CONTESTED FEMININITIES: REPRESENTATIONS OF MODERN WOMEN IN THE GERMAN ILLUSTRATED PRESS, 1920 – 1945

Jennifer M. Lynn

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History

Chapel Hill
2012

Approved by:
Dr. Karen Hagemann
Dr. Joanne Hershfield
Dr. Konrad H. Jarausch
Dr. Claudia Koonz
Dr. Donald Reid
Abstract

JENNIFER M. LYNN: Contested Femininities: Representations of Modern Women in the German Illustrated Press, 1920 – 1945
(Under the direction of Karen Hagemann)

Following World War I, the Neue Frau (New Woman) emerged as a mass-consumer image within the illustrated press and other forms of mass media including novels, movies and advertisements. However, this widely debated and enduring icon of Weimar Modernity was only one variant of a wide range of competing images of the Modern Woman in the Weimar Republic. Various groups modified and adapted the image of the Modern Woman according to their political and social goals. Thus far, most scholars have concentrated on the mass-consumer orientated image of the New Woman without acknowledging the tensions and contestation between the multiple versions of the Modern Woman in the broad and changing political spectrum of Weimar Germany. No study has examined the long-term changes and continuities, the ambiguities and paradoxes in the public discourse on the Modern Woman from the Weimar Republic through World War II. In this study, the concept of the Neue Frau defines the iconographical, commercialized representation of female modernity during the Weimar Republic, which has thus far been deemed the quintessential expression of “modernity.” However, the concept of the “Modern Woman,” in a broader context reveals that competing visual and textual interpretations of modernity were not only widespread in Weimar, but extended into the Third Reich. Focusing on visual images, and their relation to textual referents, illustrates how the meaning of modernity was flexible and dependent upon different visions of the future.
This project explores the development of the visual and textual representations of the Modern Woman and their nuanced differences in a wide range of illustrated magazines produced between the 1920 and 1945. I question the relatively coherent depiction of the image of female modernity in most scholarship and argue that throughout the twentieth century images of the Modern Woman were highly disputed ambivalent because they were an important marker of the changing constructions of modernity. By concentrating on visual and textual representations, I reveal the ways in which visual, in combination with textual representations, played a significant role in imagining and negotiating the limits and possibilities for women in all aspects of society.
Acknowledgements

I am indebted to numerous individuals and institutions that made this dissertation possible. I wish to thank all those who have supported me throughout the process of graduate school, the completion of this dissertation and my first year at Montana State University.

Generous funding from the “Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies” through the Freie Universität as well as Foreign Language Area Studies program through the University of North Carolina helped make this dissertation possible. I am grateful for the staff at the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, as well as the knowledgeable library personnel at UNC and Montana State University Billings who assisted with various parts of my research.

I now fully appreciate the term Doktormutter, as my advisor Karen Hagemann continues to provide intellectual encouragement, assistance and advice. Her steady stream of support and words of encouragement when I most needed them (alongside delicious home cooked meals) made me feel at home in Chapel Hill and sustained me throughout this process. This dissertation would not have been possible without her guidance.

I would like to thank Konrad Jarausch, Claudia Koonz, Joanne Hershfield and Don Reid for their thoughtful comments and insightful questions at various stages of this project. Both Konrad Jarausch and Don Reid wrote numerous letters of recommendation for a number of grants and fellowships and always offered kind words and perceptive observations.
Members of the Working Group on Modern Germany History in Chapel Hill, including Ali Rodriguez, Friederike Bruehoefener, Marina Jones and Sarah Summers proposed suggestions, offered comments and raised interesting questions related to different parts of this dissertation. Both current and former UNC graduate students, including Waitman Beorn, George Gerolimatos, Andrew Haeberlin, Brad Proctor, John Robertson and Julia Osman provided a wonderful support network while in Chapel Hill. During my stay in Berlin, I benefited from the friendship and support of Willeke Sandler and members of our “working group,” as well as the friendship of Stephan Huhn & Co. whose humor, kindness and generosity helped me navigate my research year in Berlin.

I would like to warmly thank my colleagues in the department of history at Montana State University, Matthew Redinger, Keith Edgerton, Tom Rust and Brian Kmec for their camaraderie, understanding and words of encouragement while traversing my first year of teaching and professional obligations alongside finishing this dissertation. Special mention must be made to Lenette Kosovich whose great company and excellent food helped me to manage this past year.

My parents, Richard and Lorrie Lynn and my siblings Tyrel, Brandon and Jessica have cheered me on and kept me grounded. Deborah and Harry Bryan deserve thanks for showing me the finest southern hospitality in North Carolina and their ongoing support. My dearest friend Rebecca G. Weed has never failed to lift my spirits or calm my nerves. Although thousands of miles away during most of my graduate education, she helped me sustain momentum and deserves credit for helping me endure the challenging parts of this journey and celebrating each and every victory along the way. Finally, Joseph Bryan, my closest companion, has my deepest gratitude for his ongoing intellectual and personal support. Throughout this process, I have benefited from his care, insightful observations, sharp humor and unwavering confidence.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**List of Figures** ........................................................................................................................................... xii

**Introduction** .................................................................................................................................................. 1

1. Historiography ........................................................................................................................................... 6
2. Theory, Methodology and Sources ........................................................................................................... 18
3. Organization............................................................................................................................................... 27


1. Technological Change and the Establishing of the Primacy of the Image ................................................. 32
2. The Transformation of the Media Market, New Reading Publics and Mass Culture ......................................................... 39
3. The Rise of the Illustrated Magazine ...................................................................................................... 47
   3.1 The Commercial Press: The *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* ................................................................. 47
   3.2 The Communist Press: The *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* and *Weg der Frau* ....... 52
   3.3 The Social Democratic Press: *Frauenwelt* ..................................................................................... 58
   3.4 The Nazi Press: *Illustrierte Beobachter* and *N.S. Frauenwarte* ................................. 61

**Part II: Contested Representations of the “New Woman” in the Illustrated Press of the Weimar Republic** ......................................................................................................................................................... 67

1. Introduction: The Postwar Gender Order and the “Battle between the Sexes” ...... 69
2. Images of Paid and Unpaid Work as a Marker of Female Modernity .......................... 74
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Defining the Gender Division of Labor: Images of Women in Paid Work</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Perception of Female Work in Shops and Offices</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depictions of Female Work in the Industries and Beyond</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Representations of the Rationalized Housewife and Female Consumer</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising New Technology and “Efficient” Housework</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and Educating Female Consumers</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Embattled Representations of the Body of the “New Woman”:</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Representing Birth Control and Abortion</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ 281, Birth Control and the Rationalization of Reproduction</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Female Prostitution</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Images of the Female Body in Motion</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Female Health and Bodily Discipline</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocating the Right Sport for Women</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Fashion Images and the “New Woman”</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming the New Erotic Female Body through Advertisement</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rationalization of Fashion and Images of the “Practical” Modern Woman</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrasting the “Old” and “New” in Fashion</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fear of a “Masculinization” of Women</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Antisemitism and “Degenerate Femininity” in the Right Wing Press</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fear of Female Emancipation: The Backlash Against the New Woman</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depictions of Degenerate Femininity</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part III: Ambiguous Images of the Modern “German” Woman in the Illustrated Press of the Third Reich

1. Introduction: The Multiplicity of Images of the “German Woman” between 1933 and 1945

2. Representations of Paid and Unpaid Female Work in the Family, Household and Workforce

viii
2.1 Re-Defining Appropriate Spaces of “Female” Work in the Press ...............240

Attempts to De-eroticize the Images of the Female White Collar Worker ..........249

2.2 Making “German” Mothers and Housewives: Visualizing Marriage and Family ..........................................................261

The Right Kind of Mother: Images of Aryan Motherhood ................................261

Work, then Family: Visualizing Advice for Young Women ............................269

2.3 Changing Representations of Female Work during “Total War” .................276

Women in Trousers: Propagating Female “War Work” ..................................278

Girls in Uniform: Images of Female Wehrmacht Auxiliaries ..............................285

3. Images of the Body of the Modern “German” Woman ......................................303

3.1 Dressing and Buying “German”: Depictions of Fashion and Consumption ...307

Fashionable and Feminine: Propagating German Style ...................................308

Advising Female Consumers ..............................................................................321

Fantasies of Fashion and Directions for Consumption during World War II ....332

3.2 Dreams for Men and Ideals for Women: Images of Female Athletes, Models and Entertainers ........................................................................340

Shaping a “Graceful” Body: Images of Female Athletes .....................................341

Movies Stars and Models: Advertising Entertainment in the Third Reich ........353

Distraction and Diversion: Images of Modern Women during World War II ......363

Conclusion: Changes and Continuities in the Visual and Textual Images of Female Modernity ..........................................................375

1. The Modern Women in Paid and Unpaid Work ..............................................379

2. Representation of the Modern Female Body .................................................386

3. Fashion, Models and Stars and the Gender Order ........................................389

4. Epilogue: A Second Post-war, Two German States and the Continuation of the Illustrated Press ...........................................................................394
Bibliography

1. Newspapers and Magazines ................................................................. 397
1.2 Other Printed Primary Sources ........................................................... 397
2. Secondary Sources ............................................................................... 398
LIST OF FIGURES

PART II:

Figure 1. “Good looks despite a stressful job,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung
June 2, 1929 81

Figure 2. “Premier Stockings, Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung,” December 21, 1924 82

Figure 3. “A headache inducing treatment,” Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung,
December 17, 1928. 85

Figure 4. “Social Cosmetics,” Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, December 21, 1924 86

Figure 5. “The Dream Fabric of the White Collar Worker,” Arbeiter Illustrierte
Zeitung, July 1932 92

Figure 6. “One of us? By no means,” Der Weg der Frau, January 1933 94

Figure 7. “Hello, I am looking for work,” Der Weg der Frau, December 1931 97

Figure 8. “An Ideal Woman’s Career,” Frauenwelt, February 11, 1928 103

Figure 9. “Women also seize the sky,” Der Weg der Frau, November 1931 105

Figure 10. “Female electrician in the Soviet Union,” Der Weg der Frau, 1931 106

Figure 11. “The Working Housewife,” Der Weg der Frau, 1931 107

Figure 12. “Far away from paradise,” Illustrierte Beobachter, February 18, 1931 109

Figure 13. “The same wages as men,” Der Weg der Frau, March 1932 111

Figure 14. “New from Old,” Frauenwelt, November 18, 1926 117

Figure 15. “The Home of Our Time,” Frauenwelt, October 3, 1931 119

Figure 16. “Practical – but Unaffordable,” Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, April 4,
1928 122
Figure 17. “Beautiful Hair – Younger Looks,” IB, September 5, 1931

Figure 18. “Another one?” Der Weg der Frau, 1931

Figure 19. “Prostitution,” Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, October 5, 1927

Figure 20. “Rationalized Housework,” Frauenwelt, August 1930

Figure 21. “The Rationalized Body,” Der Weg der Frau, July 1932

Figure 22. “Bicycling,” Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, November 2, 1927

Figure 23. “The ‘correct’ way to read,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, May 12, 1927

Figure 24. “Instructional Views for your Demeanor,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, October 18, 1927

Figure 25. “The Modern Female Athlete,” Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, October 24, 1931

Figure 26. “The ABC’s of Jiu-Jitsu,” Der Weg der Frau, March 1932

Figure 27. “Gymnastics,” Frauenwelt, December 1928

Figure 28. “American Amazonians,” Illustrierte Beobachter, September 13, 1930

Figure 29. “Beauty is something different,” Illustrierte Beobachter, July 12, 1930

Figure 30. “I buy everything at Max Kuhl,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, April 20, 1924

Figure 31. “Perfume of phenomenal power,” BIZ, August 24, 1924

Figure 32. “Modern Summer Dresses,” Frauenwelt, May 17, 1930

Figure 33. “Working Clothes from Practical Tweed,” Frauenwelt, November 1, 1930

Figure 34. “Clothes for Work,” Frauenwelt, July 26, 1930

Figure 35. “The Fashion of ‘the lady’,” AIZ, October 27, 1927

Figure 36. “What Should I Wear?” Der Weg der Frau, August 1931

Figure 37. “Practical Street Suits,” Illustrierte Beobachter, March 19, 1932
Figure 38. “The Struggle Against Crazy Fashion,” IB, January 1, 1930

Figure 39. “The Transformation of Women’s Fashion,” BIZ, September 6, 1925.

Figure 40. “Shoes made out of alligator,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, January 1, 1925

Figure 41. “Against the Masculinization of Women,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, March 29, 1925

Figure 42. “Fräulein Mia,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, December 18, 1927

Figure 43. “The Flashlight of the Present,” Illustrierte Beobachter, May 31, 1930

Figure 44. “The Woman is a model,” Illustrierte Beobachter, May 31, 1930

Figure 45. “Blond girls – watch out,” Illustrierte Beobachter, November 1, 1930

Figure 46. “Intimate overtime,” Illustrierte Beobachter, November 1, 1930

PART III:

Figure 1. “The Face of the Working Woman,” Frauenwarte, November 1935

Figure 2. “The Face of the Working Woman 2,” Frauenwarte, November 1935

Figure 3. “Ideal Work Space in a Fish Cannery,” Frauenwarte, January 1935

Figure 4. “Germany’s Only Female Pilot,” Illustrierte Beobachter, December 3, 1936

Figure 5. “They have no competitors,” Illustrierte Beobachter, December 3, 1936

Figure 6. “Irreplaceable Women’s Work,” Frauenwarte, January 1935

Figure 7. “One of 900 Thousand,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, March 4, 1935

Figure 8. “The Stenotypist Fräulein Mariko in Tokyo,” BIZ, July 16, 1936

Figure 9. “The Secretary – Selling the Typewriter,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, April 23, 1936
Figure 10. “The Secretary – Selling the Typewriter,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, August 27, 1936

Figure 11. The Secretary at Work, Illustrierte Beobachter, July 2, 1936

Figure 12. “Between 12 and 2,” Illustrierte Beobachter, July 2, 1936

Figure 13. “Midday Break,” Illustrierte Beobachter, July 2, 1936

Figure 14. “Mother School,” Frauenwarte, November 1934

Figure 15. “Mother and Child,” Frauenwarte, November 1934

Figure 16. “Mother’s Day 1935,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, May 9, 1935

Figure 17. “For Mother’s Day,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, May 6, 1938

Figure 18. “German Family,” Illustrierte Beobachter, July 28, 1934

Figure 19. “The Sauckel Family and Frau Sauckel,” Illustrierte Beobachter, September 9, 1937

Figure 20. “A new way for girls’ education,” Frauenwarte, January 1936

Figure 21. “Future Worker and Mother,” Frauenwarte, January 1936

Figure 22. “Career Choices for Girls,” Frauenwarte, March 1937

Figure 23. “Frau” or “Fräulein,” Frauenwarte, March 1934

Figure 24. “The Past,” Frauenwarte, December 1934

Figure 25. “The Present,” Frauenwarte, December 1934

Figure 26. “Pretty or not pretty?,” Illustrierte Beobachter, February 22, 1940

Figure 27. “Smiling always wins,” Illustrierte Beobachter, April 30, 1942

Figure 28. “The Sunday of the Munitions Workers,” IB, July 16, 1942

Figure 29. “Four Girls on Sunday,” Illustrierte Beobachter, September 17, 1942

Figure 30. “The Working Mother,” Illustrierte Beobachter, May 2, 1940

Figure 31. “Nimble Hands,” Illustrierte Beobachter, June 5, 1940
Figure 32. “Behind the Factory Door,” Frauenwarte, March 1934 284

Figure 33. “Air Raid Defense Training,” BIZ, May 20, 1936 286

Figure 34. “Girl with a Gas Mask,” Illustrierte Beobachter, November 25, 1937 287

Figure 35. “Running to her station,” Illustrierte Beobachter, May 25, 1939 288

Figure 36. “The air raid shelter is also a bowling alley!”, IB, May 25, 1939 289

Figure 37. “Naked – except for a gas mask!”, BIZ, November 16, 1939 290

Figure 38. “Fashion for the air raid shelter,” BIZ, September 28, 1939 291

Figure 39. “Parisian Volunteers,” Illustrierte Beobachter, November 23, 1939 291

Figure 40. “Comrades on the Flak,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, March 4, 1943 292

Figure 41. “Girls in Uniform,” Illustrierte Beobachter, November 11, 1943 293

Figure 42. “German Women Protect the home front,” Frauenwarte, June 1944 294

Figure 43. “The new uniforms!” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, July 13, 1939 295

Figure 44. “War Beauty,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, November 1939 296

Figure 45. “A War Scene,” Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, May 21, 1942 297

Figure 46. “Undressed – on the big cannon,” BIZ, August 13, 1942 298

Figure 47. “Gun Woman,” Frauenwarte, October 1941 299

Figure 48. “German Fashion – German Material,” Frauenwarte, October 1936 310

Figure 49. “Fashion of Today and Tomorrow,” Frauenwarte, Spring 1938 312

Figure 50. “Spring Fashion,” Illustrierte Beobachter, January 6, 1938 314

Figure 51. “Summer Fashions,” Illustrierte Beobachter, June 15, 1937 315

Figure 52. “They have the pants on,” Illustrierte Beobachter, May 12, 1938 316

Figure 53. “The Old and New Hairstyle,” BIZ, April 16, 1933 317
Figure 54. “Modern Beach Wear,” *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, June 4, 1936 319

Figure 55. “Grandmother – Very Modern,” *BIZ*, September 1, 1938 320

Figure 56. “Harmonic Beauty,” *Frauenwarte*, March 1938 322

Figure 57. “A Very Beautiful Woman,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, August 24, 1934 323

Figure 58. “Successful Beauty Care,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, August 13, 1939 325

Figure 59. “Like a Film Star,” *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, May 9, 1935 326

Figure 60. The Modern Woman and Cigarettes, *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, May 1933, September 1935, January 1936 329

Figure 61. “The Invisible Barrier,” *BIZ*, May 5, 1934 and July 15, 1934 331

Figure 62. “Midsummer Evening,” *Frauenwarte*, July 1941 333

Figure 63. “Summer Clothing Designs,” *Frauenwarte*, April 1944 334

Figure 64. “Klipp – Klapp,” *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, April 30, 1940 336

Figure 65. “120 cm of Material,” *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, July 9, 1942 337

Figure 66. “From head to foot,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, May 9, 1940 338

Figure 67. “Suits for the Spring,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, April 27, 1944 339

Figure 68. “The Importance of Physical Education,” *Frauenwarte*, August 1936 343

Figure 69. “Always Busy!,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, December 17, 1936 346

Figure 70. “The Sports Couple,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, October 27, 1936 347

Figure 71. “The Modern Sport-loving Woman,” *IB*, August 12, 1935 349

Figure 72. “The Modern Sport – loving Woman,” *IB*, September 5, 1935 349

Figure 73, “Beautiful Miss Dorothy Poynton,” *BIZ*, August 6, 1935 350

Figure 74. “Girls who smile on command,” *IB*, December 8, 1934 354

Figure 75. “A final glance in the mirror,” *IB*, December 16, 1937 356
Figure 76. “Longing for air and light,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, August 1, 1935

Figure 77. “A particularly pretty picture,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, June 9, 1938

Figure 78. “A healthy sports activity,” *Frauenwarte*, July 1934

Figure 79. “Searching for a beautiful face,” *BIZ*, December 14, 1935

Figure 80. “A hot day at a Berlin movie site,” *BIZ*, July 13, 1939

Figure 81. “For the next film,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, April 27, 1941

Figure 82. “The high point of the evening,” *IB*, February 4, 1941

Figure 83. “A new role as a soldier’s bride,” *IB*, February 15, 1940

Figure 84. “New Film – New Faces,” *BIZ*, February 15, 1940

Figure 85. “Laying in the warm summer sun,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, June 5, 1941
**Introduction**

In the 1930s, a popular German illustrated magazine published photographs of young, attractive women sporting short bobbed haircuts and wearing stylish clothing, underneath the bold headline, “Girls who Smile on Command: The Profession of the Model.” The photographs seem to represent a facet of the iconographic New Woman omnipresent in the mass media of Weimar Germany. This image focused on a young, single female, who earned her own money, wore stylish attire of short dresses, chopped off her hair, used cosmetics, smoked and spent her leisure time going to the cinema or dancing. She pursued economic and sexual independence, loved fashion and admired movie stars. When she dreamed about her future marriage, she hoped for a well-to-do husband and a small family with not more than two children. His income would allow her to stay home and care for the family. This complex image of the New Woman became, as several studies in the last decade have shown, the symbol par excellence of the new, consumer driven Weimar mass culture and was propagated not only by new mass media like the illustrated press and movies, but also in the advertisement section in conventional newspapers, popular art and novels.¹

---

The photographs of “Girls who Smile on Command,” however, were not presented in an illustrated Weimar magazine like the popular Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung (BIZ), they were printed in the December 8, 1934 edition of the Illustrierte Beobachter (IB); the illustrated magazine of the Nazi Party that aimed for mass circulation. The accompanying text in the IB lauds the modeling school for helping young women to develop the skills needed for the profession, without the excessive “foolishness” prevalent in western European nations. Only a few years earlier, the Nazi press had sharply criticized the image of the “New Woman” as a symbol of the decadence, amorality and degeneration of femininity in the Weimar mass culture and had used it in their anti-Semitic propaganda. Thus, the images found in the IB nearly two years after the takeover by the NSDAP, signalize a significant shift in the visual representations of the image of the German woman in the Nazi press. In order to make this image an attractive and acceptable one for their female readers, they adapted aspects of the image of the “New Woman” they had condemned before 1933, but devoid of moral depravity and without explicit connections to anti-Semitic discourse.

It was not just the far Right that criticized, modified and adapted the image of the New Woman with the aim to construct competing versions of modern femininity more in accordance to their economic, social and political agenda. During the Weimar Republic, the issue of female modernity and the related policies became an important political subject for all parties across the spectrum, including the Communist Party (KPD), the

---


---

2 Illustrierte Beobachter, December 8, 1934.
Social Democratic Party (SPD) as well as the National Socialist Party (NSDAP). I use the term “New Woman” in this study to designate the commercialized, iconographic representation of female modernity during the Weimar Republic and use the concept of the “Modern Woman” to discuss competing constructions of female modernity within and beyond the Weimar Republic. Contemporaries used the terms Neue Frau (New Woman) or moderne Frau (Modern Woman) within their publications and I will make careful delineation between the language of the publication and the broader concept of the Modern Woman within my analysis.

This dissertation explores the contestations over the representations of the Modern Woman in the illustrated press during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. The study focuses on four major questions: first, which visual and textual images of the Modern Woman appear in a diverse section of the illustrated press and how are textual and visual images related? Second, what are the similarities and differences between the representations in magazines of diverging ideologies and how do images of the Modern Woman reflect particular visions of modernity? Third, how did the images change or remain the same as the political and economic systems and media markets changed from 1920 to 1945? And fourth, who were the most important groups and institutions that tried to influence the discourse on “female modernity” via the illustrated press?

Through the examination of visual and textual representations of the Modern Woman, I argue that gendered images are of vital importance to political and social

---

3 Images of the Modern Woman persisted during the FRG and GDR as well. The larger project will include an analysis of images until the 1960s, when a profound change of the images of the Modern Woman began in both parts of Germany. See, most recently, Kristina Schulz, Der lange Atem der Provokation: Die Frauenbewegung in der Bundesrepublik und in Frankreich 1968–1976 (Frankfurt/M., 2002) and Donna Harsch, Revenge of the Domestic: Women, The Family and Communism in the German Democratic Republic (Princeton, 2007).
groups promoting a particular vision of modernity. The claims and discourses of modernity are inseparable from gendered implications and assumptions concerning women’s participation in politics; social and family policies; the gender division of labor in paid and unpaid work; cultural representations of modernity; and sexual politics. These observations hold true, not only for the Weimar Republic (the “laboratory of modernity”) but the so-called “reactionary modernity” of the Third Reich. The Modern Woman is therefore not a monolithic concept. The existence of multiple visual and textual representations is directly related to the ambiguities, ambivalences and paradoxes of historical constructions of modernity.

Sociologist Schmul Eisentadt’s formulation of the concept of “multiple modernities” is particularly helpful in demonstrating the contested nature of modernity. He argues:

The idea of multiple modernities presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world – indeed to explain the history of modernity – is to see it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs. These ongoing reconstructions of multiple institutional and ideological patterns are carried forward by specific social actors in close connection with social, political, and intellectual activists, and also by social movements pursuing different programs of modernity, holding very different views on what makes societies modern.⁴

Eisenstadt is interested in applying the concept of “multiple modernities” to nation-states as a whole, in particular, looking at the ways in which non-western states incorporate notions of modernity within their political and ideological frameworks. Scholars interested in the contemporary political implications of “multiple modernities”

focus on large frameworks applied to nation-state. For example, they have investigated broad currents of “European modernity,” “Chinese modernity,” and modern components in current Islamic fundamentalist movements, while applying the concept to larger theories of globalization. These approaches allow for a broad investigation into contested modernities but this perspective often neglects the nuanced components of modern projects within specific historical contexts, including the important role that gender and the family plays within competing modernities. Thus, while using the concept of multiple modernities, I apply it in order to explore internal multiple modernities that exist within Germany in the twentieth century, beginning with the alternative Communist and National Socialist programs in the interwar years. Furthermore, I employ gender as a category of historical analysis in this study of multiple modernities. I understand “gender” – following Joan W. Scott – as “constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes” and as “a primary way of signifying relationships of power.” Gendering the concept of multiple modernities underscores the importance that gender plays in reaffirming and defending a “natural” gender hierarchy within the status quo as well as the ways in which gender functions as an important marker in alternative conceptions of modernity.

In order to explore both textual and visual representations of the Modern Woman I use the mass media of the illustrated magazine, which became popular in post World War I Germany, as the focus of my analysis. Technological advancements in printing and

---

5 This is not to suggest that scholars are not aware of this, they are simply more interested in developing broad theories. See Dominic Sachsenmaier, “Multiple Modernities – The Concept and its Potential,” in Reflections, Sachsenmaier et al., 42 – 57. For European modernity, see Hartmut Kaelble, “European Self-Understanding in the Twentieth Century,” in Reflections, Sachsenmaier et al., 167 – 192.

photography allowed for magazines to be produced cheaply, in large numbers, on a regular basis and enabled them to reach a broad social spectrum of readers. These developments facilitated an unprecedented influx of visual images. One central but highly contested image that surfaced in this new mass medium was the “New Woman.” The apparent disregard for motherhood in this image challenged the gender order and was a target for political and social anxieties. While an icon in movies, plays, posters and novels, illustrated magazines played a central role too in transporting this image beyond the movie screen, the theatre stage and popular fiction.

The ambiguous nature of the visual and textual representations of the Modern Woman used to explore differing visions of modernity allowed these broadly disseminated images to resonate with a more inclusive audience. By using visual and textual representations as a central focus of my research, I show how the visual became a powerful method to negotiate both the limits and possibilities for women in politics, society, the economy and culture. The ability to manipulate, modify and adapt the image of the Modern Woman to differing political and social goals is of central importance in understanding how different groups imagined, constructed and disseminated their ideal form of modernity to a mass audience.

1. Historiography

---

The recent publication of *Gendering Modern German History: Rewriting Historiography*, edited by Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert attests to the long tradition of social, political and cultural history of women in twentieth-century Germany. My dissertation utilizes historical scholarship grounded in the larger context of women’s and gender history that began with a focus on women, politics and work in the 1970s, social changes and everyday life in the 1980s and the development of gender history, alongside new approaches to cultural history, since then. This work is indispensable for understanding the social and political contexts in which illustrated magazines produced and presented images of the Modern Woman in twentieth-century German history. The extensive literature concerning social, legal, political, economic and cultural changes impacting women from 1920 to 1945 is far too broad to include in this overview. Instead, I focus on major publications within each period and emphasize the themes and approaches that are important for my project.

*Weimar Germany*

The New Woman is one of the most recognizable icons of the Weimar Republic. Associated with urban culture, film, technology, paid work, open sexuality and “deviant” behavior, this icon represented female “emancipation.” Early feminist scholars regarded the New Woman as a positive reflection of Weimar Germany, set in opposition to

---

repressive Nazi politics. Therefore, this image became part of a constructed memory of liberation and progress, linked with feminist agendas in the 1960s and 1970s that hoped for sexual and political equality. However, as Atina Grossman recently pointed out, “Already by the mid 1970s … along with disillusionment with the promise of sexual liberation among the male “heavies” of the New Left, came reconsideration of Weimar and its progressive visions.”

In the mid 1970s and early 1980s, scholars challenged the notion that Weimar Germany functioned as a period of “emancipation” for women by pointing to middle-class women and their conservative identity, which was defined by their maternalism. In the essay “Beyond Kinder, Küche, Kirche: Weimar Women in Politics and Work,” first published in 1976, Claudia Koonz and Renate Bridenthal also argued that socioeconomic structures, the gendered division of labor and “rationalization” in the workforce served to lessen the impacts of women’s newly won political rights. Alongside the reinterpretation of the limits and possibilities of women in the workforce and their

---


10 Ibid., 209.


participation in party politics, Atina Grossman’s work during the 1980s revealed the politicized nature of debates over female sexuality. She demonstrated in her work on sexual reform and the movement for a “rationalization” of sexuality that the working-class also had their version of the New Woman who was competing with the image of the mass consumer New Woman. She confirmed the need for a critical evaluation of the one-dimensional view of the “emancipated” woman in Weimar Germany.

Later feminist scholarship fractured the homogeneous category of “women,” and continued to question the “emancipated” woman by examining the gender-hierarchical division of labor between men and women in the workforce, society and family and the rise of the white collar working class following WWI. Karen Hagemann’s important monograph, Frauenalltag und Männerpolitik: Alltagsleben und gesellschaftliches Handeln von Arbeiterfrauen in der Weimarer Republik, published in 1990, and subsequent articles focusing on work, politics and the “rationalization of everyday life,” questioned the one dimensional image of the New Woman and showed how the social democratic working-class milieu adopted and modified the consumer-orientated image to


suit its own needs. This analysis confirmed the existence of real changes in the structure of the Weimar labor market, the possibility for upward social mobility for some young working class women from the better-off strata, the general growth of consumerism in the period of prosperity between 1924 and 1929.

Broadly defined, rationalization “suggests organized efforts—by the state, by business, by social, political, and labor movements—to order and regulate the chaos of modern societies to govern behavior and structure social relations, and hence the effects of industrialization and urbanization.” During the 1990s social historians indicated, particularly for the 1920s, that rationalization permeated all areas of everyday life. The discourse on the “rationalization of everyday life,” including “modern” methods to raise children, complete housework, decorate, exercise and dress is an important concept that links different kinds of modernity with females, beyond the commercialized version. The research concerning gender and rationalization also indicated the importance of understanding the ambivalent nature of rationalization relating to social welfare policies, fears over social “decay,” and the declining birthrate. On the whole, rationalization


17 For a discussion on the role of architecture in the home and rationalized “space” in department stores, see Despina Stratigakos, “Exhibiting the New Woman: The Phenomenal Success of Die Frau in Haus und Beruf,” in A Woman’s Berlin: Building the Modern City (Minneapolis, 2008), 97-136.

reproduced gender hierarchy, inequality and perpetuated the gender division of labor, especially within the home. However, by utilizing categories of difference, historians revealed the ways in which social policies had the potential to be “emancipatory” or repressive depending on age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and class, within different historical contexts. Overall, by the late 1980s and early 1990s feminist research demonstrated how the New Woman signified the “Janus-face” of modernity. Representing sexual liberation and control, economic independence and dependence, political inclusion and exclusion, the New Woman (in all her various incarnations) symbolized the limits and possibilities for women and society in Weimar Germany. 

The alluring image of the New Woman continues to garner much attention from literary and film scholars focusing on gender and modernity in Weimar culture. The 1997 publication of Women in the Metropolis, edited by Katharina Von Ankum, explores the cultural constructions of the Neue Frau in film, art and popular fiction. Using a gendered approach, scholars examined women’s experiences with modernization and modernity.


urbanization by focusing on the agency of women in producing their own versions of modernity. *Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity: Film, Literature and “New Objectivity,”* by Richard W. McCormick, published in 2001, is another example of the burgeoning literature on cultural texts of the New Woman.\(^{21}\) Employing a psychoanalytical approach, McCormick is primarily interested in analyzing the dominant image of the New Woman as presented in the popular novels of Irmgard Keun or in films from the late Weimar period as an example of the visual manifestation of Weimar modernity.\(^{22}\) Another example is the 2006 anthology, edited by Gail Finley, *Visual Culture in Twentieth-Century Germany: Text as Spectacle* in which Barbara Kosta analyzes images in her article, “Cigarettes, Advertising and the Weimar Republic’s Modern Woman.”\(^{23}\) While arguing that cigarettes were both a symbol of liberation for women and a sign of social degeneracy, she uses the terms “New Woman” and “Modern Woman” interchangeably and only looks at advertisements from the middle-class press.

The 2008 publication of *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* examines the similarities and differences of cosmetic and

---


\(^{22}\) For a discussion of women, sexuality and ideas of modernity, see Dorothy Rowe, *Representing Berlin: Sexuality and the City in Imperial and Weimar Germany* (Ashgate, 2003). Her chapter “Representing Berlin” focuses on literary and sociological constructions of Berlin that “feminize” and “demonize” the city as a prostitute. See also, Elizabeth B. Jones, *Gender and Rural Modernity: Farm Women and the Politics of Labor in Germany, 1871 – 1933* (Ashgate, 2009), which offers a unique perspective of modernity outside the usual geographical scope of Berlin.

toiletry advertisements in a variety of magazines, including those found in Germany, France, the United States and Japan during the inter-war years. While historian Ute G. Poiger points to the malleability of the image of the Modern Girl and her relation to race and class during the Weimar Republic and early National Socialist propaganda, she only uses middle-class magazines and hence, middle-class constructions of female modernity as the focus of her study. On the one hand, she offers a compelling analysis of the role of the “Orient” and the “cosmopolitan aesthetics” in cosmetic ads and argues that a shift against these constructions occurred within a failing economy and the rise of the right at the end of the 1920s. On the other hand, Poiger does not consider competing narratives of female modernity within the variety of social and political magazines produced during the Weimar Republic to show how images of female modernity worked with and against each other. However, this collection of essays points to both the importance of the visual construction of identities in a global context and how these images are tied to debates over national identities. Moreover, the attention paid to the producers of the advertisements in relation to shifting political, social and economic contexts underscores the importance of reading visual texts alongside historical change and continuity.

While some literary and film scholars could be criticized for emphasizing the mass-consumer type of New Woman, these studies are significant because they reinforce the vital role that visual culture played in Weimar Germany and illustrate the ways in which the images of female modernity captured the imaginations of artists, writers and filmmakers during the interwar years. While drawing from these innovative approaches

---

to visual history, historical scholarship offers a well-developed framework in which to analyze my sources within concrete, historical contexts. The political and social conditions of the Weimar Republic allowed for a diverse range of groups to articulate their type of Modern Woman in relation to paid and family work, consumerism and sexuality. While the media market changed after 1933, and magazines operated under new constraints, images of femininity did not fit one mold dictated by the Nazi party.

Third Reich

Women’s and gender scholarship on the Third Reich demonstrates the often sharp differences between discourse and everyday practices and policies relating to work, the family, politics and sexuality. Claudia Koonz’s landmark study, Mothers in the Fatherland, published in 1987, broadened our understanding of women, politics and “feminism” at the end of the Weimar Republic and through the Third Reich. This study examined the ways in which women attempted to assert their power within the party, based on “maternalist” sensibilities and argued for a more serious consideration of female agency within National Socialism.  

Studies from other historians, including Rüdiger Hachtmann and Carola Sachse showed the flexibility of National Socialist ideology towards women and the ways in which the party rationalized roles for women outside marriage and motherhood, always underlined and understood in the context of racial theories. For example, by examining

---

25 Claudia Koonz, Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics (New York, 1987).

26 Rüdiger Hachtmann, Industriearbeit im “Dritten Reich”: Untersuchungen zu den Lohn-und Arbeitsbedingungen in Deutschland, 1933-1945 (Göttingen, 1989); Carola Sachse, Siemens, der Nationalsozialismus und die moderne Familie: Eine Untersuchung zur Rationalisierung in Deutschland im 20 Jahrhundert (Hamburg, 1990) and “Freizeit zwischen Betrieb und Volksgemeinschaft: Betriebliche
not only where and when women were working, but also including their age, marital status and level of education it became clear that the Nazis accepted and actively encouraged female participation of specific groups of women, especially single women, in the labor force, particularly in the war economy. This research is of particular importance when analyzing publications throughout the war years. Sachse also continued to highlight how discourses on rationalization continued during the Third Reich. Elizabeth Heineman’s monograph *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany*, published in 1999, showed how the state, alongside the experiences of WWII played an important role in defining various marital states for women, including roles that single women were to play. This literature helped to effectively destroy the conception that National Socialists *only* envisioned the role of “motherhood” for females.

Based on these studies, current research that focuses on sexuality, culture and the body operates within a framework that acknowledges the seemingly contradictory roles for women and images of women in the Third Reich, depending on the categories of “race,” marital status, age and occupation. For example, Irene Guenther’s *Nazi Chic: Fashioning Women in the Third Reich*, published in 2004, deals with visual and textual images of femininities and the related structures of the textile and garment industry. While emphasizing the tensions between “modern” industrial practices and the discourse associated with women’s “natural” roles and the Modern Woman, Guenther narrowly focuses on characteristics of the conventional middle-class depiction of femininity,

---

without acknowledging that multiple notions of female modernity existing at the same time. In another study published in 2004, Kristin Döhring and Renate Feldmann examine the differing conceptions of femininity within the Frauenwartethrough discourse analysis, in comparison with other right-wing women’s publications. Yet, they do not discuss them in relationship with earlier images of femininity or within a wide variety of other magazines, which marginalizes the array of visual and textual images available to readers in the Third Reich. However, these two recent examples show how images of female modernity did not cease to exist after 1933, but were imbued with different meanings under National Socialism. Most importantly, racial discourse played a role in defining the new types of the German Modern Woman for the Nazi party.

As Claudia Koonz notes in her essay, “A Tributary and A Mainstream,” in Gendering Modern German History, scholars in the 1990s began to examine the relationship between gender, modernity and consumer culture in Nazi Germany. While earlier scholarship has emphasized the paradoxical nature involving National Socialism and “modernism” or “modernity,” some scholars argued that, as uncomfortable as it may

27 Irene Guenther, Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich (Oxford, 2004). Numerous works concerning art and film during the Third Reich also point to the ways in which National Socialists had their own version of “modernity.” See, Jo Fox, Filming Women in the Third Reich (Oxford, 2000); Sabina Hake, Popular Cinema of the Third Reich (Austin, 2001); Terri Gordon, “Fascism and the Female Form: Performance Art in the Third Reich,” Sexuality and German Fascism 11 (2002): 164-200; Angela Vaupel, Frauen im NS-Film (Hamburg, 2002); and, Barbara Schrödl, Das Bild des Künstlers und seiner Frauen (Marburg, 2004). Dagmar Herzog’s Sex after Fascism also showed that sexuality was not as constrained or conservative as previous scholarship had assumed. Dagmar Herzog, Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth Century Germany (Princeton, 2005).

seem, National Socialism and modernization are not mutually exclusive. Nancy Reagin, Renate Harter-Meyer and Hartmut Berghoff, for example, point to the importance of understanding the role of consumption in the Third Reich and the ways in which goods were marketed to consumers (most often women). While consumerism and advertising have played a large role in the scholarship concerning Weimar and East and West Germany, this growing body of literature indicates that scholars should be aware of the ways in which women continued to be targeted consumers, often through visual images of women, during the Third Reich too.

Recent works, thus, bring to light the variety of roles, expectations and policies directed at women during the Third Reich, all connected to theories of race and the exclusion of “unwanted” women from society. I contend that a study of the illustrated press can help us understand the extent to which producers of mass media in the Third


32 Adelheid von Saldern points out that the while keeping in mind that historians “agree that bodies are not solely a product of cultural construction,” new work on the arts and visual media in the Third Reich help us understand how gendered (and racialized) images of femininity and masculinity are linked to political aims and “concepts that were supposed to be translated by making them visual.” Saldern, “Innovative Trends in Women and Gender Studies of the National Socialist Era,” German History 27 (2009): 84 – 112, here, p. 95.
Reich co-opted and reformulated images of the New Woman in order to present a broad audience with their versions of female modernity. In addition, much of the scholarship on the visual images of women in Third Reich give only a cursory glance at visual culture in the Weimar Republic, adhering to the conventional periodization of 1933-1945. I suggest that intense negotiation of images of femininity often took place in times that cross the typical political, economic and social periods which historians traditionally employ.

The historiography concerning women and gender in twentieth century Germany suggests that the constructed image of the Modern Woman as a signal of “progress” or “modernity,” expanded and retracted during specific historical periods based on economic, social, political and cultural factors. The multiple types of the Modern Woman, although constructed during Weimar Germany, reverberated through the Third Reich. The continuities, ruptures and debates over this period of time can, perhaps, indicate where, why and to what extent the contested and contradictory images of the Modern Woman (related to the overall gender order) became important sites for a variety of actors to articulate their vision for social and political change.

2. Theory, Methodology and Sources

In my work, I question the dominant depiction of a relatively coherent ideal of the Modern Woman in the scholarship. Next to the continuities between visual and textual images, I intend to highlight contestation, ambiguities and change. Gender serves as a primary category of analysis in my study. Historians using gender can examine the ways
in which gender identities are constructed and how they function to maintain or disrupt normative roles for men and women. The idea that gender is constructed through different discursive practices helps explain why femininity is represented in multiple and contradictory ways. Joan Scott, in a recent forum in the *American Historian Review* noted that “Various representations of masculinity and femininity have been invoked to mobilize constituencies, to tar enemies, to put groups and individuals in their place. Gender is after all, ‘a primary way of signifying power.’” Thus, even though I focus on “women,” I use gender to tease out and recognize the fractured nature of the category of “women” and the ways in which differing concepts of femininity are constructed through visual and textual representations. While masculinities are not the focus of this project, they do play a role in the analysis. While not all visual and textual images explicitly contain discussions of masculinity, there are inherent assumptions about the gender order which rest on notions of a traditional gender hierarchy. Also, there are moments in time – and thus in my study – when the Modern Woman is paired with a particular form of masculinity. This includes the “effeminate” male in relation to the “overmasculinized” woman during the Weimar Republic, the male boss as a symbol of “authority” in a variety of advertisements and the role of soldierly masculinity during the Third Reich.

The theoretical approach of gender also allows historians to examine gender in relation to other categories of difference. Joanne Hershfield notes in, *Imagining la Chica*

---

33 Scott, “Gender and The Politics of History”, 42.

Moderna: Women, Nation and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1917-1936, published in 2008, that her work is “organized around the conviction that visual images of women embody popular discourses about sexuality, work, motherhood, and feminine beauty, as well as other social categories that intersect with gender such as race, class, and ethnicity.” Visual and textual representations of “women” are never isolated from other categories of difference, including age, marital status and social background.

As Griselda Pollack has noted, feminist scholarship concerning visual images has also moved beyond simple denunciations of stereotypical images of women to “a more exacting assessment of the productive role of representation in the construction of subjectivity, femininity, and sexuality.” As the art historian Amelia Jones points out, “feminism has long acknowledged that visuality (the conditions of how we see and make meaning of what we see) is one of the key modes by which gender is culturally inscribed.” Current scholarship stresses the necessity of not only analyzing the product but the process of image making in order to provide a more nuanced and multi-faceted discourse of female representations, rooted in historical analysis. Thus, it is not merely the photograph or illustration in the illustrated magazine that I am interested in, but the ways in which its multiple meanings are a process of negotiating the various political, social and cultural discourses about women in a particular historical context.


Alongside gender, I use the theoretical and methodological approach of “intermediality” which examines the relationship between visual and textual images. In a broad sense, the term “intermediality” refers to direct or indirect encounters between two or more media, including the interrelatedness between text and pictures. Peter Wagner in *Icons, Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, notes that the “...verbal and visual combine to produce rhetoric that depends on the co-presence of words and images.”39 W.J.T. Mitchell argues that scholars should not just examine the differences and similarities between words and pictures but also ask, “. . .why does it matter how words and images are juxtaposed, blended, or separated?”40 Texts, for example “explain, narrate, describe, label and speak to or for images” while images “illustrate, exemplify, clarify, ground and document the text.”41 Thus, the multiple meanings of the images and the text are dependant upon one another. The placement of the images in the magazine, the type of image (such as a photograph or drawing) their primary function (advertisement or illustration) alongside the corresponding text combine to produce a variety (but not an unlimited number) of meanings.42 Yet, in order to understand the correlation between texts and images, it is vital that they be situated in their historical context.


42 As Amelia Jones points out, images (in this context advertisements) rely on texts to finalize their constructions, often making an image seem “natural” and “logical.” This concept can be applied not only to the role of gender in advertisements, but also to captions and articles that accompany photographs and drawings. Jones, “Feminism, Incorporated: Reading ‘Post-feminism’ in an ‘Anti-feminist’ age,” in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, 314 – 329.
The contexts in which the images appear and their specific functions are neither mutually exclusive nor static, they can and often do, change over time.\textsuperscript{43} Although scholars recognize the need for images to be placed in an appropriate context, Peter Burke, in \textit{Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images As Historical Evidence}, published in 2001, points out the need to examine “contexts in the plural.”\textsuperscript{44} This entails exploring the precise meaning of “contexts” for any specific study on a number of levels. Most important for my study are the following two: first, the initial production of the image, including artistic and social conventions of the time (which help shape how an image is made), motivations for production and methods of distribution must be analyzed. The production of the images, influenced by social, political, economic and cultural factors, must be examined in order to present a critical reading of representations because images and texts are tied to the ideological forces informing the institutional structures of the publication, alongside the intent to inform readers of an event or social conditions in a particular manner while competing with other publications. Secondly, the images and the accompanying texts will be examined to see how the magazines discussed the various elements of the Modern Woman and presented her to readers.

For this project, particular attention is paid to places within the publications that specifically focus on femininity and the relation of women to work, sexuality and consumerism. While considering where a publication designated an image or idea as

\textsuperscript{43} Peter Burke, \textit{Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images As Historical Evidence} (Ithaca, 2001), 187. Burke notes that “a series of images offers testimony more reliable than that of individual images,” by providing a particular view of change over time and allows the historian to compare a specific theme, in one time period, to understand different social perspectives of one event or idea. Thus, illustrated magazines, published on a bi-weekly or weekly basis provide an excellent realm of interrogation for the use and change of images over time.

\textsuperscript{44} Burke, \textit{Eyewitnessing}, 187.
“modern” or “new,” I also look for patterns of repetition in language and images. In addition, I consider the importance of the overall format of the magazines and how the publications constructed a complete picture of their Modern Woman. Thus, different sections, such as advertisements, sports pages or fashion columns are emphasized in different proportions within the analysis, depending on the illustrated magazine. This approach allows for a more “open-ended” examination of the publications, without letting one category of images or text dominate or influence the outcome.

While images can be considered a point of entry into contemporary views of a specific time and place, they must not be mistaken for direct access to a social world. Yet, I argue that images are part of “reality,” magazines contribute to the “visual landscape” available to members of society. Images can offer insights into social, cultural and gender constructs. However, to get at these insights it is important to differentiate between the types and functions of images, including photographs, illustrations and advertisements. For example, photographs can tell us much about contemporary living and working conditions, material culture and gender relationships, both as pieces of evidence and how photographs were used in the past. However, historians must recognize the limits of photographs as historical evidence. One cannot see outside the frame, or always identify the producer, and must remain critical in regards to the unspoken elements of an image. Regardless of how alluring it may seem to read a photograph on its


46 Concentrating only on advertisements, for example, would slight the communist publications. This is not because the communist press felt the need to protest consumerism, but because their advertising sections were marginal. Similarly, ignoring the differences between the placement of the images in relation to other content in the magazines would trivialize the editorial intent, because the layout of a magazine is constructed with a specific purpose in mind.
own terms, textual evidence in conjunction with the image leads to a more complicated understanding of the multiple layers of meanings. It is also essential to remember what was possible to photograph in a specific historical period, how it was photographed and what the photographer deemed suitable subject matter.

Moreover, as scholars and critics have long noted, photography was laden with ties to the “scientific understanding” of the world, one that was “objective,” where reality passed through a lens which editors presented to the public. Editors often treated photographs as unbiased images of people and events, with the understanding that the public accepted them without criticism. As media scholar Hanno Hardt states, “Photographs are assigned the power to establish the real conditions of society, either in the form of middle-class conceptions of tradition and survival or in the provocative style of social criticism, with its attacks on the social and political establishment.” The camera supplied the means to define a seemingly unprejudiced “truth,” and the perspective of “truth” was formed by both the individual taking the photograph and how a publication chose to place the photograph in its publication.

Illustrations and graphics will be analyzed carefully as well. Illustrations in the humor section of a magazine, for example, present easily understood gender stereotypes of men and women and serve to entertain as well as indicate specific social classes, ethnicities or political positions. Thus, physical characteristics and human emotions are

---


49 Although photographs may have seemed impartial and carried an air of objectivity based on technological advancements of reproduction, some contemporaries sharply criticized the expansion of the illustrated press and the use of photographic representations. For example, see Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. by Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA, 1995).
exaggerated and function to produce an immediate emotive response. Illustrated fashion sections, while displaying trends and fads, serve to inform, entertain and present the reader with options to buy ready-made clothing, patterns for women to sew their own clothes, ways to “modernize” an old dress, or create a new garment out of an old one. These illustrations (oftentimes in black and white drawings) portray an “ideal” body and relate to the various ways in which the “covering” or “uncovering” of the female body constructs hierarchies of what are acceptable and unacceptable styles for women.50 Clothing, as Irene Guenther in Nazi Chic has noted, is political because it relates not only to social change but also - because political regimes can “define ‘ideals of national taste,’ - to ‘acceptable forms and images of . . . individual and collective identity.’”51

Another important category of images includes advertisements, which are meant to entice, induce spending and encourage participation in consumption. Advertisers promoted a specific type of Modern Woman to market their goods to that influenced the manner in which women became both a consumer and a commodity.52 Yet, one must be careful to recognize that advertisements were often a large source of revenue for a publication. Magazines may have been more flexible concerning the types of images included in the advertising section, compared to the overall content of the magazine. The size and placement of advertisements throughout the magazine, not just in the individual sections, have an additional function of linking articles or short stories to consumer


52 Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough, eds., The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective (Berkeley, 1996).
goods. Taking into consideration the function and type of visual and textual images, one can see how individual elements of a magazine combined to create a holistic construction of the Modern Woman, even if it was an ambiguous and paradoxical representation.

It is difficult to measure how ordinary men and women responded to the publications, but not entirely impossible. While recognizing the limits of my sources regarding reception, I outline four areas in which to explore the relationship between the audience and the magazine. First, I consider the circulation numbers, availability of the publication and target audiences in order to get a general sense of who may be the primary readers. Secondly, letters to the editor can show us what topics readers were satisfied or unsatisfied with, their concerns and comments. Thirdly, advice columns, which required interaction between the magazine and reader, could reveal both demographic data (gender of reader, age, location) and the kinds of issues and problems readers are concerned with. Fourth, when publications alter their design, masthead, size content or production schedule, an editor traditionally included an address to readers explaining why the changes were made based on readership (i.e. did readers demand the inclusion of specific material), financial considerations or in relation to new forms technology and design practices.

The illustrated magazine is unique in its function to inform, entertain, persuade and explain by using a combination of visual images and text. Unlike films where images flicker across the screen, or novels which construct a “verbal image,” illustrated

---

53 A good example of this can be found in the *Illustrierte Beobachter* where a half page ad for women’s shampoo was juxtaposed with various articles concerning women’s work, role in the home and the economy. These ads, with the article placed directly above them, took up an entire page and ran consistently for several months in 1931 and 1932.

54 This also includes an understanding of reading culture and speculation that magazines can be shared or accessed in a public space (i.e. beauty salons would provide reading material for their customers).
magazines offer a unique forum that allows the reader to extrapolate meaning by both “seeing” and “reading.” In order to expand my study within and beyond the Weimar Republic, my major group of primary sources will be illustrated magazines, representing a broad political spectrum from the far left to the far right.

My criteria for choosing these magazines include the mixture of general and female readership, the availability via newsstand or subscription and the overall popularity of the publications. Also included are the major illustrated magazines produced by specific political parties. In Weimar Germany, important publications from the left include the Communist *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (1925-1938), the KPD women’s magazine *Weg Der Frau* (1931-1938) and the Social Democratic *Frauenwelt* (1924-1933). The liberal *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* (1918-1945) represents a middle-class magazine. I also use the NSDAP *Illustrierte Beobachter* (1926-1945). I will continue for the Third Reich with the popular *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, alongside the *Illustrierte Beobachter* and the *N.S Frauenwarte* (1932-1945).

3. Organization

The first part, “Mass Culture and the Rise of the Illustrated Magazine, 1919 - 1945,” introduces the magazines and discusses how the press and different media markets changed over time. I demonstrate that the aesthetic principles for magazines, established during the Weimar Republic, continued during the Third Reich that often functioned to hide political and social change in general interest magazines. Alongside this, I include a discussion on the production and reproduction of images, including photographs,
advertisements and illustrations. Chapter one also provides background information on each illustrated magazine, including the social, political and ideological forces informing the publisher and editorial decisions, the overall content and format of the publication, circulation numbers and the intended audience. The second part, “Contested Representations of the New Woman in the Illustrated Press of the Weimar Republic,” begins with an introduction that explores the emergence of the image of the New Woman in the popular *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*. The representations of the New Woman is a starting point for discussing its influences and in comparison, contesting constructions of female modernity in both the Communist, SPD and NSDAP press. Thematic subchapters explore the most important themes relating to the discourse of the Modern Woman during the Weimar Republic: first, paid employment, second, house and family work and third, the female body related to sport, sexuality and consumerism. In each subchapter I analyze the difference and similarities in the visual and textual images presented in different magazines, explore their main aims and functions and ask which political and social goals different groups propagated in their magazines a specific image of the Modern Woman. A concluding section, focusing on the “wrong” kind of Modern Woman explores the ways in which different publications defined the limits of female “emancipation,” which existed in all publications.

The image of the Modern Woman did not disappear during the Third Reich, but instead was reformulated in the illustrated magazines according to National Socialist ideology, beginning in the 1920s, but continuing into the 1930s as well. The introduction to the third part, “Ambiguous Images of the Modern “German” Woman in the Illustrated Press of the Third Reich” raises questions concerning the ways in which the press first
modified and adapted the images developed during the Weimar Republic to racial ideology and secondly, the role the Second World War played in the shaping of the images. In explaining the differences and similarities from the visual and textual representations of the Modern Woman in the Weimar Republic and highlighting the ruptures and continuities, this chapter focuses on the role of race, class and familial status in the reformulation of the images. Subchapters explore first, representations of the Modern Woman in images of paid and unpaid work during the Third Reich. Next, I analyze the impact of World War II on publication’s depictions of female work, which includes an important shift in images because mobilization for war and the needs of a “total war” society forced the Nazi party to change the propagated images of the Modern Women dramatically during the war years. This section specifically focuses on the war years and the ways in which the illustrated press stressed a different kind of women’s work (in the war industry) and in auxiliary groups. The third chapter concentrates on representations of the “Aryan” female body, connected to fashion and consumerism, as well as directions for consumption during World War II. Finally, I will explore the female body in connection with female athletes, movie stars and models in the press as well as the function of these images during World War II.

The conclusion reviews the main arguments of the dissertation and elaborates on some of the core similarities and differences found within visual and textual representations of Modern Women between 1920 and 1945. It will also emphasize continuities and ruptures in the representations of the Modern Woman and tease out what factors and what groups played an important role in their construction during different periods. This section demonstrates the significance of these findings within the
historiography on Modern German and Women’s and Gender history as well as suggest areas for further research, through the 1960’s which will take into consideration ideas of “female modernity” within a divided Germany.
Part I:

Mass Culture and the Rise of the Illustrated Magazine,

1919–1945

Introduction

In both the popular imagination and historical scholarship concerning mass media in twentieth-century Germany, the Weimar Republic is often characterized by its vibrant urban culture, rollicking nightlife, sounds of jazz on radio broadcasts and newly established cinemas filled with spectators watching moving images across the screen. While the explosion of mass media in Germany after World War I is a familiar narrative, recent scholarship has stressed both the opportunities and limitations of a growing “mass culture,” cautions against presenting Weimar as homogenous or interpreting “mass culture” as a clear indication of “social leveling.” Cory Ross, in his new work Media and the Making of Modern Germany published in 2008, argues that it is necessary to examine mass media within the contexts of who is “seeing” what at a particular place and time, which means careful consideration of just how far particular media became mass media.55 While images of the Modern Woman moved within and through the expanded spaces of media in general, it was the representations in mass print media that reached the largest audience.

During the twentieth century, media such as film and radio were more “dependant” than the illustrated press “on technological limitations, commercial considerations, cultural attitudes and household leisure budgets.” Ross argues that “Over the first part of the twentieth century the print press was the only form of communication that managed to achieve anything close to a universal reach or market saturation in Germany.” Due to technological innovations magazines became cheaper to produce and easier to distribute. Both the commercial and political press quickly seized new opportunities to reach broad audiences with their illustrated magazines. These were easily distinguished by their mixed compositions of photographs and illustrations and compelling front covers, usually with a bold headline. They incorporated news stories and human interest articles, “celebrity journalism,” serialized novels, crossword puzzles and often special sections for theatre, film, fashion, sports and travel. By the end of the Weimar Republic the illustrated magazine, unique in its combination of “seeing” and “reading,” was firmly established in the media landscape and maintained its prominence throughout the Third Reich.

The Weimar Republic constitutes an important period that set the aesthetic conventions that the illustrated press continued to follow during the Third Reich. I contend that the illustrated magazines played a central role in suggesting an illusion of continuity across regimes. Publishers and editors often hid significant changes in content, tone and ideological underpinnings of general interest magazines behind familiar mastheads and


magazine designs. In order to understand the important role of not only technological, political and social developments on the press but also debates concerning the use of reproduced images, this part will focus most heavily on the Weimar Republic when the most rapid and dramatic changes related to the rise of the illustrated press occurred. While editors experimented with a variety of ways to arrange texts and image in the magazines, by the end of the 1920s, aesthetic arrangements of texts and images converged to create a prototypical illustrated magazine.

This first part begins with an examination of the technological changes in printing, reproduction and distribution that allowed for the initial expansion of the illustrated press during the early twentieth century. Next, I offer an overview of the debates surrounding the use of photographs in the press and reveal how images, although often criticized by the cultural elite, remained central aspects of mass culture, beyond the 1920s. The final chapter of this part discusses the background of individual publications and takes into consideration the function of different magazines at a particular historical moment.

1. Technological Changes and the Establishing of the Primacy of the Image

Illustrated magazines, initially established in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, expanded after World War I due to important advancements in the technology of the printing business, photographic and image reproduction and expanded distribution methods. While technological developments alone cannot account for the increase in publications, both the commercial and political press utilized these techniques to create new publications and expand existing ones. It is therefore important to understand the key innovations that
impacted both the development and sustainability of the illustrated press. At the beginning of
the twentieth century, the growth of the number of photographs and halftone reproductions,
in combination with the rotary press permitted publications and images to be printed faster
and in larger numbers. Techniques to improve the quality of printed images, including
sharper images, led to an increase in the quantity, which helped publications greatly expand
their commercial range. The development of linotype, a method of creating moveable type
by machine, instead of hand setting, was introduced at the end of the nineteenth century,
which allowed for quicker and less labor intensive production. This meant news and
entertainment reached readers more rapidly and less expensively than ever before.

While publications continued to include illustrations, photographs became the most
important type of image in the magazines after World War I. “Not since the beginning of the
modern press had a new technology threatened to alter the face of newspapers and magazines
as radically as photography,” notes media scholar Hanno Hardt. The photograph’s claims to
“truth” provided an authoritative “voice” for publishers and satisfied the readers’ appetites
for visual stimuli. This was only possible due to new camera technology. Bulky camera
equipment could be traded for smaller, lighter, inexpensive cameras like the Ermanox and
Lecia, allowing the means of producing photographs to extend to a wider number of people.
For example, 35 mm cameras allowed for close-up shots and rapid succession of images. The

---

60 Rudolf Stöber, *Deutsche Pressegeschichte* (Konstanz, 2000), 120-121. Images were printed in black and
white (on a gray scale) and although magazines sometimes printed in sepia, red or blue ink, color images were
not used until the 1950s.

61 Stöber, *Deutsche Pressegeschichte*, 121. By the end of the nineteenth century the use of more sophisticated
rotation presses could produce up to 100,000 four sided copies per hour. “Linotype,” introduced around 1890,
meant that it was possible to set “up to 10,000 characters per hour,” which was “five times the rate of a skilled

63 Hanno Hardt, *In the Company of Media: Cultural Constructions of Communications*, 1920s-1930s (Boulder,
2000), 64.
Ermanox, developed by the Ernemann company in Dresden, allowed for photographs to be taken without a flash, in poor lighting, and opened up more possibilities for shooting indoors.\footnote{Ian Jeffrey, \textit{Photography: A Concise History} (New York, 1981), 243. See also Helmut Gernsheim, \textit{Geschichte der Photographie} (Stuttgart, 1981).} Previously, photographers relied upon awkward bellows cameras, which had plate magazines for glass negatives, and, because of their size, photographers had to carefully plan each shot. Thus, lighter, more efficient and less-expensive cameras allowed for more documentation in the public sphere.\footnote{Also important for the popularity of photography was that technological changes allowed for a broader public to engage in photo documentation, the so-called “democratic value” of producing images, not just journalists. Before the advent of lightweight cameras and roll film, family photographs were mainly a product of studios, run by professionals. As a result of new cameras, ordinary people, at least those better off, also had the opportunity to document their everyday lives, and photographs were no longer relegated to those who could afford to have their portraits taken by professionals. The movement towards documentary photography changed the normative conventions of photography, allowing for images beyond wedding photos or family portraits taken in luxurious sitting rooms.}

The rise of photography in the press was linked with the development of picture and news agencies that competed with each other for prominence in the industry. The oldest wire service in Germany, the W.T.B. (\textit{Wolff’s Telegraphisches Bureau}) was established in 1849 and was politically and financially controlled by the government. In 1913, the T.U. (\textit{Telegraphen-Union}) was formed and became a division of the nationalist Hugenberg media group in 1919.\footnote{Winfried Lerg, “Media Culture of the Weimar Republic: A Historical Overview,” \textit{Journal of Communication Inquiry} 12 (1988): 94-107, here, p. 99.} Although newspapers employed their own journalists, it was not uncommon for news services to include international, national and regional reports from syndicated material.\footnote{Lerg, “Media Culture of the Weimar Republic,” 99. After 1919, 50 new picture agencies were established. In the early 1920s, there were approximately 40 agencies in Berlin alone, each employing approximately ten full-time photographers and 70 freelance photographers. Moreover, picture agencies established in the United States and Great Britain began to open offices in Berlin: Keystone View Company in 1926, Wide World Photos and Associated Press News Photos in 1927 and the Pacific & Atlantic in 1928, all of which provided greater access to visual material on current events on a global scale. Torsten Palmer, \textit{The Weimar Republic: Through the Lens of the Press}, ed. Hendrik Neubauer (Cologne, 2000), 22.} While some photographers were employed as staff for a particular newspaper or
illustrated magazines, the majority of press photographers in 1930 were only loosely affiliated with one publication. If a photographer chose to work for a photo agency, they were given no choice in the placement of their images. However, editors of popular magazines offered contracts to successful photographers with specifications for a front page photo or a lead photo for an inside story. Images became a viable commodity, and, while readers demanded more interesting and unusual photos, agencies adopted different styles in order to compete with one another.  

Publishers, relying on photo agencies for the images, also depended on an array of distribution methods to inundate their readers with their magazines. In *Reading Germany: Literature and Consumer Culture in Germany Before 1933*, Gideon Reuveni argues that the expansion of “reading sites” enabled publications to reach a broader social stratum. These spaces, made possible by urbanization, included bookstores for travelers in railway stations, kiosks operated in the street and vendors who moved among the crowds, selling papers. These public spaces became points of contact between all social classes and allowed individuals to choose, on a daily basis, their reading material. Magazines also offered special subscription rates which readers could make use of by filling out a form and mailing it to the magazine. The success of tabloids, with their bold headlines and sensational photographs, that were sold on the streets forced many publishers to follow this example. Although publishers did not want to adopt the content of the tabloids, they did recognize the

---

68 Hardt, *In the Company of Media*, 71.
70 Reuveni, *Reading Germany*, 122.
71 Reuveni, *Reading Germany*, 122.
need to incorporate some of their techniques (both in an aesthetic and practical sense) in order to stay commercially viable.\textsuperscript{72} The increase in reading spaces and distribution methods provided a vast new audience for publishers.

The expansion of the press in Germany, in conjunction with technological developments, impacted the whole political spectrum of print media and allowed publishers to expand their readership. These initial developments set the groundwork for the continued growth of the illustrated magazine, journalistic conventions and stylistic standards. The use and role of photographs, however, was not without controversy. In order to understand the contentions around the use of images, it is necessary to examine some of the general debates, during the Weimar Republic, which established the function of images in the illustrated press.

The influx of images in the wider public was unprecedented in the 1920s. Critics bemoaned the explosion of reproduced images in mass media and hoped readers would develop a discerning taste. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1920s, the allure of the image had won. Readers demanded interesting, provocative and entertaining photographs and continued to purchase illustrated magazines on a mass scale. The publishing houses and editors of the illustrated magazines had a stake in how images were used and understood by the public sphere. The inclusion of images enhanced text in popular illustrated magazines as they became a vehicle for modern communication; readers could extrapolate meaning through “seeing” rather than “reading.” Moreover, as many scholars have indicated, photography was laden with ties to the “scientific understanding” of the world, one that was “objective,” where reality passed through a lens and editors presented an unaltered reality to their readers. Photography had “‘grown a conscious of its own laws’ due to its capacity for an ‘absolute

\textsuperscript{72} Ross, \textit{Media and the Making}, 143.
realism’ and even ‘super realism.’”73 Editors often treated photographs as unbiased images of people and events (even though they knew better), with the understanding that the public accepted them without criticism. As scholar Hanno Hardt states, “Photographs are assigned the power to establish the real conditions of society, either in the form of middle-class conceptions of tradition and survival or in the provocative style of social criticism, with its attacks on the social and political establishment.”74 The camera supplied the means to define a seemingly unprejudiced “truth,” and the perspective of “truth” was formed by both the individual taking the photograph and how a publication chose to place the photograph in its publication. Although photographs, for some, may have seemed impartial and carried an air of objectivity based on technological advancements of reproduction, some contemporaries sharply criticized the expansion of the illustrated press and the use of photographic representations.

One of the most prolific critics was the leftist writer, journalist and sociologist Siegfried Kracauer. In an essay first published in the Frankfurter Zeitung in 1927, he stated, “Never before has a period known so little about itself. In the hands of the ruling society, the invention of illustrated magazines is one of the most powerful means of organizing a strike against understanding.”75 When “reality” is regarded as the “essence” of a photograph, he continued, the “result is a world reduced to pictures by a commercial illustrated press, which continues in its unsuccessful attempt to immortalize the present.”76 Those who control the visual and sustain the claim of “objectivity” have the ability to construct and present their


76 Hardt, In the Company of Media, 86.
specific view of society. Kracauer’s criticisms are merely one example that the process of making photographs, their content and their use by the press did not remain an uncontested development in Weimar Germany. Other contemporary critics, who also held the belief that the photograph was a pure representation of reality to be a flimsy concept, still recognized its ability to elicit strong emotive responses.\textsuperscript{77}

While the authority and credibility of the photograph continued to be disputed throughout the interwar years, the public accepted the photo as an imprint of reality. The illustrated magazines made use of these assumptions and, in turn, the use of photographs and images became enshrined in the traditions of the illustrated press. While new technologies related to image-making and debates about the photograph flourished during Weimar, these were not the only factors that influenced the rise of the illustrated press. Technological developments went hand in hand with the expansion of the reading public, and the illustrated press was subject to changes in the media market under different political regimes.

2. The Transformation of the Media Market, New Reading Publics and Mass Culture

\textsuperscript{77} Reproductions of images in photo books, as mirrors of reality, also sought to reinforce the notion that the photographs represent an uncontested reality. Some of the well-known works include \textit{August Sander: Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts} (Munich, 1980). Sander’s photo books were banned under National Socialism. His work is unique in the respect that he focused on photographing a broad array of individuals. Other works published around the same time include Helmer Lerski, \textit{Alltagsköpfe} (Berlin, 1931). Lerski’s work focused on representations of the lower-class, the unemployed, beggars, and domestic servants. Erna Lendvai-Dircksen, \textit{Das Deutsche Volksgesicht} (Berlin, n.d. ca. 1930) documents inhabitants of remote country regions. Erich Retzlaff, \textit{Menschen am Werk} (Göttingen, 1931) concentrates on the male industrial worker and \textit{Antlitz des Alters} (Düsseldorf, 1930) concentrates on the older generation. Ludwig Briefer, \textit{Das Frauengesicht der Gegenwart} (Stuttgart, 1930) is another example of the emergence of the “photo book” in the late Weimar period.
Censorship laws, fluctuations in the market, international influences, forced alignment with the National Socialists and the needs of total war, all helped shape the format and function of illustrated magazines. What makes this media even more interesting, however, is continuity (or the illusion of continuity) in terms of overall format, design and style, especially in the general interest magazines. In order to understand the impact of radical shifts brought on by regime changes and war, it is necessary to examine the overall changes in the reading public.

The expansion of the reading public, alongside increased urbanization and leisure time, greatly contributed to the growth of the market for newspapers and magazines. Because magazines were relatively inexpensive compared to purchasing radios or movie tickets, even families and individuals with smaller amounts of discretionary income could purchase magazines. At the turn of the twentieth century, “The target readership . . . was no longer the educated male population but the less-educated bourgeoisie and especially the female bourgeoisie.” Increasing demands for democratization, the lessening of censorship and the elimination of a variety of taxes on newspapers were also reasons why the press sought out new readers. By the end of the First World War, the public relied more and more upon newspapers and magazines for up-to-date information. The years following World War I in Germany were fraught with political and social tensions upon the formation of the Weimar Republic. A vibrant culture and the mass media reflected these dramatic days and the problems they entailed. The expansion of the illustrated press allowed readers to follow turbulent political and social situations in text and images.

78 Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda,” 132-133.
80 Reuveni, “Reading as sites.”
At the beginning of the Weimar Republic communities relied on many local papers owned by family companies (and often with strong group or political affiliations) for their daily news; only a handful of mass-circulated newspapers circulated nationally.\textsuperscript{81} Germany lacked a strong national press in the 1920s, but, as media scholar Winfried Lerg notes, “The Weimar Republic saw the arrival of a new party press representing the political spectrum of the National Assembly of 1919 and subsequent General Elections for the Reichstag.”\textsuperscript{82} A system of large regional and local newspapers, including district newspapers that relied on syndicated material to advanced urban presses in Berlin and Frankfurt, dominated the spectrum.\textsuperscript{83}

Already by the end of the nineteenth century, the \textit{Generalanzeiger}, or general advertiser, became an important type of commercial publication that relied heavily on advertisements, outside of traditional \textit{Meinungspresse}, or political press. The emergence of the mass-circulated commercial daily newspaper and new illustrated magazines continued to become sources of entertainment for readers and revenue for publishers.\textsuperscript{84} Publishing giants Rudolf Mosse and August Scherl adopted the commercial approach for their papers, as well as the Ullstein Press, all of which stressed “topicality,” “universality” and “up-to-date” news and entertainment. As Ross stresses, “the underlying prerogative was sales” and films, tabloids and magazines were produced as a commodity and their “value was measured by sales.”\textsuperscript{85} These trends increased during the 1920s, when the growth of urban audiences

\textsuperscript{81} Lerg, “Media Culture of the Weimar Republic,” 94.

\textsuperscript{82} Lerg, “Media Culture of the Weimar Republic,” 96.

\textsuperscript{83} Hardt, \textit{In the Company of Media}, 65.

\textsuperscript{84} Hardt, \textit{In the Company of Media}, 65. The 1874 press law liberalized the publishing business and advertising reforms from the 1850s made ads an important sources of income for papers.

\textsuperscript{85} Ross, \textit{Media and the Making}, 18.
demanded reading material for entertainment and pleasure, not for education or spiritual growth.

By 1931, the combined circulation of all illustrated magazines hit 5.3 million. The majority of these publications were related to specific interest groups, including business, trade and professional journals published by the trade unions or churches. Illustrated magazines, operating out of the urban centers of Weimar Germany, had the opportunity to attract more readers than most of the thousand other journals because they carried “something for everyone.” One of the important goals of the commercial illustrated magazines was to expand their readership, and the best way to do so was to offer a variety of material in one publication. More eye-catching layouts, separated sections for readers and attempts to find “universal appeal” were general characteristics of the illustrated magazines. This style was epitomized in the most popular magazine during the Weimar Republic (which continued in the Third Reich), the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung (BIZ)*, published by the powerful Ullstein Press. The commercial press, like the *BIZ*, also claimed to be “non-political” but were all geared to a specific “world-view,” which was reflected in their content. Ross argues that “The goal was to offer something for everyone while giving no one cause for offence. From the onset, this encouraged a ‘non-political’ tendency among the mass-circulation press.”

Equally important alongside the commercial press was the increase in illustrated magazines from different political parties, all promising to represent a point-of-view to either

---

86 Knoch, “Living in Pictures,” 223

87 Magazines, including sports, humor and satire, film, fashion, cultural and literary journals, also burgeoned during the interwar years, but had smaller audiences.

encourage party members’ support or gain new readership. The Communist Party (KPD), Social Democratic Party (SPD) and National Socialist Party (NSDAP) adopted common features of the commercial press (such as a vibrant front cover and bold headlines) in order to share their vision of the world and the future to their readers. However, the communist press provided some of the most innovative work with visual and textual images (photomontages and photo-essays) in the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (AIZ), which were copied by both the commercial press and the NSDAP.\(^89\) Navigating party politics and the need to appeal to readers, however, was not always an easy task. Illustrated magazines from political parties needed to include skillful designs and appealing images while upholding the party standards.\(^90\) Moreover, publications actively sought to appeal to female readers who often made the decisions about magazine subscriptions.\(^91\) Women’s magazines, such as *Der Weg der Frau* from the KPD, *Frauenwelt* from the SPD and the *N.S.-Frauenwarte* from the NSDAP all attempted to fit into this market niche. Publishers had an active interest not only in producing women’s magazines, but also in publications that could benefit both men and women of certain political parties. Thus, the communist press hoped to reach both male and female readers with their general magazine, the AIZ. Similar hopes fostered the NSDAP, when it began to publish the *Illustrierte Beobachter* in the mid-1920s.

Both commercial and political magazines grew in popularity throughout the Weimar Republic and by 1933, illustrated magazines were a firmly established media, whose techniques and formats were utilized by all ends of the political spectrum as well as the

---


90 Evans, *John Heartfield*, 144.

91 Evans, *John Heartfield*, 144. See also, Reuveni, *Reading Germany*. 

43
commercial press. Illustrated magazines during the Third Reich “remained the primary medium of photographic journalism.”92 The illustrated press represents both the modernizing aspects of the regime and its important continuities with the Weimar Republic.93 In his article, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda: Popular Magazines in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939,” Karl Christian Führer points out that general interest magazines, like the BIZ and IB in the Third Reich, have received relatively little attention among scholars.94 Führer makes the argument, with which I agree, that general interest magazines rarely included “negative messages” within their pages. He argues that “unlike daily newspapers they must be regarded as a tool to generate only positive emotions and an optimistic outlook, both with regard to the Volksgemeinschaft and the reader’s personal prospects.”95 I would extend his argument further, contending that the function of entertainment and spaces for personal “instruction” played an equally important role during World War II.

While National Socialist magazines like the Illustrierte Beobachter and the N.S. Frauenwarte expanded in the Third Reich, the party quickly shut down oppositional KPD and SPD presses. After their accession to power the Nazis implemented the “Emergency Decree for the Protection of State and Nation,” which justified the immediate suspension of any rival’s press. Following decrees, like the “Editors Law,” set the stage for more power over the press, including control measures for editors and journalists.96 The official Nazi

92 Ross, Media and the Making, 324.
93 Ross, Media and the Making, 264.
94 Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda,” 132.
95 Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda,” 133.
96 Peter J. Humphreys, “Historical Origins of the West German Press System,” in Media and Media Policy in West Germany: Press and Broadcasting Since 1945 (New York, 1990), 22.
publishing house and subsidiary branches wasted no time in expropriating the spaces, printing presses and business offices of their rivals, which helps explain the increase in quality and quantity of their publications.

While the process of Gleichschaltung involved strict control of the press, the National Socialists actively promoted the illusion of press plurality. Many established publications were allowed to continue under previous ownership, but only if they consented to cooperate. The commercial magazines, with their ‘non-political’ format were also quickly brought under control. For example, while the National Socialists replaced the editorial staff of the famous mass commercial BIZ, the content and overall design remained familiar to readers. As Ross has pointed out, “The vast majorities of illustrated magazines were, regardless of political affiliations of their publishers, wholly non-partisan in character before 1933, and could by and large stay that way.”97 Commercial magazines, such as the BIZ and many women’s magazines, did not necessarily fit into a National Socialist scheme, yet “. . . their political utility lay not in shouting the virtues of Nazi-lead Germany from the rooftops but in conveying a reassuring sense of cosmopolitan and social harmony by means of visual pleasure, thus teaching readers to look away from the brutality of the regime.”98

The role of the press became particularly important with mobilization for war because magazines attempted to rally the nation for fighting and defend the home front, while at the same time, remaining a source of entertainment. Both general and women’s magazines first began to focus more on overt propaganda, emphasizing positive images of warfare and glorifying the military. Moreover, as early as the mid-1930s, it was necessary for the Party to

---

97 Ross, Media and the Making, 272.
98 Ross, Media and the Making, 325.
justify conscription and the remilitarization of the Rhineland, thus beginning a process of trying to “normalize” images of heroic soldiers and a society prepared to defend national interests.\textsuperscript{99} Later the party had to rationalize the use of military support against Czechoslovakia and Poland, and stricter censorship controls meant that publications were forced to operate under the auspices of propaganda even more than before. In 1939, the party established the Periodical Service (\textit{Zeitschriften-Dienst}, a weekly bulletin for magazine editors), the German Weekly Service (\textit{Deutscher Wochendienst}, which supplied pictures and other information) and a new system of instructions similar to those issued in newspapers.\textsuperscript{100}

The role of \textit{overt} propaganda during World War II has long been a focal point for historians interested in mobilization and the needs of total war. However, Ross argues very persuasively that “if there was ever a ‘golden age’ of mass culture in Germany, it was not the heady era of Weimar experimentation but rather the very years in which the Nazis launched the most lethal war in history.”\textsuperscript{101} In contrast to World War I, when authorities viewed entertainment as \textit{damaging} to the support of war, the Nazi party actively encouraged entertainment, because it was vital to maintain morale.\textsuperscript{102} During the beginning of the war, popular illustrated magazines celebrated victories and women’s magazines encouraged support of the military through practical advice, savings measures and first-aid instructions, delineating sex-based roles founded on ideas about what female readers needed to know to ensure victory.\textsuperscript{103} At the same time, as Germany’s fortunes began to turn, magazines like the

\textsuperscript{99} Ross, \textit{Media and the Making}, 344.

\textsuperscript{100} Ross, \textit{Media and the Making}, 362.

\textsuperscript{101} Ross, \textit{Media and the Making}, 347.

\textsuperscript{102} Ross, \textit{Media and the Making}, 347.

BIZ and the IB clearly made an effort not to mention the war. Although some articles discussed “working together” on the home front and the cover images were often of heroic soldiers, the images of female entertainers or “bathing beauties” only intensified.

For all the effort that various officials put into maintaining alluring, entertaining and “informative” publications, when the war came home, the quality of magazines quickly declined. Toward the end of the war, magazines took a turn for the worse. Publishers printed magazines on cheap paper, editors culled old photographs from the archives and grainy photographs contributed to the overall poor quality of the magazine. The size began to decrease dramatically, although publishers still attempted to print within their regular press schedule. Previous editions of 24 to 34 pages shrunk to six pages. The pages of the illustrated press ignored the setbacks and losses of the German military. They continued to proclaim ultimate victory and present a façade of civilian ‘normality.’

3. The Rise of the Illustrated Magazine

The publications for this study were chosen for four main reasons. First, they represent a mixture of political and commercial magazines, allowing for a more in-depth approach to analyzing contesting images of the Modern Woman. Secondly, the magazines were popular with a wide audience and were able to reach a broad social stratum. Third, magazines for

---

In order to both save space and make the press more understandable to others (i.e. conquered people), most of the popular magazines switched from the traditional Gothic to Latin script and continued to modernize publication’s overall formats and design. See Ross, Media and the Making, 363.

104 In 1942 and 1943, magazines continued to emphasize victories in France and Poland but remained silent on losses and setbacks and omitted references to the loss at Stalingrad.
both “general” readership and female readership are analyzed, including women’s magazines from different political parties. Finally, these papers offer the opportunity for a study of continuity and change, not only because publishers across political regimes followed stylistic conventions, but also because some publications continued to be published under different governments. This section will analyze the general content, format and function of each publication and highlight important points of transition in both editorial matters and political changes.

3.1 The Commercial Press: The Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung

Founded in 1890, the first mass commercial illustrated publication in Germany, the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung (BIZ), reached a steady circulation of over two million copies in the 1920s and into the 1930s.105 The BIZ, which was part of the Ullstein Press, was one of the three most powerful presses in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century and targeted a middle-class readership.106 The Ullstein Press became one of the “. . . first publishing enterprises . . . of the industrial order” and had the means to print magazines in large numbers and distribute them widely.107 The BIZ was a financial success for the Ullstein company both in terms of circulation profits and advertising. Advertising volume reached near 50 percent of the publication by 1930 and remained steady through the Third Reich,


107 Lerg, “Media Culture of the Weimar Republic,” 94. The Ullstein Press published popular authors such as Vicki Baum and several magazines focusing on the middle-class. Ullstein magazines include the women’s journal Die Dame, a periodical for housewives Blatt der Hausfrau and UHU, a small publication which included short stories, “racy reportage” and nude women, see Lerg, “Media Culture of the Weimar Republic,” 134. The influential daily newspapers Vossische Zeitung and Berliner Morgenpost were also published by Ullstein.
although declining during the war. Consumer goods, targeting a female readership, including health and beauty aids, cigarettes, clothing, bicycles, automobiles, chocolate, coffee and small household appliances, spoke to middle-class readers who had the purchasing power to obtain such goods. The Ullstein Press was also the first publishing house to use the method of street vendors to sell their newspapers and magazines, including the BIZ, beginning in 1904. Other newspapers began to follow suit and this became “not only a way of distributing reading material but also a form of publicity for newspapers and journals.”\textsuperscript{108} Readers could easily pick up the weekly edition of the BIZ on their way to work.\textsuperscript{109}

In general, the magazine avoided political issues, concentrating instead on social and cultural developments, as well as international events. The wide range of topics included concerts, theatre, film, reports from institutions and events, sports reportage and travelogues.\textsuperscript{110} The images were used to construct and reflect a middle-class view, a notion of a heile Welt (ideal world) and ideal future. Although the sources of photographs differ widely between publications, 80 percent of the photo essays in the BIZ are identified with a particular photo agency, by an individual or by an individual in conjunction with a specific agency.\textsuperscript{111} Domestic photo agencies, such as Dephot and Weltrundschau, provided much of the material for the expanded illustrated press, including photographs produced in foreign

\textsuperscript{108} Reuveni, Reading Germany, 283.
\textsuperscript{109} Approximately 16 percent of the BIZ’s circulation was in Berlin, the rest was distributed throughout Germany, thus reaching a far broader audience than most regional medium-size publications. Hardt, Pictures for the Masses, 15-16.
\textsuperscript{110} Hardt, In the Company of Media, 73.
\textsuperscript{111} Some of the most celebrated photographers of the time, including Felix H. Man and Erich Salomon, published their work in the BIZ. Hardt, Pictures for the Masses, 16.
countries like the United States. As Hardt noted, “German photojournalism in the 1920s attracted many photographers who produced series of picture essays under the guidance of editors and picture agencies and helped bourgeois magazine journalism succeed.”

Mutually reinforced notions of the commercial viability of photographs, the expansion of picture agencies and the interests of editors all merged to continually produce and reinforce middle-class notions of culture and consumerism.

According to historian Rudolf Stöber, the secret of the BIZ’s success lay in economic managerial decisions and technical advancements, as well as the hiring of smart personnel, including the editor, Kurt Korf, who edited the BIZ from 1912 to 1933. Korff believed in the power of images. For him pictures contained the ability to impact a reader because they instantly conveyed meaning. The effect of believed photos “could not be matched even by the most eloquent text.” Korff did not see the BIZ as a replacement of daily newspapers, but rather “an extension” of them, using the visual to entice readers, to invite them to observe an authentic reproduction of events. As early as 1919, the BIZ altered the role of the

---

112 These were distributed through the Berlin bureau of Pacific & Atlantic Photos, which later became known as the Associated Press. Hardt, In the Company of Media, 66.

113 Hart, In the Company of Media, 73.

114 Stöber, Deutsche Pressegeschichte, 241. Hired to work in the Ullstein text archives in 1906, Korff was therefore familiar with the Ullstein publishing house when he became editor of the BIZ in 1912. Herman Ullstein, the youngest of the Ullstein sons and dedicated to expanding the magazine department, described Korff as “ ... one of the most versatile and talented men the Ullsteins ever employed. The wealth of his good ideas, his wit, his foresight, and his versatility were inexhaustible,” see Hardt, Pictures for the Masses, 15.

115 Hart, Pictures for the Masses, 15.

116 Korff’s writing on the illustrated press informs us about his understanding of how a photo should function, how it should be employed and why. He wrote in 1927, “the public grew increasingly accustomed to receiving a stronger impression of world events from pictures than from written reports. The report was admittedly faster, but the event in its full dimensions, in its total effect—only the picture offered that to the reader. Without a picture the things going on in the world were reproduced incompletely, often implausibly; the picture conveyed the strongest and most lasting impression.” See Anton Kaeas et al., eds., The Weimar Republic Sourcebook (Berkeley, 1994). Kurt Korff’s essay was first published as “Die illustrierte Zeitschrift,” Fünfzig Jahre Ullstein (1877-1927), (Berlin: Ullstein, 1927), 279-303.
photographer. No longer would they merely provide background or illustration for a text; now the photographer was to be a journalist, relating an event to readers in ways that were, up until then, impossible. As Korff explained,

Press photography gives the people of the world a microscope with which they can view the events of their time. The photographer travels the world on your behalf and brings it closer to you. He stands on the edge of an erupting volcanic crater, cuts through the current of Niagara in a boat, climbs to the top of skyscrapers, flies over the Himalayas in an airplane, allows himself to be buried in a trench, stands in the line of fire between Spartacus and the government troops. And all this so that you can be in the places where you’ve never been, so that you learn to see this world inside and out, from every perspective. And as you see, you are informed.  

For Korff, selecting photographs did not rely directly on the event, or the importance of an event, but rather “on the allure of the photo itself.” He aligned the development of illustrated magazines with that of cinema, stating, “It is no accident that the development of the cinema and the development of the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung ran roughly parallel. The public grew increasingly accustomed to receiving a stronger impression of world events from pictures than from written reports.” More often than not, the “allure” of a photograph rested upon the curves of the newest female film star, the exotic images of Native Americans from the “Wild West” or the development in aviation technology, not pressing social issues.

In 1933, the National Socialists replaced the editorial staff of the BIZ, but, as scholars have noted, the publication made a fairly smooth transition into the Third Reich. Corey Ross recently wrote, “For the BIZ, which had always kept a safe distance from political

---

117 Palmer, The Weimar Republic, 43.
partisanship, the upheavals of 1933 seemed to make no visible difference at all.”

During the Third Reich, the *BIZ* maintained its normal press schedule and published a new edition every two weeks. The National Socialists profited from the popularity of the *BIZ*. During the Weimar Republic, it was the most popular magazine, and without severe alternations of content and style, its circulation figures remained steady. Except for a dip in circulation numbers in the mid-1930s, which Führer attributes in part to the spreading availability of radio, the *BIZ* reached a circulation of 1.5 million in 1939, the largest circulation of a general interest magazine. As with other magazines, during the war years, the quality of the *BIZ* declined dramatically with shortages of resources. The *BIZ*’s last publications hardly resembled the magazine only years earlier.

### 3.2 The Communist Press: The Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung and Der Weg der Frau

Unlike the commercialized “non-political” *BIZ*, the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (*AIZ*) directly confronted social conditions and politics through photojournalism, which focused on working-class issues and hoped to reach both male and female workers. The *AIZ* had a press run of 200,000 in 1925 and 300,000 in 1938. It appeared biweekly from 1925 to 1927 and weekly from 1927 until 1933, when the Nazi Party closed its offices in Berlin. Images in the *AIZ* not only focused on events in Germany but also included political stories and photo essays from around the world, most frequently the Soviet Union, describing, via photographs, the living and working conditions of their fellow “comrades” in the SU.

---

121 Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda,” 138 – 139.
123 Stöber, *Deutsche Pressegeschichte*, 244.
social upheaval, poor working conditions and unemployment ran together with feature stories of worker athletes, advice columns and worker theatre productions. The AIZ published critiques of middle-class “mass culture,” consumerism and spending habits next to articles which instructed readers on appropriate ways to spend their leisure time and promoted athletics as a community orientated pursuit. Political struggles were also well-documented, including the push for an eight-hour workday, debates over abortion laws, published profiles of well-known individuals such as the leader of the socialist women’s movement Clara Zetkin and later the vehement protests against the rise of extreme right parties, including the Nazi party. The AIZ also put together special sections for women, focusing on fashion, athletics and techniques for managing a household. While the BIZ relied on advertizing for much of their revenue, most advertisers shied away from the AIZ, as the organization criticized mass consumption under a capitalistic rubric.

The publisher of the AIZ was the “energetic and enterprising Communist,” Willi Münzenberg, who formed a publishing house officially related to the Internationale Arbeiterhilfe (International Workers Relief Organization, IAH).124 The AIZ was part of a “multimedia company,” one which also produced magazines such as the Arbeiter-Fotograf and Film and Volk.125 This multimedia company and its flagship the AIZ served the Communist Party and the IAH as public forms through which they tried to reach the “masses.” As historian Detlev Peukert noted,


125 Lerg, “Media Culture of the Weimar Republic,” 97. Münzenberg multimedia company also created films for a working-class audience. For this purpose he established the Prometheus film company. In addition, the company also published leftist detective stories and other novels, children’s books, the newest novels from the Soviet Union and the well-known photomontage work of John Heartfield. See, W.L. Guttsman, Workers’ Culture in Weimar Germany: Between Tradition and Commitment (New York, 1990), 271.
The old workers’ educational movement was still very much alive—was attracting, indeed, larger numbers than ever—and the mass media enabled it to take on a more prominent public role. A greater amount of energy and hope was invested in the attempt to mobilize support and encourage participation through the new means of communication than at any other period in German history, before or since.  

The IAH’s goal was to create a program and practice of politics that was flexible enough to attract sympathizers or individuals and groups uncommitted to the cause of international communism. Münzenberg, an amateur photographer himself, argued that people needed news and opinions with “social relevance and cultural significance.” Leftist mass media, like the AIZ, used the photograph as a potential means of transmitting the political message of the Communist Party to a broader social stratum.

In Der Arbeiter Fotograf: Dokumente und Beiträge zur Arbeiterfotografie: 1926-1932, Joachim Büthe argues that the development of worker photography was a reaction against the “camera in the hands of the middle-class press” and as a tool of protest against the

---

127 Petro, Joyless Streets, 7.
128 Lerg, “Media Culture in the Weimar Republic,” 97.
129 In fact, the AIZ actively “sought ‘to turn the everyday conscience of the worker into a revolutionary conscience.’” Gabriele Ricke, Die Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (Hannover, 1974), 73. See Hanno Hardt, Pictures for the Masses. On March 25, 1926, the AIZ announced a photo competition in order to create their own source of photos, arguing that “The capitalist news agencies flood the daily newspaper with tendentious news about world events ... images from the life of the proletariat are unknown and are not being produced, because their diffusion does not further the interests of the capitalist employer ... This blank has to be filled ...” The AIZ included a list of guidelines for the photographers, including the following aspects: “Photos which characterize the revolutionary movement in the working class ... the social situation of workers ... photos which present the daily life of the work in all its phases ... the working conditions and place of work ... modern technology and work processes ...” It was a resounding success. Within weeks, a national organization of worker-photographers was founded, augmented by local clubs, and the first issue of Der Arbeiter-Fotograf was published in August 1926. This movement produced so many photographs and photo essays for the AIZ that the International Proletarian Picture Agency was organized by 1930.
representation of capitalist, bourgeois values as seen through the lens of the middle-class. Historian Hardt agrees that the use of photography was part of an ideological struggle, and “the left, especially the Communist Party, recognized the potential of images and means of propaganda.” He contends that “the rise of picture magazines results not only in a critique of photography as a technology of reproduction in the hands of bourgeois publishers, but also an intensive, purposive, and successful exploration of photography as a weapon in the hands of the working class.” Unlike the BIZ, which relied heavily on material from photo agencies, the AIZ encouraged and supported the movement of worker-photographers or Arbeiterphotographen. In turn, the photographs taken by workers became the base for the images used in the AIZ.

The AIZ’s editor-in-chief, Lilly Becher, worked as a journalist from 1921 to 1924 for the Communist press. In 1924 she became the editor-in-chief of the Communist women’s magazine Die Arbeiterin before she started to work for the AIZ in 1927. She directed a small staff of five members until 1933, when the magazine had to move to Prague. A former toolmaker, Hermann Leopold became her chief assistant and helped with the layout of the magazine. Under her direction, worker photographers began to document their own lives, a process which contributed to social criticism of both their living and working conditions as well as mobilization against their circumstances. She wrote, “To be a worker photographer

---


131 Hardt, Pictures for the Masses.

132 Hardt, In the Company of Media, 62.

133 Hardt, Pictures for the Masses, 23. See also, Koszyk Geschichte der deutschen Presse, 331-332. Arbeiter Fotografie also offered technical and ideological assistance to photographers, including a section called Bilderkritik, or Photo Critique, in which workers would submit their photographs and were offered suggestions to improve them.
meant to admit the subjectivity of one’s own approach, to overcome the bourgeois influence upon the activities of viewing and taking pictures. . .”\textsuperscript{134} In order to preserve a sense of unity, credits beneath a photograph often identified the photographer as a “worker photographer,” without a name, or merely used an individual’s initials and the name of a city.

The \textit{AIZ} promoted activism via photography through the inclusion of worker photographs (mostly male images) while trying to expand its male and female readership through the use of images. Münzenberg and the editorial staff were well aware that it was “easier to sell an illustrated magazine to an indifferent worker than a theoretical brochure.”\textsuperscript{135} Becher argued that a single photograph can only describe the detail of an event, but a series of photos can “enhance the entire event,” and even if single photos are used, said Becher, they “demand more than a heading,” perhaps emphasized by a poem, for example.\textsuperscript{136}

The difference between the content of the photos in the \textit{AIZ} and the middle-class press indicates the various motivations behind each publication. Hardt argues that the \textit{AIZ} aimed to “experiment and instruct” rather than “charm and persuade,” like the \textit{BIZ}.\textsuperscript{137} But interestingly, the documentary style of photography developed in the \textit{AIZ} was actually so innovative and successful that the editors and photographers of more conservative magazines used this format too, although the content used created different visual narratives. The “narrative” photo essay was adopted by the middle-class press as they seized upon the significance of telling a story by visual means, one in which the reader, or the “viewer,” can immediately evaluate and respond emotionally, according to their own social outlook. Thus,

\textsuperscript{134} Quoted by Hardt, Pictures for the Masses, 23.
\textsuperscript{135} Hardt, Pictures for the Masses, 23.
\textsuperscript{136} Büthe, Der Arbeiter Fotograf, 18.
\textsuperscript{137} Hardt, In the Company of Media, 62.
the AIZ not only confronted and challenged middle-class values and merits of capitalism, but successfully contributed to redefining the role of images in the illustrated press.

The AIZ, however, was not the only communist illustrated magazine aiming for mass readership. In 1931 Marianne Gundermann began editing the communist women’s magazine Der Weg der Frau, which replaced Die Arbeiterin. The illustrated magazine was published once a month, until the National Socialists shut it down in 1933. It aimed for a broader readership beyond female party members of the KPD, mostly working women (“werktätige Frauen”). Der Weg der Frau was intended to focus on women’s issues that would interest average working class women, in particular, political debates concerning the repeal of § 218, the paragraph of the penal code that made abortions illegal, and access to birth control, as well as other social and political issues related to female work, prostitution, poverty and political involvement of women. The magazine included a variety of images, photographs and illustrations, alongside an arresting visual cover. The content of the publication did not just focus on “high” politics, but also the demands, responsibilities and work of everyday life. Each publication included special sections for sports, fashion, housework, childhood education, employment, film and book reviews and guest articles from female political activists. Unlike the AIZ, the woman’s magazine included a special section of “letters to the editor” and special addresses to the readers in an attempt to foster a more intimate relationship with the readers. The publication contained practical advice for its readers related to childcare, the home and family and paid employment.

Der Weg der Frau used similar strategies as the AIZ to distance itself from other publications. While the design looked familiar to readers, the content emphasized the gulf

---

between real, working-women and the fantasies portrayed in publications like the BIZ. Both communist publications were immediately disbanded in 1933 and Der Weg der Frau ceased publication entirely. The AIZ continued to operate in exile and was published out of Prague until 1938. The circulation fell to 12,000, however, and attempts to smuggle the magazine into Germany failed. In 1938 the AIZ had to be abandoned by its exile editor-in-chief Franz Carl Weiskopf, who had to flee from the Nazis to Paris.

3.3 The Social Democratic Press: Frauenwelt

During the Weimar Republic, the split in the labor movement forced a realignment of the socialist press and increased competition for readership. Economic factors, including inflation before stabilization in 1924 and the increasing demand to modernize the press in order to compete with middle-class periodicals, motivated discussions concerning the aims and content of publications. The SPD published the women’s illustrated magazine Frauenwelt between 1924 and 1933. In the first quarter of publication, Frauenwelt amassed

---

139 Herbert J. Altschull, “Chronicle of a Democratic Press in Germany Before the Hitler Takeover.” *Journalism Quarterly* 52 (1975): 229-238. See, W.L. Guttsman, *Workers’ Culture in Weimar Germany*, 276. W.L. Guttsman notes that although local party representatives were eager to “preserve the primacy of the papers’ political and educational functions . . . the SPD leadership and many of the journalists argued that if the press was to attract more readers it must change its character and widen its appeal.” Between new editorial policies which supported the inclusion of more pictures, the development of the Konzentration A.G. in order to distribute loans and subsidies for papers in return for less political and more entertaining publications and the relative stabilization of the economy in 1924, the social-democratic press reached its peak in 1929 at 1,300,000 copies. The addition of illustrated magazines augmented the mainly educational and political functions of the party newspapers, with issues related to everyday life, cultural considerations and leisure time activities. Thus, it is important to understand the function of the SPD press as a whole and the niche that illustrated magazines filled, providing insights into how the social-democratic press used photographs in both a political and cultural manner.

140 Altschull, “Chronicle of a Democratic Press.”
67,000 subscribers. By 1926, it had 100,000 readers and 40 to 60 percent of female party members subscribed to the publication. By 1933, the circulation peaked at 120,000. Frauenwelt, similar to the Weg der Frau, aimed for a readership beyond the female party members of the SPD. It hoped to reach the large number of unorganized female relatives of male SPD members. The Frauenwelt replaced the traditional social-democratic women’s magazine Die Gleichheit, which the party had published since 1892, and which had reached during World War I a number of 125,000 copies. The Frauenwelt dealt with all areas of female life, the economy, society, politics and the family. It took the “the domestic problems of working class women” as serious as “the stimulation of leisure time interests.” The magazine “sought to combine serious cultural writing with advice on domestic issues.” It “repeatedly published examples of art and literature which dealt with problems affecting women from a political point of view, but the paper also published much on female themes which had no specific political stance, and whose appeal was purely humanist.

Toni Sender, who became the editor-in-chief of the Frauenwelt in 1927, stated that “. . . the magazine wished to ‘accompany its readers into their daily lives, make their daily chores easier and help them to make their home more beautiful and to simplify their household duties.’” Sender, an active member of the Labor Movement, who had belonged to the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) from 1917 to 1921, was a representative

---

141 Koszyk, Geschichte der deutschen Presse, 308.
142 Hagemann, Frauenalltag, 537.
143 Guttsman, Workers’ Culture in Weimar Germany, 276.
144 Guttsman, Workers’ Culture in Weimar Germany, 276.
145 Guttsman, Workers’ Culture in Weimar Germany, 276.
146 Guttsman, Workers’ Culture in Weimar Germany, 281.
first of the USPD and later for the SPD in the Reichstag between 1920 and 1933. She was asked by the party leadership to take the position of editor of Frauenwelt and wrote in her autobiography, “They said they knew I was a person with strong political convictions, but they thought me also capable of speaking the language of the average small-town and village woman.” Complaints from the SPD women’s organization about the quality of the Frauenwelt had urged the party to make a change in editorial management. Between 1924 and 1927 the editors of the magazine had followed the party leadership’s guideline that the political orientation should not be readily apparent. This did not appeal to the many female party members. During their women’s conferences they demanded a change in the philosophy of the magazine in order to propel the publication to become an important socialist magazine for women. From 1927 on, Sender managed to procure two things, which enabled her to improve the quality of the publication: full intellectual freedom in her role as an editor and a sufficient budget to employ the best artists and collaborators for the magazine. She noted that the party never attempted to interfere in her work at the paper, stating, “they gave me complete liberty.” In her autobiography, Sender expounded upon the motivation behind Frauenwelt.

The idea behind the periodical was that women, having won the right to vote, should be given an opportunity to acquire some political and general culture. But there are many hardworking housewives who dislike the daily newspapers. They are not very familiar with politics nor very much interested.

---

147 Toni Sender, Autobiography of a German Rebel (New York, 1939), 263.
148 Hagemann, Frauenalltag, 540.
149 Sender, Autobiography of a German Rebel, 264.
150 Sender, Autobiography of a German Rebel, 262.
Sender’s notion that women are not familiar with nor interested in politics was shared by many female and male members of the SPD and was based on their daily experiences. Indeed, in the 1920s, women were much more reluctant to become a member of any political party or even the trade unions. Historians have explained this by the challenging daily living conditions of many working class women, who did not have the time, energy, support systems and financial resources to engage in a political party, but also with the existing gender order that defined politics as a “male domain” and the failed attempts of the male dominated labor parties to win women.\footnote{See Hagemann, \textit{Frauenalltag}.} \textit{Frauenwelt}, in its compact form and mixture of visual and textual messages, functioned since 1927 as a potential site in which female readers could engage with social and political activities in conjunction with material to entertain and instruct. However, like its other counterparts against the Nazis, \textit{Frauenwelt} was banned in 1933 by the Nazis with the advent of new press restrictions.

### 3.4 The National Socialist Press: \textit{Illustrierte Beobachter} and \textit{N.S. Frauenwarte}

Two members of the NSDAP party, Max Amann and Heinrich Hoffman, founded the \textit{Illustrierte Beobachter} in 1926 and began publication under the Nazi publishing house Franz Eher Verlag. The \textit{IB} reached a modest 50,000 copies in the first year.\footnote{Knoch, “Living in Pictures,” 228.} By the end of the 1920s, the \textit{IB} reached over 300,000 and the Nazi dailies increased to about 3.2 million.\footnote{Palmer, \textit{The Weimar Republic}, 37.} The Franz Eher Verlag publishing house also produced the NSDAP daily newspaper the \textit{Völkischer Beobachter}, the official national newspaper of the party, which reached a
circulation of over 100,000 by 1931.\textsuperscript{154} The readership of the \textit{IB} rested upon the party faithful and did not, like the \textit{BIZ}, reach an extended audience; yet, it still played a crucial role in emphasizing and developing Nazi ideology, particularly through the use of photographs. In the years leading up to 1933, the Nazi’s began to take photographs more seriously and “press photography was redefined as a necessary instrument of Nazi propaganda.”\textsuperscript{155}

The \textit{IB}’s layout and design was similar to the \textit{BIZ} and \textit{AIZ}, which included a captivating front cover and a center section designed as a place for the photo essay. The back page was devoted to individual photographs, capturing Hitler Youth camping trips, new theatre productions or military technology. The \textit{IB} had a humor section, a weekly “report” written by Hitler and an ever growing advertizing section. The advertising section of the \textit{IB} was small compared to the \textit{BIZ}, but by the end of the 1920s was larger than the \textit{AIZ}’s. In general, the majority of the advertisements focused on NSDAP party propaganda, books, pamphlets and jewelry with Nazi insignia and handguns.

The editor of the \textit{IB}, Heinrich Hoffman, had worked as an official photographer during World War I and joined the NSDAP in the early 1920s. He was chosen by Hitler as his official photographer and is credited with developing and reinforcing the mythic status of the Nazi leader in Weimar Germany. Hoffman, both as the editor for the magazine and the main contributor of photographs, was in a position to direct the layout and design as well as the content of the \textit{IB}. Hoffmann used images of Hitler and the party within the \textit{IB}, but also

\textsuperscript{154} Deltef Mühlberger, \textit{Hitler’s Voice: The Völkischer Beobachter 1920-1933: Vol. 1 Organization and Development of the Nazi Party} (Oxford, 2004), 21. See also Mühlberger, \textit{Hitler’s Voice: The Völkischer Beobachter 1920-1933Vol. II: Organization and Development of the Nazi Party} (Oxford, 2004). His extensive documentation of the development and content of the \textit{Völkischer Beobachter} rarely mentions the \textit{Illustrierte Beobachter}, but is an excellent source concerning the NSDAP’s daily newspaper. Unfortunately, I have yet to find extensive research on the background and development of the \textit{Illustrierte Beobachter}, although considerable attention has been paid to other NSDAP illustrated magazines, including Der Stürmer.

\textsuperscript{155} Hardt, \textit{Negotiated Images}, 77.
published his photographs as postage stamps, postcards, posters and picture books. The royalties from the use of Hitler’s image made Hoffmann a wealthy man and also allowed him the resources to publish several photo books of Hitler.\textsuperscript{156} While the Nazi press lacked “...the interest in talent of outstanding photographers and editors, most of whom probably never sympathized with the Nazi cause,” Hoffmann, in part, made up for this lack by his continued depictions of Hitler in a variety of media, particularly within the \textit{IB}.\textsuperscript{157}

The \textit{IB} helped to extend “...the possibilities of visual propaganda for the Nazi party, even in the absence of a strong party press, professionalism, and adequate financial support.”\textsuperscript{158} The visual propaganda, often centered on Hitler’s rallies and tours through Germany, was augmented by written political messages, both from the leader himself and other party functionaries. As Knoch observed,

\begin{quote}
The blending of documentary exactness and political messages was utilized by the Nazis as a means of first acquiring and, after January 1933, consolidating power. The quality of photographs was less important than the visual impact of confrontations, dramatizations and secular religious presentations of the \textit{Führer}. Rooted in a longstanding tradition of visual self-representation by monarchs, which was transferred into the photographic age during the imperial period, the praise of Hitler was a core aim of the \textit{Illustrierte Beobachter}.\textsuperscript{159}
\end{quote}

The majority of photo essays in the \textit{IB} concentrated on the activities of the NSDAP, particularly political rallies and parades, speakers and meetings taking place in different cities. Photo essays in the center of the magazine were primarily concerned with party rallies and demonstrations of the SA and SS marching through streets. The photomontages of Hitler,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{156} Hardt, \textit{Negotiated Images}, 76.
\item \textsuperscript{157} Hardt, \textit{Negotiated Images}, 76.
\item \textsuperscript{158} Hardt, \textit{Negotiated Images}, 76.
\item \textsuperscript{159} Knoch, “Living in Pictures,” 228.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
surrounded by supporters, became a regular feature of the *IB*, stressing the central role of the leader and his large number of supporters. These were found alongside photo essays concerning new military technologies.

Although the glorification of Hitler may have been the central aim of the *IB*, the magazine also included a variety of other subjects, seemingly apolitical, including photo essays on different types of cacti, zoo animals and architecture. Industrial production became a favorite topic of the photo essay as well, documenting, for example, how cigarettes are made or detailing the construction of new buildings. Articles and photographs concerning anti-Semitism were prevalent as well, at least during the Weimar period. Initially, the photographs and texts developed by Hoffman were designed to reach a male audience. But, by the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s, the *IB* took serious efforts to include female readers by developing a “Woman’s Page” and including advertisements marketed towards women. The *IB* continued to expand its circulation during the Third Reich and maintained the familiar format and content. One important change was the inclusion of more articles, images and advertisements directed at women. Another was a shift in preoccupation from propaganda against political and “racial” enemies to a more general interest magazine for male and female readers. While the *IB* never achieved the circulation of the *BIZ*, by 1939, its numbers had reached around 835,000.\textsuperscript{160}

In late 1932, the NSDAP began publishing a magazine for female readers as well, the *NS-Frauenwarte* (National Socialists Women’s Outlook), which became the official women’s magazine of the party. The overall content focused on women’s role in the family, female-specific paid employment, activities and education for young children, practical clothing, cooking tips and recipes, serialized novels, film and book reviews and a variety of

\textsuperscript{160} Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda,” 140.
advertisements for household goods. Photographs and illustrations were prominent features of the magazine and served to illustrate short stories, demonstrate new fashions, explain cooking methods and are frequently used as thematic or narrative photo-essays. The magazine also chronicled the work of the National Socialists Women’s League and the German Women’s Enterprise (Deutsches Frauenwerk or DFW). In 1933 the magazine already had 100,000 subscribers and was available for individual purchase.\footnote{161 Clemens Zimmermann, Medien im Nationalsozialisimus: Deutschland 1933-45, Italien 1922-1943, Spanien 1936-1951 (Kölн, 2007), 103.}

The NS-Frauenwart played a special role as the official women’s magazine of the National Socialists party. It was published on a bi-weekly basis and included supplemental newsletters and sewing patterns. By 1939 it had a circulation run of 1.4 million copies and was the single largest women’s magazine in Germany.\footnote{162 Frei, Journalismus, 72. See also, Ross, Media and the Making, 325; Zimmermann, Medien im Nationalsozialisimus, 103; and, Jill Stephenson, Nazi Organization of Women (London, 1981), 155.} During the early years of the war, the publication stressed the importance of women’s support for the military on the home front through help with the Winter Relief Aid, as members of local welfare and NS women’s organizations. It also offered practical advice for day-to-day living during wartime in terms of recipes and clothing. During the latter stages of the war, the magazine stressed more and more the involvement of women in army auxiliary groups and continued to emphasize that the German military would soon be victorious. Beginning in May 1943, the magazine shifted to a monthly publication schedule and began to decrease in size. By the end of 1944, the quality of paper and images, much like the other magazines, declined.

One might expect that the tensions or contradictory images of the Modern Woman within the illustrated press waned during the Third Reich, due to the elimination of
competing magazines, especially those with different political orientations. However, as I will show, even though debates about the Modern Woman seemed less rabid than during the Weimar Republic, the visual landscape of the female body and ideas about proper spaces for women did vary between magazines.

* * *

I argue that the illustrated press is an ideal site to examine visual and textual images of the Modern Woman, because, first, a broad spectrum of political and social groups could afford to utilize the press as a platform for their visions of society and modernity, beginning in the Weimar Republic. Magazines continued to thrive during the Third Reich, both in terms of “official” National Socialist publications for men and women and in the seemingly “non-political” commercial press. In all cases, publishers and editors utilized the ambiguities of images (alongside textual clarification) to either promote explicit political ideologies or enforce an implicit worldview based on what editors believed their target audience desired. By analyzing the visual and textual images of the Modern Woman in these illustrated magazines, from a broad political spectrum, and focusing on their similarities, differences and contradictions, we can gain a better understanding of how each magazine contributed to a public discourse on the gender order in general and the roles of femininity in differing versions of modernity in particular.
Part II:

Contested Representations of the “New Woman” in the Illustrated Press of the Weimar Republic

In 1929, Else Hermann wrote, “To all appearances, the distinction between women in our day and those of previous times is to be sought only in formal terms because the modern woman refuses to lead the life of a lady and a housewife, preferring to depart from the ordained path and go her own way.”163 Noting that the “women of yesterday” spent their time and energy caring for their children and husbands, Hermann argued that the woman of today “has set herself the goal of proving in her work and deeds that the representatives of the female sex are not second-class persons . . . but are fully capable of satisfying the demands of their positions in life.”164 This call for women to embrace their independence and “clear the way for equal rights for women in all areas of life” did not mean that women were losing their “feminine” qualities, nor does the modern woman “stand for the complete equality of the representatives of both sexes.”165 Corresponding and competing images of the Modern Woman within the pages of the illustrated press, point to the contested nature of femininity during the Weimar Republic. In their different newspapers and magazines political groups

163 Elsa Hermann, “This is the New Woman,” Weimar Republic Sourcebook, ed. Anton Kaes et al. (Berkeley, 1994), 206. This was first published as So ist die neue Frau (Hellerau: Avalon Verlag, 1929), 32 – 43.

164 Hermann, “This is the New Woman,” 207.

165 Hermann, “This is the New Woman,” 208.
across the spectrum presented their own interpretation of the “New” or “Modern” woman to their readers.

The image of the consumer orientated New Woman in Weimar Germany became the personification of urban life, independence, consumerism, mass media and new technologies. Young women, entering the job market, particularly the white-collar workforce, were perceived as the epitome of the New Woman. She wore the latest fashions, used make-up, cut her hair in a *bubikopf*, spent her leisure time at cinemas or bars and worked as a typist or shop girl. However, hidden behind the notion that the New Woman was the cultural symbol for modernity in the Weimar Republic are contestations which emphasized different elements of female modernity, including paid and unpaid work, consumerism and sexual politics.

In order to explore the range of competing images of the Modern Woman during the Weimar Republic, I ask, how do the illustrated magazines construct the Modern Woman in relation to other forms of feminine behavior? What do the magazines consider appropriate? What forms of female behavior or appearances are criticized and why? How do gender, class and race inform the magazines’ production of the ideal Modern Woman? What are the tensions found within and between the publications? How are the images and text related? Does the text contradict or complicate the visual representation in the magazine or does it reinforce the message of the image? By examining the text and images of the Modern Woman one can better understand how the mass marketed illustrated magazines attempted to regulate and enforce an ideal type of female modernity that was directly related to different political and social needs.

In order to situate the images of Modern Women in the post-WWI context, this part will first discuss the postwar gender order and women’s marginalization in party politics. Then, I
will explore the relationship between images of the Modern Woman and paid work with a focus on female white-collar work and the representations of paid work in different sectors of the labor market. Next, I analyze the rationalized, modern household in which women performed unpaid house and care work, which became a key trope for an alternative understanding of the Modern Woman. Sexual politics, fashion and sport intertwine in the fourth chapter, which examines the female body as a battleground for projects of modernity. The final chapter investigates the radicalized discourses in the late 1920s and early 1930s, which linked female modernity, racial politics and anti-Semitism.

1. Introduction: The Postwar Gender Order and the “Battles between the Sexes”

The First World War called into question some of the basic assumptions of the gender order. Women contributed to the war effort through paid work and supported the war by undertaking jobs in war welfare. As Red Cross nurses or even military auxiliaries, they provided moral support to their nation.166 Women’s demands for the vote were fulfilled with the establishment of the Weimar Republic. But, the revolutionary fervor in Germany and the tensions related to the establishment of the republic also included demobilization laws that demanded women return home from the workforce.167 Implicit in all arguments was the fear that a damaged nation and a declining birthrate, alongside the “emancipated” women, did not bode well for the future of the nation. Regardless of any parties’ previous opposition to


female suffrage, however, they all attempted to campaign for women’s votes. As Julia Sneeringer has argued, all of the political parties of the Weimar Republic from the far left to the far right shared basic assumptions about a gender-specific division of labor in politics and the maternalist role of women. Their party propaganda portrayed them “as ultimately capable of only political action consistent with ‘female nature’ . . . while simultaneously discouraging them from deploying that femininity in ways that could seriously challenge the status quo.”

Women’s initial participation in elections seemed promising at the beginning of the Weimar Republic, with nearly 80 percent of all eligible female voters participating in the first elections in 1919. The vote, many hoped, “would lead . . . to legal reforms, widespread social legislation, wage equalization, improved protection for women workers, and increased educational opportunities for women and girls.” Many also joined a political party, especially the SPD and the trade unions in 1919 and 1920, as a response to the political changes and the equality the Weimar constitution seemed to promise them. Because many men and women in politics shared the belief of the party leaders that the natural maternal “female character” would contribute to the betterment of society and supported the “equal but different” approach to female emancipation, women active in party politics and parliaments remained stuck in specific “female” areas of politics like education, family health and welfare. Furthermore, many male members of parties and trade unions “worked increasingly to narrow women’s space in the political arena” even further and understood politics as a “men’s matter” and did not want to work with or compete against women in


politics.\textsuperscript{171} As historians have underlined, throughout the Weimar Republic, “Despite the rhetoric about women’s emancipation, patriarchal ideology continued to dominate all institutions of German economic and political life.”\textsuperscript{172}

As a result, the gains for women’s equality in politics, the economy and society remained unsatisfactory. Many women who had joined a party or the trade unions in the early Weimar Republic soon left these male-dominated organizations. If they became active in politics they remained largely outside the structures of party politics and worked in self-help networks, consumer, children’s and youth or welfare organizations or supported the rising sex reform movement.\textsuperscript{173} The lack of real change for women was symbolized by the decreasing number of women delegates in the Reichstag, which in turn may have reinforced women’s perception of politics as a “men’s matter.” In addition, the hateful and heated political debates and the violence in the streets toward the end of the Weimar Republic, may have motivated women to withdraw completely from politics or support one of the more Christian or national-conservative parties that promoted women’s roles as wives and mothers and demanded a return to the gender and social order of the past.\textsuperscript{174}

Newfound space for visual representations of women in politics in the illustrated magazines echoed the antifeminist politics of the male majority in the political parties of the Weimar Republic. During the 1920s, women experienced a great divide between the political

\textsuperscript{171} Belinda Davis, “The Personal is the Political: Gender, Politics, and Political Activism in Modern German History,” in Gendering Modern German History: Rewriting Historiography, ed. Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert (New York, 2007), 107 – 127, here, p.116.

\textsuperscript{172} Bridenthal and Koonz, “Beyond Kinder,” 34 – 35.

\textsuperscript{173} See Hagemann, Frauenalltag, und Männerpolitik: Alltagsleben und gesellschaftliches Handeln von Arbeiterfrauen in der Weimarer Republik (Bonn, 1990). She demonstrates in her study that women did contribute extensively or grassroots political activism.

\textsuperscript{174} Bridenthal and Koonz, “Beyond Kinder,” 44.
rhetoric of the parties – especially of the left – which called for women’s full equality in politics, society and economy and their practices that often silenced female voices. Because of these tensions and the prevailing idea that politics was a “men’s matter,” it is perhaps no surprise that the illustrated press largely ignored women’s participation and discrimination in formal politics and represented politics and political leadership mainly through visual images of male leaders.  

This is certainly not to say that representations of women were apolitical. In fact, I argue that what is important for this study are the ways in which illustrated magazines were able to politicize visual representations of the Modern Woman – related to paid and unpaid work, sexuality, consumption, fashion, beauty and sport – precisely because, on the surface, some of these issues could be presented as “apolitical.”

After World War I, the influx of images of Modern Women disseminated by mass media increased the perception, especially in the conservative milieu, that women were out of control and “misbehaving”: taking on roles that went against their “female nature,” denying their duties as mothers and wives and pursuing pleasure and entertainment rather than contributing to the betterment of the nation. As Birthe Kundrus has noted, “In the war years and after, it was the possibility of an economically, socially, politically and sexually independent woman that so strongly captured the imagination of contemporaries.”

Solutions to assuage anxiety included continuous attempts to stabilize the family and to contain the gender conflict by reasserting a so-called traditional gender order. Redomesticating the female war worker with the demobilization policy, endorsing the role of women in the household and family in the media, supporting the public education of girls and

---

175 There are some exceptions to this, particularly in the KPD’s women’s magazine *Weg der Frau* and the SPD’s women’s magazine *Frauenwelt*, but on the whole, representations of the Modern Woman were not normally linked to formal politics.

women and developing the early stages of a welfare state were all attempts to return to
“normalcy” and “fix” a population affected and decimated by war.

Yet, reestablishing the gender order (and thus society in general) did not necessarily
mean returning to an imaginary past. On the one hand, clearly delineated gender roles for
men and women, based on gender specific tasks in the “public” and “private” spheres were a
sign of stabilization. On the other hand, the creation of new types of Modern Women, who
embraced symbols of modernity – whether through clothing, the use of scientific principles
in the household or rationalized ideas about the female body, sexuality, and marriage –
became part of a landscape in which modernity and assumptions about conventional gender
roles were not always mutually exclusive. To be sure, some versions of the Modern Woman
propagated in the mass media – especially those which depicted her as a self-assured,
sexually independent urban consumer – were criticized by publications from both the far left
and the far right. But other types, like the rationalized housewife or the athletic female
comrade, did not necessarily give up their special “feminine” qualities or their gendered roles
in the home and workforce in order to embrace an idealized construct of the Modern Woman.

2. Images of Paid and Unpaid Work as a Marker of Female Modernity

Women in paid work and the gender division of labor became a central topic of debate during
the Weimar Republic, not least because of the widespread representations of female white-
collar work that indicated to conservative critics that women were choosing paid work over
marriage and family. Moreover, at the beginning of the Weimar Republic, during the first
years of demobilization, women were accused of competing for men’s jobs, threatening the
idea that men should be the primary breadwinners. Toward the end of the Weimar Republic,
during the Great Depression with its high levels of unemployment, this discourse emerged once again. One scapegoat in these debates was the so-called “double-earner,” a married woman who engaged in paid work. The conservative public especially, but also many male trade union members, demanded the removal of all married women from the workforce by law, which indeed was implemented for state service in 1932.\footnote{Karin Hausen, “Unemployment also Hits Women: The New and Old Woman on the Dark Side of the Golden Twenties in Germany,” in Unemployment and the Great Depression in Weimar Germany, ed. Peter D. Stachura (Houndmills, 1986), 131-152.} The illustrated magazines responded in different ways to these developments and debates, but their joint focus was mainly on white-collar workers. The mainstream commercial Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung promoted the young, beautiful, single, female white-collar worker in its advertisements for clothing, lingerie, perfume and cosmetics. The communist publications AIZ and Weg der Frau criticized this middle-class consumer construction of female work and offered an alternative version of the Modern Woman that was based on the communist belief that the most important precondition for female emancipation was economic independence. The SPD’s Frauenwelt, weighed in on the debates over the white-collar worker by focusing on the discussion of different types of jobs available and appropriate for women. The NSDAP’s Illustrierter Beobachter used representations of white-collar workers to emphasize the problematic decadence of the New Woman.

“Work,” however, did not mean for women – married or not– only paid work in the workforce. Women’s roles within the household, as caregivers and efficient engineers of the home, took on special resonance during the Weimar Republic when “modern” methods of household rationalization promised to provide more free time for mothers and housewives. Publications like Der Weg der Frau and Frauenwelt dedicated pages to discussing the latest
techniques for housework, up-to-date living spaces and ways to create something “new” from something “old.” This, too, was a marker of the Modern Woman.

2.1 Defining the Gender Division of Labor: Images of Women in Paid Work

One of the most prominent and contentious visual images of female paid work during the Weimar Republic was the modern woman as the office or shop worker. Her visual presence within the illustrated press, alongside related images in popular films and novels, helped to create the icon of the New Woman who became central to debates over paid employment and the “emancipated” woman. Communist and social democratic magazines in particular showed working women in other sectors of the labor market in photo-essays and articles, but much less often. The following sections will first discuss the controversial images of female work in shops and offices and analyze the various methods in which the image of the working Modern Woman was presented to readers. An exploration of images of working women in other sectors of the workforce then demonstrates the wider array of images of female employment in the press. The function of the images depended on the publication and, as I will show, related to differing concepts of modernity and specific political and social goals.

The Perception of Female Work in Shops and Offices

The expansion of white-collar work became one factor that pushed the construction of the New Woman into the imaginations of post-World War I Germans. The increased number of white-collar workers, an understanding of modernity which linked shop assistants and office workers in an expanded bureaucratic administration and service sectors, was one prerequisite
for the rise of the image of the New Woman. Traditional historical narratives of Weimar Germany interpreted this development of the labor market as a step towards the emancipation of women. However, since the 1980s, feminist scholars began to re-examine the established notion that women flooded the labor market after World War I. A re-evaluation of statistical data combined with a careful analysis of labor market structures proved that women’s involvement in the labor force was far more complicated. Ute Daniel and other feminist historians were able to show that women did not enter the labor force en masse during and after the First World War. Rather, the change occurred between and inside the sectors of the economy where women were working. Susanne Rouette argues that although conventional, gender specific hierarchies in society had loosened during the First World War and the rhetoric of social-democracy had espoused equal rights for men and women, the “normal” gender hierarchy in the workforce was reinstated following the war with the demobilization policy. She contends that the loss of war, the revolution, inflation and the high instability of everyday working conditions led the federal government and the governments of the Länder, the federal states, to a pursue a policy that fostered the return of conventional gender hierarchies to the economy, society and the family. Their aim was to provide “security” and “normality” in the economic social order. This “normality”


included the return to a highly gender-segregated and increasingly rationalized labor market with a growing importance of cheap female work in office and shops.

The expansion of administration and services since the late nineteenth century required a workforce with new skills, including typing and stenography. Young women, who entered the labor market before and during the First World War, embodied the necessary skills. Clerks, secretaries, typists and shop girls made up the majority of the female white-collar working class in Weimar Germany. They perceived jobs as an office clerk or shop assistant as one step above factory work, since the working conditions were better and the salary slightly higher. A precondition for these jobs were youth, beauty and fashionable clothing because of their frequent contact with the public, especially in department stores where they needed to “sell” goods through their femininity.182 In 1925 two thirds of female white-collar workers were under the age of 25 and almost all of them were single.183 Female clerical workers before the war came mostly from a middle-class background but as the labor market hungered for more commercial staff, young women from working-class backgrounds “had the opportunity to ‘rise’ to white collar status.”184 As Karen Hagemann demonstrates in “Ausbildung für die ‘weibliche Doppelrolle,’” white-collar work offered a promise of rising social status to a new generation of working class girls.185 In her analysis of white-collar work, the gender-divided labor market and everyday lives of young women in Hamburg,


183 Frevert, Women in German History, 179.
184 Frevert, Women in German History, 180-181.

Hagemann states that in 1925 33 percent of women worked in white collar jobs, 27 percent in factory work, 22 percent in domestic service, 11 percent self-employed and 8 percent as laborers in a family business. In the 1920s Hamburg represented one of the most modern and developed regional labor markets in Germany. Similar structures would not be established before the 1950s all over West-Germany.\footnote{Hagemann, “Ausbildung,” 216-217.}

This promise of rising social status, however, did not negate the realities of the gender segregated labor market. As Ute Frevert explains,

\begin{quote}
Industry’s enormous demand for commercial and business staff, which had taken root in the late nineteenth century, was related to a process which divided standardized and mechanized work functions in a way that was far from gender neutral: women were given the most routine and simple tasks, particularly the operation of new office machines . . . While men saw it as an affront to their dignity if they had to stoop so low as to become typists, women seem to be blessed with a certain aptitude for the keyboard; digital suppleness acquired through playing the piano proved to be of practical value here.\footnote{Frevert, \textit{Women in German History}, 178.}
\end{quote}

There were almost one-and-a-half million white-collar workers in 1925, three times more than there were in 1907 which constituted an increase of 5 to 12.6 percent of all women in paid work.\footnote{Frevert, \textit{Women in German History}, 177.} The indicators of the gender division of labor for female white-collar work included simple, mechanical, repetitive work, which needed lower qualifications and paid less than men. White-collar workers were often employed in small to medium size businesses.\footnote{Ute Frevert, “Traditional Weiblichkeit und moderne Interessenorganisation: Frauen im Angestelltenberuf 1918-1933,” \textit{Geschichte und Gesellschaft} 7 (1981): 504-533.} Frevert argues that although the role of a shop assistant or secretary may have seemed to provide a more privileged life, most young office clerks and assistants lived below
the poverty line. However, not all female white-collar workers viewed their situation in the manner that Frevert describes. Even if their working conditions were still worse than that of male office clerks and their salary lower, most young women perceived their jobs in offices and shops as a step upwards, and it was compared to female work in factories, on farms and in domestic service. Although there existed room for some young women to advance into white-collar work, the labor market remained segregated along the lines of gender, and the media’s construction and presentation of the female white-collar worker remained a distant hope for the majority of young women.

Representations of female-white collar work in the BIZ emphasized youth and beauty, primarily through advertisements, and presented a one-dimensional image of the stereotypical “New Woman,” above all, as a consumer. Two different but related types of articles and images in the communist Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung and Der Weg der Frau, have three intersecting functions. First, these publications criticized the images of the white-collar worker in films and popular novels to contrast the “fantasy” of media and the reality of everyday life for white-collar workers. Secondly, Der Weg der Frau in particular focused on real working conditions for white-collar workers in an attempt to make women more class conscious. Third, the publications attempted to create a more realistic and rationalized image of the modern female-white collar worker by including special fashion sections for office workers, but continually reminded readers of what was necessary and practical and what was not. Taken together, it is clear that while the communist publications were vehemently opposed to the glamorized representations of the office-worker, it was impossible to ignore the appeal of the image in the broader mass media.

---

190 Frevert, Women in Germany History, 183.
Toward the end of the 1920s, the SPD’s women’s magazine *Frauenwelt* included a handful of articles related to the unrealistic expectations for female white-collar workers, but focused the majority of their efforts on career opportunities for women in different sectors of the labor force, including teaching, nursing and social work. The National Socialist press highlighted *less* the ideal of the secretary or typist and focused more of their criticism on the female model, in relation to anti-Semitic language, with a handful of exceptions. The virtual absence of representations of women in paid work in the *Illustrierter Beobachter* until the late 1920s and early 1930s speaks to the marginalization of women in the magazine and their attitude toward female party members in general, who were mainly the wives of male party members. While publications also include other images of women and paid work, the following section focuses specifically on white-collar work — a symbol of the modern, emancipated female during the Weimar Republic — first in the *BIZ* and then competing representations in the Communist and SPD press.

The relationship between paid work and the consumer-orientated New Woman in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* is highlighted in the advertisements the magazine ran. Images of the typist or the secretary are found here, but rarely anywhere else in the magazine, which demonstrates the importance of targeting a young female readership with an expendable income while not accentuating women’s role in the labor force beyond the power of her pocketbook. Much like her counterparts found in the popular films and novels, she

---

Fig. 1, *BIZ*, June 2, 1929
“Good looks despite a stressful job!”
symbolized the New Woman. Identified with her job, authors and directors often placed her in her workspace, but concerns over working-conditions and wages were never the topic of discussion. Rather, her appearance and relationships with the men around her became of central importance to popular narratives.\textsuperscript{191} Cosmetic, clothing and perfume industries targeted the secretary, typist or shop girl as the primary consumer.

When the typist or secretary is presented, she is always young and attractive. One such example is the following advertisement from June 1929, showing a woman sitting behind a typewriter, holding a bottle of perfume, as her boss leans casually across her desk (figure 1).\textsuperscript{192} Evidently, he is quite interested in what she has to say concerning the “refreshing drops” of lavender-orange perfume. “Good looks despite a stressful job!” declares the ad, signifying the importance of appearance and feminine qualities in the office. Although the job might be “stressful,” the perfume promises to soothe the nerves and guarantees the return of productiveness. Yet, the visual representation emphasizes the presence of the woman’s male supervisor and the bold headline emphasizes “good looks.” Productivity and soothed nerves take second place to the woman’s appearance. The most important quality is appearance, particularly in front of her boss.


\textsuperscript{192} \textit{BIZ}, nr. 26, June 2, 1929.
Another image of the female white-collar worker is shown in an ad for stockings from December 1924 (figure 2). Here the “boss” is encircled by five attentive young women. With short dark hair and stylish clothing, the women look directly at him. The two women in front, wearing short skirts, are not ashamed to show their stockings while the woman on the right shares a personal look with her boss. The stylish bubikopf and fashionable clothing are indicators of the figure of the New Woman. The ad is typical for the BIZ, in that a woman’s “job performance” does not rest upon her skills or the work she completes. The performance, in front of her coworkers and her supervisor, is centered instead upon her appearance. The advertisement also harkens to the familiar trope that the New Woman uses the workplace to attract a man for marriage.

“Hinds Honey Cream,” keeps the typists skin “soft and smooth” notes an ad that depicts the “typing pool.” While three short-haired women dutifully type away, one woman rests her chin on her hand, sitting in front of a stack of files, holding a pencil and addressing the viewer. Ads such as these both emphasize feminine work and machinery but insist that the feminine nature of a woman can be found in a jar of hand cream. "Why would you age

---

193 BIZ, December 21, 1924.
194 BIZ, February 2, 1929.
early, if you can, through the use of Matt-Cream and Cold Cream stay young?” asks an ad published on February 24, 1928.195 A woman holds a jar of cold cream and points to the label, while two of her co-workers look on eagerly, one of them sitting on the desk, leaning in to listen. The maintenance of one’s skin and preservation of youth, through brand-name products, is deemed an effective way of finding and keeping a job. In an ad published in the April 24, 1928 edition, a young woman sits behind a desk, wearing a jacket and “tie,” and writing on a notepad.196 “The working woman knows which assets a young soft-skinned complexion displays,” reads the text. This ad for Palmolive soap notes that “the most beautiful film and stage stars use Palmolive . . . because other soaps are too harsh.” Here is an ad that directly links the notion of the female office-worker to the stage and screen. The office is her “stage,” where a working woman embraces the glamour and beauty of the cinema, within the confines of her space.

These representations of female office workers also contain hints of the New Woman’s sexuality. The BIZ does not present the readers with a discourse concerning female white-collar workers other than as young, beautiful women gaining the attention of male authority and preserving their youth. For example, while the man is in a dominant position in the advertisement for perfume, the woman acquires his interest through her femininity. The male supervisor in the stocking ad in figure 2 is both literally and figuratively the center of attention. In the ads, the New Woman is an object on display at work. Her “productivity” is enhanced by what she wears and what perfume she uses. The New Woman derives her power

195 BIZ, February 24, 1928.

196 BIZ, April 24, 1928. These ads appear frequently in the BIZ. In 1929 a series of ads for hand lotion and perfume ran depicting women at work (typists and secretaries). They are similar in form, a half-page ad appealing to “typists, secretaries and stenographers” to use a particular hand product for “charming and soft hands,” such as the one found in the BIZ, September 30, 1929.
through her body, not her mind. She signifies an alluring combination of youthful beauty and sexuality that is not only found in nightclubs, theatres or dancehalls but in the realm of the workplace. She represents the fantasy of the typist or shop girl, which required the purchase of consumer goods while she herself is presented as a commodity.

The communist *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* and *Der Weg der Frau* emphasized the links between these expectations of female beauty and youth and the image of white-collar workers. Their critique intensified toward the end of the Weimar Republic, when films and novels about the female-white collar worker became increasingly popular.\textsuperscript{197} Two articles in the *AIZ*, for example, published in 1928 and 1929 admonished the bourgeois obsession with youth and beauty and its connection with white-collar work. “All for beauty,” reads the headline in December 17, 1928 edition. Five photographs and one illustration document what young women will go through to remain beautiful. The article begins by stating that most working-women, like “textile workers work nine or ten hours a day, and when the work in the factory is over, then begins the housework,” for both married and single women. Under these conditions it is very difficult for them to look young and beautiful for long.\textsuperscript{198} These are the “working and living conditions for the majority of women, which get worse in the case of unemployment or illness.” The article also emphasizes that the female white-collar workers, “if they are not so pretty or modern,” have a difficult time finding work because they must maintain a specific appearance, to be a “free advertisement for the firm.”

\textsuperscript{198} *AIZ*, December 17, 1928.
Criticizing the indulgence of women, who “dream of being slim,” and beauty the AIZ includes photographs of the latest beauty techniques. One woman has her face and neck massaged, because “one can, through this paraffin mask, stay ‘young and beautiful.’” Another photograph shows a woman lounging on a bed, “wrapped in a paraffin binding” in order to gain an “elegant and slim” body. A serious looking man, in a white lab coat, dyes a “rich woman’s hair,” (a “headache inducing treatment”) and daily beauty routines are calculated in terms of time wasted and money spent (figure 3).

A similar article in the AIZ, published on February 12, 1929 with the title “Social Cosmetics,” illustrates the extent to which individuals will undergo medical procedures to modify their bodies.¹⁹⁹ A series of photographs show a woman’s arm, once thick and sagging with skin and fat, transformed into a slim, attractive limb. The first photograph shows the “before” image. In the second image, the arm is raised to show the incision and subsequent stitches from the operation. The third image shows the “after” picture. The “cosmetic and advertising industries,” states the article, continues to promote the image of women who are “young and beautiful!” Again, the article notes that unemployed women, searching for a position as an office worker, are required to stay young in order to keep her job.

¹⁹⁹ AIZ, February 12, 1929.
Another set of images on the page depict a tired, overworked woman and her transformation (figure 4). Her face is wrinkled, dark circles rest beneath her eyes. The second image shows the woman after the operation. The “face lift” has removed years from her face. No longer does her face sag and droop, the wrinkles and bags under her eyes have disappeared. The article notes that these are not procedures to increase the health of individuals, but are methods to maintain and uphold a specific type of beauty for women. Even breast augmentations are being performed to create an attractive female figure. Both of these articles demonstrate the concern of the AIZ with how the cosmetic and advertizing industries work together to maintain a specific notion of feminine beauty, that of youth, which is also tied to female white-collar workers. The use of photographs intends to show “reality,” thus bridging the gap between imagining and seeing beautification processes. The viewer can instantly recognize the change in an individual’s appearance or maintenance routines, proof of differences between the working and middle-class, in terms of the ability and desire to alter one’s feminine appearance.

Another article published in the February 1928 edition of the AIZ concentrates on a young middle-class female and asks, “What does a girl need for getting dressed?”

---

200 AIZ, February 29, 1928.
radically, cosmetic surgery, this critique concentrates on clothing as a symbolic marker of class and the New Woman. Included on the page is a copy of a small article entitled “U.S. Girl needs 600 Dollars for Clothes,” linking the modern women of the United States with the capitalistic gluttony of consumer goods and the situation for white-collar workers in Germany. Beneath a photo of eight pairs of shoes, neatly displayed, the caption reads, “The shoe collection of the ‘lady’ is so big—the working woman hardly has a second pair to alternate,” while another caption beside a photograph of a stylish young woman asks, “does the worker or proletarian housewife have time or money to look so nice as this young women?” The article does note that a poor, pretty girl, for 20 Marks can have a decent wardrobe including stockings, a hat, blouse, skirt, dress, coat, handbag and a pair of shoes. For the “majority of women who must create and maintain a pretty look for an office job,” there are patterns for self-made clothing and inexpensive ready-made goods. Thus, the problem for the AIZ is not the desire or requirement to adapt to new trends of fashion or present oneself at work in a stylish manner, but rather, the values embedded in the middle-class that consumes with such rampant indulgence and the fact that this is a demand imposed on women by their employers.

An article in September 1928 in Frauenwelt, even without visual images, created a colorful picture of a woman on the hunt for a job as a private secretary and also linked the high expectations for women’s appearance with white-collar work. The title reads, “Do you know what it is like . . . when you apply for a position as a private secretary?” Addressed directly to the female reader, the author writes, “You read in the newspaper: General director of a textile warehouse searching for a private secretary, with speedy shorthand … who knows

---

201 AIZ, February 29, 1928.  
202 FW, nr. 3, February 1929, p.70.
The author emphasizes the pains the young woman takes on her appearance, as a crucial component of the interview. “You wear your best clothes,” she notes and use your best posture. The rest of the article is a play-by-play narrative of “your” experience. On the way to the interview “you are thinking in the back of your mind about the rent that is due tomorrow . . . and you hope to earn 300 Marks a month at this new job,” emphasizing the need to make ends meet. As you enter the waiting room you see “twenty blond and dark-haired girls, all in gray, blue and black suits,” all of whom “have the skills.” Suddenly, a woman who just finished the interview walks into the room with “triumph in her eyes” and you hear the announcement that the job has been filled. You leave disappointed and tomorrow the rent is due. Thus ends the article, a frank forewarning to young women who hope to become a private secretary.

However, unlike the communist AIZ and Weg der Frau, the Frauenwelt did not present white-collar work, on the whole, as problematic as the far left. More important for the magazine was to present female readers with articles and images discussing a variety of options for female work and engage in debates over the difficulties of combining paid and unpaid work. It also offered advice for a fashionable but affordable wardrobe. Moreover, an important difference between the social-democratic Frauenwelt and the communist magazines rested upon radical discourses of cultural and social criticism that the latter used in order to distance themselves from the SPD and their more moderate politics.

One example of this difference includes frequent critiques of the genre of the “office film” and related fiction novels which presented a perfect target for the AIZ and Der Weg der Frau because they could criticize the role of commercial mass-media and condemn middle-class cultural values and consumer practices while offering solutions embedded in the belief
of social, political and economic change through socialist revolution. Moreover, these
criticisms of “bourgeoisie” culture, within the context of economic crisis, took on even
greater resonance as the magazines continually emphasized the gulf between representations
in the media and the daily hardships of poor working conditions, unemployment and the
struggle of working class families to make ends meet.

In the second edition of Der Weg der Frau in 1931, the article “The False Film Ideal”
criticized very popular films like “The Private Secretary,” in which a typist marries her boss.
These films, notes the magazine, depict only a “dream.” The magazine also complained
that “Very few proletarian women know the cinematic masterpieces of directors like
Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Charlie Chaplin, Stroheim or Joseph von Sternberg,” thus gently
chastising their readers who indulge in bourgeois films while offering alternative viewing
suggestions. The short review included an image of the “false” film ideal, with no caption, of
a young woman in the arms of a handsome man, presumably the “private secretary.” Another
article in Der Weg der Frau in February 1932 critiques representations of women’s everyday
work on the “silver screen.” The women, as female white-collar workers in the movies,
have soft hands and play sports to maintain a good body. Moreover, the women “always have
lovers,” men show up at any time of day in “tails” (tuxedo) and blond-haired women (dyed
blond) always have men to protect them. The females are “doll-like” and they “melt like
butter on the sun” in front of men. Even if the women have problems, their husbands are
“always heroes” because “heroes always take their wives back” after the women stray or get
into trouble. “This is not life,” the magazine reminds its readers, “but only a film.” A reader
may say, notes the article, that women are shown “sitting at the typewriter” in films like Poor

203 WDF, nr. 2, 1931.
204 WDF, nr. 2, February 1932, p.15 – 17.
as a Church Mouse, indicating that they are employed. “Yes,” remarks the article, “and she marries her boss.” A photograph of a fashionable young woman, lighting a cigarette for a man (her boss) is captioned, “‘Perhaps this will also happen to me,’ thinks the stenotypist in the movie theatre and forgets that in real life, this does not happen.”

Besides condemning the representations of female-white collar workers, the article also criticizes the representations of middle-class wives and mothers, as in the photograph of a woman preparing a meal – using as many eggs as she wants, 200 grams of butter and a liter of milk. The article notes, “Yes poverty is – what one famous poet said – a great light from within. But one is never unemployed in these films.” Moreover, children are never sick and the mothers are always pretty. “So, that is what is ‘realistic’ in the average, middle-class films – everything is happy and works out correctly,” but in actuality, notes the article, women have something much different to do than what is shown in the film: working, eating, taking care of kids and getting older. At the end of the article, the magazine encourages women to watch Soviet films, because the women look like women today – not like “photographed dolls.”

In response to films whose protagonists are secretaries, such as “Poor as a Church Mouse” and “The Private Secretary,” the AIZ also published an article entitled, “The Dream-Fabric of the White-Collar Worker,” in July 1932 (figure 5). The article, using cinema as a lens to critique bourgeois values, also condemns the films’ romantic message of the secretary marrying her boss. The dominate image on the page is from “the Private Secretary,” and two other images from the films, including “Poor as a Church Mouse,” are also included. Without textual clarification, the images look like any other contemporary review, except the AIZ

---

205 AIZ, July, 1932.
describes the “fairytale” quality of the pictures, arguing against the unrealistic notions of females who believe they can climb the social ladder by typing memos for their boss.206

The article begins by describing the poor pretty woman, who finds a prince (rich in gold and silver) who rescues her. “What is this!” exclaims the AIZ, “You’ve guessed! An old fairytale. . . .” This fairytale, transformed for cinema, places the young woman and her prince, not in an enchanted forest or castle, but in the modern, urban workspace. The prince arrives not on a white horse, but driving an automobile. The young woman does not sweep ashes from the floor, but toils over her typewriter. “Forget about your fears of loneliness,” your “unhappiness at work” because “this happiness of the dream fabric lasts for two hours!” notes the magazine, and “One dreams and hopes . . . this is the highest meaning and lowest aim of the lying romantic films,” argues the AIZ. Instead, one should recognize the struggle

---

206 AIZ, July, 1932.
for the working class, the real struggle, not the fairytale projected through the flickering lights of a movie.

The AIZ, in particular, used the strategy of printing numerous images of white-collar workers or the New Woman, including a photo essay of the dancing troupe “The Tiller Girls” in all of their glamour and sexiness, and then told readers, “don’t look”! The AIZ offered a voyeuristic, tabloid-esque view into the film world, the stage or women’s beauty practices. While consistently condemning tasteless mass culture, the reader had the opportunity to judge for themselves whether or not the smiling group of “Tiller Girls” with skimpy costumes were being “exploited” by the capitalists. While explicitly, the AIZ would never textually sympathize with this construction of the Modern Woman, reading the images against the grain, one could argue, more cynically, that the magazine was adept at creating a collection of images that were supposed to stand in contradiction to the sober, serious, practical female comrade. *Der Weg der Frau* was also not opposed to re-printing images of white-collar workers from popular films, emphasizing glamour, fast cars and men in tuxedos, but tailored their textual analysis and reports to their female readers.

---

207 A photo essay appeared during the summer of 1929 concerning the “Tiller Girls,” see AIZ, June 28, 1929. The Tiller girls, a popular performance group composed of young women, entertained with dance and song on the theatre stage. As Gunter Berghaus explains, these theatrical productions encapsulated the modern urban space and the manifestation of female youth. See Berghaus, “Girlkulture, Feminism, Americanism and Popular Entertainment in Weimar Germany,” *Journal of Design History* 1 (1998): 193-219. Revues in Weimar Germany include those of James Klein’s *Nacktrevuen* (nude-revues) and Hermann Haller’s *Ausstattungsrevuen* (emphasizing lavish décor and costumes), all accentuating the female body. See Berghaus, “Girlkulture,” 199. He describes the highly successful “Tiller Girls,” who “had been drilled to formal perfection by ex-Sergeant John Tiller,” as symbolizing the mechanization and standardization of industry in the 1920s and argues that “For the girls, work and urbanity are inextricably intertwined. No wonder, therefore, that their dances express ‘the modern rhythm of work, the beat of the machine age,” (201 - 203). Five photographs of the Tiller Girls dominate the page. The women are resting between sets, auditioning for a show, or shown on the stage. It is only the small text beneath the largest photo that condemns the lack of culture in the theatre and ends the article by criticizing young girls for trading their youth and beauty, only to be used by an “unscrupulous profiteer.” The photos are full of young, beautiful, and seemingly happy women. At first glance, one would think the paper is “selling” the Tiller Girls. It is only the small commentary that shows the dissatisfaction with the capitalistic endeavor of John Tiller’s young dancers.
The popular novel, *Gilgi: One of Us* by Irmgard Keun, for example, provoked a particularly strong response in *Der Weg der Frau* in January 1933, which dedicated part of their issue to a special section focusing on the female white-collar worker.\(^\text{208}\) Originally published as a serialized novel in the SPD paper *Vorwärts* and as a full novel in 1931, “Gilgi” was quickly adapted to film in the same year.\(^\text{209}\) The text centers on a twenty-one year old stenotypist, Gisela, or Gilgi, who works as a legal secretary in Cologne. She meets the handsome Martin, falls in love and quits her job. After becoming pregnant, Gilgi first seeks an abortion, but decides to have the child and raise it by herself, moving to Berlin.\(^\text{210}\) The article by Ingeborg Franke, in *Der Weg der Frau*, “Gilgi: Film, Novel and Reality” is accompanied by a photo of “Gilgi” from the film. She sits in front of her typewriter in the office, a telephone and stacks of papers beside her and looks into the camera with an air of self-confidence and defiance. The caption quickly indicates the position of the magazine: “One of us? By no means” (figure 6).

\(^\text{208}\) *WDF*, nr. 1, January 1933, p. 4, 6.  
\(^\text{210}\) Other plot themes include Gilgi's attempts to find her real mother, avoiding romantic entanglements with her boss at her job and a tragic ending for a colleague, Hans, who commits suicide in the novel.
The article briefly explains that this popular book “does not know at all the female white-collar workers of today” and that this work is a “fantasy of Keuns’ – not reality.” In order to differentiate the distance between the novel and everyday life, Franke asks, “How does Gilgi live?” In her apartment is a “green, plush sofa,” and, while in the book she has to struggle, she is still “better off” than her fellow employees. Gilgi also has a savings of 1200 Marks, “What stenotypist can do that in reality?,” asks the author. Gilgi, she notes, “can do more than the average: in the evening she studies language (three to begin with and later four – so she can earn more money). At the center of the story is a romance; she takes a lover, gets pregnant and leaves the man to go to Berlin. That, writes Franke, is “simply impossible.” Moreover, Keun does not speak about politics, but they are “right under her nose,” there is no “solidarity” at all, remarks the author. While conservative commentators lamented the inclusion of sexuality, Der Weg der Frau was not upset or critical of aspects of sexuality, pregnancy or abortion, but focused their critique on economic circumstances.

Three images from the film accompany the article, meant as illustrations to the illusion of fantasy that the story provides. The first image shows Gilgi at work, standing in front of her boss’s desk, wearing stylish clothing, the second shows her meeting the man of her dreams (the caption notes that “naturally, it is love at first sight”) and the third is a photo
of Gilgi in a Mercedes with her lover. The car represents urban, modern mobility and wealth— but perhaps fittingly, Gilgi is the passenger, not the driver. The final photo, larger than the three still-shots from the film shows “the real Gilgi,” an image of a young woman working at the typewriter, who is not as pretty or young as the depiction in the film. As appealing as these images may have been to some young women, the textual content reminds the readers that the high expectations of white-collar work and subsequent wealth and glamour never work out in real life. Marianne Gundermann, the editor of Der Weg der Frau wrote a brief response about the reaction to the film and novel by readers of the Vorwärts, noting that some female letter writers protested, writing that the “egotistical Gilgi” was “not one of them.” Others resented that Keun described some working women in negative terms—like her description of the “dirty woman who sewed for a living” or how it would be impossible to buy clothes for 150 Marks, something that Gilgi does in the book.  

In order to emphasize the problematic nature of the popular novel, the same edition of the magazine published special articles dealing with the reality of the female white-collar workers, beginning with working conditions of telephone operators, whose job is stressful, hard on the nerves and comes with a low salary. Gundermann notes that she came across a young woman selling flowers on the street who said “nobody has work for a 19 year old stenotypist. I am one of the million ‘redundant’ people” and “That is the life of a stenotypist in reality.” Juxtaposed next to Gundermann’s article is a photograph of women sitting around a small kitchen table in a cramped apartment, with no plush sofa in sight. The inclusion of this image, in contrast to the glamorous depictions of Gilgi, drives home the point that photographs from everyday life and of the “real Gilgi” should prove to the readers that their dreams of prince charming or a luxurious apartment is not part of the working-class struggle.

211 WDF, nr. 1, January 1933.
It is difficult to measure, but based on the responses printed in *Vorwärts*, which *Der Weg der Frau* discussed, it seems that at least some working-women were quite critical of this unrealistic representation. That is not to say, however, that there was not something appealing for many readers about Gilgi, even if or actually because she was a novel fantasy that offered women agency.

Already before the sensation of the novel “Gilgi,” the magazine consistently emphasized white-collar work and poor working conditions for women. This was an important theme throughout the entirety of its press run. One of the most striking examples is in December 1931 edition, with the following cover image (figure 7).\(^{212}\) The women, standing on the sidewalk, hands in her pocket and smiling directly at the camera indicates the iconic image of the female white-collar worker. Her short hair, belted coat and lipstick present her as a typical Modern

\(^{212}\) *WDF*, nr. 7, December 1931, cover photo.
Woman. But rather than just a street photograph illuminating urban life, a placard tied around her neck reads, “Hello I am looking for work! I know stenography and the typewriter. I can speak French and English, I can take any household work, I can do anything that requires an attentive mind.” The caption beneath the photograph states that “She has learned so much . . . and still has no work.” Within the context of economic crisis, she represents “one of the millions” who is unemployed. A related article inside, in the regular column “Women in Factories and Offices,” has the bold headline: “Fear of Layoffs.” The article argues that the women who do have jobs in offices or department stores experience long working days with low salaries and women work through their short breaks, for fear of getting laid off. The magazine notes that what the women need, beyond a better salary, is a 40 hour work-week. An accompanying photo depicts a crowd of men and women at a department store, which is advertising for 50 female and 10 male workers and the women will get paid between 34 – 50 Marks per month. A few “lucky ones” will get the job. Taken together, these images in Der Weg der Frau function as a “warning” for young women who see white-collar work as glamorous and emphasize the struggles of unemployment.

Other articles in Der Weg der Frau, like the one found in the January 1932, continued to criticize the working conditions for women in white-collar work. In this article, the magazine describes the longer hours that women are forced to work during the Christmas season at department stores, without room for demanding better pay. Their supervisors are like

---

213 WDF, nr. 7, December 1931, p.19.

214 See also WDF, nr. 5, May 1932, p. 19, “Hard Work = Typing.” The article, which does not include an image, notes sarcastically, “What a desire – to be a stenotypist!” While the films show the job “ending in marriage between the blond-haired girl and her employer,” in reality the work is “stressful” and hard on the nerves, with long days and little pay.

215 WDF, nr. 1, January 1932, p.7 – 8. The WDF included numerous articles which attempted to deconstruct the fantasy of the white-collar worker. See WDF, nr. 2, February 1932 for the article “What Female White-Collar
“officers,” who demand discipline and use every minute to gain a profit. The women make between 80 – 100 Marks each month, and the women are powerless to fight against the system themselves. These articles continually demonstrate the attempts of the magazine to combat a middle-class ideal of the modern white-collar worker, by emphasizing their exploitation in a capitalist system.

The Nazi illustrated magazine, the *Illustrierte Beobachter*, rarely included images of working-women into its publication, but an article and photographs published in November 1929, “The Misery of the White-Collar Worker,” describes the high levels of unemployment for female workers and their search for jobs. The photographs of women, standing in line at the employment office dominate the page. One image depicts a group of women standing before the counter of a social worker, while the text notes that this is often a “humiliating thing.” The article begins by noting that the “concern for daily bread” is “not just the responsibility of men anymore.” This article is not just a sympathetic look at female unemployment however; it states that “With new rights and obligations, women have assumed a great many discomforts.” Citing “the latest German statistics” women are working as much as men, but “certainly, this victory for women has also brought its drawbacks.” Moreover, the article notes that the difficulties are not just a reflection of the “severity of workers experience,” in which five vignettes reveal the exploitative nature of the business. The first, “The Undercutting,” describes how a 19 year-old woman is told her salary will be 200 Marks per month and is then tricked after a few days for working for 160 Marks a month. The vignette “Housing included” recounts a “dubious situation” for a “pretty blond” in which the employer looking for a private secretary promises housing and a pay raise. “He bought,” the article notes, “not only cheap labor – but the entire girl ... For how many women is this the beginning of a sad ending on the streets?” In another case, a married woman is fired from her job because she is considered a “double-earner”. The article is juxtaposed with a photograph and caption of the “Western Telegraph Union” in the United States, where for eight or nine hours a day, women are forced to wear roller-skates (for efficiency), but the end result is merely to help the company turn a profit. The *WDF* not only pointed to the consequences of women being duped in the labor market (the worst being forced to turn to prostitution), but pointed to the United States as an example of female exploitation – attempting to break apart the myth of the “emancipated” American woman.

216 *IB*, nr. 45, November 9, 1929. See also the cover image of the *IB*, nr. 9, March 1, 1930, which depicts a long row of telephone operators with the bold caption: “Where nerves are exhausted!”
work” but rather, “in the seriousness of unemployment.” If you want to go beyond the statistics, notes the article, just spend a few hours in one of the employment offices in Berlin. The article then proceeds to describe a typical day for unemployed women looking for work. Beginning at eight in the morning, they wait in line for a number. If a woman is lucky, she will find work. But in the worse cases, the women look for months or sometimes an entire year for a job. In some areas, the women have a space to “practice their skills” at typing, in hopes of getting a job, but the professions are so crowded that there are few opportunities. The IB seems to be giving, at first glance, sympathy towards the women, but quickly notes that in the waiting room, the “people who want to work” have become “physically and spiritually desolate.” The IB used the image of the female white-collar worker to symbolize the discontent and anxiety that pervaded society during high levels of unemployment.

Many of the articles and images, in the Communist, SPD and NSDAP press either criticized or attempted to deconstruct the fantasy image of the white-collar worker. In the communist press, the representations of the fashionable, urban secretary were juxtaposed next to visual and textual descriptions of “real” workers. The IB employed the white-collar worker as a general symbol of economic instability and the worries about women in the workforce. The representations of the female body in relation to white-collar work emphasized class differences between images of Modern Women. The communist press sought to redefine the Modern Woman in relation to the material reality of most working women by emphasizing the gulf between fantastical images of the white-collar worker found in films and the real working conditions for women. However, it was not just the secretary who lived within the modern world, but the industrial workers and female pilots in the AIZ and Weg der Frau and the social workers and teachers in Frauenwelt.
Depictions of Female Work in the Industries and Beyond

While representations of the white-collar worker dominated the pages of the whole illustrated press, other images of women in paid employment drew only the attention of publications of the Left like the AIZ, Weg der Frau and Frauenwelt. How can we explain why representations of female workers outside the office space were not as “popular” in the illustrated press in general? Arguably, the visual representation of the factory worker or the farm wife was simply not as attractive or interesting to many readers, even if in reality, women in these jobs made up the majority of female employees. The reality of these jobs was not beautiful and pretty; it did not go together well with advertisements for luxury consumer goods, which were the main funding source for commercial illustrated magazines like BIZ. Moreover, the majority of the readers of the BIZ were still middle-class and had little interest in the economic exploitation and the poor working conditions of female employees in factories and smaller workshops, middle and upper-class households and farms. Even the social-democratic magazine Frauenwelt rarely showed images of paid female work in factories, farms and households. But textual referents to women and paid work beyond shops and offices were the norm. The same holds for the communist press. The omnipresence of the female white-collar work in other new mass media, especially the movies, challenged the press of the Left to critically respond to it and thus these visual images also played an important role in the AIZ, Weg der Frau or Frauenwelt.

The representations of women’s paid work beyond shops and offices in Frauenwelt concentrate, on the one hand, on the questions of combining motherhood and paid work and, on the other hand, career or job opportunities for young women in the realm of social work, teaching, nursing and other professions that often required more training and education. Both
spoke directly to the interest of their female readership: women from the better-off social
democratic working class milieu in the cities. Unlike *Weg der Frau* and *AIZ*, the SPD
publication relied first more on textual discussions of women’s paid work, only in the later
1920s and the early 1930s, the magazine began to include more images of working women.
The editors of the magazine responded with this move to the heated public debate over the
so-called “double-earners” and wanted to protect women’s right to work. At the same time
by emphasizing qualified, especially female, jobs, they helped to mitigate the competition of
the women in the labor market, which was in fact only a competition in higher quality
segments of the civil service, particularly education, health and welfare. For example, an
article titled “Women’s Careers” in February 1928 emphasized female careers caring for
children, teaching and photography, and notes that the infant nurses were an “ideal women’s
career.”\(^\text{217}\) While the text discusses the requirements for each job, the large half-page
photograph on the second page of the article provides documentation of the “ideal” women’s
career. A male doctor stands in the center of the photograph and holds an infant in each of his
arms. He is flanked by two young nurses, wearing their uniforms, who cradle three small
infants in their arms, smiling at the camera (figure 8). The caption, “Image from a Maternity
Hospital: Christmas Presents” (children born during Christmas) is connected with a smaller
image on the page, of a mother lying in bed with her newborn, captioned “A Mother’s
happiness.”

In this and other articles from the press of the Left, the general assumption is that young women need to have some level of education or training for work. This is the message they wanted to convey to their female readers, mothers and daughters alike, because, so the arguments goes, women nowadays cannot rely on a man as their “provider.” The economy is too poor. They need to have a qualified job on their own – at least until they marry – and have to be prepared for divorce or widowhood. In articles like “Our Daughter’s Future” or “Daughter and Work,” the Frauenwelt provided advice and options for different kinds of careers.\footnote{FW n. 5, February 1926: p. 69 – 70; FW, n. 3, February 11, 1928, p.51.} One article concerning the future of young women includes a drawing of a young woman standing outside, looking into the distance at a valley. In the sky, rows of women are chained together, their backs bent and heads bowed to the ground. Amongst the women in chains is a figure of a woman holding a small child in her arms. The article notes that marriage is not always an option for young women and “according to statistics,” the “average age of marriage is 27 years old.”\footnote{FW, n. 5, February, 1926, p.69. See “Career Choices,” FW, n. 5, March 8, 1930, p.115.} But, notes the magazine, there are options for young women, including new jobs like the book handlers who might find work at a library or traditional women’s work in kindergartens. Working as a governess or nurse, gardening, tailoring or working in retail are
all considered acceptable jobs for young women. In “Daughter and Career,” the author finds that earlier, the standard idea was that sons would have “careers” and their daughters only a “job.” But, “the modern era is forcing women to search in another way to make their livelihood” and parents, “especially the mother,” should help their daughters find their way. Recognizing the changing conditions and needs of women, Frauenwelt presented advice, job descriptions and requirements for “acceptable” and “respectful” careers for young women other than factory work or domestic service. These occupations were cleaner, with slightly higher salaries and an increase in social status (due to more training and education). The Modern Woman with an independent income, in the pages of the Frauenwelt, was not presented as a consumer-driven shop-girl, like the images found in the BIZ. Rather, the necessity of work for single women and the difficulties of combining paid and unpaid work for mothers and wives were serious topics of concern.

220 FW, n.3, February 11, 1928, p.51. See also FW, n. 7, 1924 (no date), p.103 for a discussion of training, education and women’s work and FW, (no number), March 1924, p.22 and FW, n.10, May 7, 1927, p.147 for a discussion of women in education. In an article related to social work in FW, nr. 6, March 12, 1927, p.84, the author finds that career choices are “more difficult for the female sex than the male one,” but, acknowledging the necessity for women to work, the author underscores the qualities of the female that they can use in their work (e.g. caring and the preservation of life). Women can use these qualities in jobs related to nursing, career counselors, social work, youth services and related welfare tasks.

221 For discussions of women and paid work, which emphasized the necessity of women in paid work and the balance between paid and unpaid work, see for example, FW, n. 5, 1924 (no date) p.73; FW, n. 10, 1924 (no date) for a review of a book by Anna Geyer on women and work; FW, n. 4, February 12, 1927, p. 52 for an overview of work routines for women in paid work; FW, n. 7, April 6, 1929, p. 147 for an editorial from Toni Sender discussing responses to an essay contest titled “May a married woman practice a career?” Upset readers responded to the wording of the question that started with “may”, implying that all women have a choice to work. The magazine addressed the variety of responses, which included the negative perception that professional work of married women were taking men’s jobs and the need for “equal pay for equal work.”
Der Weg der Frau used cover images to emphasize female employment and possibilities. The cover photo for the November 1931 edition, for example, depicts a young woman standing in front of an airplane, getting ready to start the engine (figure 9). The woman, garbed in pilots gear, has her goggles resting on her forehead and she smiles with happiness. The image, emphasizing independence and strength, however, is not of a German woman. The caption notes, “Women also seize the Sky: A Female pilot trainee in the Soviet Union.” While the magazine wanted to provide an appealing (and perhaps positive) cover photo, they used the image of a Soviet Women, as a way to emphasize the possibilities for women in a “new” society. The magazine also included images (beyond office work) in their publication but focused specifically on working conditions and engaged with debates about the “double-earner,” which increased during the economic crisis at the end of the 1920s and early 1930s.

Fig. 9. Der Weg der Frau, November 1931 “Women also seize the sky”

222 WDF, nr. 6, November 1931. See also WDF, nr. 4, September 1931, which depicts a female laborer alongside two men, and WDF, nr. 1 January 1932, which shows a young woman at the sewing machine. In this case, however, the cover image is linked to an article about working at home (during the Christmas season) making clothing for dolls, a process in which children are also forced to partake. In the end, they make a mere “pittance” for their families, whose parents are often unemployed.

223 See WDF, nr. 12, December 1932. One year later another female pilot (who used to work in a textile factory) is on the front cover of the magazine, smiling while climbing into the airplane; the caption notes that she is on her way to Moscow.
For example, in the first edition in 1931, an article by Käthe Duncker, a well-known communist women’s leader, “Away with employment for married women?” noted that the question of “double-earners” is at the “forefront” of everybody’s interests.\textsuperscript{224} After summarizing the demobilization policies that forced women out of jobs after World War I, the author argues that the “personal independence of women in marriage and their participation in the working-class struggle . . . is secured not only when single women participate in paid work,” but if married, “are free to keep their jobs.” The short article made clear the stance that the \textit{Weg der Frau} would take on women’s right to participate in the labor market.

The \textit{Weg der Frau}, taking a cue perhaps from the \textit{AIZ}’s popular photo-essays, printed a two page spread in the first edition in 1931. “Which Woman Belongs to the Future?” asks a bold headline for a two page photo-essay.\textsuperscript{225} A short article is surrounded by photographs of female workers and the opposing constructions of the wrong form of femininity. A photograph of a Russian female electrician, with short hair and wearing working clothes, shows her in action at work (figure 10). Another photograph depicts a self-assured woman, smoking a cigarette and standing with a hand on her hip. The caption tells the reader that this is an example of “eccentric fashion,” and the woman in the jumpsuit with flared pants is

\textsuperscript{224} \textit{WDF}, nr. 1, 1931.

\textsuperscript{225} \textit{WDF}, nr. 1, 1931, p.12 – 13.
wearing a “cocktail outfit” for an evening party. She is part of an exhibition for the “ideal home” in London. The most prominent photo, however, takes up half of a page (figure 11). A middle-aged woman in a long dress, apron and sensible shoes carries a basket (with food). The caption tells the readers, “The working housewife in Germany is regarded as the woman from all classes and the entire world.” *This* is the image of the working-woman that the Weg der Frau wants to stand in for the universal – not the female white-collar worker. This ideal working woman is conscience of her role in the working class struggle and the headline stresses “future.” The apron, the sensible shoes, the shopping basket are meant to represent the labor of “everyday life,” in both paid and unpaid work. On the surface this image seems to stand in direct contradiction to the image of a Modern Woman. However, the identity of this Modern Woman does not depend on stylish clothing or consumer goods. Rather, the Weg der Frau places her “modernity” in her attitude toward paid work, her belief that women should receive “equal pay for equal work” and her involvement in the working-class struggle and working-class politics. As we shall see in a later section, the working-class mother and housewife engaged in political battles over abortion rights and believed in the idea of a “partnership marriage.” Moreover, by including images of the young female electrician alongside the working housewife, the magazine attempted to
create a sense of “togetherness” between women and also hold up the Soviet Union as an idealized society for female workers.

During the Weimar Republic, the National Socialist *Illustrierte Beobachter* also used representations of female work to both promote their vision of the future and criticize the left’s celebration of the Soviet Union as a model of success. In February 1931, the *IB*’s headline “The Woman as Worker” was set beneath a circular photograph of a poverty stricken male and female in the Soviet Union.\(^{226}\) The inside report begins with a statement from someone in Moscow, “Here the woman is an equal partner of society, not just on paper but in reality.” In an attempt to debunk the status of women in the Soviet Union, the *IB* begins the article by reviewing the claims that women are free, equal and work toward the “intensive building” of the “communist ideal” because they have time off for pregnancy and child care facilities. The *IB*, however, argues that there is really no family life and the “Young Pioneer” program is a ruse, where the nation’s youth “are in the hands of the Party” and the parents have little influence. “Equality” is also “demonstrated” in the physical appearance of the average woman, who is described as wearing “dark skirts and blouses, headscarves” and “on the border of luxury – leather shoes.” The articles continues, noting that “the physiognomy of the faces – bleak. Otherwise, unremarkable.”

Next to the article, the *IB* appended images of life for women, including a photograph of

---

\(^{226}\) *IB*, February 28, 1931.
two women sitting in the street, in piles of rubble (figure 12). The caption explains, “These rhinestone paving ‘Angels’ seem quite far away from paradise!” and another caption, underneath a photograph of a woman in bulky clothing notes, “No job for a woman: A Female Streetcar Driver.” The photographs, depicting a dreary life for the women in the Soviet Union display what the IB presents as the real working and living conditions for women. The article ends with the message, “Whether the ‘New Woman’ created in Russia, will have durability, time will tell, where this leads to the deliberate destruction of all individuality, all family life, and any true human happiness!” The article made no direct reference to Germany, but a caption, underneath a photograph of female soldiers, holding rifles to their sides, reads, “Theory and Practice: In Germany, the Communists are raging Pacifists – in Russia, the woman apply for military service!” This was an attempt to prove to its readers that ideas about the working condition in the Soviet Union are far from a worker’s paradise, where masculinized women carry weapons and working conditions are terrible. Not surprisingly, the communist press took the opposite approach in order to convince their readers that the best possible future, one for the Modern Woman, had already began in the Soviet Union.

A series of photographs and an article by the editor, Marianne Gundermann, found in the March 1932 edition of Der Weg der Frau demonstrates one example of this attempt to celebrate the Soviet Union as a bastion of women’s rights and freedom.227 The title, “For Bread, Peace and Freedom,” invokes revolutionary language and the accompanying images are meant to underline the possibilities for women’s emancipation. The images also represent a contrast between the textual description of the situation for women in Germany and the visual evidence of changes in the Soviet Union. Next to the headline, a young and healthy

227 WDF, nr. 3, March 1932, p. 3 – 6.
woman smiles broadly and looks to the sky. Gundermann notes that “yes,” in Germany women have “political rights” (with the right to vote, etc) but we still have paragraph 218 and women must fight for “equal pay for equal work … against hunger … against unemployment ….” The “working woman,” she argues, “must decide for socialism.” The article is sandwiched on the page between four photographs of women across the top and the bottom – explaining or “proving” that the situation in the Soviet Union is better for women.

The position of the photographs (which range from women working with machines to athletic activities and child-care service) demonstrate the importance of change for the Modern Woman in all aspects of life. A photograph of a woman working with machines (a motor, perhaps) is explained by the caption, “In the Soviet Union, the demands that were drawn up by working women for the worldwide International Women’s Day, are fulfilled. The worker in the factory and the employees in the office, receive the same wages as their male colleagues” (figure 13).

Another image explains that “No job, or possibility of mobility is closed for women. The female captain of a steamboat on the Volga is no more a rarity than a female director of a business.” A photograph of agricultural work (with the modernized tractor) is set next to an image of women sitting in a factory cafeteria, which, the caption notes, allows them to eat at work, rather than labor
at home. Beyond the images of female paid work, the photos tell the readers that during free time, some women study and many continue on to university. Ten smiling women, wearing skis, stand in a line and smile at the camera. This caption directly links the “German” woman to the “Soviet woman,” asking, “Can the German working women play Winter sports? They do not have the necessary time or the money. But for the women in the Soviet Union, sports are just part of life.” Photos of women holding babies and toddlers are connected to sexual politics with a caption explaining that there is no Paragraph 218 in the Soviet Union which makes abortions illegal, but many women have children anyway, because they are able to take care of them. Finally, a photograph of children playing at the Moscow Zoo notes that when mothers go to work (or have a day off) the children have a place to play – with cultural activities. Together, the article and images connect an ideal version of the Modern Woman: economically independent, earning equal wages as men and participating in “male work” with the help of social institutions that care for children, provide women with leisure time activities and continuing education.

While Der Weg der Frau celebrated the living and working conditions of women in the Soviet Union, the magazine took pains to politicize their readers to fight for more rights for working women by including articles and images related to female factory work in Germany, almost always focusing on three aspects of labor: the working conditions within the workplace, the low pay and caustic remarks about the material distances between the workers and their supervisors. Descriptions of 8 ½ hour days in the “stinky and damp” industrial laundry facilities in Berlin (only two, 15-minutes breaks are allowed), for example, are contrasted with the comment that the family of the boss has a house, good clothing and even
some men have automobiles and sailboats. Another article from May 1932 includes a small photograph of women standing at the assembly line of a chocolate factory, calling attention to the fast tempo, poor salaries and the 48-hour workweek. The magazine made continual attempts to recognize different kinds of women’s work, including sporadic articles on rural work, like the article in 1931 titled, “Land Work – Slave Work.” The small photos accompanying the article depicted women forking hay and working in the fields, carrying out their daily tasks. The text describes the women who rise at 5am to milk cows and feed the pigs before breakfast at 6am with their husband. Then (during harvest) the women must go to the field and “must work like a man.” There are few holidays during the year, and much time is spent canning food. The women often work 16 – 17 hours a day, with no real salary, perhaps earning a bit of “egg money” for herself. No theatre or movies for these women, notes the article, sometimes they can afford to buy books and have time to read a book. This is the way she works, “year in and year out.”

The attempts to include other images of female work, beyond the white-collar worker, point to the concerted efforts of the left press to recognize both the opportunities and

---

228 WDF, nr. 3, March 1932, p.19. The WDF did include a short discussion on whether or not women should engage in handwork, see WDF, nr.3, March 1932, p.22, “Should we do handwork?” One reader, who worked at an office job, responded by noting that handwork is “not just the prerogative of the middle-class woman,” but it really came down to time and money: whether or not the women could buy the supplies for the work and if they had the time (and desire) to do such work.

229 WDF, nr. 5, May 1932, p.19. See also WDF, nr. 1, 1931 for the column “The Women in Factories and Offices,” which becomes a regular feature of the publication. See WDF, nr. 6, June 1932 on the working conditions at a Seimens factory. The accompanying photograph focuses on a large clock hung above the assembly line and emphasizes the poor working conditions which are all for big profits. A report in WDF, nr. 10, October 1932 on a strike of female textile workers in Manchester, England reminds readers that many of these women are also married workers, who get up at 5AM to get to their job and continue working at home by taking care of their children, cooking, washing and cleaning their house. See WDF, nr. 6, 1931 for a short article demonstrating salary differences between men and women who work in the same industries. Frauenwelt did occasionally include images of women in factory work, like the photograph of women working in a radio factory in the December 29, 1928 edition. The attendant article describes the dismal work conditions on the rationalized assembly line.

230 WDF, nr. 3, 1931, p.6
limitations of women in paid labor. *Weg der Frau* and *Frauenwelt* gave serious attention to the necessity of female labor, the magazine emphasized careers for young, single women that required additional training or education and often fit within the stereotypical boundaries of “female” paid work. Indeed, in these “modern times,” stated the magazine, women needed an alternative to marriage at a young age. In contrast, the National-Socialist magazine *Illustrierter Beobachter* marginalized female paid work, which did not fit to their ideal of womenhood, and only used visual representations of female work to indicate the problematic image of “equality” for women in the Soviet Union. In the commercial middle-class magazine *BIZ*, images of working women beyond shiny advertisement representations of New Women in offices and department stores are virtually absent. Real working-class women did not sell well.

2.2 Representations of the Rationalized Housewife and Female Consumer

The movement of “household rationalization” during the Weimar Republic was an attempt to define the household as an efficient and organized working space. The *AIZ, Der Weg der Frau* and *Frauenwelt*, in particular, offered advice to their female readers to organize their home and family in “scientific” terms. Rationalization and Taylorization, both within industry and the home were promoted by a broad range of groups, including bourgeois feminists, welfare workers, the female functionaries of the *SPD* and the trade unions and industrialists. The “scientific” discourse on rationalization aimed for the enhancement of the productivity in factories and households. The “household reform,” in particular, was promoted with the argument that women would win more time for their families and children and bring them up in better health. This, in turn, would benefit the health of society, the wellbeing of families and thus the prosperity of the state. Leftist propagandists of the
“rationalization of housework” also hoped that working class women would gain more time for their activities in the labor movement, when they would do their housework more efficiently. The movement to rationalize the household not only included techniques for efficient household work but instructed women also to be aware of their energy efficient and healthy body movements – whether peeling potatoes, doing laundry or reading a book – in order to maintain a “healthy” female body. While the magazines from the Left supported a rationalized household and urged women to adapt to new “modern” techniques, none of the publications questioned the gender division of labor in the home, not even Weg der Frau.

**Advertising New Technology and “Efficient” Housework**

The AIZ, Der Weg der Frau and Frauenwelt ran series of columns, articles and photo-essays for the working woman which focused on household management. While the readers of the BIZ might be able to employ domestic servants to clean, cook and shop for the household, working-class women could not afford the luxury of hiring servants or purchasing new expensive home appliances, like electric vacuum cleaners and washing machines. Many working class households even lacked electric or gas stoves and bathrooms. These three magazines wanted to mold a “modern woman” who knew how to run an efficient, healthy home. They provided instructional photographs for arranging furniture and decorating to meet “the healthy standards” of a living space.²³¹ The movement concerning a rationalized household, studied by scholars such as Karen Hagemann and Mary Nolan, offered

---

²³¹ AIZ, January 1, 1927. This article was the first in a series that ran for several months. The AIZ also included articles on babies, including methods for bathing children, proper nutrition, clothing and activities for young children.

Beginning with the first issues of \textit{Frauenwelt}, modernization and rationalization of the home played a central role, speaking to both the accepted gender norms of female work in the home and to the idea that modernity was encapsulated not in trendy fashions, films or department store windows, but in the efficiency of the house- and family work. The visual and textual representations of the technically savvy and resourceful housewife and worker were vital components of the ideal Modern Woman in \textit{Frauenwelt}. Later, the \textit{AIZ} and \textit{Der Weg der Frau} would incorporate many of the visual images prominent in the SPD magazine related to the modernization of the home, but carefully distanced themselves from “bourgeois” notions of buying “gadgets” for the home or noting that some women do not have the time or energy to redesign their household furniture.

Some of the most important features of the rationalized household included clean, simple and “functional” furniture (no “kitsch and trash!”), efficiently organized work spaces and systematic methods of housework, as well as hygienic practices and guidelines for every household task and care work. Drawings and photographs related to the home became an important method for the magazines to instruct mothers and housewives on proper housekeeping methods. The images, which often juxtaposed “correct” and “false” snapshots of living spaces, functioned on a number of levels. First, the images constantly reminded readers that both the body and soul benefited from a rationalized space. Secondly, the
photographs and drawings functioned as a kind of blueprint for female readers – instructing women on how to rearrange furniture, use proper lighting and organize their kitchen. Third, because many working women could not afford to “remodel” or purchase expensive household devices, first Frauenwelt and later Weg der Frau offered suggestions on making something “new” out of something “old” for the household, not just clothing, but furniture as well (figure 14). On the one hand, one could argue that this constituted a type of social discipline, constantly reminding readers of what their homes should look like, but not always considering the fact that many women did not have the time, money, or the energy to complete these projects. In fact a result of this campaign was that the expectations of housekeeping in working class homes rose. On the other hand, some of the practical advice and related efforts to improve hygiene certainly updated the living space. The magazine offered its readers advice, hints, tips and arguments on how and why the home needed to be modernized. An historical study that interviews working class housewives show that many, especially from better of families, appreciated this advice and support.233

233 See Hagemann, “Of Old and New.”
Visual images of the modern functional home which reflected the Bauhaus style are found in numerous issues of the *Frauenwelt*. Articles like “The Kitchen,” with drawings, demonstrated the difference between “the kitchen how it is” and “the kitchen how it should be.” The first image shows heavy furniture and heavily decorated walls. The second image shows furniture with clean lines and a room void of decoration. The “furniture in its simpler form” shows how “everything should be practical.” Other articles, like “The New Household,” “Housing Reform,” “How I modernized furniture” and “There is Room in the smallest of places” all include numerous images to illustrate the advantages of living in a rationalized, modern space. In March 1928, Irene V. Hartung, in her article, “There is room in the smallest of places” tells her readers that “if a woman has the desire to make her home pretty and cozy” it is possible “with good advice” and “good examples.” Above the bold headline, a photograph of a kitchenette serves as the focal point on the page. The photograph on the following page of the article depicts a “sitting room in a small living space,” including a small table, fold-out desk, sofa and bureau. The decorations are minimal and this “scheme of an ideal modern small apartment” for parents with two children, contains all the “modern hygienic requirements,” such as sufficient light and air. Hartung tells her readers that they can make adjustments, but “buy only what is modern” and “that means practical and

---

234 *FW*, nr. 8, 1924, p.134.

236 The magazine also included photo essays and articles on new housing projects. See *FW*, nr. 10, May 18, 1929, p.229-230; *FW*, nr. 26, October 3, 1931, p.470-471; *FW*, nr.6, March 1932, p.132; *FW*, nr. 11, May 28, 1032, p.249.
functional.” This article, like many others, sets up not only the “ideal modern home” but also an ideal modern family, with no more than two children.²³⁷

_Frauenwelt_ praised housing reform and modern housekeeping techniques, but never challenged the gender division of labor in the home and the family. This was an issue that was rarely discussed in the SPD-women’s movement of the 1920s. The situation was not different, however, in the KPD. A small photo from July 1927 for example, included a small kitchen with the caption that noted this is the “workroom” for the woman, making clear distinctions of gendered space.²³⁸ What adds to the normative status of the modern home and family is that real women rarely appear in the photographs. The images, often photographs from exhibitions on housing reform, remain just that: an exhibition photo. The homes are neat, clean, efficient and brand-new – indicating gendered spaces for the Modern Woman, but disconnected from specific individuals or families. The space was supposed to represent an ideal for all working-families, thus generalizing “the woman in the kitchen” as any working woman.

²³⁷ See also, _FW_, nr. 4, February 25, 1928, p.88. Some articles also included separate spaces for men and women, including a men’s room with a sofa, desk and bookshelf, see _FW_, nr.20, October 6, 1929, p.466.
²³⁸ _FW_, nr. 16, July 1927. The rationalized kitchen, exemplified in the “Frankfurt Kitchen” designed by the Austrian architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky in 1926, was intended to relieve women of some of the stress and time of daily cooking. Different models or alternatives of this design were promoted in the magazine. See, “The New Kitchen,” _FW_, nr. 2, January 26,1929, p.16. See _FW_, nr.1, January 11, 1930, p.5 for a brief discussion of the “Frankfurt Kitchen” and kitchen reform. One article in _Weg Der Frau_ also encouraged women to make new kitchen furniture, see _WDF_, nr.5, May 1932: “The New Kitchen out of old furniture,” p.27. For a discussion of the “liberation” and “segregation” of women related to new kitchen designs, see Leif Jerram, “Kitchen sink dramas: women, modernity and space in Weimar Germany,” _Cultural Geographies_ 13 (2006): 538 – 556.
Recognizing women’s “double-burden” as working women, Frauenwelt offered advice on how to make housework more efficient, in hopes that women would have more leisure time. The magazine made this explicit in articles like “Rational Housekeeping,” published in January 1931 or “The home of our time” from October 1931 (figure 15).\(^2\) The first paragraph explains to the reader that women today have much to do; paid work and helping their husbands in their work. But even the housewife, who does not have a job, but sees “her actual career in the management of the household is no longer willing to sacrifice the whole day for housework.” Instead, “She will save time and energy” that she can “devote to her children” and “share the interests of her husband, play sports, read a good book or attend a lecture.” She will be a “comrade of her husband and children.” Implicit is the notion that if women do not make more time by efficient housework to spend with their children or husbands, they are inferior mothers or wives.

Many hurdles were to be overcome, however, for working class women to follow these new standards. One major hurdle, next to the lack of money and time, was the old, small and crowded living space itself. The ideal “modern housewife,” lived in an apartment of “modern” housing complex of the “Neues Bauen” (New Building) movement related to

the Bauhaus. It aimed for hygienic, “sunny and airy” apartment houses with a cost efficient and functional design. The two photographs accompanying the article depict parts of a kitchen designed by famous Weimar Bauhaus architect, Bruno Taut, including a fold-down ironing board, an organized closet, a built-in kitchen cabinet and a place to sit by a window.²⁴⁰ These small “working kitchens” are designated the realm of the female, who has the responsibility of managing her household. They were quite different from the common working class kitchens in old apartment houses, which were often larger and the only heated room in the apartment. Therefore they were not only the working room for the housewife but also the living room of the whole family.²⁴¹

The AIZ, also in support of the rationalized household, included visual and textual images, which defined the new modern working-class home as a clean, well-organized efficient space. For example, one short article furnished three photographs displaying a small apartment, the space used resourcefully. This was the first in a series, which ran for several months. Each month, the section would focus on different areas of the apartment. A column on June 6, 1927 discusses the difference between “wasting time over dusting” or “practical devices” for the home.²⁴² The “kitchen really is a mess when all of the cooking utensils are hanging up,” for example.²⁴³ Better to be orderly and clean and put them in a drawer or small cupboard, in order to eliminate clutter. Der Weg der Frau also concentrated on creating a clean, practical space at home, and supplied, each month, a column recommending hints

²⁴⁰ See Eric Weitz, Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy (Princeton, N. J., 2007), 170 – 183 for a discussion of the leading architect Bruno Taut and his work on the public housing developments, supported by the SPD, in Stuttgart, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, Berlin and other cities. According to Weitz, over 2.5 million homes (housing around 9 million people) were built during Weimar Germany and by 1930, approximately 14 percent of the population lived in new apartment buildings, p. 276.
²⁴¹ See Hagemann, Frauenalltag, part 1.
²⁴² AIZ, June 6, 1927.
²⁴³ AIZ, June 6, 1927.
and tips for cooking and cleaning. All of these techniques recommended that the working woman, who did not have the financial resources of a middle-class woman could still create a clean, healthy living space, using the assets available to her, often making something “new” out of something “old,” much like those found in the Frauenwelt. WDF, as well as AIZ, however, more often focused on the tensions related to economic circumstances and class differences. This strategy allowed both publications to support “practical” and “rational” household techniques and give their readers practical advice, but gave them at the same time the opportunity to criticize capitalist consumer culture and what they saw as middle-class assumptions about working women who could successfully combine paid and unpaid work with the benefits of modern technology.

For example, an article in the April 4, 1928 edition of the AIZ entitled “The Old and New Household” includes six photographs, representing the outdated models of housework and the modern methods of washing, cooking and cleaning. The “women in offices and textile factories, handle complicated machines,” the article states, and modern technology can transform the household as well. No stranger to these types of technology, the woman at home would be able to utilize the new appliances effectively. One photograph depicts a small hotplate (one small pan over a burner) and is captioned, “Primitive—as in the time of your
grandmother!” The images portray “clean, easy and practical,” new appliances (including a vacuum and an electric washing machine) used in middle-class home, which make housework much quicker. The problem, of course, is cost. “The vacuum cleaner is a practical cleaning instrument . . . but what worker can pay 120 to 180 marks for it? (figure 16).” If advancements in technology ever do become affordable for the worker, however, the AIZ notes that it would allow more free time for sports, politics and education.244

Karen Hagemann, in her research on rationalization and the working-class, contends that “The most important reason for the skeptical and reserved attitude of most working women was clearly that the recommendations for household rationalization generally bore little relevance to everyday life in their homes. This applied both to the ‘rationalization’ of working methods in the household and modernization of home furnishings and to the many small and large labor-saving devices suggested for purchase.”245 The Frauenwelt may have raised the expectations for standards in the home, but the criticism of consumer products for the home in the communist magazines remained sharp.

While Der Weg der Frau included monthly tips and hints for cooking and cleaning, it was even more critical of consumerism disguised as products for the rationalized household.246 In the first edition, the magazine linked assembly-line work together with the rationalized household, both visually and textually.247 A photograph of women standing in front of a mechanized assembly line at a factory illustrates the “non-stop” paid work in order

244 AIZ, April 4, 1928.

246 In each issue of WDF, one page was dedicated to seasonal food and recipes and advice for small household maintenance. The magazine would also include practical hints for house cleaning (e.g. WDF, nr. 12, December 1932). The first issue of WDF, for example, included kitchen recipes and tips for preparing vegetables in order to get the best possible nutrients.

247 WDF, nr.1, 1931, p.11.
for big businesses to turn a profit. The discussion of rationalization in business turns to a comment that there is always “non-stop” work for women in the home. A photograph of a woman using a stand-up vacuum cleaner, running it across her carpet is situated next to the article that notes that women cannot afford the “rationalized” home appliances advertised to help women cut back on labor in the household.\textsuperscript{248}

The burden of the “modern home” rested upon the shoulders of the Modern Woman. The gender specific division of labor did not shift within the household. Women were still made responsible for cooking, cleaning, sewing, shopping and looking after the children. The expectations of the modern wife and mother, as illustrated in the articles and images in the \textit{AIZ, Der Weg der Frau} and \textit{Frauenwelt}, increased throughout the Weimar years. The images and corresponding text of women at home focused on practical methods for maintaining an orderly and clean household and using the resources available to them, while displaying correct approaches to housework for the Modern Woman that corresponded to the overall practices of healthy, everyday activities. Moreover, it was not just the home which needed to function in an orderly, mechanized manner; through advice on how to be efficient with one’s energy at home, the female body itself became a time-saving device, which will be analyzed in the next chapter. While the publications promoted an ideal type of Modern Woman who used rationalized, scientific techniques to manage her home, it was always clear that the “domestic” sphere was the “female sphere.” All of the publications focused on women’s work in the home and did not mention the participation of a husband, father or male partner in the gender division of labor in the home. Only one image in \textit{Der Weg der Frau}, published \textsuperscript{248} WDF, nr. 1, 1931. See also, in the same issue, an article on new “Kitchen Gadgets,” which contains small photographs of an egg cutter and an aluminum tea kettle. The problem, notes the article, is that these “labor-saving devices” are too expensive for working women.
in February 1932, alluded to changing domestic relationships.²⁴⁹ In the photograph, a family sits around the kitchen table and the father holds two children on his lap, while the mother reads a magazine. The caption observes that the father looks after the children so the mother will not be disturbed while reading. This shows “comradeship” between the sexes, notes the caption, where women are not economically-dependent upon males. This representation is rare, however. No matter the publication, the underlying assumptions remained that work in the home was women’s work. Conventional ideas about the gender order also extended to the realm of “consumerism” in all of the publications. Although differentiated between publications, advertisements, essays, articles, columns and images rested upon the expectations and assumptions that women were the primary consumers in society.

**Creating and Educating Female Consumers**

In all of the publications, it was clear that consumerism was part of the female domain. Women did the shopping for meals, took care of the clothing for their children and tended to the needs of the home. In *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, Victoria de Grazia suggests that one approach of feminist scholarship “has identified commercial culture as an especially totalizing and explosive force, to which women are more vulnerable than men because of their subordinate social, economic, and cultural position and because of the patriarchal nature of the organization and the semiotics of mass consumption.”²⁵⁰ In contrast, Grazia notes, other feminist scholarship has recognized that women have always been associated with consumption, “as a consequence of their role

²⁴⁹ *WDF*, nr. 2, February 1932.
in the household division of labor and as reified objects in the commodity exchange system.”

These perspectives, however, only view consumption as an oppressive force, in which female agency is completely absent. Some scholars argue that “mass consumption liberates women by freeing them from the constraints of domesticity” because “women, out shopping or otherwise practicing what has been called ‘style politics,’ use the rituals of consumption in dress, cosmetics, hairstyle and gesture to bend the norms ordained by the market and to flout family and other authority.” Arguably, both sides of the argument contain validity, but what is important for representations of the Modern Woman was the role that advertising played in attempting to construct an ideal woman – via products – and the illusion of choice they offered women during the Weimar Republic.

Advertisements and discussions of consumer products presented in each magazine attempted to create a specific type of consumer. In the BIZ, advertisements targeted females with an expendable income through products that enhanced women’s visual appearance (make-up and clothing), or they tapped into the desire to obtain objects that symbolized an emancipated, youthful and modern life-style, including bicycles, motorcyclists, radios and cameras. The New Woman featured in the BIZ spent her (theoretical) expendable income not on vacuum cleaners but on perfume, lotion, diet aids and cosmetics to keep her young. As we have seen previously, advertisements for clothing and cosmetics consistently presented women as commodities – available to men – at home and at the office.

The BIZ’s instructions on what to wear, products to buy and how to act converged to form the New Woman’s ideal type of femininity and modernity. The combination of advertisements, fashion sections and cover images drew sharp generational distinctions

---


between the past and present and continually emphasized the female body as a site for modernity. Advertisements promised the white-collar worker the attention of her supervisor and demanded conformity to new trends. In conjunction, articles and photo essays presented an “unproblematic” standard of youth and beauty available through clothing and behavior. The New Woman embraced alligator shoes, short skirts, the **bubikopf**, smoking, dancing and drinking and constructed her identity based on store-bought goods.

The advertising sections in the *AIZ* and *Weg Der Frau* were, unsurprisingly, relatively small. As part of the communist press, the advertisement sections did not constitute a large percentage of the magazines and were usually dedicated to promoting books, small appliances and household goods. For example, a half-page advertisement section in the December 8, 1926 edition of the *AIZ* offered musical instruments, a small radio, tonic for nerves and rheumatism and a salon specializing in the “wave curl” hairstyle. The advertisements, mainly composed of text contain a few small images, nothing compared to those found in the *BIZ*. Even with difficulty procuring advertisements, during the late 1920’s, a handful of ads emerged in the *AIZ* that displayed a young women working behind the typewriter by day and dancing with men by night, but these types of advertisements were rare.\(^{253}\)

Because the advertising sections were quite small, the *AIZ* and *Weg Der Frau* relied on editorial content to inform their readers on how to be discerning consumers. The *AIZ* often did this on their “Page for Women,” discussed in the previous section on female work, which outlined acceptable and practical alternatives to fashion and accessories. *Der Weg der Frau* focused more on household items, noting that “women are the consumers in the

---

253 One particular ad for chocolate is a montage of a young woman standing beside the boss, a typist holding the “Stollwerk Gold” candy, while a small image in the corner shows young women dancing with men. This advertisement, however, is a rarity.
Advice on what soap to buy or the benefits of new, practical household goods were the standards topics for the magazine. The half-page section of advertisements, like the one printed in June 1932, contained very few images except for one small ad from “Dr. Ernst Richter’s tea,” where the headline beside a slender woman reads, “Is slimness only for fashion? Slimness means youth and healthiness!”

The AIZ and Weg der Frau, in part, did base their version of the Modern Woman on consumerism, but in a vastly different way than the BIZ. Because most women could not afford to buy ready-made-clothing, cosmetics and expensive household appliances, because the party did not want to encourage participation in the capitalistic mass-consumer economy, and because advertisers would avoid promoting their products in the communist press, the magazine strategically used internal content (rather than ads) to construct an informed and practical Modern Woman.

Frauenwelt also used a variety of internal content, rather than a large advertising section, to promote the notion that their Modern Woman should be an informed and smart buyer. While including advertisements (often on the back cover) for the consumer co-ops established by the labor movement already in the second half of the nineteenth century, the magazine stressed that women have the possibility to make something “new” out of something “old,” rather than purchasing new furniture or dresses, for example, as discussed in the previous section. This extended to the family as a whole. Numerous articles and images related to self-made clothes for children, husbands and young adults, homemade games and toys for children and methods for making baskets and rugs, for example, all pointed to the assumption that wives and mothers were in charge of the household budget. Moreover, the magazine content assumed (rather correctly) that its readers were not single

---

254 WDF, nr. 2, February 1932, p. 27.

255 WDF, nr. 6, June 1932. Other small ads included fabric, food, bike tubes and hand cream.
women, but married women with families who were mainly members of the working class. Thus, the magazine presented advice and products for women who needed to stretch the household income to make ends meet.

As a consumer, the Modern Woman in the NSDAP’s *Illustrierte Beobachter* was initially instructed to buy only German goods in the articles on “The Page for Women,” not through the advertisement section, which will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections. However, as the advertising section expanded in the late 1920s, the magazine did attempt to appeal to female readers and linked their version of the modern woman with consumer goods. For example, an ad in the November 24, 1928 edition read, “Something for the modern woman!”\(^{256}\) The *IB* is not advertising shoes, makeup or clothing, but a new sewing cabinet that is the “dream of the housewife,” thus linking modernity with the housewife. Other appliances include typewriters and handheld cameras, both of which are paired with representations of women. An office worker sits behind the “modern, fast typewriter,” connecting the typewriter to female work. Cigarette ads also presented a more fashionable, stylish woman. Salem cigarettes advertised the “oriental tobacco” in the form of a beautiful woman, holding a cigarette, surrounded by tobacco leaves, contradicting the anti-smoking policy that the party promoted.\(^{257}\)

The women in the advertisements in the *IB* were usually shown from the shoulders up, youthful and happy. Eroticism, in terms of women showing off their bodies in underwear ads or sitting in their bedrooms, are absent, unlike those found in the *BIZ*. In the *IB*, “pretty” is acceptable, “sexy” is not. Typewriters were exhibited with the “secretary” behind it, in the middle of ads selling the Nazi newspaper and rings, pins and necklaces with the party

\(^{256}\) *IB*, November 24, 1928.

\(^{257}\) *IB*, September 8, 1928.
insignia. This indicates that these ads aimed more for potential employers, the male party members, than for women. For men “pretty” and “sexy” sold, also for Nazis. Although one could argue that a scattering of ads may not necessarily point to the Nazi’s construction of femininity and modernity, the images in conjunction with the articles outlining appropriate behavior and a clear gender hierarchy demonstrate that these are important pieces of the whole to consider in the IB’s presentation of the Modern Woman, which was, similar to the AIZ and the BIZ, addressed to both men and women.

In 1931, the IB ran a series of advertisements for hair coloring and shampoo, which were clearly aimed at women. The ads, including a photograph of a young blond woman, have a large caption next to her smiling face. “Always Blond,” “Blonds stay Blond!” and “Wonderful for Blond Hair!”258 Other ads reminded readers that “beautiful hair” was linked to youthful beauty (figure 17). The ads took up the bottom half of the page and reminded readers that “natural” beauty could be enhanced through these products. In each issue, an article for or concerning women was placed directly above the advertisement. Although not the formal “Page for Women,” it is clear that the juxtaposition of the article and advertisement created a deliberate space within the publication for women. Even more, while male readers were bombarded with images of airplanes, tanks, gas masks, ships, skiers and boxing matches, the

---

258 IB, August 8, 1931. See also IB, September 9, 1931 and October 17, 1931 through December 12, 1931. All eleven issues contained the advertisement for hair color and shampoo.
IB’s inclusion of women could also be seen as an indicator for men that issues of the German woman and femininity were, if not equally important to men’s ventures, at least needed to be considered.

In the images of the Modern Woman as a consumer, as we have seen in the representations of the modern home, women were presented as the primary consumers in the family, making the spending decisions for their family. In advertisements like the ones found in the BIZ, the young, single female was presented as the primary consumer for products that enhanced her beauty and kept her body “soft” and “youthful.” In the previous sections, it is clear that each publication used representations of female paid and unpaid work, the rationalized household and consumer products in order to create their specific versions of the Modern Woman. Added to this landscape are a variety of representations of the Modern female body.

3. Embattled Representations of the Body of the “New Woman”

As we have seen, the Modern Woman was marked first and foremost by her visual appearance, whether celebrated or chastised, in the illustrated press. But representations of work, the modern home and the female consumer are only pieces of the larger puzzle. The female body is an important component in the interrelated debates on sexual politics, sport and fashion. This section focuses first on the abortion debates of the Weimar Republic and the ways in which publications politicized the issue. The KPD and SPD both fought for the repeal of § 218 of the penal code, which criminalized abortion, and called for free distribution of contraception. The illustrated press also weighed in on debates about prostitution, condemning society as the cause (from the left) or linking prostitution to the
New Woman (on the right). While magazines differed on their proposed solutions to the problem, it is clear that concerns and fears about the sexuality of Modern Women permeated public discourses. Second, the realm of body and sport provided a platform on which both the far left and the right presented positive images of female bodies to the public, but similar assumptions about what sports were appropriate for women crossed political lines. Third, the promotion and critique of fashion, beauty and youth epitomized some of the most vehement debates about the Modern Woman related to class, national politics and, for the far Right, race. Fashion, as a performative aspect of gender – and of modernity – constituted an important link between all the magazines’ notions of the Modern Woman and the visual “break” with the past. Furthermore, the visual display of women, donning masculine clothing, drew criticism from magazines that drew boundaries on what was appropriate for women. Finally, toward the end of the 1920s and in the early 1930s, the NSDAP’s IB infused their anti-Semitic propaganda with allusions to the wrong kind of Modern Woman who posed a threat to the German nation.

3.1 Representing Birth Control and Abortion

During Weimar, the KPD, SPD and other organizations united and fought for the repeal of § 218. The sex reform movement also fought for an enlightened notion of female sexuality and a “companionate marriage,” in which the Modern Woman became an equal counterpart to her husband. Debates over abortion politics, prostitution and the sex reform movement have been widely discussed in the historical scholarship, but it is important to point out some

---

259 The movement to abolish Paragraph 218 went hand in hand with reforming Paragraph 184, Section 3, which outlawed publicizing, advertising or displaying contraceptive measures because they were considered “objects intended for indecent use.” See Atina Grossmann, “Abortion and Economic Crisis,” in When Biology Became Destiny, ed. Renate Bridenthal et al., 66-86.
of the visual strategies that publications used to weigh in on the debates because these issues are related to each publication's holistic image of a Modern Woman.\textsuperscript{260}

\section*{§ 281, Birth Control and the Rationalization of Reproduction}

The abortion debates of the late Weimar Republic reached an apex with the arrest of two physicians and activists of the Sex Reform movement, Else Kienle and Friedrich Wolf, who had performed abortions. As historian Atina Grossmann has argued, the years of economic crisis sharpened the need for women to be able to limit births in the face of unemployment and their burden of reproductive work. While slogans such as “Your Body Belongs to You” found space within the pages of the KPD’s magazine for women, on the whole, according to Grossmann, “For right and left both, the question was not women’s reproductive freedom or individual right to determine their own lives, but rather the central function of their reproductive work as bearers and socializers of children and nurturers of the family unit.”\textsuperscript{261}

Thus, during times of economic and political crisis, women’s willingness to reproduce the next generation became “particularly critical.”\textsuperscript{262}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{261} Grossman, “Abortion and Economic Crisis,” 69.
\textsuperscript{262} Grossman, “Abortion and Economic Crisis,” 69.
\end{flushright}
For the left, the ideal Modern Woman, who was educated about reproduction and sexuality, experienced a marriage of equality (or a “comradeship marriage”) and was able to limit the number of children by using birth control. Alongside the criticism of the exploitation of women at work and in entertainment, therefore, the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* and the *Weg der Frau* also campaigned for the repeal of § 218, while the SPD’s women’s magazine *Frauenwelt* also argued for safe and reliable birth control.\(^{263}\) The May 20, 1930 edition of the *AIZ*, for example, covered the highly publicized arrest and trial of Frau Albrecht, who was charged with performing abortions in 300 cases, and put Frau Albrecht’s photo on the front page.\(^{264}\) The subsequent article explained that she used her “medical expertise” to perform abortions and accepted no money for this service. The accompanying photographs show the protest against Albrecht’s imprisonment and § 218. The article ends with the battle cry, “Out with all those arrested! Out with Frau Albrecht, this selfless helper! Away with § 218.” The highly visible anti-218 campaign in the *AIZ* demonstrated the publication’s role in publicizing the conflict over sexual politics, emphasizing the injustice of Albrecht’s

\(^{263}\) *AIZ* published the first installment of “Maria and the law” in January 1931. The serialized novel was billed as “a novel from the life of every woman.” Many scholars have focused on the novel itself, but the inclusion of this novel, alongside other articles and images concerning prostitution and abortion, demonstrate that the *AIZ* was committed to examining such debates. In *WDF*, nr. 2, 1931 the magazine recommends the novel “Maria and the Law” to their readers. The magazine comments that even though working woman have little time to read this book, that thousands of women have already read, is an example of the fight for women’s rights.

\(^{264}\) *AIZ*, May 5, 1930.
imprisonment and connecting the daily struggles of working women and the politics of abortion.

One important goal of the *Weg der Frau* was to educate readers on the politics of abortion and urged readers to fight against § 218. The first issue included an interview with Dr. Else Kienle, under the headline, “Your Body Belongs to You!”

While explaining that she performed abortions for patients who already had children, “no one with their first pregnancy,” Kienle stated, “I am of the opinion that it is the large sense of responsibility of the modern woman, to only bring a child into the world if there is a guarantee that the child is taken care of properly.”

Kienle’s statement emphasizes that the “modern woman” is aware of her situation – agency to change it is connected to the discourse of the rationalization of sexuality in general. At the same time, Kienle drew attention to the Soviet Union, arguing that the situation for women is much better there and should serve as a model for Germany.

The discussion of the abortion laws were sometimes accompanied by a drawing or illustration, but in general, the publication relied on textual reports of doctors who were legally prosecuted for performing abortions. Käthe Kollwitz’s illustration of a working mother, holding her pregnant belly while her two children stand beside her, served as a stand-in representation for all women facing the decision of whether or not to have more children (figure 18). The publication used visual images more often in other sections, perhaps in an

---

265 *WDF*, nr. 1, 1931, p.2 The same issue includes an article on the history of the brochure “Abortion or Contraception” by Dr. Alfred Apfel (with an illustration by Käthe Kollwitz), published by the International Worker’s Publications in Berlin and a short article by Paula Brupbacher concerning abortion in Switzerland.

266 *WDF*, nr. 1, 1931, p.2.

267 The magazine also incorporated discussions on sexual education. For example, see *WDF*, nr. 8 August 1932 which reviews a brochure about sexual education by Dr. Annie Reich, titled “When your child asks ….”

268 See, for example, *WDF*, nr. 2, 1931, which included testimony from a doctor on performing 7000 abortions; See also, *WDF*, nr. 2, 1931, which discussed the high rates of “Childbed Fever” (Puerperal fever caused by an infection in the uterus) as another consequence to Paragraph 218. This article included a graph that depicted the high number of cases in Germany compared to Holland, Denmark and Italy.
attempt to appeal to a more “optimistic” visual repertoire, while at the same time, using textual references to underscore the need for birth control and abortion reform.²⁶⁹

An article in Frauenwelt, published in January 1931 amidst the abortion controversies, “Paragraph 218 – Birth Control?” argues that women only have abortions in the most extreme circumstances and some women are not even aware of the consequences abortions can have on their health and damage to their bodies. “If we all recognize this,” argues Susi Bork, then as soon as possible, § 218 must be repealed. “Above all,” writes Bork, “extensive education” on how to prevent unwanted pregnancies would make abortion needless. Marriage counseling and free distribution of contraception is one solution and “women in rural areas and small towns should be encouraged, without shame, to ask their doctors for advice. Much human happiness and zest for life would be preserved.” Safe and healthy contraception would prevent abortions and every woman can learn how to use it herself.

The article also notes that many women suffer under a sense of guilt when she has had an abortion, so much so that women have “severe nervous disorders” as a consequence. More than bodily harm, the magazine comments that “usually women themselves do not know how they came to the state of depression without a reason.” Effective and safe birth control would not only limit unsafe abortion practices, but help the mental state of women as well. “Often differences arise in marriage by such physical conflicts,” observes the author, including “aversion to husbands, constant fear for the life of the existing, perfectly healthy

²⁶⁹ See also, WDF, nr. 2, 1931 for a letter from a working mother who writes that many women sympathize with the difficulties for working women and states that the abortion law is causing thousands of women to die. She concludes vehemently: “Away with the murder paragraph!” See also, WDF, nr. 3, September 1931 for an article by Dr. Alfred Apfel on legal cases for those prosecuted for performing abortions and WDF, nr.7, December 1931 on the case of Dr. Selo and the one in Krefeld. An article published in WDF, nr. 3 March 1932, “Doctors and Paragraph 218,” discusses a questionnaire given to doctors (from the German Association of Doctors) regarding whether or not they agree that the abortion law should be kept, repealed or reformed. See WDF, nr. 8, August 1932 for a short article on abortion laws in Czechoslovakia.
children, and much more. But here, too, through discussion with the physician” these problems can be solved. The current laws only hurt the poor, because “anyone with enough money available,” notes Bork, will find a way to have an abortion, in spite of § 218. She tells her readers, to fight for a marriage law which gives women not only rights to their bodies but also for birth control. “It is up to us women, that we sisters inform them again and again” she argues, that § 218 will be redundant if women can have access to and use birth control. This article is one example of the way in which Frauenwelt engaged in the discourses and debates over birth control and abortion reform and emphasized the need for healthy relationships, healthy bodies and rights for women. Set within the text is a photograph of a statue of a man and woman standing together, carrying bundles of materials atop their heads, clothed in the robes of antiquity. The image, entitled “Husband and Wife carry the burden of life,” is captioned, “In the square outside of the town hall in Strausberg stands a sandstone group, which is the symbol of marriage in that it shows in the relationship of the husband and wife, solving the serious challenges that life posed.” The image, somber in tone, links the problematic nature of and the “challenges” for men and women in society related to children.

Other articles in Frauenwelt, like “§ 218 – Birth Control?” or “How many children,” take a similar approach to the politics of abortion and birth control. They argue first, it is out of necessity that women have abortions and second, healthy and safe birth control would help solve the problems of dangerous methods of abortion.  

270 By employing statistical evidence, the magazine notes that at least 1 million women have an abortion in Germany each year. This means that on average, every German woman would have almost twice in her life an abortion procedure. Citing economic and social conditions as the root cause of abortions,

Frauenwelt acknowledges the standard living conditions for many families, who are unable to provide for their children, focusing on married women who do not want more children. A lithograph by the artist Stumpp (presumably the well-known Emil Stumpp) entitled “Sisters” depicts two young girls, one with her arm around the other. The image rests in the center of the text, perhaps as an indication of vulnerability and hope for the future.

The magazine also included bold advertisements for one of the most well-known anti-§ 218 plays, “Tortured People,” by Carl Credé (1929). The play was initially based on a ‘reportage’ called “Women in Need, § 218,” which had been serialized in the Communist Party paper, Die Rote Fahne. In 1931, the Weg der Frau organized a traveling exhibition with the same name. The ads included the bold headline “Still §218, Tortured People” a “drama by Dr. Credé, listed in many places with worldwide success. Excellent reviews. Men and women must know this work.” As Cornelia Usborne has explored in her work, Cultures of Abortion in Weimar Germany, “only left-wing film and fiction dared to put the plight of the working-class heroine at centre stage.” While other works, like the infamous Gilgi created by Keune or Vicki Baum’s stud. chem. Helene Willfüer (1928), placed the female white-collar worker at the center of the story, fiction and theatre pieces supported by the left focused more on working class women, often mothers. Der Weg der Frau and

---

271 Carl Credé was a left-wing doctor who had been imprisoned for performing abortions and wrote a piece that was illustrated by Käthe Kollwitz. The play “thematized the supposed class inequality of the law and the judiciary,” showing the death of a working mother, who already had eight children, due to a dangerous abortion. The play followed in the heels of the very successful play, Cyankali § 218 by Friedrich Wolf. For an in-depth analysis of the work and the subsequent film which premiered in Berlin in May 1930, see Cornelia Usborne, Cultures of Abortion, 42 – 47.

272 Usborne, Cultures of Abortion, 49 – 50.

273 FW, nr. 2, January 25, 1930, p.26; FW, nr. 4, February 22, 1930, p.74; and, FW, nr. 8, April 18, 1930. Käthe Kollwitz did the illustration “At the Doctor’s” for the program for the production, directed by Erwin Piscator.

274 Usborne, Cultures of Abortion, 42.
*Frauenwelt*, both speaking directly to female readers, argued that safe and reliable contraception would help alleviate women’s monthly fears of an unwanted pregnancy.

**Perceptions of Female Prostitution**
Related to debates concerning sexuality, leftist magazines also criticized the “class society” for the spread of prostitution. The cover and inside article of the October 5, 1927 edition of the AIZ is a striking example, focusing on social ills and prostitution. The cover photo of a serene and modest young woman – sitting at a sewing machine – is identified with the caption, “Former Prostitute in a Moscow Recovery Home.” The related article, with the bold headline, “Prostitution,” notes that the “hypocritical” and “moralizing” ranting about the “shameful” prostitutes is typical across continents and nations “since the beginning of civilization.” Yet, research has shown, it is women “of lesser means” (especially the industrial workers and servants) who are prone to turn to prostitution. “The reasons are obvious,” the article states, “insufficient pay for female workers, the unfavorable moral conditions in the factories, ignorance, lack of education, inexperience, seduction and especially temporary unemployment . . . cause temporary or permanent prostitution.” The article emphasizes that prostitution is not due to “moral inferiority of individuals” who wish to “indulge in licentiousness” but the “economic conditions” of “capitalist order.” The problems of sexually transmitted diseases and other

---

275 AIZ, October 5, 1927.
276 AIZ, October 5, 1927.
“catastrophic conditions” cannot be solved by “reform,” but only a revolution. The women, the AIZ emphasizes, are not aggressively and selfishly pursuing their sexual desires and nothing short of revolution will alter the conditions responsible for prostitution.277

The photographs accompanying the article are meant to display the living conditions of the prostitutes (figure 19). One image depicts a long, narrow, empty alley between two apartment buildings. The caption emphasizes that “whoever is against prostitution must fight for the elimination of slums in all large cities,” they are the “breeding grounds” for “sexual diseases.” In another photo, two women with short hair curly hair, wearing slips stand in a doorway, looking into the camera. The caption states, “In strongly Catholic Cologne, there are whole streets and alleys, where every night girls stand half naked in the doorways to attract customers.” The photographs of the scantily-clad women and the accompanying article “confirm” that prostitution has nothing to do with unchecked sexuality or immorality, but rather the socio-economic context in which women are forced to resort to prostitution to make a livelihood.278

277 The rhetoric in the AIZ also points to the desire to change ideas about marriage and love in general. Civil marriages, they note, are often a form of prostitution – when a husband or wife must marry for money. Within the current socio-economic conditions, argues the AIZ, individuals are forced to “subordinate” their “feelings and thoughts to the most common daily necessities.” The current state of poverty and unemployment is not a “paradise” where love can thrive. The AIZ states, “The social revolution will be the revolution to free the heart.” See also, “Marriage and Prostitution” in the AIZ, nr. 20, May 20, 1930, in which the magazine utilizes a frequent trope that marriage is a form of prostitution. The SPD’s Frauenwelt published articles related to marriage, but encouraged marriage and sexual reform in the form of “companionate marriages” in which men and women would be equal partners. See, for example, FW, nr. 9, May 4, 1929, p. 202, as well as the cover image from March 9, 1929, entitled “Comrades,” which depicts a man and a woman sitting side-by-side with the landscape of a lake behind them.

278 Amidst the photographs of unclean alley-ways and poor housing conditions in Germany, there are three photographs at the top-left hand page. The small images show a woman wearing high-necked and long-sleeved dresses. At first glance, the images look “old-fashioned” or even “lady-like.” The caption, however, proves to be a “shocker” for the readers. The caption first states, “Capitalism has debased the mind and body of the have-nots into a commodity,” linking prostitution to the conditions of the working class. The caption then notes that alongside “the army of millions of women who sell their ‘love’ to the highest bidder, come more and more young men who prostitute themselves. Our pictures show a male prostitute in different disguises, who looks for his customers in homosexual circles,” thus connecting prostitution with issues of homosexuality.
Other articles, such as “The misery of Berlin Prostitutes,” in the June 29, 1931 AIZ edition included detailed photographs of the living conditions of female prostitutes. Two prostitutes (with a black bar to conceal part of their faces) stand in the street, wearing fashionable hats, high heels and carrying handbags. The visual depiction of the two prostitutes, in this article, is different from the others. In fact, the AIZ seemed to make the visual argument that these women looked like any other modern woman on the street. Their fashionable jackets, stylish hats and high heels look relatively well-kept – emphasizing the need to “sell” their looks to men. But, the contrast of the fashionable woman is juxtaposed with photographs of rooms in an apartment or hourly-hotels. The small, dark rooms with narrow beds and thin blankets demonstrate the abysmal living conditions of the women.

The reports on prostitution in Der Weg der Frau also included numerous visual representations in order to reinforce their argument that prostitution was another form of capitalist exploitation. An article in the December 1932 edition, “Purchased Love,” included a sketch of a female prostitute on the street who has to sell her body in the “free market” of capitalism in order to make a living. The poor pay for female workers and the high levels of unemployment contribute to the situation where women are forced to sell their bodies. An article in the same edition argued that prostitutes and war go hand-in-hand, and historically, prostitutes have been part of war, an object for soldiers. For Der Weg der Frau, prostitution is a social consequence of capitalism. Thus, in order to get rid of prostitution, capitalism must disappear. In order to underscore this point the magazine included an article and set of images on prostitution in Moscow, or the lack thereof. They argued that this is a direct result of equality between men and women, especially in relation to working wages. In the Soviet

279 AIZ, June 29, 1931.
280 WDF, nr. 12, December 1932, p. 3 – 4. See also an article by Magnus Hirschfeld, which briefly discusses male prostitution, a product of inequality in society.
Union, the article argued, the fight against prostitution, which began in the 1920s, was only possible because there was “openness and interest about the situation,” real help for women and the revolution which pushed for equality between men and women. The article and accompanying images depict how society helps women by educating them on how to maintain a healthy body (contraception) and training them for jobs in the workforce. A reproduction of a poster against prostitution in Berlin is situated next to images of young women studying (in a home for girls) and another ex-prostitute who learns how to make women’s clothing, thus linking the decrease of prostitution in Moscow with social reforms directed at training women for new jobs, where, explicitly, they can make enough money to earn a living.

A center spread in early 1931 also linked the problem with prostitution to general discourses of sexuality in Germany. The article, “Discretionary Affairs of honor . . .”, sarcastically critiqued personal advertisements found in newspapers. The ads, where men looked for sexual relationships and “weekend girlfriends,” seemed to some women like the chance of a lifetime. While the men promise jewelry, rides in automobiles and other luxuries, the article claims that this does not constitute sexual freedom for women. Both the textual and visual images of the women point to the type of “New Woman” who would be thrilled to own a fur coat or speed around the city in a fancy car. “We do not live in a fairytale land,” notes the article, “but in a clear reality.” The only solution to this problem is changing society, like the Soviet Union: “The Russian woman has been able to tear off the chains of sexual dependence. With of the abolition of economic exploitation – sexual oppression disappeared.”

\[28^{1} WDF, \text{nr. 2, 1931, p.16 – 17.}\]
Part of the representation of the Modern Woman in the left-leaning press was based on a rationalized idea of sexuality – where women had access to birth control and believed in the idea of a companionate marriage. While stressing the importance of fighting for repeal of § 218 and demonstrating the socio-economic conditions for prostitution, the Communist and Social Democratic press also used visual images to create a positive, instructional space for female readers emphasizing an alternative Modern Woman. In particular, the publication balanced the textual content focusing on the issue of prostitution, abortion rights and political involvement, with visual content focusing on fashion and health and hygiene related to sports and exercise.
3.2 Images of the Female Body in Motion

Representations of the healthy female body were crucial elements in alternative visions of the Modern Woman, especially in the SPD and KPD press. While the commercialized image of the Modern Woman often stood for an object of male desire, the sporty and healthy woman on the left represented an ideal which embraced the “rationalized” body. Moreover, the athletic Modern Woman presented in the communist press was one of independence and physical strength, who was tied to the politics of mobilization and community. The NSDAP press, on the other hand, used sports to create their vision of ideal women who had “grace” and femininity, rather than masculinized bodies. As scholars have found, the “emancipated” female body, participating in athletics, could be perceived by contemporaries as striving for “equality” with men.282

**Promoting Health and Bodily Discipline**

Instructional articles and images in the *AIZ, Der Weg der Frau* and *Frauenwelt* emphasized the need for women to pay attention to their bodily movements in every household activity, extending the rationalized home to the rationalized female body. For example, a photo essay in the October 17, 1930 edition of the *AIZ* presented the correct methods of sitting at a table to sew, standing to wash dishes, scrubbing the floor and carrying goods from the market. One photograph of a woman mending clothing is captioned, “A chair with a back and a footrest is not ‘effeminacy’ but is rather restful and a source of gathering strength for the sewing work.”283 The dishwashing, also, should be done on a table that is high enough so a woman

---

283 *AIZ, October 17, 1930.*
does not have to stoop over. In the column reserved for the “working woman,” in May 1927, illustrations exhibit the correct ways to sit while sewing or mending clothes. The first image depicts a woman sitting in her chair, leaning over her work, with her legs crossed. “The woman in this picture has her legs crossed over one another and because of this she sits bent.” The next image depicts a young woman, with her feet resting on the chair, her body curled over her sewing. “This is uncomfortable and impossible!,” the article states and would soon make a young woman unhealthy. The article goes on to discuss two other incorrect sitting positions until finally, the fifth woman “sits up straight and at the same time comfortably and naturally.” She has a footstool to rest her feet on and a table near her chair for her supplies, the correct way to sew.

The Weg der Frau also made use of visual instructions in order to contrast “correct” and “incorrect” methods of doing housework. Underneath an article “Health and Hygiene,” women are instructed to “save yourself time and energy” by using the following hints. Small drawings of stick figures also remind women not to stand on the back of a chair to wash windows (use a ladder instead) or balance precariously on chairs to clean the top of a

---

284 AIZ, May, 1927.
285 WDF, nr. 3, 1931.
bureau (use a long-handled duster instead). Frauenwelt had already published this exact series of instructional photographs in August 1930, urging readers to follow the directions in each illustration (figure 20). In the July 1932 edition, Der Weg der Frau upgraded from stick-figured drawings to a series of photographs for the rationalized body in an article, “Correct Posture Promotes Health” (figure 21). Part of “rationalization” is to pay attention “to the entire body,” notes the article. Each household task is illustrated by an image of a woman showing the proper use of the body. The young woman, wearing a one-piece bathing suit (presumably to emphasize the body) is shown how to bend with your knees to use a dustpan, rather than bending at the waist or demonstrating the right way to carry a bucket of water so as not to hurt one’s back. While these two images concentrate on household tasks, a photo of how to tie your shoe (put your foot on a chair rather than bending to the floor) and the correct way to “relax” (which depicts a woman sitting up straight in a chair, reading a book) emphasize other ways that women need to be aware of their bodies.

The Modern Woman, in this context, embraces a conscience attempt to visualize and use her body in a healthy manner, within the home. If women did not have an inordinate

---

286 FW, nr. 16, August 1930, p.370-371.

287 WDF, nr. 7, July 1932, p.29.
amount of free time (which they did not), “practical methods” for housework encouraged them to adopt habits at home to keep their bodies more healthy. One article even suggested incorporating “a little gymnastics” into one’s household routine, stretching while sweeping the floor to keep the body flexible.\(^{288}\) As strange as this may sound, the *AIZ* promoted specific types of exercises for women to do at home as part of their normal household activities. An article published on November 2, 1927 instructs young women on proper methods of sitting in front of a sewing machine or typewriter, alongside three different exercises to strengthen their bodies.\(^{289}\) The article remarks that “women’s work such as sewing, typing and writing” increases “occupational illnesses of female work” and can be physically harmful to the body. The article describes five exercises that young women can do at home to help with these problems. One exercise shows a woman lying on her back, arms straight at her sides, while her legs “bicycle” in the air (figure 22). In order to combat the stress of one’s occupation, including white-collar work, women were instructed to be aware of their bodies and develop good habits to maintain their health.

These articles continued throughout the Weimar years, containing the same messages: the Modern Woman is aware of how she uses her body at work, but in a manner

\[\text{Fig. 23, *BIZ*, May 12, 1927} \]

The “correct” way to read

\(^{288}\) *AIZ*, January 15, 1933.

\(^{289}\) *AIZ*, November 2, 1927.
directly related to issues of health, unlike the New Woman who is aware of her sexuality and her ability to incite desire. While the AIZ used illustrations of proper working techniques to stress the importance of health, the BIZ contained an interesting parallel regarding the proper demeanor and behavior of women, related to the body. Illustrations in the BIZ show fashionable young women in social scenes, not at home or performing housework, and emphasize the visual appeal of movement more than questions of health. However, in both the middle-class and communist publications, the goal is to discipline the body to conform to either particular social manners or ideas about the rationalized female body.
The discussion of youth and the New Woman took hold in articles discussing appropriate methods of standing, sitting, picking up objects and greeting friends. The New Woman became aware of her body in terms of how she should move and use her body correctly. A photo essay on May 12, 1927 in the *BIZ* demonstrates these “attractive and healthy measures.” A woman reading a magazine (the *BIZ* of course, is the prop here), is first slouched in her chair with her head down (figure 23). This is incorrect, but sitting up holding the newspaper close to her face, legs crossed at the ankles is the “right” way to sit, much like the image in the *Weg der Frau* related to correct posture, which also showed a woman reading.

These instructions became part of the New Woman’s public performance, designed to cultivate graceful and appealing body language, underlined by the language of “health.”

Correct ways to walk are demonstrated by photographs of women holding a coffee cup. The “false” way to move is “bending your knee” in front of you at a choppy angle. The “right” way to walk is to “glide,” holding the coffee cup in front of you, but not too close to

---

290 *BIZ*, May 12, 1927. Another article discusses the ways in which a young woman’s character can be measured by the way she sits in a chair. See *BIZ*, May 24, 1929.
your face. One does not slouch while standing at a table, but stands with her back straight; one does not bend from the waist to pick something off the ground (a very “un-pretty” method), but “bends at the knee” to pick something up. Not only are these methods much more attractive, they are also “far more healthy” for a young woman. Another article in the October 18, 1925 edition uses illustrations to discuss “instructional views for your demeanor” (figure 24). While including methods of sitting and greeting one another (one must not grasp the other person’s hand too tightly and step away from them, but rather gently clasp hands in a civil manner), the article also demonstrates the correct method of closing a door. A young woman does not enter the door and close it with her body turned sideways, but instead, shut the door as she faces the room. The focus on the body and movement become part of the construction of the New Woman. It is not merely how she looks, but how she acts. The women wear appropriate clothing to social gatherings and parties and understand the importance of measuring each movement in terms of fostering an entire image. It is not enough to look like the New Woman, one must act like the New Woman, much like the Modern Housewife who is aware of every movement. While the images certainly indicate class differences, some of the images between the magazines are similar, like the illustrations of how to properly sit while reading a book or newspaper. The text, however, clarifies the setting or the reasons why it is important to discipline the body for reasons of health, both outside and inside the home. Outside of the household, the female athlete also became an object of attention, as an alternative version of the commercialized Modern Woman.

291 *BIZ*, October 18, 1927.
Advocating the Right Sports for Women

The body of the Modern Woman in the AIZ and the Weg der Frau conveyed confidence and self-assurance, not through the use of clothing or cosmetics, but through strength, speed and athletic skill. W.L. Guttsman explained in Workers Culture in Weimar Germany: Between Tradition and Commitment, “The strongly political character of the communist sports organization was in line with the general policy of the KPD which ... endeavored to mobilize the resources of the ancillary organizations for the political struggle.”292 Female athletes, while regarded as a tool for political struggle, alongside the development of a healthy mind and body, also represented an alternative to the middle-class New Woman which was propagated in the left-leaning publications, while the IB used sports as a lens to promote the “correct” female body.

In August 1926, the AIZ published a photo essay “Play and Sport” showing workers involved in athletic competitions throughout Germany.293 In one photograph, six women are lined up for a relay-race while a photograph below reveals nine Russian swimmers challenging the female Berlin water-polo team. In May

Fig. 25, AIZ October 24, 1931
The Modern Female Athlete

Between Tradition and Commitment (New York, 1990), 138. For a recent discussion of tennis, boxing and track and field events in relation to gender and class, German Modernity (Oxford, 2010).
1927, the AIZ reported on various sporting events which took place earlier in the month. The photograph in the center of the page shows hundreds of young women simultaneously performing calisthenics. Many of the photographs promote team activities, rather than individual competitions, advocating cooperation and support among workers. All the women are in orderly rows, wear identical t-shirts and shorts and face forward. The caption underneath explains that this “massive demonstration of young working women” took place on May 1.  

The AIZ used the captions or text among pictures to link the worker and the athlete. It would never be a massive demonstration of “women,” but always “working women,” emphasizing the importance of class. The following image, from the AIZ cover, demonstrates the typical presentation of young women in the magazine (figure 25). Her body is strong although her clothing is gender specific. Her hair might be short but it is not the stylish cut of women in the BIZ, as working-class women could not afford expensive haircuts.

The Modern Woman, in this case, represents an ideal where strength is valued, but erotic power is nonexistent within the publication, at least in terms of inciting consumer desire. The BIZ tended to place urban, modern women or famous actresses on the cover of their publication, emphasizing sexuality, but the AIZ stressed worker solidarity and “healthy” constructions of the female body. The AIZ, in the late 1920s began to publish a page...

---


295 AIZ, October 24, 1931. For other cover images of female athletes, see AIZ, July 13, 1927; AIZ, August 10, 1927; AIZ, April 11, 1928; AIZ, April 25, 1930; and, AIZ, June 19, 1930.
dedicated specifically to female athletes. “Frauensport,” although not present in every issue, was more prominent than sporadic fashion columns for young women.  

In all of the images the females are presented without overt sexualization, in terms of eroticism or gaining the attention of men, even in summer sports when the females are wearing bathing suits. The bathing suits themselves are modest, and other photographs show women in sports uniforms, looking like other members of their team. Arguably, this does not mean that viewers could not find the young, female athletes attractive, but the publications presented the women as “wholesome,” rather than objects intended to incite desire, like the images in the BIZ.

*Der Weg der Frau* ran a column each month, “Health and Personal Hygiene,” that provided examples of sports and exercises for women, all within the framework of worker’s sports. The first edition, for example, asked, “Should women do sports?” A small photograph of women jumping through the air in unison, with a caption noting that this is a group of working-class women athletes, provides the answer. The article maintains that sports for women are “an important weapon in the fight for independence from men,” connecting self-confidence and female strength with equality. But, the article quickly qualified, these are not the same sports in which middle-class women participate; rather, sports should provide comradeship and a better relationship between both sexes. The magazine is particularly aware of how some readers might respond by noting at the end of the article, “Where is the time to exercise? And yet, our question, ‘should women do sports?’ is particularly important. Therefore, we will discuss in continuing columns on the health for women the possibility to work out and remain healthy, particularly for working women – and

---

296 AIZ, June 29, 1927.
297 WDF, nr. 1, 1931, p.22.
show that it is possible to remain ‘robust’ and healthy.” The first issue inaugurated the framework in which sports and related images of female athletes would be presented to their readers. Cover images often emphasized female independence and strength, not just through female pilots, but through the female athlete, as in the close-up of a female swimmer smiling at the camera on the front of the second issue in 1931. Articles including “Gymnastics Everyday” stressed the importance of taking breaks and stretching, particularly for female typists who sit and work for hours. The short article is accompanied by images of a middle-aged woman in shorts and a tank-top, performing a variety of stretches.

While daily exercises could be done alone, the magazine promoted unity through sports, whether through “indoor” gymnastics or “pushball.” After describing some of the techniques (with illustrative photographs), the magazine mentioned that women should encourage each other and bring their friends along for sports. While the magazine encouraged women to pay attention to their bodies and participate in sports, they did not have reservations about gendered differences in sports. In December 1931, the magazine declared that, within the context of “modern personal hygiene,” women can do any sports today, but some sports, like boxing and football were “not for us!” Rather, worker sports, which are “the same for men and women” are far better. The photographs of a group of young women, wearing bathing suits, participating in a game of “push ball” demonstrates “strength and healthiness.” In the last edition, published at the beginning of 1933, the magazine asked

298 WDF, nr. 2, 1931. See the cover photo for WDF, nr. 8, August 1932: two smiling, happy female athletes. Photographs of a mother and daughter also remind readers to practice gymnastics with their children. See, WDF, nr. 5, May 1932. For emphasis on unity in sports, see also WDF, nr. 10, October 1932 in which a group of women doing gymnastics help each other with balance.

299 WDF, nr. 3, 1931.

300 WDF, nr. 6, 1931; WDF, nr. 2, February 1932.

301 WDF, nr. 7, December 1931.
“What sport is unfeminine?”302 In this case, the article notes, both working-class and middle-class parents agree that boxing and football is “not for girls – only men.” Working women, in their fight for freedom, are in “solidarity” with men in working-class struggle.

While boxing and football were two examples of physical activities that were not appropriate for women, women could use their own physical aggression and skills in the realm of self-defense. In March 1932, the magazine published a column on “Self–Defense.”303 The five accompanying photographs showed a woman using Jiu-Jitsu to protect herself from male attackers, including an image of a woman fighting against a man in uniform – the caption explaining that “The female athlete knows how to fend off the Nazi aggression” (figure 26). The history of the sport is old, notes the magazine, but women with “systematic learning and regular training” have the possibilities of learning the “ABC’s of Jiu-Jitsu.”

The images and text emphasize the importance of health, solidarity and class consciousness, not attracting men and spending money on consumer goods. The female athlete became an alternative type of Modern Woman to the BIZ’s middle-class consumer, one that embraced commitment and unity within the Communist Party. Besides the few comments in Der Weg der Frau concerning unsuitable sports for women and the general

302 WDF, nr. 2, January 1933.
303 WDF, nr. 3, March 1932.
framework of solidarity through worker’s sports, the magazines in general did not focus their attention on criticizing middle-class female athletes. The AIZ and Der Weg der Frau also praised the athletic female body and did not shirk from revealing slim, muscular, young women on its covers or on sports pages.

Frauenwelt also encouraged its readers to participate in activities that would strengthen the female body. Articles on rhythmic gymnastics, women’s sports, gymnastics at home, and “good and bad” sports for women all urged women to pay attention to their movement and build strong bodies.\(^{304}\) An article published in April 1929, outlined appropriate sports for women and included photographs of a female athlete throwing the discus, two women paddling in a canoe and female runners and dancers alongside a group of young children playing leap-frog. The images all indicate positive examples of female athletes – the women are young and healthy. Not only are sports good for the body, but also for the “psychological” state of women, for self-confidence, strength and “inner and outer satisfaction.” Sports like rowing, bicycling, swimming and hiking are good for developing “force-power.” One can develop strength or force, alongside skills, by playing tennis, boxing, skiing, discus and all sports with balls (like football, rugby, baseball, hockey and cricket). Although the magazine includes boxing and football on their list of good sports, this seems to be directed more at males than females, where more feminine sports include those that are illustrated in the photographs.

Other articles and images, like “Something about Gymnastics” and “Household Gymnastics” focuses more attention on the Modern Woman who has less time to participate

\(^{304}\) See FW, nr. 14, July 1926 for “rhythmic gymnastics” (the Laben school) that included seven photographs of different types of body movements and dances. See also, FW, nr. 13, June 8, 1927, p.191 for an article on women’s sports. For a discussion of “body culture of the female,” see FW, nr. 11, June 1, 1929, p.253, which focuses on a discussion of the benefits of gymnastics and sports for the female body and provides photographs of women practicing ballet with their children, dancing and strengthening their bodies.
in organized sports activities.

“Something about Gymnastics,” from December 1928, acknowledges in the article that most women argue that they do not have time to for sports, because “all their energy” is spent at work or at home. The article offers a set of ten tips for women to work out at home, including doing gymnastics early in the morning and exercising by an open window. The article includes a number of photographs, including stretching exercises for women to do on their own, as well as a group of women working out together (figure 27). “Household Gymnastics,” printed in the April 1930 edition includes illustrations to show step by step moves for stretching, sit-ups and toe-touches. The drawings, of a young woman with a bubikopf practicing each exercise are intended as practical instructional material. The article also mentions that it is difficult for working women to find time to do regular gymnastics, but with regular training she will not be so tired in the evenings and the sports help them increase flexibility, build muscles and increase concentration.

In September 1931, Frauenwelt published a center spread on “Women in the Worker Sport International in Vienna.” This was unusual for the magazine because they normally did

---

305 FW, nr. 26, December 29, 1928, p.611. The magazine also included “sports clothing” in their fashion sections. See, for example, FW, nr. 9, April 1926, p.139; FW, nr. 26, December 1931 for skiing outfits (for “winter sports”) or “sports clothes” in FW, nr. 15, July 26, 1930, p.354, which used the descriptor “sports clothes” for everyday, comfortable clothing. The article “Sport and Art” also praised representations of athletes in paintings and sculpture (including a female tennis player) in FW, nr. 6, March 23, 1928, p.131-132. Female athletes were normally not the subject of cover images for the Frauenwelt, but the edition published on February 8, 1930 does depict a square-jawed man ice-skating, his companion, a young woman, is in his arms.

306 FW, nr. 8, April 18, 1930, p.174. See also, FW, nr. 7, April 1931, p.149 and FW, May 30, 1931, p.245.
not dedicate space to a large photo-essay and article and because topics on sports and athleticism usually focused on gymnastics or exercises that women could do at home. This article, however, celebrates women’s participation in mass sports and is visually very similar to the photo spreads found in the AIZ. The text notes that 30,000 women from 23 different nations participated in the activities. Not only did the women march together, but “6500 women from several nations at the same time” and “wearing the same sportswear” practiced gymnastics in rhythm to music. The magazine praised the “movement of waves” and the “bronze arms and legs” in the “reflection of the sun’s rays.” It was “a picture of beautiful bodies, grace and proletarian energy,” notes the article. The article also stressed that women were not fighting for awards or prizes, because the socialist rejects both. Rather, “competition” for the socialist is fighting for the instruction and training of the masses.” Moreover, rhetorically linking the liberation of women to the working class struggle, “men and women must stand shoulder to shoulder.” A resolution adopted by the women stressed that “We want to fight against war, fascism and capitalist slavery, for bodily and intellectual freedom, for peace and socialism.” One photograph running across both pages shows thousands of women doing toe-touches in unison, wearing white t-shirts and black shorts, emphasizing the number of women participating in the event. Above the headline is another photo of a female gymnast on the parallel bars, her body swinging through the air as her fellow athletes look on. The images of group gymnastics and parades emphasize unity and strength of the women. While the captions of the photos are only descriptors of the images, the photographs represent an attempt to visually enforce unity and strength. The photo essay not only celebrates female athletes for their “beauty” and “grace,” but indicates to readers
that organized sports of the workers’ movement are equally as important as daily gymnastics at home or within the local community.

The NSDAP had a far more ambiguous relationship with the representations of female athletes. The *IB*’s presentation of women and athletics is twofold. On the one hand, photographs portray women dancing, playing pool, roller-skating, ice-skating and practicing archery, and without a careful reading, would seem to demonstrate support for the athletic and creative prowess of the female body. On the other hand, the *IB* used these images to criticize specific athletic pursuits. As historian Leila J. Rupp wrote, “The ideal Nazi woman was not frail and helpless, but strong, vigorous, athletic.”\(^{307}\) She argues that “. . . one reason for emphasizing health and exercise was based on the dominant notion of woman-as-mother: The new standards of physical beauty prized broad-hipped women, unencumbered by corsets, who could easily bear children.”\(^{308}\) While this may be true, it is important to recognize that the magazine did not promote just any form of athletic activity; the *IB* clearly demonstrated opposition to athletic activities which were “unnatural” and “unfeminine,” far more than the other publications.

A photograph of a team of archers, for example, takes up the bottom half of one page in the September 13, 1930 edition (figure 28).\(^{309}\) Approximately 30 young women, wearing summer dresses are lined up, taking aim at an invisible target. The caption beneath the photograph states, “A photo that will press out the cold fear of pacifist idiots! But calm down—they are American Amazonians!!” In a tone which can be read as sarcastic, the *IB*


\(^{308}\) Rupp, “Mother of the ‘Volk’”, 378.

\(^{309}\) *IB*, September 10, 1930.
makes light of women archers—even as a sport—tying it to military maneuvers and implicitly stating that pacifist men are as effeminate and unmanly as the “American Amazonians” in their nice summer dresses.

Another image, published on July 12, 1930, is captioned, “Modern dancing gymnastics” or: Beauty is something different!” (figure 29). 310 The photograph is composed of a group of female dancers, wearing shorts and t-shirts, jumping in the air, faces forwards, their hair flying around their faces. At first glance, one might think that the IB would complement the strength of the women or their athletic abilities. They do not. Instead, the IB criticizes the development of the “so-called rhythmic gymnastics and the search for the so-called “self expression” of the dancers of the Laben School.”

The dancing, they claim, leads to muscle cramps, like the “graces in our picture.” Opposing traditional forms of dance and embracing the movement known as ausdruckstanz (“dance of expression”), Rudolf Laban founded more than 25 schools across Germany. His notions of “free dance,” often performed without music, became a symbol for modern dance in Germany during the 1920s and was appropriated as “German Dance” under the Third

310 IB, July 12, 1930.
Reich. In August 1931, the IB’s cover page included two particularly striking photographs of female athletes. The reader might assume that the two women, throwing the shot put, should be lauded for their strength. The photos, taken moments after the shot put has left their hands, are typical of the new kind of sports reportage that attempts to capture the athlete-in-action. Both women’s faces are pulled in a grimace and a yell, their bodies capturing shadows. The caption reads, “How far the record-seeking Sports-girl has moved away from the old ideal of the ‘grace and dignity’ of the German mother and wife.” The internal content had no connection to the cover photo, it only served to capture the attention of a passerby and to snarl at the incorrect type of female athleticism.

The IB praised the youthful activities of sport, most often in a section entitled S.A. Sport, where women were not featured. The IB did publish some articles and photographs of women and sport, but clearly demarcated the appropriate and inappropriate forms of athletic activities for young women. For example, the cover of the magazine on November 17, 1928 depicts a young woman in roller skates, jumping in the air and smiling into the camera. The corresponding article, “Real and False Grace in Women’s Sports,” discusses “the real

---


312 IB, 17 November, 1928.
grace in women’s sports,” illustrated in activities like roller-skating or ice-skating and are more “natural” for women. New forms of “modern” dance are decidedly not feminine. The photographs of the modern dancers portray the women in dramatic positions, arms flung outwards, a most “ungraceful” pose. Moreover, the “female disposition” is more inclined toward the graceful sports of ice and roller-skating. The corresponding photographs are captioned, “The female roller skater is a really athletic and healthy sport for our women.”

Skiing and ice-skating were two sports that the IB also deemed appropriate for women. Profiles of female ice-skaters and articles, like “The Healthiest and most elegant winter sport (ice-skating) for girls and women,” published in 1932, argued that this sport is the most beautiful sport for women and in all cases the “female disposition and constitution” alongside “grace and personal charm” are conducive for ice-skating. The discourse surrounding the health of the female body in the IB was framed in terms of combating trends in language couched in gendered terms. The pictures of the archers and dancers also depict a particular revulsion to the type of “modernity” embodied in these female pursuits. “Beauty is something different,” states the IB, and female beauty, in terms of the body, is best exhibited in sports which seem to embrace the “natural” rhythms and movements of the female, such as ice-skating or ballet dancing. While sports played an important role in delineating different types of Modern Women, fashion took center stage in publications. Whether celebrating youth and beauty or constructing alternative types of female style based on class differences, fashion played a crucial role in constructing the Modern Woman.

---

313 IB, nr. 1, January 2, 1932, p.18. See also, IB, nr. 8, February 20, 1932, p.190. The IB also included a profile of Sonja Henie, a world-champion ice-skater who told the reporters that she had wanted to become an ice-skater since the age of eight. Accompanying photographs of her practicing and competing emphasized graceful poses. See also, IB, January 2, 1931 for female skiers.
3.3 Fashion Images and the “New Woman”

If one only compared the visual representations of the Modern Woman’s wardrobe in *Frauenwelt*, the *AIZ, Weg der Frau* and *IB* to fashion sections in the *BIZ*, there is little difference. The young, slender and beautiful female models wear the latest dresses, adorn themselves with the correct accessories and are self-confident in their poses and facial expressions. Yet, the publications on the left politicized clothing by including other articles, commentary and captions which attempted to differentiate their type of Modern Woman from others, based on class differences. While the *BIZ* emphasized femininity in the form of desire and seemed to promote the fully “emancipated woman,” the magazine delineated firm boundaries for the Modern Woman. The *IB*, in its “Page for Women,” argued that the “German” Modern Woman could be stylish while purchasing only German goods.

*Forming the New Erotic Body through Advertisement*

Promising youth and beauty, the *BIZ* presented a woman whose femininity was instantly registered through the visual, particularly through clothing, cosmetic and perfume advertisements. The level of feminine sexuality and erotic intent are evident by the methods in which women are presented both as a consumer and as a commodity, as we have seen in the magazine’s presentation of white-collar workers. While some of the ads show women alone, many of them infer that a New Woman attracts a man by emphasizing her physical appearance.

The two advertisements below are representative of the numerous images in the *BIZ*. In the left image, the young woman is posed on the edge of the bed, while a man stands expectantly behind her, smiling, presumably waiting for her to get dressed, or undressed
depending on the viewers’ imagination (figure 30).\textsuperscript{314} In the illustration on the right, the woman’s bare shoulders, exposed garter belt and stockings are highly suggestive.\textsuperscript{315} Undergarments, the most personal garments of a woman’s wardrobe are on display. While some of the representations of women in undergarments are to sell a brassiere or silk stockings, the following ad is one for perfume (figure 31).\textsuperscript{316} There is a sense of intimacy located in the image, where the viewer is privileged to see the woman in a private space, without her knowing it.

In the April 22, 1928 edition, a quarter-page advertisement states in bold lettering, “The modern woman stays young!” A woman wearing a short dress, her hair bobbed, standing in front of a set of doors, advertizes beauty cream for day and night. This ad notes that she has learned to “defeat aging,” and how to stay “young and fresh” by using “Mattcreme,” which gives her a “healthy complexion . . . Through this the ‘modern woman’ achieves a healthy face!”\textsuperscript{317} Ads for beauty creams and cosmetics, spanning 1924-1933, are often designed with labels such as “A modern woman” or the “beautiful woman.” A face cream ad in a January 1925 edition of the \textit{BIZ} is virtually indistinguishable from one found in a March magazine in 1932. Both ads depict young women wearing make-up, looking confident and self assured that their appearance is one of perfection.\textsuperscript{318}

\textsuperscript{314} \textit{BIZ}, April 20, 1924.

\textsuperscript{315} \textit{BIZ}, August 24, 1924.

\textsuperscript{316} One example of an ad for brassieres shows a woman in her bedroom, standing in front of the mirror (to show both the back and front of the design) in a June 1927 edition of the \textit{BIZ}. The women modeling the latest design is young, with short, dark, curly hair and a self-assured look on her face.

\textsuperscript{317} \textit{BIZ}, April 22, 1928.

\textsuperscript{318} \textit{BIZ}, January 23, 1925 and March 16, 1932.
Ads for perfume remained prevalent throughout the decade and the women were represented in much the same manner. They were shown in their homes, getting ready for an evening out. One image portrays a young woman in an evening gown splashing “Kölnisch Wasser” on her neck while at her vanity table in front of a mirror. Another perfume ad, for the same brand, depicts the young woman standing outside a theatre with her beau. Illustrating these scenes is a familiar narrative, the women at home prepare for their evening out with handsome looking men. If present, the men in the illustrations are attractive and broad shouldered, the compliment to the female next to him.

These advertisements, which are widespread throughout every issue, exemplify the enhanced sexuality of women. The New Woman is not afraid of exposure, both in terms of her own body and what she is willing to “show” her audience. An ad shown in the January 1925 edition of the BIZ (which the magazine reprinted in the following months) for “Tosca” perfume portrays a scene of pure decadence. A woman sprawled on a table, is by all means, the centerpiece. Her evening dress is nearly sheer, showing the outline of her body, her breast bared and she tilts her chin upwards in defiance. A man moves towards her, carrying a bottle.

---

319 BIZ, May 22, 1927.
of “Tosca” perfume on a silver platter. Clothing ads, showing models dressed in evening wear, also wear garments, which show off their back, their shoulders and their legs. Two women, for example in the January 24, 1924 edition of the BIZ, are standing next to each other, holding fur wraps, the backs of their dresses cut low. In advertisements for household appliances, such as the new “Vox” stereo, a woman lounges in her pajamas, one arm resting on her new appliance, the other draped across the back of her chair, eyes closed. The woman is as much on display as the stereo itself.

The body is emphasized in these images in two aspects. First, the body is highlighted as a site for covering and uncovering. The negotiation between the proportion of the body that a viewer can see or that a viewer can imagine is shown in the settings in which women are placed and what they are wearing. The image of the woman in a slip and stockings, for example, accentuates her femininity by revealing her legs, shoulders, her back and hints at, yet does not expose, for example, her breasts. Secondly, the “skin” of the body receives attention as the site of youth. Ads emphasize the value of feminine youth; they encourage women to “prevent aging” and to be aware of the texture of their hands or their faces. The smell of the skin must not only be fresh, but alluring, as part of a maintenance routine that promises a pleasant working environment by “soothing the nerves” and is equally important in maintaining social relationships with men.

One of the striking observances concerning these images is the nature of the young woman’s self-assuredness and self-awareness. The women are surrounded by mirrors, either

---

320 BIZ, January 24, 1924.

321 BIZ, August 16, 1926.
in their homes or checking their lipstick in public. They “see” themselves as fresh and new, they desire others to see them the same way. They are conscious of their beauty; they are satisfied with their bodies. With the help of beauty cream, make-up and perfume the young woman is transformed into a commodity that looks, feels, and smells like a vision of delightful youth; characteristics that were closely associated with the female white-collar worker, as we saw in the section on women and work. At once a commodity and a consumer, the BIZ’s model of the Modern Woman reveled in her femininity by paying attention to her body and using it as an object of attraction.

The Rationalization of Fashion and Images of “Practical” Modern Women

Unlike the BIZ, which demonstrated fashion in ads selling sexy underwear or alluring perfume, the AIZ, Weg der Frau and Frauenwelt included representations of their Modern Woman, but emphasized in special style columns or fashion supplements, rather than large advertising sections. These publications also presented “modern” sewing patterns or instructions for how to make something “new” from something “old” (much like instructions for the rationalized home). The AIZ and Der Weg der Frau also used fashion in order to criticize what they saw as an indulgent consumer society, while offering practical alternatives for their readers, like the special sections we saw earlier on clothes for white-collar workers. Each publication also used fashion as a marker of modernity and change over time by juxtaposing “styles from the past” with “modern clothing” on their covers and in special photo-essays.

322 For example, a series of ads ran beginning in the March 2, 1928 edition for “Pebeco” toothpaste that show a woman holding a compact mirror at arm’s length, smiling at her reflection.
Frauenwelt, from its first issue, published a special fashion section with each of its editions. The sections were on average three to four pages with illustrations depicting the latest summer dresses, winter coats or stylish skirts. A couple of pages included drawings, with the pattern numbers printed clearly by each outfit and a short descriptor indicating the amount of fabric for each outfit and suggested colors and fabrics. Subsequent pages would include step by step instructions for making something “new” out of something “old,” tips for updating clothing on a budget and patterns for children and men’s clothing. The magazine understood that their readers could not afford the luxury of purchasing a whole new wardrobe each season, but attempted to offer alternatives in order for women to remain stylish. In 1927, when the new editor Toni Sender took over the magazine, the fashion section began to include articles and photographs in order to explain the “practical and at the same time the most beautiful and modern” clothing. The introduction to this new approach noted that the magazine would present what women could make or alter on their own, as not to be dependent on ready-made clothing for “modern” and “new” styles.

The presentation of fashion clearly engaged with the discourses of “modernity,” including articles and images on how to “modernize” existing articles of clothing. Articles such as “A modern smock dress out of an un-modern Sunday dress” included instructions and images to help women update their wardrobe. The descriptor “modern,” included in the title of the fashion section, increased in frequency towards the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. From “modern coats,” “modern inexpensive undergarments,” “modern summer dresses” to “jaunty modern winter coats,” the magazine textually

---

324 FW, nr. 16, 1924, p. 261.
emphasized stylish trends (figure 32). In 1928, the magazine began including fashion photographs in the publication, alongside illustrations, showing the finished product. The photographs lent an air of “reality” to the Modern Woman. No longer was she a paper doll, with exaggerated slenderness, youthful appearance and no designation of individuality. The photographs of women in the “modern coat,” however, depict actual women, posing with their hands on their hips and their faces turned to present a profile to the camera. The photographs function to make a connection between the possibilities (the drawings) and the actualization of the Modern Woman through a powerful visual indicator of modernity – fashion.

*Frauenwelt* also included commentary on clothing reform, and called for practical, comfortable and “modern” clothing for women. “The Principles of Women’s Clothing,” by *Frauenwelt* did periodically include fashion for “older women” and “thicker women” in its style section, but on the whole illustrations of young women remained the norm. For exceptions, see *FW*, nr. 19, November 1924, p.313-317; *FW*, nr 8, April 1926, p.127.
Elizabeth Kirchmann-Röhl, explained the qualities of clothing reform, accompanied by a
drawing of two examples of women’s dresses. The article critiqued the “BIZarre” and
“tasteless” changes in fashion and then outlined the approach that women should have to
fashion. “Women’s clothing should be beautiful!” the author exclaims, but what is beautiful?
The clothing should be made of good material, fit properly and avoid exaggeration along
with good posture. The new fashions (slim lines and very pretty) only fit the slender, young
women and are not made for older women. But, fashion is still important, argues the author,
and is related to the liberation of the body. First, women should not “blindly wear the color
that is only now ‘modern’,” but relate the color of the clothing to their skin and hair.
Secondly, there are forms of clothing that will always remain beautiful and never become
obsolete. Third, “every exaggeration is ugly,” in style and color, for example.
Fourth, clothing must always be related to the freedom of the movement of the body. Finally,
clothing must always be comfortable. While the magazine does not reject fashion, it makes a
point to mention that “especially for the self-confident working-class women, it is necessary
to form their views on fashion,” indicating the desire to be stylish, but support a type of
fashion that is related to the liberation of the body – comfortable, loose clothing allowing for
movement. This approach allowed the publication to present types of clothing and
accessories that were available to working-class women – ideas for updating an old dress, for
example, because few women could spend money on the latest trends. The article ended with
a message to its readers, “To combine practicality and beauty is necessary and possible.”

327 FW, nr 4, May 1924, p.61.

328 See also, FW, nr. 9, 1924 for an article against exaggeration in fashion. An article and series of illustrations
by Friedrich Wendel in FW, nr. 10, 1924 addresses caricatures of fashion styles.
In the article, “Women’s Clothing and Women’s Liberation,” Jenny Schumacher argued that the “emancipation of clothing” ran parallel with the “emancipation of women” and the conscious female would be aware of the role that clothing played in her life. The author notes, by the end of the last century, the beginnings of the emancipation of women also changed women’s clothing. While women sought equality with men, “some women went so far as to wear men’s clothes” and “short hair.” The women’s emancipation, in part, was marked by the “banishment of prevailing conventions and customs” including “the long skirt, the constricting corset and high collar.” Schumacher argues that the “intellectual liberation of women was thus parallel to her physical liberation.” This included the self-confidant woman, independent from the prevailing ideas of “feminine,” who did not seek to highlight the charms of the female body to attract men. The magazine criticized the objectification of women through the means of fashion, but did not go so far as to celebrate masculinized fashions. Short hair, the stylish bubikopf was acceptable, but a total transformation from head to toe was frowned upon. Fashion, as Kirchmann-Röhl noted in her previous article, “should be beautiful.”

At the same time, women should not be “slaves to fashion,” and the “proletarian woman” can also strive to characterize the clothing of the working-woman as simple and beautiful. At the end of the article, Schumacher comments that the clothing of the conscious woman is not just a matter of “form” but also an “expression of a new spirit” because even the “seemingly external,” in dress and jewelry, reveals the beginnings of a changing culture. The images included with the article first show reproductions of images of early centuries:

329 FW, nr. 18, October 1924, p.292 – 293. See also, FW, nr. 17, 1924 for a discussion of how to be a smart consumer.

330 FW, nr. 4, May 1924, p.61.

170
women in confined dresses. A set of four images, in particular, demonstrates the shift from the fashion of the eighteenth century to the clean, streamlined looks of the 1920s – *sans* corset, bustier, high collar, hat and parasol. The images function to set apart the current style, but framed within an argument related to female emancipation, manifested symbolically in clothing.

*Frauenwelt* linked clothing reform to women’s issues. Contributors did not just desire to “free the body,” but hoped to instill a sense of engagement with fashion that made readers more aware of their consumer choices. Subsequent articles, “The Liberation of Women in the Mirror of Clothing,” “Fashion and Women’s Liberation” and “Clothing Reform,” continued to remark on the importance of practicality, health and hygiene related to women’s fashion.331 “Fashion and Women’s Liberation,” published in November 1929, asks if the “modern woman” will be afforded the same “comfortable” and “functional” clothing as men.332 The author, Margarete Hartig, notes that this “modern woman” can be fully satisfied

---

331 See *FW*, nr. 22, October 27, 1927, p.342-343; *FW*, nr. 22, November 2, 1929, p.514-515; and, *FW*, nr. 13, June 30, 1928, p.306.

332 *FW*, nr. 22, November 2, 1929, p.514. See also, *FW*, nr.2, January 1929, p.42, “The New Line,” for a discussion of the return to more “feminine” clothing. Included in this article (alongside two small images of women in dresses) is an examination of the practicality of fashion for working women, who mostly sew their own clothes, rather than buying them at a department store.
with the “sachlich” (functional) dress of today. The magazine attempted to balance reader’s desires for fashionable clothing while encouraging women to develop discriminate taste. In an article published in 1928, for example, “The thick and the thin,” the magazine argued that young women want to look like the images of women in the advertisements, but when they try the clothes on, they do not look the same.\textsuperscript{333} Women want to look “modern and chic,” but must wear clothes that flatter their bodies, rather than buying into the latest trend. The article presents “tips” for its readers on how to look thinner, particularly the length of dresses and skirts and wearing darker colors. While critiquing fashion’s ideal woman (young and thin) the magazine continued to subtly enforce the notion that women could take steps to look young and thin by dressing strategically and including the standardized images of the middle-class consumer type of Modern Woman within its fashion section. These drawings and photographs targeted feminine professions, which required a type of uniform or standardized dress for their work, with patterns, so women could sew their own.\textsuperscript{334}

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Frauenwelt included more options for women’s clothing for work, but not for a specific profession. Rather, the images indicate white-collar or professional work. A short article with three drawings of stylish women “Work and Holiday Clothing” in September 1928, noted that it is possible for women to look nice at work (whether in the factory or office). The images, of slim, stylish women with the headline indicating “Working Clothes from Practical Tweed” demonstrates the attempts of the magazine to provide fashionable options for working women (figure 33). The drawing behind the women indicates an urban space with tall office buildings, and the self-confident

\textsuperscript{333} Frauenwelt, nr. 14, July 14, 1928, p.330.

\textsuperscript{334} For example, see Frauenwelt, nr. 11, 1924, p.181 – 182; Frauenwelt, nr. 17, 1924, p.277 – 278; Frauenwelt, nr. 15, July 26, 1930, p.355.
women model dresses appropriate for the office. Frauenwelt began including more photographs of women’s fashions related to specific types of work, like the one found in July 1930 which depicted clothing for nursing, cooking and a woman working with books (figure 34). These photographs are directly related to the articles on women’s work found in the magazine, emphasizing some of the “ideal” types of women’s work. Fashion and work are directly connected, not just in representations of clothing for the office, but other “female” professions.

The AIZ also included representations of the Modern Woman in relation to fashion, but fluctuated between presenting acceptable clothing for proletarian women and criticizing the over-indulgence of middle-class spenders. A July 1927 article in the AIZ, “The Social Character in Fashion,” argues for “practical” and “healthy” clothing for the proletarian woman, while presenting a photograph of the Modern Woman in a low-waisted dress, short hair and high heels. Although the images appear similar to those in the BIZ, as far as the type of clothing, there are significant differences between the publications. The AIZ dedicated a much smaller percentage of its pages to women, particularly young women for whom office garb was necessary. Also, the clothing was not ready-made, but patterns. The

335 FW, n. 15, July 26, 1930, p.355.
336 AIZ, July 13, 1927.
textual descriptions, while using some of the same types of language in describing a specific style, also underlined the sensibleness of garments. Economic reality necessitated making one’s own clothes rather than buying a wardrobe of ready-made dresses and coats for each season. Rationalization, in this case, translated to everyday life choices. It is not merely the factory floor that becomes efficient, but a woman’s appearance as well. Short text which accompanied illustrations attached “proletarian practicality” to clothing in order to separate the working class from bourgeois culture and style even while using fashionable descriptors.

Articles such as these emphasized class differences, but argued that working women were by no means “bourgeois” if they wanted to adopt more fashionable styles. A number of articles in the AIZ also demonstrate a denunciation of the activities, spending-patterns, and values embodied by the image of consumer-orientated Modern Woman. For example, in an article entitled “Where does the money go?,” printed in September of 1927, the AIZ criticizes the “glitter” and “sparkle” of capitalistic obsession with clothing and jewelry. The eight photographs which accompany the article are of smiling young women, one of which shows off an umbrella with a butterfly on it, and four images of women’s silk stockings. A month later another article appeared, “The Fashion of ‘the lady’,” with

---

337 AIZ, September 14, 1927.
photographs of an upper class woman (figure 35).\textsuperscript{338} In one photograph, the woman stands in a garden and the caption beneath the photo reads, “The garden of the worker is a miserable flower pot – at best a little arbor. The capitalists have parks and a winter garden in their house. In such [a winter garden] the ‘lady’ wears silk pajamas.”\textsuperscript{339} The article states, “Silk, velvet, lace and fur is the lady from morning to midnight.” The rich women change their clothes several times during the day and for an evening coat, the women have “1, 2, 3, 5 and more fur coats” which cost “a thousand marks.” Moreover, “The women glitter in velvet and lace while thousands of worker’s children hunger day after day.”\textsuperscript{340}

The \textit{AIZ} does not argue that women should not attempt to dress well or fashionably, but the overindulgence of rich women, as shown in the photographs, is a bitter contrast with those who cannot afford to spend without conscience. These luxuries are incompatible with the economic realities of the worker, and framing “the lady” as an indulgent capitalist allows the \textit{AIZ} to critique bourgeois values emphasized in representations of frivolous females. In an October 1930 article, the \textit{AIZ} demonstrates this concern with a discussion of middle-class fashion in 1900, 1924 and 1930.\textsuperscript{341} The paragraph above four women modeling different dresses advises women to ignore the “fashion industry’s propaganda,” and instead choose clothing that is practical and adequate, as well as pretty. “Sports Clothing,” the focus of a column published in January 1928, includes an illustration for “bloomers for ladies.”\textsuperscript{342} The short article asks, “Should the male or female worker wear sports clothing? Or, is wearing

\textsuperscript{338} \textit{AIZ}, October 19, 1927.

\textsuperscript{339} \textit{AIZ}, October 19, 1927.

\textsuperscript{340} \textit{AIZ}, October 19, 1927.

\textsuperscript{341} \textit{AIZ}, October 3, 1930.

\textsuperscript{342} \textit{AIZ}, January 31, 1928.
sports clothing a bourgeois matter? No. Naturally, there is a big difference between practical and luxurious sportswear." The constructed images of working-class women, while adopting “bourgeois” styles had to be grounded in economic realities.

Amidst all the criticism directed at the image of the modern woman as the white-collar worker, the AIZ frequently made attempts to offer “modern” and “fashionable” clothing for female office-workers on its “Women’s Page.” The image of the female office clerk in the AIZ is different from the BIZ; most importantly, it was not as eroticized. One focus of the “Working Woman” section of the AIZ was the inclusion of “practical” clothing patterns, often times specifically for women working in an office. The images, until mid-1927, were rough drawings and representations of office workers that are small in scale and deemed sensible, not fashionable. A column in April 1927 places a distinction on clothing for “work” and the “office” (figure 10). In this section, the outfits are roughly drawn and the clothing is not modeled by women. Within the text further distinctions are made between different types of work, including clothing for housework and more stylish outfits for a sales or office girl. The representations themselves do not speak to a fashion-conscious proletariat but rather are imbued with practicality and sensibleness. Yet, few readers would be able to afford a wardrobe which included clothing for a wide variety of tasks or be able to afford to update their wardrobe each season with the latest trends.

By August 1927, the illustrations in the AIZ began to appear more stylish (figure 11). No longer were women non-existent or roughly drawn, but now illustrations showed women

---

343 AIZ, January 31, 1928.

344 AIZ, January 26, 1927 and AIZ, March 6, 1927. These columns demonstrate how to make something “new” from something “old,” like transforming an old cape into a dress suitable for work.

345 AIZ, April 10, 1927.
posing with books, wearing hats and carrying stylish handbags.\textsuperscript{346} The visual images of the Modern Woman began to emerge similar to those found in the \textit{BIZ}, they are fashionable and confident, but not erotic. Columns appeared designating particular styles of clothing and fabric for each season, such as the October 5, 1927 edition describing clothing for autumn.\textsuperscript{347} A November issue describes “practical autumn and winter coats” and different styles clarified as “sporty” or “elegant.”\textsuperscript{348} The \textit{AIZ} began to use some of the same types of textual descriptors for “modern” and “stylish” clothing by employing the same types of clarifications in the captions and text for the garments.

By 1928, “The Working Women” page appeared with more regularity and continued to propagate fashionable clothing for women. The women in the drawings appear young, tall and slim. Their bodies, although not framed provocatively, are posed to show off the new summer dress, winter suits or uniforms for work. The April 10, 1928 edition, clothing for “work” also included dresses that women would wear for housework or gardening, in combination with clothing for the office girl or sales girl.\textsuperscript{349} However, a few months later the \textit{AIZ} only exhibited young slender women, wearing garments suitable for office work, not housework.

The \textit{AIZ} often presented images of working women alongside their fashion columns. For example, in the September 5, 1930 edition, a photograph of young women working in a factory is set above a column for “Practical Autumn Coats.”\textsuperscript{350} Amidst the economic strains of the depression, the \textit{AIZ} suggested six different styles of coats for young women. In the

\textsuperscript{346} \textit{AIZ}, August 17, 1927; October 5, 1927; and, November 1, 1927.

\textsuperscript{347} \textit{AIZ}, October 5, 1927.

\textsuperscript{348} \textit{AIZ}, November 1, 1927.

\textsuperscript{349} \textit{AIZ}, April 10, 1928.

\textsuperscript{350} \textit{AIZ}, September 5, 1930.
photograph above the column, the female factory workers smile at the camera, sitting in front of sewing machines. The angle of the camera captures the long tables, with dozens of women sitting side by side, fabric bunched across the table. Although appearing to be “happy,” the caption provided suggests otherwise, describing the dark room lit only with artificial light, the close quarters of the workers and dusty air which caused adverse health effects. Thus, while integrating images of the Modern Woman via fashion columns, the AIZ simultaneously pointed to detrimental working conditions for female workers in the clothing industry. This strategy allowed the AIZ to provide female readers with some semblance of modernity and style, while sustaining the rhetoric of class difference and pointing to the realities of most working women. The clothing represents the fantasies, part of the construction of the ideal types of femininity for young women who do have a job, which requires them to act the part of a young, beautiful typist or shop girl. The photographs of working women, on the other hand, are more akin to the “reality” of everyday life. Through the Worker’s Photography movement, individuals were encouraged to document their living and working conditions, but workers captured the gloomy interiors of the factory or their small kitchens, not their office. However, the “worker” in the AIZ remained primarily male. As Eric Weitz has pointed out, the image of the masculinized, muscled worker remained the norm in the AIZ.351 While Weitz does examine the AIZ, he ignores the women’s magazine, Der Weg der Frau, which presented far more images of female workers in an attempt to create a type of Modern Woman who sought economic independence and also crossed the boundaries of what was considered “traditional” female work.

351 Weitz, Creating German Communism, 191. In his chapter “Gendering German Communism,” Weitz also acknowledges the fashion columns in the AIZ and recognizes an array of images of femininity in the AIZ.
The communist woman’s magazine, *Der Weg der Frau* also included pages of fashion each month, but with far less commentary than the *AIZ* or *Frauenwelt*. The style section, “What should I wear?” was usually two pages long. The first edition, for example, contained one page of illustrations of five slender women wearing belted dresses, fashionable hats and holding pocketbooks with corresponding pattern numbers printed alongside each drawing (figure 36). \(^{352}\) The next page always included practical advice for mending clothes and stockings, making clothing for children out of cast-offs or creating three different collars to alter one dress. The text, unlike the *AIZ*, provided step-by-step instructions, but did not engage in ideological positioning related to fashion, perhaps because the surrounding content in the magazine made its political and social positions clear. While the magazine did include styles for “larger women” and mentioned that one style was “youthful,” on the whole the magazine saw fit to provide useful suggestions for their female readers.\(^{353}\)

---

\(^{352}\) *WDF*, nr. 1, August 1931, p.16 – 17.

\(^{353}\) *WDF*, nr. 6, November 1931 incorporates clothing for “thicker” women. Sometimes the magazine would respond to readers’ wishes (e.g. “how to make a new pair of gloves”). See *WDF*, nr. 7, December 1931, p. 22 – 23.
*Der Weg der Frau* connected any discussion of personal appearance to “health,” thus offering tips on skincare, but also warning against chemicals found in makeup in the “Dangers of Cosmetics.”\(^3\)\(^5\)\(^4\) Articles on skin or hair care were found in the “Sports and Personal Hygiene” section of the magazine. Any discussion of personal care was always connected with images of female athletes, linking care of the skin to the general health of the female body. This strategy allowed the magazine to offer some advice to women on their appearances – but always within a framework of “health and hygiene,” rather than consumer practices.\(^3\)\(^5\)\(^5\)

While the *Illustrierte Beobachter* contains images of the Modern Woman, although not to the extent that the *BIZ, Frauenwelt* or *AIZ* did, it is clear that there is an ambiguous and tense relationship between the Modern Woman visually and textually within the magazine. The figure of the Modern Woman, shown in fashionable garb on the “Women’s Page” have two functions. First, the *IB* targeted female readership and urged women to dress in an appropriate, yet fashionable manner, tied to political interests. Second, the page serves as a marker for male readers, to demonstrate the importance of women’s issues among militarization, political rallies and technological advancements, so often the subjects of focus in the magazine.

As Leila Rupp wrote in “Mother of the ‘Volk’: The Image of Women in Nazi Ideology,” the Nazi’s believed feminism “. . . had convinced women that motherhood was beneath their dignity” and campaigned for women to return to their “natural” roles of wives

---

\(^3\)\(^5\) See *WDF*, nr. 2, 1931 for a short article on using olive oil to soften the skin and *WDF*, nr. 2, 1931 for a brief article on the “Dangers of Cosmetics,” which included a warning that colored powders can be harmful.

\(^3\)\(^5\)\(^5\) Unsurprisingly, the *WDF* did not have many ads for fashion or beauty products in its magazine. One exception is an ad for “Phoenix” brand overshoes, available in different colors. Even here the ad stressed that the product was inexpensive and practical, which meant that women could actually save money.
and mothers. At the same time, Nazi ideology “created new responsibilities for women within the home. A woman would have to concern herself with the world outside her home and, through her duties within the family, could support racial, cultural and economic policy on the national level,” which included guarding against foreign influences and transmitting German culture to their children. As depicted within the IB, “Women could serve the nation by purchasing only goods produced in Germany, boycotting Jewish stores . . . and buying carefully in order to raise the standard of living.” These roles demanded that German Women, as consumers, must be informed and educated on the practice of helping to sustain the national economy through their spending patterns and awareness of German fashion.

The “page for women” focused most often on issues of fashion. The photographs and drawings are, to a large extent, replicas of the fashion pages in other magazines. The women are usually thin, modeling the latest clothes, showing off a suit or sports garment, for example. The captions describe the type of fabric or the color of the garment. The text, however, places the issue of women’s fashion in a political and social context. The articles often begin by describing the topic of the page, practical suits or sports clothing, and stress the importance of clothing that is sensible and still makes a woman look pretty. The articles discuss the fashion trends and the importance of buying good quality, “sturdy” clothing. Before long, however, the reader is cautioned against supporting both “foreign companies” and “Jewish manufacturers” and is instructed to support “German” shops.

356 Rupp, “Mother of the ‘Volk’,” 370.
357 Rupp, “Mother of the ‘Volk’,” 371.
358 Rupp, “Mother of the ‘Volk’,” 372.
An article titled, “Fashion of the German Woman, against the price of the fashion dictators,” discusses the personal style of the German Woman and the excessive influence of foreign fashion, particularly French.\(^{359}\) The article continues by stating that “the policy of the German woman and girl” in regards to fashion is that “fashion is modern and for every German woman is not what the degenerate French in conjunction with the Jewish clothing factory owners prescribe, but rather what every woman needs, that which is practical, nice, inexpensive and also sturdy and pleasing.”\(^{360}\) The women’s “appetite for clothing,” may be satisfied through a particularly German mode of style and consumption. The images with the article include a photograph of a woman modeling a winter coat, which is “flattering to all figures,” and is sold in a light-brown color. A photograph of four handbags at the bottom of the page is captioned, “Handbags in a flat or pouch form, all are ‘modern.’ When one has the time, make one for yourself.”\(^{361}\) While using the same type of textual descriptors as the BIZ noting the color, texture and quality of the garment, the IB politicized fashion much more than the BIZ. As the AIZ, fashion became a focal point for politics. But unlike the AIZ, which concentrated on issues of class, the IB focused on the national economy and women’s responsibility to adhere to the racist components of Nazi ideology.

---

\(^{359}\) IB, Nov. 23, 1929. Although Irene Guenther treats the intersection of racism, economic nationalism and female eroticism in terms of fashion, she does not use the IB in her analysis. Guenther, Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich (Oxford, 2004). See also, Sabine Hake, “In the Mirror of Fashion,” in Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture, ed. Katherin Von Ankum (Berkeley, 1997). Hake suggests that right-wing critics of the Weimar Republic used fashion as a site to “describe the dangers of a homogeneous international culture” and specifically attacked French couturiers and Jewish Konfektionäre, p. 193.

\(^{360}\) Hake, “In the Mirror of Fashion,” 193.

\(^{361}\) Hake, “In the Mirror of Fashion,” 193.
Like the *AIZ*, *Frauenwelt* and *Weg der Frau*, but in conformity with its own political stance, the *IB* presented women with options to make their own clothing using only German materials. Articles on the “Page for women” reasoned that self-made clothing and accessories from “German” textiles can also be modern. For example, a short column and photographs in the January 18, 1930 edition encourage women to make “sports clothing” at home, by using the latest sewing and knitting patterns.  

Two of the photographs show women wearing their self-made creations, a sweater-jacket and a sweater with contrasting colors. Another small photograph also shows a handmade dress for a young girl, in an “easy and quick” pattern.

The March 19, 1932 issue features “Practical Street Suits,” and the article begins by describing the fashion ‘seasons,’ the changes in spring and fall clothing and notes that an economical woman can clothe herself both “practically” and “tastefully” (figure 37).

---

362 *IB*, January 18, 1930.
363 While the majority of “Women’s Pages” concentrated on women’s fashion and style, the April 12, 1930 edition focused on clothing for children. The article discussed the “sailor style” trend for children’s clothing and contained photographs of three children wearing playclothes and outdoor coats.
364 *IB*, March 19, 1932.
photographs, arranged around the text, show fashionable women, modeling the type of suits and coats that are deemed appropriate to wear. The text describes the colors and fabrics of the clothing, showing the brown, sturdy jacket to the right, with a skirt that hits just below the knee. The first illustration presents clothing for the larger figure, and offers advice on how to dress to flatter your figure. After this, the article connects the seemingly non-harmful issue of the season’s styles with support for the German state: “In general, one can say that we do not, in dresses or suits, have the slightest occasion to support foreign countries or Jewish manufacturers.”

Urging women to support German companies, the article contends that German clothing is of higher quality, thus making the connection between the “good” German shops and those of outsiders, both literally and figuratively. The article concludes by arguing that a designer in Turkey, Kemal Pascha, has learned to adopt “European styles” but only uses Turkish materials, thus serving as an example of a nation which establishes a “national fashion” and instructs women to support a similar program in Germany. The images, without contextualization, are quite similar to those found in the BIZ and AIZ. Black and white photographs of women modeling take up the page. While three of the women are young and rather thin, there is one photograph of an older woman, with a body that is not so small. Here, the IB seems to be targeting a broader range of women, not just women in their early 20s for example. They are distinctly feminine, however, in their presentation and lack any “masculine” qualities. The women in these photos all wear feminine hats, and although their hair may be cut short, it is unmistakable that these individuals are women. Thus, the article and photographs serve a variety of purposes. One is to include female readers, the second to connect fashion with practicality for a broad range of women and third, to connect

---

365 IB, March 19, 1932.
appearance and shopping with national identity, telling women that German fashions, while adopting European styles, can be transformed into a “national fashion,” which excludes spending money on foreign (particularly French) and Jewish domestic manufacturers.

Another article concentrates on “the struggle against crazy fashions,” of the early 1930s (figure 38). The article is more explicit in its demands that women oppose designs and fabrics of non-German designers, while presenting drawings of slim, fashionable women.

The newest trend, states the article, is a long skirt. Although one might expect a more conservative notion of female dress, the article proposes that women stick with the shorter dresses and skirts (but not above the knee). “What would a working woman do with her long skirts? We’ll stick to our medium-length skirts for working.” The long skirt, although seemingly “conservative” in its ability to cover women, was of no use to women who needed a practical wardrobe and who could not afford the more expensive long skirts. The article playfully categorizes elements of fashion for the German Modern Woman, and although not

---

366 IB, January 15, 1930.
367 IB, January 15, 1930.
arguing against looking nice, urges women to be sensible. Corsets, for example, were an “instrument of martyrdom” and the article notes that “We’re happy that the youth don’t have to know this and that our mother’s were at the mercy of the corset!” Thus, generational differences are also part of the discussion. The corset, with its cinching, tucking and smoothing effect, is not needed with the latest designs, which are looser fitting. The corset is not modern, but a symbol of the past, something that only a reader’s mother would have worn. A sense of freedom, through clothing, can be obtained.

While approving of the release of such a contraption, the modern German woman is advised to “stick to clothes with long lasting yarn (threads)” because women “work so much and don’t have a lot of money.” Moreover, the high quality of the clothing is also tied to who produces it: “If we reject these useless fashions we can reject the stupidity of fashion,” and thus, “we can reject the people in the economy who control the threads,” the manufacturing. “How can you look fashionable and reasonable at the same time?,” the article asks. Find good clothing that is useful for your work, a “simple blouse” and a “normal skirt” is more comfortable and one can find a “comfortable and sturdy jacket” which matches the skirt. Then, “one will always be well dressed.”

Fashion pages, which targeted women, presented a tension between fashion, national identity and practicality. The Modern German Woman is one who understood the difference between looking nice and supporting foreign, and specifically, Jewish manufacturers of ready-made clothing. A photograph published on March 23, 1929 depicts a group of young women facing the camera, while on the right, a woman models a suit. The caption reads, “This is once again something for the Jews! In Berlin there was recently, on Lindenstrasse

368 IB, January 15, 1930.
369 IB, January 15, 1930.
the first ‘modeling agency’ opened for women ... generally the whole business of this particular exchange lies in the Jewish hands.” The IB argued that women can and should support the notion of a “national fashion,” and pay particular attention to who makes and sells the clothing, as demonstrated in the inclusion of photographs which “prove” the monopoly of the Jews in the fashion and modeling industry. The IB is far from presenting a notion of extravagance and is sympathetic to women who work and do not have a large income with which to purchase an impractical wardrobe. Practicality, defined as buying high-quality clothing from “German manufacturers,” which supports the national economy, is tied to articles of clothing which can be mixed, matched and worn in a variety of settings.

The images presented in the IB are themselves akin to the middle-class photographs and illustrations of the New Woman in the BIZ and the AIZ’s construction of their Modern Woman. Yet, nuanced differences, including women who are older and have a larger body type are apparent. The relationship between the images and the text is of particular importance here. The text serves as an explanation for women’s fashion in terms of the “German” woman’s identity and appearance, while providing advice on how to support and maintain a particularly national view of style. Interestingly the “page for women,” did not focus on issues of marriage or children. Instead, the IB attempted to create a space for women that encouraged a specifically feminine mode of modernity to highlight women’s consumption in regards to clothing. The body became a site in which the Modern German Woman declared her allegiance to the party, not only in terms of sexuality and reproduction, but in economic terms as well. By paying attention to where women shopped and styles they wore, women were in a unique position to bolster the German economy while boycotting Jewish businesses and “foreign” influences.

370 IB, March 23, 1929.
Contrasting the “Old and “New” In Fashion

The BIZ used its advertizing and entertainment sections to present their vision of the Modern Woman and the AIZ, Der Weg der Frau, Frauenwelt and the IB all had special fashion sections. But, what made these representations modern? Beyond their textual descriptors of “modern” dress, one method that many of the magazines used to define modern consisted of visually contrasting “old” and “new.” Emphasizing the modern meant that a traditional past had to be rejected or reformed. Changing notions of fashion and beauty were instantly visible and were thus invoked in order to underline female transformation. The dismissal of corsets and long bathing suits in favor of shorter skirts and sporty, comfortable clothing became visible indicators of change – on the street, in department store window and in the print media. A brief overview of this approach indicates how important the visual was in defining the Modern Woman against her mother’s generation.

The editor-in-chief of the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, Kurt Korff, understood the necessity of placing appealing images on the front cover of the magazine, in an attempt to gain and sustain readership. The New Woman, specifically in contrast to older generations, served as an attractive front cover and a site for marking

Fig. 39, BIZ, September 6, 1925
“The Transformation of Women’s Fashion”
modernity. This type of woman, no longer hidden under layers of clothing, felt comfortable showing more skin, wearing make-up and outwardly flirting with men in public. The New Woman visually constituted a break from tradition, particularly when she was juxtaposed with images of the past. Moreover, the images in the form of photographs gave the viewers a heightened sense of the reality of change between the “old” and “new” women of Germany.

The cover photograph of the September 6, 1926 edition, captioned “the transformation of women’s fashion,” demonstrates the visual shift between the fashionable women of “today” and previous generations (figure 39).\footnote{BIZ, September 6, 1926.} The modern woman sits to the left of the “old,” whose dress is composed of layers of fabric. The “old” signified the outdated, where yards of fabric cover the woman from head to foot. Sitting demurely, the “old” is calm, poised and conservative. The Modern Woman, however, in her short dress, bobbed hair and high heels checks her appearance in a compact, aware of her youthfulness and beauty.\footnote{Numerous ads also ran for the “Bubikopf.” One ad on June 5, 1927 sold “Elida Shampoo” for the bubikopf and illustrated a young woman getting her hair cut. The ad read: “Every modern woman knows the benefits of a bubikopf! Using Elida Shampoo, a woman can have healthy hair!” A short article in June 28, 1925 asks, “Bubikopf or not? The “Gamine and Garconne type is ideal!” One photograph of a woman is captioned, “The summer sport girl of today: a smooth bubikopf, short skirt...cigarette in her mouth!” Thus, both advertisements and articles emphasized the symbolic importance of the bubikopf as an indicator of the New Woman.}\

Other cover images of the \textit{BIZ} during the Weimar Republic use this trope to emphasize the perceived liberation of women. One cover from 1924 presented a portrait of a street in Berlin in 1924 and 1830.\footnote{BIZ, September 21, 1924.} The photograph on the left shows a young woman, wearing a short skirt, holding a newspaper and smiling at the camera as she gets her shoes polished. Her short hair peeks out from underneath a fashionable hat, and the busy street behind her, bustling with people, is her urban backdrop. The image on the right shows a
serious woman, standing next to a man, covered in clothing from head to foot, barely an inch of skin to be seen. The New Woman, placed in an urban space, is depicted as independent and confident, distinguished from the past. She takes care of her appearance, reads newspapers and her carefree expression shows escape from any hardships. Readers could instantly register the visual change of women while the BIZ presented this type of beauty as unproblematic. The BIZ did not use these images to criticize changes in women’s appearance or behavior, but constructed the New Woman as a symbol of modernity, vibrant urban space and youthful attitudes.374

The prominence of such contrasts on the cover illustrate the extent to which the BIZ continued to use narratives of “progress” and “modernity” to appeal to their readers, indicating that nowadays women are more liberated when it comes to their appearance. Moreover, the BIZ frames these changes as unproblematic and remains uncritical of the standard of beauty which requires expensive clothing, jewelry and cosmetics. Notably, there are no such contrasts made in terms of men’s appearance. In fact, one illustration found in the “humor” section of the magazine shows the characteristics of women’s fashions compared to men. In five frames, the woman’s clothing transitions from long, flowing dresses and large, decorative hats to the slim, smooth garments of the 1920s. The man, wearing a tuxedo,

374 The cover photograph of the August 16, 1925 edition shows three women standing on the beach. Two of them wear shorts and a “sailor shirt,” their hair cut in a bubikopf. The woman on the right, holding a cigarette and wearing long earrings, is looking in shock at the third member of the party—a young woman whose long hair nearly reaches her waist. “So what’s next!” reads the caption “The astonishing bubikopf on the beach.” The photo demonstrates the old-fashioned embodiment (long hair) next to the two women who are far more modern. The young women, shown in their leisure time, not only smoke and wear revealing clothing, but are aghast that their peer has refused to cut her hair, sending the message that the popular bubikopf is a sure sign of a modern, youthful appearance and refusing to cut one’s hair will surely bring about surprise from other women. See also the February 2, 1928 image with the caption “Costume Balls: Then and Now,” which contrasts the “old” and “new” by depicting the Modern Woman in a short dress and bobbed hair sitting on the lap of a man and her “old” counterpart demurely sitting by herself, a high-collar, long-sleeved dress covering her body.
remains exactly the same in all of the frames.\textsuperscript{375} To represent change over time, and a shift to the modern era, the \textit{BIZ} uses contrasting depictions of females to convey the impression that a site of modernity is found within a female body. Issues of modernity in terms of contrasting the old with the new also appear inside the magazines, which allow for a more textual analysis in terms of how the images and the text interact with each other.

An article accompanied by photographs in the May 22, 1927 is headlined, “The Fashion of Today—A Fountain of Youth.”\textsuperscript{376} The first photograph of a film star, Ida Wüst, shows her stepping out a car in 1912. This image is juxtaposed next to another photograph of her by a vehicle, taken in May 1927. In 1912, she wears a long skirt, bulky jacket and large hat with a feather. In 1927, however, she wears a skirt that shows off her legs, high heels, a fashionable jacket and a box hat. The dancer Anna Pavlova is photographed in 1912, her body covered from head to foot in a long

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fig40.jpg}
\caption{BIZ, January 1, 1925\newline
“Shoes made out of alligator are very modern!”}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{375} \textit{BIZ}, March 9, 1924.\textsuperscript{376} \textit{BIZ}, May 22, 1927. More examples of contrasting “old and new” can also be seen in the \textit{BIZ}’s photo essays and articles such as “The Modern Woman in India” (July 22, 1928), which portrays the young generation of Indian women in western style dress, standing next to their mother’s and grandmother’s who wear “traditional” saris. These depictions emphasize that young women, on a global scale, are significantly different than the older female members of their families and society in general.
coat, scarf and a hat that hides her hair, holding a large bag. In the next photograph of her, she confidently strides towards the camera in a suit, heels and carrying a small purse in one hand. The article states that fashion is moving forward, but this time it is a transformation of individuals, “and although they grow older—their appearance is decidedly younger.” The article approaches “youth” in different terms. The “fountain of youth” is a woman’s wardrobe, the magic formula for reversing aging. One does not necessarily have to be young, but one can look young and modern through her choice of clothing or footwear. For example, a 1925 photograph from a photo-essay on new fashion trends shows a woman holding a stylish shoe, her legs crossed at the ankles, resting atop a dead alligator, near its gaping jaws (figure 40). This woman embodies, through the metaphor of a deceased wild beast, an independent, strong and fearless young woman. “Shoes made out of alligator skin are very modern!” The woman in the photograph, with her bubikopf and revealing clothing symbolizes the New Woman as a consumer who can afford to buy exotic accessories.

Alligator skinned shoes may seem exotic to some readers, but the BIZ is careful to delineate between clothing and accessories that are modern but not tasteless. “Is women’s clothing today too audacious? What was it before?” reads a headline on February 21, 1926. This article traces women’s fashion over time and is visually exemplified in paintings and sculptures from different eras. One sculpture shows the “sports clothing” of females in Sparta while another painting depicts King Friedrich Wilhem III next to his wife. She wears an empire waist dress, which pools on the floor around her feet. Another illustration is captioned “The German woman in the time of the Reformation.” The emphasis is on her hat, which is at least twice the size of her head. Women’s fashion has changed, states the article, “in fact,

\[377\] BIZ, January 1, 1925.

\[378\] BIZ, February 22, 1926.
women’s fashion has been ‘revolutionary’.” Sport, for example, has had an immense impact on women’s clothing—both in terms of what kinds of clothing women wear for sport and in the type of body that women have (slim, healthy, more athletic). “The fashion of the day is more free, but not really more ‘saucy’ than the fashion of the past one hundred years,” the magazine argues. The BIZ describes the change in fashion overtime, in rising hemlines and influences from the French and American styles. The photographs of women “today” highlight a “young” fashionable sense—but indicate that the dresses are not really too audacious—they are “modern,” and conform to a widespread change in female dress—but nothing too shocking. Thus the BIZ is able to embrace and promote the fashion industry while convincing readers that “modern” does not imply garish or gaudy clothing.

**The Fear of a “Masculinization” of Women in Images**

While appearing to endorse the independence, economic freedom and overt sexuality of the Modern Woman, the BIZ also presented a critical version of the Modern Woman who, in their opinion, went beyond the acceptable definitions of “emancipation” and appeared too masculine. The “return to the feminine form” in the late 1920s, which will be discussed in a later section, may in part, be a result of the perception that women were rejecting too much of the past and embracing a future that went beyond the social boundaries of propriety. Katie Sutton, in her work *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany*, explores nonheterosexual women and genders in relation to differing forms of “female masculinity.”

She makes the argument that women in men’s clothing represented larger arguments about gender roles and

---

women’s foray into “male” spheres and also constituted a space in which “queer female desire” could be articulated.380

The contrast of “old” and “new,” previously found in the BIZ celebrated women’s so-called emancipation; however, these “new women” were too new. They became the extreme variation of the New Woman who rejected femininity in all forms. According to the film scholar Patrice Petro, images of mannish fashions symbolized “. . . a far more disturbing trend, one in which women seemed to renounce femininity and regress to an adolescent sexuality—thus to deviate from the path of ‘normal’ female sexual development.”381 This may be the case for some images, but Petro fails to make the critical distinction between representations of “androgynous” figures and overtly masculinized women. Androgyny points to gender neutrality in which feminine and masculine characteristics are called into question. The images found in the BIZ reflect two separate ideas. First, a number of representations appear of masculinized females, whose gender is not entirely ambiguous. These women do not represent gender-neutral roles but rather adopt characteristics of masculinity, thus challenging the traditional construction of women as well as that of the young, fashionable female found within its own pages. Second, articles emerged in the late 1920s which focused specifically on androgyny. By examining these two tropes, one can see the complicated nature of defining appropriate gender roles using the New Woman as the centerpiece of the conversation.

380 Sutton, The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany, 47.

One of the first manifestations of this concern appeared in the *BIZ* on August 24, 1924 in an article entitled, “The Masculinization of Women.” The two page photo essay and editorial includes photographs from popular women’s magazines, including *Die Dame* and the American fashion magazine *Harpers Bazaar*. Two photographs of women, with page-boy haircuts are settled on top of the second page. The caption underneath reads: “The Masculinization of Women: Forms of the modern pageboy hairstyle from the magazine, *Die Dame*.” Within the text, three indicators of this masculinization include the pageboy haircut, wearing a top hat and donning a man’s coat. In 1924, masculinization was discussed in terms of physical appearance, framed within a discussion of “fashion.” The images are benign, four photographs and one illustration of the pageboy haircut and one photograph of a

---

382 *BIZ*, August 24, 1924.

383 *BIZ*, August 24, 1924.
woman wearing a hat and a long black coat. The women may be a bit masculinized, but not in excess. At this point, there is no real danger in these woman’s actions, the “feminine form” is adopting outward appearances of men, but the “parody” of men is not excessive.

Although the images of short hair may seem masculine, it is clear in all of them, that the individuals are women. The woman wearing the heavy, dark, “manly” coat is still wearing high heels, and does not camouflage her sex. Nine months later, the subject of masculinized women takes on a different tone. The bold title of this article from March 1925 reads, “Now that’s enough! Against the masculinization of women.”\textsuperscript{384} Two photographs at the top of the page show two women, with their hair styled like a man’s and wearing suits and ties (figure 41). This is not the bubikopf, but rather the short style of a man’s haircut. The caption under one photo reads, “The masculinization of women is exaggerated more and more! Not a man, but rather the English actress Dolores (in private life—not a role).”\textsuperscript{385} The emphasis on the photograph as “proof” of Dolores’s taste for the masculine in her private life rather than in a movie, symbolizes the boundaries that the BIZ deems acceptable. While not explicitly mentioning lesbianism, the article condemns women for adopting clothing and hairstyles, which are “unnatural.” It is not that these women are neutral, not really masculine or feminine, but rather that they are appropriating masculine characteristics through clothing and hair styles. The manner of this article suggests a shift from tolerable styles of a new haircut to an affront to femininity and society in general. The BIZ found some level of “masculinization” harmless, yet more severe adoptions of men’s clothing and haircuts proved

\textsuperscript{384} BIZ, March 29, 1925. Petro included this article in her analysis in Joyless Streets. The article “Now that’s enough” also appears in the Weimar Republic Sourcebook, 659.

\textsuperscript{385} BIZ, March 29, 1925.
to be beyond acceptable. While it may seem amusing at one point for women to wear men’s clothing, fears of upsetting the “natural” gender order began to surface.

The BIZ dedicated the cover of the November 13, 1927 edition to “Fräulein Mia.” She and her gentleman friend stride past a small assembly of people and her male companion appears particularly dapper in a tailored suit, handkerchief in his pocket and cigarette in hand. To the left of the couple a man sits askew in his armchair, watching the two walk away. His face, framed by a thick beard, expresses genuine confusion. To the right of Mia, a bespectacled man bends down and whispers something into the ear of the young, curvy woman perched on the edge of her chair. They both smile and certainly, Mia is the source of amusement. Far from being inappropriate, Mia wears a skirt that falls just above her knees and her choice of footwear is about as feminine as one can get, high heels. This is not of concern. What is, however, is the top half. “Fräulein Mia” is drawn to represent a man: short hair parted on the side, suit jacket and tie, a cigarette in her right hand. She is not androgynous; she is framed as a woman, both by the caption and in contrast with the “real” man beside her (figure 42).

The deviant behavior, modeled by the fictional “Fräulein Mia,” is almost purely a visual representation. The small caption beneath the illustration reads, “What do you say about Fräulein Mia?” The publication invited readers to submit their comments and winners received a cash prize. The BIZ announced the cleverest of quips in December. A Berlin reader, Emmi Schmidt, replied. “Oh wow-a self-made man!” She won 300 Reichmarks for her snappy reply. The “self-made man” alludes to the construction of gender through one’s

---

386 BIZ, November 13, 1927.

387 This image is from the reprint – for the prize.
visual appearance and Fräulein Mia denies her gender by appropriating masculine characteristics.

Above quotes from the readers, nine photographs of women with short dark hair are arranged in an arch. Two females wear bow-ties and cast their gaze to the side, rather than look directly at the camera, and do not smile. This array of “manly” women, in photograph form instead of drawings, could be used to lend “reality” to the fictional character of “Mia.” The BIZ presents the imaginary “Fräulein Mia” to gain readers attention, while using photographs to legitimize the discourse of problematic gender roles in society. She is not
merely an illustration for an amusing contest, for which the BIZ uses as a hook to promote their magazine, but also as proof of abnormal female behavior.

The BIZ also explored the subject of androgyny in a contest beginning on May 10, 1928. The headline “Boy or Girl?” stands boldly above six photographs, lettered A through F. The readers are invited to guess whether the individuals in the photographs are male or female. The photographs are of seemingly adolescent girls or boys, and the images are cropped tightly around their faces or show part of a tie or vest that they are wearing. In this instance, the gender norms of both males and females are called into question. The article is not framed around a female, imaginary or real, who is adopting male behaviors, but around figures whose sex is entirely absent. There is no contextualization, either in written or visual form which enables the reader to recognize the sex of the person. The six photographs are reprinted with the contest results a month later. The BIZ identifies three of them as girls and three as boys. The brief article beneath stresses the difficulty of being able to tell whether or not they are a boy or girl. To a certain extent, androgyny was part of the discourse presented to readers of the BIZ. While the appearance of this discourse in the magazine signaled a problem for youngsters, this connects with the overall worries of an unstable gender order.

Overall, however, images concerning masculinized women suggest that the presence of unsteady gender roles is only a result of women defying the norms, not men. Moreover, the use of photographs in conjunction with the text also indicates to the readers that the threat

---

388 BIZ, May 20, 1928.

of the over-masculine woman is “real.” She is not merely a character on-screen or an illustration in the humor section, but the “fact” that she truly exists is cause for concern. She is much more than a source of amusement or wonder, there is the possibility that feminine qualities, hidden beneath men’s clothing and haircuts directly transfer to the inner subject—as a New Woman who denies her own “sex.” According to the BIZ, the New Woman can be “independent,” but within the confines of her femininity. She can be “sexual,” but only in a heterosexual sense. These competing forms of identity for the New Woman demonstrate the extent to which the BIZ actively engaged in the construction of appropriate forms of femininity.

The *Illustrierter Beobachter* also engaged in discourses that linked fashion to the masculinization of women. In an article published on June 30, 1928, “On Women and Fashion,” the *IB* proclaims “The masculinization of women – and in a causal link – the feminization of man” are “insane and grotesque” and constitute a future harm to the nation.\(^{390}\)

The two page article, with photographs, links fashion to the problems of the Weimar Republic. Women are “more estranged” from their “God-given and natural occupation – which is the mother and the housewife,” notes the article. The women are “arrogant” and the “so-called ‘modern’ woman’” intervenes in all things that are not only the sole prerogative but the duty of men.” In order to underscore the importance of this issue, the *IB* included photographs of women’s fashions from “then” and “now.” Visually, there are similarities between these images and the ones in the *BIZ*, but the text serves to undermine the image of any kind of “emancipated” woman. For example, two juxtaposed photographs at the top of the second page of the article link women and the automobile. The first image includes a

\(^{390}\) *IB*, June 30, 1928. Sutton briefly analyzes the “feminization” of men’s fashion in *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany* (54 – 57) through the figure of the “dandy,” but not in relation to the Nazi Press.
female passenger (covered from head to foot in the style of the early 1900s) and the caption notes that the “‘Car girl’ from 1913” is “sweet and modest” sitting next to the man. The photo on the right with a woman in fashionable clothing standing next to a racing car – with the proclamation “Brash and arrogant, a threat to humans and animals, are the female drivers in 1928.” The “Car girl” from 1913 is not in the driver’s seat, both literally and metaphorically. Another set of photographs contrasts sports clothing and states that the tennis clothing of the turn of the century (long skirts and sweaters) can “certainly not” be accepted as “appropriate” to the sport, but “whether the bathing suit is the best sports clothing must seriously be doubted.” The article ends with a statement against women who wear pants, drive cars, disavow motherhood and emphasize that this “modern” femininity is dangerous to the state. None of the photographs emphasize a “masculinized woman” – in terms of visual appearance – but the implicit statement is that women who drive cars or wear men’s pants are pushing the boundaries of acceptable femininity. Although the article condemns the fashions of “today” (and the behaviors associated with stylish clothing), the magazine does not suggest a return to the past for overly-confining or impractical clothing – rather a return to women’s “natural” roles as wives and mothers.

Perhaps in reaction to the perception that women were becoming “too masculine”, by the end of the 1920s, the ideal “shape” of the Modern Woman began to change, demonstrating, once again, that the symbol of modernity could be seen in the figure of a woman. In the mid-1920s, the BIZ ran a series of ads for the Lobbenberg & Blemenau model of the corset, with ads reading in thick bold letters, “Are you big? Then wear the Corset!” The ads show a picture of a woman standing in front a mirror, smiling at her slender reflection. As demonstrated in previous advertisements and photographs, the slim figure of
women was popularized in the *BIZ* and other magazines, but one article in February 24, 1929 depicted a shift in what was considered modern.\(^{391}\) The cover photograph of the *BIZ* shows a woman being fitted for a suit. She stands in front of the mirror, one hand holding a cigarette, her dark hair cut short. But instead of a long, slim figure, she is plumper. The caption below reads “Thick is again modern!” The cover image corresponds to an inside article, which contains four illustrations of women. Nine women in a “London revue” are drawn with linked, round arms and plump legs kicking in the air. Another woman sits in a restaurant, food and drink surrounding her. The caption reads, “Thank god! Away with the calories! One can eat again what one wants!” The images of larger women, however, are not a call to a free-for-all indulgence in food and drink. When read with the text, it is clear that the *BIZ* is promoting a certain type of larger woman; not too big, not “fat.” She is still “pretty” and “fashionable.” This new “culture period” and the “tempo of the times,” allows for another type of “ideal beauty,” states the article. While the *BIZ* presented the slender New Woman through most of the years, in 1929 the *BIZ* decided that the “thick” woman was also modern. Was this a call for young women to eat and indulge with disregard to their shape? Certainly not! “Plump” was acceptable, “fat” was not. The *BIZ* recognized and propagated a “return to femininity” in fashion and the ideal body type, emphasizing a womanly figure in contrast to androgynous figures that blurred the lines between “women” and “men.”

An article published in *Der Weg der Frau* in October 1932 also focuses on the “return” to the feminine body.\(^{392}\) Yet, rather than a defense of flaunting curves, the *Weg der Frau* linked fashion to larger social problems, particularly the “need” for women to emphasize their bodies to gain attention and economic independence via prostitution. The

\(^{391}\) *BIZ*, February 24, 1929.

\(^{392}\) *WDF*, nr. 10, October 1932, p. 10 – 11.
magazine described the outdated look of long, billowy skirts that touched the ground, blouses with long-sleeves (buttoned to the neck) and big hats. This may seem amusing now, notes the magazine but “then – everyone thought these fashions were chic and beautiful. Thick was trump!” The first images are drawings of women sitting in salons and correspond to the description of female fashion. The article continues, arguing that the fashion industry depends on working women – those who are in the factories, the office and stores, have some money to buy new clothes. And after work, women pay attention to their bodies through sport: “The working woman today is more independent and free than women thirty years ago, who could only live when a man supported her.” But, if she does not work, “she had to find someone to support her” and she has to find “something to sell … namely, her femininity, her body.” The article then makes the connection between the fashion industry and male desire, noting that women dress for men, emphasizing more “femininity,” and this is not freedom for women. When there is no other option for paid work, women turn to prostitution, selling their bodies to strange men. A corresponding image of a woman reclining in her slip, pulled down over one shoulder is captioned, “Redundant Women.” They have to use their bodies as a “commodity” in order to make living. “Thick” (or curvy) is once again back and women are challenging the androgynous figure of the Weimar Republic, but it makes little difference if women are still forced to dress for men.

It is necessary for women to have nice clothes to wear to work (this makes sense, notes the article), that women look decent for work. However, under the “Nazi morale,” women do not work outside the home, continues the article, “the fascists … want the women back in the kitchen” and want their clothes “feminine again.” While outlining the problematic nature of fashion and its links to female regression back into the home, the article ends with
the note that working women remember that they are part of the working class struggle. With articles such as this (alongside their condemnation of the stereotypical white-collar worker), Der Weg der Frau reminded readers that there is a big difference between appropriate clothing for work and buying into capitalist system in which women were both exploited at work and were forced to sell themselves to make a living.

Fashion was a lightning rod for a variety of debates related to the Modern Woman because clothing instantly designated something “new” and magazines could easily juxtapose images which showed the “transformation” of women’s fashion. The illustrations and photographs of female fashion look similar in all of the magazines, but the captions and related articles delineate the magazine’s particular political position. While the BIZ took a playful approach to women’s fashion, they drew firm boundaries around acceptable behavior and did not support the “emancipated” woman who dressed and acted like a man. The communist press attempted to balance their content between practical and affordable, yet modern, clothing for their readers with warnings about buying into mass-consumer ideals. Frauenwelt also presented practical and affordable clothing to their readers, offering sewing patterns and instructions for making something “new” from something “old,” but linked clothing reform to the emancipation of women in society. The IB used fashion as an instructional tool to inform readers to buy only “German” fashion and goods. The German woman could be modern, but her conscious attempts to avoid Jewish department stores and steer clear of French influences, gave her a special role in the economy and society. As we shall see in the next chapter, a “return” to more feminine styles did not mean “out of date” styles. Rather, magazines explicitly reminded readers that soft fabrics and full skirts were “once again modern.” Regardless of textual content, every magazine used fashion to create
their “modern” woman during the Weimar Republic. Amidst the debates concerning women’s visual appearance at the end of the 1920s, the level of anti-Semitic rhetoric directed at the “wrong” type of Modern Woman increased.

3.4 Antisemitism and “Degenerate Femininity” in the Right Wing Press

During the Weimar Republic, the Nazi Party seemed to have little interest in recruiting female members or discussing issues related to women. Claudia Koonz claims that party members paid little attention to their female colleagues and did not campaign for the female vote. She argues that this provided room for female party members and supporters to organize on their own, at least until 1933, at which point the party took over. Overall, the NSDAP’s vision for women emphasized the primacy of motherhood and “their definition of that role expanded and contracted according to the needs of the Nazi Party and the state . . . Traditional sex-role stereotypes were preserved to the detriment of men and women alike.”

Koonz writes further that “The separation between masculine and feminine spheres, which followed logically and psychologically from Nazi leaders’ misogyny, relegated women to their own space – both beneath and beyond the dominant world of men.”

As some scholars have emphasized, the Nazi rhetoric of “‘Kinder, Küche, Kirche’ appealed to nostalgia for preindustrial society, while the recruitment of women to the labor force and mass political organizations, as well as attempts to rationalize reproduction,


394 Koonz, “Mothers of the Fatherland,” 448.

revealed modernizing tendencies.”396 As we have seen, these “modernizing tendencies” do not just appear in terms of women’s participation in the labor force, they also become visible in the *IB* at the end of the 1920s in terms of the construction of the German Modern Woman and her responsibility as a consumer.

Women’s “own space,” the “private sphere” of the home, became subject to discussion in the *IB* in the late 1920s and early 1930s and were related to women’s special role in preserving the German *Völk*. In her discussion concerning German women’s relationships to far-Right politics, Elizabeth Harvey states that “biological racism reinforced the principle of women’s inclusion with the nation as ‘carriers of the blood,’ . . . it magnified the importance of questions that could be seen as falling within women’s domain: it offered women a role as ‘guardians of the race,’ as experts on reproduction and population question who would devise strategies to improve racial quality and strengthen racial boundaries, cure the reproduction of the ‘inferior’ and promote the breeding of pure ‘Aryans.’”397 Biological racism surfaced within the *IB*, particularly in terms of women’s roles as mothers.

**The Fear of Female Emancipation: The Backlash against the New Woman**

I have shown that the *Illustrierte Beobachter* did not reject the concept of the Modern Woman, but constructed a specific type of German Modern Woman, who was aware of her spending habits and responsibility to the national economy while embracing her “natural” role as wife and mother. Moreover, the *IB* was careful to define the types of women responsible for the disruption of the labor market and the family. In doing so, the *IB* targeted

---


397 Elizabeth Harvey, “Visions of the Volk,” 164.
the middle-class consumer type of the New Woman, like the one found on the BIZ, as a threat to the gender order. This section will first examine an article in the IB addressing the “qualities” of the Modern Woman and concentrate on the tensions found between appropriate femininities found in the magazine.

A close reading of an article published in May 1930, “The Woman in the Flashlight of the Present,” can productively illustrate the IB’s presentation of the Modern Woman in regards to larger social and political issues, including women’s participation in the labor force and her role within the family. Arguing that the Modern Woman has moved away from her natural role as a wife and mother, the IB explicitly and implicitly outlines a model of femininity that is rooted in the “natural” characteristics of women and imbeds this argument within a discussion of paid employment, marriage, fashion and the female body.

Beneath the headline in the two page spread, rests a photograph of a recently married couple smiling happily into the camera and framed within the shape of a heart. The caption above the photograph reads, “The woman has no understanding of the race question. The

\[398 \text{IB, May 31, 1930.}\]
beauty queen chooses a Jew because she did not know better” (figure 43). Visually, the “race question” is the center of the article, as this is the image the article is built around, emphasizing the issue of race within the overall argument that women are stepping outside their natural boundaries.

Claudia Koonz observes that already during the 1920s, Hitler defined his role for women in the future Nazi state:

The German girl [will] belong to the Nazi State and with her marriage become a citizen . . . Women were not born with rights; men conferred them. A man might serve the state in many ways; women’s only genuine calling lay in marriage, defined in the narrowest biological terms: to guarantee ‘the increase and preservation of the species and the race. This alone is its meaning and its task.’

The implication of the visual image of the woman and the Jew emphasizes women’s duty to marriage but decries the uneducated woman who does not understand the significance of choosing a suitable partner in order to “preserve” the “species and the race.” Moreover, the “beauty queen,” as a manifestation of the middle-class New Woman is directly tied to the Jew, a trope that reappears within the magazine.

The article opens by stating, “The modern woman, unchained, almost uncontrolled in everyday indulgence, was suddenly placed before various decisions because of the Great War.” Marriage vanished not only from “a lack of suitable partners” (deaths in the First World War), but also because “marriage-shy” men were more interested in climbing the corporate ladder. Thus, marriage as an institution was “shattered” and became a starting point for the emergence of “uncontrolled women” in society. While it would be impossible to

---

399 Koonz, Mothers in the Fatherland, 55-56.
blame women for the demographic shifts after the war, the *IB* does place a certain level of liability on women in regards to the labor market.

Forced to provide for themselves “woman became, in almost every occupation, more or less the dangerous competitor of men,” states the article. Women are found in jobs “that are female in nature,” citing such examples as nurses, female doctors and movie stars. Beyond these, however, the *IB* points to women who are “supervisors in airports, diplomats, press secretaries and in occupations that the man previously considered his special domain.” The result of women’s foray into the “male” occupations turned the “battle of the sexes for the house and marriage into the struggle for bread.” Beneath this paragraph, a corresponding image shows a group of nurses standing in an orderly row. The caption beneath it reads, “One occupation that men can agree to leave, the woman as nurses.” This connects the female character of the occupation to “natural” feminine qualities, inscribing a positive tone to the visual representation. The position of the male breadwinner, undermined by women’s expansion into the labor market has created a tension between the genders, because women “refuse” to remain in jobs that are characterized by female qualities. The concept of the male breadwinner, the man being responsible for the family income, became an important part of the debate concerning female employment, particularly during the years of the Great Depression.

Alongside the *IB*’s discussion of women in the labor force and appropriate feminine professions, public discussion of the *Doppelverdiner* or “Double-Earner” proclaimed that married women, engaged in employment outside the home, competed for men’s jobs in a

---

400 Next to this photograph, however, is a photograph of a female political candidate handing out pamphlets to a group of men on the “docks in London,” an “un-feminine” activity, the caption cautions. The implicit compare/contrast between the two images functions as a visual point of reference for positive and negative activities for women.
time of high unemployment. As Renate Bridenthal noted, “There is no guesswork about the social reaction to structural changes in the economy, which made women the scapegoat for unemployment, as witness to the countless bitter references to *Doppelverdiner.*” Karen Hausen examines the problems of unemployment and the spread of short-time work in the Weimar Republic and how this contributed to tensions between labor and capital and between women and men. She states that “The period of high unemployment in Weimar was a poor time for convincing working men, and even comrades, that women deserved equal access to employment.” Within the context of vehement protests against female participation in the labor force, particularly married women, the *IB* gave its approval to “feminine” jobs while stressing the proper role for women as “wife and mother.”

The assessment of women’s occupations and the perceived consequences for men in the *IB* quickly became a critique of modernity. The article states, “While she cannot deny her deep-rooted determination of motherhood—in spite of the appearance of a job and the pseudo-practicality of it . . . they go alone through life in factory hell, mentally and physically exhausted, almost breaking down. While this is going on, her more rich sisters render homage to all fooleries—like fashion—as fashion and modernity offer

---

401 For a discussion of women’s professional employment, debates over double-earners at the end of the 1920s, and women in the professional workforce in general through 1940, see Jill McIntyre, “Women and the Professions in Germany, 1930-1940,” in *German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler*, ed. Anthony Nichols and Rich Matthias (London, 1981), 175-214. This essay also focuses on the discussions surrounding the introduction of regulations concerning married women in the professions and the legislation in May 1932 that allowed national and local authorities to dismiss married women “whose financial circumstances ‘seemed constantly secure,’” p. 186.


403 Karen Hausen, “Unemployment also Hits Women,” 78-120.

404 Karen Hausen, “Unemployment also Hits Women,” 113.
Modernity is attached to the female in this context, ascribing the wealthier women the possibilities of living better than their female counterparts in the workforce.

Directly to the left of this paragraph is a photograph of five women playing billiards. Underneath the caption reads, “The rich ladies must kill their time, in doing so Billiards is certainly a healthier sport than eating cake and whipped cream!” The sarcastic message is a critique of “rich” women’s activities. The women in the photograph appear to be in their early twenties. One of them, holding a pool cue and smiling to the camera wears shorts and a short-sleeve shirt while a female observer stands with her hands on her hips, a hat pulled down over her head.

The second half of the article focuses on two main themes, marriage and work and the extent to which the female is responsible for her own situation. In an attempt to avoid isolating women, the IB carefully navigates between the notion that women were “forced” into male occupations during the war and the notion that at present women were ripping the very bread out of the men’s hands by refusing to remain in “traditional” female occupations and refusing the “breadwinner” his proper position in the family.

Moreover, the wealthier women, in their preoccupation with fashion and consumption, do not face the same consequences as their feminine counterparts in the working-class. The same article continues, “The girl struggling for the bread becomes the victim of an eternally lusting Jewish vampire as she is an easy victim—exploited, abused and thrown away! For how long?” The IB, in demonstrating sympathy for the working girl directly connects Anti-Semitism with women’s daily struggles: “So appears the woman in front of the camera in the present, varied in shape and form . . . She can be seated everywhere and it is okay,” but “this hard everyday life alienates her from her larger destiny. Cities and

Karen Hausen, “Unemployment also Hits Women,” 113.
countries are depopulated.” The article emphasizes the fears over a declining birthrate, as well as underlines the woman’s position in the “modern world” by stating, “The working woman assists in the increasing isolation of the modern individual.”

The IB blames women in part for throwing into disarray the “natural” social and gender order, leading to decreased birth rates, racially-suspect marriages and increased competition for men in the workforce. The IB argues that women, who seek amusement and “participate in the intoxicating swirl of the city,” will find their “delicate” bodies damaged. The “damage” to the female bodies, although not elaborated on, could be interpreted in a variety of ways, including sexual damage related to rape and prostitution or the threat that women may become more masculine.406

“Women in the flashlight of the present” concludes by reasserting the “biological” differences between men and women, stating, “Nature has predetermined the robust man for the fight for existence. The woman is family, mother, the shelter of the home . . . And nature does not allow itself to be mocked and to be kicked with feet without punishment!” The nature of the punishment, it seems, is the decaying social order, both in terms of women’s role in the labor force and the ideal family. The threatening tone of the statement, and ultimate “punishment,” can also be linked to earlier statements in the article which connect the “Jewish” threat to young, working-class women.

406 As noted by Claudia Koonz in Nazi Conscience (Cambridge, 2003), the “sexual freedom that promoted the mannish woman,” became a primary concern of Nazi Party leaders in relation to the “threats” to the Volkskörper from within the Volk itself. See pp. 103-104.
The photographs corresponding to the article present an array of images of the Modern Woman, and without contextualization, the images could be copied from any of the other illustrated magazines. Yet, the captions and the text demonstrate that not all the women in the photographs are to be admired or emulated. The *IB* maneuvers between applauding the female nurses, describing an image of a female glider as “adventurous” and arguing that a dance contest “dulls the mind.” A photograph of a woman’s legs is captioned, “The woman in the office is a model in her silk stockings,” directly connecting the notion that urban glamour and fashion is merely a distraction from the real problems and responsibilities of women in general (figure 44). The woman is nothing more than a mannequin, incapable of performing her duties as a wife and mother. The young, urban office girl is presented as a static, shallow consumer who does not understand her most important role in society.

Through this article, the *IB* explicitly marks the dangerous territory for women in terms of physical space. Urban spaces where poor working-class women fall prey to Jewish lust and the allure of the city and modern fashion, which only wealthy women can afford, leads to “damaged bodies.”
Women’s participation in the realm of male-dominated employment has upset the “natural” gender order and sapped her own instinctive need to be a wife and mother. Implicitly, the IB constructs the ideal Modern Woman, who yearns to nurture her husband and children and rejects the type of modernity which separates women from their families.

**Depictions of Degenerate Femininity**

While promoting representations of appropriate femininity and modernity in fashion and athletics in terms of a women’s visual appearance, the IB’s contradictions and tensions rise. The Modern Woman, conscience of her body in terms of national health and style, is pitted against images of the New Woman, the young, star-struck consumer type found in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*. Koonz indicated that “Women who supported the Nazis hoped to stem the tide of decadence they believed was engulfing their society,” and in particular, blaming “foreign influence and women’s emancipation” for “the demise of all morality and order.” Not only did the IB draw upon the stereotype of the New Woman as a symbol of degenerate behavior, but it specifically tied her activities to anti-Semitic propaganda. Both the Jew and the New Woman “provided powerful metaphors against which people could direct their anger, and the anxieties generated by Hitler’s warnings kept Nazis in a constant state of alert.”

One such example is a collection of illustrations with the headline reading “The Jew and the German Blond,” in which the IB describes the relationship *between* the typical New Woman and Jewish men, thus linking two powerful symbolic enemies

---


408 Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, 56.
The German Blond is a replica of the middle-class, consumer New Woman, depicted in the *BIZ* and popular films and novels.

The German woman is depicted with short blond hair, wearing high heels, shorter dresses (or in her undergarments) and swimsuits for a beauty contest. The “Kavalier,” a stereotype of a younger, rich, Jewish man in the first illustration, sits at a table with the blond woman. The caption states, “There the disaster begins for the blond girl,” signifying the first step towards a disastrous ending if a “German Blond” gets involved with a Jewish man. The next drawing indicates a move from the “public” space of the street to that of a doctor’s office (figure 46). In contrast to the young Jewish man, the Jewish doctor is fat, old, ugly and possesses the stereotypical large nose. He wears a doctor’s coat, one hand in his pocket, while the other holds a medical instrument. The woman faces him, in a state of undress, bare from the waist up. She’s pulling down the top of her dress and part of her breast is exposed.

The caption is explicit, stating, “The blonds are examined by the lecherous Jews as painstakingly as a gynecologist. Blond girls—watch out before the cunning deceive you!” The connection between a female- specific medical examination and the sexuality of the Jew warn young women to beware, instilling a sense of

---

409 *IB*, November 1, 1930.

410 *IB*, November 1, 1930.
fear of what could happen next. The violation of female sexuality, by a Jew, is a trope employed in other illustrations as well.\footnote{IB, November 1, 1930. Interestingly, this trope is employed in a children’s book, \textit{The Poison Mushroom}, published in 1938 in order to warn children about the dangers of Jews. See Claudia Koonz, \textit{The Nazi Conscience}, 148-149.} In one image, a young woman is sitting in bed, clutching her blanket to her chest, a look of terror on her face.\footnote{IB, November 1, 1930.} She is the “German Blond,” with her light hair cut in the style of a \textit{bubikopf}. A caption is absent from this illustration, but the message is clear. On the wall behind her a crucifix is hung, further marking the differences between herself and her attacker. The woman’s fear is caused by the man who pokes his head through the door and leers at the woman. His shadow cast on the wall emphasizes “Jewish” characteristics.

This image is of complete victimhood. The fear of sexual violation for the blond woman comes as a direct result of the man’s insatiable sexual appetite. These images and texts present the woman as a victim to sexual depravity. There are no indications in these drawings that the woman is responsible for attracting men or alluring the man to her bed.

However, other illustrations on the page present a different perspective, one that illuminates the “Blond Woman’s” role in her own demise. Another picture is captioned, “Intimate overtime that she gives the boss (he is a Jew) makes the blond popular” (figure 47). He is in an oversized chair, a telephone sits on his office desk to his right, a small table with a decanter of presumably, alcohol to his right. The blond is in the center of the picture, sitting sideways across the man’s lap, one arm around his neck. Her dress is nowhere to be seen, but she is wearing her slip, showing her legs and part of her chest. They are both clearly amused, smiling, and are having a good time. The man’s face is turned toward the woman, his lips are

\footnote{IB, November 1, 1930.}
pursed, as if to kiss her. In this depiction, the blond woman is given no sympathy. She is the one “giving overtime” and is portrayed as responsible for her own actions, which consequently make her popular. There is no suggestion, on the surface, that she is being seduced or coerced in any manner. The setting points to an office, indicating that the woman is probably laboring as a secretary or stenographer, thus connecting the IB’s German Blond with the typical representation of the New Woman. Baring the top part of her breasts and her long legs, the slip slides above her thigh, and points to the sexuality of the German Blond. Like the construction of the New Woman, she embraces and uses sexuality for her own purpose.413

413 The familiar trope of the young, single woman dreaming of an acting career also appears in the montage. A young woman is in bed, her back to the man standing beside her, looking back at him with an expression of “satisfaction,” The man wears glasses, and seems to be re-attaching his suspenders, his overarching belly sagging down. “The way to become a star of the stage is often through the director’s bed,” states the caption bluntly. Who is to blame? Is it the young woman? Is it the Jewish director? Is it mass media which promotes such fantasies for German women? In this image, sexuality is embedded both in the young woman and the man. On the one hand, the pretty woman uses her sexuality to obtain a particular goal: to become a star. On the other hand, the Jewish man’s supposed proclivity young, blond woman allows him satisfaction of sexual gratification. Another image in the essay portrays contestants in a beauty pageant, wearing swimsuits and a sash pose on a runway, holding their hands to their hair or placed on their hips. The audience, comprised of older Jewish men stare lavishly at their bodies. A caption which informs the readers that “Jewish men also like to be the distributor of blond goods at bars,” is set beneath an illustration of a dim bar, where a woman sits on a Jewish man’s lap, the table in front of them covered in alcohol bottles and tobacco products. As shown in the variety of illustrations, the woman is in each situation of her own choosing. In this case, she is not only depicted as a woman easily seduced by Jewish men, but a “consumer good” which Jewish men “distribute” throughout the bars.
These illustrations represent a cautionary tale in the most insidious of forms, placing the woman as both victim and offender at once. She is used and uses the Jewish man, whose masculinity appears in the form of luxury, wealth and deviant sexual appetite. The final step, in this essay, is the fate of the German Blond. The “tragic end” leads her “to the street.” This caption, beneath a dejected looking woman standing in a pool of light from a streetlamp, insinuates that the final destination is prostitution. The visual connection of the “German Blond” as the New Woman illustrates the IB’s opposition to this type of female modernity. There is an illustration at the bottom right of the page, however, which epitomizes the young German woman. Her face is serious and her hair is worn in two long braids. The caption beside her warns that young women need to wear the swastika pin on their dresses in order to fight against the sexually depraved Jewish men.\footnote{414} These depictions clearly articulate the duel forms of femininity in the National Socialist political view: the woman as an active agent in society and the formation of appropriate femininity for young women.

Other illustrated sections depict these familiar themes in the IB. Repeatedly, the young women are depicted as white-collar workers, either shop girls or typists, who are “duped” by the glamour and beauty of fine clothing, taken advantage of by their bosses within the workspace or shown in bars, clubs or promenading with their “Jewish” men on the city sidewalks.\footnote{415} The New Woman became the target for criticizing the type of femininity responsible for social disorder. Denying her “natural role” as mother and wife, the seemingly economically-independent, uninhibited young woman was transformed into the symbol of modernity gone wrong and directly tied to anti-Semitic rhetoric.

\footnote{414} IB, November 1, 1930. Readers could choose from the variety of swastika emblazoned jewelry found in the IB’s advertising section.

\footnote{415} A series of these illustrations can be found in the IB, October 12, 1929; December 14, 1929; February 8, 1930; March 15, 1930; March 22, 1930; and, April 8, 1930.
The illustrated press during the Weimar Republic presented competing images of the Modern Woman – related to paid and unpaid work, consumerism and the female body – in order to create an ideal womanhood that fit specific political and social needs. In all cases, the textual content helped define and delineate the visual representations of the Modern Woman from other publications. The image of the Modern Woman was never defined based on one aspect of her body, personality or participation in the labor force. Rather, the magazines used a combination of cover, fashion sections, sports columns or advertisements to form their ideal. While the New Woman remained the stereotypical image of the “emancipated” woman in the BIZ, other publications adapted and modified this version for their own purpose.

The Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung consistently displayed the New Woman as an object of sexuality, defined through her youth, beauty and type of clothing she wore (or did not wear, depending on the advertisement). Moreover, she is not only the “buyer” in these images, she can be bought. The exterior façade of the “typist” was vital for her job, as she was expected to appear in an appropriate manner in the office. For the purpose of advertising, she was tied to the “stage and screen.” The use of illustrations also conveys a sense of fantasy, the detailed drawings of creating the New Woman as someone who desires and is desired at the same time. The positions of their bodies, bare legs and shoulders and coy gazes at men indicate the heightened eroticism of young, independent women who are aware of their sexuality and their femininity. The icon of the New Woman in the BIZ became a clear site for comparing and contrasting the “old” and “new.” What accounted for the “new”
included her clothing, haircut and where she was photographed. The use of photographs expresses a sense of the “real.” Here was the New Woman “in the flesh.” She walked through the streets, she danced at parties and became an obvious marker for modernity. While the BIZ did not seem to have any problems supporting or encouraging these views, the magazine drew a line when it came to the overmasculinization of the New Woman. Riding motorcycles or driving a car without a man was one thing, dressing like one was quite another. The BIZ maintained specific class boundaries through the depictions of the New Woman at her white-collar job and the amount of money she had available to spend on consumer goods. The New Woman is also the archetypical image represented in cinema and popular novels. But the previous analysis showed that it was only one variety of the image of the Modern Woman. While the popular BIZ defined the Modern Woman, as the New Woman within a specific framework of modernity, other publications also weighed in on the debates, albeit with a different perspective.

The Modern Woman in the Social Democratic press, as illustrated in the Frauenwelt, was most directly connected to the rationalized, modern home. Expected to be efficient in her daily work, in order to spend her leisure time with her husband and children or involved in political and social activities, the magazine provided instructions on how to run a well-organized home. The magazine also applauded women’s participation in the labor force and discussed a variety of “female appropriate” career opportunities for young women, who may not have the chance to marry, or marry young. The Modern Woman also believed in a companionate marriage and the right to use birth control in order to plan the size of her family. She supported the Sex Reform movement that sought to repeal § 218. Frauenwelt used its fashion sections to link modern garments and the clothing reform movement to larger
goals of women’s emancipation, while providing “do it yourself” sewing patterns. This allowed the magazine to include garments required for paid work and leisure-time activities, without supporting expensive ready-made goods. Although the communist press emphasized sports more, Frauenwelt provided daily activities and exercises for its readers in order to keep their bodies strong and healthy.

The communist press was also not without its Modern Woman. Much like the images in the Frauenwelt, at work, she was sensible when it came to her wardrobe. At home, she was practical and efficient in her household work. At play, she was dedicated to keeping her body healthy through athletic activities. Elements of the New Woman (e.g. the stylish consumer) were modified to produce a complete re-presentation of the Modern Woman for the magazine which was tied to party ideology. The Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung and Der Weg der Frau did include a variation of the female office-worker, but aware of the economic and social realities for young working women, demonstrated opposition to the capitalistic values of female office workers while attempting to present a young female that embodied the values and goals of the Communist Party. The dominant depictions of young women, found on the covers as well as in expanded sport sections, are that of the athletic female. The bodies of young females in the magazines are natural and healthy. They do not wear make-up, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, flirt with men, toss seductive gazes at their bosses from behind a typewriter or announce their sexuality through clothing. Der Weg der Frau and the AIZ promulgated the image of class solidarity, even in leisure time activities. The magazines presented an image that described a situation in which young working women had time and energy to be involved in activities outside of paid employment, work in the home or in political activities. The AIZ and Der Weg der Frau offered a specific mode of recreational
activity which promoted healthy bodies and camaraderie while opposing all consumer-orientated leisure activities. In order to promote class solidarity and offer alternative methods for the Modern Woman to develop a rational and healthy identity through work and play, the publications criticized the consumer driven middle-class women, her desire to stay young and mass entertainment to demonstrate opposition to the values of capitalism. Both the *AIZ* and *Weg der Frau* participated in the highly-policitized debates concerning abortion and birth control and continually emphasized that it was necessary for working-class mothers to limit their number of children. Through these interweaving themes, the communist press produced their vision of the Modern Woman. She was a female “comrade,” prepared to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with working-class men and fight in the struggle to overcome capitalism. The rhetoric of women’s rights, however, continued to be subsumed under class warfare.

Those on the far right also opposed the middle-class construction of the New Woman. In contrast to a class-based analysis, they emphasized racial distinctions in order to create a femininity tied to national politics. The Modern German Woman, as constructed in the *IB*, could enjoy the latest fashions and trends, and be involved in athletic activities, but within a specific political context designed to shape an ideal form of femininity. A woman’s appearance, framed in terms of practicality and quality, became intertwined with the discourse on the nation and anti-Semitism. While offering an alternative Modern German Woman, the *IB* was able to prove its dedication to female readers while supporting the politics of the party. Although the *IB* restrained from placing direct blame on women for demographic changes, it is clear that women’s actions disrupted the labor market, the family and the nation. The question of female health was typically discussed in terms of inappropriate athletic activities, framing modern dance, for example, in terms of unhealthy
and unnatural body movements. “Graceful” sports were “natural” for women, like ice-skating or ballet, but muscular women became a target of derision. The German Modern Woman as consumer was to play an important role in the economy. While choosing modern, fashionable clothing, she was to pay close attention to her purchases, avoiding Jewish shops and foreign influences. The visual representations of fashionable women could come directly from any other magazine, but the textual clarification made certain that this was the Modern Woman educated in proper consumer practices for the German nation. Finally, the IB became more outspoken against the type of Modern Woman who remained ignorant of the “race question,” and whose economic independence threatened the “natural” gender order. The New Woman, as the young, beautiful consumer and white-collar worker that the IB designated as the “German Blond,” became a fixture in the illustrations and articles that represented degeneracy and ruin. The IB presented the Modern Woman as both the problem and the solution to the failings of the social and gender order at the end of the Weimar period. As we shall see in the next chapter, the illustrated press in the Third Reich propagated far more than the ideal “Aryan Mother.” The familiar tropes of the Modern Woman from the Weimar Republic would appear in new guises during the 1930s.
Part III:

Ambiguous Images of the Modern “German Woman” in the Illustrated Press of the Third Reich

Two beliefs helped shape popular memory of the ideal of femininity of the National Socialists that were also shared by historical scholarship. First, that the Nazis universally condemned the Modern Woman, especially the mass culture icon of the New Women, as a harbinger of danger, unchecked independence and degenerate femininity. However, as the analysis in the previous part of this study demonstrates, while the National Socialist illustrated press of the Weimar years certainly described the New Woman as the incarnation of dangerous female emancipation, it shrewdly recognized the appeal of this icon and started to rework visual elements into their own construction of the German Modern Woman. This attempt intensified during the Third Reich. Second, related to the first conviction, is the view that the glorified “ideal” image of the German Woman during the Third Reich was encapsulated in the concept of the Aryan mother, surrounded by her large family. The perfect

416 Overviews of women in Nazi Germany, or of the Third Reich overall, often point to the Modern or New Woman as part of the general backlash against women at the end of the Weimar Republic. See, for example, Lisa Pine, “Women in the Family,” in Hitler’s ‘National Community’: Society and Culture in Nazi Germany (London, 2007), 68 – 69. See also, Adelheid von Saldern, “‘Art for the People’: From Cultural Conservatism to Nazi Cultural Policies.” in The Challenge of Modernity: German Social and Cultural Studies, 1890-1960 (Ann Arbor, 2002), 299 – 347.
backdrop for this fantasy of the National Socialist family was rural tranquility.\footnote{For example, Mathew Stibbe’s section “Nazi Propaganda and the ideal Nazi Woman,” in Women in the Third Reich (London, 2003), suggests that National Socialists were only interested in propagating the “Aryan” mother in the media.} Unquestionably, the figure of the Aryan Mother played a crucial role in National Socialists rhetoric and visual culture, because the major aim of the NSDAP was to create a “racially pure” family and society. However, this was only one image of National Socialist femininity that was complemented by others. Recent scholarship has already pointed to the wide variety of roles for women that existed in the Third Reich. New analysis of the images of the German woman, for example, focus on textual propaganda discussing the “natural” beauty of women and are illustrated by an image of this German mother or a fresh-faced girl in her BDM uniform, who would be a future mother. Other scholarship focusing on film points to the privileged space female film stars occupied in the Third Reich. Scholars, though, have not yet explored the whole variety of complementary – and sometimes even competing – images as well as the contradictions between National Socialist rhetoric and images. They do not relate the images they study such as “the BDM-girl” or “the Nazi movie star” to other constructions of femininity besides the “foil” of the German Aryan mother.\footnote{Jana F. Bruns, Nazi Cinema’s New Woman (Cambridge, 2009); Antje Ascheid, “Nazi Stardom and the Modern Girl: The Case of Lilian Harvey,” New German Critique 74 (1998): 57 – 89 and Hitler’s Heroines: Stardom and Womanhood in Nazi Cinema (Philadelphia, 2003). For a recent discussion of gender and modernity as it relates to the Third Reich, see Claudia Koonz, “A Tributary and a Mainstream: Gender, Public Memory, and the Historiography of Nazi Germany,” Gendering Modern German History: Rewriting Historiography, ed. Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert (New York, 2007), 147-168.}

I contend that rather than being “extraordinary,” representations of alternative forms of femininity in the visual landscape of the illustrated press were standard fare for viewers. I argue that competing images of female modernity existed alongside the image of the “Aryan” mother and that these representations not only adopted the symbols of the Modern Woman, which were already present during the Weimar Republic, but were equally important in
creating a visual landscape which legitimized a wide variety of “femininities” during the Third Reich. Furthermore, images of the Modern German Woman in the illustrated press were flexible, depending on the readership of the publication and specific historical circumstances, which became increasingly important during the war. This applies particularly for the commercially produced magazines such as the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* that continued to appear. Political ideology was here balanced by market demands. My observation is of central importance because it demonstrates not only striking visual continuities with the Weimar Republic, but also the extent to which the regime tolerated representations of female modernity that had hitherto been deemed unacceptable and that previous scholars have overlooked. The major aim seems to have been to integrate as many Aryan German women as possible, not only the older, but also the younger generation, into the *Volksgemeinschaft* of the Third Reich. This was not achievable with an image of femininity that was perceived by younger women, who were socialized in the Weimar Republic, as “outdated.”

What is perhaps one of the most striking discoveries is the lack of “negative propaganda” present in the analyzed publications. As discussed earlier, magazines like the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* and the *Illustrierte Beobachter* focused on creating a space in which readers saw only the “pleasurable” aspects of the Third Reich. This again served the purpose of integrating as many women and men of the population as possible into Nazi society by giving them the feeling of both continuity and recommencement.419 While the *BIZ* was already very “apolitical” during the Weimar Republic, I demonstrated that the *IB* used its magazine to deliver the message that Jews and the “New Woman” were intimately linked.

---

This kind of propaganda, after 1933, was removed from its pages. Instead, the magazine concentrated on entertainment, images of leisure time and visions of female beauty, which seemed to visually contradict its earlier views on the modern woman. This change was a result of the successful reinvention of the IB, which developed from a journal for convinced, mostly male, supporters of the National Socialist movement before 1933 to a more commercial magazine that aimed for a broad female and male readership during the Third Reich.

In the following, I will outline the most important themes related to the various facets of the image of the Modern Woman in the Third Reich that fall under two broad categories: first, representations of paid and unpaid work and second, the female “Aryan” body. I will briefly discuss the most important historiographical trends related to these major themes and indicate how the analysis of visual images of the Modern Woman can alter or add to our understanding of the representation of the “German” woman in the Third Reich. I first talk about women in paid work, afterwards about “Aryan” motherhood and National Socialist family politics, women in World War II and finally the “Aryan” female body.

1. Introduction: The Multiplicity of Images of the “German Woman” between 1933 and 1945

As scholars have shown, for all the rhetoric about women returning to the hearth and home, the National Socialists never intended to completely remove women from the labor force, but supported “suitable” work for unmarried women, and hoped to persuade married women to leave the labor market. This would allow them to concentrate on their families or to start a

---

family. The continued campaign against the double-earner and the introduction of the Marriage Loan Scheme in 1933, which promised loans to “Aryan” couples, on the condition that women leave employment, was an attempt to both increase the birth rate and remove married women from the workforce. Women who did work, were encouraged by the regime to work in areas that “suited” their “biology,” including social work, domestic and agricultural work, while avoiding heavy industry. In industry, women were still needed as workers; routine and monotonous tasks on the assembly line were defined in National Socialist ideology, as before, as suitable, because they supposedly did not distract women from “thoughts of their familial duties” or damage their bodies. In fact, the percentage of employed women increased steadily between 1933 and 1939, when Germany had one of the highest employment rates of women in Europe, especially in the industries, but also in the trade and service sector.

The percentage of women in the workforce increased from 34.4 percent in 1933 to 36.7 percent in 1939. The number of female industrial workers continued to grow during the


422 Lisa Pine, Nazi Family Policy, 17. In 1937 the condition that women had to give up paid employment was revoked.

423 Pine, Nazi Family Policy, 21.


425 Lisa Pine, Hitler’s National Community, 72.
1930s, from 1.21 million in 1933 to 1.84 million in 1938. Of course, women continued to work in unskilled positions in the traditional “female” industries of textile, clothing and food processing, but the major growth took place in the new industries such as chemicals industries and electrical industries. White-collar work continued to increase too, from 1.6 million in 1933 to 1.9 million in 1939. The gendered segregation of the labor market continued not only between sectors of the economy, but also inside them, with women working in less skilled positions and receiving lower wages than men.

Contributing to the existing scholarship with an analysis of the illustrated press shows how visual media helped reinforce the definition of appropriate spaces for unmarried female work by including photo-essays or profiles that emphasized a wide variety of options for employment. Interestingly this discourse was a continuation of the debate on the public and the media of the Weimar Republic where magazines like the social-democratic Frauenwelt engaged in similar discourse. To be sure, some of these images reiterated the declarations that women participate in “female” appropriate jobs. But alongside the images of social workers or nurses, magazines included photographs of women in modern industrial work or celebrations of “exceptional” female professionals, not least under the auspices of German self-sufficiency and later schemes to include all women in work related to rearming the nation. Moreover, images of the urban, single secretary – once condemned in the National Socialist press during the Weimar Republic as a symbol of degenerate femininity – returned to the pages of the magazines as an acceptable form of female modernity. In the political

---


427 Stibbe, Women in the Third Reich, 88.

practice of the Third Reich, the demands of the labor market and the employers who needed the cheap female labor were more important than any National Socialist gender ideology, which resulted in constant conflicts between rhetoric and practice.

Educating mothers, or future mothers, remained a crucial component of National Socialist propaganda and policies. Here, too, the intensive attempts to educate “modern mothers” continued. In the interest of social hygiene, women were aware of the need to raise their children with healthy practices. This started in the Kaisserreich, increased during the Weimar Republic and continued to expand, as Karen Hageman and others have shown in their research. Forms of “gender pedagogy,” or teaching girls how to become proper women as mothers and housewives, were also continued. What was new, was the framework of racial classifications that became central to all welfare practices, education and population policies. Family policies and legislation aiming to “protect” the German Volksgemeinschaft and increase birth-rates as well as the cult of Aryan motherhood all aimed to exalt the Aryan German mother and her family. Symbols of motherhood, like the annual celebration of Mother’s Day, which were invented in the 1920s, the awards for large families and the visual juxtaposition of the “mother” with the “soldier” all underscore the Nazis belief that women’s most important role in society was the increase in the “quality” and “quantity” of

---


431 For literature on the BDM, see Sabine Hering and Kurt Schilde, Das BDM-Werk “Glaube und Schönheit”: Die Organisation junger Frauen im Nationalsozialismus (Berlin, 2000).

the population.⁴³³ For all the rhetoric about women’s “natural” ability to be wives and mothers, it was clear that the regime felt it was necessary to educate and inform women on “the proper,” i.e. hygienic and scientific – in short “modern” – way to perform household duties, raise children, decorate their homes, and shop for their families.⁴³⁴ This type of Modern German Woman was thus educated in the realm of racial hygiene, was aware of her consumer choices and the important role she played in the state, society and economy. Moreover, in times of crisis, especially during the war, wives, daughters and mothers were called upon to make sacrifices on behalf of the nation. Their duty, first and foremost, was to serve the Third Reich.

It is unsurprising that when discussing the Aryan mother scholars point to the abundant manifestations of the German Mother on posters, postcards and in paintings and sculpture. To be sure, the repetitious images of the mother, cradling or nursing her child, reflected the ideological claim of ideal “Aryan” motherhood. The official Nazi women’s magazine, the N.S. - Frauenwarte, included these images in photo-essays dedicated to the celebration of mother’s day or on the cover of the magazine. While many of the images repeat the “Madonna-like” imagery of motherhood, the magazine included other images of educating women to become housewives and mothers, which focused on their unpaid work within the family. This helped bolster the discourses that argued housework and family work was the most important calling for women. These images also functioned as visual instructions for young women, as advice for their future roles as workers, then as a wife and mother. Young women as future wives and mothers were, in general, one of the major targets of the NS


women’s propaganda. The Frauenwarte, for example, attempted to create a special visual narrative for young women, emphasizing appropriate types of female jobs, which would prepare them for their future role as wives and mothers. Women were expected to give up their paid jobs once they married and had their first child.

In contrast to the National Socialist woman’s magazine, both the Illustrierte Beobachter and the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung marginalized images of motherhood and unpaid family and housework. Beyond sporadic inclusions of a “portrait” of a “German family,” visually, Aryan motherhood, like other components of the Nazi ideology, were not the focus of their content. Rather, as we shall see in the analysis, these two popular illustrated magazines were far more interested in providing their readers with entertainment, visual pleasure, erotic female bodies and accounts of “celebrities.” Their main function was to please, deflect and appease; to give their readers the impression that everything was normal, well-organized and they were taken care of by the National Socialist government.

Even this did not change much during the Second World War, when the demands of a “total war” required support from all areas of society and the boundaries between the home and front were far more permeable than any previous conflict. Indeed, in times of crisis and within the context of “total war,” flexible gender roles were utilized by the Third Reich in order to support the aims of the war. What is particularly important here is first, women’s participation in the wartime economy and second, their integration as Wehrmacht auxiliaries in the military service. The Nazis permitted work of unmarried women, but attempted to keep married women out of the labor force until 1939 in order to fulfill racist population policies outlined by the regime. Because the level of employment of unmarried women was already

---

quite high (77 percent in 1939), it was not necessary in the first years of World War II to mobilize married women.\footnote{Karen Hagemann, “Mobilizing Women for War: The History, Historiography, and Memory of German Women’s War Service in the Two World Wars,” \textit{Journal of Military History} 75 (2011): 1055-1093.} National Socialist leaders tried to avoid this as long as possible, because of Nazi ideology, but also because of their fears that forcing married women into compulsory war work would severely undermine morale on the home front and the war front. This was especially true for more “privileged” women.\footnote{Hagemann, “Mobilizing Women for War.”} The memory of the so-called “stab in the back” of World War I – the unrest and opposition on the home front – was clearly in the minds of officials who argued against fully mobilizing women’s labor, including married women’s labor. However, this policy was only possible because of the regime’s intensive use of forced labor and until the regime started the war against the Soviet Union in 1941.\footnote{Stibbe, Women in the Third Reich, and Ulrich Hebert, Hitler’s Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich (Cambridge, 1997).} With the invasion of the Soviet Union, the demand for labor at home dramatically increased because of the rising numbers of fallen soldiers at the Eastern front that had to be replaced by male employees still working at home. More and more German men were drafted.\footnote{Hagemann “Mobilizing Women for War.”} Beginning in 1941 the Nazi regime was forced to mobilize an increasing number of women for war work. Initial campaigns tried to encourage women to volunteer for war work. By 1942–43, especially after the defeat at Stalingrad, this was no longer enough. It proved difficult, however, to mobilize the last reserves of women for a “total war, especially for the Wehrmacht, where women, as well, should replace soldiers as auxiliaries.\footnote{Hagemann “Mobilizing Women for War.”} Nevertheless, 400,000 German Red Cross nurses and nurses’ aides, more than 500,000 female Wehrmacht
auxiliaries, 500,000 female aerial defense auxiliaries, alongside women involved in the police, Gestapo, and the SS actively contributed to the war effort. The service women of the Wehrmacht steadily increased, from rear area positions to integral components of military air defense and other military functions. Every twentieth soldier of the Wehrmacht in 1944–45 was a woman.441 As Karen Hagemann has recently pointed out, this mobilization of women for the military has not only been marginalized in the scholarship, but also in public memory, not least because of the conflict of memories over the rhetoric of “victimization” of the Germans on the home front and the need to reestablish the post-war gender order.442

Scholarship that focuses on official policies and legislation geared toward mobilizing women for the wartime economy and female auxiliary groups have not fully integrated the visual aspect of wartime propaganda. I argue that already in the mid-1930s, the illustrated press was visually preparing its citizens for conflict and highlighted women’s roles in defense of the nation, parallel to the changes in the laws that would allow such a mobilization.443 During the war, numerous images in the illustrated press of female work in the war industry and of female Wehrmacht auxiliaries attempted to “normalize” the changing gender order. At the same time, magazines emphasized that this was only necessary because of extraordinary circumstances of the emergency situation of “total war.” These representations of productive, loyal German women were often paired with images of the female external “enemy” in an attempt to underline the seriousness and importance of the German woman’s duties to the nation.


442 Hageman, “Mobilizing Women for War.”

443 Hagemann, “Mobilizing Women for War.”
Even the women that were integrated in the “male world” of the military as Wehrmacht auxiliaries had to look female and emphasize her femininity. The National Socialist propaganda did everything possible to make sure that these auxiliaries were perceived as women and as *female* “helpers” of the male soldiers, not a soldiers or “gun women” (*Flintenweiber*). Not only did the regime not allow them to carry weapons, but also regulated their social lives, their clothing and appearance, including cosmetics, through decrees and careful control over their visual representation in public.\(^444\) These attempts were one area of many in which National Socialist policy tried to control, form and regulate the female body.

The different representations of the female body in the Nazi magazines reveal that a wide variety of “femininities” coexisted alongside the German mother in the illustrated press. One field that demonstrates this clearly is fashion and consumption. Irene Guenther’s in-depth investigation of the fashion industry during the Third Reich is essential in understanding debates over German style.\(^445\) Amongst her wide-variety of sources, Guenther also looks at magazines, but concentrates heavily on fashion magazines. In the *BIZ* and the *IB*, the most common image of the German woman was also a twenty-something single woman, who spent her leisure time at the pool, wore “modern” clothes, used “mysticum” face powder and smoked “Manoli” cigarettes before donning her “Hauptauna” bra and an evening gown for a night on the town.

Another set of images that demonstrates the vast variety of body images of women is sports. During the Weimar Republic, the National Socialist press complained about the masculine female athletes found in other publications. Depictions of athletic or sporty women in the Third Reich were intended to display “grace” and “beauty.” While the

\(^{444}\) Hagemann, “Mobilizing Women for War.”

Frauenwarte connected women’s sport to health and reproduction, it explicitly informed readers that the athletic women of the Third Reich were not the “masculine” women of earlier years. The IB and the BIZ were far less concerned with situating female sports within the framework of women’s health. Rather, photographs of “celebrity” athletes, especially during the 1936 Olympics, concentrated on their physical appearances as women, their attractiveness, rather than their athletic accomplishments.

Movie stars, models and female entertainers are a third field that demonstrates the wide range of body images of women in the Third Reich. Pictures of prominent women played an important role in the general interest publications like IB and BIZ. In her work, Nazi Cinema’s New Woman, Jana F. Burns argues that the regime’s relationship with cinema was ambivalent, where female film stars made the success of Nazi films possible, but failed to deliver any coherent political message. As “sources of vicarious pleasure,” film stars occupied a privileged role within the Third Reich and their ambiguous messages both affirmed and questioned Nazi ideology. Moreover, at times, film stars could function as a way in which a “seductive counter image” could be presented to audiences as part of a fantasy. I would argue that alongside images of movie stars, entertainers and models functioned in a similar way in the illustrated press and this function became increasingly important during the war. Not only were they objects of fantasy and diversion, but they presented an alternative understanding of femininity that was once heavily criticized during the Weimar Republic.

446 Bruns, Nazi Cinema’s New Woman.
447 Bruns, Nazi Cinema’s New Woman, 9.
448 Bruns, Nazi Cinema’s New Woman, 227.
In the following chapters I will first explore images of female employment; afterwards, I analyze how the illustrated press presented narratives of female life in the household and the family. At the end of this second chapter, I will also analyze how images of female war work functioned within the illustrated press, when women donned trousers or uniforms in service of the nation. In the third and last chapter of this part, I examine images of the body of the Modern “German” Woman with a focus on fashion and consumption first and second, images of female athletes, models and entertainers.

2. Representations of Paid and Unpaid Female Work in the Family, Household and Workforce

Scholarship based on statistical analysis, structures of the labor market and official policies have noted the contradictions and uneasy relationship between “reality” and “practice” related to female paid work. In particular, scholars emphasize National Socialist discourses that promoted jobs suitable to women’s “biology” and encouraged women to avoid work that could harm their child-bearing capabilities. I contend that the images of female work in the illustrated press both echo and contradict these sentiments. On the one hand, magazines like the Frauenwarte consistently published photographs of female paid work in an attempt to both celebrate and encourage appropriate careers for young women and linked them to the “modern” workplace. On the other hand, representations in the Illustrierte Beobachter crossed the boundaries of what was usually deemed suitable work for women by focusing on “exceptional” females in the Third Reich. Moreover, in contrast to the vehement discourses relating the white-collar worker to anti-Semitism and degenerate sexuality during the Weimar Republic, both the IB and BIZ refashioned the “secretary” into an object of acceptable female modernity, but retained her “erotic” elements for their viewer’s pleasure.
This wide array of images of female paid work and their relation to modernity underscore the existence of a variety of acceptable notions of female modernity and femininity during the Third Reich. In the following sections, I will first analyze the Frauenwarte’s approach to representations of paid work in contrast to the Illustrierte Beobachter. I will end by detailing the attempts to (de)eroticize the white-collar worker.

2.1 Re-Defining Appropriate Spaces of “Female” Work in the Press

The Frauenwarte dedicated a considerable amount of space in the publication to articles and images of working women. By arguing that any work can be “motherly,” or contribute to the “new social order,” the magazine was able to present very different types of work as appropriate for women. Thus, its visual representations of female paid work emphasized the broad variety of occupations open to women in the Third Reich and accentuated the productive role that they played in society beyond the family. The images functioned as a form of validation for female paid labor and carried a mixture of both the special “qualities” that women can bring to work as well as the visual appeal of the Modern Woman.

One example of this strategy is a collection of photographs published in the. Frauenwarte in November 1935, “The Face of the Working Woman.” Originally part of an exhibition in Düsseldorf, “Women and Volk,” the large spread of photos includes images of young,

---

449 An example of this can be found in the NS-FW, nr. 16, February 1934, which contains an article, “The Working Woman,” arguing that while it is clear that the “first places in new state,” are “not for the working women,” as long as thousands of men remain unmarried (and “condemn” thousands of women to remain single), women must have the right to an occupation. The author, Else Schilfarth, argues that the qualities needed for motherhood can also be utilized in the workforce. Although all “physically and mentally healthy” women agree with the “goal of the Führer” (motherhood), women can bring their special feminine qualities to their work. A photograph of the staff of the magazine, working in their office, illustrates this article. See also, NS-FW, nr. 21, April 1934 and NS-FW, nr. 7, September 1935, p. 202 for similar rhetoric.

450 NS-FW, nr.11, November 1935, p. 331-333.
attractive female workers in the Third Reich. The accompanying article, by Lore Bauer, notes that the question of women’s work is constantly discussed and written about, whether or not women should work and what kind of work is especially suitable for women. The magazine answered these questions by printing photos of nine women, all in different jobs and explained the importance and character of each woman’s occupation. “Women and Volk” are not specific women, that is, the captions only indicate their professions, labeling the images as “the secretary” or “the factory worker” (figure 1). This allows each portrait to symbolize “any” German woman. The text, too, speaks of “the secretary” or “factory worker” in broad terms and avoids linking the image to a specific location or business in a further attempt to create a sense of familiarity with their readers. This “dear reader” approach by the Frauenwarte, speaking to all factory or office workers, was a strategy in which the magazine attempted to create a sense of inclusion for employed women.⁴⁵¹

The aesthetics of each image are quite similar. The portraits concentrate on the “face” of the working woman, as well as their movements and gestures. The secretary, for example, is in the

Fig. 1. Frauenwarte, November 1935
“The Face of the Working Woman”

⁴⁵¹ The front-page editorials often addressed readers in a language of familiarity in an attempt to create a sense intimacy with their audience.
middle of typing a document and the factory worker leans over her work station, putting together pieces of a machine. The photograph of the nurse alongside the tobacco worker and female factory worker also demonstrate the visual contrast between jobs that are traditionally deemed “female” and the more problematic nature of industrial labor. For all the rhetoric that factory labor would be harmful to women’s bodies and could damage them for future motherhood, the magazine visually and textually praised her contribution to the nation.  

Indeed, modern, industrialized factory work was necessary for economic renewal and, later, preparation for a war. The article notes that the factory worker, “day in and day out” sits for eight hours in front of her machine, “hardly ever looking up” and “fulfills her difficult tasks of making one part of a machine at one of the largest factories in Germany.” The work is “tiring and exhausting” but her “face betrays” that with “her whole sex, diligence and devotion to duty will be fulfilled.” While noting the “exhausting” work, neither the image nor the text refer to any “damage” that the female body might be subject to.

The magazine presented the factory worker to readers alongside the more “acceptable” work of nursing

---

Fig. 2, Frauenwarte, November 1935
“The Face of the Working Woman 2”

---

452 See Tröger, “The Creation of a Female Assembly Line Proletariat.”

---
and child care (figure 2). All of these images of female employees, notes the article, “are living proof of their suitability of their particular skills to their respective work, to their joy at work and their inner calling. It requires no further words.” Like earlier discussions of women’s work, this article did mention “motherly” qualities in relation to the female doctor, but the majority of the textual descriptions, as well as all of the images, avoided the direct comparison or allusion to motherhood; presumably, they are unmarried. The Frauenwarte, with this photo essay, presented a multitude of images of working women within its pages, celebrating each woman’s special skills or characteristics that they contributed to their respective careers and to the nation as a whole.

While nursing, child-care and social work were staple images of female paid work, the Frauenwarte continued to include representations of female factory work. A photograph published in January 1935, emphasized the clean and airy work space for female workers in a fish cannery (figure

Fig. 3, Frauenwarte, January 1935
“Ideal Work Space in a Fish Cannery”

453 NS-FW, nr.11, November 1935, p. 331-333. The NS-FW included generic images of “women’s work,” including stereotypical representations of women involved in nursing and childcare. For example see, NS-FW, nr. 1 May 1934, p. 664 for an article which describes the roles of the instructors at the NS Mother-School on a course on midwifery. The article contains two photographs, one of the teacher surrounded by young women giving a lecture and holding a baby and a group of students learning how to properly bath infants. See also, NS-FW, nr. 11, November 1935.
The photograph captures the long row of women, sitting at tables in a well-lit and clean working space. It is related to an accompanying article which praises the women’s section of the German Labor Front. This example is typical of images of female factory work presented in the magazine, which constantly emphasized “hygienic” conditions, space for breaks and clean workspaces and thus, functioned to demonstrate how well the Nazi state took care of its female workers.

These images of female work in the Frauenwarte demonstrate a concerted attempt to validate a wide variety of paid labor for unmarried women. The inclusion of “modern” spaces of work, like the rationalized factory or the urban office also signified the magazine’s effort to create appealing images of modern female work and capitalized on familiar tropes of the Modern Woman. This included the image of the Modern “working-class woman” in the Weimar Republic (the female factory worker who labored in industry) and the modern, urban icon of the female secretary, which will be discussed in the next section.

The Frauenwarte, because of its format and function as the National Socialist women’s magazine addressed mainly a female readership. Therefore, it dedicated much more space to articles and columns related to women’s paid work than the Illustrierte Beobachter. Many of its female readers were employed and needed to earn a living. Moreover, the more somber tone of the Frauenwarte presented female work in a serious manner – as part of German

---

454 *NS-FW*, nr. 15, January 1935, p. 464 – 465. Other photographs include the “hygienic” washroom, the clean and spacious cafeteria and another “light” and “airy” workspace for the women.

455 The creation of the Women’s Section under the German Labor Front in July 1934, led by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, was accountable for the welfare and education of around seven million women. The main tasks of this organization included settling disputes, supervising high standards of hygiene in the workplace and other measures which aimed to protect the child-bearing capability of women. Courses in housekeeping and childcare were also part of the program. The underlying motive, of course, was to make sure that women were “physically capable of and psychologically amenable” to birthing children for the nation. See, Lisa Pine, *Nazi Family Policy*, 21 and Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, 95-96. See also *NS-FW*, nr. 16 February 1934; *NS-FW*, nr. 15, January 1935, p. 462; *NS-FW* nr. 11, February 1935; and, *NS-FW*, nr. 11, November 1936 for praise of the DAF.
woman’s roles and duties within the Third Reich. They also were a defense of women’s involvement in the workforce, especially in more professional positions, that was directed against male party members and functionaries of the NSDAP who – at least rhetorically – wanted to get rid of female employment altogether.\textsuperscript{456}

The \textit{IB} virtually ignored the everyday world of female paid work. Instead it focused on “celebrity journalism” to highlight “exceptional” women and their work. The following analysis of a two page photo-essay is indicative of the ways in which images of female workers entered the pages of the \textit{IB}. The photo-essay from December 1936 on exceptional women in male jobs stated, “They have no competitors: 10 women as the only representatives in their profession,” profile a group of women whose colleagues are all men.\textsuperscript{457} The jobs, including a saxophone player, a pilot, a professor of classical music and a movie director (of course Leni Riefenstahl), are represented by a photograph of each of the women at work. The article explicitly states that these are certainly \textit{not} examples of

\textsuperscript{456} For example, the \textit{NS-FW} included articles discussing female architects (\textit{NS-FW}, nr. 15, January 1935, p. 471); beekeepers (\textit{NS-FW}, nr. 16, January 1936, p. 515); female nutritionists (\textit{NS-FW}, nr.21, April 1934, p. 637) and doctors and lawyers (\textit{NS-FW}, nr. 21, April 1935, p. 656-657).

\textsuperscript{457} \textit{IB}, nr. 49, December 3, 1936, p. 2062 – 2063.
typical “female” work, but the *IB* celebrates their extraordinary and exceptional contribution to the nation. “Life, work and fighting for the nation,” begins the article, “are duties of the women in the Third Reich. It continues, “Germany, whose highest aim is the woman carrying out her proper calling as wife and mother, has no intention to expel the working women from their jobs. On the contrary, the state protects and promotes talent and lets it develop freely...” Referencing the general theme, the article notes that the reported ten women have created a position for themselves in a usually male profession “through their energy and talent” even if it is “a bit unconventional.” Both images and text emphasize the special character of these women – and only as an exception can they be accepted into their professions.

The captions under each of the photographs explain the type of work that each woman is involved in, like the famous female pilot, Hanna Reitsch: “Germany’s only female pilot” who works at the “German Research Institute for Gliding in Darmstadt” (figure 4). The
text describes her as “always helpful and companionable” with her fellow comrades. The photograph of Reitsch working on an engine with her shirt-sleeves rolled up, shows a smile on her face. While the profession is a masculine one, Reitsch has also carved out her own space in the field. The photographs, including Leni Reifenstahl behind her camera, a female craftsman (ivory turner), an “electro-technical” expert and ceramicist seem to emphasize a form of female independence (figure 5). Even though the jobs are coded masculine, the photographs laud the women’s accomplishments and their individual femininity. Moreover, links to modernity, embedded in the technology of the airplane (a favorite theme of the magazine), the films of Leni Reifenstahl or the contributions of women to scientific research, created a visual link between technological development, industrial advancement and female work. This photo essay provided a visual space for women who did not fit the profile of the German Mother, and the text did not indicate that these individuals are using special “feminine” qualities in the workforce. Rather, the IB’s acknowledgement of female work lauded unusual or “celebrity” women who did not stand in for the average “German Woman” as in the Frauenwarte. The IB would continue to use this approach throughout the 1930s, profiling famous female athletes who were also part of the labor force, for example, continuing to use “celebrity journalism” to gain the attention of their readers.458

Both the Frauenwarte and the IB, in their own ways, thus included a variety of representations of female paid work. Both women’s magazines, especially the Frauenwarte,

458 IB, nr. 36, September 17, 1936, p. 1555-1556. In September 1936, the IB included a “sports celebrity” interest piece, “Our Olympic Champions have returned to their professional life!” The two page photo-essay includes seven photographs of female athletes who now spend their days behind a typewriter, selling radios or teaching kindergarten rather than racing or swimming. The short text notes that the Olympic Champions, as a “simple matter of course have returned to their posts,” and it is this “modest integration into the national community that ensures the winners the sympathies of their countrymen.” Praising the sensible nature of the women, the IB concludes by noting that they will always be associated with the development of Germany as a leading sports nation. The photographs all depict the women at work, in businesses, offices and schools.
attempted to legitimize and justify inclusion in the labor force in a broad variety of occupations, which reflected the needs of the labor market.

Attempts to De-eroticize the Image of the Female White Collar Worker

During the Weimar Republic, the Nazi press associated the image of the female employee in offices and shops with the negative counter-image of the New Woman, whose “independence” threatened the hierarchy between the sexes. This image of femininity was linked to anti-Semitism and sexual deviance within the larger framework of the backlash against the Modern Woman at the end of the Weimar Republic. The BIZ, in contrast, had presented an eroticized version of the consumer-orientated white-collar worker to its readers as the incarnation of the New Women, emphasizing her ability to use her body to gain the attention of her boss. Both constructions were related to each other; the Nazi image was a reaction to the commercialized and eroticized image of the New Women in the BIZ and elsewhere in Weimar mass culture.459

Yet, the illustrated press of the Third Reich did not abolish the image of the Modern Woman; on the contrary, it incarnated some aspects the New Women in its constructions of the Modern German Woman. One important theme was female work in offices and shops, not simply because they wanted to present their readers with appropriate and appealing images of female paid work. The major reason was that the economy increasingly needed female work in offices and shops, in fact in the whole service sector, and there was no way for the Nazis to turn back the wheel of history. This would have created fierce resistance

from employers. Thus, female white-collar work had to be presented in a new way that fit to the Third Reich’s ideology.

Accordingly, the *Frauenwarte* presented female white-collar work in a “de-eroticized” way, as one form of appropriate female work alongside others. In order to carry out this agenda, the magazine used female work in offices and shops as an example of a workplace where women could bring their special “female” skills to the workforce. The new editors of the *BIZ* after 1933 clearly attempted to de-eroticize the image of the female white-collar worker in photo-reports and advertisements, though not completely, whereas the IB increasingly emphasized the erotic body of the urban, modern and of course, Aryan stenotypists and secretaries. This contradictory trend is only partly a result of the different readership: The *IB* readers were more often male, even after 1933, and closely related to the NSDAP; the *BIZ* continued to be a commercial magazine that aimed for the broadest audience possible, was financed by advertisements and had to sell them. In the end, both magazines followed the same logic; they presented the job of the white-collar worker as an example of appropriate female paid work for young single women. The “modest eroticism” of the modified image was intended to make female white-collar work equally attractive for their different groups of readers: male party members, parents and daughters, male employers and female workers as well as consumers.

A photo-essay, “Irreplaceable Women’s Work,” published in January 1935 in the *Frauenwarte* is a good example of the strategy in which the magazine attempted to validate female participation in the labor force, create an image of paid work that was attractive and integrate images of the Modern Woman.\(^{460}\) The bold headline, “Irreplaceable Women’s Work” and the subheading, “At their job, everyone serves the Volk – so we are all

\(^{460}\) **NS-FW**, nr. 15, January 1935.
comrades,” serve to unify the different images on the page (figure 6). The captions state the profession and the origins of the photograph (Berlin, Hamburg, Munich etc ...), which adds to the vision of German unity by “connecting” them through work.⁴⁶¹ A guest editorial from Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, the leader of the NS-Frauenschaft (National Socialist Women’s League) reminded readers that qualities such as “humbleness, big-heartedness” and “internal strength” are important to the German people, connecting internal female qualities with the public visibility of women’s paid employment.

The photo essay is arranged thematically and the juxtaposition of different forms of labor—both “urban and rural” and “young and old”—attempt to combine women under the banner of “comradeship.” The photographs are meant to provide a glimpse of women “in action,” rather than portraits, suggesting the desire to show readers a “real-life” depiction of female work. Included in the images are representations of “womanly” work: tending to a flock of geese, a kindergarten teacher, a nurse, a tailor and a florist. Academic positions in law and laboratory workers in a chemistry lab in a hospital also have a place within the photo-essay.

⁴⁶¹ Another photo essay published in the NS-FW, nr. 2, November 1934 proclaims a similar message. The photos depict a women’s congress in Stuttgart that took place in October 1934 and includes photographs of Scholtz-Klink visiting factory works in Bielefeld and a group of older women wearing traditional German dresses. The text notes that “Today there is no difference between working women, between mothers, between factory workers and girls,” because all the women work side by side with men to contribute to the nation.
The images of fashion designers, a female photographer, a typist, a beautician and a shop girl also demonstrated the need to include careers that are connected to the urban, modern world. The appearance of these images in the magazine is striking within the context of Nazi tirades against this type of Modern Woman five years earlier. By including these images of white-collar work and professions related to beauty and fashion, alongside other examples of appropriate female work, the women’s magazine attempted to modify the meaning of the
representation of the Modern Woman and utilize the imagery to create a unified portrait of the female labor force.\textsuperscript{462}

The photo-essay, published in a special theme issue on women and paid work, was accompanied by related articles in the magazine that emphasized “modern” careers for young women, including various careers in fashion or modeling. These jobs are not “decadent,” states the magazine, but part of national culture. Architecture, which was earlier “pronounced a male job,” is now a possibility for women.\textsuperscript{463} The front page article by Klink, “The Mission of the Productive Women in the Working Life of our Volk,” textually emphasized women’s roles in the new German social order and guided readers’ understanding of the photo-essay. Klink tells her readers that “the professional woman can still be a woman” and “a job is only inappropriate for a woman if she cannot permeate it with her particular womanly strength” and is only problematic if it “deforms” her “character.” In her editorial, she argues that the differences between women based on employment (whether women have a professional career or work in a factory) do not matter in regard to the overall formation of the Volk. The photo-essay is meant to emphasize not only the special female qualities that women can bring to the workforce, but the special nature of “inclusiveness” that all working women should feel. Both visually and textually, this presentation places special emphasis on the “modern”

\textsuperscript{462} Other articles in this issue include a discussion of women’s work in agriculture, home economics and nursing. Each article briefly outlines the main duties of each job and the education required for each occupation. \textit{FW}, n. 15, January 1935, p. 458, 467. Special sections for women’s paid work continued to appear in the magazine. For example, see \textit{NS-FW}, nr. 21, April 1935 for articles on female physicians, lawyers and philology.

\textsuperscript{463} \textit{NS-FW}, n.15, January 1935, p. 471. Many of the accompanying articles do not contain images, presumably because they are represented in the center photo-essay. The \textit{NS-FW} continued to promote different professional careers for women. For example, see \textit{NS-FW}, nr. 2, April 1934 for an article on female nutritionist; \textit{NS-FW}, nr. 16 January 1936, p. 514 for an article on a “technological careers,” including laboratory work, technical assistants (like photographers assistants) and dentistry. See also \textit{FW}, nr. 16, January 1936 for photographs and a short article on female beekeepers. A one-page announcement in the \textit{NS-FW}, nr.6, September 1937 also noted that women’s participation in the nation goes beyond “the home and the kitchen” and juxtaposes two photographs together: that of a rural woman holding a child and another of a woman working in front of a desk.
careers, celebrating the work of the white-collar worker alongside other forms of employment.

In the *BIZ*, the secretary continued to be an object of fascination and fantasy, similar to the Weimar Republic. The secretary still looked like the Modern Woman in the pages of the press from five years earlier. She wore fashionable clothes, used cosmetics, took the subway to work and lived in her own apartment. Her surface appearance had not altered. The secretary was a representation of female paid work, but the photo-essays attempted to capture the idea of a modern lifestyle for a single woman, without condemnation. The *BIZ* took an interesting approach, re-working the image of the “secretary” in its magazine, by presenting the urban, Modern Woman as an international phenomenon. This strategy allowed the magazine to visually include the white-collar worker “outside” Germany, but retained her appeal for the German audience. These photo-essays were also visually linked with advertisements that used the white-collar worker to sell goods.

Fig. 7, *BIZ*, March 4, 1935
“One of 900 Thousand”
The following two photo-essays in the *BIZ*, of the female white-collar worker in New York and Tokyo, contained prominent photographs of women in their symbolic poses behind their typewriters, one of the most important visual links related to the modern, urban, single female worker. In March 1935, the *BIZ* introduced its readers to “Joan,” one of the 900,000 stenographers in New York City (figure 7). A photo-report of her “daily life” depicts Joan walking to work in her form-fitting two piece outfit and all the proper accessories, with a caption noting that she earns around 25 dollars a week, much of it spent on clothing and cosmetics, presumably, to maintain her appearance and her employment. The *BIZ* used the example of Mariko, a single female stenographer in Tokyo, to emphasize the “modern” nature of her lifestyle and work (figure 8). Both “Joan” and “Mariko” were visual markers of female modernity, which through a reader’s

---

464 *BIZ*, nr. 10, March 4, 1935.

465 *BIZ*, nr. 29, July 16, 1936. See also *BIZ*, nr. 4 January 1, 1934, p. 128 and *BIZ*, nr. 25, June 25, 1933 p. 913 for images of the female secretary.
imagination could stand in for any Modern Woman. While this could be read as a continued “fantasy” for young women, the female white-collar worker was presented as unproblematic.

The images of both “Joan” and “Mariko” contain an air of self-confidence, moving on their own through the city on their way to work or during their breaks. From her morning breakfast at a café and her break on the steps of the library, readers would have instantly recognized in “Joan” or “Mariko” the construction of the Modern Woman which echoed the image of the urban, independent white-collar worker in popular media during the Weimar Republic.

A series of advertisements in the BIZ for “Olympia” typewriters also utilized the image of the female secretary in order to sell their “efficient” machine. The illustrations, all with the secretary in an office space were accompanied by captions which indicated that the boss was “pleased” with his secretary’s work – offering her a raise or holding her up as a “model” employee for the other women in the office. The images of the secretary, interacting with her boss, presented a confident, trim, youthful and stylish white-collar worker, an echo
of the images of the Modern Woman from the Weimar Republic (figures 9 and 10).\textsuperscript{466} While these advertisements were not used to sell stockings or cosmetics, they did utilize the familiar trope of the attractive secretary to sell a product. What is noticeably different in these advertisements is the underlying “respectability” of the secretary; her visual representation is still attractive, but not overly eroticized. In these images, she may be attractive to her boss, but she also gains his attention by her efficient and productive work, not just her female figure.\textsuperscript{467}

While the visual language in the \textit{BIZ} points to an attempt to “de-eroticize” the white-collar worker, the \textit{IB} took the opposite approach, emphasizing the body of the female-white collar worker. Most importantly, this type of “eroticism” was acceptable – unrelated to anti-Semitic discourse or misbehaving women – as part of the visual landscape of the Aryan body. The \textit{IB} readapted the image of the consumer-type of Modern Woman found in the Weimar Republic, by maintaining her “sexiness” but eliminating textual and visual images that linked her to dangerous behavior. Like the \textit{BIZ}, this allowed the publication to include familiar images of female modernity within their magazine, but sanitized it to fit within the discourse of the Third Reich.

A three page photo essay, “Between Twelve and Two,” published in the July 2, 1936 edition of the \textit{IB} is indicative of the ways in which the magazine presented women in white-

\textsuperscript{466} \textit{BIZ}, nr. 17, April 23, 1936, p. 352 and \textit{BIZ}, nr. 25, August 27, 1936, p. 1415. See also, \textit{BIZ}, nr. 25, June 25, 1933; \textit{BIZ}, nr. 39, September 36, 1938; and, \textit{BIZ}, nr. 40, October 3, 1940. An advertisement for a feminine hygiene product, “Sagrotan,” used the image of the secretary in an ad which proclaimed “Colleagues – but never Comrades,” advising women that if they needed to feel more “fresh” and “confident” at work they should use their product, \textit{BIZ}, nr. 22, May 31, 1934, p. 781.

\textsuperscript{467} On the other hand, the \textit{BIZ} also made use of photo-reports to ridicule American secretaries in Hollywood, who hoped to become film stars. This approach allowed the magazine to present appealing but “safe” images of female modernity to its readers and at the same time, draw careful boundaries around her behavior. See \textit{BIZ}, nr. 13, March 1938, p. 688. For a similar photo poking fun at secretaries’ clothes, see \textit{IB} nr. 21, May 26, 1938, p. 796.
A collection of three photographs of white-collar workers dominated the first page, but the only image of women at work is a small photo in the upper left corner, showing one woman sitting behind a large typewriter and her colleague standing beside her, holding a file (figure 11). The text mentions that women, who work in offices and factories, need a mid-day break, noting that she “sits all morning at her typewriter,” taking dictation, answering the phone and engages in all kinds of “energy consuming” work. The photographs provide the solution to nerve-racking work, by tram or bike, office workers can take a break and go swimming and relax in the sun. The women return to the office feeling “fresh” and “reinvigorated” and the afternoon work hours speed by.

The first three photographs of the women in their working clothes take up the first page of the photo-essay, at work, catching a train and on the train (figure 12). The women are still in their working clothes, smiling at the conductor and anticipating their arrival at the swimming pool. The photograph marks the visual step from “work” to “play” in the narrative of the essay. The last two pages of the essay include photos that depict the women in their bathing suits, lying in the sun, splashing in the water and eating their lunch. The bodies of the two white-collar workers, languidly resting on each other in the sun, are intended to demonstrate the time of leisure and relaxation that women can have on their

---

468 IB, nr. 27, July 2, 1936, p. 1074-1076.
break (figure 13). The photographs look a bit posed, akin to pin-up images of females in bathing suits, the women’s male counterpart resting alongside them. While the photo-essay makes clear that these are working women, the images emphasize their leisure time, providing the reader with gazes onto swimsuit-clad bodies, the removal of their work clothes into the bathing suit, the uniform of the summer.\footnote{The IB included numerous “photo-studies” of women in bathing suits, unconnected to other magazine content, which will be analyzed in the next part.}

The white-collar worker can be a bit sexy, playful and have fun.

On one level, this is an example of the IB emphasizing leisure time, space for rest and relaxation on a lunch-time break, which reenergized them for the rest of the workday.\footnote{See also, “Vacation in Summer,” a one-page photo essay dedicated to describing a day’s vacation of a young, stylish woman, including starting the day with reading the IB over a cup of coffee, watching boats on the sea and rowing. IB, nr. 29, July 16, 1936, p. 1163.} On another level, the use of the secretary demonstrates that the IB was willing to depict white-collar workers in a different light than during the Weimar Republic. No longer was the secretary an emblem of urban modernity – deemed problematic. The removal of clothes revealed the female figure, the “exhibition” of the female Aryan body for readers and the transformation of the dutiful secretary into an object of visual pleasure.
The analysis of the white-collar worker in the illustrated press of the Third Reich reveals a variety of strategies to rework the previously deemed problematic icon of the “secretary” into an acceptable figure in contradictory ways. While the Frauenwarte emphasized their “womanly” contribution to society, the BIZ focused on her “modern” appeal and the IB, while including images of woman at work, focused its narrative on glorifying her body. Overall, representations of unmarried, female paid work combined both visual elements of the “modern” German woman and textual referents to their gender-specific characteristics that women would utilize at work, no matter what their profession.

In contrast to the wide variety of images of female paid labor, each publication’s inclusion of “Aryan” motherhood and her family underlined the role of unpaid work in the household and family. As the primary caregiver, the German woman was supposed to be trained, educated and advised on all the proper methods of raising a family and taking care of her children. The following section focuses on the ways in which the women’s magazine visually emphasized the need to educate and train German mothers for all household and child rearing duties. Even if they were “naturally” suited for care giving, the proper German
mother was supposed to be aware of not only her daily work, but her place within the new racial state.

2.2 Making “German” Mothers and Housewives: Visualizing Marriage and Family

The representations of the German mother in the illustrated press reveals the tensions between what scholars have deemed the mix of “reactionary” and “modern” elements of the Third Reich. On the one hand, images of Aryan motherhood constitute a visual translation of women’s “return” to the domestic sphere, emphasizing women’s “innate” qualities of nurturing, caring and tending to their families. These images, found in the Frauenwarte portrayed just how important it was to educate and instruct mothers on their necessary household duties and tasks, demonstrating that although women are “natural” caregivers, their skills must operate in the racial and ideological framework of the party. On the other hand, the Illustrierte Beobachter and Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, overall, marginalized representations of “Aryan motherhood” in favor of competing representations of femininity, which accentuated characteristics of the Modern Woman. When the magazines did include images of German motherhood or the family, they relied on customary visual tropes that replicated official propaganda, often of the iconic “rural” family. The following section first focuses on images of Aryan motherhood in the Frauenwarte and then the BIZ and IB.

The Right Kind of Mother: Images of Aryan Motherhood

Footnote: For examples directly related to women, see Lisa Pine, Nazi Family Policy, 1-7, in which she argues that it was neither wholly “reactionary” or “modern,” but dependent upon specific circumstances and policies.
The family constituted the “germ cell” of the nation and the ultimate source of “‘volkish’ renewal,” and it became the task of the German woman to embrace her motherly duties to her family and the nation. The visual representations of mothers in the Frauenwarte always emphasized the right kind of mothers – women who had been trained and taught how to be mothers. The photographs demonstrated women learning the skills of motherhood through a variety of programs sponsored by the Reichsmütterdienst (RMD), including programs like the “Mother school.” The RMD was formed on mother’s day in May 1934 for the explicit purpose of training women in domestic science within the overall context of ‘political education’ and national economic policy.

The function of education courses directed at women were intended to make them aware of the importance of the mother for the Volk, make sure mothers were “emotionally ‘fit’”, prepared to take care of their families and educate their children. This instruction intended to transmit the regime’s racial goals, with the express purpose of creating large, “Aryan” families. While the large family may have been the ideal, the visual images in the Frauenwarte concentrated

472 Pine, Nazi Family Policy, 10.

473 Pine, Nazi Family Policy, 73 – 74. See also, Jill Stephenson, The Nazi Organization of Women.

474 Pine, Nazi Family Policy, 76.
more on the educational aspects of motherhood and augmented their reports with a young, smiling mother holding her child, rather than a family portrait. The following photo report, “Work by Women for Women,” which focuses on a “Mother School” in Stuttgart, is a standard approach that the Frauenwarte used in their magazine. The photographs functioned as visual evidence of women’s education and training, emphasizing certain sets of skills, whether sewing, cooking, infant care or childhood education. In one photograph, six women learn how to make baby food, smiling and laughing in the training kitchen and carefully attending to their work (figure 14).

Throughout the Third Reich numerous photo-reports emphasized this aspect of the mother’s school and the photographs are nearly identical in all cases. The accompanying articles outline the “practical instruction” for women, describing each course and its specific application within the household.

Amidst the images of coursework, one photograph often dominated the pages, like the one in conjunction with the Mother School in Stuttgart (figure 15). Both its size and its placement at the top of the page accentuate the final goal for all of the participants at the

Fig. 15, Frauenwarte, November 1934
“Mother and Child”

475 NS-FW, nr. 11, November 1934, p. 330 – 331. See also NS-FW, nr. 18, March 1934, p. 531, which outlines the important role that women play in the household and designates family work as a “job”; NS-FW, nr. 22 May 1934, p. 664; and, NS-FW, nr. 5, August 1934 for typical articles on education in domestic science.
school: birthing healthy, happy, racially-fit children for the nation. The caption, “mother and child” does not specify who the woman is, a common strategy in the magazine in order to emphasize the symbolic nature of the image. Because the women are unidentified, they can “stand-in” for all mothers and children of the Volk. The Frauenwarte continued these types of articles throughout the Third Reich and supplemented them with celebratory images of the German mother in their special “Mother’s Day” editions every May.476 The repetitive nature of the photo-essays and reports functioned as evidence of the activities of these organizations and encouraged women to participate.

Unlike the women’s magazine, which focused on the visual training for the “right” kind of Mothers, the BIZ and IB emphasized the Aryan family as a whole, rather than stock images of mothers and children or training courses for mothers. In the BIZ, the small numbers of photographs of mothers are the “living” counterparts to the numerous

---

476 See the May editions for each year of the publications, which always included photographs, poems and articles praising the German mother. For typical images of the German mother see for example: NS-FW, nr. 22, May 1934, pp. 657-663; NS-FW, nr. 25, June 1934, p. 753; NS-FW, nr. 4, August 1934, p. 109; NS-FW, nr. 23, May 1934, pp. 713-715; NS-FW, nr. 23, May 1935, p. 710; NS-FW, nr. 18, January 1936, pp. 470-474; NS-FW, nr. 23, May 1936, p. 736; and, NS-FW, nr. 23, May 1937, p. 576. These would continue throughout the entirety of the publication. Cover photos, like the one from January 1938 frequently utilized the image of the German mother and her family. See NS-FW, nr. 13, January 1938.
drawings and paintings that depicted German mothers and their families. They included the repetition of familiar tropes: rural idyllic scenery, “old-fashioned” modest clothing and a large family who worked together in the household. These images, however, do not constitute typical material for the BIZ. One of the main functions of the BIZ was to entertain readers and allow them visual access into a fantasy world of film stars, dancers and celebrity athletes, which will be analyzed in the next part. The annual celebration of “Mother’s day,” however, could not pass without acknowledgement from the magazine. While a break from their standard representations of German women, the following image from 1935 is a typical example of how the magazine visually included the German mother alongside competing representations of femininity (figure 16).

Beneath the large headline, “Mother’s Day 1935,” appears a quote from Adolf Hitler, stating, “The program of our National Socialist Women’s movement has in reality but one single point, and that point is the child, that tiny being which must be born and grow strong and which alone gives meaning to the whole life-struggle.” The photograph, which takes up nearly the entire page, stands as an example of a woman who has listened to her leader and provided the nation with a total of six children. The unnamed mother is visually centered, and her husband’s protective arm surrounds the child between them. Tools of daily work, the field, trees and a horse in the background are instant indicators of their location. The BIZ tapped into the myth of rural serenity and family life, where every family member contributes to the daily work. These are typical tropes in paintings and drawings depicting the German family, like the one the BIZ printed for Mother’s Day in 1938 (figure 17). The family, who grows vegetables and grain works together, notes the brief caption for the May

---

477 BIZ, May 9, 1935.

478 BIZ, nr. 18, May 6, 1938, p. 666.
1935 photograph. The father was a “front-line fighter” and a farmer since 1924. The name of the woman is unimportant; her identity, first and foremost, is that of a “mother.”479 The images of the German mother in the BIZ seem incidental, included when necessary (like the celebration of Mother’s Day), but nonetheless important in the magazine’s attempt to visually capture the symbolic importance of motherhood.

It is perhaps surprising that the Illustrierte Beobachter, the primary National Socialist illustrated magazine, took a similar approach to the BIZ, including more images of mothers around Mother’s Day and visually repeating the imagery of the rural family, but on the whole, ignoring the theme of motherhood.

The following photograph, printed as an entire page in the IB in July 1934 is characteristic of the representations of mothers in the magazine (figure 18).480 The stand-alone image in the IB functioned to transform the concept of the family into visual terms. In the hierarchy, the husband comes first, surveying his farm. The mother, with her modest clothing and kerchief, in a gesture indicating protection and nurturing, cradles her child. The product of their harvest and the milk cans in the forefront of the photograph point to abundance and self-

479 See also, BIZ, nr. 25, June 18 1936. In June 1936, the BIZ also deviated from its normal material and presented a two-page photo-essay, “The most beautiful Lebensgemeinschaft: The Family.” Once again, the photographs attempted to capture the symbolic “family” of iconic paintings and drawings, focusing on family work and rural idealism. Interestingly, the photo-essay on the “family” focuses mainly on the role of the mother, the images capturing movements of their daily lives and play-time outside, the father only appearing in one image.

sufficiency. With this photograph, the symbolic “German family,” the IB tells its readers, is not just an abstract idea found in art.

In line with the IB’s approach to focus on “exceptional” women (like their representations of paid work), the magazine also occasionally included photo-essays of exemplarily mothers, like the one printed in September 1937 which highlighted the Sauckel family in Thürigen, the epitome of the “Kinderreich Family” in the Third Reich.\textsuperscript{481} Frau Sauckel earned the “Gold Medal” from the party after the birth of her ninth child. The main photograph depicts the entire family, the mother and father standing at the end of a path, while the children, arranged by height, greet their parents with the Nazi salute (figure 19).\textsuperscript{482} Another photograph focuses on Frau Sauckel as she watches over two of her small boys, playing outside. The accompanying text notes that because party work takes up a great deal of her husband’s time, the entire responsibility for the children rests upon her shoulders, even though the photographer took pains to include the father figure in the images. Beyond serving the material needs of her children, Frau Sauckel also contributes to their overall “education,” instructing them on the importance of the state and their leader, in addition to more

\textsuperscript{481} Pine, Nazi Family Policy, 88-116.

\textsuperscript{482} IB, nr. 36, September 9, 1937, pp. 1324-1325.
instruction from their father, when he has time. The images of the mother emphasize her role as a nurturer, watching over playtime or tending to the newborn in the crib and the text praises her contribution to the nation, who thanks her for her devotion.

Contrary to the assumptions that the German mother would visually take priority over other representations of femininity in the National Socialist press, this analysis reveals that although the IB and the BIZ acknowledged the special role of motherhood, visually, the magazines delegated the mother to the periphery. Arguably, the images themselves are rather tedious and repetitive, reflecting familiar themes from official propaganda, which readers would instantly recognize. What accounts for this seemingly contradictory stance toward images of German motherhood? This can only be understood within the framework of the publications as a whole and their functions to entertain and amuse their readers. I contend that, overall, the magazines simply deemed the image of the German mother as less visually appealing than their customary inclusion of female film stars, women in bathing suits and sports celebrities. By including sporadic images of motherhood in the magazine, the magazines could “have their cake and eat it to,” so to speak, by modestly acknowledging motherhood, but relegating her image to annual celebrations of Mother’s Day and commonplace depictions of the

Fig.19, IB, September 9, 1937
The Sauckel Family and Frau Sauckel
German family. Whereas, in contrast, the images of the German mother in the *Frauenwarte* attempted to validate their readers who were faithful housewives and mothers. This analysis shows that the visual imagery of motherhood in the Third Reich was far from monolithic and complicates our understanding of how the mass media prioritized or undermined the image of the Aryan mother.

**Work, then Family: Visualizing Advice for Young Women**

Parallel to the *Frauenwarte*’s approach of emphasizing the “training” of mothers, the magazine used two broad themes to visually present “advice” for young women in their magazine. First, acquiring a job (which they would leave upon marriage) and secondly, “love and marriage,” which emphasized the right kind of relationship, themes that were virtually absent in the *BIZ* and *IB*. In a very similar way, this type of advice was given to mothers and daughter the social-democratic magazine *Frauenwelt* during the Weimar years. The following analysis, concentrating first on the recommendations for “career choices” and then “relationships” reveals how the *Frauenwarte* used visual images to create a narrative that both legitimized female paid employment and instructed women on their role in choosing racially compatible husbands.

In an earlier section, I analyzed images of unmarried female workers, noting that the *Frauenwarte* included a wide variety of occupations in its visual presentation of female work for unmarried women in general. However, the
magazine also included special sections, specifically for young women on the verge of choosing their careers and their future role in society, like the one found in the January 1936 edition of the magazine, titled, “The new way for girl’s education.” While the advice for young women often emphasized the “modern” aspects of their career training and outlined young women’s options, the four large images accompanying the article focus specifically on representing the ideal portrait of the young German woman (figure 20).

“A new way for girls education: from Frauenabitur to Women’s Jobs” in January 1936 noted that the “modern” form of education for young women included practical education for women, where they could earn a living by using their special “feminine” characteristics. With “luck” they will find a husband and start a family, but professions in white-collar work, domestic science, social work, infant care, gardening and teaching would all assist them in preparing them for this future role. The seemingly benign photographs can be read on a couple of levels and the use of the images relies on their flexibility. First, the corresponding portraits of the young, self-assured, serious women could easily be placed within the overall narrative advised by the article, representing their future as either “workers” or “mothers” or both. Second, the photos clearly emphasize a certain “type” of young woman: pretty, healthy, modest, with their blond hair, braids and serious faces indicate their

Fig. 21 *Frauenwarte*, January 1936
“Future Worker and Mother”

---

483 *NS-FW*, nr. 16, January 1936, pp. 503 – 508.
awareness of their duty to the nation (figure 21).\textsuperscript{484} The article stresses that it is important to think about career choices for girls, which is often forgotten. “Again and again,” notes the author, “new career opportunities are found for young women.” The magazine, although prioritizing motherhood as the most important aim, used the image of the young woman to emphasize the importance that she be trained or skilled – that she can have gainful employment.

A special issue in March 1937 on women and work focuses especially on girls and their future, combining both portraits of young women and photographs of women who have successfully found a profession.\textsuperscript{485} The large cover photo depicts a female artist, her bobbed hair framing her youthful face and her modest clothing practical for her work as a ceramicist (figure 22). The lead article is a piece on “Career choices for our girls,” and immediately addresses the issue of “work” versus “marriage.” The author reports that many mothers ask, “Should our girl learn a profession? She is going to get married.” Every woman has her pace, notes the author, and parents often ask, “Is marriage, being a housewife and mother not a career?” Of course, remarks the author, but girls can have the opportunity to prepare for this, outside of helping in their own household. There are many “wonderful careers” for young women, notes the magazine, which provides an outline of “career groups” for its readers and includes the normal “care giving” jobs for women, alongside technical jobs in medical laboratories or pharmacies and careers in art.

\textsuperscript{484} *NS-FW*, nr. 16, January 1936, p. 504.

\textsuperscript{485} *NS-FW*, nr. 21, March 1937. For similar themes see also, *NS-FW*, n. 5 August, 1935, p.140-141; *NS-FW*, nr. 16, January 1935, pp. 490-494; *NS-FW*, nr. 17, February 1935, pp. 530-532 and *NS-FW*, nr. 21, April 1935, pp. 650-652. These articles and images remained prevalent in the magazine throughout the Third Reich, attempting to strike a balance between women’s involvement in paid work and their future as wives and mothers.
The first group of accompanying photographs are of women sewing, tending to the sick and taking care of children, visually placing these jobs in the hierarchy of “female” work. A one page article, however, is dedicated to “technical” work, in the context of the “four year plan,” noting that the creation of German products and technical assistants in biology and chemistry were vital to German self-sufficiency. A photograph of a laboratory worker, depicting a young woman in her white lab coat looking through her microscope, illustrated the article. This analysis indicates that the magazine adjusted their visual advice for young women. Rather than simply using portraits of young German woman, the magazine made a clear attempt to show successful women in all different types of careers, while informing parents that although marriage is the main goal, all of these careers help prepare women for their future, the next step in the visual narrative for young women.

The visual advice for “marriage and family,” within the framework of “racial hygiene,” relied on the iconic images of

---

486 See also, NS-FW, nr. 20, June 1938 for a similar article.
the strong, blond, healthy German woman and her racially-pure male counterpart, often represented as a soldier. But, before the advice for young women on marriage, they had to be educated in the proper racial understanding. While scholars have clearly indicated how pervasive this was in schools and organizations like the BDM, the Frauenwarte also played an important role in guiding and advising young women through visual images of marriage and family.\textsuperscript{487}

Drawings with captions such as “Frau oder Fräulein” accompanied articles on the German woman’s role in maintaining the racial health of the population and warning readers of the dangers of the falling birthrate (figure 21). The caption noted that in 1900 every third woman had a child, whereas in 1925, only every ninth woman had a child. Ten years ago, if one asked a young woman what she wanted to be, she would answer, notes the magazine, “I want to be a film star or a dancer,” but today they would say, “I want to get married and be a mother … Yesterday was the lady, who shall now be the mother.” But what exactly does the magazine mean by “the lady?” The lady, with her “elegant figure” (often found in “modern literature”) only had one child, who said she did not have enough time for more children. Some might argue that this type of woman is “happy” and “fulfilled,” but really it is the mother who is fulfilled, according to the article. The “National Socialist woman” who becomes a mother is the link between the “past” and the “future,” and it is through caring for the “health” of the nation, the most difficult of jobs, that she finds her happiness and fulfillment. “It is no longer people without space, but space without people,” notes the article and it is vital that married couples have more children.

This article and image is merely one example of this type of discourse that frequently appeared in the magazine, contrasting the woman of the Weimar Republic with the changing attitude of “today’s” women who were happy and willing to accept their charge.

---

488 NS-FW, nr. 18, March 1934, pp. 538-539.
While the above article explained the importance of children and marriage for couples who exemplified the racial standards, continuing photo-essays and articles depicted the ideal “husband” and “wife,” pairing images of appealing young women and handsome men side by side and tapping into the imagery of both the “past” and the “present.” “Love is fate,” published in December 1934, is a typical example of the ways in which the Frauenwarte visually presented marriage to its female readers. In this case, the magazine used two representations of the “ideal” couple in order to show the unchanging “harmony” between men and women. Beneath photographs of sculptures of “Adam” and “Eve,” the caption in bold lettering reads, “The Past” (figure 24). On the second page, the modern couple, labeled “the present,” constitutes an attempt to visualize the rhetoric of the strong, yet pretty, female counterpart to the sharp-jawed masculine male in his military uniform. Together, they would form the foundation of the future of the Third Reich (figure 25). The accompanying article outlines the “struggle” for “racial purity” and provides a framework in which the images are supposed to be read. The article emphasizes that “today” it is not the “clothes” but the

---

489 NS-FW, nr. 14, December 1934, pp. 425-426. The magazine included numerous articles related to marriage and racial hygiene, but not always with photographs or illustrations. For example, see, NS-FW, nr. 17, February 1934, p. 507; NS-FW, nr. 10, November 1934, pp. 296-297; NS-FW, nr. 21, April 1935, p. 646-648; NS-FW, nr. 24, May 1935, pp. 755-757; NS-FW, nr. 14, December 1935, p. 446-447; NS-FW, nr. 21, April 1936, pp. 66-67; and, NS-FW, nr. 10 October 1936, p. 294-295.
“body,” not “externally,” but in the internal “essence.” The “new bond” from “person to person, from man to woman” is a type of “new love” which connects “souls to souls.” The environment of young women, notes the article, influences the ways in which the young girls form images of their future spouses, and it is imperative that “inner” purity plays an important role in their youth, so they are taught from a young age, the significance of marriage. It is time to “put an end to . . . the distortions and perversions” of “love and marriage,” demands the article, which promised people a comfortable and easy life. “True love is hard,” the article concludes, but it is also “destiny,” and “our people are healthy in the very moment when our girls know again that love is destiny.” Frauenwarte addressed the issue of love and marriage in terms of the future for young women, reminding them of the importance of “inner purity” and attention to the “right” kind of relationships. The magazine textually and visually contrasted “the past” and “the present,” accentuating the important and serious change of attitude that German women had toward marriage and children.

Overall, Frauenwarte endeavored to create a visual narrative of advice for young women, beginning with “career choices,” emphasizing their contribution to the economy and then stressing the importance of the right kind of marriage and motherhood, all within the context of propagating the Aryan race. While the National Socialists emphasized “womanly” and “feminine” qualities that resided within every German woman, the magazine stressed – through their photographs – that proper mothers must be trained and educated in the domestic arts.

2.3 Changing Representation of Female Work during “Total War”

Visual representations of female work in the illustrated press shifted during World War II. Rather than focusing on women’s “inherent” qualities for certain jobs or emphasizing
unmarried women’s work, photographs focused on women’s duty to the nation. As scholars have noted, the regime took pains to redefine “women’s work” during the war because of the necessity of placing women in employment related to the war effort, replacing male jobs on the home front and working in armament factories.\textsuperscript{490} Noting the rhetoric of “courage” and “sacrifice,” Leila J. Rupp, for example, argues that official proclamations from the National Socialists merely added to the previous images of the German woman in order to demand her contribution to the state.\textsuperscript{491} While, as we shall see, this may be the case in some publications, like Frauenwarte, other magazines took a different approach to presenting women’s “war work.”

What is striking are the various ways in which the illustrated press attempted to make war work acceptable. The following analysis shows the broad range of female images of “war work” in the press during the war, beyond the “traditional” roles of women as nurses or “mothers” to the soldiers. The IB and BIZ often framed their photo-reports or images in terms of women’s appearance or “attitude” during war, emphasizing both their contribution to the war effort and the flexibility of gender roles during war. The women’s magazine, true to format, presented their images of female work in grander terms, making sweeping statements about the roles for women, especially in factory work. This analysis shows that the exhortation for women to be involved in war work, in the propaganda in the illustrated magazines relied, not only on altered images of the “traditional” German woman, but often accentuated the appealing figure of the “girl in uniform.”

The images of young females supporting war efforts began already in the mid-1930s, as magazines praised women’s work in defending the nation. The standard image was women in

\textsuperscript{490} Rupp, \textit{Mobilizing Women for War}.

\textsuperscript{491} Rupp, \textit{Mobilizing Women for War}, 135.
gas masks. During the war, magazines included a variety of images of female Wehrmacht auxiliaries and carefully delineated the “German” woman from the “enemy” woman in their pages, visually legitimizing flexible gender roles and “duty” of the German woman in the Third Reich, while propagating an overly-eroticized or masculinized image of the female “enemy.” Moreover, against the assumption that women retained their “feminine” appearance in their war uniforms, the visual images, perhaps unwittingly, did not always present this view. Certainly, while some images and their corresponding captions emphasized their “femininity,” in other images of women – covered from head to toe in overalls and gasmasks – “gender” was often hidden.

**Women in Trousers: Propagating Female “War Work”**

In February 1940, the *Illustrierte Beobachter* published four photographs of working women with the headline: “Pretty or not pretty – in any case practical!”\(^{492}\) The first photo is of a woman working at a gas station who is “spared having to wear stockings,” because she can now wear long pants. The three other photos include a woman removing snow (kept warm in her long pants), washing the train car in a pair of baggy pants and a “woman in her uniform” who “feels more comfortable when she has to get on and off the train so many times” (figure 26). The caption notes that “The rapidly recognized utility of long work pants has quickly replaced the short skirt for many women’s work in the war.” These photographs emphasize two things. First, that it is appropriate for women to be working, some in traditional male jobs (at the gas station for instance) and secondly, that it does not matter if the women do not look “pretty” – clothing is a matter of practicality. The *IB* thus made an attempt to point out

\(^{492}\) *IB*, nr. 8, February 22, 1940, p. 191.
to its readers that German women are contributing to the economy, but framing it in terms of women’s fashion. As more and more women were needed to replace men, the magazine often took a more “playful” approach, focusing on the visual aspects of “women in trousers” rather than their day to day activities.

The IB also emphasized women’s “attitudes” towards their work. For example, a photo published in April 1942, entitled “Smiling always wins,” depicts women working on the train and delivering letters with a friendly smile and greeting (figure 27). A caption beneath the photo of a smiling female postal worker quotes Bertel S., who said “in the beginning it was difficult,” but with “courage I settled in.” She noted that she saw the “longing looks” on women’s faces as they waited for a letter from the front. This “bonded us,” she said, but she made the situation better when she responded with a friendly greeting or a kind word.

Fig. 26, IB, February 22, 1940
“Pretty or not pretty? In any case, practical!”

493 IB, nr. 18, April 30, 1942. For another example of a photo essay emphasizing the necessity of a “good attitude,” see “Lore is an example: A German girl in the war,” in IB, nr. 13, March 27, 1941. Lore, a student studying art, also recognizes her “duty” to help her nation, volunteers for the red cross and spends her evenings darning stockings and spending time with friends. She is full of energy, smiling and always willing to help. See also, IB, nr. 44, October 30, 1941, in which a photo of a woman wearing a long skirt and belted jacket, poses before a door, holding a stack of folders. The caption reads, “Secretary in Uniform: Many of our women and girls are put into uniforms today. Female train employees, postal workers and decorated Blitzmädels perform their duty. Here is a female radio employee in her service clothing.”
These women in uniform are contributing, not only by working, but by being friendly, smiling, supporting the troops with their kindness. Moreover, these women in uniform are far more “feminine” than their counterparts in industrial employment. It was much easier to present working women (like postal workers) to readers by focusing on their relationship with the larger community and emphasizing how important women’s attitudes were at work, instead of the actual physical labor. In order to avoid the more “masculine” presentation of female factory work, the *IB* emphasized the leisure time of female factory workers, celebrating their bodies, rather than their labor.

For example, similar to its presentation of white-collar workers, the *IB* published a photo-essay, “The Sunday of the Munitions Workers,” in July 1942, which emphasized their leisure time and celebrated their youthful bodies, rather than their work. The brief article notes that the “incredible success of our armed forces” is not just a product of the “victory on the battlefield” but of those who stand behind

---

494 *IB*, July 16, 1942.
the army. Especially important are the millions of women working in munitions factories which contribute to this success and this become clear, the articles continues, if you “wandered through an armament factory.”

While stressing their dedication within the factory, the magazine made a conscious choice to photograph the women in their leisure time, noting the activities and forms of relaxation that energized them for work, like the photograph of two young women rowing in their bathing suits (figure 28) or female workers relaxing in the summer sun after their “busy work week” (figure 29). In this way, the magazine was able to do double-duty. They might be “women in trousers” at work, but underneath, they are still very feminine. Using this approach, the IB could present the worker as both a faithful contributor to the war effort and an object of visual appeal at the same time.

495 IB, nr. 38, September 17, 1942. For a similar photo essay, see IB, nr. 1, January 6, 1944. The photo essay with the bold headline “Just like Soldiers!” concerning Kriegshilfsdeinstmaiden in a munitions factory. The photos depict happy, healthy women in their daily activities. Accompanying captions note that this is “safe” and “important” work and the “German girls of today know, that in the battle for Europe’s freedom, they must not stand aside and [that] their faithful and dutiful work is indispensible.”
One exception to this trope in the *IB* was its presentation of female workers who were married and had children. Indeed, mothers would not have the time (and perhaps not the youthful bodies) to sunbathe and listen to records on the weekend. Their “leisure” time would be spent caring for their children and household. Thus, the *IB* chose to frame the issue of married women’s work in terms of support from the state and community, as exemplified in a report published on May 2, 1940.496

The woman standing behind a piece of machinery in an armaments factory concentrates on her work, her hair pulled back, her attention dedicated to the task at hand (figure 30). The caption informs readers that even though she is a mother, the *Volksgemeinschaft* helps her by providing girls from the *Frauenhilfsdienst* to watch over her children while they are at work. Regardless of previous exhortations for married women to focus on their children, exceptions were made during war and their “double burden” would be relieved with the help of qualified, well-trained single women.497 Moreover, subsequent images of “nimble hands” at work in the factory emphasize the contrast between the leisure

---

496 *IB*, nr. 18, May 2, 1940. A few years later the *IB* would publish a handful of photographs of women working in industry and the captions point out that they are mothers. These women (ages 39, 49 and 54) are praised for their continued duty and work for the nation, but does not mention the ages of their children, marital status or whether or not the women work full time.

497 See, for example, Leila J. Rupp, “Mother of the *Volk*: The Image of Women in Nazi Ideology,” *Signs* 3 (1977): 362-379. In “Whose Mothers?,” Elizabeth Heinemann argues that regime believed younger women were more suited to paid labor than older women, even if the younger women were mothers. See also, Jill Stephenson’s work in which she argues that middle-class women were often able to avoid any forced labor schemes or factory work, while young rural women preferred to work in wartime industries, such as munitions factories, instead of working on family farms.
time of factory workers and their active role in the workplace, surrounded by the modern machinery of “total war” (figure 31). The woman on the right, although in “trousers” are still identifiable as females, while the figure in the left is more of an androgynous figure, whose gender is only apparent in the caption, which notes, “All women and girls are helpers of our soldiers. In the vast halls of the ‘Junkers-Work’, where earlier exclusively men worked, is now a site for a large number of female workers.”

---

498 IB, nr. 23, June 5, 1941. See also IB, nr. 26, June 26, 1941.
As we have seen, *Frauenwarte* previously published photographs of factory work that emphasized clean and hygienic workspaces. During the war, the women’s magazine included numerous images of female factory workers. Beyond the different women in the photos (always unidentified), the images are nearly exactly the same. This allowed, once again, for the female worker to be a “stand-in”– a tribute to all female labor during war. An image accompanying the article “Behind the Factory Door,” published in March 1943, is a typical representation found in the women’s magazine (figure 32).

The woman looks content, secure in her knowledge that her place behind the machine is a crucial factor in Germany’s victory. While all magazines ignored setbacks and defeats of the German military, they consistently pressed their readers to accept that the “sacrifices” of German women on the home front would be worth the final success. These images functioned to convince readers of the necessity of female labor during the war, especially in factory work. Images in the *IB* attempted to lessen the contradiction between hard labor in the factories and the female body by accentuating their leisure time or illustrating how the state helped working mothers. *Frauenwarte* adopted techniques of previous images of working women, presenting portraits of female factory workers as unproblematic and absolutely necessary to the German war effort. Much like the images

---

499 *FW*, March 1943.
found in the *IB*, the female factory worker could only be feminine to a certain extent. Clearly, they were *woman*, but in their bulky clothing and surrounded by heavy machinery, readers would certainly recognize that this image of the female worker was quite different from previous images of female work. Thus, it was always necessary to include a textual referent that legitimized their work and most often focused on describing the woman’s “internal strength,” and her “duty,” rather than discussing her actual profession beyond “factory worker.”

**Girls in Uniform: Images of Female Wehrmacht Auxiliaries**

While images of women in uniform would become standard fare for viewers during the war, magazines were already emphasizing women’s roles in defending the nation, beginning in the mid-1930s. This made sense in light of the “Air Defense Law” and the establishment of the “Reich Labor Service” (RAD) in June 1935, which helped set the framework for women’s compulsory wartime service. Numerous images of women involved in the training for the “defense” of Germany in the illustrated press accentuated women’s role in air raid protection.

In particular, the *Illustrierte Beobachter* and the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* helped create a “visual” preparedness for war. The images of women in gas masks or learning how to fight fires in their bulky protective gear were a far cry from what readers had previously seen in the publications. Unlike some of the images of young, attractive female factory workers on their day off, the images of women in gas masks emphasized their skilled training and competency in case of an air attack. As Peter Fritzsche points out in “Machine Dreams:

---

500 Hagemann, “Mobilizing Women”, 1074-1076.
Airmindedness and the Reinvention of Germany,” the gas mask was not an unusual sight in Germany during the 1930s.\(^{501}\) They became, “everyday appendages” and were eventually termed “the people’s gas mask.”\(^{502}\) Indeed, the illustrated press published a variety of images of women in gas masks during the 1930s, including women in “everyday” activities.\(^{503}\) This constituted not only an attempt to normalize and familiarize the public with the proper use of the device, but also to underline how important it was that women be trained, prepared and confident in their abilities to defend the nation.

A photo-essay of young women involved in special courses during higher education included images of women in gas masks, training for a defensive war (figure 33).\(^{504}\) The photograph of the young woman, her gender identified visually only by her hair, doing exercises, is one example of the typical presentation in the magazine. The corresponding text explains that these university students take part in training, learning how to operating

---


\(^{503}\) An interesting example of showing the gasmask in “everyday life” is a photograph of a rural woman driving a tractor while wearing a gasmask published in the *IB*, nr. 38, September 19, 1940.

\(^{504}\) *BIZ*, May 20, 1936.
machinery, put out fires and first aid skills. Young women who wanted to attend university were required to finish six months of RAD. After they enter university, notes the article, twice a semester the students complete short training exercises, which alongside collegiate sports and other student activities helps to form a “new” German student who is “close to the people.”

A two page photo essay that ran in the November 25, 1937 edition of the *Illustrierte Beobachter* is introduced with a bold headline “Girl with a Gas Mask.” The headline partially overlaps a photograph of a young woman, taking notes during a class, the gas mask sitting on the desk in front of her (figure 34). The caption notes that “dedication and devotion for the larger cause” is conveyed on the young woman’s face. The photo essay explains women’s roles in protecting the nation and emphasizes the practical instruction that women receive from the National Air Raid Protection League in Löcknitz. The remaining

---

505 *IB*, nr. 47, November 25, 1939. Although most of these essays focused on German woman, a photo-essay in the *Illustrierter Beobachter*, labeled “Japanese women in service of anti-aircraft defense” from September 17, 1936, shows orderly lines of Japanese schoolgirls in gas masks marching through the streets of Tokyo. The short accompanying text to the images states that “Anti-aircraft defense, in all the cities of the world, has become one of the most urgent tasks of national self-preservation.” Additional photographs include soldiers helping secure the masks on “housewives and girls,” and an exhibition depicts a model of a housewife, wearing her gas mask on the way to the market. The final photo shows active participation of women (labeled “Geishas and Hausmädchen”) who are “united” in putting out a fire during a training exercise.
photographs concentrate on depicting the “reality” for women, showing them during training exercises, including firefighting and medical care. The captions instruct readers on how the images should be read, noting that they “demonstrate the thoroughness of training” that women must have in order to participate in civil air defense.

Subsequent articles, such as “The most modern Anti-aircraft defense school in the world” frequently demonstrate that women are equipped with the necessary skills to protect the nation in time of war. A large photograph on the left of this photo essay depicts a young woman in coveralls, wearing her gas mask and running to her station (figure 35). The short article, which describes the school for anti-aircraft defense in Berlin-Wannsee, notes that members are educated in both theoretical and practical matters and are trained in the “self-protection of the population.” While the article does not detail coursework or training methods, it does note that “In spite of all personal freedom there is a lot of work here” because the individual leaders need to “retain what they have learned and know how to pass the information on to their subordinates.” The largest photo of the essay, taking up nearly half of the second page, is labeled: “In the basement of the community house: the air raid shelter! If necessary, it offers protection for an enormous number of people against air

raids and gas bombs.” The inhabitants, however, are not practicing an air-raid drill. Instead, a group of smiling young women are enjoying a game of sport during their leisure time, because as the caption states, the air-raid shelter “can also be used as a bowling alley” (figure 36). The group shots of camaraderie and the women “in action” rushing to her station call attention, not to the female body or her need to be protected, but her loyal and competent service.

The gas mask became part of a new uniform necessary in a time of crisis and in the following years more articles and images presented practical instructions for civilians in case of an attack. Fritzsche states that civilians were not “targets to be protected” but played a special role by “maintaining social order, bolstering civic morale, and preparing for the next onslaught.” Articles with step-by-step visual instructions of what to do in case of an air attack focused on women’s roles or images of females participating in air defense training became part of the visual landscape during the war.

In order to highlight the seriousness and importance of the tasks of the German woman, the magazines presented counter-images of non-German women in gas masks,

---

507 Fritzsche, “Machine Dreams,” 700. Fritzsche also notes that women played a prominent role in the journals Die Sirene and Der Flieger. Women were included as important combatants and were to play a vital role in civil defense. See IB, nr. 38, September 21, 1939, “Flieger Alarm!” and its accompanying illustrations depict a mother leading her daughter down the steps to the shelter with gas masks around each of their necks. Included are step-by-step instructions of what to bring to the shelter for different members of the family, a reminder to turn off the gas in the house and to cover food.
which functioned as a tool of derision and contempt. One of the most exaggerated (and voyeuristic) attempts at shocking readers appeared in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*’s article about London’s “war time nightclubs” and female entertainers.  

“Naked except for a gas mask!” states the caption underneath the photo printed on November 16, 1939 (figure 37). The woman in high heels stands before a dressing table in a provocative pose. The text notes that “just like in 1914” women are “found in uniforms” and the gas mask is the “nightclub uniform” for girls. Indeed this “uniform” stands in stark contrast to the dedicated and serious German women. These images continued throughout the war, such as mocking gas masks as a part of the “uniform” for fashionable air raid shelter clothing (figure 38). The short quip notes that “War profiteers sense opportunities . . . and devised these latest styles for the air raid shelter.”

---

508 *BIZ*, nr. 46, November 16, 1939. This is not the only example of the magazines publishing images that border on voyeurism and concentrate on “extreme” forms of female sexuality. A photo essay in the *Illustrierter Beobachter* in the spring of 1940 included a photo essay on a “charity auction” in England, complete with photographs of topless women posing in front of men on a runway.

509 *BIZ*, nr. 39, September 28, p.1589 and See also *BIZ*, n. 15, April 11, 1940 for an article “With a Gas Mask on the Beach of Miami?” The photograph of a young woman in a bathing suit is published with no other context except for a caption which explains that it is not a gas mask, it only looks like one. “The aluminum ‘box’ is merely a new device for learning how to swim” and the display just provides “one more reason to look at pretty, young girls in swimsuits.”
Unlike the serious and practical instruction that German women see as their duty in terms of air raid defense, English women are merely interested in spending money on fashion for the air-raid shelter and the “voluntary women with their autos” in Paris are an attempt to demonstrate the ineffectual nature and amateur behavior of the other, non-German women (figure 39).510 The images of the German Modern Women are active, wearing gas masks while checking on air-raid shelters, putting out fires, practicing drills and taking care of their families in a theoretical attack and their counter-image visually reinforced this concept.

While the gas mask could arguably be considered a type of “uniform” on its own, increasing numbers of women in uniform appeared in the Illustrierte Beobachter, the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung.

510 IB, nr. 47, November 23, 1939, p. 1684.
and the Frauenwarte. Photos in the illustrated press included Blitzmädels, nurses and women in various auxiliary services.\footnote{A total of 450,000 women joined the auxiliary services, often replacing men who were sent to fight on the Eastern front. Campbell, “Women in Combat,” 314.} Both the IB and the BIZ chose young, pretty women in uniform to represent the women involved in auxiliary services, underlining their commitment to the nation, but visually informing readers that these roles were only possible during times of dire need. The Frauenwarte, on the other hand, continued to promulgate more “serious” images of the female auxiliaries, and did not always have the same visual “tone” of the other two publications.

While the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung published few photos of women in industrial work, the magazine did publish a number of photos and photo-essays emphasizing women’s functions in Wehrmacht auxiliary services. These images are one step beyond women in “civil” uniform and increased as the war years went on. The images and accompanying text, however, are careful to demonstrate that these roles are only appropriate because they are necessary and constitute a sacrifice on the part of women. The cover of the March 4, 1943 edition of the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, for example, is comprised of a large photograph of women, looking through instruments to detect enemy airplanes (figure
The small caption in the right hand corner, “Comrades of the Flak,” tells readers that women and girls are now taking over the positions vacated by deployed soldiers in the “command and analysis” center. Using the technology, the women are able to determine the exact flight path of enemy aircraft. The accompanying photographs inside the magazine show women learning how to use headphones and microphones and learning how to plot flight paths. Although they play an important role in the war, the visual images emphasize their “auxiliary” position, which served to remind readers that they were only female “helpers” of soldiers.

An article in the *Illustrierte Beobachter* on November 11, 1943 headlined, “Girls in Uniform,” also celebrated women’s roles in the war (figure 41). These “women in uniform” included a typist working for the news service, a woman working at a hospital and a member of the Air Signal auxiliary in her uniform relaxing at home. While a number of the photos depict the women at work – in active service – one image shows an “off duty” woman while the caption notes that in her free time she listens to the radio and darns her stockings. She knows “how to organize her home nicely.” While women’s participation in “men’s work” is praised, the photo of the woman at home, surrounded by decorations and photos on a small table, emphasizes that women are still “feminine;” their duty is perhaps man’s work, but they do not deny their womanhood.

Fig. 41, *IB*, November 11, 1943
“Girls in uniform”

---

512 *BIZ*, nr. 9, March 4, 1943.

513 *IB*, nr. 6, November 11, 1943.
Frauenwarte as well began to publish more images of women in uniform and stress the importance of women’s roles in auxiliary services. An article about the “Corp of Female Signal Auxiliaries” notes that the “Girl in Uniform, in that simple blue-gray dress” has become a familiar image in the Reich. The cover of Frauenwarte in June 1944 is a large photograph of women in uniform with the caption, “German women protect the home front – in action in Anti-Aircraft Auxiliaries” (figure 42). The women depicted on the front cover appear older, not as “youthful” as many of the women found in the images in the IB or BIZ, but stressed their role, not as objects in need of protection, but protectors of the home front. These images would have appealed to a readership of an older generation.

While the illustrated press published photos of active, energetic German women contributing to the war economy and serving as part of auxiliary services for the military, the press also presented their readers with “enemy” women in uniform. Much like the strategy related to women in gas masks, including over-

---

514 NS-FW, nr. 12, February 1943.

eroticized or masculinized images of “enemy” women served to visually reinforce the productivity of the German modern woman at war.

The July 13, 1939 edition of the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* includes a typical example of this strategy, printing a photograph of a group of marching women, captioned “Well-fortified women present themselves to the King, equipped with steel helmets, rain coats and charming smiles. The Voluntary British Air Raid Association, marching in the parade for the ‘Day of Service for the Fatherland’ in London’s Hyde Park. A big incentive for the women is the variety of uniforms for the support services in the territorial army, navy, air force as well as in agriculture and ambulance drivers” (figure 43).\(^5\) Two more photographs with accompanying text notes, “The new uniforms! A young woman in the English Land Service wears breeches, a sweater and a felt hat,” and the other picture of a young smiling woman wearing “the service coat and hat for the women’s auxiliary.”

---

\(^5\) *BIZ*, nr. 29, July 13, 1939, p.1179.
The *BIZ* emphasizes that these women are not really interested in duty and service. They might march like men, but they are only interested in fashion. The bold headline for a one-page photo essay in November 1939, “War Lipstick,” comments that in England, make-up companies sell lipstick that “goes with every type of women’s uniform” and women can get a hairstyle that fits under their helmets (figure 44). The lipstick named “Stop Red,” for example, matches with a firefighter’s uniform and “Redwood” compliments the blue-gray air raid uniform. These “war colors” are what interest English women, suggests the magazine, not important work or dutiful activities. While there is no direct reference to German women in the war effort, it is clear that these photo-essays stand in direct opposition to the representations of German women, who take their duties seriously.

In May 1942, the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* published a page of photographs of women from the United States that emphasized the eroticism of American propaganda for the war.

---

517 *BIZ*, November, 1939.

518 See also, *BIZ*, February 1, 1940 for a photo-essay, “The Lady plays war.” The one-page report includes copies of advertisements from British magazines that link “war” and beauty products. The caption explains, “The ladies of high English society play war. They have the most elegant uniforms … they drill a little, visit the hospital, put packages together for the front and move in a cloud of powder and perfume.” The reproductions of British advertisements include “Brylocrem” hair cream and “Icilma” beauty aids. “Hard working but very lovely,” notes one ad, “Never let Beauty off-duty! With Icilma you go on the job looking as charming and radiant in uniform as you do in your best party frock.”
with the headline, “In the war . . . with girls and short pants.”\textsuperscript{519} The photo on the left-hand side of the page shows a tall, blond woman wearing tiny shorts, high heels and a dagger around her waist. She stands at attention, with a rifle over her shoulder. “Instead of a love scene, a war scene,” notes the caption (figure 45).

More photographs linked American women’s sexuality and war in the August 13, 1942 edition of the \textit{BIZ}. The headline “Girls on the war path” stands above a striking combination of images.\textsuperscript{520} One photograph is a “before” image of three women saluting the camera, “dressed – standing in front of a small cannon.” The caption notes that each of the women wears one of the latest styles of uniforms for “Roosevelt’s War,” including an “officer’s winter uniform,” a simple uniform of the women’s volunteer service and one summer uniform. The next photograph is captioned, “Undressed – on the big cannon.” The photograph shows three women, in bathing suits, posing on the cannon (figure 46). It is a “patriotic circus show in Hollywood,” the magazine tells its readers. While the \textit{Illustrierte Beobachter}, on the whole, concentrated on

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Fig. 45, \textit{BIZ}, May 21, 1942 \hspace{1cm} "A war scene"}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{519} \textit{BIZ}, nr. 20, May 21, 1942. Another photograph depicts a woman in a short dress and holding a rifle, with the caption explaining that “this is the girl soldier, that Hollywood recruits … a provocative encouragement for men with apathetic hearts.”

\textsuperscript{520} \textit{BIZ}, nr. 33, August 13. Another example of this can be found in the \textit{Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung} on 24 September 1941. One photograph shows an “army girl” primping in front of a mirror, checking out her uniform. The caption notes with sarcasm, “How terrifying!” The images of women, on this page, are juxtaposed with photographs of gangly, skinny American men marching with rifles over their shoulders. The American men do not look “manly” at all and the American women – in their uniforms – are depicted as silly and shallow.
the positive aspects of women in uniform, the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* served as a forum to emphasize the overt sexuality of American women.

While the “masculine” nature of a military-like uniform could be extended to German women as a symbol of service and duty, the uniforms of the American, English or French women was a symbol of their non-threatening status. Women in tiny shorts, bathing suits or their preoccupation with cosmetics were all accentuated in the photographs and illustrations in the German press. Moreover, the photo essays concerning German women *never* showed women holding weapons.\(^{521}\) A short article in *Frauenwarte* in 1941 included a photograph of a Soviet woman, laying on her stomach and aiming a rifle (figure 47). The caption notes that “here we see one of the *Flintenweber* (gun woman), which our soldiers have repeatedly met in the bunkers.”\(^ {522}\) The derogatory term “gun woman” emphasized the very *unfeminine* nature of Soviet women. While deemed an integral part of the war effort, women’s roles, clearly outlined in an auxiliary function, never strayed into the territory of actually *being* soldiers. They might be “like” soldiers and their duties might be described as equally

---

\(^{521}\) German women, although trained to be familiar with guns (such as the women serving in the Anti-Aircraft units), were not allowed to fire them. In November 1944, Hitler gave an official order that forbade women from being trained in the use of weapons, except in “remote areas of the Reich which could be easily overrun by the Soviets.” See Campbell, “Women in Combat,” 317.

\(^{522}\) *NS-FW*, nr. 4, September 1941.
important, but the uniform (whether ‘civil’ or ‘military’) did not change the assumed fundamental nature of women.

However, the prominent images of German women in uniform designated a change in the illustrated press during the war, particularly in the *Illustrierte Beobachter*, which began to include more representations of “active” femininity, particularly highlighting German women’s role in defending the nation from air raid attacks. German women in uniform became part of the normalized visual landscape during the war. She was one type of Modern Woman, who donned a uniform in support of her nation. The inclusion of images of “enemy” women in uniform served as a foil against the modest, dutiful German women. Corresponding images of female war work flooded the pages of the illustrated magazines, focusing especially on female factory work, which officials had earlier decried as harmful to the female body. As the previous analysis revealed, the magazines emphasized both the “extraordinary” circumstances that precipitated women’s participation in the war effort and attempted to maintain their “femininity” or, in the case of the *IB*, accentuate the young female body of munitions workers. At the same time, many of the images are ambiguous. The bulky uniforms and gas masks covered the usual visual clues to signify gender, while images of the munitions workers in their bathing suits did everything possible to emphasize their femininity. The contrasting images reveal that the illustrated press during World War II did not just include photographs of mothers and their soldiers, but
a variety of images that encouraged women’s roles in the labor force and auxiliary groups, outside of “traditional” female work. While the magazines used these images to both “normalize” women’s war work and appeal to their female readers, publications like the IB and the BIZ included appealing images of the female body (both at home and of “enemy” women) as a strategy to legitimize female war work and provide entertainment for their readers.

***

The analysis of the visual and textual representations of female paid and unpaid work during the Third Reich reveals that far from offering a monolithic “ideal” of the Aryan German woman, the illustrated press utilized a wide variety of images that emphasized a wide range of acceptable “femininities,” depending upon specific historical circumstances and the function of each publication. Images of paid employment for unmarried women in Frauenwarte both employed the textual discourse of “womanly” work in order to legitimize their roles in the economy and harnessed the appeal of the Modern Woman. This was especially evident in their presentations of “modern” careers for young women (including white-collar work), which the National Socialist press had previously prevented as problematic because it was linked to the image of the New Woman. Both the Illustrierte Beobachter and Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung also re-worked the image of the white-collar worker. On the one hand, the images in the BIZ focused on a less eroticized version of the Modern Woman, who still embraced an urban lifestyle, but in advertisements, gained the attention of her boss through her work, not just her appearance. This allowed the magazine to continue to present the white-collar worker as an unproblematic image of feminine modernity in order to appeal to and entertain its readers. The IB, on the other hand, used the image of
the white-collar worker as an object of visual pleasure, focusing more on her “mid-day” break and feminine body, rather than her work. These images would appeal not only to male readers, but would serve as an example of a “beautiful” body, an ideal, for their female audience.

Representations of female unpaid work, the “making” of German mothers and advice for young women, reveals how the women’s magazine attempted to create a visual narrative that emphasized the importance of female employment, alongside marriage and family. Here, they continued the Weimar discourse that had emphasized, at least in the social-democratic milieu, the importance of a professional education for girls that allowed them to earn a living in a decent and appropriate job until marriage, stopped working when they had their first child, and returned to work, but only if it was truly necessary later when the children were grown up. Frauenwarte, especially, tried to mobilize its female readers to become active in the National Socialist women’s and welfare organizations. The photographs of women, learning how to be mothers, within the Nazi racial framework, provided documentation of their central role in the state. Moreover, the advice for young women, often conceptualized in visual images, offered flexibility, where readers could imagine the young women as either future workers or mothers and wives, depending on the context.

While Frauenwarte certainly dedicated much of their space to images of mothers or future mothers, the IB and the BIZ only occasionally celebrated motherhood. There acknowledgement of the importance of women to the future of the Reich, most often on Mother’s Day, relied on standard visual tropes of the rural German family. As the analysis in the next part will demonstrate, the majority of their images of women were dedicated to film stars and sports celebrities, images which they deemed more appealing to their readers and
echoed the visual forms of the Modern Woman found in the illustrated press during the Weimar years.

During World War II, representations of “women in trousers” and “girls in uniforms” were regular features in all of the magazines because the regime needed to visually prepare the nation for conflict and “normalize” female war work, without upsetting the gender order. The boundaries for female roles expanded during conflict, as evidenced in the ambiguous visual depictions of women in gasmasks, Wehrmacht uniforms and female factory workers. The textual content, however, continually emphasized that this was only possible in order to secure the future of Germany, to win the war and support their soldiers. In Frauenwarte the recurring images of women in uniform or “behind the factory door” emphasized their somber and serious duty, which would have broad appeal among their female readership. The images of munitions workers in the IB, in contrast, accentuated women’s positive attitude and female bodies, textually expressing gratitude for their hard work and visually stressing their leisure time. This strategy allowed the publication to “support” female war work, but continue to provide more appealing and entertaining images to its readership. Propaganda related to the “enemy” women, especially in the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung served as a crucial marker between the “right” and “wrong” kind of woman in uniform, implicitly and explicitly providing visual confirmation of the over-sexualized “enemy” woman and the responsible, reliable (yet feminine) German woman who supported her nation. The BIZ submerged its political message underneath sensational photo reports, but its “entertainment” provided a valuable visual lesson for the importance of German women in the war effort.
3. **Images of the Body of the “German Woman”**

The visual representation of the female body in the illustrated press of the Third Reich also constitutes striking continuities between Modern Women in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. Without textual clarification, a profile of a film star, fashion model or a female athlete in the illustrated press showed little change after 1933. Indeed, many of these images were designated “modern,” but rather than bodies of decay, decadence or degeneration, they became acceptable forms of female modernity. While the extent of this flexibility depended on the publication, in general, the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* and the *Illustrierte Beobachter* continued to avoid overt political content and tried to frame the images within the realm of entertainment or sensational news stories. The most ideologically explicit women’s magazine, *Frauenwarte*, offered more practical advice and, on occasion, warned readers against the representations of women found in other publications.

Karl Christian Führer argues that during the Third Reich, the general interest magazine provided a kind of pleasure, beyond distraction and amusement, by offering instructional spaces, which “promised self-improvement and a better personal life.”

Whether in the realm of household advice or apolitical serial novels, Führer noted that the general interest magazine, between 1933 and 1939, served a specific function by celebrating the regime and downplaying negative propaganda and “expressions of hatred” directed toward ‘racial’ and political enemies. I argue that photographs and illustrations of the body of the “German woman” provided a space of *visual* instruction, one that modified or adapted images of modern women in order to promote different ideals of beauty, fashion or female

---

523 Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda,” 132 – 133.

524 Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda,” 133.
athleticism which appealed to a specific readership. Moreover, I would extend this argument into the war years, where the markers of the modern woman continued to flood the pages of the illustrated press as objects of desire, distraction from the war and reminders of “normality” on the home front.

As I have emphasized before, fashion, consumption and the female body played a central role in delineating different types of Modern Women in the Weimar Republic. During the Third Reich, this continued in the illustrated press because these themes allowed the media to present a broad variety of facets of the image of the Modern Women to their readers. At the same time, the analysis of these themes reveals that the Aryan mother was the most prominent female ideal for German women and girls in the Nazi state, but not the only one. While the common image of the Aryan female body in official propaganda, which also informed public memory, is often clothed in dirndl dresses and “traditional” costumes and celebrates motherhood, illustrated magazines continued to present images of glamorous women dressed in the latest fashions, wearing the most stylish new hats and using beauty products and cosmetics to enhance their beauty. The conflict that existed concerning fashion in the press was theoretically absent, because the fashion industry, “purged” of its foreign influences and Jewish manufacturers and designers, was now a source of celebration and linked to issues of national culture and identity. No longer are fashionable models objects of derision, but active participants as consumers and producers of the German economy.

As this analysis will show, official textual rhetoric concerning the role of fashion and beauty within the Reich seemingly contradicted the visual representations of the body of the “Aryan” female – garbed in clothing dubbed “modern” and whose natural beauty was augmented by cosmetics or age-defying skin products. Advertisements became no less erotic,
suggestive or subdued during the Third Reich than before in the Weimar Republic. Nivea ads for suntan lotion – with bronzed women in bathing suits backs arched to the sun – or Hauptana bra ads with women observing their form in a mirror remained staples in the illustrated magazines. In ads and fashion sections, women continued to wear make-up and smoke cigarettes, clad in off the shoulder evening gowns and drinking champagne. Women could be – or imagine themselves to be – an ideal woman that did not always fit neatly into Nazi ideology, which demanded that women avoid cosmetics or cigarettes. One major reason for these tensions was the conflict of interest between Nazi ideology and the market; consumer goods in the National Socialist economy nevertheless needed customers.

During the war, fashion, beauty and consumption in the popular press functioned, similar to movies and the radio, as a site of instruction, pleasure and distraction from the conflict and entertainment for both male and female readers. As Cory Ross has pointed out, the ‘golden age’ of mass culture may very well be defined at the onset of World War II because the regime actively encouraged entertainment as a form of maintaining morale. As I will demonstrate, images of beauty and fashion remained staples in the illustrated press during the war. We have seen in the previous chapters related to women’s work that women in trousers or uniforms became familiar images throughout World War II. They became representations of an active femininity by both promoting and contributing to the war effort and emphasizing German women’s dedication to the nation. These images corresponded to the presentation of young, active and healthy “BDM-Mädels” of the Nazi Germany girls' organization or of maternal female leaders of the NS-Frauenschaft and other organizations with mainly female members and volunteers.

525 Cory Ross, Media and the Making of Modern Germany (Oxford, 2008), 347.
Within the context of rationing, material shortages and the anxieties of war in general, one might expect fashionable and glamorous women to disappear from the pages of the press. Yet alongside images of uniformed women or female factory workers, magazines continued to include fashion spreads and cosmetic ads, together with articles offering tips and advice on women’s wardrobes. While the level of instructional content depended upon the publication, it remained important for the magazines to continue to present a sense of “normality” via fashion, beauty and consumption even during “total war.” However, this “normality” visibly faded away when the magazines became shorter, their paper lost its quality and the images were less glossy and diverse during the year of the Endkampf.

Images of the female athlete also had a place in the illustrated press as a celebration of the “healthy” Aryan body. As I will demonstrate, Frauenwarte preferred to discuss female athletic activities within the framework of healthy Aryan bodies fit for reproduction and explicitly argued against the “masculinized” female body presented and praised in the pages of the Weimar press. The Illustrierte Beobachter and Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, on the other hand, focused more on “celebrity” female athletes while “domesticating” them by providing “home stories” of these women.526

Photographs of the Aryan female body as sun-bronzed bathing beauties, models or celebrities were also common representations found in the IB and the BIZ. In her analysis of Das Schwarze Korps and other publications, Dagmar Herzog has noted that the strategy of “incitement and disavowal” related to more risqué photographs allowed the regime to both “present itself as the guardian of good taste” and “titillate and pander to the pleasures of

---

526 Katie Sutton discusses the notion of “domesticating” female athletes during the Weimar Republic, a practice, I argue, that continued into the Third Reich, in “The Masculinized Female Athlete in Weimar Germany,” German Politics and Society 27 (2009): 28 – 49.
looking."\textsuperscript{527} This was possible because magazines could present both the “negative” and “positive” images, while textually informing readers which was “good” and which was “bad.” While Herzog’s analysis focuses on publications that were stridently and explicitly more political and more engaged with anti-Semitic rhetoric, general interest magazines also offered their readers more provocative images of the female Aryan body, albeit at times, more “tame” than publications directed only at men. Because the general interest publications avoided “negative messages,” images of sunbathing young women or celebrity entertainers were not juxtaposed next to pictures of the “wrong” kind of women.\textsuperscript{528} Rather, the images and accompanying text constituted a striking silence when it came to discussion of racial purity or German superiority. These images functioned as a form of “positive” propaganda, with the implicit assumption that these were “Aryan” women. In the following I first explore depictions of fashion and consumption and afterwards images of female athletes and models.

3.1 Dressing and Buying “German”: Depictions of Fashion and Consumption

During the Weimar Republic, the illustrated press used the interrelated themes of fashion and modernity to construct their competing ideals of the Modern Woman. In the Third Reich, it was no longer necessary for the Nazi illustrated magazines to employ direct attacks on alternative constructions of the Modern Woman put forth by the political enemy. This did not mean, however, that competing images or messages disappeared. The fashion spreads and

\textsuperscript{527} Dagmar Herzog, Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany (Princeton, N. J., 2005), 40.

\textsuperscript{528} Herzog does analyze a photo-spread in the \textit{Frauenwarte} that criticizes these depictions, which will be discussed in more detail. See, \textit{Sex After Fascism}, pp. 40 – 41.
advertisements echoed the visual forms from the Weimar Republic and the meaning inscribed to them via captions or related articles depended on individual publications.

The following analysis first focuses on the ways in which each publication took a different approach to fashion, concentrating on the appeal to women to buy and dress “German,” as well as presenting images of “modern” designs to their readers. Female consumers were also advised, as analyzed in the second section, on the proper forms of beauty and habits of consumption in order to maintain a youthful, natural or in some cases, desirable body. Finally, we will see that during the war, fashion played an important role as a topic of advice as well as a site of distraction and visual pleasure during conflict.

**Fashionable and Feminine: Propagating German Style**

The image of the commercialized fashion-forward New Woman that invested too much of her money and time on her appearance garnered criticism from both the Left and the Right in the Weimar Republic. For the KPD and SPD this ideal was a symbol for the class-based struggle because it was based on consumerism and the illusions of the silver screen. For the National Socialists, the commercialized image of the New Women represented degeneracy and cosmopolitism; they connected it with anti-Semitic stereotypes. She was thus a part of “Jewish-dominated” fashion, the negative impacts of Americanization and the damaging French influence on style. It was not necessarily “fashion” that was the central problem, but what fashion signified in a larger cultural, political and economic framework.  

---

529 See Eugenia Paulicelli, *Fashion Under Fascism: Beyond the Black Shirt* (Oxford, 2004), which examines dress and body culture in Italy in which she makes a similar argument for the politicization of fashion.
One of the declared goals of the fashion industry during the Third Reich was to emancipate itself from the negative influence of “foreign” and “non-German” fashion. While this discourse was already present in the National Socialist press at the end of the Weimar Republic, it intensified during the early years of the Third Reich in order to promote the new German Institute for Fashion and its “German style.” However, as Irene Guenther has argued, a unified idea of what “German” fashion should be never materialized, nor did the institute achieve its goal of becoming a leader in the fashion world, either at home or internationally. Due to competing economic interests, disparate notions of the meaning of “German” fashion and the aryanization of the industry and loss of talent, the Fashion Institute failed to meet its goals.

While illustrated magazines focusing strictly on fashion, like Die Dame, which continued to exist during the Third Reich, the far-reaching popular press also provided advice and information on the latest designs, as well as the official women’s magazine. One strategy to educate female readers on the importance of German fashion was to include articles and photo-essays highlighting the success of the German Fashion Institute and emphasizing that German designers could “compete” with the international world of fashion – especially France. This marks a clear continuity of National Socialist discourse between the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich by emphasizing women’s special role in the nation as consumers of German fashion.

---

530 See Guenther, Nazi Chic?, 167-201.
531 Guenther, Nazi Chic?, 200 – 201.
532 Guenther, Nazi Chic?, 200 – 201.
533 Because her work focuses specifically on “fashion,” Guenther rightly analyzes fashion magazines, rather than general interest publications. In the context of discussing images of modern women, I argue that the mass produced and high circulating popular press provides a more complex view of women’s fashions because the fashionable woman is juxtaposed next to other interpretations of female modernity.
In particular, the National Socialist women’s magazine *Frauenwarte* included articles explaining the function and expertise of the German Fashion Institute for its female readers who were mainly connected in one or another to the National Socialist movement. They played important roles as “catalysts” of the National Socialist ideology, who should communicate it to other women, and therefore needed to be educated on proper forms of consumption. In March 1934, the magazine published an essay on the German Institute for Fashion highlighting a fashion show and exhibition of spring clothing and accessories.\(^{534}\) The article included a set of images of women in close fitting suits and dresses modeling the latest designs. While the article provides the justification for the necessity to have German fashion the visual images are intended to show women that German fashion also for the NSDAP does not just mean dirndl dresses and folklore, but cutting edge designs. The hope, noted the article, was that the work of the German Institute for Fashion would also spread to other nations. But first and foremost German women should begin with the “demand” that stores sell German fashions and that their seamstresses follow “German” designs.\(^{535}\)

Other articles focused on the use of materials. “German Fashion – German material” declared the headline to a photo spread in the *Frauenwarte* in October 1936.\(^{536}\) The photos,

\(^{534}\) *NS-FW*, nr. 18, March 1934, p. 547-548.

\(^{535}\) *NS-FW*, nr. 18, March 1934, p. 547-548.
depicting women in the latest winter coats and blouses for the fall and winter season, stressed the use of German material (figure 48). The women, in model-like poses, showed off winter coats trimmed with fur and “sporty” blouses. The article explicitly connected the new designs to the German Institute for Fashion, commenting that the goal is to achieve independent creativity at the institute using only German materials. The designs are described as “very youthful,” “very chic” or “elegant,” noting the color and fabric of the dress or jacket and also the body type that best suits each one. One jacket, for example, tucked at the waist is for “tall and thin figures.”

While the text emphasizes the need to promote “German” fashion and materials, the images could be taken out of any fashion spread from the Weimar Republic (only that the fashion itself had changed in Germany and elsewhere). The self-assured poses, the use of cosmetics to enhance the model’s features and crisp black and white images are reminiscent of images found in photo-essays in the commercialized press (figure 49). This strategy of presenting fashion allowed female readers to participate in the visual pleasure and fantasy of fashion (especially the more luxurious representations), while textually the Frauenwarte was careful to remind the readers of the how fashion had changed. The skirts were longer, the cut more feminine, modest and elegant.  

Frauenwarte also reminded readers of the proper

536 NS-FW, nr. 9, October 1936, p. 270 – 271.
537 NS-FW, nr. 9, October 1936, p. 270 – 271.
538 For similar articles and images related to using German material see NS-FW, n. 3, July 1934, p. 87. See also, Nancy R. Reagin, Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870 – 1945 (Cambridge, 2007), 159-165.
production and design of German fashion alongside more “practical” choices for their readers, complete with pattern inserts or examples of how a stylish hat or accessories could update women’s wardrobes, very similar to the women’s magazines of the Left in Weimar. Combining illustrations and photographs, these fashion sections (found in nearly every issue) used the term “modern” to describe clothing choices, like the article from March 1936, which described the use of embroidery on clothing as “very modern.” While the magazine did include images of women and girls in “traditional” German dress, the fashion section most often emphasized a more up-to-date approach to women’s fashion. Thus, at least visually, *Frauenwarte* revealed its own tensions when it came to dressing the modern woman. On the one hand, images of women in “traditional” clothing could be found on the front cover or illustrating articles about women’s role in the Third Reich. On the other hand, the fashion sections with their black and white photographs served to offer women a level of sophistication and design that echoed the images in the popular press and suited much better to the needs of working women in offices and shops than the dirndl. Accompanying

---

539 See, for example, *NS-FW*, nr. 16, February 1934; *NS-FW*, nr. 11, November 1935; *NS-FW*, nr. 13, December 1936; *NS-FW*, nr. 21, April 1937.

540 *NS-FW*, nr. 20, March, 1936, p. 650.

541 See *NS-FW*, nr. 22 May 1934, p. 674 – 675 for a discussion of the development of traditional German clothing with illustrations and accompanying text describing the “practical” reasons for wearing traditional dress. See also, *NS-FW*, nr. 20, March 1934, p. 613; *NS-FW*, nr. 16, January 1935; and, *NS-FW*, nr. 26, June 1936, p. 850. Irene Guethner notes that despite the attempts to introduce folk costumes and dirndl dresses as part of the national style and as part of *haute couture* collections, “urban” women avoided wearing the dresses and rural women had little time, material or energy to spend on making dresses that were impractical for most farm work. See, *Nazi Chic?*, 109-119. Although Guenther notes that the *Frauenwarte* included articles related to traditional costume, most often these were separated from the regular fashion section.

542 The front cover of the *Frauenwarte* often displayed images of flowers, rural scenes or holiday-related scenes. When women were shown on the front cover, at least during the peace years, they were most often connected to the celebration of mother’s day. For example see, *NS-FW*, n. 23, May 1935.

543 For more examples see *NS–FW*, nr. 24, May 1935 for photographs of women’s bathing suits; *NS-FW*, November 1934, p. 309 for the latest jackets for autumn and winter (complete with fur accessories); *NS-FW*, nr. 7, September 1935 for photographs and brief descriptions of colors and fabrics for dresses and winter coats and
articles offered the textual justification and explanations of why it was crucial for German women to be aware of their fashion choices, but at the same time used conventional descriptors of “modern,” “elegant” or “chic” to convince readers that dressing German meant dressing stylish.

As a magazine intended for a more general and more male audience, the *Illustrierte Beobachter* provided less practical advice or consistent updates on the latest fashion trends for female readers but instead included some articles that emphasized the role of the German Fashion Institute. An article, “Will the skirt be longer or shorter,” used photographs to point to the active contribution of women in the development of German fashion. Photographs of a smiling young women measuring hems, female fashion designers sketching new designs and students sitting in lectures as images of fashionable women are projected on the wall provide visual proof of the nation’s determination to bolster their own industry, while at the same time highlighting women’s active role and “varied tasks” in the fashion design and production. Similar reports in the *IB* highlighted the work of German fashion designers, but unlike the *Frauenwarte*, they focused more on presenting photographs of youthful models, surrounded by designers, rather than presenting readers with arguments, details or information about the role of fashion in the German economy (figure 50). These examples of explicitly “German” fashion in the *IB* functioned more as general interest pieces, showing readers the active work of designers creating flowing evening gowns.

---

*NS-FW*, nr. 13, December 1936 for an article which details stylish accessories to wear with jackets. For discussion concerning “feminine” summer dresses and tips on wearing hats see *NS-FW*, nr. 21, April 1937. *IB*, nr. 48, November 26, 1936, p. 2007.

*IB*, nr. 1, January 6, 1938 for an article which describes designers creating new styles for spring.
The *Illustrierte Beobachter* also highlighted “modern” fashion trends, including an essay titled “After 35 Years – Once again Modern!” The article noted that the updated looks of hats and dresses were not “un-modern” but reworked full skirts from the past into a modern interpretation. “Modern Knit Dresses” declared one particular ad for Bleyle clothing which described it as “comfortable, practical and affordable”

While these articles and images provided information on the latest fashions, deemed “modern,” other images related to fashion and beauty in the *IB* focused more on emphasizing the young female body and leisure time, like the summer swimwear collection published in 1937. The majority of the page is dominated by women in swimming suits and summer shorts, lounging in the sun (figure 51). The accompanying text mentions the use of comfortable fabrics, appropriate footwear and the latest trend of “knickerbockers” that women are wearing, the “fashion” spread speaks more to the desire to present beautiful women to their viewers, enjoying their summer leisure time.

In line with its overall function to entertain and amuse, the *IB* also used fashion as fodder for

---

546 *IB*, nr. 25, June 22, 1939, p. 980
547 *IB*, nr. 34, August 26, 1937, p. 1283.
548 *IB*, nr. 24, June 15, 1937, p. 965. The *BIZ* also included swimwear in their fashion sections, but presented the photographs in typical model’s poses, standing.
more “sensational” news, like the photo essay from 1937, “She is wearing the pants” which features photographs of women (all from behind) wearing trousers.\textsuperscript{549} The largest picture, captioned, “everyday fashion in Hollywood” notes that “one can find these pants shorter” also called “shorts.” The photograph shows a woman strolling down the street. Another image shows two women crossing a street, one wearing pants, one wearing shorts with a caption that states, pants “in all forms can be found in the American world (especially in Hollywood)” and as “everyday wear” for women (figure 52).

The function of images such as these contrasted the women of Germany to the women of America who were often tied to Hollywood, which evoked decadence and the wrong kind of “modern woman.” This allowed for the publication to present interesting and entertaining photographs while condemning or mocking American women’s appearances.\textsuperscript{550} Overall, the \textit{Illustrierte Beobachter} was far less interested in presenting their readers with practical advice on clothing and instead printed tantalizing photos of summer swimwear, continued to present readers with “modern” fashion and tabloid style exposé’s on American women. These images support the recent research that focuses on the ways in which National Socialist discourse used images of pleasure and leisure in mass media in order to gain acquiescence from its citizens.\textsuperscript{551}

\textsuperscript{549} \textit{IB}, May 12, 1938. As noted in the previous section, fashion was also fodder for war propaganda, focusing on the “gasmask” designs or mocking British women who volunteered for service only because of the new uniform.

\textsuperscript{550} Another example of this can be found in \textit{IB}, nr. 8, February 24, 1938, which features photographs from the Hollywood film industry and fashion and declares that women in America watch films to see beautiful clothing.

\textsuperscript{551} For example, see Führer, “Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda,” 132-153.
The *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* remained dedicated to presenting fashion sections for women, continuing to visually replicate the aesthetic style from the Weimar Republic. The magazine’s approach to fashion replicated the familiar photo-essays, sharp illustrations, large photographs and overall design. Readers would see or “read” change via text, but not overall design, providing visual continuity from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich. Moreover, the “apolitical” nature of the *BIZ* also meant that explicit references to Nazi ideology were not necessary in order to sell their magazine. In the early years of the Third Reich the magazine pointed out the “return” to more feminine styles – a trend already beginning in the early 1930s in response to the intensified discourse related to the “masculinized” or overly-emancipated modern woman. In an article published in April 1933, the “hairstyle of the past” is visually compared with “the new hairstyle” (figure 53). This was significant because it visually and textually repudiated the too-short hairstyles of the 1920’s. As analyzed in the previous chapter, the bob was a quintessential marker of the Weimar modern woman and

---

554 *BIZ*, April 16, 1933.
in an even more extreme version; masculine hair-cuts matched their male-coded hairstyle to male-coded clothing and deviant behavior. In the first image, the young woman, with a bob, curled at the ends is photographed in a profile, the lines of her nose, lips and chins looking straight forward. The “new” haircut, illustrated by the photograph on the right, shows a curl upwards, but what is significant is her profile, turned down and to the side, feminine and demure. This is no longer the edgy woman of the Weimar republic, but a softened version of femininity.

Articles in the BIZ also presented new fashion trends that were dubbed “very feminine” or focused on reinterpretations of “old fashioned” materials and clothing.555 An article discussing new dresses made out of taffeta emphasized that “the modern woman,” while not wearing a taffeta petticoat anymore, does wear dresses with a “rich ruffle and puffed sleeves.”556 Another caption notes that the model wears a “modern black and white dress” made out of fabric that used to be considered “old fashioned” and highlights another feminine “silhouette” which is for young, thin women.”557 Other articles featuring the new summer clothing reinforce that the “old fashioned is now the new fashion,” pointing back to the past.558

The discourse of the “return” to femininity plays off the exaggerated masculine or androgynous form of the “emancipated woman” of the Weimar Republic. As we have seen

555 BIZ, 1934, p. 111 and p.586
556 BIZ, nr. 17, April 29, 1934, p.586.
557 BIZ, nr. 17, April 29, 1934, p.586.
558 BIZ, nr. 19, May 18 1934. A photo-essay published on February 12, 1933 focused on “modern clothing” accessorized by dramatic jewelry. Another essay, “How should I wear my cap?” makes the point that the beret-like hat has already been “modern” for four years and presents seven photographs demonstrating different ways to wear it. See BIZ nr. 17, April 30, 1933. “Calico is Chic” presented day and evening clothing made out of the fabric, BIZ, nr. 21, May 28, 1933. See also, BIZ, nr. 12, March 13, 1934, which emphasized that the “new line” is “very feminine,” with photographs of women wearing blouses with puffed sleeves and dresses with bows on the collar.
earlier, the “masculinized” or “manly” woman was never an ideal during the Weimar Republic, but rather a set of visual images used in opposition to a grotesque form of femininity covered in men’s suits. The discussions during the Third Reich contrast this image with the new emphasis on “feminine” through different types of clothing or hairstyles. The BIZ made it clear, however, that adopting more “feminine” styles was now “modern.” The German modern woman was not just wearing more feminine clothing, but in the general discourse, was now celebrating her return to the proper kind of femininity.

While the BIZ attempted to point out the “return” to femininity with images of ruffles, taffeta gowns and soft hairstyles, there was no shortage of images which portrayed the more “glamorous” modern woman. Seasonal fashion spreads emphasized the latest trends for stylish women, offering choices of skirts or trousers for the beach that featured images of women with bobbed hair and bronze shoulders showcasing the latest summer wear or evening wear for balls and parties.559 Photo-essays like “beach wear 1936,” noting that long pants “remained modern,” depicted confident, stylish women enjoying their summer vacation (figure 54).560 A photo-essay published in September 1938, with the bold headline “Grandmother – very

559 BIZ, nr. 21, May 27, 1934, p. 725 (for summer fashions) and see BIZ, nr. 1, January 1935 for a special section on balls and ball gowns for young women. BIZ, nr. 5, January 30, 1936 for evening wear. “Fur on dresses and coats,” in the BIZ, nr. 39, September 29, 1934 emphasized a more luxurious form of fashion, noting that black and brown furs were the latest styles.

560 BIZ, nr. 23, June 4, 1936.
modern” makes the argument that updated designs from an “earlier time” and feminine beauty have created the “woman of 1938” (figure 55).\textsuperscript{561} Photographs of a woman dressed in a strapless, floor length evening gown or reading “a letter from him” while lounging in a chair, depict images of luxury and high fashion. Articles discussing the latest hat, unlike the \textit{Frauenwarte}, made no mention of thriftiness or practicality, but emphasized the wide variety of styles for women.\textsuperscript{562}

The \textit{BIZ} also included familiar representations of the sporty, independent modern woman in outfits especially designed for riding bikes. In cute blouses and bottoms designed as a cross between a “short” and a “skirt,” three young women turn sportswear into something “elegant.”\textsuperscript{563} While the text notes that the clothing is more “elegant” the images themselves are reminiscent of the new woman of the Weimar Republic. Whether it was luxurious evening wear or modern items for the beach, the \textit{BIZ} catered to women who did not have to sew their own dresses or update their wardrobes with accessories. The majority of the \textit{BIZ} readership was still middle- and upper-class and

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fig55.jpg}
\caption{Fig. 55, \textit{BIZ}, September 1, 1938. “Grandmother – very modern!”}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{561} \textit{BIZ}, nr. 35, September 1, 1938.

\textsuperscript{562} \textit{BIZ}, nr. 13, March 26, 1935. See \textit{BIZ}, n. 37, September 12, 1935 for an article on “modern” evening clothes.

\textsuperscript{563} \textit{BIZ}, nr. 27, July 7, 1937.
did not care where the fashion came from, as long as it was new, chic, luxurious and functioned as a marker of social difference.

The relation between fashion and the modernity of women was closely linked during the Third Reich. In *Frauenwarte*, fashion was a site in which the magazine could both instruct their readers on how to dress “German” as well as promote the modern, stylish designs theoretically separated from the influence of foreign fashions. While the magazine offered practical advice and patterns to their readers, it remained important to the publication to offer appealing visual images of the latest designs to women. The *BIZ* continued its practice of displaying glamorous modern women and even while emphasizing a “return” to femininity in contrast to the “masculinized” woman of the Weimar Republic, consistently reminded readers of how “modern” German women were. True to its function, the *IB* used fashion to entertain and amuse its readership. Rather than engaging in lengthy dialogues related to the German Fashion Institute or providing advice for updating a wardrobe with accessories, the magazine focused on presenting an image of a youthful, beautiful modern woman with unlimited amounts of leisure time on her hands. As we shall see in the next section, clothing was not the only indicator of the modern German woman. Notions of beauty, regulating the female body via consumer goods and products offering instant gratification and narratives of romance and glamour were essential elements in forming the female Aryan body.

**Advising Female Consumers**

The fascination with fashion in the illustrated press could be explained within the discourse of the German economy and national identity, but the issue of what constituted proper female beauty exposed tensions in the magazines when it came to defining the German modern woman. The ideologically explicit *Frauenwarte* followed the official party line when
instructing women to embrace “natural” beauty through healthful living. As Irene Guenther has pointed out, the tanned and fertile “Aryan-Nordic” beauty was supposed to supplant the image of the glamorous female so closely linked to the “vamp” of the Weimar Republic. The *Illustrierte Beobachter*, however, had no qualms about printing advertisements of glamorous women for the latest beauty products. The *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* not only published ads for beauty products related to “stardom” but openly disregarded the Nazi anti-smoking campaign in their advertising sections – as did many women of the middle and upper class. Smoking was still fashionable and chic. Above all, the *IB* and the *BIZ* promoted narratives of happiness, emotional fulfillment, healthy relationships and desirable bodies within the framework of consumerism.

*Frauenwarte* concentrated on the “proper” kind of beauty for women. An article published in July 1934 emphasized a “natural” appearance and spoke against the beauty of the “film and theatre world” with hair color, lipstick, eye shadow and the “made-up” look of femininity. Beauty deemed “fresh” or “natural” through natural products and sunshine would contribute to women’s overall health. “Health and beauty is” one article defined in March 1934, “balance and harmony” and depends on “lots of light and air . . . exercise, lots

---


565 *NS-FW*, nr. 1, July 1934, p.8
of fruits and vegetables, no alcohol, no tobacco." While these articles used text to outline female beauty, other articles like “Our goal is harmonic beauty” printed in 1938, included close-up photographs of fresh-faced, young German women to emphasize that beauty does not come from cosmetics or beauty products that promise to eliminate signs of aging (figure 56). Rather proper care of the body, the use of “modern nutritional science” and care of the female body through gymnastics and sports promotes a healthy and beautiful body. Even as the fashion pages displayed women who clearly wore lipstick or eye shadow, the Frauenwarte attempted to convince readers that beauty products were not necessary for German women.

The instructional function of Frauenwarte attempted to balance the desires for fashionable clothing and ideas of beauty. The magazine never informed readers that they should not look fashionable or pretty but directly tied it to a discourse of “naturalness.” This strategy allowed the magazine to provide information and advice on beauty without relying on visual aspects of the commercialized modern woman. The photographs of female beauty represent “every woman,” a strategy that the magazine employed on a regular basis. These were not

---

566 *NS-FW*, nr. 1, July 1934, p.8. See also *NS-FW*, nr. 19, March 1934 for an article that detailed the ways that “natural” beauty products should be the center of women’s beauty routines.

567 *NS-FW*, March 1938.

568 For example, see the analysis in the previous section on women and work.
“exceptional” women or youthful bodies in bathing suits, but the type of Aryan woman meant to idealize the female body and beauty in the Third Reich that did not rely on cosmetics.

The *Illustrierte Beobachter* offered their readers images of ideal beautiful women who were anything but a clean-faced, down to earth, smiling, blond-haired woman found in the women’s magazine. A series of recurring advertisements for *Kaloderma* brand soap used what looks more like the representation of the “dangerous” type of modern woman found in the pages of the Weimar press (figure 57). What is most interesting is that the accompanying text explains that a woman is only beautiful if “her complexion is pure and clear, her skin soft and supple.” After a couple weeks of use, notes the text, you will notice the “improvement of your skin and complexion.” The accompanying image, however, presents a young woman who seems to be selling cosmetics rather than soap to improve her complexion. Her aloof expression and her aura of sophistication in conjunction with the text advising women to wash their face “twice a day” reveals tension between the notion of a clean, fresh face and the “very beautiful woman” whose visage seems to embody the quintessential commercialized modern woman. As Ute Poiger has argued, while Nazis were able to find a level of acceptability in fashions of the modern woman, “more hostility persisted towards women’s use of certain cosmetics, especially lipstick.” This hostility, however, did not mean that the *IB* refused to include advertisements of women using a whole

---

569 *IB*, nr. 34, August 24, 1934. The same edition of the *IB* also included a full page ad for Palmolive as well as a quarter page ad for “Nivea” sun cream, advising housewives to use it after cleaning and washing the dishes.

array of cosmetics. And obviously this hostility did not prevent women from using decorative cosmetics.571

Advertisements in the Illustrierte Beobachter also promoted a narrative of “female beauty” which often linked women with a male counterpoint. In an ad for another kind of soap, Palmolive, the tagline read “He only has eyes for his wife” above an illustration of a woman serving her husband dinner with a broad smile on her face.572 The message, as advertisements often are, is absolutely explicit. Not only is the female figure in a traditional gender role as the housewife and homemaker, the use of this specific product would prevent your husband’s eyes from straying. Other narratives promised “successful beauty care,” where the “success” seemed less about skin care and more about ending up dancing with a handsome man, the ultimate result of the product (figure 58).

While the product is directed at women, the dominant photographs could also appeal to men. For example, the largest image in the half-page ad for Palmolive emphasized a woman who had presumably just stepped out of the bath, demurely holding a towel in front of her,
but showing off her curves. Similar ads with text noting the “epitome of female beauty” is a “pure complexion” and the “freshness of skin” included comparable images of freshly-bathed beauties drying off after their bath. Even though this is not for cosmetics, the ads, which were prevalent throughout the Third Reich, always framed the soap as a “beauty product” whose results were emphasized with nude or semi-nude young women.

The BIZ continued to present women as both consumers and commodities in their magazine. The content and array of advertisements still echoed the structure readers would have found familiar before 1933, using glamorous women to sell beauty products, undergarments, feminine hygiene products, hand crèmes and cigarettes. Similar to the advertisements in the IB, the female body was the center of attention and the images of women in the advertisements are not motherly or matronly but accentuate the slim, youthful female body. What is different, of course, is that during the Third Reich these images existed within a racial framework – but one that did not have to be explicitly stated. The assumption was that the women in the ads were “Aryan” women.

Fig. 59, BIZ May 9, 1935
“Like a film star”

---

574 See also, IB, nr. 38, February 22, 1934; IB, nr. 41, October 12, 1934; IB, nr. 35; August 29, 1935; IB, nr. 38, September 19, 1935.
575 Some examples of these ads can be found in IB, nr. 38, September 23, 1937 and IB, nr. 19, May 12, 1938.
576 Poiger notes that the “cosmopolitan aesthetic” of advertisements prevalent during the Weimar years waned after 1933, even as the image of the “Modern Girl” remained flexible in regards to advertising and propaganda in the Third Reich. See Poiger, “ Fantasies of Universality,” 340.
While articles in the Frauenwarte implored women to use their “natural beauty” or use natural beauty regimes, the BIZ focused their presentation of beauty through cosmetic advertisements. Thus, through consumption, women could transform themselves into objects of desire. With taglines like “Life also has its close-ups – you must look like a film star,” women were instructed to buy the right shampoo, hair dye or face powder. The accompanying images of women, often with the handsome “leading man” were typical of the BIZ, like the series of ads for Kamilloflor hair treatments (figure 59), which linked the use of their products with movie stars, luxurious fur coats and handsome men. The young, desirable female body was made possible through consumption.\(^{577}\) Hair ads for “blond hair” also stressed the connection between glamour and the desirable female body. With captions telling women that they will be “charmed” by their blond hair or that they can still look pretty at age 26, these advertisements functioned as a site of instruction, reminding women that one ideal was the blond, Aryan woman.\(^{578}\)

The representation of the urban, fashionable women during the Third Reich held a variety of accessories, not least of them, a cigarette. In visual contradiction to the views that women should not smoke, advertisements and photographs of movie stars in the BIZ continued to use glamorous women to sell their product.\(^{579}\) As Barbara Kosta has noted, the “smoking” woman

\(^{577}\) Hair ads showcasing the fantasy of looking like a film star can also be found in BIZ, nr. 9, February 28, 1935; BIZ, nr. 22, May 9, 1935; BIZ, nr. 24, June 13, 1935; BIZ, nr. 22, May 28, 1936; BIZ, nr. 29 July 16, 1936. Advertisements telling women that “youth and beauty go hand in hand,” with images of beautiful women and handsome men, reminded women that desirable bodies were expected to stay young, see BIZ, nr. 34, August 19, 1936.

\(^{578}\) See, BIZ, nr. 31, August 1, 1935; BIZ, nr. 40, October 3, 1935; BIZ, nr. 34, October 21, 1935. A handful of advertisements in the BIZ however did emphasize “natural” beauty – but “natural beauty” using cosmetics. As Irene Guenther has noted, this was a way to sell the look of “natural beauty.” Guenther, Nazi Chic?, 99 -106. These advertisements were rare in the BIZ, but one “Khasana” brand cosmetics depicted a smiling woman, her face surrounded by fruit, the product promising “natural color” including “lips as red as cherries.”

was tied to the idea of the modern woman during the Weimar Republic as both a symbol of liberation, but also of degeneracy.\textsuperscript{580} While discourse related to opposition to tobacco was certainly not new during the Third Reich, anti-smoking campaigns acquired important resonance within the National Socialist framework of racial hygiene and bodily purity, alongside expectations for women’s behavior. As scholars have noted, the often ambiguous campaigns against smoking were linked to notions about the damage to female bodies.\textsuperscript{581} Scientist claimed that smoking led to “frigidity” in women and “overstimulated” their reproductive organs, which decreased their ability to bear healthy children.\textsuperscript{582} Moreover, opponents argued that the aging effects of smoking made women less marriageable.\textsuperscript{583} But, advertising campaigns during the 1930s continued to use the image of the Modern Woman to sell cigarettes, sometimes a bit tantalizing or suggestive, with an air of independence and satisfaction. The image of the female smoker was used not only to sell cigarettes to the “cultivated” individual, as noted in some ads, but the photos themselves point to the stereotype of the Modern Woman prevalent in the Weimar Republic.


\textsuperscript{582} Proctor, “The Nazi War on Tobacco”, 441.

\textsuperscript{583} Proctor, “The Nazi War on Tobacco”, 441.
The BIZ frequently printed advertisements for Manoli, Land Four or Atikah brand cigarettes in its magazine, often full-page ads (figure 60). The women in all of these advertisements are often depicted as independent women enjoying the pleasure of a cigarette. The advertisements that depicted women smoking were related to the numerous images of film stars and entertainers with cigarette in hand, a symbol of urban modernity, glamour and sophistication. For example, a photograph of Marlene Dietrich, with cigarette in hand, is an example of the typical representation in the entertainment pages. “The newest image of Marlene Dietrich” coincided with two small photos of “modern” film stars. Regardless of whether or not the regime officially proclaimed that women should not smoke, advertisements and entertainment sections sanctioned this luxury and perpetuated the visual repertoire during the Third Reich. The tobacco industry wanted to sell its goods. Here too

---

584 For other examples see, BIZ, nr. 5, February 5, 1933; BIZ, nr. 23, June 11, 1933; BIZ, nr. 30, July 25, 1934; BIZ, nr. 31, August 1, 1935; BIZ, nr. 37; September 12, 1935; BIZ, nr. 39, September 26, 1935; BIZ, nr. 3, January 16, 1936; BIZ, nr. 6, February 6, 1936; BIZ, nr. 32, August 6, 1936; and, BIZ, nr. 36, September 3, 1936.

585 BIZ, nr. 25, June 25, 1933.
market and National Socialist policy pursue different interests. These advertisements also reflected the tensions between the disciplinary nature of the regime and the need to continue the pleasures and desires of everyday life.586

While advertisements for undergarments, make-up and hair-dye were a way of advising women on how to transform themselves into visibly desirable objects, a series of Sagrotan ads for a “feminine hygiene” product focused on women’s “personal” health concerns.587 The ads presented both a problem and a solution in a wide variety of social settings, targeting a wide demographic of women. Single women with personal hygiene troubles were informed that they would remain isolated from colleagues or single, while married women with children would find themselves alone at home, whose husbands took the kids to play. Advertisements included illustrations juxtaposing images of a woman as the “outsider” and an image of a happy, content female who used their product, surrounded by friends and colleagues with taglines like “the invisible barrier” or “a colleague but never a friend” (figure 61).588

In 1936, Sagrotan introduced a new series of advertisements that presented a more positive image to consumers. Rather than being isolated or shunned, the images in the new advertisements depicted women only as objects of desire or contentment. With captions like “Why is she always the focal point”? or “She never waits for him,” women were instructed


587 Personal hygiene products (for menstruation) from the brand “Camilla” also lauded their “modern” aspects, showing active, independent women who rode bicycles, kept her marriage in “harmony” or chatted with girlfriends. Besides these products being labeled “modern,” the ads also reminded women of maintaining “youth and beauty.” See, for example, BIZ, nr. 5, January 31, 1935; BIZ, nr. 9, February 28, 1935; BIZ, nr. 21, May 23, 1936; and, BIZ nr. 16, April 16, 1936.

588 These ads ran in series in the BIZ. See BIZ, nr. 20, May 5, 1934; BIZ, nr. 22, May 20, 1934; and, BIZ, nr. 28, July 15, 1934. Sagrotan ads can also be found in the NS-FW, although not as frequently. See, NS-FW, nr. 26, June 1934. The BIZ continued to publish these ads during the Third Reich, with similar themes and images.
that “embarrassing” problems disappeared with the use of their product. Visually, the women in the ads were surrounded by men who applauded their performance on the stage, lounged with them at the beach or sat close to their new bride on their honeymoon.

This is a modern woman who is aware of her own body, who within the rhetoric of purity – of being “clean” – the advertisements for Sagrotan took on more meaning. This was also a way of advising female consumers, not only about fashion and beauty products but about their body. Ads for products like Sagrotan not only functioned as a way to discipline the female body in terms of personal care, but explicitly noted that women would be isolated from their social circle, unable to maintain relationships and remain outsiders from the community without the use of their product. Thus, “beauty” extended beyond fashion and cosmetics in ads such as these.

Whether advising women to purchase products to enhance their beauty or remain youthful and desirable, both the IB and the BIZ continued to present advertisements that contained the familiar image of the more commercialized modern woman, often connected with a narrative of romance and glamour. These images, echoing the photographs of film stars and celebrities, provided a

---

589 BIZ, nr. 20, May 20, 1936 and BIZ nr. 24, June 10, 1936.

590 Dozens of these ads were published in the BIZ. See, for example, BIZ, nr. 22, May 28, 1936; BIZ, nr. 26, June 29, 1936; BIZ, nr. 31, July 20, 1936; BIZ, nr. 33, August 13, 1936; BIZ, nr. 34, August 19, 1936; and, BIZ, nr. 36, September 10, 1936.
space in which women could imagine transforming themselves into desirable objects. The *Frauenwarte* attempted to convince women that the “natural” suntanned look was the highest ideal of female beauty, not the “made-up” look of celebrities or entertainers. The women’s magazine upheld the party line when it came to women’s appearances, advising their readers to avoid smoking and makeup and instead, rely on sunshine and fresh air for a healthy, “natural” look.

**Fantasies of Fashion and Directions for Consumption during World War II**

As we have seen, “women in trousers” became a symbol of female war work and contribution to the nation, often in sharp contrast to images of “enemy” women in frivolous fashion. While these “women in trousers” represented the dutiful female German woman during a time of war, fashion was also used a site of diversion and a fantasy of luxury on the home front. Tensions between articles instructing women on “re-using” clothing or adding accessories to update their wardrobe alongside continued advertisements and fashion spreads that depicted fur coats or classy new hats revealed competing messages of the magazines.

On the one hand, scholars have made it clear that part of women’s fashion during WWII was “making-do” with available materials and magazines attempted to give advice on the use of ration cards.\(^{591}\) On the other hand, magazines continued to publish photo-essays of the latest fashions, still attempting to preserve a sense of normality on the home front as it disintegrated into chaos. Fashion remained a site of diversion and visual pleasure for the magazine’s readers. Often juxtaposed next to drawings of heroic German soldiers and promises of victory, the fashion essays and presentations of the latest hats and handbags served to emphasize femininity, not only presenting life as normal on the home front, but

\(^{591}\) Guenther discusses fashion, especially in high fashion magazines during the war, *Nazi Chic?*, 213 – 232.
also displaying the visual differences between the heroic masculine soldier and the loyal women at home.

_Frauenwarte_, because of its female readership, provided the most explicit advice related to fashion and consumption. Although surrounded by reminders of the war effort, the fashion pages remained, to a certain extent, detached from everyday reality. Textual referents, however, reminded readers that the newest summer dresses or winter coats could be created or updated with fewer materials. This compromise allowed the visual elements to take center stage. _Frauenwarte_ continued to offer the most consistent advice on fashion to their female readers throughout the war.

While the _BIZ_ and the _IB_ included occasional pieces directly related to fashion, the women’s magazine included a two to three page fashion spread in each issue. The consistency of the magazine reflects the desire to maintain a sense of normality on the home front, even though the fashion spreads were surrounded by articles and images imploring women to give all they had to the war effort, to celebrate their work in the factories, or images of soldiers and portraits of Adolf Hitler.

The magazine included illustrations of the clothing as well as photographs of women modeling the new outfits – providing a visual cue that fashionable, well-dressed women were visible in Germany. The fashion sections of the magazine avoided lengthy articles and
descriptions of the garments, focusing instead on brief instructions or notes about fabric or colors. Presentations of the latest designs, like “Midsummer Evening,” published in the summer of 1941, from the fashion institute in Munich included bold photographs and short descriptors of the designs, pattern numbers and lengths of fabric required for each outfit (figure 62). While many of the articles used illustrations to show the latest designs, the photographs served as evidence that it was possible to be a fashionable German woman, even in a time of war.  

In its effort to both visually please readers and provide more practical advice, Frauenwarte included images of clothing that could be worn for different purposes, made out of old materials or articles of clothing. Beginning in the latter half of 1941, the magazine began to more explicitly remark upon the lack of materials and presented alternatives for their female readers, but continued to include photographs of fashionable women, alongside illustrations of the latest dresses, skirts and blouses that women could make from patterns, which were included in select issues of the publication. Throughout the war, the magazine reminded readers that they

592 For similar articles that incorporate photographs, see Frauenwelt, nr. 1, July 1941; nr. 2, July 1941; nr. 4, August 1941; nr. 6 September 1941; nr. 7, October 1941; nr. 9, November 1941; nr. 11, December 1941; nr. 14, January 1942; nr. 15, February 1942; nr. 16, March 1942; nr. 2, July 1942; nr. 3 August 1942; nr. 5 September 1942; nr. 12 February 1943; nr. 2, October 1943; nr. 8 April 1944; and, nr. 3 November 1944.  
593 See, Frauenwarte nr. 12, December 1941 for an example of making stylish dresses out of existing clothing. Similar articles appear in Frauenwarte nr. 13, January 1943; nr. 15, February 1943; nr. 1 July 1942; nr. 15, May 1943; nr. 5, January 1944; and, nr. 12, August 1944.
could remain fashionable, even amongst rationing and the burgeoning conflict on the home front. A “Page of Practical Advice” published in March 1944 is particularly telling. Small images accompanied advice for “What can one do, when …” followed by a litany of advice related to fashion. A number of the captions explicitly focus on “what to do” when one’s neckline or coat is *unmodern* or “out of fashion.” The page of advice offers ways to alter old dresses, skirts and coats to update their style and overall design. Both textually and visually, the women’s magazine attempted to balance practical advice for women, while still maintaining a level of modern, fashionable clothing. Whether it was augmenting and updating a blouse “from 20 cm of material” or fashioning a new belt to update a dress, *Frauenwarte* continued to visually stress the style of the German woman.\(^{594}\) Moreover, the fashion section constituted an independent space within the publication where women could gaze upon pretty summer dresses or winter coats with fur collars without any visual references to the war and few textual reminders of the conflict. A page of summer dresses, published in April 1944 included a photograph that, without any context, could have come from any of the pages in the prewar years (figure 63). On the whole, the women’s magazine made a concerted attempt to continue the fashion section for women. While stressing “practical” clothing (for both work and the household), the magazine was careful not to visually connect fashion with war, creating and maintaining a space of fantasy within the magazine.

During the war, the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* continued to present the latest fashions to its readership, commenting on “modern” designs. In photo essays like “New Fashion,” the

\(^{594}\) *FW*, nr. 1, September 1944.
magazine noted something that is “really modern” is a military-inspired coat. Hats decorated with fur or form-fitting dresses were presented to readers with short descriptors of the clothing or accessory, without mentioning the war.

The BIZ did not include a regular fashion section in its magazine, but used some space to focus on the latest fads. Much like the woman’s magazine, the BIZ did not highlight deprivation when it came to fashion; it was more playful in its approach to discussing what women were wearing. For example, the BIZ focused on items like new shoes, worn by pretty young women, with wooden soles that made “klipp – klapp” noises on the sidewalk. As Irene Guenther has noted, newspapers tried to convince women that these were “stylish” and “lovely.” In an article found in April 1940, the BIZ described the shoes as “beautiful” and “new,” providing visual evidence of three women joyfully “klipp-klapping” along a street in Berlin. An accompanying cartoon published on May 9, 1940 took a light-hearted approach to the wooden-soled shoes. Illustrations of a couple sitting on a park bench with their initials carved into the bottom of the woman’s shoe, or a woman who snuck into the house (because she changed out of her wooden shoes) to meet her boyfriend both emphasize a more playful discourse surrounding women’s fashion. The IB included a similar cartoon on its back cover issue of July 10, 1941, including drawings of a woman who wore her shoes

---

595 BIZ, nr. 9, February 29, 1940
596 See, for example, BIZ, nr. 39, September 25, 1941.
597 Guenther, Nazi Chic?, 239.
598 BIZ, nr. 18, April 30, 1940. A cartoon published on May 9, 1940 took a light-hearted approach to the wooden-soled shoes. Illustrations of a couple sitting on a park bench with their initials carved into the bottom of the woman’s shoe, or a woman who snuck into the house (because she changed out of her wooden shoes) to meet her boyfriend both emphasize a more playful discourse surrounding women’s fashion. The IB included a similar cartoon on its back cover issue of July 10, 1941, including drawings of a woman who wore her shoes
photograph of the sandals mentions that they come in a variety of colors and have become a “huge success” (figure 64).599

The BIZ occasionally stressed that women had to “make do” with what was available for fashion and style, but rather than presenting the lack of resources as a problem, it emphasized the use of German materials in stylish designs or concentrated on accessorizing, rather than whole outfits. In one fashion spread, “German straw hats from German straw,” the photographs of women were still fashionable and were ideal because they used German material.600 Only a handful of articles during 1942, for example, expressed ways to use less material or accessories (rather than new outfits) for the new styles. The article, “One uses 150 cm of fabric …” is one of the first articles presented in the magazine that includes a drawing of a pattern.601 The 150 cm of fabric could be used to create three new outfits for the summer. The images, including a woman wearing the fabric like a swimming suit, wearing heels and standing on the beach, posed in a typical model’s pose, while another photograph demonstrates how to tie the fabric backwards or another woman who created a hidden compartment in her wooden-soled shoes for her house key or train fare.

599 BIZ, nr. 18, April 30, 1940.

600 BIZ, nr.16, April 18, 1940, p. 363. See also the cover image of BIZ, nr. 10, March 7, 1940, which highlights a scarf made out of one of the latest German materials, “Fish leather.” The caption noted that the good quality lasts and it is an “original and interesting note” in German fashion design. A series of photographs published in May 1942 depicted three stylish ways to wear a scarf. The model, sitting in an outside café modeled the “simple” and “stylish” scarf that came in a variety of colors. See BIZ, nr. 18, May 7, 1942. For a similar article see, BIZ, nr. 45, November 12, 1942 which included an illustration, among seven photographs of women in scarves, of how to tie the “cascade” style for “fashion magic.” None of these articles explicitly mentioned conditions on the home front, but merely reinforced the idea that women could remain fashionable.

601 BIZ, nr. 27, July 9, 1942, p.395.
in different ways (figure 65). The accompanying text is significant because the BIZ offers a rare piece of “practical” advice to use an old piece of fabric to create something new.

Overall, however, the BIZ provided an instructional space for women related to fashion, but continued to present similar photographs and images that would have been familiar to readers during the pre-war years.

Fig. 66, IB. May 9, 1940
“From head to foot”
The *Illustrierte Beobachter* also avoided mentioning scarcity in their magazine while presenting their readers with photographs of women wearing clothing out of “German” materials. For example, the “new” German material called “fish leather” featured prominently in a photo essay in May 1940. The *IB* attempted to popularize dyed fish skins, developed by a fashion school in Frankfurt, by showing readers the fashionable alternative to fabric. Two small photographs depicted the process of dying and sewing the material, while two other small images displayed two new shoes—“one for the theatre” and “one for the street”—that used fish leather in the design. The dominant photograph, however, showed a woman clothed “from head to foot,” including a hat, blouse and gloves, made from fish leather (figure 66). The woman in the image is the prototypical representation of the commercialized modern woman, placed in an office, looking stylish and smart.

Illustrations or photographs of women’s fashions declined as the war years wore on and the magazine began to shrink in size and in quality. Yet, occasional photo essays like “Good suits in the Spring,” published in April 1944, presented four new

---

602 *IB*, nr. 19, May 9, 1940, p. 474. See also *IB*, nr. 9, 27 February 1941, p. 256 for an article titled, “Always more beautiful fabric,” detailing the process of creating new fabric designs.

603 Guenther, *Nazi Chic?*, 238. In addition to “fish leather,” the Frankfurt fashion school also used Plexiglas to make soles for shoes and even designed a bridal gown made out of the material.
styles for women from the “leading fashion houses,” including afternoon suits, suits for all day and a suit for the evening.\textsuperscript{604} The photographs portray the women in self-assured poses, modeling the latest fashions (figure 67). Even in the truncated length of the magazine, the IB continued to include numerous photos of young, fashionable women.\textsuperscript{605} Representations such as these detached fashion and glamour from everyday reality. During the war, the woman’s magazine used fashion as a space for “fantasy.” As shown earlier, the magazine was intent on providing images of women contributing to the war effort, either in auxiliary groups or on the factory floor. While the magazine did offer practical advice, they did so within a framework of “modern” designs, providing explicit instructions on how to update old-fashioned (or worn out) designs. Both the BIZ and the IB avoided mentioning the war at all when it came to fashion. Focusing instead on highlighting “German” materials, the fashionable “new” synthetic fabrics or wooden-soled shoes, the publications used fashion as visual proof of normality on the home front (amongst the lack of material resources) and as a space where readers could imagine themselves participating in the performance of beauty and style. Images of beautiful women were not only clothed in modern “German” dresses and suits, but were also presented to the readers as desirable bodies for men and perfect bodies for women.

3.2 Dreams for Men and Ideals for Women: Images of Female Athletes, Models and Entertainers

Images of graceful athletes, sun-bathing beauties and film stars filled the pages of the illustrated press during the Third Reich. As the Nazi Party consolidated their power, it was

\textsuperscript{604} IB, nr. 17, April 27, 1944
\textsuperscript{605} The IB did not hesitate to continue to place advertisements of glamorous women selling cosmetics or beauty products in its magazine during the war. An advertisement for cold crème and powders is just one of many examples of how the IB continued to promote an image of fantasy for female readers.
no longer necessary to battle political enemies using the body of the Modern Woman. Rather, the illustrated press shrewdly adopted the appeal of youthful, beautiful or glamorous modern women and placed her within an acceptable framework of femininity. These images functioned as ideals for women and on some levels, objects of desire for men. Markers of divergent conceptions of the German modern woman are found within the publications, sometimes with textual referents of “modern,” and at other times, echoing the visual language of images of modern women that were present in the Weimar Republic.

The following section first concentrates on representations of female athletes in the illustrated press and the divergent ways that the women’s magazine and general interest publications presented sports and athletic women to their readers. Next, I analyze a variety of images of models and celebrities, which presented a space of fantasy and glamour, prevalent in the general interest magazines, and frowned upon by the women’s magazine. Finally, I conclude with a brief analysis of how these images intensified and took on particular importance during the war, as reminders of normality and objects of diversion from conflict.

**Shaping a Graceful Body: Images of Female Athletes**

The body of the female athlete played an important role in the Third Reich, not least because official party rhetoric argued that women must maintain healthy, strong bodies for producing “Aryan” children. While ideology may have concentrated on the healthy body for reproduction, images in the illustrated press celebrated the female athlete, Olympic stars and ballet dancers as ideal Modern Women. During the Third Reich, the bodies of the female athlete were not described as “masculine,” too muscular or damaged, as they had been during the Weimar Republic. Indeed, the female athlete, whether through her grace on ice or playful meanderings on roller-shoes, provided “proof” of well-spent leisure time and the health of
the German nation. In the Weimar Republic, athleticism and sports were key features of the left’s version of the Modern Woman, demonstrating worker solidarity and self-confidence associated with equality.\footnote{See my analysis in Part II.}

While the \textit{BIZ} and \textit{IB} featured individuals as “sports celebrities” and concentrated on athlete’s external appearance, \textit{Frauenwarte} took the opportunity to analyze female physical education within the broader framework of the ideology of the Nazi party. The following analysis examines the ways in which the female athlete was linked to modernity through her self-awareness of her own body and participation in sport. At the same time, the magazines stressed the outward appearance of the female athlete, rather than her accomplishments, as well as reminded readers of her feminine or domestic qualities.

\textit{Frauenwarte} included a variety of images of female athletes, but connected the notion of “healthy mother – healthy \textit{Volk}” more explicitly than the \textit{BIZ} and \textit{IB} by arguing that healthy bodies were a prerequisite for reproduction. Because the aim was to reach “Aryan” mothers, or women were potential mothers, it was necessary to make sports into a space where all women could participate. A special themed issue on women in sports, from October 1934, included a variety of possibilities for exercise, including hiking, group gymnastics, swimming and a special instructional essay on exercises for women to complete at home.\footnote{NS-FW, nr. 8, October 1934. Accompanying articles and images include female dancers, divers and women playing ball sports. See also \textit{NS-FW}, nr. 1, July 1934 and \textit{NS-FW}, nr. 8 October, 1934; and, \textit{NS-FW}, nr. 11 November, 1935 for similar images. The \textit{NS-FW} fashion section also included clothing patterns for sportswear including ski-outfits (\textit{NS-FW}, nr. 13, December 1934), swimwear (\textit{NS-FW}, nr. 26, June 1937) and horse riding (\textit{NS-FW}, nr.13, January 1938). In a special supplement related to female “beauty care,” the magazine notes that regular gymnastics are important for keeping off weight and contributes to the overall image of the body, see \textit{NS-FW}, nr. 23, 1938 (no date).}
The photos show the movements step-by-step, much like the instructional diagrams found in
the illustrated press during the Weimar Republic, forming the healthy, female body. The photographs of female athletes are ordinary women, unlike the celebrity athletes found in the IB or BIZ. The women’s magazine attempted to create a “relatable” space for women and sports within its pages, rather than presenting the athletes as celebrities.

This approach is exemplified in an article and photo essay, “A conversation about the importance of physical education for women,” published in August 1936 in relation to the summer Olympics held in Berlin. Using the personas of a “young woman” and a “gymnastics instructor,” the magazine presented a dialogue intended to convince readers of the benefits of regular sports and physical activity and made a clear distinction between the “masculinized” woman of the past and the feminine, but strong woman of today. The article is illustrated with four large photographs, in each corner of the magazine, without captions, emphasizing women’s unity in sports. With matching sports costumes, the women play ball, practice gymnastics and run.

See also NS-FW, nr. 19 1938 (no date) for step-by-step instructions for daily exercises.

However, in a later issue, the magazine did in fact profile some of the female athletes participating in the 1936 Olympics, including Gisela Mauermeyer, a discus thrower, whose muscled legs and strong arms are clearly defined in her photograph. NS-FW, nr. 4, August (issue 1), 1936. The focus of the article, a “chat” with some of the athletes, discussed the women’s background and their previous sports accomplishments, but little is said about how these female athletes exemplified an ideal woman.

NS-FW, nr. 4, August 1936.
together. None of the women are famous athletes, but “everyday” women, unidentified personas meant to signify the possibility for all German women to participate in sports. Except for the photograph of the runners, who wear shorts and tank-tops, the women wear longer tunic tops with bloomers, close fitting, emphasizing their curves (figure 68).

The photographs serve to bolster the argument of the “gymnastic instructor” who argues that if every woman practiced some sport for one or two hours a week, “we would not only have healthier woman, but more beautiful women” whose “good body shape” would be preserved even as they age. We would also, she argues, “have more women with inner discipline . . . and not least we would have more happy women” who would be “better comrades of her husband and children.” Frauenwarte also presented “counter-arguments” related to sports in the guise of the hesitant “young woman” who wonders if the female Olympic athlete, and her “hunt for records,” is “unfeminine.” The “instructor” explains that the female athlete is much like the pianist, who uses her talents and her “whole personality” to develop her skills. These qualities “rest in us, in every one of you” and “for your objection” that this is “unfeminine,” the instructor asks, “What do you mean by ‘feminine?’

The young woman responds by stating “I realize that today, when many women are forced to take a job, the understanding of the nature of the typical female has changed. Also, in the ‘new Germany’ the emphasis has been placed on bringing feminine qualities to professional life and one aims to make the ‘masculinized’ woman of the past decades disappear.” The instructor quickly tells the reader that the new approach to athletics takes into consideration “the whole female body” and promotes “harmony of the heart, lungs, muscles and nervous

---

611 Seven months earlier, the NS-FW had presented a two page photo spread of female Olympic athletes in the magazine. The photographs were close-up pictures of the women, only a handful of them in their sports attire. The majority of the photographs showed the women in fashionable hats, wearing makeup and smiling into the camera. See NS-FW, nr. 18, February 1936.
system,” making a clear delineation between the image of a “masculinized” woman and a healthy, female body – which is vital to the “formation of the German nation.”

This particular piece, related to dozens of other images of the female athlete in the Frauenwarte, echoed the fears over the grotesque bodies of the “masculinized” women presented in the illustrated magazines during the Weimar Republic. The publication made the argument that first, female Olympiads were practicing a profession, like pianists who sought to reach the highest aim of their art, making the female athlete an acceptable figure. Second, asking the “young woman” what her definition of “feminine” was pointed out the malleability of the word in order for the magazine to emphasize that women brought feminine qualities to their professional lives, without being “masculinized.” Finally, through the voice of the “instructor” the magazine attempted to convince women to pay attention to their bodies, explicitly for health, beauty and happiness and implicitly for reproductive purposes.

Unlike the women’s magazine, both the IB and the BIZ were far less concerned with arguments that linked Aryan women’s health and reproduction. However, the images and narratives surrounding the representation of female athletes in the general interest press visually distanced themselves from the strong and independent type of modern woman found in the pages of the communist press during the Weimar Republic. As analyzed previously, during the Weimar Republic the Nazi party deemed “graceful” sports (ice skating and ballet especially) more appropriate and dignified for German women. Whether it was a “behind the scenes” look at the lives of female athletes, a presentation of “Olympic beauties” or the use of the female athlete to sell consumer goods, both the IB and the BIZ focused on female bodies and sports that exemplified their notion of femininity, and at times, domesticity. This
allowed the publications to present “exceptional” women within their magazines (as a type of celebrity), but within the boundaries of acceptable femininity.

Photo essays in the *IB* often introduced readers to female athletes using “behind the scenes” photographs that focused less on their athletic accomplishments and more on their appearance. For example, a photo essay on female ice-skaters included three photographs showing one athlete checking her gear, another signing an autograph for a young girl and the last woman sitting on the sidelines, knitting. Not only are the women practicing a “graceful” and appropriate sport, but they are also pursuing domestic, feminine tasks in their spare time. A short section of texts tells readers that “All the spins and swirls require strength and endurance, in addition to the flexibility of the youthful body,” but the photographs do not focus on strength or endurance, only their spare time. The photograph of the woman knitting reads, “Always busy! Victoria Lindpaintner, today a German world champion, uses her break to knit” (figure 69). Thus, while there is a brief textual mention of the women’s abilities, overall, the photo-essay focuses on their non-sport related activities. Other photo essays, like “Ballet Girls Take a Break,” published only months later contained similar themes.

---

612 *IB*, nr. 51, December 17, 1936, pp. 2159 – 2160. For similar photo-essays, see *IB*, nr. 42, October 17, 1935, p. 1674, which shows female dancers learning choreography while an instructor corrects their movements. The *IB* and the *BIZ* would take a similar approach to reporting on female actresses and entertainers as well, which will be analyzed in the next section.

613 *IB*, nr. 50, December 10, 1936. For similar presentations of female athletes in the *IB* see *IB*, nr.43, October 31, 1935; *IB*, nr. 33, August 13, 1936; *IB*, nr. 42, October 15, 1936; *IB*, nr. 27, July 8, 1937; *IB*, nr. 31 August 5, 1937; *IB*, nr. 33, August 19, 1937; *IB*, nr. 42, October 21, 1937; and, *IB*, nr. 1, January 6, 1938. One deviation
lacing up their ballet slippers or choosing costumes from a large rack of clothing are placed next to a large photograph of three women embroidering with the caption “hardworking legs and hardworking hands.” These photographs demonstrate the attempts of the magazine to provide readers with a “human interest” story while emphasizing athlete’s feminine nature, both in the sports they play or in stereotypical feminine pursuits.

As Katie Sutton argued in her article, “The Masculinized Female Athlete in Weimar Germany,” one strategy to curb the danger of the perceived physical equality between men and women was to create a “narrative of transformation.” This narrative included the juxtaposition of images, of women practicing their sport and wearing appropriate “heterosexually appealing” clothing in the evening.614 The IB took this same approach during the Third Reich, by domesticating the female athlete. While Sutton notes that images of female athletes “transformed” into women wearing evening clothes, smoking cigarettes and dancing, which are more akin to the commercialized image of the modern woman, the “transformation” of the female

614 Sutton, “The Masculine Female Athlete in Weimar Germany,” 34.
athlete, or women involved in sporty “masculine” pursuits during the Third Reich, domesticated women.

For example, an article with the headline “Sports Couple,” focused on Bernd Rosemeyer (a race car driver) and Elli Beinhorn (a pilot). Although not a female “athlete” in the traditional sense of athletic competition, the “sport” of flying a plane put Elli in the category of an “exceptional” woman. The accompanying photographs of the “fastest couple in the world” depicted Elli and Bernd discussing souvenirs from their travels and decorations in their home, including a machete. Elli, dressed in a long skirt with cropped hair, is described in the last photograph on the page as the “housewife” who makes one final adjustment to her husband’s suit before he leaves the house (figure 70). These, and similar photo essays, reminded readers that although women may be involved in more “masculine” pursuits, their everyday lives conformed to an ideal type of femininity suited to the domestic sphere. The connection of the textually-designated “modern woman” in relation to beauty products and sports was also a common theme within the pages of the IB. For example, the textually designated “modern woman” in the Palmolive ad, shooting a bow and arrow is similar to a photograph of a female archer, enjoying the summer sun (figures 71 and 72).

615 IB, nr. 43, October 27, 1936. The BIZ used this same approach in a photo essay published on May 25, 1938, which depicted a dancing couple. While captions noted that playing tennis, swimming and bike riding were also part of their training, a large photograph also depicted the young woman Ilse, curled up on the couch, reading a book, her femininity emphasized in a skirt and curled hair, as well as an image of her wearing an evening gown with her dance partner.

616 A photo-essay published in September 1936, “Our Olympic Champions are Back in their Professional Lives,” documents German female athletes who outside of swimming or running included stenographers, a kindergarten teacher and a woman who worked at a butcher shop. It is not surprising that the profiles focused on “feminine” types of jobs.

617 IB, August 12, 1935 and IB, September 5, 1935.
“The modern, sport-loving” woman, states an ad for soap, knows that “proper skin care goes hand in hand with sports” and that the “youthful appearance of the body must be preserved” through the use of their product. A “large percentage of women use Palmolive” states the ad because the “the skin remains smooth and supple and the complexion maintains its healthy color and young, fresh, radiant appearance.” Palmolive, as the ad reminds its readers, is “more than soap” it is “a beauty product.” The text, in its “address” to female readers, emphasizes qualities that women can obtain through the purchase of their product, namely, beauty linked with an athletic youthfulness. Ads for Nivea hand crème and Sparta crème also
utilized the female athlete in their advertisements, focusing on sun-bronzed swimmers or fresh looking skiers and ice-skaters.\footnote{Ads for Nivea or Sparta brand crème appeared in both the IB and BIZ on a regular basis. For example see, IB, nr. 34, August 24, 1934; BIZ, nr. 2, January 10, 1935; BIZ, nr.4, January 24, 1935; BIZ, nr. 19, May 9, 1935; BIZ, nr. 21 May 23, 1935; BIZ, nr. 31, August 1, 1935; BIZ, nr. 23, June 4, 1936; BIZ, nr. 26, June 29, 1936; and, BIZ, nr. 31, July 30, 1937. Although it was rare to see advertisements specifically for “sports” clothes, the BIZ did run a handful of ads for Hautana sports undergarments, the “latest innovation” that was made for women who played tennis or threw the discus.}{618}

The Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung was the least subtle when it came to presenting its readers with images of the attractive female athletes, focusing on appearances, rather than accomplishments. Although this was a strategy that the BIZ employed throughout the Third Reich, analyzing images from the 1936 Olympics demonstrates the contrast between the BIZ, Frauenwarte and the IB. Rather than “domesticating” the female athlete or providing lengthy commentary on the reasons for healthy bodies, the BIZ focused on “Olympic beauties.”

A photo-spread for the 1936 Winter Olympics, also held in Berlin, included five photographs of international female athletes, ranging from downhill skiers to ice-skaters.\footnote{BIZ, nr. 6, February 6, 1936.}{619}

The captions only mentioned their names, country of origin and sport. The explicit focus was on their looks, rather than their accomplishments. The BIZ took a similar approach for the summer games later in the year, focusing on images that looked more like head shots of film stars, rather than athletes. The
magazine, aware of its international readership during the event, published numerous photographs of athletes from a variety of participating countries and included captions in both English and French. An example of a typical photograph includes a quarter-page spread captioned “Beautiful Miss Dorothy Poynton. As a high-diver she won her first Olympic laurels in Los Angeles” (figure 73). The photograph, showing Poynton wearing make-up and a fashionable outfit, visually stresses her feminine appeal, rather than her athletic abilities. Although subsequent editions did include still shots from individual events, the BIZ printed photographs from events like diving or swimming, which emphasized graceful movements and female curves. Moreover, articles like “A House without Men” covered female accommodations during the Olympics and showed the readers women getting their hair done, dressing up for the evening and laughing together. These human interest pieces likened the female athletes to movie stars or fashion models and capitalized on their femininity rather than their athletic pursuits.

Throughout the Third Reich, the IB and BIZ presented its readers with “graceful,” yet “modern” sport activities. Both magazines published photo-essays, for example, on roller-skating. The BIZ in September 1936 remarked that roller-skating is “once again modern!” and printed two-pages of photographs depicting a woman being lifted in the air and a group playing “roller-hockey” in Frankfurt am Main. Less than a year later, the IB published their photo-essay on roller skating, featuring similar photographs and noting that with the

---

620 BIZ, nr. 32, August 6, 1936.

621 See BIZ, nr. 33, August 13, 1936 for images of female divers or BIZ, nr. 30, July 23, 1936 for a large photograph of three swimmers (from Argentina, Germany and the U.S.A.) wearing their street clothes, arms linked together. This edition of the BIZ focused on the famed German director Leni Reifenstahl’s filming of the Olympics, showing her giving directions, the design of new apparatuses for filming and techniques for filming a variety of events.

622 BIZ, nr. 39, September 24, 1936.
inclusion of palm trees and a swimming area, the atmosphere is akin to “California.”\textsuperscript{623} The articles emphasize leisure time and playfulness, with women wearing flowing knee-length outfits and lounging underneath the palm trees. This type of sporty activity was entirely acceptable within the boundary of female athletics, because roller-skating had been dubbed “graceful,” like ice-skating and ballet dancing.\textsuperscript{624}

The visual differences between the female athlete in the women’s magazine, as the “everyday woman,” and the sports celebrities in the \textit{IB} and \textit{BIZ} is striking. \textit{Frauenwarte} does not include images of “glamorous” women or famous athletes, but focuses on what they hope interests their readers – women like them. Moreover, with lengthy articles, the magazine provided a more detailed analysis of why women should strive to maintain a healthy body and distanced themselves from the “masculine” athletic body of the Weimar Republic. Both the \textit{IB} and the \textit{BIZ} visually focused on offering readers images of attractive young women, more similar to celebrities or entertainers than professional athletes. However, the magazine consistently focused on presenting sports dubbed “graceful” (as well as modern) and “domesticated” the female athlete, by depicting her as the housewife or participating in female pursuits.

\textbf{Movie Stars and Models: Advertising Entertainment in the Third Reich}

Movie stars and models were typical content for readers in the \textit{Illustrierte Beobachter} and the \textit{Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung}. The women’s magazine, \textit{Frauenwarte} occasionally published

\textsuperscript{623} \textit{IB}, nr. 30, July 29, 1937.

\textsuperscript{624} In contrast to the “graceful” movements of the German women, the \textit{BIZ} published a one-page exposé on the American version of roller-skating, roller-derby. Photographs depicting women participating in the “dangerous” sport of battling for domination, the “Amazons in Rollerskates,” as the headline proclaimed, bore no resemblance to the German modern woman. The photographs of a verbal fight, a pile of women entangled on the floor and a woman sitting in the penalty box all stressed the “sensational” aspect of the sport.
movie reviews, but did not publish photographs of fashionable film stars or celebrities. Indeed, as Dagmar Herzog has noted, *Frauenwarte* explicitly condemned the photo-essays from other publications. In the February 1940 edition of the magazine, a two-page spread depicted photographs of scantily clad female performers and glamorous women, juxtaposed next to fresh faced women dancing in dirndl dresses, doing gymnastics and wearing modest, one-piece bathing suits. The captions, “They think: Chic and cheerful. We think trashy and trying too hard” and “They think boring? We think: Healthy and beautiful” point out the magazine’s attempts at separating their publication from other magazines. The article, as Herzog analyzes, stressed that these images were “Jewish – all too Jewish.” These “enticing” images were not meant to satisfy reader’s imaginations or illicit desirable responses, but to chastise other publications, which did not have a problem providing sexy images for their readers. The *IB* and the *BIZ* printed similar photographs of attractive models, film stars and “bathing beauties” in their magazines. These photographs were certainly never pornographic, but arguably, reworked the more “eroticized” body of the Modern Woman into an acceptable form of femininity.

A modified version of the female “model” appeared in the December 8, 1934 edition of the *Illustrierte Beobachter*, which looked suspiciously

---

625 Herzog, *Sex After Fascism*, 41 – 42.
626 Herzog, *Sex After Fascism*, 40.
like a version of the modern woman found in the pages of the commercial press during the Weimar Republic. Beneath the headline, “Girls who smile on command: the profession of the model,” the lead photograph depicts a group of nine smiling women, hands on their hips, looking in unison toward the camera (figure 74). As noted previously, during the late Weimar period, the IB consistently linked modeling, fashion shows and beauty queens with anti-Semitic caricatures and rhetoric. The IB characterized this type of Modern Woman as merely a “commodity” being handled (physically and economically) by Jewish men. But a few years later, the tone and content concerning modeling shifted dramatically. The IB appropriated similar images of the Modern Woman found in the Weimar Republic, but modified the meaning by eliminating anti-Semitic rhetoric and providing textual evidence of an appropriate profession for young, German women.

According to the accompanying article, one of the goals of the only state-approved modeling institute in Berlin is to exhibit clothing on “living bodies” as opposed to the mannequins in store windows, which “of course, gives a very different impression.” The following photographs on the first page of the article exhibit some of the important skills that young women learn for their job. Images of women with stylishly cut hair are captioned “once again – walking must be learned. Here the steps are practiced in a group” or “‘Customer service’ is affiliated with the friendly face. Even smiling must be practiced, so it is not stereotypical, but rather, really charming.” The accompanying photographs demonstrate the importance of disciplining the entire body – posture, walking, smiling and the appropriate “expressions of the hand.”

628 The practice of including photographs to instruct women on how to walk, sit, or move appropriately was not new in the illustrated press. As discussed in Part 2, magazines included images of disciplining the body within
The photographs all emphasize the precise skills and complexity of modeling and the article continues by arguing that for “practical considerations,” the models must have a “beautiful, well-proportioned figure,” in order to show their “motions in a necessary balance.” Moreover, an “important principle” of the school is “general care of the body” including hand, skin and hair care, noting that “body weight must be constantly controlled and the proportions of each measurement between the shoulder and hip must always remain the same.” The female body, once again, must be disciplined in order to maintain a certain level of aesthetic beauty necessary for the profession. “At the same time,” the article continues, “the state-approved school assures to avoid the excessive foolishness of the Western European and overseas regions,” thus reaffirming the educational and professional aspect of the modeling school for young women.

Images of female film stars in the IB included celebrity photographs with captions informing readers of their newest films or photo essays which presented a narrative of a “day in the life of” a particular film star. The stage and screen sections of the IB promoted the latest stars in their upcoming roles, with the majority of the text merely noting their names and films. Clearly, the focus is not reporting on the film itself, but the women in the social circles and in some publications (like the AIZ or Weg der Frau) showed women how to use their body while working at home.

---

629 See, for example, IB, nr. 39, October 3, 1935 for a discussion of the latest film stars; IB, nr. 35, September 2, 1937 for a photo-essay titled “Hedi or Margo?” and IB, nr. 3 January 20, 1938 on two twin who are dancers. See also, IB, nr. 8, February 24, 1938; IB, nr. 11, March 17, 1938; IB, nr. 22, June 2, 1938; IB, nr. 5, February 2, 1939; and, IB, nr. 10, March 9, 1939.
leading roles. Other photo essays include “women and make-up,” demonstrating the techniques of the trade and “The art of the mask” with accompanying images providing step by step examples of what female stars had to go through before they walked on stage, applying “cherry red lipstick” or powdering their face before the curtain rises.630 These photo essays presented a narrative of beauty, transformation and an “inside look” at the lives of celebrities.631 The photo-essay “Brigitte Horney: the first in the studio” depicted a day in the life of the German actress, working on her film Midnight Waltz. The account of Brigitte getting in her sports car, drinking a cup of coffee, applying makeup (in three different photographs) and the last glance in the mirror before the shooting starts, focuses on the preparation for the day (figure 75). The accompanying text states that she is working from early morning until late at night, day after day, for the upcoming film. The final image of the photo essay captioned “a final glance in the mirror” depicts Horney after her make-up is complete. These “behind the scenes” photo essays, which were also typical in the BIZ, were a way to offer an entertaining narrative and promote the German films through images of female beauty.632

In the mid 1930s, the Illustrierte Beobachter introduced a new set of

630 IB, March 1937.
631 IB, May 1936.
632 A two-page essay on a film academy included studying their lines, taking directions from the director, etc., nr. 3, January 19, 1939. See also, IB, n. 17, April 1939.
regular photographs to its readers, women in bathing suits which served to emphasize the
feminine – not in the image of German motherhood – rather in evocative poses and youthful
beauty. The women, as passive objects subject to the male gaze of readers or representations
of an ideal beauty for women, remained unconnected to other content in the magazine. They
were not illustrations for a story or indications of summer fashions. Most often, the captions merely read “study in the sun,” “photo study by the swimming pool” or “Longing for air and light: Recuperation in the Sun” (figure 76).633 In the last photo, the eight women, “longing for light and air” are lined up on the dock, like sardines in a row, with smiling faces. Their feet dangle over the edge of the dock and, save for one woman wearing a dress, the rest are garbed in bathing suits, bronzing their legs and faces. It is no surprise that advertisements echoed these images. Nivea Crème, for example, consistently used the trope of the young, swimsuit clad woman in its half-page exhortations to women to buy their product. These images can be read as entertainment for men and the promotion of an “ideal” female body for women. Theoretically, these women could represent the “future” mothers of Germany, but arguably it simply did not matter. The appeal lay in the visual pleasure of seeing, of imagining women enjoying their leisure time on the beach, not in official rhetoric related to proper motherhood. Implicit in these images, of course, is the notion that these are “racially” worthy German woman, even if they did not emphasize their role in society as mothers or workers. I would argue, similar to the cover

---

633 IB, nr. 31, August 1, 1935, p.1198. See also, IB, nr. 29, July 18, 1935; IB, nr. 32, August 8, 1935; IB, nr. 29, July 18, 1935; IB, nr. 13, March 30, 1939; IB, nr. 19, May 11, 1939; and, IB, nr. 20, May 18, 1939.
photos found on the BIZ during the Weimar Republic, the female figure was a commodity to be sold to the German people. The following cover image, from the IB in June 1938, of two women in two-piece bathing suits and light hair (with the appearance, perhaps of cosmetics) is captioned, “It is summer again! A particularly pretty picture, that speaks of the joy of sunshine and water (figure 77). The cover of the magazine, used to quickly capture the attention of a potential buyer, provided an appealing image to readers. While the rural farm worker or nursing mother were staples in official propaganda, on posters and in rhetoric, the image of the slim, suntanned woman helped sell the benefits of the Third Reich.

Frauenwarte also included a handful of images of women in bathing suits, but presented her to readers as an icon of health, not as an object for the male gaze (figure 78). For example, a photograph of three women, their backs turned to the viewer; stand on a dock in their bathing gear with a caption stating that “For women, swimming is also a healthy sports activity.” Without textual clarification, the images could have been printed in the IB as another “study in the sun,” but the corresponding article in Frauenwarte, “Physical Education for Women,” written by Henni Warnighoff the leader of the women’s group for physical education, is intended as an authoritative discussion of the importance of good health for women. Noting that the working woman or the mother and housewife have little time for sports, it is important to carve out time for physical activity. Citing numerous possibilities for sport, Warnighoff notes that “healthy women” means “healthy Volk.” Thus, the healthy women in bathing suits in the Frauenwarte are textually directly connected to the

634 IB, nr. 23, June 9, 1938.

635 The BIZ also showcased some “bathing beauties,” including a cover photograph of two women in bathing suits fishing, with the caption “Far from the city: Holiday: a good time to pass the time.” See BIZ, nr. 26, June 30, 1938. See also, BIZ, nr. 18, May 5, 1938 and BIZ, nr. 22, June 2, 1938.

636 NS-FW, July 1934.
health of the nation and directed towards their readers, unlike the images found in the *IB* and *BIZ*, which remained objects of fantasy.

Dancers, film stars and models continued to fill the pages of the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* in photo-essays and sensational spreads related to the latest theatre show or upcoming films. The *BIZ* did not hesitate to include photographs of “American beauties” as well, including photo essays depicting American models and shots of Hollywood film stars.

Rather than focusing on German models, an essay published in December 1935, “Searching for a beautiful face for a soap ad,” shows a young photo model her “everyday clothes” meeting with Mr. Brown who is looking for a new face for the packaging of soap.637 The text merely describes the images and offers no criticism of the American business of modeling, noting that the “stars” can have four to five different images taken for advertising purposes on an average day. The photograph in the center of the page shows the director poring over a board of pictures of glamorous women, the newest model

---

637 *BIZ*, nr. 46, December 14, 1935. See also *BIZ*, nr. 9, February 28, 1935. See *BIZ*, nr. 21 May 23, 1935 for a typical presentation of movie stars and dancers in a variety show. See also *BIZ*, nr. 33 August 15, 1935; *BIZ*, nr. 36, September 5, 1935; *BIZ*, nr. 36, September 5, 1935; *BIZ*, nr. 43, October 24, 1935; *BIZ*, nr. 1, January 1, 1936; *BIZ*, nr. 6, February 6, 1936; *BIZ*, nr. 31, July 30, 1936; *BIZ*, nr. 38, September 17, 1936; and, *BIZ*, nr. 39, September 24, 1937.
standing at his side (figure 79). The accompanying captions do not claim that this occupation is problematic, disparage the modeling industry as a whole or draw any parallels to Germany.⁶³⁸

Film stars or entertainers in “behind-the-scenes” interest pieces in the BIZ, similar to the reportage in the IB, often include still images from films or women on the stage, but are surrounded by photographs of women in wardrobe, getting their make-up done or resting in-between sets. This kind of “celebrity journalism” allowed readers into the workings of a film set or behind the curtain at a show. The presentation of the stars outside of their roles also shows readers how normal they are. These images are also connected to advertisements which promise that women can look like a film star. The “film star,” of course, is the young, glamorous woman depicted on the cover of the magazine.

Fig. 79, BIZ December 14, 1935
“Searching for a beautiful face”

---

⁶³⁸ In 1938, the BIZ did include two photographs depicting “the most expensive hose in the world—made in Hollywood,” which noted that fashionable fishnet stockings can be available for “only” five dollars and a pair made for the film “In Old Chicago” are worth 250 dollars. The photograph of the film star and of a pair of stocking clad legs and heels provide evidence of American decadence. Underneath these photos, the BIZ included another interest piece, “One film, six stars, six hats,” with photographs of six actresses wearing fashionable hats that characterized the women’s role in the film. The juxtaposition of the two show that while the BIZ could present the shameful spending of money on stockings, the magazine could still present American film stars as part of their normal repertoire of images. See also, BIZ, nr. 19, May 12, 1938 for photographs of the “newest Hollywood beauties,” a set of twins who have “the same voice, blue eyes, brown hair” and who share the same “height and figure.”
A cover photo and inside spread published in July 1939 is a typical example of how the BIZ presented film stars to their readers.\textsuperscript{639} Behind the scenes of a movie, on a hot summer day, the magazine depicted girls in bathing suits, surrounded by the director. Nine women outfitted in matching bathing suits, standing on a stage, playing in the water or pausing during a scene are all pretty, youthful and young – the commercialized, modern “star” of the film world (figure 80). The text of the article merely describes the images, noting that the film star Zarah Leander and her leading man take a pause during the filming, or the best “girl costumes” for a hot day are bathing suits. Whether it was American models, German film stars and dancers or photo-essays describing how to use make-up to create the look of “the vamp,” the BIZ continued to fill their pages with images of glamorous women who remained objects of desire for men or ideal beauties for women.\textsuperscript{640} The interrelation between the photos of film stars and products which promised that women could look just like them demonstrates that the magazine provided images of visual pleasure as well as an “instructional” space for female readers. These representations fit into the research that demonstrates that the regime tolerated images of women who did not fit into what was

\textsuperscript{639} BIZ, July 13, 1939. Similar photo essays include essays like “Who is this Frau?” which reveals on the next page that the woman in the costumes is none other than Greta Garbo in BIZ, nr. 12, March 1933.

\textsuperscript{640} BIZ, nr. 51, December 22, 1938. See also BIZ, nr. 29, July 18, 1935 for a typical photo essay on ballet dancers, where the largest photograph on the page was of women resting between practices, wearing shorts that showed off their graceful legs. The BIZ also used entertainers on the cover, showcasing stylishly dressed women. For example see BIZ, nr. 31, August 1, 1935, which showcased three actresses, Carola Höhn, Maria Andergast and Heli Finkenzeller.
considered the stereotypical notion of the ideal “Aryan” woman. These women were the exceptional celebrities who were lauded and praised in the press.

*Diversion and Distraction on the Home Front: Images of the Modern Woman during World War II*

During the war, the images of women lying in the sun, frolicking in the water, or getting ready for their next film only intensified in the *BIZ* and *IB*, even while the magazines shrunk in size and diminished in quality. *Frauenwarte*, as analyzed earlier, continued to publish images of hardworking factory women and loyal mothers and wives on the home front during the war. Even as fashionable women received space in nearly every issue, the women’s magazine did not focus on glamorous or tantalizing images of young women in bathing suits because their target audience consisted of a different demographic. While the two general interest magazines did provide images of women in supportive functions, images of entertainers and celebrities increased in proportion to the rest of the content.

Both the *IB* and the *BIZ* included examples of German tanks, portraits of Hitler and examples of German victories. The male coded military technology stood in stark contrast to the soft femininity of bathing beauties or glamour of the film world. The images of women enjoying their leisure time or the depictions of entertainment on the home front also provided a complimentary representation to the photographs of working women. The modern woman during the war did not only provide support on the home front or work in an ammunition factory, but the modern woman on stage or enjoying her leisure time became an important part of propaganda to maintain morale or provide distraction for the home front.  

---

As historians have noted, the regime was painfully aware that maintaining morale on the home front was absolutely vital and mass media played a crucial role in presenting a veneer of “normality” and “distraction” to the nation.\textsuperscript{642} The discontent, protests and images of chaos on the home front during World War I was not to be repeated. Thus, the Modern Woman, transformed from her role as the “degenerate” woman who disavowed motherhood during the Weimar Republic, became a crucial component of the visual landscape during the war – to provide entertainment and distraction from everyday life.

The \textit{Illustrierter Beobachter} provided endless images of film stars, ballet dancers and bathing beauties in the pages of their shrinking magazine. A two page spread of photographs discussing costume designs for upcoming films included a photograph of an actress trying on new pieces to make sure they all fit properly.\textsuperscript{643} Her smiling profile, bare back and slipping dress provides a tantalizing glimpse of the female body, without being too overt (figure 81).\textsuperscript{644}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure81.jpg}
\caption{IB April 27, 1941 \textit{“For the next film”}}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{642} Ross, \textit{Media and the Making of Modern Germany}, 347.
\item\textsuperscript{643} \textit{IB}. April 27, 1941.
\item\textsuperscript{644} \textit{IB}. nr. 17. April 27, 1941. Accompanying images on the page include a woman pouring over fabric samples, a model being fitted in a long evening dress, a woman standing in a slip examining a ball gown and a pile of jewelry to match the dresses.
\end{itemize}
Similar articles were never visually or textually connected to the war. Rather, these images were evidence of normality on the home front and a site of visual pleasure and diversion for their readers.

The *IB* made occasional attempts to connect celebrities to the war effort, but always in a lighthearted manner. In October 1939, the *IB* printed two photographs of Marlene Holl side by side. The first image captured the dancer in a particularly difficult pose while the second demonstrated her commitment to the war effort by preparing packages for soldiers. The text notes that instead of handling “make-up and powder,” Marlene is participating in more important work for “our soldiers.” In a one-page photo essay published in February 4, 1941, a visit from the Höpfner sisters provided entertainment for soldiers on leave. The images depicted the two women showing the soldiers pictures of them in illustrated magazines and the “high point of the evening” included entertainment in the form of a dance especially for the men (figure 82). These photographs and text explicitly

---

645 See, *IB*, nr. 4, January 25, 1940; *IB*, nr. 15, April 11, 1940; *IB*, nr. 3, January 16, 1941; *IB* nr. 4, January 23, 1941; *IB*, nr. 10, March 6, 1941; *IB*, nr. 11, March 13, 1941; *IB*, nr. 14, April 13, 1941; *IB*, nr. 25 June 26, 1941; *IB*, nr. 33, August 14, 1941; *IB*, nr. 40, October 2, 1941; *IB*, nr. 41, Oct. 16, 1941; *IB*, nr. 47, November 20, 1941; *IB*, nr. 49, December 4, 1941; *IB*, nr. 11 March 19, 1942; *IB*, nr. 21, May 21, 1942; *IB*, nr. 23 May 1943; and, *IB*, nr. 23, June 8, 1944.

646 *IB*, nr. 42, October 19, 1939.

647 *IB*, n. 9, February 4, 1941.
demonstrated the role that celebrities played in helping maintain morale on the home front. At the same time, the tone of the text and the images is cheerful and avoids any real engagement with the war. The IB continued to do this during the war, showing soldiers posting signed autographs from films stars like Hilde Körber on their wall or presenting Hili Finkenzeller (a “star” of a new romantic film) on the front cover, signing autographs for two German soldiers (figure 83).

While the IB made a sporadic attempt to connect celebrities to the war effort, the BIZ presented female celebrities disconnected from any textual or visual reminder of the war. Photographs of dancers or film stars preparing for a new show or films were frequently photographed during costume changes or taking a break from a busy day of shooting a film. Photographs with the headline, “New Film – New Faces” informed readers that Annlies Reinhold and Lena Normann would play the lead roles in the upcoming film The Three Codanas about a group of trapeze artists (figure 84). The two lead actresses, posing for the camera are young, smiling into the camera, outfitted in their costumes for the film. The caption merely mentions the film and the actresses names, stating that they had

---

648 See, for example, BIZ, nr. 49, December 7, 1939; BIZ, nr. 13, March 18, 1940; BIZ, nr. 20, May 16, 1940; BIZ, nr. 36, September 4, 1941; BIZ, nr. 37, September 11, 1941; BIZ, nr. 38, September 18, 1941; BIZ, nr. 49, December 4, 1941; BIZ, nr. 7, February 19, 1942; BIZ, nr. 8, February 26, 1942; BIZ, nr. 11, March 19, 1942; BIZ, nr. 36, September 10, 1942; BIZ, nr. 5, February 4, 1943; BIZ, nr. 14, April 8, 1943; BIZ, nr. 28, July 15, 1943; BIZ, nr. 3, 29 January, 1944; BIZ, nr. 30, July 27, 1944; BIZ, nr. 45, November 9, 1944; and, BIZ, nr. 51, December 21, 1944.

649 BIZ, nr. 7, February 15, 1940.
performed in variety shows on stage and this was their first appearance in a film. The surrounding images on the page were similar, noting upcoming female roles for the latest Zarah Leander film, Maria Stuart. The magazine also presented still photographs from films, a “sneak peak” of what audiences could expect during an upcoming movie.

The IB and the BIZ also continued to publish images of women in bathing suits for their readers. Images of two Swedish swimmers training in wintertime (by sliding down a hill on snow, in their bathing suits) or lying outside in the “beautiful, warm, spring sun” reminded readers of leisure time (figure 85). A photo essay of a dancer in the Berlin opera presented Ilse Meudtner on her summer vacation, splayed on the beach in her bikini. One photo-essay published in 1943 made a note that women involved in the state news service did spend their free time at the beach and even captioned a large photo of women splashing through the water as “bathing beauties.” It is clear, in this last example that the magazine wanted to emphasize the women’s free time, rather than their work. In 1943, this also displayed to readers that contributing to the war effort also meant leisure time at the beach.

As analyzed previously, on the one hand, the magazines

---

650 IB, nr. 23, June 5, 1941. See also, IB, nr. 27, July 3, 1941; IB, nr. 31, August 5, 1943; IB, nr. 46, November 18, 1943.

651 IB, nr. 28, July 15, 1943.
attempted to show women’s contribution to the war effort in the workforce or in auxiliary
groups which expanded during conflict. On the other hand, the *BIZ*, much like the *IB*,
focused considerable attention on celebrities whose attractive photographs provided evidence
of normality and a means of escape for readers. This demonstrates the duel function of the
magazines, both as distraction and sites of instruction. With imperatives to “send this issue to
the front,” readers were reminded, textually, that the film stars and bathing beauties could be
viewed from afar, a memento perhaps for soldiers on the front.

By the fall of 1944, the publication’s size and quality decreased. Grainy photographs in
six page editions would often use a cover image of brave German soldiers, but the inside
content often remained disconnected from the war. Indeed, an astonishing array of
photographs of animals in the wild, grainy images of dancers, cabaret reviews and occasional
pieces about “working together” on the home front made up the majority of the content. The
general interest magazine used images of sunbathers and movie stars to present an illusion of
peace and normality on the home front. Aside from a few reminders of the war, the general
interest press provided distraction and fantasy in the guise of the female body. During the
Weimar Republic, more suggestive images of the modern woman were used to argue against
Americanization or provide evidence of decay. Now, similar images were placed within a
framework in which “enemies” were absent from the pages of the *BIZ* and the *IB*, allowing
readers to escape into a space which ignored the realities of war.

* * *

The illustrated press during the Third Reich continued to propagate their idea of the
modern woman, not in the farm girl with her kerchief connected to the country or the Aryan
mother nursing her child, but in images of the female body that contained the visual markers of female modernity continued from the Weimar Republic. While the images show continuity from the visual landscape of the 1920s, the magazines used textual referents to rework the photographs and illustrations into acceptable forms of femininity. As discussed earlier, the general interest magazines, in particular, created a space for both visual “distraction” and “instruction” which promised self-improvement. Overall, Frauenwelt concentrated on constructing their version of the Aryan woman bound within National Socialist rhetoric related to proper gender roles. I contend that both the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung and the Illustrierte Beobachter reconfigured elements of the modern woman, in part for entertainment and diversion, as objects for men and also as examples for female readers as alternative versions of the modern woman.

Representations of paid work in the woman’s magazine Frauenwarte depicted a wide variety of occupations for women, but defined them within acceptable boundaries of “female” work, where women’s special, natural qualities would contribute to the nation. The magazine also reworked occupations that were previously connected to the problematic images of the Modern Woman during the Weimar Republic, presenting the sober, hard-working secretary alongside factory workers and nurses. The BIZ and the IB retained the appeal of the secretary through photo-essays on “hardworking” women, who spent their afternoon break lounging in the sun. The Modern Woman, still portrayed as earning her own income and living an independent life, was not connected to anti-Semitic rhetoric, but modified to provide an appealing yet alluring image to its readers. While the Frauenwarte printed images of normative spaces of feminine work, the IB “celebrated” women who were the “only” female in their respective occupation. This type of reportage followed the strategy

of the magazine to provide more interesting photographs to their readers, showing out of the ordinary opportunities for female paid work.

Analyzing images of women in “trousers” and “uniforms,” during World War II, demonstrates the different strategies involved in promoting women’s war work and contribution to the war effort. *Frauenwarte*, in its typical somber approach, tried to show readers the necessity of war work, showing women’s duty to the nation behind the factory doors or within auxiliary groups. Even if it meant doing “male” jobs, both married and single women played an important role on the home front. The *IB* and the *BIZ* often took a more playful or light-hearted approach to female war work by emphasizing their unattractive yet “practical” clothing choices and their cheerful attitudes towards their jobs. Representations of women in uniform, or in active service in defense of the home front stressed women’s training and capabilities. Whether participating in the most “modern” air raid defense school or learning how to put out fires, the magazines allowed for a more flexible understanding of gender roles during war. Moreover, the publications consistently compared the hardworking and productive German woman to “enemy” women who paraded around in nightclubs wearing only a gasmask. Wartime propaganda in the general interest press attempted to assuage fears related to women’s roles in the war and at the same time, provide sensational reports related to the overly-eroticized enemy women, straddling a canon or “playing war.”

While images of paid work were a reminder to readers that women participated in the labor market, *Frauenwarte* also linked paid work to a particular life trajectory for young women. This included images that suggested that women could work, then find a husband and settle down. Representations of motherhood, or training for motherhood, constituted an instructional space for women that attempted to create a visual narrative of what should be
women’s goals and celebrating their contribution as knowledgeable and skilled “Aryan” mothers. The *BIZ* and the *IB*, on the whole, relegated images of mothers to publications surrounding “Mother’s Day,” choosing instead to create a space of visual fantasy with photographs of movie stars and “bathing beauties.” The function of the general interest magazines, in part, was to entertain rather than provide advice on the topics of marriage and family.

Fashion remained a contentious issue in the Third Reich. As scholars like Irene Guenther have pointed out, it was difficult to define what German fashion really could or should be. To be sure, women in dirndl dresses or practical clothing for farm or factory work were included in *Frauenwarte*, but rarely within the fashion section. This was a space in which the magazine attempted to convince their readers that buying and dressing German meant stylish dresses and coats which could compete with any other nation’s designs, especially the French. Accompanying information on patterns and fabrics allowed readers to create their own versions of “modern” dresses or fashionable winter coats. Both the *Illustrierte Beobachter* and *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* avoided lengthy discussion on German fashion, but did present readers with a handful of articles celebrating the German Fashion Institute, focusing instead on printing glamorous images of women as objects of fantasy. The *BIZ* in particular emphasized the “return” to femininity but continually stressed the “modern” aspects of garments that reworked “old-fashioned” silhouettes or fabrics into contemporary designs. This allowed the publication to distance themselves from the androgynous or masculine version of the modern woman found in the pages of the Weimar press. But the *BIZ* was intent on reminding readers that these were not the designs of the past, only influenced by them. The “transformation” of German fashion, visually and textually was not that
different from images prevalent in the Weimar Republic. Yes, the women were deemed more “feminine,” but at the same time, they were still “modern” women.

The Frauenwarte took a more firm approach to female beauty and consumption, explicitly warning readers that “beauty” was not created through lipstick or eye-shadow, but through natural products, light and sun. Holding the party line, the women’s magazine avoided advertising cosmetics and used images of blond, bronzed women as examples of ideal feminine beauty. The Illustrierte Beobachter promoted images akin to the “vamp” of the Weimar Republic in advertisements for beauty products as well as linked female beauty with romantic scenarios involving handsome beaus and content, committed husbands. Similarly, the BIZ ignored official rhetoric related to women’s behavior, including advertisements for cosmetics and cigarettes, alongside products that promised women that they, too, could transform themselves into desirable bodies. These images of consumption in both the IB and the BIZ constituted an instructional space for women which sometimes depended upon the very products that the Nazis, officially, deemed problematic.

During the war, fashion and beauty were not deemed frivolous or unimportant. For the women’s magazine, the fashion section in every edition provided both practical advice for “making-do” with what was available and photographs of stylish designs that provided evidence that German women could remain stylish, even during the war. The BIZ and the IB rarely noted deprivation and instead, took a more playful approach to women’s fashion, emphasizing how synthetic materials, wooden-soled shoes, or “modern” designs inspired by the military were stylish and chic. The absence of visual images of the war or difficulties on the home front around the images of fashion demonstrate that the publications first, wanted
to avoid explicit discussions of material deprivation or rationing and second, to maintain the fantasy of normality during the war.

The female athlete posed a particular problem for the magazines during the Third Reich, because on the one hand, a healthy, fit woman was necessary to reproduce “Aryan” children. On the other hand, the muscled or “masculine” athletes of the Weimar Republic, which had symbolized the “emancipated” woman, had to be tamed. While the women’s magazine carefully outlined the argument that the physically fit woman was not the same as the masculinized woman of the Weimar Republic, and presented group photographs of “everyday” women participating in sports, both the IB and the BIZ highlighted “graceful” female pursuits. Their photographs, whether focusing on the more “domestic” pursuits of athletes or images of “beautiful” Olympians were careful to present sport celebrities in appropriate female pursuits. Moreover, the “domestication” of women involved in sports demonstrated to readers that women still maintained appropriate gender roles within the home.

Models, film stars and “bathing beauties” provided ample images of entertainment and ideal bodies in the general interest magazines. Much like the “behind the scenes” photographs of female athletes, the inside-look at the making of a film or models in training connected images of female beauty with consumer products and the fantasy of become a movie star. Images of young, beautiful women enjoying their leisure time by sunbathing or splashing through the ocean remained unconnected to other content in the magazines. The modern woman, in two-piece bathing suits or starring in an upcoming film, remained commodities that not only helped to sell magazines, but functioned as ideals for women and objects of desire for men.
Moreover, during the war, images of female celebrities or bathing beauties only intensified within the press, creating an illusion of normality and standing in stark contrast to the images of heroic soldiers or examples of military technology. While the *Frauenwelt* avoided printing images of celebrities, both the *IB* and the *BIZ* littered the pages of their publication with signs that life on the home front still allowed for leisure time in the sun and exciting new films. While a handful of articles in the *IB* connected dancers or films stars to the war effort, in general, the magazines maintained a clear division between images of conflict and images of entertainment and amusement. Rather than bombardments of official propaganda, the magazines created a space for imagining and participating in a world that no longer existed. The modern woman was part of this fantasy, unconnected to devastation, deprivation and the brutality of war.
Conclusion:

Changes and Continuities in the Visual and Textual Images of Female Modernity

The analysis of textual and visual images of the Modern Woman in the illustrated press from 1920 to 1945 demonstrates the interplay between politics, media, the market and understandings of the gender order, all of which inform magazine’s presentation of their version of female modernity – and with it the broader reading public’s understanding of the concept of the Modern Woman as an marker of competing concepts of “modernity.” The growth of the illustrated press during the Weimar years, based on technological innovations and the expansion of new reading publics, provided a space in which different political groups could articulate their visions of modernity, visual and textually symbolized in their version of the Modern Woman.

This growth included not only the commercial press, like the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung which relied on advertisers for it success, but magazines published by or affiliated to political parties and movements, which had an interest in gaining readership within and beyond the members and supporters of their organizations and movements. In order to be able to compete and sell their magazines, publications like the communist Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung attempted to include material that was both appealing to a broad audience and
reflected their political and social aims. Illustrated women’s magazines, like the social democratic *Frauenwelt* and communist *Weg der Frau*, published by the respective political parties also tried to reach to broader female audiences in their respective political milieus beyond the female party membership. The party leadership allowed the leading female party functionaries to articulate “specifically female” interests and concerns – as long as they corresponded with the general party line and did not question the political and gender hierarchy in the party. The *Illustrierte Beobachter*, during Weimar Germany, was mostly dedicated to male members of the party, underlining their belief that National Socialism was a male movement. By the end of the Weimar Republic, the illustrated press – from the commercial to the political – was fully established and with it the aesthetic conventions of the illustrated magazines.

The illustrated press remained a popular form of consumption during the Third Reich. The illustrated magazines of the Left were quickly banned alongside oppositional political parties like the KPD and the SPD. But the commercial mass magazines, the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* and similar products, continued with great success. The *BIZ* changed little after 1933, continuing to appeal to more affluent strata of society, who could afford to buy luxury goods and products advertized in the magazine. For its mainly middle-class readership, this helped provide an illusion of continuity into the Third Reich and in their everyday life. The *Illustrierte Beobachter* effectively reinvented itself as a general interest magazine in the Third Reich in an attempt to gain a broader audience, including female readers. Beginning in 1933, the *IB* did not aim to function any longer as a space of political instruction for the mainly male followers of the Nazi movement. Its editors now wanted to produce an illustrated magazine that functioned as a site of distraction and visual pleasure.
The magazine eliminated therefore all visual and textual images related to anti-Semitic discourse and focused only on “positive” messages, with the implicit assumption that the images of women presented were “Aryan” women.

This study demonstrates how this explains the inclusion of images in the *IB*, which the National Socialist press had condemned before 1933 or that did not fit into their official propaganda related to women’s role in the Third Reich. The analysis of the general interest magazines, often ignored in discussion of popular culture in the Third Reich, contributes not only to the understanding of how illustrated magazines functioned but also reveals the extent to which images of the Modern Woman were used to signify “positive” messages and alternative versions of femininity during the Third Reich.\(^{653}\) The *N.S.-Frauenwarte* was the official party magazine for women, it addressed women who were active supporters of the National Socialist regime, leaders and members of the *NS-Frauenschaft*, the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (League of German Girls or BDM), and other organizations for women such as *Mutter und Kind*. It attempted to appeal to young women, who had spent their formative years growing up in the Weimar Republic, as well as older women, who were still single and employed or were mothers and housewives. They were supposed to be educated in National Socialist ideology and motivated to continue to support the Third Reich and the NSDAP and to try to win other women for the movement.

This study has showed that the illustrated press was *the* ideal medium with which different political groups could articulate their claims related to female modernity, which reached a far broader audience than film or novels. The inclusion of images and text allowed the publications to present complex and sometimes contradictory images of femininity which

---

crossed political regimes. On the one hand, the political press attempted to create their own version of the Modern Woman which fit the needs of their specific party and their vision of female modernity. Linked to paid work, the rationalized household, the athletic body or claims of women’s ultimate aim as a mother and housewife, these images of Modern Women stood in contrast to the commercialized version found in magazines like the *BIZ*. On the other hand, the need to speak to their desired audiences (in the case of the party political illustrated magazines) or to sell their product and gain advertisements that helped fund the magazine (in the case of commercial magazines), came into conflict with the explicit or implicit political agenda. In the Third Reich, tensions continued between official rhetoric and particular understandings of the gender order and female modernity. After 1933 and especially since the mid-1930s, when the National Socialist regime started economic mobilization for the planned war and during the conflict itself the necessities of the labor market and the war economy also informed the commercial illustrated press. At the same time, magazines attempted to mobilize the population and to create landscapes of visual pleasure and entertainment – a difficult challenge.

Based on these observations, the following sections will outline some of the most important changes and continuities from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich related to representations of the Modern Woman in the areas of paid and unpaid work and debates focusing on images of the female body.

1. **The Modern Women in Paid and Unpaid Work**

During the Weimar Republic, the figure of the young and single female office or shop assistant constituted one of the most contested images of the Modern Woman found in the illustrated press. To the public, this figure represented the expansion of female paid work and
was associated with the feared dangers of female “independence” and “emancipation.” The *BIZ* was one of the many commercial magazines that capitalized on this image, also popularized by popular novels and the new mass media film, presenting the New Women as both a consumer and a commodity. The *BIZ* “sold” this visually appealing version of the Modern Woman through advertisements and related photo-essays on fashion, but, true to its aim to entertain, it avoided any serious debates about women’s participation in paid work. This was also appropriate for the magazine’s main audience, the middle-class, who were also encouraged to purchase the products in the *BIZ*’s advertisements. While the image of the New Women found in the *BIZ* is congruent with previous research, my study demonstrates the visual reaction to this image from both the left and the right and thus its multiple variations. 

Politically orientated publications on both the left and the right heavily criticized the middle-class conception of the New Woman and her appearance in mass media, but for different reasons. Forced to respond to the popularity of the fashionable image of the young and single white-collar worker as an indicator of upward mobility in society and the promise of market consumption for everybody, both the *AIZ* and *Weg der Frau* attempted to dispel the glamour and fantasy world of being a “private secretary.” Reproducing images from popular films, movie posters or summaries of novels which focused on the “New Woman,” the communist press criticized the oft-repeated narrative that linked the female shop or office assistant to consumer goods, fast cars and romantic relationships with handsome male bosses.

---

Their strategy included juxtaposing images and discussions of white-collar workers in the “fantasy world” of commercial mass movies, to photographic evidence of the real working conditions of “real women,” rising levels of female unemployment and text which articulated that this type of white-collar worker was “not one of us,” but a “traitor” to class interests and class solidarity.

The Nazi Illustrierte Beobachter, during the Weimar Republic, used the image of the New Women embodied by female white-collar workers in diatribes against the degenerated and “emancipated” non-German woman. Printing more sensational or titillating illustrations of this type of Modern Woman (either being victimized by Jewish men or using their “overtime” in the office to engage in illicit affairs with their Jewish bosses) revealed to its mainly male audience the problematic nature of this kind of female modernity. Only in the early 1930s did the NSDAP begin to care more intensively about female voters and supporters of the Nazi movement.

The Nazi regime officially propagated the Aryan “mother” with a large number of children as its major feminine ideal, as previous scholarship has shown. Her equally Aryan spouse was, of course, the sole-breadwinner and the couple and their children integrated themselves happily in the German Volksgemeinschaft. This image was encapsulated in the iconographic depictions of the agrarian family. In practice, however, Nazi officials were quite flexible, as in other areas of politics, and well aware that the labor market demanded female white-collar work in shops and offices, and preferred as in the past young and single female employees. The needs of the labor market, in conjunction with the intent to reach a much broader audience after 1933, helps explain why the Illustrierte Beobachter harnessed the visual appeal of young, single white-collar workers, and emphasized in their visual
presentation a “modest eroticism,” but at the same time disconnected it from the discourse of degeneration and anti-Semitism. In contrast, the women’s magazine Frauenwarte took pains to de-eroticize the white-collar worker completely, praising her skills (not her body) and making the occupation of a secretary or shop worker appropriate for young, single women. This corresponded to the reality of its female readers.

Although the female white-collar worker was the subject of much speculation and debate in the press and remained a marker of female modernity throughout the Third Reich, other representations of female paid and unpaid work constitute important changes and continuities as well. Weimar publications on the left presented readers with images of other acceptable spheres of female work, both on the factory floor and professional occupations. The communist magazines in particular emphasized that “real” working-class women and her working conditions were visually not very appealing. Nevertheless, female paid work in all of its contemporary forms was presented as the only way for working class women to liberate themselves, because it gave them at least some economic independence from their parents and their husband and brought them in contact with other members of their own class. This was perceived by the KPD as the pre-condition for any form of class struggle, including women. The Soviet Women was presented to the readers as the model of the female future. She performed paid work in all sectors of the labor market and had become an equal partner of men in all areas of society and politics. The IB, in turn, clearly attempted to repudiate this argument. The discourse linking female “emancipation” to economic independence disappeared in the magazines with the elimination of the communist press after 1933.

However, a remarkable continuity related to female work between the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich is the reinforcement of the visual and textual narrative that women could
be trained for more highly qualified jobs, if they were appropriate to the “nature” of their sex and would provide skills and training for their eventual marriage and their tasks as a future housewives and mothers. During Weimar, the SPD’s Frauenwelt strongly articulated the need for women’s training and education in “female jobs,” while at the same time supporting women’s right to work more general against all attacks inside and outside of the labor movement. This was in direct response to the situation of the majority of working class women, who – as in the past – needed to earn a living and could not be sure if they could really stop working after marriage, even if they hoped so. Most working class wives either had to continue to do paid work even when they had children, or return to paid work when their spouse became unemployed, ill, died or left the family. The more qualified they were for the labor market, the better their chances to find decent job. In the eyes of the female editors of the Frauenwelt, the old middle-class argument that girls would not need job training because they would get married, was simply wrong. Moreover, the magazine emphasized “rationalization” in all areas of everyday life, housework, family work and reproduction as one of the most important aims of the Modern Woman. Working-class women, this discourse suggested, could be freed from the burdens of their households through the functional furnishing of their apartments and the most efficient methods to do housework, which would give them more time to employ more scientific and hygienic methods of care work for their children, spend more time with their families and even become active in the labor movement.

656 Hagemann, Frauenalltag; Mary Nolan, “‘Housework Made Easy’: The Taylorized Housewife in Weimar Germany’s Rationalized Economy,” Feminist Studies 16 (1990), 549-577.
During the Third Reich, the *N.S. Frauenwarte* continued with the propaganda of similar ideas, but now with a strong racial component. The magazine applauded women’s contribution to more professional (and desirable) fields of work, defending the idea that women should participate in paid work until they marry. Photographs depicting evidence of fulfilling careers as teachers, nurses or other “modern” professions functioned to illustrate the possibility for female employment for single, Aryan women, but it was presented as a stage in the life of women between school and marriage. A family and children were expounded as the ultimate aim for every woman, her fulfillment. The professional training and education of girls in the appropriate female jobs, the magazine argued, would provide them with the skills necessary to raise a family. By using their “natural” feminine qualities, women would first contribute to the nation through paid work and then by working in the family. In the presentation of these different narratives, as the study has shown, the visual images in interplay with the text were an important tool in defining women’s various roles that crossed political regimes.

The needs of an economy of “total war,” which was officially declared by Hitler in the winter of 1942 demanded even more flexibility in the images of women and paid work. Scholars have analyzed the mobilization of women for both the workforce at the home front and the military at war, not only as nurses but also as Wehrmacht auxiliaries, but this study examines the role that visual images played in this “mobilization.” It indicates that illustrated magazines played a crucial role in the necessary mobilization of women for war. At the same time they clearly defined the limits of women’s room to maneuver. The more the conventional gender order was questioned by the needs of a society at “total war,” which was defined as an “extraordinary emergency situation” and thus an exception from the “normal
rules” of the gender order, the more it became necessary to emphasize these limits and with them, the “natural femininity” of German women. Thus, on the one hand, the number of images of “women in trousers” in the war industries and public service, for example in the transportation system, increased dramatically, but at the same time their femininity, even modest erotic attractiveness, was visually emphasized again and again. The clear message was that these girls and women had to replace men, because the war demanded it, but they remained feminine.

Even images of working mothers were, after 1942, included, but they needed textual clarification which underlined that the nation required temporary female labor and the state would take good care for their children in one of the new National Socialist childcare facilities. More than 30 percent of the children between three and six were in a childcare facility during World War II. Frauenwarte reminded their female readers of their “duties” as women on the home front and presented photographs of serious and somber workers. During the war, the IB and the BIZ also presented images of women in male jobs. But they emphasized (even more than the Nazi women’s magazine) women’s femininity and showed mostly young women whose beauty was readily apparent in tailored uniforms. They focused


more on the leisure time of these female workers than on their factory jobs in the war industry, because this allowed them to show images of female munitions workers wearing swimsuits on the weekend or women involved in more “domestic” pursuits after hours. This reassured the readers that even though women were needed to fill in for men, who were drafted for the war, they still looked like women, had the typical needs of women and did their usual female duties in the household. These magazines concentrated less on textual rhetoric demanding female sacrifice and instead, provided evidence of cheerful, pretty, supportive women on the home front, which was also important for the readers of both magazines at the front. Not only the civilians at home, but also the soldiers at the front, who read these magazines, wanted the reassurance that everything was fine and as normal as it could be at home under the given circumstances. “Their” girls and women in the German Heimat did not change, different than the women of the nations of the enemies.

This last message was especially highlighted in reports on German women at the home front, defending the nation against air-raid attacks, who were trained in the most “modern” air-raid defense schools. The photos of sober looking female air-raid auxiliaries were contrasted in the IB and BIZ with much more eroticized images of British “enemy” women, who had turned gas masks into fashion accessories and seemingly were only “playing war.” These visual representations of women of the enemy nations functioned as photographic proof of their inability to seriously contribute to the war effort in their respective nations. Furthermore, the inclusion of sensational exposes fit the needs of the magazine to entertain and amuse their readers.

Another clear continuity, in all magazines during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, beyond the political spectrum from the far left to the far right is that the gendered
division of labor at home, in the society and in the workforce is never questioned. All political groups shared a similar understanding of the gender order. They all assumed “natural,” i.e. biological gender differences lead to a “gender specific” character and “gender specific” qualifications for men and women. In turn, these differences resulted in a “natural” gender specific division of labor not only in the family, society and economy but also in politics. Even the communist and social democratic papers who rhetorically insisted on “equality” and “partnership” between men and women, believed in the popular Weimar slogan “equal but not the same.” The major difference was their rigidity of its interpretation, the flexibility of the borders that defined the “appropriate” spaces of women’s roles and female activity.

2. Representations of the Modern Female Body

Representations of the female body, through displays of athletic abilities, fashion and entertainment also helped form competing images of the Modern Woman and provided remarkable visual continuity from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich. The images of the female body functioned to provide instantaneous evidence of the right kind of Modern Woman who participated in proper sports, wore appropriate clothes or paid attention to the health of her body. The images could also indicate the wrong type of modern woman, whose body was “masculinized” through aggressive sports or by donning men’s clothing and hairstyles.

Unlike the commercial press, magazines on both the left and right used during the Weimar Republic the female athlete and the discourse of healthy female bodies as an extension of political ideologies. While the middle-class version of the New Woman may be considered “sporty” and “sexy,” the AIZ and Weg der Frau constructed the female athlete as
a positive counter-image to the New Woman, who signified strength and independence through sports. Both magazines depicted alternative leisure time activities for working class women which fit the party’s desire for political mobilization and involvement in group sports as a school for solidarity. The visual images of athletes, defining strong bodies, were not attempts to eroticize the female body, at least not like the BIZ.

Women’s magazines, like Frauenwelt and Weg der Frau not only propagated the participation of young single women in the workers sport movement, but also informed their older female readers, who did not have the time for regular, organized sports about alternative exercises at home. They provided, for example, visual instruction on how to maintain a healthy body through gymnastic exercises or proper ways to accomplish household tasks. A very different type of instruction was provided by the BIZ in this area. Readers were educated in disciplining the female body in terms of learning how to walk, sit or enter a room properly like a lady. The difference between these two approaches emphasizes that while the concept of the “rationalized” body was shared across political spectrums, each magazine altered its meaning to fit its particular readership.

As part of their support for the “rationalization of reproduction” and the sex reform movement the illustrated magazines of the left also propagated birth control and a reform of the penal code. The demand of an abolition or at least a reform of the § 281 and § 218 in the penal code that did not allow abortion and of the prohibition of any public information about methods and means of birth control was perceived by the editors of the leftist magazines and their readers as an important step towards a healthy female body. They understood women’s goal to plan their number of children, because this was one of the only ways for them to control their expenses and their amount of work. They knew that most illegal abortions were
done by desperate married women, who were forced to risk their health and live because of these anti-feminist laws. *AIZ, Weg der Frau* und *Frauenwelt* clearly intended to support working-class women’s needs. These themes remained completely absent in the *IB* and *BIZ* before and after 1933.

The *IB*, during the Weimar Republic, used the image of the female athlete or sport to depict “natural” or “unnatural” activities for young women, which were all connected to National Socialist ideas of race. While supporting the image of the healthy and athletic young body the *IB* defined specific types of sports as “appropriate” for women. Alongside arguing that gymnastics, ballet and ice-skating captured the “natural grace” of the female body, the *IB* deemed sports like modern dance and archery as unbecoming for young women, which did not fit into their interpretation of femininity.

Throughout the Third Reich, both the *BIZ* and the *IB* continued to highlight the most “graceful” and “feminine” sports for women that would not damage their bodies, a clear continuity with the discourse in the Weimar Republic. Because their magazines were intended for a general female and male audience, they did not include lengthy discussions about female sports. This was left to the *Frauenwarte*. Instead, they printed images of the most “beautiful” athletes and focused on behind-the-scenes photographs of female athletes engaged in domestic pursuits, thus providing evidence to their readers that even these exceptional women did not overstep the boundaries of their sex. Whether pursuing the “modern” sport of roller skating in their leisure time or participating in Olympic competitions, the magazines emphasized their looks, rather than their accomplishments.

In contrast, *Frauenwarte* presented female sport and athletics within the framework of National Socialist ideology, connecting “healthy” bodies to the reproduction of the
“Aryan” race. Appealing to their female readers, the magazine focused on providing visual and textual instruction for healthy bodies, which included female appropriate forms of sport. Moreover, the magazine explicitly engaged with previous discourse which had linked sports to the “masculinization” of women, promising their readers that both professional athletes and ordinary women could retain their femininity, even while participating in sports. This magazine was obviously quite aware of the Weimar discourse surrounding “overly-muscular” and “masculinized” women and made a strong attempt to tame the image of the female athlete.

3. Fashion, Models and Stars and the Gender Order

Fashion, and related discussions of consumer products which promised to enhance or create desirable bodies, were important components of the Modern Woman in both the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. The BIZ propagated the image of the un-corseted female body; clad in short dresses and sporting the fashionable bubikopf in both its advertisements and fashion section. This image was more overtly eroticized and was used to both sell the magazine and consumer goods to its middle-class readership.

Competing publications adapted fashion to their own needs during the Weimar Republic. While some of the images, particularly in regards to fashion, are quite similar to those found in the BIZ, the textual descriptions alongside them points to one of the major differences between the publications based upon different audiences. The AIZ and Weg der Frau, careful to explain the differences between working, middle and upper class notions of clothing and the values they held, recognized the political value of apparel. These magazines couched discussions of fashion in terms of practicality, efficiency, thriftiness and class. The option of
sewing one’s own clothes, making something new out of something old, or modernizing outfits with accessories, offered more realistic solutions to for women, as evidenced in both the KPD’s and SPD’s magazine for women. Sections for women’s fashion for the office aimed to demonstrate that the AIZ, Weg der Frau and Frauenwelt, aware of women’s particular concerns, could present an image which incorporated the visual New Woman without approving of her behavior.

Two interrelated developments beginning at the end of the Weimar Republic exemplify an important continuity related to fashion and “appropriate” gender roles. The first is the condemnation of the “masculinization” of women and second, the desire for women to return to more “feminine” choices in clothing and hairstyles. The only serious apprehension that the BIZ exhibited during the Weimar Republic related to female modernity pertained to the perceived “masculinization” of the Modern Woman. Initially, images of more “masculine” women were presented as harmless and playful. But, they turned from a lighthearted discussion of gender crossing to an admonition of young women who adopted masculine dress and hairstyle to the extreme. The masculinization of women became a particular theme in the BIZ which shifted from acceptable modes of crossing gender norms to outright disgust at women’s adaptation of masculine characteristics, to eventual concerns over androgynous youth. The BIZ allowed no space for women to cross traditional gender roles it terms of women’s appearances. Katie Sutton, in her analysis of the “masculine” woman points out that this was, in part, related to fears of upsetting a heteronormative gender order and a backlash against the image of the emancipated Modern Woman. However, as I

demonstrate, the reaction or “return” to femininity did not mean getting rid of the image altogether, but visually taming her, while textually declaring her “modern.”

In the early 1930s, publications began to explore this “return” to “femininity,” showcasing curvier bodies and ruffled dresses. By 1933, popular magazines like the BIZ declared that soft hairstyles and full skirts were the latest rage. Even in 1938, the magazine noted that “old fashioned” styles were back in fashion. However, what is critical in this analysis is the relationship between the image and the text. While the photographs lauded women’s “femininity,” textual explanations consistently reminded readers that this was modern, thus adopting the textual discourse of the modern woman to images that supposedly represented more “feminine” fashions. I argue that what was rejected was not the idea of the Modern Woman as a whole, but only the more “masculine” construction of the Modern Woman.

Fashion also played an important role in the Nazi construction of the German Modern Woman. She was aware of her consumer habits in terms of the national economy, was instructed to supported “German” businesses and boycott Jewish business and foreign influences, themes which began in the Weimar republic and continued into the Third Reich. The analysis of female modernity, linked to fashion, requires a careful reading between the image and the text. While the images often echoed the visual constructions of fashion from the Weimar era, the text was extremely important in both designating the clothing “modern” (and appealing), while at the same time, reminding readers of the importance of “German” designs and materials. Frauenwarte recognized that female readers were not all interested in dirndl dresses and thus included sections related to “modern” fashions in each publication. Unlike the BIZ, which relied upon a readership who could purchase ready-made-clothing and did not necessarily care whether or not their garments

---

were “German,” the women’s magazine provided sewing patterns and advice on how to update their wardrobe. While rhetorically reminding readers of the efforts of the German Fashion Institute to produce designs that would compete with the French, the magazine attempted to provide the most up-to-date options for women’s wardrobes. Thus the press expanded the visual appeal of the fashionable Modern Woman that existed in the Weimar Republic to the desires of women in the Third Reich.

While the Nazis had an easier time situating fashion within the broader context of the German economy and linking it to women’s roles as consumers, other issues related to the “right” kind of beauty proved to be more problematic. The women’s magazine followed the official discourse which argued women should avoid cosmetics or smoking and advised their readers to embrace their “natural” beauty through light and sun. The IB and the BIZ, however, used their advertising sections to appeal to readers who had the means and the privilege of using cosmetics, smoking cigarettes or purchasing luxury goods and provided instructional space for women to create bodies that would be desirable to men, pointing to a visual continuity with the Weimar Republic. While official propaganda portrayed the “ideal” Aryan woman, clad in a dirndl dress, sans make-up and hair-dye, the general interest magazines used elements of the “vamp” or the more “sexy” Modern Woman to appeal to a broader public. Moreover, these images did not disappear during World War II, but served to inform readers that German women could remain fashionable and stylish. The woman’s magazine provided their female readers with advice and tips on how to “modernize” out-of-date dresses and jackets and make new dresses out of something old. Unconnected to the rest of the magazine content, the fashion sections in all magazines constituted a space of visual fantasy and evidence of “normality” on the home front.
The figure of the model, entertainer and “bathing beauties” continued to grace the pages of the illustrated press during the Third Reich. These images, once described by the Nazi press as “commodities” to be “handled” by Jewish men were reworked in order to provide a space of visual pleasure and distraction for its readers. While scholars have shown that German film actresses occupied a privileged space within the regime, my analysis shows that glamorous or more “provocative” images of ordinary German women, as well, were prevalent in the press.\(^{661}\) The BIZ and the IB promulgated images of young women in bathing suits enjoying their leisure time and the success of glamorous German actresses in their magazines, underlining the “positive” messages of the regime. While one could argue that these images signified that these women would or should become the future Aryan mothers, neither the text nor the images made such claims. Moreover, photographs of actresses in the dressing room or women sunbathing only intensified during the war, which supports the claim by scholars who argue that mass media and its function to entertain and distract became particularly important during conflict, when the regime attempted to retain a sense of normality on the home front. The IB did make lighthearted attempts to connect female celebrities to war work. However, signing autographs or providing a dance routine for soldiers, was not the same kind of “war work” that the Frauenwarte supported. These “modestly eroticized” beauties, tied to anti-Semitism and degeneracy during the Weimar Republic, signified an acceptable form of the Modern Woman during the Third Reich.

4. Epilogue: A second Post-war, two German States and the Continuation of the Illustrated Press

The differing constructions of the Modern Woman negotiated in the German illustrated press reveal the contested nature of female modernity during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. Contestations within and between the magazines uncover the complicated negotiation of femininities and demonstrate how publications attempted to present a multi-faceted Modern Woman to their readers, tied to different political and social aims. Crossing traditional periodization often employed by historians, I intended to reveal how visual images of female modernity can show remarkable continuity across differing political regimes. What remains to be explored, is how and why images of the Modern Woman were reworked the post-war world.

Already by the end of 1945, the allies quickly developed and instituted illustrated magazines developed for women and general audiences. The speed at which these publications began speaks to the central role that the visual media played in trying to define and support particular versions of a post-war gender order. Under the authority of the American forces, the women’s magazine SIE began publication in December 1945, with its main directed at “re-orientating” the German woman and offered practical advice, praised the Trümmerfrauen for their efforts in rebuilding the nation and lauded women who would become part of a democratic Germany.

The Soviets were quick to answer in kind to with their own illustrated magazines for female readers, Frau von heute which first appeared in February 1946. The thirty-two pages of images and text in the first edition included photographs of a destroyed Berlin, offered

---

practical advice for women coping in the aftermath of the war and celebrated women’s roles in rebuilding Germany, specifically with an “anti-fascist” worldview. The magazine, published by the Demokratische Frauenbund Deutschlands (DFD), met with continued success in the post-war years and functioned as a general interest woman’s magazine; publishing articles and photo-essays related to fashion, beauty advice, film, paid work, politics and family life.

During the 1950s, publications in both East and West Germany continued the established aesthetic traditions of the illustrated press and used the media in an attempt to navigate between the past and future of Germany as well as their relationship with each other. The success of general interested illustrated magazines like Heute and Stern in West Germany and the Neue Berliner Illustrierte in East Germany, alongside women’s magazines, suggests that an analysis of gender and differing representations of female modernity would be fruitful. This is particularly true, as recent scholarship has shown that gender functioned as a primary marker, especially in the context of the Cold War, for each state to differentiate themselves against the other.

Exploring images of the Modern Woman from 1920 to 1945 contributes to our understanding of how femininities are created, modified and contested through visual and textual images. This analysis raises questions related to the reemergence of the Modern Woman in the post-war world and emphasizes the continuing importance of scholarship related to women’s and gender history.
Bibliography

I. Illustrated Magazines


1.2 Published Primary Sources


Hermann, Elsa. “This is the New Woman” Weimar Republic Sourcebook, eds. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994),
2. Secondary Sources


Altschull, Herbert J. “Chronicle of a Democratic Press in Germany Before the Hitler Takeover.” *Journalism Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (1975): 229-238.


“Home/Front: The Military, Violence and Gender Relations in the Age of the World Wars.” In Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth Century Germany,


Young, Robert G. “‘Not this way please!’: Regulating the Press in Nazi Germany.” *Journalism Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (1987): 787-792.