

Homophobic Propaganda and the Denunciation of Same-Sex-Desiring Men under National Socialism

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Because after all it had been made explicitly clear to us that we must do away with such things.

Testimony of Else K. to the criminal police, July 10, 1934

IN 1935, UNDER THE GUISE of wide-ranging legal reforms, the National Socialist regime in Germany stiffened the provisions of Paragraph 175 and introduced a new subclause (Paragraph 175a) that laid the legal groundwork for increasingly radical measures against homosexual behavior. Such behavior became subject to harsh persecution, as many thousands of men were sentenced to prison terms or penal servitude, incarcerated in psychiatric institutions, and castrated or murdered in concentration camps.

The radicalization of the Nazi regime's persecution of male homosexual behavior took effect at different rates across the various regions of the German Reich. In Prussia the homosexual movement was dealt a crippling blow as early as 1933, when the government banned the *Freundschaftblätter* (friendship bulletins) that had been published in Berlin for same-sex-desiring men and women and disbanded the Berlin-based homosexual organizations. This had the effect of undermining the communication network that was essential to the organizational efforts of associations of same-sex-desiring persons across Germany.¹ In that same year, in urban areas of Prussia, many pubs frequented by same-sex-desiring persons were shut down. In

¹Little is known regarding the dissolution of the federations. On this topic, see Stefan Micheler, "Kampf, Kontakt, Kultur: Die Freundschaftsverbände gleichgeschlechtlich begehrender Männer und Frauen in der Weimarer Republik in Norddeutschland. Ein Werkstattbericht," in *Querschnitt—Gender Studies: Ein interdisziplinärer Blick nicht nur auf Homosexualität*, ed. Paul M. Hahlbohm and Till Hurlin (Kiel, 2001), 42–81.

Hamburg, on the other hand, similar pubs remained in business until the summer of 1936. However, by 1936 at the latest, a harsh and comprehensive policy of persecution had taken hold across the German Reich. Its aim was to eliminate homosexuality from the public sphere. Bars and public lavatories in a number of cities were raided by the police. Police permission for cross-dressing in women's clothing was withdrawn, and transvestites and male prostitutes were subjected to internment in concentration camps.

The National Socialist regime's professed goal was to eradicate homosexual behavior and not the "homosexual" per se, although the end result was often the same.² Like other minorities, "homosexuals," who were deemed degenerate and unhealthy, could not be assimilated into the Aryan German ideal.³ "Alien to the species," they were excluded from the *Volksgemeinschaft* (Volk community) and exposed to slander and persecution. Homosexual behavior was regarded as inconsistent with National Socialist population policies on several grounds. Men who engaged in it were unlikely to fulfill their duty to reproduce and were thus "population policy zeros"; such men might pass on to their offspring a "constitutional predisposition to homosexuality";⁴ and such men were the antithesis of the National Socialist masculine ideal, which linked manliness to physical and mental strength, heroism, and a capacity for self-sacrifice—an ideal that achieved its apotheosis in the figure of the soldier. Unlike this ideal figure, "homosexual" men were soft, effeminate, and unable to exert the control over physical urges that was necessary to uphold civil society.⁵

These ascriptions were not new but had their basis in traditional stereotypes that date back to late-nineteenth-century constructions of the

²Burkhard Jellonnek first developed this thesis in his dissertation, "Homosexuelle unter dem Hakenkreuz: Die Verfolgung von Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich" (Paderborn, 1990), 327. See also Harry Oosterhuis, "Reinheit und Verfolgung: Männerbünde, Homosexualität und Politik in Deutschland (1900–1945)," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 5, no. 3 (1994): 388–409, and the nearly identical English version of this essay, "Medicine, Male Bonding and Homosexuality in Nazi Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 32 (1997): 187–205. However, the empirical basis for these arguments was established as early as 1977 by scholars who refuted the notion of a "homocaust," an idea that had been awarded wide currency by German gay groups in the early 1970s. See Rüdiger Lautmann, Winfried Grikschat, and Egbert Schmidt, "Der rosa Winkel in den nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern," in *Seminar: Gesellschaft und Homosexualität: Mit Beiträgen v. Hanno Beth u.a.*, ed. Rüdiger Lautmann (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 325–65.

³Since many of the same-sex-desiring and -acting men I describe in my study would not have used the term "homosexual" to describe themselves, I enclose it in quotation marks. The term was based on a late-nineteenth-century construction of the "homosexual personality," and it would be ahistorical and incorrect to describe all same-sex-desiring men from earlier and later periods simply as "homosexual." In my sources, when the term "homosexual" is used, this generally refers to "homosexual men."

⁴My research on Hamburg criminal justice files demonstrates that many same-sex-desiring men were married and had children. These men did not ordinarily identify as "homosexuals."

⁵To date there have been few studies of masculinity under the National Socialist regime. The groundbreaking theoretical works on the topic remain the studies by George Mosse

“homosexual personality.” However, while many same-sex-desiring men in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany had developed and articulated a variety of models of subjectivity and identity that survived into the Nazi era, the stereotype of the “homosexual” as “effeminate and degenerate,” “depraved,” and “corrupt” became the unifying view of the “homosexual personality” and a focus for homophobic hostility.⁶ So too did another common stereotype, that of the “seducer” and “corrupter” of youth (*Jugendverführer* and *Jugendverderber*), a uniquely dangerous figure who lured “normal” young men into depravity and thus spread the “epidemic” of homosexuality.⁷ In addition, after the overthrow of Ernst Röhm and his associates within the Sturmabteilung (SA) and the attendant rise of Heinrich Himmler and the Schutzstaffel (SS) in 1934, the rumor that “homosexual cliques” planned to seize power took hold, giving “homosexuals” another identity as “enemies of the state.”⁸ Indeed, as Rüdiger Lautmann, Winfried Grikschat, and Egbert Schmidt have pointed out, in helping to marginalize the sexual within the movement’s masculine fraternal order, homophobia played a key role in stabilizing the National Socialist regime.⁹

All in all, the Nazi regime was characterized by contradictory attitudes toward homosexuality. Such contradictions became particularly evident in the medical profession’s “search for the roots” of homosexuality and the attendant search for a “homosexual cure.” Conflicts were also evident in the struggle between the police and legal apparatus over jurisdiction over the prosecution of “homosexuals.”¹⁰

and Klaus Theweleit. In my opinion, however, Theweleit’s analysis must be regarded as at least somewhat homophobic, since he assumes that homosexuality had a “structural importance” in “the functioning and maintenance of the National Socialist system of rule” and fails to distinguish adequately between ideas linked with masculinist associations and homosexual behaviors. See George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York, 1985); Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York, 1996); and Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien*, 2 vols. (Reinbek, 1977).

⁶The designation of a particular behavior as “masculine” or “unmanly” has little to do with any universal gender order but varies among individuals, societies, and cultures. As the Hamburg criminal justice records demonstrate, the designations of behavior varied widely even under National Socialism. In some instances, it was deemed “particularly masculine” or “manly” to make a complete confession; in other instances, the same behavior was interpreted by policemen, prosecutors, and judges as a “female desire for gossip.”

⁷On the stereotype of the “corruptor of youth,” see Jürgen Müller, “Ausgrenzung der Homosexuellen aus der Volksgemeinschaft: Homosexuellenverfolgung im Nationalsozialismus am Beispiel der Stadt Köln” (thesis, Universität-Gesamthochschule Duisburg, 2001), 165–70.

⁸Peter von Rönn, “Politische und psychiatrische Homosexualitätskonstruktion im NS-Staat. Teil I: Die politische Genese des Homosexuellen als Staatsfeind,” *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung* 11 (1998): 99–129; and von Rönn, “Teil II: Die soziale Genese der Homosexualität als defizitäre Heterosexualität,” *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung* 11 (1998): 220–60.

⁹Lautmann, Grikschat, and Schmidt, 359.

In their persecution of same-sex-desiring individuals, the National Socialist regime relied upon a tradition of homophobia that was deeply rooted in German society and both preceded and outlived Nazi rule. Homosexual activities between men or women were incompatible with traditional notions of morality and respectability and with the gender ideology of a patriarchal, heteronormative bourgeois society. In its persecution of homosexuality, therefore, the Nazi regime was able to “depict itself as the bastion of bourgeois respectability.”¹¹ As was the case in the regime’s euthanasia, forced sterilization, and castration programs and in the persecution and murder of Jews, the policies and ideas enacted by the Nazi regime were a radical extension of measures that had already been proposed prior to 1933.

Despite the recent increase in the number of studies relating to the persecution of same-sex-desiring men and women under National Socialism, the topic remains marginal to much historical work on the Nazi era, particularly when compared to historical studies of other categories of victims. How did representations of homosexuality in public discourse change between the era of the Weimar Republic and that of National Socialism? What role did homosexuality play in daily discourse? What role did stereotypes play in the functioning of homophobic propaganda?¹² How significant was the practice of denunciation in the persecution of same-sex-desiring men?¹³ Although historical scholarship in the field has touched upon these questions, the interrelationships of these issues have yet to be considered in a systematic fashion. This essay proposes to remedy this gap in historical scholarship.

This study will focus on evidence from Hamburg, which, as a seaport and the second largest city in the Reich, was reputed to be a “homosexual stronghold.” For my analysis of public discourse, I shall consider three

¹⁰See von Rönn, “Teil II.”

¹¹Frank Sparing, “... wegen Vergehen nach §175 verhaftet”: *Die Verfolgung der Düsseldorfer Homosexuellen während des Nationalsozialismus* (Düsseldorf, 1997), 54. See also Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 157–58, 164–65.

¹²By the terms “homophobia” and “homophobic,” I do not intend to connote “fear” in the medical or psychological sense of the term but, rather, “hostility” and “rejection” in a social and political sense.

The important studies of the press and propaganda under National Socialism are Oron J. Hale, *The Captive Press in the Third Reich* (Princeton, 1964); Zbynek A. B. Zeman, *Nazi Propaganda* (London, 1964); Joseph Wulf, *Presse und Funk im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Gütersloh, 1964); Jürgen Hagemann, *Die Presselenkung im Dritten Reich* (Bonn, 1970); Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent: Bavaria, 1933–1945* (Oxford, 1985); and Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*, 3rd ed. (Munich, 1999). In these studies, the problem of “homophobia” is barely discussed.

¹³The past few decades have witnessed an increase in the number of publications on the historical significance of denunciation. Two address the subject comparatively: Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, eds., *Accusatory Practices: Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789–1989* (Chicago, 1997); Günter Jerouschek, Inge Marßolek, and Hedwig

Hamburg newspapers, including the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, one of the largest German newspapers, with a wide readership both within Germany and abroad.¹⁴ I shall also examine contemporary reference works, the Sopade's *Deutschland-Berichte* (the reports on the German Reich by the executive board of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands [SPD] in exile, which were based on reports provided by informants within Germany), and reports issued by the Reich's Sicherheitshauptamt (Central Security Office). Finally, to examine the phenomenon of denunciation, I shall draw upon the Hamburg criminal justice records, sources that offer a rich base of evidence for the larger history of National Socialist persecution as well as important evidence for social history, the history of everyday life, and the history of mentalities. My goal is to develop a more nuanced and refined chronology of the evolution of homophobic propaganda and its dissemination, to specify more precisely the stereotypes that were mobilized against those classed as "homosexual," and to investigate the relationships between regime propaganda and denunciations at the grass roots. To the extent that future comparative research qualifies my study, any differences are likely to be the result of regional variations in the application of administrative measures rather than in mentality.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON HOMOSEXUALITY
FROM THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC TO THE NAZI STATE

Popular representations of homosexuality varied widely in the Weimar Republic. This is true within broad public discourse as well as in the specialized, professional discourses of law, criminology, medicine, and sexology. In addition, same-sex-desiring men and women contributed their own knowledge and perspective to the other discourses on homosexuality.

The variety of attitudes toward homosexuality is evident in contemporary encyclopedia articles on the topic, in which depictions of homosexuality range from harsh portrayals of pathology and moral condemnation to toleration tinged with pity. (Although they professed to include female homosexuality, these reference essays implicitly focus on theories and concepts relevant to male homosexuality.) The fifteenth edition of the *Große Brockhaus* (published between 1928 and 1935), for example, refers to

Röckelein, eds., *Denunziationen: Historische, juristische und psychologische Aspekte* (Tübingen, 1997). Others consider the problem specifically under National Socialism: Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933–1945* (Oxford, 1990); Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann, *Politische Denunziation im NS-Regime oder die kleine Macht der "Volksgeossen"* (Bonn, 1995); and Eric A. Johnson, *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (London, 2000).

¹⁴Hale, 2, 6. As a point of comparison, I shall also examine selected articles from newspapers published in other cities. I wish to thank Bettina Ramm of Hamburg for her assistance in analyzing the newspapers.

“individuals who suffer from homosexuality” and depicts the condition as abnormal and wholly pathological. The fourth edition of the *Große Herder* (published between 1931 and 1935) states: “[Homosexuality] is contrary to nature since it is inconsistent with the natural purpose of sexual intercourse.” This work also notes that sexual relations between men are prohibited by law (with Austrian law extending the prohibition to relations between women) and comments on the planned reform of the German penal code. In contrast, the seventh edition of *Meyers Lexikon* (published between 1924 and 1930) expresses considerable empathy for homosexuals. It refers to “persons who often possess great intellectual and moral capacity” and “often experience severe emotional suffering” as a consequence of the social ostracism of “homosexuals.” The entry in *Meyers* cites as references the *Jahrbücher für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (Yearbook for the intermediate stages of sexuality); the Bund für Menschenrecht (BfM, or Alliance for Human Rights), an organization with a large membership of same-sex-desiring individuals; and the BfM’s publication, the *Blätter für Menschenrecht* (Journal of human rights). A separate lexical entry discusses the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee (Scientific Humanitarian Committee), the first homosexual rights organization, founded in 1897, while the supplemental volumes contain entries on transvestites and Magnus Hirschfeld, a leading sexologist and leader of the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee. However, even the *Meyers Lexikon* cannot be said to display a uniformly positive image of homosexuality as it, too, proffers “therapeutic advice.” Not a single reference article regards homosexuality as a “normal” phenomenon. All of them discuss whether homosexuality was a hereditary or an acquired trait and whether a “cure” or “remedy” for it might yet be found. Finally, all the articles link male homosexuality with “effeminacy” of mind and body, thus lending further support to the claim that it was a condition “contrary to nature.”¹⁵

The 1924 press accounts of the investigation and trial in Hanover of the serial sex-murderer Fritz Haarmann contain a similar spectrum of representations of male homosexuality, ranging from moral condemnation to pity, and even include isolated instances of acceptance.¹⁶ The investigation during the summer of 1924 and the ensuing trial in December were the

¹⁵“Homosexualität,” in *Der Große Brockhaus: Handbuch des Wissens in zwanzig Bänden*, 15th rev. ed., vol. 8 (Leipzig, 1931); “Homosexualität,” in *Der Große Herder: Nachschlagewerk für Wissen und Leben*, 4th rev. ed., vol. 6 (Freiburg/Breisgau, 1933); “Homosexualität,” in *Meyers Lexikon*, 7th rev. ed., vol. 5 (Leipzig, 1926); “Wissenschaftliches humanitäres Komitee,” in *Meyers Lexikon*, 7th rev. ed., vol. 12 (Leipzig, 1930); “Hirschfeld, Magnus,” in *Meyers Lexikon*, 7th rev. ed., vol. 14 (Leipzig, 1933); “Transvestiten,” in *Meyers Lexikon*, 7th rev. ed., vol. 15 (Leipzig, 1933).

¹⁶The shop assistant Fritz Haarmann (1879–1935) murdered between twenty-four and twenty-seven young men (age thirteen to twenty-one) during sexual intercourse, then dismembered their corpses and threw the bodies into the Leine. Haarmann was convicted of twenty-four counts of murder in December 1924 and executed in April 1925.

subject of extensive coverage in the Hamburg press as well as in other local and national newspapers. In many instances, the press reports display contradictory attitudes toward homosexuality, sometimes within a single newspaper. Some accounts, for example, depict “homosexuals” as “very peaceable and charming individuals,” noting that Haarmann was the first “homosexual sadist” murderer known to criminal history.¹⁷ The chief criminal inspector of Berlin, Dr. Koop, who assisted with the investigation, commented on the case in a similar manner: “Many are blaming homosexuals for these deeds. But homosexuals have as much and as little to do with this case as heterosexuals do with the Großmann mass murders.”¹⁸ Other accounts of the case, however, draw a connection between “sex killings” and homosexuality and use the case as a pretext to vilify homosexuality and the sexual permissiveness of the Weimar Republic. The conservative *Hamburger Nachrichten* refers to ten same-sex-desiring men arrested by the Hanover police as Haarmann’s “homosexually inclined comrades,” implicitly depicting them as accomplices in Haarmann’s deeds.¹⁹ A final press summary of the trial employs particularly hostile and extravagant language:

When several months ago the vile deeds of this beast in human form became known, when bones and skulls were fished out of the Leine, the populace was seized with horror. Many wondered, aghast, how it was possible that this monster, this ravager of morality and budding youth, could exercise his rage amongst our nation’s youth unnoticed for so long. The only possible explanation is the barbarity that has taken hold since the revolution, the licentiousness that Marxism has promoted throughout our schools, in the arts, and in our civic life.

The existence of the “bestial Haarmann” served as a warning to reject the “licentiousness and the degeneration of morals, the shameful propagandizing, and the wicked raging of Germans against Germans.”²⁰

The broad range of political and social attitudes toward homosexuality in the Weimar Republic stands out in the critical reviews of Richard Oswald’s and Magnus Hirschfeld’s educational film *Anders als die*

¹⁷“Der Fall Haarmann,” *Hamburger Anzeiger*, July 17, 1924, 2.

¹⁸“Der Fall des Massenmörders Haarmann: Drahtmeldung unserer Berliner Schriftleitung,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, July 20, 1924, morning ed., 2. In 1921 the butcher Georg Karl Großmann murdered up to twenty prostitutes in his Berlin apartment following sexual activities. Großmann dismembered the bodies and sold them as pork. Großmann was arrested in August 1921 and convicted of only three murders, since evidence was lacking for the rest. He was executed in 1931.

¹⁹“Provinz Hannover: Ein siebenfacher Lustmörder,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, July 3, 1924, morning ed., 3.

²⁰“Das Todesurteil gegen Haarmann und Grans,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, December 19, 1924, morning ed., 3.

Anderen—§ 175 (Different from the others—§ 175) and of other films, plays, and books.²¹ For both audience and critics, male and female homosexuality was a topic of interest within cinema, theater, literature, and the arts—a visible, if controversial, matter of public discourse. The majority of artistic and literary representations depicted homosexuality as “unnatural”; the rare positive representations were usually penned by same-sex-desiring persons themselves.

Although the 1920s were not as golden, liberal, or tolerant as has often been assumed, many heretofore marginal social groups, including same-sex-desiring men and women, were able to find a niche in the Weimar Republic and occupy positions of public influence. The sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld was highly renowned and able to publicize his views and those of the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee in the leftist and liberal press.²² Although the conservative press vilified and denounced Hirschfeld’s research, even this negative reportage helped publicize his research and political goals.

While the *Freundschaftsverbände* (friendship federations) of same-sex-desiring individuals received no mention in the popular press, their publications succeeded in drumming up “homophilic” publicity. Approximately twenty periodicals for same-sex-desiring men and women appeared between 1919 and 1933. According to their own sales figures, some of these were mass publications with a circulation of over 100,000. Occasionally, they sold out immediately upon publication. These periodicals were subject to censorship throughout the Weimar Republic, and some were placed on the index of banned books, but despite these repressive measures, most were published regularly, without interruption.²³

²¹The film was reviewed in at least four newspapers in Hamburg alone. The reviewer in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, which was associated with the German Democratic Party (Deutsche Demokratische Partei, or DDP), lauded the film’s objectivity and sensitivity. See “Theater, Kunst und Wissenschaft: Besprechung von ‘Anders als die anderen,’” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, August 20, 1919, evening ed., 8. See also the review by “L. B.” in the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, August 18, 1919; the review by “C. Wgr.” in the *Hamburger Volkszeitung*, August 18, 1919; and the review by “k.” in the *Generalanzeiger für Hamburg-Altona*, August 19, 1919.

²²Articles by the Wissenschaftliches humanitäres Komitee were published in the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung*, a paper affiliated with the KPD. See Richard Linsert, “Magnus Hirschfeld’s Lebenswerk: Zum 60. Geburtstag des Forschers,” *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung*, no. 21 (1928): 13; “Schmerzlust: Von Sanitätsrat Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld und Richard Linsert. Mit Aufnahmen aus einem Berliner Salon für ‘Individuelle Körperpflege,’” *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung*, no. 43 (1928): 4–5. I wish to thank Jens Schmidt of Hamburg for bringing this article to my attention. Schmidt examined the topic of masculinity in weekly magazines published over a span of several years under the Weimar Republic. See Jens Schmidt, *“Sich hart machen, wenn es gilt”: Männlichkeitskonzepte in Illustrierten der Weimarer Republik* (Münster, 2000), 81.

²³See Micheler, “Kampf, Kontakt, Kultur”; and Klaus Petersen, *Zensur in der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart, 1995).

The ascension of Adolf Hitler to the office of chancellor of the Reich and the seizure of the German government by the National Socialist coalition cabinet spelled the end to all positive representations of homosexuality and the death of the emancipatory movement of same-sex-desiring men and women in the German Reich. These developments appear in the professional discourses of law and medicine as well as in the popular media.

This transformation can be documented in *Meyers Lexikon*. In the seventh edition, published during the Weimar Republic, the entry on “homosexuality” largely reflects the views of the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee. But the eighth edition, published since 1936, denounces Magnus Hirschfeld as an “infamous ‘sex researcher’” and “Jew.” The Nazi-era *Meyers Lexikon* drew upon a law dissertation submitted in 1937 by the SS leader Rudolf Klare. This homophobic dissertation, which examined the legality of homosexual behavior, is the foundation for the encyclopedia article and is cited as a suggestion for further reading. According to the lexical entry, the majority of “homosexual” men “preferred boys and youths,” and homosexuality resulted from seduction. “Homosexuality must be regarded as a threat to the *Volk* community, since homosexuals exhibit a tendency to form cliques, seduce the young, and, above all, undermine the natural will to life by propagating an aversion to marriage and the family.” Despite its ostensible function as a neutral manual of reference, this article debated the political question of whether homosexuality should be subject to harsh punishment. With “lesbian love” more common than believed, the article continued, “the question arises whether in the future this should also be subjected to punishment.”²⁴ It appears that National Socialist Party officials and the state exerted direct influence over the content of some encyclopedia articles.²⁵ While it is impossible to determine whether the *Meyers* entry on homosexuality was subjected to such interference, the entry displays such striking similarities to Rudolf Klare’s views that it is certainly plausible that he authored it himself.

If the theme of male-male desire emerged in literature and the arts under National Socialism, it was implicit and desexualized—expressed as camaraderie, male friendship, and hero worship within the works of nationalistic authors.²⁶

²⁴“Hirschfeld, Magnus,” in *Meyers Lexikon*, 8th rev. ed., vol. 5 (Leipzig, 1938); Rudolf Klare, *Homosexualität und Strafrecht* (Hamburg, 1937); and “Homosexualität,” in *Meyers Lexikon*, 8th rev. ed., vol. 5 (Leipzig, 1938).

²⁵For example, the *Meyers Lexikon* entry on “Jews” was criticized and debated by both the Parteiamtlichen Prüfungskommission zum Schutze des NS-Schrifttums (Official Party Board of Examiners for the Protection of National Socialist Publications) as well as the Reich Central Security Office until finally a member of the SS Security Office, Dr. Six, was commissioned with writing a section of the article. See Bundesarchiv Berlin: R58/984 RSHA, 213–15, directive dated May 2, 1938, regarding the *Meyers Lexikon* article on “Jews.”

²⁶Christian Klein, *Schreiben im Schatten: Homoerotische Literatur im Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg, 2000). I find Klein’s methodology and his choice of terminology (“gays”) to

Under the Weimar Republic, occasional positive depictions of homosexuality had appeared in the essay section of newspapers, in science reportage, and in the coverage of the Haarmann case. But after the spring of 1933, when the Hamburg press was “coordinated” (*gleichgeschaltet*) with Nazi policy, either forcibly or voluntarily, such positive depictions disappeared.²⁷ Newspaper coverage thereafter referred to same-sex-desiring men only as criminals and did not mention female homosexuality.

In 1933, the Hamburg newspapers reported on the “Battle against Trash and Smut” and the “Battle against Public Immorality” waged by the police of Hamburg and Berlin. These campaigns entailed a ban on erotic literature, a crackdown on prostitution outside of brothels, and the closing of Berlin pubs, including many “homosexual bars.” Most of the reports, particularly those in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, were objective in tone, although a few did contain derogatory depictions. Most were brief local news bulletins on such topics as illegal abortion and sexual acts with children, including acts between adult men and boys. Some covered the many judicial directives on forced castration issued by the Reich Supreme Court as well as local courts in Hamburg and other cities. Newspapers occasionally enjoined the population to protect children against “fiendish strangers.” According to articles written in 1933 and 1934 on criminality in Hamburg, the overall number of crimes declined under the new government, but the number of sexual offenses increased, a fact accounted for by the intensity with which such offenses were investigated and prosecuted.²⁸ During those years, the Hamburg papers were not yet subject to direct interference, as the Ministry of Propaganda was still formulating its position and had yet to issue concrete orders.²⁹ But thereafter, the Hamburg press depicted homosexuality as a crime and a perversion and promoted the bourgeois, “child-

be questionable. To date there has been no research on the representation of female homosexuality in literature and the arts in the Nazi era.

²⁷Regarding the *Gleichschaltung* of the *Hamburger Anzeiger*, see Wulf, 32; on that of the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, see Hale, 210–11. Jürgen Fromme has argued that the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, once the largest paper in northwest Germany as well as one of the largest liberal newspapers in Germany, had already adopted a nationalistic perspective in the closing years of the Weimar Republic but continued to remain free of the direct, personal influence of National Socialists even after 1933. See Jürgen Fromme, *Zwischen Anpassung und Bewahrung: Das Hamburger Fremdenblatt im Übergang von der Weimarer Republik zum “Dritten Reich.” Eine politisch-historische Analyse* (Hamburg, 1981). However, my analysis of the *Fremdenblatt* from 1933 to 1936 demonstrates that the process of *Gleichschaltung* was completed by April 1933.

²⁸See “Die Kriminalität geht zurück,” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, August 30, 1933, evening ed., 3; “Die Kriminalität und Verbrechensbekämpfung in Hamburg,” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, November 13, 1934, evening ed., 6.

²⁹Frei and Schmitz have argued that the National Socialist regime was never able to exert complete control over the press. By the same token, however, no newspaper was able to remain entirely free of National Socialist influence. See Frei and Schmitz, 96.

rich" marriage, the lifestyle officially favored by the National Socialist regime. As early as 1934, pronatalist population policies that aimed at dramatically increasing the birth rate of "Aryan children" found their expression in press accounts that debated the role and duties of "mothers, marriages, and family," extolled the virtues of "young, happy couples," and promoted "early marriage and child-rich families."³⁰

HOMOPHOBIC PROPAGANDA UNDER NATIONAL SOCIALISM

In the Third Reich, press accounts reinforced an image of the "homosexual" as criminal and sustained the regime's homophobic propaganda. The press exploited at least three events for this purpose: the assassination of the SA leader Ernst Röhm in 1934, the trials of sex murderers August Seefeld and Otto Krepp in 1936, and the second wave of prosecutions of Catholic clergymen for sexual offenses in 1937. In the "Röhm Purge" and the "sex offender trials," homosexuality was deployed to justify political goals and actions. In the cases of supposedly "homosexual" sex offenders and sex murderers, the extensive coverage was designed to demonstrate the regime's resolve in prosecuting "immorality" and "crime" and to underscore its claim to "bourgeois respectability."³¹

The assassination of Ernst Röhm on June 30, 1934, is generally regarded as a turning point in the National Socialist regime's treatment of homosexuality. Following his nomination as chief of staff of the SA in 1931, Ernst Röhm was denounced as a "homosexual" by the opposition Social Democratic press. His homosexuality also made him a controversial figure within the Nazi Party, which advocated harsh prosecution of homosexuality.³² However, Hitler defended Röhm against attacks both within the party and

³⁰"Die Ehe im neuen Staat: Schutz der Mutter," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, April 17, 1934, morning ed., 2; "Warum sie einmal 'ja' gesagt haben: Junge Ehepaare erklären die Gründe, die zur Ehe führen—Es gibt auch noch Romantik," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, October 25, 1934, morning ed., 8; "Jung-Hamburg heiratet," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, November 1, 1934, evening ed., 5. The image of the family as "germ cell" can also be found in "Eröffnung der HJ-Ausstellung," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, October 22, 1934, morning ed., 5; "Förderung von Frühehe und Kinderreichtum," *Hamburger Nachrichten*, June 6, 1937, morning ed., 2.

³¹Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 157–58, 164–65.

³²See Hans-Georg Stümke and Rudi Finkler, *Rosa Winkel, Rosa Listen: Homosexuelle und "Gesundes Volksempfinden" von Auschwitz bis heute* (Reinbek, 1981), 119–45; Jellonnek, "Homosexuelle unter dem Hakenkreuz," 57–79; Alexander Zinn, "Die Bewegung der Homosexuellen: Die soziale Konstruktion des homosexuellen Nationalsozialisten im antifaschistischen Exil," in *Die Linke und das Laster: Schwule Emanzipation und linke Vorurteile*, ed. Detlef Grumbach (Hamburg, 1995), 38–84; Zinn, *Die soziale Konstruktion des homosexuellen Nationalsozialisten: Zur Genese und Etablierung eines Stereotyps* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997); Friedrich Koch, *Sexuelle Denunziation: Die Sexualität in der politischen Auseinandersetzung*, rev. ed. (Hamburg, 1995), 21–25.

in public, declaring the private life of SA leaders to be their own affair.³³ Röhm was held in high political esteem by the Nazi Party, as he was believed to be the only person capable of transforming the SA into an organization that could assist in the Nazis' "seizure of power." In 1934, however, Röhm was deposed and assassinated. These events followed a decision made by Hitler and the party leadership to back the Reichswehr in its ongoing conflict with the SA regarding which organization would serve as the army of the "new Germany." Hitler also exploited the purge to consolidate his own power and insure his status as the sole Führer. In addition to Röhm, many innocent bystanders as well as a number of other SA leaders and supposedly conservative, reactionary, or monarchist competitors were assassinated, including the former Reich chancellor Kurt von Schleicher.

According to Nazi propaganda, the assassinations were a preemptive measure to subvert a coup planned by Schleicher and Röhm, who were said to be in the employ of a foreign power—an accusation that quite obviously had no basis in reality. In order to justify the purge and to disguise its true motives, the regime exploited homophobia. On the day of the assassination, June 30, 1934, the National Socialist Party's press office issued a report that, according to Max Domarus, was written by Hitler himself. Reprinted in numerous newspapers, the report claimed that there had been an attempt to drive a wedge between the SA and the party and between the SA and the state:

We are uncovering more and more evidence to support our suspicion that this plot can be attributed to a clique of like-minded conspirators. . . . Our chief of staff, Röhm, in whom our Führer has placed such extraordinary trust, did nothing to oppose these actions; indeed, he undoubtedly supported them. His widely known unfortunate predisposition over time resulted in so unbearable a strain and a burden that Röhm, a leader of our movement and the chief of the SA, became torn by a profound crisis of conscience.³⁴

Thus the report blamed Röhm's supposed disloyalty upon his "unfortunate predisposition" and surmised that a "homosexual clique" had formed to subvert the state, a supposition that was often exploited later to justify the persecution of same-sex-desiring men. In his Reichstag address of July 13, 1934, Hitler reiterated his professed belief that a "small group of individuals joined by a common predisposition" had engaged in plans for treason and the overthrow of the government. As evidence for existence of a

³³Adolf Hitler, Directive No. 1 of February 3, 1931, reprinted in Heinrich Bennecke, *Hitler und die SA* (Munich, 1962), 253; also reprinted in Koch, 253. *Völkischer Beobachter*, April 8, 1932, reprinted in Max Domarus, *Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen 1932–1945. Kommentiert von einem deutschen Zeitgenossen. Teil I: Triumph 1932–1938*, 4th ed. (Leonberg, 1988), 102.

³⁴*Erklärung der Reichspressestelle der NSDAP*, June 30, 1934, reprinted in Domarus, 398–99.

“clique,” Hitler claimed that Röhm had promoted SA men “simply because they belonged to the circle of those afflicted with this particular predisposition.”³⁵ The full text of this speech was reprinted in newspapers and publicized in radio broadcasts.

According to a statement released by the Reich press office on June 30, 1934, “some SA leaders were accompanied by catamites. One SA leader was surprised in a most revolting situation and was arrested.” However, a supposed “eyewitness account” issued by the press agencies later that day states only that the SA leader of Silesia, Edmund Heines, was arrested with an eighteen year old in his bed. The reports are focused on the purported “traitors” and their “plot” and “plans for high treason,” while the indignation over the “shameless appearance” of the “loathsome scene” receives only fleeting mention.³⁶ On the same day, Hitler issued a twelve-point directive to the new SA chief of staff, Viktor Lutze, stating in point seven:

I expect all SA leaders to help the SA maintain and reinforce its standing as a pure and untainted organization. I want every mother to be able to send her son to the SA, the party, and the HJ [Hitler Youth] without fearing that he might there be debased in his manners or morals. For this reason, I want all SA leaders to be strict in ensuring that any offenses against §175 result in the immediate expulsion of the accused from the SA and party. SA men should be leaders, not ludicrous apes.³⁷

The propaganda surrounding the affair deploys many metaphors of order and cleanliness, such as the claim that Hitler had cleaned up a “pigsty.” But contrary to the historical accounts offered by Max Domarus, Hans-Georg Stümke, Rudi Finkler, and Friedrich Koch, homosexuality was only one among a number of accusations made by the regime. The central accusation was high treason, supplemented by accusations of homosexuality and luxurious living. The party newspapers proffered a similar version of the purge.³⁸ What remains unclear is whether the party press office deliberately or accidentally introduced the homophobic slant in its accounts of the purge. Given the inconsistency and confusion in the depictions of homosexuality and the real or alleged homosexual activities of those arrested and murdered, it seems unlikely that the homophobia that permeated these accounts was premeditated. Whether the press statements were prepared in advance of the actual purge and, if so, by whom remains

³⁵ Adolf Hitler, *Reichstagsrede*, July 13, 1934, reprinted in *ibid.*, 410–24.

³⁶ “*Augenzeugenbericht*” zu den *Verhaftungen der SA-Führer*, June 30, 1934, reprinted in *ibid.*, 399–400.

³⁷ “*Tagesbefehl an Chef des Stabes, Viktor Lutze*,” June 30, 1934, reprinted in *ibid.*, 401.

³⁸ See, for example, “*Hitler reißt den Meuterern die Achselstücke von den Schultern. Mit eiserner Entschlossenheit das Treiben der Verschwörer beendet. Der Luxus wird ausgerottet*,” *Der Angriff: Die nationalsozialistische Abendzeitung*, June 30, 1934, 1. I wish to thank Jakob Michelsen of Hamburg for this reference.

an open question. The private diary of the Reich Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, makes no mention of any plan to exploit Röhm's assassination for purposes of homophobic propaganda, in spite of the fact that an entry dated June 29, 1934, makes it clear that Goebbels, though not involved in planning the assassinations, was informed of the purge, approved of it, and took part in its implementation.³⁹ It was not until later, in the years following the purge, that the party leadership and other influential members of the regime began to promote the idea that homosexuality had played a role in the murders of the SA leadership.⁴⁰

The Reich Press Agency accounts appeared on the radio and in newspapers, reached a wide audience, and became a topic of gossip and speculation for weeks. Placards of Hitler's "daily directives" were posted on advertising pillars throughout the Reich, where they remained for several days as a visible reminder of events.⁴¹ The reports of the exiled SPD suggest the success of this propaganda campaign, as the population began to adopt the metaphors of order and cleanliness advanced by the regime. In taking "vigorous action," Hitler had garnered prestige and approval.⁴² Even old SPD functionaries were said to have forgotten that their party had condemned Röhm for homosexuality in 1931.⁴³ The reports confirm that the German public's speculation and indignation remained focused on the homosexuality and the lavish lifestyle of the murdered leaders and that the real reason for the purge—to eliminate political competition and neutralize the SA—did not become apparent for many months.⁴⁴ Although they do not mention the accusations of "homosexuality," the Sopade reports make it clear that this was a useful propaganda issue. Nonetheless, the Hamburg trial of a man accused of violating the sedition law (*Heimtücke-Gesetz*) demonstrates that some Germans saw through the propaganda surrounding the Röhm case. In this 1937 case, the master locksmith Paul Carmohn was overheard saying in a pub that the SPD had long accused Röhm of being a "bum fucker" but that Hitler had not turned against Röhm until the SA leader became a political threat. This was proof that Hitler was nothing but a "giant scoundrel."⁴⁵ As Eugen Lenz, a Hamburg lawyer repeatedly convicted for homosexual

³⁹ *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels: Sämtliche Fragmente. Band 2: 1931–1936*, ed. Elke Fröhlich (Munich, 1987).

⁴⁰ See, for example, a speech by the minister of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, reprinted as "Deutschlands Antwort," *Hamburger Nachrichten*, May 29, 1937, evening ed., 1; "Abrechnung: Dr. Goebbels spricht," *Hamburger Nachrichten*, May 29, 1937, evening ed., 2–3. See also Stümke and Finker, 206.

⁴¹ For a photo of an advertising column, see *Hamburger Anzeiger*, July 5, 1934, 1.

⁴² *Deutschland-Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade) 1934–1940*, vol. 1 (1934) (Frankfurt am Main, 1980), 198–99, 297, 298, 309, 310.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 761.

⁴⁵ Staatsarchiv Hamburg 213-11, Staatsanwaltschaft Landgericht—Strafsachen, repository number 1027/38. All subsequent repository numbers (Rep.), unless stated otherwise, refer to this holding.

activities under the Nazi regime, explained in 1946, the Röhm assassination was politically motivated. Hitler had protected Röhm for many years, although he was well aware of the accusations of homosexuality.⁴⁶

The Röhm Putsch signaled that the Nazi regime would no longer tolerate homosexuality within its ranks. In the months that followed, further waves of purges took place within the SA and the Nazi ranks. By these means, the Nazi Party was able to put an end to the contradictory situation in which it had found itself—of condemning homosexual behavior while simultaneously permitting a top position to be occupied by a “homosexual.” At the same time, the putsch demonstrated that homosexuality would no longer be tolerated elsewhere in the Reich.

In its portrayal of the Röhm putsch, the press deployed a kind of symbolic politics but did not precipitate the persecution of “homosexuals” across the Reich, as scholars have often assumed.⁴⁷ In the aftermath of the Röhm affair, most persecutory measures were directed against members of the Nazi Party and affiliated organizations. The legal groundwork for widespread persecution of other men who engaged in homosexual activities was not laid until the general reform of the penal code in 1935. No attempt was made to establish a list or registry of “homosexuals.” The Reichszentrale zur Bekämpfung der Homosexualität und der Abtreibung (Central Reich Agency for Combating Homosexuality and Abortion), established in 1936, required only members of certain groups to register with its office: members of the party and affiliated organizations, Wehrmacht soldiers, Jews, clergy and members of religious orders, and those individuals who had occupied important social positions prior to 1933. In practice, however, many local police officials passed on the names of “ordinary homosexuals” to the Reichszentrale.⁴⁸

A general persecution of “homosexuals” began in different locations at different times. While certain categories of persons, such as male prostitutes and transvestites, were subject to prosecution across the Reich as early as 1933 and existing laws were enforced in Prussia at that time, no systematic persecution of “homosexuals” began in Hamburg until the summer of 1936.⁴⁹ As Peter von Rönn has documented in detail, the introduction of such persecution was closely linked to the rise of Heinrich Himmler. The official SS weekly, *Das schwarze Korps*, which after its initial publication in February 1935 became the second largest newspaper in the

⁴⁶Text dictated by Dr. Eugen Lenz on December 10, 1946, at the public prosecutor’s office during the reopening of his case. Rep. 3007/40.

⁴⁷See, for example, Jellonnek, “Homosexuelle unter dem Hakenkreuz,” 329.

⁴⁸Müller, 79.

⁴⁹Röhm was not able to protect “homosexuals” prior to his assassination, a notion that has occasionally been advanced by scholars. He did not intervene during the February 1933 banning of the friendship bulletins, the destruction of Magnus Hirschfeld’s Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin in May 1933, or the closing of numerous “homosexual bars” in

Reich, was instrumental in propagating the crucial myth of “homosexual cliques.”⁵⁰ In 1937, the paper published a series of articles characterizing (male) “homosexuals” as “enemies of the state” who tended to form cliques, seduce the young, and threaten to feminize the *Männerstaat* and calling for the enactment of more drastic measures.⁵¹ The belief that homosexuals were “enemies of the state” was thereupon propagated by the daily press. The *Hamburger Nachrichten*, for example, referred to and based its accounts on the series of articles published in *Das schwarze Korps*.⁵² By means of these articles, which were probably influenced by the Reichszentrale zur Bekämpfung der Homosexualität und der Abtreibung, the Gestapo and the SS staked their claim to authority in the “battle against homosexuality” in opposition to the claims of the courts.⁵³ As Peter von Rönn has emphasized, “The propaganda directed against homosexuals as enemies of the state, which began in early 1937, was accompanied by the organizational and ideological consolidation of Himmler’s empire of power.”⁵⁴

Press coverage of the jury trials of two accused murderers, Adolf Seefeld and Otto Krepp, was also tainted by homophobia. Reporters covering Adolf Seefeld’s trial and execution in 1936 linked the themes of homosexuality

Berlin. The idea that Röhm intervened to protect “homosexual” men is founded on a mistaken belief in a homogeneous and unified identity among same-sex-desiring men. As Eleanor Hancock’s research has demonstrated, Röhm’s conception of homosexuality, which was based on an image of male homosexual virility, existed in stark contradiction to Magnus Hirschfeld’s image of the homosexual as a “third sex” and had little in common with the concepts of homosexuality advocated by the Alliance for Human Rights. Although Röhm was a member of the Alliance, he did not intercede on its behalf. At most, he could have provided protection only to those “homosexuals” in his own cohort. See Eleanor Hancock, “‘Only the Real, the True, the Masculine Held Its Value’: Ernst Röhm, Masculinity, and Male Homosexuality,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8, no. 4 (1998): 616–41.

⁵⁰At the end of 1935, *Das schwarze Korps* had a circulation of 200,000 copies. By mid-1937, this had increased to a circulation of 500,000. In 1944, with a circulation of 750,000, it was the second-largest German newspaper, following *Das Reich*. *Das schwarze Korps* was an example of “yellow journalism” that promoted anti-Semitism and took part in the campaign against the Catholic Church. See Frei and Schmitz, 102.

⁵¹Von Rönn, “Teil I,” 115–20. An article published in *Das schwarze Korps* in the summer of 1936 did not yet include “homosexuals” in its listing of “enemies of the state.” See “Wer ist ein Staatsfeind?” in *Das schwarze Korps, Zeitung der Schutzstaffel der NSDAP. Organ der Reichsführung der SS*, August 27, 1936, 1. This image of the enemy was not formulated or expanded upon until the Gestapo Sonderkommando “special campaigns” against “homosexuals” began in various cities in the summer of 1936 and was not propagated until after the successful campaigns and the founding of the Central Reich Agency. Among the campaigns that have already been the subject of historical investigation are the Hamburg campaign conducted by the Prussian Gestapo’s Sonderkommando Nord in August and September 1936 (which I also examine in detail below) and the Gestapo Sonderkommando campaign in the Rhineland from the summer of 1936 until April 1937. See Sparing, 85–87.

⁵²“Staatsfeinde,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, March 5, 1937.

⁵³Von Rönn, “Teil I,” 102–5, 115–20.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 103.

and sexually motivated murder in ways that echo the accounts of Fritz Haarmann's trial in 1924. Seefeld, an itinerant watchmaker and "tramp," had, over the course of many years in northeastern Germany, sexually assaulted at least thirty boys age four to eleven, poisoned them with a narcotic, and buried their bodies in wooded areas. On the basis of circumstantial evidence and the credible testimony of witnesses, Seefeld was convicted of twelve counts of murder and sentenced to death. Shortly before his execution, he was alleged to have confessed to additional murders. From the trial's inception on January 21, 1936, to the reading of the verdict on February 22, newspapers across the Reich published extensive accounts on a near daily basis. The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, the *Hamburger Anzeiger*, and the *Hamburger Nachrichten* reported the death sentence and the execution on their front pages and with oversize headlines. The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* sent its own reporter to the trial and occasionally reprinted accounts from the Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro (German Press Agency). The press accounts stress repeatedly that the case demonstrated the soundness of National Socialist lawmaking. Seefeld, it was claimed, would have been "neutralized" much earlier if only forced castration and preventive detention had been available to law enforcement before the Nazi era.⁵⁵ The press urged that "German youth" be protected from such "beasts"⁵⁶ and reprinted prosecuting attorney Beusch's homophobic final address: "One gets the feeling that the devil himself was wandering through our German provinces in the person of the accused. Seefeld is evil personified. The defendant corrupted more than 100 boys. He alone is to blame for his victims' degeneration, since for them this was their first sexual experience. When pursued to their natural end, perverse tendencies often result in murder."⁵⁷

Rather than commenting critically on these assertions, the newspaper reporters lent further support to such claims. In its account of the death sentence and execution, the *Hamburger Nachrichten* argued that the crimes had been facilitated by the "humanitarian liberal-Marxist past." Other

⁵⁵See, for example, "Vor dem Schwurgericht Schwerin. Zwölf Knabenmorde sollen aufgeklärt werden. Bericht des Sonderberichterstatters," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, January 21, 1936, evening ed., 6; "Die ersten Zeugen im Prozeß Seefeld. Der Angeklagte erscheint in Zivilkleidung—Erörterung der Familienverhältnisse. Bericht des Sonderberichterstatters," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, January 30, 1936, evening ed., 6; and "Seefelds Ankläger spricht. Die Kette des Schuldbeweise Bericht von Kp.," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, February 20, 1936, evening ed., 6. Regarding the significance of the Seefeld case, see Patrick Wagner, *Volkgemeinschaft ohne Verbrecher: Konzeptionen und Praxis der Kriminalpolizei in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik und des Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg, 1996), 231–32.

⁵⁶"Der Seefeld-Prozeß: Die zwei Knabenmorde bei Neuruppin. Bericht des dn.," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, February 9, 1936, morning ed., 6; "Die Lehren aus dem Seefeld-Prozeß. Die Notwendigkeit gründlicher Verhandlung. Bericht des dn.," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, February 14, 1936, evening ed., 6.

⁵⁷"Seefelds Ankläger spricht. Die Kette der Schuldbeweise Bericht von Kp.," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, February 20, 1936, evening ed., 6.

accounts mention “atonement” and “satisfaction” over the demise of the “beast in human form.”⁵⁸

A year earlier, a Hamburg murder case had been the subject of homophobic propaganda in the local press. In March 1935, during or after sexual activities in his apartment, twenty-two-year-old barber Otto Krepp murdered a forty-seven-year-old sailor with a hammer. The police, the public prosecutor, the court, and the press termed the incident a case of murder in the course of robbery, although Krepp himself claimed to have acted in a state of “sexual frenzy.” One indication that the crime was not premeditated is the fact that the corpse remained hidden for months in a suitcase under Krepp’s cellar steps, the odor of decay finally leading to its discovery in June 1935.⁵⁹ The *Hamburger Nachrichten*’s accounts of the discovery of the corpse and Krepp’s investigation and trial are reasonably objective, sticking closely to the official Altona police press statements. However, the stories in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* and the *Hamburger Anzeiger* are quite homophobic. Even before the investigators had determined whether Otto Krepp, his subtenant, or his friends had anything to do with the murder, the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* stated that Krepp “seems without a doubt to be involved in the murder. . . . This basement apartment was one of the most disreputable sites of moral aberration, where men of all ages consorted in the most shameful manner day and night. The police placed the apartment under observation some time ago and in fact had already carried out a raid on the apartment in order to put an end to the suspicious goings-on among Otto Krepp’s circle of acquaintances.”⁶⁰

The newspaper account implies that Krepp’s friends and acquaintances were possible accomplices to the crime. According to the *Hamburger Anzeiger*, Krepp’s apartment was a “strange nest to which the homosexual acquaintances of its tenant flocked.” The article continues: “Although there is not yet concrete evidence to link the discovery of the body to this apartment and its tenant, the apartment is strongly reminiscent of other dens of iniquity in which similar crimes have taken place in recent criminal history.”⁶¹ A later article in the *Fremdenblatt* counters an accusation that the

⁵⁸“Das Urteil von Schwerin,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, February 22, 1936, evening ed., 1; “Das Ende des Knabenmörders,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, May 23, 1936, evening ed., 1.

⁵⁹Krepp’s investigation, trial, and execution were documented at length. The majority of the files are located in Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein, Section 352 Altona, Staatsanwaltschaft beim Landgericht Altona, 7102–9. For a voyeuristic and homophobic depiction of the case, see Helmut Ebeling, “Ein Koffer unter der Kellertreppe und eine Leiche darin,” in *Schwarze Chronik einer Weltstadt: Hamburger Kriminalgeschichte 1919 bis 1945*, ed. Helmut Ebeling (Hamburg, 1980), 361–88.

⁶⁰“Die Männer-Leiche im Koffer. Grauenhafter Fund in einem Keller,” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, June 13, 1935, evening ed., 5.

⁶¹“Neue furchtbare Bluttat in Altona aufgedeckt! Entsetzlicher Leichenfund in einem Keller am Brunnenhof,” *Hamburger Anzeiger*, June 13, 1935, supplement, 2.

police should have taken action against Krepp long before this incident occurred: "On the contrary, the police are aware of the actions of nearly all of the morally abnormal men in this city and intervene ruthlessly and without mercy whenever possible." The article then enjoins the population to cooperate with the Altona police and to inform the authorities of the names of the owners, employees, and guests of pubs "often frequented by homosexuals."⁶²

The "immorality trials" of Catholic priests in April and May 1937 mark the peak of homophobic propaganda in the media during the Nazi era. Numerous priests and members of religious orders were accused of having had "unnatural sexual relations" or of having lured children and youth into sexual acts. The National Socialist regime exploited these trials to damage the reputation of the Catholic Church in hopes of undermining its influence in youth groups and in schools, particularly in predominantly Catholic regions with large numbers of parochial schools. Some trials also involved charges of seduction and rape of adult women and of offenses against the currency regulations.⁶³ A few trials of Franciscan friars occurred as early as 1936 but received at most cursory coverage in predominantly Protestant regions.⁶⁴ Soon thereafter, the regime issued a directive ordering that individual trials be delayed until they could be clustered at a more auspicious moment. It would be easier to exploit the trials for purposes of propaganda, if one could depict the "offenses against morality" as a massive problem within the Catholic Church.⁶⁵ In the spring of 1937, the moment seemed ripe, and numerous cases involving Catholic priests were brought to trial. Over the course of eight weeks between April and June, the daily and party newspapers and radio devoted extensive, front-page coverage to the trials. The more sensationalist headlines trumpeted talk of a "quagmire" and the "heart of an epidemic" in the monasteries, proclaiming evidence of "moral degeneracy," "spiritual criminals," and "corrupters of youth clad in cassocks." Other headlines announced "Bottomless Depravity in the Monastery." In contrast to ordinary judicial procedure, in these sex trials the public

⁶²"Der Mord am Brunnenhof. Raubmord an einem Hamburger Seemann—Aufklärung trotz verwischter Spuren," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, June 19, 1935, evening ed., 5.

⁶³For a discussion of the sex trials, see Hans Günter Hockerts, *Die Sittlichkeitsprozesse gegen katholische Ordensangehörige und Priester 1936/1937. Eine Studie zum nationalsozialistischen Kirchenkampf* (Mainz, 1971); Stümke and Finkler, 201–11; and Detlev Müller and Jürgen Müller, "'Dienstags gesündigt, mittwochs gebeichtet': Die Sittlichkeitsprozesse gegen die Katholische Kirche in den Jahren 1936/1937," in *"Verführte" Männer: Das Leben der Kölner Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich*, ed. Cornelia Limpricht, Jürgen Müller, and Nina Oxenius (Cologne, 1991), 76–81.

⁶⁴A rare account of a Koblenz trial can be found in "Der Sittlichkeitsprozeß gegen die Franziskanerbrüder. Bruder Angelicus auf der Anklagebank," *Hamburger Nachrichten*, June 16, 1936, evening ed., 6.

⁶⁵Directive of the Reich Ministry of Justice, reprinted in Harry Wilde, *Das Schicksal der Verfeimten: Die Verfolgung der Homosexuellen im "Dritten Reich" und ihre Stellung in der heutigen Gesellschaft* (Tübingen, 1969), 203.

was often permitted to view the proceedings. Thus the press was able to report extensively on the “perverse activities” of the “devils clad in cassocks” whose “faces were contorted with greed” as they “reveled” in “unnatural fornication.”⁶⁶ The coverage focused on the seduction of children and youth, the exploitation of relationships of dependence, and the abuse of rank and office. The press ignored cases where investigations were dropped or trials resulted in acquittals due to lack of evidence or ill-founded accusations.⁶⁷ Pamphlets documenting the alleged crimes were distributed in Catholic regions. One of these brochures, titled “You shall know them by their deeds!” contained a summary of Nazi newspaper accounts of trials of Catholic clergy, focusing mainly on accusations of sexual offenses. The pamphlet, which cost 65 pfennig, had a print run of 100,000.⁶⁸ To accompany the trials, a number of party organizations, including the SA and the Hitler Youth, organized “informational” campaigns aimed at their own members, as well as public campaigns against the supposed “moral corruption” of Catholic priests.⁶⁹ Although the Catholic Church defended itself against the accusations, it declined to offer protection to any clerics who were convicted of homosexual activities.

As the Sopade reports demonstrate, the population in both Catholic and Protestant regions of the Reich recognized the trials as anti-Church propaganda, which meant that they had the opposite of the intended effect. However, some Sopade correspondents noted that under the influence of the propaganda, many children and youth avoided Catholic clerics or subjected priests to public verbal abuse.⁷⁰ Regardless of whether the reports of the moral failings of clerics were believed, it is apparent that the association of homosexuality with crime and seduction was a stereotype that few were willing to question.

Although large-scale persecution of same-sex-desiring men began in Hamburg in July 1936, the press did not pick up the story of the Gestapo’s *Sonderaktion* (special campaign) until the end of August. In all likelihood, the investigating authorities had initially elected to delay informing the press in order to avoid warning potential targets of the new measures. Soon,

⁶⁶See, for example, “‘Seelenhirte’ als Seelenverbrecher. Furchtbare Sittlichkeitsverbrechen vor dem Landgericht in Trier,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, May 8, 1937, 2nd supplement, 1; Beilage, 1.

⁶⁷The Sopade reports make specific mention of the case of the former member of the Bavarian parliament, Präses Waltherbach, who was held in custody for six months during investigation. Although they gave the investigation extensive and hostile coverage, the newspapers failed to report that the charges against Waltherbach were eventually dropped. See *Deutschland-Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade) 1934–1940*, vol. 2 (1936) (Frankfurt am Main, 1980), 915.

⁶⁸*Deutschland-Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade) 1934–1940*, vol. 3 (1937) (Frankfurt am Main, 1980), 412.

⁶⁹Sopade, 2 (1936), 921; Sopade, 3 (1937), 509.

⁷⁰See, for example, Sopade, 2 (1936), 921; Sopade, 3 (1937), 1182.

however, they judged it important that the public be informed of the success of the campaign, which had been carried out during the Berlin Summer Olympics by a special unit of the Reich criminal police headquarters under the direction of Criminal Police Commissioner Gerhard Günther Kanthack.⁷¹ The articles characterize same-sex-desiring men as dangerous criminals and are replete with talk of a “battle against homosexuals,” a “crackdown on moral degeneracy,” a “cleanup campaign,” “epidemics,” and “a settling of scores with homosexuality.”⁷² Two lengthy articles that appeared in both the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* and the *Hamburger Anzeiger*, most likely based on the same source, employ metaphors of order, cleanliness, and health and homophobic stereotypes of degeneracy, seduction of youth, and criminality. According to the *Fremdenblatt*, the decline in moral standards in Weimar Germany had led to increased homosexuality, forcing the National Socialist government to take vigorous action beginning in the summer of 1934. However, neither the current campaign nor the strengthening of Paragraph 175 had resulted in a “total eradication of this moral degeneracy” that “constitutes a grave threat to German youth.” Only the “vigorous crackdown” by the Gestapo Sonderkommando had succeeded in “rapidly purging Berlin and other cities of homosexual excesses and thus prevent it from spreading.”⁷³ The *Hamburger Anzeiger*, in turn, stated that homosexuality was “unhealthy” and a “symptom of degeneracy” that manifested itself in “overbred peoples”:

At best it turns men into effeminate, furtive seekers of pleasure. It erodes their moral fiber and character, it destroys their righteous male honor, and in many cases, unfortunately, it leads to crime. The most hardened criminals often are recruited from homosexual circles. The new Germany has no use for criminals and weaklings, perverts and

⁷¹On May 22, 1935, Gerhard Günther Kanthack was appointed divisional head within the Reich Gestapo department on homosexuals. See Andreas Pretzel and Gabriele Roßbach, “Wegen der zu erwartenden hohen Strafe . . .”: *Homosexuellenverfolgung in Berlin 1933–1945*, ed. Kulturring in Berlin e.V. (Berlin, 2000), 334; Wagner, 248–50; and Stefan Micheler, “. . . eben homosexuell, wie andere Leute heterosexuell”: Der Fall Heinrich Erich Starke,” in *Verfolgung Homosexueller im Nationalsozialismus: Beiträge zur Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung in Norddeutschland*, vol. 5, ed. KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme (Bremen, 1999), 77–92.

⁷²“Gegen die Sittenentartung. Strafprozesse im Bereiche des § 175,” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, August 26, 1936, evening ed., 5; “Der Durchgriff gegen Sittenentartung,” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, August 29, 1936, evening ed., 5; “Säuberungsaktion in Hamburg. Massenverhaftungen von Homosexuellen,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, August 26, 1936, 2; “Der Kampf gegen die Homosexuellen,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, August 30, 1936, 6. See also “Es wird durchgegriffen . . . im Kampf gegen die Homosexualität,” *Hamburger Anzeiger*, August 26, 1936, 1; “Die Abrechnung mit der Homosexualität,” *Hamburger Anzeiger*, August 30, 1936, 1.

⁷³“Gegen die Sittenentartung. Strafprozesse im Bereiche des § 175,” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, August 26, 1936, evening ed., 5.

inverts, but requires instead straightforward and sincere manly souls, and so we must combat homosexuality with the means available to us—education, observation, the law, the police, and the courts.

The article concludes by noting that such “homosexual filth” needed to be eliminated in a “clean sweep.”⁷⁴ Employing a similar tone and nearly the same wording, the *Essener National-Zeitung*, which Hermann Göring had adopted as his mouthpiece, reported on the campaign conducted by the Gestapo Sonderkommando in Hamburg.⁷⁵ Although the newspapers had previously only publicized violations of Paragraph 176, which involved sexual activities with minors, now the police and court sections of Hamburg local newspapers began to include coverage of arrests and trials of same-sex-desiring men under Paragraph 175, often mentioning the defendants by name.

Nearly all Germans came into contact with Nazi homophobic propaganda. Many read the daily newspapers, and most subscribed or were compelled to subscribe to one of the Nazi Party or party-affiliated papers.⁷⁶ A few of the newspapers were even posted in public display boxes. Many Nazi organizations, including the Hitler Youth, the SA, the Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich Labor Service), and the Wehrmacht, disseminated “educational information” on the “dangers of homosexuality.”⁷⁷ In addition, the relatively new media of the radio had a large audience.

It is difficult to measure directly the impact that these years of National Socialist homophobic propaganda had on the German population. No opinion polls on attitudes toward homosexuality exist for the Weimar or the National Socialist eras, nor do the Sopade reports or the SD’s *Lageberichte* (the “status reports” issued by the Sicherheitsdienst of the SS) mention the antihomosexuality campaigns or the persecution of same-sex-desiring men.⁷⁸ Although the effect of Nazi propaganda can-

⁷⁴“Es wird durchgegriffen . . . im Kampf gegen die Homosexualität,” *Hamburger Anzeiger*, August 26, 1936, 1.

⁷⁵See a reprint of the *Essener National-Zeitung* article dated August 28, 1936, in Hans-Georg Stümke, “Vom ‘unausgeglichene Geschlechtshaushalt.’ Zur Verfolgung Homosexueller,” in *Verachtet, verfolgt, vernichtet: Zu den “vergessenen” Opfern des NS-Regime*, ed. Projektgruppe für die vergessenen Opfer des NS-Regimes, 2nd rev. ed. (Hamburg, 1988), 47–63, 57.

⁷⁶Frei and Schmitz, 97.

⁷⁷Günter Grau discusses several Nazi-era sources that support these conclusions, such as the *Sonderrichtlinien: Die Bekämpfung gleichgeschlechtlicher Verfehlungen im Rahmen der Jugenderziehung*, ed. Reichsjugendführung (Berlin), June 1, 1943. Part of the *Sonderrichtlinien* are reprinted in Günter Grau, *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1993), 294–99.

On an informational session on homosexuality at the Reich Labor Service following the arrest of a male prostitute, see Rep. 8393/36. On the Hitler Youth sessions, see Rep. 7391/36. See also Ramm, 90; Andreas Pretzel, “‘Als Homosexueller in Erscheinung getreten’: Anzeigen und Denunziationen,” in Pretzel and Roßbach, 18–42, 31.

⁷⁸Heinz Boberach, ed., *Meldungen aus dem Reich 1938–1945: Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS* (Herrsching, 1984).

not be measured precisely, it is reasonable to infer that such propaganda was effective to the extent to which it was founded on existing stereotypes.⁷⁹ Homophobic portrayals of homosexuals as criminals, “enemies of the state,” and “corrupters of youth” were widespread, and their truth was seldom questioned, particularly given the dearth of other, more positive public images.

The homophobic propaganda certainly fueled a hostile atmosphere that encouraged the acceptance of persecutory measures. The press appealed to the German population to preserve “German youth” from the lures of “seducers,” and leading Nazi functionaries urged the population to report the names of criminals and anyone “detrimental to the *Volk*,” including those who undeservedly held positions of status in the party, state, or society. These press and party appeals laid the groundwork for the cooperation of the German population in the persecution of same-sex-desiring men. Although “being homosexual” was not against the law, the National Socialist propaganda implied that the mere “inclination” was itself a crime. Branding such men as criminals made them vulnerable to denunciation, and “*Volk* comrades” were encouraged by the regime to be vigilant in carrying out their duty to denounce the “homosexual.”⁸⁰

RUMOR, DENUNCIATION, AND PERSECUTION

In addition to the propaganda disseminated in Nazi organizations and the popular media, rumors about same-sex-desiring men, spread in daily conversations, abounded throughout the Reich. The files of the Hamburg district court document numerous instances of gossip about “homosexuals” circulating in neighborhoods, at the workplace, on board ships, and within party organizations, the Hitler Youth, the SA, Nazi training camps (*Kameradschaftslagern*), and even the police.⁸¹ Gossip about “homosexuals” seems to have been a popular pastime in many communities—urban and rural, densely populated as well as sparsely settled.⁸² Such rumors display three important traits: they arose quickly whenever a man failed to

⁷⁹Regarding the difficulty of “measuring” the success of propaganda, see Ian Kershaw, “How Effective Was Nazi Propaganda?” in *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations*, ed. David Welch (London, 1983), 180–205.

⁸⁰See Pretzel, 22; and Burkhard Jellonnek, “Staatspolizeiliche Fahndungs- und Ermittlungsmethoden gegen Homosexuelle: Regionale Differenzen und Gemeinsamkeiten,” in *Die Gestapo: Mythos und Realität*, ed. Gerhard Paul and Michael Mallmann (Darmstadt, 1995), 343–56.

⁸¹For gossip among acquaintances, see Rep. 7573/37, 8451/38, 9828/38; in the workplace, Rep. 1224/37, 6001/38, 2298/42; on ships, Rep. 7435/37, 9942/38, 10531/39; within Nazi organizations, Rep. 2524/35, 2111/37, 7907/37, 56/38, 38/46, AI 5955; and within the police, Rep. 6376/37.

⁸²For suggestions of gossip in various districts and towns, see Rep. 5885/39, 7523/38, 373/37, 3101/37, 2111/37, 10814/39, 1090/38, 10960/39, 424/38, and 7272/41.

conform to the prevailing masculine ideal, they spread over long distances, and they were replete with homophobic stereotypes.⁸³ In 1934, for example, neighborhood youth spread rumors about the homosexuality of a thirty-one-year-old dentist, Friedrich Schlappkohl, but while everyone claimed Schlappkohl's homosexuality was widely known, no one could provide the police with concrete evidence.⁸⁴ In the mid-1930s rumors circulated in the Hamburg police department about an attorney, the friend of a police officer, who was conspicuously "soft and girlish in behavior, with a veiled gaze and an always deliberately quiet manner of speech." In 1936 rumors spread among the population of Bergedorf regarding the "homosexual disposition" of a local physician, Rudolf Brachmann. He was reputed to have allowed a nineteen-year-old orphan to live in his home in order "to satisfy his homosexual urges," to have approached and used "other boys" as "tools for his homosexual desires," and to have taken advantage of his position as physician to satisfy his lust. In December 1936, in the Jenfeld district, the sixty-one-year-old master harness maker Wilhelm Warnke was considered to be "a crank and a slovenly and flabby fellow" who "molested children," an accusation wholly without foundation. In August 1937 businessman Detert Iderhoff, an "important citizen" of the North Sea island of Norderney, was denounced to the Hamburg police for "having the reputation of being homosexually inclined." Because of his effeminate manner and appearance, the inhabitants of Norderney referred to him as the "little girl." Early in 1938, the rumor began to circulate in the district of St. George that the young man residing at 6 Koppel Street was a "homosexual" who "lived in a separate room and entertained one young man after another there at all hours of the day and night."⁸⁵

Such rumors were almost impossible to escape. Hermann Scheibel, a forty-four-year-old tax inspector and party member who demanded that a local grocer retract his accusation that Scheibel was a "homosexual," was denounced soon after sending copies of the retraction to several people. Adolf Großkopf, a thirty-year-old party member, entered into a sham marriage in hopes of countering rumors of his homosexuality, but to no avail.⁸⁶

While the physician Rudolf Brachmann could report that rumors of his homosexuality had prompted many same-sex-desiring men to visit his offices, often in search of advice, most men found that such rumors threatened their economic survival. The barber Otto Krepp was forced to close

⁸³Epithets such as "queers," "poofers," and "bum fuckers" were the order of the day. See Rep. 2524/35, 3674/35, 1138/36; Rep. 1138/36, 2909/36; and Rep. 2524/35, 1090/38, respectively.

⁸⁴I have used pseudonyms for all private individuals who were born after January 1, 1911, for whom no date of death is known. All individuals for whom no date of birth or death is known have also been cited under pseudonyms. In abbreviations of surnames, I have changed the first letter of all surnames in the interest of anonymity.

⁸⁵Rep. 1138/36, 6376/37, 2111/37, 373/37, 9831/38, 467/39.

⁸⁶Rep. L189/35, 9180/36.

his business when his customers abandoned the shop, and the dentist Werner J. had to relocate his practice to another neighborhood and apply for an injunction to halt the rumormongers' "character assassination."⁸⁷

Rumors led to denunciations as well as disgrace. Since few relevant records exist for the Weimar period, it is difficult to compare the denunciations of same-sex-desiring men under National Socialism with earlier practices. Most police records for the Weimar era have been destroyed, and the few remaining court records reveal little about what triggered an investigation. Of approximately sixty Weimar-era court files from Hamburg and Altona that I have examined, six relate to denunciations for same-sex sexual activities. In each of these cases, the denouncer witnessed the activities in question, which took place in parks, public lavatories, and lodging houses. Since the number of investigations of same-sex-desiring men under National Socialism was significantly higher than under the Weimar Republic, and since only a small number of these cases were initiated by police investigative efforts, it follows that the number of denunciations must have increased.

To date, over 180 denunciations of same-sex-desiring men by private individuals have been documented for Hamburg under the Nazi regime. Although the records contain numerous cases of denunciations made anonymously or by strangers, the majority came from men and women who were acquainted with those whom they denounced. The denouncers included men and women of every age and class⁸⁸—neighbors, landlords and tenants, employees and coworkers, restaurant and hotel staff, and even family members.⁸⁹

⁸⁷Rep. 2111/37. "Das Verbrechen am Brunnenhof. War Krepp mit seinem Opfer allein? Beitrag von p.," *Hamburger Anzeiger*, June 12, 1936, 1. See Rep. 7218/39.

⁸⁸Burkhard Jellonnek has argued that a disproportionately high number of women were among the denouncers of same-sex-desiring men; however, Frank Sparing, examining the same Düsseldorf records, has contested Jellonnek's claim and methods (see Jellonnek, "Staatspolizeiliche Fahndungs- und Ermittlungsmethoden," 350; Sparing, 128). Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann, who believes that the notion that women predominated among denouncers under National Socialism is a cliché that remains unproven, suggests that men predominated ("Politische Denunziation—eine 'weibliche Domäne'? Der Anteil von Männern und Frauen unter Denunzianten und ihren Opfern," 1999 11, no. 2 [1996]: 14; see also Katrin Dördelmann, "Denunziationen im Nationalsozialismus. Geschlechtsspezifische Aspekte," in Jerouschek, Marßolek, and Röckelein, eds., 157–67). According to Robert Gellately and Peter Hüttenberger, political denunciations typically were directed against members of the same social class as the accuser, a finding borne out in my random sample of Hamburg sedition cases. Although members of other social classes were among those denounced in Hamburg (particularly academics, physicians, and work supervisors), the majority of denunciations were directed against members of the same social class (see Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, 125; Peter Hüttenberger, "Heimtückefälle vor dem Sondergericht München 1933–1939," in *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, ed. Martin Broszat, Elke Fröhlich, and Anton Grossmann, vol. 4 [Munich, 1981], 435–526, 517).

⁸⁹For denunciations by neighbors, see Rep. 3185/35, 5688/36, 7394/36, 196/37, 424/38, 1029/38, 1033/38, 1090/38, 10251/38, 467/39, 6355/41; for those by landlords,

Since the police rarely inquired about or recorded an accuser's motives, such information is available in only a few of the cases where same-sex-desiring men and women in Hamburg were denounced. While some denouncers were probably moved by a personal consideration such as profit or revenge, they were unlikely to admit this to the authorities.⁹⁰ Many who may have barely known their victims either believed that "homosexuals" were a danger to society or sought to maintain or gain status and power by participating in some of the National Socialists' campaigns. The records do provide ample evidence of homophobia, for many denunciations make reference to "effeminacy," "enemies of the state," "child molesters," "corruptors of youth," and "perversion." In their December 1937 denunciation of the thirty-one-year-old porter Ernst-Heinrich Hinze, his former supervisor and former coworker remarked that Hinze was "a bad person" and "not a real man."⁹¹ Several denouncers made reference to press announcements urging the German population to join in informing on "homosexual" men. When one of these, Elisabeth Cohrs, denounced her neighbor in 1938, she stated: "I read in the newspaper that we should not go easy on such individuals but that the police should pursue them without mercy, so I decided it was my duty to report this situation."⁹²

Some denouncers, like the two mothers who reported their adolescent sons in hopes of "protecting" them from further contact with men, may not have realized the consequences of their acts, but most must have understood.⁹³ Like those who denounced political offenses, the denouncers of "homosexuals" had personal grudges or a desire to maintain or share in

see Rep. 3549/38, 724/39, 5353/41, 7101/41; for those by tenants, see Rep. 8842/37, 3454/38, 5327/39.

⁹⁰A denouncer's personal motives are sometimes alleged by the accused in his defense. See, for example, attorney Erich Wandschneider's letter to the Hamburg prosecutor, dated July 30, 1934 (Rep. L189/35), which claims that "the origin of the accusations was the psychosis that resulted from the Röhm affair and the irresponsible statements of individuals who were avenging their anger and bitterness toward the accused in a biased and personal manner." The accused had stopped purchasing his groceries from the shop since the food there was so often already spoiled, a fact that he had mentioned to other customers. Other motives can be inferred from their context. In September 1936, sixty-seven-year-old pensioner Hermann Köster denounced his wife and stepson in order to obtain evidence supporting his application for divorce. According to Köster, his wife tolerated, even promoted, his stepson's homosexual relationships and had helped convert their apartment into a flophouse (Rep. 8689/38).

⁹¹Rep. 2632/38.

⁹²Testimony by Elisabeth Cohrs to the criminal police, Department K 24, on April 27, 1938 (Rep. 467/39). For other cases, see testimony by Else N. to the criminal police, Department F 31, on July 10, 1934 (Rep. L189/35), Rep. 124/37, and Rep. 709/39.

⁹³In both cases, the fifteen-year-old boys were convicted of prostitution. Egon V. admitted to the court that he loved men and received a prison sentence of two years (Rep. 1821/38). Richard N., termed "a rent boy of the foulest sort," also received a sentence of two years. His mother's application for a pardon was later denied (Rep. 3533/42). For similar cases in Berlin, see Pretzel, 25.

the regime's power.⁹⁴ Those who did not sympathize with the regime and its aims would have been unlikely to cooperate with it.⁹⁵

While certain behaviors, such as visiting public gathering places, heightened the risk of denunciation and arrest, all same-sex-desiring men were vulnerable to denunciation—even those who led quiet lives. Gustav Pannier, a twenty-eight-year-old office clerk, was denounced by Rudolf Arnold, a janitor, who had observed that Pannier often visited a neighborhood lavatory in the evening hours. On August 17, 1938, Arnold followed Pannier to another public lavatory and then brought him—presumably by force—to the police station. Nineteen-year-old waiter Børge F. was denounced by his landlords, who read some of his correspondence, including a number of love letters. Shop assistant Rudolf G. and decorator's apprentice Alfred P. were denounced by P.'s building superintendent, who noted that G. brought flowers when he came to visit. The superintendent peeked through the keyhole of P.'s door, observed the two men engaged in sexual acts, locked the door, and notified the police.⁹⁶

Hotel guests were also vulnerable. Between 1935 and 1937 the staff of the Concordia lodging house, located near the Reeperbahn, contacted the police on at least seventeen occasions to inform on men suspected of engaging in same-sex sexual activities. On most of these occasions, the staff had spied upon their victims for quite some time. Although the files are silent on the issue, it is certainly possible that the staff were pressured by the police to act as informers, for the Concordia lodging house had been named as a notorious "homosexual" haven in need of more stringent surveillance during an October 1934 meeting between the Hamburg youth welfare department and the head of the Hamburg vice squad. It doubtless took some time before rumors began to circulate that the staff of the Concordia were involved in many denunciations.⁹⁷

Some hotels found alternative ways to comply with the regime's dictates, as the story of Erich P. demonstrates. Several times in the early 1940s,

⁹⁴See, for example, Günter Jerouschek, Inge Marßolek, and Hedwig Röckelein, "Denunziation—ein interdisziplinäres Forschungsfeld," in Jerouschek, Marßolek, and Röckelein, eds., 9–25, esp. 17; Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, 136; Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann, "Denunziantentum und Gestapo. Die freiwilligen 'Helfer' aus der Bevölkerung," in Gerhard and Mallmann, 285–305, esp. 302; and Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann, "Politische Denunziationen im NS-Regime. Die kleine Macht der 'Volksgenossen,'" in Jerouschek, Marßolek, and Röckelein, eds., 146–56, 150.

⁹⁵Jellonnek has argued that "the Nazi leadership and the population were in complete agreement on the importance of persecuting homosexuals," which is demonstrated by the fact that only a "narrow segment of intellectuals and politicians" under the Weimar Republic had supported the plan to repeal some of the legal discrimination against homosexual acts (see Jellonnek, "Staatspolizeiliche Fahndungs- und Ermittlungsmethoden," 350). This argument is certainly plausible though impossible to prove.

⁹⁶Rep. 9210/37; Rep. 5353/41; Rep. 1724/36.

⁹⁷On the Concordia lodging house denunciations, see Ramm, 91; Rep. 1149/37, 10599/38, 3383/38, 5034/36, 2399/38, 6622/38, 741/38; Rep. 9286/36, 1876/36, 2882/

while stationed in occupied Brussels, P. spent the night in a hotel with a male friend. On the third occasion, the receptionist told him, "The Gestapo has informed us that we may no longer provide you with a room."⁹⁸ On this occasion, the hotel staff chose to warn their guest rather than denounce him.

Workplace denunciations were typically directed against adult men who entered into relationships with underage male apprentices or coworkers, even when both consented to the relationship.⁹⁹ Family denunciations were made for reasons that are not always clear. In February 1937, thirty-two-year-old lathe operator Alfred Beckmann and forty-five-year-old bicycle fitter Wilhelm Wilck, who had a relationship of long standing and had for a time lived together, were denounced by Wilck's brother.¹⁰⁰ In July 1937, sixteen-year-old errand boy Karl-Heinz Dellin died after a suicide attempt, mistakenly believing his love for another man was unrequited. In the days that followed, his mother brought to the police a telegram and several letters addressed to her son that included the names of many of his same-sex-desiring friends.¹⁰¹

Most of those denounced for homosexuality were men, but some were women, even though sexual contacts between women were not punishable under German law. In addition to being marginalized in the workforce, they could be prosecuted for "asocial" criminal offenses.¹⁰² Ellen E., a twenty-year-old sales representative, and Paul-Reimer I., a painter, lived as tenants with the family of a dentist. The couple pretended to be engaged and planned a "sham marriage" in hopes of keeping their same-sex desires a secret. But in 1941 an anonymous letter of denunciation was sent to the criminal police, stating: "You should conduct a raid . . . on E.'s love nest. This is the residence of a 'mannish woman' who often invites her 'own

36, 1595/38; Rep. 324/38, 1048/38, 1060/38; and *Niederschrift über die am 5.10.1934 im Jugendamt Hamburg statgefundene Besprechung über Fragen der Zusammenarbeit zwischen Hitler-Jugend u. Jugendamt*, Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 354–55, Jugendbehörde I, 232e: Einsetzung und Tätigkeit des HJ-Streifendienstes der NSV Jugendhilfe 1934–1941. This text is reprinted by both Grau and Stümke, who unfortunately fail to provide a citation for the original source (see Grau, 70–74; Hans-Georg Stümke, "Die Verfolgung der Homosexuellen in Hamburg," in *Heilen und Vernichten im Mustergau Hamburg: Bevölkerungs- und Gesundheitspolitik im Dritten Reich*, ed. Angelika Ebbinghaus, Heidrun Kaupen-Haas, and Karl Heinz Roth [Hamburg, 1984], 80–84, esp. 83–84).

⁹⁸Unpublished interview of Erich P. conducted by the Arbeitskreis schwule Geschichte Hamburg on July 22, 1992.

⁹⁹See, for example, Rep. 7942/37, 323/38, 456/38, 2033/38, 7893/38, 8011/38, 8938/38, 7192/41, 2298/42, 3496/44. It seems unlikely that relationships or sexual advances involving adult men with underage female apprentices would have resulted in similar moral indignation.

¹⁰⁰See, for example, Rep. 4036/37, 2752/38.

¹⁰¹Rep. 584/38.

¹⁰²Regarding the persecution of same-sex-desiring women, see Claudia Schoppmann, "Zur Situation lesbischer Frauen in der NS-Zeit," in Grau, 35–42. See also Claudia

kind,' sometimes more than just one, into her lodgings. In times like these, we clearly should not tolerate such § 175 activities (à la Röhm). Since there are children living in the house, immediate action must be taken. Obviously, it is inadvisable for our youth to observe such activities." Paul-Reimer I. was sentenced to eight months in prison and was enjoined by the prosecutor and the court to have himself castrated, which he did. The fate of Ellen E. remains unknown.¹⁰³

Some denunciations, of course, were false, but establishing the accused's innocence could be difficult, as the following case illustrates. In 1937 a Hamburg professor of public law, Rudolf Laun, and his wife spent their summer vacation on the North Sea island of Sylt, where their son, who was in the Reich Labor Service, was stationed. Before going to work, the son occasionally met his parents on the beach, where they breakfasted together and then bathed. On a few occasions, Laun's wife did not join her husband and son, and on one of these Laun was observed giving his son "a brief kiss on departure" before carrying out his morning exercise routine. On August 7, Laun learned that the criminal police had "passed on the following information" to the Reich Labor Service:

On several mornings, some Westerland residents observed a young worker meet an elderly man at wicker beach chair No. 1435 at roughly 7 A.M., apparently for the purpose of engaging in unnatural sexual practices. They were observed bathing together and sitting on the canopied beach chair. At the end of the encounter, the older man gave the young laborer some money and kissed him upon departure. Following the laborer's departure, the older man satisfied himself sexually while carrying out a gymnastics routine.

Laun immediately filed slander charges with the local police, where he discovered that several persons had been spying on him and his son for a number of days. The Sylt police had even placed the beach under observation on a morning when the son had not visited. On August 12 Laun wrote to the Flensburg prosecutor, arguing that the denunciation was clearly a product of deliberate malice, since the nature of his meetings with his son must have been obvious to anyone. "Two men bathing in the sea together and sitting on beach chairs is nothing out of the ordinary." Nor was it

Schoppmann, *Nationalsozialistische Sexualpolitik und weibliche Homosexualität*, 2nd rev. ed. (Pfaffenweiler, 1997); and Claudia Schoppmann, *Verbotene Verhältnisse: Frauenliebe 1938–1945* (Berlin, 1999). Regarding the stigma of the "antisocial" label, see Schoppmann, *Nationalsozialistische Sexualpolitik*, 260–61.

¹⁰³Anonymous letter to the criminal police dated April 28, 1941, Rep. 6776/41. For other cases see Rep. 465/38, 2448/42, 2336/43, and 7979/38. Collective fantasies about the supposed lesbian sexuality of nuns and nurses affiliated with religious orders lent credibility to the accusation of lesbian sexuality. It is impossible to tell from the records whether these accusations were deemed plausible, thus forcing these women to attempt to refute their accusers.

strange for someone to do exercises on the beach. The accusation that he had masturbated on the beach in full public view was grotesque. In any case, no one would have been able to see what it was that he had handed to his son. It was pure chance that he had decided to extend his holiday; had he already departed, it would have been very difficult for his son to prove the truth. "On the contrary, had we chosen that very morning to depart, this would have been taken as an indication of our guilt. . . . My son, though completely innocent . . . might well have become the victim of a terrible, unjust conviction." The denunciation could have driven his son to ruin and damaged his own reputation as a scholar. The fact that the Sylt police refused to divulge the name of the denouncers and that the Flensburg prosecutor's office abandoned the investigation of Laun as "unfounded" supports Laun's assessment of events. Had the case involved two men other than father and son or men who were not members of the higher social classes, the outcome might have been far different.¹⁰⁴ Among those convicted of homosexual activities in Hamburg, it is likely that some were victims of false denunciations who had been unable to convince the court of that fact. In some cases, they may even have confessed to the accusation under the pressure of interrogation and trial.¹⁰⁵

While one cannot demonstrate that homophobia increased among the German population in the 1930s, the Nazi regime certainly promoted an atmosphere that encouraged many to act upon their prejudices by publicizing its revisions to the penal code, encouraging denunciation, and aggressively pursuing investigations of homosexuals. Thus, the masseur Stanislaus Kasperski and the unemployed tax accountant Albert Küssow, who had met in 1921, were able to live together in an apartment as a couple for eleven years without interference until 1937, when they were denounced.¹⁰⁶

Though one cannot correlate the frequency of denunciation with the intensity of homophobic propaganda, a number of the denunciations made during periods when the media were reporting extensively on "homosexual criminals" show a clear link to the press accounts. During the 1934 Röhm affair, for example, the rumors that began to circulate about the homosexuality of a Nazi Party member prompted his denunciation to the police. Shortly following the news accounts of the Krepp murder and supposed intrigues, one neighbor denounced a thirty-two-year-old tailor for using his apartment as a "flophouse for rent boys," and another informed on a twenty-two-year-old for "homosexual intrigues," even though both

¹⁰⁴Staatsarchiv Hamburg: 241-2, Justizverwaltung, Personalakten A 3210, Rudolf Laun. I wish to thank Thomas Mohr of Hamburg for his assistance.

¹⁰⁵Regarding false denunciation in Berlin, see Pretzel, 28–29. In addition to the cases noted above, other instances of false accusations revolved around unrequited love, envy when another soldier was granted leave from the front, or attempts to wrest custody of a child from a spouse (see Rep. 4536/40, 5310/41, 6512/41).

¹⁰⁶Rep. 1033/38.

neighbors had been aware of the situations for quite some time. In a third case, the denouncers made explicit mention of the Seefeld child murders.¹⁰⁷

Although the National Socialist regime generally encouraged denunciation, on occasion it tried to check the flood of denunciations in the realization that the multitude of false ones were overburdening the investigative apparatus. Adolescents were notable for their enthusiasm in denouncing offenses.¹⁰⁸ In 1934 the Hamburg Hitler Youth organization insisted on participating in the campaign against “homosexuals” and organized patrols to uncover “homosexuals” and rent boys across the city. A number of the Hitler Youth offered themselves as “decoys” or “bait,” pretending to offer sexual services in order to entrap men. Within a few weeks, however, the Hamburg police called a halt to the “impudent” investigative techniques of these “amateur criminologists.”¹⁰⁹ After Röhm’s assassination, newspapers published repeated appeals to the population in an effort to stem the tide of informers. However, as Martin Broszat has noted, such appeals led to a wave of further denunciations. The regime’s messages on denunciation were thus ambivalent and sometimes contradictory.¹¹⁰

As rumors invited denunciations, denunciations prompted investigations and prosecutions. Contrary to what earlier historians have assumed, recent research using the repositories of Gestapo and police records from Berlin and Hamburg, the two largest cities in Germany, demonstrates that “active” investigation methods such as surveillance and raids were not the basis for most arrests of same-sex-desiring men. In Hamburg, the percentage of cases originating from such methods was twenty-two in 1936, when the Berlin Gestapo Sonderkommando was active there, twelve in 1937, and eight in 1938. For the entire twelve-year period of Nazi rule,

¹⁰⁷Rep. L189/35, 2782/36, 3185/35, 6693/36. Regarding homosexual stereotyping of Nazi leaders, see Zinn, “Die Bewegung der Homosexuellen”; Zinn, *Die soziale Konstruktion des homosexuellen Nationalsozialisten*; Jörn Meve, “Homosexuelle Nazis: Ein Stereotyp in Literatur und Politik des Exils” (Hamburg, 1990). For cases of sexual denunciation, see Bernward Dörner, “Heimtücke”: *Das Gesetz als Waffe: Kontrolle, Abschreckung und Verfolgung in Deutschland 1933–1945* (Paderborn, 1998), 189–91. For cases from Hamburg, see Rep. 2055/35, 2581/35, 5113/37, 1556/38, 127/39, 1335/40, 559/43. For cases from Düsseldorf, see Johnson, 297–98.

¹⁰⁸Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, 156. Denunciations by the Hitler Youth prompted a significant number of investigations.

¹⁰⁹See Rep. L735/34, 2729/35, 3333/35, 3476/35, 4984/35, 1138/36, 8809/38, 6514/37, 2492/45, 38/46; Staatsarchiv Hamburg: 354-5, Jugendbehörde I, 232c: Einsetzung und Tätigkeit des HJ-Streifendienstes der NSV Jugendhilfe 1934–1941. Regarding the debate on the Hitler Youth patrol at the central train station, see Ramm, 27–28.

¹¹⁰“Chef des Stabes Lutze warnt die Denunzianten,” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, July 19, 1934, morning ed., 1; “Rudolf Heß gegen die Denunzianten,” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, July 24, 1934, morning ed., 1, and evening ed., 2; “Gegen Gerüchtemacher und anonyme Denunzianten,” *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, July 31, 1934, evening ed., 2; Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, 138–39; Martin Broszat, “Politische Denunziationen in der NS-Zeit: Aus Forschungserfahrungen im Staatsarchiv München,” *Archivalische Zeitschrift* 73 (1977): 221–38, 223.

an average of only 14 percent of the cases in Hamburg were derived from police initiatives. As was the case with political offenses, the state apparatus was only effective in its pursuit of male same-sex behaviors because neighbors, coworkers, and even family members were willing to denounce.¹¹¹ My examination of the surviving records of the Hamburg district court for the years 1936 and 1937 indicates that more than one fourth of all the lower court trials involving Paragraphs 175 and 175a violations were the result of third-party denunciations.¹¹² If one includes the denunciations by adult men who had been approached for sexual favors, that figure rises to 32.9 percent for 1936 and 31.7 percent for 1937. Analysis of a portion of 1938 cases bears out these statistics, as do random samples from the remaining years of Nazi rule, which show that approximately 30 percent of all lower court cases from 1933 to 1945 resulted from denunciations.¹¹³

Regarding the discussion among Nazi elites whether denunciation should be encouraged or banned, see Diewald-Kerkmann, "Denunziantentum und Gestapo," 285–305; Diewald-Kerkmann, "Politische Denunziation—eine 'weibliche Domäne'?" 11–35; Diewald-Kerkmann, "Politische Denunziationen im NS-Regime," 146–56; Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, 139.

¹¹¹Robert Gellately, "The Gestapo and German Society: Political Denunciation in the Gestapo Case Files," *Journal of Modern History* 60, no. 4 (1988): 654–94. Regarding the importance of denunciation to the regime, see Diewald-Kerkmann, "Denunziantentum und Gestapo," 289–90; Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, 129–30, 135–36. Johnson also emphasizes the importance of denunciation but argues that Gellately and Diewald-Kerkmann attribute too much responsibility to the denouncers and too little to the Nazi apparatus of persecution (433–34). I disagree with Johnson's critique. The importance of denunciation to the apparatus of persecution was detailed by Martin Broszat as early as 1977 ("Politische Denunziationen").

¹¹²Staatsarchiv Hamburg: 213–11, Staatsanwaltschaft Landgericht—Strafsachen. Between 1986 and 1996, authorized by the Hamburg state archive, the legal staff destroyed most of the records of the Hamburg public prosecutor's office dating from the National Socialist era. These records were a crucial repository of information regarding the investigative methods of the Hamburg police as well as the workings of the public prosecutor and court system. Although the records for the years from 1938 onward had been preserved in near entirety, today less than 20 percent of the records survive. Since there were no statistical criteria employed in selecting which records should be preserved, the surviving records cannot be taken as representative. Following international protest, the destruction of records relating to violations of Paragraph 175 was halted by the senator of justice in 1996. The judicial records dating from the years prior to 1937 had already been culled by the National Socialists when the courts were consolidated in the newly established greater Hamburg region. Regarding the destruction of these records, see Stefan Micheler, "'Verfahren nach § 175 übertrafen in ihrer Häufigkeit die Verfahren gegen andere Verfolgte erheblich'—daher wurden sie vernichtet. Zum Umgang des Hamburger Staatsarchivs mit NS-Justizakten," in *Verfolgung Homosexueller im Nationalsozialismus: Beiträge zur Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung in Norddeutschland*, vol. 5, ed. KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme (Bremen, 1999), 112–21.

¹¹³Due to the destruction of records by the Hamburg state archives and the errors made by the archive in selecting from the existing records, these figures should not be regarded as definitive. Nonetheless, some obvious trends are apparent. Since the original grounds for

Data from many other areas confirm the importance of denunciations. The court records from Altona, which was incorporated into greater Hamburg in 1937, show that nearly 42 percent of the investigations conducted between 1933 and 1937 resulted from denunciations. According to Andreas Pretzel, 38 percent of approximately three hundred cases in Berlin resulted from denunciations by a third party and 11 percent from denunciations by those approached for sexual favors. While Frank Sparing's research on Düsseldorf and Jürgen Müller's on Cologne have yielded a lower percentage of denunciations, this might be accounted for by the fact that only a fragment of the original case records for these cities survived the war. Although no statistics have been compiled for the city of Munich, Stephan Heiss has surmised that the active cooperation of the population was key in that city as well.¹¹⁴

The majority of same-sex-desiring men who were investigated came to official attention after a sexual partner or an acquaintance revealed their names under the pressure of interrogation. Many men who were interrogated submitted a sort of "wholesale confession," naming all of their previous sexual partners and engaging in great self-reproach for their sexual desires. Few could withstand interrogation and refuse to

investigation played no role in the later choice of which records to destroy and which to preserve, I believe my statistical analysis to be legitimate. I examined all 130 surviving files for convictions dated 1936. In 82 cases, or 63 percent, what triggered the investigation is apparent from the record. For the year 1937, I examined all 183 surviving records and was able to make a clear determination in 145 records, or 78 percent. For convictions dating to 1938, Moritz Terfloth and I examined 232 of the 500 surviving case files. In almost all the records (99 percent), the reason for investigation is apparent. The analysis of the files from the years 1933–35 is still in progress. For the years 1933–45, evidence has survived for 1,828 trials of violations of Paragraphs 175 and 175a. Of these cases, I have examined 646 files, while Moritz Terfloth has analyzed an additional 115 cases. Our summary statistic is based on our analysis of these 761 cases, which represents 42 percent of the surviving case records. The Hamburg state archive is not able to provide information regarding the original number of cases that were tried during the Nazi years.

¹¹⁴Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein, Section 352 Altona, Staatsanwaltschaft beim Landgericht Altona.

Pretzel grouped government agencies and businesses under one heading (22), but I have chosen to list denunciations from the workplace under the heading of "personal denunciations." It is thus likely that the percentage of denunciations from private individuals in Berlin will exceed 50 percent.

In his study of Cologne cases, Jürgen Müller argued for a lower estimate for the percentage initiated following denunciation. However, the surviving records for Cologne are too fragmentary to permit Müller to undertake an empirical quantification ("Die Kölner Kriminalpolizei zwischen Verbrechensaufklärung und 'vorbeugender Verbrechensbekämpfung,'" in *Polizei und schwule Subkulturen* [Comparativ 9, no. 1], ed. Stephan Heiss and Wolfgang Schmale [Leipzig, 1999], 25–47).

In 1990, Burkhard Jellonnek conducted comparative research on this question, examining one urban region (Düsseldorf), one midsize town (Würzburg), and one rural area (Pfalz). In Düsseldorf, 15 percent of cases followed from denunciations; in Würzburg, 9 percent; in

provide the names of their former sexual partners.¹¹⁵ Thus, the focus of the police investigative apparatus was on interrogating men who had already been arrested. Consequently, each denunciation led to the arrest and conviction of not just the man accused but many others. Nearly half of all Hamburg convictions thus ultimately were the result of denunciation.¹¹⁶

Unlike those made during the Weimar Republic, denunciations made under National Socialism often led to prosecutions. The Weimar police and courts had required concrete evidence of sexual acts akin to “natural,” heterosexual intercourse, which most denouncers would have been unable to provide. Until 1936 the Hamburg vice squad focused mainly on the

Neustadt/Pfalz, 11 percent (“Homosexuelle unter dem Hakenkreuz,” 193–99, 236–42, 282–93, 330). His assumption, most likely correct, is that the Gestapo engaged in active investigation only in urban areas and relied in rural regions on denunciations and on pressuring those whom they had arrested into providing the names of additional “homosexuals.” It was, of course, more difficult for police to pursue “active” investigations in rural areas since there were no meeting places for same-sex-desiring men.

According to Frank Sparing, Jellonnek mistakenly included a portion of the records from the Düsseldorf regional high court district, which extended considerably beyond the boundaries of the city itself. Only a fraction of these high court cases would have issued directly from the city of Düsseldorf. When Sparing examined the same records analyzed by Jellonnek, he arrived at different figures (10, 12, 15, 104).

Moreover, Jellonnek’s analysis does not reflect that the criminal police, not the Gestapo, were responsible for most prosecutions of homosexual men. He also overlooked the fact that a high proportion of the Gestapo’s investigative efforts took place within the framework of a *Sonderaktion* (special campaign). The more likely conclusion is that presumably no such campaigns were conducted in small towns and rural regions. On the whole, Jellonnek’s results must be approached with caution, since he based his analysis on a restricted number of sources and, in the case of Düsseldorf, made errors in the regional distribution of cases.

In his own study of Düsseldorf, Frank Sparing also arrived at a lower estimate for cases initiated following denunciation. However, he based his analysis on only 360 Gestapo case files, since the Kripo files could no longer be located, even though they had been examined for a commemorative history of the Düsseldorf police in 1983 (11).

Stephan Heiss’s argument is based on an analysis of surviving police case records, but unfortunately he did not provide any information about the number or completeness of the records he analyzed (“München: Polizei und schwule Subkulturen 1919–1944,” in Heiss and Schmale, eds., 61–79).

In his important study of Frankfurt am Main, Dieter Schiefelbein did not consider the issue of cases triggered by denunciation (“Zur Verfolgung von Homosexuellen in Frankfurt am Main,” in *Verfolgung und Widerstand in Hessen 1933–1945*, ed. Renate Knigge-Tesche and Axel Ulrich [Frankfurt am Main, 1996], 404–14).

¹¹⁵Heinrich Erich Starke, a traveling salesman from Hamburg, and Hans-Georg S., a resident of Düsseldorf, were among the very few men who resisted the pressure of interrogation and refused to provide names. Regarding Starke, see Micheler, “eben homosexuell”; regarding S., see Jürgen Müller, “Die alltägliche Angst: Denunziationen als Instrument zur Ausschaltung Missliebiger,” in Limpricht, Müller, and Oxenius, eds., 96–103, esp. 100.

¹¹⁶This figure is a reasonable estimate, since statistical analysis of the grounds of investigation is no longer possible due to gaps in the preservation of records.

¹¹⁷Micheler, “eben homosexuell,” 78.

investigation of male prostitutes and blackmailers.¹¹⁷ In September of that year a denouncer complained to the Gestapo that he had repeatedly brought his accusation to the attention of the criminal police but had been ignored.¹¹⁸ Starting in the summer of 1936, the police (until the summer of 1937 the Gestapo, and from the summer of 1937 until 1945 the Kripo) investigated all accusations, regardless of the motive of the denouncer or the plausibility of the accusation, for under the Nazis, the mere suspicion that a person might be “homosexual” sufficed to trigger an investigation. The mere fact that a man had been called a “homosexual” justified the questioning of acquaintances, coworkers, and neighbors. In most instances, the accused were summoned to appear before the police, where they were interrogated and often taken into “protective custody.”¹¹⁹

An analysis of the denunciations of same-sex-desiring men in Hamburg refutes Eric Johnson’s recent thesis that popular denunciations either did not prompt official investigations or resulted in only minor sentences.¹²⁰ The denunciations of same-sex-desiring men had serious consequences for the accused: Heinrich Erich Starke was murdered in the Neuengamme concentration camp; Alfred Beckmann died while a resident of the Meseritz-Obrawalde psychiatric hospital in Brandenburg, where he had been incarcerated by order of the court. Following their lengthy imprisonment, Eugen Lenz and Gustav Pannier were forced to undergo “voluntary castration” in order to secure release from the concentration camp. Other victims cited in this study “merely” received lengthy prison sentences. But because the court records ordinarily do not mention later forced castration or subsequent confinement to a concentration camp, it is reasonable to assume that many victims were subjected to punishment beyond what is officially documented. Many of those convicted of a Paragraph 175 violation lost not only their jobs, homes, and friends but also their health and even their lives.

Same-sex-desiring men under National Socialism thus lived in a climate of fear. All aspects of their daily lives were affected by persecution. The friendship federations were banned, bars were shut down or subjected to police surveillance, lavatories and parks were observed for evidence of “homosexual” assignations, magazines for same-sex-desiring men and women were banned. The fear of blackmail was ever present, as was the fear of denunciation. It became impossible for same-sex-desiring men to feel secure even in their own homes or among friends and colleagues. Those who were arrested and convicted often found themselves abandoned by their friends. Others were forced to keep their desires hidden. They withdrew from the homosexual subculture and abandoned friendships with other

¹¹⁸Rep. 8689/38.

¹¹⁹See Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, 165.

¹²⁰Johnson’s argument, which addresses Jews, is contradicted by the research of both Robert Gellately and Gisela Diewald-Kirkmann and seems implausible given the evidence that Johnson himself cites in his work (484).

same-sex-desiring men in fear of coming to the attention of the state. This climate of fear led to withdrawal, to increasing loneliness, to suicide. For young men who discovered that they had same-sex desires, it was virtually impossible to develop a positive sexual identity. In addition to the homophobia expressed in the media and popular opinion, they were confronted with the homophobic propaganda campaigns of the Hitler Youth. The plight of these young men, who had never experienced the comparatively liberal atmosphere of the Weimar Republic, was particularly tragic.¹²¹

Although the National Socialist regime, defeated in war, came to an end in 1945, its legal code and police and court apparatus were taken over by the Federal Republic, along with the medical theories on the genesis of homosexuality that the Nazis had developed and articulated so effectively. Homophobic stereotypes have further determined German society's views on homosexuality, and social discrimination affected the handling of homosexuals until the 1960s. While the state no longer prescribed death or mutilation for "homosexuals," it continued to inflict considerable psychological damage.

Translated by Patricia Szobar

¹²¹Under National Socialism a few individuals did demonstrate solidarity with same-sex-desiring men. Some refused to cooperate with investigating authorities or provided false and misleading information to protect accused men. Others maintained personal contact and association with convicted men, and some employers went out of their way to rehire those convicted upon release.