

Politics & Society

<http://pas.sagepub.com>

Sexual Violence in Europe in World War II, 1939 1945

Jeffrey Burds

Politics Society 2009; 37; 35

DOI: 10.1177/1059601108329751

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://pas.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/37/1/35>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *Politics & Society* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://pas.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://pas.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations <http://pas.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/37/1/35>

Sexual Violence in Europe in World War II, 1939–1945*

JEFFREY BURDS

Focusing in particular on the German-Soviet war in the East, this article explores variations in patterns of sexual violence associated with armed forces in Europe during and immediately after World War II. Besides soldier violence perpetrated against civilian populations, a significant role was also played by irregular forces: most notably, by partisan guerrillas and civilian vigilantes. Ethnic nationalist partisan forces perpetrated especially brutal sexual violence against women and girls of “enemy” nationalities. Likewise, after liberation civilian reprisals were fairly common throughout Europe against so-called “sexual collaborators”—that is, against women excoriated for providing “sexual comfort” to the enemy during the German occupation.

Keywords: World War II; gender; violence; rape; sexual violence; Europe; Soviet Union; Germany

*This article is part of a special section of *Politics & Society* on the topic “Patterns of Wartime Sexual Violence.” The papers were presented at the workshop *Sexual Violence during War* held at Yale University in November 2007. For more information, please refer to the Introduction to this section.

I would like to express my thanks to the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, which has generously supported this research. I am grateful to the following archivists and scholars who provided assistance in Russian research collections: S. V. Mironenko, V. A. Kozlov, and D. N. Nokhotovich in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF); Vadim Altskan and Michlean Amir of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; and Crispin Brooks of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education. Special thanks to Jared McBride for his assistance in securing additional materials, to Dariusz Jonczyk for help with Polish sources, to Mary Nolan for her excellent editorial suggestions, and to Elisabeth Wood for encouraging me to reflect more broadly about patterns of sexual violence in World War II. I also want to express my gratitude to Biljana Bijelic, Tom Jay Cinq-Mars, Tom Havens, Elizabeth Hillman, Amelia Hoover, Hiroaki Kuromiya, Meghan Lynch, Dieter Pohl, David Stone, Kimberly Theidon, Lynne Viola, and Debbie Zoldan.

POLITICS & SOCIETY, Vol. 37 No. 1, March 2009 35-74

DOI: 10.1177/1059601108329751

© 2009 Sage Publications

I. GERMANY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE EAST

*We are war. Because we are soldiers.
 I have burned all the cities,
 Strangled all the women,
 Brained all the children,
 Plundered all the land.
 I have shot a million enemies,
 Laid waste the fields, destroyed the churches,
 Ravaged the souls of the inhabitants,
 Spilled the blood and tears of all the mothers.*

*I did it, all me.—I did
 Nothing. But I was a soldier.*

In his diary Wehrmacht soldier Willy Peter Reese wrote that he entered Russia in summer 1941 with a sense of shock at the excesses of his fellow soldiers. By autumn 1944, just weeks before his death at age twenty-three, Reese was among those fleeing the Soviet Union for Germany, and he reflected in this frenzied entry just how transformed he had been by the war. Stumbling over a rich cache of food, alcohol, and cigarettes abandoned at a railway station near Gomel, Belorussia, Reese and his mates fell into a bacchanalia of consumption and excess that bordered on hysteria:

We sang over claret and liqueurs, vodka and rum, plunged into intoxication like doomed men, talked drunkenly about sex and science, reeled by the railroad cars, sat outside over campfires, were made ill by the cheap spirits and the sudden rich diet, and carried on anyway, made grotesque speeches about war and peace, grew melancholy, talked about our lovelornness and homesickness, started laughing again, and went on drinking, whooped and skipped over the rails, danced in the cars, and fired into the air, made a Russian woman prisoner dance naked for us, greased her tits with boot polish, got her drunk as we were. . . .¹

“I’m collapsing under so much guilt—and I’m drinking!” Reese wrote. He and his mates decimated the Soviet Union, its resources and its peoples as they fled the Red Army following the battle at Stalingrad in 1943. His diary is a confession, his guilt the guilt of all German soldiers in the East. In Russia, he had truly become “a stranger to myself.”

In more ways than one, the war on the Eastern Front differed profoundly from the conduct of war in World War II in other parts of Europe and around the globe. Omer Bartov, among others, has written about the “brutalization of warfare” in the East during World War II. Violent actions toward local civilians that would have led to courts martial and a possible firing squad in occupied France were everyday experiences of the average Wehrmacht soldier in the East.² While

Soviet writers complained bitterly of German atrocities in the East, many of these excesses were muted in standard western studies of the Eastern war.³

The same contrasts apply to Soviet versus western accounts of sexual violence on the Eastern Front, where “looting the Russian civilians was not called ‘plundering’ and not prosecuted, and . . . raping Russian women was not considered to be a ‘moral offense.’”⁴ While from the start the Soviets underlined the singular character of German sexual terror in the East, it is only recently that western scholars have begun to explore the mountain of Soviet and post-Soviet data on wartime sexual crimes.⁵ With the discovery of the culpability of the Wehrmacht for atrocities against civilians has come the growing awareness of the central role of sexual violence in German-occupied zones in the East.

German sexual atrocities in Soviet zones were driven by two main factors: a distinct racial policy that encouraged mistreatment towards non-Aryan civilian populations and growing soldier stress associated with staunch Soviet resistance from the first weeks of the war. This soldier stress only rose as Wehrmacht morale plummeted in the wake of the humiliating defeat at Stalingrad in February 1943.

German Views of Race and Gender

Paragraph 2 of the 1935 Nuremberg Law unequivocally prohibited sexual contact between Aryans and Jews: “Extramarital intercourse between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood is forbidden.”⁶ Although such bans were strictly imposed against sexual contact with Jews, the “mixing of the bloods” (*Rassenschande*) of Aryans with other races was a major concern in the Third Reich’s racial policies, where there were various kinds of strict prohibitions against “illegal associations.”⁷ In the Nazi hierarchy of racial purity, Aryans were the purest and Jews were the basest of racial types. But Slavic *Untermenschen* (sub-humans) from the East were—in Nazi racial ideology—little better than Jews.

At home, Reich authorities strictly proscribed sexual contacts between Germans and other races. In the midst of an aggressively pronatalist policy that encouraged the birth of Aryan babies in greater Germany, there was a special concern about sexual fraternization between German women and girls and foreign workers, especially POWs and forced laborers from the East. Approaching some 3.5 million forced laborers by 1945, these Eastern workers (*Ostarbeiters*) were a major source of Nazi racial anxieties. Typical were these guidelines issued by the Reich Ministry of Justice on June 14, 1943: “German women who engage in sexual relations with prisoners of war have betrayed the front, done gross injury to their nation’s honor, and damaged the reputation of German womanhood abroad.”⁸ But with so many German men away at the front, and as German war casualties mounted, legal prohibitions had little effect preventing such illicit associations between foreign workers and German women and girls. *Rassenpolitisches Amt* reported:

Regrettably, it has come to our attention that there are many German women and girls who, unmindful of their duty to the *Volk*, are not ashamed to strike up a friendship or even intimate relations with these men of the alien *Volk*. They allow themselves to be plied with drinks quite openly in the pubs and then disappear with these men, who don't even speak German, into parks, adjacent woodlands, and meadows. . . . The foreign agricultural worker . . . on the farmstead always will try to instigate relations with the German farm-girl and farmer's wife, notwithstanding that her husband is off at the front. . . . For as long as he remains on our soil, the foreign laborer will exploit the woman of German blood to satisfy her sexual cravings, father children with her, and later . . . simply abandon the woman along with her half-breed children.⁹

The problem of illicit sexual associations between German women and foreign men became so serious that the German security police or SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*) issued in 1944 a secret report lambasting the "immoral conduct of German women," among whom "a significant proportion of women and girls" had showed an alarming inclination "to exploit the situation sexually." Special opprobrium was meted out to "war wives":

The effect of war wives' marital infidelity on their husbands at the front must be regarded as especially serious. These men were very troubled by neighbors' reports of their wives' behavior. Many blame Germany's leadership for being unable to maintain order in the family while they fight at the front.¹⁰

The sexual insecurity of Wehrmacht soldiers at the front who left wives, daughters, and girlfriends behind was a common theme in Soviet propaganda targeting front-line soldiers.

Sex and the German Occupation

If Reich sexual policies at home were guided by racial insecurities, then racial policies in foreign zones were a hodgepodge of notional efforts aimed at preserving Aryan semen for Aryan women. There were strict race-based prohibitions against sexual fraternization with females of inferior races. All the same, as Wendy Jo Gertje-Janssen has noted, such regulations seem to have had little impact on limiting actual sexual contacts—forced or consensual—between German soldiers and Eastern women: "The written rules of the Third Reich which forbade Germans to have sex with non-Germans in the East were, for the most part, a reality only on paper, and the leadership acknowledged this."¹¹ Even among SS elite units, there was so much "mixing of the races" in Ukraine that commanding officers simply refused to enforce the prohibitions.¹²

Reich administrators introduced a number of initiatives aimed at reducing the frequency of sexual fraternization of German soldiers with local non-Aryan women. Unique among the warring nations of Europe was the Nazi policy on *Einsatzfrauen*, traveling brothels that serviced the sexual needs of German

soldiers.¹³ “Local military leaders at the intermediate level were responsible for equipment, supervision, and food [for the prostitutes], for cleaning and other inspection, and for distribution of condoms, soap, and lubricants.”¹⁴

Officially, Reich policy strictly condemned prostitution. In his *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had vehemently attacked prostitution as a “frightful plague,” a “terrible poisoning of the health of the national body,” a “moral devastation,” the root of the dissipation of Germany’s moral and physical strength due to “this Jewification of our spiritual life and mammonization of our mating instinct.” While one would have expected a strict Nazi prohibition of prostitution, in fact, as Julia Roos has found, the Nazis preferred to promote state-regulated prostitution side by side with a pronatalist policy to grow the Aryan population.¹⁵ Besides racial concerns, the Reich’s efforts to regulate the sexual behavior of German soldiers by providing state-sponsored brothels was also driven by concerns about sexually transmitted diseases as well as fears that illicit sexual contact between soldiers and civilians would heighten security risks.¹⁶ As Franz Seidler noted in his class study of German military bordellos in World War II: “The intimate life of the soldier was part of the official care program. The minute a soldier entered a Wehrmacht brothel, he was subjected to an onslaught of regulations and behavioral instructions. His adherence [to the rules] was watched. Even the satisfaction of his sexual needs was not in a rule-free realm. To demonstrate the complete power of the totalitarian state, in my opinion, there is no example more absurd than how the soldier was ‘administered’ even in his most intimate areas.”¹⁷

Ostensibly, German military brothels were to be staffed by racially suitable volunteers who were hired to provide sexual comfort to German soldiers at the front. In practice, however, the Wehrmacht’s huge demand far outstripped the supply of available women, so that recruits had to be found among local civilian populations. Ringdal insisted that “Exceptionally few [local] girls made contact with German soldiers.” But that was probably more true of Western than of Eastern Europe. “As a result,” explained Ringdal, “the Germans had to implement stricter measures to ensure that the soldiers had a sex life. The vast majority among the home-recruited *Einsatzfrauen* were sent eastward. But it soon became clear that they were far from enough—and an increasing number of sexual attacks on civilian women began to be reported from the Ukraine and White Russia. In Poland and the Ukraine, and partly in Serbia, the Germans started to draft local girls into the *Einsatzfrauen*. Officially, the girls were given a choice between draconian forced labor and a more comfortable and better-paid life in a brothel.”¹⁸

The preference for light-skinned, light-haired, blue-eyed women and girls from Poland, Belorussia, and Ukraine was clearly driven by an effort to maintain appearances of conforming to racial purity regulations. But this also raised considerable long-term concerns. Certainly, fraternization with German soldiers brought substantial material advantages for cooperating women and their families. “Even if they did not pay in cash, they [German soldiers] were very generous with

clothes, jewelry, food, and other gifts, which were greatly appreciated at a time when luxury items were at a premium.”¹⁹

German perspectives consistently blamed the local population for initiating illicit contacts. An SD report in 1943 in Ukraine concluded: “Often native women [in the cities] try to establish relations with Germans or allies in order to obtain some kind of food.”²⁰ A Russian memoirist recalled after the war a wartime conversation between a Kiev woman and a German officer: “‘Tell me, is it true that German soldiers rape German women?’ The German smiled, saying, ‘As you see, it’s the exact opposite.’”²¹ Such views that all Eastern women were essentially whores who threw themselves at occupation soldiers no doubt exacerbated German sexual violence against local women. Convinced that all Soviet women were in essence prostitutes, German soldiers saw no intrinsic problem with forcing sex on local women.²²

In his *Sex in the Third Reich*, Russian historian Andrei Vasil’chenko noted the power wielded by German officers: “Sex was simultaneously both a carrot and a stick in the hands of [German] commanders in the war. Every German soldier had the right to relax in a bordello five or six times a month. However, commanders could also reward . . . special services by issuing passes for supplementary sex.”²³

The hardships of war and the seeming inevitability of German victory combined to promote a reevaluation of values among local girls throughout the East, at least some of whom began to prefer German soldiers to local men. A Soviet intelligence officer, Kazimir Mette, working underground in Mogilev, Belorussia, reported the typical Soviet complaint in April 1943: “The majority of youths failed to understand in the first months of the occupation that the Germans are their mortal enemies. . . . Very many young women and girls have begun increasingly to fraternize (*znakomit’sia*) with German officers and soldiers, inviting them into their apartments, going out with them, and so on. It seems strange and surprising that the Germans have found so many supporters among our people.” Mette was a former teacher, and he recognized many of the girls from his classrooms, noting unhappily that even young Communist girls (*Komsomol’ki*) “had abruptly thrown aside their . . . [Soviet] patriotism, their communist worldviews.”²⁴ In Kiev, a young woman schoolteacher left in her diary the complete story of her decision to abandon a dead-end relationship with her Soviet pre-war boyfriend in favor of a German soldier.²⁵ An Estonian who worked as a chauffeur at a German research lab in Simferopol during the war, Leonid Legek, complained bitterly that his wife Iraida “began to live with various German officers, to lead a wild way of life, and as a consequence I divorced her in autumn 1942.”²⁶

Sexual crimes accompanied the advancement of Wehrmacht forces and their allies. Staff Sergeant Flora Lup of the Second Division in the Rumanian Army testified that “Every day all of the officers of our unit ordered their adjutants to be on the look out for nice rooms where at night they could bring young girls and

beautiful women for drinking parties and orgies.”²⁷ Aleksandr Muntianu of the First Infantry Battalion in the Rumanian Army admitted that he had taken part in gang rapes of Ukrainian women side-by-side with his unit officers.²⁸ Stationed in Kursk, Russia, in February 1942, Wehrmacht Lance Corporal Arno Schwager noted with envy the special privileges of German officers: “All of the senior officers had their own fine apartments, the residents of which were expected to serve them. Particularly the daughters were made to service the officers in all sorts of ways. Most frequently of all German officers each have their own personal Russian women, who are supposed to sleep with them, wash their feet and backs, clean their clothes, and often they even cut their toenails. Every officer has one.”²⁹

On their part, women in occupied zones often made themselves available as a means to survive. A guard at a German camp near Simferopol in the Crimea, Red Army deserter Nikolai Kulik, testified that “many [local] girls were forced to marry quickly in order to avoid deportation.” Pregnancy and a wartime husband became the best strategies to escape forced labor. For the young brides, the best choices usually fell on collaborationist husbands. Added Kulik: “So that they did not deport this girl [twenty-one-year-old Anna Malakhova] to Germany, I began to live with her. In this way this girl succeeded in avoiding forced deportation.”³⁰ All of the guards at the camp at the former Sovkhoz Krasnyi had war wives, some more than one.

Former “war wife” Natal’ia Kvach admitted readily that young women in German occupied zones were counseled to get pregnant to avoid deportation: “At that time, the Germans were deporting others like me to Germany. People sought out all sorts of ways in order to avoid this. Many got infected with various diseases, or injured themselves. I was young and healthy. Someone then advised me to get pregnant, that this would be a guarantee against being sent away. Although I seriously doubted this, I nonetheless decided to take the risk.”³¹ Kvach chose as her “war husband” another Ukrainian collaborationist guard, Nikolai Derevianko, who also happened to be the leader of a Soviet spy network inside the camp. She gave birth to their daughter on November 1, 1943, and in this way managed to avoid deportation throughout the war.

Forced Sterilization Campaigns

Growing “fraternization”—either forced or consensual—created colossal problems for both the Soviets and the German occupation. After just the first year of the Wehrmacht’s occupation of Ukraine, Heinrich Himmler estimated that a million babies had been born to Ukrainian women who had been fathered by German soldiers.³² Statistics like these led to a concerted Reich effort to prevent unwanted pregnancies of mixed German-*Untermenschen* parentage.

Gisela Bock has found that some two million women “Eastern workers” (*Ostarbeiters*) were subjected to compulsory abortions and forced sterilization

during the war. The main goal was not only a matter of population control of racial undesirables but also a general policy not to hamper forced laborers with distractions like caring for their own small children. Most of these were women working in German and Austrian zones where there were considerable concerns about so-called “mixed blood” (*Mischlinge*)—usually a euphemism for “half-Jews” but also a slur increasingly applied to any mixed Aryan and non-Aryan offspring, especially when the non-Aryan parent was from the “lower races” of the East.³³

By 1943, the threat of a “mixed blood” population explosion in Soviet zones led the Reich to adopt stringent policies on compulsory abortions and sterilization of Eastern women involved in intimate sexual relations with German soldiers. Typical was this order regulating the racially mixed progeny of German policemen stationed in the East:

Munich, 26 March 1943

RE: Sexual Intercourse with Women of other races

The Reich Leader SS wants women natives of the occupied Eastern provinces, impregnated by a member of the SS or Police, generally to have an abortion made by the competent Medical Officer of the SS and Police respectively unless the woman concerned has been found to be of good race.

The Russian doctors and the Russian Board of Doctors will not be notified of this instruction. In individual cases of abortion social considerations will be taken into account. The explanation given should not allow the conclusion that there is a general instruction in existence.

For the Chief of the Main Office SS Court

[Dr. Günther Reinecke]

SS Obersturmbannführer and Chief of Police³⁴

Forced abortion was particularly common in German-occupied Poland, but also in Ukraine, and southern and western Russia.³⁵

Curiously, rape and other forms of sexual violence were not crimes in German military law. The main concern was not the intrinsic crime of rape or sexual violence but rather of *Rassenschande*, or “race mixing.”³⁶ So time and again we find cases of Wehrmacht soldiers’ being disciplined for sexual crimes—but closer investigations reveal the crimes were not rape or sexual abuse as such but rather *Rassenschande*.³⁷ The German Reich “judiciary viewed ‘race defilement’ as seriously as ‘high treason.’” Mixing of the races could carry sentences up to four or five years by 1939.³⁸

Birgit Beck has noted that there was a relative leniency toward sex crimes perpetrated in Eastern zones versus Western Europe, where German perpetrators of sexual violence were regularly sentenced with serious punishments. Beck concluded that in France the Wehrmacht was deeply concerned about its reputation among French civilians, whereas in the Soviet Union sex crimes were punished

only on the basis of serious racial violations (sex with Jews) or in particularly heinous cases that threatened to “undermine military discipline.”³⁹

Sexual Violence against Jewish Women

Of course, not all sexual relationships between Soviet women and German occupying forces were consensual. To date, there has been no systematic study of German sexual violence in Soviet zones. But the evidence on all sides points to ubiquitous and repeated sexual exploitation of Soviet women, abuse that was often accompanied by violence.

It has long been widely assumed that acts of sexual violence against Jewish women—including rape and forced prostitution—were rare because of strict prohibitions warning against sexual relations with Jews.⁴⁰ As we have seen, violations of these strictures in the West could bring court martial and execution, while violations in the East usually brought milder punishments: special duties, short-term imprisonment, or—in extreme cases—transfer to the Eastern Front. For instance, the only known rape case in a camp in Croatia in 1941 and 1942 brought the German guard a sentence of just six months in prison for “desecration of the race” because he had raped Jewish inmates.⁴¹ But in the East such comparatively stiff sentences seem to have been the exception, not the rule.

Despite these prohibitions, substantial anecdotal evidence suggests that German soldiers in the East often exploited the sexual opportunities afforded by total control over Jewish women and girls. Regardless, the prohibitions against “racial mixing” were not enforced against the hundreds of thousands of collaborationist non-Aryan auxiliaries who dominated the ranks of local occupation police or camp guards.⁴² The violations of camp inmates by guards were so widespread that in 1943 Heinrich Himmler established camp brothels. In Ravensbrück concentration camp alone, some 35,000 Jewish women and girls worked in the brothels during the war, each responsible for servicing seven or more men each day.⁴³

In the SS brothel at Gusen, (see Figure 1) in the larger Mauthausen complex (Austria), there were some 500 SS guards, some Germans (including Austrians), but mainly Ukrainians. There were two brothels, both installed in 1942 as the liquidation of the ghettos drove larger numbers of Jews into the camps. Access to the brothels was restricted, with visits awarded for good service. In the brothel for German SS guards, nearly all of the ten women who served their sexual needs were ethnic German, selected from among the German criminal population of the camp. In contrast, in the brothel for Ukrainian guards who—according to testimony—“found it a little difficult to approach German girls,” almost all of the women were Polish inmates from the camp, or Jewish women masquerading as ethnic Poles.⁴⁴

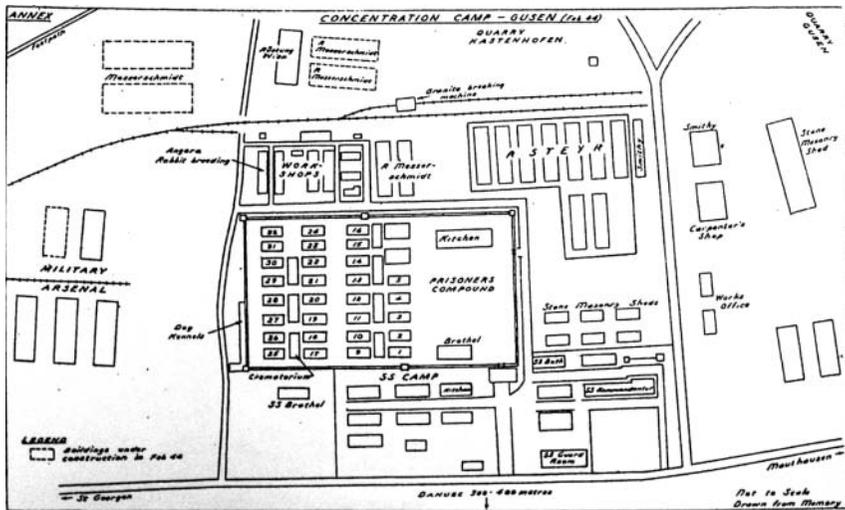


Figure 1. At Gusen (Mauthausen), there were two brothels: the SS brothel reserved for Germans (lower left) and the camp brothel reserved for Ukrainian SS guards, located inside the prisoner compound and staffed with Polish and Jewish women inmates.

Source: OSS Interrogation Files, National Archives, RG263, Entry ZZ20, Box 1, Document 9.

Outside the brothels, the everyday lives of Jewish female inmates offered numerous opportunities for sexual harassment and violence. Czech underground fighter Vera Laska described the ritualized humiliation perpetrated by SS guards during female inmates' visits to showers and latrines:

On the rare occasions that the women were marched to the real showers . . . the grapevine somehow always reached the lowest of the SS, who came to jeer, tease, and taunt the defenseless women. Stripping the women naked was also practiced at times of camp selections, or on long and boring Sunday afternoons, when the SS had nothing better to do than to order a roll call and expose the powerless women to a cruel parade. . . . The depravity of the men, indulging themselves in this cheapest, basest and most disgusting of games, as much for the pleasure of seeing naked females as for the sport of frightening them out of their minds, was one of the cruelest tortures to which women were subjected in the concentration camps. . . . Those newly arrived to these jaws of hell were crushed under the deluge of foul language, obscene gestures and the fact that they were paraded like cattle on the market in front of men. To many women it meant an unforgivable and never to be forgotten humiliation.⁴⁵

Sexual abuse was ubiquitous. "The [Hungarian] guards would take out young girls and do whatever they wanted to do with them. The girls would come back crying. The mothers would be beaten for trying to protect them."⁴⁶ "The Germans

would take girls, rape them, and then kill them. They shot them. They were ashamed. . . . They wanted after they raped them, they wanted to wipe up the evidence.”⁴⁷ “In Chruslice [Poland, a concentration camp] I was sexually assaulted. . . . It was New Year’s Eve [1943]. I was sitting in a room with a bunch of young girls because I was afraid to sit in my room. . . . There came in a bunch of drunk Polish Volksdeutsche collaborators and Germans and they took out . . . 5–6 women. We were all sexually assaulted.”⁴⁸ An eyewitness to the pogrom in the Minsk ghetto in July 1942 recalled: “Before the eyes of mothers, who either fainted or went insane, the drunken Germans and policemen raped young girls without a trace of shame either in front of each other or in front of onlookers. They took their knives and cut out sex organs, forced bodies, both dead and alive, into the most disgusting poses, and cut off noses, breasts, and ears.”⁴⁹

The abuse of Jewish female inmates applied to women and girls of all ages. Transferred to Ravensbrück when she was only five years old, Sara B. was brutally abused by two SS officers in a special room reserved for that purpose:

It is very difficult for me to even talk about this because it was one of the most horrible of my experiences. This was in Ravensbrück. Someone came to get me. And I was given some candy. . . . And I was taken into a building into a small room. . . . There were two men there. And there were some other people in the room. . . . I was put on a table . . . or a tall bed. . . . I was very violently sexually abused. And I remember being hit, I remember crying, and I wanted to get out of there. And I was calling people. And screaming. And I remember . . . one of them told me that they would stand me up on my head and cut me right in half. They wanted me to stop screaming. And . . . it was . . . I’ve had nightmares about that for most of my life. And then I was taken back to where my aunt was. It was something we didn’t talk about.⁵⁰

It was fairly common for guards to use sex as a rite of humiliation for inmates.⁵¹ Aleksandr Shugai was a thirty-year-old ethnic Russian who served in the Red Army, and he was captured in the first year of the war. He recalled with horror the memories of sexual violence he witnessed as an inmate at Darnitsa camp on the outskirts of Kiev, Ukraine:

As a witness to these events, I speak of one of the most terrible methods of taunting and torturing Jewish prisoners, particularly of [Jewish] women. In Darnitsa camp (near Kiev) there were women prisoners of war, the majority of them were medical personnel. Among the prisoners were also women of Jewish nationality. These latter the fascist torturers would strip naked and drive into a pit where undressed [Soviet] officers were waiting. Then [one by one] they led men and women from the pit and forced the men to humiliate the women, compelling the men to rape the naked women, who were specially [forced] to kneel on all fours. If the men refused to rape the women, fascist scoundrels forced sticks into the women’s vaginas, kicked them with their boots, and committed brutal reprisals [on the women]. All this took place publicly, before the eyes of prisoners

of war, to the particular satisfaction and delight of the fascist tormentors. Similar forms of humiliation took place during the entire period of my internment in the camp, and I personally witnessed all these horrors. It is difficult to find the words to describe the horrors of brutal tortures and humiliations [committed against] Soviet war prisoners.⁵²

Many of the prohibitions against sexual contacts between Germans and Jews seem to have been avoided by the tactic of raping Jewish women just prior to their executions. An eyewitness of a mass shooting operation in Belorussia testified: "I saw the Germans herd young girls into a shed next to the mass graves and rape them before shooting them."⁵³ At Skarzysko-Kamienna camp in Poland in 1944, "There were a lot of girls, beautiful girls. And they worked. And there was a selection one day. The Gestapo SS came and they took out a few Jewish girls, took them into the forest, and then they came back. They did what they had to do sexually and then they killed them."⁵⁴

Alternatively, German guards and their accomplices used physical and psychological intimidation against their victims to avoid punishment for violating the prohibitions against racial mixing. In Czechoslovakia, German officers selected unmarried Jewish girls specifically for their deflowering. Irene E. recalled: "They started asking us: Have you ever slept with men? We told the truth, you know: the one was married, and [I] said no. So they ask if we want to try. Nobody said a word. Nobody said a word. So the German said: *Wir such spielen?* Do you want to play? And another was standing far, not very far [away]. And was laughing to death. Laughing to death. . . . Well I had to do what he said. . . . And then I started bleeding." After the first officer had raped her, another German violated her with a stick. "Then I really, really wanted to die. I wasn't scared to die. I wasn't scared to die at all. And he said: if I ever say to somebody something, so he was going to kill me. So I didn't."⁵⁵

Outside of the camps, local bounty hunters exploited the sexual favors of Jewish women who hid from the Germans.⁵⁶ The vetting process to expose Jewish women hiding from the Germans was rife with sexual violence.

While hiding in the Czech town of Nitra, Eva S. was attacked by thugs from the fascist Hlinka Guard. She was hit repeatedly in the head by one of the men, forced to strip, and then beaten brutally with his baton. "[I was hit] twenty-five times on [my] bottom, and then twenty-five times behind my knee. . . . [He] then pulled me up, pushed me against the wall, pinched my breast. It hurt an awful lot. He kept saying, admit that you're Jewish. I wouldn't. He told [the other] soldiers to close the windows and put a silencer on [his] gun. He put it against my temple. '[This is] your last chance.' I said 'I'm not Jewish.' He pushed me down the stairs."⁵⁷

Far from releasing Jewish women from the horrors of sexual violence, their low status seems only to have encouraged greater frequency and intensity in sexual abuse.

II SCHOOL OF HATE: THE SOVIET RED
ARMY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

“. . . You cannot defeat an enemy without having learned to hate him from the bottom of your heart.”

—Joseph Stalin, May 1, 1942

If German gender violence was rooted largely in racial presumptions about Jewish or Slavic *Untermenschen*, Soviet violence seemed grounded in hate, a white-hot-burning desire for vengeance against German atrocities. It is impossible to understand Soviet sexual violence in Germany and other enemy nations of Central and Eastern Europe without a keen understanding of the Soviet experience of the war.

A lieutenant in the Soviet Red Army mobilized from West Siberia to the Ukrainian front in July 1941, Gerassimov, interviewed in 1942, recalled the moment he first really learned about German anti-civilian violence. On July 27, 1941, he saw his first action—a successful skirmish with German forces where his unit had managed to rout the enemy and capture fifteen German soldiers besides. “I remember it clearly as if it had only just happened. They were brought in looking frightened and pale. My men had cooled down already by then and each had brought the prisoners what he could spare: a bit of tobacco or a cigarette, some gave them tea.” This was war, but soldiers were soldiers. A veteran member of his unit warned ominously: “‘Wait till you see what they’re doing behind their own lines, how they treat our wounded men and civilians.’ Well, his words had about the same effect as if he’d poured a bucket of cold water over us.” The experience of war was, as Erich Heller later observed, a moment when reality surpassed imagination, when the most unimaginable cruelty became real. Nowhere was this more accurate than on the Eastern Front. Gerassimov continued:

Soon after that our troops launched an offensive and then we actually did see what they [the Germans] were doing . . . villages razed to the ground, hundreds of women, children and old folks shot, mutilated corpses of Red Army prisoners, women and girls, some only children, raped and then most brutally done to death. One case in particular sticks in my mind: it was a girl of about eleven. She must have been on her way to school when the Germans caught her, dragged her into a garden, raped and then killed her. There she lay among the crushed potato tops, a chit of a girl, a mere child, with her school-books lying all around bespattered with her blood. . . . Her face was frightful, gashed with saber cuts. She was still clutching her school-satchel. . . .⁵⁸

For Gerassimov, this was to be the beginning of his education in what Soviet writer Mikhail Sholokhov labeled a “school of hate.” The successful Soviet counter-offensive following the Battle of Moscow in late 1941 and early 1942



Figure 2. Ubiquitous scenes of sexual violence in Eastern zones. In village Tikhvino, the corpse of a seventeen-year-old girl, raped and murdered by the Nazis. The Soviet photographers had lowered her skirt to take the photograph.

Source: State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), Moscow.

proved to be the turning point, as Soviet soldiers witnessed first-hand the carnage wrought in zones occupied by the enemy just days before. They were

. . . near Ruzhin. At Skviri, the place of execution was in a gully. This was where the captured Red Army men had been tortured to death. You've most likely been in a butcher shop, haven't you? Well, that'll give you an idea of what this place looked like. . . .

The trunks of the bodies clotted with blood hung from the boughs of the trees growing in the gully. The hands and feet had been hacked off; and half the skin was flayed off. . . . The bodies of eight more men lay in a heap at the bottom of the gully. And you couldn't tell to which man the limbs belonged. It was just a pile of slaughtered flesh hacked into big pieces. And stacked on top of them, like plates, one fitting into the other, were eight Red Army trench caps. . . .⁵⁹

Wounded himself in September 1941, Gerassimov would serve the rest of the war driven by a desire for vengeance. By 1942, he was renowned—and respected among his peers—for his incandescent violence against the enemy. The Soviet world had been turned upside down.

In “Kill,” his most famous and oft-quoted article of the war, Soviet journalist Ilya Ehrenburg expressed the sentiment of horror and thirst for vengeance that united Soviet hearts and minds:

СМЕРТЬ НЕМЕЦКИМ ОККУПАНТАМ!

К СОВЕТСКИМ ЖЕНЩИНАМ ОККУПИРОВАННЫХ немцами областей

Дорогие сестры! Женщины и девушки!
Передаем вам горячий привет из столицы нашей Родины — города Москвы.
Святая русского народа — красавица Москва — переживает радостные дни. Недавно под Москвой Красная Армия одержала большую победу над немцами.

Жестокое сражение за Москву продолжалось 20 дней — с 16 ноября по 6 декабря. Для захвата Москвы кровавый Гитлер послал около миллиона своих солдат. Немцы наделись быстро окружить и взять Москву. У себя в Германии Гитлер уже трезвонил: «Немецкие солдаты смотрят на московские улицы в бинокли». Но Гитлер опять оскандальился. Его хвастливый план занять Москву провалился с треском. 6 декабря наши войска перешли в наступление и погнали немцев от Москвы.

За время боев под Москвой Красная Армия захватила и уничтожила более полутора тысяч немецких танков, более 6 тысяч автомашин, свыше 600 пушек, огромное количество минометов, пулеметов и другого оружия. Убитыми немецкая армия потеряла около 100.000 человек. Ранено свыше 300.000.

Победа под Москвой — это не первый удар Красной Армии по врагу. 29 ноября наши войска вышибли немцев из Ростова на Дону и отогнали их на несколько десятков километров. 9 декабря части Красной Армии выгнали немцев из Тихвина и Ельца, а 16 декабря — из города Калинин. В сражениях, которые были у этих городов, уничтожено много немецких солдат и захвачено много немецкого оружия.

Наступление наших войск продолжается. Каждый день войска Красной Армии освобождают от немецких захватчиков сотни населенных пунктов.

Весь советский народ радуется победам Красной Армии. Победы приближают час окончательного разгрома немцев и освобождения всех советских людей, оказавшихся под их игом.

Мы знаем, как тяжело, как трудно живется вам под властью немецких злодеев. Много зла и горя причиняют они вам.

ДОРОГИЕ СЕСТРЫ!

Мы знаем, как тяжело, как трудно живется вам под властью немецких злодеев. Много зла и горя причиняют они вам.

Немцы отбирают последний кусок хлеба у вас и ваших детей. Немцы суют свои поганые носы в ваши печки, горшки и кашушки. Немцы, как голодные псы, рыщут по чуланам, кладовкам и погребам.

Немцы забирают одежду и обувь, оставляя раздетыми вас и ваших детей. Награбленное в нашей стране добро немецкие солдаты отправляют в Германию.

Немцы наседуют наших женщин и девушек, заражают их венерическими болезнями, мучают их, а затем убивают. Посмотрите на снимок. Это жительница села Красная Слободка Наталья Стренадкина. Группа немецких бандитов изнасиловала ее, а затем убила и труп бросила в хлев.



Figure 3. "To Soviet Women in German Occupied Territory." This Soviet leaflet air-dropped on German-occupied Soviet civilian zones tells the story of the German rape and murder of a young woman. Her friend decides to become a woman sniper to avenge her friend's murder. The leaflet appeals to all Soviet women to rise up and "Avenge the German Occupation!"

Source: Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI), Moscow.

The Germans are not human beings. Henceforth the word German means to us the most terrible curse. From now on the word German will trigger your rifle. We shall not speak anymore. We shall not get excited. We shall kill. If you have not killed at least one German a day, you have wasted that day. If you cannot kill your German with a bullet, kill him with your bayonet. If there is a calm on your part of the front, or you are waiting for the fighting, kill a German before combat. If you leave a German alive, the German

will hang a Russian and rape a Russian woman. If you kill one German, kill another—there is nothing more amusing for us than a heap of German corpses. Do not count days; do not count miles. Count only the number of Germans you have killed. Kill the German—this is your old mother's prayer. Kill the German—this is what your children beseech you to do. Kill the German—this is the cry of your Russian earth. Do no waver. Do not let up. Kill. . . .⁶⁰

Such open calls for brutal reprisals against all Germans—soldiers and civilians, men and women—would facilitate the unleashing of a veritable tidal wave of reprisal violence against German non-combatants and their allies. In “A Soldier's Oath,” Aleksei Surkov passionately captured the Soviet thirst for revenge: “. . . my heart is burning with the tears of women and children. Hitler and his hordes will pay for those tears with their wolves' blood, for the avenger's hatred knows no mercy.”

Such heartfelt cries for blood vengeance against an implacable enemy were not merely the words of Russian journalists. In autumn 1944 as Soviet forces advanced westward towards Berlin, the newspaper *Soviet Fighter* (*Sovetskii Boets*) ran an essay contest on the question: “Why I want to kill every German.” Hundreds of soldiers submitted essays describing in vivid detail the “misfortunes that the Germans had perpetrated against them personally.”⁶¹ Their accounts underline one important theme: by 1944, Soviet soldiers were not fighting Stalin's war, nor Russia's war; they were fighting their own personal wars of vengeance against an enemy that had affected them all directly. We are talking here not about six degrees of separation, or even three degrees, but direct experience of an enemy each of them knew all too well.

Hatred was a message that seeped into the pores of Soviet soldiers fighting their way to Berlin, witnessing for themselves the aftermath of the brutal German occupation, hearing for themselves the cries of liberated peoples. One soldier wrote: “For the tears of my mother who raised me, for the tears of my own children, I will wreak an unrelenting vengeance on every fascist. I will avenge unto my last drop of strength until not a single armed Fritz remains alive. . . . I will carry out Comrade Stalin's command with honor.”⁶²

Staff sergeant of a Guards regiment Ivanov had been taken prisoner by the Germans for sixteen days. Faced with certain death by physical abuse and starvation, he escaped and rejoined his unit in 1943. “From the moment [when I rejoined my unit] my vengeance had already begun. For the sufferings of our people, for the agonies of our citizens, for the burned towns and villages. . . .”⁶³

Vasilii Turenko wrote: “I have traveled the route of battle from Stalingrad to the Donbas. I witnessed horrors, what the Germans had done. I saw things that have never been written in human history—such atrocities brought by the Germans.”⁶⁴ Red Army soldier Konstantin Tarasaev was a former member of a partisan band near Chernigov: “Several times they conducted raids on the youth. Three times I escaped from the hands of the fascist barbarians. For nearly a year

I hid in damp holes and barns, evading the fascists. Learning that I was hiding out, the fascist monsters arrested my mother, threatening that if I did not surrender to the German officials then they would shoot my mother. The fascists captured me and sent me under convoy into hard labor. There I saw how these two-legged beasts abused Soviet war prisoners. I personally took part in a prisoner escape. The fascist aggressors cannot ever be forgiven for this. They will be made to pay for their evil deeds.”⁶⁵

Medic Nikolai Krivenko wrote: “In winter 1944 when I hid away from my home so as not to fall into the hands of the fascists, they drove my young children and wife out of our apartment to live on the street, in the swamps. For all this I will get vengeance at the front.”⁶⁶

“For my wounds,” wrote Sergeant Khodarev, I will bash (*ugozhu*) a thousand Hitlerlites.”⁶⁷ “For one eye we will take four eyes, and for every Hitlerite slap we will answer with hundreds of strong and powerful punches.”⁶⁸

Soldier contacts with Soviet civilians in liberated zones brought stories from the German occupation. “I heard many stories of German atrocities from peaceful citizens in the course of our advance. The Germans showed particular malice towards Jews.”⁶⁹ Nikolai Kopodiaznyi from Sumskaia oblast’ was among those charged with removing the corpses of dead prisoners from a German prisoner-of-war camp in Khar’kiv. Then just sixteen years old, he wrote in 1944: “Wrenched with anger and malice, every person nurtures in his own heart a hatred for the enemy.”⁷⁰ Sergeant Aleksandr Sidorov wrote in the same angry tone: “I recall what happened in one Ukrainian village. We liberated the village, but we couldn’t find anyone. Searching through the entire village, we found just one injured seventy-year-old man, who had been cut down by a German bullet. It turned out that the Germans had killed every single person in the village, most of them had been shot. And old folks had been forced at gunpoint to mine the roads. I will never forget that village.”⁷¹

Besides firsthand experiences or stories from fellow countrymen in liberated zones, Soviet soldiers at the front also were haunted by concern for loved ones recently liberated by the Red Army. “Many, many families suffered the same way at the hands of the Germans. And my heart is . . . filled with grief for my grandfather and grandmother who remained in [German-]occupied territory of Soviet Moldavia. When we liberated my native town I did not find them alive—they had been killed by the Germans.”⁷² Sergeant Veniamin Nikishkin wrote in general terms: “The Germans tortured and shot millions of people who were guilty of nothing. Thousands of villages and towns were burned. The Hitlerites have perpetrated indescribable horrors against the Soviet people. Our people will never forgive this!” But Nikishkin’s horror was also quite personal: he had lost a brother who had been injured and then captured by the Germans, sent to a prison camp, then sent to his execution in a poison gas van. He was saved by escaping, and had written from a rear hospital—now an invalid, but alive.

Ivan Efreitor wrote of his father's brutal murder, his sister's rape. "These tears will not go unanswered, every Hiterlite will be made to pay for bringing such carnage to our holy land. I will make the Germans pay for killing my father."⁷³

Some soldiers wrote of their thirst for vengeance in poetic form. Guardsman M. N. Dement'ev submitted the following verse in pencil handwritten on a torn sheet of paper:

Vengeance

*My heart is filled with vengeance
I want to beat the Germans
For the death of my beloved brother
I vow vengeance on the enemy.
To avenge, to avenge without mercy
To avenge brutally, to avenge . . .*⁷⁴

Red Army soldier Grigorii Reznikov wrote: "When they arrived at my native city of Kirovograd, the fascist barbarians shot my father, mother, sister, and her baby. They took away everyone they found at home. Besides my parents, the Germans shot more than 500 others. I can never forgive such evil [perpetrated] by the Hiterlites. When I get to Berlin—the center of the fascist lair—I will find the ones guilty of shooting my parents and reckon with them in the same way as a cook cuts up potatoes."⁷⁵

Woman guards regiment soldier D'iats fought in the war from June 1941, leaving her own four-year-old son in the care of her mother, a local member of the Communist Party. Evacuated to Central Asia, her mother and son returned to their native village Golubovka, Sergovskii raion, Voroshilovgradskaia oblast' following the Moscow counter-offensive in April 1942. But by summer 1942, the village had once again fallen to the Germans—her mother was forced to live in the cellar of a bombed-out cottage, where she lost 75 percent of her sight from living in the dark. The Germans beat her grandfather almost to death while conducting a search of their home; he died soon after. Her father lost all of his sons, all but one grandson, and all of his nephews in the war. In all, there were thirteen members of her family before the German occupation; only four survived the war.

D'iats's four-year-old son lived throughout the German occupation in a barn, and watched silently as several of his friends bled to death after being cut for amusement by the German officers who lived in their family home. Returning to her village after liberation in 1943, her then seven-year-old son recounted all this to his mother.

I will never forget those frightened child's eyes filled with tears as my dear son Slavik recounted [all this] to me. I will never forget, and the thirst for vengeance that beats in my heart summons me towards retribution against this scum.

I have taken part in the liberation of many villages, hamlets, and towns. I have seen numerous monstrous atrocities. Liberating the town of Berdiansk . . . I found a thousand children's corpses in a vineyard—the Germans had shot them as they evacuated the town. The grapes were spattered with blood and despite my thirst, I could not raise my hands to eat the grapes. In village "Chernyi Voron," [Black Crow] Nikolaevskaia oblast' my comrades and I entered the area after driving away the Germans and found a burned-out village and charred corpses—there were old people, women and children. I will never forget, and I will never forgive these monsters for the charred corpse of a woman embracing to her breast an infant who was not more than a few months old.

One can describe many, many atrocities perpetrated by the Germans on our land. Let the heart of every soldier overflow with a fierce hatred and in the battles to come avenge all of their evil deeds.

Death to the German scum! Forward towards victory, we will raise the banner of victory over Berlin! Long live our dear (*rodnoi*) and beloved People's Commissar Comrade Stalin!⁷⁶

Driven with the passion for vengeance, Soviet soldiers perpetrated horrendous atrocities on women in the nations of the German allies. Besides a yearning for vengeance, there was also an overweening sense of entitlement among soldiers in the victorious Red Army—the presumption that with victory there came the rights of sexual use of conquered women. It is estimated that some two million women and girls were raped in East Germany alone in the early months following Soviet occupation.⁷⁷ Most of the violations were gang rapes, usually in front of German eyewitnesses—especially before the eyes of husbands, sons, and fathers.

The atrocities were not confined to rape: forced impregnation was a deliberate tactic so as to haunt German society for decades to come with Aryan-*Untermensch* mixed-blood children that would bear the unmistakable features of the Slavs and Central Asians. Likewise, German women were not just murdered, their bodies were often desecrated. Eyewitnesses recalled grisly scenes of women's naked bodies nailed spread-eagled on the sides of barns.⁷⁸

Soviet soldiers reserved especially brutal reprisals for women suspected of pro-German collaboration: "The Russians, after first raping them, cut off with knives the breasts of the women who had cohabited with the Germans." This usually followed ritualized scenes of humiliation where the women's heads were shaved, and then they were marched down local streets humiliated by jeers and insults from their former neighbors.⁷⁹

Our understanding of rape warfare as a category of violence in modern warfare has largely been viewed through the lens not of German abuses but rather of Soviet sexual violence perpetrated against German and East European "collaborationist" women in 1945. But the same reports were heard all over newly re-occupied zones

in Soviet Eastern Europe. The Saaremaa obkom in Estonia reported in March 1945: “There are numerous reports of [Red Army] soldiers assaulting isolated [Estonian] women in the country[side]. Only last week, some soldiers raped a woman on her way to the hospital to give birth, inflicting serious injuries on her husband as well, so that the couple later died in the hospital. Because the incidence of robberies, murders, and thefts [perpetrated by Soviet soldiers] is so high, the people are dispirited and no longer dare to live on isolated farms.”⁸⁰

From Latvia we have the account of Agate Nesaule’s *A Woman in Amber*, an award-winning memoir of her journey from war-torn Latvia through Germany and America. Recounted through the eyes of a child, we capture the horror of the Soviet occupation throughout Eastern Europe in 1944 and 1945:

After the [Soviet Red Army] soldiers had taken away all the men, they continued their search for valuables. They ordered all the suitcases opened and their contents dumped on the floor. They inspected women’s clothing and patted women’s bodies. . . . When Hilda fumbled with her buttons, they slapped her and screamed at her. Then two soldiers started to pull her behind a partition. . . .

I could hear Hilda moaning, then the grunts, laughter and jeering of the soldiers. Then more grunts. Grinning soldiers crowded around the partition. Hilda shrieked a couple of times, thuds followed, and she subsided to a whimper. Finally she made no sound. . . .

All the other women without children were eventually dragged behind the partition. They begged, cried, implored, prayed. They struggled until slaps and blows stopped them. They pleaded pregnancy, claimed sickness, feigned madness, showed nausea, clung to posts, fell to their knees, called for their mothers, prayed to God. Nothing helped. Grunts, laughter, thuds, slaps, cries of pain and more grunts continued.⁸¹

Since all the terrifying action up till then had taken place behind a partition, the seven-year-old Nesaule felt an ambiguous horror of a child fearing the mysterious, threatening unknown. But then, her imagination was transformed into an even more terrible reality:

Once the soldiers pushed a woman down on the floor in front of the partition and tore at her clothes. A soldier fell on her, grunting and rooting. My mother tried to keep me from seeing, but it was too late. In a flash, I understood it all—the pleas of the women, the grunts of the soldiers, the way they could use an umbrella to kill a woman. *The terror of every woman and girl there was also my own.*⁸²

In the Soviet western borderlands, just as in occupied Germany, during the early months of Soviet occupation every contact between a Soviet and a civilian was mediated by the palpable threat of violence. In her own way, every woman and girl in these occupied zones had her own personal epiphany, her own discovery of seven-year-old Agate Nesaule’s horror. Such moments would leave an indelible mark on local collective memory and forever undermine the legitimacy of Soviet power in occupied Eastern Europe.⁸³

Traditionally, historians have interpreted mass rape and gender abuse after the war as the product of the lack of discipline within the Red Army, of the hunger for reprisals, or just soldiers' blowing off steam. But the truth is that Soviet soldiers sought every means available to avenge German wrongs. Soviet soldiers shared a visceral understanding of the power to rape, to avenge real or imagined wrongs on the bodies of German women. As Gerda Lerner perceptively noted in her path-breaking study of female subordination during wartime: "The impact on the conquered of the rape of conquered women was twofold: it dishonored the women and by implication served as a symbolic castration of their men. Men in patriarchal societies who cannot protect the sexual purity of their wives, sisters, and children are truly impotent and dishonored."⁸⁴ Hence, the Soviet tendency to rape in public, before witnesses: women and girls were ravaged as their menfolk and neighbors stood by watching, helplessly.

Women's Survival Strategies in War Zones

Surrounded by ubiquitous rape and the probability of repeated sexual violence, some German women inevitably opted to trade sexual favors for protection and sustenance. Journalist Marta Hillers kept a diary of the first eight weeks of the Soviet occupation in Berlin. That diary is perhaps the greatest source we have chronicling how women cope with sexual violence during war.⁸⁵ At first, armed with a bit of Russian from her travels in the 1930s, Hillers was optimistic: "I have to relearn everything I've been taught about women in war."⁸⁶ So she tried to mediate between terrified Germans and the victorious Russians. "I feel some of my fear beginning to dissipate. It turns out that Russian men, too, are 'only men'—i.e., presumably they're as susceptible as other men to feminine wiles, so it's possible to keep them in check, to distract them, to shake them off."⁸⁷ Her sense of empowerment proved to be little more than illusion. Gang raped twice by two different units of Red Army soldiers during the first night of occupation in her war-ravaged neighborhood, Hillers thought she had found respite in the arms of a Red Army private named Petka, who whispered love and brought gifts of food and other scarce items. But when she was raped again while her friends and neighbors hid trembling behind a locked door, Hillers withdrew into herself: "And now I'm sitting here at our kitchen table. I've just refilled my pen and am writing, writing, writing all this confusion out of my head and heart. Where will this end? What will become of us? I feel so slimy, I don't want to touch anything, least of all my own skin. . . . My true self simply leaving my body behind, my poor, besmirched, abused body. Breaking away and floating off, unblemished, into a white beyond. It

can't be me that this is happening to, so I'm expelling it all from me."⁸⁸ But her efforts to deny and then escape reality were futile. Raped a fourth time in less than forty-eight hours, this time in a particularly brutal and humiliating fashion (the rapist scowled at her as he drooled spit into her open mouth), Hillers had an epiphany: "What does it mean—rape? When I said the word for the first time aloud, . . . it sent shivers down my spine. Now I can think it and write it with an untrembling hand, say it aloud to get used to hearing it said. It sounds like the absolute worst, the end of everything—but it's not."⁸⁹ And then, her decision: "Damn it all to hell! I say it out loud. Then I make up my mind. No question about it: I have to find a single wolf to keep away the pack. An officer, as high-ranking as possible, a commandant, a general, whatever I can manage."⁹⁰ Empowered by "doing something, planning something, determined to be more than mere booty, a spoil of war," Hillers went out into the Berlin streets in search of a Soviet officer. "All my feelings seem dead, except for the drive to live. They shall not destroy me."⁹¹ This too proved to be an illusion—first in the person of a gentle Ukrainian lieutenant, then a Russian major and his entourage. Haunted by self-loathing for "the filth I am now," Hillers shut herself down: "And frigid is what I've been during these encounters. It can't be otherwise, nor should it be; as long as I'm nothing more than a spoil of war I intend to stay dead and numb, without feeling."⁹²

Faced by the ever-present threat of brutal and repeated sexual violence, German women developed strategies to discourage their potential assailants. Many moved to dwellings on higher floors: would-be rapists seemed disinclined to climb the steps beyond the fourth floor. Limiting their time on public streets, some women disguised themselves as old women or boys. Others rendered themselves undesirable by permanently scarring themselves with knives, or smearing themselves with soot, mud, dirt, or animal or human excrement. Others packed rags with blood between their legs to feign menstruation. Some clung to their children in the hope that this might discourage their would-be attackers.⁹³

*'War within the War: Ethnic Nationalist
Partisans and Sexual Violence*

Adding to Soviet violence was the enormous role played by ethnic partisan reprisals that skyrocketed in the wake of the collapse of authority with the German departure and the advance of the Soviet front toward the west. Descriptions of the horrific scenes of gender violence left over from ethnic nationalist brutality defy explanation. As Waldemar Lotnik, a Polish partisan in

southeastern Poland, recalled: "Special treatment was always meted out to women. Rape is the male conqueror's instinctive privilege, his way of defiling and possessing his victim, and killing and sex are thus intertwined. . . . The naked remains of women often showed signs of mutilation—their vaginas had usually been slit open. Even small girls had been carved with knives and bayonets."⁹⁴ Though he was a Polish partisan, Lotnik made it clear that such descriptions could be applied equally to the carnage inflicted by both sides, ethnic Ukrainian and ethnic Polish: "The ethnic Ukrainians responded by wiping out an entire Polish colony, setting fire to the houses, killing those inhabitants unable to flee and raping the women who fell into their hands, no matter how old or young. This had been the pattern of their behaviour east of the Bug [River], where tens of thousands of Poles had been either expelled or murdered. We retaliated by attacking an even bigger Ukrainian village and . . . killed women and children. Some of [our men] were so filled with hatred after losing whole generations of their family in the Ukrainian attacks that they swore they would take an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. . . . This was how the fighting escalated. Each time more people were killed, more houses burnt, more women raped."⁹⁵

With the collapse of German authority in occupied zones, and the frenzied advance of Soviet soldiers toward Berlin, Central and Eastern Europe during the late-war and early postwar eras degraded into zones of lawlessness, where crime, banditry, and ethnic-based civil war further escalated forms and intensity of sexual violence. Even Soviet partisan units were regularly implicated in excessive violence. Major of Soviet State Security Kirill Orlov summarized his unsuccessful effort to maintain discipline among irregular partisan units in his debriefing on September 24, 1943: "In every village there were cases of drunkenness, pillaging, the raping of women, murder, arson against farmsteads and villages at the hands of bandit groups which, disguised as partisans, systematically terrorized the local population and in the same way undermined [the work] of people's avengers—[true] partisans." In Orlov's view, these bandits "intimidated and repulsed peasants from aiding the partisans in their struggle."⁹⁶ Martin Gilbert wrote of a "plague of rape" perpetrated by partisans in the Soviet Union: "armed groups of former Soviet soldiers, escaped prisoners-of-war, 'attacked Jewish bunkers in order to take defenseless Jewish women.'"⁹⁷

Soviet partisan commander Aleksei Fedorov reported from Volhynia in February 1944: "Every commander, commissar or lieutenant has his own [camp] 'wife' or lover, with whom he sleeps. Almost every 'wife' is pregnant."⁹⁸ Polish Jew Bronka Ch. (b. 1925) was one such "wife." Having escaped from the Warsaw ghetto, eighteen-year-old Bronka managed to join a group of Jews hiding out in the forests of eastern Poland. "We had to be in the forest. We were

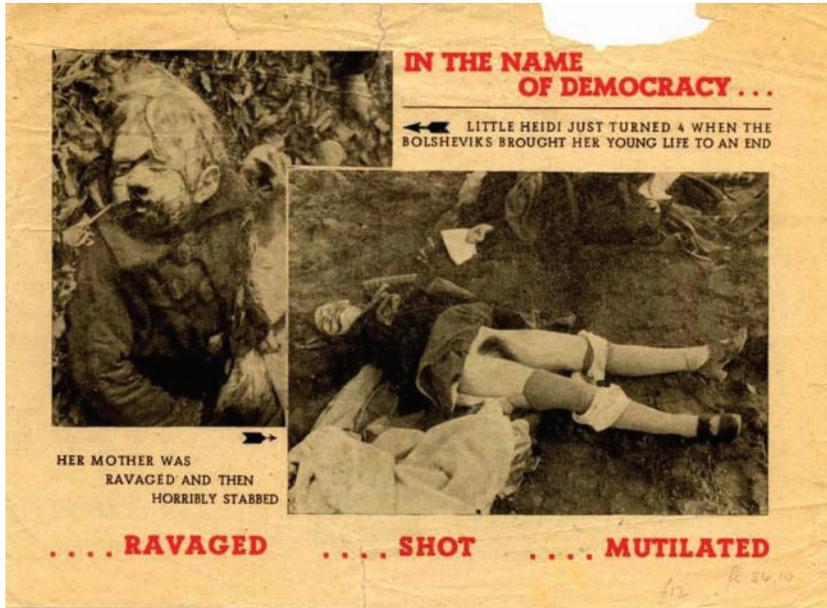


Figure 4. German propaganda leaflet dropped on US and British forces on the Western Front in Europe, 1945. The leaflet depicts Soviet sexual violence against women and children as a tactic for dividing the allies.

Source: Museum of World War Two (Natick).

running day and night, night and day. We lived hour to hour.” Since she spoke fluent Polish and because her appearance allowed her to pass as a non-Jew, she managed to escape violence from both the Germans and the Poles; but not from Soviet partisans. “The Russian partisans did not give a damn that we were Jews. . . . If it was a woman or a girl then they had to use her. A man they let him go.”

Over the course of eighteen months, Bronka was raped multiple times by multiple perpetrators. “I endured everything that a woman could endure, a young girl in those days. Everything. There is nothing that was no. Everything was yes, I did it. It had to be done because I could have been shot many times, killed by them.” Bronka got pregnant in 1944, and gave birth to the child in 1945—after liberation. But the baby died of starvation after ten weeks. By then a war refugee in Kursk, Bronka decided to become a prostitute to survive. But she was so sickly and emaciated that she could not attract any customers. Soon after, she suffered a complete physical and emotional breakdown.⁹⁹

Such individual stories accumulated into a serious wave of violent crime in postwar Soviet territories that had been occupied by the Germans. The lawlessness

was reflected in Soviet aggregate statistics, which tracked an astounding 547 percent increase in the incidence of social banditry in the region, 1940–1947. During the same period, the incidence of armed robbery and brigandage grew by 236 percent. Most of this growth of all forms of violence was concentrated in the immediate postwar period, 1944–1947.¹⁰⁰

III OCCUPATION VERSUS LIBERATION: THE HERMENEUTICS OF RAPE WARFARE

“In war women have to do things they wouldn’t dream about in peacetime. We all have to survive.”

—Woman refugee from West Ukraine, June 1945¹⁰¹

Distinct and divergent perspectives of winners and losers seem to have profoundly influenced the filters through which we view and understand wartime sexual violence. The fact is that even as their gender makes women and girls especially vulnerable to particularly heinous forms of wartime violence, so too does women’s sexuality empower them in the wartime and postwar struggle to survive: Faced with the very real threats of ubiquitous violence and imminent starvation, some women chose to exploit their sexuality as a survival strategy. In this way, gender offered women and girls opportunities for survival not generally available to men and boys.¹⁰²

According to the tendentious and impressionistic recollection of Nat Frankel of Patton’s Fourth Armored Division, the typical American soldier who landed at Normandy and fought his way across Europe to victory in Berlin eleven months later could “boast” an average of twenty-five sexual conquests.¹⁰³ The standard image in American culture is that of grateful European women and girls who offered themselves up to the victorious American GIs one lustful interlude at a time. But Frankel’s own account reveals a distinct political economy of rape warfare: of European (especially German) women desperate to provide for themselves and their families who traded sexual favors for access to food and security: “Present-day Europe is full of respectable, petty-bourgeois women who have, at least once in their lives, flung back their legs for the price of a loaf of bread. But who’s to judge? Many of them I saw were completely incapable of playing the role of whore with any conviction. I remember one whore in particular. We were deep in Germany, and I asked her if her husband was still alive. . . . She just looked at me. She wasn’t waiting. She was just looking, just looking. Sex can be jagged glass.”¹⁰⁴ Frankel added: “Few of them were, I might add, prostitutes. . . . One must remember the situation of the participants. Most of the women we had were—contrary to the popular portrait of hungry, hot French girls running away from their shopkeeper fathers—Germans, women who in many cases hadn’t seen their husbands or lovers in five years. . . . If

you're a decent fellow, you demand a lot of love and you get it. If you're a pig, the girl is unlucky but can't say no anyway."¹⁰⁵ American soldiers wanted to believe in their own irresistible virility, but on the edge of consciousness was that nagging tug of understanding: This is rape. As Frankel himself admitted: "Watch her face; she alternatively opens and closes her eyes, sometimes in ecstasy, more often in a desperate attempt to grasp this essentially ungraspable situation. And she stares at you with the slightest hint of guilt in her eyes—or is that knitted brow simply the knowledge, flowing into her mind like you into her body, of what she herself must mean to you, a man whose name she'll not remember?"¹⁰⁶

Based on a close study of military court records of 14,000 rapes perpetrated by American soldiers against civilian women in the United Kingdom, France, and Germany between 1942 and 1945, criminologist J. Robert Lilly has presented impressionistic testimonies like Frankel's against the background of solid empirical evidence.¹⁰⁷ Lilly has confirmed what *Time Magazine* reported in September 1945: "Our own army and the British army along with ours have done their share of looting and raping . . . we too are considered an army of rapists."¹⁰⁸

"German Hens:" *Les Poules au Boches*

Survival and opportunity are both key motivating factors that raise the specter not of hoarding armies brutally raping and murdering local women for their own pleasure but of women and girls offering themselves up to enemy soldiers. Certainly, there lies imbedded in the hierarchy of foreign military occupation an explicit and ubiquitous threat of violence, of the tacit knowledge in the minds of local women that these soldiers can take whatever they want with impunity. But there is that other delicate artifact of wartime popular culture: of local women who willingly offer themselves up to the enemy.

After the war, such women are generally excoriated as "sexual collaborators" who provided the enemy with warmth and comfort. My point here is not to brand such women but to identify that this too is an intrinsic part of wartime sexual violence: There are some women who die resisting rape, while there are others who accept the inevitability of their fate and learn to cooperate with it as a survival strategy. And it is these women who in Europe became the targets of a particular brand of popular reprisals after the war.

We know very little about the fate of women "sexual collaborators" following World War II. In parts of Western Europe (especially France and Belgium), women accused of providing comfort to the enemy were known as *Les Poules au Boches*, or "German Hens": They were subjected to public rituals of humiliation—a sort of carnivalesque lampoon of their "betrayal" that followed distinct local rules and procedures. In most cases, the women were hounded or kidnapped from their homes and forced to march in impromptu parades,

performing symbolic gestures of collaboration along the way: saluting the “Heil Hitler,” re-enacting their particular forms of collaboration (sexual or otherwise), singing German songs, all to the raucous cheers of appreciative crowds. Almost universally, such women were subjected to public excoriation through head shaving—a rite of violence that was borrowed from the anathematization of women and girls for “cavorting with evil” as witches in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe: “Those convicted of harmful sorcery as well as ‘those who offer nocturnal sacrifices to demons and sinfully invoke them by impious prayers . . . will receive 200 lashes in public; they shall be shamefully shorn, and in this state, be forced to traverse the ten villages neighboring their homes, so that their example will serve as a correction to others.’”¹⁰⁹

In France, these rites of humiliation often crossed over from caricature to brutality. Historian Fabrice Virgili has estimated that some twenty to twenty-five thousand French women were subjected to ritualized shearing and other humiliations following liberation.¹¹⁰ An eyewitness description of a procession of such “sexual collaborators” provides the typical rowdy atmosphere:

Near to the metro stop Danube (19th *arrondissement* of Paris), a crowd was following a woman who was entirely naked. Her head had been completely shaved, and on her breast two swastikas tattooed in Indian ink. I trembled at the idea that this woman would no longer be able to undress herself in front of a man without showing the shame that was on her body. On her back she also had tattooed a portrait of Hitler. The crowd which was out of control were throwing stones at her, pushing her and insulting her.¹¹¹

The “shaved head was a sign of expiatory punishment”; the tattoos a lifetime reminder of the woman’s alleged betrayal.¹¹² (See Figures 5 and 6)

The same logic of public excoriation appeared in other cultures. In the Soviet Union, for instance, local women who were found to have worked in German military bordellos were often subjected to ritualized vigilante attacks: Usually their heads were shaved and their naked skin was tarred so that their bodies would forever bear the scars of their wartime collaboration.¹¹³

Working in postwar Soviet-occupied East Germany, psychologist Erika Hoerning has argued that while German women who had suffered rape at the hands of Soviet soldiers in 1945 were by and large loyal to their men, and did not blame them for the violence they had suffered, the men were in denial and often accused their abused and terrorized women of fraternizing with the enemy, a contemporary equivalent of victimizing the victim of rape twice: terrorized by Soviet forces, the rape victim was in turn ostracized by her family and community.¹¹⁴ A Ruhr metal worker later recalled the burning words of an African-American soldier stationed in Germany: “The German soldiers fought for six years, the German women for only five minutes.”¹¹⁵ The woman’s implied “consent” to be a victim of violence (exemplified by the fact that she lived to tell the



Figure 5. A French woman who co-habited with a German officer is shorn of her hair in liberated Paris, 1944.

Source: American GI's scrapbook, Museum of World War Two (Natick).

tale rather than dying in the struggle to save her virtue) meant ipso facto that she had collaborated with her perpetrator, and deserved not compassion but disdain. Perry Biddiscombe found that returning Wehrmacht soldiers after the war often took part in vigilante violence against German women suspected of sexual relations with non-German men. Germany's social and cultural collapse "provided a special catalyst for the puritanical anger and resentments of local men, and this was reflected in a rate of anti-fraternization violence—mainly beatings and haircuttings. . . ."116

In Scandinavia, where the Nazis identified northern Europeans as "nearly Aryans," the German occupying authorities organized *Lebensborn* maternity homes to care for non-German mothers and their Aryan offspring. Here and elsewhere throughout postwar Europe, there were marked efforts to punish or ostracize the offspring of occupation soldiers (*Wehrmachtskinder*, *enfants des Boches*, etc.) as "hidden enemies."¹¹⁷

I would add that the same ambivalence applied to war brides. Postwar cultures are intrinsically suspicious of love relationships with foreign soldiers that



Figure 6. A parade of “sexual collaborators” in liberated Holland, 1944. From the scrapbook of an American GI.

Source: Museum of World War Two (Natick).

originate during war, and local women are often branded as sexual opportunists who cashed in on their sexuality to escape the dreary hardships of wartime and postwar occupations.¹¹⁸

CONCLUSION THE LEGACIES OF WARTIME SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence was an intrinsic part of war throughout Europe during and immediately following World War II. Race, ethnicity, shattered soldiers’ morale, ethnic conflict, collaboration, desperation, and opportunity were all factors in the complex calculus of violence that characterized each community’s experience of war.¹¹⁹ This was especially true of sexual violence, where distinct and divergent perspectives of winners and losers also seemed to have profoundly influenced the filters through which we view and understand wartime sexual violence.

And the lives of women victims who survived sexual violence during World War II? The most common feature that unifies all studies of the trajectories of women’s lives after sexual violence is their silence, their unwillingness to speak. The foremost American psychiatric expert on women and sexual trauma, Dr. Judith Lewis Herman, has observed: “The ordinary response to atrocities is

to banish them from consciousness. . . . Atrocities, however, refuse to be buried. . . . To speak about [violent] experiences in sexual or domestic life was to invite public humiliation, ridicule and disbelief."¹²⁰

Alaine Polcz, a nineteen-year-old ethnic Hungarian woman from Transylvania, was haunted by memories of gang rape hundreds of times by Soviet soldiers in 1945. Dr. Polcz, a noted Hungarian child psychologist, remained silent about the traumatic events of 1945 for more than forty years, until publication of her shocking memoir in Hungary in 1991. One of the most vivid and poignant moments in her heart-wrenching memoir is her account of a recurring dream:

I want to recount a dream that haunts me in several variations since that time.

I am fleeing, the Russians are running after me. My legs seem made of lead, I have difficulty running, but I have to keep accelerating because they will catch up with me. A leafy, large tree. I clamber up, I fall back. They are already in my tracks; I can see their faces, their glances. Somehow I climb back up the tree. I keep climbing, I do not fall back, but they are also up on the tree behind me. I crawl out on a branch ever higher, rather ever closer to its tip. I fall and hit the ground. I race along. I reach a wall. I climb up on the wall between the slots of the bricks to reach the top. My nails tear as the Russians jerk me back. I am running again, into a house. I flee back and forth inside the house. I go across attics, cellars, through doors, windows. They catch up with me. I run into a lavatory, I lock the door behind me. I know they will break it in, but I have a second or two until then. I stand on top of the toilet, I reach into the tank, I know it contains a weight. I want to take it out and hit my head with it and shatter my skull. But by then they break the door in. The weight is in my hand. A Russian comes toward me, I want to hit him in the head. At that moment I wake up, sweating; I feel my heart throbbing in the corners of my eyes, I am suffocating, gasping for breath.

I had this dream for many years. It is beginning to fade now. But I am still wandering about in houses and fleeing, and the Russians are still opening doors on me and crawling through windows. I am now realizing, as I write this, that I shall always be apprehensive when a door stands ajar—who will come through it and pounce on me and take me away or deck me, hit me?¹²¹

In ways that we are only beginning to understand, wartime sexual violence on a mass scale in occupied and liberated Europe left deep physical and emotional scars on the women victims as well as on their loved ones who stood by, watched their suffering, and could do nothing.¹²²

NOTES

1. Willy Peter Reese, *A Stranger to Myself: The Inhumanity of War: Russia, 1941–1944* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2003), 149.

2. On the escalation of German violence in the East versus the West, see Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941–1945: German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (London: Macmillan, 1985); Idem., *Hitler's Army* (New York: Oxford University Press,

1992), 68–70; Truman Anderson, “The Conduct of Reprisals by the German Army of Occupation in the Southern USSR, 1941–1943” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1994), 176; and Ben Shepherd, *War in the Wild East: The German Army and Soviet Partisans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

3. The classic works on the Eastern war were prepared by wartime American intelligence officers who relied heavily on tendentious German intelligence officers’ accounts of the war in Soviet zones. There is therefore no indication of a Holocaust that killed some 2.8 million Soviet Jews or of a ruthless German occupation policy that killed more than 11 million Soviet non-Jewish civilians. See Gerald Reitlinger, *The House Built on Sand: The Conflicts of German Policy in Russia, 1939–1945* (New York: Viking, 1960); and Aleksandr Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941–1945: A Study of Occupation Policies*, 2d rev. ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1981).

4. Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941–1945*, 29.

5. For classic Soviet accounts, see “Molotov’s Note on German Atrocities in Occupied Soviet Territory” (January 6, 1942); *Comrade Genia: A Story of a Victim of German Bestiality in Russia as Told by Herself* (London: Nicholson & Watson, n.d.); and *Soviet Documents on Nazi Atrocities: Illustrated by Some 200 Original Photographs* (London and New York: Hutchinson & Co., 1942) [Issued by the Press Department of the Soviet Embassy in London.] More recently, the best study chronicling the extraordinary range of German sexual atrocities in the East is the thesis by Wendy Jo Gertjejjansen, “Victims, Heroes, Survivors: Sexual Violence on the Eastern Front during World War II” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 2004). The dissertation is based almost entirely on German archives, supplemented by the limited selection of materials available at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum copied from the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), f. R-7021 the Soviet State Extraordinary Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating the Crimes Committed by the German-Fascist Invaders and Their Accomplices.

6. For the text, see Steve Hochstadt, ed., *Sources of the Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 44.

7. Gisela Bock, *Zwangssterilisation im Nationalsozialismus: Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik* (Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1986). Gisela Bock, “Antinatalism, Maternity and Paternity in National Socialist Racism,” in *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s–1950s*, ed. Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (New York: Routledge, 1991), 233–55; Gabriele Czarowski, *Das kontrollierte Paar: Ehe- und Sexualpolitik im Nationalsozialismus* (Weinheim, Germany: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1991); Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920–1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Patricia Szobar, “Telling Sexual Stories in the Nazi Courts of Law: Race Defilement in Germany, 1933 to 1945,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (January/April 2002): 131–63.

8. Birthe Kundrus, “Forbidden Company: Romantic Relationships between Germans and Foreigners, 1939–1945,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (January–April 2002): 205. On Nazi sexual policies, see Dagmar Herzog, ed. *Sexuality and German Fascism* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004); Elizabeth D. Heineman, “Sexuality and Nazism: The Doubly Unspeakable?” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (January/April 2002): 22–66.

In this article, I will not discuss Reich efforts to proscribe the activities of homosexuals. On this theme, see Geoffrey J. Giles, “‘The Most Unkindest Cut of All’: Castration,

Homosexuality and Nazi Justice," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27, no. 1 (1991): 41–61.

9. Quoted in Kundrus, "Forbidden Company," 206.

10. This and the preceding were drawn from Kundrus, "Forbidden Company," 207.

11. Gertjejanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors," 10.

12. Gertjejanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors," 63.

13. On *Einsatzfrauen*, see Nils Johan Ringdal, *Love for Sale: A World History of Prostitution* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 325–26. See also Franz Seidler, *Prostitution, Homosexualität, Selbstverstümmelung: Probleme der deutschen Sanitätsführung 1939–1945* (Neckargemünd, Germany: Kurt Vowinkel Verlag, 1977); Christa Paul, *Zwangsprostitution: staatlich errichtete Bordelle im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, Germany: Hentrich, 1994); Annette F. Timm, "Sex with Purpose: Prostitution, Venereal Disease, and Militarized Masculinity in the Third Reich," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (January/April 2002): 223–55; and Christl Wickert, "Das große Schweigen.' Zwangsprostitution im Dritten Reich," *WerkstattGeschichte* 13 (1996): 90–95. Here, Nazi policy in military brothels for soldiers on leave from the front was comparable in most ways to the Japanese "comfort women," with one exception: whereas the Japanese relied on staffing these brothels with local "enemy" women (Chinese, Korean, etc.) as forced prostitutes, the Germans preferred to avoid any official precedent supporting intimate relations between Aryans and non-Aryans. On Japanese prostitution, see Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Comfort Women*, expanded 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and George L. Hicks, *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War* (New York: Norton, 1997).

14. Ringdal, *Love for Sale*, 325.

15. As quoted in Julia Roos, "Backlash against Prostitutes' Rights: Origins and Dynamics of Nazi Prostitution Policies," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (January/April 2002): 67–94.

16. Gertjejanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors," 122, 167.

17. Seidler, *Prostitution, Homosexualität, Selbstverstümmelung*, 187, as cited in Gertjejanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors," 373. For a mind-numbing series of sanitation efforts that would have dampened soldiers' enthusiasm for state-run brothels, see Gertjejanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors," 202–204.

18. Ringdal, *Love for Sale*, 326.

19. Ringdal, *Love for Sale*, 325.

20. Quoted in Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2004), 187.

21. *Ibid.*, 187.

22. See the discussion in Gertjejanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors," 161.

23. Andrei Vasil'chenko, *Seks v Tret'em reikhe* (Moscow: Iauza, 2005).

24. From documents transcribed and reprinted in "Arkhiv. Na okkupirovannykh territoriiakh," *Kommersant Vlast'* no. 29 (July 24, 2001) and no. 30 (July 31, 2001).

25. Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads'kykh ob'iednan' Ukraïny (TsDAHOU) [Kiev, Ukraine], f. 1, op. 23, d. 905.

26. Testimony of L. Legek, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, RG-31.018M *Postwar war crimes trials related to the Holocaust, 1945–1970*, Roll 39, Interrogation Transcript dated February 23, 1971, l. 22. (Arkhiv SBU (Kiev), 20404, Ugolovnoe delo No. 40, t. 17).

27. Interrogation transcript of Staff Sergeant Flora Lup, of the Second Division in the Rumanian Army, dated May 4, 1943. GARF, R-7021, op. 148, d. 39, ll. 4–5. I am grateful to Jared McBride for bringing this document to my attention.

28. Interrogation transcript of Aleksandr Muntianu, of the First Infantry Battalion in the Rumanian Army, dated May 9, 1943. GARF, R-7021, op. 148, d. 39, ll. 8–9. I am grateful to Jared McBride for bringing this document to my attention.

29. The interrogation transcript was dated September 20, 1942, and transcribed in Gennadii Bordiugov, comp. “Prestuplenie i raskaianie. Chuvstvo viny soznatel’no i bessoznatel’no presledovalo nemetskikh soldat i ofitserov,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta* no. 111 (June 22, 2001).

30. Testimony of N. P. Kulik, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, RG-31.018M, Roll 38, Interrogation Transcript dated May 11, 1971, l. 16. (Arkhiv SBU (Kiev), 20404, Ugolovnoe delo No. 40, t. 16).

31. Testimony of Natal’ia Kvach, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, RG-31.018M, Roll 39, Interrogation Transcript dated February 23, 1971, l. 201. (Arkhiv SBU (Kiev), 20404, Ugolovnoe delo No. 40, t. 16).

32. On 1 million German-fathered babies in Ukraine, see Oleg Zarubinsky, “Collaboration of the Population in Occupied Ukrainian Territory: Some Aspects of the Overall Picture,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 10, no. 2 (1997): 138–52. This estimate has been challenged in recent scholarship. See Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg, Germany: Hamburger Edition, 1999); and Dieter Pohl, *Die Herrschaft der Wehrmacht Deutsche Militärbesatzung und einheimische Bevölkerung in der Sowjetunion 1941–1944* (Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008), 133.

33. On forced sterilization campaigns, see Gisela Bock, “Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State,” in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Carol Ann Rittner and John K. Roth (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 161–86. Pending further research, we have no way of explaining the apparent discrepancy between the comparatively limited number of sterilizations versus the very large number of forced workers from the East.

34. Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. R-7445, op. 2, d. 96, l. 136. On German policies towards German offspring of mixed blood in the East, see Regina Mühlhäuser, “Between Extermination and Germanization: Children of German Men in the ‘Occupied Eastern Territories’ 1942–1945,” in *Children of World War II: The Hidden Enemy Legacy*, ed. Kjersti Ericsson and Eva Simonsen (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005), 167–89.

35. Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut: das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen, Germany: Wallstein, 2003).

36. Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941–1945*, 29, 116.

37. See the case study of one of the few Wehrmacht soldiers convicted of sexual war crimes in the East: Yehoshua R. Büchler, “‘Unworthy Behavior’: The Case of SS Officer Max Täubner,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 2003 17, no. 3 (Winter 2003): 409–29.

38. Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 80; and David Raub Snyder, *Sex Crimes under the Wehrmacht* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

39. Birgit Beck, “Rape: The Military Trials of Sexual Crimes Committed by Soldiers in the Wehrmacht, 1939–1944,” in *Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum

(New York and Oxford: Berg, 2002), 262. See also Birgit Beck, *Wehrmacht und sexuelle Gewalt: Sexualverbrechen vor deutschen Militärgerichten 1939–1945* (Paderborn, Germany: Schöningh, 2004); Idem., “Sexual Violence and Its Prosecution: Courts Martial of the Wehrmacht,” in *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction, 1937–1945*, ed. Roger Chickering et al. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

40. Vera Laska, “Women in the Resistance and in the Holocaust,” in *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Carol Ann Rittner and John K. Roth (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 250–69; Beck, “Rape”; and Gertjejanssen, “Victims, Heroes, Survivors,” 154–55.

41. Narcisa Lengel-Krizman, “A Contribution to the Study of Terror in the So-called Independent State of Croatia: Concentration Camps for Women in 1941–1942,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 20 (1990): 15.

42. The ratio of Germans to local collaborators in many departments and police organizations in the East ran from one to five in 1941 to one to twenty or more by 1943. Figures from the Reichskommissariat (Ukraine) show the SS employed some 15,000 Germans and 238,000 native police at the end of 1942, reflecting a ratio of nearly one to sixteen, a rate that rose to 1:25 or even 1:50 in some regions by 1944. See Raul Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1960), 243–44. Cf. Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–44* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999); Richard Breitman, “Himmler’s Police Auxiliaries in the Occupied Soviet Territories,” *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual* 7 (1990): 23–39; and Erich Haberer, “The German Police and Genocide in Belorussia, 1941–1944,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 3, no. 1 (2001): 13–29; no. 2: 207–18; no. 3: 391–403.

43. Myrna Goldenberg, “Sex, Rape, and Survival: Jewish Women and the Holocaust,” <http://www.theverylongview.com/WATH/essays/sexrapesurvival.htm>.

44. Eyewitness testimony of a twenty-three-year-old Polish inmate, Slonina, about Gusen (Mauthausen) Concentration Camp, December 26, 1944. NARA, RG263 Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Entry ZZ-20 Select Documents of the Office of Strategic Services Released under the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, 1941–1948, Box 1, Document 9.

45. Laska, “Women in the Resistance and in the Holocaust,” 266. See also Jonathan C. Friedman, *Speaking the Unspeakable: Essays on Sexuality, Gender, and Holocaust Survivor Memory* (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 2002), 41–71. On sexual slavery inside the German concentration camps, see Gertjejanssen, “Victims, Heroes, Survivors,” 226–52.

46. Quoted in Friedman, *Speaking the Unspeakable*, 56.

47. Quoted in Friedman, *Speaking the Unspeakable*, 58.

48. Interview with Lucyna W. B., USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education (<http://college.usc.edu/vhi>, hereafter, VHE), VHE interview code 22640 (English).

49. The account of Lilya S. Gleizer, as cited in Gertjejanssen, “Victims, Heroes, Survivors,” 308.

50. Interview with Sara B. M. (b. 1938), VHE interview code 29016 (English).

51. Handwritten affidavit of F. A. Bakhman, September 26, 1944. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 67, d. 77, ll. 86–87.

52. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 65, d. 521, l. 19.

53. The account of Osher Zisman, as cited in Gertjeanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors," 308.

54. Interview with Harry K., VHE interview code 19656 (English). See also the interview with Saul M., VHE interview code 32388 (English); and the interview with Tola W., VHE interview code 42996 (English).

55. Interview with Irene E. B., VHE interview code 15450 (English).

56. On the sexual exploitation of Jews in hiding by bounty hunters, see Friedman, *Speaking the Unspeakable*, 60–64.

57. Quoted in Friedman, *Speaking the Unspeakable*, 62.

58. Mikhail Sholokhov, *Hate* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1942), 15–18.

59. Sholokhov, *Hate*, 16–17.

60. Il'ia Erenburg (Ilya Ehrenburg), wartime journalistic writing from his compilation *War: 1941–1945* (London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1964). The cited article was entitled "Kill," first published in *Krasnaia zvezda* on July 24, 1942. Similar sentiments were published in Erenburg's "Justification of Hatred," first published in *Pravda* on May 26, 1942.

61. For a helpful introduction to representations of Germans in Soviet Red Army letters, see E. Sherstianoi, "Germaniia i nemtsy v pis'makh Krasnoarmeiitsev vesnoi 1945 g.," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, no. 2 (March 2002): 137–51. The author noted that in letters home Soviet soldiers rarely discussed the violence they saw or perpetrated. In this study of some 300 letters from Soviet soldiers written between January and April 1945, the author found not a single reference to Soviet violence targeting civilians (pp. 145–46).

62. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 13.

63. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 49.

64. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 56 ob.

65. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, ll. 64–64 ob.

66. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 77.

67. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 117.

68. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 118.

69. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 34.

70. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 121.

71. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, ll. 115–115 ob.

72. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 34 ob.

73. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 116.

74. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 10.

75. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, l. 105.

76. GARF, f. R-7021, op. 116, d. 388, ll. 145–145 ob.

77. Perry Biddiscombe, "Dangerous Liaisons: The Anti-Fraternization Movement in the U.S. Occupation Zones of Germany and Austria, 1945–1948," *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 3 (2001): 611–47, 614; Antony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945* (New York: Viking, 2002); Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939–1945* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 283–84, 305, 309–14, 318–20; Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1995), 69–140; and Alfred Maurice de Zayas, *A Terrible Revenge: The Ethnic Cleansing of the East European Germans, 1944–1950* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). On Jewish women victims of Soviet rape, see Friedman, *Speaking the Unspeakable*, 62–73.

78. de Zayas, *A Terrible Revenge*, 42.

79. Alaine Polcz, *A Wartime Memoir: Hungary, 1944–1945* (Budapest, Hungary: Corvina, 1991–1998), 65. Cf. Andrea Petö, “Memory and the Narrative of Rape in Budapest and Vienna in 1945,” in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 129–48; and James Mark, “Remembering Rape: Divided Social Memory and the Red Army in Hungary, 1944–1945,” *Past & Present*, no. 188 (August 2005): 131–66.

80. Quoted in Mart Laar, *War in the Woods: Estonia’s Struggle for Survival, 1944–1956* (Washington, DC: Compass Press, 1992), 47.

81. Agate Nesaule, *Woman in Amber: Healing the Trauma of War and Exile* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 59–61.

82. Emphasis added. *Ibid.*, 62. Cf., in Poland, memoirist Wanda Póltawska has written about how the gang rape of her mother by Soviet soldiers in Poland in 1945 led to her mother’s suicide and her own hardship as an orphan refugee as she walked westward, eventually sailing to America. Wanda Póltawska, *And I Am Afraid of My Dreams* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964).

83. Cf. Elizabeth Heineman, “The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany’s ‘Crisis Years’ and West German National Identity,” *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (April 1996), 354–95; and Maria Lazda, “Gender and Totalitarianism: Soviet and Nazi Occupations of Latvia, 1940–1945” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2005); and Jeffrey Burds, “Gender and Policing in Soviet West Ukraine, 1944–1948,” *Cahiers du Monde russe* 42, no. 2/4 (April/December 2001): 279–320.

84. Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 80.

85. Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City (A Diary)* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005). In 2003, German literary editor Jens Bisky identified the anonymous author as German journalist Marta Hillers (1911–2001). This extraordinary diary has provoked considerable controversy. For a summary of the debate, see the review by Constanze Jaiser at H-Net (December 2003), <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=321531072994284>.

86. *Ibid.*, 29.

87. *Ibid.*, 48.

88. *Ibid.*, 61.

89. *Ibid.*, 63.

90. *Ibid.*, 64.

91. *Ibid.*, 64, 66.

92. *Ibid.*, 75.

93. Gertjejanssen, “Victims, Heroes, Survivors,” 274.

94. Waldemar Lotnik, *Nine Lives: Ethnic Conflict in the Polish-Ukrainian Borderlands* (London: Serif, 1999), 66–67. Cf. Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

95. Lotnik, *Nine Lives*, 65.

96. From documents compiled by Evgenii Zhirnov, “Arkhiv. Na okkupirovannykh territoriiakh,” *Kommersant Vlast*, no. 29 (July 24, 2001); and no. 31 (August 7, 2001).

97. Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe during the Second World War* (New York: Henry Holt, 1985), 464. Cf. “Seksualnoe nasilie, polovaia raspushchennost’,” in *Krasnye partizany Ukrainy, 1941–1944*, ed. Aleksandr Gogun and

Aleksandr Kentii (Kiev, Ukraine: Ukrainskii izdatel'skii soiuz, 2006), 181–19; and Kenneth Slepian, *Stalin's Guerrillas: Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 140.

98. The text of the report appears in Aleksandr Gogun and Aleksandr Kentii, *Krasnye partizany Ukrainy, 1941–1944* (Kiev, Ukraine: Ukrainskii izdatel'skii soiuz, 2006), 183.

99. Interview with Bronka C. K., VHE interview code 29421 (English).

100. The data were declassified from unpublished Top Secret files in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. See GARF, f. R-7523 *Verkhovnyi Sovet Soiuzna SSR*, op. 89, d. 4408 *Materials regarding crime and sentencing in the USSR for the period 1937 to 1956* “Memorandum regarding the statistics of criminals sentenced by the state judicial organs of the USSR for the period from 1940 through June 1955,” ll. 2–3. And table on l. 10. On the wave of violent crime in postwar Eastern Europe, see Jeffrey Burds (Dzheffri Burds), *Sovetskaia agentura: ocherki istorii SSSR v poslevoennye gody, 1944–1948* (Moscow, Russia, and New York: «Sovremennaia Istoriia», 2006), 9–41.

101. Quoted in Lotnik, *Nine Lives*, 191.

102. There were, of course, exceptions. On homosexual rape in the camps, see the extraordinary accounts of Gilbert M., VHE interview code 45926 (English), and Kenneth R., VHE interview code 40310 (English).

103. Nat Frankel and Larry Smith, *Patton's Best: An Informal History of the 4th Armored Division* (New York: Dutton, 1978), 85; Boguslav Shnaider, “Istoricheskaia publitsistka. Neizvestnaia voina,” *Voprosy istorii* 1995, no. 1 (1995): 108.

104. Frankel and Smith, *Patton's Best*, 87–88. American soldiers' arrogance and mistreatment of German women and girls provoked widespread resentment among the local population. See Perry Biddiscombe, “Dangerous Liaisons.”

105. Frankel and Smith, *Patton's Best*, 85–86.

106. Frankel and Smith, *Patton's Best*, 85–86. Cf. Atina Grossmann, “A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers,” in *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society and Culture in the Adenauer Era*, ed. Robert Moeller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 33–52; and “Trauma, Memory, and Motherhood: Germans and Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-Nazi Germany, 1945–1949,” in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 93–127. For Soviet reports on soldier rape targeting German women in the American zone of occupation, see A. S. Seniavskii and E. S. Seniavskaia, “Istoricheskaia pamiat' o voinakh XX veka kak oblast' ideino-politicheskogo i psikhologicheskogo protivosostoianiiia,” *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 2007, no. 3 (2007): 116.

107. J. Robert Lilly, *Taken by Force: Rape and American GIs in Europe during World War II* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Aside from establishing that there was widespread civilian sexual abuse perpetrated by American occupation soldiers in Western Europe during and after World War II, Lilly also shows that African-American soldiers were far more likely than white soldiers to receive serious punishments for sexual violence.

108. *Time Magazine*, September 17, 1945.

109. Quoted in Max Dashu, “The Secret History of Witches” (2000), http://www.suppressedhistories.net/secret_history/kings_witches.html.

110. Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Gender and Punishment in Liberation France* (New York: Berg, 2002). Virgili adds that many of these women either had no sexual relations at all with Germans or were doing so at the behest of the French underground. There are about eight minutes of U.S. Army film that capture French reprisals against

co-called *Les Poules au Boches*—"German Hens." "March of Time Outtakes: Head Shaving of French Women Accused of Collaboration with Germans," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, RG-60.4084, Tape 2732.

111. Quoted in Virgili, *Shorn Women*, 137.

112. *Ibid.*, 9.

113. According to a diarist in Leningrad, a kitchen worker at Bendorf during the war met and dated an Italian. After the war, she was tarred for sexual collaboration with the enemy. Elena Skrbjabinina (Skriabinina), *After Leningrad: A Diary of Survival during World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1988), 15, 168.

114. Erika M. Hoerning, "The Myth of Female Loyalty," *Journal of Psychohistory* 16, no. 1 (1988): 19–46. Cf. Annamarie Tröger, "German Women's Memories of World War II," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, ed. Margaret R. Higonnet et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 285–300; Elizabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Woman." Cf. Meinhard Stark, "*Ich muß sagen wie es war*" *Deutsche Frauen des GULag* (Berlin, Germany: Metropol-Verlag, 1998).

115. Biddiscombe, "Dangerous Liaisons," 615.

116. *Ibid.*, 611.

117. The best multinational study of sexual collaborators and their offspring following World War II is Kjersti Ericsson and Eva Simonson, eds., *Children of World War II: The Hidden Enemy Legacy* (New York: Berg, 2005). On children and the Nazis during and after the war, see Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives under the Nazis* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006). On the rape of German children by Soviet soldiers, see pages 316–20.

118. Petra Goedde, "From Villains to Victims: Fraternalization and the Feminization of Germany, 1945–1947," *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 1–20; and R. Esser, "'Language No Obstacle': War Brides in the German Press, 1945–49," *Women's History Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 577–603; Biddiscombe, "Dangerous Liaisons," 611–47; and Atina Grossmann, "Victims, Villains, and Survivors: Gendered Perceptions and Self-Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Postwar Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (January/April 2002): 291–318.

119. On sexual violence in war, see the perceptive work of Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Variation in Sexual Violence during War," *Politics & Society* 34, no. 3 (September 2006): 307–41.

120. Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 4; Katherine Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).

121. Polcz, *A Wartime Memoir*, 137–38.

122. Most promising in this regard are two studies, one by medical anthropologist Vieda Skultans, who began to study "neurasthenia" in post-Soviet Latvia, only to discover that so many Latvian women had been victims of wartime and postwar sexual violence that she had unexpectedly tapped into a deeper, more profound legacy of German and Soviet occupation. *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998); and on East German women victims of rape, see Hoerning, "The Myth of Female Loyalty." The standard guide on the aftermath of gender violence is the profoundly insightful work of Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*. On the psychology of the after war, see Alice Förster and Birgit Beck, "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and World War II: Can a Psychiatric Concept Help Us Understand Postwar Society?" in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and*

Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Hannah Starman, "Generations of Trauma: Victimhood and the Perpetuation of Abuse in Holocaust Survivors," *History and Anthropology* 17, no. 4 (December 2006): 327–38.

Jeffrey Burds (j.burds@neu.edu) teaches history at Northeastern University in Boston. He is working on a book-length study of Soviet collaborators in the second world war: Idioms of Hate: Soviet Collaborators in the German War against "Jewish Bolshevism." He is the author of Sovetskaia agentura: ocherki istorii SSSR v poslevoennye gody (1944–1948) [Soviet Police Informants: Essays on the History of the USSR during the Postwar Years (1944–1948)] (2006), Shpionazh i natsionalizm: pervye gody kholodnoi voiny na zapadnoi Ukraine (1944–1948) [Espionage and Nationalism: The First Years of the Cold War in Western Ukraine (1944–1948)] (2008), and of numerous articles on Soviet counter-insurgency policy and the Soviet secret police.

