

Writing for Dictatorship, Refashioning for Democracy: German Women Journalists in the Nazi  
and Post-war Press

by

Deborah Barton

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Department of History  
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Abstract

This dissertation investigates how women journalists acted as professional functionaries in support of the National Socialist dictatorship, and later, a democratic West Germany. As a project that examines the intersections between the press, politics and gender, this study makes three contributions to the study of German history. The first is for the understanding the expansiveness and malleability of what constituted politics in the Third Reich and the nature of consensus between the regime and the population. Nazi gender ideology proclaimed that women belonged only in the private sphere. Correspondingly, Nazi press authorities dictated that women write only about topics pertaining to this area. The regime labeled such news apolitical. However, soft news from a cheerful perspective was an indispensable part of Nazi media policy: it provided the façade of normalcy and morale building under Hitler. In return for their support, the state offered women journalists a status not open to most women. The study of women journalists further unravels the draw of National Socialism for those Germans the regime deemed politically, socially and racially acceptable: increased possibilities and social prestige.

The second contribution relates to the study of women in the professions, which has often been overlooked. This project demonstrates that the National Socialist regime needed female journalists and thereby emphasizes women's roles in major events. Not an insignificant number

of women built diverse and influential careers in journalism both within and outside of Nazi gender parameters, often with the expressed desire of Nazi press officials.

The third contribution is for understanding the cultural interchanges that affected the relationship between the Western Allies, international audiences, and West Germany in the post-war years and the ways in which gender and the experiences of women in Third Reich helped Germany move forward. In the decades after the war, women presented their professional experiences during the Third Reich in a manner that served to distance not only themselves but also the press and Germany as a whole from Nazism. By repressing, reimagining and remembering the Nazi past, the women's personal writing became a vehicle that helped West Germany build and maintain a stable democracy.

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## Abbreviations

AAA	Akademisches Auskunftsamt
AAK	Archiv der Akademie der Künste
BAB	Bundesarchiv Berlin
BAK	Bundesarchiv Koblenz
BNA	British National Archives
DNB	Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte
LAB	Landesarchiv Berlin
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
NSF	Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft
RDP	Reichsverband der Deutschen Presse
RDS	Reichsverband Deutscher Schriftsteller
RKK	Reichskulturkammer
RMVP	Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda
RSK	Reichsschrifttumskammer
SAB	Staatsarchiv Bremen
VAP	Verband Ausländischer Pressevertreter

## Introduction

In her 1997 memoir, journalist Helene Rahms described her entry into the journalistic profession. In 1937, when she was nineteen, she approached her local press office to discuss her intention to train as a journalist. The press official reportedly laughed and replied, “for National Socialists, journalism is a political profession. And women have no place in politics.”<sup>1</sup> He then dismissed Rahms from his office. Although it is not possible to determine the exact nature of Rahms’ exchange with the press official, her depiction of this event draws attention to the very real sexism and limitations women faced within the journalistic profession from male press authorities and colleagues. Her inclusion of this scenario in her memoir also showcases the regime’s official policy toward female journalists: they were not suited to write for the political or “hard news” pages of newspapers that focused on such areas as foreign affairs or domestic policy. Women journalists were rather to be channeled toward seemingly trivial areas like local news, entertainment, human-interest stories, or the women’s pages, which were primarily composed of domestic articles, serial novels and fashion tips.

Despite this official discouragement, Rahms secured a volunteer trainee position with the provincial paper, the *Saale-Zeitung*, and completed the journalism entrance exam. During her one-year internship her colleagues regularly made her aware of her status as a woman and how that affected her prospects within the field. Her editor took on her journalistic education, pushed her forward, provided opportunities and critiqued her work. Yet her one female colleague warned her that even if she were the boss’s protégé, she would not have much opportunity in her career to move beyond working within the

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<sup>1</sup> Helene Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen: Mein Leben als Journalistin im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Scherz, 1997), 12.

women's pages. Her colleague implied that Rahms would be permanently undervalued and relegated to the margins of the profession.

Rahms completed her internship in 1938 and was on the path to a successful career. Just a few years later, the young and ambitious journalist was appointed acting department head at the Nazi paper *Die Mitteldeutsche Zeitung*—an opportunity created by the war. In 1943, she pursued and landed a sought-after position working in *Feuilleton* at *Das Reich*.<sup>2</sup> The paper was founded in 1940 with the support of Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels to impress both German and international audiences and was widely thought to be among the few (relative) quality papers published during the Third Reich. At *Das Reich*, Rahms worked with, and learned from, some of the most recognizable names in German journalism: Margret Boveri, Erich Peter Neumann, Werner Werths, Jürgen Schüddekopf, and Ilse Urbach. Although not a member of the NSDAP, Rahms was able to establish a successful career that brought her responsibility, enjoyment, travel, and connections to the intelligentsia and high-ranking officials.

Only twenty-seven at the time of the Third Reich's collapse in 1945, Rahms continued her prominent career in the post-war period, writing for the women's and *Feuilleton* sections of the most esteemed West German papers, including *Die Welt* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. In 1997 she published her memoir, *Zwischen den Zeilen: Mein Leben als Journalistin im Dritten Reich* (Between the Lines: My Life as a Female Journalist in the Third Reich). In her book, Rahms' alternatively presented herself as an insider and an outsider within the field. She emphasized the camaraderie she shared with her colleagues and the responsibility she acquired. More than once she noted that

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<sup>2</sup> *Feuilleton* translates roughly into "features." The newspaper section is usually comprised of culture, science, human-interest stories, and gossip.

Goebbels himself was aware of her work. At the same time, she designated her writing as fluffy and insignificant. She highlighted the limitations she faced as a woman and the little value she was accorded by Nazi press authorities and male colleagues. In addition, Rahms' book supported the narrative presented by her female colleagues in the immediate post-war years that women, the press, and Germany as a whole, were victims of the Nazi regime and, to some degree, the occupation authorities.

Rahms' professional status and experiences in the Third Reich, the restrictions she faced and the success she enjoyed, demonstrate the tensions between the Nazis' sexist rhetoric and beliefs about the rightful place of women in the private sphere and their desire to mobilize women for public service to the National Socialist state. By challenging and utilizing the system, women forged professional careers and achieved a level of public influence that belied their small numbers. Rahms' presentation of these experiences decades after the collapse of Nazi Germany highlights the ways in which women journalists utilized the very real opacity of their roles in the Third Reich to their own (and West Germany's) benefit in the post-war decades. Presenting themselves as an important part of the functioning of the press, but also as outsiders, allowed women journalists to emphasize their professional success and skills but removed them from a close connection to Nazi propaganda and cast them in the role of victims due to their gender. This status meant that after the war they represented a press, and a country, not tainted by Nazism.

This dissertation investigates Nazi policy and practice toward women journalists, and analyzes how they fit into the official structure of the press's and the regime's propaganda goals. It looks at the range of career opportunities open to and sought out by

women, examines the ways in which they acted as agents to navigate in and around the gaps between Nazi rhetoric and policy for their own professional advancement, and analyzes the nature of their influence. It also explores how a small group of journalists presented and utilized their careers within Hitler's press in the post-war years.

In democratic systems, the press is an institution of the public sphere, which facilitates and represents an active civil society. In totalitarian states, where the public sphere is at best an illusion, the press largely functions as a professional public relations instrument that reproduces and disseminates the regime's ideology for the control and (re-)engineering of society. This study argues that in the Nazi and post-war decades German women journalists, in comparison to their small numbers, played a disproportionately significant role in the maintenance of the state. They served as professional functionaries who helped preserve the National Socialist dictatorship and then refashioned their experiences to help West Germany find its footing after 1945. Their writing became a vehicle for the dissemination of politics in various forms, sometimes masquerading as entertainment or personal histories, and for different purposes—maintaining a totalitarian regime and, later, supporting the building of a democratic state. Located on the outskirts of power, they became important agents in the exercise of that power. Analysis of the role and experiences of women journalists provides insight into the adaptability, endurance, and appeal of National Socialism. At the same time, this analysis helps explain how post-war West Germans quickly transitioned to a stable and democratic society by discussing, reimagining, and recasting their Third Reich past.

The National Socialist regime relegated women to a seemingly subordinate and separate status within the journalistic field and endeavored to restrict their numbers and their roles. From 1933 to 1945 women never comprised more than 10 percent of accredited journalists. At the same time, the regime stressed that women were to be an important part of the esteemed institution of the press and valued members of a comradeship of journalists based first and foremost on race. The notion of women's importance and simultaneous inclusion and exclusion in the field was woven into the Nazis' journalist training program, influenced women's careers throughout the Third Reich, and shaped how women presented those experiences in the post-war years. This ambiguity rested on how the regime presented and utilized the journalistic profession, the multiple (and malleable) meanings and understandings of what constituted "politics" in the Nazi years, the flexibility of Nazi gender ideology, and the importance of notions of community and belonging.

### **Professional Functionaries for the National Socialist State**

Jürgen Habermas argued that the rise of the mass media led to a shift from a critical public sphere that served as a forum for discussion and debate into a passive space in which the public simply consumed information.<sup>3</sup> Habermas called this process the "refeudalization" of the public sphere, and his theory particularly aligns with the nature of the controlled media during the Third Reich.

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<sup>3</sup> According to Habermas, daily papers provide a substitute for a critical public sphere. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989). See also Kate Lacey's discussion of the public sphere in *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 229-230.

Press authorities, under the direction of Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, presented journalism as an elite, exciting and viable field for women and encouraged them to view it as a profession rather than simply a job. From their training onward, women journalists acted as a professional conduit between the state and the German public, particularly its women, helping to further the National Socialist worldview. Scholarship on the press and the professions in Nazi Germany has largely ignored the importance of women journalists. The primary questions historians of the press have asked are: to what degree did the regime achieve total control? How much agency was afforded individual newspapers and journalists with regard to content? Did the press offer resistance to Nazi policies or did it function by and large as a tool of the regime?

In an early study, Oron Hale outlined how the Nazis rebuilt the press to achieve near total control of personnel and newspaper content.<sup>4</sup> Twenty-five years later, Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz demonstrated that most aspects of the press offered little resistance to Nazi measures that harnessed it as a mouthpiece for the state. Although there was some flexibility with regard to how and what a journalist wrote, and some journalists even managed to criticize the regime by writing “between the lines,” by and large journalists provided content that supported and promoted Nazi beliefs.<sup>5</sup> More recent scholarship has supported Frei and Schmitz’s argument.<sup>6</sup> The small body of work that

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<sup>4</sup> Oron Hale, *The Captive Press in the Third Reich* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964).

<sup>5</sup> Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Beck, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Christoph Studt, ed., *„Diener des Staates“, oder, „Widerstand zwischen den Zeilen“?: Die Rolle der Presse im „Dritten Reich“* (Berlin: Lit, 2007). Contributors to the volume demonstrated that, overall, the media operated as a tool of the state; passive resistance was rarely possible. If a journalist managed occasionally to insert what he or she deemed a subversive message, they had no control over how readers interpreted their words. Such actions, the authors argue, cannot be considered resistance despite such claims of many journalists in the post-war decades. In recent work, Bernd Söseman argued that the only alternative for a journalist within the controlled press was to adapt or quit writing. See Bernd Söseman, Marius Lange, *Propaganda, Medien und Öffentlichkeit in der NS Diktatur. Eine Dokumentation und Edition von Gesetzen, Führerbefehlen und sonstigen Anordnungen sowie*



does address women journalists, including Carmen Sitter's study of women in journalism during the twentieth century, has focused primarily on the limitations women faced within the field and the correspondingly low percentage of women within the press.<sup>7</sup> Historiography's concentration on the underrepresentation of women in the press and the gendered roadblocks they faced, as real as both were, has meant women's contributions to and experiences within the field have not been thoroughly fleshed out and analyzed.

As this dissertation attests, journalism opened up roles for women to achieve prominence and a professional importance to the state in ways that other fields did not. Professions such as the military and clergy remained barred to women over the course of the Third Reich—policies not specific to the Nazi regime. Professions that necessitated long-term training remained difficult for women to enter. The regime restricted the number of women within other fields, including law.<sup>8</sup> Konrad Jarausch identified how long-term economic trends left certain professions—lawyers, teachers and engineers—vulnerable to the regulation and professionalization promised by the Nazis. Poor economic conditions culminating in the depression led to a material crisis that in turn

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*propagandistischen Bild und Textüberlieferungen im kommunikatorischen Kontext und in der Wahrnehmung des Publikums* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2011); Judith Prokasky, ed. *Zwischen den Zeilen? Zeitungspressen als NS-Machtinstrument* (Berlin: Stiftung Topographie des Terrors, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Carmen Sitter, *Die eine Hälfte vergisst man(n) leicht!: zur Situation von Journalistinnen in Deutschland unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1998). Other works, including those by Sylvia Lott and Laura Wehr, have focused on particular newspapers targeted at women. See Lott, *Die Frauenzeitschriften von Hans Huffzky und John Jahr: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Frauenzeitschrift zwischen 1933-1970* (Berlin: Wissenschaftsverlag Volker Spiess, 1985), Wehr, *Kamerad Frau?: eine Frauenzeitschrift im Nationalsozialismus* (Regensburg: Roderer, 2002), and Kathleen Condray, *Women Writers of the Journal Jugend from 1919-1940: "das Gehirn unserer lieben Schwestern"* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> For more on the legal profession in Nazi Germany see Ingo Müller, *Hitler's Justice: The Courts of the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). For a study of the clergy under Nazism see Kevin Spicer, *Resisting the Third Reich: The Catholic Clergy in Hitler's Berlin* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), idem, *Hitler's Priests: Catholic Clergy and National Socialism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), Manfred Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus: Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Durchdringung des protestantischen Sozialmilieus in Berlin* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001).

contributed to professionals' accommodation to the Nazi regime and their support of its policies to "purge" Jewish Germans from various fields.<sup>9</sup> Like other professions, the purging of the German press cleared away unwanted competition and opened employment opportunities for "racially" and politically acceptable Germans, men and women alike. Jill Stephenson demonstrated that what was singular to Nazi policy was not its gender ideology or its restrictions of women but rather its racial politics and the dismissal of so-called non-Aryans from various professions.<sup>10</sup>

Jarausch and Stephenson focused only on the so-called caring and elite professions. Journalism offered opportunities to women outside of the established elite. In return for their support, women journalists received a stature that was public in its reach: they were involved in the production and distribution of information. In spite of facing discrimination in the process of becoming journalists and on the job, many women nonetheless felt as though they were being given an opportunity at professional advancement and believed that with enough hard work and tenacity they could create careers for themselves.

### **The Elasticity of "Politics"**

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<sup>9</sup> See Konrad Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers, and Engineers, 1900-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) and *The Conundrum of Complicity: German Professionals and the Final Solution* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001). *The Conundrum of Complicity* is an occasional paper based on the Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Annual Lecture given by Jarausch on 11 June 2001. According to Jarausch, the professed reason for the spread of antisemitism throughout German universities was the charge that Jews were overrepresented in academic and intellectual life. Jarausch, *The Conundrum of Complicity*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Jill Stephenson, "Women and the Professions in Germany, 1900-1945" in *German Professions, 1800-1950*, eds. Geoffrey Cocks, Konrad H. Jarausch (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 279.

The Nazi government politicized all aspects of society and used the press to produce and disseminate its worldview in a variety of forms and voices. Goebbels and his propaganda machine encouraged the notion of a distinction between political and apolitical news to give the impression that there was a public sphere not entirely dominated by the state.<sup>11</sup> In his diary, Goebbels wrote, "...the moment a person is conscious of propaganda, propaganda becomes ineffective."<sup>12</sup> The front sections of the newspapers were composed of what the regime officially labelled political news—domestic and foreign policy and affairs, along with international events.<sup>13</sup> These sections spoke more explicitly with the voice of the regime and were largely the purview of male journalists. The population considered such news nationally as opposed to personally significant.<sup>14</sup> In reality, material presented as apolitical, including local news, culture, domestic articles and entertainment formed a critical component of Nazi propaganda. Such material appeared disconnected from Nazi ideology and the regime's political goals, all the while functioning within its program of racial persecution, territorial aggression, war and eventually, genocide.

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<sup>11</sup> Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 21. Rentschler makes this argument with regard to the production of films. He argues that film in Nazi Germany should be viewed in the context of the totalitarian state's effort to create a culture industry employed in the service of mass deception. Many of the period's films appeared to be harmless, escapist vehicles but all served a larger political purpose.

<sup>12</sup> As quoted in Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion*, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Scholars of the modern press have identified that journalists serve and influence politics but have focused on politics in the traditional sense. For instance, see Frank Bösch and Dominik Geppert, eds. *Journalists as Political Actors: Transfers and Interactions between Britain and Germany since the late 19th Century* (Augsburg: Wissner, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> In his work on radio from the 1920s to the 1950s in the city of Hildesheim, Andrew Bergerson demonstrates that Germans considered news broadcasts and the front pages of newspapers as distributing nationally significant news. They viewed news broadcasts as something that involved them in a wider world of current events over which they had little or no control. See Andrew Bergerson "Listening to Radio in Hildesheim 1923-1953," *German Studies Review* Vol. 24, No. 1 (February 2001), 94 and *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

Historians including David Welch, Eric Rentschler, Jana Bruns, Corey Ross and Karl Christian Führer have examined the importance the regime placed on culture and entertainment as a delivery system for politics and to divert the population's attention from the ugly realities of life in the Third Reich.<sup>15</sup> This study addresses the question of who exactly played a critical role in maintaining Nazism by politicizing the personal, presenting a *gemütliche* version of the Nazi state, and insulating Germans from state terror and destruction. Women journalists were central to this aspect of so-called apolitical news or propaganda since they worked largely in the areas the population most craved: areas that focused on private interests and pleasures.<sup>16</sup> Nazi press authorities viewed the voices of women as more amusing and emotional than those of their male counterparts and valued women for the subtlety and softness they allegedly brought to the field.<sup>17</sup>

It was, above all, within the areas of the traditional and banal everyday that women journalists contributed to Nazi propaganda. Nancy Reagin examined the linkages between German domesticity and nationalism prior to and during the Third Reich and the ways in which a certain standard of German housekeeping was linked to public policy.<sup>18</sup> Domestic articles instructed housewives how to shop, save and keep house in a manner

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<sup>15</sup> Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Karl Christian Führer, "Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda: Popular Magazines in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939," in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, eds. Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross and Fabrice d'Almeida (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Jana Bruns, *Nazi Cinema's New Women* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Hilmar Hoffmann, *The Triumph of Propaganda: Film and National Socialism, 1933-1945*, translated by John A. Broadwin and V.R. Berghahn (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996); David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933-1945* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001.)

<sup>16</sup> These sections included human-interest stories, local news, entertainment and the "women's pages." As Richard Evans argues, the Nazi regime's most popular policies and organizations were those that addressed the population's private needs and desires. Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power, 1933-1939* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 709. See also Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern*, 366.

<sup>17</sup> Wilhelm Weiss, "Die Frau im Schriftleiter Beruf," *Deutsche Presse*, 7 March 1936, 118.

<sup>18</sup> Nancy Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

that reduced their consumption of certain products and allowed the regime to channel industrial resources to preparing for and fighting the war.<sup>19</sup> Articles on relationships, the family or even fashion underscored the concept of a *Volksgemeinschaft* (National Community) founded on the exclusion and eventual persecution of those the regime labeled “racial,” social or political degenerates.<sup>20</sup> Such pieces were political in their effects if not in their designation.

The regime’s presentation of the (a)political nature and effects of women’s journalistic activities was fluid, particularly throughout the war. Since women comprised the majority of the home front during the war years, women journalists’ value to the state increased, as did the political significance of their work. On the one hand, press authorities assured women journalists of their importance to the war effort, acknowledging that women’s publications served an explicit political purpose: to boost women’s morale and shore up the home front.<sup>21</sup> The writing of women journalists helped provide distraction from everyday hardships, and they portrayed the war as a time for pride, camaraderie and personal growth. Some women travelled through the occupied East and put a *gemütlich* spin on processes of extreme violence. On the other hand, the work of women journalists was most often included in the newspaper sections and publications that the regime continued to present as apolitical and that the population considered to be so. The regime classified the work of women journalists as both political and apolitical depending on what designation would best suit the task at hand.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the Nazi concept of a unified *Volksgemeinschaft* and its impact see Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), and Michael Wildt, *Hitler’s Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012.)

<sup>21</sup> Dr. Stiewe, “Die Bedeutung der Frauenzeitschriften im Kriege,” *Der Zeitschriften-Verleger*, 27 March 1940, No. 13, 97-99.

Although Nazi press authorities claimed that what they officially labelled political writing was a man's arena, this dissertation attends to the breadth of areas in which women worked and the variety of issues, topics and events they tackled; women held positions in all fields and on all manner of newspapers during the Third Reich. Female journalism candidates obtained internships at eminently political newspapers, including the official party paper the *Völkischer Beobachter*. Many women worked freelance, writing for both political papers and women's magazines, thereby crossing the informal boundaries between so-called apolitical and political news. Although exceptional, some accredited women journalists did write about domestic and foreign policy, international events and the war. Margret Boveri, arguably one of the best-known political journalists – male or female – in the Third Reich launched her career in 1934. Beginning in 1936 and continuing throughout the war, Lily Abegg worked as a foreign correspondent in Japan for the highly respected *Frankfurter Zeitung*. This was a position of some responsibility given Germany's alliance with Japan and the war in the Pacific. Hildegard Faber began her career in 1942 as a cultural journalist. In 1943 she moved to Paris to write for the *Organisation Todt's* magazine, *Frontarbeiter*, thereby connecting with the "male" world of military planning, wartime violence and persecution. The issue of a journalist's gender was complex in Nazi Germany since women's contributions outside of women's news were often coded as masculine through the use of pseudonyms.

Most scholarship on Nazi news or propaganda disseminated through the press has disregarded the specific contribution of women. In contrast, the nature and influence of propaganda has attracted significant attention starting immediately after the collapse of the Third Reich. Julius Streicher, founder and publisher of the violently antisemitic paper,

*Der Stürmer*, was the only member of the press tried and convicted as a major war criminal during the Nuremberg Trials. Although Streicher had not been directly involved in the murder of Jews, the International Military Tribunal deemed his propaganda a significant factor in inciting the genocide. Streicher was sentenced to death and executed in October 1946.<sup>22</sup> Streicher's material represented just one strand of Nazi propaganda, and the work of Ian Kershaw, David Welch, Aristotle Kallis, and Jeffrey Herf has demonstrated that Nazi propaganda was more subversive, sophisticated and diverse than the vicious headlines in *Der Stürmer* might suggest. Propaganda was most successful when it triggered or responded to traditional German values but less so when it attempted to establish new "revolutionary" sentiments.<sup>23</sup> As Erich Rentschler pointed out, to understand Nazi propaganda, we need to consider what Goebbels termed the orchestra principle: "We do not expect everyone to play the same instrument, we only expect that

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<sup>22</sup> For more on Streicher and *Der Stürmer* see Randall L. Bytwerk, *Julius Streicher: Nazi Editor of the Notorious Anti-Semitic Newspaper Der Stürmer* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2001), and Franco Ruault, "*Neuschöpfer des deutschen Volkes": Julius Streicher im Kampf gegen "Rassenschande,"*" (Frankfurt; New York: Lang, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> See Ian Kershaw, "How Effective was Nazi Propaganda?," in *Nazi Propaganda. The Power and the Limitations*, ed. David Welch (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 180-205. In this way the regime was unable to realize complete social conformity. Aristotle Kallis analysed the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda during the Second World War and demonstrated that Germans supported Nazi messages concerning Bolshevism more than those addressing militarization, preparation for war, and the idea of a national rebirth. Goebbels strove to ensure that support of the population throughout the war was not based solely on its relationship to Nazism but rather to Germany. Where Nazi propaganda did achieve success was often due to the effective manipulation of negative themes that corresponded to wider—not solely Nazi—attitudes inherent in German nationalism, including anti-communism, antisemitism, anti-liberalism and anti-internationalism. Aristotle Kallis, *Nazi Propaganda and the Second World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 63, 70-71. Jeffrey Herf identified the nature and extent of the regime's antisemitic propaganda during the war and its contribution to the Holocaust. Herf argued that the media became a vehicle to further increase hatred toward the Jews, to justify their persecution and to suppress factual details of the Holocaust. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 183, 232-233. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum exhibit on propaganda and the CBC six-part series titled *Love, Hate & Propaganda: WWII For a New Generation* demonstrate the ongoing and widespread interest in propaganda. <http://www.ushmm.org/propaganda> (accessed on 17 September 2014) and <http://www.cbc.ca/player/Shows/Shows/Doc+Zone/Love+Hate+and+Propaganda> (accessed on 17 September 2014).

everyone play according to a plan.”<sup>24</sup> Women journalists contributed to the diversity of Nazi propaganda.

The ambiguity surrounding the role of female journalists served the regime well. Nazi discourse that the activities of women were located primarily outside of the political realm validated the idea that women journalists addressed only apolitical topics and helped facilitate the politicization of the German population in a subtler and more palatable manner than articles with aggressive political headlines. This discourse became useful for women journalists in the post-war years as they could point to the so-called harmless nature of their writing to distance themselves from overtly Nazified news or propaganda. Nazi gender ideology that disadvantaged women and state policies that restricted women in various ways allowed even those journalists who had worked in more traditionally understood political areas to claim the status of outsider or victim in the post-war years.

### **The Malleability of Gender Rhetoric**

The role and importance of women journalists highlights the malleability of Nazi gender ideology and showcases how the complex relationship between Nazi rhetoric, policy and action presented (small) pockets of freedom and opportunity for women. Already in 1939, the American sociologist Clifford Kirkpatrick identified the numerous contradictions and inconsistencies within Nazi discourse and practice toward women in the family and at work.<sup>25</sup> Immediately after the war, the role and experiences of women in the Nazi state provoked fascination inside and outside of Germany but did not emerge

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<sup>24</sup> As quoted in Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion*, 20.

<sup>25</sup> Clifford Kirkpatrick, *Woman in Nazi Germany* (London: Jarrolds, 1939), 187. Kirkpatrick wrote, “It is not certain that even Nazis theorists know just what they mean by womanly work.”



as a subject of historical analysis until the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>26</sup> Since that time, questions raised within the historiography have addressed the repression of women under the Nazi regime, the disconnect between the cliché, “Kinder, Küche, Kirche,” and the realities of women’s work outside the home, and the degree to which women supported, benefited from and acted as perpetrators within the Nazi state. The experiences of women journalists and the opportunities afforded to them testify to the fact that in Nazi Germany, as anywhere, all women did not experience gender the same way.

Jill Stephenson and Tim Mason contributed important early studies.<sup>27</sup> Stephenson argued that rather than being severely repressed, the status of women in Germany had a status on par with other European countries. Mason analyzed women’s experience within the family and the labour market as well as the impact of Nazi welfare and economic policies on women. He maintained that the Nazis oppressed women but he also highlighted the complexity of women’s experiences and demonstrated the need for further research. Through her work on the regime’s natal policies, which included forced sterilization and abortion for those it considered not “biologically” fit, Gisela Bock identified the relationship between racism and sexism; Nazi racism was not gender-neutral, and its sexism was not race-neutral. She argued that women were all potential victims of the regime’s policies because the state determined who would and would not

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<sup>26</sup> For instance, the early “rubble films” often presented women as *Trümmerfrauen* or victims of rape. For a discussion on the depiction of women in rubble films that goes beyond simply the notion that women were victims of the Nazi regime and Soviets or heroes helping to rebuild society, see Mila Ganeva, “Fashion Amidst the Ruins: Revisiting the Early Rubble Films *And the Heavens Above* (1947) and *The Murderers are Among US* (1946),” *German Studies Review* Vol. 37, No. 1 (February 2014): 62-85. For more on rubble films see Robert R. Shandley, *German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), and Bettina Greffrath, *Gesellschaftsbilder der Nachkriegszeit: Deutsche Spielfilme 1945-1949* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1995). In the immediate post-war years, there was also widespread popular interest in Nazi women’s crimes. See Alexandra Przyrembel, “Transfixed by an Image: Ilse Koch the ‘Kommandeuse of Buchenwald’,” *Germany History* Vol. 19, No. 3 (2001): 369-399.

<sup>27</sup> Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1975); Tim Mason, “Women in Germany,” *History Workshop Journal* No.17 (1976): 74- 113.

become mothers based on who was considered racially or socially valuable.<sup>28</sup> My work showcases how in the Third Reich some women were simultaneously disadvantaged by, and profited from, their gender.

Ute Frevert demonstrated that Hitler's Germany held appeal for women who satisfied the Nazis' political, racial and social requirements.<sup>29</sup> Claudia Koonz examined the ways in which women benefited from and contributed to Nazism. Koonz argued that women longed for influence over a privileged women's sphere—a private *Lebensraum*; many women viewed Nazism as a vehicle to achieve this independence.<sup>30</sup> Whereas Koonz focused on women's agency in the private realm, this study addresses the role of women in a public and influential field. It thereby builds on work by Elizabeth Harvey, Wendy Lower, Elissa Mailänder, and Bronwyn Rebekah McFarland-Icke on the relationship between gender, the professions and the Holocaust.<sup>31</sup> Harvey identified the

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<sup>28</sup> See Gisela Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State," in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, eds., Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984): 271-296. idem, Gisela Bock, *Zwangssterilisation im Nationalsozialismus: Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1986).

<sup>29</sup> See Ute Frevert, *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation*, translated by Stuart McKinnon-Evans in association with Terry Bond and Barbara Norden (Oxford; New York: Berg, 1990).

<sup>30</sup> Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1987). Bock and Koonz engaged in a critical exchange on women's agency in Nazi Germany dubbed the *Historikerinnenstreit*. This debate sparked a wealth of research in this area. Atina Grossmann argued that Bock's position was common among German women's historians. Having grown up hearing the stories of their mothers, many German historians approached the study of women in Nazi Germany in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s with the intention of showing their suffering and strength. According to Grossmann, American historians on the other hand, were more often exposed to the experiences of German Jewish and non-Jewish refugees as well as Holocaust survivors. See Atina Grossmann, "Feminist Debates about Women and National Socialism," *Gender & History* 3, No. 3 (1991): 354.

<sup>31</sup> See Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), Wendy Lower, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2013), Elissa Mailänder, *Gewalt im Dienstalltag: die SS-Aufseherinnen des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Majdanek* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2009), and Bronwyn Rebekah McFarland-Icke, *Nurses in Nazi Germany: Moral Choice in History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). For more on women in the public sphere see also Sybille Steinbacher, ed. *Volksgenossinnen: Frauen in der NS-Volksgemeinschaft* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), and Nicole Kramer, *Volksgenossinnen an der Heimatfront. Mobilisierung, Verhalten, Erinnerung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

function of women in Nazi efforts to “Germanize” Eastern Europe and highlighted women’s indirect contribution to the persecution of gentile and Jewish Poles. Journalists played a key role by promoting Germanization activities and extolling the program’s virtue in their writings and in their photo reportages. Lower demonstrated how women became directly entangled with processes of extreme violence in the occupied East during World War II. Women journalists travelled to and worked in the very areas where the ghettos and killing centers were located.

Regardless of the areas in which women journalists worked, whether writing human-interest stories, domestic articles, or reporting on the German East, the concept of being a part of the elite *Kameraderschaft* of the press and the sense of identity, solidarity and professionalism this engendered influenced all of their activities. As a part of this community, women journalists acted as consummate professionals on behalf of the state. And, they reaped the rewards of their contributions.

### **Opportunity and Belonging**

The notion of community was a critical element of Nazi ideology and was centered just as much on inclusion as it was on exclusion. The synergy between the increased possibility for some and the persecution of others was what constructed daily life throughout the Third Reich. The study of women journalists illuminates the ways in which the relationship between the Nazis and so-called Aryan Germans belonging to the *Volksgemeinschaft* was based on reciprocity; in other words, support for the state yielded opportunities for personal gain, fulfillment and/or pleasure.

Beginning in the 1970s, scholars began to conduct research on public opinion, enthusiasm and discontent in the Third Reich.<sup>32</sup> In the late 1980s, in conjunction with the large (and still growing) body of work on everyday life, historians increasingly focused on Hitler's efforts to ensure the support of the German public and Nazism's subsequent appeal to much of the population. The work of Alf Lüdtke, Ian Kershaw and Detlev Peukert showed how Hitler's own popularity helped facilitate social consensus.<sup>33</sup> Robert Gellately identified the high level of cooperation and self-policing prevalent among Germans. According to Gellately, consent and coercion were entangled in Nazi Germany since the regime directed most of the coercion and terror toward groups for whom the public demonstrated little sympathy. Götz Aly examined how the regime fostered and retained broad public support by providing material advantages to the population. The Nazis bought and paid for this extended welfare state by the plunder of the conquered lands in the East and the property of Jews. Shelley Baranowski highlighted how the regime invoked lasting feelings of enjoyment and happiness among Germans through its Strength through Joy program.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Martin Broszat was one of the first proponents of *Alltagsgeschichte* and provided a comprehensive look at everyday life in Bavaria during the Third Reich. Broszat coined the phrase "Resistenz" to demonstrate various ways Germans demonstrated dissatisfaction with the Nazi movement. Resistenz was not about active resistance to the Nazi regime but rather about immunity to aspects of Nazism. According to Broszat, support and discontent in the Third Reich were not black and white but shades of grey. See Martin Broszat, Elke Fröhlich and Falk Wiesemann, *Bayern in der NS-Zeit* (Munich; Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1977-1983). See also Alf Lüdtke, ed. *Alltagsgeschichte. Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen* (Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 1989). Ian Kershaw provided one of the earliest studies on popular opinion in Nazi Germany. See Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich, Bavaria 1933-1945* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

<sup>33</sup> See Detlev Peukert, *Volksgenossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde: Anpassung, Ausmerze und Aufbegehren unter dem Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne: Bund, 1982); Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Alf Lüdtke, "The Appeal of Exterminating 'Others': German Workers and the Limits of Resistance," in Michael Geyer and John W. Boyer, eds., *Resistance against the Third Reich, 1933-1990* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Gellately showed that most denunciations of German citizens came not from the Gestapo but rather fellow citizens. Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007) and *Hitler's Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und*

I demonstrate how Nazi press authorities sought to create a press corps loyal to the Third Reich by way of cultural, social, and intellectual stimulation. I analyze how successful leaders of the press were in achieving this goal by exploring the ways in which women found satisfaction and an identity through their profession. Peukert used the term *Machbarkeitswahn* to describe how Nazism embodied a modern sense of limitless possibility.<sup>35</sup> The sense of revival and possibility in public life can also be applied to an individual's personal experience. Although female journalists faced restrictions, disadvantages and prejudices, they also experienced enjoyment, adventure and career progression through their work. The Reich Press School incorporated solidarity-building exercises, cultural trips and even fun into its training program. Accredited female journalists were drawn to the freedom, flexibility and travel possible within the profession. During the war they benefited from these aspects of their job, enjoying access to food not available to the majority of the population and, in some cases, escape from Allied bombs through assignments in the countryside or abroad.

An examination of the opportunities open to women journalists teases out the relationship between belonging, opportunity, and identity within the Third Reich.

Thomas Kühne has argued that most Germans aspired to the sense of belonging and

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*Nationaler Sozialismus* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2005); Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). See also Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Julia Timpe, "Hitler's Happy People: *Kraft durch Freude's* Everyday Production of Joy in the Third Reich" (PhD diss., Brown University, 2013); Jonathan Wiesen, *Creating the Nazi Marketplace: Commerce and Consumption in the Third Reich* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung: Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007); Frank Bajohr, *"Aryanisation" in Hamburg: The Economic Exclusion of Jews and the Confiscation of their Property in Nazi Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

<sup>35</sup> As quoted in Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 51. See also Detlev Peukert, *Max Webers Diagnose der Moderne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), idem, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life* (London: Batsford, 1987).

collective identity embodied by the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Kühne demonstrates the ways in which a desire for community and the experience of belonging to a *Volksgemeinschaft* founded on racial exclusivity facilitated mass murder.<sup>36</sup> The inclusion into the elite body of the press, the esteemed identity of “journalist,” and anticipated career advantages helped pull women journalists into political service to the state; such women gained a sense of belonging in an important and public field. Helene Rahms wrote of the happiness and community that she found within the profession and recalled, “We were included in this illustrious circle and felt high above clouds of the war, as if we were on Parnassus.”<sup>37</sup> But this was an opportunity founded on race and antisemitism. Women journalists wrote on behalf of and for only the privileged “Aryan” community.

### **Professional Mediators for Post-War Germany**

The study of women journalists also has implications for understanding the needs of German society in the post-war years and the linkages between the press, politics, rebuilding, memory, and gender. In the post-war years a small group of women journalists published narratives depicting their professional and personal experiences during the Third Reich. These women recast their own past in a way that both appropriated and acknowledged Jewish suffering and persecution under the Nazi regime. Their writing was designed to distance themselves and the press from the stigma of Nazism. But it also helped to fashion and maintain a positive post-war identity for West (later reunified)

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<sup>36</sup> According to Kühne, the Nazi concept of a people’s community was itself the product of extreme nationalism. The notion and appeal of comradeship had roots in men’s trench warfare experience during World War I. See Kühne, *Kameradschaft: die Soldaten des nationalsozialistischen Krieges und das 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006) and Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler’s Community, 1918-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 113.

Germany that allowed the country to move forward and enjoy ongoing stability. This identity rested on the idea that Germany itself was a victim of the Nazi regime, the war, and the post-war occupation. In a manner that often veiled, or even inverted, the nature of their public writing during the Third Reich, particularly with regard to Nazism's antisemitic world view, these women continued to act as professional functionaries for a different political reality.

Tony Judt explored how a mixture of forgetting in the economic and political spheres, coupled with small pockets of remembering in the cultural sphere, facilitated the rebuilding of a stable and democratic Western Europe.<sup>38</sup> Women journalists contributed to this dual process. My work adds to studies on the West German narrative of victimization that emerged after 1945 and the gendering of Germany's defeat.<sup>39</sup> As Elizabeth Heineman argued, women's experiences amidst the bombs and, later, the sexual violence perpetrated by the Red Army came to symbolize the rape of Germany by the Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup> Petra Goedde shed light on how the U.S. feminized a defeated

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<sup>38</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

<sup>39</sup> See Robert Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Moeller demonstrated how the experiences of German PoWs in the Soviet Union and expellees from the East came to symbolize the suffering of the entire German population. See also Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies. Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007). Grossmann described the lack of any widespread sense of responsibility for the crimes of Nazism and pointed out how the German discourse of victimization impacted and angered Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. As the U.S. view of the Germans shifted from foe to friend, occupation authorities became increasingly impatient with dependent Jewish refugees in the DP camps. For more on Germany's transition to a democratic society see Konrad Jarausch and Marcus M. Payk, eds., *Demokratiewunder: Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945-1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), Norbert Frei, *Und Wir: Das Dritte Reich im Bewusstsein der Deutschen* (Munich: Beck, 2005), Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), and Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Heineman, 'The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's "Crisis Years" and West German National Identity,' *American Historical Review* 101/2 (1996): 354-396. See also Alison Owings, *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993). Owings interviewed a number of German women, several of whom discussed their own victimization.

Germany and cast itself in the role of “male protector.” The U.S. view of Germany, coupled with the Germans’ own presentation of their vulnerability reinforced and benefited both countries.<sup>41</sup> In the midst of the developing Cold War, this presentation of Germany’s recent past proved useful to the Germans as well as the Western Allies: it recast the Soviet Union in the role of villain, ensured the western region of Germany remained in the U.S orbit, and legitimated Germans’ view of themselves as victims.

Through their personal narratives, women journalists played a fundamental role in the birth and maintenance of this victimization trope. But the women’s presentation of Germany as victim was (somewhat) balanced by their recognition and condemnation of Germany’s crimes. The journalists’ writing helped Germans simultaneously suppress their responsibility and shame over the atrocities committed under National Socialism and acted as a tempered release for that shame. By offering a narrative that distorted, remembered, and repressed Germany’s experience of National Socialism, the women presented a past in a way that was tolerable for both the German population and an international audience. Because women journalists both distanced and bridged the reality of Germany’s Third Reich experience, their work fit into changing discussions of Germany’s past throughout the post-war decades and achieved a lasting resonance. An analysis of women journalists’ post-war contribution to German identity-building builds

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<sup>41</sup> See Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003). See also Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Michaela Hoenicke Moore’s work revealed that American views on Nazi Germany prior to and even throughout the war were mixed and often “generous” and helped precipitate the quick realignment. See Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).



on scholarship by historians, including Dagmar Herzog, concerned with how and why Nazism was (mis)remembered after 1945.<sup>42</sup>

The study of women journalists as professional functionaries helps us reconsider what we might otherwise call contradictions—the notion that women downplayed their roles, the agency of the press, and the population’s support of Nazism—and yet also acknowledged some crimes. This project shows that this was not a contradiction but rather the central part of a post-war rhetoric designed simultaneously to remember and repress. This dissertation also helps identify continuities and ruptures surrounding ideas about gender, the function of journalists and the various meanings of what constituted politics between the Third Reich and post-war West Germany. Although the tone of the women’s narratives and the areas in which they mediated changed after 1945, the women’s gender and profession ensured that they influenced Germany’s post-war transition and the narrative of its past in a manner that exceeded their small numbers and professional profile. In this way, women journalists helped maintain West Germany as they had the Nazi state.

As women they could more easily represent Germany’s suffering than their male counterparts because they had experienced the privations of the home front, including the bombs and the Red Army. As a result of Nazi gender rhetoric, they could also present themselves as professionals disconnected from the production of Nazi propaganda. The notion of women operating only in an apolitical realm within the Third Reich carried over

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<sup>42</sup> See Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Through the lens of sex, Dagmar Herzog explored how Germans (mis) remembered Nazism in order to reject Germany’s dark past and return to “normality.” In the 1950s conservatives and the Church linked Nazism and the Holocaust to sexual immorality and secularism. A return to Christian sexual values symbolized Germany’s transition (back) to a moral, “civilized” nation. In the 1960s, the sexually inciting elements of Nazism were misremembered as the 1960s generation linked their parents’ supposed sexual repression under the Third Reich with the Holocaust.

and became useful in the post-war decades. The U.S. occupation authorities, an international audience and the German public continued to employ the Nazi regime's distinction between political and apolitical material. Finally, the German press both depicted and instigated democratic change in the post-war years—a marked change from the Nazi period.<sup>43</sup> As journalists, the women represented freedom of expression, an active civil society, and democracy. This association strengthened the perceived authenticity of their narratives. They used the identity of journalist in the post-war decades to de-Nazify their work in the Third Reich. In her 2006 memoir, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann wrote: “One who worked as a journalist in Germany during the Third Reich is often asked why he or she did not emigrate. I often told my students in Mainz that nobody knows whether he or she might have to work under conditions in which they are not free. If that is the case, one must remain a journalist.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Context: Women at Work from Weimar to the Third Reich**

National Socialist ideology loudly proclaimed that the primary role for a woman was as a wife and mother. Yet in 1936 approximately 37 percent of women in Germany worked outside the home. By 1944 women comprised more than 50 percent of the German workforce.<sup>45</sup> Many of their experiences in the workforce were not particular to the Nazi regime. From the end of the First World War and throughout the course of the Third Reich, gender was the site of both continuities and disconnections with regard to women in the workplace. Women's role in the workforce had expanded during World

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<sup>43</sup> See Christina von Hodenberg, “Mass Media and the Generation of Conflict: West Germany's Long Sixties and the Formation of a Critical Public Sphere,” *Contemporary European History* 15, No. 3 (August 2006): 367-395.

<sup>44</sup> Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen* (Munich: Herbig, 2006), 117.

<sup>45</sup> Sitter, “*Die eine Hälfte vergisst man(n) leicht!*,” 201.

War I. In 1918 they received the vote in Germany and the German government wrote official sexual equality into the Weimar constitution. Theoretically, women had the same professional opportunities as men. Although they had made some progress in white-collar professions, most women who worked outside of the home remained in traditional roles in small shops or textile industries.<sup>46</sup> Weimar provided legal equality but gender tensions and informal inequality for women remained. Various groups in society, including some political parties and some women's organizations, made efforts to confine women to domestic or traditional female roles, particularly after the beginning of the depression in 1929. Similar trends took place in other European countries.

The Nazi policy toward women in the workforce fluctuated throughout the course of the 1930s based largely on the primacy of economics. Between 1933 and 1935, when unemployment was high, the regime undertook steps that corresponded to its public rhetoric of returning women to the domestic sphere. In some instances the Nazis built on the pre-existing trends of Weimar, pandering to men's fears about women in the professional sphere and the gendered division of labour. Nazi aggression toward women in the professions was based on both ideology and political considerations: the regime recognized that this campaign appealed to large segments of the German population.<sup>47</sup> It continued and expanded the Weimar-era campaign against "double earners" and thereby pushed married women out of civil service positions, instituted financial incentive programs to encourage marriages and births, and restricted entrance to institutions of

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<sup>46</sup> See Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, "Beyond Kinder, Küche, Kirche: Weimar Women in Politics and Work," in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, eds., Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984): 33-65. In many areas Germany was still a rural country and women worked with their husbands on the farm along with keeping house.

<sup>47</sup> Stephenson, "Women and the Professions in Germany," 279.

higher education for women. Certain professions became off-limits while others, such as law or academics, were subject to restrictions. And, much as in Weimar, the Nazis often relegated employed women to the less esteemed and lowest paid positions.<sup>48</sup>

The Party also strove to balance its economic and practical goals with its ideological platform, adapting its ideology along the way. In 1936, as the regime began to escalate its preparation for war with the introduction of the first four-year plan, it not only relaxed restrictions on women's employment but also actively began to recruit women to the workforce, recognizing the need for women's labour. Although Nazi rhetoric continued to espouse motherhood and domesticity, its practical policy toward women in the workplace was adjusted to fit its requirements. By 1936, press authorities had also begun increasingly to stress the importance of women journalists, which meant growing opportunities for women within the press.

### **The National Socialist Press**

National Socialist Germany represented one of the most modern mass media societies of its time, and the press formed a critical component of the regime's media dictatorship.<sup>49</sup> Germans were highly literate, and the consumption of newspapers in Germany significantly increased beginning in the early twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> The press both embodied and helped produce modernity. Newspapers represented the modern by

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<sup>48</sup> For more on woman at work in Nazi Germany see Michelle Mouton, "From Adventure and Advancement to Derailment and Demotion: Effects of Nazi Gender Policy on Women's Careers and Lives," *Journal of Social History* 43, No. 4 (2010): 945-971; Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Germany* (Toronto: Longman, 2001).

<sup>49</sup> Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 20. See also Karl Christian Führer, *Medienmetropole Hamburg: mediale Öffentlichkeiten 1930-1960* (Munich; Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 2008). Führer argues that, despite the prevalence of radio, newspapers remained the most important informational tool for Germans throughout the entire Third Reich.

<sup>50</sup> Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin*, 56. As the population gained a political voice, newspapers grew in volume and significance.

their use of technology and their ability to collect, prepare and distribute daily material from around the world to hundreds of thousands of subscribers. In addition they choreographed and helped readers navigate the urban experience.<sup>51</sup> During the Weimar Republic the press was decentralized, diverse and enjoyed relative freedom. In the hands of private publishing houses, political parties and religious bodies, the publication of newspapers flourished. By 1932 there were 4703 different newspapers in Germany.<sup>52</sup> Prior to and during its first months in government, the Nazi regime made clear its desire to harness the power of the press as a vehicle of the state. Goebbels announced in his first official press conference on 15 March 1933: “The press is not only there to inform but must also instruct... You will also recognize that it is an ideal situation for the press to be a tremendously important instrument for influencing the masses.”<sup>53</sup>

The regime quickly implemented controls over journalists and publishers, closed down oppositional newspapers, and acquired ownership of a large percentage of the press through the party-owned Eher publishing house.<sup>54</sup> At the beginning of 1933, the Nazis controlled less than three percent of Germany’s papers; by 1944, 80 percent of the total

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 10. Fritzsche argues that Berliners were both readers and spectators who used the press to make sense of their (changing) urban environment (86). Daily newspapers also became more commonplace in rural areas in the first decades of the twentieth century.

<sup>52</sup> Hale, *The Captive Press*, 3. For more on the Weimar Press see Bernhard Fulda, *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, Russel Lemmons, *Goebbels and Der Angriff* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994), Michael Groth, *The Road to New York: The Emigration of Berlin Journalists, 1933-1945* (Munich: Minerva, 1984), and Modris Eksteins, *The Limits of Reason: The German Democratic Press and the Collapse of Weimar Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>53</sup> Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Nazism 1919-1945: Vol. 2 State, Economy and Society 1933-1939, A Documentary Reader* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1984), 393.

<sup>54</sup> In 1933 Max Amann, director of the Eher Verlag, became Reich Leader of the Nazi Party Press and Head of the Reich Press Chamber. He played an important role in Nazi control over the press. On 24 April 1935 Amann put into place three regulations to ensure the regime further control over the press. The first ordinance withdrew publishing rights from any publisher whose publications the regime deemed immoral. The second gave Amann power to close newspapers or publishing houses where the number of competing newspapers compromised the economic health of the field. The third ordinance was to hasten the demise of private ownership in the press industry and its eclipse by the Party press machine. Hale, *The Captive Press*, 148-151.

circulation of newspapers came from the Eher *Verlag*.<sup>55</sup> Three key individuals fought for influence and jurisdiction over the press: Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda; Otto Dietrich, Reich Press Chief of the Nazi Party and the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Propaganda; and Max Amann, Reich Leader of the Nazi Party Press Organization and Head of the Reich Press Chamber.<sup>56</sup> It was Goebbels who secured control over press reporting and therefore influenced the experience of women journalists to a greater degree than Dietrich or Amann.

Through its Reich Press Chamber, the Propaganda Ministry assumed control over the Reich Press Association (*Reichsverband der Deutschen Presse*) and thereby regulated entry into the field. (See Chart I.) Membership in both the Reich Press Chamber and the Press Association was mandatory for all active journalists. Whereas Jewish and left-wing journalists lost their positions and often had to flee Germany, the bulk of the pre-Nazi press remained. In this way the press retained a small degree of continuity from the Weimar to the Nazi years. Most independent newspapers and their employees quickly accommodated to the regime through self-censorship.<sup>57</sup> The Propaganda Ministry controlled newspaper content by holding owners and editors responsible for what they published, through the state-controlled press agency (*Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* or DNB) and through detailed directives issued at daily press conferences. The press agency supplied news and guidance for the press and acted as a pre-censorship tool; the press

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<sup>55</sup> Peter Longerich, "Joseph Goebbels and his Press Policies within the Web of the Nazi Institutions" in *Zwischen den Zeilen? Zeitungspressen als NS-Machtinstrument?* (Berlin: Stiftung Topographie des Terrors), 18; Holocaust Encyclopedia, The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007655>, accessed on 3 January 2013. See also Rudolf Ströber, "Germany 1933-1945, as Media Case Study," *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications Volume 2*, ed. Donald H. Johnston (San Diego: Academic Press, 2003).

<sup>56</sup> Goebbels had to concede responsibility for the economic structure of the press to Amann in 1933-1934. Longerich, "Joseph Goebbels," 19. For more on Amann see Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*.

<sup>57</sup> Frei and Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*, 26.

conferences provided guidelines indicating what material could or could not be reported and the manner in which it should be done. During the Weimar Republic, the daily press conference was an informational event organized by journalists; under Goebbels and Dietrich it became a tool of the Propaganda Ministry.<sup>58</sup>

The Nazis defined the role of a journalist broadly. Marie Matthies worked for the German Press Association during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. She noted that the party counted in this category everyone, whether working freelance, full- or part-time, who was in any way active in shaping the intellectual content of newspapers, magazines, news services or associational newsletters.<sup>59</sup> The expansive definition of a journalist allowed the regime to control the production of all or most news-oriented materials and those producing them. The German Press Association required that all accredited journalists be listed in its professional registrar (*Berufsliste*.) I define journalist as an individual who was listed in the Nazis' professional registrar. Although I do discuss the experience of a handful of German Jewish and so-called *Volksdeutsche* women (those of German origin born outside of Germany), they largely remain beyond the frame of this study. The majority of Jewish journalists were removed from the press after the Nazis came to power. In addition, my sources do not allow for an in-depth examination of *Volksdeutsche* women within the press.<sup>60</sup>

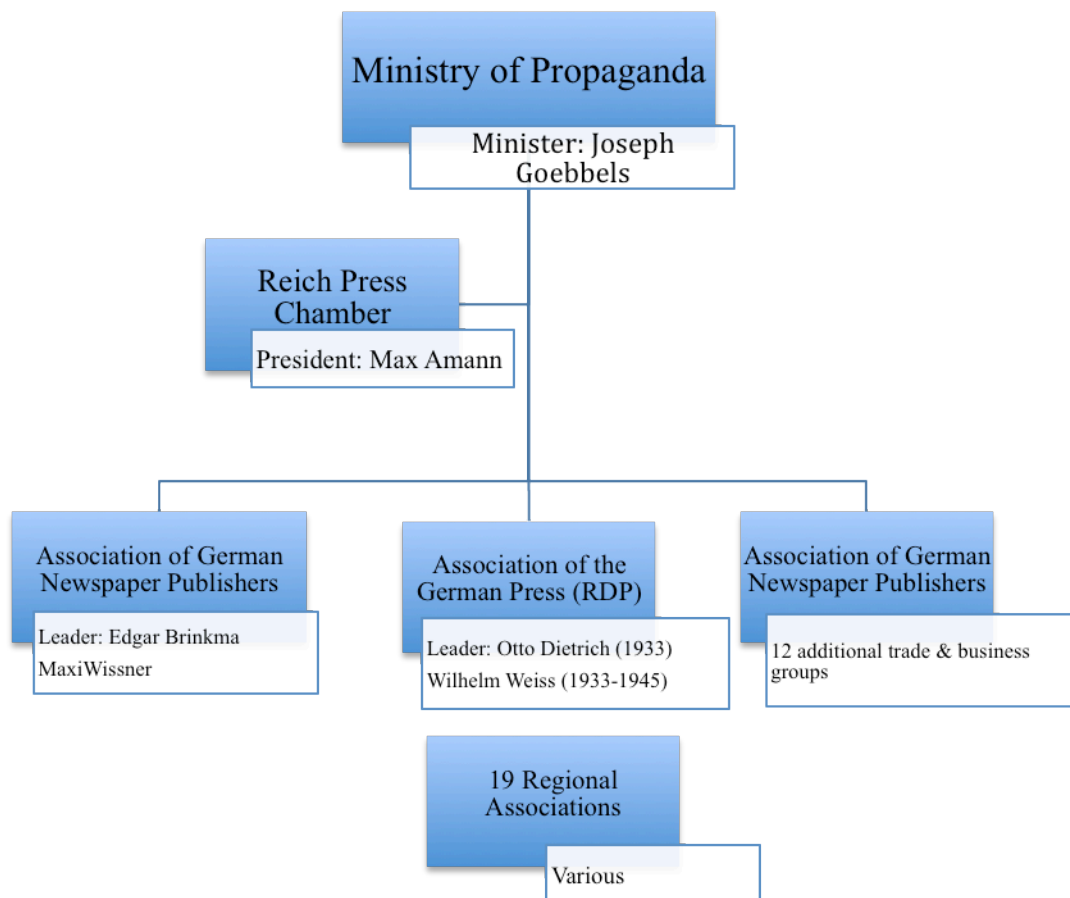
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<sup>58</sup> Longerich, "Joseph Goebbels and his Press Policies," 15.

<sup>59</sup> Marie Matthies, *Journalisten in eigener Sache: Zur Geschichte des Reichsverbandes der deutschen Presse* (Berlin: Journalisten-Verband, 1969), 136.

<sup>60</sup> Bergen, "The Nazi Concept of 'Volksdeutsche,'" 569. Bergen notes the term also had connotations of blood and race that the English definition, "ethnic Germans," does not capture.

**Chart I. Organization of the Ministry of Propaganda in Relation to the Press<sup>61</sup>**



### Methodology and Sources

This dissertation is structured both chronologically and thematically. The chronological framework allows me to trace the growing importance of women journalists over the course of the Third Reich and analyze their continuing influence and resonance in the post-war period. The thematic overlay addresses the breadth and variety of women’s journalism, highlighting the various ways in which women structured their

<sup>61</sup> Chart based on Hale, *The Captive Press* and Ströber, “Germany 1933-1945, as Media Case Study.”



own careers and contributed to the maintenance of the regime. Additionally, I interweave discussions of specific journalists, which enables me to explore trends and anomalies in the experiences of journalists. My work includes a transnational approach as I address interactions between German journalists and Allied press personnel in the postwar years as well as the impact of women's writing abroad during and after the collapse of the Third Reich.

The foundation of this work is archival. I draw on government documents, newspapers, magazines, trade publications, and the public and private writings of journalists, including memoirs, diaries, personal correspondence and photographs. Due to the fragmentary nature of the sources, by layering the evidence from government records about journalists, public writing by journalists, and personal accounts from journalists, I gain an understanding of the complexities surrounding this network of sources and the construction of women's careers. Personal accounts, including memoirs and edited diaries, are subject to the goals and biases of the writer as well as the failings of memory, whether intentional or unintentional. I analyze the ways in which an individual's personal presentation would benefit him or her at the time of publication, compare and contrast various personal accounts to tease out their veracity, and align personal narratives with official documents to obtain an accurate picture of the role of women journalists.

## **Chapter Overview**

Chapter One explores the Nazification of the press and the establishment of a journalist-training program founded on Nazi concepts of race. To practice journalism in the Third Reich required an entry exam, a yearlong internship and a three-month course

at the German Press School. I analyze the degree to which each aspect of the training program was gendered and explore how the regime's primary goal—to create a Nazified cohort of journalists—superseded notions of women's gendered place within society and the press. Press authorities sought to appeal to and ensure the loyalty of journalist candidates by creating a sense of professional possibility and responsibility, solidarity, and elitism; women were included as a part of this privileged clique.

Chapter Two looks at Nazi policy and practice toward women journalists in the pre-war years and contrasts it with women's experiences. The regime endeavoured to channel women into the areas it deemed appropriate for their “feminine” talents: culture, local news, features and the women's pages. Although the Nazis depicted these areas as apolitical, they were in many ways more important than the “hard news” sections, which primarily remained the domain of male journalists. By focusing on human-interest stories and areas dedicated to seemingly private interests, women journalists contributed to the regime's political goal of maintaining a sense of normality to achieve broad acceptance in the eyes of the population; they helped create a positive image of Nazi Germany that acted as a counterbalance to the repression and terror propagated by the regime. I provide a snapshot of the field, identify women's place in the structure of the press, and investigate their experiences in different media.

Chapter Three focuses on those few women who worked outside of the traditional female realm. I use the concept of crossing borders to examine how journalists functioned as mediators between Hitler's Germany and the world, thereby contributing to the regime's foreign and domestic political goals in a more overt and widespread manner than women did who worked in “soft” news. For instance, the regime laboured to ensure

that newspapers abroad included positive news about Germany and/or rallied ethnic Germans to the Nazis' cause. Issues such as manpower, talent and connections allowed some women to transcend Nazi policy and work in the areas or countries they desired.

Chapter Four addresses the increasing importance of women journalists during the war and analyzes the ways in which they contributed to the Nazis' wartime propaganda goals, both engaging and distancing their readers from the destruction that reigned around them. As the war progressed, the public's trust in hard news plummeted, and the regime relied on the areas in which most women journalists worked to keep the population entertained, distracted and encouraged in order to ensure its ongoing support.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, some women secured positions in occupied Europe or wrote on war developments, thereby experiencing and contributing more directly to Germany's wartime discourse. I also investigate how the Nazis' need for women journalists and the benefits and opportunities these women enjoyed fostered a mutually beneficial relationship.

Chapter Five looks at the long-term influence of five women journalists' post-war presentations of their Third Reich experiences and the ways in which their narratives helped Germany's political transition after 1945. It investigates post-war discussions of Germany's Nazi past in academia and the media, and situates the memoirs and diaries of Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, Ursula von Kardorff, Margret Boveri, Helene Rahms, and Marta Hillers into this discussion. Each journalist used the suffering of Jews during the Third Reich to present a "good" Germany that was also a victim of Nazi crimes. To do so, however, meant reversing the nature of their writing about Jews and downplaying the

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<sup>62</sup> Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 375.

benefits they had received as members of the press and the “Aryan” *Volksgemeinschaft* during the Third Reich.

## Chapter One

### How to Write for the Reich: The Professional Training of Female Journalism Candidates, 1933-1945

Seven to Seventy: Women Journalists as Members of the Reich Press School's Community: You can say whatever you want – no matter how strong, how confident, how knowledgeable you may have been entering the Reich Press School – you would have been plagued by some unrest, some insecurity. A feeling of inferiority: Will I pass? What if I fail? Will I meet all of the requirements?...The questionnaire seemed based on something more than simply knowledge gained through school books. We had the idea that the completed questionnaire would be something like a spiritual x-ray of each participant – an image that would intensify throughout the course... We gave ourselves over to a new life [at the school] with no inhibitions. We felt excitement and joy. We would be introduced to new and interesting things and we would experience camaraderie with like-minded people who aspired to the same goal. Of course, we were also fearful as [the school] would be a crucial test.

Else Günther, *Deutsche Presse*, March 1936.

In winter 1939, twenty-eight year-old journalist-in-training Ursula von Kardorff took part in the three-month course at the Reich Press School. She later described her experience as, “A strange time...we were five girls and around twenty men. We all had to participate in early morning sport, which included throwing around hand grenades made out of wood. We were trimmed and trained politically, learned about the profession, of course, took various trips to hear lectures, attend the theatre and so on.”<sup>1</sup> In April 1939, Kardorff wrote to her friend that by the end of the course she and others from the “non-party” papers had “built a wonderful clique.”<sup>2</sup> Her words demonstrate that the school sought to shape both minds and bodies and was successful in creating a sense of professional unity even amongst those not reconciled to Nazi ideology. Although she

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<sup>1</sup> Carmen Sitter, *Die eine Hälfte vergißt man(n) leicht!": zur Situation von Journalistinnen in Deutschland unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1998), 232.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Kardorff to Hanna (last name unknown), 27 April 1939, Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich (IfZ), ED 348/4. Kardorff noted, “By the end we’d built a wonderful clique made up of students from the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Kölnische Zeitung* and the *Münchner Neuste Nachrichten*, typical that the non-party papers found each other, not least because they had the most intelligent attendees.”

claimed to be put off by the ideological bent of the training, Kardorff retained the desire to build a career in journalism and adhere to press guidelines despite the restrictions and compromises this required.

Before she attended the Press School, Kardorff had completed her journalistic internship on the conservative daily, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. She hoped to establish a successful career but knew that as a woman she would face roadblocks. Kardorff confided in her friend that she feared her time at the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* would come to an end after her internship: “Unfortunately, this paradise will end forever in January because they will not keep me; in principle they take no women. Out of 43 journalists one other (female) volunteer and me are the only women...Where will I find something like this again?”<sup>3</sup> However, Kardorff did obtain a full-time role with the paper writing for the *Feuilleton* and women’s section.

Kardorff’s training trajectory, her concerns and experiences during that stage, and her successful career in features and women’s stories demonstrate the components, contradictions and consequences of the Nazis’ journalistic training program and plans for the profession. Women were included as a part of the elite *Kameradschaft* of the press and enjoyed the opportunities and benefits that came with this status. They were trained in a similar manner to men and encouraged to view journalism as a viable profession. But they were severely underrepresented within the field, and, as qualified journalists, they were to be restricted to culture, local news, women’s stories or features. Such contradictions provided the leaders of the press a useful ambiguity with regard to its policy toward female journalists, whereby they could mobilize women journalist hopefuls in the interest of the regime, while also appearing to adhere to Nazi ideology’s sexist

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<sup>3</sup> Letter from Ursula von Kardorff, 12 October 1938, IfZ, 348/4.

view of women's roles within society. In turn, this inconsistency afforded women like Kardorff some capacity to negotiate the Nazi system to benefit their own careers.

This chapter outlines the professional training path for journalist candidates in Nazi Germany and discusses the Nazis' preparation and molding of men and women for roles in the press. It argues that the regime sought to, and largely did, create a loyal press. This achievement was not solely due to the regime's strict control of the field. Rather, officials in the Ministry of Propaganda and the German Press Association worked to present journalism as a youthful, dynamic, appealing, and open field, in which a select cadre of talented young men and women could find success. In this way, the regime aimed to ensure the public support of individuals in a highly visible profession who were not necessarily disposed to its ideology.

The training program for women journalists is used as a lens through which to assess the importance and success of Nazi concepts of belonging and community. The regime sought to create a *Volksgemeinschaft* founded on its notion of an "Aryan" elite.<sup>4</sup> It therefore implemented decrees intended to isolate and eventually eliminate those it deemed racially unsuitable; to Germans included in the national community it promised privilege and opportunities. Under the aegis of this process, press authorities spoke of the journalistic profession as an elite institution within the privileged *Volksgemeinschaft* and encouraged young, journalist hopefuls to view themselves as possessing innate talent. The idea of inherent suitability for the journalistic profession had a racial foundation, insofar as the regime forced Jewish journalists out of the profession, thereby opening

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<sup>4</sup> See Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Those excluded from the *Volksgemeinschaft* included Jewish Germans, homosexuals, Sinti and Roma, and those the National Socialist regime deemed politically and/or socially unacceptable. The regime also designed "positive" policies to be applied to so-called Aryan men, women and children in order to create this racialized *Volksgemeinschaft*.

doors for journalist candidates. The National Socialist training program for journalist hopefuls reveals common ground between the regime and German citizens who were offered bright possibilities for their futures—but possibilities that often ran alongside, and came at the expense of, the persecution of others. Analysis of the training program also highlights the modernist nature of the regime, which sought to transform the press and mobilize men and women for service to the state.<sup>5</sup>

### **Reinventing the Press: Purges and “Professionalization,” 1933-1934**

By the early twentieth century, the press in Germany was well established, respected, and influential.<sup>6</sup> As the leading source of information and entertainment, the press enjoyed a wide readership, particularly in urban centres. For most Germans, newspapers had become a necessity of everyday life: “I couldn’t even imagine breakfast without a newspaper,” confessed one reader in Berlin.<sup>7</sup> After the Reichstag election in March 1932 and the run-off presidential vote in April, the NSDAP stressed that as an emerging powerful party it needed a stronger press presence.<sup>8</sup> A few months later, party

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the modern aspects of National Socialism see Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (Westport: Greenwood, 1979); David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997); and Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> See Rudolf Ströber, “Germany 1933-1945, as Media Case Study,” *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications Volume 2*, ed. Donald H. Johnston (San Diego: Academic Press, 2003). Most cities in Germany had established a weekly paper by the end of the seventeenth century, but the press did not become a mass medium until the late nineteenth century. See Howard Tumber and Marina Prentoulis, “Freedom of the Press in Western Europe,” *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications*, 195.

<sup>7</sup> As quoted in Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 53. By 1914 there were 4200 newspapers and 6500 journals published in Germany.

<sup>8</sup> Memo from Alexander Roux to the Presseamt Gross-Berlin der NSDAP, 27 April 1932, Reichskulturkammer (RKK), Bundesarchiv Berlin (BAB), R56I/77/45. A party report stated, “The NSDAP is the strongest party in Germany as the last vote proved. Only two large papers, the *Völkische Beobachter* and *Der Angriff* are at the disposal of this large popular movement. The *Völkische Beobachter* appears [only] in Munich and *Der Angriff* as an evening paper in Berlin. This situation is almost grotesque... It is absolutely necessary finally to establish a large National Socialist newspaper in the capital of the Reich. So, create a strong National Socialist Press. The reader will be there.” The memo also addressed the party’s fear of the Jewish press: “It is necessary to continue the fight against the overpowering Jewish press and



leaders attributed the significant decline in votes between the July and November elections to a weak media influence—the National Socialist press, they emphasized, must be expanded.<sup>9</sup> Prior to coming to power and consistently thereafter, the party made clear that the media would be instrumental in state-building and social control. As Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*, “By far the greatest bulk of the political ‘education’, which in this case one may rightly define with the word ‘propaganda,’ is the work of the press. It is the press above all else that carries out this ‘work of enlightenment,’ thus forming a sort of school for adults.”<sup>10</sup> Although such language regarding the didactic responsibility of the press had long roots in Germany, the party publicly positioned itself as a force determined to rebuild and control the press.

After 30 January 1933, the new Nazi government quickly enacted laws to remove Jewish Germans from all aspects of professional and civil life. It viewed the purging of the press of so-called undesirables and its reincarnation as a vehicle for the Nazi message as particularly important. Like the cultural realm, the press was a highly visible and symbolic field for the Nazis; they charged that Jews controlled the press and dominated German intellectual life as a result.<sup>11</sup> Thus, even before it enacted its first official anti-Jewish measure, the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, on 7 April 1933, the regime shut down “oppositional” papers belonging to the Social Democratic and Communist parties and began to remove politically suspect and Jewish journalists

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hold on to the supporters of our movement. Or rather, continue to win new [supporters] and demolish our enemy’s strongest weapon, the Jewish-Marxist press.”

<sup>9</sup> Memo from NSDAP Gau Berlin to Berlin Press Association, 8 November 1932, RKK, BAB, R56I/77/36. Media magnate and Nazi supporter Alfred Hugenberg owned the Scherl publishing house.

<sup>10</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, translated by Ralph Manheim (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1940, first published 1925), 108.

<sup>11</sup> “Das Schriftleitergesetz,” *Zeitungs-Verlag*, 7 October 1933, No. 40, 650-651. The regime viewed the press as an “instrument for the intellectual influence on the nation” and equated it with schools, radio, film and theatre.

from the field.<sup>12</sup> Since journalists reported on the arts or were often authors themselves, the priorities to “de-Judaize” culture and journalism went hand in hand.

One woman who fit into several persecuted categories was Hilde Walter, a freelance writer working with well-known dailies, including the *Berliner Tageblatt*, *Die Welt am Montag*, and *Die Weltbühne*. Jewish and politically left leaning, in her memoirs, Walter recalled her colleagues’, and eventually her own, forced removal from their positions. After the elimination of the first politically unsustainable editors, she noted, several Jewish colleagues remained unmolested, but only for a short period. The removal of Jewish journalists ran “on two parallel tracks,” with politically contentious Jews removed first.<sup>13</sup> The Reich Press Association forced Walter out of her position in November 1933.

The Editors Law (*Schriftleitergesetz*)—promulgated on 4 October 1933 and effective on 1 January 1934—legally barred all Jews and individuals with a Jewish spouse from working as journalists or editors. From that point forward, all working journalists and journalist candidates would have to prove their so-called Aryan ancestry as well as their spouse’s.<sup>14</sup> Wilhelm Weiss, the head of the German Press Association,

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<sup>12</sup> See Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1939. The Years of Persecution* (London; Phoenix: Orion Books, 1997), 12. Friedländer makes this point with regard to the cultural domain, noting that culture was the most visible representative of the “Jewish spirit” and therefore Jewish presence in that sphere had to be eradicated. For more on the Nazis’ removal of Jewish and oppositional musicians, actors and artists from German cultural life, see Alan Steinweis, “The Nazi Purge of German Artistic and Cultural Life,” in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, eds., Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Steinweis estimates that about 8000 Jews were dismissed from professional roles in the cultural realm during the 1930s. Steinweis, “The Nazi Purge,” 101.

<sup>13</sup> Hilde Walter, “Vorgänge bei der Gleichschaltung und ‘Arisierung’ des Rudolf-Mosse-Betriebs” from *Erinnerungsbericht: Über persönliche Erfahrungen im Dritten Reich bis November 1933*, 8 October 1959, IfZ, zs-2031, 7. Walter specialized in social policy, industrial law, and women’s professions.

<sup>14</sup> Memo, Reichsverband der Deutschen Presse (RDP), Auszug aus dem Schriftleitergesetz, 12 April 1944, BAB, R103/25. See also Marie Matthies, *Journalisten in eigener Sache: Zur Geschichte des Reichsverbandes der deutschen Presse* (Berlin: Journalisten-Verband, 1969), 133. Matthies worked for the RDP throughout Weimar and National Socialist Germany. She provides a first-hand account of the

devoted much energy throughout the final months of 1933 and 1934 to removing the remaining Jews from the profession: he continued to closely monitor the field's adherence to the Editors Law. Up to and throughout the war he regularly published the names of banned journalists in the trade publication *Deutsche Presse*.<sup>15</sup> SS Lieutenant-General (*Gruppenführer*) Weiss was one of the earliest members of the Nazi party. In 1933, he became the deputy editor of the official party paper, the *Völkische Beobachter*, and took on the Press Association's Presidency. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels had the ultimate authority with regard to who was allowed to work in the field. He ordered that the press association and its regional offices regularly send lists of all active journalists to his ministry. These lists were also shared amongst the offices to avoid employing an individual who had previously been rejected or purged.<sup>16</sup>

In November 1934, Weiss asked the head of each regional association to provide statistics on how many Jews were refused entry to the press and how many were still working on daily papers.<sup>17</sup> Later, he announced that over the course of 1934, the Nazis had removed at least 1300 “undesirable” journalists – close to ten percent of the entire

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organization during these years along with her recollections of colleagues and the leaders of the Press Association.

<sup>15</sup> Memo from Wilhelm Weiss to all Regional Press Associations, 4 May 1938, BAB, R103/4, Rundschreiben Nr. 27 and Memo from the RDP to all Regional Press Associations, 1 November 1938, BAB, R103/4, Rundschreiben Nr. 74. Weiss issued one such warning on 13 March 1942. In a highly confidential memo Weiss warned that journalist Arthur Bay had been searching for a position. Due to his political past, there was no question—he could not work as a journalist in Nazi Germany. Weiss asked the Regional Press Associations to be aware in case Bay crossed their radar. BAB, R103/5, Rundschreiben Nr. 11. Weiss was a rabid nationalist and a member of quasi-military and veterans' groups including the *Freikorps*. He participated in the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923 and later achieved the rank of *Obergruppenführer* in the SA.

<sup>16</sup> Memo from Wilhelm Weiss to all Regional Press Associations, 20 June 1938, BAB, R103/4, Rundschreiben Nr. 3 and February 1937, R103/4, Rundschreiben Nr. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Memo from the RDP to all Regional Press Associations, 2 November 1934, BAB, R103/1, Rundschreiben Nr. 18.

press – from their positions.<sup>18</sup> By comparison, the Nazis’ application of legislation regarding Jewish lawyers was relatively mild. After the April decree excluding Jews from the bar, almost 70 percent were able to continue working for a time.<sup>19</sup> After 22 April 1933, in effect the regime banned Jewish doctors from working only in clinics and hospitals run by the national health insurance; some were even allowed to continue working there. Thus, in mid-1933 nearly 11 percent of all practicing German physicians were Jews.<sup>20</sup> While accommodations were made in the medical field, only a handful of Jewish journalists retained their positions within the press: The more public the field, the more important for the Nazis that it was thoroughly purged.<sup>21</sup> Thus, racism was particularly central to the regime’s policies surrounding the press. Weiss summed up the state of the industry in 1937:

We have freed the journalism profession from Jews and Marxists, from “salon Bolshevism”... We have removed all unsuitable elements and constantly work to free the press from those individuals who do not possess the inner discipline to

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<sup>18</sup> Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1989), 28. This estimate seems conservative since it is not clear whether it included the “Marxist” journalists who were targeted immediately after the Nazis came to power in January 1933. In October 1934 Goebbels decreed that Jews could write, but only for Jewish publications. Press authorities also targeted journalists who were classified by the 1935 Nuremberg Laws as so-called “Mischlinge,” and those with a “Mischlinge” spouse, throughout the course of the Third Reich. The regime backed off occasionally due to war considerations and then again moved forward to ban those classified as “Mischlinge” from working within the press. See Memo, Aktionen gegen nichtarische und gegen nichtarisch verheiratete Schriftleiter, undated, BAB, R103/5.

<sup>19</sup> Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 29. In June 1933 Jewish lawyers still comprised 16 percent of the field. As Friedländer points out, although a number of Jewish lawyers were still able to practice, many were excluded from the National Association of Lawyers and worked in constant fear of losing their positions. See also Konrad Jarausch, “Jewish Lawyers in Germany, 1848-1938: The Disintegration of a Profession,” *Leo Baeck Yearbook* 36 (1991): 171-190.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 30. For more on doctors in Nazi Germany see Fridolf Kudlien, *Ärzte im Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1985) and Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

<sup>21</sup> Friedländer argues that the regime was wary of banning all Jewish doctors because doing so would have affected a vast number of “Aryan” patients and likely caused upset. Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 30. In contrast, the removal of Jewish journalists would not have inconvenienced non-Jewish Germans in the same way.

join unconditionally and without question the united front building the National Socialist state.<sup>22</sup>

As a whole, the industry offered little protest against the expulsion of German Jews. This response can be attributed to a combination of apathy, longer-term antisemitism and above all, careerism. In this way, the journalistic profession did not differ from other fields, including the arts, clergy, law, teaching and medical communities.<sup>23</sup> Economic instability during the Weimar Republic, culminating in the 1929 depression led to material crisis, unemployment, and alienation in various professions. The theatre profession, for instance, had an unemployment rate of over 44 percent by April 1932.<sup>24</sup> After World War I the status of the medical field for both practitioners and students declined. For this reason, a substantial number of medical professionals and students resented Weimar democracy and joined the NSDAP.<sup>25</sup> This trend hit the younger generation, who hoped to gain a foothold in their desired field, especially hard. Overcrowding and distrust of democracy made the Nazi platform based on the elimination of competitors appealing.<sup>26</sup> The regime offered seeming protection

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<sup>22</sup> Wilhelm Weiss, "Presseführung und Zeitungsgestaltung: Grundsätzliche Ausführungen über zeitgemässe Fragen der deutschen Presse," *Deutsche Presse*, 20 March 1937, 142.

<sup>23</sup> See Konrad Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers, and Engineers, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). For more on the legal profession in Nazi Germany see Ingo Müller, *Hitler's Justice: The Courts of the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> Alan E. Steinweis, "The Professional, Social, and Economic Dimensions of Nazi Cultural Policy: The Case of the Reich Theater Chamber," *German Studies Review* Vol. 13, No. 3 (October 1990), 445.

<sup>25</sup> Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 217.

<sup>26</sup> See Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions*. Jarausch explores education, engineering and the law. He argues that all three professions had a dependence on governmental authority for training, certification, and economic stability. Like journalism, the number of candidates admitted influenced the economic well-being of those in the professions. Thus, after 1933, those in the field attempted to defend their self-interest by supporting the regime's efforts to remove Jewish colleagues. See also Jarausch, *The Conundrum of Complicity: German Professionals and the Final Solution* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Centre for Advanced Holocaust Studies, 2001), 4-6. Jarausch points out that any uneven distribution of Jewish representation in the liberal professions was itself a product of the interaction between legal emancipation and social prejudice; this combination opened the free professions to Jewish practitioners, but restricted government careers in the military, the diplomatic service and the bureaucracy, among other fields. Early in the Third Reich both the Catholic and Protestant Church also offered at least

from the vicissitudes of the marketplace.<sup>27</sup>

In journalism too, a high unemployment rate caused tensions and anxieties among professionals during the Weimar years.<sup>28</sup> Less restrictive than the academic, civil service, or judicial fields, journalism had offered potentially high-profile positions to people from outside the established elites—including Jewish Germans and women. However, without regulation, anyone could enter the profession and thus it was overcrowded and professional opportunities were limited. Like other professions, the purging of the German press cleared away unwanted competition and opened employment opportunities for “racially” and politically acceptable Germans.

As journalism became a key site both of the Nazification and “de-judaization” of society, women journalist hopefuls, like their male counterparts, benefited from these processes in ways that they did not in other fields. Some professions, including the clergy and military, remained closed to women over the course of the Third Reich. (The exclusion of women from these professions was not distinctive to Nazi Germany.) In others, such as the legal or civil service, the regime restricted the number of women who could enter. Professions requiring extensive and expensive training like the medical field remained difficult for many women to access. The number of Jewish journalists removed from the field in 1933-34 (1300 or 10 percent) represents approximately the percentage

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tacit support for measures aimed at limiting “Jewish influence.” For a study of the clergy under Nazism see Kevin Spicer, *Resisting the Third Reich: The Catholic Clergy in Hitler’s Berlin* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004); idem, *Hitler’s Priests: Catholic Clergy and National Socialism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008); and Manfred Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus: Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Durchdringung des protestantischen Sozialmilieus in Berlin* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> Alan Steinweis makes this point with regard to the establishment of the *Reichskulturkammer* in September 1933. See Alan Steinweis, *Art, Ideology & Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Art* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 270.

of women in the press by 1941, suggesting that female journalist trainees benefited directly from the regime's policy toward Jewish journalists.<sup>29</sup>

German women professionals and Jews had already been scapegoats during the economic crises in Weimar Germany, but the fates of these two groups within the field of journalism diverged in Nazi Germany--unless of course one was a German Jewish woman professional. The contrast between the life stories of the German-Jewish journalist Luci von Jacobi and non-Jewish Helma Huffschmid illuminates this phenomenon. After losing her position at *Tempo* in 1933, von Jacobi fled to Switzerland.<sup>30</sup> Like many Jewish Germans forced into exile, Jacobi could not rebuild the professional prominence and financial security she had enjoyed prior to the Nazi takeover. She died in poverty in 1956 in Locarno, Switzerland.

By comparison, in 1934, twenty year-old Helma Huffschmid began working as a volunteer at the *Völkische Beobachter* – the party's official paper – during her semester break from university. Huffschmid enjoyed her first journalistic experience: “At the time, I did not have any journalistic ambition,” she remembered, “but a position with the paper was the most comfortable because of the freedom the profession offered.”<sup>31</sup> One of the hallmarks of the Nazi period was that the persecution of certain groups in the population dovetailed with others' perceptions of increased freedom and privilege. Since journalists functioned as a link between the regime and the German population, the field's

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<sup>29</sup> Sitter, “*Die eine Hälfte vergißt man(n) leicht!*,” 226. At the beginning of 1941 there were 1400 women journalists working in Germany, approximately half of them in Berlin.

<sup>30</sup> Irene Below and Ruth Oelze, *Lucy von Jacobi: Journalistin* (Munich: Richard Boorberg, 2009), 15. When Jacobi began her journalism career in 1928 she was one of the first women to work for the famous Ullstein-Verlag.

<sup>31</sup> Annette Lehmann, Helma Huffschmid interview, *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde*, “*Wir waren ja die Trümmerfrauen diesem Beruf*,” ed., Lissi Klaus (Zurich; Dortmund: eFeF, 1993), 40.

willingness to abandon Jewish colleagues helped to set the public tone for wider persecution of German Jews.<sup>32</sup>

### “Professionalizing” the Press, 1933-1934

With the purging of the press moving ahead rapidly in 1933 and 1934, officials shifted their focus to journalistic training for young men and women to ensure that those filling the positions of the purged would be not only racially suitable but also ideologically apt. The regime viewed a new cohort of Nazi-trained journalists as the primary vehicle through which it could re-socialize the public; thus the steps to shape a young journalist were an important aspect of creating a new Nazi press. Throughout the course of the Third Reich, the regime continued to ban papers and dismiss journalists who fell out of favour; but in order to influence the *Volksgemeinschaft*, it recognized that these individuals would have to be replaced with younger journalists, who were at least ostensibly well-trained in the Nazi worldview and its approach to journalism.<sup>33</sup>

During the Weimar Republic, the journalism profession had been largely unregulated, and mandatory guidelines for the training of journalists did not exist for men or women.<sup>34</sup> A similar situation prevailed in Britain, where efforts to establish and

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<sup>32</sup> Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 59. Friedländer makes this argument with regard to elite groups in general, including doctors, lawyers and artists.

<sup>33</sup> Wolf Meyer-Christian, “Die Erziehung des Schriftleiter-Nachwuchses,” *Deutsche Presse*, 29 September 1934. Wolf Meyer-Christian was born in 1902 and became a member of the Nazi party in March 1928. He began his journalism career as a political reporter at the *Hamburger Tageblatt*, one of the first party papers. There he met and became close friends with the *Reichsschulungsleiter*, Hans Schwarz van Berk.

<sup>34</sup> Wolfgang Müsse, *Die Reichspresseschule: Journalisten für die Diktatur? Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Sauer, 1995), 76. Because the profession viewed and marketed itself as a free and liberal profession, many who wished to enter the field, and often those within the press, did not want to be restricted by entry guidelines, education and training requirements or exams.



monitor professional standards remained informal until after the Second World War.<sup>35</sup> The concept of professionalizing the press was not specific to Nazi Germany. Indeed, by the late nineteenth century in the United States there were numerous calls to modernize journalism by establishing professional requirements similar to those within the fields of law and medicine. This trend was due in part to the growth of newspapers, and universities began to expand their curricula beyond the traditional liberal arts area. The idea of practical education grew, and the first full-fledged journalism school opened at the University of Missouri in 1908.<sup>36</sup> In Germany, the field did make some advancement towards offering educational programs for would-be-journalists: the German Institute for Journalism (*Deutsches Institut für Zeitungswissenschaft*) was founded in the early 1920s and endeavoured to teach democratic and pluralistic-oriented journalism. A few years later, *Zeitungswissenschaft* (Journalism studies) was added to the curriculum of a handful of German universities, including Berlin and later Munich. Yet no compulsory training program existed.

Hitler and Goebbels capitalized on the chaotic and overcrowded state of the field to implement measures designed primarily to control and monitor the press and those within it. Press authorities presented their measures to control the media as an opportunity for a new generation to gain a foothold and succeed in the field. In a 1934 article in the *Deutsche Presse*, Dr. Wolf Meyer-Christian, the future head of the Reich Press School, stated that the current journalist cohort could not be relied on to communicate the National Socialist message:

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<sup>35</sup> Deborah Chambers, Carole Flemming, Linda Steiner, *Women and Journalism* (London: Routledge, 2004), 58.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

We know that the journalistic milieu is still largely determined by a generation of [previously] approved journalists. I would like to acknowledge that among these professionals there are many who have dedicated themselves honestly and earnestly to the National Socialist idea. Still, we cannot look past the fact that the attitude of many German newspapers toward the new state is still dominated by the perspective of the old police state. They have conformed, but only reservedly. Where is the guarantee that this press would not fail when put to the first psychological or moral test? The answer is the up-and-coming generation of journalists. It is a generational issue that we have to solve.<sup>37</sup>

Nazi press communications claimed that a new world of opportunity awaited young journalist hopefuls. Of course, with these opportunities came stipulations. The party made clear that whether male or female, a journalist's primary task was to communicate National Socialist ideals and strengthen the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The regime took pains to stress that the nature of journalism had dramatically changed; journalists held a critical leadership role within the Nazi state and belonged to an elite *Kameradschaft*. The professional guide, "Der Schriftleiter", read as follows:

the nature of the work and the role of the journalist in the new Germany are markedly different than before the seizure of power. At that time, the journalist applied his personality and talent in the interests of specific groups. Today his work has a higher calling: it will be applied, in all aspects, big or small, to the service of the National Socialist state and the national community.<sup>38</sup>

Wilhelm Weiss and other leading figures in the German press declared that women too would benefit from professional changes. In a 1936 speech to a gathering of women journalists in Berlin, Weiss assured women that they would play a larger role in the press than ever before. Weiss spoke of the need for women's involvement in the very public field of the media and encouraged women to view journalism as a proper, viable

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<sup>37</sup> Meyer-Christian, "Die Erziehung," *Deutsche Presse*, 29 September 1934.

<sup>38</sup> Akademisches Auskunftsamt (AAA), Schriftleiter, 1 January 1938, BAB, R103/125, 18.

profession requiring interest, capability, and commitment, not simply as a job to pay the bills.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Editors Law**

The 1933 Editors Law introduced conditions that would now be required of all accredited journalists and transformed the nature and organization of the profession. The law specified that one could only become a journalist if one possessed German citizenship; had not lost their citizenship, political rights or the right to hold a public office; had proof of “Aryan” ancestry and/or did not have a “non-Aryan” spouse; was at least twenty-one years old; was considered legally competent (*geschäftsfähig*); was trained and accredited in the profession; and had acquired the skills necessary for the task of exerting intellectual influence on the population.<sup>40</sup> The law also classified journalists into three categories within the overall professional registrar (*Berufsliste*): List A was for journalists who were authorized to work in any field, B was for those allowed only to work in a specific area (*Fachgebiet*), and C was for journalists in training.

The decree made no open distinction with regard to gender, class, education or even party membership for journalists and journalism candidates. In this respect, the press (officially) remained an accessible, flexible, and open profession. In 1938, Josephine Trampler-Steiner, a young doctoral candidate studying journalism (*Zeitungswissenschaft*) under famed journalist and founder of the program, Professor Emil Dovifat, wrote a dissertation that discussed the history of German women’s

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<sup>39</sup> Wilhelm Weiss, “Die Frau im Schriftleiter Beruf,” *Deutsche Presse*, 7 March 1936, 118.

<sup>40</sup> See “Das Schriftleitergesetz,” *Zeitungs-Verlag*, 7 October 1933, Nr. 40, 649 and Memo, RDP, Auszug aus dem Schriftleitergesetz, 12 April 1944, BAB, R103/25. Press authorities issued constant reminders to the Regional Press Associations to ensure that they collected complete documentation for all active journalists.

relationship with the press. Trampler-Steiner praised the Editors Law as a milestone of progress for women in the field: those who were entered in the *Berufsliste* were under the law's protection, which, in principle, offered women the same professional opportunities as men.<sup>41</sup> The Reich Press Association often emphasized this point in its communication with young women enquiring about entering the profession.<sup>42</sup> In response to journalist candidate Jutta Bourcevet's inquiry about pursuing a career, the Press Association confirmed that the law did not differentiate between male and female journalists. The Nazi Editors Law regulated, controlled and racialized the field, but the concept of an accessible profession, regardless of one's gender, remained consistent with perceptions concerning the press during the Weimar years.

### **Building a New, National Socialist Cohort**

The press authorities outlined the following steps necessary to become an accredited journalist: completion of an initial aptitude test to determine one's professional suitability (primarily *Weltanschauung*); completion of a full-time, minimum one-year internship at a German daily newspaper, magazine, periodical or news bureau with an additional six months required at a weekly paper and—the jewel atop the Nazi training plan—application, attendance and graduation from the new Reich Press School (*Reichspresseschule*).<sup>43</sup>

In theory, there was little gender distinction with regard to the established training program. In his 1935 study *Die Frau im Journalismus*, Dr. Adolf Dresler, lecturer at the

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<sup>41</sup> Josephine Trampler-Steiner, *Die Frau als Publizistin und Leserin: Deutsche Zeitschriften von und für Frauen* (Freiburg: Bergern, 1938, PhD Dissertation), 65.

<sup>42</sup> Memo, RDP, 20 June 1944, BAB, R103/25.

<sup>43</sup> Women and men also trained as photojournalists (*Bildberichterstatter*).

*Zeitungswissenschaftlichen* Institute at Munich University, praised the Nazi reorganization of the press, noting that “now female journalists would have the same education as the male journalists.”<sup>44</sup> Dresler’s writing suggests that esteemed members of the field supported the equality of training for male and female would-be-journalists. In reality, however, education and training for prospective male and female journalists were similar but also different.

### **Opportunity, *Erlebnis* and Camaraderie: The *Reichspresseschule*, 1935-1939**

In 1936, Else Günther, a thirty-year-old journalist-in-training, published an article praising her experiences at the Reich Press School. Günther assured potential female students that although they would make up only a small number of school attendees, they would not feel excluded. Rather, they would become an integral part of a close-knit, select community. She described how students participated in morning sports, attended lectures, saw films, visited theatres and enjoyed evenings in the pub so that “they could take something home with them”—knowledge and an enjoyable experience.<sup>45</sup> Günther’s text highlights important aspects of the school’s curriculum and approach to journalistic education: the training of young journalists was regimented and focused both on bodies and minds. It revolved around creating a comradeship based on race, the notion of elitism, shared physical training and ideological indoctrination. The school’s leaders used culture and fun as a vehicle to fulfill the school’s political mandate to build loyalty and camaraderie amongst the would-be-journalists.

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<sup>44</sup> Adolf Dresler, *Die Frau im Journalismus* (Munich: Knorr & Hirth, 1936), 12.

<sup>45</sup> Else Günther, “‘Sieben zu Siebzig’ Jungschriftleiterinnen in der Gemeinschaft der Reichspresseschule,” *Deutsche Presse*, 7 March 1936, 432. The single, Berlin-based Günther was a member of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts. She had not joined the party, although she was a member of the German Labour Front (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront*) and the Nazi League of German Women.

Significantly fewer female candidates than male had the opportunity to attend the Reich Press School. This fact was not based on a quota but rather on general discrimination. In 1936, women made up approximately 10 percent of press school attendees. This figure was almost double the percentage of women already active in the press at this point and the number of women journalists attending the school grew throughout the late thirties. By early 1939 it reached 25 percent.<sup>46</sup> By comparison, the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism in the United States maintained a 10 percent quota on women students until 1968.<sup>47</sup>

The school opened in January 1935 and closed in October 1939 due to the war.<sup>48</sup> Hans Schwarz van Berk, a well-known journalist, close associate of Goebbels, and the *Reichsschulungsleiter* was instrumental in the school's planning. In his 1935 article in the journal *Der Deutsche Student*, Schwarz van Berk emphasized that the objective of the press school was not only to shift those not "useable" into other professions, but also to ensure that the useable talent was directed to the right position. He stressed the need for young brainpower and promised that the school would refresh the journalistic field, which up to this point had been too influenced by private agendas.<sup>49</sup>

The courses took place in three-month increments, and prior to acceptance to the school, students had to pass a five-hour written test.<sup>50</sup> The candidate's completed exam, a *Wochenbericht*, a reference from their editor, and recommendations from the head of the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. In 1938, twenty-five female journalists completed this course. Sitter, *Die eine Hälfte vergißt man(n) leicht!*, 219.

<sup>47</sup> Chambers, Flemming and Steiner, *Women and Journalism*, 56.

<sup>48</sup> See Müsse, *Die Reichspreseschule: Journalisten für die Diktatur*. Over the course of its existence, the school had various instructors with different educational approaches, which meant that the training program varied somewhat over the years.

<sup>49</sup> Hans Schwarz von Berk, "Zeitungs-Studenten," *Der Deutsche Student*, June 1935, 363.

<sup>50</sup> Else Boger-Eichler, *Die Schriftleiterin* (Berlin: Akademisches Auskunftsamt der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1939), 12. Candidates chose a theme from the list of prescribed topics and had two hours to write an essay and a further three hours to answer the standard list of questions.

Regional Press Association were sent to the directors of the press school, and students received their acceptance or rejection directly from Wilhelm Weiss.<sup>51</sup> Kardorff and her female co-volunteer at the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* both failed their first attempt at the exam and had to spend another three months as volunteers before attending the school in summer 1939. This situation suited her fine, Kardorff noted, since, “In the summer the press school is somewhat more bearable than in the winter.”<sup>52</sup> Her implication was that the school would be more fun in the spring. Kardorff’s initial failure also suggests that the press authorities took seriously the knowledge, and more important, the political character of the journalists it accepted to the school. One could complete the entire training program and not fulfil the last, but most critical, step.

Indeed, the school placed far more emphasis on a candidate’s apparent *Weltanschauung*, political reliability, and perceived malleability, than on journalistic skill and ambition, although it also deemed these attributes important. The mandatory requirements for those applying for an instructor position at the school dictated that one must be a member of the NSDAP, a good journalist, a specialist in a particular subject, and possess pedagogical skills and a soldierly appearance.<sup>53</sup> There were no female instructors at the school. In early 1936, Weiss outlined the three categories for the young professionals’ development: journalistic training, character development and political education. Political education included ensuring that students adhered to the Nazi *Weltanschauung*, were well versed in the ins and outs of political journalism, and

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<sup>51</sup> Memo from Wilhelm Weiss to the heads of the Regional Press Associations, Eignungsprüfung für den Besuch der Reichspreseschule, 13 July 1939, BAB, R103/5, Rundschreiben 40. (Note this was a standard memo and was also distributed, for instance, in 1938.)

<sup>52</sup> Letter from Kardorff to Hanna, 20 December 1938, IfZ, ED 348/4.

<sup>53</sup> Memo, RDP, 14 January 1937, BAB, R103/3, Rundschreiben Nr. 6.

understood Nazi press policy.<sup>54</sup> School leaders monitored and critiqued students throughout the course and sent some home before completion when they did not meet standards.

The program was taxing. Kardorff described the months as sometimes depressing, sometimes interesting: “After everything was over, I came home utterly exhausted, as pale, ancient, and ugly as a Sudeten German refugee woman. The last week we only slept on average five hours.”<sup>55</sup> Kardorff wrote these words to a friend in April 1939, only a month after the German invasion of Czechoslovakia and seven months after the annexation of the Czech Sudetenland on the pretext of Czech mistreatment of ethnic Germans in the region. Her reference to a Sudeten German refugee indicates the nature of the political education students received within the press school. It also suggests that the school’s political indoctrination about Germany’s perceived enemy, in this case Czechoslovakia, a country allegedly persecuting ethnic Germans, was at least in part successful.

Students attended lectures in the morning with daily *Ausflüge* (sightseeing trips), including visits to galleries, museums, film screenings and court proceedings organized for the afternoon.<sup>56</sup> The school maintained a close relationship to the Ministry of Propaganda and students were allowed to tour the film studio in Babelsberg and even attend the daily Reich Press Conference.<sup>57</sup> Students were then asked to write of their experiences in practice articles. *Kameradschaftsabende* took place in the pub in the

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<sup>54</sup> Memo from Wilhelm Weiss, RDP, 29 April 1936. BAB, R103/2, Rundschreiben Nr. 32.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from Kardorff to Hanna, 27 April 1939, IfZ, ED 348/4.

<sup>56</sup> Gutachten der Reichspressechule, BAB, April 17, 1939, R55/456.

<sup>57</sup> Fritz Zeirke, “Was treibt die Reichspressechule,” *Deutsche Presse*, 15 May 1937, 225.



evening, and occasionally key figures from government departments or editors from newspapers were invited so the students had a chance to network.<sup>58</sup>

School officials placed a particularly strong emphasis on the attendees' cultural experiences and social life. This aspect particularly pleased candidates because it introduced an element of privilege, fun, and continuity into the Nazi school, despite the ideological saturation. The notion and importance of cultural education or *Bildung* had long roots in Germany. The school's focus on cultural experiences helped to normalize the school for those, such as Kardorff, who may not have been reconciled with Nazi ideology.<sup>59</sup> Goebbels ensured that students could attend the theatre at reduced prices—a policy that impressed both sophisticated urban students, as well as candidates from smaller towns and the countryside.<sup>60</sup> The Press Association and the school's directors chose Berlin because it placed the students directly in the middle of the Reich's political and cultural life.<sup>61</sup>

The school used incentives to motivate and build loyalty amongst the trainees. At the end of each course the most successful candidates took part in a trip to reward them for their hard work and further their journalistic training. One such group spent two weeks at the World's Fair in Paris and another traveled to Danzig to study Germany's relationship with Eastern Europe (*Ostfragen*). The topics of Danzig and the so-called Polish Corridor were focal points of the regime's nationalist propaganda concerning the need to overturn the Treaty of Versailles, which had redrawn Germany's borders to

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<sup>58</sup> Müsse, *Die Reichspreseschule*, 201.

<sup>59</sup> For a discussion on culture and "Bildung" in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, see Jennifer Jenkins, *Provincial Modernity: Local Culture & Liberal Politics in Fin-de-Siecle Hamburg* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2003). See also Rolf Kaiser and Hermann Loddenkemper, *Nationalsozialismus: totale Manipulation in der beruflichen Bildung?* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1980).

<sup>60</sup> Müsse, *The Reichspreseschule*, 199.

<sup>61</sup> Meyer-Christian, "Die Erziehung," *Deutsche Presse*, 29 September 1934.

benefit the newly (re) created Poland at the end of World War I. They also connected to the party's assertion that Germany was threatened geopolitically and militarily due to the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazi government focused on Poland as a particular threat.<sup>62</sup> Both of these elements fed into Hitler's justification for the later invasion of Poland. The trip to Danzig represented a perk and also an element of ideological training for the students.

Such trips were not only about exploring the political questions students would later address as accredited journalists but also provided opportunities for bonding and fun. Leo Leixner, who attended the school in 1937, raved about the days spent in Pomerania with ten of his fellow students at the end of his course. Although they explored the political problems of the region, Leixner and his companions also enjoyed the adventure, the countryside, the people, and especially the food and drink.<sup>63</sup>

The press school sought to foster a sense of camaraderie and professional elitism amongst the attendees. In his summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the first course in 1935, the school's director, Wolf Meyer-Christian emphasized that the pedagogical purpose of the school was to develop a compulsion for community building amongst all participants and "foster a coexistence based on solidarity."<sup>64</sup> The school's April 1936 report demonstrates the importance the school administration placed on team spirit by praising Rolf Gödel as one of the school's first-rate students due to his "outstanding camaraderie."<sup>65</sup> The regime stressed this element to influence a trainee's adherence to

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<sup>62</sup> See Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 4.

<sup>63</sup> Leo Leixner, "Bekannt zurück aus Hinterpommern: Eine Studienfahrt der Reichspreseschule," *Deutsche Presse*, 1937, Nr. 24, 378. Leixner noted that most of the insights and admiration he and his fellow students developed about Pomerania came through the stomach.

<sup>64</sup> Meyer-Christian, "Der erste Kursus der RPS," *Deutsche Presse*, 20 April 1935.

<sup>65</sup> Gutachten der Reichspreseschule, 8 August 1939, BAB, R55/456, 55. Gödel was a student at the Press School in summer 1939.

Nazi ideology and build a sense of loyalty to the regime by providing him or her with the idea that he or she was part of a select and important group within the state.<sup>66</sup> The notion of community was a critical element of Nazi ideology and was based just as much on inclusion as it was on exclusion. The ideal of the national community for instance, depended on “Aryan” Germans believing themselves to be racial comrades in contrast to the exclusion of Jews and “asocials”.<sup>67</sup>

Although the school’s leaders promoted the ideal of press *Kameradschaft*, there were aspects of training that still differentiated male and female journalists’ roles in this community. The school’s leaders acknowledged and noted that women could face drawbacks with regard to socializing because they were in the minority.<sup>68</sup> Although there was a deliberate militaristic tone woven into the entire school experience, the instructors embedded in a male candidate’s training more overt, discipline-oriented exercises. During the initial training phase, men and women were separated, and male candidates had to complete one to two weeks of training at a paramilitary camp where instructors, who believed in an elitist, collective education (*Gemeinschaftserziehung*), would endeavour to extinguish individualistic inclinations through practices such as sport, roll call and marching in step.<sup>69</sup> A so-called *Kamaradschaftsführer* led these activities. An SA man, Otto Leo von Tidemann, held the first post and was likely selected due to his claims that he possessed comprehensive military and military sports experience.<sup>70</sup> The next

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<sup>66</sup> Memo from Wilhelm Weiss, RDP, 29 April 1936, BAB, R103/2, Rundschreiben Nr. 32.

<sup>67</sup> Fritzsche, *Life and Death*, 15. The party created a number of institutions and organizations based on this concept, including the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel* or BDM) and Hitler Youth (*Hitler Jugend*). Fritzsche demonstrates that the concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* achieved broad legitimacy in Germany.

<sup>68</sup> Meyer-Christian, “Der erste Kursus,” *Deutsche Presse*, 20 April 1935.

<sup>69</sup> Heinrich Boltze, “Die Reichspresseschule—ein Sieb für den Nachwuchs,” *Deutsche Presse*, 10 August 1935, 382.

<sup>70</sup> Müsse, *Die Reichspresseschule*, 192.

*Kamaradschaftsführer*, Gerhart Schwager, belonged to the SS, which further militarized the proceedings and lent a sense of elitism to the experience.

The school established no comparable camp for women, perhaps because it viewed such explicit paramilitary training, at least prior to the war, as too far removed from National Socialist language concerning gender. Another possibility is that, if war did break out, women were not expected to be sent to the front. Therefore, there was no need for such training. Instead, as part of their ideological indoctrination, before attending the press school female candidates spent eight days in the Press and Propaganda Department of the League of German Women learning its functions and activities.<sup>71</sup> In 1938, the school created the position of *Kameradschaftsleiterin*, whose role was to advise female students as well as monitor those with a questionable outlook toward Nazism. The school viewed this role as important because it was intended to serve young women preparing for a critical role in service to the state.<sup>72</sup>

Twenty-four-year-old Ruth von Kondratowicz was the first to hold the position. Kondratowicz embodied a diversity of experience in acceptable women's areas that the school's leaders deemed appropriate for a female journalist. In 1934 she completed her *Abitur* (high school diploma) in Home Economics and joined the League of German Women; in 1936, she participated in English and French language courses, studied stenography, typing, fashion, gymnastics and dance, and began her journalistic training; she completed her volunteer internship in 1937 at the weekly publication the *Landesbauernschaft Schlesien* and attended the press school. In December 1937, she became an accredited journalist in *Kunstbetrachtung* (art commentator) a field in which

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<sup>71</sup> Boger-Eichler, *Die Schriftleiterin*, 12.

<sup>72</sup> Karolina Seyboth Lebenslauf, undated, BAB, R103/197.

press authorities encouraged women's involvement.<sup>73</sup> The support given by a *Kamaradschaftleiterin* was short-lived—the school closed two years later—but the establishment of such a position demonstrates that the regime needed and wanted women's involvement in the school and the press.

The school's message to male and female students about a journalist's position and responsibility in German society was similar in content, if not always in delivery. After the initial split training period, men and women came together at the Berlin villa that housed the school to begin their classroom-based training. The school functioned like a boarding school. Officials continued to stress discipline and strictly regulated the students' hours—time was designated for meals, afternoon rest and lights out. The overt militant aspects of men's initial camp experience were toned down, but the school still had a militaristic bent. Despite the fact that the curriculum officially spared women from overt military training, it did not entirely remove women from a militarized experience. At the villa, both men and women participated in mandatory early morning military-oriented exercise that included throwing wooden grenades.<sup>74</sup> This duality demonstrates that professional inclusion and exclusion of women journalist candidates were not mutually exclusive. Gender-delineated training was malleable in order to accommodate the regime's desire for a unified and politicized National Socialist press corps.

The notion of inclusion was perhaps even more important for women than for men. Indeed, the purpose of Else Günther's article on her experience at the school was to provide a picture of women's worries, expectations, and experiences as they embarked on the final step in their journalistic training. According to Günther, foremost in a woman's

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<sup>73</sup> Ruth v Kondratowicz Personalnachweis and Personalfragebogen, 22 October 1938, BAB, R103/187. Kondratowicz was also employed as the secretary of the head of the school.

<sup>74</sup> Sitter, "*Eine Hälfte vergißt man(n) leicht!*," 232.

mind before attending the school was how her relationship with the male cohort would develop and function. How would she measure up to and position herself in relation to the male journalists? “The one thing we knew for certain,” Günther wrote, “was that there were sure to be more ‘*Berufskameraden*’ than ‘*Berufskameradinnen*’ (male students than female students.)” In Günther’s cohort this ratio was “Seven to Seventy!”<sup>75</sup> Regardless of whether press authorities commissioned Günther’s article, the fact that it was published suggests that the regime strove to address and alleviate young women’s concerns about the challenges they would face and ease their entry into the profession.

Günther’s article shows that press officials and women viewed—indeed, women had to view—professional training through the lens of gender. On the one hand, the fact that the regime and women themselves emphasized women’s inclusion suggests that gender affected women’s involvement and acceptance into the *Kamaradschaft* of the press. Male journalists did not need to stress their inclusion, nor did the regime. On the other hand, the school integrated women into the tight-knit group of journalist candidates. Günther described a warm, close relationship with male colleagues, which she attributed to their common experiences at the school:

It became an increasingly cordial relationship and we girls—girls typically have much less opportunity for professional camaraderie and community than boys—took the trouble not to disturb but rather to insert ourselves into this community. And so we participated in early morning sports in the nearby Grunewald, ate together, listened to our colleagues’ papers and presented in front of our male and female ‘comrades.’<sup>76</sup>

For women, who had less access to professional support in the form of colleagues and associations, the press school experience could be particularly inspiring. Günther stressed: “The Press School was particularly special for women since they did not often

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<sup>75</sup> Günther, “Sieben zu Siebzig,” *Deutsche Presse*, 7 March 1936, 432.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

have the opportunity to be together with other female journalists day by day. Although in large cities like Berlin, women journalists had some opportunity for intellectual exchange, women at provincial papers were often “allein auf weiter Flur”.<sup>77</sup> Admission to and attendance at the school offered women a support system and networking opportunities as well as a heightened sense of joining an elite and privileged group.

The administration’s efforts to foster a sense of importance, camaraderie and fun amongst the students, as well as the proffered opportunities to network with prominent individuals in the field and explore Berlin’s cultural life, paid off for the regime. For Leo Leixner, his trip to Pomerania was a highlight of his time at the school.<sup>78</sup> “It was not surprising that we said goodbye with a heavy heart,” wrote Günther. “It was only ten weeks and yet what rich weeks they were for us because they trained us not only to become full-fledged journalists but also full-fledged people.”<sup>79</sup>

### **Education, Exams and Internships: Limitations, Possibilities, Support and Strategies, 1935-1945**

As press officials developed the training plan for journalists, they intended that the Reich Press School would be the most important and last step in the creation of a new press. However, a candidate first had to secure an apprenticeship at an approved newspaper and pass an aptitude test. At this stage, a journalist hopeful became an official “Journalist in Training,” was entered into the professional registrar, and could begin their yearlong internship. The Press Association believed that the school would be more likely to fulfil its task if the young professionals attending it were more uniform and thoroughly

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Leixner, “Bekannt zurück aus Hinterpommern,” *Deutsche Presse*, 1937, Nr. 24, 378.

<sup>79</sup> Günther, “Sieben zu Siebzig,” *Deutsche Presse*, 7 March 1936, 432.

screened. For this purpose, the school administration established the entry exam intended to weed out those they deemed not suited or malleable enough for the profession. When the Press School closed in 1939, journalist trainees wrote a final exam before they became accredited journalists. Similar practices took place in the cultural arena. The Theatre Chamber, for instance, implemented a system of examinations to determine priority for placement of newcomers in the field.<sup>80</sup>

In theory, there was no distinction between men and women for the exams and internship training, but gender restrictions and differentiations also affected women during this phase of their training. Prior to the war, women experienced severe difficulties finding an internship opportunity and even when they did, they were often restricted to small tasks, local news, or women's pages. Still, when a female candidate had secured a suitable apprenticeship and had the opportunity to write the press entrance exam, the committee tested and treated her in the same manner as her male counterparts: all candidates regardless of sex were expected to be conversant in the Nazi view of politics, history, geography, culture and current affairs. These seeming inconsistencies were typical of the Nazi approach to the training of female journalistic candidates. They allowed the regime space to create the politicized media cohort it desired without appearing to compromise its rhetoric on women's place and use in the German community—women would be a part of the press but not in high enough numbers that they would be particularly visible or prominent.

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<sup>80</sup> Steinweis, "The Professional, Social, and Economic Dimensions of Nazi Cultural Policy," 448.



### To Educate or Not to Educate

The field did not require prospective journalists to complete an *Abitur* or university degree in order to be admitted to the profession, and the Nazis presented the profession as one that offered equality to all. An important aspect of Nazi ideology was its promotion of an increased sense, if not always reality, of social equality amongst Germans.<sup>81</sup> Without formal barriers to entry, journalism was a viable profession for women who were traditionally disadvantaged when it came to the ability to complete their schooling and pursue a secondary education. Indeed, press officials made it clear that an education did not guarantee career success. Instead they emphasized the idea of innate talent, in other words a biological calling to the elite journalistic profession, which in turn aligned with Nazi race theory about so-called inferior races and peoples.

The 1939 guide for female journalists, *Die Schriftleiterin*, advised: “Female high school graduates with an *Abitur* who do not possess any natural journalistic talent in combination with the required traits of character, mind and spirit, should be discouraged from choosing a journalism career.”<sup>82</sup> This belief applied to both sexes. In Britain, the field also operated on the premise that journalists were born and not made—a belief that rendered a high level of education unnecessary.<sup>83</sup> In spite of this rhetoric on the importance of innate talent as opposed to formal scholarly training, the Press Association preferred and encouraged candidates, male or female, to obtain as extensive an education as possible. Weiss noted:

I have the occasion to point out that the *Abitur* is not a prerequisite for the entrance exam, even if it is desirable that the applicants without an *Abitur* or equivalent stay away from the profession. However, in the interests of the

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<sup>81</sup> Fritzsche, *Life and Death*, 61.

<sup>82</sup> Boger-Eichler, *Die Schriftleiterin*, 14.

<sup>83</sup> Chambers, Fleming, Steiner, *Women and Journalism*, 58.

profession's prestige... a high level of education must be required. The [press] entrance exam must prevent those with insufficient talent from entering the profession. But it is not possible from the outset to reject someone because he does not have an *Abitur*."<sup>84</sup>

Although incomplete archival records – especially in terms of information on education levels of journalists – make definitive conclusions difficult, documentation on 42 female journalists working between 1933 and 1939, indicates that 18 (43 percent) received their *Abitur* or equivalent.<sup>85</sup> Journalism was open to all, but middle-class women with access to education had a better chance to enter the field.

In practice, press officials valued and emphasized the elitism of the field over equality of entry, signaling the importance of the profession to the regime. In a 1941 memo to all Regional Associations, Weiss expressed his concern about ongoing understatements concerning the education and professional requirements for journalist candidates. He drew attention to two alarming examples: a professional advisor had told female *Abitur* candidates that he strongly advised against formal study if they wanted a journalism career—it was a fully un-academic career for which study was unnecessary; and, based on promotional material, a mother, whose son was deemed unsuited to academic study believed that he would make an excellent journalist. These examples, wrote Weiss, proved that the wrong perceptions prevailed about the nature, demands and importance of the profession. Since the press organization's official position was that formal education was neither (legally) mandatory nor absolutely necessary, Weiss

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<sup>84</sup> Memo, RDP, Schulvorbildung der Schriftleiteranwärter, 28 June 1943, BAB, R103/7, Rundschreiben Nr. 18.

<sup>85</sup> Statistics compiled from RDP, BAB, R103, R34 and R55. Of this group, ten (24%) went on to attend university. Eight of these women (19%) were already practicing journalism during the Weimar years.

demanded that, in the interests of the profession's reputation, they must emphasize that only the best and most capable journalists were accepted in the field.<sup>86</sup>

Not only did Weiss seek to change the culture of German journalism but also to shift cultural perceptions of the profession amongst the broader public. Dr. Gertrud Hoffman, head of the Professional Registrar of the German Press Association during the war, answered a young woman's enquiry about professional requirements: "Although it was true," she noted, "that the budding journalist is not required to complete a formal education, in practice many employers hire only those who have obtained a high school diploma in order to ensure that the candidate has achieved a certain level of education. Moreover, a journalist-in-training without a thorough and varied knowledge base—best achieved through formal education—was not capable of meeting the demands of the profession."<sup>87</sup>

For all journalism hopefuls with the opportunity and means to attend university, press officials clearly outlined their preferred course of study.<sup>88</sup> Although it counselled men and women on the importance of receiving a broad education, it advised only male students that history and political science should form the backbone of their studies, especially if they intended careers as political correspondents.<sup>89</sup> It directed young women toward culture (art, music, dance, literature), history, languages, German literature and,

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<sup>86</sup> Memo, RDP, 8 February 1941, BAB, R103/5, Rundschreiben Nr. 5.

<sup>87</sup> Memo from Gertrud Hoffmann to Jutta Bourcevent, RDP, BAB, June 30 1944, R103/25.

<sup>88</sup> Although the regime made early attempts to restrict numbers of female university students, by the mid-1930s it grew increasingly anxious to recruit women, even in areas where they had not traditionally been significantly represented. In 1934, women represented 16 percent of university students—the same figure as 1929. This percentage later declined, to the regime's dismay. In early 1940, 35 percent of all students were women; in some disciplines they made up the majority. See Jill Stephenson, "Women and the Professions in Germany, 1900-1945" in *German Professions, 1800-1950*, eds., Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad H. Jarausch (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 277.

<sup>89</sup> Helmut Sündermann, *Der Weg zum Deutschen Journalismus: Hinweise für die Berufswahl junger Nationalsozialisten* (Munich; Berlin: Franz Eher, 1938), 17. Sündermann also advised men to consider philosophy, law and sociology.

occasionally, economics. In this way, women would have the cultural, intellectual, economic and technical requirements for a press career in areas where the regime wanted to mobilize the talent of women.

Ideally, prospective journalists would combine their academic studies with a practical journalism program. Although this course of study did not qualify a graduate to become a journalist, it did shorten the mandatory internship period, thereby providing a substantial incentive.<sup>90</sup> As a result, the percentage of female students enrolled in journalism studies grew steadily from Weimar to Nazi Germany: 18.4 percent in 1929 to 28.2 percent in 1939.<sup>91</sup> The rising numbers of female students can be attributed partly to the fact that the regime primarily sought out and encouraged women to take up this field of study.<sup>92</sup> This trend suggests that the Nazi government viewed the journalistic profession as so important that it encouraged women to pursue secondary education in order to be most effective in their role. Gertrud Uhlhorn recalled that when she studied *Zeitungswissenschaft* with Dr. Professor Emil Dovifat in the mid-1930s there were already many women in the program. “Later in the war he had almost only women,” she added: “The men were all drafted.”<sup>93</sup>

### The Entry Exam

The main purpose of the entry exam was to enable the examination committee to assess the applicant’s level of knowledge, talent, political outlook, and most important,

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<sup>90</sup> Letter from the RDP to candidate Gertrud Wedekind, February 1944, BAB, R103/25.

<sup>91</sup> Sitter, “*Die eine Hälfte vergißt man(n) leicht!*,” 218. In her 1938 dissertation, Josephine Trampler-Steiner argued that female students had a special love of *Zeitungswissenschaft* and that in the last few semesters approximately one-third of these students had been women. Trampler-Steiner, *Die Frau als Publizistin und Leserin*, 66. See also Aufklärungsblätter über die akademischen Berufe, Schriftleiter (Journalist, Redakteur) akad.geb. Nach dem Stand vom 1. Januar 1938, BAB, R103/25.

<sup>92</sup> Sitter, “*Die eine Hälfte vergißt man(n) leicht!*,” 218.

<sup>93</sup> Anja Meyer, Gertrud Uhlhorn interview in *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde*, 121.

character.<sup>94</sup> The Press Association outlined strict guidelines for how the initial journalism entrance exam should be conducted: the head of the Regional Press Association, or if this was not possible, a journalist specifically from the party press, would conduct the exams along with an examination committee comprised of at least three qualified journalists; it also encouraged the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Propaganda whenever possible.<sup>95</sup> In 1938, Weiss decreed that the committee must also include a political journalist, suggesting that the importance of a journalist trainee's ability to address political issues increased as the government moved closer to war.<sup>96</sup> The exam was mostly oral. "It should unfold as a lively conversation," Weiss dictated, "rather than a set process of questions and answers." Weiss' stance indicates the malleability of the examinations in order for the press authorities to identify candidates best suited for the National Socialist press rather than those who were simply well informed.

The Press Association declared that participation in the Hitler Youth, League of German Girls or German Women's Association was a requirement—a fact that many journalists who trained during the Third Reich also claimed retrospectively. Ursula Kardorff, who had not belonged to any Nazi-related organization, maintained that prior to her exam, she had quickly acquired membership in the National Socialist People's Welfare Association (*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*). She was the only non-party member at her exam, she stated.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Memo, RDP, 12 October 1936, BAB, R103/2, Rundschreiben Nr. 70. In addition, the committee sought to establish the applicant's National Socialist qualifications and service to the party or one of its affiliated organizations (*Gliederungen*.)

<sup>95</sup> Memo, RDP, 12 October 1936, BAB, R103/2, Rundschreiben Nr. 70.

<sup>96</sup> Memo, RDP, 4 March 1938, BAB, R103/4, Nr. 10.

<sup>97</sup> The documents related to the exams demonstrate that most candidates who sat the test were indeed members of either the party or one of its *Gliederungen* (organizations.)

A candidate's beliefs had to be firmly rooted in a Nazified world-view.

Candidates also had to possess at least minimal knowledge of the party's history and demonstrate familiarity with its most important writing, above all, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. In his book, Hitler repeatedly charged that the press was controlled by Jews who used it as a weapon to undermine the state: "In future days the Jew will certainly continue to raise a mighty uproar in his newspapers if a hand is ever laid on his favourite nest, if an end is put to the mischief of the press and this instrument of education is put into the service of the state and no longer left in the hands of aliens and enemies of the people."<sup>98</sup> Rahms recalled that during her exam in 1938, the first question the committee asked was "Is there anyone here who has not read *Mein Kampf*? Because if so, the examiner stated, it would be pointless to participate in this exam."<sup>99</sup> Although Rahms wrote her memoir decades after the collapse of Nazi Germany, other journalists also stated that *Mein Kampf* was necessary reading in order to pass the exam.

Press policy dictated that women should be channeled toward culture and entertainment. These two areas were in fact the most desired for journalist candidates, male and female alike. Regardless of what field an applicant hoped to work in, the Press Association viewed journalists first and foremost as political employees and accordingly wanted all candidates to be conversant in politics.<sup>100</sup> Questions in the political section of the examination addressed the Anti-Comintern Pact, Nazi social and economic policy, the Geneva Conventions, Marxism versus National Socialism, race, the occupation of the

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<sup>98</sup> Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 246.

<sup>99</sup> Helene Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen: Mein Leben als Journalistin im Dritten Reich* (Bern: Scherz, 1997), 17.

<sup>100</sup> Protokoll über die Schriftleiteranwärter-Prüfung, RDP, 12 March 1944, BAB, R103/94. A 1944 report stated: "As usual, most of the candidates lean toward the cultural or entertainment pages...but their exam answers also indicate that they recognize that the role of journalist is first and foremost political and one must be able to grapple with political issues."

*Ruhrgebiet*, and the history of the “first Reich” (the Holy Roman Empire.) Typical topics concerning Nazi Germany covered the Editors Law, the Reich Chamber of Culture, the Hitler Youth and Alfred Rosenberg. Questions related to culture included art in the east, film, literature and modern art. Finally, topics related to the profession included how one should write for the various pages of a newspaper, including the sport and *Feuilleton* sections, and the importance of photojournalism.<sup>101</sup>

The exam requirements and nature of the questions changed very little prior to and throughout the war with the exception of specific war-related questions.<sup>102</sup> Before the war women made up only a small percentage of those taking the exam. The surviving documents do not allow for a statistical analysis prior to 1939. Kardorff was the only female attendee at her November 1937 exam. In 1938, Helene Rahms was the only woman out of the fourteen candidates at her exam. Yet only two candidates passed—Rahms and one of her male colleagues. If a woman reached the exam stage, an examination committee did not discriminate against her when it came to entering the profession.<sup>103</sup> By 1944, women made up 49.71 percent of journalists in training, indicating that an increasing number of women were admitted to the entrance exam.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, in some of the regions, including the Sudetenland, Bohemia and Moravia, Brandenburg, Danzig West Prussia, Westphalia, Saxony and Silesia, women made up over 50 percent, occasionally close to if not 100 percent of the journalists in training.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> See RDP files, R103/91, 119, 120.

<sup>102</sup> Protokoll der Landesverbandsleiter, 22 March 1943, BAB, R103/127. The surviving documents are fragmentary and most related to exam results are from 1943 and 1944.

<sup>103</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 17.

<sup>104</sup> Statistics compiled from RDP, BAB, R103/234. Out of 342 trainees, 167 were women.

<sup>105</sup> Statistics compiled from RDP, BAB, R103/234.

As men were increasingly conscripted, earlier efforts to recruit women were intensified as the civilian mobilization of women during the war became more crucial.

In 1936, Weiss declared that the committee's task when deciding which candidates passed the exam was to consider "not so much what the candidate did not know but rather whether they were intellectually open-minded and tractable" and if their disposition made them suitable for journalism.<sup>106</sup> It was up to each exam committee to determine the balance required between knowledge, innate talent, and character. Thus, some candidates were admitted to the training program if they possessed the right outlook and could demonstrate that they could fill in any gaps related to their knowledge or understanding of the profession. Edeltraud Schönewald's 1944 exam report noted that she had made a strong impression and seemed very capable and intellectually agile although she still had considerable gaps in knowledge about politics and culture. The committee concluded that she was hardworking and capable of filling in any gaps during her internship: Schönewald passed.<sup>107</sup> Focused on rejuvenating the press, the Press Association preferred younger candidates between the ages of twenty to thirty. But it accepted older individuals if they demonstrated above average talent. Willy Weiss was already forty years old when he passed the entrance exam on 14 April 1943. His committee felt that Weiss, in view of his age and his previous career in the army, would bring the necessary maturity to the role.<sup>108</sup>

Some candidates were allowed to retake the exam but many simply failed outright. Hitler Youth leader Ernst Voges's examination committee concluded in 1943

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<sup>106</sup> Memo, RDP, 12 October 1936, BAB, R103/2, Rundschreiben Nr. 70.

<sup>107</sup> Majunke Lange, Gutachten über die Anwärterin Edeltraud Schönewald, 18 September 1944, BAB, R103/100.

<sup>108</sup> Prüfung Protokoll, 29 April 1943, BAB, R103/99.



that, “he had too many gaps in the necessary knowledge and lacked the necessary maturity for the profession.”<sup>109</sup> Similarly, BDM member Gertrud Kosynwsky’s exam committee recommended that she be advised against pursuing a career in journalism because she lacked knowledge, enough interest in the field, and clarity about what she wanted to do professionally.<sup>110</sup> The demands of wartime did not cause the exam boards to abandon standards or to become more lenient toward those they deemed unqualified.

Officially, press authorities had high expectations and demands with regard to a candidate’s performance both before the war and during. Some candidates later maintained, however, that they had had a hard time taking the exam seriously. This claim could be useful during the occupation as the Allies sought to determine the extent of allegiance individuals exhibited toward the regime. Others described the process as strenuous. In the post-war years, thirty-two year-old Thea Fischer, a successful *Feuilletonistin* during and after the Third Reich, spoke of her fear during her 1936 exam: “What is a collective farm? What is the name of the *Gauleiter* from her city? How many *Kreisleiteren* are there? I thought ‘My God, you won’t pass this exam.’”<sup>111</sup> In the afternoon came “reasonable questions” that Fischer noted she could answer for the most part. According to Fischer, she passed on the condition that she would quickly make up for the gaps in her political knowledge. In her post-war version of events, Fischer’s statement that she lacked political knowledge could serve to demonstrate how she was not entangled with Nazism. Still, her comment that one was allowed to make up for areas in which they lacked knowledge is supported by the archival documents. That Fischer

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<sup>109</sup> Der Prüfungsausschuss des Landesverbandes Westfalen, 11 March 1943, R103/91.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Anja Meyer, Thea Fischer interview, *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde*, 103-104.

passed indicates the committee felt she possessed the appropriate character or outlook for a role in the press.

Kardorff deemed the exam a farce where “journalistic talent did not play a role,” as she wrote to a friend in 1939.<sup>112</sup> According to Kardorff, she had to slog through five hours of abstruse questions, including the need to recite precisely the Führer’s historical words. She believed that she impressed the committee with the supposed passion with which she reeled off the names of the sixteen men who fell during the November 1923 Beer Hall Putsch. She downplayed her attendance at her aristocratic high school and emphasized work at the party paper, *Der Angriff*.<sup>113</sup> Kardorff attributed her success to her ambition, her quick ability to grasp the absurd rules of the game, and the self-confidence with which she answered the questions.<sup>114</sup>

Although contemporary accounts of the exam place a thorough knowledge of Nazi policies and even verbatim quotations of Hitler’s speeches and writing as central to the exam process, post-war recollections by journalists have downplayed this requirement. In her memoir, Helene Rahms alleged that she had simply skimmed *Mein Kampf* on the train the morning of the exam: “I mastered the art of speed reading (*Querlesen*) rather perfectly, made note of a few keywords that lent themselves to quotes and glossed over the gaps in [my] knowledge with bluster.”<sup>115</sup> By invoking the idea of bluster Rahms could distance herself from a close knowledge of or connection to Nazism. But her words also underscored that knowledge of National Socialism was necessary

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<sup>112</sup> Introduction by Peter Hartl in Ursula von Kardorff, *Berliner Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1942 bis 1945* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992), 12.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 17.

during the exam, suggesting that bluffing did not always do the trick.<sup>116</sup> Press authorities questioned men in the same manner as women. In his post-war memoir, Karl Korn, a volunteer at the *Berliner Tageblatt*, wrote that his exam began with the profound question: how many times have you read *Mein Kampf*? Korn, who claimed that he had never read the book, answered that he had read it once. His committee then asked what the “Führer” had to say about the German press. Korn answered with well-known phrases from Hitler’s speeches: the German press must be a *Kampfpresse*. “I was brave enough to say that this too was precisely what I was driving at,” claimed Korn.<sup>117</sup> Like Rahms, Korn suggested that a basic knowledge of Nazism coupled with key terms was enough to pass.

After the Reich Press School closed in October 1939, the Press Association required journalism candidates to write an extensive exam at the end of their internship in order to obtain official accreditation. The two-day final exam had both an oral and a written component. The three-hour written portion consisted of an essay on a particular theme. For instance, four candidates took the Sudetenland Press Association’s 12 October 1943 exam: Candidate Ilse Hanakk wrote on “Europe and the United States: The Changes in Their Relationship from Columbus to Franklin Delano Roosevelt”; Adof Karlas wrote on “The Rise and Fall of the Modern Italian Empire: From Cavour to Badoglio”; and, Rothtraut Vrtel wrote on “The British Empire: Its rise and influence on European development.”<sup>118</sup> In the afternoon of the first day the examination committee took candidates to an exhibition. They were then required to write a short article to demonstrate their practical talent. The oral questions on the second day were broken into sections: For instance, a *Volksgeschichte* question addressed the stages of German empire

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Karl Korn, *Lange Lehrzeit. Ein deutsches Leben* (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1975), 229-231.

<sup>118</sup> Prüfung Protokoll, Landesverband Sudetenland, 12 October 1943, BAB, R103/91.

building from Charles the Great to Adolf Hitler; world history topics included the three divisions of Poland; and political questions included: What were the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles? Who is Quisling? What is wrong with Gandhi? Culture was the longest section and covered romantic writers, philosophers, baroque painters, Wagner and the meaning of *Sturm und Drang*. Additional sections included sport, the press and the Editors Law.<sup>119</sup>

The exam guidelines were strict but the fact that each committee designed its own questions and decided who passed and failed based on its interpretation of each candidate's potential lent the exams a degree of ambiguity and meant that candidates, as long as they had a knowledge of National Socialism, had to figure out where gaps in knowledge were and were not negotiable. This process gave authority to those on the ground to determine who would be able to enter the field. It is difficult to conclude from the fragmentary exam reports how easy it was to pass or fail, although evidence suggests that during the later war years at least, the majority of participants passed. Out of 44 candidates who took the entrance exam between 1942 and 1944, 75 percent passed: 70 percent of the candidates were women, of whom 87 percent passed; 70 percent of the male candidates passed.<sup>120</sup> These same results suggest that women were equally if not more likely to pass the entrance exam than men. Thus, perceived potential and adherence to the Nazi world outlook as opposed to gender and age were the defining factors that allowed candidates formally to begin their journalistic training.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> I have compiled these numbers based on exam reports from RDP files R103/92, R103/127, R103/122, R103/91. 16 October 1942, Berlin: 16 candidates took the exam—11 women and 5 men, 10 women and 3 men passed (R103/91); March 15 1943, in Cologne: 6 candidates took the exam—4 women and 2 men, 3 women and 1 man passed (R103/192); March 19, 1943 in Düsseldorf 4 candidates took the exam: 3 women and 1 man; 1 woman passed (R103/122). March 19, 1944 in Karlsruhe: 9 women and 3 men took the exam, all passed (R104/94); September 18, 1944 in Baden-Westmark: 6 candidates took the exam—4 women and 2 man – all candidates passed (R103/127).

## The Volunteer Year

At the end of her internship, Dora Schmidt's reference from Dr. Theoder Nebelung, the editor of the *Nordhäuser Zeitung* stated:

Amongst the number of journalists that I have trained over the past two decades, Fräulein Dora Schmidt occupies an exceptional position because she began her career as a gifted elite within the German Labour Front. She tackled every job with energy, handled all difficulties with skill, and met all demands. This was true with regard to editing work as well as for reporting in the area of local news.

He went on to praise her professional camaraderie and emphasized that due to her writing skills, he had trusted Schmidt with increasing responsibilities.<sup>121</sup> The editor of the *Südharzer Kurier* where Schmidt completed her training agreed:

Fräulein Schmidt has worked in all departments although her training was primarily in the local and "Heimat" areas of our newspaper. In particular she gained recognition through her reports on the Party's departments and local councils. Schmidt has the essential skills of a journalist and performed wonderfully.<sup>122</sup>

At the end of October 1944, Schmidt wrote the exam to become an accredited journalist. She was the only candidate in the Thuringia-Kurhessen region to pass.<sup>123</sup> Thanks to her positive references, she secured a permanent position at the *Südharzer Kurier*. However, she was restricted to writing for the local news and women's pages. Schmidt's volunteer experience highlights the opportunities and restrictions, inclusions and exclusions women journalists faced during the internship phase of their training. Schmidt wrote primarily in designated women's areas and performed small tasks. Yet she nonetheless obtained a

<sup>121</sup> Dr. Theodor Nebelung Zeugnis, 15 September 1944, BAB, R103/100.

<sup>122</sup> Erwin Reich, Editor of the *Südharzer Kurier*, Ausbildungs-Beurteilung for Dora Schmidt, 14 October 1944, BAB, R103/100. Schmidt moved to the "*Südharzer Kurier*" in April 1943.

<sup>123</sup> Memo from Landesverband Thüringen-Kurhessen to the RDP, 22 November 1944, BAB, R103/100. The number of students taking the final exam at any given time varied. In 1944 there were 42 journalists-in-training in this region but it is not possible from the documents to ascertain how many wrote and passed the exam.

level of responsibility and became an insider though seemingly on the outskirts of the male-dominated *Kamaradschaft* of the press.

From 1935 to 1939, promotional material, newspaper articles, and personal communication to and from the Press Association recognized and spoke unapologetically of the challenges young women faced as they attempted to establish a foothold in the field. Securing an internship was the biggest obstacle a woman encountered at this early stage.<sup>124</sup> Yet the profession also offered women support and encouragement, particularly toward the end of the 1930s. At the beginning of 1939, Erika Kirmsee, head of the League of German Women's Press and Propaganda Department, announced that in agreement with the NSDAP Press Department, the league had established a professional office (*Nachwuchsstelle*) to advise and assist talented women interested in journalism to enter into the profession with as little difficulty as possible.<sup>125</sup> The professional guide for female journalist hopefuls acknowledged the difficulties women faced but advised, "anyone who trusts enough in her talent and enthusiasm and possesses the will to meet such challenges head on will progress in her career."<sup>126</sup>

The guide implied that the profession required (and desired) women able to assert agency within the field and use the system to work for themselves. In their post-war presentations of their careers, some women emphasized how they secured their desired positions due to initiative, tenacity, and inventiveness, and not the entreaties of the Nazi state. The nature of the regime's communication toward female journalist hopefuls

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<sup>124</sup> Aufklärungsblätter über die akademischen Berufe, Schriftleiter (Journalist, Redakteur) akad. Geb, (Leipzig: Sächsisches Akademisches Auskunftsam für Studien und Berufsfragen, der Landesstelle für Akademische Berufsberatung: 1938), BAB, R103/25. The 1938 general guide for all journalists included a paragraph that stated, "For women, the profession is accessible. However, it is very difficult, particularly in the dailies, to establish a foothold and get ahead."

<sup>125</sup> Erika Kirmsee, Reichsfrauenführung, Presse-Propaganda Hauptabteilung, 12 January 1939, BAB, NS 44/46, Rundschreiben Nr. F 8/39.

<sup>126</sup> Boger-Eichler, *Die Schriftleiterin*, 14. An earlier version of *Die Schriftleiterin* was published in 1936.

suggests there was some truth to the women's words. In 1933-34, twenty-year-old Gertrud Uhlhorn began her apprenticeship at the small *Badische Residenz-Anzeiger* in Karlsruhe.<sup>127</sup> Uhlhorn noted that she had followed the advice of her godmother, a news reporter in Karlsruhe, who counselled her to avoid a large daily where she would not be on the radar but rather select a small paper where she would be thoroughly trained.<sup>128</sup> At the *Badische Residenz-Anzeiger*, Uhlhorn shared an office with the paper's three employees, who were all former reporters on the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the most respected paper in Germany. Uhlhorn claimed she was trained in all areas and aspects of journalism and noted that she even laid out the women's pages. Her approach, she maintained, was to take every risk possible, and by doing so she established a successful career in *Feuilleton*.

Felicitas Kapteina characterized her professional start during the war as brave and atypical. She simply approached the local news reporter and stated that she wanted to be a journalist. Together they attended an event. "You write and I'll write and together we'll decide whose is better," he challenged.<sup>129</sup> There is no way to determine whether this incident actually took place, but Kapteina's description of the beginning of her career aligns with that of other successful female journalists who began their careers during the Third Reich. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann credited her professional start to her ambition and tenacity. After completing her *Abitur* in 1935, the twenty-two-year-old Neumann claimed that she slipped into a lecture by the well-known professor of journalism studies, Emil Dovifat: "Breathless, I listened to how he interpreted a cartoon on the screen. A new

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<sup>127</sup> Anja Meyer, Gertrud Uhlhorn interview, *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde*, 120.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Alexa Godbersen, Felicitas Kapteina interview, *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde*, 60. Kapteina stated: "I went to the local paper [whose headquarters were in Cologne] and said to the reporter that I would really like to become a journalist."

world!” Noelle-Neumann made a quick decision to approach the famous professor and expressed her desire to complete her doctoral work and become a journalist. She asked if she could send him some manuscripts to review. A few days later, she claimed, he replied that he thought she had good prospects in the field.<sup>130</sup> Noelle-Neumann began to study journalism and history in Königsberg and later in Munich.

Noelle-Neumann claimed that she was very aware of gender roadblocks and in 1937 took active steps to prepare for a career in journalism: she joined the female version of the Nazi Student Association (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Nationalsozialistischer Studentinnen*), which she claimed was the only way to secure a spot on a study-abroad program. She became a cell leader (*Zellenleiterin*) and founded a journalistic study group with fourteen other women. She took part in writing competitions to secure a spot in the German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD) exchange program to the University of Missouri, the top school for journalism in the United States.<sup>131</sup> In this way she used gender to explain her connection to a Nazi group. Noelle-Neumann also published a number of articles about her international travel experiences in the internationally respected dailies the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Berliner Zeitung*. Despite these successes, when she decided to seek a newspaper internship and begin the formal steps toward establishing a career, the editor of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* advised her to first complete her doctorate: as a woman, he counseled, a title would provide her with a much better chance at a viable career. Neumann had received the same advice seven years earlier from Heinz Ullstein of the famed Ullstein publishing house.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen* (Munich: Herbig, 2006), 42.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-52.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.



As the war progressed, more possibilities opened for female candidates. Yet even prior to 1939, women landed internships at almost every type of paper, including the masculine party papers. Ursula Roeh began her journalism career in 1935 as a journalist in-training at the *NS-Kurier* in Stuttgart. After she attended the press school from January to March 1937, Roeh freelanced for both party and non-party papers, primarily on the cultural pages.<sup>133</sup> In 1935 the *NSZ-Westmark* trained Kaete Lindener, Frieda Cacielle Brayer and Erika Lori. The paper was home to a number of female journalist trainees over the course of the war.<sup>134</sup> Ursula von Kardorff began her volunteer internship in 1937 at *Der Angriff* writing what she referred to as “... faithful German fashion reports and articles that were kitschy but with political undertones.” Kardorff also planned to submit work to another party paper the *Rhein Front*.<sup>135</sup> Later that year she moved to the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.

When a male or female candidate did find an internship, the Press Association expected and demanded that they be correctly trained as journalists. However the standards and areas in which they were trained depended to some extent on gender. In a 1935 article Meyer-Christian lamented that in half of all cases a candidate’s internship was not a training period at all. Rather, the young volunteer was used as cheap labour in minor areas such as local news.<sup>136</sup> Meyer-Christian’s concern did not apply to women since they were encouraged to focus on and often restricted during their training to local news or women’s pages. Yet the Press Association did intervene when it deemed that a

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<sup>133</sup> Ursula Roeh, Lebenslauf, undated, BAB, RKI487. Roeh was born on 10 May 1911. By June 1940 she had contributed to the *Nordische Rundschau*, *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, *Rote Erde*, *Schleswiger Nachrichten* and *Hamburger Anzeiger*.

<sup>134</sup> See RDP, BAB, R103/138.

<sup>135</sup> Letter from Kardorff to a friend (unnamed), March 27, 1937, IfZ, ED348/4.

<sup>136</sup> Meyer-Christian, “Der erste Kursus,” *Deutsche Presse*, 20 April 1935.

newspaper did not take the training of female candidates seriously. At the end of the internship period for journalist candidates Ilse Hannak and Rothraut Vrtel both received poor evaluations on their final examination. According to the Press Association, the young women were not to blame but rather, the press administrator noted that in both cases the editor of each newspaper had not fulfilled their duty to the journalists in training. In one case, it was clear that the young woman had been used as cheap temporary work in the editorial department and that the editor had paid scant attention to her training. The Press Association provided the women the opportunity to retake their exam in six months and directed the papers to improve their training practices.<sup>137</sup>

Some women maintained that they enjoyed responsibility, but others had to struggle to gain professional experience. A typical contract included six weeks in the typesetting and printing department and six weeks within the editor's secretarial office. The rest of the internship was to be spent with editors in order to ensure one spent time in all departments.<sup>138</sup> In 1938, Helene Rahms was disillusioned by the meager experience she received as a journalist-in-training in the local news section of the *Saale-Zeitung* in Halle. Her primary task was sorting, rewriting, and organizing the local segment, which consisted of trivialities in "brittle" German submitted by postmen, café owners and other locals: "The goal to write about art, theatre and literature seemed so distant and so unreachable," she noted.<sup>139</sup>

Rahms followed her (one) female colleague's advice and grabbed the first opportunity to land a scoop in the hope of propelling herself into more challenging

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<sup>137</sup> Undated memo, BAB, R103/91.

<sup>138</sup> Ausbildungs-Vertrag between *Nordhäuser Zeitung* and Dora Schmidt, 25 November 1942, BAB, R103/100.

<sup>139</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 11.

waters. The editor wanted to win the only interview with a trio of tightrope acrobats who had arrived in town. When he ordered someone to quickly contact the group, Rahms claimed to have spoken up: “It would be better if one of us allowed the acrobat to carry us across the wire and then described his experiences.”<sup>140</sup> The editor dismissed her idea as too risky. Rahms pushed and the editor eventually consented to let her conduct the interview. Terrified, Rahms was carried across the tightrope and thus landed her first solo reportage and congratulations from her colleagues. Restricted to unsatisfactory tasks, Rahms strove to obtain a useful and fulfilling volunteer experience—a common situation for female candidates. Although she gained experience during her internship, it was primarily in local news: “I had to learn from the ground up. I was sent to the zoo, to a chicken farm, and to a champagne breakfast with a travelling circus.”<sup>141</sup>

Female volunteers also emphasized a sense of satisfaction, fun and inclusion both within and outside of work. In a 1938 letter to a friend, Kardorff wrote that her work at the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* provided her with indescribable joy: “I am so happy there that I would even go in on Sundays if I could.”<sup>142</sup> In her memoir, Rahms noted that after *Kristallnacht* on 9 November 1938, “with a thorn in our conscience” she and her colleagues “lived on, wrote, edited, ate, drank, danced, and romanced. We huddled together, sometimes in this, sometimes in that pub...barbaric, childish nonsense. Hectic gaiety, unleashed by the pressure of daily work.”<sup>143</sup> She described numerous outings that involved much drinking and merriment. Rahms’ post-war presentation was self-serving as it established her horror at what was happening to Germany’s Jews and distanced her

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>142</sup> Letter from Usula von Kardorff, 12 October 1938, IfZ, ED 348/4.

<sup>143</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 30-33.

from a sense of complicity with Nazism. But it is important to consider her presentation of the happiness, fulfilment, and community that she found within the profession. These were elements that the regime wove into its training of young journalists. Part of Nazism's appeal to the German population, particularly its youth, was that it addressed their hopes for a better life.<sup>144</sup>

Gender was a significant part of a woman's internship experience in ways that were based on sexism not solely related to a National Socialist state. When she was searching for an internship, Thea Fischer recalled that one editor, who could not offer her a position, encouraged her to approach the *Heimat am Mittag*, with the advice, "They are urgently searching for a young (female) journalist...Go there and introduce yourself. Make yourself chic, he appreciates well-dressed women."<sup>145</sup> In an effort to build her journalism experience, as a student Noelle-Neumann claimed to have approached the *Königsberger Zeitung* to ask them to print her work. While waiting, she recalled that reporter after reporter filed past her. Eventually, an employee informed her that the editor had announced that a pretty young lady was in the hall. "While I wanted to have a serious conversation, the male staff viewed me as an attraction (*Sehenswürdigkeit*)," she claimed.<sup>146</sup> Rahms recalled that she became her boss' protégé: he demanded high professional standards and rigorously critiqued her work. At the same time he called her "cookie" and presented her with professional opportunities linked to his personal desires. Rahms noted that he had praised her journalistic skills but stressed they urgently needed to expand her horizons. He suggested a joint trip to Munich and Prague to write about German art and life in the Protectorate. "Nothing would happen," he said, "unless she

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<sup>144</sup> Fritzsche, *Life and Death*, 37.

<sup>145</sup> Anja Meyer, Thea Fischer interview, *Medienfrauen*, 103.

<sup>146</sup> Neumann, *Die Erinnerung*, 50.

wanted it to.”<sup>147</sup> An affair ensued. Moreover, Rahms noted that she had been included in gatherings at her editor’s house where colleagues spoke of their worries about the Third Reich. She was invited, Rahms mused, because in the eyes of the older men she was an innocent, somewhat cheeky young thing, or she was there to pour their tea or even as decoration.<sup>148</sup> Still, Rahms felt the evenings were a sign of trust, and she was pleased to have been included. Her experience denotes a mixture of marginalisation and inclusion.

### **Wartime: Expanding and Shrinking Opportunities 1942-1945**

Conditions caused by the war brought opportunities and disadvantages to women journalist hopefuls as men’s education and careers were delayed or even dashed due to their military duty. In May 1944, a wife described how, before the war, her husband intended to begin training as a photojournalist. She worried that since he had been in the field for five years, he would be too old to be able to transition into his desired career.<sup>149</sup> Officer J.M. Pirwitz returned from the front in early 1944 after having had both feet amputated. He approached the Press Association to inquire whether he would be able to pursue his intended career as a journalist despite his physical disability. The association advised that since journalism was physically and emotionally demanding, he would have difficulty entering and succeeding in the field.<sup>150</sup> Werner Sack had also been severely injured during the war. In November 1944, he wrote the Ministry of Propaganda to

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<sup>147</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 44.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>149</sup> Enquiry from Frau Peterson to the RDP, 8 May 1944, BAB, R103/25. The RDP’s answer was that starting a career as a photojournalist was not age restricted: Her husband could apply after he was released from military service.

<sup>150</sup> Letter from the RPD to Officer J.M Pirwitz, 1 April 1944, BAB, 103/25. He would only be able to do so if he possessed above average talent.

express his frustration at being unable to find a volunteer position. He worried that he had already lost a lot of time with regard to preparing for a career.<sup>151</sup>

The press remained an important field to the regime even in the last months and weeks of the war. In the fall of 1944 women made up the majority of those applying to take the journalism entrance exam. Although an increasing number of women were entering the profession, the overall number of internships was shrinking with the drafting to military service of many male editors who would have trained the volunteers. In the fall of 1944 the Press Association confirmed that admission to journalists in training, or rather female volunteers--had shrunk: only 50 percent were accepted to take the entrance exam compared to the previous year. It instructed all Regional Association heads to use this figure as a guide when admitting new trainees.<sup>152</sup>

Paper shortages meant that a number of newspapers and magazines had closed or merged, further reducing internship opportunities. Still, the Press Association assured prospective journalists that the training program was not completely suspended. In late 1944 and early 1945, women were still entering the field and even securing volunteer positions. Magdali Eleonore Bülle wrote to her Regional Press Association in October 1944 concerned that she would have to wait until March 1945 to take the next entrance exam. She succeeded in finding a newspaper in West Prussia that agreed to take her as an intern.<sup>153</sup> At the end of February 1945, the editor of the *Bodensee Rundschau* registered

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<sup>151</sup> Letter from Werner Sack to the Ministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, 3 November 1944, BAB, R103/87. Sack attributed his loss of time to interruptions in his schooling out of economic necessity in his youth and the war. He had written the journalism entry exam while he was in the military hospital.

<sup>152</sup> Memo, RDP, 29 September 1944, BAB, 103/131 or 103/126, Nr. 5.

<sup>153</sup> Letter from Magdali Eleonore Buelle to Landesverband Baden-Westmark, 6 October 1944, BAB, R103/126.

his new intern, Rosemarie Fabian, for the press entrance exam.<sup>154</sup> The field remained viable for women until the end of the Third Reich.

## Conclusion

The fact that women were underrepresented and discriminated against as they attempted to enter the journalistic profession was not specific to Nazi Germany. Indeed, women struggled professionally during the Weimar period as well as in other European countries. In the United States, women were encouraged to study and train for writing for the features or women's pages. By 1940, several universities across the country offered courses for women in writing for women's pages or women's magazines.<sup>155</sup> In Britain, although the training and education of journalists never took gender into account—women gained the same skills as men and therefore had the potential to do the same work—women still had a difficult time securing an internship and thus a foot in the door of their chosen career.<sup>156</sup>

Margaret and Patrice Higonnet have used the image of the double helix with its structure of two interwoven strands to analyze women's role and progress (or lack thereof) within a system of consistent gender relationships: "The female strand on the helix is opposed to the male strand, and position on the female strand is subordinate to position on the male strand. It appears women take a step forward but they are still led by men...Everyone steps forward or backward on the Helix."<sup>157</sup> This concept applies to the

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<sup>154</sup> Letter from the *Bodensee Rundschau* to Landesverband Baden-Westmark, 27 February 1945, BAB, R103/127.

<sup>155</sup> Chambers, Flemming, Steiner, *Women and Journalism*, 62.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.* 63 and 61.

<sup>157</sup> Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L. R. Higonnet, "The Double Helix," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, eds. Margaret R. Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel and Margaret Weitz Collins (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 34.

Nazi training program for journalists. Press authorities sought to present all journalists as part of an elite group. However, within this clique, women were subordinate to men.

Specific to journalism in the Third Reich was its racial framework and the regime's central aim to ensure that it could rely on a journalist to conduct the profession in a manner that was, or appeared to be, supportive of National Socialism. The desire for a politicized press resulted in multiple discrepancies and ambiguities in the regime's approach toward the training of women journalist hopefuls. To impart the necessary ideological indoctrination and understanding of a journalist's role in the Nazi state, the regime trained women in a similar manner to men.

The journalistic training program highlights the broader relationship between identity, loyalty and opportunity in Nazi Germany. The Nazi promise to remake Germany and improve life for the so-called Aryan community also applied the idea of transformation to the press. Press authorities marketed the new Nazi press as one that would offer opportunities for all racially and politically appropriate journalist hopefuls. Although few in number, women were included as an essential part of the elite *Kamaradschaft* of the press. This inclusion, the resulting sense of belonging, and a hoped-for opportunity helped pull journalist hopefuls, men and women alike, into political service to the state.

The recruitment and training of female journalists demonstrated the myriad contradictions of Nazi conceptions of gender and programs for the politicization of social institutions. Women were to be included but they were hemmed in by differential treatment, sexist working conditions, and limited opportunities for advancement. All journalists were required to demonstrate exemplary Nazi credentials, solid academic



achievement and, ideally, military training. Existing barriers to entry for women for all of these prerequisites only compounded the complications of gaining entry into a field that the Nazi state was ostensibly encouraging them to join. In spite of facing discrimination in the process of becoming journalists and on the job, many women nonetheless felt as though they were being given an unprecedented opportunity at professional advancement and believed that with enough effort and drive they could create a career for themselves in a field dominated by men.

## Chapter Two

### Prettying up Politics Rhetoric, Reality and Women Journalists 1933-1939

What is chic for one is not for all: How to cleverly evade small flaws in your appearance through this winter's fashion. Who has not bemoaned a small flaw! It may be that your legs are too short, your neck too long or your shoulders too sloped! No one's appearance is perfect. And who knows whether women would really be more appealing if they had no irregularities in their face or figure? Famous painters have often showed us their models' "defects" are charming... This means that beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, but... we also want to be satisfied with our looks. Only by being self-critical can we feel secure that our appearance does not provoke the disapproval or even the ridicule of others.

Annaliese Reese, *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 2 December 1934

In her 1938 dissertation on the history of women in the press, Josephine Trampler-Steiner, a young doctoral candidate in journalism studies at the University of Munich, argued that despite severe restrictions, women had conquered every aspect of the press, working as journalists, as publishers and as newspaper owners. Trampler-Steiner pointed out that the women's inserts and the *Feuilleton* section were open to capable women journalists. Those who attempted to push into the political pages of a newspaper, however, continued to experience difficulties. Yet she argued that most women journalists were not upset by the fact that men held more positions and greater authority in the area of political news, because this notion related only to a narrow conception of politics. If one held to a broader definition of what constituted political—one that included social and cultural topics—then women journalists held influence since these areas represented a pure woman's realm.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Josephine Trampler-Steiner, *Die Frau als Publizistin und Leserin: Deutsche Zeitschriften von und für Frauen* (PhD diss., Freiburg: Bergern, 1938), 67. Trampler-Steiner was born in 1908 and was a student at the University of Munich working under the supervision of, among others, Prof. Dr. Karl D'Ester and

Trampler-Steiner's argument pinpoints the importance the regime placed on women journalists, suggests their widespread influence, and illuminates the complex, shifting and contrasting notions of what the regime presented, and what the population understood, as politics in Nazi Germany. Press authorities maintained that women journalists held an esteemed leadership position in society but dictated that they work only in areas best suited to their "feminine" talents: local news, culture, features and, most important, women's publications, which primarily comprised fashion, lifestyle and domestic articles. In this way, women journalists were primarily to serve as mediators, managing the relationship between women and the state. They would connect with women in the areas where they functioned: as mothers, in welfare and social work, home economics, education, arts and culture, youth work, sports, and the church.<sup>2</sup>

The Nazi government sought to utilize female journalists as a bridge to infiltrate and influence the so-called private sphere. What the regime officially called political news—such as national and international events, and anything related to foreign and national policy—was to be left to male journalists.<sup>3</sup> The population deemed such news nationally significant as opposed to personally significant. As Goebbels stated in 1934:

The National Socialist movement is in its nature a masculine movement... While man must give to life the great lines and forms, it is the task of woman out of her inner fullness and inner eagerness to fill these lines and forms with colour. The realms of directing and shaping are not hard to find in public life. To such realms belong, for one thing, the tremendously great sphere of politics. This sphere without exception must be claimed by man.<sup>4</sup>

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Adolf Dresler. Trampler-Steiner acknowledged that women still faced severe obstacles in the journalistic field, even within "women's" areas.

<sup>2</sup> Nachrichtendienst der Presse-Frauenschaft, *Deutsche Presse*, Nr. 36, 9 September 1933, 586.

<sup>3</sup> In addressing Nazi policy toward women, Hitler stated: "For her world is her husband, her family, her children and her home. But where would the greater world be if no one cared for the smaller world? How could the larger world exist if there were no one to take as a life task the care of the smaller world?" As quoted in Clifford Kirkpatrick, *Woman in Nazi Germany* (London: Jarrolds, 1939), 102.

<sup>4</sup> As quoted in Kirkpatrick, *Woman in Nazi Germany*, 107. Kirkpatrick highlights the confusion and contradictory claims in regard to Nazi ideology about women.

But the notion of the political was an elastic concept in Nazi Germany. The areas in which press authorities touted the talent of women journalists had strong political implications for the regime. Due to the overt Nazified language and viewpoint often included in lead articles and main sections of newspapers, the areas that the regime presented as apolitical, and ones that the population often considered to be so, appeared comparatively free of Nazi ideology and were appealing to people, men and women alike.<sup>5</sup>

These sections served a political purpose, one that Goebbels in particular valued. Such pieces produced seemingly harmless local news, culture and lifestyle features—lighter news from a generally cheerful perspective that provided pleasure and a façade of normalcy. This type of newspaper content played a subtler yet indispensable role in the Nazi propaganda machine. Within these pages, Nazi press authorities deemed women’s voices more emotional, amusing and light-hearted—implicitly more entertaining—than men’s. But, the very normalcy of the areas where women journalists worked facilitated the politicization of everyday life. The Nazis utilized the private or personal sphere to help achieve their political goals—the construction of a *Volksgemeinschaft* based on the exclusion of those deemed racially, socially or politically unacceptable and a war based on race and space.<sup>6</sup> The gap between National Socialist claims of apolitical newspaper

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the appeal of material the German public deemed free from Nazi ideology see Karl Christian Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda: Popular Magazines in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939,” in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, eds. Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross and Fabrice d’Almeida (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and Karl Christian Führer, *Medienmetropole Hamburg: Mediale Öffentlichkeiten 1930-1960* (Munich; Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Although democratic parties used the term *Volksgemeinschaft* during the Weimar Republic to convey the idea of citizenship, under the Nazis it stood for racialism and expansionism. For more on the Nazi concept of a unified *Volksgemeinschaft* and its impact see Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008) and Michael Wildt, *Hitler’s Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2012).

content produced by women, versus the importance of these fields opened up a space for women journalists to achieve a sense of professional success and a level of influence that went beyond their small numbers.

This chapter argues that women journalists, as professional functionaries, helped to maintain the Nazi state in two ways: they contributed to and legitimated the idea of ideologically free newspaper content focused on the personal and thus provided a seeming refuge from overt Nazified news. This process helped create the illusion of continued normalcy under the Nazi regime.<sup>7</sup> But they also politicized the personal, helping the Nazi government to work toward its domestic and foreign policy goals. Nazi rhetoric that all women stood outside of politics legitimated the notion that women journalists addressed only apolitical topics.<sup>8</sup> In this way, sexism benefited the regime. The very fact that women journalists were located on the outskirts of the profession, in terms of numbers, visibility and the seemingly trivial areas in which they worked is what provided them their influence.<sup>9</sup>

The study of women journalists helps us to understand the expansive nature of politics in Nazi Germany. Every area was politicized, but where the Nazis focused much importance was where politicization was least noticeable—within the banality of the

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<sup>7</sup> The idea of creating an illusion of normalcy was a conscious goal of Goebbels but not necessarily of the women journalists who worked in the areas that facilitated the idea of the continuation of normal everyday life. Some women had no choice but to work in these areas and others simply found them most interesting.

<sup>8</sup> The notion that women were apolitical was not specific to Nazi Germany. In her article on Bab'i bunty, Lynne Viola demonstrated that Soviet authorities viewed protests by peasant women as hysterical and irrational—in other words, apolitical. In reality these protests were a form of opposition to peasants' socio-economic concerns under threat by the state. Women would initiate the protests, while the more vulnerable men would remain on the sidelines to start. In this way women utilized the state's perceptions of them as irrational to carry out a political demonstration. See Lynne Viola, "Bab'i Bunty and Peasant Women's Protest during Collectivization," *Russian Review* Vol. 45, No. 1 (January, 1986): 23-42.

<sup>9</sup> Claudia Koonz makes this argument with regard to women's influence in the private sphere. See Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1987).

everyday.<sup>10</sup> In this realm, the regime viewed women journalists as an important political tool. The regime's presentation of the press as elite, the (limited) opportunities women found in journalism and their sense of being part of a professional cohort meant that women journalists supported the regime. The work of women journalists elevated aspects of Nazism; simultaneously, working in the elite field of the press elevated individual women. Thus, women journalists also demonstrate the ways in which people on the margins could help build up and support the state.

### **Journalism “Gives a Woman Political Value [to Use] in Service to the State”**

How did the regime present the field of journalism and depict a woman's role within it? What were the characteristics of women's career trajectories and the nature of their experiences in women's magazines, the large dailies, the party papers and the press of the *NS-Frauenschaft* (League of German Women or NSF)? Within the Nazi state, authorities made clear that the main task of any journalist was to communicate Nazi ideology and help strengthen the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The 1933 Editors Law defined the journalistic profession as a public mission and bound it legally and intellectually to the state. Accordingly, it considered a journalist's role political.<sup>11</sup> The Press Association instructed journalists that, “press and politics belong together; they cannot be separated from each other.”<sup>12</sup> In his 1938 brochure titled “The Path to Journalism in Germany,” Deputy Reich Press Chief of the NSDAP, Helmet Sündermann, equated a journalist's role with a politician's, noting: “After all, there are professions that introduce youth to

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<sup>10</sup> Nancy Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 6.

<sup>11</sup> “Das Schriftleitergesetz,” *Zeitungs-Verlag* No. 40, 7 October 1933, 650-651.

<sup>12</sup> “Die Arbeitstagung des RDP in Köln,” *Deutsche Presse*, 14 December 1935, 662-663.

politics because they are inherently a political profession. Journalism stands at the summit of such professions. A born journalist is a born politician."<sup>13</sup>

The regime's conception of journalism as a political profession meant that it also placed value on women journalists and provided them a sense of professional importance in areas that were public in their reach and impact. As a result, those journalists gained a sense of belonging in the field and a stature in Nazi Germany not available to most women. In some ways the connection between journalism and the state was a mutually beneficial arrangement: it gave all journalists an elite status in society and often a close connection to state and party officials. Women journalists had access to power without holding power.

The case of Jewish society columnist, Bella Fromm, provides a telling example. In her diary, *Blood and Banquets*, Fromm spoke of her meetings with high-ranking Nazi leaders and other officials, including Goebbels, Hitler, Hindenburg, Bernhard von Bülow and British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden.<sup>14</sup> Although Fromm overstated the nature of her relationship with prominent individuals and fabricated parts of her book, her articles written at the time show that she did socialize and network in important circles at press and other functions.<sup>15</sup> Within the sphere of Nazi racism and sexism, Fromm circulated with some of the most powerful individuals in Germany. However, her situation changed

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<sup>13</sup> Helmut Sündermann, *Der Weg zum deutschen Journalismus: Hinweise für die Berufswahl junger Nationalsozialisten* (Munich; Berlin: Franz Eher, 1938), 9.

<sup>14</sup> See Bella Fromm, *Blood and Banquets: A Berlin Social Diary* (New York: Harper, 1942). Fromm was a popular society columnist with the *Vossische Zeitung* in Berlin and had a well-established career in journalism before the Nazis came to power in 1933. *Blood and Banquets* was first published in 1943 in Britain and then in 1944 in the United States.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Ashby Turner, "Two Dubious Third Reich Diaries," *Central European History* 33 No. 3 (2000): 419. Ashby Turner scrutinizes Fromm's work and identifies structural and authenticity concerns. He notes that despite Fromm's claim that the work was written in Germany, there was no trace of a diary in her private papers from Germany. Turner outlines errors and discrepancies within Fromm's work and argues that some entries are so implausible that their veracity is highly questionable. He concludes that *Blood and Banquets* was, at best, a memoir about events in Germany composed years later in America.

in the mid 1930's, when, as a result of the regime's increasing persecution of Jewish Germans, Fromm was forced to leave her job.<sup>16</sup> She fled Germany for the United States in 1938.

Press authorities addressed the role of women journalists early in the Third Reich.<sup>17</sup> In 1934, they organized the Committee of German Women Journalists (*Reichsausschuss der Schriftleiterinnen*), a sub-department of the German Press Association, chaired by Annie Juliane Richert. Among the standard components of membership meetings were talks concerning the professional situation for women journalists and general themes that women journalists should cover.<sup>18</sup> The Press and Propaganda department of the Nazi Women's League also held professional days lecturing about topics, including how journalism was a viable career for women.<sup>19</sup> Speaking at the annual German Press Association Day in 1935, Richert portrayed the Editors Law and the changes it engendered in the field as a step that, "for the first time in the history of the press," gave a woman journalist a status that provided her with political value to use in service to the state. "No other profession affords a woman such a significant task as that of journalist," Richert enthused. "She is the quiet, reliable leader for the women's world."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Fromm was able to keep working under a pseudonym until at least 1934, likely later. Her diary does not make it clear exactly when she had to quit practicing journalism.

<sup>17</sup> See for example "Nachrichtendienst der Presse-Frauenschaft," *Deutsche Presse* No. 36, 9 September 1933, 586. The article outlines the press responsibilities of the League of German Women, published in the trade publication, *Deutsche Presse*.

<sup>18</sup> Frauengruppe des Landesverbandes Berlin," *Deutsche Presse*, No. 15, 14 April 1934, 11. On 10 April 1934, for instance, Sophie Rogge-Börner, journalist and publisher of the National Socialist journal *Kämpferin*, spoke about elements of the "Germanic Lifestyle" for women.

<sup>19</sup> Bericht über die Tagung der Gauabteilungsleiterinnen, 2 May 1939, Bundesarchiv, Berlin (BAB), NS 44/46.

<sup>20</sup> Speech by Annie Juliane Richert reprinted in, "Die Arbeitstagung des RDP in Köln," *Deutsche Presse*, 14 December 1935, 668-9.



Part of this important role was to further expand women's presence in the field and foster young, female talent. The primary objective of such professional development for women was to ensure that female journalists complied with National Socialist professional standards. Professional communications also separated women from the larger male-dominated press, indicating that the regime desired a distinction between the roles of male and female journalists. Still, the very fact that the regime recognized professional women's organizations suggests that it not only accepted but also wanted and needed women in journalistic roles.<sup>21</sup>

By the mid 1930s, as Hitler's plans for war began to take hold, discussions about the role and responsibilities of women journalists, although still limited, increased in trade newspapers, Press Association speeches and within the National Socialist League of German Women. This fact suggests that female journalists would be a component of the regime's plan for war since they would replace male counterparts on the home front who would work in the field. Representatives in the profession assured women that they would play an important role in the press and encouraged them to view journalism as a challenging career choice requiring interest, capability, and commitment.<sup>22</sup>

In his 1936 study, "The Woman in Journalism," Dr. Adolf Dresler, a respected lecturer at the *Zeitungswissenschaftliche Institut* at the University of Munich, provided a history of women's journalistic activities. Although Dresler did not attribute the growth in the number of women working in the field solely to Nazism, he emphasized an increase in the number of women entering the field since the Nazis gained power.

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<sup>21</sup> Jill Stephenson, "Women and the Professions in Germany, 1900-1945" in *German Professions, 1800-1950*, eds. Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad H. Jarausch (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 282. Jill Stephenson made this argument with regard to teachers, doctors, and lawyers.

<sup>22</sup> Wilhelm Weiss, "Die Frau im Schriftleiter Beruf," *Deutsche Presse*, 7 March 1936, 118.

According to Dresler, a survey conducted by the *Deutsche Institut für Zeitungskunde* in Berlin revealed that 222 women were members of the German Press Association in 1932. In January 1935, there were 687 women journalists in Germany.<sup>23</sup> Dresler's numbers allege a 43 percent increase in women working in the field between 1932 and 1935. Although it is not possible to evaluate the methodological approach and quality of Dresler's work, what is noteworthy is the message contained in his study: women had become an increasing part of the press since the turn of the century and even more so during the Third Reich.

In March of 1936, the head of the German Press Association, Wilhelm Weiss, spoke to a gathering of Berlin-based female journalists. Weiss dismissed the idea that women should expect to produce only *gemütvolle* (sentimental) pieces or write solely about domestic issues. He sought to dispel the notion that a woman's journalistic role in Nazi Germany would be easy or insignificant: "Today," declared Weiss, "the journalistic profession for women... is a serious, taxing, and dramatic field."<sup>24</sup> His message was clear. Women were to be a vital part of the press: "If the journalism profession is to acquire the necessary esteem in the National Socialist state, it must stand in unity. Women who are a part of the press will render great service... to the German press

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<sup>23</sup> Adolf Dresler, *Die Frau im Journalismus* (Munich: Knorr & Hirth, 1936), 11. Dresler's numbers included women in the training program but excluded photographers and illustrators. His work was published in book form and in the "women's pages" of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*. He did not include figures outlining how much the field grew as a whole and therefore provided no analysis regarding the percentage of women who made up the press corps. Dresler acknowledged that a growing number of women became more professionally involved in journalism throughout the course of the twentieth century. Karl Christian Führer has pointed out that accurate press numbers were not kept during the Weimar Republic. In contrast, the Nazi regime kept extremely detailed statistics related to the press. Although Führer was referring specifically to newspaper subscriptions, his argument could also be applied to the number of journalists working in the field. See Führer, *Medienmetropole Hamburg*.

<sup>24</sup> Wilhelm Weiss, "Die Frau im Schriftleiter Beruf," *Deutsche Presse*, 7 March 1936, 118.

itself.”<sup>25</sup> The Press Association sought to present journalism as a profession that seemed both accessible and appealing to women, and in many ways it was.

A woman’s ability to work in the field, for instance, was not limited by her marital status. Out of 248 women journalists who worked at some point during the Nazi period, 105 or 53 percent were married.<sup>26</sup> The files do not allow for a precise analysis of the number of journalists who were also mothers but they do indicate that some women had children. Some journalists were single mothers, including Maria Reese, Petra Vermehren and Ruth Andreas-Friedrich. Women were attracted to journalism for a number of reasons: status, financial need, accessibility, a love of writing, the opportunity for travel, and the freedom and flexibility the profession offered. For most women, their role as a journalist formed an important part of their identity. Else Frobenius began writing in 1920 as a means to earn a living after her divorce. She cherished her career and the travel that came with it, noting in 1942-43: “When I travel through the world as a representative of the press, my pen feels like a golden key that I consider myself lucky to have found. I could express my love for Germany through my articles about my ‘Heimat.’”<sup>27</sup> Frobenius was a German nationalist who joined the Nazi Party in May 1933. Nazi ideology and the perception of service to Germany also influenced how she viewed her career.

A number of female journalists travelled extensively prior to or as a part of their careers. Journalist hopefuls inquiring about the field often asked about the possibility of

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Statistics compiled from various BAB, R103 files. It is not possible to break down the figures into those who worked before the war and those who started their career during the war.

<sup>27</sup> Else Frobenius, *Erinnerungen einer Journalistin. Zwischen Kaiserreich und Zweitem Weltkrieg* (Cologne; Weimar: Böhlau, 2005), 194. Lora Wildenthal published, edited and provided an introductory essay to Frobenius’ memoir.

working abroad.<sup>28</sup> As a young woman, Felicitas Kapteina recalled that she had wanted to be an actress, detective or journalist. In the end, Kapteina desired a profession that was versatile and in which she could indulge her love of travel and writing.<sup>29</sup> Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann described herself as a wild youth, unwilling to conform. She had wanted to be a journalist, she claimed, since the age of ten.<sup>30</sup> In 1938, Noelle-Neumann, who came from an upper-middle-class background, began a trip around the world. Over a six-month period the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* published six reports from her trip even before she had completed her journalism studies or entered the formal journalistic training program in 1940.<sup>31</sup> In her 1943 article, “Mein Weg zur Bildberichterstatterin,” (My Path to Photojournalism), Liselotte Purper claimed that at the age of 10 she had read a story about a young girl who became a photographer. Inspired and intrigued, Purper maintained that she had never considered another profession. Purper’s career took her all over Europe.<sup>32</sup> Helene Rahms viewed journalism as a route to the “Bohemian life” she craved and a profession in which she could indulge her passion for culture and writing.<sup>33</sup> The happiest a journalist could be, she maintained, was if she were considered a “brilliant scribe.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> From September 1931 to May 1933, for instance, Marta Hillers took an extended trip through countries including Poland, Georgia, the Soviet Union, Turkey, Greece, and Italy. In conjunction with her travel, she sold photographs to American and European magazines. Marta Hillers Fragebogen for the Reichsschrifttumskammer (RSK), August 1938, BAB, RKB76.

<sup>29</sup> Alexa Godbersen, Felicitas Kapteina interview, *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde: “Wir waren ja die Trümmerfrauen in diesem Beruf”* (Zurich-Dortmund: eFeF, 1993) 60.

<sup>30</sup> Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen* (Munich: Herbig, 2006), 29 and 41.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>32</sup> Katja Protte, “Beruf: ‘Bildberichterstatterin’ in ‘Bildberichterstatterin im Dritten Reich’: Fotografien aus den Jahren 1937 bis 1944 von Liselotte Purper.” *Deutsches Historisches Museum Magazine*, No. 20 (Summer 1997), and Liselotte Purper, “Mein Weg zur Bildberichterstatterin,” *Frauenkultur*, February 1943, BAB.

<sup>33</sup> Helene Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen: Mein Leben als Journalistin im Dritten Reich* (Bern: Scherz, 1997), 126.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 185. “als brillante Feder.”

## The Professional Landscape

Despite the fact that official communications positioned women journalists as an important part of the profession, they faced severe restrictions and obstacles in the field throughout the 1930s. In this way women were (somewhat) invisible in a highly public field. In 1935, women made up around 5 percent of the German press. This trend was typical of European countries, although the number of women journalists was higher in the United States.<sup>35</sup> By 1939, this percentage had only increased to 8.8 percent.<sup>36</sup>

Through its promotional material and correspondence, the Press Association acknowledged the challenges women faced in the field. It was difficult, particularly in the daily newspapers, for them to find a permanent position.<sup>37</sup> Only in rare cases was a woman able to obtain a position as a political reporter or foreign correspondent.

In October 1936, seventeen year-old Dorothea Thimme, a recent graduate from the German Press School, wrote to Hans Schwarz van Berk, the editor of the party paper *Der Angriff* and a close associate of Joseph Goebbels, pleading for his help to find a job. “Since autumn 1935 I have been working as press advisor with the National Socialist Women’s League, district Württemberg-Hohenzollern,” Thimme wrote. “However by December I would like to be out of here because I hardly learn anything new and I do not

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<sup>35</sup> For more on journalism in the United Kingdom and United States see Deborah Chambers, Linda Steiner and Carole Fleming, *Women and Journalism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004) and F. Elizabeth Gray ed., *Women in Journalism at the Fin de Siècle: Making a Name for Herself* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> In his 1936 work *Vom Zeitungschreiber zum Schriftleiter: Untersuchung über den Bildungsstand der deutschen Journalisten*, Dr. Rolf Oebstger-Röder calculates that there were approximately 14,300 men working as journalists in Germany. Taking both Oebstger-Röder’s and Dresler’s numbers together suggests that women made up 4.6% of the press. Carmen Sitter, however, uses the figure of 5.6%. Carmen Sitter, *Die eine Hälfte vergisst man(n) leicht!": Zur Situation von Journalistinnen in Deutschland unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1998), 224.

<sup>37</sup> Aufklärungsblätter über die akademischen Berufe, Schriftleiter (Journalist, Redakteur) akad. Geb, (Leipzig: Sächsisches Akademisches Auskunftsamt für Studien und Berufsfragen, der Landesstelle für Akademische Berufsberatung, 1 January 1938), BAB, R103/25.

get any stimulation. It is very difficult to find a position. I have basically done everything that one can do. Could you give me any advice?”<sup>38</sup> Thimme went on to note that she had always trusted Schwarz van Berk as a professional comrade (*Berufskamerad*) and that he had the type of career she hoped to build. Thimme had followed the steps that press authorities outlined for women journalists: she joined the National Socialist League of German women in 1935, completed her internship at a newspaper, and attended the German Press School. The League of German Women’s reference for Thimme stated that she was talented and especially suited for a career in journalism.<sup>39</sup>

Schwarz van Berk responded that he was happy to advise Thimme and counseled that it was a good idea to leave her position as press advisor within the Women’s League because otherwise she could be stuck there until “she turned gray.” However, Schwarz van Berk maintained that he had no position in mind for her at that moment and, “as you well know,” he wrote, “in our office no female journalists are employed [full time] and the publisher will probably not deviate from this rule.” The best course of action, he advised, was to approach the press office of the National Socialist Women’s League for assistance in finding a position.”<sup>40</sup> Thimme was not able to secure her desired-position at a newspaper and instead continued to work in the Press and Propaganda Department of the Women’s League throughout the war.<sup>41</sup>

Thimme’s appeal to Schwarz van Berk suggests the importance of a male helper, patron, or even a lover for women hoping to gain a foothold in the field. Margret Boveri,

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<sup>38</sup> Letter from Dorothea Thimme to Hans Schwarz van Berk, 27 October 1936, Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A Rep 250-06-04 Nr. 3.

<sup>39</sup> National Socialist Women’s League, Membership cards, BAB, NS44/100, 131.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from Hans Schwarz van Berk to Dorothea Thimme, 19 November 1936, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04 Nr. 3.

<sup>41</sup> NS-Frauenschaft Training Program, March 1939, BAB, NS44/46.

the most famous foreign correspondent during the Third Reich, credited her journalistic start not only to hard work, ambition, tenacity and luck but also to Paul Scheffer, the editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the first paper for which she worked. Highly educated but unable to secure a fulltime position, Boveri worked as a freelance journalist until a personal contact recommended her to Scheffer in August 1934. She became Scheffer's protégé already during her time as an intern. Scheffer introduced Boveri to influential people and fostered her career progression. "It was due to Scheffer," recalled Boveri, "that I started to become a name. He immediately promoted [my work.] During my first four months my editorials appeared constantly... suddenly the name 'Margret Boveri' was all over the paper."<sup>42</sup>

Waltraud Fest obtained her journalist internship at the *Duisburger General Anzeiger* through her father, who worked for the paper himself.<sup>43</sup> The paper hired Fest fulltime at the end of her internship. Journalistic opportunities opened up for Helene Rahms when she was still an intern, thanks to an affair with her boss. Twice divorced and described by acquaintances as a beautiful blond, Edit von Coler joined the NSDAP in 1931.<sup>44</sup> As a cousin of Himmler's wife, she had friends and acquaintances in high places.<sup>45</sup> Although not trained as a journalist, in March 1935, based on Himmler's personal recommendation, Edit von Coler became the Foreign Press Chief for the *Reichsnährstand* (Reich Office for Food and Agriculture).

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<sup>42</sup> Margret Boveri, *Verzweigungen: eine Autobiographie*, edited by Uwe Johnson (Munich: R. Piper, 1977), 236.

<sup>43</sup> Anja Meyer, Waltraud Fest interview, *Medienfrauen*, 142-143.

<sup>44</sup> Bella Fromm commented on von Coler's looks and charm. She also claimed to be suspicious of von Coler's political activities on behalf of the Nazi Party. Fromm, *Blood and Banquets*, 117.

<sup>45</sup> Jacques Picard, *Edit von Coler, Als Nazi-Agentin in Bukarest* (Bonn: Schiller, 2010), 29.

Conversely, men who held power in the field could also limit a woman's progress. For instance, the head of the Silesian branch of the Press Association wrote to the main office to complain that the editor of the *Schlesische Sonntagspost* was working too much with women photojournalists and using too many female photographs while highly qualified male photojournalists' requests to be published were not being met.<sup>46</sup> It was not necessarily women's presence in the field that met resistance but rather their visibility or the idea that they were usurping male opportunities. This notion openly contradicted Nazi rhetoric that women must focus their energy on the domestic realm.<sup>47</sup>

For this reason, often with little or no choice, many women journalists worked on a freelance basis.<sup>48</sup> The high unemployment rate that began during the last years of Weimar ensured that in the early 1930s the few permanent positions available went to men.<sup>49</sup> Out of 142 women journalists working in the prewar years, at least 70 (50 percent) were freelance journalists at some stage during their career.<sup>50</sup> The actual number is likely much higher given that 35 of these women did not indicate one way or another whether they worked freelance or in a fulltime position. Assuming that these 35 women were freelance journalists, the number increases to 105 (74 percent). Moreover, the women who listed a position with a newspaper may not have been permanent employees but rather occasional employees (*gelegentliche Mitarbeiter*). Even the newspapers published

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<sup>46</sup> Letter from Herr Lindner to the Reichsverband der Deutschen Press (RDP), 18 December 1939, BAB, R103/80.

<sup>47</sup> Doris Bergen highlights this dynamic with regard to women's roles in the "manly" German Christian movement. Women, Bergen demonstrates, participated in the movement in many ways. Indeed, the group depended on the contribution of women. But, their involvement contrasted with the idea of a "masculine" movement. See Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: the German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> This fact also characterized women's positions in Weimar.

<sup>49</sup> Sitter, "Die eine Hälfte vergisst man(n) leicht!," 226.

<sup>50</sup> Statistics compiled from various files: BAB, R103, R55, R34, NS44, NS42; LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, E Rep 200-64; IfZ, ED 324, ED 348.



by the National Socialist Women's League, the supposed home for women journalists, relied more heavily on freelance contributions than they did on the work of fulltime staff. The most experienced and esteemed journalists often worked freelance at some stage during their career. Heddy Neumeister was a highly educated and trained journalist who became a permanent staff member on the *Kölnische Zeitung* in 1930. The paper did not offer her enough professional possibilities and she left in 1932. Neumeister freelanced in Berlin until 1936 when she joined the respected *Frankfurter Zeitung* to write primarily about social policy (*Sozialpolitik*).<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Margret Boveri worked freelance prior to and after her position at the *Berliner Tageblatt*.

The freelance status of a significant number of female journalists naturally brought with it challenges such as financial and professional insecurity. Despite Boveri's professional success and a number of contract opportunities, she could only keep her head above water after she left the *Berliner Tageblatt* in 1937 because, during that period, she lived rent free and had access to her mother's pension.<sup>52</sup> Based in Rome, Adelheid Dehio was a freelance journalist who had been a steady correspondent for *Der Angriff* since 1932.<sup>53</sup> Dehio's communication with the paper's editorial department throughout 1938 and 1939 demonstrates the vulnerability of even established freelance journalists.

Dehio repeatedly had to send complaints requesting remuneration for work the paper had used. In early March 1939 she wrote to *Angriff* editor, Kurt Kränzlein with the complaint: "I have unfortunately heard absolutely nothing about the work that I submitted, which your editorial department commissioned from me... I am unfortunately

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<sup>51</sup> Dr. Heddy Neumeister, Lebenslauf, undated, BAB, RK 1483.

<sup>52</sup> Boveri, *Verzweigungen*, 309.

<sup>53</sup> Dehio wrote for such diverse papers as *Der Angriff*, the women's magazine, *Die Frau*, the respected *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, and the German News Agency (*Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* or DNB.)

not at all in the position to work for free.”<sup>54</sup> Later that same month she sent another plea, noting that this time she was following up on her work from November about which she had sent many letters. Influential contacts in Italy were asking when they could expect to see her work to which they had contributed. She would regret it, wrote Dehio, if so many years of productive work and partnership with *Der Angriff* were to end over such things.<sup>55</sup>

Freelance work meant professional and financial insecurity for most journalists, but it also ensured them a more expansive audience than their male or female counterparts in fulltime positions had. In addition, a number of freelance journalists were also writers who reached the population through their articles and serialized novels that were included in newspapers. Although press policy sought to restrict female journalists to a female-only audience, due to their freelance status, they often worked for a variety of publications with a diverse readership. Gertrud Burath, for instance, published work in such varied publications as popular illustrated tabloids, numerous dailies, women’s magazines, and trade publications related to the textile, steel, and metal industries. In 1936 she published approximately 29 articles in *Der S.A. Mann*—a publication targeted toward a male audience.<sup>56</sup> Herta Herbst published in the popular *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Westdeutscher Beobachter* (a Nazi paper), and the women’s magazine, *Mode und Heim*, among others. She also wrote for the popular and growing-market of magazines related to radio and radio programs that were widely read

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<sup>54</sup> Letter from Adelheid Dehio to Kurt Kränzlein, 5 March 1939, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr 5.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from Dehio to *Der Angriff* editorial department, 30 March 1939, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Gertrud Burath Fragebogen, 1 October 1936, BAB, RK I62.

by both men and women.<sup>57</sup> Between 1934 and 1936, the number of copies sold of *Berlin hört und sieht* increased by more than 280 percent. The *Deutsche Radio-Illustrierte* was the eighth most popular illustrated magazine in Germany with a circulation in 1936 of more than 800,000.<sup>58</sup> Marta Hillers, who later wrote the famed World War II diary, *A Woman in Berlin*, wrote for at least nine publications including various illustrated tabloids, women's magazines and dailies.<sup>59</sup>

Freelance journalists were also dependent on the German News Agency (DNB) to distribute and publish their work. As the largest central Nazi news agency, the DNB provided much of the content destined for Germany's newspapers, making it a critical tool for the regime. Technically, the organization was run as a private enterprise, but the Ministry of Propaganda had control over all areas including economic issues, personnel and content.<sup>60</sup> The news agency played an influential role with regard to the content published in newspapers throughout Germany. In 1936, for instance, the DNB instructed Karl Silex, editor-in-chief of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and Paul Scheffer, editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, to publish an interview with a Professor Dr. Frank that he had given to Paula Siber, Secretary for Women's Affairs for the Ministry of the Interior and to make sure it was included in a prominent place.<sup>61</sup> Women did not always receive

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<sup>57</sup> Herta Herbst, Lebenslauf, Fragebogen Reichsschriftumskammer, Fragebogen Reichsverband der Deutschen Schriftsteller, 23 August 1935, BAB, RK I233.

<sup>58</sup> Christian Führer, "Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda," 137.

<sup>59</sup> Marta Hillers Fragebogen – zur Bearbeitung des Aufnahmeantrages für die Reichsschriftumskammer, August 1938, BAB, RKB76. See Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin: Diary 20 April 1945 to 22 June 1945*, translated by Philip Boehm (London: Virago, 2005). The book was published in the United States in 1954 and then in Germany in 1959. It was not until it was republished in German in 2003 and in English in 2005 that the book became popular. Although it was published by "Anonymous," Marta Hillers wrote the book supposedly based on her wartime diary.

<sup>60</sup> André Uzulis, "Darf nichts bringen': Eine Nachrichtenagentur im Dritten Reich," in *"Diener des Staates," oder, "Widerstand zwischen den Zeilen"?: Die Rolle der Presse im Dritten Reich,* ed. Christoph Studt (Berlin: Lit, 2007), 110. See also, Uzulis, *Nachrichtenagenturen im Nationalsozialismus: Propagandainstrumente und Mittel der Presselenkung* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1995).

<sup>61</sup> Memo from Paula Siber, Referentin für Frauenfragen im Reichsministerium des Innern, to Dr. Karl

public credit for their work, which meant that regardless of how wide the audience for a particular piece, it was not always clear that a woman had written it. The DNB alerted a Frau Wangenmeim that it planned to distribute her article for publication in German newspapers. However, the agency had removed her name.<sup>62</sup> Given the fact that women (and some men) did not always have a by-line and the relatively popular use of pseudonyms (*Deckname*), it is challenging to determine just how strong a woman's journalistic voice echoed throughout Germany.

### **Hiding Behind a Gender Screen?**

Names possess social power.<sup>63</sup> For this reason, it was not uncommon for women to write under an alias or pseudonym. This practice was often, but not always, due to their sex. The Regional Press Associations were responsible for approving any journalist's application to use an alias. In Berlin, regional press authorities worked in conjunction with the police department to approve requests.<sup>64</sup> The German Press Association monitored all journalists and photojournalists working under pseudonyms to ensure that no one deemed politically or so-called racially unsuitable was able covertly to practice journalism. Each Regional Association was regularly required to send the Press

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Silex, 25 July 1936, BAB, R34/172. Siber noted, "It is desirable that the report over Frank and Engel is especially widely disseminated abroad." For more on Siber, see Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*.

<sup>62</sup> According to the DNB, Frau Wangenmeim's name had been removed because the agency had had to edit the piece. 4 May 1934, BAB, R34/172.

<sup>63</sup> See Dietz Bering, *The Stigma of Names: Antisemitism in German Daily Life, 1812-1933* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992). Bering analyzes the social power of names and examines cases of Jewish Germans who endeavored to change their names due to deeply engrained antisemitism in Germany prior to the Third Reich.

<sup>64</sup> Memo, RDP, "Behandlung von Anträgen auf Erteilung von Deckname," 7 April 1938, BAB, R103/24. The police were involved in the issuing of Deckname. Each applicant completed a police questionnaire and provided proof of their "Aryan" heritage. The police then reviewed whether the pseudonym requested by the applicant was already in use. In April 1938, Wilhelm Weiss noted that the responsible police authorities throughout Germany would be prepared to work in conjunction with the Regional Press Associations to process the applications.

Association a list of updated pseudonyms. The *Deutsche Presse* published these lists, which included the real names and addresses of the journalists.<sup>65</sup>

The use of *Deckname* and what they indicate about women in the press in Nazi Germany is complex. In some instances, the use of pseudonyms could serve to desexualize or even masculinize a woman's name—a practice that rendered her invisible. Cultural journalist Katharina Kleikamp wrote under KK and Gertrud Burath under H. Maden. Franziska Bilke used the male name Franz, and Helga Bousten-Schmucker published under Hans Georg. Foreign correspondent Margret Boveri published under the letters Dr. M. Boveri. As, Boveri herself noted, “the femininity was gone. The readers sometimes asked whether I was the wife of Dr. M.”<sup>66</sup> Boveri claimed that she did not have to alter her by-line until she travelled to Malta to report on the 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia. It was only after Boveri started to make a name for herself as a war correspondent writing in a traditional male domain that she had had to desexualize her name. The timing suggests that Nazi press authorities and (male) editors believed that in the area of hard news a masculine or gender-neutral name held more legitimacy than a female name.

The use of masculine or desexualized aliases was not always tied to the area or type of paper for which women wrote. Although Boveri was a foreign correspondent when she began to use an alias, other female journalists who used male pseudonyms wrote primarily for women's and family magazines and the women's supplements of the

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<sup>65</sup> Memo from the RDP to the Regional Press Offices, 25 March 1938, BAB, R103/24, Rundschreiben Nr. 18.

<sup>66</sup> Boveri, *Verzeigungen*, 284.

daily newspapers.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, some women who used a male alias also used a female one. Other women wrote only under feminine pseudonyms.<sup>68</sup> Out of a compilation of 35 female journalists who used *Decknamen*, 49 percent (17) used a gender-neutral or male name; two of these women (6 percent) also used a female pseudonym. The remaining 18 women (51 percent) used a feminized pseudonym.<sup>69</sup> Men also used pseudonyms but primarily took on other male names.<sup>70</sup>

**Table I. Women’s Use of Pseudonyms**

Total Number of Women	Gender-Neutral or Male Pseudonym	Both Male and Female Pseudonym	Female Pseudonym
35	49 percent (17)	6 percent (2)	51 percent (18)

Source: BAB, R103/92, 4, 5, 6 and 24.

Evidence suggests that names had status and mattered in the press. The use of pseudonyms could help women traverse the boundaries between professional options, acceptance, and perceived legitimacy on the part of readers and even colleagues. The right name in a by-line could simultaneously help the regime bridge any space between its gender rhetoric and the activities of women journalists. In 1933, Martha Maria Gherke wrote an article for *Die Dame* titled “Winter Sports Equipment for the Lady” under the

<sup>67</sup> For instance: Ilse Thien used the pseudonym “Schuster”; Caecile Allemdinger wrote under C. Amaranth; Else Frobenius often used “Joachim.” Frobenius used her real name for her publications in the Women’s League paper, *N.S. Frauen-Warte*. Aliases could be used to differentiate a journalist’s work if he or she was also an author or wrote different type of material for different publications.

<sup>68</sup> Barbara Mueller wrote under the names “Johannes Hardt” and “Marie Daut.” Libertas Schulze-Boysen wrote under the name “Helga Hegt,” and Charlotte Harrer, who wrote for the party papers the *Münchner Zeitung* and *Die Bewegung*, published under the name “Charlotte Rieder.” Thea Fischer was employed on a provincial paper and wrote a daily article under the name “Thea”.

<sup>69</sup> Calculations based on a list of journalists using pseudonyms suggest that the percentage of women who wrote under an alias, whether male or female, was about nine percent. Statistics compiled from the lists of *Decknamen* from BAB, R103/92, 4, 5, 6 and 24.

<sup>70</sup> It is difficult to determine whether any men used a woman’s name to publish in “women’s” periodicals. I have found no such cases in press files. Hans Spielhofer wrote under the name Hans Halsbach and Josef Raabe under Helmut Korbel. Even the well-known journalist and editor of *Der Angriff*, Hans Schwarz van Berk, used the alias Hans Hansen.

degendered by-line G. In the same magazine, the male journalist Franz Leppmann wrote “The Language of Fashion.” Leppmann received a full by-line, suggesting that even when writing about women’s issues, female journalists were less likely to receive full credit for their work than male journalists.<sup>71</sup> The fact that Gherke was part Jewish presumably played a role; from 1934 onward she had trouble pursuing her profession. “Race” mattered more than sex when it came to receiving credit for one’s work, and women were both visible and masked in the field of journalism.

### **Politicizing the Everyday**

Ministry officials, academic studies, and professional publications advised that women were naturally more expressive and emotional than men. In this way, they deemed women particularly suited to write about the personal and the everyday—two areas of critical interest to the Nazi regime. Press authorities sought to channel women into local news, travel, culture, features, and, above all family and women’s magazines and the women’s sections of large dailies. Indeed, the press files on 47 women show that at least 32 (68 percent) worked primarily in these areas.<sup>72</sup> Some women resented being shunted to particular areas. Many years after she began her journalistic career in the Third Reich, Felicitas Kapteina maintained that the women’s pages of newspapers were a “ghetto.”<sup>73</sup> Others strove to work in so-called female appropriate areas not because of

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<sup>71</sup> Nachlass Maria Gherke, Presseartikel 1929-1939, IfZ, ED 324/35. Both articles appeared in the publication *Der Bazar*.

<sup>72</sup> Statistics compiled from various files: BAB, R103, R55, R34, NS44, NS42; LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, E Rep 200-64; Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich (IfZ), ED 324, ED 348. This statistic may be too low since other women who indicated that they worked in areas outside of so-called women’s issues may also have contributed to women’s publications or supplements along with their other area of focus. Out of the forty-seven women, 28 percent (13) published in daily newspapers, 28 percent (13) in specialty or trade publications and 15 percent (7) for Nazi party papers.

<sup>73</sup> Alexa Godbersen, Felicitas Kapteina interview, *Media Frauen*, 66.

Nazi instructions to do so but because they simply found these areas most interesting or appealing. In fact, during their journalistic training, most candidates, male and female, indicated a preference for the cultural or entertainment sections of a newspaper.<sup>74</sup>

The Press Association counseled that to succeed in journalism, men and women required traits traditionally associated with concepts of masculinity: strong nerves, speed, resilience, physical and mental robustness, and a willingness to take on a journalist's significant responsibility to the state and to their public.<sup>75</sup> But the Association also encouraged women to rely on their so-called feminine characteristics to achieve professional success. They should employ a woman's allegedly inherently malleable disposition, imagination, curiosity, fickleness, compassion, adaptability, and eye for detail in the everyday. A female journalist also needed a stylish and vibrant approach to writing – a skill that supposedly, came more easily to women.<sup>76</sup>

In his 1936 study, Dr. Adolf Dresler concluded that, “The journalistic work of women will be limited mainly to entertainment, literature, fashion, education and related topics because the female nature corresponds to these areas. The woman will always write more with her heart than the man.” He also noted that in “her selected areas, a woman journalist's work was sometimes even better than a man's.”<sup>77</sup> Weiss claimed that female reporters were important due to their ability to write in a more varied, colourful and amusing fashion than men.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Protokoll über die Schriftleiteranwärter-Prüfung, RDP, 12 March 1944, BAB, R103/94. A 1944 report stated: “As usual, most of the candidates lean toward the cultural or entertainment pages...but their exam answers also indicate that they recognize that the role of journalist is first and foremost political and one must be able to grapple with political issues.”

<sup>75</sup> Else Boger-Eichler, *Die Schriftleiterin* (Berlin: Akademisches Auskunftsamt der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1939), 8.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>77</sup> Dresler, *Die Frau im Journalismus*, 11-12.

<sup>78</sup> Wilhelm Weiss, “Die Frau im Schriftleiter Beruf,” *Deutsche Presse*, 7 March 1936, 118.



Making content appealing and entertaining to readers was important to Goebbels and other press authorities, particularly given the conformity and blandness of the news that resulted from Ministry of Propaganda control of the press. Willi Bißhoff, head of the Reich Association of German Magazine Publishers, stressed that journalists working on magazines had the same responsibilities for the development of the mind and knowledge of the German population as their colleagues on daily papers: they needed a flair for what was current, rapid decision-making powers, talent and creativity. Even trade magazines, Bißhoff declared, did not need to be dry or boring.<sup>79</sup>

General interest magazines were an important tool in the Nazis' media arsenal and valued for their role in sustaining the appearance of normality and a focus on everyday life in the Third Reich. This category included family and women's magazines as well as radio program guides. Millions of Germans read these publications.<sup>80</sup> Out of the 22 most popular magazines in 1934-1936, the largest group (seven publications or 32 percent) was designated as women's or family magazines. These seven publications had a combined circulation of 3,180, 954.<sup>81</sup>

Freelance journalist Ruth Andreas-Friedrich published in various women's and family magazines, including the *Frankfurter Illustrierte Blatt*, Germany's fourteenth most popular magazine, and the *Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung*, the twenty-third most read magazine. Both publications attracted male and female readers. In addition, she wrote for the *Feuilleton* and women's supplements of the daily papers including the *Deutsche*

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<sup>79</sup> Willie Bißhoff, "Die Berufung der Zeitschrift," *Deutsche Presse*, 14 December 1935, 670-671.

<sup>80</sup> Führer, "Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda," 132.

<sup>81</sup> Statistics compiled using Führer, "Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda," 133.

*Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Berliner Tageblatt*.<sup>82</sup> Such a variety of publishing opportunities gave Andreas-Friedrich a widespread audience. She covered culture, cosmetics, and interpersonal issues with topics such as, “Problems within the Marriage: The First Few Months.”<sup>83</sup> Friedrich’s focus on personal, domestic, and relationship advice were the very areas that appealed most to Germans, men and women alike. Germans preferred magazines that provided entertainment and non-fiction reporting but that also carried a range of lifestyle and household advice. These publications provided the population not only with diversion or a sense of escapism but also offered the chance to improve oneself and one’s personal life.<sup>84</sup>

The *Junge Dame*, a magazine aimed at young, single women, pointed out the importance of its advice column: “You Ask... Frau Ilse Answers.” The magazine maintained that the column was serious, instructive, and addressed political, professional, educational, and moral issues that were important to all readers. In contrast to the rest of the publication, Frau Ilse was designed not to entertain but to educate and inform. Due to its popularity, journalists dedicated more and more of their time to the column.<sup>85</sup> It was the aspirational nature of these magazines that attracted readers.

Along with general reporting, Ilse Thien focused on serialized novels for popular women’s and general interest magazines including *Blatt der Hausfrau*, one of Germany’s most popular magazines.<sup>86</sup> Based on her research, Trampler-Steiner argued that the

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<sup>82</sup> Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, Fragebogen für die Reichsschrifttumskammer, 1936 and 1938, BAB, RKI7. Andreas-Friedrich also published in *Mode and Heim*, *Fürs Haus*, *Berliner Hausfrau*, and *Neue Illustrierte Zeitung*.

<sup>83</sup> Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, “Probleme um die Ehe: Die ersten Ehemonate,” *Berliner Hausfrau* No. 42, 15 July 1937.

<sup>84</sup> Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda,” 134.

<sup>85</sup> Memo, *Die junge Dame*, October 1939, Ministry of Propaganda, BAB, R55/20922.

<sup>86</sup> Ilse Thien, Lebenslauf, undated, BAB, RKI57. Thien also wrote for *Deutsche Familien-Illustrierte*, *Elegante Welt*, *Für alle* and *Berliner Hausfrau*.

serialized novel was the part of the paper that women readers most loved.<sup>87</sup> Serialized novels themselves seemed harmless as they veered away from overt political issues and instead engaged people's imaginations through tales of romance, adventure or scandal. This form of feel-good media provided readers a seemingly de-politicized realm of blissful domesticity, self-improvement, adventure, education, and escapism and made these journals a major force in Germany's media landscape.<sup>88</sup> In addition, domestic themes dominated both general interest and women's magazines during the pre-war period, suggesting that both genres were targeted at married women—an indication of women's strong position as media consumers.

Prior to the war, the regime did not subject magazines to the same rigorous control it did daily newspapers. This meant that both men and women who worked on magazines enjoyed marginally more creativity and intellectual freedom—a fact that may also have motivated women to join family-oriented or women's magazines. Katharina Kleikamp wrote articles about art, home economics, and trade for the *Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung* as well as various fashion and household magazines, despite the fact that the party had doubts about her loyalty to the Nazi state.<sup>89</sup> General interest and women's magazines may have provided a seeming refuge from the oppressiveness of the Propaganda Ministry for readers and journalists alike. Evidence suggests that the regime did not control at least some aspects of the women's supplements on newspapers quite as

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<sup>87</sup> Trampler-Steiner, *Die Frau als Publizistin*, 103.

<sup>88</sup> Führer, "Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda," 148.

<sup>89</sup> NSDAP Gauleitung Berlin, Gau Personalamt, Politische Beurteilung, Katharina Kleikamp, 28 May 1937, BAB, RKI279. The NSDAP's 1937 political assessment of Kleikamp warned, "[Her] attitude toward the Nazi state is in serious doubt." Kleikamp began her career during the Weimar Republic. She had returned to work during the Third Reich due to dire financial circumstances after her husband, a former government employee in the Ministry of the Interior, had been dismissed when the Nazis came to power. Karl Kleikamp was dismissed without a pension because, prior to Hitler's ascension to power, he had allegedly held an important position.

vigorously as it did other sections. In 1938, the leaders of the Reich Press School decided that fashion journalists did not have to attend the school at the end of their training. Rather, the head of the Regional Association would, based on the trainee's personality and achievement, decide whether he or she would be entered into the professional registrar as a fashion journalist.<sup>90</sup>

Sometimes a niche in women's issues proved beneficial. Photojournalist Liselotte Purper's career took off in 1936 when her work came to the attention of Hanna Holzwart, the editor of *Frauenkultur*, the monthly magazine of the *Deutsche Frauenwerk*. Born in 1918 to a middle class family, Purper's connection with Holzwart provided her with contacts within the Press and Propaganda department of the National Socialist League of German Women.<sup>91</sup> Her first pictures appeared in *Frauenkultur* in 1936. In 1937 she had four reportages included in the paper, all depicting an idyllic and feminine Nazi lifestyle.<sup>92</sup> Purper also published within the pages of *N.S. Frauen-Warte*, the flagship paper of the National Socialist League of German Women, as well as a handful of general women's magazines.<sup>93</sup>

Purper was able to build a successful freelance career and achieve financial security. A woman journalist depicting the activities of other women either within or outside of the League of German Women aligned more closely to the regime's discourse on separate but equal realms for men and women. Indeed, press authorities' communication to female journalists asserted that they needed to be active in the press

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<sup>90</sup> Memo, Amtsgerichtsrat Justiciar, RDP, 1 August 1938, BAB, R103/4, Nr.53.

<sup>91</sup> Protte, "Beruf: 'Bildberichterstatterin'," 4.

<sup>92</sup> Purper's 1937 reportages included, "The Reich School for Mothers in Berlin-Wedding: A Place of Feminine Culture and Womanly Support" (January); "Relief Work for Mother and Child at the Start of Summer"; "The House of a German Woman" (July); and "A Day at the National Socialist Women's League Camp for Regional Youth Group Leaders" (August).

<sup>93</sup> Purper also took on commissioned work that dealt with portraying the lives of Germans from the National Socialist People's Welfare Organization and the Reich Labour Service.

because only women had the inherent understanding and knowledge about women's lives. Such knowledge and capability were a part of a woman's nature and made female journalists a natural to handle women's interests.<sup>94</sup> The words of a woman journalist regarding child-care or domestic issues for a female audience appeared more legitimate than a male journalist addressing the same topics. Women journalists on the peripheries of power could in this way wield important influence.

### **The “Women’s Supplements” in Daily Newspapers**

The supplements for daily papers were by and large composed of fashion, sewing patterns, recipes, household, and lifestyle advice, articles about children and childrearing, culture, serial novels, and sometimes puzzles, humour and letters from readers.<sup>95</sup> The *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, a typical daily, included a weekly women's supplement called *Die Welt der Frau* (The World of the Woman).<sup>96</sup> Articles from December 1934 illustrate the personal nature of the material: “Return to the ‘Heimat’: A Christmas trip to the Baltic,” and “What Women are Writing.” There was an on-going column titled “Domestic Angle” that provided housekeeping and shopping tips and an advice column that dealt with interpersonal issues. A typical topic: “An Untrustworthy Man—An

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<sup>94</sup> Boger-Eichler, *Die Schriftleiterin*, 8-9.

<sup>95</sup> Serial novels and general entertainment were also found in other sections of a newspaper or in additional supplements.

<sup>96</sup> Founded by August Scherl of the Scherl Publishing House in 1883, the paper was a part of Alfred Hugenberg's right-wing conservative press empire in the early 1930s. Norbert Frei notes, in a broader sense the classification “bourgeois-conservative” applied to most of the German press, or at the very least the papers that were not confessional, social democratic or communist. See Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Beck, 1989), 54-55. Other popular dailies, such as the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, also included “women's” supplements.

Unfeeling Woman.” Articles only infrequently addressed topics about women at work.<sup>97</sup> Male journalists too occasionally worked on women’s topics, although this was not a role most men desired.

The women’s supplements were located toward the back of the paper, along with the entertainment, gardening, and travel supplements. The supplements connected to areas that the population could personally identify with and created a sense of insularity and security from larger events. By contrast, the front pages of a newspaper focused on national and world events and more clearly spoke with the voice of the Nazi regime.<sup>98</sup> The front-page headlines of the 2 December 1934 *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* included “Political Murder in Leningrad: High Party Official Shot by Terrorists,” “The Saar Economy after Reincorporation,” and “Göring Honours the Unknown Worker.”<sup>99</sup>

But Nazism linked domesticity to its political agenda and thus the women’s supplements helped to politicize the personal. The regime urged housewives to alter how they kept house, cooked, shopped and sewed in order to support German rearmament.<sup>100</sup> In 1936, Göring’s Four-Year Plan aimed at preparing the country for war.<sup>101</sup> The regime directed resources away from consumer goods and toward the production of war materials. Housewives and mothers were responsible for family purchases and thus an

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<sup>97</sup> See *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 2 December 1934, 9 December 1934, 16 December 1934 and 23 December 1934. For instance, the December 16, 1934 issue included the article “From the Lives of Professional Women: Studying Law.”

<sup>98</sup> Andrew Stuart Bergerson, “Integrating in the Accusative: The Daily Papers of Interwar Hildesheim,” *Issues in Integrative Studies* No. 15, (1997): 8.

<sup>99</sup> *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 2 December 1934, 1. The murder preceded “The Great Terror” of the 1930s. Evidence suggests that Stalin planned Kirov’s murder.

<sup>100</sup> Nancy Reagin outlines the relationship between a particular idea of “German” domesticity and nationalism from 1870 onward. In World War I, the Weimar Republic, under the Nazis’ Four-Year Plan, and in Poland during World War II, a notion of “German” housekeeping was incorporated into public policy. Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation*.

<sup>101</sup> For more on the Four-Year Plan and the regime’s overall economic objectives see Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: the Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Penguin, 2007).

economic force that the government recognized.<sup>102</sup> In this way, women were perhaps the most important target of Nazi propaganda disseminated through the press.

### **A Paper of Their Own**

The publications of the League of German Women provide the most overt example of how domesticity, culture, and topics related to everyday lives and relationships helped support Nazi notions of race and the regime's preparations for war. A position within the Press and Propaganda department of the National Socialist League of German Women and its subsidiary, the German Women's Association (*Deutsches Frauenwerk*), or for one of the publications they produced, corresponded to the regime's depiction of the ideal role for women journalists: to convey National Socialist ideology through an organization and paper targeted entirely at Germany's women. Under the direct authority of the party, the League of German Women focused its message on the importance of women to the Nazi state not only as wives and mothers but also as agents in the social and cultural fields. In addition, women were the conveyors and maintainers of racial purity and the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

An early member of the NSDAP, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink became head of the League in 1934. Under her leadership it defined itself as an organization that brought together "the housewife and the academic woman, the teacher and the sister [and] those employed in the workforce along with the artistic woman."<sup>103</sup> The Press and Propaganda

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<sup>102</sup> As Reagin points out, housewives who managed their families' budgets were among the first to see the impact of Germany's rearmament. Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation*, 150.

<sup>103</sup> Erika Kirmsee, *Deutsches Frauenschaften: Jahrbuch der Reichsfrauenführung* (Berlin: Im Auftrage der Reichsfrauenführung, 1937), 6. The Women's League itself was under the direct (male) control of the NSDAP. By 1935 the organization boasted almost two million members. Scholtz-Klink became head of the organization in February 1934. For more on the Women's League, see Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland* and Jill Stephenson, *The Nazi Organisation of Women* (London: Croom Helm, 1981).

department served as the organization's mouthpiece and its link to Germany's women. To present a unified front and consistent message, all press worthy material from the organization's various divisions flowed through the department. Staff members reworked the material into propagandistic form and disseminated it further.

The League viewed the role of all women journalists, whether they worked inside or outside the organization, as important both to it and to the Nazi state. Its Press and Propaganda department staked an interest in the career path for female journalists and involved itself in their professional life beginning with their training. Prior to acceptance to the Reich Press School, journalism candidates spent eight days in the department to learn its activities.<sup>104</sup> The department also held professional days and lectures for established women journalists.<sup>105</sup> To maximize its reach, it installed women press experts (*Pressereferentinnen*) in every province and district in Germany and worked closely with the Press and Political Office of the Reich Leadership of the NSDAP along with all press offices of the party and state. Because not all press experts were journalists, the department organized training courses to ensure that they worked closely with Germany's women journalists.<sup>106</sup> The agenda for a day course in May 1939 included the following discussion topics: Is Journalism a Women's Profession? What Behavior do we Expect from a Journalist? A Journalist's Job Description; Working Together: the League of German Women and Journalists; and The Career Path for Journalists in the Women's League.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Boger-Eichler, *Die Schriftleiterin*, 12.

<sup>105</sup> Bericht über die Tagung der Gauabteilungsleiterinnen, 2 May 1939, BAB, NS 44/46.

<sup>106</sup> Kirmsee, *Deutsches Frauenschaffen: Jahrbuch*, 6. Courses were provided through the "Reichsschule."

<sup>107</sup> NSF Press and Propaganda Department memo, 7 January 1937, BAB, NS/45 and NSF Press and Propaganda Department memo, 26 May 1939, BAB, NS/44/46.



To disseminate its ideology as widely as possible, the Press and Propaganda department provided content for the daily press and numerous magazines. In a memo directed to all regional department heads, Erika Kirmsee, head of Press and Propaganda, introduced guidelines on how to work more closely with newspapers in order to better promote the organization's work and achievements. In 1937, Kirmsee noted that she was pleased with what each region had achieved to date in terms of collaboration with the regional press.<sup>108</sup> The fact that the League placed an emphasis on disseminating material to various publications gave its journalists a voice that extended well beyond the organization's almost two million members.

The department undertook various media-related initiatives including organizing its own press conferences, hosting radio shows, staging exhibits and talks, and disseminating poster propaganda. A typical campaign took place in May 1937 in honour of Mother's Day. Its purpose was to communicate the critical role of women within the scope of the Four-Year Plan. To ensure its material was published, the Press and Propaganda instructed regional press experts to provide "fluffy," "lively" articles for the press and avoid serious pieces, indicating that it was aware of the type of material that would appeal to German readers outside the scope of the League.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Abgeschlossene Werbung für das Deutsche Frauenwerk, 3 August 1937, BAB, NS44/45, Rundschreiben Nr. 131/37. For instance, an article about the Women's League and how to join appeared in the well-respected *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* in February 1936.

<sup>109</sup> National Women's League memo, 15 April 1937, BAB, NS44/45. The press leaders of each Gau were required to report on their successes. Mother's Day was also politicized in the Weimar Republic. Ideology related to Mother's Day glorified motherhood in order to encourage an increase in the birth rate and to encourage women to make sacrifices in the midst of economic and political crises. See Karin Hausen, "Mother's Day in the Weimar Republic," in *When Biology Became Destiny. Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, eds., Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984): 131-152.

### *N.S. Frauen-Warte*

Perhaps the most important undertaking and opportunity for both the organization and women journalists were the League's own publications, which included:

*Frauenkultur*, *Deutsche Hauswirtschaft*, and *Mutter und Volk* as well as the annual *Deutsches Frauenschaften Jahrbuch der Reichsfrauenführung*. The organization's most important paper, the *N.S. Frauen-Warte*, held the elite position as the only official party paper for women. Like all other party papers, it mainly served the regime's propaganda purposes and provided a form of self-promotion for the League and its subsidiaries. The paper appeared biweekly from 1932 to 1943, after which it was published monthly (until 1945) due to wartime paper shortages, though at a time when other women's publications were long since cancelled.

*N.S. Frauen-Warte* enjoyed a wide distribution. Recipients included party members as well as women who were not connected to any National Socialist organization. In fact, the League deemed it more important to target women who were not politically organized in their distribution list because it was an opportunity to disseminate propaganda to those women who were perhaps not close to or convinced by the Nazi party. The price was low so that most women could access the paper. Gertrud Scholtz-Klink encouraged regional press experts to "recommend that women of lesser means band together for a subscription."<sup>110</sup>

Already in November 1932, the National Socialist Women's Organization positioned the paper as an important medium in the movement's struggle. A memo to the organization's district leaders declared, "...the goal of our movement is not only to gain

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<sup>110</sup> Reichsfrauenführerin, Memo, Gemeinschaftswerbung für unsere Zeitschriften, 1 November 1937, BAB, NS/45, Rundschreiben Nr. 166/37.

followers but to make convinced and exemplary National Socialists out of them. And in this work the main task falls to the woman.”<sup>111</sup> Conversant with Nazi ideology, the newspaper’s primary purpose was to promote women’s service in the family, social, and cultural domains. Its construction of womanhood was the role of housewife and mother. *N.S. Frauen-Warte* covered a range of topics, the predominance of which changed according to the goals of the regime and, later, the events of the war. Each issue was composed of articles pertaining to general news, fashion, recipes, *Feuilleton*, household tips and advertisements as well as pieces about travel and leisure.<sup>112</sup> In this way, the *N.S. Frauen-Warte* modeled the ideal National Socialist life-style for a woman and her family.

In the fall of 1937, in the midst of the Four-Year Plan, the League undertook a massive advertising campaign to further increase the paper’s circulation. Gertrud Scholtz-Klink announced: “For the successful training and justification of our work, we need [to ensure] the widest distribution of our three newspapers. A comparison between the circulation numbers with the membership of the League of German Women and the German Women’s Association shows that the current distribution of our three papers is insufficient. As a result, over the next three months we will undertake an intensive advertising campaign ...I expect your active efforts for this campaign.”<sup>113</sup> The campaign was a success: at the end of 1937 the *N.S. Frauen-Warte*’s circulation was 700,000, and by the beginning of World War II it had increased to 1 ½ million, making it the leading

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<sup>111</sup> Memo, *N.S. Frauen-Warte*, 30 November 1932, BAB, NS44/54.

<sup>112</sup> See *N.S. Frauen-Warte* issues from July 1933 to August 1939, BAB, Berlin, NS47/12. The *Feuilleton* section included book reviews, poems, short stories, serial novels, and various cultural offerings. A significant proportion of the paper’s content—more than two thirds of the articles -- related to the National Socialist construction of womanhood; this portrait of Germany’s women was almost always positive. Kirsten Döhring, Renate Feldmann, *Von ‘N.S. Frauen-Warte’ bis Victory: Konstruktionen von Weiblichkeit in nationalsozialistischen und rechtsextremen Frauenzeitschriften* (Berlin: Logos, 2004), 92.

<sup>113</sup> Reichsfrauenführerin, Memo, Gemeinschaftswerbung für unsere Zeitschriften, 1 November 1937, BAB, NS/45, Rundschreiben Nr. 166/37.

women's publication in Germany.<sup>114</sup> Most journals had a circulation of maximum 50,000; the *N.S. Frauen-Warte's* circulation numbers gave those who wrote for it a particularly large audience.<sup>115</sup>

Prior to the war, articles about women's role in the family included such titles as "Preserving and Strengthening the Family" (1933); "A Mother with Many Children (*Kinderreiche Mutter*) tells of her Experiences" (1934); "More Understanding for the Family" (1936) and "Work without End: The Daily Work of a Farmers' Wife" (1939). Articles dispensing household advice included such titles as "A Beautiful Home Through Proper Care," (1936). Women were not to purchase new goods but rather preserve and care for what they had; this type of household management was women's contribution to the war.

All articles about family and motherhood were in line with traditional German and European gender ideology but they also corresponded with Nazi racial ideology and its notion of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The 1936 article, "Every Mother of Good Blood is Holy to Us—From the Work of the SS. The 'Lebensborn', A Higher German Future," for instance, disseminated vitriol about "Aryan" versus Jewish blood—a Nazi worldview embodied in the 1935 Nuremberg laws that removed Germans classified as Jewish from civic life.<sup>116</sup> Even seemingly benign decorating tips included anti-foreign or even racist undertones. The article "Our Apartment Becomes a Home" featured photos of two bedroom sets. It described the "fancy", art deco inspired set, as "How the Bedroom

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<sup>114</sup> Kirmsee, *Deutsches Frauenschaffen*, 6.

<sup>115</sup> Döhring and Feldmann, *Von 'N.S. Frauen-Warte' bis Victory*, 89.

<sup>116</sup> *N.S. Frauen-Warte* No. 6 (1936): 166, BAB, NSD47/12. For more on the regime's pro and anti-natal policies see Gisela Bock, *Zwangssterilisation im Nationalsozialismus: Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik* (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1986) and Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State," in *When Biology became Destiny*, 271:296.

Should Not Look. This bombastic form, using foreign wood...does not correspond to the lifestyle of the German people.” Another photo displayed a bedroom suite as it should look: a simple form, constructed from beech wood, without any decoration that “attracted dust.”<sup>117</sup> Such pieces demonstrate the subtler and less overtly political ways in which Nazi racial policy developed and took hold.<sup>118</sup>

Each issue of the *N.S. Frauen-Warte* was built around a central theme.<sup>119</sup> Topics ranged from women in the family to war, from culture to colonialism. According to a study conducted by Kirsten Döring and Renate Feldmann, most of the paper’s central themes—70.6 percent from 1933-4 to 1940-1—were not woman specific.<sup>120</sup> No matter the theme, however, the paper dedicated articles to women’s place within that area. The 15 August 1933 issue centered around discussions of “race” and Judaism with such articles as: “Not Christian rather German is the Opposite of Jewish” by a male journalist. “German Girl Amongst Jews” by a female writer tackled the allegedly harmful influence of Jews and their unsavoury interest in “Aryan” girls. Nazi propaganda often depicted Jews as predatory and charged that they posed a sexual threat to “Aryan” girls.<sup>121</sup>

Antisemitism was the prominent theme again in January 1938, a year that brought the

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<sup>117</sup> *N.S. Frauen-Warte* No. 26 (June 1938): 182, BAB, NSD47/12.

<sup>118</sup> Along with home furnishings, the Nazi regime also attempted to purge anything “foreign” such as French or “non-Aryan” influences from the field of fashion. See Irene Guenther, *Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2004).

<sup>119</sup> There was little content about professional women included in the paper, although women’s work outside of the family and home was an important theme even before World War II. Such articles tended to focus on women in service to the Nazi state like the July 1933 “Feminine Work in Service to the People’s Community.” During the war the paper served to mobilize women for war work, for instance in factories or as flak gunnery assistants.

<sup>120</sup> Döring, Feldmann, *Von ‘N.S. Frauen-Warte’ bis Victory*, 98. The figure of 70.6% relates to the years 1933/4-1940/1.

<sup>121</sup> Doris Bergen, “Social Death and International Isolation: Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939,” in *Nazi Germany Canadian Responses. Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War*, ed. Ruth L Klein (Montreal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 8. For more on antisemitism in Germany see Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1939. The Years of Persecution* (London; Phoenix: Orion Books, 1997) and Albert S. Lindemann and Richard S. Levy eds, *Antisemitism: A History* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

German annexation of Austria, the Sudeten Crisis, and *Kristallnacht*. Articles included “Flaming signs of the Jewish World Revolution,” written by a female journalist. An article titled “The Eternal Jew” (which appeared prior to the 1940 film) by Dr. Hermann Schramm included photos meant to showcase aspects of the Jewish “race”: pictures of ugly, deformed or seedy-looking men along photos of made-up women who were smoking or otherwise engaged in activities the Nazis labeled inappropriate or even degenerate for women. These visions were contrasted with photos of “German” women engaged in productive female work such as caring for children.

The paper’s most frequent central theme focused on the East as a colonial space.<sup>122</sup> With articles addressing Germany’s need for *Lebensraum*, the July 1936 issue provided a direct connection to rearmament and the pretext Hitler would use to wage his war of race and space. The July 1938 issue dealt with the topic of the Sudeten Germans and included the piece, “The Sudeten Germans in the Fight.”<sup>123</sup> Hitler, always intent on war on his terms, had hoped that the Sudeten issue would result in this objective.<sup>124</sup> The Munich crisis averted war (for the time being) and ceded this critical Czech territory to Germany. In general, articles about the East were intended to create a sense of German ownership of the East and raise support for Hitler’s later plans to colonize Eastern territories.

In November 1938, in a secret speech to representatives of the German press in Munich Hitler outlined the importance of propaganda during the Czech crisis and the role such propaganda would play in preparing Germany for war:

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<sup>122</sup> Döhning, Feldmann, *Von ‘N.S. Frauen-Warte’ bis Victory*, 98-99.

<sup>123</sup> The same issue of *N.S. Frauen-Warte* included a more “womanly” piece about dirndls in the Ostmark (Austria), which Germany had annexed in March of that same year.

<sup>124</sup> On Hitler’s planned path to war see Gerhard Weinberg, *Hitler’s Foreign Policy 1933-1939: the Road to World War II* (New York: Enigma, 2005).

We have set ourselves several tasks this year which we want to achieve through our propaganda—and I consider the press present here among the main instruments of propaganda. First, the gradual preparation of the German people themselves. For years circumstances have compelled me to talk about almost nothing but peace. Only by continually stressing Germany's desire for peace and her peaceful intentions could I... provide the armaments, which were always necessary before the next step could be taken. But it was now necessary gradually to re-educate the German people psychologically and to make it clear that there are things which *must* be achieved by force if peaceful means fail. To do this, it was necessary not to advocate force as such, but to depict to the German people certain diplomatic events in such a light that the inner voice of the nation itself gradually began to call for the use of force... I would like to state now that this propaganda has worked superbly this year, quite superbly and that the press has got completely used to this work and that I personally looked through the numerous German papers each day with great pleasure... The greatness of this success became clearest to me at that moment when, for the first time, I stood in the middle of the Czech fortifications.<sup>125</sup>

Colonialism was the central theme of the *N.S. Frauen-Warte's* August 1939 edition.

Although the issue did not focus on Poland, the timing of the publication is telling; Hitler was about to launch his war against Poland, the primary target of rhetoric about German living space. On 23 August Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The non-aggression pact included a secret protocol, which contained the details of a division of Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe.<sup>126</sup> Articles that month in the *N.S. Frauen-Warte* included “German Women in Africa,” with photos by Ilse Steinhoff, and “The Colonial Achievements of the German Red Cross Overseas” by Sofie von Ihde as well as a selection of German colonial literature.<sup>127</sup> Under the mask of apolitical women's stories and culture, these articles encouraged pride in Germany's colonial history and supported Nazi beliefs in expansion and empire building. They also

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<sup>125</sup> As quoted in Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Nazism 1919-1945, Volume 3, Foreign Policy and Racial Extermination* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 113-114.

<sup>126</sup> For more on the relationship between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union see Gerhard Weinberg, *Germany and the Soviet Union, 1939-1941* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954) and Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

<sup>127</sup> *N.S. Frauen-Warte* No. 4 (August 1939): 108-11, BAB, NSD47/12.

connected to German foreign policy and were designed to help foster enthusiasm for war even as Hitler continued to claim he desired peace.<sup>128</sup> In this way, the political activity of women played a role in every issue.<sup>129</sup>

The fact that the *N.S. Frauen-Warte* was a party paper and focused directly at women meant that it corresponded most closely with press authorities' beliefs about the role for female journalists in the Nazi state: to communicate the Nazi way of life and worldview to Germany's women. Nevertheless, the paper did not provide many fulltime opportunities for women journalists and instead relied heavily on freelance contributions. In addition, the paper was not a home only for female journalists. Men also contributed articles. Indeed, out of 236 articles only 36 percent were written by women, 21 percent by men and 42 percent by authors whose sex was indiscernible either due to an alias or no by-line. If one brackets out the authors whose gender cannot be discerned, women produced 60.8 percent of the articles and men 39 percent with the exception of the year prior to the war (1937-1938) when male journalists provided the most content.<sup>130</sup>

Still, women journalists did find fulltime and consistent freelance work at the paper. A look at the backgrounds, experiences and writing of some of the women journalists who worked closely with *N.S. Frauen-Warte* shows that female contributors to its pages fit a certain profile. Although not a requirement for other magazines and newspapers, these women tended to be party members. They also had a personal connection to lost territories, "threatened" borders, or Eastern regions with German minorities. This trend suggests that the paper wanted women who would be able to

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<sup>128</sup> See Weinberg, *Hitler's Foreign Policy*.

<sup>129</sup> German women had long-term ties with the colonial movement in Africa and Eastern Europe. See Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

<sup>130</sup> Döhring, Feldmann, *Von 'N.S. Frauen-Warte' bis Victory*, 91.



effectively toe the party line, so to speak, about the importance of the East to German identity. Ellen Schwarz-Semmelroth, who eventually became editor, had joined the NSDAP in September 1930.<sup>131</sup> Renate von Stieda, Irmgard von Maltzahn, and Else Frobenius, all consistent contributors to the paper, had joined the party in November 1929, August 1930 and May 1933 respectively. All three also addressed Germany's relationship with the East in their writing.

Born in Riga, Renate von Stieda began working with the paper in May 1933 at the age of 25 and continued on as part of the editorial and writing team throughout the war. At the same time, she also published articles in the women's supplements of the *Völkischer Beobachter* along with non-party papers and magazines. A dedicated National Socialist, von Stieda founded the "Local chapter of the National-Socialist Union of Schoolgirls" in Leipzig in 1930.<sup>132</sup> From 1932-1933 she worked as a cultural expert in the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel* or BDM.)<sup>133</sup> Prior to the war, von Stieda's writing on the East included the article "Trip over the Border" (July 1933) about her travels in Poland as well as the 1937 book *Krieg über der Kindheit*. The book was aimed at German youth and described Germany's World War I experience on the Eastern front from von Stieda's viewpoint.<sup>134</sup> At the age of 10 she had fled Latvia for Germany with her mother and siblings. Her father died near Riga in 1920.<sup>135</sup> Nazi ideology claiming that *Volksdeutsche* communities in the East were a part of the

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<sup>131</sup> Ellen Schwarz-Semmelroth file, BAB, RKI549.

<sup>132</sup> *Ortsgruppe des Nationalsozialistischen Schulerinnenbundes*

<sup>133</sup> Renate von Stieda, Lebenslauf, 26 January 1939 and RDP Fragebogen, undated, BAB, RKB211. Prior to becoming a journalist, von Stieda had worked as a helper in a children's home, as a domestic worker, a librarian, and a stenographer.

<sup>134</sup> Von Stieda continued to publish after the war. A novel depicting a soldier's reflections on his Third Reich past titled *Das fremde Reich* appeared in 1975.

<sup>135</sup> Renate von Stieda, Lebenslauf, 26 January 1939, BAB, RKB211. The files do not specify the reason why the von Stieda family left Lithuania or how her father died. The wording on her *Lebenslauf*, however, suggests that, as ethnic Germans, they felt in some way threatened.

*Volksgemeinschaft*, and Hitler's calls for Lebensraum likely appealed to von Stieda given her family's background.

The writer and journalist Irmgard von Maltzahn was also a regular contributor to the *N.S. Frauen-Warte*. Born in 1893 in the Pomeranian town of Roidin, Maltzahn spent the years of World War I in Berlin working with the Red Cross and later the National Women's Service. In 1919-20 she worked in a transit camp assisting returning German POWs from the East. She later moved to Danzig where she founded the Danzig chapter of the BDM. A prolific writer, von Maltzahn published a number of books after 1933, including *German Girls on the Outpost* about German communities in "threatened" border regions. She also worked with von Stieda on *Krieg über der Kindheit*. She published her short story "Heimkehr" about POWs returning from the East in the 1 August 1933 issue of *N.S. Frauen-Warte*.<sup>136</sup>

A fervent nationalist, Else Frobenius enjoyed a long and prominent career prior to and during the Third Reich, writing primarily about women's issues. She brought her own political beliefs about National Socialism, *Volksdeutsche*, colonialism, and Germany's World War I defeat into her work. Born in 1878 and of German origin, Frobenius grew up in Estonia, then part of the Russian empire. In March 1908, after experiencing the upheaval of the Russian Revolution in 1905 and her husband's bankruptcy in 1907, Frobenius moved to Berlin.<sup>137</sup> There she became politically active in the area of women's rights, colonialism, and German nationalism. She joined the nationalistic *Deutsche Volkspartei* in 1919 and the National Socialist Party in May 1933.

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<sup>136</sup> Irmgard von Maltzahn, Lebenslauf, undated, BAB, RK I401.

<sup>137</sup> Else Frobenius, *Erinnerungen einer Journalisten*, 91.

On behalf of the League of German Women, Frobenius lectured about literature, particularly works about German colonialism.<sup>138</sup>

For Frobenius, the move to Berlin instigated a huge turning point in her life. What awaited her on the other side, she claimed in her memoir, was her work. For the majority of her career, Frobenius worked as a freelance journalist. She published her first article in May 1909 in the *Neue Preussische Zeitung*. In fall 1920, she received a letter from Hugo Stinnes, asking her if she would like to take over the independent management of the women's supplement for the conservative daily, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.<sup>139</sup> The first issue of the paper with the inclusion of the supplement "Frau und Welt" appeared in January 1921.<sup>140</sup> Due to economic difficulties the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* stopped printing its supplement in 1922. Nevertheless, Frobenius continued to work for the paper as a reporter on behalf of women's associations. She also wrote for the women's supplements of other papers and took over the direction of the women's pages for the publication, *Auslandswarte*.

Frobenius joined the German Press Association in 1923 and remained a member throughout the Third Reich. She was also classified as a *Kunstberichter*, the National Socialist term (formerly art critic) for those who wrote about art, dance, theatre, music and film. Press authorities closely controlled the list of *Kunstberichter*, a fact that highlights the importance with which they viewed, and strove to control, culture.<sup>141</sup> The

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<sup>138</sup> Else Frobenius, Fragebogen, 1938, BAB, RKI120. She was also a member of the National Socialist League of German Women and the Reich Colonial League.

<sup>139</sup> Frobenius, *Erinnerungen einer Journalisten*, 180. Frobenius attributed the offer to her acquaintance with Clara Mende who also knew Stinnes as well as her own work with the "Kolonialen Frauenbund." For more on German women and colonialism see Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*.

<sup>140</sup> The women's supplements were incorporated into the paper's *Feuilleton* section.

<sup>141</sup> Else Frobenius, Fragebogen, 1938, BAB, RKI120. In 1934 Frobenius was entered as a journalist without restrictions into List A of the German Press Association's Professional Registrar. For more on the importance of culture to the Nazi regime, see Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1939*.

type of journalism Frobenius practiced did not change significantly from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich. She wrote consistently for the women's pages of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, for the women's journals *Blatt der Hausfrau* and *Das Deutsche Mädel*, and for the *N.S. Frauen-Warte*.<sup>142</sup>

Frobenius travelled widely for her profession, writing articles about festivals, landscapes, cities, castles, art and literature—often with a “völkisch” bent.<sup>143</sup> Given her nationalistic outlook and her own background, her work often depicted the lifestyle and culture of *Volksdeutsche* communities in regions east of Germany. On a trip to Latvia, for instance, she visited a German folk festival and an exhibition “celebrating the agricultural riches of the Land.”<sup>144</sup> Articles about and for *Volksdeutsche* communities in regions East of Germany served to stimulate the reader's imagination about the beauty and exoticism of the East and the so-called civilizing influence of German culture within these areas. This discourse had violent ramifications during World War II as the regime expelled Poles in areas of Poland and massacred millions of Jews as part of the scheme to “Germanize” the East.<sup>145</sup> Frobenius' career directly aligned with what press authorities

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<sup>142</sup> Else Frobenius, Fragebogen, 1938, BAB, RKI120. For more on the *Volksdeutsche* see Doris Bergen, “The Nazi Concept of 'Volksdeutsche' and the Exacerbation of Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, 1939-45,” *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 1994): 569-582; idem “Tenuousness and Tenacity: The Volksdeutschen of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Holocaust,” in *The Heimat Abroad. The Boundaries of Germanness*, eds., Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005); idem “Sex, Blood, and Vulnerability: *Women Outsiders in German-Occupied Europe*,” in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, eds., Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); idem “The Volksdeutschen of Eastern Europe and the Collapse of the Nazi Empire, 1944-1945,” in *The Impact of Nazism. New Perspectives on the Third Reich and its Legacy*, eds., Alan E. Steinweis and Daniel E. Rogers (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

<sup>143</sup> Frobenius also undertook press trips for the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA or Association for Germans Abroad.)

<sup>144</sup> Frobenius, *Erinnerungen eine Journalistin*, 194.

<sup>145</sup> For more on Germany's colonial discourse and actions in Poland see Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) and Kristen Kopp, *Germany's Wild East: Constructing Poland as Colonial Space* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012).

claimed was suitable for women journalists, particularly her press work with the National Socialist Women's League and the People's Welfare Organization and her focus on German *völkisch* culture. Under the veneer of travel and enjoyment, her articles carried political messages concerning Nazi views on World War I, the "harsh" treaty of Versailles, expansion, and the "inferiority" of Slavs and Jews.

### Helping to "Loosen" up the Party Papers

The party papers often presented an image of aggressive masculinity, screaming political headlines and virulent antisemitism in line with Nazi ideology. Certainly these elements were a prominent aspect of two of the best-known and most overtly political Nazi papers, *Der Angriff* and the official party organ, *Völkischer Beobachter*. Yet female journalists, positioned as far removed from (traditional) politics and a man's world, did write for these papers during the 1930s, albeit in small numbers.<sup>146</sup> Prior to, and after January 1933, the party press was preoccupied with how to expand its readership beyond the narrow circle of party members and thereby influence a larger segment of the German population. The conflict between the image of party papers as the regime's fighting press and their need to broaden their readership by including appealing and interesting stories created room for journalists who could be associated with both overt and more subtle Nazified articles.<sup>147</sup> Given that women made up over 50 percent of the population, a woman's voice benefited such publications. Both the *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Der*

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<sup>146</sup> For example, from 1933 to 1935, Herta Herbst produced material for the party's *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, along with the illustrated *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, the respected daily, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, and a variety of fashion and home publications. Herbst described most of her work as "feuilletonistischer" style although she also wrote travel articles and conducted occasional interviews. Herta Herbst, Reichschriftumskammer Fragebogen, 23 August 1935, BAB, RK I 233.

<sup>147</sup> Frei, Schmitz, *Journalismus*, 98-99.

*Angriff* carried women's interest pieces and other content seemingly free from ideology to which women contributed.<sup>148</sup> *Der Angriff* provides a telling case. In a 1938 memo to all *Auslandsvertreter*, *Angriff* editor, Kurt Kranzlein asked for a short article about New Year's celebrations around the world: "The Report Should be Short and Funny; No Politics."<sup>149</sup>

Established in the summer of 1927 by Gauleiter Joseph Goebbels, *Der Angriff* played an important part in the rise of National Socialism in Berlin. For the first year of its existence, the paper was the only means by which Goebbels could disseminate Nazi ideology. He paid particular attention to the content and strove to create an aggressive tone that appealed to his constituents. Adept at playing on the atmosphere created by the depression—widespread unemployment, misery, and frustration with the Weimar Republic—*Der Angriff's* propaganda was mostly negative in character. It became important in Berlin's political life and soon began to rival other political newspapers published in the city.<sup>150</sup> At the core of the paper was virulent antisemitism, as Goebbels proclaimed that the Jews were responsible for the Weimar Republic and Germany's suffering. After 1933, the paper put out both a morning and an evening edition. Although it never retained the importance it enjoyed prior to the Third Reich, it did become the official organ of the German Labour Front (DAF). The paper's antisemitic and combative language remained, but *Der Angriff's* editorial team was aware of the need to improve the paper's quality and engage a wider circle of readers.

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<sup>148</sup> *Der Angriff*, 18 June 1937, 5, 20 June 1937, 6 and 13. Two examples include: "Women in Strength through Joy Sport" and "Enough with the Asparagus Harvest, the First Blueberries Have Arrived." Not all of these pieces had by-lines so one cannot say for sure whether women wrote them, although this seems likely.

<sup>149</sup> Memo from *Der Angriff*, Hauptschriftleitung to all *Auslandsvertreter*, 13 December 1938. LAB, A Rep 250-06-04 Nr. 4.

<sup>150</sup> Russel Lemmons, *Goebbels and Der Angriff* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 128.

The editors of *Der Angriff* received copies of 57 German and international newspapers. Some samples such as the *Jüdische Rundschau* or the *Times* were likely sought by *Der Angriff's* editors in order to respond to criticism or issue political or racial attacks. But the editors used other papers as examples of quality writing, style, appearance and even content.<sup>151</sup> In 1939, Kränzlein requested that all reports be submitted in active voice, which he felt many readers preferred. Such writing, he believed, would give *Der Angriff* an edge over other papers: “Reports in such a style have a stronger impact and are more true to life. On the whole [they] help to loosen up...the newspaper. We therefore ask you to kindly bear in mind our wishes for *Der Angriff* and to work in this [more] relaxed personal style for us.”<sup>152</sup> The perceived competition with the illustrated press and the concern about a looser style—although this applied to all employees, the overwhelming majority of whom were men—suggest a specific place for women given the regime’s belief that they could write in an engaging manner.

Kränzlein appeared to actively encourage women to write for his paper. In a letter to journalist Frau C. von Scheele-Willich, Kränzlein expressed concern that his criticism of her work had frightened her to the point that she no longer believed in the possibility of publishing in *Der Angriff*. However, he countered, that idea was “completely false”; his criticism was based only on a stylistic issue. “Due to the corrections, you perhaps are reluctant even to approach the piece,” he wrote. “But that doesn’t hold water for me.” Kränzlein’s concern, he assured, was that von Scheele-Willich had simply attempted to write in a style that was not her own and had not succeeded.

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<sup>151</sup> Zeitungsliste für die Schriftleitung des “*Angriff*,” undated, LAB, A-Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 1.

<sup>152</sup> Letter from Der Hauptschriftleiter KRZ/P [Herr Kränzlein] to Dr. Krome, 21 August 1939, LAB, A-Rep 250-06-04, Nr.1.

I urgently ask you, Madam, to stick to our agreement. I based everything else [on your piece] and would have to change my entire plan. Simply write in a style that is natural, only write soon and send me quickly your thing, so that I can see what you've written and know what else I must obtain. But please do it, start and it will certainly become something.<sup>153</sup>

Victoria-Elise von Brockhuesen published 30 articles in *Der Angriff* in 1934—an average of 2.5 per month.<sup>154</sup> In May 1936 Cecilie Ihlenfeld, who was based in Paris, received a rejection from *Der Angriff* for her latest submission. The editor responded: “Thank you very much for your article on fashion. Even though we agree with you on many points, we [will] refrain from publishing it. Most of all, because here [in *Der Angriff*] we also criticize or ridicule the fashion of other countries, in particular that of extravagant America.”<sup>155</sup> *Der Angriff* considered even fashion articles important enough that they had to suit the tone, image and purpose of the paper.

## Conclusion

During the 1930s the press often ignored or downplayed the threatening aspects of Nazism, including state terror and the persecution of Jewish Germans and political and social undesirables. By doing so, the institution as a whole lent the appearance of normality to the Third Reich and helped to stabilize the regime.<sup>156</sup> Still, overtly Nazified headlines most often dominated the domestic and foreign political pages, as Victor Klemperer demonstrated. Klemperer, a former journalist and professor of romance

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<sup>153</sup> Letter from Kränzlein to Frau C von Scheele-Willich, 4 April 1939, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 2.

<sup>154</sup> Victoria-Elise von Brockhuesen, Fragebogen, 3 March 1938, BAB, Kulturkammer, RKI 56. Von Bruckhuesen also wrote for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, producing about the same number of articles per year that she did for *Der Angriff*.

<sup>155</sup> Letter from *Der Angriff*, Chef vom Dienst Dr. M.P., to Frau Cecilie Ihlenfeld, 16 May 1936, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04 Nr. 5. Hans Schwarz van Berk was the editor of *Der Angriff* at this time. For more on the politics of fashion in Nazi Germany see Guenther, *Nazi Chic?*

<sup>156</sup> Judith Prokasky, *Zwischen den Zeilen? Zeitungspressen als NS-Machtinstrument* (Berlin: Stiftung Topographie des Terrors, 2013), 13



languages, was a keen observer of the press under National Socialism. Dismissed from his position at the University of Dresden in 1935 due to his Jewish origins, he kept a diary throughout his lifetime.

Klemperer recorded the transformation of everyday life under Nazism and consistently collected samples of Nazi discourse. Many of his diary entries commented on the uniformity of the newspapers and the difficulty in extracting any news beyond the typical propaganda, much of it antisemitic, within the lead article, headlines and political pages. On 5 October 1935 Klemperer wrote, “After a gap of several months I have subscribed to a newspaper [the *Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten*] once again. Every time I read it I feel sick; but the tension is now so great one must at least know what lies are being told.”<sup>157</sup> For Klemperer it was necessary to read the news to try to discern how Nazi policies and actions would affect him as a German Jew, and his observations demonstrate the overt Nazi discourse in the main sections of newspapers.

Meanwhile the idea of ideologically free news provided Germans with the lived experience of normalcy. Studies of press reception conducted during the Third Reich demonstrated that readers often ignored the politics section, preferring the local, family, and human-interest news, sports and entertainment sections—the very areas where female journalists typically worked.<sup>158</sup> A doctoral dissertation by Alfred Schmidt published in 1939 analyzed reader response to newspapers in a small Saxon town and

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<sup>157</sup> Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: the Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1933-41* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), 131. Klemperer primarily read the DNZ and commented on the political pages and lead headlines where most of the “Jew baiting” took place. 138. Throughout his diary Klemperer demonstrated that one had to read the foreign newspapers to learn what the Nazis did not speak of. 73. See also Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI, Lingua Tertii Imperii, a Philologist's Notebook* (London: Continuum, 2002).

<sup>158</sup> Prokasky, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 13.

concluded that 88 percent of readers read the local news section, 88 percent read the classified ads, and only 40 percent read the political section.<sup>159</sup>

The regime strove to utilize women journalists for a role that was political in nature but most often depicted as outside the realm of traditional politics. Under the Nazis, the notion of what was and was not political was elastic. The National Socialist policy toward the nature of female journalism was not unique. During the Weimar Republic women were able to make significant gains in journalism and did write for political papers, yet they were still largely confined to women's news, culture or human-interest—areas designed to provoke an emotional or pleasurable response. The difference was that the Nazis sought to politicize the personal by utilizing areas that the population enjoyed and grounding them as apolitical as a way to set the foundation for the politicization of everyday life. These areas would become critical to the regime and the population during the war. The very fact that women journalists were women is what the regime valued: Women journalists were both political actors and political objects.

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<sup>159</sup> Alfred Schmidt, *Publizistik im Dorf* (Dresden: M. Dittert, 1939), 19. According to the October 1937 census 380 people—200 men and 180 women—lived in the area.

## Chapter Three

### Crossing Borders

#### Journalists as Unofficial “Diplomats” in the Pre-War Years

After the war, hatred and blindness divided the world in two: the victors and the vanquished. The victors assumed that they were entitled, albeit peacefully, to eliminate the vanquished. Over the last twenty years we have seen that they incorrectly calculated this notion. The result was financial turmoil and economic disaster. In North America, surpluses in production were thrown into the ocean while Russia suffered from famine. For technical and monetary reasons, the cotton-exporting countries believed they could refuse to ship cotton to Germany. But Germany invented artificial fibers, and the cotton trade in the U.S. collapsed. Thanks to an ideology that has gathered all the forces and reserves of its peoples, Germany and Italy have gotten their economies back on track.. [A country] of 80 million people has saved itself without outside assistance, for the welfare and progress of all nations.<sup>1</sup> Journalist Edit von Coler, *Curentul*, 23 February 1939.

In 1933, thirty-four-year-old Thea Rasche became the only female editor-in-chief of a publication in Germany. Her position was not at a fashion, home or general women’s magazine, but at the monthly *Deutsche Flugillustrierte*. Rasche earned her pilot’s license in 1925 and began participating in various competitions in Europe and North America in the late 1920s. Between 1924 and 1933, she wrote articles about the modern field of aviation for German and American newspapers and in 1933 turned her attention fulltime to journalism.<sup>2</sup> She joined the NSDAP in May 1934. During her tenure as editor of the *Deutsche Flugillustrierte*, she participated in and reported on a race from England to Australia. After the publication folded in 1935, Rasche worked as a freelance journalist, writing articles for various papers in and outside of Germany and publishing books about

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Jacques Picard, *Edit von Coler Als Nazi-Agentin in Bukarest* (Bonn: Schiller, 2010), 92.

<sup>2</sup> Thea Rasche, Fragebogen zur Durchführung des Schriftleitergesetzes vom 4. Oktober 1933, undated, Bundesarchiv Berlin (BAB), RK B166. Rasche wrote for a variety of papers, including the *B.Z. am Mittag*, the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, the *Essener Generalanzeiger* and *McFadden and Magazine* in the U.S. Anneliese Dieffenbach also provided articles and photos for the *Deutsche Flugillustrierte*.

flying.<sup>3</sup> She travelled back and forth to the United States from 1934 to 1937 promoting German aviation on the radio, in women's clubs, and at the University of California.

Rasche wrote and presided over articles that profiled heroic German pilots from the First World War, discussed modern fighter planes and their weapons, and identified the aviation achievements and technical advances of other countries—topics that extolled a modern, militarized society. The 13 January 1935 issue of *Deutsche Flugillustrierte*, for instance, featured the article “War Memories from our Minister of Aviation, Hermann Göring.” Such pieces glorified World War I but also served to rekindle the shock of defeat. They could also cultivate enthusiasm for Hitler's rearmament plans, intended to prepare Germany once again for war. Indeed, in spring 1935 Hitler announced (open) German rearmament, the establishment of the Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht, and general conscription—all of which contravened restrictions established in the Treaty of Versailles. Rasche forged an exciting and successful career in the doubly male world of piloting and journalism, possibly becoming an inspiration for other young women. Felicitas Kapteina, who began her journalistic career in local and cultural news during World War II, recalled that as a child she had dreamed of becoming a “fliegende Schriftstellerin”—a pilot who flew to far away countries and wrote about them.<sup>4</sup> During the war and likely even before, the German Press Association received inquiries from female journalist hopefuls about the possibility of becoming pilot reporters.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Thea Rasche, Report, U.S. Military Government of Germany, 8 July 1947, BAB, RK B166.

<sup>4</sup> Alexa Godbersen, Felicitas Kapteina interview, *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde: “Wir waren ja die Trümmerfrauen in diesem Beruf”* (Zurich-Dortmund: eFeF, 1993), 60. When Rasche began her editorship of the *Deutsche Flugillustrierte*, Kapteina was ten years old.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from the Reichsverband der Deutschen Presse (RDP) to Marianne Geissler, 19 April 1944, BAB, R103/25. One young woman who made such an inquiry had read a book by a Frau H.M. Heidrich called *Als Fliegberichterin Unterwegs*, prompting the Press Association to respond that the book was written by a capable journalist who had simply highlighted her own experiences: there was no official job in such a capacity at this stage in Germany. Flying was also popular among women in the Soviet Union. A number

This chapter uses the concept of crossing borders to argue that women journalists were able to utilize small pockets of freedom to forge careers in realms that connected with and influenced the regime's national goals, foreign relations, and its preparations for war. The Third Reich's policy toward women journalists dictated that they were to act as mediators between the state and the female population. As such, their work was to focus on the private sphere and remain largely in the women's supplements of newspapers and magazines.

But there were exceptions to this policy even prior to World War II. Women like Rasche sought journalistic opportunities outside of the traditional female realm, acted as agents for their own careers, and connected with an audience beyond Germany's female population. The fact that such women – though few in number – pursued and succeeded in atypical roles, points to a combination of restrictiveness and flexibility with regard to Nazi press policy toward women journalists. If a female journalist secured an opportunity outside of the women's realm and proved herself within it, press authorities did not intervene. A newspaper editor had some measure of autonomy in hiring and promoting the journalist he deemed best suited for a particular role. Luck, talent, and tenacity could trump sex. In this way, the study of women journalists helps illustrate how the intersection between personal opportunities, even for those typically on the outskirts of

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of Soviet women pilots fought in World War II, including Marina Roskova and Natalya Meklin. See Reina Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001); Anne Noggle, *A Dance with Death: Soviet Airwomen in World War II* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994); Amy Goodpaster Strebe, *Flying for her Country: The American and Soviet Women Military Pilots of World War II*, foreword by Trish Beckman (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007). For memoirs of Soviet women pilots see *In the Sky Above the Front: A Collection of Memoirs of Soviet Airwomen Participants in the Great Patriotic War*, edited and translated by K.J. Cottam (New York: MA/AH Pub., 1984) and Anna Timofeyeva-Yegorova, *Red Sky, Black Death: A Soviet Women Pilot's Memoir of the Eastern Front*, translated by Margarita Ponomaryova & Kim Green (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, 2009).

power, and the interests of the regime encouraged individuals to help support and maintain the National Socialist state.

I present five case studies of women who acted as unofficial diplomats, providing news from abroad in ways that helped support the regime's national agenda, in particular its antisemitic worldview, and promoting the new Germany outside the borders of the Reich: Mia Passini and Adelheid Dehio, who reported abroad for the party paper, *Der Angriff*; Margret Boveri, who secured a position as a foreign correspondent with a large Berlin daily; Margret Stockfisch, who wrote for German papers aimed at ethnic Germans abroad; and Edith von Coler, who used her role as journalist to foster a closer relationship between Germany and Romania.

### **Reporting for the Party Papers**

The flow of news in and out of Germany was an important element of Nazi media planning and policy. The regime was concerned not only with controlling and influencing the news German correspondents abroad produced for audiences at home but also took an active interest and role in the news about Germany included in foreign and German language papers around the world. In 1936, and again in 1939, the German Press Association and its professional promotional material indicated that if a female journalist had the appropriate language skills, she might find opportunities working as a foreign correspondent abroad.

The party press presented an image of hyper-masculinity, political aggression and virulent antisemitism that aligned with National Socialist ideology. Women too contributed to these papers. The experiences of Maria (Mia) Passini and

Adelheid Dehio, who both worked abroad for the party paper *Der Angriff* during the 1930s are, if not generally representative of women journalists, telling: they wrote on a variety of themes that were important to the Nazis' political platform, made article suggestions, complained, lobbied for more work, and defended what they had submitted.<sup>6</sup> Editor-in-chief Kurt Kränzlein viewed the role of foreign correspondents as important. In February 1938, he wrote to Dr. Theodor Seibert, the paper's London correspondent:

In connection with our goal to fight against lies from abroad (*Auslandslügen*) as was manifested above all in Dr. Dietrich's "The World Press Unmasked" ... *Der Angriff* will include a daily column: 'The daily lies from abroad.' But I cannot achieve this goal without the keen collaboration of our foreign correspondents. This action is of paramount importance and has the full understanding of our Reich Press Chief...<sup>7</sup>

Mia Passini was born in 1908 in Austria. A journalist, press photographer, and author, Passini was based in Paris when she wrote for *Der Angriff*.<sup>8</sup> A reference for Passini praised her as a person of importance within the National Socialist realm in Austria:

I have known Mia Passini for many years and she has worked as my editorial colleague for illustrated publications for five years. She is an important journalist and press photographer. She repeatedly exposed herself politically by smuggling material for Austria's provincial Nazi leaders to Munich. She moves in the same circles as other National Socialist writers, including Robert Hohlbaum, Mirko Jelusich and Erwin Rainalter, who are also in the position to provide information about her. As well, Mia Passini, who accompanied me on my escape to Germany, is well known by Austria's provincial Nazi leaders like Othmar Krainz, Valentin Schuster, Raimund Heinz and so on. I can warmly recommend her inclusion.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The party press employed other female foreign correspondents, including Frl. Ruetzow, who worked for the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*.

<sup>7</sup> Memo from Kurt Kränzlein to Dr. Theodor Seibert, 1 February 1938, Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A Rep 250-06-06 Nr. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Mia Passini file, BAB, RK B0147. Passini listed her primary profession as author and wrote such works as the 1935 *Ein Prinz, zwei Mädchen und eine Katze*. In her *Reichsverband Deutscher Schriftsteller Fragebogen* from 12 December 1933 she noted that she wrote for newspapers in Switzerland as well as for Germany's *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*. She also wrote under the pseudonym "Luise Stahl."

<sup>9</sup> Mia Passini file, BAB, RK B0147.

Although the testimonial was not signed or dated, it is possible that the editor-in-chief of *Der Angriff* requested the reference before Passini began to write for the paper. Kränzlein strongly supported Passini's involvement with the paper. In May 1938, in response to the recent articles that she had submitted, he noted, "I was very pleased to hear from you again and would very much like to regularly publish things written in the manner of these articles. I'd almost say that you could not send me enough [of such pieces]." <sup>10</sup> Kränzlein sent her samples of the *Angriff am Abend* so that she could get to know the style and spirit of the paper. <sup>11</sup> Over the course of 1938-39, Passini and Kränzlein communicated every month, often several times a week. Their frequent correspondence indicates Passini's importance to *Der Angriff*.

Passini regularly suggested article and series topics but none that specifically related to women. Rather her ideas linked to the Nazi view that its enemies, most notably "international Jewry," posed a security threat to Germany. <sup>12</sup> This discourse was the premise for Hitler's war of race and space. In July 1938 Passini wrote to Kränzlein noting, "I would like to suggest a series of articles about drug trafficking and its shelters in Europe, in particular Paris. At the moment I am also working on an article about the Jewish question in France and the refugee problem..." <sup>13</sup> She also suggested a piece on the Parisian underworld and the nationalisation of the French aviation industry. These topics alluded to xenophobia and antisemitism in France, as well as perceptions of licentiousness and decadence. Kränzlein was enthusiastic about her ideas, calling them

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<sup>10</sup> Letter from Kränzlein to Mia Passini, 28 May 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Kränzlein to Passini, 22 June 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Nazi ideology connected this belief to Germany's World War I defeat and the notion that Jews stabbed the country in the back.

<sup>13</sup> Passini to Kränzlein, 7 July 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5. Passini's observation of the refugee problem in France was a reference to German and Austrian Jews who had fled the Nazi regime.



“fruitful”; he accepted all of the above suggestions but requested that Passini concentrate most on titillating pieces—scandal, murder and manslaughter, and similar things. This type of sensationalized news had first become popular in Germany at the turn of the century and even earlier in Paris.<sup>14</sup> Kränzlein’s request suggests that women could play a particular role in sensationalized or tabloid-oriented news.<sup>15</sup>

Kränzlein paid the most attention to Passini’s suggested “Judenfrage” piece. He advised that she obtain a copy of the book by French author and doctor, Céline, entitled “Bagatelles pour un massacre” (Trifles for a Massacre). In the virulently antisemitic work, Céline criticized Jewish influence on French society. Kränzlein encouraged Passini to choose the most interesting chapters that dealt with Jewish influence in the most important areas of public life, which she could then use to write a series of book reviews: “Do not discuss only political positions, rather address the areas that concern themselves with film and theatre. Also handle the eroticism of the Jews who—due to their domination in this area--sow their wild oats.”<sup>16</sup> Nazi antisemitic propaganda depicted Jews as predatory and oversexed, posing a sexual threat to “Aryan” women.<sup>17</sup> Kränzlein may have believed that an article on this topic by a female journalist woman could highlight this supposed threat in a more direct way to achieve maximum impact.

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 60. This type of sensationalized news, which included murders, scandals and stories of corruption, was first practiced in New York and Paris in the 1830s. The style eventually became popular in Germany in the late nineteenth century. See also Sarah Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: the Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Kränzlein to Passini, 8 July 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Kränzlein to Passini, 19 August 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Doris Bergen, “Social Death and International Isolation: Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939,” in *Nazi Germany Canadian Responses. Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War*, ed. Ruth L. Klein (Montreal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 8. For more on antisemitism in Germany see Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1939. The Years of Persecution* (London: Phoenix, Orion Books, 1997) and Albert S. Lindemann and Richard S. Levy, eds, *Antisemitism: A History* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

The regime used the press to publicize antisemitism in other countries as a way to legitimate and ensure acceptance of its own exclusionary policies. Passini built on Kränzlein's ideas and attempted to stretch them into more opportunities to publish. She proposed articles on the growth of antisemitism in France, the attitude of various, newly established antisemitic newspapers, the opinion of the "man on the street" about "the Jewish question, the eroticism of Jews, and Jewish exploitation of women in Parisian film schools."<sup>18</sup> Passini's ideas, based on Kränzlein's wishes, indicate that there was a demand amongst *Angriff* readers for a type of soft porn content that merged with the Nazis' vicious antisemitic ideology—a demand that Passini could meet. She also enclosed a page of cartoons from the "Gringoire" and suggested that *Der Angriff* could include a few antisemitic jokes to demonstrate the nature of antisemitism in France.<sup>19</sup> In this way, Passini contributed to the regime's desire to grasp the population's attention through humour and amusing anecdotes, but on topics that had political and violent repercussions. Humour provided a counterbalance to excessive National Socialist solemnity yet could still promote a worldview based on exclusion.<sup>20</sup>

In July 1938, as Passini discussed articles about French antisemitism with Kränzlein, an eight-day conference was taking place at Évian-les-Bains in France. President Roosevelt initiated the conference for international leaders in an attempt to deal

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<sup>18</sup> Letter from Passini to Kränzlein, 16 August 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Passini to Kränzlein, 16 August 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Patrick Merziger, "'German Humour' in Books: The Attractiveness and Political Significance of Laughter during the Nazi Era," in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, eds., Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross and Fabrice d'Almeida (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 109. Merziger demonstrates that humour was not just a diversionary tactic during the Third Reich but also had political implications. According to Merziger, the public's taste during this period signified general agreement with the central ideologies of the regime. See also Patrick Merziger, *Nationalsozialistische Satire und "Deutscher Humor": politische Bedeutung und Öffentlichkeit populärer Unterhaltung 1931-1945* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010) and Martina Kessel and Patrick Merziger, eds., *The Politics of Humour: Laughter, Inclusion, and Exclusion in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

with Jewish refugees fleeing Germany and Austria. Roosevelt himself had come under criticism for U.S. policy that severely restricted the number of Jewish refugees the U.S. would accept. Many countries sent representatives to Évian but only one, the Dominican Republic, agreed to take a significant number of Jewish refugees.<sup>21</sup> The conference's failure provided fuel to Nazi propaganda that Jews were internationally reviled and that no country desired their presence.<sup>22</sup>

Passini's work contributed to what the regime and *Der Angriff* hoped to achieve through its foreign correspondents and freelance journalists. Shortly after *Kristallnacht* on 9 November 1938, Kränzlein issued a communication to its reporters working abroad noting that the paper intended to take on the Jewish question much more than it had to date. He emphasized that this issue should not only be handled in Germany and that they needed current stories from abroad. Kränzlein instructed that the paper must always show how Jews in other countries took up positions against Germany. It should encourage other countries to treat them like criminals.<sup>23</sup> Newspapers act as a conduit to the population. By accepting, speaking in, and disseminating antisemitic language, journalists such as Passini engaged in linguistic violence and thereby helped to create Nazi categories of race and citizenship that had genocidal repercussions.<sup>24</sup> They conveyed and legitimated the Nazi concept that Germans were part of a

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<sup>21</sup> The Dominican Republic's offer to accept Jewish refugees was part of its effort to improve its international reputation after the massacre of 1000s of Haitians in 1937 under the dictator Rafael Trujillo.

<sup>22</sup> For more on Canada's response to Nazi Germany's policy and practices towards Jews see the collection of essays in Ruth L. Klein, ed. *Nazi Germany Canadian Responses. Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War*.

<sup>23</sup> Memo, Kränzlein, 26 November 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-4, Nr. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9.

*Volksgemeinschaft* based on “race” and enabled Germans to identify with the collective and follow the Nazi regime to the very end.<sup>25</sup>

One did not have to be a prominent National Socialist or produce rabid antisemitic articles to contribute to *Der Angriff*. Based in Rome, author and journalist Adelheid Dehio began writing for the paper in 1932. Born in 1894 in Estonia, then part of the Russian Empire, Dehio defined herself as strongly anti-bolshevik and described her profession as “untrained journalist”. She belonged to the German Association of Authors, the German Association of the Press und the Association of the Foreign Press. A polyglot, Dehio spoke German, Italian, Russian, French and English. Like other women who worked freelance, she published in a range of mainstream daily papers, women’s magazines, and other party papers.<sup>26</sup> However, she was a steady correspondent for *Der Angriff*. In a November 1938 memo to the foreign office, Kränzlein listed Dehio as one of the paper’s foreign correspondents.

Like Passini, Dehio produced articles on a variety of themes, including industry, business, travel, and local and national festivals. Most pieces were not specifically related to women. In fact, she considered one series that she had written about her youth in Estonia as too “feminine, even girlish in tone for *Der Angriff*.”<sup>27</sup> On the paper’s request, Dehio worked on a piece about model businesses (*Musterbetriebe*) in Italy. Dehio had spoken with the President of the Confederation of Industrial Workers (Confederazione

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<sup>25</sup> Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 11.

<sup>26</sup> Adelheid Dehio, Reichsverband Deutscher Schriftsteller, Fragebogen für Mitglieder, 17 March 1936, BAB, RK I 74. Dehio wrote *In Palästen, Hütten und Ruinen*, published in 1939. She also produced articles for *Die Frau*, *Frau im Welt*, the *Hanover’scher Kurier*, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the *Illustrierte Beobachter* (the party’s illustrated paper) the German News Agency (DNB) and “many others.”

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Dehio to Kränzlein, 8 January 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 4. She hoped to publish the articles in the *Völkischer Beobachter* since she felt they were “less unsuitable” for the *VB* than for *Der Angriff*.

dei Lavoratori dell'Industria), Herr Cianetti, who, she advised, provided excellent information about fascist social legislation.

Dehio also worked in a collaborative manner with Kränzlein, regularly suggesting additional articles, such as a piece on the socialist foundations of the motor producer, FIAT. Moreover, she advised on what topics were likely to be well received in Italy. Such recommendations had political implications as Dehio herself pointed out with regard to Cianetti's article: "I think it is also in the interest of your paper that you find a prominent place for this article and series—this will make a good impression on the powers that be [in Italy.]"<sup>28</sup> Part of Hitler's envisioned foreign policy program even prior to 1933 was an alliance with Italy. In September 1936, as the Spanish Civil War raged, Italy and Germany signed an informal agreement that covered cooperation on Spain. Germany also agreed not to interfere in the Mediterranean. Relations were further strengthened when Italy joined the Anti-Comintern pact with Germany and Japan in 1937.<sup>29</sup> In December 1938, when Dehio recommended the FIAT article, the relationship with Italy was becoming even more important due to Hitler's plans for war. In May 1939, Germany and Italy signed the Pact of Steel, thereby linking the two countries militarily and politically.

Both Passini and Dehio complained about articles they had submitted that the paper had chosen not to publish. These complaints suggest two important but conflicting circumstances for women freelance journalists: those who worked with party papers had to struggle to get their articles published. Yet women pushed for increased professional

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<sup>28</sup> Dehio to Kränzlein, 7 December 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Nazism 1919-1945, Volume 3, Foreign Policy and Racial Extermination* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 65-67. For more on the Spanish Civil War see Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* (London; New York: Harper Perennial, 2006).

opportunities and felt that there would be some reward by doing so. In June 1937, Dehio explained to Kränzlein that she had not submitted any articles in a long time because she was discouraged due to the little exposure her travels to Libya had brought for her in the paper: "...it was very painful on my return to find out that not one of my articles was printed in *Der Angriff*. I had written five long articles, always late in the evenings after a packed day, which I sent, as you requested, only to *Der Angriff*. Since no more than eight journalists participated in this very interesting trip, I could have successfully published my work anywhere else in Germany. Now they've all fallen under the table."<sup>30</sup> Despite her complaints about the paper, it was *Der Angriff's* editor who had provided for and supported Dehio's trip.<sup>31</sup>

The paper's editor-in-chief presented women with opportunities, demonstrating that he valued their contributions to the paper. Yet he also attributed less value to a female journalist's role. Kränzlein wrote to Passini that together with the Tobias-Film-Kunst Gesellschaft, the paper was organizing an announcement about a film prize focused on an aspect of automobiles. They were looking for material that would lend itself to a film. "In order to demonstrate to the participants what it is about, beforehand *Der Angriff* is sending six writers on a trip through the country, where each will then send in a composition that we will publish as a guide. More specifically, there will be five male writers and one female," he wrote. Kränzlein invited Passini to undertake the trip and appealed to her to accept.<sup>32</sup> His insistence that she join the team alludes to an element of tokenism—the desire to have at least one woman representing the paper. This wish, in

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<sup>30</sup> Dehio to Kränzlein, 11 June 1937, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 4

<sup>31</sup> Letter from Dehio to the editorial department of *Der Angriff* titled "Einschreiben," 30 March 1939, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Kränzlein to Passini, 1 November 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04 Nr. 5.

turn, could indicate that Kränzlein wanted to tap into a female readership and viewed a female journalist as the key.

Despite the length of her association with the paper, and the fact that her work had clear political implications, Dehio remained concerned about the security of her position. Since 1932 she had been a member of the Association of the Foreign Press in her capacity as correspondent for *Der Angriff*. In January 1938, Dehio complained to Kränzlein that she had recently been deleted from the membership list of the Association and instead included on the list of so-called publicists who wrote only occasionally. This was the “exact opposite of a promotion,” she pointed out. Dehio particularly feared she would be pushed to the background during the upcoming visit of the “Führer” to Rome, “despite the fact that I have held this position abroad for the purpose of the NSDAP for so many years.” Dehio maintained that she did not deserve such a demotion and that the NSDAP could keep more than one correspondent in Rome <sup>33</sup>

Even though Kränzlein sent the reference that Dehio requested to facilitate her re-inclusion in the Association, her concerns about her position continued and appear to have been justified. In April 1938, Dr. Waldemar Lentz, who had recently arrived in the city to assume responsibility for Rome-based reporting, wrote to the editorial office in Berlin that he had recently met Dehio. He requested that Berlin clearly delineate his and Dehio’s responsibilities.<sup>34</sup> *Der Angriff*’s answer described Dehio’s role as insignificant, noting that she was an old associate that the paper had helped to struggle through her life in Rome by throwing occasional work her way: “This [arrangement] has so far worked

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<sup>33</sup> Dehio to Kränzlein, 15 January 1938, LAB, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Letter from Dr. Waldemar Lenz to *Der Angriff* editorial department, attention FrI. Polomski, 22 April 1938, A Rep 250-06-04, Nr. 4.

very well without negatively affecting the work of our permanent correspondents.”<sup>35</sup> The experiences of Passini and Dehio on *Der Angriff* demonstrate that the party papers needed and desired the work of women in areas beyond the private sphere, but only in the second tier.

### **Reporting for the Large Dailies**

In her 1977 memoir, famed foreign correspondent Margret Boveri noted, “The first women that the *Frankfurter Zeitung* employed as fulltime staff before the outbreak of World War II had to earn this honour through hard physical labour. Lily Abegg travelled by military truck through inhospitable terrain deep in China, and I had to repair my own car on the muddy roads of Anatolia.”<sup>36</sup> Although the details of Boveri’s claim cannot be substantiated, her words do underscore the fact that in Nazi Germany, women who worked as foreign correspondents were exceptions to the rule. If they did secure a position in hard news whether abroad or domestically, they often had to overcome a number of hurdles. Once in such a role, however, their gender mattered less, or in different ways, as they travelled throughout the world reporting on all manner of news. World War II both expanded and reduced opportunities for female journalists to work abroad, but a handful of women including Margret Boveri, Lily Abegg, Petra Vermehren and Irene Seligo, obtained positions as foreign correspondents for important dailies already prior to 1939.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Letter from *Der Angriff* to Waldemar Lenz, 26 April 1938, A Rep-250-06-04, Nr. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Margret Boveri, *Verzweigungen: eine Autobiographie*, edited by Uwe Johnson (Munich: Piper, 1977), 321.

<sup>37</sup> For more on foreign correspondents throughout the twentieth-century see Norman Domeier and Jörn Happel, “Journalismus und Politik. Einleitende Überlegungen zur Tätigkeit von Auslandskorrespondenten 1900-1970,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* Vol. 62, No. 5 (2014): 389-397.



Women who worked as foreign correspondents generally had a personal connection to the country where they were based, or at least language skills gained through travel. Although born in Hamburg and raised partly in Switzerland, Abegg had spent most of the first 15 years of her life in Japan.<sup>38</sup> After her family returned to Switzerland, Abegg studied Economics and Political Science in Geneva and Hamburg. She started out as an assistant at the *Institut für Zeitungswissenschaften* at the University of Heidelberg. From 1930 to 1933, she worked as a newspaper correspondent in Berlin. In 1934, at the age of 35, Abegg began her career as a foreign correspondent in Japan where she reported for various German and Swiss papers. In 1936, she became the Far East correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*—a position she held throughout the war.<sup>39</sup> A posting in Japan for an esteemed paper was an important role with political implications in the 1930s and during World War II. Hitler desired a close friendship with Japan and the country became a critical ally to Germany beginning in 1936—the year Abegg became the *Frankfurter Zeitung*'s Far East correspondent—when both countries signed the Anti-Comintern Pact.<sup>40</sup>

Margret Boveri was perhaps the best-known foreign correspondent during the Third Reich. Her career trajectory highlights the particular roadblocks women faced trying to break into this aspect of the field. Born in 1900 to a German father and American mother, Boveri developed an interest in foreign cultures and politics early in her life after time spent working with people from various countries at a zoology station

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<sup>38</sup> Lily Abegg, *Japans Traum vom Musterland: Der neue Nipponismus* (Munich: Kurt Desch, 1973), 11.

<sup>39</sup> Lily Abegg, Internationales Biographisches Archiv 37/1974 vom 2. September 1974, munzinger.de, (accessed on November 21, 2013). Abegg also lived in China and later in India and Pakistan.

<sup>40</sup> See Gerhard Weinberg, *Hitler's Foreign Policy, 1933-1939: The Road to World War II* (New York: Enigma, 2010). In November 1936 Germany and Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact directed at the Soviet Union. On September 27, 1940, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact (also referred to as the Axis alliance.)

in Naples. Because there was no university program in foreign policy in Germany, Boveri instead studied German, History, Philosophy, and English at the University of Würzburg. She completed her doctorate in 1932 in Berlin. She claimed that she was unwilling to pursue a career directly related to foreign policy due to Hitler's regime. Instead, Boveri decided to become a journalist. In her memoir, Boveri wrote of the difficulties she encountered due primarily to her gender. Her personal letters from the 1930s and the war years support Boveri's post-war description of her struggles within the field. In 1933, Boveri set her sights on working for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*—a paper she idealized—but she was met with the words: “Women do not belong in politics,”<sup>41</sup> and “we cannot use women here.”<sup>42</sup> It was not until the end of 1938 that Boveri achieved her professional goal of working for the paper.

Boveri worked as a freelance journalist until she secured a fulltime position at the liberal daily, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, in August 1934.<sup>43</sup> A personal contact recommended Boveri to the paper's editor-in-chief, Paul Scheffer, who, after an initial assignment—Boveri was to review a recent book on the “Conference of Pacific Affairs” that had taken place in Toronto—hired her. Boveri maintained in her memoir that although Scheffer was her biggest supporter, he was initially reluctant to let her write about foreign politics. Instead, he encouraged her to write for the literature and “*Geistiges Leben*” sections of the paper.<sup>44</sup> Scheffer's employment of Boveri initially conformed to a Nazi policy that considered women as suitable for the culture sections of a newspaper. Boveri soon

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<sup>41</sup> Margret Boveri, *Verzweigungen*, 218. “Frauen gehören nicht in die Politik.” Herrn Schötthofer of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 222. “Frauen können wir nicht gebrauchen.” Kircher of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

<sup>43</sup> Margret Boveri, *Lebenslauf*, 21 February 1938, BAB, RK I50. Boveri published work in *Atlantis* and *Hilfe* as well as articles about her travels in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

<sup>44</sup> Boveri, *Verzweigungen*, 230.

realized her hope to become the paper's London correspondent was a pipe dream. Nevertheless, due to her own persistence and Scheffer's eye for talent, she soon began to report on international news.

Boveri's career progressed rapidly, a fact that she attributed to hard work, ambition, tenacity, luck and Paul Scheffer's support. Although she claimed that early in her career she suffered from insecurity, throughout her memoir she made clear that her boss, colleagues, and the public knew of and respected her work, thereby drawing attention to her talent. From the beginning, Boveri wrote about political issues past and present. Articles she published during her first year included: "The Japanese-English Alliance of 1902, Empire Policy, the Naval Question and the Status Quo," and a piece about a conference between the Balkan powers. One of the questions she addressed in the Balkan article was what role the German air force might play. In this way, she highlighted Germany's developing military might.

In early 1935, Boveri took part in a trip to Greece organized by the Ministry of Propaganda for German newspaper editors as a replacement for Scheffer, who was unable to attend. As the only woman in a group of 15 men, Boveri felt resentment from the other participants due to her gender. Although she faced difficulties, Boveri's narrative suggests she overcame these with hard work.<sup>45</sup> After the first night she had already written half of an article.<sup>46</sup> The success of her trip to Greece ensured Boveri further travel and opportunities to investigate issues and events that were deeply political. In 1935, she began to write about the Italian invasion of Abyssinia and received an assignment to travel to Malta to cover the conflict, an opportunity Boveri attributed to her

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 266

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 268.

proven success and her knowledge of Italy and Italian. It was this assignment, Boveri believed, that consolidated her status in the field as a capable foreign news reporter.<sup>47</sup> Her coverage of the conflict also brought her into the realm of war correspondence. A woman journalist working as a war correspondent was something of a novelty for Europe and North America.<sup>48</sup> The fact that both Abegg and Boveri had language, study, and travel opportunities early in life suggests that class mattered perhaps as much as gender in determining the type of journalistic roles women could pursue.

Despite her talent and growing prominence or perhaps because of it, Boveri's gender became, in some ways, an even bigger issue. She attributed part of her effectiveness in Malta to the fact that she was able to travel around unnoticed: "I did not look like a special correspondent for an international newspaper."<sup>49</sup> Boveri's gender may have meant that witnesses and officials opened up more easily or were less guarded with regard to the information they released. It was around this period, recalled Boveri, that she was forbidden to sign her editorials with Margret Boveri, and instead had to use "Dr. M. Boveri." In this way, Boveri's name was desexualized--but only for her articles on world events.<sup>50</sup> Scheffer wrote to Boveri that he would happily make her responsible for the international news section of the paper if he saw a way. But, he feared a "palace revolution" if he did so. As Scheffer stated, "The decision of nature works against you."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>48</sup> For instance, American writer and journalist Martha Gellhorn became famous after establishing herself as a war correspondent during the Spanish Civil War.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>50</sup> While on location in Cairo and Riyadh, Boveri visited not only politicians but also representatives of Egyptian women's organizations. Thus even Boveri, who was at this stage becoming a well-known and respected correspondent of "hard news," still produced "women's stories." She also occasionally wrote articles on literature and history.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 282 and 284.

Boveri was next offered a temporary position as foreign correspondent in Rome—an important assignment in 1935. Despite her track record and the dedication of her readers, Boveri was not considered for the permanent position. Rather, she was to fill in for a period because the young male candidate the paper had selected lacked the necessary experience. Boveri was to take up the position in Rome while the male journalist was trained in Berlin. “The antifeminism had become so strong [at the *Berliner Tageblatt* in 1935],” stated Boveri, “that only with the utmost effort was Scheffer able to secure my dispatch [to Rome]. He had to take responsibility for everything I was to write.”<sup>52</sup> During her time in Rome, Boveri continued to work on events of international importance, including a trip to Naples for the naval parade to honour the state visit of Admiral Miklos Horthy, leader of the authoritarian government in Hungary.

After leaving the *Berliner Tageblatt* in 1937, Boveri once again tried to secure a position with the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Editor-in-chief Rudolf Kircher turned her down. Her depiction of her meeting with the head of the political news department, Benno Reifenberg, suggests that it was indeed her gender that was the roadblock. According to Boveri, Reifenberg showed her the room where the daily conference was held. Reifenberg explained that the room was the heart of the paper. Here decisions were made and a sense of camaraderie prevailed—a camaraderie that did not include women. Reifenberg told Boveri that no woman was allowed to attend the conference; therefore no woman could become a permanent member of staff in Frankfurt. As long as he had something to say at the paper, he assured her, he would make sure this policy continued.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 311. Indeed, Lily Abegg and Heddy Neumeister already worked for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* but were not based in Frankfurt and thus would not have affected the so-called male camaraderie. Abegg was in Japan and Neumeister in Berlin.

That policy did not change until the young Elisabeth Noelle Neumann joined the paper in 1943.<sup>54</sup> Benno Reifenberg was still with the paper.

Although the paper recognized her talents and growing prominence, Reifenberg offered Boveri only the possibility to work occasionally on a freelance basis, thus setting her back to where she began her career. Boveri proposed to take a freelance trip for the paper to Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Persia.<sup>55</sup> The paper accepted and eventually published her articles. Upon her return, in early 1939, Boveri became a permanent staff member at the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, after six years and much effort. It is not possible to make a definitive claim regarding the timing of the newspaper's offer of a fulltime position to Boveri. But the fact that it came only months before the launch of World War II could suggest that press authorities were pressuring editors to hire more women in critical positions as a part of the regime's imminent plans for war.

In her memoir, Boveri focused more attention on her talent, her tenacity and the gender-based roadblocks that blocked her professional advancement than on the exact nature of her writing. Although she worked for relatively quality papers during the Third Reich and her articles were generally as free from Nazi ideology as it was possible to be, she did produce material that some, including her biographer, questioned in the post-war years.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen* (Munich: Herbig, 2006), 106. Elisabeth Neumann claimed that when she began at the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, she received a place at the male-dominated conference table. The editor exclaimed, "You are the first woman to sit at this table." According to Neumann, the "big name" Boveri resented her since she still had to sit at the edge of the room.

<sup>55</sup> Boveri, *Verzweigungen*, 319.

<sup>56</sup> For more about Boveri's career and political outlook in the post-war years see Michaela Hoenicke Moore, "Heimat und Fremde. Das Verhältnis zu Amerika im journalistischen Werk von Margret Boveri und Dolf Sternberger," in *Demokratiewunder: Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945-1970*, edited by Arnd Bauerkamper, Konrad Jarausch and Marcus M. Payk, 218-252 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

For instance, she wrote an article on a “race defilement” trial in Hamburg in 1936. Such pieces contributed to the racial categorization of Germans and normalized such discourse for newspaper readers. Germans eagerly read accounts that titillated and helped reinforce Jewish otherness.<sup>57</sup> The press publicized and legitimated the inclusionary and exclusionary basis of the *Volksgemeinschaft* for the German public. For Jewish men, charges of race defilement could lead to incarceration in a concentration camp.<sup>58</sup> During the war, Boveri wrote articles criticizing American politics and way of life and accusing the U.S. of antisemitism.

Boveri’s experiences demonstrate that one’s professional role was not always decided by one’s gender. At the *Berliner Tageblatt*, Boveri was not restricted to the women’s supplements or the local news section, as press policy dictated. Rather, two of her male colleagues, Wilhelm Renner und Fritz Dettman, reported for the local news pages. Moreover, her colleague, Karl Korn, who began at the paper around the same time as Boveri, started off in foreign politics but moved instead to *Feuilleton*, eventually taking over responsibility for the literature and “Geistiges Leben” pages that Scheffer had envisioned for Boveri.<sup>59</sup>

Boveri was the most famous woman journalist to work in the foreign policy section of a newspaper during the Third Reich, but she was not the first. Petra Vermehren began her journalism career at the age of 40, upon moving to Berlin in 1933. In April

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<sup>57</sup> For more on the impact of “Race Defilement” trials see Patricia Szobar, “Telling Stories in the Nazi Courts of Law: Race Defilement in Germany, 1933-1945,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 11, No. 1 and 2, January/April (2002): 131-163. For instance, Szobar notes that press coverage lent publicity to the *Rassenschande* trials, prompting some Nazi officials to attempt to suppress the reporting because the public commotion was having a “dangerously exciting” effect on schoolboys who eagerly followed the trials in the newspapers (143-144).

<sup>58</sup> Michael Wildt, *Hitler’s Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2012), 275.

<sup>59</sup> Boveri, *Verzweigungen*, 234. Boveri highlighted how both she and Korn often felt dejected and downtrodden by long-term employees at the paper.

1934 Vermehren began to work as an editor in the foreign news department alongside the only other employee, Fritz Molkenhuth.<sup>60</sup> She started out reading and summarizing foreign papers for Scheffer and, according to Boveri, possessed “good political instincts.” In 1936, Vermehren began to write in addition to her work as an editor. She soon became a correspondent based in Athens and later Lisbon, where she reported for the *Berliner Tageblatt* as well as other dailies.<sup>61</sup> When the *Berliner Tageblatt* was shut down in 1939, Vermehren worked as foreign correspondent for the equally respected *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* until 1944. The fact Scheffer hired both Boveri and Vermehren for his foreign news section and both journalists eventually worked as foreign correspondents demonstrates that, with talent and the support of well-placed men, a woman could report on world events and state issues.

### **Promoting Germany and the *Volksgemeinschaft***

In an effort to ensure that Nazi Germany was represented in a positive manner abroad, the party’s foreign press department sought to influence foreign journalists and used its own correspondents to transmit a carefully crafted, favorable impression to an international audience.<sup>62</sup> The department cultivated contacts with foreign journalists, sent literature on the “new Germany” to foreign newspapers, and attempted to stir up antisemitic sentiment. In January 1936, for instance, the office of Otto Dietrich, the Reich Press Chief, provided news of “world Jewry and the communistic underground

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>61</sup> Vermehren also reported for *Der Mittag* and the *Kölnische Zeitung*.

<sup>62</sup> See files of the Reich Press Chief /Reich Press Office, which includes records of the foreign press office, BAB, NS 42. In 1931 a separate party press office was established under the leadership of the Reich Press Chief Otto Dietrich. For more on the Nazi regime and foreign correspondents in Germany see Martin Herzer, *Auslandskorrespondenten und auswärtige Pressepolitik im Dritten Reich* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2012).



movement” for publication in the antisemitic U.S. paper, the *American Bulletin*.<sup>63</sup> The party also focused efforts on women journalists demonstrating their belief that they too had a public voice that mattered; for instance, a U.S. reporter, identified in the files only as Frau Emmerson, wrote for *Deutscher Weckruf*. The Reich Press Office invited her as a guest of honour to the 1937 party day in Nuremberg.<sup>64</sup> The party put together long lists of foreign journalists invited to such important events as the 1936 Olympics, reserved hotel rooms, set agendas and endeavoured to put its best face forward.

The *Verband Ausländischer Pressevertreter* (Association of Press Representatives for Foreign Papers) was a useful tool in the regime’s effort to influence news about Germany. The organization was established in 1922 by a small group of journalists in order to represent the interests of those who, for statutory reasons, were not included in the *Verein der Auslandspresse* (the Foreign Press Association): Germans were not allowed entry into the already existing Foreign Press Association.<sup>65</sup> By 1931, the Association had over 120 members representing newspapers from approximately 40 different countries.<sup>66</sup> This group included foreign journalists living in and writing about Germany for papers abroad, as well as German journalists writing for German language papers targeted at a country’s German communities and foreign papers abroad. Records indicate that a significant percentage of members were of German origin (or so-called *Volksdeutsche*) and maintained ties with the country by writing for German interest papers.

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<sup>63</sup> “The White Man’s Viewpoint,” 2 January 1936, BAB, Reich Press Chief, NS42/5.

<sup>64</sup> Kartei v.a. amerikanischer und französischer Korrespondenten und Journalisten (A-Z), 1941, BAB, NS42/37.

<sup>65</sup> Membership was also incompatible for those journalists who worked concurrently on German and foreign papers.

<sup>66</sup> Walter Heide, *Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Zeitungen im Ausland* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1935), 129.

The Association's membership numbers show that the percentage of women within this organization grew from 1930 to 1938 (the last year for which membership lists are available), even as overall membership declined: in 1930, there were 110 members, 10 percent (11) of whom were women.<sup>67</sup> By January 1935, this number decreased to 67 journalists, but the percentage of women grew to 12 (8). In April 1936, of the 86 members, 14 percent (12) were women. By October women comprised 15 percent of this group (Table II).

**Table II: Membership Numbers for the *Verband Ausländischer Pressevertreter***

Year	Membership Total	Number of Women	Percentage of Women
1930	110	11	10
1935	67	8	12
1936 (Apr. & Oct.)	86	12	14- 15

Source: VAP, Berlin Mitgliederliste, November 1935, LAB, Stockfisch Nachlaß, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 10

Women wrote for papers ranging from dailies to specialty cultural journals, press agencies and pro-Nazi papers published in Europe, North America and Asia.<sup>68</sup> The female journalists listed in Appendix A, Table III, were based in Berlin and belonged to the organization at some stage between 1935 and 1938—most for the entire period. Of these 25 women, at least 21 (84 percent) were either “Reich Germans” or *Volksdeutsche*. Together they wrote for fifteen German language papers, as well as numerous local language papers in countries including Canada, the United States, England, Portugal,

<sup>67</sup> Verband Ausländischer Pressevertreter (VAP) E.V. zu Berlin Mitgliederliste, November 1930, Stockfisch Nachlaß, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 10.

<sup>68</sup> See Appendix Table III: Women Foreign Correspondents, 1935-1938. The table does not provide a complete picture of all female foreign correspondents but rather a snapshot.

Spain, Denmark, Poland, France, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Lithuania, Argentina, El Salvador, and China (See Table II, Appendix A.) Through such papers, the regime sought to establish closer ties with ethnic Germans to ensure that they would serve the interests of the Reich. Nazi officials emphasized the notion of a *Volksgemeinschaft* to which ethnic Germans living outside the borders of the Reich belonged. According to the

*Handwörterbuch der Wohlfahrtspflege*:

The German Volk is not defined by the borders of the Reich but is a *Volks-und Schicksalsgemeinschaft* [community of the people and of destiny] spread over the whole earth but bound together by blood and race. . . . Since the National Socialist rise to power in 1933 the welfare of the Germans abroad has become an essential part of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.<sup>69</sup>

The racist, expansionist nature of the Nazi view of *Volksgemeinschaft* would have violent applications during the war. Some papers were located in regions or cities, including Riga, Lodz, and Warsaw, that Germany would occupy during the war and turn into sites of displacement and extreme violence directed primarily toward Jews but also non-Jewish local inhabitants.

The 1935 *Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Zeitungen im Ausland* calculated that there were approximately 1700 German language newspapers around the world. This figure includes an unspecified number of *auslandsdeutsche* papers, which were especially important to the regime, according to the *Handbuch*: “German foreign newspapers emphasize an awareness of one’s affiliation to the German fatherland; they are a part of a

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<sup>69</sup> As quoted in Norbert Götz, “German-Speaking People in German Heritage. Nazi Germany and the Problem of Volksgemeinschaft,” in *The Heimat Abroad. The Boundaries of Germanness*, eds. Krista O’Donnell, Renate Bridenthal and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 59, 61. Götz demonstrates that the inclusion of ethnic Germans outside the borders of Germany became an important aspect of the Nazi notion of Volksgemeinschaft. For more on the Volksgemeinschaft see Wildt, *Hitler’s Volksgemeinschaft*. Wildt notes that the idea of the Volksgemeinschaft became popular during the First World War as a tool to unite Germans “behind the imperial war flag” (265).

national unit that cannot be determined or constrained by borders.”<sup>70</sup> Berlin-based German journalist Martha Stockfisch worked as a freelance correspondent for papers within Germany and *auslandsdeutsche* papers published in Spain, Portugal, China, Canada, and the United States.<sup>71</sup> Although her work ranged from reports on technology, industry, and agriculture to lighter pieces including women’s features and travel, her writing always promoted Germany. In an April 1934 article published in the Madrid-based *Deutscher Echo*, Stockfisch wrote about skiing in Switzerland, but focused most of the article on the German choir program: “Out of the clear windows we saw the snow fall and heard the wind at the doors while the shadow of the evening sank deeper. The organ sighed and cheered and we, as Germans, were happy in the foreign land to have our masters of chorale music at hand.”<sup>72</sup> Such pieces promoted German culture and created a sense of unity and shared pride about German accomplishments for *Volksdeutsche* living outside the borders of the Reich.

Correspondence between Stockfisch and her American and Canadian editors at the *Freie Presse für Texas* and the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* respectively, indicates the ways in which, to varying degrees, both papers adopted the language and philosophy of the Third Reich. Both promoted the notion of a revitalized Germany—a key political message of the Nazi party and one that many Germans supported—and loyalty to the “Fatherland,” as well as the idea of “Germandom” and *Volksgenossen*.<sup>73</sup> No matter how

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<sup>70</sup> Heide, *Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Zeitungen im Ausland*, 126. The countries with the most German language papers were: Switzerland - 444; Czechoslovakia - 249; Austria - 236, USA - 174, France - 78, Romania - 75; Poland - 71; Brazil - 57; USSR - 40; and Argentina - 32.

<sup>71</sup> Stockfisch Nachlaß, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 7. Stockfisch was a well-known rower in her youth and was hailed as a pioneer of women’s rowing. Mitglied im Friedrichshagener-Damen-Rudercluv v. 1908.

<sup>72</sup> Margret Stockfisch, “Orgelmusik im Föhn,” *Deutscher Echo*, 12 April 1934, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 9.

<sup>73</sup> See Peter Fritzsche *Life and Death in the Third Reich*.

limited the circulation, press officials in Germany and the North American editors alike viewed these papers as an important link between Germans abroad and Hitler's Reich.

The *Freie Presse für Texas* was a conservative, German-language paper, founded in 1885 in San Antonio. Although well established and prominent long before the Nazis gained power, the editor's 1932 letter to Stockfisch suggests the paper's early affinity for aspects of National Socialist ideology: "I give you the most heartfelt thanks for all of your efforts and your brave championing of our paper. We know you understand that we are on duty in the outpost and [therefore] have to fight against lies and deception."<sup>74</sup> The editor's reference to an outpost invoked the notion of a *Volksgemeinschaft* not restricted by national borders or oceans and the idea of colonialism: National Socialism would conquer the world. In February 1933, he thanked Stockfisch for her collaboration with the paper and shared his hope that with Hitler's accession to power, order would finally be created in "our dear Fatherland."<sup>75</sup> In January 1934, the editor offered Stockfisch his "sincerest thanks for your good work in the interests of Germandom. In this time of the new Germany we will have success."<sup>76</sup> Finally, in January 1935, in response to the Saar referendum in which the territory overwhelmingly voted to join Germany, he rejoiced: "The German Fatherland lives!"<sup>77</sup> Along with demonstrating support for Nazi Germany, the editor's words indicate the importance with which the paper viewed Stockfisch's contributions.

Unlike the longstanding *Freie Presse für Texas*, the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* was established in 1935 by pro-Nazi German Canadians with support from the Nazi

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<sup>74</sup> Letter from the editor of *Freie Presse für Texas* to Stockfisch, 6 February 1932, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 8.

<sup>75</sup> Editor to Stockfisch, February 1933, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 8.

<sup>76</sup> Editor to Stockfisch, 25 January 1934, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 8.

<sup>77</sup> Editor to Stockfisch, 4 January 1935, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 7.

regime. The paper was published out of Winnipeg. One of the leading figures responsible for its launch was Heinrich Seelheim, the German Consul for western Canada. The paper's editor-in-chief and manager, Bernhard Bott, was able to develop ties with the Nazi government through his relationship with Seelheim.<sup>78</sup> In 1934, Bott travelled to Germany, attended the Party's rally in Nuremberg, and established contacts with state and party agencies concerned with promoting National Socialism to Germans living abroad. Bott felt that Canada needed a "forceful German newspaper which could act unhindered as the herald and defender of the German-Canadian movement from coast to coast."<sup>79</sup> An enthusiastic proponent of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, Bott believed that Germans in Canada should remain German: "A German remains a German not in a political or legal sense, but in his blood and in his essence."<sup>80</sup> He envisioned that the paper would promote German culture and combat anti-Nazi propaganda. The paper had a modern look and included international news, local events, editorials, women's features, sports, serialized novels, humorous stories, accounts of the progress of the "German movement" in Canada, and an English-language supplement. Bott described the paper to Stockfish as the only organ in Canada that embraced the National Socialist cause and spirit,

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<sup>78</sup> Johnathan F. Wagner, "The Deutsche Zeitung für Canada: A Nazi Newspaper in Winnipeg," MHS Transactions, Series 3, Number 33, 1976-77, <http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/deutschezeitung.shtml#59> (accessed 14 September 2013). Prior to Hitler coming into power in 1933, Seelheim supported the Nazi movement and sought to develop among German Canadians a consciousness of their ties to Germany. The Nazi triumph in January 1933 intensified Seelheim's *völkisch* commitment. In May 1934 he joined the party.

<sup>79</sup> As quoted in Wagner, "The Deutsche Zeitung für Canada."

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

including its anticommunist and antisemitic *Weltanschauung*.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, the paper appeared on the Nazis' list of anti-Jewish newspapers.<sup>82</sup>

More than once Bott thanked Stockfisch for her professional support and encouraged her to write for the paper regularly.<sup>83</sup> He also expressed his gratitude that the *Reichsnährstand* (Reich Office for Food and Agriculture) and its press office placed such significant value on providing his newspaper with appropriate material, thereby demonstrating the paper's reliance on German sources for its content. Indeed, Bott emphasized that the paper needed such content and support.<sup>84</sup> In particular, he asked Stockfisch to write women's features and stories that would interest farmers: the paper's readership was largely lower-middle income or rural readers. Bott stressed that most of his subscribers were unassimilated, recent arrivals in Canada who stemmed from German communities in Russia, Poland, Austria and Hungary.

Both North American papers had only limited success in furthering the goals of or ensuring support for National Socialist Germany. In February 1937, the editor of the *Freie Presse für Texas* lamented, "Here in America, the desired unity of the German element is still a dream castle in the air." He also noted that the American population had no sympathy for Germany's antisemitic measures.<sup>85</sup> Although the U.S. public largely rejected the Nazis' beliefs about race, many still held generous views toward Germany,

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<sup>81</sup> Letter from Bernhard Bott to Martha Stockfisch, 2 June 1936, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 8. Bott noted that "The *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* is the only organ in this whole vast country that consciously acts in the interests and in the spirit of the new Germany week after week."

<sup>82</sup> Anti-Jüdische Zeitungen und Nachrichtendienste in USA and Canada, undated, BAB, NS42/5.

<sup>83</sup> Bott to Stockfisch, 25 February 1937, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 8.

<sup>84</sup> Bott to Stockfisch, 2 June 1936, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 8. In many issues the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* used news supplied to it by the German News Bureau controlled by Goebbels. The Nazi Party's Foreign Press Office also provided numerous stories. For example, Rolf Hoffmann, the head of the Foreign Press Office, sent Bott an article entitled "Rudolf Hess, the Führer's True Servant and Deputy," which appeared in the May 27, 1936 issue. Wagner, "The *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*."

<sup>85</sup> Letter from the *Freie Presse für Texas* to Stockfisch, 10 February 1937, LAB, E Rep 200-64 Nr. 8.

based on ethnic and cultural identification with Germans.<sup>86</sup> Articles by journalists like Stockfisch, focusing on culture, agriculture, technology and women's stories might have had more success in creating admiration for Germany and furthering the Nazis' foreign policy agenda than overt racist or political propaganda. For instance, Stockfisch's party-organized tour of the AEG (*Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft*) Turbine factory in 1937 resulted in an article that extolled Germany's technological prowess.<sup>87</sup>

At the height of its success in 1937-38, the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* had an official circulation of only 6000, composed primarily of a small, extremist group. But given that its primary audience was large families in isolated farming communities, the paper may have had a much wider readership than official circulation numbers would indicate. It was significant enough that the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and the Canadian press monitored its activities. From 1938 onward, Canadian newspapers, including the *Winnipeg Tribune* and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, became increasingly concerned about Nazi propaganda and in particular the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*. The *Winnipeg Tribune* labelled it a vehicle that "...peddles the best Goebbels-Streicher line of anti-Jewish and anti-British propaganda right here in Canada."<sup>88</sup>

Berlin certainly showed considerable interest in the propaganda efforts of the German language press. Within Germany, Stockfisch was invited to a number of important events that the Nazi government wanted to promote within the German and foreign press, indicating that it viewed correspondents like her as important. She attended

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<sup>86</sup> See Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>87</sup> February 1937, LAB, E Rep 200-64 Nr. 8. Stockfisch ended the piece with the line, "[We can be] assured that the AEG turbine factory is the most important and busiest of its kind in the world."

<sup>88</sup> Wagner, "The Deutsche Zeitung für Canada." The RCMP arrested Bott in August 1939 and the paper was shut down.



openings and exhibitions related to industry, agriculture, women's areas and culture, including a press reception at the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, about Germany's economic developments in 1935, the Reich Party Congress in Nuremberg in 1937 and 1938, the opening of the exhibition "Nuremberg, the German City," a reception celebrating the "Week of German Books," and various events related to promoting the 1936 Olympics held by the Propaganda Ministry. Stockfisch's work contributed to the regime's important goal of creating a feeling of loyalty to Germany among ethnic Germans all over the world.

### **Practicing Journalism, Influencing Politics**

"Through friendly and comradely gestures and [by] working together without delay, Germany can influence Romania in the future..."<sup>89</sup> Journalist Edit von Coler wrote these words in April 1939 in a report to high-ranking officials in the Nazi government about how Germany could forge a closer relationship with Romania. Von Coler dedicated her professional life, both as a journalist and an unofficial diplomat, to helping her country bring Romania into Germany's orbit, something that would become particularly important during World War II. In this role she reported to various offices and ministries, including the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Edit von Coler's professional and personal activities during the Third Reich provide perhaps the most clear—and exceptional—case of a woman journalist who used her skills, and in turn was utilized by various officials, to engage in political machinations for Germany. Born in Berlin in 1895, von Coler lived a wealthy and privileged life. A

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<sup>89</sup> Edit von Coler, Bericht to W. Lorenz, Dr. Gritzbach, Min. Dir. Heinburg, President Hunke, 21 April 1939, Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich (IfZ), Von Coler Nachlaß, ED 374/1. See also Correspondence, Edit von Coler file, BAB, RKY10.

German nationalist, she yearned for Germany to regain its world prestige after its defeat in World War I and the supposed humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles. She joined the NSDAP in 1931 and, as a cousin of Heinrich Himmler's wife, Margaret, had friends and acquaintances in high places.<sup>90</sup>

Although not trained as a journalist, in March 1935, based on Himmler's personal recommendation, von Coler became the Foreign Press Chief for the Reich Office for Food and Agriculture. There, she worked under Richard Walther Darré, the Reich Farm Leader, Reich Minister of Nutrition and Agriculture, and the first chief of Himmler's Race and Resettlement Office (*Leiter des Rasse und Siedlungshauptamts*).<sup>91</sup> The Reich Office for Food and Agriculture regulated all aspects of agriculture including production, trade and consumption of agricultural products—an important office as Hitler prepared for war and needed to ensure access to food stores. Von Coler spoke English fluently. Part of her role as Press Chief was to analyse articles from foreign newspapers that dealt with agriculture and produce pieces about Germany's new agricultural policy.

It was within the realm of Germany's preparation for war and *Drang nach Osten* (a goal that later became part of the Nazis' "General Plan for the East") that von Coler deployed most of her professional and personal efforts. Her initiatives were often connected to orders from Nazi government officials and related to the goal of tying Romania to Germany economically, politically, and culturally.<sup>92</sup> In the wake of Göring's 1936 Four-Year plan, Romania's importance to the German government increased as the

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<sup>90</sup> Picard, *Edit von Coler als Nazi-Agentin in Bukarest*, 29. After her second divorce in 1930 and following a recommendation, von Coler received a job as artistic director of the *Staatlichen Schauspielhaus* in Berlin.

<sup>91</sup> Darré served as Reich Minister of Nutrition and Agriculture from 1933-1942. He was also named *Reichsbauernführer*. He developed a plan for "*Rasse und Raum*" ("race and space", or territory), which provided the foundation of the Nazi policy of *Lebensraum*.

<sup>92</sup> Picard, *Edit von Coler*, 47.

regime endeavoured to secure access to Romania's abundant raw materials, including oil and foodstuffs. In summer of 1938 oil became a principal interest of German diplomacy.<sup>93</sup> The country also occupied a strategic location for Germany's eventual invasion of the Soviet Union.<sup>94</sup>

To this end, von Coler travelled to Romania in 1938, ostensibly in her role as a press representative for Nazi Germany's agricultural offices. But she acted more as an unofficial diplomat than a journalist. Von Coler sent reports back to Germany outlining the state of Romania's agriculture and its economy, her discussions with key figures about the Romanian press, developments within Romania's *Volksdeutsche* communities, and the connections she built with influential Romanians.<sup>95</sup> A report dated 11 June 1938 and bearing the generic title "Report on a Romanian Trip" described the discussions she had had with the Assistant Director General for Press and Propaganda and the Deputy Director of the Press in Bucharest about the press and future exchanges with Germany. "Our intention," she wrote, "was to free the Romanian press of its capitalist influence and interest it in the German experiences in this [the economic] arena."<sup>96</sup> Von Coler's words suggest an intention to exploit antisemitic sentiment within Romanian society, since in Romania, manifestations of antisemitism were most visible in resentment of Jews as capitalists.<sup>97</sup> These beliefs also connected to Nazi accusations that, prior to Hitler's

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<sup>93</sup> Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania. The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944* (Chicago: Ivan R Dee, 2000), 52.

<sup>94</sup> For more on Germany's plans for the invasion of the Soviet Union, see Gerhard Weinberg, *Germany and the Soviet Union, 1939-1941* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954).

<sup>95</sup> The sources available do not make it possible to ascertain whether her trip was taken in an unofficial capacity or whether she was on an assignment from one of the German Ministries with which she had contact.

<sup>96</sup> Edit von Coler, Sachbearbeiterin im Reichsnährstand, Berlin, Bericht über eine Rumänien-Reise im Mai 1938, 11 June 1938, IfZ, ED374/1.

<sup>97</sup> Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania*, 37. In 1930, 318,000 of 756,930 Jewish Romanians derived their income from commercial enterprises. Forward.

accession of power, Jews had dominated the press and used it as a weapon to manipulate German society.

Throughout her time in Romania von Coler produced a number of articles designed to highlight how Germany and Romania could each benefit from a closer relationship in the area of agriculture.<sup>98</sup> She succeeded in securing an interview with the Romanian Minister of Agriculture, Gheorghe Ionescu-Sisesti, for the Nazi paper, *Landpost*, which appeared on 27 May 1938.<sup>99</sup> Titled “Increases in Production—also in Romania,” the article painted a positive picture of Romanian agriculture and industry and noted that Romania particularly valued its economic relationship with Germany: “Finally, Ionescu-Sisesti turned [the discussion] to the good economic relations between Romania and Germany with regard to the agricultural industry. ‘Romanian farmers have always used, and will continue to use, German machinery, in particular plows, threshing machines and tractors,’ he confirmed... ‘They [Romanian farmers] want as many German-made tools and as much machinery as possible. They cannot increase production and improve quality without good equipment.’”<sup>100</sup> Von Coler announced that she had successfully placed an article about German agricultural policy in the Romanian newspaper *Universal*. This development, she claimed, would “pave the way for further cooperation, which will have an impact in the near future. Documents about this are in the Foreign Ministry.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Report from Edit von Coler, 22 January 1939, IfZ, ED374/1. For instance, “Romania’s Farmers can be Comrade[s] for Germany.”

<sup>99</sup> Report from Edit von Coler, “Bericht über eine Rumänien-Reise im Mai 1938,” 11 June 1938, IfZ, ED 374/1.

<sup>100</sup> “Erzeugungsteigerung—auch in Rumänien: Eine Unterredung unserer Sonderberichterstatteerin mit dem rumänischen Landwirtschaftsminister,” *Nationalsozialistische Landpost*, 27 May 1938.

<sup>101</sup> Report from Edit von Coler, “Unterredung mit alten Bekannten,” 10 November 1938, IfZ, ED 374/1.

A 10 November 1938 report, sent under the title, “Edit von Coler, Specialist in the Office of Administration for the Reich Farm Leader,” outlined her growing involvement not only in propaganda and agriculture but also in large industrial and economic affairs between the two countries. Von Coler met with the Romanian Foreign Minister, the State Secretary for Press and Propaganda, the wealthy industrialist Nicolae Malaxa, and the Commissioner for Minority Rights (*Minderheitenkommissar*.)<sup>102</sup> The Commissioner for Minority Rights likely helped connect von Coler with Romania’s ethnic German communities.

Von Coler reported that the outcome of the Munich Agreement had left a positive impression on Romania: the country was turning away from France and cautiously toward Germany. The Romanian press was taking a notable interest in the on-going trade negotiations between the two countries. Romania, she stated, was very interested in the products from Germany’s booming armament industry and its agricultural machinery. The Nazi government exerted pressure on Romania to cooperate with German industry and form an alliance that would assist Germany in its preparation for the war that Hitler intended. Edit von Coler worked in conjunction with this goal. Nicolae Malaxa, for instance had business links to Nazi Germany. He advocated for a Romanian-German

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<sup>102</sup> After World War I the League of Nations created a system to guarantee minority rights in Europe. Minority treaties pledged a country to recognize the “full and complete protection of life and liberty of all inhabitants without distinction of birth, nationality, language, and religion.” Although Romania signed its treaty in December 1919 in Paris, it demonstrated reluctance to grant civil rights to minority groups, particularly Jews. Jews in Romania did not receive equality under the law until 1923. Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania*, xviii. For more on post-war treaties see Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Von Coler likely met with the Commissioner regarding the minority rights of ethnic Germans in Romania.

alliance and, later, used his industrial empire and control of the steel industry in Romania to help with the German war effort.<sup>103</sup>

Von Coler's actions in Romania also contributed to the Nazi regime's effort to connect to and influence ethnic Germans outside of the Reich. She successfully created a sense of unity amongst Romania's approximately 800,000 *Volksdeutsche*—an important step toward ensuring the group's loyalty to Hitler.<sup>104</sup> The various groups of ethnic Germans, she reported, who had previously engaged in bitter and divisive strife now formed a closed group under the leadership of Fritz Fabritius.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, a 1936 essay on ethnic Germans in Romania reported that the community was internally fragmented but particularly susceptible to National Socialism.<sup>106</sup> Edit von Coler acted in conjunction with official German diplomacy that advocated on behalf of ethnic German interests. This suggests that a woman could play an important soft role in diplomacy while men worked in a formal capacity. In a November 1938 letter to Malaxa, von Coler noted that she had done all she could to clear up any misunderstandings among various groups of ethnic Germans—as far as she, “as simply a weak woman,” was capable.<sup>107</sup>

Reporting on developments with regard to Romania's Jewish citizens, von Coler noted that actions to purge Jews from official offices and new laws targeting Jews, including forbidding ownership of pharmacies and agricultural land, were forthcoming. She maintained that Jews in Bucharest were beginning to sell their property and accused

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<sup>103</sup> See Nicole Jordan, *The Popular Front and Central Europe: the Dilemmas of French Impotence, 1918-1940* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See also Picard, *Edit von Coler*.

<sup>104</sup> Ethnic Germans represented about 7 percent of the Romanian population. Götz, “German-Speaking People,” 76.

<sup>105</sup> Reports from Edit von Coler, 2 November and 10 November 1938, IfZ, ED 374/1.

<sup>106</sup> As quoted in Götz, “German-Speaking People,” 76.

<sup>107</sup> As quoted in Picard, *Edit von Coler*, 73.

Jews of trying to disrupt Germany's relationship with Romania.<sup>108</sup> Widespread antisemitism was present in Romania prior to the war, and von Coler's reports outlining rising anti-Jewish sentiment would have been of interest to the Nazi government.<sup>109</sup> Antisemitic legislation in Romania benefited ethnic Germans. Due to the government's expropriation of Jewish property in 1940, ethnic Germans were able to take over Jewish businesses and expand their role in the Romanian economy.<sup>110</sup> It is not possible to discern the degree of von Coler's influence in Romania; nevertheless, the country did become a German ally in November 1940. Romania's relationship with Germany had devastating repercussions for its Jewish population. Local actions, together with German policies, resulted in the massacre of between 380,000 and 400,000 Jews in Romanian-controlled areas during World War II.<sup>111</sup>

In January 1939, based on the wishes of her Romanian contacts, von Coler moved to Romania for what was to be a twelve-month period. Once again she reported, "Further details about my work can be found in the press department of the foreign office."<sup>112</sup> The primary purpose of von Coler's stay in Romania was to work with the industrialist Malaxa, whom she described as a sincere advocate for Germany: "He always stressed the importance of my work for Romania and the rapprochement with Germany." Malaxa requested that von Coler become the editor-in-chief for the newspaper, *Curentul*, that he had recently established, the purpose of which was to improve relations between Germany and Romania. However, von Coler was to work behind the scenes—her name

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<sup>108</sup> Report from Edit von Coler, 21 April 1939, IfZ, ED 374/1.

<sup>109</sup> For more on pervasive antisemitism in Romania see Mihail Sebastian, *Journal 1935-1944* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000). Sebastian was a Jewish journalist and author who recorded the increasing persecution of Romanian Jews throughout in the late 1930s and the war.

<sup>110</sup> Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania*, 49.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, xxi.

<sup>112</sup> Reports from Edit von Coler, 7 and 12 February 1939, IfZ, ED 374/1.

would not appear in relation to the paper.<sup>113</sup> In a letter to the foreign office, Fabricius described von Coler's role as both advisory and hands-on since she would have to give the paper the right shape and direction. He confirmed that von Coler had successfully formed relationships with various circles in Romania, especially the press.<sup>114</sup> Von Coler was given a sabbatical from her work with Darré, demonstrating that Nazi officials supported her activities in Romania.<sup>115</sup>

French intelligence officials viewed von Coler's activities with concern, including her work on *Curentul*, which included pro-Nazi articles. France had traditionally enjoyed and hoped to maintain close relations with Romania. In March 1939, the French Central Intelligence Service in Bucharest noted,

Frau von Coler's personality is very interesting and deserves our full attention. She is Himmler's cousin and is considered the most dangerous of all of his spies in the service of Germany. Since her arrival in Bucharest, she exerts all kinds of activities and operates in all areas. The Romanian police strictly monitor her. She will probably stay for a long period in Romania. The number of German propagandists has doubled and currently includes about 160 people.<sup>116</sup>

Neither this number, nor the French belief that von Coler was a spy can be confirmed.

Von Coler's reports demonstrate that the Foreign Office in Germany was aware of her activities; some officials encouraged her efforts. They also point to some of the ways in which the Nazi government used the German and foreign press as a political tool; women could play a role in these politics as informal diplomats. Evidence suggests that precisely because von Coler was a woman she could play the role she did in Romania. Numerous reports refer to her charm, beauty and social skills. These attributes, along with the idea that women were apolitical, may have helped to penetrate important circles

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<sup>113</sup> Picard, *Edit von Coler*, 76. Malaxa was also a close friend of the Romanian king.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.



in Romania and allowed her to function informally to work toward achieving Nazi Germany's political goals.

## **Conclusion**

In 1940, journalist Anneliese Zander-Mika wrote an article entitled "Women and the Press," claiming to address practical questions surrounding women's work in the field. In her piece, which traced the history of women journalists and women's journals in Europe and Germany from the seventeenth century to the present, Zander-Mika noted: "Amongst the considerable number of German women journalists today, there are scarcely any more who write for the political pages...Most female professional journalists today are in permanent employment and write for the cultural pages."<sup>117</sup> Zander-Mika's text pointed to Nazi policy and to a large degree reflected the reality of women journalists working in the Third Reich prior to World War II. But it did not give the whole picture.

There were spaces for women in a variety of areas that connected directly to state affairs. The work of each of the women addressed in this chapter reported on or related to critical national and international events and German national and foreign policy in the mid to late 1930s, including Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, the Spanish civil war in 1936, Germany's invasion of Austria in 1938 and the resulting wave of Jewish refugees, the 1939 Pact of Steel, and the Nazi government's goal to secure the loyalty of communities of ethnic Germans beyond the borders of the Reich. It is possible that some women succeeded in working in journalistic areas that were traditionally the domain of

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<sup>117</sup>Anneliese Zander-Mika, "Frau und Presse," in *Handbuch der Zeitungswissenschaft*, ed. Walter Heide (Leipzig: Karl W Hiersemann, 1940), 1167.

men because press authorities considered their numbers too small to be of importance or their situation too peripheral to affect the landscape of the press in general. Records do not indicate that the government, propaganda or press authorities were concerned about those women who worked outside of the female realm. Rather, the limitations and roadblocks women faced tended to be due to the policies, traditions, and hiring practices of individual papers and editors, which in turn points to pockets of on-the-ground decision making available to (generally male) individuals in the controlled Nazi press. This fact contrasts with the significant effort press authorities exerted to locate and seek out any journalists not able to prove their “Aryan” lineage or who were considered politically suspect.

As the experiences of Boveri, Passini, Dehio testify, women journalists were still affected by their position as women even when they were not working on material for women’s publications. Still, in various ways each of the women discussed in this chapter acted as unofficial diplomats in areas that connected to Germany’s long-term foreign policy goals and its preparations for war, as well as the Nazis’ *Weltanschauung* based on antisemitism, racism and the inclusionary and exclusionary nature of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The number and influence of women journalists in this realm would only grow during the Second World War.

## Chapter 4

### Opportunity, Influence and Total War, 1939-1945

Eastern Workers in the Camp and in the Factory: The rooms all look like there is a children's party taking place. Paper chains hang between the beds with lanterns in-between and handmade paper plants. On the walls there are pictures of saints, family photos from the East and pictures of bathing suits from German fashion magazines, sparkling birthday cards and pictures of young Frenchmen... The wooden lockers are covered with coloured paper in proliferous patterns, lace adorns the two-story beds and the closet doors are covered with clumsily drawn but cheerful chalk drawings... Today is a rainy Sunday and they do what one does on such a day: they write postcards, of which they are only allowed a certain number each month, they watch the sky, they flip through a Tolstoy from the library or one of their camp newspapers, the Russian "TRUD", the "Ukrainian" or Belorussian "Bielaruski Rabotniki", they mend and one even sews curtains."

Christa Rotzoll, *Das Reich*, 21 November 1943

Ruth Andreas Friedrich began her career in 1925 as a freelance journalist writing for a range of women's publications. When Hitler came to power in 1933, she continued along the same professional track. Her work included reportages about topics ranging from culture to cosmetics to advice pieces about relationship and family problems.<sup>1</sup> In September 1939, she secured a full-time position as a senior staff member at a magazine for young, single women titled *Die Junge Dame*. By June 1943, Friedrich was acting editor—the publication had since merged with another and changed its name to *Kamerad Frau*—replacing Hans Huffzky, who had been drafted into the German army.<sup>2</sup> Under her tenure, *Kamerad Frau* included some of the most virulent antisemitic articles to appear on its pages. Antisemitic propaganda became an increasingly important part of the Nazi

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, Fragebogen for the Reichsschrifttumskammer 1936 and 1938, BAB, RKI7. Andreas-Friedrich wrote for such magazines as *Mode und Heim*, *Fürs Haus* and *Berliner Hausfrau* as well as papers within the illustrated press and the women's supplements of the large daily the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.

<sup>2</sup> Huffzky was drafted in February 1940. At that stage, Ursula Schacht-Ziebarth took over as editor-in-chief until Friedrich received the role in 1943.

government's media barrage during the war. The regime used such material to encourage hatred toward Jews and validate its policies that led to the murder of European Jews.<sup>3</sup>

Twenty-six-year-old Ursula von Kardorff began her journalistic training as a volunteer at the party paper *Der Angriff* in 1937.<sup>4</sup> She continued her internship period at the respected *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, eventually securing a permanent position where she remained until February 1945. Kardorff largely established her career during the war years. Her wartime work focused on culture and gender, and ranged from amusing articles to pieces lauding the capability and “*joie de vivre*” of German women in the midst of hardship. In this way, she contributed to Goebbels' desire to provide both a diversion through the media, and later, to bolster the morale of the home front.

In Baden-Württemberg in January 1945, Luise Herklotz contacted the German Press Association, demanding the right to continue political reporting for the publication *Volksgemeinschaft*, despite the fact that she was not officially qualified as a political journalist. Herklotz noted that since the editor had left the paper, she had been working practically independently on the political section, something, she argued, that no one would have allowed if she had not mastered the area.<sup>5</sup> The experiences of Friedrich, Kardorff, and Herklotz showcase how the war generated possibilities for women journalists within the press and their contribution to various forms of Nazi wartime propaganda and discourse. The number of women journalists grew marginally during the war. By March 1944, they comprised approximately 11 percent of the press, up from

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<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 233, and David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 181.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Kardorff to a friend, 27 March 1937, Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich (IfZ), ED348/4.

<sup>5</sup> Luise Herklotz, letter to the Reichsverband der Deutschen Presse (RDP) Baden-Westmark, 25 January 1945, BAB, R103/119. Herklotz had received a letter from the RDP Baden-Westmark on 11 January 1945 informing her that, as she was only entered into the Professional Registrar B, she could not continue working on political assignments.

around 9 percent in 1939.<sup>6</sup> But this relatively small increase downplays the growth of women journalists' importance and influence.

This chapter explores the ways in which women journalists benefited from, engaged with, and contributed to the war effort through their work. During the war, the regime's need for women journalists and the professional possibilities opened to them converged into a mutually beneficial relationship. With opportunities for adventure, travel, and perks not easily accessible to the majority of Germans, women journalists were in a position to experience the war more positively than other elements of the population.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, women journalists recalled the period as one of professional inclusion and success, which testifies to the success of the regime's presentation of the field as elite and its efforts to create a sense of camaraderie within the press. Some women even experienced, utilized, or defined the war as a vehicle for female empowerment.

Ian Kershaw uses the concept of "working towards the Führer" to describe how, by way of social or personal motivations, individuals in the Third Reich came to implement, or further the potential for implementation of, the ideology and goals that Hitler embodied.<sup>8</sup> Careerism, privilege, and the possibility for *Erlebnis* encouraged women journalists to contribute to the maintenance of the Nazi state.<sup>9</sup> In turn, through

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<sup>6</sup> March 1944, List of German Press Association Members, BAB, R103/234. Women likely represented a higher percentage of those actively working within Germany at this stage. List of daily papers, Reichskulturkammer, January 1942, BAB, R56IV/27.

<sup>7</sup> This does not mean that women journalists did not endure hardship and loss, but rather that, at least for some, their world and career possibilities opened up in ways that differed from women working within the home or in professions that lacked the flexibility of journalism.

<sup>8</sup> Ian Kershaw, "'Working Towards the Führer.' Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship," *Contemporary European History* Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 1993): 103-118.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Fritzsche argues that the "consumption of *Erlebnis*" promoted a sense of social equality among Germans and was a pivotal factor in the strength of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. See Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 61.

their work, they helped to ensure the German population's support of the regime to the end by providing their readers a much needed refuge from the realities of war.

Press officials, in particular the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, recognized the need to present a veneer of normality and keep the population entertained. Women journalists had already made an important contribution to this goal throughout the 1930s. As the war progressed, they played a significant role in the regime's need to connect to, distract, encourage and bolster the public's mood and likelihood to hold out. Women journalists worked in the very areas that the public most craved: lighter fare such as culture, travel, local news and women's news. Germans' trust in hard news plummeted as the tides of the war turned against Germany.<sup>10</sup> Women provided a softer form of propaganda that was more easily digested by the population than screaming political headlines that, as the war progressed, bore little relation to the reality of Germany's military situation. Yet the work of women journalists, particularly those based or travelling abroad, also engaged with politics, military actions, wartime atrocities, and violence on both battle and home fronts. Through their texts and photos, journalists distanced the population from the destructiveness of the war and simultaneously engaged with it. They brought the war to the home front but in a more palatable form. In an inherently sexist state, the regime relied on the political mobilization of a small group of women in the most critical public arena—the press.

Authoritarian regimes establish and maintain their hegemony in part through manipulation via the press. Daily papers were at the centre of this managerial relationship between the state and the public and never more so than during the war when Germans

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<sup>10</sup> Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 375. Germans read the paper for local news and entertainment. As the war progressed they also read for the obituaries.

were far more likely to read the paper than in the pre-war period.<sup>11</sup> Thus, during the war, women journalists had a particularly large audience.

### **“Despite everything, it was a beautiful time”: Expanding Horizons**

This chapter addresses three central questions: what was the nature of the opportunities the war presented for women journalists and how did they experience the profession during these years? How important were women writers on the home front and abroad and how did they contribute to Nazi propaganda goals? Finally, in what ways did gender matter within the profession in times of war? Christa Rotzoll began her journalistic career in 1943 as a trainee on the well-known paper, *Das Reich*. After the war, she discussed the ways in which it had opened up horizons for young women: “We had to do something, not simply sit at home,” she noted. “Many [women] were able to become something they never would have if they had had male competition.”<sup>12</sup> Rotzoll’s words suggest that the devastating war started by Hitler brought about increased emancipation and prospects for some women. From the start of the war, as the regime drafted men into the Wehrmacht and service as embedded war reporters, possibilities opened for women journalists that made the field more accessible, afforded them increasing responsibility, and in many ways rendered the profession more interesting and appealing. By the last months of the war, 5252 male journalists, approximately 35% of those entered in the Professional Registrar, had been drafted to the Wehrmacht, Police, or *Organisation Todt*.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 361.

<sup>12</sup> Christa Rotzoll, *Frauen und Zeiten* (Stuttgart: Engelhorn, 1987), 128.

<sup>13</sup> Memo, RDP, 1 January 1945, BAB, R103/104. Statistics compiled from RDP files. There were 17,000 journalists entered in the Professional Registrar in 1944, approximately 1870 were women.

Authorities relied on women and men to ensure that the press continued to function as smoothly as possible. Early in the war, the German Press Association, anticipating a possible shortage of journalists due to Wehrmacht conscription, implemented the *Kriegssonderliste* (Special War List) that endeavored to bring former journalists out of retirement and also allowed for members of the Wehrmacht, who were active in frontline propaganda units and similar organizations, to work without having completed the journalist-training program. The point of the list was to ease entry requirements into the field where and when necessary. Although women were also listed in the *Kriegssonderliste*, it primarily consisted of men.

By 1940, the Press Association announced that the growing number of journalists conscripted to the Wehrmacht increased the difficulties in finding replacements.<sup>14</sup> This process opened up even more opportunities for women. In March 1944, there were 238 journalists on the Special War List, 51 of whom were women. Although the number of women included in the list was well below the number of men, they still comprised 21 percent, which was more than double the percentage of women listed as full-time journalists in the professional registrar of the Press Association. When the war ended, presumably with Germany's victory, journalists entered into the Special War List would be required to complete the Nazi journalist-training program if they wanted to continue to work in the profession.

Some women could transition smoothly from other jobs into journalism, particularly if they had foreign-language skills, which the regime valued during the war. Elisabeth Eisenhardt, who spoke French and English, began the war as a secretary and foreign-language assistant in the "special service" office of the NSDAP Press Chief, Otto

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<sup>14</sup> Memo, RDP, 26 June 1940, BAB, R103/80, Nr. 21.



Dietrich. There, Eisenhardt compiled and translated material from the English press. Dietrich's office valued her instinct and judgment when it came to selecting important material. She eventually became a journalist working for the Ministry of Propaganda.<sup>15</sup>

Prior to the war, Helma Huffschmid had had no interest in journalism, although she had occasionally assisted her journalist husband with his work. Bernd Huffschmid was a freelance business correspondent on the party paper, the *Westdeutsche Beobachter* and later, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. In 1940, he was conscripted into the Wehrmacht but endeavoured to continue working. Helma Huffschmid took over part of her husband's work. With a young baby at home, Huffschmid noted: "During the day I played the housewife and gardener and during the night, when the child was in bed, I took over the material [my husband sent]. With Pleasure."<sup>16</sup> Huffschmid worked anonymously. All articles appeared under her husband's name. Despite not receiving recognition for her work, she loved the job and continued to work as a journalist after the war.

Positive change also came for women already in the field. Gertrud Uhlhorn had completed her studies in journalism in February 1938 and hoped to find a position as a cultural journalist. She had difficulty finding a fulltime job and before the war, was only able to land a four-month contract on the *Eberswalder Stadt-und Landbote*.<sup>17</sup> It was only at the start of the war that she began regularly to publish book, ballet, and film reviews as

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<sup>15</sup> Elisabeth Eisenhardt file, Ministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, undated, BAB, R55/30141. Prior to the war, Elisabeth Eisenhardt—who completed her *Abitur* in 1929--worked as a secretary for various firms. In early 1937, at the age of 28, she joined the government's foreign press office (*Auslandspressestelle der Reichsleitung*) where she compiled and translated reports concerning the French press.

<sup>16</sup> Annette Lehmann, Helma Huffschmid interview, *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde: "Wir waren ja die Trümmerfrauen in diesem Beruf"* (Zurich-Dortmund: eFeF), 42. After the war, Huffschmid worked in conjunction with her husband for a variety of papers, including the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. She continued to publish under his name.

<sup>17</sup> Anja Meyer, interview with Dr. Gertrude Uhlhorn, *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde*, 124. After her contract position, Uhlhorn accepted a job with the Reich film archive.

well as women's specific articles. She also wrote a column titled "Berliner Brief" for a newspaper in Karlsruhe. After the death of her husband on the eastern front in June 1944, Uhlhorn moved to her parents' home in Pforzheim. Despite the fact that she had been out of the field for two years after the birth of her son and thanks to a friend's connection, she obtained a job on the *Pforzheimer Anzeiger*. The editor hired her on the spot, claiming, "Heaven sent her to me! My reporter for local news will be sent to the front tomorrow."<sup>18</sup> In August 1944, Uhlhorn became the paper's first female reporter.

Freelance photojournalist Liselotte Purper had established a fruitful career by 1937, working with Nazi women's groups, but it was during the war years that she thrived. By 1941, Purper employed two additional photographers and her firm earned between 3000 and 4000 RM per month—a kingly sum at that stage in Germany. By comparison, toward the end of the war, most male journalists earned anywhere from 350 to 1350 RM per month; women were most often on the lower end of this pay scale.<sup>19</sup>

The war also presented women with increasing responsibilities and expanding horizons. The experiences of women journalists during this period suggest a modest—and perhaps temporary—shift in gender relations in the field. Male journalists came to accept and even appreciate the contributions of their female colleagues and editors came to rely on the work of women. Gertrud Hoffmann became the replacement editor of the trade journal, *Deutsche Presse*, while Hans Henniger was in the field; Edith Hamann replaced Huber Miketta and then Ernst Poggo as editor on the women's magazine, *Die*

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>19</sup> Salary figures from RDP regional associations in Württemberg and Sudetenland from October, November, December 1944, BAB, R103/229. It is difficult to analyze if or how salaries for journalists and photojournalists changed over the course of the war since the data is incomplete. A comparison with salaries before the war suggests that they in fact increased after 1939. However, factors such as the type of newspaper and the journalist's role come into play.

*elegante Welt*, and Grete Ratemann stepped in as the cultural editor of the major daily, *Donauzeitung*. In 1940, shortly after she got her start as a trainee on the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, on the encouragement of her soon-to-be husband, Peter Erich Neumann, joined the esteemed *Das Reich*. In 1941, when Peter Neumann left for the Eastern front as a war reporter, the young journalist took over his role as head of the national affairs section of the paper.<sup>20</sup> Still, no woman ascended to the position of editor of a major daily.<sup>21</sup>

In 1938, at the provincial *Saale-Zeitung*, journalist-in-training Helene Rahms quickly became disillusioned by the little experience she received. Her primary task was organizing, sorting and writing the local segment, consisting of “trivialities” such as “Farmer R. fell from a ladder and broke three ribs,” “Nazi women’s groups forms sewing circle,” or “Local group leader dedicates the new party flag.”<sup>22</sup> By November 1941, Rahms was working independently, having taken over a solo reporting position for a male colleague on the party paper, *Mitteldeutsche Nationalzeitung*.<sup>23</sup> In 1943, the ambitious journalist sent a sample of her work to *Das Reich*, a paper that employed the most accomplished and well-known journalists in Germany. The editor published her piece and hired Rahms shortly thereafter.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen* (Munich: Herbig, 2006), 96. See also Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Beck, 1989).

<sup>21</sup> List of magazines and newspapers, Reichskulturkammer, January 1942, BAB, R56IV/27. The files only indicate that as of 1942 no woman had become editor of a major daily. Nevertheless, this likely remained the case throughout the war.

<sup>22</sup> Helene Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen: Mein Leben als Journalistin im Dritten Reich* (Bern: Scherz, 1997), 11.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 102/3.

Rahms recalled, “Now no one was bothered that women filled in the gaps [at the paper].”<sup>25</sup> From the time it was launched in May 1940 until the paper closed down at the end of the war, *Das Reich* employed a number of women journalists, some already prominent in the field and others just starting out: Ilse Urbach, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, Petra Vermehren, Christa Rotzoll, and Margret Boveri all worked for the paper.<sup>26</sup> Toward the end of the war, the editor, Rudolph Sparing, gave Helene Rahms and Christa Rotzoll, who was still a trainee, almost complete responsibility for the cultural pages: “And we sat at the desks of the cultural reporters, young, reckless and fun loving ladies,” Rahms recalled.<sup>27</sup> In this way, Rahms presented the war as an opportunity for a women’s personal growth.

Margret Boveri had worked in her desired role as a foreign correspondent before September 1939, yet the war also expanded opportunities for her. When interviewing with the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in the fall of 1938, the paper informed Boveri that, although they were well aware of her achievements, a woman could not represent a paper of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*’s standing, particularly in such an important post as Washington, D.C.<sup>28</sup> The paper suggested she work freelance. By late 1940 Boveri had secured a position as the paper’s fulltime New York correspondent.<sup>29</sup> Of course, Nazi Germany remained a sexist state and women could still be outsiders in the field, particularly those who worked in hard news. Boveri felt that the *Frankfurter Zeitung* did not publish her work often enough, a fact she attributed to her gender. In April 1940, Boveri declined to take part in a book about the world that contained primarily women authors, including

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>26</sup> However, the number of male journalists on *Das Reich* still far outweighed the number of women.

<sup>27</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 199.

<sup>28</sup> Margret Boveri, *Verzweigungen: Eine Autobiographie*, ed. Uwe Johnson (Munich: Piper, 1978), 319.

<sup>29</sup> Boveri became the *Frankfurter Zeitung*’s foreign correspondent in Stockholm in May 1939.

two of her colleagues who also worked as foreign correspondents, Irene Seligo and Lily Abegg. Boveri feared that her participation would further harden the gender-divide between her and her male colleagues, whom she believed did not view her as an equal.<sup>30</sup>

Women journalists, whose work afforded them opportunity for travel in and outside of Germany, could enjoy benefits much of the population on the home front had no access to, especially as the war progressed. The German Press Association's 1936 assurance that journalism was an important, challenging and exciting career for women became reality for a number of female journalists during the war. Of course, many German men travelled as soldiers and some of that travel was also highly enjoyable for them. Travel to other countries, or the countryside, provided women with a respite from wartime bombing and destruction, as well as access to ample food and drink. From 1942 onward, British bombing campaigns against Germany intensified, and the levels of destruction rose again in 1943, as the U.S. joined their British Allies.

In July 1943, Liselotte Purper travelled on a press trip to Denmark and Norway with a group of women journalists from Berlin. In her diary, she described the exquisite meals they enjoyed: "Tea, coffee, hot chocolate—yes please, everything one desires! 'Bread and butter... yes we have them.' And what bread and what butter. In silver baskets there is white bread, brown bread, crispbread and fragrant, light pastries."<sup>31</sup> Purper went on to note that she saw little of the city but enjoyed the best cafés with other

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<sup>30</sup> Heike B. Görtemaker, *Ein deutsches Leben: Die Geschichte der Margret Boveri* (Munich: Beck, 2005), 136.

<sup>31</sup> Liselotte Orgel-Köhne, *Willst du meine Witwe werden? Eine deutsche Liebe im Krieg* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1995), 79.

Berlin journalists and packed her travel bag with treats.<sup>32</sup> In this way Purper benefited from German war material gains in occupied territories.

Helene Rahms enjoyed travel opportunities throughout the entire war. Around 1942, on a press trip to Königsberg for a cultural festival, she travelled first class and relished good food, wine and tickets to the theatre and opera: “We were spoiled, pampered, warmed up with grog, greeted with champagne and hosted by the mayor with a solemn speech and a pompous dinner.”<sup>33</sup> During a press trip to Vienna, Rahms recalled that it felt like a different world, with more food and drinks and fewer bombs.<sup>34</sup>

For her column “*Thea*” on the *Heimat am Mittag*, Thea Fischer had the opportunity to travel and try out different wartime jobs, some more glamorous than others. Among other things, she worked at a market selling vegetables and as a ticket collector on a streetcar. On a contract for the Ministry of Propaganda, she reported on the evacuation of mothers and children to the countryside: “In the beautiful month of May, I was allowed to go to...the Black Forest and poke around. I can still see the beautiful blooming meadows with fruit trees that I travelled through...I did well for myself and was applauded for it. Despite everything, it was a beautiful time.”<sup>35</sup> The trauma and upheaval of forced evacuation for mothers with their children contrasted with Fischer’s enjoyable experience. Journalism could also provide physical safety on the home front.

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<sup>32</sup> For more on the benefits and access to food that members of the Wehrmacht enjoyed in Western Europe see Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 92-93.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 145. For more on the regime’s use of material benefits to placate the population see Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, Fabrice d’Almeida, eds., *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Julia Timpe, “Hitler’s Happy People: *Kraft durch Freude*’s Everyday Production of Joy in the Third Reich” (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 2013); Jonathan Wiesen, *Creating the Nazi Marketplace: Commerce and Consumption in the Third Reich* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Anja Meyer, Thea Fischer interview, *Medienfrauen*, 106.

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann was able to leave Berlin in March 1945 for the safety of the countryside—despite the regime’s policy that the civilian population remain—because as a reporter she had a travel permit. Kardorff fled to Bavaria with a female colleague in February 1945.<sup>36</sup>

### **Crafting Pleasure, Diversion and Optimism for the Home Front**

Throughout the 1930s, the Nazi government recognized and responded to the need to maintain a sense of normalcy in everyday life. From 1939 onward, the regime increasingly focused its propaganda efforts on entertaining, distracting, and bolstering the mood and attitude (*Stimmung und Haltung*) of the home front in order to ensure its continued support for the war. Given Hitler’s belief that Germany lost World War I due to the collapse of the home front, these efforts only grew in importance to the regime as Germany’s military losses increased in late 1942 and 1943.

Goebbels linked the press and its task to actions on the military front. In July 1942, just before what would become the prolonged and bloody battle for Stalingrad, Goebbels made clear the mission of the press: “The preservation of the mood of the German people, especially in the present time and before the biggest military decisions, is of the highest importance.”<sup>37</sup> The year 1943 began with the loss of Stalingrad, defeat in North Africa, and the Allied landing in Sicily. In February of that year, as the regime was preparing to close or reduce the pages of additional magazines and newspapers due to

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<sup>36</sup> Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen*, 126; Von Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, 197.

<sup>37</sup> “Konzentration der Zeitschriften: Maßstabe, Fortbestand, Schliessung und Zusammenlegung,” *Das Reich*, 14 February 1943.

material shortages, it announced that publications and content geared towards entertainment would not be affected.<sup>38</sup>

A report from the German press association acknowledged that entertainment was a proven tool for diversion and relaxation and had a positive emotional impact on the attitude of the population. The regime believed that publications geared toward entertainment helped support the war beyond providing a distraction for the population: because magazines and newspapers were later shipped to the front, they also helped to strengthen the bonds between the military and home.<sup>39</sup> The German Chamber of Culture, a part of Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry, confirmed that the role of the cultural press—providing stories, serialized novels, humour and poetry—had become increasingly important as the population's appetite for such entertainment increased. The Chamber of Culture was clear: it did *not* want cultural or entertainment material focused on military or war themes. On the contrary, the population and even front-line soldiers needed content that provided a break from the theatrics of war.<sup>40</sup>

Always aware of the importance of public opinion, the regime worked to monitor and improve the propaganda directed toward the German population. In July 1943—the same month the western allies landed in Sicily and seven months after the Rosenstrasse protest in Berlin—the Central Party Propaganda Office of the NSDAP grappled with the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Publications considered “luxury,” however, would be closed, likely due to the disparity between the projected images in such publications and the reality of everyday life.

<sup>39</sup> Memo, RDP, 30 July 1941, BAB, R103/6, Nr. 30. The report anticipated that the importance of such material would grow along with the length and severity of the war.

<sup>40</sup> Memo, Kulturpolitik, “Hohe Berufung und Vielgestalt, Zehn Jahre Kulturpressearbeit, 1943, Kulturkammer, BAB, R561/8. As Jana Bruns demonstrates in her work on Nazi cinema, this same trend was present in the many wartime films produced in a “Hollywood” style. The press in wartime Germany gained an audience precisely through entertainment deemed apolitical. See Jana F. Bruns, *Nazi Cinema's New Woman* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3. For more on National Socialist films see Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Hilmar Hoffmann, *The Triumph of Propaganda: Film and National Socialism, 1933-1945*, translated by John A. Broadwin and V.R. Berghahn (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996); David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933-1945* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001).



following questions: “How could the regime raise the prestige and reception of propaganda amongst the population? What [other] means could be used to favourably influence the mood and attitude of the population? What propaganda methods were best suited to have a sustained effect on the widest circle of the population?”<sup>41</sup> By 1943, the German population had grown increasingly alienated and frustrated by overt Nazi propaganda (and particularly its presentation of the war) that did not correspond to what many knew to be the reality of Germany’s military situation. Thus, material devoted to diversion became ever more pivotal to the regime.

Women journalists, charged with writing colourful, uplifting and or amusing pieces, had an important role to play in this scenario.<sup>42</sup> The newspaper *Das Reich* provides one example. The paper was founded, with Goebbels’ support, in 1940 to showcase quality German journalism for a domestic and international audience.<sup>43</sup> Goebbels allowed the paper more freedom to give the impression of liberality and candour. *Das Reich* included (comparatively) factual and quality content in the areas of politics, war reporting, business and *Feuilleton*. In line with the Nazi *Weltanschauung*, the paper still published antisemitic propaganda and vitriol directed at the Allies.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the *Feuilleton* section titled “Literature/Art/Science” often comprised

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<sup>41</sup> Memo, Reichspropaganda Leiter der NSDAP, 6 July 1943, BAB, NS18/1072. Goebbels was simultaneously head of the government’s Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, housed in Berlin, and of the *Reichspropagandaleitung*, based in Munich. See Aristotle A. Kallis, *Nazi Propaganda and the Second World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 132 and Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 365.

<sup>42</sup> Wilhelm Weiss, “Die Frau im Schriftleiter Beruf,” *Deutsche Presse*, 7 March 1936, 118.

<sup>43</sup> The paper was the brainchild of Rolf Reinhardt, SA Oberführer and Chief of Staff for the Reich Leader of the Press, Max Amann. The first issue appeared on the 26 May 1940.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Goebbels often wrote the lead article. Occasionally, articles by Goebbels were published both in *Das Reich* and the party organ *Völkischer Beobachter*. Memo, Reichspropaganda Leiter der NSDAP, 20 May 1942, BAB, NS 18/110.

almost half of the paper.<sup>45</sup> The paper also included travel and local news. Witty and intellectually stimulating, *Das Reich* proved a huge success, eventually reaching a circulation of 1.4 million.<sup>46</sup>

Prior to and during her time with *Das Reich*, Helene Rahms worked in *Feuilleton* covering plays, exhibitions, and such occasions as a poetry evening at the Romanian embassy as well as the seasonal wine harvest in Austria. Her column in *Das Reich*, “Aus den Ländern” (From the Countryside), relayed everyday events taking place in idyllic countryside towns, prose about the scenery and descriptions of cultural festivals. She later described her work as “pretty filler that avoided all political motives”—a self-serving description designed to downplay her connection with Nazi propaganda—but she also noted that it was important to the paper.<sup>47</sup> Rudolph Sparing, the paper’s editor, allegedly referred to Rahms as *Das Reich*’s “Spezialistin für Stimmungen” (Mood Specialist).<sup>48</sup> Such pieces were important in the eyes of the Propaganda Ministry; they brought to mind bucolic images of stability and peace and offered culture as distraction from wartime hardships. Moreover, they provided a glimpse of what life could return to after the war, thereby imparting hope.

After reading one of her theatre reviews, which Rahms claimed was a piece that overtly praised the play but offered subtle criticism that discerning readers would pick up on, an official from the Ministry of Propaganda approached her to ask her to work with the Ministry. Her task would be to write two reviews of whatever cultural event she attended. One review would be published in the newspapers for audiences and the other

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<sup>45</sup> Frei, Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*, 110.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 97.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

would be her “real views” on the piece. In this way, Rahms could help the Propaganda Ministry to understand what was and was not working with regard to its cultural offerings.<sup>49</sup> Rahms likely shared this event from her past to highlight how she endeavoured to “write between the lines” to critique the Nazi regime and to emphasize that she turned down the Propaganda Ministry’s offer. Nevertheless, the Ministry’s request highlights the importance with which it viewed culture as a diversion for the population.<sup>50</sup>

Less illustrious papers also wanted light fare for their readers. After leaving *Das Reich* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann produced “entertaining” reportages, including “Gossip in the Pacific” for the illustrated press.<sup>51</sup> Working for the party paper, the *Westdeutsche Beobachter*, Felicitas Kapteina concentrated on pieces depicting “everyday life” during the war.<sup>52</sup> Local news proved particularly important to Germans before and during the war. It connected more easily with what they knew to be reality, helped them feel integrated into their community, and provided a sense of shared experience.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>50</sup> According to Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, an official from the Propaganda Ministry approached her in April 1942 to ask if she would work as adjutant to Goebbels on public opinion research—the topic of her doctoral thesis. Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen*, 103. Thea Fischer also claimed that the Propaganda Ministry offered her a position based on her travel reportages. All three women maintained that they were able to turn down the Ministry’s offer without consequences. The press files do show that the Ministry of Propaganda approached female journalists to work in various capacities within the Ministry. Some but not all accepted a role with Goebbels’ organization.

<sup>51</sup> Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen*, 118.

<sup>52</sup> Alexa Godbersen, Felicitas Kapteina interview, *Medienfrauen*, 61.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Fritzsche demonstrates that the local news section in newspapers was a modern element in the German press. In the late nineteenth century, when newspapers began to report on local topics such as the growth of the metropolis, their readership grew substantially. Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 59-60. See also Andrew Stuart Bergerson, “Integrating in the Accusative: The Daily Papers of Interwar Hildesheim,” *Issues in Integrative Studies* No. 15, (1997): 57. By the end of the war, the death notices, located in the local pages, were the most-read part of the newspaper.

The German News Agency (*Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* or DNB) commissioned articles and short stories from journalists, which it then distributed to magazines and newspapers. Topics it requested from female journalists included anniversaries for German (or Austrian) composers and painters, art exhibitions, reviews of theatre performances, and articles about life abroad, including the Parisian theatre scene.<sup>54</sup> Already in 1940, the agency requested material that was “pretty, amusing, cheerful and life-affirming.”<sup>55</sup> In 1943, the head of the DNB in Vienna wrote to Elfriede Meyn, its representative in Paris, advising her of the type of material he was seeking: “I think to myself that in Paris there must be a whole range of authors who can provide what I am looking for, lively, witty, funny, even a little cheeky, also erotic in a good sense... I imagine that you must always come across such things in the French press and in magazines and that you could easily acquire the translation rights.”<sup>56</sup>

Of course, male journalists also contributed cultural pieces, light-hearted articles, and local news to the German Agency or for specific newspapers. Many, however, also worked in the hard news sections, such as national and international affairs, that related more directly to the war. Female journalists could link to, or divert attention from, the war in a softer way via the traditional woman’s world. For instance, in spring 1940 the agency requested that Marianne Schrim provide an article about the work of the Red Cross since it “would make decent propaganda.”<sup>57</sup> More important, women journalists could connect more directly with the female population.

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<sup>54</sup> Correspondence, Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro (DNB), 8 December 1943, 5 July 1943, 12 December 1943 BAB, R34/456.

<sup>55</sup> Correspondence, DNB, 9 January 1940, BAB, R34/464. The agency praised a short story by Judith von Gadow titled “Wir schaffen wieder Hühner an.”

<sup>56</sup> Memo, Elfriede Meyn, DNB Paris from DNB Vienna, 1 December 1943, BAB, R34/371.

<sup>57</sup> Correspondence, DNB, 20 May 1940 and 13 April 1940, BAB, R34/464.

### **Morale Building for the Female Population**

The regime viewed female readers as an important audience from early in the war onward. Since women made up approximately half of the population and represented the majority of those “manning” the home front, articles aimed at this audience were important. In March 1940, *Der Zeitschriften-Verleger*, a trade magazine aimed at magazine publishers and journalists, published an article on its front page pointing to this fact. The piece, titled “The Importance of Women’s Magazines in War,” instructed that regardless of their form, women’s publications served a political job: they must mobilize women psychologically and physically to help them get through difficult times. Women’s magazines, it continued, had done such a good job in this area prior to the war that they could now be credited with the willingness of the female population to put up with current circumstances.

Such publications, the article continued, might not address politics in relation to domestic and foreign policy, but they did bring a different type of politics to the page: they taught their readers how to think and deal with aspects of a woman’s life. They provided practical advice, for instance, on how to shop and how to save. Indeed, women’s magazines supported the war effort by providing tips on savings measures, household substitutes, blackout procedures, and first aid instructions.<sup>58</sup> “A woman’s life,” the article noted, “was made of up many small things that might not seem heroic in the everyday,” but a woman was as heroic as a man, and “women’s magazines during the war must emphasize this.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 362.

<sup>59</sup> Dr. Stiewe, “Die Bedeutung der Frauenzeitschriften im Kriege,” *Der Zeitschriften-Verleger*, 27 March 1940, No. 13, 97-99.

Although the publication of magazines had dropped dramatically by 1944, standards denoting who could work in women's issues remained stringent, pointing to the fact that the regime continued to view these areas as important. When aspiring journalist Ruth Schultze completed her journalism exam in 1944, the examination committee agreed that she made a good overall impression, noting that she was well versed in culture and politics and her ideological viewpoint beyond reproach. Though she was designated a full-fledged journalist, she was not yet allowed to enter the two fields she most desired: *Frauenfragen* and *Kulturpolitisches*. The committee felt that Frau Schultze did not yet have the necessary know-how for these specialized and important areas.<sup>60</sup>

“The Importance of Women's Magazines in War” also alluded to an important strand of the regime's wartime propaganda—morale building for the female population. In 1944, the German News Agency noted that women were one of the most important factors to consider with regard to its political propaganda.<sup>61</sup> A journalist's task with regard to connecting with German women was twofold: First, she (or he) had to provide articles designed to recruit women to wartime service and praise the heroism of women in this time of war. In addition, a journalist had to avoid anything that could deflate the population's will to hold out. As Germany's military situation deteriorated and calls to resist became increasingly empty, the best way for the press to maintain morale was to sidestep anything unpleasant.<sup>62</sup>

In 1943, Helene Rahms wrote a seemingly innocuous article on children who had been sent to the Protectorate of Bohemia for safety that was intended to settle the nerves

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<sup>60</sup> Gutachten über die Abschlussprüfung der Schriftleiterin Fräulein Ruth Schultze, 1 October 1944, BAB, R103/100.

<sup>61</sup> Memo, DNB, 1943-1944, BAB, R34/457.

<sup>62</sup> Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 373.

of German mothers. The school director, she recalled, was concerned about the children's safety given the local population's hatred of Germans. Rahms described her article as "...a harmless piece that masked this reality with the sentimental title 'Safe and sound, far from home.'" Rahms knew that the press censors would not risk an article that threatened to demoralize parents, since doing so could weaken their will to hold out and thereby destabilize the regime.<sup>63</sup> Instead, Rahms wrote of how nicely the children were treated, that they were only a little homesick and had more than enough to eat.

The writing of Ursula von Kardorff provides a useful case study of material designed to bolster women's morale as the German population experienced increasing deprivations on the home front. Her work recast the regime's public and political goals as ones that offered women personal experience and fulfillment.<sup>64</sup> Kardorff's wartime work – steady but not prolific – focused on culture and gender and ranged from light articles, such as the tongue-in-cheek "Modern Danaïden," which described the frustration of torn stockings, to pieces lauding the capability, patriotism and *joie de vivre* of German women in the midst of hardship. Four articles from 1944 provide a sample of Kardorff's contribution to female morale building: "Flakhelferinnen" (Flak Gunnery Assistants), "Frauen und nicht Soldat: Die Luftwaffe stellt Flakwaffenhelferinnen ein" (Women and not Soldiers: The Luftwaffe Employs Flak Gunnery Assistants), "Die Frauen in Berlin: Brief an einen Neutralen" (Women in Berlin: A Letter to a Neutral Person), and "Die Frau von dreißig Jahren" (The Thirty-Year-Old Woman).

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<sup>63</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 135.

<sup>64</sup> According to Jürgen Habermas, the decay of the public sphere and the blurred boundaries between public and private are due in part to the growth of consumption-oriented mass media. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989).

Both “Flakhelferinnen” and “Frauen und nicht Soldat: Die Luftwaffe stellt Flakwaffenhelferinnen ein” dealt with the issues of women flak gunnery assistants and promoted the fun and fulfilment available to women through war service, as well as the contribution they could make to the defence of their homeland, all the while maintaining their femininity.<sup>65</sup> In both pieces, Kardorff was clear: German women were not soldiers, nor were they connected to the military in any way. They were first and foremost women and approached their duty in a “womanly” way.<sup>66</sup> This observation separated women from the overt military (violent) aspect of the war.

*Flakhelferinnen* enjoyed an exciting and healthy lifestyle that provided numerous comforts, important this late in the war, including plentiful food, as well as entertainment (for example access to a radio and visits to the hair salon) and abundant free time.<sup>67</sup> “The war needed men,” wrote Kardorff, “and women were successfully stepping into vacated, sometimes leadership, roles with gusto, bravery, and success.”<sup>68</sup> Kardorff ended “Frauen und nicht Soldat” with a final line about the lasting impact this experience would have on women: “[These women] worked perfectly’, said the young lieutenant in his proper military voice. And later, when it is again peaceful, they will be able to say: Then, when it really mattered, I was there too.” Kardorff’s message – it was important for women to contribute to the war, for their own good and for Germany’s – blended the concept of

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<sup>65</sup> Ursula von Kardorff, “Frauen und nicht Soldat: Die Luftwaffe stellt Flakwaffenhelferinnen ein,” *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 June 1944; “Flakhelferinnen,” *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 November 1944.

<sup>66</sup> Kardorff, “Frauen und nicht Soldat.”

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.



service for the nation with personal enjoyment and growth. Her text offered a far more appealing message than the increasingly thin calls for yet more sacrifices.<sup>69</sup>

Encouraging women to register for work within flak gunnery brigades was an important propagandistic topic for the regime. A memo to all Reich Propaganda Offices stated: “The role of Flak Gunnery Assistant is a Wehrmacht assignment and is therefore fundamentally more important than any civilian position [for women.]”<sup>70</sup> Articles from other female journalists on the topic appeared in such newspapers as the *Völkischer Beobachter* and *N.S. Frauen-Warte*.<sup>71</sup> Although recruiting women to such positions would suggest that the war was all but lost, Kardorff’s article helped veil this dilemma; to describe the *Flakhelferinnen* role as one that was not only patriotic and fun, but that also came with perks, downplayed the danger and futility of such a job and distracted from the visibility of Germany’s impending loss.

Kardorff also championed women’s more general war experiences. In “Die Frauen in Berlin: Brief an einen Neutralen,” written in March 1944, she addressed common questions about life for women in Berlin. Her words acknowledged hardships, but placed more emphasis on the heightened intensity, joys, and appreciation of life that came from experiencing the home front.<sup>72</sup> Far from having forgotten how to smile, she suggested, women banded together through even the worst trials of life in the Reich’s capital. Kardorff evoked an ideal of a female camaraderie that could not be destroyed by

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<sup>69</sup> For more on the ambiguity regarding female soldiers and the role of the *Flakwaffenhelferinnen* see Jutta Rüdiger, *Zur Problematik von Soldatinnen* (Lindhorst: Askania, 1987). On the personal experience of a *Flakwaffenhelferin* see Alison Owings, *Frauen. German Women Recall the Third Reich* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993).

<sup>70</sup> Memo, Dr. Schultz v. Dratzig, Fernschreiben an alle Reichspropagandaämter, Betrifft: Einziehung der weiblichen Jahrgänge 20-24 als *Flakwaffenhelferinnen*, undated but likely 1944, BAB, R103/93.

<sup>71</sup> For instance, see Senta Ulitz, “Ein neuer Begriff: *Flakwaffenhelferin*,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, 23 June 1944, No. 75, 3.

<sup>72</sup> Ursula von Kardorff, “Die Frauen in Berlin: Brief an einen Neutralen,” *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 March 1944.

bombs and created a sense of pride for women in Berlin to hang onto – a much-needed morale injection in 1944 – and a sense of wonder that the rest of the population could admire: “And if I am to be completely honest, please don’t feel this is a propagandistic exaggeration...[I’d] prefer to be there, at the heart of it where the pulse beats stronger than anywhere else.”<sup>73</sup>

Packaged as feminine fortitude, Kardorff’s text engaged with the violence of the war and the repercussions of German military actions. However, its message that conditions in Berlin were exciting and life-affirming downplayed the danger. Kardorff’s request that readers not dismiss her words as propaganda testifies to the population’s distaste for such material; it may have resulted in a more positive reception to her article. Her message also subtly advocated a form of hedonism, suggesting Germans should enjoy life while they could. Doing so could also provide distraction from appalling destruction. Finally, Kardorff’s article connected to an aspect of propaganda that still corresponded with reader interest in 1944—terror bombing and the destruction of German cities by the British and Americans.<sup>74</sup>

In “Die Frau von dreißig Jahren” Kardorff used the image of a “magic film” to depict her view of today’s woman. The “film” begins in 1929 and describes the experiences of a generation of women born during the First World War – women on the brink of adulthood when Hitler assumed power. Kardorff traced the difficult, but exciting, shared history of this generation, their youth curtailed by the deprivations of the war, the violence and upheaval of the aftermath, and the inflation of the early 1920s. Her words juxtaposed feminine innocence and suffering with strength and capability: “Is this

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> See Kallis, *Nazi Propaganda*, 80, 160-1; Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 372.

a despairing sex?" she asked. "No, exactly like plants that grow under difficult conditions, they became tough and flexible, and that serves them well today."<sup>75</sup> These women overcame hardships unknown by previous generations and sought opportunities: they pursued professions, travelled, married and began families. This exciting and formative time coincided with the early years of the Nazi regime. Kardorff presented the mid-1930s as a time of stability, prosperity and peace for women.<sup>76</sup> In 1944, when most of the German population was suffering the deprivations of war, Kardorff's words reminded women why many were (at least until the later years of the war) enthusiastic about Nazism, once again providing a boost for women and for the regime.

Kardorff's articles responded to the Nazis' desire that the press provide optimistic and upbeat material. Although records do not establish the degree to which such articles bolstered female morale in 1944, they likely did not invoke the population's anger and frustration in the way that blatant propaganda related to the war did. More likely, they helped soothe Germans' growing dissatisfaction with the regime, the war, and the war coverage. Kardorff's depiction of women both supported and pushed the boundaries of Nazi gender rhetoric in a way that was useful to the regime. Women were fighters and actors in the public realm, but they were first and foremost women and made their contribution in a so-called feminine way, separate from the violence of the war. Though they stepped into men's personal and professional roles, they did so in a modest manner. Women were vital and strong in the face of adversity but always tranquil; family remained their primary responsibility.<sup>77</sup> This ambiguity allowed Kardorff to support the

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<sup>75</sup> Ursula von Kardorff, "Die Frau von dreißig Jahren," *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 1944.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

regime's need for the political mobilization of women without drifting too far from Nazi gender norms; it also suggested that Nazism led to female empowerment.

Other publications, including the widely circulated party paper, *N.S. Frauen-Warte*, also published pieces targeted to female morale building. But Kardorff's work was published in a respected, bourgeois paper, giving her text a more sober (and therefore credible) tone than could be found in party papers. The fact that the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* dedicated space for such articles in 1944, when the number of pages for all newspapers was significantly reduced—some were only two pages long—demonstrates the importance with which press authorities viewed pieces intended to boost the morale of the female population. Despite the futility of such instructions, as late as April 1945, the Reich Press Office demanded that all components of the press and propaganda machine must “exclusively serve the purpose of raising morale and the spirit of resistance.”<sup>78</sup>

### **“Negative” Propaganda and a Wider Audience**

Although articles containing upbeat messages and dedicated to diversion, pleasure and female morale-building on the home front formed a significant component of women's journalism during the war years, some female journalists also contributed to the regime's racial and political discourse about Germany's claimed enemies—the Allies and above all, “international Jewry.” High-ranking officials in the Propaganda Ministry and its Reich Press Office likely knew by fall 1941 that Germany had begun the mass murder of European Jews. To support this policy they used the media to provoke hatred toward Jews and offer justifications for the government's murderous policies and actions. After

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<sup>78</sup> As quoted in Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 260.

Germany's loss in Stalingrad in January 1943, Hitler instructed the press to keep up a near constant bombardment of antisemitic headlines and articles and headlines.<sup>79</sup>

Women journalists working on publications ranging from women's magazines to dailies to party organs contributed to this line of Nazi rhetoric. Ruth Andreas-Friedrich's work in *Kamerad Frau* in 1943 included inflammatory articles about Jews.

Unbeknownst to her colleagues, before and during her tenure as editor of *Kamerad Frau*, Andreas-Friedrich was active in a resistance group helping to hide Jews and others targeted by the regime. Her contribution to Nazi propagandistic goals was not based on a belief in Nazi ideology but rather something more personal such as careerism. Her work may also have served to mask her resistance activities.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, she fulfilled the duties of her profession, thereby "working towards the Führer."<sup>81</sup> Such texts were designed to make Jews the scapegoat for German frustration over the war and their own suffering and losses. In addition, violence disseminated via language helped to set in motion physical violence against racialized minorities. In this way antisemitic material in the press connected indirectly to the process of the "Final Solution."<sup>82</sup>

In early 1943, Margret Boveri, working as a foreign correspondent in Lisbon, received a telegram from the *Frankfurter Zeitung* that instructed her to write an article about "the Jewish question" in America. Like Andreas-Friedrich, Boveri satisfied the demands of her profession. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* published her article, titled "Landschaft mit doppeltem Boden: Einfluss und Tarnung des amerikanischen

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>80</sup> The files do not indicate that Friedrich ever addressed her work in *Kamerad Frau* or that the Allied authorities questioned her on her contribution to antisemitic propaganda.

<sup>81</sup> Kershaw, "Working Towards the Führer".

<sup>82</sup> Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9.

Judentums” (Landscape with a Safety Net: The Influence and Camouflage of Jews in America) on 28 May 1943. Boveri wrote that there was a strong current of antisemitism in America, which was kept quiet since it did not fit with the American myth that all people were equal.<sup>83</sup> The article was more a critique of American politics and the American way of life—a common theme that Boveri took up in her private and public writing without any prompting from her editors—but it did contain a particularly antisemitic paragraph charging that the Jews led the U.S. to war against Germany in hopes to bring about the downfall of the Third Reich. However, evidence suggests that the paper’s editors added this paragraph, prior to publication, without Boveri’s knowledge.<sup>84</sup>

Rather than the Jewish adversary, much of Boveri’s wartime writing dealt with the U.S. She wrote about its rampant capitalist system, criticized its elections, and charged that democracy and equality did not exist. Anti-American material was a central component of Nazi propaganda and one that the German population was receptive to throughout the war, especially if it also played into German fears about Bolshevism and Soviet reprisals should they cross into Germany. Charges that the U.S. was uncultured and simplistic, that the country displayed no knowledge or understanding of Europe, that the Allied “terror” bombing was immoral and destroyed Europe’s cultural heritage, and that America was a country possessed by consumer greed proved popular topics in the German press.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Margret Boveri, “Landschaft mit doppeltem Boden: Einfluss und Tarnung des amerikanischen Judentums,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 28 May 1943. See also Görtenmaker, *Ein deutsches Leben*, 180-181. Görtenmaker analyses a number of Boveri’s articles about the war.

<sup>84</sup> Görtemaker, *Ein deutsches Leben*, 182.

<sup>85</sup> Kallis, *Nazi Propaganda*, 86. Boveri contributed to this discourse in many of her articles.

In March 1944, for instance, the German News Agency gave journalist Margret Gröblichhoff a few suggestions for articles, including “Every Anglo-American Bomb only Benefits the Soviets.” This article, the agency noted, must argue that without troops on the ground, the most England and the United States were accomplishing was to weaken the German East front and ensure further Soviet penetration within Europe. It also suggested a piece titled “American War” that would provide a historical overview about how the U.S. had never fought real opponents. Rather, it had only conquered “Indians” and, in World War I, an already asphyxiated Germany. As a result, the American army would never be able to defend Europe against the Soviets if Germany were destroyed.<sup>86</sup>

As a student, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann had studied for a year in the United States. During the war she also published articles that addressed U.S. politics and culture. Her article, “Das Geschichtsbild der Amerikaner,” (The Americans’ Image of History) published in *Das Reich* on 18 May 1941, maintained that the U.S. was a simple country with no understanding of European history or politics. Its university courses in history focused on American history while breezing through hundreds of years of European developments. She charged that courses at U.S. universities included blatant moral judgments: “The moral enthusiasm exhibited during discussions about foreign politics by every student who had attended the lecture ‘European History’ was almost touching in its naivety if it did not cost humanity so much blood and sorrow.”<sup>87</sup> In this way she implied U.S. responsibility for the war since the country did not understand European politics.

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<sup>86</sup> Letter to Margret Gröblichhoff from DNB, 30 March 1944, BAB, R34/471.

<sup>87</sup> Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, “Das Geschichtsbild der Amerikaner,” *Das Reich*, 18 May 1941, BAB, Noelle-Neumann file, RKI498. Other titles by Noelle-Neumann included, “Spinnen im Goldenen Nett: Die Herrschaftsform der Amerikanischen Dynastien,” *Das Reich*, 8 March 1942 as well as profiles on FDR and

Noelle-Neumann's work also brought together discourses about the U.S. and Jewry. In "Who Informs America? Journalists, Radio Broadcasts and Films," she turned to traditional Nazi rhetoric concerning Jewish control of the press, arguing that this was the case in the United States from the newspapers to radio, from film to theatre.<sup>88</sup> In this way she contributed to propaganda about financial influence and control but in a more sober tone than could be found in such papers as the *Völkischer Beobachter*. *Das Reich* was popular in Germany due to its "factual" and restrained tone, which the population viewed as more credible than simple agitation.

The experiences and activities of Schulze-Boysen demonstrate how one could use a journalistic position not only to maintain but also to oppose the regime. Women journalists, like other segments of the population, could become victims of National Socialism if their political views, lifestyle, and or sexual or "racial" identities did not conform to Nazi ideology. Libertas Schulze-Boysen, born in 1913 in Paris but raised in Germany, joined the Nazi party in March 1933. At the same time, she began working as a journalist in Berlin within the press and propaganda department of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film AG where she remained until 1935. In July 1936, she married a fellow journalist who worked as a consultant within the Reich Aviation Ministry and temporarily quit the profession.<sup>89</sup>

In January 1937, Schulze-Boysen requested to leave the Nazi party claiming that she could not perform her political requirements since her marriage. "I am, of course, like any other German comrade always ready to make sacrifices and will continue as before to

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Eleanor Roosevelt.

<sup>88</sup> Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Wer Informiert Amerika? Journalisten, Radiosprechen, Filme," *Das Reich*, 8 June 1941, Noelle-Neumann file, BAB, RKI498.

<sup>89</sup> Libertas Schulze-Boysen, *Lebenslauf and Fragebogen*, 1935 and 10 November 1936, BAB, RKJ13.



support the [National Socialist] movement,” she wrote, “[but now] all that I do—if I understand the Führer correctly—has to be in the framework of my duty toward my household, husband and family.”<sup>90</sup> Schulze-Boysen used Nazi gender discourse as a way to distance herself from the regime. The party accepted her request. In reality, under the influence of her husband, a long-time opponent of the Nazis, she had grown to despise the movement.

During the war, Schulze-Boysen continued occasionally to publish film reviews and small articles in the *National Zeitung* in Essen, having replaced a reporter who had been drafted into war service.<sup>91</sup> In November 1941, she began to work in the cultural film centre of the Ministry of Propaganda. By this stage, together with her husband, she was an active opponent of the regime and engaged in the resistance activities of the group known as The Red Orchestra.<sup>92</sup> Schulze-Boysen helped to produce anti-Nazi leaflets, acted as a courier and passed on information about possible contacts. She used her position in the Propaganda Ministry to collect photographic evidence of German atrocities in the East. Schulze-Boysen was arrested on 8 September 1942, shortly after her husband, and murdered in Berlin-Plötzensee on 22 December 1942.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Memo, NSDAP Gauleitung Kurmark, Gaumeister, 26 February 1937, BAB, PK L 0122. An Reichsleitung der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei Reichsschatzmeister, München Zeichen: Ihr Schreiben vom 1.2.37 Reichsschatzmeister KBet: Austrittserklärung der Pgn. Libertas Schulze-Boysen, früher Liebenberg, jetzt Berlin.

<sup>91</sup> Letter from Libertas Schulze-Boysen to the Reichsschrifttumskammer Berlin, 3 August 1940, BAB, RKJ13. Until at least July 1941 Schulze-Boysen worked under the pseudonym Barbara Boysen.

<sup>92</sup> For more on the Red Orchestra see Shareen Blair Brysac, *Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack and the Red Orchestra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). See also John M. Cox, *Circles of Resistance: Jewish, Leftist, and Youth Dissidence in Nazi Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>93</sup> Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, <http://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/recess/biographies/biographie/view-bio/schulze-boysen-1/> and <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz117643.html> (accessed April 13 2013).

## War, Violence and Journalism

Women journalists also travelled and worked outside the borders of Germany in neutral countries, countries allied with Germany, and within occupied regions in East and West Europe. Such opportunities provided excitement and challenges but deeply implicated women journalists in the war and the production of propaganda that both veiled and legitimated processes of extreme violence. On 29 December 1940, *Das Reich* published an article by Ilse Urbach titled “Weibliche Hilfe im Wartheland: Bei den Arbeitsmaiden zwischen Posen und Litzmannstadt” (Female Help in the Warthegau: with the working girls between Posen and Litzmannstadt.) In glowing terms, Urbach’s article described her visit to a group of young German women who worked in the region, helping to “re-Germanize” communities of *Volksdeutsche* from the Baltic States and the Volhynian region of eastern Poland and Ukraine.

The so-called Warthegau was a part of western Poland that Germany annexed after its September 1939 invasion. The groups of *Volksdeutsche* had recently been “resettled” under the aegis of the Nazi government’s *Heim ins Reich* program—a part of the regime’s larger goal to colonize and Germanize Eastern Europe.<sup>94</sup> The very notion that communities of ethnic Germans existed outside of Germany’s borders and were persecuted by foreign governments provided a pretext for Hitler’s war of race and space

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<sup>94</sup> There were also German minorities living in the region. They too were subjected to “re-Germanization.” After the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the National Socialist government arranged for ethnic Germans from the Baltic and Volhynian regions to resettle in the Warthegau. For more on the *Heim ins Reich* Program and the processes related to Germany’s “re-Germanization” ambitions in the Warthegau see Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Götz Aly, “*Endlösung*” *Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1995); Kristen Kopp, *Germany’s Wild East: Constructing Poland as Colonial Space* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012); Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi. Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). For more on Poland’s World War II experience see Piotr Wróbel, *The Devil’s Playground: Poland in World War II* (Montreal: Canadian Foundation for Polish Studies, 2000).

that resulted in the displacement and murder of millions.<sup>95</sup> As Doris Bergen points out “if the *Volksdeutsche* had not existed, the Nazis might have invented them.”<sup>96</sup>

To “re-Germanize” the annexed territory and accommodate ethnic German re-settlers, Nazi authorities planned on the expulsion of Poles and Jews.<sup>97</sup> During 1939-41, the Nazis expelled and appropriated the property of close to half a million people.<sup>98</sup> In 1941-42 Nazi leaders, believing that they were on their way to winning the war, expanded and solidified these goals under the General Plan East—a long-term scheme that involved the expulsion and or enslavement of “inferior” Slavic peoples and the mass murder of Jews living in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belorussia and regions in Russia and Ukraine. The Nazi leadership planned to repopulate the empty areas with Germans.

Ethnic Germans became the beneficiaries, perpetrators, and victims of Nazi violence. The Nazi government defined *Volksdeutsche* as those whose language and culture had German roots but who did not hold German citizenship.<sup>99</sup> In reality, it was not so easy to distinguish them from their Slavic and Jewish neighbours.<sup>100</sup> The *Volksdeutsche* were the intended recipients of Polish and Jewish property but the ambiguity and malleability of the term meant that their “Germanness” was often in doubt. Moreover, those who attempted to prove their “Germanness” often found that the easiest

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<sup>95</sup> Doris Bergen, “The Nazi Concept of ‘Volksdeutsche’ and the Exacerbation of Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, 1939-45,” *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 1994), 570.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Eptstein, *Model Nazi*, 166. See also Aly, *Endlösung*.

<sup>98</sup> See Phillip T. Rutherford *Prelude to the Final Solution – The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles 1939-1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007).

<sup>99</sup> Bergen, “The Nazi Concept of ‘Volksdeutsche,’” 569. Bergen notes the term also had connotations of blood and race that the English definition, “ethnic Germans,” does not capture.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 573-574.

way to do so was to demonstrate their adherence to Nazism, which in turn meant perpetrating violence against Jews.<sup>101</sup>

Born in Berlin in 1912 to a middle class family, Urbach was an accomplished journalist who had written for the *Berliner Tageblatt* and *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* primarily in the areas of *Feuilleton* and the women's supplements. She had joined the Nazi party in May 1933. After the war she worked in *Feuilleton* for *Die Welt*, eventually becoming head of the section in 1950. From her lyrical descriptions of the Polish landscape—"endless meadows with no border between sky and earth"—to a passing reference of alleged Polish violence against ethnic Germans in the region, to lauding the brave and industrious work of the young women caring for the new settlers, Urbach's article, "Weibliche Hilfe," incorporated all of the regime's requirements concerning propaganda about the east.

In 1941, the *Sonderdienst der Reichspropagandaleitung* prepared a strictly confidential report outlining the importance of the *Volkstumspropaganda* in conjunction with Germany's plans for the eastern territories that it seized during the war.<sup>102</sup> The report cautioned that although the issue of the *Volksdeutsche* had been a part of German vocabulary and policy for several years, only a small circle of specialists understood the importance of this group. Going forward, propaganda "must direct the Germans' gaze to the East as a whole": the German population must be made to understand the political importance of "re-Germanizing the East" and recognize the threat that came from the

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 570, 574. See also Bergen, "Sex, Blood, and Vulnerability," 274.

<sup>102</sup> Memo, Sonderdienst der Reichspropagandaleitung, Hauptamt Propaganda, Amt: Propagandalenkung, "Fragen der Volkstumspropaganda," 15 August 1941, BAB, NS18/1455. The report defined the "German East" as East Prussia, Danzig-West Prussia, the Warthegau and upper and lower Silesia. The area comprising the General Government—parts of southern and central Poland and western Ukraine including Warsaw, Krakow and Lviv--was designated as a separate administrative region of the Third Reich. The area included the bulk of central and southern Poland and western Ukraine and was under the colonial administration of the Nazi government until early 1945.

“primitive, racially and culturally inferior, insignificant Slavs” mixing with and infiltrating ethnic German communities, a process that threatened the very existence of the German *Volk*.

Most important, propaganda must emphasize the resettlement of ethnic Germans as a critical step toward the goal of re-Germanizing the east. The report instructed that propaganda efforts should focus on “describing the German people in the east, the raw beauty of the land and the improvements Germans were making to the area.”<sup>103</sup>

According to Nazi rhetoric concerning the press, women journalists were particularly suited to write emotional pieces on such issues such as motherhood, teaching, children, youth, domesticity and local affairs, all of which connected with the “resettlement” of *Volksdeutsche* communities.

Urbach’s article put an industrious and *gemütliche* spin on processes of extreme violence. She enthused that “Posen had joyfully returned to a German life.”<sup>104</sup> Her text implied that Germany had a right to this former Polish region because this space was German in its very essence.<sup>105</sup> “The girls had long ago settled in the former Polish school,” she wrote. This phrase wiped away Polish presence in (or claim to) the area. Her words alluded to but smoothed over German violence in this region. She visited Łódź (renamed Litzmannstadt) where the Germans’ had established a Jewish ghetto in February 1940. She wrote of the improvements the Germans had brought to the region and contrasted German progressiveness, order, and cleanliness with Polish

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<sup>103</sup> Memo, Sonderdienst der Reichspropagandaleitung, Hauptamt Propaganda, Amt: Propagandalenkung, “Fragen der Volkstumspropaganda,” 15 August 1941, BAB, NS18/1455.

<sup>104</sup> Ilse Urbach, “Weibliche Hilfe im Wartheland: Bei den Arbeitsmädchen zwischen Posen und Litzmannstadt,” *Das Reich*, 29 December 1940.

<sup>105</sup> For more on Nazi blood and soil rhetoric that associated landscape with national character, see Thomas Lekan, “German Landscape: Local Promotion of the Heimat Abroad,” in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, eds., Krista O’Donnell, Renate Bridenthal and Nancy Reagan (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005).

slovenliness.<sup>106</sup> Above all, she highlighted the domestic support young German women provided in these areas, caring for children, sewing, cleaning and guiding the families toward a German way of life. Under the Nazi regime domestic practices became part of racism and persecution in occupied Poland. German women working in the region applied a particular notion of German domesticity to gauge the “Germanness” of the settlers and used it to “re-Germanize” those whose ethnicity was in doubt.<sup>107</sup>

Urbach labeled Wielun “the city of the Jews” and wrote, “They still run around here freely and, shuddering, we turned away from the swarm of yellow stars of David on backs and chests.”<sup>108</sup> Her text connected to, and implied agreement with, the ghettoization of Jews that took place throughout Poland. Her language—“swarm” and “shuddering”—was in keeping with the National Socialist focus on antisemitic propaganda, implying pestilence and dirt juxtaposed with German cleanliness and order. Such discourse served to create repulsion toward Jews and Poles amongst German readers. Urbach ended her article with the words, “this land will bloom.” In reality, it became soaked with the blood of millions. Urbach’s article, published in a major daily newspaper with a circulation of 1.4 million at its peak, appeared at a time of military successes when the German population was particularly receptive to war news and propaganda. During the first two years of the war, the Wehrmacht appeared to go from

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<sup>106</sup> For more on Lodz see Winson Chu, “The ‘Lodzermensch’: From Cultural Contamination to Marketable Multiculturalism,” in *Germany, Poland and Postmemorial Relations: In Search of a Livable Past*, eds. Kristin Kopp and Joanna Nizyńska (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 239-258.

<sup>107</sup> Nancy Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation. Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 13.

<sup>108</sup> Urbach, “Weibliche Hilfe im Wartheland.” The Nazis decreed that Jews in Poland wear the Star of David in November 1939.

victory to victory, and Germans were much more inclined to read the paper than before the war.<sup>109</sup>

Articles written by women journalists about the East appeared in large and small, mainstream and Nazi publications. The National Socialist Women's League published pieces on the East in their publications *N.S. Frauen-Warte* and *Frauenkultur*. In fact, the *Frauen-Warte's* most frequent theme was *Grossdeutschland* (pan Germany).<sup>110</sup> Dr. Hanna Holzwart, the editor of *Frauenkultur*, wrote and commissioned several articles on women's participation on the Eastern Front (*Osteinsatz*).<sup>111</sup> On 13 May 1941, an article by Renate Heidner titled "*Deutsche Land im Osten: Der Osten des Warthelandes*" appeared in *Die Bewegung*, the official publication of the National Socialist Student League, indicating that women's contribution to discourse on the East reached men, women and young Germans alike.<sup>112</sup> Heidner too spoke of Poland as a land to be colonized and tamed. Her only reference to the war was the line, "the end of the Polish campaign." Instead, her text focused on culture as she described an exhibit in Łódź. The

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<sup>109</sup> Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 362.

<sup>110</sup> Kirsten Döring, Renate Feldmann, *Von "N.S. Frauen-Warte" bis Victory: Konstruktionen von Weiblichkeit in nationalsozialistischen und rechtsextremen Frauenzeitschriften* (Berlin: Logos, 2004), 99. Most of the paper's articles on this topic dealt with the domestic support young German women provided to the resettled *Volksdeutsche*. The May 1942 issue, for instance, was dedicated to that particular theme and included, among others, an article called "Der jüngste Gau Grossdeutschlands, Oberschlesien: Aus dem Tagebuch einer Ansiedlerbetreuerin im Gau Wartheland." *N.S. Frauen-Warte*, May 1942, Number 19, <http://digi.ub.uniheidelberg.de/diglit/frauenwarte1941/0377?sid=f8600e13332f372363607d9e58686a28> (accessed 1 June 2014). A 1941 issue of *Frauen-Warte* was also about *Grossdeutschland* and included the article by Emmy Poggenesse, "Junge Führerinnen beim Osteinsatz im Gau Wartheland," 10, No. 8 (1941), 115.

<sup>111</sup> Letter to Dr. Hanna Holzwart, editor of *Frauenkultur*, to unnamed, 9 October 1940, BAB, Hanna Holzwart file, PKF25. In October 1940 a consultant with the National Socialist Women's League responsible for the "political education" of young German women, informed Holzwart that, having just returned from Lodz, she had received payment for the articles she had written on women's work on the Eastern front. She believed the paper should publish many pieces on the East.

<sup>112</sup> Renate Heidner, "Deutsches Land im Osten: 'Der Osten des Warthelandes,'" *Die Bewegung*, 15 May 1941, No. 18/19, 6.

goal of the exhibition was to correct any notion that there was only a small German cultural influence in the region.

As a part of the effort to depict the land as inherently German, Arthur Greiser, Nazi *Gauleiter* of the Warthegau, instituted measures to make the land look German by eradicating any signs of Polishness. He demanded officials rename locales, remove Polish-language signs, and tear down Polish monuments.<sup>113</sup> Heidner contributed to this goal, writing: "... the area around Litzmannstadt was Germanic homeland, as evidenced by many archaeological finds. Farmers and citizens founded their German villages and towns and created self-governing communities." Indeed, she continued, "it was always the Germans who established the culture and who were responsible for the industrial success [of the region.]" In Heidner's view, this progress was only halted in 1918 by Polish terror. The exhibition included pictures that portrayed the life of Germans in the region, their work and the "wide land that awaited."<sup>114</sup>

Women journalists related a version of the war to the German public not only through their texts but also through their images. Photojournalism represented one of the most important and modern forms of media. For her work as a freelance photojournalist, Liselotte Purper traveled extensively.<sup>115</sup> During the war her trips included occupied Poland, Ukraine, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and Germany's ally, Romania. As Elizabeth Harvey demonstrated, Purper's commissioned work focused largely on German women contributing to war work in female ways, including caring for

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<sup>113</sup> Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 234-235.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Other women photojournalists who worked during the Third Reich include Erika Schmachtenberger, Ilse Steinhoff, Ursula Ostwald, Tita Binz, Hilde Zenker, Margot Monnier (pseudonym Hada), Elefried Schaefer, Eleanor Saas, Inge Seeling, and Paula Lohr. See Reichsverband der Deutschen Presse files, BAB, R103.



the wounded and helping resettled *Volksdeutsche*. Her images also included scenes of pastoral beauty and tranquility, a particularly important visual as the war came home to Germany and the population craved diversion and a sense of comfort in the midst of increasing destruction.<sup>116</sup> Her photo reportages included groups of re-settled ethnic Germans in Łódź (1939), ethnic German women handing out water in Kronstadt to German soldiers passing through the city (undated), peaceful fields during harvest time in the Warthegau (1940), village children on their way to school in Hungary (1942), wounded soldiers in an air force hospital in Odessa (summer 1942), and women as airplane mechanics helping to transport wounded soldiers from Lviv (1943).

Purper's photographs depicted no violence or grief in war-torn areas. Rather, her work connected to the regime's desired propaganda surrounding its "Germanization" initiatives and put a heroic spin on the work of women on the Eastern front. In October 1940, in connection with the Nazi women's organization, Purper traveled to Belgrade for reportage on the resettlement of *Volksdeutsche* from Ukraine, Eastern Poland and Romania. She photographed German women cooking, assisting the settlers, and caring for the children. Her photographs also depicted the joy of the settlers as they journeyed towards a new life in the realm of the Third Reich.<sup>117</sup> In reality, the re-settlers often faced difficult journeys. It was not uncommon for the very young and the elderly to die en

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<sup>116</sup> See Elizabeth Harvey "'Ich war überall': Die NS-Propagandaphotographin Liselotte Purper," in *Volksgenossinnen: Frauen in der NS-Volksgemeinschaft*, ed. Sybille Steinbacher (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007). For more on photography see Habbo Knoch, *Die Tat als Bild: Fotografien des Holocaust in der deutschen Erinnerungskultur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2001); Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); and Janina Struck, *Private Pictures: Soldiers' Inside View of War* (London: I.B Tauris, 2011).

<sup>117</sup> Orgel-Köhne, *Willst du meine Witwe werden?*, 32.

route. Once they arrived in the Warthegau, many spent months in camps.<sup>118</sup> Though many of her contracts were for the Nazi women's organization, Purper's work had a wide resonance, appearing in publications ranging from the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, to *Mutter und Kind* to the *Luftwaffenkurier*.

Women journalists and photojournalists stationed in or travelling in the East were in the very areas of extreme violence toward indigenous populations and, above all, Jews. During her travels Purper witnessed the nature of the war and the results of the German occupation. In October 1940, she made her second trip to the Warthegau. On a contract for the National Socialist People's Welfare Organization (*NS-Volksfürsorge*), her assignment was to photograph young German women working in and around Wielun. In her diary she described the city: "Here everything begins with dirt. Wretchedness. The Jews—star by star—are only allowed to walk on the street. Polish women, wrapped in their large shawls, drag their feet through the place. Much hardship! Lifeless despair in every meter of this town, into which a 'loving God' has never looked."<sup>119</sup> Although not a part of her official contract, Purper photographed Jews wearing the Star of David on the streets of Wielun. She also took photographs of the outside of the Lodz ghetto. These pictures remained unpublished until after the war.

In Prague in October 1941 Purper wrote, "I have no illusions over the severity of the fight in the East...I have seen enough reports and also pictures that are so dreadful, that will never be published, although it would be necessary for gossips, that they see the brutal reality once in front of their eyes."<sup>120</sup> In Odessa, in July 1942, she observed that there was hardly a house that had not suffered from the war. In Krakow, on 10 January

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<sup>118</sup> Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 174.

<sup>119</sup> Orgel-Köhne, *Willst du meine Witwe werden?*, 29.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

1943 she recorded: “I do not have the impression at all that I am in Poland or abroad. So many Germans are underway in the German cityscape. The Poles have their own shops and hotels. Germans, myself included, feel right at home here. One no longer sees any Jews.”<sup>121</sup> Krakow was the capital the General Government region of Poland and the headquarters of Hans Frank, the Governor General. The Germans began deporting ghetto inhabitants to the Belzec killing centre in June 1942. The final liquidation of the ghetto took place in March 1943. The SS and police carried out the operation, shooting approximately 2000 Jews in the ghetto, transferring another 2000 to the Plaszow forced-labour camp. The remaining Jews were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau.<sup>122</sup> Purper visited just prior to the final liquidation. It is possible that she viewed one of the transports from the ghetto.

Although not reporting directly on the war, women journalists and photojournalists depicted the by-products of German military victories and atrocities. In this way they engaged directly and indirectly with wartime violence. By contrast, male journalists frequently functioned as embedded war reporters or as part of the Wehrmacht’s own propaganda battalions, covering military developments, highlighting German victories and enemy atrocities, and depicting the experiences of German soldiers. A German Press Association memo from February 1942 showcases the importance the regime placed on frontline coverage; it instructed regional associations to put together

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>122</sup> See *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009) and Andrea Löw and Markus Roth, *Juden in Krakau unter deutscher Besatzung 1939-1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011). For more on life in the Krakow ghetto see the memoir by Tadeusz Pankiewicz, *Die Apotheke im Krakauer Ghetto* (Essen: Bettendorf, 1995).

special lists of potential war reporters. Those chosen would be discharged from fighting and would function as fulltime journalists within the Wehrmacht.<sup>123</sup>

Articles from war reporters included a range of topics: “White Flags over Modlin” (October 1939); “Our Friends: the Stukas” (August 1942); “Twenty Minutes in Soviet Captivity: German Shock Troops Come Back with Rich [War] Booty” (September 1942); and, “In 24 Hours, 10 Soviet Tanks” (September 1942).<sup>124</sup> In his 1941 article “On the Road,” war reporter Fritz Dettmann described the East and Germany’s supposedly judicious treatment of Soviet POWs:

In the hands of the Germans accompanying the prisoners one does not see whips, with which to drive forth these spineless hordes. But one sees again and again the trouble these prisoners took to burn and destroy the cities and towns of their own people... One does not dare to imagine this picture in reverse: these [people], brown as earth, as occupiers in German cities and towns, these herd animals (*Herdentiere*) accompanying German prisoners. One needs the goddamn eyes of a man to take in the war here.<sup>125</sup>

Dettmann’s piece, labelled “An especially good propaganda unit report,” was forwarded to the Ministry of Propaganda to be used as an example.

Along with articles on military victories, German soldiers, and the nature of the enemy, war reporters wrote about the *Volksdeutsche*. In an undated piece titled “German Colonists in the Caucasus under Moscow's Stranglehold,” war reporter Karl Bayer wrote of the sturdiness and enterprising nature” of the *Volksdeutsche* despite the atrocities perpetrated toward this group by the “Jewish Bolsheviks.” He described this alleged violence graphically.<sup>126</sup> Bayer’s piece was markedly different from the cosy, peaceful articles on ethnic German settlers typically written by women journalists.

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<sup>123</sup> Memo, RDP, 24 February 1942, BAB, R103/6.

<sup>124</sup> Ministry of Propaganda files, BAB, R55/1051, R55/1052, R55/204.

<sup>125</sup> Fritz Dettmann, “An einer Strasse,” 1941, BAB, R55/1051.

<sup>126</sup> Karl Bayer, “Deutsche Kolonisten im Kaukasus unter Moskaus Würgegriff,” undated, BAB, R55/204.

Opportunities for women journalists increased in tandem with German aggression in the spring and summer of 1941. In April, the Wehrmacht invaded Yugoslavia. Two months later it attacked Soviet territories. Much as it did in Germany, the Nazi government took over the press in these regions and established its own papers. For example, it set up the *Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland* in August 1941 in Riga. By 1943 the paper had some 120,000 subscribers.<sup>127</sup> Women journalists obtained full-time positions in various regions of the occupied East and in countries aligned with Germany. Some even completed their journalistic training at German papers in these areas.

Eva Klempp began her training in July 1941 at the *Donauzeitung*.<sup>128</sup> In May 1943, she moved to Kiev to write for the *Deutsche Ukraine-Zeitung*. In January 1942, Lilo Zingler too began her career at the *Donauzeitung*. By July 1944 Zingler was one of two journalists responsible for the paper's Balkan pages, a position that necessitated travel within the region.<sup>129</sup> The war also presented an opportunity for Hella von Einsiedel to travel to the East. Born in 1915 in Dresden, Einsiedel worked as a secretary prior to the war. Sometime after June 1941 she secured a secretarial position on the *Deutsche Ukraine-Zeitung*. There she was given an opportunity to write. Her articles attracted the

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<sup>127</sup> Joachim Joesten, "German Rule in Ostland," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1943, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/70304/joachim-joesten/german-rule-in-ostland>, (accessed 11 April 2014). The U.S. foreign affairs report noted: "The press of the Ostland has been largely taken over by the Nazis, or brought into line. Old newspapers have ceased to publish and new ones have taken their places. Each of the four General Commissariats has its German-language paper, which carries the official announcements and calls the tune for the rest of the press."

<sup>128</sup> Series of memos from the RDP about Eva Lore Klempp, 1944, BAB, R103/84. Klempp worked in Belgrade until October 1941 and from March to April 1943 on the *Freiheitskampf* in Dresden.

<sup>129</sup> Memo, RDP, 1944, R103/84. In early 1944, the paper's editor informed Max Amann, the Reich Press Leader, that Zingler began first in the business pages and had, since February 1943, worked on the Balkan section. For more on the Holocaust in Croatia see Alexander Korb, *Im Schatten des Weltkriegs. Massengewalt der Ustaša gegen Serben, Juden und Roma in Kroatien, 1941-45* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2013).

interest of the editor of the *Donauzeitung*. In February 1944 she began to train as a journalist at the Belgrade paper.

Women journalists' long-term presence in the East meant direct exposure to processes of escalating violence and repression. Events in Belorussia provide one example. In April 1942, the Germans established the *Minsker Zeitung*. By the time the last issue was published in summer 1944, the paper had a circulation of 22,000. More than two-thirds of the copies were sold to the Wehrmacht, who viewed it as an important information vehicle and distributed it to soldiers free of charge. The paper employed 15 German journalists.<sup>130</sup> It covered the war and international affairs as well as social, cultural, and political news from Germany and Belorussia. Ruth Rosener completed her year-long internship at the paper sometime between 1942 and the beginning of 1944.<sup>131</sup> During that time, the German occupation force subjected the Belorussian population, above all its Jews, to extreme brutality. The Minsk ghetto was formed in July 1941. Hundreds of thousands of Jews in Belorussia were massacred by shooting or in gas vans. In July 1943 alone, the Germans massacred 26,000 ghetto inhabitants.<sup>132</sup> The final liquidation of the ghetto took place on October 1943.<sup>133</sup>

Although likely, it remains unclear whether women journalists specifically requested positions in the East. Ministry of Propaganda files on the *Osteinsatz* do indicate

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<sup>130</sup> Alex J Kay, Jeff Rutherford and David Stahel, eds. *Nazi Policy on the Eastern Front, 1941: Total War, Genocide, and Radicalization* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012), fn62. For more on German wartime policies in Belorussia see Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weissrussland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999); idem "Failure of Plans for an SS Extermination Camp in Mogilev, Belorussia," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* Vol. 11, No. 1 (March 1997): 60-78.

<sup>131</sup> Letter from the Reichsleiter für die Presse der NSDAP to Wilhelm Weiss, 19 February 1945, BAB, R103/120. Rosener likely worked at the paper during 1943.

<sup>132</sup> Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945. The Years of Extermination* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 530. See also Raul Hillberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961).

<sup>133</sup> Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 102.

that women—whether because they believed in Nazi ideology or perceived opportunities for career progression or adventure—requested to be sent to occupied regions. Under the aegis of the Ministry of Propaganda they worked as secretaries, stenographers and switchboard operators.<sup>134</sup> In addition, files show that male journalists requested positions in the occupied East. In March 1943 Paul Kurz, who had worked for the party paper *Mitteldeutsche* since 1932, wrote to the *Reichsleitung der NSDAP Amt Rosenberg*, requesting to take part in the “Osteinsatz.” He believed that with the war still raging, such a possibility was within his grasp. In September the Ministry of Propaganda informed Kurz that they could not fulfil his request. He was sent to Italy as a part of the news squad (*Nachrichtentruppen*.)<sup>135</sup>

Women’s journalistic opportunities outside of Germany were not limited to the occupied East; women worked in Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, France, Spain, Portugal, the United States, and even Iraq. France was a desirable destination for most German soldiers as well as for male and female journalists throughout most of the war. In January 1942, there were twenty active foreign correspondents in occupied France, at least two of whom were women, and in Vichy France there were four men and one woman.<sup>136</sup> Hildegard Faber enjoyed an exciting career working for German papers outside of Germany, including in her “beloved Paris.” Born in March 1914, in Karlsruhe, Faber studied philosophy, German, theatre, and dance at the University of Cologne. After her degree she completed her journalist internship

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<sup>134</sup> There were also good career prospects for women in teaching and nursing in Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. See Wendy Lower, *Hitler’s Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2013).

<sup>135</sup> Letter from Paul Kurz to Herr Stellrecht in the Reichsleitung der NSDAP, Amt Rosenberg, 11 March 1943, BAB, R55/998; Ministry of Propaganda, Personnel Department memo, 3 April 1944.

<sup>136</sup> Liste der zur Zeit in Paris und Vichy tätigen deutschen Auslandskorrespondenten, RDP, 29 January 1942, BAB, R103/43.

with the party paper *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung*, and in the Sudetenland with *Die Zeitung*. She became a fully accredited journalist in December 1940. Until the end of 1942 she wrote for the arts section of the *Karlsbader Tageszeitung*.

At the beginning of 1943, Faber took a job in Paris on one of the *Organization Todt's* illustrated magazines, the *Frontarbeiter*. This position moved Faber's work beyond the feel-good area of culture and directly connected her writing to the masculinized world of Germany's war production and defense activities as well as the violence inherent within these processes.<sup>137</sup> *Organization Todt* was founded in 1938 for the construction of large-scale engineering projects in Germany. During the war it was restructured into a para-military organization under the authority of the Minister for Armaments and Munitions. It also incorporated the construction units of the Wehrmacht. The group became responsible for projects within Germany as well as in the occupied territories of East and West Europe. The organization employed conscripted Germans and local volunteers, though as the war continued it relied increasingly on slave labourers, prisoners of war, and concentration camp inmates. Forced to work under the grimmest conditions, many of these forced labourers did not survive.<sup>138</sup>

The Nazi propaganda machine devoted attention to the work of *Organization Todt*. In France, the organization's projects included the construction of the Atlantic

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<sup>137</sup> Correspondence, Hildegard Faber, 1942-1943, BAB, R103/119.

<sup>138</sup> *Organisation Todt* was founded by Fritz Todt in 1938. After Todt's death in 1942, Albert Speer, Minister of Armaments and War Production, took over responsibility. For more on the work of *Organisation Todt* in France see Fabian Lemmes, "Arbeiten für das Reich: die Organisation Todt in Frankreich und Italien, 1940-1945" (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2009). For more on the *Organisation Todt* in general see Franz W. Seidler, *Die Organisation Todt: Bauen für Staat und Wehrmacht, 1938-1945* (Koblenz: Bernard & Graefe, 1998). For more on forced labour see Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labour in Germany under the Third Reich* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Paul B. Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression: the SS, Forced Labor and the Nazi Monumental Building Economy* (London: New York: Routledge, 2000); and Alexander von Plato, Almut Leh, and Christoph Tonfeld, eds., *Hitler's Slaves: Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-occupied Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2010)



Wall. As the war on the Eastern front began, Hitler decided to fortify the Atlantic coast in the occupied Western territories. The organization worked to reinforce ports and anti-aircraft batteries and constructed large bunkers that the regime intended as production sites. Propaganda over such projects aimed to highlight the invincibility of Nazi Germany. After the losses at Stalingrad and North Africa in early 1943, the importance of such propaganda increased, at least in the eyes of the Nazi government, even if the credibility of such news eroded. Hitler strove to boost the morale of the German population by attempting to convince them that an Allied invasion was impossible.<sup>139</sup>

Magazines like *Frontarbeiter* were targeted to the German workers within the organization and projected the image of the workers as soldiers and heroes. They equated labour with virility, strength, and discipline, and thereby connected *Organization Todt* and its activities to the very attributes that would (supposedly) lead Germany to victory.<sup>140</sup> Hildegard Faber contributed to this discourse. In addition, she experienced the course of the war directly. In July 1944, searching for a new position, she wrote that she had left Paris in June, as "...the invasion chased us over the border. I am now looking for a position. It is not hard but one does not want to take [a position in] just any city."<sup>141</sup> By the autumn of 1944 she had secured a position, presumably writing about culture, at the *Mulhauser Tageblatt* in the Sudetenland.<sup>142</sup> The case of Faber demonstrates that during the war women could toggle between positions in a traditional (and acceptable) area for female journalists and work that connected them directly to militarized organizations,

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<sup>139</sup> Inge Marszolek, "The Atlantic Wall—an Ambiguous Heritage," Lecture, Expert Meeting Redefining the Atlantikwall, Amersfoort, Netherlands, 2 September 2010, <http://congres2010.atlantikwallplatform.eu>, (accessed January 2014).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Letter from Hildegard Faber to unnamed, 17 July 1944, BAB, R103/119.

<sup>142</sup> Letter from Hildegard Faber to Landesverband Sudetenland, 20 October 1944, BAB, R103/119.

wartime defence and, as with the case of *Organization Todt* and its use of slave labourers, war crimes.

Journalists working in and outside of Germany also had an indirect connection to German violence perpetrated on the Eastern (and Western) front given their privileged access to information. First, newspapers received news from the state-run German News Agency. The agency coded reports by color according to their secrecy and what could and could not appear in newspapers. As Noelle-Neumann recalled, journalists could follow the reports and in this way learn factual information about the course of the war that was denied to most Germans.<sup>143</sup> Kardorff wrote that in November 1944, even though she was not writing much, she continued to go to the office in order to access information not available to the population at large: “What matters to me is the news, the bulletins from the Promi, and the wireless news, which the paper gets and which Bärchen [her colleague] lets me see. These enable me to get a good idea of the situation...”<sup>144</sup>

Germans in the press had easier access to foreign newspapers than the rest of the population. Noelle-Neumann pointed out that the regime could not cut off journalists from information to the degree that they could with the general population.<sup>145</sup> Despite attempts, the Nazis could not keep all news from the population either. Many Germans turned to the BBC or other foreign radio broadcasts to receive information that the Nazi government suppressed.<sup>146</sup> Boveri kept an archive of various international papers. In

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<sup>143</sup> Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen*, 101.

<sup>144</sup> Von Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, 73.

<sup>145</sup> Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen*, 119.

<sup>146</sup> See Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 185-6. Gellately notes that it is difficult to determine how many Germans listened to the BBC in secret. However, a demonstrated knowledge among the population of the exact nature of the war events before the German news published such material indicates the Germans frequently tuned in.

December 1944, Kardorff recorded in her diary that she had read an article in the *Journal de Genève* about Germany's murder of Jews:

There was a horrifying article by two Czechs, who escaped from a concentration camp in the East. They say the Jews there are systematically gassed. They are taken into a big washroom, ostensibly to have a bath, and gas is then pumped in through hidden valves, until they are all dead. The corpses are burned. The article is seriously written and did not sound like atrocity propaganda... It is said the camp is at a place called Auschwitz.<sup>147</sup>

Kardorff was referring to the Vrba-Wetzler report. In April 1944, two Slovak Jews, Rudolf Vrba and Alfréd Wetzler, escaped from Auschwitz. They produced one of the earliest and most detailed descriptions of the organization and functioning of the camp and killing centre.<sup>148</sup> Millions of Germans were well aware of the deportations of the Jews, but knew fewer specifics about the killing centres in the East. Foreign newspapers published quite detailed but sometimes contradictory information about the death camps.<sup>149</sup>

Journalists, particularly editors—at least at the large dailies such as the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Das Reich*—often had contacts to state officials high in the government, which provided another avenue of news. Hans Schwarz van Berk, a reporter with the Waffen SS, travelled back and forth between the Eastern front and the home front. He had a close relationship with Goebbels and would report back to colleagues on

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<sup>147</sup> Von Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, 178. Kardorff's original diary notes show that she did record this entry on 27 December 1944.

<sup>148</sup> See Rudolf Vrba and Alan Bestic, *Escape from Auschwitz: I Cannot Forgive* (New York: Grove Press, 1986). The book was first published in 1964. Alfréd Wetzler, *Escape from Hell: The True Story of the Auschwitz Protocol*, ed., Péter Várnai; translated from the Slovak by Ewald Osers (New York: Berghahn, 2007).

<sup>149</sup> For more on the failure of U.S. newspapers to adequately cover Germany's murder of European Jews see Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1986). Leff argues that the *New York Times* did publish many articles about the Holocaust and some contained precise information. However, the paper only featured a handful of the articles prominently.

*Das Reich* about the “whims and moods” of the Propaganda Minister through which one could discern more about the war situation in general.<sup>150</sup> Foreign correspondents also had access to papers within the countries in which they worked and could share news with colleagues. Male journalists working as embedded war correspondents on the frontlines brought back information to their colleagues. Already in fall 1941, Erich Peter Neumann, the head of domestic news on *Das Reich*, was transferred to a propaganda unit on the Eastern front. There he was a witness to an *Einsatzgruppen* shooting of Jews.<sup>151</sup>

### **A Question of Gender?**

From 1939 to 1945 the possibilities, limitations and even dangers for male and female journalists diverged and overlapped in distinct ways as the tides of war changed for Germany. German women journalists based abroad during the war sometimes aroused the suspicion of Allied intelligence services that were concerned they were involved in espionage on behalf of Germany. Setting aside the issue of whether there was any truth to such claims, what is significant is that these agencies considered the role and work of such women to be highly important and dedicated resources and time to investigate their actions. This fear could relate to general suspicion of women working outside of the norm. The British Secret Service monitored Margret Boveri, based in the United States and, after December 1941, Portugal, and Petra Vermehren, based in Greece and, beginning in February 1941, Portugal. However, it was the activity of Lily Abegg, a correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in the Far East, which drew the most concern

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<sup>150</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 175. Norbert Frei notes that Hans Schwarz van Berk had a close but sometimes contentious relationship with Goebbels. Toward the end of the war the two fought over Schwarz van Berk’s disregard for language restrictions. See Frei, Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*, 168.

<sup>151</sup> Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen*, 129. This personal link to news is also true of course of soldiers on the front lines who shared their experiences with families.

from the British as well as U.S. and French intelligence agencies before and after the war. Although never fully confirmed, Allied intelligence believed that Abegg, born in Hamburg but raised in Switzerland and Japan, engaged in anti-Allied propaganda and espionage activities in the Far East and inspired the Tokyo Rose broadcasts designed to undermine Allied morale in the South Pacific.

In a September 1943 letter to the U.S. Embassy in London, J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), requested information on Lily Abegg, who had come to his attention by way of another investigation. Hoover wrote that Abegg was “reportedly involved in German and Japanese espionage.”<sup>152</sup> The Embassy investigated and received a response from Felix Cowgill, the head of MI6, department V, who was responsible for counter-espionage outside of the territory of the British Empire. Cowgill confirmed that Abegg was well known to MI6:

She first came to notice early in 1940 when we learned that she was in Berlin and was intending to travel to Japan via Naples.... She was (and may still be) a correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. She is violently pro-Nazi and anti-British. In May 1941 Singapore reported that Lily had arrived in Indochina and that she intended to proceed to Bangkok. The French authorities described her as ‘agent allemande notoire et tres dangereux’ [a German agent and very dangerous.] Lily is reported as saying at this time, ‘The fact that I was sent to Indochina is for me a clear indication of the next theater of hostilities’.<sup>153</sup>

British Security Intelligence Far East also kept a file on Abegg. It too charged that she was conducting espionage and propaganda on behalf of Germany and “considered to be very clever.” One report stated that she was one of eight reporters with the German troops upon their entry into Paris, which, if true, indicates that women journalists could also function as embedded war reporters for Nazi Germany. The report

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<sup>152</sup> Letter to Mr. A. M. Thurston in the American Embassy, London, from J.E. Hoover, 24 September 1943, BNA, KV2/3711 C589191.

<sup>153</sup> Letter from Cowgill to Cimperman, 18 October 1943, BNA, KV2/3711 C589191.

noted that she arrived in Japan in August 1940 and, after the war, was interned in Yokohama Jail on 20 September 1945. She remained imprisoned until 24 January 1946 and left Japan on 15 February 1946.<sup>154</sup> Just prior to Abegg's imprisonment, U.S. journalist Clark Lee tracked her down in Japan. On 18 September 1945 Lee published an article titled "Swiss Woman Writer Denies Helping Japs: Only Woman on McArthur 'Wanted' List".<sup>155</sup> After the war, Abegg continued her successful career. She returned to the Far East in 1950 as a freelance reporter for various newspapers. In 1954, she began as the Far East correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (the successor to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*), based in Japan.<sup>156</sup>

Coming to the attention of Allied Intelligence Services was an experience that women shared with their male colleagues abroad and did not necessarily indicate that someone was an agent. Paul Scheffer, who disliked the Nazi regime, worked as a foreign correspondent based in the United States for a variety of German papers prior to and during the war. American Intelligence Services, at one stage, believed Scheffer to be a dangerous German agent. Those fears were eventually dismissed. Scheffer spent the rest of his life in the United States.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Abegg's official biography notes that she returned to Switzerland in 1946. Internationales Biographisches Archiv/37, Munzinger.de, (accessed January 2013).

<sup>155</sup> Clark Lee, "Swiss Woman Writer Denies Helping Japs: Only Woman on McArthur 'Wanted' List," *The Binghamton Press*, 18 September 1945, 8.

<sup>156</sup> Confidential report to John Cimperman, Foreign Service, American Embassy, London, 24 September 1956, BNA, KV2/3711 C589191. Abegg's file picks up again in August 1956 when Security Intelligence Far East forwarded its wartime file on Abegg to Britain. The report stated that Abegg had been in the region (Hong Kong and Tokyo) from May 1954 to June 1956 (which was true) and had listed her occupation as journalist. In summer 1956 she began a lengthy trip to China. Abegg published various books about her impressions of the Far East and her post-war travels. British Intelligence Services and the American embassy exchanged correspondence on Abegg in September 1956, at which point the American embassy noted that, "we assume that Elizabeth Abegg is of no current interest to U.S. and therefore we are not forwarding this information to Washington."

<sup>157</sup> British Secret Service, Extract from report on German S.I.S, mentions Scheffer, date unclear, BNA, KV2/960 C589192.

Certainly, opportunities grew for women as their male counterparts left for the front. At the same time, due to material shortages, including printing facilities and paper, various newspapers and magazines closed down. This process, which began in a limited fashion at the start of the war, further restricted women in a field where they already faced roadblocks. In mid-1941, the German Association of the Press informed its regional associations that due to the closing of printing facilities it would begin shutting down newspapers and magazines; other publications would be merged.<sup>158</sup> Paper restrictions exacerbated this process.

Paper shortages affected even the flagship paper of the National Socialist Women's League, *N.S. Frauenwarte*. In November 1943, it was reduced from a bi-weekly to a monthly paper. Earlier that year, Renate von Stieda, the editor of the paper, wrote to the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (German Writers' Union) asking for assistance finding additional work. Stieda noted that due to conditions brought on by the war, her work on the paper had become so limited that she now wanted to turn her energies to another task: "Because I know that the prospects for female journalists overall are not good, especially with the necessary paper restrictions, I am considering something within a publishing house or something to do with writing."<sup>159</sup> By the end of the war, the number of newspapers published in Nazi Germany dropped by 28 percent. Material shortages hit magazines even harder, and by 1944 only one-tenth of the 1939 titles were still being published.<sup>160</sup> Still, the population's longing for news of any kind ensured that newspaper circulation remained at approximately 25 million to the end of 1944.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Memo, RDP, 5 May 1941, BAB, R103/5, Rundschreiben Nr. 20.

<sup>159</sup> Letter from Renate von Stieda to the Reichsschrifttumskammer, 12 January 1943, BAB, RKB211.

<sup>160</sup> Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 361 and 373.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

Men's careers were put on hold during their war due to military service, but conscription to the Wehrmacht did not always prevent men from practicing journalism. Many male journalists acted as war reporters, publishing in newspapers throughout Germany and for military publications. Moreover, military newspapers from the frontlines did not fall under the Editors Law, which meant that men who worked for these papers could not be entered into the Professional Registrar but rather were included in the "Special War List." In this way, war opened up opportunities for male journalist hopefuls who had not yet begun their journalistic training to gain some professional experience.<sup>162</sup>

The careers of some women journalists changed course during the war in ways that were within and outside of their control; some women may have viewed the changes as positive and others not. By January 1942, as the Wehrmacht stalled before Moscow, it had become clear to military and party leaders that Germany would not achieve a lightning-speed victory in the East. Discussions were also taking place in Wannsee on how to coordinate the murder of European Jews. Both processes would require more manpower. At the same time, the Ministry of Propaganda endeavored to fill all positions vacated by men with women, from drivers to office workers to journalists. At the beginning of the war there were approximately 1000 employees within the Ministry of Propaganda, 70 percent of whom were men.<sup>163</sup> By January 1942, the number of employees had grown by 42 percent (758 men and 662 women) particularly in areas made more important by the war, including propaganda, wire-tapping analysis,

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<sup>162</sup> Memo, RDP, 14 August 1944, BAB, R103/93.

<sup>163</sup> Memo über den Fraueneinsatz im Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, March 1942, BAB, R55/18.



ensorship and editorial work. After an intensive campaign to recruit women, by April the Ministry employed 1452 persons, 59 percent of whom were women.<sup>164</sup>

The Propaganda Ministry also requested lists from all regional press associations of female journalists who were capable of standing in for conscripted male colleagues to work within such areas as Press, Radio, Film, Theatre, Music and Literature.<sup>165</sup> Women journalists would also fulfill propagandistic roles, including dealing with youth, sports and fashion questions. In addition, the Ministry required female journalists for foreign press services with (fluent) language skills in English, French, “a northern language,” Spanish, Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian, Romanian, Greek, Dutch, and Russian or Ukrainian.<sup>166</sup> After only one month, an internal memo announced that the Ministry was pleased with the large number of journalists who had registered to work within the organization.<sup>167</sup> Among the women journalists who became active in the Ministry of Propaganda over the course of 1942 and 1943 were Else Frobenius, a freelance journalist and party member who had written for the women’s pages in daily newspapers and for the Nazi publication *N.S. Frauenwarte*, fashion journalists Charlotte Jossner and Luise Reich, and Marget Illing who had focused on culture.<sup>168</sup> It is likely that the above journalists chose to work for the Ministry.

The careers of women journalists could also be interrupted or delayed due to their recruitment to war-service in armaments factories or as part of the *Flakhelferinnen*

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<sup>164</sup> Letter from head of personnel department to Goebbels, Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (RMVP), 30 April 1942, BAB, R55/18. By April 15 there were 858 women and 594 men employed within the Ministry of Propaganda.

<sup>165</sup> Memo, RDP, 21 January 1942, BAB, R103/6, Nr. 6.

<sup>166</sup> Memo, Personalbedarf an weiblichen Mitarbeitern in Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, undated, BAB, R55/18.

<sup>167</sup> Memo re: Fraueneinsatz from the Ministerium für Volksaufgabe und Propaganda to the Gau-Organisationsleiter der NSDAP, 27 February 1942, BAB, R55/18.

<sup>168</sup> RMVP list of Verstärkter Einsatz weiblicher Arbeitskräfte in RMVP - aus dem Sektor der Schriftleiterinnen zur weiteren Veranlassung, undated, BAB, R55/18.

brigades. In January 1943, the Ministry of Propaganda requested that regional press associations compile a list of all male and female journalists who, within their journalistic roles, were fulfilling important tasks related to the war. Those not listed would become candidates for wartime service related to the defense of Germany.<sup>169</sup> Although female journalists who were not employed or those in freelance positions were more likely to be called up for war service, those with jobs deemed unimportant by the regional press association or an editor could be conscripted.

Both Ursula von Kardorff and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann feared that they would be designated for factory service. In August 1944, Kardorff noted, “There is a rumour in the office that I and some other are to be dismissed and sent to work in a factory. My name was put on the list by one of the directors who does not like me.”<sup>170</sup> Connections and relationships continued to influence a woman’s career. Although Kardorff managed to avoid factory work, others were not so fortunate. In July 1944, journalist hopeful Rita Münchenberg wrote to the German Press Association asking for details about whether and how one could still train to be a journalist after the war since she was in service at the *Reichsluftfahrtministerium* (Ministry of Aviation) for the remainder of the war.<sup>171</sup>

Although women journalists did not function as embedded war reporters or soldiers, there are cases where they reported near the front lines or were recruited to the Wehrmacht. Felicitas Kapteina began as a trainee in local news late in the war. On the party paper, the *Westdeutsche Beobachter*, Kapteina’s first assignment was at Schleiden in der Eifel, at that stage only a few kilometers from the front. As the front drew closer

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<sup>169</sup> Response from RDP to Ministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda concerning its 27 January 1943 memo “Anwendung der Verordnung über die Meldung von Männern und Frauen für Aufgaben der Reichsverteidigung,” 11 February 1943, BAB, R103/6, Nr. 5.

<sup>170</sup> Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, 146.

<sup>171</sup> Letter from Rita Münchenberg to the RDP, 24 July 1944, BAB, R103/25.

she left the paper and fled to relatives in Essen.<sup>172</sup> In November 1944, Edith Stender, a freelance journalist working for the *Ostdeutsche Beobachter*, was one of five members of the regional Press Association in the Warthegau drafted into the Wehrmacht where she worked as a translator.<sup>173</sup> In the same month, Elisabeth Grass, a journalist from the Black Forest, wrote to the German Press Association asking them to forward her mail to her field post number. Grass was working as a librarian at the front (*Frontbuchhändlerin bei der Wehrmacht*.) In order to keep soldiers entertained, raise morale, and impart a piece of home to the front lines, authorities set up mobile libraries. She had no next of kin, Gross wrote, so in the event of her death, the Press Association could simply delete her name from the Professional Registrar.<sup>174</sup> After more than a year working within the Ministry of Propaganda, cultural journalist Charlotte Jossner was assigned to the Navy, although records do not show in what capacity.<sup>175</sup> Although women journalists faced potential danger, files do not indicate that any women died or were taken as POWs as were their male counterparts.

In the last years of the war, military losses impacted the careers of female journalists working in occupied East and West Europe. Newspapers closed and Allied armies advanced. Ruth Rosener, who carried out her journalistic training in the occupied East, was continually thwarted in her efforts to graduate to full-fledged journalist. German losses on the military front meant the closure of the papers on which she had trained. In a February 1945 memo concerning Rosener, the office of Max Amann, the Reich Leader for the Press, noted: “The files show that Fräulein R. has had rare bad luck

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<sup>172</sup> Alexa Godbersen, Felicitas Kapteina interview, *Medienfrauen*, 61.

<sup>173</sup> Memo from RDP to the Landesverband Wartheland, 3 November 1944, BAB, R103/104.

<sup>174</sup> Memo from Elisabeth Grass to RDP, 26 November 1944, BAB, R103/119.

<sup>175</sup> Personal file, Charlotte Jossner, 1943, BAB, RKG0036.

with regard to her employment to date because she was always at a newspaper that fell victim to military events [losses] and since then...her files had gone missing and she had to start [her training] from the beginning again.” She was therefore still officially a trainee, the memo continued, but should have been designated a full journalist and able to earn a decent salary.<sup>176</sup> Male and female journalists working in occupied West and East Europe who fled the Allied advance often became refugees inside Germany or in areas still occupied by Germany. In the fall of 1944, for instance, Ewgenia Hausmania fled from Latvia to Vienna, and Agnes Vesilo fled from Estonia to Frankfurt an der Oder.<sup>177</sup> The war followed these women home to Germany.

## Conclusion

In her essay “Truth and Politics,” Hannah Arendt wrote, “Images made for domestic consumption, as distinguished from lies directed at a foreign adversary, can become a reality for everybody...”<sup>178</sup> Arendt’s words provide a useful framework in relation to women’s journalism during the war. The primary role of women journalists was to connect with German women on the home front and offer material that would be upbeat, bolster their morale, and offer a relief from the everyday stresses of war. After 1942, the German public viewed hard news about the war with growing skepticism. At the same time, the appetite for material devoted to entertainment and diversion increased. It was in these areas that women primarily focused. This material created an alternate

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<sup>176</sup> Letter from the Reichsleiter für die Presse der NSDAP to Wilhelm Weiss, 19 February 1945, BAB, R103/120.

<sup>177</sup> Index of correspondents, journalists, publicists, sorted by country, undated, BAB, NS42/49. The files do not indicate whether they were able to continue their careers. In addition, when regional press offices sustained bomb damages they attempted to keep functioning.

<sup>178</sup> Hannah Arendt, “Truth and Politics,” in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking, 1968), 261.

reality to help the population escape the destructiveness and hopelessness of the war –if only briefly.

But women journalists contributed to several strands of wartime propaganda important to the regime. Those who travelled or were based in occupied Europe brought the war home to Germany. Mediated through the words and photos of women journalists, the war was made more agreeable for the population. A focus on harmonious communities of ethnic Germans being cared for by young German women, for instance, beautified the processes of extreme violence and genocide linked to the *Heim ins Reich* program and the General Plan for the East. Along with their growing public influence, women journalists' importance to the regime also increased during the war years. The Nazi government needed women journalists to support the state; in turn, the state supported women journalists by providing opportunities for career advancement, pleasure and fulfillment. The convergence of need and opportunity in the important profession of journalism, in a sexist state, demonstrates how those on the margins of power can become complicit in the very exercise of that power.

## Chapter Five

### Cleaning up the Mess

#### Women Journalists as Mediators for Germany's Post-war Rehabilitation

For twelve and a half years the German people lived within prison walls. What actually took place inside those walls almost never reached the public ear. The Nazis had many adversaries in Germany. These adversaries, having stood out as “Aryans” against Party and Hitlerism from the start of the regime, did not feel that they could conscientiously appropriate the all-too-few opportunities of emigration the world offered for the persecuted. They stayed in the country of their own accord... They knew of all the atrocities that took place, though only through rumour. And precisely because they knew and foresaw all this, they felt it their duty to use their energies on the spot. Then at least not all the intended outrages might be carried out. Many whose lives were in danger would never have managed to emigrate if all Hitler's opponents had left first. Countless “wanted” persons who went underground could never have stuck it out to the end but for the help of strangers.

Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Berlin Underground, 1938-1945*

In July 1945, U.S. journalist Frances McFadden wrote to Bob Hatch, a member of the U.S. Military Information Control Division in Germany, requesting photos of a German woman clearing up debris to go along with an article entitled *Woman with a Broom*. McFadden specified that there must also be rubble in the picture, the woman must hold a broom, and she could not look posed. “The woman with a broom is both a symbol and promise,” McFadden wrote, “Everywhere, before the monster bulldozers arrived to clear paths for the armies through the debris left by the bombers, women instinctively seized their brooms in this futile age-old gesture of cleaning up the mess.”<sup>1</sup>

McFadden's request demonstrates how, immediately after hostilities ceased, Germany's women became not only a symbol for the devastation of war but also of the resilience and strength needed for rebuilding. Yet her words also distanced women from responsibility for the war. Men destroyed Europe through war; the women would attempt

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<sup>1</sup> Memo from Frances McFadden to Bob Hatch, 25 July 1945, Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich (IfZ), OMGUS, 5/266-1/1.

to clean up the mess. McFadden was working on the draft of a women's magazine titled *Wir Frauen*, to be published in the U.S. occupation zone. Each issue of the magazine would devote two pages to a feature called "A Topic for Discussion." For the first issue, McFadden wanted a survey taken of German women answering questions related to the theme of peace, including "What can German women do to help Germany win back the respect of other nations?"<sup>2</sup> Such an article planted an early seed concerning the depiction of German women rebuilding the country physically, socially and, most important, morally and the press as a symbol and means to do so.

Germans eagerly promoted this discourse and the Allies willingly subscribed to it. Despite the fact that a number of women—although by no means all—initially charged with clearing rubble were in some way closely affiliated with Nazism, the *Trümmerfrau* became and remains an iconic image of German women's wartime and post-war victimization, resilience, and heroism.<sup>3</sup> The reality and image of a woman "cleaning up the mess" provides a useful framework when considering how, over a seventy-year period, a small group of female journalists played a fundamental role in shaping and preserving a particular version of Germany's past—a version that cast the country in the role of victim but that also helped it process its history and slowly acknowledge its own crimes.

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<sup>2</sup> Memo from Frances McFadden to Bob Hatch, Subject: Questions for the Woman's Magazine, 26 July 1945, IfZ, 5/266-1/1. McFadden wrote: "I am listing three topics below. Could the survey men approach a small group of women in any town they choose and try these questions out on them and send us the replies. This does not propose to be a large survey of any given population. We simply want some spontaneous and thoughtful answers from a dozen or more women - about 4 answers of 100-200 words on each. Topic 1: What are you doing to help overcome the current shortages in your home? 2: How can you teach your children to hate war? 3. What can German women do to help Germany win back the respect of other nations?"

<sup>3</sup> Many works still employ the image of *Trümmerfrauen* to convey hope, resilience and the idea of starting over. See, for example, Theresia Zierler, ed., *-und trotzdem gab es Hoffnung!: "Trümmerfrauen" aus Österreich berichten* (Graz: L. Stocker, 2006); Gerta Mojert, *Trümmerfrauen in Jülich: Zeitzeuginnen und Zeitzeugen berichten* (Jülich: Fischer, 2003); Franz Severin Berger, Christiane Holler, *Trümmerfrauen: Alltag zwischen Hamstern und Hoffen* (Vienna: Überreuter, 1994).

This chapter explores how five women journalists presented their personal and professional experiences during the Third Reich to create a tale of discrimination, limited agency, bravery and suffering at the hands of the regime and later the occupiers.<sup>4</sup> By way of their personal narratives, published in the post-war period, these journalists functioned as mediators between the German population, the Western Allies, and an international audience.<sup>5</sup> Their “recollections” helped to rehabilitate not only their own Third Reich careers but also the journalistic profession and the country as a whole.

The personal narratives of Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, Ursula von Kardorff, Margret Boveri, Helene Rahms, and Marta Hillers offered a detailed depiction of Germany’s victimization and only a half-hearted acknowledgment of Germany’s crimes. But it was the mixture of forgetting, distorting, and remembering in the journalists’ narratives that made the past palatable for the German population and acceptable to an international audience. Tony Judt argued that some measure of neglect was needed in the post-war years to ensure the survival of democracies, civic health, and reconstruction in Western Europe. A combination of forgetting in the political and economic spheres with pockets for remembering in the cultural sphere allowed for the rebuilding and stability of Europe.<sup>6</sup> Women journalists contributed to this dual process.

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<sup>4</sup> For more on women journalists’ presentation of their Third Reich experiences see Angelika Engler and Klaus Lissi, eds., *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde, “Wir waren ja die Trümmerfrauen diesem Beruf”* (Zürich-Dortmund: eFeF, 1993); Christa Rotzoll, *Frauen und Zeiten: Porträts* (Berlin: Taschenbuch, 1991); Marlen Singen, *“Du schaffst es” : Erfahrungen eines ungewöhnlichen Lebens* (Frankfurt; Berlin: Ullstein, 1993); Uta van Steen, *Macht war mir nie wichtig: Gespräche mit Journalistinnen* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1988); Vilma Sturm, *Barfuß auf Asphalt* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1981); and Elisabeth-Noelle Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen* (Munich: Herbig, 2006). For more on Holocaust memory culture in West Germany see Jacob Eder, “Holocaust-Erinnerung als deutsch-amerikanische Konfliktgeschichte. Die bundesdeutschen Reaktionen auf das United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.” In *Universalisierung des Holocaust? Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik in internationaler Perspektive*, edited by Jan Eckel and Claudia Moisel, 109-134 (Göttingen: 2008).

<sup>5</sup> I utilize the women’s diaries, memoirs, articles and interviews and demonstrate the ways in which these sources can be considered part of the same genre.

<sup>6</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005).



The journalists' utilization of their profession and their professional skills for their own purposes and on behalf of what would become the Federal Republic of Germany, demonstrated both continuity and discontinuity with their actions and influence during the Third Reich. The women made clear their reasons for publishing their wartime experiences: they wanted post-war audiences to understand the challenges they faced in their experiences as female journalists within the Third Reich. By doing so they sought to exonerate themselves from an affiliation with Nazi propaganda. Presenting the journalistic profession as a stronghold of opposition to the regime strengthened this narrative and created the idea of an anti-Nazi, persecuted press. They also aspired to demonstrate how difficult it had been for the German population as a whole to live under the Nazi dictatorship. In this way they continued in their role as professional functionaries but for a new political reality.

Discontinuities prevailed when it came to the journalists' published work. To achieve their goals, the women veiled and/or reversed the nature of their writing during the Third Reich, particularly that which had pertained to Jews and especially Jews in the East. In addition, they downplayed the advantages and opportunities they garnered as members of Hitler's *Volksgemeinschaft*, instead focusing on the obstacles they had faced as women, masked the self-coordination or *Gleichschaltung* that took place in much of the press during the Nazi period, and utilized the Jewish experience of persecution to highlight German suffering and heroism.

Due to both their profession and their gender, these five women influenced Germany's post-war transition in a manner that reverberated well beyond their small numbers. Much like in Nazi Germany, the fact that they were located outside the formal

structures of power but functioned within a public institution enhanced their ability to influence the application of that power. The ways in which the women journalists presented aspects of journalism and everyday life in the Third Reich were not, for the most part, unique. Male journalists too described why and how they were not entangled with Nazism. But, unlike their male counterparts, the women could claim the status of being “outside of politics” and/or victims during the Third Reich, based either on their journalistic activities or on their gender; they referred to Nazi gender ideology to strengthen this claim. The U.S. occupation authorities, an international audience and the German public adhered to the Nazi regime’s distinction between political and apolitical material and accepted the notion that women journalists had operated only in the apolitical realm during the Third Reich. Moreover, the idea that all women were repressed by Nazi gender politics was a widely held belief that lasted decades after the war. In this way, the women journalists could make a representative and more powerful statement, while men could only speak to their individual circumstances.

“Ordinary” Germans claimed that Germany too was a victim of National Socialism. Unlike most German women, these journalists enjoyed a public role and could expect that their work would be published and reviewed. Based on their professions, they enjoyed the status of “observer.” Thus, they could speak on behalf of the population about everyday experiences within the Third Reich; they presented a past that was not just their own. Most important, as journalists, they symbolized democracy in the form of the freedom of the press—a right firmly embedded in the Basic Law and one that West German citizens treasured after the controlled press of the Third Reich.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Article Five of the Basic Law (the West German constitution) reads: “Everyone shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinions by speech, writing and pictures and freely to inform himself from

The journalists' influence extended well beyond the immediate post-war period. Their personal narratives were published in the decades ranging from the 1940s to the 2000s and during different political, social, and cultural climates. But the continuity across their presentations of the Nazi experience through the decades, along with the ongoing popularity of their publications, helped not only to ensure that the victimization narrative endured in (West) Germany's memory culture but also that Germany continued the process of acknowledging its crimes.

The post-war influence of the five women journalists helps us to understand the needs of the population in rebuilding society. They presented and represented an appealing narrative that combined suffering and rejuvenation. In addition, their personal narratives functioned as both a mechanism to push down the population's shame over the war and Holocaust and as small release for that shame. Because these women offered "both sides of the story," however tepidly, their work fit into changing discussions of Germany's past throughout the post-war decades. They were not publicly lauded as heroes in the manner of some male journalists, such as Theodor Heuss or Sebastian Haffner; nor were they associated with the crimes of the Nazis and punished as villains like Julius Streicher or Otto Dietrich. On the stage of Germany's post-war transition, these five women did not operate entirely behind the scenes but neither did they occupy leading roles. From the wings they played a subtle but critical part in the creation and maintenance of a positive post-war image for Germany and contributed to a process that allowed for a stable and functioning civil society.

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generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting ... are guaranteed. There shall be no censorship." As quoted in Peter J. Humphreys, "German, Status of Media," in *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications, Volume 2*, ed. Donald H. Johnston (San Diego: Academic Press, 2003), 237.

## Early Voices Amidst the Ruins

Journalist Ruth Andreas-Friedrich had written for a number of illustrated and women's publications during the Third Reich.<sup>8</sup> She continued her successful career in the post-war years, and with the approval of the U.S. occupation force, she launched her own women's magazine, *Sie*, in Berlin in the fall of 1945. The Office of the Military Government, Information Control Branch had reviewed Friedrich's Third Reich past and quickly classified her as *Nicht betroffen* (unaffected) by Nazism. It praised her as an anti-fascist, noting that one could trust her ability to run a magazine.<sup>9</sup> The occupation force viewed the media as an important vehicle for the re-education of society. The Military's report implied that Friedrich was precisely the type of journalist the U.S. authorities desired as a conduit to the German population.<sup>10</sup> She offered a compelling portrait of a hero due to her wartime activities in a small resistance group called *Uncle Emile* that had assisted Jews and other persecuted Germans. U.S. could also readily accept Friedrich as a victim due to her gender.

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<sup>8</sup> Friedrich was a staff member of the women's magazine *Die junge Dame* and also wrote the following books: *Aberglauben in der Liebe* (1935), *Lieder, die die Welt erschütterten. Historische Lieder aus vier Jahrhunderten* (1935) and *So benimmt sich die junge Dame. 1000 Antworten auf 1000 Fragen des Benehmens* (1940.)

<sup>9</sup> Michael Jobbelson, U.S. Civ. Chief of Research Section, Report, Office of Military Government, Information Control Branch, U.S. Army, 2 June 1947, BAB, Ruth Andreas Friedrich File, RK I7. The report also praised Friedrich as a business-minded journalist.

<sup>10</sup> For an analysis of the importance with which the U.S. viewed the process of cultural transformation through the media see Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible. American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Post-war Germany 1945-1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999). Gienow-Hecht focuses on the American-founded paper, the *Neue Zeitung*. For an analysis of the denazification of the media see Toby Thacker, *The End of the Third Reich: Defeat, Denazification & Nuremberg, January 1944–November 1946* (Stroud: Tempus, 2006). Thacker argues that the Americans viewed information control as critical in post-war Germany and put significant emphasis on denazifying the media as thoroughly as possible. However, the U.S. denazification program was marginal at best. After a few years many journalists compromised by the Nazi regime resumed working in the post-war press. For more on German-American cultural transfers via industry see Volker Berghahn, *Industriegesellschaft und Kulturtransfer: die deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

At the end of World War II, the U.S. and USSR emerged as the new centres of power within Germany and the world at large. The wartime alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies began to unravel and disparate political, social, and economic goals and ideologies developed into the Cold War. The Soviet Union quickly replaced Germany as the West's enemy—a shift that provided fertile ground for a narrative depicting German victimization and heroism.<sup>11</sup> In a rapid readjustment of its perspective on Nazi Germany, U.S. occupation forces and the public quickly feminized the defeated country and cast itself in the role of the “masculine” provider and protector.<sup>12</sup> The fact that American views on Nazi Germany prior to and even throughout the war were mixed and often generous helped precipitate the quick realignment.<sup>13</sup> The shift can also be attributed to the GIs' interactions with German women and the soldiers' perception of women's vulnerability as well as the view that their interactions with Germans were apolitical and personal. The U.S. soon equated its perceived sense of women's vulnerability with Germany's vulnerability overall.<sup>14</sup>

It was in this atmosphere of gendered defeat that Friedrich's narrative about her Third Reich experiences first appeared. Titled *Berlin Underground*, the book was based on her wartime diary. *Berlin Underground* was published and reissued during periods when Berlin was in the world spotlight due to the Cold War. The book first appeared in

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<sup>11</sup> The U.S. and the Soviet Union began to see the other as an enemy that was trying to expand at all costs.

<sup>12</sup> Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). See also Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill; London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002). For a discussion on the gendered nature of defeat see Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007). Grossmann argues that “defeat and occupation were quite directly inscribed on women's bodies” (12).

<sup>13</sup> Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 81.

the U.S. and Germany in 1947.<sup>15</sup> That same year U.S. President Harry Truman announced the Truman Doctrine, designed to fight Soviet expansionism. In 1947 the U.S. also began a massive aid program under the Marshall Plan to assist European economic recovery and thereby reduce the appeal of communism. The Berlin blockade and airlift, an important event in establishing Germany as a victim in the eyes of the West, began in June 1948.<sup>16</sup> Friedrich's book was published in England that same year. There was much publicity in the west about heroic Germans who stood up to Russian aggression. A film titled *The Big Lift* was shot on location in Berlin in 1950. The film told the tale of the airlift through the experiences of two U.S. airmen.<sup>17</sup>

The English version of *Berlin Underground* was reissued in 1989—the year the Berlin wall fell. The German version was reissued in 1977, 1983, and 1986. Friedrich's second book, *Battleground Berlin: Diaries 1945-1948*, detailed the post-war social and political situation in Berlin. It was first published in English in 1962, the year after the Soviet Union built the Berlin wall and reissued in 1990, the year of German reunification.<sup>18</sup> Both works were republished in one volume in 2000. Since their first publication, Friedrich's books have been translated into, among others, French, Dutch, Hebrew and Hungarian. The book's early publication and subsequent popularity made Friedrich one of the first journalists, male or female, to present her version of Germany's

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<sup>15</sup> Friedrich's German magazine *Sie* had included an excerpt in its January 1946 inaugural edition. The German edition was titled *Der Schattenmann, Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1938-1945*.

<sup>16</sup> In 1948 the western zones introduced a new currency. The Soviets viewed this move as a step toward creating a German state (contrary to agreements), which would then be armed against the Soviet bloc. The Soviets responded by closing off access to Berlin. The U.S. in turn responded by an airlift to fly food, coal, medicines and other supplies into the city. In May 1949 the Soviets backed down and re-opened routes.

<sup>17</sup> George Seaton directed the film. *The Big Lift* starred Montgomery Clift and used members of the U.S. air force to act as themselves.

<sup>18</sup> The German edition of this second book was not published until 1985, suggesting that publishers deemed Friedrich's narrative on the Third Reich more compelling (and therefore popular) for German audiences than her discussion of post-war politics amongst the occupation forces.

Nazi experience. In contrast, the well-known Jewish writer Leo Perutz returned to Austria from Palestine after the war. He hoped to publish *By Night Under the Stone Bridge*. But Perutz was worried that the Jewish aspects of his work would hinder his chance to find a publisher. Indeed, in 1951 his publisher wrote, “Much as I love and esteem your work, I do believe that the attitude of present-day readers in Austria and Germany will prevent it from becoming a success.”<sup>19</sup>

It is not known if or how much Friedrich massaged her diary before its publication. The nature of her text does suggest some post-war editing. She does not record any fear in keeping a diary or describe the logistics of hiding it. There is no repetition in the text, and Friedrich presents herself as remarkably astute with regard to the steps the regime took to isolate and persecute Jewish Germans, and later, the course of the war. In an entry dated 9 November 1938, Friedrich wrote: “Von Rath shot by Grünspan...I see no signs of anti-Semitic indignation, but there is an oppressive uneasiness like that before a thunderstorm.”<sup>20</sup> In contrast, the diaries of Victor Klemperer, a Jewish professor of romance languages, depicted a man desperately trying to process what was taking place. Klemperer struggled on a daily basis to glean something useful from the coordinated press and attempted, generally without success, to anticipate the next anti-Jewish measures the regime would implement. His diaries are repetitive and uncertain and often present an unflattering image of himself.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Ruth Kluger, “Personal Reflections on Jewish Ghosts in Germany,” in *Lessons and Legacies Volume VIII, From Generation to Generation*, ed. Doris L. Bergen (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008), 273.

<sup>20</sup> Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Berlin Underground, 1938-1945* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 16. The correct spelling of the name of the shooter is (Herschel) Grynszpan.

<sup>21</sup> See Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years 1933-1941* (New York: Modern Library, 1999), and Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years 1942-1945* (New York: Random House, 1999).

Friedrich's position as a journalist and confirmed anti-Nazi gave her a voice of authority and objectivity. She included very little about her journalistic experiences within her book and wrote of the press as if she were an observer rather than a participant of the institution. Doing so removed her from any connection to Nazi news and propaganda. In an October 1938 diary entry she wrote: "It's a queer thing. Every day millions of pounds of printed paper go rolling out of this building, vomiting a torrent of NS Propaganda over mankind." In August 1944 she recorded: "Our noble editors... have done themselves proud; even the most carping critic must admit that. The way they work their imaginations overtime to invent headlines should satisfy even Mr. Hitler's thirst for vengeance."<sup>22</sup> A fact that Friedrich did not mention in her published diary—and one that post-war literature on the press or on Friedrich has rarely addressed—was her editorship of the magazine *Kamerad Frau*, which began in June 1943. During her tenure as editor, the magazine produced its most inflammatory articles against Jews, some of which Friedrich co-authored.<sup>23</sup> The U.S. military's report on Friedrich's Third Reich activities also ignored this fact. It stated only that she had written on themes that were "of an un-political" nature.<sup>24</sup> The fact that Friedrich focused on women's issues was enough for the U.S. occupation authorities to consider her writing "un-political" despite the antisemitic

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<sup>22</sup> Andreas-Friedrich, *Berlin Underground*, 158. Friedrich was referring to the aftermath of the July 20<sup>th</sup> assassination attempt on Hitler. For more on inauthentic diaries allegedly written during the Third Reich see Henry Ashby Turner. "Two Dubious Third Reich Diaries," *Central European History* Vol. 33, No. 3 (2000): 415-422.

<sup>23</sup> Sylvia Lott, *Die Frauenzeitschriften von Hans Huffzky und John Jahr: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Frauenzeitschrift zwischen 1933 und 1970* (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1985), 230. *Die junge Dame*, the magazine for which Friedrich worked, merged with another publication in April 1943 and was renamed *Kamerad Frau*.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Jobbelson, U.S. Civ. Chief of Research Section, Report, Office of Military Government, Information Control Branch, US Army, 2 June 1947, BAB, Ruth Andreas Friedrich File, RK I7. With regard to Friedrich's work (specifically her serialized novels) on the women's magazine, *Die junge Dame*, the report stated: "The themes [on which she wrote were] of an un-political nature although [the magazine] praises Nazi institutions (BDM...etc.)"



nature of some of her articles.<sup>25</sup> The attitude of the occupation authorities reflected Nazi and post-war discourse on women as outside the realm of formal politics.

In her book, Friedrich documented escalating persecution of Jews in Germany and the actions she and her circle took to assist Jewish friends and acquaintances in danger. *Berlin Underground* provided an important and early testimony about Jewish oppression. Yet her diary also helped to distance the journalistic profession and the country as a whole from the stigma of Nazism; she did so by discussing the experiences of Jewish Germans. She was well positioned to discuss Jewish suffering; Yad Vashem honoured her as a “Righteous Among the Nations” in 2002 for her assistance to Jewish Germans.<sup>26</sup> Friedrich attributed primary responsibility for crimes against Jews to only a handful of Nazis and depicted most Germans as either mortified by the regime or as heroically assisting Jews.

Friedrich discussed the horrors of *Kristallnacht* and depicted her journalism colleagues as ashamed. By her account, the morning after the pogrom her editor lamented, “My dear girl, I shan’t live through this. We ought to be so ashamed we could sink into the floor. Synagogues—houses of God—temples of the Lord simply soaked down with gasoline.”<sup>27</sup> Friedrich also depicted a colleague who was a party member as not “really” a Nazi. She noted that her publisher joined the NSDAP only to have access

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<sup>25</sup> Andreas-Friedrich spent her career in women’s news, writing about topics that ranged from culture to cosmetics to interpersonal issues. As a member of a resistance group, Andreas-Friedrich may have written antisemitic material to mask her activities assisting persecuted groups, including Jewish Germans.

<sup>26</sup> “Righteous Among the Nations Honored by Yad Vashem by 1 January 2014,” <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/statistics/germany.pdf> (accessed 19 February 2014). There is also a commemorative plaque to Andreas-Friedrich outside her former apartment building in Berlin.

<sup>27</sup> Andreas-Friedrich, *Berlin Underground*, 19. She described a friend, as “trembling with rage,” and bursting out, “We really ought to spit at each other for standing by without opening our mouths” (22).

to party bigwigs since they might prove useful at some stage.<sup>28</sup> In post-war Germany, the notion that even Nazis were not Nazis was useful to journalists and the population alike.

In Friedrich's narrative, much of the non-Jewish German population strove to help Jews during the war. In June 1942, she noted that Germans were helping feed Jews: "A great many people with guilty looks are lugging shopping nets full of vegetables through the streets of Berlin."<sup>29</sup> As the end of the war loomed she claimed,

We who are in our eleventh year under Hitler's dominion have little cause to boast. But, if ever anyone risked his life for his Jewish brothers, it has been the German Aryans--hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, risking their necks every day and every hour... for a few wretched bread stamps, a lodging for a night or two...scraped together out of their own need, fought for among bombs, forced labor, failing communications, and personal hardship, gained by defying every prohibition, law and propaganda decree.<sup>30</sup>

Most Jews could only consider living as "U-boats" if they had the help of other Germans.<sup>31</sup> Those who helped took considerable risks to do so. "Aryan" Germans could ease or make more difficult the experiences of Jews in hiding.<sup>32</sup> In the post-war years, Jews who survived the war in hiding noted that they had often received nothing more than empathy or excuses from their "Aryan" friends and acquaintances.<sup>33</sup> They cited the problems they endured finding housing and food and the near constant fear of being recognized and betrayed.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 118. Andreas-Friedrich recorded this diary entry on 27 March 1943.

<sup>31</sup> The term U-boats was used to describe Jews living in hiding or passing as non-Jews.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Lutjens, "Vom Untertauchen: 'U-Boote' and der Berliner Alltag 1941-1945," in *Alltag im Holocaust, Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich 1941-1945*, eds., Andrea Löw, Doris L. Bergen, and Anna Hájková (Munich: Oldenburg, 2013), 55. See also Beate Kosmola, "Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen in Berlin. Flucht vor der Deportation (1941-1943)," in *Alltag im Holocaust*. For an account of one woman's experience in hiding see Mark Roseman, *A Past in Hiding: Memory and Survival in Nazi Germany* (New York: Metropolitan, 2001).

<sup>33</sup> Lutjens, "Vom Untertauchen," 57.

Friedrich recognized how her text could impact the world's view of Germans and sought to draw a distinction between the Nazi regime and the country as a whole.<sup>34</sup> A March 1943 entry reads: "To us...it is enormously important for people abroad to learn that even in Germany there are human beings, not merely Jew baiters, disciples of Hitler and Gestapo Cossacks."<sup>35</sup> By using the term "Cossack," Friedrich drew a comparison between the National Socialists and the Soviets. If Friedrich did indeed write these words in March 1943—shortly after the German defeat at Stalingrad—she was aware that the tide of war had turned against Germany. A comparison with the Soviets would imply that the Nazis were not the only aggressors. If Friedrich added this text after the war, the comparison still reminded the world that the Germans were now occupied by Soviet "Cossacks" and were thus in the position of victim.

Friedrich and her small circle took risks to help Jewish friends and even strangers during the Third Reich, but most of the German population was, at best, apathetic to Jewish suffering. Although a small undercurrent of discomfort occasionally existed, most of the population simply looked the other way, and many benefited.<sup>36</sup> Yad Vashem recognizes only a small number of Germans—just over 500—for their wartime assistance to Jewish Germans. In comparison, it honours 3760 French, 5351 Dutch and 6454

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<sup>34</sup> She placed most of the blame for Nazism and its crimes on only a handful of perpetrators, arguing in October 1945, "The tendency is to identify the whole people with the outrages of its leaders. Yet thousands upon thousands had nothing whatever to do with those outrages. On the contrary, year in and year out they risked life and liberty—with no help from foreign nations, no support from any organization or powerful Party quarter—to serve humanity wherever they could." Friedrich, *Berlin Underground*, Forward. In this way she also attributed partial responsibility for the carnage of the war on the rest of the world, taking the focus off of the German population.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>36</sup> See Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Persecution: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1933-1939* (London: Orion Books, 1997) and *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007). For the ways in which Germans benefited from the regime's persecution of Jews see Frank Bajohr, "Aryanisation" in *Hamburg: The Economic Exclusion of Jews and the Confiscation of the Property in Nazi Germany* (New York: Berghahn, 2002) and idem, *Parvenüs und Profiteure: Korruption in der NS-Zeit* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 2001).

Poles.<sup>37</sup> Although Yad Vashem's numbers do not necessarily reflect the full extent of help given by non-Jews to Jews during the Holocaust and are problematic due to post-war politics, among other issues, they do give us an approximation of the number of Germans who assisted German Jews. This number is most likely in the hundreds and not the tens of thousands as Friedrich asserted.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Friedrich's work helped establish a myth of German resistance. In reality, such resistance was marginal.

Friedrich contributed to the popular tale that Hitler led unwilling and victimized Germans to the abyss. Although Hitler's regime led Germany into a devastating war, Friedrich's work downplayed the support the Nazis enjoyed from much of the German population. In her depiction, Germans followed Hitler because they suffered the defeat of the First World War and the economic turmoil that ensued:

We have a Mr Hitler because we lost a four years World War, because we went through years of inflation, of economic crisis, of unemployment, exhaustion, uncertainty; because we have never in history been a united nation, and consequently require perpetual reassurance that we actually are a nation at all...It's easy to throw stones if you've been born heir to many hundred years of education as a people; easy to sit in judgment when you're in the midst of abundance, roast chicken and the good life.<sup>39</sup>

In Friedrich's narrative, the Germans had twice been victims, first of a chaotic interwar period and then of the Nazis. She argued that the population "gave the devil an inch back in 1933" because they "feared for their livelihood, for the life and welfare of their wives and children. Because they were afraid of hunger and unemployment, of denunciations,

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<sup>37</sup> The Germans threatened Poles caught assisting Jews with death.

<sup>38</sup> With regard to the accuracy of the Righteous Among the Nations numbers, Yad Vashem states: "Sometimes survivors could not overcome the difficulty of grappling with the painful past and didn't come forward; others weren't aware of the program or couldn't apply; other survivors died before they could make the request. An additional factor is that most cases that are recognized represent successful attempts; the Jews survived and came forward to tell Yad Vashem about them." "Righteous Among the Nations Honored by Yad Vashem by 1 January 2014," <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/statistics/germany.pdf> (accessed 19 February 2014).

<sup>39</sup> Andreas-Friedrich, *Berlin Underground*, 134.

the Gestapo, the scaffold.”<sup>40</sup> On the one hand, Friedrich suggested that Hitler came to power due to earlier German disunity, suffering and economic devastation, thus signifying that National Socialism enjoyed a measure of popular support among the population. On the other hand, she implied that the Germans were afraid of Hitler already in 1933. Politically and racially acceptable Germans, however, often benefited from aspects of the Nazi program as Hitler used a carrot and stick approach to win over many and reconcile others to the regime.

Friedrich advanced the notion of inner emigration; her involvement in a resistance group legitimized this concept for the droves of Germans who claimed the same in the post-war years. The question of emigration was perhaps especially critical for journalists, because those who had fled the country when Hitler came to power returned and took up influential positions in the post-war press causing tensions with those who had remained and desired to keep working. The returning émigrés provided a moral and often persecuted counterbalance to those who had stayed and enjoyed successful careers in Nazi Germany. Friedrich maintained that she had remained in Germany out of a sense of duty. She implied that the Germans who had stayed suffered the most under the regime—not the émigrés who had fled, often in fear for their lives.

In a February 1944 entry, angered by radio broadcasts from Thomas Mann urging the Germans to “get out on the barricades,” Friedrich wrote:

Would that all those who make such a demand of us in resounding accounts of moral superiority could know how wrongly they judge us and our opportunities! No one who does not himself live in the country and suffer from the country has any idea what it means to be bound with the chains of dictatorship. Those who did not leave here until after 1933 know least of all and forgot the soonest. That is

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

why we bear most of our émigrés such a grudge, because they demand of us what they themselves could not accomplish.<sup>41</sup>

But *Berlin Underground* also spoke to German responsibility for Nazism. In this way, Friedrich achieved a sense of balance that lent her work a credibility that extended beyond her status of resistance fighter and woman. In a February 1943 entry, she discussed the massive roundup that took place of the remaining Jews in Berlin and described the English bombing raid as retribution for “the monstrous deed.” She identified and critiqued the population’s focus on its own suffering and its inability to associate cause with effect.<sup>42</sup> Some of Friedrich’s passages, however, read both as a rebuke of the German public and a comparison between the Nazis and the Allies. On 29 October 1945 she reflected on the population’s outrage that the occupation authorities planned to exclude party members from cultural occupations. In her diary Friedrich noted that the Allies could easily execute such policies; the Nazis had implemented “almost identical” policies against Jewish Germans and “no one had complained then.”<sup>43</sup>

In the mid to late 1940s the press was not silent about German atrocities committed during the war. German newspapers covered the Nuremberg trials more

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 125. Friedrich continued, “Émigré, stay where you are. Rejoice in the sun if you will and can. But spare us your accusations and your contempt. Get out on the barricades he tells us from his comfortable country house.”

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 90. Friedrich noted: “They can’t grasp it that they—they in particular—should have been the ones to suffer so. From cause to effect is a long road. Very few people know enough to follow it.” Nathan Stoltzfus explores the issue of mixed marriage, the February 1943 roundup, and the ensuing protest of a group of “Aryan” women married to Jewish men who had been picked up. Stoltzfus argues that German antisemitism erupted only in times of economic crisis and disappeared in times of economic health. He points out that Jews were quite assimilated in Germany and intermarriage between Jews and so-called Aryan Germans was common. See Nathan Stoltzfus, *Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996).

<sup>43</sup> Andreas-Friedrich, *Battleground Berlin: Diaries, 1945-1948* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 100. With regard to the Germans’ outrage over U.S. exclusionary policies she wrote: “Have they forgotten how easily it can be done? Has it escaped them that these special laws are almost identical to those of eight years ago against the Jews? Along with having lost their memory of Party membership, the majority of Party members seem to have also lost their memory of Nazi legislation... Who complained back then about terror and injustice?”

intensively than later war crimes proceedings. But in their reporting, journalists placed responsibility for all persecution, violence, and genocide on a small gang of Nazi criminals. This presentation provided ordinary Germans the chance to absolve themselves of guilt and responsibility.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the trials did not focus on the genocide of the Jews as a specific and separate part of Nazi atrocities.<sup>45</sup> Friedrich's narrative fit into but also expanded media discourse. Although her text presented a distorted image of Germans as victims during the Third Reich, she also provided an early acknowledgment of German crimes, particularly the persecution of Jews. This stance was of course a reversal of the nature of her articles published late in the war but consistent with her activities assisting Jewish Germans throughout the Third Reich. The fact that she addressed Germany as both victim and perpetrator meant that her words were agreeable to Germans and to an international audience.

### **From Shaping to Maintaining Post-war Discourse**

The personal recollections of Ursula von Kardorff also made an early contribution to the developing tale of German victimhood and heroism. Like Friedrich, Kardorff began to publish pieces related to her view of Germany's Third Reich experience while the country was still in physical and psychological ruins. Kardorff began her career in 1937 at the party paper, *Der Angriff*. She secured a position at the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* where she remained until February 1945. Throughout the war Kardorff had

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<sup>44</sup> Host Pöttker, *Abgewehrte Vergangenheit. Beiträge zur deutschen Erinnerung an den Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne: Herbert von Halem, 2005), 120-121. At this stage, the only newspapers allowed to publish were the ones authorized by the Allies. It is therefore not possible to say whether the media would have publicized the trials and engaged in discussion of wartime crimes without Allied influence.

<sup>45</sup> Kluger, "Personal Reflections on Jewish Ghosts in Germany," 271.

worked in features, writing about women's issues, including the bravery and resilience of German women. She continued with these themes in the post-war years, writing for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* about everything from young widows to expellees, from portraits of German women in concentration camps to trends in fashion.<sup>46</sup> Whereas during the Third Reich Kardorff's writing depicted Nazism as a vehicle for female empowerment, in the post-war years she emphasized women's victimization at the hands of the regime and the war it waged.

Kardorff's 1948 piece, "In Encircled Berlin [*Im Kessel von Berlin*]: Notes from the Diary of Ursula von Kardorff," was written during the Berlin Blockade. Her text called to mind German crimes in occupied Europe but she applied them to the suffering of the German population: "burned out apartment," "frozen in the east," "shot," "murdered," "gassed," "death in old and new Buchenwald," "transported," "impoverished."<sup>47</sup> Her text fit into the Cold War atmosphere in the West as she re-tooled language related to the Nazi regime and applied it the Soviet Union's treatment of Germans. In both private and published work, Kardorff referred to Berlin as a ghetto.<sup>48</sup> In

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<sup>46</sup> See Ursula von Kardorff Nachlass, IfZ Munich, ED348/7. In her article, "Speer—ein Mann mit Verantwortung," she even offered a sympathetic portrait of Hitler's Minister of Armament Albert Speer, commending him for his attitude before the court, for accepting his responsibility, for being ashamed of his role in the Third Reich and for his statement: "Es gibt auch in einem autoritären System eine Gesamtverantwortung." Ursula von Kardorff, "Speer – ein Mann mit Verantwortung," *Wiesbadener Kurier*, 25 June 1946. For a different perspective on Speer, see Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

<sup>47</sup> Ursula von Kardorff, "Im Kessel von Berlin: aus dem Tagebuch von Ursula von Kardorff," 5 September 1948, IfZ, ED348/15. Through her text, Kardorff evoked images of the bombing of German cities, the experience of Wehrmacht soldiers on the Eastern front, the columns of refugees from eastern regions in Germany, the transportation of Germans to the Soviet Union for forced labor, and the plight of the German population at home. In general, Kardorff's articles focused on a mixture of culture, women's news, travel and the narrative of German victimization and heroism. See, for example, Ursula von Kardorff, "Barometer Mode, 1945 nur mit einem Rucksack—und 8 Jahre danach," 1953, "Er bleib mir unvergessen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Nr. 164, 19 July 1958.

<sup>48</sup> Kardorff, "Im Kessel von Berlin: aus dem Tagebuch von Ursula von Kardorff," 31 August 1948, IfZ. ED348–NL 15.



this way, her narrative of the past and present German vulnerability aligned with and underscored shifting U.S. attitudes.

Kardorff was best known for her book (referred to and promoted as a diary) *Berliner Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1942 bis 1945* (Notes from Berlin). She wrote the first draft after the war. The book was based on her wartime diary, letters, and calendar, as well as post-war correspondence and feedback from friends and colleagues.<sup>49</sup> In this way, Kardorff's book can be considered an early depiction of Germany's wartime experience as her words were intended for an immediate post-war audience. After searching for over a decade for a publisher, *Berliner Aufzeichnungen* appeared in 1962—a key period in the Cold War. The Berlin Wall had been built in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis took place in October 1962.<sup>50</sup> The book was translated into English as *Diary of a Nightmare: Berlin 1942-1945* and published in the U.S in 1966, where it was met with rave reviews.<sup>51</sup>

*Berliner Aufzeichnungen* combined the genres of literary work, diary, memoir and social commentary. Kardorff deftly deflected potential criticism with regard to editing or hindsight by noting that she wrote when the events were still fresh in her memory: “I have not added anything new, which I learned later.”<sup>52</sup> In a 2002 dissertation, Barbara Serfozo analysed Kardorff's work and argued that her published diary was an altered version of her original writings and contained key passages that were written after the

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<sup>49</sup> Ursula von Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare: Berlin 1942-1945* (New York: The John Day Company, 1966), forward.

<sup>50</sup> Letter from Ursula von Kardorff to Herr Fleischer at *Die Neue Zeitung*, 20 March 1948. IfZ, ED348/7. Kardorff had already employed the developing Cold War to deflect any criticism of her journalism during the Third Reich. In 1948 the American-sponsored paper *Die Neue Zeitung* refused to employ Kardorff due to the *Weltbühne*'s (a Soviet-zone paper) critique of one of her wartime articles. Kardorff claimed to her would-be employer that the piece written about her in *Weltbühne* was simply a Communist attack for a post-war article that she had written about conditions in Soviet POW camps.

<sup>51</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 13 June 1966, IfZ, ED348/31.

<sup>52</sup> Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, forward.

war, with few to no original notes as their foundation.<sup>53</sup> Whereas Serfozo focused on the discrepancies between Kardorff's original notes and published books, Peter Hartl—who also compared Kardorff's original notes with her published text and wrote the forward for the 1992 edition—argued that although the published version was not verbatim, there was a close similarity between the two.<sup>54</sup>

There is no doubt that Kardorff's wartime notes provided a strong foundation for her book. But, what is significant is the nature of the changes that she made. Some of the most important scenarios and viewpoints for which her work was praised were added later. In the first edition she included “flashbacks” that expressed her hatred for the Nazis as well as references to Jewish transports. Though her original entries contained a sense of disdain for Nazism, she wrote most of the passages criticizing the Nazis after the war and no similar entries are found in the originals.<sup>55</sup> In a 21 August 1943 entry, Kardorff considered whether she was ever a Nazi; yet this passage did not exist in her wartime diary. Certain facts, including her brother Klaus's membership in the SA and her volunteer internship at *Der Angriff*, also do not appear in her published work.<sup>56</sup>

When discussing her draft manuscript with friends and colleagues, Kardorff described her desire to convey the truth of Germany's wartime experience and claimed that the most important thing to her was that the book was “ganz echt” (completely true); yet, she also wrote with a specific, very public, goal in mind: she sought to use her work

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<sup>53</sup> Barbara Serfozo, “Warring Narratives: The Diaries and Memoirs of Lore Walb, Ursula von Kardorff and Margret Boveri” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2002), 131.

<sup>54</sup> Ursula von Kardorff, *Berliner Aufzeichnungen 1942-1945* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1994) Peter Hartl, forward, 25-26. This edition of Kardorff's book was originally published in 1992 by C.H. Beck.

<sup>55</sup> Serfozo, “Warring Narratives,” 155. With regard to Kardorff's added-in references to Jewish transports, Serfozo concludes that Kardorff was attempting retroactively to express moral indignation.

<sup>56</sup> Ursula von Kardorff, Nachlass, IfZ, ED348. Hartl points out that Kardorff was able to write more openly in her diary after the war. Still, she did not mention that she worked for *Der Angriff* in her diary or in the questionnaires for the U.S. occupation authorities, skipping over her volunteer internship and speaking only of her work at the Deutscher Verlag and then at the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.

to influence the post-war, international opinion of Germany, to present to the outside world a picture of a good Germany that was also a victim of Nazi crimes.<sup>57</sup> In 1947, when searching for a publisher, Kardorff expressed her desire to have her work published outside of Germany, noting, “I would like to make something of the German situation clear to the idiotic *Ausland* who does not grasp anything about it.”<sup>58</sup> To that end, Kardorff considered *Berliner Aufzeichnungen* as a vehicle to present her own personal and professional experiences in Nazi Germany and to advocate her view of German wartime and post-war injustices. She wrote descriptively about German hardships and discussed Germany’s persecution of the Jews. But she also associated German and Jewish suffering and compared the occupying powers, particularly the Soviets, to the Nazis.<sup>59</sup>

Kardorff suggested that her professional focus on culture, everyday life and women’s topics, the same areas in which Friedrich had worked, meant that she avoided political discussion and was therefore not complicit with the dissemination of Nazi propaganda. A February 1945 entry in her diary reads: “So this is the end of six years’ work. I hope that during those years I never sold out to the Promi and that I never wrote anything really opposed to my convictions. Anyhow, I had the good fortune to be working in features, which saved me from having to do a lot of unpleasant things.”<sup>60</sup> In the post-war years, other female journalists echoed Kardorff’s claim.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Letter from Ursula von Kardorff to Charlotte von der Schulenburg, 20 August 1947, IfZ, ED348/6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> See for example her entry entitled “New Year’s Day, 1944” where she writes of her brother’s death and compares German suffering after air raid bombings to that of the Jews. Von Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, 89, 205.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 193-194. “Promi” refers to the Propagandaministerium (Propaganda Ministry). Although she presented the passage as a February 1945 entry in her diary, she actually added it after the war as she was preparing her work for publication.

<sup>61</sup> Christa Rotzoll and Helene Rahms among others.

Kardorff's self-portrait as uncompromised by Nazism carried over to the newspaper for which she worked, and by association, to her colleagues. She described the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* as read by Germans but not Nazis: "...it [did] not take long to spot people who think as one does oneself...They do not talk about 'the Führer,' but about Hitler, they are skeptical about the situation on the Eastern front...they read the *Frankfurter Zeitung* or the *DAZ*..." she wrote.<sup>62</sup> Kardorff attributed this passage to 12 May 1943; in reality she had added it sometime after the war. She also replaced all references to "Der Führer" with Hitler.<sup>63</sup> The idea that some papers could provide real news did exist during the Third Reich. But Kardorff's inclusion of the passage afterward demonstrates her understanding that emphasizing this notion would be beneficial to her and to those with whom she worked closely.

The case of Hans Schwarz van Berk provides an example of Kardorff's efforts to rehabilitate the reputation of a colleague closely tied to the regime. In 1962, Kardorff received a letter from Joachim Friedrich Goldman asking about the wartime record of Hans Schwarz van Berk, onetime editor of the party paper *Der Angriff* and a close colleague of Goebbels. Schwarz van Berk was featured in Kardorff's (recently published) *Berliner Aufzeichnungen*, and the letter enquired about his actions as a prominent Nazi. "I don't think I have ever answered a letter so quickly," Kardorff wrote. "He was in the Waffen SS and also a journalist on *Das Reich*. He was a Nazi, but one of the most upstanding that I knew. Or do you believe that otherwise it would have been possible to

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 27. Hartl compared Kardorff's original notes with her diary and noted that there was no entry on 12 May 1943. Kardorff, *Berliner Aufzeichnungen*, 84.

be as open with him as we were?”<sup>64</sup> By Kardorff’s account, her father had been outspoken about his hatred of Hitler yet had never been denounced by Schwarz van Berk. It would have been important for Kardorff personally to dissociate Schwarz van Berk from any wrongdoing since she had socialized and worked with him during the Nazi years.<sup>65</sup>

Kardorff did not address certain details about Schwarz van Berk’s past, including the fact that he had remained a committed Nazi to the end.<sup>66</sup> During the war, as part of the SS, Schwarz van Berk had reported from the front lines in Poland, France, Greece and the USSR. According to *Sicherheitsdienst* reports on the mood of the population, his wartime articles were well received by readers.<sup>67</sup> Schwarz van Berk, who loathed Bolshevism and Russia, had produced inflammatory articles that warned of the catastrophe that would befall Germany in the event of defeat. He described the Russians as soulless and argued that their coldness, brutality, madness and barbarism would end civilization, as Germany knew it.<sup>68</sup> Kardorff’s defence of her former colleague corresponded to Friedrich’s presentation of a press in which most journalists could speak freely with each other and mirrored Friedrich’s depiction of the “good Nazi.”

The late 1940s to the early 1960s was a period of relative silence in the political, academic, and public sectors about German crimes committed under National Socialism. The Nuremberg trials had garnered extensive media coverage, but in the 1950s and early

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<sup>64</sup> Letter from Kardorff to Joachim Friedrich Goldmann, 13 December 1962, IfZ, ED348/9. Letter from Joachim Friedrich Goldmann to Kardorff, 12 December 1962, IfZ, ED348/9.

<sup>65</sup> Kardorff had been a volunteer at *Der Angriff* during Schwarz van Berk’s tenure as editor.

<sup>66</sup> Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Beck, 1989), 169. Under his leadership, Schwarz van Berk increased the circulation of *Der Angriff* by 50,000.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 169, 172. Schwarz van Berk was prohibited from practicing journalism after the war.

1960s the press initiated little discussion on Germany's war experience.<sup>69</sup> West Germany did not begin to investigate crimes committed under the Nazi regime in a large-scale manner until the late 1950s with the establishment of the Central Office for the Investigation of National Socialist crimes in Ludwigsburg in 1958.<sup>70</sup> Still, the Federal Republic took some early steps to confront its past. Despite Adenauer's lack of zeal in the judicial pursuit of war criminals and his reluctance to speak about the war on the Eastern front, he did endorse restitution for victims of the Holocaust in the form of the 1952 Luxembourg agreement. There were also grassroots endeavours, including the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), some religious groups and relief organizations that worked toward improving relations between Germany and its victims.<sup>71</sup>

Kardorff's book presented an early acknowledgment of German wartime atrocities. She drew particular attention to the persecution and murder of European Jews. However, her frequent comparisons between wartime Jewish and post-war non-Jewish experience set up a scale of victims with Germans and European Jews equally balanced. Kardorff described a conversation with U.S. military personnel in July 1945 and wrote that Americans seemed naive: "When you are with them you suddenly feel burdened with the weight of centuries, old as the hills and complicated – a feeling which, apart from

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<sup>69</sup> Pöttker, *Abgewehrte Vergangenheit*, 121. This shift is due in part to the fact that after the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, the German press experienced more freedom from Allied control. Still, some journalists, Theodor Heuss among them, were vocal about German crimes. See Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>70</sup> At this stage Germany began to investigate the Auschwitz issue.

<sup>71</sup> See Steven M. Schroeder, *To Forget it all and Begin Anew: Reconciliation in Occupied Germany, 1944-1954* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). Schroeder argued that reconciliation efforts were not always based on regret but on pragmatic concerns about improving German's daily life and obtaining acceptance from the international community. Despite the fact that this work also played into the German sense of victimhood, it still laid the foundation for greater reconciliation in the years to come.

ourselves, perhaps only the Jews experience. What a similarity there is between the Germans and the Jews.”<sup>72</sup>

Von Kardorff’s presentation of injustice was also related to her views on class and her connections to the Prussian nobility. She frequently claimed that the Prussians, represented in her work primarily by the Junkers, were hated by other Germans and the occupying powers, and compared their post-war situation with that of German Jews during the Third Reich. When completing an American questionnaire in July 1945, Kardorff was scornful of the questions and noted: “Among other things they wanted to know ... whether our forebears had ever had any titles of nobility ... In the old days a Jewish grandmother was the thing not to have had, but now the same applies to an aristocratic one.”<sup>73</sup> Although Kardorff wrote about the questionnaire in her original diary notes, she added the sentence concerning “a Jewish grandmother” specifically for the book. In an article entitled “Verzeihung—ich bin Preuin” (Sorry – I’m a Prussian Woman) Kardorff described the look on a Frenchman’s face when he realized she was Prussian: “It was generally as if one said to an SS man at the time, I am a full Jew.”<sup>74</sup>

Juxtaposed with Kardorff’s depiction of the German plight was her portrait of German heroism and sacrifice during the war. In the post-war years, publicizing the 20 July 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler became Kardorff’s personal mission and *Berliner Aufzeichnungen* her tool. Much of her writing focused on the valour of the conspirators, the price they paid for their actions, and the impact such bravery should

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<sup>72</sup> Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, 228. In her original diary, a sentence not included in the published version states that, although no people had ever been so crushed, the Germans were superior to the Americans in every respect (336). The notion of Germany’s superiority over the United States (and the Soviet Union) had been a common trope in Goebbels’ propaganda.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from Ursula von Kardorff to Franz Joseph Schoeningh, *Sddeutsche Zeitung*, undated, IfZ, ED348/7.

have in Germany and abroad.<sup>75</sup> In an August 1945 letter she described an English radio program about the assassination attempt: "Beautifully made, not even the most crazed propagandist could have done it better. I believe it to be a quasi duty of mine to provide a sweeping advertisement for these types of things, since who else moved as I did in these circles, and could also express themselves at least somewhat deftly about it?"<sup>76</sup>

Kardorff's comparison of publicizing 20 July with propaganda indicates how this plot could be utilized as a device to retool Germany's image in the eyes of the world. Kardorff had a personal stake in publicizing the heroism of this group. As a member of the Prussian aristocracy, Kardorff was socially acquainted with the small circle of army officers that planned the assassination attempt. She played a minor role in the aftermath by delivering a message to a conspirator's wife and was questioned by the Gestapo.<sup>77</sup>

Kardorff's account of the heroism of July 20<sup>th</sup> was strengthened by the figure of Marion Dönhoff. An influential journalist in the post-war press, Dönhoff had been deeply involved with the plotters. She came to be viewed as the moralistic and respectable face of Germany and a symbol of the post-war free press, which in turn helped underscore Kardorff's own narrative.<sup>78</sup> Dönhoff began her journalism career in 1946, writing for the

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<sup>75</sup> For more on German resistance to National Socialism see Ian Kershaw, *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler's Germany, 1944-45* (New York: Penguin, 2011); Hans Mommsen, *Alternatives to Hitler: German Resistance under the Third Reich*; translated and annotated by Angus McGeoch (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); and Peter Hoffmann, *The History of German Resistance, 1933-1945*, translated by Richard Barry (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

<sup>76</sup> Letter from Ursula von Kardorff to unnamed, 5 August, IfZ, ED348/6.

<sup>77</sup> Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, 142. Historians including Norbert Frei have confirmed Kardorff's small role in the plot. Frei, Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*, 152.

<sup>78</sup> For more on Dönhoff see Alice Schwarzer, *Marion Dönhoff: ein widerständiges Leben* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1996), and Haug von Künheim, *Marion Dönhoff* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2000). Von Dönhoff was born to an aristocratic family in East Prussia, near Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg). After the war she became a prominent journalist in West Germany and a strong proponent of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik. She wrote for the *Die Zeit* and eventually became its editor and, later, publisher. Books by von Dönhoff include, among others, *Namen die keiner mehr nennt; Ostpreussen: Menschen und Geschichte* (Düsseldorf: E. Diederich, 1962), *Die Deutsche Ostpolitik* (Erlenbach: E. Rentsch, 1968), *Foe into Friend: the Makers of the New Germany from Konrad Adenauer to Helmut Schmidt*, translated by Gabriele Annan



political pages of *Die Zeit* in Hamburg. In 1968 she became the paper's editor and, in 1972, its publisher. Dönhoff also represented Germany's victimization at the hands of the Soviets. Born to an aristocratic family in East Prussia, near Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg), she fled to the West in January 1945 shortly before the arrival of the Red Army. Dönhoff became a proponent of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and supported reconciliation with Eastern Europe. She too believed that the July 20<sup>th</sup> plot needed more publicity in Germany and abroad and wrote consistently about it in the post-war decades.<sup>79</sup> Dönhoff maintained that good journalism had more to do with morality than marketing.<sup>80</sup> Her popularity and influence testify to the importance of the press as an institution and symbol of democracy in the post-war years.

Kardorff's presentation of women's experiences in the war and its aftermath provide a telling example of how her book helped create, legitimize, and maintain the idea that women had been innocent victims of Nazism, while providing a small space for acknowledging Germany's crimes.<sup>81</sup> In Kardorff's presentation, the war and its consequences belonged to men; Germany's resurgence would belong to its women. "Perhaps we women now face our hardest job . . . to give understanding, comfort, support and courage to so many utterly defeated men," she wrote in summer 1945, thereby equating Germany's defeat with men and the courage to move forward with women.<sup>82</sup>

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(London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), and *Was mir wichtig war; letzte Aufzeichnungen und Gespräche* (Berlin: Siedler, 2002).

<sup>79</sup> Maren Gottschalk, "Die Preußin, Marion von Dönhoff, 1909-2002," in *Der geschärfte Blick: Sieben Journalistinnen und ihre Lebensgeschichte* (Weinheim: Beltz, 2001), 212.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>81</sup> In the post-war years, German women focused on their wartime difficulties—the scarcities, the fear, the violence—and not on the ways in which they had benefited from and/or been complicit in Nazi atrocities. See Elizabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review* Vol. 101, No. 2 (1996): 354-396.

<sup>82</sup> Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, 230.

Kardorff wrote of the hardship women faced due to the war and the violence they experienced at the hands of Soviet soldiers. The Red Army perpetrated extreme brutality toward the German population, most notably through the mass rape of women. Soviet violence in Germany was motivated by a series of factors, above all a desire for revenge against German atrocities perpetrated in the Soviet Union and a hatred of Germans.<sup>83</sup>

Women's experiences came to symbolize the rape of Germany by the Soviet Union and German victimhood in general.<sup>84</sup> Kardorff's numerous references to the Soviets helped create and support this appropriation. Her 23 September 1945 diary entry reads:

All the women here aged more than thirty look old, sad and broken. 'Come here, woman.' The cry that rang through the city when the victors decided to rape, loot and shoot anyone they chose still rings in everybody's ears. Hitler and his war have broken down the dam, which protected us. The red flood, which threatens to swamp half of Germany, is his doing.<sup>85</sup>

Kardorff's text placed the blame for Germany's current situation on a small group of Nazis. Her words "red flood" depicted the Soviets as uncivilized and inferior to Germans, a common trope in Nazi propaganda. Although Kardorff did not directly address the Wehrmacht's destructive and brutal behaviour in the Soviet Union, which left a large gap in her acknowledgment of wartime victimization, some passages in her book alluded to German wartime atrocities in East and West Europe:

I sometimes feel like a candle burning at both ends. At the front my brothers and my friends are fighting for a victory the very prospect of which fills me with horror. To think of Hitler as the master of Europe!... We seem to be asking for retribution. 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own

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<sup>83</sup> Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 113-114. See also Herf, *Divided Memory*; Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, Allies*; idem, "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers," *October* Vol. 72, Berlin 1945: War and Rape. 'Liberators take Liberties', (Spring 1995): 42-63.

<sup>84</sup> See Heineman, "The Hour of the Woman."

<sup>85</sup> Kardorff, *Diary of a Nightmare*, 246.

soul?' ...But I suppose it must be some kind of perversion to hope that one's own country will be defeated.<sup>86</sup>

Kardorff's reference to German crimes during the war meant that her text acknowledged the past in a way that left a space, however small, for truth. Her text allowed Soviet sexual violence against German women to be acknowledged and helped acknowledge Germany's crimes.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, in the academic realm and via media such as film, there was much discussion of the violence and suffering Germans experienced during and after the war.<sup>87</sup> The first of Theodor Schieder's five volumes on German expellees was published in 1956. Commissioned by the West German government and produced by a group of reputable historians, the volume, *Documents on the Expulsion of the German Population from the Territories East of the Oder-Neisse-line* focused on the violence inherent in the expulsion of millions of Germans from Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. It paid scant attention to the brutal German occupation of these countries

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 26. Kardorff recorded this entry on 12 January 1943 when reflecting on a newspaper article published in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* titled "The German Soldier Keeps Watch." But Kardorff also downplayed violence in the East. One of her few diary entries concerning the Eastern Front expressed sympathy for Germany's "boys." Another entry claimed that her brothers – both served, at some point, as officers on the Eastern Front – would never be guilty of looting or rape. Ibid. 214. In this respect, Kardorff's presentation of the German military contributed to popular and academic discourse on the "clean Wehrmacht"--a narrative that continued into the 1990s. For more on the German army in the Soviet Union see Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Antony Beevor, *Stalingrad* (New York: Viking, 1998); Ronald Smelser, Edward J. Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: the Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Waitman Wade Beorn, *Marching into Darkness: the Wehrmacht and the Holocaust in Belarus* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); and Ben Shephard, "The Clean Wehrmacht, the War of Extermination, and Beyond," *Historical Journal* (May 2009) 455-73.

<sup>87</sup> Robert Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 125. The key symbols of German suffering—POWs and expellees--became central themes in numerous West German movies during the 1950s and early 1960s.

and to the Holocaust.<sup>88</sup> *Documents* examined the actions of the Red Army in depth but with little reference to why Soviet forces were in Germany to begin with.

Schieder's work referred to the Poles and Soviets as "frenzied," "sadistic," and "driven by national hatred," whereas the language applied to Nazi crimes was more benign and conceptual. Nazi policies in the east were referred to as "population transfers" and the Poles were "removed" from their farms in order to make way for ethnic Germans whom the Nazis wished to resettle.<sup>89</sup> The volumes, published between 1956 and 1963 amounted to a "scholarly seal of approval" for Germany's victimization narrative.<sup>90</sup> Schieder was a former member of the NSDAP. During the Third Reich his scholarship supported the idea of a German *Lebensraum* and the inferiority of the Slavic populations. His work was incorporated into the *General Plan Ost*.<sup>91</sup> Kardorff offered a more balanced and nuanced version of Germany's past than Schieder. *Berliner Aufzeichnungen* was republished in 1976 and again in 1992.

In the midst of generational and political shifts in the mid to late 1960s, Germany began to explore its National Socialist past more comprehensively than in earlier decades.

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<sup>88</sup> Theodor Schieder, *The Expulsion of the German Population from the Territories East of the Oder-Neisse-line* (Bonn: Federal Ministry for Expellees, Refugees and War Victims, 1956). Schieder was a Professor at the University of Cologne. His research assistants included Martin Broszat and Hans-Ulrich Wehler. The volumes compare and equate German crimes with crimes against the Germans. In Volume I of *Documents on the Expulsions*, Schieder compared the actions of the Soviets and Poles during the expulsions with the policy of the Nazis during the war. When looking at reprisals and the innocence of the ethnic Germans he wrote, "Just as in the case of the Nazi tyrants, so also in the case of the Polish authorities and the Polish militia, the notion of collective guilt was the intellectual peak of their narrow-minded chauvinism." (86) He went on to compare the Polish security services to the SS. *Documents* did not compare the expulsions to the Holocaust. There was no in-depth discussion of the murder of the European Jews. *Documents* advanced the argument that German crimes were committed by only a handful of zealous Nazis and disregarded any notion of accommodation or complicity of the German population as a whole.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 85, 100.

<sup>90</sup> Moeller, *War Stories*, 84.

<sup>91</sup> See Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, eds., *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1919-1945* (New York: Berghahn, 2005); Wolfgang Bialas and Anson Rabinbach, eds., *Nazi Germany and the Humanities* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007); and Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation. Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

International and national events in the early 1960s, along with the study of the Jewish genocide that was taking place outside of Germany, aided this process.<sup>92</sup> In 1961, albeit with considerable difficulty, Raul Hilberg published *The Destruction of the European Jews*. In the introduction, Hilberg summed up the state of current academic discourse on World War II noting, “The destruction of the European Jews has not yet been absorbed as a historical event.”<sup>93</sup> The Eichmann trial began in Jerusalem in 1961 and drew international focus to the Holocaust. In addition, the Auschwitz trials that took place in Frankfurt in 1964 and 1965 marked a significant change in the German perspective on the war.<sup>94</sup> Whereas the German population largely viewed the Nuremberg trials as a victor’s justice, there was no such concern over the Frankfurt process since the defendants were judged by the German justice system.<sup>95</sup>

### **Continuity Amidst Change**

In the late 1960s, a wave of student protests, some violent, swept through West Germany. Students rebelled against what they viewed as an authoritarian government and university system. They demanded, among other things, social change, an end to the Vietnam War, and exploration of their parents’ and grandparents’ actions and responsibility during the Third Reich.<sup>96</sup> The political climate shifted left and the Social Democrats took power. Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* was an important measure in Germany’s

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<sup>92</sup> Kluger, “Personal Reflections,” 275.

<sup>93</sup> As quoted in Christopher R. Browning, “Spanning a Career: Three Editions of Raul Hilberg’s *Destruction of the European Jews*,” in Bergen, ed., *Lessons and Legacies Volume VIII*, 191.

<sup>94</sup> For more on the Auschwitz trial see Rebecca Wittmann, *Beyond Justice: the Auschwitz Trial* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); and Devin O. Pendas, *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965: Genocide, History, and the Limits of the Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>95</sup> Kluger, “Personal Reflections,” 275.

<sup>96</sup> This generation was known as the 68ers. For more on the student movement and 1968 generation see Peter Dohms, Johann Paul, *Die Studentenbewegung von 1968 in Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Siegburg: Rheinlandia, 2008), and Tony Judt, *Post-war*.

move toward reconciliation with the East and acknowledgment of the genocidal war on the Eastern front. In 1970 the statute of limitations for crimes committed during the war was removed. Change was also taking place in the academic realm. Whereas in the 1950s German historians presented Nazism as an aberration that appeared out of nowhere and ended with *Stunde Null* (the Zero Hour), by the late 1960s academics (inside and outside of Germany) were exploring the roots of Nazism and the genocide of the Jews.<sup>97</sup> It was during this period of investigation and confrontation with the past that Margret Boveri published three books that addressed her Third Reich experience: *Wir Lügen Alle: Eine Hauptstadtzeitung unter Hitler* (*Everyone Lies: A Major Daily Newspaper under Hitler*, 1965), *Tage des Überlebens: Berlin 1945*, (*Survival in 1945 Berlin*, 1968), and *Verzweigungen* (*Crossroads*, 1977.)<sup>98</sup>

Boveri was one of the most respected journalists in Germany during the Third Reich and post-war years. Immediately after the war she began to publish her views on the occupation of Germany. She claimed her 1946 *America Primer for Grown-Up Germans* was intended to foster understanding between the two countries. In reality, it advanced anti-American stereotypes, implied Germany's victimhood, and compared aspects of U.S. policy with Nazi practice.<sup>99</sup> During the Third Reich Boveri had also

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<sup>97</sup> The Sonderweg was an important step in this process. Although easily criticized it did bring the exploration of the growth of Nazism to the forefront. Hans Ulrich Wehler and the "Bielefeld School" were proponents of Germany's "special path" to Nazism. In addition, in the mid to late 1970s, historians, including Jill Stephenson and Tim Mason, began to investigate the role of women in the Third Reich, showcasing the diversity of experiences and disputing the notion that women were primarily victims of the regime.

<sup>98</sup> In 1976, the second edition of Kardorff's *Berliner Aufzeichnungen* was published.

<sup>99</sup> See Michaela Hoenicke Moore, "Heimat und Fremde. Das Verhältnis zu Amerika im journalistischen Werk von Margret Boveri und Dolf Sternberger," in *Demokratiewunder. Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945-1970*, eds., Arnd Bauerkämper, Konrad H. Jarausch and Marcus M. Payk (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005). Hoenicke Moore focused on Boveri's widely distributed and praised *America Primer for Grown Up Germans*. In its essence Boveri's piece was anti-American. It charged the U.S. with hypocrisy, compared elements of U.S. policy to the Nazis, including the "Euthanasia" program in Germany (230) and argued that Germany was superior in terms of art and culture.

criticized the U.S. in her published writing. A prolific writer, Boveri continued to practice journalism after the war, although she was positioned largely on the margins of the field due to her opposition to the establishment of the Federal Republic.

*Wir Lügen Alle* depicted the history of the *Berliner Zeitung* and its 1939 demise. The book was Boveri's response to various post-war criticisms levelled at journalists (although not specifically at her) who had enjoyed successful careers in Nazi Germany and continued to hold esteemed positions in the post-war years.<sup>100</sup> *Tage des Überlebens* centred on the last days of the war in Berlin.<sup>101</sup> Boveri was concerned about the impact her work could have as a tool of the Cold War since it detailed the Red Army's often violent occupation of Berlin. In a 1966 letter to a friend, Boveri wrote of her concern that publishing such a book in the current political atmosphere could be "a type of exhibitionism" and feared that her words would be used by "cold warriors" against the Soviets.<sup>102</sup> In contrast to Kardorff, who utilized the political climate to her own advantage, Boveri was concerned about fanning the flames of the Cold War. Her worry highlights an important fact: a journalist's voice, even in works focused on personal experience and observation, could affect public opinion within Germany and abroad. Both *Wir Lügen Alle* and *Tages des Überlebens* were widely reviewed and, for the most part, positively received within West Germany.

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Her discourse presented Germany as a victim. Still, Hoenicke Moore demonstrates the ways in which Boveri's voice was also a force for democratic change in post-war Germany as she processed Germany's defeat and occupation. In the 1950s Boveri's journalism discussed her disapproval of Adenauer's politics of western integration and what she viewed as the unjust division of Germany (235). However, as Hoenicke Moore shows, Boveri's influence with regard to her journalism and political views slowly decreased in West Germany in the decades after the war.

<sup>100</sup> Heike B. Görtemaker, *Ein deutsches Leben: Die Geschichte der Margret Boveri, 1900-1975* (Munich: Beck, 2005), 285. In *Wir Lügen Alle*, Boveri was responding to, among others, Kurt Ziesel's 1958 book *Das verlorene Gewissen. Hinter den Kulissen der Presse, der Literatur und ihrer Machtträger von Heute*. Ziesel had been a National Socialist. In the post-war years he was critical of journalists who had achieved prominence in the Third Reich and continued to hold important positions after 1945. 286.

<sup>101</sup> The book was reissued in 2004.

<sup>102</sup> Görtemaker, *Ein deutsches Leben*, 293.

I focus primarily on Boveri's 1977 memoir, *Verzweigungen*. She co-wrote the book with her interviewer and editor, Uwe Johnson, a respected novelist and editor from East Germany.<sup>103</sup> The fact that Johnson's name was associated with Boveri's memoir added to the perceived credibility of her work for audiences. Indeed, Johnson pushed Boveri to address difficult questions concerning her role in Nazi Germany and confronted her with what he viewed as excuses or alibis in her presentation of her past. For instance, he pressed Boveri on her refusal to emigrate, challenged her belief in inner emigration, and disputed her notion that, as Friedrich and Kardorff had also asserted, one could be more help to Germany if one remained.<sup>104</sup> Prompted by Johnson, Boveri conceded that she had established and enjoyed a prominent career under the Nazis. Boveri's public processing of her own agency under Nazism could benefit the country as a whole. Her text allowed Germans to continue to emphasize their suffering but also to think about the responsibility they bore for supporting and/or benefiting from National Socialism. Given that fact that Boveri had been a harsh critic of the American occupation of West Germany and had presented the Federal Republic as a victim of U.S. political manipulations, her ability to focus on something other than Germany's victimization would have resonated with those familiar with her journalism. Still, the trope of personal and national victimization dominated her text.

From 1934 onward Boveri had worked as a foreign correspondent for the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and *Das Reich* covering a wide range of political

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<sup>103</sup> *Verzweigungen* was published in 1977, two years after Boveri's death.

<sup>104</sup> Margret Boveri, *Verzweigungen: eine Autobiographie*, edited by Uwe Johnson (Munich: R. Piper, 1977), 214-215. Boveri, whose mother was American, maintained that she had had long conversations with a Swiss friend about the question of emigration. Her friend advised that she would be more effective if she remained. Pressed by Uwe Johnson, Boveri did reflect on the question of emigration and stated that it was possible that she had fooled herself into thinking this way because she simply did not want to leave Germany. Still, her main point was that she loved Germany and she had the feeling that one did not leave one's country when things were going badly.



issues and international events, including the Spanish Civil War, Italy's 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, and the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941. Although she could not make the claim that her work during the Third Reich was in the seemingly apolitical world of women's stories, she did use gender to distance herself from Nazism. She focused much attention on Nazi gender rhetoric and the subsequent discrimination and roadblocks she faced as a female journalist. In addition, she presented herself as out of favour with the regime due to the fact that she wrote for what she classified as "Jewish, liberal" newspapers. In Boveri's representation, her gender and the nature of her work made her an outsider in the eyes of the Nazis.<sup>105</sup>

Boveri used her wartime relationships with Jews to demonstrate her anti-Nazi stance and personal victimization during the Third Reich and then transferred this presentation to the population as whole. Throughout 1940 and 1941 Boveri had worked as a foreign correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in the United States. After the U.S. entered the war in December 1941, she was interned along with other Germans until her return to Europe could be arranged. According to Boveri, "As a pitiful refugee I would have been welcome [in the United States]. As a representative of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* I was [considered] a 'foreign agent.' No one thought about the fact that I could not be a genuine Nazi because I was friendly with Jewish colleagues who had emigrated."<sup>106</sup> She had also written that everyone she knew had considered *Kristallnacht* a disgrace for

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 268. Boveri described a 1936 press trip to Greece noting that she and two other journalists were treated poorly by most of the group because they worked for the "Jewish-liberal" papers. However, Boveri felt that because of her gender, she was treated as the lowest of the low.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 327.

Germany, thus positioning herself as an authority on the population's reaction to Jewish suffering.<sup>107</sup>

Boveri presented herself as an opponent of Nazism. She stressed that the papers for which she wrote provided quality news to the degree possible under the controlled press and generally employed journalists and editors opposed to the Nazis. In doing so, she created a narrative that distanced the profession from a sense of accommodation with the regime. Like Friedrich and Kardorff, she employed the persecution of Germany's Jews to achieve this objective. Boveri classified the *Berliner Tageblatt* and *Frankfurter Zeitung* as pro-Jewish. The *Berliner Tageblatt*, according to Boveri, was "the newspaper of the Jews" and therefore despised by the Nazis.<sup>108</sup> She detailed the cases in which the paper's editor and staff protected Jewish journalists and allowed them (often under pseudonyms) to keep writing after the January 1934 Editors Law prohibited Jews from working in the press.<sup>109</sup> Such cases were rare in Nazi Germany. A handful of Jewish journalists did continue working but only for a year or two after the Editors Law. After that, some Jews continued to write, but they did so covertly and were not listed in the professional registrar.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 326.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 298. "Their business flyers, obituaries and new addresses for those who had emigrated appeared in our paper. We sat in the middle [between the regime and Germany's Jews] so to speak." Boveri viewed the *Frankfurter Zeitung* as the highest quality publication in Germany. She used the name of the prominent Jewish family, Rothschild, to demonstrate the paper's distance from the regime: "You must remember, after all, that of course Rothschild also read the *Frankfurter Zeitung*," she claimed. As Boveri knew, the name Rothschild would have reverberated with a post-war audience and served to strengthen her depiction of the paper's pro-Jewish leanings. 331.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 241. Boveri did not indicate how long the Jewish journalists had been able to continue working. However, Scheffer left the *Berliner Tageblatt* at the end of 1936.

<sup>110</sup> For instance, in January 1939 the German Press Association warned its regional offices to keep an eye open for a Max Speter who had recently published articles in a handful of specialist newspapers. Speter was Jewish and was not entered in the professional registrar. Memo from Dr. Hennigsen, RDP, 4 January 1939, BAB, R103/87.

Boveri maintained that compared to the rest of the coordinated press, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and *Berliner Tageblatt* provided much needed quality reporting. There was truth to her account. Karl Vetter, the publishing chief at the *Tageblatt*, had attempted to retain some of the paper's most respected reporters, including Jews and those on the political left. But Vetter also strove to conform so that the paper would not be shut down. As a result, the *Berliner Tageblatt* had included respectable pieces by well-known voices but also articles Jewish readers would have found repugnant. Boveri herself had written an article titled "*Rassenschande. Zwei Urteile in Hamburg*" ("Two Race Defilement Trials in Hamburg.") The article appeared in winter 1936 in response to the trials of two Jewish men accused of "race defilement" due to their relationships with "Aryan" women. Press coverage lent publicity to the *Rassenschande* trials and served to intrigue and even titillate German readers. It also served to advance and promote "racial" classifications and thereby, helped increase the social isolation of Jews.<sup>111</sup> When asked by Johnson what she would have done if someone outside of Germany had confronted her with the article, Boveri responded: "I would have possibly found it tactless but I also would have found it justified. I probably would have blushed."<sup>112</sup> Boveri's utilization of the persecution of German Jews to emphasize her abhorrence of National Socialism was in marked contrast to her *Rassenschande* article.

Notwithstanding the publication of such articles, Boveri maintained that Germans recognized the pro-Jewish nature of the paper: "Jewish readers would have indeed been angry...about the Hamburg piece and many others like it but they knew the conditions

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<sup>111</sup> See Patricia Szobar, "Telling Sexual Stories in the Nazi Courts of Law: Race Defilement in Germany, 1933 to 1945," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* Vol. 11, No. 1- 2 (2002), 143-144. Szobar noted that some Nazi officials attempted to suppress the reporting because the public commotion was having a "dangerously exciting" effect on schoolboys who eagerly followed the trials in the newspapers.

<sup>112</sup> Boveri, *Verzweigungen*, 292.

that forced this [type of article] and they knew the paper's worth due to its other parts. I think that many readers, both Jews and non-Jews, when they read the title or first few lines of such articles simply did not read further. That is always the case in totalitarian regimes." Boveri invoked the GDR as a contemporary example thereby equating it with the Third Reich--a comparison that would have met with acceptance in the west during the Cold War.<sup>113</sup> By Boveri's account, the paper produced antisemitic pieces as a cover for its opposition to the regime. In the post-war period, many Germans claimed that their antisemitism during the Third Reich was in effect a ruse to mask their anti-Nazi sentiments. A similar argument from Boveri, a respected public figure, validated such claims.

Boveri was not alone in her assertion that the *Berliner Tageblatt* was a popular paper among Jewish Germans. Her former colleague, Jürgen Peterson, offered a similar argument when he published his reflections on Third Reich journalism. But Peterson's piece (a 17-page article in the *Frankfurter Hefte*, a monthly political journal) appeared in 1981, more than ten years after Boveri first published her version of the paper's history.<sup>114</sup> By 1981, she had already produced two books on the subject, both of which garnered numerous reviews and generated much discussion in the German media.

Like Friedrich and Kardorff, Boveri also contributed to the rehabilitation of Nazi journalists. In response to a reader's letter to her article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, she wrote that she had known no convinced Nazis in Germany and that within

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 298. "Thousands of cancellations came in the day after the first lead article by Scheffer's successor," she noted, "as many people recognized for the first time the extent to which we were 'for the Jews.'"

<sup>114</sup> See Jürgen Peterson, "Journalist im Dritten Reich: I Lehrjahre im Darmstadt und Berlin," *Frankfurter Hefte* No. 3 (1981): 41-48. Boveri had first written about the *Berliner Tageblatt* in her 1965 *Wir Lügen Alle: Eine Hauptstadtzeitung unter Hitler*.

the press, those named as former Nazis after the war had been wrongly accused.<sup>115</sup> Boveri had written for *Das Reich* in the later years of the war.<sup>116</sup> In a 1955 article about the death of the paper's former editor, Rudolf Sparing, she declared that she had had reservations about joining the National Socialist paper. After a few weeks however, she overcame her inhibitions because she worked with esteemed journalists who said what they thought and "thought much differently than Hitler and his followers."<sup>117</sup> The similarity of Friedrich, Kardorff, and Boveri's narratives about their experiences with their coworkers during the Third Reich suggests that there was a degree of comfort and unrestricted speech within certain elements of the press. Yet as all three women continued their careers in the post-war years, they also shared a need to defend the role of the press or at least the papers and colleagues with whom they had been associated.

Boveri credited Sparing's broad shoulders for the open and intellectual atmosphere at *Das Reich*: "He was, as far as I could see, a Nazi, and also a fanatic in his German patriotism. But the injustices that happened during the war years were surely repugnant to him in his soul even if in his critiques he did not speak of injustice but rather of the 'wrong policy' or 'wrong measures.'"<sup>118</sup> In this same piece Boveri described the fate of other (male) journalists who had been punished by the Soviets for the crimes of the Nazi period.<sup>119</sup> The population could consider Boveri's words and apply them to

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<sup>115</sup> As quoted in Görtemaker, *Ein deutsches Leben*, 285.

<sup>116</sup> In 1940 Goebbels approved measures to found *Das Reich* in an effort to target more discerning readers and to showcase a so-called vibrant and open German press.

<sup>117</sup> Margret Boveri, "Rudolph Sparing," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 May 1955, 2.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. In her article Boveri listed the esteemed journalists who had worked for *Das Reich*. She declared that although Sparing had been a National Socialist, he had protected the staff from accusations from above—likely meaning Goebbels—and even a few times from a writing ban. Other journalists, including Helene Rahms and Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann, also maintained in their memoirs that there was an anti-Nazi atmosphere at *Das Reich*.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. According to Boveri, the Russians did not believe that one former colleague, a journalist by the name of Wirth, had never been a party member; he was killed in 1945. The Russians sentenced another

themselves, other ordinary Germans, or former members of the Wehrmacht made to suffer on behalf of the Nazis. In addition, by describing the editor of *Das Reich* as upstanding despite his politics, Boveri strengthened her notion that by working for the paper she had not served the regime, but rather the German population by providing real news. Boveri's depiction of the press under National Socialism benefited journalists and Germans alike. The rebuilding of a free press in the post-war years was an important achievement and a foundational symbol of democracy. The idea that it was made up of those who had resisted the Nazi regime by attempting to provide real news could function as a source of pride for the German nation.

### **Keeping up Appearances**

In 1997 Helene Rahms published her memoir, *Zwischen den Zeilen: Mein Leben als Journalistin im Dritten Reich* (*Between the Lines: My Life as a Journalist in the Third Reich*.) Most of her text covered the same well-trodden territory that Friedrich, Kardorff, and Boveri had covered decades before: a lack of agency due to gender, the decency of the press, and the population's distaste for the regime. Rahms believed that her generation was still held accountable for the "mistakes, errors, and crimes of the Nazi era." She lamented that, despite the heroic resistance and the contribution of individuals who paid with their lives, in the eyes of later generations, her own remained collectively guilty.<sup>120</sup> Rahms' narrative emphasized her own, her colleagues' and the German

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journalist, whom Boveri declared was "always an outspoken enemy of National Socialism," to Bautzen prison after five years in a camp. Sparing died after 10 years in a Soviet camp. Boveri wrote: "These are a few of the individuals, who, with great suffering, had to atone or still atone for the guilt of the nation...However [one] judges his [Sparing's] political stance—his conduct demands respect."

<sup>120</sup> Helene Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen: Mein Leben als Journalistin im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Scherz, 1997), Forward. According to Rahms, her generation had had to negotiate between fear for their own economic survival, social obstacles, opportunities and danger in a political system for which German

population's vulnerability and bravery amidst the danger in which they had lived. By the time she published her book, Germany was reunified, the nature of Germany's Nazi past had largely been accepted and the victimization trope disputed. At least one review of her work pointed out the predictability of Rahms' story.<sup>121</sup> But the prestigious *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, where Rahms had worked for over 25 years, approvingly promoted her book, indicating that an undercurrent of desire for and acceptance of the portrait of Germany offered by such women as Friedrich, Kardorff, Boveri and Rahms remained.<sup>122</sup>

The 1980s marked steps forward and backward in Germany's attempts to investigate and situate its past. Coinciding with a conservative turn in politics under Chancellor Helmut Kohl, controversies played out in politics, the media, and academic circles that showcased tensions between the enduring discourse of German victimhood and the exploration and acknowledgement of the scale of German wartime crimes and the Holocaust. These disputes ensured that Third Reich history remained on the German and international agenda. Two notable events occurred in 1985. In his 8 May 1985 speech to the German parliament, West German president Richard von Weizsäcker demonstrated forward movement in terms of Germany's acknowledgment of the singularity of the Holocaust and the importance of retaining its memory:

May 8, 1945 was a day of liberation. It liberated all of us from the inhumanity and tyranny of the National Socialist regime. Nobody will, because of that liberation, forget the grave suffering that only started for many people on May 8. But we must not regard the end of the war as the cause of flight, expulsion and

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history provided no comparable experience and under the influence of an ideology that succeeded in transforming the parents', schools' and churches' mediated moral values.

<sup>121</sup> Mechthild Küpper, "Ehrgeiz und Neugier: Helene Rahms erinnert sich an den Journalismus im Dritten Reich. Die Versuchung des schönen Schreibens," 26 April 1997, *Berliner Zeitung*, <http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/ehrgeiz-und-neugier--helene-rahms-erinnert-sich-an-den-journalismus-im-dritten-reich-die-versuchung-des-schoenen-schreibens,10810590,9268274.html> (accessed 3 September 2013).

<sup>122</sup> Review, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 April 1997, No. 79, page B5 and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 September 1998, No. 223, page 41.

deprivation of freedom. The cause goes back to the start of the tyranny that brought about war. We must not separate May 8, 1945, from January 30, 1933... Who could remain unsuspecting after the burning of the synagogues, the plundering, the stigmatization with the Star of David, the deprivation of rights, the ceaseless violation of human dignity? Whoever opened his eyes and ears and sought information could not fail to notice that Jews were being deported... There were many ways of not burdening one's conscience, of shunning responsibility, looking away, keeping mum. When the unspeakable truth of the Holocaust then became known at the end of the war, all too many of us claimed that they had not known anything about it or even suspected anything.<sup>123</sup>

Weizsäcker also noted that 8 May was a day of remembrance but that remembrance meant recalling events honestly, without distortion. "This," he wrote, "places high demands on our truthfulness... Everyone who directly experienced that era should today quietly ask himself about his involvement then."<sup>124</sup>

Later that year, to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of V-E Day, U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Chancellor Kohl visited the Bitburg cemetery, which contained the graves of SS men. The event was meant to function as an indication of the strength of German-American ties and the two countries' successful post-war reconciliation. But the visit blurred the distinction between German victimhood and the victims of the Germans. Reagan's comments that the young men buried in Bitburg were victims of one man, Hitler, just as sure as those who died in concentration camps were victims, underscored and further legitimized the universalization of Jewish and German victimhood during the war.<sup>125</sup> Reagan's words also demonstrated this this narrative remained one strand of American opinion with regard to Germany's World War II experience.

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<sup>123</sup> As quoted in Geoffrey H. Hartman, ed., *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 263-265.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> See Hartman, *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, and Theo Hallet, *Umstrittene Versöhnung: Reagan und Kohl in Bitburg 1985* (Erfurt: Sutton, 2005).



The *Historikerstreit* that began in the summer of 1986 added to the discussion and controversy. It focused on the place of Nazism in German history, the singularity of the Holocaust, and the question of German national identity. Historian Andreas Hillgruber published *Zweierlei Untergang* in which he argued that the loss of East Germany to the Soviet Union and the Holocaust were the two tragedies of World War II. But Hillgruber's text focused more attention on Germany's loss in the East.<sup>126</sup> In June, the controversy became public when Ernst Nolte published an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Nolte argued that the Holocaust was a "reaction, born from fear, to the annihilation processes of the Russian Revolution."<sup>127</sup> By Nolte's account, German crimes were not unique but rather just one example of atrocities in a long list of twentieth-century violence. He believed that Germany's past (and national identity) should be de-stigmatized and Nazism should be integrated into the longer narrative of German history. Jürgen Habermas labeled Nolte's argument an attempt to cancel out the damages of the Holocaust.

Despite arguments that positioned German suffering alongside the Holocaust, the *Historikerstreit* brought even more attention to discussion of Germany's past. In the 1980s and 1990s, an increased focus on social history, the history of everyday life, and women's history brought significant strides in academic exploration of the unfolding of the Holocaust and the involvement of various segments of German society. Looking at history from below demonstrated the collective support for Nazism and the actions of

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<sup>126</sup> See Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). See Andreas Hillgruber, *Zweierlei Untergang: die Zerschlagung des Deutschen Reiches und das Ende des europäischen Judentums* (Berlin: Siedler, 1986). Maier maintains that Hillgruber described German soldiers' experiences in the East in technicolour and the extermination of the Jews in gray. In addition, Hillgruber called for historical empathy for the German army noting that they fought historically to save the country from Soviet vengeance and communism. The Cold War and the GDR framed Hillgruber's argument as the German army fought to prevent the loss of East Germany to the Soviets.

<sup>127</sup> As quoted in Konrad H. Jarausch, "Removing the Nazi Stain? The Quarrel of the German Historians," *German Studies Review* Vol. 11, No. 2 (May, 1988): 285-301.

large segments of the population toward the maintenance of the Nazi regime.<sup>128</sup>

However, difficulties in accepting the past still remained. Despite much academic work on the war on the Eastern front, there was a public outcry when the exhibit on the crimes of the Wehrmacht toured Germany; the myth of the “clean Wehrmacht” was still alive in the 1990s.<sup>129</sup>

Given that it was published in 1997, Rahms’ memoir provides a strong example of the endurance of Germany’s victimization narrative. She claimed her book was directed toward Germany’s youth: to demonstrate how ambition and curiosity, qualities Rahms attributed to journalists, could lead to entanglement with the regime’s interests. Some sections of Rahms’ work do suggest that she strove to address the ways in which she was engaged with Nazism. She described how two former colleagues had left the profession due to their distaste with the Nazi-controlled press: one ended up on a chicken farm and the other became a nurse. Rahms made clear that leaving journalism was not something she had ever considered. Rather, she emphasized her ambition: “I didn’t want to feed chickens [or] care for the sick. I was ambitious, I wanted to write.”<sup>130</sup> But, above all, her memoir functioned as a vehicle to rehabilitate her Third Reich career.

Rahms began her journalistic career in 1937 in the local news section of the *Saale Zeitung*, a small provincial paper. Later in the war she worked on the elite paper, *Das Reich*, writing for the *Feuilleton* and *Innenpolitik* (domestic policy) sections about

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<sup>128</sup> Studies seeking to understand everyday life under Nazism were originally charged with trying to whitewash the Nazi past. The 1984 German TV mini-series *Heimat: Eine deutsche Chronik* by Edgar Reitz was popular both in Germany and abroad. However, some historians and reviews charged that it presented a version of Germany’s past that included few Nazis, presented the Germans as victims, and excluded the Holocaust. See Timothy Garton Ash, “The Life of Death,” *The New York Review of Books* (19 December 1985).

<sup>129</sup> The 1995 exhibition was titled, *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944* (“War of Annihilation. Crimes of the Wehrmacht 1941 to 1944.”)

<sup>130</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 64.

culture, local news and “women’s issues.” She recounted the difficulty she had had entering the profession due to her gender. By her account, her articles were harmless and “avoided all political motives”; they were simply “pretty filler.”<sup>131</sup> Like Kardorff, Rahms too implied that her work in features was of little importance; thus, she was not responsible for the production of Nazified news.

Along with her gender and the apolitical, feminine nature of her work, Rahms emphasized her youth and naivety. She wrote about a trip to Prague with her editor that took place sometime between Germany’s March 1939 occupation of Czechoslovakia (and division of the country into the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the German client state of Slovakia) and the war. Rahms presented herself as a student of her editor’s superior experience and knowledge with regard to such political events as Germany’s occupation of Czechoslovakia: “She [meaning herself] asked a lot, he answered patiently and profusely. How the Czechs had harassed the Germans since 1919 under Masaryk and Beneš; but they were tidier and more hard working than the Czechs....The Czechs are smart but lazy. Simply Slavs.’ She believed him. She probably had a lot to learn about patriotic feelings.”<sup>132</sup>

The nature of Rahms’ writing and the structure of her memoir are compelling. She claimed that she had written her book “reconstructed from the fragments of memory,” yet included specific conversations and, what she presented as, direct quotes from colleagues, friends and acquaintances. She did not include dates, but collapsed chronology and gave critical moments, such as *Kristallnacht* or the invasion of the Soviet Union, a haziness

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 12, 122. In 1999 Rahms also published *Die Clique: Journalistenleben in der Nachkriegszeit*, which addressed her post-war experiences. Rahms’ title, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, invoked the notion that one could bypass Nazi censors and even critic the regime by “writing between the lines.”

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 51.

that served to soften such events. Rahms wrote about herself in the third person, describing herself as “the volunteer” or the “young reporter,” which further distanced her from the notion that she bore agency for serving the regime.<sup>133</sup> *Zwischen den Zeilen* painted a rosy picture of the upstanding journalistic profession despite Nazi control. Rahms too used the persecution of the Jews to demonstrate her colleagues’ true feelings about National Socialism. Although outwardly accommodating to the regime, according to Rahms, the *Saale Zeitung* did not blacken the name of anyone, did not betray anyone, and did not include diatribes against the Jews.<sup>134</sup> Rahms’ work contains an interesting tension between her depiction of Nazi control over the press and the little-wiggle room available for journalists and the suggestion that papers could ably avoid printing antisemitic pieces.

Like Friedrich and Boveri, Rahms used *Kristallnacht* to demonstrate the extent of her colleagues’ loathing for the regime and the care the paper had taken not to publish articles that were disrespectful to German Jews. She claimed that the morning after the pogrom the paper’s editor, Bernd Olaf, announced: “It is now clear to us that this state in which we live is not a *Rechtsstaat* (a state founded on the rule of law).” He told staff that they should act according to their consciences. Although Rahms wrote her memoir almost sixty years after the events, she positioned Olaf’s words as a direct quote and maintained that the staff simply returned to work, trusting that there was no “Judas” among them. “Our paper reported the fire [at the synagogue] briefly in an objective tone,” Rahms wrote. “It respectfully called the synagogue “the Jewish house of worship.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 28/29.

Rahms repeatedly used the term “clique” to describe how she and other journalists viewed themselves during and after the Third Reich, positioning journalists as an elite group able to dissociate themselves from Nazism:

I fell in with groups, clubs and cliques that existed as islands in the “national community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*), cut off from outside [influences] but in agreement within... We never spoke about politics, the name Hitler did not come up, rather [one spoke] about one’s own work... We were polite to outsiders, formal and well-behaved. One moved as if masked.<sup>136</sup>

In this way she emphasized that she was included as an insider in the press but noted that she faced gender restrictions and worked in areas that were insignificant, thereby also portraying herself as an outsider. Rahms presented those she classified as intellectuals as separate from the regime and the war it waged. By her account,

The intellectuals and the military despised each other. That’s always been the way. Now that the military personal enjoy all sorts of privileges [compared to] the civilian population, the aversion has increased to enmity. Above all, the journalists... bespectacled, with wrinkled pants and worn out shoes, felt themselves to be the opposite of those wearing uniforms who still wore their highly polished boots in the midst of the bombed out cities.”<sup>137</sup>

The idea of all journalists as bespectacled invoked a visual comparison with Jews who were often depicted in photographs and texts as wearing glasses. In this manner her words emphasized that journalists were victims of the regime.

Certainly, like any segment of German society, there had been journalists working in the Third Reich who were not enthralled with Nazism and even those who opposed the regime. But Rahms also positioned colleagues who were party-members as dissociated from Nazism. Ilse Urbach, who joined the party on 1 May 1933, worked in *Feuilleton* for

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 108/9.

the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Das Reich*.<sup>138</sup> According to Rahms, even though Urbach had an early party number she had rarely worn her badge and had never said a word about the party. Rahms described how Urbach loathed certain Nazis. Toward the end of the war a Gauleiter by the name of Franke visited *Das Reich* where Rahms and Urbach worked. By Rahms' account, Urbach whispered to another colleague that that she could "never drink a beer with such a pig." Later at the pub, Urbach told an amusing childhood story in which she referred to a Jewish child who had been picked on. Rahms maintained that the telling of story was unusual for Urbach and described her laughter as nervous. Why, Rahms wondered, would Urbach tell such a story to a group who never spoke about the Jews and to whom antisemitic remarks were taboo? She concluded that Urbach was the Jewish child.<sup>139</sup> Although Urbach was not Jewish, the situation of Jews in Germany proved useful for Rahms' depiction of fellow journalists as victimized by the regime.<sup>140</sup>

Rahms also utilized Nazi crimes against the Jews to address what she viewed as her post-war victimization at the hand of the occupying powers. For instance, she was briefly imprisoned by the English military occupation shortly after the war ended. Although vague about the reason behind her incarceration, she claimed that she had known some individuals in whom the English were interested. The man who first questioned her was, Rahms' guessed, Jewish, which led to a "confusing" set of feelings

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<sup>138</sup> Ilse Urbach File, BAB, RK I0584. Urbach wrote reportages, articles for the women's pages and film critiques. She had worked with Boveri, Kardorff, Neumann, and Rahms.

<sup>139</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 166. She noted that Urbach left the paper a few weeks later to go to the countryside, where nobody would ask whether she was Jewish or part Jewish.

<sup>140</sup> In the post-war years Rahms worked with Urbach on the paper *die Welt* in Hamburg. Urbach also assisted Boveri with material and research for her book on journalism in the Third Reich.

for Rahms: “Anti-Jewish feelings. They had remained alien to me before and during the worst years,” she wrote.

But now? The young man who had interrogated me, with the curved nose, wide, slightly downward curved lip, the nasal voice, was he a Jew? Probably. How else would he speak German so fluently? ...For sure, the son of Jewish emigrants. Should I try to understand his need for revenge? What else could behind the obviously invented accusation? The few days prison, this awkward interrogation, my God, what was this when weighed against the suffering of the Jew, perhaps his own family?

Rahms concluded if she met him again she would spit at his feet.<sup>141</sup> Her text invoked the notion of the interrogations by the Soviet NKVD, depicted and accused in wartime and post-war tropes as comprised of Jews.<sup>142</sup>

Rahms’ memoir also presented German soldiers and officers as victims of the war and the Soviets. Rahms maintained:

The reality they [German soldiers and officers] experienced as POWs in Russia, the years that they were dragged further east from camp to camp, remained hazy...unimaginable. Some returnees were released due to serious illness. They returned with faces bloated and disfigured from hunger, explained in fragments what we, who remained out home, could not imagine.<sup>143</sup>

Extensive public and academic discussion on the Holocaust and German destruction in Soviet Union had taken place by the time Rahms’ published her memoir. But, like Kardorff, Rahms included no discussion of German violence on the Eastern Front. For Rahms, such a presentation of downtrodden and mistreated German POWS was personal since her husband, a high-ranking officer in the Wehrmacht, returned home after years in Soviet captivity. Indeed, Rahms noted that she wrote her memoir for later generations of Germans that included her children and grandchildren.

<sup>141</sup> Helene Rahms, *Die Clique: Journalistenleben in der Nachkriegszeit* (Bern: Scherz, 1999), 18.

<sup>142</sup> Leonid Rein, "Local Collaboration in the Execution of the 'Final Solution' in Nazi-Occupied Belorussia," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter 2006): 385.

<sup>143</sup> Rahms, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, 91.

### **Present Day: The Phenomenon of *A Woman in Berlin***

The popularity of the "diary," *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City*, exemplifies the ongoing influence that a single woman journalist could have on the preservation of a narrative about gendered victimization. The book was first published in the U.S. in 1954 and then in Germany in 1959.<sup>144</sup> It was not until it was republished in German in 2003 and English in 2005 that the book became a part of popular culture. Although it was released under the pseudonym "Anonymous," a journalist, author, and photographer by the name of Marta Hillers wrote the book supposedly based on her wartime diary. The well-travelled Hillers began her journalism career in 1934. Throughout the Third Reich she worked as a freelance journalist for a number of publications, including *Hilf mit!*—a propaganda vehicle for German students.<sup>145</sup> Unlike the other women, Hillers' book was not a vehicle for self-promotion; she wrote little about her journalism career. And the book's fame came after she had passed away.

*A Woman in Berlin* was subject to controversy when it was republished in Germany in 2003 over the degree to which Hillers had edited her diary before publication. However, esteemed poet and writer, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, and historian Antony Beevor vouched for its authenticity. The dominant theme in Hiller's book was the correlation between the suffering and strength of German women. Indeed

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<sup>144</sup> Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin: Diary 20 April 1945 to 22 June 1945* (London: Virago, 2005), forward xi. According to Enzensberger, the first edition of the book was not well received in Germany as it was said to besmirch the honour of German women with its frank portrayal of the ways in which German women attempted to survive the first weeks of defeat. In addition, German men did not want to be portrayed as impotent onlookers while women were raped and abused.

<sup>145</sup> See Marta Hillers file, BAB, RKB76. Hillers had studied for a time at the Sorbonne, was well travelled and spoke German, Russian and French. In September 1941 she began to work on *Hilf mit!* See also Atina Grossmann, "Gendered Defeat: Rape and Fraternization after the 'Zusammenbruch.'" Conference paper: "Theorizing German Suffering: Bombing, Rapes and Expulsions," University of Toronto, (2007).



Enzensberger's forward to *A Woman in Berlin* set up the context and primary thread of the book:

It is hardly remarkable that one of the best personal records of the war in Germany is a diary kept by a woman. After all, it was the women who preserved an oasis of sanity in a world run amok. While the men were fighting a murderous war, the women proved to be true heroines of survival. To the extent that a German resistance existed, women provided the logistics. And when their husbands and lovers returned, paralyzed by defeat, it was women who cleared the rubble.<sup>146</sup>

Hillers described the hunger, bombings, and mass rape that she and other women suffered at the hands of the Red Army in the final months of the war and first weeks of the occupation. As it fought its way westward, the Red Army raped women, including Jewish women and forced laborers, in Poland and Hungary. Yet to this day, the narrative of wartime rape focuses almost exclusively on the experience of German women, which suggests the importance of such widely publicized accounts as those offered by Hillers and Kardorff.<sup>147</sup> And, with few exceptions, such discourse only addresses the Soviet army's activity in this sphere.

Hillers positioned herself as both actor and witness in her text. She included passages that depicted her own strength and suffering as well as the resilience of other women. In an entry dated April 1945 she noted, "What's clear is that every threat to your life boosts your vitality. My own flame is stronger; I'm burning more fiercely than before the air raids. Each new day of life is a triumph. You've survived once again. You're

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<sup>146</sup> Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin*, xi. Antony Beevor wrote the introduction for the 2005 English edition. Beevor noted that any suspicions he had about the authenticity of the book were soon discarded: "The truth lay in the mass of closely observed detail. The anonymous diarist possessed an eye so consistent and authentic that even the most imaginative forger would never had been able to reproduce her version of events" (xvi).

<sup>147</sup> In *The Russians in Germany* Norman Naimark does provide a brief discussion on rape in Hungary and Poland.

defiant.”<sup>148</sup> Hillers associated men with Nazism and war and women as the embodiments of the “good” Germany. In an entry dated May 1945 she claimed, “Deep down we women are experiencing a kind of collective disappointment. The Nazi world — ruled by men, glorifying the strong man — is beginning to crumble.”<sup>149</sup>

There is an important tension in Hillers’ portrait of Nazi Germany. Although she suggested that all Nazis were men, she also created the impression that most German men were not Nazis. In this respect her narrative benefited the larger population. As Hillers reflected on the loss of the war, she blamed NSDAP members for Germany’s situation: “A bit of *Schadenfreude* cannot be denied,” she wrote. “The Nazis were too pompous and subjected the *Volk* to too many harassments, especially in the last few years, so it’s right that they should atone for the general defeat.”<sup>150</sup> She positioned the Nazis as a small group of “others” and downplayed the population’s earlier support of the regime.

But, Hillers also considered German suffering in the context of German crimes. By doing so, her narrative was still acceptable in Germany and overseas sixty years after the end of the war and after decades of exploration of Germany’s National Socialist past. In one entry, she reflected on the fact that the Germans had brought suffering on themselves.<sup>151</sup> She also cited the hypocrisy prevalent amongst the Germans and recorded the population’s attempts to dissociate themselves from the Nazis in the aftermath of the war. “You hear the same talk...at the [water] pump,” she observed, “everyone is now turning their back on Adolf, no one was ever a supporter. Everyone was persecuted, and

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<sup>148</sup> Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin*, 15

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

no one denounced anyone else.”<sup>152</sup> Hillers grappled with her own agency: “What about me? Was I for or against? What is clear is that I was there, I breathed what was in the air, and it affected all of us, even if we didn’t want it to.”<sup>153</sup> Her statement that Germans were affected even if they did not want to be suggested that an individual, such as herself, was not to blame even if one had lent their support to the regime. This conclusion was hardly recognition of agency. But there was some truth to her words. Although numerous Germans were committed Nazis, others who lent their support to the regime barely questioned their contributions; they simply overlooked the results of Nazi policy and action. Individuals were mobilized by the Nazi movement rather than motivated by a belief in its ideology. Their actions were based on not seeing and not knowing the effects of their actions and support.<sup>154</sup>

### **Transnational Impact**

With the exception of Marta Hillers, the women journalists discussed in this chapter achieved prominent and lasting careers throughout the post-war years. Margret Boveri remained one of the best-known German journalists. After the war she continued as a prolific writer and political critic. She was awarded the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* in 1970—the highest civilian honor, for promoting understanding between East and West Germany.<sup>155</sup> Helene Rahms spent twenty-five years in *Feuilleton* at the prestigious

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *A Small Town Near Auschwitz. Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8.

<sup>155</sup> Boveri’s post-war books include: *Amerika-Fibel für erwachsene Deutsche* (1946), *16 Fenster und 8 Türen* (1953), *Der Verrat im XX. Jahrhundert*, 4 Volumes (1956–1960). This work was translated into English *Treason in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (1961), *Wir lügen alle. Eine Hauptstadtzeitung unter Hitler* (1965), *Tage des Überlebens. Berlin 1945* (1968), *Die Deutschen und der Status Quo* (1974), *Verzweigungen. Eine Autobiographie* (1977 and 1996.)

*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and many years as the head of its women's section. In 1979 she won silver in the *Deutsche Preis für Denkmalschutz* (Prize for the protection of German cultural heritage) – the highest honor in this area.<sup>156</sup> Yad Vashem honoured Ruth Andreas-Friedrich as a “Righteous Among the Nations” in 2002. Since its first publication in 1947, numerous editions of Friedrich's *Berlin Underground* have been printed, the latest in 2000. Together, the personal narratives of the five women have been published on average of two per decade in German and/or English since the end of World War II.<sup>157</sup> To varying degrees, the media, academia, and the public in Germany and abroad considered all of the women authentic chroniclers of Germany's wartime experience. Each of the works discussed in this chapter were reviewed in prestigious newspapers in Germany and often abroad. Each of the women are cited in important academic works on the National Socialist press. This section, however, will focus on the reception of two of the most popular works—Kardoff and Hillers.

Kardorff continued her journalism career after the war, working with highly respected papers including the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Stuttgarter Zeitung*. She became one of the few German, female journalists to cover the Nuremberg Trials in 1946. Eventually she accepted a full-time position with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, working in the *Feuilleton*, *Frauen-Wohnen-Mode*, and *soziale Reportagen* sections of the newspaper. A productive writer in the decades following the war, Kardorff also wrote a

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<sup>156</sup> The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* was a centre-right paper founded in 1949 as a replacement for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* that Hitler closed down in August 1943. At both papers Rahms continued to work with colleagues with whom she had worked during the Third Reich.

<sup>157</sup> These dates were: 1947, 1948, 1954, 1959, 1962, 1966, 1976, 1977, 1983, 1986, 1992, 1997, 2000, 2003, and 2005.

popular column entitled ‘*Durch meine Brille*’ for the *Münchener Abendzeitung* and produced a number of books, most of them on travel and lifestyle.<sup>158</sup>

Yet none of these works resonated with her audience in the manner of *Berliner Aufzeichnungen* and her depiction of the German war experience. The reception of Kardorff’s book demonstrates how a journalist’s words impacted German self-perception and identity building, as well as the Western image and political utilization of Germany. This image of Germany was particularly useful to the Western powers in the early to mid-1960s—one of the coldest periods in the Cold War. Her work received positive reviews from U.S. news publications including *The New Yorker*, which lauded her descriptions of suffering, and the *Wall Street Journal*, which applauded her candour and empathy, as well as her strongly anti-Nazi beliefs – beliefs that her “intellectual and aristocratic circle shared.”<sup>159</sup> In contrast, in 1961 Raul Hilberg struggled to find a U.S. publisher for his book, *The Destruction of the European Jews*—one of the first and most important accounts of the Holocaust. The German edition of the books was not published until 1982.<sup>160</sup>

In Germany, *Berliner Aufzeichnungen* was on the best-seller list for weeks in 1962 and ran as a popular series in *Die Welt* under the title, “Chronik unserer schwersten

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<sup>158</sup> Titles include: *Paris. Richtig Reisen* (Paris. Traveling Right), *Adieu Paris, Romantisch reisen in Deutschland* (Romantic Travels in Germany), *Glücklich sein und glücklich machen: ABC der Lebenskunst* (Being Happy and Becoming Happy: The ABCs of the Art of Life), and *Die dressierte Frau* (The Trained Woman).

<sup>159</sup> *The New Yorker*, undated, *Wall Street Journal*, 13 June 1966, IfZ, ED348/31. *The New Yorker*’s review quoted Kardorff’s passages on suffering: “August 7, 1943: ‘It is one thing to suffer, but this constant feeling of being conscience-stricken grinds away one’s personality.’ Sept. 12. 1944: ‘Nowadays our watchwords are: Gestapo, arrest, Eastern front, People’s Court, casualty lists, air raids, interrogation, torture, the gallows. That is reality and nothing else matters.’”

<sup>160</sup> See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961). The Polish and Hebrew versions were published even later.

Tage.”<sup>161</sup> Margret Boveri and Ruth-Andreas Friedrich also contributed to this series.<sup>162</sup> The *Zürcher Zeitung* praised Kardorff as an “unsuspicious witness” due most likely to her journalistic career and the association of the press with free speech and democracy. She also garnered positive reviews in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Der Spiegel*.<sup>163</sup> Her letters from the general public were mostly enthusiastic. One man who understood the public relations value of the book wrote that finally someone had shown that one could not paint the behavior of Germans during those difficult years in only black and white. He hoped the book would be widely published, particularly overseas.<sup>164</sup> Her work continues to be used in scholarly studies and popular histories about journalism and everyday life during the war that attract a broad audience. She was used as a significant source in Antony Beevor’s widely popular *The Fall of Berlin 1945* – a number-one seller in eight countries. Kardorff is quoted approvingly in Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz’s 1989’s *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*—a foundational work on the press in Nazi Germany and one that is used extensively as a source in other academic studies.<sup>165</sup>

Since its republication in German (2003) and English (2005) *A Woman in Berlin* has been translated into seven languages and is widely available at popular bookstores internationally.<sup>166</sup> It spent weeks on the best-seller list in Germany and was met with critical acclaim in the United States. The *New York Times*’ 2005 review of the book

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<sup>161</sup> Ursula von Kardorff, Biography, Archiv (Munzinger-Archiv) ME-KA 17.11.1962.

<sup>162</sup> Along with Ernst Jünger and Erich Kästner.

<sup>163</sup> Josef Halperin, “Berliner Aufzeichnungen, 1942-1945,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 12 September 1962, IfZ, ED348/31.

<sup>164</sup> Karl Bergmann, letter to *Die Welt* responding to “Was soll’s?,” 4 September 1962, IfZ, ED348/9. Karl Bergmann served on the Eastern Front.

<sup>165</sup> Frei, Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*; Antony Beevor, *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945* (London: Viking, 2002).

<sup>166</sup> Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin*, xi. I used WorldCat to search for the number of libraries that currently hold a copy of a *Woman in Berlin*.

states: “The author is dispassionate and honest about Germany’s responsibility for the war that has destroyed it, appalled at news of Nazi atrocities...she has given us something that transcends shame and fear: the ability to see war as its victims see it.”<sup>167</sup> The reviewer describes the author as a victim, lauds her ability to speak objectively about Nazi Germany, and credits her with providing a balanced account of German victimization in World War II in light of German crimes.

Another review of this work from the World Press states that the author provides a female perspective on German suffering but “one in which the writer never runs any danger of falling into the typical clichés about the fate of womankind.” The reviewer goes on to note, “The writer is too reflective...for that...Her incredible sensitivity to language...her gift for precise observation...her clear judgment...one should never stop praising this book. It is the unique testimony of a victim of violence.”<sup>168</sup> A film based on the book called (in English) *Anonymous: A Woman in Berlin* and directed by Max Faerberboeck was made in 2008, and reviews lauded its balanced look at the collapse of the Third Reich. Hillers’ work is also utilized academically. It is included in academic reading lists at universities from UCLA to George Mason.

## Conclusion

In her work on personal testimonies of individuals who lived within the Soviet system, Irina Paperno demonstrated how a community of texts creates a community of peoples. The process of community building was not limited to those who knew each other or had shared particular experiences. Rather, a textual space builds an extended

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<sup>167</sup> Joseph Kanon, “My City of Ruins,” *New York Times*, sec. Arts, 14 August, 2005.

<sup>168</sup> Hanna Leitgeb, “A Woman in Berlin,” *World Press Review* Vol. 50, No. 7, July 2003.

community.<sup>169</sup> Paperno's concept helps illustrate how, by way of their personal recollections and by writing as "witnesses" to life in the Third Reich, five women journalists provided a particularly powerful voice in the fashioning and durability of Germany's post-war image—an image founded on the dual notions of decency and victimhood. Though journalists, it was primarily through their "personal recollections" and the collective popularity of these diaries/memoirs that these women influenced Germany's post-war transition from villain to victim and ensured that this narrative endured.

Their status as women and as professional journalists was an important part of their influence. As women, they had not occupied decision-making or leadership positions in the Nazi press. Although prominent, they could also represent "ordinary" women journalists and ordinary Germans. In the post-war years, Nazi discourse proved beneficial for women. The party's repeated declaration of politics as an exclusively male domain allowed women to claim that the crimes of Nazism and the German nation were products of a state controlled exclusively by men.<sup>170</sup> Thus, the women's gender helped to underscore the perceived authenticity of their version of Germany's past. Friedrich's writing and her status as a woman who worked in an "apolitical" realm during the Nazi period helped to set the stage for the narratives (and their acceptance) of the women that followed. Kardorff and Rahms highlighted how their work was not political; Boveri emphasized the gender discrimination she faced as a woman in a man's realm.

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<sup>169</sup> Irina Paperno, "Personal Accounts of the Soviet Experience," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* Vol. 3, No. 4, 2002, 598.

<sup>170</sup> Robert Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Post-war West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 12.



After the war, the German press became both an instigator and a symbol of democratic change.<sup>171</sup> Thus, as journalists the women symbolized freedom of expression, the return of an active civil society, and democracy. The institution of the press celebrated individuals that represented the triumph of democratic ideals over totalitarianism, of good over evil. The media personalities that personified this new Germany were typically, but not always, journalists who had not served the Nazi regime, including Marion Dönhoff.

In the post-war years these five women journalists were better positioned than men to portray their own and the country's victimization at the hands of the Nazis and Allies. Male journalists also wrote post-war memoirs that addressed their Third Reich careers. But these works typically did not enjoy the same traction or popularity as the female journalists discussed in this chapter. For instance, in *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*, Norbert Frei relied on eleven memoirs, four (36 percent) of them from women journalists, including Andreas-Friedrich, Boveri and Kardorff. The men's memoirs used for Frei's study were published only in German from the late 1960s to the early 1980s with most appearing in the 1970s. They have not been translated or reissued.

Displaying the skills of a journalist each of these women, to varying degrees, strove for objectivity in her published writing. They questioned their own pasts and discussed German responsibility for the persecution of the Jews, the war, and the Holocaust. This stance gave their words credence and seeming balance and strengthened the credibility of their narrative. They helped recast the role of the German press in the

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<sup>171</sup> See Christina von Hodenberg, "Mass Media and the Generation of Conflict: West Germany's Long Sixties and the Formation of a Critical Public Sphere," *Contemporary European History* Vol. 15, No. 3 (August 2006): 367-395.

Third Reich, prioritized German suffering over German crimes and offered a lukewarm acknowledgment of pre-war and wartime victimization of Jews. While academic and public discourse over Germany's Nazi past evolved and changed throughout the decades, the narratives of the five women journalists remained a quieter but consistent voice. The personal writing of this small number of women personified the "good" Germany—an image that helped lessen the taint of Nazism from the post-war to the present day. But by having done so, they also helped create a democratic and stable society that eventually acknowledged and attempted to atone for the crimes of the National Socialist period.

## Conclusion

In his 1924 text, *Mein Kampf*, Hitler—less than ten years away from becoming the German Chancellor—wrote of the importance with which he viewed the press: “The state must particularly exercise strict control over the press; for its influence on these people [the German population] is the strongest and most penetrating...”<sup>1</sup> In a 1935 speech at the annual German Press Association day, Annie Juliane Richert, the head of the Committee of German Women Journalists, spoke of women’s importance to the journalistic profession and the status the field afforded women in return: “No other profession affords a woman such a significant task as that of journalist.”<sup>2</sup> Toward the end of 1944, Max Baumann, the editor of the *Hamburger Tageblatt*, published an article claiming that women were not welcome in the profession beyond the few specialist areas in which they typically worked.<sup>3</sup> Decades after the collapse of the Third Reich, Thea Fischer fondly recalled her time as a journalist prior to, and during, World War II. She interviewed interesting people for her column and enjoyed a being minor celebrity in her town. During the war, travel allowed her temporary escape from the bombs and access to food and material goods not available to much of the population.<sup>4</sup> All four people spoke to the role and experiences of women journalists in Nazi Germany—a mixture of inclusion, marginalization, importance, and privilege.

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<sup>1</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 242.

<sup>2</sup> Speech by Annie Juliane Richert reprinted in, “Die Arbeitstagung des RDP in Köln,” *Deutsche Presse*, 14 December 1935, 668-9.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Käthe Döpke-Goerler, Leiterin des Reichsausschusses der Schriftleiterinnen im RDP, 23 September 1944, BAB, R103/30. Baumann was a lecturer in journalism and head of the Regional Press Association.

<sup>4</sup> Anja Meyer, Thea Fischer interview, *Medienfrauen der ersten Stunde*, “Wir waren ja die Trümmerfrauen diesem Beruf.” Angelika Engler and Klaus Lissi, eds. (Zürich-Dortmund: eFeF, 1993), 106.

This project has investigated women's place in and contribution to the journalistic profession throughout the course of the Third Reich. As public figures with a public voice, the study of how women journalists functioned within the National Socialist press and their importance to the regime is critical; journalists were visible to and impacted the rest of the population in a way other professions did not. As British journalist and feminist Florence Fenwick-Miller wrote in 1884:

For every hundred persons who listen to the priest, the journalist...speaks to a thousand; and while the words of the one are often heard merely as a formality, those of the other...may effectively influence the thoughts and consciences and actions of thousands in the near future. Shallow, indeed, would be the mind which undervalued the power of the journalist, or underrated the seriousness of his vocation.<sup>5</sup>

By their very existence women journalists stood in contradiction to Nazi gender discourse, yet they were also important vessels of Nazi ideology. Situated on the periphery of an important institution within a sexist state, women journalists occupied a central place within the Nazis' news and propaganda goals, acting as professional functionaries who helped to uphold the regime in ways that went beyond their limited numbers.

The experiences of women journalists and the nature of their writing help us to understand the attraction, efficacy and operation of National Socialism. The regime primarily utilized women journalists as instruments to politicize the personal sphere. Under the Nazis, the German language became more aggressive and militaristic with metaphors for battle in all areas of life. In other words, the regime mobilized language for

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<sup>5</sup> As quoted in *Women in Journalism at the Fin de Siècle: Making a Name for Herself*, F. Elizabeth Gray, ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1.

war.<sup>6</sup> By writing human-interest stories, entertainment and domestic articles, women journalists provided a counterbalance to hard news focused on overtly political topics, including domestic and foreign policy or even the course of the war. In reality, these lighter areas performed an equally important political function. Women journalists helped to distance Germans from the reality of Nazi terror and aggression. The illusion of an ideologically free sphere appealed to German readers, and the regime strove to foster this belief. It channeled women journalists into areas designed to create a feel good press that focused on private pleasures. Press authorities believed that female journalists could write in a more amusing, engaging and personal way than their male counterparts. In some sense, then, the contributions of women provided an escape from unremitting, overtly Nazi material.

As the war came home to the Reich and the population tired of unrelenting propaganda claiming imminent victory or wonder weapons that bore no relation to their everyday life amidst bombs and hardship, Germans increasingly valued escapist material provided through the press. Entertainment and culture helped people retain a sense of normality and continue on despite destruction and chaos. As the regime's link to the female population, the writing of women journalists also grew in value as women made up the majority of the home front. Their job was to bolster the population's mood and likelihood to hold out. Women journalists provided material that praised and encouraged the strength and "joie de vivre" of German women in the midst of hardship and reminded them to enjoy life in any way possible. The writing of women journalists who worked in such seemingly harmless areas was political in its effects despite the fact that the regime

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<sup>6</sup> Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power, 1933-1939* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 214. See also Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI, Lingua Tertii Imperii: a Philologist's Notebook* (London: Continuum, 2002).

designated it “apolitical” and the German population accepted it as such. Thus the study of women journalists helps to define and complicate what the population and regime considered politics in the Third Reich.

Although few in numbers, some women journalists worked outside of the so-called soft realm that the regime dictated as appropriate for women journalists. They worked at eminently political newspapers and covered a variety of domestic and foreign events and issues. The gaps between Nazi gender policy and practice presented a small measure of freedom and opportunity for women to forge the type of career they desired.

Regardless of the areas in which they worked, women journalists acted as professional functionaries managing the relationship between the state and the German public. Their writing helped to build up and support the state’s power. In return, the Nazi regime provided a level of prestige and access to opportunities not open to most women. Press authorities presented the institution as an elite clique and included women as a part of the *Kameradschaft* of the press. The professional identity of “journalist” was important to these women from their training onward and ensured that they wrote within the confines of the controlled-press whether or not they were disposed to Nazism. In this way, the regime created a loyal press that was based largely on volunteerism and a notion of professional importance. Careerism, privilege, and the possibility for adventure and travel encouraged women journalists to contribute to the maintenance of the Nazi state. Ian Kershaw termed the phenomenon of those who, due to social, professional or personal motivations, came to carry out the goals and ideology that Hitler embodied, as “working towards the Führer.”<sup>7</sup> The possibilities for privilege and professional

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<sup>7</sup> Ian Kershaw, “‘Working Towards the Führer.’ Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship,” *Contemporary European History* Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 1993): 103-118.

advancement grew during the war. Many journalists travelled for their jobs, an opportunity that provided access to culture, pleasure, and escape from the realities of war.

The tangling of gender, politics, the press, and the ambiguous status of women journalists as both insiders and outsiders in the field also had important ramifications in the post-war years. After 1945 a small cadre of female journalists played a disproportionate role in the reconstruction and stability of West Germany, and later, a reunified Germany. Through their personal narratives depicting their experiences during the Third Reich, women helped create and maintain the notion that Germany itself was a victim of the Nazi regime, the war, and the occupation forces. But women journalists also provided an early, if tepid, discussion, of Germany's crimes, particularly the genocide of European Jews. By offering a narrative that simultaneously repressed, distorted, and remembered Germany's National Socialism experience, the women presented the past in a way that was tolerable for both the German population and an international audience. Their writing allowed Germany to process its crimes since its own suffering was publicly acknowledged. In this way, the women continued to act as professional functionaries but for a radically different political system.

The women's gender and profession were instrumental in the influence they exerted. Referring back to Nazi gender rhetoric, the women were able to present themselves as journalists disconnected from overtly Nazified news and propaganda. As women they could more easily epitomize Germany's suffering than men. And, as journalists, they became associated with the resurgence of democracy and an active civil society in West Germany. In contradiction to sexist ideology and practice, both the Nazi regime and the democratic government in post-war West Germany relied on the

contributions of a small number of women journalists to help ensure the stability of the state. This dependence on those outside of the structures of power and the influence that they exerted underscores the importance of the press in both dictatorial and democratic societies.



## Appendix A

Table III: Women Foreign Correspondents, 1935-1938

Region	Paper	Journalist
<b>North America</b>		
Chicago	<i>Abendpost, Mitropost</i>	Michalina Schwarz
	<i>The Musical Leader</i>	Lipa Ehrens
Texas	<i>Freie Presse für Texas</i>	Martha Stockfisch
Winnipeg	<i>Deutsche Zeitung für Canada</i>	Martha Stockfisch
<b>Europe</b>		
Paris	<i>Danse et Beute</i>	Lipa Ehrens
Madrid	<i>Deutscher Echo</i>	Martha Stockfisch
Lisbon	<i>Diario de Noticias</i>	Lilo Ritscher
Portugal	<i>Commercio do Porto</i>	Elise Hopffgarten
London	<i>Investigator London</i>	Alexandra von Korotowetz
Oslo	<i>Morgenbladet</i>	Birgel Hammer
Copenhagen	<i>Politiken</i>	Karin Stampe- Bendix
	<i>Dansk Kirkemusiker Tidende, Aftenavis</i>	Alma Heiberg
Stockholm	<i>Internationale Press Centralen</i>	Lillian Rosen
Finland	<i>Hufvudstadsblade, Journale, Allas Kronika</i>	Lili Humble- Oehquiest
Riga	<i>Brihwa Seme</i>	Liesbeth Wensch,

		Dora Mintz
	<i>Nordschleswigsche Zeitung, Apenrade, "Rigasche Post</i>	Gertrud Nehls (Falk)
Malmédy	<i>Der Landbote</i>	Gertrud Nehls (Falk)
Lviv	<i>Chilborobskyi Schljach</i>	Alexandra v. Korostowetz,
Telna	<i>International Press Service, Telna Radio Dienst, Telna Bunte Tagesberichte</i>	Nusica Lukaschewski
	<i>Freie Presse</i>	Wally Friedenberg
Warsaw	<i>Kurjer Polski, Polska Zbrojna, Bluszcz</i>	Helena Heinsdorf
Łódź	<i>Wieczor Warszawski, Kronika Polski i swiata, Swiat</i>	Anna Rogowicz
Bucharest	<i>Curenttul</i>	
<b>South America</b>		
Buenos Aires	<i>Combate</i>	Romilda Ortel
San Salvador	<i>Diario Latino</i>	Hermogenes Sanchez, Rosa Charlottenburg
<b>China</b>		
Tianjin	<i>Deutsch-Chinesische Nachrichten</i>	Martha Stockfisch

Source: Stockfisch Nachlass, LAB, E Rep 200-64, Nr. 7, 8 and BAB, N42/30, NS42/5.

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NS 42 Reichspressechef der NSDAP/Reichspressestelle  
NS43 Vereinigung Carl Schurz e. V., Verband ausländischer Pressevertreter  
NS 44 Reichsfrauenführung  
R34 Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro  
R55 Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda  
R56-I Reichskulturkammer  
R56-IV Reichspressekammer  
R103 Reichsverband der Deutschen Presse  
Zsg 117 Presseauschnittsammlung Hauptarchiv der NSDAP

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*Deutsche Flugillustrierten*

*Deutsche Presse*

*Die Bewegung*

*Die Dame*

*Die Junge Dame*

*Die Neue Zeitung*

*Die Welt*

*Die Zeit*

*Deutscher Echo*

*Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*

*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

*Frankfurter Hefte*

*Frankfurter Zeitung*

*Frauenkultur*

*Freie Presse für Texas*

*Kurier*

*La Suisse*

*Münchner Abendzeitung*

*Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*

*N.S. Frauen-Warte*

*Nationalsozialistische Landpost*

*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

*New Yorker*

*New York Times*

*Schlesische Sonntagspost*

*Schwäbische Zeitung*

*Stuttgarter Zeitung*

*Süddeutsche Zeitung*

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