

Sisters, Objects of Desire, or Barbarians:  
German Nurses in the First World War

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## **ABSTRACT**

This is a study of German nurses during the First World War that examines the differing perceptions and representations of them that appeared during the war, focusing on those of German soldiers and British and American nurses that were at odds with the ideal image of nurses. I trace British and American nurses' opinions using nursing and medical journals and investigate the complex relationship between German nurses and soldiers using soldiers' newspapers as a main source base. I argue that representations and perceptions of German nurses that contrasted with the ideal image of a nurse are crucial to understanding the relationships between German, British, and American nurses because the perceived deviations from the ideal image strained their relationships even after the war was over. These conflicting images are also essential to appreciating the complex relationship between German soldiers and nurses because they show that, at times, these relationships took on more than the familial characteristics featured in the ideal image to include romantic characteristics that could complicate nurses' lives and cause concern among German military authorities and the public. This study demonstrates the complexity of these various relationships and the effect the war had on them, which extended beyond the signing of the armistice.

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

In August 1914, war broke out across Europe and drew whole populations into the war effort. Within Germany, one group of women received mobilization orders at the same time German men received their calls to mobilize. These women were members of the German Red Cross who, with the coming war, had important work before them: caring for wounded and sick soldiers. From 1914–1918, around 92,094 German Red Cross women were involved in nursing work, with 19,073 serving behind the front lines in the rear echelons and 73,021 working on the home front.<sup>1</sup> Under the German Red Cross, three levels of nurses existed: full nurses (*Schwestern*), voluntary auxiliary nurses (*Hilfsschwestern*), and nurses' aides (*Helperinnen*).<sup>2</sup> In 1914, there were about 6,000 full nurses, 1,000 voluntary auxiliary nurses, and 7,000 nurses' aides.<sup>3</sup> Each level required specific types and lengths of training that involved practical and moral instruction and concluded with exams.<sup>4</sup> Full nurses, also known as sisters, had to train for one year in many German states then pass an exam while auxiliary nurses had six months of training, and aides had four to six weeks of training. Nurses' aides' lack of training restricted them for the most part to hospitals on the home front. The discussion of German nurses in this study contributes to the growing literature on German nurses, specifically those in the First World War, and nurses involved in caring for soldiers during war by presenting a more complex

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Kimmle, *Das Deutsche Rote Kreuz im Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Grund, 1919), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig Kimmle, "Germany's Red Cross," *American Red Cross Magazine* (July 1915): 241.

<sup>3</sup> Dieter Riesenberger, *Das Deutsche Rote Kreuz: Eine Geschichte, 1864–1990* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2002), 138.

<sup>4</sup> On moral instruction, see Jakob Vogel, "Samariter und Schwestern: Geschlechterbilder und -beziehungen im Deutschen Roten Kreuz vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Landsknechte, Soldatenfrauen und Nationalkrieger: Militär, Krieg und Geschlechterordnung im historischen Wandel*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Ralf Pröve (New York: Campus Verlag, 1998), 328.

image of them.<sup>5</sup> I argue that representations and perceptions of German nurses that contrasted with the ideal image of a nurse are crucial to understanding the relationships between German, British, and American nurses because the perceived deviations from the ideal image strained their relationships even after the war was over. These conflicting images are also essential to appreciating the complex relationship between German soldiers and nurses because they show that, at times, these relationships took on more than the familial characteristics featured in the ideal image to include romantic characteristics that could complicate nurses' lives and cause concern among German military authorities and the public.

The origins of the Red Cross reach back to Henry Dunant's observations during the Battle of Solferino in Italy in 1859 where thirty thousand wounded soldiers lacked adequate care. These observations led to his vision of establishing a permanent committee concerned with the care of the wounded and sick during war, which formed in 1863 and later became the International Committee of the Red Cross.<sup>6</sup> Dunant was also instrumental in envisioning the Geneva Convention of 1864 that established the neutrality of medical personnel and wounded soldiers, ensuring they would be cared for even if they fell into enemy hands. The seven

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<sup>5</sup> For German nurses, see Claudia Bischoff, *Frauen in der Krankenpflege: Zur Entwicklung von Frauenrolle und Frauenberufstätigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1992); Riesenberger, *Das Deutsche*; Dieter Riesenberger, "Zur Professionalisierung und Militarisierung der Schwestern vom Roten Kreuz vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 53 (1994): 49-72; Marianne Schmidbaur, *Vom "Lazaruskreuz" zu "Pflege Aktuell": Professionalisierungsdiskurse in der Deutschen Krankenpflege, 1903–2000* (Königstein: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2002); Verband der Schwesternschaften vom Deutschen Roten Kreuz e. V., ed., *Rotkreuzschwestern: die Pflegeprofis Menschlichkeit – die Idee lebt* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2007). For works on nurses in other countries during World War I, see Christine E. Hallett, *Containing Trauma: Nursing Work in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); Mark Harrison, *The Medical War: British Military Medicine in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2000). For other works on war nursing, see Foster Rhea Dulles, *The American Red Cross: A History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950); Hilde Steppe, *Krankenpflege im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Mabuse-Verlag, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> Caroline Moorehead, *Dunant's Dream: War, Switzerland and the History of the Red Cross* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, Inc., 1998), 2.

principles of the Red Cross, which are “humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntariness, unity, and universality,” reflect Dunant’s vision of neutral, voluntary medical services during war that would serve humanity by caring for wounded and sick soldiers without partiality.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the International Committee of the Red Cross, individual countries founded national societies of the Red Cross. Prussia, which later became a part of the German state, was one of the first to do so in February 1864.<sup>8</sup> In peacetime, these national societies and their local branches provided help with catastrophes and epidemics and made preparations for wartime, such as collecting donations and training male medical personnel and female nurses.<sup>9</sup> During war, they helped with the caring of wounded and sick soldiers by establishing military hospitals, sending out nurses, collecting supplies, and working with religious and secular associations.<sup>10</sup> The Red Cross in Germany included women’s associations, men’s associations, and sisterhoods.<sup>11</sup>

During war, the Central Office of the Red Cross in Germany worked with military authorities in coordinating voluntary nursing.<sup>12</sup> Any voluntary nursing endeavors during war involving nursing soldiers had to be under the direction of the Red Cross. For example, at the beginning of the war, a number of hospitals and the nurses associated with them offered their hospitals and services to the Red Cross, coming under their authority yet also retaining a measure

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<sup>7</sup> Sabine Schipplick, “Perspektive Profession: Idee und Entwicklung der Rotkreuz-Schwesternschaften,” in *Rotkreuzschwestern: die Pflegeprofis Menschlichkeit – die Idee lebt*, ed. Verband der Schwesternschaften vom Deutschen Roten Kreuz e. V. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2007), 15.

<sup>8</sup> Riesenberger, *Das Deutsche*, 37.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 37, 50, 82-83.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>11</sup> Henrick Stahr, “Liebesgaben für den Ernstfall: Das Rote Kreuz in Deutschland zu Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs,” *August 1914: Ein Volk zieht in den Krieg*, ed. Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt (Berlin: NiSHEN, 1989), 86. For a more detailed study of men’s and women’s work in the Red Cross, see Vogel, “Samariter.”

<sup>12</sup> Susanna Dammer, *Mütterlichkeit und Frauendienstpflicht: Versuche der Vergesellschaftung “weiblicher Fähigkeiten” durch eine Dienstverpflichtung (Deutschland 1890–1918)* (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1988), 233.

of independence. German military authorities did not allow independent nursing endeavors involving military nursing outside of the Red Cross, such as that undertaken by two British women, Mairi Chisholm and Elsie Knocker, who set up their own dressing station on the front lines near Ypres in 1914.<sup>13</sup> Catholic nuns and Protestant deaconesses in Germany offered their nursing services to the Red Cross and helped nurse soldiers on the home front and behind the front lines. In the course of the war, 17,200 Catholic nurses, 11,231 Protestant deaconesses from motherhouses, and 1,000 Protestant deaconesses from associations cared for wounded soldiers.<sup>14</sup> Training among religious nurses took place within a hierarchical motherhouse structure that nurses in Catholic orders were tied to for life.<sup>15</sup> In the motherhouses, nurses worked where they were told to and, in return for their work, received food, shelter, clothes, pocket money, and senior care from the motherhouses. The motherhouse model and vocation of nursing was ideal for upper-class women because it provided them with security, supervision, and a socially acceptable profession. The Red Cross sisterhoods adopted the motherhouse model in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when nursing came to be seen as a female profession. The motherhouse model appealed to the military medical service because the sisters were dependent, economically and personally, acquainted with a system of barracking, and available for service.<sup>16</sup> Only single women could be members of the sisterhoods, which the Red Cross kept as a criterion until 1960.<sup>17</sup> For the most part, the Red Cross sisterhoods attracted middle and upper class women who did not have family

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<sup>13</sup> Mitton, G. E., Elsie Shapter Knocker T'Serclaes, and Mairi Chisholm, *The Cellar-house of Pervyse: a Tale of Uncommon Things, from the Journals and Letters of the Baroness T'Serclaes and Mairi Chisholm* (London: A. & C. Black, 1917).

<sup>14</sup> Dammer, *Mütterlichkeit*, 235.

<sup>15</sup> Schmidbaur, *Vom "Lazaruskreuz,"* 60.

<sup>16</sup> Riesenberger, "Zur Professionalisierung," 64-65

<sup>17</sup> Verband der Schwesternschaften vom Deutschen Roten Kreuz, *Rotkreuzschwestern*, 16.

obligations that kept them from training and working as nurses.<sup>18</sup> Using the motherhouse model to train Red Cross nurses was unique to Germany.<sup>19</sup> The American Red Cross enlisted nurses from various nursing schools and hospitals to be part of a reserve in case of war while the British Red Cross incorporated nurses from various other nursing services, such as the Territorial Force Nursing Service.<sup>20</sup> Part of the reason for the difference in models among the three countries had to do with the development of the nursing profession within each country and the rather late prominence of the Red Cross in America and Britain. German voluntary auxiliary nurses and nurses' aides came from a similar upper class background as nurses, especially since the work they did was voluntary.<sup>21</sup> Jean Quataert's study of the Baden Nurses' Aides League, however, reveals that the lower classes also joined the Red Cross to become nurses. This is suggested because some members of the League were concerned that the sisterhood in Baden was attracting "only women from poorer rural and urban backgrounds."<sup>22</sup>

The other group of nurses in Germany was the independent professional nurses organized under the Professional Organization of German Nurses (*Berufsorganisation der Krankenpflegerinnen Deutschlands* or BOKD) under the leadership of Agnes Karll. Karll founded the organization in 1903, and by 1914, it had about 3,200 members.<sup>23</sup> These nurses did not work under the German Red Cross until the last years of the war because military authorities

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<sup>18</sup> Riesenberger, *Das Deutsche*, 90-91.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>20</sup> Dulles, *The American Red Cross*, 96 and Anne Summers, *Angels and Citizens: British Women as Military Nurses, 1854-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), 246-247.

<sup>21</sup> Opitz, "Das Rote Kreuz im Krieg," *Zeitschrift für Medizinalbeamte*, May 5, 1915, 255.

<sup>22</sup> Jean H. Quataert, "Women's Wartime Services Under the Cross: Patriotic Communities in Germany, 1912-1918," in *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, eds. Roger Chickering and Stig Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 462.

<sup>23</sup> Riesenberger, *Das Deutsche*, 139.

and the Red Cross refused Karll's initial offer of help in 1914.<sup>24</sup> The BOKD offered their services to Austria instead and sent more than five hundred nurses there.<sup>25</sup> The BOKD and the German Red Cross disagreed on many points about the direction the female nursing profession should go. The Red Cross was a conservative organization that saw nursing as a type of charitable work, whereas the BOKD earned wages for their nursing work. The BOKD worked with the German women's movement and supported independent professional nurses, working to further the professionalization of nursing by freeing nurses from motherhouses and gaining state recognition for the profession.<sup>26</sup> Although Protestant and Red Cross nurses could leave the motherhouses, they lost the security the motherhouses provided and the money saved in their pensions.<sup>27</sup> The Red Cross sought to hang on to the motherhouse system and the control they had over the nursing profession. According to Dieter Riesenberger, the emancipatory potential of nursing "became neutralized through the institution of the motherhouse."<sup>28</sup> The BOKD, however, wanted to further the emancipatory potential of nursing that would allow for more independence, personally and economically, which the motherhouses did not provide. Their differing goals and visions of nursing led the Red Cross and BOKD to take up different roles at the international level, with the BOKD becoming more active in the international nursing community with other organizations that shared their views and goals for the nursing profession.

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<sup>24</sup> Regina Schulte, "The Sick Warrior's Sister: Nursing during the First World War" in *Gender Relations in German History: Power, Agency, and Experience from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, eds. Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Harvey (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 124.

<sup>25</sup> Riesenberger, *Das Deutsche*, 139.

<sup>26</sup> On the BOKD, see Geertje Boschma, "Agnes Karll and the Creation of an Independent German Nursing Association, 1900–1927," *Nursing History Review* 4 (1996): 156–58.

<sup>27</sup> Schmidbaur, *Vom "Lazaruskreuz,"* 60.

<sup>28</sup> Riesenberger, *Das Deutsche*, 110.

In this study of German nurses during the First World War that examines the differing perceptions and representations of nurses, I argue that specific accusations and views of German nurses that surfaced during the war among British and American nurses strained their relationships with German nurses in ways that even the conclusion of the war did not fully repair. While the war itself placed strains on the international relationships among nurses by hampering communications and meetings on a broad international level, the specific accusations against German nurses, such as German nurses' partial and "inhumane" behavior towards prisoners of war (POWs), created suspicions and animosity that did not automatically disappear with the armistice. British and American opinions of German nurses can be traced in the articles and editorials within British and American nursing and medical journals, revealing changes in opinion as the war progressed. Medical professionals and nurses were the main contributors and readers of these journals, so the views presented in them reflected those among that community and reached that target audience specifically. The *American Red Cross Magazine* might be the exception to this classification because, after America entered the war in April 1917, it had a circulation of almost one million.<sup>29</sup> Other scholars have neglected to examine closely what these sources can tell us about how British and American nurses viewed German nurses. These sources show that the image of German nurses in the minds of the readers and contributors to these journals directly conflicted with the ideal, dominant image of nurses during various points in the war.

In British journals, the depictions of German nurses reveal that British nurses made initial efforts to maintain solidarity with German nurses under their common designation as nurses by

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<sup>29</sup> Dulles, *The American Red Cross*, 149.

viewing them in a positive light and diverting blame from them despite Germany's status as an enemy nation and accusations of German nurses' "barbarousness." These efforts only fully broke down in 1918 after the publication of a government report about the treatment of British POWs that set in stone the dominant image of a German nurse in Britain as one who exacerbated the suffering of the wounded by pouring food and drink out in front of the thirsty and starving soldiers. The dominance of this image that conflicted with the ideal image adversely affected the relationship between British and German nurses by creating antagonistic feelings among British nurses that they had to overcome after the war to further international nursing efforts.

American nursing journals reveal a similar trajectory of attitudes toward German nurses, but they do not go to the extent British journals do in completely denouncing them and viewing them in a negative manner. Early in the war, they presented positive stories of German nurses and the work they did, which reflect professional solidarity but also the close working relationships between American and German nurses in the early years of the war. With America's entry into the war in April 1917 and the British report published in 1918, the articles in American journals present a slightly more complicated view that was not completely positive. Overall, however, the articles show that they maintained their solidarity and positive opinions of German nurses, but it was more of a reserved positive view that was contingent on German nurses proving after the war that they did not commit the actions POWs accused them of, such as refusing, pouring out and/or spitting in food and drinks and insulting them. Only in the early 1920s did the American nursing journals reveal the larger impact the negative views of German nurses had when the journals issued calls for financial help for the BOKD. These calls for help hinted that some American nurses among the readership retained antagonistic feelings toward German nurses even though the journal itself did not encourage such views through the articles

they published about German nurses. It was not so much that American nurses were exempt from hatred of German nurses, as later evidence of their feelings show, but more that they, especially writers in the American journals, were more reserved and cautious with antagonistic feelings when other nurses were the target of them. The writers in British journals showed similar caution in negatively depicting German nurses at first, but they soon abandoned it altogether whereas writers in American journals did not. By examining the depictions of German nurses in British and American journals that conflicted with the ideal image of nurses, the detrimental effect these views had on international relationships is obvious regardless of whether the images and stories were factual or not, which is not entirely clear. Numerous accounts from British prisoners of war testify that such harsh treatment took place at train stations in Germany at the hands of German women and Red Cross nurses, but all women volunteering at the train stations wore similar types of uniforms with the symbol of the Red Cross. I believe it is likely that British POWs could not accurately tell the difference between nurses and other Red Cross women, such as those who were members of the *Vaterländische Frauenvereine* and served refreshments at many train stations. Heather Jones comes to a similar conclusion in her study about violence against POWs, positing that the prisoners likely could not tell the difference between Red Cross women and women of the *Vaterländische Frauenvereine*.<sup>30</sup> Her conclusion is not precisely clear, however, because the *Vaterländische Frauenvereine* was a subsidiary organization of the German Red Cross, which leaves the category of Red Cross women she sets apart unclear in terms of which women are included within it.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Heather Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France, and Germany, 1914–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 60.

<sup>31</sup> On the *Vaterländische Frauenvereine* being a subsidiary organization, see Vogel, “Samariter,” 322.

I also argue that soldiers' interactions with German nurses and their depictions of them, at times, went beyond the ideal relationships of mother/son and sister/brother towards a romantic relationship that directly conflicted with nurses' ideal asexual nature. These views and interactions reveal the contested nature of the ideal image of nurses by adding conflicting characteristics to the image of nurses and expose the inadequacy of favoring the ideal image and marginalizing aspects of the nurses' experienced reality in the wards in studies of German nurses. The important sources I use to investigate these relationships and depictions are soldiers' newspapers, which were "printed at or near the front, by and for soldiers" and were very popular with circulations anywhere from one hundred printings to one hundred and thirty thousand depending on the newspaper, of which there were 113 in the course of the war.<sup>32</sup> While the military formally censored the newspapers, Robert Nelson reveals that, in the German case, censorship of these papers was more lax than the Allies because of the large number of papers printed within the German Army.<sup>33</sup> German soldiers submitted articles, fictional stories, poems, and comics to these newspapers, in which German nurses were a frequent subject, providing a unique source for the views soldiers held of them.

Most studies of German nurses during the war have argued that nurses conformed to their gender roles and did not challenge the gender order since most nurses abided by the ideal image of nurses, which the Germans based on bourgeois gender roles and ideals.<sup>34</sup> Within the bourgeois gender order, women's place was in the home where they worked and took care of their families while men's place was in the public sphere, where they worked for wages, serving as the

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<sup>32</sup> Robert L. Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1, 4, 34.

<sup>33</sup> Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers*, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Claudia Bischoff, "Krankenpflege als Frauenberuf," *Jahrbuch für kritische Medizin* 8, Sonderband 86 (1982): 13.

breadwinners of the family. Many people came to see nursing as an extension of women's roles as a mother, housewife, and sister, which made it acceptable for nurses to work outside the home.<sup>35</sup> Many often view war as destabilizing the gender order because women have to take on more responsibility while men are away fighting, becoming for a time quite independent, often taking on the role of breadwinner. For example, during the First World War, more women took up work in the war industries and became more involved in strikes and politics, entering the public sphere even more than typical.<sup>36</sup> Richard Bessel argues that after the war, many Germans made a significant effort to return to their "normal," pre-war lives, such as replacing women in the workforce with returning soldiers.<sup>37</sup> The effort to return to their pre-war lives clearly suggests that the war had a destabilizing effect. In terms of the German Red Cross, however, Bianca Schönberger concludes that during the war it did not seek to challenge the traditional gender roles and order, which reflects the organization's conservative nature.<sup>38</sup> Her argument, however, conflicts with that of Modris Eksteins who argued that "what was important above all for Germans was the overthrow of old structures," indicating that not all sections of German society desired to overthrow traditional structures.<sup>39</sup> Claudia Bischoff argues that in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, people came to view nursing as a principally female profession with women's nature and skills being particularly suited towards it.<sup>40</sup> A German doctor, for example, stated that in hospitals "women are in their very own element, here they accomplish with unparalleled skill

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>36</sup> Ute Frevert, *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation*, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans (New York: Berg, 1988), 157, 167.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 163-64, 223.

<sup>38</sup> Bianca Schönberger, "Motherly Heroines and Adventurous Girls: Red Cross Nurses and Women Army Auxiliaries in the First World War," in *Home/front: the Military, War, and Gender in Twentieth-century Germany*, eds. Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (New York: Berg, 2002), 58.

<sup>39</sup> Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 169.

<sup>40</sup> Bischoff, "Krankenpflege," 14, 20.

and devotion that which the hard hands of men alone achieve only imperfectly.”<sup>41</sup> An article published in *Das Rote Kreuz* in 1918 prescribed that a good nurse must “emit a truly sisterly, indeed a motherly air.”<sup>42</sup> Red Cross and religious nurses viewed nursing as a “labor of love” as opposed to actual work.<sup>43</sup> They believed nursing should be a type of charity or service and not wage-earning work.<sup>44</sup> As one article in *Das Rote Kreuz* stated, “The Red Cross sentiment is developed without any aims to personal benefits, in unselfish generosity for friend and enemy, without loyalty to only one confession.”<sup>45</sup> This description of Red Cross thinking refers partly to the international character of the Red Cross in which nursing work was above national differences and everyone received the same care. Nurses were supposed to adopt and embody a number of characteristics, some of which included sacrifice, humility, kindness, selflessness, modesty, obedience, and austerity.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to bourgeois ideals and characteristics that Germans associated with nursing, some of which included religious characteristics, Germans also associated nurses with religious imagery, which became another facet of the ideal image. This was partly related to the number of nurses who were nuns and deaconesses, but it also had to do with the type of work nurses did. One religious image that became associated with nurses was the angel of peace, which, as Birgit Panke-Kochinke argues, war nurses were always associated with.<sup>47</sup> An example of such an

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<sup>41</sup> Kimmle, “Germany’s,” *American Red Cross Magazine* (July 1915): 241.

<sup>42</sup> Otto Juliusburger, “Arzt und Krankenschwester,” *Das Rote Kreuz* 36 (1918): 109.

<sup>43</sup> Herbert Grundhewer, “Die Kriegskrankenpflege und das Bild der Krankenschwester im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert,” in *Medizin und Krieg: vom Dilemma der Heilberufe, 1865–1985*, ed. Johanna Bleker and Heinz-Peter Schmiedebach (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987), 147.

<sup>44</sup> Helmers, “Zur Pflege des Rote Kreuz-Schwesterntums,” *Das Rote Kreuz* 35 (September 1917): 458.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Felix Freudenthal, “Zum Beruf der Krankenschwester” *Das Rote Kreuz* 35 (January 1917): 39; Bischoff, “Krankenpflege,” 21; Vogel, “Samariter,” 328; Grundhewer, “Die Kriegskrankenpflege,” 144.

<sup>47</sup> Birgit Panke-Kochinke, “Krankenpflege hinter der Front im Ersten Weltkrieg: ‘Ach welch ein Jammer ist es doch...,’” *Pflegezeitschrift* 58, no. 12 (2005): 752.

image appears in the published account of one nurse, Emmy von Rüdgersch, which shows an angel with a red cross on the front of her gown (Figure 1 in Appendix).<sup>48</sup> Even the nurses' uniforms at all levels of nursing resembled a religious habit more than a uniform, which Jakob Vogel points out can also be observed in their name, *Schwestertracht*, since the word *Tracht* also refers to the habit of a nun.<sup>49</sup> Herbert Grundhewer argues that this uniform along with "all elements of the image of the nurse...had a function in [creating] this sexual barrier around the sister."<sup>50</sup> His portrayal of the image of nurses creating a sexual protective wall relates to the asexual nature of nurses that came with being sisters and mothers to their patients and not romantic interests.<sup>51</sup> The asexual characteristic of the ideal image acted as a code of behavior for nurses but was also supposed to act as a deterrent to men to preserve nurses' purity and higher motives of service. This part of the ideal image is particularly important when considering the relationship between nurses and soldiers. All of the aspects of the ideal image of nurses described above existed side by side; they were all complementary images of the ideal nurse that support arguments of German nurses not challenging the gender order.

Within the existing historiography, Jakob Vogel's study explores gender roles within the Red Cross through the men's and women's associations and argues that, despite tensions that arose during the war over task allocation, neither group really challenged the gender order because, in the case of nurses, they retained "the notion of motherliness and rather domestic oriented women's role."<sup>52</sup> Herbert Grundhewer's essay on nursing in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Emma von Rüdgersch, *Unterm Roten Kreuz: Erlebnisse und Schilderungen von Emma von Rüdgersch* (Baden: M. Schanenburg, 1916), 33.

<sup>49</sup> Vogel, "Samariter," 328.

<sup>50</sup> Grundhewer, "Die Kriegsrankenpflege," 146-47.

<sup>51</sup> Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers*, 168.

<sup>52</sup> Vogel, "Samariter," 337.

century also emphasizes the motherly and sisterly roles of nurses in the development of nursing as a female profession and the image of nurses during the war. He also states, however, that “if one reads war stories and other statements about war medicine, one receives the impression that the only serious dangers for women in the field were the sexual wishes of their male companions.”<sup>53</sup> Although he pulls out some examples of this from the primary sources, his focus is more on the ideal image acting as a protective shell against sexual advances rather than on the threat the actual sexual wishes he includes as examples presented to the ideal image itself.

One of the more recent studies about German nurses during the First World War is Bianca Schönberger’s essay “Motherly Heroines and Adventurous Girls: Red Cross Nurses and Women Army Auxiliaries in the First World War.” In this essay, Schönberger compares nurses and female army auxiliaries in relation to the gender order. Female auxiliaries replaced soldiers in the rear echelons and performed various types of clerical work. She argues that nurses and the work they did during the war did not present much of a challenge to the gender order, as it “complied largely with traditional ideas of women’s role in philanthropic work.”<sup>54</sup> In contrast, female auxiliaries did challenge the gender order because they directly replaced soldiers behind the front lines and received wages for their work, often higher wages than soldiers.<sup>55</sup> Although her study focuses on the ideal image of nurses that coincides with her argument, she also includes a conflicting image of nurses that some conservatives in Germany put forth by claiming nurses were serving near the front for selfish reasons, such as finding a husband.<sup>56</sup> Schönberger introduces this competing image into her study to illustrate that some sections of German society

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<sup>53</sup> Grundhewer, “Die Kriegskrankenpflege,” 146.

<sup>54</sup> Schönberger, “Motherly Heroines,” 102.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-93.

saw nurses' placement near the front lines as a threat to the gender order regardless of whether or not nurses conformed to their proper gender roles while there.

Regina Schulte's essay on German nurses in the First World War fills a gap in the historiography about German nurses during this war by examining their experiences in military hospitals, care of soldiers, and return journeys after the war. She argues that one reason nurses likely sought to serve at the front was that they wanted to escape the strict atmosphere of the motherhouses.<sup>57</sup> In reference to women's service at the front, Schulte argues that it gave nurses the chance to be equal to men, in a sense, by serving beside them and facing similar dangers.<sup>58</sup> One part of her essay takes up the topic of the familial model at the front in which nurses played the role of mother and sister and the wounded and sick soldiers took on the role of the child or brother, conforming to the ideal roles each were supposed to play. She argues that "the familial structure provided a framework for making sense of their [nurses'] experiences and as such was a crucial source of strength."<sup>59</sup> Schulte presents this structure as the only one that existed among nurses and soldiers, but as Robert Nelson's study of soldiers' newspapers reveals, some soldiers did not limit themselves to viewing nurses in their asexualized roles of mother and sister.<sup>60</sup> Nelson argues "it would have been very difficult for nurses to pretend that this was a family situation" based on soldiers' obvious views of them that did not fit the ideal of mothers or sisters but rather presented them in a romantic light. Although Nelson only devotes one page of his book to the appearance of nurses in soldiers' newspapers, lacking any in-depth look at this

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<sup>57</sup> Schulte, "The Sick Warrior's Sister," 125.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>60</sup> Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers*, 168.

aspect, he demonstrates the need for a more nuanced view of nurses and their relationships with soldiers, which the second part of this study attempts to do.

In reference to the period just after the war, Klaus Theweleit's study of the fantasies of the Freikorps introduces two interesting images of nurses. Members of the Freikorps were troops that volunteered to fight after the war against socialists and communists in Germany during the revolution and against various powers in the East. Among their writings, two types of nurses appeared: the 'Red nurse' and the 'White nurse.' The image of the 'White nurse' coincides closely with the ideal image of nurses described at the beginning of this work, and the Freikorps sought to protect these women unlike the 'Red nurses' that they sought to kill.<sup>61</sup> With the image of the 'Red nurse,' however, the 'nurse' aspect was simply a disguise that these women, who were portrayed as being connected with the Red Army or revolutionaries, used as they plundered towns and prostituted themselves to the soldiers.<sup>62</sup> These two contrasting images are interesting for the ways they coincided with various images of German nurses during the war.

While earlier studies have focused on the ideal image of nurses, this study places the perceptions and representations of German nurses that were at odds with the ideal image at the center rather than on the margins to demonstrate the importance of these conflicting views to the relationships between German nurses and others, revealing how these views put strains on relationships and made them more complicated. Chapter 2 examines the relationships between German, British, and American nurses during and after the war while chapter 3 looks at the relationships between German nurses and soldiers.

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<sup>61</sup> Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 1, *Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, trans. Stephen Conway (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 92.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-85.

## CHAPTER II INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTIONS OF GERMAN NURSES

Although Red Cross societies were founded along national lines and closely connected to their respective national militaries, in their treatment of the wounded, nationality was to be irrelevant since they were to treat all wounded and sick soldiers the same. The Geneva Convention classified medical personnel as neutral, and that classification, coupled with their view of the wounded, demonstrates the ideal put forth in the *British Journal of Nursing* that “nursing has no nationality.”<sup>63</sup> The belief among some British and American nurses that German nurses violated this ideal created tension in their relationships that lasted after the war and led to harsh depictions of them in nursing journals, particularly those of the British. Before the war, the most prevalent international interactions among nurses took place within the International Council of Nurses (ICN). American and British nurses founded the ICN in 1900.<sup>64</sup> German nurses of the BOKD joined in 1904, and the ICN admitted them as founding members since, at the time of the ICN’s founding, no such German organization had existed. Agnes Karll took a leading role in the ICN in 1909. The intricacies of the relationships between British, American, and German nurses can be seen by looking closely at which German nurses were most involved in this organization. One of the goals of the organization was to help nurses become professionally independent.<sup>65</sup> The nurses in Germany who were pursuing the same goal were members of the BOKD under Agnes Karll. Members of the German Red Cross also participated

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<sup>63</sup> “International News,” *British Journal of Nursing* 53 (September 1914): 240.

<sup>64</sup> Nancy J. Tomes and Geertje Boschma, “Above All Other Things—Unity,” in *Nurses of All Nations: A History of the International Council of Nurses, 1899–1999*, eds. Barbara L. Brush and Joan E. Lynaugh (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams, and Wilkins, 1999), 3.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

in ICN meetings and congresses, but their goals did not match up as well with those of the ICN since the German Red Cross had no interest in making nurses more professionalized in the sense that it would make them more independent and push nursing more towards wage-earning work.<sup>66</sup> Evidence of their differing goals can be seen in the debate over the number of years of training required to become a nurse. The ICN required three years of training before nurses could become members, which was what Karll advocated; however, the Red Cross in Germany advocated one year of training with an exam at the end, which most states ultimately adopted.<sup>67</sup> This put German nurses in the ICN in an awkward position because their state requirements did not match those of Britain or America that required three years of nursing training, meaning they could not officially become active members in the same manner.<sup>68</sup> The differentiation between nursing requirements and the states' views of nursing in Germany, America, and Britain made Karll and others in her organization feel like they were being held back from advancing the nursing profession in Germany.<sup>69</sup>

The British and American nurses in the ICN fully supported Karll and the BOKD in their efforts to make nursing in Germany more professionalized and independent.<sup>70</sup> This support continued during and after the war among many nurses, but under the strains of war, people in Britain and America seriously questioned the integrity of German nurses, which brought forth antagonistic feelings among some British and American nurses toward German nurses that remained in the air after the war was over.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>67</sup> Riesenberger, *Das Deutsche*, 105.

<sup>68</sup> Boschma, "Agnes Karll," 161.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Tomes and Boschma, *Nurses*, 24, 29

## British Perceptions of German Nurses

During the first years of the war, British perceptions of German nurses were for the most part positive and coincided with the ideal image of German nurses; but, as the war progressed and accusations and accounts of contact with German nurses became known, their perceptions took a turn and became negative. Looking at articles published in British nursing journals, specifically the *British Journal of Nursing*, at the beginning of the war, one notices that articles discussing German nurses often make a specific reference at some point to Karll and her nurses, with whom British nurses were more connected through the ICN. Feelings of ill will did not appear in these early articles, and British nurses appear to have retained feelings of internationalism despite being on the opposite side of the war from German nurses. In September 1914, for example, an article appeared declaring “we have thought much and in deep sympathy with dear Sister Agnes Karll, and our many German sisters,...to meet them all again, in a neutral world across the Atlantic would indeed be cause for rejoicing.”<sup>71</sup> Another short article appeared in May 1915 accompanied by a picture of German nurses helping a wounded British prisoner write a letter that took up the subject of the international character of nurses and nurses’ responsibility to care for all wounded regardless of nationality. According to the author, the British treated all wounded equally, and she felt that if the situation were reversed, Karll and her nurses would do the same.<sup>72</sup> The reference to Karll and the nurses in the BOKD specifically reveals British nurses’ close connection to this particular group of German nurses. This article

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<sup>71</sup> “International News,” *British Journal of Nursing* 53 (September 1914): 240.

<sup>72</sup> “Nursing and the War,” *British Journal of Nursing* 54 (May 1915): 412.

expressed full faith in Karll's nurses embodying the ideal characteristics of a nurse in terms of kindness and impartiality and emphasized nursing being above national differences.

A letter to the editor a week later on May 22, however, questioned this belief.<sup>73</sup> The writer felt the author of the article was "a little sanguine concerning the feeling of German nurses towards our wounded."<sup>74</sup> The evidence she provided as an example to counter this, however, was rather flimsy and involved a nurse who claimed to be Swiss but was suspected of being German celebrating the sinking of the *Lusitania*. The editor's comments regarding this letter provide further evidence of the different relationships between British nurses and the various German nursing associations because the editor was curious to know in which nursing institution the nurse in the example was a member. The interest in this question suggests that the information made a difference, as if the action would seem plausible from one association but particularly egregious from another, such as the BOKD that British nurses held in high esteem.

Contributing to the positive images of German nurses at the beginning of the war were articles that discussed a hospital in Berlin within the locality of Tempelhof where nurses treated soldiers from various nationalities equally and the Red Cross communications between Britain and Germany.<sup>75</sup> These positive perceptions coincided with the ideal image of nurses, particularly the characteristic of nursing being above national differences and caring for all wounded regardless of which side they were fighting on in the war. Although a number of the articles reveal a partiality towards Karll and the nurses in the BOKD by specifically referencing them, they also demonstrate an inclination among British nurses to see the best in German nurses.

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<sup>73</sup> "Letters to the Editor," *British Journal of Nursing* 54 (May 1915): 451-52.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 451.

<sup>75</sup> On the hospital in Berlin, see "Medical News from Germany," *British Medical Journal* 2 (November 1914): 944. On Red Cross communications, see Pope-Hennessy, "The Prisoners Section of the British Red Cross: A Human and Sympathetic Report," *British Journal of Nursing* 55 (November 1915): 419.

By 1915–1916, any euphoria expressed by the populations in 1914 was gone; instead of the war being over by Christmas 1914, it had dragged on with a rising number of casualties in the millions. During this time, more complex and negative views of German nurses began to appear, which the progress of the war likely contributed to creating. Examples of these views appear in two personal accounts published in the journals. In one account printed in the *British Medical Journal* in June 1915, a French nurse reported that the German nurses at Cambrai were experienced and devoted and treated her kindly. Commenting on the treatment of wounded enemy soldiers, she noted that the Germans treated the French well but some of the other nationalities, such as the British, Indian, and French troops from Africa, were “rather neglected.”<sup>76</sup> This account suggests a differentiation in treatment among the wounded of different nationalities, which conflicts with the characteristic of impartiality. The second account, written by a British nurse and excerpted in the *British Journal of Nursing* in December 1916, described her encounter in occupied Belgium with German nurses who had just arrived at the hospital she was working at. Before arriving, the German nurses had supposedly heard that an English nurse was at the hospital, and when they saw her, she said they “scowled” at her.<sup>77</sup> She claims she had to leave almost as soon as they arrived because “the German nurses had gone on strike, refusing to work if the Englishwoman remained.”<sup>78</sup> This is a clear example not only of nurses recognizing national differences but also of a break in the international relationship among nurses, refusing any sort of cooperation. Regardless of whether this account is completely true or not, the view it presents of nurses is important because the journal published it and

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<sup>76</sup> “A French Nurse’s Experiences in a German Ambulance,” *British Medical Journal* 1 (June 1915): 1092.

<sup>77</sup> “My Experiences on Three Fronts,” *British Journal of Nursing* 57 (December 1916): 527.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

brought it to the attention of all of their readers. The view this particular account presented stained the image of German nurses by conflicting with the ideal and suggesting a fracture among nurses.

The account by the French nurse mentioned above also included information on what she said was the local population's perception of German nurses, which is worth mentioning because of its singularity among stories about German nurses on the one hand and its similarity to Freikorps' depictions of the 'Red nurse' on the other hand. The French nurse reported that the local population viewed German nurses negatively, in terms of them having a "bad name" among the population, because of "other women wearing the Red Cross uniform, who from time to time visited the town and plundered on a large scale, besides being liberal of their favours to the officers."<sup>79</sup> The activities of these nurses violated the ideal image of the nurse not only through plundering, which did not coincide with sacrifice, but also with suggestion of relationships between nurses and officers, considering purity was one of the ideal characteristics. While the French nurse cleared up any confusion in the journal about these women actually being nurses, this belief and image remained intact among the local population who were not likely to have read the *British Medical Journal*. An interesting aspect of this account is that it bears striking similarities to Freikorps' images of the 'Red nurse.' This image, in alarming ways, matches the one that the French nurse provided in terms of women dressing up as nurses and plundering and having various scandalous relations with military men. Freikorps soldiers possibly got this image of 'Red nurses' from their war experiences, whether they witnessed such instances themselves or heard rumors of such instances, which may have influenced their view of

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<sup>79</sup> "A French Nurse's Experiences in a German Ambulance," *British Medical Journal* 1 (June 1915): 1092.

women associated with the Red Army. The lack of discussion during the war of such instances suggests that they were not given much credence and lacked evidence to corroborate them, unlike the reports about German nurses from British POWs.

In February 1918, the Government Committee on Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War presented the *Report on the Transport of British Prisoners of War to Germany, August–December 1914* to the Houses of Parliament in Britain.<sup>80</sup> The government established the committee in 1915 after stories about prisoners' experiences came to light to gather information for propaganda during the war and possible war crime trials after the war.<sup>81</sup> The committee interviewed British prisoners of war about their treatment while being transported from northern France and Belgium to camps within Germany, which the committee then used in the report they presented and published in 1918.<sup>82</sup> Of particular interest in this report are the accounts that describe the alleged actions of German women and nurses at the train stations the prisoners stopped at, which included refusing food and drink to British prisoners, spitting into or pouring out food and drinks in front of them, and calling them derogatory names. Heather Jones, whose study looks at the treatment of prisoners of war, asserts that the information in the report is reliable because it is in line with information from other interviews not published in the report and other sources, such as soldiers' letters.<sup>83</sup> She does believe, however, in the probability that British prisoners confused German Red Cross women with women from other associations.<sup>84</sup> German doctors also appear in the POWs' accounts but most seem to have treated the prisoners

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<sup>80</sup> Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War, *Report on the Transport of British Prisoners of War to Germany, August–December 1914*, 1918.

<sup>81</sup> Jones, *Violence*, 55.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

decently although one account mentioned a doctor refusing a wounded soldier care.<sup>85</sup> Accounts about the harsh treatment of British prisoners became public knowledge soon after Germany released some of the British prisoners, particularly beginning in 1915, and the government used their accounts to make accusations against the Germans for their brutality. While various prisoners' accounts appeared throughout the war years, they did not gain much traction within nursing journals until the government published its official report in 1918. After the publication of the report, British and American medical and nursing journals featured articles with excerpts from the report accompanied by their own opinions of German women. Examining articles in British journals over the course of the war shows the variety of responses to the accusations against the German Red Cross in these prisoner of war accounts. The responses reveal an initial denial among British and American nurses that the German women described in the accounts were actually nurses, which reflects their desire to uphold the integrity not only of German nurses but also of the nursing profession as a whole. Initial reactions, however, gave way under the weight of the evidence, and possibly public pressure, to condemnation of German nurses among British nurses and a reserved view of them among American nurses in the journals, which reveal the strains war placed on the relationships among nurses.

Some of the first prisoner accounts appeared in the *British Medical Journal* in January 1915, soon after the actual incidents. The article featured accounts from officers in the Royal Medical Corps who were taken prisoner by the Germans and transported by rail to the interior of Germany. According to the accounts, German Red Cross women tormented the prisoners while their trains were at the stations by pretending to offer them a drink and then taking it away. The

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<sup>85</sup> For doctors treating them decently, see Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War, *Report*, 28, 32, 39, 43. For a doctor refusing care, see *Ibid.*, 16.

author of the article asserted, “indeed the Red Cross women showed a special bitterness against English prisoners, whose suffering it was their duty, in accordance with the [Geneva] Convention under which they are supposed to work, to mitigate.”<sup>86</sup> Such accounts not only portrayed Red Cross women, including nurses, as displaying partiality in their care of the wounded but also indicated deliberate viciousness and malice on their part by unnecessarily taunting the prisoners. Both of these traits clearly conflicted with the ideal image of nurses. The initial reports in the *British Medical Journal* for the most part simply presented parts of the accounts of prisoners without much direct commentary by the authors.<sup>87</sup>

Early articles in the *British Journal of Nursing* followed a similar pattern of not presenting their own commentary on the accusations against the German Red Cross. This suggests an inclination to remain somewhat aloof from the reports even though they published them in their journals. For example, one of the first reports about these incidents to appear in the journal was an article printed in August 1917 that featured an excerpt from an article that appeared in the *Times* without any substantial comment from the journal. The excerpt from the *Times* article attacked German women, and the German Red Cross in particular, recounting their actions of offering, then taking away food, spitting in British POWs’ food, then laughing when they ate it, and pouring drinks on the ground.<sup>88</sup> The author of the *Times* article claimed that the “German Red Cross has prostituted the sacred sign and shamed its name. It has forfeited all right to be regarded as an organisation of humanity.”<sup>89</sup> Nurses were included in these accusations and such harsh statements condemning them completely contrasted with the ideal image they were

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<sup>86</sup> “Germans and the Geneva Convention,” *British Medical Journal* 1 (January 1915): 165.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* and “German Prison Camps,” *British Medical Journal* 1 (March 1916): 420-22.

<sup>88</sup> “Care of the Wounded,” *British Journal of Nursing* 59 (August 1917): 87.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

supposed to embody. The author even made the accusation that “German women have behaved to British wounded...with a brutality which a few years ago we would have thought incredible in any women with white skins.”<sup>90</sup> This accusation not only presents an obvious contrast between the ‘brutality’ being alleged and the alleviation of suffering nurses were supposed to administer, but also adds a racial element to the comparison to show how far German women had allegedly fallen based on these accusations, contributing to Allied arguments of German barbarism and a lack of civilization.

All major powers made such accusations of barbarous, uncivilized behavior during the war, which relates to this war being a “war of cultures,” as Modris Eksteins describes it.<sup>91</sup> They made these accusations, in part, to delegitimize the war effort of the opposing side by denouncing their actions as regressive rather than progressive in terms of civilization and culture, thereby painting their own war effort in a positive light. Even though Germany had the markers of civilization, such as universities and a successful economy, the British believed they could still be barbarians because “civilization does not consist in knowing, but in the manner of acting.”<sup>92</sup> I would argue here that it was not so much the actions themselves that made them “barbarians” but the group of people they directed those actions towards: Europeans. Such actions would not have been condemned in the same way if they were directed towards colonial subjects, but since they were committed against other “civilized” nations, those nations referred to them as barbaric. Other arguments used by the major powers for condemning such actions were that only members of the “inferior races” would commit such atrocities, implying that once

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Eksteins, *Rites*, xv.

<sup>92</sup> “The Collective Aberration of Germany,” *British Medical Journal* 2 (August 1916): 185.

a nation became “civilized,” it would no longer act in such a manner.<sup>93</sup> All such accusations had racial elements influenced by colonial experiences, as in the example of a French lawyer who said the Germans had “treated us as negroes,” and they appeared in the propaganda and dialogue among all the major powers in the war.<sup>94</sup>

The lack of comment from the nursing journal writers regarding the excerpt from *The Times*, either contradicting it or raising questions relating to it, implies they did not have any objections to the accusations and statements made against German women and nurses. This is surprising considering the journal’s earlier support and positive comments regarding German nurses and their treatment of the wounded. Prisoners also accused German doctors of ill treatment, but such accusations tended to concern lack of proper medical care, such as ordering windows left open in cold weather and allowing unsanitary conditions in POW camps to proliferate, which led to a typhus epidemic in camps in 1915.<sup>95</sup>

The publication of the government report on the treatment of British POWs led to a proliferation of discussion about German nurses in the journals that caused British and American nurses to have more stake in the discussions and assert their own stances on the issue rather than remaining largely aloof. The views and opinions put forth in the journals reflected those of the nursing communities. The majority of the government report consists of excerpts from testimonies given by British prisoners of war to the committee, which they separated into those of officers and those of enlisted men. Preceding these accounts are the committee’s findings, and

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<sup>93</sup> John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 156.

<sup>94</sup> Jean Schmitz and Norbert Nieuwland, *L’invasion allemande*, vol. 2, *Documents pour servir à l’histoire de l’invasion allemande dans les provinces de Namur et de Luxembourg* (Brussels and Paris, 1919–1924), 68, quoted in Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 223.

<sup>95</sup> On open windows, see Leo Pasvolsky, “Ivan the Tortured,” *American Red Cross Magazine* 13 (January 1918): 15. On typhus epidemic, see Jones, *Violence*, 95-109.

in regards to the German Red Cross, they ascertained that “all things considered, it was the behavior of the German Red Cross that was the most revolting.”<sup>96</sup> They list various examples of their behavior detailed in the accounts, condemning their insults and refusal of food and drink most and concluding that “their heartless cruelty, their profusion of gross insult were barbarous beyond all words.”<sup>97</sup> This perception of the Red Cross’ behavior goes against everything the Red Cross, and the nurses who served under it, were meant to represent by caring for all of the wounded and being the epitome of humanity. The committee’s comments include a footnote that refers to the existence of only one account where the Red Cross “behaved very decently.”<sup>98</sup> They discount this example of Red Cross’ actions that conform to the ideal image, however, by claiming that “in view of the evidence there can be little doubt that the reference is to the German Army Medical Service on this occasion, not to the Red Cross Society.”<sup>99</sup> This statement leads readers then to discount any positive statements and accounts of Red Cross’ actions within the accounts, of which a few others exist in addition to the one the committee points out.<sup>100</sup> The view one comes away with after reading this report, then, is that Red Cross women and nurses acted with particular cruelty towards the British prisoners with no generous actions being attributed to them if one adopts the committee’s view that any positive actions were those of the medical service and not the Red Cross. The cruel and “barbarous” actions of the Red Cross women dominate the POW accounts and outweigh any other actions the soldiers recounted.

While some of the accounts only refer to the Red Cross in general or to Red Cross women, leaving it unknown as to whether the women were nurses, auxiliary nurses, nurses’

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<sup>96</sup> Committee on the Treatment, *Report*, 4.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> For the footnote, see *Ibid.* For the account the comment comes from, see *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>100</sup> On other instances of positive actions, see *Ibid.*, 45, 47-48

aides, or other volunteers, other accounts specifically refer to German nurses. The differentiation between the different types of Red Cross women is important because some groups had more training than others, and part of this training involved teaching the qualities they were supposed to possess and display. Those with less training would not have internalized these qualities to the same extent as nurses, and, beyond that, nurses were expected to adopt the characteristics within the ideal image more than others who only performed nursing work on a volunteer, part-time basis. Therefore, claims that nurses in particular violated key tenets of their work were especially contemptible. Some of the examples of actions attributed to nurses in the prisoners' accounts concerned nurses who refused to give British prisoners food or dress their wounds, laughed at them when they asked for water, and spat in their faces.<sup>101</sup> One officer reported, "I myself saw one, and other officers saw several, German women, dressed as nurses and ladies, and wearing the Red Cross, deliberately empty bowls of soup on the platform before us, saying something about giving nothing to 'English swine.'"<sup>102</sup> He felt that "throughout this journey the conduct of the German women, especially those dressed as Red Cross nurses, was revolting and barbarous beyond words."<sup>103</sup> All of these incidents conflict with the duties and characteristics of nurses not only by their alleged refusal to care for the soldiers and disrespectful manner but also by the preferential treatment based on nationality, treating the German soldiers the best but even favoring the French more than the English.

The report also appeared as a smaller sixteen-page pamphlet later in 1918 with an introduction by John Keble Bell, who was English novelist and journalist, and excerpts from the

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<sup>101</sup> On refusing to provide food or drink, see *Ibid.*, 20, 29, 40, 49 and 51. On refusing to dress wounds, see *Ibid.*, 40. On laughing at them, see *Ibid.*, 48. On spitting in soldiers' faces, see *Ibid.*, 33 and 49.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

report. It makes the report a bit more accessible by shortening it and pulling out three main points around which to focus the excerpts instead of separating them by the rank of the men who provided the testimonies. One of these points was that the behavior of the German Red Cross was “so vile as to be almost incredible” while another was that the behavior of German women in general, and Red Cross women in particular, was even worse than that, especially among the educated and wealthy who jeered and spat at the prisoners and acted in a vindictive manner.<sup>104</sup> Just to demonstrate further how despicable these actions were, Bell contrasted them with the actions of British nurses who had “unfailing kindness, gentleness, self-sacrifice, heroism, and even martyrdom,” which coincides with the ideals outlined at the beginning of this study.<sup>105</sup> This set British and German nurses apart even though in the ideal they were supposed to be the same in their actions and qualities. The image this book and the actual report itself presents of German nurses is a very strong and negative one that not only provoked discussion within the British and American nursing journals but also appeared in British propaganda posters, casting German nurses as uncaring and cruel.

Discussions among nursing and medical professionals that developed as a result of the government report first appeared in March 1918 in both the *British Medical Journal* and the *British Journal of Nursing*. While accounts from the prisoners had already appeared in the *British Medical Journal* in 1915, the March 1918 article includes the author’s opinion on the information provided by the prisoners, whereas the earlier articles for the most part refrained from comment. The title of the March article, “Red Cross ‘Ladies,’” from the start indicates that

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<sup>104</sup> Keble Howard [John Keble Bell], “*The Quality of Mercy*”: *How British Prisoners of War were taken to Germany in 1914* (London: Avenue Press, 1918), 4-5.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

the article calls into question these women's label as 'ladies' by putting the word in quotation marks. The author draws an analogy between these German Red Cross women and "Red Indians," alleging that "the German woman is still in the primitive stage of ethical development out of which the Red Indian has emerged."<sup>106</sup> This suggests that these German women dropped to the level of barbarity with their actions and lost any concept of how to act in an ethical, civilized manner, contributing to Allied accusations about uncivilized and barbarous Germans. While this article does not mention nurses specifically, it does describe similar actions as the ones nurses were also accused of in the report, which would place them in the same position as these "ladies" the author discusses. The author's positioning of German "ladies" in a "primitive stage" theoretically removes German nurses from their position alongside other nurses in the international community and takes away their ability to display even the ideal characteristics they were supposed to, which only those who were "ethically developed" could have hoped to possess.

The article that appeared in the same month in the *British Journal of Nursing* specifically took up the subject of the nurses mentioned in the report and questioned who exactly the prisoners referred to when they attributed the actions in their accounts to "nurses." The article provides evidence for why these prisoners' accounts garnered so much attention in 1918 even though people had heard similar stories throughout the war, specifically in the *British Medical Journal* in 1915 but also through letters from people on the continent, as mentioned in the *American Journal of Nursing*. The official government report substantiated what was before mere rumor. The author allows for the possibility that the "wave of utter brutality in which [the

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<sup>106</sup> "German Red Cross 'Ladies,'" *British Medical Journal* 1(March 1918): 266.

German nation] is engulfed” through their execution of the war may have “overwhelmed even the nurses,” who were “trained in the habits of docility, and unquestioning obedience to authority.”<sup>107</sup> However, the author makes the particular argument that the nurses referred to in the report

are not the professional nurses of peace time, but the 'German Red Cross Nurses,' who have no right to the title of trained nurse, and trained nurses in this country [Britain] have suffered so much from confusion with pseudo-nurses, and from being held responsible for their undisciplined behavior, that it is only just to suspend judgment until we know that the incredible cruelty to our wounded has been practised by the trained German nurses.<sup>108</sup>

The “German Red Cross nurses” the author claims the prisoners must be referring to were the auxiliary nurses or nurses’ aides who only had months or weeks of training, not the one year of training required for nurses referred to as sisters. The issues she refers to among trained British nurses and “pseudo-nurses” relates to the conflicts between professional nurses, who had three years of training, and women with little nursing training, such as those in Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD), who only had to have three months of hospital training before serving abroad in the fall of 1915.<sup>109</sup> Soldiers often called the VADs “sister,” which the professional nurses objected to since only fully trained nurses had earned that title.<sup>110</sup> Such confusion among the different types of women involved in nursing work in Britain brings forth the question of whether British prisoners could properly identify which types of German Red Cross women treated them harshly, which is what the author of the article was essentially questioning. For example, one job of the Baden Nurses’ Aides League was to work at the refreshment booths at

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<sup>107</sup> “Organised Cruelty,” *British Journal of Nursing* 60 (March 1918): 143.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Lyn Macdonald, *The Roses of No Man’s Land* (New York: Atheneum, 1989), 114.

<sup>110</sup> Janet S. K. Watson, “Wars in the Wards: The Social Construction of Medical Work in First World War Britain,” *The Journal of British Studies* 41, no. 4 (2002): 500-501.

the train station.<sup>111</sup> It is possible that the soldiers could not properly differentiate between the various types of German Red Cross women, especially since some of the Red Cross women wore uniforms that resembled those of nurses. For example, the Baden Nurses' Aides League's uniform was a dress with a Red Cross apron, white cap, and league's brooch.<sup>112</sup> The question of whether the women referred to in the prisoners' accounts were actually nurses matters not only because the author of the article found it important but also because the German nurse became the poster child for the incidents described in the report in terms of images and verbal references. The author's conviction that the women described were not professional nurses is evidence of the positive international feelings that still existed and of some nurses wanting to believe the best of other nurses, regardless of which side of the war they were on, because of professional identity and integrity. The author does not, however, believe these accounts were completely false, which is indicated in her concluding statement that "the blood of British women must be turned to water if they forget these insults."<sup>113</sup> The international feeling obviously did not extend to all women in the German Red Cross, only to the professional nurses, who they gave the benefit of the doubt.

The journal did not make such concessions for professional German nurses in an article that appeared later that same month about the prisoners' accounts, however, which indicates that some British nurses were putting more separation between themselves and the German nurses. In this article, the author recommended that every nurse read the committee's report, which was a "catalogue of horror and bestiality, and the worst offenders were the German women."<sup>114</sup> The

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<sup>111</sup> Quataert, "Women's Wartime," 464.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 465.

<sup>113</sup> "Organised Cruelty," *British Journal of Nursing* 60 (March 1918): 143.

<sup>114</sup> "The Martyrdom of British Prisoners in Germany," *British Journal of Nursing* 60 (March 1918): 217.

article consisted mostly of quotations from the report, including ones that referenced nurses specifically, but unlike the article from the beginning of the month, the author did not assert that the nurses mentioned were not professional nurses. This is telling and indicates that some nurses were no longer willing to go out on a limb to try to uphold the ideal image of German nurses. The author let the tainted image of them stand without making exceptions for professional nurses. On top of all of this, the article ended with the statement that there were those in Britain “who consider it no insult to our heroes and martyrs to communicate with German women, during this exposure of premeditated murder, calculated torture, and to expect those of us of pure British descent not to protest against their disloyalty!”<sup>115</sup> Although it is not clear which particular types of communication with German women prompted this ban, it is clear that the author means *all* German women. Including this statement at the end of an article about German nurses in a nursing journal and declaring all such communication with German women disloyal suggests that even British nurses communicating with German women would be unacceptable. With such strong statements and no concessions for professional nurses, German nurses became fully implicated in these actions and included within the ban on communications with German women, which would mean a further erosion of the internationalism that was supposed to exist between nurses.

The breakdown of the earlier positive relationship between British and German nurses becomes apparent when writers in the journals no longer made the effort to contradict the negative views of German nurses that they reported about in the journal. The other article that failed to do this appeared in November 1918 and was specifically related to prisoners speaking

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

out against the government because they felt the government could have done more to help them while they were in Germany. The only comment that refers to nurses is the author's observation that "we regret to observe Sir George Cave's statement that even among German nurses 'many are found who, far from helping suffering prisoners, have stooped to inflict insult and injury upon them.'"<sup>116</sup> Their regret stems from the fact that Sir Cave singled out German nurses in particular in his statement. Their statement, however, does not do much to elevate the image of German nurses since expressing "regret" does not go as far as contradicting the negative image, which authors in the journal had shied away from since early March.

Two British propaganda posters that appeared during the war depicting German nurses performing actions from the prisoners' accounts also influenced the view British nurses held of German nurses and revealed the negative turn that view took over the course of the war. The posters featured the image of a nurse pouring out food or drink in front of soldiers and gave prisoners' accounts visual representation to stir public opinion. These posters, which reached the British public, were what helped to make the German nurse the literal "poster child" of these alleged heinous acts towards British POWs. David Wilson created one of the posters, titled "Red Cross or Iron Cross?" (Figure 2). In the image, a British soldier lays on the ground with his head wrapped reaching out towards a nurse with a cup in her hand. The nurse stands before him with one hand on her hip and the other pouring water out of a glass. Two German military officers stand in the background watching. The caption is "Wounded and a Prisoner our soldier cries for water. The German 'Sister' pours it on the ground before his eyes. There is no woman in Britain who would do it. There is no woman in Britain who will forget it." This propaganda poster

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<sup>116</sup> "A Corporation without a Soul," *British Journal of Nursing* 61(November 1918): 281.

works on multiple levels because it attacks Germany, German women, and German nurses in particular with its comparisons and contributes to the argument that Germans are barbaric and uncivilized unlike the British. In this poster, the nurse is representative of all the German women implicated in the report, which taints the image of German nurses. Putting the word *sister* in quotation marks calls into question whether these women should even be referred to as nurses since their actions violated the characteristics a nurse was supposed to embody. The statement that no woman in Britain will forget it suggests a lasting break or tension between British women, including nurses, and German nurses, which would complicate efforts at internationalism after the war.

The second poster's image is similar to that of the first, but its intention is different. The Ladies Emergency Committee of the Navy League produced the poster, and it was on the streets around July 1918 if not earlier (Figure 3). In the image, wounded British prisoners are in an open truck; one is standing up with his arm wrapped in bandages while another with his head wrapped leans against him, and both have sad, injured looks on their faces. On the platform stands a German nurse pouring out water and laughing while a German soldier stands behind her. To the left of the image is a biblical quote from Matthew 25:35: "I was thirsty and ye gave me –." This quote in the Bible relates to a conversation Jesus had with a group of the righteous that he had separated from the unrighteous. He was telling them that they had provided for him when he was hungry, thirsty, etc., and by "him," he meant others in need because by helping others they were in essence helping him. He told the other group that they had not provided for him because they had denied others in need and, for this, they would be going into the everlasting fire. The quote on the propaganda poster tellingly leaves out the word *drink* because this is what the nurses were accused of denying the soldiers. Employing this biblical quote on the poster with the missing

word that implies they refused someone in need placed these German nurses in the group of the unrighteous, those that would spend eternity in everlasting fire.

The important difference in the image from the other poster is the laughter on the nurse's face, which some prisoners mentioned in the accounts included in the report. This adds another element of cruelty to the image because not only is she pouring out the water but she is also laughing while doing it. The Ladies Emergency Committee of the Navy League used this image to ask for donations to help feed and comfort Royal Navy prisoners. This poster becomes even more interesting because a writer mentioned it in the *British Journal of Nursing* in July 1918. The journal reported that, in a number of the posters that were displayed, the "nurse's face was obliterated—in some cases torn out and in others covered up with a stamp edging."<sup>117</sup> The posters were literally defaced. The author reporting this claimed they were defaced by the "Huns in our midst" that "evidently give short shrift to posters to which they object."<sup>118</sup> The author's statement suggests an approval of the image and opposition to its defacement, which does not coincide with the opinion presented in the article that appeared in early March, showing that some nurses had moved away from identifying with German nurses based on their common nursing profession and ideals. The defacing of the posters is evidence that not everyone in Britain agreed with or approved of the representation of German nurses that directly correlated with prisoners' accounts, which indicates that a unanimous opinion on this subject did not exist although the dominant one appeared on the posters. While scratching out the face of the German nurse could be seen as an act of hatred towards German nurses, the author's reaction to the defacing does not suggest this. In addition, if one believed the poster accurately portrayed

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<sup>117</sup> "War Posters Defaced," *British Journal of Nursing* 61 (July 1918): 5.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

German nurses, the poster would have been more effective at inspiring donations and stirring hatred if the laughing face was left unscathed.

In contrast to the dominant image of German nurses in British propaganda posters, nurses' appearances on German propaganda posters mostly featured them in their ideal nursing roles, waiting on and taking care of the wounded (Figure 4). Others that did not show them nursing sought donations for the nurses and motherhouses and presented muted images of nurses (Figures 5 and 6). For example, one shows the profile of a nurse with a downcast face and eyes that deemphasizes her place in the picture even though she is the only one in it, which coincides with the ideal image of the nurse with qualities such as sacrifice and humility (Figure 5). Posters of nurses in Germany fully upheld the ideal image of nurses.

Also in contrast to the dominant image presented in Britain of German nurses is the ideal image of the British nurse in the form of Edith Cavell. British nurses and citizens viewed Cavell as a martyr because the Germans executed her in October 1915 for helping Allied soldiers escape back to the front lines from occupied Belgium in 1914–15, which was illegal. The British considered the German action brutal and barbarous, in a way parallel to the alleged German nurses' actions towards the prisoners. An article in the *British Journal of Nursing* about the unveiling of a local monument to Cavell asserted that “her example will always be an inspiration to our noble sisterhood of nurses and the women of the country,” demonstrating the particularly high place she held among British nurses.<sup>119</sup> The image of Cavell is problematic, however, because she did overstep her duty as a nurse and used that position and the hospital she was in charge of to perform the illegal action of helping soldiers return to the fighting front. The author

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<sup>119</sup> “Edith Cavell: Ceremony of Unveiling a Local Memorial,” *British Journal of Nursing* 57 (October 1916): 333.

of the article also claimed that “the irony of the circumstance was that her ministrations were devoted impartially to wounded Germans as well as Belgians.”<sup>120</sup> This statement leaves Cavell’s image intact in Britain, in regards to her possession of the ideal nursing characteristic of not recognizing national differences in caring for soldiers, while casting German actions in a negative light. Even though not all of Cavell’s actions were neutral, such as helping Allied soldiers back to the front lines, in caring for soldiers, the most important work of a nurse, her actions were neutral. The emphasis on the particular fact of her impartiality directly contrasts with the partiality British prisoners and others accused German nurses of showing at the train stations and in some hospitals. The differences between the dominant image of the ideal British nurse and the dominant image of the German nurse in Britain reveal stark contrasts, with Cavell embodying the ideal characteristics of a nurse while fulfilling her nursing duty of caring for soldiers to the illegal extreme and dying for her efforts. German nurses on the other hand appear as the complete opposite, not caring for all soldiers equally or showing selflessness and compassion. Similar accusations to those leveled against German nurses do not seem to be prevalent for Allied nurses. While the Germans did accuse the British and French of mistreating German prisoners of war and medical personnel, they do not appear to have leveled any specific accusations against Allied nurses that gained anywhere near the attention German nurses received because of British accusations. One reason for this could have been that British accusations against nurses centered almost completely on POWs’ treatment at train stations in 1914. Some German propaganda regarding German POWs did feature similar experiences to those described by the British POWs, such as being verbally abused and spat on, but those

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

accused of these actions were French and British civilians in general rather than the civilians and Red Cross workers that were the alleged aggressors in Germany.<sup>121</sup> The lack emphasis on Red Cross workers or nurses, likely because of their non-participation in such actions, explains why Germans did not portray nurses and the Red Cross in a similar manner as the British. German accusations appear to have focused more on prisoners' treatment in the prison camps and labor companies and blamed military authorities, officers, and soldiers more than anyone else.<sup>122</sup>

All of these discussions in British journals and the posters of German nurses that appeared throughout the war indicate that, for most of the war, an inclination existed among British nurses to view German nurses from an international perspective and not think any less of them because they were on the opposing side. Although competing images of German nurses appeared at various points throughout the war, they did not gain much traction until the committee published its report on the treatment of POWs in early 1918. While some nurses countered the image presented of nurses in the reports by arguing they were not professional nurses, this argument did not last long, and the image of nurses in the report was the dominant one that appeared in writings and posters in the last months of the war. In the end, the positive ideal of German nurses within British medical and nursing journals could not be maintained despite some efforts to keep their image untarnished. The efforts to view them in a positive light, coupled with the ultimate failure of these efforts, reveal the strains war placed on internationalism among nurses and the antagonisms that arose once numerous prisoners' accounts and a government report supported the competing image of German nurses. The British

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<sup>121</sup> Jones, *Violence*, 46, 50.

<sup>122</sup> On prison camps, see "German Prison Camps," *British Medical Journal* 1 (March 1916): 420-22. On labor companies, see Jones, *Violence*, 237, 247.

perceptions of German nurses that conflicted with the ideal image of nurses in Germany are important because they had adverse effects on how the British, especially British nurses, came to view German nurses. This created much strain after the war as nurses sought to restore the internationalism that the ICN had been developing before the war started.

## **American Perceptions of German Nurses**

The relationship between American and German nurses is an interesting one because of America's neutrality prior to April 1917 when they entered the war on the side of the Allies against Germany. Because of America's initial neutrality, American nurses served in all the warring countries, clearly representing the internationalism and neutrality of nursing. From September 1914–October 1915, around 350 doctors and nurses served in foreign countries, with at least 192 of them being nurses.<sup>123</sup> The personal experiences American nurses had with German nurses coupled with lack of hostility between their countries created a positive view of German nurses that remained dominant in American nursing journals until America entered the war. After America declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, this perception of German nurses faced various challenges, one of these originating with the publication of the *Report on the Transport of British Prisoners of War to Germany, August–December 1914* in Britain, which put stress on the relationships between American and German nurses.

Early in the war, the featured stories and images of German nurses in American nursing journals reveal the overwhelmingly positive view American nurses had and circulated of German nurses that did not contain any hint of negativity. For example, one picture included in a January

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<sup>123</sup> Dulles, *The American Red Cross*, 133.

1915 issue of the *American Red Cross Magazine* showed rows of beds in a German hospital with French wounded who appear well cared for in an orderly setting with nurses in the image.<sup>124</sup> This picture coincides with accounts discussed above that assert that German nurses treated French soldiers well. Other examples of positive articles about German nurses discussed German hospital trains and the German Red Cross in particular.<sup>125</sup> Within these articles, the authors and editors reveal a high admiration for the efficiency and management of the German Red Cross, which contrasts with the view of the German Red Cross in prisoners' accounts that were circulating at the same time. An article in September 1915 about an expedition in the Middle East organized by the American Red Cross includes a strong positive image of German nurses. The goal of this expedition was to travel through the desert towards Egypt to set up a tent hospital at "Hafiret-el-Aujeh, a military post on the main caravan line from Palestine to Egypt," but they ended up setting up the hospital in Hafir instead. Four German nurses were on this expedition, the only nurses who traveled with them. The associate director of the expedition, who was an American, praised their "excellent work under trying circumstances," such as enduring the long journey and living and working in the hot desert environment.<sup>126</sup> He asserted that they were "made of heroic stuff" in part because they volunteered to advance closer to the front line, farther than originally planned, "where difficulties and dangers would be great. Water would be scarce, food uncertain, and return hazardous."<sup>127</sup> The image this account presented embodied the ideals and characteristics German nurses were supposed to have, including duty

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<sup>124</sup> *American Red Cross Magazine* 10 (January 1915): 8.

<sup>125</sup> On the hospital train, see "A German War Hospital on Wheels," *The Nurse* 2 (February 1915): 100-103 and *American Red Cross Magazine* 12 (January 1917): 60. On the German Red Cross, see Kimmle, "Germany's Red Cross," *American Red Cross Magazine* 10 (July 1915): 239-245.

<sup>126</sup> George C. Doolittle, "With the Turkish Army in the Desert: An American Red Cross Relief Caravan Journeys Across Syria Toward Egypt," *American Red Cross Magazine* 10 (September 1915): 316.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

and self-sacrifice. The expedition itself demonstrates the international cooperation that did take place during the war, albeit among nations that were not at war with one another. Even among those nations that were at war, however, prominent members of the American nursing community like Lavinia Dock advocated the continuance of internationalism. She found it “lamentable” that women and especially nurses were “imitating the vain rivalries of men, echoing their absurd war cries, showing the clan spirit and perpetuating the memory of feud and clash.”<sup>128</sup> She upheld the ideal that nursing was above national differences and argued that others should do the same, which included German and British nurses.

Evidence of such international cooperation can be seen between the German and American Red Cross and nurses in the American Red Cross hospitals that were established in Germany early in the war. One of these was the American hospital in Munich, which was set up and managed by Dr. Sofie A. Nordhoff-Jung and her husband Dr. Franz Jung, who happened to be in Germany on work-related business when the war broke out.<sup>129</sup> They both had earlier immigrated to America, but Dr. Nordhoff-Jung was born in Germany, so she had specific ties to the country. German nurses, auxiliary nurses, and nurses’ aides worked and volunteered their time at this hospital, which was a success.<sup>130</sup> Another of these American hospitals was set up in Gleiwitz, a city in Upper Silesia in what is today Poland, as the American Red Cross took over administration of a theater converted into a hospital, which was only about twenty-five miles from the active fighting.<sup>131</sup> While mostly American personnel worked there, a handful of

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<sup>128</sup> Lavinia L. Dock, “As to Preparedness,” *American Journal of Nursing* 16 (May 1916): 752.

<sup>129</sup> William P. Kennedy, “The Noble Work of a Noble Woman,” *American Red Cross Magazine* 10 (February 1915): 71.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>131</sup> Donna G. Burgar, “In Gleiwitz: Unit I, American Red Cross, at Work,” *American Journal of Nursing* 15 (September 1915): 1098.

German nurses' aides helped with translating and nursing activities. Wilma Rüdiger was one of these nurses' aides who worked with the American nurses. She saw the war as her opportunity to become a professional nurse, having already trained to become a nurses' aide before the war.<sup>132</sup> She began studying and training to become a full nurse before being transferred to the American hospital and, once there, continued her training under American nurses, gaining much of her skills and knowledge from them that allowed her to pass the exam.<sup>133</sup> The willingness not only to work with German nurses, auxiliary nurses, and nurses' aides but also to help train some of them to become nurses testifies to the internationalism that existed between American and German nurses. Rüdiger described the relationship between the nurses' aides at Gleiwitz and the American nurses as "very comradely and warm."<sup>134</sup> An American nurse who worked at the hospital related that the German women there "did splendidly" with their work, and she had only good things to say about them.<sup>135</sup> The good working relationships evidenced here between American nurses and German Red Cross women demonstrate elements of internationalism and present positive images of German nurses that do not conflict with the ideal.

Negative portrayals of German nurses only appeared in American nursing journals after America entered the war on the side of the Allies in April 1917. While negative views of Germany, and even German nurses, circulated within America before their entry into the war, these views did not appear in American nursing journals until after America declared war on Germany. Most of the perceptions that competed with the German ideal of nurses appeared in

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<sup>132</sup> Wilma Rüdiger, *Frauen im Dienst der Menschlichkeit: Erlebtes im Deutschen Roten Kreuz von 1914 bis Friedland* (München: J. F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1962), 10.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>135</sup> Burgar, "In Gleiwitz," 1095.

connection with the treatment of prisoners of war after the British committee published the report on the treatment of POWs. However, an article in September 1917 in *The Nurse* described six American nurses who were arrested and convicted of spying in 1916 for obtaining valuable information as they worked in advanced dressing stations in France and passing it on to the Germans.<sup>136</sup> The author based this article on one printed in the *Nursing Times* in London, and it is interesting because of the way the author tried to turn the blame away from American nurses, whose image and honor was tainted by this conviction since spying violated numerous characteristics and ideals nurses were supposed to possess. In trying to remove the blame from Americans, the author suggested that the Germans were behind it all because the operation pointed towards “a systematic organization of spies, utilizing the services of nurses as sources of first-hand information” all within one group of nurses, which, according to the author, “bears the stamp of German ‘thoroughness.’”<sup>137</sup> Although the author does not discuss it, by attempting to implicate the Germans in this spying incident, the author by default implicates German nurses because they would have likely been the ones best able to pose as American nurses since they were already trained in nursing. The author’s suggestion that the Germans were behind the spying then compromises German nurses’ honor just as it did that of American nurses although the author does not give this any consideration. The tone and content of the article make the suggestion look like the author was simply grasping at straws to keep American nurses’ image and honor intact. The accusation against American nurses of spying was seen as particularly damaging, which is why the author claimed, “it is far better for humanity and for the fair name of womanhood that every evil day and every beleaguered city should have its Edith Cavell,

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<sup>136</sup> “A Stain on Our Good Name,” *The Nurse* 7 (September 1917): 175.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 175-76.

suffering martyrdom for honest faithfulness to her duty.”<sup>138</sup> The reference to Cavell, who represented one of the ideal nurses in Britain, demonstrates how she became a dominant ideal image not only in Britain but also in America, being seen as a martyr who died for carrying out her duties in caring for and helping Allied soldiers, even though her activities went beyond those intended for nurses and violated the law. In the article, the author presented a stark contrast between the nurse who spies and the nurse who dies as a martyr, placing them at opposite ends of a spectrum. By accusing the Germans of being behind the spying, the inference can be made that Germans were then placed at the far end of this spectrum, on the opposite end from Cavell.

The negative depictions of German nurses in American nursing journals that identify them explicitly revolve around the treatment of prisoners of war, specifically Russian and British prisoners. They demonstrate that American nurses were less likely to condemn German nurses as some articles in the British journals did even though they do present some negative reports without commentary just as some articles in the British journals did. American nurses’ views of German nurses were more reserved in regards to the accusations leveled at German nurses because of their close working relationships at the beginning of the war and America’s late entry into the war, which resulted in a shorter time of viewing Germans as the enemy, less anti-German propaganda, and fewer numbers of their soldiers falling into German hands. Two of the articles that discuss Germany’s treatment of POWs in the *American Red Cross Magazine* do not provide any comment on the accusations against German nurses, focusing instead on the reports of the prisoners themselves, which coincides with the way some authors in the British journals handled the accusations. An article in January 1918 discussed Germans’ treatment of Russian

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 176.

prisoners, which were in many ways similar to the accounts given by British prisoners in regards to the lack of food and drink, especially during transports, and the lack of good medical attention. The author claimed that “any appeal for food or drink is met with derision by the soldiers. Even the German nurses are cruel beyond belief.”<sup>139</sup> This is the same image of German nurses that the British prisoners’ accounts presented, but now the Russians were also victims of such cruel actions. The other mention of cruelty by German nurses in this magazine appeared in an article in December 1918 that contained excerpts from letters written by an American lieutenant from July–September 1918. In it, he discussed the change of feelings among Americans in general towards Germans that now included animosity, resulting from the Germans sinking the *Lusitania* and their treatment of American soldiers.<sup>140</sup> He specifically mentioned Germans’ inhumanity and uncivilized nature in resuming unrestricted submarine warfare and their alleged mishandling of the bodies of American soldiers, as when some American soldiers allegedly found a fellow soldier “stripped naked and bound to his tank.”<sup>141</sup> The Lieutenant also contrasted the behavior of Allied and German nurses. His observation of Allied nurses treating wounded Germans without consideration of nationality made him think of “how the German nurses treat our chaps, spitting into the food and the cups before they hand them to them.”<sup>142</sup> This article demonstrates how such negative images of German nurses were kept alive even after the major powers had signed the armistice in November 1918. Setting up the dichotomy between the actions of Allied and German nurses created the perception of how far German nurses were

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<sup>139</sup> Leo Pasvolsky, “Ivan, the Tortured: The Terrible Truths about the Treatment Accorded the Russian Prisoners of War in Germany—Another Violation of the Laws of Humanity and International Law,” *American Red Cross Magazine* 13 (January 1918): 15.

<sup>140</sup> Coningsby Dawson, “In the Great Allied Drive: From Letters Written on the Battlefield and in the Hospital,” *American Red Cross Magazine* 13 (December 1918): 37, 39.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

from the ideal that the Allied nurses represented. Accusing German nurses specifically of such uncivilized behavior demonstrates the extent to which the Allies sought to portray Germans as inhumane and barbaric because of the ideal that nurses were supposed to represent. Portraying German nurses in this light provided further, almost assured, proof in the eyes of the Allies of just how uncivilized Germany was since nurses were supposed to be the epitome of humanity and truly selfless and self-sacrificing. The *American Red Cross Magazine* did not comment on the accusations put forth in the lieutenant's letters against German nurses in particular, but writers in the *American Journal of Nursing* commented on similar accusations in reference to the *Report on the Transport of British Prisoners of War to Germany, August–December 1914*.

In the months following the publication of the report in early 1918, writers in the *American Journal of Nursing* detailed aspects of the report and directly addressed the accusations leveled against German nurses, casting doubt on the complete validity of the accounts. The two articles that appeared in May and June revealed the stance that the journal took on this issue and stuck to through the end of the war, which contrasted with the progressive pulling away of British nurses in their journals that left no hint of redemption for German nurses then or after the war. While the committee's report created tensions among British, American, and German nurses in terms of the views British and American nurses came to possess, British and American nurses handled these tensions in different ways that partly had to do with their countries' differing circumstances in relation to the war coupled with the various personalities directly behind the journals. The writers of the May and June articles in the *American Journal of Nursing* responded in a manner similar to the early March 1918 article in the *British Journal of Nursing* that sought to remove professional nurses from the prisoner accounts by suggesting that the women were not actually nurses. This partly had to do with not wanting the profession of

nursing tarnished since the accusations against German nurses conflicted with the ideals of the nursing profession as a whole. If German nurses were guilty of such actions then that could have called into question the actions of other nurses and the basis upon which nurses were involved in caring for the wounded. Unlike the authors in the British journal, authors in the American journal were not as eager to write off German nurses and stop defending them within the journal as the British did, most likely because of America and Britain's differing war experiences. For example, the paragraph-long May 1918 article mentioned the published British report and asserted that the "record of the cruelty of the German nurses to the wounded is hard reading for trained nurses."<sup>143</sup> However, this was the only mention of the cruelty in the article, which did not go into any specifics. The remaining part of the article detailed the only act of kindness from German Red Cross women in the prisoners' accounts in which two or three of them saw that the British prisoners were starving and brought them sausage sandwiches, but the German officers stopped them from actually handing them to the prisoners since they were British.<sup>144</sup> The reader comes away unaware of what cruel behaviors German nurses allegedly exhibited because the only details from the British report included in the article were from the instance where they behaved ideally. By only detailing this one instance, the author deemphasized the nurses' harsh behavior that dominated the committee's report and placed disproportionate emphasis on this one instance of kindness. This suggests a reluctance to disseminate the accounts of German nurses' alleged cruelty and the image such accounts gave of them, which was likely a result of journal writers not believing, or wanting to believe, that German nurses committed such alleged cruelties

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<sup>143</sup> *American Journal of Nursing* 18 (May 1918): 717.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.* The report actually contains more than one instance of kindness from nurses, as referenced in the discussion of the report above, but this article made the claim that only one was included.

out of a sense of professional solidarity and integrity. At the same time, however, the presence of the article indicates the journal did not seek to ignore the existence of report altogether and felt the need to present some account of it.

Returning to the topic of the accusations against German nurses a month later, writers in the journal finally addressed more directly the charges of cruelty that they had glossed over in the previous article. The author claimed that the accounts of these actions were “now too frequent and too specific to be disbelieved,” which partly coincides with my view of these accusations because the large number of accounts relating similar types of information about prisoners’ experiences suggests that there was truth in the stories although the accuracy of all the details, such as whether the women were actually nurses, is not for certain.<sup>145</sup> The author also included specific details regarding these actions that were missing from the previous article, such as spitting in food and drinks, holding items out and then taking them away, and pouring food and drinks out on the ground in front of the soldiers.<sup>146</sup> This article reveals the important role the British report had in making this negative image of German nurses a dominant one in 1918 even though the behaviors refer back to 1914. It provides one answer for the question of why these actions did not receive more attention in 1914 when they were allegedly committed. The author mentioned that these actions became known among some American nurses early on in the war through a letter written by Mary Burr who had contact with British prisoners in Switzerland and heard some of their accounts, which she included in the letter. The letter was read to some American nurses early in the war, but the general belief was that these accusations against nurses could not be true and that the prisoners must have exaggerated what they had experienced.

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<sup>145</sup> “Foreign Department,” *American Journal of Nursing* 18 (June 1918): 802

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

Because of the reaction to the information in the letter about the nurses, they “felt abashed and hesitated to repeat anything so sensational again.”<sup>147</sup> This suggests that it was only with the government report, which gathered and published prisoners’ accounts, that such accounts gained credibility and a more prominent role within discussions despite the fact that the image of German nurses was a negative one. While the author no longer discounted the examples of behavior found in the accounts, the author does question whether the women identified as nurses really were professional nurses. This is similar to the initial response found in the *British Journal of Nursing*. However, unlike the British journal, the American journal does not contain any further discussions of the report in later issues that allow the harsh actions of German nurses to be recounted without any qualifications, which indicates that the view presented in this article was the one the journal stood by. The author concluded the article by stating

until we had proof that could not be disputed we should continue to believe that these women could not really be nurses, but must be of the laity, with no training in the humanities. If, however, any German nurses had indeed ever so fallen into primitive cruelty, they would surely have to be shut out from all international intercourse that the future may hold.<sup>148</sup>

She asserted that, after the war, German nurses must be “questioned, heard, and judged” on this matter.<sup>149</sup> Her reference to these actions being committed by the laity is not completely clear in regards to whom this would include, although one can assume that she meant the nurses’ aides and possibly even the auxiliary nurses, even though they did have longer terms of training. The possibility also exists that the laity refers to Red Cross women who did not have any courses in nursing-related activities but volunteered their time at refreshment booths set up at train stations.

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

The view the author presented with her concluding statement was that they would consider German nurses innocent until proven guilty but that any guilty verdict would separate them from the international nursing community after the war because they would have violated important tenets and ideals of nursing.

The positive perceptions of German nurses that appeared in American nursing journals throughout the beginning years of the war are representative of the fact that during these years, America was neutral, which lessened the chances of nationality clashes and allowed the American and German Red Cross to work closely together. For British nurses, the situation was different because Britain and Germany were enemies from the beginning, and even though nursing was supposed to be above national differences, such views were difficult to uphold in a war where propaganda and slander aimed to directly damage the nation and “mobilize hatred against the enemy.”<sup>150</sup> One can see this in the correlation between British charges against Germany as a barbarous nation and charges against German nurses for their alleged barbarousness. The situation was also different for American nurses because Americans did not have any wounded soldiers under German care like the British did in the early years of the war, meaning they were not as directly affected by the actions of German nurses. Even when America entered the war, the positive image of German nurses remained relatively intact within nursing journals. This could be a result of the previous working relationships between American and German nurses earlier in the war, including the possible German-American ancestry of some of the nurses, and the relatively short period they faced each other on opposite sides of the war. The

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<sup>150</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in World War I* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1927).

British, in contrast, had for the entire war stood opposite of Germany, which affected how they viewed one another after four long years of war.

Ultimately, the dominant image of German nurses in American nursing journals by the end of the war was a reserved positive one that hinged on German nurses being innocent, in theory, of the actions they were accused of in the British report. In contrast, the dominant image found of German nurses at the end of the war in British nursing journals was more negative because the authors stopped attempting to qualify who exactly they thought were displaying such behaviors, disapproved of the defacing of the poster portraying one of these actions, and called for an end to all communication with German women. It becomes obvious then that the competing images of German nurses that arose during the war affected British and American perceptions of German nurses by calling their integrity into question and put strains on their relationships that would have to be overcome after the war before internationalism could be rekindled among all the nations. The mere fact that these countries fought on opposing sides during the war did not mean automatic animosity between Allied and German nurses because they were now enemies. The relationship between Allied and German nurses seems to have been negatively affected more by the accusations of German nurses' violations of key ideals and characteristics of nursing, such as impartiality, self-sacrifice, and kindness, than by their countries' designation as enemies. Admittedly, the war itself created intense hatred among enemy nations, as Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker's study elucidates, with each side believing it was fighting to preserve civilization.<sup>151</sup> This study of American and British

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<sup>151</sup> Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18: Understanding the Great War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 102-03.

views of German nurses does not seek to overturn Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker's conclusion, but it does temper it to an extent, especially in regards to American and German nurses because the *American Journal of Nursing* does not display any of this hatred towards German nurses in the course of the war. This is not to say that nurses were exempt from feelings of hatred but rather that when the target of that hatred was to be other nurses, a number of them took a more cautious and reserved view, which the journals clearly indicate. Among nurses, the fact that their countries were at war with one another was not as big of an obstacle since nursing was, ideally, above national differences. What did create an obstacle was the charge that German nurses violated key ideals of the nursing profession, which the nursing journals indicated because the negative depictions of German nurses only appear as a result of accounts that suggested their behavior did not fit that of the ideal nurse. Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker assert that during the war "it was impossible to *think* in neutral terms, hence neutrality was *unthinkable*;" however, such a statement cannot be completely true, particularly among nurses, because nursing enemy soldiers would have required at least some measure of neutral feelings among the nurses for them to carry out their duties.<sup>152</sup>

The discussions that took place and relationships that redeveloped after the war among German, British, and American nurses focus specifically on Agnes Karll and the professional nurses in the BOKD rather than on the German Red Cross, which reflects the closer relationship that had developed between them before the war based on their similar views of professional nursing. The first discussions that appeared in nursing journals about German nurses after the war took place around the end of 1922 in the *American Journal of Nursing* when Lavinia Dock, a

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 139.

founder and secretary of the ICN, issued a call for help for German nurses in the BOKD, who were in “serious distress” because of the detrimental economic situation in post-war Germany.<sup>153</sup> One gets the impression from her call for help that some residual antagonistic feelings towards German nurses may have existed among some American nurses because, within her appeal, she pointed out that during the war some Christians thought that it was “a holy duty to hate Germans” even though one is supposed to ‘love thy enemy.’<sup>154</sup> She stated that she hoped nurses did not share this view because German nurses needed their help and that “whoever was to blame for the war, the nurses certainly were not.”<sup>155</sup>

In August 1923, a report appeared in the *British Journal of Nursing* regarding a statement Karll gave at the ICN conference in Copenhagen in which she quoted a resolution she sent to an ICN meeting earlier that year that “claim[ed] an opportunity of refuting the accusation which she warmly repudiated that the German nurses had committed atrocities on wounded enemies, which accusation, the resolution stated, had been made against them by American nurses.”<sup>156</sup> This reveals that there were some nurses in America who directly accused German nurses of committing the cruel acts described in the prisoners’ accounts, which was not the position the *American Journal of Nursing* took. Karll’s statement also reveals the need she felt to address and deny those accusations five years after the war had ended, suggesting the accusations still held weight among some nurses in the ICN. At the meeting Karll sent her resolution to, they decided to consider the resolution finished with by accepting Karll’s statement and claims of innocence, indicating, at least officially, that the matter was settled and the accusations were no longer an

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<sup>153</sup> Lavinia L. Dock, “Foreign Department,” *American Journal of Nursing* 23 (December 1922): 209.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> “International Council of Nurses: Conference at Copenhagen,” *British Journal of Nursing* 71 (August 1923): 100.

issue. Even in March 1924 though, an editorial in the *American Journal of Nursing* stated that “to help or not to help German nurses is disturbing many minds. The question is one every nurse should decide for herself in the light of her sympathies and the information given” in previous articles regarding the situation of nurses in Germany.<sup>157</sup> This statement suggests that even though the ICN itself had set aside the accusations against German nurses made during the war, not all nurses were willing to do the same, showing the residual effects of the war and the perceptions of German nurses that came out of it. Even so, throughout these years, some American nurses and the ICN provided the BOKD with financial help so that the organization would not collapse, which would have hurt the ICN’s goals regarding professional nursing since Germany would have lost its one organization that was devoted to the ICN’s goals and wanted to work with it to build internationalism among nurses.<sup>158</sup> Despite earlier statements in nursing journals during the war that singled out Karll’s nurses and spoke of them in a positive light, they found themselves lumped together under the heading of ‘German nurses,’ which emerged from the war with some bruises. The reason the BOKD did not continue to be singled out in a positive manner could have been because the war blurred some of the clear divisions among the different types of nurses among those that were involved with war nursing working under the Red Cross and wearing its symbol. Another reason could have been fear of backlash from some readers not in favor of giving Germans any exemptions, especially as the war dragged on, as evidenced early on in the letter to the editor in the *British Journal of Nursing*.<sup>159</sup> Even though most nurses ultimately accepted German nurses, specifically members of the BOKD, back on the international stage, the

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<sup>157</sup> “The Plight of German Nurses,” *American Journal of Nursing* 24 (March 1924): 463.

<sup>158</sup> On American nurses’ support, see “Nursing News and Announcements,” *American Journal of Nursing* 24 (March 1924): 497. On ICN support, see “Secretary’s Report,” *British Journal of Nursing* 73 (November 1925): 230.

<sup>159</sup> “Letters to the Editor,” *British Journal of Nursing* 54 (May 1915): 451-52.

war put strains on their relationships based mostly on accusations raised against German nurses that Agnes Karll felt it necessary to address the ICN about five years later. Nursing journals discussed and commented on the negative views of German nurses during the war, and these discussions show the changes in their opinions over time, revealing the complexity of their relationships and the effect of the war on them.

### CHAPTER III

## SOLDIERS' DEPICTIONS OF NURSES AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GERMAN NURSES AND SOLDIERS

During the First World War, soldiers' depictions of nurses at times matched the ideal image of nurses described at the beginning of this study with nurses taking the form of angels, mothers, and sisters. Other times, the depictions challenged this image by portraying nurses as romantic interests in subtle or blatant ways. The dominant ideal relationships between German soldiers and nurses during war were ones based on the familial relationships of mother and child and sister and brother. Most historians who discuss these relationships emphasize the familial model, which conformed to gender roles, neglecting to present other relationships that also existed or relegating competing structures to only a few sentences, which distorts the reality of the interactions between nurses and soldiers.<sup>160</sup> I argue that these competing views reveal important facets of the relationships between German soldiers and nurses and of the view soldiers held of nurses that did not conform to the ideal and had the potential to complicate life in the wards. Examining nurses' accounts along with images, poems, and stories published in soldiers' newspapers during the war reveal the existence of ideal depictions of nurses as angels, mothers, and sisters alongside views that conflicted with the ideal of viewing them as asexual, such as romantic depictions of nurses and romantic relationships between soldiers and nurses.

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<sup>160</sup> See Schulte, "A Sick Warrior's Sister"; Schönberger, "Motherly Heroines"; Grundhewer "Die Kriegskrankenpflege"; Riesenberger, *Das Deutsche*.

## Depictions and Relationships that Coincide with the Ideal Image of Nurses

Part of the ideal image of German nurses saw them as pure and angelic, and many soldiers drew on this image of nurses in the poems they published about nurses in German soldiers' newspapers. One poem featured in the papers in 1917, entitled "The Sister," described nurses' steps floating like an angel while another from 1918 entitled "To a Sister" described the "gentle workings" of a nurse's hands "like an angel, meek and pure."<sup>161</sup> Another aspect of the ideal image of nurses saw them in a motherly role that coincided with the pure and asexual nature of the ideal nurse. In many cases, nurses and soldiers abided by the model of nurses taking on the role of a mother in wounded and sick soldiers' lives. One example of a nurse seeing herself in a motherly role occurs in an account by Sister Maria von Syberg that appeared in a 1936 book entitled *Frontschwester* containing letters, reports, and diary entries from German nurses in the rear echelons on all fronts.<sup>162</sup> Sister Maria von Syberg took on a motherly role after a German pilot saw the two French pilots he had killed when he took down their plane in an air fight, which he found upsetting. To comfort him, the sister "takes his head in [her] hands as a mother."<sup>163</sup> Another nurse's account from the book emphasized this role to an even greater extent. A young nurse, who was keeping watch over a sleeping wounded soldier, placed his fist in her hands "as a babe in the cradle" once he started moaning with pain and displayed "motherly compassion."<sup>164</sup> Furthering her use of motherly imagery, the nurse described how the soldier

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<sup>161</sup> Alfred Hein, "Den Schwestern," *Liller Kriegszeitung*, May 14, 1917; Silberschmidt, "An eine Schwester," *Kriegszeitung der 1. Armee*, March 3, 1918.

<sup>162</sup> Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, ed., *Frontschwester: ein deutsches Ehrenbuch* (Berlin: Bernard & Graefe, 1936).

<sup>163</sup> Maria von Syberg, "Fliegerschicksal," in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 63.

<sup>164</sup> Fridel Marie Kuhlmann, "Die Hand," in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 65.

“stretched peacefully like a babe and recovered in the protection of her motherly hands.”<sup>165</sup>

These examples demonstrate how some nurses viewed their comforting of soldiers as motherly actions reminiscent of the way a mother would comfort sick or hurt child. The way soldiers referred to nurses also indicates how they viewed them as mothers. For example, one soldier called Elfriede Schultz “*Mutti*” while another group of soldiers under the care of Käthe Russner called themselves her “children.”<sup>166</sup> As all of these examples from nurses’ accounts and soldiers’ newspapers indicate, nurses and soldiers latched on to aspects of the ideal image of nurses, with soldiers using the ideal characteristics in their poems and both nurses and soldiers viewing their relationship as that of a mother and child. These relationships and representations confirmed the ideal image of German nurses. In soldiers’ newspapers, depictions of nurses that conform to the ideal appear about as often as depictions that hint towards the romantic, but nurses’ accounts feature the ideal image to a much greater extent, only rarely providing indications of romantic relationships.

## Comradeship between Nurses and Soldiers

The existence of comradeship, in its truest sense, did not exist between soldiers and nurses, but the language of comradeship was used by both soldiers and nurses to refer to one another, and some of the nurses’ experiences were similar to those of soldiers. The nurse was in fact seen as a complementary figure to that of the soldier, and in some ways, this relationship

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> On calling a nurse *Mutti*, see Elfriede Schulz, “Die ersten Kriegsmonate,” in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 22. On soldiers calling themselves children, see Käthe Russner, *Schwesterndienst im Weltkriege: Feldpostbriefe und Tagebuchblätter* (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1936), 19.

between them could be viewed as one between a brother and a sister.<sup>167</sup> Soldiers and nurses' use of the language and actions of comradeship displays an effort at equality through difference because they faced some similar situations while performing very different but important work in the war, one fighting and the other nursing. Paul Fussell's study of British soldiers' writings from the war reveals the gap that existed between soldiers and civilians on the home front based on their very different experiences of the war, which drew soldiers closer together through common understanding.<sup>168</sup> Because nurses blurred the lines between the home and battlefield by serving in the rear echelons, they were able to bridge part of the gap that existed between soldiers and civilians, which is why they were able to achieve some aspects of comradeship with the soldiers through some of their shared experiences. Within nurses' accounts, Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung asserted, "we were all comrades," and another nurse addressed one of her patients as "comrade."<sup>169</sup> Some soldiers in turn also referred to nurses as comrade, as evidenced in the poem already referred to above, "The Sisters," with the line "You are all each our comrade!"<sup>170</sup> These examples demonstrate one way comradeship manifested itself among nurses and soldiers, which was through the language they sometimes used to refer to each other. In an article published in the *Kriegszeitung der 1. Armee*, the author pointed out that "as nurses, they are counted among us field gray" because they were responsible for taking care of the soldiers when they got sick or

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<sup>167</sup> Schönberger, "Motherly Heroines," 99.

<sup>168</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 2009), 103-04.

<sup>169</sup> On all being comrades, see Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, "Im Feldlazarett 1918," in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 98. On calling a patient comrade, see Grete Scheibe, "An der Somme," in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 76.

<sup>170</sup> Alfred Hein, "Den Schwestern," *Liller Kriegszeitung*, May 14, 1917.

injured, which demonstrates how their role as nurses put them in the position of being considered soldiers' comrades.<sup>171</sup>

The similarity in some of soldiers and nurses' experiences in mobilization, life near the front, and death demonstrate other ways their relationship coincided with comradeship. Just as the military authorities mobilized soldiers upon the declaration of war in August 1914, so they mobilized nurses, although nurses volunteered their service while the military drafted the soldiers.<sup>172</sup> Once mobilized, a number of nurses served in hospitals close to the front lines, in some cases only twelve kilometers behind it.<sup>173</sup> Some nurses faced hunger and freezing temperatures.<sup>174</sup> Like soldiers, nurses also faced the threat of bombs and other types of enemy fire, albeit to a lesser extent than soldiers did. For example, in one case, a bomb hit the roof of a hospital, and in another account, a hospital had to be evacuated because the Allies were shelling it.<sup>175</sup> In another instance, falling bombs threw one nurse against the wall.<sup>176</sup> Needless to say, a nurse's life behind the front lines was not always safe, but even a nurse's death could exhibit signs of comradeship with soldiers. For example, Sister Katharina, Countess of Schulenburg, was buried with full military honors in September 1914.<sup>177</sup> Even nurses who were not privileged enough to be buried with military honors still achieved some sort of equality or comradeship in death by being buried among soldiers as one poem written by a nurse indicated as she described

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<sup>171</sup> "Unsre Schwestern," *Kriegszeitung der 1. Armee*, September 8, 1918.

<sup>172</sup> Quataert, "Women's Wartime," 453.

<sup>173</sup> Minna Hotzbach, "Erste Eindrücke in einem Feldlazarett des Westens," in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 87.

<sup>174</sup> Marienschwestern an das Mutterhaus in Breslau, "In den Krankenbaracken von Reihel," in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 67, 69.

<sup>175</sup> Maria von Syberg, "Fliegerschicksal," and Grete Scheibe, "An der Somme," in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 63, 74.

<sup>176</sup> Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, "Im Feldlazarett 1918," in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 99.

<sup>177</sup> Johanniterschwestern, "Im Überfall von Löwen," in *Frontschwester*, ed. Elfriede von Pflugk-Hartung, 28.

walking among the rows of soldiers' graves and coming upon the grave of a nurse.<sup>178</sup> Certain aspects of comradeship among nurses and soldiers, such as nurses' sisterly role and the self-sacrifice nurses displayed in risking their lives to care for soldiers conform to the ideal image of German nurses.

### **Relationships between Nurses and Soldiers that Challenge the Ideal Image of Nurses**

While the motherly and sisterly roles nurses assumed towards soldiers fit the ideal image of nurses that saw nursing as an extension of the domestic sphere, other relationships between nurses and soldiers, such as romantic ones, whether real or fictional, clashed with this image. In light of this clash, most nurses, military authorities, and the general population saw romantic relationships between nurses and soldiers as improper. Not many of the published nurse's accounts refer to interactions that hint towards the romantic, but one account published in 1962 does reveal that they existed, even if they were for the most part one-sided. Wilma Rüdiger, who trained to become a nurse under American nurses at Gleiwitz, related an account of a soldier, Paul, who "had a crush" on her when she worked at a hospital.<sup>179</sup> Rüdiger requested that Paul, a soldier with both of his legs amputated, be transferred to her row because she thought he would be happier there with better care and neighbors in nearby beds. She soon realized that he had a crush on her, which she believed would be beneficial because it would provide him with a distraction and make her work easier. She reveals her discovery of his crush in her account in an indirect way. She states, "He did not let me out of his sight, and I soon noticed that he had a

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<sup>178</sup> "Am Schwesterngrab," *Der Champagne-Kamerad*, May 21, 1916.

<sup>179</sup> Rüdiger, *Frauen*, 25.

crush on his Sister [nurse],” referring to herself.<sup>180</sup> The indirect way she refers to herself may suggest her modesty, wanting to avoid stating “he had a crush on me,” or a desire to distance herself from a direct statement describing his feelings towards her, which otherwise might in some way implicate her in these feelings.

Rüdiger does not provide any concrete evidence that she returned his feelings although her actions indicate that she was fond of him but not in a clearly romantic way. Her response to the discovery of his feelings indicates this because she only mentions how she thought it would be beneficial to his recovery and her work, not to herself personally. Although Paul’s view of her conflicts with the ideal asexual image of nurses, Rüdiger does not discourage his feelings. For example, she accepted the frequent letters that he wrote and placed in various places for her to find that expressed his feelings for her. She described the letters as short, full of mistakes, and barely legible with messages like “’Worthy Sister, have you slept well?’ or ‘Come to me shortly.’”<sup>181</sup> When Paul was transferred to another hospital, he sent her longer letters that she always answered. She even sent him packages and visited him twice. Over time though, she heard from him less and less and then not at all, but she discloses at the end that “a big stack of bundled letters, in which this young person attempted to express his unbridled and good heart, remain in my hands,” even years after the war had ended.<sup>182</sup> The fact that she kept the letters so long and spoke fondly of them indicates that she cared for this soldier and had a rather strong connection with him, but the account of her actions and the language she uses to describe her relationship to Paul does not give the impression that she returned his feelings in a like manner.

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

By not returning the feelings he felt for her, Rüdiger did not violate the ideal image of nurses herself, but she did allow Paul to continue to hold on to a romantic image of her that did violate the ideal image by not dissuading his affections. This account reveals that not all soldiers restrained themselves to viewing nurses within the familial model as mothers and sisters. The scarcity of similar instances of such relationships between soldiers and nurses within nurses' accounts may be a result of nurses not recording all such instances because they did not fit the ideal. Any instances that hinted towards the romantic would have brought the ideal image of nurses into question and placed nurses under similar suspicions that the women's army auxiliary came under during the war.<sup>183</sup> One of the accusations people in Germany made against the women's army auxiliary was that the motivation for them going to work near the front was finding a husband since that is where most of the young men were.<sup>184</sup> Schönberger's study turns up similar accusations toward German nurses, but they were nowhere near as widespread as those against the women's army auxiliary since most people believed nurses' motivations were unselfish.<sup>185</sup>

One set of sources that shed particular light on relationships between nurses and soldiers that hint towards the romantic are German soldiers' newspapers. The images, fictional stories, and actual accounts that appear within these newspapers clearly demonstrate that, at least in the minds of some soldiers, nurses were not asexual and that other potential relationships besides familial ones existed in the hospital wards. By only examining nurses' accounts about these relationships, one misses the different forms they could take and the extent to which soldiers'

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<sup>183</sup> For a study of the women's army auxiliary, see Schönberger, "Motherly Heroines" and Bianca Schönberger, "Mobilising 'Etappenhelperinnen' for Service with the Military: Gender Regimes in First World War Germany" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2002).

<sup>184</sup> Schönberger, "Mobilising," 263-64.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

views of nurses conflicted with the ideal image of them and the proper relationships they were supposed to have with them, even if those relationships were only fantasy. The images, poems, and accounts can be separated into two groups: those that do not suggest reciprocal feelings and those that do.

The evidence in soldiers' newspapers that do not indicate any reciprocal feelings from nurses reveals the attitudes and romantic feelings soldiers had towards nurses despite the fact that the ideal image of nurses portrayed them as asexual. In the 1916 poem "The Sister," the soldier is preoccupied with a nurse's hand, through which contact between the nurse and the soldier took place as she cared for him. In the last stanza, he claims, "I could keep you [the hand] on and on through the whole life," which suggests a lasting relationship, specifically with the hand but, since the hand is connected to the nurse, with her also.<sup>186</sup> The language in the poem also hints towards the romantic as he speaks of her "dear, dear tender hand."<sup>187</sup> Another poem from 1917, "The Blonde Sister," reveals feelings of jealousy as the soldier in the poem leaves the hospital and feels pain at the thought that he is only "one of many" in the blonde sister's life.<sup>188</sup> The poem is meant to be a farewell poem dedicated to thank her, but the dominant impression the poem gives is one of longing and pining love because he is upset that he will just be a blur to her and is sad about leaving her. This poem clearly indicates that the soldier did not view the nurse as a mother or sister but as a romantic interest, which conflicts with the ideal image of nurses. A comic included in one of the newspapers demonstrates a clear break with viewing nurses as asexual by portraying a flirtatious encounter. The image is of a nurse focusing on bandaging a

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<sup>186</sup> Max Heckel, "Die Schwester," *Liller Kriegszeitung*, March 5, 1916.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> "Der blonden Schwester," *Kriegszeitung von Baranowitschi*, October 10, 1917.

soldier's foot while he is sitting up in bed looking at her with a half-smile on his face (Figure 7). The title under the image classifies the soldier as a "ladies' man," and in the caption, the nurse asks him whether he had considered the possibility of being wounded before "answering the bold undertaking."<sup>189</sup> He replies that he had thought of that and on "the tender treatment" that he would receive.<sup>190</sup> The image coupled with the text show that some soldiers did view nurses as sexualized since they were an object of flirtation. It also suggests the type of behavior that nurses might have had to cope with when dealing with some soldiers who did not stay within the confines of the familial structure. This image also indicates a lack of response from the nurse who has no further dialog and only stares at the foot she is bandaging. In this image, the flirtation is a one sided affair.

One poem uses the ideal familial model of brother and sister and religious descriptions to deflect any romantic interpretations of the soldier's relationship with a nurse.<sup>191</sup> For example, he tells his nurse to "Come, let me kiss your pure mouth one more time pious as a brother!"<sup>192</sup> Even though the soldier describes kissing a nurse, he couches it in religious and familial language that makes it asexual and unromantic. On the surface, the depiction the poem provides of the nurse and the soldier's relationship with her fully conforms to the ideal image of nurses. Such an effusion of brotherly and religious language, however, suggests that it may simply be a screen for the romantic feelings he has that is designed to protect the nurse the poem is meant to thank. All of the above examples from the soldiers' newspapers only deal with depictions of romantic feelings soldiers had towards nurses without any indication of reciprocal feelings, but they

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<sup>189</sup> "Ein Schwerenöter," *Der Champagne-Kamerad*, October 1, 1916.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Nelson discusses this to an extent in *German Soldier*, 168.

<sup>192</sup> Max Zeibig, "Der deutschen Schwester," *Liller Kriegszeitung*, June 12, 1918.

clearly reveal that relationships between soldiers and nurses were more complex than the ideal familial model suggests.

The examples from the newspapers that do indicate reciprocal romantic feelings between soldiers and nurses are in the form of comics, an actual soldier's account, and a fictional story. I argue that such representations reveal relationships between soldiers and nurses that conflicted with the ideal forms and demonstrate the complexity of these relationships as they took place in the reality of the wards. The comic images in the newspapers featuring nurses and soldiers are part of sets of images that have a common theme for that issue. One of the images appears under the theme of "Various Substitutes" (Figure 8). The image depicts a soldier and a nurse in an outside setting with the soldier facing towards the nurse, holding her hand with his other arm around her shoulder. The caption reads, "If there must be a substitution, then to me you are the dearest."<sup>193</sup> The theme of substitutions, of which tens of thousands actually existed in Germany at this time, suggests that nurses were not a first choice for romantic relationships but only a substitute. This could be related to soldiers having more access to nurses during the war than other women on the home front because a number of nurses served just behind the front lines and had constant interactions with soldiers, mainly as their patients. Regardless of the fact that the comic is meant to be satiric and not representative of reality, especially since the nurse is shown as the substitute, the nurse is still presented in a romantic relationship. She is not off limits as the ideal image is meant to make her. The other comic image, under the theme of "Hospital Enjoyments," presents the nurse in a similar way, suggesting she is getting married to one of the soldiers (Figure 9). The caption above the picture indicates the soldier is introducing his "sister"

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<sup>193</sup> "Allerlei Ersatz!," *Kriegszeitung der 1. Armee*, July 7, 1918.

to a professor.<sup>194</sup> The use of the term *sister* here is clearly meant to be ambiguous as to whether she is his actual sister or a nurse, but the reader is meant to understand that she is a nurse because every other picture under the theme features either a wounded soldier, a nurse, or both, who are in some way related to the hospital. In this image, no one is wounded, which leaves the woman to be viewed as an actual nurse. The caption also suggests clandestine behavior. It states that for once the soldier's familiar pretext, introducing a woman as his sister, is in line with the truth, which suggests that he might have routinely introduced women as his sister to cover up romantic relationships with them, although this time it is the truth because she is a nursing sister. The image itself suggests a romantic relationship and possibly marriage between the couple because they are standing side by side with their arms interlocked, holding a bouquet in front of them while a figure dressed in black, who is identified as a professor, stands facing the couple with his back to the viewer, which is reminiscent of a pastor marrying a couple. The suggestion of a nurse marrying a soldier clearly violates the type of relationship that was supposed to exist between nurses and soldiers.

One of the fictional comedic stories in the soldiers' newspapers also conflicts with the ideal image of nurses in a similar way.<sup>195</sup> The story's main character is a poet, Adolar Nuller, who was drafted into the army during the war. The story is about the experiences he has in a war that he cannot quite become accustomed to and a uniform that never fits quite right. One of the key aspects of the story is that he always left his collar open because it bothered him, which suggests his nonconformity. His open collar was an act of insubordination that caused him to get into trouble with his superior. The irony is that his open collar caused him to be wounded in the

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<sup>194</sup> "Lazarett-Freuden," *Kriegszeitung der 1. Amree*, September 8, 1918.

<sup>195</sup> Richard Hamm, "S'Hakerl und S'Schlingerl," *Die Sappe*, February 1918.

trenches because it became stuck in the wire mesh and he could not get away to avoid an incoming shell. He ended up in a hospital where he met a nurse, Sister Wendi, and became taken with her, being “mesmerized by her caring look” and dreaming about her. Once he recovered enough, he dressed in his uniform to go for a walk, leaving his collar open as usual, and when Sister Wendi came by to congratulate him on his recovery, he spun around and his open collar became caught on her open collar, which she too always got in trouble for leaving unbuttoned. By a romantic twist of fate, their open collars found each other and brought them together. By disobeying the rules and not buttoning their collars, they were brought together into a romantic relationship that in and of itself went against the acceptable relationships between nurses and soldiers. One of the images accompanying the story shows nurse Wendi bending over Nuller’s bed and pointing her finger at him with hearts and stars surrounding the image. In the other image that ends the story, they are embracing and kissing each other. This story fulfills the earlier examples taken from the newspapers that revealed one-sided affections for nurses, which was what Nuller experienced before his collar hooked on hers and his affections became reciprocated. While this story is clearly romantic fiction, using open collars to bring the main characters together so that they can find love, it demonstrates, like the other examples above, that such relationships were not beyond the imagination of soldiers. Such relationships were not so impossible that soldiers never even considered them as a possibility even though the ideal image of nurses should have made them so. One could argue that such imaginings simply represent fantasy because the soldiers knew that such relationships were unlikely to happen based on the ideal image, but the next example illustrates why such relationships may not have seemed quite so impossible.

While the next example from soldiers' newspapers does not feature a romantic relationship in the full sense of the term, it is an account of events surrounding one nurse written by a soldier who witnessed the events. The soldier does not use any names in the account and begins by asking, "Why should I not tell it?"<sup>196</sup> The anonymity and question suggest that what he describes in the account is not exactly considered proper or widely acceptable behavior, especially for a nurse. In the first part of the account, he describes his nurse laughing with her eyes and then aloud at his ramblings while in a delirious fever, indicating her friendly relationship with the soldiers. The second part of the account, though, moves toward behavior that was a little more than just friendly. The soldier talks about how one of the wounded soldiers tricked their nurse after telling her that he was going away by asking her if she wanted to know something and then telling her that he could not tell her. Before she walked away though, he caught her hand, and then for the rest of the day the author says a strange thing happened because each time the nurse would pass by that soldier's bed, she would touch his hand, causing the soldier to smile to himself. By flirting with her a little, the soldier got extra attention from her before he left that did not directly relate to nursing care and appeared more like reciprocal flirtation on her part. Later the next afternoon, another soldier who was leaving pulled the same trick by telling her that he had something he would like to tell her but could not, which caused her to laugh and tell him that she would present him with something for a farewell. Later that night when the lights went out, she returned with an emergency light. She then "stepped quickly up to his bed....bent fully downward" and "touched her mouth to his" before quickly leaving.<sup>197</sup> The author believes it is likely both of them will not forget it. This account does not suggest an

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<sup>196</sup> "Unsre Schwester," *Der Champagne-Kamerad*, January 23, 1916.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

actual relationship like the previous examples because the nurse performed these actions just before the soldiers left, but her actions were more romantic than platonic and do not fit within the ideal familial model. The fact that her behavior was not exactly proper can be seen in the soldier keeping her anonymous and in her performing these actions in a subtle manner, waiting until the lights went out before kissing the soldier so that numerous others would not see her and she would not get into trouble. This account suggests that nurses also violated the ideal image they were supposed to uphold, as her actions cannot be classified as those of a mother or sister. This conflicts with the ideal image that many historians emphasize of these nurses and demonstrates why the image of nurses needs to be more nuanced. The last example provides further evidence of this because it shows that the soldiers were not the only ones toppling the familial structure and violating the ideal image and that some nurses had a hand in it too, which further complicates their image.

The ideal image of nurses called on them to be mothers and sisters to the soldiers they were nursing. Nurses were supposed to be asexual figures, especially in the eyes of the soldiers, yet one sees from nurses' accounts and soldiers' newspapers that this was not always the case. Not even all nurses abided by the ideal at all times, if one takes the anonymous soldier's account at face value. Many nurses, as well as some soldiers, did visualize and speak about nurses' work in ways that matched a motherly or sisterly role, but this was not the only way nurses were viewed. Regina Schulte argues that "the familial structure provided a framework for making sense of their [nurses'] experiences and as such was a crucial source of strength" for them.<sup>198</sup> While the references in nurses' accounts to the familial model provide proof that this was true,

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<sup>198</sup> Schulte, "A Sick Warrior's Sister," 131.

one wonders how the presence of romantic views of nurses might have complicated their ability to make sense of their experiences through the familial model and find strength within it.

Examining soldiers' newspapers in particular provides evidence that soldiers also viewed nurses in a romantic light even though that conflicted with nurses' supposedly asexual nature. The images, poems, and stories within these newspapers reveal the variety of views soldiers held of nurses. Even if soldiers intended many of the representations of nurses in the newspapers to be only fiction, the idea that soldiers even conceived of nurses in romantic terms undermined ideal image of nurses. Soldiers' newspapers, in fact, reveal how common such romantic references were among soldiers, at least within these papers, which is not what comes to light when only nurses' accounts are used to examine the relationships between soldiers and nurses. The image of the nurse as an object of attraction and a romantic partner directly competed with the ideal image of nurses as mothers and sisters, revealing that not all soldiers remained within the bounds of the ideal image. Portraying the relationships between nurses and soldiers as only familial in nature distorts the reality in the hospital wards that actually present a much more complex picture that had the potential to complicate nurses' lives considering how dominant the ideal image was not only among nurses but also among society as a whole.

## CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

Over the duration of the First World War, the ideal image of German nurses as mothers and sisters who were asexual in nature and possessed qualities of self-sacrifice, kindness and impartiality, came under fire on many fronts. Reports about German nurses' treatment of prisoners of war, the British in particular, put their kindness and impartial care of the wounded into question while romantic views of nurses and actions that resulted from them, on the part of soldiers and nurses, threatened the ideal of a familial model at the front among nurses and soldiers. While these competing views did not completely destroy the ideal image of nurses, they reveal important aspects of the relationships between German nurses and soldiers and among British, American, and German nurses. Examining views of nurses that point towards the romantic demonstrates that the relationships among German nurses and soldiers were more complicated than many previous studies have been willing to suggest and investigate to a greater extent. While being on opposing sides of the war placed some strain on the relationships British and American nurses had with German nurses, the accusations against German nurses by British prisoners of war exacerbated these strains and produced tensions that lingered for years after the war ended. These images of nurses that competed with the ideal image, whether they reflect reality or not, are important and have to be taken seriously because they were prevalent during and after the war and affected the lives of German nurses and those associated with them and should therefore be more fully incorporated into studies of German nurses during the First World War. Further areas of research are the relationships among international nurses as whole after the war and the work they did together during the interwar period after their countries spent four bitter years fighting one another. Further investigation into German nurses' responses during and

after the war to the accusations against them regarding the POWs and the views German nurses held of British and American nurses would be useful to understanding on a broader scale the international relations among nurses and would add depth to the study presented here.

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## APPENDIX



**Figure 1. Red Cross Angel**

Source: Emma von Rüdgersch, *Unterm Roten Kreuz: Erlebnisse und Schilderungen von Emma von Rüdgersch* (Baden: M. Schanenburg, 1916), 33.



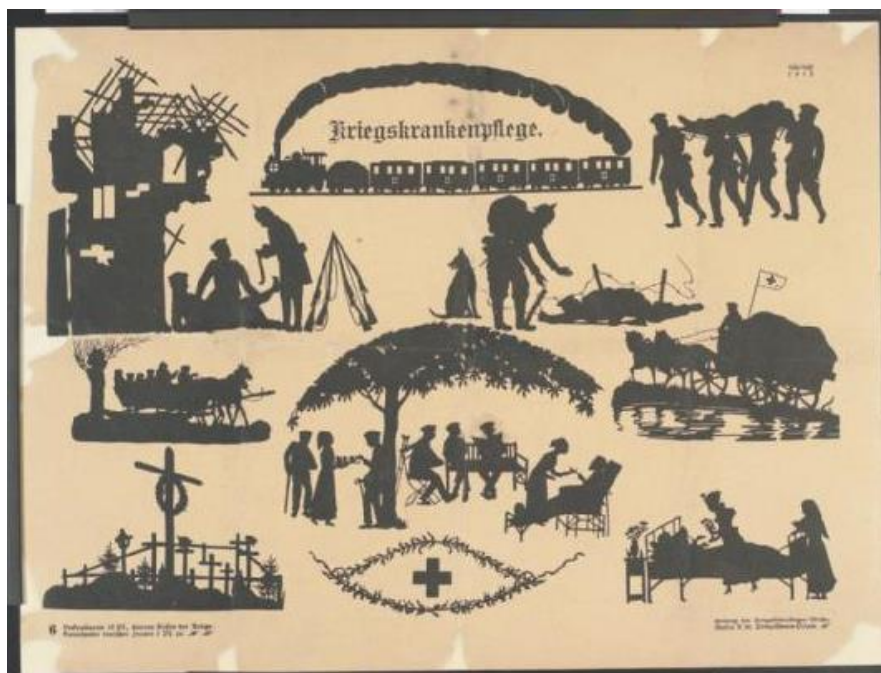
**Figure 2. Red Cross or Iron Cross?**

Source: Imperial War Museum, IWM PST 2762.



**Figure 3. Ladies Emergency Committee of the Navy League**

Source: Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center, George F. Tyler Poster Collection, PT080837.



**Figure 4. Kriegsrankenpflege**

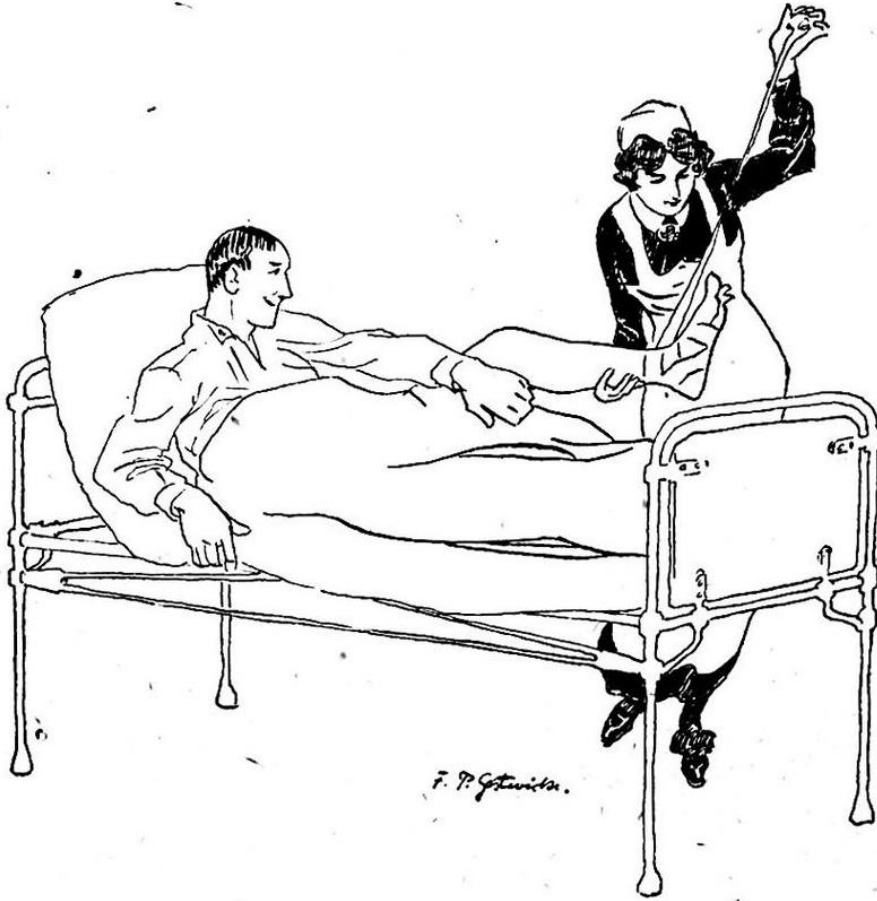
Source: Imperial War Museum, IWM PST 5708.



**Figure 5. Schwesternspende**  
Source: Imperial War Museum, IWM PST 2684.



**Figure 6. Sammlung für ein Mutterhaus**  
Source: Imperial War Museum, IWM PST 11304.



**Ein Schwerenöter.**

„Haben Sie denn gar nicht an die Möglichkeit gedacht, verwundet zu werden, als Sie sich zu dem kühnen Unternehmen meldeten?“

„Das schon, Schwester, ich dachte aber auch an die zarte Behandlung, die mir dann zuteil wird!“

**Figure 7. Ladies' Man**

Source: "Ein Schwerenöter," *Der Champagne-Kamerad*, October 1, 1916.

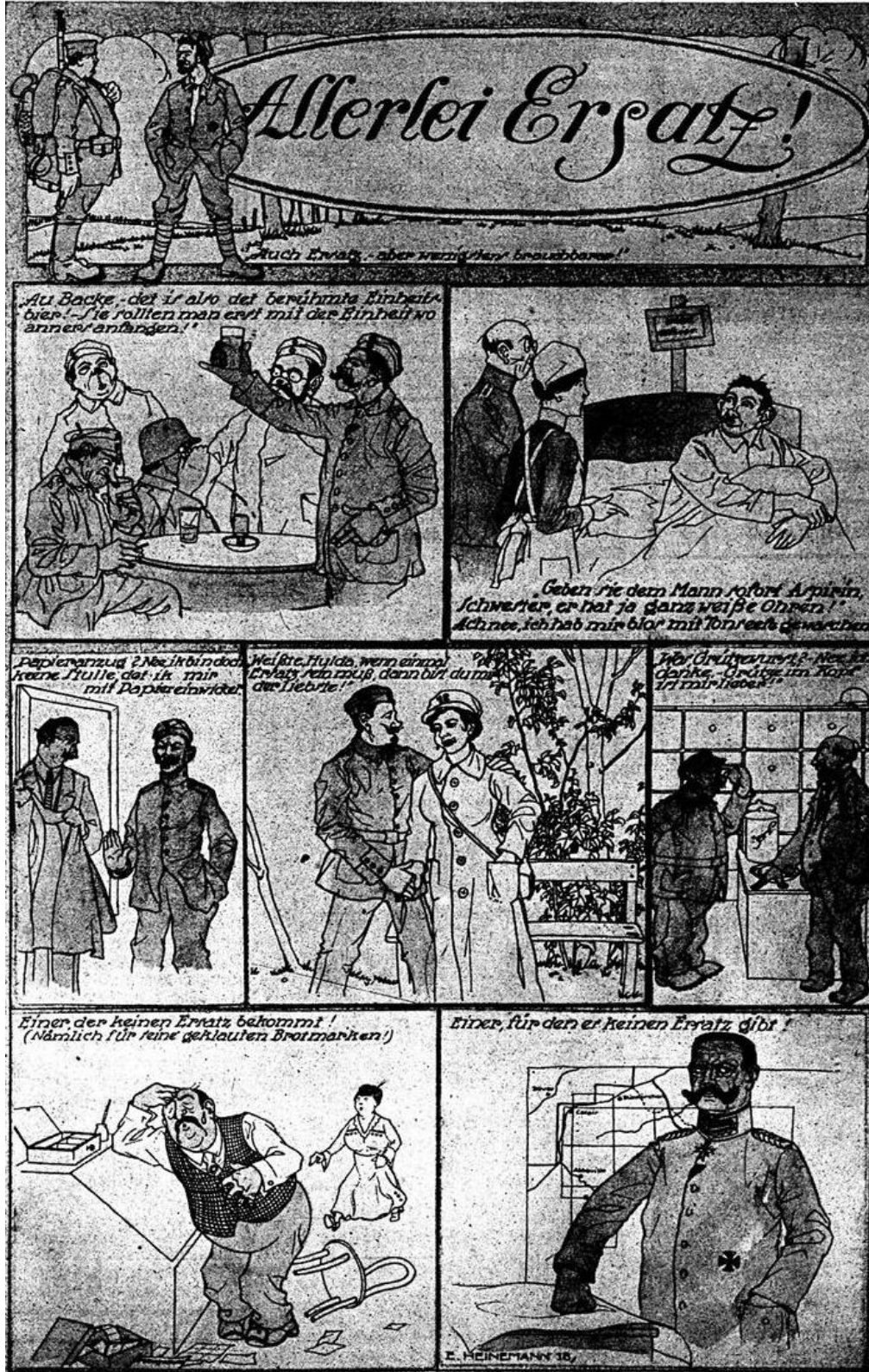


Figure 8. Allerlei Ersatz!  
Source: "Allerlei Ersatz!," *Kriegszeitung der 1. Armee*, July 7, 1918.



Figure 9. Lazarett Freuden

Source: "Lazarett-Freuden," *Kriegszeitung der 1. Armee*, September 8, 1918.

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