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Murder, Denunciation and Criminal Policing in Weimar Berlin

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Murder, Denunciation and Criminal Policing in Weimar Berlin

In the years since 1989, there has been a wealth of scholarly research into role of denunciation in supporting Germany's two twentieth-century authoritarian regimes. The shocking revelation after the collapse of East German communism and the opening of the Stasi archives that hundreds of thousands of GDR citizens had served as 'informal collaborators' with the secret police seemed to help explain how a relatively small police organization managed to create a culture of terror and conformity. By focusing on the cooperation of ordinary citizens with policing institutions in the surveillance of public and private behaviors, scholars of Nazi Germany have demonstrated that the Secret State Police (Gestapo), far from constituting a totalizing institution that imposed terror on German citizens, relied on spontaneous denunciations from citizens to identify transgressors of political and racial crimes.¹ Scholars have elaborated this revision by outlining the 'myths and realities' of the Gestapo, reevaluating the view of omnipotence and omnipresence first publicized by the Gestapo leadership and later perpetuated by scholars who had not bothered to question the self-promoting assertions of the Nazi state police.² While some scholars, such as Bernhard Dörner and Eric A. Johnson, have objected to these revisions of the Nazi terror that, in its most extreme articulation, seem to shift responsibility for the terror away from the Gestapo and its agents and onto the shoulders of 'ordinary Germans,'³ denunciation research has radically revised our understanding of state-societal relations under Nazism. Rather than a one-way exertion of domination of the state on society, the model now generally accepted is that of a powerful

state apparatus, whose ability to coerce was nonetheless limited and which relied on the complicity of a significant minority of citizens.

How citizens in Third Reich learned these accusatory practices so quickly, however, remains almost wholly unexamined. Despite a growing interest in the development of police work and institutions in the years before the Nazi seizure of power, there has been little systematic research into the ‘civic tradition in Germany which, at least according to popular mythology, encouraged people to inform the police.’⁴ In this article, I will argue that this ‘civic tradition’ can be found in the institutions and practices of criminal policing developed in Germany before 1933. I will be focusing on the criminal police (Kriminalpolizei, Kripo) of Berlin, and in particular on the work of the homicide squad, which was the organization that boasted the most ‘state-of-the-art’ police science and whose work was arguably the best publicized among the various branches of police work. I begin by arguing that separating criminal from political policing creates a specious distinction that masks the very concrete ways in which the methods and goals of criminal police work intersected with those of political policing. Key to my argument is the notion of the culture of ‘mutual surveillance’ (a term more appropriate than ‘self-policing,’ which suggests an absence of state intervention⁵) that was articulated as a goal by the Berlin police officials in the 1920s. This culture of policing or ‘mutual surveillance’ was by no means a success in the eyes of the police, but it was precisely in its failures, I argue, that it set the stage for the culture of denunciation after 1933. Finally, I focus on a case study involving a 1931 murder. The five-year investigation that was perpetuated by the mutual denunciations of the murder victim’s neighbors illustrates how ordinary citizens participated in the institutions and practices of

mutual surveillance developed and promoted by police officials in the 1920s. Their accusatory behavior is indicative of a continuity in the culture of policing in the periods before and after the nazification of the Berlin police.

Crime and Denunciation

In 1933 Hitler complained to his minister of Justice that ‘we are living at present in a sea of denunciations and human meanness.’ Citizens were denouncing one another of the most remote infractions for the basest of reasons.⁶ Understanding how civic practices of policing functioned in the period before 1933 is essential for understanding how the regime after 1933 was so successful in mobilizing the cooperation of citizens in the enforcement of racial laws and political conformity. To appreciate this connection fully requires turning attention to the points of contact between the state and its citizens where the state enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy and where the state actively sought the cooperation of its citizens in policing public behavior. For this reason, I use the definition of denunciation or ‘accusatory practices’ offered by Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately. They define accusatory practices as ‘spontaneous communications from individual citizens to the state (or to another authority such as the church) containing accusations of wrongdoing by other citizens or officials and implicitly or explicitly calling for punishment.’ These ‘practices’ vary from culture to culture and are a ‘point of contact between individual citizens and the state, one that embodies a whole set of unarticulated decisions about loyalties to the state, on the one hand, and to family and fellow citizens, on the other.’⁷ Such a conceptualization of accusatory behavior permits

the comparison of similar practices across regimes (authoritarian or liberal) without losing sight of the specific purposes and specific state-societal relationships encompassed in those behaviors.⁸ For example, German workers in the Ruhr enforced patriotic loyalty to the Reich during the French occupation through an informal yet publicized system of denunciation, while Communist cells in Berlin enforced discipline by successfully encouraging their members to report politically questionable activities to the local leadership.⁹

Rigid definitions of what kinds of crimes can be denounced have prevented scholars from investigating the close linkages between authoritarian and non-authoritarian regimes in terms of denunciatory behaviors and state-societal relations. Traditionally 'denunciation' has been used to denote accusations of breaches of political or church law - what contemporary scholars implicitly see as 'illegitimate' normalizing codes, in contrast to the 'legitimate' laws, such as criminal codes. In this view, denunciations are specific to authoritarian regimes or (in the case of medieval and early-modern Europe) repressive cultures in which conformity of thought and action is the main feature of social organization. 'Illegitimate' laws are designed to enforce the power of the state or the church, while 'legitimate laws,' such as those prohibiting murder and theft, are widely accepted as necessary for the maintenance of social and moral order, carry a long tradition of legal and cultural practice, and are not tied exclusively or even primarily to the integrity of the political order. Upon further examination, however, the distinction between 'political' and 'legal' crimes loses its usefulness.

Accusatory practices within the context of criminal policing did not form a distinct category from those employed in the policing of political, sexual, or religious

behavior. Rather, they helped form a continuum of regulatory priorities determined, but not entirely controlled by, the state. Historically, institutional and cultural practices of enforcing social conformity and loyalty to the state have not been confined to the realm of political behavior. Criminal codes are often seen by certain social groups and individuals as part of a political rather than a moral order, as the nineteenth century history of wood theft clearly illustrates.¹⁰ Further, laws regarding ‘political’ crimes, or even the racial purity laws of the Nazi regime, can easily be seen as codes of social and moral order. Separating political denunciations from informing on breaches of ‘legitimate’ law creates a specious distinction. As Gerhard Sälder puts it, the differentiation between different kinds of informing is ‘problematic from a methodological perspective because it implies a normative prejudicing of the research subject and threatens to limit [the subject] to this dichotomy.’¹¹

In Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, even those responsible for policing ‘ordinary’ and political crimes found it difficult to draw definitive boundaries between the two, as there was no clear division of labor between the criminal and political police. Although criminalists sought to keep themselves separate from the political police as a matter of professional integrity, detectives from the Berlin Kripo (Department IV) were often called on to assist in investigations handled by the understaffed political police (Department IA). Despite the professional resistance to the politicization of its work, the Kripo in Berlin became increasingly engaged in policing subversive political groups after 1930.¹² The career of Bernhard Weiss illustrates this close connection between criminal and political policing. Weiss, a trained lawyer, returned to work from his distinguished service in the First World War and began work with the Kripo as its deputy chief and

assisted in the restructuring of the political police. He returned to Department IV in 1924 as its chief and worked to develop the Prussian State Criminal Office. In 1927 he was promoted to deputy president of the police. In that capacity he vigorously defended the necessity of political policing and political intelligence. Perhaps ironically it would be his own republican affiliations, as well as his Jewish identity, that would lead him to become a casualty of the purges of the police in 1932.¹³

This blurring of official provenance became even more pronounced after 1933. The Gestapo and the Kripo often found themselves sharing jurisdictional authority with regard to certain criminal violations, such as homosexual behavior and race defilement (*Rassenschande*).¹⁴ Such disputes illustrate the fluidity of the lines between political and criminal transgression. Even the targets of Nazi persecution defy distinct delineation. As is well known, the Nazis included criminals in their long list of enemies of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, who after November 1933 could be placed in ‘preventive detention’ as habitual criminals. It was, in fact, the Nazis’ hard line against crime and vagrancy that won them a degree of respectability in the eyes of many law abiding Germans.¹⁵ Informers in criminal cases were thus just as conscious of policing society against its enemies as denouncers were of policing the state against the politically suspect.

The point here is not to suggest that the policing of ‘ordinary’ criminality was a synecdoche of the Nazi terror. Certainly there were important qualitative and indeed moral differences between the enforcement of anti-miscegenation laws of 1935 and the laws prohibiting murder and aggravated assault. The point is rather to demonstrate that the lines between the two kinds of policing were not always so clear, especially from an institutional standpoint. Clear distinctions between violations of different kinds of

‘socially damaging’ (*Gemeinschaftsschadende*) were often difficult for citizens to draw and are for historians difficult to draw as well. At the intersection of these kinds of policing are the accusatory practices of citizens mobilized by police to identify transgressions of both ‘illegitimate’ and ‘legitimate’ law. The policing of ‘criminal’ activity (murder, theft, sexual assault, vagrancy, and the like) through the interaction of the state and citizens thus belongs analytically in the realm of denunciation research. The history of the criminal police in Berlin suggests that efforts to create a public culture of policing in the 1920s established certain features of the surveillance society of the Nazi regime.

‘The Untrained Gaze of the Layperson:’ Criminal Policing and Mutual Surveillance in the 1920s

To speak of accusatory practices as part of a culture of ‘mutual surveillance’ in the Weimar period is not to suggest that the Nazi terror, with a police force that was not constrained by the rights of citizens, began in the 1920s; rather, it is to argue that such a culture set the conditions under which the Nazi terror as it developed in the 1930s was possible. Accusatory practices of the Weimar period were not developed in the same coercive environment as those fostered by the Gestapo, nor did their execution have the same implications for their victims. Just as it is dangerous to underestimate the power of the Nazi police apparatus, however, it is also ill advised to underestimate the influence of the institutions of Weimar policing. Indeed, it would be a mistake to ignore the ubiquity of the police (especially in Berlin) in the Weimar period and the influence it exerted over

many aspects of public life. There was a 'general view,' as one historian has written, 'that the Weimar Republic, compared to the Prussian monarchy, had vastly extended the sphere of public surveillance.'¹⁶

In the realm of criminal policing experts cultivated and promoted practices of professional police work and the mutual surveillance of citizens with particular success in Germany. Because of widespread concerns about predatory criminality and because of the popularity of crime stories as sensational events, the criminal police in Berlin was more successful than the other branches of the police in garnering support from the public. While political crimes affected only a small group of people, 'everyday' criminality seemed to be a pervasive part of everyday life.¹⁷ The criminal police sought to specialize and professionalize their practices to make them more efficient and effective tools in the escalating war on crime.¹⁸ Criminal police work took on a greater sense of urgency as the rise in crime rates after World War I fed into widespread anxieties about economic, social, and political disorder, turning Wilhelmine public concerns about crime into full-scale moral panic.¹⁹ Specialized organization of criminal investigative units, the systematization of information on criminal transgressors in files and cards, the routine raids of underground 'hang outs,' and the recruitment of informants, all represented an elaboration of prewar practices that were designed to make police work more efficient and 'scientific' and to inspire the trust of the public.²⁰ This trust was crucial for the police force that after the Revolution drew its authority from a republican constitution rather than monarchical power. As a representative of the Prussian ministry of the interior wrote in 1926, 'The character [of the Prussian police] as an organ of the people (Volkes) arises unambiguously from the exclusion of that which is military, from the complement [of

personnel] from all circles of the people (Volkskreisen), and above all from the fostering of close togetherness (Zusammengehörigkeit) between the police and people, which gives the post-war police a completely new character.’²¹ Such was the ideal, in many regards unfulfilled, of the republican police. To be sure, the administration of the criminal police came under attack by political opponents of the Social Democratic government in Prussia, leftist critics of the criminal justice system, and journalists critiquing the handling of individual cases. However, the goal of the criminal police - protecting society from criminals and bringing wrongdoers to justice - was never in question.

An essential part of the modernization of police work was the cultivation of cooperative relationship between police and public – the education of the citizenry to serve as the eyes and ears of criminal investigators (even if police experts often expressed doubts about the ultimate realization of that goal). Such a model of policing did not originate in the fascist regime.²² Its proponents, at least in Berlin, in the 1920s rather promoted it as an inherently civic and republican model. Criminal justice experts could legally justify the use of coercion in obtaining the cooperation of citizens for prosecution,²³ but compulsion did not serve the ends of a republican state authority that theoretically worked for the people. Nor did it yield important information to police about crimes that had not yet been committed.²⁴ The productive ‘togetherness’ of police and people had to arise from the education of citizens in the practices of police and the criminal activity that took place in the city.

Such was the goal of leading figures in the Berlin criminal police. In the wake of embarrassing public revelations regarding the failure of the Prussian police to identify one of their own informants, Fritz Haarmann, the ‘Werewolf of Hannover’ who was

responsible for the murder of over twenty young men and boys, the chief of the Berlin Kripo, Bernhard Weiss, insisted to his professional colleagues that Haarmann would have been apprehended much earlier had the neighbors in his apartment building only reported the serial murderer's suspicious activities to the police sooner:

Certainly, one will retort that the sharp eye of the law, the police, must see more than the untrained gaze of the layperson. Granted. On the other hand, however, one should not forget that the difficult, responsibility-laden activity of the criminal police, particularly insofar as it serves in the protection against criminal acts, to a large degree relies on the cooperation of the public. Without this, the efforts of the criminal police often remain unsuccessful.²⁵

Without the eyes and ears of citizens, in other words, police were limited in their ability to protect the public from dangerous criminals. Weiss was doing more than deflecting responsibility for Haarmann's murder spree away from the police; he was articulating a philosophy of police work that was embodied in many of the institutions and practices developed by the police to encourage citizens' cooperation.

In the years following the Haarmann investigation, police became increasingly aggressive in attracting public attention to the work of criminalists and the necessity of participation in criminal surveillance and investigation on the part of the citizenry. What was needed in the war on crime was a populace ready to serve as the eyes and ears of police officials. This recruitment of the public to take part in criminal policing was part of what Anton Kaes has identified as a culture of 'total mobilization' in post-war Germany, a term he borrows from Ernst Jünger. The militarization of German society continued after the First World War and expanded into all aspects of social life, including police work. Fritz Lang's film 'M' compellingly depicted the elaboration of the processes of mobilization - in this case, the collective search for an urban murderer. Neighbors survey

each other as policemen look on, and everyone becomes suspicious. The film thus captures ‘the desire for disciplinary power and mobilization.’²⁶ As we will see, however, the disciplinary aspect of this mobilization was very incomplete.

Already before World War I the urban press played a key role in encouraging popular interest in local and national crime. The proliferation of daily newspapers that began in the late nineteenth century and continued into the Weimar period increased the volume and the quality of the communication between the authorities and the citizenry. In Berlin at the turn of the twentieth century, the public press made it possible for urban citizens to imagine the city-scape as a coherent space and to map sites of danger and respectability. Crime reporting was part of this process in Berlin.²⁷ In Germany’s ‘newspaper city,’ Berlin police officials had at their disposal a vast array of national and local presses in which to publicize police work, from the respectable *Vossische Zeitung* to the tawdrier late-Weimar tabloid *Tempo*. In his prewar handbook for criminal investigation, Albert Weingart encouraged police officials to publish information about investigations in the local sections of the daily press. ‘Those who have made important observations should learn through the news in the press of the implications of their observations and so be induced to come forward as a witness.’ Weingart warned, however, that officials should be cautious not to reveal too much information that might damage the investigation.²⁸ German crime experts were not singular in noting the efficacy of the modern print media in the project of surveillance. Indeed, the dramatic expansion of the popular press in the latter half of the nineteenth century throughout Europe was due in large part to the growing concern with urban crime and its prevention.²⁹ Newspapers in late Victorian towns in Britain, for example, became

increasingly local in focus and operated as producers of urban knowledge that helped to enforce urban civility by exposing transgressors of norms of urban conduct.³⁰

The ability of the urban press in Berlin to produce urban knowledge was amplified in the Weimar period by an increase in the overall number of newspapers and an elaboration of prewar trends in the commercialization of reading.³¹ Beginning in August 1919, police routinely informed the press of all capital crimes.³² That same year, the *Berliner Morgenpost* orchestrated an elaborate contest called ‘Augen Auf!’ in which Berliners were to seek out and ‘apprehend’ a *Morgenpost* reporter posing as a ‘criminal.’³³ Not all Weimar criminalists believed the publication of information about crimes ultimately yielded the desired results, preferring instead ‘modern’ and ‘scientific’ techniques of detection. Yet influential criminalists such as Robert Heindl insisted that the publicity offered by the press was invaluable.³⁴ On the occasion of the Peter Kürten serial murder case in Düsseldorf, the exasperated head of the Berlin homicide squad Ernst Gennat, frustrated with the sensationalism in the regional and national newspapers, remarked, ‘The criminal police and the press are so dependent on one another, I don’t know if the criminal police depends more on the press or if the [press] relies more on the criminal police.’³⁵

The publication of the often lurid and titillating details of local crimes and the call for citizens to offer up relevant information encouraged citizens to view police work as both entertaining and a civic responsibility; surveillance of criminal activity depended on the blurring of state and personal interests. While newspapers were the most important point of contact between police authorities and citizens, in Berlin in the 1920s crime experts developed new ways of communicating with citizens. The prophylactic advisory

centers (*Beratungsstellen*) that were founded throughout Germany in the wake of the post-war crime wave represented one of the great innovations of the 1920s. At such centers citizens could seek out professional advice and information on crime prevention and crime prevention products; 19,000 visited the center in Berlin in 1922 and 15,000 in the crisis year of 1930.³⁶ Investigators also increasingly relied on the radio as a means of communication, especially after 1924 when the limited number of household radios began to modestly increase.³⁷ In January 1925, for example, detectives on the hunt for a murderer gave a surprising amount of information in a radio press release regarding a possible suspect in the case. Police had already received numerous helpful phone calls from listeners who had been prompted by the previous day's report, the detectives stated, and expressed their hope that more citizens would come forward.³⁸

Officials also took part in the visual culture of display that characterized urban life in order to publicize sensational cases and promote the image of the police as professional defenders of the public good and to mobilize citizens to cooperate with the police.³⁹ For example, to the practice of exhibiting of corpses at the morgue was added in 1923 the display of the clothing of an unidentified murder victim in a shop window; such publicity, officials hoped, would solicit from the public pertinent information.⁴⁰ Officials also developed the use of the new cinema to project notices and educational programming on the sides of buildings.⁴¹ The 1926 Great Police Exhibition in Berlin was designed as a public relations event to promote the image of the police as a body of professional and scientifically trained experts whose role it was to protect the citizenry against dangerous social outsiders. Among the exhibits was a diorama that asked the onlooker to analyze a crime scene to detect the murderer and a replica of Fritz

Haarmann's apartment. The exhibit invited observers to test their own powers of detection in identifying criminals in a photographic lineup.⁴² Simulated 'manhunts' at Luna Park in which the park visitors were invited to take part and crime puzzles published in newspapers also invited citizens to practice identifying and apprehending criminals. Such events and displays were meant to shift the position of the citizen from that of a spectator of police power to that of an active participant in police work while at the same time reinforcing the police's authority as the ultimate arbiter of criminological truth.⁴³ In this way, officials and criminologists sought to organize citizens into a community that could ideally police itself, under the direction of professional criminalists, against criminal activity.

Of course, in murder investigations, investigators did not need to rely only on the public's sense of civic responsibility or attraction to lurid sensationalism; they could also appeal to basic greed. The offer of a reward for information leading to the apprehension of a murderer was already a well-established practice by 1919. Clearly some people were willing to provide false information for the promise of profit.⁴⁴ The conservative *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* took the cynical view that citizens participated in investigations out of greed when it indicated that the public was 'spurred' by a 1000RM reward to give 'numerous reports of suspicious persons' with regard to a murder of a Berlin woman in 1932.⁴⁵ Most citizens were probably unaware, however, that rewards were distributed among all of those citizens who led investigators to useful evidence and that such witnesses often had a difficult time obtaining the promised money.⁴⁶

Public response to efforts of police to organize participation is difficult to measure. Police records and newspaper reports reveal in individual murder cases a high

level of involvement in investigation, and not just in the local communities in which the murders took place; citizens from throughout the city responded to invitations to offer up information. As early as 1920, when Lucie Belitz was murdered in her Kreuzberg apartment in 1920, police claimed that over 600 accusations from the public had to be investigated, only one of which led to the apprehension of the murderers.⁴⁷ While this might have been extreme, it was by no means singular. The 1927 investigation of the murder of a young woman prompted one elderly woman in Lichterfelde to write a desperate note to police in which she accused her young male tenant of trying to kill her. 'I take my tenant for the greatest scoundrel of all time,' the woman wrote. 'He is an enormous swindler and lies constantly in unbelievable fantasies.'⁴⁸ Whether the distraught woman was exceedingly paranoid or truly in danger is not clear, but the woman's extreme suspicion was both unfounded (her tenant was not the murderer), and it was not singular in this particular case. Investigators received from suspicious citizens further reports of strangers encountered on trams, in welfare lines, and even their own apartment buildings who possibly fit the description of the murderer.⁴⁹ None of the reports yielded the perpetrator. Similarly, the 1929 murder of a little girl in West End elicited statements from the citizens throughout the city who reported strangers on the street, in pubs, and even in Romani camps as likely suspects.⁵⁰

The limited statistical evidence available suggests that police enjoyed some success in soliciting popular participation. The number of registered complaints (*Anzeigen*) for first and second-degree murder were published in the *Statistical Yearbook of the City of Berlin* for the years 1911 to 1926. In 1911, the number of *Anzeigen* for murder and attempted murder was 146; that number declined steadily until

after the war, when it rose dramatically in 1922 to 219. The number rose to 637 in 1924 and fell again to 91 in 1926. There were no similar statistics for following years, so it is impossible to tell whether the drop in 1926 indicated a reversal of the postwar trend.

What is clear, even in 1926, is that the rate of *Anzeigen* was not tied to the murder rate.

The high number of complaints contrasted to the low number of convictions for the same crime: in 1924 the courts only prosecuted 46 cases of premeditated and unpremeditated murder.⁵¹ It is possible that citizens in 1924 might have been in part inspired by the Fritz Haarmann serial murder case in Hanover of that year.

While Weimar officials often complained about a lack of public interest and support in solving capital crimes,⁵² just as often they complained that the wheels of justice were clogged with false leads and spurious incriminations made by concerned or spiteful citizens.⁵³ Police found it difficult to discipline citizens' often enthusiastic participation in criminal investigations to the needs of the state. Scholars have found this uncontrolled nature of denunciatory behavior in authoritarian regimes as well. As Fitzpatrick has pointed out, even in totalizing regimes such as the Soviet Union, state agencies were often frustrated and overwhelmed by the accusations filed by citizens.⁵⁴ Similarly, in 1934 the Gestapo was inundated with denunciations of political crimes – so much so that the Reich Minister of the Interior demanded that steps be taken to reduce the number of charges brought to the police.⁵⁵ In the 1920s and 1930s, police frustration criminal-justice experts deeply mistrusted the ability of even the most truthful citizen to accurately recall and relate observed phenomena.⁵⁶ These were the fundamental contradictions in the partnership between police and public promoted by officials such as Weiss. The panoptic ideal was hampered by the very way in which the German public

was perceived by officials as well as by newspaper editors and reporters, who saw urban dwellers at once as rational citizens and irrational sensation-seekers. Police officials had to rely on the observatory powers of citizens whom they ultimately did not trust, while newspapers sought to appeal to both the sense of justice and the longing for sensation of the Berlin public.⁵⁷ Even Fritz Lang, whose film 'M' captured the essence of the societal panopticon advocated by police, was skeptical of the omnipotence and omnipresence of the 'gaze.' In his film it is ultimately a blind man who identifies the murderer, and the objective gaze of the camera yields in the end to a sympathetic view of the criminal.⁵⁸

These contradictions within the public culture of policing created a space for behavior that worked against the disciplinary goals of the state. A key reason the number of participants in criminal investigations far exceeded the number of witnesses with useful information was that the accusatory practices in criminal investigations were easily manipulated to suit personal agendas. Just as the Gestapo dealt with vindictive denunciations, so too did the criminal police of Weimar Berlin. Police officials were very familiar with this popular practice of using police investigations in interpersonal conflicts, as it was common in murder investigations for persons innocent of the crime to be implicated by jealous spouses, vindictive neighbors, angered creditors, or the like.⁵⁹ One particularly instructive case in this regard involved the denunciation of a woman in 1931 for the 1921 death of her son. The woman's child had died of liver failure after a long and complicated illness. In 1931, the estranged wife of the woman's former lover reported to police that the woman had actually murdered her child. Later, in 1935, the woman was denounced again, by the same individual, for allegedly having conspired to murder the denouncer. Police determined the allegations to be false.⁶⁰ Such examples

illustrate that criminal investigations were, like political denunciations, instrumentalized for selfish purposes.

To speak of a culture of ‘mutual surveillance’ in the Weimar period, then, is to speak of a set of institutions and practices designed to encourage citizens to observe and report criminally suspicious behavior to the state. Police experts as well as the popular media promoted the notion that such surveillance was necessary by propagating the notion that society and individuals needed protection from dangerous criminals. In this the criminal police were often very successful, even though citizens did not always participate in ways that the police expected or even desired. Like political policing in the Nazi regime, criminal policing in Weimar society created a space for state-societal interaction that could serve the often conflicting ends of the state and its citizens.

‘What does ‘Langu’ mean?’: A Case Study in Criminal Denunciation

A particularly illustrative case study in criminal denunciation suggests a continuity between the Weimar and Nazi periods. In January 1931 the body of 81 year-old bachelor Jakob Freudenheim was discovered in the elderly bachelor’s apartment on Heinrich-Roller-Straße in north Berlin. There had been no sign of forced entry and the only potential clue as to the identity of the murderer was an envelope found on the floor next to the body on which was scrawled in blue pencil the cryptic word ‘Langu’. The detectives very quickly settled on a radio technician because he was a stranger to the neighborhood who was known to have visited Freudenheim’s apartment shortly before Freudenheim’s murder. At the same time, many residents of the community were

determined to find the culprit among their neighbors. That the investigators were never able to prove the radio technician was the murderer and failed to produce another viable suspect fueled the investigative zeal of the neighbors Freudenheim had left behind. For at least five years after Freudenheim's body was first found and police officials had all but given up on solving the murder, neighbors would keep the investigation alive by taking part in rounds of mutual incriminations and accusations that can only be described as a microcosm of denunciation. Like the many German citizens who denounced their neighbors to the Gestapo for having violated political and racial purity laws, the residents of Heinrich-Roller-Straße engaged in malicious and idle rumor, vindictive denunciation, and strategic use of the state to mediate their interpersonal conflicts. The investigation lasted from January 1931, to at least 1936, when the last recorded report was made to officials by residents of the neighborhood. The record of witness statements and police reports permit a close examination of the ways in which citizens interacted with one another and with the state in the process of the criminal investigation.

The residents of Heinrich-Roller-Strasse were undoubtedly curious and excited to read of their neighborhood murder in the pages of the Berlin dailies. As in many other murder investigations of the period, the press sensationalized the Freudenheim murder to attract public attention to the case and enlist the aid of citizens in solving the murder. The Freudenheim murder was one of the several in the 'murder spree' of January 1931 that the popular tabloid *Tempo* used as the context for its reward contest that year. The aspect of the Freudenheim case that attracted the most attention was the envelope discovered on the floor next to the body with the strange word 'Langu' scrawled on it. Several of Berlin's dailies ran headlines that asked, 'What does "Langu" mean?' and speculated

divergently that it was Spanish, Esperanto, or Hebrew for ‘Don’t stab!’⁶¹ Prompted by the publicity surrounding the mysterious note, citizens reported to officials their own theories about what ‘Langu’ could mean. One man wrote to police that ‘Langu’ was Lithuanian for ‘window.’⁶² A reader of the *BZ am Mittag* wrote from as far away as Koblenz to tell police that ‘Langu’ was an anagram of ‘Ungal [sic],’ which in Russian, he asserted, means ‘chased away.’⁶³ Despite efforts of these citizens to solve the mystery of the strange clue, its meaning was never determined.

The residents of Heinrich-Roller-Straße initially used the murder investigation to police the boundaries of their small community. Even as the official investigation focused on the radio technician (based on the statements of two witnesses who claimed to have seen an unidentified young man entering Freudenheim’s apartment) and on the theory that the murderer had been a stranger to the neighborhood, many living in the area turned their suspicions against those who were on the margins of the community who had not lived there long or who were unpopular. Lodgers in Freudenheim’s apartment building and the itinerant brother of a neighbor became objects of suspicion. The keeper of the local milk shop implicated a man whom he knew simply as ‘the bum’ because the man habitually borrowed money he never repaid. Freudenheim, the shopkeeper told police, had warned him about this ‘bum,’ whom his wife refused to serve because of his ‘strange demeanor.’ The man was also rumored to have become a gigolo.⁶⁴

The residents of Heinrich Roller- and the intersecting Winsstraße did not look exclusively at those on the margins of their community, however. One person who fell under immediate local suspicion was Alfred W.,⁶⁵ the husband of Freudenheim’s housekeeper, Else. Else lived with her husband Alfred on Heinrich-Roller-Straße, just

down the street from Freudenheim. Else and Alfred were immediate suspects because of their proximity to the victim and because they had the means and opportunity to commit the crime. Alfred, however, was able to produce an alibi for the time of the murder - an alibi confirmed by his neighbor, Hermann S., a jalousie maker who lived in Alfred's apartment house.⁶⁶ Despite Alfred's alibi, his neighbors persistently implicated him in their statements to police. In one such instance, a woman who lived in Freudenheim's building and whose husband had been one of the key eye witnesses to the stranger entering Freudenheim's apartment, reported to police that she knew from 'hearsay' that it was 'going around' that Alfred owned clothes just like those of the young man neighbors claimed to have seen with Freudenheim. She asked that her statement remain confidential because she did not want Alfred's wife to know she had made these incriminations.⁶⁷

For over a month, such rumors continued to circulate, and witnesses repeatedly pointed their fingers at Alfred and his family. The wife of the porter in Freudenheim's building telephoned police to indicate that the W. family 'appeared suspicious' because a man living with Alfred's brother Hermann on a nearby street fit the description of the young man reportedly seen with the victim the day before the murder.⁶⁸ Police determined that this allegation was false; no such man lived with Alfred's brother and mother.⁶⁹ The porter's wife was not the only one to turn a rumor into an allegation, and the investigation quickly turned into a game of finger pointing and vengeance. Less than a week after the porter's wife aired her suspicions to officials, another of Freudenheim's neighbors, Ida, made a confidential statement to police in which she also implicated Alfred W. Police did not take an official statement because Alfred had by this time established an alibi. However, Alfred's mother eventually found out about Ida's betrayal,

and promptly had a conversation of her own with the police in which she told the investigators that Ida's husband had a black coat and hat like the ones worn by the unidentified suspect – clothing which she herself had loaned Ida's husband for a funeral. Upon investigation, police discovered that most of her allegations were insupportable, and that the hat she had loaned Stark had been so small Stark had been unable to wear it.⁷⁰ While some of Freudenheim's neighbors may have genuinely feared a murderer was living in their midst, clearly the investigative process stimulated conflicts between others who could then use the police to mediate those conflicts.

The mutual incriminations and suspicions in the Freudenheim case did not trail off in 1931 as one might have expected. While officials exhausted their interest and resources in the case after their futile attempt to pin the crime on their prime suspect, the radio technician, residents of the Heinrich-Roller-Straße neighborhood continued for years to look among each other for the murderer. In September 1934, the mother of Alfred and Hermann W., informed officials that Ida had been overheard telling someone that could arrange to have her own husband Ernst incarcerated for the murder of Freudenheim.⁷¹ Police diligently sought to determine the reliability of this rumor, the source of which was a married couple in the neighborhood. The husband and wife claimed they had only been repeating what they had heard Ida herself say, but they also insisted that Ida's accusations were not to be believed. Ida, they told police, was ill-tempered, vindictive, and nasty to her husband and to others in the neighborhood. 'I hold the whole prattle as nothing but the gossip of Ida,' the husband said, 'and don't believe that there is any truth at all behind it.'⁷²

When police finally questioned Ernst in December, the suspect told his interrogators that he knew that he had been implicated in the Freudenheim murder. For about a year, he said, he had heard rumors circulating that said he was the murderer of Freudenheim, although he claimed not to know the source. For her part, Ida maintained that the whole thing had been a misunderstanding. She claimed that when she had suggested that she could have him arrested, she meant only if he had not been able to prove his alibi for the Freudenheim murder.⁷³ The assistant detective who investigated this new round of rumors determined that they could not be substantiated. The incrimination made by Alfred W.'s mother in September 1934 'might have a personal character,' he suggested. 'While [Ida and Ernst] and [Alfred W. and his family] had earlier socialized amicably, since the murder they are on bad terms.' The new round of allegations was a continuation of the incriminations made against the W. family in 1931, the officer wrote in his report.⁷⁴

The series of allegations continued into the spring of the following year, when the porter at Heinrich-Roller-Straße telephoned police to report something suspicious in the apartment recently vacated by Alfred W. According to the porter, a hole had been sawed into the floor of the apartment, which the porter surmised must have been made for the purposes of hiding something obtained through a criminal offence. An officer went to the apartment building, where Hermann S. – Alfred's alibi – told him that in March, before the W. family had vacated their apartment, he had observed Alfred and his brother standing at a window looking at an 'object' and 'laughing.' Hermann S. believed that 'this object - which he [Hermann] in any case could not describe - could be connected to the Freudenheim murder case.'⁷⁵ Investigators, though apparently aware of the

speciousness of the incrimination, were compelled to do at least a cursory investigation of the charges, and determined that they were groundless.⁷⁶ Thus ended an ultimately fruitless murder investigation that appeared to have been driven more by the victim's neighbors than by detectives.

Conclusion

Seen in the context of the accusations and mutual incriminations that took place in the months immediately following the murder, the rumors and allegations made between January 1931 and 1936 suggest a continuity of 'accusatory practices' bridging the January 1933 divide. To what extent was the accusatory behavior embraced by Freudenheim's neighbors and encouraged by the police the legacy of the authoritarian Kaiserreich? After all, already by the end of the nineteenth century Germans were very familiar with institutions of a police state.⁷⁷ Might the behavior of the residents of Heinrich-Roller-Straße be evidence of the failure of liberal state institutions to establish themselves securely in German society? At a conference held in Rothenburg in 2000, scholars interested in the problem of denunciation concurred that denunciatory behavior is most pronounced in dictatorial regimes where there is no clear division between state and society. Gerhard Paul summarizes their conclusions by writing that 'although societies with established traditions of civil society and a critical relationship between state and society are also in no way safe from denunciation and also in part consciously encourage citizens in accusatory behavior, it remains a civilizing function of the modern state structurally not to encourage its citizens to denunciation.'⁷⁸

Yet officials in the criminal police in Berlin in the 1920s self-consciously styled themselves as modernizers in the field of crime prevention and crime detection. Many, including Bernhard Weiss, also presented themselves as servants of a republican citizenry. It was precisely these two aspects of the development of the Weimar police that led to the fostering of the accusatory practices described above. The escalation of public surveillance against actual and potential criminal transgressors -- murderers, thieves, child molesters, or merely 'asocials' -- was a byproduct of the modern state, even though its implications bore little resemblance to the kind of bourgeois liberalism often associated with 'modern' state systems.

The accusatory practices of the Third Reich were not, or at least not only, the result of authoritarian state power working its way downward through the populace. Rather, they developed in a cultural context in which citizens were already accustomed to the message that they should be operating as the eyes and ears of the police and in which many citizens both took the message seriously and used the opportunity to further their own personal agendas. Participating in that culture, Freudenheim's neighbors appear to have been less interested in finding his killer than in how they use the police to intervene in their interpersonal relations. Detectives of the Berlin homicide squad never did catch the murderer. But they did learn, as the Gestapo would after them, that knowledge, whether based on fact or fiction, has power no matter who produces it.

 Notes

¹ For a useful examination of the historiography, see Robert Gellately, 'Denunciation as a Subject of Historical Research,' in *Historical Social Research* 26:2/3 (2001): 16-19 and Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul, 'Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent? Gestapo, society, and resistance,' in *Nazism and German Society*, ed. David Crew, *Rewriting Histories* (London and New York, 1994), 166-196. See also Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1935-1945* (Oxford, 1990), esp. 129-157; Reinhard Mann, *Protest und Kontrolle im Dritten Reich. Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft im Alltag einer rheinischen Grossstadt* (Frankfurt am Main and New York: 1987).

² Gerhard Paul and Klaus-Michael Mallmann, eds., *Die Gestapo - Mythos und Realität* (Darmstadt, 1995); Gerhard Paul, *Die Gestapo in Schleswig-Holstein* (Hamburg: 1996); Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler : Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford and New York, 2001). For the classic work on the Gestapo that perpetuated the notion of omnipotence and efficiency, see Jacque Delarue, *Geschichte der Gestapo* (Düsseldorf: 1964).

³ Eric A. Johnson, *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); Bernward Dörner, 'NS-Herrschaft und Denunziation. Anmerkungen zu Defiziten in der Denunziationsforschung,' *Historical Social Research*, 26, 2/3 (2001), 55-69. Dörner's own research demonstrates the widespread practice of denunciation in German society. See his *Heimtücke: Das Gesetz als Waffe. Kontrolle, Abschreckung und Verfolgung in Deutschland 1933-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998).

⁴ Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, 'Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History', Fitzpatrick and Gellately, eds., *Accusatory Practices: Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789-1989* (Chicago, 1997), 21.

⁵ Gellately, 'Denunciation as a Subject of Historical Research,' 16-17.

⁶ Quoted in Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933-1945* (Oxford, 1990), 139.

⁷ Fitzpatrick and Gellately, 18.

⁸ See, for example, the essays in *Denunziatend der Neuzeit: Politische Teilnahme oder Selbstüberwachung*, special issue of *Sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen* 27:2 (1998) and Inge Marsolek and Olaf Stieglitz, eds., 'Denunziation im 20. Jahrhundert: Zwischen Komparatistik und Interdisziplinarität (Denunciation in the 20th Century: Between Comparatistic and Interdisciplinarity),' special issue of *Historische Sozialforschung (Historical Social Research)* (26:2-3 (2001)).

⁹ Pamela Swett, 'Denunziation und (Selbst-) Disziplinierung: Straßenzellen der Berliner KPD, 1929-1932,' *Sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen* 27:2 (1998), 126-131.; Gerd Krüger, 'Straffreie Selbstjustiz: Öffentliche Denunzierungen im Ruhrgebiet, 1923-1926,' *Sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen* 27:2 (1998), 119-125. In Allied occupied Bavaria, citizens rarely informed police of black market activities, but there was a high incidence of informing on women for suspected prostitution. Citizens were also quite willing to summon police to solve neighborly differences. Gerhard Fürmetz, 'Last oder Hilfe für die Polizei? Anzeigen, Meldungen und Denunziationen im Nachkriegsbayern,' *Sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen* 27:2 (1998), 138-143.

¹⁰ Dirk Blasius, *Kriminalität und Alltag. Zur Konfliktgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: 1978).

¹¹ Gerhard Sälter, 'Denunziation - Staatliche Verfolgungspraxis und Anzeigeverhalten der Bevölkerung,' *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 47:2 (1999), 153. Translation mine. Gellately makes a similar argument in Gellately, 'Denunciations in Twentieth-Century Germany,' in Fitzpatrick and Gellately, eds., *Accusatory Practices*, 186.

¹² Liang, op. cit., 125-127.

¹³ Liang, op.cit., 158-159. See also Weiss's *Polizei und Politik* (1928).

¹⁴ Patrick Wagner, *Hitlers Kriminalisten. Die deutsche kriminalpolizei und die Nationalsozialismus zwischen 1920 und 1960* (Munich, 2002), 80-87.

¹⁵ Patrick Wagner, *Volksgemeinschaft ohne Verbrecher. Konzeptionen u. Praxis der Kriminalpolizei in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik und des Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg, 1996); Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 90-120; Nikolaus Wachsmann, 'From Indefinite Confinement to Extermination: Habitual Criminals' in the Third Reich', in Robert Gellately and Nathan Stolfus, eds, *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, 2001), 165-191.

¹⁶ Hsi-Huey Liang, *The Berlin Police Force in the Weimar Republic* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 6.

¹⁷ Liang, op. cit., 16-17.

¹⁸ Wagner, op. cit.; Richard Bessel, 'Policing, Professionalization, and Politics in Weimar Germany,' in Clive Emsley and Barbara Weinberger, eds., *Policing Western Europe: Politics, Professionalization, and Public Order, 1850-1940* (New York, 1991); Richard Bessel, 'Militarisierung und Modernisierung. Polizeiliches Handeln in der Weimarer Republik,' in Alf Lütke, ed., *'Sicherheit' und 'Wohlfahrt'. Polizei, Gesellschaft und Herrschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), 323-343; Andreas Roth, *Kriminalitätsbekämpfung in deutschen Großstädten 1850-1914. Quellen und Forschungen zur Strafrechtsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1997).

¹⁹ Richard Bessel, *Germany After the First World War* (Oxford, 1993), 241-253; Moritz Liepmann, *Krieg und Kriminalität in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, Berlin, and Leipzig, 1930); Sace Elder, 'Murder Scenes: Criminal Violence in the Public Culture and Private Lives of Weimar Berlin,' Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2002), 26-66.

²⁰ Wagner, op. cit., 79-107.

²¹ Ernst von den Bergh, *Polizei und Volk. Seelische Zusammenhänge*, Die Polizei in Einzeldarstellung, v. 1 (Berlin: Gersbach & Sohn, 1926), 116. In many regards the Berlin police retained its militaristic character, especially the Schutzpolizei. See Bessel, 'Militarisierung und Modernisierung. Polizeiliches Handeln in der Weimarer Republik.'

²² Robert Gellately, 'Allwissend und allgegenwärtig? Entstehung, Funktion und Wechsel des Gestapo-Mythos,' in Gerhard Paul and Klaus-Michael Mallmann, eds., *Die Gestapo: Mythos und Realität* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995),

²³ On the debates about the use of force by police in obtaining statements, see 'Zeugen' in Fritz Stier-Somlo and Alexander Elster, ed., *Handwörterbuch der Rechtswissenschaft* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1920), vol. 6; Karl Friedrichs, 'Das Recht des polizeiliche Vernehmung,' *Archiv für Strafrecht und Strafprozess* 54 (1907): 394-407; Albert Hellwig, 'Zur Psychologie der polizeilichen Vernehmungstechnik und ihrer Würdigung durch den Richter,' *Die Polizei* 25,3 (1928): 72-73.

²⁴ Stargardt, 'Polizeiliche Ermittlungen. Wünsche und Winke,' *Kriminalistische Monatshefte* 6,1 (1932): 6-12. On the inappropriateness of police brutality on the part of the German political police in the *Rechtstaat*, see Weiss, *Polizei und Politik*, 123-128.

²⁵ Bernhard Weiss, 'Der Fall Haarmann', *Archiv für Kriminologie* 76, 3 (November 1924), 161-174.

²⁶ Anton Kaes, "The Cold Gaze: Notes on Mobilization and Modernity," *New German Critique*, 59 (Spring/Summer 1993): 114-115.

²⁷ Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), esp. and Philipp Müller, 'Journalistische Vermittlung und ihre Aneignung. Die öffentlichen Verhandlungen über Wilhelm Voigt alias Hauptmann von Köpenick in Berlin 1906/08,' *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 13(2): 2002, 35-55.

²⁸ Albert Weingart, *Kriminaltaktik. Ein Handbuch für das Untersuchen von Verbrechen* (Leipzig, 1904), 42. The press also exerted a significant influence on the criminal-justice system in the Wilhelmine period. See Benjamin Hett, *Death in the Tiergarten: Murder and Criminal Justice in the Kaiser's Berlin* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004).

²⁹ See Marie-Christine Leps, *Apprehending the Criminal: The Production of Deviance in Nineteenth-Century Discourse*, Post-Contemporary Interventions (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1992); Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1996)

³⁰ Andy Croll, 'Street Disorder, Surveillance and Shame: Regulating Behavior in the Public Spaces of the Late Victorian British Town,' *Social History* 1999 24 (3): 250-268.

³¹ Gideon Reuveni, 'Lesen und Konsum: Der Aufstieg der Konsumkultur in Presse und Werbung Deutschlands bis 1933,' *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 41 (2001), 97-117.

³² Liang, op. cit., 117.

³³ Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge and London, 1996), 84; Hall, op. cit.

³⁴ Robert Heindl, *Polizei und Verbrechen*, Die Polizei in Einzeldarstellung, Wilhelm Abegg, ed., volume 4 (Berlin: Gersbach & Sohn, 1926), 116-121.

³⁵ Ernst Gennat, 'Die Düsseldorf Sexualverbrechen (Fortsetzung und Schluß),' *Kriminalistische Monatshefte* 4:4 (1930), 82 and Gennat, "Der Kürtenprozess," *Kriminalistische Monatshefte* 5:6 (June 1931), 132-33.

³⁶ Wagner, op. cit., 107-108.

³⁷ K.C. Führer, 'Auf dem Wege zur Massenkultur? Kino und Rundfunk in der Weimarer Republik,' *Historische Zeitschrift* 262:3 (1996): 739-781.

³⁸ LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 1753, Bl. 8.

³⁹ Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001); Vanessa Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley, 1998);

⁴⁰ Erich Liebermann von Sonnenburg and Otto Trettin, *Continental Crimes [Kriminalfälle]*, trans. Winifred Ray (London, 1935).

⁴¹ 'Frauenmord an Leibnitzstrasse,' *Berliner Morgenpost* (BMP) 10 July 1924.

⁴² Oskar Dressler, ed., *Große Polizei-Ausstellung im Wort und Bild. Internationaler Polizeikongress* (Vienna, 1927), 33-38.

⁴³ Sara Frances Hall, "Subject under Investigation: Weimar Culture and the Police" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 2000).

⁴⁴ BMP 15 February 1931.

⁴⁵ 'Der Mord an der Greisen in der Lutherstraße. Einige Spuren...,' 8-Uhr Abendblatt, 24 October 1932, in ⁴⁵ LAB A Rep. 030-03 Tit. 198B (Mordkommission), Nr. 1178. (Formerly housed at the Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv, Pr. Br. Rep. 30 Berlin C Tit. 198B.)

⁴⁶ LAB A Rep. 030-03 Tit. 198B Nr., 504, Nr. 496, Nr. 522.

⁴⁷ Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A Rep. 358-01 (*Generalstaatsanwaltschaft des Landgericht Berlin*), Nr. 2484.

⁴⁸ LAB A Rep. 030-03 Tit. 198B (Mordkommission), Nr. 521. (Formerly housed at the Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv Pr. Br. Rep. 30 Berlin C Tit. 198B).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ LAB A Rep. 030-03 Tit. 198B, Nr. 1357.

⁵¹ *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Berlin*, 1923, 1924, and 1925. In 1926, that number decreased to 91.

⁵² LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 2198, Bl. 224.

⁵³ Gennat, 'Die Düsseldorf Sexualverbrechen,' 81; LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 581: Bericht, 22 June 1927.

⁵⁴ Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation in the 1930s,' in *Accusatory Practices*, ed. Gellately and Fitzpatrick (1997), 84-120.

⁵⁵ Gellately, *Gestapo and German Society*, 139.

⁵⁶ For example, Kleinschmidt, 'Wahrheit und Irrtum im polizeilichen Ermittlungsverfahren,'" *Kriminalistische Monatshefte* 6:10 (1932): 225-227; Ernst Gennat, 'Vernehmungen – Kriminalistische Strategie und Technik,' *Kriminalistische Monatshefte* 3:5 (1929): 101-105; William Stern, 'Aussagestudium,' in William Stern, ed., *Beiträge zur Psychologie der Aussage* (Leipzig, 1903/04); Adolf Stöhr, *Psychologie der Aussage* (Berlin, 1911).

⁵⁷ Marie-Christine Leps argues that the press of the nineteenth century in France and England 'worked to incite, entertain, and distract the public into recognition of hegemonic truths' about criminally deviant behavior. See Leps, op. cit., 132.

⁵⁸ See Kaes, op. cit., 116-117.

⁵⁹ Investigations of the unrelated 1927 murders of Margaete Keding and Frieda Ahrendt, for example, both led estranged wives to implicate their husbands to police. LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 477: Transcript, 20 November 1930; LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 551: witness statement, 7 April 1927.

⁶⁰ LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 1355, Bl. 1-16.

⁶¹ BMP, 24 January 1931; *Tempo*, 26 January 1931; Walther Kiaulehn, 'Warum Monteur Klein wieder freigelassen werden musste,' *BZ am Mittag*, 9 March 1931 and 'Ein Selbstmord rettete Monteur Klein,' *BZ am Mittag*, 10 March 1931.

⁶² LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 1364: Willi Rolligänger to Polizeipräsidium, 12 March 1931.

⁶³ LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 1364: Note recorded by Kriminal-Sekretär Gröbel, 11 March 1931.

⁶⁴ LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 1424: witness statement, 7 February 1931.

⁶⁵ To protect the identities of those involved, I have chosen to abbreviate the last names of those who do not appear in the newspaper accounts of the case.

⁶⁶ Ibid: Mordkommission Freudenheim 11 February 1931.

⁶⁷ Ibid: witness statement 27 January 1931.

⁶⁸ LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 1364: Vermerk, 7 March 1931.

⁶⁹ Ibid: Vermerk, 9 March 1931.

⁷⁰ LAB A Rep. 030-03, Tit. 198B, Nr. 481: Bericht, 6 December 1934.

⁷¹ Ibid., witness statement, 13 September 1934.

⁷² Ibid.: witness statements, 28 September 1934 and 1 October 1934.

⁷³ Ibid.: witness statement, 5 November 1934.

⁷⁴ Ibid.: Bericht, 6 December 1934.

⁷⁵ Ibid.: Bericht, 4 April 1935.

⁷⁶ Ibid.: Vermerk, 9 November 1936.

⁷⁷ On the development of the Prussian police, see Albrecht Funk, *Polizei und Rechtsstaat: Die Entwicklung des Staatlichen Gewaltmonopol in Preußen, 1848-1918* (Frankfurt am Main and New York: 1986); Alf Lüdtkte, *'Gemeinwohl' und 'Festungspraxis. Staatliche Gewaltsamkeit und innere Verwaltung in Preußen, 1815-1850* (Göttingen: 1982); and the relevant articles in Lüdtkte, ed., *'Sicherheit' und 'Wohlfahrt.' Polizei, Gesellschaft und Herrschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992).

⁷⁸ Gerhard Paul, 'Denunziation - anthropologische Konstante oder kulturelles Phänomen? Eine Tagung vom 10. bis 13. Oktober 2000 in Rothenberg ob der Tauber,' *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 48:12 (2000): 1104. Translation mine.