

**WHO AM I NOW? THE CHANGING ROLES OF HUSBANDS, WIVES, AND
CHILDREN IN MIXED-MARRIAGE FAMILIES IN NAZI GERMANY**

by

Adriana Reynoso

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 2007

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(History)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April 2011

© Adriana Reynoso, 2011

Abstract

This thesis examines the human impact of Nazi policy on mixed marriages in Germany, especially the psychological and emotional effects that this policy had on spouses and children in these families. The Nazi regime wanted to remove all Jewish persons from the Reich in an effort to uphold the rhetoric of “racial purity” and maintain the supposed superiority of the so-called Aryan race. Intermarriage between Germans of Jewish and Christian faiths made this goal much more difficult than the regime had anticipated. Intermarried Germans were not so easily convinced of the correctness of Nazi rhetoric, so the regime enacted policies and regulations that attempted to convince mixed couples that divorce was their best option. These policies prevented any future intermarriages and criminalized “racial mixing” while simultaneously promoting the action of divorce. Most intermarried Germans refused to divorce their Jewish spouses, however, and faced dire consequences because of this refusal. To access their experiences, this thesis examines memoirs and diaries written by children and wives of mixed-marriage families as a means of exploring the emotional and psychological effects of getting divorced or remaining married. This thesis argues that these effects were made evident in a change of each family member’s sense of self with respect to their designated role within the family unit as a result of the Nazi policies on intermarriage. Women in this situation often emerged as the emotional mainstays of their families while men-whether Aryan or Jewish- were deeply damaged by their inability to continue their traditional role of protector and provider.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Dedication	v
Introduction	1
The Nazi Definition and Disruption of Marriage	11
Now What? Mixed Marriage Families Respond to the Nazis	17
Who Am I Now? The Changing Roles of Husbands, Wives, and Children in Mixed Marriage Families	27
Conclusion	42
Bibliography	45

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the culmination of a lifelong interest, and two years of research during which I learned German, studied the practice of history and spent hours at libraries in Canada, Germany and the U.S. I would like to thank my parents and my brother for their encouragement and their support, which has given me the ability to follow my dreams. I also want to thank my grandparents, who always indulged my interest in the family history. My friends and colleagues, whose conversation, encouragement and helpful hints always helped, especially in the most stressful moments, are also greatly appreciated. Thanks for being there when I needed it. The faculty and staff of the History department, who always helped me with various questions, are also appreciated. I also want to thank my German language instructors, particularly Gela Struch, whose advice was very helpful. The librarians and assistants at archives and institutes in Berlin and Hamburg were also immensely helpful, and I thank them for their kindness to me. *Vielen Dank!* Finally, an incredibly big thank you to my supervisor, Chris Friedrichs, without whose advice, guidance and support I would not have known where to begin, or how to finish, this project. Thank You.

This project of course would not have been realized without the financial assistance of the University of British Columbia, the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Department of History, and the Conway Summer Travel Fellowship, which assisted me with my research trip to Germany in May of 2010.

For my family,

In memory of those no longer with us, but who remain in our hearts forever.

Introduction

“In the entire human organism, there are nowhere two people who attract and detest each other more than the Jews and the Germans.”¹

-Moses Hess

“What mattered was only my love...”²

-Viktor Klemperer

From the unification of Germany in 1871 to the end of the Weimar Republic in 1933, Jewish and non-Jewish Germans found themselves increasingly drawn to each other, both professionally and personally. The emancipation of the Jews in Berlin in the late eighteenth century, and the development of such legislation in Germany in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, afforded the Jewish German population new economic and social opportunities. This enabled Jews living in Germany to become more involved with the larger society and accepted into it. Inter-marriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans was a part of this process. After the end of the Weimar Republic, however, all of the work that had been done to promote the equality of German citizens would be undone. By late 1935, Nazi policymakers had drafted and enacted the Nuremberg Laws, which included the ban on inter-marriage, outlawing the practice of marriage between Aryans and anyone viewed as non-German.³

In the Nazi mindset, the Jewish people were not just a religious community, but a racial one as well.⁴ The Nazis therefore defined any marriages between those of the Jewish faith and those who were not Jewish as “mixed”, using the German term *Mischehe* to refer to these unions in policy and rhetoric in a derogatory tone. The Nuremberg Laws also included regulations

¹ Alan Abrams, *Special Treatment: the Untold Story of Hitler's Third Race* (Secaucus, NJ: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1985), 97. As quoted by Abrams.

² Marion A. Kaplan, “Friendship on the Margins: Jewish Social Relations in Imperial Germany,” in *Central European History* 34:4 (2001), 493. As quoted by Kaplan.

³ The term Aryan was now synonymous with German, which was exclusively for those the Nazis defined as German, i.e. not Jewish.

⁴ In this thesis, “race” is understood to be a social construct, but I have decided not to use quotes for these terms in the text of the paper to avoid any confusion with quotes from a source.

regarding the children of mixed marriages, whom the Nazis would refer to as *Mischlinge*, a derogatory term denoting individuals of mixed race.⁵ The Nazi regime was puzzled by those who were both Aryan and Jewish because half of their ancestry was Aryan but the other half qualified as Jewish, which was in direct opposition to the ideal of “racial purity” that Nazi rhetoric espoused. Nazi policies on intermarriage were part of the regime’s attempt to deal with what it viewed as anomalies to the Nazi ideal vision: first by making intermarriage illegal, and then by enacting further laws that would make it more difficult for mixed-marriage couples and their children to exist within German society.

I am concerned here with how mixed-marriage couples responded to the Nazi policies and the consequences of those actions for each member of the family. Specifically, I examine how these consequences affected each family member’s sense of self in terms their role in the family. By role in the family I am referring to the traditional ones ascribed by general cultural norms, such as husband and father, wife and mother, and daughter or son. These roles can be understood more specifically by the function they each served in the family unit, meaning the actions or behavior that these roles would have required. The function of the husband and father was that of provider and protector, meaning he would safeguard his family from economic or social harm. The wife and mother would have been expected to keep a good home, and especially to be there for her husband and children as emotional support and be the family’s moral centre. Children were expected to follow their parents’ advice, examples and instructions. This was true for intermarriages as well as non-mixed marriages, but these roles became more

⁵ The Reich Citizenship Law, which defined who was and was not a German citizen, also defined who was and was not a Jew in the eyes of the regime. The Nazi policymakers involved with creating this definition further classified those of mixed ancestry based on the amount of Jewish blood one had. If a person was the product of one Jewish parent and one non-Jewish parent, which meant that they had two Jewish grandparents, then that person was classified as *Mischling*, first degree. If a person had one half-Jewish parent, and therefore one Jewish grandparent, and one non-Jewish parent, then that person was classified as *Mischling*, second degree. If a person was either of these, but had been raised in the Jewish faith, then he or she was classified as a *Geltungsjude*, meaning ‘one who counts as a Jew,’ and therefore treated as a Jew. For further information on this policy, see Jeremy Noakes, “The Development of Nazi Policy towards the German-Jewish ‘Mischlinge’, 1933-1945,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 34 (1989), 291-354; especially pages 306-315.

difficult to uphold for mixed marriage families during the Nazi era.

Nazi policies on intermarriage marked intermarried couples and their children as exceptions to the social norm, furthering their isolation by removing them from employment or educational opportunities. The severe restrictions placed on intermarried families limited their abilities to perform the actions necessary to fulfill their role(s) within the family unit. This forced the members of intermarried families to adapt to new roles, or lose them altogether. This thesis is the result of my attempts to understand the process by and through which Jewish and non-Jewish Germans in mixed marriages underwent an identity change because of their experiences with the Nazi regime.

In order to analyze these changes, I have primarily examined the memoirs of survivors of the Nazi period. Predominantly available are those written by the children of intermarriage, though there are also a few memoirs and diaries written by intermarried women. Memoirs can, of course, present problems for the modern researcher attempting to use memories of an event, long since passed, as evidence for the arguments one wishes to make regarding that event. This should not limit or prevent their use as sources of historical evidence. Memoirs, as noted by historian Andreas Lixl-Purcell, are “recollections that extend our knowledge of history through their focus on specific issues,” especially the consequences of actions, and the emotional and psychological damage they can cause.⁶ This is the key subject of my research: the emotional and psychological effect of the Nazi policies, which is indeed only available to me through personal recollections. Memoirs provide the emotional, human element that is not made apparent by facts and numbers on a page, offering readers a “privileged access to an experience.”⁷ While acknowledging that there may be discrepancies in human recollections, my work makes use of the memories that are available as a lens through which the past is made more accessible to us.

⁶ Andreas Lixl-Purcell, “Memoirs as History,” in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 39 (1994), 227.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.

The scholarship on the subject of German-Jewish intermarriage in Nazi Germany has dealt predominantly with the issues faced by mixed marriage couples in the larger context of the Jewish struggle during the Nazi era.⁸ The most comprehensive work done in English on the subject of intermarriage in Nazi Germany has been that of Nathan Stoltzfus in *Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany*, in which he argues that Aryan women married to Jewish men became resistance fighters on behalf of their husbands and children.⁹ Marion Kaplan, dealing primarily with Jewish women's history, has included the experiences of intermarried Jewish women in her book *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*.¹⁰

In German language scholarship, Beate Meyer has conducted some of the most comprehensive work on the subject of *Mischehen* and *Mischlinge*, focusing her research primarily in Hamburg. Her most prominent work on the subject is a study entitled "*Jüdische Mischlinge*": *Rassenpolitik und Verfolgungserfahrung 1933-1945* which focuses on the experiences of *Mischlinge* with the persecution caused by the racial policies of the Nazi regime.¹¹ Monika Richarz has also included *Mischlinge* in her collection of memoirs covering specific periods of Jewish German history.¹²

My work attempts to add to the existing scholarship by arguing that all members of

⁸ Some scholars have focused on the gendered and racial aspects of Nazi policies and society as a frame through which to view the treatment of couples in mixed marriages. The most well known of these have been Claudia Koonz's *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) and Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann's *The Racial State, Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), though neither has focused solely on mixed marriages.

⁹ See Nathan Stoltzfus, *Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ See Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹¹ See Beate Meyer, "*Jüdische Mischlinge*": *Rassenpolitik und Verfolgungserfahrung 1933-1945* (Hamburg: Doelling und Galitz, 1999). She has also published in English, most recently an article on the subject of intermarriage. See "The Mixed Marriage: a Guarantee of Survival or a Reflection of German Society During the Nazi Regime?" in David Bankier, ed., *Probing the Depths of Antisemitism: German Society and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1941* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 54-77.

¹² This has been published in three volumes, the third, *1918-1945*, being the most relevant to my own research. See Monika Richarz, ed., *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland: Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte, 1918-1945* vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1976).

mixed marriage families were affected by the Nazi policies on intermarriage. I hope to illustrate the domino effect that legislation dealing with intermarriage had on the family as a whole. This thesis offers an overview of what husbands, wives and children in mixed marriages experienced emotionally and psychologically as a result of their persecution. Because most scholars have chosen to focus their work on the marriages between Jewish men and non-Jewish women, these are the more commonly analyzed and studied relationships before and during the Nazi era. My work includes these unions, but places more focus on marriages between Jewish women and non-Jewish men. Couples in which the wife was Jewish are often considered to have been less affected by the Nazi regime by virtue of the husband's Aryan status, but my research makes clear that they and their children were in fact significantly affected by Nazi persecution.

The first section of my thesis explains the history of marriage in Germany, of which intermarriage was a part. The second section explains how the Nazis used their racial rhetoric to make these marriages a criminal violation of the (new) social norms. The third section explains how this forced couples in mixed marriages to choose between divorce and remaining married, illustrating the consequences of that decision for each member of the family. The fourth section shows how these consequences, which were a direct result of the Nazi policies on intermarriage, led to emotional and psychological changes which were manifested as a change of roles within the family unit.

Marriage and Family in Germany Before 1933¹³

For Germans living in the era between German unification and the end of the Weimar Republic, marriage was a union through which families were created, children were raised, and political or business partnerships could be solidified.¹⁴ Marriage was also a way for men and women to declare their love and commitment to each other. This held true for Germans of the Christian or Jewish faiths alike, as many of the concerns surrounding marriage and family relations were universal.¹⁵ It is no surprise, then, that many people from the period of unification onwards felt an attraction to others who may or may not have been of the same religious background but held similar ideals and values as themselves.

Although intermarriage was not specifically outlawed, it had not actually been possible in the German-speaking lands before unification because the only marriage ceremonies in existence were religious, and hence required the conversion of one spouse to the other's religion.¹⁶ Couples who were of different religions when they first met, then, became part of whichever religious community they had both chosen to be a part of, whether Protestant or Catholic.¹⁷ With the unification of Germany in 1871 came a new legal system that established, among other things, a civil marriage ceremony for all. In 1875, Otto von Bismarck passed the Civil Marriage Law, which required that every marriage be performed in a civil service in order to be legally

¹³ The period referred to here will concentrate on the era from unification to the end of the Weimar Republic, 1871 to 1932, as most records concerning marriage and intermarriage are more widely available from this period on. The various duchies, kingdoms and provinces that made up the German-speaking lands before unification would need far more space and time than this paper affords to do justice to the various intricacies and particulars of each area's attitudes and experiences towards marriage. Also, as this paper is concerned primarily with intermarriages, and no information for such unions would exist in the era before unification as any marriages between Jews and non-Jews were only performed when one partner had converted.

¹⁴ Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 91. Kaplan notes that in this period, when familial contacts were limited, families would look to professional, business and friendship connections for possible marriage partners.

¹⁵ Kaplan, *Making*, 85. She explains that Jewish and non-Jewish Germans held similar views on marriage, though some issues were of special concern to the Jewish minority.

¹⁶ Though the unification brought civil marriage to all of Germany, it was actually possible in some areas of the German Confederation by 1861. See Amos Elon, *The Pity of it All: a Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1743-1933*. (New York: Picador, 2002), 85.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Elon points out that though spouses were required to convert for religious ceremonies, it was in fact illegal to convert to Judaism.

recognized by the state.¹⁸ This enabled couples of different religious backgrounds to marry without a religious ceremony and without requiring either spouse to convert, which meant that more people could marry outside their faith. With this new freedom, the number of intermarriages between Jews and non-Jews began to increase steadily between 1871 and 1933.¹⁹ Intermarried couples were more accepted because they were still part of a long-standing socio-cultural tradition: even up to the 1930s, the institution of marriage was a “deeply rooted norm” in Germany.²⁰

In the imperial period, questions of when to marry, whom to marry, and reasons for marrying were of concern to both children and parents. That marriages would and should be contracted, or arranged, by one’s parents or guardians was standard procedure for the middle and upper classes, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. In the bourgeois society that witnessed significant growth during the imperial period, families were concerned primarily with the financial stability and well-being of their children and the social status that was attached to this. Therefore, marriages were based more often on economic and social concerns than they were on love, especially among the upper middle classes in Germany.²¹ Those Germans (Jewish or non-Jewish) who had no aspirations to bourgeois status, or who had no interest in economic or social stability, married more often for love. This was of course the primary reason for intermarriages as well.

Marrying outside of one’s faith was not an easy decision, and certainly would not have been the first choice for parents who were concerned that their children marry into families like their own. Parents were, as has been noted, generally concerned with their children’s financial

¹⁸ Martin Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany 1800-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2006), 142.

¹⁹ Monika Richarz, ed., *Jewish Life in Germany: Memoirs from Three Centuries*, trans. by Stella P. Rosenfeld and Sidney Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 7. Richarz explains that “For the period of 1875-1879, 4 percent of all Jewish marriages in Prussia were mixed; for 1901-04 the figure was 9 percent; and for 1930-1933, it was already 24 percent.”

²⁰ Stoltzfus, 73.

²¹ Kaplan, *Making*, 85.

stability and social well-being, so when a son or daughter wished to marry outside of the religious community parents would often agree because it meant some form of stability.²² More often, however, couples would have to intermarry without the consent of their parents. Therefore, it can be argued that intermarriages were based on a mutual understanding and attraction, in contrast to the increasingly outdated practice of marriage to a stranger or family acquaintance.²³

In addition to the fact that more Germans were marrying for love, arranged marriages were becoming less practical for financial and social reasons. After the country's defeat in the Great War and the subsequent establishment of the Weimar Republic, Germans (particularly young women) found less reason and fewer opportunities for marriage, as "prospects for starting families during Weimar were discouraging."²⁴ The loss of a large portion of the male population of marrying age and the economic fluctuations of the early and late 1920s often made marriage, and indeed arranged marriages, impossible. For German women the shortage of eligible men within their own communities would perhaps have led more of them to seek marriage partners from outside of these communities.

Getting married, of course, was only part of the story. Whether arranged or not, and whether they were intermarried or not, couples were expected to fulfill the roles that the social expectations of the day required. A man was expected to work, provide for his family financially, and to maintain the middle class values of hard work, discipline and self-reliance.²⁵ In fact, men whose private lives were not well ordered could be demoted, particularly in the civil service, so it

²² Ibid., 94. Especially in the case of a Jewish daughter wishing to intermarry, parents would "acquiesce in the belief that their penniless daughter had found someone to provide for her."

²³ Kaplan, "Friendship," 493.

²⁴ Steven M. Lowenstein, "Jewish Intermarriage and Conversion in Germany and Austria," *Modern Judaism* 25:1 (2005), 27.

²⁵ Nancy Reagin, "The Imagined Hausfrau: National Identity, Domesticity, and Colonialism in Imperial Germany," *Journal of Modern History* 73:1 (2001), 60.

was important for them, and their home life, to be free of any immorality.²⁶ To ensure that their home life was ordered and stable, men relied on their wives. Women were expected to work in the home, cooking, cleaning and raising the children, rather than find wage-earning employment. Advice literature of the day (written by and for middle class women) promoted the “idealized standard” of household work and child-rearing, specifically providing tips on household management, housekeeping practices and other pertinent information.²⁷ Women were also expected to provide for their families emotionally, to be the center of the household by making certain that the home was a morally and physically clean, peaceful sanctuary. Wives were supposed to be “islands of tranquility,” and the family was the place in which husbands and children would be cared for and comforted.²⁸ Husbands and fathers would be able to relax after a long day at work, while wives and mothers would be surrounded by the comforts of home, which were the fruits of their own labor and the financial security provided by their husbands. Children would learn that diligence and hard work would be rewarded by emotional and financial stability. By maintaining what was considered a morally and socially upright household, Jewish and non-Jewish Germans ensured that domestic life was the sector in which these standards would be perfected and represented.

During the Weimar Republic, which was established in 1919 and ended with the Nazi takeover in 1933, tensions arose concerning the condition(s) of the family unit. When, as noted earlier, economic fluctuations made marriage and raising a family look less promising, a new generational conflict emerged in which children found themselves living in a country different than that in which their parents had been raised. The damages of wartime often changed family dynamics. The loss of brothers, fathers, husbands and sons meant that many women would have

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Reagin, 58. This article goes into further detail on the impact that this advice literature, in the form of magazines and journals, had on the collective identity of the German *Hausfrau*.

²⁸ Kaplan, *Making*, 16.

to return to work, and would not be able to maintain the peaceful, serene home lives they had once cultivated. The absence of a father's "strong guiding presence" only further exacerbated the generational conflict, and left mothers less able to cope with their children's individual needs in addition to those of the family.²⁹ Both Jewish and non-Jewish Germans were concerned about the decline of the family during the Weimar period, and they attached great significance to the maintenance of the family as a "social institution."³⁰ In the Weimar era, the morality and virtues that had been upheld during the imperial period were once again viewed as the responsibility of the family, of husbands, wives, fathers and mothers.

For intermarried families, there had always been an additional concern. Children of these unions were most often raised in the Christian faith, not that of their Jewish parent.³¹ Because of their mixed background, these children, and indeed their Jewish parents, struggled to define themselves. They felt they were German, but also argued that not all Germans had to be exactly the same.³² This tension and uncertainty would only be further exacerbated in the Nazi era.

²⁹ Re: father's guiding presence, see Sharon Gillerman, "The Crisis of the Jewish Family in Weimar Germany: Social Conditions and Cultural Representations," in Michael Brenner and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918-1933* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 181.

³⁰ Gillerman, 177-178.

³¹ Children of mixed marriages were more commonly raised as Protestants, since most mixed marriages were between Protestants and Jews. There were, however, some marriages between Catholics and Jews, and their children were predominantly raised as Catholics. See Lowenstein, 30.

³² Kaplan, *Making*, 14.

The Nazi Definition and Disruption of Marriage

By January of 1933, it was clear that the era of assimilation and integration was coming to an end. Hitler and his Nazi government immediately began the process of transforming Germany into the Third Reich, a process that would involve the re-structuring of society into the idealized image of Nazi rhetoric. According to this rhetoric, German society was not divided by class or religious affiliations but by race.³³ Nazi racial beliefs revolved around the notion of preserving “racial purity” by maintaining the strength of the so-called master race, also referred to as the Aryan race.³⁴ Nazi rhetoric also argued that the Jewish population constituted the so-called subhuman race and a threat to Germany. Hitler had argued that it was “the Jew” who had been responsible for all of Germany’s ills, because “the Jew” (always referred to as a male) had “prostituted” the German people and wanted to “bastardize” the German race by “poisoning the blood” of the “body of the German nation”, particularly through his own marital or extra-marital affairs with Aryan women.³⁵ Because of this perceived struggle between the Aryan and the Jew, the Nazi regime believed in the distinction between these two races, and indeed between the Aryan and all other races, as differentiating between valuable and un-valuable people.³⁶ Those who would help protect and preserve the Aryan race were of course Aryans or of “kindred blood”, and were thus considered valuable.³⁷ All other races, particularly the Jewish race, were viewed as threatening to destroy and defile the so-called master race, and were thus considered un-valuable.

The Nazis attempted to re-define nearly every aspect of life through this racial ideology,

³³ Koonz, 6. See also Burleigh and Wipperman, 4 and 306.

³⁴ Re: “preservation of ‘racial purity’”, see Matthew Stibbe, *Women in the Third Reich* (London: Arnold, 2003), 17.

³⁵ Burleigh and Wipperman, 41. In regards to the reference to the Jew as a male, Claudia Koonz provides a possible explanation: “In Hitler’s view of the world, men were powerful and dangerous; women passive, protected, harmless and not very intelligent.” It is possible to see how the Nazis would have viewed the seducer, then, as male and the female as the innocent, pure Aryan who is seduced. See Koonz, 325.

³⁶ Elizabeth D. Heinemann, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 18.

³⁷ Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Documents on Nazism 1919-1945* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), 464. Quoted from the Reich Citizenship Law of 1935.

but it found perhaps its clearest (albeit still confusing) expression through the Nazi conception of marriage.³⁸ The regime's understanding of the function, motivations and purpose of marriage was influenced by the primary goal of preserving the Aryan race. In the Nazi mindset, it was not love but the continued existence of the nation that was at stake when a couple decided to marry and have children. Therefore, marriage was about procreation and the education of the young regarding the Nazi rhetoric, so that they could grow into model Aryan men and women who would also procreate. Pamphlets and "racial science" courses instructed Aryans, particularly young women, on how to find an appropriate partner with whom to reproduce and how to raise the children that would result from such a union.³⁹

As early as October of 1933, the leader of the Nazi Women's Auxiliary issued directions such as "produce babies and educate them according to Nazi doctrine" and "understand and apply racial principles in the selection of sexual partners."⁴⁰ These sexual partners would have to become spouses, however, as the Nazi regime still held on to traditional values regarding marriage and family. As Matthew Stibbe notes, "sex within Nazi Germany was officially defined as occurring solely within marriage."⁴¹ Connected to this point, the Nazis viewed the family as the best way to educate young people.⁴² The roles of men and women within marriage were largely traditional, so that the husband and father would have his distinct function as provider of and for the family, and the woman and wife would have her distinct function as child-bearer and child-rearing caretaker. According to the Nazi rhetoric, "men were productive and creative actors in the big world of politics and war, while women were reproductive, imitative and essentially

³⁸ Re: re-defining, see Burleigh and Wipperman, 4.

³⁹ Koonz, 189.

⁴⁰ Koonz, 158. She also notes the racial principles as presented by the Nazis included the command to "Remember you are a German and choose only a spouse of similar or related blood!" See Koonz, 189.

⁴¹ Stibbe, 50.

⁴² Heinemann, 33. In fact, Heinemann also notes that because of this view, single motherhood and illegitimacy, while not frowned upon so long as the parentage was of the Aryan or German race, was still problematic for the regime.

passive in the little word of the family household.”⁴³ Marriage for the Nazis was a partnership in the fulfillment of one’s duty to propagate, educate and thus preserve the Aryan race.

Within the context of their policies on racial purity and their concept of marriage, the Nazis viewed mixed marriages and any sexual relationship between Aryans and non-Aryans as a direct assault on the Aryan race. Because the Nazis’ primary goal was the preservation of racial purity, they viewed the mixing of races as “equivalent to original sin”, defiling their idealized vision.⁴⁴ The Nazis defined the concept of mixed marriage as a combination of races, not religions. The racial rhetoric regarding mixed marriages was made official when, in late April of 1935, the regime announced that the concept of mixed marriages would refer not to inter-religious marriages, but to racial mixing, “as when an Aryan marries a Jew.”⁴⁵ Marriages and sexual relations between Aryans and Jews were problematic for the Nazis specifically because they furthered what Hitler and Nazi rhetoric argued had been the problem with German society: the assimilation and integration of Jews. To counter this, and to prevent any further defilement of the Aryan race, the Nazi government reminded the public that its aim was “the biological separation of the Jewish and German races.”⁴⁶

To achieve this separation, Hitler had Nazi policymakers draft laws, policies and regulations that would re-enforce the rhetoric of preserving Aryan racial purity.⁴⁷ It was the Nazis’ goal, through legal action, to maintain the rigid distinctions between Aryan and Jew, superior and inferior, valuable and un-valuable. These legal actions would involve the

⁴³ Burleigh and Wipperman, 242.

⁴⁴ Karl S. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy Toward German Jews, 1933-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 51. He explains that the Nazis viewed the ideal of racial purity as a paradise, and hence the allegory of mixing races to original sin.

⁴⁵ Schleunes, 120.

⁴⁶ Schleunes, 108. Biological, to the Nazis, meant that “race” was something inherent within one’s blood, or genetics, and their policies reflected this notion. See Jeremy Noakes, “The Development of Nazi Policy towards the German Jewish ‘Mischlinge’,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 34 (1989), 319-320.

⁴⁷ Koonz notes that, “Hitler was committed to the appearance of legality”. See Koonz, 135. Hence, his orders to legally dissolve and prevent marriages would have been in keeping with the attempt to maintain the appearance of correctness and legality to the international and German community.

criminalization of mixed marriages and sexual relationships between different races (particularly Aryans and Jews), and the easing of traditional German attitudes towards divorce. In September of 1935, the Nazi regime also introduced the Nuremberg Laws, the new legal system of the Reich that officially defined the state's position on all racial and social matters. These laws included the official ban on intermarriage, effectively outlawing any mixed marriage and dissolving existing engagements between Aryans and Jews.⁴⁸ The Nuremberg Laws further limited any possible interactions between Aryans and Jews by criminalizing sexual intercourse, social interaction or even business transactions between the two. Nazi policymakers defined these interactions as cases of *Rassenschande*, literally meaning “the scandal of racial mixing.”⁴⁹ This further emphasized the Nazi view of mixed racial relations as a defilement of the purity of the Aryan, German race, and its criminalization made it clear to the German public that mixing of the races was now punishable by law.⁵⁰

While these laws outlawed racial mixing of any kind, they did not have any legal effect on those mixed marriages that had been contracted before 1935. Couples who were living in “legalized *Rassenschande*”, as some staunch Nazis called it, were problematic for the regime precisely because they were mixed.⁵¹ These unions were also problematic from a policy point of view, because the regime did not want to alienate the Aryan spouses or relatives (especially the elites) whose support for economic and social programs the regime could not risk losing.⁵² Nazi

⁴⁸ Stoltzfus, 72.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Monika Richarz also notes that these laws were one way in which the social isolation of the Jewish population, intermarried or not, was achieved. The laws “greatly aggravated segregation” because “all association between Jews and non-Jews of the opposite sex was now criminalized and thus highly dangerous.” See Richarz, *Jewish Life in Germany*, 32.

⁵⁰ The public was often made aware of these laws and the consequences of disobeying them through newspaper articles that described incidents involving Aryans and Jews. This was part of the Nazi “campaign to enforce racial principles.” See Ursula Büttner, “The Persecution of Christian-Jewish Families in the Third Reich,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 34 (1989), 275. Articles that discussed court cases involving *Rassenschande* and the dismissal of Aryans from their professional positions because of their marriages to Jewish spouses were the most common. For reprints of these articles, see Wolfhard Buchholz, ed., *Die Ausgrenzung der Juden in der Tagespresse des Dritten Reiches, 1933-1941, eine Dokumentation*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007).

⁵¹ Re: “legalized *Rassenschande*”, see Stoltzfus, 72.

⁵² Büttner, 268.

policymakers also recognized that they could not force people to divorce, especially since divorce was still largely unpopular among the general population of Germany.⁵³ Therefore, the regime had to make divorce appear to be the logical resolution to the so-called problem of intermarriages and the racial mixing that these unions would lead to. In July of 1938 the National Marriage Law was issued, in which reasons for divorce included: “adultery, refusal to procreate, immorality, VD, a three-year separation, mental illness, racial incompatibility, and eugenic weakness.”⁵⁴ All of these reasons could explicitly be connected to the preservation of racial purity, and so the Nazi mindset made divorce more acceptable and possible by virtue of this fact. In the legal system and racial hierarchy created and defined by the Nazis, divorce along these lines was seen as for the betterment of society, not to its detriment.

Nazi laws, policies and regulations made divorce a socially acceptable option for intermarried couples, but not necessarily a personally acceptable one. Most Aryan spouses refused to divorce, so the regime took another approach: constant harassment and threats if they did not divorce.⁵⁵ In particular, the Gestapo would call intermarried Germans repeatedly into its various offices for “consultations” in which Gestapo officers would attempt to persuade them, first by friendly and later by unfriendly approaches, that “divorce was in the Germans’ self-interest, given the regime’s view of race.”⁵⁶ The laws that excluded Jews and Aryans married to Jews from entering into certain professions and expelled them from civil or military service if they did not divorce also enabled the Nazi regime to harass and threaten the stability of these marriages.⁵⁷ Under these pressures and strains, intermarried couples were forced to “scrutinize

⁵³ Stoltzfus, 272. He also notes that even Goebbels recognized that “a forced divorce is useless because even if it would break the legal tie, it could certainly not break inner ties...” See Stoltzfus, 173.

⁵⁴ Koonz, 192.

⁵⁵ The refusal of most Aryans to divorce their Jewish spouses is well documented in Stoltzfus, 9, 12, 74, and in Meyer, *Jüdische Mischlinge*, 68-76.

⁵⁶ Stoltzfus, 106.

⁵⁷ A discussion of these laws can be found in Stoltzfus, 43-49, 116-118. Marion Kaplan notes the threat of job loss even before the Nuremberg Laws: “By June 1934, Berlin schools fired ‘Aryan’ schoolteachers who had married Jewish spouses in 1933 or still intended to marry Jews.” See Kaplan, *Dignity and Despair*, 79.

their relationships” and some yielded to the pressure, while others held fast to their families.⁵⁸

The only options left for intermarried couples were to divorce or remain married. But what were the consequences of either response, for these couples, and their children?

⁵⁸ Kaplan, *Dignity and Despair*, 75.

Now What? Mixed Marriage Families Respond to the Nazis

As Raul Hilberg notes, “the most serious situation for intermarried Jews arose upon the dissolution of their marriage,” because the consequences of the divorce would have lasting effects on the spouses and children of mixed families.⁵⁹ If a couple divorced, the Jewish spouse was no longer under the legal protection of the Aryan husband or wife, and would be deported to a concentration camp, where he or she would possibly be killed. While some of the Aryan spouses who divorced their Jewish husbands or wives would later claim they did not know that the divorce would sentence their spouses to death, it can be argued that the known existence of concentration camps and the ill treatment of Jews in Germany were signs of the impending catastrophe.⁶⁰ Aryan spouses surely must have known that divorce could only have negative effects on their Jewish spouses and children.

Among the relatively small number of divorces, there were a few Aryan spouses who divorced their Jewish husbands or wives because they had been convinced of the correctness of Nazi rhetoric.⁶¹ For the most part, however, divorces occurred because the pressure of the Gestapo and social harassment, as well as the threat of losing work, led to “internal disintegration.”⁶² The inability of either spouse to endure the constant harassment, fear, and social isolation can explain why some couples ended their marriage, though this did not necessarily mean they stopped caring for one another, or that it led to the end of all connections to each other.

Divorces in Germany “resulting from political or societal pressure were not necessarily intended by either partner to bring about the end of the relationship,” as is evidenced by some

⁵⁹ Raul Hilberg, *Victims, Perpetrators, Bystanders: the Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 133.

⁶⁰ Re: knowledge of existence of concentration camps, see Kaplan, *Dignity and Despair*, 197-200.

⁶¹ Stoltzfus, 74, 106-107. There was a 7 percent divorce rate among intermarried couples in Nazi Germany. See Stoltzfus, 12.

⁶² Meyer, “The Mixed Marriage,” 76.

Aryan spouses' continued concern for the safety of their former husbands or wives.⁶³ Despite the fact that there was not much the Aryan spouse could do (legally) for the Jewish husband or wife once they were divorced, some Aryans continued to provide support or protection as long as possible because they were aware of how dangerous the situation was for Jews in Nazi Germany. Ingeborg Hecht, speaking of her Aryan mother and Jewish father, recalls that her mother protected her father even after they were divorced, "because she found out the Nazis wanted him in a concentration camp."⁶⁴ This attempt to protect the Jewish spouse, even after divorce, was more common than not, and Ingeborg's mother's knowledge of what it meant for her former husband to be sent to a concentration camp reflects the very real threat familiar to intermarried couples.

Heinz Kühn, whose Aryan father and Jewish mother had divorced in 1925, notes that even though they had separated because of their personal differences, his father still recognized the dangers of the Nazi regime and the threat it posed to his former wife and in-laws. Kühn writes that after the initial Nazi book burning, his father "had been outraged" and that his father had said, "Just because Berliners are tolerant of Jews and think the Nazis are a nuisance doesn't mean that the Nazis will leave the Jews alone," while his face clearly showed "his anxiety about the fate that threatened Mother and her sisters."⁶⁵

Although divorce was what the regime had pressured for, and some couples were forced to separate because of the strain this caused, others divorced purely for economic reasons. In

⁶³ Hilberg, 133. He also notes that many of these couples continued their physical relationship, and maintained this in secret. Ibid. Harriet Pass Freidenreich has noted that some of these couples further planned to emigrate separately, and then re-unite and re-marry once in the new country of residence. See Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *Female, Jewish and Educated: The Lives of Central European University Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 176. An example of one couple who planned this, but whose re-marriage never took place, can be found in Eva Wysbar, "Hinaus aus Deutschland, irgendwohin..." *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933* (Lengwil am Bodensee: Libelle Verlag, 2000).

⁶⁴ Ingeborg Hecht, "The Germans and the Nazis Were Not Synonyms for Me," in Cynthia Crane, ed., *Divided Lives, the Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 66.

⁶⁵ Heinz Kühn, *Mixed Blessings: An Almost Ordinary Life in Hitler's Germany* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 45-46.

these cases, the couple felt it would be best for the Aryan spouse to keep his or her job, so that he or she could continue to support their family.⁶⁶ The professional contacts that they preserved by no longer being attached to a Jewish spouse would (they believed) help them secure the safety of their former husband or wife when the Jewish spouse was threatened by an impending deportation order.

One such case can be found in the story of Max Krüger, an Aryan, and his Jewish wife, Camilla Davidson-Krüger. They had met while working at the same theater, he a student and actor, she an actress, in 1912, and were married later that year. They decided to divorce in 1937, because Max had lost his position as director of the Freiburg State Theater, and they hoped that by ending their marriage he would find new work. When Camilla was arrested by the Gestapo in Berlin in 1944, and was about to be deported, Max did all that he could. Helmut Krüger, the couple's eldest son, describes the efforts undertaken by his father to secure the safety of his former wife. He writes, "unterstützte uns unser Vater mit allen seinen Möglichkeiten. Er hatte eine mittelbare Verbindung zu einem Münchner Rechtsanwalt... tatsächlich soll er sich um die Freilassung unserer Mutter bemüht haben, aber ohne Erfolg."⁶⁷ Though his professional contacts had connections to the Nazi party, they and Max could not delay or prevent Camilla's deportation to Theresienstadt. The fact remains that Max tried, via every possible association he had with those in higher positions, to help the woman he had shared most of his life with, and whom he still loved.

While their parents could still show care and concern for each other, the children of divorced intermarried parents experienced, albeit at a younger age, their parents' separation as a physical separation. The custody of *Mischlinge* whose parents had divorced was most often

⁶⁶ Kaplan, *Dignity and Despair*, 90-92.

⁶⁷ Helmut Krüger, *Der Halbe Stern: Leben als deutsch-jüdischer "Mischling" im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Metropol, 1993), 93. Using the German plural, 'uns', for 'we' or 'our', Helmut is referring to himself, his younger brother Answald and his younger sister Brigitte, who was only 14 when their parents divorced. He says, "My father tried, through all sorts of possibilities, to support us. He had a minor association with a lawyer in Munich, who tried daily to free our mother, but with no success."

assigned to the Aryan parent, unless he or she abandoned his or her children, or they had been raised Jewish.⁶⁸ Those who had been raised as Jews were at risk for deportation themselves, and so anything that the Aryan parent could do to help them was as unlikely to actually stall deportation for their child as it was for their former spouse.⁶⁹ The fact that these children were placed into the custody of the Jewish parent at the time of the divorce, with no alimony, suggests that it was indeed the intention of the regime to sever any ties that the Aryan parent had to his or her Jewish child.⁷⁰ In addition to this extreme kind of separation, children of intermarriage whose parents were divorced also experienced the kind of separation anxiety that most children of divorce go through at a young age: not understanding why they can no longer see one of their parents as often as they used to. Ilse Koehn, who was the daughter of an Aryan mother and half-Jewish father, noted this exact feeling when she was a child. Of having to change her place of residence to live with her Aryan mother and grandparents, she writes: "...how can you cry and be miserable because you've been told to live with your mother, whom you love? Why did they bring me here? I have no one at all to talk to."⁷¹ The change in her daily surroundings, the loss of being able to talk to and see her father, surely contributed to this sense of isolation, the feeling that she did not quite belong.

This kind of sentiment was amplified by the fact that children of intermarriage whose parents had divorced did not get to fully connect or re-connect with their father or mother when

⁶⁸ Re: custody granted to Aryan parent, see Kaplan, *Dignity and Despair*, 86. The custody of children whose parentage was mixed was also given to the Aryan spouse's family if he or she had died. Ingeborg Hecht recounts that there were Jewish women whose husbands had died in the war, and had their children taken away from them by the deceased father's family. See Hecht, 64. Children who were mixed but who had been raised as Jews were thus counted as Jews by the state, and relegated to the same fate as their Jewish parent and relatives. See Stoltzfus, 64, 71.

⁶⁹ For more information on the experience of mixed children who had been raised as Jews, refer to the memoirs of Henny Brenner, *Das Lied ist aus: ein jüdisches Schicksal in Dresden* (Zurich: Pendo, 2001) and Ursula Pawell, *My Child is Back!* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000). Both are excellent, and moving, accounts of their lives before and during the Nazi period, with brief comments on their lives after the Nazis.

⁷⁰ Beate Meyer notes that, in Hamburg at least, judges "ruled that a divorced Jewish woman had no right to alimony." Meyer, "The Mixed Marriage," 68.

⁷¹ Ilse Koehn, *Mischling, Second Degree: My Childhood in Nazi Germany* (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1977), 24-27.

they were allowed to visit the parent with whom they did not live. Heinz Kühn reflects on this experience as well, when discussing the visits that he and his sister, Anne Marie, were allowed to have with their Aryan father.⁷² He writes, “Living each in a world that was radically different from that of the other, we had to renew, at every visit, that familiarity, that closeness we had felt when we last had parted.”⁷³ Since they lived mostly with their Jewish mother and grandmother in Hamburg-Altona, and their father and his relatives lived in Berlin, Heinz also sensed the difference between himself and his Aryan father, friends or relatives as manifesting itself in the physical surroundings as well. He writes of his childhood impression, “*their* rooms are sunlit, spacious, comfortable; *their* streets are quiet, tree-shaded, wide... In Hamburg the streets are narrow, crowded, noisy; in Grandmother’s apartment the floors creak, and the rooms are gloomy.”⁷⁴ Clearly, Heinz felt that there were differences between his life and that of his Aryan father and relatives, making him feel isolated from them. The terms “gloomy” and “comfortable” further attest to this isolation, in that they highlight the differences between the life experiences of Aryan and *Mischling* children in Nazi Germany.

The children of intermarriage whose parents had remained married also experienced the sense of not belonging, of feeling excluded. They had to face this kind of isolation as well, though it manifested itself in other ways, because of the different nature of their upbringing. By remaining married, Aryan spouses had effectively secured the safety (for the time being) of their Jewish spouses. There were, for the most part, no deportations of Jewish husbands or wives who had remained married to their Aryan spouses, or whose Aryan spouses had not yet died. As with all Nazi policies, there were exceptions to the rule. While most Jewish spouses were not deported

⁷² Heinz’s mother had custody of her children because, as she and her ex-husband had divorced in 1925, there was no Nazi stipulation that the children should remain with the Aryan parent, and their father was also not interested in maintaining sole custody of Heinz and his sister. By the time the Nazis would have attempted to place them in the custody of their father, Heinz and his sister were already adults. Therefore, his observations are about of growing up as a child of divorce in the late Weimar and early Nazi era, though his experiences can certainly be applied to those of other mixed children, because they shared the sense of exclusion from the Aryan community as mixed children.

⁷³ Kühn, 40.

⁷⁴ Kühn, 13.

so long as their Aryan husbands or wives did not die or divorce them, there was an attempt made to deport them in 1943. The so-called “Final Roundup” of the Berlin Jews included those who were in intermarriages, but the *Rosenstrasse* Protest, in which nearly 2,000 Aryan wives demanded the release of their Jewish husbands, managed to save these men (and some women) from that fate. Deportations of Jewish wives occurred late in the war, mostly in February of 1945, and these women returned to their families by June of that year after being liberated by the Allies.⁷⁵ Although these women were certainly no less harmed by the Nazis than others, their late deportations and higher likelihood of survival meant that they, their husbands and their children dealt with other concerns and fears related to the continued existence of their mixed marriage.

The most common threat, other than divorce and deportation, for Jewish men and women married to Aryans was that of losing the ability to provide for their families. Aryan husbands and wives who remained married to their Jewish spouses found it exceedingly difficult to maintain their professional positions as well as their personal ones. This was, of course, different in every case, and for the most part, those more seriously threatened with job loss were Aryan husbands who worked in the civil service.⁷⁶ The increasing harassment from the Gestapo, and the refusal of some people to work with anyone who was married or related to a Jew, made it nearly impossible for the Aryan spouse to find work.

Indeed, before their decision to divorce, Max and Camilla Krüger had endured this exact situation. In 1933, Max had lost his job at the Freiburg State Theater, and had been sent to work as director of the Silesian National Theater in Brieg, Poland, which was basically seen as the end

⁷⁵ Various sources attest to this, in particular see Cynthia Crane, ed., *Divided Lives, the Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 269-295 and 133-168. One person whose mother was not so fortunate was Wolfgang Breckheimer. In his memoir, Wolfgang discusses the deportation of his mother in 1943, and her subsequent murder at Auschwitz. In this rare case, it may have been a personal vendetta, or because of the Breckheimers’ history of Marxist, anti-fascist sentiment, in addition to the fact that Cecilie Breckheimer, Wolfgang’s mother, was Jewish, though a self-proclaimed Atheist. For more, see Wolfgang Breckheimer, *Von Den Nazis Verfolgt: ein Zeitzeuge berichtet* (Offenbach am Rhein: Otto, 2001).

⁷⁶ Meyer, “The Mixed Marriage,” 60.

of his career. His son writes, “Praktisch war damit schon seine Laufbahn zerstört.”⁷⁷ Because he was still married to Camilla, the difficulties in working with his colleagues were renewed, and he lost this position in 1936.⁷⁸ Another couple who faced this dilemma were the parents of Ursula Bosselmann. Her Aryan father and mother had met in the summer of 1917, while he was a soldier on leave in Hamburg, and married at the end of the war. Ursula’s father was a lawyer, as many members of his family had been, and because he stayed married to his Jewish wife, he lost nearly all of his clients. He was now solely dependent on seeing clients in private, which, according to Ursula was as though he had no clients. She writes, “Mein Vater war nun an auf Privatklienten angewiesen, die es so gut wie Überhaupt nicht gab.”⁷⁹

The parents of Henny Wolf, who lived in Dresden, also experienced the hardship of losing the means to provide for their family, though theirs was a more personal loss as well as a professional one. Max Wolf, an Aryan, and his Jewish wife, Frieda, had met in a Dresden dancehall. They married at the end of the First World War, with the blessings of her parents. In 1920 Max, who had worked at the Dresdner Bank for fifteen years, decided to open a movie theater with two (non-Jewish) business partners.⁸⁰ In the 1930s, Max was pressured to leave his wife, and was even told that he would be able to keep his theater if he divorced Frieda, but he refused, and ended up losing his business. Henny writes, “Einmal wurde er in Berlin aufs Reichspropagandaministerium vorgeladen, wo man ihm nahe legte, sich doch von seiner jüdischen Frau scheiden zu lassen, dann konnte er alles behalten. Dies kam für ihm Überhaupt

⁷⁷ Krüger, 24. This translates to English as, “From then on his career was practically destroyed.”

⁷⁸ Krüger, 40.

⁷⁹ Ursula Bosselmann, “Plötzlich waren wir keine Deutschen und keine Christen mehr,” in Arnulf H. Baumann, ed., *Ausgegrenzt: Schicksalswege “nichtarischer” Christen in der Hitlerzeit* (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus GmbH, 1992), 65. The sentence quoted translates to English as, “My father was now dependent on personal clients, which was as though he had no clients at all.”

⁸⁰ Brenner, 15.

nicht in Frage.”⁸¹ Henny adds that, for her father, this meant the family would have to survive through financial hardship: “Für meinem Vater bedeutete dies freilich zuerst einmal den finanziellen Ruin.”⁸² It also meant that they would have to move, something that Henny and other young children of mixed marriages had to accommodate.

For those intermarried couples who had remained married, the threat of the Aryan spouse losing his or her job, and the very real circumstances it produced when that job was lost, had lasting effects on their children. The immediate consequences of moving meant that children of mixed marriages would be placed in new surroundings, sometimes in entirely different cities, forcing them to re-learn everything they had known about their old homes. For many, like Henny, it caused a deep grief and sense of loss. She writes, “Ich war Tod unglücklich darüber und heulte.”⁸³ The sense of loss that children like Henny felt when they moved was further amplified by their feelings of isolation, whether they had moved to a new neighborhood or a new city. In Henny’s case, this was a particularly sensitive issue because she lost all of her non-Jewish friends. As a *Mischling* who had been raised Jewish, Henny was expelled from her school, in addition to being forced to move and give up the family-owned movie theater.⁸⁴ These losses, of all those things that symbolized her pre-Nazi life, were the physical manifestation of her isolation, though the most painful experience for her was the emotional isolation. Her former friends would no longer associate with her, and this caused her more pain than the physical separation from her old life. She writes, “Es war ein schreckliches Gefühl, als meine besten

⁸¹ Brenner, 49. This translates to English as, “Once he was summoned to the Reich propaganda minister’s office, where he was told that if he divorced his Jewish wife, he would be able to keep everything. This was out of the question for him.”

⁸² Ibid. This translates to English as, “This was, admittedly, my father’s first experience with financial ruin.”

⁸³ Ibid. This translates to English as, “I was deathly unhappy about it and cried.”

⁸⁴ For more information on the expulsion of *Mischlinge* raised as Jews from school, and the special schools set up for them, see Noakes, “Development,” 325-327. Ursula Büttner has discussed the social isolation that occurred for both those raised as Jews and those raised as non-Jews well before their official expulsion. See Büttner, “Persecution,” 274.

Freundinnen an mir einfach vorbei schauten.”⁸⁵ Such experiences would force Henny and other children of intermarriages to learn to rely on themselves, mostly by becoming accustomed to their new surroundings and making new friends.

Although children would cry and feel that the move was the end of their childhood, as Henny had, it would not change their situation, though some couples hoped a new city would provide them with more opportunities for the Aryan spouse to find work. Helmut Krüger recognized that while his parents had decided to move to Berlin in 1933 because his father, Max, had lost his position as director of the Freiburg State Theater, they felt Berlin would also provide them with more anonymity and offer more options for Max to find work in a theater where no one would know his wife was Jewish.⁸⁶ For other families, the loss of work for their Aryan parent, and the move to a new home, was something their children recognized as having more of an effect on their parents, than themselves.

Ruth Wilmschen, whose Aryan father had been a soldier in the First World War, and then became a school teacher, discusses the effect that moving had, above all, on her Jewish mother. Her father had refused to divorce his Jewish wife, and had been forced to retire from his teaching position because of it. They had to move because their home in Hamburg was a “civil service apartment,” and Ruth notes that “these few months were not at all fine.”⁸⁷ While she does not explicitly single out any one member of the family being more affected than the other, she does note that the move seemed to put more of a strain on her parents, and perhaps on their relationship, than it put on her or her siblings. She states that her mother told her husband (Ruth’s father), “I am a millstone around your neck. We should have divorced.”⁸⁸ It is clear that

⁸⁵ Brenner, 45. This translates to English as, “It was a horrible feeling, that my best friends simply stopped looking at me.”

⁸⁶ Krüger, 25.

⁸⁷ Ruth Wilmschen, “In the Nazi Years, I Acquired an Elephant Skin,” in Cynthia Crane, ed., *Divided Lives, the Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 142.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

for Ruth's Jewish mother, the whole ordeal, her husband losing his job, being forced to move out of their apartment, in addition to the Gestapo harassment, was too much to bear.

What effects this had on her sense of self, on her husband's sense of his role or function in his family, and the emotional and psychological effects that this would have had on Ruth or her siblings, are questions that can be applied to every mixed marriage family during the Nazi period. As outlined above, the Nazi policies on mixed marriage and "racial purity" led intermarried couples to end or continue their marriages, with different consequences. The consequences of their decisions to divorce or to remain married resulted in changes regarding each member's sense of identity, their sense of purpose and their role within the family unit. It is to this particular aspect of their stories we must now look.

Who Am I Now? The Changing Roles of Husbands, Wives, and Children in Mixed Marriage Families

The emotional and psychological damage done by the Nazis via the consequences that intermarried couples and their children had to endure was lasting and often tragic. While some children, husbands and wives were deported and did not return, all mixed marriage families faced the constant threat of deportation, the repeated harassment of the Gestapo, and the loss of their homes, friends and livelihoods. The effect of these experiences on each family member's sense of self and their role within the family resulted in a change of that role, a recognition that they were no longer who they had once been. No longer were they simply Germans, but Aryan, Jew or *Mischling*. No longer were they children, husbands and wives, but something more, or less, than they had been before the Nazi regime.

For mixed-marriage couples who had divorced or remained married, the consequences were initially different but eventually had the same effect on the mentality and sense of self for the husband. In both cases, the husband in a mixed marriage lost his role as the protector and provider for his family.⁸⁹ For Jewish men whose Aryan wives had divorced them, there was nothing they could do to prevent their own deportation, unless they were protected either by their own ability to hide, or by their children or former wives as in the case of Ingeborg Hecht's father. Jewish men who were married to Aryan wives automatically lost their role as protectors and providers, simply because they were Jewish. They were discriminated against in the workforce, losing their ability to provide for the family financially.⁹⁰ They were discriminated against as Jews, subject to harassment on the streets as well as physical and verbal threats to which they could not respond for fear of worse reprisals from Nazi or Gestapo officers.⁹¹ This all resulted in an inability to protect themselves or their wives and children from the Nazi regime.

⁸⁹ Beate Meyer has argued that this sense of no longer being able to protect one's wife and children was especially evident among Aryan men only after their Jewish wives were "obliged to do forced labor". She argues that this is the moment in which they "found their role as protectors was gradually dwindling." See Meyer, "The Mixed Marriage," 61. In this section, I argue that this sentiment can also be viewed as an effect of the Nazi policies on intermarriage, and that it was true for Jewish men as well. Some Aryan husbands also had to do forced labor, but the ultimate

One such case can be found in the memoir of Ursula Pawel, whose father Otto Lenneberg was Jewish and mother Lina was Aryan. Ursula recalls that when her father lost his job, her mother did what she could to provide for the family, and even tried to get her husband work that would not be reported to the authorities.⁹² Because Ursula and her brother, Walter, had been raised as Jews, they were subject to the same discrimination as their father. They were all deported from Düsseldorf in July of 1942, and though Lina had attempted to join them, the Gestapo had not allowed it.⁹³ Although Otto had lost his role as protector and provider, he did have one last thing to offer them: faith. Ursula, the only one to survive, notes that “persecution made us feel our Jewishness most deeply, despite the fact that religious ceremony meant little to my father to the end of his life.”⁹⁴ It is clear that while Otto did not care for ceremony, the depth of his and his children’s belief in their faith offered some form of comfort in what was a demoralizing, frightening and ultimately heart-breaking situation.

Aryan men who were divorced, and who wanted to assist and still protect their former wives by preventing their deportation, found they had no power to do so. Recall the situation of Max and Camilla Krüger, whose plan had been to divorce in order for Max to maintain his position as director of the state theater and thus provide financial support for the family.⁹⁵ What the Krügers had not been able to anticipate, however, was that Max would lose his position as protector of the family. Granted, a divorce suggested that the husband and father would no

moment in which Aryan husbands would have recognized they had absolutely no power to protect their wives was deportation. Re: Aryan forced labor, see Meyer, “The Mixed Marriage,” 66; Kaplan, *Dignity and Despair*; 174 and Abrams, 118.

⁹⁰ While this was indeed the case for most Jews in Nazi Germany, there were a large number of intermarried Jews who worked in factories, particularly in Berlin. See Stoltzfus, 205-206. The lack of sufficient income often had to be supplemented by the Aryan spouse’s income, which was also very small. See Stoltzfus, 125-129.

⁹¹ Stoltzfus, 12. He also notes the confiscation of Jewish property, loss of pets, and other forms of persecution of intermarried Jews in Nazi Germany. See Stoltzfus, 164-175.

⁹² Pawel, 27.

⁹³ Pawel, 47.

⁹⁴ Pawel, 61. Ursula’s brother Walter actually had his Bar Mitzvah in September of 1943, in Theresienstadt. A year later, in October of 1944, he, Ursula and Otto arrived at Auschwitz, where Otto and Walter perished shortly after. Ursula was transferred to Birkenau a few weeks later, where she was liberated in 1945. See Pawel, 61-75.

⁹⁵ Krüger, 57-58. Helmut notes especially that the divorce was only so his father could get his job back, and that when he did, Max continued to support his family, as he always had.

longer have to be a protector, but because they still cared for one another, the realization that he could not do anything for Camilla must have surely left Max feeling as though he no longer had any control over what could happen to his family.

Aryan men who had remained married to Jewish women could no longer provide for their wives and children either, because they had lost their job as a result of the marriage and they were limited in their ability to protect their families. Henny Wolf's father, Max, lost his movie theater and was unable to find further work because of his continuing marriage to Frieda, Henny's mother. In order to provide for his family, Max had to resort to hiding Frieda and Henny's Jewish ration cards by covering them with his Aryan ration cards. When he showed the baker, butcher and other shopkeepers the cards with the Aryan stamp on top, people believed all three were for Aryans and thus the portions were better.⁹⁶ Still, it was not enough or as much as he had been able to provide before the war and before the Nazis. When the war was raging and Dresden was facing yet another bombardment, Max Wolf realized he was unable to protect his wife and daughter from deportation. Henny had received her notice to report to the Dresden Gestapo in February of 1945, and her father said, "Nur ein Angriff kann uns retten."⁹⁷ It certainly seems odd that he would say so, but if there were yet another bombing of the city, they would have had a valid reason for not reporting to the Gestapo. They might be presumed dead in the rubble, or they really would die, and therefore escape deportation. The fact that he had to resort to relying on enemy (Allied) fire in order to protect himself and his family from the internal enemy of the Nazi regime reflects the level to which he and other husbands and fathers in mixed marriages had been lowered by the regime and its policies on intermarriage. Aryan men were increasingly aware that there was little they could do to help their families, and some husbands tried desperately to hold on to their role as protector and provider.

⁹⁶ Brenner, 67.

⁹⁷ Brenner, 8. This phrase translates to English as "only an attack can save us".

Some Aryan husbands thought they could protect their wives and children from deportation through their service in the military. Ruth Wilmschen's father was one such case. Ruth mentions that her father argued it was "inconceivable" that a wife should have to wear the yellow star when the husband was a soldier in the West, and that his initial argument against divorce had been that "As an old soldier, I should be able to keep my wife."⁹⁸ Even though he had been forced into the local defense unit of Hamburg (made up mostly of middle aged men and those previously ineligible for the draft because of intermarriage or infirmities) and though he had been a soldier in the First World War, he still was unable to protect his wife. Ruth notes that her father's service did prevent her mother from wearing the star, but her mother was still sent to do forced hard labor in Halle, and was then deported to Theresienstadt.⁹⁹ That Ruth's father was unable to do anything for his wife despite his military or labor service reflects the extreme consequences of remaining married to a Jewish spouse. The regime would not tolerate what it perceived as impudence on the part of these men, so their conscription was not an asset that would enable them to protect their wives and children. Since military service, both past and present, could not save their wives or children, and they could not work because they had Jewish wives, Aryan husbands were left with few or no means to maintain their role within the family unit as protectors and providers.

This lack of options left many husbands in mixed marriages without a sense of being the capable, successful and strong persons they had once been. In the words of Ursula Bosselmann, whose Aryan father could not prevent the deportation of his Jewish wife, "Mein Vater war ein gebrochener Mann."¹⁰⁰ Margot Wetzel wrote, "When my mother was taken away, my father broke down because he couldn't do anything. Imagine. He must let his wife go away and he can

⁹⁸ Wilmschen, 140 and 147.

⁹⁹ Wilmschen, 147. The forced labor of intermarried Jews, and even intermarried Aryans and Mischlinge first degree included working in factories, electrical works like Siemens, IG Farben; and cleaning trains and streetcars. See Kaplan, *Dignity and Despair*, 174-175.

¹⁰⁰ Bosselmann, 77. This phrase translates to "My father was a broken man."

do nothing about it...My father lay down in bed and cried.”¹⁰¹ Although she wrote these lines about her own father, they are certainly applicable to the situation of most men in mixed marriages. Broken by the Nazi regime and its policies, Aryan men, like Ursula and Margot’s fathers, no longer had the strength or will necessary to fight for their families. Indeed, this was also true for Jewish husbands in mixed marriages. Julius Israel, whose Aryan wife Charlotte had supported him at *Rosenstrasse*, remarked when he returned home: “In that camp one is less than a louse. They take away every ounce of strength.”¹⁰² Charlotte, speaking of her husband years later, noted that, “he was sick to his soul. He cried constantly. Cried constantly.”¹⁰³ The destruction of their careers, in addition to their inability to protect their wives, children, or themselves, made it impossible for men in mixed marriages to carry on their lives as they had before the Nazis. Thus, the Nazi policies on intermarriage changed who husbands in mixed marriages were, taking away their role as protector and provider, leaving them broken and disillusioned.

While their husbands were experiencing the loss of their role and function in the family, women who had intermarried went through a change in their roles as well. Whether they remained married or divorced, Aryan and Jewish women had to face the Nazi regime and the consequences of their decision, in particular the emotional breakdown of their husbands. This led both Aryan and Jewish wives to take on their husbands’ former role, learning to provide for their families and protect them in addition to maintaining their existing role(s) as the emotional center and support for both their husbands and their children.

Aryan wives who had divorced their Jewish husbands had to rely on themselves for emotional and financial support, though some were also, like Aryan husbands, protectors of their

¹⁰¹ Margot Wetzel, “There was No Part of Life Where You Weren’t Asked Whether or Not You Were Jewish,” in Cynthia Crane, ed., *Divided Lives, the Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 277.

¹⁰² As quoted by Stoltzfus, 251.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

former spouses.¹⁰⁴ The memoir of Ingeborg Hecht provides a striking example of one such case. Ingeborg's mother decided to hide her Jewish ex-husband in her own apartment, no doubt with great fear of their eventual discovery. Ingeborg notes that it was only later, when they moved into a smaller apartment, that they were separated, and that even then her parents still worked together to try to earn enough money so that her father could live.¹⁰⁵ She also explicitly states that it was in fact her mother's intention to protect her father, and the use of the phrase "my mother protected him" strongly associates Ingeborg's Aryan mother with the act of protection, viewing her as the one with the capacity to be a protector.¹⁰⁶ Through this lens, then, it is possible to view the actions of Aryan women who had divorced but still cared for their Jewish husbands as the actions of women who became protectors.

Aryan women who had not divorced their Jewish husbands were also forced by the regime's policies to learn to rely on themselves. Because their husbands could no longer support them financially, Aryan women became the sole financial support of their family, in addition to their existing role as the emotional support. As a result of this, and due to their status as Aryans, they also became the protectors of their children, husbands and themselves. These women had been forced to identify with their husbands as belonging to a Jewish household, and were subject to the same discrimination as non-intermarried Jewish families.¹⁰⁷ Because they were still Aryan women, however, they were given slightly more room to maneuver, and were thus able to withstand the pressure the Nazi regime placed on their husbands.

The strongest example of women standing up for their Jewish husbands and their children is found in the *Rosenstrasse* protest of 1943 in Berlin. While this is only one example, and

¹⁰⁴ On the subject of mixed marriages scholars appear to disagree on which ones ended in divorce more often. This could also be because of a difference in statistics in different German cities. Beate Meyer has argued that mixed marriages between an Aryan woman and Jewish man ended in divorce more often, while Claudia Koonz has argued that those in which the husband was Aryan and the wife was Jewish were more likely to divorce. See Meyer, "The Mixed Marriage," 75 and Koonz, 192.

¹⁰⁵ Hecht, 66.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Stoltzfus, 9.

specific to Berlin, the Jewish husbands who had been held at the *Rosenstrasse* center were spared from deportation, and in fact, a transport of men who had already been deported were brought back because of this protest.¹⁰⁸ Though other Aryan wives of Jewish husbands may not have been so lucky, like Lina Lenneberg, who lost her husband Otto and young son Walter, the women who protested that week on *Rosenstrasse* managed to overcome their fears and their stress, to demand and ensure the release of their husbands.

While these Aryan wives may or may not have viewed themselves as protectors, or as having gone through a role change, it is clear that they did experience such a change. Because they had increasingly begun to be the ones to defend their Jewish husbands in interrogations by the Gestapo, on the street to passersby who would glare at them, and even to their own Aryan family members who disapproved, these women had already begun to step outside of the persona of a meek, obedient housewife, and went above and beyond their traditional role of providing emotional support.¹⁰⁹ Because these women risked their own lives to defend their husbands, their actions can and should be viewed as evidence of a change of their function within the family unit. In succeeding, for the most part, to protect their husbands and children from deportation, Aryan women who remained married to Jewish men had become more than the emotional support, and were now the protectors of their children and husbands.¹¹⁰

Jewish wives who had been divorced from their Aryan husbands, however, began to experience the full force of the Nazi anti-Jewish measures. They now had to rely on themselves, their children or their former husbands for help in avoiding deportation, though this did not

¹⁰⁸ On the release and return of Jewish husbands as a result of the *Rosenstrasse* protest, see Stoltzfus, 243-257.

¹⁰⁹ Elsa Holzer describes her response to the Gestapo's suggestion that she should divorce her Jewish husband, Rudi. See Stoltzfus, 107-108. Re: passersby and family members, Charlotte Israel describes these incidences as part of her own experience with discrimination as an Aryan woman married to a Jewish man, Julius. See Stoltzfus, 52-53, 153.

¹¹⁰ While it can be argued that these women could also lose this role if their husbands and children were deported, the fact remains that these women were able to adopt this role in the first place. Unlike their husbands, their whole marriage had not been centered on their holding this role, but rather their emotional support. For women who had adopted the role of protector, the loss of it, therefore, would not have been such a cruel blow to their sense of self, because their protection of their husbands was an extension of their existing role as the supportive wife.

always work. The experience of Camilla Davidson Krüger and her former husband's attempts to prevent her deportation illustrates this. Camilla was left to her own devices, and her own will, to survive her deportation to Theresienstadt. It is certainly possible that this experience equipped her with the sense of self-sufficiency that she continued to carry with her, in effect changing her from the frightened, stressed and uncertain woman she had been into one who knew she could survive the most extreme degradation and who was able to protect herself.¹¹¹

Jewish women who had remained married to their Aryan husbands also had to learn to protect themselves, and their children, from the Nazi regime. Some women had been the emotionally stronger partner from the very beginning of their marriages, and had fulfilled their role as emotional support and moral center of the family with great dedication. Often it meant that they had to suppress their own fears and sorrow in order to support, and protect, their children and husbands. Ilse B, whose Aryan father and Jewish mother had married despite the protests of his family, notes that her mother did indeed keep her thoughts to herself.¹¹² She writes, "My mother repressed her anguish and always helped...she didn't say anything."¹¹³ While Ilse notes that this enabled her mother to endure the name-calling and the loss of her relatives, it must be recognized that this was also her mother's way of protecting herself, her children and her husband from further stress. Keeping her own fears subdued, despite the constant tension they all lived with, made Ilse's mother a protector in her own right, and allowed her to maintain and fulfill her initial role as emotional support.

¹¹¹ Helmut Krüger notes that in 1954, after his mother had died, he found a letter she had written in 1946 to her only surviving relative, a cousin in America. In the letter, Camilla described her joy at being re-united with her children and Max after she had been released from Theresienstadt, but also noted her sorrow at having lost all of her relatives. In her letter, she also spoke of her independence. She told her cousin about living in her own little apartment and how she was able to take care of herself, not relying on her children or her former husband. See Krüger, 125-129.

¹¹² Ilse B, "I Was Treated Differently Because I Looked Aryan," in Cynthia Crane, ed., *Divided Lives, the Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 221. This eventually led to the Aryan relatives not visiting the family, but rather, Ilse's father went to visit them. She believes it was because her mother was Jewish, and that his relatives not visiting his children and wife was very hard on her father. This reflects the emotional strength of his Jewish wife, because while she never said anything, and had the closeness of her relatives, he had to deal with the stress of his own family disapproving of his life choices. Ibid.

¹¹³ Ilse B, 210.

Ursula Bosselmann's mother was also able to provide her family with this kind of protection, and she even defended her children against the Nazis' attempt to take them away, because she had learned early on to be strong for them. Ursula had two sisters, one of whom, Irmi, had been diagnosed with an illness at a very young age. She did not always live with the family, but often had to spend time in a clinic. Ursula notes that her mother always visited Irmi, usually alone, because her father (perhaps reflective of his later breakdown and inability to handle stress) rarely went to see his daughter.¹¹⁴ Ursula explicitly states that her mother was stronger, writing, "Meine Mutter war überhaupt die starke, alles verbindende Kraft der Familie."¹¹⁵ The additional stress of caring for a sick child must have made the Nazi policies and their consequences even harder to bear, but even so, Ursula's mother continued to provide care and comfort for all three of her daughters and her husband. She was constantly called into the Hamburg Gestapo, but she never told her husband or children about these interrogations, surely wanting to spare her children, but also her husband, from any further fears for their or her safety.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, when the Nazis wanted to place Irmi in a euthanasia program Ursula's mother defended Irmi by reminding the officials of her daughter's non-Jewish status and non-Jewish father, which at the time, luckily, saved Irmi's life.¹¹⁷ When Ursula's mother was deported on February 14, 1945, she attempted to get the SS officer on the platform of the train station to allow her to stay because she had three children to care for, trying to play on the traditional role of wife and mother to gain her safety.¹¹⁸ The SS officer, however, said that if she continued to be so impudent the children would go with her, yelling "Sie sind so frech gewesen.

¹¹⁴ Bosselmann, 51.

¹¹⁵ Bosselmann, 50. This translates to English as, "My mother was above all the strongest, out of all the combined strength of the family."

¹¹⁶ Bosselmann, 66.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Bosselmann, 73.

Sie gehen mit!”¹¹⁹ The children were not deported, however, perhaps because Ursula’s mother remained quiet, recognizing the danger in which she could place her children, and perhaps her husband. She did eventually return to them, in June of 1945, though still protecting her family by not wanting to speak about her experience(s) until years later.¹²⁰ It is possible, then, to view the experiences of Jewish women married to Aryan men as a role change in that they maintained their existing role within the family unit as emotional support while also becoming protective of their children and husbands as an extension of that role.

The fact that any of these women were able to take on the role of protector and defend themselves and their children against the Nazi threat is remarkable when considering the stresses they had to endure. In addition to this, their husbands’ emotional breakdowns must have made it even more imperative that Jewish (and indeed non-Jewish) wives take matters into their own hands. Erna Becker Cohen, who went “underground” as a “U-boat”, provides one striking example of such action. Erna’s husband had tried his best, within his limited capabilities, to find her and their five-year-old son a place to hide with nuns at a convent in the countryside, but eventually even these women grew afraid and wanted them to leave.¹²¹ Erna began to lose hope, and by Christmas of 1942 she wrote in her diary, “I sit quietly next to my husband and dream of another, peaceful world, in which I am a full human being...Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, and Mozart are our only friends...I have no inner peace. Life is so relentlessly difficult. Torment...Where is God?”¹²² Erna’s thoughts regarding her own situation well reflect the similar, more general experience of Jewish women with Aryan husbands. Her strong sense of the difficulties of her life might have impelled her to take action to protect herself, and by extension, her young son. Erna was sent to the Gestapo collection center in March of 1943, but she did not

¹¹⁹ Ibid. This translates to English as, “You have been so cheeky, they’ll go with you!”

¹²⁰ Bosselmann, 76.

¹²¹ Koonz, 304.

¹²² Ibid. As quoted by Koonz.

stay or do as she was told. She escaped and went into hiding as a “U-boat”, living without a permanent residence, changing her location every few days.¹²³ This is an extraordinary case of one Jewish woman married to an Aryan man who managed to protect herself and her family by disappearing, making herself elusive and not allowing her fear to prevent her from taking action to defend herself from the Nazi regime.

For children of mixed marriages, the classification of *Mischling* first or second degree, or of *Geltungsjuden*, certainly would have had an effect on who they thought themselves to be: German with Jewish heritage, German, or German-Jewish.¹²⁴ This was only added pressure, however, to the existing stress placed on them by the Nazi policies regarding their parents’ marriages, and the effect that the consequences of their parents’ decisions would have had on them. As has been noted, fathers, whether Aryan or Jewish, lost their role as protectors and providers, while mothers, whether Aryan or Jewish, took it upon themselves to protect their families as an extension of their existing role as caregivers and emotional support. Children of intermarriages, whether their parents were divorced or not, would have to take it upon themselves more often than their Aryan parent to defend and protect their Jewish parent from deportation. Whether or not they could actually prevent the deportation of their Jewish parent, the fact that these children recognized they had the capability to somehow alleviate the situation and provide some form of help, is the main point here. In recognizing this, they placed themselves in a new role or function within the family unit. They had gone from being totally dependent on their father or mother for emotional and financial support, as well as safety, to being the ones who could offer that for their parents.

Because of their *Mischling* status, children of mixed marriages recognized that they were, by virtue of their very existence, protection for their Jewish parent. They could provide their

¹²³ Koonz, 305.

¹²⁴ Refer to Introduction of thesis, page 2, note 3.

Jewish parent with some protection from deportation because of their connections to their Aryan father and relatives, which the Nazi regime recognized it could not risk losing the political support of. The fact that half of their ancestry was valued by the state made it possible for these children to help their Jewish parents, or at least try to.¹²⁵ One way in which they could do so was by serving in the German army, which they were allowed to do because (so long as they had not been raised Jewish) the Aryan half of their ancestry qualified them for military duty.¹²⁶

Helmut Krüger was a soldier in the *Wehrmacht* until the expulsion of all *Mischlinge* and intermarried Germans from the army in 1940. His experience exemplifies this particular form of protection for the Jewish parent who had been divorced from his or her Aryan spouse. Helmut recognized that he and his brother Answald had the capability to help their mother, because they were serving the country faithfully, and felt their own safety, when not in battle, should be extended to their family. When he was awarded the Iron Cross, in October of 1940, Helmut was certain that he had attained the lasting protection of his siblings and his mother.¹²⁷ He writes, “Ich glaubte, meine Geschwister und meine Mutter seien jetzt für alle Zeit gerettet.”¹²⁸ He was proven wrong, however, when his mother was deported to Theresienstadt in 1944. He and his brother and father did succeed, however, in securing slightly better conditions for her. According to Helmut, she wrote to them asking for more warm clothing, but had said that other than that she

¹²⁵ Meyer, “The Mixed Marriage,” 62. She notes that this was usually the case with children of Jewish mothers, though Stoltzfus discusses the *Mischlinge* with Jewish fathers who were also able to achieve some improvements for their parents. See Stoltzfus, 115-118, 122-123.

¹²⁶ Stoltzfus, 112-123. For more about the policies regarding military service of *Mischlinge*, see Noakes, “Development,” 301, 328-336 and Meyer, *Jüdische Mischlinge*, 230-237.

¹²⁷ Though the expulsion order had been issued in April of 1940, many commanders were more concerned with fighting a war than racial policy, and allowed some of their *Mischlinge* soldiers to remain in uniform, and Helmut was one of them. See Stoltzfus, 119.

¹²⁸ Krüger, 69. This translates to English as, “I thought my siblings and mother were now saved for all time.” For further information on how he received the Iron Cross and his military service, 65-77. Helmut and his brother’s efforts to help prevent the deportation of their mother were nearly successful when a high-ranking SS Officer they met through an acquaintance of their father’s theater business, offered to release their mother if the two agreed to become informants for the Gestapo in Switzerland. Helmut says he and his brother and father seriously discussed it, but decided not to agree to it because it was so uncertain what their mother’s fate really would be if they did. They tried to get back into military service, but none of their connections could help. See Krüger, 93-94.

was healthy.¹²⁹ This did not completely alleviate Helmut's fears for her safety, nor those of his siblings and father, who still cared for his ex-wife, but it did give the family some reassurance to know that at least she was not being sent anywhere else.¹³⁰ Although they had not been able to prevent her deportation, Helmut's experience still shows the degree to which children of mixed marriages were still able to have an impact on the treatment of their Jewish father or mother.

Werner Goldberg, a *Mischling* like Helmut and his brother Answald, also served in the military, and used this to help defend his Jewish father, successfully keeping him from deportation.¹³¹ The difference in Werner's case, however, was that his Aryan mother had not divorced his Jewish father, so there was the double protection of having an Aryan spouse and in-laws, as well as a son who was not raised as a Jew and was serving in the Wehrmacht. Although their actions resulted in different outcomes, these young men were able to recognize that their own involvement with the regime, through conscripted or voluntary military service, could serve them by helping to protect their Jewish parent. The fact that they felt they could somehow apply their own safety, and status, to that of their parents reflects their role change within the family unit. They now recognized themselves, not their father or mother, as the one with the ability to protect, or attempt to protect, their Jewish parent and their siblings.

Their ability to recognize this, and their relative ease of adaptation to the extreme changes they experienced as *Mischlinge*, whether they served in the Wehrmacht or not, was influenced by their earlier experiences with the consequences of their parents' decisions to divorce or to stay married. Whether their parents had divorced or remained married, the children of mixed marriages had endured the isolation of being separated from their former lives, even

¹²⁹ Krüger, 96 and 115.

¹³⁰ Camilla Davidson Krüger was liberated by the Soviets in May of 1945, though it would take her another six months to be re-united with her children, as she had been suffering from Typhoid, and her children had moved to Hamburg, the Western zone. Finally, the Red Cross helped her join them in 1946, and she spent the rest of her life with them, her grandchildren and her former husband. See Krüger, 115, 125-128.

¹³¹ See Stoltzfus, 115-118. Werner was also able to protect his father from deportation because he had been held at *Rosenstrasse*, where Werner participated in the protest there. See Stoltzfus, 123.

before the Nazi policies were implemented and their parents responded to them. This isolation, whether due to being separated from one parent, or being separated from one's former friends, forced the children of intermarriage to adapt to change. As noted earlier, Heinz Kühn, whose parents had divorced when he was very young, described the isolation caused by their separation as manifesting itself in a physical way. The differences in his surroundings when he lived with his mother and grandmother in Hamburg-Altona, or with his father in Berlin, made Heinz learn how to move between two worlds. In a way, the consistency of switching between homes helped him to adapt to change itself.

Henny Brenner also learned to adapt to change. Recall that she and her family had to move out of their beloved home and give up their movie theater, and she had the painful experience of her friends no longer looking at or speaking to her. At a young age, Henny learned to adapt to change because her isolation forced her to make new friends, to find her way around new surroundings, and to find a place (or role) for herself within that new environment. Like Heinz and Henny, children of intermarriage were forced to come to terms with their new surroundings, and the restrictions placed on them by the Nazi regime. Within this context, it is clear that children who served in the Wehrmacht, or who helped their parents in other ways, were consistently adapting and adjusting their lives to changing environments. Whether it was the battlefield, being on leave and on the home front, or factory work and forced labor situations, children of intermarriage had learned at a young age to rely on their own capabilities to alleviate their constantly changing situations.

These changes did not end with the defeat of the Nazis and the end of their regime, but (for some) continued even when their Jewish parent had returned from their deportation, and long after. As noted earlier, Ruth Wilmschen's mother had felt herself to be the cause of her family's misfortune. She had said to her husband, according to Ruth, "I am a millstone around

your neck.”¹³² The effect that this had on her child, Ruth, was to make her daughter take on the role of caretaker, to be the emotional support and possible protection for her mother that neither parent could now provide. Learning to respond to the changes placed on them because of the Nazi policies, Ruth was able to adapt quickly to the changing roles of her family and meet the challenge of caring for herself and her mother for as long as she could. Though she was unable, like her father, to prevent the forced labor or deportation of her mother, Ruth was able to continue her new role as caretaker and emotional support when her mother returned from Theresienstadt.¹³³ Her mother was ill, and for four years, Ruth was her sole caretaker, providing the emotional comfort that she herself had experienced when her family was forced to move, and before her mother’s deportation.¹³⁴ The feelings of isolation as a young woman, which had helped her to adapt to change and take on this role, had stayed with her long after the initial experience. In her later years, answering an interviewer’s question, she said, “Do I feel excluded? (Thinks for a while.) Yes, I do. But this is a ‘mixed children’ thing... Whatever happens in childhood, you never forget.”¹³⁵

¹³² Wilmschen, 142.

¹³³ Wilmschen, 149-151.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Wilmschen as quoted by Cynthia Crane, 168.

Conclusion

“Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland.
Der Eichenbaum
Wuchs dort so hoch, die Veilchen nickten sanft.
Es war ein Traum.”
-Heinrich Heine¹³⁶

In the short span of less than one century, Germany had witnessed unification, empire, defeat in the First World War, a democratic Weimar Republic, and the Nazi takeover of power. Despite all these changes, customs and traditions revolving around marriage and family remained relatively stable. For those who were partners in mixed marriages, however, life drastically and permanently changed after 1933. They had been attacked in the Nazi regime’s policies and propaganda as abhorrent, as going against what the regime felt marriage should be. Because mixed marriages violated Nazi racial laws and were therefore considered criminal, policies developed and enacted by the regime were intent on removing the Aryan partners from such unions in order to re-construct society in accordance with the Nazi ideal of a “racially pure” nation.

What the Nazi regime, Hitler and all other policymakers, could not factor into their calculations and rhetoric, however, was that not all so-called Aryans believed in the idea of “racial purity.” People living in mixed marriages had, more often than not, married for love, and were not so quickly convinced of the supposed inferiority of their Jewish spouse. In fact, most Aryan spouses refused to abandon their Jewish spouse and any children they had. The Nazi regime was relentless in its propaganda, however, and the Gestapo was also consistent in its harassment of both Aryan and Jewish partners in mixed marriages. These couples were left with only two options: divorce or remain married. In choosing either one of these responses to the Nazi policies on intermarriage, mixed couples and their children faced dire consequences.

¹³⁶ Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Gedichte*, ed. by Jonas Fränkel (Leipzig: Insel, 1925), 281.

In either case, the Jewish spouse of an Aryan man or woman was not safe from the threat of deportation, nor were any children of these unions who had been raised as Jews. With the defeat of Germany in the war looming, the Nazi regime became less concerned with not upsetting the Aryan relatives of its Jewish population, and so Aryan spouses were left with no options to protect their Jewish husbands or wives, or their children. The Nazi policies on intermarriage resulted in a role change for each member of mixed-marriage families.

This paper has shown that these effects were not distinguished by the racial categorization of the child, husband or wife. Whether they were Aryan or Jewish, each family member experienced a role change as a direct result of Nazi policy. A father and husband was no longer able to provide for or protect his family, since he was given insufficient work and, if Jewish, discriminated against to the point of not being able to respond to threats for fear of worse conditions for his family or himself. In response to this, mothers and wives had to take it upon themselves to become the family's provider (especially if Aryan, because they were offered work) and protector. Whether protecting their children and husbands physically through protests, or emotionally through keeping their own fears to themselves, Aryan and Jewish women took on this role as an extension of their existing role as the emotional center of their family. In response to both of their parents' role changes, children of intermarriage also underwent a significant change. Their experience with emotional, physical and social isolation made them more able to adapt to change, and hence, change their own situation. No longer dependent, as children, on their parents, they now provided the protection and emotional support their families would need to survive the Nazi regime, and the war. Though each member of mixed marriage families had become something, someone, other than they had once been, it was not necessarily temporary. No matter what the specifics of their experience were, and whether they were Aryan or Jewish, all members of intermarried families would carry the scars of their survival for the rest of their lives.

While there is much more that remains to be learned about the deeper psychological effects of these experiences on all members of mixed marriage families, I have examined the changes that manifested themselves in more obvious ways. All of those who were persecuted by the Nazis lived in constant fear, with threats to their lives, but the changes that this imposed on them were varied. Those living in mixed marriages are a small but significant group of survivors whose tales have yet to be fully explored and made available to a larger audience. By shedding light on these lesser-known but equally powerful stories of resistance and survival during the Nazi era, we can deepen our understanding of the human impact of Nazi policy. Perhaps most important of all, we can use this understanding to acknowledge the strength and courage it takes to survive such a regime, and to struggle to prevent racial discrimination in our own society.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- B, Ilse. "I was Treated Differently Because I Looked Aryan," in Cynthia Crane, ed., *Divided Lives, the Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 201-228.
- Bosselmann, Ursula. "Plötzlich waren wir keine Deutschen und keine Christen mehr," in Arnulf H. Baumann, ed., *Ausgegrenzt: Schicksalswege "nichtarischer" Christen in der Hitlerzeit* (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus GmbH, 1992), 46-86.
- Breckheimer, Wolfgang. *Von den Nazis Verfolgt: ein Zeitzeuge berichtet* (Offenbach am Rhein: Otto Verlag, 2001).
- Brenner, Henny. *Das Lied ist Aus: ein Jüdisches Schicksal in Dresden* (Zurich: Pendo, 2001).
- Buchholz, Wolfhard, ed. *Die Ausgrenzung der Juden in der Tagespresse des Dritten Reiches, 1933- 1941, eine Dokumentation* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007).
- Edvardson, Cordelia. *Burned Child Seeks the Fire: a Memoir* trans. by Joel Agee (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).
- Hecht, Ingeborg. "The Germans and the Nazis Were Not Synonyms for Me," in Cynthia Crane, ed., *Divided Lives, the Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 43-66.
- Heine, Heinrich. *Sämtliche Gedichte*, edited by Jonas Fränkel (Leipzig: Insel, 1925).
- Jochheim, Gernot. *Frauenprotest in der Rosenstrasse Berlin 1943: Berichte, Dokumente, Hintergründe* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2002).

- Klemperer, Victor. *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years*, vol. 1, trans. by Martin Chalmers (New York: Random House, 1988).
- Koehn, Ilse. *Mischling, Second Degree: My Childhood in Nazi Germany* (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1977).
- Krüger, Helmut. *Der Halbe Stern: Leben als deutsch-jüdischer "Mischling" im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Metropol, 1993).
- Kühn, Heinz R. *Mixed Blessings: An Almost Ordinary Life in Hitler's Germany* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988).
- Lixl-Purcell, Andreas, ed. *Women of Exile: German Jewish Autobiographies Since 1933* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1988).
- Paepcke, Lotte. *Ich wurde vergessen: Bericht einer Jüdin, die das Dritte Reich Überlebte* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1979).
- Pawell, Ursula. *My Child is Back!* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000).
- Richarz, Monika, ed. *Jewish Life in Germany: Memoirs from three Centuries*, trans. Stella P. Rosenfeld and Sidney Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).
- Richarz, Monika, ed. *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland: Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte, 1918-1945* vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1976).
- Sello, Maria. "1933-1945: Leben unter Hitler," in Arnulf H. Baumann, ed., *Ausgegrenzt: Schicksalswege "Nichtarischer" Christen in der Hitlerzeit* (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus GmbH, 1992), 12-45.
- Wetzel, Margot. "There Was No Part of Life Where You Weren't Asked Whether or Not You Were Jewish," in Cynthia Crane, ed., *Divided Lives, the Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 269-295.

Wilmschen, Ruth. "In the Nazi Years, I Acquired an Elephant Skin," in Cynthia Crane, ed., *Divided Lives, the Untold Stories of Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 133-168.

Wysbar, Eva. "A Mixed Marriage Beneath the Swastika," in Margarete Limberg and Hubert Rubsaat, eds., *Germans No More: Accounts of Everyday Life, 1933-1938*, trans. by Alan Nothnagle (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 87-94.

Wysbar, Eva. "*Hinaus aus Deutschland, irgendwohin...*" *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933* (Lengwil am Bodensee: Libelle Verlag, 2000).

Secondary Sources

Abrams, Alan. *Special Treatment: The Untold Story of Hitler's Third Race* (Secaucus, NJ: Lyle Stuart Inc., 1985).

Bauer, Yehuda. "Introduction," in David Bankier, ed., *Probing the Depths of Antisemitism: German Society and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1941* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 3-16.

Borut, Jacob. "Verjudung des Judentums: Was there a Zionist Subculture in Weimar Germany?" in Michael Brenner and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918-1933* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 92-114.

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

Büttner, Ursula. "The Persecution of Christian-Jewish Families in the Third Reich," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 34 (1989), 267-289.

Elon, Amos. *The Pity of it All: a Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1743-1933* (New York: Picador, 2002).

Freidenreich, Harriet Pass. *Female, Jewish and Educated: The Lives of Central European University Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

Freidenreich, Harriet Pass "Gender, Identity and Community: Jewish University Women in Germany and Austria" in Michael Brenner and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918-1933* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 154-175.

Gay, Peter. *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

Gillerman, Sharon. "The Crisis of the Jewish Family in Weimar Germany: Social Conditions and Cultural Representations," in Michael Brenner and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918-1933* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 176-199.

Heinemann, Elizabeth D. *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

Hilberg, Raul. *Victims, Perpetrators, Bystanders: the Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).

Kaplan, Marion A. "Friendship on the Margins: Jewish Social Relations in Imperial Germany," *Central European History* 34:4 (2001), 471-501.

Kaplan, Marion A. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Kaplan, Marion A. *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

- Kitchen, Martin. *A History of Modern Germany 1800-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006).
- Koonz, Claudia. *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).
- Lixl-Purcell, Andreas. "Memoirs as History," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 39 (1994), 227-238.
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul. *German Jews: A Dual Identity* (Newhaven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999).
- Meyer, Beate. "The Mixed Marriage: a Guarantee of Survival or a Reflection of German Society During the Nazi Regime?" in David Bankier, ed., *Probing the Depths of Antisemitism: German Society and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1941*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 54-77.
- Meyer, Beate. "*Jüdische Mischlinge*": *Rassenpolitik und Verfolgungserfahrung 1933-1945* (Hamburg: Doelling und Galitz, 1999).
- Mosse, W.E. *The German Jewish Economic Elite, 1820-1935* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
- Noakes, Jeremy. "The Development of Nazi Policy towards the German-Jewish 'Mischlinge,' 1933-1945," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 34 (1989), 291-354.
- Noakes, Jeremy and Geoffrey Pridham, eds. *Documents on Nazism 1919-1945* (New York: Viking Press, 1974).
- Owings, Alison. *Frauen: German women recall the Third Reich* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993).
- Pegelow-Kaplan, Thomas. "Contestation of Jewishness," *Central European History* 35:1 (2002), 195-221.

Schleunes, Karl S. *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy Toward German Jews, 1933-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

Stephenson, Jill. *Women in Nazi Germany* (London: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001).

Stibbe, Matthew. *Women in the Third Reich* (London: Arnold, 2003).

Stoltzfus, Nathan. *Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).