

## *The Mixed Marriage: A Guarantee of Survival or a Reflection of German Society during the Nazi Regime?*

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Until emancipation of the Jews in the mid-nineteenth century and the introduction of civil marriage, marriage between Christians and Jews was prohibited.<sup>1</sup> In the twentieth century, the number of mixed marriages increased considerably — a sign not only of the assimilation of Jews, but also of the declining significance of religion in marriage. The city of Hamburg, whose example will be used in this essay to illustrate the interplay of external pressure and internal breakdown of mixed marriages during the Nazi regime, provides as early as the 1920s the most “unfavorable picture” from the Jewish point of view — in other words, the most mixed marriages — followed by Berlin and Breslau.<sup>2</sup> By 1933 the percentage of mixed marriages in the Hanseatic city had risen to more than 57 percent of all Jewish weddings. Whereas the average in Germany fell to 15 percent in 1934<sup>3</sup>, the numbers dropped in Hamburg to only 32 percent despite restrictive measures introduced by the registry offices.<sup>4</sup> When the Nazis came to power,

there were approximately thirty-five thousand couples living in mixed marriages in Germany.<sup>5</sup> This development had been causing the Jewish communities in the cities much concern since it generally meant that the next generations were lost to the community.<sup>6</sup> The ban on mixed marriages laid down by the Nuremberg Laws finally put an end to a development that had been prevalent for almost eighty years. Far more Jewish men than women married non-Jewish partners. Those Jews living in mixed marriages were more likely to have come from long-established Hamburg families than from among Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, who as a rule still had stronger ties to their religion.<sup>7</sup> Jewish women living in mixed marriages were no longer recognized as members of the Jewish community; Jewish men, on the other hand, were only excluded from Orthodox associations but were allowed to remain in the community.<sup>8</sup> The mixed marriage very often led to conversion to Christianity, and in Hamburg conversion was usually to the Protestant Church. By 1940, when emigration was no longer possible and the mounting pressure against Jews, accompanied by the destruction of their economic existence, had already led to a sharp rise in the divorces rate, 972 couples were living in mixed marriages — 623 with Jewish men and 349 with Jewish women.<sup>9</sup>

1 The increase of mixed marriages until 1933: Kerstin Meiring, *Zwischen zwei Welten: Studien zur christlich-jüdischen Mischehe in Deutschland, vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Ende der Weimarer Republik*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Bielefeld, 1995, p. 123ff.

2 *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*, 3–4 (1924), p. 79.

3 Jeremy Noakes, “The Development of Nazi Policy toward the German-Jewish ‘Mischlinge’ 1933–1945,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 34 (1989), p. 291.

4 Baruch Zwi Ophir, “Zur Geschichte der Hamburger Juden 1919–1939,” in: *Juden in Preussen — Juden in Hamburg*, Peter Freimark, ed., Hamburg, 1983, pp. 89ff.

5 Ursula Bittner, *Die Not der Juden teilen*, Hamburg, 1988, p. 14. In 1939 it was estimated that there were between 20,000 and 30,000 mixed marriages in the areas of Germany and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (see Bruno Bian, “Die Mischehe im Nazireich,” *Judaica* 4/48, p. 48; and Eberhard Röhm, Jörg Thierfelder, *Juden-Christen-Deutsche*, Stuttgart, 1995, vol. 3/II, 1938–41, p. 112.)

6 Arthur Ruppin, “Die Verbreitung der Mischehe unter den Juden,” *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*, 4 (1930), p. 58.

7 Dora Weigert, “Die jüdische Bevölkerung in Hamburg,” *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*, 5–7 (1919), pp. 66–112.

8 Ina S. Lorenz, “Das ‘Hamburger System’ als Organisationsmodell einer jüdischen Grossgemeinde. Konzeption und Wirklichkeit,” in: *Jüdische Gemeinden und Organisationsformen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Robert Jütte and Abraham P. Kusnerman, eds., Vienna, pp. 221–255. The exclusion of women later meant that they could not be included as members of the religious society in the compulsory organization *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* (RVVD) until 1943. They were protected because they had changed their names and addresses and were much more difficult to trace than the men.

9 Leo Lippmann, “... ‘Dass ich wie ein guter Deutscher empfinde und handele.’ Zur Geschichte der Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeinde in Hamburg in der Zeit vom

The term "mixed marriage" now no longer referred to marriages between members of the Jewish community and non-Jews, but, according to the National Socialists, to relationships in which one partner fitted their "racial" definition of a Jew. From a National Socialist viewpoint, Jews who had entered into a marriage with "*Deutschblütige*" (German-blooded), were even more undesirable than other Jews, as they posed a direct threat to the "*deutschen Blutsverband*." Accordingly, any future mixed marriage should be forbidden in order to prevent "*Blutmischung*" (The mixing of blood), and the effects on the "*deutschen Blutsverband*," should as far as possible be made undone. This is why specialists of "racial science" were so eager to know where a couple had originally come from, and on what grounds they had entered into a mixed marriage. In 1937, one of the leading racial-hygienists, Otmär Frhr. v. Verschner, publicly posed the question: "What kind of people were they, on both the German and the Jewish side, who entered into mixed marriages?"<sup>10</sup> Statistics had long shown that wealthy Jewish men married non-Jewish women who were "often below their rank."<sup>11</sup> Verschner's question led to the first large-scale investigation on the subject, which was carried out by the anthropologist Alexander Paul.<sup>12</sup> He had documents on 1,115 male and 670 female Jews that the Reich Ministry of the Interior had put at his disposal.<sup>13</sup> Paul, a convinced racial-hygienist, investigated the class that

*Herbst 1935 bis zum Ende 1942.*" Finanzbehörde Hamburg, ed., Hamburg, 1993, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Otmär Freiherr von Verschner, "Was kann der Historiker, der Genealoge und der Statistiker zur Erforschung des biologischen Problems der Judenfrage beitragen?," in *Forschungen zur Judenfrage*, vol. II, Sitzungsberichte der zweiten Arbeitsstagung der Forschungsabteilung Judenfrage des Reichsinstituts für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands vom 12. bis 14. Mai 1937, Hamburg, 1937, p. 219.

<sup>11</sup> Dora Weigert, "Die jüdische Bevölkerung in Hamburg," *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*, 5-7 (1919), p. 85. See also Meining, *Welten*, p. 228ff.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Paul, *Jüdisch-deutsche Blutmischung. Eine sozialbiologische Untersuchung*, Berlin, 1940.

<sup>13</sup> These family documents were probably attached to applications for marriage permits submitted by "*Mischlingen ersten Grades*" (persons with one Jewish parent), who had hoped to be allowed to marry "German-blooded" partners with the permission of *Reichsausschuss zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes* ("Reich Committee for the Protection of German Blood").

the prospective couple belonged to, as well as the allegedly hereditary diseases. Although his study is unacceptable because of its racist, pseudoscientific character<sup>14</sup> and the proposed political consequences of exclusion of the offspring, it is very precise and subtle with respect to the social classes of the mixed marriages. In short, he reached the conclusion that Jewish men who entered into a mixed marriage came, as a rule, from the upper or upper middle classes (mostly from the merchant class), and generally married much younger women of a lower social status. While a mixed marriage offered male Jews the opportunity of integration into non-Jewish society, the attraction of marrying a Jew for non-Jewish women was that it meant a step up the social ladder. On the other hand, when Jewish women married non-Jewish men (on the whole this was less common), both man and woman usually came from the same social background and there was no great difference in their ages. Although both partners in the marriage came from a higher class, the marriage seldom meant social advancement for the Jewish woman. It seems that Jewish women chose non-Jewish partners more for emotional than materialistic reasons.

Even if the motivating force for entering into a mixed marriage did not influence to any considerable extent every decision made in married life, it was given a new relevance after the National Socialists came to power, since the measures taken against the Jews, especially the destruction of their economic existence, had just as much effect on Jews in mixed marriages as on other Jews. In the first five years of the Nazi regime, precisely those marriages contracted for materialistic reasons broke up very quickly, although the divorce rates from this period are not known.

A woman living at that time recollected in an interview<sup>15</sup> the break-up

<sup>14</sup> The terms that Paul uses in his investigation indicate his convictions as an advocate of the pseudo-science of racial theory and racial hygiene; for example, *Kaufmannssippen* ("merchant tribes"), *Juwelierssippen* ("jeweler tribes"), etc. He pleads for a comprehensive model for the exclusion of the offspring from the German community. Because of the rigidity of this model it was not carried out.

<sup>15</sup> All interviews quoted were compiled and archived (FZH/WDE), as part of the project *Hamburger Lebensläufe — Werkstatt der Erinnerung in der Forschungsstelle für die Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus in Hamburg* (now: *Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte*). The names given are aliases. FZH/WDE 009, Interview with Irene Heuertmann (9 June 1988).

of such a marriage. When her parents married her mother converted to Judaism (this was more an exception than the rule). Her father, a wealthy merchant, supported his wife's relatives for some years and provided a comfortable life for his family. Severe anti-Jewish measures, however, brought about a serious decline in his business. Her mother's relatives suggested clubbing together to buy a sewing machine so that the mother could take in work and earn enough money to feed the family. She vehemently rejected the proposition: "How could I stoop to that!" Her husband's arrest during *Kristallnacht* and subsequent internment in KZ Sachsenhausen clearly indicated to her that he would be stigmatized as a criminal in addition to the decline in social status that he had already experienced. Both strengthened her in her resolution to seek a way out of a marriage whose material foundation had crumbled. She filed a petition for divorce while her husband was making emigration plans. Through obtaining the divorce and leaving the Jewish religious community, she was able to return to her *deutschen Blutsverband*.

This "offer" to the "German-blooded" women was included in categories of "privileged" and "non-privileged" mixed marriages that were formulated by Hitler in the winter of 1938 and promulgated by Göring.<sup>16</sup> The intention was to lure these women into divorces while they were still reeling under the shock of *Kristallnacht* and "Aryanization." Even if the majority of "German-blooded" women did not choose to take advantage of this "offer," the repressive atmosphere had a destabilizing effect on mixed marriages. Thus, the roles played by the individual members of a family underwent a change during the first five years of the Nazi regime. Jewish husbands were scarcely in a position to play their traditional male role of breadwinner, and most of them were no longer able to represent the family in public. They were obliged to sign over their assets to their wives or children, entrust them with the daily running of their companies, let them deal with the authorities, burden them with negotiations concerning rent and/or visas, etc. The wives, as a rule, were ill-prepared to take on these tasks.<sup>17</sup>

16 Bundesarchiv (BA), Reichsministerium des Innern 5519 (343-345), Letter (Geheimer Schnellbrief), of Göring, to the Minister of the Interior and others, 28 December 1938.

17 The 60 interviews conducted by the author in which *Mischlinge ersten Grades*

as their upbringing and married life until then had been dictated by the traditional male and female roles. If they wanted to earn money, they were obliged to resort to "a woman's capabilities," like sewing for example, which meant it was impossible to maintain their previous standard of living. A man living at that time describes how this change affected family life:

Yes, but there were many ... you couldn't call them "quarrels." The family's morale was steadily broken. Although my father was very authoritarian, he was not a strong man ...; he was otherwise mild, gentle, especially with children. And anyway, my mother didn't understand anything about such things [earning money, B.M.J.]. Of course, she stood by my father. There was no question about it. Nevertheless, the pressure from outside — the pressure on those people who had to live under such circumstances — made family life difficult. One wrong word led to a quarrel ... The relationship between my parents was no longer as peaceful as it used to be. We were short of money and then finally we were short of food. Eventually my father no longer received full rations, which meant we had even less food.... There was a lot of unrest which actually had nothing to do with my parents. It was a result of the pressure from outside.<sup>18</sup>

The Jewish husbands found it difficult to come to terms with the loss of their position and reputation in society; their wives had to provide them with the emotional support they needed, especially when they were plagued by depression and thoughts of suicide.<sup>19</sup> Another person interviewed summarized the effect that the drop in status had on her family: "My father was always very depressive; he constantly thought about suicide and kept on saying if it weren't for him, if he were out of the way, then it would be easier for all of us. Of course, we all suffered under these circumstances because we always wanted to cheer him up and unfortunately we weren't very successful."<sup>20</sup> In many families, it was left to the wives alone to earn the money as well as to come to terms emotionally with the pressure from outside; they, in turn, tried to share this responsibility with their adolescent children.

talk about their personal experiences reveal that only about 10% of the non-Jewish mothers were employed before 1933.

18 FZH/WDE 052, Interview with Dennis Berend (5 May 1993), Transcript, p. 7.

19 Dissertation of the author on "Jüdische Mischlinge," Hamburg, 1999.

20 FZH/WDE 010V, Interview with Hermann Iversen (21 May 1990), Transcript, p. 8.



If, on the other hand, the wife was Jewish, her husband's professional status determined to what extent racial discrimination affected their life. In the civil service, racial discrimination was particularly severe and either prevented the husband from being promoted or even brought about his dismissal. This could well mean hard times for the family. Someone who was self-employed, however, was neither forced to give up his business nor was his Jewish wife affected by such dramatic events as *Kristallnacht*, but was "merely" subject to social discrimination.

In the winter of 1938, as already mentioned, Hitler classified mixed marriages as either "privileged" or "non-privileged."<sup>21</sup> "Privileged" meant that for the time being a family was allowed to stay where they had been living, and that the family property could be transferred to the non-Jewish partner or the children. "Privileged" was either a marriage without children where the wife was Jewish, or a marriage in which the husband was Jewish and their children had not had a Jewish upbringing. If, however, the husband was Jewish and there were no children, if the non-Jewish wife had been converted or if the children had been brought up in the Jewish faith, then the marriage was "non-privileged." The married couple lost not only the right of residence in non-Jewish districts and power over the family property, but in addition were treated like Jews who were emigrating; in other words, they lost both their citizenship and their property. Jews living in "privileged" mixed marriages were exempt from wearing the yellow badge.<sup>22</sup> When the *Sicherungsanordnung für Vermögen* (blocking of accounts), was revised according to the status: In the case of the husband being Jewish, his assets and those of his wife and their non-Jewish children were "saved" by the state of Germany. However, in the case

of the wife being Jewish, the *Sicherungsanordnung* affected only her.<sup>23</sup> If an exception had been made and the "German-blooded" husbands in mixed marriages were allowed to stay in the Wehrmacht,<sup>24</sup> their wives were exempt from forced labor,<sup>25</sup> which they were initially summoned to (as were all Jews), at the beginning of 1939.<sup>26</sup>

The government granted such "privileges" in order to placate the "German-blooded" relatives as the measures taken against the Jewish population were becoming more and more radical. The categories of "privileged" and "non-privileged" mixed marriage were never legally protected, but for each measure taken against the Jews this status allowed exceptions to be made.

While the Jewish men in mixed marriages had to be in constant touch with the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* (RVJD), because of their status, Jewish women were to a great extent protected by their "German-blooded" husbands. These husbands, however, after their wives had been obliged to do forced labor, found that their role as protectors was gradually dwindling. In 1940/41 discussions took place in Hamburg's Jewish community about the critical financial situation. The topic of the discussions was whether or not to regard Jewish women living in mixed marriages as members of the community (again). However, it was not possible simply to dispense with the religious principles that had led to their expulsion. Moreover, attempts to induce these women to pay the membership fees met with little,

<sup>21</sup> The term "privilege" is not used by Göting, he acquired the administrative jargon to define the exceptions for certain mixed marriages.

<sup>22</sup> "Polizeiverordnung über die Kennzeichnung der Juden" from 1 September 1941, §3. Hilberg adds that Jews who were married to *Mischlinge* were also regarded as having "privileged" marriages. See Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, Frankfurt, 1990, vol. II, p. 445f. "Privileged" mixed marriages could only be the result of one's biological and not adopted children. Staatsarchiv Hamburg (StAHH), Jüdische Gemeinden, Abl. 1993, Ordner 20, Letter of RVJD Berlin to RVJD Hamburg, 7 May 1940.

<sup>23</sup> StAHH, Oberfinanzpräsident 10 (Devisen- und Vermögensstelle), Enactment (Allgemeiner Erlass No. 23/40 D.St.), of the Reichswirtschaftsminister to the Oberfinanzpräsidenten, 9 February 1940, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> The "German-blooded" husbands of 25,000 Jewish and "half Jewish" women were discharged from the Wehrmacht on 8 April 1940. See Noakes, "Development," p. 331.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Sauer, *Dokumente über die Verfolgung der jüdischen Bürger in Baden-Württemberg durch das nationalsozialistische Regime 1933-1945*, Stuttgart, 1966, vol. II, p. 374. For further special regulations see Büttner, *Not*, p. 44ff.

<sup>26</sup> Letter of the Präsident der Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsverwaltung und Arbeitslosenversicherung to the Präsidenten der Landesarbeitsämter a.o., 20 December 1938, in: Dieter Maier, *Arbeitsgesetz und Deportation. Die Mitwirkung der Arbeitsverwaltung bei der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung in den Jahren 1938-1945*, Berlin, 1994, p. 30f.

if any success. Consequently, the plan was shelved.<sup>27</sup> In 1942 those people living in mixed marriages who were members of the *Jüdischen Religionsverband* (religious association), and in 1943 the remaining people who were — according to Nazi definition — Jewish, were forced to join the *RVID*.<sup>28</sup>

Until early 1945, those Jews living in “privileged” mixed marriages had been exempted from the deportations that began in October 1941; the deportation of those living in “non-privileged” marriages was deferred initially, unless either divorce or the death of the “Aryan” partner had ended the marriage. In this case, other reasons had to be found for deferring the deportation; one reason often used was that the son was on active military service, another was that the child was still a minor. Since decrees were issued that prohibited *Mischlinge* from serving in the armed forces after 1941/42, this excuse often served the purpose of drawing attention to the son, with the result that, after his discharge from the Wehrmacht, his mother was deported.<sup>29</sup> Even after divorce, Jewish women were still to a certain extent protected if they had young children who had not had a Jewish upbringing. The age at which a child ceased to be a protection for his mother was lowered from eighteen to sixteen years.<sup>30</sup>

In 1942, the participants at the Wannsee Conference and subsequent conferences discussed the future fate of the *Mischlinge* and the twenty-eight thousand mixed marriages in the area of Germany and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.<sup>31</sup> They considered the possibility

27 StahH, *Jüdische Gemeinden*, Beilage zu C 6 (Mischehen), note Löffler to Lippmann, 10 March 1941, pp. 4–7. The author would like to express her thanks to Dr. Ina S. Lorenz for this information.

28 Büttner, *Nor*, p. 45 und StahH, Senatskanzlei, Hans Martin Corten, *Bericht über die Organisationen der Juden in Hamburg vor und nach dem Waffenstillstand*, undated report (probably winter 1945).

29 In the case of the son being granted an exemption and remaining in the *Wehrmacht*, according to a “*Führerentscheid*” (decision by the “Führer”), the “privilege” still held if the only son died a *Heldentod* (hero’s death), in the war. BA, Reichsjustizministerium 455, Letter of Lammers, to the Minister of the Interior, 4 March 1941.

30 Lippmann, *Geschichte*, p. 92.

31 Hilberg, *Vernichtung*, p. 436. Report of the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942, written by Adolf Eichmann according to instructions from Reinhard Heydrich,

of compulsory divorce,<sup>32</sup> and in the event that the “German-blooded” partner refused, whether he should also be sent to a ghetto.<sup>33</sup> Since there was resistance from the Ministry of the Interior to the idea of a deportation without a divorce, and the Ministry of Justice was opposed to compulsory divorce,<sup>34</sup> a final decision was not reached. Hitler was asked to find a solution, but he postponed making a decision until after the war. The majority of people in mixed marriages owe their lives to the fact that this decision was deferred. Nevertheless, even without compulsory divorce and deportation, the chances of survival for individuals or small groups lessened in the face of the Gestapo’s activities.

Yet, when the Gestapo arrested Jews living in mixed marriages in Berlin in February 1943 as part of the *Fabrik-Aktion*, the public protests by the “German-blooded” wives and other relatives apparently were successful. This has been given considerable attention by postwar researchers.<sup>35</sup> The people concerned soon came to the conclusion that the Gestapo was intent on gradually including “privileged” mixed marriages in the deportations. In reality, this action was an attempt by the Gestapo to radicalize anti-Jewish policy and they simply employed methods of public raids that were quite routine in the East.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, there was an unusually large number of people from the world of art and letters among those arrested, which caused an uproar and united the women in their protest. In addition, the arrests only served the purpose of registration and not deportation — a fact that came to light

published in Kurt Pätzold and Erika Schwarz, *Tagesordnung: Judenmord. Die Wannsee-Konferenz am 30. Januar 1942*, Berlin, 1992, pp. 108f.

32 Report “Besprechung über die Endlösung der Judenfrage” on 6 March 1942 in Pätzold and Schwarz, *Judenmord*, p. 111 and p. 118.

33 Letter of Staatssekretär im Reichsjustizministerium Franz Schlegelberger to the participants of the Wannsee Conference from 5 April 1942, in Pätzold and Schwarz, *Judenmord*, p. 126f.

34 Uwe D. Adam, *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich*, Düsseldorf, 1972, p. 325.

35 Kwiät assumes, for example, “that similar actions could have changed the course of National Socialist policy as regards the Jews.” Konrad Kwiät, “Nach dem Pogrom: Stufen der Ausgrenzung,” in: *Die Juden in Deutschland 1933–1945*, Wolfgang Benz, ed., Munich, 1988, p. 594.

36 Christof Dipper, “Schwierigkeiten mit der Resistenz,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 22 (1996), pp. 409–416.

upon new investigations. Indeed, the result was fully acceptable to the state.<sup>37</sup>

In Hamburg and elsewhere,<sup>38</sup> however, the Gestapo adopted a less dramatic approach that could be adapted to each individual case. The men were sometimes required to report to the Gestapo, while others were picked up less conspicuously. The action stretched over a period of some days and primarily affected men who had formerly been self-employed and who were fairly well known but not linked with influential groups. According to reports made by the wives and children, the women in Hamburg tried everything to get their husbands released, but their attempts were unsuccessful. There were not enough of them, they were not united and they let themselves be intimidated. "Your husband is being sent to Auschwitz, just pretend that you haven't got a husband any more," was the reply that one wife was given by the man responsible when she asked for help. He advised another woman not to bother any more because her husband was not going to come back — nobody ever returned from Auschwitz. He had already made the note "Auschwitz" on his file cards.<sup>39</sup> The people arrested were taken to Hamburg's police prison in late March 1943, and around the end of April or beginning of May 1943<sup>40</sup> were sent to Auschwitz where they were murdered.<sup>41</sup> For the Gestapo the action was a double success:

<sup>37</sup> Wolf Gruner, *Der Geschlossene Arbeitseinsatz deutscher Juden*, Berlin, 1997, p. 319.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317. Gruner refers to arrests at work and following a summons from the Gestapo in Berlin, Breslau and Dresden. Dipper refers to simultaneous arrests in Darmstadt, which did not lead to a public protest either (see Dipper, "Schwierigkeiten," p. 411). The authorities carried out the arrests of 12 Jewish husbands in "privileged" mixed marriages during the period March to May 1943.

The person responsible was supposed to have received the information from his superiors that, according to a new directive against Jewish partners in mixed marriages, unlimited internment could be applied for. He was sentenced after the war, just like the person responsible in Hamburg. See Urteil 2a Ks I/49, appearing in Irene Sage-Grande et al., eds, *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen. Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1945–1966*, Amsterdam, 1981, vol. 22, pp. 658–682.

<sup>39</sup> FZH, Sign. 12 S, Urteil des Landgerichts Hamburg (50), 35/50 14 Ks 56/50, pp. 8–11.

<sup>40</sup> FZH, Sign. 35363, Zu- u. Abgangslisten des KL Fuhlsbüttel, 31. December 1942 to 8 May 1943.

<sup>41</sup> Only one prisoner was able to escape since he was working outside.

those people who until then had been protected were seized for the first time, and it intimidated those mixed-marriage families that had not been affected by the arrests.

If Jewish husbands had been interned, extra pressure was put on the wives to obtain a divorce. In certain cases the Gestapo fixed a deportation date irrespective of the divorce plans.<sup>42</sup> The "legal position" was that deportation had precedence over a prison sentence or custody, with the result that the prisoners were transferred to Auschwitz.<sup>43</sup> This increased the pressure on the wives to file petitions for divorce. In many cases they were also persuaded by relatives who were anxious about their own careers, privileges or political ambitions.

The housing policy of the Nazis constituted an additional form of pressure on mixed marriages. By mid-April 1942, not only Jewish married couples but also couples living in "non-privileged" mixed marriages had been assigned to *Judenhäuser*. This also applied to "Aryan" wives who now found themselves in cramped quarters in blocks marked with the Star of David.<sup>44</sup> The housing situation deteriorated even further following the air raids on Hamburg in the summer of 1943, when the Gestapo demanded that more houses be vacated. The *RYVD*, which was responsible for carrying out these orders, sent notices to those homes that had been rented by Jewish husbands. As regards those mixed-marriage families whose houses had been bombed, the *RYVD* found them accommodation with other mixed-marriage families,<sup>45</sup> where families were segregated according to the sex of the Jewish partner. This meant that the rooms in which those families with Jewish husbands lived became overcrowded — and what was more, they could be given notice to vacate their accommodation by the *Amt für Raumbewirtschaftung* (administration of living space), or on the Gestapo's orders at any time. This was much more difficult if the rooms in

<sup>42</sup> For example, the court decisions 5 U 82/1942, 3 b R 234/1941, p. 5f can be found in the archives of the Hamburg District Court (ALH).

<sup>43</sup> Jews who were to be "evacuated" (deported), were to have the execution of their sentence suspended, and if they were in custody they were not to be charged, except if the death penalty was expected. BA, Reichsjustizministerium 1238, Letter of the Minister of Justice to the Attorney General a.o., 16 April 1942.

<sup>44</sup> StahH, Jüdische Gemeinden, Rutschbahn 25, UA 27–45.

<sup>45</sup> StahH, Jüdische Gemeinden, Abl. 1993, Ordner 26, Max Plaut, report of the discussion, 4 October 1943.



which the mixed-marriage family lived were rented by or belonged to a "German-blooded" man. The situation did not deteriorate further until October 1944 when the "German-blooded" husbands also had to do forced labor.

Every new measure against the Jewish population — and even more so, every arrest — confronted the "German-blooded" wife once more with the question whether or not she should accept the "offer" of a divorce with all its privileges of a "member of the German people" with full rights or continue to bear the growing repression. Taking one Hamburg family as an example, Ursula Bittner describes vividly the difficult conditions under which most of these marriages were kept intact.<sup>46</sup>

My article sets out to examine the minority of mixed marriages that broke up because of external pressure and internal disintegration. To this end, 130 decisions on divorces made by the Hamburg District Court from 1937 to 1945 were analyzed.<sup>47</sup> Most researchers have estimated the divorce rate among mixed marriages to be at a level of 7–10 percent,<sup>48</sup> these divorces were not categorized according to sex.<sup>49</sup> However, this estimate takes into account only those divorce proceedings that began in late 1941 and were completed in 1942. More than one-third of the court decisions made in Hamburg are dated between 1942 and 1945. In my opinion, the estimated number of divorces involving mixed marriages should be revised upwards to over 20 percent.<sup>50</sup>

From a National Socialist viewpoint, a married couples' first duty was to serve the "national community" and secure its continued existence

<sup>46</sup> Bittner, *Not*.

<sup>47</sup> The 130 decisions analyzed here were random samples and were found with the help of index entries in the archives of the Hamburg District Court (ALH); they are however not identical to the unknown number of mixed marriages in Hamburg that ended either in divorce or annulment.

<sup>48</sup> Bittner refers to 7.2% (97), mixed marriages that were divorced in Baden-Württemberg and 9.9% (123), in Hamburg. See Bittner, *Not*, p. 298.

<sup>49</sup> The general divorce rate in Germany in 1939 was 38.3 (per 10,000 marriages), which dropped to 30 per 10,000 marriages in 1940. See Dirk Blasius, *Ehescheidung in Deutschland*, Göttingen, 1987, p. 211. The divorce rate for mixed marriages was at a similar level per 1,000 marriages (see Table 1).

<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, since figures from Berlin, Breslau or Frankfurt do not exist, we cannot compare the divorce rate.

with respect to "purity of blood" and race.<sup>51</sup> This was contained in the new Marriage Law of 6 July 1938, although some concessions were made to those conservatives who still believed in the indissoluble bond of matrimony and privacy of married life. National Socialist judges had already created a new situation *de facto* by reinterpreting existing laws in the years between 1933 and 1938. They had defined the belonging to the Jewish race as a *personal* characteristic, the effect or significance of which would be explained to Germans when the National Socialists seized power.<sup>52</sup> Those who had been "enlightened" in this way should be entitled to demand an annulment within a certain period. This interpretation of the law produced a new legal reality that was incorporated in the Marriage Law of 6 July 1938. At the same time as this radicalization *de facto* was taking place, the members of the Academy for German Law were working on fundamental changes in the German legal system. The main issue was the introduction of the principle of irrevocable breakdown which was to replace the question of culpability. The hard-line racists defined marriage as "a long-term relationship between two persons who are of healthy blood, of the same race and of opposite sex, for the purpose of preserving and promoting the common good ... and for the purpose of procreating racially equal children of healthy blood and for the purpose of rearing them to be diligent *Volksgenossen*."<sup>53</sup> In the case of a childless marriage, the couple should obtain a divorce in order to enter into another marriage for the purpose of having children. In reality though, after protracted discussions the final law was a middle-of-the-road compromise in accordance with Hitler's own wishes. The new Marriage Law combined the principle of irrevocable breakdown with the question of culpability. That is, in cases of adultery, refusal to procreate, and other serious

<sup>51</sup> Gabriele Czarnowski, "Der Wert der Ehe für die Volksgemeinschaft. Frauen und Männer in der nationalsozialistischen Ehepolitik," in: *Zwischen Karriere und Verfolgung. Handlungsräume von Frauen im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland*, Kirsten Heinsohn et al., eds., Frankfurt am Main, 1997, pp. 78–95.

<sup>52</sup> Hans Wrobel, "Die Antechung der Rassenmischehe," *Kritische Justiz*, 16 (1983), pp. 354ff. Ingo Müller also provides a general overview, *Furchtbare Juristen*, Munich, 1987, pp. 97–105. Marius Hetzel, *Die Anfechtung der Rassenmischehe in den Jahren 1933–1939*, Tübingen, 1997.

<sup>53</sup> Friedrich Mössmer, chairman of the committee, quoted according to Blasius, *Ehescheidung*, p. 195.

marital offenses, the question of culpability still applied. One of the new provisions was the “dissolution of the household” on the grounds of an irretrievable breakdown, which was possible after three years of separation. These rules applied to all couples seeking divorce. In addition, the government created another possibility for couples in mixed marriages to annul the mixed marriage — and by doing so, the judges continued their application of the principle that the non-Jewish spouse was not enlightened on the effects of the “racial difference.” Those “German-blooded” partners who wanted a divorce (primarily non-Jewish wives), could now have their marriages annulled on “racial grounds” without having to prove the partner’s neglect of marital duties or a breakdown of the marriage. The period within which they could file for annulment was one year; in other words, it would have expired in 1939. The judges, however, always found new reasons in the subsequent years for extending the period. They accepted that the non-Jewish partner had not understood the consequences of the “difference in races” until the arrests of *Kristallnacht*, the compulsory wearing of the yellow badge, or the commencement of deportations — even if they did not apply to mixed marriages. Finally, even the United States’ entry into the war was supposed to have made the effects clear to the “German-blooded” partner.

The judges standardized the ruling on marriage annulments at a steering committee meeting in 1942. They decided, contrary to the wording of the law, that the petition for annulment of a marriage could be filed after each drastic measure taken against the Jewish population. Moreover, they ruled that a divorced Jewish woman had no right to alimony.<sup>54</sup> Of the 130 judgments passed, 29 were marriage annulments. The highest annual figure was reached in 1943 with 17 petitions for annulment. Most of the petitions were against Jewish men who had been interned for breaking one (or several), of the anti-Jewish

regulations. The grounds for having a marriage annulled were generally insubstantial; for example, the “German-blooded” wife had only just become aware of the “difference in races,” or, it had been impossible to predict the state’s current attitude towards Jews. It is hardly possible to find any differences in the 1943 petitions between the sexes. It was more urgent for the petitioners and the judges that the divorce be granted as quickly as possible. After 1943, the decisions made were fairly arbitrary. While some judges tried to maintain the level of radicalness that had been reached, others saw that the war was being lost and they returned to former procedures. This lack of uniformity is illustrated by the following two examples of annulment proceedings initiated by “German-blooded” husbands:

- A sergeant<sup>55</sup> stationed in Cholim-Lublin wished to have his marriage to his Jewish wife annulled on the grounds that: “He had already been obliged to resign his position as a political leader [of the NSDAP, B.M.] because of his wife’s race. Now, in the war, he had witnessed how his comrades had been brutally murdered by Jews while he himself had only been lightly wounded. These experiences had made it clear to him that he could not continue his marriage with her.”<sup>56</sup> It was certainly not true that Jews murdered German soldiers in the area around Lublin. It is however true that precisely in this area, which was originally planned as an enormous ghetto for Jews, the SS and the Wehrmacht had over the years massacred thousands of Jewish inhabitants and slave laborers who had been transported there. Mass shootings, gassings in wagons, and finally mass deportation to Sobibor and Treblinka were features of everyday life there during this war of extermination.<sup>57</sup> The soldier was a confirmed National Socialist and the reason for his divorce

54 Minutes from a meeting of the judges’ steering committee of the Hamburg District Court on 20 May 1942 appearing in: Helge Grabitz, “In vorausseilendem Gehorsam ... Die Hamburger Justiz im ‘Führer-Staat’”, in: “Für Führer Volk und Vaterland...” *Hamburger Justiz im Nationalsozialismus*, Justizbehörde Hamburg, ed., p. 57f.

Hamburg’s district court judges also reached similar conclusions on 16 June 1942, see Reginald A. Puerchel, “Tritigerische Normalität: Die Rechtsprechung in Ehe- und Familiensachen der Landgerichte Hamburg und Altona,” *ibid.*, p. 413.

55 The petitioner had in the meantime reached the rank of *Feldwebel*, which was the highest army rank open to “jüdisch Versippte” (someone related to a Jew by marriage). See order of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW), from 20 January 1940, in: *Die Sonderinheiten in der früheren deutschen Wehrmacht*, bearbeitet im Personalstandsarchiv II des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (22c), Kornelminster from 14 October 1952, p. 49.

56 ALH, 8 R 54/44.

57 Dieter Pohl, *Von der “Judenpolitik” zum Judenmord: der Distrikt Lublin des Generalgouvernements 1939–1944*, Frankfurt am Main, 1993.



could have been that since he knew about the murder of the Jews he could no longer bear being married to a member of this group. The sight of this person would remind him every day of his terrible guilt. After his annulment, he refused to pay his wife any alimony whatsoever. She became chronically ill and had to be put in a nursing home. What followed was a bitter dispute between the social welfare office and the *RVJD* about who should pay for her care since nobody felt responsible for her.<sup>58</sup>

Another "German-blooded" husband, perhaps encouraged by the court rulings, filed a petition for annulment or divorce on the grounds of an irretrievable breakdown. He had already been dismissed by the postal service in 1937 and discharged by the Wehrmacht in 1943 on account of his marriage. He wanted to sue for divorce on the grounds of "racial difference," but lost his suit! The judge was of the opinion that the time limit for contesting the validity of his marriage had expired; moreover, he had long since experienced the disadvantages of having a Jewish wife. He had not produced evidence that his wife had committed a matrimonial offense; on the contrary, it was likely that he wanted to marry another woman.

The majority of mixed marriages were, however, not annulled as the hard-line racists would have liked; rather, divorces were obtained on the grounds of serious matrimonial offenses. That applied to both "privileged" and "non-privileged" marriages.<sup>59</sup> There were also "normal" divorces; some were obviously conjoint, while other couples continued their marital quarrels in the court. In these cases (as with other divorces), the judges based their decisions in the first place on whether and which gender-specific, marital duties had been violated. Couples in which both partners wanted a divorce often used the argument that the "German-blooded" partner had refused to have sexual intercourse

because of *rassistischer Abneigung* (racial aversion).<sup>60</sup> Such behavior was evidence of the "racial awareness" desired by those in power, and the judges could therefore regard this as a violation of marital duties.

Another example of the violation of marital duty was given by a Jewish husband, who stated that his wife's "completely uneconomic behavior" and her personal insults such as "dirty old Jew" had wrecked the marriage.<sup>61</sup> The court regarded this behavior as a clear violation of the duties of a wife and found the woman guilty. In the prewar period, the judges still had a definitive picture of exactly what constituted matrimonial offense and required proof of such offenses. Nevertheless, the kind of offenses showed that the discrimination against the Jews had long become a part of the marriage partnership. By the time war broke out, Jewish partners had also started filing petitions for divorce if they could no longer endure everyday married life. They did not at that time have to weigh the strain of being married against the fear of being deported.

These court decisions were still influenced by efforts to give the impression of gender-specific criteria and persecution measures. From 1939 more and more anti-Jewish measures were imposed, and the Jews themselves were blamed for being hit by such measures and for their marriage coming to an end. Examples of this are given below:

- Among the men with previous convictions arrested in the *Junii-Aktion* in 1938<sup>62</sup> there were also Jews who lived in mixed marriages. Some of their wives filed petitions for divorce. The arrests were adjudged to be due to destruction of the marriage by the arrested husbands.<sup>63</sup>
- If a Jewish husband lost his job, he was blamed for the divorce for failing to fulfill his duty of supporting his wife.<sup>64</sup>

58 StAHN, Jüdische Gemeinden, Abl. 1993, Ordner 12, correspondence between the

lawyer Dr. Haas and *RVJD* (Heinemann), 12 June 1944, 14 and 24 July 1944.

59 Fifty nine marriages with offspring and 56 childless marriages were annulled or ended in divorce; in 15 other divorces it was not discernible whether or not children were involved. Since as a rule marriages with offspring were "privileged," the divorce rate for the two categories should be nearly the same.

60 ALH, 4 R 260/37.

61 ALH, 6 R 185/37.

62 Wolfgang Ayass, "Ein Gebot der nationalen Arbeitsdisziplin." Die Aktion "Arbeitsreichen Reich" 1938, *Beiträge zur nationalsozialistischen Gesundheits- und Sozialpolitik* no. 6, *Feinderklärung und Prävention*, Berlin, 1988, p. 59.

63 ALH, 7 R 40/39, 5b R 41/40, 7 R 40/39, 3 R 94/39, 5b R 41/40.

64 ALH, 4 R 28/42.

- If Jewish husbands were arrested and interned for breaking anti-Jewish regulations, the civil court ruled that: "The defendant made himself guilty of dishonorable conduct by an act against the State which he has already confessed to. His conduct has irreparably destroyed his marriage."<sup>65</sup> In another case the court went even further and surmised that, owing to the husband's "bad conduct," he would most likely be taken directly from the police prison to a concentration camp and that would mean the end of his marriage anyway.<sup>66</sup>

Gender-specific grounds disappeared gradually from the court rulings. The administering of justice shifted from a chaotic juxtaposition of the most varied criteria to a divorce procedure that as a matter of principle assumed that the Jewish partner was to blame. This process virtually ended in 1942. Thereafter, there were at best "non-political" decisions if the couple had been separated for at least three years or if there were elements of an offense, for example if adultery could be proved.

Adultery remained grounds for divorce in both the old and the new marriage law. The facts were obvious since the injured party filed a petition for divorce, but it was essential that *Rassenschande* had not been committed, because the Nuremberg Laws had made extramarital sexual intercourse between Jews and *Deutschblütige* an offense requiring public prosecution. This accounts for the judgments following *Rassenschande*-proceedings among decisions relating to divorce case.<sup>67</sup> However, in other cases, wives denounced their Jewish husbands so that it would be easier for them to obtain a divorce.<sup>68</sup> While the district court still regarded such legal proceedings as a breach of marital fidelity, the higher regional court praised the *Volksgeossin* for having acted (albeit unintentionally), in the interests of the public.<sup>69</sup>

65 ALH, 8 R 462/42.

66 ALH, 2 R 382/42.

67 Hans Robinsohn, *Justiz als politische Verfolgung. Die Rechtsprechung in "Rassenschandefällen" beim Landgericht Hamburg 1936-1943*, Stuttgart, 1977. Robinsohn calculated that Hamburg (in comparison with Frankfurt and Cologne), had the highest persecution coefficients and concluded that "Hamburg had by far the most severe practice of persecution" (p. 21).

68 ALH, 11a R 401/39.

69 ALH, 6 U 420/37.

In addition, the Marriage Law of 6 July 1938, as already mentioned, made it possible for a couple to obtain a divorce without any question of culpability after being separated for three years. Some couples obviously saw this as an opportunity to obtain a divorce on the grounds of mutual consent. In the prewar period, mixed-marriage couples who had been living apart for several years also availed themselves of this law. Nevertheless, the separation was often the result of persecution. For example, the wife of a Jewish man had refused him access to their home after he had been released from a concentration camp in 1938. In 1942 he received his deportation orders as a person from a "non-privileged" mixed marriage who had separated from his wife. His wife seized this opportunity to file her petition for divorce. Apparently he asked his wife to delay her petition in order to defer his deportation. When his wife turned down his request he refused to consent to a divorce. But the court dismissed his interventions since "the respondent is a *Volllinde* and therefore a member of a race that belongs to the sworn enemies of the new Germany and now fights on the side of our foes."<sup>70</sup> After her husband had been released from the concentration camp, the woman could not have been expected "to live like husband and wife again just because the respondent is Jewish."<sup>71</sup> The court made short work of it (so as not to delay the impending deportation), and granted the divorce on the grounds of a separation lasting several years.

Just as a long interment in a concentration camp had led to a three-year separation, in other cases it was the emigration of the Jewish partner: some of the Jewish spouses, mostly the men, had emigrated alone if their wives had not wanted to follow them into the economic uncertainty of a foreign country. In the judgments of these divorces after a three-year separation, every "racial" reason, which was not required by this criterion, is missing. Only rarely was the reality of a marriage apparent through the veil of insubstantial reasons. Often only the address of the Jewish spouse, given as somewhere abroad, "address unknown," a concentration camp or a *Judenhaus* — reflects the reason for the separation.<sup>72</sup> In the case of the Jewish partners being interned, they were taken from the concentration camp and brought

70 ALH, 11b R 286/41.

71 ALH, 11b R 286/41.

72 Locations of the Jewish spouses at the time of the divorce included 59 residing in Hamburg or elsewhere in Germany, 28 imprisoned in a jail or concentration camp,

before the judge; in the case of them having emigrated, the petition was sent to them via the consulate, or during the war simply inserted in the *Reichs- und Staatsanzeiger*.

There were, also, conjoint divorces during the Nazi regime — those that took place under extreme pressure and those that occurred as a result of bad advice given not only by the Gestapo, but also by representatives of the *Reichsvereinigung*, for example, Max Plaut, chairman of the organization in Hamburg. Some of the wives who had been subjected to pressure by the Gestapo asked for his advice in such a tricky situation. Who else could they have turned to? Lawyers, acquaintances and representatives of the *Reichsvereinigung* unanimously advised the wives to obtain a quick divorce and made every effort to ensure this happened as speedily as possible, especially if the Jewish husband had been interned. By doing so, they all helped to accelerate his deportation. In a report made after the war, the daughter of a Jew murdered in a concentration camp describes her mother's dilemma as follows:

Members of the Gestapo, employees of Jewish centers as well as other victims of persecution told my mother time and time again that if she did not have her marriage dissolved, it would have severe consequences for my father. If this state of *Rassenschande*, as it was made out to be, did not change, then my father would be sent to a concentration camp where, they thought, he would probably die. If the marriage were dissolved, then my father could expect better treatment. He would at the worst be evacuated. We had already heard from the relatives of people evacuated that it ... was more a question of rehousing. It had been possible to send post after some months and those evacuated were also allowed to receive parcels.<sup>73</sup>

Relatives did not know that Theresienstadt often was only a stopover on the way to KZ Auschwitz.

Of the 130 divorces investigated, there were 103 Jewish men and 27 Jewish women involved (Table 1). Many of them had been married for decades (Table 2). More than a third of the petitioners filed for divorce

<sup>72</sup> had emigrated, 6 were living in a *Judenhaus* in Hamburg, 6 had emigrated with their non-Jewish spouses, 2 lived in a nursing home or hospital, 2 lived with the non-Jewish spouses in occupied eastern territories, and 2 whose whereabouts were unknown.

<sup>73</sup> Archives of the Justizbehörde Hamburg, Eheanerkennungsverfahren 346 E 1 1/3/5, Letter of G. W. to Landesjustizverwaltung Hamburg, 5 August 1956, p. 1f.

when it was obvious that the Jewish partner would be deported (Table 1). More than 70 percent of those who remained in Germany after their divorce were murdered, that is, sixty-three men and six women. At the end of the war there were still 647 Jews in Hamburg, more than half of whom were women (358 women to 289 men).<sup>74</sup>

Pressure from all sides was put on those couples seeking a divorce (though mainly on the "German-blooded" wives) — pressure from employers, clerks at the employment exchange, professional associations, welfare workers, landlords, the Gestapo, neighbors, and superiors in the Wehrmacht. At least the representatives of the *RVD*, the lawyers (including the Jewish legal advisers), and often the family played a supportive role. Apart from the authorities already mentioned, people involved in the persecution included the non-Jewish wives and, to a much lesser extent, the non-Jewish husbands. An objection has to be raised here against Nathan Stoltzfus who, in an attempt to locate a potential for resistance in the German people, defines the low divorce rate for mixed marriages in general and the much-cited protest by the wives of those Jews arrested in the *Fabrik-Aktion* in the *Rosenstrasse* in particular, as "acts of political opposition."<sup>75</sup> External factors may well have prejudiced the decision to divorce, for example, the forced move to a *Judenhaus*, or the husband's internment and the inescapable fate of "evacuation," added to the decline in social status and the economic hardships during the war. Moreover, the women were often confronted with the dilemma: whether or not to accompany their husbands on the final journey; having already suffered the difficult years from 1933 to 1942–43. Divorce seemed to be the only way of surviving. However, the decision to renounce one's partner was mostly taken by non-Jewish women, who, although not perpetrators, by doing this nevertheless became involved in the process of exclusion and persecution and consequently assumed a role they did not like to be reminded of when the

<sup>74</sup> FZH, Sign. 6262, Report on the Jewish Community of Hamburg, undated (probably summer 1945), p. 1 and 3. The New York newspaper *Aufbau* published lists of Jews who had survived in Hamburg. See *Aufbau* of 20 and 27 July 1945.

<sup>75</sup> Nathan Stoltzfus, "Widerstand des Herzens. Der Protest in der Rosenstrasse und die deutsch-jüdische Mischung," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 2 (1995), p. 221. See also Nathan Stoltzfus, *Resistance of the Heart. Internment and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany*, New York, 1996.



war was over.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, far more “German-blooded” women obtained divorces from their Jewish husbands than “German-blooded” husbands from their Jewish wives — even after taking into consideration the proportionally larger number of such marriages with Jewish husbands. The initial materialistic reasons for the marriage, and the high level of pressure exerted on these marriages at an early stage by the Gestapo and non-Jewish society had a negative effect on the marriage. In contrast, the emotional reasons for the marriage between “German-blooded” men and Jewish women, together with the lower level of pressure that was exerted at a later stage from the surroundings, probably had a stabilizing effect that sustained the marriage. However, even if a couple fought to keep their marriage intact in order to give the Jewish partner protection, this was by no means a guarantee that he or she would not be deported. A small number of people living in both dissolved and intact mixed marriages had on several occasions been deported to Theresienstadt between the summer of 1943 and January 1945, yet, more than two hundred people — mostly living in “privileged” mixed marriages — were deported from Hamburg to Theresienstadt in February 1945.<sup>77</sup>

The protection offered by a “privileged” mixed marriage was always only temporary even if many people survived in this constellation. In many marriages the external pressure led to internal disintegration. It evoked both the wish to struggle through together, to save the other one, to escape the persecution, just as much as it evoked base feelings. A “privileged” mixed marriage was no guarantee of survival — it was merely a reflection of German society.

<sup>76</sup> A law “Gesetz über die Anerkennung freier Ehen rassisch und politisch Verfolgter” of 23 June 1950 (*Bundgesetzblatt*, p. 226), enabled, among other things, the revision of divorces after the war. It is certainly no coincidence that 22 women from Hamburg (all “German-blooded” except for one Jewish woman), but no divorced man made applications which secured for them benefits and the right of inheritance. <sup>77</sup> Gruner, *Arbeitsinsatz*, p. 328. In Hamburg, this deportation, declared throughout the Reich as “labor in another area,” affected — after exemptions and postponements — 128 men and 66 women mainly from “privileged” mixed marriages. Fortunately, almost all of them survived the late deportation.

Table 1. Duration of Marriage among divorced mixed couples

Length of marriage	Number of divorces
0–5 years	12
6–10 years	38
11–15 years	25
16–20 years	19
21–25 years	15
26–30 years	12
More than 30 years	4
No data	5
Total	130

Table 2. Divorces among “racially mixed marriages” in Hamburg 1937–45

Year	Number of divorces	Jewish men	Jewish women	Total of mixed marriages
1937	4	3	1	
1938	20	16	4	
1939	22	19	3	
1940	14	9	5	972
1941	19	15	4	1,036
1942	21	17	4	1,122
1943	23	20	3	
1944	6	3	3	874
1945	1	1	—	647
Total	130	103	27	