



# SUBMERGED

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# ON THE SURFACE

THE NOT-SO-HIDDEN JEWS OF NAZI BERLIN

1941-1945

RICHARD N. LUTJENS, JR.

SUBMERGED



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*The Not-So-Hidden Jews of Nazi Berlin,*  
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For my parents





# CONTENTS

List of Figures and Tables	viii
Acknowledgments	x
Notes on Names and Terms	xii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. Submerging	29
Chapter 2. Surviving	75
Chapter 3. Living	124
Chapter 4. Surfacing	163
Epilogue	197
Appendix. The Demographics of Submerging in Nazi Berlin	209
Bibliography	225
Index	238

# FIGURES AND TABLES

## FIGURES

1.1. Cäcilie Ott	42
1.2. Rates of Submerging, October 1941–Qrt. 1, 1943	43
1.3. Numbers of Submerging and Suicide, 1941–March 1943	45
1.4. Comparative Numbers of Suicides and People Submerging (1941–1943)	45
1.5. Charlotte Bodlaender	48
1.6. Siegmund Weltlinger	59
1.7. Margarete Weltlinger	59
1.8. Herta Fuß	64
2.1. Erich Hopp	83
2.2. “Jewish Congress,” <i>Der Stürmer</i> , no. 34 (July 1934)	87
2.3. OKW Official Identity Card of Rudolf Kopp Used by Konrad Friedländer	92
2.4. Ursel Finke	105
2.5. Walter Riesenfeld with Grete Hoffmann and Elisabeth Fritz, Christmas, 1943	115
3.1. The U-boat Eugen F.	126
3.2. Susanne Hesse	131
3.3. Eugenie Nase	134
4.1. Berliners Storm Public Bunker in Humboldtthain Park in the Wedding District, 1943	169

<b>4.2.</b> A Scene from the Destroyed Mitte District, ca. 1945	173
<b>4.3. and 4.4.</b> Scenes of Destruction: The Soviets Battle through the City	180
<b>4.5.</b> Dr. Kurt Michaelis	188
<b>A.1.</b> Date of Submerging	213
<b>A.2.</b> Number of Jews Deported from Berlin, March–December 1943	215
<b>A.3.</b> Age and Gender Distribution of Berlin’s Jewish Population in 1939 (by percent)	217
<b>A.4.</b> Age Distribution of Men and Women in Hiding Who Survived (by percent)	218

**TABLE**

<b>A.1.</b> Size of Family Groups Who Submerged Together and Survived	219
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## NOTES ON NAMES AND TERMS

One of this book's primary goals is to reclaim from the magnitude of witnesses and victims of the Holocaust the individual voices of Berlin's seventeen hundred Jews who survived by living a submerged life in and around the city. I can think of no better way to do this than to use the full names of the survivors. Names are the doorway to our human identity; they exert tremendous power over us. They are our introduction to others. Perhaps for these reasons, some of the archives I visited for my research have in place strict privacy rules governing the publication of names. The reader therefore will notice that I sometimes use full names and sometimes simply use the first name and last initial.

As for spelling, I use the name of the survivor at the time they were in hiding, even if those names changed after the war due to marriage or emigration. Thus, I discuss the hiding experiences of Annelies B., even though I cite her as Annelies H., because she was still known as Annelies B. at the time she was in hiding. Some confusion might arise in one other instance. In 2008, I was fortunate enough to be able to interview Mrs. Ruth Gumpel née Arndt. In my study, I refer to her as Ruth Arndt. However, I cite her as Ruth Gumpel when referring to our interview, and I abbreviate her name as Ruth G. when citing the interview she gave to the Fortunoff Archives.

Concerning the use of place names: Jews hiding in Berlin spoke German, and in their testimonies, they use German place names. As they rarely left Germany, the spelling of place names is a bit confusing in only one instance. Those individuals writing immediately after the war refer to the Łódź ghetto by its German name: Litzmannstadt. I do not see this as a problem. They called the ghetto Litzmannstadt, and this is their history. I only use the name Łódź in one instance, and that is from a quotation in a memoir written several decades after the war. Otherwise, I keep to the original survivor terminology.

One final note, and of critical importance for this book, is how I refer to Jews who hid in and around the city. As will become evident, hiding as

an act of evasion during the Holocaust works as a category of analysis, but the verb “to hide” is a largely deceptive and inaccurate term for what Jews in the city did to survive. This is why they do not use the noun “the hidden” to describe themselves; indeed, they use the verb and its adjectival and noun forms quite seldom. Instead, they employ their own language to describe themselves and what they did. In an effort to pay full justice to their experiences in the city, this book will use their language throughout. However, due to the sheer diversity of the terms employed by survivors, and the fact that this study makes use of them all, the following is a list to help the reader navigate:

*auftauchen* (v.)—to surface; to emerge; colloquially, to bob up. Often used by survivors to describe the act of shedding their false identities and places of refuge at the end of the war. The term, especially the colloquial definition, can also apply to those individuals who were able on occasion to move among the non-Jewish population during the war, even if they might have to dive again after a while.

*flitzen* (v.)—to dash; to dart; colloquially, to hotfoot it.

*Geflitzte(r)* (n.)—dasher; darter; someone who makes a run for it or is on the move with the specific purpose of not being caught or seen.

*illegal* (adj.); *Illegalen* (n. pl.)—illegal; illegals. A term used by both surviving Jews and the Soviet occupation authorities in postwar Berlin, referring to Jews who survived submerged to differentiate them from Jews who survived the camps. Phrased on restitution applications as *illegal gelebt* (lived illegally).

*tarnen* (v.)—to camouflage; most often used in the sense of concealing one’s Jewish identity, although particular clothing to disguise oneself or alterations to one’s physical appearance also were employed.

*tauchen* (v.)—to dive. See below; diving evokes similar imagery as submerging, which uses the same root verb. *Tauchen*, however, indicates a particular act of evasion at a particular moment that divers repeated again and again over the course of their time evading capture, in order to live submerged.

*Taucher* (n.)—diver(s).

*U-Boot* (n.)—U-boat, or submarine. A Berlin colloquialism, found only elsewhere among hidden Jews in Vienna. The term is strongly evocative of the acts of *untertauchen* and *tauchen*. A common moniker to describe the city’s submerged Jews.

*untertauchen* (v.)—to submerge. Within the context of deportation, the act of fleeing arrest and living either physically concealed, under a false identity, or in a state of moving around continuously to avoid denunciation. It also implies an act of some duration, i.e., living submerged.

*verstecken/verbergen* (v.)—to hide. In the case of Berlin, used almost exclusively for particular acts of physical concealment. Sometimes used as an adverb (i.e., lived hidden). Rarely used as a noun (i.e., the hidden).



# INTRODUCTION



Das war mein Kampf.  
—Ludwig Leopold, a Berlin U-boat<sup>1</sup>

On 4 February 1943, with deportation to Auschwitz and near certain death there looming, fifty-two-year-old Dr. Charlotte Bamberg vanished, submerging into the shadows of Nazi Berlin and diving into an extraordinary twenty-seven-month odyssey of survival. Several months after her escape from the “Gestapo’s murderous grasp,” Bamberg found herself, of all places, in the home of the German countess Maria von Maltzan, a vocal opponent of the Nazi regime who had already taken in two other Jews who, like Bamberg, had fled their deportation. The home was crowded, to be sure, for Maltzan was a veterinarian and an ardent lover of animals, and in addition to the people in the home, she had five Scottish Terriers, two cats, and a number of birds. She also worked three days a week at an animal shelter, and on those particular days, Maltzan enjoyed being greeted at the bus stop at the end of the day by her pets. Thus, the task fell to Bamberg to walk the five dogs to the bus station to greet the countess and also to bring one of the Persian cats for whom the countess had bought a leash. One day, on the way to the bus stop, one of the terriers lunged for the cat. Bamberg began to scream as the cat, meowing loudly, scratched and climbed its way on top her head while the dogs circled her, barking furiously. All along the street, window after window opened to afford the curious neighbors a better glimpse of this truly ridiculous spectacle. Collecting herself, Bamberg calmed the terriers, took the cat home, and then, with the five dogs still in tow, made her way to the bus station.

As she wryly noted years later, “This scene seemed ever so fitting for a submerged person.”<sup>2</sup>

Charlotte Bamberg was one of approximately 6,500 Berlin Jews who, between 1941 and 1945, attempted to escape the Nazis by going into what is usually referred to as “hiding,” and she was one of some 1,700 of them who managed to survive in this manner.<sup>3</sup> Yet survivors seldom use the verb “to hide” (*verstecken*) to describe how they navigated and survived the final, murderous years of Nazi rule—and usually then only in cases of physical concealment—and they certainly do not describe themselves as the hidden. Rather, like Bamberg, they referred to themselves and were referred to by others by a variety of colorful monikers, all of which this book will employ. Some called themselves “illegals,” as did the postwar Berlin bureaucratic apparatus;<sup>4</sup> others used the term *Geflitzte* (coming from the German verb to dart, dash, or hotfoot it, and perhaps best translated in this case as the “dashers”). Still others talk about living camouflaged (*getarnt*). Many, however, went by the terms *U-Boot* (submarine or U-boat) or *Taucher* (diver), and, very true to the city’s reputation for wry humor, they referred to the act of hiding as “diving” or “submerging.”<sup>5</sup> Nor are these terms simply colloquial expressions for hiding. Rather, they express a particular reality and ways of existing and surviving in Nazi Berlin that *were not* hiding, at least, not as we have come to think of the act. Indeed, nothing delineates the experiences of Berlin’s divers from standard assumptions of hiding more than the story of Anne Frank and her attic mates, who still serve as the paradigm of the hiding experience.<sup>6</sup> As opposed to the static and unvarying attic experience of the Franks, the Van Pelses, and Fritz Pfeffer, however, Charlotte Bamberg’s experiences of evading deportation were energetic, complex, and multivalent. In fact, this Berlin U-boat experience—itsself composed of hundreds of individual experiences—is so markedly at odds with what we call “hiding” that the concept of hiding will not suffice for understanding the intricate processes of flight and survival—and the resultant memories—that define the experiences of those Berlin Jews who decided to submerge. Bamberg’s story therefore ultimately is indicative of a much more accurate portrayal of so-called “hiding” in the city, one in which the word “hiding” is, at best, misleading and, at worst, woefully inaccurate.<sup>7</sup> And although Bamberg was almost certainly the only fugitive Jew in the city to have to face down five Scottish Terriers and a Persian cat while evading the Gestapo and its informants, her story is unique only in the particulars. When examined together with hundreds of other survivor testimonies from the city, her experience cuts straight to the heart of the U-boat experience, an experience that for each individual, according one survivor, was “different, but the same.”<sup>8</sup>

What follows is a history of Berlin's submerged Jews. Its purpose is to present more than just the diverse experiences of Berlin's U-boats, divers, dashers, and camouflaged Jews who survived the Holocaust submerged in and around the city. More importantly, its aim is also to construct a history of those experiences by examining the seemingly unique stories of the survivors and asking what connects them, what, despite their tremendous diversity, they all have in common. Three main arguments underpin this book, which is itself based on an examination of over four hundred survivor testimonies (i.e., approximately 25 percent of all Berlin survivors in hiding) as well as data pertaining to the age and gender of over one thousand survivors (approximately 63 percent of all survivors).<sup>9</sup> The appendix found at the end of the book provides the reader with a thorough discussion of the data I have compiled and analyzed to support the various statistical claims made in this study, specifically the number of Jews who submerged, when they submerged, and how many survived. The appendix also examines arrest rates in the city and the gender and age of Berlin's submerged Jews.

First, as already evidenced by the language of survivors such as Bamberg, Jews in Berlin did not hide in the way that the word implies (i.e., in the sense of keeping out of sight and physically concealing oneself for long stretches of time). Significantly, the survivors themselves employ a variety of phrases and expressions to describe their particular, individual experiences, experiences that destabilize standard notions of what hiding means. This is due to the fact that Jews in Nazi Berlin rarely hid in the usual sense of the word. Indeed, the title of Charlotte Bamberg's unpublished testimony is "Untergetaucht—An der Oberfläche—1941/1945" ("Submerged—On the Surface—1941/1945"), which serves as the inspiration for this book's title and suggests a surprisingly public illegal existence.<sup>10</sup> If anything, Jews who attempted to evade arrest and deportation in and around Berlin during the final years of the Third Reich focused more on concealing their Jewish identity than on physical concealment. Second, surviving submerged in the city was both an individual and individualistic act, and it is remembered by survivors as such, both implicitly and explicitly. In part, this resulted from a relatively high degree of mobility and agency, central features of submerged life and often essential for survival. Berlin's divers frequently relied on their own ingenuity, resourcefulness, and knowledge of German society to navigate the dangers of Nazi Berlin, as numerous survivor accounts can corroborate; in this sense, submerged life was individual. However, they also took advantage of the individual and solitary nature of submerged life to act in ways that helped to ensure their own survival while simultaneously reaffirming their own unique identities. In this sense, hiding was individualistic.

Proceeding from these two arguments is this book's third argument and the overall basis for its structure: most unusually, especially when working with Holocaust survivor testimony, Berlin's divers have no collective memory. Traditionally, one of the primary challenges for historians working with survivor memory (usually, camp and ghetto survivor testimony) is to sift through collective memory to retrieve individual voices, personal experiences, and historical fact. In the case of Berlin's submerged Jews, the opposite is true. The dynamic and individual nature of hiding resulted in a staggering number of variables dictating not only how Berlin's dashers and divers survived but also how they experienced that survival. Of course, the context of surviving in and around the capital of the Third Reich means that survivor accounts often share a striking number of similarities, but the lack of a collective memory has prevented survivors from connecting these similarities. This absence of a cohesive "hiding narrative" has put me in an unusual and exciting position. The nature of submerged life in Berlin has prompted me to work against the grain, and this study turns conventional methodology on its head. Rather than starting with the collective to reach the individuals, it starts with the individuals and their many competing voices to establish a cohesive, but not collective, historical narrative of survival and submerged life in Nazi Berlin.

### **Hiding in Berlin—A Misnomer?**

Hiding as a category of analysis in the Holocaust is a small, albeit growing, field, and studies of hiding in Germany are no exception to this trend.<sup>11</sup> It is also a highly fragmented field, due to the nature of the act. The ghettos and camps brought together Jews from across Europe, regardless of nationality, class, gender, or relationship to Judaism, and the visibility of these sites of concentration and destruction have allowed historians to examine them head on. This did not occur with hiding. Although, certainly, cases exist of Jews from one area of Europe hiding in another area, hiding remained, for the most part, nation specific, indeed, location specific. Moreover, due to the small amount of literature in the field specifically focused on hiding, as well as the nature of the word itself, the idea of hiding still conjures up images of physical concealment and immobility in basements, attics, hay lofts, etc., even though scholarship is well aware that Jews survived in "hiding" in an astonishing variety of locations through an equally noteworthy number of tactics. Still, we use the term "hiding." The result, understandably, is that the word "hiding" ends up serving a primarily rhetorical purpose, allowing scholars of the Holocaust to group together disparate experiences under a single concep-

tual framework. As an expedient, this approach certainly works, as the term is useful for situating and collectivizing the experiences of a diverse host of individuals scattered throughout Europe in much the same way that the ghettos and camps, which physically situated and collectivized Jews, also serve as sites of analysis. Yet experiences of hiding, based as they are on quite particular national, regional, and local differences (as well as the personality of the individual hiding), are so diverse that hiding as a category of analysis seems at once too broad and too specific to do the topic justice when focusing on a particular region, such as, in the case of this book, Berlin.

As mentioned above, Jews who survived in “hiding” in Berlin have employed a variety of terms to identify themselves. These terms of identification, however, are not simply a linguistic flourish. Rather, they are reflective of a tremendous diversity of experience. Indeed, whatever term is used by survivors, especially when read within the context of their testimonies, not a single one evokes traditional conceptions of hiding, physical concealment, silence, isolation, or immobility. Nor is current literature on hiding in Germany ignorant of the dynamic imagery that the language of the survivors evokes. Marion Kaplan explains: “‘Hiding’ could mean ducking out of sight for the duration of the war or removing the yellow star and assuming an ‘Aryan’ identity, with or without papers. Jews became fugitives, ‘submerging’ or ‘diving’ into the underground, to avoid detection by the Nazis.”<sup>12</sup> Other scholars have chosen to differentiate between “hiding and open hiding,” the latter phrase meant to suggest those who lived under a false identity among non-Jews.<sup>13</sup> Certainly, some Jews in Berlin spent periods of time physically hiding in one place (a few even spent the entire war in one location), and in those instances, survivors use the verbs *verstecken* (to hide) and *verbergen* (to conceal). However, such complete immobility was an exception to the rule and was usually of short duration, as most survivor accounts from the city confirm. Jews moved around frequently, interacted with non-Jews, and participated in securing their own survival. In short, they did not physically hide in the way that both the word itself and our understanding of hiding during the Holocaust dictate they should have. This begs an important question: should the word “hide” figure at all prominently in discussions of U-boat survival in the capital of Nazi Germany?

Although problematic, the term “hiding” ultimately still provides a useful conceptual framework within which to operate, and this study will make use of the term now and again. As a category of Jewish response to the Holocaust, hiding has become too fixed in our minds to depart from it entirely. Moreover, relying solely on the rich language of Berlin’s submerged Jews to structure this study has the potential to alienate further

their experiences from the broader current of Holocaust history, when hiding in Berlin, indeed throughout Europe, should be integrated more fully into that history. In addition, the act of hiding in Berlin has multiple—and often quite personal—facets and means more than physical concealment. Therefore, the problem lies not in the term hiding per se. Rather, the problem lies in an uncritical adoption of the term and in a near total lack of contextualization, which render hiding almost useless as an informative category of analysis. However, situating hiding in Berlin and employing the specific terminology used by the city's Jews to qualify their experiences avoids generalizations and highlights a more meaningful, complex, and location-specific definition of the word hiding. Indeed, whether examining hiding in Berlin, greater Germany, or throughout Europe, historians need to engage in a careful and close consideration of the terms used by survivors and ask what those terms say about the nature of the act. Without such a close reading, a more general, pan-European narrative of hiding during the Holocaust threatens to overpower the highly localized nature of the act of evasion and to reinforce preconceived and often erroneous notions about daily life in “hiding.”

### **The U-boat as Individual and Individualist and the Lack of a Collective Memory**

The fact that hiding was an individual act stems largely from the demands of the act and the circumstances of surviving in and around the capital of Nazi Germany. Although a significant number of the survivors examined for this study (over 40 percent) made the decision to go into hiding in consultation with family members, most could not stay together as a group.<sup>14</sup> Logistics such as the size of the hiding place, the need to be on the move constantly, and the threat of denunciation required that people often act spontaneously and with little or no consultation with others. This does not mean that the city's U-boats had no contact with one another; on the contrary, they were well aware of one another's presence. However, many of the important decisions taken to ensure survival, from procuring food and shelter to finding work, were made individually or in consultation with only a few other people.<sup>15</sup> As such, in their postwar accounts, survivors do not claim an experience greater than their own. At every turn in my research for this book, I was struck by how resistant these memories have remained to outside discourses and collective memory.<sup>16</sup> This resistance is almost certainly the product of the individual nature of hiding, on the one hand, and the stark differences between the experiences of Jewish camp inmates and those of the U-boats, on the other.

This stands in marked contrast to the immense influence that collective memory has exerted on camp survivor testimony.<sup>17</sup> In part a postwar phenomenon, collective memory also was the result of National Socialist extermination policies that reduced life to its most basic and inhuman form. The collective camp experience was the result of the forced subordination of the individual and most avenues of self-expression to the basic needs of survival and the near total deprivation of any real agency among the camp inmates. Although many camp survivors attempted to maintain some of their individual humanity, the exigencies of survival and the camp guards' relentless dehumanization of the inmates precluded any semblance of normality or the pursuit of avenues of self-expression. Conditions and experiences in the camps varied, but when the war ended and survivors began to bear witness, existence in the camps appeared to have been experienced almost uniformly. The sense of a collective experience developed, reinforced in the subsequent decades by scholarly approaches to "Jewry as a whole" during the Holocaust.<sup>18</sup> The result is that "almost all [camp] survivors say 'we' rather than 'I.'"<sup>19</sup> In contrast, there is no unified, collectively remembered experience of hiding in Berlin—nor could there possibly be one. As a result of the individual nature of hiding, the ways the U-boats remembered and recorded their time submerged defy a single experience akin to that formed in the camps. Two people with very similar experiences while living illegally in the city might interpret the event in different ways. Consequently, central to understanding survivor memories of submerged life in Berlin is the fact that the survivors almost never say "we" unless they are discussing a specific moment that they shared with others. Indeed, regardless of the nature of the account (i.e., restitution claims, postwar interviews, or personal memoirs), Berlin's surviving divers and dashers rarely speak for others.

Instead, what becomes evident through a close examination of survivor testimony is that the need for speedy adaptation, creative thinking, and problem solving in a world stuck between the ghettos and camps, on the one side, and the world of German civilian life in wartime Berlin, on the other, resulted in surprising degrees of personal agency among the city's divers, which, in turn, contributed to their survival. Such agency was not a constant, to be sure, among the U-boats. Nor was it experienced to the same degree by all. And, of course, that agency was highly circumscribed by the very real dangers of hiding. However, the unsettled and dangerous nature of hiding in Nazi Berlin, in forcing Jews to move around, frequently brought them into situations where their decisions mattered in determining not only whether they managed to evade capture but also, and of critical importance for their memories of submerged life, what the quality of their experiences was. This constant, forced interaction with

non-Jews and the city in wartime forced Berlin's illegal Jews to learn how to take advantage of the city and German society in ways usually considered off-limits for them during this time. Moreover, these interactions provided many of the U-boats with opportunities to act in ways that reaffirmed their individual identity, if only intermittently. Indeed, when the opportunity arose for Jews to be proactive, they took the initiative. In this sense, diving in Berlin was not merely an individual act; it was also an individualistic act, one that successfully rejected the dehumanization and destruction of the individual so central to experiences in the camps.

### Surviving Submerged in Berlin—Literature and Testimony

Nearly seventy-five years have passed since the first accounts of Berlin's Jewish divers appeared. They comprise a motley collection: published and unpublished, written and oral, autobiographical as well as biographical, ranging in date from 1945 to 2015. Indeed, this study is highly indebted to the fact that the U-boats were never entirely forgotten in the city. Their stories received at least some public attention as early as the late 1940s.<sup>20</sup> Between 1956 and 1966, the West Berlin senate honored over seven hundred non-Jews for the indispensable aid they provided to the U-boats.<sup>21</sup> In 1982, the reporter Leonard Gross published a journalistic account of the experiences of several Jews in hiding in *The Last Jews in Berlin*.<sup>22</sup> More recent attention to Berlin Jewish life during the 1930s and 1940s has resulted in a small but growing amount of literature on Jews in hiding in the city, the history of the city's Jewish Hospital, the history of Jewish informants working for the Gestapo, and a number of personal memoirs.<sup>23</sup> The Gedenkstätte Stille Helden, a memorial and educational center dedicated to honoring the U-boats and their non-Jewish helpers, also is an invaluable educational resource and a testament to the city's efforts to remember its Jewish history.<sup>24</sup> Yet despite the relatively large amount of attention paid by scholars to hiding in Berlin and Germany, more generally, there often remains an unfortunate tendency for individual accounts of hiding to form the crux of analysis; indeed, biographical and autobiographical accounts still tend to dominate. In these accounts, one person's story is followed from beginning to end, and that particular individual's story is portrayed either as representative of a certain facet of hiding or else as representative of the general experience. While these accounts of and by particular individuals have much to offer, especially in a subfield of Holocaust history as new as hiding, a sustained analysis linking these varied individuals to a broader, shared history often is missing, thereby obscuring the commonalities of the U-boat experience.



In this study, the reader will encounter four key types of survivor testimony: published memoirs; unpublished written accounts collected by the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung at Berlin's Technical University, many of which were originally collected by the Wiener Library in London and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem; interviews conducted by the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University; and, of critical importance, postwar restitution claims in Berlin to the Head Commission for the "Victims of Fascism" (OdF). This study aims to use these sources to portray the experience of hiding in Berlin within a framework of historical accuracy.<sup>25</sup> Literature on the advent, evolution, and purpose of survivor testimony has demonstrated the limits as well as possibilities associated with relying on such accounts.<sup>26</sup> Significant hurdles are the context in which survivors provided their testimony, factual accuracy, and the inevitable impact of Holocaust-survivor collective memory. Although this study has had to grapple with these challenges, I was surprised to find that analysis of U-boat testimony did not always reflect these difficulties to the extent I had expected. Indeed, these three problems associated with survivor testimony were either less severe or else expressed in markedly different ways than literature on survivor memory suggests.

Critical to reading the testimonies of Berlin's submerged Jews is recognizing that these are not Holocaust camp testimonies and should not be read as such; hiding is part of Holocaust history, certainly, but that history is multifaceted, and as the field continues to diversify, frameworks for analysis need to adapt to the particularities of the event(s) in question. Even still, with respect to hiding, there has been the tendency to analyze the potential and limitations of survivor testimony through the lens of camp survivors and marginalize or ignore testimonies that fall outside of this rubric.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in her study *The Era of the Witness*, Annette Wieviorka rightly warns that "testimonies, particularly when they are produced as part of a larger cultural movement, express the discourse or discourses valued by society at the moment the witnesses tell their stories as much as they render an individual experience."<sup>28</sup> She argues that these discourses inevitably led individual Holocaust survivors to participate in the formation of a collective memory. As a result, Jewish witnesses were drawn into an inescapable circle in which their memories and experiences were subordinated to social, cultural, and political aims. She also argues that despite the tremendous value of survivor testimony, historians should not "look . . . for what they know is not to be found—clarification of precise events, places, dates, and numbers, which are wrong with the regularity of a metronome . . ."<sup>29</sup> Although Wieviorka is correct, scholars examining hiding should not assume that the same analytical pitfalls that apply to reading or listening to camp-survivor testimony can be neatly

applied to reading hiding-survivor testimony, because it unintentionally implies that time for Jews in hiding functioned as it did for those in the camps. In the camps, days blended into one another, and the horror and depravity found there, coupled with the powerful influence of postwar collective memory, blurred chronology and the experience of specific events. However, within Berlin, Jews lived in a world regulated by time. They listened to the radio, read newspapers, and were aware of the progress of the war, all of which had a direct bearing on their decision-making. In addition, the vast historical literature on Berlin during this period has allowed this author to corroborate survivor claims against established empirical data on the city.

As such, although this study's various primary source materials reflect broader issues confronting all historians working with survivor testimony, U-boat accounts present their own particular challenges. Published memoirs, for example, although enlightening and—quite frequently—verifiable through government documents and other survivor accounts, can come across as too singular and too misleading about the overall nature of hiding. As individuals writing about their own highly personal experiences, their memoirs often strike a particular tone: one of fear and loss and suffering, to be sure, but also often one of heroism, of individual will and agency in the face of overwhelming odds, of unwavering humanity in the face of bestial cruelty. They speak to the human desire for hope. Holding out the implicit promise of drawing the reader into “solidarity” with the survivor, memoirs of hiding often are motivated by the needs of the society receiving the message.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the act of writing itself allows the author to choose carefully how they want people to interpret and view their memories of hiding.<sup>31</sup> Many titles are designed to excite and inspire, for example: Gad Beck's *Underground Life: Memoirs of a Gay Jew in Nazi Berlin*; Cioma Schönhaus's *The Forger: An Extraordinary Story of Survival in Wartime Berlin*; and Larry Orbach and Vivien Orbach-Smith's *Soaring Underground: A Young Fugitive's Life in Nazi Berlin*.<sup>32</sup> The result of these and other memoirs leaves the reader with the impression that experiences of hiding are singularly unique when, in reality, they are part of a much broader and more shared experience of hiding in the city.

Unpublished accounts, also incredibly informative, vary in length, style, and purpose, and they are also shaped by temporal distance from the actual event. The Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung at Berlin's Technische Universität, in particular, has collected hundreds of published and unpublished eyewitness accounts from Jewish survivors. These documents span seven decades and represent an incredibly diverse array of voices writing at different times and for different reasons. Only through careful attempts to corroborate one testimony by analyzing it against historical

documentation and other testimonies is it possible to document with reasonable certainty the claims made in these accounts. The Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies is yet another valuable resource, but not without its limitations. Created “to allow the survivor to speak,” the archive collects testimonies that function as a form of psychological and emotional catharsis.<sup>33</sup> As Lawrence Langer notes, oral testimony cuts through “literary artifice” and allows what he calls the “impromptu self” to shine through and provide insight into the conflict between the present self and the past self.<sup>34</sup> Although useful for the psychological and emotional insights that they provide, these interviews were conducted several decades after the war; factual accuracy sometimes is lacking and is not the primary goal of the project. In addition, interviewers for this project at times posed leading questions to survivors and occasionally projected their own, ill-informed understanding of hiding onto the survivors.<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, factual accuracy of survivor testimony remains an issue, but in the course of my research, although I have confronted misremembered dates and inaccurate identification of names, I still have mustered together a large enough collection of survivor accounts to verify survivor claims whenever possible.<sup>36</sup>

Of all the survivor-testimony sources employed in this study, by far the most fruitful—if also the most challenging—is the collection of applications to the Head Commission for the “Victims of Fascism” (OdF), an organization sanctioned by the Soviet military government and established in May 1945 to coordinate aid and support for German victims of the Third Reich.<sup>37</sup> OdF recognition carried with it preferential rations and access to housing and was a necessity for the former illegals, many of whom were sick, homeless, and impoverished. Because the OdF initially was created for political victims of Nazism, the authorities at first rejected a number of the earliest Jewish applicants. Reasons for rejection, such as the following, were not uncommon for early applications submitted by Jews: “Only a short time as a Jew in the camp. No antifascist activity. Rejected.”<sup>38</sup> After some debate, however, in September 1945, OdF officials created a subcategory for Jews: *Opfer der Nürnberger Gesetze* (Victims of the Nuremberg Laws).<sup>39</sup>

The structure of survivor testimonies submitted to the OdF reflects the demands of the application process as well as the more privileged status accorded to political opponents of Nazism. OdF applications asked for an individual’s name, birthdate and place of birth, current address, and address in 1933. They also asked for the applicant’s religion, whether one had worn the Star of David, whether one had been in a camp, whether one had engaged in antifascist activity, whether one had lived illegally (which was the term used by the OdF to mean submerged) and, if so,

for how long. They inquired into the names of organizations or political parties in which one had been active before 1933, veteran status, NSDAP party affiliation, whether one had been arrested or charged by Nazi authorities, and a host of other questions designed to assess the character and background of the individual claiming to be a “Victim of Fascism.” Applicants also submitted a résumé (*Lebenslauf*) along with three references to vouch for the veracity of their claims, and every claim was vetted. Although résumés submitted to the OdF are not free of error, the requirements for recognition as a Victim of Fascism strongly mitigate the dangers of widespread misremembering among survivors.

Almost all OdF *Lebensläufe* follow a similar format, as a result of the structure of the application. Although emphasis in the applications varied depending on age, gender, class, and, presumably, personality, the survivors generally included a brief description of their family background and career. Many pay special attention to the moment when the Nazis came to power in 1933, usually employing phrases strikingly similar to the following: “Until the Nazis destroyed everything.”<sup>40</sup> What follows then often is a description of particular indignities suffered throughout the 1930s, which, depending on the individual in question, includes loss of career or business as well as home or valuables, divorce from a non-Jewish spouse, various arrests or encounters with the authorities, if applicable, and forced labor, which nearly all U-boats of working age experienced. Because most Jews waited until the last possible minute to submerge, many testimonies also mention the infamous *Große Fabrik-Aktion* (Large Factory Operation) of late February/early March 1943, in which the Nazis deported the vast majority of full Jews remaining in the country who were not married to non-Jews. Almost all survivors mention their decision to submerge, even if only in one sentence. Most applicants also phrased their decision in a markedly similar fashion: “In order to escape the inhuman persecutions of the Nazis, my husband and I decided to live illegally.”<sup>41</sup> What follows in many cases is then a description—albeit quite brief in some testimonies—of what they did and what happened to them while living submerged.

On the surface, then, the OdF *Lebensläufe* appear highly formulaic, with survivors even employing similar words and phrases to describe their encounters with Nazi persecution. This similarity in language reflects not only the standardized nature of the application process but also the political atmosphere in which these résumés were written. Perhaps as a result of the early rejections by the OdF, survivors likely learned to emphasize certain aspects of their experiences in favor of others. In particular, many of the former illegals highlighted and perhaps even exaggerated their “antifascist activities.” Some, for example, listed listening to foreign radio

broadcasts as evidence of antifascist activity. While the act was dangerous, it was no more so than illegal life, and categorizing it as an act of resistance was a stretch. In addition, applicants often emphasized their suffering over all other experiences, perhaps to stake out their place in a fast-developing “hierarchy of suffering” in postwar Germany.<sup>42</sup> Sandwiched between the survivors of the camps and the favored political persecutees of Nazism, the city’s former divers focused on suffering, perhaps to avoid being overlooked. This certainly explains the attitude of one U-boat, who concluded his application by stating that if camp survivors could receive recognition as an OdF, then he certainly could; after all, at least the inmates “had a roof over [their] heads!”<sup>43</sup>

Yet despite the superficially formulaic structure of many of these *Lebensläufe*, OdF testimonies are arguably the richest and most valuable source of survivor testimony available, due to their temporal and emotional immediacy to the end of the war. Temporally, that immediacy produced even in quite succinct accounts a richness of detail: specific and verifiable dates, names, addresses of helpers, hiding places, sites of near misses with the authorities, and other detailed insights, which might otherwise have faded over time or else been lost to record for those survivors who never recounted their experiences in subsequent decades. The accuracy produced by that temporal immediacy, however, so necessary in the construction of a history of hiding, is complemented and strengthened by the emotional immediacy of these testimonies. In his examination of Holocaust testimony, Lawrence Langer writes that “memory excavates from the ruins of the past fragile shapes to augment our understanding of those ruins.”<sup>44</sup> Yet what if one is still living among the ruins? Berlin was little more than rubble. Many former U-boats were still waiting to hear what had become of their family members who had been deported, and they were still plagued by illness, malnutrition, homelessness, poverty, and grief. Liberation, as Dan Stone reminds us, “was a process . . . sometimes a very long one,” and for the surviving U-boats the wounds of twelve years of persecution were still raw.<sup>45</sup> The war was over politically and militarily, but emotionally and physically, was it really?

This is the setting in which OdF testimonies were written. The war at the time was both over and not over, making the documents unique. As written sources, one might be tempted to conflate them with later written sources, both published and unpublished, and to critique them as such. As Langer notes, “Written memoirs, by the very strategies available to their authors—style, chronology, analogy, imagery, dialogue, a sense of character, a coherent moral vision—strive to . . . eas[e] us into their unfamiliar world through familiar (and hence comforting?) literary devices.”<sup>46</sup> While this is an apt critique of published memoirs, it has little bearing

on understanding an OdF testimony. Indeed, with the exception of a rudimentary chronology, the literary strategies put forth by Langer rarely appear in these testimonies. And in the few instances they do, their appearance is so noteworthy as to merit special comment and examination in this study. Instead, OdF testimonies need to be understood and read as existing—temporally, emotionally, and textually—in a liminal space. Temporally and emotionally, this is a space where the past, prewar self has been shaken to its very core, but the postwar self has not yet had a chance to develop and fully consider its experiences. Textually, this is a space that straddles the structural limitations of the OdF application process and the written word, on the one hand, and the “impromptu self” of oral testimony, on the other, a self in which one often witnesses “an estrangement between one’s present and past persona.”<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, however, that estrangement in this case was not between a present, late twentieth-/early twenty-first-century self and a past, wartime self but rather between a present, wartime/liberation self (1945/1946) and a past, prewar, even pre-Nazi Germany, self.

The liminal space in which these OdF *Lebensläufe* were written therefore can go a long way to explaining why, considering the dire circumstances under which these applications were submitted, a surprising number of *Lebensläufe* go so far beyond the requirements of the OdF application in the information they provide. In his examination of *Lebensläufe* statements of SA men written during the Third Reich, Bruce Campbell noted similar cases of deviation from and elaboration upon the standard résumé format, suggesting in such instances there likely exists “a strong desire or need to state it, illuminating either particularly strong or significant beliefs . . . [t]hus, when the writer of a *Lebenslauf* departs from the formula, the reader can assume that there is a reason and must pay attention.”<sup>48</sup> The many OdF testimonies that vary from the standard OdF application format suggest a similar need to speak and to express one’s experiences, especially in the immediate aftermath of twelve years of persecution, the last few spent enduring the indignities, deprivations, and dangers of illegal life. The result of that need to speak is a motley collection of applications whose résumés range in length from a few sentences to multiple pages rich in detail. Writing styles vary from handwritten, misspelled, phonetic *Berliner* dialect to typewritten, semidetached, almost academic parlance. Some survivors spend a great deal of time focusing on the prewar years and the loss of social and economic status, while others focus almost entirely on the act of going into hiding, or else all of the places they hid, or sometimes on one or two particular moments experienced while in hiding. In short, these seemingly standard résumés are often anything but that. They are personal insights channeled through

an impersonal, politicized, bureaucratic formula to which many survivors seem to have paid as little attention as possible.

Of critical note when dealing with OdF testimonies and for the construction of this book, then, is the presence of only the palest narrative arc in these particular survivor accounts, especially in comparison to later postwar accounts, most notably published memoirs. Certainly, while some OdF applicants attempted to provide an overall *Lebenslauf* (from childhood to the rise of the Nazis and through to liberation), not every testimony covers each facet. Even if they do, sometimes it is with one perfunctory sentence, the merest nod to the *Lebenslauf* structure. Rather, survivors focus on what matters for them, how they understand (or understood, prewar) themselves, and how, in such an abbreviated format, they could possibly begin to bring across the overall experience of living submerged in Nazi Berlin, a difficult (if not impossible) task, as one survivor reminds us: “What two and one-half years [in hiding] means can only be judged by someone who experienced it himself.”<sup>49</sup> The one or two anecdotes that survivors introduce into their testimonies are, I argue, more than just an example of what they experienced in hiding. Rather, due to the nature of the OdF *Lebenslauf* and the proximity of the testimonies to the end of the war, the stories shared by survivors are likely representative of their overall personal experience of living submerged in the city, that one instance or moment that must, by necessity, stand as representative for the entire experience. This is not to say that other experiences omitted from the OdF applications were not important. Indeed, some experiences were undoubtedly too painful or personal to share or else might have seemed irrelevant to achieving OdF recognition. Detailed testimonies given in later decades certainly testify to the incompleteness of the OdF applications but generally do not contradict them; rather, they elaborate upon them.<sup>50</sup> Ultimately, what was written must have stood out at the time to the individual applicant as the best and—perhaps, emotionally speaking—easiest way to express what in the immediate months following the end of the war was an experience beyond words.

If one focuses primarily on OdF testimonies, then, as this book does, one must be resigned to the lack of a firm, detailed, comprehensive narrative arc of experience for each survivor encountered in these pages. From a narrative perspective, this might seem frustrating; to follow an individual actor through a significant moment in their time submerged, only to see them fade once more into the shadows of the city when that moment has passed, toys with our human desire for resolution and connection to an individual that a sound literary arc generally provides. Naturally enough, this is why most discussions of hiding in Germany have worked with later testimonies, in which the survivor provides significant

detail and a generally solid chronological structure. Without question, later testimonies are useful and enlightening, and this book makes use of them throughout, especially where these later accounts can illuminate and confirm earlier OdF testimonies. However, it favors the OdF testimonies precisely due to their lack of a firm narrative arc. To invoke the metaphorical language of Berlin's divers, just as individuals in hiding submerged, resurfaced, and resubmerged again and again throughout the war, so, too, do their stories. In fact, one final reason the OdF testimonies are arguably the most enlightening of all survivor testimonies is due precisely to their lack of a clear narrative structure. They speak to memories of the experience and not to how collective memory and societal need want an experience to be related. Despite whatever gaps in information might exist in any given individual OdF résumé, when examining hundreds of OdF testimonies together, as this book does, the individual experiences work together to complement one another, with each story picking up where another has left off. As such, it is less any one particular individual whose experiences speak for or define the hiding experience in Berlin and its history than the necessary and complex interplay (sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory) between individual voices struggling to be heard after years of persecution and silence.

### **Why Berlin? The Capital of Nazi Germany as a Site of U-boat Survival**

Throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, some Jews made the decision to hide in order to evade almost certain death. Most did not succeed, although success varied from country to country, and the chances of survival still were better than in the camps. A host of factors, including location, nationality, Nazi policy, the attitudes of the local population, gender, and age, influenced when Jews hid, how many hid, and how many survived.<sup>51</sup> Although more research is necessary to fully flesh out the similarities and differences of hiding during the Holocaust, the variations are intriguing. For example, in the Netherlands, approximately 16,100 Dutch Jews managed to survive in hiding; they had a survival rate of approximately 58 percent.<sup>52</sup> In the Warsaw Ghetto, through which approximately 490,000 Jews passed, only 5 percent of Jews attempted to hide, but those who did had a survival rate of approximately 40 percent (11,500).<sup>53</sup> Within Germany's pre-1938 borders, somewhere between ten and twelve thousand Jews submerged during the Holocaust, at least half of whom did so in Berlin; at least five thousand Jews managed to survive in hiding nationwide.<sup>54</sup> Even still, less than 10 percent of Berlin Jews attempted to submerge,



and of those who did, only around one-quarter survived.<sup>55</sup> Clearly, whatever the common fears prompting Jews to hide and the factors influencing their chances for survival were, there is no single history of hiding.

Considering Berlin's position as capital of the Third Reich, it is perhaps surprising that the city is an important site of Jewish-German survival during the Holocaust. Yet despite that position, Berlin was not as hopeless a place for Jews to submerge as one might expect. Indeed, within the context of what remained of Berlin's Jewish community in the wake of the Holocaust, Berlin's submerged Jews were not a negligible presence. Of the roughly 8,300 Berlin Jews who survived the war, approximately 20.5 percent were U-boats and 22.9 percent camp survivors, with the remaining 56.6 percent individuals who survived having done so due to having been married to a so-called "Aryan" spouse or through their status as a "Half-Jew" (that is, as a *Mischling*).<sup>56</sup> On the national level, the former U-boats account for at least one-third of all Jewish survivors in hiding in Germany (at its pre-1938 borders). How, then, might we begin to account for their survival, beyond issues of luck or chance or individual initiative? In other words, was there something particular about Berlin that enabled one-third of all German Jews who survived in hiding to have done so in and around the city?

We should take care when considering this question to neither overstate nor understate the importance of the city, the structural realities of Nazi policy, and the course of the war in influencing chances for survival, thereby diminishing the agency of Berlin's U-boats or the bravery of those who helped them. On the one hand, these factors undeniably played crucial roles in shaping both chances for survival and expressions of individual agency while living submerged in the city; without them, survival rates in Berlin would have been much different. Of central importance therefore in determining rates of submerging and survival in Berlin are three main factors: (1) the sheer size of the city; (2) the city's sizeable and largely acculturated Jewish population; and (3) the evolution and expression of Nazi antisemitic policy in the city.

As a sprawling metropolis, Berlin offered a large degree of anonymity, important for evading capture.<sup>57</sup> Jews learned early on to avoid neighborhoods where they were known. By 1939, the city was home to approximately 4.5 million people spread across 339 square miles. In March 1943, when more than 6,000 Jews were living submerged, there was approximately one U-boat for every 69,200 non-Jews in the city. Even before the deportations began, Jews still could be found living in each of the city's twenty administrative districts.<sup>58</sup> Whether Jews specifically sought out reputed districts of anti-Nazi resistance (e.g., Wedding and Neukölln) and avoided neighborhoods with a higher concentration of Nazis (e.g., Steg-

litz) is unknown, yet such an explanation seems too simple. First, the socioeconomic–political divisions between individual neighborhoods were not always as rigid as they might seem. Even in largely well-to-do pro-Nazi neighborhoods, certain working-class streets harbored a number of former social democrat and communist voters.<sup>59</sup> Second, a concentration of fugitive Jews in any one area of the city eventually would have been discovered by the Gestapo. Enemies lurked everywhere, but research on resistance in Berlin’s neighborhoods demonstrates that help for Jews existed throughout the city.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, many survivors remark on having lived with dedicated Nazis who knew nothing of their true identity.

Another important reason why so many Jews submerged and survived in Berlin was that 44 percent of all German Jews (72,872) lived in the city when the deportations began there in October 1941.<sup>61</sup> Although a number of future divers had relocated to the city during the 1930s in order to escape the hostility of smaller towns and lose themselves in the city’s anonymity, most either were native to the city or else had lived there for decades; they knew how life in the city functioned, and native Berliners also understood the nuances of its character. Remaining in the city provided a certain level of comfort and a known constant in the otherwise unstable and chaotic world of hiding. To leave Berlin for unknown territory was risky, and those Jews who did leave Berlin to hide elsewhere usually did so after securing a job or a place to stay. Of the 425 testimonies examined for this study, 92 survivors (or 22 percent) specifically reference leaving the city. The actual percentage is likely higher. However, most individuals who left Berlin did not spend the entirety of the war outside the city. And, of those who did, many stayed nearby, in towns and villages such as Rangsdorf, Barnim, Bernau, Stahnsdorf, and Strausberg, all less than forty miles away. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find testimonies such as that of Felix Z., who spent the majority of his time hiding outside Berlin but listed Berlin addresses for fourteen of his fifteen helpers.<sup>62</sup>

The value of Berlin also lay in the fact that most of the city’s Jews were an integral part of the city’s character and had long since acculturated to non-Jewish society.<sup>63</sup> Until the Nazi seizure of power, Jews participated in all aspects of German life, living alongside, working with, befriending, and marrying non-Jews. Indeed, during the 1920s, 30 percent of all Jewish marriages in Berlin were to non-Jews.<sup>64</sup> In postwar interviews, survivors occasionally remark on having felt themselves once to have been a part of Germany, and we should not underestimate exactly how helpful their position as “German citizens of the Jewish faith” (as many viewed themselves) and their familiarity with German cultural and social mores were for ensuring their survival. Indeed, Jews’ knowledge of German and its

myriad dialects mitigated a significant cultural barrier to survival. Elsewhere in Europe, particularly farther east, lack of acculturation presented complications for Jews attempting to hide.<sup>65</sup> In Poland, for example, linguistic separation put a number of Jews in hiding at a significant disadvantage, as the Yiddish accent of many of them could betray them.<sup>66</sup> The result was that some Poles were unwilling to hide Jews, and when they did, cultural differences often forced hidden Jews to remain silent and out of sight. In contrast, Berlin's divers moved around more freely and blended in with non-Jews more readily; even before they dived, their knowledge of German served as a critical advantage.

Central to understanding why Berlin is the largest site of U-boat survival was the expression of Nazi antisemitic policy in the city. Jews in Berlin, even once the deportations began, never faced the same degree of social or physical isolation from non-Jews that they did in Eastern Europe. In fact, approximately 4,700 Jews married to non-Jews lived legally in the city throughout the war.<sup>67</sup> These couples often provided invaluable aid to Jews attempting to evade arrest and deportation. Also, the ghettos constructed in the east never materialized in the city, and despite segregated work areas and semi-segregated apartment buildings, Jews had valuable contacts with non-Jews; when the time came to submerge, divers often were able to turn to these contacts for help. Indeed, unlike in Poland, where non-Jews caught hiding Jews were executed summarily along with their entire family, non-Jewish helpers in Berlin did not face an automatic death sentence.<sup>68</sup> In Germany, there was no specific crime for hiding Jews, only the broader crime of *Judenbegünstigung* (aiding and abetting Jews), and the punishment for helping Jews varied considerably, ranging from incarceration in a concentration camp to shorter prison sentences to fines to sometimes nothing at all.<sup>69</sup> Finally, Jews living in Berlin when the deportations began benefitted from the relatively long duration of the major deportations (approximately sixteen months). Although the first deportations began in October 1941, the last of the major deportations did not occur until the beginning of March 1943, thereby giving Jewish Berliners more time to gather knowledge of what "resettlement" truly entailed.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the Jewish population, in sheer numbers, remained significantly larger until that point than in other large German cities, meaning that when the last major roundups of Jews began at the end of February 1943, there simply were more people around to submerge, if they were able and willing. This simple yet essential explanation finds confirmation in Susanna Schrafstetter's recent study of Jews who went into hiding in and around Munich. Although Munich, too, witnessed its final major deportations at the same time Berlin did, the Jewish commu-

nity there had already been so devastated by earlier deportations that very few Jews were still left in the city to flee. To compare: at the time of the last major deportations in late February/early March 1943, some fifteen thousand Jews still worked as forced laborers in Berlin's massive armaments industry, jobs that had shielded them from the earlier deportations. In Munich, those Jewish workers numbered a mere 313.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, one note of caution: although Berlin's divers benefitted from the help of thousands of non-Jews, both through organized networks of resistance and instances of individual bravery and humanity from the city's population, we need to take care not to romanticize a city that only one decade before had had an international, progressive, cosmopolitan reputation that follows it to this day. Regardless of whatever Weimar Berlin's reputation had been for modernity, cabaret, a vibrant gay community, an avant-garde arts scene, or a place where, to borrow from the historian Peter Gay, the outsider became insider, antisemitism was already a growing force in the city.<sup>72</sup> After Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, that force increased steadily until, by the time the deportations began in 1941, it was overwhelming. Indeed, however unpopular Nazism might have been in the city compared to other regions of the country, the Nazis still polled 34.6 percent of the vote in the March 1933 elections (compared to 43.9 percent nationally).<sup>73</sup> Antisemitic violence unleashed by the SA in the wake of Hitler's seizure of power was matched by the city's government issuing some fifty-five antisemitic ordinances by the end of 1934, which only increased in number as the years progressed. Although sympathy for the persecution of the Jews could be found throughout the city, even manifesting itself in vocal criticism during the wave of antisemitic violence that gripped the city in the summer and fall of 1938, the Nazis continued to ramp up their targeting of Jews.<sup>74</sup> Even the members of Berlin's non-Jewish population who exhibited individual bravery by attempting both before and during the deportations, and also in the years of submerging, to aid Jews as best as they could were outnumbered both by ardent Nazis and by those who looked away. Although perhaps as many as thirty thousand Berliners might have been involved in actively sheltering Jews who had fled their deportations, often with over one dozen individuals involved in helping a single Jew, that was still a miniscule percentage of the city's entire population (less than 1 percent), and all it took was one act of denunciation to destroy everything. Thus, while we should not forget the cosmopolitan reputation the city might once have had, and while its spirit might have lived on in any number of individual Berliners, we should not give the capital of Nazi Germany more credit than it deserves in explaining why so many German Jews managed to survive the horrors of the Holocaust submerged there.

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## Structure of the Book

This book is divided into four chapters: “Submerging,” “Surviving,” “Living,” and “Surfacing.” Each of these chapters deals with the major themes running through the lives and experiences of Berlin’s divers. Each chapter also is situated chronologically, in order to guide the reader through the complexity of submerged life in wartime Berlin. This juxtaposition of theme and chronology, however, should not be understood as limiting the various experiences covered in each chapter to any given year. Rather, this juxtaposition is necessary to convey the experience of living submerged in the city and the way those experiences were shaped by the broader forces of deportation, the war, and the Holocaust. Moreover, the thematic progression of the chapters is broadly indicative of the process of hiding, wherein Jews first submerged and then began the process of learning to survive. Once submerged, Jews then could and often did take advantage of their knowledge of the city to try to carve out a semblance of life-affirming tasks and activities. And, in the final months and weeks of the war, they began the slow, chaotic, and dangerous process of surfacing and reclaiming a public identity. These experiences, however, were directly influenced by the course of the war and Nazi policy: in other words, chronology and structural forces beyond the U-boats’ control.

Chapter 1, “Submerging,” covers the first deportations in October 1941 through the last major deportations in early March 1943. The chapter analyzes the three available responses to the deportations—compliance with the deportation orders, suicide, and submerging—and argues that although suicide and hiding were clear rejections of National Socialist policy, deportation was not only something that happened to Jews. Jews consciously and actively grappled with how to respond to the deportations. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the Large Factory Operation of 28 February–5 March 1943, an event that triggered the largest number of attempts to submerge.

Chapter 2, “Surviving,” chronicles the rest of 1943 and uses this first full year of submerged life for many of the U-boats as a lens through which to examine the challenges of securing food, clothing, and shelter while navigating the dangers of arrest and denunciation. This chapter argues that successfully coping with the challenges of hiding was a learning process throughout which the city’s divers and dashers developed a number of strategies to optimize their chances for survival. This first year in hiding also was the most dangerous and accounted for almost two-thirds of all U-boat arrests. As such, submerged Jews needed to adapt quickly to the threats facing them.

Chapter 3, “Living,” examines 1944 and builds off the previous chapter’s argument that survival was a learning process. The chapter argues that acclimation to the circumstances of illegal life and the establishment of valuable contacts and strategies for survival enabled many U-boats to focus some of their energies on developing a sense of routine and normality in their lives. The chapter also addresses how issues of friendship, employment, and recreation as well as darker issues of illness, death, and rape influenced how survivors remembered the quality of their experiences. The chapter argues that the emotional impact of these various experiences was as influential in the construction of survivor memories of living submerged as were the purely physical challenges associated with the act.

Chapter 4, “Surfacing,” covers the last months of the war in 1945. This chapter looks at the steadily declining availability of food and shelter for Jews, the increasing danger of arrest by the Gestapo, and the approaching Soviet Army and how it created new avenues for survival as well as new difficulties. This chapter argues that even in the chaos caused by the retreat of the German Army, Jews still were able to utilize the circumstances created by the war to continually develop new strategies for survival. This final chapter also analyzes the ways that the hopes and fears of the remaining Jews in the city at times intersected with those of the non-Jewish population and how those hopes and fears were reflective of a specific Berlin wartime experience.

## Notes

1. “That was my struggle.” Landesarchiv Berlin (hereafter LAB), C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38151.
2. Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung (hereafter ZfA), File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, “Untergetaucht—An Der Oberfläche—1941/1945.”
3. A full discussion of the empirical data underpinning this study (i.e., number of Jews submerged, arrest rates, and the gender and age of the U-boats) and how the author reached his conclusions can be found in the appendix in this book.
4. Despite the problematic nature of the terms “illegal” or “living illegally,” members of Berlin’s surviving U-boats also used these terms to describe themselves and their experiences. See Rudolf Frauenfeld, “Wir Illegalen,” *Der Weg: Zeitschrift für Fragen des Judentums*, 22 March 1946.
5. Anthony Read and David Fisher suggest that the self-chosen term “U-boat” was a direct reflection of the average Berliner’s outlook on life; in Read and Fisher, *Berlin: The Biography of a City* (London: Hutchinson, 1994), 236. See also Peter Gay, *My*

- German Question: Growing Up in Nazi Berlin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 13–14.
6. See Alvin H. Rosenfeld, “Popularization and Memory: The Case of Anne Frank,” in *Lessons and Legacies: The Meaning of the Holocaust in a Changing World*, ed. Peter Hayes (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 243–78; Zoë Vania Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 136; Nicholas Stargardt, “Children,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies*, ed. Peter Hayes and John K. Roth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 227; and Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 205.
  7. For more on the importance of survivor language in understanding the hiding experience in Berlin, see Richard N. Lutjens, Jr., “Vom Untertauchen: ‘U-Boote’ und der Berliner Alltag 1941–1945,” in *Alltag im Holocaust: Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich 1941–1945*, ed. Andrea Löw, Doris L. Bergen, and Anna Hájková (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2013).
  8. Mrs. Ruth Gumpel, interview with author, 2 April 2008, Petaluma, CA.
  9. See appendix. The lists of survivors were published in the Jewish–German exile periodical *Aufbau: Reconstruction* over the course of two months, beginning on 2 November 1945, in a section titled “Neue Listen von Juden in Berlin” (from 16 November 1945, titled “Neue Berliner Liste”). The names of survivors in hiding were designated with the letter “b.” Although some discrepancies exist, the lists are generally accurate. They were published between November 1945 and January 1946. The lists may be found in the following editions. For the year 1945: Nr. 45 (p. 28); Nr. 46 (p. 26); Nr. 47 (p. 26); Nr. 48 (p. 36); Nr. 49 (p. 26); Nr. 50 (p. 27); Nr. 51 (p. 27); Nr. 52 (p. 37). For the year 1946: Nr. 1 (p. 26); Nr. 2 (p. 32); Nr. 3 (p. 27). These lists contain the names of over nine hundred former U-boats. The additional names were collected by the author from testimonies found in the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung at Berlin’s Technische Universität.
  10. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg.
  11. Literature on hiding in Germany, although not vast, has received increasing attention from scholars, both in its own right and as part of larger narratives. Notable examples include Maren Krüger, Marion Neiss, Martina Voigt, Birgit Wagener, and Irina Wandrey, “Alltag im Berliner Untergrund,” in *Antisemitismus in Jüdische Geschichte*, ed. Rainer Erb and Michael Schmidt (Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Autorenverlag, 1987); Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Die Juden in Deutschland, 1933–1945: Leben unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1988); Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (1998); Trude Maurer in Marion Kaplan, eds., *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Wolfgang Benz ed., *Überleben im Dritten Reich: Juden im Untergrund und ihre Helfer*; Petra Bonavita, *Mit falschem Pass und Zyankali: Retter und Gerettete aus Frankfurt am Main in der NS-Zeit* (Stuttgart: Schmetterling-Verlag, 2009); Susanna Schrafstetter, *Flucht und Versteck: Untergetauchte Juden in München—Verfolgungserfahrung und Nachkriegsalltag* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2015); Marnix Croes and Beate Kosmala, “Facing Deportation in Germany and the Netherlands: Survival in Hiding,” in *Facing the Catastrophe: Jews and Non-Jews in Europe during World War II*, ed. Beate Kosmala and Georgi Verbeeck (New York: Berg, 2011); also, Beate Kosmala, “Zwischen Ahnen und Wissen: Flucht vor der Deportation (1941–1943),” in *Die Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland: Pläne—Praxis—Reaktionen*, ed. Birthe Kundrus and Beate Meyer (Göttingen: Wallstein-

- Verlag, 2004); Beate Kosmala, “Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen in Berlin: Flucht vor der Deportation (1941–1943),” in Löw, Bergen, Hájková, *Alltag im Holocaust*; and, Lutjens, “Vom Untertauchen.” For an excellent case study of a single act of hiding and survivor memory, see Mark Roseman, *The Past in Hiding* (London: Penguin, 2000). A notable exception and an excellent example of a comprehensive, location-specific study of hiding outside of Germany is Gunnar Paulsson, *The Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).
12. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 201.
  13. See Zoë Waxman, “Rape and Sexual Abuse in Hiding,” in *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust*, ed. Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010), 16g.
  14. For a discussion on the difficulties of hiding with family members, see Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 204.
  15. Andreas Nachama, Julius H. Schoeps, and Hermann Simon, eds., *Jews in Berlin*, trans. Michael S. Cullen and Allison Brown (Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 2002), 215.
  16. Christopher Browning, in his study of the Starachowice labor camp, describes the testimonies he worked with in his study as having remained “relatively pristine.” See Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 234.
  17. See Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), xxii. Zoë Waxman’s recent work attempts to break through collective memory to reflect the “heterogeneity” of survivor experiences; see Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*.
  18. See Moshe Zimmerman, “German Jews in the History of the Shoah,” in *On Germans and Jews under the Nazi Regime: Essays by Three Generations of Historians*, ed. Moshe Zimmermann (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2006), 108.
  19. Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 29.
  20. See Eric H. Boehm, *We Survived: The Stories of Fourteen of the Hidden and Hunted in Nazi Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1949), and Kurt Grossmann, *Die unbesungenen Helden: Zeugnisse der Menschlichkeit aus Deutschlands dunklen Tagen* (Hamburg: Furche, 1957).
  21. For more on this initiative, see Dennis Riffel, *Unbesungene Helden: Die Ehrungsinitiative des Berliner Senats, 1958 bis 1966* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2007).
  22. Leonard Gross, *The Last Jews in Berlin* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982).
  23. See Reinhard Rürup, ed., *Jüdische Geschichte in Berlin: Essays und Studien* (Berlin: Druckhaus Hentrich, 1995); Nachama, Schoeps, and Simon, *Jews in Berlin*; and Beate Meyer and Hermann Simon, eds., *Juden in Berlin, 1938–1945* (Berlin: Philo Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000). Wolf Gruner chronicles the antisemitic measures taken against the Jews of Berlin in Wolf Gruner, *Judenverfolgung in Berlin, 1933–1945: Eine Chronologie der Behördenmassnahmen in der Reichshauptstadt* (Berlin: Druckhaus Hentrich, 1996). The protest of non-Jewish women against the arrest of their Jewish husbands in February and March 1943 received renewed attention in Wolf Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße: Die Fabrik-Aktion und die Verfolgung der “Mischehen” 1943* (Frankfurt/M: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2005). For a history of the Berlin Jewish Hospital during the 1940s, see Danial B. Silver, *Refuge in Hell: How Berlin’s Jewish Hospital Outlasted the Nazis* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003). The histories of Jewish informants working for the Gestapo in Berlin and Vienna were the



- subject of Doris Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat: Jüdische "Greifer" im Dienst der Gestapo, 1943–1945* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2006).
24. The Gedenkstätte Stille Helden is located at 39 Rosenthaler Straße in the former brush factory of Otto Weidt, an ardent protector of persecuted Jews during the Nazi period. In addition to their own publication, *Gedenkstätte Stille Helden*, the museum is currently compiling a large database on the hidden and their rescuers.
  25. In a similar fashion, Christopher Browning's recent microhistorical study of survivors of the Starachowice labor camp is guided by his twin goals of achieving "authenticity" as well as "factual accuracy." See Browning, *Remembering Survival*, 7.
  26. See Wieviorka, *Era of the Witness*. See also Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*; Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), and Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991).
  27. Waxman recognizes, for example, that survivors in hiding often "lack many of the shared experiences to which concentration camp survivors appeal" in the reproduction of survivor memory. In Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, 165.
  28. Wieviorka, *Era of the Witness*, xii.
  29. Wieviorka, *Era of the Witness*, 132.
  30. Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, 129.
  31. See Lawrence Langer, "Redefining Heroic Behavior," in Hayes, *Lessons and Legacies*, 227–29. See also Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, 119. On the writing process, see Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research*, 67–71.
  32. In addition to the above titles, see also, Inge Deutschkron, *Ich trug den gelben Stern* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1978); Margot Friedländer with Malin Schwerdtfeger, "*Versuche, dein Leben zu machen*": *Als Jüdin versteckt in Berlin* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2008); Barbara Lovenheim, *Survival in the Shadows: Seven Hidden Jews in Hitler's Berlin* (London: Peter Owen, 2002), and, most recently, Marie Jalowicz Simon, *Untergetaucht: Eine junge Frau überlebt in Berlin, 1940–1945* (Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer, 2014).
  33. Wieviorka, *Era of the Witness*, 108–10, 126–27.
  34. See Langer, "Redefining Heroic Behavior," 229, 235.
  35. Many of the interviews were conducted by non-specialists, and they attempt, for example, to elicit from survivors admissions of fear (when some survivors claim they were not afraid) or to contradict survivors on the dates of well-known events, such as the German invasion of the USSR.
  36. For a discussion of the challenges associated with ascertaining accuracy, see Browning, *Remembering Survival*, 7–8.
  37. Regarding the history of the Victims of Fascism and their treatment under the Soviet-controlled sector and later in the DDR, see Susanne zur Nieden, *Unwürdige Opfer: Die Aberkennung von NS-Verfolgten in Berlin 1945 bis 1949* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2003); Christoph Hölscher, *NS-Verfolgte im "antifaschistischen Staat": Vereinnahmung und Ausgrenzung in der ostdeutschen Wiedergutmachung (1945–1989)* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2002).
  38. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 39108. For more on the strict early criteria for obtaining OdF status, as first enacted on 23 June 1945 in the Soviet Zone of Occupation, see Ulrike Offenberg, "Seid Vorsichtig gegen die Machthaber": *Die jüdischen Gemeinden in der SBZ und der DDR, 1945–1990* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag GmbH, 1998), 43–45.
  39. zur Nieden, *Unwürdige Opfer*, 28–31, 45–49. See, also, Offenberg, "Seid vorsichtig gegen die Machthaber," 45–48.

40. Centrum Judaicum Archiv (hereinafter CJA) 4.1., 2106.
41. CJA 4.1, 2971.
42. I am indebted to Sarah Liu, Judith B. and Burton P. Resnick Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, for bringing this phrase and its implications for my research to my attention. Also, see Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 187.
43. CJA 4.1, 3156.
44. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, 128.
45. Dan Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps: The Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 2.
46. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, 19.
47. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, 129, 143.
48. Bruce Campbell, “Autobiographies of Violence: The SA in Its Own Words,” *Central European History* 46, no. 2 (2013): 219.
49. CJA 4.1, 1846.
50. Christopher Browning also noted that the testimonies he examined for his recent study remained “remarkably stable and less malleable than [he] had anticipated.” See Browning, *Remembering Survival*, 9.
51. For an in-depth discussion of why survival rates of Jews varied so much throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, see Peter Hayes, *Why? Explaining the Holocaust* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017), 218–258.
52. In Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 132–33.
53. Paulsson, *Secret City*, 231–32. See also, Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 138–39.
54. See Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 97, 115.
55. Croes and Kosmala estimate the number of Berlin survivors as anywhere between 1,700 and 2,000 in “Facing Deportation,” 124. See also, *Gedenkstätte Stille Helden*, 8.
56. Siegmund Weltlinger, “*Hast du es schon vergessen?*” *Erlebnisbericht aus der Zeit der Verfolgung* (Berlin: Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit in Berlin, 1954). See also Wolf Gruner, *Judenverfolgung in Berlin: Eine Chronologie der Behördenmassnahmen in der Reichshauptstadt* (Berlin: Druckhaus Hentrich, 1996), 94 [also cited as Wolf Gruner, *The Persecution of the Jews in Berlin 1933–1945: A Chronology of Measures by the Authorities in the German Capital*, trans., William Templer (Berlin: Stiftung Topographie des Terrors, 2014)]. The data first cited by Siegmund Weltlinger form the basis for the quoted figures and are used by scholars in their estimates of the number of Berlin Jewish survivors. Scholarly works still cite Weltlinger’s initial figure of 1,400 Berlin Jewish survivors in hiding, including Roger Moorhouse, *Berlin at War: Life and Death in Hitler’s Capital, 1939–1945* (London: Random House, 2010), 306; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 228; and Trude Maurer, “From Everyday Life to a State of Emergency: Jews in Weimar and Nazi Germany,” in *Jewish Daily Life*, ed. Marion Kaplan, trans. Allison Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2005, 373. Recent estimates by researchers at the Gedenkstätte Stille Helden in Berlin now indicate that over 1,700 Jews survived in hiding in and around the city. This updated figure is the one this study uses. However, I am unaware of any changes made to estimates of the number of survivors from the camps and from mixed marriages. Accordingly, the statistics cited are a hybrid of Weltlinger’s original data on camp and mixed-marriage survivors and newer estimates on survivors in hiding.
57. Research suggests that elsewhere in Europe, the anonymity of cities tended to make them more conducive to hiding than small towns or the countryside. Benz,

- Überleben im Dritten Reich*, 12. For a history of Jews in hiding in Warsaw, see also Paulsson, *Secret City*.
58. Nachama, Schoeps, and Simon, *Jews in Berlin*, 139. For a statistical breakdown of Jewish Berliners by neighborhood, see Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 93.
  59. For example, the so-called “Arme-Leute-Ecken” in Steglitz had a fairly strong Communist contingent, even though over 40 percent of neighborhood voted for the NSDAP in the November 1932 elections. See Hans-Rainer Sandvoß, *Widerstand in Steglitz und Zehlendorf* (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 1986), 7.
  60. During the 1980s, a massive scholarly undertaking by the Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand resulted in the publication of *Widerstand 1933–1945*. Of the fourteen volumes detailing various resistance groups and individuals, all but four were the product of Hans-Rainer Sandvoß. See, for example, Sandvoß, *Widerstand in Neukölln* (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 1990); Sandvoß, *Widerstand in einem Arbeiterbezirk* (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 1983); and Sandvoß, *Widerstand in Steglitz und Zehlendorf*. See also, Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 121.
  61. See BA R 8150/26, 8150/27, ZIH 112/21b, StadtA Mainz NL Oppenheim 52/28, YVA 0.8/14, “Monatliche Entwicklung der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Berlin, 1941–1943.”
  62. CJA 4.1, 3156.
  63. On the diversity of the city and its sources of aid for Jews, see Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 122.
  64. See Avraham Barkai, “Jewish Life in Its German Milieu,” in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4: *Renewal and Destruction, 1918–1945*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 57.
  65. Nechama Tec, “Helping Behavior and Rescue during the Holocaust,” in Hayes, *Lessons and Legacies*, 210–24.
  66. Tec, “Helping Behavior,” 213.
  67. Gruner, *Persecution of the Jews*, 53.
  68. Tec, “Helping Behavior and Rescue,” 211–12.
  69. See Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 123, 146.
  70. Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 117.
  71. Schrafstetter, *Flucht und Versteck*, 83.
  72. Among a host of excellent literature on modernity and the vibrant cultural and artistic milieus in the city and Weimar Germany, more generally, see, for example, the memoirs of Christopher Isherwood, *Christopher and His Kind* (London: Eyre Moteum, 1997); Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014). Also, Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968); Katharina von Ankum, ed., *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); and Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). For more information on the city during the Third Reich, see Rüdiger Hachtmann, Thomas Schaarschmidt, and Winfried Süß, eds., *Berlin im Nationalsozialismus: Politik und Gesellschaft 1933–1945 (Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus)* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011).
  73. Wolfgang Ribbe, ed., *Geschichte Berlins: Von der Märzrevolution bis zur Gegenwart* (München: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1988), 2:934. See also Richard F. Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 476.

74. On the antisemitic measures taken against Jews in the city between 1933 and 1945 and the reaction of the Berlin population, see Wolf Gruner, “Die Verfolgung der Juden und die Reaktionen der Berliner,” in *Berlin, 1933–1945*, ed. Michael Wildt and Christoph Kreutzmüller (München: Siedler Verlag, 2013), 311–24.

*Chapter 1*

## SUBMERGING



### **The Prelude: Berlin, 1938–1941**

On 10 June 1938, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi minister for propaganda, addressed over three hundred Berlin police officers: “The rallying cry is not law, but rather harassment. The Jews must get out of Berlin. The police will help me with that.”<sup>1</sup> The first five years of Nazi rule witnessed the gradual, yet steady, tightening of restrictions against Germany’s Jewish population and its increasing exclusion from the country’s political, cultural, social, and economic life.<sup>2</sup> Berlin was not immune to these developments. However, 1938 witnessed the start of ever more violent and radical policies designed to force the Jews from German soil. Although approximately 30 percent of Berlin Jews had emigrated by the end of 1937, over 110,000 still remained in the city.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, despite the continual attacks on Jewish commercial activity that had been occurring since the early 1930s, Berlin’s Jewish businesses (or those designated by the Nazis as Jewish businesses) had managed to persevere to a surprising degree. Although the size of Jewish-owned businesses had shrunk dramatically over the preceding five years (with a vast majority too small to be listed in the city’s commercial register), Christoph Kreutzmüller argues that over 42,750 Jewish businesses continued to exist as late as the summer of 1938 (down from around 50,000 in 1933), with some 6,500 still large enough to be listed on the commercial register.<sup>4</sup> Yet Nazi determination to rid the country of Jews increased exponentially during the year, as reflected

in a “surge of decrees” designed to destroy all Jewish commercial activity, fully isolate Jews from non-Jews, and bring the still nominally autonomous Jewish communities firmly under Nazi bureaucratic control.<sup>5</sup> The final break with the regime’s more gradual policies of economic and social isolation came on the night of November 9–10, 1938, when the Nazi authorities unleashed a wave of terror and violence against Jews not seen since the middle ages: Kristallnacht.<sup>6</sup>

The events of Kristallnacht marked a turning point for the Jews of Germany. Any remaining illusions of safety vanished, as did the idea of a Jewish future in Germany. In Berlin, Nazi hordes led by the SA ransacked and destroyed hundreds of Jewish businesses (exact figures are unknown), set ablaze nine of the city’s twelve synagogues, and, amid the beatings and killings, arrested or attempted to arrest some twelve thousand Berlin Jews, sending approximately three thousand individuals to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in the Berlin suburb of Oranienburg.<sup>7</sup> The financial consequences also were devastating. In the immediate wake of the pogrom, the Nazis imposed a collective fine of one billion Reichsmarks on the country’s Jews.<sup>8</sup> One month later, the Nazis ordered the nationwide Aryanization or liquidation of all remaining Jewish-owned businesses; the process took time, but between 1938 and 1941, 5,577 Jewish-owned businesses closed.<sup>9</sup> Observing the turmoil around her, the non-Jewish diarist Ruth Andreas-Friedrich wrote, “Now I know it. The Jewish war has begun . . . with an attack across the board.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, in historical hindsight, the events of Kristallnacht presaged the imminent war against Europe’s Jews.<sup>11</sup>

Berlin Jews were caught in a snare of degrading national and city laws designed to complete the isolation measures taken against them during the first five years of Nazi rule. In December 1938, the German labor office created a separate Central Administrative Office for Jews to coordinate all issues relating to Jewish housing, food, insurance, and labor.<sup>12</sup> Segregated forced labor, introduced at the end of 1938 for all unemployed Jews, became official policy by 1940.<sup>13</sup> Social ordinances banning Jews from most public spaces and Jewish children from attending school with non-Jews were followed by dozens of humiliating ordinances pertaining to ration cards, pets, bicycles, shopping times, curfews, housing restrictions, and the confiscation of all valuables.<sup>14</sup> In January 1939, the Nazis required all Jews not in a privileged mixed marriage to add either Sara or Israel to their names.<sup>15</sup> The outbreak of war in 1939 only intensified Nazi efforts to exclude and degrade. The steady eviction of Jews from their homes and government attempts to relocate them to so-called Jewish houses (*Judenhäuser*) served to further isolate Jews from non-Jews.<sup>16</sup> On 1 September 1941, the introduction of the *Judenstern* (Jewish Star) allowed

the authorities to monitor the movements of Berlin Jews and better prevent their interaction with non-Jews.<sup>17</sup> Daily life continued in the Jewish community but in an increasingly proscribed and unstable form. Those who tried to circumvent the myriad restrictions—and many of the future U-boats did—risked arrest, imprisonment, and early deportation.

The Nazis also consolidated the country's remaining Jewish communities firmly under a newly created umbrella organization: Die Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland (The National Association of Jews in Germany).<sup>18</sup> Under the nominal cover of "Jewish self-administration," the Reichsvereinigung was responsible for coordinating all facets of Jewish life: welfare services for the now-impoverished Jewish community; facilitating Jewish emigration; ration card distribution; and, as of October 1941, the organization of deportation lists. In reality, the Reichsvereinigung was under the direct control of the Gestapo and was responsible for enacting its antisemitic policies. Although the Reichsvereinigung attempted to care for the Jewish community, its primary function by the closing months of 1941 was the coordination of the Jewish community in Germany in preparation for the Final Solution.<sup>19</sup>

In response to increasing and unrelenting persecution, Jews throughout Germany scrambled to procure the affidavits and visas necessary for emigration. Many succeeded. In Berlin alone, between 1933 and the outbreak of war in September 1939, some eighty thousand Jews emigrated.<sup>20</sup> These numbers declined, however, as a number of potential places of refuge either were at war with Germany or already conquered. Moreover, the restrictive quotas set by many countries and the fantastic sums of money required to procure visas hindered mass emigration. Although Kristallnacht had awoken most Jews to the dangers facing them, the ensuing three years did not give most of them enough time to escape. In her memoirs, Inge Deutschkron, a future U-boat, remarked, "For the German Jews, even the most German among them, the events of November 9 were an alarm signal. Some believed that it was now five minutes before twelve. Actually, for most of them it was already five minutes past twelve—too late."<sup>21</sup> Indeed, when Heinrich Himmler ordered the halt to most emigration in October 1941 (emigration still being an option for a very small number), 73,842 Jews remained trapped in the capital of a country soon bent on their extermination.<sup>22</sup>

On 18 October 1941, a train carrying 1,013 individuals left Berlin for Litzmannstadt in the Reichsgau Wartheland of what had, until September 1939, been Poland.<sup>23</sup> This transport was the first of almost two hundred that departed from Berlin during the next three and a half years for various ghettos, concentration camps, and extermination camps in Eastern Europe. After eight years of various approaches to solving the

“Jewish Question,” in the wake of the invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Nazi antisemitic policy quickly began to coalesce around the decision to exterminate Europe’s entire Jewish population. Even still, the process was uneven and piecemeal, and it was largely initiated away from the Berlin metropole. While the process of systematic extermination of Soviet Jews had begun in September and October 1941, Polish Jews had already been dying in great numbers since 1939 through ghettoization and the ensuing disease, starvation, and sporadic killings. Yet when the first deportation train left Berlin in October 1941, the fate of Jewish Germans was still somewhat unclear, as they were not initially marked for inclusion in the extermination measures already sweeping Eastern Europe. Indeed, the chief purpose of the Wannsee Conference (initially scheduled for 9 December 1941) was to clarify the position of Jewish Germans and who should be included in the deportation measures. This changed, however, with the declaration of war against the United States, which ultimately pushed the meeting of the conference back to 20 January 1942. Critically, on 12 December 1941, Hitler gave a speech to his *Reichsleiter* and *Gauleiter*, indicting Jews as responsible for what was now a world war; it was only at this point, as Christian Gerlach argues, that the inclusion of Jewish Germans in the extermination of European Jewry became an official reality.<sup>24</sup> Thus, despite being the capital of the Third Reich, Berlin was not leading the way in setting extermination policy, and Berlin’s Jews could have had no way of knowing what awaited them, as their position in the Final Solution was still being worked out. Only with the Wannsee Conference did the relevant government agencies accept the program, thereby coordinating the fate of Germany’s Jews with the systematic deportation and murder of over six million European Jews. From this point on, although the size and frequency of the deportations from Berlin fluctuated, the Nazis never swayed from their ultimate goal of making the German capital *judenfrei* (free of Jews).<sup>25</sup>

The frenetic sixteen months between the end of most emigration and the last of the major transports out of Berlin in March 1943 witnessed three main types of individual response to Nazi persecution: compliance, suicide, and submerging. A fourth option, escape from Nazi Germany to a neutral country, was incredibly difficult to pull off and will be examined in chapter 2. Each response, even compliance, contained some level of conscious choice, and this chapter pays particular attention to the relatively broad scope of personal agency still afforded the city’s Jews. These responses to Nazi terror did not operate independently of one another, and each individual response to the deportations invariably informed the decisions of others. The issue of compliance certainly provoked considerable debate within the Jewish community. Suicide was not only an act of



despair; it was also a rejection of Nazi persecution. Aware of the choices before them, approximately 6,500 Jews chose neither compliance nor suicide. These individuals instead chose to submerge. The factors prompting this response varied over the course of sixteen months, as did the rates of submerging. Indeed, Jews did not begin to flee the transports en masse until the last quarter of 1942, peaking during the *Große Fabrik-Aktion* (Large Factory Operation) at the end of February 1943, when approximately 4,700 Jews submerged.

## Compliance

Most Jews obeyed their “evacuation” summons. No one reason explains the seeming lack of resistance to the deportations among the Jewish-German populace. Initial studies on the subject reinforced views of Jews as “archetypical victims.”<sup>26</sup> Criticism has been scathing, emphasizing the seeming naïveté of Jewish-Germans as well as their misguided patriotism and faith in their own security.<sup>27</sup> Why else, the argument runs, would they have agreed to a measure that in most cases was a death sentence? Jews had acculturated well to German society, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup> In Berlin, in particular, Jewish contributions to the history and culture of the city were considerable.<sup>29</sup> Proud to consider themselves “German citizens of the Jewish faith,” they served bravely in the First World War alongside their gentile compatriots. Eight years of Nazi rule had a sobering effect, but the notion of systematic extermination was as unthinkable as it was unprecedented. Moreover, widespread acculturation had the effect of convincing some Jewish Germans that the “Jews” to whom the Nazis referred could not possibly include them.<sup>30</sup> Nazi “camouflage” policy also complicated the issue. Just as the regime later tried to pass off the gas chambers as showers to assuage the fears of its victims and ensure their cooperation, the Nazis also allowed many of the deported to write letters back home, in some cases as late as 1943. The notes were often brief: “I am fine. I am in Lodz. Send packages.”<sup>31</sup> Others were more cryptic and troubling: “Send us something to eat, we are starving . . . [d]on’t forget me . . . I cry all day.”<sup>32</sup> Such disturbing messages notwithstanding, few people in the city, at least until 1942, had a clear idea of what had happened to their friends and family, even if their suspicions of the worst began to grow.<sup>33</sup>

The stereotype of the obedient German, Jew and non-Jew alike, also has contributed to explanations concerning Jewish willingness not only to board the transports but also to comply with earlier antisemitic ordinances, especially with regards to flouting restrictions demanding that

Jews wear the *Judenstern* at all times in public. Nor were these critiques solely the product of hindsight. Even some Jewish-German observers at the time, including those who later submerged, offered scathing—indeed, unfair—critiques of their fellow Jews, even going so far as to imply a simplistic link between those who obeyed Nazi ordinances in the months leading up to the start of the deportations and those who ended up complying with their deportation orders. The future U-boat Kurt Lindenberg, a prominent recurring actor in the first two chapters of this book, was one such individual. Writing about his experiences in Nazi Berlin, Lindenberg offered the following observation on the attitudes of Berlin’s Jewish population in 1941:

At this time, the Jews in Berlin began to divide clearly into two groups. The first group consisted of such people who surrendered to their situation with a certain fatalism and willingly obeyed all prohibitions and laws with a view to antagonizing their oppressors as little as possible. A large portion of this group viewed the people of the other group with an absolute hostility that sometimes led to denunciations (I am personally aware of such cases). The other group consisted of Jews who had a certain will to resist. They circumvented with cunning and spite as many prohibitions as possible, partly in order to take pleasure in as many bright spots as possible in their bedeviled life, and partly out of pure joy in not obeying in any way the abhorrent National Socialists. The first group speculated on a speedy end to the war, while the second group foresaw that a speedy end to the war was out of the question and that sooner or later all Jews in Germany that one could get their hands on would be killed regardless of whether they behaved “obediently” or “disobediently.”<sup>34</sup>

Lindenberg wrote these words in 1944 from the safety of neutral Sweden. His testimony is peppered with such scathing indictments of Jewish Germans. His comments were also influenced by hindsight at the time of his writing and the credence he gave early on to the rumors trickling in from the east about the fate of deported Jews. That Lindenberg’s prescience on this matter and his combative, independent spirit saved his life are undeniable. Nor is Lindenberg entirely incorrect that a certain “will to resist” and a profound mistrust of “resettlement” characterized a number, likely a majority, of the future U-boats. Still, the divide he portrays, while instructive in painting a general picture about Jewish attitudes toward the Nazi state on the eve of deportation in 1941, is too simplistic. A number of Jews who chose to submerge wore the star, kept their heads down, followed Nazi-issued ordinances, and pursued legal means to forestall deportation until submerging was their only remaining choice. Lindenberg’s testimony, although recognizing the powerful role of the state and its or-

gans in shaping the behaviors and attitudes of Germans (Jews and non-Jews), demands more from Berlin's Jews than many could give and fails to recognize a complex of factors leading to Jewish compliance as the deportations began. This is especially true in light of the way that the Nazis, in addition to their own ordinances and laws, also forced the administrative apparatus of the Jewish community, the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland (National Association of Jews in Germany), and its leaders to ensure the cooperation of the Jewish population. Indeed, by 1941, employees of the Reichsvereinigung found themselves in the unenviable position of drawing up deportation lists.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Lindenberg also discounts the consequences of outright defiance, which only worsened the situation of the community. Thus, when twenty employees of the Berlin Jewish Community fled from a transport destined for Riga in October 1942, the Nazis arrested twenty employees of the Jewish Community and the Reichsvereinigung; ultimately, seven were executed at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.<sup>36</sup> Fear, not perceived innate German obedience or a belief in "weathering the storm," was a dominant factor at work.

Jews also complied with Nazi ordinances and the eventual evacuation orders because they often had or felt they had no recourse. After years of growing isolation, many Berlin Jews, like their compatriots throughout the country, already had experienced a "social death."<sup>37</sup> Help from non-Jews often was not possible; years of antisemitic policy and social pressure had weakened or destroyed former friendships and acquaintanceships. The feeling that following the deportation orders was the only option was particularly acute among families wishing to remain together. Taking in a family was next to impossible for most Germans, due to lack of space and food, and very few large families went into hiding. On the eve of his family's submerging, for example, the one diver heard his mother remark "that there were four of them and, as such, had no possibility to flee."<sup>38</sup> Even when submerging was a possibility, some families opted for deportation rather than dispersing and living submerged but separated from one another: "We will remain together!"<sup>39</sup> Also, after eight years of humiliation and persecution, many people no longer had the will to resist. Gerda Fink and her husband escaped from the collection camp on the Große Hamburger Straße in order to evade deportation. Her father, however, simply had given up: "My father's nerves were so weakened by the death of my mother and sorrow over the carrying off of our relations, as well as by years-long persecution, that nothing mattered anymore. When we were picked up at the end of 1942, he made no attempt to escape these criminals."<sup>40</sup> By the time the deportations began, many people were too emotionally or physically broken to cope with the uncertainty and instability of submerging.

Fear and despair were not the only emotional factors that influenced the deportees. Communal solidarity and familial love in the face of persecution also provide a powerful explanation for why people boarded the trains. The very agency that enabled some Jews to flee also presented many with dilemmas about whether to do so. Among Zionists, the decision to go into hiding or comply with the deportation orders was a matter of principle.<sup>41</sup> By early 1942, many Zionists in Berlin reached the conclusion that they should demonstrate their solidarity with their Jewish brothers and sisters and allow themselves to be deported. Hechalutz, the Zionist youth movement dedicated to Jewish resettlement in Palestine, debated the matter. One member “. . . believed the Hechalutz pioneers had the ‘holy obligation’ to lead the Jews, even to deportation,” and many shared this opinion, arguing, in particular, against tearing apart families.<sup>42</sup> Others, however, embraced the ideas of flight and escape, rather than “letting [themselves] be slaughtered like an animal by the Nazis.”<sup>43</sup> As rumors began to circulate in 1942 about the final fate of the “resettled” Jews, the discussion acquired a new air of urgency.<sup>44</sup> Some Zionists opted to dive, with an eye on making it to the Swiss border and carrying out a new mission to “bear witness for posterity of the work of the German Hechalutz and the Youth Aliyah.”<sup>45</sup> Contact with a Swiss branch of Hechalutz, which helped facilitate escape over the border for Jews, made this an appealing alternative for those who rejected deportation.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to political and moral considerations, many Jews ultimately decided to go into hiding for personal reasons. The U-boat Gad Beck stated in his memoirs, “In the end, love was the final factor in making the decision to live illegally”; in this way, he remained with his friends and family.<sup>47</sup> Conversely, love for one’s family often was a driving force behind obeying the deportation summons.<sup>48</sup> One evening in the fall of 1942, the brothers of Manfred Lewin, Beck’s first love, summoned him to their apartment. The Gestapo had arrested their family while they had been at work. The brothers, however, decided to join their family at the collection center in the Große Hamburger Straße. Determined to save Manfred, Beck went to Manfred’s boss to discuss the situation. The boss lent Beck his son’s rather ill-fitting Hitler Youth uniform. Wearing this camouflage, Beck approached the officer in charge at the collection center. He claimed that Lewin was a saboteur and possessed keys to several apartments under renovation. He promised to return Lewin immediately, and the two left the collection camp. However, Manfred soon stopped Gad: “Gad, I can’t go with you. My family needs me.”<sup>49</sup>

There is, to be sure, something a bit implausible about the circumstances surrounding Manfred’s release, and the farewell between these two friends is perhaps a bit stylized in its published retelling more than half

a century later. On the whole, however, there is good reason to believe that Beck was telling the truth, perhaps literally, perhaps figuratively. If the tale Beck spun to have Manfred released seems implausible, we must bear in mind that stranger and even more improbable events occurred during the Holocaust that saved people's lives. Indeed, other equally daring and seemingly implausible moments recorded in Beck's memoir find confirmation in both survivor testimony as well as Nazi police records. Still, we must reckon with this particular moment, in which Beck lost his first love, not being literally true; this scene, after all, might have been a way for Beck to say goodbye to a person he never had the chance to say goodbye to, a person whose memory followed him for the rest of his life. Even if this were the case, there is a deeper, perhaps even more powerful truth to this scene, a truth often attested to by survivors: love. Love is an impossible value to quantify, and its powerful role should not be underestimated. In this case, as in countless others, the love that prompted Beck to submerge was the very same love that drove many Jews to share the fate of their families—regardless of what they knew or surmised about what awaited them in the east—and stay together when their deportation notification cards arrived.

The motives for compliance with deportation orders varied considerably: fear and despair, physical and emotional exhaustion, familial love, and solidarity are only some of the reasons why so many Jews obeyed orders for “evacuation.” Doubtless, other reasons remain unknown, having perished with their victims. Although many Jews did not consider defiance or resistance (in the form of suicide or submerging), they did grapple consciously and constantly with the grave implications of their predicament. Evidence demonstrates that deportation was an omnipresent subject of discussion and debate among Jews and not merely a tragedy that they accepted with quiet resignation. Indeed, for those who made the conscious decision to follow their deportation orders with their heads held high and their eyes open, the act of compliance, to put a spin on Lawrence Langer's term, was quite possibly their last “choiceful choice.”

## Suicide

Despite the more than fifty thousand Berlin Jews whom the Nazis deported with little or no difficulty, others refused to go. On 11 November 1941, Eugen and Anna V., both aged fifty-six years, ended their lives by gassing themselves in their kitchen. Besides requesting that their bodies be cremated, the couple V. left a note for their children:

[D]earest Children!

What we will now do, we do in order to shorten an agonizing, degrading life. It must be a relieving thought to know that we are at peace, rather than tormented and hunted and inwardly worn down, vegetating far from home. We are now peaceful and happy, more so than we have been for a long time. We ate supper, are now drinking a glass of wine, and will then head into the kitchen for our final sleep. Think back 3 years: thus have our days and nights become, though graver still, since all prospect of rescue now seems impossible. We are too old to await different times; hold tight. Remain strong, upright, and unbroken, and do not mourn for us. We will be fine, once all is passed. So many people are now dying in the prime of life.

The thought of never hearing from you again is a difficult one; and yet with the future that would lie before us should we live, we would still have to plan on hearing nothing from you for quite some time. We could never be of help or comfort to you. But do not be bitter! The difficult life that you must lead will educate you in ways different than the secure existence of our youth could. Still, rather than knowing that you are in misery, persecuted and hunted, I would prefer you dead. And so should you view our choice to move on.

My last thoughts go with you.

Your Mother

All my thoughts and feelings are with you.

Your Father.<sup>50</sup>

This letter is but one of many composed by Jews throughout Germany during the years of National Socialist rule as a final testament to their desperation, their rejection of Nazi persecution, and, in many cases, their final act of “self-assertion.”<sup>51</sup> To quote the historian Konrad Kwiet, “Suicide was the ultimate and most radical attempt to elude Nazi terror.”<sup>52</sup> Faced with an uncertain future or, for those who believed the whispers, mass murder and imminent death, well over one thousand Berlin Jews committed suicide, with perhaps as many as two thousand Berlin Jews taking their lives during the main period of the deportations from the city (October 1941–March 1943).<sup>53</sup> Persecution and fear of deportation were not the only motivating factors behind suicide. However, the high rate of Jewish suicides during this period and extensive eyewitness accounts leave no doubt of a strong link between deportation and suicide as

well as a growing suspicion throughout 1942 that the Nazis were killing those Jews they had deported.<sup>54</sup> Although a direct link between suicide and submerging is more difficult to establish, the pervasiveness of suicide in the city did have an impact on the future U-boats. Many experienced the pain of losing loved ones at this time. Indeed, some individuals who ultimately ended up diving first tried to take their own life. Moreover, suicide became such a recognized and daily response to Nazi persecution that feigning the act became a useful decoy for some Jews who submerged.

In his postwar commentary on the fate of the Jewish community in Berlin, the U-boat and prominent postwar Jewish West Berliner Siegmund Weltlinger estimated that of the approximately 160,000 Jews living in Berlin in 1933, roughly 7,000 died in Berlin during the following twelve years, the majority of them through suicide.<sup>55</sup> Nationwide, the figure is close to 10,000.<sup>56</sup> Christian Goeschel estimates that the deportation years between 1941 and 1943 accounted for anywhere between 3,000 and 4,000 suicides of Jews throughout Germany.<sup>57</sup> His argument that “German-Jewish suicides were a particular response to Nazi racial policy” is sound.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, throughout the 1930s, suicide numbers among German Jews generally peaked during major instances of Nazi persecution (e.g., the nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses organized in April 1933 or in the aftermath of Kristallnacht in November 1938).<sup>59</sup> Eyewitness testimony, the correlation between persecution and suicide rates, and the observations and attitudes of the authorities all validate his claim that suicide became “an everyday phenomenon among German Jews.”<sup>60</sup> When the first transport left Berlin on 18 October 1941, suicides of Jews therefore increased dramatically.<sup>61</sup> In 1941, 334 Jews took their lives in Berlin, and 64 others made the attempt.<sup>62</sup> In 1942, 888 Jews killed themselves and 168 Jews tried to do so.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the number of suicides and attempts by Jews in Berlin more than doubled after the deportations began. Finally, in the first quarter of 1943, when the last of the large-scale deportations took place, 205 ended their lives, with an additional 29 attempts.<sup>64</sup> The main motive for these suicides was “racial persecution,” and the Nazis knew it.<sup>65</sup> Police records frequently noted “upcoming evacuation” or “fear of deportation” as reasons for suicides and suicide attempts. However, official statistics do not list deportation as a motive for suicide.<sup>66</sup> Rather, the authorities categorized all suicides according to seven motivating factors: “Economic Difficulties”; “Incurable Disease”; “Melancholy or Poor Nerves”; “Love-sickness”; “Fear of Punishment”; “Family Disputes”; and “Other Reasons.” Authorities listed Jewish suicides overwhelmingly under this final category. In the first quarter of 1943, when 205 Jews committed suicides, all but seven suicides were listed under “Other Reasons.”<sup>67</sup> Similarly high proportions of suicides listed under “Other Reasons” are found in every

quarterly period between 1941 and 1943. Contemporary accounts from the Nazi authorities and Jews suggest a strong correlation between the deportations and incidents of Jews taking their lives. This connection also explains why suicide rates spiked when deportation transports left the city.<sup>68</sup> The fact that 142 Jews took their lives in the second quarter of 1942 while 381 did so in the third quarter reflects the jump in the number of transports from 17 to 62.<sup>69</sup> Thus, Nazi racial policy and the deportations likely account for the vast majority of the suicides listed under “Other Reasons.”<sup>70</sup>

The rate of successful suicides among Jews was higher than among non-Jews, indicating either a level of confidence in their choice, a more reliable method, or both.<sup>71</sup> Yet a small number of future U-boats also tried ending their lives during this period. Born in 1896, Grete Klein was the daughter of the former director of the Königsberg operatic theater. On 29 October 1941, however, she was waiting at the Levetzowstraße Synagogue collection point for a transport headed to Litzmannstadt in Poland.<sup>72</sup> Determined to kill herself, she managed to steal poison from the doctors’ quarters. However, her attempt failed, and she spent the first three weeks of November recovering in the Jewish Hospital.<sup>73</sup> During this time, a non-Jewish acquaintance of her father’s visited her regularly, despite the potential prison sentence involved for those who maintained “friendly relationships” with Jews.<sup>74</sup> After her convalescence, Grete registered with the Jewish Work Office and went to work at the Electrolux firm in Berlin-Tempelhof. She stayed there for two months before turning to her father’s acquaintance and his landlady for help in submerging. Grete and the very few others with similar experiences were fortunate; the authorities deported most Jews who attempted suicide immediately after their recovery.<sup>75</sup>

By the middle of 1942, suicide among the Jewish community in Berlin had reached epidemic proportions and no longer surprised anyone, including the Gestapo. Armed with this knowledge, some Jews intending to submerge feigned their own deaths. At the end of October 1942, Edith Ruth Epstein, fearing deportation, wrote her parents a goodbye note informing them of her plans to commit suicide; she then fled.<sup>76</sup> Edith was not alone. Two months later, on the night of 9 January 1943, Dr. Arthur Arndt, his wife Lina, and their two children, Ruth and Erich, left their apartment in Kreuzberg and departed to their respective hiding places. Before leaving the apartment, Dr. Arndt left behind a suicide note, informing the authorities of the family’s intention to end their lives.<sup>77</sup> Edith and Dr. Arndt hoped that a suicide note would throw the Gestapo off their trail for a time. In the time it took the Gestapo to verify the suicide notes, divers feigning suicide had gained a valuable window of time to disappear. Of course, false suicide notes did not protect those who submerged indefinitely. Without excellent forged papers, pass inspections



and denunciations ensnared thousands of U-boats. Feigning suicide, although potentially useful, was of limited use. These limitations notwithstanding, faking one's death is an early example of how some Jews in the city managed to manipulate the oppressive conditions created by the Nazis to their own advantage.

## Submerging

Suicide was not the only option for Jews who refused their evacuation summons. Ernst Borchardt took a different path: "As the situation of the Jews became ever more critical, I decided, in order to escape the looming deportation, to live illegally."<sup>78</sup> Borchardt was not alone in his choice. Between autumn 1941 and March 1943, approximately 6,500 Jews in the city attempted "to live illegally." Unlike suicides, however, which paralleled the rise and fall in the number of transports leaving the city, the prevalence of people submerging followed a different logic. Although every act of hiding was a direct response to the deportations, not all deportations prompted large numbers of Jews to hide. Indeed, until autumn 1942, the transports had a minimal impact on hiding rates. The prevalence of submerging, the specific factors prompting one to do so, and how one carried out the act varied over the sixteen months between the first transport leaving Berlin in October 1941 and the final, large-scale roundup of the city's Jewish populace at the end of February 1943.

A confluence of factors influenced when and how Jews submerged. Survivors discuss the deteriorating position of Jews in the city, receipt of their evacuation notice, or else their narrow escape from the Gestapo while at work or on the street. Rates of submerging and the processes surrounding the act depended on several considerations, including age and gender, employment status, knowledge of conditions in the east, and, in particular, evolving National Socialist policy in dealing with the "Jewish Question." Taken together, these variables explain the low rates of hiding throughout the first year of the deportations and the sudden, exponential growth in submerging rates during the last quarter of 1942 and the first quarter of 1943.

The history of submerging evolved over time and falls into three periods. The first period, between October 1941 and September 1942, was characterized by low rates of submerging. A combination of factors—lack of knowledge of events in the east, the demographics of the early deportees, and the possibility of having one's name removed from the deportation lists—account for the lack of attempts to hide. The second period of submerging lasted between October 1942 and the end of February 1943.

During this time, the number of people submerging grew rapidly. Although some individuals planned for their move underground, this phase witnessed increasingly last-minute acts of diving, often as the result of the Gestapo's innovations in its arrest tactics. The final period occurred during the Large Factory Operation. Initiated on Saturday, 27 February 1943, this event lasted several days, although most arrests occurred during the first two days.<sup>79</sup> This massive, nationwide roundup signified the end to legal life for all but several thousand Berlin Jews not in mixed marriages or of mixed-race status and prompted the single largest act of submerging in the city.<sup>80</sup> Over the course of that week, approximately 4,700 Berlin Jews fled.<sup>81</sup> However, as a result of the surprise nature of the operation and the disciplined behavior of the security forces charged with its execution, submerging was harried and difficult to pull off.

### Phase One: October 1941–September 1942

Forty-three-year-old Cäcilie Ott was one of the first divers in the city (see figure 1.1). She received her deportation notice in November 1941. Two days before her deportation—most likely the 27 November transport to Riga—an unnamed “acquaintance” offered her shelter.<sup>83</sup> Ott accepted and disappeared, taking with her only the “most necessary” of possessions.



Figure 1.1. Cäcilie Ott.<sup>82</sup>

On the evening of her departure, policemen appeared at her apartment: “The bird has flown the coop,” remarked one officer to the other, according to an acquaintance who listened in on the proceedings from the hallway.<sup>84</sup> Ott intentionally had left some money and personal papers behind, along with the suitcase packed for her deportation, in order to suggest that she had committed suicide and thereby delay a hunt for her, and the authorities visited the morgue in search of her body. Thus began Ott’s three-and-a-half-year submergence. She was supported by those who first took her in and by a sister who, until her husband’s death a couple of years later, lived in a privileged mixed marriage.<sup>85</sup>

Although the first several months of the deportations witnessed transports carrying one thousand individuals, relatively few people dived during 1941 and the first three quarters of 1942 (see figure 1.2).<sup>86</sup> Approximately 15 percent of this study’s sample submerged during this time, even while the Nazis deported approximately 36 percent of the city’s Jewish population.<sup>87</sup> Survivors who fled during the early months of the deportations are remarkably silent on the exact reasons they chose to do so. Many of them seem to have fled their deportations due to either previous encounters with the Nazis or else their strong political convictions rather than based on fears of what “resettlement” entailed. The majority of Berlin Jews did not submerge during these early months for three reasons: lack of knowledge of conditions in the east; the age and social composition of the early deportees; and the availability of legal and semi-legal recourses to forestalling deportation.

Unlike many survivors, Cäcilie Ott did not mention why she decided to submerge. At the time of her disappearance, she still had siblings in the city and maybe wished to remain with them. Perhaps her acquaintances had heard rumors about atrocities in the east and warned her. Yet rumors of mass killings were not widespread at this time and seem an

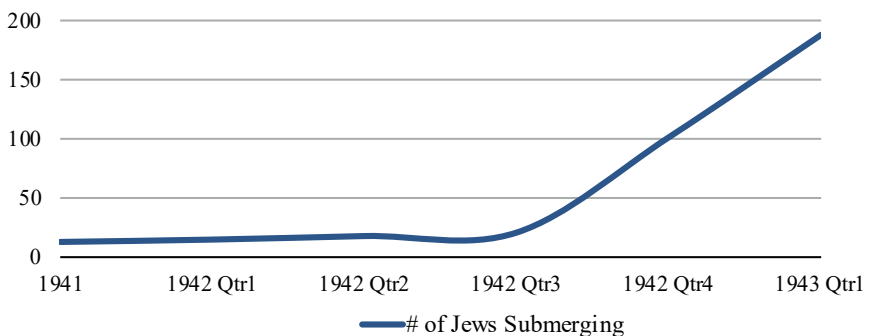


Figure 1.2. Rates of Submerging, October 1941–Qtr. 1, 1943.

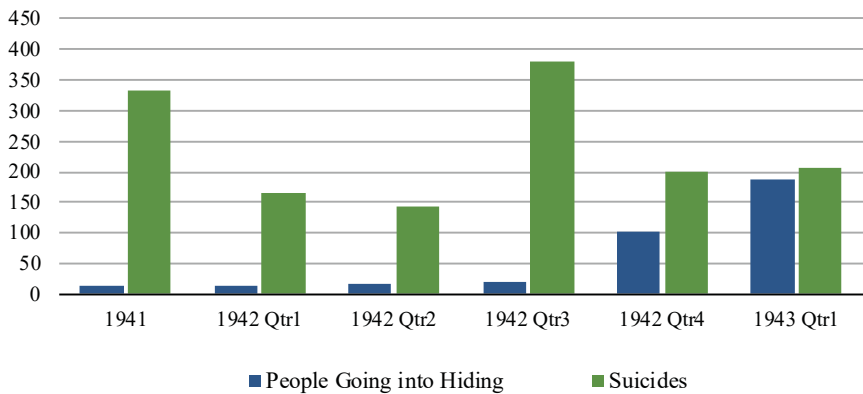
unlikely explanation. Although, in hindsight, Ott's decision to submerge was a wise choice, she could not have known the fate that awaited her in Riga; the Nazis executed the entire transport of one thousand Jews on 27 November 1941.<sup>88</sup> Certainly, the disappearance without a trace of one thousand Berlin Jews was bound to raise grave concerns, especially among Jews back in the city awaiting word from their deported family members. Even still, only 3 percent of U-boats in this study's sample submerged in 1941. For the few who survived and recorded their experiences, these individuals either had suffered multiple arrests in the preceding eight years, had lost family members in concentration camps, or had needed to flee arrest by the Gestapo.<sup>89</sup> For example, Ott's brother had been imprisoned in the Buchenwald concentration camp for five years, and he died there in 1942. With almost no information on the camps and ghettos, the best explanation for why people made the choice to submerge so early was their earlier experiences with Nazi brutality.

Continued lack of concrete information on the fate of the deported Jews also accounts for the low rates of hiding during the first year of the deportations. The Nazis justified the first deportation from Berlin as a measure designed to open up apartment space for party functionaries and people who had lost their apartments to air raids.<sup>90</sup> The administrative jargon of "resettlement" and "evacuation" did not yet arouse widespread fear and suspicion in those slated for deportation.<sup>91</sup> One survivor, who decided to dive with his family while packing for their deportation, recalled, "We thought, it won't be so cozy in Poland, but one will be able to survive."<sup>92</sup> In addition, the first deportees to Litzmannstadt were "almost without exception well dressed and carried with them on average 50 kilograms in baggage," and they boarded older passenger cars, according to one witness.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the nature of the deportees' departure contributed to the myth of an actual resettlement.

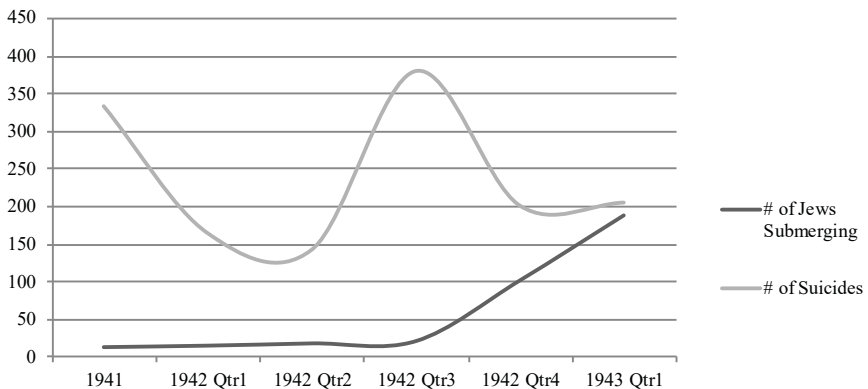
The demographics of the early deportees offer another explanation. The first transports to leave Berlin primarily carried elderly men and women.<sup>94</sup> When the deportations to the Theresienstadt ghetto began in 1942, the authorities scheduled people for deportation who were ". . . over 65 years of age as well as Jews 55 and older in delicate health along with family, provided they [were] not in a German-Jewish mixed-marriage, and their children under 14 years of age."<sup>95</sup> Only a small number of Jews 65 years of age or older (approximately 3 percent of this study's sample) submerged and survived.<sup>96</sup> The elderly were less able to cope physically and psychologically with the rigors of hiding than were younger Jews; suicide often remained their one outlet of "self-assertion."<sup>97</sup> Significantly, the data on submerging do not correspond neatly with available data on suicides in the city during this period, although both acts were responses

to Nazi persecution and deportation (see figures 1.3 and 1.4).<sup>98</sup> Whereas rates of submerging remained low throughout the first year of the deportations, suicide rates stayed high, rising and falling in tandem with the number of transports leaving the city.<sup>99</sup>

As figures 1.3 and 1.4 indicate, the rates of people diving remained largely unchanged once the deportations to Theresienstadt began during the second quarter of 1942, while suicide rates exploded. Although the age of the deportees and lack of knowledge were contributing factors, the social composition of many of the Theresienstadt transports also played a role in assuaging the fears of the deportees. Besides the elderly and young, the authorities deported respectable and important members of the Jewish community, including veterans of the First World War. Those excluded from the Theresienstadt transports included foreign Jews and Jews involved



**Figure 1.3.** Numbers of Submerging and Suicide, 1941–March 1943.



**Figure 1.4.** Comparative Numbers of Suicides and People Submerging (1941–1943).

in industries essential to the war effort.<sup>100</sup> Though usually only a stop on the way to the camps and ghettos farther east, Theresienstadt doubtless played a role in cloaking the true meaning behind the deportations.<sup>101</sup>

Due to the dangers inherent in submerging, Jews avoided submerging for as long as possible. Once they fled their deportations, they no longer had legal access to ration cards or housing and had to contend with the daily threat of arrest and deportation. Indeed, the growing desperation among members of Germany's Jewish community caused many of them to turn to various individuals and agencies that they saw as being able to help them avoid deportation. To this end, Jews had three options open to them, short of submerging immediately or committing suicide. First, Jews could attempt to obtain a reprieve from the deportation. Usually, this came through what was known as a *Reklamation*, an official complaint from their employer; this was a common practice until the beginning of 1943 for Jews employed in war-related industries. A second option was to turn to high-ranking administrators in the Reichsvereinigung who sometimes were able to remove names from transport lists.<sup>102</sup> Connected to this was a third and highly uncertain possibility: the bribery of Gestapo officials, which could also be an option for those with sufficient financial means at their disposal. Indeed, the precarious position of Jews made some of them highly susceptible to the false promises of certain grifters masquerading as "emigration consultants" (*Auswanderungsberater*) who attempted to—at times successfully—bilk unsuspecting Jews out of hundreds of Reichsmarks in exchange for supposed exemption from the deportations.<sup>103</sup>

Employed Jews certainly had the greatest legal chance of avoiding deportation through obtaining a *Reklamation* from their employer. After the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 and the entrance of the United States into the war in December 1941, forced labor served as a form of protection for thousands of Jews in the city. The future U-boat Paula Vigdor remembered her boss telling her and her coworkers that should they ever receive an evacuation summons to come see him immediately. When Vigdor received her first evacuation summons in November 1942, her boss got her a *Reklamation*.<sup>104</sup> The motivations behind the majority of these employer complaints are unclear. Certainly, economics played a dominant role: the cost of hiring and training new employees was a consideration. However, a complaint also was the simplest, most effective way for employers sympathetic to the situation of Berlin Jews to help their employees.<sup>105</sup> Official complaints by factories, however, worked only for those still employed in industries essential to the war effort, and the number of Jews working in such industries fell from a peak of 26,000–28,000 in the summer of 1941 to approximately 15,100 on 1 January 1943.<sup>106</sup> Even in the summer of 1941, no more than 35–38 percent of Berlin Jews were employed in forced labor. Thus, almost two-

thirds of Berlin Jews were in danger of immediate deportation.<sup>107</sup> Still, *Reklamationen* figure prominently in some postwar survivor accounts and demonstrate that many of the future U-boats benefitted from this early alternative to deportation. Moreover, the number of survivors who attest to the importance of such reprieves, however temporary they were, also demonstrates exactly how attuned many future U-boats were to the complex and ever-shifting bureaucracy that surrounded them and structured their daily lives in the final years leading up to their decision to submerge.

Individuals unable to obtain a *Reklamation* resorted to other tactics to delay their deportation. High-ranking administrators in the Reichsvereinigung sometimes were able to remove names from transport lists.<sup>108</sup> Bribery also was an option for those with sufficient financial means at their disposal. Thus, Dr. Charlotte Bamberg bribed an official in the “Speer Ministry” to remove her name from a 1942 transport.<sup>109</sup> Yet the precarious position of Jews also made them vulnerable to people looking to turn a profit. Between autumn 1941 and March 1942, for example, the salesman Friedrich Wetzel and his accomplice Dr. Walther Schotte fraudulently collected 14,500 RM from sixteen Jews in return for a promise to have their names removed from the deportation lists. In some cases, Wetzel even promised to have their racial standing changed from *Volljude* (full Jew) to either *Mischling* (half Jew) or *Arier* (Aryan).<sup>110</sup>

The scam run by Wetzel and Schotte is not only a sad and telling indicator of the increasing desperation felt by Berlin’s Jewish residents in 1941, but it also demonstrates a working knowledge on the parts of both perpetrator and victim of how the Nazi state functioned. Like the *Reklamation*, it shows that many Jews (and non-Jews) understood the regime’s racial laws and were well aware of how its administrative and deportation policies functioned. Individuals looking to swindle Jews clearly used this information to their advantage. The police noted in their investigation of Wetzel and Schotte that the accused knew quite well that a reprieve from deportation could only be granted by the State Police and only in cases where the individual was over sixty-five years old, infirmed, or involved in a war-related industry. Even then, a medical certificate issued by the Jewish Hospital in Berlin was required; still, medical certification did not guarantee a reprieve, as the Gestapo had the final say.<sup>111</sup> Also, in a paranoid system that pivoted on the idea of race and racial purity, both Jews and non-Jews understood even in the early days of the deportation that racial status meant all the difference. Thus, in some cases, Wetzel’s promise to have one’s racial status altered to either *Mischling* or Aryan status demonstrates that although the fatal consequences of deportation were not yet fully understood, the link between full-Jewish racial status and the “evacuations” was certainly clear. Nor was Wetzel the only one promising such a change in racial status. Extant applications to the Ger-

man medical authorities from Jews seeking to have their or their child's racial status changed to *Mischling* or Aryan testify to an understanding on the part of both perpetrator and victim that such a thing was possible.<sup>112</sup> That at least sixteen Jews testified that Wetzel had been recommended to them and that they had believed his claims to be able to protect them attests to Wetzel's knowledge of the system and his confidence in his own lies. In addition, both perpetrators and victims in this instance understood that the Nazi bureaucracy was far from incorruptible. The belief that deportation reprieves could be bought with the right connections provides interesting insight into the way both perpetrators of crime and their Jewish victims understood the Nazi state to function, whatever pretenses the Nazis may have maintained to the contrary. While corruption undoubtedly was a fixture of the Nazi state, both Jews desperate to avoid deportation and individuals eager to capitalize off of that desperation failed to understand one central point. Corruption, if and when tolerated, was the privilege of ideologically and racially pure members of the *Volks-gemeinschaft*.<sup>113</sup> Its privileges did not apply to Jews.<sup>114</sup>

Ultimately, whatever the particular route(s), legal or otherwise, Jews chose to forestall their deportation, most attempts at a reprieve ended in failure. Charlotte Bodlaender received her evacuation summons in late December 1941 (figure 1.5). To prevent her deportation, she arranged



Figure 1.5. Charlotte Bodlaender.<sup>115</sup>



a marriage with a member of the Jewish community who worked for the city and who had thus been granted a stay of his deportation. Bodlaender scheduled her wedding for 25 January 1942. The authorities, however, scheduled her evacuation for 23 January. Although she had her papers in order, the Gestapo asked Bodlaender to appear before them to discuss the matter. An active member of the forbidden Communist Party of Germany (KPD), Bodlaender feared a trap and immediately went underground with the aid of members of her political circle.<sup>116</sup> When she submerged, however, she was in an extreme minority and would remain so until the autumn of 1942. At that point, a shift in Nazi deportation policy in the city and the overall deteriorating position of Jews prompted a massive upswing in the number of people submerging.

### Phase Two: October 1942–26 February 1943

On 2 December 1942, the non-Jewish journalist and future “Righteous among the Nations” Ruth Andreas-Friedrich opened her diary with a bleak entry:

The Jews are submerging in droves. Dreadful rumors concerning the fate of the evacuated. From mass shootings to starvation, from torture to gassing. No one can voluntarily expose oneself to such a risk. . . .<sup>117</sup>

By the end of 1942, the notable flight underground of thousands of Jews in the city was underway. During the last quarter of 1942 and the first quarter of 1943, approximately 70 percent of this study’s sample made the choice to submerge. Four factors explain this phenomenon. First, the whisperings of mass shootings and gassings in the east had ceased to be a rumor for increasing numbers of Berliners. Fewer Jews held any illusions concerning the fate that awaited them. Second, foreign laborers began to supplant Jewish laborers, and a *Reklamation* became substantially more difficult to obtain. Third, the average age of Jews in the city was younger than it had been a year prior, and most were largely employed in war-related industries. Younger Jews were better able to cope with the physical and psychological rigors of life on the run than were older Jews, and, due to their employment status, they were able to put off submerging until the end of 1942. Fourth, in the fall of 1942, the Berlin Gestapo significantly altered its arrest and deportation tactics. This shift reflected the regime’s increasing determination to solve the “Jewish Question” and reinforced in the minds of Jews the precarious nature of their existence. For those individuals who made adequate preparations to dive, the act of submerging during this period often represented more of a transition than an immediate plunge into the unknown. However, the evolving methods of

the Gestapo increasingly forced the hands of many Jews, prompting, by the end of 1942, increasingly ill-prepared and last-minute efforts to avoid deportation.

Throughout the summer of 1942, rumors of mass executions and gasings surfaced in Berlin. Although difficult to believe, the rumors became so omnipresent as to convince many Jews of their truth. Letters from the east grew increasingly ominous in their content before eventually stopping. Cioma Schönhaus, temporarily exempt from the deportations due to a *Reklamation*, received the following letter from his father in the Majdanek concentration camp: “Dear people, I have arrived here safely. Have you heard anything from Fanja? I have been looking for Mama everywhere. Cioma was right about everything. I’m glad he’s not here with us. Farewell, Your Beba.”<sup>118</sup> Other individuals learned about the killings from gentile sources. Kurt Lindenberg, adept at moving through the city without wearing the obligatory star, received confirmation of his fears from soldiers back on furlough as well as civilians who had been in the east. Their eyewitness accounts of mass murder convinced Lindenberg of the need to “scarper” underground: “I told myself that it was better to freeze in the Berliner Tiergarten than to die like an animal of cholera or typhoid fever or be slaughtered in Poland.”<sup>119</sup> By the end of 1942, such attitudes were commonplace among members of the Jewish community and contributed to the sharp rise in the number of divers in the city.

Moreover, by late 1942, the *Reklamation* was no longer an effective means of forestalling deportation. The original purpose of forced Jewish labor as an element of Nazi antisemitic policy had been to harness the productive energy of the Jewish unemployed to the benefit of the state while simultaneously extending control over the Jewish population.<sup>120</sup> By 1942, however, Nazi victories throughout Europe provided the state with sufficient new sources of forced labor, most notably from the USSR and Poland, to replace Jewish forced laborers in Germany. Beginning in 1943, more than one hundred thousand forced laborers arrived in Germany each month.<sup>121</sup> By the summer of 1943, over four hundred thousand foreign laborers had arrived in the city.<sup>122</sup> Whereas a *Reklamation* for skilled laborers in 1941 and early 1942 provided months of protection from deportation, such exemptions by the end of 1942 bought Jews perhaps only a few weeks, at most.<sup>123</sup> The plentiful supply of foreign laborers now obviated any further economic arguments for a *Reklamation*.

Gender and age also affected submerging rates. Current research strongly suggests that, relative to their percentage of the population, fewer women made the decision to submerge than men did, with women comprising approximately 55 percent of the surviving U-boats.<sup>124</sup> Although still accounting for more than half of all divers, this figure is slightly less than

the overall percentage of Berlin's female Jewish population. In part, this discrepancy can be explained by the fact that women with children were hesitant to submerge, and thus, spur-of-the-moment flights tended to be undertaken by younger women and single women during the final months of the major deportations from the city in late 1942 and early 1943. Another explanation is that younger, single women often remained the only remaining caretakers for their elderly and infirmed family members and did not want to abandon them by submerging; they also knew their elderly relatives could not handle the dangers and pressures of an illegal life on the run.<sup>125</sup> Yet even many of these single women faced the difficult choice of staying with their families or fleeing.<sup>126</sup> As for mothers, even if they managed to find places for their children to hide, the thought of being separated from them and leaving behind their precarious—but still legal—existence prevented many from submerging until the last minute or even at all.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, of the fifty-five individuals this book has identified as submerging during the Large Factory Operation at the end of February 1943, 65 percent were women.<sup>128</sup>

Concerning age, by the end of the first year of the deportations, the average age of the Jewish community was younger and employed. The earlier transports mainly were composed of the elderly, and suicides were highest among older Jews unable to cope with the uncertain prospects of deportation or life underground.<sup>129</sup> Younger Jews were more likely to submerge than older Jews, and approximately two-thirds of all survivors in hiding were forty-five years of age or younger when the deportations began. Evidence also suggests that younger Jews sometimes were instrumental in persuading their elders to flee.<sup>130</sup> In part, this has to do with the resilience and optimism of youth as well as its greater willingness to take risks. Also, many of these individuals were quite young when the Nazis came to power. They grew up in what one young diver described as a “bandit state,” and they had not been instilled with the same respect for order and the rule of law that their elders had. For instance, nineteen-year-old Erich Arndt convinced his parents to dive. When he first approached his family with the idea, the deportations had been going on for about a year. Erich kept coming home, his sister recalls, with ever more stories of people who had submerged. Initially hesitant that a family of four could find someone to take them in, Erich's father finally told his son to give it a try.<sup>131</sup> The Arndts were fortunate to have had many friendly neighbors; a number were former patients of Erich's father, a neighborhood doctor. As something of a practice run, the Arndts stayed with two families on a couple of occasions. Eventually, Erich approached his neighbors about the idea of submerging. They supported the idea and even agreed to scout out other people who could help. In the meantime, the neighbors sug-

gested that the family bring any valuables to their place for safe storage. Beginning in October or November 1942, the family began transporting goods in secret to their neighbor's apartment. Finally, on 9 January 1943, the family submerged. The help the Arndts received from sympathetic non-Jews ensured not only that the family members had places to hide but also that six people ultimately found refuge instead of four, including Erich's girlfriend and her mother, making this one of the largest groups to submerge in Berlin.<sup>132</sup>

The Arndt family planned for their move underground, giving them a substantial advantage. Individuals who put credence in the rumors circulating about the ghettos and camps had time to put their affairs in order and plan for some of the unpredictability sure to accompany illegal life in the city. Early divers had more options than people who waited; the relatively large numbers of Jews still living legally in Berlin meant that those who dived early enough occasionally had friends and family who could take them in.<sup>133</sup> For example, Herta Fuß spent her first three months submerged with Jews who were still living openly in Berlin.<sup>134</sup> Non-Jews also convinced their Jewish friends and acquaintances that they should refuse the deportation summons and either dive immediately or, when deportation looked imminent, come to them for help.<sup>135</sup>

In some cases, aid from strangers appeared unexpectedly. The non-Jew Maria Nickel first met Ruth Abraham on the street in the autumn of 1942. Abraham was pregnant with her daughter. They exchanged addresses, and Nickel visited her around Christmas of that year. Nickel's second visit occurred in January 1943, while Abraham was recovering at her aunt's apartment after having given birth. Sometime between late January and early February, the Gestapo arrested Abraham's aunt. At this point, Nickel urged the family to flee and even offered her and her husband's ID cards for the Abrahams' use.<sup>136</sup> The proactive manner in which Nickel approached and befriended the Abraham family was a rare occurrence, with respect to the entire Jewish population, but far more common among people who fled their deportation. Through Nickel, the Abrahams made invaluable connections that were to sustain them in hiding for over two years. Consorting with Jews was a dangerous act, but helpers such as Nickel were essential for survival.

The U-boat Kurt Lindenberg claims that "almost all people" who submerged had money set aside and/or connections with "Aryan" family members.<sup>137</sup> Whether one can use the phrase "almost all people" is doubtful. However, those without family, friends, or useful connections were at a severe disadvantage. Almost no person survived the war without help at some point from non-Jews and/or family members in mixed marriages. Ample evidence suggests that many individuals had little or no money

with them and no ration cards, leading them to look for work or else rely on the hospitality of friends, acquaintances, and strangers.<sup>138</sup> However, advance preparation was widespread enough for survivors to remark upon not having been well prepared: “I do not belong those [groups of] people, whose well-filled briefcases made a well-prepared illegal life possible.”<sup>139</sup> People who made plans to submerge often were better equipped to handle the deprivations and economic challenges of illegal life on the run, at least for a time. Although Lindenberg’s belief concerning what made submerging a success might not apply to everyone, he rightly claims that those who dived before the Gestapo was at their door had an advantage.<sup>140</sup>

Indeed, Lindenberg was one of those individuals who made plans to submerge. However, once he finalized his plans, he continued to wait. An immediate flight underground was inadvisable, as his absence from work would have been reported to the Gestapo, and he feared such an action would result in his family’s deportation. Still, he took other measures he thought necessary to prepare himself for that day. He stored clothes with non-Jewish acquaintances, saved every “pfennig” possible from work, and created two escape routes. The first led out of his family’s apartment through a metal grate to the roof of the building, which he had sawed through and carefully replaced. He also made a copy of a key to the back door of his factory.<sup>141</sup> Thus, while leaving the date of his submerging open, Lindenberg did all he could to prepare for the moment when his deportation arrived.

He did not have long to wait. Of all the factors influencing submerging rates during this period, the arrival of agents of the Viennese Gestapo in October 1942 was paramount. Although not solely responsible for the increase in the number of people diving, the Viennese Gestapo underscored the gravity of the situation; indeed, some U-boats specifically refer to the “Viennese Gestapo.”<sup>142</sup> These agents had a reputation that far outweighed their numbers. Charged with ridding the city of its Jewish residents, the Viennese Gestapo introduced new arrest and deportation “methods.” The introduction of these so-called “Viennese methods” (*Wiener-Methoden*) paralleled a surge in people fleeing the transports.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, as 1942 waned, fewer Jews had any doubts as to what lay in store for them. They needed to decide soon whether to submerge. The Gestapo became increasingly determined to make the decision for them.

Under the direction of SS-Hauptsturmführer Alois Brunner, agents from Vienna arrived in Berlin, partly in response to allegations of corruption on the part of Berlin’s Gestapo leaders. Brunner arrived with his “mission” clear: “[t]o show the Prussian pigs how one deals with those bastards, the Jews.”<sup>144</sup> In order to facilitate the arrest and deportation of the city’s Jews, Brunner augmented existing policies and introduced new ones,

including the expansion of the collection centers at the Levetzowstraße Synagogue and in the Große Hamburger Straße.<sup>145</sup> Of particular importance for the history of the U-boats, Jews no longer received advance notice of their deportation, a tactic employed to prevent people from committing suicide or diving underground. Instead, officers now surprised them in their homes or on the streets, catching people unawares and bringing them in trucks to a collection center for deportation.<sup>146</sup> Brunner created a map of Berlin, demarcating the Jewish residences, thus allowing for effective and large-scale raids built on the elements of fear and surprise.<sup>147</sup>

Those individuals who had become adept at moving through the streets without wearing the Jewish Star sometimes were able to avoid these surprise roundups. Indeed, since the introduction of the star in September 1941, many Jews who chafed at the onerous and continually increasing number of restrictions placed on them by the Nazis and the violence and vitriol such a physical marker inspired in segments of the German population quickly learned how to navigate without the star and without getting caught, so that they could continue to take advantage of activities such as going to the movies, shopping outside of restricted shopping times, and visiting restaurants and cafés.<sup>148</sup> Kurt Lindenberg, who considered himself one of those Jewish Berliners possessing what he termed a “will to resist,” spent a noteworthy portion of his testimony explaining how he and others managed it, so important was the act to how he viewed himself and his ability to survive:

[Not wearing the star] naturally entailed some difficulties as soon as one moved around one’s neighborhood streets. Since people there knew me, I had to be able to show the star on my left arm, which I always kept bent, as soon as someone asked me. Therefore, I fabricated a star that I attached to a cloth panel [*Blechtoile*] and held it there with a strong needle. This “star” was attached so firmly that on casual inspection it appeared sewed on. As soon as I was out of my “neighborhood,” I could inconspicuously let the star disappear and again walk with my arm held normally. With time, I acquired a certain conjuror’s skill. For example, I could jump with the “star” on my arm onto a moving bus, and while the conductor was busy punching my ticket, I let the “star” on my jacket disappear literally under the conductor’s nose. Something similar worked in reverse. One could board the bus without the “star,” and when one alighted at home, the “star” sat on the left arm, without even one of the bus passengers having seen what I had done.<sup>149</sup>

Lindenberg’s methods were far from unique, however ingenious he portrays his methods. The trick, commonly understood by Jews in the city

and likely shared between them, was to make the star looked firmly sewed on and yet easily removable once one had reached a part of the city where one was unknown; for all Berlin Jews, even the most daring, understood the folly and danger of walking around their own neighborhood without the star. Indeed, Lindenberg was taking a risk even by walking in his own neighborhood with his left arm bent to obscure the star, as fanatical Nazis could and did denounce individuals who did not wear the star prominently enough or else tried to cover it up, for example, by walking with one's briefcase covering it.<sup>150</sup> Fortunately, the size of Berlin and its many neighborhoods made anonymity far more possible than in smaller cities and towns, where moving around without the star was more dangerous, if not impossible. Yet however much learning to safely navigate the city without wearing the star might have helped these individuals avoid a number of surprise roundups, the Berlin Gestapo's agents still reduced the "legal" Jewish population in the city to some six thousand within five months due to its new arrest tactics.<sup>151</sup>

When members of the Gestapo arrived at an apartment building, they first blocked off the entrance, making escape difficult. The element of surprise played a large role. Unless one had planned and made an escape route, the only options were to try to hide somewhere in the apartment or not answer the door, in the hopes that the agents would leave.<sup>152</sup> Gentile neighbors could help or hinder in the process. Herta Fuß's building supervisor locked her in the cellar when "a large car" pulled up to her apartment.<sup>153</sup> She waited until the coast was clear and fled to Jewish acquaintances. Due to the seeming random nature of the raids, some people took no chances and submerged at the first sign of a raid in their vicinity.<sup>154</sup> The Gestapo informed those caught in their apartments that they had a certain amount of time (an hour or less) to pack a suitcase and come along. Agents and Jewish orderlies loaded the arrested onto trucks and then proceeded to the next building until the trucks (each holding up to thirty people) were full. They then sealed and locked the apartment, leaving inside any remaining possessions they did not confiscate or destroy immediately.<sup>155</sup> Unlike earlier deportation procedures that took entire families together and gave advance notice, the surprise raids meant that individuals arrived home from work or shopping to find their family deported and their apartment sealed against entry.<sup>156</sup> For those who had been considering diving, a sealed apartment was a terrible blow, often separating them from the few possessions and little amount of money they still had. Frequent reports, such as the following, from the various police precincts throughout Berlin at this time testify to the determination of some people to get back into their apartments:

*Broken Seal.* 7 January 1943

The building superintendent at Weinbergsweg 9 informed us on January 6 that the Jewish fugitive Gustav Israel Warowitz, born September 25, 1897 in Tuchow and formerly residing in Berlin at Weinbergsweg 9, removed the seal placed on his front door by the Jewish Kultusvereinigung and took some things from the apartment.

W. is evading the evacuation and moving around Berlin without wearing the Jewish Star.<sup>157</sup>

Those still in possession of keys had this option. However, this was a risky move. Sometimes, Gestapo agents were waiting for people when they returned to their sealed apartments.

The raids trapped Jews throughout the city. Herta Fuß, sheltered by Jewish acquaintances in their apartment after her initial dive, was caught unawares one day when the Gestapo arrived to arrest the occupants. Fuß hid under the bed while the others were taken away.<sup>158</sup> Such a narrow escape was not as improbable as it might seem. The same chaos of the surprise raids that trapped unsuspecting people also made it possible for people to slip through the cracks in the bureaucracy. The Gestapo agents had dozens of individuals to arrest. They had their lists of names and did not necessarily have time to search every building and every potential hiding place for unknown persons who may or may not have been there. Indeed, as already mentioned, just as agents did not always bother to break down doors when people pretended not to be at home, they also were not going to search every apartment when every person they were supposed to arrest was present and accounted for. They also did not always wait around when they showed up at an apartment and one of the inhabitants was at work; in their arrogance, they believed that, sooner or later, everyone would fall into their murderous grasp.

Along with raids on apartments, raids in the streets trapped many people. On 20 January 1943, the police arrested Berta Bernstein on the Rosenthaler Platz. She was not wearing the Jewish Star, and police discovered that she had fled her deportation summons.<sup>159</sup> Nine days later, the Nazis deported Bernstein to Auschwitz.<sup>160</sup> A wrong turn also could have disastrous consequences. On 17 January 1943, police stopped eighteen-year-old Günter Loewenberg for trying to drive down a closed street. After the officer ascertained that he had no papers, Loewenberg tried to flee but drove down a dead end. Indeed, the very size of Berlin that provided anonymity and made it conducive to submerging also meant that it could trip people up when navigating unfamiliar parts of the city. The arresting officer sat himself next to Loewenberg and forced him to drive to police headquarters. On the way, Loewenberg pretended that the car broke down. When the officer got out to inspect the engine, Loewenberg jumped back in the



car and drove off. An officer by the name of Schmidt got in front of the vehicle to force it to stop, but Loewenberg kept driving, a testament to his determination and desperation. Schmidt jumped on the radiator of the car and managed, after one hundred meters, to bring the vehicle to a halt. The police arrested Loewenberg and brought him to the local headquarters.<sup>161</sup> On 18 April 1944, the Nazis deported Loewenberg to Auschwitz.<sup>162</sup> By the end of 1942, the position of Berlin's remaining Jews had so deteriorated that the question was no longer if one would be deported but when, and it was this climate of persecution that explains the massive upswing in people submerging during the last quarter of 1942 and the first quarter of 1943.

By this time, then, submerging increasingly was a direct response to the Final Solution now sweeping Europe. It is also important to bear in mind that despite more than eight years of persecution when the first transports left Berlin in October 1941, those deportation transports appeared in Berlin somewhat later and continued longer than they did farther east and within Germany proper. Berlin Jews, despite reduced ration cards and incomplete attempts to create so-called *Judenhäuser*, did not face nearly the same degree of starvation and killing that plagued the inhabitants of the Polish ghettos, which began to be established beginning in the fall of 1939; indeed, by December 1939, at least fifty thousand Polish Jews had already perished.<sup>163</sup> Even the introduction of the *Judenstern* in Germany came only in September 1941 (compared to two years earlier in Poland). With the invasion of the Soviet Union, the war for the annihilation of Europe's Jews began in earnest, but again, the outright slaughter that occurred there did not occur back in Germany. With the coordination of the Final Solution at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 and the construction of most of the main extermination camps that year—Chelmno in December 1941; Bełżec in March 1942; Sobibór in May 1942; Treblinka in July 1942<sup>164</sup>—the killings escalated dramatically. By the time that the last major roundups of Jews in Berlin occurred at the end of February 1943, most other German cities had already deported the vast majority of their significantly smaller Jewish populations, and three-quarters of all Jewish victims of the Holocaust were already dead.<sup>165</sup> Certainly, tens of thousands of German Jews were deported (especially in the first full year of the deportations), having no idea of the fate that awaited them. By the fall of 1942, however, the scale of murder was so great that it could not help but make its way back to Berlin's relatively large remaining Jewish population, and the Nazis went to little effort to hide the truth in Germany, even if they did not come right out and say it. Although conclusive evidence was lacking for most of Berlin's population (both Jewish and non-Jewish), eyewitness accounts from soldiers home

on furlough, public speeches made both by Hitler and Goebbels, and “rumors” about the large-scale murder published in such official party organs such as the *Völkischer Beobachter* made it clear for those individuals who wanted to listen that deadly events were occurring farther east.<sup>166</sup>

Yet as much as the decision to dive was a response to the increasingly substantiated rumors, survivors who submerged during this time remain silent on one important factor that presumably might have played a role in their decision: the course of the war, in particular, the German Wehrmacht’s defeat at Stalingrad. The capitulation of over ninety thousand soldiers of the 6th Army under the command of General Friedrich Paulus on 2 February 1943 marked a strategic turning point in Nazi Germany’s fortunes. The formerly unstoppable Nazi war machine had been dealt a decisive blow. As the news reached Berlin, opponents of the regime, Jews and non-Jews alike, must have taken heart. A not unreasonable assumption might be that the battle encouraged Jews that survival was possible, if they could just hold out a little longer by submerging.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, resistance throughout Europe, both by non-Jews and Jews, increased in the aftermath of Stalingrad, which was shortly followed by the loss of all of North Africa and, in the summer of 1943, the Allied invasion of Sicily. The more the war turned against the Nazis, the more hope took hold that survival and liberation were possible.<sup>168</sup> However, survivor accounts are almost uniformly silent on Stalingrad and its influence on decisions to submerge. Jews in the city were aware of the battle’s progress and spread the word.<sup>169</sup> Doubtless, the Nazi defeat was welcome news and afforded some measure of hope.<sup>170</sup> Yet Stalingrad was over 1,300 miles from Berlin. Even a swift defeat would take months. Moreover, at the time, Stalingrad did not spell certain defeat for the Nazis. Due to the lack of survivor commentary on the battle, it is therefore difficult to gauge the extent to which the battle prompted hesitant Jews to submerge. Certainly, rates of submerging continued to increase throughout the month of February, and Stalingrad might have been the reason, but without survivor testimony to corroborate the link between the battle and the decision to submerge, such a claim is difficult to assert with absolute certainty. Even still, considering the influence that the German defeat at Stalingrad had on resistance movements throughout Europe, Stalingrad should at the very least be seen as having provided hope for those Jews willing to submerge and those non-Jews willing to support them. Perhaps for some, even, it was a key motivating factor.

Agents of the Viennese Gestapo left Berlin in January 1943, but they also “left behind distinct traces.”<sup>171</sup> These “traces” proved invaluable to the Berlin Gestapo one month later when it coordinated the roundup and deportation of the majority of the city’s remaining Jews during the

nationwide Large Factory Operation. On 18 February 1943, Joseph Goebbels noted in his diary that the operation would commence on 28 February 1943: “The Jews in Berlin now finally will be deported. With the deadline on February 28, they will all first be brought together and then deported in daily batches of up to 2000.”<sup>172</sup> Although few Jews in Berlin were aware of the intended operation, what remained of their precarious existence as legal residents was about to disappear. For people still willing to take the risk, the time to go underground was upon them.

### Phase Three: The Large Factory Operation: 27 February–5 March 1943

On 26 February, Moritz Henschel, the head of the Reichsvereinigung, approached Siegmund Weltlinger and requested that he be ready on the following day to participate in the roundup of Jews in a “large search operation.” Weltlinger, a leading member of the Jewish community, refused again, just as he had refused all previous requests to act as a collector (*Abholer*). Henschel was not dissuaded: “I cannot grant you dispensation for this day, and if you refuse, I will notify the Gestapo. The consequences will be yours to bear.” Weltlinger said nothing but returned home and, a few hours later, submerged with his wife Margarete (see figures 1.6 and 1.7).<sup>173</sup>



Figure 1.6. Siegmund Weltlinger.<sup>174</sup>



Figure 1.7. Margarete Weltlinger.<sup>175</sup>

The “large search operation” to which Henschel referred was what became known as the Large Factory Operation (*Große Fabrik-Aktion*).<sup>176</sup> Initiated on Saturday, 27 February 1943, and lasting less than one week, this massive roundup signified the end to legal life for all but several thousand Jews not in a mixed marriage or of so-called mixed-race status.<sup>177</sup> Over the course of that week, approximately 4,700 of the remaining 11,000 Jewish forced laborers went into hiding.<sup>178</sup> In other words, roughly 43 percent of the remaining Jewish workers plus their families fled during this time and managed to evade arrest, if only for a short while.<sup>179</sup> The operation meant that an illegal life was the one viable alternative to deportation, signaling a final call to act and an irrevocable break with what remained of pre-war life. Kurt Lindenberg recalled, “It was the day I decided to take my life-deciding initiative completely in hand and the day that meant I had irrevocably lost my parents and now began an underground life . . .”<sup>180</sup>

The Nazis were prepared for this final operation and directed the energies of much of the Berlin security apparatus toward their goal of arresting over ten thousand Jews within one week. Through the end of March, the authorities deported over 8,600 Jews from Berlin.<sup>181</sup> The Gestapo was responsible for coordinating the arrests in designated factories and firms, and the Waffen-SS was charged with overseeing the arrests and transports.<sup>182</sup> However, the Gestapo did not reserve the operation’s scope to factories and firms where Jews worked. Around 8:00 A.M., members of the municipal police (*Schutzpolizei*) received Order Nr. 5620, ordering the police to arrest all Jews encountered on the streets and bring them to one of several collection camps throughout the city.<sup>183</sup> The Gestapo began the operation on Saturday at 7:00 A.M. The day before, the Gestapo had notified leaders of the Reichsvereinigung and those firms employing Jews, although it had been known for some time that such an event was in the works.<sup>184</sup> Yet, with few exceptions, the exact nature and extent of the operation was not clear until the morning it took place. Experience with Jewish suicides and flight, coupled with the training received at the hands of the Viennese Gestapo, had honed the Berlin Gestapo’s methods of conducting roundups. In many cases, Jews had little or no warning before their arrests, although suspicions of a massive roundup had been growing over the previous weeks. Rumors of a massive action against the Jews, combined with increasing arrests and deportations, are the logical explanation for the sharp increase in the numbers of people going into hiding. However covert Goebbels intended the planning of the operation to be, its scope made keeping it secret impossible. In addition to Gestapo, SS, and *Schutzpolizei* involvement, the RSHA (Reich Main Security Office), the Armaments Inspection of the Wehrmacht, the Labor Administration, firms and factories, as well as other ministry bureaucrats and city leaders

knew of the impending raids on the factories.<sup>185</sup> In March, Goebbels cited in his diary “the better circles, especially the intellectuals” and the “short-sighted behavior of the industrialists” as responsible for warning Jews of impending deportation.<sup>186</sup> However, the tip-offs came from all manner of Berliners: coworkers, police officers, friends, neighbors, and members of the Reichsvereinigung.<sup>187</sup>

News of the operation also spread with the arrest of those Jews, mostly men, in privileged mixed marriages and therefore protected from deportation. The Gestapo brought these individuals to a special collection center in the Rosenstraße 2-4.<sup>188</sup> As their gentile spouses gathered outside of the collection point to discover what had become of them, a week-long act of silent protest occurred. Due to the unprecedented nature of the protest, the lack of contemporary accounts, and the singularity of this act of defiance in the history of Nazi Germany, reports on the nature of the protest vary exceedingly.<sup>189</sup> On the one extreme, as many as six thousand non-Jews, mostly women, gathered outside of Rosenstraße 2-4, defying police threats and guns aimed at them, crying: “Give us our men back!” (*Gebt uns unsere Männer zurück!*). This version of the event propagated the myth that large crowds and active protests in the face of continual police threats resulted in the release of the Jewish spouses.<sup>190</sup> Recently, careful scholarship has determined that the protest was much smaller, numbering not much more than 150 persons.<sup>191</sup> Certainly, the police did attempt to clear the street, and the occasional call for the release of the prisoners was heard. However, the protest was more of a “silent demonstration” than a protest in the commonly understood sense of the word.<sup>192</sup> Perhaps most surprisingly, the presence of the protesters, although brave, had nothing to do with the release of the prisoners. Rather, the authorities brought the protected spouses to the collection point to clarify their racial status and recruit them as replacements for those Jews scheduled for deportation.<sup>193</sup>

The vast majority of the city’s divers, however, may have been unaware of the events unfolding in the Rosenstraße, or its impact on their decision to flee was negligible.<sup>194</sup> In fact, survivors do not discuss the event in their testimonies. Instead, their accounts of this period focus on how they evaded arrest or learned that their deportation was at hand. On 2 March, Ida Gassenheimer went to her bank to withdraw money, as was her custom at the beginning of each month. When the bank manager saw her, he exclaimed, “Frau Gassenheimer! You’re still here?! I have information that by March 5 there won’t be any Jews left in Berlin.” The following day Ida Gassenheimer went underground.<sup>195</sup> Gassenheimer’s account is perhaps a little too neat to be strictly true and likely reflects the imposition of historical hindsight on her memories. Although the bank manager may have heard about the operation or even witnessed parts of it himself,

he almost certainly would not have known that the Gestapo intended to wrap up the event by March 5. However, Gassenheimer's recollection symbolizes the tremendous shock experienced by many Jews during the operation and the final break with their former lives.

Despite rumors that a massive roundup was imminent, most Jews did not know when it would happen, finding out only when the operation was already upon them. Kurt Lindenberg, who had prepared to submerge, was caught at work that day. His supervisor appeared around 8:15 A.M. and informed the Jewish section of the factory that they were not to leave their stations; management was on its way. This section, which at first had employed twenty-five Jews, now employed just nine. The supervisor, a man remembered by Lindenberg as "respectable," returned a couple of minutes later to inform them that "the riflemen are coming."<sup>196</sup> His arrest now imminent, Lindenberg proceeded to the coatroom, removed what few possessions he had, went back to work, and waited for the bathroom to be free; the bathroom was in the same hallway as the door to which Lindenberg had made a key. While he was in the bathroom, Gestapo agents arrived. When Lindenberg left the bathroom, he saw a member of the Gestapo guarding the door to the Jewish section. Lindenberg walked confidently past him; the agent suspected nothing. When he reentered the workroom, he turned on the lathe at the work station, pulled the key out of his pocket, opened the back door, and sprinted down the steps and out into the building's second courtyard. He passed through the first courtyard of the building with no difficulties, but as he reached the exit, a truck blocked his path. Two SS men with carbines and bayonets were preparing to load Lindenberg's coworkers onto a truck. Lindenberg realized that running was both pointless and suspicious. He walked calmly past the SS men and his coworkers and down the street—he began to run once he turned the corner.<sup>197</sup>

Lindenberg's successful escape depended on several factors not available to those caught completely unaware at the onset of the operation. He had planned ahead by making a copy of the factory's backdoor key. The Gestapo also did not know what Lindenberg looked like, and his confidence and calm did not arouse suspicion. He also was fortunate that the administrator called ahead to warn him and his Jewish coworkers that the Gestapo was on the way. Lack of preparation did not mean that people did not attempt to escape; thousands did. However, successful flight with no preparation or advance warning was less liable to succeed. Frieda Seelig seems to have been taken by complete surprise on the day of the operation. While she dashed across the factory courtyard to escape, one of the factory supervisors turned her in. The SS beat her, breaking at least one of her ankles and one of her feet. Her injuries were so severe that they took her to the hospital.<sup>198</sup>

The Nazi security apparatus in charge of the operation scheduled it for a Saturday, so as to disrupt production as little as possible and arouse minimal public attention. However, news spread throughout the city among Jews and non-Jews over the course of the first day.<sup>199</sup> Already, thousands of Jews had gone underground thanks to advance warning. Survivors also sometimes credit their escape to pure chance.<sup>200</sup> Although chance may explain why some people escaped arrest, circumspection and an acute awareness of the severity of the raids is a more likely explanation why many other individuals were able to evade the police. For example, some individuals, not sure what to think, stayed home from work to see if there was any truth to the rumors. Others had worked the nightshift and seen firsthand the roundups as they left to go home.<sup>201</sup> By 1943, rumors of Nazi atrocities seemed more credible than two years earlier, and the city's Jews were on their guard.

Jews also saw for themselves that a massive raid was underway. On the first morning of the operation, Ilselotte Themal's uncle, with whom she, her child, and her husband were living, came into the living room and told her to look out the window at the building next door; he had heard screams. Themal saw police herding women onto a truck in the courtyard next door. With her *Judenstern* covered, she walked with her son to the local post office and called her friend in the neighboring town of Potsdam, Willi Vahle. She told him the family would like to pay a visit; Vahle understood immediately. She went back home, passing trucks filled with Jews. Her landlord, a party member who had long since stopped supporting Hitler, came into the apartment and told Ilselotte and her uncle to leave as soon as possible; he had heard that all the Jews were being taken away. On their way out of the building, they passed two men racing inside to arrest the remaining Jews still living there: the Themals. Fearing the worst for her husband at work, Ilselotte left word with her landlord to tell him, should he escape, that they had gone to Willi's. To Ilselotte's great relief, he arrived at the Vahle residence that afternoon.<sup>202</sup>

Thus, the surprise home raids, which had started back in the autumn of 1942, continued during the operation. In some cases, these raids threatened people already in hiding, such as Herta Fuß, who had scrambled under the bed to escape arrest (see figure 1.8). She remained there for about an hour. Herta attempted to leave by the front door, but the key broke off in the lock. Located on the third floor of the building, Fuß's only escape option was out the window. Although the food in the apartment had been confiscated at the time of the arrests, the sheets and hand towels remained. Having tied all of them together, Fuß waited until the small hours of the morning—between 1:00 and 2:00 A.M.—and lowered herself out of the window to the street below. She spent that night wandering the streets of Berlin, and the next morning she made for a new hiding place.<sup>203</sup>



Figure 1.8. Herta Fuß.<sup>204</sup>

Despite the commotion caused by the operation, some people had no idea what was happening. Paula Vigdor took ill on 22 February, so her uncle invited her to stay with him. On Sunday morning, 28 February, Vigdor went home and found her door sealed against reentry. Her next-door neighbor opened the door and, astonished to see Vigdor, told her the Gestapo had been looking for her. She was to report to them when she received this message. Vigdor's uncle counseled her to wait, but he was arrested two days later.<sup>205</sup> Vigdor then submerged. Similarly, Eva Gotthilf had been home sick from work for about two weeks. On Monday evening of the operation, Gotthilf had gone out shopping with Aryan ration cards she had procured. When she returned home at 7:30 p.m., her apartment had been sealed and her father, sister, and brother arrested. Gotthilf handed over her purchases to her neighbors and set off to find her family.<sup>206</sup>

The *Große Fabrik-Aktion*, whether a complete shock or not, reflected the Berlin Gestapo's response to evolving Nazi policies concerning the "Jewish Question." This massive operation was the capstone in a process that had taken almost one and a half years to complete. Now, with few exceptions, public life as a Jew in Berlin was no longer possible. The operation accounted for almost two-thirds of all attempts to submerge



and accelerated a tendency that had been occurring over the course of the previous sixteen months. Many Jews were not prepared. Yet diving was their best chance for survival. With their apartments sealed, their possessions confiscated, and many of their loved ones deported or waiting in the collection centers for deportation, the new U-boats needed to act with speed and confidence if they were to evade the Gestapo and survive.

## Conclusion

The Nazi ban on most legal emigration in autumn 1941 left Jewish Berliners with three available options. For some people, the choice of compliance, suicide, or submerging was clear and involved little internal debate. Others, however, actively struggled with their decision. Some deportees later fled their transports or even the camps and returned to the city. Survivors of failed suicide attempts sometimes later made the choice to submerge. In the chaos of 1940s Berlin, Jews had a few highly circumscribed choices before them. However, they still considered their options with what agency they still had left.

Deportation and suicide were dominant features of daily Jewish life for the duration of the war. The majority of the city's Jews, approximately 55,000, either complied with their deportation orders or else were ensnared before they could submerge; only 1,900 returned. Between 1941 and the end of March 1943, over 1,400 Jewish Berliners took their own lives. Fear, obedience to the state, lack of knowledge about events in the east, and despair, while dominant factors, do not account fully for the actions of all deportees. Familial and communal solidarity also motivated an unknown but likely significant number of Jews to board their transports. Indeed, Jews actively considered and debated compliance; deportation was not merely a tragic act that befell them. Suicides, like deportation, often were the products of fear and despair. The act of taking one's life, however, had a deeper significance. For many Jews, suicide was their final chance to assert both their dignity and their rejection of Nazi persecution.

The future U-boats witnessed these events with increasing apprehension and horror. Unlike individuals committing suicide, however, whose numbers rose and fell in tandem with the number of deportation trains leaving the city, a striking majority of individuals who submerged waited to do so until the closing months of 1942 and the beginning of 1943. Lack of knowledge of events in the east likely explains the low rates of submerging in 1941 and early 1942. Even as the rumors of mass murder trickled into the city, many individuals bided their time and planned their actions carefully. Indeed, most people waited until the last possible mo-

ment to submerge. The Large Factory Operation at the end of February 1943 forced the hands of most Jews. By the end of the first week of March, almost 6,500 Jews were in hiding throughout the city. Despite a decade of persecution, the next twenty-six months proved to be unlike anything that the Jews of Berlin had yet faced. The challenges of submerged life often were overwhelming, and most people did not survive the ordeal. Moreover, on the evening of 2 March 1943, as thousands of Jews still scrambled to find shelter and evade arrest, bombers of the British Royal Air Force descended upon the city; approximately 480 Berliners perished.<sup>207</sup> Although it was a small raid in comparison with what was to come, the bombings presaged the extreme difficulties and uncertainties awaiting the city's newly submerged Jews. Speedy adaptation to their new circumstances was essential for survival.

## Notes

1. From the diary of Joseph Goebbels, in Nachama, Schoeps, and Simon, *Jews in Berlin*, 192. Also Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 51.
2. For an in-depth look at the development of National Socialist Jewish deportation policy, see H. G. Adler, *Der verwaltete Mensch: Studien zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1974). See also Uwe Dietrich Adam, *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1972). More recently, the first volume of Saul Friedländer's two-volume study on the National Socialist war against Europe's Jews is a masterful and nuanced study of the steady erosion of Jewish life during the first half of the Third Reich. See Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, vol. 1: *The Years of Persecution* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997).
3. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 95.
4. For a full analysis of the state of Jewish commercial activity in the capital, see Christoph Kreuzmüller, *Final Sale in Berlin: The Destruction of Jewish Commercial Activity, 1930–1945*, trans. Jane Paulick and Jefferson Chase (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 79, 219. Also, chapter 7, on “The Statistics of Destruction,” 212–21.
5. See Albert Meirer, “Wir waren von allem abgeschnitten’ Zur Entrechnung, Ausplünderung und Kennzeichnung der Berliner Juden” in Meyer and Simon, *Juden in Berlin*, 92–93. For a list of the specific anti-Jewish ordinances affecting Berlin Jews in 1938, see Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 46–62.
6. Alan Steinweis's recent study on Kristallnacht is notable for its focus on the participation of average Germans. See Alan E. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht 1938* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). From an eyewitness perspective, see *Novemberpogrom 1938: Die Augenzeugenberichte der Wiener Library*, London (Frankfurt/Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008). For shorter discussions of the event as it occurred in Berlin, see David Clay Large, *Berlin* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 309–13; Read and Fisher, *Berlin*, 216–18; and Nachama, Schoeps, and Simon, *Jews in Berlin*, 192–96.

7. In Kreutzmüller, *Final Sale in Berlin*, 135. There is some discrepancy in the literature, with estimates of perhaps as many as twelve thousand Berlin Jews arrested in the wake of Kristallnacht. See, Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 58–59; and Nachama, Schoeps, and Simon, *Jews in Berlin*, 192–96. This discrepancy, however, likely lies in the distinction between those arrested and held in local Berlin jails, those slated for arrest who managed to hide, and those sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.
8. Avraham Barkai, “Population and Economic Stagnation” in Meyer, *German–Jewish History in Modern Times*, 4:32.
9. Figures compiled from Kreutzmüller, *Final Sale in Berlin*, 216. See also, Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 62; Large, *Berlin*, 313; and Beate Meyer, “‘Arisiert’ und Ausgeplündert: Die jüdische Fabrikantenfamilie Garbáty,” in Meyer and Simon, *Juden in Berlin*, 77.
10. Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen, 1938–1945* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1947), 30.
11. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht*, 3.
12. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 60.
13. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 75. See also Wolf Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor under the Nazis: Economic Needs and Racial Aims, 1938–1944*, trans. Kathleen M. Dell’Orto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 10–11.
14. For a comprehensive list of the antisemitic ordinances enacted in the city between 1933 and 1945, see Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*.
15. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 63.
16. See Wolf Gruner, “Die Reichshauptstadt und die Verfolgung der Berliner Juden 1933–1945,” in Rürup, *Jüdische Geschichte in Berlin*, 243.
17. Adler, *Der verwaltete Mensch*, 47.
18. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 68. A recent noteworthy study on the Reichsvereinigung is Beate Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung: Die Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland zwischen Hoffnung, Zwang, Selbstbehauptung und Verstickung (1939–1945)* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011). Also, see Meyer, *German–Jewish History*, 4:346–54, 356–59.
19. See Browning, *Remembering Survival*, 34.
20. Figures compiled from Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 95.
21. Deutschkron, *Ich trug den gelben Stern*, 43.
22. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 94. Although the October 1941 ban on emigration affected the vast majority of German Jews, a small number still managed to emigrate after that time. The number was small, however, with perhaps no more than four hundred individuals managing such a feat, and records are incomplete. An estimate of slightly less than four hundred individuals emigrating after the emigration ban can be gleaned from extant records. See BA R 8150/26, 8150/27; ZfH 112/21b; StadtA Mainz NL Oppenheim 52/28; YVA 0.8/14, “Monatliche Entwicklung der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Berlin, 1941–1943.” Also, YVA 0.8/145, “Jüdische Bevölkerung in Berlin, 1943–1945.” The documents can also be found at [www.statistik-des-holo-caust.de/stat\\_ger.html](http://www.statistik-des-holo-caust.de/stat_ger.html) (accessed 4 January 2017).
23. Alfred Gottwaldt and Diana Schulle, *Die “Juden deportierten” aus dem Dritten Reich 1941–1945: Eine kommentierte Chronologie* (Wiesbaden: Marix Verlag, 2005), 70–71.
24. The events leading up to the Wannsee Conference and the pivotal role of Hitler’s 12 December speech for the fate of German Jews receives excellent coverage by Christian Gerlach, “The Wannsee Conference, the Fate of German Jews, and Hitler’s Decision in Principle to Exterminate all European Jews,” *Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (December 1998): 759–812. Regarding the evolution of Nazi policies that led

- up to the Holocaust, especially, as seen through the confluence of local and regional decisions made farther east, see Christopher R. Browning's pivotal study: Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
25. See list of deportations in Gottwaldt and Schulle, "Judendeportationen," 444–67.
  26. See David Vital, "After the Catastrophe: Aspects of Contemporary Jewry," in Hayes, *Lessons and Legacies*, 136–37.
  27. See Gay, *My German Question*, 123–24.
  28. On Jewish acculturation and its distinction from assimilation, see Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10–11.
  29. Gay, *My German Question*, 14–15. See also, Giles MacDonogh, *Berlin* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 20.
  30. See Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 97.
  31. Deutschkron, *Ich trug den gelben Stern*, 88–89.
  32. Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 86.
  33. Widespread rumors concerning the fate of the "resettled" Jews were in regular circulation no later than the autumn of 1942. See Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 96. See also, Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945: The Years of Extermination* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007) xxii, 510–14.
  34. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
  35. See Avraham Barkai, "In a Ghetto without Walls," in Meyer, *German–Jewish History*, 4:346–54, 356–59. The short but critical history of the Reichsvereinigung, the difficult position in which it found itself, and its limited options for maneuver in an increasingly radical Nazi Germany has received excellent attention in Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung*.
  36. See Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung*, 206–7. Wolf Gruner cites eight people executed. See Gruner, *Persecution of the Jews*, 159.
  37. In Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 200. "Social death," cited from Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
  38. Frank Bauer, *Sie gaben ihr Leben: Unbekannte Opfer des 20. Juli 1944 – General Fritz Lindemann und seine Fluchthelfer* (Berlin-Kleinmachnow: Chronos, 1995). See also, Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
  39. In Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 99.
  40. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr: 33971.
  41. Gad Beck, *An Underground Life: The Memoirs of a Gay Jew in Nazi Berlin*, trans. Allison Brown (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 64.
  42. Beck, *Underground Life*, 62.
  43. Beck, *Underground Life*, 62.
  44. Beck, *Underground Life*, 61.
  45. Beck, *Underground Life*, 63.
  46. Beck, *Underground Life*, 59, 111.
  47. Beck, *Underground Life*, 63–64.
  48. Maurer, "From Everyday Life," 367.
  49. Beck, *Underground Life*, 67–70.
  50. LAB, A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr: 1954. Zentralkartei für Mordsachen. See also, Christine Hartig, "'Conversations about Taking Our Own Lives—Oh, a Poor Expression for a Forced Deed in Hopeless Circumstances': Suicide among German Jews 1933–1943," *Leo Baeck Year Book* 52, no. 1 (2007): 257.

51. See Christian Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 98, 102, 103, 105, 109, 113, 115. Also, Hartig, "Conversations," 248–59.
52. Konrad Kwiet, "The Ultimate Refuge: Suicide in the Jewish Community under the Nazis," *Leo Baeck Year Book* 29 (1984): 138.
53. Figures vary somewhat concerning the exact numbers of suicides committed by Berlin Jews during this time. See Anna Fischer, *Erzwungener Freitod: Spuren und Zeugnisse in den Freitod getriebener Juden der Jahre 1938–1945 in Berlin* (Berlin: text.verlag, 2007), 14–19; Goeschel, *Suicide*, 107, 109; Maurer, "From Everyday Life," 366–77; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 179–84; Konrad Kwiet and Helmut Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand: Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Existenz und Menschenwürde, 1933–1945* (Hamburg: Christians, 1984), 204–5; Hartig, "Conversations," 248; Kwiet, "Ultimate Refuge," 155.
54. See, for example, Hartig, "Conversations," 249, 260–61.
55. LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 38 + 39.
56. Kwiet, "Ultimate Refuge," 155, 157.
57. Goeschel, *Suicide*, 107.
58. Goeschel, *Suicide*, 97.
59. Kwiet, "Ultimate Refuge," 146–50. See also, Fischer, *Erzwungener Freitod*, 15–16.
60. Goeschel, *Suicide*, 110.
61. Goeschel, *Suicide*, 117. Also, Hartig, "Conversations," 259.
62. LAB, A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198 B, Nr.: 1623. Zusammenstellung der Selbstmorde und Selbstmordversuche für Berlin und Potsdam für das Kalenderjahr 1941. See also, Goeschel, *Suicide*, 108.
63. LAB, A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198 B, Nr.: 1624. Zusammenstellung der Selbstmorde und Selbstmordversuche für Berlin und Potsdam für das Kalenderjahr 1942.
64. LAB, A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198 B, Nr.: 1625. Zusammenstellung der Selbstmorde und Selbstmordversuche für Berlin und Potsdam für das Jahr 1943.
65. Goeschel, *Suicide*, 107.
66. Kwiet, "Ultimate Refuge," 158.
67. LAB, A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198 B, Nr.: 1625. Zusammenstellung der Selbstmorde und Selbstmordversuche für Berlin und Potsdam für das Jahr 1943.
68. Goeschel, *Suicide*, 108.
69. Gottwaldt and Schulle, "Judendeportationen," 446–54. Compare with charts 5 and 6 in Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 98–101.
70. See, for example, CJA, 4.1, Nr: 2470.
71. Goeschel, *Suicide*, 109.
72. Gottwaldt and Schulle, "Judendeportationen," 444. On the critical role that the Letzowstraße Synagogue played during the Berlin deportations, see Akim Jah, *Die Deportation der Juden aus Berlin: Die nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik und das Sammellager Große Hamburger Straße* (Berlin: be.bra wissenschaft verlag, 2013), 257–77.
73. LAB, B Rep. 078, Zug.Nr. 6026, Nr.: UH 745, M 009, R 161.
74. Although there was no specific crime in Germany for hiding Jews, one could be punished for the broader crime of *Judenbegünstigung* ("privileged treatment of Jews"). The punishment for helping Jews varied considerably, ranging from incarceration in a concentration camp to shorter prison sentences to fines to sometimes nothing at all. See Croes and Kosmala, "Facing Deportation," 123, 146. Also, Benz, *Überleben im Dritten Reich*, 40–41.
75. CJA, 4.1, Nr: 2106. Goeschel, *Suicide*, 107. Kwiet, "Ultimate Refuge," 138, 159.
76. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr: 35368.

77. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
78. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr: 1042.
79. Jah, *Deportation*, 426–27. See also, Gruner, *Persecution of the Jews*, 163–64.
80. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 59.
81. See Jah, *Deportation*, 519.
82. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, OdF Kartei, A-31677.
83. Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 445.
84. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr: 38677.
85. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr: 38677.
86. These data were compiled from submerging dates provided by some 425 survivors (25 percent of all U-boat survivors) in their postwar applications to the OdF, as well as those provided in postwar memoirs (published and unpublished) and interviews given by survivors to the Fortunoff Video Archives at Yale University. See also deportation figures in Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*,” 444–54.
87. I reached this figure by adding together the Berlin deportation numbers listed in Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 444–54. During this period, the Nazis deported approximately 26,606 Jews from Berlin. In June 1941, the Jewish population in Berlin, as categorized by race, was 73,842. See Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 94.
88. See Gerlach, “Wannsee Conference,” 765. See, also, Gruner, *Persecution of the Jews*, 150, 178.
89. See, for example, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30320 and CJA 4.1, 2175.
90. Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 70.
91. Eric A. Johnson, *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 405. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 195.
92. ZfA, File of Dr. Alfred Cassierer, “Palestinaamt in Berlin illegales Leben in Berlin und Flucht über die Schweizer Grenze 1939-1943,” Zeugenbericht von Dr. Alfred Cassierer, Beth Jizchak, aufgenommen vom Dr. Ball-Kaduri am 26.12.57.
93. Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 65, 71.
94. Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 65.
95. Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 267.
96. Marnix Croes and Beate Kosmala suggest a similar figure in in their comparative study of deportation in the Netherlands and Germany. See Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 116.
97. Goeschel, *Suicide*, 109. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 203.
98. The data for figures 1.3 and 1.4 are taken from the following sources. Suicide figures may be found in LAB, A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198 B, Nr.: 1623: Zusammenstellung. Der Selbstmord und Selbstmordversuche für Berlin und Potsdam für das Kalenderjahr 1941; A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198 B, Nr.: 1624: Zusammenstellung der Selbstmorde und Selbstmordversuche für Berlin und Potsdam für das Kalenderjahr 1942; and A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198 B, Nr.: 1625. Zusammenstellung der Selbstmorde und Selbstmordversuche für Berlin und Potsdam für das Jahr 1943. These figures closely correspond with Christian Goeschel’s figures cited in *Suicide*, although exact figures differ slightly.
99. On the link between deportation transports and waves of suicides, see Kwiet, “Ultimate Refuge,” 153.
100. Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 267.
101. Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 266.
102. On a discussion of the avenues available to the Reichsvereinigung to forestall or otherwise influence the deportation of individuals, see Beate Meyer, *A Fatal Balanc-*

- ing Act: *The Dilemma of the Reich Association of Jews in Germany, 1939–1945*, trans. William Templer (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 147–52. Also, Deutschkron, *Ich trug den gelben Stern*, 92.
103. Beate Meyer, *Fatal Balancing Act*, 148, 151–52. Also, Avraham Barkai, “Self-Help in the Dilemma: ‘To Leave or to Stay?’” in Meyer, *German–Jewish History*, 4:329.
  104. Landesarchiv Berlin, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31551.
  105. See the case of the brush maker Otto Weidt in Deutschkron, *Ich trug den gelben Stern*, 90.
  106. Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor*, 19, 27.
  107. Figures compiled from the deportation lists in Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 94, 98–101, and in Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor*, 19, 27.
  108. Deutschkron, *Ich trug den gelben Stern*, 92. See also, ZfA, file of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, “Untergetaucht–An Der Oberfläche–1941/1945.”
  109. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, “Untergetaucht–An Der Oberfläche–1941/1945.”
  110. LAB, B Rep. 058, Nr.: 631.
  111. Meyer, *Fatal Balancing Act*, 150–51.
  112. Indeed, even before the deportations began, some Jews attempted to apply to have their racial status legally changed. For a concise and excellent overview, see Jürgen Matthäus, “Evading Persecution: German–Jewish Behavior Patterns after 1933,” in *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses*, ed. Francis R. Nicosia and David Scrase (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 53–64. For specific examples, see Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (hereinafter, CAHS), RG 17.070M, Reel 1503, Cases 61732, 61737, 61771, 61757, 61805.
  113. Rüdiger Hecht noted in his paper “White-Collar Crime in the Third Reich”, presented at the thirty-seventh symposium of the Gesellschaft für Unternehmensgeschichte, Frankfurt a/M, 16–17 October 2014, that “cases of corruption were considered illegal . . . but were not prosecuted or made public . . . some staff members lost their jobs but key figures of the Nazi political system were spared.” In *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 56 (Spring 2015), 127.
  114. For more on the criminal exploitation of Berlin’s Jews during the deportations, see Richard N. Lutjens, Jr., “Ordinary Crime and the Persecution of Jewish Germans in Deportation-Era Berlin” in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 31, no. 3 (1 December 2017): 433–56.
  115. LAB, C Rep. 118 -01 OdF Kartei, A-947.
  116. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 947.
  117. Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 96.
  118. Cioma Schönhaus, *The Forger: An Extraordinary Story of Survival in Wartime Berlin*, trans., Alan Bance (London: Granta Books, 2007), 72.
  119. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, “Personal Report.”
  120. Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor*, 4–6.
  121. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 46.
  122. Figure cited in Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 121.
  123. See, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 34188.
  124. Kosmala, “Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen in Berlin,” in Löw, Bergen, and Hájková, *Alltag im Holocaust*, 46.
  125. Marion Kaplan also notes that this is one explanation, among others, for why fewer women than men emigrated from Germany when emigration was still an option. See Marion Kaplan, “Changing Roles in Jewish Families,” in *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses*, ed. Francis R. Nicosia and David Scrase (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 34–35.

126. Kosmala, "Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen in Berlin," 40–41.
127. Kosmala, "Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen in Berlin," 36–44.
128. Based on a sampling of 425 individuals (25 percent of all U-boat survivors) who listed the date of their submerging.
129. Kurt Lindenberg recognized the factor that his parents' ages played in preventing their submerging in ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report." For a statistical breakdown of the age of Jews committing suicide between 1941 and 1943, see Zusammenstellung. Der Selbstmord und Selbstmordversuche für Berlin und Potsdam für das Kalenderjahr in LAB, A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit.198 B, Nr.: 1623; Zusammenstellung. Der Selbstmord und Selbstmordversuche für Berlin und Potsdam für das Kalenderjahr 1941; A Pr.Br.Rep. 030-03, Tit.198 B, Nr.: 1624; A Pr.Br. Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198 B, Nr.: 1625.
130. LAB, C Rep. 118-0, Nr.: 30203.
131. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
132. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
133. Maurer, "From Everyday Life," 371–72.
134. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30544.
135. Deutschkron, *Ich trug den gelben Stern*, 103–6.
136. ZfA, File of Ruth Abraham, Testimony of Maria Nickel to the Entschädigungsamt Berlin, 5 May 1953. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 220.
137. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
138. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 208.
139. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 2754.
140. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
141. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
142. See, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30544 and LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30579.
143. Hans Safrian, *Die Eichmann-Männer* (Wien: Europaverlag, 1993), 189
144. Safrian, *Die Eichmann-Männer*, 189. For more information on charges of corruption on the part of the Berlin Gestapo, which involved high-ranking members of Berlin's Gestapo enriching themselves off of the property of deported Jews, see Jah, *Deportation*, 347–58.
145. For a fuller discussion of Brunner's new methods, see Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung*, 207–10. See also Jah, *Deportation*, 363–417.
146. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr: 30544. See also Safrian, *Die Eichmann-Männer*, 190; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 192.
147. Safrian, *Die Eichmann-Männer*, 190. See also Croes and Kosmala, "Facing Deportation," 116.
148. On the increase of public indignities suffered as a result of the introduction of the star, see, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30699 and 33971.
149. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
150. For example, see LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 4410.
151. LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 38 + 39, "Bericht über die Neubildung der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Berlin," 13.November.1946.
152. Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 85.
153. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr: 30544.
154. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr: 26890.
155. As cited in Safrian, *Die Eichmann-Männer*, 190–91.



156. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr. 31267; see also, CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 1596.
157. LAB, A Rep. 408, Nr.: 4 “Tätigkeitsbuch 17. Polizei-Revier Kriminalpolizei Weinbergsweg 12.” From 1.Januar.1943–31.Dezember.1943, #21.
158. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30544.
159. LAB, A Rep. 408, Nr.: 4 “Tätigkeitsbuch 17. Polizei-Revier Kriminalpolizei Weinbergsweg 12.” From 1.Januar.1943–31.Dezember.1943, #73.
160. Bundesarchiv Koblenz, *Gedenkbuch: Opfer der Verfolgung der Juden unter der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft in Deutschland 1933–1945*, Bd. I (Koblenz: Bundesarchiv Koblenz, 2006), 262.
161. LAB, A Rep. 408, Nr.: 24 “Tätigkeitsbuch des 244.R.Kö, #21.”
162. *Gedenkbuch*, Bd. III, 2151.
163. Hayes, *Why?*, 241
164. Hayes, *Why?*, 126.
165. Hayes, *Why?*, 114–15.
166. On the general knowledge of the German population concerning the fate of the Jews in the years 1941–1943, see Peter Hayes, *Why?*, 155–56.
167. See, for example, Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 50.
168. On the rise in resistance in the aftermath of Stalingrad, see, for example, Hayes, *Why?*, 197, and Friedländer, *Years of Extermination*, 401–2.
169. LAB A Rep. 408, Nr.: 43 “Tätigkeitsbuch 287 Pol. Rev. Krim-Pol.,” #61-Feb. 6, 1943.
170. For Marie Jalowicz, already living submerged, the German army’s defeat at Stalingrad meant that the course of the war had been decided. In Jalowicz Simon, *Untergetaucht*, 209.
171. In Safrian, *Die Eichmann-Männer*, 192, as quoted from Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der Europäischen Juden*, überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage in 3 Bänden (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Verlag, 1990), 485.
172. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 49, as quoted in *Tagebücher Göebbels*, Teil II, Bd. 7, S. 369, Eintrag vom 18.2.1943.
173. LAB, E Rep. 200-22, Nr.: 7 + 8.
174. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, OdF Kartei, A-33169.
175. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, OdF Kartei, A-31710.
176. A detailed account of the logistics surrounding the *Große Fabrik-Aktion* and the methods used to carry it out in Berlin can be found in Jah, *Die Deportation der Juden aus Berlin*, 426–56. In addition, a more specialized statistical overview of the so-called *Große Fabrikaktion* and its relationship to hiding may be found in Claudia Schoppmann, “Die ‘Fabrikaktion’ in Berlin: Hilfe für Untergetauchte Juden als Form humanitären Widerstandes,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 53, no. 2 (2005): 138–48. The role of the Reichsvereinigung receives attention in Meyer, *Fatal Balancing Act*, 176–79.
177. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 59. There is some disagreement between historians concerning the exact length of the operation. Beate Meyer argues that it lasted for one week and that it was officially declared finished on 7 March 1943: see Meyer, *Fatal Balancing Act*, 176, 177. In contrast, Akim Jah and Wolf Gruner emphasize a shorter operation, as the vast majority of Jews were arrested within its first two days and most were deported during the first four days in March. See Jah, *Deportation*, 426–27. See also, Gruner, *Persecution of the Jews*, 163–64, 179.
178. See Jah, *Deportation*, 519.
179. See Schoppmann, “Die ‘Fabrikaktion’ in Berlin,” 142.
180. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, “Personal Report,” 7.

181. See Bundesarchiv (hereinafter, BA) R 8150/26, 8150/27, ZIH 112/21b, StadtA Mainz NL Oppenheim 52/28, YVA 0.8/14, “Monatliche Entwicklung der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Berlin, 1941–1943.” The documents can also be found at [http://www.statistik-des-holocaust.de/stat\\_ger.html](http://www.statistik-des-holocaust.de/stat_ger.html).
182. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 61.
183. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 60–61.
184. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 59–60. See also, Meyer, *Fatal Balancing Act*, 176.
185. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 78.
186. *Tagebücher Goebbels*, Teil II, Bd. 7, 449: Entry on 3 March 1943, and *Tagebücher Goebbels*, Teil II, Bd. 7, 528: Entry on 11 March 1943. Cited in Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 78.
187. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 79
188. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 60.
189. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 139–41.
190. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 10, 139–56.
191. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 144.
192. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 148–53.
193. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 157.
194. Wolf Gruner also notes the silence of contemporaries on the matter of the *Frauenprotest* until years after the fact. See Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 144–45.
195. ZfA, File of Ida Gassenheimer, “Mein ‘Untergrund-Leben’ in Berlin.”
196. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, “Personal Report.”
197. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, “Personal Report.”
198. CJA, 4.1, 2207.
199. Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 102–3. See also, Ursula von Kardoff, *Berliner Aufzeichnungen, 1942 bis 1945* (München: C.H. Beck, 1992), 71–72.
200. See, for example, CJA 4.1, 2304.
201. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 81.
202. ZfA, File of Ilse Thelma, “Meine Erlebnisse während der Zeit der Judenverfolgungen in Deutschland 1933–1945.”
203. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30544.
204. LAB, C Rep. 118 -01 OdF Kartei, A-30544.
205. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31551. See also, Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 81
206. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr. 31267.
207. Werner Gierbig, . . . *im Anflug auf die Reichshauptstadt* (Stuttgart: Motorbuch Verlag, 1973), 64–65.

## Chapter 2

# SURVIVING



In March 1943, Joseph Goebbels boasted that Berlin was *judenfrei*. He was wrong. Although the authorities deported over 8,600 Jews in the immediate wake of the operation, some 6,790 *Mischlinge* (half Jews), members of *Mischehen* (mixed marriages), Jewish widows and widowers of non-Jews, and Jewish citizens of either neutral countries or those allied with Germany still resided legally in the city as of the summer of 1943. In addition, at least several thousand U-boats remained at large. Yet the demands placed upon them during their initial months underground were formidable; for many, the challenges were insurmountable. Lack of preparation, insufficient contact with potential aid-givers, and the demanding requisites for survival left many Jews exposed and vulnerable. Between March 1943 and January 1944, the Gestapo, aided by its network of Jewish informants and civilian denouncers, likely arrested over 4,000 individuals, almost two-thirds of the city's submerged Jewish population.<sup>1</sup>

Central then to the U-boat experience was the elemental and daily process involved in simply surviving, above all procuring shelter, food, and, if possible, false papers, while also avoiding denunciation and arrest. Survival underground often became an individual learning process, one characterized by continuous trial and error without a single correct answer. Yet despite the formidable challenges that awaited the city's divers and dashers in a life on the run, things were not as hopeless for them as one might expect. When Jews in the city dived, it was not into an unfamiliar world of foreign customs, unknown enemies, and an unfamiliar

landscape. It was Berlin; indeed, more or less the same Berlin as the one they had been living in the day before they submerged, with the same patterns of daily life and the same landscape. What had changed overnight was the legality of their presence. And while their new, illegal status did presage a host of new obstacles to overcome, most Jews who submerged had unknowingly been preparing for this day for years. Indeed, the eight years of Nazi rule leading up to the deportations had already provided a number of the city's divers and dashers with a valuable degree of training of how to work within and without the system. Those who for years had defied Nazi prohibitions on Jews frequenting public venues such as theaters, parks, beaches, cinemas, and cafés already had a basic grounding in how to navigate these areas without being denounced. Similarly, those who had learned to move comfortably without wearing the star were already somewhat prepared for how to conduct themselves, and they knew which neighborhoods were safest for them. Middle-class women who had found work during the 1930s to supplement the family income already had gained useful skills, and they were accustomed to working outside of the home and taking on the responsibility of head of family. In short, Berlin's divers submerged into a socially, culturally, and topographically recognizable context.

To be sure, all of this would soon change. Joseph Goebbels's *Sportpalastrede*, in which he called for total war, had occurred on 18 February 1943, shortly before the Large Factory Operation. World War II was turning against the Germans. The Nazis' drive to capture and exterminate every single Jew under their control continued unabated. Moreover, as the Allied air campaign against Germany's cities ramped up, the once familiar landscape of Berlin changed with it, creating new dangers and obstacles. Yet as the city changed, Berlin's submerged Jews changed along with it. They did not live in a bubble, watching as life in the city evolved before their eyes, but rather engaged with these changes and the ensuing challenges as best as they could and adapted based on their own personal observations and experiences. Thus, U-boat responses to the challenges of survival were as varied and diverse as the challenges themselves. Although help from non-Jews was instrumental, survival, in the end, depended on self-reliance and the speedy acclimation of the U-boats to their new life. Finding a place to shelter was incredibly difficult. The dangers of denunciation and increasing Allied air raids on the city forced people to move around frequently. Sources of food, never plentiful, steadily dwindled as the tide of war turned against Germany. To alleviate the physical strains associated with procuring food, some U-boats turned to the black market. For the right price, they could buy not only food and ration cards but also false papers. False papers, although useful for deflecting unwanted

suspicion, were an inadequate safeguard against the dangers of denunciation and arrest. Yet experiences of arrest also varied, and these illustrate not only how the U-boats lived but also how the Nazis developed ruthless and innovative methods to counter their survival tactics. Indeed, many of the city's Jewish divers and dashers proved remarkably resilient and creative, as evidenced by a few bold and successful attempts to flee to neutral countries.

## Finding Shelter

Dr. Charlotte Bamberg submerged with relative ease in January 1943. She went to an old friend, known by all in the neighborhood as “Papi,” who told her, “I already have four of your sort. . . . I myself live in my factory, so you all can move around freely at my place. The door lady has been bribed; she already has received fifty kilograms of flour.”<sup>2</sup> Assured of a place to stay, Bamberg packed her belongings and moved into Papi's apartment. Several months later, members of the security police appeared at the apartment; someone had denounced them. With their papers more or less in order, Bamberg and the others were able to provide a plausible alibi. Yet the police left the apartment on a note of suspicion: “You all definitely are Aryan, right?”<sup>3</sup> Bamberg and the others immediately fled to different locations. The next day, the police raided the apartment.

Bamberg next moved in with a countess, and in the summer of 1943, she relocated to a spare room in Papi's factory. By August, however, she was back in Papi's apartment with her former roommates. Her stay there ended in November—this time permanently—with the destruction of the apartment in an air raid. By this point, long-term shelter had become increasingly difficult to find. Often, Bamberg did not learn where her next lodgings were located until as late as 6:00 P.M. Over the course of the following year and a half, Bamberg moved over a dozen times. She always managed to find a place to stay, even if her roommates sometimes consisted of mice and rats: “But I always managed it. I was never without a roof over my head.”<sup>4</sup> In this respect, Bamberg was more fortunate than many of her fellow submerged Jews.

Finding and maintaining a place to stay was difficult; for many U-boats, it was impossible. Yet without adequate shelter, they were too exposed, a condition that contributed to the high rate of arrest in 1943. The centrality of shelter to Jews' experiences manifests itself in survivor accounts in three ways. The first appears in discussions concerning the continual search for shelter. Family in mixed marriages and non-Jewish friends were critical allies, but help often came from unexpected quarters. Second, sur-

vivors discuss the quantity and quality of their accommodations, highlighting the diverse and transient nature of illegal life. Third, survivors focus on the factors that prompted them to relocate. Fearful hosts, suspicious neighbors, personal conflict, and air raids are the main reasons given for moving.

The majority of divers submerged spontaneously during the Large Factory Operation and often had no immediate recourse to shelter. Even Jews who had planned ahead frequently found themselves looking for new places to stay. The ease with which they acquired lodgings varied considerably. Jews with gentile friends or family members in mixed marriages benefitted from these relationships, as did those who had connections to resistance groups. Other factors, such as access to money or not “looking Jewish” also helped. In many instances, however, Jews only had their own initiative on which to rely, thereby increasing substantially the risk of arrest.<sup>5</sup>

Gentile friends and acquaintances played a crucial role in sheltering their Jewish friends. They also were responsible for convincing individuals that survival was feasible. When Eva Gotthilf decided to search for her family after their arrest during the Large Factory Operation (see chapter 1), members of the police (Schutzpolizei, or Schupo) turned her away at the collection center.<sup>6</sup> They urged her to be sensible; she could do nothing for her family, and she would not be permitted to stay with them. After wandering the streets of Berlin during the night of 28 February, Gotthilf went to say goodbye to non-Jewish acquaintances. These acquaintances, however, refused to let her leave. With no possessions and only fifty Reichsmarks in her wallet, the family took her in and provided her with shelter for the next eight months.<sup>7</sup>

The support provided by Gotthilf’s friends stands in marked contrast to the disappointment experienced by others. Fear of denunciation and arrest inhibited many would-be helpers, and potential sources of aid yielded nothing more than pity or apologies. Erich Hopp went into hiding in 1942 with his wife Charlotte and his son Wolfgang. They first turned to friends and good acquaintances for shelter, but to no avail. One friend turned them down with the explanation that “[their] Jewish corpses . . . might be found in his apartment after an air raid.”<sup>8</sup> His fear was not unfounded.<sup>9</sup> Jews often chose not to risk discovery in the air raid shelters and remained in apartments during the bombings. Yet the death of an unregistered person in an apartment endangered the helpers and any other Jews who might be under their protection.

In their postwar accounts, survivors rarely condemn the individuals who refused them help. Rather, they emphasize the dangers their potential hosts faced and the small, yet essential, instances of aid they provided.

In particular, survivors were grateful for their silence. Erich Arndt and Bruno G. spent much of their illegal life in a small factory. After the war, the owner of the factory below the one in which they had sheltered said that he had always suspected that Jews were hiding there. Bruno remembered with gratitude: “[This factory owner] was one of many, many Germans who helped us not as much as [those who provided us with shelter] but indirectly, some of them only by keeping their mouth shut, which was just as important.”<sup>10</sup> The number of U-boats who survived thanks to the silence of their German neighbors is unknown. Certainly, Germans who remained silent in the face of Nazi persecution bear some responsibility for the fate of European Jewry. However, a different form of silence saved the lives of hundreds of Jews throughout Berlin, demonstrating the potentially redemptive value of silence. During a time when actions spoke louder than words, the silence of gentile friends, neighbors, and strangers was of inestimable value. In some cases, non-Jews who initially refused to take in Jews either took them in later or put them in contact with other non-Jews. In this way, the city’s divers and dashers built aid networks and found accommodations. Even still, it is important to remember that non-Jews who provided submerged Jews with a temporary home were constrained by the circumstances of their own lives. They could not significantly alter their conduct for the benefit of those living submerged, and therefore many drew Jews into their daily routines, sometimes in unexpected and unwise ways. Charlotte Bamberg’s experience walking five Scottish Terriers and a Persian cat to the bus stop to pick up her helper from work illustrates this phenomenon (see introduction).

U-boats also found shelter with relatives and friends in mixed marriages. The prevalence of aid from these individuals is unknown, yet at the end of July 1943, 6,790 Jews were still residing legally in the city. By the end of February 1945, that number had fallen to 6,284.<sup>11</sup> These individuals and their children, acutely aware of the plight facing illegal Jews, reached out to family members, and even strangers, in an attempt to find them help.<sup>12</sup> Certainly, enough Jews benefitted from *Mischlinge* and *Mischehen* to warrant one U-boat to remark, “I didn’t have Aryan relatives, and so I stood alone . . .”<sup>13</sup> Lilly Post, however, did not stand alone. After narrowly escaping arrest in February 1943, she turned to an uncle living in a privileged mixed marriage and spent the remainder of the war with him. In other cases, children who had married non-Jews were able to hide their parents.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, Jews in mixed marriages served as a valuable bridge between the world of the U-boats and the world of non-Jews.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the help that some couples in mixed marriages readily gave, sheltering with them carried its own dangers. Those in *Mischehen* were located on the margins of German society, suspect in the eyes of their

neighbors, and often watched by the Gestapo, so they were in a worse position to help than non-Jews. One false step or an unguarded word against the regime endangered not only the couple but also the Jews they were concealing.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, as the war progressed, their legally protected status and continued presence in German life became increasingly untenable for the regime. Already, in 1942, *Mischlinge* and couples in *Mischehen* began to be conscripted into forced-labor battalions.<sup>17</sup> Starting in 1944, Jewish widows and widowers of non-Jews, hitherto protected from arrest, were also subject to deportation and thus no longer able to aid the U-boats.<sup>18</sup>

Some Jews also turned to resistance groups for help. In February 1943, Jizchak Schwersenz founded the Zionist youth group Chug Chaluzi (Pioneer Circle). The members of this group established hiding places for dozens of illegal Jews and provided them with food and false papers.<sup>19</sup> Communist resistance groups also figured in the salvation of some people.<sup>20</sup> One survivor even claimed that “it was almost impossible for people to submerge for years on end who did not belong to the illegal Communist organization.”<sup>21</sup> This statement is a clear exaggeration; it was also written in the Soviet Occupied Zone of Berlin. Although a number of Jews did receive substantial support from communist groups and their sympathizers, most illegal Jews did not belong to such groups. Certainly, in the early years of Nazi Berlin, there were a few communist resistance groups in which Jews played key roles, but in the 1930s, what remained of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) had been slow to recognize the dangers of National Socialist antisemitic rhetoric. Jewish membership in the KPD during the Weimar Republic was never high in any case, with estimates placing membership in 1927 at about 1,000 out of a total membership of 140,000. Indeed, as John M. Cox, argues, the KPD never showed much courage in confronting the so-called “Jewish Question.”<sup>22</sup> Although Kristallnacht changed that somewhat, by the time Jews in Berlin submerged, the KPD had been decimated by relentless persecution. Moreover, firmly affiliating oneself too closely with a resistance group—communist or not—was incredibly risky, as the Gestapo could target them at any time, and usually only undertaken by individuals with strong political convictions. Indeed, the dangers of Gestapo infiltration were everywhere, as evidenced by the arrest of the party’s entire domestic leadership at one meeting in 1935.<sup>23</sup>

Other individuals used money they had saved to procure shelter. Jews who submerged before their scheduled deportation often had money and valuables for barter set aside. Georg Gustav Segall and his wife Rita had 2,000 RM when they submerged on 10 October 1942. This enabled them to stay for a while in hotels and guesthouses under false names. The



money did not last long, however, and Georg soon sought out people with whom they could stay.<sup>24</sup> Although helpful, money alone was not enough to ensure steady shelter. The availability of lodgings also was contingent on one's appearance: specifically, did one "look Jewish"?<sup>25</sup> After submerging sometime in late 1942 or early 1943, the Pineas family, husband and wife, separated. The husband went to Vienna, and the wife stayed in Berlin. One day, a judge contacted her for an interview, after a parson in Württemberg charged him with saving Jews from the deportations. As the judge deemed that she did not look "pronouncedly" Jewish, he considered her an acceptable risk and sent her to live at the parsonage as a guest.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, not fitting the Nazi physical stereotype of a Jew gave people with fairer hair and a lighter complexion an advantage.<sup>27</sup> The most ardent Nazi supporters never dreamed that Jews could look like anything other than the stereotypical cartoons found in the Nazi tabloid rag *Der Stürmer*.

Despite the support that some Jews received from family, friends, and strangers, many individual divers stood alone and relied on their own initiative to find a place to stay. After her harrowing escape from the window of her first hiding place, Herta Fuß stayed with a non-Jewish acquaintance for a few days. She then spent an unspecified number of nights sleeping on the streets.<sup>28</sup> One day, she approached an elderly woman and, after striking up a conversation, inquired whether the woman knew of a place where she could spend a few nights. Fuß explained that her brother was home on vacation, and he and his wife needed their privacy. Remark- ing on Fuß's "innocent eyes," the woman told Herta that she had a place for her to stay, and Herta moved in with her.<sup>29</sup> For homeless individuals like Herta, a combination of courage, personal initiative, and an ability to lie seamlessly were their best hopes for survival. However, as these U-boats lived alone and without stable, trustworthy connections, they had the greatest chance of being caught. They had no warning if a denuncia- tion in their circle of acquaintances took place and fewer people to turn to for help and advice. In the chaotic and unstable submerged world of Nazi Berlin, the existence of these individuals was doubly uncertain. Indeed, by November 1943, Fuß awaited deportation after her cover story fell apart.

Dashing around the city in a struggle for survival was an indication of just how difficult it was to hold on to shelter. No location was completely safe: "We had to be on the move constantly, not hidden in an attic or basement but just try [sic] to evade being caught in one way or another."<sup>30</sup> Also, the quality of those locations varied considerably, ranging from comfortable homes to dwellings scarcely worthy of the name. Moreover, the need for shelter challenged Jews' prewar social prejudices and forced them into living situations that once would have been intolerable. Hid- ing places were as diverse as the lives of the U-boats, demonstrating both

the extreme need facing the city's illegal Jews and the dynamic nature of hiding.

Survivors rarely provide a comprehensive list of every place they stayed, because life on the run was so transient. Each day brought new anxieties over finding cover, and many individuals often did not know until the evening where they would spend the night.<sup>31</sup> In an eight-month period in 1943, Kurt Lindenberg hid in fourteen different locations, not including train cars and telephone booths. Some of the divers simultaneously held multiple hiding places, with one daytime shelter and one nighttime shelter.<sup>32</sup> In fact, few people managed to remain in one location for the duration of the war.<sup>33</sup> The average U-boat likely sheltered in over a dozen different locations.<sup>34</sup> One man claims he moved twenty-eight times.<sup>35</sup> But generally only those places where people lived for an extended period of time or that stood out as noteworthy receive mention in survivor testimony. As a result, many people only mention a few places they stayed, even though their testimonies state that they hid in almost a dozen different locations.<sup>36</sup>

The exigencies of survival introduced the U-boats to a "most colorful collection" of hiding places: "From a luxurious 4 bedroom apartment above a small gardening summer cottage, a bomb-damaged room in a bombed-out house, a sales room in a clothing goods store, a workers cottage in a Berlin suburb, etc."<sup>37</sup> Indeed, some individuals found relatively comfortable lodgings with the aristocracy or in pleasant homes with friendly company.<sup>38</sup> Others had to contend with cramped, vermin-infested, and primitive situations.<sup>39</sup> Often, the city's many summer garden cottages (*Lauben*) provided shelter. An architectural fixture in Berlin and throughout Germany, these small, unheated cottages were often little more than shacks. Although a refuge from hostile eyes, they were scant protection from the elements. Dirt floors absorbed the cold and damp, and the temperature inside rarely reached forty degrees in the winter.<sup>40</sup> Often, Jews could not find even a *Laube*. One woman and her family slept outside, on floors, or in basements, "until good friends every now and then gave us shelter."<sup>41</sup> Indeed, experiences sleeping in the city's parks, in train station waiting rooms, or even in the city's ten-cent toilettes were common.<sup>42</sup> Yet these forms of "shelter" were often the only refuge many divers could find.<sup>43</sup>

The need for refuge also introduced some individuals to the "seedier" elements of Berlin and forced them to confront their present social reality. Despite almost a decade of persecution and social isolation, some Jews still clung to their pre-Nazi social status and upbringing, attitudes that sometimes conflicted with the realities of underground life, especially for those individuals who had grown up in a solidly bourgeois milieu.<sup>44</sup> The quicker they learned that prewar social distinctions had no place in their under-

ground life, the sooner they could focus on survival. Erich Hopp and his son Wolfgang spent their first ten days on the run with the madam of a brothel at Mulackstraße 40a. The street, narrow and dark even today, was located in one of the most undesirable quarters of Berlin.<sup>45</sup> By his own admission, Erich Hopp was a gifted individual and had been a well-respected man of excellent family before the Nazi rise to power: decorated veteran of the First World War, professor of literature, author, poet, president of the Association of Authors for the Protection of Intellectual Property, presiding member of the Union of German Intellectual Workers, honorary member of the German Women's Book Association, honorary councilor of the League of Film Actors, grandson of a Kolberg rabbi on his father's side, and grandson of the chairman of the Jewish Community of Breslau on his mother's side (see figure 2.1).<sup>46</sup> He recounted his impression of the brothel after the war: "The tables had bright-colored lamps which Wolfgang thought pretty. . . . I lay awake, reviewing the paradox: here we were safe—in a brothel! And safe for how long?" The inhabitants of Mulackstraße 40a treated Hopp well, but for a man of his social and intellectual situation, the "paradox" must have been extreme indeed.<sup>47</sup>

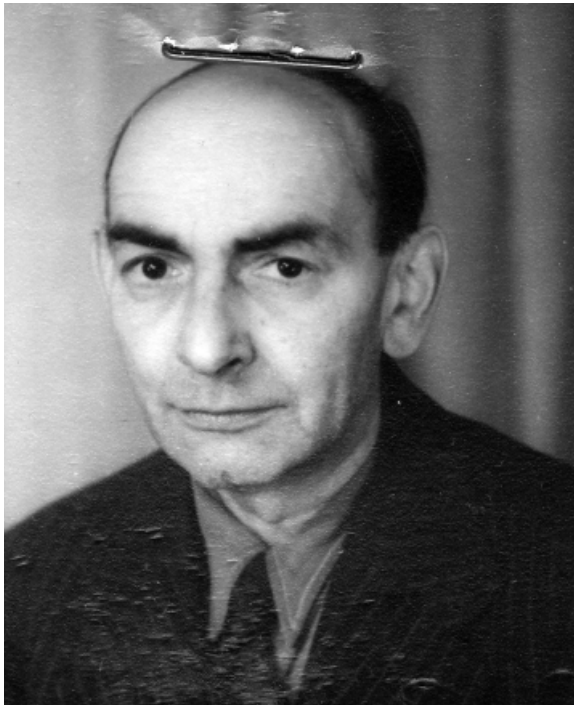


Figure 2.1. Erich Hopp.<sup>48</sup>

A variety of individual factors prompted the city's divers and dashers to relocate, but three predominate in survivor testimony. First, fearing denunciation, many people who took in fugitive Jews later turned them out. The financial and physical strain of supporting Jews and the personal conflicts that sometimes arose between diver and helper were a second factor. Third, air raids destroyed the dwellings where Jews sought asylum. Although Allied bombing runs on Berlin were a small concern for the first three years of the war, increasing raids caused widespread damage and forced many submerged Jews to surface.

Submerged Jews frequently had to contend with their helpers' fears. A decade of Nazi rule had turned neighbor against neighbor, and many non-Jews turned individuals away, or else only allowed them to stay for a night or two. During the Large Factory Operation, Paula Vigdor turned to her uncle's former housekeeper for protection. However, the housekeeper's sister-in-law refused to allow Vigdor to remain for long. She had seen Jews loaded onto trucks and considered Vigdor's presence an unacceptable danger. Occasionally, the women did allow Paula entry into the apartment at night. More often, however, no one answered the door, and Vigdor had no alternative but to sit all night on the front steps. Only after recognizing that this shelter was entirely lost to her did Vigdor turn elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

Although the fears of many potential helpers were premature, they were not unfounded. The city's divers and dashers came under frequent suspicion, even when they lived with false papers.<sup>50</sup> Neighborly curiosity was not always good-natured, and residing illegally in one of Berlin's many apartment houses, especially cramped, overcrowded apartment flats in poorer, working-class districts, posed an ongoing challenge. Three-year-old Fredy K. had to leave his first hiding place when the acquaintances who had taken him in were made aware by the neighborhood that he was a "Jewish type" (*jüdischer Typ*). Fredy's helpers, frightened by what had transpired, returned him under cover of a foggy night to his mother, who was hiding in a different neighborhood.<sup>51</sup> Several facets of Fredy's experience warrant commentary here. The first concerns the response of Fredy's helpers, who clearly viewed the neighbors' comments that Fredy was a "Jewish type" as a sign that he was in danger. Yet the exact circumstances surrounding the interaction are unknown. Fredy's testimony, submitted at the age of six to the Odf in the fall of 1946, is remarkably well written, and a three-year-old child (as he was at the time of the incident) would not have remembered these details. It is therefore likely that his testimony was dictated by his parents, neither of whom had been at the scene and who probably received this knowledge from Fredy's helpers. Moreover, Fredy devotes only one sentence of his testimony to describing

this event. We therefore are left to speculate on the context in which these remarks were made and who, exactly, made them. Were they meant as a pointed warning or an outright threat? Were they made out of fear or hostility, and, if fear, was it fear for Fredy or fear of the authorities getting involved in the private lives of the residents of the building? Second, Fredy claims that the “neighborhood” (*Nachbarschaft*) brought up his appearance to his helpers. This term suggests a broader suspicion and concern among the residents of the building in which Fredy was living and indicates that he was not hiding at all but living openly with his helpers, which could potentially lead to denunciation. Proceeding from this is a third, crucial facet of Fredy’s story: he and his helpers were not denounced but rather, depending on the tone and context in which the comments were made, at most threatened with denunciation or else made aware that Fredy’s appearance might lead a hostile unknown in the neighborhood to denounce him. Although a great deal of research has been done on the role of denunciation in Nazi Germany, the motivations of many of the denouncers is largely unknown, with historical explanations for the motivations not going much beyond categorizing them as either “affective” (i.e., done with a real regard for the Nazi regime and its ideology) or “instrumental” (i.e., to settle personal scores or vendettas and use the state apparatus for one’s own personal gain)—the latter of which was likely the more common of the two motivations.<sup>52</sup>

With regard to Fredy’s case, we cannot know—but should still ask—why he was not denounced. After all, his helpers certainly felt threatened and frightened enough to send him back to his mother; they perceived a real threat to his safety. And if the comment on his appearance was meant to suggest an “affective” desire to denounce, as it clearly reflected a distinct National Socialist antisemitic feeling, then why did a hostile neighbor not go straight to the Gestapo? There are several possible—and not necessarily mutually exclusive—explanations. One might be, of course, that a real concern for Fredy’s safety motivated the comment. Perhaps there was an ardent Nazi in the building, one known for denouncing others, and concerned neighbors, wanting to know as little as possible of Fredy’s background for their own protection, issued a coded warning to let his helpers know that sheltering Fredy was dangerous for all parties involved. Another potential explanation is that the “neighborhood,” suspecting that Fredy was Jewish, issued a preemptive warning in order to head off any possible denunciation, because it did not want the Gestapo or police involved in the workings of the neighborhood or building. If this were the case, the neighborhood turned its back on Fredy and endangered his very life, not out of any real affection for National Socialism and its antisemitism but rather out of a selfish and stubborn desire for normal-

ity, which the appearance of the feared Gestapo could threaten.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, if that were the case, what we see here is not mere indifference to Fredy's plight but rather a decidedly aggressive apathy that refused to tolerate anything or anyone that could cause disruption. On that score, it is also not unreasonable to speculate whether the apartment building perhaps housed political opponents of the Nazis or individuals engaging in illegal black market activities who felt threatened by Fredy's appearance in the neighborhood.

Another potential explanation for the warning is that the neighbor issuing it was not entirely sure and did not want to run afoul of the Gestapo by falsely denouncing Fredy's hosts. Indeed, the scale of false denunciations made on instrumental grounds was so great in the early years of the Third Reich that the Gestapo, perpetually understaffed and overstretched, made it a crime to falsely denounce someone.<sup>54</sup> Fredy, of course, was too young to know this, but adult U-boats were not. Take, for instance, the case of the diver Konrad Latte. A gifted musician, Latte camouflaged himself and spent part of the war traveling Germany as a member of a touring music group. While on tour, Latte's future wife informed him that a certain woman in the group, an ardent Nazi, was about to report Latte to the Gestapo on suspicion of being Jewish. With no false papers—Latte continually claimed they had been lost in an air raid and was awaiting new papers, which likely aroused the woman's suspicions—Latte realized he had no other choice than to confront the woman. As reported by his chronicler, “[Konrad] told the woman he would not tolerate the offense of being called a Jew, and invited her to accompany him to the Gestapo office to settle the question, reminding her of the stiff penalties for denouncing a true German. She declined, and the matter died.”<sup>55</sup> In Fredy's case, a degree of uncertainty might very well have made the neighbor commenting on Fredy's appearance think it best to issue a thinly veiled warning rather than risk a false denunciation.

One final and important facet of Fredy's story is the actual comment that the neighborhood thought he looked a “Jewish type.” Fredy's testimony on that score is rather unique among the OdF testimonies in that the issue of “looking Jewish” rarely appears in these early testimonies, although it does show up a bit more frequently in later testimonies and memoirs. Interestingly, survivors rarely elaborate on what it meant to “look Jewish,” suggesting that even decades after the demise of the Third Reich, the matter of “looking Jewish” within the context of Nazi Germany was somehow self-evident. One survivor only went so far as to say that her husband, also living submerged, did not look Jewish, and she elaborated by stating that he did not look like a “*Stürmer* caricature” (see image, below). This suggests an astounding degree of credulity on the part

of *Der Stürmer's* seven-hundred-thousand-strong readership, something that likely aided submerged Jews, none of whom resembled the bizarre and often photo-touched portrayals.<sup>56</sup>



Figure 2.2. “Jewish Congress,” *Der Stürmer*, no. 34 (July 1934).<sup>57</sup>

Such caricatures as the one pictured above, hallmarks of the virulently antisemitic *Der Stürmer*, portrayed Jewish men as squat, overweight, and physically unfit, often balding, but otherwise with black hair, large, downward-hooked noses, protruding, fleshy lips, and, occasionally, an effeminate demeanor, all of which was meant, in the words of the historian Claudia Koonz, to “alert readers to the connection between inner depravity and external appearance” central to Nazi race ideology.<sup>58</sup> Even if not all Germans were as hatefully gullible as the readership of *Der Stürmer*, Nazi propaganda for nearly a decade had impressed upon the German public that Jews looked and acted a certain way. For those individuals who bore absolutely no resemblance to Nazi propagandist images of Jews, camouflaging one’s self as Aryan to navigate the streets of Berlin was an excellent strategy. Indeed, many of the U-boats recognized the absurdity of the Nazis’ antisemitic stereotypes, and a few even managed to have some fun with it while highlighting the stupidity and inaccuracy of the state’s racial propaganda. Bruno G., who, in his own words, did not look “typically Jewish,” dated a Jewish girl who looked “Aryan”: she had blonde hair, blue eyes, and was tall and slim. In the aftermath of the introduction of the *Judenstern*, Bruno and his girlfriend intentionally used to walk around busy parts of the city, their stars prominently displayed, enjoying the stares of passersby who could not believe that the two of

them were Jews.<sup>59</sup> Although useful, as almost all of the testimonies discussing not “looking Jewish” indicate, years of Nazi antisemitic propaganda had managed to pervade not only the minds of ardent Nazis but also those of most Germans, both Jewish and non-Jewish. As a result, just as having a supposed non-Jewish appearance was a considerable benefit to some U-boats, being a “Jewish type” complicated matters. Indeed, fears of looking Jewish, heightened by years of the antisemitic caricatures and propaganda that had permeated society, caused some Jews to exaggerate in their own minds the “Jewishness” of their features.<sup>60</sup> To counter these stereotypes and allay their own fears, some female U-boats dyed their hair.<sup>61</sup> One woman even went so far as to undergo rhinoplasty to change her appearance, thinking that her nose was too Jewish, despite what non-Jews told her to the contrary.<sup>62</sup>

Suspicious and hostile neighbors on the lookout for Jews were not the only factors forcing many dashers to be constantly on the move. The destitution of many of these individuals presented an unsustainable physical and financial burden for some helpers and was yet another reason that caused them to turn out the U-boats who had sought shelter with them. One survivor lost her hiding place of nine months due to the “universally catastrophic food provisioning” that gripped the city in 1944.<sup>63</sup> Her helper could no longer feed her. Although the average German engaged in non-heavy employment was entitled to 2,400 calories per day, this figure became increasingly “theoretical” as the war entered its final years.<sup>64</sup> Jews and their helpers with neither the means nor the inclination to procure food on the black market were reduced to sharing, and 2,400 calories per day did not suffice for two people.

Personal conflict between submerged Jews and their helpers also contributed to the transient nature of submerged life. In late November or early December 1943, Herta Fuß turned to a former colleague for shelter, as Fuß had recently escaped from the collection camp and required assistance. Fuß noted that this colleague lived together with an “Aryan,” suggesting that the colleague was either Jewish or a *Mischling*. One evening around 11:00, while Fuß was washing her clothes, the colleague entered the room and ordered her to leave immediately. Fuß threw her wet clothing over her arm and headed to a hotel.<sup>65</sup> Apparently, the colleague’s partner had fallen in love with her. Herta does not elaborate, but perhaps there had been an affair, or the man had made advances. Possibly the colleague merely suspected a partiality on his part. In any event, this case serves as a useful corrective to romanticized visions of heroic helpers and solidarity with Jews in the face of Nazi persecution. Human insecurities continued to intrude on the lives of the U-boats and their helpers and further complicated efforts to find and maintain lodgings.



Bombings also frustrated efforts to find shelter. Allied air raids destroyed hiding places and displaced almost every U-boat during the war. By the end of the war, over one million Berliners were homeless.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, as the air war against Berlin intensified, the chances of finding suitable shelter worsened, and the physical alterations to the cityscape caused by the air raids had a direct impact on the U-boats' chances for survival. The physical stability of Berlin, which had initially been a known constant when most Jews dived, began to shift out of all recognition, with disastrous consequences: "The heavy air attacks accumulated, little by little all acquaintances and friends were fully bombed out, and we no longer had accommodations."<sup>67</sup> Loss of shelter deprived Jews of essential protection and exposed them to discovery by the authorities. In some respects, the Allied air raids certainly brought some measure of hope and a sense of abstract justice to the U-boats and their friends. One survivor remarked decades later that she used to wish the bombers could swoop down and pick her up.<sup>68</sup> Another said that he never really thought the falling bombs could hurt him and his submerged friends: the bombs were for the Germans, not them.<sup>69</sup> Yet that was wishful thinking. The bombs, of course, fell at will, destroying essential shelter and causing injury and death to Jews and non-Jews alike.

In survivor testimony, air raids usually blend together, thereby stressing the strong association made by many U-boats between daily life and the air war against Berlin. Survivor depictions of the raids underscore the broadly felt fear and uncertainty of underground life. One notable exception, however, is the airborne Battle of Berlin, directed by Air Marshal Arthur Harris of the British Royal Air Force (RAF).<sup>70</sup> The RAF waged this air battle against the city from August 1943 until the end of March 1944. However, the first massive strike against the city did not come until 22–23 November. These two evenings witnessed the only attempt by Allied forces to ignite a firestorm in the city, the likes of which consumed Hamburg and Dresden. Only due to its wide boulevards and open spaces was Berlin able to avoid total catastrophe.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, on the first night alone, over 700 bombers dropped 1,132 tons of high-explosive bombs and 1,334 tons of firebombs on the city, the second largest tonnage dropped on the city during the entire war.<sup>72</sup> Between 22 and 26 November, the city suffered staggering losses: 400,000 homeless, 68,000 domiciles destroyed, and 2,966 dead.<sup>73</sup> The November raids are some of the only raids on the city mentioned by multiple survivors.<sup>74</sup> Despite more than eighteen months of bombings and the devastating Battle of Berlin in April and May 1945, the events of November 1943 stood out with clarity. The bombings were of such magnitude that one survivor even uses them to pinpoint the date of her arrest.<sup>75</sup> U-boat victims of these raids not only lost their shelter, they also lost their few remaining possessions, including

food, money, and false papers, thereby complicating efforts to survive.<sup>76</sup> The raids, however, did not destroy solely shelter. Dr. Charlotte Bamberg's juxtaposition of the November raids with her life in the preceding months is telling of the power of the raids to demolish more than concrete and stone: "We enjoyed lodging, a household, and convivial living, until being bombed out fully [in November] 1943."<sup>77</sup>

The immense difficulties associated with finding and maintaining shelter were a concern throughout the war. However, evidence indicates that the problem of locating suitable places to stay was even more acute in the opening months after submerging, as Jews attempting to live illegally in the city still needed to build up networks of helpers. The first months were therefore a period of acclimation, of experimenting, of figuring out whom to trust. Frightened hosts and suspicious neighbors, although common, were not the only factors prompting the divers to move. The financial and emotional demands of providing for U-boats led to open conflict. The air raids were an added concern. Particularly in 1943, when several thousand U-boats were still living in the city, bombs forced people into the open and left them even less prepared for illegal life than they had been previously.

## Food and False Papers

Helene and Paul Helft had been arrested on the first day of the Large Factory Operation. Somewhere near Dresden, Helene and her husband escaped their transport. After spending two nights in the forest without food or shelter, Helene made her way to business friends near Dresden. She received food and money to get her and her husband back to Berlin. In Berlin, Helene decided to try to retrieve some of her possessions from her sealed apartment, but the apartment's porter fetched the police. Only through her cunning was Helene able to escape arrest, although she does not say how.<sup>78</sup> Helene's experience illustrates a central problem for many U-boats: Jews found themselves underground with little or no money.<sup>79</sup> Thus, a number of Jews defied all risk to get into their former apartments to retrieve cash or any possessions that might be used to trade or sell for food, false identification papers, and other essentials.<sup>80</sup>

The availability of food in Berlin decreased at a time when U-boats needed it most. Most Jews, deprived of legal access to meats, fats, and fruit since rationing began, were in a substantially weakened state when they submerged.<sup>81</sup> Mindful of the damage that poor rations had inflicted upon civilian morale during World War I, the Nazis set up a complex system of rationing meant to keep the German people working for victory.<sup>82</sup> Combined with the severe exploitation of agricultural regions in Eastern Europe, the rationing system enabled the Nazi state to provide for its cit-

izens until the final weeks of the war. Indeed, by the beginning of 1944, Germans remained the best-nourished people in war-torn Europe.<sup>83</sup> Yet rations continued to decline, especially in regards to meats and fats. At the start of the war, meat constituted 12 percent of a standard consumer's monthly diet, and fats constituted 6.5 percent. By the middle of 1943, those figures had dropped to 5.7 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively. By April 1945, the figures had reached 0.9 percent and 1.9 percent.<sup>84</sup> Considering that the Nazi state did not always meet its promised rationing targets, the true figures might be somewhat less. For submerged Jews, they were undoubtedly much lower, during a time when they needed every ounce of energy to stay nimble, alert, and ahead of their enemies.

Hunger reached such proportions that some U-boats turned to eating spoiled food, old sausage casings, or even dog biscuits.<sup>85</sup> Jews had few other options open to them to alleviate their desperate hunger pangs. Some non-Jews did share food, or else they undertook the dangerous task of procuring food by trading or selling Jews' possessions.<sup>86</sup> In fact, for non-Jews unable to shelter U-boats, providing food was an important way for them to contribute to their survival.<sup>87</sup> U-boats who had money sometimes chose to eat set meals (*Stammgerichte*) in a restaurant or pub. The meals in these locales did not require ration cards. However, they also lacked fat and meat and were neither hearty nor appetizing.<sup>88</sup> One U-boat in his early twenties claims he ate five portions a day to keep up his strength.<sup>89</sup> Otherwise, some individuals turned to stealing to feed themselves. At one point during the war, Bruno G. received a ration card for two hundred grams of bread. He went into a bakery when it was empty and requested four rolls, knowing that the baker would have to turn around. When she did, Bruno reached behind the counter and grabbed a handful of ration stamps. He then waited calmly for his rolls, handed over the requisite stamps, gave the Hitler salute, and walked out.<sup>90</sup>

Submerged Jews also put what little money they had toward buying false papers, a valuable asset in the struggle to evade arrest. Yet one usually could not procure false identification papers without great financial outlay and risk. Moreover, as 1943 progressed, the postal identification card, one of the most common and accessible forms of identification, no longer counted as valid identification during pass inspections. As a result, many Jews were left with expensive identification papers of questionable value.<sup>91</sup> Even when an individual received the papers gratis, he or she still had to pay to have the photograph changed and a new official stamp affixed. Often, they could not afford the exorbitant prices charged for these services.

In early 1943, Konrad Friedländer decided that his postal identification card was no longer a guarantor of his safety. He therefore turned to his good friend Rudolf Kopp. Kopp provided him with an official identity card, filled out by the High Command of the Armed Forces (*Oberkom-*

mando der Wehrmacht, or OKW) (see figure 2.3). Yet even these excellent papers only protected Friedländer in case of raids by the police or Wehrmacht. They were not, after all, an identification of citizenship. Also, the cost of forging the papers was 6,000 RM, an exorbitant sum that one of Konrad’s helpers paid.<sup>92</sup> Although false papers varied considerably in price, and Friedländer’s appear to be somewhat pricier than many, most records indicate a cost of at least 2,000 RM for decently forged papers.<sup>93</sup> Friedländer’s good fortune in having such friends was not unique among



**Figure 2.3.** OKW Official Identity Card of Rudolf Kopp Used by Konrad Friedländer. In addition to name, birth date, and current address, the card lists Friedländer’s build (medium), the shape of his face (oval), his hair color (dark blond), and his eye color (brown). The photograph with corresponding seal was central to any well-forged set of identification papers.<sup>94</sup>

survivors. However, high rates of arrest suggest that it also was not the rule. For many people, false papers and a steady supply of food were neither safe nor easy to come by. Those not fortunate enough to receive false papers and food from friends sometimes turned to the black market.

## The Black Market

The black market was a central feature in the lives of Berliners, a liminal space, underground yet in plain sight, where Jews and non-Jews alike operated in contravention of the law, albeit with a great difference in risk.<sup>95</sup> It was vast, comprising hundreds of individual and overlapping “networks.” For some people, including U-boats, trading on the black market functioned as their primary occupation, and the individual sometimes operated in as many as fifty or sixty different trading “rings.”<sup>96</sup> In other cases, the level of involvement was smaller, involving perhaps forty individuals operating through one contact.<sup>97</sup> Until 1944, most illegal trade occurred indoors: in bars, restaurants, and cafés.<sup>98</sup> The gradual destruction of the city forced the trade to move outdoors, and all areas of Berlin had some level of black market activity. However, almost 50 percent of all trade occurred in one of four neighborhoods located in the center of the city: the Mitte district (16.7 percent), followed by Charlottenburg (11.5 percent), Prenzlauer Berg (9.8 percent), and Schöneberg (7.5 percent).<sup>99</sup> Evidence suggests that the various sites of illegal trade were well known, and this parallel underground drew in a number of Jews looking to earn a living.<sup>100</sup> However, not all Jews who turned to the black market did so for financial gain. Most were searching for food, false papers, and other goods.<sup>101</sup> Studies show that the two most sought-after products on the black market were food and food stamps (23 percent) and material/clothing (23 percent); tobacco followed (19 percent), then services (13 percent). These data correspond to the needs of many Jews who braved the black market.<sup>102</sup>

Survivor accounts testify to the importance of the black market, the exorbitant prices charged, and the advantages of having taken money and goods into hiding. When Adolf Bielschowsky submerged on 16 October 1942, he took with him approximately 6,000 RM. Of that, 2,500 RM went toward obtaining a doctored service record book. Bielschowsky obtained the book from a certain Wichmann, a Jew active on the black market during 1943. Wichmann had been introduced to Bielschowsky at a small café in the center of the city by Franz Kaufmann, a Jewish convert to Christianity. Kaufmann was active in the Confessing Church and was known for helping hundreds of Jews obtain false papers and ration cards.<sup>103</sup> In addition to the 2,500 RM, Bielschowsky paid 150 RM to have his own photograph added to the illegal document.<sup>104</sup>

Although false papers were in high demand, food was the most sought-after commodity. As the war progressed, it became one of the most expensive.<sup>105</sup> Bielschowsky paid 250 RM for a complete book of ration stamps. Individual food stamps varied in price, between 9 RM and 10 RM. Heinz Goldmann bought his ration cards from a Frenchman at the S-Bahn stop Hohenzollerndamm on the southwest edge of the Berlin city center. According to his brother Herbert, Goldmann paid 60 RM for ration cards equaling one pound of fat and 30 RM for ration cards entitling the carrier to one pound of meat.<sup>106</sup> Since many Jews submerged with little or no money, the cost of food on the black market was doubtless prohibitive.<sup>107</sup>

The sites where Jews encountered the black market demonstrate the centrality of restaurants, pubs, train stations, and other public meeting places to the pursuit of illegal trade. Bielschowsky's first black market contact moved away in July 1943, but he soon found a new connection, when a stranger approached him in a small bar in the neighborhood of Prenzlauer Berg and asked if he needed ration stamps. The U-boat Leopold Chones also bought his ration stamps in a pub, the Lokal Südstern, in the Berlin district of Neukölln.<sup>108</sup> These locations served as venues where Jews could socialize with both non-Jews and U-boats and establish valuable trading contacts. For example, the Goldmann brothers frequented a restaurant called Zum Klausner. There they met Paul Regensburger, also known as Dr. Regen, another U-boat.

Yet the black market, although a central feature in the lives of many U-boats, was dangerous. Kurt Lindenberg recalled, "The fantastic sums that one could earn through illegal trade did not compare to the accompanying danger. Actually, all of my illegally living acquaintances, who quietly occupied themselves with illegal trade, were 'nabbed' sooner or later."<sup>109</sup> The arrest of one Jew in a black market circle often led to the arrests of others.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, between August and October 1943, the Gestapo arrested Adolf Bielschowsky, his contact Wichmann, Paul Regensburger and the Goldmann brothers, and Leopold Chones. In the case of Regensburger, the police found him dining at Zum Klausner.<sup>111</sup> Still, need and desire drove countless Jews onto the black market. For many, it was the only source of food and false papers. Although the number of U-boats regularly working on the black market appears to have been small, some level of contact with illegal trading often was unavoidable; it enabled survival.

## Arrest

Fritz-Günther Meyer and his wife submerged on 8 May 1943. The Meyers found shelter with a non-Jew, and, with the help of another U-boat,

Fritz-Günther found work as a supernumerary at the State Opera. On 10 September 1943, under unknown circumstances, the authorities arrested Meyer's wife and took her to the collection center in the Große Hamburger Straße to await deportation. Determined to save his wife, Meyer turned to a former colleague now working at the collection center, a Jewish orderly (*Ordner*) named Baches. Baches operated as a courier between Meyer and his wife. He smuggled in a package of shoes and gloves for Frau Meyer and a hammer and chisel to effect her escape. In turn, he brought Meyer a letter from his wife, assuring him of her well-being and determination to hold on. Soon, however, the news reached Meyer of his wife's impending deportation. In response, he wrote a letter to the camp leadership, requesting a stay of his wife's deportation and his intention to turn himself over to the authorities in twelve days, after settling his affairs.

Meyer, however, had no intention of turning himself in. Rather, he attempted to stall the authorities, while making the final preparations for his wife's escape. To that end, on 28 September, Meyer paid Baches a visit at his apartment. He proceeded to give Baches a rope, two steel saws, and some medication, in the hope that his wife could use them to escape her transport.<sup>112</sup> He also gave Baches a letter containing instructions on how and where his wife best could execute her escape. He included a timetable, travel cards, and a punched train ticket from Berlin to Breslau for his wife's use. Meyer then arranged to meet with Baches the following day at 2:00 P.M. When he arrived at Baches's apartment, agents of the State Police arrested him.<sup>113</sup>

In Nazi Berlin, the phenomenon of arrest was omnipresent. At one point or another, most U-boats narrowly escaped from the police and their informants, and almost all knew of someone who had fallen prey to arrest. Indeed, the Gestapo's formidable methods, developed under the aegis of the Reich Main Security Office, were highly effective. Nazi security forces apprehended approximately 65 percent of all U-boats over the course of 1943, accounting for almost 88 percent of all arrests of submerged Jews.<sup>114</sup> Although the Nazis continued their pursuit of illegal Jews until the closing days of the war, evading capture in 1943 proved most difficult.

In Berlin, agents of the Gestapo hunted down the city's divers and dashers, working from detailed lists obtained from the Jewish Registration Office (*Jüdische Meldestelle*) and the Berlin Jewish Community. They compared transport lists with the names of deported Jews, allowing them to ascertain whether a Jew had submerged.<sup>115</sup> With this list in hand, the Gestapo methodically pursued its prey, relying on three primary methods to ensnare the U-boats. First, pass inspections and police raids, although also a useful means of tracking down military deserters, were effective in identifying fugitive Jews. Second, denunciation by non-Jews was an om-

nipresent threat. Not infrequently, denunciations led to a domino effect and the arrest of dozens of illegal Jews in a short span of time. Agents of the Gestapo also coerced U-boats they arrested into divulging the locations of other Jews. In some cases, they even persuaded some of these Jews to work for them. These so-called *Fahnder* (searchers), although few in number, proved to be a third and equally insidious threat to Jews attempting to evade arrest and deportation.

### Pass Inspections

On 20 September 1943, members of the Kriminalpolizei (Criminal Police) came upon forty-five-year-old Max Zickel in the city's Mitte district. Upon questioning, Zickel failed to provide proper identification. He soon admitted to having not worn the Jewish Star for over a year, and the police took him into custody.<sup>116</sup> Zickel's encounter with the city's police was an all-too-common occurrence for the city's illegal Jews. Discussion of pass inspections in survivor accounts is usually quite matter-of-fact and cursory, suggesting that the inspections were such an intrinsic part of life in the city as to warrant little explanation. Indeed, carrying ID papers had been a fixture of German society, even before the Nazi seizure of power. Only by this point, for the U-boats, these papers meant the difference between life and death. Comprehensive arrest records do not exist, but inspections likely account for a large number of arrests, especially during 1943, when many U-boats were without shelter. Although false papers provided some level of protection, Jews had to trust to their knowledge of when and where such inspections might occur and adjust accordingly.

Navigating the streets of Berlin was a nerve-wracking affair, and the U-boats had to be on guard constantly. The police cordoned off sections of streets, requiring all people to show identification. Male U-boats were at particular risk, as the purpose of pass inspections had as much to do with tracking down deserters from the German army and fugitive foreign workers as with locating fugitive Jews.<sup>117</sup> When the police were in doubt as to a person's identity, they sometimes tipped off Jews working for the Gestapo that someone they inspected might be Jewish.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, as the war progressed and the German home front radicalized in the face of total war and increasingly diminished prospects for victory, these inspections increased in frequency.<sup>119</sup> Over time, the city's camouflaged Jews operating in public recognized the most likely locations for police and Gestapo raids: certain cafés and restaurants, the opera, the black market, and trains became off-limits for all but the most daring.<sup>120</sup>

Many U-boats developed specific tactics to mitigate the dangers of pass inspections. Among men of fighting age, appropriate military identifica-



tion and uniforms were invaluable. Günter Fabian, twenty-three years old at the time of his flight underground, was in possession of an identification card issued by the German Volkssturm (Home Army). His future father-in-law also provided him with a Volkssturm armband, allowing him to blend in with other men his age and deflect suspicion.<sup>121</sup> Other, younger men donned Hitler Youth uniforms, demonstrating their belief that an outward display of support for the regime served as a form of protection against suspicious Germans. For Jews lacking false papers or a borrowed uniform, the best way to deflect suspicion was not to run or slink away into the shadows but rather to engage people: “The best means of disarming a mistrustful staring person was to ask them where a street was or for a light for a cigarette.”<sup>122</sup> Although these methods did not protect one from large-scale pass inspections, they did lessen the chances of being reported to the nearest police officer.

As the air war against Berlin intensified, the need to take cover put the U-boats in a difficult position. Public bunkers were subject to inspections, and Jews were hesitant to use apartment basements, as their presence might raise awkward questions among the residents and the air warden.<sup>123</sup> As a result, Jews often eschewed proper shelter, at least until the closing days of the war forced many to risk the bunkers. For most of 1943 and 1944, however, some had no other alternative than to take cover in the streets, in parks, or in “slit trenches” and watch the bombs fall around them: “Often enough, I saw death before my eyes . . .”<sup>124</sup> More commonly, they opted to remain in the apartments of their helpers, vulnerable to shattering glass, fire, and, most fatally, a direct hit.<sup>125</sup>

If a U-boat survived the air raid, they still had to contend with discovery by the building’s residents.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, the first task of the air warden after the all-clear sirens rang was the inspection of the building and each apartment for damage. Jews were aware of this threat, and despite the fire and turmoil that engulfed entire neighborhoods, they could not rest. As the wardens made their rounds, U-boats fled or hid themselves as best they could. In August 1944, Erich Friedländer experienced a near miss when an air raid targeted the neighborhood of Friedrichshain. As the sirens rang, Friedländer, fully dressed and prepared to flee after the raid, took his place in the corridor of the building’s second floor, protected only by the walls and two thick blankets. Bombs directed at a local factory pulverized the neighborhood. One bomb destroyed the entire fourth floor of Friedländer’s building, half of the third, a portion of the second, and then dropped into the neighboring basement, where it exploded. After the raid ended, Friedländer heard the voice of the air warden coming to make his inspections. Erich attempted to hide in the lavatory. By this point, however, the upper floors of the building were ablaze. Taking advantage of

the ensuing confusion among the neighbors, Friedländer grabbed his possessions and fled through the smoke and fire to his next hiding place.<sup>127</sup>

## Denunciation

On 7 August 1943, the Gestapo received the following anonymous handwritten letter:

Urgent. Jewish Matter

Wish to make an important communication to you concerning a Jewess. I have noticed for some time that people are hiding a Jewess in this building, and she does not wear a star.

The Jewess is called Blumenfeld, and she is being secretly hidden [sic] by Frau Reichert, Berlin W., 38 Passauer Strasse, 3 floors up, front building. This must be stopped immediately, send an official straight away about 7 in the morning to pick this woman up.

When this Jewess lived in the building before she was always cheeky and stuck up. But you will have to be quick because otherwise she might disappear and go somewhere else.

Heil Hitler<sup>128</sup>

When the authorities arrived at the apartment to question Blumenfeld, she claimed Slovakian citizenship but was unable to produce her passport, which she said was at police headquarters awaiting an extension of residence. After further questioning, Blumenfeld admitted to being a Jew.

Denunciation of illegal Jews was one of the Gestapo's most valuable tools. Although most of the agency's records either disappeared or were destroyed at the end of World War II, extant data from two cities (Würzburg and Düsseldorf) demonstrate that the organization was quite successful in enforcing racial policy, coordinating deportations, and hunting down fugitive Jews with a minimal number of personnel.<sup>129</sup> The average German citizen played a critical role in enabling the Gestapo's success and in reinforcing popular perceptions of the Gestapo as a larger and more omnipresent organization than it was. The Nazi state fostered an impromptu and organic network of denouncers, some motivated by hatred and greed, others by fear and uncertainty, and the Gestapo benefitted from the atmosphere of mistrust it created among the German people.<sup>130</sup>

Survivors routinely remark on fleeing their shelter due to being spied on. However, many often were unaware that their presence in a building had aroused any suspicion until agents of the Gestapo or its accomplices arrived to arrest them. The number of Jews arrested as a result of denun-

ciation is unknown. However, the transient nature of submerged life and the need for Jews to blend in with non-Jews as much as possible meant that the Gestapo relied heavily on informants and anonymous denunciations. Moreover, denunciation did not only endanger the safety of the denounced person and their helper. Ruthless and unrelenting interrogation by the Gestapo often led to multiple arrests. The arrest of Lotte Blumenfeld stands as perhaps the strongest example of the ramifications of denunciation. Her case highlights the complexities of successful evasion and the interconnected nature of submerged life in the city. However, Blumenfeld's arrest also illustrates the tenuous position of these connections. One act of denunciation had the potential to destroy multiple lives.

Blumenfeld's submerged life began in January 1943. For the previous five months, she had been waiting on an official emigration visa to enter Switzerland. Although illegal, Blumenfeld had connections through a non-Jewish acquaintance who was head of the Protective Police Reserves. By the end of January 1943, the emigration papers had not arrived, so Lotte submerged. After hiding for fourteen days, she again visited her acquaintance to inquire about the papers, but she was put off. During her next visit, she was told the papers would be a long time in coming, but the connection could arrange for Lotte to receive a Slovakian passport, albeit without a permit of residence. Lotte agreed and received in late May or early June 1943 new papers with the name Marie Sochmanowa. A couple of weeks later, Blumenfeld returned the passport to her connection, as he promised to obtain a residence permit for her, something that would arouse less suspicion. Blumenfeld called him again on the evening of 11 August, and her acquaintance told her to call back on Friday, 13 August. Lotte Blumenfeld gave this testimony to the Gestapo on 12 August 1943. Sometime between her last telephone call and the following morning, the police arrested her. Although a passport might have prevented Lotte's arrest, the denunciation was grounds for immediate questioning.

Blumenfeld's denunciation first led to the interrogation of the woman providing her with shelter and to her connection in the police reserves, both of whom initially prevaricated. The woman in whose apartment Blumenfeld resided testified that she believed Blumenfeld's story concerning her Slovakian origins. This claim seems doubtful, as the denunciation letter suggests that Blumenfeld's Jewish identity had been known in the building for some time. Blumenfeld's police connection also tried to deflect suspicion during his interrogation on 12 August. He claimed that he had not seen Lotte for a long time and denied all charges. After the police confronted him with 5,000 RM, supposedly to be used in securing the authorization for another Jewish couple's entry into Switzerland, the reserve officer confessed to everything, including to the origins of Lotte

Blumenfeld's false papers. His confession then led to the arrest of Leon Blum on 16 August 1943.

Blum's arrest then led to the arrest of Franz Kaufmann and two of his associates on 19 August.<sup>131</sup> A notable figure in church resistance in the Third Reich, Kaufmann had a distinguished professional career, and his history attests to the rich, complex, and varied interactions between Jews and Christians before the Nazi rise to power.<sup>132</sup> Born on 5 January 1886 to a Berlin Jewish family, Kaufmann later converted to Christianity. He served in the 10th Bavarian Field Artillery Regiment, and he was promoted to first lieutenant in 1913. He was wounded on 18 March 1918 and awarded the Iron Cross First and Second Class, the Bavarian Military Order of Merit Fourth Class with Crossed Swords, and the Frontline Service Cross.<sup>133</sup> After the war, he received his doctorate in law and political science, served in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, turned down an appointment as city councilor, and then worked as chief secretary in the Reich Finance Ministry and later in the Reich Public Accounts Office until his dismissal in 1936.<sup>134</sup> In 1934, Kaufmann married the non-Jew Margot von Walther, and at the time of his arrest, the couple had a three-year-old daughter. Having raised his daughter in the Protestant faith, Kaufmann qualified as living in a privileged mixed marriage. He was a member of the Confessing Church and, in 1942, began working to aid Jews living illegally.

Kaufmann was instrumental in procuring false papers for Jews. Members of the Confessing Church dropped post office ID papers (among other forms of identification) in the collection box, and Kaufmann then had the papers doctored with new photos and seals. He also received the necessary documents from other intermediaries and anonymous sources.<sup>135</sup> One of the head forgers for the group, a U-boat named Cioma Schönhaus, then made the necessary changes to the papers.<sup>136</sup> Kaufmann's case is noteworthy not only for the number of arrests it prompted but also for how it demonstrates the importance of the Confessing Church for the underground movement, collaboration between Jews and non-Jews, and the simultaneous strength and fragility of such groups that endeavored to aid Jews. Indeed, the momentum created by Blumenfeld's arrest accelerated with the arrest of Franz Kaufmann.<sup>137</sup> According to secondary sources, the police arrested Kaufmann with a notebook containing the names and addresses of illegal Jews and his fellow conspirators.<sup>138</sup> Also on Kaufmann's person at the time of his arrest was a variety of identification documents waiting to be forged.

According to his confession, Kaufmann began helping Jews on the run after meeting Leon Blum in 1942. Kaufmann told Blum that he was "sympathetic to fugitive Jews," and Blum asked Kaufmann if it would be pos-

sible to procure identification papers for a U-boat, Lotte Blumenfeld.<sup>139</sup> Kaufmann then contacted a U-boat named Wichmann, who obtained the necessary papers, likely on the black market, where he was active.<sup>140</sup> Through his connections in the Confessing Church, Kaufmann regularly received batches of false papers from two Jews, Ludwig Lichtwitz and Cioma Schönhaus, who forged the papers for the sum of 100 RM per ID. Kaufmann met at regular intervals with Lichtwitz at the parcels section of a post office. Kaufmann received the doctored passes, and Lichtwitz received new ones to forge.<sup>141</sup> The interrogation soon returned to Wichmann, with whom Kaufmann was scheduled to meet the following day, 20 August. Along with confirming the complicity of Wichmann, Schönhaus, Lichtwitz, and two other individuals, the Gestapo forced Kaufmann that evening to reveal information pertaining to eight Jews and one non-Jew. Where possible, he provided current addresses, true names, and false identities. When asked how many Jews he had helped since 1942, Kaufmann replied that he needed time to consider the matter. At 10:00 P.M., the Gestapo concluded the first day of interrogation.<sup>142</sup>

The second day of Kaufmann's interrogation began at 9:30 A.M. on Friday, 20 August 1943. Kaufmann began with the following statement:

As a result of my arrest yesterday morning, I have been confronted with a completely new situation. Until that point, I saw it as my task to place myself protectively in front of those who had entrusted their care to me. Naturally, it is a difficult decision for me henceforth to abandon those, before whom I had stood protectively. This decision could mature only gradually, and hence, I ask that you not be angered with me if today I correct and add to the information given during my questioning yesterday.<sup>143</sup>

As part of his "corrections," and almost certainly the result of torture at the hands of the Gestapo, Kaufmann was forced to divulge the aliases of several of his partners, and he proceeded to give an unwilling and damning confession regarding the whereabouts of almost two dozen Jews.<sup>144</sup> Most of those people mentioned were not arrested as a direct result of Kaufmann's confession. Some, such as Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, had changed hiding places.<sup>145</sup> In other cases, the individuals had emigrated or were assumed deported. Kaufmann sometimes was able to lie about the full extent of his relationship with his partners and what they knew of his illegal activities. Still, the thoroughness with which the police pursued every missing Jew and every non-Jewish helper was as disheartening as it was ominous.

By 23 August, besides Lotte Blumenfeld, twenty-seven people somehow connected to Franz Kaufmann had been arrested. Over the next eight weeks, the police arrested over two dozen more Jews, *Mischlinge*,

and non-Jews. By 12 October, the State Police reported a total of fifty individuals, mostly Jews but also non-Jews, arrested as a result of the denunciation of Lotte Blumenfeld. The documents suggest the figures were even higher than that. Moreover, searches were still underway, including the hunt for the forger Cioma Schönhaus. Trials were held for those non-Jews and some *Mischlinge* who had helped Jews evade capture. As for the U-boats, the file is clear:

Those arrested Jews on file, insofar as their file is no longer needed, have already been evacuated, that is to say, have had state police measures taken against them. The Jews Kaufmann, Neuweck alias Wichmann, Segall alias Engelmann . . . and Lichtwitz alias Langenbach, for the purpose of further investigation, are to be found in the collection camp in the Gr. Hamburger Str. 26.<sup>146</sup>

Thus, only Jews who were perceived as being of some use to the police were held in custody; the Gestapo deported the others as soon as possible.<sup>147</sup> Two of the individuals arrested, Rolf Isaaksohn and Fritz Neuweck (alias Wichmann), worked for the Gestapo as informants tracking down U-boats. One *Mischling* protected from deportation received an eight-year prison sentence. Dr. Franz Kaufmann, the nexus of this center of resistance and aid, was racially Jewish according to the Nuremberg Laws; he was held in police custody and never charged.<sup>148</sup> The Gestapo sent him to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp where its agents executed him on 17 February 1944.<sup>149</sup>

## Jewish Informants

Berlin's submerged Jews not only had to contend with arrest through pass inspections and denunciation by non-Jews, they also had to worry about betrayal by other Jews, whose participation in the denunciation and arrest of the U-boats is a bitter and complicated chapter in the history of hiding in the city. Two types of Jewish denouncers aided the Berlin Gestapo, although the numerical consequences of their actions varied as greatly as did their motivations for providing information. The first and most common type provided one-time information to the Gestapo, as the result of either torture or false promises. The second type of informant was known in bureaucratic circles as a *Fahnder* (searcher). Survivors referred to them simply as *jüdische Spitzel*: "our all too well-known Jewish spies."<sup>150</sup> These men and women did not provide one-time information. Rather, with systematic and frequently zealous efficiency, they worked with the Gestapo and often took the lead role in tracking down Jews on the run. Although

no more than a couple of dozen operated at any given time, the *Fahnder* played a central role in tracking down hundreds of illegal Jews.<sup>151</sup> Jewish acts of betrayal illustrate the desperation that accompanied arrest as well as the Gestapo's horrific ability to infiltrate every aspect of German society and to intimidate and manipulate everyone who fell within its grasp.

On 27 August 1944, agents of the Gestapo, most likely Jewish *Fahnder*, arrested twenty-year-old Lothar Orbach during a game of billiards at the billiard hall he regularly frequented. Orbach looked up from the game to find a pistol pointed at his head. A fellow U-boat managed to escape, but the Gestapo deported Orbach to Auschwitz on 6 September 1944.<sup>152</sup> From there, Orbach was transferred first to Niederorschel and then to Buchenwald, where he was liberated on 12 April 1945.<sup>153</sup> Before leaving for the United States in September 1946, Orbach and an acquaintance paid a visit to the man who had betrayed him: nineteen-year-old Siegfried G. Shortly before his deportation, Orbach had heard from an acquaintance working in the Gestapo collection camp that G. had been responsible for his arrest.<sup>154</sup> Siegfried tried to exculpate himself. Orbach, working in post-war Germany to track down and interrogate Nazi war criminals, took G. to a Russian officer in the city and had him charged as a Nazi informer.<sup>155</sup> Fifty years later, Orbach remained unaware of what had happened to Siegfried G. Orbach assumed he had been released, but in his memoirs, the apprehension of Siegfried served as an act of closure: “[It] relieved me of a burden.”<sup>156</sup>

Siegfried's case made its way before the Jewish Community's Honor Court (Ehrengericht des jüdischen Gemeinde). The community established the court to ascertain if and to what extent individual Jews had “offended against the interests of the Jewish community” during the Third Reich.<sup>157</sup> Although the court could not issue prison sentences, it did have the right to deprive Jews of access to social welfare and of recognition as a Victim of Fascism.<sup>158</sup> The court's rulings shed some light on the moral dilemmas faced by Jews whom the Gestapo arrested. In the summer of 1944, Siegfried G. was a seventeen-year-old who recently had been arrested by the Gestapo. Orbach believed that G.'s transgression had been a traffic accident involving an unregistered motorcycle.<sup>159</sup> However, G.'s main offense had been his work falsifying papers for submerged Jews.<sup>160</sup> According to Siegfried, the Gestapo tortured him, a statement perhaps confirmed by the sling G. wore at the time of Orbach's arrest.<sup>161</sup> The court concluded that Siegfried's act of betrayal was the result of the impossibly difficult circumstances under which he found himself and, moreover, his young age. As the court concluded, “One cannot expect from such a young and inexperienced person in such an intractable and dangerous situation the same courage and consideration as from a mature male adult.”<sup>162</sup>

Siegfried's case is indicative of many that confronted the court. Denunciation and betrayal, although predominantly non-Jewish acts, unfortunately occurred with relative frequency. When the police or the *Fahnder* arrested a U-boat, they brought the individual in for questioning to the Jewish collection camp, which, in March 1944, had relocated from its location on the Große Hamburger Straße to the former Jewish Hospital under the leadership of Gestapo member, SS-Hauptscharführer, and Criminal Police Secretary Walter Dobberke.<sup>163</sup> A member of the Nazi Party since the spring of 1937, Dobberke had been assigned to help implement and oversee the deportation of Berlin's Jews beginning in 1941. Following the last major deportations from the city in March 1943, Dobberke then turned most of his energies to coordinate the tracking down, arrest, and deportation of the city's divers and dashers. Upon arrest, the former U-boat was brought before either Dobberke or a subordinate and interrogated as to the location(s) of other Jews. They often used a combination of torture and promises to send the prisoner to the Theresienstadt Ghetto instead of to Auschwitz in order to extract confessions.<sup>164</sup> The Jewish *Fahnder* working at the collection camp also pursued their own methods to extract confessions from former U-boats. They offered to help the prisoner find work for the Gestapo or to put in a good word and get them sent to Theresienstadt. They also resorted to trickery and lies, pretending that they, too, had been arrested. After "commiserating" with the prisoner about their common fate, they sometimes persuaded them to divulge the whereabouts of other Jews.<sup>165</sup>

The number of U-boats whom the Gestapo and *Fahnder* were able to arrest through these one-time confessions is unknown. A former secretary to Dobberke as well as a former *Fahnder* testified after the war that most arrested Jews divulged the whereabouts of other U-boats. However, both of these individuals had it in their best interest to implicate as many Jews as possible to deflect blame. On the other hand, one inmate of the collection camp claimed that only sixty Jews betrayed other Jews.<sup>166</sup> The reality likely lies somewhere between heroic refusal and widespread cooperation. Of the approximately 4,800 U-boats arrested, perhaps several hundred Jews provided credible information to the Gestapo, much of which was obtained through torture, false promises, and trickery. As one confession often led to the arrest of multiple individuals, had most captured Jews divulged the whereabouts of other Jews, far fewer than 1,700 U-boats would have survived the war. Also, many submerged Jews intentionally avoided one another to protect themselves and others in case of arrest; not everyone could provide useful information to the Gestapo. Lastly, not all credible information led to arrests. The fluid nature of submerged life often meant that addresses were obsolete by the time the Gestapo arrived.



In most cases, acts of betrayal were one-time events that in no way reflected a willingness or desire on the part of Jews to aid the Nazis. Siegfried G. was a typical case of the horrific consequences associated with arrest and the difficult choices that faced most people once confronted with the imminent reality of Auschwitz. This qualification does not negate the understandable anger of those who experienced betrayal. However, it does illustrate how quickly freedom of choice diminished once the Gestapo made an arrest. Those who refused to help the Gestapo certainly displayed heroic resolution, but Jews who were tortured faced an overwhelming situation in which survival was one of the few clear thoughts able to penetrate the mist of pain, dread, and despair. Even still, fear of the camps never led the vast majority of Jews to join that small, despised, and feared minority of former U-boats who actively aided the Gestapo in its hunt for the city's divers and dashers: Berlin's Jewish spies, the *Fahnder*.

On the evening of 8 August 1944, Lola Alexander stood on the platform of Berlin's Gesundbrunnen railway station and waited, as usual, for her fellow U-boat Ursel Finke (see figure 2.4). Finke and Alexander both worked at small lending libraries owned by the non-Jewish couple who hid them. As Finke appeared, Lola stared in paralyzed disbelief. Ursel had been arrested by a man from whom she already had escaped once before: the *Fahnder* Gerhard Behrendt.<sup>167</sup> Behrendt had brought Finke to his superior, the Gestapo *Kommissar* Herbert Tietze, who was waiting at the train station.<sup>168</sup> Determined to avoid deportation, Finke broke free and threw herself in front of an oncoming train. When she came to, a crowd had gathered before the platform. Finke had fallen under the train, which tore apart her one leg but did not kill her. As she was pulled to the platform, the crowd, unaware of her true identity, chastised her for her stupidity. Finke retorted, "You should try being persecuted as a Jew!"<sup>169</sup> Behrendt approached her and told her that he and Tietze were good people and would have let her run. In response to her request that they now let her do so, Behrendt gave her a sneering grin and replied, "But you can't!"<sup>170</sup>



Figure 2.4. Ursel Finke.<sup>171</sup>

As a result of the Large Factory Operation, the Berlin Gestapo established the Jewish Search Service (Jüdischer Fahndungsdienst) in the spring of 1943, an organization unique to Berlin and Vienna.<sup>172</sup> Its employees were tasked with tracking down the city's estimated five to seven thousand illegal Jews.<sup>173</sup> The exact number of individuals arrested by the *Fahnder* is unknown. However, in 1950, the East German police charged in absentia Rolf Isaaksohn, one of the most notorious *Fahnder* in wartime Berlin, with having betrayed upward of 250 hidden Jews. His accomplice and wife, the equally notorious Stella Goldschlag, was responsible for at least one hundred arrests.<sup>174</sup> Even if the other *Fahnder* were far less aggressive and successful, their actions as a group account for possibly as many as one thousand arrests (22 percent) of all U-boats.

Under the camp leadership of Walter Dobberke, the Gestapo recruited its *Fahnder* from those former U-boats whom it felt could help track down especially large numbers of Jews. For Jews who accepted Dobberke's offer, the job offered a number of advantages. The *Fahnder* received ration cards, police identification, freedom of movement, and the right not to wear the Jewish Star.<sup>175</sup> In some cases, they were allowed to continue living with their spouse.<sup>176</sup> Some received a monthly payment of 160 RM.<sup>177</sup> Dobberke even offered the false hope that working for the Gestapo protected their families. A variety of factors, largely but not exclusively self-serving, prompted these individuals to offer their services to the Gestapo.<sup>178</sup> In turn, a perverse symbiotic relationship developed. The Gestapo needed the *Fahnder* to help them track down Jews evading deportation, and the *Fahnder* offered their services in order to avoid deportation.

The composition of the Fahndungsdienst varied exceedingly. Other than being Jewish, these spies had only two qualities in common.<sup>179</sup> The first was their large circle of Jewish associates and their knowledge of the Jewish community. Indeed, the *Fahnder* Behrendt, although in a privileged mixed marriage, had worked since 1938 for offices of the Jewish Community or in forced Jewish factory labor. Rolf Isaaksohn and Fritz Neuweck (alias Wichmann), both arrested during the Franz Kaufmann affair, had been active on the black market forging false papers and had many contacts. The second was their willingness to work for the Gestapo. Postwar attempts by former *Fahnder* at self-exculpation proved largely cynical or inadequate. The deadly Stella Goldschlag, known in U-boat circles as the "Blond Poison," underwent two trials in postwar Berlin.<sup>180</sup> She argued that she had been a victim and had offered her services to the Gestapo only in exchange for saving her parents from deportation.<sup>181</sup> Yet not only was Goldschlag responsible for betraying her first husband, she also continued to work for the Gestapo after it deported her parents. Her next husband, Rolf Isaaksohn, was, if possible, even worse. His contempo-

raries noted his perverse fascination with Nazi pageantry during the thirties. He once threatened to denounce his own family to the regime, and evidence suggests that not even Stella could match him in ruthlessness. Isaaksohn fled the collection camp in the Jewish Hospital during the final days of the war, and the East German government declared him dead in 1953.<sup>182</sup> The psychology of these individuals requires further study. However, Isaaksohn's behavior suggests a certain level of cheap mimicry of his persecutors and perhaps even self-loathing. Similar to those concentration camp prisoners who resorted to imitating their SS oppressors, some of the *Fahnder* may well have fallen into the same psychological trap.<sup>183</sup>

Using Jews as informants held several advantages for the Gestapo. First, the *Fahnder* understood how submerged life operated. They were well acquainted with illegal methods of procuring food, the types of shelter sought out by Jews, and the cafés, restaurants, and other social venues Jews frequented.<sup>184</sup> Second, years of social isolation from the non-Jewish population had created a level of useful anonymity for Jews attempting to live illegally. At the same time, however, Jews became more visible to other members of their steadily shrinking community, and the Gestapo used the *Fahnder* to identify Jews who otherwise would have escaped their notice.<sup>185</sup> Third, the Gestapo manipulated the trust between Jews to maximize the level of information the *Fahnder* were able to take from the U-boats, resulting in a larger number of arrests. Indeed, these informants regularly passed themselves off as fellow U-boats to win the confidences of those they betrayed.<sup>186</sup> Lastly, the *Fahnder* served an important function by augmenting the Gestapo's extensive infiltration of German society. In the past few decades, historians have countered the myth of the Gestapo as an "omniscient and omnipresent" entity in German society.<sup>187</sup> Its success at infiltrating and intimidating German society would not have been possible without the participation of the German public in "policing" itself.<sup>188</sup> With respect to tracking down U-boats, the *Fahnder* brought with them a level of knowledge of submerged life without which the Gestapo would have been far less successful. The *Fahnder* took the lead in hunting down and arresting Jews, as in the case of Ursel Finke, while members the Gestapo served an auxiliary role. Indeed, the initiative and successes of *Fahnder* were such that the Gestapo reduced the number of its own employees working in the collection camp.<sup>189</sup>

The U-boats were acutely aware of the presence of the spies, and survivors frequently mention the dangers such individuals presented. The *Fahnder* scoured the city and surrounding countryside, and according to one survivor, they "had a better eye for who was Jewish," in part because as Berlin's Jewish community rapidly shrank during the deportations, those who remained became better known to one another.<sup>190</sup> Many *Fahnder* also

relied on their former identity as U-boats to get close to fugitive Jews, and individuals often were unaware that they were speaking with a member of the *Fahndungsdienst* until it was too late. Some, like Ursel Finke, attempted to flee at all cost, to the point of throwing themselves in front of an oncoming train. Others resorted to fighting back. Indeed, betrayal by a fellow Jew provoked such anger on the part of some U-boats that the *Fahnder* ultimately received permission to carry a sidearm for their own protection.<sup>191</sup> Over time, U-boats also learned to avoid certain cafés, theaters, and restaurants frequented by other illegal Jews.<sup>192</sup> In the end, the safest way to avoid denunciation by Jews was to limit one's contact with other divers or, at the very least, to avoid sharing addresses and names.<sup>193</sup> Despite the comfort that came with socializing and speaking freely with other Jews, the risk that one might be speaking with a Jewish spy or future spy was too great. Although surviving the war often required putting one's trust in strangers, submerged Jews learned to divulge no more than was absolutely necessary.

### Escaping Germany

On 29 September 1943, as a result of the Franz Kaufmann affair, the Gestapo arrived to arrest the Jewish forgers Ludwig Lichtwitz and Cioma Schönhaus. Although the agents succeeded in apprehending Lichtwitz, Schönhaus was nowhere to be found. In fact, he had fled the country to neutral Switzerland. With careful preparation, including the right outfit, appropriate papers, and a mind that had weighed almost every possible scenario or question he might encounter, Schönhaus rode his bike more than four hundred miles to the Swiss border. While an escape into Switzerland was not impossible, it was almost so, and an acquaintance tried to talk Schönhaus out of such an act, arguing that with his excellent false papers he was safer in Berlin.<sup>194</sup> In the case of a wanted master forger, this was not true. However, the fact remains that the flight from Berlin to neutral countries was an incredibly difficult feat. It is unknown how many German Jews attempted to flee to neutral countries and how many succeeded, but the number is likely quite low. Stories of flight from Berlin and escape to neutral countries are therefore noteworthy. They demonstrate not only the difficulties inherent in such a move and why so few likely attempted it but also the U-boat understanding of German society and, for those who attempted these escapes, their ability to use that understanding to their own advantage.

Kurt Lindenberg, a central figure in this study thus far, dared to escape Nazi Germany in November 1943. His plan had begun to form during

that summer. He does not mention why he decided on Sweden instead of Switzerland. He knew, however, that a direct flight was impossible, so he set his sights on Denmark, a country he assumed to be anti-Nazi and therefore filled with people who might help him. Lindenberg's resolve to flee the Reich developed for a number of reasons. The first was the termination of "an unhappy love affair" with the daughter of a senior police lieutenant serving in Warsaw. She knew that Kurt was Jewish, and she stood by him until her mother discovered the affair from a neighbor and ended the relationship. Second, the precarious position of the U-boats steadily worsened, and one by one his acquaintances disappeared. Lindenberg also feared the upcoming winter and the increasing air raids on the city. He saw escape as his best chance for survival.

Lindenberg spent the summer planning his escape by learning all that he could about traveling to Sweden. Gathering information on the transportation possibilities was integral to his extensive preparations. He hung around train stations and asked questions about the shipments of fish arriving; his pretext was that he was employed by a fish distributor. Lindenberg also spoke on the telephone with the product information office of the German National Railway (Reichsbahn) concerning transportation options. He conversed for hours with the drivers of Danish fish import trucks. Once he even went so far as to visit the Swedish consulate in Berlin. He told the consulate who he was and how he had heard that the Swedes had taken in Danish refugees. He then asked them which German ports were involved in exporting coal to Sweden. In this case, he was informed that coal exports to Sweden had stopped; this, in fact, turned out to be a lie. Lindenberg ascertained the truth after calling the Reichsbahn.

One of the biggest obstacles he faced was that he could not ride a train over the border. German police and military pass controls were tight; officers would have noticed a young man not in uniform, and forged papers were beyond his financial means. Although Lindenberg had his original birth certificate and a document certifying that he was not fit to serve in the military, the papers were of questionable worth. Thus, the first part of his trip would have to be in a cargo car. Once in Denmark, although he could ride in a regular carriage, he still required a ticket proving that he traveled from Germany. Tickets needed to be punched upon boarding the train and surrendered upon leaving the train station. Lindenberg first bought two train tickets for Berlin-Copenhagen. He went to the local train station when it was crowded and passed through boarding control. The man punching the train cards assumed the second person had already passed through and punched both of Lindenberg's tickets. Lindenberg waited for a while and then exited, handing over one of his two tickets at the control. A few days later, Lindenberg returned to the station, bought

a new ticket, and, upon his exit from the station, turned over the ticket he had had punched a few days earlier. He now had a valid ticket that would enable him to circumvent official ticket controls.

When Lindenberg spoke of these plans to other illegal Jews, however, he only met with attempts to dissuade him. For Lindenberg, their timid reaction was typical: “The German Jews are indeed Germans, insofar as they have no individual courage, just like the majority of Germans.”<sup>195</sup> The majority of U-boats did not attempt to escape Germany. Their general response, according to Lindenberg, was as follows: “No, no, if we’re nabbed here, then we just had rotten luck. But to want to make one’s way through the German border is downright suicide.”<sup>196</sup> Indeed, most survivors do not mention attempts to escape Germany, likely because they considered fleeing the country to be too great of a risk. Lindenberg, however, was not looking for a travel companion. He just wanted to see what people thought. Indeed, by his own admission, Lindenberg was an *Einzelgänger* (loner), a term that when seen in conjunction with his decision to flee Germany by himself highlights the highly individual nature of submerged life.

On the morning of 5 November 1943, Lindenberg attempted to begin his journey. He arrived at the train station and proceeded to the cargo cars. However, his car was located toward the end of the tracks and had not yet been loaded. Lindenberg left the train station and spent the day wandering around the city, going into two movie theaters and eating three separate meals in local pubs. By the end of the day, his car still had not been loaded. Indeed, the train did not leave until late the following night. Even then, it only went as far as the Berlin neighborhood of Pankow before halting yet again. Finally, on the third night, the train wended its way through Brandenburg and Mecklenburg to Rostock. In Rostock, Lindenberg broke his nose when one car being coupled to his car threw him across the room. The train then proceeded on to Warnemünde, where Lindenberg was to catch a ferry. In Warnemünde, the marina police almost arrested him, but his false documents carried him through the ordeal. With a swollen nose and blood smeared over his face, Lindenberg secured lodgings for the night with a woman whom he described as a “clueless angel.” He then spent the next night in the smoking salon of the ferry that would take him to Denmark.

Lindenberg arrived on 11 November in Gedser, Denmark. With his valid train ticket, he took the fast train to Copenhagen. The train, however, was delayed, and he arrived in Copenhagen after curfew. Luck was with him, and his false papers worked on the Danish officials. Lindenberg had three addresses of people to whom he could turn for help. After ringing the buzzer at one address and waiting for some time, a woman let

him in and brought him upstairs to her apartment. She then fetched the wife of the pastor who lived downstairs. They provided him with bread, butter, a fried egg, and a bottle of Carlsberg beer. The woman, the sister of someone Lindenberg knew in Berlin, also gave him five Kroner and some Danish ration stamps and offered him a place to stay for the night. The next day Kurt accompanied the woman to the home of the family for whom she worked. The mistress of the household invited him in and promised to get in touch with people who might be able to ferry him to Sweden. For Kurt, acclimated to the difficulties of hiding in Berlin, the experience was somewhat unreal: "When I thought about which difficulties and diplomatic chess games were necessary in order to obtain secret accommodations in a house in Berlin, here seemed to me like a dream."<sup>197</sup> That afternoon, a young man came to the house and said that Lindenberg soon would be heading to Sweden. That evening, the contact drove Lindenberg, a Danish Jew, and another fugitive from the Gestapo to the coast, put them in a boat, and on 12 November 1943, Kurt Lindenberg arrived safely in Sweden.<sup>198</sup>

Lindenberg's story of escape highlights the extreme difficulties and unexpected dangers that accompanied those attempting to flee Nazi Germany. There is more to his story than highlighting difficulty and danger, however. Of particular importance for contextualizing and understanding Lindenberg's successful preparations for his flight to Sweden via Denmark is recognizing that many of the same factors that affected the chances for Lindenberg's successful escape are those that historians of the Holocaust have long understood as critical for explaining the varying Jewish survival and mortality rates throughout Nazi-occupied Europe: location, the attitude of local populations to the persecution of the Jews, and, especially, timing.<sup>199</sup> Indeed, Lindenberg's escape allows us to see these broader factors at work in the survival of one individual and to read a larger narrative of Jewish survival into Lindenberg's highly personal and brief description of his escape. Although Lindenberg might have opted for neutral Switzerland, like Cioma Schönhaus, who fled to that country a little more than a month before Lindenberg's own flight, Sweden remained his destination. Lindenberg does not indicate why he chose Sweden, but historical hindsight allows us to observe the aforementioned three factors at play. The first is that Sweden was closer than Switzerland and required less time to travel through hostile Nazi Germany; the less time spent in the cradle of Nazism and its fanatical adherents, the better. The second factor concerns the attitude of the Swiss and Swedish governments to the plight of Jewish refugees. Stemming from a decree issued by the Swiss government in October 1939, unauthorized refugees (including many Jews) apprehended by the Swiss police were sent back to their country of origin, a policy not

always uniformly enforced but one that remained in effect at least until late 1943. On the other hand, Sweden, which initially had had a similar attitude toward Jewish refugees as the Swiss government, changed course when the deportation of Norwegian Jews began in late 1942, and the Swedish government offered asylum to those Jews who managed to reach the country.<sup>200</sup>

Third, Lindenberg happened to choose his flight to Sweden at just the right time. To what extent Lindenberg was aware of the policy changes of the Swedish government is unclear, but we do know, based on his conversation with a Swedish consul at the embassy in Berlin, that by early October 1943, Lindenberg had heard of the escape to Sweden of the vast majority of Denmark's Jewish population. The Jewish population in Denmark (numbering around seven thousand) had been left relatively unmolested for the first three and a half years of Nazi occupation in comparison to Jews in most other occupied countries. This came to an end in the autumn of 1943. The Nazi occupation authorities, under the command of Dr. Werner Best, were determined to solve the "Jewish Question" in Denmark and scheduled a roundup of Danish Jews for 2 October 1943. The plans, however, were leaked, and the Swedish government announced its intention to accept all Danish Jews who could reach its shores. What ensued was a concerted, nationwide effort by the Danish people to first shelter and then smuggle, on fishing boats, almost the entire Jewish population of Denmark to safety in Sweden. In the end, the Nazis only managed to arrest 485 Jews.<sup>201</sup> This was and is still remembered as a truly heroic and remarkable feat, and as the news of the rescue (if not its scale) had already reached Lindenberg in Berlin, it quite likely served as a source of hope for him, who must have felt reassured in his choice of destination. In short, the timing of Lindenberg's escape could not have been better. He arrived little more than a month after the flight of Denmark's Jews to a nation that already had demonstrated its rejection of Nazism's murderous antisemitic designs and that now had a network of individuals in place to help ferry Lindenberg out of the country almost as soon as he had arrived.

Lindenberg's successful flight was due to a number of factors outside of his control, including the attitude of the Danish people and the Swedish government, but it is also undeniable that his careful preparations (months in the making) played a central role in his survival. We also should be mindful that Lindenberg was a particular type of individual: headstrong, a risk taker, but also a quite methodical individual who planned ahead and who even in the months before he was forced to submerge had been preparing for that eventuality (see chapter 1). In understanding why some Jews took the even greater risk to flee Nazi Germany,



we therefore need to treat his withering judgment that Jewish Germans had no courage as too simple and certainly unfair. Lindenberg was a single man, twenty-two years old. He was not hiding with family or friends. He was young and active enough to brave the cold and hunger. He was comfortable with lying and taking great risks. Even with the war still raging as he wrote the account of his escape in neutral Sweden, Lindenberg already recognized his own cunning and daring: “With the gangster tricks that I learned in these 8 months [in hiding], I would have gotten on well in the gangster world of Chicago in the ’30s.”<sup>202</sup> While this is certainly true, to some degree every Jewish diver in Berlin needed to learn such “gangster tricks” in order to survive, even those Jews who never contemplated escaping the country. Fleeing Nazi Germany was not an option for most; for others it was too great a risk. Lindenberg’s flight to Sweden was a success, but not one that could have been foreseen by any person at the time. Just as submerging was a personal decision, so too was the act of fleeing Nazi Germany.

## Conclusion

The year 1943 was the first for most of Berlin’s Jews who made the decision to dive into the shadows of Nazi Berlin and live submerged. For the majority, it was also their last. Survival in the dangerous and chaotic world of Berlin or even farther afield was simply not possible. The obstacles involved in procuring adequate food and shelter as well as false papers proved insurmountable. Supporters of the regime and the aggressive *Fahnder* threatened to ensnare Jewish divers at every turn. The air raids on the city further complicated efforts to survive. Although some individuals were able to rely on their own cleverness and ingenuity, without sufficient networks of aid provided by friends, family, and goodhearted strangers, the city’s divers and dashers were dangerously exposed and vulnerable. By the end of the year, the Gestapo had succeeded in arresting approximately 4,200 fugitive Jews.<sup>203</sup>

Indeed, however much stories of survival provide a tentative road map to navigating the dangers of Nazi Berlin, the high arrest rates in 1943 indicate that there was no single “correct” way to live submerged. To make such a claim implies that those Jews captured by the Nazis somehow made mistakes or did something wrong. Survival tactics that worked for some individuals ultimately led to arrest and deportation in other instances. In understanding then why some Jews managed to evade capture where others did not, we must be resigned to understanding that survival, in so many instances, also came down to issues of luck and fate, two admittedly

vague and unhelpful terms for understanding the process of survival, but also essential components of the experience.

What is interesting in the stories recounted by survivors is how seldom issues of luck or fate appear in their testimonies but also what discussions of luck or fate do reveal about individual survivors, in the rare instances they use those terms. Several factors likely influenced U-boat use of the words “luck” and “fate.” The first might be that survivors employ the terms to excuse their having survived when so many other Jews did not. Crediting survival to luck or fate might function to deflect guilt or assuage conflicted feelings, especially for Jews in hiding, most of whom lost almost all of their family and friends during the Holocaust. Another explanation might be that U-boats used the terms to describe an occurrence they were unable to process at the time it happened, and they can only attribute their survival to luck, even if in historical hindsight we are able to see larger, clearly explainable factors at work, for example, the fortuitous combination of location, the attitude of the Danish population to the treatment of Jews, and the timing that contributed to Kurt Lindenberg’s successful escape from Germany to Sweden. Finally, as mundane as the explanation might sound, perhaps the former divers used the term reflexively, simply reaching for the first vaguely appropriate word that came to mind; this is especially true in the months immediately following the end of the war, before survivors had the chance to fully process all that they had experienced. However, it bears repeating that relatively few U-boat testimonies contain these terms, and if they go into detail, survivors tend to be fairly explicit in explaining how and why they survived. Despite the increasing death, chaos, and confusion caused by the air raids—as shelter vanished, food became scarce, and Berlin’s landscape was altered—daily life in the city still retained a degree of logic and routine, allowing Jews to construct at least a bare semblance of sense and order and thus provide in their testimonies a basic explanation of how specific processes factored into their survival. While there was no tried-and-tested formula for survival and certainly no guarantees, it is undeniable that despite the many challenges facing them, Berlin’s submerged Jews operated in a less arbitrary and brutal environment than that of the camps. If the camps were night, black as pitch, Berlin remained in a state of twilight, light enough to navigate albeit too dark to do so with absolute certainty. Yet the individual and individualistic nature of submerged life gave the U-boats a greater hand in navigating that twilight to effect their own survival, thereby lessening the need to discuss vague ideas of luck and fate. That the city’s former divers largely avoid discussions of the role of luck in survival is a testament to the very nature of their experiences submerged.

Ultimately, then, those U-boats who managed to survive their first year submerged, succeeded not solely due to issues of luck and fate or the essential generosity and aid of non-Jews. Rather, they underwent an individual learning process, one characterized by trial and error. The transient and chaotic nature of submerged life presented Jews with an almost impossibly large number of hurdles to overcome. However, it also provided them with a wide variety of tools to use in facing the myriad threats to their existence. By the end of the year, those Jews who had evaded capture were beginning to acclimate—at least on a basic level—to their new lives. They began to develop strategies to maximize their chances for survival and create a certain level of “normality” in their otherwise unstable lives. As they learned to navigate the city, they formed networks of helpers and began building personal relationships that would provide them with invaluable emotional support in the coming sixteen months.

The Third Reich still controlled vast swathes of Europe, and 1944 would bring with it more denunciations, arrests, despair, and struggle. However, amid the fight for physical survival, moments of light and hope still existed. Indeed, figure 2.5 suggests a parallel narrative of survival, one in which Berlin’s submerged Jews surfaced on occasion and attempted to do more than simply survive: they attempted to live. The pursuit of cre-



**Figure 2.5.** Christmas, 1943. The gentleman pictured is Walter Riesenfeld living submerged and celebrating Christmas with Grete Hoffmann (*right*) and Elisabeth Fritz (*left*), the two sisters sheltering him.<sup>204</sup>

ating and maintaining a life, so integral to individual identity and so central to the history of Berlin's divers, will be pursued in the next chapter.

## Notes

1. For a more detailed discussion of arrest rates, see the appendix in this book.
2. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, "Untergetaucht."
3. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, "Untergetaucht."
4. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, "Untergetaucht."
5. Benz, *Überleben im Untergrund*, 12.
6. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr. 31267.
7. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr. 31267.
8. As told to Eric H. Boehm, *We Survived: The Stories of Fourteen of the Hidden and Hunted in Nazi Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1949), 99.
9. See the case of Ursel Reuber and Eva in Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 210–17.
10. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
11. Indeed, the number of Jews residing legally in the city in February 1945 had actually increased from the previous year, standing at 5,847 at the end of July 1944. See YVA 0.8/145, "Jüdische Bevölkerung in Berlin, 1943–1945." The documents may also be found at [http://www.statistik-des-holocaust.de/stat\\_ger.html](http://www.statistik-des-holocaust.de/stat_ger.html).
12. See, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31551.
13. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38443.
14. CJA 4.1, 1602.
15. See LAB C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31225; LAB C Rep 118-01, Nr.: 2220; and, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31551.
16. See, for example, LAB, CJA 4.1, 1602.
17. Avraham Barkai, "The Final Chapter" in Meyer, *German-Jewish History*, 4:381.
18. Barkai, "Final Chapter," 4:382. See also LAB, C Rep 118-01, Nr.: 38677.
19. For a discussion of the origins, development, and resistance activities of Chug Chaluzi, see Christine Zahn, "'Nicht mitgehen, sondern weggehen!' Chug Chaluzi—eine jüdische Jugendgruppe im Untergrund," in *Juden im Widerstand: Drei Gruppen zwischen Überlebenskampf und politischer Aktion, Berlin 1939–1945*, ed. Wilfried Löhen and Werner Vathke (Berlin: Druckhaus Hentrich, 1993), 159–205. See also, Marion Neiss, "Chug Chaluzi (Kreis der Pioniere)," in Wolfgang Benz und Walter H. Pehle, eds., *Lexikon des deutschen Widerstandes* (Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1994), 189–90.
20. See, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 32306 and LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 947.
21. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30710.
22. John M. Cox, *Circles of Resistance: Jewish, Leftist, and Youth Dissidence in Nazi Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 74–75. Cox's noteworthy study is not merely interested in Jewish, communist dissidents but also Jewish left-wing dissidents in Germany more generally, and his book demonstrates that this was a truly politically diverse group.

23. Cox, *Circles of Resistance*, 60.
24. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
25. See, for example, ZfA, File of Susanne von Schüching, "Interview Frau von Schüching," interviewed by Marion Neiss, 14 November 1984, 10; and Ruth W. Holocaust Testimony (T-619), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
26. Herman P. Holocaust Testimony (T-128), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
27. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 204–5. See also Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 293.
28. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30544.
29. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30544.
30. Ruth W. Holocaust Testimony (T-619), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
31. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, "Untergetaucht."
32. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31551.
33. See the case of the father of Ruth G., in Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
34. See, for example, LAB, C Rep 118-01, Nr.: 30929.
35. ZfA, File of Julius Flatow.
36. See, for example, LAB, C Rep 118-01, Nr.: 30929.
37. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report." See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 204–5.
38. See, for example, LAB, B Rep. 078, Zug. 6026, UH 633, M 009, R 161, 15; ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, "Untergetaucht"; and Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
39. See Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 205. See also Friedländer with Schwerdtfeger, "Versuche, dein Leben zu machen," 127–29.
40. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30363.
41. CJA 4.1, 3089.
42. See, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38009.
43. LAB A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617, 61/L-63.
44. See, for example, Schönhaus, *The Forger*, 113.
45. Boehm, *We Survived*, 99.
46. LAB, C Rep 118-01, Nr.: 30929.
47. Boehm, *We Survived*, 100.
48. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, OdF Kartei, A-30929.
49. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31551.
50. CJA 4.1, Nr.: 698.
51. LAB, C Rep. 118-01.
52. See Robert Gellately, "Denunciations and Nazi Germany: New Insights and Methodological Problems," *Historische Sozialforschung* 22, nos. 3/4 (83) (1997): 234–35. Also, Karl-Heinz Reuband, "Denunziation im Dritten Reich: Die Bedeutung von Systemunterstützung und Gelegenheitsstrukturen," *Historische Sozialforschung* 26, nos. 2/3 (96/97) (2001): 223.
53. Stubbornness (in German, *Eigensinn*) and its utilization by Germans in the Third Reich to pursue a normal, everyday life, even at the cost of inadvertently strengthening the regime's hold on society, receive excellent, nuanced attention by Andrew Bergerson in his study of daily life in the town of Hildesheim during the Third Reich. See Andrew Stuart Bergerson, *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

54. See, Gellately, “Denunciations and Nazi Germany,” 237, and Reuband, “Denunziation im Dritten Reich,” 222–23.
55. Peter Schneider, “Saving Konrad Latte,” *New York Times* magazine, 13 February 2000, 31.
56. See the testimony of Ruth W. Holocaust Testimony (T-0619), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. On *Der Stürmer*'s readership numbers by the late 1930s, see Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 228, 232.
57. Photograph accessed on 19 May 2018 from Calvin College's *German Propaganda Archive*, <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/sturmer.htm>
58. Koonz, *Nazi Conscience*, 232.
59. Testimony of Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
60. Friedländer with Schwerdtfeger, “*Versuche, dein Leben zu machen*,” 132–33.
61. Friedländer with Schwerdtfeger, “*Versuche, dein Leben zu machen*,” 114. Mark Roseman also noted the phenomenon of dyeing one's hair in his study of the experiences of a young Jewish woman in hiding in Nazi Germany. See Roseman, *Past in Hiding*, 333.
62. Friedländer with Schwerdtfeger, “*Versuche, dein Leben zu machen*,” 132–36.
63. CJA 4.1., Nr.: 516.
64. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 82, 84–85, 99.
65. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30544.
66. Antony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945* (New York: Viking, 2002), 419.
67. CJA 4.1, 495.
68. Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 and T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
69. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
70. This “Battle of Berlin,” waged solely in the air, is not to be confused with the Battle of Berlin waged by the Soviet army against the city in April/May 1945. For more information on the air battle, see Gierbig, . . . *im Anflug auf die Reichshauptstadt*, 81–158; Ralf Blank, “Kriegsalltag und Luftkrieg an der ‘Heimatfront,’” in *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Bd.9: erster Halbband, Die Deutsche Gesellschaft 1939–1945; Politisierung, Vernichtung, Überleben*, ed. Jörg Echternkamp (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2004), 372–75.
71. Gierbig, . . . *im Anflug auf die Reichshauptstadt*, 102–3.
72. Gierbig, . . . *im Anflug auf die Reichshauptstadt*, 106. See also, Jörg Friedrich, *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany, 1940–1945*, trans. Allison Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 76. See also, Christian Dirks, Axel Klausmeier, and Gerhard Sälter, “*Verschüttet*” *Leben, Bombentod und Erinnerung an die Berliner Familie Jaschkowitz* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich Verlag, 2011), 29–35.
73. Gierbig, . . . *im Anflug auf die Reichshauptstadt*, 116–17.
74. See, for example, CJA 4.1, 1613; CJA 4.1, 2898; CJA 4.1, 1602; CJA 4.1, 1810; CJA, 4.1, 1716; CJA, 4.1, 3156. The November raids also receive mention from non-Jewish diarists in the city. See Ursula von Kardorff, *Berliner Aufzeichnungen* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1992), 129–132. See also Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 120–21.
75. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30544.
76. CJA 4.1, 1716.

77. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, "Untergetaucht." A parenthetical notation in the margins of Bamberg's testimony notes the date of the bombing as November 1943.
78. CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 697. A few significant discrepancies exist between the testimony of Helene and her husband, Paul (see: CJA 4.1, Nr.: 698), although large parts of each testimony correspond to one another. In the above case, Paul does not mention arrest or deportation, although he does confirm that Helene returned to the apartment (albeit, in his testimony, with a friend) to try to retrieve possessions from the apartment.
79. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 208.
80. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 207.
81. On the state of Jewish wartime food rationing, see Avraham Barkai, "In a Ghetto without Walls" in Meyer, *German-Jewish History*, 4:335. See also, Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 83.
82. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 82.
83. See table II.III.33, "Daily Calorie Value of Standard Consumer's Rations, January 1941–1944," in *Germany and the Second World War*, vol. 2: *Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power*, ed. Bernhard R. Kroener, Rolf-Dieter Müller, and Hans Umbreit, trans. Derry Cook-Radmore, Ewald Osers, Barry Smerin, and Barbara Bilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 529.
84. See table II.III.32, "Fats and Meat Rations as Proportions of Basic Foodstuffs for Standard Consumers 1939–1945," in Kroener, Müller, and Umbreit, *Germany and the Second World War*, 2:527.
85. See, respectively, Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library; Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library; Ruth W. Holocaust Testimony (T-619), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
86. See Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. See also Eric H. Boehm, "The Strength of Two," in Boehm, *We Survived*, 21.
87. See, for example, Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
88. CJA 4.1, 3156. See also, Jalowicz Simon, *Untergetaucht*, 168.
89. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
90. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
91. See also Maurer, "From Everyday Life," 369.
92. Entschädigungsamt Berlin, Entschädigungsakte Nr.: 1.010 I.
93. See the following section on the black market for a comparison of costs for false papers.
94. Entschädigungsamt Berlin, Entschädigungsakte Nr.: 1.010 II.
95. From the outbreak of war in 1939 until the introduction of the West German Deutschmark in 1948, the black market figured prominently in the lives of Berliners. For a discussion of the black market during the war, see Malte Zierenberg, *Stadt der Schieber: Der Berliner Schwarzmarkt 1939–1950*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008). On Berlin's postwar black market, see Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946–1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
96. Zierenberg, *Stadt der Schieber*, 101.
97. See the infamous case of Martha Rebbien in Zierenberg, *Stadt der Schieber*, 88.

98. For example, see Zierenberg, *Stadt der Schieber*, 136.
99. Zierenberg, *Stadt der Schieber*, 138.
100. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
101. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 207.
102. Zierenberg, *Stadt der Schieber*, 162.
103. For more information on the relationship between these individuals, see chapter 2, the section on “Denunciation.”
104. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
105. See, for example, ZfA, “Erlebnisse der Frau Charlotte Josephy.”
106. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
107. See, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr. 31267. See also CJA 4.1, 1999.
108. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
109. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, “Personal Report.”
110. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, “Personal Report.”
111. For more information on the arrest of these individuals, see the section “Denunciation” in chapter 2. For other arrests on the black market, see, LAB, A Rep. 408, Nr.: 4 “Tätigkeitsbuch 17. Polizei-Revier Kriminalpolizei Weinbergsweg 12,” 1.Januar.1943–31.Dezember.1943, #19, #66, #77.
112. Meyer’s wife likely was scheduled for either the 28 September 1943 transport sent to Auschwitz or the 14 October 1943 transport sent to Auschwitz. See Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 460.
113. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617, Bl. 174/1–176.
114. See the appendix in this book.
115. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 65–67.
116. LAB, A Rep. 408, Nr.: 4 “Tätigkeitsbuch 17. Polizei-Revier Kriminalpolizei Weinbergsweg 12,” #837.
117. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 51. See the case of the *Mischling* Werner Rosenbaum who was arrested as a deserter, in CJA 4.1, 1810. See also LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 33122.
118. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 96.
119. See the testimony of Gerda Fink in LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 33971.
120. Certain cafés, restaurants, and theaters attracted a number of illegal Jews and, consequently, the Gestapo and their Jewish informants. See Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 103–6. See also Peter Wyden, *Stella* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 184.
121. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 32306.
122. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, “Personal Report.”
123. See, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 35596.
124. CJA 4.1, 3156.
125. See, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 33203; LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr. 30278. Also, CJA 4.1, 1817; CJA 4.1, 1810.
126. LAB, E Rep. 200-22, Nr.: 7 + 8. Nachlass Weltlinger. Anlage I zu Formblatt C.
127. ZfA, File of Erich Friedländer, “Meine Erlebnisse in der Hitlerzeit.” See also, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31094.
128. Note in Marion Neiss, “Postscript,” Schönhaus, *The Forger*, 209. The original note may be found in LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617. Note: there is a slight discrepancy between the note in Neiss and the note from the Landesarchiv Berlin with respect to the opening line and closing greeting. However, the body of the letter reads the same.
129. The organization of the Gestapo and the diverse methods the agency utilized to achieve its aims in the Greater Reich and throughout occupied Europe receive ex-



- cellent attention in Gerhard Paul and Klaus-Michael Mallmann, eds., *Die Gestapo im Zweiten Weltkrieg: "Heimatfront" und besetztes Europa* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliches Buchgesellschaft, 2000). With respect to enforcing antisemitic policy in Düsseldorf, see Holger Berschel, "Polizeiroutiniers und Judenverfolgung: Die Bearbeitung von 'Judenangelegenheiten' bei der Stapo-Leitstelle Düsseldorf" in Paul and Mallmann, *Die Gestapo im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 155–78.
130. An in-depth discussion and analysis of the diverse motivations behind acts of denunciation in Nazi Germany and the central role played by the populace in supporting the Gestapo and its war against Jewish-Germans may be found in the seminal work Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). See also Eric A. Johnson, *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (New York: Basic Books, 2000). For a broader discussion of denunciation and its role in modern German history, see Robert Gellately, "Denunciations in Twentieth-Century Germany: Aspects of Self-Policing in the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic," in *Accusatory Practices: Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789–1989*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
  131. The particulars of the case may be found in LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617. See also Neiss "Postscript," 209–10.
  132. See Schönhaus, *The Forger*, 92–95, 104–5, 113–14, 135–36, 141, 160, and Neiss, "Postscript," 208–12.
  133. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617, and Neiss, "Postscript," 210.
  134. Neiss, "Postscript," 210–11.
  135. Neiss, "Postscript," 211. Also in Schönhaus, *The Forger*, 136.
  136. Neiss, "Postscript," 211.
  137. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
  138. Neiss, "Postscript," 210.
  139. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
  140. For more information on Wichmann, see the section in this chapter, "The Black Market."
  141. Although Kaufmann placed most of the responsibility for the forging on Lichtwitz, Schönhaus's memoirs suggest that his work as a forger was central to the endeavor. See Schönhaus, *The Forger*.
  142. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
  143. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
  144. The full confession and list of names may be found in LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
  145. Compare the confession of the locations of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg and Grete and Lotte Bing in LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617 with ZfA, File of Charlotte Bamberg, "Untergetaucht," and LAB, C Rep. 118-0, Nr.: 30203.
  146. LAB, A Rep. 355, Nr. 18617.
  147. LAB, A Rep. 358-02, Nr. 141210.
  148. Neiss, "Postscript," 210.
  149. For more on the Kaufmann case, see Jah, *Die Deportation der Juden aus Berlin*, 527–30.
  150. C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 30978.
  151. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 69, 287–88.
  152. Larry Orbach and Vivien Orbach-Smith, *Soaring Underground: A Young Fugitive's Life in Nazi Berlin* (Washington, DC: The Compass Press, 1996), 311. Orbach's memoirs do not mention Hirsch having been present at the time of the arrest. However, Hirsch claims that he was there, and nothing he says in any other regard con-

- tradicts the circumstances behind Orbach's arrest. See Hirsch's statement in LAB, B Rep 002, Nr. 4861: Das Ehrengericht des jüdischen Gemeinde. For confirmation of Orbach's deportation date and destination, see also, Gottwaldt and Schulle, "Juden-deportationen," 465.
153. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 7436. See also, Orbach and Orbach-Smith, *Soaring Underground*, 329.
  154. Orbach and Orbach-Smith, *Soaring Underground*, 308. See also, LAB, B Rep 002, Nr. 4861: Das Ehrengericht des jüdischen Gemeinde.
  155. Orbach and Orbach-Smith, *Soaring Underground*, 335.
  156. Orbach and Orbach-Smith, *Soaring Underground*, 335.
  157. Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 276. See also Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 99.
  158. Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 276–78. See the case of Inge Reitz, in Wyden, *Stella*, 275–76.
  159. Orbach and Orbach-Smith, *Soaring Underground*, 308.
  160. LAB, B Rep 002, Nr. 4861: Das Ehrengericht des jüdischen Gemeinde.
  161. LAB, B Rep 002, Nr. 4861: Das Ehrengericht des jüdischen Gemeinde. Orbach noted the sling, in Orbach and Orbach-Smith, *Soaring Underground*, 305.
  162. LAB, B Rep 002, Nr. 4861: Das Ehrengericht des jüdischen Gemeinde.
  163. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 90. For more information on Dobberke, his role as camp leader, and his interrogation methods, see Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 59–64.
  164. Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 72–73.
  165. Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 84–85.
  166. See Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 74–75.
  167. ZfA, File of Lola Alexander. BERICHT UEBER MEINE ILLEGALITAET WAEHREND DER NAZIZEIT IN DEUTSCHLAND von LOLA ALEXANDER, Berlin-Lichtenberg.
  168. Tietze worked directly under Dobberke. See Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 59.
  169. ZfA, File of Ursula Finke. BERICHT UEBER MEINE ILLEGALITAET WAEHREND DER NAZIZEIT IN DEUTSCHLAND von Ursula Finke, Berlin-Lichtenberg.
  170. ZfA, File of Ursula Finke. BERICHT UEBER MEINE ILLEGALITAET WAEHREND DER NAZIZEIT IN DEUTSCHLAND von Ursula Finke, Berlin-Lichtenberg. The details of Finke's arrest and interaction with Behrendt are also found in Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 133. See also Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 305.
  171. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Odf Kartei, A-30546.
  172. Doris Tausendfreund locates the origins of this service in the spring of 1943, as a consequence of the *Große Fabrik-Aktion*. See Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 69. In contrast, Akim Jah traces the origins of this group of individuals to Alois Brunner's tenure in Berlin, arguing that it was expanded in the summer of 1943 after the last major deportation of Jews from the city occurred. See Jah, *Die Deportation der Juden aus Berlin*, 525–27.
  173. Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 69.
  174. Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 142, 156. So well-known to Berlin's divers and dashers were Isaaksohn and Goldschlag that Marie Jalowicz Simon, in her memoirs published in 2014, mentions them specifically. See Jalowicz Simon, *Untergetaucht*, 305.
  175. Tausendfreund, *Erzwingener Verrat*, 72–73.

176. See LAB, A Rep. 358-02, Nr. 141210
177. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 77.
178. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 75–77.
179. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 78.
180. Wyden, *Stella*, 245. Peter Wyden's biography *Stella* attempts to provide deeper psychological insight into her motivations. A fascinating read, Wyden's study is openly influenced by his own childhood memories of Stella, but nonetheless is still rich in survivor anecdote and testimony.
181. Wyden, *Stella*, 255.
182. Wyden, *Stella*, 216. See also LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 38067.
183. For an analysis of camp inmate mimicry of SS behavior, see Bruno Bettelheim, "Helpless Victims," in *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, ed. Donald L. Niewyk, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 108–12. See also Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, 125–26.
184. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 69.
185. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 69.
186. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 84–85. See also the testimony of Annelies H. and the case of the informant Rachmann in Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 and T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
187. See, for example, Robert Gellately, "Allwissend und allgegenwärtig? Entstehung, Funktion und Wandel des Gestapo-Mythos," in *Die Gestapo—Mythos und Realität*, ed. Gerhard Paul and Klaus Mallmann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995).
188. Gellately, *Gestapo and German Society*, 8.
189. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 81
190. ZfA, File of Charlotte Josephy, "Erlebnisse."
191. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 82.
192. Wyden, *Stella*, 184–85.
193. ZfA, File of Ellen Compart, "Interview mit Frau Ellen Compart, 5.9.1984," Interviewers: Wagener and Voigt, 27.
194. Schönhaus, *The Forger*, 168–69.
195. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
196. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
197. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
198. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
199. On the importance of timing, see Hayes, *Why?*, 225–25. The various factors affecting the survival rates among Jews throughout Europe receives excellent attention in Hayes's sixth chapter, "Homelands: Why Did Survival Rates Diverge?"
200. On the attitude of the Swiss and Swedish governments to Jewish asylum seekers, see Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939–1945*, vol. 2: *The Years of Extermination* (New York: Harper Perennial), 447–49.
201. On the rescue of the Jews of Denmark, see Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 2:545–47.
202. ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
203. For a discussion of arrest rates, see the appendix in this book.
204. Photograph courtesy of Martina Voigt. Privatbesitz, Reproduktion Gedenkstaette Deutscher Widerstand/German Resistance Memorial Center, Berlin.

## Chapter 3

# LIVING



The first full year of living submerged took a horrific toll on the U-boats. At the start of 1944, approximately 2,300 Berlin Jews remained on the run. For these individuals, 1944 remained a dangerous extension of the previous year. The Allied invasion at Normandy and Soviet advances into Poland provided hope but no tangible benefits. Allied victories only hardened Nazi resolve to pursue the Final Solution. To that end, the Nazis increasingly sought to solve the question of the legal status of Germany's remnant Jewish population and ordered the deportation of Jewish widows and widowers of non-Jews. They also ordered the conscription of *Mischlinge* and Jewish spouses of non-Jews to work in forced labor battalions throughout the Greater Reich and France. The radicalization of the war effort thus led to a parallel radicalization of Nazi antisemitic policy and convinced some previously protected Jews in the city to submerge. Throughout 1944, the challenges associated with procuring food and shelter, surviving air raids, and avoiding denunciation and arrest remained at the forefront of the U-boats' experiences. Illness, death, and sexual violence also were widespread concerns, and despite differences in coping with the myriad challenges to survival, these were common to many divers. Yet as they adjusted to the demands of illegal life, survival came to mean more than just physical self-preservation, and experiences began to diverge. Crucially, in their pursuit of survival, submerged Jews began to establish basic routines in the search for some level of normality and self-affirmation in an otherwise chaotic world. The consequence of

the establishment of such routines in fact enabled some of the U-boats not simply to survive but to begin to create some semblance of an “everyday” life.

The notion that submerging could provide an operative space in which to pursue an everyday life in a time and place as dangerous, brutal, and bizarre as Nazi Germany is not as far-fetched as it might seem. The idea of everyday life need not and—in the case of Berlin’s divers—should not imply “ordinary” or “unchanging.” There was, to be sure, nothing ordinary or unchanging about U-boat experiences in Nazi Berlin or, indeed, the Jewish experience in Nazi Germany throughout the regime’s twelve-year existence. However, as scholars studying the history of everyday life (*Alltagsgeschichte*), especially during the Third Reich, have argued, there is no one definition of the everyday.<sup>1</sup> Nor is the everyday fixed or enduring. Rather, when considering what the idea of an “everyday” meant to Berlin’s dashers and divers, we should take note of the historian Dennis Sweeney’s understanding of the “transitory nature of the everyday,” of “everyday life as a series of unique places, each with its own particular temporalities and routines.”<sup>2</sup> Everyday life, even in times of peace and stability, is anything but fixed; it is a fragile and constantly shifting concept and therefore not at all incompatible with understanding that even amid the unstable terrain of submerged life in Berlin there was still the potential for an everyday life, one that held out the hope for a degree of relative safety and stability. Certainly, this life was ephemeral and often highly circumscribed. For the U-boats, it might last anywhere from a few days to a few months, depending on ever-changing circumstances: the threat of denunciation, air raids, illness or death, a hostile or frightened helper, and, ultimately, the Battle for Berlin could all too quickly bring an end to an everyday existence. And yet repeatedly in survivor testimony we find that the end of one everyday could, and often did, lead to a new everyday. In fact, the tenuous and fluctuating nature of a submerged existence does not negate the possibilities for pursuing and achieving a life characterized by everyday routine and an expression of individual agency. Rather, it highlights not only the extreme durability of the concept of the everyday but also the very malleability of the concept, for when speaking about the everyday for Berlin’s divers, we are in fact speaking of multiple “everydays” of varying duration, of “everydays” that due to the act of Jews living camouflaged as Aryans meant the balancing of dual identities within their own daily lives.

Despite the highly individual and complex nature of daily life for the U-boats, the refusal to simply vanish into the shadows and survive isolated, alone, and immobile, if at all possible, repeatedly shines through in much survivor testimony concerning the pursuit of an “everyday.” Even

if the act of submerging in Berlin had not necessitated frequent mobility, survivors often behaved in ways so out of keeping with standard ideas of hiding, in ways so public and, from our perspective, so risky and unnecessary that we must conclude that there was another factor at play: the stubborn desire to remain an individual and not merely to survive but live. This stubbornness (*Eigensinn*), so central to understanding the history of everyday life in German history, seeks to understand, in the historian Paul Steege's words, "both the liberating possibilities of stubborn independence in the midst of daily life and the often unintentional complicity in producing and sustaining structures of *Herrschaft* [authority]." Although utilized to great effect in understanding non-Jewish individual behavior during the Third Reich, testimonies by former U-boats about their behavior while living submerged also have an *eigensinnig* (stubborn) quality running through them.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, the stubborn desire to pursue a daily life—even at great risk—is made abundantly clear in many survivor testimonies. On the other hand, because pursuit of such a life almost always required the concealment of one's true identity and the public adoption of an "Aryan" persona, everyday life meant coming into frequent contact with ardent Nazis and their sympathizers. The result was that effectively camouflaging oneself as an Aryan often required a show of support for the regime, creating an ironic situation in which defiance was of necessity expressed as complicity. Consider the following photograph of the U-boat Eugen F.:

Dressing in a Hitler Youth uniform served as excellent camouflage in his attempt to survive. As discussed in chapter 2, uniforms proved especially effective in disguising men of fighting age in a wartime society where vocal and visual support for the regime were essential for deflecting suspicion. Eugen F. did not wear this uniform



Figure 3.1. The U-boat Eugen F.<sup>4</sup>

for a specific purpose; rather, this uniform allowed him to move freely when he walked down the street.<sup>5</sup> Neither the benefit of wearing such uniforms, however, nor the appearance of complicity with the regime was lost on the city's divers, one of whom expressed this reality in the fall of 1945 in his Odf application:

It is unnecessary to point out that every camouflage during that time needed to avail itself of the features of National Socialism. Only those who outwardly clothed themselves in the garb of national socialist customs and characteristics could have the hope of not attracting attention and to continue living camouflaged.<sup>6</sup>

While certainly true, this outward support of Nazi authority was not limited to men in uniform. Whether it meant reading the Nazi daily newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, while riding the streetcar, giving the Nazi salute when in public, or simply lending a supposedly sympathetic ear to ardent Nazis and their hopes for a final victory, Jews who chose to surface during the war and camouflage themselves as non-Jews routinely were brought into situations that inadvertently reinforced the authority of the Nazi state, even among those Jews working with resistance groups to actively undermine it. Separating the true identity of camouflaged Jews from their assumed identity was not always easy, which was precisely the point, as a good camouflage was critical for survival; the full, true self could not be present on the surface at all moments. Yet in examining survivor testimony from those individuals who stubbornly struggled and succeeded in building some semblance of everyday life, we will see time and again in this chapter how the everyday in such situations, despite the superficial appearance of support for the regime, “work[ed] to create moments where experiences of the self [could] flash up in burst of recognition”<sup>7</sup> and allow the prewar self to shine through.

It was absolutely critical to the creation of an everyday life, then, for Jews to build off of their original contacts and early experiences of survival and solidify social networks of support: “I gradually collected around me a large circle of people who mustered great sympathy for my situation and helped me.”<sup>8</sup> These networks helped Jews handle the physical challenges of evading capture and opened up avenues of escape from the physical and emotional limitations of an illegal life. These experiences demonstrate the paradox inherent in living submerged in and around Berlin, which this chapter explores: although the dangerous and marginalized situation of the city's divers and dashers should have severed whatever remaining connections they had to German society, after years of discriminatory policies that had first isolated and then physically ejected Jews from German society, illegal life often brought Jews together with

German society in surprising and subversive ways. As a result, life in the city witnessed atypical levels of interaction and intimacy between Jews and non-Jews and afforded noteworthy levels of agency to Jews attempting to live illegally. Friendships and romances formed and matured, and many helpers formed strong emotional bonds with the U-boats who came into their lives. Employment, although difficult to secure, also created a sense of purpose and enabled reentrance into a world that had been distant and hostile for years. The dynamic and individualistic nature of submerged life aided them in their endeavors. Not every U-boat succeeded; denunciations and arrests continued, and feelings of comfort and security often were ephemeral or illusory. Moreover, while many divers built real and enduring relationships and were fortunate to find genuinely good people sympathetic to their plight, others were routinely surrounded by hateful and ardent supporters of the regime. Just as physical conditions varied greatly, so too did social interactions between Jews and non-Jews. In conjunction with physical challenges to survival, these interactions underscore the diversity of illegal life in the Nazi capital and the uncertain mixture of circumstance and conscious choice permeating the lives of the U-boats. Indeed, both their successes and disappointments demonstrate the centrality of the individual experience for shaping the quality of their submerged life as well as memories of that life.

**“My husband left me after 14 years of marriage because of my Jewish descent”: Jewish *Mischlinge*, Widows, Widowers, Divorcées, and the Next Wave of Illegals<sup>9</sup>**

In summer 1944, upward of two thousand Jews were living submerged in Berlin.<sup>10</sup> In addition, some six thousand Jews resided legally in the city, forty-six hundred due to their marriage with non-Jews and the remainder due to their status as *Mischlinge*.<sup>11</sup> This figure shrank over the course of the next sixteen months as the authorities deported Jewish widows and widowers as well as certain *Mischlinge*. Out of a sample of 425 U-boats who survived the war submerged, this study identifies eight people (1.8 percent) who went into hiding at this time. Although this number is small, it reflects the increasing determination of the Nazi regime to solve the Jewish Question down to the last detail. With the last of the major deportations of most full Jews the previous year, the Nazis, under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler, turned their full attention to rooting out the remnants of the Jewish people in Germany.

Bureaucratic circles had been divided for years over how to classify and treat *Mischlinge*, a group of approximately 112,000 people.<sup>12</sup> These



divisions reflected both practical considerations (e.g., concern over a potential uproar from non-Jewish family members over the persecution and potential deportation of their loved ones) as well as ideological ones (e.g., how much “Jewish blood” disqualifies someone from membership in the *Volksgemeinschaft*?). They also exemplify the utterly confusing and capricious nature of the minutiae of Nazi race law in Germany. Broadly speaking, *Mischlinge* were any individuals who had a Jewish parent or grandparent(s). The treatment of these “half Jews,” however, varied according to ancestry and religious affiliation. Individuals with one Jewish grandparent (*Mischlinge* of the Second Degree) usually suffered in their careers and education but were exempt from deportation and wearing the Jewish Star.<sup>13</sup> More problematic for the regime were the seventy-two thousand individuals who had one Jewish parent and one non-Jewish parent, so-called *Mischlinge* of the First Degree, many—but not all—of whom would be exempt from deportation until the final months of the war.<sup>14</sup> If the couple remained childless and the husband was Aryan, the marriage was “privileged”; in this case, the Jewish spouse was exempt from deportation and not required to wear the Jewish Star.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, a mixed marriage in which the children had been raised Christian was also privileged, an odd exception to National Socialist beliefs that religion did not affect race.<sup>16</sup> Yet even among those categorized as a *Mischling* of the First Degree, a further distinction was made to determine which of these individuals would be classified as a so-called *Geltungsjuden* (“equivalent to Jews”) and be subjected to many of the same harsh measures as full Jews, often including deportation.<sup>17</sup> This latter classification, affecting about seven thousand Jews in Germany in its pre-1938 borders, was applied to *Mischlinge* of the First Degree who either were married to full Jews at the time of the implementation of the Nuremberg Race Laws on 15 September 1935, were still a member of the Jewish Community at the time of said laws, or were born after 31 July 1936 from a relationship deemed as a consequence of those laws as *Rassenschande* (race defilement, that is, sexual intercourse between a Jew and a non-Jew). Yet many of these individuals had few or no ties to Judaism, and in some cases did not even know that they fell under this category until it was too late, thinking instead that they qualified as a *Mischling* of the First Degree. Indeed, ideological obsession with blood and race along with bureaucratic capriciousness came together to reflect what the historian Maria von der Heydt has aptly identified in Nazi Germany as the “arbitrariness of racial definition.”<sup>18</sup>

Yet with the outbreak of war, the often-convoluted official government policy toward those individuals variously classified as half Jews began to crystalize and take on an increasingly virulent form. Indeed, the radicalization of Nazi antisemitic policy culminated in February 1945 with an

order to deport all remaining Jews and *Mischlinge* from Germany's capital. Only the lack of adequate transport caused by the Reich's impending collapse prevented this order from being executed in Berlin.<sup>19</sup> Already in April 1940, Hitler had ordered the dismissal of *Mischlinge* and non-Jews in mixed marriages from the Wehrmacht.<sup>20</sup> Despite the efforts of some individuals to disguise their status, most had been discovered and forced out by 1942.<sup>21</sup> The hysteria and paranoia of Nazi officials only increased as the war dragged on. In 1943, official opinion coalesced around the idea of employing half Jews and couples in mixed marriages in segregated forced labor battalions in Germany and France coordinated by the Organisation Todt (OT).<sup>22</sup> Himmler ramped up the conscription rate in October 1944 in what has been referred to as a "second Fabrik-Aktion."<sup>23</sup> The Nazis sent male *Mischlinge* and the non-Jewish husbands of Jewish women to work throughout the country. Female *Mischlinge* and those with physical impairments were conscripted into local outfits.<sup>24</sup> The physical conditions in these battalions varied exceedingly. The workers were technically free, could send letters home and receive packages, and were able to apply for leave.<sup>25</sup> However, many of the camps were little better than the concentration and labor camps endured by full Jews, and the removal of *Mischlinge* into these isolated battalions was a slippery slope that easily could lead to internment in a concentration camp.<sup>26</sup> By 1944, the knowledge of the genocide of Europe's Jews was widespread among Berlin's Jews, and any official promises concerning the treatment of OT workers rang hollow. As the war turned against the National Socialist regime and its policy toward the *Mischlinge* hardened, some Jews began to flee their battalions and submerge.<sup>27</sup>

As part of the Nazis' attempt to resolve the question of the status of so-called half Jews and those in mixed marriages, on 18 December 1943 Heinrich Müller, chief of the Gestapo, ordered the deportation of divorced and widowed Jews of non-Jews to Theresienstadt. At that time, the future U-boat Susanne Hesse worked as a train car washer for the Reichsbahn in Berlin (see figure 3.2). She had moved to the city from Breslau three years earlier after her husband Hans separated from her because she was Jewish, a practice upheld by law since July 1938 but one that officials had encouraged since 1933.<sup>28</sup> To facilitate the separation, Hans had turned to the Breslau Gestapo. The Gestapo's threats persuaded Susanne to move to Berlin and live with her mother. In Berlin, Hesse clung to a precarious but still protected existence, because her marriage remained in effect until October 1943.<sup>29</sup> On 10 January 1944, the Gestapo finally arrived to arrest Susanne, but she was not at home.<sup>30</sup> As a result of this narrow escape, Hesse decided to submerge.



Figure 3.2. Susanne Hesse.<sup>31</sup>

Divorce on the grounds that one partner was Jewish was common in Nazi Germany, although evidence suggests that most non-Jews remained loyal to their spouses.<sup>32</sup> Still, Nazi officials and their supporters encouraged the practice, particularly in cases involving someone of social importance.<sup>33</sup> Thus, German authorities “forcibly” dissolved Eva Kemlein’s marriage to the non-Jewish author Herbert Kemlein by withholding his wages.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Ellen Reppel and her non-Jewish husband, a professional boxer, divorced, because “otherwise he would have had to give up his sport.”<sup>35</sup> Although life in a mixed marriage incited daily persecution in the forms of verbal harassment, destruction of careers, and a second-tier status within German society, these marriages were the only thing protecting the Jewish spouse from deportation. Indeed, some people resisted repeated demands from the authorities that they divorce.<sup>36</sup>

In some cases, divorces resulted from antisemitic attitudes on the part of the non-Jewish spouse. Lissi Tessman’s husband divorced her in January 1943, “since between [them] considerable differences had arisen due to racial differences.”<sup>37</sup> However, the reasons for divorce varied, and many

cannot be verified. Herbert A., born in 1927 and baptized a Lutheran, mentions that his parents divorced “due to reasons of race politics” (*aus rassenpolitischen Gründen*). This rather ambiguous phrase leaves unanswered the question of whether the pressures of National Socialist anti-semitic policy crushed the parents or whether the issue tore apart the marriage from the inside.<sup>38</sup>

People also divorced as a means of safeguarding the family structure.<sup>39</sup> Isaak Grünberg married his Christian wife Fried Hanke on 13 August 1918, and she gave birth to their son Erwin a month later. Isaak and his wife worked together in the tailoring business, and their marriage was a happy one “until the Hitler regime befell [the] Germans and tore us apart.”<sup>40</sup> By October 1940, the pressures and threats against the family had increased to the point that Isaak felt forced to leave home. The authorities gave his wife an ultimatum: either divorce her husband or the family would lose its domicile and business. The fate of their son was also a factor. By divorcing her husband, Grünberg’s wife could change her son’s status to *Mischling*. Otherwise, the child qualified as a *Geltungsjude*. The decision was a difficult one for the family, but the knowledge that his wife and family were safe gave him “satisfaction.”<sup>41</sup> Despite the pain of divorce and the ensuing years in hiding—Isaak submerged on 2 June 1942—the Grünbergs reached the decision mutually, taking into account the challenges of staying together and weighing them against the pain of separation and the persecution of the Jewish spouse.<sup>42</sup> The Grünbergs designed their decision to ensure the best outcome under a set of unfavorable conditions. At the time of their divorce, the deportations had not yet begun, and staying married seemed to pose a bigger threat to the family. Also, once the deportations started, some Jews worried that the Nazis might deport their non-Jewish spouses.<sup>43</sup> The Nazis’ convoluted attitude toward *Mischlinge* and the Grünbergs’ willingness to exploit the law allowed the family to hold on to their business and guarantee a protected status for the Erwin.<sup>44</sup> Ultimately, thanks to the unwavering love and fidelity of Fried, who provided for him during his illegal years, Isaak survived the war.

The emotional strain and social isolation of living in a mixed marriage sometimes was unbearable; the benefits afforded by such marriages were not always clear, especially to the non-Jewish partner. On 3 March 1943, less than a week after the Large Factory Operation, Gertrud Stephan, the Jewish wife of a non-Jewish district chimney sweeper, reported to police that her husband Walter had committed suicide in his Prenzlauer Berg workshop; he had hanged himself from his ladder. He left behind a note: “Farewell, you beautiful world.” The police report linked his suicide to

his wife: “Because his wife is Jewish, and he feared for her troubles, which he no longer wanted to experience.”<sup>45</sup> On 7 December 1943, the Nazis deported Gertrud on the forty-seventh transport to Auschwitz.<sup>46</sup> Walter Stephan probably was unaware that his death prompted the deportation of his wife nine months later. Nonetheless, his suicide had mortal consequences for her, and it highlights the importance of the non-Jewish spouse for ensuring the continued protection of their Jewish partner. Thus, beginning in January 1944, with the deportation of Jewish widows and widowers of non-Jews, a new—albeit significantly smaller—wave of submerging began. However, for reasons perhaps pertaining to the logistics associated with deportation, some people did not submerge until June 1944.<sup>47</sup> Others used a variety of tactics, including forged documents, to forestall submerging until the last few months of the war.<sup>48</sup> Yet by the beginning of 1944, most Jewish widows and widowers had only a small span of time between the death of their non-Jewish spouse and the moment of their arrest to consider submerging. Often, the Jewish *Fahnder* were waiting for the grieving spouse outside of the funeral.<sup>49</sup>

Fifty-seven-year-old Eugenie Nase (see figure 3.3), widowed since 1934, had learned relatively early the dangers associated with Gestapo actions. The Nazis had arrested most of her family in 1938. From that date forward, she made a point of hiding during every Gestapo operation. In January 1944, however, Gestapo agents appeared at her door and asked her to accompany them to headquarters. The agents granted Nase’s request that her *Mischling* son be allowed to escort her. Despite countless examples in the previous two and a half years of Jews fleeing arrest, the agents relied on an aura of fear to ensure Nase’s compliance, and they left her and her son alone in the hallway at headquarters. Nase used the opportunity to back out of the hallway and flee the building. The appearance of her son with her enabled Nase to “bluff” the two police officers guarding the entrance into letting them leave. She and her son then headed straight to the nearest bank. A friend of the family returned to her apartment and packed a few of her possessions in a suitcase. Eugenie and her son then fled the city for two months.<sup>50</sup>

The day before Eugenie Nase submerged, Lydia Haase also fled, leaving behind her mentally handicapped twenty-three-year-old son Falko. Although her non-Jewish husband had passed away in 1936, Haase had argued that she could not be deported because she had to care for her son. Yet when Haase went to the ration card distribution center a few days later, the workers at the center refused to issue her ration cards, a sign of her imminent arrest. Haase was fortunate not to have been arrested by a *Fahnder*, some of whom frequented Jewish ration card distribution centers



Figure 3.3. Eugenie Nase.<sup>51</sup>

to arrest illegal Jews and those, like Haase, who recently had lost their legal residency status.<sup>52</sup> Haase therefore submerged and assumed a new name: Lucie Hoffmann. She did this in the hope of being able to look after her son, who was living in a health institution. Indeed, the head of the institution continued to allow Haase to visit her son for the remainder of the war and camouflaged her visits.<sup>53</sup>

Jews who submerged in 1944 did so as a result of the radicalization of National Socialist antisemitic policy. As previously protected Jewish groups recognized too late, the nature of the party's ideology could never have allowed *Mischlinge* and *Mischehen* to retain even a marginal existence within the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Once most full Jews had been deported, any remaining vestiges of the Jewish community had to be purged. Although most Berlin *Mischlinge* and Jews in *Mischehen* did survive the war, the position of widows, widowers, and divorcées was far more precarious. Their best hope was to submerge. In doing so, they joined the city's other divers in the daily struggle for survival.

## “Because I was bored . . . I decided to get a job”: The Experiences of Employment

In January 1944, fifty-four-year-old Charlotte Josephy lived in the small town of Rüdnitz bei Bernau, about twenty-eight kilometers outside of Berlin. She had moved to the town during the previous summer on the advice of a lady she had met in the city. Josephy’s false papers and a *Bombenschein* (a document proving one’s status as a victim of the air raids) enabled this flight from Berlin. Yet although she received a residency permit and ration cards, Josephy’s stay in Rüdnitz was distressing. The antisemitism of the town’s residents became too much to handle, and the *Fahnder* recently had begun combing the city’s nearby small towns for U-boats. These factors persuaded Charlotte to search for a change in venue, and on Saturday, 15 January 1944, she read the following ad in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*:

Reliable Nanny with good references sought for 3 children aged 1–7 in a quiet, rural villa household with family ties, as soon as possible. Mrs. Marg. Bender, Ostseebad Zoppot bei Danzig, Baedekerweg 3.<sup>54</sup>

Josephy made the requisite inquiries, and Herr Bender interviewed her on the telephone. In April 1944, she moved to Zoppot bei Danzig.<sup>55</sup> Josephy’s case was not unique. Indeed, employment was a key factor in the survival of many U-boats and had a significant impact on how many of the survivors remembered their time in hiding. Certainly, not everyone worked. However, employment was a formative part of the submerged experience, and it illustrates the relative freedom of movement and action available to many Jews.

• • •

The primary purpose for the U-boats in having a job was to buy food and shelter or else contribute to the household caring for them.<sup>56</sup> Thus, working was a necessary part of survival and made the continued support of non-Jews more feasible. One woman, a seamstress, supported herself and her husband by sewing and cleaning for fourteen different acquaintances, many of whom also offered her shelter.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, to support his wife and child, another diver found work as a tailor and a wood chopper.<sup>58</sup> Yet despite the central role employment played in sustaining the U-boats materially, work was not solely a means to survival. Rather, survivor testimony indicates that employment served three valuable social functions for Jews, and furthermore had a fundamental impact on how male and female U-boats experienced and remembered their time in hiding.

First, with respect to the social functions of work, employment provided the U-boats with a release from the tedium and loneliness of hiding. Employment also allowed these individuals to escape from dangerous or unpleasant living conditions. Second, working brought Berlin's illegals into contact with broad sections of the non-Jewish population, enabling them to interact with gentile society, to observe the German home front, and to experience compassion and friendship as well as hatred and persecution. Third, work, even if unpaid, functioned as a form of resistance and self-expression. In some cases, work as an act of resistance manifested itself in real attempts to hinder the goals of the Nazi state, as evidenced by those who participated in distributing anti-Nazi literature or working with circles of resistance. In most cases, however, work functioned more as an act of stubborn self-expression, as personal resistance that afforded the city's divers opportunities to wield whatever agency still existed for them in a state bent not only on their physical destruction but also on the destruction of their individual spirit. Indeed, the resulting expressions of such agency provide insight into the talents and personalities of the U-boats that the Nazis were unable to squash.

Submerged life in Berlin, especially for those who physically hid, was not only dangerous but also often tedious and lonely.<sup>59</sup> Survivors thus tried to amuse and employ themselves in a variety of ways. One survivor knitted a dress and, once it was finished, took it apart to begin again. Her husband, meanwhile, read newspapers and novels.<sup>60</sup> Another U-boat busied himself by writing poetry, chronicling his experiences of hiding and his hopes and dreams for the future.<sup>61</sup> Others, however, tried to escape the tedium through more public forms of employment. Konrad Latte, child of Breslau Jewish converts to Christianity—but still a full Jew according to the Nuremberg Laws—focused on his passion for music; indeed, he founded the famous Berliner Barock-Orchester after the war. Latte played music to take his mind off of the “boring and seedy” nature of hiding. Through an acquaintance, he found work playing the organ at funerals and thus funded his life underground; as the war dragged on, he became quite in demand. Another connection found Latte work at the State Opera, a job that once brought him face to face with Hermann Göring after a performance of Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Later in the war, Latte even joined a traveling musical troupe. Yet as his chronicler notes, “It wasn't a thirst for adventure that drove and in the end saved him. It was simply that his ambition to excel in his profession was stronger than his fear of his persecutors, and that to reach his goal he had to crisscross Berlin everyday.”<sup>62</sup>

Employment also enabled the U-boats to escape dangerous and intolerable situations. Charlotte Josephy responded to the advertisement in



the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* for this very purpose. Her new job allowed her to flee the intolerable antisemitic atmosphere in Rüdnitz and the dangers presented by the *Fahnder*. Having a plausible reason to move also made traveling, with its many pass inspections, somewhat safer. So did having the support of a prominent family. Josephy's new employers, the Bender family, moved in high circles of Nazi society, and Josephy recalled that Albert Forster, *Gauleiter* of Danzig, was one of the family's guests. The willingness and ability to relocate functioned as a valuable shield against the dangers of arrest and afforded the U-boats a chance to find safer living conditions.<sup>63</sup>

In some postwar testimonies, work also functions as a representation of how camouflaged Jews remember their lives on the run, and it demonstrates a truly broad range of survivor encounters with German society. These personal interactions with German society influenced the emotional experience of hiding, resulting in diverse survivor memories and conflicting viewpoints. Indeed, survivor descriptions of work often provide the clearest insight into daily life and its emotional consequences. Moreover, of all experiences while living submerged, work is perhaps the least foreign to contemporary society. As such, postwar accounts likely discuss employment in order to convey more intangible impressions and feelings.

Ruth Arndt had a great time spending her days off in the summer of 1944 bicycling around the Harz Mountains. Since April of that year, she had been working as a nursemaid for an agricultural attaché from Spain, Dr. José Santaella, and she accompanied the family on their summer vacation. Ruth had found the position when another illegal recommended Ruth's services to the attaché. He met Ruth at the famous Hotel Adlon, mere steps from the Brandenburg Gates, hired her, and took her to stay with the family on their country estate. Ruth hesitated to leave her family behind; however, her new employers also hired Ruth's mother as their new cook. Although Ruth and her mother lived under different names and pretended not to know one another, being together under the same roof was a great comfort.<sup>64</sup> Compared to the dangers of Berlin, the five months between April and September 1944 were a positive time in Ruth's illegal life. The family, including the attaché's German mother-in-law, knew that Ruth and her mother were Jewish and treated them with respect and kindness. Ruth ate well, a great luxury. She also did not worry about air raids in the countryside and was able to sleep. Moreover, the family paid Ruth and her mother for their work. Opportunities to accompany the family on vacation and to ride a bicycle—privileges long since denied Jews—allowed Ruth to escape Berlin's dangerous conditions, physically as well as emotionally.

Escaping Berlin was not the only way to find comfort and moments of relative peace and freedom. Even within the city, employment could provide meaningful social interaction and a sense of normality. For much of late 1943 and early 1944, Dr. Charlotte Bamberg moved from town to town as new threats arose and new opportunities for work presented themselves. By late spring 1944, however, Charlotte was back in Berlin and running the store of a furrier who recently had mended her coat. Posing as the owner's cousin, Bamberg made the bomb-damaged but well-stocked store into her own "Paradise": "I had an open store, decorated the display windows, sold gloves, scarves, artificial flowers, and canes, and repaired umbrellas as the only store [of its kind] in the western part of the city."<sup>65</sup> Considering that civilian consumer-goods production in 1944 was between 50 to 60 percent of what it had been at the outbreak of war, Charlotte's store very well might have been unique, as she herself noted.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, her account of this period is tinged with pride. She enjoyed decorating the display window. Her customers "streamed into the store." They liked her enough to bring her little presents, such as the occasional pear or *boulette*. In return, she put merchandise aside for these better customers, with whom she was friendly.<sup>67</sup> Bamberg enjoyed her job largely because of the "chatty clientele" she built up around her. She does not explicitly state how much she revealed to these customers, and considering the care that Jews went to fully mask their identities in public, we should assume that Bamberg remained aware of the precariousness of her position. Still, these interpersonal interactions, however superficial, appear to have brought her much joy. Indeed, with the exception of a brief mention of the air raids, all other indications of the time, place, and dangerous circumstances in which she was living, vanish; she might have been discussing her first job in a bygone era of peace and stability. It is also worth considering (although Bamberg does not comment on it herself) what this small store and her position in it represented for her. Certainly, the store itself served as a place of physical safety, shelter (along with food) being essential for ensuring that safety. However, her assumed identity as the owner's cousin in one of the last, remaining locations of its kind in the city seems to have imbued in this gregarious and amiable individual a degree of cool confidence. She was the face of the store, in many respects, a purveyor of increasingly scarce goods, and this conferred on her a degree of authority, which she exercised judiciously and to her advantage in her interactions with her customers. If the confidence and relative happiness with which she related her experiences in the store are any guide, this comparatively safe space appears to have reinforced her position and sense of self. Indeed, practitioners of everyday life remind us that "cultivating a certain kind of self presumes in turn a certain kind of

place in which that self can potentially thrive.”<sup>68</sup> Thus we see something perhaps resembling a tenuous, self-perpetuating cycle in Bamberg’s experience, in that the store represented security, security begat a confidence, and that growing confidence further increased Bamberg’s sense of security and self (if only temporarily).

Above all, Bamberg was not cut off from those who knew her true identity, undoubtedly a welcome and necessary feeling during a time when one more often than not was trapped in a false identity. The store then also operated as a place “where [she] could speak in all openness with good, true friends, who came freely into the store.”<sup>69</sup> Of critical note here is Bamberg’s use of the word “friends” (*Freunde*). This word has a much more specific use in the German language than it does in English, where “friend” and “friendship” can signify anything from a mere acquaintanceship to a platonic relationship of great endurance and depth. In German, use of the word “friend,” in particular during the last century, meant exclusively the latter idea. Germans generally do not use the word with abandon, and their language is rich with nuanced descriptions of personal relationships of varying levels of intimacy: acquaintances (*Bekannt*), fellows (*Burschen*), comrades (*Kameraden*), and buddies (*Kumpel*) as well as a variety of verbs such as “to become chummy” (*anfreunden*) or “to befriend” (*befreunden*). Bamberg’s use of the word *Freunde* is therefore a telling indication that strong relationships between Jews and non-Jews could continue during this time. Her close relationships furthermore highlight the understandable pursuit of the “ordinary” during the “extraordinary” (to borrow from Andrew Bergerson) during this time. Indeed, the juxtaposition is striking. On one level, Bamberg and her friends met in an ordinary store in a neighborhood in Berlin to socialize, under any other circumstances a truly banal gathering. It is only when one remembers that Bamberg was a Jewish woman on the run from the Nazis, working in a bomb-damaged store in wartime Berlin that one sees the extraordinary double narrative occurring, one in which the seeming everyday comes head to head with the bizarre.

If discussions of work have the potential to illuminate positive experiences of submerged life, they can also underscore its more brutal and nightmarish facets. In its most positive form, steady work engendered a measure of much-needed stability and “normal” social intercourse. Opportunities for work allowed the divers to resurface from their submerged milieu and experience a part of Germany from which they had been excluded. As social creatures, humans often crave the company of others. In times of great distress and hardship, the value of such interactions is inestimable, as evidenced by the language Ruth and Charlotte use to discuss their jobs. However, employment also served as a reminder of the

cynicism and hostility of large segments of the non-Jewish population. Even in cases where a job provided relative safety and opportunities for movement, social interaction, and improved rations, a malevolent workplace exacerbated the emotional strains of hiding.

Annelies B.'s experiences were emblematic of such fear and misery. She and her blind twin sister Marianne spent much of the war running from one place to the next and holding a variety of jobs. Once, Annelies found work with her sister taking care of five children on a large farming estate near Breslau. Annelies secured the position under the guise of needing a vacation from the bombings in the city. She had hoped that the man would not be a Nazi. His name had a "von" in it, and her assumption demonstrates that the myth of aristocratic anti-Nazism existed well before the war's end. This man, in fact, was an ardent Nazi who monitored anti-Nazi sentiment among the local population. According to Annelies, the estate was a safe place to live; nobody would suspect a Jew of living there. Moreover, she had earned the man's respect one day by admitting that she was not really a secretary, as she had claimed. Instead, she led him to believe that she worked for the Gestapo, and he approved. Annelies and her sister stayed with the family for six weeks.<sup>70</sup> During this time, Annelies balanced her work on the estate with trips to Berlin to collect ration cards. She had developed an excellent system. Operating under the guise of an agent of the Gestapo, Annelies told the estate owner that she needed to return to Berlin every so often to complete a task for her "secret" job. In return, her Gestapo "boss" in Berlin granted her four extra days off for her vacation in the countryside. This lie ensured that Annelies and her sister could extend their stay in the countryside while simultaneously continuing to receive their ration cards and escape the dangers of Berlin. Yet the sisters could not prolong their stay forever, and soon they gave their notice. In gratitude for her excellent work, her boss gave her a gift: a bar of soap made of "Jewish bones" from a concentration camp that a friend had sent to him. Annelies took it, in her words, expressionless.<sup>71</sup>

In reality, the Nazis did not make soap from the fat of murdered Jews. Widely propagated after the war, Annelies's account, given forty-six years after her liberation, appears to reflect the influence of collective survivor memory on her own experiences. After the liberation of the city of Danzig (Gdańsk, in present-day Poland), it was discovered that the Anatomic Institute of the Danzig Medical School, under Professor Rudolf Spanner, experimented with the production of small amounts of soap made from the fat of human bodies. This experiment lasted approximately one year (February 1944–January 1945), and the manufactured soap was used for lubrication and cleaning purposes. The fat was taken from executed German prisoners as well as Poles and, in a few instances, Russian prisoners

of war. No individuals were executed specifically for the purpose of making the soap, and the Stutthof concentration camp located near Danzig, where Jews were held, did not provide any of the corpses for these heinous and ghastly experiments.<sup>72</sup> However, evidence suggests that Annelies's memory still might be accurate. The soap myth did originate during the Third Reich, and the tale held some currency among the higher echelons of the Nazi leadership. The Nazis' sadistic utilization of Jewish hair and dental fillings suggests that they certainly would have had no moral compunctions about rendering fat from murdered Jews to produce soap. Also, the acronym printed on mass-produced soap lent itself to misreadings: R.I.F. (*Reichsstelle für Industriefette*) looks quite similar to the initials R.J.F. (*Reines Judenfett*). Another possibility is that the similarity of the two acronyms seemed a particularly funny joke to the most fervent believers in the Final Solution, thereby perhaps providing another basis for the myth. Annelies's employer was a fanatical Nazi, presumably one with important party contacts. Therefore, he might have given Annelies a bar of R.I.F. soap and explained to her, either in jest or in earnest belief, its supposed origins.

In contrast to the experiences of Ruth and Charlotte, for whom work engendered positive memories, Annelies's account of her employment serves as a vehicle through which to convey her dread and anguish. From a perspective of survival, Annelies's employment experience on the estate had been ideal. The estate owner's party connections and the fear with which the local populace seemed to regard him ensured her safety. The system whereby Annelies secured ration cards and prolonged her stay outside of Berlin was a clever example of the opportunities available for Jews evading arrest to manipulate the system. Yet Annelies remembers nothing emotionally positive or redeeming about her employment. Indeed, her work on the estate was but one of many negative moments during the war. In particular, the gift of soap is illustrative of the profound grief and horror that characterized her submerged life. In all three cases, however, memories of work suggest that the quality of the individual's personal interactions with non-Jews was essential for positive experiences while living submerged. Material concerns, although essential for survival, were only one factor in the struggle to keep body and soul together and thus remain an individual.

Employment also provided an opportunity for some U-boats to demonstrate their individual talent and initiative. Thus, Konrad Latte took advantage of his musical prowess to support himself and advance his own career interests. In a similar fashion, Jacob Gersten sustained himself by painting and selling watercolors to known antifascists. Gersten listed his profession as an advertising agent (*Reklamemakler*). He had worked from

April 1930 until the end of March 1936 as the sole drawer of advertisements for Hertie, a major department store. His clandestine occupation not only enabled him to survive, it also provided him with a valuable outlet for self-expression, as it was well suited to his talents.<sup>73</sup>

Not all Jews engaged in paid work; yet occupying oneself without guaranteed pay also was a form of employment. Indeed, some illegals found numerous ways to employ their energies and talents, often through acts of resistance. These acts provided satisfaction and served as an opportunity to utilize one's strengths within a limited environment. In particular, survivors mention antifascist activities, such as distributing flyers or giving speeches to those who would listen.<sup>74</sup> Organizations such as the Community for Peace and Construction (*Gemeinschaft für Frieden und Aufbau*), founded by the U-boat Werner Scharff, and the Zionist youth group Chug Chaluzi are noteworthy examples of resistance groups in which Jews could and did play prominent roles.<sup>75</sup> On the whole, however, Jewish participation in organized resistance groups was limited. Large-scale acts of Jewish resistance, as seen in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, did not transpire in Germany, and to look for parallels or similarities in Berlin obscures the importance of individual resisters in the city.<sup>76</sup>

A large number of U-boats tended to focus their immediate postwar accounts on their own individuality in resisting.<sup>77</sup> In part, this might be the result of necessity; individuals who proved their participation in "illegal antifascist work" were more likely to receive favorable treatment in postwar Berlin. Yet in focusing on their antifascist work, survivors illustrate the relative freedom of action afforded them in the city. Nor does the focus on individual initiative disappear in later accounts and published memoirs by survivors.<sup>78</sup> Acts of resistance did not transcend the daily rhythms of submerged life; they were part of those rhythms, and they highlight the potential for personal initiative in the city. Life in Berlin was an individual affair, and when opportunities for action presented themselves, they provoked individualistic responses.

The ophthalmologist Dr. Erich Weinberg and his family fled the Gestapo on 26 February 1943. Like all Jewish physicians, Weinberg had lost the right to be known as a doctor in 1938.<sup>79</sup> However, he had continued to work as a "treater of Jews" (*Judenbehandler*) and as head of the Polyclinic for People with Eye Illnesses (*Poliklinik für Augenranke*) until 1942. When Weinberg fled arrest, he spent an unspecified part of the year hiding in a cellar in the suburb of Falkensee. In 1944, he resurfaced in Falkensee and began to engage in what he termed "sabotage." For the duration of the war, Weinberg worked to undermine the German war effort by giving members of the Wehrmacht and Home Army (*Volkssturm*) injections to induce fever.<sup>80</sup> Weinberg does not mention the source of

his supply of “fever injections”; nor does he mention how these soldiers found him. He also neglects to mention whether he received payment for his services. According to his testimony, Weinberg had connections with opposition groups; the first individuals to give him sanctuary when he submerged were reliable antifascists. Although he did not operate alone, he still pursued an avenue of resistance that reflected his educational background and personal talents. In doing so, he undermined the war effort and asserted his own identity.

In their search for employment, Jews also had to contend with Nazism’s views on “gender-appropriate” work. Nazi propaganda promoted the long-standing conservative ideal of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, church).<sup>81</sup> In this view, men were seen as the breadwinners of the family and women as stay-at-home mothers, raising children for the Fatherland and taking care of household duties. Although almost fourteen million German women were engaged in some form of employment related to the war effort by the middle of 1943, the safest work for female U-boats remained in domestic service.<sup>82</sup> In turn, men labored as carpenters, tailors, wood cutters, or in similarly “male-appropriate” trades. The gendered nature of employment not only affected the types of jobs men and women found but also influenced how survivors remember their work. Women mention employment far more often than men do, and female survivors go to greater lengths in their testimonies to discuss the jobs they held while living camouflaged.

Male survivors possibly do not discuss illegal employment to the same extent as women because it did not stand out to them as sufficiently interesting enough to warrant comment. Even in the cosmopolitan and progressive atmosphere of 1920s Berlin, German society did not consider having a career to be as integral to female identity as it was to male identity. Society expected men to work; it merely tolerated women working. Yet, beginning with the Nazi seizure of power, a reversal began to take place in regards to gender and work, increasing subtly at first but accelerating greatly as Jews submerged in the early 1940s. Increasingly, women were called upon to be active and vocal advocates for their families, entering the workforce as their husbands lost their jobs and engaging in serious discussions surrounding the desirability and feasibility of emigration as the matter became more pressing.<sup>83</sup> Working, however, remained a continuation of male prewar or pre-Nazi “normal” life, and men perhaps were not as inclined to view their employment as an avenue of self-expression or as an indication of the vastly different world of hiding. Also, male U-boats often engaged in manual labor. Those among them who once had been white-collar professionals might have been indignant at the nature their underground work and thus chose not to mention it in their accounts,

especially in light of what, in her study of changing gender roles in Jewish families, Marion Kaplan has referred to as “men’s deep-seated identity with their occupation.”<sup>84</sup> Female U-boats, on the other hand, became the primary or sole breadwinners for the first time during their years in hiding, even if the 1930s had been a time when many of them had been unknowingly preparing for such future roles. Indeed, while the reality of women working while living submerged was not unique to Berlin, the social, political, and economic travails of the 1930s that had gradually required women to take on traditional male working functions speak to a parallel shift in gender roles that occurred at the same time. Thus, as the 1930s wore on, Jewish women increasingly entered the workforce to help make up for the husband’s lost income. This shift reflects economic changes specific to Germany in the 1930s that were not necessarily repeated elsewhere in Europe, where traditional gender roles often remained in place for Jews in hiding.<sup>85</sup> Women’s experiences of work therefore stood out to them as emblematic of submerged life, in which they were responsible for their own survival and sometimes that of their family. For some women, employment therefore undoubtedly was noteworthy, indicative not only of their submerged experiences but also reflective of broader changes that had already been occurring in Jewish–German life since the 1930s.

Interestingly, although most male survivors do not analyze their experiences during this time through the lens of paid employment, an exception arises for men engaged in the arts or in jobs that were risky or out of the ordinary. For example, Cioma Schönhaus’s memoirs devote several chapters to his work forging papers for illegal Jews. Similarly, Peter Schneider’s account of Konrad Latte’s life in hiding focuses on his passion for music and desire to pursue that passion against all odds. Latte’s “ambition to excel” and Schönhaus’s pride in his resistance and risk-taking suggest that work often receives ample commentary from male survivors only when it asserts a specific, self-selected, ego-driven identity. Yet even in these cases, a detailed discussion of paid employment was not immediately forthcoming after the war. Schönhaus waited almost sixty years to publish his personal account, and the journalist who interviewed Latte was looking to expose a hidden past.

Women also discuss paid employment more than men do, because more women worked. This was already a common trend by the late 1930s, as more jobs were open to them than to Jewish men, especially those formerly engaged in white-collar professions.<sup>86</sup> The prevalence of female employment almost certainly reflects the greater availability of work considered safe for female U-boats. The types of occupation most “suitable” for women in Nazi Germany often were not subject to regulation by the German labor authorities: nannies, housekeepers, cleaning women,



cooks, and, to a lesser degree, shop clerks. Thus, Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, when given a choice of false papers, chose the documents listing her occupation as house seamstress. Bamberg's reasoning: "Home seamstresses were completely undocumented, so that I had nothing to do with the work office; I stood, in some measure, in a free trade."<sup>87</sup> Indeed, employment in private homes remained relatively free from government interference, and because the circle of household contacts was small, the danger of discovery was limited.<sup>88</sup> Approval by one's Aryan employer also afforded a certain level of protection, especially if they were a party member: Charlotte Josephy's employer, the Bender family, was connected to high-ranking Nazis, including the *Gauleiter* of Danzig, Albert Forster.<sup>89</sup> In contrast, male divers rarely—if ever—found domestic employment, obtaining work instead in manual trades, factories, or sometimes in small businesses, areas of occupation subject to government regulation. Also, these jobs employed multiple people and increased the chances of denunciation. When men did work in factories or offices, they relied either on excellently forged papers or on the goodwill of their employers to keep their identity a secret.<sup>90</sup>

Men who wanted or needed to work also had to contend with the fact that young German men were expected to be in the armed forces or engaged in essential work for the war effort.<sup>91</sup> In October 1944, the German government conscripted all men between the ages of sixteen and sixty not yet in the military to serve in the *Volkssturm*, increasing the risks faced by male U-boats.<sup>92</sup> Men, however, continued to brave the city streets, and false papers and a credible alibi became even more important. One evening on the S-Bahn, the Gestapo approached the teenage U-boat Bruno G. and demanded to see his papers. His friend Ruth Arndt sat a few seats away, uncertain of what would happen. Bruno presented his papers, which certified that he was a Czech forced laborer; he even spoke in the broken German accent he had been practicing. Czechs generally were paid laborers and allowed to move around the city, so Bruno's passport did not arouse suspicion.<sup>93</sup> The officer just reminded Bruno that his pass had expired and needed to be updated.<sup>94</sup> After this brief exchange, Bruno turned and gave Ruth a wink. Ruth, only three years Bruno's senior, had not warranted the Gestapo's attention; women were not potential soldiers. Bruno's presence of mind and stolen papers saved him, but the encounter nevertheless illustrates a particularly gendered challenge to survival.<sup>95</sup>

The differences between male and female involvement in the workforce do not imply that men were less active than women were. Men engaged in a variety of activities, including working on the black market and engaging in acts of resistance. Moreover, one should not overestimate

the prevalence of Jewish employment; paid work was not easy to find, was dangerous to pursue, and was difficult to maintain for extended periods. For example, on 30 August 1943, the Gestapo undertook the search of a small firm and discovered, in addition to numerous goods subject to rationing, two guns and some ammunition. They also discovered that the firm's manager, a certain Kurt Jansen, was in reality an unregistered Jew by the name of Kurt Jacobson, and that Jacobson's secretary was also his wife; she was taken into immediate custody. His son Wolfgang was also present at the time of the arrest, but somehow father and son managed to flee. They were quickly apprehended, however. At that point, Jacobson, determined to fight back, suddenly turned on the arresting officer and pulled out a Walther pistol he had on his person. The officer, however, was quicker. Jacobson received a shot to the lung and died the following morning as a result of his wound. Police soon discovered that years before, the owner of the firm had been having financial difficulties and the work office had sent Jacobson to assist him. Jacobson apparently financed the firm and managed it under the pseudonym Jansen; he also secured his wife a position at the firm. Nobody besides the owner knew that Jacobson was Jewish. A hidden room, nicely apportioned, was constructed on one of the firm's floors to house husband, wife, and child. When the authorities in the past arrived to inquire about Jacobson's whereabouts, Jacobson (aka Jansen) simply lied and claimed that Jacobson had disappeared. And yet despite such elaborate and careful preparations, it all came to naught. Although police records do not elaborate further on the case, the fact that the Gestapo, Department IV D 1 (the section responsible for dealing with Jewish matters) had been called in to investigate strongly suggests a denunciation. It is unknown who made the denunciation, but Jacobson's case is illustrative of the host of unseen dangers facing Jews attempting to work, which even the best-laid plans sometimes could not avoid.<sup>96</sup> Still, the importance of the employment experience for Berlin's divers is hard to exaggerate. Its benefits often extended far beyond affording the essentials of food, clothing, and shelter. Indeed, having a job served a variety of personal functions for Jews evading arrest and attempting to live. The formative experience of work, for those who could find it, highlights the potential for and limits of Jewish self-expression and agency during this time.

### Having a Social Life and Getting Out

Employment, while perhaps the safest excuse to leave one's place of hiding, was not the only reason to get out. Some Jews took advantage of their

mobility to enjoy themselves. Although more common among people in their teens, twenties, and thirties, divers of all ages surfaced on occasion and ventured out into German society. These social interactions provided a useful cover: no one expected Jews to insert themselves in German daily life. Moreover, many survivors enjoyed these forays into the open, which otherwise held few discernible benefits for physical survival. Indeed, in some survivor accounts, the omnipresent threats of discovery and arrest even seem to fade into the background, if only temporarily.

Moments of relaxation and lightheartedness were often quiet, small affairs. Dr. Arthur Arndt, father of Ruth and Erich, sheltered for the entire war in the pantry of a former patient. He had a bed and a night table and passed the time by reading.<sup>97</sup> Still, when possible, he left the apartment to visit his children, usually on Sundays. The family conversed and joked over card games. Ruth also wrote and recited poems to keep her mind occupied and relaxed.<sup>98</sup> Other survivors mention venturing out in public: to movie theaters (used for both pleasure and warmth), public baths (cleanliness being key to moving around inconspicuously in public)<sup>99</sup> cafés, restaurants, and billiard halls, all of which were popular ways to stretch one's legs and relax. The opera also was very popular among some divers, at least until the Gestapo and its Jewish informants caught on.<sup>100</sup> These locations, especially the restaurants and cafés, also served as places to purchase black market goods and make otherwise useful contacts, and therefore these sites served the dual aims of surviving and living.<sup>101</sup>

Jews living camouflaged often made efforts to socialize and ingratiate themselves in their new environment, and blending with non-Jews served a social as well as a practical purpose. Dr. Charlotte Bamberg traveled to the town of Perleberg, about one hundred miles outside of Berlin, after a new ordinance in the town of her previous residence required all "bombed out" citizens to register. The Hotel Berlin became her new home; the hotel also was a social gathering place for members of a Luftwaffe fighter squadron. In her recounting, this did not appear to bother Bamberg especially: "Escorted by a soldier, whom one got to know effortlessly over dinner, one radiated respect and trust, so that for some time peace descended."<sup>102</sup> Whether at work or in social situations, earning the trust of non-Jews added a layer of protection. Assuming one's camouflage held, physically and socially speaking, fewer places could be safer for an intelligent, sophisticated woman who "effortlessly" met people over supper than a hotel hosting a Luftwaffe squadron. The language Bamberg used to describe these encounters suggests that she rather enjoyed the situation, while remaining cognizant of its gravity.

The pursuit of leisure occasionally took on even more ostentatious forms. Before his escape to Switzerland, Cioma Schönhaus bought a small

sailboat named the *Kamerad*. To better play the part of the experienced, recreational sailor, he even procured from a friend a white turtleneck sweater and white pants.<sup>103</sup> Yet he had almost no training, and Schönhaus's first foray alone was a minor calamity; he lost control of the boat on the Havel River, which wends its way through Berlin's western reaches, and wound up in the weeds. To prevent future disasters, Schönhaus bought an instruction book on sailing for beginners. After all, as a fellow diver reminded him, if the boat capsized, the authorities would be out there to inspect: "And, I suppose the watercolour stamps on your [fake] post-office ID card are waterproof?"<sup>104</sup> Yet despite the dangers, the desire to carve out moments of relaxation was a powerful motivator for some individuals.

Although many U-boats sought out moments of amusement, age played a role in their behavior. Schönhaus's sailboat purchase suggests that younger Jews—Schönhaus was only twenty years old—were more willing to take risks than older Jews who had entered maturity during the Weimar Republic or the Wilhelmine period. Of course, youthful behavior in pursuit of leisure and survival sometimes led to recklessness. Ruth Arndt spent part of 1944 working in a food store run by Nazis. To supplement her meagre supply of food, Ruth stole minute amounts of cocoa, coffee, and sugar and secreted them in small scraps of paper. In a moment of pride, Ruth confided in her father what she had been doing. Decades later, Ruth still remembered her father's response: "My God, I hope you children [will] get back to normal and stop all this once the war [is] over."<sup>105</sup> The struggle to survive sometimes prompted young illegals to take risks that frightened their elders, illustrating the age-old divide between generations. In the chaotic years of submerged life, when families were split up and youth were on their own, young people pushed boundaries with more confidence and recklessness than did their elders.<sup>106</sup>

Dreary and tiring periods of confinement were a bore, and some divers, youth in particular, felt stifled. In pushing their boundaries, these individuals reveal a number of possibilities for action not usually associated with hiding. Yet illegal life in Nazi Berlin, however dangerous, still allowed for and sometimes even encouraged the perennial rebelliousness of youth. Thus, twenty-two-year-old Ingeborg E. found a job at a company as "office help" (*Bürokraft*), soon after submerging with her mother. Her mother's non-Jewish lover had secured this position for Ingeborg. The job served a few functions for her: "Since I did not want to be continually supported by my mother, and since I also wanted to have a few Marks for myself, and also because it was boring for me as a young person to stay at home, I went in search of a job."<sup>107</sup> Ingeborg's comment reflects the frustrations felt by many young illegals. The desire to escape the dual restrictions of parental

control and submerged life encouraged young people to forge their own paths to survival and self-development.

**“In March 1944 my mother died due to the many deprivations”:  
Illness, Death, Pregnancy, and Sexual Violence in Hiding<sup>108</sup>**

Many threats hung over the U-boats, a number of which they learned to avoid or at least mitigate. Illness and injury, however, were often unavoidable.<sup>109</sup> In these cases, ailing individuals examined the severity of their illness and, sometimes in consultation with others, determined the minimum amount of care necessary at a nominal level of risk. In May 1944, Ruth Arndt came down with a serious case of tonsillitis, complicated by an abscess in her throat. Ruth had been working for the Spanish attaché’s family for little over a month, and her illness introduced a hazardous complication into an otherwise safe environment. The doctor needed to lance the abscess, but Ruth was hesitant. She could not afford the procedure, and the thought of bringing a stranger into her illegal life, however strong her alibi, carried certain risks. In the end, Ruth’s employer asked Ruth’s mother (the family cook) to intervene and convince Ruth to have the procedure. That act alone was dangerous, as the other servants wondered why the cook was taking such an interest in the well-being of the nanny. Although Ruth’s employer offered to pay the costs himself, the doctor refused. Ruth believed he sensed something in the situation and performed the procedure gratis. Ruth made a full recovery.<sup>110</sup>



Deteriorating health is a recurring theme in a number of postwar testimonies, in which it is often described by survivors as resulting from their many *Aufregungen* (agitations) and *Entbehrungen* (deprivations).<sup>111</sup> Deaths also occurred, but survivors do not always mention the specific cause. For example, Annie Priester merely remarked that her “husband died on September 25, 1944, as a result of the agitations of our life of flight.”<sup>112</sup> The “agitations” and “deprivations” suffered by the U-boats were many. Along with physical illness and injury, psychological factors took their toll, and the stresses of illegal living led to heart and nerve problems. Yet as Priester’s comment indicates, the specific causes of death, even if they were known, occupied the minds of survivors less than general circumstances. What killed their loved ones was the condition of an illegal, hounded existence as a whole.

Many of the city’s submerged Jews suffered at one point from injury, illness, malnourishment, and even despair. Most struggled through, al-

beit often at the cost of significantly compromised health.<sup>113</sup> The physical strains of dashing throughout the city for survival meant that malnutrition was the most common health affliction.<sup>114</sup> Even before submerging, ration cards for Jews had not entitled them to fats, meats, or fruit. They subsisted largely on vegetables and starches and already suffered from the consequences of such a limited diet.<sup>115</sup> The prohibitive cost of black-market food and illegal ration cards made food a valuable and uncertain commodity. One survivor recalled that her fiancé, shortly before his capture and deportation, had taken ill due to malnutrition.<sup>116</sup> Another individual, who spent almost three years submerged, weighed approximately seventy-five pounds by war's end.<sup>117</sup> Malnourishment not only sapped the U-boats' physical strength, it also took its toll on the ability to think on one's feet, to take calculated risks, and to blend in with the gentile population. The consequences of malnutrition, in conjunction with the physical and emotional traumas of illegal life, led to another common illness: despair. More than simply a period of depression or fear, despair signaled a complete loss of hope. In the camps, such despair was common; indeed, some camp survivors recall looking at an inmate and recognizing their imminent death.<sup>118</sup> Submerged in Berlin, despair was not an automatic death sentence. In some cases, people recovered. Strong emotional support from helpers and other Jews was vital to that recovery. Yet despair was a vicious malady that threatened to overwhelm many people.<sup>119</sup>

Despair often plagued the twin sisters Annelies and Marianne B. Marianne's blindness left Annelies with the task of procuring food, ration cards, and shelter, thus requiring them to separate for short periods of time. In an interview given several decades after the war, Annelies recalled a particular trip she made to Berlin to collect new ration cards. She left Marianne at the farm where the two had been staying. She told Marianne to assume she had been captured if she did not return by a specific time. A chance meeting with a stranger on a train, however, delayed her return. Against all reason, Annelies confided in him her Jewish identity. She left the train with him, and he provided her with food and an official travel pass, certifying that Annelies worked for his office and that her position required her to travel. In the meantime, Annelies realized she had forgotten to send word to her sister. She raced back to find Marianne "close to insane." She had been preparing to turn herself in to the Gestapo. Only Annelies's last-minute return prevented this fatal decision.<sup>120</sup>

In other cases, the moment of renewed hope never came. On 22 February 1944, the wife of Julius Rosenthal was involved in an accident on the street, resulting in a double cranial fracture. The police arrested her and took her to the Jewish Hospital to recover. Knowing that deportation now awaited her, she took her life on 12 October 1944.<sup>121</sup> Despair

after arrest was not uncommon. However, the physical and psychological burdens of submerged life also proved too much for some individuals. In these cases, Jews preempted even the possibility of arrest and took their own lives.<sup>122</sup> After the war, the diver Ellen Rathé remembered the case of Hannelore L. Hannelore had been taken in by a friend of Ellen's, but the rigors of illegal life in the city proved too much for her:

[She] poisoned herself on the street with pills. She was found on the Nicholsburgerplatz and taken to the Gertrauden Hospital where, without having regained consciousness, she managed to die an Unknown, since, in order to protect us all, she had destroyed her identity papers.<sup>123</sup>

Not all Jews despaired. Not all who despaired died. Friends, family, love, recreation, employment, and the will to survive: these were some of the antidotes to one of the deadliest illnesses of the war. The key for one survivor and her family: "We grabbed everything that was a little bit light."<sup>124</sup>

Despite the best efforts of the U-boats to survive, death was not always avoidable. Due to a lack of documentation, the number of people who died in hiding is unknown. At least 130 Jews perished in the air raids, if we are to peg the U-boat mortality rate to that of the non-Jewish mortality rate. However, we must also remember that lack of access to medical care and the exigencies of illegal life probably resulted in a higher-than-average mortality rate. The death of a U-boat, if they had friends or family, was a terrible emotional blow. Moreover, death put the living at risk.<sup>125</sup> Unlike Hannelore L., who planned the time and place of her death, most of the dashers who died did so unexpectedly, and the disposal of a dead body endangered the deceased's friends, family, and helpers.<sup>126</sup>

Wiktor Pakman escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto with his wife at the end of September 1942, after the conclusion of the first large-scale liquidation measures in the ghetto that summer.<sup>127</sup> His sister Karola lived in Berlin in a mixed marriage. Karola effected the escape of her brother and sister-in-law by paying a bribe to an unspecified individual. Wiktor's two other sisters, Tania and Pela, along with Pela's daughter Mary, had been living in the city illegally since 1939.<sup>128</sup> Along with Pela's husband, who fled the ghetto in October 1942, the family lived together in Karola's apartment. In September 1943, the entire family contracted food poisoning, most probably through contaminated flour acquired on the black market. Wiktor died on 1 October 1943.<sup>129</sup> The family had to contend not only with the loss of Wiktor but also with his body. Burial was not an option. The sisters therefore rolled the body in a carpet and had two "trustworthy men" lay it along the banks of the Berliner Landwehrkanal. Authorities soon discovered the body and buried it in the Marzahn Cemetery on the outskirts of Berlin.<sup>130</sup>

Disposal of the dead often followed similar lines. Despite the tragedy of loss, U-boats were unable to give their loved ones the proper burial and respect they deserved. Martin Wolff had been living submerged with his wife since August 1942. Frau Wolff suffered from cancer and amaurosis. However, due to the risk of capture, the couple was unable to seek out necessary medical care for her. Sometime in late 1943 or early 1944, Frau Wolff died. Martin had few options before him. With the help of an unnamed source, he put his wife in a small pull cart and placed her body in front of a police station. He was unable to ascertain the whereabouts of her remains after the war.<sup>131</sup>

Although Wolff was not alone in the difficulties faced when a loved one died, some Jews and the non-Jews helping them were able to go to great lengths to ensure that those who died in hiding received a proper Jewish burial. The cantor Martin Riesenburger, who, due to his marriage to a non-Jew, had been spared deportation and assigned by the Nazis in June 1943 to oversee Jewish burials at the Weißensee Cemetery, continued to provide Jews with a proper burial until the final days of the war. In his memoirs, he recounts the burial of a Jewish man who, in the parlance of both Jews and non-Jews at the time, had died while living in illegality. One early morning a non-Jewish woman who had been sheltering the man appeared in his office to report the death. Secretive and scared lest her Nazi neighbors catch wind of what was happening, she nonetheless asked Riesenburger if he could come that evening in his wagon (having removed the Star of David from his clothes, of course) and pick up the body for burial; Riesenburger complied. When the burial was held a few days later, the woman, along with several others who had helped hide the man, appeared at the burial to pay their respects.<sup>132</sup> Riesenburger noted in his memoirs that all of the woman were Christian and wore crosses. Considering the myriad methods that submerged Jews used to camouflage themselves whenever they resurfaced into the non-Jewish world, it would be useful to consider whether all of the woman at the burial were, in reality, non-Jews. Riesenburger notes elsewhere in his memoirs that he always made a point of celebrating the High Holy Days in the Jewish calendar, if at all possible, and that he would even receive carefully worded phone calls from U-boats asking to know if they could attend services. Riesenburger knew that the Gestapo kept a lookout on these days, so he posted a watchman and planned an escape route should the dashers have to flee again. It is therefore logical for us to assume that if some Jews would risk their safety to attend services and maintain a sense of Jewish identity and faith, then something similar likely also occurred in cases where fellow U-boats (family and/or friends) wanted to pay their final respects to Jews who had died in hiding.



The birth of a child also posed problems for some women. As a matter of health, most female U-boats were malnourished and lacked regular access to a doctor. A newborn child also risked exposing the mother and her helper(s) to unwanted attention, and the act of giving birth sometimes led to denunciation and arrest.<sup>133</sup> Pregnancy resulting in birth among female U-boats, although not widespread, did occur. According to this study's sample, six children were born after the Large Factory Operation. The number of pregnancies almost certainly was higher; however, survivors rarely discuss miscarriages or abortions. Abortions were difficult to obtain, traumatic, and often carried out under unsanitary conditions. Survivor testimony suggests that most pregnancies resulted from consensual sex. Still, it is important to ask how consensual sexual intercourse could be during this time if it occurred between Jewish women and their non-Jewish helpers. Doubtless, some women became pregnant after falling victim to rape. There is also a nebulous and indeterminate gray zone of what could be termed "sexual barter." In her examination of sexual barter in the Theresienstadt Ghetto, Anna Hájková differentiates between what she terms "rational relationships" and "instrumental sex," both of which have direct bearing on the experiences of some female U-boats. Hájková argues that "rational relationships describe any instance or combination of social, sexual, and romantic relationships in which one or both of the partners engaged for at least partly pragmatic reasons. Instrumental sex . . . is a short-duration sexual encounter lacking, or possessing much less of, the social dimension."<sup>134</sup> While such examples of sexual barter also existed among some female U-boats and their helpers, and while consent likely was given in a number of cases, it is critical to remember the extreme power imbalance at work in many of these relationships, both in terms of gender and in the context of racial persecution in which the U-boats were operating. All too easily, what would begin as an instance of sexual barter could be shorn of its consensual nature and slide into the realm of rape. The psychological trauma associated with this act of violation during a period of already heightened stress further complicated survival. Although very few survivors mention rape, that omission does not mean rape did not occur. Jewish women on the run, especially if they submerged alone, often relied on strangers for help and were especially vulnerable to sexual predators. Likely, survivors omit this traumatic event out of a reticence to discuss such a painful and indescribable experience.<sup>135</sup>

Annelies B. worked for part of her submerged life as a waitress in the Berlin suburb of Oranienburg, close to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. One of her fellow waiters took a sexual interest in her, but she told him to keep away. However, his behavior became markedly more aggres-

sive after Annelies ran into a dishwasher from her former Jewish finishing school. In hindsight, Annelies suspected the woman of informing on her to the coworker, although she does not explain how this occurred. The man offered Annelies an ultimatum: sex with him or the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Choosing, in her words, “the lesser of two evils,” Annelies had sex with him and soon discovered she was pregnant.<sup>136</sup> Through word of mouth, Annelies heard about a midwife who performed abortions by injecting soap into the uterus. She received two or three of these injections before the abortion succeeded. However, the afterbirth did not pass. Suffering from stomach cramps, Annelies convinced a *Mischling* friend to let her stay with him for one night. That night, Annelies began to hemorrhage. Sitting on a pail while the blood poured out, Annelies decided to call the hospital, but it refused to admit her until she first saw a doctor. Fortunately, the afterbirth passed, and the bleeding subsided. The next morning Annelies dressed and left; she did not see a doctor until after the war.<sup>137</sup>

Rape and abuse constituted a physical and psychological threat to Jewish women. Although their non-Jewish rapists, if caught, faced prosecution for race defilement (*Rassenschande*), Jewish women could not turn to the authorities, as they would face certain deportation. Thus, men could degrade women repeatedly under their “protection.” These acts of sexual abuse, although a consequence of National Socialist persecution of Jews, were not necessarily acts of antisemites; in fact, many antisemites would not have engaged in sexual intercourse with a Jew on any account. Rather, rape often was the act of opportunists who took advantage of the social climate created by Nazism to exploit people with no recourse to justice. Yet it was also as much an “expression of anti-Jewish violence,” as Alexandra Przyrembel argues, as it was a consequence of an antisemitic and anti-Jewish system.<sup>138</sup> The prevalence of sexual blackmail and violence toward U-boats cannot be ascertained, but extant documentation demonstrates that some women were forced to trade sex for lodgings and/or money.<sup>139</sup> Although women were able to escape from these situations, as evidenced by Annelies, who never returned to her intolerable waitressing situation, the “safety” that these men provided from arrest and denunciation made some women feel as though they had no alternative.<sup>140</sup> In such situations, sexual abuse often led to something akin to sexual bondage, in which each rape reinforced the connection between rapist and victim.

On 30 November 1944, German officials charged the non-Jew Fritz Witt with race defilement. According to the report, Witt had engaged in sexual intercourse with Edith E. and her daughter Ingeborg E. After hearing the testimony of Edith and Ingeborg, the Gestapo was convinced

not only of Witt's guilt in the matter but that Witt "also did not shy away from exploiting the plight of the two Jewesses in order to consort with mother and daughter at the same time . . ."141 Indeed, Witt had raped both mother and daughter, alone and together. There is more to Witt's case, however, than the cruel act of a rapist taking advantage of two women under his "protection." Indeed, by all accounts, the relationship between Witt and the mother Edith initially was mutual. Witt had met Edith in 1937 in Königsberg in East Prussia; charged and cleared of race defilement in 1938 due to lack of evidence, Witt again met Edith in Berlin in 1942 and resumed a casual sexual relationship. Edith and Ingeborg submerged in December 1942, and Witt took them in. Some discrepancy exists between the testimony of mother and daughter on this point. Ingeborg claimed that she had to beg Witt to take them in, which he did because of his relationship with her mother. Ingeborg also stated that she and Witt did not get along. Through connections to two U-boats, mother and daughter were able to obtain false papers under the name Plester, and in October 1943, they registered with the police and received ration cards. During this time, Edith took care of Witt and his apartment, and Witt found Ingeborg a job as an office assistant.

According to Edith, her sexual relationship with Witt eventually included Ingeborg. She does not mention brute force per se, and her only reference to sex of a "perverse" nature concerns engaging with Witt in oral sex. Ingeborg is more specific and incisive during her interrogation, perhaps either as a result of her youth (she was twenty-two years of age at the time) or her relationship with her mother. According to Ingeborg, Witt and her mother argued frequently, and their incompatibility extended to the bedroom. Sometime in late fall or early winter of 1943, Witt approached Ingeborg and asked her to have sex. He explained that he wanted to start a relationship with her, being now fonder of her than he was of her mother. Ingeborg refused his advances multiple times, something that led to "dramatic scenes" (*Auftritten*). Her mother witnessed these episodes and had a talk with her: "Out of thanks to Witt, I had to make a sacrifice."<sup>142</sup> Ultimately, Ingeborg began engaging in sex with Witt every four weeks or so. Witt also continued to have sex with Edith and, two or three times while Witt was intoxicated, with both mother and daughter at the same time.

The abusive and dysfunctional dynamic that culminated in rape of mother and daughter should be understood as the final phase in what, according to all sources involved, began as a somewhat "normal" and functioning relationship. The abusive situation that developed was not unique to Nazi Germany; however, it was doubtless a result of the system in which the three lived. In a free society, Edith and Ingeborg would

have been able to leave or report the situation; Witt would have had no claim over them. Instead, Edith, knowing the risks gentiles ran in illegally sheltering Jews (and perhaps even overestimating those risks), counseled her daughter to have sex with Witt out of gratitude for his help. Indeed, the mother's attitude is perhaps reflective of a number of such instances of rape in hiding, where the victim felt that this gross violation was the necessary price to be paid for survival. Also, the relationship might never have come to this point; where freedom of choice and movement are possible, once a relationship sours, often nothing holds a couple together. In Nazi Germany, however, laws against sexual intercourse between Jews and non-Jews tied Edith and Ingeborg to Witt in a form of sexual bondage. On the one hand, the mother and daughter were his to exploit until caught. On the other hand, once caught, Witt also became a criminal, albeit one without a death sentence. The exploitative situation that developed between Witt and Edith and Ingeborg demonstrates one of the many perverse and surprising morasses created as a result of the National Socialist system. Nazis and their sympathizers were not the only human threats to Jews. With no recourse to the law, Jews were at the mercy of the entire non-Jewish population. While Witt took sexual advantage of the situation, any form of conflict between Jews and the people sheltering them could lead to the U-boats finding themselves in danger.

## Conclusion

For the submerged Jews of Berlin, 1944 was a continuation of the previous year's struggle. The fight for adequate food and shelter remained at the forefront of Jews' minds, and the threat of denunciation and arrest still loomed large. The radicalization of National Socialist antisemitic policy also drove previously protected Jews to dive. Over the course of the year, Allied advances certainly brought hope. On the western front, the failure of the Nazi High Command of the Armed Forces (OKW) to stem the western Allied advance in the Ardennes during Battle of the Bulge proved disastrous for Germany. On the eastern front, the Soviets had halted outside of Warsaw, and the city fell to them in January 1945. Hitler's claims of a Thousand-Year Reich, a possibility in the eyes of many only two years before, now seemed unachievable. Yet despite these victories, hope was only one aspect of survival, and for some U-boats, even hope was elusive. Illness, death, or sexual abuse at the hands of supposed helpers threatened many. In the individual world of submerged life, the U-boats often suffered alone.

Yet despite the challenging and dangerous nature of illegal life, many U-boats succeeded, however briefly, in developing routines in the search for a tenuous normality. They were aided in their endeavors by the mobility of their situation as well as frequent opportunities to express their individuality. Whether their routines included having a job, participating in resistance groups, biking in the countryside, or meeting with family members on Sundays to play cards, Jews stubbornly sought out stability and familiarity when at all possible, even when such behavior appears in hindsight to have been foolish and risky. Yet these developments were a powerful psychological and emotional tool, and the city's divers and dashers relied on them in the fight not only to survive but also to continue living as individuals with a sense of self. Indeed, survivor accounts suggest that emotional factors (both positive and negative) had at least as profound an impact on survivor experiences and memories as did physical factors, if not more. Although some of these routines and possibilities for social interaction lasted for only a few days at a time, others lasted for months. Yet as 1944 drew to a close, the approach of battle interrupted daily life with increasing frequency and ferocity. Hitler's war for domination came home to the Germans, and the possibility of normality, even one as fragile as that experienced by Berlin's U-boats, disappeared. Their tenuous and ephemeral routines collapsed, only to be replaced by new threats to their survival.

## Notes

1. On the ability of *Alltagsgeschichte* to defy a single definition, see Paul Steege, Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Maureen Healy, and Pamela E. Swett, "The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter," *Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 2 (June 2008): 361.
2. These comments were given in a panel discussion moderated by Andrew Stuart Bergerson. The panelists included Elissa Mailänder Koslov, Gideon Reuveni, Paul Steege, and Dennis Sweeney. See "Forum: Everyday Life in Nazi Germany," *German History* 27, no. 4 (2009): 575.
3. An excellent example of the roles of *Eigensinn* and its relationship to *Herrschaft* in the daily lives of Germans living under Nazi rule is Andrew Stuart Bergerson, *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2004).
4. LAB, Landesbildstelle, Bestell-Nr. 254931
5. Eugen Herman-Friede, Interview 10112, Segment 38, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 9 June 2018.
6. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 34292.
7. Paul Steege in "Forum: Everyday Life in Nazi Germany," 577.

8. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30320.
9. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31980.
10. See the appendix in this book for the number of U-boats at large at the start of 1944.
11. I am grateful to Maria von der Heydt for bringing these figures to my attention. See also Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 47. For more discussion on the categorization of *Mischlinge* and *Mischehen* and the persecutory measures taken against them, see Jeremy Noakes, "The Development of Nazi Policy towards the German-Jewish 'Mischlinge,' 1933-1945," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, no. 34 (New York: 1989), 291-354. In recent years, the fate of *Mischlinge* and *Mischehen* has benefitted from more sustained scholarly inquiry. See James F. Tent, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Nazi Persecution of Jewish-Christian Germans* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003). Ursula Büttner and Martin Greschat focus specifically on the fate of Christians of Jewish heritage in *Die verlassenen Kinder der Kirche: Der Umgang mit Christen jüdischer Herkunft im "Dritten Reich"* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998). See also, Beate Meyer, "*Jüdische Mischlinge*": *Rassenpolitik und Verfolgungserfahrungen 1933-1945* (Hamburg: Dölling und Gallitz, 1999).
12. Tent, *In the Shadow*, 2. This figure includes an estimate of forty thousand *Mischlinge* of the second degree.
13. Tent, *In the Shadow*, 3.
14. Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 1:149.
15. Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 1:290.
16. Tent, *In the Shadow*, 3
17. Tent, *In the Shadow*, 4.
18. Maria von der Heydt, "'Wer fährt den gerne mit dem Judenstern in der Straßenbahn?': Die Ambivalenz des geltungsjüdischen' Alltags zwischen 1941 und 1945," in *Alltag im Holocaust: Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich 1941-1945*, ed. Andrea Löw, Doris L. Bergen, and Anna Hájková (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2013), 65-66. In this article, von der Heydt provides an excellent overview of the daily experiences and challenges faced by this small, and therefore often overlooked, group within Germany.
19. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 91.
20. Tent, *In the Shadow*, 63.
21. See the case of Georg Kamin in LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 34292, and the testimony of his wife Rosa in LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30654. See also the case of Lance Corporal Rolf B. in Tent, *In the Shadow*, 121-22.
22. Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor*, 89-90, 92.
23. Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor*, 95.
24. Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor*, 95.
25. Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor*, 98.
26. Tent, *In the Shadow*, 149.
27. See, for examples, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 34292; LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 35752; LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 33167; CJA 4.1, 2933.
28. Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 1:121.
29. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31980.
30. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 47. See also Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 461.
31. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, OdF Kartei, A-31980.
32. See Avraham Barkai, "Jewish Life under Persecution" in Meyer, *German-Jewish History*, 4:253.
33. Meyer, "*Jüdische Mischlinge*," 72-86. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 190-91.

34. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 1792.
35. CJA 4.1, 1680. See Avraham Barkai, "Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938," in Meyer, *German–Jewish History*, 4:213.
36. LAB, C Rep 118-01, Nr.: 2246. In Dresden, the case of Victor Klemperer and his wife Eva stands as a particularly strong and well-known example of spousal loyalty and the hardships suffered by couples in mixed marriages during the Third Reich. See Victor Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten. Tagebücher: 1942–1945*, ed. Walter Nowojski (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1995), 2:280. See also, Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., "Victor Klemperer's Holocaust," *German Studies Review* 22, no. 3 (October 1999): 388.
37. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 31492.
38. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 39108.
39. Barkai, "Final Chapter," 4:381.
40. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 30591.
41. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 30591.
42. See LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31094.
43. See the concerns of Victor Klemperer in *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten*, 2:280.
44. See also, Frederick Weinstein, *Aufzeichnungen aus dem Versteck: Erlebnisse eines polnischen Juden 1939–1946* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2006), 373. My thanks to Martina Voigt for having brought this work to my attention. See also Meyer, "Jüdische Mischlinge," 87–88.
45. LAB, A Rep. 408, Nr.: 11. Tätigkeitsbuch Kripo. Rev. 64.: 1.1.1942–28.12.1944, #81 Selbstmord durch Erhängen. The suicide note reads, "Ade du schöne Welt." The police conclusion regarding Stephan's suicide reads, "Weil seine Ehefrau Jüdin ist und er für sie Unannehmlichkeiten befürchte, die er nicht mehr erleben möchte."
46. Freie Universität Berlin: Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung (Hrsg.), *Gedenkbuch Berlins der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Druckhaus Hentrich, 1995).
47. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30638.
48. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 32931.
49. See Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 67.
50. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31225.
51. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, OdF Kartei, A-31225.
52. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 100–103.
53. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31209.
54. "Wirtschaftsblatt der deutschen allgemeinen Zeitung," in *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sonnabend, 15. Januar 1944, Nr. 14.
55. ZfA, File of Charlotte Josephy, "Erlebnisse." See also Benz, *Juden im Untergrund*, 26–29.
56. CJA, 4.1, 2971.
57. CJA, 4.1, 2971. See also, CJA, 4.1, 2978.
58. LAB, C Rep 118-01, Nr.: 38153.
59. For example, see Maurer, "From Everyday Life," 370–71.
60. Maurer, "From Everyday Life," 370–71.
61. ZfA, File of Martin Wasservogel, "Gedichte aus der Illegalität."
62. Schneider, "Saving Konrad Latte," 17–22. See also Benz, *Überleben im Untergrund*, 25–26.
63. ZfA, File of Charlotte Josephy, "Erlebnisse." See also Benz, *Überleben im Untergrund*, 26–29.
64. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust

- Testimonies, Yale University Library. See also Lovenheim, *Survival in the Shadows*, 132–35.
65. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, “Untergetaucht.”
  66. Kroener, Müller, and Umbreit, *Germany and the Second World War*, 2:519.
  67. See, for example, Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 83.
  68. Steege, Bergerson, Healy, and Swett, “History of Everyday Life,” 365.
  69. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, “Untergetaucht.”
  70. See Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 AND T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
  71. See Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 AND T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
  72. For an overview of the origins of this soap myth and a sound debunking of it, see Joachim Neander, “The Danzig Soap Case: Facts and Legends around ‘Professor Spanner’ and the Danzig Anatomical Institute, 1944–1945,” *German Studies Review* 29, no. 1 (February 2006): 63–86. Tom Segev traces the origins of the “soap myth” in *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 183–84. See also Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, 168.
  73. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 34859.
  74. See, for example, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 7436.
  75. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 8851. See Barbara Schieb-Samizadeh, “Gemeinschaft für Frieden und Aufbau,” in Benz and Pehle, *Lexikon des deutschen Widerstandes*, 213–15. For more on Jews in the Berlin resistance, see also, Wilfried Löhken and Werner Vathke, eds., *Juden im Widerstand: Drei Gruppen zwischen Überlebenskampf und politischer Aktion, Berlin 1939–1945* (Berlin: Druckhaus Hentrich, 1993); Arnold Paucker, *German Jews in the Resistance 1933–1945: The Facts and the Problems*, trans. Deborah Cohen (Berlin: Allprintmedia GmbH, 2005); Eric Brothers, *Berlin Ghetto: Herbert Baum and the Anti-Fascist Resistance* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2012); and Cox, *Circles of Resistance*. For an overview of Jewish resistance throughout Europe and its postwar legacy, see Hans Erler, Arnold Paucker, and Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich, eds., “Gegen alle Verglebarkeit”: *Jüdischer Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2003).
  76. For more information on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943, see Israel Gutman, *Resistance: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994). With respect to the connection between the uprising and the instances of Warsaw Jews submerging, see Paulsson, *Secret City*, 165–98.
  77. That some of the illegals resisted as individuals also finds documentation in Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 214.
  78. See, for example, the work of the forger Cioma Schönhaus in Schönhaus, *The Forger*.
  79. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 49.
  80. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38247.
  81. This ideal predates the rise of the Nazis, and it was a popular theme in the Weimar Republic. See, for example, Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, “Beyond Kinder, Küche, Kirche: Weimar Women in Politics and Work,” in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, ed. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 33–65.
  82. Kroener, Müller, and Umbreit, *Germany and the Second World War*, 2:947.
  83. Marion Kaplan provides an excellent overview of these shifting roles over the course of the 1930s. See Kaplan, “Changing Roles in Jewish Families,” in Nicosia and Scrase, *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*, 15–46.
  84. Kaplan, “Changing Roles,” 27.



85. Very little comparative research on Jews in hiding has been undertaken, and yet the reversal in gender roles that occurred in Germany was, for a variety of social and cultural reasons, not replicated elsewhere in Nazi-occupied Europe. Natalia Aleksiu's fascinating study of gender and daily life in hiding in Galicia indicates that quite unlike in Berlin, or Germany more generally, traditional roles remained largely unchanged for the hidden Jews of Galicia. See Natalia Aleksiu, "Gender and the Daily Lives of Jews in Hiding in Eastern Galicia," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues*, no. 27 (Fall 5775/2014): 38–61.
86. Kaplan, "Changing Roles," 34–35.
87. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, "Untergetaucht."
88. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 203.
89. ZfA, File of Charlotte Josephy, "Erlebnisse." See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 208–9.
90. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
91. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 203; Maurer, "From Everyday Life," 370.
92. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 350–51.
93. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 122–23.
94. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. See also Ruth Gumpel, interview with author; Lovenheim, *Survival in the Shadows*, 170–71.
95. For more on the role of gender and submerged life, see the appendix in this book.
96. LAB A Rep. 408, Nr.: 4, #785. "Tätigkeitsbuch 17. Polizei-Revier Kriminalpolizei Weinbergsweg 12." From 1.Januar.1943–31.Dezember.1943
97. Ruth Gumpel, interview with author.
98. Ruth Gumpel, interview with author. See also Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
99. According to Kurt Lindenber, looking clean and well-kept was "one of the most important commandments" of underground life. In Lindenber, "Personal Report."
100. Wyden, *Stella*, 251–52. See also, Jalowicz Simon, *Untergetaucht*, 305–6.
101. Survivor testimony abounds with mention of these locations. See, for example, Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library; CAHS, RG-14.070M, Reel 1959, fr. 877–1007; LAB, B Rep 002, Nr. 4861, "Das Ehrengericht des jüdischen Gemeinde."
102. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, "Untergetaucht."
103. ZfA, File of Cioma Schönhaus, "Interview G. Rogoff," 14.3.89 Basel, Interview conducted by Neiss, Schieb, Voigt, 12.
104. Schönhaus, *The Forger*, 128, 126–30.
105. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
106. See also Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 301–2.
107. CAHS, RG-14.070M, Reel 1959, fr. 877–1007.
108. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31398.
109. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 207–8.
110. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
111. Poor health as a consequence of years submerged was certainly not unique to Berlin's U-boats. Jews who submerged in Munich, for example, faced similar health problems. See Schrafstetter, *Flucht und Versteck*, 219–25.

112. CJA 4.1, 1512.
113. CJA 4.1, 2086.
114. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 207.
115. Barkai, "In a Ghetto without Walls," 4:335. See also, Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 83.
116. CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 486
117. CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 648.
118. See Des Pres, *Survivor*, 88–89.
119. See Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 302; also, Maurer, "From Everyday Life," 373.
120. See Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 AND T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
121. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31476.
122. See Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 211–12.
123. ZfA, File of Ellen Rathé, "Versicherung."
124. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
125. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 207–8; Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 299–300.
126. See the case of Ursel Reuber and Eva in Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*, 210–17.
127. The Pakmans were one of a few thousand Jews who managed to escape the ghetto at this time. See Paulsson, *Secret City*, 76–78.
128. Weinstein, *Aufzeichnungen aus dem Versteck*, 375.
129. The hunger suffered by U-boats sometimes led them to consume spoiled food out of desperation. For another case of food poisoning, see Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
130. Weinstein, *Aufzeichnungen aus dem Versteck*, 376.
131. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38159.
132. Martin Riesenburger, *Das Licht verlöschte nicht: Ein Zeugnis aus der Nacht des Faschismus–Predigten* (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1984), 39–40.
133. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30895. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 207.
134. See Anna Hájková, "Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide: Negotiating the Sexual Economy of the Theresienstadt Ghetto," *Signs* 38, no. 3 (Spring 2013): 505–6.
135. For an explanation of rape and its infrequent use in survivor testimony, see Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, 137–40.
136. See Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 AND T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
137. See Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 AND T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
138. Alexandra Przyrembel, "Rassenschande" *Reinheitsmythos und Vernichtungslegitimation im Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 475.
139. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 208. Kurt Lindenberg is also quite clear on this point. See ZfA, File of Kurt Lindenberg, "Personal Report."
140. See Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 and T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
141. CAHS, RG-14.070M, Reel 1959, fr. 877–1007.
142. CAHS, RG-14.070M, Reel 1959, fr. 877–1007.

## Chapter 4

# SURFACING



The Allied liberation of Germany from twelve years of Nazi tyranny entered its final phase in January 1945. On the country's eastern and western flanks, the Allies swept over Germany's pre-1939 boundaries and began the quick, albeit costly, destruction of the Third Reich. By 31 January, the Red Army had reached what would soon be the new eastern border of the German state, the Oder River, a mere forty miles from Berlin.<sup>1</sup> The liberation of the city, however, took another three months. For the city's submerged Jews, victory could not arrive soon enough. The years submerged, during which they were almost continually on the run through the shadows of Berlin, had taken their toll on the health and emotional well-being of all those still alive in the city. However close victory was, the focus of the average submerged Jew remained day-to-day survival in a city that had become increasingly difficult to navigate, geographically as well as personally. The ferocity of the air raids continued, and the Soviet advance inundated the city with hundreds of thousands of refugees, making daily life chaotic. As the Red Army closed in during April and launched "Operation Berlin," the full horrors of the Nazi war were finally brought home to bear upon Berliners, non-Jews and Jews alike. When it was over, Berlin lay in ruins, but its Jewish residents were free. The cost of liberation, however, was heavy, and the experience of liberation complex.<sup>2</sup>

As World War II entered its final phase, the divisions between the surviving U-boats and the non-Jewish population began to blur. In-

ingly, the hopes and fears of the remaining Jews in the city began to intersect with those of the non-Jewish population in ways that were reflective of a specific Berlin wartime experience. Even in the chaos caused by the retreat of the German Army, Jews were able to use the circumstances created by the war to continually develop new strategies for survival; considering their circumstances, many divers proved quite adept at taking advantage of the turmoil. Indeed, as the city changed, they changed with it, and their aptitude for assessing the situation manifested itself, in particular, in their responses to the German refugee crisis and their manipulation of the effects of the air raids to obtain legal residency permits and procure ration cards. These actions were possible because, contrary to the assumed nature of hiding in which Jews lived almost completely removed from non-Jews, many U-boats never completely severed their ties to German civil society. Their connection to that life “aboveground,” the ability on occasion to resurface and come up for air, enabled them to keep abreast of the war’s progress and its effects on the city and to use that knowledge to survive these final challenging months.

The benefits that accrued from the increasing disorder in the city, however, could only go so far. The divers also suffered from the steady decrease in the quality of life in Berlin. Their position had always been a marginal one and often barely sustainable, and the Soviet advance wreaked even greater havoc on their lives. It destroyed whatever semblance of an everyday the U-boats had managed to build. Resting as it did on Nazi rule, everyday life in the Third Reich began to collapse in tandem with the regime, and such a collapse consequently disrupted the U-boats’ tried and tested networks of survival. The confusion in the city also began to disrupt the decision-making capabilities of some of the city’s submerged Jews, which put them in increasing danger of arrest. Although the last transports to the camps left in March 1945—the Nazis never wavering from their pursuit of the Final Solution—the city’s divers were not aware of that fact.<sup>3</sup> Arrest and deportation continued to loom large in their minds even as the basic necessities for survival rapidly disappeared.

The pandemonium caused by the Battle of Berlin proved to be the final challenge for the approximately 1,700 U-boats who had survived for so long. Coming on the heels of years of deprivation, the battle also proved one of the toughest moments for the city’s divers and dashers; they were beset on all sides. As the city collapsed into anarchy, Jews were also caught up in the fighting. In a city that had lost its civil structure, identification of individuals was nearly impossible, and the divers, particularly men, risked being shot by fanatical Nazis either as Jews or as deserters. In addition, the Battle of Berlin, fought on every street in the city, claimed

tens of thousands of civilian lives, and the fighting posed a danger to Jews and non-Jews alike.

Nor was the liberation of the city by the Soviet Army a straightforward matter. Although freedom was long awaited and the knowledge that one was free elicited joy and relief, liberation entailed uncertainty, danger, and shock for the survivors. The behavior of the Soviet troops was a dark stain on the event; their crimes against the German civilian population extended to Jews as well. Unless one could prove otherwise, the invading troops assumed everyone they encountered was an enemy, and some of the city's remaining Jews fell victim to that assumption. Even those who did not personally experience Soviet vengeance often knew of someone who did. Although some survivors had largely positive memories of liberation, the freeing of the Jews of Berlin was not an easy experience. Removing the history of that event from the overall context of the Battle of Berlin distorts the complex impact it had on the survivors. Moreover, it mythologizes and whitewashes a moment in the history of submerged life that, when contextualized, reinforces the connection between the submerged Jews of Berlin and the city.

### **January–April 1945: New and Expanded Opportunities for Survival**

On 12 January 1945, forty-one-year-old Paula Vigdor, who had dived during the Large Factory Operation of 1943, resurfaced. Tired of the difficulties illegal life posed for her and aware of the rapid Allied advance through Germany, Vigdor went to the Berlin civil authorities and registered as a refugee from Eydtkau.<sup>4</sup> Eydtkau (today, Chernyshevskoye, Russia) was located in the easternmost part of East Prussia, a region recently taken by Soviet forces. With the territory now out of German control, the authorities had no way to verify Vigdor's statement. She therefore received ration cards and legal registration. Despite the dangers, the recent Allied advances had persuaded Vigdor to take the risk, thereby improving her health and providing her with some measure of stability. Nor was she the only illegal to take advantage of the fall of the Altreich and the ensuing flood of refugees.

#### **Camouflaging as “Refugees”**

The flight of German civilians from the eastern portions of the Reich created an important opportunity for Jews willing to risk claiming that they were refugees fleeing the advancing Red Army.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the number

of German refugees moving through Berlin was so large and the pressures they exerted on the civil and military authorities so great that some divers in the city felt safe enough to take advantage of the chaos to resurface. Once they had done so, they could obtain ration cards and, in the case of individuals like Vigdor, register as legal residents. According to one survivor, the chaotic nature of the city helped; with a little “chutzpah and bluster,” he could now get ration cards.<sup>6</sup> Nor was this act a mere spontaneous response to the influx of refugees. Rather, Jews expanded upon a strategy to feed themselves that had been available to some of the more daring individuals since the heavy air raids began in March 1943. In doing so, their responses illustrate the adaptability of survival strategies, their acute understanding of the Berlin environment, and their awareness of the progress of the war.

The Red Army first breached the German *Altreich* in October 1944, only to be thrown back by the Wehrmacht, but not before the massacre of over two dozen inhabitants—women, children, and the elderly—of the small German farming community of Nemmersdorf.<sup>7</sup> Besides reinforcing National Socialist propaganda claims of a bestial and destructive Soviet Army, this act set the stage for what became by 12 January 1945, the date of the Soviet invasion of East Prussia, a forced population transfer of historic proportions. Estimates suggest that over eight million Germans were fleeing into the *Altreich* by the middle of February.<sup>8</sup> At least 120,000 individuals did not survive the trek.<sup>9</sup> Some fell victim to the Soviets through murder or, after being raped, suicide.<sup>10</sup> The refugees were predominantly women, children, and the elderly. During the brutal winter of 1944–45, temperatures dropped well below zero, and the snow piled high; individuals froze to death. Overwhelmed train capabilities prevented reliable transport westward; many journeyed on foot.<sup>11</sup> On their way, they brought with them their stories of flight and tales of the atrocities of the Red Army.

While much of Germany west of the Oder and Neisse Rivers soon experienced the flood of refugees, Berlin, as both capital and important transit hub, bore the brunt; by the end of January, over forty thousand refugees were arriving daily.<sup>12</sup> Despite attempts to reroute trains or push the refugees onward, the city was inundated, its train stations fast becoming makeshift camps.<sup>13</sup> Gad Beck, a *Mischling*, recalled how the influx of refugees began to alter the subways: “The U-Bahn stations were turning more and more into emergency accommodations. People camped out on the platforms—entire families with their luggage; some had set themselves up quite a little home.”<sup>14</sup> Many of the refugees were sick, and fears of an epidemic prompted the authorities to keep the refugees moving, often demonstrating an extreme indifference to their suffering.<sup>15</sup> These efforts, however, were complicated by Berliners attempting to make their own way out of the city to the comparative safety of the countryside and smaller towns.

However much the authorities may have dreaded the inundation of the city by hundreds of thousands of impoverished and sick refugees, the influx was a welcome opportunity for Berlin's illegal Jews to share in the aid being passed out to the newcomers. For some individuals, the possibilities were similar to those provided by the air raids. Ever since the heavy bombing had started in the city in 1943, the increasing number of bombed-out individuals enabled some illegal Jews to procure ration cards, if only on a sporadic basis; it provided them, in the words of one survivor, with an "opportunity to get in on the act."<sup>16</sup> Ruth Arndt was one of a number of U-boats who developed a somewhat systematic approach to obtaining ration cards. After an air raid, Ruth located a newly bombed-out street, remembered the address, and showed up at one of the local aid stations.<sup>17</sup> After presenting the address of her now "destroyed" apartment, she then received her ration cards. Still, there was a risk that one of the people standing in the same line had actually lived at that address; to be careful, Annelies B., for example, always asked the people in front of her and behind her where they had lived, so as to avoid giving the same address.<sup>18</sup> This was not an uncommon occurrence among divers attempting to resurface.<sup>19</sup> Although the origins of this tactic are unknown (i.e., did survivors share the information with one another, or was it self-evident?) and the act was dangerous, the destruction of the city and the increasingly transient population made camouflaging oneself as an *Ausgebombte(r)* (bombed-out person) a viable alternative.<sup>20</sup>

The ration cards supplied two weeks of food, a valuable asset. However, bombed-out Berliners were expected to have procured new housing by the time the next ration cards were delivered. In order to extend his supply, Bruno G. went back to the same registration center, slamming his fists on the table and demanding to know why his new ration cards had not been delivered:

What kind of Schweinerei is this?! Why weren't my ration cards delivered to me? Here, I'm working extra shifts for the Führer, and I have to sacrifice my sleeping hours; I come here and stand in line. Who's responsible for this, Missy? I want his name. I want to turn him in.<sup>21</sup>

With profuse apologies from the employee at the center, Bruno thus managed to obtain an extra period of ration cards, including clothing cards and the ever-valuable tobacco ration cards. Although this specific auxiliary tactic could work only one time per distribution center, Bruno remembers the opportunity presenting itself on several occasions. Many U-boats, however, made no record of having camouflaged themselves as victims of the air raids. Certainly, the risks of being recognized and denounced outweighed the benefits in the minds of many. Yet considering the usefulness of camouflaging oneself as an air-raid victim, the jump to

claiming to be a refugee from the eastern reaches of the German *Großreich* appears to have been the next logical step.

The influx of refugees served as a strong cover story, credible in the eyes of the civil authorities who were coping with providing for hundreds of thousands of refugees. That such a cover story was possible was due to the nature of the average refugee's flight. Many had to flee the advancing Soviet troops with little forewarning. In a rush to board trains, papers were lost. Possessions transported in wagons were often left behind in the drifting snow. Moreover, because so many German towns and cities were now either under Soviet control or under siege, authorities were not able to check the refugees' claims. Jews recognized this and were careful to pick towns and cities that were already lost to the Soviets, or else were soon to be lost. Thus, Paula Vigdor claimed that she was a refugee from farthest reaches of East Prussia.

In a similar fashion, after hearing about the evacuation of Breslau, Edith Ruth Epstein declared herself a refugee from the besieged city.<sup>22</sup> Breslau was one of a number of cities declared "fortresses" by Hitler, to be held at all costs. After a rushed evacuation, announced at the end of January in the streets by loudspeakers on trucks, the city was finally cut off on 12 February 1945, trapping over eighty thousand civilians; it was not liberated until 6 May.<sup>23</sup> Epstein's alibi proved a safe one, and the circumstances illustrate the acute awareness the U-boats had regarding the progress of the war. Vigdor, too, credited the speedy advance of the Allies with her decision to register with the authorities.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the city's divers did not just know that the Allies were coming; they knew, through word of mouth and listening to foreign radio broadcasts, where the Allies were, and they used this knowledge to their benefit. Yet the refugee crisis engulfing the city was only one element signaling the collapse of the Third Reich. Even still, although camouflaging oneself as a refugee may have benefitted some individuals, it was not an option for all the city's divers or at least not considered by them.

### Visiting the Air Raid Shelters

One noticeable change that many of the illegals, including Bruno G., recognized, particularly during the final, chaotic month of the war, was that the focus of the civil authorities and the local populace shifted from the hunt for illegal Jews to the defense of the city.<sup>25</sup> A shift in the attitudes of the civilian population was also noticeable. They did not resist the Nazis, but they were not loyal either, nor were they interested in a final and bitter struggle to the death. The war was lost, and they wanted it over as soon as possible. The continuous air raids and the forthcoming battle had



shifted their priorities. In the words of one historian, “Bombs tended to privatize.”<sup>26</sup> Berliners had turned inward to steel themselves for the long fight, a shift allowing the dashers to focus a bit more on their own survival during the final battle and less on evading capture. As the war came home to Berliners and began to radically alter Berlin’s physical landscape, it consequently began to alter people’s behavior and outlook.

An important result of this shift in civilian attitudes was that air raid shelters and apartment basements became increasingly available to the U-boats. For years, many individuals living in illegality had eschewed the apartment bomb shelters as well as the public bunkers.<sup>27</sup> In particular, the public bunkers were subject to pass inspections, and many divers rightly feared them.<sup>28</sup> The U-boat Friedrich Rhonheimer, for example, always had avoided the shelters. However, this all changed in the final month of the war. During that period, Rhonheimer felt comfortable enough to visit the shelters, because “the atmosphere made this possible.” Indeed, his now credible pretext that the train connections were cut went unquestioned.<sup>29</sup> Even in the public bunkers, some now dealing with accommodating upward of thirty thousand souls at a time, the days of strict pass inspections were vanishing (see figure 4.1).



**Figure 4.1.** Berliners Storm Public Bunker. Already, in 1943, Berliners storm one of the public bunkers in Humboldthain Park in the Wedding District. By 1945, the chaos had only increased.<sup>30</sup>

For most Berliners, Jew and non-Jew, the increasing air raids were a more pressing threat. On 21 April, Ruth Arndt and her friend Ellen Lewinsky decided to take the risk and visit a nearby air raid shelter; the previous day, the windows of the factory in which they were hiding had been blown in by the force of a bomb falling in the immediate area.<sup>31</sup> Over the years, submerged Jews had learned to lie and bluff their way out of difficult situations, and in the chaos of the final weeks of war, visiting the shelters was now seen as an acceptable risk. If no one recognized them, they were safe. At least in the shelters, their fate was, to some extent, within their control. The bombs, however, were not. Thus, the air raids were helpful, up to a certain point; as they increased in intensity beginning in February, the confusion they caused at first worked in the U-boats' favor. Yet as the Soviets approached the Oder and Neisse Rivers, the ensuing rapid destabilization of life in the city also began to work against those dashing through the city in an effort to survive and often complicated their attempts.

### **January 1945–April 1945: The Dangers of a Disintegrating “Everyday Life” in Berlin**

Returning to the city after her Spanish helpers had left Germany in autumn 1944, Ruth Arndt secured employment along with her friend Ellen Lewinsky as a maid for the family of a Wehrmacht colonel who knew they were Jewish. Ruth and Ellen also waited tables when the family hosted dinner parties for other officers, whose drunken advances Ruth and Ellen sometimes needed to fight off. The family provided Ruth and Ellen with food leftovers, including, once, the remains of a goose that Ruth and Ellen took back to their factory hideout to share with Ruth's brother Erich and his friend Bruno. Then, on 3 February, while Ruth was at work, the air raid siren went off. Ruth decided to take cover in the cellar, since she was not known in that neighborhood. Once it was all over, she left and headed for the subway, but it was closed. As she walked back to her lodgings at the factory, the devastation from the latest bombing raid increased as she got closer: smoke, debris, dead horses, and dead people littered the streets. Over 2,500 Berliners had perished; more than 100,000 were now homeless. Luckily, the factory was still standing, and her family and friends were unharmed. That February outing proved to be one of Ruth's last for the remainder of the war; as a result of the increasing air raids, the city was becoming too dangerous.<sup>32</sup> Martin Riesenburger, caretaker of the Jewish cemetery in the Weißensee district of the city (which had over four thousand graves destroyed by the air raids), noted in his postwar account

the horrific destruction of the very same air raid that Ruth had experienced; as a result, from that point on, he, too, rarely left the cemetery.<sup>33</sup> Of course, danger had plagued the city's divers and dashers for more than two years by this point, but danger was part of the U-boats' daily routine; indeed, in the words of Ruth's chronicler, "They had lived with danger for so long that they felt immune to it."<sup>34</sup> While somewhat hyperbolic and certainly not applicable to all of the city's divers, it is undeniable that by this point, in pursuit of elemental survival and a sense of normality, many of them had developed a variety of tactics for navigating *through* the city while navigating *around* danger. Yet whatever level of control over their destinies some of the more confident dashers felt they had gained, they could not pretend to have any control over the bombs that were falling with increasing frequency and intensity and that had begun to twist the city's once familiar landscape out of all recognition. Indeed, in many respects, the fact that it was the air raids of 1945 that finally made the city "too dangerous" to navigate with any degree of familiarity and confidence is a testament to the tremendous survival skills developed by the U-boats over the preceding years.

Despite the increased, yet still limited, opportunities for obtaining ration cards and registration, submerged life became markedly more dangerous from February 1945 onward. Berlin began experiencing almost daily air raids; any semblance of normality, despite its root in a National Socialist vision, disintegrated, for both Jews and non-Jews.<sup>35</sup> The approach of the Soviets, the growing scarcity of food, and the continued hunt by the Gestapo for the remaining U-boats further destabilized life on the run. That the infrastructure of the city had not collapsed earlier was a testament to the wartime planning of the authorities as well as to the will of Berliners to carry on in the face of the numbing effects of the air raids.<sup>36</sup> Even so, by March 1945 at the latest, the last vestiges of daily life had all but vanished. The final months of the war witnessed the breakdown of Berlin society and a commensurate breakdown of standard U-boat responses to navigating Nazi society. All submerged Jews, whatever their particular form of evasion as the Third Reich entered its death throes, experienced mounting challenges to survival. The closer the war's end came, the more perilous life became.

For the first three and a half years of the war, Berlin had been spared the horrors and dangers of large-scale bombing runs on the city. Initial damage to the capital was minor. This all changed on 1 March 1943, when the Royal Air Force (RAF) dropped over nine hundred tons of bombs on the city.<sup>37</sup> Frequent and heavy air raids over the following two years completely changed the cityscape. Berlin was never engulfed in the kind of firestorms suffered by Dresden and Hamburg, thanks to its open spaces

and large boulevards, although almost 75 percent of damage in the city was due to fire.<sup>38</sup> This was not for lack of Allied efforts. Berlin had suffered more air raids—450 by the war’s end—than any other city. Over 45,000 tons of explosives had been dropped on the city.<sup>39</sup> Strategic bombing often was impossible, due to cloud cover, so the bombs fell at random.<sup>40</sup> The RAF continued its nightly bombings of the city, and the Americans continued the daytime raids that they had begun in the previous spring.<sup>41</sup> By late winter 1945, the capital of the Third Reich was fast becoming a “ghost town” (See figure 4.2).<sup>42</sup> Beginning with the massive air raids in March 1943, Goebbels had ordered the closing of all schools and the evacuation of over one million Berliners. At the start of the war, Berlin had a population of almost 4.5 million people. By early 1945, the population stood between 2 and 2.5 million.<sup>43</sup> By the war’s end, over one million Berliners were homeless.<sup>44</sup> Many of those who were not homeless could scarcely refer to their shelter as a home: blown-out windows, collapsed roofs, and half-burnt dwellings characterized many of these structures.

For Berlin’s U-boats, the air raids, in particular those toward the end of the war, were a complicated experience. Gad Beck described his attitude as such: “On one hand, we were in just as much danger and suffered as much from the bombs as everyone else; on the other hand, however, we were happy about anything the Allied forces were doing to hurt the Nazis.”<sup>46</sup> Indeed, although the bombs were directed at the Nazi state with an aim to ending the war, they were indiscriminate in their targets. Jews may have feared the air raids even more than others did, since shelters were not always available. On 3 February 1945, the family of Wiktor Pakman, who had died of food poisoning in October 1943 (see chapter 3), suffered three more losses. On that day, the Allies had made their most devastating strike on the city yet, dropping over eleven thousand tons of explosives.<sup>47</sup> Wiktor’s sister Tania, his wife Róża, and an acquaintance from the Warsaw ghetto were caught in the flames on the way to a shelter in the district of Kreuzberg. Wiktor’s two surviving sisters and niece also lost their apartment.<sup>48</sup> The latest raids may have brought hope and opportunity for some, but for many they provided hope only in an abstract sense. From the perspective of daily survival, the raids were an additional threat.

By early spring, civilian life in the city had ground to a halt, and although the collapse of German civil society did make some aspects of evasion easier for Jews, the overall state of life for the U-boats took a significant turn for the worse. Although never fully integrated into gentile daily life, Jews did not experience submerged living independently of that “other” life. Indeed, as the war approached its end, these two different lives moved closer together. The effects of the air raids and the disinte-



Figure 4.2. A Scene from the Destroyed Mitte District, ca. 1945.<sup>45</sup>

gration of daily life on the German population have been characterized as follows:

Destruction forced you to take care of errands: finding protection, a roof over your head, family members; filing for government aid; arranging to get what is constantly lacking; and buying and selling on the black market. In Berlin, everything was out of the way.<sup>49</sup>

In a number of respects, this description almost could serve as a description of daily life for Berlin's divers and dashers. However, the difficulties were even greater for Jews. Indeed, as much as Allied military successes carried with them the hope for liberation, the ironic, short-term consequence of such victories for the U-boats was the significant complication of daily life and the disappearance of various means of survival.

First, the disintegration of civilian life in the closing months of the war meant the end of employment for camouflaged Jews, even if a few did manage to maintain their jobs until the arrival of the Russians. Charlotte Josephy, still working for the Bender family near Danzig, was left behind to pack up the family's furnishings. In this way, she kept a roof over her head and her alias as family nanny.<sup>50</sup> For those still living in Berlin, however, employment began to vanish in February. Ruth Arndt had stopped going to work after her experience of an air raid in February. Her brother Erich and his friend Bruno managed to carry on working in their factory until early April, when Soviet advances shut down nonessential industries. Moreover, as young men, they ran the risk of forced conscription or arrest in a city where all males, from boys to the elderly, were preparing for the upcoming final battle.<sup>51</sup>

In March 1945, as a consequence of the rapidly deteriorating conditions in the city, Walter Sternberg also lost his job. Sternberg had been working illegally for the cosmetics firm Gebrüder Müller since 1939, and no one knew he was Jewish. Although such feats were not common, they were possible. In fact, the earlier one could camouflage oneself, the better chance one had of pursuing a continuous, stable existence without having to repeatedly dive and resurface. Sternberg had almost two years before the deportations began to lay the groundwork for his cover story as a non-Jew. By the time they started in 1941, there was no need to question his story. He also set himself up in a work environment where he was completely unknown, his initial residence being in one neighborhood and his place of employment being in another. He submerged in 1940, and he had been promoted to manager in 1943.<sup>52</sup> The termination of his employment spelled the end of what must have been a remarkably stable thread of existence in an otherwise unstable life.

Even if businesses had stayed open and employed U-boats taken the risk of showing up, traveling around much of the city was almost impossible by March 1945. The air raids wreaked havoc on the city's public transportation. The Anhalter Bahnhof, a train station serving forty thousand passengers daily at its peak, was destroyed in February 1945.<sup>53</sup> Already in autumn 1944, transportation had become difficult for Berliners. Gad Beck remembered the difficulties of traversing the streets of Berlin:

The streetcar . . . was in terrible condition. Almost all the windows were broken, and the wind whistled through the car. Sometimes everyone would have to get out because the tracks were damaged. Then we'd have to walk a few blocks to catch another tram along the same line to continue along the route. . . . The closer we got to the city center, the greater the extent of bomb damage.<sup>54</sup>

Such interruptions were only part of the difficulty for Beck. An active member in Zionist resistance circles, the twenty-one-year-old took up the mantle of resistance by helping to procure food and living quarters for over thirty illegal Jews hiding throughout the city. Beck's Zionist connections, as well as his status as a *Mischling*, meant that he had readier access to sources of food and shelter than many of the U-boats. However, by 1945, the air raids had disrupted his "network" of helpers as well as his connections to those in hiding. As the city's infrastructure collapsed, Beck passed the destroyed dwellings of both the U-boats and their helpers with increasing frequency, which complicated his efforts to provide for them.<sup>55</sup>

The increasing destruction of the city not only impeded the activities of Beck, it was also responsible for the deteriorating living conditions of submerged Jews. Hiding places were often unsanitary and unheated. As more and more of the city fell into ruins, however, even the illegals who had once lived in the relative comfort of semi-heated pantries and apartments found their options for shelter now quite limited: "The large bombing attacks accumulated, all acquaintances and friends became, little by little, altogether bombed out, and we no longer had any accommodations."<sup>56</sup> In February 1945, the apartment in which Walter Sternberg had been living was destroyed in an air raid; the woman hiding him was able to secure new lodgings, however.<sup>57</sup> Yet even when shelters were still somewhat intact, blown-out windows all but negated the relative warmth of the apartment, and the U-boats were forced to cover the windows with paper, if they could.<sup>58</sup>

The approach of the Red Army should have provided the U-boats with renewed hope; in most cases, it did. Yet having come so far, some individ-

uals, such as twenty-four-year-old Gerda Fink, began to doubt their ability to carry on much longer: “We would not have been able to hold out much longer, because, due to the persisting inspections and raids conducted by the Nazis, we would have been eventually discovered . . .”<sup>59</sup> Police patrols had, of course, always been part of the reality of submerged life. A forged passport or even a forged postal ID card was necessary to evade these patrols.<sup>60</sup> However, surprise raids and heightened pass inspections increased in frequency during the war’s final months, trapping those without the necessary forged documentation.

The surge in police patrols was noticed not only by the illegals but also by their helpers.<sup>61</sup> This was a result of the rise in the number of Wehrmacht deserters and the need for the authorities to muster all able-bodied men and boys for the final battle against the Soviets. Julius Becker, submerged since the end of 1942, recalled the difficulties he had in avoiding pass inspections in a city with, according to his claims, eighty thousand deserters from the German army.<sup>62</sup> By this date, well over one hundred thousand German soldiers had deserted, suggesting that Becker’s claims might not be as far off as they first seem.<sup>63</sup> Twenty-five-year-old Heinz T. remembered how the omnipresent patrols made him feel like “hounded game” (*gehetztes Wild*).<sup>64</sup> Thus, along with the mounting difficulties associated with the disruption of daily life and in procuring food and shelter, Jews had to contend with agents of the Gestapo who had given up neither their search for illegal Jews nor their dedication to the Final Solution. Indeed, on 15 January 1945, the Reich Main Security Office ordered all remaining *Mischlinge* and Jews in mixed marriages deported to Theresienstadt, beginning in February. The order, however, was not carried out in Berlin due to a lack of transportation caused by the last, desperate attempts of the Wehrmacht to hold off the advancing Soviet troops.<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, the last scheduled train to Auschwitz, on 5 January 1945, was redirected to Sachsenhausen, carrying 30 individuals.<sup>66</sup> In total, four transports left Berlin in 1945, carrying 129 people to Sachsenhausen and Theresienstadt. The last train left Berlin for Theresienstadt on 27 March 1945, carrying 42 people.<sup>67</sup> Jenny Meisels, her daughter Gisela, and Gisela’s newborn son Michael were among the group. Gisela had entered the City Women’s Clinic (Städtische Frauenklinik) in the district of Charlottenburg in January to await the birth of her child; she had procured false papers in order to accomplish this. Gisela gave birth on 18 February 1945. Four days later, while her mother Jenny was in the hospital visiting her daughter and granddaughter, the three were arrested. They had been denounced and were sent to Theresienstadt. The three arrived there on 28 March, and they were liberated on 7 May 1945.<sup>68</sup> Although large-scale deportations were no longer possible and had ended completely in



March, submerged Jews could not have known this. Even if they were not deported, torture and the threat of execution remained very real possibilities. Indeed, arrests of Jews continued until the final days of the war.

Berlin's imminent collapse also disrupted the decision-making capabilities of the U-boats. Quick thinking was always a necessary skill for survival in the city. However, the stress of the final months and weeks of the war destabilized their grasp on their surroundings that had characterized the relationship of the U-boats with the city. Thus, on 14 March 1945, shortly after 10:00 P.M., passersby arrested eighteen-year-old Kurt W. in the Mitte district after he had attempted to escape from two members of the police; his accomplice, twenty-five-year-old Stefan W., escaped. During the escape, one of the two officers had been shot dead.<sup>69</sup> Having run in the opposite direction as Kurt, Stefan escaped but was wounded by a bullet. Kurt and Stefan had been working in Gad Beck's network of resistance and aid for illegal Jews since their escapes the previous year. Kurt, with Beck's help, had escaped a forced labor detail in the city. Stefan had escaped from Buchenwald and made his way to Berlin.<sup>70</sup> Working in Beck's circle, the two had provided aid to at least thirty-six illegal Jews in the city. The group had long managed to function with almost seamless efficiency. After Beck's own arrest on 2 March 1945, however, the group's network quickly began to unravel, endangering the lives of dozens of people.<sup>71</sup>

After his capture, Beck, adept at functioning in Berlin's underground, had to turn his work over to others. Thus, on the night of 14 March, Kurt and Stefan had been engaged in procuring horsemeat from a couple who owned a restaurant; the meat was to be distributed to submerged Jews throughout the city.<sup>72</sup> The Gestapo, in its own report, claimed that twenty-five pounds of horsemeat had been purchased for 600 RM, supposedly from Switzerland.<sup>73</sup> A brutal interrogation followed Kurt's arrest and resulted in the interrogation of Beck's sister Margot and gentile mother Hedwig. Although unable to collect any useful information from Margot or Hedwig, the Gestapo kept Margot in custody; the Gestapo felt sure she would be able to provide more information concerning her brother's extensive illegal activities.<sup>74</sup>

The circumstances surrounding the arrest of Kurt and Stefan reflected the disintegration of Beck's fine-tuned network of help. Beck remarked in his memoirs, "The final months of the war were unbearable. You could tell with every step that things were going downhill. Nothing worked anymore . . ."<sup>75</sup> Beck was referring to the infrastructure and overall daily life in the city; however, after his arrest, he just as well could have been referring to his network. On the evening of Kurt and Stefan's denunciation, a sudden air raid on the city had surprised them, and they ducked into an empty apartment in the district of Friedrichshain. Beck claims that one of

the two had used and flushed a toilet, notifying the air raid warden that someone was in the building. In having used the toilet, they “broke one of the fundamental rules of living underground.”<sup>76</sup> During their years submerged, Jews had learned to remain silent, in particular, when they were sheltering in an apartment that was supposed to be empty. This sudden lapse in judgment proved costly and reflected the chaos of the city and its effects on clear thinking.

In addition, as the group’s leaders were arrested, the network had to turn to individuals like Kurt, who were less prepared to take on the dangers and responsibilities of a leadership role. When the Gestapo arrested Kurt, he had on his person the names and addresses of thirty-six individuals to whom he was to deliver the horsemeat. This was a dangerous move, Beck remembered:

I have often thought how indescribably foolish this was. I would never have let Kurt have such a list. When I was in charge, there never even was a list; I always had all the names and addresses in my head. But of course, no one was really in charge anymore.<sup>77</sup>

Through the escape of Stefan, one of the group’s non-Jewish connections was able to reconstruct the list through memory and, braving the air raids, warn all of the individuals on the list.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, Beck’s comment that “no one was really in charge anymore” highlights the increasing difficulties that the end of the war, itself much longed for, caused for the illegals.

In the final months leading up to the Battle of Berlin, the threat of arrest and deportation continued to hang over the U-boats. Those fears, a part of daily life from the very start of their lives underground, were compounded now by the impending arrival of war on their doorstep. The flood of refugees into the city and the breakdown of public transportation—indeed, of the city’s entire infrastructure—added unsettling new complications to the already difficult task of survival. Previous strategies no longer worked. Employment, often essential for the physical and emotional well-being of the divers, became impossible. Hiding places decreased in both quantity as well as quality as the air raids intensified. Jewish and gentile networks of aid and resistance began to crumble. These difficulties, however, paled in comparison to the upcoming battle for the capital of Nazi Germany.

### **The Battle of Berlin: 16 April 1945–2 May 1945**

At the end of October 1945, Albert and Gisela Silberkleid submitted their application for recognition as Victims of Fascism (OdF). Their war-

time experience of illegal life had been characterized as “most abominable,” that is, “until the gloriously valiant Red Army . . . ransomed us.”<sup>79</sup> Doubtless, the liberation of the city’s Jews by the Soviets was a cause for celebration and relief. After twelve years of abuse and persecution, the last three of which were often spent living under horrible conditions, the U-boats were indeed grateful for their liberation. Most postwar applicants for recognition as an OdF remark upon their liberation by the Red Army, albeit not usually in the glowing terms used by the Silberkleid family. Liberation was more often a statement of fact. Indeed, the battle for the city and the closing days of the war received little attention from Jews in their immediate postwar testimonies, unless the survivor had an encounter with “fascism” in the final days of the war. Only in later accounts do the final days of the Third Reich receive substantial attention.

In part, these early omissions have to do with the fact that the Soviet-controlled sector of the city issued recognition as an OdF; criticism of the Red Army would have been counterproductive. Another explanation might have had to do with the fact that the battle brought liberation; despite the high cost, freedom was what mattered to the survivors. A final explanation concerns the issue of victimhood. The questionnaire for OdF status was not concerned with how, if at all, the victim of fascism was also a victim of the Soviet Army’s advance upon the capital. Moreover, the battle for the city was, in a number of respects, not a Jewish experience or a gentile experience but rather a Berliner experience. Thus, it had seemingly little relation to suffering under fascism, even though the battle was a direct consequence of that fascist experience. Silence on the issue, however, minimizes the pivotal experience of witnessing the destruction of the Third Reich and the difficulties caused by that destruction.

The Battle of Berlin, waged between 16 April and 2 May 1945, destroyed much of the city and with it the last traces of normality.<sup>80</sup> For the city’s divers and dashers, it also changed the ways that they navigated the city. The goal for all Berliners was to hang on: *durchhalten*, in the words of Berliners’ beloved Alter Fritz (Frederick the Great). Many of the old rules that had worked against Jews had disappeared. As the city began to fall apart, so did fears among the Jews of being captured; the invisible, yet powerful, walls separating them from gentiles began to crumble. Most non-Jews had their own worries. For Jews, many of the worries of the past three years were replaced by the more immediate worries of surviving the battle. Caught in the crosshairs of Nazi and the Soviet fighting, Jews and non-Jews alike perished in flame and by bullet in the now contested and ruined city. Exact casualty figures are unknown, but recent historical estimates put the number of German deaths, soldier and civilian, at 325,000. Soviet death estimates range widely between 78,000 and 305,000.<sup>81</sup> The



Figures 4.3 and 4.4. Scenes of Destruction: The Soviets Battle through the City.<sup>82</sup>

long-awaited liberation was thus fraught with danger: Jewish women feared rape at the hands of Soviet soldiers; Jewish men risked being shot as Nazis; and, proving one's Jewish identity was not easy. "Fortress Berlin" became a deadly environment, engulfing Jews and non-Jews. By the first week of May, liberation was secure but not before a most dangerous and destructive period unlike anything the U-boats had faced yet.

### **The Battle in the Streets: Final Encounters with the Nazis**

The Battle of Berlin raged for over two weeks, as the Wehrmacht, the SS, and also the Home Army (Volkssturm), composed of boys as young as twelve and men in their seventies, fought over every square inch of the city. Throughout, panicked civilians hunkered down in bunkers, leaving the relative safety of their lodgings only during intermittent breaks in the fighting.<sup>83</sup> Ruth Arndt and Ellen Lewinsky donned helmets during lulls in the raids to fetch water for themselves.<sup>84</sup> The scenes that greeted them were of absolute devastation.<sup>85</sup> The fighting then recommenced, and they raced back to the shelter again, only to resurface during the next break in fighting. The Soviets patrolled the skies, and many civilians were caught unawares as the bombs fell and the planes shot at soldiers and civilians alike. Nor was the civilian populace a victim only of the Soviets. The German forces claimed their own share of German civilian lives, both through "friendly fire" and through summary executions.<sup>86</sup>

On 27 April 1945, at the height of the battle for the city, forty-two-year-old Artur Isaaksohn was hiding in the basement of a parsonage. Members of an SS commando unit arrested him there and took him to the infamous Gestapo headquarters on the Prinz-Albrecht Straße. Isaaksohn already had had a number of encounters with Nazi brutality over the years: arrested in his hometown of Pyritz in November 1938, he had spent two months in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp; arrested in late 1942 on his way home from work, he had been sent to the collection camp in the Große Hamburger Straße to await deportation; two days later, he had jumped out of the window and submerged; for the remainder of the war, he worked in the resistance. This time, however, as the Soviets coursed through the city, the Gestapo had little need and no time to imprison Isaaksohn. Members of the Gestapo interrogated and beat him. They took him out back into the garden and forced him to dig a hole. They then ordered Isaaksohn to kneel down and shot him in the back of the head, execution style.<sup>87</sup>

Isaaksohn awoke some time later to find himself partially buried in the hole; the shot had misfired. Heavy artillery fire also had prevented his would-be murderers from completely burying him. With tremendous ef-

fort, Isaaksohn managed to extricate himself from the hole and made it to the Anhalterstraße, where he collapsed before being carried by privates to a nearby bunker for medical treatment. As the bunker cleared out, Isaaksohn was brought first to a Russian prison, and he was later able to make it to Rudolf Virchow Hospital, but only through “roundabout methods” (*auf verschiedenen Umwegen*). Isaaksohn survived, but he lost his left eye, suffered a life-threatening infection of the wound, and spent one month in the hospital.<sup>88</sup>

Three days later, during the final day of bitter fighting, heavy artillery fire forced forty-four-year-old Herbert Labischinski and his protector to leave their attic and seek out the relative safety of the building’s basement.<sup>89</sup> As the fighting continued, fleeing German soldiers passed through the basement. Also passing through the basement were members of the security service (SD); they were looking for soldiers who had hung back to avoid fighting. Upon encountering Labischinski, they questioned him about his military affiliation. Labischinski was not able to give a proper account of himself, and the SD took him out onto the street to join the fight going on near the Bendlerstraße. As they approached a bridge that had been blown up, Labischinski pretended he could not make it across. One soldier then hit him over the head with a pistol. As he tried to carry himself back to the basement, a soldier shot Labischinski through his left hand and then left him for dead.<sup>90</sup> That Labischinski was not shot immediately as a deserter is somewhat surprising, especially as he had not encountered Wehrmacht soldiers but rather members of the dreaded security service. The number of deserters in the city cannot be verified; however, eyewitness accounts attest to the frequent summary executions of supposed deserters during the battle.<sup>91</sup> The Soviets arrived on the scene a couple of hours later. Labischinski’s helper explained to the officer what had transpired, and Labischinski was taken to a Soviet field hospital where he underwent surgery for his cracked skull; soon thereafter, with his skull still open, Labischinski was transferred to a German civilian hospital for his lengthy and difficult recovery.<sup>92</sup>

The final days of fighting had a direct impact on both Isaaksohn and Labischinski, as they got caught up in the Nazis’ nihilistic battle against the Soviets. Of note, however, are the differences surrounding these encounters. Isaaksohn testified that his arrest occurred due to his being Jewish. Even with their defeat assured, fervent believers in the Nazi cause still posed a threat to Jews in hiding. Unlike the earlier arrests that sent Jews first to the collection camps in the city and, if they could provide no useful information for the Gestapo, immediately on to the concentration camps, the final days of the war precluded the “orderly” processes of annihilation. Even arrests occurring a month earlier would have led

to questioning and then detention in the Jewish Hospital, under the assumption that the transports to the east would resume one day. Instead, the Nazis now carried out the Final Solution on the streets with little bureaucratic fanfare and according to individual whims. In some cases, this worked in the Jews' favor. For example, the head of the collection camp at the Jewish Hospital, Walter Dobberke, refused to liquidate the inmates, presumably to demonstrate his "humanity" in case of arrest.<sup>93</sup> In the heat of battle on the streets, however, the result often was immediate death. Isaaksohn suffered a botched execution and survived. The number of U-boats who perished through summary execution and crossfire, however, remains unknown.

Labischinski's case is different. At no point does he mention his arrest having been caused by his being Jewish. In fact, the security forces were more interested in knowing why he was not joining in the fight. Probably, the authorities did not even suspect him of being Jewish. With the battle at its peak, the SD was looking for both cannon fodder and deserters. Likely, Labischinski was not executed due to the proximity of battle and the desperation of the SD to find people to fight. In fact, that Labischinski was pistol-butted and shot through the hand rather than executed when he tried to escape demonstrates how near the fighting had come. The particulars of his arrest and forced conscription also illustrate the bitter irony of successfully camouflaging one's self as an Aryan in these final days of fighting. Earlier, a man of fighting age not in uniform would have been suspected of being Jewish. Now, however, his lack of military affiliation led immediately to suspicions of being a cowardly German deserter, a betrayer of the Fatherland.

### The Experiences of Liberation

The campaign of violence perpetrated against the U-boats during the battle was as much about their perceived identity as German civilians as it was about their identity as Jews. In this sense, the battle reflected the heightened ambiguity of the average submerged Jew's position in the city. By its very nature, an illegal life in Berlin was always ambiguous. This was especially true for the "camouflaged," who continuously had to negotiate their dual "identities" as Aryans and Jews. The arrival of the Soviets, however, further blurred these distinctions. Initial encounters with the Soviets were a positive experience for many. Sixty-one-year-old Morris Weissmann and his wife Charlotte had lived illegally for over two years in the town of Rangsdorf, about thirty kilometers outside of downtown Berlin. The Weissmanns had camouflaged themselves well under the name Meissner, and Morris worked as an esteemed air raid warden in the town.

According to his testimony, Weissmann, among his other accomplishments, had consulted with local military and civilian leaders and arranged for the town to be handed over to the Soviets without a shot. Whether that is strictly true or not, Morris Weissmann had captured the respect of the townspeople as well as that of the Soviet authorities, who nominated Weissmann for the position of the town's first post-Nazi mayor, a claim that likely would have been verified by the OdF commission when Weissmann applied for recognition.<sup>94</sup> Although Weissmann declined the offer, he did return to Berlin to work as an administrator (*kommisarischer Leiter*) for the mayor of Berlin's Tiergarten district. For Weissmann and his wife and doubtless some others, the Soviet liberators brought freedom and a relatively smooth transition into a post-Nazi Germany.

The experiences of the Weissmanns, however, while in keeping with narratives regarding the Soviets as liberators, are only one side of the experience of liberation. For many Berliners, including the U-boats, the invasion of the Red Army was a dangerous and frightening event. In a postwar report on her liberation, Dr. Charlotte Bamberg could speak of a new dawn and yet only two paragraphs later write about finding a shelter that provided protection against the "ignominious access" of the Russians.<sup>95</sup> The "gloriously valiant Red Army" was, in the eyes of many survivors, anything but. Survivor experiences of rape, murder, imprisonment, and disappointment often preceded or accompanied feelings of relief, joy, and gratitude for their liberation.<sup>96</sup> Even survivor gratitude did not preclude feelings of suspicion or disdain for the liberators, and a single narrative of the liberation experience among the surviving U-boats is nonexistent. Rather, the perspective of each survivor depended upon the nature of their first encounters with the Soviet troops. Moreover, these encounters were shaped not only by initial Soviet behavior and the realization that the Red Army had saved their lives but also by racialized German attitudes toward the "Bolsheviks," the troops' often violent and drunken behavior, and the gendered treatment of the conquered Germans.

Soviet behavior toward the German population varied wildly, even within initial encounters. During the closing days of April, Siegmund and Margarete Weltlinger, living submerged since the Large Factory Operation, were forced to leave the apartment in which they had been hiding and take cover in the building's basement; they passed themselves off as bombed-out civilians. When a Russian lieutenant arrived in their shelter, he came with words of comfort: "Russki are not barbarians; we are good to you."<sup>97</sup> The officer had once studied in Berlin and knew the language. He gave food to the hungry inhabitants of the cellar, and all seemed well until the soldiers searching the cellar discovered six revolvers. Suddenly, the atmosphere changed. The soldiers lined up the inhabitants against



the wall of the basement, a prelude to execution. At that point, Siegmund, in a move that presaged his future work in the field of Jewish and Christian reconciliation in postwar, occupied Germany, intervened. He told the lieutenant that he and his wife were Jews and that the weapons did not belong to the inhabitants of the building but rather to members of the Volkssturm who earlier had passed through. Moreover, he explained, the residents of the building had known that he and his wife had been hiding in the building and had not betrayed them. In truth, no one in the building had known anything about the Weltlingers. The lieutenant believed them, though, and the atmosphere again became one of relief and celebration. Still, as Weltlinger remarked years later, “We really lucked out with the first soldiers.”<sup>98</sup> All around him, plunder and rape were occurring, a fact that shocked many of the U-boats and confirmed the German people’s worst suspicions.

The rumors of Soviet atrocities brought to the capital by refugees from the east confirmed for many what Goebbels and his propaganda machine had always claimed: the Bolsheviks were animals who would spare nobody. The behavior of the troops on their way to the city seemed to bear this out. Their thirst for revenge was inflamed by the words of the Soviet writer and propagandist Ilya Ehrenburg:

Do not count the days; do not count the miles. Count only the number of Germans you have killed. Kill the German—this is your mother’s prayer. Kill the German—this is the cry of your Russian earth. Do not waiver. Do not let up. Kill.<sup>99</sup>

Although the behavior of the troops in the eastern provinces initially had proven useful to Stalin as a means of cleansing the future Soviet and Polish territories of its German inhabitants, the policy proved counterproductive once troops crossed the future Oder–Neisse line, the eastern boundary of the new postwar Germany.<sup>100</sup> In Berlin, full Soviet control over the troops vanished, and the Berliners witnessed rape, murder, and robbery. For the Jews who had managed to survive the years evading arrest and deportation by the Nazis, the first encounters with members of the Red Army often were bizarre and unsettling.

In the first case, the appearance of the Soviets was shocking. On 26 April, Ruth Arndt and Ellen Lewinsky went out to get water during a lull in the street fighting. They were stunned to run into two Russian soldiers. They were not afraid, however; the presence of the soldiers meant that freedom was near. Yet Ruth was flabbergasted. The soldiers looked “dilapidated,” a common state of affairs among the less-skilled infantry units.<sup>101</sup> The appearance of these lower infantry troops did not appeal to Berliners, Jew or non-Jew, however grateful they may have been for their

liberation. Jewish Germans had been persecuted and almost annihilated by the Nazis; that fact did not mean, however, that the Soviet peoples were equals. Rather, the look of the troops was “fierce”; to Ruth, they looked like “Mongols.”<sup>102</sup> Indeed, postwar accounts sometimes remember the Soviets as having “Asiatic” features or being “Mongolians,” even if that was not the case.<sup>103</sup> In part, such descriptions of the invaders came directly from Nazi propaganda.<sup>104</sup> Yet although Nazi propaganda often directly linked the threat of Bolshevism to the Jews, attitudes of German cultural superiority existed long before the Nazis came to power and had as much of an impact on Jewish perceptions of the East as they did on non-Jewish perceptions.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, the “Asiatic” nature of the Russians had been taught to all schoolchildren as far back as the Wilhelmine Empire.<sup>106</sup> As a result, the rhetoric of cultural superiority influenced all Germans, regardless of faith.

These cultural prejudices drew much of their strength from the appalling behavior of some of the troops. When the Red Army liberated Zoppot bei Danzig in March 1945, Charlotte Josephy tried to hide from them. Doubtless word of the soldiers’ behavior had reached her, and she was unsure of what to expect. The Bender house had been overrun by refugees, and the dwelling was subject to frequent attacks by the Soviets. Although Josephy does not elaborate on the nature of those attacks, her words are still telling: “The raw manner in which they behaved is impossible to describe. I attempted to conceal myself from them, but I was discovered and robbed of all of my possessions.”<sup>107</sup> Josephy only mentions being robbed; whether she experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of the soldiers is unknown. After the war, shame and grief prompted many women to remain silent about their experiences of rape. Indeed, Soviet soldiers raped German women on a staggering scale.<sup>108</sup> Well over one million German women, ranging from children to the elderly, were victims of rape during the Soviet campaign; in Berlin alone, the soldiers raped between 95,000 and 130,000 women.<sup>109</sup> Rape and fear of rape also explain many of the more than 10,000 female Berliners who committed suicide during this period.<sup>110</sup>

The unbridled sexual violence against women reflected Soviet desires for vengeance, occasional lack of discipline among the troops, as well as the primitive view of women as “spoils of war.”<sup>111</sup> Nor was this atrocious act carried out only against non-Jews. Soviet troops also raped Jewish women, and they did so as individuals as well as in groups.<sup>112</sup> The extreme level of sexual violence against women caught many individuals off guard.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, the behavior of Soviet troops must have come as a particular shock to Jewish women, who had expected the Soviets to be their liberators.<sup>114</sup> Ruth W., for example, hid on the top floor of an apart-

ment to avoid falling prey to marauding soldiers. In those final days of the war, she recalled hearing the Russians screaming at night for women; she also personally knew of people who had been taken off the streets and raped.<sup>115</sup> Annelies B. and her sister Marianne also hid upstairs in a top-floor apartment to evade the troops.<sup>116</sup> Such a tactic was widespread among Berlin women, and it appears to have developed through the assumption that the soldiers were either afraid of being ambushed on the upper levels of buildings or else not inclined to make the effort of climbing multiple flights of stairs.<sup>117</sup>

Jewish men also had to beware the Soviet troops. While women needed to guard against becoming sexual victims of the Red Army, men had to avoid being mistaken for a Nazi official or soldier; after such intense fighting, the Soviets were wary of all German men, especially those of fighting age.<sup>118</sup> Considering that the Battle of Berlin conscripted boys as young as twelve and men as old as seventy, the scope for suspicion was broad indeed. Berliners also needed to take care that they were not robbed. When Ruth and Ellen first encountered Soviet troops as they went to the pump to fetch water, they immediately returned to their shelter and came back with Ruth's brother Erich and his friend Bruno G, so that the two men could meet their liberators. Yet instead of greeting them as victims now liberated, one soldier pointed a rifle at Erich and took his leather jacket.<sup>119</sup>

The antiquarian Ralf Kollm had similar difficulties. Fifty years old, scion of an old Berlin Jewish family that had been in the city for over 150 years, Kollm had served valiantly in the First World War and, after receiving numerous injuries, been recognized as a "severely injured [veteran]" (*Schwerbeschädigter*). His documentation from the First World War, coupled with false papers and a non-Jewish name (the family had changed it from Kohn in 1887), had served Ralf well during his years on the run, providing him with his "best mask" (*beste Maske*). Kollm also made use of a yellow armband signifying him as blind. However, most Russians could not speak German and thus could not or would not differentiate between the various armbands. The consequence was that Kollm's armband caused the Soviets to mistake him for a soldier.<sup>120</sup>

Kollm does not mention any negative consequences arising from this encounter, other than the presumed indignity of suffering for so long only to be rejected as an enemy combatant. Others, however, were less fortunate. Thirty-five-year-old Werner Wunderlich was liberated outside of Berlin on 21 April 1945, but he spent almost three weeks in a Soviet prison. He was released only when he managed to provide witnesses who could testify as to his true identity. Wunderlich credits his imprisonment to the Nazis; the new authorities did not trust the Jewish credentials that he had saved. Because he was the only person in the small town of Straus-

berg with Jewish papers, the Soviets were even more suspicious, taking him to be either a German officer trying to escape or else a spy.<sup>121</sup>

Soviets were fearful of German officials trying to pass themselves off as civilians or even as victims of Nazi persecution, and this could have dangerous consequences not only for Jews but also for their helpers. When real Nazis, eager to conceal their past lives, actually did insert themselves into the situation, the matter became even more complicated. The dentist and decorated soldier of the First World War Kurt Michaelis (see figure 4.5) experienced his liberation in the town of Ferch, located about forty-five kilometers outside of downtown Berlin. Michaelis's experience of liberation was bittersweet, especially because he blamed himself for the death of one of his helpers, a man who would have become his brother-in-law. The Rook family, including Michaelis's fiancée, had helped shelter Michaelis under the alias "Neumann" for over two years in a house they owned in the town. After being bombed out of their own home and losing their pub in Berlin in air raids in February 1945, the Rook family relocated to Ferch to await the war's end. When the Soviets moved in on



Figure 4.5. Dr. Kurt Michaelis.<sup>122</sup>

2 May 1945, they commandeered the first floor of the home; the Rook family, including Michaelis, took the second floor, and a certain Frau Röper continued living on the third floor, although now with the Russian commander of the unit.

Michaelis's true identity had been revealed to the commander and his troops upon their arrival. Frau Röper, however, had continued to refer to Michaelis as Herr Neumann. Michaelis knew that the Röper family had always been Nazi sympathizers and suspected them of belonging to the party and even to the SS. A few days after the Soviets' arrival, around lunchtime, Michaelis was ordered to report to Frau Röper's floor. When he got there, he found the captain, Herr Rook, and Frau Röper engaged in an energetic debate, and the captain demanded to see Michaelis's papers. Evidently, Michaelis's true identity as a Jew had been revealed, but Frau Röper continued to deny that Michaelis was Jewish. The controversy, however, aroused the captain's suspicions, and Rook and Michaelis were taken away and locked in a room. The captain soon approached them with a revolver, screaming, "You both are Gestapo informants and will now be shot!"<sup>123</sup> Michaelis tried his best to explain, asserting his innocence and suggesting that Frau Röper was of a mind to seek revenge on them. Michaelis and Rook were taken out to the pump house and locked in with sentries posted outside.

After an agonizing fifteen minutes, during which time Michaelis's fiancée, Frau Rook, the captain, Frau Röper, and a translator discussed the matter, Michaelis and Herr Rook were freed. The troops soon left. At that point, Herr Rook, knowing that Frau Röper had been responsible for the mess, ordered her to leave the property. Michaelis testified that Röper had always hated the family; she knew they were anti-Nazis and the previous month had denounced the family to a member of the Volkssturm, who had in turn warned "Herr Neumann" that the family should be careful. Michaelis stayed in his room as Rook accompanied Röper off the property, but he heard what happened next from eyewitnesses. Rook and Röper had a scuffle (*Handgemenge*). She screamed, and the departing troops returned. One of the soldiers shot Rook, and he was killed instantly.<sup>124</sup>

On 21 October 1945, while submitting his application for Odf status, Michaelis added this story as an addendum to his application; the event clearly represented a traumatic point in his hiding experience. Michaelis wrote, "It is a tragedy that directly through my person a death should have been caused, that Herr Rook had to die only two days before the war's end."<sup>125</sup> That Michaelis should blame himself is difficult for us to see. The perpetrator, by all accounts, was Frau Röper, and her method of murder was the frightened and mistrustful Soviet troops. She demon-

strated the pernicious and vindictive spirit of the Nazis in the war's final days and used the chaos of this period, when everyone was a suspect and everyone an enemy, to take her revenge. Although he survived the event, Michaelis, having benefitted from the Rook family's protection and having built strong emotional ties with them, could not think about his experiences of war and liberation without also thinking about the fate of Herr Rook. For Michaelis, his experiences and the experiences of the Rooks were inextricable.

As the early encounters with the Soviets indicated, proving one's identity as Jewish was not always easily accomplished. The problem, according to Bruno G., was that the troops were "uneducated Mongolians" who could not tell the difference between Jews and Germans. Bruno perhaps forgot in his testimony, given decades later, that these "differences" were largely the product of Nazi antisemitic imagination. Yet in their desire for revenge and as a product of their bitter experiences on the front, the Soviets were not taking any chances. Moreover, having liberated Auschwitz and other camps and having encountered the victims of Nazism on their way to Berlin, the Soviets believed that most Jews had been exterminated. Even a Jewish ID card, kept for years in hiding at great peril, did not afford automatic protection. When Charlotte Josephy tried to show her card to Polish soldiers who had moved into the area around Zoppot, they refused to believe her.<sup>126</sup> When the Russian troops, who had stolen Erich Arndt's leather jacket at gunpoint, were told by Ruth that they were Jewish, one soldier looked at them, pulled his finger across his throat, and said, "Juden kaputt" (The Jews are dead).<sup>127</sup> Not even the Jewish ID cards that Erich and Ruth's mother had sewed in their coats helped. Nor was this an isolated experience. What the Russians had seen convinced them that the Jews were dead and that those who claimed to be Jews were lying.<sup>128</sup>

For over two years, survival depended upon the concealment of one's Jewish identity. As the Soviets poured into the city, however, a drastic reversal occurred, and the best way to secure help and protection was to prove beyond a doubt that one was Jewish. Friedrich Rhonheimer had managed this feat during the battle when he encountered Jewish officers of the Red Army fighting in the Wichertstraße.<sup>129</sup> Rhonheimer does not say, however, how he accomplished this. As the case of Michaelis suggests, not all Soviets necessarily denied the survival or existence of Jews in Germany; indeed, at first, the captain had believed Michaelis. If identification did not suffice, however, U-boats were able to prove themselves most easily if they ran into Jews serving in the Red Army. Ruth Arndt and her family proved themselves when an officer asked her to recite the Sh'ma Yisrael (Hear, O Israel), a cornerstone of Jewish prayer.<sup>130</sup> Char-

lotte Josephy also managed to receive recognition as a Jew by reciting the same prayer.<sup>131</sup> After years of persecution due to their faith and supposed race, the act of expressing their faith openly must have come as a tremendous and gratifying relief to many individuals. Rather than a cause for persecution, the prayer was a guarantee of their salvation and an end to the nightmare of the Third Reich.

## Conclusion

The Second World War ended on 8 May 1945. After years of camouflaging their true identities, the city's divers could surface—this time for good. As Lydia Haase, who survived the war to be reunited with her son Falko, remarked, “With the invasion of the Russians . . . I once again took my old name.”<sup>132</sup> Still, some had lived under a false name for so long that the adjustment was not automatic. Martin Riesenburger held his first synagogue service on 11 May. He recalled the panic he noticed on the faces of some former U-boats when he called them by their real name for the first time; fear of denunciation and the Gestapo did not vanish overnight.<sup>133</sup> Thekla Beyer put her liberation in other words: “My proper life began again only with the invasion of the Red Army.”<sup>134</sup> However they expressed themselves, Jews slowly allowed the realization that the nightmare was over to set in.

The years of living submerged in the capital of the Third Reich had been challenging, even brutally so. The final months were no exception. They presented the U-boats not only with new challenges to survival but also with new opportunities for survival. The city they had learned to navigate in the previous two years fell apart, worsening an already precarious position. However, the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the U-boats helped them to survive, and so did their willingness to take advantage of the chaos caused by the Allied invasion of Germany. Yet the chaos soon started to work against the submerged as well, and during the Battle of Berlin, they faced their last challenge to survival. In confronting the realities of war at home and the invading troops, the U-boats had to come to terms with what was now a mostly uncomfortable dual identity as German and Jew. As far as the bombers were concerned, U-boats were Germans. To the Nazis they encountered, they were Jews. To the Soviets, they were suspect, perhaps an enemy or perhaps a friend. The average Berliner did not much care one way or the other, so long as the war ended. Yet despite the complicated experiences of liberation, freedom was the ultimate result of the Soviet advance, and the one that mattered most to survivors. Liberation came for Paul and Helene Helft when they approached a Rus-

sian officer while waving a white towel. This officer inspected their papers and believed their story. What he told them was heartening: “You are free and can move around anywhere. You can choose English, American, or Russian citizenship.” After recording this in his postwar application for OdF recognition, Paul Helft remarked, “May he be right!”<sup>135</sup>

## Notes

1. Tony Le Tissier, *The Battle of Berlin* (Shroud: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2007), 37.
2. The tremendous difficulties associated with the experience and process of liberation in Europe receive excellent attention and analysis in Dan Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps: The End of the Holocaust and its Aftermath* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).
3. Gottwaldt and Schulle, “*Judendeportationen*,” 466–67.
4. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31551.
5. See also Maurer, “From Everyday Life,” 370
6. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
7. Thomas Darnstädt and Klaus Wiegrefe, “Vater, erschieß mich!” in *Die Flucht: Über die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten*, edited by Stefan Aust and Stephan Burgdorff (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2002), 21–22.
8. Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 48.
9. Darnstädt and Wiegrefe, “Vater, erschieß mich!,” 28.
10. Darnstädt and Wiegrefe, “Vater, erschieß mich!,” 28.
11. Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 47–48.
12. Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 48.
13. Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 49.
14. Beck, *Underground Life*, 144.
15. Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 49, 52.
16. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
17. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
18. See Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 AND T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
19. See Ruth W. Holocaust Testimony (T-619), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
20. For the use and practice of the term, see, for example, CJA 4.1, 3101. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 209; Maurer, “From Everyday Life,” 370.
21. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
22. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 35368.
23. Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 48, 126, 401.
24. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31551.
25. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.



26. Friedrich, *The Fire*, 317.
27. See also Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 211.
28. LAB, C Rep 118-01, Nr.: 38677.
29. CJA 4.1, Nr.: 1694.
30. LAB, F Rep. 290, 01 NS Zweiter Weltkrieg, Luftschutz, 372688.
31. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
32. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. See also Ruth Gumpel, interview with author, and Lovenheim, *Survival in the Shadows*, 167–70.
33. Riesenburger, *Das Licht verlöschte nicht*, 40, 46–48.
34. Lovenheim, *Survival in the Shadows*, 170.
35. Le Tissier, *Battle of Berlin*, 19.
36. Le Tissier, *Battle of Berlin*, 20.
37. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 307–8.
38. Le Tissier, *Battle of Berlin*, 19. See also, Friedrich, *The Fire*, 98.
39. Friedrich, *The Fire*, 316. See also, Le Tissier, *Battle of Berlin*, 19.
40. Le Tissier, *Battle of Berlin*, 19.
41. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 348.
42. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 357.
43. Le Tissier, *Battle of Berlin*, 19–20.
44. Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 419.
45. LAB, 01 NS Zweiter Weltkrieg, Luftangriffe, Bestell-Nr. 172508.
46. Beck, *Underground Life*, 143.
47. Friedrich, *The Fire*, 316.
48. Weinstein, *Aufzeichnungen aus dem Versteck*, 376–77.
49. Friedrich, *The Fire*, 317.
50. ZfA, File of Charlotte Josephy, “Erlebnisse,” 4. See also, ZfA, File of Lola Alexander, “Bericht über meine Illegalität Während der Nazizeit in Deutschland von Lola Alexander, Berlin-Lichtenberg.”
51. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
52. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31545.
53. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 184, 202.
54. Beck, *Underground Life*, 143.
55. Beck, *Underground Life*, 143.
56. CJA 4.1, 495.
57. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31545.
58. See Anlage I zu Formblatt C. in LAB, E Rep. 200-22, Nr.: 7 + 8.
59. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 33971.
60. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 35368.
61. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 34878. See also the testimony of Hans Lang concerning the increasing difficulties for Jews in hiding during the last months of the War in LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38043.
62. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 33122.
63. Norbert Haase estimates that well over one hundred thousand German soldiers deserted the Wehrmacht in Haase, “Wehrkraftersetzung und Fahnenflucht,” in Benz and, *Lexikon des deutschen Widerstandes*, 316.
64. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31804.
65. Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 91.

66. Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 441.
67. Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 466–67.
68. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30895. See also, LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30901.
69. LAB, A Pr.Br. 030-03 Tit. 198 B Nr.: 1811.
70. Beck, *Underground Life*, 131–32, 156.
71. Beck, *Underground Life*, 147.
72. Beck, *Underground Life*, 156.
73. LAB, A Pr.Br. 030-03 Tit. 198 B Nr.: 1811.
74. LAB, A Pr.Br. 030-03 Tit. 198 B Nr.: 1811.
75. Beck, *Underground Life*, 147.
76. Beck, *Underground Life*, 156.
77. Beck, *Underground Life*, 156.
78. Beck, *Underground Life*, 156–57.
79. CJA 4.1, 2303.
80. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 365.
81. Alan Axelrod, ed., *Encyclopedia of World War II* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2007), 165
82. LAB, F. Rep. 290, 01 NS/ 2. Weltkrieg Eroberung Berlins, Bestell-Nr. 183845, 183854.
83. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 367–368.
84. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
85. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 366.
86. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 364–65.
87. CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 759.
88. CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 759.
89. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 366.
90. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 34878.
91. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 364–65.
92. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 34878.
93. Beck, *Underground Life*, 162–63.
94. CJA, 4.1, 2898.
95. ZfA, File of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg, “Untergetaucht.”
96. This also applies to camp survivors. See, for example, Stone, *Liberation of the Camps*, 53.
97. Weltlinger, “Hast du es schon vergessen?,” 27.
98. Weltlinger, “Hast du es schon vergessen?,” 28.
99. In Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 169, 196–97.
100. Le Tissier, *Battle of Berlin*, 16.
101. Le Tissier, *Battle of Berlin*, 17.
102. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
103. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 375. See also Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
104. Atina Grossmann points out that as a result of Goebbels’s propaganda, the Russian soldiers were “invariably coded as Mongols.” See Atina Grossmann, “A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers” in *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era*, ed. Robert Moeller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 52.

105. Aristotle A. Kallis, *Nazi Propaganda and the Second World War* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 82. See also, Stephen G. Fritz, *Endkampf: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Death of the Third Reich* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 44.
106. Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 126.
107. ZfA, File of Charlotte Josephy, "Erlebnisse," 4.
108. The earliest postwar report of the rape of German women appeared in a stylized semiautobiographical and anonymously written pseudo-diary: Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1954). For a discussion of the rape of German women at the hands of members of the Red Army and its social consequences, see "Gendered Defeat: Rape, Motherhood, and Fraternization," chapter 2 in Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*. Also see Grossmann, "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers," in Moeller, *West Germany under Construction*.
109. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 376. See also, Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 410
110. Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany*, 158.
111. Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 326–27.
112. Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 63–64. See also Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 345–46; and Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 378.
113. Beevor, *Fall of Berlin*, 312–13.
114. See Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 and T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. See Grossmann, "Question of Silence," 53.
115. See Ruth W. Holocaust Testimony (T-619), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
116. See Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276 AND T-1866), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
117. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 379.
118. Beck, *Underground Life*, 163.
119. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. See also Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
120. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38443.
121. CJA, 4.1, 3140.
122. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, OdF Kartei, A-31212.
123. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31212.
124. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31212.
125. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31212.
126. ZfA, File of Charlotte Josephy, "Erlebnisse," 5.
127. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. See also Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
128. See Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 306.
129. CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 1694.
130. Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. See also Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

131. ZfA, File of Charlotte Josephy, “Erlebnisse.” See also Benz, *Überleben im Untergrund*, 25–26.
132. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31209.
133. Riesenburger, *Das Licht verlöschte nicht*, 53.
134. LAB, C Rep.118-01, Nr.: 30500.
135. CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 698.

## EPILOGUE



The struggle is over! Murder has an end!  
I am now free! I raise my hands,  
My heart to the eternal heavens,  
Full of thanks that in the long anxious years,  
Despite all the suffering that befell me,  
I did not lose my faith in the future.

—Excerpt from “Nach dem Kampf,” composed  
by Martin Wasservogel in May 1945<sup>1</sup>

The months following the end of the Second World War represented a new beginning for Berlin’s formerly submerged Jews, now perhaps better referred to as the “surfaced” (*Aufgetauchte*). That beginning, however, was fraught with difficulties, and the concept of liberation should not be viewed as an overnight, joyful process but rather, as Dan Stone reminds us, “something that happened over time—sometimes a very long time.”<sup>2</sup> The National Socialist nightmare was over, but the countless emotional and physical consequences of submerged life and the war outlasted the Third Reich. Berlin was in ruins; it was, as Martin Riesenburger noted in his memoirs, a “world cemetery.”<sup>3</sup> The initial months of freedom witnessed a sickly and largely penniless group of survivors struggling with the impact of years of physical deprivation as they sought out necessary food, clothing, and shelter through official recognition as “Victims of Fascism.” This was also a deeply emotional time, as the end of the war forced survivors to cope with the reality of what had befallen their loved ones. Still, some of the former divers seized on their newfound freedom with energy

and great resilience. They went to work building a new, more tolerant Germany before the realities of the Cold War and a divided Germany set in. Yet many others left what had become a foreign land to start new lives abroad. Whether they stayed or left, however, they carried with them memories of their years submerged and often quite nuanced views on the nation that had been both the cause of their suffering and the site of their survival. The diverse experiences and reactions of those who had submerged did not simply reflect their varied identities and preferences; the individuality at the core of those wartime experiences shaped the varied postwar lives of the former U-boats.

Nearly three years of repeated diving and dashing around the city in an attempt to evade arrest and deportation had taken a tremendous physical toll on the U-boats. Years of malnourishment and unbearable stress had weakened many of the survivors. Helene Helft, who had fled a transport with her husband and made her way back to Berlin, lost over one-third of her body mass while living submerged and weighed only eighty pounds at the war's end. In addition, she suffered from chronic bronchitis, spots on her lungs, and inflammation of the rib cage; she was immediately sent to a hospital after the cessation of hostilities.<sup>4</sup> Nor was Helft alone. Almost every survivor mentions the poor state of his or her health, from severe weight loss, frostbite, or rheumatism to heart and nerve problems. In a few cases, the individual never recovered and died soon after emerging. Sixty-three-year-old Franz Rogasinski had spent most of his underground years moving from acquaintance to acquaintance, in the process developing a severe case of heart disease. He died on 20 March 1946.<sup>5</sup>

The survivors were also at a severe material disadvantage that was compounded by the fact that their poor health prevented many from earning a living. Most had lost their property, homes, businesses, and valuables to the Nazis. What few possessions people had brought with them when they submerged had been sold to procure food, shelter, and false papers or had been destroyed in one of the city's numerous air raids. Obtaining basic necessities was the immediate and essential priority. Although a number of survivors were able to stay with their helpers after the war, many were not so fortunate. Applications to the Odf waste no time in illustrating their dire conditions: "I am requesting warm winter clothing, warm underclothes and shoes, and a coat, and an apartment, since I am very sick and cannot live in a completely destroyed garden cottage in the winter."<sup>6</sup> Although overall restitution was important, and some survivors did make a point of listing all of their lost property and goods, immediate survival in the form of food, shelter, and medical attention took precedence in most cases.

Despite these physical hardships, the emotional consequences of the war were often especially painful for the survivors. The majority of the city's surviving dashers had been spared the horrors of the camps and ghettos, but most of their families had perished in the east. Although the murders in the camps were suspected by many former illegals by 1943 at the latest, many registered the full reality only after the war, when family members did not return. Some, like thirty-nine-year-old Lilli Steup, had resolved to maintain a "home" in Berlin for her deported father, sister, niece, and brother-in-law and had dived in the hope of seeing them again. She wrote to the Odf:

I had always believed at least one of them would return . . . I led a hounded, terrible life, only in the hope of seeing one of my loved ones again. I didn't want to believe that humans were so barbarous and killed them. Unfortunately, I had to learn to see things differently.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, the recognition that one's family was dead, according to Frieda Seelig, who had lost forty-one family members during the war, was "the most ghastly" (*das schrecklichste*) experience.<sup>8</sup>

Almost all the former U-boats comment on having lost family in the camps, and the experience of liberation was colored by those losses.<sup>9</sup> As one survivor remarked in autumn 1945, "But I cannot feel real joy, because the greater part of my relatives remained behind in the concentration camps, among them my mother."<sup>10</sup> In other cases, survivors waited in vain for the return of loved ones who had been caught while living submerged.<sup>11</sup> Nor was the grief confined to family members. Lilli Steup, recognizing the likelihood that her family had perished, still held out hope that the man who hid her until his forced conscription in 1944 might be alive in a prisoner-of-war camp. She concluded her testimony on the following, grief-stricken note: "If this one person, whom I await, does not return, then my life has no purpose. No one awaits me, no joy."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Steup's grief, bordering on despair, was a common emotion in the years following the end of the war. Annelies B., who had survived with her twin sister Marianne, gave an interview in 1991 about her experiences. When asked if she was happy that she had survived, she responded, "I could not give you an unqualified yes."<sup>13</sup>

Not all survivors focus solely on loss and grief, however, and the months following liberation witnessed a succession of weddings of former U-boats. Some of these weddings were more akin to reunions between loved ones. Isaak Grünberg, who had divorced his non-Jewish wife in order to protect their son and family business (see chapter 3), moved back in with his beloved on 2 May.<sup>14</sup> Max Gamson had divorced his

non-Jewish wife in 1932, although they continued to live together until 1939 and had a son together. During his years submerged in the city, Gamson's ex-wife was one of the individuals who helped him survive by providing food and clothing. They remarried in 1946 and remained together in Berlin until Gamson's death in 1962.<sup>15</sup> Some of the earliest marriages in 1945 and 1946 were between individuals who had found each other during the tribulations of the Third Reich and the years submerged. Ruth Arndt had met Bruno G. at a party in the early 1940s. They reconnected almost two years later, while Bruno was living submerged with his friend Erich, Ruth's brother, and they married on 19 September 1945. In June of that year, Erich had also married his fiancée, a fellow U-boat named Ellen Lewinsky. A joint Jewish wedding was held for the two couples on 7 October 1945, one of the first in the city.<sup>16</sup> After years submerged, the city's surfaced Jews finally were able to declare publicly the unions that they had developed under the most dangerous and difficult of conditions.<sup>17</sup>

The marriages were not just between formerly submerged Jews. A great number took place between the city's former divers and dashers and the men and women who had helped them to survive. Kurt Michaelis, who had blamed himself for the death of his future brother-in-law (see chapter 4), married his helper and fiancée Else Lönser shortly after the war.<sup>18</sup> Michaelis was one of dozens. Similarly, the Protestant Gertrud Wieczorek developed a friendship with her future husband Ludwig Katz in 1936. When Ludwig submerged in November 1942, he stayed with Gertrud. They entered into an unofficial "marriage of comrades," as he termed it, and Gertrud provided Ludwig with food and other aid throughout his years on the run. The two married on 27 June 1945.<sup>19</sup> Not all the relationships forged during the war were happy, though, and the end of the war did not lead to an automatic severing of ties. Lotte F. and her daughter spent the war sheltering with a non-Jew, Willi Bruska. After the war, Lotte decided to remain with Willi, and out of thanks allowed him to move in with her and her daughter in the apartment she had received as an ODF. On 14 June 1954, Lotte's cousin Alice N., a fellow former U-boat, telephoned the East Berlin police. Bruska had stabbed Lotte to death, slashing her wrists and her carotid artery. Lotte's fifteen-year-old daughter, with whom he had also been engaging in a sexual relationship, escaped after being beaten. Bruska turned himself in to the East German police the following day. In her statement to the police, Alice claimed that her cousin had remained with Bruska after the war because she felt obligated to him for the help he provided her in sheltering her and her daughter. What Lotte experienced while sheltering during her years submerged with Bruska is unknown, but their relationship formed during the war kept her tied to Bruska until her tragic death.<sup>20</sup>



Even in cases of true love and mutual respect, happiness was cut short. The wartime struggles that had brought the U-boats together with their helpers continued to intervene after the war. Like the submerged, who suffered gravely through malnutrition and other physical and emotional challenges to their health, the non-Jewish men and women who had helped them survive often sacrificed their own health in providing for their illegal loved ones. Non-Jewish lovers of Jews sometimes had to submerge with their partners when the Gestapo caught wind of their relationship.<sup>21</sup> Even if submerging had not been necessary, great hardship often followed these non-Jewish partners. Hans G. had submerged at the age of twenty in February 1943. He had dashed around the city almost daily, until he met his future wife Ursula. In May 1944, Ursula gave birth to a child under false pretenses (the origins and name of the child were altered). The couple finally married on 10 July 1945. Less than two months later, however, Hans brought Ursula to a hospital. According to Hans, the “stresses and strains” of the preceding years had been too great for her. Ursula died on 8 March 1946, and Hans emigrated.<sup>22</sup> The bonds like those that had developed between Hans and Ursula continued, however, to find expression in dozens of other marriages during this time, a testament to the stubborn ability of love and fidelity to develop under the least conducive of circumstances.<sup>23</sup>

Other survivors expressed their newly regained freedom not through marriage but by throwing themselves with almost startling energy into rebuilding their careers, thus contributing to the reshaping of what would become a divided Germany by the fall of 1949, a division that would last throughout the Cold War. The ophthalmologist Erich Weinberg, who had resisted the Nazis by injecting members of the Wehrmacht and Volkssturm with fever injections (see chapter 3), had already founded his own hospital by November 1945 in the Berlin suburb of Falkensee, and he also worked as head of the local health office. He later had a practice in the neighborhood of Spandau after fleeing to West Berlin in 1951.<sup>24</sup> Forty-five-year-old Alfons Wormann, who lived illegally for almost four years, found a job less than two weeks after the war's end in the Berlin Police Presidium.<sup>25</sup> Thirty-eight-year-old Grete Bing, who had survived in hiding with her mother Lotte, found work as a masseuse and exercise therapist, a career for which she had trained in 1937.<sup>26</sup> Similar to the importance of working while in hiding, work functioned in the immediate postwar era not only as a way of supporting oneself but also as a way of reasserting one's identity and also one's newly regained freedom.

Some of the former divers also used their employment as a means to seek justice for the victims, to punish the perpetrators, and to contribute to the rebuilding of a more accepting German nation. Twenty-three-year-

old Marie J. had come from an avowedly communist background. Her father had been a member of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and her mother a member of the auxiliary Rote Hilfe. For Marie J., a well-educated young woman who had worked in the resistance during the Nazi period and had decided to continue her studies after liberation, her path after the war was clear: "Now I would like to continue with my studies and as an educated academic strive to become a useful member for the reconstruction [of Germany], in our sense of the word."<sup>27</sup> A number of survivors found work in the interallied government or with the local German authorities, employment that provided opportunities to eradicate Nazism in Germany. Forty-five-year-old Max Rautenberg, before 1933 a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), went to work with another unnamed Jew immediately after the war tracking down Nazis in the suburb of Bestensee. Although still quite sick from years on the run, Rautenberg had a mission. These now "submerged" and "camouflaged" Nazis, referring to them in a parlance he understood all too well, were everywhere trying to pass themselves off as civilians, and Rautenberg and his partner would not stand for it: "After all of the sorrows we underwent there may never and will nevermore be Nazism and militarism in Germany. To that end we have deployed our entire energies." Rautenberg had some success in tracking down these Nazis, including members of the former SS. The Soviet command recognized Rautenberg's work and provided him with the identification to prove it.<sup>28</sup> In a similar fashion, the survivor Georg Schiesser found work with the newly reconstituted Berlin criminal police less than three weeks after the war ended: "On May 27, 1945, I entered the service of the Berlin criminal police in order to assist in the eradication of fascism and the reestablishment of well-ordered conditions in my Father City."<sup>29</sup>

Nor was hunting down Nazis the only way that some of the former divers contributed to the reestablishment of law, order, and a new Germany. Werner Goldmann, a druggist by training who had survived with his wife and daughter in and around Berlin, served as mayor of the town of Brieselang outside of Berlin from the end of April 1945 until February 1946; the town's website still remembers his service.<sup>30</sup> Fifty-six-year-old Kurt Messow, winner of the Iron Cross First and Second Class during the First World War, who had married his helper after the war, was appointed an attorney for the city on 15 July 1945. By 15 October of that year, Messow had risen to the position of senior district attorney.<sup>31</sup> Despite all that they had experienced in the preceding twelve years, and especially during the final three, the former submerged made their presence felt in ways that far outweighed their numbers.

Some of these individuals went on to have prominent and respected careers in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) after the official division of Germany in 1949, in which their actions reflected the ways their wartime experiences shaped their postwar visions for the nation. Charlotte Kaufmann, born in Hungary, had been an active member in the KPD and Rote Hilfe and a dedicated antifascist before the Nazi seizure of power. She submerged in the beginning of 1943 and survived the war by dashing between the cities of Jena and Berlin. Immediately after the war, Charlotte took a job as a clerical assistant with the women's police and remained in what became the GDR. In 1958, she married the decorated antifascist Willi Kaufmann. Over the next two decades, Charlotte had an active career as a member of East Germany's Socialist Unity Party (SED). She served as a member of an arbitration commission for which she won two accolades in the 1970s. In addition, she won the Honor Medallion of the Committee of Antifascist Resistance Fighters, the Medal for Membership in the Party of the Working Class, and the Medallion for Exemplary Border Service, among many others.<sup>32</sup>

Günter Fabian, who was twenty-five years old at the end of the war, went on to lead a similarly illustrious career in the German Democratic Republic. He had submerged on the first day of the Large Factory Operation. His father had been arrested already in 1941, and the Nazis deported his mother the following year to Litzmannstadt. Even before submerging, Fabian had connections to resistance circles in the city. He was also aided during his years submerged by his future wife Ingeborg and her family; Günter and Ingeborg had become engaged in 1944. After the war, Fabian participated in the refounding of the SPD in the Berlin district of Weissensee. After his expulsion from the party in 1948, Fabian was asked to form a social-democratic faction within the "democratic" (that is, East German) block in Weissensee and serve as the faction's head. Due to Fabian's postwar work in agriculture, he was asked to become a member of the Democratic Farmers Party of Germany in the GDR in 1951. Fabian also participated as a member of the Secretariat of the Berlin Committee of the National Front. In 1954, Fabian became a councilman (*Stadtverordneter*) in the Berlin city council. Among his many honors for service to the German Democratic Republic, Fabian received the Merit Medallion of the GDR, the Three Times Medallion for Outstanding Achievement, and the Medal of the Democratic Farmers Party of Germany.<sup>33</sup>

In the Federal Republic of Germany, Siegmund Weltlinger, a self-identified "German-Jewish Citizen," saw the fulfillment of his personal and public evolution. Born on 29 March 1886, Weltlinger grew up in

a worldly, cultured home frequented by artists and intellectuals, Jewish and Christian alike. A well-educated and successful banker before 1933, he began his political life as a monarchist. After the abdication of the Kaiser, he dabbled in leftist and rightist politics before finally settling on the “democratic middle.”<sup>34</sup> Weltlinger and his wife Margarete submerged on 26 February 1943 to avoid being caught up in the Large Factory Operation (see chapter 1). The ensuing two and a half years were difficult for the Weltlingers. Even before the existence of the extermination camps became known to him in April 1945, Weltlinger’s “faith in Germany” had been shaken through the immense difficulties he faced, first as a consequence of the two months he had spent in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in the aftermath of Kristallnacht and then as a diver.<sup>35</sup> Yet Weltlinger remained in West Germany for the rest of his life. Along with his upbringing, Weltlinger credits his wartime experiences with shaping his postwar relationship with his nation, claiming that his attitude would have been very different

if it hadn’t been for the encounters with many opponents of the National Socialist domination from the concentration camps; moreover, the behavior of large portions of the population with respect to the wearers of the star; and, above all, the courage and willingness to make sacrifices on the part of many non-Jewish fellow citizens who took it upon themselves, often under threat to life to themselves and their family, to hide the persecuted.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, when Weltlinger stepped forward to protect the non-Jewish residents accused of concealing weapons during the Soviet advance (see chapter 4), he was acting in a way that reflected a lifetime of experiences, including those while living submerged. The divisions of religion and class that Weltlinger had seen tear apart his country over the decades motivated him to work for a solution, to “build a bridge between the different peoples of Germany and to confront the understandable talk in the world that we were ‘a people of murderers.’”<sup>37</sup>

Weltlinger’s first opportunities to build the bridge he envisioned came in 1945 and 1946, when he accepted an appointment to the advisory committee for church affairs. In September 1945, Weltlinger became head of the committee’s division for Jewish affairs.<sup>38</sup> Thus began an active and illustrious career for Weltlinger in West Berlin as peacemaker and public figure working to counter the mistrust and animosity that had developed between Jews and Christians. Among his many activities until his death in 1974, Weltlinger was a founding member of the Work Community of Churches and Religious Societies of Greater Berlin in 1947 and the Society for Christian and Jewish Cooperation in 1949, serving as chairman of the latter until 1970.<sup>39</sup> In addition, Weltlinger joined the newly cre-

ated Christian Democratic Union (CDU) political party in 1946. He was elected to the Berlin House of Delegates (Abgeordnetenhaus) in 1958, serving there for almost a decade, and was awarded the Federal Republic's Great Cross of Merit in 1966. To be sure, Weltlinger's dedication to rebuilding a better and more tolerant West Germany was something of a rarity in the divided postwar nation. So, too, was his wildly optimistic belief in an interview given in 1951 that "Germany will become the greatest immigration center of Jews throughout the world. It is the heart of Europe, the natural exchange center between East and West."<sup>40</sup> Yet presumably this attitude also grew out of the same mindset that enabled him to declare toward the end of his life: "[I] have never regretted being a German Jew!"<sup>41</sup>

Despite the initial contributions made by many of the former U-boats to the immediate postwar Berlin landscape and the successes they had in reestablishing their livelihoods, many of them, most likely a majority, ended up leaving Germany over the following decade. As of 1951, of the approximately 6,660 members of the Jewish community still residing in the city, more than 6,000 had applications to emigrate on file.<sup>42</sup> Many who did stay were older and lacked friends or family abroad who could support them. The examples of Weltlinger, Fabian, and others, although powerful testaments to the potential for a vibrant postwar Jewish life in the two Germanys, were the minority; many of those who remained in East and West Germany led quiet lives. Some of those who initially remarked in their Odf applications that they wanted to stay and work to rebuild Germany eventually emigrated.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, many of the survivors had no interest in rebuilding Germany. Whereas the historical record asks us at that point in time to begin differentiating between what would become East and West Germany in 1949, survivors both at the time and in testimony given decades later generally do not. They speak of Germany and the Germans. Whatever the geopolitical consequences of the division of Germany and the respective paths that both the FRG and the GDR took to come to grips (or not) with the Nazi past, survivor attempts to wrestle with the disaster that befell them between 1933 and 1945 meant that their experiences with the gentile population in the late 1940s and early 1950s were still with "the Germans," not West Germans or East Germans. Ultimately, the experiences of twelve years of Nazism had proved too traumatic and painful for them to ever consider staying in either West or East Germany; as the Cold War began to gather pace, even before the official division of Germany, they departed in the late 1940s to the United States of America, Great Britain, Australia, and the newly created nation of Israel, among others. Bruno G., his wife Ruth, and her family left after a few years for the

United States. In an interview given several decades after the war, Bruno remarked on his intense “dislike” of Germany; he had no desire to stay in the nation that had caused so much destruction and misery.<sup>44</sup> Initial hopes among Jews that German criminals would pay for their transgressions against humanity and that the German people would openly and sincerely acknowledge their crimes proved baseless. The attitude of many Jews in occupied Germany can be summarized in the words of a rabbi, pronounced in the early 1950s at a sermon in Berlin: “A couple of years ago a Society for Christian and Jewish Cooperation was constituted. Between Jews and Christians in Germany there will never be a conversation; it will always remain a monologue.”<sup>45</sup>

Yet despite such sentiments, the diverse, individual experiences of submerged life afforded many of the former U-boats distinct perspectives on an event normally constructed in a strict binary of German (read: Nazi) versus Jew. However much the survivors loathed the Nazis, however much they were angry at the Germans whom they once had considered friends, neighbors, and countrymen, many, if not most, of the former divers carried with them a remarkably subtle and nuanced approach to the German people. These men, women, and children had survived the Holocaust on civilian German soil. They certainly had many traumatic, indeed brutal, encounters with the Nazis and their supporters during the Third Reich’s twelve-year existence. However, they also could not have survived had it not been for the selflessness and loyalty of the non-Jewish Germans who helped them survive. Thus, in testimonies given decades later, former U-boats often attempt to differentiate between Germans and Nazis. This distinction played a vital role in the construction of their postwar identities, identities that often set them apart from camp survivors who generally viewed the Germans solely as perpetrators. Even Bruno G., angry as he was at the German people, recognized the need to distinguish. He remarked in his interview that a tendency exists to put all Germans in the same “box,” and he went to great lengths in the same interview to stress the help he received from non-Jews.<sup>46</sup>

As Ruth W., another former U-boat, poignantly remarked, the relationship between her and her former nation was “a difficult conflict to resolve.” The difficulty of that conflict was a direct result of the individuality of surviving and living submerged in Berlin:

Maybe because we were not in the concentration camp, where you saw these bestialities really in front of you, that it was different with us. We had it hanging over us—maybe it happens to us—but we were not close to it, and that also made our outlook maybe a little different that we don’t . . . that the worst thing happened to our families and so, but on the other

hand there were people who were Germans, were decent, not just decent, terrific people, and so we cannot say as many do the hundred-percent hatred of everybody that has anything to do with Germany.<sup>47</sup>

The nuanced attitudes of the city's former divers and dashers, the U-boats who lived submerged for the final three, brutally destructive years of the Third Reich, the different paths they took to secure their survival, and the ways they pursued their postwar lives are clearly reflective of a different type of Holocaust experience. Approximately 1,700 individuals survived in hiding in the capital of Nazi Germany. That feat alone is a testament to their strength. That their experiences of survival were so diverse, however, indicates levels of agency and individuality not normally attributed to Jews during the Holocaust, and yet these played a crucial role in surviving submerged on the surface in Nazi Berlin.

## Notes

1. In ZfA, File of Martin Wasservogel, "Gedichte aus der Illegalität." The original reads:  
Vorbei der Kampf! Das Mord hat ein Ende!  
Ich bin nun frei! Ich hebe meine Hände,  
Mein Herz zum ew'gen Himmelraum empor  
Voll Dank, dass ich in langen bangen Jahren  
Trotz allem Leide, das mir widerfahren,  
Der Zukunft Glauben nicht verlor.
2. In Stone, *Liberation of the Camps*, 2. For more specifics on Jewish life in postwar Berlin, see Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 88–130.
3. Riesenburger, *Das Licht verlöschte nicht*, 51.
4. CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 697.
5. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 35596.
6. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 31078.
7. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 35992.
8. CJA, 4.1, 2207.
9. See, for example, CJA, 4.1, 2856; CJA, 4.1, 2892; CJA, 4.1, 2086; LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 24634.
10. CJA 4.1, 1984.
11. See, for example, CJA, 4.1, 2065.
12. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 35992.
13. Annelies H. Holocaust Testimony (T-276), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
14. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 30591.
15. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr. 34974.
16. Ruth Gumpel, interview with author. See also, Fortunoff Video Archives, Witness: Ruth G.; also, Ellen Lewinsky Arndt and Ruth Arndt Gumpel, "Berlin: Survival in

- Hiding,” in *Daring to Resist: Jewish Defiance in the Holocaust*, ed. Yitzchak Mais (New York: Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, 2007), 101.
17. See also, CJA, 4.1, 3017 and CJA 4.1, 3016.
  18. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31212.
  19. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 22389.
  20. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 31268.
  21. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 33203.
  22. CJA 4.1, 577.
  23. For additional examples, see also, CJA, 4.1, 2174; LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 32306; LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38116–38117; LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 31124; LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 30363; LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 35368.
  24. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38247.
  25. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 34147.
  26. LAB, C Rep. 118-0, Nr.: 30203.
  27. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 2754. For more on her postwar career, see Jalowicz Simon, *Untergetaucht*, 389–410.
  28. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 7232.
  29. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 35445.
  30. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 24634. See also, the town of Brieselang’s official website: [https://www.gemeindebrieselang.de/city\\_info/webaccessibility/index.cfm?region\\_id=342&waid=41&item\\_id=853492&link\\_id=213666028&contrast=0](https://www.gemeindebrieselang.de/city_info/webaccessibility/index.cfm?region_id=342&waid=41&item_id=853492&link_id=213666028&contrast=0).
  31. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38116–38117.
  32. LAB, C Rep. 118-01 Nr.: 38290.
  33. LAB, C Rep. 118-01, Nr.: 32306.
  34. LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 85, p. 16.
  35. LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 85, p. 15.
  36. LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 85, p. 15.
  37. LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 85, p. 19.
  38. LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 10. See also, LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 85, pp. 17–19. See also, Offenberg, “*Seid vorsichtig gegen die Machthaber*,” 23–24.
  39. LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 85, p. 20.
  40. Edward M. Korry, “Official Sees Influx of Jews into Germany,” *The Stars and Stripes*, Tuesday, 24 April 1951, 6.
  41. LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 85, p. 28.
  42. Edward M. Korry, “Official Sees Influx of Jews into Germany” *The Stars and Stripes*, Tuesday, 24 April 1951, 6. After reaching a high point of 7,807 members in March 1947, that number declined to 6,010 in 1952. See Offenberg, “*Seid vorsichtig gegen die Machthaber*,” 33.
  43. See, for example, CJA, 4.1, Nr.: 648. See also, Grossman, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 243–46.
  44. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. See also, Ruth Gumpel, interview with author, 2008.
  45. As remembered by Siegmund Weltlinger in, LAB, E Rep. 200-22. Nr.: 85, p. 20. On the disillusionment of Jewish Berliners in the immediate postwar period, see Grossman, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 107–108, 242–247.
  46. Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
  47. Ruth W. Holocaust Testimony (T-619), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.



## APPENDIX

### The Demographics of Submerging in Nazi Berlin



In March 1946, Rudolf Frauenfeld published an article titled “Wir Illegalen” (“We Illegals”) concerning those German Jews who had survived the Holocaust in hiding.<sup>1</sup> Frauenfeld’s article in a Berlin journal reminded readers that a considerable number of Berlin’s 8,300 Jewish survivors were U-boats. Indeed, approximately 1,700 men, women, and children who survived by hiding in and around Berlin comprised 20.5 percent of the surviving Berlin Jewish population, along with survivors of the camps (22.9 percent), those who had an “Aryan” spouses (*Mischehen*), or those of *Mischling* (mixed-race) status (56.6 percent).<sup>2</sup> Those in mixed marriages and those considered *Mischlinge* were threatened but were not generally deported.

For decades, those scholars who commented on U-boats rarely went beyond assertions that approximately 5,000 Berlin Jews tried to hide and that perhaps 1,400 succeeded.<sup>3</sup> More recent estimates suggest that approximately 1,700 Berlin Jews survived in hiding, but there is much discussion of the total number who made the attempt.<sup>4</sup> Estimates continue to range from 5,000 to 7,000; this book, however, argues for a figure of approximately 6,500.<sup>5</sup> It does this by looking at current historical estimates of the percentage of Berlin Jews who survived submerged (25–28 percent) and when Jews dived. Studying the number of Jews who submerged at particular moments (especially during the notorious *Große Fabrik-Aktion*—the Large Factory Operation, or roundup of Jews still at Berlin plants at the end of February 1943) will show that estimates of 5,000 Berlin Jews who attempted to flee their deportations is improbably low. A second category

of analysis is the gender and age of the U-boats, including the prevalence of family groups among them. The data from these two categories will both confirm and challenge existing assumptions, suggesting new avenues for exploring when and why people hid. They will also help incorporate the history of hiding in Berlin into Holocaust history and bring the tale out of the attics and cellars into the light of historical scrutiny. They will provide an empirical framework for the incorporation of myriad individual case studies, published memoirs, and anecdotal evidence into a coherent narrative, and they highlight patterns of behavior among Berlin's U-boats.

The findings in this appendix draw on biographical data pertaining to 1,074 former U-boats, about 63 percent of all the survivors who submerged in Berlin. The data on dates of submerging are based on the testimonies of 425 of those same individuals, 25 percent of surviving U-boats.<sup>6</sup> Any persons who submerged in the city in order to evade deportation or forced labor due to their Nazi-designated racial status are included as U-boats.<sup>7</sup> In Berlin, the vast majority of U-boats were *Volljuden* (full Jews) under the 1935 Nuremberg Laws (whether or not they identified religiously as Jewish). It was mainly during 1944 that some Jews of previously protected status submerged, primarily divorced and widowed spouses of non-Jews or *Mischlinge* slated for work in the brutal forced labor detachments. The study relies on four main sources of survivor testimony: postwar aid applications in Berlin to the Main Committee for the Victims of Fascism (OdF) preserved at the Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB) or at the Centrum Judaicum Archiv at the Stiftung Neue Synagoge Berlin (CJA); unpublished written accounts collected by historians for the project "Rescue of Jews in National Socialist Germany, 1933–1945," now held by the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung (ZfA) at Berlin's Technische Universität;<sup>8</sup> interviews conducted by the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University; and published memoirs.

### **"Submerging in Berlin"—A Clarification in Terminology**

Although the individuals in this study submerged in Berlin, not all U-boats spent the entirety of the war there. Suspicious neighbors, pursuit by the Gestapo, and frequent air raids necessitated periodic movement: these are the three explanations survivors often give for their mobility. The precariousness of submerged life motivated many U-boats to leave the city, in some instances for the entire remainder of the war. A number of U-boats split their time between Berlin and other places. Mobility offered a number of advantages. First, there was always a risk of running

into a hostile acquaintance in Berlin, not least because in summer 1943 the Berlin Gestapo expanded the Jüdischer Fahndungsdienst (Jewish Search Service). This organization coerced former U-boats into service because they could spot Jews in the city more readily than most Germans and knew better where others might hide or gather. Their betrayal resulted in the arrest and deportation of hundreds of submerged Jews.<sup>9</sup> From March 1943, air raids began to pose a greater threat.<sup>10</sup> Yet even when Jews left Berlin, the city still functioned as a base, a known entity that offered a number of advantages to its former residents.

The intermittence of some U-boats' presence complicates definitive claims on how many survived "in the city." Survivors who registered in Berlin after the war did so because it had been their home before they submerged, not necessarily because they had spent the war there. Of the 425 testimonies compiled for this study, 92 (or 22 percent) specifically reference leaving the city. The actual percentage is likely higher. Most individuals who left Berlin did not spend the entirety of the war outside the city. And, of those who did, many stayed nearby, in towns and villages such as Rangsdorf, Barnim, Bernau, Stahnsdorf, and Strausberg, all less than forty miles away. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find testimonies such as that of Felix Z., who spent the majority of his time hiding outside Berlin but who gives Berlin addresses for fourteen of his fifteen helpers.<sup>11</sup>

Ultimately, individuals who survived outside Berlin should still be included in data on submerging in the city. While they might not have spent much of the war there, and while a few daring ones even managed to escape Germany entirely, Berlin cannot be discounted as the initial seat of their survival. These individuals made the decision to dive while living in the capital. Berlin was where they first heard the horrific stories trickling in from the east. Berlin was where they witnessed the deportations. Berlin was where they had lived, worked, and suffered. Their experiences in the city prompted their decision to dive, and Berlin could even exert a magnetic pull on those who left for a time: its anonymity lured some back, it supplied others with ration cards, and it provided a familiar base from which to spread out.

### How Many Jews Attempted to Dive in Berlin?

Writing from exile in Sweden, whither he escaped in November 1943, the former U-boat Kurt Lindenberg estimated that in March 1943 perhaps 7,000 Jews had been hiding in the city.<sup>12</sup> Most estimates put the figure closer to 5,000.<sup>13</sup> Assuming that the correct number of Jews who survived is approximately 1,700, then a total of 5,000 hidden Jews would

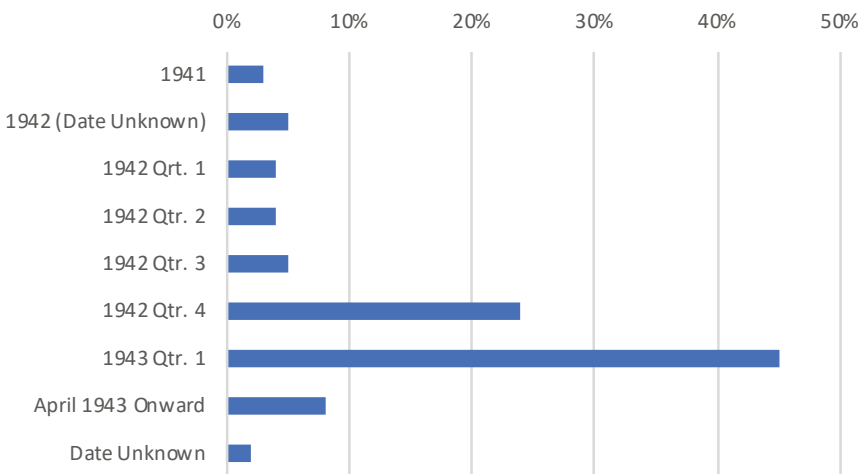
indicate a survival rate of 34 percent, a figure markedly at odds with other estimates (a majority) that locate that rate between 25 and 28 percent. Moreover, if 4,700 Jews submerged in the days surrounding the *Große Fabrik-Aktion*, then 94 percent of U-boats would have had to flee during this time. This percentage seems improbably high. First, it does not account for Jews who submerged later, including *Mischlinge* slated for forced labor under Organisation Todt in 1944 and the 205 Jews who fled during a January 1944 roundup directed at those no longer living in a protected mixed marriage.<sup>14</sup> Second, if only 6 percent of Jews submerged before or after the *Aktion*, this would account neither for the marked increase in the number of Jews diving during the last two quarters of 1942 nor for the spread of rumors to that effect.<sup>15</sup> Third, it is unlikely that a small number of Jews attempting to submerge before February 1943 would have sufficed to prompt the Gestapo to alter its arrest and deportation tactics to prevent Jews from fleeing; the prevalence of such “disappearances” played a central role in the Gestapo’s decision in the fall of 1942 to stop notifying Jews in advance of the date of their deportation.<sup>16</sup>

An estimate of 6,500 U-boats is most likely. If 4,700 Jews submerged in late February 1943, then that would leave 1,800 hidden individuals to account for. Records from September 1943 through February 1945 list 273 Jews who fled.<sup>17</sup> Data on Jews who fled between April and August 1943 are lacking, but it is not unreasonable to assume that at least another hundred or so fled during this time. This would leave approximately 1,400 or so individuals who would have fled in the eighteen months between the first deportations in October 1941 and the end of February 1943. Unfortunately, we still have no way to determine the number of individuals who submerged and the number arrested before the summer of 1943. Yet 1,400 fleeing between October 1941 and the *Grosse Fabrik-Aktion* at the end of February 1943 is certainly high enough to have caught the notice of the Gestapo. It is also large enough that tales of Jews submerging would have spread among a population still living above ground and that at the end of December 1942 remained almost 33,000 strong.<sup>18</sup> It is therefore clear that an estimate of 5,000 Jews is too low, especially when one factors in the 4,700 Jews who fled during the *Aktion*. And yet in order to get closer to the number of Berlin Jews who dived, it is necessary to analyze when those Jews who managed to survive had gone into hiding.

### When Did the U-boat Survivors Originally Submerge?

The prevalence of submerging, the specific factors prompting individuals to submerge, and variations in the process reflected the changing demo-

graphics of the city's Jewish population and the further radicalization of National Socialist antisemitic policy, as discussed in chapter 1. Figure A.1 represents a yearly and quarterly breakdown of submerging during these sixteen months.<sup>19</sup> The first year of the deportations was characterized by low rates of submerging, despite transports in autumn 1941 routinely carrying 1,000 individuals.<sup>20</sup> Of the 25 percent of survivors in this study who mention when they submerged, only 3 percent did so in 1941, followed by perhaps 15 percent or so during the first three quarters of 1942, even as the Nazis deported approximately 36 percent of the city's Jewish population.<sup>21</sup> The numbers, however, escalated dramatically during the last quarter of 1942 and the first quarter of 1943, when somewhat more than two-thirds of all successful U-boats in this study's sample submerged. Beginning in the autumn of 1942, the number of people submerging in the city grew noticeably. During the fourth quarter of that year, 24 percent of this study's sample of U-boat survivors submerged, with an additional 45 percent submerging in the first quarter of 1943. The nationwide roundup begun on 27 February 1943 signified the end to legal life for all but a few thousand Berlin Jews in mixed marriages or those considered *Mischlinge*; it prompted the city's single largest episode of submerging.<sup>22</sup> This operation lasted several days, although most arrests occurred during the first two.<sup>23</sup> Over the course of that week, approximately 4,700 Berlin Jews fled.<sup>24</sup> In other words, roughly 43 percent of the remaining Jewish workers fled the deportations with their families during this time, thus evading arrest, if only for a short while.<sup>25</sup>

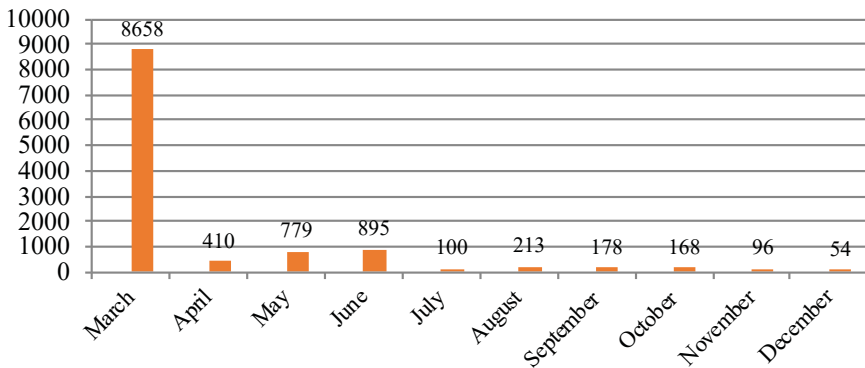


**Figure A.1.** Date of Submerging.

This dramatic and tragic event has implications for our overall data on the city's divers. Based on testimonies accounting for one-quarter of survivors, 14 percent of these had fled during the operation, although that percentage may be as high as 20 because some survivors in this study do not list the exact date on which they submerged in 1943.<sup>26</sup> The midpoint of this range suggests a 17 percent survival rate. Therefore, around 800 of the surviving U-boats submerged during the operation. The other 900 survivors who submerged did so either before or after the event. The survival rate of this group clearly was much higher.<sup>27</sup> People who made plans to submerge were often better equipped to handle the deprivations of a submerged life, and an average survival estimate of 50 percent for those who submerged before or after the operation reflects the attendant advantages. If a 50 percent survival rate—900 of these 1,800 U-boats survived—still might strike some as high, that rate would be lower were the number of Jews who fled 6,700 or 7,000 (per Kurt Lindenberg's estimate). Conversely, if the number of U-boats who submerged at times other than the operation were lower, the survival rate for that group would be improbably high. Thus, a balanced estimate of the number of U-boats is necessary, and 6,500 seems quite plausible. The discrepancy between the two survival rates is telling. No more than one in five Jews who fled during the *Aktion* survived the entire war submerged, because many of those who fled were not prepared, leaving them more exposed. Those who planned their flight were better prepared, thus indicating a greater chance at success. Ultimately, however, despite the discrepancy in these two rates, the overall rate of success in this scenario of 6,500 individuals who fled is 26 percent (1,700 survivors), a survival rate that tallies with current estimates.

### Arrest Numbers

In the wake of the operation, the authorities deported 8,658 Jews from Berlin.<sup>28</sup> Around 1,100 of those had attempted to submerge, and this group comprised a significant number of those deported on the 36. *Osttransport* (which left Berlin for Auschwitz on 12 March 1943) and the 4. *große Alterstransport* (which left for Theresienstadt on 17 March).<sup>29</sup> Four earlier transports that left the city on four consecutive days beginning on 1 March 1943 likely also carried some U-boats, whose attempts to dive had lasted only a few days or even hours. Two smaller deportations from the capital took place on 19 April and 17 May;<sup>30</sup> beginning in April, the deportation numbers decreased, although between one and five transports of varying size continued to leave the city each month. The authorities were seeking to deport from the Altreich by the end of June 1943 all full



**Figure A.2.** Number of Jews Deported from Berlin, March–December 1943.

Jews not living in mixed marriages. They also hoped to deport that fall all Jews from countries allied with or not at war with Germany. In all, during the final two years of the deportations (approximately March 1943 to March 1945), all transports probably carried some Jews who had previously been living submerged in the city,<sup>31</sup> but their number decreased sharply as arrests declined.

The decline in arrests of submerged Jews reflects more than just a decrease in absolute numbers. To be sure, with at least 4,000 fewer U-boats in the city in 1944 (as a result of arrests, deaths, and flight), the remainder became more challenging to uncover. An arrest of 4,000 U-boats in 1943 would represent a 62 percent decrease in the hidden population. If the authorities managed to arrest a similar percentage of submerged Jews in 1944, that would have reduced the surviving population in hiding to 950 by 1945, but more than 1,700 were hiding at that point. This strongly suggests, as this book argues, that Berlin's remaining illegal Jews became better at evading arrest. An unknown number of Jews had left the city over the course of 1943 and 1944 for safer environs. However, even that confirms this book's argument that the U-boats learned to employ a variety of strategies to secure a measure of safety. Indeed, many survivors seem unaware that in explaining *how* they survived, they also were explaining *how they learned to survive*.

### Gender, Age, and Family Status of Berlin's Divers

Gender and age influenced not only chances of survival but also the decision itself.<sup>32</sup> The data on gender and age in this book are compiled from lists of survivors, not from all individuals who attempted to dive. They do

not permit, therefore, definitive claims about the gender and age of those who attempted to flee deportation. However, the data set is large enough to suggest that age, gender, and their intersection had a crucial impact on survival.<sup>33</sup> Among Berlin's U-boats who survived, 58 percent were women and 42 percent were men. According to the 1939 census of Berlin Jews,<sup>34</sup> 57.5 percent of Jews were female, and 42.5 percent were male.<sup>35</sup> This is a rather surprising correspondence and suggests two possible hypotheses. First, women and men dived and survived at rates equal to their percentage of the 1939 Jewish population.<sup>36</sup> Despite the difficulties facing them, male U-boats were able to adapt successfully. This hypothesis rejects gender as having had any significant impact on survival, and it contradicts both historical literature and survivor accounts from the period. The second hypothesis is that proportionately more men than women went into hiding but that more men were arrested. Based on recent research in the field and this book's own findings, the second of these two hypotheses seems more likely.

Current research strongly suggests that, relative to their percentage in the population, fewer women made the decision to submerge than did men. What remains unclear, however, is whether fewer women actually made the decision to dive or whether—due to a variety of factors—they chose to dive at the last minute, thereby lessening their chances for survival. In an ongoing study of attempts to hide in Germany, the Berlin-based *Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand* estimates that 55 percent of the U-boats were women.<sup>37</sup> Although still accounting for more than half of all U-boats, this figure is slightly less than the overall percentage of females among Berlin's Jewish population. In part, this discrepancy might be explained by the fact that women with children were hesitant to submerge and, thus, that spur-of-the-moment flights tended to be undertaken by younger and single women. Yet even many of these single women faced the difficult choice of staying with their families or fleeing.<sup>38</sup> As for the mothers, even when these managed to find places for their children to hide, the thought of separation, as well as the thought of leaving behind their precarious but still legal existence, prevented many from submerging until the last minute—or even at all.<sup>39</sup>

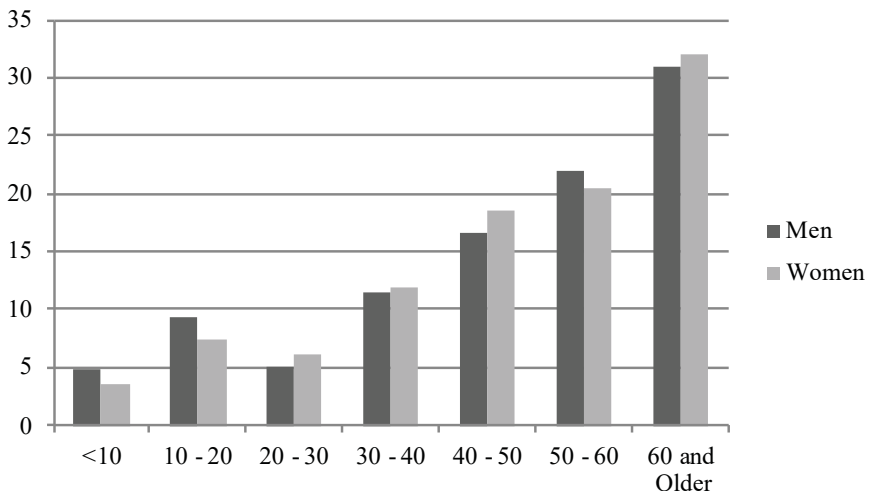
Those women who decided to submerge enjoyed two relative advantages. First, men, particularly younger men, were expected to be in uniform. Without credible false papers or a sound alibi, they attracted attention.<sup>40</sup> Second, women could hope to find paid employment in private households—outside the purview of the Labor Office and other prying eyes.<sup>41</sup> If men worked at all, they labored in manual trades, factories, or businesses, areas subject to government regulation; at their places of work, they had contact with other people, increasing the chances for de-



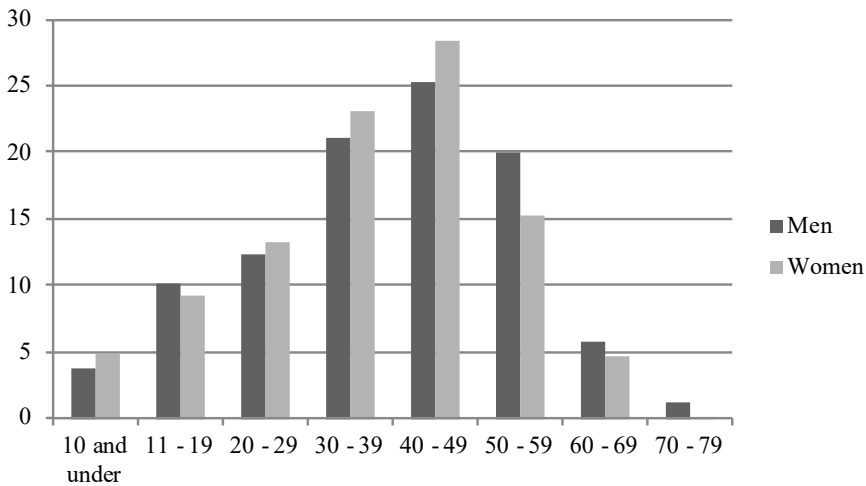
nunciation. These men had to rely on forged papers or the good will of employers (see chapter 3).<sup>42</sup>

When age is factored in, a more nuanced picture emerges. Years of emigration by younger Jews had taken their toll.<sup>43</sup> In the 1939 census, more than half of the Jewish population was over the age of fifty, compared to only 24 percent of survivors who submerged (figures A.3, A.4).<sup>44</sup> The average U-boat survivor was younger than the average age of the 1939 population, although they were still a bit older than one might expect (thirty-seven years for women and thirty-nine for men) and certainly older than most camp survivors, who tended to be in their teens, twenties, or thirties.<sup>45</sup> Nearly half of male survivors and a little more than half of female survivors in this study were between the ages of thirty and forty-nine. Individuals between the ages of ten and twenty-nine comprised 23 percent of those individuals who survived, in contrast to 14 percent of the overall Jewish community in 1939. Those individuals ten years old or younger comprised 4 percent of survivors who dived, roughly equal to their share of the Jewish community in 1939.<sup>46</sup>

Jews fifty years of age and older still account for almost one-quarter of all U-boats who survived, indicating that age was not an insurmountable barrier. Indeed, older men appear to have benefitted from their age, with 27 percent of male survivors over the age of fifty versus 21 percent of female survivors. The higher rates of survival among these men might result from the circumstance that older men not in uniform were less likely to arouse suspicion than were younger men.



**Figure A.3.** Age and Gender Distribution of Berlin's Jewish Population in 1939 (by percent).



**Figure A.4.** Age Distribution of Men and Women in Hiding Who Survived (by percent).

Jews between the ages of ten and thirty are somewhat overrepresented among survivors, suggesting that younger Jews likely were better able to take the necessary risks to ensure survival. In particular, when one considers the sometimes reckless behavior of youth (as recounted in survivor testimony), their survival rate is rather high.<sup>47</sup> One should note that the gender composition of individuals in this age group is nearly equal, with roughly one-quarter of male and female survivors falling into it. The predominance of survivors in their thirties and forties might suggest that middle-aged Jews were best equipped to handle challenges. These individuals were young enough for the physical exigencies but old enough (particularly, in the case of men) to avoid suspicion. They were more likely to have helpful connections with gentiles from the pre-Nazi years. Intellectual and emotional maturity might also have aided them in better calculating risks.

Although the data on gender and age are suggestive, how accurately do they reflect the composition of the population of Jews who attempted to survive submerged? Current evidence strongly suggests that more women than men dived, even if they did so at a rate more modest than their share of the population. As for age, the average U-boat survivor was in his or her late thirties. Although research suggests that younger Jews and Jews over the age of fifty submerged in larger numbers, youths' lack of connections coupled with their recklessness and the inability of much older Jews to handle the physical and emotional challenges of life on the run might

have resulted in a larger number of arrests or deaths.<sup>48</sup> Survivors implicitly and explicitly reference gender and age in their discussions of submerging, indicating that they did indeed have a formative impact.

A significant number of survivors also fled with family members (table A.1). This study interprets the idea of “family” to include spouses and fiancés/fiancées, siblings, children, cousins, and other blood relations. Contrary to the example of Anne Frank, families seldom if ever stayed in one place together due to the difficulties of finding shelter large enough to accommodate them.<sup>49</sup> Even when families did so, it was almost never for the duration of the war. Although family members often submerged together, most did not live together.

**Table A.1.** Size of Family Groups Who Submerged Together and Survived.

	2 People	3 People	4 People	5 People	6 People or more
Number of Groups	113	38	14	1	2
Percentage of the Whole	67%	23%	8%	1%	1%

*Note:* The figure is based on 1,074 individuals.

In this study’s sampling of survivors, 42 percent submerged with family, although a majority of these family units consisted of two people; generally, they were spouses, although siblings and cousins also hid together. The preponderance of small units reflects the challenges facing large groups seeking to shelter together. Many families hesitated to submerge due to their unwillingness to split up and their inability to find people who could help them all.<sup>50</sup> However, because the U-boats often had to split up, family size had little impact on whether or not one was caught. Rather, the very small number of large families that survived submerged likely indicates how few decided to submerge in the first place. Also of note is that the gender breakdown of these family groups corresponds to the overall gender composition of the city’s divers. This suggests that whatever emotional benefits might have come with submerging with one’s family, the ability of the family to mitigate the gendered difficulties of hiding in Berlin was minimal. Not surprisingly, young children and adolescents benefitted from fleeing with their family: children aged fourteen years or younger make up approximately 13 percent of family groups that submerged, whereas they comprise approximately 3 percent of people surviving without family.

## Conclusion

In recent years, scholars have revised to 1,700 their estimates of the number of Berlin U-boats who survived; this book has argued that by balancing what scholars know about arrest and deportation rates with what we know about who survived, we can revise to 6,500 the number of people who submerged. This revised figure suggests an even greater level of resistance to deportation by Jews and their helpers' than has previously been assumed. Indeed, the act of submerging should be contextualized, for overall survival rates are contingent on when people chose to dive and what preparations they made. Thus, Jews who fled before or after the *Große Fabrik-Aktion* had a significantly higher rate of survival. Submergence therefore increased over time and depended on an array of variables, including rumors from the east, employment status and the effectiveness of the *Reklamation*, and the anticipated effects of submerging on family members (see chapter 1). In 1943, the Nazis arrested the majority of Berlin's U-boat population. Yet in 1944, the authorities arrested such a modest number of U-boats that the number as a share of the remaining U-boat population fell precipitously. The sources suggest that the U-boats learned how to hide better. They built upon previous mistakes and became remarkably more adept at navigating the city, a process no doubt more feasible for many of them because Berlin was home.

The difficulties associated with discussing gender and age stem largely from the fact that the data are based only on those who survived and not on those who went into hiding. This study's data set appears to confirm what scholars currently understand about Berlin's Jewish community on the eve of deportation and the gender of the U-boats: more women than men survived, even if it appears that women went into hiding in proportionally lower numbers than men did. If we factor in age, however, a more nuanced picture develops. Men over fifty survived in higher rates than did women in the same age category. Interestingly, males between the ages of ten and thirty survived at rates equal to those of females, a figure that calls into question assumptions about the problems facing Jewish young men hiding. The explanation for this relative success remains elusive. Nor do the data on families shed much light on the topic. The gendered survival rates of families are nearly equal to those of men and women who hid alone, suggesting that the family ties did little to change the gendered balance in hiding.

Research on hiding largely remains locale-specific. Most of the literature on Germany examines either individual case studies, specific facets of hiding, or hiding in particular localities.<sup>51</sup> The data presented here relate to Berlin; the act of submerging and the methods of evading

capture remained contingent on the city itself. Yet should the history of hiding during the Holocaust remain so localized? Certainly, the data in this article speak to Berlin and not to Paris, Warsaw, or Prague. But what might the particular demographics of hiding in these cities, if analyzed in conjunction with one another, say about hiding throughout Europe, the peculiarities of regional National Socialist antisemitic policy, and the myriad histories of hiding as they fit within the broader framework of the history of the Holocaust?

## Notes

1. Rudolf Frauenfeld, "Wir Illegalen," *Der Weg: Zeitschrift für Fragen des Judentums*, 22 March 1946.
2. See *Gedenkstätte Stille Helden* (Berlin: Allprint Media, 2008), 8. The figure of 1,700 is the newest, revised estimate. See also Lutjens, "Vom Untertauchen," 49. Original estimates put the number of U-boat survivors at 1,400. See Weltlinger, "Hast du es schon vergessen?" The data first cited by Weltlinger formed the basis for original estimates used by scholars when discussing the number of Berlin Jewish survivors. These works include Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 94; Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 306; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 228; and Maurer, "From Everyday Life," 373. The recent estimate by researchers at the Gedenkstätte Stille Helden, indicating that at least 1,700 Jews survived in hiding in and around the city, is what I use. However, since I am unaware of any changes to estimates of the number who survived the camps or were never deported in the first place as partners in mixed marriages, the statistics in this book associate Weltlinger's original data on camp and mixed-marriage survivors with newer estimates of the number who survived in hiding.
3. The earliest estimate came from the U-boat Siegmund Weltlinger shortly after the end of the war. See "Bericht über die Neubildung der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Berlin," 13 November 1946, in LAB, E Rep. 200–22. Nr.: 38 + 39. Until quite recently, most historical works discussing Jews in hiding corroborated Weltlinger's claims. See for example Konrad Kwiet and Helmut Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand: Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Existenz und Menschenwürde, 1933–1945* (Hamburg: Hans Christian, 1984), 150–51. See also Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 77, 81; Gruner, *Persecution of the Jews*; and Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 293.
4. An early demographic overview of Jews in hiding throughout Germany is Avraham Seligmann, "An Illegal Way of Life in Nazi Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 37 (1992): 327–61. Seligmann utilizes an approach similar to mine, but bases his findings on only sixty-five testimonies, which he has gathered from throughout Germany. More recently, though, a host of scholars has begun to focus on demographic questions posed in this article. See, for example, Croes and Kosmala, "Facing Deportation"; Kosmala, "Zwischen Ahnen und Wissen"; Kosmala, "Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen in Berlin"; and Lutjens, "Vom Untertauchen." A more specialized statistical overview of the Große Fabrikaktion and its relationship to hiding may be found in Schoppmann, "Die 'Fabrikaktion' in Berlin," 138–48.

5. For a full discussion of these demographics, see Richard N. Lutjens, Jr., “Jews in Hiding in Nazi Berlin, 1941–1945: A Demographic Survey,” in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 268–297.
6. Figure A.1 is based on a sample composed of 425 U-boats (25 percent of survivors); Table A.1 is based on 1,074 U-boats (63 percent of survivors). Figure A.2 is based on deportation records, figures A.3 and A.4 on the 1939 Berlin census.
7. The lists of survivors were published in the Jewish–German exile periodical *Aufbau: Reconstruction* over the course of two months beginning on 2 November 1945 in a section titled “Neue Listen von Juden in Berlin”; 16 November 1945, “Neue Berliner Liste.” The names of survivors who had been in hiding were designated with the letter “b.” Although some discrepancies exist, the lists are generally accurate. They were published between November 1945 and January 1946. The lists may be found in the following editions. For the year 1945: Nr. 45 (p. 28); Nr. 46 (p. 26); Nr. 47 (p. 26); Nr. 48 (p. 36); Nr. 49 (p. 26); Nr. 50 (p. 27); Nr. 51 (p. 27); Nr. 52 (p. 37). For the year 1946: Nr. 1 (p. 26); Nr. 2 (p. 32); Nr. 3 (p. 27). These lists contain the names of over nine hundred former U-boats. It should be noted, however, that *Aufbau* lists only Jews who were members of the Jewish Community. “Jews by Race,” who either listed themselves as “Dissidents” or “Christian,” do not appear in the lists. I collected additional names from testimonies found in the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung (ZfA) at Berlin’s Technische Universität.
8. Many of these were duplicated from testimonies at the Wiener Library in London and Yad Vashem.
9. The role of the Fahndungsdienst in tracking down the U-boats forms a dark and complex aspect of life in hiding. For more information, see Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*; and Jah, *Deportation*, 525–27. See also Wyden, *Stella*.
10. Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 142.
11. CJA 4.1, 3156, file of Felix Zacharias.
12. ZfA, file of Kurt Lindenberg, “Personal Report.” See also Kwiet and Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand*, 150–51; and Kosmala, “Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen,” 46.
13. Kwiet and Eschwege suggest a figure of five thousand. See also Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 77, 81; Paulsson, *Secret City*, 2; Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 293; and Seligmann, “An Illegal Way of Life,” 328. Beate Kosmala, in contrast, estimates a figure closer to seven thousand: “Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen,” 46.
14. See YVA 0.8/145 on the statistics from 31 January 1944 concerning *Abgänge* for the “Jüdische Bevölkerung in Berlin, 1943–1945.” Also Gruner, *Persecution of the Jews*, 168; and Jah, *Deportation*, 470–71.
15. Meyer, *Tödliche Gratwanderung*, 206.
16. Jah also cites contemporary eyewitnesses who noted that “too many” Jews were fleeing upon being ordered to report to the collection camp in the Levetzowstraße Synagogue: *Deportation*, 260–61.
17. This figure was reached by examining the numbers of Jews listed as *flüchtig* in YVA 0.8/145, “Jüdische Bevölkerung in Berlin, 1943–1945.”
18. For reference, see BA R 8150/26, 8150/27; ZIH 112/21b; StadtA Mainz NL Oppenheim 52/28; and YVA 0.8/14, *Monatliche Entwicklung der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Berlin, 1941–1943*.
19. This chart’s data are based upon 425 former U-boats (25 percent of all survivors). It also corresponds to current estimates released by the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung at Berlin’s Technische Universität claiming that the majority of U-boats submerged at some point in 1943, usually in the first three months. However, these fig-

- ures are based on nationwide data. See Schoppmann, “Die ‘Fabrikaktion’ in Berlin,” 142. Also, see Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 115–16. Their conclusions are based on one thousand survivors, but the estimates are similar. Both this book and their article estimate that 3 percent of Jews went into hiding in 1941. Croes and Kosmala, however, argue for a lower rate of Jews submerging in 1942 (34 percent) than do I (42 percent).
20. See deportation figures in Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die “Judendeportationen,”* 444–54.
  21. I reached this figure by adding together the Berlin deportation numbers listed in Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die “Judendeportationen,”* 444–54. During this period, the Nazis deported 26,606 Jews from Berlin. In June 1941, the Jewish population in Berlin (by “race”) was 73,842. See Gruner, *Judenverfolgung*, 94. A 3 percent submerging rate in 1941 for German Jews in general is also posited in Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 142.
  22. Gruner, *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße*, 59.
  23. Jah, *Deportation*, 426–27. See also Gruner, *Persecution of the Jews*, 163–64.
  24. See Jah, *Deportation*, 519.
  25. See Schoppmann, “Die ‘Fabrikaktion’ in Berlin,” 142.
  26. An estimate of 20 percent is not out of place. Claudia Schoppmann suggests 18 percent in “Die ‘Fabrikaktion’ in Berlin,” 142. In the postwar testimonies I examined, some survivors do not list the exact day they hid, but rather only a month or year. It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that a number of those individuals who fled in February or March 1943 fled specifically during the *Aktion*, since that was the week when more than two-thirds of all Jews who went into hiding did so.
  27. Figures based on my data set of 425 U-boats who survived in hiding, roughly 25 percent of known survivors.
  28. See BA R 8150/26, 8150/27; ZIH 112/21b; StadtA (archive) Mainz NL Oppenheim 52/28; YVA 0.8/14, “Monatliche Entwicklung der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Berlin, 1941–1943. The documents may also be found at [http://www.statistik-des-holocaust.de/stat\\_ger.html](http://www.statistik-des-holocaust.de/stat_ger.html) (accessed 4 January 2017).
  29. Jah, *Deportation*, 520.
  30. Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die “Judendeportationen,”* 419–20.
  31. See Jah, *Deportation*, 519. See also Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 142.
  32. Most recently, see Kosmala, “Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen.” See also Schoppmann, “Die ‘Fabrikaktion’ in Berlin,” 142–43.
  33. These data are based on 1,074 individuals in hiding, including the eight female and four male child survivors known to have been born on or after 18 October 1941. The age-related data are based on the age of the city’s submerged Jews as of 18 October 1941, the date of the first deportation transport to leave Berlin. A convenience sampling of 63 percent of 1,700 people would provide a level of probability approaching 99 percent. See W. Lawrence Neumann, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2011), 263–67.
  34. Croes and Kosmala cite a similar number of women in “Facing Deportation,” 119.
  35. Avraham Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation: The Economic Struggle of German Jews, 1933–1943* (Boston: Brandeis University Press, 1990), 153–54.
  36. As suggested in Seligmann, “Illegal Way of Life,” 340.
  37. Kosmala, “Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen,” 46.
  38. Kosmala, “Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen,” 40–41.
  39. Kosmala, “Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen,” 36–44.
  40. See, for example, Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 203; Croes and Kosmala, “Facing Deportation,” 119; and Maurer, “From Everyday Life,” 370.

41. See for example ZfA, file of Dr. Charlotte Bamberg. See also Croes and Kosmala, "Facing Deportation," 119.
42. See for example Bruno G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1764), Fortunoff Video Archive.
43. See Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation*, 154.
44. I compiled the data in figure A.3 from the 1939 census for Berlin, published in *Der Weg: Zeitschrift für Fragen des Judentums*, 13 December 1946. Cited in Nachama, Schoeps, and Simon, *Jews in Berlin*, 216.
45. Hilberg, *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders*, 188. As noted, the data are based on the age of the survivors as of the first transport to leave Berlin, on 18 October 1941. The average age of the women reflects data from 620 individuals and does not include eight female children born after 18 October; the average age of the men reflects data from 442 individuals and does not include four male children born after 18 October.
46. The small number of child survivors in Germany differs from that in other regions in Europe, where children tended to make up a higher percentage of survivors who had hidden. See, for example, Croes and Kosmala, "Facing Deportation," 119–20, 129–30. See also Paulsson, *Secret City*, 224–27.
47. On the recklessness of youth, see, for example, Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 301–2. For individual examples of such reckless behavior, see Larry Orbach and Vivien Orbach-Smith, *Soaring Underground: A Young Fugitive's Life in Nazi Berlin* (Washington, DC: The Compass Press, 1996); and ZfA, file of Cioma Schönhaus, "Interview G. Rogoff," 14.3.89 Basel, interview conducted by Neiss, Schieb, Voigt.
48. On the number of older Jews submerging, see Kosmala, "Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen," 42.
49. Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*, 51.
50. See, for example, concerns of the Arndt Family in Ruth G. Holocaust Testimony (T-1763), Fortunoff Video Archive; see also ZfA, file of Werner Foss.
51. Notable examples include Benz, *Die Juden in Deutschland*; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*; Maurer, "From Everyday Life"; Benz, *Überleben im Dritten Reich*; Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat*; Bonavita, *Mit falschem Pass und Zyankali*; Kosmala, "Überlebensstrategien jüdischer Frauen"; and Lutjens, "Vom Untertauchen." For an excellent case study of a single act of hiding in Germany and of survivor memory, see Roseman, *Past in Hiding*.



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# INDEX

- Abraham, Ruth, 52  
age, 3, 12, 16, 22n3, 41, 43–45, 49–51,  
72n129, 96–97, 103, 126, 148, 183, 187,  
210, 215–20  
    and the decision to hide, 16, 22n3 41,  
    43–45, 50–51, 72n129, 215–20  
    and survival rates, 16, 22n3, 44,  
    215–20  
agency, 7, 10, 17, 32, 36, 65, 125, 128, 136,  
146, 207  
air raids, 44, 76–78, 84, 86, 89–90, 97,  
109, 113–14, 124–25, 135, 137–38, 151,  
163–64, 166–72, 174–75, 177–78, 183,  
188, 198, 210–11  
Alexander, Lola, 105  
Alois Brunner, 53–54, 122n172  
Andreas-Friedrich, Ruth, 30, 49, 68n32  
antifascist activity, 11–13, 141–143, 203.  
    *See also* resistance  
antisemitism, 17, 19–20, 31–33, 35, 50,  
67n14, 80, 85, 87–88, 112, 121n129, 124,  
129, 131–32, 134–35, 137, 154, 156, 190,  
213, 221  
    and Nazi policy, 16–17, 19, 21, 30,  
    32–33, 35, 39–41, 49–50, 67n24,  
    98, 121n129, 124, 129–30, 132,  
    134, 156, 158n11, 213, 221  
appearance, xiii, 81, 85–88  
    and “looking Jewish,” 78, 86–88  
    and Nazi racial stereotypes, 87  
    on the need for cleanliness, 147,  
    161n99  
Arndt, Arthur, 40, 147–48  
Arndt, Erich, 40, 51, 79, 170, 174, 187,  
190, 200  
Arndt, Lina, 40  
Arndt, Ruth, x, xii, 40, 137, 139, 141, 145,  
147–49, 167, 170–71, 174, 181, 185–78,  
190, 200, 205  
arrest, xiv, 3, 12, 19, 21–22, 22n3, 24n23,  
30–31, 35–36, 42, 44, 46, 49, 52–53, 55–  
57, 60–64, 66, 67n7, 73n177, 75, 77–80,  
89–91, 93–96, 98–108, 110, 112–13, 115,  
116n1, 120n11, 123n203, 124, 128, 130,  
133–34, 137, 141–42, 146–47, 150–51,  
153–54, 156, 164, 174, 176–78, 181–83,  
185, 198, 203, 211, 211–216, 219–220  
    and the black market, 94  
    and denunciation, 21, 41, 75, 77–78,  
    96, 98–99, 102, 104, 115, 128, 146,  
    153, 156  
    and pass inspections, 40–41, 95–97,  
    176  
    rates of, 214–215  
aryan, 5, 17, 47–48, 52, 64, 77, 79, 87–88,  
126, 129, 145, 183, 209  
Auschwitz, 1, 56–57, 103–5  
  
B., Annelies, xii, 123n186, 140–41, 150,  
153–54, 167, 187, 199  
B., Marianne, 140, 150, 187, 199  
Bamberg, Charlotte, 1–3, 47, 77, 101,  
119n77, 138–39, 145, 147, 184  
Battle of Berlin (airborn), 89, 118n70  
Battle of Berlin (Soviet military campaign,  
spring 1945), 118n70, 164–65, 178–79,  
181, 187, 191  
Battle of Stalingrad, 58, 73n168, 73n170  
Beck, Gad, 36, 166, 172, 175, 177  
Becker, Julius, 176  
Berlin as a site of survival, 16–20  
Beyer, Thekla, 191  
Bing, Grete, 201  
Bing, Lotte, 201  
black market, 76, 86, 88, 93–94, 96, 101,  
106, 119n93, 119n95, 145, 147, 151, 174  
Blum, Leon, 100  
Blumenfeld, Lotte, 98–99, 101–02  
Bodlaender, Charlotte, 48–49  
Bruska, Willi, 200  
  
camouflage, xiii, 2–3, 33, 36, 86–87, 96,  
125–27, 134, 137, 143, 147, 152, 165,  
167–68, 174, 183, 191, 202

- Chug Chaluzi, 80, 116n19, 142
- Communist Party of Germany (KPD), 18, 27n59, 49, 80, 202–03
- Confessing Church, 93, 100–01
- daily life, 6, 31, 76, 89, 114, 117n53, 125–26, 137, 147, 157, 161n85, 163, 171–72, 174, 176–78  
and Eigensinn, 117n53, 126.  
*See also* everyday life; normality
- death  
in hiding, 22, 78, 89, 97, 114, 124, 125, 149–52, 156  
of a non-Jewish spouse, 133
- definitions of submerging, xii–xiii, 2, 210–210
- Denmark, 109–112
- denunciation, xiv, 2, 20–21, 34, 41, 75–78, 81, 84–86, 95–96, 98–102, 104, 108, 115, 120n11, 121n30, 124–25, 128, 145–46, 153–54, 156, 177, 191  
and arrest, 21, 41, 75, 77–78, 96, 98–99, 102, 104, 115, 128, 146, 153, 156  
and Franz Kaufmann, 98–102
- deportation, xiv, 1–3, 17–21, 31–58, 60–61, 65–66, 71n102, 76, 80–81, 95–96, 98, 102–07, 112–13, 124, 128–33, 150, 152, 154, 164, 174, 176, 178, 181, 185, 198, 209–16, 220  
and ability to forestall, 34, 43, 48, 50, 70n102, 133  
and compliance, 21, 32–37  
and decision to submerge, 37–41, 128–134  
and suicide, 37–41 (*see also* evacuation)
- despair, 33, 36–37, 65, 105, 115, 149–50, 119
- divorce, 12, 131–32
- Dobberke, Walter, 104, 106, 122n163, 183
- E., Edith, 154–56
- E., Ingeborg, 154–56
- Eigensinn*, 117n53, 126
- emigration, 31–32, 46, 65, 67n22, 71n125, 99, 143
- employment, 18, 20, 22, 41, 49, 88, 106, 128, 135–46, 148, 151, 155, 157, 170, 174, 178, 201–03, 216, 220
- Epstein, Edith Ruth, 40, 168
- escaping Germany, 32, 36, 108–14. *See also* Lindenber, Kurt; Schönhaus, Cioma
- evacuation, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 44, 46, 48–49, 56. *See also* deportation
- everyday life, 39, 117n53, 125–27, 136–39, 164, 170. *See also* daily life; normality
- F., Eugen, 126
- F., Lotte, 200
- Fabian, Günter, 97, 203, 205
- Fahnder*, 96, 102–08, 113, 133, 135, 137.  
*See also* Jewish informants; Jüdischer Fahndungsdienst
- false papers, 75–76, 80, 84, 86, 91–94, 96–97, 100–101, 106, 108, 110, 113, 135, 145, 155, 176, 187, 198, 216
- family, 24n14, 35–36, 44, 51–52, 76–79, 81, 113, 129, 132, 147, 151–52, 157, 170, 199, 210, 219–20
- fate, 113–15. *See also* luck
- Fink, Gerda, 35, 176
- Finke, Ursel, 105, 107–08
- food, 6, 21–22, 30, 35, 63, 75–76, 80, 88, 90–91, 93–94, 107, 113–14, 119n81, 124, 135, 138, 146, 148, 150–51, 156, 162n129, 167, 170–72, 175–76, 184, 197–98
- forced labor, 12, 30, 46, 50, 80, 124, 130, 177, 210, 212
- Frank, Anne, 2, 219
- Friedländer, Erich, 97–98
- Friedländer, Konrad, 91–92
- friendship, 22, 35, 128, 136, 139, 200
- Fuß, Herta, 52, 55–56, 63–64, 81, 88
- G., Bruno, 79, 87, 91, 145, 167–68, 170, 174, 187, 190, 200, 205–06
- G., Hans, 201
- G., Siegfried, 103–105
- Gamson, Max, 199–200
- Geltungsjuden*, 129
- Gemeinschaft für Frieden und Aufbau, 142
- gender, 3–4, 12, 16, 22n3, 41, 50, 143–45, 153, 161n85, 161n95, 184, 210, 215–20
- Gersten, Jacob, 141
- Gestapo, 2, 8, 18, 22, 31, 36, 40–41, 44, 46–47, 49–50, 52–53, 55–56, 58–62, 64–65, 75, 80, 85–86, 94–96, 98–99, 101–08, 111, 113, 120n120, 121nn129–130, 130, 133, 140, 142, 145–47, 150, 152, 154, 171, 176–78, 181–82, 189, 191, 201, 210–12  
and new arrest and deportation methods, 53–54
- Goebbels, Joseph, 29, 58–61, 75–76, 172, 185, 194n104
- Goldmann, Werner, 202
- Goldschlag, Stella, 106, 122n174
- Gotthilf, Eva, 64, 78

- Große Fabrik-Aktion* (Large Factory Operation), 12, 33, 42, 59–65, 73n176, 209, 212, 220
- Große Hamburger Straße, 35–36, 54, 95, 102, 104, 181
- Grünberg, Isaak, 132, 199
- Haase, Falko, 133–34, 191
- Haase, Lydia, 133–34, 191
- health, 44, 134, 149, 150–53, 161n11, 163, 164, 198, 201. *See also* illness and injury
- Hechalutz, 36
- Helft, Helene, 90, 119n78, 191–92, 198
- Helft, Paul, 90, 119n78, 191–92
- helpers, 79, 84, 88, 99, 101, 125, 153, 182, 200, 202
- Henschel, Moritz, 59
- Hesse, Susanne, 130–31
- hiding
  - as a category of analysis, xii–xiii, 4–6
  - demographics, 209–220
  - on the individual and individualistic nature of the act, 2–4, 8, 114, 128, 142*See also* submerging
- Hopp, Charlotte, 78
- Hopp, Erich, 78, 83
- Hopp, Wolfgang, 78, 83
- illness and injury, 13, 22, 44, 124–125, 134, 149, 150–53, 156, 161n11, 163, 164, 198, 201. *See also* health
- Isaaksohn, Artur, 181
- Isaaksohn, Rolf, 102–06
- J., Marie, 73n170, 122n174, 202
- Jacobson, Kurt, 146
- Jewish Hospital, 8, 40, 47, 104, 107, 150, 183
- Jewish Informants, 2, 8, 75, 95, 102–08, 147. *See also* *Fahnder*; Jüdischer Fahndungsdienst
- Jewish Star (*Judenstern*), 5, 11, 30, 34, 50, 54–56, 72n148, 76, 96, 98, 106, 129, 152, 204
- Josephy, Charlotte, 135–137, 174, 186, 190–191
- Judenhäuser*, 30, 57
- Jüdischer Fahndungsdienst, 96, 102–08, 113, 133, 135, 137
- K., Fredy, 84–86
- Katz, Ludwig, 200
- Kaufmann, Charlotte, 203
- Kaufmann, Franz, 93, 100–102, 106, 108, 121n141. *See also* denunciation
- Kemlein, Eva, 131
- Klein, Grete, 40
- Kollm, Ralf, 187
- Kristallnacht, 30, 67n7, 80, 204
- Labischinski, Herbert, 182–83
- language, xiii, 3, 5, 12, 16, 23n7, 139, 147
- Latte, Konrad, 86, 136, 141, 144
- Lebenslauf*, 12–15
- leisure, 146–49
- Levetzowstraße Synagogue, 40, 54, 69n72, 222n62
- Lewinsky, Ellen, 170, 181, 185, 200
- liberation, 13–15, 58, 140, 163, 165, 174, 179–81, 183–91, 197, 199, 202
- Lichtwitz, Ludwig, 101–02, 108, 121n141
- Lindenberg, Kurt, 34–35, 50, 52–55, 60, 62, 72n129, 82, 94, 108–14, 161n99, 162n139, 211, 214. *See also* escaping Germany
- Litzmannstadt, xii, 31, 40, 44, 203
- luck, 113–15. *See also* fate
- Meisels, Gisela, 176
- Meisels, Jenny, 176
- memory, 4, 6–7, 9–10, 13, 16, 25n27, 37, 140–41
- Messow, Kurt, 202
- Michaelis, Kurt, 188–90, 200
- Mischehen*, 26n56, 30, 42–44, 52, 60–61, 75, 77–79, 100, 106, 129–32, 151, 159n36, 176, 209, 212–13, 215, 221. *See also* mixed marriage
- Mischlinge*, 17, 47–48, 88, 102, 129–30, 132–33, 154, 166, 175, 209
- mixed marriage, 26n56, 30, 42–44, 52, 60–61, 75, 77–79, 100, 106, 129–32, 151, 159n36, 176, 209, 212–13, 215, 221. *See also* *Mischehen*
- Nase, Eugenie, 133–134
- National Association of Jews in Germany, 31, 35, 46–47, 59–61, 68n35, 70n102. *See also* Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland
- Neuweck, Fritz, 102, 106. *See also* Wichmann
- normality, 7, 22, 115, 124, 138, 157, 171, 179. *See also* daily life; *Eigensinn*
- OdF, 9, 11–16, 25n38, 70n86, 84, 86, 127, 178–79, 184, 189, 192, 198–200, 205, 210. *See also* Victims of Fascism



- Orbach, Lothar, 10, 103, 121n152  
 Organisation Todt, 130, 212  
 Ott, Cäcilie, 42–43
- Pakman, Wiktor, 151, 172  
 Post, Lilly, 79  
 Priester, Annie, 149  
 propaganda, 29, 87–88, 143, 166, 185–86, 194n104
- rape, 22, 124, 149, 153–56, 162n135, 166, 181, 184–87, 195n108, 200. *See also* sexual violence
- Rassenschande*, 129, 154  
 Rathé, Ellen, 151  
 ration cards, 30–31, 46, 53, 57, 64, 76, 91, 93–94, 106, 111, 133, 153, 140–41, 150, 155, 164–67, 171, 211. *See also* food
- Rautenberg, Max, 202  
 Red Army, 163, 165–66, 175, 179, 184–87, 190–91, 195n108. *See also* Soviet Army  
 refugees, 109, 111–12, 163–68, 178, 185–86
- Reich Main Security Office (RHSA), 60, 95, 176
- Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland, 31, 35, 46–47, 59–61, 68n35, 70n102. *See also* National Association of Jews in Germany
- Reklamation*, 46–47, 49–50, 220
- resistance, 13, 17–18, 20, 37, 58, 73n168, 78, 80, 100, 102, 116n19, 127, 136, 142–45, 157, 175, 177–78, 181, 202–03, 220. *See also* antifascist activity
- Rhonheimer, Friedrich, 169, 190  
 Riesenburger, Martin, 152, 170, 191, 197  
 Riesenfeld, Walter, 115  
 Rogasinski, Franz, 198  
 Rosenstraße Protests, 61, 73n177  
 Rosenthal, Julius, 150
- Sachsenhausen, 30, 35, 67n7, 102, 153–54, 176, 181, 204  
 Schiesser, Georg, 202  
 Schönhaus, Cioma, 10, 50, 100–102, 108, 111, 120n128, 121n141, 144, 147–48. *See also* escaping Germany
- Schwersenz, Jizchak, 80  
 Security Service (SD), 182–83  
 Seelig, Frieda, 62, 199
- sexual violence, 22, 124, 149, 153–56, 162n135, 166, 181, 184–87, 195n108, 200. *See also* rape
- Sh'ma Yisrael (Hear, O Israel), 190–91  
 shelter, 77–90  
 Silberkleid, Albert, 178–79  
 Silberkleid, Gisela, 178–79  
 Soviet Army, 163, 165–66, 175, 179, 184–87, 190–91, 195n108. *See also* Red Army
- Sternberg, Walter, 174–75  
 Steup, Lilli, 199  
 submerging, 41–65  
     as an individual and individualist act, 2–4, 8, 114, 128, 142
- suicide, 37–41, 45, 69n53, 132–33, 168  
 Switzerland, 99, 108–09, 111, 147, 177
- T., Heinz, 176  
 Tessman, Lissi, 131  
 Thernal, Ilselotte, 63  
 Theresienstadt, 44–46, 104, 130, 153, 176, 214
- Victims of Fascism, 9, 11–16, 25n38, 70n86, 84, 86, 127, 178–79, 184, 189, 192, 198–200, 205, 210. *See also* Odf
- Vigdor, Paula, 46, 64, 84, 165–66, 168  
 Volkssturm, 97, 142, 145, 181, 185, 189, 201
- W., Kurt, 177  
 W., Ruth, 186, 206  
 W., Stefan, 177  
 Wannsee Conference, 32, 57, 67n24  
 Weinberg, Erich, 142–43, 201  
 Weissmann, Charlotte, 183–84  
 Weissmann, Morris, 183–84  
 Weltlinger, Margarete, 59, 184, 204  
 Weltlinger, Siegmund, 26n56, 39, 59, 184–85, 203–05, 221nn2–3  
 Wichmann, 93–94, 101–02, 106, 121n140. *See also* Neuweck, Fritz
- Witt, Fritz, 154–56  
 Wolff, Martin, 152
- work, 18, 20, 22, 41, 49, 88, 106, 128, 135–46, 148, 151, 155, 157, 170, 174, 178, 201–03, 216, 220. *See also* employment
- Wormann, Alfons, 201  
 Wunderlich, Werner, 187
- Zionism, 36, 80, 142, 175