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Separate or Equal? The Emergence of an All-Female Group in Norway's Rightist Underground

KATRINE FANGEN

This article discusses the importance of separate women's organizations in militant groups of the far right. The analysis suggests that the existence of a separate women's group has not only enhanced the respect the members feel for themselves and each other, but has been successful in eliciting greater respect from their male counterparts, resulting in the women receiving greater responsibility in the organization. The article is based on participant observations and on interviews with activists in the militant far-right underground in Norway. It assumes that the need for separate women's organizations in the rightist underground reflects a pre-existing dissatisfaction with conditions and opportunities for females in a highly male-dominated environment.

Introduction

The history of extremist political activity reveals several cases of all-female groups. The women in these groups are distinct from their male colleagues not only in having a separate organization, but often in developing a very different political agenda. Intriguingly, the motivation for women to form all-female groups seems to emerge from different sources depending on their political orientation. Women in far left groups tend to be given responsibility when they work side by side with the men in a single organization; when leftist women create all-female groups, it is usually to pursue a particular objective, generally of a feminist nature. By contrast, in the far right, women tend to be given a subordinate position in mixed-gender groups. By creating their own organizations, women on the far right have a chance to voice their opinions, develop leadership skills and gain self-confidence. Thus the presence of all-female groups on the far right indicates the dissatisfaction women feel with their opportunities in a male-dominated hierarchy.

What drives women to become involved in militant groups? Are there any general differences between leftist and rightist militant women? Do women have any common issues that transcend ideological differences? Do they function as auxiliaries to the male groups, or are they autonomous? These are some of the questions we will be exploring. Because of problems

raised by using material from various sources, our conclusions will be tentative. However, we can develop a framework in which it is possible to make some generalizations – or, alternatively, identify points of uniqueness – that characterize women in the Norwegian rightist underground.

I will highlight these issues by focusing on the position of women in the Norwegian rightist underground before and after the emergence of the all-female group, Valkyria. I will establish a context for this phenomenon by comparing the roles Norwegian rightist women play with those of women who take part in similar groups in other countries. The article is primarily descriptive, as it is based upon my participant observations in the rightist underground during 1993–94, on in-depth interviews and conversations with central activists in the period 1993–96, as well as on the analysis of documents, world wide web pages and fanzines.¹

Women in Militant Groups

Some General Reasons Women Join Militant Groups

Militant women are often considered a paradox, insofar as they run counter to traditional expectations of differences between the sexes. As Robin Morgan puts it, '... all women share the cross-cultural burden of being viewed as the repositories of (male-defined) morality. Therefore, women must never be wrong-doers. To encroach beyond the present boundaries ... is a far more crucial act for a woman than for a man'.² From this standpoint, women who join militant movements with more caring goals, such as animal liberation or environmental or anti-abortion movements, are more easily comprehensible. Women are often more numerous than men in such groups. From her experiences among militant animal liberationists, Eileen MacDonald observes that in most groups women were not merely members but effectively leaders as well. While the men did a lot of talking and planning, it was the women who turned up late at night in order to carry out the group's actions.³

Women also tend to join progressive movements more often than reactionary ones. In a study by Weinberg and Eubank, fewer than 10 per cent of Italian women terrorists over a 14-year period were affiliated with neo-fascist groups. When they did join neo-fascist groups, women were, moreover, dramatically under-represented in positions of leadership. One reason for their subordinate positions may be the fact that they were relatively young: 60 per cent of them were aged between 15 and 24 at the time of their arrest. By contrast, left-wing terrorist women were somewhat older: 60 per cent were aged between 20 and 29 when they were arrested.⁴

Women in Militant Groups: Divisions along Ideological Lines

An examination of rightist and leftist groups reveals an interesting division along ideological lines. When compared with women in militant rightist groups, militant women on the left tend to be treated by their male colleagues with greater respect and given more responsibility; leftist women have thus seemed to feel the need for separate organizations less urgently than their rightist counterparts. For example, even before they had gained the same rights of citizenship as men, women occupied prominent positions in the Russian revolutionary movement; indeed, they participated in the assassination of several authority figures, including Tsar Alexander II. Interestingly, the matriculation of these leftist women into the broader revolutionary movement stemmed from their frustration with the inefficacy of the all-female group, called the Fritsche Circle, in which they had begun their radical career: though motivated strongly by feminist concerns, they believed that women's rights could not be realized in any meaningful way until the peasants and the working class were emancipated.⁵ Thus beginning with an all-female organization, they ultimately merged their efforts with a male group in which they remained surprisingly – considering that women were almost invisible in political life at that time – influential.⁶

A century later, in the 1970s, women continued to occupy prominent positions in militant leftist groups, and remained fully involved in leftist terrorist activities. In the modern era, most of these women became involved in these groups through a relationship with a male terrorist,⁷ leading some analysts to suggest that leftist women were abandoning feminist principles in favor of a traditional female orientation, becoming followers of dominant male leaders.⁸ Members of the German Red Army Faction (RAF), male and female, suggest otherwise, however. One of the prominent female members of the RAF thought that the main reason there was such a large proportion of women in the group was that 'German revolutionary women were convinced that if they had had a voice during Hitler's time, many of the atrocities would not have happened'.⁹ In many respects, women were key figures in the RAF. According to a leading male RAF activist, had it not been for the fact that most of these women were already involved in partnerships, they could have performed all of their terrorist actions on their own.¹⁰ Some of the later RAF women were also highly engaged in feminist issues; and there have been two women's groups within the RAF: the Militant Black Panther Aunties,¹¹ and Red Zora. The latter group specifically bombed sexist targets.¹²

Even though women who become involved with militant leftist groups may not have been consciously motivated by feminist reasons to do so, it seems that their sense of rebelliousness is stimulated by the 'oppression'

they have experienced as a consequence of being women.¹³ This is particularly true of women who join terrorist groups in countries where emancipation of women has occurred only recently. For example, the Middle East has produced female terrorists of exceptional sacrificial devotion and fanaticism, as Alison Jamieson points out. Here, in fact, an all-female group, the Fatima Brigades, has played a central role; Jamieson calls them 'the valkyries of the Islamic revolution'.¹⁴ There have also been prominent women within Palestinian terrorist groups, the IRA and the Italian Red Brigades. In the last organization, several women's groups were formed, groups that usually concentrated on targets of special relevance to the feminist cause.¹⁵

In contrast to women in leftist groups, women who join right-wing groups often find themselves in an ambivalent position since ideologies of the far right often tend to define women solely in terms of motherhood. As a result, far-right women activists often have to formulate agendas that differ slightly from those of the men in the same groups. This was definitely true of the women who entered the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s: the major organization was so clearly defined in terms of manhood that the thought of women joining it was unthinkable; however, some women pleaded for the right to build a separate women's division of the Klan, and finally received permission to do so. According to Kathleen Blee, financial opportunism and intra-Klan conflict, not concern for women's rights, was the precipitating factor that pushed the male Klan leaders to create a women's Klan.¹⁶ The men wanted the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK) to be an auxiliary of the men's order. In practice, however, this was not the case. Women rejected the notions of the vulnerability of white women. They wanted to challenge male political and economic dominance.¹⁷ They praised women's rights organizations, the participation of women in the temperance movement and women's suffrage. The Klanswomen also celebrated women who 'made it' in traditionally male workplaces.¹⁸

Women who joined Nazi organizations in Germany in the 1920s were somewhat less engaged in issues of women's equality. Claudia Koonz reports that many women became Nazis because they feared that Weimar liberalism would lead to the degradation of women. One reason was that they feared that liberal policies would lead to more prostitution, so that women would be valued merely as sex objects. Another fear was that women would feel humiliated when entering the male world of production. Frightened by the uncertainty of the time, women 'accepted the premise of second-sex membership in Hitler's movement in exchange for the hope of preserving their own womanly realm against male interference'.¹⁹ Their main motivation was, in other words, the need for safety. Nazi women dreamed of a future in which women were equal, but different.²⁰ But there

were also women who wanted a more equitable position, and who saw themselves as revolutionaries.²¹ In the initial phase of the Nazi movement, women were in fact allowed to participate side by side with the Nazi men; but when Hitler came to power, they were forced back to the family sphere. Koonz points out that it is typical that women have equality as long as the movement is in its initial phase, but descend to a subordinate role as the movement matures. For example, even when women educated themselves in traditional occupations, ultimately they still could achieve status only within the hierarchy of their fellow women. In Hitler's division of society into male and female spheres, this was indeed the only logical consequence.²² They were at no stage allowed leading positions, control or political influence,²³ and in this regard they never were – and never could be – equal. Thus, although there were several women's organizations in Nazi Germany, their particular mission was to contribute money and moral support to the men. A women's group called Rote Hakenkreuz, for example, 'established rest homes for SA men, collected money and clothing for them, and prepared food for Nazi families without income'.²⁴

It is interesting to note that the experience of Nazi women of the 1920s, and the organizational developments that grew out of that experience, are striking precursors to recent evolutions within the modern Norwegian right: In the 1920s, the organization of a separate Nazi women's group, as Koonz argues, was allowed to occur by the very fact that women were perceived as insignificant by the broader movement. However, once the women's group was created, it engendered consequences both unintended and unforeseen:

Because they were deemed so unimportant, women were unintentionally given the opportunity to organize their own relatively independent associations, edit their own newsletters, pamphlets, and broadsides, proselytize other women, and discuss their views on the 'woman question'.²⁵

As we shall see, a similar course of events has recently transpired among women of the Norwegian right.

There have been tendencies to create separate women's groups in other racist and far-right groups. Several examples of neo-fascist women's groups have occurred during the past 25 years. A subdivision of the German ANS, called the League of Hamburg Women, emerged in the late 1970s.²⁶ In 1984 a very small group called Deutsche Frauenfront (DFF) emerged. This group had originally begun as the women's division of Freiheitlich Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (FAP). It later split off from the ANS, and several other women's groups joined in. Many of the leading women in DFF are partners of leading men from other national socialist organizations.²⁷ DFF prints the journal *Der Madelbrief*.²⁸ A women's division of the DNSB

(Deutsche National Sozialistische Bund) and a women's group of stormtroopers (Sturm Abteilung, SA)²⁹ have recently emerged, and in 1991 several females created Skingirlfront Deutschlands.³⁰ There is also a group called Women for Aryan Unity, with divisions in Germany and the Netherlands, among other countries.³¹ In the US, there are some smaller women's organizations, such as the Aryan Women's League.³² A few fanzines for female rightist activists are also published in the US, including *White Sisters*, *Today's Aryan Women*³³ and *Right as Reina*. The last presents information on the female side of the nationalist skinhead scene in the US.³⁴ All these 'zines are meant to unite female white power activists. In Italy, a group has emerged called Unione Skinhead Girl Italia, consisting of 15–20 young 'NS skinhead girls'.³⁵ In Britain the Patriotic Women's League publishes its own fanzine, *Valkyrie*.³⁶ There are no separate organizations for women in the British Young National Front, but there are a few cases of women as leaders of local groups.³⁷ In 1994 in Sweden, there emerged an organization of national socialist women called Kristine Gyllenstjarna, which is a subdivision of Riksfronten (The Reich's Front).³⁸ In fact this organization already existed at the end of the 1920s: at that time, the name referred to several women's organizations within the various national socialist parties.³⁹ In Denmark, a small group called DANSK (Danish Aryan National Socialist Women) emerged in the autumn of 1955.⁴⁰ Most of these women's organizations do in fact function as auxiliaries to the male organizations, and they are not very visible on the international scene. As we will see, the women's groups in Norway are striking in the ways and extent to which they differ from this typical pattern.

Political Violence in Norway

In comparison with other European countries, Norway has seen few incidents of political violence and terrorism. During the 1970s, the Special Branch of the Police focused their surveillance mainly on Marxist-Leninists, Maoists and Trotskyists. However, after an 18-year-old right-wing activist bombed a May Day parade in 1979, the Special Branch was criticized for paying insufficient attention to right-wing extremists. Other violent incidents occurred as well. In 1981, two 18-year-old rightist activists committed a double murder, killing two men who had participated in a weapons theft with them; the killers feared that they would inform the police. There was another bomb attack in 1985, this time against a Muslim mosque. All three of these acts were carried out by people with connections to the rightist underground, which, at that time, existed in the shape of the political (but non-parliamentary) party, Norsk Front (the Norwegian Front), and later as the Nasjonalt Folkeparti (National People's Party). As a result

of these events, the Special Branch refocused its attention from the leftist to the rightist underground.⁴¹ Two more bomb attacks have occurred since 1985, both directed against the anarchist Blitz house in Oslo.⁴² The 'terror group' Vaepnede Ariske Celler (Armed Aryan Cells) claims to be responsible for both of these bombings.⁴³

This is far from a complete list of right-wing violence, but it does cover the most severe actions. The kind of indiscriminate terrorist violence typical of the far right in Italy is almost absent in Norway.⁴⁴ So far, only the right wing has carried out bombings or shootings. That is not to suggest that violence is the exclusive domain of the far right: the anarchists connected with the Blitz house also exercise political violence, by beating up and throwing eggs at nationalist politicians, as well as beating up neo-Nazis in the streets.⁴⁵ The militants from the Blitz house are organized in the group Anti-Fascist Action, with the aim of confronting 'the Nazis physically or ideologically'.⁴⁶

Among the anarchists, women participate in the front line on an equal footing with the men. They have their own group within the Blitz house, the so-called Blitz Women's Group. As we will discuss in detail below, women within the Norwegian right-wing do not usually participate in the front line during attacks. However, they take part in weapons training and ordinary self-defense training (such as kick boxing) together with the men, so that they are able to protect themselves. Right-wing women tend to be more militant than the anarchist Blitz women. In January 1995, the most militant among them created a separate organization, called Valkyria, and since then they have become more ideologically oriented and even more militant. It is symptomatic that the rightist women have chosen to call their group Valkyria, since the mythological figures, the valkyries, were women who were combative and feared.⁴⁷

The Far Right in Norway

The Norwegian rightist underground consists of several groups with constantly changing names; some of the current ones are Viking, the militant cell Anti-Antifa/Vaepnede Ariske Celler, and NUNS 88⁴⁸ as well as the women's group, Valkyria. The number of people within this underground varies, but usually includes no more than 40 activists and 200 sympathizers.⁴⁹ Activists contribute to the underground through their specific tasks, which include editing fanzines or writing articles for them, planning or executing violent actions, distributing information or playing in white power bands, of which there are three in Norway: Vidkuns venner (The Friends of Vidkun), Norhat (Northern Hatred) and Norske legion (the Norwegian Legion).

These various organizations are headquartered at different places around Norway. There are also local cells within the same organization, as is the case with both Viking and Valkyria. Yet the situation is not so fragmented as it may seem: the ongoing conflict with militant anti-fascists has provided an informal basis for ideological unity. Without this, the rightist underground probably would have split into separate parts; but for now, some sense of common identity and solidarity remains despite differences in lifestyle, strategy and ideological orientation.

The dominant political theme that drives rightist activists is the fight against the idea of the multi-cultural community. Most call themselves nationalists, which they define as being against immigration and defending one's country. How individuals define themselves in terms of this struggle is related to their age; because the age of participants has changed during the past three years – in 1993, most participants were aged between 18 and 32, whereas the current age range is considerably narrower, with most participants being aged between 15 and 20 – members' perceptions (and hence labels) for themselves have evolved to fit the new demographics. Thus over the past two years, some participants under the age of 20 have come to refer to themselves as Nazis. Some older activists, aged between 25 and 34, call themselves national socialists. The decision of different groups of participants to distinguish themselves respectively as nationalist, Nazi or national socialist is obviously to some degree a mark of differing perceptions of these names, their meanings and their values. It is symptomatic that only very young men claim themselves to be Nazis, completely without reservation and fully aware of how provocative this is; whereas activists who are closer to their 30s feel the need to justify their views and thus try to present their views as 'national socialist', and as legitimate and reasonable. Those activists who claim to be nationalist, rather than national socialist, are more often opposed to the raucous behavior of the young persons claiming to be Nazis than to the actual ideology connected to the term,⁵⁰ yet feel the need to distance themselves from the term nonetheless.

Zorn 88, the only formal Nazi organization in Norway, at one time had only two youths among its membership. But a growing number of young people are now allowed to join this organization. There is almost no contact between the former NS members from the 1930s and 1940s and the young Nazis. However, some young activists have been in contact with the anti-immigrant organization Den norske forening (DNF, the Norwegian Union),⁵¹ and DNF has occasionally sponsored the rightist underground. The reason for their decision to support the young activists was that some members of the DNF were attacked by Blitz youths when making public speeches. They have, therefore, chosen to exchange financial support for physical support.⁵²

All of these components go into the rightist underground in Norway, which may be considered part of an international white power underground.⁵³ Their contacts with Swedish activists, whom they visit every time they arrange concerts or marches, is the most extensive form of contact. In addition, the Norwegian Anti-AFA collaborate with the neo-Nazi 'Combat 18' in England by printing lists of Norwegian anti-racists – 'traitors' and 'wanted dead' – in *Blood & Honor*.⁵⁴ The Norwegian division of the international Blood & Honor movement was created in the autumn of 1995.⁵⁵

Norwegian activists exchange information with right-wing activists from a wide range of European countries, as well as from the US. Prior to 1995, Norwegians met representatives of foreign right-wing groups at international gatherings held in other countries, such as Sweden. But in the summer of 1995, the first white power concert in Norway brought right-wing activists from Germany, England, Denmark, Sweden and the US to Norway for the first time.

Females in Norway's Extra-Parliamentary Party-Dominated Underground Prior to 1992

In 1970, a new generation of activists began to emerge as the dominant power in the Norwegian right. From that time to 1992, women could be seen to differ markedly from men in the underground along three important lines: men had a virtual monopoly on positions of leadership; no men participated only as partners of activists; and only women (though not all women) defined themselves as politically neutral. Indeed, until 1994, all but one of Norway's rightist women in the modern era joined the underground because they had become affiliated with a male activist; whereas none of the males joined because of partnership with a female.⁵⁶

Interestingly, this pattern echoes that found by Weinberg and Eubank among Italian terrorists – but it represents a departure, in some respects, from the more independent path some rightist women had taken in the past, particularly in Norway, where there have been women who have figured prominently in the rightist underground throughout the years. This was true even for the separate organizations for National Socialist women (such as *Kvinneherden*, the women's storm troopers, a subdivision of the NS storm troopers; and the *Women's NS*, a subdivision of the National Socialist Party) in German-occupied Norway during the Second World War. According to Swedish national socialist Vera Oredsson, the Norwegian NS was, in comparison with its counterparts in Sweden and Germany, unique in its views on women, seeing both sexes as equally worthy and portraying them side by side in party documents.⁵⁷ Some of the female NS members

have remained active in the post-War years. Similarly, as Claudia Koonz points out, in the 1930s several women joined Nazi organizations independently of their husbands.⁵⁸ This might be due to the fact that, at that time, there were several women's organizations to join – a possibility supported by the fact that, after the emergence of a separate women's group in the rightist underground in Norway, women began to join the underground directly, without being affiliated with a male activist beforehand.

But at the end of 1970, a new generation of rightist activists emerged to dominate what I discuss here as 'the rightist underground',⁵⁹ and the opportunities for women in the movement declined dramatically. By the 1980s, only one woman in the numerous extra-parliamentary rightist parties held a prominent position: she was editor of the magazine *Nasjonalisten* (the Nationalist), and served as an executive member of the Norwegian Front (NF). In her view, she was meant to be 'the women's alibi' for the Norwegian Front, and the leader of NF wanted her to start up a separate women's organization.⁶⁰ However, NF's membership included no other women (ten of the eleven women's names on the roster were fictitious), so a separate women's organization was never really possible. Because she remained editor of *Nasjonalisten*, however, she wrote articles on both ideological and women's issues.⁶¹

In general, women were in scarce supply in right-wing parties in Norway in the 1970s–1980s, and such women as there were seemed unlikely candidates for leadership roles. *Nasjonalt Folkeparti* had a couple of female members, at least one of whom joined because of ideological motives rather than because of a relationship with a male activist. Neither of these two women ever fully identified with the nationalist skinhead part of the underground movement, which began to emerge in Norway in the late 1980s; yet for a while, both were partners of males from this movement. Later on, they developed more independent roles at the periphery of the skinhead-dominated underground, one of them becoming involved with the *Asatru* society,⁶² the other participating in Nazi marches from time to time.

More women began to join in the movement after a huge confrontation between racists and anti-racists in Brumunddal in 1991, an event which precipitated the overall growth of the nationalist part of the skinhead movement.⁶³ But still, most of these women entered the movement because they were following male activists with whom they had romantic relationships.

Females in the Skinhead-Dominated Underground, 1993–1994⁶⁴

The women who were part of the rightist underground during the early 1990s played subordinate or passive roles. For some women, this was a

result of a lack of self-confidence, which generated a passive acceptance of a secondary position in their relationships with men, whether those relationships were personal or organizational. But for other women this was clearly not the case: the subordinate role was not something easily tolerated. These women were explicitly dissatisfied with the actions of the men, in terms of both where they were taking the party and how the men treated women. The men labeled these women 'neo-feminists'. Some of these women exited the militant underground, but continued to play an ideological role by writing for the nationalist monthly, *Fritt Forum*.⁶⁵ Others stayed within the underground but reluctantly resigned themselves to a subordinate status, minimizing their participation or accepting a less visible role. Some women began talking of the need for a separate women's group. At the time, these women – even those who called themselves feminists – considered themselves to be 'not particularly interested in politics'; but they felt a need to preserve their national culture from the influence of foreign cultures, and agreed with the right-wing men that immigration was bad.

It is interesting to examine the style of participation of women in the right-wing underground prior to their establishment (in 1995) of their own separate organizations. Within the male-dominated groups, even the more reflective women, who had identified specific practices they disagreed with, acted rather passively in comparison with the males. While the men ran group meetings, women often talked privately in the background, or, if they sat together with the men, they laughed at what the men said or did. Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber discuss the problems connected to the interpretation of gang women who act passively, and suggest that what men often consider to be 'giggling' is a way for women to counteract a situation which is dominated and defined by men.⁶⁶ This notion seems to fit Norway's rightist women. Whereas young and inexperienced males often played a passive role upon initially entering the organization, they quickly felt comfortable and soon played a more active role. By contrast, women would continue to play passive roles even after they had participated in the group for years. Their less frequent participation in the underground's monthly pub meetings suggest that women felt less important to the movement, or did not identify themselves actively with it. Some women even said openly that these gatherings were of little value to them. Thus, women clearly understood the underground as being dominated and defined by its male membership.

One reason contributing to the subordinate role of women in the underground was that they were much younger, in general, than the leading male activists. In 1993–94, for example, there were several partnerships between women aged 16–18 and men aged 30–32.⁶⁷ Most of the females were aged between 16 and 24, whereas most males were aged between 16

and 34. (Over the past two years, 1995–96, several young men have joined the underground, so the age difference between the sexes has become somewhat equalized, yet the women are still generally younger than their partners.) The low age of women in far right groups is, as mentioned previously, also prevalent in other countries.⁶⁸ Some of the inequality between males and females must therefore be interpreted as being more the result of difference in age than in gender.

The way in which male and female members viewed their love relationships also reflected the men's dominance of the right wing in the 1970s and 1980s. For most of the men, loyalty to the underground outweighed loyalty to their partners. Men were willing to withdraw from their partners or end the relationship altogether if the women talked too much or opposed their actions.⁶⁹ Men also broke up with women who flirted with other men, even though men retained the right to flirt with other women.

Whereas men predicated their relationships on the necessity of their partners not interfering with their work in the movement, women during this period predicated their participation in the movement on the existence of their relationship with their partners. Few women remained in the underground after the breakup of their partnerships. Men, on the other hand, very seldom left the underground because of the breakup of their partnerships. (The few men who did leave the underground because their partner, unaffiliated with the underground, disapproved of their participation in it, generally did so because they wanted to leave the underground anyway and needed their partner to help them break the connection.)

Most couples split apart under the pressures created by outside attacks, police surveillance and frustration within the movement. Nevertheless, there are a few couples who live together, and a few couples who have children. Some couples have broken up, though, leaving a few single mothers within the movement. The fathers of their children are males within the underground, except for one female who became a mother long before she entered the rightist underground.

Even though women in these organizations are, in theory, subordinated to the men, they often defy the men's commands. For example, on one occasion, the women went to a skinhead concert in Sweden despite the fact that the men did not want them to go because they thought there might be fighting and all of them would be arrested; the women found this exciting and wanted to take part regardless of the consequences. In another instance, the women were the only ones successfully to attend a counter-demonstration against anti-racists in Oslo: all of the men were stopped by the police, a fact which proved no deterrent to the women, who passed the police unnoticed.

Women from rightist organizations, knowing that they are less exposed to police raids, sometimes carried weapons such as sticks and stones in this period. This seems to be typical of militant groups where women are present; historically the pattern has shown up during the Second World War in American youth gangs⁷⁰ and in Nazi organizations, where women were tasked with keeping and hiding weapons.⁷¹ The film *Battle of Algiers*, based on Saadi's *Memoirs*, details the use of women as weapons carriers.⁷²

During the early 1990s, rightist women had very different experiences in the degree to which they were or were not treated as equals with rightist men. Some of them talked about not feeling oppressed by the males: 'there is total equality here', they said.⁷³ Others held that the men were indeed dominant, but asserted that they were 'no worse here than in other gangs'. Some women, on the other hand, felt oppressed by the men, and felt the need for women meeting outside the presence of men so that they might gain more self-confidence.

Female Roles in the Norwegian Right, 1993–1994

The differing degrees to which individual women viewed themselves as equal to the men reflected the differing roles they themselves played in the underground. Even before the emergence of all-female rightist groups, there were some tough and extroverted women within the underground; whereas others played passive roles, either because they were simply resigned to this status, or because they willingly accepted the fact that in this movement the men were the active ones.

Some short profiles of a representative sample of these women will illustrate the different ways they interpreted their position in the underground.

One of the most active and tough women in the Norwegian underground during the early 1990s was Verena, aged 24. She enjoyed high status among the men, especially because of her broad knowledge and experience regarding skinhead style. Since she had been involved in the skinhead subculture previously when she lived in Italy, and since she was the partner of a man who led a skinhead gang there, she had much greater familiarity with this particular lifestyle than any of the Norwegian men. This, in turn, lent her great self-confidence among them. She had come to Norway because of her husband, the football supporter and racist skinhead Magnus. Since he was a member of the Capital Football Supporter Club, she also joined it, and quickly felt comfortable there – she said she appreciated the rough male atmosphere. In 1994 she still lived with Magnus, even though by then they were officially separated. With her former partner, Verena published her own skinhead fanzine, *Stomping Ground*. Each issue had an

interview with an oi-band and usually an interview with other females who published skinhead fanzines. The rest of the 'zine contained pictures of skinheads from all over Europe, and drawings she herself had made of skinhead females.

Verena maintained that the female version of the skinhead uniform was both feminine and tough. She played with this ambiguity herself by acting offensively, almost aggressively, but at the same time wearing a mini-skirt and a great deal of make-up. She was proud of showing her muscles, and had tattoos on her upper arm. Verena told me that she once met a male who was surprised that she was a skinhead female because she was so attractive: he believed that skinhead females were masculine and, therefore, ugly.

Verena told me that she preferred male friends because she did not like the competitiveness and jealousy which often developed between women. She trusted men more than women. Despite this, from time to time she found it sad that so few females were active in the movement.

Yet even though Verena clearly was much more self-confident and extroverted than many of the men, she accepted, and acted in accordance with, the men's definitions of appropriate female behavior. As she told me, she was especially careful about keeping a good reputation in terms of sexual norms. She realized that many of the men were not monogamous, and changed partners frequently. According to Verena, the men considered themselves 'playboys, and that is [considered as] good!' A woman, on the other hand, was stigmatized if she became associated with a new man after ending a relationship. Verena found this unfair, but was nonetheless even more strict about adhering to the role ascribed to 'straight girls' (i.e. girls who did not sleep around) than many of the other women in the group. She said that because she had been the partner of one man from the underground, she could not become affiliated with any other man from the same milieu; if she wanted a new partner she would have to find him outside the underground, otherwise her reputation of being 'straight' would be jeopardized.

Though Verena was tough, and though she commanded a certain amount of respect from the men by virtue of her expertise on skinhead style, she was given no influence over the profile and actions of the underground movement. In fact, she accepted that the men defined the organization. For example, she said that the role of female skinheads was to support the males' fights, but not to fight themselves. (As we shall see, this contrasts with the Valkyria women of today, who actually *want* to take part in the front-line battles.) Verena was a woman who enjoyed watching violence, but saw violence itself as a male activity. 'There are some violent females' gangs in other countries', Verena said, 'but this is not the general trend'. In contrast to some of the other females, she liked the skinhead film *Romper*

Stomper greatly, especially because of the violent scenes. She had no interest in becoming more active politically. She said that the important thing for her was being a skinhead, and she was not that interested in politics. One of the males told me that she sympathized with the MSI, the current fascist party in Italy,⁷⁴ and she herself told me that she was more right-wing than left-wing. However, she repeated over and over that she had nothing to do with Nazis. She also told me that she was not racist, and that she had nothing against spending the entire evening talking with a black man. The fact that she did not want to be defined politically reflects the general trend among Norwegian racist women at that time. In terms of her vocational career, Verena was – as were most of the other rightist women – rather traditional: she worked in a hospital canteen.

Tyra, aged 20, was another woman who acted aggressively, and who, in her own subtle way, defied traditional roles prescribed for females. Before she joined the rightist underground, she was involved in a group with Satanist affiliations. She smoked marijuana and listened to death metal music. None of these activities was popular among rightist males, because ‘skinheads are 100 per cent against drugs’, and because they wanted to remain aloof from the satanic subculture: after all, rightist activists viewed themselves as ‘fighting for a good cause’, whereas Satanists ‘celebrated evil’. Tyra also violated other norms defined by the males. On several occasions she outdid the males in extremism in her use of symbols, such as the time she painted swastikas on the walls of houses on Constitution Day (17 May);⁷⁵ she was also known to give the Nazi salute, even in public areas. By contrast, the males were usually reluctant to use such symbols in the city center. Tyra was also the only woman in 1993–94 who liked to wear fatigues. (Today, fatigues are the dominant fashion among Valkyria women, who have a rather militant appearance.)

Tyra’s humor was explicitly antisemitic. Once she sat in the back of my car with some of the males. They amused themselves by calling each other Jewish names like Silverman, Goldschmidt, etc. When it was time to come up with a name for Tyra’s partner, who was sitting beside me in the front seat, she said, ‘No, he is mein Fuhrer’. Her partner Agnar replied, ‘Yes. You finally realized that.’ This may be construed as her playing up to Agnar, making him feel superior. But observations of their relationship on other occasions make it more possible that this was a statement of her ambivalence regarding traditional sex roles: her labeling of Agnar as her ‘Fuhrer’ was rather an ironic comment.⁷⁶

The perceived significance of the antisemitic content of her humor should be balanced against a clear understanding that it was not rooted in a consistent national socialist ideology. She was not an activist who read a lot. Her comments and her use of Nazi salutes seemed less dogmatic than

deliberate provocations, signals of her loyalty to the underground, and emblematic of her willingness to go to extremes.⁷⁷

Tyra's desire to provoke by violating common norms was further revealed in the way she talked about sexual matters. Once she spoke freely to one of the males, Frode, about her sex life with Agnar. Agnar, who was standing beside her, seemed to feel good about this, adding details to her stories. Among other things, she told Frode that Agnar took her wherever he wanted: on the safe, in bed or in the kitchen. She also told him that Agnar could watch pornographic videos for hours. Frode said, 'You are a nymphomaniac, aren't you?' 'Yes, I am', she replied. 'Couldn't you go around the corner and do it with yourself?', he asked. 'Yes, I could', she said, 'but I need more time than that; I need at least twenty minutes'. Here again, she played out her ambivalence about traditional gender roles: despite Agnar's traditional macho role, 'taking her' wherever and whenever he wanted and watching pornographic videos, it is she who is the storyteller active in creating the theme of their relationship. And it is she who is the nymphomaniac, that is, the woman who enjoys sex – she who takes, rather than the passive object that is only 'taken'. McRobbie and Garber, in their article on women's participation in youth subcultures, interpret similar kinds of behavior as a way women can react aggressively to male dominance: the young women use their sexuality in order to confuse men and their authority. In this case, Tyra's reaction took the males' prevailing image of women as 'mattresses' – i.e. useful only as sexual partners – and exaggerated it to a degree confusing to men, thus retaining her power. By contrast, Verena was doing all she could to avoid such an image in the first place.

Tyra's job was as a day-care worker; she wanted to become a midwife when she grew older. It may seem paradoxical that a female who wanted to become a midwife – someone who plays a role in the creation of life – plays with symbols of Satanism and Nazism, the symbols of death, in her free time. Her rebellion is, indeed, two-fold:⁷⁸ by wearing masculine, military-looking clothes, by using provocative, chauvinistic symbols, she defied all images of how a decent woman should act. She also defied 'the system' by using the most offensive symbols of all. Yet her choices of work and education reflected the traditional caring roles of women.

Hilde, aged 18, was one of the women who most explicitly disapproved of certain male practices. She viewed many of the men as lacking self-confidence, and thought many of their actions resulted from a need to prove themselves strong and dangerous. She also viewed some of the other women as untrustworthy. Among other things, she told me that some of them had stolen cosmetics from her when they were at parties at the home she shared with her partner, a leading male activist. She said she felt that she

differed from the other women. She particularly did not like the free manner in which Tyra spoke or acted. Hilde was skeptical about female activists who acted in too vulgar a manner. Unlike them, she was more careful in how she expressed herself.

Like Tyra, Hilde was involved with other youth subcultures before she joined the rightist underground. Hilde had previously been a 'synther', a subcultural style similar to the German *grufties*,⁷⁹ dressing in black and listening to depressing music. She could lie on the floor for hours with the lights off, listening to monotone synth music. She changed her style when she became involved with one of the older male rightist activists.

Yet Hilde was often annoyed by things her partner, Sverre, did, and said that she became very angry with him on certain occasions. Once when they were driving past one of her former synth friends, he shouted 'bloody anarchists'; this infuriated her because synthers are not anarchists, even though they resemble the anarchist youths from the Blitz house. On another occasion, I sat with her and Ragnar at a table late in the evening.⁸⁰ All of the participants in the underground had previously gone to see the film *Romper Stomper*, a film in which women have a clearly subordinate role, particularly the female partner of the main (male) character, who is badly treated by him. The female activists found the film annoying. Hilde explicitly indicated that she did not like the film because of the way the main character treated 'his' woman. Hilde then despaired of her own partner, because when he was drunk he either ignored her or would engage in what she deemed 'mental abuse'.⁸¹ This meant primarily that he ignored her and left her on her own, while he ran off to battles. However, when he was sober, he would take care of her and listen to her opinions. Her ambivalence toward Sverre was displayed the night everyone saw the film when, at its conclusion, the right-wing activists fled because they feared the Blitz youths would attack them: Hilde became separated from Sverre, and grew agitated because she did not know where he was, and because he had been so vulgar earlier in the evening. She criticized Ragnar for not calming Sverre, who had been thrown out of the cinema because of his raucous behavior. She said that it was not good to be around Sverre when he was drunk. Ragnar tried to calm her down and said, 'I have known Sverre longer than you. He is just like that, but you don't have to worry about him. I know him.' Hilde replied, 'But you do not share his bed, like I do!'. She said he was unpredictable when he was drunk. This time he had run away without telling her where he had gone, and she felt lost.

Hilde was one of the prime movers who, along with some of her closest friends, initiated the first attempt to create an all-female Norwegian rightist group. When her friends left the underground because they thought it too raucous, she was left to defend her critical attitudes alone. Her response was to participate less frequently than she had previously.

Hilde was not very interested in politics, though she told me that both her mother and her friends at school shared most of the attitudes of the right-wing activists. Also they could grin 'bloody nigger' when seeing a black man. She was resigned that they claimed not to be racists, even though their views were no better than those of the underground's members. She herself used expressions which suggested her adherence to explicitly racist views. For example, she talked about her cat having 'race consciousness' because it acted proud and uninterested when meeting wild cats. In 1996, she has been speaking of her need to become better schooled in ideology. This felt need is also prevalent among Valkyria women, and marks a shift from the lack of interest in ideology women manifested in 1993-94. Yet, in contrast to women from Valkyria Oslo,⁸² Hilde still does not call herself a nationalist; though she does not openly call herself a national socialist, she does not reject this term.

Sigrun, aged 27, was older than most of the other women, yet was not the most extroverted. She appeared satisfied with the male dominance of her milieu, in which women were accepted only at the fringe. She was particularly interested neither in style nor in ideology, and she had no wish to participate more actively, she said; she found it exciting merely to be around, because 'something always happens'.⁸³ To share in the excitement produced by the men was sufficient for her. She also appreciated the attention she received from the men. However, she complained about the small number of women in the underground. She said she had become a nationalist because so many male immigrants had accosted her. She was unemployed, taking care of her son full-time. She had been involved in relationships, none serious, with some of the men. Later, she became involved with one of the leading male activists for a longer period. When this relationship came to an end, she continued to participate in the movement as an independent woman. The men esteemed her, apparently because she was more mature than the other females, so that, despite her minimal involvement in activism, and despite her previous involvement with more than one of the men, she was treated with respect.

Three 16 year old females became involved in the rightist underground without previously participating in other youth subcultures. They supported militant nationalism and joined the weapons training program of the Home Guard's youth division. These women were fond of parties, and they thought it was fun to be part of the underground. They found the various ideas and actions of the males amusing, and could speak with great pleasure of things the men had done. On a trip to Sweden, they went with me in my car. They talked about how they often found the males paranoid. They talked about one incident at a party at Sverre's place, when they suddenly heard some rumbling sounds from the cellar. Sverre stood up and cried, 'It's the Blitz youths!' But

then it turned out to be just the washing machine. They also told me that once, when they had been at Ragnar's place, Ragnar had played a practical joke on Reidar: he called him at the pub and shouted 'Fifty Blitz youths are coming, get out of there!' Reidar was frightened, but before he managed to escape, Ragnar called him again and said, 'I was only joking'. The females told me that afterward, Ragnar did not dare visit the pub for a week because Reidar was so furious. The females found this very amusing.

In 1995, these three women, together with some others, created the group Aryan Sisters. One of the Valkyria members⁸⁴ has said that this group name was mostly meant to catch the attention of the press, and that today there is no such group. Nevertheless, the women behind the name are still active within the underground. In contrast to the Valkyria women, they drink more and are known to be fond of giving Nazi salutes. The Valkyria women deem this frivolous behavior and assert that if the women are to be taken seriously they need to drink less and act less vulgar.⁸⁵

Rightist Men's Views of Rightist Women, 1993–1994

Before women established their own groups, most men indicated that they had positive feelings toward the idea of women taking part with them 'at the front'; however, they asserted, the women seemed to lack the necessary fighting spirit. Many male leaders had even less favorable views, feeling that women had no place in the conflicts that comprised the so-called nationalist milieu. Back in 1992, for example, the nationalist fanzine *Bootboys* declared that, 'Remember: Women and children should be kept out of the battle. We are not cowards like the Blitz youths who attack these'.⁸⁶ In this view – a view which predominates in rightist undergrounds everywhere – the battle was only for men. This is not surprising: the emphasis within militant neo-Nazi groups on machismo and confrontation leads one to anticipate their almost exclusively male character, as Christopher Husbands puts it.⁸⁷

Egil, one of the most prominent members of the Norwegian rightist underground to espouse the view that the nationalist milieu should be reserved exclusively for men, argued that

It would be best if there were no women in the movement at all. They destroy the feeling of comradeship. A woman always wants to own you, and they feel too much Women can be aggressive as well, but there are not many idealistic women amongst us. Most of them are partners or sympathizers, tag-alongs.⁸⁸

The concept of 'comradeship' was frequently invoked by male activists. Often they based their sense of this concept on the virtues of the Viking era.

Egil was particularly fond of talking of the Viking spirit, which he said was based on the rule that 'To a friend you shall always be a friend, but to friend's foe no man shall ever be a friend'.⁸⁹ In short, this is a world of men fighting other men. The concept of comradeship accordingly excludes females, Egil said. Women were a divisive element in the community of men. He used the film *Romper Stomper* as an example. The female partner of the main character (who was, of course, male) reports a murder as a means of revenge against the man for having broken up with her. This was a typical female trait, according to Egil. He also argued that women could engage in disastrous actions during their menstrual period. In his view, female terrorists produced more severe actions than men. When women first unleashed their aggression, they lost control entirely. Women are extremely volatile, he said, whereas men are like sociopaths in their callous indifference to feeling. This activist had an essentialist view of gender differences: women are by their nature sensitive and emotional, whereas men by their nature are able to control their feelings. It followed, thus, that women could participate only at the periphery of the movement, as partners and sympathizers, but not as activists.⁹⁰

Other male activists were more open to female participants. They said that they wanted tougher women in the movement, women who could participate with them in the front line. They used the anarchist Blitz women as an example of a type of woman they would like to have in their own movement. Such women were even more aggressive and hateful than the men, they said. Yet it is noteworthy that this opinion rested on the same essentialist view of gender differences – women are more emotional than men – despite its pro-female orientation.

Men who spoke of the need to have tougher, more aggressive women did not consider such women to be 'turning into men', as members of male groups often feel when women enter their domain.⁹¹ Rather, these men considered this kind of combative woman to be exciting and attractive. A lead male activist said he was secretly attracted to Blitz women. Another man, who was highly preoccupied with skinhead style, said he thought women who shaved their heads were 'cool'. Still another man, who openly called himself a national socialist, said he found the valkyries as they were represented in the Wagner opera *der Ring des Niebelungen* extremely tempting.⁹² Yet another male activist favored some women he saw at a white power concert in Sweden: they wore black nazi caps, white shirts, black ties and long black skirts, and had long blonde hair. 'These women turn me on', he said.⁹³ These women all represented, in their varied ways, different images of the combative woman.

But even men who said they wanted more active women in the movement usually excluded their own partners from consideration. Women

in the abstract appear to have been attractive prospects as partner-combatants; but to these men, the real women they actually knew 'spoke too freely' for their taste, and therefore could not be trusted. For the same reason, these men often excluded women members from important events such as concerts and strategic meetings. The men also forbade women from joining in events, e.g. as trips to Sweden, because such trips usually ended in altercations or arrests: the men said that it was part of the game to be knocked unconscious, whereas women could not cope with this. In other words, they used their concern for the women as a way of arguing against women's participation. Another argument – never expressed openly but nonetheless evident – is that concerts and clashes constitute events which, in an extreme way, bond the community of males. This is especially obvious at white power concerts where hundreds of young men greet the vocalist and fight each other in front of the stage.⁹⁴ Women disturb this picture.

For the few males who disliked this kind of rough male atmosphere, the presence of women could have a positive effect. One male activist, aged 24, argued that 'If many girls participate there will be fewer conflicts, because the males are actually a little diffident. They pretend not to show their feelings; like if you have feelings you are through. But most of them become a bit soft when girls are present.'⁹⁵ Yet this kind of argument was uncommon, and typically it was used by an activist who was uncomfortable with a movement that was becoming increasingly raucous or militant. This particular individual eventually left the underground for this reason.

This man wanted women in the movement to have the role of calming the males. Women are frequently given this role in male-dominated gangs or movements, often in the form of nurse or mother.⁹⁶ From time to time there have been women in the Norwegian rightist underground who wanted to reform the males, making them less militant and extreme. They adopt the traditional female role of saving their man from the bad influence of his friends, a role equivalent to the 'good girls' defined by Anne Campbell.⁹⁷ Such women usually stay within neither the rightist underground nor their partnerships with male activists. One 30 year old male told me that he had broken up with such a woman; she wanted him to grow his hair and stop making trouble. 'I cannot be in such a relationship', he said, because 'the cause comes before everything else'. Another activist of the same age recounted that he had many relationships behind him which fell apart because of 'the cause'. Yet another male left the group because his partner became very upset every time she heard that he had been with his nationalist friends. He chose the woman and rejected the group because, as he said, his partner was the only thing of true value in his life. These days, he joins the skinheads only when she is out of town for a few days. The role as reasonable mother, in other words, does not function in this underground.

Another role permitted for women in such movements everywhere is to be sexually accessible. This kind of female role pattern seems to be more typical than the 'mother' in the Norwegian rightist underground. The males call such women as 'mattresses' or 'field mattresses'.⁹⁸ According to the males, such women participate only in order to sleep with the men. Such women are no good for the movement, as one leading male activist says: 'Some females are first with one male, then with another and then with a third, and when that comes to an end, they leave the movement and betray us. It is only natural to take revenge when one has been deceived. But point is that the females are not sworn nationalists, they are in it only to be with the males.'⁹⁹

Categorizing women as 'straight' or 'mattress' is not a practice confined to the males; the 'straight' women tend to define other women of the underground as 'mattresses' as well. Typically, males who changed partners often were not labeled in a comparably negative manner. Rather, their comrades spoke of them with a mixture of amusement and admiration, as when one man said that his friend probably had a lot of sons all over town because he had laid so many women. But another male activist was highly conscious of the fact that it probably was difficult to be a woman among such men. He was angry at his own friend who treated females according to what he called the 'use and catch' method. He said to me that females are to be treated with respect, and became furious when talking about men who rape women or commit incest. There should have been a death penalty for such injustices, he said.¹⁰⁰

Despite the tendency of male activists to dominate women, most of them were proud of a few women whom they labeled 'neo-feminists'. They used the presence of such women as proof that their movement was not so chauvinistic as other male-dominated subcultures. A 23 year old activist drew a comparison with bikers. For them, the bike and the club come before their partners. The nationalists, on the other hand, wanted women to participate on an equal basis, he declared.¹⁰¹

The use of pornography and chauvinistic jokes was, nevertheless, frequent among male activists. However, they tended to engage in such behavior when women were not present. As Ulf said, 'It is like that when guys sit alone. When we watch TV, one of us says 'that girl looks pretty', and then we just start joking further along that line, and at the end there is a lot of dirty talk. Of course you don't talk like that when girls are present.'¹⁰² Some men used the label 'male chauvinist' as a negative term for other male participants, and thus placed themselves higher on the 'soft' masculine scale. This shows that although the males construct a rather prototypical sort of masculinity, they also try to adapt to modern demands on the male role. Most of them expressed that they had nothing against the equality of men

and women in society, and were accordingly open to the equality of females in their own movement.

Separate Women's Groups

The wish among female rightist activists grew out of their feeling that they were being stigmatized by the men, and their dislike of being excluded. They felt that it was easier to express themselves when the men were absent. Moreover, they wanted to create something on their own, and thereby gain more respect from the males.

By the early 1990s, women were feeling considerable dissatisfaction with the underground. The most dissatisfied left the underground because, as one of their friends told me, they were tired of the vulgar profile of the skinheads, and they wanted to work more ideologically. Some of these women occasionally wrote articles for the nationalist monthly magazine *Fritt Forum*, and were titled co-editors. Other females, more convinced of national socialism than most of their peers, began to act independently of all of the underground's groups, though most retained personal contacts with leading rightist activists. Interestingly, what determined these independent women in favor of maintaining their national socialist ideology remained radically different from what motivated the rightist men. One woman, for example, said that for her the most important factor is national socialist morality: she views national socialism as a private affair, as it deals with family life, the upbringing of children, and the prohibition of abortion, prostitution and pornography, and emphasizes an anti-materialistic lifestyle. In other words, her concerns seem to be the same as those of women in Nazi organizations, as described by Claudia Koonz.¹⁰³ By contrast, young male national socialists speak more often of the need to fight the 'Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG)', the need to maintain the purity of the race or the desire for a more authoritarian kind of state government.¹⁰⁴

Despite their loyalty to the ideology, several of the more ideological women left the underground after a while because they disliked the prevailing raucous skinhead lifestyle. These women speak of the underground and its participants as being 'non-serious'. They have an especially negative view of many of the underground's youngest women, considering them 'cheap' and immature, and too passively accepting of their underprivileged position in relation to the men.¹⁰⁵ Until recently, ideologically convinced women seemed to have only two alternatives to the underground: they could work with the editor of *Fritt Forum*, or they could cultivate contacts with older nationalists or national socialists. A third route that later became available was to join the newly established Asatru society.

In 1993, a new option emerged with the first initiative toward starting a

separate women's group. The very name of the group – Skall – 'Shell' – underlined the women's sense of needing to protect themselves from the domination of the men. At the first and only meeting they had, the members discussed, among other issues, how much they should open themselves toward me as a researcher without threatening their own integrity. For the men, such issues were relevant primarily in relation to the surrounding world of enemies. For the women, it was also an issue of how the men would react to what they told me.

The male activists were positive toward the initiative. One of them was willing to help the women with practical matters, such as the printing of a fanzine and the creation of a logo. The Skall group was, however, suspended because the leading woman was removed from the movement by her mother(!).¹⁰⁶

In January 1995, some of the females formed a group on their own: Valkyria. They wanted to escape the label of 'mattress' and gain more respect for being serious. 'It feels safe to be within an all-female group, and not having boys around you all the time', one of the initiators explained.¹⁰⁷ By starting on their own, they gained respect and felt safe. One Valkyria member stressed this point:

No men shall decide for a girl's group. We can manage by ourselves! But this does not mean that we do not want to collaborate [with the men], or give each other advice and moral support In mixed groups there is no equality [between the sexes]. The boys have a tendency to neglect the girls' potential and talents. The inner circle of boys usually becomes a pure boys' club and the girls feel overruled.... Girls never get the chance to show what they are good at! If they don't get the opportunity to become schooled, and are allowed to participate only at parties, no one can expect them to have great political knowledge. We demand respect and we will not let ourselves be put upon.¹⁰⁸

This statement shows that the females were no longer satisfied with being merely a passive audience for the males' actions. The reason women wanted their own group was not because they disagreed with the political views held by the males, or with the males' militant actions. Rather, they wanted – in line with Morgan's interpretation of terrorist women – to make the men's combat their own. However, in contrast to classical militant women, they also developed their own actions and agendas with issues different from those of the men.¹⁰⁹

The Valkyria Group

Even though Valkyria is a separate organization, it shares many activities with men from the Viking group. They share the same post box address; and Valkyria is defined as Viking's 'sister' on Viking's home page on the Internet. In Viking's fanzine, also called *Viking*, the Valkyria women have a page of their own, where they write short articles signed *Jeanne D'Arc*. Leading members of both groups take part in the same meetings, where they plan future actions, camps and training. Weapons training is organized jointly for the two groups.

The Valkyria group is not organized as militarily as the Viking Group.¹¹⁰ There are no formal leaders of the Valkyria group. Still, there are more experienced women who tell less experienced women what to do. One of these more leading women explains that 'We have requirements. If you give youths clear messages, they do what you ask them to do. People need more clearly defined rules to follow.'¹¹¹ This trend for some women to put forward rules for less experienced women to follow is completely new. The notion that there are certain definite requirements of how women should behave is also new. Valkyria is organized in several local cells. The main part of the group is located in Oslo, with about ten members; another ten women are distributed across four other cells located at smaller places surrounding Oslo. The Oslo cell often organizes its own actions, which makes a ten-woman membership practical, because they fit into two cars, as a leading activist from the Viking group puts it.¹¹² The Oslo women may be considered the inner circle of Valkyria women. However, all the women meet once a month. The main purpose of this meeting is to come together and create a sense of being a group, but they also plan actions and discuss ideology. Sometimes the Valkyria women organize their own training camps in which like-minded women from other countries also take part.

Valkyria's long-term project is to build up groups all over the country. The intention is for each local cell to have its own leader, and for all the leaders to meet once a month in order to discuss common strategies. This group of leading female activists is called Frigg.¹¹³

Until recently, there was a separate Valkyria cell in Drammen, which had little contact with the Oslo cell. The Drammen group emerged in the summer of 1995, but dissolved in March 1996 because its leader left the underground. A woman from the Oslo cell asserts that the Drammen women were more fond of pub life, whereas the Oslo women are more militant and demand that their members drink less.¹¹⁴ Another difference was, according to her, that the Drammen women tended to be more ideologically extreme, by not distancing themselves from national socialism as the Oslo women did.

The Valkyria women created their own symbol, which combined the Celtic cross, the women's sign and the circle. One member explains: 'The women's sign because we are women, the Celtic cross because we are nationalists, and the circle to symbolize the unity and solidarity between us'.¹¹⁵ They recently dropped this sign because the Celtic cross is often associated with Nazism, and these women prefer to be considered nationalists. They therefore use only the Norwegian flag and the official symbol of Norway, the lion, because these symbols are purely national and have no Nazi connotations.

Valkyria women recruit new members through leaflets and by recruiting the friends of friends.¹¹⁶ This is in distinct contrast to the situation prior to the emergence of a separate women's group, when (with the exception of one woman who joined because of ideological motives) the sole route into the movement for women had to do with their relationships with men, a pattern that matches the findings of Weinberg and Eubank for both leftist and rightist militant women.¹¹⁷ However, nowadays some women have initiated direct contact with the Valkyria group without having been involved with the underground men's group beforehand. These women join the underground partly because they find it exciting. Some also cite political motives for entering, such as the frustration they feel after having been assaulted by foreign (Muslim) men. One woman recounts that she entered the Valkyria group after having read one of their leaflets: when she 'saw the content of the leaflet, I was so glad there was somebody else who believed the same things as I do'.¹¹⁸

After a probationary period, a newcomer is allowed to meet all of the members of her local Valkyria cell.¹¹⁹ One woman from the local group is responsible for taking care of the newcomer, and is bound to secrecy concerning any problems the newcomer wants to discuss. This mentor relationship is meant to last until the other members fully trust the newcomer, when she is allowed full membership.

There are no initiation rituals which the newcomer has to pass, a pattern, for example, of the women's KKK in the 1920s.¹²⁰ But there are some standards for admission. A trustworthy member of Valkyria is to handle information with discretion, not drink much, practice kick boxing and shooting, not give Nazi salutes, be a true nationalist, wear military clothes when needed but in daily life dress in casual clothes and, last but not least, live 'straight', i.e. not change partners often. Some women have been denied membership, usually because they drink too much. This is especially true of a few Satanist women who wanted to join Valkyria. However, according to a leading Valkyria woman, the Satanists were too fond of pub life and Nazi salutes; Valkyria members should conduct themselves more seriously. More formal requirements are that all members are bound to keep

information secret and, most important of all, not give away the identity of other group members. They are not allowed to discuss information or mention names on the telephone because 'we know that the Special Branch is very interested in everything we do, and in the identity of our members'.¹²¹ Members are forbidden to discuss internal issues with outsiders, because 'there are a lot of opponents who work full-time to map us, but without our help they will never obtain information of any significance'.¹²² However, members are permitted to discuss the general guidelines of the group and give examples of their common activities. Some members function as media spokespersons.

Even though the Valkyria group, according to its instruction manual, is a militant nationalist group, the newcomer does not have to prove ideological proficiency or excellence in shooting or fighting.¹²³ Rather, the new recruit has to prove herself capable of following certain procedures concerning appointment-making, alert behavior and discretion. This feature is quite similar to the procedures followed in more well-organized and militant groups such as the Italian Red Brigades.¹²⁴

Only women over age fifteen are allowed to be members.¹²⁵ The reason for this is that the members often enter into serious conflicts with teachers, parents or even the Child Welfare Authorities after joining Valkyria. A leading Valkyria member reports that 'Many of the girls received high grades at school and were nice, sweet girls. Then one day they come home wearing army caps and boots. Their parents say 'you are not allowed to go out any more'. But the parents calm down after a while. They become resigned when their kids reach the age of 18.'¹²⁶ This shows that participation in this group means opposing the traditional roles for females of being nice and living up to the expectations of parents and teachers. These women want to break with such a subordinated role; they want to be valued as tough.

The Valkyria women receive letters from women in many different countries, some of whom have already organized their own all-female groups; others want to establish groups and need advice from an existing organization. For example, a Danish women's group was organized in the summer of 1995, after its founder had contacted the Valkyria women asking for information. The Valkyria members also exchange letters and information with women in Germany. In addition, some other nationalist female groups have emerged in Norway recently.¹²⁷

Stylistic Distinctions Between Valkyria Women and other Female Activists

With the emergence of Valkyria, two different styles now exist for women activists. The women of Valkyria wear fatigues and US Army caps every

time there is a concert or a counter-demonstration. The Valkyria women look so ultra-militant that some of their Swedish acquaintances have labeled them the Death Squadron.¹²⁸ Some of the women outside Valkyria, a few of whom are organized in NUNS 88, wear the typical female version of the skinhead uniform: miniskirt, fishnet stockings, Doc Martens, black white power T-shirts and bomber jackets. These women also have the typical skinhead woman hairstyle: head cropped close to the skull with a blonde fringe of bangs above their foreheads.¹²⁹ Some women have tattoos: one woman has a tattoo picturing snakes crawling up her upper arms.

In other words, women from both NUNS 88 and Valkyria copy many elements from masculine uniforms. However, the Valkyria women counteract these elements by their long hair, which they sometimes bleach in order to look more Aryan;¹³⁰ the NUNS 88 women do so by wearing skirts and fishnet stockings. According to one Valkyria woman, the NUNS 88 women think the Valkyria women are too rough.

The ideal image of female activists in these groups is not the traditional feminine negation of the macho image. An ideal which is widespread – among men and women alike – is the tough woman who does not fear fights, though she does not take part in them.¹³¹

New Female Role-Patterns, 1995–1996

In 1996, there are some new role patterns visible for women in the Norwegian rightist underground. Young and inexperienced women still play more passive and subordinate roles. However, the new trend is that there also exist women who take part in all actions. These female activists are militant nationalist women,¹³² and they are mainly organized in the Valkyria group. They are involved for political reasons, and are active in all kinds of actions. For example, they join strategic meetings with the males, take part in weapons training and organize their own study meetings and underground actions.

Another newly established role is found among the national socialist skinhead women,¹³³ some of whom are members of NUNS 88. The Valkyria women label these latter women non-serious because they drink a lot and give Nazi salutes; they are also, according to a woman from Valkyria, most likely to be labeled 'mattresses',¹³⁴ a status which renders them (in the eyes of militant Valkyria members) unacceptable as activists, yet still acceptable as friends, a pattern Campbell has often found elsewhere in youth gangs.¹³⁵

Both the militant nationalist women and the female nationalist skinheads may be considered activists since they partake in major actions of the underground. In addition, there are sympathizers; that is, women who do not participate directly in underground activities. They sympathize with the

'nationalist milieu' – which is the name activists use to refer to the rightist underground – and they make their first contacts with the underground because of political ideas (such as opposition to immigration), because of their attraction to a male activist and/or because of the excitement connected to such a secretive and potentially dangerous movement.

Activist women apply the same distinctions between those who drink a lot and like to give Nazi salutes and those who drink less and act more disciplined to both men and women. Still, they apply the category 'mattress' only to women; they never categorize men as sexual objects. This shows that, even though the existence of a separate women's group has led to greater prominence and self-confidence for women in the underground, sexist views still tend to serve as guidelines for their actions and, to a large extent, are uncritically adopted even by the female activists.

Violence

The participation by Valkyria women in weapons training leads one to ask if this is motivated by a genuine wish to carry out political violence or by a sense that taking part in such activities provides access to a distinctly male kind of world, as Wheelwright reports from her study of amazons and military maids at the beginning of this century.¹³⁶ The latter interpretation seems the more plausible, especially when one listens to what the women say themselves. One soon sees, for example, that weapons training is motivated partly by the strong sense of comradeship that it engenders:

We gain a 'we' feeling among us. It becomes a part of your life. This is much better than being mere rowdies in the streets, shouting 'sieg heil'. We make a fire and eat hot dogs and have a lot of fun. The police have turned up once, but we move from place to place every time, so they can't find us.¹³⁷

There is, of course, a lot of excitement connected to the weapons training, both because the police try to locate and stop it, and because it has an aura of secrecy and extremism. In one sense, then, the weapons training is an advanced kind of play for adult kids. One female activist referred to this underground as parallel to the situation described in the novel *Lord of the Flies*: they are like the males in that book, isolated and with no one to correct them.¹³⁸ However, the training is not just play. It is also motivated out of a genuine feeling that they are in real danger of being severely wounded in attacks by anti-fascists, and that use of weapons is the only possible way to fight back. One female activist states that 'If it should come to civil war between racists and anti-racists in Norway, we would not hesitate to use weapons to defend what we believe in'.¹³⁹

Still, not all the females want to fight in the front lines. Up to now, they have withdrawn to the background when there have been violent clashes. One Valkyria woman claims that

it is a question of courage. We [the Oslo Valkyria women] are more militant than the women from Drammen. They only have these courses in Norse mythology; whereas we try to gain more courage by practicing kick boxing, training with dogs, and learning communication techniques. When we have enough courage, we will also fight in the front line. We prepare for war, and we learn camouflage. A second lieutenant from the army is training us. About 50 per cent of us want to take part in the front. Some women say they do not dare to take part in the front line. That's no problem; they can contribute by taking care of other tasks.¹⁴⁰

This Valkyria activist argues that they will take part in militant actions because their hatred is growing. This hatred is connected to their feeling of being politically persecuted. They agree with the view held by the males that Norwegian politics are governed by the pro-immigration left wing and, accordingly, the hate targets of these women include both the official authorities as well as militant groups on the left: 'At school we [all women] are taught to be kind, sweet girls and vote for the Labor party. But our [the Valkyria women's] hatred is growing, and we want to get revenge [on the left-wing youths]'.¹⁴¹ The women maintain that they are afraid of being attacked by Anti-Fascist Action. All of them carry mobile phones, so that they can reach males if necessary. They carry tear gas or wear shoes with steel caps to protect themselves. If they are attacked, they want to fight back, they say. Once a woman from the AFA group threatened a Valkyria woman; then three Valkyria women went together to get the AFA woman.¹⁴² Such all-female fights are rare, however.

Some women have a few reservations about the militant profile of the rightist underground. In particular, they dislike the weapons training and the violent actions. Nevertheless, they see the need for protection and want to know how to defend themselves against attack.

But most of the women support militant strategies. This attitude among the women is remarkably new in the Norwegian rightist underground. Instead of being hesitant concerning the militant actions of the men, they now actively support such policies.¹⁴³

Ideology and Politics

Having started their own groups, rightist women are now more eager to talk politics. Many of them express more extreme views than they did

previously. It may be that they had the same views before, but now verbalize them more – they ‘come out’, so to speak. Another new feature is that women now tend to enter the group for political reasons, not just because they have relationships with men in the underground. One newly recruited member of Valkyria says that it was ‘especially Valkyria’s views on immigration that attracted me. As a nationalist,¹⁴⁴ I will definitely fight with all the means necessary to make Norway a better country to live in.’¹⁴⁵

First and foremost, the Valkyria members are against immigration. They say that they are scared by the way many immigrants (i.e. Muslims) view women. One woman claims that

It scares me to see Norwegian women with veils. It is a big step back for emancipation. In Norway women are used to wearing miniskirts; if the Muslims come to power we won’t be able to do that anymore. I have read the Bible and the Koran. The Koran does not fit our beliefs. Muslim men are allowed to strut their women inside their houses, and hit their wives if they do not give birth to sons. Most of us have girlfriends outside the nationalist milieu, and they say the same things we do.¹⁴⁶ They are also skeptical when Muslim men try to pick them up.¹⁴⁷

This woman uses arguments which can be categorized as nationalist or new racist.¹⁴⁸ That is, she does not talk explicitly about the purity of the race, but instead of the fear of Muslim culture becoming too dominant. Other women are more openly racist in the narrow sense of the word. One woman asserts that ‘There are only 8 per cent of us whites in the world; therefore we have to protect the white race. Mixed marriages lead to a gray race...’ Yet another woman declares that ‘The white race is genuine, and it needs to be attended to. I have met an immigrant who maintained that all people of her color should mix with us whites in order to destroy our race. We won’t put up with that!’¹⁴⁹

A small number of women are sympathetic to portions of the Nazi ideology. One woman says that

There were many things in Hitler’s ideology which were good, but unfortunately everything went overboard in the end. We especially keep a distance from the persecution of Jews. Hitler was a national socialist; we are only nationalists. We want to defend the Norwegian character, and to protect the white race by stopping immigration and preventing the dilution of the race.¹⁵⁰

However, a leading Valkyria activist states that the Valkyria group is not open to Nazis:

Many of us are called Nazis. But we do not belong to the group that goes into the street and shouts 'Sieg Heil'. Approximately 90 per cent of those who take part in the milieu are not Nazis. Then there is a group called NUNS 88. They are Nazis. But they have a rather low IQ. There is a woman in that group as well. We used to call them Nuns on the run, because every time there is trouble, they run. The leader of that group even cooperates with the police. ... It is impossible to unite nationalism and national socialism. Nationalism means staying with country, whereas national socialism means your country is where national socialism is. That makes a big difference. ... The Second World War was fifty years ago. The ideology of Hitler is obsolete. The point about 6 million Jews is an issue on which we cannot take a stand.¹⁵¹

Nazism becomes an important issue for these women because outsiders tend to think of them as being Nazis, and because these women adhere to an international subculture where Nazi elements are highly prevalent.¹⁵² One of the Valkyria women tried to sort out what separated militant nationalism from neo-Nazism, and learned, after having interviewed researchers, journalists, politicians and right-wing activists, that they saw nationalists and neo-Nazis in practice as more or less the same thing. Thus despite wanting to be considered nationalists, these women realize that because they participate side by side with neo-Nazis, they must accept being considered Nazis as well. This insight seems to have made them somewhat less anti-Nazi than they originally wanted to be. They have become resigned to the situation, and say they don't care if some activists are Nazis.

But even though they are no longer openly anti-Nazi, they certainly remain anti-Communist. One woman asserts that

Fighting Communism is important to us. Communism makes us freeze. There is no help voting for the Progress Party as long as the Labor Party is in power. The Blitz youths are only Gerhardsen's storm troopers. We're all anti-Communists. But except for that, there is a broad range of opinions.¹⁵³

The Valkyria group arranges study meetings to 'heighten' its members' 'political, cultural and historical consciousness'¹⁵⁴ and to protect Norway and Norwegian culture. At the meetings, the members discuss the Viking era, the history of the Norwegian national socialist party during the 1930s and 1940s, 'our historical roots' in more general terms, immigration policy and nationalism. The most experienced women see their role as being to teach the other women, but also to have an impact on people who disagree openly with their views. Their main goal is to 'heighten the girls' consciousness'.¹⁵⁵ One woman claims that 'I was born in Norway, and I am

proud of being Norwegian. Proud of Norwegian culture and history. If others do not agree with me, I will do everything I can to convince them.'¹⁵⁶

Despite the Valkyria members' outspoken stand against immigrants, they do not usually carry out leaflet actions, violence or harassment against foreigners. According to a leading male activist, the reason for this is that these actions are 'taken care of' by male activists, so that the women do not see the need to engage themselves in this way.¹⁵⁷ Instead, they carry out their own actions on issues which do not engage the men as much.

Women's Issues

We want to create a future for our children and for girls in the nationalist milieu.¹⁵⁸

The Valkyria members are concerned with several contemporary women's issues, such as their stance against the emergence of brothels, and against pornography and prostitution. In this regard, they resemble their female opponents from the Blitz house more than their male counterparts from the rightist underground. Women from the Blitz house have frequently organized demonstrations against brothels. According to the Valkyria women, a problem with these demonstrations is that they have not managed to create financial loss for the brothels. They also claim that so-called 'red stockings', i.e. left-wing feminist women, only want higher wages, whereas the Valkyria think that women should receive full wages for working at home. Several of them want to remain home with their future children, rather than sending their children to kindergarten. At present, only a couple Valkyria women have children.

In this way, the Valkyria women tend to distance themselves from parts of feminist policy. They tend to think that emancipation in some ways has gone too far. Hence, they are quite in line with the idea common among Nazi women of the 1930s who wanted women to be separate but equal; that is, that they contribute through different tasks in society, but wish nevertheless to be judged as equal.¹⁵⁹ Many of the females are interested in equal rights for men and women, and view Viking women as female ideals because they were strong and combative.

Yet even though Valkyria women define themselves partly in opposition to left-wing feminism, they remain curious regarding the policies and knowledge of women on the left. According to one Valkyria member, they would like to find out more about what various leftist groups stand for, and would like to do so by actually joining their courses. They once contacted women from Rød Ungdom in the street, and asked whether they could join their communication courses. According to this Valkyria member, the

communist women refused to answer the question, and seemed furious to be asked. She asserts that 'The Blitz girls are scared to death that we will say, "Hi, we are tough girls who want to study with you". They are scared because we are tough girls like they are, but still stand for something other than for what they do.'¹⁶⁰

Heretofore, the Valkyria women have not organized their own anti-brothel demonstrations. However, they have organized actions to stop men from using prostitutes. They did so by walking the streets where prostitution occurs, so they could see for themselves how it happens. To prevent it, a Valkyria called the men up, saying 'We do not want this to happen again'.¹⁶¹ Prostitution pollutes women's nature, she said.¹⁶²

The Valkyria women are also against pornography, as are the left-wing women. This is further proof that female participation in the rightist underground must be viewed in a context outside of male participation, especially since many of the men are high consumers of pornography.

One other instance of male attitudes rejected by these women is that statement by politician Jack Kjuus that all adopted children should be sterilized.¹⁶³ This view, which is equivalent to the racial hygienic views that were widespread in the 1920s and 1930s,¹⁶⁴ have no appeal for these women.

In addition to their activism against the oppression of females, the members of Valkyria take part in volunteer work for elderly people.¹⁶⁵ This is in no way a common trend among young women in Norway. They are similarly nonconformist in their choice of traditionally female occupations at a time when it is more the norm for women to pursue longer educations than men, and when more and more women are entering traditionally male spheres of production. One of the Valkyria women works in a kindergarten, another in a day-care with dreams of being a mid-wife. Others work in shops, and some go to school.

This combination of females supporting the males' militant practices and studying ideology while at the same time practicing exceptionally traditional female roles is prevalent in rightist undergrounds in other countries as well. The same held true for women in Nazi organizations in the 1930s.¹⁶⁶ However, in line with women of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, the Valkyria girls also support several women's rights issues. Therefore, the Valkyria's view of gender roles is, as Blee has pointed out regarding the Klanswomen, 'neither uniformly reactionary, nor progressive'.¹⁶⁷

Current Male Views of Female Activists

The emergence of the Valkyria group has changed the picture of how males within the rightist underground view the females. A leading activist from

the Viking group states that there is no problem having women taking part, and he disagrees with the view that women's emotions are a problem when it really matters.¹⁶⁸ According to him, the hatred that women feel after being attacked is much more intense than what males feel when they get beat up. Such intense hatred is useful to the underground, he says, because it strengthens the will to fight. He says that the main issue is not whether a participant is a woman or man. What matters is that the person is able to think and remain calm under pressure. Women who are able to think and stay calm during attacks are worth more than a man who is a rowdy and acts without thinking, he states. Such women may be given leadership tasks if they have the ability and courage to fulfill such a role. However, women who are 'mattresses', drink a lot and give Nazi salutes are no good to the movement. This kind of skinhead style may work in London, but it doesn't work in Norway, he says. According to him, skinheads are a variation on football hooligans, and are not the easiest people to handle. He therefore prefers more disciplined youths.

This view is common among other male activists. As far as I can tell, all the men are sympathetic to the fact that women organize themselves. The dominant attitude is that men and women can fight side by side. In this regard, this underground is not very typical of rightist undergrounds elsewhere, where the macho community is far more idealized. For example, the British National Front tends to portray women from their own movement as mothers or housewives, even when these women are in fact political activists.¹⁶⁹ The Norwegian rightist underground thus seems comparatively more modern. This difference between Norway and England also reflects general differences in the situation of women in the two countries. Norway is often considered to be one of the countries with the most far-reaching emancipation in the world, with a large proportion of women in positions of leadership, especially in the political and public sectors. In Norway, women militants both on the left and on the right have all-female groups and participate in major activities with the men. It seems evident that the prominent position of females is a result of the self evident equality of participation of men and women in Norway. The pro-female views of the male right-wing activists shows that the far-reaching emancipation of women in Norway has also permeated underground groups on the right.

Yet the male activists tended to view the females differently before the emergence of Valkyria. There is certainly a dialectic relation between how the women behave and how the men view them. The situation predating the organization of separate women's groups was to some extent similar to that which led to the organization of separate women's groups among German Nazis in the 1930s and among American Ku Klux Klan members in the

1920s, namely, that women were allowed to organize their own groups precisely because they were deemed unimportant. Nonetheless, the consequence of an all-female group in the Norwegian rightist underground is that the women become more visible, more confident and, therefore, are accorded a more prominent position by the males. So when the women develop a group on their own, with their own identity and strategies, the males also tend to respect them more.

Men and Women Side by Side

The fact that there were so few women within the rightist underground previously seems to be a strong indicator that the role women occupied within the movement was not sufficiently satisfying to attract or retain female members. Women wanted to do something on their own, and not merely serve as audience for the men. Thus the principal motivation behind the formation of the all-female group was the women's sense that they were unjustly subordinated. This is probably the reason separate women's groups seem to occur less frequently among militant groups on the left: since women in leftist groups are more frequently allowed leading roles, they feel the need for separate organizations less urgently. In the rightist underground, the ability of women to win responsible roles is a consequence of their formation of a separate women's group, a result they previously could only dream of. The leading women of Valkyria are now a part of the inner circle, and even take part in meetings where strategic underground activities are planned. However, it is still the male activists who establish the main tenets of the underground; and even the leading Valkyria women ask principal male activists for advice before giving interviews.

By establishing their own organization, rightist women create their own loyalty to the movement. They organize their own actions, with emphasis on certain 'women's issues' not shared by the males. To a greater extent than before, women make contact with the movement on their own initiative, not merely because they are involved with one of the males. The creation of women's groups has also led to more women becoming attracted to the movement. And, more than before, they seem to be remaining with it. This has led to an increase in politicization. They have also become more militant. Thus women are taking part in the movement not only because they are attracted to tough, militant far-right men, but because they themselves want to be tough, militant and far-right. In this regard, they are now the men's 'equals'.

NOTES

I owe a special thanks to the assistant editor Joan Witte who helped me rewrite the final draft.

1. I intend to discuss methodological aspects of my study in a forthcoming article. The literature on the specific problems connected to the study of far-right groups is scarce. However, some authors have given reports which highlight important aspects of such studies. See, for example, Kathleen Blee, 'Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan', *The Journal of American History* (Sept. 1993).
2. Robin Morgan, *The Demon Lover. On the Sexuality of Terrorism* (London: Methuen 1989) p.195.
3. Eileen MacDonald, *Shoot the Women First* (London: Fourth Estate 1991) p.1.
4. Leonard Weinberg and William Lee Eubank, 'Italian Women Terrorists', *Terrorism* 9/3 (1987) pp.254-7.
5. Barbara Alpern Engel and Clifford N. Rosenthal, *Five Sisters. Women Against the Tsar* (NY: Schocken Books 1977) pp.xxiv, 28.
6. For example, Vera Figner was responsible for the preparation and the keeping of the bomb and was a central figure behind the assassination of the Tsar. In 1880 she was chosen as the foreign correspondence secretary of the People's Will. She was also responsible for coordinating the effort to woo foreign opinion. See David C. Rapoport, 'The International World as Some Terrorists have seen it: A Look at a Century of Memoirs', in David C. Rapoport (ed.), *Inside Terrorist Organizations* (London: Frank Cass 1988) p.37. See also Engel and Rosenthal (note 5), p.43.
7. Considerable data indicate that many women join terrorist groups because they have become affiliated with terrorist men. Leonard Weinberg and William Lee Eubank studied the biographies of 451 women who were active in Italian terrorist groups, both rightist and leftist, between 1970 and 1984, finding that in two-thirds of the case stories, the women had become involved because they were married to terrorist men, and in most of the other cases the women had become involved via a male sibling. A significantly higher proportion of the women had prior blood or love ties with terrorists, as compared to the men. For the few men who were involved because of family ties, the connections were fraternal or paternal rather than marital or romantic. Furthermore, the men had a history of political involvement predating their terrorist activities, whereas most of the women *did not*. In other words, men had a greater tendency to become involved in terrorism because of politics, whereas women more often became involved because of men. Interestingly, of the women studied, only 7 per cent held positions of leadership and participated in major terrorist operations such as kidnapping and assassination. See Weinberg and Eubank (note 4), pp.253, 255. See also Morgan (note 2), pp.203-4.
8. This holds true even for the leading women of the Red Army Faction (RAF): Eileen MacDonald (note 3), p.202, confirms that RAF women did not join terrorism because of feminist motives. Since they identified the interests of their male comrades as their own, Robin Morgan (note 2, p.207) argues that they were in practice followers whose orientation were not feminist but traditional female.
9. MacDonald (note 3), p.201.
10. MacDonald (note 3), p.205.
11. MacDonald (note 3), p.210.
12. MacDonald (note 3), p.200.
13. A leading woman within the Red Brigades says that 'Women remain enemies of any type of power whatsoever; they have a feeling of real hostility toward it. ... It's a rebellion, though more than a rebellion; it's a conviction that the power of one individual over another is a source of disaster and injustice'. 'Interview with Adriana Faranda', in Alison Jamieson, *The Heart Attacked. Terrorism and Conflict in the Italian State* (London: Maryon Boyars 1989) p.273.
14. *Ibid.*, pp.64-5.
15. *Ibid.*, p.67.
16. Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Klan. Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University

- of California Press 1991) p.42.
17. *Ibid.*, p.41.
 18. Blee (note 1).
 19. Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland. Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (London: Jonathan Cape 1987) p.55.
 20. Claudia Koonz, 'Women in Nazi Germany', in Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (eds), *Becoming Visible. Women in European History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1977) p.450.
 21. *Ibid.*, p.451.
 22. *Ibid.*, pp.459, 464–5.
 23. *Ibid.*, p.448.
 24. *Ibid.*, p.454; see also p.463.
 25. *Ibid.*, pp.448–9.
 26. *Demos Newsletter*, No.24 (1993).
 27. J. Mushaben, 'The Rise of Femi-Nazis? Female Participation in Right-Extremist Movements in Unified Germany', paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 31 Aug.–3 Sept. 1995, p.25.
 28. Heléne Lööw, 'Tant brun – man och kvinnor i vit makt världen och i de nationella leden 1937–1992' (Aunt Brown – Men and Women in the White Power World and in the Nationalist Parties 1937–1992), *Historisk tidskrift* 4 (1992) p.559.
 29. Mushaben (note 27), p.24; *Demos Newsletter*, No.40 (Feb. 1996).
 30. Mushaben (note 27), p.24; *Demos Newsletter*, No.24 (1993).
 31. Mushaben (note 27), p.24; Internet information.
 32. Internet information.
 33. Lööw (note 28), p.559.
 34. *Fritt Forum*, No.5 (1996).
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. Heléne Lööw, 'White Power Rock 'n Roll. A Growing Industry', in Jeffrey Kaplan and Tore Bjørge (eds), *Nation and Race: The Developing Euro-American Racist Subculture* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, forthcoming 1998).
 37. M. Durham, 'Women and the National Front', in Luciano Cheles *et al.* (eds), *Neo-Fascism in Europe* (London: Longman 1991) p.276.
 38. Heléne Lööw, 'Rasistisk undergrundkultur' (Racist Underground Culture), in *Rapport till samordningskansliet för brottsförebyggande åtgärder*, Stockholms Stad.
 39. Lööw (note 28) 'Tant brun', p.554.
 40. *Demos Newsletter*, No.40 (Feb. 1996); *Faedrelandet*, No.11 (1995).
 41. See *Lund-rapporten (The Lund Report)* regarding the Norwegian Special Branch. Document No.15 (1995–96), the Norwegian Government.
 42. In 1981, several punks and freaks invaded a house in Oslo as squatters. They were later thrown out by the police but were, however, offered another house instead, which is now known as the Blitz house. Most of the users of this house call themselves anarchists; various rock groups and cultural organizations, as well as the women's radio station *RadiOrakel* are based there.
 43. *Fritt Forum*, No.4 (1995).
 44. L. Weinberg and W.L. Eubank, 'Leaders and Followers in Italian Terrorist Groups', *Terrorism and Political Violence* (hereafter *TPV*) 1/2 (April 1989).
 45. See *AFA Magazine*, No.2 (1996) for an account of their actions during 1995. *AFA Magazine* was first published in 1995. Anti-Fascist Action was established in 1994. It is organized as a network of local groups, which in turn cooperate with other anti-racist groups such as SOS-Racism.
 46. *Ibid.*
 47. According to Norse mythology, the valkyries served Odin. They led battles and chose which warriors fell in battle. During battle, the valkyries would wear helmets on their heads and carry shields. The Vikings feared the valkyries because they thought them to be bad omens.
 48. NUNS 88 stands for Young Norwegian National Socialists 88. The number 88 is used in white supremacist groups as a code for 'Heil Hitler'.

49. The number of active individuals varies, making it difficult to decide whether to count them as participants or not. According to a leading activist from the Viking group, 200 is probably the maximum number of people they would be able to gather if everyone connected to the underground turned up today; whereas forty persons are active on a more regular basis. (This section is based upon a tape-recorded interview on 24 April 1996.) A leading activist from the national socialist skinhead part of the underground reports that at a concert on New Year's Eve in 1995, they gathered 130 persons, to date the maximum number of persons gathered from the Norwegian rightist underground. (Interview, 17 Aug. 1996).
50. I have described the substantial differences among these various rightist groups in Katrine Fangen, 'Living out our Ethnic Instincts. Ideological Beliefs among Rightist Activists in Norway', in Kaplan and Bjørge, *Nation and Race* (note 36).
51. Rhetorical differences between 'anti-immigrants' and young right-wing activists are discussed by Tore Bjørge in his essay, 'Extreme Nationalism and Violent Discourses in Scandinavia: "The Resistance", "Traitors", and "Foreign Invaders"', in Tore Bjørge (ed.), *Terror from the Extreme Right* (London: Frank Cass 1995).
52. I received this information when this agreement was put forward at a meeting at *Den Norske Forening* in March 1994.
53. See Kaplan and Bjørge (note 36).
54. Combat 18's *Internasjonalt Redwatch*, No.1 (1996).
55. *Fritt Forum*, Nos.2-3 (1996).
56. According to my observations, and my discussion of the issue with both male and female activists.
57. Vera Oredsson, 'Jamstaldhet – en nationell produkt?' ('Equality [between the sexes] – a National Product?'), *Nordisk Kamp*, Nos.3-4 (1994), pp.4-5. Vera Oredsson is probably the only woman ever who has, for a period of time, been the leader of a National Socialist party (with both male and female members); see Löow (note 28).
58. Koonz (note 20), p.451.
59. See my discussion of the term in Kaplan and Bjørge (note 36).
60. Per Bangsund, *Arvtagerne. Nazisme I Norge etter krigen (The Inheritors. Nazism in Norway after the War)* (Oslo: Pax forlag 1989).
61. Especially interesting, perhaps, are her articles on homosexuality, considering that, according to several activists who were active at that time, she later separated from her husband because he had a male lover.
62. Asatru is from the Norse mythology.
63. The so-called Brumunddal Clash is described and analyzed by Froydis Eidheim, 'Hva har skjedd I Brumunddal? Bygdesamfunnet I motet med de fremmede og seg selv' (What has happened in Brumunddal? The Local Community Confronted by the Foreigners and Itself), *NIBR-report*, No.20 (1993).
64. The period when I carried out my field-work.
65. *Fritt Forum* ('Free Forum') is, according to its outlines, a free forum; that is, it is open for all persons and groups of the far right. The magazine does not allow explicit Nazi articles to be printed. However, it distributes fanzines and other issues with Nazi content through its distribution network, *Nor-Effekt*. The editor is 29 years old, and his co-editors are all young people. The magazine is, however, sponsored by a fund (also called *Fritt Forum*), made up by several elder nationalist politicians.
66. A. McRobbie and J. Garber, 'Girls and Subcultures', in Stanley *et al.* (eds), *Resistance through Rituals* (London: Hutchinson 1976).
67. The statutory age for sex in Norway is 16 years.
68. Weinberg and Eubank (note 4).
69. In some militant leftist groups, romantic relationships within the movement are viewed as a problem. See Alison Jamieson, 'Entry, Discipline and Exit in the Italian Red Brigades', *TPV 2/1* (Spring 1990) pp.1-20.
70. Anne Campbell, *The Girls in the Gang* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers 1993).
71. Koonz (note 19).
72. See also David C. Rapoport, *Assassination and Terrorism* (Toronto: CBC 1971).

73. *Fritt Forum*, No.4 (1995).
74. The current Fascist party in Italy, with Mussolini's grandchild as a prominent female representative.
75. Tyra, like many of the other youngest women of the underground, fits Anne Campbell's description of the typical 'gang girl'. As Campbell puts it, 'Like the boys ... they enjoy excitement and trouble, which break the monotony of a life in which little attention is given to the future.... They admire toughness and verbal "smarts". ... Authority, in the shape of school, parents and police, is the enemy, but a welcome one since it generates confrontations and livens things up.' Campbell (note 70), pp.7-8.
76. McRobbie and Garber (note 66).
77. cf. Jamieson (note 69), p.8.
78. McRobbie and Garber (note 66) see the two-fold rebellion of 'gang girls' as defined both by their gender and by their lower class position. Actually, several women terrorists and revolutionaries have mentioned that the fact that they are women makes a double reason for joining the combat. See, for example, Engel and Rosenthal (note 5), p.xv. Julie Wheelwright discusses the problem of a woman who rebels against traditional gender roles by joining the British organization National Fascisti in 1924. As her involvement with the fascists demonstrates, her rebellion did not translate into a broader analysis of oppression; 'Rather, she allied herself with the most hierarchical and authoritative ideology of the day, embracing an extreme of masculinity'. Julie Wheelwright, *Amazons and Military Maids. Women who Dressed as Men in the Pursuit of Life, Liberty and Happiness* (London: Pandora 1989) p.11.
79. For a description of 'Grufties', see Manfred Stock and Philipp Muhlberg, *Die Scene von Innen. Skinheads, Grufties, Heavy Metals, Punks* (Berlin: Links Druck Verlag 1990).
80. Field notes from 11 Aug. 1993.
81. I have heard of only a few instances of men in this movement hitting their partners. However, from time to time some males can act very dominantly, and order their women to come with them or to be quiet.
82. Interview, 9 March 1996.
83. Cf. Wheelwright's description of 'Colonel Barker'; Wheelwright (note 78), p.10: '... she joined not so much from patriotic motives as from the spice of adventure it introduced into life. The spice it lent to Barker's life included running the boxing programme designed to whip members into top physical condition to combat "the reds and the pinks" - and participating in the Sunday afternoon disruptions of Communist Party meetings in Hyde Park.' See also *ibid.*, p.13: 'The male world became accessible in an exciting way.'
84. Interview, 9 March 1996.
85. Cf. Blee (note 16), p.80.
86. *Bootboys*, No.11 (1992).
87. Christopher Husbands, 'Militant Neo-Nazism in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1980s', in Luciano Cheles *et al.* (eds), *Neo-Fascism in Europe* (London: Longman 1991) p.103. See also *Demos Newsletter*, No.40 (Feb. 1996) p.108. The trend is very much the same in Norway, although there are no statistical data available on the gender differences regarding racist and neo-fascist violence.
88. Interview, 11 Aug. 1993.
89. 'Havamal', Verse 43, in D.E. Martin (ed.), *The Havamal: with Selections from other Poems of the Edda Illustrating the Wisdom of the North in Heathen Times* (Cambridge: CUP 1923), quoted in *Bootboys/Ragnarok* 12/2 (1992).
90. There are several stories written about the differences between male vs. female terrorists. According to the head of the Hamburg Office for the Protection of the Constitution, women terrorists are more dangerous than men because they trust solely their emotions, whereas men rely on their logical reasoning. Women, therefore, tend to act without thinking, whereas men hesitate before they act. See MacDonald (note 3), pp.222-5. Jamieson (note 13), p.67, argues in her study on the Italian Red Brigades that female terrorists may be rawer, more acute and more passionate than their male counterparts.
91. See Wheelwright (note 78) on the meaning of women who enter typical male worlds in order to become like them.

92. Field notes, and interview, 14 May 1994.
93. Field notes, 30 April 1994.
94. I have analyzed this event in Katrine Fangen, 'Skinheads i rodt, hvitt og blatt. En sosiologisk studie fra "innsiden"' (Skinheads in red, white and blue. A sociological study from "inside"), *UNGforsk-report*, No.4 (1995) pp.27, 34–5. See also H. Lööw (note 36).
95. Interview, 5 July 1994.
96. Mushaben (note 27), p.20.
97. Campbell (note 70), p.7: '...her aim is to save him from his rowdy friends who are clearly a bad element, bringing out the worst in him'.
98. The term 'mattress' is used as a metaphor for sexually accessible women. The woman is thus pictured as a passive object, lying on the floor. This categorization of the women is, not surprisingly, similar to those found by John Clarke among British skinheads, and by Joyce Mushaben among German fascist skinheads. The skinheads described by Clarke talk of 'good girls' in contrast to 'slags' and 'scrubbers'; John Clarke, 'Style', in Stuart Hall *et al.* (eds), *Resistance through Rituals* (London: Hutchinson 1976) p.190. Joyce Mushaben reports of German neo-fascists that they apply the term 'Unterlagen' to young women who embrace secondary and subordinate roles, among others, as easily accessible sexual objects; Mushaben (note 27), p.20. In other words, they use a term almost identical to that used by participants in the Norwegian rightist underground. These categories place certain women in subordinate and passive roles, regardless of how these women view their presence themselves.
99. Interview, 25 Jan. 1994.
100. Interview, 15 Sept. 1993.
101. Interview, 14 Aug. 1993.
102. Interview, 28 Jan. 1994.
103. Koonz (note 19).
104. I have described the males' views in more detail elsewhere: see Fangen (note 50).
105. Anne Campbell (note 70), p.9, discusses the problems 'gang girls' are confronted with no matter what role they choose to play: 'These types of roles tend to suggest a no-win situation for gang girls. As Sex Objects, they are cheap women rejected by the other girls, parents, social workers, and ironically by the boys themselves. As Tomboys, they are resented by the boys and ridiculed by family and friends who wait patiently for them to "grow out of it".'
106. In fact many parents try to remove their children from the rightist underground. It is therefore not unusual for females to be commanded to leave the underground by their parents. However, many defy these commands, and therefore have to move out of their parents' house at an early age. There seems also to be a trend that males defy their parents' demands more than the females do.
107. This argument was also common among Nazi women who started their own groups in the 1930s; see Koonz (note 20), p.450.
108. *Fritt Forum*, No.1 (1996). Cf. the emphasis of the Klanswomen that the WKKK was an organization for women, of women and by women, which no man should exploit to his individual gain: Blee (note 16), p.28.
109. The same was true for women who started a women's division of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s. As Kathleen Blee (note 16), p.2, clearly points out, 'their activities and ideologies differed sufficiently from those of the Klansmen that an examination of the women's Klan changes our interpretation of the Klan as a whole'.
110. The fact that militant women tend to organize themselves less militarily than militant men seems to be a trend throughout history. For example, the female militants involved in the Russian Revolution did not put much emphasis on discipline and command hierarchies before they merged their all-female circle with a male group; see Engel and Rosenthal (note 5), p.28. Some exceptions do nonetheless exist. The Women's KKK adopted the militaristic hierarchical style of the male KKK, and both organizations used a strict command hierarchy; see Blee (note 16), pp.35–6.
111. Interview, 9 March 1996.
112. Interview, 24 April 1996.
113. Frigg was, according to Norse mythology, Odin's wife.

114. Interview, 9 March 1996.
115. *Fritt Forum*, No.1 (1996).
116. According to Blee (note 16), p.29, the female KKK members expanded the impact of the Klan since they consciously used their families and personal networks to recruit new members.
117. Weinberg and Eubank (note 4), p.256.
118. *Fritt Forum*, No.1 (1996).
119. Valkyria's Instruction Manual.
120. Blee (note 16), pp.37-8.
121. Valkyria's Instruction Manual.
122. Valkyria's Instruction Manual.
123. Cf. Jamieson (note 69), p.3. Similarly, the KKK women supported militant patriotism, but tended not to be involved in physical violence; see Blee (note 16), pp.34, 40.
124. Jamieson (note 69).
125. Valkyria's Instruction Manual. According to Norwegian law, youths above the age of 15 are allowed to be members of political organizations, whereas youths above the age of 18 are of age and are allowed all citizens' rights. In the Women's Klan of the 1920s, sixteen was the lower age limit; see Blee (note 16), p.30.
126. Interview, 9 March 1996.
127. These two groups, Embla and Jenter for Norge (Girls for Norway), have not yet presented themselves in the underground; but they are supposed to receive a broader presentation in the next issue of the main information magazine of the underground. *Fritt Forum*, No.5 (1996).
128. Interview, 9 March 1996.
129. Cf. Mushaben (note 27), p.26.
130. *Ibid.*, p.20.
131. Cf. the picture of a skinhead woman kicking a black man portrayed as an ape in *Bootboys*, No.7 (1988). See also Lööw (note 28), p.560.
132. Mushaben (note 27), p.23, has observed rather similar female role-patterns among German neo-Nazis. The militant nationalist women are similar to those to whom Mushaben refers as the 'recruiters of the fighting front'; 'In contrast to Fascho-Brides who willingly confine themselves to the sidelines of the movement, members of the "fighting front" reject passive, eternally feminine images of women in favor of self-determined active roles'.
133. Cf. those women whom Mushaben categorizes as Fascho-Brides; *ibid.*
134. Interview, 9 March 1996.
135. Campbell (note 70), p.9.
136. Wheelwright (note 78), p.13.
137. Interview, 9 March 1996.
138. Tore Bjørge, 'Entry, Bridge-Burning and Exit Options: What Happens to Young People who join Racist Groups - and Want to Leave?' in Kaplan and Bjørge (note 36).
139. *Det Nye* (a magazine for young women), No.10 (1995).
140. Interview, 9 March 1996.
141. Interview, 9 March 1996.
142. This event was described independently both by a leading male activist from the Viking group (interview, 24 April 1996), and by a leading female activist from the Valkyria group (interview, 9 March 1996).
143. There is a trend for women in far-right groups to be a minority compared to men in regard to violent acts with neo-fascist or racist motives. According to data presented by Christopher Husbands (note 87), p.103, females made up 4 per cent of the suspects of punishable offenses with neo-fascist features in Germany in the period 1977-86. Of the persons actually convicted of relevant punishable offenses with neo-fascist motives, only 5 per cent were female; while only 2 per cent of the persons involved in various acts of planned or actual violence with such motives were female. Between ¼ and ½ of the approximately 40,000 right-wing extremists in Germany are women. However, few women are present at party gathering, and almost none of them participate in street-fights.
144. 'Nationalist' is commonly defined by the activists as 'being proud of one's country, and

- being 100 per cent against immigration’.
145. *Fritt Forum*, No.1 (1996).
 146. According to Kathleen Blee (note 16), p.3, women in fact make racist organizations more dangerous, because they spread the ideology through their family, their personal networks and local contacts. This makes women’s influence often more extensive than the men’s. My analysis suggests that this might also hold for the Valkyria women since, according to my observations, they have much more contact with friends outside the milieu than the men do.
 147. Interview, 9 March 1996.
 148. Martin Barker, *The New Racism. Conservatives and the Ideology of the Tribe* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America 1982).
 149. Both women interviewed in *Det Nye*, No.10 (Oct. 1995).
 150. *Det Nye*, No.10 (Oct. 1995).
 151. Interview, 9 March 1996. For a discussion of the way male activists deal with the Holocaust, see Fangen (note 50).
 152. Kaplan and Bjørge (note 36).
 153. Interview, 9 March 1996. Rune Gerhardsen, Labor Party politician. Head of Oslo Town Council.
 154. Valkyria’s Instruction Manual.
 155. *Det Nye*, No.10 (Oct. 1995).
 156. *Ibid.*
 157. Interview, 24 April 1996.
 158. *Fritt Forum*, No.1 (1996).
 159. Koonz (note 20), p.450.
 160. Interview, 9 March 1996.
 161. *Ibid.*
 162. This argument was also commonly used by Nazi women in the 1930s: see Koonz (note 20), p.449.
 163. Jack Kjuus is the leader of *Hvit Valgallianse* (White Election Alliance).
 164. I have described the history of such views in Norway in the report ‘*Rasismens historie og forhistorie*’ (The History and Prehistory of Racism), *SFDH (Sogn og Fjordane College)-report*, No.1 (1993).
 165. At times, the Women’s Klan portrayed itself as a social welfare organization. Some chapters collected food and money for the needy (typically Klan families), and others ran free day-nurseries and homes for wayward girls; see Blee (note 16), p.40. Similarly, Nazi women collected money for poor national socialist families; see Koonz (note 20), p.463.
 166. Koonz (note 19).
 167. Blee (note 16), p.3.
 168. Interview, 24 April 1996.
 169. Durham (note 37), p.279.