

## Conclusion

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# THE SURPLUS WOMAN



*The surplus woman stands as an important cultural icon of the *Kaiserreich* (Imperial Germany). The *Frauenüberschuß* (female surplus) offered a presumed demographic event that provided urgency to calls for change and served as a platform for the reform of education, the professions, the institution of marriage, and sexuality. It also elicited sympathy for a cohort of middle-class women who, through no fault of their own, had been left outside of home, motherhood, and marriage. In the course of the twentieth century, demographic circumstances altered dramatically to create a brutally real female surplus. In light of two world wars, discussion about a female population surplus emerged in a culture already informed by the social and cultural distress created by “too many” women. *The Surplus Woman* concludes by exploring the rhetoric surrounding marital status in World War I and post-Imperial Germany, followed by an assessment of the importance of the female surplus to our understanding of German history.*

## The Surplus Woman of World War I

The onset of war in 1914 brought forth a period of extraordinary and unanticipated trauma for Germans. The Kaiser’s call for national mobilization at the outset of the war occasioned the recasting of the great social questions that had characterized the cultural, political, and social discourse of the *Kaiserreich* since national unification in 1871. Discussions regarding the rights of laborers, the division of political power, the role of the military in society, the ownership of capital, and the structure and composition of a healthy nation—all intensely

debated topics in the press, the universities, and among political parties—were channeled anew in the wake of the guns of August. The woman question was no less transformed during the Great War. The rhetoric of the German women's movement changed during the early years of the war with particular regard to the topic of marriage. While marital status and the role of single women had been a foundational concern prior to 1914, the outbreak of military hostilities brought about a marked shift in the language and agendas of the movement. Just as female marital prospects became increasingly shaky in light of the devastating battlefield casualties, the leaders of the German women's movement began to stop talking about the plight of single women.<sup>1</sup>

As soldiers West and East dug in and men began to be killed in the millions, European demography changed irrevocably. Social Democrat Luise Zietz wrote in 1916, "The war has mightily increased the *Frauenüberschuß*. Very many young, single or recently married soldiers have been killed and among the severely maimed, young men in their teens and in the best years of manhood are represented in greater numbers. Therefore the marital possibilities for *Mädchen* [girls] are reduced to a not insignificant extent."<sup>2</sup> The facts: straightforward, inarguable, and as might well be expected in the context of such a tremendous conflict. Yet Zietz's articulation of those facts is one of the only clear statements made by a leader of the prewar women's movements about the demographic realities of war and their consequences for female marital prospects.

With slaughter rampant across Europe, the surplus of unmarried women became a stark reality. During the course of the war, the number of marriages in Germany decreased significantly. In 1913, 252 marriages occurred for every 10,000 unmarried Germans over the age of fifteen; by 1916, that rate had dropped to 127 per 10,000, increasing to 156/10,000 by 1918.<sup>3</sup> Among German females over the age of fifteen, the percentage of those unmarried rose from 34.7 percent in 1913 to 38.6 percent by 1918, representing a numerical increase of 1.3 million single women.<sup>4</sup>

Facing the reality of a war that manifested appalling lethality from the outset and which seemed endless, women's rights advocates may well have continued and expanded their discussion of the female surplus as a central pillar of calls for change. Yet, evidence derived from texts on the nature of female wartime service by key figures in the women's movement written during the period from 1914 to 1916 shows that this was not the case. The surplus single woman disappeared from the rhetoric of the German women's movement just when reason dictated her real arrival. Three factors brought about this change: the celebration of unity occasioned by the war; the patriotic nationalism that resounded in wartime solicitations of women's work; and the vision of maternal citizenship that emerged as a corollary to calls for female service to the state.

The early years of the war mark a clear topical shift in the rhetoric of the women's movement away from the material conditions that had created the surplus woman and into the patriotic realm of female wartime service. The period of the war occupies a transitional space between Wilhelmine advocacy of expanded

professional, educational, and legal rights, and the Weimar-era adjustment to suffrage, labor reconfiguration, and the tensions between democratic principles of egalitarianism and cultural and social limitations on gender equality. Much of the scholarship on the wartime women's movement has emphasized the belief held by leading women's rights advocates that female service during the war would bring about "recompense and reward" in the form of postwar legal rights, especially suffrage.<sup>5</sup> But expectation of payback (and accompanying debates about female opportunism) emerged much more in the later war years than during the early years of patriotic solidarity.<sup>6</sup> Expectations of postwar rewards for loyalty increased congruently as the horrific trials exacted by the war mounted. Historian Jean Quataert has noted a significant transition between the early war, when "a gendered war culture of patriotic duties extended deep into civil society," and the late war, when "soldiers and civilians alike had to make sense of the sacrifices asked of them. Then, the patriotic vocabulary of the August days, which had defined the sacrifices in the name of God, king, and fatherland, quickly faltered."<sup>7</sup> Quataert identifies the "decisive turning point" as 1916, when "the army's voracious need for human and industrial resources was pushing Germany toward 'total war'."<sup>8</sup> The wartime rhetoric of the German women's movement reflects Quataert's chronological reading through an early focus on unity, *das Volk*,<sup>9</sup> and maternal citizenship. Addressing the needs of the surplus woman did not emerge on the wartime agenda.

In its prewar incarnation, the female surplus had been presented as primarily a middle-class issue. The Kaiser's call for peace in the fortress (*Burgfrieden*) at the outset of the war made such class-based interests seem unpatriotic.<sup>10</sup> Leaders of the women's movement shared in this feeling as they repudiated endeavors emphasizing the needs of one group of Germans over another. During the Great War, these figures came to reevaluate the successes and to explore the failures of the antebellum women's movement. Chief among their criticisms was that the movement had been fragmented and misguided. The war itself had forced this reevaluation, leading women's leaders "in the most varied areas to relearn views that we held as irrevocable, to recognize it as essential to change and to make perspectives that we had long thrown overboard into our own intellectual property."<sup>11</sup>

While some doubted whether commitment to the war effort could unite women,<sup>12</sup> most female activists saw the *Burgfrieden* as an opportunity to rejuvenate and consolidate organized German womanhood. In dispensing with old habits, moderates saw both women and Germany from a new political perspective: "These days most surprisingly have shown how far the socialist train of thought, also in that of social democracy, is active in very wide circles. We all hold it as a natural duty to assist not only the relatives of those who fight in the field, but also those otherwise affected by war and its consequences."<sup>13</sup> As they sought sisterhood in the unity of women working for Germany, how could moderate women's rights advocates continue to articulate their concern for a small fragment of German society—that is, the unmarried women of the middle-class?

In striving to shrug off old 'views that had been held as irrevocable,' leaders of the German women's movement returned to some very traditional ground. Edu-

cational and vocational advances (benefits that largely advantaged single women) no longer formed the core arena of women's advocacy. Lily Braun argued that women should gather together "not to demonstrate for the right to vote but instead to place themselves in disposal for the care of the ill and wounded ... the breakthrough of a long-suppressed female feeling that wants nothing other than helping and healing—every primitive feeling of her sex that a single word best portrays: motherliness."<sup>14</sup> In their energetic acceptance of calls for a unified fatherland, female activists advanced a new form of spiritual motherhood that set aside prewar concerns for the unwed.

Enthusiastic patriotism marks the writings of those women who discussed female service to society in the early years of the war. Gertrud Bäumer's view of the German cause expressed fervent national loyalty: "Germany has been forced to defend with the blood of its men the fruits of its cultural strength ... We German women are a part of our land with every love and every hate, with every pain and every joy ... The deeper we feel the greatness of these actions, the higher our own duties as women must stand. If already so many tears must now flow, then we want to take care that none flow that could be dried. If already the lives of thousands must be given, the more beautiful and greater the mission to protect life, to preserve, to nurture."<sup>15</sup> Maternalism nestled comfortably within the German wartime mission. Women had to perform acts both large and small—drying tears while also protecting, preserving, and nurturing that for which the good soldiers were fighting. In the discourse surrounding wartime service, homefront duties could never be viewed as a hardship: "Is what we bring forth with our work then a sacrifice? No, it is a blessing to us ... it is a necessity of the heart to serve our beloved fatherland as custodians and protectors of its material and cultural wealth which our brothers defend outside in the field with body and life."<sup>16</sup> The advocates of wartime service configured it as all things good: a blessing and a duty, the next best thing to fighting at the fronts. For some women, the ability to participate in the historical movement of the times was no doubt a tremendous motivation. But for many others, war work was not a choice to elevate the spirit, but a grave necessity conditioned by privation, scarcity, and—yes—absent men.<sup>17</sup>

Commitment to the war effort meant commitment to the nation above all else. The enthusiasm of the early months of war caused Gertrud Bäumer to review the history of women's activism and to lament its internationalist tendencies: "The word 'sisters' for women of other countries was natural for us; we were gladdened by their successes, pained by their defeats and disappointments ... [Yet] we felt all the more strongly how very much we nonetheless were rooted in our own German ways ... In interactions with the others we were all the more deeply and engagingly conscious of our own essence ... we experienced that which has well been named the German cultural distinction: the particular knack that we Germans bring to the intellectual work of the world."<sup>18</sup> Bäumer's nationalist enthusiasm contrasted strikingly with her prewar belief that, "It is in the nature of certain intellectual movements not to be contained by national

boundaries.”<sup>19</sup> Before the war, as Angelika Schaser has argued, “internationalism and nationalism were not mutually exclusive.”<sup>20</sup> Yet after 1914, the celebration of German distinctiveness became the cornerstone of the BDF’s support for the war. Internationalist tendencies signified subversive pacifism, a sphere from which the moderates held themselves far distant. Helene Lange argued that German *Kultur* had created envy throughout the world. Jealousy of a superior civilization had created the belligerence: “In this mirror of world envy we saw our Germany with its flourishing cultural strength which in peaceful conquest had attempted to create space for itself in the world. Truly not to the disadvantage of humanity, for whom the German achievements . . . have brought immeasurable cultural advancement.”<sup>21</sup> Lange saluted the might of German *Kultur* and urged female commitment to the war effort.

A conflict over the destiny of civilized society naturally had very deep consequences for each individual—man or woman—who “at a single blow comprehended that his own piece of life was a part of this great, steady, inherently joined community of work and effort, against which an entire world had raised themselves in enmity. Each now at once saw his existence . . . as a link in a chain, a threatened part of the whole.”<sup>22</sup> These links created the united national community; as constituent parts, women could no longer identify marital status as a topic of great relevance. Peacetime could afford comparison of women and men, or wed and unwed. But during the war such categorization served only to divide and distract the *Volk*. Single women had not been forgotten; they simply no longer merited discussion even as their numbers counted ever higher. Lange wrote that, “we feel our Germanness as a condition and foundation of all other blessings, as our united common internal strength—all must be expended in order now to strive for its value, for its future existence.”<sup>23</sup> In giving up everything for German civilization, moderate and conservative activists alike found the plight of the unmarried woman to be expendable. The women’s movement let go of the surplus woman and adopted a vision of female citizenship. This rhetorical shift provided female activists with an empowered political position in the early years of the war.<sup>24</sup> But that strength would be fleeting, for as Margaret Higonnet has argued, assessments of wartime gains tend to emphasize “visible but isolated material changes. The evidence points to ideological mechanisms limiting the transformation of gender lines.”<sup>25</sup> Such a limiting ideology manifested itself in the vision of the motherly citizen advocated by leaders of the women’s movement during the war.

The onset of war provided the pivotal opportunity to reassess the female path toward German citizenship. By linking the traditional goal of education to national duty, women’s advocates could claim that expanding female access to learning was in fact patriotic. Activists emphasized female duty over development and the welfare of the greater national whole over the fate of individual daughters. If, prior to the war, unmarried women needed to work in order to replace the void left by marriage, during the war they simply were needed to work—no explanation was necessary. With greatest urgency, “the war demonstrated that the state

needs the woman.”<sup>26</sup> Called upon to take men’s positions in factory, field, and the professions, women had to do their part in filling the spaces left behind by those killed or mutilated on the fields of battle.<sup>27</sup> Because so many married women were left to function as single women during the war, the previously firm connection between marital status and working life among middle-class women all but vanished in discussions of replacement work.

Wartime discussion of female service repeatedly put forth the question: how and where might women best serve the German cause? Echoing a central theme of the *Kaiserreich* women’s movement, female writers asserted that a woman should tap into her essential maternal nature as she configured her life and work. Lily Braun set her advocacy of the maternalist spirit in dialogue with the sacrifices of German men in war: “If the dead could talk, our dead, they would elevate themselves and call to us, ‘How can you my mother, you my wife not want to prove as my blood [that you will] devote everything for the greatness to come—even in death to serve life?’”<sup>28</sup> The dead beckoned to mothers and wives, but not sisters. The maternal ties of mother to son and of wife to children yet-to-be summoned these ghostly cries. Braun was interested in precisely this essential link and believed that maternalism manifested itself in the female gut-feeling that emerged upon the outbreak of war: “All thinking and actions of women were immediately subjected to the natural female instinct which broke through with elemental power—the instinct that intellectualism had seemed almost to dissolve.”<sup>29</sup> Away with women’s movements and strategies, away with the mechanical bureaucracy of university entrance and job training! These had been the concerns of prewar women who had lost touch with their essence, women who had been numbed by a prosperous civilization into forgetting that which was most primordial—women who were not mothers.

Braun believed that the onset of the war had demonstrated that “the women’s movement was in danger of petering out. The war leads it ... to fresher waters. The return of the woman to the primitive feelings of her sex also further produces their corresponding ability to contribute.”<sup>30</sup> The fragmented, intellectualized women’s movement could never have equaled the mission brought forth by war: “Now it is the women who have to ... return themselves to the highest law of nature, through the strong, conscious will of motherhood.”<sup>31</sup> Such a vision left no room for tinkering with the concerns of those unwed women who had been excluded from or unequal to the natural female calling. In this way, single women were subsumed into a maternalist community of citizens, providing sustenance through the grim years of war as well as hope for the victorious future. The prewar women’s movement had focused on the problem of surplus women and the spirit of maternalism; World War I removed the female surplus from the discourse, leaving maternalism to stand alone.

War called upon the spirit of mothers. Elisabeth Gnauck-Kühne argued that a mandatory year of service would provide benefits for German society as a whole by infusing it with maternal essence; at the same time, “each German girl will be trained for her female calling.”<sup>32</sup> Only in this way could females serve on par with

men: “German men have developed their accomplishments in the community through their blood ... The empire stands like a building of granite and iron ... The establishment of female duty in direct service of the fatherland ... would be the crowning construction of our empire.”<sup>33</sup> Compulsory service provided the clearest way to prepare women for the type of work the war demanded of them. While calls for compulsory service long preceded the war, the age of hostilities brought new energy to such proposals. Discussions of service absorbed the types of rhetoric that had surrounded the female surplus prior to the war. Calls for mandatory service shared a similar reading of history to that which had described the pathos of the superfluous woman: “The female sex, whose domestic activity was in part altered and in part devalued by the economic development, had to first struggle for broadened living conditions. Then she pressed into the factory, office and shop and found a place at the counter ... In what direction moves this development now?”<sup>34</sup> Gnauck-Kühne’s query suggested that factory, office, and shop had already succeeded in providing a haven for the displaced women whose fate she had so lamented prior to the war. The fact that wartime losses made prospects of marriage ever slimmer is not mentioned in the wartime work of Gnauck-Kühne, the great proponent of the prewar female surplus.

War is a creative force both despite and because of the upheaval it brings forth. In the light of August 1914, women’s lives and women’s movements faced new pressures and exigencies—as well as opportunities. Antebellum feminist advocates had looked upon middle-class single women as a group in need. The war provided the occasion for this cohort to be recast (both in rhetoric and action) as social stabilizers rather than as threats to the prevailing order, as essential rather than superfluous, as citizens rather than burdens. The raging conflict and its domestic disruption formed a crucible in which a social dilemma could become a source of civic strength.

Recognizing the intrinsic potential of an era of patriotic fervor and social upheaval, women’s rights advocates seized onto a vision of maternal female citizenship as the centerpiece of their calls to action. Anna Pappritz noted that the work of the BDF was most consequential “when it teaches its members to feel like responsible citizens of the state who have the duty to dedicate their ability to work not only in the narrow circle of family, but also to fatherland and *Volk*.”<sup>35</sup> Assertions of mutual interdependence informed the connection between women’s work and German citizenship. During war, leading activists of the German women’s movement argued that through service rather than through suffering, females would earn the right for the state to support their vocational, educational, and spiritual needs. The war made such service vital rather than voluntary; the hope was that the state then would respond in kind.

Lily Braun put the *quid pro quo* in direct terms: “The war has demonstrated that the state needs women; that women are themselves conscious of their duties regarding the state ... In the path of educating a woman to be a citizen, she would ... be in the position to earn the same certification as the man.”<sup>36</sup> Rights would follow once women proved their abilities to serve the state. Women would have

to earn recognition by demonstrating their capacity for citizenship, rather than by jockeying for rights on the basis of damage done to them by the reverberations of social and economic change—such an approach had been (so wartime activists believed) the mistake of the fragmented prewar women's movement. The war provided the opportunity to demonstrate female civic potentiality and offered functionality to a segment of society that had been notable for its dysfunction. The prewar emphasis on marital status was exchanged for a wartime vision of national citizenship. It would take future German women much of the twentieth century to develop a feminism that moved beyond contextual categories of demography or national allegiance.

The Great War changed single women from a cohort that German society had to do something about to a category that Germany would not survive the war without. Women—married and unmarried, of means and indigent—were essential to the functioning of German society. War made this evident in ways that in peacetime begged explanation. In the antebellum *Kaiserreich*, the notion of a female surplus provided one such explanation: the changing economy had pushed surplus women outside of the home; thus, they had to be educated and given useful work. Yet war—in every way but demographically—erased the female surplus. Prior to 1914, a lack of female vocational training meant that single women would falter. In wartime, a lack of female vocational training meant that Germany would falter. Single women were no longer on the front lines and the central object of the German women's movements; instead, Germany was on the front lines and all women, wed and unwed, were called to duty.

The ebbing of concern over the fate of the surplus woman at the onset of World War I makes clear how very much she was a product of the *Kaiserreich*. The old maid had been a dominant signifier of aberrance, but war created a culture far more concerned with the deviance of foreigners and pacifists, war-evaders and Communists. The surplus woman had functioned as a means to create awareness of the need for social change, but war necessitated changes so obvious that her symbolic utility disappeared even as her numbers grew. The changes wrought by war emerged both in the role of women in German society (most particularly through female patriotic mobilization and labor, and female suffrage after the war) and in the nature of German society itself. The icon of the surplus woman no longer was necessary to convey the tumult of a society in transition. Death and defeat had ably taken on that role.

### **Post-*Kaiserreich* Readings of the Surplus Woman**

In Imperial Germany, concerns regarding the nature of modernity were articulated through expansive debates over industrial expansion, socialism, sexuality, women's rights, and demographic change. As historian Kevin Repp has argued, during this period an activist core of social reformers had sought to come to terms with the future. They formed the hub of a reformist sphere that operated

largely outside of politics in pursuit of institutions that could adapt to changing times. The *Kaiserreich* provided a context in which the “peculiarities of the German political system,” with its impotent legislature and anti-democratic federal structure, “acted as ‘incubator’ for the Wilhelmine reform milieu ... These fragile, yet protective confines were crushed by the First World War.”<sup>37</sup>

During the war and into Weimar Germany, social debates became more pointed and urgent. Assessment of the consequences of industrial expansion tempered into debate over postwar recovery and reparation repayment; the socialist threat was made vivid by the Russian Revolution; vague anxieties about sexuality and sexual activity gained specificity through the wartime proliferation of venereal disease; demographic upheavals in urbanization and population gave way to territorial redistribution and the mortality of war; and the broadly construed *Frauenfrage* (woman question) was transformed by the advent of female suffrage, the iconography of the New Woman, and the realities of redressing the wartime disruption of the private sphere. The *Frauenüberschuß* had been a prism that had refracted myriad anxieties about change. In a belligerent, ultimately vanquished state, such refraction gave way to more concrete exigencies.

The First World War created in fact what proponents of the female surplus had long fancied to be true: an unambiguous preponderance of women. The surfeit was most clear in cohorts of marriageable age. Demographer Rudolf Meerwarth compared sex ratios and marriage rates for the years 1910 and 1925 and found that a distinct surplus of women emerged in the years following the Great War (Appendix: Table 25).<sup>38</sup> The war had extensive impact on marriage rates as well. Among women, the number married decreased from 1910 to 1925, while nuptiality among men actually increased in the postwar era (Table 26).<sup>39</sup> Meerwarth explained this gender difference as emerging from the fact that “the marital desire of men, in any case the inclination of men to marry, becomes greater in the postwar period.”<sup>40</sup> This assessment of marriage statistics relied upon the rather ambiguous notion of male desire as the deciding factor in marriage creation. A similar line of scientific observation and gender-role stereotyping can be found in Meerwarth’s assumption that marriage was the primary goal of the female sex: “In order to arrive at marriage, women often will direct their attention towards companions of the same age or even younger.”<sup>41</sup> Women sought to arrive at or to entice marriage; the wedded union was a female goal to attain. Yet the marriage rate was dependent upon male inclination or desire, making weddings a male choice. This statistical reading emulated the *Kaiserreich* view of surplus women desperately depending upon men to absorb their abundance.

An isolated but nonetheless extraordinary analysis of the female surplus during the interwar period came from General Walther Reinhardt, early architect of the Weimar-created *Reichswehr* (German Armed Forces). Reinhardt believed that a surplus of women might best be addressed militarily: “With the full use of military capable men, the use of women at the front is not necessitated by the force of numbers ... But it remains a possibility to withdraw men and insert women, not due to lack of numbers, but following a considered plan. From the

standpoint of effectiveness it will be right where women do better work, from the standpoint of maintaining the *Volk* it will be just as good, if a surplus of women can be prevented, or if such a surplus can be reduced.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps it would have been just as good for the *Volk*—but not for those women sacrificed in order to reduce the surplus! While Reinhardt's proposition did not lead to the creation of a female regiment, it does suggest that (for at least some Germans) 'too many women' remained a problem to be solved.

Unwed women remained a problematic cohort in the Weimar era, even if no longer a core focus of the women's movement. Never-married women continued to be lampooned, though with less frequency and different nuances than in the satirical accounts of the *Kaiserreich*. In a description of postwar German womanhood, Erik Ernest Schwabach reified the *alte Jungfer's* (old maid's) status as a pariah:

[The unmarried woman is like] the piano out of tune [or] dried watercolors. She is an *alte Jungfer*, inferior, disdained, contaminated, embittered, incapable of every activity, because she has not learned any. She is free. But what should she do with this freedom? She acts like a fish in an aquarium, a glass pane is shoved between her and this or that that she might like to explore, and with every attempt she hits her head. After some time the fishmonger removes her because she poses a painful taboo ... In the same way, the *alte Jungfer* does not recognize that the pane between her and the dangerous world has fallen, no taboos exist between her and the world, and she could step outside without suffering harm. She remains voluntarily in an open prison, in order to decay there.<sup>43</sup>

Schwabach's depiction continues the Wilhelmine practice of immersing old maids in the animal kingdom. While earlier accounts bound unmarried women to their pets, Schwabach made her a metaphorical fish out of water. Yet Schwabach's take on the *alte Jungfer* differed from those of her imperial antagonists. Schwabach encouraged her to embrace the world outside and wanted to let the unmarried woman know that that world could be a welcoming place. This Weimar old maid suffered from a more individualized malady than the *alte Jungfer* of a quarter-century earlier. Schwabach hinted at the transformative potential of Weimar political and social reconstruction by suggesting that the new age might well be ready to release the single woman from her self-imposed prison.

Interwar literature on sexuality also reflected upon the unmarried woman as abnormal. As discussed in chapter 2, single women became the subject of a new kind of scrutiny as the field of sexology emerged during the *Kaiserreich*. The notion of a female sex drive slowly gained currency as Freudian thought proliferated in the postwar era. In her examination of interwar French cultural history, Mary Louise Roberts has described how sexology merged with medicine in the conviction that abstinence "could lead to nervous illnesses and disorders of all kinds, including hysteria, nymphomania, and breast and uterine cancer."<sup>44</sup> The dissemination of new knowledge in the sexual area continued a vision of the abstinent old maid as aberrant.

In his extraordinarily titled 1931 work, *Maidenhood: Virginity and Defloration as a Cultural Problem*, physician J.R. Spinner provided a semi-scientific account of *Altjungfernschaft*:

Virgin—forever a virgin—*alte Jungfer* ... This epithet gives virginity its particular urgency. One might generally defend virginity as one will, but it nevertheless remains the case that the *alte Jungfer* is a caricature in our culture. Still more, she is a socio-pathological figure, physically and mentally. She is the highest grade of the unfulfilled female ... The female body is so completely oriented to sexual activity that it externally documents the characteristics of repression in far greater degree than that of the male. When does the virgin begin to become an *alte Jungfrau*?<sup>45</sup>

Spinner answered the question by placing the onset of old maidenhood as early as the age of 21. By a woman's late twenties, "the tragedy of *Jungfräulichkeit*" surfaced in earnest as those "who still were not married already were considered to be somewhat suspect—because they were unpopular, because they were not in a position to become visible, because they matured into wallflowers. At thirty the *alte Jungfer* had already begun."<sup>46</sup> Interwar sexual science legitimated what nineteenth-century taunts had implied all along: unmarried women were abnormal. Yet despite the occasional literary and sexological accounts of the German old maid, the postwar iconography of the surplus woman did not serve as a source of social activism.

Germany's defeat in the Great War had changed the rhetoric of the women's movement. At the same time, the surplus woman receded behind two very different female models: the New Woman and the Maternal Citizen. The New Woman reacted against both the surplus woman of the *Kaiserreich* and the patriotic worker of the Great War. Historian Atina Grossman has described the New Woman as representing "both a blurring of traditional gender roles and a polarization of gender experience during the war: men in the trenches and women on the home front." The New Woman encapsulated sexual subversives like "the intellectual with a Marlene Dietrich-style suit and short mannish haircut" as well as "the young white-collar worker in a flapper outfit." Marital status configured this modern female far less than it had the surplus woman. In Grossman's typology, the New Woman might also be "the young married factory worker who cooked only one warm meal a day, cut her hair short into a practical *Bubikopf*, and tried with all available means to keep her family small."<sup>47</sup> The overdrawn lines of the New Woman stereotype helped to fuel reactionary politics in favor of eradicating the trailblazing icon and replacing her with the patriotic *Hausfrau* and her hardworking, pure daughter.

The Maternal Citizen served as a continuation rather than a repudiation of female patriotism. While the New Woman certainly reflected the experience of some German women of the Weimar era, she was more a cultural construction than lived reality.<sup>48</sup> Historian Susanne Rouette found in a study of early Weimar labor and social policy that the gender politics of the postwar emphasized

“talents considered ‘natural’ to women: as wives, homemakers, and particularly as mothers ... Such desires and demands could serve as justification for a conservative reconstruction of gender relations.”<sup>49</sup> The linkage of motherhood and citizen’s rights was built upon the tenets of prewar maternalism. Rouette argues that the “gender stereotypes [of early Weimar] returned to a program of femininity within which, in the course of the nineteenth century, ‘motherliness’ had been granted a central status.”<sup>50</sup> A simple yet crucial change from the prewar women’s movement’s view of motherliness had taken place during the war: single women had been rhetorically removed from the central stage of maternalist engagement. This does not mean that the women’s movement abandoned all concern for the unwed. But while prewar maternalism sought to point out the feminine power of those who were not mothers (while also eliciting sympathy for them), wartime and Weimar maternalism emphasized motherhood itself as the most outstanding characteristic of the new female citizen. This reading of female civic belonging resulted in the bourgeois women’s movement calling in November 1918 “for women’s participation as ‘mothers and citizens’ in ‘building Germany’s future.’”<sup>51</sup> The Maternal Citizen embodied a vision of womanhood that was *völkisch* and timeless. In contrast, the surplus woman of the *Kaiserreich* had been a phenomenon rooted in her era, a victim of circumstances specific to her time and place.

Scholarship on the Weimar women’s movement is marked by descriptions of its disappointments and paralysis, its generational conflict and lost sense of purpose.<sup>52</sup> The irresolute nature of Weimar feminism was in part a consequence of the dialectical opposition of Weimar’s New Woman and Maternal Citizen. Ute Frevert has observed that “the [women’s] movement had no answer to the question of how the ‘new woman’ could resolve the conflict between modern occupational demands and traditional family ties ... Instead, it offered women another role: that of dutiful, selfless, conciliatory members of an idealized *Volksgemeinschaft* [community of the German *Volk*].”<sup>53</sup> The wartime shift away from the surplus woman and toward maternalist-nationalist rhetoric helped to create the divisive gender politics of the Weimar era. By predicating female advancement upon women’s inclination and ability to serve the nation in a time of conflict, wartime women’s rights advocates abandoned their earlier emphasis on the plight faced by the unwed. This shift advanced a feminism that appeared to be more unified, useful, universal, and patriotic. Such an approach to women’s rights left a very real void, however, when the postwar women’s movement attempted to carve a new identity in an era that ultimately brought them “to echo the ideas of the Right.”<sup>54</sup>

In her account of single women in Nazi and divided Germany, Elisabeth Heine- man describes single marital status as a potent category of aberrance in fascist Germany. She notes that in the Nazi era, “when women were denied permission to marry because of supposed eugenic flaws or asocial behavior, it might be accurate to say that perceptions of their shortcomings ‘caused’ their single status. Yet the reverse was also true: single status made it more likely that women would attract official disapproval in the first place.”<sup>55</sup> Single women—especially never-married women past the prime age of first marriage—formed a suspicious cohort to the

pro-nation, pro-natalist Nazis. Heineman concludes that in both postwar East and West Germany, “marital status continued to determine the contours of women’s lives,” despite the fact that in the first census after World War II, 126 women existed for every 100 men.<sup>56</sup> Among adults of marriageable age, the statistics are more resounding with estimates of 2,242 available women for every 1,000 men.<sup>57</sup> Even after World War II, the continuing centrality of marital status in the German conception of womanhood is supported by the enduring presence of hackneyed visions of the *alte Jungfer*.<sup>58</sup> After the Second World War, the concept of the female surplus continued to single out a problematic component of the population. An article in *Constanze*, a post-World War II women’s magazine, decried the prevailing understanding of the *Frauenüberschuß*—“What an ugly word! And what an even uglier meaning! A word that is taken from the language of trade and signifies nothing more or less than a product, and at that a product of which there is an excess, which is superfluous.”<sup>59</sup> Mid-twentieth century readings of single women indicate that the optimistic visions of *Kaiserreich* reformers had not been realized. The iconic *alte Jungfer* did not go away and, even by the middle of the century, the surplus woman could not completely transcend descriptions of her abnormality. In part because post-World War I female activists left behind their advocacy of relief and advancement for single women, conceptions of the aberrant unwed remained throughout the twentieth century. The surplus woman’s political utility disappeared even as she remained a convenient prop in the panorama of German culture.

The rhetoric and reformist efforts of *Kaiserreich* maternalists like Helene Lange, Alice Salomon, and Elisabeth Gnauck-Kühne contributed enormously to the abiding importance of marital status in defining the ‘contours of women’s lives.’ In their focus upon the *Frauenüberschuß*, maternalist female reformers in Imperial Germany had succeeded in opening professional and public spheres to unwed women, but also had continued to hallow marriage as the life form that women most longed to choose, if they only could. Moderates also helped to maintain the iconography of the single woman as irregular and problematic. By championing maternal capacity as the surplus woman’s route to salvation, moderate and religious activists advanced a German cult of motherhood—even as they sought to reconfigure the maternal presence outside of the traditional family.

In her study of *Mothers in the Fatherland*, Claudia Koonz asserts that emphasis on female difference as well as the celebration of the maternal capacity, so prominent in the *Kaiserreich*, also found great resonance in Nazi ideology: “Motherly love in its separate sphere, far from immunizing women against evil, fired women’s dedication to the *Führer’s* vision of an ‘Aryan’ future and expanded opportunities for women to reign in their own *Lebensraum*.”<sup>60</sup> By no means did the maternalist vein of the German women’s movement necessitate the extremes of Nazi family policy. But maternalism did provide an ideological foundation to the delineation of separate spheres by arguing for women’s rights based on difference. This worldview made female resistance to Nazi cultural politics much less likely to occur. In the particular political, economic, and social circumstances of

interwar Germany, this was dangerous stuff: “The habit of taking psychological differences between men and women for granted reinforced assumptions about irrevocable divisions between Jew and ‘Aryan’. In place of class, cultural, religious divisions, race and sex became the dominant social markers.”<sup>61</sup>

Yet the historian needs to be wary of a teleological vision that attempts to connect the dots on the path to Hitler. The religious, moderate, and radical voices that speak in this book also articulated a vital critique of the modern era, a critique that fueled farsighted programs of female organization, educational reform, professional development, and ideological innovation. The use of marital status as a foundation for reform did indeed open the door for the reconfiguration of bourgeois, radical, and religious feminism in the service of politics that deemed patriarchal family structure as the norm. But introduction of the surplus female as a political figure worthy of rights also lent credence to dramatic calls for social and cultural change; radical figures such as Ruth Bré and Lily Braun saw the eradication of marriage as a potential next step in the solving the crisis of the surplus woman, while for August Bebel and Clara Zetkin, the supposed existence of the excess female provided further evidence of the rot at the core of bourgeois society.

As Ann Taylor Allen has observed in her history of German maternalism, the *Kaiserreich* “idea of women’s social role ... was, in fact, both backward- and forward-looking, seeking to preserve positive aspects of women’s traditional work as well as to open up new possibilities.”<sup>62</sup> Proponents of the female surplus looked to the past to explain the present. It was a past they lamented and a present that alarmed them. They thus developed a vision for the future guided by a hope that “unwanted” women could be welcomed into a more encompassing, nurturing, universal family. This rather radical conception of the future neither anticipated nor shared the ideals of the fascist familial order that would later triumph in Germany.

### **The Surplus Woman: Icon of Anxiety and Hope**

In his epic *Buddenbrooks*, Thomas Mann employed a cohort of old maids as the ultimate misfits of Imperial German bourgeois culture.<sup>63</sup> He offered no way out for either the Buddenbrooks or the old maids, concluding the novel with the chorus of single women musing upon “the past and the future—though of the future there was in truth almost nothing to be said.”<sup>64</sup> Unlike Mann, the leaders of the German women’s movement believed that there could be a future for such un-modern women—and they sought to provide it. The writings of female social reformers of the *Kaiserreich* demonstrate how very much they understood the stigmatization facing unmarried women like Mann’s old maid, Clothilde. The activists employed similar derogatory characterizations to justify the imperatives of the social movement that they pursued. While some of them may have identified with Mann’s stereotypes personally, all acknowledged the archaic sphere of *Altjungferntum* as confronting a particularly painful fate in the face of moder-

nity. These depictions of single women were suffused with class-consciousness, as moderates and religious activists described the pain of the middle-class plight, while radicals and socialists suggested that the staying power of the German old maid demonstrated the moral bankruptcy of the bourgeoisie.

The surplus woman is in part the pathetic creature portrayed in *Buddenbrooks*. Mann presented her static nature as fictive commentary on the fruitlessness of the ambition hub-bubbling about her, while many other depictions of the era conveyed the surplus woman as made increasingly pathetic by industry and embourgeoisement. The *Frauenüberschuß* was adapted to causes as disparate as Gnauck-Kühne's version of Catholicism, the moderate maternalism of Lange and Salomon, and the subversive visions of socialism, marriage reform, and the *Neue Ethik*. Though predicated upon a perceived population crisis, the female surfeit was a product of imagined demography. Yet the significance of this cultural construct surpassed its supposed quantifiable origins both as an expression of the distress resulting from industrial and capitalist advancement and as a mandate for change to enhance the quality of women's lives. Herein rests the importance and strength of this cultural icon: her pathetic origins offered the opportunity for transformative power.

The champions of the surplus woman created an icon that signified anxieties about changing gender roles in the modern era and formed a provocative pillar of broadly based social reform. As a conceptual notion, the female surplus proved to be enormously malleable and thus quite useful to disparate voices in search of social change. Imperial advocates of women's rights presented single women as a special, newly configured cohort: not simply unmarried women, they were the *Frauenüberschuß*. This conceptual shift hinted at a reconfiguration of gender roles in the *Kaiserreich*; while Thomas Mann affixed his unwed female characters as passive entities in pre-modern guise, female activists, social scientists, and sexologists identified surplus women as active combatants ever seeking to find their place in the modern world. That search did not achieve unequivocal success in the form of legal or political advancement, but in ennobled failure the surplus woman gained ever greater symbolic potency.

This book has sought to shed light on the *Frauenüberschuß* as an important point of reference in the social debates of Imperial Germany. As both the target and justification for reform, the surplus woman had great civic potentiality. Many of the most prominent female activists in Imperial Germany were unwed women. As advocates of change, they sought to extend agency to other unmarried women and create new opportunities for themselves in the process. The concept of the female surplus as a basis for reform covered a whole rubric of contemporary issues by offering a critique of industrial society, providing an explanation for the predominance of bourgeois interests in reformist activities, explaining the gendered consequences of demographic fluctuation, and reflecting the maternalist sensibilities so predominant in the German women's movement.

The surplus woman emerged out of critical observations of industrial society. Reformers configured the bourgeois single woman as one who stood alone not

by choice, but because the economic conditions of unified Germany had left her no option. The machine had revolutionized the home and forced the spinster outside. Moderate feminists, radicals, socialists, and religious reformers all shared in a formulation of the female surplus that emerged out of the particular consequences of the industrial mode of production. These activists argued that the society that had created the *Frauenüberschuß* needed to be fundamentally reformed.

Socialists and the critics of marriage and morality read the female surplus as a critical symptom of a debauched society. Clara Zetkin and August Bebel offered a Marxist interpretation, placing the *Frauenüberschuß* squarely in the bourgeois milieu and asserting that only through proletariat revolution would the female surplus cease to matter. Ruth Bré and Lily Braun utilized the plight of the female unwed as a prominent component of their critiques of marriage. Helene Stöcker went further, using the surplus woman as a prime exemplar of the stultifying consequences of the prevailing moral code; should the *Neue Ethik* gain foothold in German culture, the *alte Jungfer* would disappear into an environment of love, openness, and freedom.

Moderate and Catholic advocates constructed their vision of reform along class lines, justifying middle-class interest on the basis of the upheaval of the bourgeois home wrought by the advance of capitalist professions and commodities. Lange, Salomon, and Gnauck-Kühne observed that it was socially acceptable and often fiscally imperative for working-class unmarried women to work—thus removing unskilled female laborers from the ranks of the *Frauenüberschuß*. These reformers hoped to advance a culture that would provide unmarried bourgeois women with the options and skills to work. In their justification of middle-class professional opportunities on the basis of economic necessity, moderate feminists dodged a rhetorical bullet. Theirs was not an emancipatory feminism, but rather an advocacy based on circumstance—all the easier for would-be opponents to consider without fear. This advocacy was immersed in maternalist ideology. Who better to serve as the spiritual nurturers of the industrial world than those women who, through no fault of their own, would never have the opportunity to physically nurture their own children? Professions such as teaching, social work, nursing, and midwifery, along with voluntary activities, provided a means by which the great social malaise of the capitalist epoch might be infused with the healing capacity of spiritual motherhood. Surplus women would be the first to answer this call.

Was the surplus woman simply an unfortunate victim of the times? Indeed, she could not have chosen her single status willfully if the *Frauenüberschuß* was to serve as an inspiration for reform. If the surplus woman had been a voluntary visionary (like Weimar's "New Woman"), then she would have played a very different symbolic role as an explicitly political individual pursuing and embracing change. But the female surplus of Imperial Germany was comprised of women who suffered because of the uncertain times in which they lived. The moderate Helene Lange spoke to a much broader audience than did her contemporaries who articulated a vision of equality-based feminism. The undesired, unchosen,

untethered status of the surplus woman licensed the tone and extent of reform efforts.

The iconic surplus woman depended upon imagined demography for her victim status. As has been demonstrated, the numbers do not provide any clear evidence of a female surplus, let alone one that was worsening in the imperial era. But the course of social change does not depend upon verifiable facts; it hinges much more upon what contemporaries believe to be true. The power of the *Frauenüberschuß* lay not in its demographic actuality, but in its perceived verity and the anxiety such a perception caused. Evidence suggests that Imperial Germans very much believed that a female surplus existed. In many ways, it was a welcome conundrum for female activists in that it offered both an explanation for female trauma and the opportunity to advance agendas of change. For unmarried women, the notion of an economic and demographic engine propelling them into the unknown must have been more comforting than facing that unknown without considering why. And it would have been worse yet for unwed bourgeois women to face undefined futures while blaming themselves for failing to marry. Moreover, the concept of the *Frauenüberschuß* provided single women with a way to familiarize the unfamiliar by bringing their untapped maternal skills into a world in need of nurturance.

The notion of women made surplus encompassed social categories much broader than marital status. Excess women had been abandoned not only by men, but also by the promise of maternity, the security of home, and the sanctuary of the family. Imperial Germans frequently portrayed the female unwed as living in a condition of *Not*—implying a predicament or plight, or more dire circumstances of distress, misery, even peril. The *Frauenüberschuß* described a category of women in a state of emergency. This depiction rent asunder bourgeois gender norms of male provider and female nurturer. Out of this rupture, the cultural icon of the surplus woman emerged. Moderates, radicals, socialists, and religious figures interpreted and reconfigured her in the pursuit of social reform. As distinct interest groups debated the origins and fate of the female surfeit, they mutually informed one another about the hopes and anxieties of those who had gone before them and beside them. The female surplus thus provides a lens by which historians can consider the connections between groups usually regarded as distinct.

Made problematic by the discourse surrounding marriage, motherhood, sex, and demography, the surplus woman of Imperial Germany was a vessel through which apprehension about modernity could be expressed. The demographic evidence that supports the notion of a female surfeit is scarce, but that fact does not trivialize the cultural resonance of the surplus woman. Amidst the reformist ethos pervading the *Kaiserreich*, a statistically unsubstantiated concept became an important current in the social debates of the day. Women who had been conditioned to expect marriage deeply feared that it *might* not happen to them. Marriage, the home, motherhood, and family seemed to have been assaulted by the modern age. Generalized anxieties about one's future in the modern world

might have been hard to articulate or pinpoint, but particularized concerns about the fate of young bourgeois women served as a way of expressing fears far greater. The surplus woman stood as a reformist beacon both pragmatic and rhetorical in the culture of Imperial Germany.

## Notes

1. For an extended discussion of the rhetorical shift of the wartime women's movement, see Catherine Dollard, "Marital Status and the Rhetoric of the Women's Movement in World War I Germany," in *Women in German Yearbook 22*, eds. Helga Kraft and Maggie McCarthy (Lincoln, NE, 2006), 211–235.
2. Luise Zietz, *Zur Frage der Frauenerwerbsarbeit* (Berlin, 1916), 12.
3. Ute Daniel, *The War from Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War* (New York, 1997), 133.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Ute Frevert, *Women in German History*, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans (New York, 1989), 162; on the hopes for political gain, especially suffrage, see also Sabine Hering, *Die Kriegsgewinnlerinnen: Praxis und Ideologie der deutschen Frauenbewegung im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Paffensweiler, 1990), 122–137, and Elizabeth Harvey "The Failure of Feminism? Young Women and the Bourgeois Feminist Movement in Weimar Germany, 1918–1933," *Central European History* 28 (1995): 6.
6. Hering, *Kriegsgewinnlerinnen*, 130–133.
7. Jean Quataert, *Staging Philanthropy: Patriotic Women and the National Imagination in Dynastic Germany, 1813–1916* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2001), 272.
8. *Ibid.*, 274; on 1916 as the central turning point in the German civilian view of the war, see also Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914–1918* (New York, 1998), 65, 76–82.
9. *Das Volk* connotes a patriotic view of the German people rooted in a mythic past and immersed in the German countryside, language, and folk culture.
10. On *Burgfrieden*, see Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 51–66, and Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth, and Mobilization in Germany* (New York, 2000), 139–146, 160–181.
11. Josephine Levy-Rathenau, "Die Lehren des Krieges für die Frauenberufsbildung," in *Kriegsjahrbuch des Bundes Deutscher Frauenvereine* [BDF], ed. Elisabeth Altmann-Gottheiner (Berlin, 1915), 60.
12. Elisabeth Gnauck-Kühne, *Dienstpflcht und Dienstjahr des weiblichen Geschlechts* (Tübingen, 1915), 24.
13. Marie Baum, "Volkskraft zur Kriegszeit," in *Kriegsjahrbuch des BDF*, 35.
14. Lily Braun, *Die Frauen und der Krieg* (Leipzig, 1915), 11.
15. Gertrud Bäumer, "Die Frauen und der Krieg," in *Kriegsjahrbuch des BDF*, 8.
16. Anna Pappritz, "Nationaler Frauendienst," in *Kriegsjahrbuch des BDF*, 33.
17. On the impact of World War I domestic privation, see Daniel, *War from Within*, 189–207, and Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000), 24–92.
18. Bäumer, "Frauen," 3.
19. Gertrud Bäumer, "Frauenbewegung und Nationalbewußtsein," *Die Frau* 20: (1912/13): 387;

- quoted in Angelika Schaser, "Women in a Nation of Men: The Politics of the League of German Women's Associations (BDF) in Imperial Germany, 1894–1914," trans. by Pamela Selwyn, in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (New York, 2000), 260.
20. Schaser, "Women," 260.
  21. Helene Lange, "Der Krieg und der deutschen Kultur," in *Kriegsjahrbuch des BDF* 7.
  22. *Ibid.*, 17.
  23. *Ibid.*
  24. Nancy Reagan, *A German Women's Movement: Class and Gender in Hanover, 1880–1933* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995), 187.
  25. Margaret R. and Patrice L.-R. Higonnet, "The Double Helix," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, CT, 1987), 33.
  26. Braun, *Frauen*, 46.
  27. Alice Salomon, "Probleme der Sozialen Kriegsfürsorge," in *Kriegsjahrbuch des BDF* 52.
  28. Braun, *Frauen*, 51.
  29. *Ibid.*, 12.
  30. *Ibid.*, 45.
  31. *Ibid.*, 53.
  32. Gnauck-Kühne, *Dienstpflicht*, 24.
  33. *Ibid.*, 19–20.
  34. *Ibid.*, 7–8.
  35. Pappritz, "Nationaler," 33.
  36. Braun, *Frauen*, 46–48.
  37. Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890–1914* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 315.
  38. Rudolf Meerwarth, Adolf Günther, and Waldemar Zimmerman, *Die Einwirkung des Krieges auf Bevölkerungsbewegung, Einkommen und Lebenshaltung in Deutschland*, Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Weltkrieges, ed. Carl Melchior, no. 11 (Stuttgart, 1932), 91–92; on Meerwarth's career and impact on official statistics in Imperial and Weimar Germany, see J. Adam Tooze, *Statistics and the German State, 1900–1945* (New York, 2001), 50–51, 54–56, 97–102. Tables appear in the appendix preceding the bibliography.
  39. Meerwarth, *Einwirkung*, 91–92.
  40. *Ibid.*, 92.
  41. *Ibid.*, 39.
  42. Walther Reinhardt, *Wehrkraft und Wehrwille*, ed. Ernst Reinhardt (Berlin, 1933), 63, cited in William Mulligan, *The Creation of the Modern German Army* (New York, 2005), 205.
  43. Erik Ernst Schwabach, *Die Revolutionierung der Frau* (Leipzig, 1928), 80; Schwabach (1891–1938) was a poet, translator, and biographer of Paul Gauguin.
  44. Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917–1927* (Chicago, 1994), 169.
  45. J.R. Spinner, *Die Jungfernschaft. Virginität und Defloration als Kulturprobleme* (Leipzig, 1931), 285; Spinner was a colleague of Magnus Hirschfeld.
  46. *Ibid.*, 287.
  47. Atina Grossman, "The New Woman and the Rationalization of Sexuality in Weimar Germany," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York, 1983), 156.
  48. On the New Woman as cultural icon, see Marsha Meskimmon, *We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), and Katharina von Ankum, ed., *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (Berkeley, CA, 1997).
  49. Susanne Rouette, "Mothers and Citizens: Gender and Social Policy in Germany after the First World War," *Central European History* 30 (1997): 51; Rouette argues that this "conservative

- reconstruction of gender relations” is identifiable in early Weimar labor and social legislation which aimed toward a “restoration of the gender-hierarchical division of labor” (1997, 59).
50. *Ibid.*, 63.
  51. *Ibid.*, Rouette cites here the Petition of the Federation of German Women’s Associations to the Reichstag, 4 November 1918, quoted in Else Wex, *Staatsbürgerliche Arbeit deutscher Frauen 1865 bis 1928* (Berlin, 1929).
  52. On disappointment, see Reagin’s chapter “A Movement Adrift,” in *Movement*, 203–219; Schaser, “Women,” (2000, 262), notes the minimization of “female national tasks” in early Weimar. On paralysis, see Harvey, “Failure,” which describes an “immobile” (1995, 2) Weimar’s women’s movement facing “senility” (1995, 8); Frevert, *Women*, characterizes the Weimar movement as both “harmless and predictable” (1989, 171) and “confused and contradictory” (1989, 203); Ute Gerhard, in *Unerhört. Die Geschichte der deutsche Frauenbewegung* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1992), describes the leadership as “timid and evasive” (377). On generational conflict, see Frevert, *Women*, 198, 201; Gerhard, *Unerhört*, 370–372, and Harvey’s article which describes the older bourgeois movement, which, “in seeking to bridge the generation gap ... felt it necessary to change their language and reshape the presentation of their ideas ... to meet the perceived shift of young middle-class educated women to the right” (1995, 24). On lost purpose see Reagin, *Movement*, 203–208, and Rouette, “Mothers,” 66.
  53. Frevert, *Women*, 203.
  54. *Ibid.*, 6; On the rightward shift of the Weimar women’s movement, see the discussion of a “backward-looking utopia” in Rouette, “Mothers” (1997, 64); Harvey, “Failure,” 24–28, on the increasing compromises of the women’s movement in late Weimar; and Reagin’s chapter in *Movement*, “Growth on the Right,” 221–247.
  55. Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), 26.
  56. *Ibid.*, 236.
  57. Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley, 1993), 27.
  58. See for example: Charlot Strasser, foreword to *Der Donor*, by Gertrud Isolani (Biel, 1949), 21. Strasser evokes familiar bestial imagery:

Are there not multiple, eccentric characters ... which give themselves to surrogates of cats and dogs, on which they bestow enormous amounts of love as recompense, women who live without relationships, for themselves, selfishly, ... sometimes already *altjüngferlich*, women for whom ... diagnoses would apply, either in the form of hysteria or neurosis, or in the form of a schizoid?
  59. Helga Prollius, “Ein Königreich für einen Mann?,” in Annette Kuhn and Doris Schubert, eds., *Frauen in der Nachkriegszeit und im Wirtschaftswunder, 1945–1960* (Frankfurt a.M., 1980), 53; cited in Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 28.
  60. Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York, 1987), 14.
  61. *Ibid.*, 6.
  62. Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1991), 230.
  63. See chapter 1.
  64. Thomas Mann, *Buddenbrooks* [1901], trans. H.T. Lowe-Porter (New York, 1984), 602–603.