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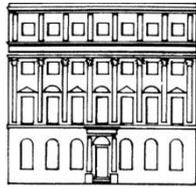

BULLETIN

'Gentle Bobby' and 'Rigid Pickelhaube'? Communicating Order, Policing Society: A Comparison of Policing in Britain and Germany in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Twentieth Colloquium for Police History, organized by the German Historical Institute London and University College London and held at the GHIL, 9–11 July 2009.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the history of the police emerged as new approach in historical studies, demystifying the institution and its nimbus. Since then, the examination of police and policing in society has proved to be a productive field of historical research. The Twentieth Colloquium for Police History furthered this trend by comparing the relationship between communicating social order and policing society in Britain and Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

After a note of welcome by Andreas Gestrich, Director of the GHIL, and an introduction by Philipp Müller (UCL), two keynote lectures opened the colloquium. In his keynote lecture entitled 'Trends and Developments of Policing in Britain', Clive Emsley (Open University, Milton Keynes) scrutinized the cliché that the British and Welsh police are 'the best in the world'. He questioned their allegedly 'non-military' and 'non-political' character by examining patterns of British policing on the beat, institutional structures, and the challenges posed by technology and the recording of information. Emsley pointed to the rather slow pace of technological advancement and the lack of research on police discretion in Britain. He argued that technology had reduced discipline among the police during the inter-war period; several decades later, taped interviews demonstrated the police's use of violence to obtain confessions. Broadcasting these interviews at times complicated the picture even further. Closed circuit television (CCTV) is another problem for the modern British police. According to Emsley, CCTV, more part of the European policing style, produces a huge amount of information while the means for sorting it efficiently are still absent.

Alf Lüdtke (University of Erfurt) introduced his keynote lecture, 'The *Longue Durée* of Policing in Modern German History', by opposing Raymond Fosdick's observations on the 'paternal regulatory practices' of the 'English democratic police' and 'the freedom of public control'. Commenting on the *long durée* of paternal regulation in Germany, for example, Lüdtke emphasized that research on the his-

tory of the police has shifted from looking at domination as a labelling process (stereotypes) to seeing policing as a social practice. This has made the 'dominated' visible as 'active co-participants in situations of policing'.

Herbert Reinke (Technical University of Berlin) examined a specific aspect of the relationship between the public and the police in his paper on 'Police Violence and Traffic: Regulating Traffic in Germany in the 1920s'. Reinke argued that for the German police, regulating traffic was hardly an issue during the Kaiserreich and the 1920s. This changed, however, at the end of the 1920s, as indicated by the issuing of regulations, the installing of traffic simulations, and the publication of instructions for pedestrians. Not until the 1930s did the German police authorities seek to achieve an understanding of the operation of traffic. In his comment, Michael Haunschild (University of Hanover) supported Reinke's investigations and pointed to the general neglect of the topic because of historians' apparent penchant for theories of social control. Haunschild suggested considering traffic control as an 'emotional battleground'; scrutinizing fears and their role for traffic could further insights into traffic as a social convention. Anja Johansen (University of Dundee) explored the intricate relationship between police and public by examining citizens' complaints about police malpractice in London and Berlin between 1890 and 1914. By comparing the different policies pursued by the London Metropolitan Police and the Berlin *Schutzmannschaft*, Johansen revealed that the police's rhetoric of defence shaped the public understanding of order and expectations of policing, accounting for the different perceptions of the Gentle Bobby and the rigid Berlin *Schutzmann*.

Jakob Zollmann (Berlin) introduced a second comparative field addressed by this colloquium, namely, the policing of colonies. In his paper 'Policing German South West Africa from 1894 to 1915', Zollmann emphasized the illusions of Imperial rule in the German colonies. The vastness of the land to be policed, the small number of staff, and problems of translation rendered total police control infeasible. A further impediment to the establishment of the colonial state was the ongoing conflict between the Imperial mounted police force, natives, and settlers in the police zone of German South West Africa. Police control in the German colonies was strictly confined to small 'islands' surrounded by vast areas which were in the hands of the local native population. Georgina Sinclair (Open University, Milton

Keynes) approached colonial policing from a different perspective. She looked at the significance of the two-way traffic between metropolitan and colonial police forces and the persistence of this tradition since the nineteenth century, connecting the model of the Metropolitan Police (urban, civil, and unarmed) with that the Irish Constabulary (colonial, semi-military, and heavily armed). Sinclair followed the institutional development of this relationship in the twentieth century, demonstrating the different stages of the internationalization of UK police practice since 1945. In her comment, Radhika Singha (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) argued that when comparing colonial policing, settler and non-settler societies must be differentiated as they impacted differently on the execution of power by the authorities. In addition, Singha pointed to the significance of the circulation of infrastructural power, expertise, and personnel in the colonies.

In the following Open Panel, a traditional part of the Police Colloquium, early-career researchers were invited to present their projects. Nadine Rossol (University of Limerick) presented her postdoctoral research project 'Policing as Pedagogy: The State, the Police, and Civic Culture in Germany, 1920s–50s'. Rossol suggested that all German political systems at this time required the police to have an an 'educative function'. In Düsseldorf as well as in Leipzig, politicians and officials at state, regional, and local levels created a specific role for the police in their respective political systems; this dynamic process was influenced equally by the reactions of the police to these attempts and their own institutional memory. Ciprian Cirniala (University of Potsdam) addressed the question of legitimacy in socialist Romania between 1960 and 1989. He argued that the official, benevolent rhetoric was accompanied by random militia practices, including physical violence, but also included individual negotiation and patronage. Paul Maddrell (University of Aberystwyth) examined the understanding of opposition by the East German Ministry of State Security (Stasi) in the 1950s. In his view, Stasi officers seemed to be trapped inside a conspiratorial universe by their ideology. However, he contended that the Stasi's concept of opposition was both a result of the creation of ideology and a reflection of reality.

In the next panel, entitled 'Representation and Media', Jens Jäger (University of Cologne) presented his research on 'Attempts to Visualize Clues in Germany in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth

Centuries'. Jäger's thesis was that the police media campaign established trust because it helped to familiarize its audience with the work of the police and raised public awareness of police issues. The police's objective of appearing in the most favourable light in public was achieved by a strong focus on criminals and their prosecution in the media. Nik Wachsmann (Birkbeck College, London) set off the discussion by asking what differences there were between rural and urban areas, suggesting that the various audiences should be differentiated. Wachsmann also raised the question of to what extent ordinary criminals caused insecurity and fear rather than prompting an awareness of police measures among the people.

The last panel, 'Recording Individuality', addressed the subject of technology and its significance for policing. In her paper, Jane Caplan (St Antony's College, Oxford) separated registration, recording, and documentation (*Erfassung*) from police surveillance (*Beobachtung*) in Nazi Germany. Caplan's analysis revealed Nazi Germany's strong faith in records and official forgeries (for example, fake death certificates produced for murdered concentration camp prisoners), emphasizing the proximity of recording to fiction, and its potential to disguise disorder and a lack of safety. Chris Williams (Open University Milton Keynes) spoke on the introduction of the UK's Police National Computer Project from 1958 to 1977, which meant that for the first time, a national institution was able to police in real time. Computerization was supposed to achieve both an efficient management of police and the betterment of society. Williams's analysis showed how everyday police work benefited from the new technology, but he also addressed the limits of the computerization of the 'real' and its complexities. In her comment Cornelia Bohn (University of Lucerne) supported the speaker's pioneering research on the administrative tools of control and discussed the operational capacities of computation, the problems addressed by technology, and the new challenges and problems they pose.

A lively and concise discussion concluded the conference. The debate chaired by Philipp Müller focused on the questions and challenges facing research on the history of the police, and the contrasts between policing in Britain and Germany. Richard Bessel (University of York) stressed the significance of discontinuity when considering Germany's history of policing and called for a comparative analysis of both institutions and practices. He underlined the problematic

nature of the assertion of differences between democracy and communism, and asked what democracy would be without policing. Paul Lawrence (Open University, Milton Keynes) pointed out several aspects worth investigating, such as the physicality of the police, their presence, and buildings. Alf Lüdtke stressed the question of our own practice when it comes to the making of history. He called for greater reflection on our traces and stressed the need to render our historical material more transparent. Other ideas discussed by the participants included the division between rural and urban, corresponding shifts in insecurity, policing narratives, emotions on the beat, consent and the international dimension, and the spread of private security organizations.

CIPRIAN CIRNIALA (University of Potsdam)