Why we need a history of prostitution in the Holocaust*

Abstract:
For many Holocaust historians, prostitution is a source of profound discomfort and tends to be interpreted as sexual violence only. This essay presents a historiographical and empirical interventions on why incorporating the notion of sex work as labor sheds new light on our understanding of the society of victims, the agency of the people who bartered sex, and the value of intimacy in these enforced circumstances. The essay presents 15 case studies of women and men, both heterosexual and queer, who engaged in sexual barter with fellow victims, bystanders, and perpetrators in ghettos, concentration camps, and in hiding. Finally, the article considers the stigma attached to sex work and puts forward a plea for the necessity of a critical reading of common assumptions about stigma.

Keywords: Holocaust, prostitution, sexuality, sexual violence, Jewish history, stigma

In July 1942, a 24-year old woman, whom I will call Alice Haberland, was deported from Berlin to Theresienstadt. She grew up in a wealthy, well established Jewish family, and arrived without her parents — her mother was Gentile and her Jewish father had been murdered. At first shocked by the dirt, hunger, and overcrowding and without any knowledge of Czech or acquaintances to ask for help, Alice found her feet and started providing for herself and her sister, who was in the last stages of tuberculosis, by offering sex for food. Later, when three elderly disabled female relatives arrived at Theresienstadt, she supported them as well. This changed in January 1943, when rabbi Leo Baeck, the revered leader of German Jewry and friend of Haberland's family, arrived at Theresienstadt. In his 1979 Pulitzer Prize winning biography of Leo Baeck, Leonard Baker relied on a common trope to describe Haberland's experience:

"This lovely young woman had known all the comforts that money can bring, and she missed them in Theresienstadt. The crowded conditions, the shortage of food, and the dirt eroded her sense of pride and decency. In hopes of an extra scrap of food, a feeling of warmth, space to breath in, she became a prostitute. Years later she said: "I don't know why I did what I did. You can't explain those things." Judaism has no dark and private confessional booth. It does, however, have love and sympathy for the troubled individual. "I needed someone to understand my action," she said, "and I used Baeck. His compassion for human errors would not allow him to hold my acts against me. He was my conscience, like my father."[1]

Haberland stopped selling sex. Two months later, her octogenarian grandmother died, followed by her sister in July 1943. Haberland survived the ghetto, moved to the US, married, and had children.[2] Unlike most survivors in the Western world, she never gave testimony to any of the many Holocaust oral history projects.

Haberland's story raises questions about how sexual barter has come to be portrayed as inherently shameful. Why did Baker describe the motivation of Haberland's selling sex not as a way of saving her relatives, but rather as a spoilt young woman's mistaken insistence on an "extra scrap of food, a feeling of warmth, space to breath in?" The passage suggests a vision of sexual barter as something that needs to be forgiven. In this article, I propose we read such case histories in a different light, namely, through the framework of the economy of prisoner society and the history of prostitution. In fact, the "extra scrap of food" or better accommodation in Theresienstadt often meant vastly improved living conditions; indeed, for the elderly and sick it could mean the difference between life and death.[3] Histories of sex work offer a paradigm that allows us to refrain from interpreting sex work as either discrediting or solely victimizing. Rather, it was a resource: alone in a foreign ghetto, without any connections, Alice Haberland was able to provide for herself and four relatives.

Prostitution is among the most stigmatized topics in Holocaust studies. Both scholarly and more popular accounts of the Holocaust tend to either omit mention of sex work, narrate it in titillating fashion, or equate it with sexual violence. The last point means that much of the feminist scholarship on the Holocaust interprets sexual barter primarily as violence. This perspective, I argue, leads our focus away from victims' agency and obstructs our understanding of society in extremis. The experiences of Holocaust victims who participated in various types of sexual barter – from flirting to rational relationships to the straightforward exchange of intercourse for food or protection – were ambivalent and multifaceted, and meant

various things to various people over time. Sexual barter could, but did not have to include sexual acts.

Building on my earlier work on sexual barter in Theresienstadt,[4] this article presents a historiographic intervention that moves beyond simplistic and reductive views implied by the term "forced prostitution."[5] I critique the automatic categorization of prostitution as sexual violence or even rape merely because the women and men involved had limited control over their lives. Zoe Waxman is correct in stating that "[r]efusing to acknowledge that even women in extremity can be capable of making choices . . . renders the women involved faceless victims."[6] In the account to follow, I will explore cases of unofficial, unorganized sexual barter by Holocaust victims in various settings such as ghettos, camps, and in hiding, demonstrating why context is key and exploring what sexual barter can tell us about the mentality and limited choices of the participants. The goal is to systematically examine the mechanisms that stigmatized prostitution.[7] I will not address prostitution organized by the Germans, such as brothels for the Wehrmacht, concentration camp prisoners, or forced laborers, because these did not include any Jews.[8] This piece also does not address the sexual barter of teenagers and children.[9] Whether children's participation in sexual barter could entail meaningful agency is an important debate.[10] However, as but one intervention, this article focuses on cases involving adults only (though some of them were young) in order to avoid the far more complex question of child abuse.

In a departure from my earlier work, here I use sexual barter and prostitution as synonyms. I had been wary about employing the notion of prostitution because of the stigma associated with it, which could render analytical grasp of the concept useless.[11] In the eight years since first writing about sexual barter, in teaching the history of sexuality in general and the history of sex work in particular, as I often debated the processes of the stigmatization of prostitution with my students, and I realized that my pragmatic decision to distance myself

from this term contributed to its taboo. Therefore, I use both terms to refer to the same phenomenon, albeit in different contexts: prostitution serves here as a meta-term, while sexual barter describes individual acts and relationships between Holocaust victims.

Sexual barter, that is exchange of sex or affection for resources or protection, was a frequent means by which Holocaust victims sought to secure their survival.[12] It was also a means of exerting agency. I differentiate--depending on whether (and to what degree) sexual barter had a more pronounced social dimension--between two types of relationships: those that were rational, in the sense that they produced longer-lasting affectionate, sexual, and romantic relationships even when one or both of the partners had entered into the exchange for at least partly pragmatic reasons; and instrumental sex, which refers to short-term sexual encounters.[13] Sexual barter during the Holocaust could be, and indeed often was, violent, and thus a form of sexual violence. However, it is important not to equal violent sexual barter with rape, because bartering partners always exercised some degree of individual choice. In contrast, rape is a form of sexual assault in which the victim has no freedom to decide whether they want to engage in the sexual act. We must acknowledge that sexual acts in the Holocaust encompassed a wide range of possibilities between quite rare but fully consensual relationships at one end and the more frequent occurrence of rape at the other. While the boundaries were and remain muddled, the ability to exercise at least some form of control over sex defines sexual barter.

I will first present the relevant aspects of the history of prostitution that make it possible to interpret sexual barter in the Holocaust without ahistorical moralizing. I then explore the reasons for the long-standing discomfort around prostitution within Holocaust studies, a discomfort that persisted even after the advent and success of Holocaust women's and gender history. Delving into Holocaust historiography on women and sexual violence, I will investigate in detail how scholars make judgments that are presented as commonly

accepted. The third, empirical section of the article, offers a roadmap of various historical examples of sexual barter. First, I explore how sex work was seen and made sense of by onlookers. I then look at the narratives of both heterosexual and queer participants in sexual barter between prisoners in concentration camps and ghettos, and the sexual barter between Jewish women and men in hiding and their rescuers. The article concludes with an examination of sexual barter between prisoners and guards, a particularly extreme form of dependency.

How can we write a history of such an erased, marginalized topic? Which sources can we rely on? The usual approach of historians of prostitution[14] – to rely on police files – does not work here, since these institutions did not exist in the concentration camps nor, obviously, amongst groups in hiding. Some ghettos did have Jewish police, but they rarely addressed sex work,[15] and very few documents from the Jewish or Order Police survived. The other common approach, reading files of medical authorities, offers a possibility and was deployed in Robert Sommer's investigation of the camp brothels, whose workers had periodic tests for VDs.[16] The concern for the dignity of people who engaged in a stigmatized sexual activity would suggest that a repeated discussion of gonorrhea tests – when people's stories are reduced to enforced intimate medical tests -- is unfortunate.[17]

In the end, I work with personal testimonies, usually written after the war, and with a few fortunately preserved contemporaneous sources.[18] This means that in the overwhelming majority of cases, we find testimonies about, but not *by*, men and women who engaged in sex work. Most existing memoirs operate within the binary narrative categories of romantic love and sexual violence. In following the call of queer studies, I propose that we need to question our normative assumptions of what is "natural" or "right" and read sources in their own light.[19] Finally, to demonstrate the judgment and contempt of survivors towards women (rarely men) who bartered sex, I include several of their stories. The challenge is determining

how to examine these voices in way that shows empathy to judging narrators (themselves victims of the Holocaust) while refusing to shame the people who engaged in sex work. In spite of the stigmatization attached to sexual barter, in the fifteen case studies presented in this essay, for eight of these, there is some form of self testimony; six of the protagonists thematized their own sexual barter.

Historically investigating sexual barter is further complicated by the fact that even when stories of people who sold sex appear in historical documents, we may not be able to identify the people mentioned in those stories, because many narrators did not recall names. In those rare cases in which I was able to locate first-person testimonies of sexual barter, I was faced with the requirement to anonymize individuals imposed by archives, families, or the interviewees. Mara Keire has pointed out that pseudonyms and abbreviated names perpetuate judgements about what is shameful.[20] It is particularly critical to use real names to document the history of people erased in the Holocaust.[21] But as I experienced all too personally, even in cases where the researcher is not bound by stipulations of an ethics committee or an archive, it can be the relatives of the people we write about who are willing to use legal threats to stop the researcher from using real names, or in fact do this research in any form. So the historian of prostitution and the Holocaust is left with a conundrum: if we continue to use pseudonyms or abbreviate names, we perpetuate stigma, but if we use real names, we face potential legal, financial, institutional, and personal costs. There are no good solutions. I use full names when a published account disclosed these, otherwise keep the pseudonyms presented in sources or dictated by the archive. In one case, I have adopted initials.

Body/service: historiography of sex work in the Holocaust

Holocaust historians are profoundly uncomfortable with sex work. A narrative in which (even presumed) prostitution was interpreted as complicity with the Nazis already became common in pre-independence Palestine.[22] Holocaust historians have been influenced by this stigma: they are disturbed by occurrences of sexual barter and most of them avoid the topic altogether. When it is discussed, it is almost always interpreted as sexual violence in which women have little to no (meaningful) control or as a form of complicity in which those engaging in sexual barter were totally responsible for their actions and could be judged for their choices.[23] Gender studies of the Holocaust have largely ignored the historiography on prostitution, even though they have taken up other important trends within gender studies.[24] This neglect may be an unconscious response to the fierce backlash against those who have studied gender with respect to genocide. Indeed, feminists have had to fight for the establishment and legitimacy of women's and gendered perspectives on the Shoah.[25] Such challenges to the study of women and gender might explain why scholars tend to focus on unambiguous histories of women's heroism, suffering, and resilience and why there has been so little space to address presumably shameful acts such as sex work or same sex desire.[26] To date, women's history of the Holocaust almost exclusively follows arguments that regard prostitution as inherently exploitative.[27] The literature exploring this topic is vast; I will discuss only the most influential works.

The now-standard interpretation of prostitution during the Holocaust is one of "survival prostitution", which posits that when Holocaust victims bartered sex in order not to die they were suffering a form of sexual violence.[28] For example, in their 2004 classic *Sexualized Violence*, the authors claim that asymmetrical, dependent rational relationships (my term) constituted sexual violence because the rank-and-file prisoners had no choice but to engage in them.[29] Regina Mühlhäuser, the leading authority on sexual violence on the German Eastern front in World War II, offers an even-handed portrayal of the circumstances

in which women in occupied Soviet territories bartered sex for food with German soldiers, whose actions had created the food shortages in the first place. However, Mühlhäuser focuses on the actions of the occupying soldiers, bypassing questions about the agency of the occupied population.[30] Maren Röger's work perhaps provides the best example of the "survival prostitution" interpretation. In her study of intimacy in occupied Poland, Röger interprets sexual barter and prostitution as sexual violence.[31] The author shows that the women were forced by circumstances to sell sex to the occupiers, but she neglects any investigation of the choices and decisions that women made in order to engage in these encounters. To bolster her claim of "survival prostitution", Röger set apart former professional prostitutes from those who engaged in sex work only in response to war shortages ("old" and "new" prostitutes, so to say). This differentiation is frustrating, as it is inherently classist and marks prostitution as dishonorable. Like the formerly "respectable" women who sold sex during the war, the working-class women who engaged in prostitution were motivated by economic necessity and chose to use this resource to make ends meet. Even scholars who are acutely aware of the agency of victims and who seek to avoid judgmental language sometimes unwittingly lend support to the view of prostitution as inherently exploitative. Sara Horowitz explicitly eschews judgmental language but still falls back on the tell-tale phrase "selling one's body," which implies that these women sold something that ought not be traded, that is irreplaceable: The phrase equates a sexual act with a purchase of the entire human being, even the soul.[32] She also included cases of child sex abuse alongside narratives of adult women who made the choice to barter sex.[33] By discussing sexual abuse of a small child alongside grown-up sexual barter, Horowitz, perhaps unintentionally, influences the reader to interpret sexual barter as abusive. In other cases, historians link sexual barter and rape just out of confusion and their lack of an interpretative framework. In Evgeny Finkel's study of Jewish survival choices in Eastern Europe, when

discussing Jewish women's choice to engage in sexual barter with Germans, the reference was to literature on sexual violence. [34]

Contrasting this historiographical sketch with an overview of interpretations of sex work is helpful. Feminist historians have taken E.P. Thompson's social history on the agency of "little people" as a point of departure in order to suggest that prostitution has a history and that we need to recognize prostitution as labor.[35] Intimacy can be a commodity; Nicole von Germeten reminds us that "the woman […] is selling her services, not 'her body and soul.'"[36] From this perspective, sex is just one of the services that can be sold, alongside cooking, cleaning, rearing children, or selling produce in a shop. In her work on the French poor in the 18th century, Olwen Hufton showed that prostitution was an integral part of what she termed "the economies of the makeshift", one of the many strategies the poor used to survive. Judith Walkowitz has demonstrated in her study of prostitution in mid-19th century England that indeed sex work was violent, but then so was most of the quotidian life of working-class women. The consensus among historians of prostitution is that we must recognize the agency of the women and men who sold sex. The point is not to romanticize the decisions of women who went into sex work, but to be able to provide a nuanced, historical view of their choices and consent. Mir Yarfitz, in his history of transnational Jewish sex work in Argentina reminds us that: "As well-intentioned listeners, we must seek to hear the voices of our subjects within their own paradigms."[37]

In her work on East European migrant sex workers, Ilse van Liempt reminds us of why it is problematic to differentiate between women who worked as prostitutes back home and those became prostitutes only in a new setting (one could say "old" and "new" prostitutes), as in those who are "criminal" and those who were forced into sex work only by circumstances of force.[38] First, this differentiation does not work because most of the migrants had already been in sex work before they departed from Eastern Europe to the

Netherlands, and were in some form informed about what awaited them. Second, this differentiation stigmatizes sex work as morally wrong.[39] Third, van Liempt points out that exploitation is a category that is difficult to measure. She suggests that rather than a narrow focus on consent, we need to pay close attention to the whole process in which sex is sold.[40]

It is immensely useful to take these observations on board. They allow us to discern that, for Holocaust victims, sexual barter was one resource among many; for others it was almost the only one. In order to recognize the lived worlds of the women and men who bartered sex we need to closely explore the situation in which sexual barter took place and try to understand the meanings and values of sex. Our task ought to be to establish a better understanding of the limited freedom and choices of Holocaust victims in navigating the world during the persecution.

Witnesses judging sexual barter

After the Munich agreement of 1938, Czechoslovakia lost its border regions to Germany, Poland, and Hungary. Tens of thousands of people -- Social democrats, Communists, Jews, and emigrants -- fled inside the reduced borders of the country, but many were forbidden entry and were forced to stay in refugee camps in the diminished Czechoslovakia. Doreen Warriner was a British social worker who helped political opponents and Jewish refugees escape from Czechoslovakia. In January 1939, she described the situation in several of these camps in a letter to her colleague, Eleonor Rathbone, a British MP and campaigner for women's rights. Dolní Krupá near Ralsko in Northern Bohemia was particularly dire. People were sick and dying, and the inmates were clothed in the summer clothes in which they escaped. There was a diphtheria epidemic, and before Christmas, four children died. The women were crying and the general mood was apathetic. Warriner added: "The Czech [local] village boys come and ask for the girls, saying that they have money; and this when the girls

[sic] come from some of the most self-respecting families, of the leaders of the group."[41] Warriner used the example of prostitution to underline the gravity of the situation in the camp. She indicated that the young female refugees were being taken advantage of by the local men – as opposed to an interpretation in which the women earned money to improve their situation, to be able to purchase warm clothing and medication. For Warriner, prostitution stood in contradiction to being a respected person, and symbolized the collapse of the refugees' society in the camp.

Some of these women were probably able to escape to Britain in 1939 on so-called domestic visas because the country had a shortage of maids. Rose Holmes's important research has shown that German, Czech, and Austrian maids who worked in Britain were confronted with long, exhausting labor, little pay, and expectations of gratitude.[42] Some were sexually harassed by their employers.[43] The women could not complain as they did not want to endanger their visas. The intertwined narratives of shameful sexual barter, sexual violence, and gratitude meant that next to none of these women complained about their treatment during the war. The stories of these women have been largely silenced and overshadowed by narratives of gratitude about the children saved by the Kindertransporte.

We owe some of the most forthright documentation of sex work during the Holocaust to Cecylia Slepak, a journalist who was part of the Oneg Shabbes documentation of life in the Warsaw ghetto.[44] She interviewed dozens of women, smugglers, social workers, and also a woman named Guta who provided for her family through sex work between ca 1940 and 1942. Guta was 23 years old in 1942. Married just after the outbreak of war, she was split up from her husband by the war and continued living with her parents and brother.[45] Slepak outlined how Guta had tried to join her husband in Lithuania, failed, and subsequently worked as a trader. When her parents took in an ethnic German lodger, she became his lover. Slepak argued that "[o]n her side the relationship sprang not from affection but from her excessively

erotic temperament and her cool calculation of financial profit." Similar to the examples of prostitution in colonial Kenya that Luise White examined, Guta offered the appearance of mutual love (the German carried her photograph in his purse and after the forced resettlement of Jews into the ghetto, continued to visit her for months).[46] As an attractive woman, she also provided companionship at evening parties, transforming the apartment into a (in the context of the ghetto) glamorous place of celebration and expensive drinks.[47] She also started working as a waitress, a job that allowed her to widen her social networks. Slepak indicates that this job included prostitution, as "she attracted clients through her looks and sophistication."[48] Eventually, Guta's relationship with the ethnic German came to an end. To improve her income, Guta partook in smuggling, which also entailed sexual barter with the Gentile smuggling leader. This rational relationship, too, was characterized by spending time together and the affection that the smuggler felt for Guta. Smuggling, however, did not offer a secure income, and so Guta began working as a sex worker in a bar, where she received a cut from the drinks she convinced patrons to buy, and sold sex.[49]

One could - and indeed, should! - write an entire book on Guta. But in the space here I want to address several select issues: Slepak describes an enormously resourceful, bold, and hard-working woman who bartered sex as just one of the jobs that she engaged in. Moreover, she had access to some desirable jobs (smuggling, or waitressing) only because she was willing to engage in sexual barter. These aspects of her biography are best described using Hufton's "economies of the makeshift" paradigm.[50] Second, Slepak repeatedly stresses the (relatively) luxurious world in which Guta sold sex, so much so that the reader wonders if the writer was not motivated by envy, though she also clearly states that Guta's own needs were modest.[51] This narrative probably reflected a wider discourse on luxury in the ghetto; many essays in the Oneg Shabbes collection described the "high life" in cafes or restaurants with an implied social critique.

Slepak also makes clear that Guta's motivation was helping her family; her mother was clear that it was solely her daughter's support that had saved them from death. Finally, Slepak's narration attempts to be objective and to report on a prostitute as a part of the ghetto's social history, but she judges her throughout.[52] Slepak uses expressions such as "excessively erotic temperament,"[53] "at the price of selling her body she is able to materially survive,"[54] and "sinking deeper and deeper into a moral quagmire."[55] This tension between Slepak's attempt at sociological distance and the moral conventions she fell back on is the same that most Holocaust historians addressing sex work are caught in. In the earlier report, Slepak mentions that Guta's father ran a restaurant and that "she spent her childhood and adolescence in an atmosphere of alcoholism, sexual abuse, and cynicism."[56] The pathologizing narratives in which a prostitute's choice of profession is explained by childhood sexual abuse are well established.[57] Slepak examines who in Guta's surrounding knew about the sexual barter and when; she also tells us that Guta tried to hide it from her social circle, indicating that this was an activity best obscured. At the end of the account, Guta no longer cared about people's opinions, which Slepak interpreted as her moral collapse. Slepak's documentation of Guta is fascinating and difficult at the same time: it offers us evidence of a woman surviving, and thriving, in extremely challenging conditions, supporting a family as well a network of friends. But the Slepak's account is coated in concealed stigmatizing comments that survive in historians' reading of the account.[58]

This condescension towards sex workers is present in postwar testimonies as well. Following sexual extortion from a Jewish functionary, at 21 years of age, Erna Frischmannová was put on a transport from Theresienstadt to Raasiku, Tallinn, and Goldfields in Estonia. Frischmannová was extremely lucky and survived.[59] In her oral history from 1989, she recalled that the camp commandant in the last camp, Fritz Stiwitz, had a relationship with a Polish Jewish woman named Anushka.[60] Frischmannová described her as

very beautiful, and then she added: “The problem was, Anushka was, even in Poland [pause], a sort of bar girl, she didn't take things so seriously as we did.”[61] With this reported lack of seriousness was apparently, as Frischmannová expressed elsewhere, the belief that Anushka used be a sex worker.[62] Once, Stiwitz started looking for other Jewish women to have sex with, and asked for Erna. Anushka stepped in in Erna’s place, thus saving her from what for Erna would have been a rape. Frischmannová recalled that Stiwitz reaction was: “Oh, you old whore, come with me.”[63] Thanks to the research of Benjamin Lapp, we know that other survivors also recalled the enforced relationship between Stiwitz and Anushka.[64] However, Frischmannová was the only who mentioned that there was something reprehensible about the woman who saved her from rape. In fact, Frischmannová stated: “I have to emphasise that again and again, she was very good to me.”[65] Anushka survived, moved to Great Britain and later to Israel. She gave an oral history where she spoke of many difficult aspects of her experience, including the separation from her daughter and sexual violence at hands of a queer guard. But she did not mention Stiwitz.[66]

Not all survivors spoke about fellow prisoners who engaged in sexual barter with disdain. Ella Deutsch, a 33-year old Jewish woman from Ostrava, was imprisoned in the Theresienstadt Family Camp in Birkenau. Her block elder was a fellow Ostrava woman named Nanne, who engaged in sexual barter with the guards in exchange for better treatment and food for her elderly mother: “That young girl kept herself and her mother alive like many others by becoming a lover of an SS man!” Deutsch wrote to her daughter 45 years later. She then described Nanne as a resourceful woman who, once she was made aware that Ella was the wife of a family friend, became helpful.[67]

A particularly agonizing example of stigmatization of prostitution stems from a teenage girl for whom it was sexual assault. In 1971, the Prague historian and survivor Anna Hyndráková wrote down her wartime memories for her adult children. She had time, having

been recently demoted from her former job at the Institute for the History of Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Perhaps because she was starting anew in the post-1968 normalization Czechoslovakia, she included incidents that, we may speculate, others chose to avoid discussing. Hyndráková, who was born in 1928, was deported via Theresienstadt and the Family Camp in Auschwitz to a satellite camp of Gross-Rosen. In February 1945, when the prisoners were sent on a death march, Hyndráková fled with her best friend, Doris W., and another young woman, Eva Preissová, three and four years older, respectively. Soon, the three were caught and sent to Niesky, another satellite camp of Gross-Rosen. The escapees were treated decently, as they were given food and shelter and were not beaten. However the men, prisoner functionaries, expected that the women would have sex with them. Hyndráková described the last three months of the war as a total shock and ongoing rape. After the first night, the head capo and Doris and Eva "tried to talk sense" into Hyndráková. They even told her they instead of the old man assigned, she could pick a young lover. The commandant stopped by, telling them with a smirk: "you can do everything, only don't get children [do not get pregnant]."[68]

Hyndráková continued: "So I decided to be 'reasonable.' But when they came in the evening, Kurt, Tadeusz, and Dolek [her new assigned partner], I started panicking and fought all night. He [Dolek] begged and tried it with kindness and without. I did, too, I whispered to him, 'You are a Pole, don't be a jerk like them!' It was terrible, I was probably hysterical, and I still had the fever. The same thing was repeated the third night. I don't even know if I lost my virginity or not." A few days later the three were sent to the Görlitz satellite camp. Here, a 33-year old Cologne Jew took a liking to Hyndráková: "I fought only a little, I no longer had the will or the strength."[69] She went on to explain that he was a helpful man who wanted to take care of her. At this stage, Hyndráková made the following statement: "I was sorry that he did not fall in love with Eva, I thought she would have not minded so much. She once even

went [with a man] for a cube of margarine."[70] After the war, they shared a flat, where they had conflicts because Eva was sexually active with changing partners, and Hyndráková disapproved.[71] At the same time, Hyndráková struggled because most of her relatives had been murdered, she was not made welcome by her surviving family, and she broke off the relationship with the Cologne man, who was upset and made a scene. Hyndráková's uncle implied that her sexual conduct was at fault, thus blaming her for the sexual violence she experienced. Hyndráková chose to leave this history behind her, married, studied, and became a historian.[72]

The difficult, indeed painful story of these young women survivors at the end of the war is instrumental for our understanding of sexual violence and the stigmatization of sexual barter. It shows Hyndráková's feelings of shock and being overwhelmed; what others considered sexual barter, to her meant rape. Judging from Hyndráková's testimony, the other two women were apparently willing to engage in sexual barter. The age difference between 21 (Eva), 20 (Doris), and 16 years (Hyndráková) played a significant role; in addition, Doris and Eva probably had previous sexual experience. It seems that women who engaged in sexual barter were usually comfortable with their sexuality.[73] But while Hyndráková and Doris remained close friends, Eva was hardly mentioned in their testimonies, and she was depicted as morally questionable because she engaged in sexual barter during the war and was not selective in her choice of sexual partners. Of the three women, Hyndráková was the only one who later spoke about this experience.[74] In her oral history, Doris W. only briefly touched on arriving in Niesky, and her account diverged from Hyndráková's considerably. She cited the commandant saying: "'Watch out that there are no children nine months later or any babies here.' [chuckles] But the men were in such a condition that they didn't care and we were in such a condition that we didn't care."[75] Doris's statement is ambiguous: what did the

men and the women not care about? Sex? Threat of pregnancy? Doris did not follow up to explain.

Eva emigrated to Chile and later to France, where she died in 2002. She left no testimony apart from her reparation file, where she wrote about the lasting health damage she endured from frost-bite she contracted in the last months of the war.[76] If it were not for these lines in her reparation file, all that would remain of Eva's memory would be the depiction of her as the unsympathetic woman who was too sexually active, and thus someone best left unspoken about. But what is the cost of such silences and erasures for understanding what happened to Holocaust survivors?

Narrating sexual barter in first person

Most of the narratives concerning sexual barter in the Holocaust are about white people, reflecting the majority of victims, and this focus often treats the persecution of racialized victims such as the Sinti and Roma or African-descended people separately. In doing so, this segregation fails to recognize the parallels in victims' experience and prisoner society.[77] In departure to the prevalent trend, I want to include a story of a Sinti woman who engaged in sexual barter. Between February 1943 and August 1944, the SS set up a section of Auschwitz Birkenau as the "Gypsy Family Camp." Survivors reported that women prisoners bartered sex with prisoner functionaries. The well-known German-Jewish physician Lucie Adelsberger recalled that the prisoner dentist in Auschwitz, who was among the most privileged prisoners, gave food to women "including a whole group of beautiful Gypsy [sic] women, who one after another found their way to his chamber."[78] Adelsberger's description of the "good-natured man" was ironic, because in the next sentence she revealed that he helped the Romani women not altruistically, but in exchange for sex, and that he was able to exert control over a number of attractive women.

A rare description of sexual barter between prisoner functionaries and a Roma prisoner comes from Zilli Reichmann, a 19-year old German Sinti woman who was in Auschwitz with her three-year old daughter, parents, siblings, and nephews and nieces. Similar to Guta, Reichmann was immensely resourceful: she had escaped from an earlier camp, and she stole food from the warehouse and kitchen. Later, when the Camp Elder, the former interbrigadist Hermann Dimanski, took a liking to her, she agreed to become his lover. Dimanski was 15 years her senior and for Reichmann, the decision was a pragmatic one. Reichmann's mother was worried that her daughter would be caught stealing. Zilli recalled: "It was not particularly nice. But I was not disgusted by him or such, he was a clean man. […] But me and a Gadjo [non-Roma], that was bad."[79] Her parents approved of the relationship because Dimanski brought them food. Dimanski was apparently genuinely in love with Reichmann and after the war, he traced her and proposed. For Reichmann, however, the relationship was one of convenience.[80] Dimanski's help meant that Reichmann's many relatives no longer suffered from hunger, and she was even able to help other inmates in the "Gypsy Camp."

Reichmann's story has been told twice, but her biographers' approach is very different. We owe one biography to Jana Mechelhoff-Herezi, historian of the Nazi persecution of Sinti and Roma, whose interview from 2017-18 gave space to Reichmann's experiences, ambivalences, and contradictory protagonists. An 2016 biography by the historian Heiko Haumann depicted the relationship as romantic and Reichmann's rational motivation is only alluded to.[81] In fact, a 2011 book by Haumann on Dimanski also mentioned his relationship with Reichmann as romantic. It is disturbing that Haumann devoted a significant amount of space reference Reichmann's enforced VD tests,[82] especially since the reader learns from them nothing relevant to Dimanski nor Reichmann.

The age gap between partners in sexual barter could also go in the opposite direction. Eva Müllerová was a 46-year old housewife and mother from Brno who was deported to Theresienstadt several months before her husband Oskar. Her two sons were able to escape deportation.[83] In 1942, Müllerová started working as a housekeeper for a prisoner functionary who was 12 years her junior, Ferdinand Löwy from Plzeň, who was deported alone because his gentile wife had divorced him "on racial grounds" after the German occupation. Löwy ensured that not only Müllerová, but also her husband, once he arrived, were protected from transport. Such a protection was immensely important in the transit ghetto from which transports to the "East" departed regularly. Löwy found Oskar a good position. It is not clear whether Löwy and Müllerová became lovers (for which there are indications), but their connection qualified as sexual barter in the sense of exchange of affection and domestic support for resources. Oskar was jealous, and complained in the letters to his sons, while Müllerová presented herself as resourceful and Oskar as irrationally suspicious. She also helped Löwy to rekindle the postal connection to his family in Plzeň, as he was upset not hearing from his ex-wife and daughter. Müllerová's frankness in relaying her relationship with Löwy and marital difficulties to her two sons outside of the ghetto is unusual, and the fact that these letters survived even more unique. In the end, Müllerová and her husband were deported to Auschwitz and murdered. Löwy was able to survive in Theresienstadt, remarried his wife, and never mentioned the Müllers to his family.

Instances of queer sexual barter are even more difficult to find, as the victim society in camps and ghettos stigmatized same-sex relationships.[84] The Austrian Josef Kohout was one of the very few prisoners with a pink triangle who gave testimony in any form. Persecuted for article §129 of the Austrian criminal code (same-sex intimacy), Kohout survived Sachsenhausen and Flossenbürg concentration camps in Germany. At first, Kohout was sexually assaulted by other prisoners, who saw him as fair game because they perceived his

pink triangle as a marker of femininity, indicating sexual availability.[85] Later, he became the lover of first one and later another prisoner functionary, men who identified as straight, but according to Kohout's testimony, had relationships with him because there were no women present. Kohout described how the first relationship did not arise from his own free will, but how he was able to improve his choice of partner over time.[86] Both men grew to like him, engaging in gestures reserved for established couples, such as jealousy, taking him on labor assignments outside, or crying from joy when receiving his visit in the sick bay.[87] With the help of these relationships, Kohout was able to make a career within the prisoner society, becoming a prisoner functionary himself and eventually acquiring the ultimate sign of status: a freely chosen relationship with another prisoner who was himself persecuted as a homosexual.[88]

Kohout's account was published soon after the decriminalization of homosexuality in Austria in 1971. It was based on Kohout's conversations with Hans Neumann in the late 1960s and appeared in 1972 under the pseudonym "Heinz Heger."[89] Kohout openly reported about the sexual violence that he had experienced and witnessed. Similarly, he directly addressed the situations in which he participated in sexual barter and the limited leeway in which he acted. He was not ashamed of his actions, however he once remarked that "my will to survive had a high price […] of morality, decency, and honor."[90] Throughout, however, he represented himself as an empathic, decent, and wherever possible, helpful man. The memoir often uses the phrase "I had no choice," and then depicts a situation in which Kohout chose sexual barter that offered him advantages, while the alternative would have put him in danger. For Kohout, this was not a meaningful choice. This viewpoint contrasts with the often-quoted question posed Liana Millu in her fictionalized account of Birkenau. Here, a Dutch prisoner called Lotti who signed up for the camp brothel asks: "I'm supposed to refuse life because it's offered on a dirty plate?"[91] thus consciously choosing survival.

Sexual barter in hiding

Hierarchical relationships and dependencies between the hidden Jews and their rescuers permeated life in hiding. The stigma surrounding prostitution profoundly influenced postwar testimonies, in which first-person narratives of sexual barter disappeared almost completely. This view has largely influenced the research, as historians have interpreted these stories almost exclusively through the framework of romance or sexual violence.[92] The only important exception is Katya Gusarov's discussion of Jewish women in hiding in occupied Eastern Europe who examined women's agency and choices in rational relationships in hiding. Gusarov also looked at the value of sexual barter in hiding.[93]

When Marie Jalowicz Simon's memoir of hiding in wartime Berlin came out in 2014, her book radically challenged the lasting expectations about altruistic rescue.[94] Readers across the world were captivated by her sober narrative of bartering her rescue for money, aid, cleaning, affection, company, and sex[95]. Simon's memoir showed that sex was a currency, and just one currency among others. The choice Simon had was to stay and provide what was asked of her, or search for another hiding place (and be potentially caught). And yet, while Simon clearly speaks about her choices, the historian Marion Kaplan analyzing them wrote "are these choices or choiceless choices? […] I do not have an answer."[96] But as historians of sexuality and the Holocaust, we should attempt these answers, however difficult they are.

While most known instances of sexual barter in hiding were heterosexual and with the woman as the selling party, cases of men selling sex can offer a useful comparison. Perhaps best known is the Berlin Jewish resistance fighter Gad Beck, who offers a queer perspective.[97] As someone defined in the aftermath of the Nuremberg laws as "Geltungsjude," that is, in his case, a person of mixed background but who was a member of the Jewish Community, Beck's background offered some protection from deportation.[98] He eventually went into hiding on

account of his resistance activities. Together with his friends in the Chug Chalutzi Zionist group, he organized a network that helped Jews in hiding. Beck encountered several gentile men who offered to help, with implicit or explicit demands of instrumental sex. Beck depicts these encounters as sexual encounters that he would have not chosen out of his free will, mentions what he did or did not like about their physical looks, and frames them as a part of his sexual biography.[99]

These statements need to be taken with a grain of salt. Beck's ghost-written memoir is rich in exaggeration and after its publication some former Chug Chalutzi members rejected his claims about mutual intimacy, whereas others threatened legal action for being outed.[100] But if we decide to follow the story, it is remarkable that Beck not only choses to speak about his participation in sexual barter, he does it as a sign of his dedication to resistance and as an inherent part of his flamboyant and rich gay identity. There is no sign of shame, nor of sexual violence, echoing the trend from Josef Kohout. It is very probable that his perspective as a man, in particular as a sexually active, confident gay man, influenced the framing of his narrative not as a victim, but an active partner. To take another example, in her analysis of the relationships between French POWs and German women, Cornelie Usborne showed similar narrative expectations of men who participated in sexual barter as unashamed. These men depicted the women (who, in fact, often had coaxed them into intimacy) as conquests.[101] Wider patriarchal structures within society influenced the ways how men and women framed their sexual barter: gay and straight men who had sex within their sexual orientation could integrate these into their sexual biography, whereas women who engaged in heterosexual barter were stamped as having had too many sexual partners. Expectations of a hard sexual orientation is key for this framing: Dorota Głowacka's research into male-male sexual violence experienced by Jewish teenage prisoners in concentration camps indicates that the boys framed the assault as rape. At the same time, the boys made sense of it in homophobic

terms by linking the attacker's motivation to his presumed homosexuality.[102] It is not only the gender of the selling party, it is also their identity in terms of sexual orientation that indicates whether the barter will be narrated, and if so, how they make sense of it.

There is even less information on men who engaged in rational heterosexual relationships. There are indications that Jewish men in hiding, just like Jewish women, were expected to secure rescue with affection and intimacy, but if they survived, they almost never spoke about it.[103] We get a glance in Marie Jalowicz Simon's memoir when she recalls her hiding place in winter 1942/43. She stayed with Gerda Janicke, a former patient of Benno Heller, a Jewish gynecologist protected by mixed marriage. Heller helped many Jews go into hiding, setting them up with his former patients. Heller and Janicke used to have a sexual relationship, and now the affair was rekindled in exchange for Jalowicz's hiding place. "Heller himself once asked me angrily, 'Do you suppose I'm doing it for fun? When I have so much on my mind, and we're all of us malnourished? I have to pay Frau Janicke for sheltering you with my prowess in bed.'"[104]

At Janicke's, Jalowicz later met another Jewish woman in hiding, the dressmaker Eva Deutschkron, who was married, However, Deutschkron was hidden separately from her husband Martin, who was hiding with their friend Mirjam Grunwald, incidentally a former classmate of Jalowicz. Grunwald had access to funds and ration cards. Deutschkron confided in Jalowicz: "But she [Grunwald] could bear her mortal terror only in the arms of a man. So she suggested a very unusual bargain: Eva was to lend Mirjam her husband for an indefinite period of time, getting money and ration cards in return. Part of the deal was that Eva would see her husband just once a month: no love-making, no emotional outbursts, their meeting would be only so that they could know they were both still alive."[105] The Deutschkrons discussed the offer with Heller, who suggested: "In absurd times, everything is absurd. You can save yourselves only by absurd means, since the Nazis are out to murder you all." The

Deutschkrons accepted the bargain, which meant that Martin was safe, and Eva had extra access to food.

Eva Deutschkron left behind three testimonies of her time in hiding.[106] No testimony from Mirjam Grunwald and Martin Deutschkron is known. None of Eva Deutschkron's three accounts references the deal she struck with Mirjam. She mentioned Benno Heller and his affair with Gerda Janicke; she brought up the separation from her husband in two different hiding spaces, and Heller played a role in her acceptance to be apart.[107] But each of the three testimonies are unclear on Martin's hiding place in 1943, and the details Eva gave vary. Mirjam is a fixture in Deutschkron's memoirs, but it was Martin and Eva who took her in to their final hiding space. Eva even mentioned weekly 15-minute meetings, but in her version, she was checking in on Mirjam who was out on her own.[108] Only once, Eva spoke about marital tensions when Martin and Mirjam turned against her at the end of the war.[109] The Deutschkrons remained a couple, the three eventually emigrated to the US and remained friendly. Finally, all three texts completely pass over Jalowicz's presence – the fellow hidden Jew to whose account we owe this story.

Can we rely on Marie Jalowicz Simon's version of events? The memoir has been praised for its accuracy and honesty. Her son, who is a Holocaust historian, was able to crosscheck all the extraordinary stories. He recalled: "Marie Simon was right, and really had said all that was necessary on a given subject."[110] Jalowicz was honest and unflattering in her descriptions of everyone, and she was open about the fact that she was not particularly fond of either Eva or Mirjam. Perhaps a certain malice combined with the desire to tell "the whole story" is one reason behind Jalowicz's choice to include their story in her account. Eva Deutschkron's storytelling was probably motivated by the fact that unlike Jalowicz, whose postwar life had little to do with the people who helped her survive, Martin remained her husband and father of her children, and Mirjam a family friend. The narrative of sexual barter

would have turned the ruling conventions and gender order on their head: the account about a Jewish woman who purchased a friend's husband to ease the stress in hiding transgresses too many normative societal assumptions. Benno Heller did not have the chance to write his memoir. In February 1943, he was betrayed, arrested, and did not survive the war. Gerda Janicke took care of his widow, while Eva Deutschkron ran the network of hidden Jews.[111]

Relationships with guards

How did sexual barter between victims and perpetrators play out, and how did it compare to the instances between victims, and also between victims and bystanders? Did the Jewish men and women here have any meaningful control? Was there an exchange or were they rather coerced into sex? The following examples offer more dimensions of violent sexual barter.

Lili Scholz, a "half-Jewish" journalist in Frankfurt/Main born in 1914 whose mother was Jewish, offers an example of violent sexual barter with a perpetrator. In June 1944, a Gestapo officer Heinrich Schmitt, whose wife and children were evacuated due to aerial bombardment, gave her a choice: either become his lover, or put the life of her Jewish mother in jeopardy: "I mean - you know the situation of your mother, and it is I who puts the transport lists together. You understand – I."[112] Scholz gave in and saw the Gestapo man regularly, even though she was repulsed. For Schmitt, coming from a poor background, having an affair with the daughter of a well-known Frankfurt doctor who did anything Scholz ordered, was a confirmation of his power.[113] After three months, Scholz became pregnant and organized an (illegal) abortion, all the while without telling anything of it to her parents. Eventually she learned that Schmitt found several other "half-Jewish" women whom he coerced into relationships in exchange for not harming their Jewish parents.[114] In February 1945, the last remaining German Jews, most of whom were protected by a mixed marriage, were about to be deported to Theresienstadt. They could not know (as we do today), that

Theresienstadt was a relatively safe destination at that point, and they were terrified. For the first time, Scholz sought out Schmitt of her own will. He hit her in her genitals and then informed her that he had removed her mother from the deportation list.[115] Possibly, Hahn included the story of this sexualized violence to frame the one favor she experienced from her abuser. After the war, Scholz married a US citizen and moved to the USA. She published her edited diary in 1974, in the midst of the women's liberation movement. Thanks to Scholz's diary we have the account of her enforced relationship with the Gestapo officer.

A well-known story of romantic involvement between a Jewish prisoner and a guard was documented by Lukáš Přibyl's films and studies on the transports of Czech Jews to the East. The location was the camp of Ereda in north-eastern Estonia, which was one of the camps that Theresienstadt women passed through when they were being deported to Raasiku and later to Goldfields. In Ereda, the commandant Heinz Drosin fell in love with the beautiful 18-year old Inge Syltenová from Brno.[116] The story of their relationship was relayed by the survivors as neither Drosin nor Syltenová survived the war. The narrative in which the eyewitnesses relayed the story followed the conventional romantic framework of an evil man redeemed by a love of a good woman:[117] Syltenová supposedly scolded Drosin when he beat prisoners or withheld food when the inmates talked with people from the outside. She allegedly improved the conditions for prisoners in the camp. In February 1944, Drosin and Syltenová attempted to escape to Scandinavia. Their escape failed and they were both killed. A SS driver who picked up the corpses of Syltenová and Drosin informed the prisoners about their death. It is not clear whether other SS seized and murdered both of them, or whether Drosin, once he recognized that they would be captured, killed first Syltenová and then himself.[118] Either way, Syltenová was murdered by the Germans.

Přibyl endorsed the romantic narrative. He described the episode as "the astonishing and tragic case of a concentration camp Romeo and Juliet."[119] He also wrote about "love

between Heinz and Inge," and the "lovers."[120] At the same time, Přibyl was able to recognize sexual violence: he mentioned the "sexual abuse" that both female and male prisoners in Ereda experienced.[121] Unfortunately, Přibyl did not explore the difference between the Syltenová-Drosin romance on the one hand, and sexual abuse by other SS men on the other.

Speaking about Syltenová's connection with the commandant in solely romantic terms is problematic because it disregards the asymmetries that defined the relationship. Syltenová, who was born in 1925 and turned eighteen just before her deportation to Ereda, was separated from her parents and family, and had witnessed a considerable amount of violence in the year and half since her deportation from Theresienstadt. She had nowhere to escape to. It is possible that the young woman was attracted to Drosin who was reportedly good-looking. But probably more important was that Syltenová could persuade the SS man to treat her fellow prisoners as human beings to support the tight-knit group of her fellow prisoners, receive their admiration, wear decent clothes, and be protected from hard work. Acknowledging this context shows that reading the relationship as a romance between two good-looking star-crossed lovers misses its entire context of coercion and dependency, much more persuasive arguments why Syltenová chose to engage in the relationship.

Hertha Poppert offers particularly striking example of a Jewish victim who used sexual barter to survive and help others, and of the stigmatization she endured because of it.[122] Hertha née Speier, born in 1913 in Hessian Fritzlar, emigrated to the Netherlands in 1933 with her future husband. They settled in Zaandam, got married, and ran a millinery factory. Hertha identified as a Catholic. In July 1942, the couple was arrested by the Gestapo in connection to smuggling illegal IDs from Belgium. Before, they had been able to send their 8-year old daughter into hiding.[123] Erich was sent to Sobibór and murdered, a fate that Hertha was able to escape. In March 1943, Hertha was sent from prison to Vught concentration camp. There she became the secretary of Arthur Lehmann, himself German emigrant and

chief camp clerk, and lover of Richard Süßkind, another prisoner functionary.[124] She was known for her "fearless" way of dealing with the SS and, once, for punishment, was sent to three months forced labor.[125] Later, she was transferred to the Philips Kommando, a section of the camp where inmates worked for the Philips company.[126] In June 1944, the Jews of the Philips Kommando were sent to Auschwitz and later to Reichenbach, a satellite camp of Gross-Rosen. The women were sent to further camps in Parschnitz, then in quick order to Porta Westfalica, Beendorf, from here on a death transport to Hamburg-Eidelstedt. Just before the British army arrived in Hamburg, on 2 May 1945, the survivors, among them Hertha Poppert, were sent to Sweden in a little known rescue mission organized by a SS man called Franz Göring.[127]

Poppert must have appeared to her contemporaries a woman of great charm and femininity.[128] We have her (oddly not flattering) description from David Koker: "an eerie vacant face with brown eyes [and] plain blond hair. And her strange gait: a bit bent forward in the lumbar region, something languid and smooth, soft stepped."[129] In a classic denunciation of "dangerous" female beauty, women survivors stressed that Poppert dyed her hair, and continued to do so, remarkably, throughout her time in the camps.[130] It is not clear whether Poppert had sex with the Germans (as some survivors claimed), or whether she flirted with them, but in either case she succeeded in establishing a working relationship. In her own statements, Poppert steadfastly rejected any intimate relationships with Germans.[131] One particularly useful acquaintance in Vught was the Protective Custody Compound Leader Arnold Strippel, later transferred to oversee the satellite camps of Neuengamme.[132] These ties to the perpetrators allowed her to occupy a position as prisoner functionary in all these camps and access inside information. For instance, Poppert knew in Vught that Auschwitz was an "annihilation camp" and she informed her fellow prisoners upon arrival what they could expect.[133] Gerda Nothmann Luner, a teenage German emigrant, recalled that in April 1945

during a horrible train ride from Beendorf, Poppert recognized in an SS man a guard from Vught, her former lover, who told her to leave the train, which, according to Luner, was directed to an even deadlier place. Poppert took all of the Philips women with her, thus saving their lives. Luner described Poppert as "the camp prostitute,"[134] and remarked: "so, in the end, I owe my life in part to a very altruistic prostitute."[135]

Luner's recollection addressed, in a muddled way, a central event for which Poppert was to be investigated for after the war. In March 1945, the Philips women arrived in Porta Westfalica, where the SS officer in charge happened to be a former SS man from Vught who recognized Poppert and made her camp elder. This was probably Arnold Strippel, the base commander for Hamburg, and the most experienced, and brutal, among his peers.[136] Poppert also served as transport leader on a notorious evacuation transport from the approaching British army six weeks later.[137] Altogether 4,350 inmates were forced into crowded open coal cars that travelled across northern Germany for ten days. There were up to 160 people for space that would have usually held 60-80; the Philips women were spread among the cars. There was almost no food or water.[138] People in the cattle cars beat each other to death over space. It is estimated that altogether about 500 people died. From the 200-250 women of the Philips group, 93 perished.[139] The train travelled without much of a destination, following tracks that were not destroyed. For three days, it stopped in Sülstorf in Mecklenburg. Survivors remarked that even now, Poppert was able to keep her good looks.[140] The survivor Ria de Korte recalled: "The transport leader passes by the train car with her record book. It is beautiful spring weather. She is wearing a borrowed short summer skirt and a spotless collar. Her hair is newly done and shines golden yellow in the sun. She is a prisoner, like us. How many dead? She asks. 'Nine.'"[141] Strippel ordered Poppert to count the women from the Philips group. She took it as a chance to find two empty cars and brought the Philips women there. The conditions were somewhat better, the cars less full, and most importantly, the

killing among the desperate people in crowded cars stopped.[142] The train then continued for another six days. Poppert was also able to organize another empty car and bring Dutch women from another group.[143] From Eidelstedt, the Dutch women were taken on a transport to Sweden organized by a Gestapo liaison officer.[144]

Luner's portrayal of the woman who repeatedly saved not only her life, but that of many other women of the Philips group, was stigmatizing: the way she used the term "prostitute" implied that Poppert had done something wrong. There is a sad irony in the gap between Luner's judgment and the fact that Poppert's brave and altruistic conduct. Still, in comparison with the statements of other survivors, Luner's judgement was positive. Days after the liberation in Sweden, and again one year later in the Netherlands, survivors pressed charges against Poppert, accusing her of "collaboration" with the Germans because she served as a prisoner functionary.[145] Poppert was not only stigmatized as a prostitute and a "collaborator" who slept with the guards, but moreover, fellow survivors depicted her as queer. In winter 1943, the Vught prisoner David Koker, who was a precise observer, mentioned her bisexuality.[146] Unfortunately, the authors of an otherwise excellent study of the Philips group integrated the survivor accusations against Poppert as part of their analysis: "She worked in cold blood and with focus. [here they bring in a survivor quote] 'She slept with everyone, men, women, Jews, Germans, as long as it brought her advantage.'"[147] The cited quote depicted Poppert as abnormal because of her lack of sexual boundaries. It was the combination of all three, sex work, "collaboration," and queerness, that present powerful mechanisms of othering that the survivors used to other her as deviant.[148] Hertha Poppert was very lucky that she did not let the Dutch survivors, whose lives she had saved through her charisma and resourcefulness, ruin her postwar life. She was reunited with her daughter, moved to Belgium, remarried, had one more child, and lived the rest of her life as a wealthy woman on the French Riviera.[149]

Conclusions:

I started this essay with a complaint about gender Holocaust history ignoring prostitution, and I want to end it on a positive note. Since its publication in 2013, my earlier research has, I believe, allowed second and third generation Holocaust descendants as well as child survivors to re-evaluate the experiences of their family members. Ariana Neumann's and Zuzana Justman's studies of their families in Theresienstadt addressed sexual barter face on.[150] Similarly, Nina Grünfeld published a biography of her Slovak Jewish grandmother, who was a professional sex worker prior to her deportation to Auschwitz and Ravensbrück.[151] These authors were able to incorporate sexual barter with its complexities, and the agency it afforded women, into their narratives.

Incorporating prostitution into our Holocaust histories allows us to write a more nuanced history. The concept of sexual barter makes it possible for historians to comprehend how people in situations historians previously interpreted as hopeless looked for resources. Such an approach shows the different values and meanings of intimacy, affection, and sexual acts for the bartering parties. Recognizing the value of sex as something precious meant it could be exchanged for valuable things, such as a "good job" in a camp, protection from transport, a hiding place, or a visa. Rather than looking at sex as something that ought not to be bartered, this perspective allows us to discern that sexual barter could offer a high cost countervalue: sometimes it meant a hiding place, rescue from transport to a deadly camp, or even removal from a list to the gas chamber. Looking at intercourse in exchange for life, it is striking how much value this commodity could carry. As Katya Gusarov showed, rescuers motivated by rational relationships put their lives at risk to save the Jews they were hiding.[152]

As Hufton showed with the "economies of the makeshift," sexual barter was one resource among many. It was often employed by individuals with excellent social capital,

such as Guta, Josef Kohout, Eva Müllerová, Anushka, Gad Beck, or Hertha Poppert, people with whom others liked spending time. Context is crucial, necessitating close analysis and careful research: some situations had minimal leeway (Inge Syltenová in Ereda), whereas sometimes, like Eva Müllerová, individuals had a choice whether to engage in sexual barter, and pursued it to unlock new opportunities. The fact that these are difficult histories does not mean that these women and men had no agency. These were not choiceless choices.[153] Lawrence Langer's concept has become an unfortunate truism, shaping our expectations of Holocaust victims so that they always appear passive, leading to flattened histories. We need to appreciate decisions people made as decisions, such as fleeing or staying, with whom to share food or join on transport — or whether to engage in sexual barter, be it in a selling or purchasing position.[154] Even if their freedom was limited, or if those people did not survive in the end, their choices should not be rendered meaningless.

Consent, similar to freedom, does not operate as a binary. "A narrow focus on whether or not women consent to prostitution hinders our understanding of the whole process,"[155] wrote Ilse van Liempt on the issue of consent for trafficking. Holocaust historians may feel that they put themselves in ethically troubled and troubling waters if they go into partial consent for the often violent or coercive sexual barter, but doing so provides us with a better understanding of victims' perspectives. The victims did not have all choices, but they had some. If we want to understand their agency, we need to explore how they made use of these, and how they created leeway out of minimal spaces.

Over the course of my research, I have often debated my work with friends and colleagues. In bringing up the silence of Alice Haberland, Anushka, Martin Deutschkron, or Eva Preissová, people would respond "but of course." When I responded by pointing to the counter-examples of Zilli Reichmann, Eva Müllerová, Josef Kohout, Gad Beck, Lili Scholz, and Marie Jalowicz Simon, people said that these were exceptions. Our task, I suggest, is to

analyze the history of normative assumptions, rather than having them dictate our interpretation of sex work. To go beyond stigma is hard, as it belongs to the utmost pillars of a society. But as Jennifer Evans reminds us in her plea for queering German history, we need to denaturalize our current frames of reference.[156] The nature of shame attached to sex work in itself has been changing, and has been historized. In this article, I have traced the emergence of the stigma that came about during the Holocaust. Society could interpret certain acts as permissible (men selling sex to women), but that also varied over time and depended on the context. Inge Syltenová's sexual barter was eminently narratable because the author and director who discovered the story did not interpreted it as such but rather as a romance. A romantic relationship between a perpetrator and a Jewish victim is apparently less transgressive than sexual barter. This social expectation of romance, however, distorts the historical setting: most relationships in the Holocaust were hierarchical and had a transactional dimension. The challenge at hand for future Holocaust historians is to recognize the expressions of shame in the sources we read and to avoid restating them in our analysis. Instead, we need to make shame and stigma into a topic of their own.[157]

Finally, what do we get when we incorporate the Holocaust into the history of prostitution? Doing so raises issues of stratification, class, and its rapid change during the genocide. Much of prostitution history has been in reference to working class women. One discomfort of Holocaust historians towards the sex work paradigm was what one could phrase as "these women would have never engaged in it in normal times," that is, prostitution as labor is a fitting concept only for poor people; for the respectable, it is implied as dishonorable, and therefore inherently coercive. It would be worthwhile to explore how other historians of sex work address these class contradictions. But there are limits to what we can take from the history of sex work as labor, as the history of prostitution in the Holocaust was defined primarily by life and death, rather than work. In the end, we will not know which

stories Guta, Eva Müllerová, Inge Syltenová, and Benno Heller would relay of their wartime lives. They did not live to tell them.

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Notes

[1] Baker, *Days of Sorrow*, 294.
[2] For Haberland, I have consulted her restitution file in Entschädigungsamt Berlin (#76079).
[3] Hájková, *Last Ghetto.*
[4] Hájková, "Sexual Barter…," 503-533.
[5] See, for instance Gans, *Jaap en Ischa Meijer*, 362; Fogelman, "Sexual Abuse…,", 255-274; Person, "Sexual Violence…," 103-121.
[6] Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, 44-45.
[7] See also Timm, "The Challenges…," 351-364, 353, 357.
[8] See Regina Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*, section III; Sommer, *Das KZ-Bordell*; Hughes, "Forced Prostitution…,"; Fárová et al., *Zdeněk Tmej*.
[9] For child sexual abuse and sexual barter, see Lev-Wiesel et al., *Hell Within Hell*; Horowitz, "What We Learn," 45-66, 51-52; see also Waxman, "Buried Words,"473-480, 475 and passim.
[10] Waxman, "Buried Words," 473-480; Dwork, "Sexual Abuse," 495-500.
[11] Hájková, "Sexual Barter," 505.
[12] Ibid.
[13] For instrumental sex, see Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 53, 70, 188.
[14] Gilfoyle, "Prostitutes in the Archives," 514–527; Walkowitz, "Politics of Prostitution," 192.
[15] Bethke, *Dance*, 74.
[16] Sommer, *KZ-Bordell*; Hughes, "Forced Prostitution."
[17] Cf. Haumann, *Hermann Diamanski*, 159, 170.
[18] See the remarks by Karibo, "Reading the Archives," 69-99.
[19] On critical reading of the notion of "normal," see Daston, *Against Nature*; Cryle et al., *Normality A Critical Genealogy*.
[20] Keire, "All Things," paper.
[21] Onitiu, "'The Duty to Remember," seminar.
[22] Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power*, 268f; Bos, "Sexual Violence," 117; Timm, "The Costs of Silencing,". The narrative of shameful prostitution with the Nazis also applied for the occupied countries in general, see for instance Virgili, Shorn Women.
[23] Examples of this interpretation include Röger, *Kriegsbeziehungen*; Finkel, *Ordinary Jews*, 107.
[24] Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*; Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*; see also Finkel, *Ordinary Jews* (for inclusion of various social and political theories more generally).

[25] One example is presented in Langer, 'Gendered Suffering?' 361-363 and Ozick's attack on Ringelheim, cited in Ringelheim, "The Split," 340–350. See also directly refuted in Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, passim; Spurlin, Lost Intimacies, 2-3.
When the author applied for funding for a conference on everyday Holocaust history in 2010, the funding body stated in their feedback on the application that it was necessary to explain why gender studies was relevant.
[26] Laska, *Women in the Resistance*; Kaplan, *Between Dignity*; Nechama Tec, *Resilience and Courage*.
[27] Walkowitz, "Politics of Prostitution," 188 has presented this argument.
[28] Röger, *Kriegsbeziehungen*; see also Person, "Sexual Violence."
[29] Amesberger et al., *Sexualisierte Gewalt*, 150f.
[30] Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*, 156-164.
[31] Röger, *Kriegsbeziehungen*.
[32] Von Germeten, *Profit and Passion*, 8.
[33] Horowitz, "What We Learn," 51-53.
[34] Finkel, *Ordinary Jews*, 107.
[35] Hufton, *The Poor*; Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian society*; White, *Comforts of Home*; Corbin, *Women for Hire*.
[36] Walkowitz, "History," 19-32.
[37] Yarfitz, *Impure Migration*, 137.
[38] Van Liempt, "Trafficking in Human Beings," 27-42.
[39] Ibid., 32.
[40] "A narrow focus on whether or not on women consent to prostitution hinders our understanding of the whole process." Van Liempt, "Trafficking in Human Beings," 33.
[41] National Archives Jew, HO294/53, "Warriner to Layton 9th January 1939." Thanks to Henry Warriner for providing me with a copy. See also Warriner, "A Winter in Prague," 209-240; Warriner, *Doreen Warriner's War*, 42-61.
[42] Holmes, "Love, Labour, Loss," 288-309.
[43] Holmes made this point at her talk "Love, Labour, Loss: Women, Refugees and the 'Servant Crisis' in Britain, 1933–1939," at the Feminist History Group at the University of Warwick, 21 May 2015.
[44] Ofer, "Her View through My Lens," 29-50, 38-43; Kassow, *Who Will*, 245-247.
[45] See also Person, "Sexual violence," 114.
[46] White, Comforts of Home.
[47] Anonymous (= Cecylia Slepak), "The Jewish woman," 233-341, 316, 320. Samuel Kassow believes that these two sections discuss two different women, Kassow, *Who Will*, 450, fn 46, whereas Dalia Ofer, Katarzyna Person, and myself believe they are identical.
[48] Slepak, 321.
[49] Ibid., 322.
[50] Hufton, *The Poor*.
[51] Slepak, 321.
[52] Ofer, "Her view:" Kassow, *Who Will*, 245-247.
[53] Slepak, 316.
[54] Ibid., 248. Notably, Ofer repeats the phrase "selling her body": "Her view," 41.
[55] Ibid., 322.
[56] Ibid., 245. Ofer points out that Slepak's first report on Guta ends just after the move to the ghetto and is more positive to her. Ofer, "Her view," 41-42.
[57] For an example of this narrative, see Farley, "Prostitution,", 247-280, 252.
[58] Ofer's argument that Slepak "reverberated sympathy to Guta beyond the intellectual empathy of the researcher" is an example of internalized stigmatization of sex work: Ofer, "Her view," 42; see also Kassow, *Who will*, 246f.
[59] Anna Hájková, "The Holocaust,".
[60] On Stiwitz (sometimes spelled Stiewitz), see Birn, "Goldfields," 1498f.
[61] British Library, Oral History Collection, C410/055, "Interview of Erna Meissner (né Frischmannová)." The transcript erroneously spelled Anushka without "h." See also Meissner, interview #37341 where she described Anushka: "she used to be a singer in a bar or something like that. Her husband was there as well. [long pause] You could be critical of her behavior."
[62] Cited after Přibyl, "Die Geschichte," 148-239, 205.
[63] Meissner, interview.
[64] Kahane, interview; Billauer, interview. With many thanks to Benjamin.
[65] Meissner, interview.
[66] USHMM, 1995.A.1272.41, "Interview of Anushka F." With thanks to Benjamin Lapp for identifying this interview and letting me know, and to Simon Goldberg for translation.

[67] Beit Terezin Archive, 114,4, "Memoirs of Ella and Otto Deutsch." I believe that Deutsch erred here; Nanne's sexual partner was probably a prisoner functionary (kapo), and not a SS man. See also Hájková, "Between Love and Coercion," 112-133, 125.
[68] Hyndráková, "Dopis dětem," 120-176, 156. Hyndráková changed Preissová's last name, and I keep here the form she gives in her memoir.
[69] Ibid., 158. The man returned to Cologne and went on to become a key member of the local Jewish Community and the German Social Democrats.
[70] Ibid., 158.
[71] Ibid., 165.
[72] Neuner, "Anna Hyndráková,".
[73] Hájková, "Between Love and Coercion, 118.
[74] Hyndráková, "Dopis."
[75] Yale Fortunoff Collection, "Interview Doris W.", hvt 1410.
[76] NRW State Archive, BR 3002 NR 759709, "Reparation file Eva Preissová.".
[77] Carr, *Germany's Black Holocaust*; Camp, *Other Germans*; Weiss-Wendt, *The Nazi Genocide*.
[78] Adelsberger, *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Story*, 61.
[79] I should like to thank Jana Mechelhoff-Herezi for sharing with me her forthcoming work on Reichmann. See Reichmann, *Gott hat mit mir*, 48.
[80] Reichmann, *Gott hat mit mir*, 50.
[81] Haumann, *Die Akte Zilli Reichmann*, 138-142.
[82] Haumann, *Hermann Diamanski*, 158-170, for VD tests 159, 170. Dimanski added an "a" to his last name after the war to "Diamanski."
[83] All names in this case have been changed on the wish of the person holding the papers which reference this paragraph. I have also changed some circumstances.
[84] Eschebach, "Geschichte und Gedenken,", 65–79.
[85] Heger, *Men with the Pink Triangle*, 28.
[86] Ibid., 61.
[87] Ibid., 62, 72, 76f.
[88] Ibid., 95.
[89] Gassner, "Wer war Heinz Heger?"
[90] Heger, *Men with the Pink Triangle*, 75.
[91] Millu, *Smoke over Birkenau*, 172.
[92] Kaplan, *Dignity*, p. 220; Horowitz, "What We Learn."
[93] Gusarov, "Sexual Barter," 100-111.
[94] Simon, *Gone to the Ground*.
[95] Hillenbrand, "Retter, die keine Helden waren."
[96] Kaplan, 'Did Gender Matter', 37-56, 44-45. Kaplan alluded to Lawrence Langer's choiceless choices.
[97] See Beck, *Und Gad ging zu David*; and van Dijk et al., "Einsam war ich nie...," 96-109.
[98] Von der Heydt, "'Wer fährt denn gerne,", 65-80.
[99] Beck, *Und Gad ging zu David*, 169, 293f, 309-314.
[100] Frank Heibert to the author, 22 August 2018.
[101] Usborne, "Female Sexual Desire," 454-488.
[102] Glowacka, "Sexual Violence Against Men," 78-99. For a different interpretation, see Dwork, "Sexual Abuse."
[103] See also the study by Utz, "Making Love and Make-Belief," 75–92.
[104] Simon, *Gone to the Ground*, 146. Simon used the real names.
[105] Ibid., 171.
[106] Deutschkron, "Die Unsagbaren Aufregungen," 950; Deutschkron's Oral History; Arthur Rathburn et al., *No More Tears*.
[107] Deutschkron's Oral History, 45; Rathburn, *No More Tears*, 107.
[108] Deutschkron's Oral History, 46.
[109] Ibid., 59.
[110] Simon, *Gone to the Ground*, 323.
[111] The fact that many of the surviving hidden Jews, who otherwise had no reason to know her, mentioned Deutschkron's name, is a confirmation. Thanks to Martina Voigt for consultation on the Deutschkrons.
[112] Hahn, *Bis Alles*, 596. With thanks to Maria von der Heydt. The name of Heinrich Schmitt is changed in the book.
[113] Ibid., 600.
[114] Ibid., 624.
[115] Ibid., 626-628.

[116] Přibyl, "Die Geschichte," 199-201; *Forgotten Transports: To Estonia*. Sometimes, Drosin is spelled as Drosihn.
[117] Another example is Renee Neumann/Viktor Pestek in Theresienstadt Family Camp in Auschwitz. There is also a Christian romance novel *For Such a Time* about a relationship between a SS man and a Jewish woman prisoner in Theresienstadt who eventually converts to Christianity: Kelly Faircloth, "Holy Shit, Who Thought This Nazi Romance Novel Was a Good Idea?" *Jezebel*, August 6, 2015. The novel was shortlisted for two prizes of the Romance Writers of America annual conference.
[118] Přibyl, "Die Geschichte," 201.
[119] Johnston, "Přibyl's 'Forgotten Transport' films"; repeated on the website of the film.
[120] Přibyl, "Die Geschichte," 200, 201.
[121] Ibid., 200.
[122] I should like to thank to Pim Ligtvoet for his generous support and advice on the case of Hertha Poppert, on whom he has been working over twenty years, and to Alyn Beßmann for drawing my attention to her and providing information on the death transport from Beendorf.
[123] (Pim Ligtvoet), "Poppert (Erich)".
[124] Koker, *At the Edge*, 369; entry for December 22, 1943, 299f.
[125] Koker, At the Edge, p. 374; Poppert, SE/RA/420393/02/E10/16, sworn statement. Thanks to Jan van Ommen for sending me copies of these documents, and to Felix Oppenheim for translating them from Swedish.
[126] Klein et al., *Het Philips-Kommando*.
[127] Van Ommen, *1945 – Destination Sweden*, 75-83. With thanks to Jan for sending me a pdf.
[128] Buitenkamp-Degen, Malmö city archive, sworn statement.
[129] Koker, *At the Edge*, entry for December 22, 1943, 300.
[130] Klein et al., *Het Philips-Kommando*, 274. See also Brommet, interview; and Simons, interview.
[131] Malmö City Archive, CABR, sworn statement Hertha Poppert, May 16, 1945; CABR, sworn statement Hertha Poppert, February 16, 1946.
[132] On Strippel, see Buggeln, *Slave Labor*, 219f.
[133] Dutch National Archives, CABR G9573, sworn statement Hertha Poppert, February 16, 1946, with thanks to Pim Ligtvoet for sending me the copy; Luner, *Gerda's Story*, 434.
[134] Luner, *Gerda's Story*, 434.
[135] Luner, no title, Wiener Library, K4b(1).
[136] Just five days later, on 20 April 1945, Strippel oversaw the execution of the children victims of medical experiments at Bullenhuser Damm satellite camp. Buggeln, *Slave Labor*, 220. In her interview from February 8, 2000, Eva Sanders Mendel identified Strippel by name. See also Hogervorst, "KZ-Überlebende als Zeuginnen," 109-119.
[137] For the transport: de Korte, "Op Transport,"; Kooger, "Der Häftlingstransport,". With thanks to Alyn Beßmann.
[138] Kooger, "Der Häftlingstransport," 32-22.
[139] Kooger, "Der Häftlingstransport," 29; Dutch National Archive, CABR G9573, sworn statement Hertha Poppert, February 16, 1946. Thanks to Jan von Ommen for sending me copies.
[140] Mendel, interview.
[141] De Korte, "Op Transport."
[142] Mendel, interview; Dutch National Archives, Hertha Poppert, sworn statement 1946, CABR G9573; van Ommen, *1945 - Destination Sweden*.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Kooger, "Der Häftlingstransport," 43; van Ommen, 1945- Destination Sweden, 75-77.
[145] Malmö city archive, sworn statement Annie Mouwes-Messian; Ligtvoet, "Erich Poppert."
[146] Koker, *At the Edge*, entry for 22 December, 1943, 299.
[147] Klein et al., *Het Philips-Komando*, 275.
[148] Hájková, "Sexual Barter," 523.
[149] Ligtvoet, "Erich Poppert."
[150] Neumann, *When Time Stopped*; Justman, "My Terezín Diary."
[151] Grünfeld, *Frida*.
[152] Gusarov, "Sexual Barter."
[153] Langer, *Admitting the Holocaust*, 46.
[154] For a similar point on agency, see Adler, "Hrubieszów at the Crossroads…," 1-30.
[155] Van Liempt, "Trafficking in Human Beings," 33.
[156] Evans, 'Why Queer German History?' 371–384, 375.
[157] Hájková, "Introduction: Sexuality, Holocaust, Stigma," 1-14.