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German Women and Nazi Justice: Their Role in the Process from Denunciation to Death

*Eric A. Johnson**

»And if they found out you're single, just forget it, you have no chance.«'

Abstract: This essay examines both the »legal« repression of women in Nazi Germany and the role that women played in helping to make the Nazi system of social and political control function. It focusses on women and the organs of social control in the city of Cologne and its surrounding area. It combines a computer analysis of all existing cases (circa 30,000) of illegal political activity reported to the state prosecuting attorney (*Staatsanwaltschaft*) in the district served by the Cologne »Special Court« (*Sondergericht*) with an indepth analysis of a sample of over two hundred of these cases in the city of Cologne and in the neighboring small town of Bergheim. It also analyzes the prison records of the main Cologne jail (Klingelpütz) during the war years. It argues that though women were important actors in the Nazi control apparatus at the local

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¹ Frau Werner in Annemarie Tröger, »German Women's Memories of World War II,« in Margaret Randolph Higonnet et. al., eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, 1987), p. 293. On the importance of marriage to German women in the Third Reich in general, see Gabriele Czarowski, *Das kontrollierte Paar. Ehe- und Sexualpolitik im Nationalsozialismus* (Weinheim, 1991).

level, both as denouncers and as witnesses, they were far less active than men in making the Nazi terror work. Likewise, they were less often and usually less severely punished for anti-governmental activities than men. Finally, social class, racial background, and marital status sharply differentiated women who were repressed by the Nazi regime from women who helped the Nazi regime repress others.

On August 17, 1934, Maria H., a fifty-five-year-old mother of seven children from Leipzig, wife of a music publisher, and daughter of an industrialist, was on vacation in the Rhineland with her youngest son. Doing some final shopping in Cologne's High Street (Hohestrasse) before returning home to Leipzig the next day, she encountered two Hitler Youth, aged 12 and 13, selling a Hitler-Youth newspaper with large headlines stating that »Whoever Mixes with Jews, Dirties the Nation,« (*Wer sich mit Juden einlässt, beschmutzt die Nation*). Jewish herself, she was understandably appalled, and told the boys that »it is vulgar that you are selling this newspaper, it would be better if the Reds were voted in again,« (*Es ist gemein, dass Ihr die Zeitung verkauft, es wäre besser, wenn wieder rot gewählt würde*).

The boys quickly spotted a nearby SS-Mann, who then had Frau H. arrested by a policeman and taken to Gestapo Headquarters. There a case was started against her for the crime of making a seditious statement against the Nazi Regime. Her interrogation took place on the next day, and both she and the elder of the Hitler Youth were required to provide written testimony of their versions of the affair.

Frau H. admitted fully, in her signed statement, to having said what the boy accused her of saying. She apologized for this, however, and asked for understanding of her predicament, explaining that she had only said these things because of her »distress« (*Erregung*) and because she felt she needed to protect her »previous way of life and religion.« To demonstrate that she had not intended to attack »the government or the present state in a criminally-hostile fashion« and that both she and her family had never been enemies of the state or its officials, she explained that even her own son had been a member of the Hitler Youth for three months until he was forced out because of his Jewish background.

The Gestapo agent handling the case released her shortly after her interrogation, noting that she had permanent lodgings where she could be found in Leipzig and that she had no previous political or criminal record. Two days later the other Hitler youth was also summoned to Gestapo HQ to make his own written statement. This jibed fully with his comrade's. Two days after that, on 22 August, the Cologne State Prosecuting Attorney's Office (*Staatsanwaltschaft*) dismissed the case. It justified this on the grounds that the Hitler

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Youth newspaper »Fanfare« was not on the official list of newspapers which one could libel.²

On January 26, 1937, Barbara C., a sixty-two-year-old grandmother and mother of eight children from the small village of Quadrath, which lies about 20 miles west of Cologne, started a case against a thirty-seven-year-old railroad worker, Josef P., from the neighboring town of Bergheim for libelling Hitler.³ In a signed, written statement, she told the local police authorities that her nephew told her in December 1934 that P. had said to him and others when they were attending a football game between Bergheim and another local town that Hitler was an *Arschficker* (pederast, but stated graphically) and a »warmer Bruder« (a slang expression for homosexual). Asked why she had not informed the authorities earlier about this, she said that in fact she had done so. Over a year earlier, thus in late 1935, she claimed she had instructed her husband to inform the local Nazi Party Zellenleiter (cell leader, above a block leader), also mayor of Quadrath, Heinrich T., what P. allegedly had said.

On January 31, the Zellenleiter T. was summoned to provide testimony to the police department in nearby Bergheim. There he spoke with a certain Kriminalsekretär S., who apparently was not a member of the Gestapo but was the policeman in charge of political matters for the entire Nazi period in Bergheim. T. confirmed that Frau C. had indeed informed him earlier of what P. had said. He had chosen not to pass this along to the police, however, as he preferred to channel it through what he saw was the normal course of action, »auf dem Dienstwege,« that is to the higher party authorities in his district.

Nearly a week later, on February 4, the accused P. was finally called in to testify along with four other witnesses. Fully denying ever having made such statements, P. claimed that Frau C. was »well known for making such denunciations, and that she never shied away from any possible means to place her fellow citizens in a bad light« The testimony of the witnesses was mixed. Frau C.'s nephew testified that indeed P. had said what he was accused of saying. But two other young men who had been at the football game with P. testified that they had not heard him say such things. Furthermore, the final witness, a thirty-seven-year-old housewife and neighbor of Frau C. testified that Frau C. was known to be of dubious character.

While the case against P. was dismissed three months later by the public prosecutor in Cologne, two cases were started against Frau C. for herself having made seditious statements, including saying to another neighboring housewife, who happened to be the wife of the local Nazi Party Blockleiter, that Hitler was an *Arschficker* and, as the Blockleiter's wife testified, »for carrying on like a beast« and screaming that »the Nazi Party can lick my ass.« Such graphic statements continued to pour out in the documentation involved

² Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf Kaiserswerth, Schloss Kalkum, hereafter NWHADK, Rep. 112/1013.

³ NWHADK, Rep. 112/10776.

in the two cases.⁴ For example, in May 1936 Frau C.'s daughter, in the presence of the next-door Nazis, reputedly took out a picture of Hitler in the morning newspaper and said: »I will now wipe my ass with Hitler.« Whereupon she then »took the newspaper with the picture and made a wiping motion on her ass, and went directly to the toilet.« In the end, no case was lodged against Frau C.'s daughter, one of the cases against Frau C. was dismissed by the Cologne *Staatsanwaltschaft*, and the other led to her acquittal by a Cologne *Schöffengericht* on February 27, 1937.

On May 31, 1942, Paula W., a single, forty-six-year-old seamstress living in central Cologne was bombed out of her apartment by a massive British air-raid. That evening, while sorting through what was left of her meager belongings in the rubble of her apartment building's cellar, for unknown reasons, she also took a few minor clothing articles, an empty suitcase, and two cans of coffee from the remains of fellow lodgers. Within two days she was denounced anonymously to the Gestapo, tried in »lightening-quick« fashion by the Cologne *Sondergericht* for being a *Volksschädling* (parasite of the Volk), and executed in the dreaded Klingelpütz prison in downtown Cologne.⁵

On January 5, 1945, two months before the American army marched into the bombed-out remains of the city of Cologne, the Cologne *Sondergericht* sentenced a brave, thirty-six-year-old, single, medical doctor named Felicitas G. to a six-month jail term for libelling the Nazi state. The woman was brave in at least two senses. Her illegal utterance had been occasioned by her refusal to accept an award (the *Kriegsverdienstkreuz*) she had earned for courageous service in caring for her patients while the children's hospital in which she worked was under heavy bombing attack. When asked by a fellow doctor, named Marianne F., who ultimately made the denunciation against her, why she had not bothered to pick up her medal from the authorities, she responded: »I consider an award from this state to be a personal affront (*Eine*

⁴ NWHADK, Rep. 112/15295 and Rep. 112/10739.

⁵ Both of the major newspapers in Cologne published a story on Paula W.'s execution on June 3, 1992. The story was much longer and was obviously of much greater propagandistic intent in the main Nazi newspaper *Westdeutscher Beobachter* than in the long-standing *Kölnische Zeitung*. Other details of her background can be found in a list of executed women in Cologne's Klingelpütz prison, »Verzeichnis über Hinrichtungen 1941-1944,« NWHADK, Rep. 132/715. A somewhat more impassioned treatment of this case is provided by Hans Wüllenweber, *Sondergerichte im Dritten Reich. Vergessene Verbrechen der Justiz* (Frankfurt, 1990), p. 17. An interview of a life-long Cologne resident, Frau J., carried out on May 18, 1993, in the course of the broader project which this paper is a part of, revealed that the Cologne population commonly believed that being sent to Klingelpütz meant being sent to death. Frau J. explained that she had been threatened several times by the owners of a local shop that she would be sent to the nearby Brauweiler prison outside of Cologne for failing to respond with the required »Heil Hitler« when she entered the store. When asked why they threatened her with Brauweiler instead of Klingelpütz, Frau J. responded: »That was where one went to be executed.«

Auszeichnung von diesem Staate fasse ich als eine persönliche Kränkung auf).» Thereupon **she** tossed the letter informing her of the award in the wastebasket. When asked by her head doctor about her reasons for doing this, she simply replied: »I reject this **State**« (*Ich lehne diesen Staat ab*).⁶

The four cases cited above suggest many things about the role of women, the nature of protest, and the system of terror in Nazi Germany. They indicate first of all that the tragic drama of Nazi society had no linear plot. Who would expect a well-off Jewish woman's son to have joined the Hitler youth, or for her to be let go when she openly admitted to having called publicly for a return of the socialists? Sixty-two-year-old grandmothers are usually thought to use more proper speech, and are not the kind of people one imagines to be typical denouncers. That a hard-up, middle-aged woman might decide to pinch a few items from a bombed-out cellar is hardly surprising. But that her execution would be called for and carried out by even a quasi-legal procedure, within two days of her misdeed is shocking for every society, even one as warped as the Third Reich. And finally, heroic medical doctors are not the kind of people one expects to be put in the slammer in any society.

These cases suggest that the Nazi system of terror *could*, but not always did, react with lightning speed and utmost severity to stamp out the lives of those who did not follow its every prescription, including those of women. They also indicate that occasionally some criticism of the regime, even of Hitler, was tolerated.⁷ Minor acts and statements of defiance, they do not point to any bold acts of derring-do like the famous plot against Hitler's life in 1944, which in any case were quite uncommon in Nazi Germany. Rather they point to a society in which acts of protest often overlapped with acts of compliance or even plain criminality. In the city of Cologne, the most famous of all daring protesters, the young anti-Nazi youth gang called the Edelweiss Pirates, who attacked patrols of Hitler Youth, plastered city walls with anti-Nazi graffiti, and were associated with the murder of a Cologne Ortsgruppenleiter (moderate-level Nazi official) in September 1944, continue to be the subject of intense disagreement even among Cologne's democratic citizenry today. Some see them as Cologne's greatest »resistance fighters.« Others see them as common criminals, debauched youngsters who simply robbed, murdered, and plundered.⁸

⁶ NWHADK, Rep. 112/18839.

⁷ This does not seem to jibe well with Ian Kershaw's argument that Hitler was usually seen as above criticism. Ian Kershaw, *Der Hitler-Mythos. Volksmeinung und Propaganda im Dritten Reich*, Stuttgart, 1980. See also, Kershaw's *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945* (Oxford, 1983).

⁸ The Ortsgruppenleiter was murdered on September 28, 1944, by a young man who had only a brief association with the Cologne Edelweiss Pirates. A detailed discussion of the entire argument surrounding the Edelweiss Pirates is found in Bernd-A. Rusinek, *Gesellschaft in der Katastrophe. Terror, Illegalität, Widerstand — Köln 1944/45* (Essen, 1989). See also, Matthias v. Hellfeld, *Edelweißpiraten in Köln*.

Most significant for the purpose of this essay, the cases of the women cited above demonstrate that women were significantly involved in nearly all aspects of the Nazi system of terror. If few women, or men, could claim to have been involved in full-scale resistance,⁹ thousands of women could claim to have acted bravely and meaningfully as »ordinary Germans who in their daily life took risks to dampen morale,« as one German woman put it shortly after the war while discussing her own involvement in such activities.¹⁰ But most women found little in the Nazi regime to criticize, at least not openly. Many women acted to support the regime by turning in people who deviated against the regime to the Gestapo, regular police, party, or other authorities. And still more played a significant role as witnesses testifying sometimes for and sometimes against accused non-conformists, oppressed minorities, or real resistance fighters.

The part that women played in helping to support the regime has recently come as far more of a surprise and far more difficult for many to fathom than their role as opponents of a regime,¹¹ in which, as Claudia Koonz argues, »the second sex was beneath suspicion.«¹² But this need not be so astounding. Perhaps it might be going a bit too far to adopt the radical perspective argued recently by Ute Frevert that women were better off in many ways in Nazi Germany than they had been previously in the Weimar Republic or were afterward in the Federal Republic. Nonetheless, there is much evidence that speaks in support of Frevert's more modest claim that »women who satisfied the political, racial and social requirements - and the vast majority did - did not perceive the Third Reich as a women's hell.«¹³

Jugendrebellion gegen das 3. Reich (Köln, 1983), and Detlev Peukert, *Die Edelweißpiraten. Protestbewegung jugendlicher Arbeiter im Dritten Reich. Eine Dokumentation* (Köln, 1983). In an interview with a well-respected Cologne artist on January 15, 1993, who himself was a member of a youth band called the Navajos in the late 1930s and was arrested and taken for an interrogation in this regard to the Gestapo headquarters in Cologne, Herr B. explained that »the Edelweiss Pirates were criminals.«

⁹ Perhaps the most comprehensive assessment of resistance, seen from many angles by many of the most important scholars on the subject, is Jürgen Schmädke's and Peter Steinbach's huge edited volume, *Der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus. Die deutsche Gesellschaft und der Widerstand gegen Hitler* (Munich, 1986).

¹⁰ Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, The Family and Nazi Politics* (London, 1988), p. 316. For a detailed discussion of opposition, as well as conformity, in everyday life, see Detlev J.K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life* (London, 1989, orig. published in 1982 as *Volksgeossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde - Anpassung, Ausmerzung, Aufbegehren unter dem Nationalsozialismus*).

¹¹ Two recent books on female denouncers have received wide media attention in Germany and abroad: Helga Schubert, *Judasfrauen* (dtv, 1992); Peter Wyden, *Stella* (New York, 1991).

¹² Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. 335.

¹³ Ute Frevert, *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual*

Although enough has been written to ensure that few would now assume that "resistance was a men's affair...with the innuendo that women accepted Nazism more easily than men,"¹⁴ as Koonz fears,¹⁴ there is still little work of a truly systematic nature on women's role in resisting the Nazi regime and next to none on the role of women in helping to make the Nazi terror system function.¹⁵ Despite the several interesting and suggestive recent volumes detailing the courage and suffering of hundreds of German women by means of retrospective interviews and detailed documentations,¹⁶ there is much room left for a sober analysis of the often decisive role German women played in the success and failure of the Nazi regime, especially in the control and policing of its citizens.

The goal of this essay is to detail, largely with quantitative evidence, the involvement of women in the various stages of the Nazi system of terror. The

Liberation (Oxford, 1989, orig. pub. as *Frauen-Geschichte zwischen Bürgerlicher Verbesserung und Neuer Weiblichkeit* by Suhrkamp in 1986), p. 252. The role of women in the Third Reich has indeed become the subject of considerable controversy (see ahead to note 40 on the criticism of Koonz's work). Prior to the appearance of Koonz's book, Jill Stephenson had probably written the best known studies of women in Nazi Germany. See her *Women in Nazi Society* (London, 1975) and *The Nazi Organisation of Women* (London, 1981). For more recent work on the subject generally, see, for example, Michael Phayer's book *Protestant and Catholic Women in Nazi Germany* (Detroit, 1990), which is critical of Koonz's work and which contains a considerable amount of discussion about dissenting women, but which possibly overestimates the amount of »dissent« by giving the term an extremely wide interpretation (see especially pp. 168-169); Gisela Bock, *Zwangsterilisation im Nationalsozialismus. Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik* (Opladen, 1986); and Czarnowski, *Das Kontrollierte Paar*.

¹⁴ Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. 310.

¹⁵ Perhaps the most frequently cited assessment of German women's role in resistance activities, is the two page discussion in Hanna Elling's *Frauen im deutschen Widerstand 1933-45* (Frankfurt am Main, 1978, pp. 71-72. The few authors, who have attempted to provide any measureable quantitative assessment of resistance and protest, seldom mention German women's contribution in more than a table or two or a couple of case examples. See, for example, Reinhard Mann, *Protest und Kontrolle im Dritten Reich. Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft im Alltag einer rheinischen Großstadt* (Frankfurt, 1987); and Peter Hüttenberger, »Heimtückefälle vor dem Sondergericht München 1933-1939;« in Martin Broszat, Elke Fröhlich, and Anton Grossmann, eds., *Bayern in der NS-Zeit, Vol. IV, Herrschaft und Gesellschaft im Konflikt* (Munich, 1981), pp. 435-526. But even these limited treatments are more than one often finds in most works dealing with the resistance.

¹⁶ See, for example, Very Laska, ed., *Women in the Resistance and in the Holocaust: The Voices of Eyewitnesses* (Westport, CT, 1983); Gerda Szepansky, *Frauen leisten Widerstand: 1933—1945. Lebensgeschichten nach Interviews und Dokumenten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983); and Gerda Zorn and Gertrud Meyer, *Frauen gegen Hitler. Berichte aus dem Widerstand 1933-1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 1974). For moving interviews of Cologne Jewish men and women who often were aided by the native German population, see Barbara Becker-Jakli, ed., *Ich habe Köln doch so geliebt. Lebensgeschichten jüdischer Kölnerinnen und Kölner* (Cologne, 1993).

first stage often began with a denunciation by a common citizen of another common citizen for a **rather** trifling act of non-compliance. If the denunciation was made to the Gestapo, or if the Gestapo was informed of this by another party, as it was supposed *to* be but not always was,¹⁷ and if the Gestapo decided it was worth pursuing, then the most likely course of action was for it to open a case against the accused person. Sometimes this led to an immediate arrest (if the act or person was considered particularly dangerous), but more often it led to the summoning of the individual and of various witnesses to Gestapo Headquarters where they were to provide written testimonies of their versions of the affair and to help supply the Gestapo with whatever physical evidence they might be able to provide. If the Gestapo chose to do so, the case was then forwarded to the State Prosecuting Attorney's Office, which decided whether the case was to be dismissed (as it was in the vast majority of cases) or to be put to trial. From the perspective of the accused, it was usually far better if this course were chosen by the Gestapo. Even though the judges of the Third Reich have more than a chequered history,¹⁸ and thousands of people were sent to death for very minor deeds by sick madmen like the head of the Berlin *Volksgesichtshof* Roland Freisler¹⁹, most of the time they handed out less than fully draconian verdicts.²⁰ Furthermore, receiving a sentence of some weeks, months, or even years to be served in a penal institution, was far preferable to being placed by the Gestapo in *Schutzhaft* (literally »protective custody«), which along with the similar procedure used by the »criminal police« (Kripo) called *Vorbeugungshaft* (»preventive custody«) was often a ticket to concentration camp and death without even the semblance of a hearing or defense.²¹

¹⁷ The best treatment of the subject of how political denunciation worked in Nazi Germany has been provided in a recent article and book by Robert Gellately. See his »The Gestapo and German Society: Political Denunciation in the Gestapo Case Files,« *Journal of Modern History*, 60(1988), and Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy 1933-1945* (Oxford, 1990), esp. 44-76 and 130-158.

¹⁸ For an especially condemnatory assessment, see Ingo Müller, *Hitler's Justice: The Courts of the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA, 1991, orig. published in 1987 as *Furchtbare Juristen: Die unbewältigte Vergangenheit unserer Justiz*). Also critical are Ralph Angermund, *Deutsche Richterschaft 1919-1945. Krisenerfahrung, Illusion, politische Rechtsprechung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990); and Lothar Gruchmann, *Justiz im Dritten Reich 1933-1940. Anpassung und Unterwerfung in der Ära Gürtner* (Munich, 1988). For a treatment, though milder, of Cologne judges and justice, see Adolf Klein, »Hundert Jahre Akten - hundert Jahre Fakten. Das Landgericht Köln ab 1879,« in Klein and Günter Rennen, eds., *Justitia Coloniensis. Landgericht und Amtsgericht Köln erzählen ihre Geschichte(n)* (Cologne, 1981), pp. 89-193.

¹⁹ For a recent examination of Freisler and the *Volksgesichtshof*, see H.W. Koch, *In the Name of the Volk: Political Justice in Hitler's Germany* (London, 1989).

²⁰ See, for example, Adolf Klein's discussion in his *Köln im Dritten Reich* (Cologne, 1983), pp. 101-105.

²¹ On the practices and legal definitions of *Schutzhaft* and *Vorbeugungshaft*, see Ger-

The argument of the paper follows Frevert's view that the vast majority of German woman apparently »did not perceive the Third Reich as a women's hell.« Most woman conformed, kept their heads down, and had little contact with the machinery of justice and injustice. Women did not leave all political acts to the men, either for or against the regime, however, as a sizable number were involved in enforcing social and political control in everyday life, especially by being ready to inform on non-conformists or simply on neighbors they disliked. Some women also undertook acts like the courageous doctor to stand up against the regime, but this happened rarely. Applying to German men as well, the majority of cases in which women were accused of wrongful political behavior were minor affairs which neither the police nor the courts wanted to punish severely. The vast majority of cases lodged against men and women ended not in arrest, followed by prison or concentration camp terms. Most ended with a Gestapo interrogation and warning, followed by a final dismissal from the public prosecutor's office.

In the main, as Figure 1 demonstrates by summarizing the female/male ratio in the terror process - whether as denouncers, witnesses, accused, sentenced, placed in *Schutzhaft* or concentration camp, or sentenced to death - the Nazis were far more likely to save their stiffest treatment for men. Again borrowing from Frevert, so long as women satisfied the »political, racial and social requirements,« which meant not being communist, socialist, especially concerned with freedom and democracy, Jewish, homosexual, foreign, and often single - »and the vast majority did« - then they had little to fear.

The argument of the paper is supported primarily by three major sources of data. One is a computer analysis of the entire register of criminal political cases lodged against people in Cologne and its surrounding areas and falling under the purview of the Cologne *Sondergericht*. These comprised over 18,000 cases in which circa 30,000 people were accused of wrongful political activity, whether that be illegal opinion statements, violations of racial laws, noncompliance with wartime economic measures, listening to foreign radio broadcasts or the like.²² Whereas this provides important evidence about the

hard Werle, *Justiz-Strafrecht und polizeiliche Verbrechensbekämpfung im Dritten Reich* (Berlin, 1989), pp. 483-576; Günter Wieland, »Die normativen Grundlagen der Schutzhaft in Hitler-Deutschland,« in *Jahrbuch für Geschichte*, 26(1982), 75-102; Karl-Leo Terhorst, *Polizeiliche planmäßige Überwachung und polizeiliche Vorbeugungshaft im Dritten Reich* (Heidelberg, 1985); and Gruchmann, *Justiz im Dritten Reich*, 545-631.

²² These cases are somewhat falsely catalogued under the title of *Sondergericht Köln* and are found in the NWHADK. Only a small percentage of the cases ever were tried before the *Sondergericht* (literally »Special Court«) in Cologne. A *Sondergericht* was set up in each *Oberlandesgericht* (supreme state court) district to provide speedy justice in political cases in the Third Reich. Most of the cases were dismissed by the *Staatsanwaltschaft* before ever getting to trial and many of the cases that went to trial were heard before other types of courts in Cologne. Nevertheless, with the help of archivists at the NWHADK, notably the director Dr. Stahlschmidt, I was able to make

amount, gender, and occupation of the people who had cases started against them by the Gestapo or other police agencies for a host of political activities, it only vaguely points to what happened to these people in the end, and it provides no evidence of how the cases started and what happened in them. To determine these things, this study also provides a detailed investigation of all cases in two communities of similar size - one a small town outside of Cologne, and the other an urban section of the city of Cologne itself.²³ The final body of data involves a computer analysis of the prison records (*Gefangenenbücher*) of women in the huge Cologne jail known as Klingelputz. This source provides the possibility of making some estimate of the scope of *Schutzhaft* (protective custody) and *Vorbeugungshaft* (preventive custody), which are often talked about, but for which very little precise information is known, especially involving women.²⁴

Denouncers (22.3%, 25%, or 32.7%)

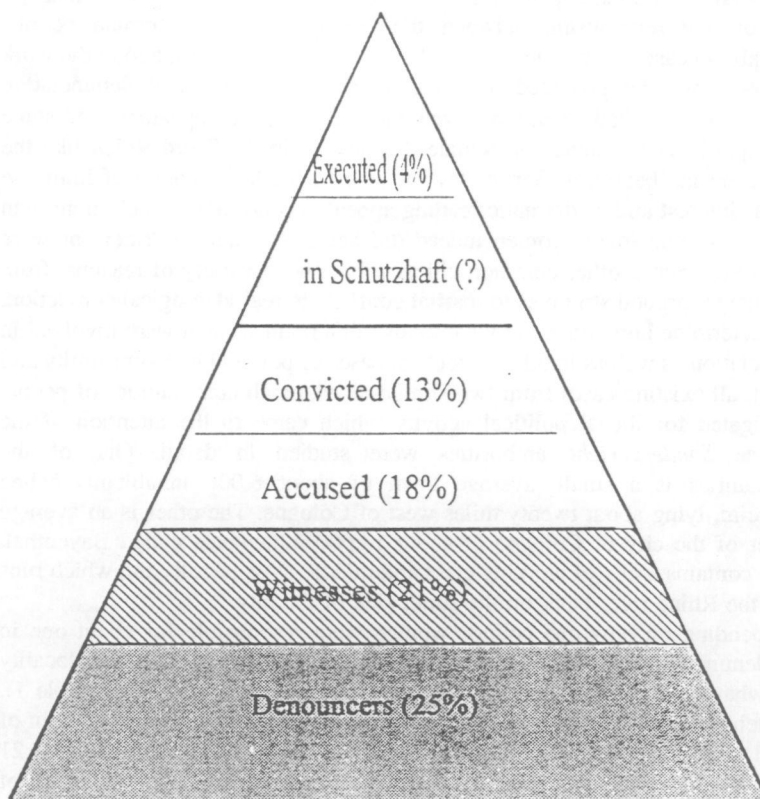
Though it is a cornerstone of the social control system of every totalitarian society, very few concrete details are known about the subject of denunciation in general. Until recently, in fact the subject of denunciation in Nazi Germany has held a kind of taboo status, shrouded in myth. Many have preferred to continue believing that the Gestapo was all powerful in Nazi Germany with hundreds of thousands of paid spies and an enormous surveillance network that peered constantly into the private lives of ordinary citizens. The important role that common citizens, acting voluntarily to inform on their neighbors and work

a machine-readable file out of the register of the individual cases, which I later was able to analyze statistically by means of the computer software SPSS. This register includes many important variables such as the name of the person (though made anonymous by blotting out the first four letters of the last name), the year the case opened, the address and the occupation of the accused. The marital background of women, but not of men, is usually recognizable because married women were also listed with their maiden names as well as married names. The gender of the accused was determined by examining maiden names, first names, and occupational designations (female workers in German almost always have an »in« at the end of their job title, like *Arbeiterin* for women instead of *Arbeiter* for men).

²³ The small town is Bergheim, which was the seat of the local *Kreis* under the same name. According to the *Kölner Statistisches Taschenbuch 1937*, p. 38, the population of Bergheim *Kreis* in the June 6, 1933 census was 68, 575. The population of the small section of Cologne, Bayenthal, used in this study was listed in the same volume (p.48) as being 17,741 on April 1, 1937, but this also included the rich section of Marienburg (pop. 3,569) which was not included in this analysis. Actually only the town of Bergheim was used in the analysis with the contiguous villages of Wiedenfeld and Paffendorf, which became part of the city just after the war. The population of this town according to the census of May 17, 1939 was 4,598 in Bergheim itself, 319 in Wiedenfeld, and 684 in Paffendorf. The source for these figures is the *Gemeindeverzeichnis nach der Volkszählung am 17.5.39* (Berlin, ?).

²⁴ NWHADK, Rep. 300/1-15.

Figure 1: Women's Involvement in Nazi "Justice"



colleagues, played in stifling possible dissent and protest has been something which both scholars and laymen have often not wanted to admit to or study.

The first published work on the subject appeared in the 1970s when the celebrated Munich historian Martin Broszat published a small article on political denunciations²⁵ and the emigre historian Richard Grunberger discussed it in a small chapter in his general social history of Nazi Germany.²⁶ But it was

²⁵ Martin Broszat, »Politische Denunziationen in der NS-Zeit. Aus Forschungserfahrungen im Staatsarchiv München,« *Archivalische Zeitschrift* 73(1977).

²⁶ Richard Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* (New York, 1974, orig. published in 1971), ch. 7, pp. 145-154.

not until the posthumous publication of the unfinished doctoral dissertation of the Cologne historian Mann in the late 1980s, that the subject of denunciation was first treated in any serious depth.²⁷

In the 1990s, the **subject** has finally begun to get the attention it deserves, most notably with the appearance of the Canadian historian Robert Gellately's book on the relationship between the Gestapo and the German people, especially in cases of race defilement.²⁸ But in Gellately's work and in the work of those few who preceded him, the subject of women and denunciation receives very limited attention. Even the more recent appearance of some highly publicized volumes on female denouncers in the Third Reich like the volume on the beautiful, Berlin, Jewish woman Stella,²⁹ though of immense popular interest and of dramatic reading appeal, has not done much more than demonstrate that many women indeed did act as Gestapo informers or were ready to denounce other common citizens for a wide variety of reasons, from small neighborhood struggles to marital conflicts to real ideological conviction.

To determine how often and what kinds of German women were involved in denunciation as well as in other aspects of cases of political nonconformity and protest, all existing cases from two similar-sized, small communities of people investigated for illegal political activity which came to the attention of the Cologne *Sondergericht* authorities were studied in detail. One of the communities is a small, average town of about 6,000 inhabitants called Bergheim, lying about twenty miles west of Cologne. The other is an average quarter of the city of Cologne of about 14,000 inhabitants called Bayenthal, which contains a mix of working class and middle-class people, and which runs up to the Rhine river bank on the south side of the city.³⁰

Depending on how one counts, women were responsible for about one in four denunciations in the two localities, with the women in the urban locality somewhat more active than the women in the rural community (see Table 1). Bergheim women were responsible for the accusations which started 16 out of a total of 87 cases (18.5%); whereas Bayenthal female accusations started 21 out of 90 cases (23.3%). But these figures underestimate the proportion of female denouncers, as several cases (but still a minority of cases) were started by anonymous tip offs or by the police authorities themselves. Selecting out the

²⁷ Mann, *Protest und Kontrolle im Dritten Reich*. Mann's work focusses on the Gestapo files from the *Gestapoleitstelle* Düsseldorf for the city of Düsseldorf. At the time he began his project in the late 1970s, there was no other study for him to compare his findings against. He estimated that the existing records of the circa 5,000 cases he had to work with were roughly 70% of the original number (p. 66).

²⁸ Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*. See also Gellately's recent review article on books on the Gestapo, SS, and the courts of the Third Reich, »Situating the 'SS-State' in a Social-Historical Context: Recent Histories of the SS, the Police, and the Courts in the Third Reich,« *Journal of Modern History*, 64(1992), pp. 338-365.

²⁹ See note 12.

³⁰ See note 23.

Table 1: Denouncers in Three Areas: Bergheim (87 cases), Cologne-Bayenthal (90 cases) and Cologne (random sample of 61 cases)

Denouncer	Bergheim	Cologne-Bayenthal	Cologne	Total	%
1. women	16	21	14	51	21.4
2. men	51	60	36	147	61.8
3. Gestapo/ Party or Police Official	11	5	7	23	9.7
4. <u>Anonymous</u>	9	4	4	17	7.1
Total	87	90	61	238	100.0

Note: When the anonymous denouncers are selected out, the percentage of female denouncers in the three areas combined is 23.0. When the denunciations started by both anonymous denouncers and police officials are selected out, the percentage of female denouncers is 25.8.

9 cases in Bergheim of anonymous denunciations and the 4 cases in Bayenthal as well as the 11 cases started by the police themselves in Bergheim and the 5 in Bayenthal, women in Bergheim would then have started 23.9% of the cases and women in Bayenthal 25.9% - together making a total of exactly 25% (37 out of 148 cases). But if one decided to only select out the anonymous cases, because the police officials were men, then one would arrive at a figure of 22.3% for the relationship of female to male denouncers in the two localities (37 out of 166 cases).

Confirmation that these figures are indeed reflective of what one would find were one to study other communities or populations comes from the results of a pilot study for this project consisting of a random sample of 61 cases for the entire city of Cologne. In this study, women were responsible for starting 14 of the cases, men started 36 cases, anonymous denouncers started four cases, and the Gestapo, Nazi Party and the police started a total of 7 cases, (see Table 1) If one uses the same means of computation used above, one finds that women

started 23% of all cases in the sample. But when the anonymous denunciations and the denunciations by officials are taken out, the percentage of cases started by women rises to 25.9%. These figures are nearly the exact same as those for Bergheim and Cologne-Bayenthal. Hence, in sum, if one added all of the cases together in the three population groups, to make a total of 238 cases studied, then women would have started 25.8% of the cases when either an individual man or woman started the case, 23% of the cases when only cases involving anonymous denunciations are taken out, and 21.4% of all cases.

Though these figures demonstrate that women played an important role in helping enforce political conformity in Nazi Germany, they nevertheless indicate that women were still far less likely than men to denounce their fellow citizens. There still remains the possibility, however, that women were more involved than these figures show. Grunberger argues, but from a limited base of information (mostly newspaper articles and a handful of retrospective interviews), that during the war years »women tended to take the lead both because there were more of them about and because many thought that prying into their neighbours' affairs constituted a female contribution to the war effort while their menfolk were at the front«³¹ Furthermore one needs to consider that given the Nazi bias against women being involved in political and official activity, women often covered up their acts of denunciation by engineering it so that some close male relative or friend went to the authorities and made the denunciation for them. This has been seen in several cases, including the case of Barbara C., whose very first denunciation of the railroad worker Josef P. was communicated to the local party authorities by her husband, though it was clear to all in the case that she had made the denunciation. Furthermore there is no way of telling how often women were involved in other cases of denunciations for which no records exist

The cases studied here, though they are made up of »all« of the known cases which were brought to the attention of the Cologne *Staatsanwaltschaft* for two localities as well as a random sample of other cases in the city of Cologne, do not include many cases that were handled by Nazi Party or other authorities who did not bring the case to the attention of the police, as in the case of the original denunciation made by Barbara C. discussed earlier. They also do not include cases which the Gestapo itself decided to suppress or handle by means of *Schutzhaft* arrests. The point is that there were many more denunciations than we have evidence for. Grunberger in his brief article points to evidence that there was such a flood of anonymous denunciations that by late 1934, Hitler's deputy Hess asked that all informants »shed their anonymity.«³² But there appears to be no way of knowing how often women were involved in these anonymous denunciations or in denunciations to other authorities for which no evidence survives. As the original card files kept by the Gestapo on

³¹ Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich*, p. 153.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 146.

individual citizens are presumed to have been destroyed in all German cities and towns, and only a few cities falling under the control of the Würzburg and Düsseldorf Gestapo have any sizable surviving Gestapo personal files, and next to nothing is known about the whereabouts of possible Nazi party personal files on common citizens, the data at hand are of the best that one has to work with, at least for the Cologne area.

There is another type of existing data, however, which supports the suspicion that German women were more active than it appears from the figures derived from the Bergheim and Cologne cases. These are in the form of cases of »false accusation« brought to the attention of the justice authorities.³³ In Table 2 one notes that of 706 cases of false accusation in the Cologne area between 1933 and 1945, nearly one third were lodged against women (32.3%). And this percentage was growing in the late 1930s before the cases ground to an almost complete halt in the war years. Only in 1944 did these cases pick up again, and it is noteworthy that women were accused in nearly half of the cases at the time.

Witnesses (20.7%)

German women's role in the Nazi system of terror was most pronounced in the area of denunciation. Their frequent involvement as witnesses in preliminary investigations and trials also added to their social and political control functions. Though, on first thought, one might expect that being called as a witness was a rather neutral act, which the summoned person had little control over and might even feel threatened by (for who in their right mind would want to spend any time at Gestapo HQ?), the evidence below suggests strongly that being a witness was seldom likely to have been a neutral act. In any case, it was often an important act. As the Nazi justice authorities made serious efforts to convey the impression that they continued to adhere to the positivistic legal traditions of the past, and as the credibility of the **denouncer** was often dependent on confirmation provided by the witnesses, the testimony of the witnesses was often of crucial importance in **determining** the fate of the accused.

Nonetheless, the fact that one was called to witness must be considered as a kind of transitional phase between those who acted to support the regime by denouncing others and those who were themselves denounced or brought to the attention of the authorities by other means. Hence it comes as no surprise that the percentage of female witnesses was lower than that of female denouncers

³³ Grunberger cites an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of August 18, 1937, as the basis for arguing that »wrongful accusations eventually imposed such a strain on manpower (and morale) that rewards of up to 100 marks - the monthly income of an unskilled worker - were offered to anyone able to lay correct information against false informers.« *Ibid.*, p. 147.

Table 2: Cases Started Against Women for False
Accusation in Cologne and Its Surrounding
Area, 1933-1944

Year	Women	Total	%Women
1933	7	44	17.5
1934	30	84	35.7
1935	21	98	21.4
1936	50	143	35.0
1937	51	151	33.8
1938	26	89	29.2
1939	29	65	44.6
1940	-	-	-
1941	-	-	-
1942	2	6	33.3
1943	-	-	-
1944	12	26	46.2
Totals 1933-44	228	706	32.3

Note: - is used when there were fewer than two cases in a given year.

but higher than of females who were accused.

In the 177 cases in the two localities of Bergheim and Bayenthal, there were a total of 706 witnesses called, of which 146 were women. This accounts for the percentage of 20.7 as reported in Figure 1. One might consider the role of women to be even more significant than these figures show, however, when one considers that at least one woman was called to testify in roughly half of all cases. Bergheim women testified in 41 out of 87 cases and Bayenthal women testified in 38 out of 90 cases (thus women testified in 79 out of 177 cases or in 45% of all cases). But when one considers that many cases had no witnesses at all (16 in Bergheim and 24 in Bayenthal), one finds that women were active in 58% of all cases in which witnesses were called.

One should not gain the impression from these figures that rural women were relatively more active than urban women. In fact the opposite was the case as many more witnesses of both genders were called in the rural than in the urban locality. Whereas female witnesses in Bergheim accounted for only 17% of all witnesses (75 out of 450), female witnesses in Bayenthal accounted for almost double that figure, 28% (71 out of 256). One can only speculate why so many more witnesses in total were called in the countryside than in the city. The reason might well be that the police in the small town of Bergheim felt a need to proceed more cautiously than the Gestapo officials of the large city of Cologne. The rural policemen had to live in the community with the people

whose cases they handled. Presumably the Gestapo officials in the city of Cologne (with its nearly 800,000 inhabitants) could act more anonymously.

Table 3: Occupation and Marital Status of Female Witnesses in Cologne-Bayenthal and Bergheim

Occupation	Total	(K-B, B)	Marital Status	
1. Housewife	83	(42, 41)	1. Married	89
2. Housedaughter	10	(3, 7)	2. Housedaughter	10
3. Professional	11	(1, 10)	3. Single	42
4. Officework, Sales	10	(6, 4)	4. unknown	5
5. Shopkeepers, Pubowners	6	(5, 1)		
6. Domestics	13	(7, 6)		
7. Skilled Worker	1	(0, 1)		
8. Worker	2	(2, 0)		
9. None or none listed	10	(5, 5)		

total = 146 (71, 75)

Note: K-B=Cologne-Bayenthal; B=Bergheim

The profile of the occupational and marital status of the female witnesses shown in Table 3 demonstrates that certain kinds of women were greatly preferred as witnesses. In line with the Nazi view that the most respectable place for women was in the home, the large majority of women that were valued as witnesses were married women (89 out of 141 when the marital status was known) and almost all of these married women were housewives (83 out of 89 or 93%). If one added the 10 minors, who were typically school children in their teens or young girls helping out with household chores, the ranks of the home-bound women who were called to testify grow even greater. Noticeably under-represented in these figures are single and above all working-class women. Whereas some of the married women might have been from the working class, one expects that this only accounts for a small minority of these women given that working-class women more often worked outside the home than middle-class women.³⁴ The fact that the ranks of the accused

³⁴ It is well known that Germany did not fully mobilize until very late in the war, and even then most middle-class married women stayed at home. As the editors of a recent book on women in the world wars explain, »Although all adult females were required to register for employment, the orders were never applied consistently, so most middle- and upper-class women were able to avoid taking jobs, leaving wor-

comprised mainly men and women from the lower orders, but that less than a third of the women summoned to testify were single and only three women were classified as workers or skilled workers in the trial documents, highlights the argument that single and working-class women were not usually considered trustworthy.

Accused (18.0%) and Convicted (13,3%)

If only a limited amount of research has been published on the subject of common people's compliance with the Nazi police state, the opposite is true for the subject of resistance to Hitler's regime. By now there are a multitude of published books and articles on resistance in most every form and in most every major city.³⁵ Resistance and protest in the city of Cologne, a city which can boast of having had the lowest level of voter support for the Nazis in the last elections of Weimar, has been studied with particular zeal.³⁶

Whereas the first works on the subject tended to overlook women as they appeared to be less directly involved in the major acts of resistance, research in the last decade and a half has demonstrated that many women were also heavily involved and suffered heavily for their acts of resistance like the famous case of Sophie Scholl and the White Rose group of wartime Munich students who were put to death by Roland Freisler's murdering machine known as the People's Court (*Volksgerecht*).³⁷ Most of these works, however, take a biographical or oral history approach.³⁸ Whereas these works are rich in detail about the cases of individual women, it is often difficult to measure how representative these individual case histories were and to determine the scope of female resistance,

king-class women to bear the major part of women's labor burden.« Higonnet, et. al., *Behind the Lines*, p. 9. For a more detailed account of female working patterns in Nazi Germany, see Ingrid Schupetta, *Frauen- und Ausländererwerbstätigkeit in Deutschland von 1939 bis 1945* (Cologne, 1983).

³⁵ For a guide through many of these works, see Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, London, 1985.

³⁶ Even after Hitler took over power at the end of January 1933, only a third of Cologne voters gave their support to his party. In the March 5, 1933 election, for example, only 33.1% of the Cologne population voted for the Nazi Party against a national average of 43.9%. In addition to the literature on the Edelweiss Pirates in Cologne cited above in note 8, a useful treatment of resistance in Cologne and its surrounding area is found in K. Schabrod, *Widerstand an Rhein und Ruhr 1933-1945* (Düsseldorf, 1967). For an autobiography of a Cologne Priest who courageously stood up to the Nazis, see Josef Spieker, *Mein Kampf gegen Unrecht in Staat und Gesellschaft. Erinnerungen eines Kölner Jesuiten* (Cologne, 1971). His Gestapo and court records demonstrate his heroism quite clearly. NWHADK Rep. 112/16574 and 112/16096.

³⁷ Koch, *In the Name of the Volk*.

³⁸ In addition to the volumes cited in note 16, see Bettina Wenke, *Interviews mit Überlebenden. Verfolgung und Widerstand in Südwestdeutschland* (Stuttgart, 1980); and Lutz Niethammer, ed., *Die Jahre weiß man nicht, wo man die heute hinsetzen soll'. Faschismus-Erfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet* (Berlin, 1983).

or even minor protest against the Hitler regime. Furthermore, those few books which have attempted to measure quantitatively the scope of resistance and protest in the Third Reich, such as the already mentioned works of Mann and Gellately, seldom focus on women directly.³⁹

In the two most recent summary discussions of female resistance provided by Claudia Koonz and Ute Frevert, both rely heavily on a book published in the late 1970s by Hannah Elling on »Women in the German Resistance, 1933-1945.«⁴⁰ Though even this book primarily relies on the biographical and documentary approach, the author provides a brief but useful assessment of the scope of activity and suffering women experienced in confronting the Nazi dictatorship. Basing her statement on estimates from several studies on several localities, which themselves were not usually terribly precise in their calculations, she nonetheless arrived at the conclusion that »the amount of German women taking part in the resistance struggle in the years between 1933 and 1945 was about 20 percent«⁴¹

Though one might quibble slightly with her figures (and with the original calculations of the studies she cites) - especially as only one of the eight cities and provinces involved in her assessment, Hamburg, had a figure of over 20% (27%), while the other seven varied from a low of 6.6 in the province of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (which she stresses was a particularly agricultural district) to a high of 15.6 in Frankfurt am Main - her general estimate is not far away from the results found in this study. One should also note that this general figure for women's involvement in what were construed as criminal acts against the Nazi regime is quite similar to the percentage of women's involvement in »criminality« in earlier periods of German history.⁴² Furthermore, it is only slightly higher than the limited and, of course, untrustworthy official statistics of criminality in the Third Reich which stopped being published in the mid 1930s.⁴³

³⁹ Mann, *Protest und Kontrolle*; Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, Hüttenberger, »Heimtückefälle vor dem Sondergericht München.« See also Sarah Gordon, *Hitler, Germans and the 'Jewish Question'* (Princeton, 1984).

⁴⁰ Elling, *Frauen im Deutschen Widerstand*, pp. 71-72. Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, ch. 9. Frevert, *Women in German History*, ch. 17. It should probably be mentioned here that the author is aware that Koonz's work has been the subject of considerable controversy. She has come under attack from several sources, but especially from Gisela Bock, who also has written extensively on the suffering of women in the Third Reich, see Bock's *Zwangsterilisation im Nationalsozialismus. Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik* (Opladen, 1986). Bock's critique of Koonz has led to a rather unfriendly exchange between the two played out in the pages of *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*: see Koonz, »Erwiderung auf Gisela Bock's Rezension von »Mothers in the Fatherland,« *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 18 (1992), 394-399; and Bock's rejoinder, »Ein Historikerinnenstreit?«, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 18(1992), 400-404.

⁴¹ Elling, *Frauen im Deutschen Widerstand*, p. 72.

⁴² Eric A. Johnson, »German Women as Criminals and Victims: Female Homicide and Criminality in Imperial Germany,« *Criminal Justice History* 6(1985), 151-75.

Figure 1 and Table 4 point to a figure of 18% for the relative involvement of German women in political acts against the Nazi regime in the Cologne area. Before discussing how this figure was derived, one must take pause to note that this estimate and virtually all existing estimates of resistance and protest are based on acts which came to the attention of the authorities; usually that means that these were resisters who were caught. As Claudia Koonz explains, successful resisters do not often show up in the records: »In true 1984 style, the Nazi system blotted out the memory of its victims almost as efficiently as it killed them. When we do retrieve names, facts, biographical detail, and primary accounts, we cannot know if we have discovered a representative case that hints at thousands of unrecorded deeds, or if we have stumbled on a unique display of courage. At no time did Germans who opposed Nazism organize military or terrorist activities, as did the resistance in occupied nations during World War II. Hence, we have no newspaper accounts of a major action here or an assassination there and no police records tracking down a centralized command force. Further complicating the historian's task is the fact that records (when they exist at all) are most complete for individuals who resisted and failed; successful resisters, by definition, remained undetected«⁴⁴

This warning notwithstanding, largely in the last half decade since Koonz finished her work, a large amount of Gestapo, police, and judicial records have surfaced in many localities, which can be used to approximate the activity of popular resistance and protest of German citizens.⁴⁵ Though she is fully correct in arguing that one cannot know about activities for which no records exist there is no reason to believe that the records which do exist would overestimate the level of female involvement in acts against the regime, especially if one accepts Koonz's statement that the »second sex was beneath suspicion.« But how much they might underestimate female involvement remains a speculative matter.

⁴⁴ Official figures show that women represented 11.9% of the total number of people convicted for a criminal offense in 1933, and 15.5% in 1937, when the official figures stopped being published. The rate for Cologne women was always slightly higher, with, for example, a rate of 12.7% in 1933. These figures come from *Kriminalstatistik für das Jahr 1934, Statistik des Deutschen Reichs*, Band 507 (Berlin, 1938), p. 18ff.

⁴⁴ Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. 310.

⁴⁵ In addition to *Sondergericht* records which are available and presumably nearly fully intact for cities like Cologne, Düsseldorf, Munich, Frankfurt, Weimar, etc., and the Gestapo personal case files for Düsseldorf and Würzburg which Mann and Gellately have explored, there are apparently a large amount of Gestapo personal case files in Moscow for several former East German cities like Weimar and Erfurt which now can be worked with. For a discussion of these newly uncovered data, see a recent article in *Der Archivar* 45(1992), 457ff. Also useful are Gestapo *Lageberichte* which Ian Kershaw has used extensively. See, for example, his *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent*.

Against Women in
Entire Cologne Oberlandesgericht District
and Outside of Central Cologne

Year	Entire Köln District			Outside of Köln and Köln-Ehrenfeld		
	WC	TC	%W	WC	TC	%W
1933	240	2555	9.4	117	1639	7.1
1934	505	4149	12.2	266	2700	9.9
1935	571	4029	4.2	325	2532	12.8
1936	590	3577	16.5	337	2320	14.5
1937	552	3350	16.5	383	2391	16.0
1938	393	2212	17.8	291	1622	17.9
Pre War						
Totals	2851	19872	14.3	1719	13204	13.0
1939	370	1507	24.6	225	981	22.9
1940	284	1415	20.1	172	916	18.8
1941	259	1068	24.3	153	713	21.5
1942	410	1435	28.6	228	883	25.8
1943	323	1158	27.9	210	735	28.6
1944	558	1663	33.6	403	1240	32.5
Wartime						
Totals	2204	8246	26.7	1391	5468	25.4
Overall						
Totals	5055	28118	18.0	3110	18672	16.7

Note: The above figures have been computed by a computer analysis of the register of political cases which were investigated by the Cologne State Prosecuting Attorney's Office (Staatsanwaltschaft). The register is somewhat falsely catalogued as Sondergericht Köln, Rep. 112, Hauptstaatsarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth. The data reflects all cases when the gender was known. This was in 99.3% of all cases.

Key: WC=cases against women TC=total cases when gender known %W=percent female of all cases when gender was known.

In the case studies of the town of Bergheim and the Bayenthal section of Cologne, 31 women out of a total of 177 people in general had cases lodged against them for political crimes ranging from libelling Hitler and Nazi authorities to plundering. This provides a figure of 17.6%. As only 12 women in rural Bergheim had cases started against them compared with 19 in Bayenthal, it appears that Hannah Elling may have been correct to point to the agricultural nature of the province of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to explain its relatively low figure of female involvement. The assessment of roughly 18% for Bergheim and Bayenthal and the observation that urban women were more active (or at least more often observed and caught) than rural women is supported by a computer analysis of the entire Cologne register of cases started by the Gestapo and passed on to the Cologne *Staatsanwaltschaft*. These figures are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

In Table 4 one finds yearly figures for the entire Cologne area on the left side of the table and for all areas outside of the inner city of Cologne and the heavily working-class area of Cologne-Ehrenfeld. Figures for inner-city Cologne and for Cologne-Ehrenfeld are found in Table 5. In Table 4 one observes that over 5,000 women had cases started against them in the Cologne area in the years between 1933 and 1945 and this represents a figure of almost exactly 18% of the total amount of cases when the gender was known (it was not known in less than 1% of cases). This figure is almost exactly the same as that which one arrives at by combining the Bergheim and Bayenthal figures. In rural areas outside of central Cologne, the overall figure was slightly lower (Table 4), and in urban areas like Central Cologne and Cologne-Ehrenfeld it was somewhat higher (Table 5).

The most significant differences one notes in all of these figures, however, is that in all cases the percentage of female involvement vis-a-vis male involvement was notably higher in the war years than in the 1930s. Already in the first year of the war, 1939, the percentages for women took a sharp upward jump both in the city and in the countryside. Whereas this data might point toward a trend toward women being less and less enchanted with the regime, one should be cautious in making such a judgment. The reason for this is that the *absolute figures* in each case show a significant decline in 1939 for both females and males, suggesting strongly that a kind of »civilian peace« followed on the heels of the outbreak of the Second World War. The reason why the women's percentages rose in the war years was largely because the men's dropped so dramatically, which is understandable given that so many men were away at the front.

Important here to note is that a large amount of the Gestapo's activity in these first war years was involved with the deportation of the Jews (carried out largely by late 1942 in Germany itself). Also throughout the war years the Gestapo was extremely active in pressing cases against foreign labor conscripts from Belgium, France, Poland, Russia, and several other countries (to be

Table 5: Gestapo Cases Started Against Women in Central Cologne and in Cologne-Ehrenfeld, 1933-1944

Year	Köln			Köln-Ehrenfeld		
	WC	TC	%W	WC	TC	%W
1933	107	827	12.9	16	89	15.2
1934	203	1279	13.7	36	170	17.5
1935	220	1299	16.9	26	198	13.1
1936	217	1110	19.5	36	147	24.5
1937	160	893	17.9	9	66	13.6
1938	86	528	16.3	16	62	25.8
Pre War						
Totals	993	5936	16.7	139	732	19.0
1939	132	477	27.7	13	49	26.5
1940	99	451	22.0	13	48	27.1
1941	95	319	29.8	11	36	30.6
1942	167	493	33.9	15	59	25.4
1943	106	375	28.3	7	48	14.6
1944	130	351	37.0	25	72	34.7
Wartime						
Totals	729	2466	29.6	84	312	26.9
Overall						
Totals	1722	8402	20.5	223	1044	21.4

Note: Same as in last table.

treated briefly in the ensuing section on »protective custody«). Cases against foreign workers, however, almost never became a matter of judicial treatment as the Gestapo simply took them into »protective custody« and did not feel the need to inform the prosecuting attorneys. In all of the cases read in Bergheim, Bayenthal, and the random sample of cases for all of Cologne (again a total of 238 cases), only one case was lodged against a foreign worker - an Italian forced laborer in Bergheim, and this was at the very end of the war.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, for the indigenous German population at least, these figures point toward a rapid decline in political cases in the first rather successful years of the war, but toward a significant increase in cases, both for women and men, beginning in 1942. There are several possible reasons for this. One might be

⁵⁵ NWHADK, Rep. 112/18869.

that with the »Jewish question« »solved,« the Gestapo could turn its attention to the German civilian population. Another explanation would be that these rising figures reflect an increasing disenchantment with the Nazis coterminous with the defeats at Stalingrad and elsewhere, the growing realization that the Germans were losing the war, and the heavy bombing attacks of the British which became truly devastating in Cologne and other cities first in the spring of 1942.⁴⁷

But even if the rise in both female and male cases in 1942 reflected some disenchantment with the progress of the war and perhaps with the regime, there is very little reason to think that these rising rates had much to do with what one usually considers to be »protest« or »resistance.« In the mid 1930s when the absolute number of both female and male offenses were at their highest for the entire Nazi period, the majority of the offenses had to do with libelous statements against the regime and its leaders (which came under the notorious »Heimtücke-gesetz« against malicious rumor mongering and statements of opinion which might damage the government). In 1935, for example, these offenses made up 221 out of the total of 505 cases against women. In the war years, *Heimtücke* cases almost dropped out of the picture and the vast majority of cases opened by the prosecuting attorney's office of the Cologne *Sondergericht* involved infractions against the wartime »Volksschädlingsverordnung« (law against parasites of the German Volk). These »offenses« had little directly to do with political attitudes, and more to do with normal criminality. In the main, they comprised offenses such as plundering, theft, black marketeering, and other infractions against the wartime economy. In 1942 only 40 *Heimtücke* cases, and in 1943 only 34 *Heimtücke* offenses were started in the Cologne area against women. These figures represent a percentage of 9.8 in 1942 and 10.5 in 1943 of all cases started against women.

Figure 1 differentiates between those that were convicted and those that were accused. The reason for this is that in the Bergheim and Bayenthal cases, relatively fewer women were convicted than men. While fifteen men were convicted in the two localities, only 2 women, one in each place, were convicted and sentenced. This ratio yields a percentage of 13.3.

Unfortunately it is not possible to back this figure up satisfactorily with a computer analysis of the entire Cologne district. This is because of the fact that without reading the details of each case, one does not know whether the case ended up in a conviction, an acquittal, or a dismissal. It is known, however, that the vast majority of the cases in the entire Cologne register were in fact

⁴⁷ The really heavy bombing of Cologne began in late May 1942 with the first of many »1000 bomber attacks« launched by the RAF. See Eric Taylor, *1000 Bomber auf Köln. Operation Millenium 1942* (Düsseldorf, 1979). In her interviews of Germans who lived under Nazi rule, Annemarie Tröger notes how quickly they turn to discussions of their sufferings during the bombing attacks. Tröger, »German Women's Memories,« p. 299. Kershaw notes a drop in morale already in 1941 in Bavaria in his *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent*, p. 318 ff.

dismissals (perhaps as high as 80% or greater). Also some indication that the trend observed for Bergheim and Bayenthal held for other areas as well is made possible by analyzing the original *Aktenzeichen* (judicial record for each case which was a series of numbers and letters indicating usually if only a dismissal (*Einstellung*) was involved or if the case went to court. A computer analysis of these *Aktenzeichen* was indeed carried out and it showed that the percentage of women involved in cases where some kind of trial took place dropped to 17.1% for the entire Cologne area in the entire 1933-1945 period (against the original figure of 18%). But this figure cannot be trusted as many of the cases involved several people in which only some of them were convicted or acquitted at trial while the others had their cases dismissed before trial.

Better corroboration of the argument that relatively fewer women vis-a-vis men were convicted than were accused, comes from the execution data which will be turned to shortly. But before discussing that issue, which has a logical sense of finality about it, a discussion of the issue of »protective custody« needs to be considered.

»Protective Custody«

Of all of the Gestapo's many potent weapons it could employ to keep the population in check, its right to arrest and incarcerate people, often in concentration camps, in what was called »protective custody« (*Schutzhaft*) was perhaps its most powerful and most feared. When it chose to resort to this practice, the unfortunate individual it arrested was denied any possibility of a defense. Whereas it is known that this practice was frequently used against the Nazis most hated enemies such as Jews and communists, few exact details are known about how often it was used against normal people whose acts were not considered especially dangerous. This applies particularly to the case of German women. The presumption is, however, that it was quite sparingly used in their regard.

Lothar Gruchmann, in his huge study of the Nazi judicial system in the 1930s, reports that it was used frequently for men, but less so for women. Though he provides several examples, he provides only limited statistical evidence, especially regarding women.⁴⁸ Clearly »protective custody« was used extensively by both the Gestapo (and also by the SA until the Röhm purge in 1934) in the Nazis' clean-up of communists in their first years in power. Still it is not clear how often this practice applied to female communists or indeed other types of women. Gellately in his study of Gestapo case files in Würzburg does not address the issue of its use against females, but found strong evidence to suggest that mostly communists were involved as he found only a handful of socialists and other former enemies of the regime who were incarcerated in *Schutzhaft*.⁴⁹ Also it is known that *Schutzhaft* was not infrequently used by the

⁴⁸ Gruchmann, *Justiz im Dritten Reich*, esp. p. 579ff.

⁴⁹ Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, pp. 38-39.

Gestapo to incarcerate individuals on their hit list, who after a »normal legal procedure« had been acquitted or sentenced too leniently.⁵⁰

Perhaps its most notorious employment, however, was against Jews in the late 1930s and, during the war years, against foreigners both in occupied lands and in Germany itself. In his classic work on the destruction of Europe's Jews, Raul Hilberg explains that roughly 20,000 Jewish males (and no females) were arrested after the pogrom known as *Reichskristallnacht* on November 9, 1938, and sent at least for a brief period to concentration camps like Dachau.⁵¹ That virtually all the Jewish men, but none of the Jewish women in the town of Bergheim were arrested, for example, is confirmed by the testimony of a Bergheim woman with a Jewish husband in a case lodged after the war against former Bergheim Nazis for »crimes against humanity.«⁵² In a study on the German police in the Nazi period, Heinz Wagner cites Himmler in 1942 as not being content with the judicial treatment of Poles, Russians, Jews, Gypsies and other people outside the German »folk community.« Himmler's call for the Gestapo to take over the criminal prosecution of these groups and thus to circumvent the judicial process in getting rid of them is worth reciting to get a sense of the barbarity of the practice of protective custody: »It is my view that the Justice authorities can only contribute in moderate measure to the annihilation of these peoples. Doubtlessly the justice authorities today act extremely harshly in their treatment of such persons, but that is not enough. It makes no sense to conserve such persons for years in German jails and prisons... I believe that considerably better results will be achieved when such persons are handled by the police, in a manner which is free from legalistic constraints and considerations.«⁵³

Some insight into how *Schutzhaft* affected German women can be gained by an analysis of the *Gefangenenbücher* (register of prisoners) of the main jail in the Cologne area which have only recently been found and have not before been analyzed.⁵⁴ Whereas these books appear to be relatively complete for women after April 1, 1941, this is not at all true for men. And this of course makes it impossible to compare how this repressive means might have been used differently or similarly for the two genders. The men's books contain fifty

⁵⁰ An example of this is in the case of the Jesuit priest in Cologne, Father Josef Spieker, mentioned above. Acquitted by the Cologne *Sondergericht* on March 3, 1935, for the crime of making seditious statements against the regime, he was arrested by the Gestapo on the steps of the courthouse and placed in Columbia concentration camp in Berlin. There he sat for nearly a year while awaiting a new trial against him in Cologne. The second time he was found guilty by the same judges. NWHADK, Rep. 112/16096.

⁵¹ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York, 1961), p.23ff.

⁵² NWHADK, Rep. 231/208.

⁵³ Cited by Heinz Wagner, »Die Polizei im Faschismus,« in Udo Reifner and B.-R. Sonnen, eds., *Strafjustiz und Polizei im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt, 1984), p. 167.

⁵⁴ NWHADK, Rep. 300/1-6,8,9 for men. Rep. 300/7,10-15 for women.

percent more people (8,172 to 5,496), but are all cases of arrest in which a clear »legal« procedure is indicated. Though there is solid evidence elsewhere that a large amount of Cologne men were placed in *Schutzhaft*⁵⁵, not one of the over 8,000 men listed had been arrested and put in either *Schutzhaft* (strictly a Gestapo procedure) or *Vorbeugungshaft* (»preventive custody«). The latter was similar to *Schutzhaft*, as it called for people's imprisonment without giving them the chance of a trial, but it was a tool of the criminal police (*Kripo*) and not a tool of the Gestapo. The intent of *Vorbeugungshaft* was to give the Kripo the right to clean the streets of career criminals. Whereas in the war years the political police increasingly dealt with what most would consider normal criminal acts of an economic nature in its repression of *Volksschädlinge*, the Gestapo was supposed to be put into gear only when the crimes involved something of a political nature or when they damaged the war effort or civilian morale. Also, as will be demonstrated below, another difference between the two types of arrest is that Kripo »preventive custody« was limited almost entirely to dealing with German citizens. Foreigners were the concern of the Gestapo, no matter what they did or did not do.

Further indication that the men's books only contain a fraction of the men that sat in Klingelpütz in the war years, and some suggestion of how extensive the practices of protective and preventive custody were for men, is provided in official Cologne prison statistics, which are not yet catalogued and which exist for only 1934 and 1935.⁵⁶ According to these figures, in 1934, for example, 18,203 prisoners (15,740 men and 2,463 women) were imprisoned for at least some period of time (unfortunately under what kind of arrest is not indicated) in Klingelpütz. Additionally, the author of a book on Cologne in the Third Reich, written by a man who himself is a superior court judge, writes that in 1940 there were 15,160 prisoners in Klingelpütz and in 1941 there were 10,877.⁵⁷ Hence what these figures indicate, when compared with the existing prison ledgers indexing 8,172 men who sat in Klingelpütz between the spring of 1941 and the fall of 1944 (less than 3,000 per year, and all with clearly indicated court cases), is that there may have been as many as five to ten thousand men who were incarcerated in either *Schutzhaft* or *Vorbeugungshaft* each year in the Cologne jail.

Though far more complete, as the female prisoners are consequitively numbered from the beginning of April 1941 until the American army overtook Cologne in early March 1945, and every possible type of arrest is represented

⁵⁵ For example, see the interview of Heinrich Becker, who sat in *Schutzhaft* in Klingelpütz in late 1943 and early 1944, in Becker-Jakli, ed., *Ich habe Köln doch so geliebt*, p. 223.

⁵⁶ »Gefängnisstatistik Köln,« NWHADK, Rep. 321/190,191.

⁵⁷ Klein, *Köln im Dritten Reich*, p. 263. Where these figures come from, however, are somewhat mysterious. The source Klein lists for these figures is a book by Robert Frohn, *Köln 1945-1981. Vom Trümmerhaufen zur Millionenstadt* (Köln, 1982), p. 45. But Frohn provides no reference to where he got the figures.

for the nearly 5,500 female prisoners listed, the women's books are certainly not absolutely complete either. Extensive trial documents of Cologne Gestapo officials after the war contain testimony from several women who said they were in Klingelpütz in late 1944 and early 1945 for whom no record exists.⁵⁸ Furthermore they supply evidence from two former policemen, who were themselves not Gestapo agents but who worked in Klingelpütz throughout the war years, and from the main medical doctor in Klingelpütz, who himself claimed to be an inmate, that sometime, probably in the fall of 1944, a special Gestapo Flügel (wing) was set up to handle the overflow of prisoners from the Gestapo HQ in Cologne in the formerly unused cellar of the huge jail.

This new Gestapo wing was said to have had its own register which has not been found. How many women it contained is unknown. It is known, however, that a large amount of women were in this wing and that every imaginable form of hideous cruelty and diabolical doings existed in this cellar from drunken sex orgies with Gestapo officials and female prisoners, to public naked whippings of the breasts of the female inmates by other female inmates (usually prostitutes) who were used as overseers, to point blank shootings, fatal injections, and the gassing of prisoners.⁵⁹

All of this said, the records appear to have been complete for women who were in Klingelpütz prison from early 1941 to late 1944. Furthermore, these are very likely to contain the vast majority of women who, for at least some period of their detention, were put in *Schutzhaft* or *Vorbeugungshaft* in the Cologne area, as the Gestapo used the Klingelpütz jail to house its prisoners after they were interrogated and often even while they were waiting to be interrogated.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ NWHADK, Rep. 231/95, and Rep. 248/265,266.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Interestingly, though these cases carried on for over twenty years and provided solid details and eyewitness accounts of murders, beatings, and the like, they ended in dismissals for »lack of evidence« against the Gestapo officials.

⁶⁰ All of the Cologne Jewish women whose interviews were published recently in Bekker-Jakli, ed., *Ich habe Köln doch so geliebt*, reported spending time in Klingelpütz. None discussed spending time in arrest in any of the other possible penal institutions in the Cologne area like the concentration camp that was set up in the Cologne Messe (trade center) in the middle of the war years. Some women, perhaps many, in *Schutzhaft*, however, probably spent time in nearby Brauweiler, but no figures are available at present. Others were perhaps only in the Gestapo HQ, known as the EL DE Haus in Cologne. According to figures from Terhorst in his article on »Polizeiliche planmäßige Überwachung und polizeiliche Vorbeugungshaft,« p. 153, women represented only about 6% of all prisoners in *Vorbeugungshaft* in 1939 and 1940 in the whole of Germany. Using his figures to compute how many Cologne-area women would have been in *Vorbeugungshaft* if Cologne were representative of the rest of Germany, one would expect about 25 Cologne-area women per year to have been in this kind of detention (dividing the total number of women in *Vorbeugungshaft* in Germany in 1939 and 1940 by 30, as Cologne had roughly 2 million people in its metropolitan area and Germany had about 65 million inhabitants at this time). In that roughly 35 women in Klingelpütz were in *Vorbeugungshaft* each year, it appears that these records were complete.

What they show is that relatively few German women in the Cologne area were put in *Schutzhaft* or *Vorbeugungshaft*.

When each of the nearly 5,500 entries for female prisoners was checked for information about the terms of their arrest their duration of stay, their ethnic, occupational, and marital background, and where they apparently went when they left the prison, it was determined that 726 had been arrested and put in the prison by either the Gestapo or the Kripo and had no further evidence of any legal case against them. The rest all had a legal case with the involvement of the *Staatsanwaltschaft* or were there only overnight while in transport to another detention center and were clearly listed as »*Durchgangsgefangene*« (»transportees,« which made up a total of 1184 women, of which 174 were »N.N.« prisoners - »*Nacht und Nebel*« or »Night and Fog« Decree prisoners were people in German occupied lands who were snatched up and were supposed to disappear without a trace).

The results of a computer analysis of these 726 prisoners is reported in Tables 6 and 7. In Table 6 one notes that the conditions of arrest of 353 of these women were not indicated and thus they could have been either arrested by the Gestapo or the Kripo. Many of them were Germans of non-Jewish background (257), but only 5 of them were Germans of certain Jewish background (Jewish women can be easily identified because they had to use Sara as a second name, though some of the apparently »normal« Germans citizens of non-Jewish background may have been of partial Jewish extraction, as »*Mischlinge*« did not have to add Sara to their names). Eastern forced laborers, mostly from Poland, Russia and Ukraine, and Western forced laborers, usually from France and Belgium, made up the rest (a total of 91). Women arrested by the Kripo, indicated by having *Vorbeugungshaft* or simply »Kripo« entered next to their names, were almost completely of German origin and not considered to be fully Jewish.

Clear indication that women were placed in *Schutzhaft* by the Gestapo only occurred in 163 cases. But the word »Gestapo« was placed next to the names of 67 other prisoners, which also can be considered to be in a kind of Gestapo "protective custody.« These records show, therefore, that only 230 women in the Cologne area were placed in protective custody by the Gestapo between April 1941 and late 1944 without recourse to any further legal process. Of these women, only 99 were non-Jewish German women (again, some of whom may have been »*Mischlinge*«). From the yearly distribution shown in Table 7, one sees that over half of them were imprisoned in 1942, and that the numbers dropped off rapidly after that time. One needs to remember, nonetheless, that many more women were certainly placed in *Schutzhaft* arrest in the new Gestapo wing of the jail at the end of the war. Also an unknown amount of women may have gone directly from Gestapo HQ to a concentration camp (though interviews of German women do not indicate that this usually took place as the transports to concentration camp for non-Jewish, German women

Table 6: Crosstabulation of Ethnic Background by Type of Arrest of Female Prisoners Without Judicial Processes in Klingelpütz Prison

Ethnic Origin	Un- Schutz. Gest. Vorb. Kripo known				
	1. German, non Jewish	257	74	25	88
2. German, Jewish	5	21	1	0	0
3. Eastern Workers	64	38	32	0	3
4. Western Workers	27	30	9	2	2
Total (726)	353	163	67	90	53

Table 7: Female Prisoners in Klingelpütz Prison Arrested Under the Clear Designation of either "Schutzhaft" or "Gestapo"

Year	All Women	German Women (non Jewish)
1941	38	16
1942	143	56
1943	18	9
1944	31	18
1945	0	0
Total	230	99

were organized out of Klingelpütz, and sometimes for Jews as well).⁶¹

Whereas all of the Klingelpütz arrestees that were not among these 726 women served out their sentences in Klingelpütz or were noted to have been sent to another jail or prison (never directly to a concentration camp), many of the women in protective custody and preventive custody or with an unknown type of arrest were sent to a concentration camp. Most often this was to Ravensbrück, the leading women's concentration camp in the war years (see Table 8).⁶² Only 3 women, for example, all clearly Jewish, were transported directly to Auschwitz. The most likely candidates for Ravensbrück were obviously German women arrested by the Kripo, as 76 of the total of 118 women were Kripo arrestees, all of German background. Women arrested by the Gestapo, somewhat surprisingly, made up only 29 of these women. Forced

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² S. Jacobiet and L. Thomas-Heinrich, *Kreuzweg Ravensbrück* (Leipzig, 1987).

laborers from eastern countries made up only 17. Apparently, no forced laborers from western countries were sent to Ravensbrück from Klingelputz. Finally, more women were sent to Ravensbrück in 1942 than in any other year.

Executions (4%)

Although being sent to a concentration camp like Ravensbrück often meant being sent to death, being sentenced to be executed certainly meant the end of the line. At this level of the Nazi system of terror, women were in a small minority. To be sure, there were some women like Paula W., cited at the beginning of this essay, who were treated summarily by a *Sondergericht* in an individual city or by the *Volksgericht* in Berlin. But these were rare cases, usually taking place only when the Nazi authorities wanted to make a special effort to scare the population into staying in line. The Paula W. case was in fact written up in the local Nazi newspaper in the Cologne area, the *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, immediately after it took place. On June 3, 1942, only one day after her execution, the paper published a large article about her case with huge headlines warning the population that the Nazis would use the stiffest means to punish anyone who sought to enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow citizens who suffered from bombing attacks.

It must be remembered, however, that this was on the heels of the largest attack to date that the British had mounted. And not only did the British hope that their 1000 bomber attack on the Cologne population would help to destroy civilian morale in Germany by the damage it inflicted, they also dropped numerous leaflets from the sky in the following days to encourage the German civilian population to give up the senseless fight. Obviously the German government wanted to nip the possible propaganda advantages the British wished to gain immediately in the bud.

One might conclude from the fact that there were so few previous or subsequent Paula Ws, that Paula W's example served its propagandistic purpose. This is not likely, however, as in that same month of June 1942 the *Westdeutscher Beobachter* also carried sizable cases about two Cologne men sentenced to death by the local *Sondergericht* for the same acts of plundering after a huge bombing attack.⁶¹ Given the fact that the existing Klingelputz records discussed above point toward at least 529 men, as opposed to only 22 women being executed between 1941 and 1945 (and given that we know that the women's records are much more complete than the men's), such propagandistic newspaper articles certainly did not scare the men. Why should one believe that they scared the women more?

⁶¹ On June 1 and June 18, the newspaper reported on executions of male Germans. The first case involved simple theft and the second involved robbery. There were 20 crime cases reported on in the newspaper involving people from Cologne. All of the cases involved were property crimes of one sort or another. Five of the cases were of women. No other females were reported as being executed.

Tabele 8: Women Sent To Ravensbrück Concentration Camp from Klingelpütz Prison, By Year, Type of Arrest, Ethnic Background, and Marital Status

1. Year

<u>Year</u>	<u>All Women</u>	<u>German Women</u>
1941	17	14
1942	51	38
1943	38	38
1944	12	8
1945	0	0
Total	118	98

2. Type of Arrest

<u>Type of Arrest</u>	<u>All Women</u>	<u>German Women</u>
1. Unknown	23	12
2. Schutzhaft or Gestapo	19	10
3. Vorbeugungshaft or Kripo	76	76
Total	118	98

3. Ethnic Background

1. German, non Jewish	98
2. German, Jewish	3
3. Eastern Workers	17
Total	118

4. Marital Background of German Women

1. single	66
2. married	32

These figures certainly do not include all of the Cologne-area people killed by the Gestapo or by Nazi judicial organs. Some of the sources we have already cited point toward the summary executions of hundreds of prisoners at the end of the war. Other trial documents in cases against former Cologne Gestapo officials tried after the war point toward numerous earlier cases, going back to the early years of the Regime, in which forced confessions led to the death of the prisoners in the Gestapo building itself.⁶⁴ In October and November 1944, the Cologne Gestapo set up a gallows in the center of the working-class section of Cologne-Ehrenfeld and publicly hung, without any other judicial involvement whatsoever, 11 foreign workers who had presumably had sexual relations with German women and 13 German men and teenage boys who had been involved in the Edelweiss Pirates organization. Their bodies were left to dangle in front of the eyes of the local population for over a week. There were also several Cologne people sentenced to death by Freisler's »People's Court,« though there is as yet no available estimate of how many Cologne people were involved.

Still, the facts that women only accounted for four percent of the executions in the Cologne jail, that only six of the twenty-two women executed were sentenced by a Cologne court (the rest were sentenced by various other courts in neighboring cities, as Klingelpütz was the central execution place for the entire Rhineland area with cities like Düsseldorf, Essen, Dortmund and others sending their convicts to Cologne to be executed)⁶⁵, and that only one of the women executed in Klingelpütz was born in Cologne against 40 Cologne-born men, must have meant that the Nazis were especially careful when it came to »legally« executing women.⁶⁶ This evidence, almost needless to say, reflects the activity of the organs of repression, not the activity of those who were repressed. Certainly many more women were involved in acts of protest, resistance, and plain criminality which could have qualified them for execution. This evidence does, however, demonstrate that the Nazis generally believed that openly executing women would not help their cause.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ See, for example, NWHADK, Rep.231/275-299, which deal with forced confessions tortured out of prisoners by the Gestapo over the entire period.

⁶⁵ Klein, *Köln im Dritten Reich*, p. 263.

⁶⁶ Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. 336, reports that the first woman executed in Nazi Germany was a young former communist, Liselotte Hermann, who was put to death on June 21, 1938. Richard Evans' new book on executions in modern Germany (*Rituals of Retribution: Capital Punishment in Germany Since 1600*, forthcoming), however, sets the date at August 26, 1933, when Emma Thiemes was executed as the first of three women executed in that year.

⁶⁷ The Nazis also did not apparently find that it was a good idea to execute even former communist and socialist party women. Although 61 male former communist and socialist party deputies of the Weimar Reichstag were killed in concentration camp or were sentenced to death, only 3 female Reichstag deputies from these parties were killed. Of course there were more male than female deputies to choose from (488 to 67). These figures are from Martin Schumacher, ed., *M.d.R. Die Reichstagsabgeord-*

Table 9: Occupation of Female Informers in Köln-Bayenthal and Bergheim

Occupation	Köln-B	Bergheim	Total	Percent
1. Housewife	16	12	28	75.7
2. Widow	2	0	2	5.4
3. Domestic	2	0	2	5.4
4. Dentist	0	2	2	5.4
5. BDM Ringführerin	0	1	1	3.7
6. Publican	0	1	1	3.7
7. Pupil	1	0	1	3.7
8. Without Occupation	0	0	0	0.0
Total	21	16	37	100.0

Table 10: Occupation of Accused Females in Köln-Bayenthal and Bergheim

Occupation	Köln-B.	Bergheim	Total	Percent
1. Housewife	6	8	14	45.2
2. Without Occupation	3	3	6	19.4
3. Domestic	3	1	4	12.9
4. Nun	3	0	3	9.7
5. Widow	2	0	2	6.5
6. Saleswoman	1	0	1	3.2
7. Worker	1	0	1	3.2
Total	19	12	31	100.0

Conclusion: Which Women got Involved? - Age, Occupation, and Marriage

A brief discussion of the socioeconomic and demographic background of the women involved in this study will help lead toward a conclusion of the essay. The most important of these variables by far is marriage. The age of the women was hardly significant as the average age of denouncers, witnesses, and the accused all averaged about 40. Men in these categories in Bergheim and in Bayenthal were slightly younger on average, but only by a couple of years at

neten der Weimarer Republik in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus. Politische Verfolgung, Emigration und Ausbürgerung 1933-1945 (Düsseldorf, 1991). Also one should note that no former female deputies were executed by a court decision, though 12 men were.

the most. The occupation of the people was perhaps of greatest significance when it regarded marriage, though the four tables on the occupations of the denouncers and the accused found in Tables 9-12 point out that unmarried working-class women or married women of the working-class who worked outside the home were almost never the ones that started cases by denouncing others, but they were the ones who had cases started against them. As shown perhaps best in Table 11, women listed as »without occupation« (usually meaning unmarried, non-working women of the working classes), unemployed women (usually also women from the working classes), and women working in jobs as common laborers, seamstresses, domestics, and other working-class jobs made up a majority of those with cases started against them by the Gestapo. Also to note is that less than one percent of the cases involved educated, middle-class women who worked outside the home (a total of 40 female teachers, doctors, and managers out of a total of over 5,000 accused women were found in this category).

The clear class bias of the process reinforces the well established argument that Nazism, though partially a »catch all« movement, had a very strong class bias with the lower classes on the receiving end and the middle classes and the wealthy on the inflicting end of the suffering. What has not previously been established empirically is the great significance that being married, and especially being married and staying at home, had in differentiating between those that worked with the regime and those that worked against it. As the single, working woman cited at the front of this essay proclaimed, being single put women at a serious disadvantage in Nazi Germany.

The case of the executed Paula W. supports this. Whereas this single, working-class woman was executed for her petty theft on the night of the first 1,000 bomber attack in Cologne, another woman who also enriched herself temporarily on that night from the ruins of the bombing was sentenced by the same court a couple of days later for only a four year sentence in a penitentiary. This woman, named Maria H., was only one year younger than Paula W.. She lived in the working-class section of Cologne-Ehrenfeld. Her case was also written up in the Nazi newspaper, though a week later. The biggest difference between the two women, apparently the difference between life and death, was that Maria H. was a married housewife.⁶⁸

Table 9 shows that over 75% of the female informers in Bergheim and Bayenthal listed their occupation as housewife (the figures from the brief random sample confirm this with a figure of 77%). Additionally several of the other female accusers were also married; married women made up a total of 81% (21 out of 26 different women) of the denouncing women in Bergheim and Bayenthal and 85% of the women in the random sample (11 of 13). Table 10 shows, however, that only 45% of the accused women in Bergheim and Bayenthal listed their occupations as housewife, though 74% of them were

⁶⁸ Her case was reported on June 9, 1942.

Table 11: Leading Occupational Classification of Accused Women in Entire Cologne Area, 1933-1944 (as % of all women)

Occupation	Percent
1. Housewife	40.5
2. Widow	1.8
3. Without Occupation	17.8
4. No Occupation Listed	3.4
5. Unemployed	3.7
6. Worker	7.2+
7. Domestic	4.5
8. Educated Trades	0.8*
9. Nuns	0.3**
10. Other (primarily working class)	20.0

Notes: + Included with workers are seamstresses (Näherinnen), who accounted for 0.7 of all females.

* Under educated trades were a total of 40 women (16 teachers, 11 managers (Filialleiterinnen), 7 medical doctors, 4 university students, and 2 dentists).

** There were 14 nuns.

married The best evidence of the effects of marriage, however, comes from the figures on women in Gestapo *Schutzhaft* and women sent to concentration camp. Only 31.3% of the German women in *Schutzhaft* were married (31 out of 99 women), though their average age was 33.5 years and at that age over 75% of Cologne women were married. Only 32.7% of German women sent to Ravensbrück were married (32 out of 98 women). Finally, of all the women detained in Klingelpütz prison between 1941 and 1945 without any evidence of a court process, only 17.6% listed their occupation as housewife.

As Ute Frevert pointed out, the Third Reich for many was not necessarily a »women's hell.« German women who got married and contented themselves with »Kinder, Küche, und Kirche«, as the overwhelming majority of them did, had relatively little to fear. Many of these women, as Frevert argues, may have experienced a level of power and respect in everyday life that they had not

Table 12: Four Leading Occupational Categories of Accused Women Over Time (As % of All Women in Entire Cologne Area)

Year	Houswife	No Occupation	Unemployed	Simple Worker
1933	42.3	15.8	9.2	1.7
1934	40.2	17.8	7.1	1.4
1935	34.1	22.2	12.8	2.1
1936	37.6	26.3	4.9	1.5
1937	40.1	22.3	2.9	1.3
1938	39.7	19.3	2.5	3.1
1939	36.2	26.2	1.9	2.4
1940	39.8	20.4	3.5	2.5
1941	36.7	11.6	-	9.7
1942	36.3	11.0	-	7.1
1943	41.5	9.0	-	6.5
1944	43.1	6.8	-	8.1

Note: The above figures greatly underestimate the number of female workers as they are only based on the classification of "Arbeiterin" (simple worker).

experienced earlier in the more democratic Weimar Republic or even later in the Federal Republic. The power of denunciation gave many women a very potent weapon. But many other women suffered greatly from this perverse society with conservative values gone mad. These were Jewish women, foreign women, Roma and Sinti women, communist women, socialist women, democratic women, freedom-loving women, and frequently single women.