258.

<sup>54</sup> One example is from Getzler, USHMM, RG-02-168, p.30.

<sup>55</sup> Dr. Gisela Perl is one example. She helped women to force the births of their babies in the night hours and would dispose of them afterward. This saved the woman's life. Otherwise both the woman and the newborn would perish. The rules also changed during the war. During one part of the war, Dr. Mengele allowed mothers and babies to live to experiment on how long the baby could survive without food. If it did not die within a few days, the mother's life could then be in danger (again). Perl, *Doctor*. Among others, see also Ruth Bondy, "Women in Theresienstadt and Birkenau," in *Women in the Holocaust*, ed. Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 315-316; Goldenberg, "Memoirs."; Felicia Karay, "Women in the Forced-Labor Camps," in *Women in the Holocaust*, ed. Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 290-291; Miriam Rosenthal, "Miriam Rosenthal," in *Mothers, Sisters, Resisters: Oral Histories of Women Who Survived the Holocaust*, ed. Brana Gurewitsch (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 192-196; Lidia Rosenfeld Vago, "One Year in the Black Hole of Our Planet Earth: A Personal Narrative," in *Women in the Holocaust*, ed. Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 281-282.

<sup>56</sup> Margarethe W. Interview in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 53-56.

month. After three weeks in the hospital they returned to the brothel, rested for fourteen days and resumed work.<sup>57</sup> Beulig's story seems to be 'happier' than the others I have found. In Mauthausen one woman died from an abortion performed in the fifth month.<sup>58</sup>

In Sachsenhausen women who became pregnant were murdered.<sup>59</sup> One of the first was a nineteen-year-old woman who had never had sex before working in the brothel. Within two months she became pregnant. She unsuccessfully tried to hide it, but this angered the SS and she was killed the day they found out.<sup>60</sup> Erika Buchmann wrote that women were put on a *Vernichtungs* transport if they became ill with a venereal disease or pregnant.<sup>61</sup> Heinz Heger claimed that the SS brought the prostitutes to Flossenbürg, but instead of being set free as promised, they were brought to the Vernichtungslager in Auschwitz, totally used up from the almost two thousand "love acts" that they must have done during the six months they worked as prostitutes.<sup>62</sup> Primo Levi writes that in Auschwitz an economic "boom period" occurred with "the arrival of a fresh contingent of robust Polish girls in place of the old inmates of the *Frauenblock*."<sup>63</sup> He does not say what happened to the "old" women, but from the other evidence, we can probably guess that the Germans murdered them.

### Numbers of Men/Work Load

It seems to be a given that the more men a woman or girl had to service, the worse the life of the woman. This is true, but there are other factors involved. First, the evidence is not always clear, so it is difficult to determine exactly how many men a woman or girl had to service. Also, depending on a person's connections one could arrange for fewer visitors. Furthermore, just like any other kind of work or torture in the camps, some people held up better than others. For one woman having to service one man a day could inflict the same level of emotional,

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<sup>57</sup> Beulig, USHMM, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>58</sup> Schiffko-Pungartnik, *Leichenträger ans Tor*, Graz 1946, p.40 quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 60.

<sup>59</sup> Letter Heinz Junge, Sachsenhausen Committee for the Federal Republic of Germany from August 18, 1990, vgl. (?) Lucie Großer (Hrsg.), *KZ Sachsenhausen*, Berlin, 1952, page 34, quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 62.

<sup>60</sup> Wickert, "'Das große Schweigen'. Zwangsprostitution im Dritten Reich," 94.

<sup>61</sup> Buchmann, Erika, *Die Frauen von Ravensbrück*, 1960, p. 86, quoted in Kassing and Paul, "Bordelle," 31.

<sup>62</sup> Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 99.

<sup>63</sup> Levi, *If This*, 91.

psychological, and even physical damage that it would take for another woman to service a much larger number. Finally, just the idea of being forced into prostitution could have been enough to push some people to commit suicide. That is, for some women who had never had sexual intercourse, who were raised in a conservative, male-dominated home, or for whatever reason, regardless of the number of men she serviced, just acquiring the occupation title “prostitute” would be enough to break her. In a male-dominated, sexually conservative society, it would be difficult to tell any of their surviving friends or family members. It is hard to imagine what a young girl would tell her brother or father, or a woman her husband.

There is an example of a woman who arranged to be a single German’s “maid” because she thought that would be better than being “man-handled” by multiple men a day.<sup>64</sup> This verifies the impression that it was worse to service more men a day. Overall, I think this is true, and we need to recognize the horror in the large numbers of men they were forced to have sex with, day in and day out. However, we also need to recognize the emotional, psychological, and physical horror of the situation even if one serviced “only” one or two men a day.

With that said, it looks like the numbers of visitors varied from camp to camp, and that even in a given camp, one woman might receive fewer or more men than another. If a woman had someone looking out for her, then she could get fewer customers. Also, if a prisoner had “pull” he could arrange to stay longer with a woman, so that that woman would get fewer customers. Frau B. worked in the brothel at Mittelbau-Dora, which was a brothel for prisoners, mostly the capos. She was lucky because she had someone looking out for her so she had fewer customers, but most of the other women received about seven men a night, night after night.<sup>65</sup> In the concentration camp Neuengamme (brothel established spring 1944) the six women received between thirty and thirty-five prisoners each evening (probably five to six each) and later even more.<sup>66</sup>

Eugen Kogon reported that between “eighteen and twenty-four” women came from Ravensbrück.<sup>67</sup> Podszun found that in addition to the original “sixteen” women that came from Ravensbrück, there were a few new names added to the list. She also found that between August

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<sup>64</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 194-198.

<sup>65</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 65.

<sup>66</sup> H. Kaienburg: “Vernichtung durch Arbeit” ..., S. 411, quoted in Klausch, “Lagerbordell,” 88.

<sup>67</sup> Kogon, *Theory*, 135.

23, 1943 and September 23, 1943, there was an average of sixty visitors in the brothel each evening, which would be about three or four for each woman.<sup>68</sup> Beulig testified after the war that while he worked in the brothel between “ten and seventeen” women worked in the brothel, and each woman would get three or four men a night, but his overall visitor number was around thirty-five, which would be fewer men for the approximately eighteen to nineteen women. A political prisoner named Wolf was in charge of deciding how many men would visit each night. Apparently, he kept the count at a level where each woman received three or four men a night.<sup>69</sup> Still, Frau W. said they received eight men in two hours, one right after the other with washing in between each.<sup>70</sup> Heinz Heger does not report on the work load specifically, but writes that there were very long lines outside of the brothel in the Flossenbürg camp,<sup>71</sup> suggesting the strength of sexuality.

Perhaps the discrepancies come from the year the person was describing when they answered the question of numbers of men serviced. In her research, Podszun saw a decline in the number of visitors by 1944. In Buchenwald it was reported that they worked seven days a week, including Sunday. They only got off from work if they had their period or if they were sick. This was probably the same routine for most camp brothels. Perhaps it does not matter if the women received four or received eight men a night. Irma Trksak, an Austrian political prisoner, wrote that she did not know how many men these women had to service each day, but those that came back to Ravensbrück were “wrecks.” They were “ruined, sick and afterward some of them died. They were promised the blue of the sky [*das Blaue vom Himmel*]...they were wonderful women, the best of buddies, friendly, comradely, totally trustworthy.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Podszun, “Sonderbau,” 16-17.

<sup>69</sup> Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>70</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 48-57.

<sup>71</sup> Heger writes, “On the very first day, when the brothel was ‘opened,’ a hundred prisoners arrived at the special block at 5 p.m, four hours ahead of opening time. A similar number came day after day, with not the slightest letup. These prisoners, laughing and joking as they queued up outside the brothel, were by no means all men still in their prime – those were mostly Capos or foremen – but also included a good number of half-starved and exhausted human wrecks, floating between life and death, and looking as if they might collapse any minute. Yet they still wanted to have their ‘pleasure’ – a clear sign of how sexuality is the most powerful of human drives.” Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 99.

<sup>72</sup> Irma Trksak, “Ein Sommerkleid für irgendwann,” in Berger, *Ich geb Dir einen Mantel, daß Du ihn noch in Freiheit tragen kannst: Widerstehen im KZ Österreichische Frauen erzählen*.

### Cost and Money Earned

It seems fairly universal that a visit to a camp brothel cost two Reichsmark when they first opened. Later the camp leadership lowered the price to one Reichsmark to encourage more visitors. Several people have stated or found this for the brothel in Buchenwald. In Buchenwald men paid two Reichsmark until February 1944 when the SS reduced the price to one Reichsmark. Podszun also found the same.<sup>73</sup> Apparently the drop in the entrance fee in Buchenwald and Flossenbürg was to gain more visitors to the brothels.<sup>74</sup>

There is some discrepancy about whether or not the women were able to keep some of the money paid, and if so, then how much. Hans Marsalek testified in 1946 that the women received fifty pfennige of the two Reichsmark admission for the brothel at Sachsenhausen, but again, this does not confirm whether the women received the money.<sup>75</sup> According to immediate post-war investigations, Oswald Pohl issued an order dated April 13, 1943, that “provided that visitors to the brothels would be charged two Reichsmark, and that from this amount, the woman would receive forty-five pfennige and the matron five pfennige.” The remaining 1.50 Reichsmark, or seventy-five percent of the proceeds, went to the Office of Economic Policy (*Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamt*, WVHA).<sup>76</sup> Frau W. reported that in Buchenwald the prisoner prostitute earned one mark of the two that were paid, and that it was put in a bank account in the camp.<sup>77</sup> Historian Christa Schulz found testimony from Ravensbrück inmates that the ten prisoners who returned from working as prostitutes had earned between seventy-five Reichsmark

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<sup>73</sup> Podszun, “Sonderbau.” According to Beulig, he sat with one of the female supervisors, examined the entrance notice or ticket, and the man paid the supervisor. At the end of the evening, Beulig gave the money to the Rapportführer vom Dienst. Beulig, USHMM, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>74</sup> In August 1944 when Buchenwald was bombed the numbers of visitors actually dropped from approximately 450-500 to 180-200 regular visitors (*Dauerbesucher*). Bericht der LAG, a.a.O. S.6 quoted in Podszun, “Sonderbau,” 16. Similar to Buchenwald, in Flossenbürg the demand for the brothel dropped and thus, so too did the price from two to one Reichsmark, but it is not clear when this happened. Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 63.

<sup>75</sup> US Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, “Document 3870-PS: Affidavit of Hans Marsalek, Part 02 [translation]”, in Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression. Volume VI: Documents 33-3-PS-3901-PS; C-2-C-195; D-39-D-281. District of Columbia: GPO, 1946. Pp. 794-796.

<sup>76</sup> Department of the Army (USA), “III. Opening Statements of the Prosecution and Defense: A. Extracts from the Opening Statement of the Prosecution: The SS Industries: Part 1”, in Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No. 10. Vol. 5: United States v. Oswald Pohl, et. Al. (Case 4: ‘Pohl Case’). District of Columbia: GPO, 1950. Pp. 242-247.

<sup>77</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 54.

and five hundred Reichsmark.<sup>78</sup> Those who were sent to Mauthausen or elsewhere and returned to the camp in which Herbermann was, received money which allegedly might have been released to them by the camp administration (*Lagerverwaltung*). The male prisoners had to pay five marks, the “whores” (*Dirnen*) received fifty pfennig, and the state took the remaining four marks and fifty pfennige.<sup>79</sup> The approximately same story comes from a confession of a commander in Mauthausen. In his post-war testimony he said that “In Mauthausen existed a brothel, every man had to pay 2 mks [Reichsmarks], the woman got 50 pfgs [pfennige (cents)] and the Hg. of the concentration camps in Oranienburg-Berlin got 1.50 – [which meant] Pohl got the money.”<sup>80</sup> According to Beulig, who worked in the Buchenwald concentration camp and testified after the war, the women received ten percent of their earnings, and there were women who were paid fifteen hundred to two thousand Reichsmark when they were let go. In what seems to be a discussion of German women, Himmler wrote that the money they earned in the camp brothel would “be an old-age security for them.”<sup>81</sup> But again, this does not mean the German women actually received the money, and it does not say anything about non-Germans.

This conflicts with what Podszun found in her research, which was that one mark and fifty pfennige (1 ½ Reichsmark) of the two Reichsmark was set aside for the women to pick up six months later, but that it was not known if the women actually ever got the money.<sup>82</sup> In her research, Christa Paul has not seen evidence showing that the women actually had spending money from their work. None of the women she interviewed said they had received any money. Instead they were told to get what they needed as presents from the men who visited them. Paul also never found that women had spending money for the camp canteen as did some of the male prisoners, although she found a statement from one prisoner woman in Ravensbrück who claimed there were women (whores) who returned with money from working as prostitutes.<sup>83</sup> In summary,

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<sup>78</sup> Podszun, “Sonderbau,” 15, 16; Schulz, “Weibliche,” 144.

<sup>79</sup> Herbermann, *Der gesegnete Abgrund. Schutzhäftling Nr. 6582 im Frauenkonzentrationslager Ravensbrück*, 89-90.

<sup>80</sup> Confession and letter of Mauthausen Commander, May 1945, USHMM, RG-04.018.\*01.

<sup>81</sup> U.S. Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, “Doc 1583-PS (translation)” in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Volume IV: Documents 1409-PS-2373-PS, District of Columbia: GPO, 1947, 115-116.

<sup>82</sup> Podszun, “Sonderbau,” 16.

<sup>83</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 71-73.



it seems that the price in a camp brothel was two Reichsmark, and that it later dropped to one Reichsmark. It is unclear how much the woman earned, if they earned anything at all. Since many women did not live to see freedom, this is a moot point. Finally, none of these questions have been answered regarding German camps in Soviet territory.

### The Visit

In Mittelbau-Dora there were two twelve-hour shifts, from eight in the morning until eight in the evening, and from eight in the evening till eight the next morning. Men would come at all different times, and the women mostly stayed in their rooms, waiting.<sup>84</sup> The brothel in Buchenwald opened after the Abendappell until about nine in the evening.<sup>85</sup> This time frame is almost exactly what Beulig reported for Buchenwald, which was that the brothel was usually open from seven to ten in the evening, until all the men were “finished.”<sup>86</sup> The men could not choose which woman to visit, but a prisoner named Wolf decided which women received which men. Beulig testified in 1947 that he changed this around according to the wishes of the prisoner (it is not clear if he meant female prisoner prostitute).<sup>87</sup>

Depending on which source one examines, the men were allowed to stay between twenty and thirty minutes. It seems if a man had connections, he could arrange to stay longer. This is verified by at least one source, Eugen Kogon.<sup>88</sup> Weidlich wrote that they could stay up to thirty minutes.<sup>89</sup>

Beulig testified that the men did not mishandle the women. Apparently the prostitutes were assigned the same clients each week, once or twice. It was policy that a prisoner could only visit the brothel one time a week, but some were able to get permission for a second visit.<sup>90</sup> Frau W. said that in Buchenwald the visits were watched. They were not supposed to do anything out

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<sup>84</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 47.

<sup>85</sup> Weidlich (Bericht der LAG, a.a.O., S.2f.), quoted in Podszun, "'Sonderbau'," 16.

<sup>86</sup> Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>87</sup> Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>88</sup> Kogon, *Theory*, 135.

<sup>89</sup> Bericht der LAG, a.a.O., S.2f., quoted in Podszun, "'Sonderbau'," 16.

<sup>90</sup> Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

of the ordinary. The men came in, went to the sanitation room, then to the woman's room, had sexual intercourse, left, and went back to the sanitation room. There were peep holes in the doors in case those in charge wanted to watch.<sup>91</sup>

#### Reasons to Visit or not to Visit the Camp Brothel

There were various reasons why prisoners visited the camp brothel, however, much of this is speculation or based on testimony of a few people. It was probably a small percentage of the male prisoner population that visited the brothels. Many had no money, and many probably simply did not want to visit. Of those who did go to the brothels, not many have come forward to discuss their reasons or their experiences. One prostitute who survived told that some prisoners did not want sex, but just came to talk with someone, a woman.<sup>92</sup> Max Beulig testified that male prisoners would look over the wall to try and see into the brothel, but they were beaten if caught. This peeping happened two to three times a week. The German brothel doctor ordered Beulig to scare them away.<sup>93</sup>

There is discrepancy among the evidence as to whether the SS visited the camp brothels. According to Beulig, the SS did not visit the prisoner brothel in Buchenwald, although it was inspected a few times a week by the SS.<sup>94</sup> Eugen Kogon wrote that the SS could "often be found there at advanced hours of the night."<sup>95</sup> A prisoner from Mauthausen also wrote that despite the regulations against it, the SS often snuck into the brothel.<sup>96</sup>

The leadership of the Communist Party opposed visiting the brothel, but did not forbid visits, fearing that if there were a ban the widespread transgressions among functionaries would

<sup>91</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 56.

<sup>92</sup> Frau B. interview, quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 47.

<sup>93</sup> Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>94</sup> Beulig claimed the SS did not use the brothel, but that several SS officers came a few times a week, allegedly to "inspect" the brothel. According to Beulig, there was no brothel at Buchenwald for German SS, only one for the SS Wachen, who were Ukrainian. Two Polish women worked in this brothel, and the German Sturmscharführer Partun was in charge. Beulig testified that Sturmbannführer Schober "inspected" the prisoner brothel every week, and that Schutzhaftlagerführer Obersturmführer Gust and Schutzhaftlagerführer Obersturmführer Merbach visited, as did Rapportführer Hofschulte, and Hauptscharführer Friedrich Wilhelm, but that no other SS visited because it was forbidden. Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>95</sup> Kogon, *Theory*, 136.

<sup>96</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 73.

undermine party discipline.<sup>97</sup> Some prisoners who chose not to go to the camp brothel were not thinking of the women's welfare or of any moral or social motives, but made a political choice to not give the Nazis any recognition that their tactic to corrupt had worked.<sup>98</sup> Another reason men chose not to go to the brothel was that the block elder (*Blockältester*) who gave the permission for a brothel visit was not discreet about this grant. He named the Number, Name and 'Sonderbau.' Of course, then other prisoners would react asking the one granted permission, "What about your wife and children? Are you not ashamed?" or "Did your family save that money for food?"<sup>99</sup>

### A Day in the Life of a Buchenwald Prostitute

Beulig woke the women at seven in the morning,<sup>100</sup> they washed themselves, cleaned their rooms, and had breakfast in their rooms.<sup>101</sup> The breakfast consisted of a half a liter coffee, a pound of black bread which was to last the entire day, and about twenty grams of butter or margarine. If butter was unavailable, the women received marmalade. When asked why the women received a pound of black bread, Beulig answered that the women received the same rations as did the SS.<sup>102</sup> From eight until nine was "*Frühsport*" under the direction of a German woman who also worked as a prostitute. Her last name was Zimmermann, and she was aged around twenty or twenty-five. Hauptsturmführer Dr. Schittlausky supervised the medical examinations of the women, who were checked each morning starting at nine o'clock by a Czechoslovakian prisoner doctor (Häftlingsarzt), Dr. Matuschek. According to Beulig's testimony, most women were not found sick.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Niethammer, ed., *Der >gesäuberte< Antifaschismus*, 49, Dok. I.6, II.4ff.

<sup>98</sup> "Der Sonderbau", a.a.O., Podszun, ""Sonderbau", 19.

<sup>99</sup> Eugen Kogon, *Der-SS Staat: Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager*; Frankfurt am Main 1946, S.183, quoted in Podszun, ""Sonderbau", 19.

<sup>100</sup> Beulig, USHMM, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1. Frau W. said in the Buchenwald brothel they got up at eight. Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 55.

<sup>101</sup> Frau W. said the same, quoted in Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 48-57.

<sup>102</sup> Frau W. mentioned that they drank coffee in the morning but did not mention anything else for breakfast. Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 55.

<sup>103</sup> Creecy, USHMM, RG-06.005.05M, US Army Commands, Concentration Camp Cases Not Tried, NARA, Reel 5.

From nine until noon the women could do as they wished.<sup>104</sup> Lunch was taken in the day room at 11:30. This meal consisted of boiled potatoes, a piece of meat (almost every day), as well as fresh vegetables and kraut, and now and then an apple, pear, or salad. The women usually did not finish their meals, but would keep some of the food to barter with the other prisoners. From twelve until two in the afternoon was a quiet time for the women, during which they were to remain in their rooms. Afterward they would work in the laundry room. According to Beulig, when this work was finished they could do as they wished; they could play ball, walk around on the small lawn by the brothel, and so forth. Two or three times a week they took an hour long walk through the camp with Beulig as their escort. At five o'clock the women prepared themselves for the evening's work. They bathed, changed clothes, and had their hair done. A male hair dresser worked in the brothel until July or August 1944. After this the women had to fix their own hair.<sup>105</sup>

According to Beulig's testimony, three times a week the women had soup for supper. Russian prisoners would bring this to the brothel at six o'clock. The other days the two Russian prisoners would bring the evening meal at lunchtime. It usually consisted of sausage and butter or margarine. One of the female supervisors was in charge of the preparation for the cold evening meal, and the women received it in their rooms between five and six o'clock.<sup>106</sup>

### **Miscellaneous Particularities of Specific Camps**

#### **Sachsenhausen**

Hanns Christian Witt, a survivor of Sachsenhausen, testified to the United Nations War Crimes Commission in 1945 that "girls and women from Women Concentration Camps were made to be prostitutes by SS-Members. They were guarded by beastly Women Nazi Guards in

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<sup>104</sup> Similarly, Frau W. said that they read in the mornings, that books were provided for them, just not political books. Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 55.

<sup>105</sup> Frau W. just said that after lunch they basically could do as they wished. She added that they were not watched as closely as they had been at Ravensbrück. They had more free time over the course of a day, except, of course for "the two damned hours in the evening." Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 55-56.

<sup>106</sup> Creecy, USHMM, RG-06.005.05M, US Army Commands, Concentration Camp Cases Not Tried, NARA, Reel 5.

SS-uniform."<sup>107</sup> Ten women worked in this brothel. It opened during the year 1943 or 1944 and was called the Sonderbau, as were other camp brothels.<sup>108</sup> According to historian Wickert, the first day the brothel was open the SS visited, on the second the prominent prisoners, on the third day German prisoners, and on the fourth day Scandinavian prisoners were supposed to go. After this there were not any hard and fast rules. The brothel was open from six until nine in the evenings, and during the weekend already by the afternoon. Sometimes the women serviced more than forty visitors a day, staying with each man a maximum of twenty minutes. Furthermore, according to Wickert's research, the women were not allowed to leave the building.<sup>109</sup>

### Auschwitz

Below are a few excerpts from *Maria's Story*, the story of Maria, the daughter of a woman who survived Auschwitz by working as a prostitute there. Her mother gave Maria up for adoption after the war because she apparently could not handle raising her. As an adult, Maria was able to locate her real mother to whom she first wrote a letter asking permission to visit. Nea interviewed Maria.

A few days later I received a card from her saying that she was happy to get my letter and would like to see me. I went the very next day. I remember vividly how excited I was as I climbed the stairs to the fourth floor.

When I rang I heard a deep voice say, "Who's there?" It was such a penetrating, deep, husky voice that I became frightened. It was a man's voice really. The door opened, and an old woman stood before me, a very old woman. When I looked at her I thought, "This is just an old woman." But I was terrified. She was well dressed and very made up. I found her garish. She wore a wig, and she rather repulsed me.

Her apartment was in complete disarray. It was a large apartment, but clothes were all over the place; kitsch everywhere. There were at least 20 wig stands. As soon as you walked in, you knew that the apartment was only used for sleeping. I was astonished. I looked at her face: narrow, very narrow and long. Her lips were narrow as well, as if she had swallowed them. Her features were hardened and her cheekbones pronounced. I liked her eyes. They were green, light-green and had a very sad expression. They were teary. When I looked at her eyes, the hardness of her features disappeared. Her eyes are what I like to remember best. I started to talk to her, figuring that she was probably harmless...

Nea: You then asked her why she gave you away?

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<sup>107</sup> United Nations War Crimes Commission, Research Office, Hanns Christian Witt testimony September 1945, USHMMA, RG-06.005.05M, Reel 5, Third US Army Cases Not Tried.

<sup>108</sup> Paul writes that it opened in the year 1943, while Wickert claims it opened in August 1944. Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 61; Wickert, "'Das große Schweigen'. Zwangsprostitution im Dritten Reich," 92-93.

<sup>109</sup> Wickert, "'Das große Schweigen'. Zwangsprostitution im Dritten Reich," 92-94.

*Maria:* Yes. I told her that I wanted to see what my real mother looked like and learn why she had given me away. She looked at me calmly and said, "Child, I was in Auschwitz for five years." That was it! She said it with such a sense of calm, so matter-of-factly. At that moment everything became clear, just - clear. I wasn't even shocked, and to this day I find that amazing. It was as if I had sensed it coming. At the moment she spoke, what she said became the most plausible explanation, the truth that I had always sought.

My mother had been arrested by the Nazis in the spring of 1940, during the "Poland campaign." She was 20 at the time and grew up in Warsaw, where her parents had a restaurant. My grandparents were deported to Auschwitz in 1942 and murdered. My mother's capture on a Warsaw street occurred in full view of her father. Helplessly he called after her to do as the Germans said. That way she might survive, nothing would happen to her. She arrived at Auschwitz during Phase I of operations, before it became a death camp. For the first two years she worked in a road construction commando. Then she was forced into prostitution. She told me that there were bordellos in Auschwitz. In some ways she lived fairly well. She had enough to eat, which most people didn't. She also had decent clothes and didn't have to wear the prison clothing or have her hair shorn. She said that she never got really sick at Auschwitz, so, for example, she never got dysentery or typhus, which most prisoners did.

*Nea:* Nevertheless, she broke down as a result...

*Maria:* I simply couldn't conceive how she had survived. She seemed so frail sitting across from me. So, I asked her. She said, "I was very beautiful." Her beauty had saved her life because SS men constantly sought her out. New women were constantly being brought in to restock the SS bordello. Inevitably, after a while some of them would be "selected" and gassed. My mother survived five selections, while other women went to their deaths in the gas chambers. She said that she lost all fear of the Nazis.<sup>110</sup>

According to Micheels, the SS set up the brothel in Auschwitz. The inmates were specially selected prisoners headed by a capo, the madam. It was located

in the building next to the entrance gate on the upper floor. Of course, it was only for non-Jewish prisoners. It was never made clear whether this restriction applied also to the women. The brothel became quite popular, and advanced reservations were required. Sometime later stories began to circulate about orgies with some of the important Kapos.<sup>111</sup>

Levi wrote that Block 29 was the *Frauenblock* and it always had its windows closed.<sup>112</sup> Mme.

Vaillant-Couturier testified that there were two brothels in Auschwitz, one for the SS and one for

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<sup>110</sup> Weissberg-Bob, *Als man*.

<sup>111</sup> Micheels, *Doctor*, 89.

<sup>112</sup> Levi, *If This*, 28-29.

the Capos.<sup>113</sup>

### Buchenwald

This camp brothel was established on July 15, 1943, and was in business through March 23, 1945. It cost two Marks and was located in Block 46, between the prisoner hospital (*Häftlingskrankenbau*) and the Station for Medical Experiments.<sup>114</sup> Sixteen prostitutes were sent from Ravensbrück to Buchenwald on July 2, 1943. The medical papers (*Krankenpapiere*) of these women which they carried on the transport to Buchenwald are still available. On these papers are the women's birthdates, names, and other information. The women were born between December 28, 1912, and March 15, 1922, making them between twenty-one and thirty years old when they started their new jobs. Two older women, also listed in the papers, were born at the turn of the century. Historian Podszun surmises that they were sent along as chaperones or clerks (*Kassiererinnen*). Some of the women had black triangles (asocials) and others red (political prisoner).<sup>115</sup>

Max Beulig worked as the Blockführer from January 1944 to April 1945 in the prisoners' brothel in the Buchenwald concentration camp. Beulig reported that he received his position from the Lagerführer, Hauptsturmführer Max Schobert. From what Beulig had heard, the installation of the prisoner brothel cost the German Reich 85,000 Reichsmarks. He also reported that in the time he worked at the brothel there were between ten and seventeen women working as prostitutes. Apparently, seven women were sent home, though this is not clear. No new women were "hired." The youngest woman was eighteen years old, the oldest thirty-six years. There were three Polish women, one woman was from the Saar, Jenny Christmann, but it is not clear if she was French or German since she spoke both languages. The other women and girls were all German.<sup>116</sup>

There were two female German supervisors, one of which worked at the brothel outside of the camp for the Ukrainian SS where two Polish women were brought everyday. The other

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<sup>113</sup> The Trial of German Major War Criminals: Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal, Vol. 6 Forty-fourth Day, Monday, 28 January 1946, Part 6, Morning Session, Mme. Vaillant-Couturier's testimony, Nuremberg: IMT, 1947, pp. 213-215.

<sup>114</sup> Podszun, ""Sonderbau", " 8.

<sup>115</sup> Podszun, ""Sonderbau", " 9.

<sup>116</sup> Beulig, USHMM, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

supervisor worked at the brothel inside the camp. One was forty-four years old, from Berlin and named Marte Gisze. She was also a prisoner and lived in the brothel. The other woman was forty-six years old, and according to Beulig's post-war testimony, the two supervisors did not mistreat the prostitutes.<sup>117</sup>

The men were not allowed to stay overnight. It happened three or four times that Beulig punished a prisoner with a four-week ban on brothel visits because they fought with the women. Once a German prisoner climbed over the wooden partition and visited a woman, and he was punished for this. Once Max Beulig punished a German girl, Uschi Elebrecht, who had received a gold ring and a gold bracelet from the prisoner Hauptmann. He must have reported it to the Lagerführer, who then punished her with six days arrest. She spent the six days in a room in the brothel that was used as a broom cupboard. The room had one window and Beulig testified that he allowed her to have her bed, a table, a chair, and reading material. A female supervisor brought food to her. After the arrest, the girl worked as before. Beulig was unaware what happened to the prisoner who had gifted her the items.<sup>118</sup>

One of the women Christa Paul interviewed, Frau D., claimed to have worked in an SS brothel in Buchenwald from 1943 to 1945, but Paul does not comment further on this in her book.<sup>119</sup> As mentioned previously, Beulig testified that there was a brothel for the Ukrainian SS. He would meet the two Polish women who serviced the Ukrainians each night when they returned home.<sup>120</sup> Podszun was not sure if there was a second "Sonderbau," but she found two documents attesting to a brothel for the Ukrainian Wachmannschaften that was established as many SS were withdrawn from the front. One document is a *Fernschreiben* from the Buchenwald Camp Kommandant Pister who wrote to a colleague in Ravensbrück asking to exchange his sick prostitute of the "Ukrainian Sonderbaus" for a new one.<sup>121</sup> A second document she found speaks of another brothel for the Wlassow-People (Soviet prisoners who were trained to fight for

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<sup>117</sup> Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>118</sup> Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>119</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 107.

<sup>120</sup> Beulig, USHMMA, RG.06.005.05M, US Army Cases not Tried, Reel 1.

<sup>121</sup> Thü HstaA weimar KZ Bu 10, Blatt 587; BwA 82-15 NO 1545 (Pohl-Prozeß, Fall 4), quoted in Podszun, "'Sonderbau'," 17.



Germany), for which two women were taken from the prisoner brothel (*Häftlingsbordell*).<sup>122</sup>

### State Brothels for Forced and Foreign Laborers

Concerning the many brothels established by 1943 throughout the Reich for foreign workers, it seems to have been the case that German women were sleeping with foreign workers in the homeland. Omer Bartov mentions in his work that the soldiers of the 18. Pz.Div. were concerned about their marriages because of the loosening of morals on the homefront: "...there is increasing anxiety regarding the morality of women and girls in the homeland. In many cases a serious fear concerning the men's marriages can be observed."<sup>123</sup> One scholar found that "by the end of 1943, 60 brothels had opened on Reich territory 'for the protection of German blood' and another 50 were in preparation." The six hundred women who worked in these houses were recruited from Paris, Poland, and the Reich Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.<sup>124</sup> In an SD report from early 1942, it was estimated that there were twenty thousand children from German women who had slept with foreign workers, which was seen as a grave threat to the purity of the German population.<sup>125</sup>

### Summary of Forced Prostitution

An unknown number of women and girls suffered in the hundreds of brothels throughout the German Reich. That brothels were also established for prisoners and forced laborers reveal prevailing attitudes about male and female sexuality. Underlying this large system of sexual slavery there is a denial of female sexuality and a strong affirmation of male sexuality. Women's sexual needs were negated, but heterosexual men's were not questioned or were viewed as natural, so natural that the state could easily legitimize establishing different kinds of

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<sup>122</sup> Bericht der LAG, a.a.O., S.7, quoted in Podszun, "'Sonderbau'," 17.

<sup>123</sup> BA-MA RH27-18/159, 7.5.42, n.96, quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 91-92.

<sup>124</sup> Bleuel, *Sex*, 228.

<sup>125</sup> *Meldungen aus dem Reich*, Nr. 253, 22 January 1942, BAB R58/168, docs. 140ff. For more information on brothels for forced laborers in the German Reich, see Hans Peter Bleuel, *Das saubere Reich. Theorie und Praxis des sittlichen Lebens im Dritten Reich* (Bern: 1972); Bleuel, *Sex*; Andreas Heusler, *Ausländereinsatz: Zwangsarbeit für die Münchner Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945*, ed. Stadtarchiv München Richard Bauer, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der Stadt München. Band 1* (München: Hugendubel, 1996); Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*.

brothels throughout the Reich.<sup>126</sup> These crimes, sanctioned by the Germans, need to be recognized not only as having been crimes of gender, but also as grave breaches under international law primarily against women and girls, many of whom died as a result of the German brothel system.

Similar assumptions and attitudes of male sexual needs are also evident in the widespread phenomenon of rape by armed men. East European girls and women faced a special predicament as they lived under different military powers. The mass rapes the Soviets committed against Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Jewish, German, Polish, Baltic, and other women and girls are almost incomprehensible, but reveal the vulnerability women and girls in the east faced in times of chaos and war. As with the German brothel system, the majority of these crimes were never prosecuted during or after the war. The silence of the many who died as a result of rape and of those who survived rape is indeed deafening.

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<sup>126</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 131.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE “R” WORD

An educated Ukrainian teacher was a boy during the war and remembered seeing a corpse of a woman who had been raped, shot, and thrown into the woods. He discovered her after the Germans had left, could not say exactly who she was, but thought she was about twenty-five-years old. The man thought “some soldiers” probably did it, but he was not sure if the soldiers were German or Soviet. This graphic picture remained with him for his entire life.

Man: They were also going on the same route that the Germans drove. In the car there was a woman or young girl. They turned into the woods, and there, it was obvious, they raped and killed her. Such a thing, I, yes. It was, well, for example, I saw, how hard it was well, frightening, you know, to be presented with, a teenager, look – a woman lying undressed and killed, killed, shot, yes. That is, such things, it, how should I say, a sacrifice, horrible, it was clear it was a rape. I remember such a thing.

...

Yes, she was dead. The Germans, the Germans had already evacuated the village. They weren't in the village, they weren't, and then after two days or so, I passed through the edge of the woods, saw her lying, and then someone already buried her, I don't know more than that. Who did it, well, probably some soldiers. It was said that they drove, that a passenger car was seen, a passenger car drove, and she was there. They, it was obvious, raped and shot her.

Author: And you saw her afterwards?

Man: Yes, I saw her, she lay, well, how should I say, half dressed and in a puddle of blood, yes...there were several bullet wounds. That incident is just stuck in my mind.

....

Author: And how did you happen to see her?

Man: Well, it was, the soldiers were gone, the Germans were gone. And I walked, on the road, next to where the road was. There is a bend, there is a [road] that goes to Kanev, and then in the bend is the town of Tybiltsi, and there someone took her, she lay on that same path, they just left her. All in all, I don't know how, but they threw her from the car, it was obvious...

Author: And what did you do when you saw her?

Man: Ah, nothing, I went and told people, told them. Many people saw her, someone buried her...It was right after the liberation...I saw a few killed, dead people, it made an oppressive impression on me, you know, it was somehow ghastly, yes, to see that, well.

Author: And when was that?

Man: It was sometime in February, the date I, of course, don't remember, sometime in February of 1944...Yes, in February 1944.

Author: In Moshni, here?

Man: Yes.<sup>1</sup>

Rape by armed men was a reality on the eastern front. Members of the German Army, the SS and police, the Red Army, and armed partisan fighters raped women and girls all over the east, from a wide variety of backgrounds. The leadership of neither military did much to prevent its men from sexually assaulting civilian women and girls. A few men were punished, and there are stories of Soviet officers shooting soldiers who were guilty of rape. The available evidence, however, indicates that these were exceptions. Rape was not viewed as a crime, let alone a brutal attack against a person. Although rape was not a formal military tactic by either army, rape was deployed as a means of terror by both the Germans and the Soviets, and there was a tacit understanding that the armed men had a right or even permission to rape women and girls. The complicity of both the German and the Soviet military leaderships during the war and the denial of governments, states, veterans of war, politicians, and other national and international leaders has been pervasive, unmistakable, and generally, a disgrace.

Women and girls knew they had no chance against armed men. Many also knew that complaining to local authorities would not help them. Some women had already experienced sexual violence in other armed conflicts, for example in the Russian Civil War, and as the war dragged on, more and more were witness to all kinds of violence. For these reasons, unarmed women and girls were terribly frightened, and many went to great trouble to try and avoid being raped.

In addition to the widespread abuse of alcohol, in the face of such a myriad of combinations of identity markers between the rapist and his victims, there are no easy answers to the questions of why one rapist raped a certain female. The constant in the many examples available from the eastern front is that there were armed men and unarmed women and girls, affirming that rape is a crime of gender.<sup>2</sup> The pattern which emerges from the rapes in my research primarily seem not to be cultural, political, or national, but rather the domination by the

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<sup>1</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. This man's chronology is accurate. The Red Army trapped ten German divisions in a pocket near Cherkassy, Ukraine on February 17<sup>th</sup>, and the Soviet Ukrainian offensive headed west from there. By the end of March it was at the Romanian border.

<sup>2</sup> When the victim of rape was a male, the crime is a crime of gender: either because the rapist reduces the male victim to the status of a female, or because the rapist wanted to have sexual activity with a male and therefore picked a male specifically because he was a male. Also see Copelon, "Surfacing," 350 [n.12].

powerful (armed men) of the less powerful (unarmed civilian women and girls). Due to the broad nature of this study, no other clear pattern seems to emerge. Men murdered or maimed males, and they raped females. While rape in peacetime is a massive problem in many countries throughout the world, rape by armed men of unarmed civilians during wartime is an omnipresent threat for women and children. The threat of rape turned into reality on the eastern front for an unknown, but extremely large number of unarmed women and girls.

Though there are a few examples which suggest that the rapists' motive was political, many examples tend to reveal a more personal motive. The examples provided in this chapter suggest that the traditional feminist argument that rape occurs only because of a desire to feel powerful is not entirely accurate. The fact that rape and sexual harassment are abuses of power aside, the evidence from the eastern front does not indicate that a desire for more power or more feelings of power were the only motives in rape. Rather, a primary motivation seems to have been that the men simply wanted to have sexual intercourse, and they believed they had a right to force this onto women and girls (or men and boys), often because having sexual intercourse was a "traditional" soldier's reward. Men's belief in their sexual "rights" and men's sexual arrogance is linked to the rapists' overall negative attitude toward women and girls. In previous chapters, we have seen how important sex was to men during the war: prostitution and venereal diseases thrived in German occupied territories. The Germans established hundreds of brothels precisely for their men's sexual desires or, perhaps more accurately stated – their sexual demands. Indeed, the desire to have oral sex or sexual intercourse, and to "finish" inside a woman or girl (sometimes inside a man or a boy) seems to have been a primary motive for all kinds of sexual abuse.

Sadly, if historians have treated this topic at all, they have too often treated it irresponsibly and with little, mediocre, or bigoted analysis. It is a travesty that so many books have been written on World War II (and other wars) but so little written about rape until the 1990s. Few books on World War II and the Holocaust have rape in the index, let alone mention that it occurred.<sup>3</sup> Even authors who have highlighted women's experiences during this period either have ignored or denied this part of their suffering. Somehow the silence of the survivors

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<sup>3</sup> A few examples from academic research on World War II, the German occupation and the Holocaust do not have rape in the index: Bartov, Grossmann, and Nolan, eds., *Crimes*; John Erickson, "Soviet Women at War," in *World War 2 and the Soviet People*, ed. John Garrard and Carol Garrard (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*; Rittner and Roth, eds., *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*.

was pervasive enough to silence scholars as well, or perhaps the prevalence of rape in peacetime gave people reason not to analyze it in wartime. As professor of law Rhonda Copelon argues, “From a feminist human rights perspective, gender violence has escaped sanction because it has not been viewed as violence and because the public-private dichotomy has shielded such violence in its most common and private forms.”<sup>4</sup> Because so little work was done immediately after the war, and so few people dared to ask the questions, many untold stories have died and continue to die with the survivors. Yet a legion of stories do remain: in addition to the rich evidence available from memoirs and oral histories, there is also evidence of mass rape from court cases, reports, testimonies, and interrogations.

Being raped is a horrific experience. Rape is a brutal crime to commit against another human being. Even during times of peace, rape causes physical and psychological distress for years after the violation. Because of the force used, the skin in and around the vagina or anus is often ripped and abraded. In addition to internal injuries and bruising there can be a massive loss of blood. This, in combination with the intense pain, can cause a person to lose consciousness and die. Such violence can leave a woman or girl sterile, kill a fetus if she happened to be pregnant, and could leave the survivor with severe abdominal pain for years. In addition to the pain to the woman, injured breasts often no longer could be used to nurse, which could deprive an infant of life-saving milk, especially in times of hardship.

In times of war, rape often turns into gang rape, making it even more traumatic and life-threatening. Women and girls often commit suicide after they have been raped. This was common on the eastern front. Not only would they have been in much physical pain, the emotional and psychological trauma from such a violation, especially in more conservative cultures where women were viewed as having been tarnished, was enormous. Even in the west, one study showed that over two hundred women and girls committed suicide in Pankow alone and many more throughout Berlin.”<sup>5</sup> Agate Nesaule, a Latvian memoirist wrote of a Latvian woman who volunteered herself to be raped and thereby saved a young girl from the same fate.

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<sup>4</sup> Copelon, “Surfacing” 346. Copelon cites, “Charlotte Bunch, “Women’s Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Revision of Human Rights,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 12 (1990): 486; Rhonda Copelon, “Intimate Terror: Understanding Domestic Violence as Torture,” and Celina Romany, “State Responsibility Goes ‘Private’: A Feminist Critique of the Public/Private Distinction in International Human Rights Law,” both in *The Human Rights Of Women: International and National Perspectives*, ed. Rebecca J. Cook (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Read and David Fisher, *The Fall of Berlin* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 438-440. Also see Naimark, *Russians*, 69-141.

Because of her trauma, the alienation, and lack of any emotional support, she later committed suicide. Nesaule's report painfully reveals the loneliness and shame a survivor of rape often feels.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, many women asked to be murdered afterwards. In his narrative poem, *Prussian Nights*, Solzhenitsyn described a raped woman who asked to be murdered.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, women in Königsberg asked to be put out of their misery after having been gang raped, but the response by the Soviet soldiers was that "Russian soldiers do not shoot women. Only German soldiers do that."<sup>8</sup>

Not only were women and girls raped, but they were also mutilated. The historian Antony Beevor found reports of Soviet soldiers who were so drunk they were unable to complete the sexual act of rape and used a bottle instead, leaving the women horribly mutilated.<sup>9</sup> But even without the use of a bottle, women and girls were often left mutilated after a rape, especially if there were more than one rapist. The Russian Nina Markovna, who survived part of the war in Feodosia in the Crimea, reported that her neighbor suffered from serious infections and pain in her nipples because the Red Army soldiers tried to bite them off.<sup>10</sup>

Men and boys were also raped. This happened less often than it happened to women and girls, and the silence is even more pervasive, which reveals how invasive and traumatic this is to men and boys as well. A Jewish man by the name of Walter Stras, born in 1924 in Steinback am Glan in Germany, reported in an interview that male rape frequently happened in Auschwitz-Buna. Accordingly, often capos raped other men.<sup>11</sup> Because of laws against homosexual sex, and because of heterosexual pressure, male rape is something even more secretive than rape of females. So little is known about male rape that this will not be a focus in this chapter.<sup>12</sup>

Compared with other armed conflicts, there are historical specifics on the eastern front

<sup>6</sup> Nesaule, *A Woman*, 59-93.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Prussian Nights: A Narrative Poem*, trans. Robert Conquest (London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1977), 41.

<sup>8</sup> Beevor, *Berlin*, 31.

<sup>9</sup> RGVA 32925/1/100, p. 58, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 31.

<sup>10</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*.

<sup>11</sup> USHMM, RG-02\*142 Strangers in the Heartland by Donald M. Douglas, Ph.D. p 138-139.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Zarkov, "Body of the Other Man."

that are worth noting in the different cases, which is what makes this area of the world so fascinating and complex. There is evidence from which we could speculate that the Germans raped Estonians and Latvians less than they did Slavic women, but this study is based on many more interviews of Slavic women than any other kind of evidence from the Baltic. Thus, at this point, the evidence for that assertion (that the Germans raped Estonians and Latvians less than Slavic people) is unbalanced, unless we base this argument on assumptions built upon German racial theory. Yet the assumptions which originate from German racial theory suggest, for example, that Jewish women and girls would not be sexually abused or only in rare cases. As shown in Chapter Two on the “Virtual Rules of the Third Reich,” the military brothel chapter, and in this chapter below, sexual intercourse, rape, or recruitment into brothels of Jews were not rare occurrences. Thus, without more concrete evidence than what I have, it seems speculative to assert that non-Jewish Baltic women were raped less than Slavic women. As noted in Chapter One, the few Latvians I spoke with only told of rapes by Soviet men, yet many Ukrainians I spoke with told of rapes by both German and Soviet men. Indeed, there is evidence that the Soviets indiscriminately raped women and girls of all kinds of backgrounds, and this seems to have been true of the Germans also.

This chapter affirms that rape is a crime of gender, and that the motivation for rapists is not only to have more power, but also to have sexual activity. In other words, although rape has little to do with sex for the victims, it does have something to do with sex and sexuality for the perpetrators. On the eastern front unarmed women and girls performed heroic feats in their attempts to avoid being raped by armed men. Crimes committed by other civilians or partisans have been left unaccounted for. Finally, neither side (German or Soviet) has ever taken any responsibility for the sexual crimes their military members committed against unarmed civilians.

### **Language and Topic Difficulties**

Researching rape reveals problems concerning language. In her memoir, Nina Markovna explains the word rape in Russian, which is a much more powerful and accurate word than the English word. Rape in English is used in many other contexts besides the sexual assault of a human being (the rape of a village, the rape of a virgin forest), and does not fully express the horrific crime that it is. In Russian one would not use the word *isnasilovanie* to describe a military takeover of a village. Markovna explains that

in Russian the word rape means “to ravish, to violate, to outrage” and not only strictly to



penetrate a female's body. *Isnasilovanie* in Russian is a dark, frightening word stemming from the root word *сила* (power, strength, might, force), all coming from an avenging male toward a much weaker female body. Consequently not only one part of her body is violated in *isnasilovanie*, but all, all of her – her mind, heart, her very soul.<sup>13</sup>

The linguistic structure of the word “rape” in German is similar to that in Russian; furthermore in German documents the language also is not always forthright. An example of such euphemistic language comes from a World War II case against a Polish man under the German occupation for robbery. It is mentioned that the man used as his excuse for his crime the story that the Polish military had informed him the German soldiers were “mishandling” women and children, though it is not stated anywhere what exactly this meant.<sup>14</sup> It is safe to assume there was some kind of sexual mishandling in addition to non-sexual abuse. Because of the euphemistic language, and the hesitancy to ascribe crimes to people perhaps assumed rightly or wrongly to be innocent, too many crimes are left unpunished and unknown. Those who know it to have happened are too often those without the means to let the world know.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to people's hesitancy to use *isnasilovanie* and their use of other words, the almost thirty-five people I interviewed in the Cherkassy region of Ukraine were from the countryside and spoke a rural dialect of mixed Russian, Ukrainian, and even some Polish words. In addition, the majority of those I interviewed were in elementary school when the Germans invaded. They were unable to study as well under the German occupation, and when the war ended and people still faced starvation, most could not consider going to school because they had to work. This undoubtedly affected their language skills, and their language was replete with grammatical errors. Finally, many of the women and men were so excited to host me and to tell me about their lives, they spoke immensely fast, often interrupting themselves as they spoke. Being in the countryside, sometimes people stopped by in the middle of an interview and they would put their two cents in as well. Many were excited, and the transcripts of the interviews reveal this excitement in their language. An example of this is a story of a rape by two German soldiers that was cut short by a “nice” German commandant. I show it here as an example of the

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<sup>13</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 219.

<sup>14</sup> Case against Tadeusz Klecha, 1940, USHMMA, RG-15.014M, Records of the Sondergericht Hohensalza [Inowroclaw], 1940-1943 [microform], Institute of National Memory, Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation, Warsaw, Reel 1, docs. 102-104.

<sup>15</sup> Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story*, 45-46. Nordstrom discusses how the “facts” of armed conflict are constructed.

language difficulties in interviewing peasant women and men of this generation. Still, we were able to understand the basics of the story and that this trauma was a part of her memory.

Assistant: You know those women?

Woman: They aren't here.<sup>16</sup>

"They aren't here" probably meant that they had died. The woman explained how the younger woman ran to the German commandant who was staying at the interviewee's house to tell him that soldiers were raping two older women who had not hid because they felt safe:

Woman: Forgive me, Baba says, why do you ... and they said, "and she said, and they are raping," said, "poor groaning there," nothing was done. These ones are raping and those Babas said and then she came and told so I took them. So I said, and they ran away.

...

Author: Were they soldiers?

Assistant: Yea, two soldiers came to the neighbors house, and there was a young girl. She was hiding on the *pech* [oven].<sup>17</sup> And there were two old women. And they those women...

Woman: *Kachaiut. Kachaiut* [rape].

Author: And what happened then?

Woman: They ran away, they ran.

Assistant: Ran away, and the officer came?

Woman: The officer, the one that I took. He was such a good one. ...

Assistant: So he cut short those things?

Woman: Yea, yea, yea.<sup>18</sup>

Though uneducated, old, and speaking a rural dialect, this woman told us her version of the "facts" and what was very clearly her truth. Although she did not use the word *isnasilovanie*, she did use a fairly powerful word that clearly indicated rape, *kachaiut*.

Some people I interviewed did use the word rape, and more men than women did, but people often used vocabulary that was not so explicit. Sometimes instead of rape or sexual assault women said "mishandling" or "the woman's honor was insulted," or "he grabbed and pushed." Still, despite the absence of the word *isnasilovanie* (rape) often it was very clear what was meant. For example, one woman in the Cherkassy region of Ukraine told us that the Germans "used to take for their own use...take them someplace and disgrace them and torture

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<sup>16</sup> No. 26, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>17</sup> The traditional Slavic oven is also used for sleeping.

<sup>18</sup> No. 26, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

the person, the young ones, that's how it was."<sup>19</sup> This example very clearly meant some kind of violent sexual assault to me and to my male assistant, but the woman did not use the word rape.

Another example of euphemistic language that indicated some kind of sexual assault is from a woman who told us that, "And then he took me and turned over there. Then he looked around. Then he pushed me with this rock. Grabbed, grabbed, grabbed."<sup>20</sup> It was clear that the German who had been looking for partisans had attempted either rape or some kind of sexual assault, and that apparently this Ukrainian woman escaped after the rough grabbing.

Another difficulty about researching rape is that regardless of which word a person uses, many people simply do not want to talk or write about it. It is much easier to talk about someone else's rape than one's own. Many women have been raped in various conflicts, but choose, perhaps subconsciously, to not remember or more consciously, to not tell. In addition, many rape survivors unconsciously suppress the memory of their most traumatic experiences and can live for years without realizing what happened to them. It is entirely possible that some people never remember. One rape survivor reported that after having the memory of a rape resurface to her consciousness after years of being repressed, she could not say the word rape for many months. Once she tried to tell someone about it, someone who was not very attuned to the problem of sexual violence, and all she could say in an attempt to tell the other what she was dealing with was the "R word."<sup>21</sup>

The majority of the Ukrainian people I interviewed were willing to discuss sexual violence, but almost none of them had been raped (none of them told that they had prostituted themselves either). Indeed, only one woman told me of her own rape, despite most people reporting that rape was a common phenomenon in the villages we were in while they were under the Germans. Many of the women I interviewed told that they had almost been raped, but they

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<sup>19</sup> No. 6, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>20</sup> No. 11, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Even when parts of interviews were not totally clear or we were unable to clarify, the people told us many things which have been told by others as well. For example, this woman also told us the following: "Then they were calling those men. Some of them were invalids. And they pushed them into the fire. There in the center they burned the house and then threw them into the fire... By the store, over there. That's when they burned the house. And some boys maybe were caught in the house, because they didn't hide. But we had enough time to hide ours in the trenches...And they took them and pushed them into the fire, alive. And when they left and the Reds came then our *Babas* took those charred pieces of bodies and then they buried them. We would take them to the cemetery and we buried them. It was terrible. It was frightening." These scenes also corroborate other evidence of German violence in the east, often against alleged partisans or Jews.

<sup>21</sup> Conversation with a rape survivor in St. Paul, Minnesota.

somehow escaped. They also told about other women who were raped. There are many factors which possibly could explain why so few women told that they had been raped. Perhaps the ones we interviewed really had been that lucky. Other factors could have had to do with my assistant and myself. My assistant was a local in the community which helped, but he was a man, which may have intimidated some. I am a woman, which may have helped, but I am an American. This either could have helped or hindered (some wanted to pour their stories out to me, but a few seemed to distrust my intentions). Regardless of who we were, older Slavic women were not used to talking about such things as sex, let alone any violations they may have experienced. One woman admitted to me that she and her husband still hid their naked bodies from one another out of shyness.

Two women we interviewed told us about a woman born in 1928 or 1929 who was taken by two Germans into the cornfield and brutally raped. They heard that they tortured her for a long time. She was about fourteen at the time of the rape, they surmised. The first woman said, “and she didn’t tell anybody, but they really tortured her. She didn’t tell anybody so that people wouldn’t talk about her.” She continued,

Woman 1: She didn’t want to spread it around.

Woman 2: So that nobody would know about her. You know, she [was] a girl.

Woman 1: But she never got married.

Assistant: Never got married?

Woman 1: No. ...

Woman 1: After the war she didn’t tell anybody. She just kept everything in herself, but people had seen how she was grabbed [*davili*] and how they tortured her for a long time.... But where would you see that two bulls, well, understand yourself, and she was a little child yet. But everybody saw it and they were afraid to go and save her. They were afraid of them.<sup>22</sup>

Despite not remembering her name in that moment, they told us where she lived, which was in the same town, not far away. We went to visit the woman of whom they had spoken. She immediately started crying when we asked about the war, and told us that “And they were mistreating young girls. Just the way they wanted. They mistreated them so badly.”<sup>23</sup> My assistant asked, hoping she would elaborate about what we had been told had happened to her:

Assistant: Mistreated?

Woman: Yea, they mistreated them very badly. And they killed and were beating. It would

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<sup>22</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>23</sup> No. 33, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

be better not to know. Would be better not to know what we knew...ah, you know when I wasn't so big, you know when father was taken.<sup>24</sup>

She lost her mother, father, and brother in the war. She repeated herself, They were mistreating them just the way they wanted. Those Germans, they were mistreating."<sup>25</sup> Later in the interview, she reiterated,

Woman: There was everything...So it was good that those of ours, ours took care of the Germans and put them down...Our girls. In general they were tortured...Got pregnant. And so that people wouldn't know that she would give birth. Just like now, just like now.

Assistant: So they were raped?

Woman: Yea.<sup>26</sup>

She told us in general about what the Germans did to women, but never told us that she had been raped or had become pregnant herself. She told us about her alcoholic and abusive husbands, and about other hardships. My assistant left this interview part of the way through, thinking this may make her feel more comfortable to tell me, a woman. It is possible that what the other two women told us was not true or that they got her mixed up with another woman they knew had experienced the rape in the cornfield. Still, that the alleged rape survivor came out to us and immediately emphasized that the Germans raped young girls, and that she said this numerous times throughout the interview, revealed to me and my assistant that she just could not bring herself to tell us what she had experienced. Indeed, the alleged incident was long ago, and whatever pain she had dealt with during the war was by 1998 mixed with pain from abusive relationships, hunger, and deprivation from the fifty plus years after the war.<sup>27</sup> Whether or not she was the alleged rape survivor, which I think she was, perhaps by 1998 she really believed it had only happened to other girls.

Another interview revealed the pain surrounding the topic and the possibility that a man also was not willing to discuss the details of a rape. We interviewed this man specifically because we had been told that his mother had been assaulted. When we went to visit him one

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<sup>24</sup> No. 33, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>25</sup> No. 33, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>26</sup> No. 33, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>27</sup> In 1998 almost all of the peasant women and men we spoke with were living on little or no pension from the government. In other words, they were still in desperate situations, and they lived off of their own little gardens. Many did not even have soap with which to wash themselves. Indeed, many women cried just as hard, and some even harder, when they started talking about how their lives were in 1998.

afternoon he had been drinking some and possibly sleeping. He very openly started to tell us what he remembered. He told us how he was usually with his grandmother during the German occupation because his mother, who was in her twenties, was in hiding. On one occasion, she hid with others beneath some boards near their house for days. An official came and asked the grandmother where her daughter-in-law was. The older woman said she went to the Dnepr to dig trenches. The man did not believe her and set the shed on fire where the women were hiding. The older woman yelled at her daughter-in-law, Marysia, to get out. She came out, and the man hit her so hard she doubled over. He hit her again, and she bent down further. Finally, she ran. The son, who told us this story in 1998, said she then ran away and apparently did not come back. He did not know why the man did not shoot, but thought that perhaps he did not want to or he did not have a gun. In any case, she ran away and went back into hiding. He said “the women were all hiding, hiding, especially the young ones.”<sup>28</sup>

This man seemed to carry much pain with him, but he did not seem willing to elaborate. We asked him more specifically about his mother’s experience, but were unable to get a clear answer. He either did not know for sure himself because she had disappeared or because he was too young at the time to comprehend such things, and perhaps no one explained to him after the war. It is possible that he simply did not want to talk about it. At one point in the interview, just after mentioning that women gave their bodies as payment, he mentioned his mother, then something about smoking, and then something to the effect of “because ours, and ours also, the soldiers didn’t think.” Then he said if only he were older he would know more about the war.<sup>29</sup> Like many of the interviews, it left me highly aware of the pain he carried around with him on a daily basis. He was only a child when he witnessed his mother struggling with men (Soviet or German) and although he was very sweet, friendly, and talkative, it felt inappropriate to pry further. In this case, it seemed that his pain, only partially soothed by alcohol, was what caused our difficulties in completely understanding what had happened.

Katherine Jolluck found the same phenomena in the interviews of Polish women who survived camps in the Soviet Union during World War II. Rapes often were referred to as tales, things they had heard, and they usually happened to other women. Jolluck gives examples of

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<sup>28</sup> No. 21, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. He also confirmed that women paid for things via “natura,” i.e., with their bodies.

<sup>29</sup> No. 21, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

stories women told. Not one of the women reported that she had been raped. Some told detailed stories of how they were intimidated and threatened, but they always somehow managed to escape. They left gaps in the narrative or they chose to not explain how the situation ended. "In general, either the women state that they refused or escaped, or they fall silent on the outcome of their threatening encounters, gliding past it to other topics." Jolluck relates in detail about one woman who told her story in the third person and explained that she talked the man out of collecting his "payment." To the woman it was a miracle, and Jolluck comments that "Perhaps the story could not have ended another way and still be told."<sup>30</sup>

The silence surrounding the rapes of German women and girls by Red Army soldiers incited researcher and film maker Helke Sander to undertake the daunting task of attempting to determine what "many rapes" or "mass raping" actually meant in numbers. Where she grew up in Germany, people only spoke of the rapes in passing (*in Nebensätze*), and that until the anonymously written book *A Woman in Berlin* appeared, no one had approached the rapes as a main theme, despite the abundance of evidence in diaries, reports, and documents pointing to these war crimes.<sup>31</sup> Darlene Clark Hine wrote that for many Black women who left the south where rape was such a pervasive part of their lives, "Only with secrecy, thus achieving a self-imposed invisibility, could ordinary Black women accrue the psychic space and harness the resources needed to hold their own in the often one-sided and mismatched resistance struggle."<sup>32</sup> Jane Schulz found the same in her study of Southern women in the American Civil war: "Rape became for them an unspeakable crime—never named but referred to in oblique language as

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<sup>30</sup> Jolluck, *Exile*, 168-171.

<sup>31</sup> In addition to the German women and girls who eventually were recognized in various ways for having experienced these sexual crimes, many women and girls in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany were refugees from the east, who culturally, being from more conservative societies, were less likely to come forth with their stories of rape and to be recognized by news reports, scholars, or other venues of information. In her critique of Helke Sander's film, historian Atina Grossmann tends to discount the silence surrounding the rapes of Germans (she does not discuss other groups who were raped besides German Christians). Grossmann, "Silence." Yet despite many sources (including government documents) revealing the widespread evidence of sexual violence during the war – this dissertation a case in point – and regardless of which cultural, ethnic, religious, political, or national group the rape survivors belonged, most people never took responsibility for raping, governments did not prosecute on behalf of their rape victims, scholars did not write extensively on the topic of sexual violence during World War II, and history textbooks all around the world completely ignored the issue. In essence, these actions and nonactions have silenced the survivors in numerous and profound ways, similar to what survivors of sexual violence have experienced in other armed conflicts (and in peacetime as well).

<sup>32</sup> Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives," 344.

something that happened to other women.”<sup>33</sup> Vera Folnegovic-Smalc told that women who had been raped in the Bosnian conflict in the 1990s would come to the doctor and tell their tale in the third person. In addition, everyone she spoke with knew someone who had been raped, but none of them would report that they had been raped themselves.<sup>34</sup> Journalist Alexandra Stiglmayer wrote about her interviews with rape survivors in the former Yugoslavia that “the conversations were difficult. Even for these women, who wanted to tell the foreign journalists what had happened to them, rape is that terrible, humiliating, almost unutterable ‘it.’”<sup>35</sup> Indeed, rape survivors exhibit a pattern of silence in past wars and also in more current conflicts. This is because of how damaging a rape can be, not only to a person’s physical body, but also to a person’s psychological and emotional welfare.

### Fear

Because women knew how damaging rape could be, and because they knew rape was a reality in armed conflict, women and girls on the eastern front were afraid. Rape was a reality in many females’ lives before the war started. Some middle-aged and older women had experienced sexual violence during the Civil War and World War I.<sup>36</sup> During World War II, because of their knowledge of these dangers when the armies were approaching, women were frightened for themselves and their children. Some had heard stories about violent rapes military men committed on civilian women. Whether or not all the rumors were true or were propaganda did

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<sup>33</sup> Jane Schultz, “Mute Fury: Southern Women’s Diaries of Sherman’s March to the Sea, 1864-1865,” in *Arms and the Woman: War, Gender and Literary Representation*, ed. Helen Cooper, Adrienne Ruslander Munich, and Susan Merrill Squier (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Press, 1989), 60, quoted in Jolluck, *Exile*, 169.

<sup>34</sup> Vera Folnegovic-Smalc, “Psychiatric Aspects of the Rapes in the War against the Republics of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina,” in *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, ed. Alexandra Stiglmayer (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 176. See also Stiglmayer, “The Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 83, 91, 101, 133, 137. The women and children in Stiglmayer’s article make it clear that it would be difficult even to tell their family members what happened.

<sup>35</sup> Stiglmayer, “The Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 83.

<sup>36</sup> One woman told us about gangs that roamed the countryside and “tortured women.” No. 18, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Violence by some of the Bolshevik’s groups was known by many, e.g., Nizheviasov’s men raped and murdered girls. See Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women From 1917 to the Second World War*, trans. Yuri Slezkine (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 75, 86. Nina Markhovna’s mother remembered what women did to protect themselves from rape during the Civil War. Historian Alfred Meyer mentions that during World War I, “Rape seems to have been a relatively frequent occurrence in areas near the front.” Meyer, “The Impact of World War I on Russian Women’s Lives,” 211.



not affect the reality for the often defenseless civilian females. They were scared.<sup>37</sup>

Many of the women we spoke with in the Cherkassy district of Ukraine repeatedly told us about the fear they experienced under the German occupation. They were terrified to walk in the streets because they only imagined the worst, and some already had seen crimes committed against women, children, and men. Many of their stories correspond with other sources from the war. They were still in their homeland, but everything had changed. People had a sense that their lives and the occupiers were out of control. "At that time everybody was afraid of everything. Everybody was scared."<sup>38</sup> Another person said, "Everybody was afraid. It was terrible. They could kill. They could do anything."<sup>39</sup> The Germans would settle into houses in the villages and take what they needed to live. One woman told us,

And they did whatever they wanted to here. They took our hope chest. They came in quickly and asked for eggs and milk, yelling, screaming, running after girls, taking everything. They were even killing pigs. They were eating. They destroyed everything and ate eggs, milk, running under the houses and yelling, "where are those eggs and milk?" They were already taken!<sup>40</sup>

This same woman summarized the experience with, "We remained only with our souls." She was in hiding and was scared for much of the occupation. She was too scared to talk to the Germans or to have any kind of contact. She said, "Our husbands were on the front and we should look at them and talk with them? No, I never talked with them."<sup>41</sup>

As the war dragged on, people became more aware of the power soldiers possessed. As time passed, women and children were witness to much violence against innocent civilians. Elena Kozhina wrote in her memoir of her childhood experience in Russia during the war that they were terrorized.

Any yard could at any minute be visited by a soldier with a submachine gun, or by several soldiers. The Germans were walking around in groups more often, having found that this

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<sup>37</sup> Historian Katherine Jolluck writes that Polish wartime memoirs "suggest that the fear and danger of rape were ubiquitous." One example Jolluck cites, is "Ida Kasprzak, an officer in the Home Army, [who encountered] several drunken Polish men in the sewers of Warsaw; as soon as she spotted them, she was convinced they would try to rape her." Kasprzak reported that she escaped. "Uprising in Poland, 1939-1945," in Shelley Saywell, *Women in War* (Markham, Ontario: Viking, 1985), 113, (n.126) quoted in Jolluck, *Exile*, 319.

<sup>38</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>39</sup> No. 30, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>40</sup> No. 11, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>41</sup> No. 11, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

made a greater impression. Their vocabulary was limited and goal-oriented: “Woman! Pig, chicken, eggs, lard, milk.” Sometimes they simply took what they needed, without any words or negotiations. They might take not only food, but any trinket that pleased their eye, like an embroidered towel that hung in a corner under an icon. This was particularly infuriating to the Cossack women – it was no longer the seizure of something necessary, but purely an insulting reminder of the soldiers’ unlimited power.<sup>42</sup>

Almost all of the people I spoke with told the same stories, that the German soldiers came in and took what they wanted.

Being unarmed in the face of looting soldiers, people did not want to bother the soldiers because of their fear. One interviewee said, “We were afraid [when the Germans came], we were afraid. It was scary. We would crawl, hide...”<sup>43</sup> “[The Germans] were so scary,”<sup>44</sup> said another. Another said that they were “hiding constantly,” and that the young ones had reason to be the most fearful. She told us that the Germans were “especially after the young ones. The young ones had no peace.” She said she did not understand who would want to be with a German, and that they ran from the Germans as dogs did from flies. This woman hid in a cellar for two weeks.<sup>45</sup> Another woman told us they “were always scared of the ‘Fritze.’”<sup>46</sup>

Often the young and pretty girls were the most scared. One woman told us about how both the Germans and the Soviets working for the occupiers looked for the young girls:

Those ones who had something to do with Germans said “over there, over there.” And they will come and we were spinning yarn, and they looked into our faces, looking for young ones. Ours would come. Ours were scoundrels. So they would enter in the house, well now, well, now, that, that...and again he would look and we were so small and short so they would look and look. There was no young girls – only children. So they would walk out and say phooey, you are stupid. Over there, there are some nice ones.”<sup>47</sup>

Another woman said, “Of course, they liked young girls, nice girls.”<sup>48</sup>

At night, we were told, German soldiers would walk the villages looking for sex. A

<sup>42</sup> Kozhina, *Burning Steppe*, 80.

<sup>43</sup> No. 1, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>44</sup> No. 15, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>45</sup> No. 6, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>46</sup> No. 8, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>47</sup> No. 18, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>48</sup> No. 30, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

school teacher told me that

Man: “And soldiers, you know, drunk soldiers went through the houses, searching for girls. Girls hid, you know, girls and women in general, drunk soldiers caroused. I remember how my mama still wasn’t old, she was thirty-three years, that’s still not an old woman, yes. And she would hide...During the night they would come, the soldiers would come, in would stroll several people. That is, she would hide herself, they never found her. She hid under the stove, they didn’t know that there was such an opening under the stove. You know, the peasant stove, right?

Author: And why did they come into your house?

Man: They went into every house, into every house, how many, from one house to the other, yea.”<sup>49</sup>

As in other German occupied territories, there was a curfew in this region, and one was not supposed to go out. If you did and were caught there would be trouble. Thus, people generally stayed home at night whenever possible. Sometimes they even hid somewhere inside in case soldiers would enter their house. Others confirmed that women were too scared to walk at night, because “Oh yea, we were afraid of Germans.”<sup>50</sup>

One woman told how the Germans would spot a girl they liked during the day and then try to find her in the evening. One girl in the village of Soviefka was named Olya, and she hid on the stove so the Germans would not find her one night. According to the interviewee, the Germans came into the house and spoke to the girl’s mother:

In our house a woman was killed. That X., Olya X.’s mother. I think the Germans went to Olya. They wanted to take Olya and kill her, but she hid so they killed her mother who was laying on the *pechka* (oven)...Yea, yea, yea. So they came to her and said where is your daughter? They said to mother. And she said, she’s not here. I don’t know where she is. And in one shot she was gone.

She emphatically told us that this was true, and there were people who could verify this even though the house she had told us about and in which the murder happened was already gone: “Yea, that was in Sofievka. That was in that house, but that house isn’t there anymore....But there are people who know that that happened in the house.”<sup>51</sup>

Often in the interviews, the women became excited and talked very fast. Their language and physical movements revealed the chaos and fear they had experienced. In another interview

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<sup>49</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>50</sup> Woman 2, No. 30, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Also No. 10, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>51</sup> No. 9, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

we were again told of how it was unsafe at night, and the sense of chaos was evident. This woman said that “During the night we would hide in the village. We’d get together in just one house. And here they would knock in the windows and take the young ones.” She continued:

Then there was a knock. “Open, Mother!” We would open. Then he would look and see which one was young. “Komm!” We would yell. The mothers were running after us. They were also yelling. They killed my aunt. [The Germans] were pulling her daughter and she was screaming and he shot into her and killed my aunt.<sup>52</sup>

The girl broke free and ran away. The manner in which she talked revealed how alive the memory of this chaotic violence was in her.

Several people related how a person was willing to help them as an individual, but that they were not willing to do anything more such as stopping the soldiers. In addition, several women told us that they had an officer staying in or nearby their house, and that they felt safer because of this.<sup>53</sup> Two women collectively told the story of how a German officer protected one of them from soldiers at night. One of them was hiding and lying on the stove one night in a house where a German stayed, one who “didn’t touch anybody.” But suddenly she could hear music, and a crowd of Germans came into the house. She fled to a neighbor’s house where an officer was staying and started to tell him what was happening and why she had come running. The woman explained, “I started to tell him, and he said ‘Miss, lay down here. Don’t be afraid, the comrades won’t come here. The comrades won’t come.’ So I stayed until the end of the morning.”<sup>54</sup> The officer knew exactly what was going on and why this woman was scared – she did not need to finish her story. Furthermore, the officer was not going to stop the soldiers, but he was willing to help a single woman. This woman was happy to have found safety, but the example shows not only the large role fear played in the lives of women in occupied territory, but also the assumption and fear that the men, regardless of rank, would touch them.

Similarly, another woman told us she and her family felt safe to return home after a German officer or commandant started to stay in their house. At first, they were taken aback to come home one day and find him there. He was a “big shot” with his name posted to the door. But it turned out that he did not touch anybody. She said, “...later we started to come home and sleep in the house, and he was taking only one room, a bedroom, so my mother would make some

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<sup>52</sup> No. 11, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>53</sup> No. 26 and No. 27, interviews by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>54</sup> No. 30, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

soup in the evening, and he would eat it. So he wouldn't even let anybody in the house."<sup>55</sup>

According to Tatjana Wassiljewa, a Russian survivor and memoirist, a German man, knowing full well that the German invasion and policies were the causes of their suffering, helped a Russian family, but told them to keep it a secret. He was willing to help this individual family until the time he was called to the front. More than that he did not risk. Wassiljewa tells how he and other Germans took over two rooms in their house. Despite their fears, the family was allowed to stay in the other rooms, and for about one month this man gave Tatjana's mama a loaf of bread almost every day. At the time Tatjana and her family were confined to bed with weakness from hunger, but after a few weeks she and her mother were able to get up. Her father was ill, and her toddler sister, Olja, still could not walk because her legs had become useless from the starvation. For Tatjana and her family this man helped them survive for just a few weeks more.<sup>56</sup>

People remembered and spoke easily about their fear, and it was clearly a large part of their daily life during the German occupation. They were afraid of having things stolen, of being shot or hurt. Furthermore, they were frightened of being sexually assaulted, especially at night, and especially if they were young. In some cases it helped if a commandant was nearby. Sometimes the commander, officer, or "nice" German did not stop their men from their behavior but a few were willing to protect the one individual. Finally, as will become clear throughout this chapter, the women and girl's fear of rape was not unfounded.

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<sup>55</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>56</sup> Wassiljewa, *Hostage*, 14-15. A similar experience happened to the memoirist Frieda Frome and her family. A non-commissioned officer of the German artillery came to stay with them. They "trembled with dread, and [she] and her sister [hid] most of the time." But he also turned out to be a "godsend," because he brought them a little extra food. Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 37.



Fig. 1. LSHa, Documents of the Extraordinary Republic an Commission of the Latvian SSR, Soviet Extraordinary Commission, Fond R-132, Ops 28, Del 75, photograph. These photos have no other identifying information, but they are in a folder with other photos of people at an execution site, a few of women, some of them without clothing, and some of which I am sure I have seen elsewhere. Additionally, there is a picture of bodies piled up criss-cross with logs. Concerning this photo (figure 1): The detail in the original, and also in the copy I have, shows pretty clearly that this young woman or girl was beaten severely and very possibly mutilated in the mid-section. The pregnant woman or girl on the next page (figure 2) looks to have had her clothes ripped off of her, and it looks as though they are on the sides of her. She too still has stockings and shoes on. The other photos of naked, alive females in this archive folder show the piles of clothing around because they were ordered to undress. The female to the left on this page (figure 1) and the woman or girl in the next figure (figure 2) seem to have had a different fate. It is not clear to me who the perpetrators were, though some of the photos in the folder show armed guards standing around.





Fig. 2. I.S.H.A., Documents of the Extraordinary Republican Commission of the Latvian SSR, Soviet Extraordinary Commission, Fond R-132, Opis 28, Del 75, photo.

### Camouflage

War brought extreme changes and chaos to women and girl's lives. They feared the large numbers of military men carrying weapons, and in response many girls and women camouflaged themselves as old, sick or "ugly" in the hopes that this would deter men from choosing them as their next rape victim.<sup>57</sup> One woman told us she wore something torn and old over her skirts.<sup>58</sup> Young women and girls disguised their faces to look unattractive. Another woman said, "Yea. One would take mud and smear it and walk like an old one. Not a young one. But old, otherwise one would be raped."<sup>59</sup> Another woman talked about being scared to walk around. She told us she smeared her face with "black stuff," and that they "walked like the devil."<sup>60</sup>

A man told me he knew of a nurse who worked in a hospital who also made herself look ugly. The Germans had arrested her husband and she was alone with her daughter and frightened.

Man: At that time she was rather young, now I say, she was...twenty-five years probably, yes, and she was pretty. The Germans stole the husband, the husband, yes. And so they kept a close eye on her, you know. And what did she do? She, how should I say, disfigured her own face, you know, she smeared, well, I think it was with dough, you know, and then with [zelenkoi].<sup>61</sup>...She would have big boils on her face...[She and others] looked like they were sick, with something ugly on their face, some kind of abscess, yea, and that helped...  
 Author: Did they do that every day?  
 Man: Well, if, I think that she did often, especially when it was dangerous, yes...She, yes, she was scared.

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<sup>57</sup> One woman even told us her aunt put a skirt on a young man so that the Germans would not collect him for shipment to Germany, thinking he was a female. No. 13, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>58</sup> No. 18, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>59</sup> No. 33, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Another woman confirmed that women and girls did this and said that she did the same. She would dress herself in tatters almost everyday and go around trying to look old, limping. No. 31, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>60</sup> No. 30, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>61</sup> I think this refers to a green plant that when rubbed has a soapy consistency. On top of the dough the green foam would look like infected boils. Svitlana Pavlova, who assisted me in the transcription and translation of my interviews, said they called it *sobachii milo* (dog's soap).



One woman told us that “Yea, yea, that’s true. They would smear themselves with soot or whatever to look old. They would put a kerchief around them so that their face wouldn’t show too much.” She continued,

Sometimes the policemen would guide them, and sometimes Germans would go around by themselves. So you know what women, forgive me, but I’m going to tell you, what women were doing. If they would cut someplace a chicken, or if somebody was slaughtering a chicken they would gather the blood and then, forgive me, they will smear the blood so that the woman, you know, that was safe. That I know.<sup>62</sup>

Women and girls did this to make the Germans think that “they had menstruation, menstruation, that the woman has menstruation. Do you understand?” The interviewee named a specific woman, Dunka S. who apparently successfully used this strategy.<sup>63</sup>

Other people practiced similar strategies. When the Germans were retreating, the Jewish woman Frieda Frome was in hiding at a farmhouse in the countryside, having escaped from the concentration camp in Kaunas, Lithuania, and she always pretended to be sick when German soldiers stopped to water their horses. She covered her head and tried to look “as unattractive as possible.”<sup>64</sup> When an army was approaching it was common that women and children would hide in the cellars or basements. Once it became known that the Germans were murdering the Jews, Jewish people would also hide.<sup>65</sup> Others did not have basements though and only could resort to the kind of camouflage discussed here.

Another strategy women and girls used was to pretend they were sick with tuberculosis. One woman told us,

And [the Germans] were afraid if somebody was coughing. As soon as a person was coughing he’d run away. So she would do it on purpose. There was Marika D., so she caaa, caaa [coughed], because in her lungs, and she had four children. And she became like she was about one hundred years old, but she was young yet. But she was coughing, and they would run away. And if they were going on the road, they would pass by this house because she was coughing. They were very afraid of tuberculosis because the Germans would be going with big groups by the houses.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>63</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>64</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 107.

<sup>65</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*.

<sup>66</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

According to Nina Markovna's memoir, her mother also took advantage of the known fear of tuberculosis, which we will see below. Nina's mother, an elderly neighbor and Nina all prepared for the approaching armies. They had no place to hide, and so camouflage became extremely important. When the German army was approaching Feodosia, Nina's mother had Nina knead bread dough for the bread they would give their new occupiers. But ironically, she also warned her that the Germans were "soldiers away from their womenfolk. Who knows how they'll behave toward us? Try to be very, very discreet ... unnoticeable." Nina was very tall, which made this impossible. Her mother suggested that she wrap her chest tightly so that it looked flat.<sup>67</sup> Since Nina had done that for the ballet (to pass as a boy) she did not want to do this and settled for wearing a baggy shirt and a longer skirt. As the Germans arrived in the town and the townspeople were greeting them she and her Jewish girlfriend suddenly got scared, thinking of the widespread rumor that the Germans cut off virgin girls' breasts and ate them with salt. They ran inside to get "bulky old shawls" to cover themselves. Then they decided to stand next to nineteen-year-old Nadia, of Greek descent who wore a tight sweater covering her large breasts "unrestrained by any undergarments." The girls figured that no soldier would be interested in them once they saw the full-figured Nadia.<sup>68</sup>

But their camouflage attempts were even more substantial when the Soviet army was approaching. The December 1941 Soviet attacks at Feodosia and Kerch took the civilians of Feodosia by surprise. In the middle of the night the city was bombarded from the Black Sea. Hours later, soldiers began to appear and fighting commenced between the Germans and the Soviets. Fallen soldiers were spread throughout the city, which eventually went up in flames leaving much of the town devastated. The first wave of Soviet sailors to land violently swept every corner of the town clean of Germans. Nina was fourteen years old. Her father was no longer with her family because he had been captured by the Germans, so it was only herself, her fifteen-year-old brother, her mother, and an elderly neighbor lady, Praskovia Ivanovna, who could not face the horror alone since her husband died. Nina Markovna wrote,

This initial military sweep rolled over, not engulfing us, only paralyzing us with its violent efficiency. The second wave, we knew, could be devastating in its fury...Although at that

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<sup>67</sup> An example of camouflage from World War I is from the Armenian Violet Pasdermajian Goliti who told how Turkish men would come and abduct and rape Armenian women and girls. Many girls would dress as boys to avoid an attack. After a close call, with the help of her aunt she too dressed as a boy. Sally Hayton-Keeva, *Valiant Women In War and Exile: Thirty-eight True Stories* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1987), 212-214.

<sup>68</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 177-180.

time we were not sure if we would survive the fighting, we were sure that if we did survive, we would then have to face the wrath of the returning Soviet army. After the heaviest bombardment subsided, we knew that the victors would soon be in our neighborhood, and we began – as our only defense in this fateful encounter – to get ready for the “masquerade.”<sup>69</sup>

The camouflage that Nina, her mother and the elderly neighbor woman did because of their fear of rape by the Soviet army corresponds with what the women of the Cherkassy region told us: they made themselves look ugly and ill. Because the information is in the form of a memoir, it is much more detailed. Even the older woman did not feel safe. She removed both dentures so that her lips fell in, messed up her hair and tied an old and holey scarf around her neck. Nina wrote, “She needed to do very little to turn into a real old woman, but it was foolish to take chances, for even 80-year-old grandmothers were known to be sexually assaulted during the retaking of towns.”<sup>70</sup>

Nina’s mother did more than Praskovia did. She took her upper bridge out which exposed a gap in her mouth where she used to have teeth, wrinkled her lip and caused her to lisp. From her experiences in the Russian Civil War following World War I, she knew what to do.

She next took the big scissors and began to chop indiscriminately at her thick, wavy hair, reaching to the scalp in many spots. Then she made a stiff paste out of mustard and flour, sticking chunks of it on the bald spots. “Disease, contagious. I used to do it during the civil war. I was young then, but it worked,” Mother announced matter-of-fact. She put on a dreary old dress, darned and mended in many spots – no waist, no breasts, no hip outline showing – a sack.<sup>71</sup>

Next, the question remained what to do with fourteen-year-old Nina. They figured that her brother, Slava would be safe, but Nina’s mother wailed “They’ll rape her. They’ll destroy my little one. They won’t spare her.” Nina responded to her mother’s wails, thinking

what torture, what an ordeal rape must be! I was so afraid and turning to Mother I pleaded, starting to weep, “Mama, don’t let me be raped. Do something, Mama.”

She seated me on the bed next to her, embracing me in a protective hug, as if to hide me from the world. Rocking with me gently she said, “*Dochenska*, remember poor Lidochka, your friend in Dulove, and her sister, Katya? They died of *chahotka*. Remember how Katya looked? Pale, with bluish lips, red spots on her cheeks ... feverish. Those drunken soldiers are more scared of *chahotka* than bullets. We have no attic, no cellar here.

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<sup>69</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 217.

<sup>70</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 218.

<sup>71</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 218.

Nowhere to run. Yes, *chahotka* must be tried!<sup>72</sup>

When they finished with the masquerade, as Markovna named it, they were still filled with anticipation, and their fears were not unfounded.

In one room two toothless old women huddled on a bed with a fifteen-year-old boy recovering from malaria, while in the second room isolated from the rest of the family, lay a *chahotka*-wasted girl, a hanging sheet protecting others in the home from the infectious germs. I lay stretched out, clad only in my nightgown, since it was feared that were I to lie under the blanket dressed and with my chest tied, the masquerade would be revealed. A thick winter blanket covered me to the chin and in my hands I held a bloodstained handkerchief, with countless bright spots of blood spattered on the top sheet near my face – blood Slava donated by cautiously cutting his leg with Father's razor. Deep, dark shadows encircled my *chahotka* eyes. Uneven red spots on the cheeks were applied with the help of juice from a grated beet, diluted with water. No rouge or lipstick could be used to create such spots, because the soldiers could wipe away cosmetics. And those spots held the key to the whole charade, since it was those feverish spots and the blood on the sheet and handkerchief that the Soviets were almost superstitiously afraid of.

It was near noon when, already intoxicated, Red Army men appeared in our courtyard, splitting into several groups, and dashing into the apartments. At once piercing, animal-like screams of women rose in an anguished chorus. The children began to bawl, "Uncles! Don't hurt mama! My mama!"<sup>73</sup>

Markovna continues the story with many details of the mass raping by the drunken Soviet soldiers. Not all of the women survived, and some had medical complications afterward. There is no analysis in the text of the emotional or psychological effects of this kind of violence, but the matter of fact narration leaves the reader stunned and horrified. Markovna was aware of only one young married woman in their courtyard who avoided being raped. She tricked the soldiers by pretending that she was a nurse preparing to leave with her medical bag to help the wife of the head of the NKVD. She had an official-looking order and showed it to the soldiers asking if they could pronounce his name, if they knew how she could get there, and if she could get a ride from them. She would continue with the charade, all the while "shoving the men slowly out of her apartment, pretending to be leaving with them." The men continually just gave up and ran to the next apartment. She successfully repeated the act for three days, only fearing that the same men would come again and notice this nurse had not left yet.<sup>74</sup> These examples of camouflage reveal the desperation women and girls felt for themselves and for their loved ones.

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<sup>72</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 219. *Chahotka* was the colloquial term for consumption (tuberculosis).

<sup>73</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 218-220.

<sup>74</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 222.

And they had every reason to fear brutal and often fatal sexual attacks.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The eastern front is rife with examples of women and girls being targets of sexual humiliation by people with more power. The phenomenon of sexual harassment seems to mostly stem from a motivation for power and for dominating someone in a weaker position. In many examples, it seems that women and girls were the targets of sexual abuse because they were on an “enemy side.” Naturally, it is difficult to determine a person’s motivation for harassing or actually raping someone. Even if asked, the perpetrators may not know if some of the reasoning is at a less than conscious level, or if they have never analyzed it, they may not know the answer. As outlined in Chapter One, the typical feminist argument is that rape and sexual harassment have nothing to do with sexuality or sexual desire. Rather, according to the argument, rape only has to do with power, the abuse of power, and the desire to gain or feel more power.

In the examples provided the perpetrator often is not sexually engaged, and thus in the moment of the abuse the goal seems to have been to exert one's power. On the eastern front, there are cases, especially cases of sexual harassment, which hint that the immediate and primary motivation seemed to be about wanting to feel one’s power through the humiliation and shaming of another. That is, the abuser dominated someone sexually to gain a sense of power or control. In these cases, a motivation to actually be sexual or to have an orgasm or gain some kind of sexual satisfaction through oral sex, sexual intercourse, or masturbation does not come forth as clearly. Still, usually what is reported is only the incident itself. We do not know how the experience of sexually abusing someone remained with the perpetrator. Indeed, there are many references, for example, to orgies of alcohol and sex, sometimes in the form of rape, that perhaps some of the sexual desire for these gatherings comes from sexual stimulation the perpetrator gained at the time of abuse. This seems almost impossible to determine.

There are also several cases of sexual harassment and cases of rape for which the primary motivation for the abuser seems to have been sexual pleasure in a form that the abuser chose. In addition, despite the prevalence of examples of men targeting women, there are cases of women targeting men or men targeting men. Dr. Perl reported what she calls a “perverted” SS woman in Auschwitz who was sexually aroused by watching Perl operate on women’s breasts. She clearly received sexual satisfaction through watching the pain in others, inflicted on

women's breasts.<sup>75</sup> Although most examples tend to reveal women and girls who became victims in a sexual manner, men and boys also were targets of violent sexual torture. Heinz Heger, an anonymous homosexual survivor and memoirist, wrote about a camp commander who masturbated while he ordered a guard to whip a homosexual man mercilessly. Apparently, the more the tortured man screamed, the more excited the commander got.<sup>76</sup> These examples are similar to rape torture in which the perpetrator becomes sexually aroused when the victim is clearly suffering.

The World War II Soviet journalist, Konstantin Simonov, wrote an article titled "Extermination Camp." This is about the women's part of a camp where the women were guarded by SS women. Simonov investigated this, but did not know the name of the SS woman because everyone just referred to her as the *Lagerseyerka* (a modification of *Lageraufseher* (camp supervisor)).

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<sup>75</sup> The passage is as follows: "Irma Greze was the most depraved, cruel, imaginative sexual pervert I ever came across. She was the highest ranking S.S. woman in Auschwitz and it was my bad luck to be under her eyes during my entire camp life.

"One day she happened to visit the hospital while I was performing an operation on a young woman's breast, cut open by whipping and subsequently infected. I had no instruments whatsoever, except a knife which I had to sharpen on a stone. Breast operations are particularly painful, and, as there was not a drop of anesthetic in this mock hospital, my patient screamed with pain all through the operation.

"Irma Greze put down her whip, the handle of which was inlaid with colored beads, sat down on the corner of the bench which served as an operating table and watched me plunge my knife into the infected breast which spurted blood and pus in every direction.

"I happened to look up and encountered the most horrible sight I have ever seen, the memory of which will haunt me for the rest of my life. Irma Greze was enjoying the sight of this human suffering. Her tense body swung back and forth in a revealing, rhythmical motion. Her cheeks were flushed and her wide-open eyes had the rigid, staring look of complete sexual paroxysm.

"From that day on she went around in camp, her bejewelled whip poised, picked out the most beautiful young women and slashed their breasts open with the braided wire end of her whip. Subsequently those breasts got infected by the lice and dirt which invaded every nook and corner of the camp. They had to be cut open, if the patient was to be saved. Irma Greze invariably arrived to watch the operation, kicking the victim if her screams interfered with her pleasure and giving herself completely to the orgasmic spasms which shook her entire body and made saliva run down from the corner of her mouth." Perl, *Doctor*, 61-62. For further reading on Nazi sexuality, see Heineman, "Sexuality and Nazism: the Doubly Unspeakable?"; Mosse, *Nationalism*; Claudia Schoppmann, *Nationalsozialistische Sexualpolitik und weibliche Homosexualität, Frauen in Geschichte und Gesellschaft; Bd. 30* (Paffenweiler: Centaurus-Verl.-Ges., 1991).

<sup>76</sup> The passage is as follows: "I myself witnessed on more than thirty occasions how this camp commander got sexual satisfaction from watching the lashing inflicted on the 'horse,' and the perverted lust with which he followed each stroke and the screams of the victim. On one occasion there was one of us pink-triangle prisoners who failed to let out a sound while being beaten, even though he was thrashed most forcefully. However hard the S.S. man hit him, the prisoner kept his lips together. This robbed the commander of part of his fun, so he shouted at the prisoner: 'You filthy queer, why aren't you screaming? Perhaps you're enjoying it, you butt-fucker!' 'Start again from the beginning,' he said, turning to the SS guard, 'and go on until the swine starts screaming.

"The SS man struck with such force that the victim's skin broke open in centimeter-wide weals at each stroke, and his blood ran down to the ground. Now even the 'silent one' saw reason; he howled like an animal and screamed for help - help which we couldn't give him. But the commander was panting with excitement, and masturbated wildly in his trousers until he came." Heger, *Pink Triangle*, 55.

At the morning or evening check-up she would pick out from among the emaciated and exhausted women the one who was the most beautiful, and who had more or less retained a human appearance, and without any cause, swinging her whip she would hit the woman across the breasts. When the victim, felled by the blow, would fall to the ground, the *Lagersejverka* would deal her a second blow with the whip between the legs and a third blow to the same place with her metal-shod boot. Usually the woman would no longer be capable of rising, and before getting up would crawl for a long time, leaving a bloody trail. After one or two such executions the women would turn into cripples and soon die.<sup>77</sup>

This is sexual in that personal and sexual areas of the body were the target, and the motivation of the perpetrator seems to have been mostly about power, at least from what is told, but again we cannot say if the abuser was sexually stimulated. As mostly an outsider, despite having been raised in a “rape culture,” just because I am not sexually stimulated reading about this violent sexual harassment does not mean that others are not or that the perpetrator was not.<sup>78</sup>

Another example reveals the sexual humiliation prisoners suffered in the Skar ysko-Kamienna camp where, under new leadership, the camp was segregated by sexes. This made it easier for the new commandant, Paul Kuehnemann, a German gentile who spoke fluent Yiddish, to spy on the women. One time he caught a couple hiding and having sexual intercourse and forced them to do so again in front of “an audience of prisoners, an incident that shocked the entire camp.”<sup>79</sup> Here the motivation of the perpetrator is unclear, but the victims suffered humiliation in the most intimate realms of their personhood.

Other examples reveal both a motivation to be sexual, as well as a motivation to abuse one’s power by humiliating those with less power and who are in a vulnerable position. A Lithuanian girl from the ghetto told Dr. Elena Buividaite-Kutorgene in 1941 that, “a young German walked into her apartment and ordered her to stand against the wall; he said that he was now going to shoot her...She stood there trembling with horror, while he kissed her for a long time...Then he laughed and said he was joking...”<sup>80</sup> Those who were selected as prostitutes in camp brothels were also forced to undress in front of other women, the SS, and various camp personnel. Frau B., a German woman forced into prostitution by the German officials, reported

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<sup>77</sup> Ehrenburg and Simonov, *In One Newspaper: A Chronicle of Unforgettable Years*, 427.

<sup>78</sup> Roth, “Transforming.”

<sup>79</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 125.

<sup>80</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 358.

that it was like at a “meat inspection.”<sup>81</sup> Erika Buchmann, a political prisoner and block elder in Ravensbrück also reported the women were paraded in the *Revier* in front of the SS officers. The women who were less than pretty were sent to the brothels established in concentration camps for male prisoners, the prettier to the Wehrmacht brothels and the prettiest to the SS brothels.<sup>82</sup> This kind of harassment inflicted by the Germans onto those with less power is similar to the previous examples, and yet the descriptions also insinuate a sexual stimulation on the part of perpetrator.

Following are examples where people were humiliated by verbal and sexual harassment, and the dynamics tend to reveal that it was less about wanting to be sexual and more about abusing power. It was another way for the more powerful to humiliate and hurt those who were at their mercy. Yet it must be reiterated that I state this with hesitancy for the reasons previously stated. When people first arrived at a camp they were usually brought through the showers and hair dressers to be decontaminated, shaved, and re-clothed. Naked and cold, the women and men would be inspected, beaten, and ordered into their new camp outfits. There are many accounts of this in memoirs. In her chapter titled “The ‘Beauty Parlor’” Dr. Gisela Perl, survivor and memoirist, wrote in 1948 about how young SS men humiliated and harassed the women prisoners as they first arrived at Auschwitz. Calling the disinfection center the “beauty parlor” was “one of the typical Nazi jokes, a creation of their devilish imagination, which served to humiliate their victims and make their short remaining life-span all the more horrible and distressing.” The experience went as follows:

The first room into which we stepped was filled with young S.S. men. Their eyes shone with expectation, their ape-like movements betrayed an unhealthy, abnormal sexual excitement...

Coarse voices ordered us to undress. Some of us obeyed automatically, too exhausted to resist. Soon we stood naked, our clothes in a heap around our feet. Some of us protested, but our protests were soon stilled by blows and cruel kicks. There was no escape. In a few short minutes modesty, which had been drilled into us by generations of parents and educators, became a thing of the past. The many women, young and old, ugly and beautiful, undernourished and well-fed, stood defenseless, naked, in a row, exposing their bodies to the curious, hungry eyes of the perverted, depraved thugs who represented

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<sup>81</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 45.

<sup>82</sup> Buchmann, 1946, p.18, quoted in Schulz, "Weibliche," 139.



Germany's pride.<sup>83</sup>

Additionally, in another part of her memoir, Perl writes about how having been selected to go to the "right" Dr. Perl and the other prisoners were brought to be disinfected instead of to be murdered.

Under the supervision of S.S. men and women other prisoners carried out the program of disinfection. We were undressed there before the laughing S.S. guards who showed their appreciation for some of the beautiful bodies by slashing them with whips. Everything that could have reminded us of our past life was taken away from us.<sup>84</sup>

Similarly, L.J. Micheels's girlfriend Nora was enraged about her experience in Auschwitz: "Furious and upset, she told me how the S.S. had spent a long time watching the women shower."<sup>85</sup> Survivor and author, Eugen Kogon wrote about the men's experience as they first entered Buchenwald and went through the bathhouse. "By way of 'control,' the men had to squat down before the SS noncoms, backside forward and legs spread out. This was a source of particular glee to perverts among the SS, especially when celebrities were involved."<sup>86</sup>

Frieda Frome, a Jewish survivor and memoirist, wrote shortly after the war about her experiences in Lithuania and tells of females being violated by Germans who were searching the ghetto in Kaunas for Jewish valuables. "Many girls were forced to undress and pose in the nude for the Nazis' entertainment. One girl had all the hair clipped from one side of her head. The SD laughed long and loudly at the freakish appearance the terrified girl made."<sup>87</sup> Indeed, the many descriptions of this kind of harassment of victims forced to reveal their bodies to strangers reveal a motivation on the part of the perpetrators to humiliate their victims in a most intimate way and invading another's private space. This could have allowed the perpetrators to feel their power.

<sup>83</sup> Perl, *Doctor*, 42-44. Survivor Rose Meth also wrote about her arrival at Birkenau: "I can't begin to describe the shock and the humiliation. We were sheltered children. They made us undress completely naked in front of the Nazi soldiers. We wanted to die." Rose Meth, "Resistance," in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 136.

<sup>84</sup> Perl, *Doctor*, 29-30.

<sup>85</sup> Micheels, *Doctor*, 60.

<sup>86</sup> Kogon, *Theory*, 73. Kogon also tells of a pre-war example of SS sexual cruelty toward Franciscan monks: "To serve his notions of a practical joke, Koch [an SS Lieutenant-Colonel] permitted the monks to retain their brown cassocks and invented the tale that they were infested with crab lice. The monks were assembled and an SS physician issued them a salve. They were compelled to lift up their cassocks and let down their trousers, while a shrieking horde of SS bullies recited obscene jokes, read aloud from pornographic books and held up lewd pictures. The rest of the scene afforded ample opportunity for a hail of blows and kicks and other vile abuse" (p. 142).

<sup>87</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 42.

With the amount of information we have on incidents such as these, it is difficult to determine how much or if the perpetrator was sexually stimulated through the abuse.

Such humiliations happened in settings outside the camps as well. According to Nina Markovna's memoir, east European women and girls who were taken to work in Germany during the war also had to undergo a humiliating and unsanitary genital exam by a German doctor. Three thousand people signed up to leave their starving city of Feodosia.<sup>88</sup> Everyone had to have routine medical exams and be disinfected, but the women also had to be checked for pregnancy. Not only was this humiliating and invasive, but it was also unhygienic because the doctor did not change his gloves for each woman.<sup>89</sup>

When they arrived in a small town in Germany the easterners were disinfected more thoroughly, but with cold water. The people were expecting the Russian *banya*, and when the cold water started flowing one of the Russians said, "That's bathing? If Germans bathe that way, they must stink." She had the courage to ask the guard for hot water and a sponge, but the guard whipped her on her behind, laughing. Later, they were "disinfected" once again, and the Germans cut off many of the women's hair because of lice. Russian braids are sacred to Russians, and many women wept.<sup>90</sup> Tatjana Wassiljewna, a Russian survivor of the war and memoir author, wrote that when she arrived in Germany at just over ten years of age, the Russians also had to undress in front of strangers, German men who had taken charge.

We are taken to the bathhouse. There is no bath though; it is more like a shower. The Germans – men! – hose us down row by row, spraying us with some kind of liquid. I have never stood naked in front of a man. What must it be like for the older girls and women! I

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<sup>88</sup> In the Cherkassy region of Ukraine we were told about how the people dreaded being drafted for this work. One woman told us in great detail the story about how she jumped from the train, broke her leg and was subsequently caught again and sent to Germany anyway. No. 7, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Her story was confirmed by another interviewee. No. 9, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Another woman explained how she jumped from a train and made it home after hiding in the ditch all night. No. 6, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Most people I interviewed who were forced to travel to Germany traveled by train, and the conditions were not good. One woman told us the following: "There was a building and they locked us there. Then after dinner before the night we were transferred to a school by the railroad station. And then the transport train came and we were thrown in among the animals, just like we were animals. There was straw and all of that. The train was full, you had to stand. One German was sitting with a rifle by the door. We were taken to Germany. At first we were crying. When we were taken there the people were falling down and fainting, well in general, it wasn't good." No. 14, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>89</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 249-251.

<sup>90</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 261-265.

feel humiliated, for them as well as for me.<sup>91</sup>

This humiliation that Russian and other east European girls and women experienced is not unlike the examples from the camps.<sup>92</sup> In these instances, sexual satisfaction does not appear to have been a motive of the perpetrators, but it is clearly an abuse of the Germans' power.

Indeed, it seems that sexual humiliation and torture in the concentration camps and elsewhere in the German Reich was quite common, and that although men and boys suffered from this kind of abuse, women and girls seem to have been more frequent targets. Abuse of power is evident here, but the desire for sexual satisfaction through sexual abuse sometimes also comes through. Similar abuses of power are evident in the many examples of rape on the eastern front. Here, the perpetrators clearly wanted to have sexual intercourse, and many examples reveal a primary motivation of sexual desire.

### German Brutal Sexual Crimes

Historian Nina Tumarkin writes, the Germans in the east "tortured and murdered civilians at the slightest pretext. As for rape – there was no need for any pretext."<sup>93</sup> The war in the east was extremely brutal and violated international laws of war because of the conscious decision by Hitler and his men to wage a war of extermination against the Soviet Union.<sup>94</sup> Armed with the blessings of Hitler and the military leadership, the troops sent to the east were allowed "all reprisals to be made against the inhabitants of Soviet cities and towns. In accordance with

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<sup>91</sup> Wassiljewa, *Hostage*, 49.

<sup>92</sup> Hannah Bannett, Jewish survivor, explained that she was hid her identity and lived in Crakow for a while during the war. There, she worked for Sepp Wirth, who apparently "was a good friend of Hans Frank, the governor general of Poland." Another Jewish woman also worked for Wirth, and he complimented Bannett on her German. Later, she quit the job because he made sexual advances toward her. Bannett does not clarify whether Wirth knew she was Jewish, though he may have, since there was another Jewish woman there as well. Hannah Bannett, "Hannah Bannett," in *Mothers, Sisters, Resisters: Oral Histories of Women Who Survived the Holocaust*, ed. Brana Gurewitsch (Tuscaloo and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 58.

<sup>93</sup> Tumarkin was specifically writing about German crimes against Slavs, who also "found themselves the victims of both racism taken to its extreme and a thorough, ideologically based hatred of communism." Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia*, 68.

<sup>94</sup> In part, the Nazis justified this because the Soviet Union had never formally signed the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. However, the Soviet Union had adhered to parts of these laws (maritime warfare principles, the 1935 Geneva Protocol concerning poisonous gases and bacteriological methods of warfare, and the 1929 Geneva Convention concerning wounded and sick in armies in the field), and Soviet officials have argued before and during WWII that the Soviets in general have long adhered to universally recognized laws of war. For more information on the Soviet side of the story, see George Ginsburgs, "Laws of War and War Crimes on the Russian Front during World War II: The Soviet View," *Soviet Studies* 11, no. 3 (1960).

this order, military courts received instructions to ignore the complaints of the Ukrainian, Russian, and Belorussian population against the lawless acts committed by the soldiers and officers of the German army.”<sup>95</sup> The orders issued by the OKW and OKH were composed in four sets of instructions, three of which allowed great freedoms for crimes against Soviet civilians:

1. Regulations concerning the activities of the Einsatzgruppen of the SS and SD, which enabled these murder squads to operate with relative freedom within the areas controlled by the army groups under the direct command of Reinhard Heydrich.
2. The curtailment of military jurisdiction (Die Einschränkung der Kriegsgerichtsbarkeit), which stipulated that guerrillas, and civilians suspected of assisting them, were to be shot by the army, and that in case no guilty party could be found, collective measures were to be taken against the civilian population in the area.
3. The Commissar Order, which called for the shooting of any Red Army political commissar captured by the troops.
4. The ‘Guidelines for the Conduct of the Troops in Russia’, which ordered ruthless measures against ‘Bolshevik agitators, guerrillas, saboteurs and Jews’ and called for the complete elimination of any active or passive resistance.<sup>96</sup>

Under these orders, the Wehrmacht and the SS razed entire villages, and murdered masses of east European citizens by shooting, burning them alive, or by starvation and exposure. Regardless of their cultural, religious, or national backgrounds, they were Soviet and therefore the enemy. As Truman Anderson writes, “a bitter, unrestrained war against ‘Jewish Bolshevism’ is no longer at issue: the German military endorsed a range of brutal occupation policies that meant death for millions of Soviet civilians and prisoners of war.”<sup>97</sup>

The situation in the east was considerably different than in the west. What was considered a punishable crime in France, for example, was not punishable in the east. German troops were under tremendous physical strain, and when there was heavy fighting it was difficult to bring all cases of crimes to court. In this kind of intentionally brutal atmosphere, the military

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<sup>95</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, xxix.

<sup>96</sup> Streit, *Kameraden*, pp. 28-61; Jacobsen, ‘Kommissarbefehl’, pp. 170-182; Jacobsen, *1939-1945*, pp. 441-516; Krausnick, ‘Kommissarbefehl’; A. Roberts and R. Guelff (eds), *Documents on the Laws of War* (Oxford, 1982) pp. 1-22, 43-59, 153-6; D. Schindler and J. Toman (eds), *The Laws of Armed Conflicts* (Geneva, 1973) pp. 247-88. Military aspects of the Barbarossa Orders in H.R. Trevor-Roper (ed.), *Hitler’s War Directives*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1978) [n. 1], quoted in Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 106. Also Schulte, *German Army*, 1-17.

<sup>97</sup> Truman Anderson, “Incident at Baranivka: German Reprisals and the Soviet Partisan Movement in Ukraine, October-December 1941,” *The Journal of Modern History* 71, no. 3 (1999): 590. The Belorussian Shmuel-Dovid Kugel also recorded that “It was known that entire villages and towns had been wiped out for the killing of a single German.” Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 156.

leadership did not view rape as a crime, but as an action against partisans or other Soviet enemies. Under these circumstances, what was viewed as rape in the west would not be considered rape in the east. The rules were entirely different. Historian Bartov writes,

the definitions of the offences may well have changed depending on the period and location. Thus, for example, looting of boots in France may have been considered to be 'theft', whereas in Russia it would not be thought of as an offence at all; rape in France would be defined as a 'moral offence', whereas in Russia, if considered at all, it might appear as a racial offence, health hazard or even as 'collaboration with partisans'.<sup>98</sup>

In other words, Bartov found that rape of a woman in the east would only be considered a crime because the offender was allegedly "sleeping with the enemy." Bartov concludes that "we can therefore surmise that looting the Russian civilians was not called 'plundering' and not prosecuted, and that raping Russian women was not considered to be a 'moral offence'."<sup>99</sup>

Instead sexual offences were, "at the most, 'racial offences' or 'fraternisation.'"<sup>100</sup>

Indeed, although rape was not a formal military tactic, German men received what we could call a blessing to rape. A regulation from the Main SS Court Office (*Hauptamt SS-Gericht*) declared that the lack of sexual intercourse and the large amounts of alcohol consumed should be considered "extenuating circumstances" and should not be punished severely, especially if it were the first offense.<sup>101</sup> Ironically, historian Birgit Beck reveals that some judges treated German rapists with pity because of the difficult situation on the eastern front. Beck argues that this "so-called 'sexual predicament' of soldiers played a considerable role here and was taken into account when a sentence was given."<sup>102</sup> In light of what seems to have been ample sexual outlets in the many German military brothels, private brothels, or with street prostitutes or women willing to enter a prostitutional relationship, the idea of a "sexual predicament" seems more similar to an excuse on the part of the leadership.

In addition to the official German military sanction of excessive cruelty to civilians in the east, the laws on rape also reflected a complete lack of concern for the topic, despite the

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<sup>98</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 127.

<sup>99</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 29. Neither definition accurately describes rape for what it is – a brutal crime.

<sup>100</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 116.

<sup>101</sup> Doc. 15: Erlaß-Slg. Des Hauptamtes SS-Gericht, BA/MA NSD 41/39, published in Sander and Johr, eds., *Befreier*, 68.

<sup>102</sup> Beck, "Rape," 265.

related health risks to their own men or the obvious moral questions. Since 1941, crimes such as rape could be punished with the death sentence, but this was meant only for the rape of German women and was intended to protect the German community. Therefore, rape by Germans of non-German women in other countries was not punishable by death, nor even taken seriously, especially in the east.<sup>103</sup> This is clear in the change in the law for rape in October 1940 which rendered rape a “petitioned crime” (*Antragsdelikt*) meaning that punishment had to be requested.<sup>104</sup> Historian Christa Paul writes, this resulted in “a nearly complete absence of prosecution and punishment for rapes.”<sup>105</sup> It is not likely that women in occupied eastern territory would come forth to complain. In her comparison of rape cases in the east and in the west, Beck found that witness testimony of rape in the east was relatively rare, indicating the opinion that the words or testimony of a Slavic person was not worth much to the Germans. Witness testimony in rape cases in the west were far more numerous.<sup>106</sup>

Furthermore, we have seen in Chapter Two the large number of discipline cases in which alcohol played a role. Birgit Beck also found in her comparison of rape cases on the western and eastern fronts that the “excessive consumption of alcohol” played a “big role,” according to the testimonies of perpetrators and witnesses.<sup>107</sup> We must consider that sometimes the perpetrator may have exaggerated his drunkenness in the hope of receiving a lighter sentence. Considering the repetitive warnings about alcohol from the German leadership, intoxication certainly could have influenced the number of rapes men committed. As with other crimes, alcohol would make it easier to sexually assault another human.

As we saw in the chapter on German military prostitution, the German leadership changed its mind about having sex with “inferior” peoples in the brothels, because being sexual with a prostitute was different than being sexual with someone met in another place. The German leadership felt the same about raping, which was not viewed as such a violent act if it was

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<sup>103</sup> See Bartov, *Eastern Front*; Beck, “Rape,” 256-257; Majer, *Fremdvölkische*.

<sup>104</sup> Reichsgesetzblatt I, S. 1347; vgl. auch Rudolf Absolon, *Das Wehrmachtsstrafrecht im 2. Weltkrieg*, Kornelimünster 1958, S. 35 [n.13], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 140-141.

<sup>105</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 102.

<sup>106</sup> Beck, “Rape,” 260.

<sup>107</sup> Beck, “Rape,” 259.

perpetrated against someone allegedly inferior to the German people.<sup>108</sup> In fact, one court case for the rape of a Russian woman reveals the ideological position taken when considering the fate of a Russian female. A man received eight months for the rape of a woman who, as the judge ruled, “belongs to a people for which the concept of women’s sexual honor has more or less entirely vanished.” The judge continued, “the decisive factor for the punishment was first and foremost the serious violation of discipline which the accused, by committing this crime, is guilty of, as well as the serious damage to the reputation of the German Wehrmacht which is the result of his crime.”<sup>109</sup> In other words, the lack of discipline in such a matter made the Germans look bad. What happened to the Russian woman was purely incidental.

Raping a woman who acted like or was a prostitute was like sleeping with a “whore,” especially if she was not German. In fact, the case against three Estonian Wehrmacht members for the rape of Klawdija B. shows this attitude. The case recorder wrote that this was a case of a “typical rape,” and that German concerns were not affected since the guilty and the victim were locals, and therefore there was no reason to take measures against the rapists. But the case recorder wrote in the report that the two men viewed this woman as a prostitute and because they believed her to be a prostitute, they used force when she resisted being sexual with them. They thought she resisted only because she was menstruating, the logic being that a prostitute would never resist. The case report, in German, also states that additional evidence that the men viewed her as a prostitute (and therefore rapeable) was that the one man tried to rape her orally. Although unstated, the assumption was that one did not have oral sex with a woman one views as “proper.”<sup>110</sup> In this rape case, German concerns were not affected, and so nothing was done to punish the rapists.

Similarly, Nikolas Laskovsky, who practiced law in Ukraine under the German occupation, does not mention rape cases in particular, but writes that “it was characteristic of the German Court to give light sentences when the case did not ‘touch the interests of the German administration.’ On the other hand very severe sentences followed when the interests of the

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<sup>108</sup> Ruth Seifert, *Frauen, Männer und Militär (II): Vier Thesen zur Männlichkeit (in) der Armee*, Sowi-Arbeitspapier Nr. 61 (Munich, 1992), 9-10, quoted in Beck, “Rape,” 266.

<sup>109</sup> BA-ZNS, S 269, ‘Gericht der 7. Panz.Division, Feldurteil vom 19. August 1941’, 22-23, quoted in Beck, “Rape,” 263.

<sup>110</sup> Leiter der Staatsanwaltschaft beim Deutschen Gericht, Police report to Herr Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD. Estland – Abt. AV, Reval, 10 May 1944 to 4 June 1944, ESA Fond R65s, Opis 1s, Del 1278, docs. 1-4.

German administration seemed to have been ‘touched.’”<sup>111</sup> In the rape case of Klawdija B., although there was an investigation, the conclusion of the German court shows the lack of concern for rape victims or survivors. Laskovsky also reported that the sentences for various crimes changed during the German occupation.<sup>112</sup> More research needs to be completed to better understand sentencing in different locations and at different times of the war.

Of course, there were rape cases in the east where the rapists were sentenced. It seems that the issue for the Germans was one of visibility. If it was a highly visible case, then the rapist was sentenced. Otherwise, they did not punish the men. One example of a highly visible assault is the 1941 case against two Germans, Oskar Schulz and Karl Kurowski, both of whom were sentenced to death for the brutal rape of a Polish woman in Pniewo. Schulz raped her orally and vaginally while the other man held her down until he (Schulz) was “sexually satisfied.” Schulz threatened the woman throughout the assault with his weapon. Then Kurowski raped her vaginally, but before he was “finished,” a member of the German police grabbed the men. A group of about fifty Poles had gathered around the scene. The woman’s husband also had arrived and told the Germans to let his wife go, but Schulz hit him with his weapon. Her mother also witnessed the scene, but because of the weapon she and the others were too fearful to do anything.<sup>113</sup>

This case, like so many others on file, goes into great detail about how much the men drank in various locales. It is quite clear that they were intoxicated, and at first they claimed that they did not know what they had done. Still, this was not viewed as an excuse, and the men were sentenced to death. Because of the large number of witnesses and perhaps because it was in 1941, the Germans were concerned about their image and used this case in the early period of their occupation to set an example of their lawfulness. Other rape cases also ended in convictions

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<sup>111</sup> Nikolas Laskovsky, "Practicing Law in the Occupied Ukraine," *American Slavic and East European Review* 11, no. 2 (1952): 129-130.

<sup>112</sup> Laskovsky discussed a change in judicial decisions that became especially noticeable after the summer of 1943 in Ukraine. He writes, “It became obvious that there had come from ‘above’ an order to avoid antagonizing the local population with too severe sentences in cases which might be relatively unimportant.” Prior to this period, someone caught slaughtering cattle was sentenced to two to three years in prison. In the fall of 1943 similar cases were given much milder sentences. One man in particular was sentenced to three months in prison, but let go immediately after the trial on the grounds that he had already been in prison during the preliminary investigation. Laskovsky, "Practicing Law," 131-132.

<sup>113</sup> Strafsache gegen Oskar Schulz and Karl Kurowski, USHMM, RG-15.014M, Records of the Sondergericht Hohensalza (Inowroclaw), Reel 2, Group Od nr. 51, do nr 100, 1941, docs. 1-17.



of the accused rapist in part because of the German concern to uphold their image, at least that is what the German documents state.

Similarly, another rape case against the German Adolf Warnke allegedly damaged the Germans' image, and he was therefore punished. Warnke was in his SA uniform and raped a Polish girl. The case reporter alleges that the girl was a believable witness who made a good impression. More importantly perhaps, was that there were two other men who had seen her just before or just after the rape and vouched for her honesty. One of the men even went to the police with the story. According to the case report, the accused man was sentenced to the "relatively harsh" sentence of eight years prison not really to protect the Polish girl's sexual honor, but because the German man had seriously damaged the image of the Germans in this area.<sup>114</sup>

Likewise, in the case against *Volksdeutsche* August Tober, the Polish woman he allegedly raped also had men who went to the police for her to vouch that the intoxicated man had raped her. According to the accused, the woman and her husband were known as enemies of Germany (*deutschfeindlich*), and she was sexually "loose." But his testimony was full of contradictions, and the woman and her husband seemed trustworthy. Tober also threatened her by saying he would use his weapon against her. A man who raped a woman without threatening with his weapon, even if the weapon was at his side with easy access and in full view of the woman, was not necessarily viewed as serious a crime.<sup>115</sup> Tober was sentenced to nine years for armed robbery and rape. In addition, according to the case report, his sentence was not reduced because of the damage he did to the image of the German in the occupied east.<sup>116</sup>

In the interviews I conducted in the Cherkassy region of Ukraine, we learned many painful stories of rape by German soldiers and officers under the German occupation, most of which seem to have never been reported. One story told of a young girl gang raped by three Germans. She survived, and her mother came to help her after the Germans left. It seems people in the village could hear what was happening, but no one dared go help the girl:

Woman 2: And Peter's Maria died, she's not here.

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<sup>114</sup> Strafsache gegen Adolf Warnke, USHMMA, RG-15.014M, Reel 1, Group Nr. 200 do nr 250, 1940, docs. 445-459.

<sup>115</sup> HA. SS-Gericht – 6. S.E., Ziffer 23 vom 15.12.1940, in: Sammelerlasse des Reichsführers-SS, Hauptamt SS-Gericht vom 1.8.1944, S. 102, Bundesarchiv NSD 41/312 [n.15], quoted in Seidler, *Prostitution*, 141-142.

<sup>116</sup> Strafsache gegen August Tober, USHMMA, RG-15.014M, Reel 1, Group Nr. 251 do nr 299, 1940, docs. 112-124.

Woman 1: They took her. They caught her...

Woman 2: In a school. Here where the school was.

Woman 1: They brought her to the school and she, and there were three of them. So she yelled, yelled, and mother stood and took her that way.... The Mother said, "that's alright child, at least you are still alive." ...

Woman 2: There were three Germans. Germans, and she was yelling as loud as she could but nobody went there. Nobody went, nobody helped her. She was just screaming....She was eighteen years old.<sup>117</sup>

Similarly, the two women in Interview No. 32 told about the woman who lived nearby and whom at least two Germans allegedly raped in a cornfield. At the time of the rape, she would have been about age fourteen. When we spoke with her, however, she told us about awful crimes, but never once came forth to say that was assaulted.<sup>118</sup>

One Ukrainian woman told us about the rape and torture by Germans of a woman or girl, as well as the abduction of girls by Germans for sex. Like other interviewees, she gesticulated as she spoke, and we could sense her excitement.

Woman: They were there by the department of forestry. They – her. She was fighting. So they beat her up. They made an invalid out of her. They broke through her head.

Assistant: Germans?

Woman: Yea....when they were staying here... Well, yea, and in our house I wasn't home already, that my mother used to tell, there was some kind of girls, and what were they doing? ... They were forcefully taken and they were by them, by those Germans.

Assistant: Girls?

Woman: They didn't have any place to be.

Assistant: Ah, so they just took them.

Woman: They took them as...Like lovers.<sup>119</sup>

Indeed, this woman indicated that what could be viewed as a prostitutional relationship really was sexual slavery if the woman could not escape or was too frightened to try to escape.

One man told us about his mother who was gang raped by eight German men. He cried as he told the story. The pain and loss in his slurred words were very obvious. Later, as the front moved west he fought with the Red Army and had many medals to show us. He was very proud of them and let us photograph him with his jacket and medals. When asked about his mother, he explained how over the course of four days the Germans came each night and raped the females. Those who survived lied about what had happened and disappeared.

<sup>117</sup> No. 8, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>118</sup> Nos. 32 and 33, interviews by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>119</sup> No. 10, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

Man: Eighteen people in our house, [mmm, mmm], by the Dnepr everybody was moved to us in Yasnozir, Shelepuxi, Sofievka, Melniki, all. And there were eighteen people in our house, laying all next to each other on the floor [like a rug].

Assistant: Eighteen people in one room, eighteen in one room, eighteen people.

Man: Yea, all next to each other they were lying. ... And so comes one German.

Assistant: A German comes.

Man: Yea, and he grabbed a girl, fourteen years old. In his arms and he carried her. Well, so where did he take her, so you know [untranslatable crazy expression], you know, where he took her. She came back, and said that he left. Said, he took me to the headquarters and then let me go. She quickly grabbed all her belongings and [took off] to the forest. ... Those were our boys [there], the partisans. The second night, came two, and her sister was with a child, with a little one. They grabbed her too. The child was screaming, but he carried her. Well, minutes, you know, how long it takes for a German to do it, twenty minutes, forty minutes. There were two of them. They did their business. She came and said, "they also took me to the headquarters." Well, she didn't want to admit what they did there. ... So she also took the child during the night, and all [her stuff], so, during the night, and she left. On the third night [they] came. Everyone ran away. Only the men remained. He touched me all through the night [probably meant to see if there were any girls]. A woman [*baba*] of ninety years, they grabbed her and took her behind the house. Well, ninety years old. They came, that is, [the woman] said. "Here is the headquarters, behind the house. What will they do to me? Pushed, pushed [*tovkli* or "knocked me up, knocked up"] and they ran away." On the fourth night they came, my mother didn't run away. They grabbed her, eight men and took me, you understand, I wanted to cry, ended up in a shed. And in a shed one ran out, second grabbed, third one grabbed, and that's how they raped her. Barely, barely, I pulled [brought] her into the house. ... ..

Assistant: Do you remember how many days she lay there sick?

Man: In other words, she, I don't know, how long she was laying, because right away the police came and then sent me again to Germany, mmm.<sup>120</sup>

When he returned from the war with his medals his mother had been buried. Thus, according to this man, the Germans raped two young girls, a woman of ninety years, and his mother. The three who survived were unable to admit what had happened and were not willing to ask for help or support. Instead they lied about what had happened to them and then left to be on their own.

From what we know, nothing was ever done about these crimes.

Some older women felt safe because they thought the Germans would only want sex with a young woman or girl, but there are stories of military men raping older women. Of course, whether one is "old" is all relative. In an interview I asked about the age of a rape victim, and the man said that one time the Germans raped an "old woman."

Man: My friend told about it, I didn't know myself, but she was his neighbor...She was, maybe already forty years old at the time, yes, I think, forty years, well, maybe even more. Her, she was alone, lived by herself...Her husband was the head of the police during the

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<sup>120</sup> No. 12, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

war, but he wasn't here anymore, he had left earlier, yes, he already didn't live with her. So my friend explained that...she was afraid by herself and asked if he could come to her. He was a boy, like about fourteen years at the time, fourteen years. He said, "I slept on the stove and the woman on the stove-bench." She was scared to be in her home alone...Yes, and then Germans burst in, one German burst in, yes. He went to her and he said, "I hid out in the corner and I was scared." Well, she resisted for some time, but he raped her. She said, "I'm old, I'm, I'm fifty years old," she said. "I'm old, I'm fifty." But he said, "And I'm twenty-five."

Author: Many men or one?

Man: One, yes, one, yes. She said, "I'm old, I'm 50." And he said, "I'm twenty-five," and still went ahead and raped her, and then left, yes. He told me, I remember.<sup>121</sup>

Yet even older women were raped. The veteran above told of the ninety-year-old woman whom the Germans raped the night before they fatally raped his mother.<sup>122</sup> Yet another woman told us about German soldiers raping two older women. They had not hid because they thought they would be safe. The younger of the two women who had hid on the stove ran for help.<sup>123</sup> Still, it seems that at least some older women felt that their age would protect them. I asked one interviewee how it was for her mother during the war, and she said, "She was not afraid of anybody. Nobody touched the older ones. She was old at that time. So they lived like we lived. There were especially after the younger ones. And the older ones, those kind of trunks, they were not needed. What for would he need an old woman?"<sup>124</sup> But another woman commented that "if there was an older woman or a younger woman then [the Germans] would rape."<sup>125</sup>

A woman or girl may have been safer if she had a child as well. In one case, the rapists chose not to rape one of the women because she had a baby. Instead they took the one who was not carrying the infant. The woman explained that the rape occurred on a road coming from Belaziria almost to Soviefka:

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<sup>121</sup> We continued: Author: When was that? Man: Well, it was the fall of 1943 sometime, or the beginning of 1944. I don't remember exactly, but during that time, roughly during that time. Author: In Moshni? Man: Yes, of course, in Moshni, yes. Mm, maybe you heard, there was the head of the police, Antin Sovchenko, Sov...Well, he was the head of the police in Moshni, and then he was sentenced to be shot...That was his wife, his wife Ganna. No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>122</sup> No. 12, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>123</sup> No. 26, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>124</sup> No. 6, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>125</sup> No. 10, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

Woman: My husband's wife was walking. And there [with] that Hanna Buikiska, and who else? Somebody else was walking with her. So the Germans stopped them on the road. They took her in the house where Alyosha, where Liuba lived. So they pulled the woman into the house. So whatever they wanted to do there they did. She lost consciousness and there was blood so the neighbors saw that they left and then they went in and started to give her water.

Assistant: And brought her back to consciousness.

Woman: And brought her back to consciousness. And she lived for sometime. ...

Assistant: So you said actually it was on a straight street, on a road, they caught?

Woman: On the road. They were walking on a street and they took my husband's first wife. So she showed that she has a little child. So they didn't touch her. So my husband's wife wasn't touched. That one...nothing. ...

Assistant: And how many men were there?

Woman: Three men.

Assistant: She was bleeding?

Woman: Yea, yea. She was really bleeding. It was terrible.<sup>126</sup>

In other cases it did not matter if there was a child present. Again, there are exceptions to patterns found in the cases, but the single constant is armed men and unarmed civilians. Two other women told me Germans came into a house, raped, and then murdered an expecting woman.<sup>127</sup>

An educated man told us about a few incidents, one of them was the attempted assault and murder of a young Ukrainian woman, who had gone to the Germans to inquire about her husband. She was young and beautiful.

Man: One woman, the Germans arrested her husband...she went to ask if they would free him...she never made it to the commander, to their commander. They ran after her, the soldiers, she, she understood what they wanted and wanted to run away. But they shot her, yes, her husband remained, he remained alive, it's true, they released him afterwards, but they shot her, I know that...

Author: They didn't rape her?

Man: No. They maybe wanted to, but she, she ran, they opened fire, started to shoot at her, and she there, that is, she fell and died from the wounds.

Author: A young Ukrainian woman?

Man: Yes, yes...Her husband was even, you know, her husband was the director, the school director during the war, yes. There was school for some of the time and he was the director of it. It was his wife...she just wanted to ask whether he could be freed...<sup>128</sup>

One Soviet officer told us about a brutal gang rape, murder and mutilation, the remains

<sup>126</sup> No. 9, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>127</sup> No. 8, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>128</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

of which he was shown as they entered a village in eastern Europe. His troops arrived in this village about the same time the main army took the Cherkassy Pocket. The Germans had retreated in a hurry. This was evident because they left behind two railroad cars full of sugar. One of the officer's men came running to him and told him he had to show him something.

We went, not too far away was a house. In the house you could see that the Germans had been there. The icons were on the floor, broken. On the table there was food and alcohol. So that's what remained on the table. Where the icon was supposed to be there stood an undressed young girl, about fifteen to sixteen years old, and in that place [vagina] there was a bottle stuffed. The breast was cut into four pieces and the blood was running down her legs and onto the floor. And she was *raspiata* [arms like Jesus Christ]. When I saw it I was so fearful, so I came out and started to collect the people so that they would see, so that they wouldn't say that our soldiers did it. She was cold already. So when I brought the people and they looked, oh my god, it was awful, it was scary. Such a girl, just like a flower and so beautiful, such a nice figure. So they killed her, and just like Jesus Christ on a cross they put the nails, and where the icons were hanging they tied her head to some kind of stick, and to kill her where the very important icon was. And the legs were hanging. Oh it was so scary.

Assistant: Did you find out who did it?

Veteran: Germans, Germans. There was a *Staab* [headquarters] there, they were drinking there, they were having fun there.

Assistant: And about this girl, do you remember, what was said? Who was she? How did she behave? What made it so that they did such a thing to her?

Veteran: She was the owner of that house.

Assistant: Oh, owner of that house?

Veteran: Yea, owner of that house.

Assistant: Yea, yea, a girl?

Veteran: And that means that they were drinking there and shooting there and shooting through the icons, and they left those icons on the table. ... Yea, they did it before they had to retreat, that's when they did it.

Assistant: Yea, yea, it was said and everybody says that when they were leaving...

Veteran: I can swear on the bible that this is true. I never do any propaganda.<sup>129</sup>

What was especially painful about this picture was the placement of the young girl's body in the holy corner of the icon.<sup>130</sup> The man who told the story was well-educated, and he told of rape by

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<sup>129</sup> No. 19, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. The military position and education of this man, as well as all the material from the long interview with him all point to his honesty and lack of any motive to condemn either side more than the other. He also told us of a gang rape by Soviet soldiers. I believe the story he told was true, but with the interest of anonymity cannot give more details.

<sup>130</sup> Inherited from Byzantine culture, the Russians developed their own icon painting styles, with a tremendous growth in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Soon, every Russian and Ukrainian house had an icon corner. It is the cornerstone of Orthodox culture, symbolizing the ultimate authority and "in Russia, the icon often came to represent in effect the supreme communal authority before which one swore oaths, resolved disputes, and marched into battle." For more information, see James Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1966), 26ff.

Soviet soldiers as well. He was well aware of the propaganda used by the Soviet state to incite him and his soldiers to fight to the end. In other words, this man was believable because he had a critical stance in the retelling of many events.<sup>131</sup>

Shortly before her death in a Russian hospital, Genia Demianova, a school teacher in Pskov, Russia recorded her experiences in her village during the first three weeks of the German occupation there. At the time, Genia was engaged to an American engineer and wanted him to know what had happened to her, and he was the recipient of her story. Her story of how she became a partisan illuminates the horror of being raped over and over again. She writes,

I cannot bear it. There is the swish of the whip again. An animal howl leaves my mouth. Now he flings himself upon me.

I instinctively defend myself, I compress my hips, but he forces his knees between them. It hurts, it hurts terribly, everything hurts. I cannot resist any longer. I have no strength left. ...

Now he catches me by the hair and strikes my head against the floor. Everything is creaking, crashing within me, all around me, but there is no pain. Everything goes dark. There are big red rings dancing round my eyes and then they recede more and more. I feel as if I were sinking into a bottomless pit.

"So this is death!" That is my last thought. No...no...I am still alive. God, what does this beast want of me. I implore—don't hurt me. Jimmy—our wedding. No, don't...it hurts. He is tearing me to pieces. My stomach....It hurts....Oh, God.

A distant whining sound brings me to—it is like the yelping of a dog that is being beaten. It takes a long time before I realise it is my own voice. I suddenly come back to reality. There is a fog before my eyes, but through it I can make him out—the serjeant [sic!] is near me. His eyes are protruding, his breath is panting and wheezing into my ears. His face—his mouth is surrounded with dried blood—my blood. I try to move, but I have no strength left. There is a cruel fire burning, searing my flesh, my inside. I feel giddy. The world is spinning round with me. Then everything merges to blindness.

I come to. There is a roar of cheering, the clinking of many glasses. The serjeant is standing in the open doorway:

"The wild cat is tamed," he is saying. "Boys, she was a virgin. What do you say to that?"

Another burst of cheering then he closes the door. But I am not left alone for long.

The others came in. Ten, a hundred, a thousand. Perhaps the whole Germany Army, one after another. They flung themselves upon me digging into my wounds while they defiled me. I suffered terribly; I felt as if they were tearing my intestines out bit by bit. Whoe is this? The serjeant again? Or is it that I see his bestial face in every German? I try to move,

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<sup>131</sup> A similar story from World War I from the British scholar J.H. Morgan: "There is very strong reason to suspect that young girls were carried off to the trenches by licentious German soldiery, and there abused by hordes of savages and licentious men. People in hiding in the cellars of houses have heard the voices of women in the hands of German soldiers crying all night long until death or stupor ended their agonies. One of our officers, a subaltern in the sappers, heard a woman's shrieks in the night coming from behind the German trenches near Richebourg l'Avoué; when we advanced in the morning and drove the Germans out, a girl was found lying naked on the ground 'pegged out' in the form of a crucifix. I need not go on with this chapter of horrors." Morgan, *German Atrocities*, 89-90.

but can't. I hurt all over, my whole body is a sea of fire, my inside...they have torn me to pieces. Here is another...another...another. But the grinning face is always that of the serjeant. Don't, don't, mercy.

...The Germans kept coming, spitting obscene words towards me, guffawing as they tortured me. I saw them, but felt no pain. I was in a trance, I just guessed what was happening to me, but did not know for certain....

Then, through all the torment and horror it suddenly became light round me. The fog dispersed and I understood everything. I understood that I had been dead for a long time.

I suddenly remembered and knew—knew for certain—that I was already dead—I had died when the German beast knocked my head against the floor. That was when the beast killed my spirit....

These madmen do not know that they are torturing a corpse. It is still moving, it still feels, yet it is only a corpse. It hurts when they are torturing me, it hurts when they come upon me, one after the other, but I am just a corpse.

"You're laughing, harlot, you like it," said the last German as he rolled off me and spat into my face. He did not know that he was spitting at a corpse.<sup>132</sup>

Later she escaped to the woods, joined a few comrades, one of whom was not sure this young female would be able to hold her own as a partisan. She left temporarily, and was again attacked, but this time by only one German. Genia managed to stab him in the back with a knife she had been carrying. When she returned to the partisans, all bloody and carrying the dead rapist's gun, the partisans accepted her as a member of the group.

Genia also testified that the Germans gang raped one of her pupils, a nine-year-old girl named Anuschka. Anuschka lived long enough to tell what had happened. Genia wrote, "the lower part of Anuschka's body was one horrible wound, with her intestines almost hanging out. She must have been suffering unspeakable pain, yet she managed, in her own childish way, to tell her story...A few hours later Anuschka died." The Germans saw the corpse of the little girl, carried by her grandmother, but all of those present denied having touched her.<sup>133</sup> Genia's testimony is absolutely horrifying and brings out how terrifying and physically painful a gang

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<sup>132</sup> Genia Demianova, *Comrade Genia: The Story of a Victim of German Bestiality in Russia Told by Herself* (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1941), 53-56. The novel *Rainbow* is a different kind of testimony of German brutality than is *Comrade Genia*. The latter is a personal testimony of a woman on her death bed who wants to explain to her loved one what has happened. The motive in *Rainbow* is a bit different than in *Comrade Genia*, being a complete and very well-written account of one town's experience of the German occupation and subsequent liberation by partisans. Many of the events likely took place, but the entirely benevolent and heroic partisans suggest Soviet propaganda, and the novel did receive the Stalin Prize for literature. Still, the author's portrayal of the Germans does not seem as one-sided as her portrayal of the Soviet partisans. Turkevich wrote that the author's war novels "contain excruciatingly moving pictures of the horrors perpetrated by the invading hordes. Only a woman can sense the utter bestiality in such scenes as the one in which a woman in labor is caught in the vist formed by two sadistically taunting flanks of brutish fascist soldiers. Only a woman can convey the whole agony of such a situation. One never forgets this episode or many others like it in her books." Ludmilla B. Turkevich, "Russian Women," *Russian Review* 16, no. 1 (1957): 28.

<sup>133</sup> Demianova, *Comrade Genia*, 102-105.



rape really is. Indeed, we know from other testimony that gang rapes by Germans happened. Considering Genia's emotional and physical state in the hospital, some details could have been confused, and the writing is not as eloquent as in a finished memoir or novel. Still, the core of her material should be taken seriously. Genia's account is a valuable source for others.

A hand-written document found in Kievan archives lists crimes the Germans committed in surrounding villages. Included are rapes of women and girls and abduction into brothels. According to the document, in Orikhivka and another illegible town, "the German monsters raped all the women and girls." In the town of Camielov (Nikolaev Raion) "four German soldiers raped the mother and daughter Ekaterina and Anna C." Furthermore, a local teacher named Vera K. in the village of Kabana, told that the "Germans gathered women and girls in a brothel and exposed them to massive rapes there."<sup>134</sup> An example of rape in the camps comes from Antonia Bruha, survivor, who wrote about the selection of prisoners for the various kinds of brothels in the German Reich, the SS and various camp personnel heaped verbal abuse on the women while they stood naked. Apparently, the SS would "try out" some of the women in the operation room.<sup>135</sup>

Additional testimony of German sexual violence against women and girls is available in the Molotov Note. This was part of the evidence presented at the Nuremberg war crimes trials and consists of many stories of sexual crimes committed under the German occupation. Published in 1942, the note concerns the crimes during the first year of Germany's invasion and occupation of Soviet territory. The lengthy document testifies to many rapes by German military men. "In the Ukrainian village of Borodayevka, in the Dniepropetrovsk region, the fascists violated every one of the women and girls" is one of the allegations. While this may seem to be an overblown claim, it may in fact be close to reality. A few others follow:

Everywhere the lust-maddened German gangsters break into the houses, they rape the women and girls under the very eyes of their kinfolk and children, jeer at the women they have violated, and then brutally murder their victims.

In the city of Lvov, 32 women working in a garment factory were first violated and then murdered by German storm troopers. Drunken German soldiers dragged the girls and young women of Lvov into Kesciuszko Park, where they savagely raped them ...

Near the town of Borissov in Belorussia, 75 women and girls attempting to flee at the approach of the German troops fell into their hands. The Germans first raped and then savagely murdered 36 of their number. By order of a German named Hummer, the soldiers

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<sup>134</sup> TsDAVOV (Kiev) f.1, op. 22, d.123, ll.13-15. Thank you to Karel Berkhoff.

<sup>135</sup> Antonia Bruha, in: Berger (1987), pages 149, quoted in Schulz, "Weibliche," 139.

marched L.I. Melchukova, a 16-year-old girl, into the forest, where they raped her. A little later some other women who had also been dragged into the forest saw some boards near the trees and the dying Melchukova nailed to the boards. The Germans had cut off her breasts in the presence of these women, among whom were V.I. Alperenko and V.H. Bereznikova.

On retreating from the village of Borovka, in the Zenigorod district of the Moscow region, the fascists forcibly abducted several women, tearing them away from their little children in spite of their protests and prayers.

In the town of Tikhvin, in the Leningrad region, a 15-year old girl named H. Koledetskaya who had been wounded by shell splinters was taken to a hospital (a former monastery) where there were wounded German soldiers. Despite her injuries the girl was raped by a group of German soldiers and died as a result of the assault.<sup>136</sup>

This compilation of eyewitness testimony was presented at the Nuremberg war crimes trial, and yet little if any responsibility was taken for any sexual crimes the Germans committed in the east.<sup>137</sup> The story of the mutilated girl hung up on boards is very similar to what the veteran Soviet officer reported he saw (Interview No. 19). Similar stories of cut off breasts were used for propaganda in World War I,<sup>138</sup> and it was reported that in Zagreb women had their breasts cut off

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<sup>136</sup> Nuremberg U.S.S.R. Exhibit No. 51, prepared by V.M. Molotov, January 1942, entered as "The Molotov Note."

<sup>137</sup> It must be noted that even the cases of rape which did make it to Nuremberg War Crimes Trials were not prosecuted. In fact, no one was prosecuted for rape or other sexual violence. Human Rights Watch explains that "In the second set of Nuremberg war criminal trials, conducted under the authority of Control Council Law number 10, and in Article 6(c) of the Nuremberg Charter, rape was specifically enumerated as a crime against humanity," but was not included because such crimes had "no nexus to war." See Theodor Meron, "War Crimes in Yugoslavia and the Development of International Law," *American Journal of International Law*, vol 88, no. 1, January 1994, pp. 84-87, quoted in Human Rights Watch/Africa and Human Rights Watch Women's Rights Project, *Shattered Lives*, 33. Also quoted in Copelon, "Surfacing." See also Khushalani, *Dignity*, 13-18.

<sup>138</sup> Many of the claims of German sexual crimes in World War I were not believed for decades, because they were too horrific and because Germany's enemies used the allegations in wartime propaganda. By now many, if not most, of the allegations have been shown to be true. In time, there may be evidence found for the veracity of this claim as well. See Chapter One, footnote number 10. Some of the stories are very similar to those from World War II, but they are from an entirely different region. For example, the British scholar J.H. Morgan has a separate chapter on atrocities against women. Morgan investigated the German Hussar eight-day occupation of Bailleul, France. He found thirty cases of rape, and a doctor from the town told him the number was more like sixty. Morgan acknowledged the silence around this topic and that many women would not report. Officers were guilty of rape as well. "The circumstances were often of a peculiarly revolting character; daughters were outraged in the presence of their mothers, and mothers in the presence or the hearing of their little children. In one case, the facts of which are proved by evidence which would satisfy any court of law, a young girl of nineteen was violated by one officer while the other held her mother by the throat and pointed a revolver, after which the two officers exchanged their respective roles." They then dragged the girl outside and asked her if she knew where other girls like her were. Morgan continues, "No attempt was made to keep discipline, and the officers, when appealed to for protection, simply shrugged their shoulders...The German troops were often drunk and always insolent...Inquiries in other places, in the villages of Meteren, Oultersteen, and Nieppe, for example, establish the occurrence of similar outrages upon defenceless women, accompanied by every circumstance of disgusting barbarity. No civilian dare attempt to protect his wife or daughter from outrage." Morgan, *German Atrocities*, 82-83.

and their stomachs slit open,<sup>139</sup> but that does not render all such claims untrue.

Other allegations of German sexual crimes come from war correspondent and author, Alexander Werth, who spoke with many Soviet people during and after the war. Werth reported that the Chairman of the City Soviet (mayor), Zakharov, who had been one of the chief partisan leaders of Ukraine, told him of the rapes of young girls in Uman: “The *starosta* [in many villages] was appointed by the Germans—he might have been a good man, or a bad man, or simply a weak man; but above him there was always an SS chief. “There’s one village I know,” said Zakharov, “and it’s not the only one of its kind—where the SS man would order the *starosta* to supply him with girls every night, including young girls of thirteen or fourteen.”<sup>140</sup>

Similarly, another report exposes intoxicated German officers demanding females. A statement signed by four Ukrainian police officers, Lewtschuk, Sawalni, Melnik, and Kolishuk, and submitted to the German SD in Vinnitsa asserts that at ten in the evening during their guard duty on 27 October 1941 a drunken officer and the Kommandant himself came to their post and demanded that the Ukrainians find girls for them. According to the report, the Germans declared that the police had twenty minutes to do so, and, showing a whip, they threatened that if they did not get their girls the Ukrainians would be whipped. All of the police except for Mikola Sawalni, who stayed on guard, left for the city. The officer and Kommandant found where the weapons were and began to shoot. Since the Ukrainians did not return in twenty minutes, the Germans sent Sawalni, who subsequently found a cleaning woman, Gorelizka. According to the report, the Germans took her to the Kommandant’s apartment, and after ten minutes the woman came terrified, torn, and crying out of the apartment. Thereafter “they” (apparently the officer

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<sup>139</sup> Ines Sabalic, *Nirgends erwähnt – doch überall geschehen: Ein Bericht aus Zagreb*, Publikation der Gleichstellungsstelle der Landeshauptstadt (Munich, 1992), quoted in Seifert, “War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis,” 65. Medical Service Major Nokhum Polinovsky reported that one of the mass graves he was forced to dig out in the forests surrounding Bialystok, Belorussia (the Germans had ordered all the bodies to be dug out and burned) had “seven hundred women...Their bodies were completely naked. Many of the victims had their breasts cut off and tossed into the pit next to them.” Polinovsky suspected that these crimes took place near the end of 1943. Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 205.

<sup>140</sup> Werth, *Russia*, 793. For what it is worth, Werth also reports the following: “I also heard stories of Russian Cossacks serving under the Germans. They were a bad lot. A few days before the Germans evacuated Uman, some of these Cossacks—so the story went—were let loose, and looted part of the town, and raped several girls; they were said to have been wearing Red Army uniforms and the Germans said they were a Russian advance unit. One theory was that the Germans wanted the population to be terrorized at the thought of the Russians’ coming, and to flee to the west” (p. 790).

and they Kommandant) came to the *militsia* many times and demanded girls.<sup>141</sup>

One man also told us about women, possibly three, who had been in relationships with the Germans, and that when the Germans were retreating they started to go with the Germans, but for some reason it turned sour and the men murdered the women. He said, “And why were they killed? I really don’t know why. Or that she wouldn’t go with someone else, so she wouldn’t be with someone else, I really don’t know.” He saw their graves, but not the murders. As far as I know, this is all the record left of these alleged relationships and murders.<sup>142</sup> As mentioned in another chapter, another interviewee confirmed that during the retreat, the situation became violent:

And we heard about such incidents like that [rapes] in every village, it was. And it was especially, especially dangerous on the eve of the Germans evacuation from the village. You know, see, for example, as our army was already advancing, there were battles right close, and the Germans were still here. At that time it was better to not be caught. They became cruel, even more cruel, you know, with their power and killing, and everything, and rape.<sup>143</sup>

Along the same lines, the Jewish Lithuanian survivor Frieda Frome wrote in her memoir:

Many a girl had been persuaded to “be kind” to these conquerors, we all knew. When they had tired of her they trumped up some accusation and turned her in to be shot. This was not only true of the Germans, for many of the Lithuanian Partisans were just as bad. And the same treatment had been accorded numbers of girls and women under the Russians.<sup>144</sup>

This echoes historian Bartov’s words when he aptly formulated that in the east some soldiers who at first “fraternized” also turned brutal: “On the Eastern Front it was possible for at least a significant part of the German troops to fraternize with individual Russians for a while, and then to ‘eliminate’ them and burn down their houses as part of a mass of dangerous and contemptible ‘Untermenschen’ the moment this or that ‘security situation called for such actions.’”<sup>145</sup>

Although rape was not a formal military strategy, the German leadership encouraged

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<sup>141</sup> USHMMA RG-31.011M, Reel 1, Selected Records from the Vinnytsia (Vinnitsa) State Oblast Archive, Ukraine, 1311-1c-2, docs. 12-14.

<sup>142</sup> No. 21, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>143</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>144</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 68.

<sup>145</sup> Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 129.

random violence of all kinds against innocent civilians in the east. Furthermore, the attitude toward raping a woman or girl in the east was different than if a German raped a woman or girl in a western occupied country. The Germans were not concerned with the welfare of any of the people in eastern Europe. It is quite clear that they raped much more frequently than there are court cases to show, and that many men were never punished for the horrific sexual crimes they committed against unarmed civilians. So many of the women I interviewed told how they were the least safe at night, and how it was primarily the young girls who were attacked. However, there were instances of older women being raped as well. There are several testimonies of gang rape, murders, and mutilations committed by the Germans. Rape survivors had no incentive to come forward to German officials because German officials did not prevent rapes from occurring. Furthermore, many rapes were not done in front of a large crowd. As one interviewee said about the difficulty of verifying rape, "But that sort of thing isn't being done in front of witnesses."<sup>146</sup> In addition to other sources, the few German court cases on rape reveal the concern Germans had about their image of being law-abiding occupiers. This was true for cases of rape against Jews in the east as well. Indeed, the German *Rassenschande* laws did not prevent Jewish women and girls from being raped.

#### Sexual Violence against Jews by Germans

One story that has been retold in several places is how the SS in concentration camps trained dogs to rape on order. One woman apparently had to hold her daughter while a dog raped her.<sup>147</sup> Perhaps this crime is more believable because the SS did not touch the females themselves, but trained dogs to do it for them. Yet as will become clear below, the Germans did rape Jews and other people in eastern Europe whom they viewed as being "inferior" to them. The laws against having sexual intercourse with non-Germans in the east did not prevent Germans from committing such crimes. As we have seen in Chapter Four and Five, the Germans enlisted "inferior" women and girls, including Jews, to work as prostitutes and sometimes also to serve

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<sup>146</sup> No. 19, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>147</sup> The testimony states that Mme Saint-Claire told that "a mother and her daughter were locked in a room and the mother was forced to hold up the dress of her child whom they had raped by a dog." Author unknown, Testimony on Ravensbrück Concentration Camp for Women, Confidential, Edward A. Chadwell, translator, p. 4 of report, 7 May 1945, USHMM RG-06.005.05M, United States Army Commands, Concentration Camp Cases Not Tried, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Reel 5. Lengyel, survivor, writes that this happened in Auschwitz. Lengyel, "Scientific Experiments," 129.

German military members. Even the German leadership knew this, and their excuse was that having sexual intercourse with a prostitute was different than having a sexual relationship. Raping a Slavic woman was practically irrelevant, according to one German case recorder, because the Slavs had no concept of a “women’s sexual honor.”<sup>148</sup> In the east, the same was likely thought about the raping of Jews. There is much evidence available to show that German Wehrmacht and SS members raped a significant but unknown number of Jewish women and girls. The evidence for this is available in different testimonies, memoirs, and various documents, such as an anonymous poem, a handwritten letter, a newspaper article, and court cases.

Because of the widespread myth that Jews were not sexually assaulted by Germans, it is entirely possible that survivors have had an even more difficult time coming forward. If Jewish rape survivors considered coming forward, they would have to face accusations of lying or exaggeration, even more than non-Jewish persons would because of the argument that “Germans would not rape a Jew because it was against the law.” The following is a poem by an anonymous survivor found online. It is difficult to believe that anyone would create such a testimony if it were not true:

#### Real Chocolate

The practice of gang rape of female prisoners by sholdiers [sic] was a common occurrence in the camps.... --

Anonymous inmate at Auschwitz

They lured me out of the barracks  
with promises of chocolate  
and words like "Schatzchen,"  
but the other women knew,  
and called me soldier's whore  
even before they heard the noises outside.  
I knew as well,  
but hunger has a way of changing you,  
of causing you to forget who you are.  
Funny, how there can be hope in desperation.

They threw the chocolate on the ground  
and laughed: "da, fress." I lunged for it,  
and tasted mud. "Dreh dich rum, Judenschwein."  
I saw big black boots, pairs and pairs, and the ground was so muddy,  
it seemed to give way to my body.

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<sup>148</sup> BA-ZNS, S 269, ‘Gericht der 7. Panz.Division, Feldurteil vom 19. August 1941’, 22-23, quoted in Beck, "Rape," 263.

I hiked up my prisoner's garb and spread my legs.  
 They were so light and opened so easily  
 that I thanked God because I knew  
 I wouldn't resist.  
 This body is no longer mine, this hunger;  
 at last, there is no reason to fight.

I wonder now if their desire for me  
 was a desire for death,  
 fucking a bald woman who was only skin and bones,  
 whose only salvation would be a cup of watery soup  
 for dinner, a slice of stale bread,  
 and maybe, if the soldiers wanted her again,  
 this time, a piece of real chocolate.<sup>149</sup>

This poem belies the argument that a German would not rape a starving prison inmate. This woman, who lives or who lived with the pain of being a rape survivor, in addition to other trauma, the trauma of rape and society's views toward rape survivors forced her to remain anonymous. Therefore, in her attempt to heal, she was unable to be public about her experience.

One example of the rape of Jews by the SS in Auschwitz was recorded by Ruth Elias, Jewish Auschwitz survivor and memoirist, who, I was told by a scholar, was not telling the truth. Indeed, Elias wrote in her memoir that on a few occasions the SS came into the barracks at night, grabbed the young Jewish girls on the bottom bunks, and took them to rape them. She "lived" on the third bunk when this started and so managed to escape these crimes since there was a large enough selection underneath. She and the others on top would press themselves to the wall and hope that they would not be chosen to be raped. If the women protested, the SS would beat them mercilessly and thus, the women usually ended up not protesting. Elias wrote that "rape of the Jewish girls was allowed. That was certainly no Rassenschande," and that it "is impossible to describe" the horrendous condition in which the victims returned.<sup>150</sup>

It is true that a scholar told me in a discussion in 2002 that Elias was "lying" when she wrote this part. Elias allegedly was "lying" because the SS would never do that because of the German Rassenschande laws. In other conversations with individual scholars similar claims have been made. There is a pattern in the field to deny that Jewish females would be victimized in a

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<sup>149</sup> <http://nosferatu.cas.usf.edu/journal/expository/shoah/poetry/choc.html>. I printed this in 1998. Now a username and password is required.

<sup>150</sup> Ruth Elias, *Die Hoffnung erhielt mich am Leben: Mein Weg von Theresienstadt und Auschwitz nach Israel* (München and Zürich: Piper, 1988), 147-148.

sexual way. This is based on little or no evidence, outside of the existence German Rassenschande laws. There is no reason that I know of why Elias would lie about the rapes in the camp where she was, and the scholar also did not explain either, except for the routine answer about the Rassenschande laws. Elias could have been mistaken, and perhaps these were other kinds of men, but this seems unlikely since most survivors seem to have always known exactly who the SS were, because of their notorious cruelty. In addition to all the evidence given in these chapters that demonstrates that the Nazi racial laws were not followed, when it comes to sexual violence, this small part of Elias's account does not reveal any motive on the part of the author to be an untruth, perhaps especially because Elias alleges that she was not victimized by the SS in this way. Furthermore, it appears that it was only luck which saved her from being raped. This does not imply that the Rassenschande laws were completely irrelevant. Nevertheless, as scholars we need to stop perpetuating the silence surrounding sexual violence and discard the argument that because of the Rassenschande laws, rape of Jews did not occur or occurred only occasionally, when it is remarkably evident – as will become clear in the following discussion – that this happened quite often.

Vera Laska, who identifies herself as “not an interpreter, or a psychologist, or a philosopher [but a] gatherer of memories,” writes, “considering the tens of thousands of women incarcerated in the camps, rape by the SS was relatively rare. While it is a fact that the SS could - and did - do as they pleased with any female inmate, raping them was not their preference.”<sup>151</sup> Citing only one example of the SS doctor Rolf Rosenthal and inmate nurse Gerda Quernheim at the concentration camp Ravensbrück, both of whom were confined to the punishment bunker, she states that the SS would not rape a Jew because the rules stated that they would be shot or sent to the front. However, Laska offers no cases of this to support her claims. In the case she did cite, it is not surprising that a punishment was inflicted, considering the woman involved was a nurse. Nurses and doctors survived at a higher rate because the Germans used their medical skills. Laska also reasons that the women were dirty and stinky, and were therefore not desirable, but does not mention that there were always new arrivals to the camps and that the women could be cleaned, taken on as a sexual slave or “maid” and then raped. She argues that only a very small percentage of all Jewish women in the camps may have been raped. Yet even if we were to take Laska's hypothetical theory, lacking any evidence except the one case she cites, even then

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<sup>151</sup> Laska, "Women," 265.



this very small claim could mean thousands of Jewish women whom the Germans raped.<sup>152</sup>

Indeed, in addition to the poem “Real Chocolate,” there are many accounts of German sexual abuse of Jewish women and girls. One Jewish doctor in Warsaw testified in the *Black Book of Polish Jewry* that the gynecologists in the Warsaw ghetto administered tetanus shots to victims of German rape. He also reported that the Germans mass raped Jewish girls in a mirror shop in Swietokerska Street. The “most beautiful and most healthy” girls were brought in to pack mirrors, and after they had finished the work the Germans raped them. Another affidavit in the book states that a similar incident took place on Franciszkanska street, where forty “Jewish girls were dragged into the house which was occupied by German officers. There, after being forced to drink, the girls were ordered to undress and to dance for the amusement of their tormentors. Beaten, abused and raped, the girls were not released till 3 a.m.”<sup>153</sup> Both sides of the Russo-German war used propaganda about protecting “our women” in their attempt to push their soldiers harder. If the accounts from *The Black Book of Polish Jewry* were used as propaganda that does not discount the validity of the stories. One does not eliminate the other.

Furthermore, Sala Pawlowicz, a Polish Jew, claimed that she was raped by Germans who came into the ghetto at night looking for young girls. In addition, she and others, including men, were treated in an abusive and sexual way. She also told how she was forced to strip in front of Gestapo men and then brought to another room and abused by a German who said that he could not “have her” because she was a “filthy” Jew. Instead of using his penis to dominate her, he used a whip and whipped her breasts. She fainted, and found herself on the street, naked and bloody when she regained consciousness.<sup>154</sup> A further example of a German officer who attempted to rape a Jewish woman comes from Lucille Eichengreen’s memoir. This Jewish woman recounts in her memoir her experience at the Labor Camp (*Arbeitslager*) Dessauer Ufer, where one day she found a red scarf and hid it between her thighs. She was stopped after work by a German Obersturmbannführer who alleged that he needed her to translate for him. Then he took her to the “back of the chimney” where he “abruptly came to a halt,” spun around and used

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<sup>152</sup> Laska, “Women,” 265. Bergen also argues that most Jews were reduced to “desperate, starving, and diseased” people and were therefore unlikely to become victims of sexual violence. Bergen, “Sex, Blood,” 277.

<sup>153</sup> Jacob Apenszlak, ed., *The Black Book of Polish Jewry*, New York: The American Federation for Polish Jews, 1943, pp. 25-29, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 52.

<sup>154</sup> Pawlowicz, Sala & Klose, Kevin. *I Will Survive* (New York; W.W. Norton & Company: 1962); First Edition, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 51-52.

his right hand to cover her mouth and his left to feel her body. His hand stopped between her legs where she had hid the scarf. Because of the extra material there, he thought she was menstruating and said “You filthy, useless bitch! Pfui! Menstruating!” and let her free.<sup>155</sup> Not only is this another example of a German official who was willing to be sexual with a Jewish woman, but it also shows the sexual satisfaction he sought through coerced sexual activity.<sup>156</sup>

The agronomist Sofya Glushkina recorded in a statement that in August 1941 the SS murdered her brother. The night after the murder, “there was a knock at the door. The commandant came in. He demanded the wife of the executed Jew... We thought they were going to kill her, but the Germans did something even more vile: they raped her right there in the yard.”<sup>157</sup> Later in the month the Germans would do “checks” in the Krasny ghetto: “People were herded into the cemetery, girls were raped, and people were beaten unconscious... And so it went every night.” Glushkina began a story of the sexual torturing of another young woman, but was unable to finish, remarking that “It is difficult to tell about this.”<sup>158</sup> Describing the situation in the Kishinev Jewish ghetto in Moldova, L. Bazarov recorded that, “Drunk out of their minds, the officers and soldiers would break in to the apartments at night, wreak havoc and shout insults, rape girls before their parents' eyes, throw things around, and then disappear.”<sup>159</sup>

There are several examples of brutal crimes against Jews whom the Germans murdered after they raped. The Belorussian Lilya Samoilovna Gleizer survived the pogrom of July 1942 in the Minsk ghetto: “Before the eyes of mothers, who either fainted or went insane, the drunken Germans and policeman raped young girls without a trace of shame either in front of each other or in front of onlookers.”<sup>160</sup> The Belorussian Osher Zisman wrote that “I contracted dysentery

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<sup>155</sup> Eichengreen, *Ashes*, 106-107.

<sup>156</sup> Eichengreen, *Ashes*, 106-107. Though not in the east, another piece of evidence of German sexual violence against Jews is from a New York Times 1944 front page article about the liberation of the Vught concentration camp in Holland where rape “of young Jewish women by prison wardens was a common occurrence.” New York Times, Nov. 13, 1944, p. 1, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 64.

<sup>157</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 212.

<sup>158</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 212-213.

<sup>159</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 101. David Ulyanitsky mentions the rape of Jews in his papers on atrocities committed against Jews during the first half of the twentieth century. See USHMM, Record Group 31.007, David Ulyanitsky papers.

<sup>160</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 130. She continued: “They took their knives and cut out sex organs, forced bodies, both dead and alive, into the most disgusting poses, and cut off noses, breasts, and ears.”

while staying in the cellar and could not get up, but from the ventilator I saw the Germans herd young girls into a shed next to the mass graves and rape them before shooting them. I heard one girl crying out for help; she punched the German in the snout, and in return they buried her alive.”<sup>161</sup> In Riga, Latvia it is reported that at the beginning of the German occupation, one night, “in the building at 10 Mariinskaya Street officers of the Württemberg-Baden Grenadier Regiment were having a drinking bout. They brought in dozens of young Jewish girls to join them in their orgy, forced them to strip naked, drink, and sing songs. Many of the poor girls were raped and then taken into the courtyard and shot.”<sup>162</sup> A similar report comes from Lvov. I. Herts and Naftali Nakht, who testified about atrocities in Lvov and that “The unrestrained representatives of the 'master race' did not spare a single woman during this ‘campaign’. They raped and murdered the women or threw them into burning houses.”<sup>163</sup>

Historian and survivor Felicja Karay reports in her monograph on the Skar ysko-Kamienna labor camp in Poland that the German officers in this camp were “far from the eye of Himmler” and under the protection of Hugo Dalski, an “SS officer and organizer of Polish executions.”<sup>164</sup> In the camp, these men expressed their “‘rites of manhood’” in “orgies of drunkenness and gang rapes of Jewish girls.” Karay describes a few of the officers, and reports that the “most dreaded of all was Fritz Bartenschlager, a member of the SA and a war criminal feared even by the Poles. His rape and murder of Jewish girls earned him the smoldering hatred of Jews.” Karay’s research revealed the following:

As one testimony has it, after the deportation from the Skar ysko ghetto in October 1942, Franz Schippers, Willie Seidel, and Iwan Romanko arrived in the camp. At Bartenschlager’s invitation, they picked out six girls at roll call and brought them to his rooms. The names of Cesia Kap a ski and Ewa Ernest and her sister are mentioned. They were ordered to serve the diners in the nude, and at the end of the meal were raped. The following day they were all executed. Bela Hercberg-Goldman, who had initially been

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<sup>161</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 183.

<sup>162</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 382.

<sup>163</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 78. It is not clear if non-Jews were included in these rapes and murders.

<sup>164</sup> Karay, *Death Comes*, 11. According to Karay’s research, Dalski was general manager of the Hasag industries. In 1938 he was on the roster of SS members with the rank of Obersturmbannführer, and in 1939 had the rank of SS-Standartenführer.

selected but was saved, was also later murdered together with her husband.<sup>165</sup>

Karay found more testimony of the rape and murder of Jewish girls by German officers on January 23, 1943:

In honor of German guest including Boettcher, Paul Feucht and Schippers, three girls were chosen: Gucia Milchman, a 19-year-old acclaimed for her outstanding beauty, Ruchama Eisenberg, and Mania Silberman. They were all brutally raped and then slaughtered.<sup>166</sup>

Indeed, historian Karay reports that the

Germans did not consider the many cases in which rape ended in murder as instances of “racial impurity” (Rassenschande), but for the Jews the rape was a more heinous crime than the murder itself. The various German managers and commanders chose for themselves the prettiest girls to clean their rooms, and the precise nature of their relationship was never openly displayed. In all three werks there were rumors of affairs of this sort, the overwhelming majority of which ended with the men murdering their Jewish lovers, particularly if they should become pregnant.<sup>167</sup>

With such a wide variety of examples it is difficult to argue that the Germans did not rape Jews. True, a story or two could have been falsified or mistakenly told or remembered. But in the face of so many different kinds of testimony from such a variety of sources, we need to take this seriously.

In places where the Jews had not yet been quarantined in camps or ghettos, Jewish women and girls were also victims of rape by Germans. The earliest reports of rape against Jewish women came during the violence throughout Germany on *Kristallnacht* in November 1938. These were not in the east, and perhaps therefore, disciplinary action was taken.<sup>168</sup> *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry* has numerous references to rape outside of the camps or the ghettos. In “Letters from the Indikt couple,” Mikhail Petrovich Indikt, a Jew, wrote in 1994 that his Russian, non-Jewish wife had told him “that a seventeen-year-old Jewish girl had been

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<sup>165</sup> Testimonies YV: Szlomo Grinszpan, op. cit.; Awraham Kristal, 0-16/1955; Berec Szafranski, M-21/1-22, p. 7, cited in Karay, *Death Comes*, 80-81.

<sup>166</sup> Chaim Milchman, Testimony, YV, M-1/E/1972/1793, cf. Staerkemeldung 23.1.1943, see n. 1, cited in Karay, *Death Comes*, 81.

<sup>167</sup> “Werks” refers to divisions of the camp. Karay, *Death Comes*, 95-96.

<sup>168</sup> Raul Hilberg, *Destruction of The European Jews*, Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961, p. 28; William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960, pp. 430-431, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 49. In his Third Edition, Hilberg cites as his source: Summary of Judicial Conference, Jan. 23-26, 1939 (signed Leimer), NNG-1566; Summary of Judges Conference, Feb. 1, 1939, NG-629 (n41, p.45). Both Hilberg and Shirer cite Buch to Göring, Feb. 13, 1939, PS-3063; also in Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Volume V, Red Series, V, 870-871.

raped and murdered in the courtyard that morning. [She said: “You can see for yourself, if you like.”]” Mikhail returned home “and did not set foot out of [his] house after that.”<sup>169</sup> Historian Hans-Heinrich Nolte found that Ljuba Abramowitsch testified in court of two cases of Germans who promised survival to young girls if they would have sex with them. They did not keep their word. This entire article is about the Jewish population, so the girls very likely were Jewish.<sup>170</sup>

There exists a Soviet document in Russian that is a translation of an allegedly official German document. It is from a war commandant in Ukraine and states that one gunner forced six Jews to have sexual intercourse under threat of a pistol. Because the unnamed gunner did not observe to the “purity of races” and because he raped (notice that race is mentioned first) the gunner was sentenced to seven years in prison with forced labor. There are no other identifying factors on the document, such as who wrote the memo or what the name of the accused gunner was.<sup>171</sup> This could be an example of the German court sentencing a man to one year and two months for each Jewish woman he raped. But if the document was planted somewhere to ensure the Russians would find it, then this surely would have helped the Germans’ image of being law-abiding occupiers. Nevertheless, the document alleges that Germans raped Jews.

Another testimony of rape by Germans of Jews is from what was originally a handwritten letter by two Polish Jewish women, Gyrvich and Ass. They wrote the letter on the way to their place of execution, Ponar (execution site, also called Panieri Woods outside of Vilnius, Lithuania) and threw it out on the road. The women explained that they wrote in Polish instead of Hebrew, thinking that if someone found a letter in Hebrew it would be destroyed. It was delivered to a Jewish museum in Vilnius after the Germans left in August 1944. It was typed and then also translated into Russian. The two women belonged to a group of 112 Jews who were in hiding, but whom the Germans eventually found. After pleading for forgiveness for any sins they may have committed they explain what the Germans did to their children:

The most important thing is our children whom they were treating in such a brutal way.

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<sup>169</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 42. The first set of brackets is in the original.

<sup>170</sup> Landgericht Hamburg, *Protokoll der Zeugenbefragung vom 11. März 1969*, 13-14, [n. 31], quoted in Hans-Heinrich Nolte, “The Jewish Shtetl of Slonim,” in *The People’s War: Responses to World War II in the Soviet Union*, ed. Robert W. Thurston and Bernd Bonwetsch (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 37.

<sup>171</sup> Military Commander in the Ukraine, Excerpt of a Letter, Translated from German to Russian, 17 July 1942, USHMMA, RG-06.025\*02, Central Archives of the Federal Security Services (former KGB) of the Russian Federation records relating to war crime trials in the Soviet Union, 1939-1992 (bulk dates 1945-1947), Kiev, 1945-1946, N-18762, Tom 17, Del 356.

For instance, eight-year-old girls were taken for sexual acts. The little ones were told to take the sexual organs into their mouths and suck as they would suck their mother's breast. And they were told to swallow the sperm and imagine that this was honey or milk. They tied a twelve-year-old girl to a bench, and six Germans and six Lithuanians finished the sexual act twice each, and the poor girl wasn't let go. And the mother was forced to stay during this and watch so that the child wouldn't scream. After that the mothers were forced to completely undress, were put against a wall with hands tied upwards toward the head, and they pulled out all the hair on naked places. They were ordered to stick out their tongues, and they stuck needles into them. Then they all came over and urinated and smeared their feces over their eyes.

The men were told to take out their sexual organs, on which they put red hot poker and held it until the poker became black. During that time they said it's enough to live, you Jews, we will murder all of you.<sup>172</sup>

In addition to describing the sexual crimes, the women described other tortures they had to endure.

Additionally, they told how they sold all of their belongings to a Polish woman called Widow Marisia who gave them food in exchange. Later, she allegedly asked for more gold than was possible to collect, so the group sent an eight-year-old Jewish girl to Marisia to beg to help them. The girl never returned. Gyrvich and Ass described where this woman lived: "V Poglyyanka Street, 34, in the court to the left. Everybody knows this profiteer by the Roman Catholic church Heart of Jesus, courtyard Rinkevich," and asked that someone take revenge on her for being so evil. "We beg you, thirty of our children are dead. Let her three die, two boys and one girl, together with her."<sup>173</sup> This is one of many allegations of German sexual violence against Jews. As with all kinds of sources, even the traditional "official" sources historians have relied on, it is possible that one or two have been falsified, but that does not discount the existence of so many allegations, all of which could not have been fabricated. Rather, many, if not most of them are probably true. This is even more reason that as scholars we need to accept memoirs, interviews and novels as valid sources. They are as biased as any document written by a detached, freezing bureaucrat in the middle of the winter during the war.

As we saw in the chapter on military prostitution, many sources do not indicate the religion of the females.<sup>174</sup> In addition, it was not always obvious that a person was Jewish,

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<sup>172</sup> USHMMA, RG-06.025\*01 RIGA N-18313, tom 18, doc. 117.

<sup>173</sup> USHMMA, RG-06.025\*01 RIGA N-18313, tom 18, doc. 117.

<sup>174</sup> An additional example of what probably was a Jew comes from Dr. Edith Kramer, a survivor who recorded her experiences. While imprisoned in the camp Antonienhof "a girl of 17 arrived pregnant raped by a guard and tried to conceal this. In spite of her condition she worked as hard as the others. Her camp mates were looking after

especially before Jews were forced to wear the star. Furthermore, even after Jews were forced to wear the star, others who allegedly looked Jewish but did not have the star on their clothing were “punished” for disobeying German orders, even though they were not Jewish. Historian Bernhard Chiari found in his research on German-occupied Belorussia that thousands of White Russians, Poles, and Russians died because the Germans thought they were Jews who did not wear the required stars.<sup>175</sup> On the contrary, historian Reitlinger argues that countless other Soviet citizens were murdered on the pretext that they were Jewish. For example, the Germans murdered thousands of Asiatic prisoners caught on the Black Sea front, mainly Crimean Tatars.<sup>176</sup> This could have been the same with Ukrainians or other nationalities on the eastern front. Jews could have been sexually assaulted without the German actually realizing or caring whether the person was a Jew. It is possible that a man raped a Jewish woman or girl precisely because she was Jewish. Furthermore, if the German soldier or officer was intoxicated the chances are even slimmer that he would follow any regulations. If he wanted to rape, he would rape.

One case from September 1939 of a Jewish girl raped by Germans in Poland made it to court and reveals several things: for example, that German soldiers raped a girl knowing she was Jewish. The case is for the crimes of *Rassenschande*, rape, and robbery, although there is no discussion about which crime the court viewed as the most important.<sup>177</sup> The only clue is that *Rassenschande* is the first listed. The crimes took place in Kielce, Poland on September 27, 1939, very early in the German occupation, when the Germans were most likely to be concerned about their image, though again, the case recorder does not discuss this in the documents. Further, the girl who was gang raped was menstruating, but this did not matter to the men. Three Germans entered a Jewish house, in which four Jews were sleeping. The man and his son were in one bed, and one of the Germans, Kerner, cut his beard off with a knife (which indicates Kerner knew it

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her most tenderly, shared their meagre food ration with her and hid her from the guards. I admired this attitude of the enslaved and helpless girls. At last I had to keep her away from work and should have reported her to the Gestapo. Failing to do so was punishable with death but fortunately a premature birth occurred. The child died after 10 days and I declared it a still born case which saved the mother from being deported.” No other details are given. Dr. Edith Kramer, “Hell and Rebirth: My Experiences During the Time of Persecution” USHMM, RG-02.037.

<sup>175</sup> Minskij ad. Vospominanija pedagoga Sof’i Ozerskoj, in: *Neizvestnaja židovskaja kniga*, 246-250, quoted in Chiari, *Alltag*, 246.

<sup>176</sup> Reitlinger, *The House*, 86.

<sup>177</sup> The proceedings for this 1939 case are in several places: NARA, RG 242, T 311, R. 244, Fr. 267-271; NARA, RG 242, T 311, R. 254, Fr. 910-924. I want to thank Alexander Rossino for bringing my attention to his article and to this particular rape case.

was a Jewish family since Germans frequently humiliated Jews in this manner). In the other bed were the Jewish wife and the daughter. They ripped the shirt of the twenty-year-old daughter, and then all three raped her at gunpoint.

One of the guilty German men, Franz Rothe, confessed that he tried for seven to eight minutes to enter her sexually but that because she kept kicking with her knee he was unable, even though he was “stiff.” According to Rothe, she kept screaming “*Waih, wai!*” and he silenced her by covering her mouth with his hand. Rothe reported that he did not ejaculate and did not know what the others were doing while he tried. The other German, Kerner, then said that he wanted his turn. Rothe said that Kerner was not on her a long time, and that he did not know if the latter actually had intercourse. Apparently, Kerner told him afterward that his penis would not get hard. Rothe held the girl’s hands during this rape. He denied threatening either the mother or daughter with a pistol, but the report states that someone did.

Baudisch, the third German, raped the Jewish girl last. Kerner admitted afterward that he had indeed cut the beard, but denied any other wrong doing. He said that the other two “had used the girl sexually,” but he could not remember any details. Baudisch explained that the Jewish girl looked “great” in bed, and that he could see her sexual organs.<sup>178</sup> He saw by the light that she was menstruating because she had blood at her feet. She lay with her legs spread in bed. The case came before officials, and the men were punished, though the records do not indicate what the punishment was or when they were sentenced.<sup>179</sup>

Researcher Alexander Rossino has written about this rape, and he finds it interesting that none of the three rapists admitted to actually having completed the act of sexual intercourse by having an orgasm. Indeed, it seems that because the rape was not “consummated,” the men denied having raped the girl, though they did admit they knew the girl was Jewish. One of the men, Rothe, knew about the Nuremberg Laws, but stated that he “did not think this act was punishable.” Rothe further explained that they (he said “we”) did “not think this act was punishable because [they] forced her to have sex with [them] at pistol-point.”<sup>180</sup> In other words,

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<sup>178</sup> This is an example that does not fit the traditional feminist argument that rape is not about sexuality or sex, and that it is only about power. Rothe confessed that he was attracted to this woman, and that he proceeded to rape her (even if it was unsuccessful, as he claimed).

<sup>179</sup> Report of Oberfeldwebel Josef König, Feldgendarmarie Abteilung 682, 29 September 1939, NARA, RG 242, T 311, R. 244, Fr. 267-277.

<sup>180</sup> Confession of Franz Rothe, 30 September 1939, NARA, RG 242, T 311, R. 254, Fr. 910-24, quoted in Rossino, “Destructive,” 357.



because it was not a consensual act, that is, because it was a rape, Rothe allegedly thought that this was not punishable according to the Nuremberg Laws. This echoes the widespread view among men, especially military men, that it was okay to rape anyone viewed as “not proper” or somehow “inferior.” Baudisch explained that he knew the Nuremberg Laws and that rape was punishable, but he did not provide any other explanation. Kerner alleged that he too knew the Nuremberg Laws but claimed that Baudisch had told him and Rothe that this would not be punishable.<sup>181</sup>

Historian Rossino speculates that because the men thought they would not be punished for raping a Jewish woman and that the laws against having sex with a Jewish woman only pertained in cases of consensual sex, this is an example of “German troops selectively obeying standing orders regarding the treatment of civilians, particularly Jews.” Furthermore, Rossino argues that “Rothe’s justification for his violation of the Reich’s racial laws may well have been based on a belief that Jewish women could be raped because they stood beyond the confines of German law.” Also, this was very likely the men’s beliefs: Kerner confirmed that Baudisch had convinced him a rape was acceptable against a Jew.<sup>182</sup>

Except for the list of crimes at the top of the documents (Rassenschande, rape, and robbery), it also is not clear why the men were punished or why this case was investigated. At any rate, it is one example that reveals German soldiers who had no problem with the idea of raping a Jew. In fact, the one rapist was recorded as having said that she looked attractive in bed. Of course, this case also reveals a court which took the “racial” crimes into serious consideration, but it must also be pointed out that this was in 1939, before the infamous Commissar and Partisan orders issued in the spring of 1941, which allowed for great excesses against all civilians in the east. Furthermore, there are few of these examples of rape being taken seriously in the east, and more examples that only reveal the rapes.

Many other rapes of Jews by Germans were never reported, never recorded “officially,” or at least never became public enough to make it to the newspapers, Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, or history books. Dr. Temchin, partisan fighter and memoirist, wrote about the repeated rape of Jewish women by Germans. He told that the German gendarmes in Grabowiec, Poland

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<sup>181</sup> Confessions of Andreas Kerner and Siegfried Baudisch, 19 September 1939, NARA, RG 242, T 311, Fr. 924, quoted in Rossino, “Destructive,” 357.

<sup>182</sup> Rossino, “Destructive,” 357.

fighting armed Russian POWs who had escaped, were supplied by the *Judenrat* with

housekeepers, cooks and servants who had to be young and attractive women. They were treated like slaves. Rape by two or three men was the order of the day. One girl of twelve was so badly mauled during such an “act of collective love” that she required about five or six stitches to restore her into halfway human shape. Another girl had the audacity to become pregnant and carry a “German” in her Jewish womb. This was a crime punishable by death. Luckily, she did not live long enough for the Germans to find out about it.<sup>183</sup>

Sophia Glushkina, a Russian Jew, testified at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials of how her sister-in-law was raped in the yard of their house in August 1941. She also reported that the German SS brutally raped eighteen-year-old Etta Kuznetsova, who was living in the ghetto in Krasny: “She was ordered to take her skirt off. She refused. She was beaten for some time. Her mother, fearing that they would kill her, whispered: ‘Do not resist.’ She undressed. Then she was placed on a chair, spot-lighted with a flashlight, tortured and assaulted. It is difficult to describe it all.”<sup>184</sup> Her last comment reinforces the notion that even eye-witnesses who were not raped themselves were unable to explain or describe the crimes that occurred. If a bystander has difficulty discussing rape, survivors have even more conflict.

In her memoir, Frome relates that after the Germans took full control of Kaunas, they attacked girls and women. At one point the Germans ordered all money and valuables belonging to Jews to be handled over to the police. They searched all the homes with their dogs, “ferreting into every hiding place they could locate and attacking many girls in the homes they entered. Every women and child was scared to within an inch of her life.”<sup>185</sup> It apparently did not matter that the men were Germans and the girls were Jewish. This was less about Rassenschande laws than about particular moments of men with guns and unarmed females.

German Army commander Johannes Blaskowitz prepared a report in February 1940 on SS crimes in Poland. Among other things, he complained that women in particular had been forced to undress outside on a cold night as the police “pretended to look for gold.” In addition, Blaskowitz reported that two policemen had taken two Jewish girls, teenagers, out of bed. The policemen raped one of the girls in a Polish cemetery. The other girl had become ill, but apparently the soldiers told her that “they would get her some other time and that they would

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<sup>183</sup> Temchin M.D., *Witch Doctor*, 36.

<sup>184</sup> Sophia Glushkina deposition, *The Black Book*, pp. 342-343, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 50-51.

<sup>185</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 41. For additional examples of rape against Jews, see also Rat Conroy, *Beach Music* (New York, Toronto, London: Bantam Books, 1995)

pay her 5 zloty.”<sup>186</sup> There is no other evidence known that tells if discipline was taken or how badly hurt the young and gang-raped girl was.

In the face of so many examples of rapes of Jews by the German military in various settings, it is ridiculous to claim that the Germans did not rape Jews or only raped a “small percentage.” It is impossible to quantify how many rapes occurred against Jews any better than scholars quantify other crimes, but we know they occurred. There is no reason to doubt the existence of such brutal sexual crimes. Smashing babies’ heads against buildings or cars or burning people alive in open pits is considered part of the horror of the Holocaust and WWII destruction. Sexual crimes need to be included. Sexual crimes occur in almost every armed conflict; it is unlikely, considering all the evidence, that the Germans did not commit such crimes against Jews. Still, because of the lack of research it seems early for theoretical answers about when Germans would rape Jews in the east, when they would rape and then murder, or rape and then mutilate, and how these crimes compared to sexual crimes against non-Jews.<sup>187</sup> The examples I have presented come from a myriad of combinations of dates, places, and circumstances, combinations which do not seem to offer any easy answers, except the importance of gender. The other examples overwhelmingly come from Ukraine (primarily because that is where I conducted the most interviews), but there are also cases I found of rape by Germans from Russia and Poland. The examples of rape of Jewish women discussed are of Jewish women and girls primarily from Poland, Lithuania, and Russia. I have not found examples of rapes by Germans in Estonia and Latvia, but I am hesitant to assert that this means it did not happen since the bulk of my research was in Ukraine. Considering the evidence thus far, it does not seem to have been overwhelmingly important whether a girl was Jewish or Slavic Orthodox. What mattered was that some kind of opportunity presented itself to an armed man to rape an unarmed civilian. Members of the Red Army also came across many such opportunities as they headed west across the eastern front toward Berlin.

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<sup>186</sup> Notes for an oral report prepared by Blaskowitz, Feb. 6, 1940, NO-3011, quoted in Hilberg, *Destruction*, 191. Also quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 53.

<sup>187</sup> I found more sources stating rapes against Jews which did not seem to have ended in murder than sources indicating the females were murdered. A higher number of sources indicating rape and murder also indicated rapes of more than one person. There were fewer sources indicating no murder but more than one victim. However, since it is difficult to assess actual numbers, it is very difficult to determine whether Jews were more likely to be murdered after a rape as other females. Furthermore, I found about the same number of rapes against Slavic women or girls who likely – but not for certain – were not Jews, also with a similar number of murders – but again, the sources do not always state exactly who the girls were or how many victims there were. Further, I have not found many rape cases of Latvians or Estonians by Germans, but my focus through the years has mostly been on Slavic women.

### Soviet Brutal Sexual Crimes

Relatively many scholars have written about Soviet rape on the eastern front compared to the topics of rape by the Wehrmacht and SS.<sup>188</sup> However, often the references or short paragraphs one finds on the topic are all too often apologetic, sexist, irresponsible, Eurocentric, or filled with a western arrogance.<sup>189</sup> One could be grateful that the rapes are even noted in these works, but in comparison to the innocence and high culture so often attributed to the Wehrmacht, the Red Army is almost too easily depicted as sexually violent.<sup>190</sup> Historians Read and Fisher reported that over 90,000 women visited clinics and doctors in Berlin because of the rapes committed by Red Army soldiers. Accordingly, the soldiers would just “grunt the dreaded words, ‘*Frau komm!*’”<sup>191</sup> In a nod toward the fact that the women and girls did not enjoy being raped, they mention the high suicide rate but offer no further analysis of who the women were. Instead, the authors focus on the rapists, who were allegedly the second-echelon troops. They arrived in Berlin after having survived Nazi prison camps. According to Read and Fisher, these men were “Asiatics with their own ideas about women, Mongols whose attitudes to conquered peoples had been inherited by direct descent from Genghis Khan. These were the men the refugees from the east had warned the Berliners about.” Then the authors concede that it was not just the men from the Far East. They write, “but as the fighting ended, and the tensions and the iron discipline were relaxed, front-line troops, too, sought the soldier’s traditional rewards.”<sup>192</sup> The reference to rape

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<sup>188</sup> For more on the rapes of German women in Berlin and the rest of the Soviet zone of occupation, see Anonymous, *Woman in Berlin*; Grossmann, “Eine Frage.”; Naimark, *Russians*. Based on his sister’s experience toward the end of the war, Christian Graf von Krockow wrote about Soviet rapes in Pomerania: Christine Krockow, *Die Stunde der Frauen: Bericht aus Pommern 1944 bis 1947: nach einer Erzählung von Libussa Fritz-Krockow* (1988). Military historian Brian Moynahan also writes briefly about the Soviet rapes of German women: Brian Moynahan, *Claws of the Bear: The History of the Red Army from the Revolution to the Present* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989). See also Read and Fisher, *Fall*, 239, 438-440; Sander, “Remembering.”; Sander, “A Response.”; Sander and Johr, eds., *Befreier*; J.N. Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour: Russian History 1812-1992*, Fourth ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>189</sup> The historian Norman Naimark points out that the Germans had experienced more of a decade of anti-Soviet propaganda, highlighting the “Asiatic Russians,” but this propaganda has reached farther than Nazi Germany. Naimark, *Russians*, 110.

<sup>190</sup> For a description of the Soviet Army in 1939 in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, see Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 45.

<sup>191</sup> Read and Fisher, *Fall*, 438-440.

<sup>192</sup> Read and Fisher, *Fall*, 431.

as a “traditional reward” epitomizes too many scholars’ treatment of the topic, in which they neither challenge the arrogant soldier’s view of the crime nor offer any analysis on the victim.

Furthermore, scholars’ ready connection between rape and men from the east reveals more about the scholar than about what really happened. The assumption that men from the east, especially from the Far East, rape more than men from the west, for example, the Wehrmacht soldiers, only perpetuates the unfounded claims of Wehrmacht innocence during the war. Perhaps this somehow differentiates the west from the east. Many members of the Red Army were indeed uneducated and poor. In the war they suffered tremendously, were hungry, dirty, fearful, and angry. Historian Norman Naimark comments that “even the surprisingly high incidence of rape and violence crime committed by American soldiers can be compared only superficially with the Soviet case. The poor discipline and rapacity of Soviet soldiers was matched in the Western zones only by French Moroccan troops...Despite these caveats, rape became a part of the social history of the Soviet zone in ways unknown to the Western zones.”<sup>193</sup>

On the comparison of French Moroccan troops, Naimark cites two German studies and on the rapes by Americans the citation includes reports from the war and two studies written afterward, but Naimark does not clarify or note whether these were in-depth studies that focused on the widespread problem of sexual violence, if they included the myriad ways people were sexually exploited (without necessarily being raped), if they included the perspectives of rape survivors and victims, or if these sources were based only on official documentation that concluded that the numbers of rapes by Americans, for example, was “not large.” Furthermore, the Allied forces, including the Americans did not take the crime of rape seriously, and they were not quick to prosecute either the Germans or the Russians of rape, perhaps, as Professor of Law Rhonda Copelon argues, “because the Allied forces were not innocent of this particular atrocity.”<sup>194</sup> The actual numbers of reported rapes (and even probably unreported rapes) were smaller in the west, and this was likely because the Germans and the Soviets in the east were much bloodier and brutal than in the war in the west. Still, the phrasing used reveals a similar kind of westernism that is found in many comparisons of armed conflicts.

As we have seen here, the sexual terror inflicted on women and girls under the German occupation likely was also previously unknown to those in the east. Naimark’s statement suggests

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<sup>193</sup> Naimark, *Russians*, 106-107.

<sup>194</sup> Copelon, “Surfacing” 348, n.2.

the typical sentiment of the Red Army having been full of rapists compared to the German army which was much more civilized. As one German veteran stated in an interview, “I never experienced that a German raped a woman,” and the veteran insisted that if that had happened – whether in Poland, France, or Russia, the offenders would have been brought before a military court.<sup>195</sup> The propaganda Germany employed against the barbaric Soviet people certainly has been pervasive.

Then there are examples of simply bad analysis of the topic. Historian J.N. Westwood writes,

In the final stages of the war, when the Red Army advanced into Europe, tales were spread of how Russian soldiers relieved the local population of their watches, and how no female between eight and eighty was safe. Much the same, perhaps more, might have been said about other victorious armies, and the Red Army, despite four years of barbarous war, was certainly not the worst of the belligerents.<sup>196</sup>

The phrase, “despite four years of barbarous war” insinuates that men can be excused for raping women because of their experiences in battle. Westwood offers no further analysis of these “tales,” nor provides any indication of what his source was. Then, without offering any statistics or naming other conflicts, the author minimizes the crimes with a comparison, stating that the Red Army was no “worse” than any other victorious army.

One of the many topics in Alexander Werth’s extensive book on the war in Russia is the conduct of the soldiers in foreign countries. Werth does not use the word rape, but it is implied. He writes that the “Russians themselves” do not deny that some of the Russian troops “ran wild.” If running wild means only plundering and looting, this might be true, but it is not a valid statement about the rapes, denial of which has been pervasive. Yet Werth almost apologizes for the Red Army’s behavior in Germany, where “there were, of course, some weighty extenuating circumstances.”<sup>197</sup> If by “weighty extenuating circumstances” the author means the murder, pillage, and rape the Germans committed in the east, then he is justifying the rape of civilian women, thousands of them not even German, as a revenge for what mostly German men did.

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<sup>195</sup> This same veteran commented that there were no women who were forced into prostituting themselves for the Germans in their many military brothels. Sander and Johr, eds., *Befreier*, 170, 177.

<sup>196</sup> Westwood, *Endurance*, 354.

<sup>197</sup> Werth, *Russia*, 948.

It seems that most Soviet veterans are not eager to admit that mass raping took place, especially against Soviet civilian women and girls. A retired Russian major said that many German women figured that "it was now the Russians' turn," and that it was no good resisting.

The approach...was usually very simple. Any of our chaps simply had to say: '*Frau, komm*,' and she knew what was expected of her...Let's face it. For nearly four years, the Red Army had been sex-starved. It was all right for officers, especially staff officers, so many of whom had a 'field-wife' handy--a secretary, or typist, or a nurse, or a canteen waitress; but the ordinary Vanka had very few opportunities in that line. In our own liberated towns, some of our fellows were lucky, but most of them weren't. The question of more-or-less 'raping' any Russian woman just didn't arise. In Poland a few regrettable things happened from time to time, but, on the whole, a fairly strict discipline was maintained as regards 'rape'. The most common offence in Poland was '*dai chasy*'--'give me your wrist-watch.'...But the looting and raping in a big way did not start until our soldiers got to Germany. Our fellows were so sex-starved that they often raped old women of sixty, or seventy or even eighty--much to these grandmothers' surprise, if not downright delight. But I admit it was a nasty business, and the record of the Kazakhs and other Asiatic troops was particularly bad.<sup>198</sup>

This Soviet veteran completely disregards evidence of rapes in Soviet, Polish, and Baltic areas, minimizes the rapes against the Germans by suggesting that the older women enjoyed it, and insinuates that the Asian and Kazakh troops raped more than the Russians. Although there are exceptions, there is mostly denial among Russian and other former Red Army veterans about the amount of raping they did. Historian Beevor also argues that this has not been discussed in public, but that it is high time it was.

In general, too many historians have ignored rape by Germans but have embraced the rapes by the Red Army. Their focus has been the soldier and his experience as a fighting man, and they have hardly provided any analysis of, or empathy to the victims. Indeed, the rapes on the western edges of the eastern front have been easier to document by western scholars than those that occurred further east and into the Soviet Union. More survivors in the west have had a chance to speak to a western audience (either with their voices, through investigation of medical records, scholarly research, films, etc.), which cannot be said about many survivors from further east where the German military raped. Yet before the data is before us, this imbalance of evidence should not allow us to conclude that only the Soviets were guilty of mass rape.

With that said, it is true that the Soviets raped, and they raped a lot. As with the Germans, much of the Red Army's fighting and raping was done under the influence of alcohol.

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<sup>198</sup> Werth, *Russia*, 964.

This is an accompanying detail in many reports and memoirs. Naimark notes that alcohol accompanied many rapes in the invasion and subsequent occupation of the Soviet zone in Germany.<sup>199</sup> The men drank anything that resembled alcohol if liquor was not available. The NKVD reported to Moscow that the men were drinking all kinds of chemicals stolen from laboratories or workshops, and that their compulsive drinking of alcohol was resulting in “mass poisoning” of the Soviet soldiers.<sup>200</sup>

It has been estimated that more than one million German women were raped by Soviet soldiers in the last months of World War II, and that approximately 110,000 women in Berlin were raped between early summer and fall of 1945, and less conservative estimates are much higher.<sup>201</sup> In Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s narrative poem, *Prussian Nights*, arrogantly, the officer orders an underling to retrieve the girl or woman the officer had previously chosen as his rape victim by telling her she was needed for milking a cow. The armed soldier leads her to the officer, into a closed room. While the armed soldier stood guard outside the door the protagonist, the “I” in Solzhenitsyn’s story, rapes her. Afterward, “with her face sunk in the pillow, in an unsteady voice that she could not control, [she] begged, ‘*Doch, eschiessen Sie mich nicht!*’” (Please don’t shoot me!) Although the poem, written in the first person, and Solzhenitsyn himself was an officer in the Red Army, the author has not clarified if he is the rapist.<sup>202</sup> In another part of the narrative poem, the protagonist relates what they found on a German street.

A moaning, by the walls half-muffled:  
The mother’s wounded, still alive.  
The little daughter’s on the mattress,  
Dead. How many have been on it?  
A platoon, a company, perhaps?  
A girl’s been turned into a woman,  
A woman turned into a corpse.  
It’s all come down to simple phrases:

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<sup>199</sup> Naimark, *Russians*, 112-113.

<sup>200</sup> RGVA 32925/1/100, p. 58, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 31.

<sup>201</sup> Historian Barbara Johr estimates that it could be as high as two million German women in the Soviet zone. Barbara Johr, “Die Ereignisse in Zahlen,” in *Befreier und Befreite: Krieg, Vergewaltigungen, Kinder* (Munich: Kunstmann, 1992), 59. Sander and Johr provide one of the only detailed statistical analyses of the rapes of women in the Soviet zone, based primarily on medical records. Despite the immense difficulty of determining statistics of crimes in such a crime-ridden setting as World War II, such studies – whether they try to determine how many members of a certain group were executed, cremated, starved, or raped – provide valuable insight into the breadth of the problem.

<sup>202</sup> Brownmiller certainly shows that Solzhenitsyn did not consider women’s fate seriously. See Brownmiller, *Against*, 72.



*Do not forget! Do not forgive!*  
*Blood for blood! – A tooth for a tooth!*  
 The mother begs, ‘Töte mich, Soldat!’  
 Her eyes are hazy and bloodshot.  
 The dark’s upon her. She can’t see.<sup>203</sup>

This scene clearly reveals the brutality and fatal consequences of gang rape. The woman begs to be shot when she says, “kill me, soldier” (“*Töte mich, Soldat*”). Solzhenitsyn’s reference to the girl having been turned into a woman because she has been raped echoes past Russian rulings that at times defined sexual experience as the mark of adulthood, rather than age.<sup>204</sup> This could imply that Solzhenitsyn, or at least his protagonist, viewed a raped girl as one who had had sexual intercourse, which of course, renders rape to be the same as sexual intercourse. To the rapist, rape is often also about wanting to be sexual or at least wanting to have an orgasm inside a female, but naturally to the victims it is another matter.

Natalya Viktorovna, an educated Russian journalist who wrote under the pseudonym Nikolai Viktorov as she traveled with the Red Army during World War II, believed that the Soviets raped German women and girls because the men desired both sexual activity and revenge. She reported that,

the Russian soldiers were raping every German female from eight to eighty. It was an army of rapists. Not only because they were crazed with lust, this was also a form of vengeance. Those soldiers had now seen what the Germans had done to their land—the burned-out villages, the partisans hung in the squares, people herded off to Germany as slave labor.

The Russian soldiers robbed every German man and killed most of them too, and they raped all the females.<sup>205</sup> They only knew two expressions in German—“*Frau, komm*” and “*Uhr*,” meaning wristwatch. In those days, it was still rare for a Russian to own a wristwatch.<sup>206</sup>

Although revenge was part of the picture, the desire to have sexual intercourse seems to be a more pervasive motive for the rapes. Yet there are other factors which need considering.

What is not as well known as the rapes of German women by the Soviets is that the Red Army raped all across the eastern front, including Russia, the Baltic States, and through

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<sup>203</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *Prussian Nights*, 41.

<sup>204</sup> Engelstein, *Keys*, 75-84.

<sup>205</sup> This is reminiscent of the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. when young men were lynched and the young women were raped.

<sup>206</sup> Lourie, *Russia*, 253-254.

Belorussia, Ukraine, Poland, and into Germany. In and around Berlin many women were refugees who had fled from the east. Lev Kopelev, a political officer during World War II, saw a woman with her dress torn and hair messed running for her life and screaming at two drunken “tankists” “I’m Polish! Jesus Mary, I’m Polish!”<sup>207</sup> In another part of Solzhenitsyn’s narrative poem, he highlighted the rape of eastern European women in Berlin by drunken Soviet soldiers.

In which house to seek the loot?  
Which is richer? Which is safer?  
Vanka bangs with his rifle butt,  
And look—it’s Dunka come to answer.  
Judged by her hairdo and her shoes,  
Her skirt and jumper—she’s a German!  
And it’s only by her snub nose  
One spots a fellow-countrywoman.  
She leans against the doorpost there  
Unafraid, with hands on hips.  
‘Who are you, then? ‘I’m the servant.’  
‘Don’t tell lies to your own chaps!  
You’re not in clogs. Your skirt is clean.  
Let me in!  
‘What? Let you in?  
A drunken, dirty...’ Other soldiers  
Come up. She takes a different tone:  
‘Wait, lads, I’ll show you something finer,  
A rich house, full of German virgins!’  
‘Far away?’  
‘Just round the corner!  
You’ll see! I’ll serve you like a good  
Fellow-countrywoman should!  
I’ll show you!’ The door goes slam.  
Away she runs, ahead of them,  
Lightly, leading the crowd, she goes,  
Lit up by the bluish blaze.  
Round the corner they disappear.  
Knocks. Rings. A tumult. Then we hear  
A moment later, the cry of a girl,  
Somewhere, from behind a wall,  
‘I’m not German! I’m not German!  
No! I’m—Polish! I’m a Pole!...’  
Grabbing what comes handy those,  
Like-minded lads get in and start—  
‘And oh, what heart

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<sup>207</sup> Kopelev was arrested by SMERSH counter-intelligence for showing pity for the enemy. He also had criticized Ehrenburg’s wrathful writings. Kopelev, *No Jail for Thought*, 50. Also see Beevor, *Berlin*, 28-31.

*Could well oppose?...<sup>208</sup>*

In this excerpt Solzhenitsyn hints at the complexity of relations between what were Slavic Soviet soldiers and their “own” women. Indeed, the “fellow countrywoman” did not feel safe, and she was afraid of being gang raped as more of “her” soldiers came onto the scene. It is not clear if she led the men to Polish women and girls on purpose, or if she believed they were German women and girls. But it is clear that the men may have raped a Russian woman, and that they did rape Polish females. Indeed, considering the conflict-ridden history between Russia and Poland, this may not be surprising and could be considered a rape of revenge. However, the political aspects of the situation seem less relevant in the passage that indicates the soldiers just wanted sexual intercourse regardless if the recipient was Russian, Polish, or German. When Solzhenitsyn writes, “And, oh, what heart could well oppose?” he is either hinting at his own attitude toward rape or referring to the mentality of being in a group and joining in with the others, although we must remember that there are always one or two initiators. Solzhenitsyn very likely included these scenes from his own memory.<sup>209</sup>

Soviet soldiers also raped in Latvia, where they were viewed as an enemy. The Soviets invaded Latvia in 1940, prior to the German invasion and murdered or deported thousands of people. Although people greeted the Germans enthusiastically, many Latvians today will tell you that they did not want another occupier, especially such a brutal one as the Germans. Still, the Latvian women I spoke with only spoke of rape by Soviet soldiers, not by German soldiers. None had heard of the German military brothels in Latvia, where presumably many Latvian women and girls were forced to work because of wartime desperation. Toward the end of the war, the Soviets reentered the Baltic states as they pushed the Germans out of what they considered to be their territory. There are various reports of rapes by Soviet soldiers. In September 1944, Germans reported that,

Ltn. Tenter (*Stab des Selbstschutzes von Tartu*) had reported that the Soviets had raped “uncountable” numbers of women. Many women were locked into the Försterhaus by Karusaare. In the beginning the Bolsheviks took young women and girls, but later they also raped older women. [One woman] has lost her mind... Also in the village of Pupastvere the Bolsheviks have committed the same crimes...The press hopes to have gathered firm material in order to publicize these crimes.

In the region around Dorpat [Tartu] the male population [is mostly away, and] [t]he

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<sup>208</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *Prussian Nights*.

<sup>209</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *Prussian Nights*, 41-43, 51-53, 93-103.

women therefore are home alone at night....The women don't dare stay home alone at night any more...<sup>210</sup>

But it was not only the Germans who reported Soviet rapes. Another report of Latvian women is from the Latvian memoirist, Agate Nesaule, who relates a frightful account of her childhood experience when she was held captive in a basement with other women and children. Soviet soldiers came in every day and picked their victims to gang rape behind the partition in the room. The others could only sit and listen.<sup>211</sup> The chapter, entitled "Hilda" after the woman who later committed suicide, is an incredibly painful passage to read and reveals not only the horror of being raped, but also the extreme emotional and psychological consequences to the survivor.<sup>212</sup>

The Soviet soldiers also raped in Hungary. The autobiographical *The Seed of Sarah* by Judith Magyar Isaacson tells of a Jewish woman in Budapest who came out of hiding to greet her "liberators" only to be tortured, raped, murdered, and left on the river bank.<sup>213</sup> A retired officer of the Red Army told us about his experience in a small village north of Budapest, Hungary where

<sup>210</sup> B III B, Vermerk, gez. G. Tomberg, U'stuf., Hauptreferent, 10 September 1944, ESA R64/1s/16, doc. 90.

<sup>211</sup> Nesaule, *A Woman*, 48-70.

<sup>212</sup> Nesaule recorded that in a basement women and girls continued to wait fearfully, not knowing who the next rape victim would be: "The soldiers seized an eleven- or twelve-year-old girl and started dragging her away from her mother. They had judged her too young before. Her mother, with graying hair and shapeless body, stood up and tried to convince the soldiers to take her instead, but they laughed and shoved her back. They tightened their grip on the girl. She struggled, at the same time looking expectantly to the circle of women for protection.

"At that moment Hilda came to life. She stopped mumbling to herself, jumped up and caught the arm of a soldier. She swivelled her hips and laughed into his face in a way that he saw as provocative, but which sounded mocking. The soldier dug his elbow into the side of his comrade and said something that made them both roar with laughter. They let go of the girl and led Hilda behind the partition. A lot of hooting and applauding followed.

"When Hilda returned later, the other women glared at her with hate and condemnation. Only the mother of the frightened girl started to say something, but thought better of it. Hilda returned to her seat next to me, while the other women seemed to form a circle that excluded her. Hilda was taken behind the partition several more times." Nesaule, *A Woman*, 66-67. It is not only painful to read of the many rapes, but to read about Hilda, the hero who saved a young girl from being raped, and how she was ostracized by the other women in the basement. Later, Hilda committed suicide.

Nesaule also remembered seeing a woman and her daughter, Heidi, lying dead under a tree. Heidi had been a classmate of hers and had sat next to her in school: "Heidi's face is blue and puffy, but her body looks almost the same. Her feet are bare and she is wearing no coat, only a short-sleeved dress with tiny sprigs of blue flowers. The bit of petticoat that shows is muddy...Next to Heidi is her mother, Mrs. Heimlich. A rag is tied across her mother's eyes. There is a dark hole in her cheek and there are two or three dark holes in her chest. She too is barefoot. Her dress is pushed up above her hips, there is a dark stain between her legs." Nesaule, *A Woman*, 79. Nesaule would have been about seven years old at this point in the war.

<sup>213</sup> Isaacson, *Seed*, 143-144. Also see Andrea Pető, "Memory and the Narrative of Rape in Budapest and Vienna in 1945," in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2003).

they stopped to wait for supplies from the rear lines. A Catholic priest came up to him, brought him to his house where his wife and daughter were, and told him what the Soviet soldiers had done.

We entered, we said hello hello, a young woman, beautiful and daughter of indescribable beauty. She was sixteen, and his wife was forty years. He was probably around forty-two or forty-five. You know, they were without any hair because they shaved. What he told us...he told us that “your soldiers came, they broke my radio, took my watch, earrings, rings and gold.

“...gold and golden rings.” He showed that his wife’s ring was taken, and his daughter’s and his cross. They raped his wife four times and his daughter two times. And he showed that he was standing here and that he had to hold a flashlight. They told him to hold the flashlight while they raped. [This] one... not married? [he refers to the author] Because I’m telling such things that not every girl should know. The reverend held the flashlight, and those ones raped. Four of them raped his wife, and two raped the daughter. And they took everything. I said that I’m going to put the soldiers in a line because he said that they were my soldiers. And maybe you can find by looking into their eyes you will find out who it was. He said, they left. You are Russian soldiers, but those ones maybe were from Vlasov because they spoke Russian, because in front of us there was Vlasov’s division or something like that. Who knows, could have been some deserters. The fact is that it was done. He was worried very much about his daughter, for his wife, not as much.<sup>214</sup>

In this situation no responsibility for the crimes was taken by anyone, and the officer was unable to find the rapists. There does not seem to have been any senseless violence in addition to the rapes. Having arrived at a village, the men apparently only wanted sexual intercourse. Perhaps to the rapists, sexual activity was what they needed and what they deserved. The men also took other things they needed, such as jewelry, the watch, and the radio – all prizes for their hard work on the battlefield.

From Ukraine are several examples of rape by Soviet soldiers, who were often considered as “ours” by the Ukrainians I interviewed. One woman I interviewed told of an attempted rape by one of her “own” men. She told of her miraculous escape:

And we were almost naked,<sup>215</sup> and we went to look for something. Maybe a window curtain that was left behind, maybe somebody left something because one had to put something on. So the three of us were going, and there were two of our boys, one older and one younger. Was it the second or third floor? We [were on] those floors ... So we were walking and they, “girls, come here!” Well they were ours, Reds, so we walked in, and they walked with us, those two. There ... torn and something else and one of them started to harass me [*privizalicia*] and he was probably about forty years old. That useless

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<sup>214</sup> No. 19, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>215</sup> They had little clothing.

thing [*podluka*], I would kill him now. Said to me, “what for is this? Come, in my suitcase I have everything.” I said, “I won’t go anywhere.” So what did he do? He took me by the hand and he led me. And there was a room like this. There stood a bed and there were doors and there was an empty bed. And there was a metal spring and an open window and the younger one said to him, “don’t touch her, she’s just a girl.” Said, “don’t touch her.” “If you even just touch her I’ll kill you.” Those were two of our soldiers.

Assistant: Did they speak Russian?

Woman: Yea, and he what? He was dragging me so that the other one wouldn’t lock the door. That one was younger. And this one pushed me into the wardrobe. With one arm he held me, and with the other one he was holding the door. And the other guy was pushing the door. And I didn’t think too much. Did I know where I was? And then I jumped into that window from the second floor and on the asphalt or something. ... And they were ours, ours! We were waiting for ours, and they came and he was such a scum [*podluka*], he did something like that. ... And you know if it hadn’t have been that one, the younger one was smarter. Of course he would have done something with me.<sup>216</sup>

Then she told us how she came to after her jump to safety which had hurt her leg.

Woman: I even fainted. But I [could] hear that ... he was walking, I knew it was some kind of military man, and he said, young girl, what’s with you? That’s what I knew. And then they brought me to where we were. There were empty tables. They were laying on the floor. [When they put me on the table], and they were holding me, and I was so shaken. And they were ours.

...

Assistant: And those soldiers they were ours?

Woman: Ours, ours! Ours came in.

Assistant: Russians? You heard...

Woman: Ukrainians. If he is Ukrainian or Russian – it’s still the same army.<sup>217</sup>

In all of the interviews people referred to the Red Army as “ours,” whether they were Russian or Ukrainian. The Cherkassy region of Ukraine has been a part of the Russian empire for centuries. Another Ukrainian woman told of an assault by a Ukrainian man who tried to tempt her with his penis. She was terribly frightened and ran away.<sup>218</sup> Although many of the Ukrainian interviewees had stories of wrong doings by Germans, they told similar stories of their “own” people as well.

Women and girls taken by the Germans for forced labor anxiously awaited the arrival of their Soviet liberators, only to be violated. Vasily Grossman, Soviet novelist and war correspondent, wrote about Soviet girls who were liberated from the camps by the Soviets only to then be raped by them: “Last night some of them hid in the room provided for the war

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<sup>216</sup> No. 10, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>217</sup> No. 10, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>218</sup> No. 18, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

correspondents. Screams wake us up in the night. One of the correspondents could not restrain himself. An animated discussion takes place, and order is restored.”<sup>219</sup> Grossman reported that “liberated Soviet girls quite often complain that our soldiers rape them...One girl said to me in tears, ‘He was an old man, older than my father.’”<sup>220</sup> A Ukrainian woman told me that the Soviets raped the women and girls as they “liberated” the camps where she was. She apparently was not raped because the men thought she looked like a witch.<sup>221</sup>

Tsygankov, Deputy Chief of the Political Department of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Front, sent a report to Moscow which told about the mass raping of young girls by Soviet forces. One evening a group of sixty mostly inebriated men went to the girls’ dormitories and violently assaulted them. The report states,

This is not the only incident. It happens every night and because of this, those who stay in Bunslau are frightened and demoralized and there is much dissatisfaction among them. One of them, Maria Shapoval, said, “I waited for the Red Army for days and nights. I waited for my liberation, and now our soldiers treat us worse than the Germans did. I am not happy to be alive.” “It was very hard to stay with Germans,” Klavdia Malaschenko said, “but now it is very unhappy. This is not liberation. They treat us terribly. They do terrible things to us.”<sup>222</sup>

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how much in the middle of a rock and a hard place the women and girls felt. They were not safe with either military power. With both armies they were unarmed females facing armed males, indicating the importance of gender. Tsygankov also wrote that there “are many cases of offences” committed by the Soviet men and told about another mass raping of women who had just been liberated on February 14 and 15. He noted that

there were also many offences by officers against women...Lantsova, Vera, born 1926, was raped twice – first when the vanguard troops came through the territory, and second on 14 February by a soldier. From 15-22 February Lieutenant Isaev A.A. made her sleep with him by beating her and frightening her with threats that he would shoot her. A number of officers, sergeants and soldiers tell the liberated women, “There is an order not to allow you back to the Soviet Union, and if they do allow some of you back, you will live in the north” [in Gulag camps]. Because of such attitudes to the women and girls, many women think that in the Red Army and in their country, they are not treated as Soviet citizens and that anything can be done to them – killed, raped, beaten and that they will not be allowed

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<sup>219</sup> RGALI 1710/3/51, p. 231, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 67.

<sup>220</sup> RGALI 1710/3/51, p. 227, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 65-67.

<sup>221</sup> No. 29, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>222</sup> RGASPI 17/125/314, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 108-109.

home.<sup>223</sup>

Despite the Soviet people's having been forced to labor in Germany, either because they were starving or because they were kidnaped, they tragically were not "liberated," or even welcomed home.<sup>224</sup> Furthermore, as Beevor writes, the "widespread raping of women taken forcibly from the Soviet Union completely undermines any attempts at justifying Red Army behavior on the grounds of revenge for German brutality in the Soviet Union."<sup>225</sup>

Marie Avinov is a clear example of an east European woman caught in the middle of two military powers. She had been imprisoned by the Soviets prior to WWII, and as the Germans occupied Zubtsov, Russia where she lived, she worked for them willingly. As the war progressed, it became clear to her that the Germans were just as ghastly as the Soviets. She saw a large group of Soviet POWs in terrible condition walk through the streets and later learned how they were used in "medical research," some thrown into freezing water to see how much the human body could withstand. Still, because she had worked as an interpreter for the Germans and because of her pre-war anti-Soviet past, it was necessary for her to retreat with the Germans when the Red Army retook the Tver province in Russia. As the reoccupation of Zubtsov took place, she ran into refugees who had been neighbors of hers, and they told her "the gruesome details of what [Avinov] had avoided in Zubtsov."

At the first alarm, they said, they had hidden in a ditch. "By some miracle the Russians never saw us. But we saw them— Oh God, for our sins we saw them! They dragged poor old Evdokia out of the house and shot her. Then they did the same with Natalia. As for pretty little Groosha, they tore her clothes off, called her a German whore, and then easily a dozen of them raped her, one after the other. Finally they slashed her throat. At last darkness came, and we managed to crawl away undetected."<sup>226</sup>

In 1943, as the Soviets were planning a major offensive into the Smolensk province of Russia where she resided, the Germans shipped Avinov to Berlin. The German General Mittelmeyer in Vyazma told her that this was "no place for ladies." In the spring of 1944 she and her friend managed to escape Berlin for Paris as they knew what would await them if they were

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<sup>223</sup> RGASPI 17/125/314, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 108-110.

<sup>224</sup> One young woman who had labored in Prague decided not to return home when she heard what was happening to other women who had also been forced laborers under the Germans. They were also condemned as "lovers of the Germans" and were disciplined. Thurston, "Soviet Soldiers," 248-249.

<sup>225</sup> Beevor, *Berlin*, 108.

<sup>226</sup> Chavchavadze, *Marie*. Among other places, see pages 224ff, 240-241, 257.



in the city when the Red Army arrived.<sup>227</sup>

Both the Germans and the Soviets gang raped. According to one scholar, in the Soviet Union gang rape was referred to as “collective rape.”<sup>228</sup> Indeed, there is a relationship between gang rape and the military, where there are groups of armed men in close daily living relationships. A former Red Army soldier told me off the record about the mass raping he witnessed while in Berlin. Emphatically describing scenes which were still horrifying to him in 1998, he said it was appalling and disgusting to watch lines of soldiers waiting to take their turn on a woman who was presently being raped by one of their comrades right out in the open on the street. The playwright Zakhar Agranenko served as an officer of marine infantry and wrote at the time in his diary that “Red Army soldiers don’t believe in ‘individual liaisons’ with German women. Nine, ten, twelve men at a time – they rape them on a collective basis.”<sup>229</sup> Solzhenitsyn refers to the feelings of being a part of something larger, not only a group but a moving army:

To lie prostrate, each in turn,  
In that log-road beneath the wheels,  
The wheels of the Comintern.  
Russia advances, a great power.  
Hail to that advance’s thunder!  
Some schnapps would do me good, I feel.  
But what would cheer me even more—  
Is to go looking for some plunder!<sup>230</sup>

Solzhenitsyn makes reference to the mentality of men being in a group, and how peer pressure or comradery may influence men to be sexually violent. In addition, he notes the influence of alcohol and the desire of the protagonist to drink.

In several accounts of mass rape by Soviet soldiers, one of the questions that arises is

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<sup>227</sup> Chavchavadze, *Marie*, 260-262. Since only officials were allowed to travel to France at that time, Avinov skillfully managed to arrange permits from the Gestapo headquarters.

<sup>228</sup> See Valery Chalidze, *Criminal Russia: Essays on Crime in the Soviet Union*, trans. P.S. Falla (New York: Random House, 1977), 64, Chapter 7.

<sup>229</sup> Agranenko also wrote about “how German women in Elbing, in a desperate attempt to seek protection, offered themselves instead to Soviet marine infantrymen.” Agranenko papers, RGALI 2217/2/17, p. 22, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 28. Jolluck found in her research of rape in the Gulag during World War II that the men (male criminals in the Gulag, called *urki*) played cards for essential items, lives, and even the right to rape. She writes that the winner would “get” to be the first to rape and the others would join in. Jolluck, *Exile*, 165. Historian Robert Conquest writes briefly about rape in the Gulag also: Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 314-315.

<sup>230</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *Prussian Nights*.

whether it was the frontline soldiers (*frontoviki*) or the rear echelons of the Red Army who did most of the raping. A retired Ukrainian officer I interviewed was on the front lines for much of the war and said that they did not have time for this. He did tell of horrible rape by both Soviet and German soldiers, so his denial of his *frontoviki* not raping should be valid.<sup>231</sup> The Russian Nina Markovna wrote in her memoir that the rumor in Feodosia was that in all towns the Soviets retook, the first takeover was purely military, but after a brief pause, the rear troops would come, almost always intoxicated. This is what happened to her town of Feodosia in 1941.<sup>232</sup> Vasily Grossman, novelist and war correspondent, also did not believe that the *frontoviki* committed the mass rapes: "Frontline soldiers are advancing day and night under fire, with pure and saintly hearts. The rear echelon men who follow along behind are raping, drinking and looting."<sup>233</sup> Although bigoted in analysis, Read and Fisher also write that at least in the beginning it was the rear echelons who raped in Berlin.<sup>234</sup> More research is needed to understand the dynamics of military movement and sexual crimes on the eastern front.

With so much evidence of mass rape against innocent civilians, one cannot imagine how or why the Red Army, or any army, could commit these crimes of terror. Despite all the progressive legislation of the early Soviet period, the Slavic world has not only experienced much trauma, but for centuries was also a strong patriarchal, misogynist, and conservative society. Perhaps the long history of women's oppression explains some of the rapists' motives. Indeed, the great strides the Soviet state did to unburden both women and workers, however, could not be fully appreciated before contradictions in the new Soviet system, Stalin's policy retreat, the forced collectivization, and famine of the 1930s. Indeed, any of the policy changes the young Soviet state took that would tend to be viewed as emancipatory for women and therefore for society in general, could not have been enough to have an effect on the raping. Furthermore, the Soviet soldiers, experienced extreme exhaustion, stress, and horrific and life-threatening violence. That, in addition to the large amounts of alcohol they consumed could have contributed to the raping. But there are additional specifics to consider.

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<sup>231</sup> No. 19, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>232</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 214-229.

<sup>233</sup> RGALI 1710/3/51, p.227, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 65. Moynahan also writes that the rear troops behaved worse than did the *frontoviki*. Moynahan, *Claws*, 202.

<sup>234</sup> Read and Fisher, *Fall*, 431.

In the case of Feodosia in the Crimea the Soviet army sought vengeance on the citizens of the town in part because they had allegedly collaborated with the Germans, greeting them with bread and salt, sleeping with them, and working for them. Markovna mentions the young girls who had German lovers and who were prepping themselves in the *Banya* for the New Year's celebration just before the first Soviet invasion.<sup>235</sup> After the initial wave of mass rapes by the rear echelon troops, many people in Feodosia were murdered for the "crimes" they committed under the German occupation. A middle-aged Russian woman who had worked for the Germans during their first occupation was mutilated and murdered. On her forehead was carved out "Traitor."<sup>236</sup> This kind of vengeance was not uncommon in the east, where anyone who had collaborated with the enemy was seen as an enemy to the Soviet Union. This included those abducted as forced laborers in Germany.<sup>237</sup> Indeed, even Soviet POWs were not welcomed back into their own country because they were accused of betraying their homeland by not fighting to their death, which was Stalin's order. The few POWs who survived the barbaric conditions under the Germans<sup>238</sup> and made it home were often shot. Stalin issued Order No. 270 early in the war in August 1941 in order to discourage soldiers from surrendering to the enemy.<sup>239</sup> Because of the unyielding nature of Soviet policy, when the Red Army entered Feodosia for the second time during the war, many Soviet citizens fled with the Germans fearing reprisal from the Soviet

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<sup>235</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 213.

<sup>236</sup> Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 246. Lev Kopelev, a retired officer of the Red Army, recorded that on their way west, he saw a "dead old woman. Her dress was ripped; a telephone receiver reposed between her scrawny thighs. They had apparently tried to ram it into her vagina... One of the soldiers explained that the dead woman was a spy. 'They got her by a telephone booth. Why fool around?'" Kopelev, *No Jail for Thought*, 39. This kind of sexual mutilation could have also happened to males accused of being spies, but from the evidence available thus far, it seems that it happened to females more often.

<sup>237</sup> An example of this is a friend of Tatjana Wassiljeva's, Maria, who had been a forced laborer in Germany. When she returned to Russia, the Soviets sent her to a Soviet camp for tree-felling. She returned, but was branded as a traitor. Wassiljeva, *Hostage*, 174-175.

<sup>238</sup> The extremely cruel lot meted out to Russian POWs is relatively unknown in the western world. See page 46, note 130 for more information.

<sup>239</sup> According to the order, Soviet soldiers taken in German hands were traitors. Officers and political workers taken prisoner were viewed as "malicious deserters" and their families were also "subject to arrest." Families of the rank and file soldiers were to be deprived of their rations. According to the order, those who surrendered were to have committed suicide instead of giving in. For the decree on punishing the relatives of Soviet POWs, see *Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Pravo*, no. 4, 1990, quoted in Robert Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), 241. For more on Soviet wartime legislation and discipline, see Hazard, "Soviet." Barber and Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941-1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II*, 63-67. The fleeing of people from the Red Army has also been documented in many sources, so Markovna's account is not surprising.

authorities.<sup>240</sup>

People fled the city of Kharkiv, Ukraine, especially if they had lived through the first retaking of the city by the Soviets on February 16, 1943. There appears to have been raping there as well, according to one autobiography. In light of the other evidence, rapes likely occurred. However, the witness does not elaborate on the nationality of the Soviet troops, but only identifies them as “NKVD people,” who came in after the army pushed the Germans out. Larissa Kotyeva recounts:

As soon as the city was 'liberated' by the Red Army, NKVD people appeared. Denunciations and interrogations commenced. The Soviets assumed that people who survived under German occupation were all enemies of the Communists. Many were arrested. Then followed accusations of treachery. Women who worked for the Germans, even those who had only cleaned and laundered, were denounced as 'German whores'. They were repeatedly gang raped and tortured by Red Army soldiers.<sup>241</sup>

Kotyeva’s testimony matches other stories of how survivors of the German occupation were viewed. Even so, women and girls could have been “disciplined” without being raped.

Indeed, there is more involved in the motivation for rape than the allegation that the women and girls allegedly had collaborated with the Germans under the occupation. Additionally, a political act to bully the population into political submission by mass rape is not likely since there does not seem to be any evidence that rapes were ordered. Even if the men were Russian or Ukrainian, that is, even if the men were similar politically, culturally, and historically to the women and girls, it is hard to believe that the men raped as they did only because they believed that all the women and girls in the towns had collaborated. In the case of Feodosia, Markovna notes that the man who was going to rape her (but chose not to out of fear of tuberculosis) had red hair, red eyelashes, and pale eyes, but this does not clarify who the men were.<sup>242</sup> But the military did not beat up or murder all the remaining men in the town – only the ones who were accused (rightly or wrongly) of being traitors. In contrast, all women were immediate sexual targets as the Soviet army arrived in town (which often was the case when German troops would enter a village). The Soviet soldiers raped indiscriminately, including

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<sup>240</sup> This same pattern happened war tom Russia and Eastern Europe during the Civil War. Towns were occupied and re-occupied by the Reds and the Whites with arrests and reprisals from both sides. For an example of Kursk, see Fitzpatrick and Slezkine, *Shadow*, 33ff.

<sup>241</sup> Kotyeva, *Three Worlds of Larissa*, 127.

<sup>242</sup> Information on the nationalities of the soldiers must be available since the attack on Feodosia is well known.

young girls who could not possibly have been viewed as having worked for or slept with the Germans.

With the rapes on Soviet territory, especially on “friendly” Soviet territory, such as Russia or the eastern parts of Ukraine, the Soviet rapist and the east European woman or girl were not always of similar cultural or national backgrounds. If the men were from the Far East in other cases of rape, they had reason to hate Russians, and they could have more easily viewed all citizens of Feodosia or elsewhere as members of an oppressive group. Therefore, it is possible that the men could have viewed the women and girls as rapeable because they belonged to a different and oppressive cultural or ethnic group or nationality, assuming the men would not want to rape their “own” women and girls (even though that happens in peacetime). Again, this does not seem to be an adequate explanation with the evidence available so far and without knowing more definitively which troops raped more. It seems that one of the largest motivations to rape was that the men wanted to be sexual, to have an orgasm inside a woman, and endowed with a sexual arrogance they viewed this as their right after having suffered in the war as they had.

When considering the rape of Soviet citizens who were freed forced laborers for the Germans, it is true, many in the Red Army believed that female Ostarbeiter had sold themselves to the Germans, and thereby had betrayed their fellow countrymen. Countless women and girls were forcibly brought to the west as slave laborers. Some volunteered in the hopes of avoiding death by starvation at home. One Ostarbeiter, Ukrainian Galina Ivanovna, reported to the journalist Alexander Werth that many girls would try to become pregnant with the hope that they would be sent home. Ivanovna had worked in a factory near Ulm and reported, “There was a dark shed behind one of the large piles of coal, and there some of our girls would go in the evening and make love with the French. God knows, they were so hungry and worn-out, they didn’t really want to make love, but they hoped they might get pregnant.”<sup>243</sup> A woman in the Cherkassy region

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<sup>243</sup> Werth, *Russia*, 808. In general, the Slavic people were treated much worse by the Germans than the other prisoners. Non-Slavs from the East, such as Latvians or Estonians were not viewed as badly as were the Slavs by the Germans. Quite a few people told me this was their experience when they were in Germany during the war. The Russian Tatjana Wassiljewa writes in her memoir that as a worker in Germany she was not allowed to purchase food on the market, like the other slave laborers. Sometimes, however, the Germans would take her money and slip her the cabbage or vegetable that they wanted to sell. Wassiljewa, *Hostage*, 96-97. Larissa Kotyeva also tells that as an Ostarbeiter she was not allowed to mix with other workers, but managed to make friends with a German (*Volksdeutsche*) named Lydia from Latvia. Kotyeva, *Three Worlds of Larissa*, 144. This same hierarchy of people was applied to the Red Army POWs, as historian Robert Thurston outlines in his article on soldiers’ behavior. British and white Americans were treated the best, while Soviet troops were treated the worst. Thurston, “Soviet Soldiers’,” 245.

of Ukraine also told me that she had heard that Ukrainian women would sleep with Frenchmen while they were slave laborers in Germany because the Frenchmen received packages of goods from home, which the Ostarbeiter were not allowed to receive.<sup>244</sup> Ostarbeiter had contact with men of all different nationalities, some of them POWs from other countries. Accurate statistics about who slept with whom simply are not available.

Some Ostarbeiter prostituted themselves to Germans, but regardless of how many did so, at least some Soviet men believed that any women who managed to stay alive under the German occupation was a “German Doll.” Beevor quotes a song:

Young girls are smiling at Germans  
Having forgotten about their guys...  
When times became hard, you forgot your falcons,  
And sold yourselves to Germans for a crust of bread.<sup>245</sup>

This song acknowledges that females may have sold themselves out of hunger, but simultaneously condemns them for such actions. Despite the existence of the song, it is difficult to ascertain what percentage of the Red Army really believed that “their” women had betrayed them in a sexual manner.<sup>246</sup> Still, in the cases of the mass rapes, it was not the case that each rapist raped his girlfriend from home who had allegedly slept with the enemy. Rather, usually the men raped women they did not know, thus rendering the argument that the rapes were out of jealousy or anger less valid. Furthermore, the male domination of women presented here was mostly sexual (forced sexual intercourse or forced oral sex), even though the Soviet military men could have dominated female civilians without being sexual. It is clear that raping or sexual mutilation is what men on the eastern front often did to women during war. In sum, the anger toward Soviet female forced laborers who may have slept with the enemy is not a sufficient explanation for the widespread raping because, again, they could have beaten up or murdered the women without raping them.

In the case of rape by Soviet men of German women, the typical argument that during war men define the enemy women as “whores,” and therefore exploitable and rapeable also is inadequate considering the complexities involved. It is true that many of the Soviet and east

<sup>244</sup> No. 7, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>245</sup> Senyavskaya, Yelena, *1941-1945 Frontovoe pokolenie*, Moscow, 1995 – *Psikhologiya voyny v XX-m veke*, Moscow, 2000, p. 181, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 109.

<sup>246</sup> In rape cases of battered women, often it is stated that the rapist was her boyfriend and he was jealous of someone else (rightly or wrongly) and therefore raped her.

European people hated the Germans, and for good reason. Patriotic soldiers hated the “Fritzes” and wanted to fight for their country and for Stalin, whom they loved and trusted. Even young people learned to hate the Germans. Werth quotes a letter from a young Russian soldier which clearly reveals hatred toward the Germans. The boy, Mitya, mentions the “humiliation” Russia experienced in 1941 by the Germans.<sup>247</sup> One veteran officer I interviewed remembered the pamphlets that were distributed to soldiers, encouraging them to continue fighting.<sup>248</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg, the renowned Soviet journalist and poet, helped spread these feelings of hatred and desire for revenge. Later in the war he wrote: “Our soldiers see how the Germans have introduced enforced labor for the peasants, how they flog the disobedient ones, how they lure, intimidate, and infect young girls. They shall answer for all this – it is with this feeling that the army of justice marches west.”<sup>249</sup> On another occasion he wrote, “These filthy lechers have now come to Russia...Red Army men, in the name of our girls’ honour, in the name of our women, in the name of human purity, smash these fornicating Fritzes!”<sup>250</sup> Historian Norman Naimark also argues that the rapes were out of a hatred toward the Germans.<sup>251</sup> But even if this material fueled some of the men, it was not the main motivation for or the reason behind the rapes.

According to the historian Beevor, the rapes were caused by hatred and revenge in the beginning, but by the time the men reached Berlin they raped more out of a sexual arrogance.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Werth, *Russia*, 763-764.

<sup>248</sup> No. 19, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>249</sup> Ehrenburg and Simonov, *In One Newspaper: A Chronicle of Unforgettable Years*, 339.

<sup>250</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg, *Russia at War*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1943, pp. 116-117, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 65-66. It is well known that many Soviet soldiers were given a tour of the Majdanek concentration camp to show them the horror the Germans had accomplished. This fueled the Soviet men’s anger toward the Germans. Journalist Werth writes, “About a week [after July 23, the day the Soviets discovered the camp] Simonov described it all in *Pravda*; but most of the Western press ignored his account. But in Russia the effect was devastating. Everybody had heard of Babyi Yar and the thousands of other German atrocities; but this was something even more staggering. It brought into sharper focus than anything else had done the real nature, scope and consequences of the Nazi regime in action. For here was a vast industrial undertaking in which thousands of ‘ordinary’ Germans had made it a full-time job to murder millions of other people in a sort of mass orgy of professional sadism, or, worse still, with the business-like conviction that *this was a job like any other*. The effect of Majdanek was to be enormous, not least in the Red Army. Thousands of Russian soldiers were made to visit it.” Werth, *Russia*, 890.

<sup>251</sup> Naimark, *Russians*, 76-78.

<sup>252</sup> In contrast, Brownmiller and Naimark tend to highlight the revenge motive. Brownmiller, *Against*, 64-72; Naimark, *Russians*, 105-116. Naimark writes that “rape is not fundamentally motivated by sexual needs, as some studies suggest, but rather that it is a crime of violence.” (p. 107) Furthermore, Naimark that Brownmiller’s point that army’s tend to pay more respect to their “own” women “helps us understand why, for example, Soviet soldiers only sporadically engaged in rape against Polish women, while German women were prime targets. In general, it is also the

Indeed, Beevor seems to emphasize that a chief motivation for the rapes was a desire for sexual intercourse, rather than a desire to feel domination, though he includes other factors to the discussion also. Accordingly, the Red Army soldiers “tended to regard German women more as a casual right of conquest than a target of hate. The sense of domination certainly continued, but this was perhaps partly an indirect product of the humiliations which they themselves had suffered at the hands of their commanders and the Soviet authorities as a whole.”<sup>253</sup> Beevor briefly mentions the discussions surrounding sex in the Soviet Union and the sexual freedom of the 1920s in contrast to Stalin’s attempts at reversal in the 1930s. He writes,

Most ill-educated Red Army soldiers suffered from sexual ignorance and utterly unenlightened attitudes towards women. So the Soviet state’s attempts to suppress the libido of its people created what one Russian writer described as a sort of ‘barracks eroticism’ which was far more primitive and violent than ‘the most sordid foreign pornography’. And all this was combined with the dehumanizing influence of modern propaganda and the atavistic, warring impulses of men marked by fear and suffering.<sup>254</sup>

Yet Beevor overblows the state’s role in causing the mass rapes. Despite the state’s promotion of motherhood and more conservative values in the 1930s, this could never have been sufficient to create such mass raping, even in addition to the “warring impulses of men marked by fear and suffering.” Besides, the men in the Red Army were of all ages by the end of the war. If teenagers, then they were young children in the 1930s. Others were fully grown men who probably already had their sexuality and sexual “education” long developed before the 1930s. In such a short period, the state could not have had such a large influence on the culture, gender roles, sexuality, and sexual practices of so many men. Furthermore, despite his attributing the “barracks eroticism” to a Russian writer, this too suggests orientalism or a bigoted attitude toward people from the east. Still, Beevor’s emphasis on the rapists’ desire for sex seems valid.<sup>255</sup> In her pioneering work on the mass rapes by Soviet soldiers of German women, researcher and film maker Helke Sander found that,

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case that Slavic women (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Serbs) were not subject to the same depredations by Soviets as non-Slavs -- Germans and Hungarians." But Naimark cites no sources for this, and it seems that the Red Army did rape Slavs (p. 107).

<sup>253</sup> Beevor, *Berlin*, 32.

<sup>254</sup> Beevor, *Berlin*, 32.

<sup>255</sup> Beevor brings out the point about the rapes being about sexuality more fully in his analysis of the rapes in and around Berlin. Beevor, *Berlin*, especially 326-327.



In the argument about German guilt, there is a tendency to justify the rapes as a sort of revenge. But revenge was the last reason mentioned by many of the ex-soldiers in the film. If revenge was the motive, then the women to be raped would have been selected, but they were not. It did not matter if a woman had been in the resistance or was a Jew or a Communist – it was all the same. They were women.<sup>256</sup>

Sander and historian Barbara Johr highlighted how rape by the Red Army of German women was viewed as something understandable in a difficult situation.<sup>257</sup>

Another explanation for the rapes of Germans and east Europeans is the tacit blessing provided by the Soviet military leadership. Just as the Wehrmacht and the SS had the blessings of their commander, so too did the Red Army have Stalin's blessing to rape, but there is little evidence that rape was a formal military tactic. It could have been part of the terror tactic to not only militarily retake towns previously possessed, but also to instill fear in and thereby submission by the people. All the same, the evidence does not show that Stalin ordered the men to rape. This was a "typically Bolshevik approach...to threaten and bully without once appealing to loyalty and patriotism."<sup>258</sup> Natalya Viktorovna, a Russian journalist who wrote under the pseudonym Nikolai Viktorov, reported that Stalin indeed valued the reality of his army raping en masse: "Stalin knew the value of the medieval custom of giving a captured city over to the soldiers for three days of rape and looting. It's very good for the soldiers' spirit."<sup>259</sup>

Stalin certainly knew what the army was doing, and by the time the Red Army was advancing into Yugoslavia, Germany, and elsewhere, he had received reports of the rapes and felt compelled to justify his army's actions to others. On March 29, 1945, Stalin's associate Malenkov was informed of the detailed report by Tsygankov from the 1<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Front, quoted

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<sup>256</sup> Liebman and Michelson, "After," 42.

<sup>257</sup> Doc. 15: Erlaß-Slg. Des Hauptamtes SS-Gericht, BA/MA NSD 41/39, published in Sander and Johr, eds., *Befreier*, 68.

<sup>258</sup> Chavchavadze, *Marie*, 202. Jan Gross offers an interesting discussion of official Soviet sanction of violence before the German invasion. Just one example of the attitude toward rape is from an NKVD official who replied to a half-naked captain's wife who had run into his office to complain about the angry mobs. The Soviet official merely said, "nothing will really happen there, kids just play a little and they will go." *Mo odeczno*, 10; HI, Poland. Ambasada USSR, Box 47, L. Szwacka; PGC, 4842; dzisna, 9 [n. 83], quoted in Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 40, see 35-45.

<sup>259</sup> Lourie, *Russia*, 253-254.

above, and detailing mass raping. Stalin and Beria<sup>260</sup> were given a report that said “many Germans declare that all German women in East Prussia who stayed behind were raped by Red Army soldiers.”<sup>261</sup> This same report mentioned that “the suicides of Germans, especially women, have become more and more common.”<sup>262</sup> Historian Robert Conquest has written that “there is no doubt” that Stalin encouraged the mass rapes: “Not only were there orders from the High Command, and press articles, encouraging the utmost ruthlessness, but Stalin actively condoned rape, too, apparently from a primitive view of a soldier’s rights.”<sup>263</sup>

Milovan Djilas, the Vice-President of Yugoslavia and one of Tito’s top aides, wrote about a meeting he had with Stalin during which the conduct of the Red Army came to topic. Djilas allegedly told Stalin that the “irregularities of certain of its members” was causing them political difficulties. According to Djilas, Stalin responded by saying that a man’s psyche is a “complicated thing,” and that Djilas should,

imagine a man who has fought from Stalingrad to Belgrade – over thousands of kilometers of his own devastated land, across the dead bodies of his comrades and dearest ones! How can such a man react normally? And what is so awful in his having fun with a woman, after such horrors?...One has to understand the soldier. The Red Army is not ideal. The important thing is that it fights Germans – and it is fighting them well, while the rest doesn’t matter.<sup>264</sup>

In another meeting with Stalin, Djilas complained to Stalin that the Red Army was not only raping German women, but that they were raping Yugoslavian women as well and that the British troops were not raping like this. Conquest relates,

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<sup>260</sup> Beria was a well known rapist. Among others, Any Knight, *Beria: Stalin’s First Lieutenant* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). There is also the well-published photograph of Stalin’s daughter sitting on Beria’s lap from the 1930s. She has a sneer on her face, suggesting she did not enjoy this man, though Knight speculates that Beria probably was not raping at the time of this photograph as he did later in his career. Knight, *Beria*, 54, esp. Chapter Five.

<sup>261</sup> The NKVD group attached to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Army reported gang rapes of young and old German women. One woman was raped by twelve front-line soldiers in her yard, and her neighbors suffered the same by other Red Army soldiers. Six men broke into their cellar and raped the same women the next night in front of the children. The following evening, February 5, three soldiers came to rape and on February 6 “eight drunken soldiers also raped [them] and beat [them].” These women tried to kill their children and commit suicide by cutting wrists, but failed in their attempt. Tkachenko to Beria, GARF 9401/2/94, p. 87, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 29.

<sup>262</sup> Tkachenko to Beria, March 17, 1945, GARF, 9401/2/94, p. 86-87, [n. 21], quoted in Naimark, *Russians*, 74.

<sup>263</sup> Conquest, *Stalin*, 265.

<sup>264</sup> Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, trans. Michael B. Petrovich (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1962), 110-111.

Stalin was, of course, infuriated. How could Djilas compare the Soviet army with the imperialist British? Stalin pursued this obvious target with vigour. But he added that a soldier, after hundreds of kilometres of fire and death, was entitled to 'have fun with a woman or take some trifle.'<sup>265</sup>

Investigative journalist Susan Brownmiller also quotes Stalin's response to Djilas and notes that Djilas's *Conversations with Stalin* is "overtly emotional and not altogether trustworthy."<sup>266</sup> Still, in light of other evidence the essence of Stalin's words likely can be taken seriously. In March 1945, Stalin apparently said to Czechoslovakian President Edvard Benes while in a meeting that "the Red Army – guilty of 'acts of wantonness' – clearly was not composed of angels, the soldiers having been fed on a diet of a heroic image and, being heroes, expecting to be excused as heroes, the uneducated especially abusing this honour. 'Grasp this and forgive them.'<sup>267</sup>

Furthermore, it was practically useless for a woman to complain to the Soviet authorities about rape by Soviet soldiers due to the lack of discipline taken in cases of rape. Antony Beevor writes that "NKVD rifle regiments did not punish their own soldiers for rape, they punished them only if they caught venereal disease from victims, who had usually caught it from a previous rapist."<sup>268</sup> One Soviet veteran told me he remembered when the order came through that he could shoot any of his men on the spot if they were raping, but he never had to do this.<sup>269</sup> He was referring to the Order No. 006, issued by the Commander of the Front, Marshal Rokossovsky, which was an attempt to control raping, looting, and other crimes against civilians, but the order does not seem to have done much good. Veteran Red Army officer Lev Kopelev recorded that he was told that a "division commander personally shot a lieutenant who was lining up a group of his men before a German woman spread-eagled on the ground."<sup>270</sup> Yet Kopelev recorded many other examples of rape for which no disciplinary action was taken. In her study of the mass rapes by Soviet soldiers in Berlin, researcher Ingrid Schmidt-Harzback found only a few

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<sup>265</sup> Conquest, *Stalin*, 265-266. Conquest is referring to Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, 89, 95.

<sup>266</sup> Brownmiller, *Against*, 71. Also see Naimark, *Russians*, 69-71.

<sup>267</sup> John Erickson, *The Road to Berlin: Stalin's War with Germany: Volume Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 629.

<sup>268</sup> Beevor, *Berlin*, 107.

<sup>269</sup> No. 19, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>270</sup> Kopelev, *No Jail for Thought*, 56.

cases of this order to shoot rapists actually being implemented.<sup>271</sup> In the many rape cases Beevor found in his research, among them was only one instance of discipline taken. This was for the rape of repatriated Polish women, for which five soldiers from the NKVD 217<sup>th</sup> Frontier Guards Regiment were arrested.<sup>272</sup> Furthermore, although Tsygankov reported to the officials in Moscow about the mass raping by the Red Army, he did not conclude from the crimes he had witnessed that there needed to be more discipline among the troops. Rather, “He suggested instead that the main political department of the Red Army and the Komsomol should concentrate on ‘improving political and cultural work with repatriated Soviet citizens’ so that they should not return home with negative ideas about the Red Army.”<sup>273</sup> Tsygankov had seen many hundreds of bloody, wounded, horrified rape survivors but with his recommendation he erased their memory from his consciousness and recommended that other officials do the same.

Thus, despite the order from headquarters that looters, rapists, and pillagers could be executed on the spot if necessary, it is not clear how often this kind of discipline occurred.<sup>274</sup> An example of the failure of Soviet officers to shoot their own men comes from Kopelev, who intervened in a potential rape scene. The lieutenant in charge threatened to execute the rapist with his pistol according to the “orders from headquarters. For rape – execution on the spot.” Kopelev drew his pistol, but did not feel good about shooting one of his own men, “at this brave soldier blind-drunk on vodka.” The drunken man “came at [Kopelev], hoarse with anger, spraying saliva. ‘You fucking officers, fuck your mothers! You! Fighting the war on our backs! Where were you when my tank was on fire? Where were you, fuck your mother, when I set fire to that Tiger?’”<sup>275</sup> No one was shot for their lack of discipline, and perhaps the reason was due to peer pressure and military culture which would view shooting one’s own men as a sin. Kopelev remembered that as the angry man and others were leaving, they looked “sullenly at the lieutenant and [Kopelev]. Voices in the darkness around [them]: ‘Some commanders...They’ll

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<sup>271</sup> Ingrid Schmidt-Harzbach, “Eine Woche im April: Berlin 1945, Vergewaltigung als Massenschicksal,” in *Befreier und Befreite*, ed. Helke Sander and Barbara Johr (Munich: Kunstmann, 1992), 32.

<sup>272</sup> RGVA 38680/1/3, p. 104, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 107.

<sup>273</sup> Beevor, *Berlin*, 110.

<sup>274</sup> Without citing his sources, historian Norman Naimark writes that Rokossovsky, “in charge of the front, restored order.” Naimark, *Russians*, 73. Moynahan also elusively writes that “The Front Command was eventually forced to intervene to try to restore military discipline.” Moynahan, *Claws*, 191.

<sup>275</sup> Kopelev, *No Jail for Thought*, 50-51. Tiger was the name for the German tanks.

shoot their own men over a German bitch.”<sup>276</sup>

Reading his memoirs, one gets the impression that Kopelev was an officer who had cared about the senseless violence he witnessed. He criticizes himself on a number of occasions for not having the courage to do more to stop the men, and his sense of powerlessness and shame comes through in his writing. Still, there are many other examples of almost complete indifference by Red Army officers in charge. Vasily Grossman was with part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Guards Army and reported about a young girl in the German town of Schwerin who had been raped, had a swollen eye, and was terribly bruised on her face, neck, and hands. The soldier who raped her was present and he had a ““full, red face and look[ed] sleepy.”” Grossman noted the “horror in the eyes of women and girls” whom he had seen. Furthermore, he had

heard about a young mother [who was raped] continuously in a farm shed. Her relatives came to the shed and asked the soldiers to allow her a break to breast-feed the baby because it would not stop crying. All this was taking place next to a headquarters and in the full sight of officers supposedly responsible for discipline.”<sup>277</sup>

It is difficult to imagine under what kind of circumstances this scenario could occur. Not only does it reveal the indifference of senior officers and how commonplace gang rape was, but this passage also tells us as scholars that all easy answers are incorrect. None of the things we think or live by operate in this kind of brutal atmosphere of warfare. The only pattern that seems to be evident is armed men raping civilian unarmed women and girls, and this was so unexceptional that a woman could walk up to the scene and interrupt the men.<sup>278</sup>

Tsygankov also noted in his report to the Soviet leadership that “there were also many offenses by officers against women.”<sup>279</sup> Another excerpt from the 1<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Front reveals the indifference of a superior officer:

‘For example, Eva Shtul, born 1926, said, “My father and two brothers joined the Red Army at the beginning of the war. Soon the Germans came and I was taken to Germany by

<sup>276</sup> Kopelev, *No Jail for Thought*, 51.

<sup>277</sup> RGALI 1710/3/51, p. 231, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 67.

<sup>278</sup> Thank you to Mari Trine. Another shocking story that highlights how “normal” the Soviet rapes were comes Weimar, Germany: “In Weimar on the Marktstrasse, A Russian first lieutenant came into a barbershop at the beginning of October [1945]. He was drunk and although the waiting room next to the salon was full of people, he grabbed the good-looking 21-year-old cashier and raped her on the sales table. None of the men present dared to interfere with the officer. Only when the proprietress of the store asked help from two Russian officers on the street, could this animal be overpowered.” “Bericht Lemble,” p. 25, FES, SPD Ostbüro, 0406, I, [n.78], quoted in Naimark, *Russians*, 85.

<sup>279</sup> RGASPI 17/125/314, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 108-110.

force. I worked in a factory here. I cried and waited for the day of liberation. Soon the Red Army came and its soldiers dishonoured me. I cried and told the senior officer about my brothers in the Red Army and he beat me and raped me. It would have been better if he had killed me.”<sup>280</sup>

Again, this reveals the irony of being raped by those thought to be liberators, and the tragic desire to rather be dead than having to live with a memory of this kind of violation.<sup>281</sup>

The official condoning of rape (despite the Rokossovsky order, which was issued too late) and the indifference of many officers clearly did not apply only to German females, but was tacit permission to rape women and girls in general, regardless of their political alliance, nationality, religion, or ethnic or cultural group.<sup>282</sup> But the condoning of rape by Stalin and others is also only part of the picture. Their blessing helped to keep it going, or at least did not stop the raping, but the blessing alone did not cause the rapes. As veteran Major Lev Kopelev allegedly replied to a comrade who spoke of Stalin in 1945, “stop putting all the responsibility on Stalin. He’s the commander in chief. He’s got a dozen fronts and the whole rear and all our foreign relations to deal with. Here at the front, it’s we who are in charge.”<sup>283</sup> Of the numerous rapes Kopelev recorded, including one by this comrade who had spoken of Stalin, he only recorded one whereby discipline was taken.<sup>284</sup>

Thus, rape was not a formal military tactic for either the Germans or the Soviets. One must consider that there was a voluntary will in the men who enthusiastically took part in raping, as if they believed it was their right to fulfill their desire to have sexual intercourse or sexual activity, regardless if the woman or girl wanted this. One Soviet major said to Major Soloviev, the commandant, on February 26, “I’ve just come from the front and I need a woman,” after

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<sup>280</sup> RGASPI 17/125/314, pp. 40-45, quoted in Beevor, *Berlin*, 110.

<sup>281</sup> The Polish survivor Wanda Pó tawska reported that when she was released from Ravensbrück concentration camp, men of various nationalities attempted to rape her. She reported several incidents, from all of which she claims to have escaped. Wanda Pó tawska, *I boj si snów* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1962), 154-164, quoted in Jolluck, *Exile*, 319, n.126.

<sup>282</sup> The Germans raped “their own” as well, for example, in Berlin at the beginning of the war when there were blackouts there was a great increase of reported rapes, many of whom involved women in prostitution by German soldiers on leave who would often gang-rape women. Read and Fisher, *Fall*, 54. Reade insultingly refers to the women in prostitution as “whores” and offers no analysis except for this piece of information.

<sup>283</sup> Kopelev, *No Jail for Thought*, 57.

<sup>284</sup> Kopelev, *No Jail for Thought*, 56. (The commander shot a lieutenant lining his men up to rape a woman. See page 341.)

which he committed a rape.<sup>285</sup> In the potential rape scene in which veteran Red Army officer Lev Kopelev intervened, the drunken soldier yelled at Kopelev and the lieutenant, “get out of my way, fuck your mother! I need a woman! I spilled my blood for this!”<sup>286</sup> This same sexual arrogance is revealed in Solzhenitsyn’s poem when, despite the dead raped women and girls he had seen, the protagonist chose a woman to rape. The sexual arrogance or belief in one’s right to sexual activity with another, often as a “reward” for having risked one’s life, along with the widespread abuse of alcohol among the military are main threads connecting rape from both sides of the war. If one views the situation from the female’s point of view, however, women and girls had to be wary of sexual attacks from more than the Germans and the Soviets.

### **Brutal Sexual Crimes by Others**

East European women were caught in the middle of the Russo-German war. But they had to fear being raped by not only Red Army and Wehrmacht or SS members, but by others as well, often partisans who frequently were armed men. One example comes from Lithuania where anti-Soviet Lithuanian partisans were in charge of parts of the city of Kaunas when the Germans first occupied the city. The Lithuanian doctor Elena Buividaite-Kutorgene recorded that in August 1941, “The drunken policemen had also hauled in several Jewish girls, who were frantically screaming and crying...The soldiers raped them all night long, and in the morning they took them away somewhere.”<sup>287</sup> Just a few years after the war, Frieda Frome wrote about the dreaded Seventh Fort, a prison where thousands of Jews were beaten by Lithuanian guards and then shot. Her words reveal how women were targets regardless of the rapists’ nationalities and reiterate the significant role alcohol played.

The guards were always drunk. They were furnished liquor, all they wanted, by the leaders to give them courage for the brutal, inhuman things they were ordered to do. It would make goose pimples on your flesh, Joseph said [Frome’s brother], to hear the women and girls screaming, protesting, and begging every time the drunken guards went swaggering into the barracks where they were confined.<sup>288</sup>

Frieda Frome’s friend, Sheina Epstein, had been arrested when the Germans occupied

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<sup>285</sup> RGASPI 17/125/314, quoted in Bævor, *Berlin*, 109.

<sup>286</sup> Kopelev, *No Jail for Thought*, 50-51.

<sup>287</sup> Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 354.

<sup>288</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 34.

Kaunas and was imprisoned in the Seventh Fort. For unknown reasons, the women and all the children under thirteen years of age had been released from the prison and Sheina was in a hospital where Frieda visited her. Before she died, she told Sheina about what had happened to the girls from their school. Besides the starvation and thirst, she said the worst was “the brutes...the horrible drunken men...It was worse -- a thousand times -- than death.” She continued,

“The Partisan guards came into the barracks, mostly at night after we had gone to bed. A drunken guard would seize the first girl he came to. He’d beat her into submission, or until there was no life left in her body. More often, they came with their flashlights, going from one to another until they found a girl who suited them. You saw them coming, Frieda. The light flashing here and there. And you died many times, but you kept on breathing because you couldn’t stop.”

“The virgins,” Sheina said, “were their special delight. When they discovered that a girl was still a virgin they would laugh aloud and shout to their companions: ‘Petrai! Juozai! Come, here is a virgin!’ It was as though they had discovered a rare and beautiful feast for all to share. I fought,” Sheina told me, falteringly, “until my strength was exhausted. They left me for dead. I only wish I had been dead, really...”<sup>289</sup>

The hospital in Kaunas was full of injured and diseased women and girls because of the abuse inflicted upon them by the Lithuanian partisans. They were probably put in prison after the Germans arrived for allegedly being pro-Soviet. Frome suggests that the men were supplied alcohol and that the torture was ordered from the German or Lithuanian leadership. This suggests a political motive for the sexual abuse, though the men also seemed to enjoy the sexual aspect of the abuse. The leadership may not have ordered the torture, but could have just allowed it. From the perspective of the victims and survivors, the most important issue probably was not the motive or the nationality of the rapist, but that they had been brutally and sometimes fatally violated, tortured, and abused.

Frome also relates when a drunk Lithuanian partisan followed her home, forced his way into their house and said to her mother who had come running into the room, “This girl, she’s a beauty. I’m going to take her with me.” Her mother told him she was very sick and distracted him with a radio which she then gave him.<sup>290</sup> This again reveals the arrogance of a man who believes he can just “have” a woman when he wants.

Another example of partisan rape is from an interview of the Jewish man Bernard

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<sup>289</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 35-36.

<sup>290</sup> Frome, *Dare to Dream*, 36-37.



Novick, who was from Marzinkance in Poland near the Lithuanian border. He tells of the rape by a Russian partisan of a civilian girl and also mentions the influence of alcohol.

There was a big Russian with us once... You know, we finally killed him, you know that? We killed him. In our travels we used to go and get some food. He got into a guy's house and found a little daughter he liked, and gone out and done just what he wanted to. That little girl, sure, now, she might have done it on her own, but that's beside the point. You don't do that. It was bad for a girl to be raped. And before we knew it, then, the old man came over, and he told us what happened. We shot him right there in front of everybody. He was a fighter – stupid when it came to laying dynamite under a train. He knew nothing about it, nothing at all. You know, he was one of those – take a drink and – so we finally shot him. And you know what? It was one of the best things we done. That's how we got some friends.<sup>291</sup>

Novick lived three and a half years with the partisans in the woods:

That was a disastrous life, too, because there were two groups of partisans. One was literally outlaws. They liked to rape women, rob the towns, kill. I was with a group that had nice officers, party leaders. They had a big friction between those two groups. My group leaders tried to get them together, and not to rape women in the towns and not to take anything they didn't need.<sup>292</sup>

As many of the rapes by Germans and by Soviets, these cases also reveal the role of alcohol, the anxiety-producing situations for the men, and the cases do not necessarily reveal excess violence other than what was needed to accomplish the rapes.

It is not always clear in examples if the rapist was a soldier, partisan, or civilian.

Frances Penney, a Jewish Pole, survived life in the Vilna ghetto and several concentration camps. In her memoir she wrote that she was deported from Vilna to her first concentration camp outside of Riga, Latvia. During the transport in a train, drunk Lithuanians would try to molest the women whenever the train slowed down and the doors were unbolted.<sup>293</sup> Alexander Werth wrote that a woman in Kotelnikovo, Russia told him her story. She mentioned that the Rumanians “wouldn't leave the women alone. There was a lot of rape in the town.”<sup>294</sup> In both texts it is not clear who the men were, if they were soldiers, partisans, civilians, etc.

The nationality of the rapist was not always known, and indeed, in light of so many examples, what mostly mattered to the victim was that the rapist was an armed man. In other

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<sup>291</sup> Donald M. Douglas, Ph.D., *Strangers in the Heartland*, USHMM, RG-02\*142, p. 54.

<sup>292</sup> Douglas, Ph.D., USHMM, RG-02\*142, p. 63.

<sup>293</sup> Penney, *I Was There*, 87.

<sup>294</sup> Werth, *Russia*, 522-523.

words, his gender was the most important factor. Frances Penney also tells that as the war was ending she and her friend were in a small German town, waiting to get to France. There, one night they heard loud clanging sounds and much shouting. Frances remembered the stories she had heard at home about women in the Russian Revolution who had made such racket when soldiers were approaching so as to scare the men away and protect themselves against rape. She related the story to her friend and they dragged some heavy furniture in front of their door. Soon two Jewish boys (nationality not indicated) knocked on their door wanting to be let in. Penney comments that they were disheartened to have experienced this behavior from her fellow brethren. The same evening, several American soldiers had found two ladders and were attempting to reach their apartment window to get to the women. Frances and her friend, Ada, each stood at a window and would push the ladders away. She writes, “One brave Romeos would not give up, however, and made continuous attempts to achieve their goal.” He finally left, and they were not raped.<sup>295</sup>

Presumably, what mattered most to the women and girls was that they might be sexually assaulted by an armed man. Lucille Eichengreen relates throughout her memoir how the Jewish leader of the Lodz ghetto, Rumkowski, sexually abused many children.<sup>296</sup> In one interview I conducted of a Ukrainian woman the question of whether the rapists were actually German even though they were in German uniforms was raised. It did not matter to the interviewee, who was most concerned that this bloody crime had occurred. Her reply to the question of whether the men were German or not clearly revealed her opinion that they could have been from anywhere, but they were armed rapists. She said,

Who knows. They were in German uniforms. But who knows if they were ours – even ours could have done that. They could be ours, they could be in our uniforms or in their uniforms. But they could have done that terrible thing too....And in German uniform. They were considered like they were Germans. So one doesn't know if they were German or not. In German uniform.<sup>297</sup>

In Belorussia there were “widespread allegations” that Belorussian police raped Jewish girls in Mir.<sup>298</sup> Another example of sexual abuse of Jewish women by locals is the Lvov pogrom

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<sup>295</sup> Penney, *I Was There*, 141-142.

<sup>296</sup> Lucille Eichengreen, *Rumkowski and the Orphans of Lodz* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 2000).

<sup>297</sup> No. 9, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>298</sup> Dean, *Collaboration*, 70.

in July of 1941, known as the Petliura Days, was organized by anti-Semitic nationalist Ukrainians and encouraged by the German occupiers. There exist many pictures of horrified naked women on the streets of a city, surrounded by fully-clothed men. It is not certain, but it is thought that these pictures are from the Lvov pogrom. That is how they are recorded at the National Archives in Washington D.C. and at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Approximately two thousand people died in the short period between July 25 and July 27. In accounts of this pogrom, nothing is mentioned about specific sexual crimes against women, despite the existence of these pictures. But the photos attest to women and girls specifically being violently targeted in a sexual way.



Fig. 3. USHMMMA Desig #461.22, W/S #03819, CD # 0113.



Fig. 4. USHMMMA Desig #461.22, W/S #11004, CD # 0113.



Fig. 5. USHMMMA Desig #461.22, W/S #11006, CD # 0113.



Fig. 6. USHMMMA Desig #461.22, W/S #11010, CD # 0113.

Photo Credit for photos on pages 350-352: Main Commission for the Prosecution of the Crimes against the Polish Nation, courtesy of USHMM Photo Archives, June 30, 1941, Place: Locale: Lvov? [variants: Lemberg; Lviv; Lwow], Region: Ukraine; Lvov Ukraine, [current] Poland? [1937 borders]. Each photo is labeled with its identifying numbers.



Fig. 7. USHMMA Desig #461.22, W/S #11003,  
CD # 0113.



Fig. 8. USHMMA Desig #461.22, W/S #11008,  
CD # 0113.



Fig. 9. USHMMA Desig #461.22, W/S #11002,  
CD # 0113.



Fig. 10. US HMMA Desig #461.22, WS #72105, CD # 0114.



Fig. 11. USHMMA Desig #461.22, WS #79104, CD # 0114.

These examples of rape by partisans, local police, and civilians reiterate the difficulties unarmed women and girls had in eastern Europe, regardless of who the females were and because there were so many rapists on the loose, and they were often armed or in groups. Although many village civilians helped partisans, they also had to be careful. The numerous examples that I found with relative ease reveal a variety of cultural, religious, and national backgrounds of both the men and the women or girls. This indicates that rape was a widespread if not everyday occurrence and certainly a disturbing part of this war.

### Conclusions

Women and girls on the eastern front were caught in a complex and extremely brutal war. In many settings, there were more than two sides, and they feared for their lives, their health, their reproductive health, and for some, their virginity. In order to protect themselves many resorted to camouflage of different kinds. Others hid in cellars, ran, helped one another, or hid behind a “safe” man. Some used their wits to avoid rape, while others strategically enlisted a lover by exchanging sex for food and protection. Sexual violence, rape, assault, abduction into sexual slavery, and mutilation all occurred, affecting hundreds of thousands, possibly even millions of people. Sexual violence affected unarmed civilians from different ethnicities, cultures, nationalities, and religions, and was committed by armed military members, who also came from a variety of backgrounds.

Due to the lack of previous scholarship and the broad nature of this study, and with no evidence of rape having been a military tactic on the eastern front, it is difficult to definitively state what the motives were for the perpetrators of sexual violence. However, in analyzing the diverse eastern front, the sexual violence seems to have been more often a case of armed men targeting women and girls because they were unarmed women and girls and therefore exploitable. Armed men on the eastern front did not seem to target women and girls merely because they belonged to a certain “enemy” group. Nor were they ordered by their leaders to do so. That is, the sexual violence in the east seems to have had more to do with gender violence than anything else, unlike, for example, the mass rapes in the more recent Bosnian conflict.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Alexandra Stiglmayer, for example, claims that “in war, men rape for various motives, and we can identify nearly all of them in every way. Yet not all wars are the same, and each war provides its own specific motivations for rape.” She brings up the example of the rapes by the Red Army, but only mentions that they raped German women, which of course, looks like a simple act of revenge, or a soldier’s reward. Stiglmayer, “The Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 84. As shown here, however, the revenge aspect seems to have been a small factor, whereas the idea of a

Men committed violence against females because they were female seemingly without regard to their other identity markers.

In addition to targeting primarily females, perpetrators, who sexually harassed or committed brutal sexual crimes sometimes seem to have been motivated by a desire for a greater sense of control or power over their surroundings. Indeed, the fear and basic insecurity that a man felt in combat situations could have been connected to a desire to feel more powerful and in control, which then could have contributed to a desire to force sexual activity onto someone or otherwise sexually humiliate another.<sup>300</sup>

Conversely, even if the perpetrator hoped to gain a sense of control, he also could have felt that he had lost control. That is, rape may have been against an individual man's nature, but being caught up in group violence he raped all the same. In such a scenario, in the moment of rape, such a person may feel that he had lost control of himself, a feeling of "what am I doing?" Whatever the resulting feelings of the rapist, part of the motive (conscious or unconscious) could have been the desire to gain a better sense of control in a seemingly uncontrollable situation – total war. With his peers doing it, it could make it easier to try rape with the hope of gaining some feeling of power. Ironically, in such a group or collective act, the rapist might hope to gain some autonomy. The best source to determine this would be interviews with rapists.

More often, however, the examples presented here seem to indicate that a primary (not always the only) motive was to have sexual activity (rather than the motive only having been to feel more power or control by humiliating another), and the sex was usually but not always in the form of sexual intercourse. That is, the evidence suggests that sexuality and sexual desire was involved in many of the sexual harassment and rape cases. This motive to have sexual activity is clearly an abuse of power, and in the cases in this chapter the abuse of power was based on a belief that this was a soldier's just reward, even when the woman or girl did not agree to the arrangement. It is, however, difficult to determine the exact ratio of sexual desire to desire for feelings of power.

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soldier's reward seems to have been closer to the reality. But if rape is defined as only an act of power, a soldier's reward makes less sense. When one includes the sexual aspect of the rape and the alleged enjoyment a man can obtain from forced sexual intercourse, then it makes more sense. For discussions on patriarchy and the reasons for rape, see Brownmiller, *Against*; Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*.

<sup>300</sup> In some cases, rape has been used by military commanders as a way to boost morale. Jacklyn Cock theorizes that "Men's insecurity in relation to their masculinity may become exacerbated by the physical danger of combat" Jacklyn Cock, *Women and War in South Africa* (1993), 214-215. However, this does not seem to leave room for sexual desire as part of the reasons behind rape. See also Vogelmann, *The Sexual*.



The chaos in the east prevented the German leadership from having full control over its men during its occupation. Over three million German soldiers served and approximately thirty thousand bureaucrats, officials, officers, and engineers resided and worked in German occupied territory in the east. Most of these men were brought up in patriarchal societies that had myths surrounding male and female sexuality, and they acted accordingly and seemingly with little regard to official regulations.

In addition, the German army ruled roughly fifty-five million Soviets between 1941 and 1944.<sup>301</sup> The Soviet people consisted of people from different backgrounds. It is difficult to assess which group was more affected by sexual violence with so few of the survivors to tell their side of the story and with so little of the research completed. In a war where the occupier was not “fettered by any such restraints” such as international rules of war, and where “the vanquished peoples faced not only conquerors in the traditional sense but a regime bent from the outset on enslaving and annihilating the local population” it is difficult to believe that written rules about race, ethnicity, or nationality really affected the often intoxicated soldier who sought out sexual activity. As historian Müller so aptly puts it, the Germans and the Soviets “eventually engaged in a war of unparalleled cruelty and violence, with no distinction between combatants and noncombatants, between the front and the hinterland - truly a “total” war without equal in the long, profuse annals of European warfare.”<sup>302</sup>

To the German man who believed in Aryan superiority, most of the women in the east were inferior, and if a German did not believe in Aryan superiority many still objectified females and saw them only as sexual beings. Furthermore, while in the east, he and his fellow countrymen were murdering Jewish people, and they also were murdering people all across the front for being “partisan,” killing women, children, and the elderly. Many villages were completely razed for alleged “partisan” activity, regardless of what religion the people practiced. The Germans did this despite the fact that no plan to immediately exterminate the Slavic or

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<sup>301</sup> Müller and Überschaer, *Hitler's War*, 284.

<sup>302</sup> Müller and Überschaer, *Hitler's War*, 283-284. The case seems to have been different in the west, where the violence was not so chaotic, long-lasting, or the men so intoxicated and brutal. Historian Insa Meinen found that in France the Germans forced women into their brothels who were already in prison for practicing prostitution without being registered or for breaking the law and were sexual with a German. In the area she studied in France, she found that the Germans did not resort to forcing women from the streets. In her case study, it was of course still forced prostitution because the Germans did not give the women they arrested any other real choice. Meinen, *Wehrmacht*, 204-206. But it was a subset of the population, which does not seem to have been the case in the east where the war was so brutal and all-encompassing.

Baltic people existed, as it existed for the Jews and the Gypsies. Historian Hannes Heer argued that the German soldiers were prepared for a fight, not against someone particular, such as the Jews, but against the Slavic people in general. Thereby, the soldiers acquired a *Kampfmoral*, or fighting mentality against all people in the east.<sup>303</sup> The Germans knew their policies would cause death by starvation for millions of Slavic civilians, whether Jewish or Orthodox, as well as extreme economic hardship for those in the Baltic. Indeed, historian Gerhard Weinberg has argued that the Germans planned the eventual disappearance of all Slavic peoples.<sup>304</sup>

The identity markers of a woman or girl did matter in some cases. The key question is to understand why it mattered in some instances, but not in so many others. In the case of the German Rassenschande laws, it is too simplistic to argue that they were the determining factor in a German man's decision to rape or not. The experience of many Jewish females was different than that of Slavic women and girls. Despite the almost thirty million people the Soviet Union lost during the war, some survived to tell how on a particular day the Germans murdered all of "their Jews."<sup>305</sup> Still, we must consider that in the case of rape, German Rassenschande laws seem to have been relatively unimportant. In the west, where the Germans did not view the people as being as inferior or from such a low class, these laws probably were more important. But in the east where there was such violent chaos, there was little distinction from either side who was military and who was civilian, and the pervasive belief in one's right to sexual activity took precedent over any laws forbidding sex with the women and girls there.<sup>306</sup>

In light of all the cases I have presented, it is not clear that a woman being raped by a German had a greater chance of being raped or of surviving a rape if she were Jewish, Slavic Orthodox Christian, or Baltic. I focused more on the experiences of Slavic people. Therefore, it

<sup>303</sup> Hannes Heer, "Die Logik des Vernichtungskrieges: Wehrmacht und Partisanenkampf," in Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann, eds., *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht, 1941-1944* (Hamburg, 1995), pp.104-156. Among others, see Bartov's *Hitler's Army* (New York, 1992).

<sup>304</sup> Weinberg, *A World*, 304-305. See Chapter Two, "Sex and Occupation," for more on the deliberate starvation policy, and Chapter One on the indiscriminate murders of non-Jewish civilians, partisans, and the horrific plight of the Soviet POWs.

<sup>305</sup> The Russian memoirist Nina Markovna remembers that as a young girl she lost her girlhood friend and how the Germans murdered all of what she called "our Jews." Markovna, *Nina's Journey*, 195-202.

<sup>306</sup> This same construction of race, class, and gender was prevalent in the American south, where rape of black women by white men was commonplace despite the laws. Brownmiller rightly points out that the ban on the mixing of the blacks and whites was also "part of the legal code in the American South before and after slavery" but that it "hardly affected the rape of black women by white men." Brownmiller, *Against*, 51.

seems premature to make definitive conclusions about rape in the Baltic area with an imbalance of evidence. Viewed from the woman or girl's perspective, the foremost important thing to any female was that a man was raping her. In the very moment of rape, a Russian Orthodox female, for example, could not have been thinking she was grateful for not being Jewish because at least the Germans would not murder her (in addition fearing for her life as any woman or girl would, if she were suspected of partisan activity or of helping the partisans then she probably assumed she would be murdered). Especially in times of armed conflict and total war, in the moment of rape all women and girls would feel a threat to their lives, or at least think that they may be killed. Indeed, as previous evidence has shown, because of the brutality, some women and girls begged to be killed afterward.

Robert Littlewood, anthropologist and psychiatrist, writes that "the mass rape and sexual killing of women" has such a frequency that the phenomena "argues rape in wartime to be a normal part of what is to be human."<sup>307</sup> It is so ubiquitous that it is even "carried out or simulated by child soldiers."<sup>308</sup> He writes that "sexuality and violence are inherently (that is bio-socially) associated" and that "both violence and sexuality are contingent and incremental, possibly in reaction to each other or related through psychophysiological (limbic) mechanisms of 'arousal.'" Littlewood explains this further by basically saying rape gives the individual soldier a feeling of autonomy.<sup>309</sup> It is true that, as a member of an army, a man may not feel autonomy. In addition, some rapists may gain a sense of control in an "overwhelming" situation, and this could reduce his anxiety. On the other hand, forcing sex could make one feel out of control. More research needs to be done to definitively explain the relationships between violence, sex, and armed conflicts. If some kind of biological mechanism is involved, this does not excuse the behavior nor explain why some men either conquer biology by choosing not to rape or why some men do not have such a "psychophysiological" response to the situation. This is an important aspect to consider. If humans will continue to insist on going to war, we need to at least stop the senseless violations of civilians. The more we understand about all aspects of rape and armed

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<sup>307</sup> Littlewood, "Military Rape," 8.

<sup>308</sup> Ilen and Gardwin-Gill 1994, World Vision 1996, quoted in Littlewood, "Military Rape," 8.

<sup>309</sup> Littlewood does not excuse the men for raping despite his discussion of bio-social mechanisms. An example of this is his comment on the term PTSD (post-traumatic-syndrome), and how soldiers who were "guilty of sexual massacre and rape in Vietnam to become victims in their turn: victims of the 'trauma' of war in general: atrocity becomes the natural act of the traumatized." Littlewood, "Military Rape," 13.

conflict, including biological factors present in times of great stress, the better.

Furthermore, it is difficult to place a well-rounded theory on these crimes, especially since so many men conducted so much of their destruction, torture, rape, mutilation, and murder under the influence of alcohol. With the massive amounts of alcohol the armies on both sides consumed, it could not have been clear to drunk soldiers whom they were raping and why. Were the Germans always lucid enough to know they were raping a Russian Gypsy or a Russian Jew and not a Russian Orthodox Christian? Once intoxicated, men would have been more willing to disobey rules, and they also could have been much more brutal and willing to commit sexual crimes. They also simply might have been more inclined to follow their sexual cravings. Furthermore, while under the influence of alcohol, men would have been more prone to give in to peer pressure. In trying to understand why Soviet soldiers raped their “own,” Antony Beevor reasoned that “once soldiers had alcohol inside them, the nationality of their prey made little difference.”<sup>310</sup> This likely was the same for Germans. Still, studies of intoxicated rape, especially by scientists who understand how the brain determines sexual and violent behavior while under the influence of alcohol, may help our understanding. None of this can or should be used as an excuse for rape, but it can inform us of the dangers of interjecting excessive alcohol into military (and even social) situations, whether it be training or a real armed conflict. Sadly, there is evidence that both the German and the Soviet military leadership encouraged the use of alcohol because of the knowledge that otherwise the men could not do as they were ordered.

Brownmiller argued in her pioneering investigative work on rape that rape was used by Japan and Germany, as aggressor nations, as a formal military tactic. Both German and Japanese patterns of “aggression clearly included overt expression of contempt for women as part of an overall philosophy of the master race, as well as a most pragmatic means of terror.” Rape “fit well, was conceptualized even, as a fascist act of domination.”<sup>311</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Rwandan conflicts were wars which clearly included mass rape as a military tactic.<sup>312</sup> They were different, however, from rape on the eastern front. Rape was used as a means of terror by both the Germans and the Soviets, and it fit well into the goals of forced submission, domination, and

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<sup>310</sup> Beevor, *Berlin*, 30.

<sup>311</sup> Brownmiller, *Against*, 49.

<sup>312</sup> The 49th session of the UN Commission for Human Rights accepted that the rapes were a “conscious selective war weapon for the execution of the policy of ethnic cleansing which is being implemented by Serb military and paramilitary forces.” Vranic, *Wall of Silence*, 266.

“winning.” Yet the evidence thus far does not show that rape was ordered from the top. Those at the top allowed it and helped to create an atmosphere in which this kind of abuse was prevalent. Overt violence against all civilians, young and old, was indeed encouraged by the German and the Soviet High Commands. Furthermore, rape certainly was not discouraged outside of the continual suggestions to be disciplined and act as a worthy German soldier. From what we can glean from the evidence on the Soviet side, rape and gang rape, even when it ended in the death of the women and girls, was viewed as a traditional soldier’s “reward.” It was a military custom and an assumption stemming out of a sexual arrogance that a man has the right to force sex onto a female, girl or woman.

Although we want to understand why the men raped, more research needs to focus on the victims or survivors. For centuries, civilian women and girls have been raped and today, they continue to be raped in virtually every armed conflict. Rape is at epidemic levels throughout the world, even during times of peace. This fact does not “essentialize” women’s experience. The female victims in the various armed conflicts come from different backgrounds, as do the rapists. Each conflict has its own peculiar set of characteristics, but the bottom line is that armed, military men rape women and girls. Sometimes they are gang raped, sometimes they are raped by the same person, either repetitively or one time, sometimes they are mutilated, and sometimes they are murdered. Across cultures and across time, male and female rape survivors feel many of the same feelings – they feel shame, dirty, horrified, embarrassed, and often suicidal. They also suffer many of the same symptoms because of the rape – post-traumatic stress disorder, including nightmares, anxiety, and many other sometimes life-long effects. The eastern front captures the essence of these similarities because of the myriad combinations of culture, religions, ethnicities, and political alliances. More research on rape is needed to better understand how the various categories scholars use – race, class, and gender – worked to have produced such mass raping. Thus far, it is evident that gender is distinctly the most important factor in rape by armed, military men.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS

The sexual crimes committed on the eastern front against civilians have been left predominantly unrecorded, unaccounted for, and ignored. The silence surrounding these crimes can not be traced only to the silence of the victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, the assumption that men need sexual intercourse led to much of the sexual abuse that an unknown number of women and girls endured. Members of the German army and the SS used state-run military brothels in which women and girls were forced to work, they raped women and girls of all cultural, political, and religious backgrounds, and they committed other sadistic sexual crimes against people in the east. The Red Army raped women and girls of all backgrounds as they headed west, pushing the Germans back. Finally, women and girls also fell victim to an unknown number of armed men, often partisans. Men and boys were also victims of sexual violence, and the silence surrounding these crimes is also deafening.

Women and girls were first and foremost targets of sexual violence because they were female. This often occurred because the perpetrators, usually men, were away from their homes and sought out sexual activity with a female. The many different examples provided here, the myriad combinations of nation, culture, religion, ethnicity, and political alliance between the sexual perpetrator and the victim highlight the specific plight of women and girls in armed conflict. This does not essentialize gender nor does it take all power away from women and girls. Rather, it highlights important facts concerning sexual violence in war, so prevalent in our world today. Women and girls showed immense capabilities to strategize and use the limited resources available to them, including their bodies. Furthermore, victims of sexual violence, male and female, have mostly lived alone with their suffering, shame, and embarrassment, which takes much courage and strength. However, as professor of law Rhonda Copelon writes,

The persistent failure to acknowledge the gender dimension of rape and sexual persecution is thus a most effective means of perpetuating it...Moreover, it is not enough for rape to be viewed as a crime against humanity when it is the vehicle of some other form of persecution even though gender is, in fact, usually intertwined. Sexual violence against

women on a mass scale must also be recognized as a crime against humanity because it is invariably a persecution based on gender, sometimes exclusively or primarily so.<sup>1</sup>

The eastern front crystallizes the national and international importance of gender when examining widespread sexual violence in times of armed conflict.

Feminist philosopher Marilyn Frye wrote that the most important identity marker people have is that of gender.<sup>2</sup> Since she wrote this, other scholars have provided considerable insights on the relationships between race, class, and gender, and indeed, the immense diversity on the eastern front cannot be ignored. During World War II, there were many different cultural and religious groups and nation states, which had distinct relationships to the two primary military powers in the war in the east, the Soviets and the Germans. Still, in terms of people being victimized by sexual violence, the first and foremost connection of the victim to the perpetrator was that of gender. As Brownmiller wrote, “a female victim of rape in war is chosen not because she is a representative of the enemy, but precisely because she is a woman, and therefore the enemy.”<sup>3</sup> According to much of the evidence presented here, Brownmiller’s argument would be more accurate if rephrased to something such as “primarily because she is a woman and often because she can provide heterosexual men with sexual intercourse.” Even when the victim was a male, it is likely he was chosen for coerced sexual activity primarily because he was a man or boy, that is, because the perpetrator wanted to engage in sexual activity with a male. In other words, rape, forced prostitution, and other sexual crimes are abuses of power, are crimes of gender, and often have a primary motivation of sexual activity.

In her research of Poles incarcerated in the Soviet gulag during World War II, historian Katherine Jolluck found that among Polish women, gender was a stronger bond than nationality

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<sup>1</sup> Copelon continues, “The recent recognition in international human rights law of gender violence as a form of discrimination against women as well as a violation of women’s fundamental human rights supports this expansion of the persecution bases of crimes against humanity. This is essential if the...international attention focused on Bosnia is to have meaning for women subjected to widespread rape in other parts of the world.” Copelon, “Surfacing,” 345-346. In a footnote, Copelon writes, “See, e.g., Committee to End Discrimination Against Women, Recommendation No. 19, U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 11<sup>th</sup> Sess., U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/1992/L.1/Add. 15 (1992): ‘Gender-based violence...is discrimination within the meaning of article I of the convention.’ The section defines violence against women as ‘violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or which affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.’ Ibid., Vienna Declaration, *supra* note 45, at paras. 36-44. See also Declaration to Eliminate Violence Against Women, G.A. Res. 104, U.N. GAOR, 48<sup>th</sup> Sess., *op.cit.*, U.N. Doc. A/RES/48/104 (1994).” Copelon, “Surfacing,” 358-359 n.79.

<sup>2</sup> Frye, *Politics*, 19-22.

<sup>3</sup> Brownmiller, *Against*, 64.

or culture. In her section on “mixing,” Jolluck writes that the mixing of females and males began in the cars on the way east, that the women received no comfort in mixing with the men of their own cultural and national background. That is, there was no bond created between the women and men formed because of their mutual enemy, the Soviet NKVD (secret police). The mixing only increased their shame.<sup>4</sup> This reinforces the notion of the commonality of women’s experience when it comes to specific situations in which they were the most vulnerable. In Jolluck’s example, this point of vulnerability was when the females were incarcerated and loaded onto trains heading to an unknown destination. In this dissertation, the focus of vulnerability is when people were victims of sexual violence. Allowing for unique experiences, cultures, and unique relationships to the various kinds of armed men, the myriad combinations of identity markers between the perpetrators and the victims of sexual violence suggest that the sex of the victim was a most important marker.<sup>5</sup>

If we accept the notion that rape and other forms of sexual torture have something to do with sexual desire and are not only about power, then it makes sense that gender is by far the key category in sexual crimes (whether in times of war or peace). Many men on the eastern front expected women’s sexual services, and thus they sought out sexual activity and sexual satisfaction with members of the opposite sex, regardless if they were, for example, Soviet, Polish, Latvian, Protestant, Jewish, or Russian Orthodox. Rape and other forms of sexual torture, such as forced prostitution, are clearly abuses of power, and the arrogance which leads to the abuse of power often stems from misogynist and patriarchal attitudes and norms. It is true that sometimes the perpetrator may have wanted to gain a sense of control or personal power, or even just pass the time with what the perpetrator considered to be extracurricular activity, but I argue that a significant motivation was the desire for sexual activity. Whether the abuse occurred by the act of establishing state-run military brothels, by visiting state-run military brothels, or by raping, this abuse of power stemmed from a sexual arrogance, a belief in one’s right to satisfy one’s alleged sexual needs, and a desire for sexual activity.

In our attempt to eradicate sexual violence, it is the job of some historians to further these general comparisons so that we can better understand and fight the universality of such

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<sup>4</sup> Jolluck, *Exile*, 155.

<sup>5</sup> Having similar experiences does not necessarily mean women from different backgrounds will bond, however, and Jolluck also shows this in her analysis of the relationships between Poles and Russians. Jolluck, *Exile*, 256.



treatment of women and girls, whether the struggle against such violence is during the war itself, in war crimes trials afterward, or even during times of peace. Other historians have the task of picking out the specifics from various conflicts to try to determine what made the sexual violence so painful in their primary region of study. This can then help to break down national and cultural barriers that inhibit the stories from coming forth and the healing from taking place. Furthermore, research and writing on both the general and the particular can help prevent the perpetuation of any violent sexual tendencies against others, even during times of peace.

### Consequences of Sexual Violence

As for survivors of anything highly traumatic, there were many consequences survivors of sexual violence had to endure even after the war ended, despite and because of the silence. One visible consequence of prostitution was the permanent tattoo on their skin. In addition to the numbers which many camp prisoners received, there is evidence that the Germans tattooed on the women's breast or wrist the word *Feldhure* (field whore).<sup>6</sup> Less obvious consequences were the psychological and emotional effects from being violated in the most intimate ways, from being branded a "whore," from the separation of one's own body from one's mind, and from the internalization of shame and fear, all of which inevitably reveals itself in various aspects of one's life.<sup>7</sup> Another consequence could be anger resulting from not having one's suffering recognized in the mountainous volumes of literature written on the war and the Holocaust.

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<sup>6</sup> Lustig, *Lovely*, 245; Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 135-140. Personal communication with Spiegel investigator. Ehrenburg and Grossman, *Complete Black Book*, 351. Harry Gersh, *The Sacred Books of the Jews*, New York: Stein and Day, 1968, pp. 181-183, quoted in Brownmiller, *Against*, 53-54.

<sup>7</sup> There is a large body of literature on the physical, psychological and social effects of sexual abuse on survivors. For example, John Briere and Marsha Runtz, "Childhood Sexual Abuse: Long-term Sequelae and Implications for Psychological Assessment," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 8, no. 3 (1993); Donovan and Williams, "Living at the Intersection: the Effects of Racism and Sexism on Black Rape Survivors."; Ellen Gerrity, Terence M. Keane, and Farris Tuma, eds., *The Mental Health Consequences of Torture* (New York, Boston, Dordrecht, London, Moscow: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001); Mary P. Koss, Aurelio Jose Figueredo, and Ronald J. Prince., "Cognitive Mediation of Rape's Mental, Physical, and Social Health Impact: Tests of Four Models in Cross-sectional Data," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 70, no. 4 (2002); Carl Sherman, "Years after Sexual Abuse by Priests, Psychic Sequelae Remain for Men. (Depression, Substance Abuse Common)," *Clinical Psychiatry News* 31, no. i5 (2003); Washburn, "Why Me."; Idee Winfield et al., "Sexual Assault and Psychiatric Disorders Among a Community Sample of Women," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 147, no. 3 (1990). An older review article can be found: Bohn, D. K. & Holz, K. (1996). The Sequelae of Abuse: Health Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse, Domestic Battering and Rape. *Journal of Nurse-Midwifery*, 41(6), 442-456. For an interesting case study, see Krog, "Loss and Silence."

## Psychological Consequences

Researcher Rupprecht Podszun writes that the conditions in the brothel at Buchenwald were perhaps better than in the camp at Ravensbrück, but these women suffered a very high physical and psychological burden. She suggests that we imagine that with this kind of work we are talking about “the most intimate aspects of one’s life...that is continually injured, yes, in part brutally disrespected.”<sup>8</sup> The repetition of the work, and the expectation of the sex work to start was enough to cause great sorrow, depression, anxiety, and a sense of “who cares.” From a young girl forced into prostitution:

Along the way I tell myself how lucky I am, that many people are much worse off. I've learned not to complain or feel sorry for myself; I don't even like it when others feel sorry for me. I think I'm really relatively happy. Once, while standing on the soup line, somebody told me that I should pray because I looked sad.<sup>9</sup>

This girl suffered from great anxiety and from that often had diarrhea while at the brothel.<sup>10</sup> Frau W. was a prostitute at Buchenwald, and she recorded that she dreaded the two hours she had to work every evening. Even during the days she was unable to talk to the other female prostitutes about anything meaningful.<sup>11</sup> This was perhaps because of the immense sadness she experienced.

One way to deal with sexual abuse is to separate one’s body from one’s mind. This phenomena of separating oneself from the body as if it were not one's own comes through in some of the material on prostitution. In *Doll House*, Dinur wrote that his sister, Daniella passed an inspection and for the time being was free: “she felt that deep inside her, someone is very very happy.”<sup>12</sup> Daniella’s feelings of relief about having passed were almost unreachable, buried deep inside of her and experienced by “someone” because of the ability to separate oneself from one’s body. In other words, her true feelings were far away from her conscious self. Perla S., who worked as a prostitute while living in the concentration camp Theresienstadt, was seventeen years old and Jewish. At one point she recorded that “It seems to me that I become a different person at night.”<sup>13</sup> Very often in her diary, Perla S. recorded what she received in exchange for

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<sup>8</sup> Podszun, “Sonderbau,” 12.

<sup>9</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 11-12.

<sup>10</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 129.

<sup>11</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 48-57.

<sup>12</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 212.

prostituting herself in Theresianstadt. A few examples should suffice:

*August 1, 1943.* A barrette and a comb.

*August 6.* Three times. A walking stick. A lady's umbrella. A fountain pen and a vial of blue ink.

*August 11.* Six times. A glass of baby formula made from thinned milk. A knapsack and men's galoshes. A lady's overnight bag made of rubberized fiber. An eighth of a loaf of rye bread. Some supplementary coupons for hard workers...

Once. A box of matches.

Once. A light blue Meissen saltshaker.

*August 28.* Three times. Two phonograph records. An eighth of a loaf of rye bread. Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. A travel manicure set. Twice during the night. A hot-water bottle. Four ounces of powdered sugar.<sup>14</sup>

It had become such a routine for her that she did not feel the need or the desire to write about the details of each encounter. What was important was what she received in exchange for her work, for this is how she survived. Indeed, what her body and therefore her whole being suffered was buried far away.

Similar to other prisoners, some prostitutes gave up trying to survive, but others continually tried to figure out how to endure the situation until they could be free. Frau W. reported that she once tried to commit suicide, but survived.<sup>15</sup> Daniella in *House of Dolls* did commit suicide by walking out in front of the guard toward the lake. The guard on duty shot her dead and was happy because this meant he would receive more vacation for killing an escaping prisoner. Daniella was fully aware that this would happen.<sup>16</sup> Apparently Jack Eisner is one of the few contemporaries who has written about the women prisoners he met in the brothels. He wrote that one woman always said that she did not want to live anymore, while another had accepted the situation because she saw in it the possibility to survive.<sup>17</sup>

There were also long-term psychological consequences, many of which we know

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<sup>13</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 64.

<sup>14</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 3,4,6. Perla also recorded in her diary that she told another female "It seems to me that I become a different person at night." I didn't say that some nights I feel as if the end of the world were drawing near, some terrible disaster" (p. 64). Another time she recorded that she told the same person, Ludmila, that "When you're naked you don't owe anybody anything," I said. 'On the contrary, they're taking from you. The difference is that they can take everything from you and yet it all remains yours'" (p. 82).

<sup>15</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 48-57.

<sup>16</sup> Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik 135633), *House*, 242.

<sup>17</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 37.

nothing about since so few survivors have told their stories from World War II. During Frau D.'s life after the war, she explained that she put so much effort into trying to forget everything. She had the most difficulties when she was in the dark and the memories would play themselves over and over in her mind. She could not stop this rumination. Because of the horrors remaining with her she attempted suicide on two occasions. Some days she related that she was troubled with her memories for the entire day from morning until nighttime. She said the incidents were burned into her memory, and that she would go to her grave with her thoughts of the time she spent as a prostitute in an SS brothel.<sup>18</sup> It is not uncommon for rape survivors to say the effects last a life time.

The following is a quote from Maria about her mother, who was a Jewish prostitute in Auschwitz:

I have to believe that after 1945 she experienced a number of significant mental breakdowns. I got to know a family, good friends of her's with whom she lived for a long time. For a while she lived near Munich and worked as a waitress. There she met an American G.I. with whom she apparently had her first two children. She told me that she lived with a very rich man for five years in America. But somehow, she always had to break free. It was impossible for her to live a normal life. Later she was a prostitute in Germany. She wanted all five of her children but simply didn't have the strength to keep them. I found out that she had five children from one of her women friends.<sup>19</sup>

It seems that Maria's mother lived quite alone with her memories, and that this negatively affected her life after the war.

Historian Katherine Jolluck writes about the internalization and shame that occurs after having had one's private space violated: "As violations of private space and dignity became more individualized and invasive, beginning with body searches, the breaches were progressively internalized...As the violence of the offense increased, so did the woman's level of internalization and tendency to take refuge in silence."<sup>20</sup> This same process has happened to women on the eastern front. It is similar to what Helke Sander and Barbara Johr found in their research on raped German women,<sup>21</sup> and it is what people working with survivors of sexual

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<sup>18</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 107-113.

<sup>19</sup> Weissberg-Bob, *Als man*.

<sup>20</sup> Jolluck, *Exile*, 161, 154.

<sup>21</sup> Sander and Johr, eds., *Befreier*.

torture in the Bosnian conflict have found.<sup>22</sup> Irrespective of the different cultures and time periods, this internalization of shame despite one's innocence is prevalent among survivors of sexual abuse, even in times of peace. However, the silence that has pervaded the issue of sexual violence during World War II, and especially that on the eastern front, exists not only because the survivors chose not to speak, but also because others chose silence as well.

### Discrimination

In addition to having experienced the horror that they did, survivors of sexual sadism on the eastern front have been further harmed by discrimination against them – at the time of the abuse and thereafter. Many people were aware of the sexual crimes that took place: officials, bureaucrats, soldiers, officers, judges, family members, and friends. The silence was not accidental. True, there were officials who were sympathetic to or at least aware of women's plight during the war. This is evident in several documents in which officials explained that the reason prostitution had spread was because of the lack of jobs or food available to women. Still, it seems that despite this awareness on the part of some, women who had “chosen” such work were viewed as being inferior to the rest of society.

In a comment during the post-war crimes investigations, one German witness ironically showed his complete indifference for the women who were compelled to work as prostitutes in the Buchenwald concentration camp. In a 1943 inspection of the camp, the conditions came “as a great surprise” to him, because

the camp is situated on wooded heights, with a wonderful view. The installations were clean and freshly painted. There was much healthy, normally fed, sun-tanned, working...The installations of the camp were in good order, especially the hospital. The camp authorities, under the Commander Diester, aimed at providing the prisoners with an existence worthy of human beings. They had regular mail service. They had a large camp library, even books in foreign languages. They had variety shows, motion pictures, sporting contests and even had a brothel. Nearly all the other concentration camps were similar to Buchenwald.<sup>23</sup>

The interrogator asked, “what was it they even had?” but then the questioning turned to what

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<sup>22</sup> Stiglmayer, “The Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”

<sup>23</sup> International Military Tribunal, “One Hundred and Ninety-Seventh Day: Wednesday, 8/7/1946: Afternoon Session: Part 6”, in Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal. Volume XX. Proceedings: 7/30/1946-8/10/1946 [Official text in English language.] Nuremberg: IMT, 1947, 486-491.

“crimes” this man had learned about, with no further reference to the crime of sexual slavery. The fact that the Germans were guilty of sexual slavery was not on the agenda of the war crimes investigators at Nuremberg. These women and any suffering they endured was not considered.<sup>24</sup>

But it is, and was, not only officials who disregarded female prostitutes. Another prisoner suggested to Perla, a young prostitute who did not survive, that she should find another job like the other girls had in Terezin.<sup>25</sup> In my interviews, quite a few people told me that women who had been with Germans, whether by choice or by force, were called “German sluts!”<sup>26</sup> Remembering the war, two older Ukrainian women argued that the women who voluntarily went with Germans to receive food and other goods were not insulted during the war. They could recall two reasons for this, 1) people were too busy with their own lives, and 2) fear of reprisal. When asked what people said about such women the first woman replied, “then it was war. Nobody paid any attention. Do you understand? If it were now, it would be different.” The second woman continued, “And they were afraid to say something so the woman wouldn’t tell the Germans, because they would kill you. Do you understand? Everybody was afraid of her, and when the war ended...they would be fighting and would call them names, ah, you, so and so.” The first woman chimed in, “You German slut,” and the second concluded, “Slut, yea.”<sup>27</sup>

One Ukrainian woman was raped by a Polish man, but she said she was still called a “German slut” after she returned home. Her daughter, a product of the rape, was also called “German!” (an insult) when she went to school.<sup>28</sup> Another man told me the following:

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<sup>24</sup> This insensitivity is not unique to the situation in Europe. In a report issued by the United States Office of War Information Psychological Warfare Team Attached to U.S. Army Forces India-Burma Theater, the author admits that the Korean women forced into prostitution by the Japanese military in World War II were lied to when told of what their work and payment would be, but he minimizes the women’s painful experiences. The description of the women is insulting, insensitive, and unsightful: “The interrogations show the average Korean ‘comfort girl’ to be about 25 years old, uneducated, childish, and selfish. She is not pretty either by Japanese or [sic!] Cavassian standards. She is inclined to be egotistical and likes to talk about herself Her attitude in front of strangers is quiet and demure, but she ‘knows the wiles of a woman.’” United States Office of War Information Psychological Warfare Team Attached to U.S. Army Forces India-Burma Theater APO 689, “Japanese Prisoner of War Interrogation Report No. 49.”

<sup>25</sup> Lustig, *Diary of Perla S.*, 114.

<sup>26</sup> Nos. 14, 32, interviews by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>27</sup> No. 32, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>28</sup> No. 14, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998. Another interviewee and his wife explained that their son played with a boy who had been born during the German occupation, and that sometimes other children were also call him “German!” No. #19, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

Man: So, not very long ago a woman lived on our street. At the time she was young, she had a daughter, and she was especially polite to the Germans. They, I don't know, or she lived with just one, or with many. [Laughter]. But if that were the case she was a real prostitute. She, they gave, you know, they gave her presents, shoes, and...things seemed easy for her. Then she left, even when the Germans were leaving from the village, she left with them, left, yes...She left with them, but not too far. They, all of those Germans, those who were here, they fell into an encirclement, the Cherkassy Pocket was the battle – they didn't come out of that encirclement. They ruined everything, destroyed, maybe took some as prisoners. She returned, yes, returned and well, was, you know, everyone treated her with contempt. But it was forgotten, she went to work at the *kolkhoz*...Later then they gave her medals for reading and writing. Yes, everything was forgotten, but it happened, it, yes, I know for sure that she and the Germans, that she hung out with them.

Author: She was Ukrainian?

Man: Ukrainian.

Author: And what did people say about her?

Man: They condemned her, said "prostitute!" [Laughter...] Well, they talked like, that she was a German slut [Laughter.] Do you know that bad word?<sup>29</sup>

Related to the condemnation some endured after the war I was told by several people in Ukraine that certain people who had survived some kind of sexual violence never married afterward, presumably because of what had happened to them. I heard of two cases in which the Ukrainian women had gone to the Germans willingly, one for a job as an interpreter, the other presumably for food. Both never married. When I asked what happened to the women who survived, the man quoted above responded with, "Aah, I'll tell you. There was one who lived on our street. She never married." I asked, "Do you know why?" The man responded clearly at first, but then hesitated, "It's obvious, because people related to her with contempt, that's clear, or, I don't know."<sup>30</sup>

Researcher Helke Sander found that many of the nearly three hundred people with whom she and her colleague spoke were rape survivors who suffered tremendously from the men with whom they had relationships. The men viewed the women as somehow having been guilty of being raped.<sup>31</sup> Beevor spoke with one Soviet veteran who was a rare example of someone who would talk about the topic, but the painful reality was twisted, "They all lifted their skirts for us and lay on the bed...Two million of our children were born in Germany." Another Soviet major

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<sup>29</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>30</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

<sup>31</sup> Sander and Johr, eds., *Befreier*, 17. Also see Stuart Liebman, "There Should Be No Scissors in Your Mind: An Interview with Helke Sander," *Cineaste*, Winter-Spring 1995, 41.

remarked at the time to a British correspondent that “our fellows were so sex-starved...that they often raped old women of sixty, seventy or even eighty – much to these grandmothers’ surprise, if not downright delight.”<sup>32</sup> Russian journalist Natalya Viktorovna wrote that there were jokes in Soviet society about the mass rapes, though it seems the jokes were only about the raping of German women: “A soldier is demobilized and sent home from Germany. His wife welcomes her conquering hero home. They have a great meal and they drink and then they go to bed. But he can’t get it up. So, he says to her, ‘Get out of bed.’ She gets out of bed. ‘Get dressed,’ he says, and she gets dressed. ‘Now,’ he says, ‘put up a fight.’”<sup>33</sup> Of course, the rapes of so many women and girls are no laughing matter.

There is a curious description of the prostitutes in the Auschwitz brothel provided by Dr. Micheels in his memoir. He writes,

The contrasts in the camp were unbelievably grotesque. When we came back from work and walked through the gate into the camp, we passed the block that housed the brothel. The women were hanging out of the windows waving at us as a sort of welcome back. Everybody cracked jokes about them. This scene did not look like a death camp at all. Spring had begun, and along the main street in front of each block were patches of grass with beds of marigolds, very neat and colorful.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps the women were “hanging out the windows waving,” but although this description recognizes the irony of spring, flowers, and concentration camp, it includes the apparently happy prostitutes along with the other positives - marigolds, grass, etc. Furthermore, admitting to making jokes about them only adds to the objectivication.

Nanda Herbermann, a survivor of Ravensbrück, writes with a kind of derision in her memoir about the women who worked in brothels. She wrote that approximately every three months eight to ten women, mostly from her block, were summoned for the brothel in the concentration camp Mauthausen, as well as for other camps. The “whores,” as she calls them (*Dirnen*) were picked by the commandant, the inspector and the Oberaufseherin (overseer), and they also could volunteer themselves. She was housed in a block with about four hundred people

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<sup>32</sup> Beevor, *Berlin*, 31.

<sup>33</sup> Lourie, *Russia*, 254.

<sup>34</sup> Micheels, *Doctor*, 110.



labeled as “asocials” (*Asoziale*) and “whores,” and she uses the terms as well.<sup>35</sup> Herbermann knew of their situation, that they often were forced into this work. But even then, she could not have known what each woman’s situation was, and yet she still seems to have judged them. There also is no reason to believe these women really were “whores” simply because the Germans arrested and labeled them as such. Researcher Christl Wickert also argues that authors too often refer to the women as “whores,” and that this is degrading.<sup>36</sup> For example, Seidler frequently uses the term *Dirnen*. He also calls them *Freudenmädchen* (comfort women) on at least one occasion.

Another form of discrimination is the long-standing and complete disregard of the problem or persons involved. After the war the West German government did not recognize women who were forced into prostitution, and to this day has taken no responsibility for its actions during the war.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, the Soviet or Russian government has not acknowledged the mass rapes that their soldiers and officers committed. As Brownmiller wisely points out, at least there were trials against the Axis powers after World War II where many sexual crimes were made public, even though no rapes were prosecuted. Still, there were never any proceedings against the Allied powers who also committed rape.<sup>38</sup> As mentioned in Chapter One, the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities decided to delete any historical references to sexual violence and armed conflict in its Report of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.<sup>39</sup> The omission of sexual violence came about in part because former German soldiers complained to their government, which subsequently filed a protest with the U.N. sub-commission.<sup>40</sup> Publication and

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<sup>35</sup> Herbermann, *Der gesegnete Abgrund. Schutzhäftling Nr. 6582 im Frauenkonzentrationslager Ravensbrück*, 89-92.

<sup>36</sup> Wickert, “‘Das große Schweigen’. Zwangsprostitution im Dritten Reich.”

<sup>37</sup> Ironically, despite not acknowledging its own complicity in sexual violence, historian Atina Grossmann found that the Federal Republic of Germany recognized “some” German rape victims in the 1950s who were subsequently “minimally compensated.” Grossmann, “Silence,” 62 n.42. It is not clear how many “some” is or what “minimally compensated” means relative to other compensations the German government issued.

<sup>38</sup> Brownmiller, *Against*, 65.

<sup>39</sup> Chavez, Linda. 1996. *Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery and Slavery-like Practices During Periods of Armed Conflict* 4, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/26.

<sup>40</sup> Personal communication with Professor of Law David Weissbrodt, who later became a member of the U.N. Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

a greater national and international awareness of such historical information is essential.

Margarethe W. is an example of someone forced into prostitution by the Germans who was denied any kind of remuneration for a long time. After moving to West Germany from East Germany, she applied in 1963 for recognition as a victim of political persecution. Her application was denied because, according to the West German government, she had been arrested because of “asocial behavior” and therefore she could not be a victim of political persecution. After years of fighting the government, she was granted a one-time payment as remuneration (*Entschädigung*). For fear of even more discrimination she never told the kind of work she had been forced to do in Buchenwald.<sup>41</sup> Margarethe W.’s case is not an exception to the rule. The Project Group for the Forgotten Victims of the NS-Regime in Hamburg has confirmed that there were numerous victims like her. As are the disabled, the forcibly sterilized, the homosexuals, the beggars, the homeless, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the Swing Kids, so too are the prostitutes listed among the “forgotten victims.”<sup>42</sup>

Scholars have continued to degrade victims of sexual violence, and often the attention remains on the rapist and not on the victim or the victim’s experience. As historian Marlene Epp writes,

In certain historical accounts, discussions of wartime rape have mainly nationalistic or propagandistic purposes. A Mennonite account of the Soviet advance into Poland in 1945, for instance, is blatantly racist and served both to reflect and reinforce the anti-Soviet feelings among Soviet-born Mennonites. The invading Russians are described as 'unshaven, dirty and putrid...Many were cruel Asiatic people, yellow-skinned, broad-faced with high cheekbones'. This portrayal of the Soviet soldier dehumanizes the rape experience and removes attention from the rape victims themselves. Historians have tended to deal with rape cursorily and then quickly move on, in a sense treating rape as a natural occurrence of war, and yet too horrific for analysis.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to the examples of insensitive analyses provided in Chapter Six, another example comes from historian Franz Seidler, who concludes at the end of his chapter on brothels that the totality of the war situation is evident by the fact that the “state even embraced the sexual

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<sup>41</sup> Paul, *Zwangsprostitution*, 57.

<sup>42</sup> “Beratung für Verfolgte des NS-Regimes”, BwA 56-8-5, quoted in Podszun, “Sonderbau”, 13.

<sup>43</sup> Epp, “The Memory of Violence: Soviet and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War,” 60.

arena...In the Wehrmacht brothels, the sexual act was an administrative affair.”<sup>44</sup> Seidler wrote that in the fight against sexually transmitted diseases, the appearance and dignity of the soldier was less important than the fighting ability of the army. The establishment of brothels, the accompanying inventory, women and girls, visitor rates, sanitation, etc. were bureaucratic processes. Seidler continues,

The intimate life of the soldier was a part of the official care program. The minute a soldier entered a Wehrmacht brothel, he was subjected to an onslaught of regulations and behavioral instructions. His adherence [to the rules] was watched. Even the satisfaction of his sexual needs was not in a rule-free realm. To demonstrate the complete power of the totalitarian state, in my opinion, there is no example more absurd than how the soldier was “administered” even in his most intimate areas (*wie der Soldat auch in seinem intimsten Bereichen*).<sup>45</sup>

Historian Schulte, who cites Seidler’s work, continues in the same vein. He writes that the “decision to establish Wehrmacht bordellos in the East had been forced on the military authorities.” Accordingly, when other strategies failed to control soldiers from having sex with native women, “even opponents were forced to accept the concept of bordellos operated under strict medical supervision.”<sup>46</sup> Schulte does not explain who the opponents were, and the phrasing he uses echoes Seidler in that it seems to suggest that the reader should feel sorry for the poor Germans who were “forced” into such a controlled atmosphere. Yet if there is anyone for whom to feel sorry, it is the hundreds of thousands – if not millions – of victims, survivors, and even witnesses of the massive sexual violence in all its forms on the eastern front during World War II.

### **Toward a Peaceful, Conscious, and Caring World**

Gaining awareness to the problem of sexual violence world wide is key in the process of healing, as is ending the silence surrounding sex, rape, and prostitution in both peacetime and armed conflict: I believe conversations with one another are crucial. In one of my interviews with a gentleman, I think that as he spoke he gained awareness as he came to a realization about why women would prostitute themselves in wartime. When we first began to talk, he was a bit

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<sup>44</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 187.

<sup>45</sup> Seidler, *Prostitution*, 187.

<sup>46</sup> Schulte, *German Army*, 169.

uncomfortable, and his comments about “bad” women seemed to be knee-jerk responses to the topic of sex and women, to whom he referred as “German sluts.” Because of his kindness and perhaps also because he was so intelligent, this surprised me. Later in the interview when this man used the word “slut” again, I could not help but ask whether the young woman had done this because she did not have enough to eat, since he had just told me that she received different kinds of food and was bribed. His response to the food question was as emphatic as all the other people who talked about how hungry people were. As memories came back to him, he gained awareness, and it began to make sense as to why some would choose to go to the Germans.

Man: Then there was yet another one...her name, Kristina, I even remember her name. It, she was where, I said, where my grandma lived, she was right next door. She openly became friends with them, and yes, simply wasn't afraid, and everyone knew that she was a slut [*shlyxa*], that she was close with them and felt herself to be free. You know, she dressed well, she socialized with them, ate, drank, and slept with them. And one young girl, how old was she then? Fifteen years, also was inclined to this, to sexual intimacy with the Germans, even that happened.

Author: Another?

Man: Well, she, she, you know.

Author: Kristina, yet another girl?

Man: Yes, another was Galina, yes, she went to school with me, I know, yes, fourteen years, yes, also.

Author: Fourteen years?

Man: Yes, she was inclined to that.

Author: Why did she do that?

Man: I don't know, well, it's obvious, things had an influence on her. [They] said that there would be good food, that she would get presents, and chocolate, and everything, that is, she was bribed.

Author: Do you think it was because she didn't have enough to eat?

Man: Oh, the food situation was bad, for food everyone had it bad, because, you know, no one paid for anything [meaning there was nothing to buy], there was just a small vegetable garden, you know, where one grew, or, also with bread it was bad, yes, it was a bad situation with produce. Almost that, almost starvation. Those kinds, you know, maybe that was why they got so close to the occupiers, yes. Well, yes, and besides that, the Germans stole or slaughtered many people's cows...They killed cows, there wasn't anything to eat, not even milk. If there was a piglet, a pig, they also killed that. They stole the cock, the cock, for example, the Germans stole a calf from us, they killed the suckling pig, stole and ate it, and the cock. We didn't have anything left, you see. I think, on those grounds, that is, that several also got intimate with them.<sup>47</sup>

Probably having never thought about it much before, it seemed that perhaps this man made the connection between the lack of food, the desperation of people, and the women's and girls'

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<sup>47</sup> No. 22, interview by author, Tape recording, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, August 1998.

resolution to be sexual with Germans.

A similar conversation occurred with my assistant after an interview with a woman who had been raped by a Polish man. The man had drugged her, and while she was sleeping had sexual intercourse with her. As I spoke with my assistant afterward, he commented that what had happened to the woman was not rape: it was not violent, and she was sleeping. I insisted that she had been raped. He seemed surprised at this but after a (heated) discussion, he actually said that he was beginning to see that things were more complicated than he had previously thought.

In both cases, deeper understanding occurred merely because they spoke so freely (and so much) about sexual violence. While in Cherkassy, Ukraine in August 1998, I presented a paper titled “Sexual Violence in Ukraine During World War II” at a conference organized by the Center for the Study of Oral History and Culture, centered in Kiev. I was apprehensive because I was one of only three Americans presenting at the conference, and was going to tell Ukrainians, Russians, and Poles how much sexual violence they or “their people” had endured. I was even going to mention the mass rapes committed by the Red Army. “Who am I to come here and talk about their history and on such a taboo topic?” I thought.

Their response was incredible. People posed many questions, told about things that they had heard, and only one person posed a question which seemed a bit suspicious of my intentions or my work. A couple of people raised their hands to offer stories of sexual violence. One person even asked me how I came upon such a topic. After the session, people surrounded me to thank me, give me food and drink, and to ask me questions. At dinner a woman toasted me and sincerely thanked me for “defending their women.” The regional Ukrainian television station did a spot on the news about what the Americans presented at the conference. Later, a few people told me about the report on television and told me that it was like a revolution for them. Overall, it was quite emotional and a real affirmation that only if we start the dialog about sex, rape, and prostitution could we begin to understand one another. Dialog will never reverse the horror of what happened to so many people on the eastern front during the war, and it is unlikely it will prevent other violence in the near future. Still, awareness and conversation are positively imperative to a process of healing and creating a more peaceful, caring, and conscious world.

Unfortunately, I believe that the majority of the events presented in this dissertation really happened. Because females and unarmed civilians have been – and continue to be – invisible in both official documentation, other records, and even in people’s memories, their pain has been left unrecorded and often kept a “dirty” and misunderstood secret. Yet ample evidence

remains to be able to definitively state that arguably millions of east European women and girls – and occasionally men and boys – suffered tremendous sexual violence under the German occupation and many also under the Soviet drive toward Berlin.

Although there are specifics which make the eastern front an “interesting case” to study because of its cultural diversity and its extremely bloody brutality, I do not believe this kind of sexual abuse toward people with less power is unique to the armed conflict of World War II on the eastern front. The Japanese established a similar system of sexual slavery during World War II, and there are far too many other conflicts in which sexual violence and excessive torture played or is playing a large role. Hopefully it is clear now that Germany, i.e., the Wehrmacht, the SS, the police, the Nazi leadership, and probably “ordinary” German bureaucrats who worked in the east, also participated in a sexually violent system of prostitution that they created. Men and some women sadistically took advantage of their power as guards or other officials in German concentration camps and sexually abused women, girls, boys and men. Having the role as soldier or officer, men especially lived in patriarchal realities that glorified the fighter, and allow them “excesses” because of their own sacrifices. Armed men then chose to take advantage of their power and seek sexual activity which they viewed as their due, whether it was rape by visiting a brothel or rape on the street. Members of the German armed forces and of the Red Army took part in raping probably millions of women and girls during the war on the eastern front, an unknown number of whom died because of these sexual attacks, often in the form of gang rape. Others lived with their pain in silence. The majority who survived are dead by now, and those still alive have only limited time left. Their stories about what happened passes with them. To date there has been no official recognition of these sexual crimes, nor any kind of official apology uttered. Conversely, there has only been denial and defiance.

Certain emotions, especially shame, have served the perpetrators well by keeping people silent, whether they were survivors, witnesses, or perpetrators. The shame some perpetrators probably felt (or feel) is well placed, yet they have a responsibility to speak out and to face what they have done to other human beings. The shame witnesses may feel as they either tell their story or as they begin to ask people questions is misplaced, because people need to ask questions, and they need to tell what they saw and what they know. Although felt, there should be no shame in raising these issues of sexual violence. We need to encourage such discussion. The shame survivors of sexual abuse feel is, of course, entirely misplaced, and yet one of the most difficult emotions to discard. In reality, the shame belongs entirely to the perpetrators and

to the societies which allowed the sexual violence to happen. Still, I believe survivors also have a responsibility to face their pain, their memories, and to speak out from their place of truth to help others who have similar pain. In the process they will heal as well.

Furthermore, in many ways armed conflict crystallizes what occurs on a daily basis during peacetime. Often under the influence of alcohol, often because of an inability to cope with daily reality, and often because people have never taken responsibility for – or healed – their own personal pain, people unburden their own pain onto others and sexually abuse one another on a daily basis. The sexual urge is clearly an incredibly strong urge, but especially in peacetime people should be able to get their needs met in a safe and non-coercive manner and without hurting others. Other needs related to the motivations of abuse, such as one's own emotional pain – often stemming from childhood – can be met if we place a high priority on providing the basis and support for this kind of growth. Yet especially in American society, we clearly have the means but lack the political will to provide this support. We let too many emotionally injured children grow into emotionally injured adults who then are more prone to hurt others.

The rampant sexual violence in American and other societies during peacetime is related to what happens in armed conflict. The seeds of dysfunctional sexual attitudes are planted at home, and perhaps – though not always – at home never grow into anything worse than an unhappy or unsatisfying but nonviolent sex life. But when one goes off to war and participates in an occupation of another people, fights in battles, or becomes a guard in a prison or concentration camp, these seeds, often deeply rooted, sprout because of extremely high stress levels. Less than a week ago the world was shown pictures of American soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners. Although our leadership insists this torture is not American, it seems clear that this system of violence originated from dysfunctional political, economic, and social realities at home in the United States. What happened (and is happening) in Iraq is not separate from what is happening at home. What happened on the eastern front during World War II is not separate from us today. As Yehiel Dinur painfully concluded, Auschwitz was *not* another planet,<sup>48</sup> and I would add, nor was the eastern front.

During World War II, east Europeans were caught in the middle of a horrific war, a war so horrible it is mostly unimaginable. Far too many people were subject to sexually sadistic acts of violence. Sadly, this is not a unique story if we consider the many armed conflicts throughout

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<sup>48</sup> See page 107ff. for a discussion of Yehiel Dinur's work.

the world. Even in peacetime, the excessive non-sexual and sexual violence, notably in the United States, but world-wide as well is plain to see. We can be grateful for the many people who engage in the exceptionally difficult work of helping victims and survivors of sexual violence during times of peace and war in the struggle for a just and peaceful society. With the same goal in mind, an increasing number of scholars are researching sexual violence during peacetime and during armed conflicts. Perhaps a day will come when all people will have enough emotional, physical, psychological, and monetary resources at their disposal to work toward a peaceful world.



## INTERVIEWS

### Interviews in Cherkassy Region of Ukraine

- No. 1, Woman, b. 1910, Tybiltsi
- No. 2, Woman, b. 1921, Tybiltsi
- No. 3, Woman, b. 1925, Tybiltsi
- No. 4, Woman, b. 1919, Xreshchatik
- No. 5, Woman, Moshni
- No. 6, Woman, b. 1922, Moshni
- No. 7, Woman, b. 1922, Sofievka
- No. 8, Two women, Stanislavchik
- No. 9, Woman, b. 1926, Sofievka
- No. 10, Woman, b. 1925, Shelepyxi
- No. 11, Woman, b. 1923, Shelepyxi
- No. 12, Man, b. 1916, Shelepyxi
- No. 13, Woman, b. 1916, Shelpyxi
- No. 14, Woman, Shelpyxi
- No. 15, Woman, b. 1920, Kymeiki
- No. 16, Woman, b. 1915, Kymeiki
- No. 17, Woman, Xytir Gyta Meizhiritska
- No. 18, Woman, b. 1926, Xytir Gyta Meizhiritska
- No. 19, Man, b. 1920, Moshni
- No. 20, Woman, 1917, Moshni
- No. 21, Man, Moshni
- No. 22, Man, b. 1930, Moshni
- No. 23, Man, b. 1927, Moshni
- No. 24, Woman, Yasnoziria
- No. 25, Woman, b. 1920, Yasnoziria

No. 26, Woman, b. 1921, Yasnoziria

No. 27, Woman, b. 1916, Yasnoziria

No. 28, Woman, b. 1921, Yasnoziria

No. 29, Woman, Baibysi

No. 30, Two women, Moshni

No. 31, Woman, b. 1917, Moshni

No. 32, Two women, b. 1927/1931, Moshni

No. 33, Woman, b. ~1915, Moshni

## ARCHIVES

ESA	Estonian State Archives
LSA	Latvian State Archives
LSHA	Latvian State Historical Archive
BAB	Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
USHMMA	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives

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