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**Carsten Dams, Klaus Dönecke, Thomas Köhler.** *"Dienst am Volk"?: Düsseldorfer Polizisten zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur.* Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Polizeiwissenschaft, 2007. 415 S. EUR 19.80 (paper), ISBN 978-3-935979-99-3.

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## Everyday Policemen

The discovery of several thousand DÃ¼sseldorf policemen's personnel files made this anthology possible. It constitutes the first in a new series of books dealing with police history in North Rhine-Westphalia, a German federal state already quite active in examining its National Socialist past, for instance, with a series published by its ministry of justice. Now, the state's college of administration presents a micro-historical volume on DÃ¼sseldorf's policemen chronologically ranging from the Weimar period to the early years of the Federal Republic, which focuses on the Schutzpolizei (Schupo, or city order police) in contrast to the Geheime Staatspolizei (Gestapo, or state secret police). The book accompanies an exhibition at the police headquarters and will also be used for the education of policemen in training today.

Illustrated with tables and many contemporary photographs, the volume assembles a variety of topics ranging from administrative to cultural history, from resistance to participation in mass murder perpetrated by a police battalion in the Ukraine, from gender issues to coming to terms with the Nazi past. All these aspects are embedded in the background of corporate security policy and general police duties between 1918 and 1952, which is especially relevant because during this time the DÃ¼sseldorf police experienced Weimar democracy, National Socialism, and French occupation in the early 1920s; Allied conquest and British rule after the Second World War; and the founding of the Federal Republic. Due to these ongoing changes, it is appropriate that Carsten Dams, Klaus DÃ¶necke, Thomas KÃ¶hler, and eight other contributors illuminate collective biographies, the self-conception of the policemen, and structural aspects of police organization.

A special feature of the volume is the enclosed CD-ROM. It contains the silent movie "Dienst am Volk" (1930), which also provided the title for the book. The film was shot in 1928 and 1929 in the Rhineland, especially in DÃ¼sseldorf. The movie was inspired by police president Hans Langels and directed by a police captain. It shows the fictional story of two boys and one girl from the beginning of the twentieth century up to the years of recession. While one boy is drafted as a soldier for World War I, marries the girl and finally becomes a policeman, the other immigrates to the U.S. As he is unsuccessful

there, he returns to Germany to start a career at the Henkel factory producing Persil detergent. The friends, having lost track of each other, meet again when a policeman saves the engineer from a burning factory building. Thus, the re-immigrant sees how commendable the policeman's work is, and against the background of extensive scenes with the instruction of police recruits; the aim of the film–promoting the German police–becomes quite clear. The film was quite successful and shown in cinemas all over the country. For the CD-ROM, the movie was restored and supplemented with an accompanying but unobtrusive commentary (the original version is also included), making it an impressive document of German policemen's self-image in the Weimar period.

After 1933, the DÃ¼sseldorf police officers closely affiliated with the SS: some 60 percent of them were members, but what seems a quite large number was not what the leadership hoped for, especially since Nazi party membership decreased after 1938. Of course, sheer affiliation numbers only tell part of the story when it comes to evaluating individual deeds. Franz JÃ¼rgens, commander of the local Schutzpolizei, a member of the Nazi Party, actively took part in resistance within the so called "Aktion Rheinland," the surrender of towns to Allied forces–and paid for this with his life. An appealing article by Kurt DÃ¼well shows the winding road of this formerly convinced Nazi to reason and resistance. As Klaus DÃ¶necke shows later on, no further acts of disobedience by other police officers took place, not even during the cruelties and massacres in eastern Europe. The First Squad of the "Polizei-Reiterabteilung II" (a mounted detachment), in which ten DÃ¼sseldorf policemen were on duty, took part in the shooting of more than sixteen thousand Jews in the Pinsk area in summer and autumn 1942, the liquidation of the Stolin ghetto with some seven thousand Jewish men, women, and children, and the murder of fifteen hundred Jews in Janow. Overall, the DÃ¼sseldorf policemen in the East and at home conform to the image of the German Schutzpolizei–willing participants in outrage and persecution. Apart from some very rare exceptions, they were committed, faithful executors of given orders and Nazi policy. As Dams and DÃ¶necke conclude in their survey of the DÃ¼sseldorf police officers, these men did not excel as much as Heinrich Himmler wished, but they nonetheless performed well as executioners in the war of extermination.

On the other hand, the police continuously tried to enhance their image as "friend and helper" of the Germans. This self-promotion had an important influence on their public image and on the self-perception of the policemen. "Dienst am Volk" served this goal; from 1934 to 1942 the police also staged an annual "Day of the German Police" was staged to demand money from the "Volksgenossen." But the picture of the friendly policeman constructed during this key event gradually faded during the war years. Steadily growing tasks led to a overburdening of the police, and the men had to be admonished more and more often to be kind to the population. The results of the exhortations were rather poor, and during the collapse of the Third Reich and the first months after the end of the war, the originally positive perception of the policemen crashed completely due to their aggressive, unfriendly behaviour. Their public esteem took several years to recover.

Overall this is anthology cannot–and does not attempt to–substitute a monograph integrating police history into a broader context. It presents rather narrow and particular minutiae. However, anyone interested in studying the German police in the first half of the twentieth century should examine this book closely. It proves to be quite valuable. With an attractive price, this volume informs in-depth and thoroughly about various details of "ordinary policemen," and the enclosed movie might also be suitable for teaching Weimar history.

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