

## Introduction

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### The Problem

Despite a strict prohibition and harsh punishments, thousands of western prisoners of war (POWs) and German women started forbidden relations with each other during World War II. An estimated 15,000–20,000 French, Belgian, and British POWs and an equal number of women had to stand trial, and there were undoubtedly many more relations that remained undiscovered or never came to trial. Given their large number and their increasingly lax guarding, French POWs were the predominant “offenders,” with more than 80 percent of all court martial cases.<sup>1</sup> The Belgians, detained under similar conditions to the French, engaged in forbidden relations in an even higher proportion, and the British POWs, once they became more integrated into German work life and were less strictly guarded (in 1943), followed in their footsteps. Many German women, facing a shortage of local men in their age bracket, defied Nazi propaganda that stigmatized the foreign POW as an implacable enemy. They also disregarded the omnipresent warning notices and the public posters and newspaper articles providing detailed accounts of the “shameful,” “unpatriotic” activities and harsh punishments of women who had become involved with a POW. These texts included the full names of the women.

What motivated these international love relations, these “collaborations of the heart,” in the midst of war?<sup>2</sup> The Belgian officer and historian of captivity E. Gillet reduced it to a simple formula: “Human

<sup>1</sup> Prisoners of war had to stand trial in front of a court martial (*Feldgericht*) of the German reserve army, staffed by a military judge and two assistants. The same courts also sentenced German soldiers on home leave. Following the example of some works on POWs, I use the term court martial, but military tribunal would also be a fine translation. Throughout the book, I also use the terms relation and relationship interchangeably, often adding an adjective to the former for clarification.

<sup>2</sup> Raffael Scheck, “Collaboration of the Heart: The Forbidden Love Affairs of French Prisoners of War and German Women in Nazi Germany,” *The Journal of Modern History* 90, no. 2 (2018).

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nature preserved its rights.”<sup>3</sup> The former Belgian prisoner representative in East Prussia, Georges Smets, agreed and, in a television program in 1975, appealed to his audience not to judge these relationships too harshly. Smets’ open discussion of the relationships provoked outrage among former comrades. One of them wrote him an angry letter denying that love relations existed except in the case of a few evil collaborators. Smets answered:

Noble love could very well exist between a Belgian POW and a German woman. Love knows neither boundaries nor races. That is what I tried to explain in the TV program, not more and not less. It would be a serious error to suggest to the wider public that we were all saints. Of course, the opposite is true, and this also applies to quite a few wives of our POWs.<sup>4</sup>

But Smets, a keen observer of the POW psyche and of German wartime society, also stressed other factors than “human nature,” such as the German population’s growing acceptance of Belgian and French POWs (who predominated in his region), its increasing war-weariness, and the indispensability of the foreign POWs, who, according to Smets, were largely in charge of his province by 1944. Smets refused to condemn his fellow prisoners for having loved a German woman; the “Don Juans,” as he called them, were all-too-human, uprooted, and far away from home. Reflecting on this topic in the mid-1970s, Smets saw the love between enemies as an encouraging sign for humanity. Yet, his revelation in the television program caused a scandal. POWs were supposed to have been heroic or stoic victims, fostering a spirit of defiance and always looking for a way to escape and to fool the German guards. At least, that was the tenor in memoirs, fiction, and historical publications.

French postwar works often portrayed the amorous relations as a “conquest,” making up for the defeat of 1940 and the symbolic emasculation of the captured soldiers. Authors took special delight in the thought of having “cuckolded” German soldiers and officers, and they portrayed German women as all-too-eager accomplices.<sup>5</sup> An early and influential example is the autobiographic novel *Les grandes Vacances 1939–1945* (The Great Holidays, 1939–1945) by French NCO Francis

<sup>3</sup> Musée Royal de l’Armée et d’Histoire Militaire, Evere, Fonds Gillet, boîte 1, #4, “Histoire des prisonniers de guerre 40–45.”

<sup>4</sup> Georges Smets to Mr. Georges Paulus, January 11, 1976, in Musée Royal de l’Armée et d’Histoire Militaire, Brussels, Fonds Hautecler, Farde 34.

<sup>5</sup> Patrice Arnaud, “Die deutsch-französischen Liebesbeziehungen der französischen Zwangsarbeiter und beurlaubten Kriegsgefangenen im ‘Dritten Reich’: vom Mythos des verführerischen Franzosen zur Umkehrung der Geschlechterrolle,” in *Nationalsozialismus und Geschlecht: Zur Politisierung und Ästhetisierung von Körper, “Rasse” und Sexualität im “Dritten Reich” und nach 1945*, ed. Elke Frietsch and Christina Herkommer (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2009), 184–8.

Ambrière, which won the Prix Goncourt of French literature in 1946. Drawing from a rich collection of stories he heard from comrades, Ambrière gleefully tells of French POWs wearing the uniform of a husband serving in the Wehrmacht or SS while carrying on an erotic relationship with the wife, perhaps surprising the husband with a new baby “in whose procreation the husband had no part.” Ambrière described German women as crude and lecherous beings with “the large, heavy breasts that are the default in this race” and who see French POW camps as studs for their primitive desire: “it has to be said that the compliant and dumb sentimentality of the German women, together with their sometimes bestial sensuality, provided the Frenchmen with prey that they did not need to coerce and that most often sought to surrender themselves.”<sup>6</sup> Ambrière reverses Nazi racial arrogance by integrating the encounters of French POWs with German women into a narrative of the more refined French who surpass the Germans in everything except brutality. The French POWs, who demonstrate their superior technical expertise in all jobs and make themselves increasingly indispensable, feel equally revolted by the animalistic vulgarity of German women (he once calls them “sows”) as by their cuisine, which cooks all meat in water.

Ambrière may have appealed to a still hateful French public, including many of his former comrades. Portraying German women as animals was his answer to the Nazi propaganda of 1940, which had depicted the French as a “degenerate” and “negroized” race.<sup>7</sup> It is notable that he consistently depicts German women as the active force in the forbidden relationships. He tells of his own experience bathing in the Rhine River with a few comrades in a sector the guard had allowed them to use. Suddenly, three young German women appeared. Despite the admonishments of the guard, the scantily dressed women smiled at the prisoners and repeatedly swam into “their” sector. After drying off, the three women walked right through the beach area reserved for the prisoners, provoking another confrontation with the guard.<sup>8</sup> From comrades, Ambrière heard many similar stories, for example of a stout waitress who forced a homosexual French POW into her room and into her bed, and of some farm women who selected one prisoner after the other for their farm primarily to exploit them sexually. Experiencing the vivid

<sup>6</sup> “... il faut bien dire que la sentimentalité complaisante et niaise des Allemandes, autant que leur sensualité parfois bestiale, rendait au Français des proies qu’ils n’avaient nul mal à forcer et qui le plus souvent conspiraient d’elles-mêmes à se rendre.” Francis Ambrière, *Les grandes Vacances 1939–1945* (Paris: Les Éditions de la Nouvelle France, 1946), 200.

<sup>7</sup> Raffael Scheck, “La victoire allemande de 1940 comme justification de l’idéologie raciale nazie,” in *La Guerre de 40: Se battre, subir, se souvenir*, ed. Stefan Martens and Steffen Prauser (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Ambrière, *Les grandes Vacances*, 201.

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desire of German women for French men must have been balm for the morale of the prisoners, similar to the frequent requests of German employers for French POWs as workers, but this perspective erases the often very active role of the prisoners.

At least Ambrière acknowledges the forbidden relations. He even considers them to have been extremely widespread and believes that only a small fraction went to trial. He claims that the trials were meant to be less a deterrent for the POWs and the women than a way to reassure German soldier-husbands that the state was watching over the fidelity of their wives or girlfriends while they were serving at the front. Although he points out many collaborators and opportunists among the prisoners, Ambrière weaves the forbidden relationships into an overarching narrative that stresses French resistance and patriotism in captivity, undermining the perception he cynically references in his book title, namely that the time spent in Germany was “the great holidays.”

Although Ambrière insinuates that German employers and guards used the lure of sexual experiences to make POWs work more happily for the German war effort, he recognizes that there were numerous romantic and sincere relationships and that some couples wanted to marry. Despite his demeaning and racist descriptions of German women, he also asks some intriguing questions about their motivation. Did the behavior of German women arise from “an internal revolt against the absurdity and ignominious nature of the Hitler régime? Was this for the women a way to protest in the name of human nature, and to repair with the gift of themselves all the evil of which their race had become guilty?”<sup>9</sup> Ambrière did not provide a definitive answer, but he suggested that at least in some cases this factor might have played a role.

The motivations for the forbidden relationships are hard to trace, and they can be contradictory and ambivalent. Examples of women who felt compassion for the POWs are indeed easy to find, although it is just as easy to identify prisoners feeling compassion for a woman. The relationships ran the gamut from cursory physical encounters to deeply committed love with marriage plans. Every couple negotiated their relationship in their own way, and often in a dynamic process. A seemingly deep love

<sup>9</sup> “Cela répondait-il à quelque révolte intérieure contre l’absurdité et l’ignominie du régime hitlérien? Était-ce pour elles comme une façon de protester au nom de la nature humaine, et de réparer par le don d’elles-mêmes tout ce dont leur race se rendait coupable?” Ambrière, *Les grandes Vacances*, 206–7. Antje Zühl raises a similar question with respect to all foreign laborers on German farms: Antje Zühl, “Zum Verhältnis der deutschen Landbevölkerung gegenüber Zwangsarbeitern und Kriegsgefangenen,” in *Faschismus und Rassismus: Kontroversen um Ideologie und Opfer*, ed. Werner Röhr et al. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1992), 352.

could turn into mudslinging once the partners faced a court hearing and were pressed to explain contradictory statements. An apparently superficial sexual contact could reveal a more sincere and caring dimension when it came to trial. The POWs have simultaneously been accused of collaboration for loving enemy women and praised as resisters for seducing them. The women may have engaged in an act of revolt or defiance, but they may occasionally have exploited their position as free civilians in relations with the prisoners. The distinction is sometimes murky, as suggested by Ambrière's experience with the three bathers.

The POWs who became involved with a German woman were sentenced for "disobedience," which suggested an act of insubordination or revolt. Most of the women meanwhile had to stand trial in special courts, which specialized in the ruthless and quick prosecution of political dissent and treasonous acts. Yet, most couples probably did not think very much about the political implications of their actions. A number of POWs punished by the courts martial, especially in 1941 and 1942, had a track record of being avidly pro-German, and some women tried by the special courts were NSDAP (Nazi Party) members and played an active role in the *NS-Frauenschaft*, the party's organization for women. And yet, their personal acts were political not only because they constituted a serious crime under Nazi law but above all because they challenged Nazi policies designed to preserve "racial purity" and a national solidarity defined by exclusion and resentment of all outsiders.<sup>10</sup>

The task of this book is to explore and explain the forbidden relationships as well as their legal and diplomatic context. It focuses on amorous liaisons between western POWs and women, although there were also forbidden relations between German women and Polish or Soviet POWs and civilian laborers. But these relationships were even more stigmatized by Nazi propaganda than those with western POWs and led to draconic punishment: while the Polish and Soviet POWs were often executed, many of the women involved with them were sent to a concentration camp, in both cases usually without a trial.<sup>11</sup> The book also does not consider the forbidden relations between POWs and German or non-German men that came to trial, with the exception of a short section on homosexual relations. German men could also be sentenced for forbidden contact with a prisoner on other grounds, for example by helping him escape, transporting his letters, or giving him food or cigarettes. The

<sup>10</sup> For a good overview, see Annette F. Timm, *The Politics of Fertility in Twentieth-Century Berlin* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 118–38.

<sup>11</sup> See the section "Other Prisoners" in Chapter 1, "The Prisoners of War and the German Women."

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POW would hardly be punished for this kind of contact except for homosexual acts, which were severely penalized in Nazi Germany. Nazi legislation and propaganda targeted the relations between POWs and German women because the Nazi regime considered them to be a particular danger to the German home front. As a consequence, the thousands of German women and POWs who disregarded the prohibition at great risk brought to light tensions and contradictory reactions in German wartime society. As Georges Smets explained to his outraged comrade after revealing the love relations in the television program: “I am often asked to write my memoirs, but for this chapter alone I could easily write a volume of 300 pages.”<sup>12</sup>

### The Literature

The forbidden relations lie at a crossroads of historiographies that are rarely explored comprehensively and in correspondence with each other. A body of literature focuses on the special courts and on the efforts of the Nazi system to prevent and punish German women’s relations with foreigners, usually POWs as well as forced laborers. Second, there is a rich literature on German military justice, although rarely with a focus on courts martial against POWs. Third, there are many works on POWs, most with a focus on policy, diplomacy, and the treatment of POWs by Nazi Germany, but only a few that address relations of POWs to civilians.<sup>13</sup>

Aside from some generic publications on the Nazi special courts, which usually judged the women involved with prisoners, most of the works on these institutions are fine local studies, but a forbidden relationship with a POW was only one among many offenses that came before them.<sup>14</sup> The primary interest in these works is typically to explore the role of the justice system in political repression and the latitude of the

<sup>12</sup> Georges Smets to Mr. Georges Paulus, January 11, 1976, in Musée Royal de l’Armée et d’Histoire Militaire, Brussels, Fonds Hautecler, Farde 34.

<sup>13</sup> Notable exceptions are the works by Yves Durand (noted below), Antje Zühl (noted above), and Jean Marie d’Hoop: Jean-Marie d’Hoop, “Prisonniers de guerre français témoins de la défaite allemande (1945),” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 38, no. 150 (1988); d’Hoop, “Les prisonniers français et la communauté rurale allemande (1940–1945),” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 147 (1987). See also Edith Petschnigg, *Von der Front aufs Feld. Britische Kriegsgefangene in der Steiermark 1941–1945* (Graz: Verein zur Förderung der Forschung von Folgen nach Konflikten und Kriegen, 2003), and Petschnigg, “‘The Spirit of Comradeship’. Britische Kriegsgefangene in der Steiermark 1941 bis 1945,” in *Kriegsgefangene des Zweiten Weltkrieges: Gefangennahme, Lagerleben, Rückkehr*, ed. Günter Bischof et al. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Gerd Weckbecker, *Zwischen Freispruch und Todesstrafe: Die Rechtsprechung der nationalsozialistischen Sondergerichte Frankfurt/Main und Bromberg* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998).

judges.<sup>15</sup> A few articles deal specifically with trials against women involved with prisoners. Bernd Boll, for example, analyzes several cases from the court of Offenburg (Baden). He focuses on the trials against women but also looks at a few courts martial against the POWs, as far as they are accessible in local archives.<sup>16</sup> There are similar articles by Eckard Colmorgen and Klaus-Detlev Godau-Schüttke and by Iris Siemssen

- <sup>15</sup> Freia Anders, *Straffjustiz im Sudetengau 1938–1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008); Klaus Bästlein, “Zur ‘Rechts’-Praxis des Schleswig-Holsteinischen Sondergerichts 1937–1945,” in *Strafverfolgung und Strafverzicht: Festschrift zum 125-jährigen Bestehen der Staatsanwaltschaft Schleswig-Holstein*, ed. Heribert Ostendorf (Köln: Heymann, 1992); Helmut Beer, *Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus in Nürnberg 1933–1945* (Nürnberg: Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, 1976); Justizbehörde Hamburg, ed., “Von Gewohnheitsverbrechern, Volksschädlingen und Asozialen ...”: *Hamburger Justizurteile im Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1995); Peter Lutz Kalmbach, “Das System der NS-Sondergerichtsbarkeiten,” *Kritische Justiz* 50, no. 2 (2017); Karl-Heinz Keldungs, *Das Duisburger Sondergericht 1942–1945* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998); Angelika Klein, *Individuum und Gemeinschaft in der juristischen Germanistik: die Geschworenengerichte und das “Gesunde Volksempfinden”* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2001); Gertraud Lehmann, “Von der ‘Ehre der deutschen Frau’: Nürnbergerinnen vor dem Sondergericht 1933–1945,” in *Am Anfang war Sigena: Ein Nürnberger Frauengeschichtsbuch*, ed. Nadja Bennewitz and Gaby Franger (Nürnberg: Anthologie ars vivendi, 1999); Michael Löffelsender, *Straffjustiz an der Heimatfront: Die strafrechtliche Verfolgung von Frauen und Jugendlichen im Oberlandesgerichtsbezirk Köln 1939–1945* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Hans-Ulrich Ludewig and Dieter Kuessner, *Es sei also jeder gewarnt: Das Sondergericht Braunschweig 1933–1945* (Braunschweig: Selbstverlag des Braunschweigischen Geschichtsvereins, 2000); Nina Lutz, “Das Sondergericht Nürnberg 1933–1945: Eingespielte Justizmaschinerie der gelenkten Rechtspflege,” in *Justizpalast Nürnberg. Ein Ort der Weltgeschichte wird 100 Jahre: Festschrift zum 100. Jahrestag der feierlichen Eröffnung des Justizpalastes in Nürnberg durch König Ludwig III. am 11. September 1916*, ed. Ewald Behrschmidt (Neustadt an der Aisch: VDS Verlagsdruckerei Schmidt, 2016); Andreas Müller, “Das Sondergericht Graz von 1939 bis 1945” (Magisterarbeit Universität Graz, 2005); Jürgen Sandweg, “Schwabacher vor dem Sondergericht: Der Alltag der Denunziation und die ‘Justiz des gesunden Volksempfindens’,” in *Vergessen und verdrängt? Schwabach 1918–1945*, ed. Sabine Weigand-Karg, Sandra Hoffmann, and Jürgen Sandweg (Schwabach: Stadtmuseum Schwabach, 1997); Bernd Schimmmler, *Recht ohne Gerechtigkeit: Zur Tätigkeit der Berliner Sondergerichte im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Autoren-Verlag, 1984); Hans Wrobel, Henning Maul-Backer, and Ilka Renken, eds., *Straffjustiz im totalen Krieg: Aus den Akten des Sondergerichts Bremen 1940 bis 1945*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Bremen: Bremen Verlags- und Buchhandelsgesellschaft, 1994); Hans Wüllenweber, *Sondergerichte im Dritten Reich: Vergessene Verbrechen der Justiz* (Frankfurt (M): Luchterhand, 1990); Wolf-Dieter Mechler, *Kriegsalltag an der “Heimatfront”: Das Sondergericht Hannover im Einsatz gegen “Rundfunkverbrecher,” “Schwarzschar,” “Volksschädlinge” und andere “Straftäter” 1939 bis 1945* (Hannover: Hahn’sche Buchhandlung, 1997); Gedenkstätte Roter Ochse, ed., “... das gesunde Volksempfinden größtenteils verletzt”: “verbotener Umgang mit Kriegsgefangenen” im Sondergerichtsbezirk Halle (Halle: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Sachsen-Anhalt, Stiftung Gedenkstätten Sachsen-Anhalt, 2009).
- <sup>16</sup> Bernd Boll, “... das gesunde Volksempfinden auf das Größte verletzt’. Die Offenburger Straffjustiz und der ‘verbotene Umgang mit Kriegsgefangenen’ während des Zweiten Weltkrieges,” *Die Ortenau: Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Mittelbaden* 71 (1991).



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on trials at the special courts in Kiel and Altona and by Andreas Heusler on Munich.<sup>17</sup> These studies provide important facts and observations on the courts, but they remain limited to a specific area and usually say little about the POWs.

The literature on the expectations and restrictions for German women in relations with foreigners is also rich and helpful but has remained largely isolated from studies on POWs. The book on German soldiers' wives in both world wars by Birthe Kundrus, for example, provides much detail on the social expectations placed on these women, and her article on forbidden love in Nazi Germany highlights the relations between German women and foreign prisoners and laborers, but both works are not concerned with the prisoners' perspective and their diplomatic representation.<sup>18</sup> Silke Schneider's in-depth study of forbidden contacts between German women and foreign prisoners and laborers is very good on Nazi ideas regarding "sexual treason" or "racial treason," but it focuses only on the trials against women and pursues a broader aim insofar as the book also includes relations with foreign civilian laborers.<sup>19</sup> A fascinating case study by Maria Prieler-Woldan follows the fate of an Austrian mountain farm woman, a widow, sentenced for forbidden relations with three French POWs working on her farm or nearby, but it does not contain much information about the prisoners. Moreover, it is difficult to generalize from this one case.<sup>20</sup>

Cornelie Usborne's article "Female Desire and Male Honor: German Women's Illicit Love Affairs with Prisoners of War during the Second World War" draws from trials against women in front of the special court

<sup>17</sup> Eckard Colmorgen and Klaus-Detlev Godau-Schüttke, "Verbotener Umgang mit Kriegsgefangenen". Frauen vor dem Schleswig-Holsteinischen Sondergericht (1940–1945)," *Demokratische Geschichte: Jahrbuch zur Arbeiterbewegung und Demokratie in Schleswig-Holstein* 9 (1995); Iris Siemssen, "Das Sondergericht und die Nähe: Die Rechtsprechung bei 'verbotenem Umgang mit Kriegsgefangenen' am Beispiel von Fällen aus dem Kreis Plön," in "Standgericht der inneren Front": *Das Sondergericht Altona/Kiel 1932–1945*, ed. Robert Bohn and Uwe Danker (Hamburg: Ergebnisse-Verlag, 1998); Andreas Heusler, "Strafbestand' Liebe: Verbotene Kontakte zwischen Münchnerinnen und ausländischen Kriegsgefangenen," in *Zwischen den Fronten. Münchner Frauen in Krieg und Frieden 1900–1950*, ed. Sybille Krafft (Munich: Buchendorfer Verlag, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Birthe Kundrus, *Kriegerfrauen: Familienpolitik und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg: Christians, 1995), and Kundrus, "Forbidden Company: Romantic Relationships between Germans and Foreigners, 1939 to 1945," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (2002).

<sup>19</sup> Silke Schneider, *Verbotener Umgang: Ausländer und Deutsche im Nationalsozialismus. Diskurse um Sexualität, Moral, Wissen und Strafe* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Maria Prieler-Woldan, *Das Selbstverständliche tun: Die Salzburger Bäuerin Maria Etzer und ihr verbotener Einsatz für Fremde im Nationalsozialismus* (Innsbruck, Vienna, Bozen: StudienVerlag, 2018).



in Munich. Usborne, who is particularly interested in the history of emotions, highlights the active role of many women in these forbidden relationships, suggesting that a shift in female sexual behavior and expectations occurred in wartime Germany. With reference to findings of Dagmar Herzog, she stresses the destructive effects of the war on traditional constraints and communal controls and the Janus-faced Nazi approach to sexuality, with conservative and prudish messages mixing with more progressive narratives of sexual fulfillment in a popular culture that raised corresponding expectations.<sup>21</sup> Usborne provides good observations of the behavior and the motivations of German women but does not use the files of the prisoners involved with them, which are often an enlightening corrective to the trial records of the women. Drawing from literature that does not properly distinguish between western POWs and civilian laborers (the prohibition applied only to the former), she concludes that the punishment of POWs, if they were punished at all, was generally lenient.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, she takes a critical approach toward the active role of the women, suggesting that these women sometimes were complicit in Nazi racism and even took advantage of it by engaging in erotic relations with men in unfreedom whose punishment could be savage, especially in the case of Poles and Soviet POWs.<sup>23</sup> But the punishment for the women was harsh, too, and the power relation between German women and western POWs, who had some rights and privileges, was highly dynamic and not one-sided. Some POWs, for example by hiding in a woman's apartment after an escape, also brought particularly severe punishments upon the women.<sup>24</sup>

Older works on German military justice are dominated by the controversy regarding the degree of Nazification of military justice and its role in ensuring discipline and obedience within the German armed forces (*Wehrmacht*) to the last days of the Third Reich. The important study by Manfred Messerschmidt, which argues that the military justice system

<sup>21</sup> Cornelia Usborne, "Female Sexual Desire and Male Honor: German Women's Illicit Love Affairs with Prisoners of War during the Second World War," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 26, no. 3 (2017): 476–7 and 482–4; see also Dagmar Herzog, "Introduction: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century," in *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5. For an exaggerated insistence on Nazi prudishness and condemnation of sexual pleasure, see Stefan Maiwald and Gerd Mischler, *Sexualität unter dem Hakenkreuz: Manipulation und Vernichtung der Intimsphäre im NS-Staat* (Hamburg and Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1999), for example 59–60, 103.

<sup>22</sup> Usborne, "Female Sexual Desire and Male Honor," 460–1, especially note 19.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 486–7.

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter 3 on "The Relations," especially the section "Gender Dynamics."

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was strongly Nazified, mentions courts martial against POWs only in passing.<sup>25</sup> More recently, Peter Lutz Kalmbach, who has also published on civilian courts, has taken a broader perspective by interpreting military justice in the context of Nazi preparations for total war, which required utmost discipline both on the war and home front. Kalmbach addresses the courts martial against POWs involved with German women and reveals that Hitler personally took interest in the matter and pushed for a faster sentencing of the POWs in 1943, which was, however, difficult to achieve because of the delays required by the 1929 Geneva Convention on POWs and the often intricate correlation between the courts martial and the special courts trying the women.<sup>26</sup> David Raub Snyder's study *Sex Crimes under the Wehrmacht* deals mostly with trials against German soldiers and argues that military utility and pragmatism, more than ideology, were the guiding criteria of Nazi military justice, which reacted with surprising leniency in many cases of German soldiers having sex with racially stigmatized groups. Snyder suggests that the military tribunals were more lenient and less ideological than civilian courts in this matter, but this impression does not agree with my findings on courts martial against POWs. These cases, however, are outside the scope of Snyder's book, which focuses on sex crimes (not consensual relations) by German soldiers.<sup>27</sup> Birgit Beck's study of the Wehrmacht and sexual violence includes a section on forbidden relations between German women and foreign men as a comparative angle to the trials against German soldiers accused of sex crimes. Like Kundrus and Schneider, Beck stresses the double morality of German courts, which harshly punished undesirable relations when German women were involved but was more lenient with Wehrmacht soldiers abroad. She demonstrates how the notion of "sexual honor" was also defined much more restrictively with respect to German women than to non-German women attacked by German soldiers – with important distinctions between western and eastern Europeans. Beck highlights the fact that the judges adjudicating sex crimes of German soldiers treated the soldiers' "sexual

<sup>25</sup> Manfred Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmachtjustiz 1933–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005), 312 and 319.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Lutz Kalmbach, *Wehrmachtjustiz* (Berlin: Metropol-Verlag, 2012), 150–3. See also Kalmbach, "Schutz der geistigen Wehrkraft": NS-Strafrechtsreformen für den 'totalen Krieg', *Juristenzeitung* 17 (2015); Kalmbach, "The German Courts-Martial and Their Cooperation with the Police Organizations during the World War II," *Journal on European History of Law* 8, no. 1 (2017); Kalmbach, "Das System der NS-Sondergerichtsbarkeiten."

<sup>27</sup> David Raub Snyder, *Sex Crimes under the Wehrmacht* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 190–200.