Jewish Women in the Concentration Camp System in Germany, 1933-1945

A Study on the Intersectionality of Gender and Race within the German *Konzentrationslager* System: Policies and Experiences

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this Master's Research Paper (MRP). This is a true copy of the MRP, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that this paper may be made electronically available to the public.

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Abstract

This Master's Research Paper examines the experiences of Jewish women in the three women's concentration camps of Nazi Germany: Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück in chronological order from 1933 until 1945. With the exception of various early provisional concentration camps in the early 1930s and women's subcamps of former men's camps towards the end of the war, women were largely relegated to one camp at a time (Moringen 1933-1938, Lichtenburg 1937-1939, Ravensbrück 1939-1945). As a result, studying the experiences of these women as they were transferred from one camp to the next throughout the Nazi period allows us to examine how women's concentration camp experiences evolved and changed over time. In studying specifically the experiences of Jewish women, we see not only how gender, but also race, affected the treatment and experiences of female prisoners in these camps. Ultimately, the three main camps reflect both Nazi policies and social movements which affected how long Jewish women stayed in the camps, the reasons given for their arrest, and how they were treated and categorized within the camps. The secondary focus of this project was to examine life within the camps, how these women reacted to their imprisonment, how they survived months or even years in the concentration camp system, and how they interacted with fellow non-Jewish prisoners.

Organized into three main sections (one for each camp examined) with some subsections to focus on particular aspects of each camp, this paper follows the development of the women's concentration camp system in a chronological order. The lengthy introduction seeks to establish the origins of the Nazi concentration camp system, the particular difficulties in studying Jewish and female prisoners in the earliest camps, the subject of gender in historical analysis, and the available historiography on this topic. The section on Moringen is divided into two parts. The first section deals with the organization of the Moringen concentration camp, including an examination of the available primary sources which discuss the separation of Jewish women into their own "*Judensaal*" (Jewish Hall). The second section examines daily life within Moringen. Lichtenburg is examined in only one section, both because it served as a women's camp for just over one year and because there are few sources dedicated to this camp. The final two sections examine Ravensbrück. Part 1 deals with the first period (1939-1942) in which Jewish women were imprisoned in the camp, ending with the final deportations of Jewish women to Auschwitz in the Fall of 1942 after which the camp remained "*Judenrein*" ("free of Jews") for a short while. Part 2 on Ravensbrück deals with the late war years in the camp and the declining conditions from 1943 until liberation in 1945 during which thousands of Jewish women entered the camp from eastern camps and ghettos.

This paper contributes to the historiography on gender and race in the German concentration camp system by examining both the development of the concentration camp system for women and the particular experiences and daily life and survival of Jewish women from 1933 until 1945.

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The experiences of Jewish people in the Nazi concentration camps continue to be one of the most well-researched topics within Holocaust literature. However, while much Holocaust scholarship has focused on men or generalized prisoner experiences, the distinct experiences of Jewish women within German camps remain an underexplored yet crucial subject to understanding Nazi racial and gender policies. Looking at Jewish women's experiences in the German camps from 1933 until 1945 reveals how the treatment of Jewish women, both *as women* and *as Jewish,* changed drastically over the 12-year Nazi period as the Nazi strategies shifted from encouraging emigration, to annihilation and labour extraction, to complete chaos in the final months of the war. While experiences vary by individual and by camp, key themes of survival through mutual female support (in many although certainly not all cases), ingenuity, and determination emerge. With the exception of Sinti and Roma women who experienced a similar trajectory (but were labelled "asocials"), it was Jewish women who were singled out on racial grounds as early as the mid–1930s and who faced isolation, punitive measures and threat of annihilation solely based on the "racial" designation the Nazis had imposed upon them. Whether they experienced their arrest and the camps in a similar manner to non-Jewish prisoners or whether they were explicitly targeted and singled out on account of their "racial" and religious identity—Jewish women never experienced the camps as "just women" but as *Jewish* women—designated and identified as Jewish from the beginning and treated accordingly at every stage. In studying their particular experiences, we get not only a sense of women's survival in the concentration camps and that of Jewish inmates, but also of the unique circumstances in which Jewish experiences of the Holocaust in the early camps and Jewish religious and cultural identity, as well as gender, directly dictated survival strategies within the camp system. Focusing on the three main camps, Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück, which together spanned

almost the entirety of the 12-year Third Reich, studying specifically Jewish women in the Nazi camp system reveals how the Nazi approach towards race and gender changed and shifted over the years and how the experiences of Jewish women in these camps reflected Nazi policies in the KZ system.

Although the death camps and the most infamous concentration camp of Auschwitz are located in Poland, it was in the concentration camps of Germany that women were first incarcerated as early as 1933, and it was in German concentration camps that the last female prisoners were liberated in the spring of 1945. Women were incarcerated in German concentration camps for the entire Nazi period of 1933 to 1945, with an unknown number represented in the early ad hoc camps of 1933. With the exception of two months in the fall of 1942, and uncertainty about 1933, Jewish women were a continually represented demographic among these prisoners. Women were arrested alongside men in the earliest roundups of March and April of 1933 and brought to various makeshift concentration camps but it is unclear how many (if any) happened to be Jewish. However, by the time the first women's concentration camp of Moringen became an official part of the KZ system in 1934, at least one Jewish woman was among the protective custody inmates in the camp. Indeed, Jewish women continually made up 10-15% of the pre-war female prisoner population in both Moringen and Lichtenburg (1933–1939) and were among the first inmates to be sent to Ravensbrück in May of 1939.[1] The

[1] The statistic of Jewish women making up 10-15% of the concentration camp system population in both Moringen and Lichtenburg is based on the works of Kim Wünschmann [see: Kim Wünschmann: *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Prewar Concentration Camps* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015): pp. 131]; and Henning Fahrenberg and Nicole Hördler [see: Henning Fahrenberg and Nicole Hördler, "Das Frauen-Konzentrationslager Lichtenburg: Einblicke, Funktion, Tendenzen," in *Lichtenburg: Ein deutsches Konzentrationslager,* edited by Stefan Hördler and Sigrid Jacobeit (Berlin: Metropol, 2009): pp. 168-69], among various other secondary and primary sources consulted for this project. Additionally, Judith Buber Agassi estimates that Jewish women made up around 14.2% of the prisoner population of Ravensbrück in 1939 and about 9.5% by early 1942. See: Judith Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück: Who Were They?* (Lubbock TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2007): p. 47. This is a significant overrepresentation as Jews in Germany accounted for less than 1% (about 525,000 in 1933, or 0.7%) of the German population with Jewish women accounting for about half that number in 1933 (52.3% of Jews) and about 57.5% by 1939. See: Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): pp. 10-11,

pre-war camps were primarily a German-Jewish experience with some Austrians trickling into the camp system after the Anschluss of March 1938. With the advent of war, the camps became more diversified, which came with further challenges for prisoners who no longer always shared a common language in which to communicate with fellow prisoners.

As time went on, the camps also became more deadly for Jewish women. Many who had survived Moringen and Lichtenburg only to be transferred to Ravensbrück in May of 1939 were transported to the gas chambers of Bernburg and murdered there in the winter and spring of 1942. Others succumbed to the worsening malnourishment, mistreatment, unhygienic conditions, forced labour, and disease. By October of 1942, all remaining Jewish prisoners in Ravensbrück had been deported to Auschwitz. The camp remained "Judenrein" only until December, before Jewish women were once again transported through its gates, and the camp would continue to have Jewish prisoners until the end of the war.[2] From the Summer of 1944 onward and into the final months of the war, the influx of Jewish prisoners into Ravensbrück and subcamps of formerly male–only camps drastically increased, as did the influx into Bergen–Belsen, which had kept POWs from 1939 until early 1945, in addition to taking on the role of a prisoner exchange camp in April 1943. The so-called women's camp in Bergen-Belsen opened in August 1944. Other camps were increasingly taking in women and children as well. Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Neuengamme, Gross–Rosen, Flossenbürg, and even the infamous men's camp of Dachau now had subcamps for female prisoners, among them Jewish women. However, Ravensbrück remained the main camp for women and experienced severe overcrowding at its peak from the fall of 1944 to the winter of 1945. The decision to focus this project on the three

and 142-143.For more on the Jewish population and demographics in Germany and Austria in 1939, see: Bruno Blau, "The Jewish Population of Germany 1939-1945," *Jewish Social Studies* 12, no. 2 (1950): 161-172.

[2] Rochelle G. Saidel. *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004): 17.

main camps was made not only to highlight the importance of the three exclusively female camps (regardless of men being held in separate KZ sections in both Moringen and Ravensbrück) and the linear timeline that can be reconstructed where the prisoner population moves from one camp to the next but it also reflects the finding that delving into every German camp which housed Jewish women would require a much more intensive and much larger project than was originally intended here. A comprehensive work dedicated entirely to Jewish women in all of the German camps, both the three main camps examined here and the many subcamps of the late-war years, has not yet been published.

In the early camps, most of the Jewish women were German nationals of all walks of life, ranging in age from their late teens to middle age and beyond, some were highly educated upper-class women, while others had worked the streets for a living. Towards the end of the war, the demographics had changed. The majority of Jewish women and girls who had survived this long were young women (or passed as such) who had been deemed "fit to work" and who, through sheer luck of circumstances, had evaded death from starvation, disease, and random chance selections. Most of the Jewish women in this late stage were either Polish or Hungarian—the latter experiencing ghettoization and the Eastern concentration camps and death camps much later into the war (1944) than those of other nationalities. However, Greek, German, Austrian, Byelorussian, Dutch, French, Italian, and numerous other nationalities were also represented among Jewish women in Ravensbrück and elsewhere. Many women experienced several camps before liberation, moving steadily North to Bergen-Belsen or South to Mauthausen (in Austria) as the Allies closed in from both the Western and the Eastern fronts, and some were liberated along the way. Many of the Jewish women and girls who wound up in Bergen–Belsen at war's end were nursed back to health by the British troops in the post-war

camp's hospital. It was also in Bergen-Belsen where many continued to stay after they had recovered, either unwilling or unable to go back to their countries of origin. Bergen–Belsen became the largest DP Camp for Jews in post-war Germany, lasting until 1950, and the grounds for a new sort of camp experience for those Jews unable to leave what had once been the site of their imprisonment and immense suffering in the final months of the Holocaust. In the immediate post-war years, the experiences of Jewish women in these concentration camps were not a point of interest. The emerging West German Republic was focused on rebuilding and moving on from the war; in East Germany, the concentration camp experiences of Communist victims were at the forefront of academic interest and state propaganda. The distinct experiences of racialized groups and gender had little bearing on scholarship on the concentration camps.

Research on the experiences of women in the Holocaust as distinct from those of men has been a slow but ongoing process even into the 21st century. However, the intersectionality of being both female *and Jewish* continues to be a rarely prodded topic within broader discourse on both women in the Holocaust and experiences within the concentration camp. This is despite the fact that Jewish women and girls are one of the most widely recognized victim groups of the Holocaust outside of academic scholarship, where the persecution and murder of women, especially young women and girls, has come to represent the depths of Nazi depravity. Anne Frank, one of the most widely recognized faces of Holocaust victims, comes to mind, as does the fictional "girl in the red coat" depicted in Steven Spielberg's 1993 film *Schindler's List.* Some of the most haunting and infamous photographic evidence of the Holocaust depicts the rounding up of women and children, from the Warsaw Ghetto to the platform of Auschwitz–Birkenau. There is something even now about the perceived passivity of women and children (for where there are children, there are usually women) in the Holocaust that has made them both the most visible

and easily recognizable victims of the camps and yet still overlooked in the academic discourse. Where men have received the most academic attention, they have rarely if ever done so as "men" but rather as "prisoners" or some other genderless form in which they become victims or survivors separated at most by racial, political, or religious distinction. Indeed, gender rarely surfaces as a consideration unless the subject deals with women and girls or with the feminine or perhaps with a subversion of the masculine, and here I must confess that by writing this very acknowledgement, my study may fall into the same trap. Although there have been studies of men in concentration camps with a gender consideration (Sebastian Huebel's's excellent 2022 study on Jewish men in *Fighter, Worker, and Family Man: German-Jewish Men and Their Gendered Experiences in Nazi Germany, 1933-1941* comes to mind as a rare example)[3] it is continually the burden of those engaging with women's history to explain why the lens of gender matters.

Jane Caplan, too, has addressed the pitfalls of gendering women's history while ignoring the lens as a factor when considering men's experiences. "On the one hand, marked categories like women and homosexuals are segregated into specialized studies as groups that were peculiarly the objects of gendered policies and whose members therefore had inherently gendered experiences," Caplan writes on the topic of gender in studies on the concentration camps, "On the other hand, the unmarked male ostensibly escapes gender altogether."[4] Indeed, the lack of gendering of Holocaust experiences essentially precluded the experiences of women from being considered at an academic level in a way that acknowledged the different challenges women had faced in comparison to men. The first serious academic discussion on the unique

[3] Sebastian Huebel, "Inside the KZ: Jewish Masculinities in Prewar Nazi Concentration Camps," in *Fighter, Worker, and Family Man: German-Jewish Men and Their Gendered Experiences in Nazi Germany, 1933-1941* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022).
[4] Jane Caplan, "Gender and the concentration camps," in *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany: The New Histories* edited by Jane Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann (New York: Routledge, 2010): 84.

experiences of women in the Holocaust took place in New York in 1983 at the Conference on "Women Surviving the Holocaust," the proceedings of which have been edited for publication by its organizers, Esther Katz and Joan Miriam Ringelheim. Henry Friedlander, assigned to the panel on women in concentration camps, began his remarks by stating that "I must confess that not much is known about the specific experiences of women in the camps; almost all histories have concentrated on the experiences of men."[5] Remarkably, however, a further panel interviewing survivors touched on the topics of menstruation and lesbian relationships within the camps.[6] Scholarship on women in the Holocaust continued slowly, almost imperceptibly into the following decade. As Marion Kaplan notes in a fairly recent (2019) article, there was still backlash even into the 1990s, with conservatives pushing back against what they perceived as feminists seeking to "use" the experiences of women during the Holocaust to push their own agenda and "privilege" the experiences of women above that of men.[7] Thankfully, since then, research into women's experiences during the Holocaust has been a growing topic, though the intersectionality of gender with "race" and "religion" in this particular topic is still lacking.

I do not consider myself a gender historian and agree with Jane Caplan's assessment that any study would benefit from the lens of gender as it does the lens of race, class, age, or other factors in the identity of the group being studied.[8] In acknowledging gender as one of the primary

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[5] Esther Katz and Joan Miriam Ringelheim, eds, *Proceedings of the Conference on Women Surviving: The Holocaust* (New York: The Institute for Research in History, 1983): p. 105. Although this panel was an important start, research since the conference somewhat contradicts Friedlander's claims that women were almost never treated violently in custody, that they were rarely politically involved (because they did not hold leading positions, which was true), or that Jewish women "were rarely placed in concentration camps during the 1930s." (p. 109). (As stated earlier, Jewish women made up 10-15% of female inmates in Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück, which meant they were statistically overrepresented—German Jews alone made up less than 1% of the German population between 1933 and 1939 with that number dwindling further every year). Friedlander also does not mention Moringen at all—acknowledging Lichtenburg as the first camp to hold women before quickly moving on to Ravensbrück as the first "permanent concentration camp for women" (p. 107).

[6] Katz and Ringelheim, *Proceedings of the Conference on Women Surviving,* pp. 135-137, 138-142.

[7] Marion Kaplan, "Did Gender Matter during the Holocaust?" *Jewish Social Studies* 24, no. 2 (2019): p. 38.

[8] Caplan writes poignantly in her conclusion: "...the concentration camp violated and re-made men's identities in different ways from women's. As this chapter has suggested, of all the sites and operations of gender, those in which

lenses of my study, I simply aim to make my reader aware of its implicit importance, as I, too, have been made aware of it by Caplan and other scholars better than myself. The aim of my study is not to compare and contrast the experiences of Jewish women to those of Jewish men as Marion Kaplan advocates for in her article (although this too would be a fascinating topic), but rather to examine the concentration camp experiences of Jewish women, which at times resembled the experiences of other female inmate groups and at others were uniquely impacted by their Jewish identity.[9] How Jewish women were treated in custody, indeed sometimes the circumstances of their arrest, even in the mid-1930s, must be read in the context of their designation as Jewish (whether they themselves identified as Jewish or not), as we shall see with those arrested for "race-defilement" or as "reemigrants." Additionally, Jewish women were separated from non-Jewish women as early as the mid-1930s when four inmate "Halls" were established in Moringen, including a *Judensaal.*[10] This separation became even more stringently enforced in Lichtenburg, where Jewish women were housed with Sinti and Roma and women arrested for prostitution and then in Ravensbrück, where Jewish women were housed in separate barracks and became some of the first victims of gassings at Ravensbrück. In the turmoil of the late-war influx of Jewish women into Ravensbrück and various subcamps of the women's camp and former men's camps, Jewish women also experienced exemptions from being sent to camp brothels on the grounds that their "inferior" racial status made them unfit for such abuses and the deteriorating conditions in some ways evened the field between different prisoner groups as the

men are entangled are the most difficult to uncover, precisely because their normative status makes them self-evident and therefore inconspicuous." Caplan, "Gender and the Concentration Camp," p. 99.

[9] Kaplan, "Did Gender Matter during the Holocaust?," p. 47. In her conclusion Kaplan writes: "The big job awaiting all Holocaust historians is the need for a gendered analysis. We need to more fully incorporate women's life stories as primary tools of analysis and to pay attention, as well, to how these differed or stayed the same as those of Jewish men. I do not mean simply "women and ..." but real comparisons between Jewish women and men as well as the relationships between the two genders."

[10] The exact date for the establishment of these four halls is difficult to pinpoint, secondary sources on Moringen mention the existence of four halls but not when they were first organized. Possible timeframes for the separation of Jewish women from the other inmates will be discussed in the first section on Moringen.

Nazis desperately balanced murder of prisoners with sustaining economic endeavors through slave labour. The sometimes communal dynamics which had existed for many women in the pre-war camps also greatly deteriorated in this last phase. While many women continued to try and help friends and family in the camp, the rampant spread of disease, increasing hunger, and deadly conditions within the camp made group survival increasingly costly.

Jews, Women, and the Early Concentration Camps: Overview and Difficulties

The experiences of Jewish women and of female detainees in general are directly linked with the development of the concentration camps. To understand Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück, one must also understand the development of the camp system and the presence of women in these earliest camps. Following the Reichstag Fire Decree, the SA and SS quickly tracked down known and suspected dissenters, political opponents (especially members of the KPD and SPD), and other undesirables and put them into "protective custody." The process often resembled a grass-roots movement in which local members of the SA and SS, with assistance from the Stahlhelm, Gestapo, and local police, rounded up and arrested dissenters in their communities—often with the help of local residents who, out of genuine enthusiasm for the Nazi regime or for personal gain, denounced their neighbours to the Nazis. The first official concentration camp, Dachau, opened on March 22nd, 1933. However, dozens of ad hoc "concentration camps" were established and used throughout 1933 and into 1934 and several thousand people were arrested, questioned, imprisoned, and often bullied and tortured for days or even months on end. Jews, too, entered concentration camps as early as March 1933. Although they were ostensibly arrested on "political grounds," Jewish prisoners were treated especially vindictively, subjected to anti-semitic hazing and torture rituals (a common SA pastime included shaving swastikas into the heads of Jewish prisoners), and given the worst work details in camps

already utilizing forced labour—popularly they were assigned to cleaning the latrines.[11] Women, too, were rounded up in the early arrests of March 1933, and onward with the majority of female inmates composed of Communists. As the Nazi terror continued, Social Democrats, those who had voiced opposition to the Nazi party, wives and relatives of prominent men who had escaped camps or fled into exile, women deemed "vagrants," also filled Germany's prisons and concentration camps in increasing numbers. All in all, about two hundred thousand people, mostly German nationals, mostly men, and mostly Communists, were detained at some point in 1933—around 40-50 thousand were arrested in just the first wave of terror spanning March to April of 1933.[12] Of these, only a small minority were Jewish or female, and an unknown number fit into both of these specific demographics.

While the first "official" concentration camp for women was Moringen, Wolfgang Benz (among others) regards Gotteszell, which existed from the end of March 1933 until January 1934, as "the first concentration camp for women in the German Reich" in his introduction for Markus Kienle's standout work on the camp.[13] Kienle's work, published over two decades ago in 2002, remains one of the few available sources on this camp, along with Julius Schätzle's 1974 *Stationen zur Hölle: Konzentrationslager in Baden-Württemberg,* which also emphasises Gotteszell as the "first women's camp." [14] The most prominent primary source on the camp is the

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[11] For selected examples mentioned by Benz and Distel, refer to: Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel, eds. *Der Ort des Terrors: Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Band II, Frühe Lager, Dachau, Emslandlager* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005): pp. 33, 62, 64, 99, 106-109, 122, 129-132, 144, 149, 208.
For additional literature detailing early antisemitic abuse in the KZs, see: Wünschmann: *Before Auschwitz*, pp. 53, 56. See also: Huebel, "Inside the KZ: Jewish Masculinities in Prewar Nazi Concentration Camps," in *Fighter, Worker, and Family Man,* pp. 148-174.

[12] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015): 31-32.

[13] Wolfgang Benz, "Geleitwort," in *Gotteszell - das frühe Konzentrationslager für Frauen in Württemberg: Die "Schutzhaftabteilung" im Frauengefängnis Gotteszell in Schwäbisch Gmünd, März 1933 bis Januar 1934,* pp. 7-8 (Ulm: Verlag Klemm & Oelschläger, 2002): p. 8. All translations of German sources are my own unless otherwise indicated.

[14] Julius Schätzle, "Gotteszell: Erstes Konzentrationslager für Frauen" in *Stationen zur Hölle: Konzentrationslager in Baden und Württemberg 1933-1945* (Frankfurt/Main: Röderberg-Verlag GmbH, 1974).

memoir of Lina Haag, an anti-Nazi activist who survived Gotteszell and Lichtenburg. She wrote about her experiences as early as 1944 and published her book, *Eine Hand voll Staub,* in 1947.[15] This memoir, along with letters from Gertrud Leibbrand and Paula Planck, appears to be virtually the only firsthand accounts available to historians for this camp.[16] The camp is also mentioned, albeit very briefly, in Erika Buchmann's 1946 *Frauen im Konzentrationslager,* as part of an overview including Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück, which gives the appearance of Gotteszell as one of four women's camps rather than a provisional camp that was separate from the "main" three.[17] Gotteszell is mentioned in several Holocaust compendiums, but all heavily cite these sources for their summaries, and no further works appear to have been published since Kienle's monograph. Little is known about Gotteszell, but there do not appear to have been any Jewish women in the KZ, as Kienle also acknowledges, stating: "Religious or social reasons in the sense of Ulrich Herbert's 'general racial prevention' have not yet been identified for the deportation to the Gotteszell concentration camp."[18] The primary grounds of arrest for the women in this camp seem to have been membership in the KPD. As such, it has been excluded from further examination in this project but is worth highlighting as just one of

[15] Lina Haag, *Eine Hand voll Staub: Widerstand einer Frau 1933 bis 1945. Mit einem Nachwort von Barbara Distel.* (Tübingen: Silberburg–Verlag Titus Häussermann GmbH, 2004). According to Barbara Distel, Lina Haag's memoir was one of the first sources in Germany to be published on the topic of German resistance, along with Eugen Kogon's *Der SS-Staat.* "Eine handvoll Staub" (its original title) had a second edition published in 1977 which circulated in both East and West Germany and was also published in Hungary and the Soviet Union. Further editions were published in the early 1980s and in 1995. Lina Haag lived to see the publication of this 2004 edition as well. See: Barbara Distel, "Nachwort," pp. 244-252. An earlier edition could not be procured for this project. Haag's earliest publication was in the form of letters written during the war years to her husband—the 2004 edition more closely resembles a memoir in its style—but the substance of the memoir and Haag's experiences do not appear to have changed from one edition to the next.

[16] Kienle mentions in his work that Lina Haag, Gertrud Leibbrand and two other women (whom he does not name) are the only survivors of Gotteszell still alive when he conducted this research in 2002; letters from Paula Planck were provided to him by her son Ernst Planck. See: Kienle, *Gotteszell - das frühe Konzentrationslager für Frauen in Württemberg,* p. 26.

[17] Erika Buchmann, *Frauen im Konzentrationslager* (Stuttgart: Verlag das Neue Wort, 1946): p.5. Buchmann was also imprisoned in Gotteszell (and later Ravensbrück) which may explain her decision to include the camp with the other three "central" women's camps.

[18] Kienle, *Gotteszell - das frühe Konzentrationslager für Frauen in Württemberg,* p. 49.

many examples showcasing how little research has been dedicated to the pre-war women's camps in general, let alone to Jewish women in these camps specifically.

The "concentration camps" that emerged in early 1933 varied greatly in layout, structure, and organization. Places used as concentration camps included Youth Hostels (such as KZ Havelberg), secondary schools (KZ Schillerschule in Witten), guest houses or former hotels (KZ Annaberg and KZ Bad Sulza), former Abbeys and monasteries (KZ Brauweiler and KZ Bretenau), workhouses (KZ Moringen), gyms (KZ Plaue), and empty factories or grounds of factories and warehouses (KZ Breslau–Dürrgoy, KZ Zschorlau). Frequently, Castles were used (most famously KZ Lichtenburg and KZ Colditz), as well as prisons (often empty women's prisons, as was the case for KZ Vechta, KZ Eutin, and KZ Hassenberg), as well as other penitentiaries and correctional facilities (Hamburg–Fuhlsbüttel, KZ Bonner Wall and KZ "Klingelpütz" in Cologne), at least one airport (KZ Nohra), one barge that had washed ashore (KZ Ochtumsand in Bremen), and numerous SS or SA-occupied buildings. Most were meant to relieve local jails, which were soon overflowing following widespread mass arrests, some were a convenient location for the SA and SS to torture and even kill those they had arrested out of view of the judicial system (though frequently not out of earshot of locals who complained of the incessant blood-curdling screams now filling their neighbourhoods).[19]

[19] In the case of Bremen-Mißler, the locals were able to witness the daily brutal treatment against prisoners and protest in local papers and by individuals mounted. The KZ was closed as a result of the protest by September of 1933. (Benz and Distel, *Der Ort Des Terrors: Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Band II, Frühe Lager, Dachau, Emslandlager*, p. 77-78). In the case of KZ Reichenbach, repeated complaints over the "noise" (of tortured prisoners) and an insider report on the conditions within the camp led to its closing by May of 1933. (Ibid, p. 192). Similarly, KZ Dornburg was closed in August of 1933 in response to the protests of local women from Zerbst. (Ibid, p. 91). In some cases the local population was simply aware of the mistreatment without much recourse, in KZ Witten, the SS had rented out part of the Schiller-Gymnasium (secondary school) and tortured prisoners in the infamous "Tränenkeller" (cellar of tears) with the screams of the affected ringing out throughout the school which was still in use during the week. (Ibid, p. 218).
Popular torture methods included beating prisoners with rubber truncheons, kicking in teeth, and, as mentioned, shaving swastikas into the heads of inmates (especially if they were Jewish). For these and other examples see again: Ibid. pp. 33, 62, 64, 99, 106-109, 122, 129-132, 144, 149, 208.

Most of these early concentration camps do not resemble the later camps of barbed wire fences, guard towers, and barracks. However, they became the first grounds on which SA and SS men not only refined torture techniques but also exercised organization of prisoner groups with visible patterns that persisted into the later, more organized camps. In light of the difficulty of defining "concentration camps" among the early camps, some of which were "camps" within actual prisons and jails (blurring the definition even further) I have chosen to refer to most of these early make-shift camps as "provisional concentration camps" in order to acknowledge the characteristics that made them concentration camps in the broadest definition without also attributing to them the same differential lens applied to the first official camp of Dachau, or the women's camps of Moringen, Lichtenburg, Ravensbrück which will be discussed herein. Figuring out which early concentration camps held female prisoners (without being able to travel to dozens of local archives) proved somewhat challenging. However, it was vital for establishing the landscape in which Moringen emerged as the first "official" camp. Few scholars have written about the early camps, and even fewer have been interested in the experiences of women. Almost none have examined women in the provisional concentration camps in which female prisoners were a tiny minority of the prisoner population.

In some cases, little is known about certain camps regardless of inmate demographics. Edited overviews of the early camps such as USHMM's *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Holocaust Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933–1945, Volume I* and Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel's *Der Ort Des Terrors: Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager, Band II* both of which rely heavily on Klaus Dobrisch and Günter Wieland's 1993 *System der NS-Konzentrationslager 1933– 1939* in addition to local archival research and select few monographs and first hand accounts have been some of the most helpful

resources in establishing at least a glimpse into the number of camps which held female prisoners.[20] Larger works on the camp system, such as Nikolaus Wachsmann's *KL,* have been helpful in establishing the context in which these provisional camps emerged, but say painfully little about female prisoners (if they say anything at all). Again and again, historians delving into the topic of the early pre-war camps seem to acknowledge that women (and Jews) were present in many of the camps, but aside from noting occasional gender demographics and anti-semitic specific violence, they have dismissed the number of female and Jewish prisoners as too small to warrant further inquiry.

Another difficulty in conducting even a small survey of available literature and encyclopedias of camps to determine which concentration camps also had female inmates is the gender neutral language ("people," "prisoners," or groups in the form of "Communists") used by authors, even if a particular camp had only male prisoners. Generally, when women are present, the gender-neutral statement will include some later qualifier or perhaps an unrelated paragraph explaining that "the camp also had women." Sometimes a single female prisoner is mentioned (often by name as someone of local importance), which increases the likelihood that other women were imprisoned in the same camp, but there is no verification of whether she was an exception or part of a group. In other sections, when gender-neutral language shifts suddenly to discussing "men" in a particular camp, this may well indicate that women were also present (necessitating more gender-specific language where none had been used before). Alternatively, some entries explicitly state that "no women were present," which begs the question as to

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[20] Geoffrey P. Megargee, ed, *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933-1945: Volume I, Early Camps, Youth Camps, and SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) Part A,* foreword by Elie Wiesel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).
Wolfgang Benz, and Barbara Distel, eds. *Der Ort des Terrors: Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Band I, Die Organisation des Terrors* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005).
Klaus Drobisch and Günther Wieland, *System der NS-Konzentrationslager 1933-1939* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993).

whether or not entries without this specification deliberately did not rule out the possibility of women being present in a particular camp. Regardless, the use of *male-as-norm* "gender-neutral" terminology makes it exceedingly difficult to determine whether women, too, had been present in the camp without consulting more thorough works (if indeed, any exist) or prisoner lists (the existence of which may also be questionable and digital availability almost certainly out of the question). However, there are some positive notes. In some cases determining whether or not women were imprisoned in a particular camp is easier to determine in German-language sources where certain terms are gender-specific—for example "forced labourers" which denotes "Zwangsarbeiter" for men or "Zwangsarbeiterinnen" for women (still, most German sources primarily use the gender neutral terms of "häftling" or "insassen" to refer to "prisoners" or "inmates" generally). However, because there was only one official camp for women at a time in the pre-war era (with small months of overlap during transition phases from Moringen to Lichtenburg and then from there to Ravensbrück) and similar circumstances for late war sub-camps, it is somewhat easier to trace the treatment of women than of men past the initial "provisionary camps" stage.

In my studies I have come across at least 25 pre-war "provisional concentration camps" which held at least one female prisoner (excluding KZ Stettin-Bredow where women were only brought in for interrogations and also excluding the official camps of Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück).[21] Some of these provisional KZ's held only a handful of women, or in some cases just one. Usually, women were detained for a shorter period than the men and, where

[21] The 26 camps are: Annaberg, Brauweiler, Bad Sulza, Benninghausen, Bergkamen, Berlin–Köpenick, Berlin Charlottenburg (Maikowski Haus), Berlin-Tempelhof, Brandenburg, Fuhlsbüttel, Gollnow, Gotteszell, Hamburg–Fuhlsbüttel, Hohnstein, Köln "Klingelpütz", München (Stadelheim), Neustadt, Nohra, Osthofen, Roßlau, Stuttgart, Witten, München (Ettstrasse), Stuttgart, Eutin, Gumpertshof, and Senftenberg. Of these, Fühlsbuttel had at least one Jewish woman as prisoner by the name of Gisela Konopka. See: Gisela Konopka, *Mit Mut und Liebe: Eine Jugend im Kampf gegen Ungerechtigkeit und Terror* (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1996): pp. 131–158. And one Jewish woman, Käthe Baronowitz was imprisoned and tortured by the SA in Berlin Charlottenburg (Maikowski Haus). See; Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 103.

possible, separated from them. In the case of Gotteszell, the regional KZ for women in the Württenberg area, the concentration camp held exclusively female prisoners, some of whom were later sent to Moringen, Lichtenburg, and finally Ravensbrück. Determining which of these camps also happened to have Jewish women is more difficult. In some instances small overviews of lesser–known and short–lived camps mention that women were present in the camp and that Jews in the camp were treated especially terribly but whether such identities overlapped in any of the prisoners (and if this affected how brutally or not they were treated) is either unknown or simply has not been noted as particularly important. In one case, a female prisoner in Stadelheim is mentioned as being the wife of a local Jewish legal counsel which makes it at least possible she was Jewish as well though not certain as intermarriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans was not necessarily uncommon.[22] Kim Wünschmann, a leading scholar in the niche field of Jews in the pre-war camps, mentions several Jewish women known to have spent time in "SA-Camps," in her 2015 book *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Pre-War Camps.* Names mentioned include KPD functionary Käthe Baronowitz who was tortured and taunted with antisemitic remarks in Charlottenburg's Maikowski-Haus and Lilly Salm who was held in protective custody near Cologne.[23] Marion Kaplan touches on the early imprisonment of Jewish women as political hostages in her work on Jews in Germany and Jane Caplan's introduction to Gabriele Herz's memoir of Moringen estimates that women made up an estimated 300-400 detainees between 1933 and 1934 but without any indication of how many may have been Jewish.[24] Regardless, the number of Jewish women sent to provisional concentration camps was

[22] Megargee, *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933-1945,* p. 133-134.
[23] Kim Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Prewar Concentration Camps* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2015): p. 103.
[24] Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair,* p. 20. Jane Caplan, "Introduction," in *The Women's Camp in Moringen: A Memoir of Imprisonment in Germany 1936-1937,* edited by Jane Caplan and translated by Hildegard Herz and Howard Hartig (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007): p. 11.

small. The 10-15% estimate for Moringen (an official camp but in a way originally provisional since it first and foremost functioned as a workhouse) appears to be the highest of any of the earliest camps and this is only if one looks at the entirety of Moringen's existence as a KZ. The confirmed number of Jewish women in other provisional camps is at most one in any given camp and even that is difficult to say for certain. Overall, my estimation puts the number of Jewish women in the combined provisional concentration camps outside of Moringen at less than 1% of female detainees.[25] More intensive research of local archives for every provisional camp in Germany known to have held female prisoners would be necessary in order to either confirm or rule out the possibility of Jewish women having been imprisoned in a particular camp.

Jewish Women in the Official German Camps: Overview and Literature

Moving on from the earliest phase of camps, Moringen and Lichtenburg, the two official concentration camps for women that predate the most infamous women's camp of Ravensbrück and which will be covered in more detail in the first few sections of this paper, have also had little research dedicated to them. Historians familiar with Moringen include Jane Caplan, whose introduction to Gabriele Herz's memoir is one of the few English-language works available on this camp, and Hans Hesse, who has provided an introduction and commentary on the letters of Hannah Vogt and written one of the first comprehensive overviews of the camp *Das Frauen–KZ*

[25] According to Wünschmann, women alone made up a mere 1% of these initial concentration camp inmates in the earliest years (about 300-400), and most women spent their time in protective custody as prisoners of local jails and police stations. But counting up until 1939, as many as 6,000 to 8,000 women were put into protective custody (while men numbered between 40,000 and 50,000 in the same period)—including the camps of Moringen and Lichtenburg—making up some 4-10% of the overall prisoner population. (Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 7, 104). General prisoner numbers for men are difficult to determine with any degree of certainty and the general hypothesis for the number of Jewish men in the camps ranges from 5-10%; Wünschmann's estimation of Jewish men in the pre-war camps (not counting the mass arrests of November 1938) strays towards the lower end of 5%, accounting for up to 5,000 Jewish men in protective custody before November 1938. (See: Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* pp. 68-69). Regardless, we do know that the number of Jewish women held in protective custody was not zero. Moringen held one Jewish woman (Lizzy Hirsch) in March of 1934 (prior to Moringen becoming an official camp in April of that year) and at least one Jewish woman, (Gisela Konopka) was imprisoned in Hamburg–Fuhlsbüttel and another Jewish woman (Käthe Baronowitz) in Maikowski-Haus. But it is simply too difficult to discern from available secondary literature available on these small and seemingly insignificant camps, if any Jewish women were present in a particular camp.

Moringen 1933–1938 and, additionally, *Das frühe KZ Moringen (April-November 1933)... ein an sich interessanter psychologischer Versuch.*[26] Scholars on Lichtenburg are equally scarce and even more so on Lichtenburg as a women's camp. Stefan Hördler is one of the leading historians here, and along with Sigrid Jacobeit, he has edited a monograph on the KZ, which includes a chapter by Henning Fahrenberg and Nicole Hördler dedicated entirely to looking at the women's camp in Lichtenburg.[27] Klaus Drobisch's work *Konzentrationslager im Schloß Lichtenburg* is helpful for the context of the camp as a whole, discussing the history of the castle before it became a men's concentration camp, its layout and function as a men's KZ as well as details on work commandos, discipline, and death rates, and also includes a section on the castle when it was officially a women's camp. He concludes with the designation of KZ Lichtenburg as a memorial site in 1965. A prominent DDR historian (and one of the few researching the Holocaust), Drobisch's work is one of the first publications outlining the entirety of Lichtenburg's function as a KZ and most of his source base is in the form of archival documents.[28] Works that focus on Moringen and Lichtenburg together as pre-war camps, often included Ravensbrück for an overview of all three German women's camps. However, these overviews tend to be brief, with the focus mainly on short biographical excerpts of the female prisoners. Good overview sources here include Kim Wünschmann's "Her Transport to the Concentration Camp has been Ordered: Arrests and Imprisonment of Jewish Women, 1933-1939" in her larger work *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Pre-War concentration camps,* Jutta von Freyberg and Ursula Krause-Schmitt's *Moringen - Lichtenburg - Ravensbrück: Frauen im Konzentrationslager 1933—1945,* and von Freyburg and Krause–Schmitt's work

[26] Hans Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen, 1933-1938* (Göttingen: Books on Demand GmbH, 2000).
Hans Hesse, *Das frühe KZ Moringen (April-November 1933)... ein an sich interessanter psychologischer Versuch* (Norderstedt, Books on Demand GmbH, 2003).
[27] Fahrenberg and Hördler, "Das Frauen-Konzentrationslager Lichtenburg," pp. 168-189.
[28] Klaus Drobisch, *Konzentrationslager im Schloss Lichtenburg* (Wittenberg: Kreisverwaltung Wittenberg, 1997).

alongside Hanna Elling and Barbara Bromberger, *Schwestern, vergeßt uns nicht: Frauen im Konzentrationslager: Moringen - Lichtenburg - Ravensbrück 1933 - 1945.*[29]

Thus far, Kim Wünschmann's chapter is the closest to a published study ostensibly dedicated to examining the pre-war concentration camp experiences of Jewish women (though her larger work deals mainly with Jewish men). Additional resources include encyclopedic entries on the camps in the USHMM *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933—1945: Volume I,* Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel's *Der Ort des Terrors: Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Band II,* and Klaus Drobisch and Güther Wieland's *System der NZ—Konzentrationslager 1933–1939,* as well as various anthologies dedicated to pre-war concentration camp history, history of women in concentration camps, or general overviews of the KZ system. Despite the lack of dedicated secondary material, there is a decent amount of primary sources available written by Jewish women from these camps. These include reports by Frieda Sherwood and Ilse Rolfe, and memoirs by Lotti Huber and Gabriele Herz.[30] Letters by Hannah Vogt (edited by Hans Hesse), Vogt's own historical research *KZ Moringen: Frühes KZ, Frauen-KZ, Jugend-KZ, Eine Dokumentation,* and Hanna Elling's *Frauen im deutschen Widerstand, 1933-45* provide vital non-Jewish but first-hand perspectives of life inside

[29] Jutta von Freyberg and Ursula Krause-Schmitt, *Lesebuch zur Ausstellung: Moringen, Lichtenburg, Ravensbrück: Frauen im Konzentrationslager 1933-1945* (Frankfurt: Verlag für Akademische Schriften, 1997); Barbara Bromberg, et. al. eds., *Schwestern, vergeßt uns nicht: Frauen im Konzentrationslager: Moringen, Lichtenburg, Ravensbrück 1933-1945,* Katalog zur Ausstellung: Frauen im Konzentrationslager (Frankfurt am Main: VAS–Verlag für Akademische Schriften oHG, 1988).

[30] Frieda Sherwood, "Eyewitness account by Frieda Sherwood of her experiences in 'Schutzhaft' and 'Schulungslager' after her return from Italy," pp. 1-2, Ref. 1656/3/8/117, *Testifying the Truth Collection*, The Wiener Holocaust Library, London; Ilse Rolfe, "Eyewitness account by Ilse Rolfe, a communist from Berlin, of her experiences in Moringen, Lichtenburg and Ravensbrück concentration camps," pp. 1-8, Ref. 1656/3/8/159, *Testifying the Truth Collection*, The Wiener Holocaust Library, London. [Thank you to the Wiener Holocaust Library for graciously providing me with a copy of Rolfe's account to use for my research]; Lotti Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft! Ein Leben* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1993); Gabriele Herz, *The Women's Camp in Moringen: A Memoir of Imprisonment in Germany 1936-1937.* Edited by Jane Caplan. Translated by Hildegard Herz and Howard Hartig (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

the early camps.[31] Other non-Jewish sources include interviews with Hed Regnart and Hilde Faul about their experiences in Moringen, and Lina Haag's memoir, *Eine Hand voll Staub,* about her time in Gotteszell and Lichtenburg.[32] Although there is much overlap in the source material on Moringen and Lichtenburg, since they tend to be grouped together as "pre-war camps," they will be examined in separate sections.

Secondary scholarship on Ravensbrück is far easier to find in comparison to literature on its predecessor camps. Invaluable research material here includes Sarah Helm's *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women*, and *Ravensbrückerinnen,* edited by Sigrid Jacobeit and Elisabeth Brümann-Güdter, and various works edited by Insa Eschebach, including an *Exhibition catalogue: The Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp: History and Memory,* edited with Alyn Beßmann, as well as the aforementioned works on all three German women's camps and encyclopedic entries.[33] Sources dedicated ostensibly to *Jewish* women in Ravensbrück are also available. Notable works here include Rochelle Saidel's *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp*, Linde Apel's *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939—1945, The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück* by Judith Buber Agassi, and the anthology *A Holocaust Crossroads: Jewish Women and Children in Ravensbrück* edited by Irith Dublon-Knebel.[34] Jack G. Morrison's 2000 work

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[31] Hesse, Hans, ed. *Hoffnung ist ein ewiges Begräbnis: Briefe von Dr. Hannah Vogt aus dem Gerichtsgefängnis Osterode und dem KZ Moringen 1933* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1998); Hanna Elling, *Frauen im deutschen Widerstand 1933–45* (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg-Verlag Frankfurt am Main, 1978).

[32] "Schwestern, vergesst uns nicht. Aus dem Leben der Antifaschistinnen Hed Regnart und Hilde Faul, " Frauenverband Courage e.V. (1998), Film; Lina Haag, *Eine Hand voll Staub: Widerstand einer Frau 1933 bis 1945. Mit einem Nachwort von Barbara Distel.* Tübingen: Silberburg–Verlag Titus Häussermann GmbH, 2004.

[33] Sarah Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 2015); Sigrid Jacobeit and Elisabeth Brümann-Güdter, *Ravensbrückerinnen* (Schriftenreihe der Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten Nr. 4. Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1995); Alyn Beßmann and Insa Eschebach (eds.), *Exhibition catalogue: The Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp: History and Memory* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2013).

[34] Rochelle G. Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp*; Linde Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945* (Berlin: Metropol, 2003); Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück: Who Were They?*; Irith Dublon-Knebel, ed., *A Holocaust Crossroads" Jewish Women and Children in Ravensbrück* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2010).

Ravensbrück:Everyday Life in a Women's Concentration Camp 1939-45 also features a full chapter on Jewish women in the camp.[35] Much like the pre-war camps, my research on the experiences of Jewish women in Ravensbrück relied on primary source material, along with the dedicated scholarship provided by Saidel, Apel, and Buber-Agassi. Notable primary sources include *Fiorello's Sister: Gemma La Guardia Gluck's Story* (edited by Rochelle Saidel), *Das höllentor* by Anja Lundholm, *Twice Persecuted: Surviving in Nazi Germany and Communist East Germany* by Johanna Krause, *Under Two Dictators: Prisoner of Stalin and Hitler* by Margarete Buber–Neumann and *Frauen im Konzdentrationslager* by Erika Buchmann (both valuable non-Jewish accounts), and several testimonies by Jewish women either from interviews conducted by Rochelle Saidel, or found in various anthologies collecting women's testimonies on their camp experiences.[36] Indeed, primary source material for Ravensbrück proved to be almost overwhelming—at least for the last year or so of the camp's existence. In contrast, the early years of Ravensbrück (1939-1942) are one of the most challenging for which to find Jewish primary source documentation. As such, the section on Ravensbrück is also split into two parts, focusing first on the early years in the camp in which some of the Jewish prisoners who had been through one or both of the earlier camps continued to remain prisoners in the KZ system and then on the later years after a break in the Jewish prisoner population in 1942 when most were murdered in the gas chamber of Bernburg and the rest sent to Auschwitz half a year later.

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[35] Jack. G. Morrison. "Yellow Triangles: The Jews," in *Ravensbrück:Everyday Life in a Women's Concentration Camp 1939-45* (Princeton NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000): pp. 61-74.

[36] Gemma La Guardia Gluck, *Fiorello's Sister: Gemma La Guardia Gluck's Story,* edited by Rochelle G. Saidel (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2007); Anja Lundholm, *Das Höllentor: Bericht einer Überlebenden* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag GmbH, 1988); Margarete Buber-Neumann, *Under Two Dictators: Prisoner of Stalin and Hitler,* translated by Edward Fitzgerald (London: Pimlico, 2009); Erika Buchmann, *Frauen im Konzentrationslager* (Stuttgart: Verlag das Neue Wort, 1946); Johanna Krause, *Twice Persecuted: Surviving in Nazi Germany and Communist East Germany,* edited and Translated by Christiane Hemker and Carolyn Gammon (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007). A particularly important Jewish source for early Ravensbrück was survivor Herta Soswinski. See: Herta Soswinski, "Why We Have to Tell about it," in *Auschwitz—The Nazi Civilization: Twenty–Three Women Prisoners' Accounts, Auschwitz Camp Administration and SS Enterprises and Workshops,* Compiled, Translated, and Edited by Lore Shelley (Lanham MD: University Press of America Inc., 1992): pp. 125-142.

The last years at Ravensbrück were in many ways an equalized experience among women, regardless of whether or not they were Jewish. As will be discussed in this essay, the treatment and experiences of Jewish women changed steadily to those of non-Jewish inmates throughout the years at Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück. However, the chaos of the final months of the war largely loosened the Nazi resolve towards ethnic cleansing. It targeted the weak and sick for extermination while attempting to keep up some semblance of a working slave labour force. The influx of Jewish prisoners from the abandoned camps in Eastern Europe and directly from Hungary throughout 1944 and into 1945 brought Jewish women not just to Ravensbrück but also to the various subcamps of formerly male camps throughout Germany, including Groß-Rosen, Neuengamme, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Flossenbürg, and Bergen-Belsen. A cursory study of the available literature on these camps reveals that Jewish women and women in general continue to be largely ignored, but that determining whether or not a particular camp held women is much easier here than for the provisional concentration camp and some subcamps held exclusively Jewish women who were sent there together as one group.[37] However, gender-neutral terms like "prisoners" when referring to both men and women or just men (but hardly ever to just women) continue to make mapping women (Jewish or not) in a brief overview of the whole German KZ system somewhat difficult.

There is, at least, far less of an assumption that camp experiences towards the end of the war were a "male-dominated" experience. Men and women continued to stay separated, with

[37] In my own brief study of camp lists, overviews, and available literature, I have found that Groß-Rosen had at least 36 subcamps with women in them (the majority held Jewish women), Neuengamme had at least 24 (not counting the brothel), Buchenwald had at least 27 subcamps with women in them (not counting the brothel at Mittelbau-Dora nor the medical experiments), Sachsenhausen had at least 21 (not counting the brothel near Oranienburg), Flossenbürg had at least 26, and Bergen-Belsen had Jewish women and girls in the main camp when it was largely an exchange camp and then in the women's camp and all three of Bergen-Belsen's satellite camps held women, including Jewish women. Though not mentioned here, Dachau also had at least 13 subcamps which held women (and additionally, a brothel as well), only one Dachau subcamp appears to have held Jewish women. See the Appendix for a list of all subcamps by name.

boys crossing over from the women and children's side to that of the men at about 12 years of age; as was also the case in Ravensbrück among other camps. However, both sexes were present in every major camp throughout the country. Both Jewish men and Jewish women who had survived ghettos, deportations, and camps in the East had been brought to Germany on forced marches, were used for slave labour, and suffered from malnutrition and disease. Conditions differed between camps; women in certain small factory camps tended to be better off than those dying more or less abandoned in the main camp of Ravensbrück or in Bergen-Belsen. Ravensbrück was likely one of the worst camps Jewish women could find themselves in as the war neared its end. However, as the only official women's concentration camp throughout the war period, it presents one of the most vivid pictures of the experiences of Jewish women at this time and of the Nazi policies which shaped these experiences. Having at least an overview of how many camps held women, including Jewish women, both in the beginning phase of the KZ and towards the end, helps to complete the picture of how the KZ system grew and changed over the years. Ultimately, research for Jewish women in camps outside of Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück is almost nonexistent. Examining these three camps together provides the clearest picture of how racial and gendered aspects of the camps changed over time and offers at least a starting point for understanding experiences in other camps and the various subcamps as well.

Organization of KZ Moringen

A former workhouse situated near Hanover, Moringen began taking on female protective custody inmates in early June of 1933, when three women, including Communists Hannah Vogt and Marie Peix, were transferred there from the jails they had already been living in since the first wave of arrests in March. At first, the women were kept in Moringen's *lazarett* (infirmary)

until the ward was needed for an ongoing hunger strike instigated by the male concentration camp prisoners incarcerated in a different portion of the workhouse grounds since April 11th of that year.[38] The women were moved to a "women's section" set aside specifically for women taken here in protective custody and strictly separated from the women brought into the workhouse of Moringen, who were distinguished by their black clothing.[39] In August of that year, the camp was officially guarded by SS guards (although still managed by its civilian director, Hugo Krack), which considerably worsened conditions in the emerging camp.[40] Germany's workhouses had been struggling and emptying throughout the economic turmoil of the 1930s; among others, Moringen had now found good fortune in the sudden increased need for prisoners to be kept in such former institutions.[41] As a result, the reorganisation of the KZ-System in Prussia by October of 1933 pushed director Hugo Krack to advocate for the continued use of Moringen, whose future as a KZ was in peril by the fall of 1933, as the initial terror and waves of arrests had calmed down. Ultimately, Krack got his wish; a compromise was reached in which the men's camp in Moringen was dissolved (the remaining male inmates had already been sent to Oranienburg throughout the summer and up until the end of November to make room for more women) while part of the workhouse continued to function as the main concentration camp for women.[42] The SS men who had guarded the camp since the summer left with the remaining male prisoners and, in their stead, women from the local Nazi women's

[38] Hesse, *Hoffnung ist ein ewiges Begräbnis,* p. 31.
[39] The women in protective custody were kept in the same building but in a different section of the existing women's workhouse with plans for the women's KZ to be used only as a *Durchgangslager*, that is, a transit camp . (Hesse, *Das frühe KZ Moringen*, p. 78-80.). While the women in the KZ were allowed to wear their own civilian clothing, the women and girls in the workhouse wore black dresses. (Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen,* p. 55).
[40] Men brought into the KZ Moringen from August onward were subjected to frequent beatings and berated, especially if they were in the camp's *Revier* which the SS viewed as an attempt to get away from the hardships of their imprisonment. Hesse, *Das Frühe KZ Moringen,* p. 91-93.
[41] Caplan, "Introduction," p. 21.
[42] Caplan, "Introduction," p. 23.

association (NS Frauenschaft) were hired to oversee the detainees, reporting to the matron of the Moringen women's workhouse, which continued to function separately from the KZ.[43]

There is some debate about why some women were sent to the Moringen concentration camp in the early years, while others continued to be kept in local jails and penitentiaries. Hans Hesse has pointed out that Moringen had certain agreements with the different German states, which, for example, accounted for the high number of prostitutes coming in from Hamburg. Those coming from Bavaria were primarily women who would be in custody for more than three months (with the expenses of sending women up to Hannover cited for this regulation).[44] The tendency to send along women who would be in custody for more than three months to Moringen may well explain the relatively large proportion of Jewish women, especially after 1935, when release from concentration camps (for both Jewish women and men) was increasingly tied to permanent emigration and meant that Jewish prisoners faced longer stints in concentration camps than other inmates. Women continued to be incarcerated in smaller provisional concentration camps until at least 1936. In the spring of 1934, Moringen officially became part of the KZ system, effectively leased by the Prussian Gestapo from Hanover's provincial administration and technically under the oversight of Himmler, who does not appear to have had much direct contact with the camp until his first visit in May of 1937.[45] At the same time, women from KZ Brauweiler in Cologne were also transferred to Moringen, making it the only women's camp in Prussia.[46] Throughout the mid-1930s, camps continued to close down their women's sections and send remaining unreleased inmates to Moringen. In the summer of 1935, women still incarcerated in Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel were sent to Moringen. In January of

[43] Caplan, "Introduction," p. 23.
[44] Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen,* p. 35.
[45] Caplan, "Introduction," p. 23-24.
[46] Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen,* p. 37.

1936, the remaining women in KZ Stadelheim (Munich) were sent to Moringen. On July 1, 1936, women were transferred to Moringen from KZ Bad Sulza when the camp was officially closed for women.[47]

The earliest primary source information available for Moringen in its first few months as a women's concentration camp is the writings of Hannah Vogt (both in the form of letters she exchanged with her family, edited into a monograph by Hans Hesse, and her own writings published decades later) who was one of the first three women transferred there in June of 1933. However, there do not appear to have been any Jewish women in Moringen in 1933. Kim Wünschmann's research on Jews in the pre-war camps has found that the first known Jewish woman in Moringen was a 32-year-old photographer by the name of Lizzy Hirsch, who arrived at the camp on March 12th, 1934, after being arrested for distributing Communist propaganda in Cologne. Although early arrests have generally been attributed to political activism, Wünschmann also notes that political opposition only accounted for around 12% of Jewish female inmates in Moringen (seven women). Aside from Lizzy Hirsh, other notable Jewish political prisoners included Marie-Luise Hirsch and Herta Kronheim (both KPD functionaries arrested in 1933 but only brought to Moringen in 1935 and 1936, respectively), Elisabeth Blättner (brought to Moringen in 1935), and Ilse Rolfe (née Gostynski). who was arrested and brought to Moringen in March of 1936 and whose report is a valuable source for Moringen, Lichtenburg, and the transfer to Ravensbrück.[48]

Most of the Jewish women who wound up in Moringen between 1934 and 1938 had been arrested as "reemigrants" (a full 56% by Wünschmann's estimation, accounting for 33 women),

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[47] For reference to Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel and München Stadelheim, see: Benz and Distel, *Der Ort des Terrors: Band II*, p. 118 and p. 170. (Stadelheim continued to have female prisoners after this transfer, Centa Herker-Beimler–who had been sent to Stadelheim in April 1933 and Moringen in January 1936–was brought to Stadelheim again in 1942). For mention of the transfer from KZ Bad Sulza, see: Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen,* p. 39.

[48] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* pp. 107-08.

with the second largest group consisting of "race defilers" and prostitutes (some 18%, 11 women).[49] These statistics, specifically among Jewish women (especially for the reemigrant category), are not just incidental but indeed reflect some of the ways in which Jews were uniquely disadvantaged by some of the new Nazi laws. On January 28. 1935, the Gestapo issued an ordinance outlining the persecution of returning emigrants who had been out of the country for three or more months and who, by such a lengthy absence, presumably posed a threat to national security in addition to exhibiting a lack of loyalty to the new German Reich. Interestingly, as Kim Wünschmann has pointed out, the ordinance acknowledges that Jews made up the largest percentage of these returning emigrants who were "to be regarded as principally unwanted." The decree also remarked that non-Jewish returning emigrants should undergo a process of reeducation.[50] While it is of course true that non-Jewish Germans were just as likely to be taken into custody for returning from long trips out of the country, "Aryan" Germans had the advantage of rejoining the *Volksgemeinschaft* once they had been deemed properly reeducated—German Jews could not, of course, ever become part of this idealized racial society. As a result, both Jewish men and women spent increasingly longer stints in concentration camps, and eventually permanent emigration became the only path towards release. "A release, in other words," as Jane Caplan has put it on the topic, "into forced exile."[51]

Another factor in the targeting of Jewish reemigrants was the simple fact that from 1933 onward, German Jews had increasingly more reason than non-Jewish Germans (with the exception of the politically conscious) to leave Germany and search for a better life elsewhere—not always with great success. Some had left in 1933 when the new regime's

[49] For the statistics, see: Wünschmann, Ibid. The 4th and 5th categories were "Criticism of the Regime" (12%, or seven women) and "Fraud" (2%, accounting for one singular inmate).
[50] Wünschman, "Cementing the Enemy Category: Arrest and Imprisonment of German Jews in Nazi Concentration Camps, 1933-8/9," *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 45, no. 3 (2010): p. 591.
[51] Caplan, "Introduction," p. 1.

persecution of political enemies, coupled with the dismissal of Jews from the civil service and boycott of Jewish businesses in April, had rapidly made Jewish life in Germany more dangerous.[52] As things appeared to calm down the following year, some returned, hoping to continue living in peace now that the Nazis had cemented their power and, with difficulty acquiring permanent visas and family and property still left in Germany, emigrating fully was not always possible.[53] As Marion Kaplan has also pointed out, Jewish organisations in Germany, like The League of Jewish Women, did not support emigration until after the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935.[54] However, despite the League's best efforts after this point, Jewish women continued to emigrate at far lesser numbers than their male counterparts as men seemed to be in greater danger if they stayed behind, women were more likely to stay and take care of elderly parents or children, and parents were reluctant to send single daughters away—fearing their safety over that of their sons.[55] Although Jewish women were less likely than Jewish men to emigrate they were more likely to push for the idea of leaving Germany and in some cases set off themselves to see if the family would be able to move abroad and were then arrested once they returned to Germany—as was the case of Gabriele Herz who wound up in Moringen after unsuccessfully attempting to prepare a place for her family in Italy.[56]

Lotti Huber, another Jewish woman who spent time in Moringen, survived, and wrote about her experiences, was arrested in 1937 for "Rassenschande"—she had been sharing an apartment in Berlin with her non-Jewish lover, Hillert Lueken. The Gestapo broke into their

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[52] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Historical Atlas of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan Publishing USA Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1996): p. 25.
[53] Marion Kaplan notes in her work that around 37,000 Jews left Germany in 1933 and 23,000 fled in 1934, but 10,000 returned by early 1935 because they were falling into poverty abroad—leading to the Gestapo ordinance addressing this flood of unwanted returnees. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair,* pp. 72-73.
[54] Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair,* p. 49.
[55] Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair,* pp. 138-142.
[56] For more on how Jewish women pushed for emigration but were largely beholden to the decision of their fathers or husbands, see: Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair,* pp. 63-64. For more on Gabriele Herz's background leading up to her time in Moringen, see: Caplan, "Introduction," pp. 5-10.

apartment at five in the morning (Huber's memoir only points to the arrests taking place in late 1937), and both were arrested. Huber was sent to Moringen, and later discovered that Hillert had been murdered behind the jail he had been interrogated in—his family retrieved his body from the jail with a bullet hole through the neck and a vague cover-up explanation of "suicide."[57] This kind of trauma is yet another unstudied aspect of women's experiences in the early concentration camps, which are still viewed (perhaps with some validity) as relatively benign imprisonment experiences for women in comparison to that of men. As to the second largest group of Jewish female detainees, "race-defilement" targeted both the Jewish and non-Jewish partner and indeed, as Wünschmann points out in her study, in the early years, a full two-thirds of race-defiling cases were non-Jewish women imprisoned in Moringen for relationships with Jewish men.[58] This, despite the fact that ostensibly only men (Jewish or not) could be legally prosecuted for race defilement, while women could only be called as witnesses.

In practice, the political police still took women into protective custody for race-defilement cases when they felt that the judicial system had not done enough.[59] For those who wound up in this protective custody, similarly to reemigrants, the only one in the pairing who could not be "re-educated" back into the *Volksgemeinschaft* was the Jewish partner. Patricia Szobar's study on race defilement in the German courts between 1933 and 1945 reveals some of the differences in perception of "Aryan" and Jewish women accused of race defilement. Non-Jewish women faced intense social pressure and backlash. However, they were also more likely to be portrayed as naive, young, and easily corruptible (even while they were criticized for not resisting this moral failing).[60] Jewish women, on the other hand, were generally painted as

[57] Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!*, p. 27.
[58] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 108.
[59] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 109.
[60] Patricia Szobar, "Telling Sexual Stories in the Nazi Courts of Law: Race Defilement in Germany, 1933 to 1945," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* vol. 11, no. 1/2 (Jan.–Apr. 2002): pp. 149-150.

licentious seductresses who preyed on "Aryan" men (despite a patriarchal view in which Aryan men were also morally superior).[61] Additionally, while both Jewish and non-Jewish partners were arrested and sent to concentration camps on charges of race defilement, Jewish detainees were convicted more often and tended to have longer stays in the camps.[62] Because of this, although there were initially more non-Jewish female race-defilers in Moringen than Jewish ones, the Jewish race-defilers, who primarily arrived after September 1935, were far less likely to be released.

Jewish prostitutes also faced additional racial discrimination for their line of work. Sex workers of all backgrounds faced new restrictions under the new Nazi regime, usually under the category of "asocials," which included everyone from alcoholics to the unemployed. However, sex workers who also happened to be Jewish were vitriolically painted as particularly evil "race defilers" who were attempting to destroy the "Aryan race" by ensnaring multiple unsuspecting non-Jewish men.[63] Three Jewish prostitutes in Moringen, Charlotte Droste, Charlotte Cohn, and Hedwig Hirschel, all from the same city, had their pictures published in *Der Stürmer* and were described as "the Jew whores of Breslau."[64] Additionally, while non-Jewish prostitutes were primarily put into "preventive custody" by the criminal police (Kripo) for failing to attain regular health checks, registering, or observing curfews, Jewish prostitutes were primarily persecuted on racial grounds and were generally taken into protective custody by the Gestapo.[65] Of course, like

[61] Szobar, "Telling Sexual Stories in the Nazi Courts of Law," p. 147-148.
[62] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 109. Wünschmann also notes that after 1935 the number of non-Jewish race-defilers declined significantly while over 90% of the Jewish women arrested for race-defilement arrived after September 1935 (after the promulgation of the Nuremberg Race Laws).
[63] Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen,* pp. 173-74. For prostitutes confined in the Moringen KZ, Director Hugo Krack frequently managed to secure work positions as he generally regarded them as cases that should have been sent to the work house rather than the concentration camp at Moringen. However, for Jewish prostitutes such as "Charlotte C." (Charlotte Cohn) finding suitable work included a statement to the Gestapo that she should stay in the KZ until work within a Jewish household was found for her (per the regulations of Nuremberg Laws) because "if a suitable position is not found for her, [she] would pose a constant danger for the aryan male population…" (p. 174).
[64] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 111.
[65] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 110.

reemigrants and Jewish "race-defilers," Jewish prostitutes could not be "re-educated" to join the German *Volksgemeinschaft,* while non-Jewish prostitutes, at least in theory, could be retrained. Later in Lichtenburg, the separation of Jewish women (and Sinti and Roma) as a racial group combined with women who had been imprisoned for prostitution, points to the Nazi view on moral-failings and perceived tendency to 'corrupt others' as something that was not only representative of a person's actions but also something innate—a view that somewhat replaced the initial Nazi claim to "re-educate" parts of the populace from their moral failings.

As a result, the Jewish women in Moringen and Lichtenburg represent a glimpse into the larger societal, political, and legal shifts happening throughout Nazi Germany in which new laws and policies, even if not ostensibly targeting people by race (as in the case of the reemigration laws), still disproportionately affected German Jews. Indeed, even though most of the Jewish women in Moringen were not arrested ostensibly because they were Jewish (except for those convicted of race-defilement, which technically necessitated a racial aspect), Jewish women were still separated from other inmates in Moringen since the mid-1930s. Moringen eventually came to have four distinct "halls" within the women's quarters, one for Jews (a *Judensaal),* one for Jehovah's Witnesses (*Zeugen Jehova's Saal),* and two halls that were geographical, a *Bayernsaal* (Bavarian Hall), and a *Preußensaal* or *Rheinlandsaal* (Prussian or Rhineland Hall, the sources are not definitive on this final hall or it may have housed women from both and gone by both names at different times). It is not entirely clear from the available secondary literature when three of the four halls were first established, and glimpses into the primary sources at best offer a potential timeframe. The Jehovah's Witnesses Hall was the last hall to be established in November of 1936 when the Witnesses were punished as a separate group with an extended ban on sending and receiving mail because they had refused to take part in the Nazi Winter Relief

work for 1936 and 1937. After previously dealing with individual acts of resistance in which Witnesses continued their missionary work within the camp, Hugo Krack opted to separate the group to set an example in discipline.[66] Given that the other three Halls already existed at this time, this separation appears to have resulted almost organically in the fourth and final hall and points to the conclusion that these halls were not organized and planned ahead of time. Hans Hesse's research has found that many of the women recall that they were not assigned to halls at all, but rather tended to stay together in their own groups, depending on their shared background. However, Hesse points out that the building's floor plan shows it would have been possible to separate the women into four groups on one floor.[67] Given not only the accounts consulted for my own study here but also later house rules which included a ban on "Aryans" and "Jews" from mixing in the day-rooms, it seems that some separation (at a minimum of one *Judensaal*) was not only possible but indeed necessary.[68] Investigating this particular thread is vital in furthering our understanding of the racial context in which the concentration camp at Moringen developed.

The earliest house rules from about April 1934 include a paragraph on "*Hausordnung"* in which, Hans Hesse notes, the protective custody prisoners were to be roomed in *"Gemeinschafts-, Tagesraümen und - Schlafsälen"* (Common day rooms and sleeping halls). The *Gemeinschafts* portion evokes a sense of mixing rather than separation, and the sleeping halls consisted of only two rooms under the building's roof.[69] It appears that the prisoners used each of

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[66] Hans Hesse, ed. *Persecution and Resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses During the Nazi-Regime, 1933-1945,* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2001): pp. 50-52. Jehovah's Witnesses also had the rare opportunity to be released if they signed a document renouncing their religious beliefs, though few appear to have taken this opportunity. In contrast, political beliefs held by Social Democrats and Communists could not be renounced and those imprisoned for racial reasons could neither renounce any beliefs nor be reeducated. Despite this, very few Witnesses ever renounced their faith and, as a result, the Witnesses eventually constituted the largest prisoner group in Moringen and also, subsequently, in Lichtenburg.

[67] Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen,* p. 56. Hesse muses about the layout of the Moringen *Frauenhaus* but does not offer a timeframe for when each of the four halls would have been established.

[68] For "Conditions inside the women's camps" see: Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 119.

[69] Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen,* pp. 47, 55.

the day rooms for different purposes until they were later separated by prisoner category. However, while the number of women imprisoned in Moringen by the spring of 1934 was growing again after the transfer from KZ Brauweiler, it is entirely possible that Lizzy Hirsh was still the only Jewish woman at this point, which would have made a separate room for Jewish prisoners impractical. The latest possible date for the separation of prisoners into their own halls is the early fall of 1936, after which Gabriele Herz's detailed memoir attests to the physical separation of the prisoners (although this was not necessarily strictly enforced). The report by Ilse Rolfe, who came to Moringen at the end of May 1936, is rather short and does not mention the specific living arrangements, but does mention that of the 12 "Jewish" women present at this time, one was actually a non-Jewish girl "adopted" into the group, which suggests both some separation and continued mixing. The most probable date for the emergence of these halls, or at least a separation of Jewish inmates from the others, is sometime in 1935. Frieda Sherwood's account of her time in Moringen in May of 1935 notes that she slept in a separate section with "all the other reemigrants." Given the high rate of Jewish reemigrants and no mention in any other sources of reemigrants being separated from other inmates, it seems likely that Sherwood was put in a separated section for Jewish women, which happened to consist mainly of reemigrants like herself. However, her claim that they shared "sleeping quarters" is not supported by the available evidence, which points to the continued use of two shared sleeping quarters under the roof even after the four day halls had been established.[70] More fortuitously, the

[70] Sherwood, "Eyewitness account by Frieda Sherwood," p. 2. In her account Sherwood mainly recalls her many illnesses and mistreatment, her comment on the sleeping quarters is a rather brief mention of her surroundings. Clearly traumatized and in bad health before she arrived in Moringen, some details of her account don't entirely align with other sources, such as her claim that Moringen had a gas chamber—the "*Aktennotiz*" on her report comments on this detail, stating that it is "unlikely and unknown to us" but affirming that the other reemigrants were all Jewish. Her note on "sleeping" in the same separate section as other reemmigrants also does not entirely add up, as Wünschmann's work points out, Jewish women had a separate hall by fall of 1936 but continued to share sleeping quarters with all the other women (under the roof), see: Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 119. See also, Caplan, "Introduction," p. 27. Still, it seems likely that Sherwood shared at least day quarters with fellow reemigrants (that is, the other Jewish women in Moringen at this time).

English Quaker Elizabeth Fox Howard went to Moringen in the spring of 1935 to interview a Jewish woman named Milli Beermann. Recalling this visit in her 1941 book *Across Barriers,* Howard remarks that "The Aryan and non-Aryan women were in separate common rooms and those who desired to have strictly Kosher food were allowed to have it."[71]

This also aligns with the account of Centa Herker-Beimler, who was transferred from KZ Stadelheim to Moringen in January 1936. She remarks that the "Bayernsaal" was established shortly after her arrival and that the Judensaal *already existed* around this time.[72] Reference to the separation of Jewish women from the "Aryan" women in Moringen can also be found in the third volume of the Sopade Reports published in exile by the Social Democratic Party of Germany. A portion of the 1936 report compiled up to September 1936 states that the inmates of KZ Moringen spent time in two halls and adds in a bracket that "the Jewish women had [were in] an extra room."[73] The other two halls were likely the Bavarian Hall (mentioned by Herker-Beimler) and the Prussian/Rhineland Hall, as the Jehovah's Witnesses' hall was not established until November of 1936.[74] The fourth volume of the Sopade Reports from 1937 confirms that Moringen was divided into four halls by the end of 1936.[75] Notably, these accounts taken together suggest that the Jewish Hall was established before any of the other formal halls despite the fact that the Jewish women were not arrested for the same reason (in the way that Jehovah's Witnesses, who eventually shared their own hall, were) or from the same region (as was the case

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[71] Milli Beermann is not named in Howard's report but is mentioned by Caplan in an endnote in the introduction to Gabriele Herz's memoir where Caplan also remarks that she has found no other sources to verify the claim about Kosher food but also makes no note of this important mention of Aryan and non-Aryan women being separated. See Caplan, "lntroduction," [endnote 94], p. 51. And: Elizabeth Fox Howard, *Across Barriers,* (London: Edgar G. Dunstan & Co., 1941): p. 91.

[72] A copy of Centa Herker-Beimler's account is published in Hanna Elling, *Frauen im deutschen Widerstand 1933–45,* pp. 105–110. This particular mention is found on p. 107.

[73] Deutschland Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (SOPADE), 1934–1940, vol. 3, 1936 (Salzhausen: Verlag Petra Nettelbeck, 1980): p. A. 57.

[74] While Caplan lists all four of the halls she only mentions the exact date for the establishment of the Jehovah's Witnesses' hall. See: Caplan, "Introduction," p. 27.

[75] Deutschland Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (SOPADE), 1934–1940, vol. 4, 1936 (Salzhausen: Verlag Petra Nettelbeck, 1980): p. A. 123.

for the Bavarian and Prussian Halls). This categorization of Jewish women on clear racial grounds, regardless of the reasons for their initial arrests, coincides with the ongoing isolation and categorization of Jews throughout Germany in the mid-1930s, and seems to have taken place within Moringen sometime after the Gestapo ordinance on reemigrants in January of 1935 and possibly even before the Nuremberg Laws of September that same year. The emergence of four distinct halls began with the separation of Jewish women as early as sometime in the spring of 1935, just a year after the first Jewish woman (Lizzy Hirsch) came to Moringen.

The one contrary report for separation before 1936 is the account of Hedwig "Hed" Regnart, a German Communist who was close friends with Jewish-German Communist Herta Cronheim. Regnart was brought to Moringen in March of 1936. She recalls that Herta Cronheim was brought there a quarter of a year after her (so sometime at the beginning of Summer that same year), and Regnart also vividly recalls the separation taking place in 1936.[76] At some point after Cronheim's arrival (Regnart does not provide dates for this event), the two friends made plans to ask for two-person accommodations in one of the camp's solitary cells to get away from the severely overcrowded main halls of the KZ. But, as Regnart recounts, "Jews out of the Common Hall… [came the order] one day (soon after we had made our plans)."[77] She also states that the Bavarian and Prussian Halls were established shortly after. Further on, Regnart's memoir goes on to describe "Fall 1936," indicating that this event occurred before Gabriele Herz arrived and before the official and enforced separation into four halls in November. Regnart's recollection is at odds with Centa Herker-Beimler's account, in which the Jewish Hall existed as early as January 1936 (or earlier, given Elizabeth Fox Howard's and Frieda Sherwood's accounts), and with Herker-Beimler's assertion that the Bavarian Hall was established soon after

[76] Hedwig Regnart, "Erinnerungsbericht Hedwig Regnart," Archiv Gedenkstätte Moringen, p. 5. A special thank you to the Gedenkstätte Moringen for kindly providing me with a copy of Regnart's account for my research.
[77] Ibid.

her arrival. However, Regnart's recollection also suggests that the Jewish hall was the first of the four halls to be established, a point that all accounts seem to agree on. Examining all of these sources together, the question of when Jewish women were separated from other inmates does not have a clear answer. Ultimately, this may point to the process of exclusion rather than a specific date when the Jewish Hall was established.

The process of removing Jewish women into their own hall from which they were eventually forbidden from interacting with the "Aryan" women appears to have been slow and steady, resembling the overall winding development of the concentration camp system, which also makes the process somewhat hard to pinpoint. Hans Hesse's findings that many of the early witnesses insisted that the women simply spent time with particular groups they identified with rather than in halls, point to a mix of unofficial and official separation which became more formalized over time. Frieda Sherwood's experience of being lodged with other Jewish reemigrants does not necessarily prove that Jewish women were already separated from the others as early as the spring of 1935, but does imply that the women tended to stay in groups of similar demographics, in this case Jewish and reemigration offenders. However, the emphasis that there was a divide between "Aryan" and "non-Aryan" inmates by the spring of 1935, as reported by Elizabeth Fox Howard, points to a more deliberate separation at this early stage and Centa Herker-Beimler's affirmation that there was a Jewish Hall when she arrived in January of 1936 points to 1935 as the definitive year for more formal isolation on racial grounds. Ilse Rolfe's story of the non-Jewish woman who became part of the group of Jewish women present in the spring of 1936 (at which point the Judensaal potentially already existed) reveals that interactions and close-knit groups still formed outside of these day rooms and that separation was not yet official nor enforced. It may also explain why Rolfe did not make a note of any halls at

this point, or it is possible that Rolfe did not mention the Jewish Hall because it was not established until the Summer of 1936 as Regnart attests to in her account.

Enforced separation into four halls and the firm opposition to the Jewish women mixing with women from the other halls was not put in place until November 1936—as Gabriele Herz recounts in her memoir. However, the overall process may have been developing for well over a year at that point. Looking at the development of other camps, the process within Moringen to designate prisoners into distinct categories, including the category of "Jewish" (not yet technically in itself a jailable offence) resembles similar developments for male prisoners and the formalizing processes taking shape within the wider KZ system at this time—although physical separation of Jewish men from the rest of the prisoner population had already existed in at least two camps (Dachau and Oranienburg) since 1933.[78] In this way, although set apart and unique in several aspects related to the gender of its prisoners and its continued civilian directorship (a point that too often seems to dismiss Moringen's place in the wider KZ system), KZ Moringen developed rather clearly within the larger frameworks of German concentration camps and Nazi racial policies. The question of when and why Jewish women were separated as a distinct prisoner group as early as 1935 does not have a clear or easy answer, but this in itself is an important reflection of how gradually the hierarchies that dominated life in the war time camps were solidified in the pre-war era. It is also a reflection of the gaps still evident in studying Moringen as a unique intersection of the Jewish "racial" and female gender identity, both of which have too often been neglected in studies of the pre-war camps in favour of the normative

[78] Both Dachau and Oranienburg had "Jew Companies" as early as 1933—although this separation was often within the same room of a building, with the Jewish men relegated to a particular corner away from other prisoners. (See: Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* pp. 76–82). Dachau and Oranienburg were, however, exceptions to the rule. The general practice of segregation started to emerge in 1936-37 with badges of identification being implemented in 1937-38. (See: Wünschmann, "Cementing the Enemy Category," p. 589). In this sense, although the treatment of Jewish women in Moringen was certainly better than that of Jewish men in male camps, the development of antisemitic policies within the women' camp matches that of the male camps.

male and political identities that made up the majority of the prisoner experiences at this early stage.

Imprisonment and Life in KZ Moringen

In its first year of operations, Moringen's concentration camp section does not seem to have functioned much differently regarding its female inmates than did its workhouse (whose inmates were kept strictly separate and identified by black uniforms).[79] Hannah Vogt's letters are filled with requests for more clothes or notes on when she will send back clothes for washing, she thanks family and friends for care packages, letters, and visits, discusses current events she reads in the newspapers she is allowed to have, and keeps herself busy with daily routines of work and bonding with her fellow prisoners. Indeed, here as in the prisons, female bonding continues to be a source of comfort as the number of women inmates rose to 25 by late September of 1933. *"There are lovely people among them, we do our handiwork and sing the whole day."* Hannah wrote to her mother on September 26th. *"Nowhere else does one get to know others so quickly and so thoroughly as one does in shared detention. I feel as though I have known some of these women for years already."*[80] This kind of camaraderie continued throughout the camp's existence. Although political, racial, religious, economic, or age-related divisions were of course present, they were not necessarily a barrier where shared confinement forged close bonds. For Jewish women specifically, eventually being somewhat separated from the rest of the women seems to have forged some close bonds among one another. When Ilse Rolfe mentions that there were 11 Jewish women in Moringen when she came there in March of 1936 and that the group adopted a young non-Jewish girl as the twelfth, she recalls that they called her

[79] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 105.
[80] Hesse, *Hoffnung ist ein ewiges Begräbnis,* p. 136.

their "Benjamin" and the group the "twelve tribes of Jacob."[81] While the Jewish women were likely already separated from the rest of the detainees at this point, as discussed earlier, this story illustrates continued interaction between all of the women regardless of identification.

Indeed, separation between Jewish and non-Jewish women in Moringen was not strictly enforced, and all of the women appear to have flouted the restrictions on a regular basis in order to keep in touch with one another. When stricter regulations were implemented by November of 1936, such as a ban on the "Aryan" prisoners entering the Jews' Hall and vice versa, "unless there was an exceptional reason" the women simply came up with lists of exceptional reasons and continued to frequent one another's quarters to borrow yarn, sewing machines, scissors, dress patterns and other supplies.[82] The administration within Moringen itself does not appear to have been entirely in agreement with new ordinances mandating stricter separation between "Aryans" and Jews. When Gabriele Herz was called into director Hugo Krack's office in mid-November of 1936, he informed her that two of the non-Jewish women had asked him for permission to receive English language lessons from Herz. Krack acknowledged that recent rule changes stipulated that Jews were not allowed to give instructions to "Aryans," but that if she were to talk with them in English during the communal exercise period, he could have no objection. When news of such a ban made its way back to the other detainees, they expressed outrage, and the Jehovah's Witnesses especially took offence, approaching Herz to express their indignation and to recall that since Jesus Christ, their saviour, was a Jew, they could never think of Jews as less than any other person.[83] That December, Herz appealed to the Madam Chief Warder on behalf of the Jewish women to ask for permission to celebrate Hanukkah. They

[81] Rolfe, "Eyewitness Report by Ilse Rolfe," p. 1. "The twelve tribes of Jacob" (German: "zwölf stämme Jakobs") here refers to the twelve tribes of Israel who descended from the 12 sons of the patriarch Jacob, Benjamin was the youngest son.
[82] Herz, "The Women's Camp in Moringen," p. 100.
[83] Herz, *The Women's Camp in Moringen,* p. 101. Ultimately Krack had one of the non-Jewish women provide English lessons while Herz took on three Jewish women as her students for the language.

received permission and were additionally given time off from the Winter Relief work. The women received gift packages from friends and family and had thoroughly cleaned and decorated their hall for the festivities. Some of the non-Jewish women thoughtfully asked questions about the holiday and its meaning, and praised the Jewish women, saying, "You've prepared everything so beautifully."[84] A rather heartwarming recollection of cross-cultural appreciation that is not found in either of the subsequent camps.

A similar event is recorded for Gotteszell, where the Communist women cleaned their small quarters and found scraps of cloth for the table, a wilting bouquet of flowers, and erected a small red flag and sat together quietly singing until the camp administration barged in after being tipped off about a red flag which none would confess to having known anything about.[85] Again and again, the women worked with one another and fostered companionships among each other to make their imprisonment more bearable. What is notable at this stage is that while the administration was making clear moves to separate Jewish prisoners from non-Jewish prisoners, the women continued to interact with one another despite such regulations, with seemingly no animosity. The most common complaint appears to have been a lack of activities. Gabriele Herz notes at the beginning of her imprisonment that there is very little "instruction" happening at this supposed instructional camp, aside from a daily reading of the *Völkischer Beobachter*.[86] According to Ilse Rolfe, the women could volunteer for fieldwork (which she did) or else take small circular walks around the camp's courtyard. The Halls were not locked at night, and at times, the women would sneak out onto the stairs in the early morning hours to chat or do their

[84] Herz, *The Women's Camp in Moringen,* p. 115-117. The house rules dating to about April of 1934 had included provisions for the observance of religious holidays including Jewish holidays—this provision was struck through at an unknown later date. By the end of 1936 it is likely that this provision was already crossed out (leading Herz to seek permission) but clearly not strictly prohibited. For a list of the house rules, see: Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen,* pp. 45-50. For the celebration of holidays including Jewish ones, p. 47.
[85] Schätzle, "Gotteszell: Erstes Konzentrationslager für Frauen," p. 26.
[86] Herz, *The Women's Camp in Moringen,* p. 84.

knitting.[87] Lotti Huber also recalls that "in the beginning, we had it pretty good and were allowed to receive mail and packages from home."[88] Herz's account is one of the most detailed regarding the relationships between the women in Moringen. The women share news from home and complain to one another of the often strict censorship imposed on their letter-writing, [89] Herz also took on a more motherly role to some of the younger women, comforting nineteen-year old Annemarie Münzer (fondly called "Anni" by Herz) whose engagement to a young German police officer had been rendered invalid by the Nuremberg Laws and who now sat in Moringen for race-defilement after her fiancé sought to save his career by accusing her of perjury after the two had been caught making plans to leave Germany in order marry.[90] Herz's willingness to listen, mentor, and comfort earned her the nickname "Mutter Herz" (Mother Heart) for the rest of her time in Moringen.[91] Such adopted roles as mother or sister to fellow prisoners would continue to be a hallmark of Jewish women and girls' experiences in the concentration camps, even up until liberation in 1945.

Punishment in Moringen consisted of reductions in privileges, mainly in the form of shortened visits or a reduction in the writing of letters or receiving of care packages. The policies for this appear to have been in place since 1933, when punishment for the hunger strike in Moringen during Communist Hannah Vogt's internment limited the sending of mail to once a week.[92] The second round of punishments further reduced her mail, allowing her to write only twice a month, and only two pages each time as well as receiving only two letters a month of

[87] Rolfe, "Eyewitness Report by Ilse Rolfe," p. 2.
[88] Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!,* p. 28.
[89] Herz, *The Women's Camp in Moringen,* pp. 92-93, 96.
[90] Annnemarie's story is also recalled by Wünschmann (see: Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 110). Initially she and her fiance had intended to emigrate together but were arrested—choosing instead to secure his police career under the Nazi regime her fiance had turned on her. Annemarie surfaces again in Lotti Huber's account on Lichtenburg as well—she was released from the KZ on February 4, 1939, and fled to Shanghai.
[91] Herz, *The Women's Camp in Moringen,* pp. 89-90.
[92] Hesse, *Hoffnung ist ein ewiges Begräbnis,* p. 127.

equal length.[93] Similarly, in 1936, Ilse Rolfe reported that after an incident in which the women refused to stand up from the table for Hitler's radio speech when loudly commanded to do so by the overseeing woman, the writing and sending of letters was reduced to every 14 days.[94] Herz's account of this same incident recalls that the mail embargo was set for an undetermined amount of time, and releases were halted for the foreseeable future. "This hits us where it hurts most," wrote Herz, "Anyone who is free can scarcely grasp the importance of mail to the prisoner. The letters we receive and send are, for us, our connection not only with the outside world, but with life itself."[95] These punishments seem to have been meted out to the collective group of female detainees with no further distinction, unlike later punishments at Ravensbrück, which usually targeted and singled out Jewish prisoners specifically.

While most accounts, including Herz's and Rolfe's, acknowledge that imprisonment in Moringen was bearable, the incarcerated women still suffered both mentally and physically, some some found their imprisonment especially difficult. Anni Krümmel, arrested as a prostitute and *rassenschänderin* and brought to Moringen in late September of 1937, became very physically and mentally ill in October of that year. She spent some time in the Moringen *lazarett* and at one point suffered a nervous collapse and attempted to take her own life, which led to her transfer to a clinic in Göttingen. She would go on to be transferred to Lichtenburg and then Ravensbrück.[96] Frieda Sherwood, too, recounts how several of the women had crying fits from

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[93] Ibid, pp. 128-129. Additional punishment included limiting her visitation days were also limited to two people on the fourth Sunday of each month for 10 minutes, and care packages of foodstuffs may only be sent to her on holidays, money limited to 5 marks a month, laundry to one package a month, and private persons would no longer be able to send her books or newspapers

[94] Rolfe, "Eyewitness Report by Ilse Rolfe," 2. Rolfe came to Moringen in May of 1936 and left for Lichtenburg in March of 1939, her report does not specify when this incident took place. Gabriele Herz's account (from October 1936 to March 1937) mentions such an incident happening in mid-November of 1936.

[95] Herz, *The Women's Camp in Moringen,* p. 99.

[96] The two main sources for Anni Krümmel ("Anni K."), Wünschmann and Hesse, contradict each other in some details. Wünschmann writes that Anni was a 24 year old prostitute, Hesse calls her a 35 year old arrested for race defiling—it is likely she was both a prostitute and a race-defiler (certainly the latter either way) although her age remains unclear here. Regardless, both agree she was brought to Moringen on September 30th 1937, and both note

the mental stress of life in the KZ. She herself recalls the physical burden she endured and the back pain she acquired after tripping on one of the stairs. When she was released in September of 1935, she had contracted a lung infection.[97] Leaving the concentration camp slowly became more difficult as the decade wore on, which increased the women's restlessness and despair. By 1937, the release of Jewish prisoners was increasingly tied to the ability to emigrate from Germany permanently. On May 28, 1937, Himmler declared on his visit to Moringen that Jewish prisoners in protective custody should only be released if their emigration had been guaranteed.[98] Indeed, when Gabriele Herz had left Moringen on March 17, 1937, she did so on account of the emigration papers that had finally been issued for her and her family.[99] Those unable to receive such papers stayed in Moringen until their transfer to Lichtenburg.[100] Lotti Huber, Charlotte Cohn, Anni Krümmel, Annemarie Münzer, and Ilse Rolfe were among the Jewish women who continued on into the next women's camp.

Move to Lichtenburg and Life in the Castle KZ

The move to Lichtenburg was done in stages, and Kim Wünschmann's research has determined that the Jewish inmates of Moringen were moved together as a distinct group. While most of the women were moved to Lichtenburg in December of 1937, the Jewish women appear to have been held back until March of 1938. Additionally, the Jewish women numbered at least 70 at this point, according to the available records.[101] In her report, Ilse Rolfe estimated that about 80-100 of around 1000 women imprisoned at Lichtenburg were Jewish, making up a

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her transfer to Lichtenburg and Ravensbrück and her eventual murder at Bernburg. See: Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* pp. 110-11. And: Hesse, *Das Frauen-KZ Moringen,* p. 178.

[97] Sherwood, "Eyewitness Report by Frieda Sherwood," p. 2.

[98] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p.124.

[99] Herz, *The Women's Camp in Moringen,* pp. 158-59.

[100] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 129. The SS fully took control of the camp detention of women from 1937 into 1938. The decision was made in October of 1937 to move female concentration camp inmates to the Lichtenburg castle whose male inmates were in process of being moved elsewhere and which now made the women's camp part of the wider KZ system.

[101] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* 130.

significant 8-10% of the camp's prisoner population.[102] However, Henning Fahrenberg and Nicole Hördler's work on women in Lichtenburg estimates that only a total of 514 women were transported from Moringen to Lichtenburg. The number of inmates rose to 800 by September of 1938 and up to 1065 by April 1939, with 974 remaining until May of that year, when the camp was dissolved.[103] Fahrenberg, Hördler, and Wünschmann's estimates taken together suggest that in March of 1938, Lichtenburg's prisoner population was 45.9% Jehovah's Witnesses (by far the largest group as they had also been in Moringen), 13.6% Jewish, and 40.4% other. Wünschmann estimates that Jewish women consistently made up 10-15% of the Lichtenburg population, though exact numbers are not available due to a lack of records. Her study identified at least 155 Jewish women out of the total population of 1415 who were imprisoned in the camp from 1937 to 1939.[104]

Unlike Moringen, which had been under civilian leadership for the entirety of its function as a women's concentration camp, Lichtenburg had already been an official men's camp within the wider KZ system and continued to receive formal visits by Himmler himself after the transfer of women there had been completed. Ilse Rolfe recalls that Himmler visited once a year for a personal inspection, an occasion for which the KZ was scrubbed and cleaned from top to bottom. Such inspections were usually followed by the release of "five or six of the more harmless cases" in a show of amnesty towards the prisoners.[105] The conditions in Lichtenburg were markedly worse than they had been in Moringen. Lotti Huber described the castle as a "hell" in which

[102] Rolfe, "Eyewitness Report by Ilse Rolfe," p. 2. Rolfe's report mentions that she was brought to Lichtenburg in March of 1939 which would have been a full year after the second transport of primarily Jewish prisoners. Given the documents second-hand nature (recorded by Mrs Midia Kraus), and continuous document errors in spellings and names (which have been amended or struck through in pen), and some back and forth in recorded dates, it is likely that the date was erroneously recorded as "March 1939" when it should have read "March 1938."
[103] Fahrenberg and Hördler, "Das Frauen-Konzentrationslager Lichtenburg," pp. 168-69. Of the 514 women transferred from Moringen to Lichtenburg the majority (236) were Jehovah's Witnesses.
[104] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 131.
[105] Rolfe, "Eyewitness Report by Ilse Rolfe," p. 3.

some of the women went into hysterics, especially those who were pregnant or thought they might be, and where she witnessed at least one suicide when a distressed woman threw herself down a five-storey stairwell.[106] Huber counted herself lucky that she spent "only one year" in Lichtenburg before her brother managed to secure her release, and she was able to move to Palestine. Ilse Rolfe recounted that she was "not completely unhappy there," the workload was heavier, but that she bore it well on account of her youth. Her twin sister Else, a fellow Communist, was also imprisoned in Lichtenburg and, although the women were eventually put to work, Rolfe recalls that they were not beaten, and she was able to share letters and newspapers with the other women.[107] However, Rolfe also recalls that she retreated more inward, becoming a quieter and more reflective person in order to endure the hard labour and circumstances.[108] The most significant change, noted by both Huber and Rolfe in their accounts, was the eventual, strictly enforced separation of the Jewish women from most of the non-Jewish inmates. At first, the Jewish women were punished by not being allowed to work and instead forced to sit idly in their cells. They were eventually housed together in the camp's prison building along with the prostitutes, alleged criminals, asocials, and Sinti and Roma women.[109] In her memoir, Lotti Huber recalls this grouping as "a fascinating mix of human misery."[110] Additionally, the Jewish women transferred here were now marked in their prisoner files as "Jewish" in addition to their offence (i.e. "Reemigrant") and took on the forced second name of "Sara" in January of 1939.[111]

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[106] Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!,* p. 34.
[107] Rolfe, "Eyewitness account by Ilse Rolfe," p. 3. Although not mentioned in Rolfe's account, Kim Wünschmann notes in her work that the Jewish women were initially "punished" by being barred from labour and left in small cells without a way to keep themselves busy; later they were given the worst work details, including as forced drainers in the castle sewage system. (See Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 131).
[108] Rolfe, "Eyewitness account by Ilse Rolfe," p. 4.
[109] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 131.
[110] Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!,* p. 28.
[111] Fahrenberg and Hördler, "Das Frauen-Konzentrationslager Lichtenburg," p. 172.

Some of the women were kept in solitary confinement—notably the Jewish Communist Olga Benario-Prestes, who had been sent back to Germany from Brazil by the Brazilian President Getúlio Vargas after a failed Communist revolution led there by her husband, Luís Carlos Prestes. Pregnant at the time, Benario-Prestes gave birth to her daughter Anita in a Women's prison at Barnimstrasse in Berlin on November 27th, 1936, and was transferred to Lichtenburg in February of 1938 after her daughter was weaned and given into the care of her husband's mother. Before joining the collective cell, she was still regularly brought to a Gestapo building on Berlin's Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse and tortured there for further information on the activities of International Communists in South America.[112] Later, Benario-Prestes became the eldest of the "*Judenstation"* in Lichtenburg—a position she took up again as *"Blockälteste"* (eldest of the Jewish block) after transfer to Ravensbrück.[113] Although Jewish women were slowly being more isolated from some of the other groups, life in Lichtenburg was notably stricter and more punishing on the women overall—more closely resembling the experiences of men in concentration camps with frequent roll calls and what Wünschmann notes as "a militaristic daily routine."[114] Jewish women specifically were eventually assigned the worst work details, such as cleaning the latrines—a punishment that had already been enacted against Jewish men since the earliest arrests of 1933.[115] In the fall of 1938, they were assigned to work on the

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[112] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp,* p. 43. Olga's daughter Anita was rescued from being put up in an orphanage by her paternal grandmother and eventually returned to Brazil where she was reunited with her father. Note: In her work, Saidel anglicizes the street as "Prince Albertrstrasse." Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse was renamed "Niederkirchnerstraße" in the 1950s.

[113] See: Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp,* p. 44; and Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 131.

[114] Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 131.

[115] Wünschmann, Ibid. For examples of Jewish men being assigned the worst work details as early as the provisional concentration camps of 1933 (frequently in the form of cleaning the latrines, as was the case for Jewish women in Lichtenburg), see: Benz and Distel, Der Ort des Terrors: Band II, p. 47 (in which Jewish men had to clean the KZ Berlin-Kreuzberg latrines with their bare hands), and p. 144 (in which a Jewish man in KZ Königstein-Halbestadt was assigned the "work" of breaking rocks). For more about the work assigned to Jewish prisoners in the early camps and the pervasive Nazi stereotype that Jews "refused to dirty their hands", see: Kim Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* pp. 82–88. (Section: "Camp Labor").

sewage system, a job Klaus Drobisch describes in his work on Lichtenburg as "a work that was not regarded as light for men" and for which only one of the women received rubber boots.[116] The unfortunate group returned each night covered in mud and dirt.

The harsher circumstances in Lichtenburg, firmer separation of groups, and increasing mental torment of prisoners appear, to have affected dynamics and, in some ways, weakened the women's ability to form the same wide friendship circles that many had known in Moringen or in the various local prisons before then. Huber recalled in her memoir that women went hysterical in the camp, recalling one particular instance in which a new prisoner, a Communist, had gone into an apparent epileptic fit. She continued to do this every time an Appell was called and was soon joined by four or five others who fell to the floor, frothing at the mouth.[117] Rolfe's report briefly hints at such events as well, saying only that women who had been caught illegally crossing the border "collapsed in fits of shrieking" after being imprisoned in Lichtenburg.[118] Additionally, both Huber and Rolfe recall a woman by the last name of Böhm who was hated by the other women for continually "sucking up to" the SS personnel staffing the camp and who tried to make the lives of the prisoners as terrible as possible, in one instance allegedly leaving bread in the latrines for which the entire hall was punished with shortened rations.[119] It appears that collective punishment for Jewish inmates started to emerge at this stage in the camp system for women. Apart from formal punishment, there also appear to have been several instances that went beyond formal punitive measures and into the realm of abuse and even violent reactions by

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[116] Drobisch, *Konzentrationslager im Schloss Lichtenburg,* p. 72.
[117] Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!,* p. 33. Whether these women fell into genuine fits together due to the Appell (which were notoriously tormenting for concentration camp prisoners) or whether they had implicitly or explicitly decided to rebel together in this manner is unclear from Huber's account.
[118] Rolfe, "Eyewitness account by Ilse Rolfe," p. 4. It is unclear in the report manuscript whether the portion on breaking into fits of shrieking, "*und wältzen sich in Schreikrämpfen"* has been underlined for emphasis or struck through—potentially because of the misspelling of "wälzen."
[119] The bread instance is recalled by Ilse Rolfe (Rolfe, "Eyewitness account by Ilse Rolfe," p. 4). Lotti Huber recalls that this Böhm would routinely advise the SS staff on how they might make the prison conditions even more unbearable (Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!,* p. 31).

the SS staffing the camp. Hanna Elling's brief description of Lichtenburg in her work *Frauen im deutschen Widerstand 1933-1945* mentions that Jehovah's Witnesses had fire hoses leveled at them, after which they were beaten because they had refused to listen to a radio address from Hitler following the invasion of the Sudetenland.[120] Lina Haag also recounts the incident and mentions another which happened around the following Easter, during which the Lager kommandant beat three women tied naked to wooden stakes until he could no longer raise his whip. One of the women, a "good comrade" named Steffi, imprisoned for aiding the escape of her Jewish boyfriend out of Germany, succumbed to her injuries and died.[121]

Regardless, the women still sought comfort in one another, and some attempted to alleviate the suffering of fellow prisoners or took on the roles of older sisters or mothers to their companions. Lotti Huber recalls that Marianne (Münzer), still the youngest among the Jewish women, was fondly referred to as "Benjamine" and that "In the *Lager* there was an unbelievable solidarity but also a fear of spies."[122] Huber also recalls a prostitute by the name of Elsa, a lively and good-natured woman who comforted her in a moment of despair and who took it upon herself to comfort and cheer up some of her fellow prisoners.[123] Ilse Rolfe, meanwhile, had the comfort of her twin sister with her in the camp. She also connected with the others by secretly distributing letters or newspapers to the other women, by leaving them in the bathhouse for the

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[120] Elling, *Frauen im deutschen Widerstand 1933-1945, p. 30.*

[121] See: Haag, *Eine Hand voll Staub,* p. 167-170, for an account of the Jehovah's Witnesses declaring that "there will be war" in reaction to the invasion of the Sudetendland, and p. 171 for the account on the three women being beaten by the Kommandant around Easter. Klaus Drobisch recounts this incident in his work on the camp as well and adds that the Kommandant often oversaw beatings on Sundays which were usually meted out by *Aufseherin* Maria Mandel though he occasionally took over himself. Drobisch, *Konzentrationslager im Schloss Lichtenburg,* p. 74.

[122] Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!,* p. 30. For the nickname "Benjamine," the "e" at the end of Benjamin changes the name to a feminine and diminutive form in German. Although Huber does not give a last name for Marianne, she recalls that she was engaged to a young police officer and was arrested for Rassenschande. Additionally, recalling the "Benjamine" of Ilse Rolfe's account on Moringen, this appears to have been a common pet name among the German Jewish women in the early camps although I have not come across it in any Ravensbrück accounts.

[123] Huber,*Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!,* pp. 28-29.

others to find when they entered.[124] Additionally, she recalls a middle-aged Catholic Austrian woman by the name of Frau Redlig, who would get up between the night patrols to recite poems or sing a song in the cold sleeping hall to comfort her fellow prisoners.[125] This particular event appears to have taken place before the Jewish women were relocated to the castle's prison cells and points to a continued female bond and solidarity among the women that still transcended racial, political, religious, and other imposed distinctions. Huber's recollections of young "Benjamine" Marianne, meanwhile, illustrate that particular shared bonds between the Jewish women who shared religious and cultural backgrounds (likely more so than a sense of "racial" ties) also continued. A letter written by Olga Benario-Prestes to her husband also reveals the affection the Jewish women had for their *Blockälteste.* For her birthday in February of 1939, the women in the *Judenstation* had set a table full of gifts, including a knitted light-blue sweater, handkerchiefs, toiletries, sweets, a knitted hat, a small wicker basket, and poems. "They tell me that I stood there in front of all those treasures like a child," she wrote to her husband, clearly touched by the kindness of her fellow prisoners.[126] While life in Lichtenburg was certainly more violent than in Moringen, such bonds and care for one another evidently continued to be a part of women's experiences as well.

Ultimately, the women's camp in KZ Lichtenburg was the first time Jewish women began to be treated notably worse than non-Jewish women, going beyond mere separation, and more like Jewish men had been treated since 1933. While Jewish women had already been separated from the other female detainees on the basis of race in Moringen and had experienced a loss in rights, it was still primarily their gender that had dictated their treatment and the work they were assigned. In Lichtenburg, Jewish women were not simply separated from the "Aryan" women

[124] Rolfe, "Eyewitness account by Ilse Rolfe," p. 3.
[125] Rolfe, "Eyewitness account by Ilse Rolfe," p. 4.
[126] Excerpt of Olga Benario-Prestes' letter found in: Drobisch, *Konzentrationslager im Schloss Lichtenburg,* p. 78.

but quartered with non-Jewish women who, also on the basis of race (such as Roma and Sinti women) or by perceived innate moral failings (sex workers and professional criminals) had been relegated to the worst lodgings in the camp—the perceived "scum of humanity" as Lotti Huber put it.[127] In Lichtenburg, the camp for women began more closely resembling the various men's concentration camps in which Appell, strictly enforced rules, and strict routines, governed daily life, and where Jews had consistently been selected for the worst work details and treatment. The gendered differences in the treatment of Jewish men in comparison to Jewish women is a topic worth investigating in and of itself, for it reveals much about how Nazi policies and camp structure were heavily gendered and how gender was perhaps an even greater factor in prisoner experience than race.[128]

Taken together, the pre-war camps of Moringen and Lichtenburg reveal a gradual but traceable change in how Jewish women experience the camps. As restrictions grew tighter and the Nazi regime more forceful against Jews outside of the camps, organization and conditions changed for Jewish women within the camps as well. However, as first-hand accounts from Jewish women in both of these camps also show, there is a continual resistance among the women to accept the new dynamics imposed by the administration fully and both Jewish women among themselves and with their non-Jewish counterparts continue to come together in solidarity, to care for the youngest among them, and to form deep bonds which help them survive the boredom, fear, uncertainty, and worsening conditions within the camps. This networking among women, which surfaces so often in accounts of imprisonments in jails and prisons and the early camps, continues on throughout the later camps and even into the final months at the end of

[127] Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!,* p. 28. "Abschaum der Menschheit."
[128] It must be pointed out that while political affiliations were likely the greatest factor in how prisoners were treated, Communist were repeatedly subjected to torture and bullying regardless of whether they were male or female, being Jewish as well as Communist greatly increased one's danger because of the deeply-rooted Nazi belief in a "Judeo-Bolshevik" conspiracy.

the war as one of the primary forms of survival for Jewish women even after being fully separated from other groups of prisoners after Lichtenburg.[129]

Jewish Women in Early Ravensbrück 1939–1942

On April 20th, 1939, an amnesty declared in honour of Hitler's 50th birthday led to the release of hundreds of concentration camp prisoners, but notably, Jews were officially excluded from this act of mercy. Himmler had ordered on January 31st of that year that Jews in protective custody who possessed valid emigration papers should be set free (the KZ system had seen a large influx of Jewish men and boys following the 1938 November Pogrom), however, the April amnesty, which was meant to extend an offer of integration back into the *Volksgemeinschaft* to those deemed "worthy," could not include Jews without valid papers to leave Germany permanently.[130] Women, too, were released during this period of amnesty, including the Communist Lina Haag, who had been in Gotteszell and Lichtenburg for several years, but it is unclear from her account if any Jewish women were let go up to this point.[131] The rest of the women in KZ Lichtenburg were transferred to KZ Ravensbrück in May of 1939. Jewish women in this transfer included Ilse Rolfe, Anni Krümmel, and Charlotte Cohn, who had all been in Moringen as well, and Olga Benario-Prestes, who continued to act as "Eldest" for the Jewish inmates.[132] In her report, Rolfe recalls interacting with Benario-Prestes, who had once again been put into solitary confinement. As part of her job in bringing food to those in single cells, Rolfe apparently included some sweets or notes of encouragement to her fellow Communist whenever

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130 Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 211.

131 Haag, *Eine Hand voll Staub,* p. 180.

132 Judith Buber Agassi has noted in her research that at least 22 women experienced all three of the camps, Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück. (See: Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück*, p. 73. Kim Wünschmann identified a total of 33 who experienced all three camps. (See: Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz,* p. 131. As far as I am aware in my own research on these camps, Ilse Rolfe was the only Jewish woman to survive all three and leave behind an account of her experiences.

she could.[133] Rolfe herself was released shortly after the transfer, on May 26th, and given three weeks to leave Germany. She returned briefly to Berlin and emigrated to England shortly after, where she married and had one daughter.[134]

Ilse Rolfe's release is significant because she appears to have been one of the very few Jewish women released from Ravensbrück during this early period. Linde Apel notes in her work on the topic that of the 974 women transferred to Ravensbrück that May, 137 were Jewish, with this number dropping to 124 by August, indicating 13 releases.[135] Rochelle Saidel too touches on the difficulty of finding any Jewish survivors from this early period, stating that the only Jewish survivor she is aware of from the first three years of the camp's existence was an Austrian political prisoner by the name of Herta Soswinski who arrived in Ravensbrück in January of 1942 and was sent on to Auschwitz the following Autumn (evidently, Saidel was not aware of Ilse Rolfe).[136] Similar to Lichtenburg, the transferred women were registered in the new camp as "Jews" in addition to their reasons for imprisonment, but now their degree of Jewishness was also registered, marking some as "Jüdin" or "Volljüdin," "Halbjüdin," "Mischling I. Grades," or "Jüdin-Mischling."[137] As had been the case in the first two camps, the Jewish women were separated into their own quarters in Block 11 and Block 9, the "Judenblock," shortly after arrival, and Block 7 for those designated as Jewish "*Mischlinge*."[138] They were also forbidden from interacting with those outside of the Jewish blocks but some still did regardless.[139]

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[133] The recollection that Benario-Prestes was put into solitary confinement again upon arrival is not mentioned by Saidel, Helm, Buber-Agassi, or Apel but may certainly have been possible as the camp had solitary cells and Benario-Prestes was not made *Blockälteste* till October or November 1939.
[134] Rolfe, "Eyewitness Report by Ilse Rolfe," p. 5.
[135] Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 47.
[136] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 29. Also, footnote 3 on page 233.
[137] "Jew," "Full Jew," "Half Jew," "Mixed of the first degree," or "Jewish-Mixed." Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 48
[138] See Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 152. for more on the special circumstances of the designated "half-Jewish" women in Ravensbrück.
[139] Recounted by non-Jewish survivor Rosa Jochmann who continued a friendship with fellow SPD member, Austrian Jew, Käthe Leichter. See: Herbert Steiner, ed. *Käthe Leichter: Leben und Werk.* Vienna: Europa Verlags-AG, 1973): p. 201.

Non-Jewish prisoner Doris Maase recalled that the Jewish block was “the most desperate," with many of the Jewish women having little in common and additionally shunning the smaller subgroups of Communists (“Reds”) and prostitutes among them, while the Communist Jews reviled the "bourgeois" Viennese Jews.[140]

Until August of 1941, the majority of the Jewish women imprisoned in Ravensbrück were there because of *rassenschande.* After August 1941, Jewish women were primarily designated as “political” prisoners, though this included a range of offences, not just membership in the KPD or SPD. Other categories included “asocials,” which, together with race-defilement, often designated Jewish women engaged in (or suspected of) prostitution, and professional criminals (designated “BV” for *Berufsverbrecher*).[141] Reemigrants, which had made up the largest category of Jewish prisoners in Moringen, (along with would-be-immigrants in preventative custody) was now a considerably smaller group of just four women in May of 1939 with that number growing to 60 by July of 1940 and back down to 20 later that month, which Linde Apel muses as indicating that 40 of the women had actually been released.[142] These demographics align with some of the major developments in Nazi Germany up until this point. First, that relationships between Jews and Aryans had become an increasing concern for a regime intent on clearing the country of all Jewish people, and second, that permanent emigration was the only viable, and increasingly more difficult to obtain, way left for Jewish women to escape the concentration camp system. Additionally, the regional national demographics also began to change in early Ravensbrück. Austrian women now designated as “Reichsjuden” are not always

[140] Recollections from Doris Maase recounted by Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler’s Concentration Camp for Women,* p. 56.
[141] Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 48-50. for breakdown of the various groups.
[142] Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 51. Apel writes that “Es ist anzunehmen, dass 40 Frauen tatsächlich entlassen wurden.” and does not appear to consider death as a possible explanation.

easy to distinguish in the surviving records, but by 1942, about 117 Polish Jewish women were brought into the camp. In 1942, at least 88 Czech and 82 Dutch Jewish women were also imprisoned in Ravensbrück. The majority of these incoming Jewish women were designated as "political" prisoners, and some as race-defilers.[143] As a result, the group of Jewish prisoners presented less and less as a connected group bound together by shared experiences. Instead, they were a diverse group reflecting the ongoing territorial expansion and racial segregation of the Third Reich.

As had been the case in Lichtenburg, the daily roll call of an *Appell*, in which the women lined up to be counted for hours each day, was a hallmark of life in Ravensbrück from the very beginning. Work details were also eventually organized for the prisoners, first on expansions on the camp and providing labour to local nearby farms and then slave labour for factories operated by capitalists such as Siemens, which grew to be one of the largest employers of Jewish female slave labour during the Second World War.[144] However, the first six months of the camp were also marked by "senseless activities" such as shovelling sand, alongside expansion of the camp which was intended to weaken prisoners but did nothing for the camp's (nor the Reich's) economic interests.[145] Punishment for prisoners also began to evolve in Ravensbrück. As had been the case in Moringen and Lichtenburg, restrictions on writing and sending letters or receiving packages and the restricting of rations continued to be employed to keep the women in line and letters were strictly censored—the daughters of Rosa Menzer, a Jewish member of the KPD, received letters from her in 1940 warning that "Confusing and difficult to read letters

[143] Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 51-52.
[144] Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 13. Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 95-100. If women at the factory became ill they were sent back to the main camp, vulnerable to being sent to be gassed, and replaced by another slave labourer.
[145] Iris Nachum and Dina Porat, "The History of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp as Reflected in its Changing and Expanding Functions," in *A Holocaust Crossroads" Jewish Women and Children in Ravensbrück,* edited by Irith Dublon-Knebel (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2010): p. 20.

cannot be censored and will be destroyed."[146] "Bed-building" within the barracks and subsequent inspections also became a regimented torment within Ravensbrück. Margarete Buber-Neumann, a German non-Jewish political prisoner who had been married to a Jew (with whom she had two daughters, including historian Judith Buber-Agassi) and who had already spent several years in Stalin's gulags, recalls in her memoir that "Once you failed to satisfy inspection it was more difficult than ever to pass muster subsequently. If it happened more than once you were liable to get a 'report.' A 'report' was the constant threat which hovered over our unfortunate heads." Corporal punishment also began to emerge around 1940. Solitary confinement, attacks by SS dogs, and severe beatings became a more frequent resort—especially if a prisoner was suspected of committing sabotage. Whippings of up to 25 lashes were officially instituted in 1940, administered onto the bare buttocks (a shame-inducing as well as painful method) in the basement of the prison building with a doctor in the room.[147] Himmler himself was supposed to approve each of the whippings and ordered on December 2nd, 1943, that these should only be applied as a last resort, not as "educational punishment."[148] Whether such restraint was actually shown is quite another matter, and many of the accounts of the later years speak to unimaginable suffering and sadism.

Although life in the new camp was considerably harsher than even Lichtenburg had been, the worst mistreatment and abuse was once again directed at the Jewish women. Political

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[146] "Rosa Menzer," in: von Freyburg and Krause-Schmitt, *Moringen, Lichtenburg, Ravensbrück: Frauen im Konzentrationslager 1933–1945,* p. 136.

[147] In many cases the doctor present for these whippings was Dr. Erika Jantzen who had first started working in the KZ system in Lichtenburg. In her post-war affidavit for the Nuremberg Trials she revealed that she had the power to stop whippings if a prisoner was deemed unfit but that she would not do it simply to spare the women their punishment. Although Jantzen appears overall unremorseful for the actions taken against prisoners in the camp, she does, however, acknowledge that some of the female guards in the camp could not control themselves (nor their dogs) and sometimes went too far in berating and abusing inmates which she attributes to the overseers background as "extremely inferior types who harmed the good name of German womanhood." See: Erika Jantzen, "Affidavit by Dr. Erika Jantzen, former camp physician at Lichtenburg concentration camp," Ref. 1655/3229, *Nuremberg War Crimes Trial: Documents,* The Wiener Holocaust Library, p. 1.

[148] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 14-15.

prisoner Erika Buchmann recounts that Direktor Max Koegel, who had overseen Lichtenburg and retained the position with the move to Ravensbrück, was particularly cruel towards the Jewish women. "The Jewish women had to endure the worst abuses under Direktor Koegel," Buchmann recounts, "Without ceasing [he] hailed punishments upon their entire block: fines, standing sentences, withdrawal of shopping permits, withdrawal of permission to write home or receive letters, read books or subscribe to a newspaper."[149] Indeed, collective punishment of specifically Jewish prisoners had long been practiced in the men's camps, and now in Ravensbrück, Jewish women too were collectively punished out of retribution—even for events entirely outside of their control. This particular change appears to have occurred shortly after the start of the war in the fall of 1939, when, following the assassination attempt of Hitler on November 8th, the women in the Jewish block were shut into their barracks for one month. During this time, they were not allowed to leave the barracks, standing for Appell within the block, unable to receive any mail, and screamed at, beaten, and threatened with shootings by the SS-Aufseherin Emma Zimmer.[150] Survivor Ida Hirschkron recounts that other *Aufseherinnen,* in particular Johanna Langefeld, Edith Fraede, and Gertrud Rabestein, mistreated and abused the Jewish prisoners on a daily basis.[151]

In the summer of 1940 the Jewish women were singled out for a particularly brutal task" unloading a barge of bricks without any gloves, which caused the women to bleed from their hands and seek out the camp's infirmary each evening. Erika Buchmann, working in the *Revier* during this period, recounts that under the strict supervision of Frau Dr. Janssen, those tending to the Jewish women were forbidden from properly bandaging the wounds and closely watched to

[149] Buchmann, *Frauen im Konzentrationslager,* p. 11. Erika Buchmann was also interned in Gotteszell, see: Kienle, *Gotteszell - das frühe Konzentrationslager für Frauen in Württemberg*, pp. 34, 47.
[150] Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 144.
[151] Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 145.

ensure that no extra supplies were wasted on small cuts since "it makes no difference, the Jews have to continue tomorrow anyways."[152] Eventually, the Jewish women from Block 9 were also in charge of cleaning the latrines, among them Herta Soswinski, a rare survivor of this first period from Moravia who had been brought to Ravensbrück in January of 1942 and who recounts the bitter cold, frequent bladder infections, and back-breaking outdoor winter labour.[153] The gradual separation and injustices that marked a steady decline for Jewish women in Moringen and Lichtenburg appears to have become not only more brutal but indeed deadly within months of the transfer to Ravensbrück. Most importantly, Jewish women were now singled out from all other prisoner groups for particularly brutal treatment and even punished for external factors that had nothing to do with their conduct in the camp. Although some, including Ida Hirschkron, still found eventual release, the rest of the Jewish women were now at the merciless hands of the female guards who were now overseeing their daily labour and roll-calls.

Despite the rampant fear, threats, and increasing instances of retribution and violence, there is evidence that the Jewish women still formed community and close-knit friendships among each other. *Blockälteste,* the respected Olga Benario-Prestes, in charge of the Jewish women in barrack 11, reportedly did her best to alleviate some of the women's suffering by leading them in cleaning their barrack as much as possible and making sure the women took care of their own hygiene. "If we do not take care of our own bodies, the Nazis will do as they want with us," Benario-Prestes said, " We are all in the same boat, and if we want to be treated with dignity, we must behave like human beings and not like animals."[154] She additionally helped establish secret courses on literature, language (for which she taught Russian and French), and

[152] Buchmann, *Frauen im Konzentrationslager,* p. 11.
[153] Soswinski, "Why We Have to Tell about it," 128-129.
[154] "Olga Benario–Prestes," in: von Freyburg and Krause-Schmitt, *Moringen, Lichtenburg, Ravensbrück: Frauen im Konzentrationslager 1933–1945,* p. 133.

theater evenings. Käthe Leichter, a prominent Austrian SPD member, organized some of these literary afternoons in Block 11. Although her parents had assimilated and renounced their Jewish faith in the early 1920s, Leichter and her husband, Otto, were persecuted as both members of the political left and as Jews after the Anschluss of Austria in 1938. Her husband and two sons were able to escape to France, but Käthe Leichter was arrested by the Gestapo the day she attempted to leave for Czechoslovakia. After several months of solitary confinement in a local jail, Leichter was transferred to Ravensbrück in January of 1940, where she became a prominent figure among the Jewish women in Block 11.[155] One of her most memorable contributions, recounted by her non-Jewish friend and fellow Social Democrat Rosa Jochmann, was a play called "*Schum Schum"* written with Communist Dr. Herta Breuer, which mocked the Nazis. In order to prevent discovery, Leichter reportedly kept a fake version of the script in her closet and destroyed the original in case the SS should happen upon their play.[156] Leichter was also known for writing poems, including one called *Kleiner roter Ziegelstein* about the heavy red bricks the Jewish women were forced to unload until their hands started bleeding and one about the hardships in Ravensbrück and in the men's camps called *An meine Brüder* which was memorized by a young Communist and published in Herbert Steiner's book *Käthe Leichter: Leben und Werk.*[157]

Herta Soswinski also took part in this cultural life within the Judenblock. "I, myself, knew, in addition to my own poems which were created in prison, in Ravensbrueck and later in Auschwitz, more than 300 Czech and German poems and ballads by heart." She remarks in her account, "One cannot imagine how much strength a poem or a song recalled can provide in sleepless nights. My own poems, and also those of my comrades, were written down and made

[155] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 46-48.
[156] For a rundown of the plot of "Schum-Schum" as recounted by Rosa Jochmann, see: Steiner, *Käthe Leichter,* p. 201-202. See also: Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 49.
[157] Steiner, *Käthe Leichter,* p. 203.

the rounds within our group."[158] Soswinski also recounts that the women in the *Judenblock* more or less stayed together based on nationalities (she with the Czech women in Block 9), but that cross-national friendships also emerged. She recalls one particular instance of solidarity in which she was selected for a snow shovelling crew and fainted at the feet of the two female guards overseeing them, and was attacked by one of the guards' dogs. The Kommandant had chanced to see her faint and cited her (gave her a "*meldung"*) after which her entire work squad was punished by being made to stand at the gate without food. Soswinski recalled:

> It weighed very heavy on me that the entire "kommando" had been punished because of me. But in regards to the 'Meldung,' I was to experience the solidarity of inmates. With the help of women from Block 11, for example, Kaethe Leichter, from Vienna… the 'Meldung' just 'disappeared.' It would have meant bunker, and this I would not have survived, given my weakened physical condition, not to mention the notorious SS-woman in charge of the bunker at that time."[159]

Not long after, a friend working in the sewing department offered to switch jobs with Soswinski to allow her to heal. Although the exchange did not go through, the instance paints a heartwarming picture of how these women sought to care for one another in the confines of the camp. Moments such as these, and general attempts to make their living quarters more bearable and to share in learning and teaching, are consistent with the experiences Jewish women had in Moringen and Lichtenburg and appear to have been carried on from one prisoner generation to the next.

By early 1942, Nazi policy in dealing with the ongoing "Jewish Question" had shifted drastically towards complete expulsion and eventual murder of all Jews remaining within Germany. The stories of many of the Jewish women who had also survived one or both of the previous women's camps ended with their deaths in the gas chamber at Bernburg. The euthanasia

[158] Soswinski, "Why We Have to Tell about it," 131.
[159] Soswinski, "Why We Have to Tell about it," 129-130.

facilities at Bernburg near Dessau were first used in 1941 to kill disabled Germans as part of the T4 program.[160] In 1941 and 1942, it became part of "Aktion 14f13," a "special treatment" (*Sonderbehandlung*) for killing sick concentration camp prisoners—and in some cases, for conveniently dealing with Jewish prisoners, as was the case in the men's camps of Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen.[161] Plans were made to relieve some of the overcrowding at Ravensbrück by killing off those women who were chronically ill, but ultimately, as had been the case in the men's camp of Buchenwald, the majority of the transports were made up of the Jewish prisoners from Blocks 7, 9, and 11, regardless of their health status.[162] According to Rosa Jochmann, "In January of 1942, a group of doctors entered the camp, and all Jewish comrades had to appear naked in the first row in front of the doctors."[163] After the selections had taken place, 1500 Ravensbrück prisoners, around 700 to 800 of them Jewish, were eventually loaded onto a truck and sent off to Bernburg, where they were gassed. A further 1000 women were also sent to Auschwitz on March 26th.[164]

Among the victims of the Bernburg gassings were the two "race-defilers" and alleged prostitutes Anni Krümmel and Charlotte Cohn, who had been in both Moringen and Lichtenburg; so too were Rosa Menzer (whose daughters had been warned about writing clear letters), and the

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[160] Walter Grode, *Die "Sonderbehandlung 14f13" in den Konzentrationslagern des Dritten Reiches: Ein Beitrag zur Dynamik faschistischer Vernichtungspolitik,* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang GmbH, 1987): p. 78.
[161] For more on the development of Aktion 14f13, see: Grode, *Die "Sonderbehandlung 14f13" in den Konzentrationslagern des Dritten Reiches,* pp. 82-89, 110-120; for more on Aktion 14f13 in the context of the "final solution" including the gassings of mainly Jewish prisoners from Ravensbrück, see: Ibid, pp. 197-203. For more on Aktion 14f13 in relation to Buchenwald, See: Harry Stein, "Buchenwald - Stammlager," in *Der Ort des Terrors, Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern: Band 3, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald,* edited by Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck oHG, 2006): pp. 339-340. For more on Jewish prisoners from Sachsenhausen falling victim to Aktion 14f13, see: Kathrin Kühlow, "Jüdische Häftlinge im KZ Sachsenhausen 1939 bis 1942," in *Jüdische Häftlinge im Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen 1936 bis 1945,* edited by Günter Morsch and Susanne zur Nieden (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 2004): p. 194-95.
[162] Buber Agassi calls this part of the Jewish experience in Ravensbrück "Period II" which spans from February 1942 until March 1943. See: Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück*, p. 56.
[163] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 50.
[164] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 17. See also: Buchmann, *Frauen im Konzentrationslager,* pp. 13-14. Buchmann specifically mentions the loss of Olga Benario-Prestes, one of the few Jewish women to have contact with the non-Jewish Communists in the camp (as *Blockälteste*) and who appears to have been well-regarded by all of the women in the camp, not just within the Jewish barracks.

prominent SPD member Käthe Leichter and famous Communist and beloved eldest among the Jewish women, Olga Benario-Prestes. Those left behind in the camp who had known them, including Jewish survivor Herta Soswinski, could only infer what had occurred when all of the winter clothes they had gathered for those being sent away (allegedly to a "work camp") were brought back into the main camp just two weeks later.[165] "The inmates working in the "Care Department" [*Fürsorgeabteilung*] walked in, white as sheets." Rosa Jochmann recalls. "They had just sent fifteen hundred letters to relatives of the women. The entire transport had supposedly died of "circulatory debility."[166] These discriminatory gassings targeting mostly Jewish women in Ravensbrück, even those who were otherwise in good health and able to work, are situated in the larger picture of Nazi efforts to implement the "final solution" ethnic cleansing within Germany. In the fall of 1941, most of the Jews remaining in Germany had been deported to ghettos in conquered territories in the East, mainly Poland. By December of 1941, the first extermination camp, Chelmno (Kulmhof), began its deadly operations, and on January 20th, 1942, Nazi officials met at a villa in Wannsee to discuss the details of their final solution to the ever-pressing "Jewish question." The Jewish women of Ravensbrück were gassed in March 1942, and by October of that year, the remaining 522 Jewish survivors, Herta Soswinski among

[165] Soswinski, "Why We Have to Tell about it," p. 130. "Suddenly, in March 1942, a transport of 1,000 women prisoners went to Auschwitz to work as inmate functionaries, as we learned later. Then a Gypsy transport was sent, and also a transport of prisoners from the two Jewish blocks who had arrived in Ravensbrueck before the middle of December 1941. We did not know their destination, but it was strange that their prison uniforms, they had received new clothing before leaving, was returned to camp a few days later. We had arranged with Ruth, our table-elder, to send us some news, if possible, under the star of her jacket. She did so, and the girls from the clothing detail, informed by us, gave us the note. She wrote that she did not know where she was, but that they had been received by a group of physicians which even comprised a dentist. She could not write us any more because it was her turn to get undressed. Thus, we knew just as much as before. Today, however, we know that the women were sent to Bernburg and were all gassed. The dentist was present in order to ascertain how much dental gold could be expected from the transport. Even now, writing down this information, I still get goose pimples; it is so horrible."

[166] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 50.

them, were sent to Auschwitz, marking the first time in Ravensbrück's history that the camp held no known Jewish prisoners.[167]

The Final Years in Ravensbrück 1943-1945: Survival and Despair

Ravensbrück remained "Judenrein" for only two months, from October 1942 until that December, when Jewish women once again entered the camp and Jews continued to make up part of the prisoner population until liberation in 1945.[168] The new Jewish women who entered Ravensbrück in late 1942 and throughout 1943 were the first prisoner population to have no ties to the Jewish women of Moringen and Lichtenburg. This effectively marks October of 1942 as the end of a nearly decade-long era in which Jewish women, because they were mostly imprisoned in the only camp existent for women at each stage unlike Jewish men who were spread out over several different camps, had experienced the changing KZ system together with some living through only one or two of the three but always with ties to some who had known different stages of the camp system's development. However, as Judith Buber-Agassi has pointed out in her research, there is at least a small point of continuity between the Jewish women of 1942 (which Buber-Agassi designates as "Period II") and 1943 ("Period III"). In September of 1943, 84 Jewish *mischlinge* were selected in Auschwitz and deported back to Ravensbrück for work, arriving on September 16th. A further 56 *mischlinge* arrived from Auschwitz by July of 1944. Three of these women had been in Ravensbrück in 1942, although two of them for only a couple of days.[169] Therefore, reconstructing the experiences of Jewish

[167] Herta Soswinski survived the war years in Auschwitz and managed to escape along with her *Bauleitungskommando* shortly before the death marches took off back towards Germany. See: Soswinski, "Why We Have to Tell about it," pp. 141-142. See also Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 17.
[168] The finding that Ravensbrück experienced a mere two month gap of no Jewish prisoners in the camp comes from Rochelle Saidel's research, see Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 17. In fact the gap may have been as little as just over one month, one of the survivors interviewed by Saidel, Sali Solomon Daugherty, came to Ravensbrück via Westerbork with her mother and aunt in either November or December of 1942. See: Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 65-66.
[169] Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück*, p. 60.

women from 1943 onwards requires the reports and memoirs of a new generation of female Jewish prisoners. Many of the Jewish women now in Ravensbrück had already passed through camps in the East, mainly Auschwitz, and some had lived in Jewish Ghettos for years prior to the camps. The majority of the Jewish women in the camp were Polish and (from 1944 onward) Hungarian, and unlike earlier prisoner generations, the majority had now come to Ravensbrück and into the camp system purely on account of their Jewish "racial" status.[170] A select few entered Ravensbrück as political prisoners and had not revealed their Jewish heritage to the authorities, and so were not designated as Jewish but wore the colours of political prisoners or asocials.[171]

Along with this changed demographic, Ravensbrück itself had also changed from its first phase, steadily becoming overcrowded despite some enlargements of the camp layout, and conditions deteriorated rapidly. In 1944, Ravensbrück experienced a significant influx of new prisoners from the east. Many were Jewish women and children from Hungary who had been caught up in the wake of the Nazi occupation and immediate rounding up of Hungarian Jews; some came to Ravensbrück on transports directly from Hungary.[172] Many non-Jewish Polish women (and a couple of Polish Jewish women with false papers) had been rounded up and deported after the Warsaw Uprising that same year. Towards the end of 1944, the Nazis began leading the death marches of prisoners from Eastern camps into Germany as the war front inched closer towards the homeland—many more continued to stream into and through the camp on

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[170] Jewish Poles had, in most cases, survived one of Eastern Ghettos, such as Lodz, Warsaw, Krakow and others, prior to being deported to the camps and then onto Ravensbrück or other subcamps while most of the Hungarian Jews had only spent a short time in makeshift ghettos (if any) before being deported primarily to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944.

[171] Rochelle Saidel and Judith Buber-Agassi both note the existence of some Jewish women in Ravensbrück who had been arrested for other reasons (mainly "political") while living on false papers.
Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 80, 89; Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück*, p. 64, 122, 189.

[172] Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück*, p. 140.

their way to various subcamps throughout early 1945 and up until the war's end. When the barracks could no longer hold any more women and girls, a tent (the infamous *Zelt*) was erected in the main camp, which did nothing to keep out the cold and rain. Survivor of the tent Lidia Vago, interviewed by Rochelle Saidel, recounted that she and her sister Anikó were placed there upon their arrival from Auschwitz. "It was better to be seated close to the entrance, because it was safer than sensing the constant danger of being crushed to death in the middle of the uncontrollable mass of humanity fighting for a few centimetres of *Lebensraum*." However, the downside of being close to the entrance, she recalls, was that those who needed to get to the toilets quickly had to walk over the mass of people and often could no longer hold their bowels by the time they reached the edge of the tent.[173] German-Jewish survivor Anja Lundholm also recalls the women in the tent in her memoir *Das Höllentor,* describing them as "Whimpering, half dead they lie, curled up like embryos on the frozen earth, crying and whimpering 'help us'."[174] Most of the women placed in the tent, mainly Hungarian Jewish women and girls, did not survive.[175] The severe overcrowding and unhygienic conditions made daily life unbearably dirty for the women.

With the overcrowding from the end of 1943 onwards came epidemics, like tuberculosis, and the Nazis had continued to run 'black transports' bringing sick and now "useless" prisoners to be gassed in Auschwitz. Lethal injections also remained an option for physicians at the camp's *revier.*[176] Jews continued to fall victim to these selections, but the final months had become somewhat more equalizing. The sick from Ravensbrück who were headed for the gas chamber were made up of women who had collapsed, were sick with TB, or in some other way unable to

[173] Lidia Vago in: Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 132.
[174] Anja Lundholm, *Das Höllentor: Berichte einer Überlebenden* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag GmbH, 1988): p. 129.
[175] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 88.
[176] Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women,* 335-336.

either work or eventually unable to march. Nearing the end of the war, the nearby Uckermark youth camp became a new destination for the indiscriminate mass murder and aiding in the gassing of women from Ravensbrück. The youth in the camp (girls between the ages of 16 and 21) had been evacuated by early December 1944 and by early 1945, columns of the sick and "useless" were marched there from the main Ravensbrück camp. A select few were kept in Uckermark as prisoner functionaries but it mainly served as a convenient location for mass killings via poisoning and starvation and as a selection point for extermination via gas.[177] Initially, some of the overcrowding of the camp, which was about to worsen with incoming transports from Auschwitz, had been solved with mass shootings. When this did not solve the overcrowding fast enough, victims were marched the half-mile from the main camp to the former youth camp (believing that it was a sanatorium) and after further selections at Uckermark, marched from there to the gas chamber near the main camp's crematoria—a roundabout trek that disoriented the victims and hid the true purpose of Uckermark from those in the main camp.[178]

As Sarah Helm has pointed out, it was impossible for the SS to convince themselves that these late killings were furthering the racial cleansing objectives of the Reich. "At Ravensbrück killing by gas in the closing months of the war was done to make space and save food, while also reducing the number of prisoners who might fall into enemy hands."[179] However, as Linde Apel has also pointed out, Jewish women were still vulnerable for transport to the subcamps of

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[177] For more on starvation and poisoning of prisoners in Uckermark, see:Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women,* p. 503. Prisoner functionaries who testified about Uckermark after the war recount that some of the poisoned women suffered for hours or even days before dying.

[178] Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women,* pp. 470, 489-500. Several prisoners even volunteered to go to Uckermark to stay with loved ones or in hopes of better conditions as life in the main camp became more crowded and stricken by illnesses.

[179] Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women* p. 492.
Apel concludes her study with a similar note, writing: "Zu einer Zeit, als in Ravensbrück die meisten Häftlinge ermordet wurden, verlor die antisemitische Intention der Vernichtung der Juden im Chaos der letzten Kriegsmonate ihre unterscheidende Bedeutung." ["At a time when most of the prisoners in Ravensbrück were being murdered, in the chaos of the last months of the war, the antisemitic intention of exterminating the Jews lost its distinguishing significance"]. Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 337.

Malchow, Neustadt-Glewe, and Rechlin, where they were put to intensely hard physical labour and were largely left to die of starvation.[180] The Nazi scramble to keep as much of the slave labour working as possible, to free up some space in the very overcrowded camp, all while simultaneously seeking to cover up their crimes necessitated some abandonment of their racial hygiene objectives that may well have spared many of those Jewish women who were able to survive the last days of the Shoah and live to tell their stories. In a sense, this brought the experiences of Jewish women full circle from the earliest days in Moringen, in which they suffered the injustices of the camp in much the same manner as the non-Jewish women bunked next to them. Although, of course, they had by now lost much more in the years since then than their Christian counterparts.

As was the case for Moringen, Lichtenburg, and early Ravensbrück, survival strategies shifted yet again into the late and final stages of the camp system. Ultimately, there was nothing a Jewish person or anyone else who found themselves in these wartime camps could do to alter their fate. Whether they lived or died was not a matter of skill but rather of luck and circumstance. Indeed, women were often at a disadvantage (certainly during selections at Auschwitz) because they generally did not possess the same physical strength as men, because they might have children with them or had become pregnant, and because they were more likely to be sexually assaulted by the male SS guards. Moreover, those who came from conservative orthodox Jewish families, who had grown up sheltered and modest, suffered especially during the many selections for which they were paraded naked in front of the male camp staff.[181] However, there were also some advantages to being female. While women were often subjected to the same hard physical labour performed by male inmates, there is also some evidence that

[180] Apel, *Jüdische Frauen im Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, p. 330.
[181] Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück*, p. 330. Also: Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 207

they were not pressed as hard as male inmates. In his research on gendered differences in the Neuengamme subcamps, Marc Buggeln lists several potential reasons that the mortality rate among men (especially Jewish men) was up to five times higher than that of the women.

One theory, based on first hand accounts from men, is that the women were allowed to take more time getting to their work site and did not face as much pressure to fulfill work quotas. He also theorizes that since the Jewish women had mainly come through Auschwitz, they had already been selected for work and tended to be younger (between 18 and 40) while many of the Jewish men on death lists had been born around the turn of the century or even earlier. There was also a lower level of violence in the subcamps and, ultimately, that women had better support systems in their chosen "camp families." Crucially, Buggeln argues, this is not necessarily because men were less likely to develop such support systems, "but rather that the SS continuously strove to abolish any means of engendering solidarity."[182] Indeed, as had been the case in Moringen and Lichtenburg, friendships and so-called "camp families, " which consisted of up to seven or eight women and girls (though usually around three or five) sustained many of the women who did survive, and this continued to be a hallmark of the feminine experience and certainly so among the Jewish women and girls.[183] Some of the support could be as simple as passing remarks of encouragement. Anja Lundholm recalls that the women would try to cheer each other up during the continual inspections of their bodies, telling each other how fit they were for work, the strength they still had left, all knowing at this point that being selected as too weak or sick for work meant certain death.[184]

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[182] Marc Buggeln, "Comparing Subcamps: Labor, Race, and Gender," in *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): pp. 116-117.
[183] For more on Camp Families, see: Morrison, *Ravensbrück,* pp. 125-129.
[184] Lundholm, *Das Höllentor;* pp. 130-131.

Those who had come to Ravensbrück with their mothers, sisters, extended relatives like cousins or aunts, or even friends, recount these relationships as especially important. Survivor Livia Kransberg remarks in her interview with Yad Vashem that "my sister Rose was my mother and my father, my G-d. I always suspected that way deep in her heart I was her two-and-a-half-year-old child."[185] Polish survivor Fela Kolat, transferred to the Ravensbrück subcamp of Neustadt-Glewe along with her friend Regina Wisfelner, recalls how her friend shared the limited water she had found, pouring some of the precious liquid into Kolat's cup.[186] Kolat also found comfort in sharing some food with three sisters who shared her barracks. The youngest of the sisters was able to find some small edible scraps in the garbage that no one else had been able to spot. The little group of young women even found a way to celebrate a holiday. "So there was this girl, Lola Lipschitz , from my city, it was passover." Kolat recounts. "I'm never going to forget this. It was passover. Suddenly she had a cup of potatoes in the skin—boiled potatoes. So she took a slice and shared a slice of the potato—this was our Passover meal."[187] As in other camps, hunger was, of course, continually on the minds of prisoners.[188] Others, like then-fifteen-year-old Susan Kornhauser, recall that she was taken care of by a "surrogate mother" in the camp after her own mother passed away shortly after their arrival in Ravensbrück.[189] Indeed, a series of so-called "camp mothers" took to caring for the camp's

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[185] Livia Kransberg, "Testimony of Livia (Szabo) Kransberg," Moshal Repository, Yad Vashem Archival Collection, File Number 11295, July 5th, 1999, p. 67. https://collections.yadvashem.org/en/documents/3747681
[186] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 153.
[187] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 154.
[188] Although hunger surfaces repeatedly among survivor testimony, some historians, Sybil Milton among them, have also noted that women generally dealt with hunger and malnutrition better than men. See: Sybil Milton, "Deutsche und deutsch-jüdische Frauen als Verfolgte des NS-Staats." In *Frauen–Verfolgung und Widerstand,* Dachauer Hefte 3, edited by Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel (Dachau: Verlag Dachauer Hefte, 1987) p. 11-12. Milton also notes that unlike men, women also shared recipes and made little recipe booklets as gifts for one another. This phenomenon is also explored by Saidel in her work, where she labels these recipe booklets "a form of resistance" and notes that at least four such booklets, created by Jewish prisoners in Ravensbrück, have survived. See: Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 53-54.
[189] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 93.

children, hiding those too young to work and, if a camp mother died, another took her place.[190] Almost all of the women interviewed by Saidel describe similar incidents of help and comfort from friends and family, to whom they credit their survival.

However, not everyone experienced such solidarity (which was admittedly a strong talking point, particularly in East Germany after the war and especially regarding Communist prisoners), nor formed friendships or networks within the camps. This is not to say that such relationships were necessarily rare, but to emphasise that, where such moments of friendship and support did exist, they were particularly heartwarming due to the horrendous conditions the women were experiencing at the time. Many, rather understandably, succumbed to their most animalistic needs for food and shelter at the expense of the emaciated strangers beside them. Johanna Krause, a German half-Jewish woman married to an "Aryan" and imprisoned in Ravensbrück in 1944, recalls in her memoir that she is largely unaware of such good relationships.

> If friendship is possible in a concentration camp, I didn't experience it. Maybe some women helped others, offered a supporting hand while working, but it never happened to me. From what I observed, everyone was a traitor. No one can tell me there was goodness there. It was like living among animals. The stronger ones yanked the weaker ones out of their bunks and kicked them. We fought like cats and dogs over the tiniest scrap of food."[191]

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[190] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 70. "Camp Sisters" were also common. In a 2019 article on Jewish women during the Holocaust, Marion Kaplan flags the topic of what she refers to as "fictive families" as an understudied topic within the subject of Jewish female experiences in the camps. See: Marion Kaplan, "Did Gender Matter during the Holocaust?" *Jewish Social Studies* 24, no. 2 (2019): p. 46.

[191] Johanna Krause, *Twice Persecuted: Surviving in Nazi Germany and Communist East Germany,* p. 77. Additionally Krause pens on p. 71 that "No one is willing to say exactly what it was like in a concentration camp. Solidarity? That's just old hat because you only had your own life—you only thought of your own survival. That meant: don't stick out, do your work as best you can with whatever energy you have, and nothing more. Period."

Czech-Hungarian Rosi Forsberg (neé Mauskopf) makes a similar comment about her experience in Ravensbrück in November of 1944, writing: "In the *Block* there was chaos. They assaulted one another over a piece of bread; they could no longer remain human in this hell. I did not experience any friendships or solidarity."[192] Indeed, the need for self-preservation and survival is also a hallmark of accounts from the later concentration camps; Ravensbrück was no exception. Still, many survivors of the camp continually cite relationships with friends and fellow relatives as an important part of their survival story. It may well be that survivors recall small moments of kindness and friendship more clearly against the backdrop of the suffering they experienced in the camps, especially in accounts given years or decades after liberation. However, whether survivors recount small moments of kindness or whether they found none at all, it is clear that the conditions in Ravensbrück in the final years had become unbearable. This drastic shift in solidarity and ability to care for one another in the later years of the camp reflects the chaos and destruction of the final year of the war. As the Allies steadily encircled Germany, the Nazis desperately attempted to deal with the influx of prisoners from other camps, with the mounting evidence of their crimes, and the lack of food and central organization of the camp system as a whole.

As mentioned earlier, and expanded upon in Sarah Helm's work on the camp, the growing pressure on the Nazis towards the end of the war and the horrendous conditions in the deteriorating camp did create some amount of equality between Jewish and non-Jewish women and girls in the camp. Still, some sense of racial discrimination persisted, perhaps fortuitously for Jewish women in this case, in their exclusion from work in the camp brothels (*bordells*) for which women from Ravensbrück were selected. Many survivors, among them Johanna Krause, recount that young and attractive Jewish women were taken as prostitutes in the camp, however,

[192] Sigrid Jacobeit and Elizabeth Brümann-Güdter, eds., *Ravensbrückerinnen,* p. 152.

no Jewish women have been verified to be employed specifically in German camp brothels for which prisoners from Ravensbrück could volunteer in hopes of better rations (although Jewish women were certainly vulnerable to sexual assault and rape by the SS guards within the camps).[193] One of the few secondary sources available on the topic of camp *bordells* throughout Germany is Robert Sommer's *Das KZ-Bordell: Sexuelle Zwangsarbeit in nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern,* published in 2009. While Sommer does state that Jewish women were not brought in to work these brothels, he acknowledges that at least one Jewish woman was listed as working in a brothel but was, according to him, "in all likelihood employed as a *kassiererin,*" a cashier taking payment from those visiting the brothel.[194] Still, this places at least one Jewish woman as a witness to the sexual exploitation of her fellow women prisoners in the brothel of Mittelbau-Dora, a subcamp of Buchenwald. Judith Buber-Agassi also addresses the pervasive post-war myth that developed in Israel, which claimed that young and pretty Jewish women had survived the Holocaust by becoming prostitutes in the camp brothels—a claim, she points out, for which no evidence has yet been found.[195] In a short section on the *bordelle,* Erika Buchmann

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[193] Krause wrote that "There was a brothel in Ravensbrück. They only took the good-looking women. The young Jewish women were particular favourites because they looked so good with their hair done up." Krause, *Twice Persecuted,* p. 75. Lotti Huber makes a similar comment in her memoir, writing: "And during the war they took the young, pretty Jewish girls and put them into the soldier bordells. Then it was not *rassenschande.*" (Huber, *Diese Zitrone hat noch viel Saft!* p. 29). Given that Huber left Germany after being released from Lichtenburg in 1938 and spent the war abroad, this "fact" must have been told to her after the war but she felt it was important enough to include nonetheless. For more on the topic of rape of Jewish women during the Holocaust, see: Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 212-214; and: Constanze Jaiser "Repräsentationen von Sexualität und Gewalt in Zeugnissen jüdischer und nichtjüdischer Überlebender," in *Genozid und Geschlecht: Jüdische Frauen im nationalsozialistischen Lagersystem,* edited by Gisela Bock (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag GmbH, 2005): pp. 123-148. For an essay on rape and the notion of "rassenschande" and an argument for how rape of Jewish women by German men was inherently a political act, see: Steven T. Katz "Thoughts on the Intersection of Rape and Rassenchande during the Holocaust," *Modern Judaism* vol. 32, no. 3 (2012): pp. 293–322.

[194] Robert Sommer, *Das KZ–Bordell: Sexuelle Zwangsarbeit in nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern* (Paderborn: Brill Schöning, 2009): p. 218. Some Jewish women were, however, kept as personal sex slaves during the Holocaust and may also have been employed as prostitutes within Jewish ghettos though no Jewish women are known to have worked in the official camp brothels. For more, see: Nomi Levenkron, "Death and the Maidens: "Prostitution," Rape, and Sexual Slavery during World War II," in *Sexual Violence: Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust,* edited by Sonja M/ Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel, Lebanon NH: University of New England, 2010): pp. 13-28.

[195] Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück*, p. 33.

only mentions "asocial" prisoners and it appears that many of the women had worked as prostitutes outside of the camp and were now "allowed to continue" in that profession.[196] If any Jewish women did end up in these brothels as a prostitute, she was not registered as Jewish, which leaves at least the possibility that a Jewish woman arrested on false papers could have ended up in a *bordell,* but to date there is no evidence for such a case either. Regarding the brothels at least, the Nazi's appear to have retained some continued sense of "racial" differences between prisoners. More research is certainly needed in this particular area, both on the subject of sexual violence against Jewish women in the Holocaust, and the topic the pervasive post-war myth of Jewish prostitutes.

Regardless of this particular exemption and the somewhat less racially based selections for death, Jewish women suffered immensely in the closing months of the war, dying daily of malnutrition, disease, and exhaustion. Between 1943 and 1945, some Jewish women were also subjected to forced sterilizations. However, while the decision to sterilize some Jewish women was made on a racial basis it did not target all Jewish women in the camp nor were non-Jewish prisoners exempt. Non-Jewish women from various Eastern European countries, Roma and Sinti, women who had given birth or had been given forced abortions, and those deemed "inferior" because of various disabilities, were also subjected to forced sterilizations in the Ravensbrück *Revier* throughout this second half of the camp's existence.[197] When the Allied fronts closed in on Germany in the spring of 1945, prisoners in Ravensbrück still able to walk were herded along on (for many a second) death march which set out from the main camp on April 28, the various

[196] Buchmann, *Frauen im Konzentrationslager,* pp. 18-19. Many of the women were sent back to the main camp's *revier* shortly after being brought to a bordell because they had contracted various diseases and at least one woman had become pregnant and was given a forced abortion.
[197] For more on the forced sterilization experiments, see: Tiarra Maznick, "Revisiting the Sterilizations at Ravensbrück Concentration Camp: A Victim-Based History," *Eastern European Holocaust Studies* (September 2025): pp. 1-40. For more on the long-term effects on women's reproductive ability after the war, see: Peggy J. Kleinplatz and Paul Weindling, "Women's Experiences of infertility after the Holocaust," *Social Science & Medicine* Vol. 309 (September 2022): pp. 1-10.

subcamps followed suit.[198] Some wound up in Bergen–Belsen, some were liberated along the way or found that their Nazi captors had abandoned them in the middle of the night to save themselves, and many more collapsed or were shot along the way. Some were rescued directly from Ravensbrück or at some point during the forced marches by the Swedish and Danish affiliates of the Red Cross and were brought to Sweden to recover.[199] When the Red Army liberated Ravensbrück on April 30, only around 3000 souls remained in the camp, including Jewish women, most of them sick and close to death. Some Soviet women with medical training had also stayed behind to care for the women.[200] The Nazis had destroyed records and other incriminating materials, and according to some reports, had very nearly destroyed the rest of the camp and murdered the remaining sick women as well.[201] Those herded out of the camp and subcamps also faced continued Allied bombings as well as sexual violence—especially at the hands of the Red Army, which so infamously raped German women and girls as they marched into Germany and who, in far too many instances, did not even spare the weakened and sick concentration camp survivors they encountered along the way.[202] For many Jewish women the end of the war was not really an end to their suffering but the beginning of new challenges.

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[198] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 614-615.
[199] Saidel estimates that about 1000 Jewish women were rescued by these efforts in the last days of the war. See: Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 178.
[200] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 621-622.
[201] Saidel states that the Nazi's had intended to explode the rest of the camp before abandoning it completely but that this was thwarted by prisoners from the adjacent men's camp (Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. 174.), however, Saidel does not expand on this further and gives no source reference for this claim. Sarah Helm muses in her work that it is unclear whether orders to murder the remaining women and destroy the camp were actually issued and according to one witness the orders were constantly changing—certainly this destruction did not come to pass. (See: Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women,* p. 612-614).
[202] For some first-hand accounts of rape by Russian soldiers from survivors interviewed by Saidel, see: Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück,* p. pp. 171, 172-173, 175. And Buber Agassi, *The Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück*, p. 142, In both works, the survivors almost always mention the rape as having happened to "a friend" or other woman or girl in a group. Sarah Helm also mentions the raping of Polish and even Russian women who had been brought to Germany as slave labourers in addition to dying prisoners and women quartered in the camp's maternity block. See: Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women,* p. 611. Also p. 624.

Conclusion

After liberation and the end of the war, many Jewish women found that their entire families or even villages had been murdered, and many were now displaced from their home countries, especially in Eastern Europe—now under Soviet control. They found that neighbours had taken their homes and possessions, and the antisemitism which had facilitated their forced removal was still rampant throughout Europe. Unable or unwilling to move back to their countries of origin, many Jewish women ended up in Displaced Persons camps throughout Germany, especially Bergen-Belsen, which soon became the biggest Jewish DP camp in the country, for several years after the war. Emigration also proved to be difficult for many. Some were able to obtain various visas through friends and family abroad, and many left illegally for Palestine. Most countries, including the United States and Canada, were slow to take in Jewish survivors, insisting that the refugee crisis was not their problem.[203] Such restrictions finally lessened towards the end of the decade, and along with the establishment of the state of Israel, survivors moved out of the camps. Bergen–Belsen closed at last in 1950. Those who stayed in Germany found themselves on either side of the Iron Curtain as the emerging West Germany and East Germany fostered two different cultures of remembrance of the camps.

Located within East Germany, the infamous concentration camp of Ravensbrück served a propagandic purpose for the East German government, which neglected the racialized experiences of Jewish prisoners in favour of the heroic solidarity of Communist comrades who had passed through its gates. When Rochelle Saidel first visited the camp in 1980, a rather difficult process which required not only a monitored entry into the East German state but also a difficult trek out to the camp itself, she found that memorials had been created by nationality

[203] For more on the development of Holocaust awareness in Canada and the hesitancy to accept Jewish survivors, see: Magdalena Kubow, "Kanada? The Canadian Jewish News and the Memory of the Holocaust in Canada," *A Journal of Culture and History,* Vol. 19, No. 3 (2013): 131-160.

within the remaining barracks but without further prisoner group distinction (except, of course, the continued reminders of Communists who had been martyred in the camp). When Saidel asked the guide about Jewish women in the camp, the guide at first evaded her question and then added that one of the Communist "heroines," Olga Benario-Prestes, had also been Jewish.[204] The encounter inspired Saidel to research Jewish women in the camp specifically, and the reunification of Germany in 1990 facilitated somewhat easier access to the remaining camp records. Saidel's interest, along with that of Linde Apel and Judith Buber-Agassi, who were all researching and writing in the early 2000s, may well have come about just in time to interview aging survivors of the camp. If not for their efforts, many of the stories of Jewish women in Ravensbrück and statistics about the Jewish presence in the camp would have been lost or remained unpublished or unknown. In this way, they too have become a part of the history of Jewish women in Ravensbrück, carrying on these stories as some of the few and most dedicated in this small field of research.

As for the Jewish women of Moringen and Lichtenburg, they have been almost entirely forgotten. Most of those who lived through all three of the camps were killed in the gas chamber of Bernburg or perhaps in Auschwitz. Most of those who survived either or both pre-war camps, an objectively small number overall (especially in comparison to survivors of the late camps), did not leave behind records of their experiences—and only one Ilse Rolfe, is known to have survived all three and left a written record. Gabriele Herz's memoir, the only account on

[204] Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp,* p. 4. A book on Ravensbrück published in the GDR also emphasises Olga Benario-Prestes as a lost "comrade" and lists her alongside other Communist heroes who perished in Bernburg but neglect to mention that Benario-Prestes was also Jewish and instead hail her and other Communist victims as martyrs of anti-faschism (although they do acknowledge that many of the victims of the spring 1942 victims were Jewish "along with" the "old" and "sickly"). While both identities are of course true, Benario-Prestes appears to have been in relatively good health and certainly not old (she was 34 when she was murdered). Although the mix of "Jewish" and "Communist" was certainly a fatal one in many cases. See: Komitee der Antifaschistischen Widerstandskämpfer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. *Frauen-KZ Ravensbrück.* Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg-Verlag, 1982): pp. 132-134.

Moringen that is readily available in English, may not have made it to publication without the hard work and dedication of Jane Caplan, whose introduction is also a rare academic overview on the camp that is written in English. Only a handful of other historians, most of them women themselves, have written about either Moringen or Lichtenburg as women's concentration camps, almost none about the other pre-war camps, nor overviews about Jewish women in the various subcamps of the late war years.[205] Kim Wünschmann remains the only historian I am aware of who has published an overview specifically about Jewish women in the pre-war camps in either English or German. Furthermore, I have come across no publications addressing the significance of separating Jewish women into a Judensaal in Moringen as early as 1935 and the implications this has for tracing Jewish women's experiences in the German camp system.[206] Many gaps in the literature persist, not only in examining the experiences of Jews in the early camps and in later German subcamps but also in the examination of gender throughout the development of the KZ system and, most importantly, the intersectionality of gender and race throughout the 12-year Nazi Reich concentration camp system.

The sources that are available, both secondary sources mentioned again here and the many first-hand accounts which have been examined earlier and the hundreds of accounts of women that did not fit into this project or which were relevant to camps not examined herein, often express very similar conclusions about the importance of relationships within the camps.

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[205] Some works do exist dedicated to Jewish women in a particular subcamp, often just a chapter in a larger work, but no single work has reviewed the experiences of Jewish women throughout the entirety of the subcamp system in Germany.

[206] During the research phase on this particular aspect of Moringen I reached out to the *Moringen Gedenksätte* to see if they had any further information on this detail of when Jewish women began to be separated from the rest of the female concentration camp inmates. I received a reply from Miriam Hockmann, a University of Göttingen graduate who works at the *Gedenkstätte* and who kindly sent along her term paper on the topic of prisoner dynamics within KZ Moringen and where she touched on the topic in a brief sentence and footnotes where she had concluded that 1936 was the year for this separation. The *Gedenkstätte* itself does not appear to have come to an official conclusion on this topic at this point although Miriam also informed me that attempts have been made to figure out where each of the Halls were situated and how many prisoners could be quartered in each section.

Comradeship and camp families were not unique to Jewish women, nor necessarily even to women in the concentration camps overall—although the mothering of orphaned children appears to be female-dominated, likely because children under 12 years of age were kept in the women's sections of various camps. It is also important to consider the testimonies of those, like Johanna Krause and Rosi Forsberg, who recount the final years in Ravensbrück as a constant and daily battle for survival, often at the expense of fellow prisoners. That said, the relationships Jewish women had with their fellow prisoners, both Jewish and non-Jewish (depending on how forcibly separated they were in each camp), is a thread that ties together many of the stories examined throughout this project. It was a hallmark of the experiences of Jewish women, perhaps not uniquely because they were Jewish nor always because they were women, but a hallmark nonetheless. The friendships, group-dynamics, and even small acts of kindness and encouragement made such an impact on many of these survivors that their accounts, even those written or told decades after the war, feature these almost as prominently as their memories of punishments, hunger, and suffering.

The topic of Jewish women and girls in German concentration camps, whether it is in the pre-war camps, Ravensbrück, or various subcamps or within the topics of sexual violence, or within remembrance culture, continues to be neglected within the broader topic of the Holocaust and even Jewish experiences in the concentration camps. However, the topic is deceptively broad and rich with source material for those willing to examine the available stories and records. Most strikingly, it is studying the particular experiences of individuals who were both Jewish and female that illuminates the importance of both "race" (as the Nazis defined it) and gender within Nazi practices and policies within the concentration camp system. Continued analysis of gender in the experiences of male Jews in the camps, as well as consideration of changing policies,

would greatly add to this discussion as well, so that we may better understand how such intersectionality shaped the experiences of individuals at every stage. However, because women were confined to the three official "women's camps" in a linear timeline, and because their treatment was dictated first by gender rather than race in the initial years of persecution, the topic of Jewish women provides a particularly refined lens for such examinations.

The topic of Jewish women in the German camps reflects the Nazi development from persecution of political opponents to gradual isolation and push for emigration. It reflects the growing entrapment of Jews unable to get the paperwork needed to leave Germany permanently, and the difficulties, especially for Jewish women who still believed that they were in less danger than their husbands, fathers, or sons. Furthermore, it reflects the development of the Nazi answer to the "Jewish problem" and the decision to murder Jewish women in Bernburg and later in Uckermark or send them to Auschwitz. It also illuminates the problems the Nazis faced in their pursuit of total extermination, on who to classify as "Jewish" or "partly-Jewish," how to treat them as either "Jewish" or as "women," and how to balance exploitation of labour, the inevitable end of the war in a loss for Germany, and the undisguisable crimes the Allies would soon find within the crumbling Reich. A more intensive and much larger project may well be able to examine all of these areas more fully and include not only Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück but also the known "provisional concentration camps" and the many German subcamps of Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, Neuengamme, Groß-Rosen, Flossenbürg, and others as well as the Women's Camp at Bergen–Belsen and its subsequent DP camp. This particular project is meant to give at least an overview of Jewish women's experiences in German concentration camps over the Nazi period and to provide some answers as well as indicate further questions which remain to be examined.

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Appendix

List of German Concentration Camps and Subcamps with at least One Woman Prisoner

Camps confirmed to have held a Jewish woman in them have been indicated in italics

Pre-War Camps (Women's camps indicated with an asterisk)

- Brauweiler
- Bad Sulza
- Annaberg
- Benninghausen
- Bergkamen-Schönhausen
- Berlin Köpenick
- *Berlin Charlottenburg (Maikowski-Haus)*
- Berlin-Tempelhof
- Brandenburg
- Gollnow
- Gotteszell*
- *Hamburg–Fuhlsbüttel*
- Hohenstein
- Köln "Klingelpütz"
- München (Stadelheim)
- Neustadt
- Nohra
- Osthofen
- Roßlau
- Stuttgart
- Witten
- München (Ettstrasse)
- Stuttgart
- Eutin
- Gumpertshof
    - (Camp for German beggars and vagrants)
- Senftenberg
- *Moringen**
- *Lichtenburg**

Ravensbrück

- Altenburg
    - (Under the administration of Buchenwald after August 1944)

- Barth
- Belzig
    - (Later under the administration of Sachsenhausen)
- Born
- *Dabelow (Comthurey)*
- Eberswalde
- *Fürstenberg (Oder)*
- Genthin
    - (Later under the administration of Sachsenhausen)
- Grüneberg
- Hausham
    - (Later under the administration of Dachau)
- *Helmbrechts*
    - (Later under the administration of Flossenbürg)
- *Leipzig-Schönefeld*
    - (Later under the administration of Buchenwald)
- *Malchow*
- *Neustadt-Glewe*
- Neubrandenburg
- Prenzlau-Kleine Heide
- *Rechlin (Retzow)*
- Schönefeld
    - (Later under the administration of Sachsenhausen)
- Schlieben
    - (Later under the administration of Buchenwald)
- *Uckermark*
- Velten
    - (Later under the administration of Sachsenhausen)
- Wolfen
    - (Later under the administration of Sachsenhausen)
- Zichow

Buchenwald

- Abteroda
- *Altenburg*
- *Aschersleben*
- *Allendorf ("Münchmühle")*
- *Bernburg/Plömnitz ("Leopard")*
- *Bochum (Bochumer Verein)*

- Dortmund (Hüttenverein AG)
- *Duderstadt*
- *Elsnig*
- *Essen (Humboldtstraße)*
- *Gelsenkirchen-Horst*
- *Hessisch-Lichtenau*
- *Leipzig-Schönau*
- *Leipzig-Schönefeld*
- Leipzig-Thekla
    - About 300 women here briefly in 1945 before being sent on a death march
- *Lippstadt I and II*
- *Magdeburg (Polte-Werke OHG)*
    - Formerly part of Ravensbrück, then Buchenwald in June 1944
- *Markkleeberg*
- *Meuselwitz*
- *Neustadt bei Coburg*
- *Penig*
- *Raguhn*
- Schlieben
- *Sömmerda*
- *Taucha*
- *Torgau*
- Wolfen

Neuengamme (Hamburg)

- *Fuhlsbüttel*
- *Poppenbüttel*
- *Sasel*
- *Neugraben*
- *Hamburg-Geilenberg (Dessauer Ufer)*
- *Hamburg-Eidelstedt*
- *Hamburg-Langenhorn (Ochsenzoll)*
- Hamburg-Steinwerder (Stülckenwerft)
- *Tiefstack*
- Wandsbek
- *Boizenburg*
- *Bremen-Obernheide*
- Bremen-Vegesack
- *Fallersleben (Volkswagenwerke)*

- Hannover-Limmer
- *Porta Westfalica/a II Barkhausen [aka Porta I, Kaiserhof], Lerbeckneesen, Hausberge "Hammerwerke"*
- *Beendorf (Helmstedt)*
- *Horneburg*
- *Hannover-Langenhangen*
- *Salzgitter-Bad*
- *Salzwedel*
- Watenstedt
- *Wedel*

Bergen-Belsen

- *Außenlager Bomlitz-Benefeld*
- *Außenlager Hambühren-Ovelgönne*
- *Außenlager Unterlüß-Altensothrieth*

Sachsenhausen

- Berlin-Hakenfelde (Preußen/Berlin, Luftfahrtgerätewerk/Siemens)
- Berlin-Haselhorst Siemensstadt (Preußen/Berlin, Siemens/Schuckertwerke AG)
- Berlin-Mariendorf (Preußen/Berlin, Maschinenbau-Henschel)
- *Berlin-Neukölln*
- *Berlin-Reinickendorf*
- Berlin-Oberschöneweide
- Berlin-Schöneweide
- Berlin-Niederschöneweide
- Berlin-Zehlendorf
- *Fürstenberg/Oder*
- *Glöwen*
- *Königs Wusterhausen*
- *Kleinmachnow (Dreilinden Maschinenbau GmbH)*
- *Hennigsdorf*
- Velten
    - (Originally part of Ravensbrück)
- Oranienburg (Auer)
- *Genshagen*
- Strausberg
- *Schönefeld*
    - (Originally part of Ravensbrück)

- *Belzig*
- *Wulkow*
- *Wittenberg*
    - (Women workers brought in from Ravensbrück)

Groß-Rosen

- *Grünberg I*
- *Bernsdorf*
- *Gabersdorf*
- *Liebau*
- *Ober-Altstadt*
- *Ober-Hohenelbe*
- *Parschnitz*
- *Schatzlar*
- *Birnbäumel*
- *Hochweiler*
- *Kurzbach*
- *Schlesiersee*
- *Biesnitzer Grund*
- *Birnbäumel*
- *Breslau-Hundsfeld*
- Brünnlitz (Present-day Czech Republic, formerly Moravia)
- *Christianstadt (Present-day Krzystkowice, Poland)*
- *Freiburg*
- *Gablonz*
- *Grafenort*
- *Guben*
- *Halbstadt*
- *Hochweiler*
- *Kratzau I and II*
- *Kurzbach*
- *Langenbielau II*
- *Liebau*
- *Mittelsteine*
- *Morchenstern*
- *Ober-Hohenelbe*
- *Sackisch*
- *Schlesiersee*
- *St. Georgenthal*

- *Weisswasser*
- *Wiesau*
- *Zittau (Klein Schönau)*

Dachau

- Augsburg-Kriegshaber
- Augsburg-Horgau
- München-Allach
- München-Giesing
- Hausham
    - (Formerly part of Ravensbrück)
- Schloss Itter
- Karlsfeld
- Kaufbeuren
- *Kaufering I–XI*
- Lauingen
    - (Brief stop for a transport from Bergen-Belsen)
- Mühldorf
- München-Giesing (Agfa Kamerawerke)
- Plansee

Flossenbürg

- Chemnitz
- *Dresden (Bernsdorf & Co.)*
- Dresden Universelle
- *Dresden-Reick*
- Falkenau
- *Freiberg*
- *Graslitz (Kraslice)*
- Goehle-Werk
- *Gundelsdorf*
- *Hertine (Rtyně)*
- *Helmbrechts*
- *Hainichen*
- *Holleischen*
- *Mehltheuer*
- Mittweida
- Neurohlau

- *Nuremberg (Siemens-Schuckertwerke)*
- *Oederan*
- Plauen (Cotton Mill)
- Plauen (Industriewerke AG)
- *Rochlitz*
- *Venusberg*
- *Wilischthal*
- Wolkenburg
- *Zschopau*
- *Zwodau (Svatava)*

Note: the concentration camp Natzweiler-Struthoff has been excluded from this survey study; although some of its subcamps were located within the traditional German borders the main camp was located in France. Additionally, please note that this list is likely far from being complete and more research is needed in this field to provide a complete and in-depth overview on this topic—especially in regards to Jewish women within these camps.