

Into Silence: Feminism Under the Third Reich

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The story of the German feminist movement is one of great advances and public involvement, until a Nazi government destroyed feminist aspirations and left women powerless and silent. With lies, propaganda, and fear, National Socialism deadened the voices of what once was a resounding, organized women's movement in Germany. German feminism, strong during the Weimar Republic of the 1920's, was suppressed by the new government headed by Adolf Hitler. By seducing a generation of young women away from feminist views and into the Nazi party (NSDAP) that promoted the image of the mother and the obedient wife, all that German feminists strived for and attained was lost. What was once a powerful force dissipated into Nazi regulated women's organizations, female involvement in resistance groups, or, mostly, a mix of complacency and anticipation. Although the Third Reich collapsed in 1945 with the end of World War II, its policies concerning women succeeded in dismantling the German women's movement for years after its implementation.

Prior to the rise of Hitler in 1933, German women had organized themselves to fight for rights and equality. The German feminist movement of the late nineteenth century was lead by a bourgeois women's organization, specifically the Bund Deutsches Frauenvereine (BDF).¹ Despite the middle-class leadership, German feminism was clearly connected with the Socialist movement through the radical Social Democratic Party (SPD), which was among the first political parties to advocate women's voting rights. Feminism was also boosted through external conditions, such as the invention of new appliances, which increased leisure time for middle-class women in the home, influencing them to look into education, social services, or other forms of public involvement. Besides unleashing themselves from a domestic environment, girls received a better education and tried to move into the male-dominated work world. Another shift towards involvement in the public sphere began with the onset of World War I. Women were temporarily recruited in the male dominated work force and became involved in worker's unions. A cry for citizenship with equal rights naturally developed. The cry was heard in 1918 when the creation of the new Weimar Republic granted voting rights to all citizens, female as well as male.² These events marked the first time in German history that women were given a significant part, through suffrage and governmental positions, in political life and therefore public life.

The pro-feminist mood quickly altered in Germany in 1933 when Hitler and the Nazi Party gained power, dominating politics and interfering in both private and public spheres. Wanting to control Germany, the Nazis also wanted to control each individual's life within it. In retrospect the fact that women were the primary attendees of Nazi meetings seems contradictory to what is typically understood about Nazism, a macho ideology. However, moods were changing which clashed with the Weimar government and what many saw as the deteriorating value system. The Weimar Republic struggled against post-war. economic hardships generating political instability. People felt insecure due to the chaos around them economically and politically, blaming 'new' social movements such as socialism and feminism. Many Germans were disgusted by what they viewed as the weakness of the Weimar democracy. These ideas led to apathy and a

mass feeling that the vote (and the rights previously won) was useless. Women, retreating from feminist goals, began seeking an organization that would respect the biological or stereotypical distinctions between men and women, emphasizing traditional values.³

The National Socialist party was a catalyst for creating this atmosphere, but also manipulated it to win over a population. Nazi propaganda is arguably one of the largest and most successful political campaigns in modern history. National Socialists engineered specific propaganda for women because they feared women would not follow Nazism, especially with the strength of the feminist and pacifist movements during the Weimar Republic.⁴ The headlines of female directed propaganda spoke of the “cult of motherhood” which emphasized women as mothers and wives, not only to their individual families, but more importantly to the nation: “motherly devotion equals devotion to the state.”⁵ Specifically, a woman’s ‘duty’ was the domestic realm through three main practices: forming racially healthy marriages (anyone of Jewish descent was considered racially impure), to care for their families, and to be patriotic, which included the promotion of Nazi ideas in their households. Nazi women’s organizations were in charge of the specific propaganda designed for women. The array of pamphlets, magazines, and exhibitions lacked the popularity, permeation and coercive ability of radio. Radio successfully connected the private sphere with the public sphere by allowing Nazi propaganda to infiltrate every German family at once.⁶ Excluding political news, radio shows were either cooking programs or concentrated on household concerns, such as chores.⁷ One popular wartime radio show’s topic was: “discussion on the morality of eating cake at a time of national need.”⁸ The words and manipulation of the Third Reich were inescapable.

This type of propaganda blocked women from involvement in the public sphere, and therefore excluded them from high positions in society. Although all Nazi propaganda took a traditional stance reflecting ‘family values,’ pre-1933 Nazi pronouncements envisioned women as the “backbone” of the new government. After Hitler was elected, however, the superiority of men was emphasized in campaigns.⁹ Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, stated that the National Socialism was “an entirely masculine affair befitting a masculine age” governed “by men, for men, and about men.”¹⁰ The effect of this propaganda was clear when, in 1933, 37 seats in the Parliament were available to women, but women refused to succeed these positions.¹¹ Party disdain focused upon policies restricting women from work and economic equality. Flowing from this rhetoric was great incentive for women to quit their positions in the work force to focus on the home. Many women disagreed with the attempts to push them out of the work force, yet public protests were rarely recorded. In addition to the hostile work environment for women, in 1933 all married women were dismissed from civil and public service jobs. Although National Socialist policies continued to discourage women from the work force, they never completely eliminated their participation. Women became essential workers in the factory when Hitler began drafting troops in 1936 in preparation for a new war.¹² The great irony of Nazi policy was that women were desperately necessary to a system that alienated them by law.¹³

Despite the need for female labor in the factories, Nazi propaganda focused upon specific and horrifying list of population policies to increase the German birthrate. Bonuses and loans were given for couples that were promoting the Aryan race through

'good' breeding.¹⁴ All birth control clinics and contraceptive sales were outlawed. This included any conversation held or advice given about birth control methods. Then began a heavy campaign against sexual diseases and the banning of abortion.¹⁵ Propaganda advocating reproduction was aimed at men as well as women, leading to a high divorce rate among older women. New divorce laws encouraged the acceptability of a man abandoning his wife if she reached menopause to marry a young, virile woman.¹⁶ If a woman could not reproduce she was no longer a valuable citizen as stated by a main Nazi policy: "women who have passed child-bearing age are no further interest to the Nazi State"¹⁷ Alimony was rare, for if a woman could find work she could theoretically support herself without assistance from her ex-husband. The new divorce laws forced divorced women into the Nazi factory, another ploy to support the Third Reich.¹⁸ The value of a woman through her reproductive capabilities was exemplified in the Mother's Day celebration of 1939. Women were awarded medals according to the number of children they produced. The orator, Dr. Wilhelm Fricks, thanked Hitler for instilling the future of Germany not "on the material success of the individual . . . but on the wealth of healthy children." Fricks labeled those who did not reproduce profusely (four children were considered merely respectable) "anti-social."¹⁹

However, only certain members of the populous were legally allowed to reproduce. This was based on Hitler's definitions of the Aryan race and viciously excluded those of Jewish descent. The Third Reich spoke often of the "suitable" section of the population who was deemed worthy to be involved in the Nazi family and those who were not, or "unsuitable," and were sterilized. Of all sterilized, 2/3 were females. The fact that 90 percent of those sterilized died from complications demonstrates the power of bigotry. Women were also very active in these policies, as will be discussed later. These included female prison guards, female advisors who chose those to be sterilized, and activists in the Nazi party.²⁰ It is important to understand that the women were not free from racism and many were active members in the Nazi organizations.

Nazis quickly realized that to gain the support of women policies must be designed to make women feel active and important in the movement. The National Socialist Women's League (NSF) was formed soon after the establishment of the Nazi government. Gertrude Scholtz-Klink, a leader of the NSF, merged local National Socialist women's groups and made it the goal of the organization to educate women in national and political tasks.²¹ This was in accordance with the new policy of Gleichgeschaltet, originating from the German word Gleichschaltung, meaning "coordinated," forcing all women's organizations, ranging from radical to moderate feminist groups, into the NSF.²² By 1938, all 320,000 women that had joined were active members of the Nazi party.²³ The question arises to the specific implications of Gleichgeschaltet. The rest of this paper will elaborate on the women who did support the Nazi government through NSF and its organizations, how the feminist movement was specifically exiled, and the women who found avenues of resistance.

The rule for feminists and activist women became conform or vanish. There existed many offsprings of the larger entity of the NSF, each constructed for a specific purpose to manipulate the conversion of all German women to Nazism. The goals of some groups included spying on possible rebellious women and exposing them to the Reich.²⁴ Some feminists supported National Socialism from its onset because it was anti-liberal (as detailed later with the BDF) but also because of its racist and severe nationalistic views.

Nazi organizations opened up new venues for women to explore. At first, women joined as assistants to their husbands, sons, or fathers. They sewed, cooked, made uniforms, and other types of stereotypical women's work.²⁵ With the formation of the NSF women were allowed some leeway in interpretation of policies and creation of NSF regulations. They demonstrated their economic significance by raising funds. The power of discourse through marches in rallies, in organization meetings, on the soapbox, and through propaganda gained women access to the public sphere.²⁶ These ideas attracted women from all classes, but despite the rhetoric otherwise, most female members were middle class because they had the time to dedicate to the NSF.²⁷ Also, even with the initial female support for the Third Reich, paranoia ran rampant. The strength of feminism in the Weimar Republic was not forgotten, and feminism was therefore seen not only as contrary to Nazi patriarchal values but also as a threat to the regime.²⁸

The conception of women as more rebellious than men influenced the formation of the power structure of the NSF. Therefore, Nazi women's groups possessed minimal power, even when they exhibited extreme loyalty. The first Nazi women organizations formed on July 6, 1931, even before Hitler was appointed Chancellor. At first, Nazis tried to utilize such women's leagues, such as the German Women's Order (DFO). DFO head, Elizabeth Zander, petitioned Hitler in January 1928 to become a part of NSDAP. Zander believed women had a distinct role in education against Jewish influence and overall social welfare of the German nation. After the DFO was adopted into the NSDAP, it was dissolved in 1931 to create the NSF out of disillusionment with Zander. The NSF began under male domination through the power of Gregor Stasser. Hand picked from the NSDAP, he co-organized and was the first leader of the NSF.²⁹ In this early period (1931-33), the NSF members spoke frequently against the male-dominated political structure. These early female leaders below Stasser advocated for the spread of the cult of motherhood and for it to be more than "merely lip service."³⁰ NSF's openness to radical ideas ended with Stasser's resignation. Replaced by Scholtz-Klink, she was ordered to rid the NSF of its internal, mainly feminist conflicts in 1933-34.³¹ Scholtz-Klink instituted a powerful sub-group, the German Worker's Enterprise (DFW), which contained a plethora of smaller women's groups, under direct control of the NSF from 1934-1945.³²

As the leader of the NSF and the most powerful woman with a political position in Nazi society, Scholtz-Klink directly affected the Nazi women's organizations and their goals. She promoted woman's education and even encouraged female universities. Much of the DFW concerned itself with working women and their education.³³ The perfect summarization of Scholtz-Klink's, and the NSF's, ideology roots itself in National Socialist politics: "Germans First, Women Second."³⁴ One example of a NSF produced organization is the Reichsmutterdienst (RMD; National Mother's Service). Created in 1934, the RMD promoted racial awareness for women when choosing a husband. It offered educational classes on raising children and handling housework.³⁵ However, Scholtz-Klink's popularity declined with the implementation of the BDM in July 1932. The Third Reich wanted to secure the next generation of women. The organization aimed to teach girls to be good future mothers and educated them on Nazi policies. The BDM allowed girls to organize and lead groups of their peers. When a girl finished schooling, she was immediately sent as a duty-girl to a family with three or more children. She learned domestic skills through six months of application.

Young mothers liked the BDM because they did ease the workload, but much resistance also came from women who saw the organization as a violation of their traditional right to educate their daughters.³⁶ Backlash was aimed towards Scholtz-Klink with a gradual loss of authority due to her loss in popularity in 1934.³⁷ When the NSF was disbanded, Scholtz-Klink was discredited and disappeared from public life, just like radical feminists were forced to do under Gleichgeschaltet.³⁸ After the German defeat in World War II in May 1945, the NSDAP ended, and Scholtz-Klink hid herself in France. When found, she was deemed insignificant in the Nazi political structure even though she was head of organizing half the population. Her only punishment was to be banned from public office and involvement in politics. Scholtz-Klink, disappointed with the woman's organizations, believed them ineffectual because men commanded them.³⁹

The NSF lacked political power compared to other Nazi organizations. First of all male leaders from the NSDAP constantly controlled it. Scholtz-Klink, merely a figurehead to the Nazi leadership, had to report to them. However, the NSF has never been directly linked to the mass genocide or concentration camps. Rather, the NSF focused on spreading the ideas of racial purity, not enacting them. Secondly, the Third Reich promoted policies that the NSF objected to by principle, but refused to intervene in their creation. For example, from 1935-36 child allowances were distributed, not to mothers, but to fathers. The NSF was ineffective in establishing 'wives' into the policy.⁴⁰ Thirdly, most members of the NSF were inactive, paying dues but not actively participating in the organizations programs to educate mothers and wives. This was largely due to the fact that few favored the idea of a women organization. Another reason women did not join the NSF was their attachment to religion over nationalistic concerns. Nazism was in direct opposition to Catholic and Protestant beliefs, asking members of those churches to devote themselves to Hitler over god.⁴¹ With low membership and an even lower rate of activism, the NSF proved to be less valuable to the Nazi schema than first hoped.

If women were not involved in the NSF, what happened to the profound feminist activism that existed before Nazism? National Socialism manipulated women's movements and, after gaining control over them, dismantled them during Gleichgeschaltet. Nazism ushered in an era specifying the "criminalization" of women's movements.⁴² To eliminate the enemy and to promote the idea of a superior race, women's emancipation was denounced as a Jewish influence and, therefore, corruptive.⁴³ The dissolution of the BDF, a German feminist organization, serves as a good illustration for the disappearances of the active, organized, feminist movement after 1933. At its height during the Weimar Republic, the BDF was involved in schooling for girls, admission into universities for females, national suffrage, and a small percent of women were in positions of power politically.⁴⁴ Gertrude Baumer, the president of the BDF, was an example of a politically active woman. She was a delegate to the League of Nations during the Weimar Republic and in 1919 she was elected to the National Assembly.⁴⁵ In 1933 Baumer was dismissed from office along with other women in high positions. From 1935 to 1937 her writings were censored. Her only outlet for her feminist ideas was suffocated, as were the women's movements in general. Following the German coordination, Nazi groups infiltrated the BDF's subsidiaries. By May 1934, the BDF lost its power and influence, voluntarily dissolving itself. This was the only way in which Baumer could save her organization from becoming a puppet of the Nazi

Regime. Baumer gained no important positions and disappeared completely from the public eye.⁴⁶

The BDF's extinction symbolizes the "anti-climatic end" that Nazis brought upon the organized feminist movement in Germany in the mid 1930's.⁴⁷ Complacency was the theme for most women and women's groups who had no choice but to disband or to be consumed into the National Socialist party during Gleichgeschaltet. When Hitler first appeared on the political scene, feminists, especially Gertrude Baumer, viewed him as no threat to their organizations. Though the Third Reich's policies laid the final blow to the movements, the task was easier than expected because of the fierce competition and disagreement between the radical groups, such as Marxist and Socialist groups like the SPD, and the moderate groups, the relational feminists such as the BDF. This type of competition flows throughout feminist history, but was particularly damaging in the case of Germany in the early twentieth century. The radical feminists believed the moderate feminists were conceding to the Weimar Republic and losing touch with the goals of feminism because they focused on education, not full equality. The BDF's membership was also exclusive to professionals and women workers, in other words, women already involved in the public sphere.⁴⁸ Another problem with the BDF specifically was their lack of connection to the younger generations. Young feminists chose to be in the radical movements or supported National Socialism.

All of these internal and external clashes made it easier for the National Socialists to crush the feminist movement, especially the moderate feminists who were estranged from the radical generation that the National Socialists were attracting into their framework. Nazi propaganda manipulated rumors against the feminist organizations, turning them on each other. They accused the BDF of selfishness because of their membership policies and ideological focus on education and workingwomen. They ridiculed their exclusive membership for ignoring the plight of all classes. They also used the problems between sects to promote their destruction. Nazis first categorized radical feminists less dangerous than moderate feminists because of their deficiency in organization and their lack of association with a specific party. Even in light of this, radical movements were banned to suppress future rebellions and condemned through propaganda and speeches. The NSDAP soon realized how feminism bred with politics, making the KPD (Marxist) and SPD (socialist) the first groups, due to their involvement with feminism, terminated. The moderate feminists, uplifted by this occurrence, wrote to Hitler thanking him for disbanding the radicals and ensuring their support.⁴⁹ Many feminist groups perceived Hitler as harmless (even helpful) because he first attacked their enemies.

With no organizations that were not Nazi related, and without strong leaders, the organized feminist movement that was such a force in the Weimar Republic dissipated. Most women were occupied with work and home responsibilities that the only option of involvement in the public sphere remained the NSF. There did exist, however, a minority who refused to join the NSF or NSDAP or listen to its propaganda. Female involvement was just as important in the rebellions against Nazism as it was in the establishment of Nazism through women's initial support of Hitler. In addition to this active resistance, women were arrested or killed as vengeance against their husband or father who perpetrated crimes against the Third Reich. The most effective tool, specifically for women, lay in the power of speech or gossip. For example, on December 12, 1934 Munich, Germany instituted the Heimtuck Egesetz or Law Against Malicious Gossip.

Violating censorship laws became the dominant infraction by women. Also, women were the usual violators of gossip laws.⁵⁰ Violation of laws carried a heavy price from death to imprisonment. Anyone even suspected of subverting the Nazi Regime, especially educators or their students, were subsequently fired or dismissed from school.⁵¹

Since there are few written documents about group resistance, historians usually equate female participation to that of male. No specific female resistance group existed; women partook in male-formed groups. These resistances contained little structure and less organization than previous women's movements.⁵² These small instances of insubordination were either unorganized or organized. Most were unorganized, sneaking and hiding Jews or the refusal by many housewives to teach their children Nazi ideas. The organized usually transmitted Communist ideas or were underground remnants of the KPD. The tragedy and continual losses in World War II prompted upper class and military members to form organized resistance groups in July 1944.⁵³ Before 1944, strict policies against rebellion shaped an underground, non-active resistance based on an exchange of anti-Nazi ideas or the "underground front," referencing the fronts of W.W.II.⁵⁴ The breeding ground for rebellion was the university; places valuing knowledge promoted an environment that questioned authority. These groups grew of disenchantment with the new Nazi Regime, but most were a form of youth rebellion.⁵⁵ However, a six-month period of hard labor was required before anyone could enter a university. This caused many women to reject higher education and choose motherhood.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, women who entered universities often attained and spread anti-Nazi ideas. Though these resistance groups cannot be characterized as feminists specifically, they contain many women who spoke out against Hitler and his fascism with lingering notions of women's rights.

One of the bravest, yet most tragic, groups was the White Rose Student Group in Munich. Started by Sophia Scholl and her brother Hans in 1942, the group was short-lived but influential. The group rooted itself in pamphlet distribution and public vandalism. Members degraded swastikas and painted anti-Hitler rhetoric such as "Hitler the Mass Murderer" or "Down with Hitler."⁵⁷ The White Rose pamphlets trickled through universities, holding the readers responsible to spread their ideas. In the third of four of the "Leaflets of White Rose" encourage passive forms of resistance against all things National Socialist. White Rose advocated various types of sabotage against property, propaganda, and the refusal of support to Nazi organization either by participation or economic support. Men and women are equated as citizens who have the right to freedom and a moral, just government: "Every individual human being has a claim to a useful and just state, a state which secures freedom of the individual . . . but our present 'state' is a dictatorship of evil."⁵⁸ White Rose focuses on all German people, because at this time women were not the only members of society being oppressed. White Rose saw a need for all people to be equal, women included, and though resistance groups like White Rose were not specifically feminist, they used universal rhetoric including freedom and equality. Women were seen as a natural part of humankind and were accepted by White Rose as needing the freedoms to which they believed humanity was entitled to.

The White Rose society, and universities in general, were known as hot spots for subversive activity. To prevent a much-feared woman's rebellion, all girls who exhibited

“bluestocking” values were immediately and unquestionably removed from university life.⁵⁹ Many people, like Paul Giesler, believed that a woman with an education was inherently rebellious. Giesler, a Nazi official and propagandist, toured universities speaking against the high educational environment for women. As a result of his opinions many male and female students walked out during his speech.⁶⁰ Occurrences like this proved students’ dedication to education and their overall solidarity. This sense of community frightened the Nazi regime. Therefore university education, including female education, was allowed but not encouraged. After hearing of the strident walkouts, White Rose leaders believed a great revolution was at hand. Unfortunately, walkouts became the high point of university resistance only to be followed by a sharp downfall. White Rose members handed out pamphlets during the day, destroying their safety that was found through their secrecy. Without the power of secrecy, the Nazi government quickly disposed of the group. As a rule, punishment came fast and cruel for those who dared to fight against Hitler. On February 22, 1943 all of the White Rose members were imprisoned or expelled. Sophia and Hans Scholl were quietly executed while most of the other active members served one year in jail.⁶¹

Even after her death, Scholl’s work sent waves throughout Germany. Resistance continued in Munich when ‘action Scholl’ began in April 1943. The White Rose writings were distributed and eventually spread to Frankfurt by November 1943. University groups all over Germany received their pamphlets. University students in Hamburg also incorporated the Scholl’s ideas into their underground discussion forum. They discussed a range of political topics from Marxism to literature. Greta Rothe, a radical member of the Hamburg Group, became known for her “Against Hitler and the War” pamphlet. Rothe exemplifies one of many women who were involved in spreading revolutionary ideas and anti-propagandist writings. Another resistance group involving women were the Edelweiss Pirates. More confrontational and actively resistant, the group harassed the Gestapo, vandalized Nazi buildings, and broke laws.⁶² Possibly misinterpreted as a youth rebellion, the Pirates lacked organization, but were one of the rare groups that were openly defiant against the Nazis. From White Rose to the Edelweiss Pirates, most resistance groups incorporated a rebellious youth and the transferring of ideas either through property violence, discussion, or pamphlets.

Resistance among the older generations of women lacked the desire and passion of these younger groups. Most women decided to wait for the Nazi Regime to end rather than trying to overthrow it. Some old liberal feminists worked with international organizations, especially pacifistic groups, such as the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) when World War II began.⁶³ Others, like Helen Stocker, an advocate of women’s reproductive rights, left the country soon after Hitler came to power so as not to live under the oppressive nature of Nazism. Lida Gustava Heymann and Anita Augspurg refused to come back to Germany from vacationing in Italy in 1933. They decided to wait until the Nazis fell, expecting, like most feminists in the Weimar Republic, that Hitler’s rule would be a short, ineffectual phase. Socialist and Communist feminists had no outlet for their political views. They optimistically assumed a revolution would occur against Hitler, leading most to wait in silence.⁶⁴

If not joining the youth rebellion, leaving Germany, or playing the waiting game, women activists had no choice but cooperate within the Nazi organizations. Not all of these women mindlessly followed propaganda; a few women subverted the rules through

cooperation. The experience of Kathe Kollwitz, a talented German artist, was a great example of this form of resistance. Kollwitz joined the National Socialist Writer's and Artist's Union. This guild became the only way in which German artists could display their work during the 1930's to 1940's. In 1942, critics throughout Europe praised Kollwitz's art. However, German officials called her work a "refusal to adapt to Nazism" because she did not promote Nazi images, such as the swastika or domesticated women. She lost government approval, but painted the subjects she wanted to, without the political considerations which other artists felt necessary to emulate in their work.⁶⁵

One member of the German women's movement found corruption in National Socialism from its introduction. Katherine Thomas published a book in 1943 depicting the woman's side of Nazi government. She focused on the changes in the women's movements, the lies behind the propaganda, and the devastating effects of the war on women. The war represented the lie of security and peace Nazism initially promoted, disenchanting some from its ranks. Thomas continually advocated an acceptance of responsibility by German women of their role in the Third Reich. She argued that without the support of women, Nazism would fail. For this reason, Thomas saw revolution as possible only by those who knew and once supported Hitler. Playing on Nazi paranoia, she hoped for another female-headed revolution, like the one in 1918. She published her book in America to ask the assistance of the Allies to instigate this upheaval. To her, the only way for women to defeat Nazism was to inform them of political and war news through pamphlets and Allied radio broadcasts.⁶⁶ Katherine Thomas's ideas contained validity, for when the war ended so did the National Socialist government. Unfortunately women were not leaders in the end, nor was he underground resistance enough.

The effect of women on Nazism is best categorized as a paradox. Women were a vital part to the resistance that occurred in Germany, but the resistance itself lacked the influence of the earlier revolution. This was most likely due to the war, which lowered morale and exhausted the physical, mental, and emotional capacities of the population. Without confidence and lacking strength, women chose not to choose. Women who sided against fascism anticipated rather than acted for revolution. Valued for their courage, resistant women were unusual. The norm in Nazi society was a non-activist female, involved neither in the resistance nor in the NSF. Their lack of support of National Socialism hurt Hitler, being one of the many factors leading to his demise. Ironically, women were essential to the initial party's success. The war, started to make the world Hitler's playground, drained the whole country of Germany, women and men, Nazi and anti-Nazi, of vitality. Despite all of this, women did have a place in 1930's and 1940's Germany, but feminism did not. Feminism as defined before 1933 ceased to exist. Instead, women's concerns were shoved behind the legacy of Nazism for decades. The exclusion of feminist activist after the Third Reich fell provides a disturbing realization of the endurance of Hitler's ideas, even after his death. The greatest paradox of all is though the Nazi regime failed as a government, it succeeded for generations in silencing German women and, therefore, putting a permanent hole into the feminist movement.

Notes

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- 2Eva Kolinsky, *Women in Contemporary Germany: Life, Work, and Politics* (Oxford: Berg, 1989), pp. 8-10.
- 3Kolinsky, p. 11.
- 4Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, ed., *A History of Women: in the West* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1994), p. 154.
- 5Abrams and Harvey, p. 203.
- 6Abrams and Harvey, pp. 190-191, 196, 198, 193.
- 7Abrams and Harvey, p. 198, 194.
- 8Abrams and Harvey, p. 200.
- 9 Katherine Thomas, *Women in Nazi Germany* (AMS Press: New York, 1943), p.30.
- 10Abrams and Harvey, pp. 190,189.
- 11Thomas, p. 29.
- 12Kolinsky, p. 20.
- 13Abrams and Harvey, p. 199.
- 14Kolinsky, p. 20.
- 15Thomas, p. 59.
- 16Tony Christen, "Women Without Hope," *The Nation* vol. 149 (2 Dec. 1939), p. 600
- 17Thomas, p. 35.
- 18Christen, p. 600.
- 19 "Mothers' Day in Hitler's Reich," *Christian Century* vol. 201 (31 May 1939), pp. 692-693.
- 20Duby and Harvey, pp. 150, 154, 157.
- 21Duby and Perrot, p. 170.
- 22Abrams and Harvey, p. 191.
- 23Duby and Perrot, p. 171.
- 24Thomas, p. 40.
- 25Jill Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women* (London: Barnes & Noble 1981), p. 13, 14.
- 26Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, The Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), p. 5.
- 27Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, p. 171.
- 28Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, pp. 13,32.
- 29Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, pp. 50, 29, 31, 39, 97.
- 30Duby and Perrot, pp. 171-172.
- 31Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, pp. 67, 97.
- 32Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, pp. 170, 226.
- 33Duby and Perrot, p. 171.
- 34Duby and Perrot, p. 172.
- 35Abrams and Harvey, p. 192.
- 36Christen, pp. 598-599.
- 37Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, p. 15.
- 38Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society* (Great Britain: Barnes & Noble, 1975), p. 194.
- 39Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, pp. 214-215.

- 40Duby and Perrot, p. 175.
- 41Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, p.18.
- 42Kolinsky, p. 11.
- 43Duby and Perrot, p. 150.
- 44Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, pp. 25-26.
- 45Kolinsky, pp. 9-10.
- 46Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, pp. 23, 30, 194.
- 47Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, p. 133.
- 48Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, pp. 27, 21, 25-26.
- 49Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, pp. 25, 28-29.
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- 52Duby and Perrot, p. 175.
- 53Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan, ed, *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimer and Nazi Germany*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), p. 349.
- 54Thomas, p. 98.
- 55Koonz, pp. 316, 311.
- 56Christen, p. 598.
- 57 Lisa Di Caprio and Merry E. Wiesner, *Lives and Voices* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Comp., 2000), p. 527.
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- 60Jacques R. Pauwels, *Women, Nazis, and Universities: Female University Students in the Third Reich 1933-1945* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 127.
- 61Pauwels, pp. 127-128.
- 62Koonz, pp. 129, 128, 311.
- 63Stephenson, *The Nazi Organization of Women*, p. 171.
- 64Koonz, pp. 317-318, 314.
- 65Koonz, p. 317.
- 66Thomas, pp. 98-101.