WOMEN POLICE IN WEIMAR: PROFESSIONALISM, POLITICS, AND INNOVATION IN POLICE ORGANIZATIONS

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This article details the history and philosophy behind attempted major changes in police tradition and organization that were fostered by women between 1920 and 1931 in Germany. Women police, led by Josefine Erkens and influenced by their background as social workers, tried to develop a social-work–oriented policing. Erkens held successive leadership positions in Cologne, Frankfurt, and Hamburg. With each new position she pioneered ways of thinking about the role of women in police work and about the relation between social work as a profession and policing as a profession. She became a controversial figure and was finally dismissed from her position in Hamburg. The case examined in this paper shows the influence on police of gender role uncertainty, interest group pressures, the political environment, and conflicting views of police professionalism. The article also discusses the difficulties involved in trying to integrate within one organization two disparate professional paradigms: that of law enforcement, with its emphasis on deterrence, and that of social work, with its emphasis on rehabilitation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The entrance of women into traditionally male occupations such as policing has not been achieved without pain both to women and to their male colleagues. Indeed the degree of success in introducing women into police forces remains minimal. Police organizations, typically in-bred and fraternal in spirit, and emphasizing male values of dominance, use of force, and assertion of authority, generally are not hospitable to women even if good-faith efforts are made to integrate them. Women themselves often suffer from ambivalence in relation to their role within a police organization. Martin (1980), in a study of the socialization of women police, makes a distinction between po-

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lice*women* and *police*women. *Police*women exhibit behaviors, attitudes, and norms similar to those of male officers; police*women* put greater stress on their differences from male officers, accept protective behavior from male officers, and have lower law enforcement career aspirations than *police*women. Her underlying premise is that women who accept the male-centered values do well in policing. Despite difficulties they strive to accomplish as much as the men within boundaries that have been set by men. Although she describes the psychological and social difficulties that the women have in adjusting to police work, Martin does not question the importance of subscribing to the conventional norms and values.

It can be contended that if policewomen functioned differently from men, they would be bypassed for promotions or desirable assignments. Contemporary research on women police, however, suggests that they perform their work in much the same way as their male colleagues (Bloch and Anderson, 1974). In recent times, the effort to recruit women to police work has been energized by the drive for equal opportunities for women as well as by the desire for a government bureaucracy that represents all segments of the population, including women. Therefore, there has been little effort to contend that women might play a unique role in reforming police organizations and operations to be more effective in dealing with citizens.

This article deals with an earlier chapter in the history of women police, a chapter that generally is not well known. Between 1920 and 1931, women police in Germany went through many of the same phases of development and faced many of the same problems that women police are facing throughout the Western world today. In some ways, however, the German experience at that time was quite different in that women police, under the particular leadership of Josefine Erkens, tried to develop a peculiar style of social-work–oriented policing that was radically different from traditional police operations. In effect, they were trying to move beyond the emulation of their male colleagues to the development of a new style of policing that would be a model for both men and women.[1]

Several themes are developed in this article: the role of women in policing, conflicting conceptions about police mission, professional interest-group activity, and the impact of political developments on police operations. The article also considers

[1] Although the idea of using women to bring about reform in police departments was also propounded in the United States at about the same time (Walker, 1980: 138), the circumstances, context, and degree of development were quite different from those in Germany.

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problems related to the integration of social work practices and ideals into professional law enforcement activities. The clash of professions and ideals of professionalism are central to the case that is described.

The following section describes the situation that occasioned the disbanding of the female detective unit of the Hamburg police department in 1931. The third, fourth, and fifth sections describe the gradual organizational and philosophical changes that took place prior to this event as Josefine Erkens, a leader of women police, moved from leadership positions in Cologne to Frankfurt and finally to Hamburg. The conclusion discusses the implications of this case for women in policing and for the study of professional interests in policing.

II. DISSOLUTION OF THE HAMBURG WOMEN'S DETECTIVE DIVISION

In October 1931 the female detective unit (*weibliche Kriminalpolizei*) of the Hamburg police department was abolished. The event that triggered this dissolution was a scandal among the leadership of this unit that resulted in widespread and sensational coverage in the German press. Peculiarly, however, neither the female detective unit nor the reasons for its demise are generally given note in histories of police or even in histories of women police in Germany. Thus, for example, in 1964, when the Hamburg police department issued an historical *Festschrift* to celebrate its one hundred fiftieth anniversary, women police were given only two lines. The *Festschrift* states that in 1928, despite the fact that Hamburg had nine hundred registered prostitutes whose health was certified by the authorities, the problem of venereal disease increasingly concerned the city fathers. To cut down on the vice trade that aggravated this problem, "the citizens decided on the eighth of March to create a female detective unit in the police. The first leader of the unit was *Kriminaloberkommissarin* [Chief Inspector] Erkens" (Innenministerium Hamburg, 1964: 10). This book does not discuss the abolition of the unit in 1931 nor the history of *Kriminaloberkommissarin* Josefine Erkens, who was well known in both German and international police circles in the late 1920s. It likewise says nothing about the nature of the female detective unit, which was a model of an unusual and progressive form of policing and was attracting national and international attention.

The scandal of 1931 was highlighted by a tragic and dramatic event. On July 10 of that year, on the island of Pellwurm

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in the North Sea off the coast of Schleswig-Holstein, the bodies of two women officers of the Hamburg police washed up on shore. The bodies were tied together, and each woman had been shot in the head at close range. This grisly discovery in a popular vacation retreat for people from all over Germany shocked the entire nation (*Vossische Zeitung Berlin*, July 11, 1931 [HS, no. 48]).

The two women, *Inspektorin* Dopfer and *Kriminalobersekretarin* Fischer, had sent Doktor Schlaubusch, the chief of police, a note saying that they planned to commit suicide on Pellwurm. Schlaubusch hastily dispatched an agent to the island to try to avert the tragedy. The agent was unable to find the women, and his search ended two days later with the discovery of the bodies. According to an account in a Berlin newspaper, the women had probably walked far into the water, bound themselves together, shot each other in the head with their service pistols, and then fell into the North Sea (ibid.).

The reasons for this desperate action were related to conflict in the women's detective division. Both Dopfer and Fischer had been hired in 1928, when the city of Hamburg had decided to set up a women's police unit. Both were trained social workers and experienced policewomen who, prior to their move to Hamburg, had been working in the experimental unit of policewomen in Frankfurt (ibid.).

Their supervisor in Frankfurt, Josefine Erkens, was also persuaded to move to Hamburg to head the new unit. Hamburg was the third major women's police unit that Erkens had developed. In 1926 she had started the women's unit in Frankfurt, and before that she had been the first head of the women police in Cologne, indeed the first woman to head a uniformed police unit in a German police department (Barck, 1928: 25).

Despite their common history, Erkens and Dopfer had an increasingly strained relationship in Hamburg. Two factions developed in the women's unit, with followers of Erkens and Dopfer taking sides. In the first half of 1931 the struggle came to a head, and Erkens, shortly before leaving for an extended business and vacation trip, recommended that an official reprimand be given to Dopfer. When she returned, according to the newspapers, a bitter fight broke out in the quarters of the women police during which some items were destroyed. Dopfer, with her follower Fischer, left the headquarters, and they were not seen again until their bodies were discovered (*Vossische Zeitung Berlin*, July 11, 1931 [HS, no. 48]).

The reaction of the Hamburg police leadership to these

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dramatic events was swift. Two closed-door hearings were held, and, although no blame for the suicides could be placed on Erkens, she was removed as head of the female unit and placed in a regular detective unit. Shortly thereafter, the women's division was disbanded, and the twelve remaining women officers were integrated into the regular *Kriminalpolizei*, or Criminal Investigation Division (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, October 9, 1932 [HS, no. 63]).

Erkens did not submit quietly to this disgrace and threatened a hunger strike until the matter was dealt with. Deploring the sensational press notices of the case, she declared,

> If after two investigations no blame for the suicides could be placed on me, a third investigation must be held regarding my conduct in relation to superiors and employees. I declare that no charges have been brought against me. Each accused is entitled to know what charges are being brought against him. Since the chief of the Senate [the legislative body of the city-state of Hamburg] says that it was not the top police authorities who gave false information to the press, I know it must have been the chief of the *Kriminalpolizei* who gave information to the *Vossische Zeitung*, which in numerous articles has slandered me. . . . Since no further opportunity exists to contradict the false press notices, I hereby declare that I will take no further nourishment until I have the guarantee that the proceedings of the two closed investigations are made available to the citizens so that people can make a judgment not only about my guilt or innocence in this case but also about the tactics of the police authorities, tactics that endangered the possibility of objective proceedings in the investigation (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 1, 1932 [HS, no. 59]).

The Senate of Hamburg considered Erkens's case on November 23, 1931, and supported the police authorities in their judgment. In a public statement, which they said was necessary to counter her public statements, the senators declared that by her public statements as well as by her conduct toward superiors and subordinates, Erkens had shown that she was not fit to hold a supervisory position in the police department. She was lacking in reserve, self-discipline, and objectivity in relation to her subordinates, and it would be impossible to resume normal operations with her in the department. The Senate, however, gave her the opportunity to retire from police service to protect her eligibility for a pension (ibid.).

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* of March 1, 1932 [HS, no. 59], had this comment on the Senate action:

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> The idea that Frau Erkens is not a good leader is contradicted by her excellent record in Cologne and Frankfurt. . . . [Furthermore,] it is known that even in earlier employment situations Frau Dopfer had, on the one hand, schemed against her fellow workers and against her supervisors and, on the other hand, through sullenness and refusal to cooperate had made herself generally unpleasant. In the social welfare agency in which she worked in Thuringia she also recklessly denounced her coworkers and her supervisors. The same thing appears to have happened in Hamburg. Indeed, the psychological complexity of this affair is so great that bureaucratic procedure alone can hardly deal with it.

It was not only the career of Josefine Erkens that came to an abrupt end with the events of the second half of 1931. The strong momentum of progress and acceptance of women police, which was so enmeshed with her career, also suffered a major setback. On July 20, shortly after the incident, the case was taken up at the meeting of the Presidium of German Criminal Investigators. The group decided to inquire of all state police ministries about the usefulness of women police in light of the situation in Hamburg. At its next meeting, the Presidium let it be known that it had no further plans for proceeding with a projected international meeting on women police, in which Erkens had been expected to play a leading role (Polizeipraesident Stuttgart, 1931).

Erkens herself claimed that the disciplinary actions directed against her were designed to get rid not only of her " 'but also the women's police division in the form in which it had developed in Hamburg' " (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 1, 1932 [HS, no. 59]). A similar concern was expressed in a cautious article in the August 1931 issue of the official journal of the Federation of German Social Workers. This article set out to explain the real nature of the case, which the author claimed had been unduly sensationalized into a catastrophe or crisis. Erkens, she said, worked tirelessly for the advancement of women police. The two dead policewomen also were hard working and true to their commitments as professionals (Weber, 1931: 129). The writer went on to say that "we women have a problem in that the presentation of our values is distorted" (ibid., 130). To set the record straight, she detailed her version of the case. Erkens, during the fifteen weeks she had been away from her office, had no contacts with Dopfer. The short talk she did have with Fischer was "quiet and controlled." The claim that the room had been torn up was not true. Dopfer,

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shortly before the return of Erkens, was reprimanded for her behavior toward Erkens.

The author then expressed the deep concerns of the social work profession about this case. The women's movement, she said, was particularly concerned about the acceptance of women in police work. Through such acceptance it was hoped that the police would take on a greater social service mission. This case should not affect the operations of either the women police in Hamburg or women police in general. Personal cases, concluded Weber, should not bring the whole enterprise into question and should not be used as an excuse to dismantle women police forces (ibid.).

By bringing into disrepute the woman who had been the leader in the establishment of female police forces, this case probably did force a halt in the progress in this area. To say, however, that the Erkens case was used as an excuse to dismantle the female police apparatus in Hamburg and to dim the hopes for further development of women police leaves open the crucial matter of motive. Why would the police want to destroy what appeared to be a highly successful operation? Why did they act with such haste not only to get rid of Josefine Erkens but also to dismantle the entire female police unit? Why did support for women in policing ebb so quickly after this incident? Answers may lie in the history of the development of female police units in Germany within the context of general police development during the Weimar Republic. At a more basic level, however, the demise of the female detective unit at Hamburg may be related to the vocational aspirations, ambiguities, and insecurities within the social work profession as it struggled to come to terms with German policing, which at the same time was going through its own crisis of professional identity. Erkens's career parallels these developments so closely that it is perhaps fitting that she should also have been deeply involved in the pivotal incident that was used to justify the probably inevitable decline of this early attempt to involve women in conventional police duties.

III. THE COLOGNE EXPERIMENT

Except during the National Socialist regime, German police forces have always been under the control of individual states, or *Laender*. Prior to the end of World War II, traditional police power in all German states encompassed a much larger range of activities than that in Britain and the United States. The German term for police referred to both law enforcement per-

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sonnel (known as executive police) and other regulatory personnel (known as administrative police) who handled such wide-ranging activities as health regulation, building code enforcement, labor code enforcement, food inspection, citizen registration, and market regulation (Jacob, 1963: 53–55). According to Chapman (1970: chp. 2), in Eighteenth-century Germany the term *Polizeistaat*, or police state, connotated a benevolent government concern with protection of citizens in all aspects of their lives.

In the nineteenth century, this paternalistic notion of the police state gave way to the idea of a *Rechtsstaat*, or nation ruled by law. Nevertheless, in each state the administrative police continued to exist as an organization and to influence the concept of police role and mission. Inevitably there was some confusion about the degree to which the police should be involved in general welfare activities, even of a regulatory kind. This confusion contributed, no doubt, to some of the problems of women police that are described in this paper.

The spirit of the Weimar Constitution, and especially its emphasis on democratic forms of accountability and increased participation in public affairs, was reflected in the leadership of the German states, particularly the northern states of Prussia and Saxony, which were politically under the control of the Social Democratic Party. Thus it was natural that police organizations should attempt to replace the rigid, militaristic image of the German police officer with one of concern for the public and loyalty to the principles of constitutionality and due process of law. The police leadership hoped to achieve these goals through training, careful recruitment, and leadership promotion of a more relaxed style of police operation (Liang, 1970: chap. 3; *Die Polizei*, 1926: 152). The development of a female contingent in the police was one way to soften and democratize the image of the police. Thus Walter Abegg, a leading official in the Prussian Interior Ministry, claimed that women police would be able to temper the authoritarian nature of German police thought with a philosophy of caring and social reform. " 'This will create the situation,' " he said, " 'in which the police officer will be regarded, not as oppressor, but rather as friend, helper, and protector of his fellow citizens' " (quoted in Barck, 1928: 13).

Women had been employed in professional positions in the German police before this time. As early as 1903 the police of Stuttgart in the state of Wuerttemberg had hired a female social worker to deal with some problems of human distress, especially among women and children, that all police depart-

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ments encounter regularly in their work. This woman, Henriette Arendt, who was known as "an angel of the poor," described in her books the struggle she waged against "those enemies of progress, excessive bureaucratism, and that brand of pietism that only allowed for humanitarian progress through churches" (interview with former police social worker Berta Schumacher in *Die Polizei Zeitung Baden-Wuerttemberg*, March 29, 1982). Other states followed suit, and, by the outbreak of World War I, the profession of police social worker was well established throughout Germany. Police social workers constituted a separate civilian arm of the police, however, and were in no way part of the regular police organization in terms of training, career mobility, and duties.

At the same time that the police leadership was trying to promote a new image for the German police, the victorious Entente powers retained a keen interest in hampering the development of German military strength and were concerned about the possibility of the Germans using the police as a substitute for the military. They kept close control over such aspects of police development as weapons and troop formations. In addition, they had an interest in protecting their own military forces, which continued to occupy some portions of Germany, from exploitation by Germans and especially from venereal disease. It was in fact British concern about the rising rates of venereal disease among their troops stationed in Germany that led to the creation of the first uniformed female police contingent in 1923 (Lindeman, 1925: 1–18). This unit was established in Cologne at the request of and with the help of the British authorities (Barck, 1928: 24) and was known as the *Frauenwohlfahrtspolizei*, or Women's Welfare Police.

Four women social workers were chosen for this group. Josefine Erkens, as the one with the greatest experience, was asked to be its leader and to handle the problems of organization and tactics. A group of British policewomen under the leadership of Commander Mary Allen came to Cologne to help the Germans set up their unit.

Erkens (1951) later described the excitement of this new development and the spirit of cooperation among women that it occasioned: "Women's organizations of every type and ideology in Cologne came together in a committee to support the women's police. They worked in closest collaboration with the English women to insure that from the beginning desirable standards for the new occupation would be set up." A leading Cologne newspaper published an article that described the close ties and camaraderie that developed between the English and

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German women as well as the active support, encouragement, and cooperative involvement of various women's organizations with the female police unit (*Koelnischer Volkszeitung*, March 8, 1924 [HS, no. 2]).

The mission of the new police unit was to control the rampant unregulated prostitution that was causing serious increase in veneral disease among British soldiers and presumably among Germans as well. The uniformed women police patrolled the streets at night, talking to prostitutes and bringing them to a shelter for a health examination and counseling. Again Erkens (1951) later gave some understanding of the large step that was being undertaken: "This first translation of women from passive social work into uniformed police who went out at night into the streets and into the centers of night life was at that time a step that was so new, so difficult, so decisive, that a new generation of policewomen can hardly appreciate it."

Erkens's enthusiasm is understandable considering the fact that the new police unit was to be organizationally so different from the traditional police social worker units. Nevertheless, the concept of using women to enhance police work through their skills as welfare workers had, as we have seen, a twenty-year history in Germany, going back to the first recruitment of *Polizei Fuersorgerinnen*, or police social workers, in 1903. This new unit built on the acceptance that women had gained through their previous police work.

The unit can also be seen in light of the Weimar government's general approach to social welfare. For years, Germans had lived under a paternalistic social welfare system developed by Otto von Bismarck. At the same time the Social Democratic Party had been suppressed by the conservative regimes in power during the reign of Kaiser Wilhelm II (1888–1918). Dahrendorf (1967: 64) describes this anomaly by saying that Germany had "managed to miss the road to modernity and instead consolidated itself as an industrial feudal society with an authoritarian welfare state." With the formation of the Weimar Republic and the ascent to power of the Social Democrats there were great hopes for an expanded welfare system as well as advances toward a system of socialism involving nationalization of industries. However, although workers in particular had made some gains under the new republic, especially in the areas of bargaining rights, unemployment insurance, minimum wages, and the forty-four-hour work week, many of the hopes for major structural changes were dashed by the continuing economic and political crises faced by the government. Social workers, concerned about the plight of the underclasses and

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hoping to be instrumental in new policies, were at a critical stage in their development as women professionals (for some of the history of these developments, see Eyck, 1962; and Pachter, 1978).

From the beginning, a major concern was the relations of female police to their male colleagues. With hindsight one can see that it was the progression of these relationships that had much to do with both the flowering and the deterioration of the women's police movement in Weimar Germany. In Cologne the women police would work in tandem with the men's vice control division. The women were not to do pure law enforcement tasks but were to combine their commitment to and training in social welfare work with policing to help people who were both vulnerable and at risk—that is, women, children, and youth—in the area of morals offenses. The women police insisted that a woman leader was essential for their group to guarantee that the mission of the women would not be diluted (Barck, 1928: chap. 2).

In the end, the women's police unit was kept separate from the police hierarchy and was placed directly in the administrative office of the state executive. The unit had three divisions—street patrol, counseling, and prevention—which were housed in a hotel requisitioned by the British authorities. By emphasizing prevention and care for the individual, the women claimed that they could not be compared to the regular vice squads, which tried to suppress prostitution only in the most conventional way: arrest and criminal disposition (ibid.).

Cologne's female police unit attracted attention and admiration from all parts of Germany and even internationally. Many police organizations sent representatives to the city to observe this new development in policing. Conferences were held to discuss women policing and to study the Cologne situation, and the press wrote admiring descriptions of the experiment. At a time when the idea and the reality of women police officers were becoming increasingly popular in the Western world, the women police of Cologne provided a major focus of interest and study.

Erkens blossomed under these circumstances. The chance opportunity to exercise leadership in a new and different kind of enterprise that was attracting a lot of attention brought forth all her talents as organizer, promoter, and creative innovator. She traveled far and wide making speeches and urging other police departments to follow the example of Cologne and set up similar units. She represented Germany at a League of Nations conference on women police and wrote a definitive report about

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developments in Germany for this conference (League of Nations, 1931). In her speeches she stressed the importance of female leadership, social work ideals, and the special ability of women to deal with youth and women offenders. She also emphasized the importance of organizational separation of male and female police units and of a separate career track for women that would not involve conventional police training or work. This was the position from which she was to retreat gradually during the next few years. In 1925 Erkens edited and wrote a long section in a book entitled *Weibliche Polizei* (Women Police), which was in essence a laudatory description of the Cologne experience (Erkens, 1925). This book was published by the Deutscher Polizei-Verlag (German Police Press), a major publishing firm in Luebeck, and promoted, with promises of discounts for copies bought in quantity, in the interior ministries and police departments in Germany (Deutscher Polizei-Verlag Luebeck, 1926).

In 1925 the state of Baden mounted a major international police exposition in the city of Karlsruhe. Exhibits about women police and their work were prominently displayed in the exhibition hall. Erkens was invited to spend three weeks at the exhibition as a guest of the Interior Ministry of Baden. There she gave speeches, held seminars, and otherwise promoted the ideal of women police on the Cologne model. In Baden, Prussia, and Saxony, plans were being made to develop women's police units (Fassbinder, 1930).

Despite its apparent success, the unit in Cologne lasted less than two years. The reasons for its demise are not clear, although the facts are simple. The city said that it had no more money for housing the unit and also froze hiring for all open positions. According to one history, the continuance of the unit was opposed by factions both in the regular police and in social work organizations who felt threatened by this new organization. The city of Cologne claimed it was ready to support the continuation of the unit, but the Reich subsidies that had made it possible were withdrawn (Lindeman, 1925: 12). Whatever the reasons, Erkens felt that it was impossible to carry out her work under these circumstances and resigned.

A few months later she was made head of a new women's detective division in Frankfurt, one of the leading cities of the state of Prussia. This appointment was preceded by negotiations between women social work leaders and the Prussian Interior Minister about the nature of the proposed new division. The story of these negotiations shows a certain dissension within the ranks of women social workers about the best use of

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women police. It also reveals something of the nature of Erkens as she wavered between the ideals of her profession and her obviously great ambition (Wieking, 1958: 40).

IV. POLICE AND SOCIAL WORKERS IN FRANKFURT

In Cologne the women's police unit had had the general support of social work organizations and also of the *Bund deutscher Frauenvereine* (BDF), or League of German Women's Organizations, precisely because its mission was carefully circumscribed to put major emphasis on social work goals: the prevention of immorality among endangered people and the rehabilitation of those who had already "fallen." The policing function of the women was incidental to these goals, and the separation of the unit from the high command of the police assured that the women would not be unduly influenced by police philosophy and mission.

The argument revolved around the nature of women and the optimal way to use this nature in police work, especially detective work. In June 1926, the leadership of the BDF met with representatives of the Interior Ministry and the Social Welfare Ministry of Prussia. The Interior Minister's representatives argued that there would be great advantages to having women working in the same units as detectives in the role of "helpers of the officers." The leaders of the BDF at that meeting were all high level civil servants (Dr. Helene Weber, Dr. Anna Meyer, and Dr. Gertrud Baumer). They were totally opposed to this kind of organization and insisted that women detectives should have a social welfare orientation, concentrate on helping people in trouble, and deal especially with "endangered" individuals. To achieve this goal they needed the unalloyed trust of the people, and therefore their use in any kind of conventional law enforcement work was totally unacceptable (Wieking, 1958: 43).

The other side argued that it was precisely the nature of women which would make them useful as adjunct detectives. An earlier account in the *Koelnischer Volkszeitung* (March 3, 1924 [HS, no. 2]) had perceived this difference between men and women: "Men use fear and force against individuals to insure public order and health." Women, on the other hand, use "preventive, protective, and healing approaches to helping individuals and thereby serve the welfare of all." Men are also different in their characteristics and their manner. Women know that "ministry to others lies not in following only one path, but that the conscience of people must be awakened in many ways,

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that upbringing, religion, education, health, and social consciousness are necessary for their fellow citizens." In addition, women are less likely to be influenced by the tears, entreaties, and various kinds of erotic appeals that women offenders use to influence male officers. The woman officer counters this kind of appeal from her fellow women with "objective, quiet judgment and demeanor."

The uncertainties and ambiguities in this situation can be attributed in part to the position of the *Kriminalpolizei* itself within the police apparatus. The *Kripo*, as it was known, had struggled since the inception of the Weimar Republic to maintain its independence as a professional organization of trained criminalists that would not become involved in street work, politics, or even the investigation of political crimes. Its members were recruited from those with a relatively high level of education and socioeconomic status, individuals who in prewar days would not have been interested in police work. In this atmosphere specialization of effort, experimentation, and general reform characterized *Kriminalpolizei* work in the 1920s (Liang, 1970: chap. 4). At the same time, the *Schutzpolizei*, or Protection Police, was having serious problems related to the increasing crisis of public order and the loyalty of its officer corps to the republic. It did not have the energy or time to develop new organizational forms or even to support promising experimental units such as the one in Cologne (Kohler, 1975). Thus the fact that the *Kriminalpolizei* was interested in setting up a women's division that was more than a routine women's welfare and law enforcement division, such as existed in Cologne, is not surprising. The negotiations, soul-searching, and attempts to find a way to use women that would not be contrary to their "nature," however, suggest that the newness of admitting women to this kind of work was causing uneasiness among both women and men, as each side groped for a solution that would maximize its own interests.

In the end, a certain compromise was reached, although the BDF saw it as a defeat. Women were to become nonuniformed detectives and take the same examinations for detective work as men. They would do standard detective work related to women, children, and young people, other police work, and citizen service work. They would not perform social work as such. However, they would be required to be trained as social workers and would have a separate organizational entity. A women's endangered-persons street patrol unit was also to be established (Barck, 1928: 48–55).

Erkens was appointed as head of the women's detective di-

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vision, known as the *Weibliche Kriminalpolizei.* In February 1926 she was the first woman to take the examination for the position of *Kriminalkommissar*, or detective. Her position in the negotiations over the kind of female police force to be established was somewhat ambivalent. She later (1951) claimed that she had not entered detective work "with a light heart. I had discussions with the Prussian Interior Ministry, and it was only after getting assurances that women in the *Kriminalpolizei* would only be utilized in accordance with their basic nature that I consented to go to Frankfurt on a trial basis."

Erkens was satisfied with the unit that was set up in Frankfurt, saying that "an organization was developed that allowed not only that the essential nature of women would find expression, but also that modern criminal law enforcement would be furthered. An entirely new type of policing, not only for women, was being developed" (ibid.). The women police, to be sure, continued to work with women, youth, and children, but they were to consider law enforcement as not just a legal obligation but also as an opportunity to change lives.

At the same time that Frankfurt was experimenting with a nonuniformed women's detective division, two other states, Baden and Saxony, were beginning to use women on conventional street patrol. These patrolwomen were not required to have social work training and did not have to be of the minimum age (26) that was required in Frankfurt. The age limit was considered important by the social work agencies because of the contacts the women would have with "unsavory" elements of the population. The cities of Berlin, Essen, Hannover, Cologne, and Magdeburg were also establishing female units, chiefly to do station-house work (Fassbinder, 1930; "Die Dresdener Frauenpolizei," *Saechsische Staatszeitung* March 23, 1927 [HS, no. 24]; *Frankfurter Zeitung* November 29, 1928 [HS, no. 24]). In Berlin, however, experimentation with new forms of such units was occurring with the inauguration of a *weiblichen Gefaehrdetenpolizei* (Women's Endangered-Persons' Police). This unit was described by *Kriminalkommissarin* Marianne Pfahl (1931: 224) as having a *Schutzpolizei* character but being under the direction of a female *Kriminalpolizei* leader. The unit, wrote Pfahl, was not the same as a female detective unit nor the previous vice control unit, but rather worked among the youth and women of the city. The unit had twelve members.

The establishment of female patrol units confirmed the worst suspicions of the BDF about the trend away from social work as a prerequisite for police work. This development portended a lessening of influence of the various social work

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organizations and a decrease in the number of desirable civil service positions open to social workers/policewomen.

The matter of preservice qualifications had other implications for police organizations. Rumblings were beginning to be heard about the problems of salary since the women, with their superior education, were paid higher starting salaries than the men. If the female units were actually practicing a more modern type of policing, one that combined service and law enforcement, shouldn't this type of work also be required of men? Who would lead the units that combined a service ideal with a law enforcement ideal? The possibility that women police could threaten the all-male dominance of policing in Germany began to be a greater reality now that women were on the regular career ladder in the profession (Barck, 1928: 52–54; Erkens, 1951).

All this time the BDF continued to be deeply involved in the discussions about women police. In 1926, it published "Guidelines for the Use of Women as Police Officers" (Bund deutscher Frauenvereine, 1926; Barck, 1928: appen. 1). These guidelines were quite conservative and reflected the continuing adherence of the BDF to the model of women police that had developed in Cologne. There were five basic points:

1. Policewomen were to be used only for social welfare work and should be trained as social workers.
2. A separate organizational unit with a female leader was essential for this police work.
3. Women police, however, should not interfere with the work of other private or public social welfare agencies.
4. In street work, it was desirable for women to be in uniform to be easily recognizable and respected.
5. A separate women's reporting center should be established in the upper echelons of the Interior Ministry of each state.

There was some resistance to the establishment of women's police units rather than the more traditional hiring of civilian social workers by police organizations. The conservative southern state of Wuerttemberg was a prominent hold-out. In early 1927, Erkens gave a speech on "Woman as Police Officer" in Stuttgart, the capital of Wuerttemberg, to a meeting of the *Verband wuerttembergischer Frauenvereine* (League of Wuerttemberg Women's Organizations). The newspaper account reported that "Frau Erkens gave a very earnest and intense introduction to the important although truly new matter of women's involvement in police work." She spoke about the history of the struggle against prostitution. She lectured also on

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the importance of doing social work in police departments, as was done in Stuttgart, but said that this work was useful only if it was joined by another type of social work, female detective work. Her talk ended with an appeal to the women's organizations to be in contact with police authorities in order to bring about the creation of a women's police arm for the Stuttgart police ("Die Frau als Polizeibeamtin," *Stuttgart N. Tagblatt*, March 17, 1927).

V. THE HAMBURG DIVISION

With Erkens's reputation growing in tandem with the enthusiasm for women police, it was natural that the city of Hamburg should try to recruit her when it decided to set up its female detective unit in 1927. Hamburg, a great port city that then as now likes to be known as a "free and Hanseatic city-state," was a center of liberal Social Democratic politics and thought. It provided an opportunity for Erkens to try out new ideas that would go beyond the confines of the mission of the women's police in Frankfurt. It seems, however, she did not give up a highly desirable and continuously promising career with the Frankfurt police after less than two years just to head a prostitution detail in Hamburg, despite the claim of the Hamburg *Festschrift* of 1964 (Innenministerium Hamburg, 1964).

In any case Erkens moved from Frankfurt to Hamburg in 1927, taking Dopfer and Fischer with her. Her plan for the Hamburg women's police division can properly be considered revolutionary even in light of the momentum and enthusiasm that women police were generating at that time. According to Erkens herself (Erkens, 1951), she set out to pursue two goals in Hamburg. The first was to have female detectives involved in each stage of the criminal process—from arrest and interrogation of victims, witnesses, and accused to cooperation with and support of prosecutors. In other words, she felt that although women police should continue to handle the problems of women and children, they should become involved in each aspect of the case, including those dealing with men. The strict separation of the policewomen from male clients of the system was to be abrogated.

Her second goal was even more unusual in the context of the times: In her unit, Erkens wanted men officers with training in psychology and social work, who could begin to apply the philosophy of policing that she espoused to cases with male suspects. According to Erkens, "It is just at the time of arrest and shortly thereafter that psychological factors are important in

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detective work, and much could be lost if the moment is not seized" (ibid.). She called for the development of police officers who would see their work in crime control as an integral part of the work of social agencies and social workers. In this she was trying to turn the philosophy of women police that she had set forth in Cologne and Frankfurt into a general approach to policing. As she said, "We should promote the idea of a single-track police officer, who will bring about the end of the ineffective division of work between investigating officer and social helper, as a goal for the future that should be as seriously sought for male detectives as for women" (ibid.).

Two men were added to Erkens's detective operations in the Hamburg police (Barck, 1928: 58). Her entire responsibilities included not only this detective unit but also the women's uniformed police unit in charge of endangered persons (*Gefaehrdetenpolizei*) and, most unusually, the treatment facility for individuals in need (*Pflegeamt*). Thus the organization that was born in Cologne, with its separate functions of street patrol, counseling, and shelter, may be seen as having had a major influence on the development of the very different women's unit that was set up a few years later in Hamburg, with its responsiblities for care and shelter closely tied to its responsibilities for criminal investigation and law enforcement. The integration of police work and social work achieved an apotheosis in this latter organization that had never before been contemplated (Fassbinder, 1930).

About the time that Erkens moved from Frankfurt, a Prussian city, to Hamburg, a separate city-state, an article in *Die Polizei*, the leading police journal in Germany, clarified the concept of women as police that Erkins was leaving behind. The article starts with a paean to the "new" police mission and continues by stating that women are particularly important in fulfilling that mission:

> The police has gone through a tremendous change during the postwar years. Not only has it developed a totally new organizational structure; it has also and most importantly made advances in its very soul, advances that can hardly be treasured highly enough. Full of the spirit of the modern times, today's police has sunk its roots for the first time in the soil of the people's life. It has been inspired by the exhortation everywhere to be tolerant and helpful rather than punitive and inquisitive. In this new endeavor of the police, women, who in recent times have gone into many occupations previously closed to them, have become indispensable as colleagues. It is precisely the psychological make-up of women, as well as their entire de-

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> meanor, that makes many things possible that up to this time could not be achieved. . . . One can postulate that women can be used in all aspects of detective work that fall naturally within their nature as women. Naturally all uses of women that go against their nature must be excluded (*Die Polizei*, 1926: 152–154).

This article then describes the work that women can do especially well—working with other women, juveniles, and children. This is work that men cannot do well, the author writes, and "therefore the duties of male police officers will not be diminished but only enhanced in a very fortunate way" (ibid., 153).

On the other hand, the article argues, the Interior Ministry has made it plain that "social work must not be a part of the policing mission of women. Because of the indeterminacy of the line between social work and policing and the lack of experience in this matter, it is particularly important that the domain of police as opposed to the domain of social work be carefully separated" (ibid.). Not only must the line between detective work and social work be carefully drawn, but also the distinction between endangered-persons police units, composed of women, and vice squads, composed of men, should likewise be carefully preserved. Endangered-persons units should concentrate on preventing crimes by children and women and handling and searching arrested women. They should be concerned at all times with keeping the trust of the citizens. Vice squads, on the other hand, should do the actual arresting of women and other legal work. They should not, however, abrogate their own responsibility to prevent the corruption of women and children. "It will be difficult," says the author, to distinguish the responsibilities of the endangered-persons police from those of the vice units (ibid., p. 154).

In Hamburg, as we have seen, Erkens set up a police division that violated all of the injunctions contained in this account. She brought into her orbit men who practiced the peculiar brand of policing that she was advocating. She also overstepped the borders between police work and social work, being herself the head of a uniformed street patrol unit, a detective unit, and a social work structure, the *Pflegeamt*. She went even further and insisted that women be involved at each stage of the criminal process, working with prosecutors on all aspects of the cases they were assigned, even if it meant interrogating male witnesses or dealing with male suspects. The line between endangered-persons police and vice police was thus to be eliminated in her jurisdiction (see Erkins, 1951).

One can well surmise that Erkens had gone beyond the

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pale in her enthusiasm and her search not only for a new and better role for women in policing but also for a better style and organization of policing in general. One can also conclude that she herself, with her dynamism and penchant for publicity, could easily have become a bane to her male colleagues in the police hierarchy. Despite the continued enthusiasm for women police that was evidenced in the press, some of the notices were beginning to have a slightly threatening tone to them. A headline in a Berlin newspaper in June 1929 proclaimed, "Women Police Are Marching: It is Now Permitted to Have Women Supervisors over Men" (*Vorwarts Berlin*, June 18, 1929). Erkens embodied not only this particular threat but also that of the possibility of a major restructuring of police ideology and practice.

Erkens herself seems to have suffered from a certain ambiguity of motive and vision that reflected the problems of the social work profession and her strong ties to that profession. True to this profession, she disapproved of the trend in some police departments of hiring women who did not have a social work education as endangered-persons police or regular patrol officers. On the other hand, by running a treatment center at the same time that she was running a detective unit and a patrol unit, she was going against the belief of her own social work peers that the fear and force elements of policing, which cannot be separated totally from police operations, should not taint the integrity of a social work commitment. Indeed, the German word for social work, *Fuersorge*, means literally "care for," and conveys the passion for service and the idealism that inspired this early group of female professionals. Nevertheless, the profession was fiercely determined to increase the opportunities for women and perceived that policing was an ideal place to make inroads, for it was not only dominated by men but also stressed traditional male characteristics of combativeness, force, and dominance. Erkens, by stressing the differences between men and women and the advantages of the female traits, advanced the interests of her professional peers.

VI. FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE HISTORICAL NEGLECT OF THE HAMBURG DIVISION

By 1931, when Erkens was forced to retire from the Hamburg police, another factor was working to arrest the progressive momentum of female policing. Germany's cities were wracked by disorder and conflict between the opposing private armies of National Socialists and communists. The Nazi movement, which at first had seemed like a fringe crusade, was be-

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coming more and more powerful, and the police in the German cities were frequently taxed beyond their ability in their efforts to keep order. The optimism and concern for democracy in policing that had characterized the early Weimar years gave way to frustration, increasing right-wing sentiments, and impatience with liberal ideas. In such an atmosphere the arbitrary dismantling of the women's police division was not perceived as the major event that it might have been a few years earlier (Liang, 1970). With the Nazi takeover of Germany in 1933, all women police units were abolished, and they were not reconstituted until mobilizing men for military duty had become a higher priority than keeping women at home.

Even in this unfavorable political climate, the suppression of the philosophy behind the Hamburg women police unit was extreme. Why does one find almost no mention of Erkens and the female division of the Hamburg police department in the histories of women police in Germany? This was, after all, a very unusual unit. Histories of women police almost always discuss the Cologne and Frankfurt experiences and mention that Erkens went to Hamburg, but there the story ends.

No doubt a certain delicacy about the scandal is involved. Indeed it seems likely that both the police authorities and the women's groups were inclined to suppress this particular chapter of policing. An interesting example is Wieking's book, published in 1958, *Die Entwicklung der weiblichen Kriminalpolizei in Deutschland* (The Development of the Female Detective Police in Germany). Wieking herself is a former police officer, as are almost all historians of police in Germany. She includes a short description of the Hamburg unit and an excerpt from Erkens's first official report. She explained that in 1930 the uniformed *Gefaehrdetenpolizei* patrol unit was placed under the female detective unit. Erkens, however, is never mentioned by name in the entire section on Hamburg and is always referred to as "the leader of the group." Wieking goes on to say that "the leader of the [Hamburg] female detective unit was also given the responsibility of leading the Hamburg *Pflegeamt*." She then makes this peculiar statement: "The very substantial question, whether or not the dissolution of the female detective unit was a desirable development, has not found a satisfying answer (see Appendix 4)" (Wieking, 1958: 39).

A reader who is hoping to be enlightened about the meaning of this enigmatic statement by turning to Appendix 4 will be disappointed. Appendix 4 is an item that appeared in the newspaper *Vossische Zeitung Berlin* on July 18, 1931, just a few

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days after the double suicide of Dopfer and Fischer. Written by Dr. Gertrud Baumer, one of the leaders of the BDF who had been so concerned about the uses of the women police, it is entitled "Questions about the Fate of Women Police" (see Baumer, 1931) and bears summarizing in some detail.

Women in new working situations, says Baumer, are in a fragile position and are easily judged by particular incidents. "Therefore the situation that three women police officers in Hamburg are guilty of creating threatens above all to have an effect on the development of the profession, an effect which would be both unfortunate and not justified" (Baumer, 1931 [HS, no. 165]). Whoever has trained young women in social service professions, Baumer argues, knows that it is because of their extreme sensitivity to others that they are seeking a major fulfillment of their purpose in life through helping other people. This element in their nature can lead to particular intensity in their work style. Such intensity creates some problems, especially when they deal constantly with a world in which deviance, simple passions, and corruption are the norm. The woman social worker needs strength, but she also becomes accustomed to dealing with deviant individuals. In these days, according to Baumer, when there is so little help available for those with whom one comes in contact, all welfare workers, and especially women police, are adversely affected.

Baumer goes on to say that the women police was organized on the model of a vice squad, which essentially performed sanitary control work. Female police, with their ties to women and children, really had other concerns. They expected to be able to exert a stronger influence by using their woman-to-woman or woman-to-child contacts. The skepticism in police circles about the usefulness of women police was great, and the women knew they were on trial. Therefore separate divisions of women police were set up, like nurses in a hospital. This had nothing to do with who held power; it was only the result of different functions being given to the women.

Referring to the Hamburg case, Baumer states that, although no judgment about particular personalities is intended, one must recognize that women are more likely to bring deep personal factors and tensions into the working situation. If one wishes to have the livelier and more sensitive approach of women in certain types of work, one must realize that each advantage has a parallel disadvantage and that in this particular case, the disadvantages were increased by the difficulties and demands of the profession.

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Baumer concludes by saying that her statements should not be construed to mean that women should not be in the policing profession. The work of women police shows that it transcends any one tragedy in one place, no matter how serious that tragedy may be. This case proves, however, the need to be ever more careful in the difficult task of choosing whom to take into the profession (Baumer, 1931).

At the time this newspaper comment was written the facts of the case were well known. A contemporary reader who is unfamiliar with the Hamburg female police division, however, would learn very little about the unit, its leader, or the reasons for its dissolution from either Wieking's book or Baumer's article. The concern of social workers to save the profession of women police is strongly evident in both sources, but without an appreciation for the peculiar way in which women police had developed in Hamburg.

VII. CONCLUSION

As a case study, this narrative does not allow for definitive or even authoritative conclusions about causative events or factors nor does it prove or disprove any particular theory. Furthermore, because the facts of the case are presented in some detail and because moral and philosophical ambiguity is bound to reside in such narratives, individual readers may well bring their own interpretations to the material. Nevertheless, although set in a remote time and place, this history of women police in the Weimar Republic suggests that at least four forces that are still of concern were at work at that time, first to promote and then to inhibit the process of change:

1. the effect of the interaction among political, social, and internal organizational cultures and circumstances on the process of innovation;
2. confusion over the proper way to integrate women into police work;
3. the difficulty of reconciling the conflicting professional values of social work and law enforcement; and
4. the influence of individual personalities on organizational history.

To put the foregoing history into some broader perspective, each of these forces warrants further explanation and analysis.

A. Organizational Culture and the Process of Innovation

All organizations have an internal dynamic that influences the change process. According to Crozier (1964: pt. 3), this internal organizational culture is related to the general social and

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political culture of a nation. In addition, the general rise and ebb of historical movements is reflected in efforts for bureaucratic change. In the United States, for example, a concern in the 1920s about the relation of social work to policing that was in some ways similar to that in Germany was couched in terms of a conflict between the ideals of the Progressive movement versus the growing movement for "professionalism" in policing, with "professionalism" defined as pure law enforcement (Walker, 1977, 1980). In most organizations, furthermore, rapid change generally occurs in reaction to crisis situations, whether external or internal to the organization. In American policing, for example, reform movements have typically followed major crises of corruption or abuse of power (Fogelson, 1977; Walker, 1977).

The women's detective unit in the Hamburg police was set up at the end of a period of rapid change in the philosophy and practice of policing in Germany, which in turn had resulted from the breakdown of order after the dissolution of the kaiser's empire. The earlier experiments in Cologne and Frankfurt had flourished when the new order was still in full flower and there was a strong commitment at high levels to a citizen-friendly police. In the fluid atmosphere of the early 1920s it was possible for innovative organizational entities to develop and flourish.

Because of the very nature of police work, however, the internal dynamic of law enforcement organizations is conservative and resistant to change. It can also be argued that the German bureaucracy in general, with its traditions of hierarchical controls reinforced by social class distinctions (Jacob, 1963) was particularly inhospitable to innovation. Therefore the new crisis occasioned by the disruptions of the late 1920s and early 1930s was easily translated into a hardened approach to change by police departments in Germany. Women police, who in the best of circumstances operate in an uneasy stand-off in police agencies, easily became the victims of this new organizational conservatism.

B. *Confusion about the Role of Women in Police Work*

The communications and negotiations surrounding the establishment of female police units in all three German cities discussed above suggest that both the women and the men were having difficulties defining not only the role of women police officers but also the relations of police work to social work.

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The police did not want to be known for doing social work, but, as the 1927 article in *Die Polizei* explains, distinguishing vice control from social work is difficult unless police assume a purely "enforcer" stance, which was against the whole philosophy of the Weimar police. In addition, an unfortunate dichotomy would be set up if male police were to be "enforcers" and female police were to be "friends and helpers." The preferred solution of the men—that women should handle women and children and treat them as endangered persons (i.e., vulnerable and in need of special protection)—was bound to ensure that women would not be able to follow a traditional police career track. Although beginning female officers might be paid more than beginning male officers because of their education, they would be prohibited from achieving positions of power within the organization. Under these circumstances, there was little opposition to the claim that *women* police should have degrees in social work. The BDF, in emphasizing the importance of separate women's units with women in charge, was probably dealing with the perceived reality that women would be submerged if they were to be totally integrated into the police forces. In effect the BDF's concern was not only professional but also pragmatic: how to provide maximum opportunities for women social workers in a new and potentially large work force.

Erkens herself was ambivalent. She disapproved of taking women without social work training into the police, but she was also adamantly opposed to using the type of police social worker that had existed long before her own entry into police work. Whether her disapproval was an ideological one, based on the kind of work to be done, or a professional one, based on the desire to advance social work, is not clear. Although she insisted that women police should not do any work that was antithetical to their "nature" as women, she moved more and more toward a belief in the total integration of men and women in detective work, thus making the real distinction between the kind of policing she advocated and standard police operations one of education rather than sex. Erkens was finally involved in a new kind of policing, one that tried to integrate social work and enforcement work. This new approach did not have time to mature before her unit was disbanded. Nevertheless, the fact that Erkens and the male leadership approached the goals of the organization so differently suggests that this experiment was doomed even without the difficulty inherent in having a woman in charge in an environment that had been so exclusively male for so many years. Erkens's bitter recriminations

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against the leader of the *Kriminalpolizei* (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 1, 1932 [HS, no. 59]) suggest that their relations had become strained before the death of her assistants.

C. *Social Work Values versus Law Enforcement Values*

Even under the best of circumstances, the experimental unit that Erkens was trying to establish in Hamburg would probably have had difficult problems of adjustment within the police department. Although there are frequent calls for law enforcement agencies to recognize that social welfare work is de facto an important part of their mission and to legitimize this reality in their training, recruitment, and general operations (see, for example, Bittner, 1974), the professional paradigms of traditional law enforcement and social work have many elements that make them fundamentally antithetical. The traditional law enforcement paradigm operates within a deterrence rationale. Successful relations with clients are dependent upon respect of the officer's authority. Coercion, whether exercised or implied, is the operational method that characterizes the officer as a professional. The social work paradigm, on the other hand, operates within a rehabilitation rationale. As theorists of sentencing have been saying, rehabilitation cannot be coerced: It must come from conviction. The social worker is dependent upon client trust for success in achieving the goal of rehabilitation. Cooperation is the method of choice in dealing with clients.

In her operations Erkens was trying to combine these disparate professional frameworks. This was not an easy task, especially since there was no fundamental agreement on the need for new professional goals within the department. What she was doing could easily be seen as a threat to the occupational identity of the police. Presenting a new, helpful, and friendly image to the public, in the pursuit of which women police were deemed to be especially useful, is quite different from developing a social work perspective on policing and requiring that crucial positions in the department be filled by professionally trained social workers.

In the Hamburg case, these issues of professionalism, although voiced, did not have an opportunity to mature and be resolved since Erkins's unit had such a short life. Furthermore, the political pressures on police as well as the problems of defining a role for women in policing tended to overshadow the ideological and professional issues involved. From a modern

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perspective, however, these ideological and professional issues, as well as those related to the successful integration of women into police work, continue to spark debate and concern.

D. *Personality Factors in Organizational Innovation*

In the end, one gets back to the old debate about whether it is particular individuals or the force of events that are dominant in shaping the course of history. Seen from this perspective, Josefine Erkens was a major catalyst for both the rise and fall of women in policing in Hamburg. On the one hand, her vision, resourcefulness, and energy were largely instrumental in moving women from auxiliary to full-fledged officer status in German police. On the other hand, it seems evident from the accounts of her activities, her clashes with Dopfer, and the rapidity with which not only she but also all that she had developed were scuttled by the police authorities that Erkens was a formidable individual who followed her own lights at the expense of organizational harmony. Moreover, her social work peers, although wanting to insure that the policing profession remained hospitable to social workers, did not personally mount any strong defense of Erkens. This may have been in part because she disagreed with the BDF over the uses of social workers in policing. The impression one gets is that she was an embarrassment not only because of the suicide of her associates but also because of her assertiveness and independence. The events leading up to the suicides themselves are never explained adequately in the newspapers or other accounts, and one can only speculate about the intensity of the interactions among the women in Erkens's unit and about her own relations with these women. Despite her claims to the contrary, it seems likely that her leadership was flawed. It seems likely also that a major reason that the history of the women's detective unit in Hamburg does not find its way into the general histories of women police is this same embarrassment over the fact that Erkens and her associates provided an excuse, as she herself claimed, to close down the unit.

In considering this case, one can see how the various issues—gender role uncertainty, the clash between service values and law enforcement values, the influence of political and social forces, personality factors—cross and recross as the events unfold. The peculiarity of the case, however, is that the seemingly dated issues of gender role and value orientation continue to be of intense concern in contemporary police agencies.

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* References followed by the letters HS and a number may also be found in the Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, EA 2/11, 140, Bd. I.

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