UNDERGROUND CIRCLES AND CLANDESTINE ROMANCE: QUEER RESISTANCE UNDER THE THIRD REICH

by

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ABSTRACT

KEIRA ROBERSON. Underground Circles and Clandestine Romance: Queer Resistance under the Third Reich. (Under the direction of DR. HEATHER PERRY)

This study proposes a framework through which to examine queer resistance and oppositional behaviors under oppression and persecution, such as the Nazi regime. Under the Weimar Republic, queer circles coalesced into communities that developed a degree of visibility in the German public and political discourse. Queer activists advocated for the abolition of Paragraph 175, the section of the German legal code which criminalized homosexual intercourse. Immediately following the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933, the Nazi German government targeted the visible queer establishments and print outlets. In 1935, the Nazi regime revised Paragraph 175 to implement harsher penalties and expand the scope of its homosexual criminalization. This study examines the clandestine queer communities that moved outside the public sphere to both preserve their own safety and resist Nazi persecution. Queer circles developed underground networks to maintain a semblance of their Weimar-era communities and engage in explicitly illegal acts of sexual autonomy. Furthermore, queer individuals engaged in tactics to preserve the safety of their networks and immediate queer circles.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER ONE: UNDERSTANDING RESISTANCE IN THE THIRD REICH 13

CHAPTER TWO: UNDERGROUND STRUCTURES AND NETWORKS 24

Reformers and Reactionaries 25

Sexual and Romantic Resistance 35

Mobility 44

Communication 47

Underground Communities 48

CHAPTER THREE: PRESERVATION 50

Rettungwiderstand 51

Alibis, Arrests, and Interrogations 54

Preservation 60

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION 62

BIBLIOGRAPHY 66

Primary Sources 66

Secondary Sources 67

INTRODUCTION

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazi regime instituted reproductive policies based in racism, sexism, and homophobia.[1] Conservative and eugenicist ideals painted queer Germans as both morally and sexually deviant, as well as "unhealthy and undesirable" for the reproductive capacity of the German population.[2] In 1935, the Third Reich revised Paragraph 175, the section of German law that criminalized homosexual male intercourse, to broaden its scope and impose stricter punishments for those who violated it.[3] And yet in 1929, six years before the Nazi revision of Paragraph 175 and four years prior to the National Socialist takeover of the German government, the Reichstag nearly eliminated Paragraph 175. A queer social and political movement had pushed for the abolition of the section of the German legal code that criminalized homosexuality. The homosexual emancipation movement had made significant strides through the 1920s, gaining acceptance and support beyond its community. The Scientific Humanitarian Committee was one of the most distinguished of these groups, led by prominent sexologist and staunch supporter of decriminalization, Magnus Hirschfield.[4] However, the homosexual emancipation movement's goal of abolishing Paragraph 175 was ultimately unsuccessful. Under the Nazi regime, queer establishments and literature were promptly banned in 1933, and the 1935

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[1] Gisela Block, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State," in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, eds. Renate Bridenthal, Anita Grossman, and Marion Kaplan (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 271-296; Günter Grau and Claudia Schoppmann, eds., *Hidden Holocaust? Gay and Lesbian Persecution in Germany, 1933-45*, Trans. Patrick Camiller (Chicago, IL: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1995), 4.

[2] Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust*, 4.

[3] Ibid., 64-66.

[4] Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 112-113.

revision of Paragraph 175 enabled the widespread abuse, vilification, criminalization, and organized mass murder of homosexuals.[5]

This timeline presents a dichotomy of queer life between two contiguous eras of German politics and government: the Weimar Republic, in which queer communities organized, gained political consciousness, and became visible in large cities; and the Third Reich, in which the Nazi state oppressed, persecuted, and vilified queer people, resulting in imprisonment and death for many homosexual men and (to a lesser extent) lesbian women. These opposing narratives beg questions with which this study will grapple. Nazi intelligence officials estimated the existence of at least two million homosexual individuals in Germany, supposedly based on the "registered membership" of Weimar-era "homosexual associations."[6] However, only around 100,000 homosexual men were recorded as having been arrested, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.[7] What were the tactics of queer Germans who avoided arrest, and how? What happened to the queer communities and circles that formed during the Weimar Republic? How did the Nazi politicization and criminalization of queer sexualities impact queer groups that had become politically involved in the previous decade? This study will discuss collective queer groups that organized underground to survive and continue a semblance of their lives prior to 1933. In analyzing these communities, I argue that queer Germans in Nazi Germany engaged in resistance and oppositional behaviors by creating, maintaining, and preserving underground, clandestine networks and structures. These structures enabled queer

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[5] Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: H. Holt, 1986), 54-69; Günter Grau and Claudia Schoppmann, eds., *Hidden Holocaust*, 5.

[6] Heinrich Himmler, speaking to SS- Gruppenführer at Bad Tölz, February 18, 1937, in *Hidden Holocaust*, eds. Günter Grau and Claudia Schoppmann, 91.

Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus, *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001), 243.

[7] "Persecution of Homosexuals in the Third Reich," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed February 10, 2019, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/persecution-of-homosexuals-in-the-third-reich.

people to exercise illegal forms of sexual freedom, and further, the individuals who constituted these communities engaged in strategies to preserve their networks and inner circles.

In order to accurately discuss queer Germans in the early Twentieth century, it is imperative to use specific terminology to describe the self-attributed identities of queer people. Contemporary identities, though accurate in describing the experiences of contemporary people, cannot be anachronistically imposed upon individuals who did not use them. I had initiated this study with the intention to use "LGBT," rather than "queer," to be respectful of readers who are sensitive to a word often used as a pejorative for much of the last century, only recently being reappropriated. However, this immediate inclination was unsustainable and challenging to navigate. In my belief, it is more accurate to use the term "queer" in the academic sense, as it better encapsulates the popular conflation of non-cisgender and non-heterosexual identities popular in the early Twentieth century and that carries methodological connotations in connection to queer studies. Similarly, I will often use "homosexual" to refer to a queer man, due to the historical significance of the identity and the prevalence of the terminology during this period. The word transvestite, which has been outright rejected in contemporary LGBT vernacular, will be used less than the prior two sensitive terms in this text, but it must be acknowledged that both gender nonconforming individuals and trans people of this period identified using the word transvestite.

Until the late 1970s and '80s, scholarship on queer Germans has been scant in the extensive historiography of the Nazi regime. But there were rare and important exceptions. Notably, Eugen Kogan acknowledged the presence of homosexual prisoners in concentration camps, particularly Buchenwald, in his 1946 monograph, *Der SS Staat*.[8] Heinz Heger published

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[8] Eugen Kogon, *Der SS-Staat: Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager* (Frankfurt, Germany: Verlag der Frankfurter Hefte, 1946).

The Men with the Pink Triangle in 1972, a memoir of his own experiences as a gay concentration camp survivor.[9] As later described by Michael Burleigh's and Wolfgang Wipperman's, *The Racial State*, the omission of queer history from historiographies of the Nazi regime and the Holocaust can be ascribed to both prevalent homophobia in the immediate postwar era, and that the Nazi revision of Paragraph 175 – the law that criminalized homosexual intercourse – which had not been repealed until 1968 and 1969 (in East and West Germany respectively).[10] In fact, a small number of monographs and cinematic media depicted Hitler and high-ranking members of the Nazi regime as effeminate or homosexual – a vengeful "technique of homosexualizing the enemy" used to rationalize the Nazis as "simply homosexual perverts."[11] Historian Richard Plant sought to correct the exclusion of gay Holocaust victims in his groundbreaking monograph, *The Pink Triangle*. Plant argues that scholars had largely ignored evidence of homosexual victims of the holocaust, and subsequently provides a narrative of the Nazi persecution of homosexual men.[12]

In the 1990s and early 2000s, histories of queer victims of the Third Reich crossed two significant thresholds: first, contextualization of queer male victims among other marginalized groups. Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wipperman's *The Racial State* provided an analysis of the "totality of Nazi racial and social policy in the light of detailed recent research."[13] *The Racial State* examined many margins and marginalized groups of the Third Reich, including persecuted groups, the impact of eugenicist politics on Nazi policy, and more social history perspectives of

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[9] Heinz Heger, *The Men with the Pink Triangle,* trans. David Fernbach (Hamburg, Germany: Merlin-Verlag, 1980).

[10] Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933-1945* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 183.

[11] Heinz Heger, *The Men with the Pink Triangle,* 15, 16.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933-1945*, 2-3.

youth, men, and women in Nazi Germany.[14] Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus's 1991 edited volume *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany* similarly incorporated discussions of homosexual men alongside other persecuted groups, with an overall social history focus on the conflict between marginalized people and the Nazi policies oppressing and targeting them.[15]

The second significant shift during this period is the inclusion of lesbian women. Günter Grau and Claudia Schoppmann's *Hidden Holocaust* examines queer men and women in a book which, primarily, serves as a compilation of primary sources which coalesce into a clear narrative of the persecution and oppression of queer people in Nazi Germany.[16] Furthermore, it presents a narrative of escalating persecution of queer people in three distinct parts: discrimination, criminalization, and persecution. Claudia Schoppmann continued her investigation into lesbian oppression during the Third Reich in *Nationalsozialistische Sexualpolitik und weibliche Homosexualität* (National Socialist Sexual Policy and Female Homosexuality), which centers the impact of Nazi racial, sexual, and reproductive policies on queer women.[17] While lesbian intercourse had not been explicitly criminalized under the Third Reich, Schoppmann examines the oppression of queer women, and how it differs from the experiences of homosexual men.

Notably, the 1990s also ushered in the publications of more personal testimonies, interviews, and memoirs from queer survivors of the Third Reich. Ilse Kokula's *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids* and Claudia Schoppmann's *Days of Masquerade* both provide narratives

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus, *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*.
[16] Gunter Grau and Claudia Schoppmann, *Hidden Holocaust*.
[17] Claudia Schoppmann, *Nationalsozialistische Sexualpolitik und weibliche Homosexualität* (Pfaffenweiler, Germany: Centaurus Verlag & Media, 1997).

of and interviews with lesbian women who lived under or escaped the Third Reich.[18] Similarly, Lutz van Dijk's *Ein erfülltes Leben – trotzdem* published interviews with homosexual men who survived the Nazi regime, several of whom experienced persecution and imprisonment themselves.[19] Gad Beck's memoir, *An Underground Life*, illustrated the personal account of a gay Jewish man, who not only survived, but resisted the Nazis.[20] These personal testimonies present invaluable narratives from the perspective of those who experienced the oppression of Nazi sexual and racial policies firsthand.

Scholarship in the past two decades primarily focused on the social and cultural aspects of queer life and persecution under the Nazi regime. William Spurlin's *Lost Intimacies* considers the historiographical challenges of examining queer persecution and argues that homophobia, particularly Nazi homophobia, "seldom operated alone, but operated in conjunction with other axes of power, including race, gender, and particular national policies, which under the Third Reich included eugenics and population politics."[21] Similar to Burleigh and Wipperman's *The Racial State*, Spurlin sought to explore the broader sociopolitical contexts that facilitated Nazi racial and sexual prejudice, though with a scope specifically tailored to examine their relationship to homophobia. Michael Schwartz's *Homosexuelle im Nationalsozialismus* incorporates a more diverse array of queer identities beyond gay and lesbian – including bisexual, intersex, and transgender individuals. Schwartz acknowledges that, rather than a

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[18] Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen Dokumente* (Kiel, Germany: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990); Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade: Life Stories of Lesbians during the Third Reich*, trans. Allison Brown (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996).

[19] Lutz van Dijk, *Ein erfülltes Leben - trotzdem: Erinnerungen Homosexueller 1933-1945* (Hamburg, Germany: Rowohlt, 1992).

[20] Gad Beck and Frank Heibert, *An Underground Life: The Memoirs of a Gay Jew in Nazi Berlin* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999).

[21] William J. Spurlin, *Lost Intimacies: Rethinking Homosexuality Under National Socialism* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009).

monograph discussing the persecution of queer people, it is an edited volume which examines the differing "*Lebenssituationen*," or living situations, of queer Germans.[22]

The expansion of queer studies in the Nazi historiography has enabled scholars to conduct microhistories on queer individuals and their conflicts with the Nazi police. Laurie Marhoefer's article, "Lesbianism, Transvestitism, and the Nazi State: A Microhistory of a Gestapo Investigation, 1939-1943," analyzes Nazi ambivalence regarding lesbian women, and the shifting boundaries of their indifference. Javier Vendrell's, "The Case of a German-Jewish Lesbian Woman: Martha Mosse and the Danger of Standing Out," explores intersecting identities and the unique dangers and experiences of those who lie between.[23] These studies of singular individuals and investigations reflect larger sociopolitical trends that may have been impossible to detect without the injection of queer scholarship into historiographies of the Nazi regime and the Holocaust.

It is abundantly clear, however, that much of the scholarship on queer Germans under the Third Reich is centered on narratives of persecution and oppression. Few do not, such as Robert Tobin's "Stormtrooper Families" and Jason Crouthamel's "Homosexuality and Cromradeship," which both delve into the conflict between homosexuality, masculinity, and the Nazi military.[24] Yet, these are the exception and not the rule. While it is imperative and necessary to discuss the human suffering and tragedy that many queer people experienced, few studies stray from centering the Nazi regime's victimization of queer people. None of the prior research into queer

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[22] Michael Schwartz, *Homosexuelle im Nationalsozialismus: Neue Forschungsperspektiven zu Lebenssituationen von lesbischen, schwulen, bi-, trans- und intersexuellen Menschen 1933 bis 1945* (Munich, Germany: De Gruyter Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2014), 12.

[23] Javier Vendrell, "The Case of a German-Jewish Lesbian Woman: Martha Mosse and the Danger of Standing Out," *German Studies Review* 41, no. 2 (2018): 335-353.

[24] Robert Tobin, "Stormtrooper families: Homosexuality and Community in the Early Nazi Movement," *German Politics and Society* 34, no. 2 (Summer, 2016): 94-97; Jason Crouthamel, "Homosexuality and Comradeship: Destabilizing the Hegemonic Masculine Ideal in Nazi Germany," *Central European History* 51, no. 3 (2018): 419-39.

Germans surviving the Third Reich examine collective, underground opposition to the Nazi regime's restrictive sexual policies.

Historians, such as Laurie Marhoefer and Robert Beachy, have explored the nascent, but developing, queer community in Weimar Germany. Laurie Marhoefer's *Sex and the Weimar Republic* posits that Weimar sexual politics had little to do with its eventual instability and seeks to return agency to both the activists for sexual freedom and conservative reactionaries.[25] Robert Beachy's *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity*, on the other hand, argued, "that the homosexual 'species' took root in Germany after the mid-nineteenth century through the collaboration of Berlin's medical scientists and sexual minorities."[26] Furthermore, Beachy continues, the development of queer identities in Weimar-era Berlin "clearly underpins modern conceptions of sexual orientation."[27] While these works do not deal directly in Nazi German history, Marhoefer and Beachy propose a more complete narrative of queer Germans in the Twentieth century, which juxtaposes a fragile era of progressive sexual politics against the subsequently fatal period of persecution and oppression under the Third Reich.

This study centers the narrative of queer activism and the construction of communities, which conflicted with National Socialist reactionary policies and were forced to move underground. In doing so, I argue that queer communities collectively engaged in oppositional and resistance behaviors through practicing illicit and illegal (homo)sexual autonomy, and preserving their inner circles. This, too, is lacking from queer scholarship. The limited scholarship, literature, and acknowledgements of queer resistance against the Nazi regime tend to fall into at least one of three categories: spotlights of individuals, instances outside Germany, or

[25] Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

[26] Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York, NY: Vintage, 2015), 6.

[27] Ibid., 6.

queer individuals who participated intersectionally in non-queer resistance circles. Existing discussions of queer opposition do not address collective, queer resistance inside Germany.

Many accounts of queer resisters to the Third Reich are based in Nazi-occupied territories. Willem Arondeus and Frieda Belifante have been acknowledged as queer Dutch resisters who participated in an arson attack on the Amsterdam registration office, which destroyed 800,000 identity cards to prevent them from falling into S.S. possession.[28] Even less scholarship exists on the resistance efforts of Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore, two queer artists in Jersey who disseminated anti-Nazi propaganda following the German occupation of the Channel Islands.[29] These accounts, while providing extraordinary narratives of queer and gender-nonconforming individuals, do not provide insight into the oppositional activities of queer Germans. It is more socially acceptable and defensible to revolt against an invading military force than one's own government.

Scholarship and autobiographies have highlighted the activities of queer individuals who participated in ideologically or racially driven resistance circles – however their queerness is often on the periphery of these narratives. It does not shape or directly influence their circles, methods, or objectives. Gerhard Beck is a significant example. Beck was a homosexual Jewish man who became a central member of *Chug Chaluzi*, a Jewish resistance circle focused on the rescue of persecuted individuals and fugitives.[30] His autobiography discusses his homosexuality

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[28] Robert Aldrich, Garry Wotherspoon, *Who's Who in Gay and Lesbian History* (London, UK: Routledge, 2020), 34-35; Andrew Roth, "Arondeus: Gay Hero of the Dutch Resistance," *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 6, no. 4 (1999): 34; Gerry E. Studds, *Remembering Gay Victims of the Holocaust: Willem Arondeus – Hero of the Resistance*, 139th Cong., Congressional Record E 969 (April 21, 1993); Chris Pasles, "Frieda Belinfante Honored Cultural Pioneer Still a Voice for Excellence: Orange County Edition," *The Los Angeles Times* (1987), accessed April 1, 2021, last modified February 19, 1987; Frieda Belinfante, interview by Klaus Müller, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,* May 31, 1994.

[29] Jeffrey H. Jackson, *Paper Bullets: Two Artists who Risked their Lives to Defy the Nazis* (New York, NY: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2020).

[30] Gad Beck and Frank Heibert, *An Underground Life.*

– and, in fact, it is central to his identity and relationships – but his account does not provide insight into collective queer opposition.[31] Similar issues arise in accounts of White Rose member Hans Scholl's prior charges of homosexuality or the few details of Felice Schragenheim's connections to British espionage efforts in *Aimée & Jaguar*.[32] The actions of these individuals are not founded in their queer identity, nor are they connected to a broader movement.

Even the limited secondary literature which discusses queer resistance centers individual accounts and do not attempt to portray a broader coalition of queer anti-Nazi behavior. Ian Young's 1985 *Gay Resistance* proposes a narrative in which Claus von Stauffenberg, a central member of the July 20th Plot and the individual who planted a bomb in a private military meeting to assassinate Adolf Hitler, was heavily influenced by the homosexual men in his childhood.[33] Young presents an ultimately unconvincing argument that seems to imply that Stauffenberg is queer by association with the homosexual poet Stefan George.[34] Following this deeply problematic implication, Young briefly highlights specific anti-Nazi homosexual men such as the French poet Jean Desbordes and the British secret agent Dennis Rake.[35]

Burkhard Jellonnek's brief discussions of queer resistance present more convincing and insightful evidence. In a 1990 article in *Capri*, a magazine dedicated to gay history, Jellonnek describes an event in which two plainclothes S.S. Officers arrested a locksmith on suspicions of homosexual conduct. This arrest devolved into a riot as individuals associated with the locksmith disrupted the arrest, and narrowly enabled the locksmith's escape. Burkhard Jellonnek framed

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[31] Gad Beck and Frank Heibert, *An Underground Life.*

[32] Derek Scally, "Anti-Nazi Resistance Hero was a Bisexual Nazi Youth, Book Reveals," *The Irish Times* (2018), accessed April 1, 2021, last modified January 30, 2018; Erica Fischer, *Aimée & Jaguar: A Love Story, Berlin 1943* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 1994).

[33] Ian Young, *Gay Resistance: Homosexuals in the anti-Nazi Underground* (Toronto, Canada: Stubblejumper Press, 1985).

[34] Ian Young, *Gay Resistance,* 1-19.

[35] Ian Young, *Gay Resistance*, 19-20.

this event as an example of homosexual resistance. He substantiated this assertion with Gestapo reports, which compared the solidarity of queer communities to that of communist groups, and stated, “the like-minded people almost all know each other, stick together and try to make all inquiries about other homosexuals impossible.”[36] Granted, the evidence Jellonnek provides to label this arrest as an example of “öffentlichen Widerstands von Homosexuellen,” or “public homosexual resistance” is rather weak - and presumptive. There is little evidence to suggest that the individuals who knew the locksmith were homosexuals themselves. What is evident is that one queer man resisted an arrest with the aid of friends and acquaintances – however, this does not address or prove collective queer opposition.

The above examples of prior scholarship, while providing a foundation for future research, do not address the evidence of collective queer circles engaging in oppositional activities, or resistance, to the Third Reich. Rather, they depict singular historical actors either participating in non-queer resistance groups, or as individual narratives which do not connect to broader patterns of defiance against the Nazi regime. Through the use of remaining Gestapo reports, Nazi-era ephemera, postwar interviews, and personal memoirs, this study seeks to enhance our understanding of queer anti-Nazi resistance and propose a framework for queer resistance.

This study argues that queer communities in Nazi Germany engaged in resistance and oppositional behaviors through maintaining and preserving underground, clandestine networks and structures. In order to engage with the nuanced definitions of resistance in Nazi German historiography, and place this research among it, the first chapter will examine how scholars have used resistance terminology. I argue that the word resistance, or more accurately

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[36] Burkhard Jellonnek, “Aus den Akten der Geheimen Staatspolizei: Ein Fall öffentlichen Widerstands von Homosexuellen,” *Capri: Zeitschrift für Schwule Geschicht* 3 (1990): 18-20.

Widerstand in German texts, has changed over time due to postwar political influences and, primarily, the subject matter in which the term is applied to. Furthermore, I propose a framework in which to understand queer resistance that considers the ways that queer individuals and communities were oppressed. The second chapter begins by discussing the historical context in which queer communities were organized under the Weimar Republic, then the Nazi policies which drove them underground. It then utilizes this framework to demonstrate that clandestine queer communities created underground networks to communicate, maintain flexible meeting locations, and engage in illegal activity to express body autonomy and queer sexual freedoms. The third chapter describes the strategies and tactics that queer circles and individuals used to preserve both the underground structures described in the previous chapter, as well as their loved ones – including those that the Nazi state marginalized and persecuted in other aspects of their identity, such as Jewish lesbians. The conclusion of this thesis will revisit these ideas and briefly discuss dubious activities that could be interpreted as self-preservation or acts of agency, though ultimately further the Nazi regime's heterosexist sexual policies.

CHAPTER ONE: UNDERSTANDING RESISTANCE IN THE THIRD REICH

Queer Germans engaged in behaviors and activities that were antithetical to the aims of the Nazi regime's racial policy. National Socialists threatened the lives and livelihood of homosexual men and imposed racist reproductive policies which demanded that all healthy, fertile, German women procreate with equally healthy, fertile, German men.[37] However, in order to discuss the extent to which Queer Germans resisted Nazi impositions on their reproductivity, autonomy, and personal lives, it is necessary and important to dissect the connotations of *Widerstand*, or resistance, in the historiography of Nazi Germany. In this chapter, I will discuss the changing definitions of resistance in the historiography of Nazi Germany. This section will argue that perceptions of *Widerstand* change depending upon the groups which are being observed, and that it is challenging, if not impossible, to establish a single definition of *Widerstand* to properly discuss the activities of all anti-Nazi circles. By the end of this chapter, I will propose a framework in which to examine the evidence I will provide in the next two sections of this paper.

Scholars have debated their interpretations of resistance activities, and the varying degrees therein, since the fall of the Nazi regime. Historians have proposed many definitions of resistance, which have been critiqued and refined in turn. However, it is apparent that a scholar's evaluation of resistance activity directly correlates to the historical subjects that they research. Resistance, particularly within the Nazi regime, changes dependent upon the individuals and groups who engage in it, and is shaped by their objectives, resources, and the brand of

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[37] Gisela Block, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State," 271-272.

oppression they experience. No scholar has yet determined or discussed what collective, queer resistance activities looked like in Nazi Germany.

Cold-War era political objectives influenced the earliest secondary literature on anti-Nazi resistance. West German histories centered "conservative resistance from the elite, bourgeois, or military figures," particularly those involved with the July 20th attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler.[38] These initial western impressions of anti-Nazi behaviors lead to the "monumentalization" and "heroicization" of (primarily conservative and Christian) resistance fighters, and imposed a narrative that those involved in the resistance were motivated by a "moral-ethical choice of the individual to uphold, whatever the cost, the values of freedom and democracy in the face of tyranny."[39] These histories, however politically driven, facilitated a narrow definition of resistance that further highlighted the exceptional actions of those involved with the July 20th Plot: "only a force that could have potentially overthrown Hitler."[40] East German histories acknowledged those associated with the July 20th Plot and other "bourgeois" resisters, though as "progressive" members of the "'popular front' against the Hitler Regime."[41] Much of the East German historiography of anti-Nazi resistance prioritized the "heroic underground resistance of the KPD" and associated Communist groups, including the Communist International.[42] Both the East and West German historiographies ignored and disputed the opposing narrative – as well as all others which did not benefit their respective political agendas.

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[38] Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 186.

[39] Ibid., 187.

[40] John Cox, *Circles of Resistance: Jewish, Leftist, and Youth Dissidence in Nazi Germany* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009), 4.

[41] Ibid., 186.

[42] Ibid., 185.

The strict definition of *Widerstand* began shifting in the following decades as younger scholars criticized and challenged previous concepts of resistance. In 1966, Hans Mommsen deconstructed the previously accepted notion that the individuals involved with the July 20th Plot had done so due to moral or ethical conflicts with Nazi policies, which had been intrinsically tied to the West German ideals of resistance.[43] In the 1969 monograph *Germans Against Hitler, July 20th 1944*, Hals-Adolf Jacobsen and Erich Zimmerman expanded the narrative about the July 20th Plot to describe a "silent rebellion" consisting of "very secret resistance cells" which gradually "established mutual connections."[44] Jacobsen and Zimmerman, while predominantly accepting the prior definitions of resistance through an emphasis on martyrdom and the ethical merit of conservative and military resisters, did make a case to incorporate actions which were not "sensational" or "even directly subversive."[45]

The Bavaria Project signified a shift in the historiography of anti-Nazi resistance away from heroicization and toward social histories. The subject matter, especially of the Bavaria Project, changed from the few exceptional cases to a bottom-up "history of everyday life" approach.[46] This methodology incorporated a definition of resistance which the archivists of the Bavarian State Archives described as, "every form of active or passive behavior which allows recognition of the rejection of the National Socialist regime or a partial area of National Socialist ideology and was bound up with certain risks."[47] Further elucidation by Peter Hüttenberger, the project manager, portrayed resistance as "every form of rebellion against at least potentially total

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[43] Ibid., 188.

[44] Hans-Adolf Jacobsen and Erich Zimmerman, *Germans Against Hitler, July 20 1944*, trans. Allen and Lieselotte Yahraes (Bonn, Germany: Press and Information Office of the Federal Government of Germany, 1969), 21.

[45] Martyn Housden, *Resistance and Conformity in the Third Reich* (London, UK: Routledge, 1997), 162.

[46] Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 192.

[47] Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 193.

rule within the context of asymmetrical relations of rule."[48] The "asymmetrical" rule of a governing body, in this context, being the extent to which a regime infringes upon the pre-established parameters of the relationship between the ruling body and the governed populace. Hüttenberger's definition insinuated that resistance is shaped by and reflects the asymmetry, or oppression, of the ruling system. The Bavaria Project produced six volumes of social and cultural analysis, which incorporated forms of "civil disobedience" alongside examinations of underground political circles – such as refusing to perform the Hitler Salute, replacing Nazi flags with religious iconography, and continuing business with Jewish livestock traders.[49] These concepts of resistance took a sharp departure from the stricter definitions of previous scholarship. It is significant to note, however, that the change in subject matter – away from the exceptional few and to the everyday masses – demanded a change in methodology.

Martin Broszat, who assumed the directing role of the Bavaria Project from Hüttenberger, proposed a new term to understand institutional and everyday resistance: *Resistenz.* The term *Resistenz* carries biological connotations associated with the body's natural immune response to invasive and foreign contaminants, such as parasites, diseases, and infections. In the context of Bavarian life under the Third Reich, this describes "unconscious resistance to the encroachment of National Socialist ideology and racial indoctrination," much like a body rejecting a foreign contagion.[50] Broszat's perspective on resistance is further clarified in *Contending with Hitler*, when discussing the broader German public:

> A revised definition of resistance that includes the less heroic cases of partial, passive, ambivalent, and broken opposition – one that accounts for the fragility of resistance and the inconsistency of human bravery – may in the end inspire a greater intellectual and

[48] Ibid., 192
[49] Ibid., 193.
[50] John Cox, *Circles of Resistance*, 5.

> moral sensitivity toward the subject than a definition that includes only the exceptional greatness of heroic martyrdom.[51]

This definition of resistance is notably broad and, while it does make efforts to incorporate a swath of "less heroic" instances of opposition to the Third Reich, many historians have disputed and criticized Broszat's *Resistenz* and associated broad definitions. Critics, such as Walter Hofer, argued that Broszat's definition equated "tyrannicide" with "illegal cattle-slaughter."[52] However, the scholars involved with the Bavaria Project would not have been able to analyze the less spectacular actions of everyday Bavarians without a broader understanding of subversive actions. What is notable from each definition of resistance that has arisen from the Bavaria Project is the shift from a focus on motives, goals, and intentions, to a concentration on far more minute actions and effectiveness.[53] This shift enabled Broszat and all other historians who worked on the Bavaria Project to distinguish actions which were oppositional to the Nazi regime, without the task of proving the ethical or moral merit of the Bavarians who committed them.

Historians of Jewish resistance have encountered similar needs to tailor their conceptualizations of *Widerstand* in ways that accurately reflects their evidence. The earliest discussions of Jewish opposition to Nazi policies combatted the notion that Jews surrendered to and, in certain instances, assisted their own annihilation, as popularized by Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews.*[54] Yuri Suhl rebuffed Hilberg's assessment by arguing that Jewish underground organizations existed in "practically every ghetto and in every labor and concentration camp that kept up the prisoners' morale, reduced their physical sufferings,

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[51] Martin Broszat, "A Social and Historical Typology of the German Opposition to Hitler," in *Contending with Hitler,* ed. David Clay Large (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 25.

[52] Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 195.

[53] Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 194.

[54] Yuri Suhl, *They Fought Back: The Story of the Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1967), 3-4; Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1961).

committed acts of sabotage, organized escapes, collected arms, planned revolts, and, in many instances, carried them out."[55] Suhl frames these actions as acts of resistance. However, Suhl's primary understanding of resistance predominantly centers armed opposition inside concentration camps, labor camps, and ghettos. Yehuda Bauer argued for an expanded definition when examining Jewish life from the early 1930's to the end of the Nazi regime. Bauer depicted a narrative in which Jewish resistance begun nonviolently, but escalated as many became informed of the lethal purposes of the concentration camps:

> A strategy of nonviolent, life-saving resistance made sense as long as there was hope of survival – as long as no one knew that the concentration camps were not just forced-labor installations, but death factories designed to annihilate ever last Jewish man, woman, and child. But when the truth began to leak out, in the summer of 1942, many Jews decided to take up arms and, if they had to die, to take as many of their oppressors with them as possible.[56]

Bauer's post-1942 depiction of Jewish resistance resembles Suhl's analysis, however his analysis of events prior to 1942 emphasizes the efforts that Jewish people engaged in to maintain "normal life."[57] *They Chose Life* includes food smugglers, secret religious study groups, underground newspapers, and community-led education under the umbrella of "quiet resistance" inside the ghettos.[58] Bauer reaffirmed his broader depiction of Jewish resistance in *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness*, which was published six years later. In this monograph, Bauer defines "Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust as any group action consciously taken in opposition to known or surmised laws, actions, or intentions directed against the Jews by Germans and their

[55] Yuri Suhl, *They Fought Back*, 1.

[56] Yehuda Bauer, *They Chose Life: Jewish Resistance in the Holocaust* (New York, NY: American Jewish Committee, Institute of Human Relations, 1973), 46.

[57] Ibid., 34

[58] Ibid., 32-37.

supporters."[59] He supports his position on Jewish resistance by arguing that armed resistance – the brand of resistance that scholars such as Hilberg focus on – was not possible for most Jewish people.[60] Suhl and Bauer both criticized and convincingly disproved Hilberg's assertions, at least partially due to the necessity to reconstruct an understanding of resistance which pertained to the situations of Jewish people.

Detlev Peukert appeared to take note of the inconsistencies between concepts of *Widerstand*, as well as the debate between broad and narrow definitions, and proposed a model to interpret and categorize a wide breadth of dissident behaviors. Peukert's model would acknowledge a range of subversive activities, from the highly individual acts of resistance to National Socialist policies to the exceptional acts of resistance. In this framework, Peukert assigned labels across a scope of oppositional behavior which ranged from "Private" to "Public/Political" spheres and "Partial" to "General" criticism of the Regime. Peukert designates the intersection of partial criticism and the private sphere to be identified as "Nonconformist Behavior" or *Nonkonformität*. On the opposite end of this spectrum, Peukert describes "Resistance," or *Widerstand*, to require both a general criticism of the Regime and take place within the public sphere. Between these two extremes, from private and partial to public and general, are "Refusal" and "Protest."[61] The purpose of this model, in Peukert's words, is to:

> "... distinguish among types of conflict on a rising scale of complexity and risk, beginning with occasional, private nonconformism, proceeding to wider acts of refusal, and then to outright protest, in which some intentional effect on public opinion is involved. A form of behavior, finally, may be counted as resistance only if it was intended to make a public impact and to pose a basic challenge to the regime. The advantage of making these distinctions is plain. On the one hand, we can give a precise,

[59] Yehuda Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 27.

[60] Ibid., 27.

[61] Detlev J. K. Peukert, "Working-Class Resistance," in *Contending with Hitler*, 36-37.

> gradated analysis of the range of dissident modes of behavior—a flexibility necessary in the study of 'totalitarian' regimes. At the same time, we can ensure that the concept of resistance proper does not become diluted or flabby."[62]

While Peukert's model of resistance does succeed in distinguishing forms of dissent, it is best applied to the subjects which Peukert was examining: nonmarginalized Germans, primarily of the working and middle classes. Marginalized and persecuted groups in Germany experienced greater risks when engaging in even acts of clandestine "nonconformity" and "refusal" than Germans whose identities and existence were not explicitly criminalized under Nazi law.

While Peukert's model best pertained to class analysis, he utilized it to discuss youth and religious dissent in his 1987 monograph *Inside Nazi Germany*. The discussion of religious dissent under the Third Reich bears roots in the early West German scholarship associated with conservative, bourgeois, and Christian resisters. However, it is notable that these early instances of Christian resisters were highly individual, and typically their religion was merely one facet of their identity.[63] Rather than expanding, scholars have restricted the definition of resistance as it pertains to religious opposition, due to the nature of the limited objectives and partial success of the movements. In a 1992 article on religious dissent, Claudia Koonz explores "single-issue dissent" and "motivations" outside "The Resistance, a Resistance, or *Resistenz*" by people who "fundamentally approved of Nazi policy and government."[64] Koonz concludes that single-issue dissent did not coalesce into broader opposition to the regime, and often the religious individuals who did criticize Nazi reproductive policies became "more compliant in other ways to prevent detection."[65] Ian Kershaw, too, demonstrated that any religious opposition to National Socialist

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[62] Ibid., 36-37.

[63] Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 187.

[64] Claudia Koonz, "Ethical Dilemmas and Nazi Eugenics: Single-Issue Dissent in Religious Contexts," *The Journal of Modern History* 64 (1992): S8-S31, S8-S9.

[65] Ibid., S30-S31.

policies – primarily Catholic – were primarily single-issue. However, Kershaw does illustrate that it was possible for religious dissenters to express their opposition to Nazi policies and, in a handful of instances, small victories could be won that left the Nazi regime humiliated.[66]

On the matter of youth oppositional behaviors, Wilfried Breyvogel critiqued Peukert's use of his model. Breyvogel argued that the spontaneity of youth resistance could not be properly depicted in the "ascent up a stepladder"-like hierarchy of Peukert's model.[67] As Michael Kater noted in *Hitler Youth*, the groups of dissenting German youth were starkly divided by a wide breadth of backgrounds and ideologies. [68] Due to a wide variety in identities, behaviors, and objectives, Peukert's assessment that much of the youth opposition amounted to "refusal" is naturally limiting.[69] Jan Kurz's 1995 monograph, *Swinging Democracy*, frames the underground "swing dances" as an aspect of a larger youth protest movement. Kurz proposes that underground youth swing dances thwarted Nazi expectations of conformity, which the Gestapo identified and investigated as a threat to the National Socialist agenda for German youth. This lies in direct contradiction to Peukert's depiction of youth movements as acts of refusal. Protest, in Peukert's definition, is restricted to groups which engaged in public opposition to a broad spectrum of Nazi policies. However, Kurz's definition of protest allows him to propose evidence that German youth groups engaged in covert forms of autonomy, nonconformity, and self-expression, which in many cases ultimately resulted in persecution.[70]

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[66] Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich, Bavaria 1933*-1945 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1983), 173-174.

[67] Wilfried Breyvogel, "Resistenz, Widersinn und Opposition," in *Piraten, Swings und Junge Garde: Jugendwiderstand in Nationalsozialismus* (Bonn, Germany: Dietz, 1991), 10-11.

[68] Michael Kater, *Hitler Youth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 141.

[69] Detlev J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 145.

[70] Jan Kurz, *"Swinging Democracy": Jugendprotest im 3. Reich* (Münster, Germany: Lit Verlag, 1995), 5, 49.

Resistance is a concept which has and will continue to be challenged and refined with new scholarship. These are but a handful of examples in which historians challenge established definitions of *Widerstand*, because new studies of unacknowledged or understudied groups require altered concepts of collective resistance. Peter Hüttenberger's understanding of oppositional behaviors appears increasingly salient after examining the morphing nature of the historiography of anti-Nazi resistance. In Kershaw's words, Hüttenberger promoted the notion that "resistance is a product and reflection of the system of rule itself; the nature of that rule determines the nature of resistance."[71] Each instance of collective resistance of a group, whether based in Jewish, conservative, communist, working-class, or every-day German, is molded by the type and extent of oppression they faced. It is not possible to achieve one definition of resistance that applied to all facets of individuals living under the Third Reich. What is necessary is to identify the ways in which National Socialists targeted a group, which policies these groups took issue with, what resources these groups had at their disposal, and the extent to which members of a group opposed the Nazi regime's authority.

The subject matter of this study remains queer Germans and this begs the question: what constitutes their resistance to the Third Reich? Is it resistance, rather than opposition, dissent, or nonconformity? There does not yet exist a definition of resistance (or opposition, nonconformity, dissent) that suits the activities of Queer Germans living and surviving under the Third Reich. Collective resistance, for the purposes of this study, is the formation and continuation of clandestine circles which enabled and promoted illegal activities related to sex, romance, and queer solidarity under the threat of state violence. Implicit to this definition is the marginalization, politicization, and criminalization of queer bodies. It is also notable that queer

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[71] Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 193.

Germans existed in all ethnicities, political ideologies, and religions, and thus it is impossible to determine whether all or part of this community were single-issue or broad-spectrum objectors. What is determinable are the actions which many queer Germans undertook to practice sexual and romantic autonomy in clandestine spaces, and to secure one another's wellbeing. This is not to ignore those queer individuals who denounced others for their own security, though rather to acknowledge those who chose solidarity.

I will use the framework of collective queer resistance that I have proposed – the organization of underground networks which enable, encourage, and protect individuals engaging in illegal expressions of sexual freedom and body autonomy – to examine clandestine queer circles in Germany's large cities. These groups did not form under the Nazi regime, they moved underground to conceal their activities under the threat of state persecution. I will do this by first analyzing the evidence of clandestine queer circles, both large and small, that existed and maintained their activities under the Nazi regime. In the third chapter, I will discuss queer circles and individuals engaging in actions to preserve their underground networks and protect loved ones with the limited tools at their disposal.

CHAPTER TWO: UNDERGROUND STRUCTURES AND NETWORKS

Scholars have well documented the Weimar era of visible and political queer movements.[72] Under the Nazi regime, these previously existing communities continued to exist and resist restrictive and oppressive National Socialist policies aimed to isolate and eradicate queer groups and individuals from Germany. Prior Nazi intelligence provided to Heinrich Himmler estimated the presence of two million homosexual men alone in Germany.[73] However, evidence suggests that an estimated 100,000 homosexual men were arrested under the Third Reich.[74] While many queer individuals chose to isolate themselves from queer communities to protect themselves from persecution, others opted to move their activities underground into clandestine spaces where queer communities were no longer visible to the public, but could continue their Weimar era social and sexual endeavors.

In this chapter, I will use the model that I proposed at the end of the previous chapter to examine the creation and maintenance of underground structures designed to enable and encourage queer activities which were both criminalized and stigmatized under the Nazi regime. In order to do this, it is necessary to discuss the formation of queer identified political coalitions and visible social communities that formed under the Weimar Republic and the manner in which they changed their approach as the Nazi regime embarked upon a concerted effort to "cleanse" Germany of homosexuality.[75] This chapter will then provide examples of underground queer systems constructed to provide clandestine spaces for sexual and romantic encounters,

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[72] Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin*; Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic.*

[73] Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus, *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 243.

[74] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 73.

[75] "Berlins Visitenkarte wird wieder sauber: Die Reinigungsaktion der Polizei im Schank und Gaststättengewerbe," *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 16, 1933, Verfolgung 1933-1935, Nationalsozialismus Folder 4, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany.

community solidarity, and the communication networks established to evade law enforcement interference.

Reformers and Reactionaries

Prior to the National Socialist takeover, Germany experienced what Laurie Marhoefer has described as "the world's first homosexual emancipation movement."[76] Collective queer resistance groups were not established under the Nazi regime, they merely became more covert in their activities. In order to explore the creation of organized queer networks, it is necessary to trace their origin to the Weimar Republic. Under the Weimar Republic, queer groups formed communities and a political awareness of their own marginalization which they would take with them into the Nazi regime. Furthermore, while the homosexual emancipation movement had first engaged in the politicization of queer bodies to decriminalize homosexuality, it is evident that the National Socialists harnessed the political status of queer individuals – as well as the conservative reactionary movement against homosexual emancipation – to launch a concerted campaign to further criminalize and eradicate queerness from Germany.

Following the First World War and the subsequent German Revolution of 1918-1919, leftist politicians – particularly members of the Social Democratic Party – reformed the German government which is retroactively referred to today as the Weimar Republic. During an era of progressive policy agendas and economic turbulence, the Weimar Republic saw an explosion of sexual exploration – and in return, igniting a reactionary conservative outrage that would feed into the National Socialist movement.[77] Scholars have attributed broadening sexual mores during the Weimar era to a plethora of social and political factors: a decline in religious influence,

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[76] Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic,* 3.
[77] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe,* 60.

increased interest in science, the women's suffrage movement, and a post-First World War climate.[78] The "New Woman" of the 1920's pushed against the strict gender conventions of the decades prior. The *Männerbund* philosophy shaped men's societies in (and outside) Germany, introducing an intimation of homoeroticism to male bonding.[79] The Weimar era witnessed a widespread questioning – and, at times, a rejection – of seemingly archaic gender and sexual expectations.

In 1919, sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld founded the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft*, or the Institute for Sexual Science, where he and fellow academics studied and published on non-traditional sexualities.[80] Hirschfeld's efforts did not go without backlash – in 1920, a group of right-wing reactionaries attacked Hirschfeld, nearly beating him to death – however he did establish a path for future homosexual publications.[81] An explosion of queer literature ensued during the following years under the Weimar Republic. In *Gay Berlin*, Robert Beachy explains:

> From 1919 until February 1933, somewhere between twenty-five and thirty separate homosexual German-language journal titles appeared in Berlin, some weekly or monthly and others less frequently. These supplemented, of course, Berlin's first homosexual periodicals: Adolf Brand's *Der Eigene* and Hirschfeld's *Jahrbuch*. By contrast, there were practically no such journals published anywhere else in the world until after 1942.[82]

This new literature included lesbian magazines, such as *Die Freundin* and *Frauenliebe* (later titled *Garçonne*), which begun publishing in 1924 and 1926 respectively.[83] The magazine *Das 3. Geschlecht*, or *The Third Sex*, begun publishing in 1930 as an offshoot of *Die Freundin*, due to

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[78] Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade: Life Stories of Lesbians during the Third Reich*, trans. Allison Brown (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), 2; Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, 45.
[79] Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin,* 140-141.
[80] Ibid., 160.
[81] Ibid., 169.
[82] Ibid., 189-190.
[83] Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, 55.

the popular demand for a journal catering toward transvestites.[84] *Die Freundschaft*, which catered to both homosexual women and men, was the first queer publication to be sold openly at news kiosks and continued to produce monthly issues until the National Socialist takeover in 1933.[85]

Large cities in Weimar Germany fostered homosexual subcultures, including Düsseldorf, Essen, Duisburg, Cologne, and especially Berlin.[86] However, they were not limited to large cities. Queer events and organizations also cropped up in smaller cities, such as Barmen-Elberfeld, Bielefeld, Chemnitz, Zwickau, Braunschweig, Mannheim, Nuremberg, among others.[87] Homosexual tourists from both inside and outside Germany visited these queer epicenters, and the establishments the homosexual community organized. Berlin in particular was home to an array of bars, dance halls, and clubs which catered to queer people. Ruth Roellig's 1928 tourbook *Berlins Lesbische Frauen*, described twelve of these establishments, with an emphasis on lesbian meeting spaces. Marhoefer describes this seventy-two-page tour book as, "an insider's description of the city's network of cafes, bars, and social clubs for lesbian women and for transvestites, whom Roellig described as 'women who prefer to appear in men's clothing.'"[88] This "network" of establishments reflects upon both the pervasive and public presence of homosexual culture in Berlin at the time, and the cohesive structure of queer communities. Roellig's tourbook provides contemporary readers with a glimpse into the queer

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[84] Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin*, 190.
[85] Ibid., 164.
[86] Burkhard Jellonnek, "In ständiger Furcht vor der Verfolgung: Zur Lebenssituation homosexueller Männer in Düsseldorf," 1993, Verfolgung in den Städten, Nationalsozialismus Folder 15, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany, 10.
[87] Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, 17.
[88] Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, 55

culture and community, albeit predominantly lesbian, that existed in Berlin shortly before the Nazi regime attempted to purge them from the nation.[89]

The queer community was diverse but also well-organized in the late Weimar years. Many of the popular queer meeting spots, such as the Toppkeller, required renting out and event organizing. Prominent lesbian activist Lotte Hahm managed the lesbian club Damenklub Violetta, which attracted about 400 participants in Berlin. Later, her club united with rival lesbian club Monbijou, before the two groups merged with Friedrich Radszuweit's Bund für Menschenrecht (BfM), or the Association for Human Rights.[90] Hahm, alongside Hirschfeld's Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (WhK) and Adolf Brand's Gemeinschaft der Eigenen (GdE), or Community of One's Own, was one of the many queer organizers who spearheaded the movement to abolish Paragraph 175, Germany's anti-sodomy law.

Paragraph 175 criminalized male homosexual activity. While law enforcement in Weimar Germany often maintained an ambivalent relationship with Paragraph 175, often choosing not to enforce it in metropolitan areas such as Berlin, the legal code symbolized the socio-political status of queer people. As Marhoefer explains in *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, "the campaign against the sodomy law was also a struggle against the 'pariah' and 'second-class' status of homosexual people in general."[91] Paragraph 175 represented the heteronormative socio-political structure which restricted acceptable sexual mores and legally marginalized queer people.
In response, right-wing reactionaries to the movement proposed a reform of the legal code in 1925 which would expand the purview of the current law. Rather than solely criminalizing the

[89] For more information about queer establishments during the Weimar Republic, refer to: Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin;* Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*; Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*.
[90] Jens Dobler, *Von anderen Ufern: Geschichte der Berliner Lesben und Schwulen in Kreuzberg und Friedrichshain* (Berlin, Germany: Gmünder Verlag, 2003), 104-115.
[91] Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, 58.

act of sodomy, this proposed revision would include mutual masturbation and reclassify homosexual prostitution, sexual relations with men under the age twenty-one, and homosexual advances of an authority figure in the workplace as felonies, as opposed to misdemeanors.[92] Despite right-wing efforts, this proposed reform failed in the Reichstag. The movement to abolish Paragraph 175 briefly neared success in 1929 when it was discussed in the Reichstag Judiciary Committee.[93] However, the debate over the decriminalization of homosexuality halted during the final three years of the politically deteriorating Weimar Republic.

Prior to 1933, medical and political policymakers had already stigmatized homosexuality, despite the efforts and growing support for the de-criminalization movements. The popular belief that queer individuals were a danger to the national community, particularly homosexual men, was founded in four primary arguments. First, many believed that each homosexual man deprived the nation of possible offspring. National Socialists, and even medical officials, were often concerned with Germany's low birth-rates. This concern, coupled with the idea that a man has a limited capacity of fertile semen, produced the notion that homosexual men were reducing their reproductive capability. Second, many conservative Germans believed that gay men could "corrupt" young people and initiate a possible "epidemic spread" of homosexuality.[94] This was closely tied to the derogatory stereotype that homosexual men were likely to be pedophiles. Third, related to the prior argument, was the notion that queer individuals tend to form "cliques." As best stated by Gunter Grau in *Hidden Holocaust*, "every homosexual was suspected of being a 'potential oppositionist' and thus regarded as an enemy of respectable society."[95] National

[92] Hans-Georg Stümke, *Homosexuelle in Deutschland: Eine politische Geschichte* (Munich, Germany: C.H. Beck, 1989), 65.
[93] Laurie Marhoefer, Sex and the Weimar Republic, 120-128.
[94] Günter Grau, "Persecution, 'Re-education' or 'Eradication' of Male Homosexuals between 1933 and 1945," in *Hidden Holocaust*, 3.
[95] Ibid., 3.

Socialists suspected oppositionist behavior from many minority groups, including homosexuals. Finally, Germans critical of homosexuality argued that same-sex relations would "impair" and endanger "public morality."[96] Much of these concerns were formed based on negative stereotypes and clichés, however, they nevertheless informed the Nazi propaganda that would follow in the years after 1933.

Soon after taking power in 1933, Adolf Hitler and National Socialist officials embarked on an operation to combat "public indecency." While these operations had yet to explicitly target homosexuality, "these decrees already betokened a policy that would assume a clearer shape over the following months and years: a policy of arbitrary measures designed to deter and to eradicate through terror, and of coercive measures to cure the 'scourge' of homosexuality."[97] This initial campaign shut down supposedly illicit literature, indecent public establishments – such as clubs, dance halls, and bars – and banned all visible homosexual organizations that had proliferated in urban areas under the Weimar Republic.[98] The growing political and social stigmatization of those perceived as sexually and morally deviant, particularly of homosexuals, was further exacerbated in 1934 by the Röhm Affair.

Between June 28 and July 3, 1934, commenced a Nazi operation popularly dubbed "The Night of Long Knives." During this five-day period, Adolf Hitler ordered a violent purge of top National Socialist officials in the SA to consolidate military power within the SS and reassert Hitler's military authority. Prior to these events, Ernst Röhm was the chief of the SA and served as Adolf Hitler's "second-in-command" despite complaints about Röhm's "blatantly open

[96] Ibid., 3.
[97] Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust*, 26.
[98] Ibid., 26.

homosexual behavior."[99] The Brown Shirts, as SA men were often referred to, aided Hitler in establishing Nazi control over all key positions in the German government. As Richard Plant explained in *The Pink Triangle*, "Röhm's storm troopers had provided a spigot of terror that Hitler had turned on and off as the occasion demanded."[100] However, by 1934, Röhm and the Brown Shirts had fulfilled their purpose and were no longer necessary to maintain Hitler's political control. Hitler's new top officials, including Heinrich Himmler, concocted evidence that the Brown Shirts had conspired to march against Hitler and his new Nazi government. This plot enabled the events of June 28, in which Hitler and state officers stormed the "Brown House" and initiated an event which would end in the execution of at least eighty-five top SA officials, including Röhm.[101]

Hitler and National Socialist officials used Röhm's homosexuality as their rationale for his execution. With the Röhm Affair and his subsequent public denunciation of Röhm's sexual orientation, Hitler openly incorporated his aims to target and eradicate homosexuality into his public policy. Joseph Goebbels himself had suggested that "Röhm had schemed to infiltrate the networks of power with his homosexual cronies."[102] This accusation inflamed the negative notions that homosexuals aimed to subvert the policies and goals of the new Nazi government. Quickly following these events, public and political disdain for homosexuality intensified. However, the persecution of queer communities, establishments, and individuals, which had already begun in 1933, would inadvertently push more queer people toward covert resistance to the Nazi regime.

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[99] Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle*: *The Nazi War Against Homosexuals*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: H. Holt, 1986), 61.
[100] Ibid., 61.
[101] Ibid., 61-67.
[102] Ibid., 68.

Prior to 1935, Paragraph 175 solely criminalized acts of sodomy. On June 28, 1935, the German government ratified revisions to this law which broadened the scope of the legal code and instituted harsher punishments. Much like the proposed reform of 1926, the revisions determined male prostitution, homosexual relations with minors under twenty-one, and homosexual advances toward a subordinate to be felonies. [103] More drastically, it expanded the purview of the legal code from "intercourse-like actions," such as sodomy, to include more innocuous actions such as mutual masturbation, "debauched intention," and "even erotic glances."[104] Mutual contact, or even engagement in sexual activities, were no longer strictly necessary to prosecute homosexuals.

After the 1935 modification of Paragraph 175, the Nazi regime embarked upon a nationwide effort to systematically eradicate homosexuality. Heinrich Himmler estimated the presence of two million homosexual men alone in Germany, supposedly retrieving the number from the membership registries of homosexual associations.[105] The language used in Nazi reports and news outlets reflected their mindset on the matter. The National Socialists viewed their operation as a cleansing, or a purge, of the "plague" which threatened the reproductive capacity of the Aryan race.[106] Mass arrests, spying campaigns, and frequent raids ensued. They reached their height in 1938, when the Nazis charged 28,882 men with violations of Paragraph 175 in a single year.[107] Evidence suggests that an estimated 100,000 homosexual men were arrested under the Third Reich.[108]

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[103] Paragraph 175 of the German legal code, June 28, 1935.

[104] Paragraph 175 of the German legal code, June 28, 1935; Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe,* 73.

[105] Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus, *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 243; Gunter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust*, 91.

[106] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe,* 70.

[107] Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust*, 116.

[108] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, 73.

The situation was different for lesbian women. Following the 1935 revision of Paragraph 175, National Socialist leadership debated whether they should criminalize lesbianism.[109] They ultimately decided against formally criminalizing lesbian behavior in 1942.[110] However, this decision came after efforts to investigate suspected lesbians, many denunciations of lesbians from the public, and a number of lesbians who had already been sent to concentration camps – though far less than homosexual men.[111] Lesbian women often faced different threats than formal persecution from the Gestapo. In response to the gender nonconformity that was tolerated under the Weimar Republic, the National Socialists pursued a strict (heteronormative and cisgender) gender binary. Eugenicist philosophy encouraged women, particularly Aryan women, to produce as many children as possible as a responsibility to the *Volk*. The Nazis even offered awards to mothers who bore multiple children.[112] Women who refused to marry, or bear children, were at risk of being labeled "asocial." In fact, lesbian women could even be arrested as "political opponents," in certain areas of the Reich.[113] Earning either of these titles could land women in "preventative detention," or in a concentration camp (though far more rarely).[114]

The degree of punishment for homosexual activity depended upon the variables of their situation. Most lesbian women did not warrant police attention, and most offenders of Paragraph 175 were not sentenced to concentration camps. Heinrich Himmler himself believed that, while there may be two million homosexual men in Germany, only two percent of these offenders were "true homosexuals." The others, he believed, had been "seduced" and fallen victim to the "vice" of homosexuality.[115] This led to a variety of punishments: from imprisonment for the lesser

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[109] Gunter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust,* 71-81.
[110] Ibid., 83-84.
[111] Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 10-11.
[112] Ibid., 11-13.
[113] Ibid., 21.
[114] Ibid., 21-22.
[115] Ibid., 10-11.

offenders – that is, if prosecutors could not prove multiple homosexual encounters – to being sent to a concentration camp and/or castration for serial "moral criminals."[116]

While death was not a guaranteed threat, arrest under Paragraph 175 would often lead to brutal torture. Sexual violence, such as the "hounding, torture, and murder of homosexual men" took place in Nazi concentration camps, which held approximately 5,000 to 15,000 homosexual men over the course of the regime.[117] Accounts exist of the genital torture of homosexual men in concentration camps in both Flossenbürg and Buchenwald.[118] In the Buchenwald camp brothels, Nazi guards forced homosexual men and lesbian women to engage in heterosexual sex.[119] In an interview with Claudia Schoppmann, Buchenwald concentration camp survivor Erich H. recalled, "the Nazis especially liked to put lesbians to work in the brothels, they thought it would shape them up."[120]

Beginning in 1939, National Socialists instituted policies which proposed an ultimatum to men in preventative detention: remain in police custody or become surgically castrated. Nazi medical officials believed that surgical castration could cease the sex drive of homosexual men.[121] Many homosexual men who had been released from custody – whether through the completion of their sentence or through striking a deal to be castrated in return for release – were conscripted and sent to the front lines of the *Wehrmacht*.[122] The Nazi regime engaged in a concerted effort to dismantle the queer communities that had developed under the Weimar Republic, and purge Germany of homosexuality.

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[116] Correspondence from Reich Security Headquarters to the State Criminal Police, July 12, 1940, in *Hidden Holocaust*, 251.
[117] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe,* 67.
[118] Ibid., 85-86.
[119] Ibid., 74; Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 21.
[120] Erich H., interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 21.
[121] Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust*, 250-251.
[122] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe,* 74.

One interpretation of the swift and immediate efforts to eradicate supposed sexual deviancy from public life is as a reactionary movement. While the Nazi regime encouraged eugenicist reproductive policies, conservative reactionaries that arose under the Weimar Republic influenced and bolstered National Socialist policies. Queer groups and individuals politicized their struggle against heteronormative sexual and gender boundaries in an effort to decriminalize homosexuality. In response, the Nazi regime politicized and further criminalized queer bodies and activities, and instituted the eventual goal of eradicating homosexuality from Germany. Collective groups of queer Germans, who understood their continued queerness as political and antagonistic to the Nazi regime, took their communities underground and established networks to protect themselves.

Sexual and Romantic Resistance

> We have to see this romantically, because in such drastic times one tends to be romantic. When bombs fall and explode nearby, one looks to others for closeness. And one forgets the bombs, the war, and the stalled train. One is just close to others. One does what everyone does when they are close. That's what one does.[123]

Gerhard "Gad" Beck gave this quote in an interview with Klaus Müller when describing an instance in which he and another man "made love" on a stalled train in Berlin, while bombs fell on the city around them.[124] This quote does not speak to a resistance movement in particular; however, it does speak to Beck's disregard of the state policy against homosexual conduct and how highly he regarded "closeness" and romance in moments of mortal danger. Prior to the Third Reich, queer communities had coalesced and presented the decriminalization of

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[123] Gad Beck, interview by Klaus Müller, *Paragraph 175*, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Freedman (Films Transit, 2000), 00:30 to 01:30.

[124] Ibid.,

homosexuality as a political issue. The 1935 Paragraph 175 revision was the National Socialist response, equally political. The politicization of queer bodies, sexual behaviors, and romantic pursuits took place over the decades following the First World War. Whether individuals frequented queer spaces or engaged in the occasional dalliance, those involved were members of a counterculture community whose sole existence was illegal, and which promoted the intentional violation of the law.

The eugenicist ideologies of the National Socialist movement generated a concerted effort to control the sexual lives of the German population. "The Third Reich was an immense venture in reproductive engineering," Dagmar Herzog explains in *Sexuality in Europe*.[125] The Nazi state "encouraged and enforced" the procreation of individuals deemed "healthy," especially Aryan Germans, through propaganda, financial incentive programs, and restrictions on contraceptives.[126] Eugenicists determined the mentally ill, disabled, and racial minorities to be "undesirable" members of society that should be removed from the gene pool, and restricted the reproductive abilities of these marginalized peoples through forced sterilizations, abortions, and mass murder.[127] In *Sexuality in Europe*, Dagmar Herzog continues to elucidate the Nazi stance on sexuality, stating, "in short, the distinctive innovation of Nazi sexual politics was the attempt to harness the popular groundswell of growing preoccupation with sex and liberalization of heterosexual mores to a racist and homophobic agenda."[128] The National Socialist regime politicized sexual behaviors and freedoms by designating and enforcing which Germans could and would reproduce, and which could not.

[125] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, 70.
[126] Ibid., 70.
[127] Ibid., 70.
[128] Ibid., 74.

Homosexual behavior threatened eugenicist reproductive policies. The Nazis were particularly concerned that homosexual men would contribute to the declining German birth rates. This was due to two primary reasons: the homosexual "refusal to reproduce," and, more importantly, the concern that homosexual men would "corrupt" young German men, and influence them to become homosexual as well, which would further threaten the nation's reproductive capacity.[129] The latter of the two arguments was fueled by the insidious stereotype that homosexual men were pedophilic predators – a concern that influenced National Socialists, and right-wing reactionary reformers of the Weimar era, to incorporate anti-pedophilia policies in their proposed and enacted revisions of Paragraph 175.[130]

The 1935 reform of Paragraph 175 was as much a political response to Weimar-era queer activism as it was to facetious allegations that the National Socialist party tolerated homosexuals.[131] Much of the political discussion surrounding the decision condemned the Weimar toleration of homosexual activity and the fostering of queer communities. A 1935 report by the Nazi lawyer and university professor Dr. Wenzeslaus Graf von Gleispach described the "moral degeneracy" of queer communities in Weimar-era cities and referenced the right-wing reactionary attempts to reform the legal code in 1926 which "did not yield any legislative results."[132] It is clear from the language of the report that Gleispach identifies with the right-wing reactionary reform movement. In 1937, head of the Reich Office Josef Meisinger presented a lecture, titled "The Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion as a Political Task," in which he

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[129] Ibid., 73.
[130] Paragraph 175 of the German legal code, June 28, 1935.
[131] Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 11.
[132] Wenzeslaus Graf von Gleispach, "Attacks on Morality: Report on the work of the official Criminal Law Commission," in *Hidden Holocaust*, 67-70: 67.

describes Weimar-era queer communities as an impediment to Germany's international reputation.[133]

Anti-homosexual propaganda conflated homosexuality with racial degeneracy – which preoccupied the Nazi eugenicist worldview. Many notable sex reformers and homosexual activists in Weimar Germany were Jewish.[134] Nazi political figures utilized this relationship to associate homosexuality with Jewish social stigma.[135] Other Nazi party members described homosexuality as a condition which "spread" from Asia.[136] In either instance, it was critical for Nazi eugenicists to associate homosexuality with marginalized races. Queer communities posed a threat to National Socialist sexual politics. The homosexual emancipation movement conflicted with Nazi sexual mores by both refusing to comply with eugenicist reproductive agendas and maintaining communities which fostered assertions of sexual and bodily autonomy unhindered by state policies. While the movement for the abolishment of Paragraph 175 disintegrated upon the National Socialist takeover, even more so following the 1935 reforms, queer individuals continued to meet, retain communities constructed under the Weimar Republic, and encouraged sexual freedom in clandestine spaces.

Despite the National Socialist response and threat to queer people, homosexual activity did not cease during the Nazi regime. There were individuals who decided to distance themselves from other homosexual individuals and groups to secure their own safety – and those who denounced other homosexuals themselves – though many members of queer communities were not deterred from maintaining a semblance of their previous lives under the Weimar

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[133] Josef Meisinger, "The Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion as a Political Task," in *Hidden Holocaust*, 110-115: 111.

[134] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe,* 67.

[135] Anna Clark, *Desire: A History of European Sexuality* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 191.

[136] Josef Meisinger, "The Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion as a Political Task," in *Hidden Holocaust*, 110-115: 110.

Republic.[137] In fact, according to Nazi intelligence, sizable queer communities existed in an array of large cities, such as Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, Munich, Duisberg, Düsseldorf, Kiel, and Coesfeld.[138] Clandestine queer circles continued to congregate wherever possible after closure of their major establishments: in the back rooms of bars, discrete clubs, and even private apartments. Certain homosexual individuals even continued to engage in sexual and romantic relationships following their arrest and eventual release from police custody.

The police arrested twenty-year old Karl Lange in 1935 due to his "secret meetings" with the teenage boy next door. He served fifteen months in prison – a relatively light sentence, compared to the experiences of other homosexual men. Lange was released in 1936, and soon continued to "seek acquaintanceship" with other men. In an oral history with Lutz van Dijk, published in *Ein erfülltes Leben – trotzdem*, Lange explained:

> The gays weren't just gone just because the Nazis wanted them to be. Of course, many were afraid. It was impossible to do anything in the open. But there were places in the city where you knew something was possible. For example, I sometimes went for a walk on Hamburg Street, and there was so much eye contact. It was certainly difficult to establish something like a relationship. But there were such fleeting contacts, and I had some nice encounters.[139]

Lange was arrested for violations of Paragraph 175 once more in 1937. Following eighteen months of awaiting his trial, a judge eventually sentenced him to preventative detention –

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[137] Anneliese W., interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 49; Freia Eisner, interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade,* 145-158; Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids*, 27; Lutz van Dijk, *Ein erfülltes Leben - trotzdem: Erinnerungen Homosexueller 1933-1945*, 29.

[138] Burkhard Jellonnek, "In ständiger Furcht vor der Verfolgung: Zur Lebenssituation homosexueller Männer in Düsseldorf," *Die Andere Welt* (1993), Verfolgung in den Städten, Nationalsozialismus Folder 15, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany, 8; "Informationen Zur Schleswig-Holsteinischen Zeiteschichte: Arbeitskreis Zur Erforschung in Schleswig-Holstein," December 1996, Verfolgung in den Städten, Nationalsozialismus Folder 15, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany, 30; "Jagd auf das Laster," *Das Neue Tagebuch*, May 5, 1936, Verfolgung in den Städten, Nationalsozialismus Folder 15, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany; "Vor 60 Jahren: Nazis beginnen Homosexuellenverfolgung," *Aktuell*, Verfolgung in den Städten, Nationalsozialismus Folder 15, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany.

[139] Lutz van Dijk, *Ein erfülltes Leben - trotzdem*, 83.

imprisonment for an undetermined amount of time.[140] On May 3, 1945, Russian military forces liberated the prisoners at the Waldheim prison in Saxony, including Lange.[141]

Other queer individuals were successful in establishing and maintaining relationships following their release from imprisonment. Homosexual activist Lotte Hahm could not be prosecuted under Paragraph 175, as the legal code only criminalized homosexual men, though the Gestapo did find ways to target her. Eventually, she would be imprisoned at the Moringen concentration camp under dubious charges. Hahm continued organizing events for the queer community in Berlin following the Nazi seizure of power. She changed the name of her popular Weimar lesbian club from Violetta to Sportklub Sonne, to disguise the purpose of the group.[142] The police raided one of the club's events on July 24, 1935, following a denunciation, but the authorities were unable to locate Hahm.[143] The Gestapo did eventually arrest Hahm, however, though the charges are unclear due to missing documentation. Two possible, yet contradictory charges exist to date. The account of one of Hahm's lesbian contemporaries, Anneliese W., explains that "Lotte Hahm served time in jail for seduction of a minor." However, it is notable that even Anneliese doubted this charge and added, "it was just pretext."[144] According to Hahm herself, a male stranger at Alexanderplatz asked her to look after his suitcase for him. Shortly after, the Gestapo arrested Hahm due to "illegal communist materials" they had identified in the same suitcase.[145] Whether either story is the truth, the implication of both accounts remains that the S.S. had fabricated evidence to arrest her.

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[140] Ibid., 83.
[141] Ibid., 88.
[142] Ingeborg Boxhammer, Christiane Leidinger, "Die Szenegröße und Aktivistin Lotte Hahm," in *Wir* hier! Lesbisch, schwul und trans* zwischen Hiddensee und Ludwigslust* (Berlin, Germany: Lola für Demokratie in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 2019), 58.
[143] Jens Dobler, *Von anderen Ufern*, 104-115.
[144] Anneliese W., interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 52.
[145] Ibid., 51.

The exact date of Hahm's release is not documented. However, she returned to Berlin by March 1938 at the latest, when the Moringen concentration camp closed.[146] Following her release, Hahm continued to organize meeting spots for queer circles. There is evidence of at least one queer clandestine dance hall that Hahm briefly operated in 1939, before it closed due to unknown circumstances, as many queer meeting spaces frequently did.[147] From 1938, Hahm continued her relationship with her Jewish partner, Käthe Fleischmann, who she supported in hiding until the end of the war.[148] Hahm was one of many queer individuals, in Berlin and other large cities, to continue arranging hidden spaces for queer circles to meet and foster sexual and romantic freedom.

Many queer individuals in Germany continued to maintain their communities and homosexual behaviors despite the grave risks involved in doing so. Imprisonment, detainment in "preventative custody," torture, castration, and even possible placement in concentration camps loomed on the horizon for anyone caught in violation of Paragraph 175.[149] By the end of the Nazi regime in 1945, "approximately 100,000 homosexual men had been prosecuted for same-sex activities."[150] While lesbian women did not violate Paragraph 175, they could be prosecuted under separate offenses, or persecuted as "asocials."[151] Those who engaged in homosexual activity under the Third Reich were aware of the legal ramifications and potential consequences of denunciation. These queer Germans engaged in illegal behaviors that carried immense danger to themselves.

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[146] Ibid., 52.
[147] Ibid., 51.
[148] Ingeborg Boxhammer, Christiane Leidinger, "Die Szenegröße und Aktivistin Lotte Hahm," 58.
[149] Lutz van Dijk, *Ein erfülltes Leben - trotzdem*, 29-31, 38-40, 83-84.
[150] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History*, 73.
[151] Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade,* 21.

These oppositional behaviors of queer German communities under the Third Reich were inherently political, due to the Nazi politicization of sex, criminalization of homosexual behaviors, and the prior political movement to abolish Paragraph 175. Lesbian women engaged in a similar politization of their social, sexual, and romantic activities during the Weimar republic. In *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, Marhoefer explains:

> For lesbians – indeed for all sexual outsiders – the 'social' and the 'political' were intertwined… A more expansive definition of politics, drawing on feminist scholarship, identifies as 'political' the fight to establish a limited public sphere in order to make queer communities and lives possible in new ways, not only because it entailed confrontation with the state's censorship policies, but also because it was a struggle for the survival of queer subjectivities.[152]

While the new queer spaces under the Nazi regime cannot be described as public, the actions were similarly political in nature. To engage in queer communities, attend clandestine meeting spaces, and express sexual and romantic autonomy was in direct conflict with both the law and Nazi sexual policies.

Homosexual Germans may not have known themselves or their actions to be political. However, these individuals were acutely aware that their romantic and sexual inclinations conflicted with the law. For homosexual men, in particular, to seek romantic and sexual encounters was, without doubt, illegal - and yet many men were willing and knowingly committing illegal actions at the risk of their livelihoods, wellbeing, and survival. Similarly, a lesbian relationship could damage a person's reputation, employment opportunities, and, in certain instances, could lead to denunciation and imprisonment.

It is important to note that queer Germans did not pertain to a singular ideological, religious, or racial group. It is true that queer individuals identified as anti-Nazi, nonpolitical, and

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[152] Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic,* 58-59.

even pro-Nazi in certain circumstances. The spectrum of political beliefs present in queer German communities indicates that their uniting factor is queer solidarity and sexual freedom – or, in another sense, homosexual emancipation. Peukert's model might have cast this form of opposition as sexual "nonconformity," due to the single-issue nature and inherently private setting of homosexual encounters. However, sexual nonconformity does not accurately convey the risk involved. Nathan Stoltzfus makes a similar argument in *Resistance of the Heart*, which examines Jewish-Gentile intermarriage under the Third Reich. When discussing the single-issue nature of Germans who resisted Nazi policies against Jewish-Gentile marriage, he explains:

> Although the opposition of intermarried Germans was motivated by a single cause, they cannot be denied the status of resisters for the same reason as other single-issue opponents. Among the assessments of single-interest dissenters is that they basically made peace with Nazism… Single-interest dissent has also been associated with mere nonconformism, rather than active struggle, and judged as not having hindered the overall effectiveness of the Nazis to govern. Analysis of single-issue resistance has relied primarily on religious-based dissent in Nazi Germany and fits that history better than it does that of intermarried Germans.[153]

In this passage, Stoltzfus argues that prior conceptualizations of single-issue, or single-interest, dissent against the Nazi regime should not apply to Jewish-Gentile intermarriage. I make similar arguments in the first chapter of this study – that the group a scholar is examining, and the way that group has been oppressed, must inform their definitions of resistance and oppositional behaviors. The original conceptualization of single-issue dissent did not consider the risks involved in state-condemned romantic affairs. It would also be incorrect to insinuate that, much like the religious-based dissent that Stoltzfus mentions in the above passage, that queer Germans accepted other facets of Nazism. The spectrum of queer religious and political belief systems defies any attempt to categorize their resistance along the single-issue axes.

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[153] Nathan Stoltzfus, *Resistance of the Heart* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 268.

Those queer Germans who participated in underground networks, attended clandestine meeting spaces, and exercised sexual autonomy intentionally and explicitly violated Nazi law. Following the politicization of queerness under the Weimar Republic, queer Germans retained a political awareness of their identity that informed their activities under the Nazi regime. If, as Nathan Stoltzfus states, "[a Jew and a Gentile] remaining married was a continuous, public act of dissent," then pursuing and engaging in homosexual relationships within queer spaces was a clandestine, social, and sexual rejection of the law.[154] The sexual and romantic activities of queer individuals under the Third Reich cannot be accurately understood through contemporary definitions of resistance. With each evening spent among queer peers, each sexual encounter, and each romantic relationship a homosexual maintained under the Third Reich, homosexuals rejected Nazi sexual politics.

Mobility

By the time Hitler's administration revised Paragraph 175 in 1935, the National Socialists had already spent two years attempting to isolate and alienate queer people by removing evidence of sexualities the Nazis deemed deviant from public view. Arrests and raids sharply increased.[155] Even certain enemies of the Reich encouraged their efforts. In 1936, the *Das Neue Tage-Buch*, which was published from its authors exile in Paris for criticizing the National Socialists, discussed the "homosexual epidemic" and criticized the Gestapo for being unable to contain the "rampant plague" of homosexuality quicker.[156] And yet, despite the Gestapo's many attempts to "clean" homosexuality from the streets of German cities – and their skyrocketing

[154] Ibid., 269.

[155] Straftaten und Vergehen von Angehörigen des Feld- sowie des Ersatzheeres, BArch RH 14/58, fol. 4, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany.

[156] "Jagd auf das Laster," *Das Neue Tagebuch*.

arrest rates – the S.S. was unable to cut off queer communities.[157] Reports from the Dusseldorf Gestapo conveyed their frustration at their inability to "sever the lifeline" of queer communities, and expressed that it seemed that homosexuals bore a solidarity and connectivity "similar to communists."[158] Even during a period in which the Gestapo attempted to viciously isolate, alienate, and arrest queer people, many worked to maintain a community based on solidarity and mutual aid despite the many risks involved in doing so.

The closure of homosexual establishments, the harsher amendment to Paragraph 175, and frequent Gestapo raids sent a clear message to queer individuals: the state would no longer tolerate their actions and existence. And yet, the community displayed surprising perseverance. *The Pauli* remained open in Berlin through 1938, where lesbians could meet in the back room behind the bar. Despite its "atrocious" furnishings and cramped space, it provided a haven for queer women to meet with their own community. As Anneliese triumphantly explained, "it was terrible, but it was ours!"[159] *The Pauli* did eventually close without warning or explanation, though this was a common occurrence for queer spaces by 1938. Shortly after discussing *The Pauli* in her interview, Anneliese described the constant overturn and raids of establishments, stating:

> Outside it always said, 'Private Party.' You had to ring a bell and she only let in people she wanted. In 1941 there was also a very nice club on Hoch Street at the Gesundbrunnen Station, but that one closed suddenly too. Even during the Nazi period there were clubs you could go to, but they always disappeared again after a while. After 1938 there were more and more raids. If we went to one and it was closed, then we didn't know what had happened. Before the war, Lotte Hahm had also opened a place at Alexanderplatz in the teacher's association building on the second floor. There used to be

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[157] "Berlins Visitenkarte wird wieder sauber," *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung.*
[158] Burkhard Jellonnek, "In ständiger Furcht vor der Verfolgung," 9.
[159] Anneliese W., interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 50.

> a dance cafe there. Lotte Hahm had rented it and organized ladies' nights there. But that didn't last very long either.[160]

However, despite the frequent closure of queer meeting spaces, members of these communities were quite adaptable. On the heels of recent closures, local queer communities often found new clandestine spaces to meet. The Gestapo raided the Essen Opera House in 1935, followed by a highly public series of denunciations within thespian groups in 1936. Soon after, "homosexual circles" regrouped and found locations to meet in Essen's city garden or local Handelshof.[161]

In fact, there are many examples of underground queer communities' perseverance and determination to meet, despite the risks involved in doing so. Lesbian groups formed clubs under fake names, such as "The Charlottenburg Rowing Club."[162] Heinz Heger, author of the memoir *The Men with the Pink* Triangle, formed a small group of his own in 1938 at his university.[163] Other groups met in private apartments, which appeared less likely to be raided by the Gestapo, where they might play music, provide food, and provide an opportunity to seek romantic encounters.[164] Similar underground spaces were also frequent in Kiel and Hamburg, where individuals posted coded messages about meeting spots in the personal sections of the local paper.[165]

The frequent relocation of underground queer communities demonstrates two distinct characteristics: mobility and an understanding that they acted in direct opposition to the Nazi government. By seizing queer establishments and publications, the Nazis intended to isolate homosexuals, lesbians, and transvestites from the communities they developed under the Weimar

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[160] Ibid., 51.

[161] "Vor 60 Jahren: Nazis beginnen Homosexuellenverfolgung," *Aktuell*.

[162] Margarete Knittel, interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 96.

[163] Heinz Heger, *The Men with the Pink Triangle*, 19.

[164] Margarete Knittel, interview by Claudia Schoppmann, Days of Masquerade, 96; Lutz van Dijk, *"Ein erfülltes Leben trotzdem"* 72.

[165] "Informationen Zur Schleswig-Holsteinischen Zeiteschichte," 30-31.

Republic. Furthermore, the Gestapo raids left queer groups without a fixed rendezvous location. Individuals would meet at a particular bar, club, or dance hall with the expectation that raids and closures were on the horizon—followed by a move to another location, should they not be arrested during the aforementioned raid. Despite the risks involved, queer Germans always located another bar, another backroom, another apartment to meet.

Communication

While some cities, such as Kiel and Hamburg, used coded personal advertisements to disperse information, the methods of other communities were far more rudimentary. Often, queer people relied on mere word of mouth. Information regarding the newest private queer spaces spread through “the grapevine,” which became the most reliable method to disperse information among queer peoples.[166] These methods are, perhaps, more secure than risking the possibility of an S.S. official breaking a code published in the personals. It also speaks to a level of communication between queer people in cities that relied on this method, such as Berlin and Essen.[167]

A strong communication network proved useful for more than broadcasting their next meeting place. Often, queer individuals could spread word which warned of an impending raid. In 1936, an Essen S.S. report explains, “The surprisingly well-functioning homosexual intelligence service can warn those concerned and cause them to obscure their crimes.”[168] This tactic was a crucial benefit to maintaining a cohesive queer community. It not only provided spaces for romantic encounters, but members also worked to protect those within their circles.

[166] Anneliese W., interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 51.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Burkhard Jellonnek, “In ständiger Furcht vor der Verfolgung,” 8.

Gestapo reports – particularly in places such as Essen – describe a feeling that homosexual network that was comparable to that of communists. The connected nature of the queer communities made them challenging for the S.S. to track.

This also applied when it came to information about concentration camps. Even during a time in which many Germans were unaware of the existence of or what horrors took place inside the concentration camps, many men and women were arrested for their homosexuality – albeit, far more men than women were arrested for such crimes, as lesbianism was not necessarily illegal. The lucky few eventually returned from the camps. Word of the threats for homosexuals that lie within Nazi camps such as Ravensbrück, while sparse in details, did spread through certain circles.[169] This provided crucial information for queer individuals, who found themselves at risk of not only arrest, but imprisonment at one such camp.

Underground Communities

Queer communities that organized under the Weimar Republic moved underground into clandestine spaces to engage in resistance and oppositional behaviors under the Nazi regime. While the National Socialist campaign to eradicate homosexuality from Germany succeeded in limiting and erasing the visibility queer individuals previously enjoyed, they were not successful in isolating queer people from their communities and ceasing all homosexual activities. Despite the risks involved, many queer Germans continued to engage in sexual and romantic autonomy. Underground queer circles organized in defiance of the Nazi reactionary politicization and criminalization of homosexuality by constructing clandestine spaces and networks established to enable and encourage illegal behaviors in order to promote body autonomy and sexual freedom.

[169] Anneliese W., interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 52.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the ways in which queer individuals preserved and protected the clandestine structures that they had established when directly confronted by law enforcement bodies, such as the S.S. or the Gestapo.

CHAPTER THREE: PRESERVATION

The underground queer networks established in the previous chapter faced frequent conflict with law enforcement entities, such as the S.S. and the Gestapo. The illicit and illegal nature of collective queer activities required strategies to sustain their existence under the constant threat of Nazi interference. In this chapter, I will discuss strategies which queer people used to protect both the underground structures that queer communities developed and maintained under the Nazi regime, as well as those within their immediate romantic and social circles. This will include tactics to protect themselves and others while under arrest, solidarity under interrogation, and aiding fugitives from the state. These actions supplement and preserve the oppositional and resistance activities from the previous chapter, particularly when faced with state interference and persecution.

It is important to note that while there are many Nazi arrest records and reports, I have located limited detailed information about the encounters themselves. The strategies and behaviors described in this chapter have been pulled from memoirs, interviews, and the occasional Gestapo report. The evidence in this chapter is limited, though the examples I provide suggest broader trends in the lethal "cat and mouse game" between Nazi law enforcement and queer Germans.[170] To fail to acknowledge the evidence that does exist would be to ignore the identifiable patterns of resistance and preservation of communities and loved ones that queer individuals engaged in.

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[170] Hanna Kolb, "Aber Herr Wachmeester, det waren nur Atemübungen" *Die Welt*, March 5, 2000, Verfolgung in den Städten, Nationalsozialismus Folder 15, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany.

Rettungwiderstand

Scholars have used the German word *Rettungwiderstand* to describe assisting and/or hiding persecuted peoples, particularly Jews, as a form of resistance. It literally translates as, "rescue resistance." When examining the types of individuals who engaged in *Rettungwiderstand*, Nechama Tec identifies one of the "basic shared characteristics" as "individuality or separateness… That is, these rescuers did not quite fit into their social environments - a condition they were often unaware of."[171] Tec elaborates by explaining that rescuers often lived on the margins of their communities, and thus experienced greater independence and fewer social constraints, which allows for the opportunity to act along personal morals and values. Queer Germans existed and lived on the margins of Nazi society, and a few found the "freedom from social constraints" to assist the Jewish people within their immediate circles.[172] This is true especially of lesbian and bisexual cisgender women, who had unique opportunities to cohabitate with their partners without immediate criminalization under Paragraph 175.

Germans from a wide range of backgrounds hosted, supported, and aided Jews hiding underground in Nazi Germany. An estimated 7,000 Jews in Berlin alone opted to brave the hazardous conditions of illegal existence. Without access to papers or food, living illegally under the Nazi regime often required assistance from non-Jewish individuals.[173] In particular instances, some Germans chose to capitalize upon the vulnerable position of Jewish people, though other Jewish fugitives found shelter and support in their intimate circles.[174]

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[171] Nechama Tec, "Who Dared to Rescue Jews, and Why?" in *Resisting Genocide: The Multiple forms of Rescue* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 103.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann, "Resistance," in *A Companion to Nazi* Germany (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2018), 141-142.

[174] Nechama Tec, "Who Dared to Rescue Jews, and Why?"

Post-war publications, interviews, and memoirs depict instances in which queer German women utilized public ambivalence about relationships between women to aid their Jewish partners. Erica Fischer's *Aimée & Jaguar*, a book which provides a collection of documents from the relationship between Lilly Wust and Felice Schragenheim, illustrates one such narrative. Schragenheim had lived underground through the use of aliases and false papers prior to her relationship to Wust, though this lifestyle harbored consistent threats from Nazi authorities. In 1943, Wust begun providing Schragenheim with food rations and shelter in her apartment.[175] Unfortunately, Nazi authorities begun investigating Schragenheim due to her connections with anti-Nazi espionage circles. The Gestapo traced Schragenheim to the Wust residence in 1944.[176] Schragenheim was murdered, alongside many Jewish victims, at the Theresienstadt concentration camp, during the winter of 1944 and 1945.[177] While Wust could not protect Schragenheim from Gestapo detection, notably due to connections with non-queer resistance circles, their account provides another example of queer women engaging in methods to deliberately and illegally protect loved ones from the Nazi regime.

Other queer women were more successful in aiding the survival of their Jewish partners. Following her escape from forced labor in 1941, Lotte Hahm assisted her girlfriend, Käthe Fleischmann, in finding locations to hide from law enforcement.[178] Gertrude Sandmann expressed a similar account in Claudia Schoppmann's *Days of Masquerade*. Sandmann's partner, Hedwig Koslowski, arranged a hiding place for her in a family friend's home, where she resided in a "miniscule closet" away from windows and doors.[179] In 1944, after a year and a half in these

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[175] Erica Fischer, *Aimée & Jaguar: A Love Story, Berlin 1943*, 150.
[176] Ibid., 170-172.
[177] Ibid., 260.
[178] Ingeborg Boxhammer, Christiane Leidinger, "Die Szenegröße und Aktivistin Lotte Hahm," 58.
[179] Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 83.

restrictive conditions, Koslowski organized another refuge in an unoccupied summer home in Biesdorf – then later, to Koslowski's own apartment. During this time, Koslowski and mutual queer friends supplied Sandmann with the limited food they could spare from their rations.[180]

In another oral history from Schoppmann's *Days of Masquerade*, Anneliese W. describes a situation where she and her close circle had assisted her Jewish partner, Margot, who narrowly escaped the Gestapo. Anneliese W. befriended a small circle of queer individuals who had already hidden at least one other Jewish queer woman by the time they met. These friends begun illegally sheltering Margot in the early 1940s - until a local bar owner denounced her as a Jew between 1943 and 1944. The Gestapo took Margot into custody for over six months, during which she experienced "gruesome" beatings and sexual violence.[181] During this time, Anneliese and her queer circle located the police station where Margot was being held. One of their mutual friends, Peter, who had sheltered Margot prior to her arrest, managed to bribe the Gestapo for Margot's release – an event described later in this chapter. However, the Gestapo continued to pursue Margot following her release from their custody. Rather than allowing Margot to continue residing with their mutual friends, Margot relocated to Anneliese's one-room apartment. Through precautious measures, Margot survived the Nazi regime with the assistance within her circle – despite denunciations, further (though brief) encounters with the Gestapo, and one instance in which she had been spotted by a neighbor.[182]

These accounts portray instances in which queer circles successfully hid and supported the Jewish members of their innermost community. These behaviors are not explicitly queer – in fact, marginalized and nonmarginalized Germans alike participated in sheltering and assisting

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[180] Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 84.
[181] Anneliese W., interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 53-54
[182] Ibid.

the Jewish individuals in their lives. However, it is notable that queer women also engaged in these behaviors, particularly with loved ones and those within their immediate circles. In the next section, I will discuss more widely used strategies that queer circles used to preserve their underground networks.

Alibis, Arrests, and Interrogations

While many queer German found it imperative to protect their loved ones who may be persecuted for other aspects of their identities, such as Jewish individuals, others more frequently developed strategies to preserve their underground networks and local communities. Despite the use of various tactics to avoid public visibility and conflict with the state police, the S.S. continued arresting large numbers of homosexuals. Foreign German-language newspapers such as the *Baseler Nachtrichten*, *Pester Lloyd*, and *Neue Freie Presse*, reported on notable raids, convictions, and actions against homosexuals throughout Germany.[183] Internal German crime statistics illustrates the continued arrests of queer individuals violating Paragraph 175 through 1944.[184] In Klaus Müller's interview with Gad Beck, Beck expressed the sentiment, "every day we said goodbye to someone."[185] The Gestapo frequently ripped queer persons from their loved ones and communities, and those in custody were unaware whether their fate entailed interrogation, castration, or concentration camps. Many experienced all three. However, many homosexuals developed strategies for encounters with the Gestapo to either avoid arrest, achieve

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[183] "Groß Säuberung,"*Baseler Nachrichten,* December 19, 1934; "Aktion gegen die Homosexualität," *Pester Lloyd*, December 21, 1934; "Aktion gegen homosexuelle in Hamburg," *Neue Freie Presse*, October 4, 1936, Aktionen gegen Homosexuelle in Deutschland, BArch R 4902/7742, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Germany.

Domestic German newspapers that addressed the Nazi campaign against homosexual individuals and communities, such as the *Berliner Tageblatt*, reported primarily on raids in the local region.

[184] OKH Chef der Heeresrüstung und Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres, "Statistik des Strafmaßes bei Zersetzung der Wehrkraft," Straftaten und Vergehen von Angehörigen des Feld- sowie des Ersatzheeres, BArch RH 14/58, fol. 4, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany.

[185] Gad Beck, interview by Klaus Müller, in *Paragraph 175.*

release sooner rather than later, or to aid other arrested members of their community. The behaviors discussed in this section typically fall into one of two identifiable patterns: queer solidarity and manipulating Nazi authorities.

Queer individuals aided one another within their own circles by providing alibis to the authorities. It was not uncommon, according to Burkhard Jellonnek and Laurie Marhoefer, for homosexual men and lesbian women to marry one another to evade suspicion from their neighbors and the S.S. This was not always a successful measure; however, it did provide a level of security the two may not otherwise have had – and any visitors may be explained away as acquaintances.[186] When marriage was not an option, certain homosexual circles might request the help of "alibi women," as Burkhard Jellonnek calls them.[187] That is, trusted women who would accompany men to those queer spaces to provide a cover story in the case of a raid.

A more common tactic both queer and heterosexual Germans used when dealing with the Gestapo was bribery. Especially during the war, food and goods were rationed among German citizens – which made extra ration cards quite valuable for bartering. Following the prior mentioned arrest of Anneliese W.'s girlfriend, Margot, one of their mutual friends managed to facilitate her release from custody, possibly using this very method. During Anneliese's interview with Claudia Schoppmann, she explained:

> Peter [our friend] fought her way through at the Gestapo; I don't know how she did it. I had gotten her food ration cards to bribe them [for knowledge of Margot's location]; everyone made deals back then… Margot was there over six months. Peter got her out; she never told us how she did it.[188]

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[186] Laurie Marhoefer, "Lesbianism, Transvestitism, and the Nazi State, A Microhistory of a Gestapo Investigation, 1939–1943," *The American Historical* Review 121, no. 4 (2016): 1167-1195, 1186; Burkhard Jellonnek, *Homosexuelle unter dem Hakenkreuz: Die Verfolgung von Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich* (Paderborn, Germany: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1990), 259; "Vor 60 Jahren: Nazis beginnen Homosexuellenverfolgung," *Aktuell.*

[187] Burkhard Jellonnek, "In ständiger Furcht vor der Verfolgung," 6-7.

[188] Anneliese W., interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade,* 53; It is important to acknowledge here that while Peter is socially a male name, the individual in question used feminine pronouns.

Anneliese's interview demonstrates not only that her friend, Peter, was able to influence S.S. Officers to release Margot after six months in custody, but also that bribery was a powerful tool when encountering the Gestapo. Gad Beck used similar methods during his forced labor, which the state mandated due to his half-Jewish lineage. He frequently traded sexual favors to German men in exchange for "friendly" treatment at work, a bath, or accommodations to hide himself and other Jewish fugitives.[189]

Queer individuals utilized a disparate variety of tactics while under police supervision. In one instance, Anneliese W. communicated with her imprisoned partner from outside the Berlin police department using a "secret whistle" they had the foresight to establish. This allowed Anneliese to confirm the location of her girlfriend and return with a plan.[190] On another occasion, two women used their sensuality as a tool for their own freedom. Following a 1933 raid on "political opponents," communists in this instance, Hilde Radusch was detained in a room with thirty-six other prisoners at a police station in Berlin. Two women "claimed to be masseuses and they started massaging each other right there in public."[191] This must have made the authorities of the police station uncomfortable, because according to Hilde Radusch, "it didn't take long for them to be taken out."[192] These women utilized Nazi ambivalence about female sensuality and lesbianism, which was socially frowned upon and yet not necessarily illegal, as a method to be released from Gestapo custody. While the goals of these two strategies appear dissimilar, in both instances lesbian women used socially ambiguous methods to accomplish covert objectives while under the immediate scrutiny of law enforcement.

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[189] Gad Beck and Frank Heibert, *An Underground Life*, 120-121, 126-127.

[190] Anneliese W., interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 49. It is important to note here that this incident is disconnected from the imprisonment of Margot.

[191] Hilde Radusch, interview by Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 33-34.

[192] Ibid.

In one instance, a lesbian woman within the Nazi German military succeeded in saving her own queer circle from arrest. According to an oral history in Schoppmann's *Days of Masquerade*, Erwin Friedrich, who was a sergeant in the German military at the time, narrowly avoided being charged under Paragraph 175:

> Friedrich often attended 'social gatherings' in Liegnitz as a transvestite. The group was organized by Gertraude Sailer and her girlfriend, Anita Killa. Killa was a telex operator drafted for military counterespionage service in Liegnitz. One day the homosexual meeting place was discovered and the soldiers among the guests, including Friedrich, were summoned for questioning. After a while, the well-meaning head of his company informed him that 'the danger was over.' Friedrich was transferred to Sicily. Anita Killa apparently succeeded in having all incriminating documents pertaining to her friends disappear.[193]

This venture did not end well for Killa, however. She was arrested and imprisoned – though there are no details regarding the specific charges – and eventually died due to "exhaustion and the cold" during the evacuation of the prison in Breslau.[194] Despite her death, and perhaps sacrifice, Killa did save the lives of her queer companions. There is no evidence to suggest how Killa managed to expunge the incriminating documents, though one might extrapolate that she may have had connections within the military due to her position in the military counterespionage efforts. Killa provides a single example of a queer person who had access to the proper channels to dismiss denunciations and end inquiries.

Queer individuals within the military, or even within the S.S., had opportunities assist homosexuals in their local communities. However, it is difficult to determine how frequently such instances occurred. Heinrich Himmler appeared concerned with the reputation of the S.S. and any associations with homosexuality. During a conversation with a group of Nazi leadership

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[193] Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*, 23.
[194] Ibid., 23

in 1937, Himmler mentioned the frequency of arrests of homosexual men among the S.S., where he evaluated that they occur approximately once a month.[195] Geoffrey Giles estimates even these numbers to be low.[196] In the arrest reports, Himmler himself even expressed reluctance to prosecute certain members of the S.S. for the violation of Paragraph 175, and only appeared to do so after personal warnings.[197] Despite this, a 1942 memo detailing the necessity for the execution of queer S.S. members boldly stated, "homosexual misconduct has been extremely rare in the ranks of the SS and Police."[198] It must be noted that this statement was explicitly restricted from being published to the public.[199] It is challenging to estimate an accurate number of Nazi law enforcement and military who engaged in same-sex relationships or intercourse. However, Himmler's own reticence to address the extent of their membership among his ranks – perhaps to uphold a respectable façade, as Giles argues – suggests a larger number than Himmler could publicly admit.[200]

Law enforcement entities who managed to successfully arrest queer individuals subjected their prisoners to brutal torture for interrogations. This could include beatings, sexual torture, and even the use of trained dogs to attack a man's genitals.[201] The Gestapo arrested Friedrich-Paul von Groszheim in 1937, as the Nazi regime escalated its efforts to "combat" homosexuality.[202] At the Marstall prison in Lübeck, Groszheim endured brutal beatings during interrogations, including an instance in which an officer "they twisted [his] neck, and [his] cervical vertebrae

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[195] Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust,* 196.

[196] Geoffrey Giles, "The Denial of Homosexuality: Same-Sex Incidents in Himmler's SS and Police," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* (2002): 256.

[197] Untersuchungen des kleinen und großen Schiedhofes beim Reichsführer-SS wegen des Vorwurfs homosexueller Veranlagung und Verfehlungen, 1938, NS 19/3940, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Germany, 8.

[198] Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust,* 198.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Geoffrey Giles, "The Denial of Homosexuality: Same-Sex Incidents in Himmler's SS and Police."

[201] Gad Beck and Frank Heibert, *An Underground Life*, 148; Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, 85.

[202] Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust,* 95-99

cracked so much that [he] thought it was over."[203] Following his interrogations, the Gestapo officers returned a bloody Groszheim to his cell, freezing and lined in excrement, and refused to bandage his wounds.[204] Toward the end of the war in 1945, the Gestapo raided Gad Beck's residence with the assistance of a "Jew snatcher."[205] Beck in bed with another man, Zwi, and both men were arrested. The first step of their torture was psychological: The Gestapo officers forced their victims to sign "their own death sentences."[206] During Beck and Zwi's official interrogation, a high-ranking Gestapo officer questioned Beck as he was forced to listen to the Gestapo officers beat Zwi in the next room.[207] The Nazi interrogators used psychological and physical torture tactics to break their prisoners and glean information from them.

These interrogation strategies successfully extracted denunciations and information about underground circles in many instances – though not all. Certain resolute queer individuals maintained their solidarity with their communities and loved ones despite creative and cruel Gestapo interrogation tactics. Erich Starke and Hans-Georg S. offer two distinct examples of homosexual men who explicitly refused to give incriminating information about their partners or community – and both did so proudly[208]. Erich Starke gave limited information under duress: that he had many sexual partners in the past, and the names of two men who could no longer be prosecuted for violating Paragraph 175 due to the statute of limitations.[209] Under the threat of escalating interrogation tactics, Hans-Georg S. refused and explained, "I do not name my partners... I think it's mean and dirty that I reveal a person when I've had something intimate with

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[203] Friedrich-Paul von Groszheim, "Ein Erfülltes Leben."
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid., 147.
[206] Ibid., 149
[207] Ibid., 153.
[208] Herbert Diercks, *Verfolgung von Homosexuellen im Nationalsozialismus* (Bremen, Germany: Edition Temmen, 1999), 84-85.
[209] Ibid.

him."[210] The Gestapo warned him to reconsider his statement. He did not. Hans-Georg S. only produced the names of dead individuals and, at times, first names without additional information.[211] It is difficult to determine the true ratio between queer individuals who eventually denounced others, and those that Nazi law enforcement failed to pull information from. However, enough queer prisoners refused to cooperate – despite brutal and violent interrogations – to frustrate Gestapo agents, as reflected in reports from Essen. In the words of Burkhard Jellonnek, "a few persistently refused to become 'the Judas' of their friends," and refrained from denunciation.[212]

Preservation

This chapter has described three types of behaviors: evasion, solidarity, and rescue. Each of these behaviors are born in the necessity for queer individuals to protect themselves and their communities. Queer Germans engaged in organized and careful strategies to preserve the clandestine networks they had established and protect those within their circles. Many of these individuals utilized strategies to avoid or escape arrests – similar to those used by other groups, such as Jews and communists. Those who could not escape and endured brutal interrogations faced a decision – to denounce members of their community or to stand in solidarity at their own expense. The Gestapo successfully pulled information from many of their queer victims, enabling their further raids, investigations, and incarcerations. This, however, bolsters the significance of those who refused to denounce others. It speaks to the conviction of individuals who understood that their underground structures required solidarity and preservation to survive.

[210] Cornelia Limpricht, Jürgen Müller, and Nina Oxenius, *Verführte Männer: das Leben der Kölner Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich* (Köln: Volksblatt Verl, 1991), 100.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Burkhard Jellonnek, "In ständiger Furcht vor der Verfolgung," 9.

Finally, queer German women in particular engaged in *Rettungwiderstand*, or rescue resistance. These women, who existed on the margins of society as Tec argues, provided necessary support and aid to Jewish partners and friends living underground to escape persecution. When considered in conjunction with the clandestine structures described in the previous chapter, it is evident that underground queer circles developed networks and strategies to enable illegal expressions of bodily autonomy under a fascist regime which criminalized and persecuted them for their queer actions. The construction of systems to permit and preserve illegal activities, based in sexual and social freedoms, constitutes acts of resistance.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

Surviving Nazi records suggest an estimated total of 100,000 homosexual men were arrested under the Third Reich.[213] While it is challenging to establish an accurate estimate of the number of homosexual men the Nazis interned in concentration camps, scholars have estimated between 10,000 and 15,000.[214] Lesbian women did not face explicit criminalization of their sexual activities, though the Nazi authority's ambiguous and non-uniform application of the law did result in the imprisonment of several queer women in concentration camps.[215] Many queer Germans met their end at the hands of the Nazi regime, a fate which had not been recognized in either of the immediate postwar German states. The East and West German governments did not repeal Paragraph 175 until 1968 and 1969, respectively. [216] However, the persecution and victimization of queer Germans does not reflect a complete history of queer lives under the Third Reich. In the introduction of this study, I stated that this paper will grapple with the opposing queer narratives of the Weimar Republic and Nazi regime and answer three questions: what were the tactics of queer Germans who avoided arrest, and how? What happened to the queer communities and circles that formed under the Weimar Republic? How did the Nazi politicization and criminalization of queer sexualities impact queer groups which had become politically involved in the decade prior?

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[213] "Persecution of Homosexuals in the Third Reich," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed February 10, 2019, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/persecution-of-homosexuals-in-the-third-reich.

[214] Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 196; Hans-Georg Stümke, *Homosexuelle in Deutschland: Eine politische Geschichte* (Munich, Germany: C.H. Beck, 1989), 127.

[215] Claudia Schoppmann, "The Position of Lesbian Women in the Nazi Period," in *Hidden Holocaust*, 13-14.

[216] Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 183.

Many queer Germans either fled the country, conformed to National Socialist ideals, or refrained from queer romantic and social expression during the Third Reich.[217] However, the evidence I have compiled demonstrates that both large and small queer circles retained their cohesion under the Nazi regime. For the purposes of this study, I have defined collective resistance as the organization of underground groups whose purpose was the facilitation of illegal activities related to sex, romance, and queer solidarity under the threat of state violence. The marginalization, politicization, and stricter criminalization of queer people, who had formed sociopolitical communities in the years prior to the Third Reich, placed those who exercised their sexual autonomy and engaged in protecting those within their immediate queer circles in direct conflict with Nazi law and authorities. Whether intentionally oppositional or not, queer Germans who met in clandestine queer spaces and expressed queer sexual freedom engaged in resistance activities that were explicitly illegal.

Underground queer communities constructed networks to communicate, whether by coded ads in the local paper or by word of mouth.[218] This was necessary for two prominent reasons: first, to warn others of upcoming raids and arrests, which loomed as a constant threat on the horizon. The Nazi authorities arrested hundreds in a single evening on multiple occasions. Already on December 19, 1934, “roughly 700” individuals had been arrested throughout Germany for violations of Paragraph 175.[219] The arrests of homosexual men peaked in 1938, with the arrest of over 8,500 in that year alone.[220] Nazi authorities would often raid several establishments and homes in a single evening and, through the underground networks queer communities had constructed, individuals could warn one another of impending raids. Second,

[217] Schoppmann, Racial State, etc.
[218] “Informationen Zur Schleswig-Holsteinischen Zeiteschichte,” 30-31.
[219] Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust*, 47
[220] Günter Grau, *Hidden Holocaust*, 154.

the mobility and adaptability of queer communities was imperative for the survival of underground queer structures. Due to frequent raids and unexpected closures of establishments hosting clandestine queer meeting, it was necessary to spread information of new meeting spaces that appeared shortly after.

Queer communities and individuals were under constant threat, both due to the illicit nature of their activities or their own multifaceted identities, such as Jewish queer people. Queer circles engaged in resistance strategies to preserve their underground structures and loved ones. As described in the third chapter of this study, queer Germans protected others through providing alibis, refusing to denounce others under arrest and interrogations, and protecting state fugitives. German women in relationships with Jewish women, in particular, assisted in hiding and providing for their partners. These actions preserved the sexual and romantic networks discussed in the second chapter and ensured the stability and safety of the queer individuals involved in those circles.

The evidence compiled in this study does elicit new questions. How did the lack of explicit criminalization of lesbian relationships impact the queer community in Germany? Did this embolden queer German women to support underground community efforts? Or would lesbian criminalization further encourage queer women to seek autonomy in clandestine spaces? This may be examined through a comparative analysis of Nazi Germany with the fascist First Austrian Republic, which criminalized both homosexual and lesbian intercourse. There is a necessity for research that contrasts queer groups in both countries to determine differences in policing, the survival of organized communities, and the scope of queer resistance. It is also important to test the boundaries of the framework of resistance that I have proposed in this study,

to validate the degree of its effectiveness and structure as a measure of queer resistance under fascism.

Queer Germans were of the victims of the Nazi regime, but this narrative is incomplete. I have presented the evidence in this study to illustrate a more complete picture of queer life under the Nazi regime, and propose a secondary narrative diametrically opposed to the standard Nazi history of queer victimization. This is for two purposes: first, to demonstrate that many queer individuals and communities rejected the Nazi regime's efforts to regulate the sexual and reproductive lives of its populace. Second, to return agency to queer Germans of this era, who both struggled to survive a lethal regime and exercise sexual autonomy. Queer Germans opposed and resisted Nazi reproductive and anti-homosexual policies through solidarity, community, and violating laws that the Nazi regime strengthened and used to persecute queer individuals. Even under direct threat, much like many groups targeted by the Nazis, queer Germans exhibited self-assertion, agency, and resistance.

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