

INTRODUCTION

Modern Women in the German Illustrated Press

In 1931, a German communist magazine, the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (AIZ) compared images of women's labor in the British West Indies with the status of bourgeois women, represented at a beauty pageant in Stuttgart.¹ The photographs of smiling, confident women wearing bathing suits and sporting *Bubi-köpfe* (bobbed haircuts) reflected a middle-class, commercialized image of the *Neue* or *Moderne Frau* (New or Modern Woman) of the Weimar years. While the captions explained that the "wealthy women of the ruling class" were "ignorant about the worries about work and bread," the images could also be read as a parallel commentary on the exploitation of women in general. The women who were flaunting their status and beauty were unwilling to see their own misuse in a capitalist system, a theme the communist press continuously stressed. Editors frequently linked economic control, militarism, and imperialistic motives with images of the *Neue Frau* to connect political and cultural dangers for their readers. In response to the popular image of the *Neue Frau*, the communist press constructed their own version of the modern woman in photo-essays and collages of women who recognized and rejected the capitalist control of women in mass media, beauty pageants, and cinema and embraced the possibility of revolutionary change. This was their vision of the future, an alternative modernity.

Nearly three decades later, a popular magazine in East Germany printed a feature exposing women's exploitation in West Germany. The photo-essay, "American Style," highlighted the mistreatment of women in West Berlin, including photographs of women performing "underwear" and "strip tease" shows for American soldiers.² The out-of-work dancers, clad in slips and surrounded by laughing men, emphasized women's humiliation. These are not the modern, independent women of the postwar era, suggested the magazine, but symbols of American imperialism and militarism. Echoing the themes from Weimar, the communist publication critiqued the status of women in the West and emphasized an alternative postwar modern woman. In the East, she stood behind a machine, emancipated by paid labor. She was a critical consumer and equal participant in rebuilding Germany—an embodiment of progress and

differentiation with the West. In both Weimar and the GDR, the communist press utilized the popular and commercialized image of the modern woman, associated with colonial and capitalist systems, as a foil to define the emancipated, working-class alternative.

Contested Femininities: Representations of Modern Women in the German Illustrated Press, 1920–1960 explores how images of the *Neue* or *Moderne Frau* represented competing visions of the future. Images of femininity emerged as crucial markers of modernity for different political and social groups, adapted to fit their ideological needs within and across different regimes. Whether articulating a belief in liberal democracy and capitalism, the revolutionary rhetoric of communism, or the racist, antisemitic framework of German fascism, the claims and discourses of modernity were inseparable from gendered assumptions concerning women's role in society. Gendering the concept of "multiple modernities" means interrogating the various ways in which "femininities" are defined, through the visual and textual language of "modernity," in a specific historical moment. I argue that competing images of the modern woman (and related debates about the gender order) were used as a dominant visual signifier of ideological difference and ideas about the future. Commercial and political magazines remained a key site of contestation for the modern woman from the 1920s through the 1950s.

Although crossing seemingly discrete historical periods, *Contested Femininities* demonstrates remarkable continuity in visual images of women across regimes. Analysis of gendered images confirms that the cultural boundaries between periods were far more ambiguous, complex, and flexible than we might imagine. Images of modern women that *looked* the same could be imbued with vastly different meaning, and they could be used to articulate distance from another political party during the Weimar Republic, as a sign of "positive propaganda" in the Third Reich, as markers of difference between the Soviet and Anglo-American zones (and the recent Nazi past) during occupation, and as a form of entangled "othering" between the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) during the Cold War. Representations of modern women became a crucial way for political groups and regimes to define and communicate their understanding of modernity to a wide audience. Publications that crossed different historical periods (from Weimar to Nazi Germany, or the occupation of Germany to its division) also remind us that readers confronted photographs, advertisements, and photo-essays within a larger and complex visual landscape that spanned different governments, censorship laws, and daily experiences. No matter the historical moment, images of women were used to articulate competing understandings of modernity. This book underscores striking continuities from the 1920s to the 1950s, both in terms of visual images of women and aesthetic practices of magazines.

Analyzing these ruptures and continuities, *Contested Femininities* contributes to the vast historiography of women in German history by tracing visual images of modern women in the illustrated press beyond the Weimar Republic, demonstrating the long-lasting and flexible appeal of what regimes deemed “modern” and appealing to their readers. The *Neue Frau* of the Weimar era has long been a site of interest for historians, in part because the image invoked the narrative of progress, possibility, and a challenge to conservative forces.³ The interwar years, on a global scale, saw the emergence of the “modern girl,” a phenomenon attached to new media practices, the circulation of images, and consumption.⁴ Scholars have also analyzed the *Neue Frau* as a site of backlash, fear, and anxiety as a precursor to the Third Reich.⁵ Echoing larger trends in Weimar historiography, historians often have reinforced an idea of a homogeneous culture of “modernity,” where the *Neue Frau* embodied “consumerism,” “anxiety,” “crisis,” or “modernity” writ large. Recent works have challenged the dichotomy of “glitter and doom” and argued for a more fragmented, pluralistic, “contingency”-based understanding of the interwar years.⁶

The failure to recognize the complexities of images like the *Neue Frau* simply echo the sentiments of “good culture” of the 1920s without understanding its contestation in the visual landscape of the Weimar Republic.⁷ While one version of the *Neue Frau* dominated the middle-class and commercial press, other articulations of female identity like economic emancipation, companionate marriage, or sex reform—were seen as indicators of modernity.⁸ Jochen Hung has underscored, “It is necessary to accept the existence of ‘alternative modernities’—not only in non-Western societies but throughout European history as well—in order to uncover Weimar contemporaries’ complex interpretations of their own time.”⁹ While existing scholarship recognizes some characteristics of alternative modern women, this study locates them specifically in the political and visual culture of Weimar and the transference of images into the Third Reich and beyond.¹⁰

Scholars have emphasized the role “positive propaganda” played during the Third Reich, and I stress the gulf between popular conceptions of the “Aryan” mother in a dirndl dress and the vast array of visual options available to women of different marital and familial statuses.¹¹ Representations of modern women did not disappear in 1933 but were reworked to fit the needs of the Nazi party. Illustrated magazines in the Third Reich functioned to convince readers that modern furnishings, fashion, jobs, and household advice were part and parcel of everyday life and a way to distance readers from the violence and brutality of the regime. The Nazi state had already begun preparing citizens for war in the mid-1930s, and one articulation of the modern woman included trained and competent women on the home front, images that existed long before the war began.¹² The modern woman remained flexible during World War II as she stood behind the machine, sacrificed for the nation, and donned a gasmask to

defend her country. Propaganda of enemy women (the over-sexed American or the “gun women” of the East) served as a powerful visual counterpoint to the decent and productive German modern woman.

Looking at the postwar period, historians have examined how Cold War rhetoric informed understandings of the gender order during occupation and projects of rebuilding and legitimization of the East and West.¹³ Representations of women symbolized the competing futures of Germany, as “boundary objects,” which circulated across zones and borders.¹⁴ Immediately after the war, the Anglo-American–led media linked economic recovery and fantasies of consumer choice with the familiar male breadwinner / female housewife model. The gender order was meant to reflect a return to normality and a correction to the Nazi past. In the Soviet zone, roles for women were not just an articulation of socialist ideology (with the necessity of paid work) but an explicit rejection of American occupation policies.

Importantly, constructions of the modern woman created in Weimar were reworked in both the FRG and GDR to articulate competing political and social systems during the Cold War.¹⁵ Throughout the 1950s, illustrated magazines remained a popular and accessible media, many of which were developed during the occupation years. Magazines presented a variety of roles for women, in both Germanies, defining ideal paid work and the arrangement of the domestic sphere. The entanglements of the two Germanies, albeit uneven, reveals how the GDR critiqued images of women in the West as a way to legitimize the postwar regime and gender order.

Representations of the modern woman were contradictory and malleable, dependent upon the needs of the regime or a political party and their beliefs about women in politics, the economy, and the family. At the core, patriarchal structures still determined cultural assumptions about femininity, tasked women with the double-burden, and assumed the primary caregiving and nurturing remained in the hands of women. Within and across disparate political regimes, competing images of modern women in the illustrated press remained objects of promise and cautionary tales.

Gendering Multiple Modernities

Contested Femininities genders the concept of “multiple modernities” and underscores the related contested and contradictory images of femininity. The existence of multiple visual and textual representations is directly related to the ambiguities, ambivalences, and paradoxes of historical constructions of modernity. Schmul Eisenstadt argues, “The idea of multiple modernities presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world—indeed to explain the history of modernity—is to see it as a story of continual constitu-

tion and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs.”¹⁶ Scholars interested in the contemporary political implications of “multiple modernities” focus on large frameworks applied to the nation-state. These approaches allow for a broad investigation into contested modernities, but this perspective often neglects the nuanced components of modern projects within specific historical contexts, including the important role gender and the family plays within competing modernities.¹⁷

I explore internal multiple modernities, through a gendered lens, that existed within Germany in the twentieth century.¹⁸ Rather than ahistorically apply a category of “modernity” to a particular period or set of aesthetic practices, this study is concerned with how various *Illustrierten* used the terms “*neue frau*,” “*moderne frau*,” or “modern” as descriptors as well as the patterns in the language and images of modernity.¹⁹ This reveals how images and language concerning the modern woman moved beyond the Weimar years, reflecting a concern with presenting a framework of femininity that appealed to readers but, at the same time, never challenged the gender hierarchy.

Multiple modernities, through the lens of gender, underscores the importance gender plays in reaffirming and defending a “natural” gender hierarchy within the status quo as well as the ways in which gender functions as an important marker in alternative conceptions of modernity. I understand “gender,” following Joan W. Scott, as a “constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes” and as “a primary way of signifying relationships of power.”²⁰ The idea that gender is constructed through different discursive practices helps explain why femininity is represented in multiple and contradictory ways, including the role that image production plays in communicating ideas about the gender order.²¹ Scott argues, “Various representations of masculinity and femininity have been invoked to mobilize constituencies, to tar enemies, to put groups and individuals in their place.”²² I use gender, and other relational categories, to tease out and recognize the fractured nature of the category of “women” and the ways in which differing conceptions of femininity are constructed through visual and textual representations.

Feminist scholarship concerning visual images has also moved beyond simple denunciations of stereotypical portrayals of women to “a more exacting assessment of the productive role of representation in the construction of subjectivity, femininity, and sexuality.”²³ The art historian Amelia Jones points out, “feminism has long acknowledged that visibility (the conditions of how we see and make meaning of what we see) is one of the key modes by which gender is culturally inscribed.”²⁴ Current scholarship stresses the necessity of not only analyzing the *product* but the *process* of image making in order to provide a more nuanced and multifaceted discourse of female representations, rooted in historical analysis. Thus, it is not merely the photograph or illustration in the magazine that I am interested in but the ways in which its multiple meanings

are a process of negotiating the various political, social, and cultural discourses about women in a particular historical context.

Seeing Modernity: The Illustrated Press

The illustrated press, utilized by both commercial enterprises and political parties, provided a new and engaging way of presenting news, political ideas, and entertainment to audiences. This media remained the most inexpensive and accessible to all audiences throughout the first half of the twentieth century, making it far more reaching than film or radio, until the introduction of the television in the 1960s, and is thus the focus of my analysis.²⁵ The illustrated magazine is unique in its function to inform, entertain, persuade, and explain by using a combination of images and text. Unlike films, where images flicker across the screen, or novels, which construct a “verbal image,” illustrated magazines offer a unique forum that allows the reader to extrapolate meaning by both “seeing” and “reading.”²⁶ This is not to suggest, however, that other media were unimportant in constructing the modern woman as scholarship on film, radio, literature, and photography demonstrates.²⁷ But, *Illustrierten* had the advantage of both being widely available and creating continuity (and familiarity) in titles and aesthetic practices. These magazines remind researchers that readers lived in a continuous era, with a familiar visual landscape, not always so easily bracketed by political shifts.

Utilizing the theoretical and methodological approach of “intermediality,” which examines the relationship between visual and textual images, *Contested Femininities* unpacks the complex messaging within and between *Illustrierten*. In a broad sense, “intermediality” refers to direct or indirect encounters between two or more media, including the interrelatedness between text and pictures. Peter Wagner notes, the “verbal and visual combine to produce rhetoric that depends on the co-presence of words and images.”²⁸ Scholars should not just examine the differences and similarities between words and pictures but also ask, “why does it matter how words and images are juxtaposed, blended, or separated?”²⁹ Texts, for example, “explain, narrate, describe, label and speak to or for images,” while images “illustrate, exemplify, clarify, ground and document the text.”³⁰ Thus, the multiple meanings of the images and the text are dependent upon one another. The placement of the images in the magazine, the type of image (such as a photograph or drawing), their primary function (advertisement or illustration), alongside the corresponding text, combine to produce a variety (but not an unlimited number) of meanings.³¹

Historians and media scholars furthermore emphasize that photo-reportage and the innovate use of text and image was particular to Germany, and “starting in the mid-1920s . . . photo-reportage became almost ubiquitous as

the new, modern, meticulously designed graphic media formant in the German illustrated press.³² *Illustrierten* were easily distinguished by their mixed compositions of photographs and illustrations, photo-essays, compelling front covers, and bold headlines. They incorporated news and human-interest stories, “celebrity journalism,” serialized novels, puzzles, and often special sections for theatre, film, fashion, sports, and travel. By the end of the Weimar Republic the illustrated magazine, unique in its combination of “seeing” and “reading,” was firmly established in the media landscape and maintained its prominence throughout the Third Reich and after 1945.³³

Daniel Magilow argues, “Whatever their differences as commercial or ideological rivals, *Illustrierten* were united in their enthrallment with photography and in their conviction that carefully organized photographs could convey information objectively with an added visceral punch.”³⁴ Moreover, the role of photo-reportage (the creation of narrative photo-essays) developed into one of the most recognizable features of successful *Illustrierten* during the 1920s.³⁵ The publishing houses and editors of the illustrated magazines had a stake in how images were used and understood by the public sphere, especially in a narrative and argumentative form. The inclusion of images enhanced text in popular illustrated magazines as they became a vehicle for modern communication; readers could extrapolate meaning through “seeing” rather than “reading,” even as textual explanation remained crucial for publications. Pepper Stetler, in *Stop Reading! Look! Modern Vision and the Weimar Photographic Book*, reveals how photographic books also functioned “to train their audience to better manage the new ways in which photography was being used in illustrated magazines and newspapers.”³⁶ The growth of “photographic media,” she explains, “required readers to possess new sets of perceptual skills and Weimar’s illustrated newspapers, magazines, and advertisements were experimenting with how to capture the modern viewer’s attention.”³⁷

As many scholars have indicated, photography was laden with ties to the “scientific understanding” of the world, one that was “objective,” where reality passed through a lens and editors presented an unaltered truth to their readers. Photography had “‘grown a conscious of its own laws’ due to its capacity for an ‘absolute realism’ and even ‘super realism.’”³⁸ Editors often treated photographs as unbiased images of people and events with the understanding that the public accepted them without criticism and added captions and headlines to help readers interpret a particular message. Hanno Hardt explains, “Photographs are assigned the power to establish the real conditions of society, either in the form of middle-class conceptions of tradition and survival or in the provocative style of social criticism, with its attacks on the social and political establishment.”³⁹ The camera supplied the means to define a seemingly unprejudiced “truth,” which was formed by the individual taking the photograph as well as how a publication chose to place the photograph in its publication

alongside captions, headlines, and articles that attempted to ensure the reader arrived at the correct interpretation. Although this study is not a history of reception, it nonetheless pays attention to reader surveys, letters to the editor, and responses to features and photo-essays, which reveal that readers did not always properly interpret an image, at least according to editors.

The contexts in which the images appeared and their specific functions are neither mutually exclusive nor static. Peter Burke reminds us that “a series of images offers testimony more reliable than that of individual images.”⁴⁰ *Illustrierten*, published biweekly or monthly, provide evidence of artistic conventions of the time and long-term patterns of design and content. I contend that the illustrated magazines also played a central role in providing continuity across regimes, even as major political shifts disrupted everyday life. The Weimar Republic constitutes an important period that set the aesthetic conventions the illustrated press continued to follow during the Third Reich, the occupation of Germany, and the postwar world. While editors experimented with a variety of ways to arrange texts and images in the magazines, by the end of the 1920s, these converged to create a prototypical illustrated magazine. In the process of *Gleichschaltung* after 1933, publishers and editors often hid significant political changes in content, tone, and ideological underpinnings of general interest magazines behind familiar mastheads and magazine designs, even as they violently persecuted Jewish citizens and political enemies. Popular magazines, like the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* (*BIZ*), provided comfort for those who wished to ignore antisemitic legislation and racial violence. While some presses continued to operate in exile (like the communist *AIZ*), other publications were forced to close as the Nazis banned lesbian and gay publications and other dissenting media. In the case of the communist press after 1945, the use of Weimar-era aesthetics (including photomontage) and personnel became a starting point for *Illustrierten* in the Soviet zone and East Germany. In the Western zones of occupation and the FRG, popular commercial magazines echoed the design of magazines published in previous decades.

While acknowledging the broad array of magazines published between 1920 and 1960, I am particularly interested in select runs of political magazines that either cross political regimes or were reimagined after 1945. Alongside political publications, I incorporate examples from popular magazines that reached a broad audience. This approach allows me to examine contestation, change, and continuity within a manageable scope. While recognizing the vast number of specialized journals, fashion magazines, and other women’s magazines, these publications are both popular in terms of circulation numbers and exemplify the aesthetics and content of either a widespread commercial press or the language and perspective of a particular political ideology (or both). I also incorporate historical scholarship from Weimar to the 1960s on other specific themes, including the lesbian press, which was suppressed during the Third Reich.⁴¹

During the Weimar Republic, with the birth of the mass political press, I analyze *Illustrierten* created by the different political interests for both a general audience and for women. These include the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* and *Der Weg der Frau*, published by the communist Willi Münzenberg, the Social Democratic *Volk und Zeit* and *Frauenwelt*, and the Nazi *Illustrierte Beobachter* and the *N.S. Frauen-Warte*. Alongside this, I examine the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, the most popular commercial illustrated magazine in the Weimar Republic, which continued to be published in the Third Reich. Under the Nazi regime, I continue the analysis of the official Nazi *Illustrierter Beobachter*, the *N.S. Frauen-Warte*, and the *BIZ*. I examine major publications from the Anglo-American and Soviet zones between 1945 and 1949. In the West, this includes *Heute*, *Sie*, *Constanze*, and *Stern*. While some of the occupation magazines folded after the allies left West Germany, I extend my analysis in the FRG with the popular magazines *Constanze*, *Stern*, and *Brigitte*. I also integrate the Social Democratic women's publication *Gleichheit*. Magazines in the Soviet zone, which continued publication in the GDR during the 1950s, include the *Neue Berliner Illustrierte* and *Die Frau von Heute*.

Chapter Overviews

Contested Femininities is structured chronologically, while emphasizing inter-related images and themes of paid work, the domestic sphere, and the presentation of the modern woman's body throughout the chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 concentrate on the development of the illustrated press in Weimar and the multiple and contradictory images of modern women produced by the commercial and political press. Debates about paid work were a central feature in all publications, particularly relevant to working-class magazines, which argued that socialist or communist principles would pave the way for women's equality. The anxieties and concerns over women's paid work intensified in 1929 with the Great Depression. Whether or not women engaged in paid work and in what sector became defining principles for all political parties. The visual and textual representations of the technically savvy and resourceful housewife and worker were vital components of the ideal modern woman in the Social Democratic and Communist press. The modern woman was marked first and foremost by her visual appearance, whether celebrated or chastised. The female body was an important component in the interrelated debates on sexual politics, sport, and fashion, the focus of chapter 2.

Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on the Third Reich. I argue that representations of the *Neue Frau* played an important role in defining appropriate types of modern women for the Nazi Party. Magazine editors reformulated the image according to National Socialist ideology, racial theory, and gender roles in

the Third Reich to appease their audience and promote “positive propaganda.” I argue that this propaganda in the illustrated press had far reaching appeal to the population, more than the official “*Dirndl* and mother” images. Indeed, the rejection of these images in favor of images of modern and urban women, created during the Weimar Republic, remained a staple in illustrated magazines. Images of women at work were varied in magazines and presented as positive contributions to the Reich. *Illustrierten* also emphasized the educated “Aryan” mothers through norms of the rationalized housewife, a link with reform programs in the Weimar Republic. Chapter 4 focuses on photographs and illustrations of the body that provided a space of visual instruction during the Third Reich that modified or adapted images of the modern woman to promote different ideals of beauty, fashion, or female athleticism. The visual representation of the female body in the illustrated press of the Third Reich also constitutes striking continuities. Without textual clarification, a profile of a film star, fashion model, or a female athlete in the illustrated press showed little change after 1933. Indeed, many of these images were designated “modern”; but rather than bodies of decay, decadence, or degeneration, they became acceptable forms of female modernity. After 1933, many textual referents with antisemitic imagery in the publications I examine become less frequent, as readers could assume the women featured were “Aryan” women and part of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. This contributed to a feeling of inclusion and familiarity.

Chapter 5, focusing on World War II, demonstrates that visual representations of war mobilization began much earlier than previously understood. While scholars have emphasized women’s role during the war (and in relation to Nazi policy), images of young women supporting the military and training for auxiliary duties already began in the mid-1930s, as magazines praised women’s work in defending the nation. During the war, images of the modern woman continued to flood the pages of the Nazi-approved illustrated press as objects of desire, distraction from the war, and reminders of “normality” on the home front. What is striking are the various ways in which the illustrated press attempted to make war work acceptable. Popular magazines often framed their photo-essays in terms of women’s appearance or attitude during war, emphasizing both their contribution to the war effort and the flexibility of gender roles.

Representations of the modern woman were also visible during the occupation of Germany, particularly in publications directed by the United States and the Soviet Union, the focus of chapters 6 and 7. The famous images of *Trümmerfrauen* (Rubble Women) as symbols of rebuilding, are only a small percentage of the representations available in the media and very quickly signaled a sharp postwar ideological divide. As allied policy changed toward Germans, American ideals of the domesticated modern housewife and profiles of

war brides (with an abundance of consumer goods) dominated the pages. In the Eastern zone, editors included images that emphasized the role of women in paid labor and politics while avoiding visual representations of widespread sexual violence. The use of images, with corresponding text to guide interpretations, quickly communicated larger abstract concepts of collapse and deprivation, reconstruction, and reorientation. Magazines became a primary way to signify not only the power of occupied forces, but also visions of rebuilding and modernity where women were front and center, for both the Americans and the Soviets. Chapter 7 focuses on future promises of abundance and used women's bodies to signify recovery. Both zones held out the promise and the fantasy of abundant consumer goods as women struggled to make do with ration cards and limited material goods.

The final two chapters focus on the postwar period of the 1950s in the FRG and GDR. During the 1950s, the illustrated press in both Germanys attempted to define each state's and society's vision of modernity by using images of the modern woman. Visual and textual images of femininity (and especially images coded "modern") functioned within each German state as signs that differentiated "our" Germany from the other and defined "us" in relation to the *wrong* kind of femininity on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Many of the magazines created during the occupation continued during the 1950s.

Chapter 8 demonstrates how the GDR drew on traditions of the communist press during the Weimar Republic (including hiring editors from the interwar communist press), showing continuities in aesthetic conventions and content between the postwar world and the Weimar Republic. Magazines in the FRG emphasized consumer fantasies, a retreat into the domestic sphere, and spaces for part-time work. At the same time, "modern" jobs in business and aviation became a space for female employment before marriage and children. In the GDR, where it became necessary for the state to encourage full-time employment for women, magazines applauded women's roles in modern industrialized work and in areas that were once "male domains." The visual images of labor echoed the content and style of those created during the Weimar Republic. The assumption that women were responsible for the housework and care work—in both the FRG and GDR—did not change.

In both East and West Germany, familiar images of modern women were simply repackaged for readers, as captions, headlines, or articles contextualized their meaning in the postwar world. Whether through fashion, pin-up girls, and American film stars in the FRG or the healthy and happy socialist women in the GDR, women's bodies signified recovery and stabilization. Magazines in the FRG reflected the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle), even if consumer goods were not available to everyone on an equal basis. In the GDR, the promise of abundant material goods and the politically aware, fashionable woman was meant to satisfy consumer needs.

The final chapter explores the uneven “entanglements” of the FRG and GDR. Both Germanys used *Illustrierten* to shape the image of the *other* Germany, albeit in an uneven way. The entanglements of East and West, articulated through a visual landscape of what the other side purportedly looked like, worked to distance one Germany from the other.⁴² While magazines in the FRG infrequently acknowledged the East, publications in the GDR constantly reminded readers of their neighbor by reprinting sensational material in communist magazines. The practice of (re)contextualizing and collaging images had long been a tradition within the communist press, beginning in Weimar Germany. Drawing on contemporary anxieties about Americanization, GDR magazines repeatedly asserted that the United States highly influenced the “debasement” of women in West Germany. These articles were especially important during the early 1950s when East Germany needed to establish an identity counter to the West, in the context of both Cold War politics and the recent Nazi past. These images encouraged readers to see for themselves the evidence of female exploitation in a capitalist society. The added benefit for publications was to present interesting and sometimes titillating images that might otherwise be forbidden.

The contestation of modernities, articulated in ideologies of liberal democracy, fascism, and communism, is a defining feature of Germany in the twentieth century. I argue that images of women defined different understandings of modernity within and across regimes from Weimar to the postwar world in the illustrated press. More than any other symbol, representations of femininity visually and textually defined visions of the future, political contestations, and articulated ideological differences.

Notes

Note: The online catalog for *Contested Femininities* contains additional images. This includes the image referenced in the introduction in which the *AIZ* critiques the “beauty queens” of the Weimar Republic.

1. “Zwei Welten,” *AIZ*, no. 19, 1931.
2. “American-Style,” *NBI*, no. 23, June 1951, 4–5.
3. Huysen, “Mass Culture as Woman”; Petro, *Joyless Streets*; Meskimmon and West, *Visions of the “Neue Frau”*; Hake, “In the Mirror of Fashion”; McCormick, *Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity*; and Grossmann, “Continuities and Ruptures.”
4. Weinbaum et al., *The Modern Girl around the World*; and Hershfield, *Imagining La Chica Moderna*.
5. Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, *When Biology Became Destiny*.
6. Hung, Weiss-Sussex, and Wilkes, *Beyond Glitter and Doom*. Recent scholarship that exemplifies new approaches to gender and Weimar culture include Weinbaum et al., *The Modern Girl around the World*; Graf, “Anticipating the Future in the Present”; Otto

- and Rocco, *The New Woman International*; Jensen, *Body by Weimar*; Sutton, *The Masculine Woman*; Hung, "The Modernized Gretchen"; and Eley, *German Modernities*.
7. Hung, "Bad Politics' and 'Good Culture."
 8. Grossmann, "The New Woman"; Grossmann, *Reforming Sex*; and Osborne, *Cultures of Abortion*.
 9. Hung, "Bad Politics' and 'Good Culture,'" 443; and Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities."
 10. Grossmann, "The New Woman"; Grossmann, "Girnkulture"; Von Soden and Schmidt, *Neue Frauen*; Sykora, *Die Neue Frau*; Meskimmon and West, *Visions of the "Neue Frau"*; Von Ankum, *Women in the Metropolis*; Grossmann, "German Communism and New Women"; Poiger, "Fantasies of Universality?"; Kessemeier, *Sportlich, sachlich, männlich*; Sharp, "Riding the Tiger"; Graf, "Anticipating the Future in the Present"; Petersen, *Women and Modernity in Weimar Germany*; Sonntag, "Die Proletarierin"; Otto and Rocco, *The New Woman International*; Sutton, *The Masculine Woman*; Smith, *Berlin Coquette*; Hung, "The Modernized Gretchen."
 11. Guenther, *Nazi Chic?*; Ascheid, *Hitler's Heroines*; Bruns, *Nazi Cinema's New Women*; Döhring and Feldmann, *Von "N.S. Frauen-Warte"*; Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*; Baranowski, *Strength through Joy*; Swett, Ross, and d'Almeida, *Pleasure and Power*; Wiesen, *Creating the Nazi Marketplace*; Swett, *Selling under the Swastika*; and Führer, "Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda."
 12. Winkler, *Frauenarbeit*; Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*; Stephenson, "Women's Labor Service in Nazi Germany"; Hachtmann, "Industriearbeiterinnen"; Campbell, "Women in Combat"; Kundrus, *Kriegerfrauen*; Heineman, "Whose Mothers?"; Hagemann, "Military, War, and the Mainstreams"; Vaizey, "Empowerment or Endurance?"; Hagemann, "Mobilizing Women for War"; Harvey, *Women in the Nazi East*; Lower, *Hitler's Furies*; Eley, *Nazism as Fascism*; Century, *Female Administrators*.
 13. Hagemann and Quartaert, *Gendering Modern German History*; Hagemann, Harsch, and Brühöfener, *Gendering Post-1945 German History*; Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*; Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make?*; Goedde, *GIs and Germans*; Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins*; Tröger, "Between Rape and Prostitution"; Kundrus, "Forbidden Company."
 14. Carter, "Contact Zones and Boundary Objects," 71–72.
 15. Carter, *How German Is She?*; Oertzen, *The Pleasure of a Surplus Income*; Horvath, *Bitte recht weiblich!*; and Fehrenbach and Poeger, *Transactions*; Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*; Merkel, . . . und Du, *Frau an der Werkbank*; Budde, "Der Körper der 'sozialistischen Frauenpersönlichkeit'"; Merkel, "Leitbilder und Lebensweise"; Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism*; and Bren and Neuberger, *Communism Unwrapped*.
 16. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," 2; and Sachsenmaier, Riedel, with Eisenstadt, *Reflections on Multiple Modernities*.
 17. Sachsenmaier, "Multiple Modernities," and Kaelble, "European Self-Understanding."
 18. Jarausch, *Out of Ashes*, 3–6.
 19. Jeffries, *Textual Construction of the Female Body*; and Ballaster et al., *Women's Worlds*.
 20. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 42; and Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category."
 21. Betterton, *Looking On*; Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics*; and Lorber, *Gender Inequality*.
 22. Scott, "Unanswered Questions," 1423.
 23. Pollack, "Missing Women," 229; and Hayes, "Introduction," in *Visual Genders*.
 24. Jones, "Conceiving the Intersection of Feminism and Visual Culture."
 25. Ross, *Media and the Making*; and Stöber, *Deutsche Pressegeschichte*.
 26. Magilow, *The Photography of Crisis*; and Stetler, *Stop Reading! Look!* See also Evans, Betts, and Hoffmann, *The Ethics of Seeing*.

27. See for example, Meskimmon and West, *Visions of the "Neue Frau"*; Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*; Fühlich, "Woman and Typewriter"; McCormick, *Gender and Sexuality*; Ascheid, *Hitler's Heroines*; Fast, *Das Frauenbild der 20er Jahre*; Ganeva, *Women in Weimar Fashion*; Bruns, *Nazi Cinema's New Woman*; Freytag and Tacke, *City Girls*.
28. Wagner, *Icons, Iconotexts*, 17.
29. Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 91.
30. Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 94.
31. Jones, "Feminism, Incorporated"; and the special issue *Photography and Historical Interpretation of History and Theory* 48 (2009): 1–168.
32. Holzer and Lauffer, "Picture Stories," 2.
33. Führer, "Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda."
34. Magilow, *The Photography of Crisis*, 60.
35. Holzer and Lauffer, "Picture Stories," 15–20. See also Keller, "Fotografie und Begehren."
36. Stetler, *Stop Reading! Look!*, 10.
37. Stetler, *Stop Reading! Look!*, 10.
38. Knoch, "Living Pictures," 225.
39. Hardt, "Pictures for the Masses."
40. Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 187.
41. Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*; Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation*; Schader, *Virile, Vamps und wilde Veilchen*; Vogel, "Zum Selbstverständnis lesbischer Frauen in der Weimarer Republik"; Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade*; Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*; Evans, *Life Among the Ruins*; Evans, "Decriminalization, Seduction, and 'Unnatural Desire'"; Whisnant, *Male Sexuality in West Germany*.
42. Hagemann, Harsch, and Brühöfener, *Gendering Post-1945 German History*; and Carter, "Contact Zones and Boundary Objects."