Surveilling Sex: Prostitution and the East German Stasi, 1950-1989

by

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Abstract

This dissertation offers a new approach to the history of the East German Ministry for State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, MfS, Stasi). It uses feminist methodologies of care to embed the experiences of female informers classified by the Stasi as 'sexually promiscuous' in broader frameworks of gender and sexuality research and explores the convergence of Stasi surveillance and prostitution control in the German Democratic Republic. The MfS and its extended arm, 'Working Area 1' of the Criminal Police (K1), considered 'promiscuous' women to be social pariahs, sources of venereal diseases, and threats to the Socialist state, but they also acknowledged that their connections to 'class enemies' made them valuable informants. To identify and exert control over women, the Stasi used the state's existing carceral framework to take advantage of larger state efforts to regulate prostitution, a phenomenon that was expected to disappear under socialism, in East Germany. Therefore, the dissertation argues that only by examining prostitution, venereal disease, and the Stasi surveillance network in tandem, can we fully understand the gendered exploitation of lives in the GDR.

This study uses previously unexamined Stasi files to explore state intervention into sexual lives that state socialism considered morally and medically dangerous. It begins by documenting female Stasi informers' encounters with the police, and their frequent stays in social homes, workhouses, prisons and venereological wards prior to their recruitment. It then explores women's recruitment experiences, which often involved threats of legal action if they did not agree to collaborate. Next, the study examines how female informers used their past experiences navigating the carceral and healthcare systems to 'exit' the Stasi surveillance system. The study is the first to detail the sexual abuse perpetrated by male

officers on the female informants they considered ‘available.’ Finally, it analyzes constructions of Stasi informers in contemporary popular culture. By foregrounding the experiences of vulnerable women and making their roles as social and political actors visible, this dissertation offers a necessary new analysis of Stasi practices. It also highlights the broader historiographical need for greater focus on gender and sexuality within the Stasi.

Dedication

For Skip Bailey

In Loving Memory

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List of Abbreviations

ABV	*Abschnittsbevollmächtigte (*the People's Police volunteer organization)
AIM	*Archivierter IM-Vorgang oder IM-Vorlauf* (Archived Informant Recruitment Procedure)
AKAG	*MfS archivierte Akte des Arbeitsgebietes 1 der Kriminalpolizei* (MfS archived files from work area 1 of the criminal police)
AOP	Archivierter Operativer Vorgang (Archived Operative Procedure)
AOPK	*Archivierte Operative Personenkontrolle-Akte* (Archived Operational Person Control File)
BArch	Bundesarchiv (German Federal Archives)
BStU	*Bundesbeauftragter fur die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratikischen Republik* (Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic) On July 17, 2021, the BStU was absorbed into the German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv). It is now called the Stasi Records Agency.
BV	*Bezirksverwaltung des MfS* (District Administration of the MfS)
DDR	*Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (German Democratic Republic)
DVP	*Deutsche Volkspolizei* (Regular GDR police force)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GeKra	Short for *Geschlechtskrankenheiten* (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)
GH	*Geheime Ablage* (Secret Filing)
GHDI	German History in Documents and Images
GI	*Geheimer Informator* (Secret Informant)

GV	*Geschlechtsverkehr* (Sexual Intercourse)
hwG	*häufig wechselnden Geschlechtspartnern* (frequently changing sexual partners)
IM	*Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter* (unofficial collaborator of the MfS)
IKM	*Inoffizieller Kriminalpolizeilicher Mitarbeiter* (unofficial collaborator of department K1 of the Volkspolizei)
JHS	*Juristische Hochschule des MfS Potsdam* (Law School of the MfS Potsdam)
KD	*Kreisdienststellen* (County Offices of the Stasi)
K	*Kriminalpolizei* (Criminal Police)
K1	*Arbeitsgebiet I der Kriminalpolizei* (Department K1 of the *Volkspolizei)*
KD	*Kreisdienststelle* (District Office)
MfS	*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (Ministry for State Security)
NSDAP	*Nationalsozialistische Deutscher Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers Party)
NSW	*Nichtsozialistiches Wirtschaftsgebiet* (Non-Socialist Economic Area)
SED	*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SMAG	Soviet Military Administration in Germany
Stasi	*Staatssichereit,* popularly used acronym for the MfS
StGB	*Strafgesetzbuch* (Criminal Code)
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
StVE	*Strafvollzugseinrichtung* (Correctional Facility)

UHA	*Untersuchungshaftanstalt* (Remand prison. Hohenschönhausen was UHA I. The smaller UHA II was located inside Stasi Headquarters in Berlin.)
VD	Venereal Disease
wG	*wechselnde Geschlechtsverkehr* (alternating intercourse)

Introduction

In March 1970, following a denunciation, the Berlin People's Police set their sights on thirty-year-old Margrit K. She was summoned to her local police office under the suspicion of prostituting herself and warned that security authorities knew about her immoral behaviour. She was then "shown the criminal nature of her actions [and] asked to think about how to make amends."[1] Given her intimate knowledge of local prostitutes' behaviour, they suggested that she report on women in her inner circle who engaged in sex work. One week later, Margrit was summoned back to the criminal police office. They informed her that unless she agreed to help the police identify the criminal activities of other prostitutes, she would lose custody of her child. Next, she would be forcibly interned in a venereal disease treatment center, even without evidence of sexual infection. After completing in-patient treatment, she would be imprisoned for an indeterminate length of time.[2] With few alternatives, Margrit reluctantly agreed to collaborate and report on actors within the prostitution milieu.[3]

Prostitution and coercion influenced the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of women whose private sexual behaviour defied socialist norms in the German Democratic Republic (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, GDR, East Germany) between 1950 and

[1] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, "Vorschlag zur Werbung und Plan der Werbung" Berlin, 24.06.1970. BStU 000021.
[2] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970, "HSG: Leben und Gesundheit / Brennpunkte," 22.03.70 IM Nikolaus, BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970.
[3] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970, "Bericht uber den Berlauf der Werbung," Berlin 03.07.1970, Dezernat I, Komm.II/3 BStU 000026.

1989.[4] As this case from the Stasi Records Archive illustrates, the East German Ministry for State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, MfS, Stasi) and its extended arm, working area 1 of the Criminal Police, (*Arbeitsgebiet I der Kriminalpolizei,* K1) used social and penal control strategies to intimidate women who prostituted themselves or were suspected of doing so, who habitually had sex outside of long-term, committed relationships, who did not work regularly, who consumed alcohol, or who maintained regular contact with dissident networks. While on one hand, the MfS considered them sources of physical and ideological contagion, they also acknowledged that their connections to 'class enemies' made them potentially valuable informants. As a result, they recruited these individuals as unofficial informers *(Inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter*, IMs).[5] The MfS tasked IMs with "gathering information from the area of commercial prostitution" and "clarifying criminal offenses in the area of asociality."[6]

Using feminist methodologies of care, my research embeds the experiences of female informers classified by the Stasi as 'sexually promiscuous' in broader frameworks of gender and sexuality research. Specifically, it examines the convergence of Stasi

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[4] This dissertation uses the terms *prostitute* and *prostitution* when referring to women who exchanged sex for financial or material benefits instead of *sex worker* and *sex work*. These terms are consistent with the language used by the Stasi and appear in archival materials from the Stasi Records Archive. I aim to use these terms as neutrally as possible. Additionally, I recognize that prostitute refers to an occupation and not an identity. Therefore, I use phrases such as "exchanged sex for material benefits," "sold sex" or "women who worked as a prostitute" often. I have also placed prostitute in quotations because being labeled a prostitute by the Stasi did not necessarily mean that a woman worked as one. Finally, my use of the term 'prostitute' is not intended to undermine the fact that sex work is real work.

[5] In 1950, the MfS defined unofficial informers as "people who are used for non-public cooperation with the state security organs. Although they have no special connections to people who carry out hostile activities, by virtue of their knowledge of local or professional conditions or by virtue of the position they occupy, they are in a position to assist the organs of the Ministry of State Security to obtain the information that interests it"; "Richtlinien über die Erfassung der geheimen Mitarbeiter, der Informationen und der Personen, die konspirative Wohnungen unterhalten," September 20, 1950, Consulted in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek. Moreover, according to the Stasi Mediathek, the Stasi often used the term 'Secret Informer' or *Geheimer Informator* (GI) between 1950 and 1968. After 1968, GI was replaced with IM; https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/themen/schlagwort/Geheimer%20Informator/

[6] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89, Bd. 1. "Bericht über 2. Kontaktgespräch mit dem IM-Kandidaten 'Schwarze,'" Leipzig, 20. 9. 1971.

surveillance and prostitution control in the GDR. I argue that prostitution, venereal disease, and women's involvement in the Stasi surveillance network cannot be analyzed separately for several reasons. First, extensive collaboration between the Stasi, People's Police, and health authorities resulted in a disproportionate level of policing targeting vulnerable women. Such partnerships allowed the MfS to extend its surveillance into the carceral and healthcare systems, bringing women who might not have otherwise attracted Stasi attention under their control. Second, after recruitment, many informants who engaged in 'prostitution' or other sexual behaviour deemed 'promiscuous' used their experience evading health personnel and local police forces to resist the Stasi surveillance system. Third, the Stasi, like GDR authorities more generally, attempted to control women's sexual behaviour but did not regulate male sexuality. When male employees sexually harassed or abused 'promiscuous' informers under their supervision, it was accepted or at the very least, tolerated. Fourth, today's popular representations of Stasi 'prostitute-informers' oversimplify and oversexualize their experiences at the expense of historical accuracy.
By prioritizing gender and feminism and moving women's experiences from the periphery to the core of Stasi history, we can better understand how the Stasi, People's Police, and East German state operated at the local level from 1950 to 1989.

Policing in East Germany

The East German Stasi has received a significant amount of scholarly attention for its surveillance techniques and intrusion into the lives of East German citizens. However, when it came to monitoring, identifying, and persecuting 'subversive elements' such as prostitutes or supposedly 'promiscuous' women, other agents of control like the "People's

Police [were] every bit as involved as the MfS."[7] Like the Stasi, the ordinary, uniformed police force had a vested interest in turning 'sexually permissive' women into secret police informants.[8] They were heavily involved in disciplinary and recruitment practices, and incredibly important to the SED regime. Therefore, this section traces the development of East Germany's 'ordinary' or 'normal' police in addition to the Stasi. To trace this development, we need to go back to the immediate post-war period.

Following the Potsdam Conference of 1945, the Allied powers partitioned Germany into four occupied zones: British (northern Germany), French (southwestern Germany), American (southern Germany) and Soviet (eastern Germany). As the nation's capital, Berlin was also split into four zones. To help implement a socialist regime in what would later become East Germany, Soviet occupation authorities immediately established a German People's Police (*Deutsche Volkspolizei*, DVP). Under the formal authority of the Ministry of the Interior, yet subject to Soviet interference, the People's Police was broken down into subdivisions, including foot police (*Schutzpolizei*), railway police (*Transportpolizei, TraPo*), and traffic police (*Verkehrspolizei*). Because the Soviets were hesitant to work with the Germans, they tasked these divisions with fighting economic crime and sexual delinquency.[9] A People's Police report held in Landesarchiv Berlin from February 1950 outlines DVP responsibilities as:

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[7] Molly Pucci, *Security Empire: The Secret Police in Communist Eastern Europe,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 3.

[8] Pucci, *Security Empire: The Secret Police in Communist Eastern Europe*, 2020, 3; Steffi Brüning, "Prostitution in der DDR," *Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv*, https://www.digitales-deutsches-frauenarchiv.de/themen/prostitution-der-ddr

[9] Richard Bessel states, "It is hardly surprising that, initially, neither the Soviet military authorities nor the German communists (many of whom had suffered at the hands of German police under the Nazis) were prepared to trust a German police force very far with the task of law enforcement. So soon after the Gestapo had exercised its reign of terror and German police units had killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians in

> Monitor[ing] criminals and other persons who are suspected of criminal acts, and persons who are under police supervision, who are suspected of prostitution and have a criminal record, who are suspected of resuming their criminal activity, of being in Berlin unannounced, and those who belong to bootlegging or racketeering circles. Also persons who are subject to compulsory medical examinations.
>
> In order to identify or monitor the above-mentioned groups of people, the following [locations] must be kept under observation: restaurants, coffee houses, dance halls, night bars, private accommodations, train stations, apartments where unannounced tourism is often found, bathing establishments, fairgrounds. [10]

Therefore, as the DVP maintained order by handling registrations, licenses, and carrying out venereal disease (*Geschlechtskrankenheiten*, GeKra) raids, the real "task of imposing order, of a sort, fell to [Soviet security organizations and] the Red Army whose soldiers, of course, also caused widespread fear and disorder by assaulting, raping, and stealing from the Germans under their control."[11]

It was only after the creation of the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED) in 1946 that the People's Police became "explicitly political."[12] The K5, an elite branch of the DVP devoted to uncovering political crime, became responsible for "investigations and background checks on German officials as well as surveillance operations and interrogations for denazification campaigns" in 1947.[13] It encouraged citizens to bring information forward about Nazis in their midst and manned its own network of detention centers. Over the next three years, Germans "began to take

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eastern Europe, allowing German police to check people for venereal disease was one thing, equipping (and arming) them so that they might effectively combat crime – much of which was being committed by Soviet soldiers – was quite another"; Richard Bessel, "Policing in East Germany in the wake of the Second World War," *Crime, History & Societies* 7:2, 2003, 7-8.

[10] This is why there are so many police raids and 'hwG' control measures reported in the late 1940s and early 1950s, as evidenced by Chapter Two; Landesarchiv Berlin, "Instruction No.6. Feb 23, 1950."

[11] Bessel, "Policing in East Germany in the wake of the Second World War," 7.

[12] Bessel, "Policing in East Germany in the wake of the Second World War," 16.

[13] Pucci, *Security Empire: The Secret Police in Communist Eastern Europe*, 140.

many policing, judicial and administrative functions over from the Soviet occupation authorities."[14] On February 8, 1950, four months after East Germany became its own country in October 1949, the GDR People's Chamber unanimously approved the 'Bill to Establish a Ministry for State Security.'[15] This "resolution on the defense against sabotage" gave rise to the formation of a new surveillance institution, the Stasi.[16] GDR Interior Minister Karl Steinhoff stated, "the most important tasks of this ministry will be to protect the state-owned enterprises and factories, the transportation system and the state-owned goods from attacks by criminal elements and against all attacks, to wage a resolute struggle against the activities of hostile agencies, saboteurs and spies, to wage a vigorous struggle against bandits, to protect our democratic development and to ensure that our democratic peacetime economy fulfills its economic plans undisturbed."[17]

For the next forty years, the Stasi served as the "defender of the East German Communist Party (SED)."[18] Its primary function was tied to the pre-emptive identification and elimination of threats to socialism, or, in the words of Stasi leader Erich Mielke in 1957, "preventing or throttling at the earliest stages – using whatever means and methods

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[14] Pucci, *Security Empire: The Secret Police in Communist Eastern Europe*, 149.
[15] The GDR Passes a Law Establishing the Ministry for State Security [Stasi] (February 8, 1950), published in: *German History in Documents and Images*, https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/the-gdr-passes-a-law-establishing-the-ministry-for-state-security-stasi-february-8-1950
[16] The GDR Passes a Law Establishing the Ministry for State Security [Stasi] (February 8, 1950), published in: *German History in Documents and Images*, https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/the-gdr-passes-a-law-establishing-the-ministry-for-state-security-stasi-february-8-1950
[17] The GDR Passes a Law Establishing the Ministry for State Security [Stasi] (February 8, 1950), published in: *German History in Documents and Images*, https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/the-gdr-passes-a-law-establishing-the-ministry-for-state-security-stasi-february-8-1950
[18] Wilhelm Zaisser served as the first Minister for State Security. He was dismissed after the Berlin Uprising in June 1953, and the Ministry for State Security was temporarily stripped of its independence. Ernst Wollweber replaced Zaisser in 1955, and Erich Mielke became the final Minister for State Security in 1957, serving until 1989; Barbara Miller, "The Stasi Legacy: The Case of the Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter" Doctoral Dissertation, University of Glashow, 1997, 17; Steven Pfaff, "The Limits of Coercive Control: Social and Penal Control in the German Democratic Republic" *Punishment and Society*, 3:3, Year N/A, 382.

may be necessary – all attempts to delay or hinder the victory of socialism."[19] A massive network of unofficial informants, gathering information from every sector of society, made it possible for the Stasi to identify and neutralize 'class enemies' such as vagrants, work-shirkers, alcoholics, 'prostitutes' and 'asocials.'[20] To ensure their cooperation, the Stasi relied primarily on physical violence (i.e. beatings, torture, executions) throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[21] In the 1970s, mounting attention on the world stage forced the MfS to adopt more covert methods of psychological manipulation, including *Zersetzung*.[22] Through *Zersetzung,* the MfS disoriented its targets by "discrediting his or her public image, orchestrating professional failures or problems in his or her social sphere, undermining convictions and sowing doubts about his or her personal perspectives, stirring up personal rivalries and mutual suspicions in groups, assigning a remote job; circulating compromising photos, letters, telegrams or similar material; spreading malicious rumours and fabricated indiscretions about Stasi activities, etc."[23]

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[19] Quoted in Pfaff, "The Limits of Coercive Control: Social and Penal Control in the German Democratic Republic" 391.

[20] Stasi Guideline 21 recommended "former fascists, active officers and non-commissioned officers of the fascist army, relatives of already arrested agents, criminal and corrupt people, morally depraved youth, so-called political refugees, etc." as ideal informants due to their positions in society, together with the owners of restaurants and bars, and citizens working in hotels; "Richtlinie 21: Uber die Suche, Anwerbung und Arbeit mit Informatoren, geheimen Mitarbeitern und Personen, die Konspirative Wohnungen unterhalten" November 20, 1952. Consulted in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

[21] The Berlin Stasi Museum uses the case of Paul Rebenstock to highlight the Stasi's widespread use of physical violence, even against their own employees. Rebenstock started working in the 'Directorate for the Protection of the Economy,' which preceded the Stasi, in 1949. In 1953, the Stasi placed him in disciplinary custody for extorting money. When he escaped from prison, the MfS ordered his execution. The exhibit concludes, "Paul Rebenstock was executed in the early morning of 5 March 1954 at 4:30 am. His body was cremated in the Dresden-Tolkewitz crematorium nearly five hours later. The cause of death was noted on his burial certificate as 'myocardial failure, heart attack.'" Berlin Stasi Museum, Visited by author on November 23, 2022.

[22] Gieseke notes that *Zersetzung* was not unique to the Stasi; rather, "the practice was used as far back as the Weimar Republic for the mutual infiltration of political organizations or the Reichswehr with the aim of weakening and crippling them from the inside"; Jens Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990,* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015), 148.

[23] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990*, 147.

Supporting this intelligence apparatus was an intricate institutional framework.[24] When head of the MfS Erich Mielke ordered the recruitment of "young, pretty women," "easy women" and "prostitutes" as informers in 1954, his command filtered down from MfS headquarters in East Berlin (Normannenstraße and Magdalenenstraße) to fifteen *Bezirksverwaltungen* (BV) or regional districts. In addition to the Administration of Greater Berlin, these BV were Rostock, Neubrandenburg, Schwerin, Potsdam, Frankfurt (Oder), Cottbus, Magdeburg, Halle, Leipzig, Dresden, Karl-Marx Stadt (Chemnitz until 1953), Erfurt, Gera, and Suhl.[25] Directly subservient to these BV were over 200 smaller district offices or *Kreisdienststellen* (KD), located in surrounding towns and villages. This zonal structure enabled the MfS to monitor entire districts at once. For example, in East-Berlin, the Stasi surveillance network stretched from the ministerial level down to KD offices in the boroughs of Friedrichshain, Hellersdorf, Hohenschönhausen, Köpenick, Lichtenberg, Marzahn, Mitte, Pankow, Prenzlauer Berg, Treptow, and Weissensee.[26] Surveillance was especially intense in Prenzlauer Berg, since the district bordered the Berlin Wall after its creation in 1961 and many opposition members lived there.[27] Likewise, BV Rostock received information from subordinate offices in Greifswald, Stralsund, Wismar, Bad Doberan, Grevesmühlen, Grimmen, Ribnitz-Damgarten, Rostock-

[24] Like the People's Police, the Stasi had internal divisions known as Main Departments, or *Hauptabteilungen* (HA). Each of these sixteen divisions had a different surveillance function. Department VI was responsible for identifying and monitoring groups or individuals who vocally opposed the regime or did not adhere to socialist values. It also organized the recruitment of IMs; Gary Bruce, "The Prelude to Nationwide Surveillance in East Germany: Stasi Operations and Threat Perceptions, 1945- 1953," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5:2, 2003, 12.

[25] Before 1952, the MfS broke up their offices by states or Lander: Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia.

[26] "Struktur der Bezirksverwaltung (BV) Berlin 1989" Stasi Unteragen Archiv, https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/archiv/standorte/berlin/bestaende-und-teilbestaende-der-bezirksverwaltung-berlin/

[27] Stasi Museum – Stasimuseum Berlin in der Zentrale des MfS. Exhibit. Visited November 2023.

Land, Rügen and Wolgast.[28] In the following pages, citations such as 'BV Erfurt' or 'KD Griefswald' indicate the security area from which a Stasi file came. Since smaller district offices forwarded their records to larger regional offices, and regional files are stored in the Stasi Records Archive, I did not need to visit every city to obtain its files; they were already available to me.

The Stasi Files

This dissertation weaves together the secret and civilian police records, meeting reports, letters of denunciation, personnel files, interrogation transcripts, confessions, medical histories, etc. of women living in each BV from 1950 to 1989. These documents are held in Germany's Federal Archive (Bundesarchiv), Berlin's State Archive (Landesarchiv Berlin) and the Stasi Records Archive (Stasi-Unterlagen-Archiv). With its central office in Berlin and regional branches in the twelve former capital cities of the GDR, the latter offers unparalleled insights into the lives of women from East Germany's so-called delinquent milieu. These files play a crucial role in this dissertation and represent some of the only opportunities to access the history/voices of these historical subjects but were never intended to be read by a public audience. Indeed, the history of the files themselves is an important part of this research.

After a wave of Soviet-Bloc revolutions culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, Mielke ordered Stasi employees to shred, burn, or otherwise destroy

[28] BArch, MfS, BV Rst, KD Gwd ZMA, "Telegramm KD Greifswald zu BV Rostock" Greifswald, 08. 05. 1985, BStU 0022.

large quantities of incriminating documents (Figure 1).[29] To preserve evidence of Stasi crimes, East German citizens seized regional offices across the country, beginning with the city of Erfurt. A historic plaque outside the Memorial and Education Centre Andreasstraße reads:

> On the morning of December 4, 1989, for the first time during the Peaceful Revolution in the GDR, courageous citizens in Erfurt attacked the district administration of the Ministry for State Security (Stasi) and the Stasi pre-trial detention center. This prevented further destruction of files. This marked the beginning of the dissolution of the Stasi and the struggle for access to the Stasi files, which is now regulated by law.[30]

Over the course of the afternoon and evening, similar actions took place in Leipzig, Suhl, Schwerin, and Rostock.[31] In Rostock, citizens:

> Demanded that the police take custody of [the MfS district administration office] and secure all the files. A group of citizens with police accompaniment combed it, sealed the rooms and disarmed and discharged Stasi personnel…that was the end of Stasi work. The citizens' group, which later formed itself into Rostock's independent investigative committee, then tackled the enormous task of viewing the entire body of documents left behind by the Stasi.[32]

When Berliners saw smoke billowing from Stasi Headquarters one month later, they too stormed and occupied the complex on January 15, 1990.[33]

While some East Germans deemed Stasi files unworthy of preservation, more citizens committees argued that "destroying or locking away the files would eliminate all

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[29] They successfully destroyed one third of the Stasi files, and a large-scale research project is now underway to reassemble shredded documents; Catherine Roy, "File Based Autobiographies After 1989" Doctoral Dissertation, The University of British Columbia, 2011, 57; Rachel E. Beattie, "The Poisoned Madeleine: Stasi Files as Evidence and History" *Faculty of Information Quarterly,* V1:4, August 2009. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4501/00bd84e7899c0502f7bbb99dae9f12a5497f.pdf, 3

[30] This information was obtained by visiting the Memorial and Education Centre Andreasstraße (*Gedenk-und-Bildungstätte Andreasstraße*) in Erfurt on November 10, 2023.

[31] This information was obtained by visiting the Memorial and Education Centre Andreasstraße on November 10, 2023.

[32] Roy, "File Based Autobiographies After 1989," 57.

[33] Roy, "File Based Autobiographies After 1989," 57.

evidence, making it impossible to punish culprits or to compensate or rehabilitate victims."[34] Ultimately, the German government determined that:

> Individuals had the right to discover how they had been pursued and persecuted by the Stasi; the files were needed to determine criminal charges, to assess people's suitability for political and administrative posts and to provide evidence in connection with claims for rehabilitation and compensation; and ex-Stasi operatives should be deprived of their 'intellectual ownership' of the contents of the files. The files, it was also argued, were an essential tool in the reconstruction of the past and in avoiding the kind of delays which were symptomatic of the historical reworking of the Nazi era.[35]

On August 24, 1990, the *Volkskammer* passed a temporary law outlining the use and protection of Stasi data. The German parliament formally adopted this law, which became the Law on Documents of the State Security Service of the Former GDR (*Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz*), on December 29, 1991.[36] This law had three outcomes. First, it made the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic (*Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen der Staatssicherheitsdienstes des ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, BStU) responsible for overseeing Stasi files.[37] Second, it outlined protocol for the future use of data collected by the MfS. For example, Article 13(4) says that a redaction process must occur before a Stasi victim or researcher is granted permission to view archival material. It states, "The person concerned shall on request be provided with duplicates of the records. Any personal data contained in these duplicates regarding other persons concerned or third parties shall be

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[34] For example, Minister of the Interior Peter-Michael Diestel argued that preservation was unnecessary "since everyone in the former GDR except newborns and alcoholics was to some degree implicated in the Stasi's surveillance machine, and 'files could not prove their innocence'"; Roy, "File Based Autobiographies After 1989," 61; Mike Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality. (*London: Pearson Education Ltd., 2003), 236.
[35] Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 237.
[36] Barbara Miller, "The Stasi Legacy: The Case of the Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter" Doctoral Dissertation, University of Glashow, 1997, 24.
[37] Joachim Gauck became the first Federal Commissioner for Stasi Records. Therefore, the BStU is sometimes referred to as the Gauck Authority or Gauck Commission.

rendered anonymous."[38] In line with these privacy concerns, I received redacted files. I have substituted these redactions with my own pseudonyms. In instances where code names are provided, I either refer to individuals as such or place aliases in quotations to denote informer status.[39] Finally, the Law on Stasi Files gave researchers the right to view People's Police files, including those of so-called sexually 'permissive' women who worked as informers. Over time, the People's Police and the MfS became incredibly entangled. An upwards of twenty percent of all DVP officers served as IMs, the "most extreme case" of collaboration, to use Jens Gieseke's words, being the K1 – a clandestine branch of the Criminal Police.[40] Because of this intense collaboration, the K1 issued Guideline No. 004/79 on December 10, 1979. Titled "Processing and File Regulations," it outlined the procedures for archiving K1 files in detail and stipulated that the files of all individuals processed as unofficial criminal police employees were to be "archived at the MfS."

Historiography

Since Germany lifted the curtain and scholars gained access to Stasi surveillance files in 1992, studying the MfS has become a large sub-field in German history.[41]

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[38] Censorship policies do not apply to individuals who have been deceased for more than thirty years or full-time Stasi employees; Information on Figures of Contemporary History, Holders of Political Office and Public Officials, Stasi Archives Website, https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/en/access-to-records/access-for-research-and-media/#c711; Article 13(4), "The Right of Persons Concerned and Third Parties to Receive Information and Inspect and Obtain Records" Act Regarding the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic (Berlin 2002) https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/assets/BStU/en/Downloads/StUG_englisch_pdf.pdf

[39] Katherine Verdery, *My Life as a Spy: Investigations in a Secret Police File*, (London: Duke University Press, 2018), 15.

[40] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990*, 101-102.

[41] Catherine Epstein, "East Germany and Its History since 1989," *The Journal of Modern History* 75:3, 2003, 636.

According to a 2019 report, between twenty to thirty percent of all literature written about the now-defunct GDR since its dissolution has focused on the MfS.[42] However, the experience of female IMs is still underrepresented. Within this large body of scholarship, there are two main ways that scholars have written about the Stasi. Most accentuate the dictatorial nature of GDR surveillance, often at the expense of sociocultural factors such as gender and sexuality, by concentrating on the Stasi's origins, development, structure, and day-to-day intelligence operations.[43] As a member of the BStU research staff, Gieske published *Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter der Staatssicherheit: Personalstrukter und Lebenswelt 1950 – 1989/90* in the early 2000s.[44] His 2015 monograph *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990* has also become the standard reference work on the Stasi, translated into several languages.[45] While fully appreciating the contextual information that such works provide, I argue that many top-down approaches to Stasi history do little to better our understanding of the apparatus' gendered dynamics.[46] For example, in *The History of the Stasi*, Gieseke mentions women just nine times.

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[42] Borzou Daraghi, "The Stasi Files: How East Germany's Secret Police Immersed Themselves in the Middle East and How their Work is Still Felt Today," *The Independent*, 7 November 2019.

[43] For institutional histories of the Stasi, see Klaus-Dieter Henke, et al., eds. *Anatomie der Staatssicherheit: Geschichte - Struktur - Methoden: Die Organizationsstruktur des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit* 1989, Berlin: Bundesbeauftragte, 1995; Helmut Müller-Enbergs, *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit: Richtlinien und Durchführungsbestimmungen,* Ch. Links, 1996; Jens Gieseke, *Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter der Staatssicherheit: Personalstrukter und Lebenswelt 1950 – 1989/90,* Ch. Links Verlag, Berlin, 2000; Bruce, "The Prelude to Nationwide Surveillance in East Germany: Stasi Operations and Threat Perceptions, 1945- 1953"; Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*; Elise Catrain, *Hochschule im Überwachungsstaat: Struktur und Aktivitäten des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit an der Karl-Marx Stadt-Universität Leipzig* (1968/69-1981), Leipzig, Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2013; Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990*; David Childs and Richard Popplewell, *The Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2016).

[44] Jens Gieseke, *Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter der Staatssicherheit: Personalstrukter und Lebenswelt 1950 – 1989/90,* Ch. Links Verlag, Berlin.

[45] Gieseke's chronological account charts the development, growth and function of the MfS from the Soviet occupation period to the East German revolution of 1989 and beyond; Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990*.

[46] 'Gender' is not synonymous with 'women' or 'women's history' here. Institutional histories also take a minimal interest in masculinity.

Although he discusses female denunciations in the Third Reich, the perpetration of sexual violence against German women by Soviet soldiers, and the victimization of West German secretaries by 'Romeo Spies,' a concept which will be discussed in Chapter Three, female Stasi employees/informers do not factor into his work. This omission perpetuates the narrative that there were no women in the Stasi surveillance system – a narrative that I prove to be false by employing gender as a category of historical analysis.[47]

Other scholars concentrate on social and cultural histories of the Stasi, broadening the scope of historical inquiry by examining the everyday lives of East German citizens and their function in the Stasi surveillance network.[48] For instance, edited anthologies such as *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* classify the

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[47] Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," *Feminist Studies* 3: ½, 1975, 10.
[48] For social and cultural histories of the Stasi, see: Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR 1949-1989*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Timothy Garton Ash, *The File: A Personal History.* (New York: Random House, 1997); Anna Funder, *Stasiland: Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002); Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR*, (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 2002; Andrew Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007; Gary Bruce, *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Christian Halbrock*, Mielkes Revier: Stadtraum und Alltag rund um die MfS-Zentrale in Berlin-Lichtenberg,* Lukas Verlag, 2010; Mary Fulbrook, *Power, and Society in GDR, 1961-1979: The Normalisation of Rule?* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013); Mary Fulbrook, *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities After Hitler,* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013); Uwe Krähnke: *Im Dienst der Staatssicherheit – Eine soziologische Studie über die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter des DDRGeheimdienstes,* Frankfurt 2017; Alison Lewis, *A State of Secrecy: Stasi Informers and the Culture of Surveillance.* (Lincoln: Potomac Books, 2021). Kindle. For social and cultural histories of East Germany see: Andreas Ludwig, ed., *Fortschritt, Norm und Eigensinn: Erkundungen im Alltag der DDR*, Berlin: Ch. Links, 1999; Alice Weinreb, "Matters of Taste: The Politics of Food and Hunger in Divided Germany, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2009; Jan Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945–1990,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Sandrine Kott, *Communism Day-to-Day: State Enterprises in East German Society,* trans. Lisa Godin-Roger, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Heather Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism: Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Scott Moranda, *The People's Own Landscape: Nature, Tourism and Dictatorship in East Germany*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013); Judd Stitziel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics and Consumer Culture in East Germany*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005); Philip Heldmann, *Herrschaft, Wirtschaft, Anoraks: Konsumpolitik in der DDR der Sechzigerjahre*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004; Katherine Pence "A World in Miniature: The Leipzig Trade Fairs in the 1950s and East German Consumer Citizenship," in David Crew, ed., *Consuming Germany in the Cold War,* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 21–50; Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

GDR as a "welfare dictatorship" while Mary Fulbrook labels it a "People's State" and "participatory dictatorship."[49] But even though unofficial collaboration is a popular topic of discussion in this category of scholarship, authors seldom address gender-specific informing experiences. In *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi* (2010), Gary Bruce is one of few authors to touch on the significance of gender within the Stasi, given that most of its personnel and informers were men.[50] Even still, Bruce abstains from any exploration of normative masculinity. When considered alongside one another, these influential social histories reveal a pattern: unless scholars explicitly declare their intention of examining gender, sexuality, and the Stasi, such discussions are absent from their work. Women's experiences, resistances, and struggles, which make up the substance of my work, remain underrepresented in major social histories of the MfS as a result.

Intersections of Gender, Sexuality, and the Stasi

Female-identified scholars (from both inside and outside of the academy) have essentially been the only ones to perform any gendered analyses on the Stasi.[51] Using methodologies laid out by women's history and eventually its successors, gender history and the history of sexuality, they have endeavoured to bring women's historical experiences out of the shadows. The earliest feminist historical scholarship related to the

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[49] Konrad H. Jarausch, *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR.* Translated by Eve Duffy. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006); Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR 1949-1989*, Fulbrook, *Power, and Society in GDR, 1961-1979: Normalisation of Rule?* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013); Fulbrook, *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities After Hitler*.

[50] Gary Bruce*, The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[51] German medical historians Florian Steger and Maximilian Schochow have been the only male scholars to perform gendered analyses on the MfS; Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" *The American Historical Review* 91:5, 1986; Julie Des Jardins, "Women's and Gender History" in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 5: Historical Writing Since 1945,* Axel Schneider, Daniel Woolf (eds), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 136.

Stasi came in the wake of the *Historikinnenstreit,* or "female historians' debate" which ignited in the 1980s between two feminist historians of Germany: Gisela Bock and Claudia Koonz. Up for debate was whether Aryan, German women were victims or perpetrators of violence and racial crimes in the Third Reich. Koonz argued that Aryan women profited from and participated in Nazi racial persecution, making them perpetrators of Nazism, while Bock argued that women could not be perpetrators because they were victims of patriarchal policies.[52] This public debate spurred a historiographical turn and encouraged historians of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust to pay closer attention to women's public and private lives. It also eventually encouraged female researchers working on Stasi-related topics to explore the role of women within the apparatus.

Like Bock and Koonz, the earliest gendered analyses of the Stasi looked at women's experiences/participation through a perpetrator-victim framework.[53] This methodology can be seen in Irena Kukutz and Katja Havemann's book *Geschütze Quelle: Gespräche mit Monika H. alias Karin Lenz* (1990), which profiles a Stasi informer named 'Karin Lenz' using interviews, letters, and reports from the BStU.[54] Lenz informed on both Kukutz and Havemann, making "the authors of *Geschütze Quelle*…the victims of their object of

[52] Gisela Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany" in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984); Bock, 'Anti-Natalism, Paternity and Maternity in National Socialist Realism', in D. Crew (ed.), *Nazism and German Society*, (London, Routledge, 1994); Bock, 'Ordinary Women in Nazi Germany', in D. Ofer and L. Weitzman (eds.), *Women in the Holocaust,* London, 1998; Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).
[53] Karen Hagemann, *Gendering Post-1945 German History: Entanglements*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), 3-4.
[54] Irena Kukutz and Katja Havemann, *Geschütze Quelle: Gesprdche ika H. alias Karin Lenz* (Berlin: BasisDruck), 1990.

investigation."[55] While 'Lenz' considers herself to be more of a "historical agent than a passive victim," the authors see her as a victim.[56] In this way, one might say they undermine her agency. Barbara Miller also explores informers' complicity in *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany* (1990). She argues that the Stasi recruited female informers who "demonstrated emotional disharmony and vulnerability in their private and professional lives or had experienced psychological difficulties and intense emotional dependence" yet concludes that recruitment was rarely a coercive experience.[57] She also contends that most informers embraced, or at the very least, endured, informing.[58] So-called 'promiscuous' informers are not included in this study. Annette Maennel provides a more nuanced view of gender dynamics and collaboration in East Germany in *Auf sie war Verlaß: Frauen und Stasi*, interviewing five women about their cooperation with the Stasi.[59] She uses these oral histories to argue that female-only forms of power existed within the Stasi, seeing as male officers relied on information provided by female informers. A similar argument runs through her article "Warum haben Frauen für die Stasi gearbeitet?" (1994).[60]

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[55] In a 1994 edition of *Weibblick-Heft*, Kuktuz calls Lenz "a trusted companion" from Woman for Peace who was "entrusted with the keys to the apartment to water the flowers and to get the mail from the mailbox when we went on vacation..we sang on her birthdays and took turns comforting her when she was heartbroken. We knew stories from her stories about her difficult childhood and lying in the home and so she was forgiven for many things that we would not have tolerated with others. None of us could ever seriously consider that she was playing a double game with us…finding about this was as big a shock for me as it was for my friends"; *Weibblick-Heft* 16, 1994, 4-5.

[56] Alison Lewis, "En-Gendering Remembrance: Memory, Gender and Informers for the Stasi," *New German Critique* 86, 2002, 121.

[57] Barbara Miller, *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany, (*Oxon: Routledge, 1999).

[58] Miller, *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany*, 72-73.

[59] Her interviewees "include the wife of a church functionary, a member of the army, a university employee, a factory worker, a teacher, and an education student,"; Lewis, "En-Gendering Remembrance: Memory, Gender, and Informers for the Stasi, 122.

[60] Lewis, "En-Gendering Remembrance: Memory, Gender, and Informers for the Stasi," 122.

Building on these early investigations, Belinda Cooper's 1998 article "Patriarchy Within a Patriarchy: Women and the Stasi" focuses on gender biases and limitations placed on women within the Stasi administration. Drawing on interviews with former Stasi-officers, she argues that the East German intelligence system treated women worse than the rest of GDR society did. However, because highlighting the Stasi's patriarchal nature and its reluctance to include women in its operations is Cooper's primary focus, her critical analysis stops at women's victimization.[61] In 2002, Alison Lewis explored feminist rhetoric about Stasi victims in her article "En-Gendering Remembrance: Memory, Gender and Informers for the Stasi."[62] Lewis argues that "in view of the prominence in feminist scholarship accorded to women as victims of history it comes as no surprise that the question of the relationship between gender and victims and perpetrators was taken up by women with such élan."[63] Published between 1990 and 2002, these works laid the foundation for contemporary gendered analyses of the Stasi. However, while the authors begin to unpack power differences between the sexes, they seldom integrate women into the larger MfS narrative. They also fail to show how taking women and gender issues into consideration puts the whole story in a different light.

In the last two decades, scholars have recognized that like gender, sexuality played a key role in the history of the Stasi. This historiographical turn began with scholarship on

[61] Very little space is devoted to women's role in international espionage or domestically as unofficial informers; Belinda Cooper, "Patriarchy Within a Patriarchy: Women and the Stasi," *German Politics & Society* 16:2, 1998, 5.
[62] Lewis, "En-Gendering Remembrance: Memory, Gender, and Informers for the Stasi," 106.
[63] Lewis, "En-Gendering Remembrance: Memory, Gender, and Informers for the Stasi," 106.

sexuality in eastern Germany more broadly.[64] Studies focusing specifically on MfS interference into citizens' sexual lives are much sparser, but those that do exist are foundational texts. Uta Falck's monograph *VEB Bordell: Geschichte der Prostitution in der DDR* (1998) was the first to focus scholarly attention onto the "marriage of convenience" (*Versorgungsehen*) between prostitution and the Stasi.[65] In one chapter out of seven, Falck argues that the relationship between the two parties was gradually professionalized between the 1950s and 1970s, as jurisdiction over prostitutes shifted away from the police and health authorities and the MfS used the illegality of the sex industry to ensure the cooperation of prostitutes.[66] After a thirteen year historiographical gap, Josie McLellan references Falck in her book *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (2011). Her segment "Sex and the Stasi" offers a brief but critical examination of the female informer IM Marlon Forster's everyday life.[67]

Together, Falck and McLellan laid the foundation for Steffi Brüning's book *Prostitution in der DDR: Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel der Städte Rostock, Berlin und Leipzig von 1968 bis 1989* (2020), which explores the ways so-called 'sexually deviant'

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[64] See Donna Harsch "Society, the State, and Abortion in Easy Germany, 1950-1972." *The American Historical Review* 102:1, 1997; Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Josie McLellan, "State Socialist Bodies: East German Nudism from Ban to Boom." *The Journal of Modern History* 79:1, 2007; Ingrid Sharp, "The Sexual Unification of Germany." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13:3, 2004; Jennifer Evans, *Life Among the Ruins: Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Germany,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Elizabeth Heineman, *Before Porn was Legal: The Erotic Empire of Beate Uhse*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth Century Germany*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Annette Timm, *The Politics of Fertility in Twentieth-Century Berlin*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Mark Fenemore, "The Recent Historiography of Sexuality in Twentieth Century Germany," *Historical Journal* 52, 2009 and Victoria Harris, "Sex on the Margins: New Directions in the Historiography of Sexuality and Gender," *Historical Journal* 53:4, 2010.

[65] Many scholars have since adopted this phrase from Falck; Uta Falck, *VEB Bordell: Geschichte der Prostitution in der DDR (Forschungen zur DDR-Gesselschaft)* (Ch. Links; 1 Aufl Edition, 1998).

[66] Falck, *VEB Bordell.*

[67] McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR,* 102-107.

women navigated the patriarchal GDR system, including as unofficial MfS informers.[68] In this crucial study, Brüning argues that prostitutes "stood between partially competing state actors and established a variety of action strategies to move within the GDR system."[69] Nonetheless, while the MfS occupies a more considerable chunk of her book than Falck's, Brüning's study is still one of prostitution in general. It coincides with the publication of several other works on prostitution behind the Iron Curtain in subject and timeline, beginning in 1968.[70] My study begins in 1950 to better analyze continuities and discontinues over the span of the GDR. Another contribution comes from German medical historians Florian Steger and Maximilian Schochow who use medical sources to bring vulnerable women to the fore and explore the Stasi's involvement in closed venereology wards.[71] They argue that these institutions were used to discipline women whose social and

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[68] Steffi Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR: Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel von Rostock, Berlin und Leipzig, 1968 bis 1989* (German Edition) be.bra wissenschaft verlag. Kindle Edition, 161-165. For more on women in espionage see: Tammy Proctor, *Female Intelligence: Women and Espionage in the First World War,* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Kathryn Olmsted, *Red Spy Queen: A Biography on Elizabeth Bentley*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Kathryn Olmsted, "Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids: Gender and Espionage in the Early Cold War" *Intelligence and National Security* 19:1, 2004; Kirsten Smith, "'Keep Mum, She's Definitely Not Dumb': The Complex and Cunning Femme Fatale in Espionage Fiction in History" in *Perceiving Evil: Evil Women and the Feminine,* Brill, 2015; J Wheelwright, "Poisoned Honey: The Myth of Women in Espionage," *Queen's Quarterly* 100:2, 2019; Andrea Peto, "A Gender History of Hungarian Intelligence Services during the Cold War," *Journal of Intelligence History* 19:2, 2020.

[69] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*.

[70] See: Sonja Dolinesk & Siobhan Hearne, "Introduction: Prostitution in Twentieth Century Europe" *European Review of History* 29:2, 2022; Barbara Havelková, "Blaming All Women: On the Regulation of Prostitution in State Socialist Czechoslovakia,"*Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 36:1, 2016; Barbara Havelková, "European Gender Equality Under and After State Socialism: Legal Treatment of Prostitution in the Czech Republic," Doctoral Dissertation, Exeter College, 2010; Siobhan Hearne, "Selling Sex Under Socialism: Prostitution in the post-war USSR" *European Review of History* 29:2, 2021; Siobhan Hearne, "Sanitizing Sex in the USSR: State Approaches to Sexual Health in the Brezhnev Era." *Europe-Asia Studies,* 2021; Stefano Petrungaro, "Police and Prostitution in Yugoslavia: A Nuanced Relationship*" European Review of History* 29:2. 2022; Ivan Simic, "Prostitution in socialist Yugoslavia: from Stalinism to the Yugoslav Way," *European Review of History* 29:2, 2022; Milan Dobeš, "Prostitution as a Special Form of the Offence of Social Parasitism in Socialist Czechoslovakia," *Journal on European History of Law* 13, 2022.

[71] Florian Steger, Maximilian Schochow: *Disziplinierung durch Medizin. Die geschlossene Venerologische Station in der Poliklinik Mitte in Halle (Saale), 1961-1982,* 2. Auflage, Halle (Saale) 2014; "Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin. Geschlossene Venerologische Stationen in der DDR," Berlin 2016; "Closed

sexual behavior lay outside of everyday social norms set by the GDR, but also those who refused to cooperate with the MfS.

Much can be learned about the Stasi by studying its treatment of East German women who fell outside of the boundaries of respectable femininity. 'Prostitutes' and other women presumed to be sexually deviant are significant within these margins and yet, their stories are largely missing from the current historiography. By foregrounding the experiences of women and making their roles as social and political actors visible, this dissertation offers a fresh, long-term analysis that also considers the legacy of Stasi practices. First, in contrast to studies with narrower timeframes, it profiles the intersection of prostitution, venereal disease and the Stasi surveillance network in every region and year of the GDR. This allows me to trace geographic and temporal continuities and discontinuities in policies, practices, and experiences. Second, this dissertation explores the legacies of Stasi policies by examining the disturbing ways in which women associated with working as informers have been portrayed in the post-unification era. It challenges and reorients contemporary narratives of female informers as sexually available, insatiable beings, for whom encounters with the Stasi were always pleasurable.

Venereology Wards in hospitals of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Ministry for State Security (MfS)," *Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology* 31:5, 2017; "Die Patientakten der geschlossenen Venerologischen Einrichtungen Leipzig-Thornberg, in: *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 53, 2018; "Closed Venereology Wards in the German Democratic Republic," *Acta medico-historica Rigensia,* 2019; "Were All Compulsorily Committed Women Prostitutes? Closed Venerology Wards in East Germany (1945-1990)" *Acta Dermatovenerol Croat* 28:4, 2020; "Women education in the Soviet prophylactoria and the care homes for sexually transmitted disease patients in the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany," *Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology* 37:10, 2023; See also Maximilian Schochow, *Zwischen Erziehung. Heilung und Zwang. Geschlossene Venerologische Einrichtungen in der SBZ/DDR.* (Mitteldeutscher Verlag: Halle, 2019) and Marcin Orzechowski, Kataryna Woniak, Maximilian Schochow, and Florian Steger, "Policy Approaches Toward Combatting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Occupation Zone in Germany (1945-1949), the German Democratic Republic (1949-1989), and the Polish People's Republic (1945-1989)," *Frontiers in Medicine*, 2021.

Research Methods

The Stasi produced "111,000 linear kilometers of files, 41 million index cards, 1.8 million photographs, some 25,000 video, film and audio recordings, and approximately 15,000 bags of torn documents" over the course of a forty-year period. Its archival legacy is extensive, and finding aids are not publicly available to researchers.[72] Interested parties must submit a series of request forms detailing their research interests and any plans to publish their results (Figure 2). If a researcher's application is accepted, archivists then use internal finding aids and filing systems to search through a wide range of topics. If researchers are unable to view documents in person, archivists can upload copies of relevant files to a digital portal. Finally, researchers sign a formal agreement confirming that "the copies they have received may not be used for purposes other than the one specified, nor may they be passed on to other parties." [73]

Adhering to these procedures, I applied to view the personal files of women categorized as 'prostitutes,' 'women with frequently changing sexual partners' (*häufig wechselnden Geschlechtsverkehr*, hwG), 'asocials' and 'drifters.'[74] By 'prostitute,' the Stasi usually meant a "female person who performs or causes sexual intercourse to be performed for material or financial consideration and who chooses partners indiscriminately in public for this purpose."[75] This definition only existed in the female,

[72] "Access to Secrecy – Exhibition on the Stasi Records Archive" *Stasi Records Archive*, https://www.stasi-unterlagen archiv.de/assets/BStU/de/Publikationen/Katalog_DA_EiG_EN_barrierefrei_reduziert.pdf
[73] "Information on the Release of Copies and Publication," *Stasi Records Archive*, https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/en/access-to-records/access-for-research-and-media/#c711
[74] I first applied to view these files in January 2021. I received my first set of files in July 2021, and my second set of files in November 2021. For the next two years, I received digital files in similar intervals.
[75] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit: Studien zur Phänomenologie und Aspekte der kriminalistischen Untersuchung von Straftaten gemäß 249 StGB – under besonderer Berucksichtigung der Alternative Prostitution" pg 9. July 1975. BStU 000022.

heterosexual form.[76] Essentially a synonym for promiscuity, 'hwG' referred to women with frequently changing sexual partners who, as the Stasi saw it, "due to biological and social maldevelopment," had "indiscriminate sexual intercourse without obtaining financial or material benefits. "[77] In the 1950s, 'frequently changing' meant having three sexual partners in one month, and after 1960, this was amended to four or more partners in three months.[78] Because sexuality was also linked to moral corruption, the Stasi also defined as 'hwG' women who consumed a "moderate" amount of alcohol, associated with male guests in restaurants, lacked strong social connections, or demonstrated a strong "sexual drive and lack of inhibition."[79]

The primary characteristics of an 'asocial' woman, according to the Stasi, were: "eagerness to earn a living easily, without working, [and] the unwillingness to study or improve professional skills." 'Asocials' were also described as "unable to maintain stable partner relationships, preferring to spend time in loose peer groups, lingering around and drinking excessively. With respect to their sexual behaviour, they [were] categorized as promiscuous."[80] Somewhat relatedly, 'drifter' referred to women who violated socialist

[76] I did not find any references to male prostitution in the Stasi files. For more on male prostitution in Post-war Germany, see Jennifer Evans, "Bahnhof Boys: Policing Male Prostitution in Post-Nazi Berlin," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12:4, 2003; "Decriminalization, Seduction, and 'Unnatural Desire' in the German Democratic Republic" *Feminist Studies* 36:3, 2010; "Life Among the Ruins: Sex, Space, and Subculture in Postwar Berlin," in Sabine Hake and Philip Broadbent (eds.), *Berlin Divided City, 1945-89*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); *Life Among the Ruins: Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin*.
[77] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit: Studien zur Phänomenologie und Aspekte der kriminalistischen Untersuchung von Straftaten gemäß 249 StGB – under besonderer Berucksichtigung der Alternative Prostitution" pg 9. July 1975. BStU 000019.
[78] Steger and Schochow, "Closed Venereology Wards in the German Democratic Republic," 76.
[79] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit: Studien zur Phänomenologie und Aspekte der kriminalistischen Untersuchung von Straftaten gemäß 249 StGB – under besonderer Berucksichtigung der Alternative Prostitution" pg 9. July 1975. BStU 000021.
[80] Sabine Herring, *Social Care under State Socialism (1945-1989) Ambitions, Ambiguities, and Mismanagement*, (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2009), 20.

morals by "leaving the workplace without permission."[81] Due to the tendency to conflate female sexuality and sexual infection, my next research request concentrated on venereal diseases and the compulsory admission of sexually ill women to closed venereological wards. Now known as Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), the term 'venereal disease' signified gonorrhea (*Gonorrhoe*) or syphilis (*Lues*) in the GDR.[82] Of course, to use the words of Schochow and Steger, "certain groups may coincide with each other (i.e. a prostitute may also be a person with sexually transmitted diseases, etc.)"[83]

The archivists at the Stasi Records Archive intentionally assembled a collection of Bundesarchiv, MfS, and People's Police files for me based on their connection to these key concepts. The resulting digital collection contains thousands of pages of secret police files – which are essentially variations of criminal records – and hundreds of photographs from every district in the former GDR. While some individuals' files are several hundred pages in length and contain a significant amount of information about their everyday lives, others are collections of fragments. The oldest document in my collection is dated August 14,

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[81] Schochow, Steger, "Were All Compulsorily Committed Women Prostitutes? Closed Venerology Wards in East Germany," 216.

[82] Sometimes called 'the clap,' gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. It is transmitted through oral, vaginal and anal sex without a condom/barrier measure. Symptoms include discharge and pain with urination. If left untreated, it can lead to reproductive complications such as permanent infertility in women. Syphilis is spread the same way as gonorrhea, but by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum.* It has several phases. Individuals in the primary syphilis phase may develop open sores (chancres) in the vicinity of their genitals or mouth. If these sores are left untreated, the infection progresses to secondary syphilis where rashes appear on the hands and feet and "grey lesions appear in warm and moist areas." Hair loss may also occur in this phase. If left untreated, individuals will enter the third and final latent syphilis stage, where they may develop "damage to the heart, brain, eyes, ears, and other organs. After many years it can progress to neurosyphilis (syphilis in the brain or spinal cord) and result in dementia or strokes"; "Syphilis," *World Health Organization*, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/syphilis and "Gonnorrhea (Neisseria gonorrhoeae infection)," *World Health Organization*, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/gonorrhoea-(neisseria-gonorrhoeae-infection)

[83] Schochow, Steger, "Were All Compulsorily Committed Women Prostitutes? Closed Venerology Wards in East Germany (1945-1990)," 217.

1951, while the most recent is dated November 28, 1989.[84] These records are typically divided into two categories: documents detailing personal information about the women themselves, and work-related files, most of which are labelled meeting reports or *Treffbericht*. Personnel files or *Personalakte* make up the first, and arguably most absorbing, component of any 'promiscuous' woman's secret police record. Generated as soon as they came into MfS purview, these descriptive files offer insight into people's nationality, age, birthday, education and qualifications, profession, employment history, marital status, political affiliations before and after 1933, physical appearance, psychological characteristics, and intelligence. Also featured in this section are detailed notes about women's early lives, including their first sexual experiences, living conditions, financial situations, criminal and medical histories, including histories of sexual infection. By describing women's poverty in tremendous detail, this record set in particular highlights unequal social relations in the GDR. Finally, denunciations can be found in this portion of a file, alongside interrogation records and investigation reports, which were created by Stasi personnel as they monitored women's movements pre-recruitment. These investigation reports often include explicit details about women's sexual lives, and plans to intimidate, harass, or blackmail them. The personal portion of somebody's Stasi file typically ends after they agree to work for the state, otherwise known as their declaration of commitment.

On the other hand, work files or *Arbeitsakte* contain written reports handed over by the unofficial employee over the course of her informing career, in addition to those of her

[84] Regardless of their size and date, it was a powerful, affective experience reading the records that the Stasi kept on women they believed to be sexually permissive; BStU, MfS, BV Schwerin, AU 95-52, 14. 8. 1951, BStU 000010; BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig, Abt. VI, 1022, Leipzig, 05. 09. 1989, BStU 007.

supervising officer. According to Stasi Guideline 21, 'About Searching, Recruiting and Working with Informants, Secret Employees and People who Maintain Conspiratorial Homes,' "every meeting report must be evaluated, and the measures taken must be recorded in writing and the results noted."[85] This resulted in a tremendous amount of filing. Lewis writes, "for every meeting that a case officer had with an informant, they had a form to fill out. They not only had to have the tape transcribed or take notes themselves, but they also had to tick boxes and say exactly when it started, when it ended. How many reports were made. They had to assess the state of mind of the informer. They had to discuss personal issues, and they had to dish out tasks."[86] This paperwork increased when informers failed to meet official expectations. According to Lewis, Valentina Glajar and Corina Peterson, "disobedience or unreliability could result in a flurry of activity on the part of the security officers, who would then commission further security checks, often enlisting other informants to keep collaborators honest. This in turn produced stacks of paperwork."[87] A document titled "Final Report for Archiving Operational Material About [Insert Name]" concludes the *Arbeitsakte* section of most Stasi files. This report typically spans one or two pages and summarizes the events leading up to the termination of an informer's cooperation, otherwise known as their 'archiving.'[88] Finally, I received

[85] "Richtlinie 21: Uber die Suche, Anwerbung und Arbeit mit Informatoren, geheimen Mitarbeitern und Personen, die Konspirative Wohnungen unterhalten" November 20, 1952. Consulted in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.
[86] Leo Kretzenbacker, Interview with Alison Lewis, "The Secret Life of Language: Episode 1: The Stasi Files Transcript," Podcast from the University of Melbourne, School of Languages and Linguistics. https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/school-of-languages-and-linguistics/news/the-secret-life-of-language/episodes/episode-1
[87] Alison Lewis, Valentina Glajar, and Corina Petrescu (eds), *Secret Police Files from the Eastern Bloc: Between Surveillance and Life Writing,* (New York: Camden House, 2016), 3.
[88] Katherine Verdery, "Ethnography in the Securitate Archive," *Acta. Universitatis Sapientiae, Social Analysis* 4:102, 2014, 19.

miscellaneous material including yellowed newspaper clippings, obituaries, memos, photocopies of sexual health regulations and photographs.

In the process of requesting files (but after the lifting of COVID-19 travel restrictions), I spent a considerable amount of time travelling around eastern Germany.[89] While there, I visited popular GDR sites of commercial sex, and the locations of former venereology wards in Halle and Leipzig-Thonberg. To quote R. M. Sentilles, the sensory experience of walking around and touching these institutions, which I spent years engaging with in my sedentary, archival research, "fueled my interest and kept it burning through all the slow, painful, and numerous stages of writing, revising, cutting, and rewriting."[90] Whilst overseas, I also conducted on-site research in Landesarchiv Berlin. The Landesarchiv contains valuable information about the People's Police, such as their monthly and quarterly reports on venereal disease and police raids. It was in the process of conducting this research and going to and from the Landesarchiv that I came across several works of erotic fiction focusing on female Stasi informers. These previously unstudied works include Len Bracken's *The East is Black* and three separate books by Peter Alexander and Francis Milwoky: *DDR-Sex, Hobbynutten, Fremdgeher, Bettspitzel und die Stasi als Zühalte*r; *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten, die Stasi, die Lover;* and *Sex for Money: Mit Dem Stasi Im Bett*. These works led me to Rolf Kremming's *Von Straßenstrich bis Honigfalle: Wahre Geschichten über Prostitution in der DDR,* which, although not marketed as erotica, I include in this category of literature, nonetheless. A Berlin reporter by trade, Kremming claims to expose "true stories about prostitution in the GDR" but

[89] I visited Rostock (and Warnemünde), Berlin, Potsdam, Halle, Leipzig, Erfurt, and Dresden.
[90] R M. Sentilles, "Toiling in the Archives of Cyberspace" in Antionette Burton (ed), *Archive stories: Facts, Fiction, and the Writing of History,* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 155; Emily Robinson, "Touching the void: Affective History and the Impossible," *Rethinking History* 14:4, 2010, 511.

constructs fictionalized, often hyper-sexualized accounts of real female IMs instead. I expanded my focus to include these sources, all of which raise difficult problems for historians, and use them to argue that marginalization, and hyper sexualization affected these women not only during their time as an informer but continued to affect them long afterwards as well. This signifies the lasting legacies of the Stasi's use of such women, which is another reason why this subject deserver deeper consideration.

The Limitations of Secret Police Files

Despite the large number of secret police files, and their often-voluminous nature, they still present limitations to historians of gender and sexuality. First, women who never encountered the Stasi or People's Police are absent from the historical record and therefore, absent from my study. This limitation is not unique to researchers using the Stasi Records Archive. Rather, it reflects broader patterns in the histories of gender and sexuality, as prostitutes leave few traces in public records.[91] Stasi surveillance files also have many structural limitations. First, even if complete information is provided, a file only reveals small, fragmented pieces of women's lived experiences. These snippets of information have strong ideological underpinnings and may spotlight the worst moments in a woman's life. Nonetheless, they become her identity.[92] In the words of Lewis, Glajar, and Petrescu,

> Almost all secret police files begin with a suspicion or a hint of a dissenting political position that the regime needs to prove. Propelling each file are wider metanarratives about sabotage and enemy influence, capitalist conspiracies against international communism, which seem to urge the writer of the file – usually an officer – to try to make the story fit the crime, and the file's subject

[91] See T.J. Gilfoyle, "Prostitutes in the Archives: Problems and Possibilities in Documenting the History of Sexuality" *The American Archivist* 57:3. 1994.
[92] Lewis, Glajar, and Petrescu*, Secret Police Files from the Eastern Bloc: Between Surveillance and Life Writing,* 9.

> fit the negative profile of a political dissenter. And once in writing and on file, these narrative profiles of the regime's victims proved stubborn and enduring.[93]

Consideration must also be given to redactions and the absence of women's voices beyond interrogation transcripts and informer reports. As Timothy Gilfoyle writes, "The persons speaking, recording, or describing the activity are usually investigators, judges, journalists, police, or law enforcement officials…seldom, however, do prostitutes tell their sides of the story. Even when testifying in court, these women present planned or scripted accounts of their activity, and the spontaneous outburst is infrequent."[94] Despite these limitations, Stasi surveillance files hold immense value when treated with caution. They not only reveal the dynamics and geography of commercial sex in the GDR, but also bring to light the histories of women who may have otherwise remained unknown. To quote Lewis, Glajar and Petrescu once more:

> Like relics from a defunct era, these artifacts contain compelling microhistories of the past that we can use to forge narratives. If re-invested with empathy and compassion that were lacking in the original contexts in which they were written, and subjected to critical and ethical reading, the files can be made to tell rather different stories about the past.[95]

There are two other limitations to this study. First, this dissertation does not provide an in-depth analysis of informers' sexual identities. While the male-defined terms surrounding prostitution made it a heterosexual offence in the GDR, the Stasi files reveal that engagement in male-female prostitution did not guarantee heterosexuality: rather,

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[93] Lewis, Glajar, and Petrescu*, Secret Police Files from the Eastern Bloc: Between Surveillance and Life Writing,* 9.

[94] I acknowledge that interviews are one way to incorporate women's voices into the narrative. However, I was unable to conduct interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel constraints. Since I received my Stasi files digitally, they were already redacted, which prevented me from accessing the real names of female IMs; Gilfoyle, "Prostitutes in the Archives: Problems and Possibilities in Documenting the History of Sexuality," 523.

[95]Lewis, Glajar, and Petrescu*, Secret Police Files from the Eastern Bloc: Between Surveillance and Life Writing,* 11.

informers' sexual orientation were often fluid. As an example, I will return briefly to the file of Margrit K, with whom this dissertation began. Though Margrit was married to a man until 1969 and arrested for heterosexual prostitution in 1970, she reportedly belonged to "the lesbian community" and had a girlfriend, according to her Stasi file. In one report, her supervising officer wrote, "while [Margrit] is engaged in prostitution to earn money, the girlfriend does not have intercourse with men. However, if [Margrit] has a customer at hand, the [girl]friend undresses too and stays in the same room without actively intervening in the process."[96] Margrit's file was just one of many laden with allegations of "lesbianism" and "lesbo-like" or "bi-sex" relationships. Regardless of their truthfulness, this suggests that gender and sexuality were not stable categories. The inclusion of what appear to be gender ambiguous headshots on 'hwG' registries further confirms that informers had a spectrum of potential identities. Even though the BStU redacted all identifiable facial features from these images, gender fluidity manifests itself in other ways. For example, in one image a prominent Adams apple can be seen.[97] Therefore, while queer theory may be applied to 'promiscuous' women's Stasi files and used to explore alternative understandings of their identities, I have not done so.[98] Likewise, this study does not address intersections of sexuality, Stasi surveillance, and race.[99] I requested the Stasi files

[96] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30. 06. 1970. "HSG: Leben und Gesundheit / Brennpunkte," Berlin, 22.03.70.
[97] The archivists who assisted me were unable to locate additional information about this individual.
[98] This project will require different sources (i.e. more interviews). However, redactions prevent many names from becoming known; Jennifer Evans, "Introduction: Why Queer German History?" *German History* 34:3, 2016, 371.
[99] For more on Black Germany and Black German struggles against racism and oppression see Peggy Piesche, "Black and German? East German Adolescents Before 1989: A Retrospective View of a 'Non-Existent Issue" in the GDR," in *The Cultural After-Life of East Germany: New Transnational Perspectives,* ed. Leslie Adelson, (Washington, D.C: AICGS Humanities, 2002); Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press,

of African and African-descended women in the GDR prostitution milieu but was unsuccessful due to the size and complex nature of the Stasi Records Archive. It is incredibly difficult for archivists to conduct searches along racial lines because if race is mentioned at all in a Stasi file, it may be one small line out of hundreds of pages.[100] Therefore, while I acknowledge that non-white people, and non-white prostitutes, existed in the GDR, their experiences are not discussed here.[101]

Chapter Structure

This dissertation is split into five chapters. First, to contextualize the relationship between purportedly 'sexually permissive' women and security entities like the MfS and People's Police, Chapter One reviews prostitution and prostitution-related policies in Germany before 1950. It traces major policy developments in Germany's early modern period (1500-1870), Imperial Germany (1871-1919), the Weimar Republic (1919-1933), the Third Reich (1933-1945) and the Occupation period (1945-1949) and argues that state intervention into German women's sexual lives – specifically women whose sexual behaviour was considered morally and medically dangerous – did not falter throughout changing political atmospheres. From here, we can begin to understand how regulatory and carceral models of earlier regimes shaped those of the GDR and impacted lives of East German women – the main targets of these policies and procedures.

2009); Fatima El-Tayeb. *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Tiffany Florvil, *Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement,* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2020); Sara Pugach, *African Students in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1975,* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2022).

[100] All the files I viewed belonged to white or white presenting women. This is evidenced by their headshots.

[101] To remedy this discrepancy, I also requested the Stasi files of forty-five female, African students. Their names and birthdays were graciously provided to me by Sara Pugach. Still, due to the nature of the archive, files could not be provided. Alternatively, they may not have been targeted by the Stasi, and there may be no resulting Stasi files. See Sara Pugach, *African Students in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1975*.

Chapter Two explores sexual health policies and bills issued by the East German state to control prostitution and its associated venereal diseases between 1950 and 1989. It argues that SED policymakers adopted moralizing attitudes and regulatory frameworks from earlier regimes such as registration, medical screenings, and police raids. Officials relied on older terminology such as 'hwG,' and asocial to classify 'deviant' women and viewed many of the same character traits (feeble-mindedness, etc.) as inheritable. Unlike previous regimes, however, the East German regulatory framework was oriented towards 're-educating' women with 'promiscuous' sexual habits and turning them into less disruptive 'socialist personalities.' Civilian law enforcement and welfare institutions adhered to strict ideological standards while disciplining women, and this made them more inclined to collaborate with the MfS when they asked. Chapters Three and Four attempt to reconstruct the everyday lives of 'promiscuous' female informers. Drawing on a rich source base of police records, civilian denunciations, and correspondence between venereology clinics and the MfS, Chapter Three studies the myriad of ways that female 'sexual deviants' became visible to GDR State Security. Because most of these women were politically detached individuals without any interest in informing, I argue that the Stasi would not have been able to identify or intimidate women into collaboration without exploiting the regulatory measures discussed in Chapter Two. In the late socialist period especially, case officers (*Führungsoffiziere*) threatened to arrest, imprison, or admit potential informers to a closed ward if they refused to spy on their inner circles. They could also strip them of custody of their children.

Chapter Four concentrates on female informers' post-recruitment experience. Using sources from every decade of the socialist project, it asks to which extent women were

truly governed by the state after their recruitment by the MfS or People's Police. I argue that years of preserving their anonymity by avoiding mandatory registration, skipping appointments at treatment facilities, and withholding information from police and welfare authorities allowed women suspected of sexual deviations to regain their bearings relatively quickly after recruitment, and lent shape to their movement within the Stasi surveillance system. Using the disciplinary hearing transcripts of State Security officers accused of perpetrating sexual violence against female IMs as evidence, Chapter Four also proposes that a proportion of Stasi personnel, including case officers, viewed prostitute IMs as sexually available due to the nature of their work and exploited their position to gain access to their bodies.

Finally, Chapter Five explores the cultural memory of female Stasi informers. By placing the Stasi files of real women in conversation with pseudo-historical works, erotic and semi-erotic fiction about them, I argue that the boundaries between fact, fiction, memory, and history are becoming increasingly blurred when it comes to female Stasi informers. Together, these chapters offer a new line of inquiry into the history of the East German Ministry for State Security. By placing the experiences of female Stasi informers categorized as 'promiscuous' and 'habitually promiscuous' within broader frameworks of gender and sexuality, each chapter reveals a new dimension of the interconnectedness of the Stasi surveillance network and prostitution control in the GDR.

Chapter 1: Transgressive Sex and the State: German Prostitution Policy Before 1950

"Dear comrades," began a letter from a Leipzig biology teacher to the Stasi in the summer of 1983 (Figure 3). As part of the twelfth-grade curriculum in human ontology, he wrote, "I always try to make young people aware of the glories of youth, but also of the need to use [this time] fully for personal development. I go into prostitution as one of the conspicuous signs of the hopelessness of many young girls in imperialist states."[102] This particular year, questions arose about "whether we didn't have that too" in the GDR. When he toed the SED party line and argued that it was not a typical phenomenon in socialist society and "nobody is forced to do it out of existential distress," students who knew that prostitution existed in their city disputed this response. One student knew it 'officially' from his older brother; another knew it 'for sure' from her mother's friend, who received annual invitations to the Leipziger Messe or trade fair. "What does a teacher answer, then?" he beseeched the Stasi, "'I cannot imagine that?'… secretly, I can imagine that there could be such a service."[103] He concluded, "I do not expect a detailed answer from you and ask for your understanding of my bold request. Please just try to find out if I should rebel very much against such claims."[104]

During the forty-year existence of the German Democratic Republic, the ruling SED Party maintained the official stance that prostitution had been eliminated under socialism—however, this vision of a socialist utopia never aligned with reality. As decades passed, ordinary citizens, including this biology teacher and his twelfth-grade students, remained

[102] BStU, MfS, BVfS, Lpz, Leitung 1312, "Redaktion 'Junge Welt Berlin'" 28.8.1983.
[103] BStU, MfS, BVfS, Lpz, Leitung 1312, "Redaktion 'Junge Welt Berlin'" 28.8.1983.
[104] BStU, MfS, BVfS, Lpz, Leitung 1312, "Redaktion 'Junge Welt Berlin'" 28.8.1983.

very much aware of prostitution in their cities. Prostitutes interacted with citizens at the Leipziger Messe and during their commutes to and from work, in their apartment buildings, or in surrounding parks, courtyards, cafes, bars, or restaurants. Local inhabitants also helped to facilitate the trade for financial gain, renting out rooms or chauffeuring women to their arrangements. Real and assumed prostitutes remained central figures in the day-to-day operations of the East German People's Police, too. As the de facto regulators of sexual morality in the GDR, they devoted significant time and energy to regulating female promiscuity. This is perhaps not surprising, given Germany's long history of state regulation in prostitution trades.

East German authorities were by no means the first to attempt to control female sexuality. By 1950, historical concerns about alcohol abuse, increasing criminality, poverty, race, sexual immorality, and the spread of venereal diseases had long framed women's sexual lives as matters of national importance. Consequently, generations of German women had been under surveillance from all directions. Building off of French philosopher Michel Foucault's observation that power transcends politics, this chapter reviews, compares, and contrasts prostitution and prostitution-related policies in Germany before 1950.[105] I trace significant policy developments in the German lands before 1871, Imperial Germany (1871-1919), the Weimar Republic (1919-1933), the Third Reich (1933-1945), and the Occupation period (1945-1949) and argue that state intervention in women's sexual lives remained largely consistent across several wholly different political contexts. Furthermore, I show that there was little separation between the regulatory and carceral models created to ease contagion anxieties in these earlier decades and the GDR. To

[105] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison.* (London, Penguin, 1991).

preserve public health and socialist morality, East German administrators implemented many of the same control strategies between 1950 and 1989. This regulatory framework, which comprised registration, medical examinations, surveillance, etc., gave political police forces the necessary leverage to extort 'promiscuous' women into collaborating.

Prostitution in the German Lands before 1871

The sale of sexual services was condoned in the German-speaking lands until about the sixteenth century.[106] This toleration stemmed from the shared belief that women who worked as prostitutes were "a separate species of women," meant to act as sexual outlets for men.[107] In this way, they were seen to act a safety valve between male sexual desire and the rape of 'respectable' women. They were also believed to prevent "sodomy" or homosexual acts between men. Still, as a social ill, authorities confined prostitutes to a municipal, city-run brothel (*Frauenhaus*) to limit public 'annoyance.'[108] Most brothels fell under the control of one man, known as a "women's host," to whom prostitutes often remained economically dependent.[109] When they could not meet the costs of food, rent, or clothing, they could purchase goods through him, but he would take some of their wages in return. This resulted in a cycle of crippling redemption payments, which kept many in

[106] Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, Magaly Rodriguez Garcia, and Lex Heerma van Voss, "Sex Sold in World Cities, 1600s-2000s: Some Conclusions to the Project" in Garcia, van Voss, Meerkerk (eds), *Selling Sex in the City: A Global History of Prostitution, 1600s-2000s,* Studies in Global Social History Series, Volume 31, Brill Publishers, 2017, 870.
[107] Jamie Page, "Prostitution and Subjectivity in Late Medieval Germany" *Notches*, September 23, 2021; Lyndal Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg," *History Workshop Journal* 19. Oxford University Press. 1985, 8. See also Jamie Page, *Prostitution and Subjectivity in late Medieval Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021) and Jamie Page, "Masculinity and Prostitution in Late Medieval German Literature," *Speculum* 94:3, 2019.
[108] Brothel windows were permanently closed and locked.
[109] German brothels opened in 1469; Glassford, "Emerging from the Shadows: Prostitution in the Italian States During the Renaissance, 1380-1620," *The Mirror – Undergraduate History Journal* 22:1, 2002, 119.

the trade long-term. According to Lyndal Roper, a male brothel keeper in Überlingen "pocketed a third of each woman's earnings and then deducted debt repayments from the rest. In Ulm, the money the women made was put into a box and distributed each week, one third passing to the brothel keeper who also charged for rent and maintenance."[110] She concludes, "A bout of sickness could be enough to put the woman behind in repayments, thus compelling her to chalk up yet another debt against her future earnings."[111]

With the onset of the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Catholic Counter-Reformation in the sixteenth century, attitudes towards prostitution began to harden. In the 1520s and 1530s, religious societies and moral purity groups began to condemn the sexual sins taking place in state-run brothels or so-called 'Pleasure Houses.' They also started petitioning to close brothels across the country.[112] For example, the city brothel in Augsburg, Germany, which "had been an established part of civic life for over two centuries" was closed in 1532 due to Lutheran preachers' petitions.[113] Aside from Martin Luther, who deemed prostitutes to be "dreadful, shabby, stinking, loathsome and syphilitic" women who could "give [their] disease to ten, twenty, thirty, and more good people," most moral arguments against prostitution did not mention venereal disease.[114] This is because syphilis was still a relatively recent phenomenon in Germany, and its origins were most often attributed to foul air, contaminated meat, and menstrual blood

[110] Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg," 6-7.
[111] Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg," 6-7.
[112] Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg," 10.
[113] During this period, women who sold sex in Augsburg were required to wear kerchiefs with a green stripe. This was meant to "prevent them from blending in with the so-called 'respectable population'"; Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg," 8, 10; Ulinka Rublack, *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 38, 259; The Schwules Museum, "With Legs Wide Open" Visited by author on June 22, 2024.
[114] Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg," 14; Rublack, *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations,* 14.

instead of prostitution.[115] When the Augsburg Council decided to close the brothel, Roper says, "pronouncements about the health dangers it caused were notably absent and when in the 1530s and 1540s, it campaigned to abolish prostitution and punish those involved in it, no mention was made of venereal disease. Rather, it developed a new language to define sexual sin which was a fusion of elements of both civic moralism and religious rhetoric."[116] Indeed, across the German speaking empire, City Councils started interrogating and torturing single women suspected of engaging in prostitution, often employing rhetoric about sin to arouse feelings of guilt.[117]

In the seventeenth century, anxieties surrounding sexual sin and female sexuality were heightened by religious convictions that "salvation or damnation might hang from a single sexual act."[118] This fear is evidenced by a 1630 mandate from Württemberg, which stipulated that "God's anger was dangerously aggravated" by sins of the flesh (i.e. pre-marital and extra-marital sex).[119] Another codification from Bavaria (circa. 1653) claimed that the "almighty God will be greatly offended and angered and will be moved to send and inflict all manner of serious, immediate war, unrest, and other country-wide punishments" if the "grave [sexual] sins" of German citizens went unpunished. It

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[115] Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg," 15; Mary Sponberg highlights similar beliefs surrounding menstrual blood and sexual infection. In *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth Century Medical Discourse,* she writes, "the medieval imagination produced the idea that menstruation turned women into a 'machine' capable of producing a certain dose of 'poison' every month. During the seventeenth and eighteen century, attitudes that denigrated menstruation flourished…one of the earliest theories of the aetiology of syphilis suggested that the poison was introduced to men through menstrual blood"; Mary Sponberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth Century Medical Discourse*, (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

[116] Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg," 15.

[117] Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and the Reformation in Augsburg," 17.

[118] Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 10.

[119] Ulinka Rublack defines fornication as "sex between couples who had no intention of marrying"; Ulinka Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 136; Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society,* 10.

concluded, "We are duty bound by patriarchal conscientiousness to remedy and prevent by all means such rapidly increasing vices of indecency and blasphemy."[120] To appease God and maintain public order, local administrators subjected citizens accused of sexual immorality to a range of punishments, even if these accusations were unfounded. Common punishments included public humiliation, flagellation, and exile. Single women often bore the brunt of these retributive efforts because "men bore no visible signs of illicit intercourse" while the "the fertile female body exposed sexual sins and had to carry a child as punishment for them."[121] Women's social reputations were also dependent on their virginity while men's were not. Once they 'lost' their 'honour,' it could not be recovered.

Notably, seventeenth century sex legislation was concerned not with prostitution, but with infanticidal acts.[122] To early modern authorities, 'uncontrolled' sexual behaviour like fornication led to "illegitimate conception," which drove young, unmarried, working-class women to commit sacrilegious offenses like concealment, abortion, infanticide, and child abandonment.[123] Their perpetration of these sex-crimes challenged feminine ideals, angering God in the process.[124] In her doctoral dissertation, Margaret Brannan Lewis explains, "women pregnant out of wedlock who committed infanticide were the polar opposite of what women were supposed to be. They defied God, their local government, and their own families. By killing their children, they even defied what were held to be

[120] Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 67.
[121] Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society,* 101; Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, 148.
[122] Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society* 103, 110.
[123] Laurel berries were well-known abortifacients at this time. According to Lewis, a pregnant woman from the 1500s was forced to testify after consuming a half a liter of beer with parsley and three laurel berries. Another mixed a handful of the berries with vinegar every morning; Margaret Brannan Lewis, "Infanticide in Early Modern Germany: the experience of Augsburg, Memmingen, Ulm, and Nördlingen, 1500-1800," Doctoral Dissertation, University of Virginia, 2012, 223-244; Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 133.
[124] German authorities were not at all concerned that infanticide hindered population growth because so many citizens had perished during the Thirty Years War; Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 103.

their natural motherly instincts and feelings."[125] Similar beliefs influenced the policing of sexual morality between 1700 and 1750, leading some regions, such as Bavaria, to impose stricter penalties on "fornicant-sinners."[126] In a 1727 ordinance, Bavarian lawmakers urged authorities "to punish [immorality] with more earnestness and harshness than has been the case to date so that our intended goal, staving off the wrath of God…may be better achieved and may serve to warn and cause fear in all."[127] Interest in the social roots of infanticide slowly but consistently replaced this notion of deterrence through punishment between 1750 and 1800. Acknowledging that most women took abortifacients or killed their newborns to preserve their sexual respectability, rulers like Prussian King Frederick the Great introduced relief efforts to decriminalize single, pregnant women.[128] In 1765, for example, he "decriminalize[ed] fornication for the female delinquent, whom he assumed to be pregnant."[129]

Still, women were severely and frequently punished for perceived sexual promiscuity, prostitution, and "illegitimate" pregnancy throughout the last third of the eighteenth century.[130] This was the case because in the late 1700s, understandings of the 'promiscuous' female body changed.[131] As Enlightenment ideas about biological sexual difference spread and the "two-sex-model" emerged, sexual desire became an exclusively masculine trait, while virtues such as chastity, sexual purity, modesty, and obedience came

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[125] Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 69; Lewis, "Infanticide in Early Modern Germany," 3.
[126] Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 125.
[127] Baden-Baden's sex crime law still referred to the "wrath of God" in 1760; Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 108, 116.
[128] Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 100; See also Kerstin Michalik, "The Development of the Discourse on Infanticide in the Late Eighteenth Century and the New Legal Standardization of the Offense in the Nineteenth Century," *Gender in Transition*, 2007.
[129] Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 108, 116.
[130] Lewis, "Infanticide in Early Modern Germany," 31.
[131] Karen Harvey, "The Century of Sex? Gender, Bodies and Sexuality in the Long Eighteenth Century" *The Historical Journal* 45:4, 2002, 900.

to be seen as women's natural state.[132] This prompted a reimagining of the female body – previously considered lustful – as passionless and asexual. Prevalent representations of women as having no capacity for sexual desire or pleasure cemented virginity as the only socially acceptable state for the unmarried and promoted the idea that when women engaged in intercourse, they did so passively, "without being themselves excited."[133] For instance, according to eighteenth century social reformers, married women saw sex as a "necessary rather than desirable task for reproduction or marital upkeep."[134] In this context, society accused women who deviated from the ideal biological standard by engaging in pre-marital fornication or initiating sex within marriage of having 'irrational,' 'unnatural' and 'abnormal' sexual inclinations. Regulating bodies shared this concern, and began to label the bodies of individual women, but also the collective "prostitute body," as inherently different, dangerous, and in need of formal regulation.[135] This discourse, which was reinforced and sustained by the Stasi, reflects the concept of biopower, as elucidated by Foucault.[136]

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[132] Harvey, "The Century of Sex?" 904. For more on the impact of the two-sex model on twentieth century Europe see Annette Timm, Joshua A. Sanborn, *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe: A History from the French Revolution to the Present Day* (London: Bloomsbury Publishers, 2022).

[133] Harvey, "The Century of Sex?" 903; Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 251.

[134] Harvey, "The Century of Sex?" 903; Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 251.

[135] Heather Welch discusses the gendered meaning of the term 'unnatural' in her doctoral dissertation. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, she states, "men accused of violent crimes, such as murdering their wives and children, also received the category of unnatural, but it differed significantly from that of women. Violent women upset the natural order and represented a potential problem posed by all women, whereas violent men represented singular and personal masculine failures."; Though her study focuses on England, the same can be said about Germany; Heather Welch, "Unnatural Cruel Beasts in Women's Shapes: The Female Body in Early Modern England" Doctoral Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2020, 3; Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fischer (eds), *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body: 1500 to Present,* (London: Routledge, 2013), 405.

[136] Foucault describes biopower as: "a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations"; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge, Volume 1.* Translated by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 137.

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In their fight against prostitution, German states adopted a form of biopolitical control known as regulation or *Reglementierung* in the nineteenth century.[137] This method, which "combined police surveillance, the registration of women selling sex (or suspected of doing so) and compulsory venereal disease (VD) examinations for registered women, as well as various restrictions upon their movement," originated in France in 1802.[138] Specifically, it was created during the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) to protect Napoleon Bonaparte's soldiers from venereal diseases. It aimed to discipline working-class prostitutes by registering their names, dictating their clothing, and restricting their movements.[139] In 1804, Napoleon also added the bi-weekly gynecological examinations of military prostitutes to this growing list of regulatory measures.[140] The day-to-day enforcement of these directives fell to the Morals Police, who arrested and interned violators of these rules in closed hospitals.[141] These measures, primarily driven by nation-building and safeguarding the health of French citizens, set a precedent for the systematic supervision and surveillance of 'sexually deviant' women throughout Europe and beyond.[142]

German towns and cities began to create their own *Sittenpolizei* (also known as the *Sitte*) to regulate citizen behaviour shortly after the French.[143] For example, a Leipzig *Sitte*

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[137] Melissa Kravetz, *Women Doctors in Weimar and Nazi Germany: Maternalism, Eugenics, and Professional Identity,* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2019), 102.
[138] Dolinsek, Hearne, "Introduction, Prostitution in Twentieth Century Europe," 124.
[139] Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, 10; Meekerk, Garcia and van Voss, "Sex Sold in World Cities, 1600s-2000s: Some Conclusions to the Project," 871.
[140] Herzog notes that the speculums used to conduct these checks "often enough had not been sterilized and thus themselves could spread disease"; Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, 10.
[141] Hendrik Wagenaar, "Why Prostitution Policy (Usually) Fails and What to Do About it?" *Social Sciences Journal,* 2017, 5.
[142] Meekerk, Garcia and van Voss, "Sex Sold in World Cities, 1600s-2000s: Some Conclusions to the Project," 871.
[143] Schwules Museum Berlin, 'With Legs Wide Open" Exhibit, Visited by author June 22, 2024.

unit was established on November 1, 1810. According to Victoria Harris, it comprised 234 men pulled from the regular police force, and twelve stations were constructed throughout the city to accommodate them.[144] Tasked with patrolling specific districts or neighbourhoods, keeping an eye on women whose behaviour raised suspicions of promiscuity, registering prostitutes, and ensuring their compliance with intrusive health inspections and other regulations (*Sittenordnungen*), Morals Police forces had the authority to impose fines, prison sentences, or movement restrictions if they believed a woman had violated a police order.[145] Though some officers regarded these measures as unnecessary at first and continued to engage in small-scale community policing, their attitudes towards prostitution became more punitive as Germany industrialized.[146]

Between 1850 and 1910, foreigners and citizens from across the German states and subsequently the Reich who previously lived in rural communities flocked to metropoles seeking employment. This new pattern of migration weakened the moral authority previously held by churches and families. Furthermore, the introduction of rail transport reduced travel time between cities, and major hubs like Berlin and Hamburg experienced substantial population surges, growing from 172,000 to 2,000,000 and 130,000 to 1,100,000, respectively.[147] In conjunction with this urban expansion, there was a noticeable increase in the number of women engaging in prostitution, particularly in busy public spaces such as train stations. There was also an increase in the number of men who solicited sex. By the start of the twentieth century, Harris estimates that Berlin alone accommodated

[144] Victoria Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich: Prostitutes in German Society, 1914-1945*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), 151.
[145] Victoria Harris, "Prostitution in Berlin and Hamburg," in United Nations, *Trafficking in Women, 1924-1926: The Paul Kinsie Reports for the League of Nations* 2, 2017, 73-74.
[146] Evans, "Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany," 108.
[147] Harris, "Prostitution in Berlin and Hamburg," 73-74.

up to 50,000 sex-selling women.[148] Though this demographic shift also occurred outside of urban areas, the specific anonymity afforded to individuals in cities or urban regions led to more significant concentrations of prostitutes there. These concentrations increased the visibility and accessibility of the trade, sparking concerns from authorities about preserving public order and maintaining moral standards. It was around this time that the figure of the female prostitute became associated with sexual infection, thereby "damaging the collective health of the German People."[149]

Prostitution in Imperial Germany, 1871-1914

Before the foundation of the German Empire in 1871, local authorities decided for themselves how to police female sexuality. When the country unified under Otto von Bismarck, however, the creation of an Imperial Criminal Code (*Reichsstrafgesetzbuch*) standardized the regulation system by consolidating penal provisions of separate German states into one comprehensive document.[150] Two different provisions dealt with prostitution. First, Clause 361/6 of the Imperial Code, often referred to as the 'Prostitution Paragraph,' made it illegal to practice prostitution without police permission. Permission was contingent upon a woman's compliance with intrusive regulations, including undergoing regular medical inspections and adhering to guidelines related to public movements, living arrangements, clothing, etc.[151] It stated:

> The following shall be liable on conviction to detention: Any common prostitute under Police supervision who acts contrary to the Police regulations

[148] Only 1,689 of these women went through the licensing procedure, Harris says; Harris, "Prostitution in Berlin and Hamburg," 73-74.
[149] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 10.
[150] Julia Bruggemann, "Prostitution, Sexuality, and Gender Roles in Imperial Germany: Hamburg, A Case Study" in Margaret Sonser Breen, Fiona Peters, *Genealogies of Identity: Interdisciplinary Readings on Sex and Sexuality,* (Amsterdam, Editions Rodopi BV, 2005), 22.
[151] Lisa Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 29.

> for the preservation of health, public order, and decency, as also any prostitute not under Police supervision.[152]

According to Christina Matzen, this particular provision caused a tremendous shift in prisoner demographics across Germany. Referring specifically to Berlin's Barnim Street Prison, she writes, "since sexuality was linked to moral corruption, not only were women prisoners to be entirely separated from male prisoners, but they were also put in solitary confinement in order to reflect in complete isolation."[153] Second, Clause 180, also known as the 'Procurement (*Kuppelei*) Paragraph,' focused on stifling the demand for female prostitution. It stated:

> Whoever habitually or for-profit assists prostitution by countenancing or affording facilities for it is to be punished with imprisonment for not less than one month and is liable to a fine of from 150 to 6,000 Marks and loss of franchise. In case of mitigating circumstances, imprisonment can be reduced to one day.[154]

By targeting the supply side of prostitution, imperial lawmakers hoped to "protect the public, as well as guarantee the safety of the prostitutes themselves."[155] However, the application of this law varied from city to city. Several cities continued tolerating brothels, including Leipzig and Hamburg, whose history of brothels (*Bordellierung*) dates to the thirteenth century.[156] Hamburg police officers argued that the concentration of "poor, uneducated, sometimes mentally ill or intoxicated, and often highly antagonistic, women

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[152] Clause 361:6 and 180 were both taken verbatim from the Prussian Criminal Code of 1851; Bruggemann, "Prostitution, Sexuality, and Gender Roles in Imperial Germany: Hamburg, A Case Study," 22.
[153] Christina Matzen, "Women's Prisons and the Politics of Punishment in Nazi and Postwar Germany," Doctoral Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2022, 28.
[154] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 10.
[155] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 75.
[156] Bruggemann, "Prostitution, Sexuality and Gender Roles in Imperial Germany: Hamburg, A Study," 24.

who comprised much of the prostitute population" in brothels prevented vice and disorder from becoming unmanageable.[157] One local officer wrote:

> If the police are no longer able, through the localization of prostitution, through unfettered supervision of establishments [brothels], and through the broad support of their brothel-keepers, to contain these elements [prostitutes] to some degree, murder, rape, and other crimes and excesses of all kinds will increase to unfathomable degrees.[158]

After several drawn-out debates with authorities in Berlin, Hamburg maintained nine streets with 114 houses, 821 rooms, and approximately 550-600 prostitutes until 1922.[159]

Notably, the number of women working as prostitutes in German cities increased so significantly during this period that the Morals Police could not keep up with the required checks. Richard Evans notes that between 1893 and 1894, the Hamburg Morals Police doubled in size, going from fourteen men to thirty.[160] In 1897, the police confessed that "no amount of supervision by the police, however close, will permanently be able to control these evils effectively."[161] By 1913, they were managing some-two hundred women and a city of over one million people with just forty-six policemen.[162] The

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[157] Bruggemann, "Prostitution, Sexuality and Gender Roles in Imperial Germany: Hamburg, A Study," 20-21.

[158] Bruggemann, "Prostitution, Sexuality and Gender Roles in Imperial Germany: Hamburg, A Study," 20-21.

[159] According to Julie Stubbs, the closure of Hamburg's brothels in 1922 displaced over 1300 registered prostitutes (known as 'controlled girls' / *Kontrollmädchen* or 'public girls' / *Öffentliches Mädchen*). She writes, "the Welfare and Rescue Centre tried to reunite these women with their families but were unsuccessful in most cases. Many of the displaced women could not afford their apartments due to the high prices charged to prostitutes, up to 10 M a day. As a result, quite a few became homeless"; Julie Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls': Bourgeois Feminism, Social Welfare, and the Debate over Prostitution in the Weimar Republic," Doctoral Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2001, 132-3; Victoria Harris, "The Role of the Concentration Camps in the Nazi Repression of Prostitutes, 1933-9," *Journal of Contemporary History* 45:3, 2010, 680.

[160] Evans, "Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany," 114.

[161] By 1903, religious terminology such as "evil" no longer had the desired effect. Campaigns to regulate prostitution had largely shifted away from religious rhetoric towards arguments about public health; Evans, "Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany," 114; Ann Taylor Allen, "Feminism, Venereal Diseases, and the State in Germany, 1890-1918" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4:1, 1993, 28.

[162] Lisa Todd writes, "In Hamburg, the morals police had 244 women under their control in 1914, 479 in 1915 and 870 in 1916": Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War*, 81.

surveillance of clandestine prostitutes appears to have been an arduous task, as they deliberately evaded surveillance and only occasionally engaged in prostitution. Evans states, "In their submissions to higher authority for an increase in their strength, the Morals Police emphasized the need to confront a fundamental change in the nature of the prostitution problem: the rise of a new category of prostitutes, 'who for part of the time do a regular job, but who also from time to time sell themselves to men for money in order to improve their financial situation.'"[163]

Imperial Germany and its Colonial Empire, 1884-1919

There were also colonial dimensions to regulation. From 1884 until the end of the First World War, Germany had authority over Southwest Africa (Namibia), East Africa (Tanzania, Burundi, and Rwanda), Togo and Cameroon. In the Pacific, it occupied parts of New Guinea, Samoa, and Qingdao in China.[164] The German colonial government subjected female inhabitants of these peripheries to many of the same regulatory policies as women

[163] Evans, "Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany," 112.

[164] For more on German colonialism see: Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History,* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012); Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany,* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010); David Ciarlo, "Globalizing German Colonialism" *German History* 26:2, 2008; Daniel Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Policies of Culture and National Identity in Namibia*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002); Walter, "Gender Construction and Settler Colonialism in German Southwest Africa, 1894-1914," *The Historian* 66:1, 2004; Walther, "Racializing Sex: Same-Sex Relations, German Colonial Authority, and Deutschtum," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17:1, 2008; Lora Wildenthal, "Race, Gender and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire" in Frederick Cooper and Anna Laura Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870,* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1997); Matthew Fitzpatrick, The Samoan Woman's Revolt: Race, Intermarriage and Imperial Hierarchy in German Samoa" *German History* 35:2, 2017; Krista O'Donnell, "Poisonous Women: Sexual Danger, Illicit Violence, and Domestic Work in German Southern Africa, 1904-1915, *Journal of Women's History* 3, 1999; Kate McGregor, "Working for Weichnachtsstimmung: German Women's Role in Recreating German Culture and Identity in German Southwest Africa and German East Africa, 1894-1906" in Elisabeth Krimmer and Chunjie Zhang, (eds) *Gender and German Colonialism: Intimacies, Accountabilities and Intersections* (New York: Routledge, 2023); Kate McGregor, "'There is Only One Way to Be Pretty': Racialized Beauty in the Global German Empire, 1884-1919" Doctoral Dissertation, The University of New Brunswick, 2024.

living in the metropole. For one thing, they established *Sitte* forces abroad. These police forces required all prostitutes to register and carry identity cards. They also controlled where prostitutes could live, where they could work, how they could dress, and how they could behave in public.[165] Noncompliance with these regulations could result in imprisonment or forcible confinement.[166] Health officials also subjected women in the colonies to regular medical inspections. However, unlike in the metropole, they conducted these exams with racial differences in mind. Daniel Walther writes that, "At home, medical officials could only exercise moderate authority over the bodies of prostitutes…in the colonies, medical authorities not only required the medical examinations of prostitutes and soldiers (both European and non-European) but also of those indigenous groups perceived to be essential to the colonial order or threatening that order."[167] This can be seen in the case of East Africa, where the African wives of Askari soldiers and "coloured" wives of European soldiers were subjected to gynecological screenings along racial lines.[168]

In the colonies, such policies stemmed from fears of miscegenation or 'race-mixing' (*Rassenmischung*).[169] There was a widespread belief that intimate relationships between Europeans and non-Europeans jeopardized the racial and cultural well-being of German citizens for two reasons. First, public health officials considered local female inhabitants, with their assumed "loose morals," "disgusting sexual excesses," and "relaxed conception of sexual intercourse," to be the primary carriers of venereal diseases in a

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[165] Walther, *Sex and Control: Venereal Disease, Colonial Physicians, and Indigenous Agency in German Colonialism, 1884-1914,* 39.
[166] Walther, *Sex and Control*, 2.
[167] Walther, *Sex and Control*, 2.
[168] For more on the Askari see Michelle Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014); Walther, *Sex and Control*, 97.
[169] Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 79.

colonial setting.[170] Male colonial physicians levied racially charged terms such as 'unhygienic,' 'primitive' and 'lazy' against local women, often using them to justify their targeted repression. But it was not just German settlers who were believed to be 'at risk.' Officials and colonial enthusiasts also thought that mixed-race relationships endangered the white prestige, sexual and racial purity (*Rassenreinheit*) of the German volk.[171] To preserve 'Germanness,' they banned marriages between colonizers and the colonized in German Southwest Africa (1905), German East Africa (1906), and German Samoa (1912) and sent more white women to the colonies from the metropole. Therefore, one cannot discuss the regulation system in twentieth century German without addressing its implications abroad.

Prostitution, Venereal Disease, and the First World War, 1914-1918

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, previously unaffected populations (i.e. citizens living in rural areas and 'virtuous' or 'respectable' married women) began to display symptoms of sexual infections. To prevent the moral decay of Wilhelmine Germany, but also as a public health measure, the Morals Police required all home-front prostitutes to register, undergo regular gynecological exams, and adhere to "restrictions on their movements, place of residence and behaviour in public."[172] The streets that prostitutes were required to live on were known as *Kasernierung.*[173] Certain areas of German towns and cities also became restricted. In *Sexual Treason in the First*

[170] Due to her supposed hypersexuality, the image of the 'Hottentot Venus' became synonymous with prostitution and venereal disease in the German colonies; Walther, *Sex and Control*, 81.
[171] Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 79.
[172] Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War*, 22.
[173] Schwules Museum, "With Legs Wide Open," Visited by author on June 22, 2024.

World War, Lisa Todd explains that these zoning ordinances often included churches, schools, government offices, military barracks with their young, healthy men, and Bahnhofs. In Berlin, she writes popular areas such as the "Zoological Gardens, Unter den Linden, Friedrichstrasse, Potsdamer Platz, Tiergarten, Lustgarten, and Königsplatz" also became *verboten*.[174] Women found in these zones – regardless of whether they were soliciting sex or not – could be fined or arrested by the police. Todd continues to say that women "had to keep her control book (in which these regulations were printed) and identification card on her body at all times, and 'conduct herself with dignity' in the presence of police officers. Failure to comply with these regulations could result in local imprisonment for up to six weeks, or placement in a workhouse, house of correction or asylum for up to two years."[175]

Where residency was concerned, the Morals Police required registered prostitutes to notify them if they changed their addresses, to relocate if their neighbours complained that they were being too disruptive, and to abstain from living with or contacting individuals under twenty-one.[176] For mothers who sold sex, this included their children. Moreover, they forbid prostitutes from living on the ground floor of apartment buildings and from "loung[ing] about in an offensive manner' in public streets or squares, stand[ing] or sit[ting] in windows or doorways, attract[ing] 'undue' attention to herself or commit[ting] any action that might entice men to lechery."[177] A denunciation from 1916 highlights the eagerness of the civilian populace to report violators of these regulations. In

[174] Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War*, 22.
[175] Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War*, 23.
[176] From time to time, landladies testified in favour of their tenants to stop them from being evicted; Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 95.
[177] Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War*, 22.

this case, a male tenant told his local *Sitte* unit that prostitutes lived on the ground floor of his apartment building. In flagrant displays of vice, he wrote, they invited men over at night and regularly engaged in behaviours such as "leaning out of the windows and standing in front of the door." This behaviour enabled passersby to see them "through the windows, standing half-naked."[178] The denunciation ended with a request for legal action, which meant the arrest or sentencing to a workhouse of those involved if they had a previous conviction for the same violation.[179]

Significantly, regulatory measures also expanded to encompass general promiscuity during this period. Women that the state deemed to be 'habitually promiscuous' or at risk of crime found themselves on registration lists alongside 'professional' and 'occasional' prostitutes. Legal authorities recorded the names of women known to consume alcohol or frequent bars, for example, because they assumed that drinking led to sexual excesses and therefore the spread of venereal disease.[180] "In 1916," Harris writes, "the Deputy General of Command of the German armed forces ordered that 'female persons found to be having sexual intercourse with a number of men in the course of one month – be it for compensation of any kind or not – [were] to be placed under the supervision of the vice squad after two unsuccessful warnings from the police.'"[181] Likewise, Julie Stubbs writes that in December of 1918, the Council of People's Representatives "introduced compulsory exam and mandatory medical treatment for

[178] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 135; Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War*, 22.
[179] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 135; Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War*, 22.
[180] Todd highlights the interconnectedness of promiscuity and alcohol in her section titled 'The Inner Enemy of the Hostess Bars.' Soon after the onset of the First World War, she writes, registered women were banned from entering taverns. Likewise, hostesses were dismissed from their positions in large numbers. Curfews were implemented, and any remaining female servers were prohibited from sitting and drinking with male clientele; Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War*, 88-93.
[181] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 95, 120.

anyone suspected of having a venereal disease, to be enforced by medical authorities, not the morals police. This meant that any man or woman suspected of having a venereal disease could be compelled to submit to examination and treatment for VD, a provision formerly restricted to registered prostitutes."[182] In the immediate post-war period, social hygienists created the term 'hwG' to describe this "group of people with significant promiscuity."[183] This made it easier for police and healthcare authorities to identify women they believed to be deviant, "even if they did not belong to a circle of prostitutes in the narrower sense."[184] Following its inception, this ambiguous term circulated throughout the Weimar Republic, Third Reich, and Occupation Period. Administrative and public health officials in East and West Germany also used these terms often. They feature prominently in Stasi archival material.

Prostitution, Abolitionism, and the Weimar Republic, 1919-1933

With the advent of the Weimar Republic in 1919, provisions surrounding German prostitution policy appeared to undergo significant liberalization. Influenced by the pioneering work of German sexologists like Magnus Hirschfield, who founded the Institute for Sexual Research (*Institut für Sexualwissenschaft*) in Berlin, healthcare professionals, social workers, activists, and government officials drove what is now referred to as the sex reform movement.[185] They lobbied for comprehensive sexual education to fill gaps in knowledge, increased access to contraceptives like condoms which doubled as

[182] Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 96.
[183] Falck, *VEB Bordell,* Kindle, Loc 591.
[184] Falck, *VEB Bordell,* Kindle, Loc 591.
[185] Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of Modern Identity*, (Vintage Books, Penguin Random House, 2015), 160-186.

prophylactics, and the decriminalization of abortions. They also pushed to reform the regulation system, arguing that it was inherently discriminatory against women. It "classified women engaged in prostitution as the sole sources of VD in order to justify coercive examinations and treatments," they argued, "while also penalizing women for selling sex, and often merely just for engaging in extramarital sex."[186] At the same time, "men were able (and even encouraged) to pay for sex before and outside of marriage."[187] Instead of giving prostitutes more legal protections, however, feminist reformers petitioned for female doctors, welfare workers, and police officers to be included in the creation of prostitution policy. With their natural capacity for nurturance, they argued, women could "make the right kind of intervention with prostitutes" and lead them back to 'respectable' society.[188]

The German Society to Combat Venereal Disease (*Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Bekampfung der Geschlechtskrankenheiten*, DGBG) also criticized the regulation system. With Dr. Albert Neisser as president, they argued that it failed to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases because it made men complacent: "Because prostitutes were medically inspected by the state, German men believed these women – and themselves- to be disease-free. As a result, men became infected and unknowingly transmitted that infection to their wives, who in turn might give birth to diseased

[186] Dolinsek, Hearne, "Introduction, Prostitution in Twentieth Century Europe," 125.
[187] Dolinsek, Hearne, "Introduction, Prostitution in Twentieth Century Europe," 125.
[188] Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 21; See also Cornelie Usborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women's Reproductive Rights and Duties,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

children."[189] In the place of abolition, doctors from the DGBG advocated for more sexual education and earlier marriages to stop men from purchasing sex.[190]

State-regulated prostitution came to a provisional end in the Weimar Republic on February 18, 1927, mainly in response to female-led reform groups.[191] The passage of the 'Law for Combatting Venereal Diseases' (*Reichsgesetz zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankenheiten*) decriminalized prostitution and abolished control measures like registration.[192] It offered female prostitutes unrestricted access to all public areas, did away with curfews, and eliminated women's obligation to notify the police of changes in residence. Moreover, it lifted restrictions placed on prostitutes' clothing, retracted the unlimited access authorities had to prostitutes' homes, and gave women accused of prostitution the right to a fair trial.[193] Another component of this deregulation, Stubbs says, was the "establishment, in all medium and large German cities, of welfare programs for prostitutes, 'morally endangered' girls, and wayward youth…these 'offices of social help' were staffed by women to rehabilitate prostitutes and endangered girls, returning them to an 'orderly life.'"[194] Finally, it replaced the Morals Police with the Order-and-Welfare Police (*Ordnungs-und-Wohlfahrtspolizei*). Per the DGBG's recommendation, the new Order-and-Welfare Police reported to health authorities.[195]

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[189] Dr. Albert Neisser was a German venereologist and dermatologist. He is renowned for his discovery of the pathogen responsible for gonorrhea; Todd, *Sexual Treason in the First World War,* 29; Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 47.
[190] Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 36, 47, 189.
[191] See: Anna Pappritz, "Die Teilnahme der Frauen an der Sittlichkeitsbewegung," in H. Lange & G. Bäumer (Eds) *Handbuch der Frauenbewegung* (Berlin: Moeser), vol. 2: *Frauenbewegung und soziale Frauenthätigkeit in Deutschland nach Einzelgebieten*; Kerstin Wolff, "Herrenmoral: Anna Pappritz and abolitionism in Germany," *Women's History Review* 17:2, 2008.
[192] Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 97.
[193] Roos, "Prostitution Reform, and the Reconstruction of Gender in the Weimar Republic," presented as part of the Living Weimar: Between System and Self: An Interdisciplinary Workshop, 2006, 4. https://hdl.handle.net/2022/803
[194] Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 99.
[195] Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 99.

The actual emancipatory effect that the 1927 'Law for Combatting Venereal Diseases' had on women in the prostitution milieu remains a subject of contention among historians. While some historians like Julia Roos see the passage of this legislation as "a victory for feminists and for female prostitutes" because it "energized streetwalkers to resist attacks on their civil and economic rights," others like Elizabeth Heinemann emphasize the repressiveness of its decrees.[196] In her article "Sexuality and Nazism: The Doubly Unspeakable?" for example, Heinemann argues that the shift in jurisdiction from the Morals Police to the Order and Welfare Police only transferred the supervision and control of prostitutes from the police to the medical community. She explains, "With health and social welfare agencies, not the police, now responsible for work with prostitutes, medical professionals, and social workers performed punitive functions formerly reserved for the police."[197] While acknowledging that women did gain new rights over their bodies in the Weimar Period, my argument aligns more closely with Heinemann's perspective than with that of Roos. Though the anti-VD law instructed physicians and other health officials to treat infected individuals without considering them criminals, it still established new social controls.[198] For example, it instructed health authorities to place individuals suspected of carrying and spreading venereal diseases under "hygienic supervision." This public health measure, disproportionately applied to more women than men, obliged them to obtain health certificates documenting the status of their infection, most recent examination, and treatment. As in the *Kaiserreich*, they had to carry these certificates on

[196] Julia Roos, "Weimar's Crisis through the Lens of Gender: The Case of Prostitution" Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize Presentation, November 15, 2002, *Bulletin of the GHI Washington* 32, 2003, 88; Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 97.
[197] Elizabeth D. Heineman, "Sexuality and Nazism: The Doubly Unspeakable?" in Dagmar Herzog (ed) *Sexuality and German Fascism* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 53.
[198] Many of these physicians were women. See Kravetz, *Women Doctors in Weimar and Nazi Germany: Maternalism, Eugenics, and Professional Identity*.

their person until a doctor confirmed that they were medically free of sexual infection.[199] In another control measure that resembled registration, housing offices recorded the names of suspicious (i.e. single, unemployed) women who lived alone. Stubbs notes that in the Westphalian city of Bottrop, Germany, these names were sent to health authorities, who "noted these women as potential prostitutes and carriers of venereal disease."[200] Welfare and Rescue Centers also passed on the names of women they believed to be promiscuous, and medical personnel would force them to undergo gynecological examinations at stated intervals. They quarantined and treated anyone who tested positive for syphilis or gonorrhea in wards for the sexually infected, which were usually located inside hospitals or dermatology clinics.[201]

Continued intervention in the lives of working-class, Weimar-era prostitutes is further confirmed by formal letters and petitions submitted by prostitutes to both local and federal authorities. In April 1930, for instance, a group of Berlin prostitutes who worked in the vicinity of Alexanderplatz wrote to the Minister of the Interior. Police-controlled prostitution had been done away with, they argued, which meant that the officers had no reason to conduct raids against them. Nevertheless, they continued to do so. "A veritable hunt is organized against us," the women wrote.[202] The same year, a group of women who sold sex in Cologne asked the German League for Human Rights for help because the

[199] Individuals could now pay to be examined by a private physician rather than publicly humiliated. However, women who wanted private exams had to pay for them out of pocket unless they lived in Berlin. Berlin was one of the few cities that provided this service for free; Jill Suzanne Smith, *Berlin Coquette: Prostitution and the New German Woman, 1890-1933,* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), 153-4; Alison Bashford, *Imperial Hygiene: A Critical History of Colonialism, Nationalism and Public Health,* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 78.
[200] Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 137.
[201] Stubbs, "Rescuing 'Endangered Girls,'" 138.
[202] Smith, *Berlin Coquette*, 157.

Cologne police "hunted them down" like wild animals.[203] When considered alongside the repressiveness of the 1927 'Law for Combatting Venereal Diseases,' these submissions underscore 'sexually permissive' women's experiences of discrimination despite claims of a tolerant government.

Despite the Weimar Republic's abolitionist stance, health authorities continued to single out sexually active women as social and sexual pariahs. The lingering belief that prostitutes and 'hwG' persons were the primary transmitters of sexual infection resulted in regulatory attacks on women not unlike those of the First World War, and increasingly repressive policies such as "security confinement [were even] included in the final drafts of the proposed new Criminal Code under preparation in the second half of the 1920s."[204] Richard Evans states, "The Weimar welfare state had begun to turn to authoritarian solutions to this crisis that contemplated a serious assault on the bodily rights and integrity of the citizen."[205] This is the same paradox which appears in the GDR. While the official narrative denied the existence of prostitution, authorities persecuted women they perceived to be engaging in the practice. Moreover, the fact that this persecution was then exploited by political police bodies like the MfS highlights the disjunction between legislative ideals and women's lived experiences.

Prostitution Control in the Third Reich, 1933-1945

Even before the National Socialist German Workers Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsches Arbeiterpartei*, NSDAP, Nazi Party) came to power, Adolf Hitler wanted to

[203] Roos, "Prostitution Reform, and the Reconstruction of Gender in the Weimar Republic," 15.
[204] Richard Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich,* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 377.
[205] Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich,* 380.

reintroduce the use of police forces in prostitution and venereal disease control. In his autobiography and political manifesto, *Mein Kampf*, published in 1925, he dedicated several pages to criticizing Weimar's approaches to vice. He accused Weimar leaders of over-reliance on temporary solutions like health inspections and hygienic supervision while ignoring more significant issues like Germany's moral degeneration.[206] He wrote:

> They submitted to the disease and left the causes untouched. They submitted the individual prostitute to a medical examination, supervised her as best they could, and, in case they established disease, put her in some hospital from which, after a superficial cure, they again let her loose on the rest of humanity.[207]

Hitler also attributed the spread of venereal diseases or "the sickening of the body" to "a sickening of the moral, social, and racial instincts" during this period.[208]

Following Hitler's formal appointment as Reich Chancellor on January 30, 1933, the Nazi Party began to intensify sexual regulation. First, they amended the 1927 'Law for Combatting Venereal Diseases' to recriminalize prostitution. Next, they passed the 'Reichstag Fire Decree' on February 28, 1933. This nullified individual freedoms and sanctioned campaigns against prostitutes under the state of emergency. Specifically, it allowed police to arrest prostitutes without specific charges and to search their homes without a warrant. The 'Reichstag Fire Decree' also re-established First World War era zoning ordinances, meaning that women found in restricted zones, even if they were not selling sex, could be arrested for street soliciting.[209] This decree had wide-reaching consequences as it resulted in the arrest and detention, sometimes preventative detention, of thousands of women. Between March 1 and May 31, Harris writes, the Hamburg police

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[206] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Translated by Ralf Manheim, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 59.
[207] Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 256-57.
[208] Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 256-57.
[209] Roos, "Weimar's Crisis through the Lens of Gender: The Case of Prostitution," 25, 39.

used this decree to arrest 3201 prostitutes. They kept one third of them in long-term custody, and "by December 1933, at least another 1527 prostitutes had been permanently incarcerated."[210] In the final month of 1933, revised 361/6 provisions also authorized the punishment of anyone who "publicly and conspicuously or in a manner likely to annoy the public incites immoral acts or offers immoral services."[211]

This was only the first step in a long list of repressive measures designed to remove prostitution and female promiscuity from the Third Reich.[212] While Nazi leadership framed sexual relations between 'Aryan' citizens as necessary for the health of the nation, the passage of the 'Law for Prevention of Offspring with Heredity Defects' at the beginning of 1934 introduced the biopolitical policy of forced sterilization for people with perceived hereditary, mental or physical deficiencies.[213] Because sexual deviance was medicalized under catch-all illnesses like congenital and moral feeblemindedness, venereal diseases like syphilis or gonorrhea were seen as inheritable.[214] Prostitution was also commonly associated with alcoholism, which made the sterilization of women who sold sexual services a priority. The eugenic argument for prostitute Marie P.'s sterilization in the mid-

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[210] Victoria Harris, "The Role of the Concentration Camps in the Nazi Repression of Prostitutes, 1933-9" *Journal of Contemporary History* 45:3, 2010, 678.
[211] Annette Timm, "Prostitution, Promiscuity and VD Control in Nazi Berlin" in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 194.
[212] Timm, "Prostitution, Promiscuity and VD Control in Nazi Berlin," 194.
[213] In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues that the term mental illness is often used to describe "social mores and norms rather than genuine medical conditions"; Chloe Taylor, "Biopower" in Diana Taylor (ed) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts,* (London: Routledge, 2014), 53.
[214] The term 'feebleminded' was first used by German neurologist P.J. Möbius in his 1907 paper *Über den physiologischen Schwachsinn des Weibes* (Concerning the Physiological Feeblemindedness of the Female). In this paper, Möbius argued that menstruation and pregnancy ensured women's brains were less developed than their male counterpart, which resulted in feeblemindedness and abnormal behaviour. He wrote, "instinct makes woman animalistic, dependent, naïve, and cheerful…like animals have behaved from times immemorial, so would mankind remain in its primal condition, if there were only women. All progress originates with man"; Barbara Hales, "Women as Sexual Criminals: Weimar Constructions of the Criminal Femme Fatale," *Women in German Yearbook* 12, 1996, 102.

1930s, for instance, was that she was morally inferior.[215] At the same time, the Gestapo began transporting "tens of thousands of prostitutes to workhouses and concentration camps."[216] Leipzig's social welfare department even developed its own "policy of sending prostitutes with venereal disease to a 'work camp,' located within the all-female concentration camp Moringen, to work off the costs of treating their infection."[217]

The first five years of the Nazi police state also witnessed the linkage of blood purity to sexuality, as demonstrated by the 'Nuremberg Race Laws' (or Blood Purity Laws) of 1935. These laws banned procreative, casual, paid, and unpaid sexual contact out of deep-seated fear of race mixing or miscegenation.[218] Judging prostitution to undermine the racial purity of the German People, Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*: "The mixing of blood (mixing of races) through prostitution is the corruption. Even if it did not result in a disease of this nature [syphilis], it would still damage the people morally."[219] The 'Nuremberg Race Laws' also marked a significant turning point in German prostitution policy because their provisions categorized sex-selling and so-called 'promiscuous' women as anti-social or asocial for the first time.[220] Himmler and the Nazi Criminal Police defined as asocial "anyone who through minor, but oft-repeated, infractions of the law demonstrate[d] that they will not comply with the social order that is a fundamental condition of the National Socialist state, e.g., beggars, vagrants (Gypsies), prostitutes, drunkards, those with

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[215] Ashley Lemoureux, "The Women's Hell: Distinctions Between Forms of Sexual Violence at the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, the Liberalization of Sexuality in the Weimar Republic, and the Exploitation of Sexuality in the Third Reich," Master of Arts Thesis, Liberty University, 2021, 61.
[216] Timm, "Prostitution, Promiscuity and VD Control in Nazi Berlin," 194; For more information on Nazi prostitution policies, see Julia Roos, "Backlash against Prostitutes Rights: Origins and Dynamics of Nazi Prostitution Policies," *Journal of History of Sexuality* 11:1, 2002.
[217] Harris, "The Role of the Concentration Camps in the Nazi Repression of Prostitutes, 1933-9," 681.
[218] Timm, "Prostitution, Promiscuity and VD Control in Nazi Berlin," 194.
[219] Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 160.
[220] Timm, "Prostitution, Promiscuity and VD Control in Nazi Berlin," 194.

contagious diseases, particularly sexually transmitted diseases, who evade the measures taken by public health authorities."[221] Himmler also categorized "women who changed sexual partners too frequently or had more than one illegitimate child," had been designated as 'hwG' during the Weimar period, or whom he considered "too easily aroused" as having an '*asoziale lebensweise*' or 'asocial way of life.'[222] Despite ideological differences, East German authorities used identical social criteria to determine who was a productive or normal citizen and who was deviant. As Chapter Two will show, the yellowed pages of the Stasi files are filled with identical language.

To make matters worse for already marginalized women, the Nazis' scope of deviant female sexuality expanded even further to include 'wG' in 1936. The abbreviation 'wG' stood for *wechselnder Geschlechtsverkehr* or alternating intercourse, and welfare workers used it to identify "occasionally promiscuous individuals whose behaviour verged on but did not constitute prostitution or 'hwG.'"[223] Because the Berlin Health Office did not "provide its VD experts with an exact definition of the newly coined category," categorizations were based on the prejudices of individual welfare workers. In "Prostitution, Promiscuity, and Venereal Disease Control in Nazi Germany," Timm explains that "whether one was treated like an 'ordinary citizen' who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, or like a social outsider who both caused an individual illness and represented a threat to the community at large, depended almost entirely on the

[221] Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 97.
[222] Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 93; Timm, "Prostitution, Promiscuity and VD Control in Nazi Berlin," 194; Annette Timm, "Sex with a Purpose: Prostitution, Venereal Disease and Militarized Masculinity in the Third Reich," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11:1/2, 2002, 234.
[223] Timm, "Prostitution, Promiscuity and VD Control in Nazi Berlin," 199.

subjective interpretation of the attending welfare worker."[224] This arbitrary decision-making process determined the trajectory of women's lives.

In Nazi Germany, the subjective designations of 'prostitute,' 'hwG' or 'wG' served as the necessary pretext for the removal of women from society. They led to women's arrest or preventative detention and, prior to 1938, their deportation to temporary, overcrowded female concentration camps like Moringen (1933-1938) or Lichtenburg (1937-1939). Following Himmler's request for a permanent concentration camp for deviant women, from 1939 onwards authorities sent thousands of so-called sexually permissive women to Ravensbrück or one of its thirty-four sub-camps.[225] Käthe Peterson was one such authority. In 2024, the Berlin Schwules Museum hosted an exhibit titled "With Legs Wide Open – Ein Hurrenritt durch die Geschichte" or "A Whores Ride Through History."[226] This exhibit, which was curated by a Berlin sex worker collective, states:

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[224] Timm, "Prostitution, Promiscuity and VD Control in Nazi Berlin," 199.

[225] Notably, the treatment of female inmates was so poor in Ravensbrück that it became known as "the women's hell"; Ashley Lamoureux, "'The Women's Hell:' Distinctions between Forms of Sexual Violence at the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, the Liberalization of Sexuality in the Weimar Republic, and the Exploitation of Sexuality in the Third Reich," Master's Thesis, Liberty University, 2021, 43.

[226] This exhibit is advertised as follows: "The whores from the Museum of Sex Work speak out. How does the clothing that whores wore in the Middle Ages feel? What health knowledge have they always shared? In which parts of Berlin did queer culture and sex work intersect? How did sex workers experience the Holocaust and German colonial history? What might a brothel look like in a better future, where STI tests are always free, the tea is always hot and Hurenpässe are no longer necessary A sex worker led collective has curated a German and Berlin history from a whore's perspective using archival material, oral history and artistic interventions. The central idea: *Nothing about us without us!* Sex work history as whorestory, as a critical examination of institutional devaluation, regulation, and surveillance, but also as a visualization of sex work culture through the ages, from the Middle Ages to contemporary activism…the Schwules Museum, located in the historical 'red light district' Bülowkiez, a fictitious institution is therefore being created for the duration of the exhibition, a lively, erotic, magical, funny and deeply political 'Museum of Sex Work.' This museum has various departments, including an Apothecary, a Cloakroom, a Department of Complaints, a Department of Health, an Office for the Reclamation of Public Space, a Department of Destruction, a Department for Horizontal Labour and a Chapel. What has been compiled in these departments is not a chronological overview of the cultural history of sex work, but rather a queer, playful, sometimes magical linking of documents and associations – about alternative body knowledge, working conditions, non-

> Käthe Peterson was a social worker, a member of the Nazi Party, and head of the Hamburg Care Office. She used decrees against asocial people to legally incapacitate hundreds of sex workers. Many were sent to Ravensbruck and the state hospital Meseritz-Obrawalde (in Posen, today's Poland). Its inhabitants were murdered as part of Aktion T4, the Nazi regime's systemic mass execution of disabled peoples and those they classified as unfit along eugenic lines. Peterson retired from social work in 1966 and subsequently received the Federal Republic's Grand Cross of Merit. She was by no means unique. Sex workers tend to fear the police – but some of them, particularly those with children – fear social workers even more.[227]

For women deported to mixed-gender camps, Nazi protection squads (*Schutzstaffel*, SS) frequently assigned them to work in camp brothels, which they constructed "as part of the push to increase inmate productivity," or in military brothels where they were treated as sexual slaves.[228] Women's treatment was especially appalling on the Eastern Front, where it was not uncommon for them to be taken off the street and pulled into an officer's bordello to be sexually violated by soldiers.[229]

Before moving on to the post-war period, it is important to note that while the sexual repression of German women was not a new phenomenon by 1933, the racial motivations

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normative sexuality, celebration and memorialization of ancestors, German bureaucracy fetishism, colonialist and National Socialist alienation and mourning. The history of sex work has so far been written, if at all, mainly by its regulators and oppressors. In public discourse about sex work, there are many opinions and very strong feelings but little data. Those with expertise which only comes from lived experience are almost never asked. So-called "Schutzgesetze" have been developed largely without involving sex workers. In With Legs Wide Open, this story is written differently. A narrative unfolds that is characterized by pride, self-determination, and the fight for justice"; "With Legs Wide Open – A Whore's Ride Through History" Schwules Museum Berlin, https://www.schwulesmuseum.de/ausstellung/with-legs-wide-open-a-whores-ride-through-history/?lang=en

[227] The Schwules Museum, "With Legs Wide Open," Visited by author on June 22, 2024.

[228] Maris Rowe-McCulloch, "Women's Experiences inside a German Military Brothel and Beyond" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 31:1, 2022, 2; For additional reading on sexual violence and the Holocaust, see D. Glowacka, "Sexual Violence against Men and Boys during the Holocaust: A Genealogy of (Not-So-Silent) Silence." *German History* 39:1, 2021; R. Lev-Wiesel, and S. Weinger. *Hell Within Hell: Sexually Abused Child Holocaust Survivors* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2011); K. Person, "Sexual Violence during the Holocaust—The Case of Forced Prostitution in the Warsaw Ghetto." *Shofar* 22:2, 2015; Annette Timm, "The Costs of Silencing Holocaust Victims: Why We Must Add Sexual Violence to Our Definition of Genocide" in F. Sysyn and A. Graziosi (eds) *Genocide in Twentieth-Century History: The Power and the Problems of an Interpretive, Ethical-Political, and Legal Concept*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022).

[229] Rowe-McCulloch, "Women's Experiences inside a German Military Brothel and Beyond," 10.

behind Nazi-era regulated prostitution and the "de-tabooization of violence" during this period mark departures from previous regimes.[230] As the Second World War progressed, definitions of 'dangerous' sexuality became less about promiscuity and more about racial hygiene on the German home front. In Timm's words, sexual impropriety and venereal diseases "became an obsession in the Third Reich under the guise of racial policy."[231] She explains,

> In Nazi Germany, venereal diseases were grouped together with other dangers to the race and *Volk*, and Nazi ideologists argued that the continued prevalence of the disease revealed pathological problems in the organization of German society. They considered the threat of VD to be primarily domestic rather a foreign problem. VD was viewed as a threat to the race, and sexual comportment was linked to the individual's duty to conform to racialist norms of behaviour. Sexually promiscuous individuals, propagandists argued, were likely to have sexual relations with non-Aryans, thus endangering the German population by spreading not only disease, but also racial "degeneration" and miscegenation.[232]

In addition to Jews, mixed-race individuals, Poles, Russians, and Romani peoples, the category of 'non-Aryan' also stretched to include Prisoners of War (POWs).[233] Despite

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[230] Sophinette Becker uses the term "de-tabooization of violence" in her essay "Zur Funktion der Sexualität im Nationalsozialismus." She writes, "In National Socialism, taboos were simultaneously intensified and – motivated by racism – ruptured, which was accompanied by the de-tabooization of violence"; Sophinette Becker, "Zur Funktion der Sexualität im Nationalsozialismus," *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung* 14:2, 2001, 143.

[231] Timm, *The Politics of Fertility in Twentieth Century Berlin,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4.

[232] Timm, *The Politics of Fertility in Twentieth Century Berlin*, 158.

[233] See: Birthe Kundrus, "Die Unmoral deutscher Soldatenfrauen": Diskurs, Alltagsverhalten und Ahndung Praxis 1939–1945" in Kirsten Heinsohn, Barbara Vogel and Ulrike Weckel (eds), *Zwischen Karriere und Verfolgung*, (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1997); Birthe Kundrus and Patricia Szobar, "Forbidden Company: Romantic Relationships between Germans and Foreigners," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11:1/2, 2002; Cornelie Usborne, "Female Sexual Desire and male Honor: German Women's Illicit Love Affairs with Prisoners of War during the Second World War," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 26, 2017; Raffael Scheck, "Collaboration of the Heart: The Forbidden Love Affairs of French Prisoners of War and German Women in Nazi Germany," *The Journal of Modern History* 90, 2018; Raffael Scheck, *Love between Enemies: Western Prisoners of War and German Women in World War II*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Christoph Lorke, "Shifting Racial Boundaries and Their Limits: German Women, Non-European Men and the Negotiation of Sexuality and Intimacy in Nazi Germany," *Genealogy* 4:30, 2020; Mattias Reiss & Brian K. Feltman (eds.), *Prisoners of War and Local Women in Europe and the United States, 1914-1956*, (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

East Germany's proclaimed commitment to anti-racism and anti-imperialism being far from reality, the concept of 'racial degeneration' was nevertheless absent from Stasi discussions on pre- and extra-marital sexual intercourse.[234]

Prostitution Policy in the Post-War/Occupation Period, 1945-1949

After the Third Reich's unconditional surrender on May 7, 1945, Germany was divided into four zones under the occupation of Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union.[235] Each zone was led by a military government, which held authority over prostitution policy and, in the face of rising rates of venereal disease, public health efforts. Like many European countries in the immediate post-war era, Germany experienced a public health crisis. Together with the movement of troops and displaced persons, dirty and unsanitary living conditions created a breeding ground for diseases like typhus, dysentery, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, diphtheria, and polio.[236] By the time Soviet occupation forces entered Berlin, for example, "clean water, electricity, and gas, and garbage collection had all stopped… Sewage spilled into rivers and lakes, and corpses piled up because they could not be buried fast enough. Flies, rats, mosquitoes, lice, and other disease carriers multiplied, [and] city inhabitants lived crowded together in cellars, bomb shelters, and underground tunnels, and were easy targets for spreading infections"[237] In this already virulent environment, people had unprotected sex. As described in a GHDI overview of a 1950s venereal disease poster, this "high incidence of unprotected sex was at least partially

[234] At the very least, it was absent from the Stasi files that I consulted.
[235] Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany, 1918-2014: The Divided Nation,* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 136.
[236] Jessica Reinisch, "Public Health Work in the Soviet Occupation Zone" in *The Perils of Peace: The Public Health Crisis in Occupied Germany,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4/24.
[237] Reinisch, "Public Health Work in the Soviet Occupation Zone," 4/24.

attributable to the shortage of contraceptives – and the correspondingly high price of those that could be found – but psychologists also attributed it to the chaotic postwar situation as well as the psychological consequences of the preceding war years."[238] For those who caught syphilis or gonorrhea, which many did, the bombing of medical infrastructures prevented early diagnosis, and supply shortages prevented treatment.[239]

At the same time, women engaged in 'hunger prostitution.' This means that they sold sexual services to support themselves and their dependents, who were often starving.[240] In May 1945, 50,000 women patrolled former brothel streets in Berlin looking for clients.[241] By the end of 1946, this number increased to 150,000. There was a similar increase in the number of women who offered sexual services to protect themselves and their daughters from sexual violence. In "The Continuum of Sexual Violence in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949," Hsu-Ming Teo uses the term 'compliant sex' to describe sexual encounters where "the consequences of not doing it are worse than the consequences of doing it."[242] Behind the Iron Curtain, in particular, women lacking state protection formed "consensual" sexual relationships with Soviet officers to stave off gang rape.[243] They had good reason to fear the worst. Between January and August 1945, Josef Stalin's troops systematically and brutally raped an estimated two million German women and girls –

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[238] "Poster Warning of Venereal Diseases (1950)," published in: *German History in Documents and Images,* https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=2981

[239] Markus Wahl, "Doing Drugs in Socialist East Germany: Gendered Prescription and (Ab)use of Pharmaceuticals in the GDR, 1949-1961," *The Social History of Alcohol and Drugs* 35:2, 2021, 293.

[240] Hsu-Ming Teo, "The Continuum of Sexual Violence in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949," *Women's History Review* 5:2, 1996, 192.

[241] Teo, "The Continuum of Sexual Violence in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949," 192.

[242] Teo, "The Continuum of Sexual Violence in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949," 193.

[243] Teo, "The Continuum of Sexual Violence in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949," 193. See also: Annamarie Troeger, "Between Rape and Prostitution: Survival Strategies and Chances of Emancipation for Berlin Women after World War II," in Judith Friedlander (ed), *Women in Culture and Politics: A Century of Change*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

often under the influence of alcohol.[244] They violated these victims, who ranged from ten to eighty years old, in public settings and often more than once.[245] Norman Naimark writes, "one German village captured on February 26, 1945, was systematically plundered, and virtually all of the women were raped. The screams of help from the tortured could be heard day and night. Twenty-five to thirty were left pregnant; some hundred females contracted some form of sexual disease."[246] Before Berlin – Germany's Nazi stronghold – capitulated on May 8, the Soviet's arrival was "accompanied by an unrestrained explosion of sexual violence by Soviet soldiers," peaking from April 24 to May 5.[247] Within this narrow time frame, Berlin hospital reports cite the staggering figure of over 100,000 rape cases.[248] In some instances, women who became pregnant sought abortions, and local authorities approved these requests. Between July and October 1945, the district office of Neukölln, which was just one of the twenty-four districts in Germany's capital, approved the termination of 995 rape-induced pregnancies.[249]

Women living in other cities that would soon become East Germany experienced comparable levels of violence. According to Naimark, women and girls along the Baltic

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[244] Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949,* (Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 1997), 70.
[245] Reinisch, "Public Health Work in the Soviet Occupation Zone," 5/24.
[246] Naimark, *The Russians in Germany,* 74.
[247] Naimark, *The Russians in Germany,* 70.
[248] Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 49.
[249] For more on the termination of pregnancies caused by sexual crime in German towns, see "The District Court of Meiningen: Decision about the Termination of a Pregnancy Following a Rape (January 9 1946)," published in: *German History in Documents and Images,* https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/the-district-court-amtsgericht-of-meiningen-decision-about-the-termination-of-a-pregnancy-following-a-rape-january-9-1946 and "Magdalene Gutenberg, Speech at a Gynecologists' Conference on the Termination of a Pregnancy after a Crime of Violence (October 5-6, 1946)," published in: *German History in Documents and Images,* https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/magdalene-gutenberg-speech-at-a-gynecologists-conference-on-the-termination-of-a-pregnancy-after-a-crime-of-violence-october-5-6-1946. See also Lucy Ash, "The Rape of Berlin" *BBC News, Berlin*. May 1, 2015. https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-32529679

Coast in Rostock and Warnemünde "were raped in the presence of their children and parents."[250] In Magdeburg, "German women and girls, sometimes just children, were raped repeatedly."[251] Nineteen-year-old Ruth Schumacher was raped by four Soviet soldiers in July 1945, sharing the fate of many women in Halle, and Figure 4 depicts the harassment of a German woman near the West Hall section of the Leipzig Hauptbahnhof.[252] These violent, injurious, and non-consensual sexual encounters, as well as the acts of sexual violence committed against German women by the Western Allies, led to the deaths or suicides of more than 240,000 women and girls.[253] They also dramatically increased rates of venereal disease. While there is no proof that the female IMs discussed in the following pages experienced sexual violence during this period, one cannot help but notice that several women like Hildegard N. suffered from chronic gonorrhea in 1946 and 1947.[254] Nonetheless, when SOZ public health authorities registered more than 200,000 new cases of venereal disease in 1946, the head of the German Central Administration for Health Care in the SOZ, Paul Konitzer, deemed only women to be a "great danger."[255]

Considering German women to be the primary carriers of venereal disease, even amid widespread sexual violence, the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAG) implemented a series of Soviet medical practices.[256] First, because the 1927 'Law for

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[250] Norman Naimark, "About 'the Russians' and About Us: The Question of Rape and Soviet German Relations in the Soviet Zone of Occupation," *The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research,* 1991, 31-32.
[251] Naimark, "About 'the Russians' and About Us," 31-32.
[252] "Raped by the Red Army: Two Million German Women Speak Out," *Independent UK*, 2009. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/raped-by-the-red-army-two-million-german-women-speak-out-1669074.html
[253] Miriam Gebhardt. *Crimes Unspoken: The Rape of German Women at the End of the Second World War.* Translated by Nick Somers, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2017).
[254] BStU, MfS, AU 3, Nr. 333/56, Bd. 2, "Poliklinik-Krankenhaus Schwerin Ambulatorium zu das Volkspolizeikreisamt Abt. Kriminalpolizei, AK Schwerin, Schwerin, 2. 6. 1956.
[255] Wahl, "Doing Drugs in Socialist East Germany," 288.
[256] The Soviet Military Administration in Germany is referred to as both SMAG and SMAD. SMAG is the English translation while SMAD stands for *Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland.*

Combatting Venereal Diseases' remained legally valid until 1947, authorities continued to hunt down infected individuals – particularly women they believed to be 'sexually promiscuous' – and forcibly deliver them to hospitals.[257] At the same time, they judged this law to be inefficient.[258] SMAG Order No. 25, which was issued on August 7, 1945, built on the original anti-VD law by creating a network of out-patient clinics and hospitals where women with venereal diseases, especially syphilis, could be interned.[259] Health authorities seldom incarcerated men because a diagnosis of syphilis or gonorrhea typically prompted doctors to inquire about potential (female) sources of infection. After receiving a name and address, doctors wrote to the woman and requested an examination. If she failed to appear promptly, they notified their superiors, who wrote to the woman, informing her of the circumstances and inviting her to appear for an examination. If no notice was taken, the suspected female source of contagion was arrested, jailed, examined, and, if necessary, confined to a closed hospital.[260]

Under SMAG Order No. 25, the congregation of girls or women in public spaces acted as sufficient grounds for police intervention and forced VD testing.[261] Jennifer Evans describes a scenario where police from Berlin's Steglitz borough persecuted four young

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[257] Orzechowski, Woniak, Schochow, and Steger explain: "In the Federal Republic, the ['Law for Combatting Venereal Diseases'] was in force until 1953 and was then overridden by the 'Law on Combatting Sexually Transmitted Diseases' of 23rd of July 1953. In addition, local laws on combatting venereal diseases also existed, for example in the federal state of Hamburg. In contrast, no local legislation on combatting venereal disease existed in East Germany. In the SOZ, the Weimar Law was in force until 1947. From 1945 to 1947, it was supplemented by two orders of the SMAGL Order No. 25 and Order No. 30"; Orzechowski, Woniak, Schochow, Steger, "Policy Approaches Toward Combatting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Occupation Zone," 2.

[258] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 14.

[259] Orzechowski, Woniak, Schochow, Steger, "Policy Approaches Toward Combatting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Occupation Zone," 2.

[260] Orzechowski, Woniak Schochow, Steger, "Policy Approaches Toward Combatting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Occupation Zone," 2.

[261] Jennifer Evans, "Bahnhof Boys," 619; Orzechowski, Woniak, Schochow, Steger, "Policy Approaches Toward Combatting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Occupation Zone," 2.

girls for acting in a way that they judged to be connected to prostitution. On November 28, 1945, city authorities stopped four fourteen and fifteen-year-old girls as they returned home from Christmas shopping at three in the afternoon. When none of them could produce identification on demand, the police officer brought them to the precinct and held them on suspicion of prostitution.[262] Authorities made all four "disorderly" teenagers' strip. They underwent pelvic examinations for syphilis and gonorrhea "despite the pleas of one girl not to conduct the exam since she was a virgin."[263] Expanding on this encounter in *Life Among the Ruins: Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin*, Evans writes that she "was in fact a virgin (*Unbescholten*) as she had claimed, while the other was a survivor of Soviet rape."[264] The police then forced the girls to "spend a night in a police bunker hotel despite testing negative, [and] they returned home to their parents, who had not been informed of the raid."[265] A police officer remarked on the situation, "It is impossible to differentiate between good and bad girls since even those from good homes have discovered their bodies as a means of living an easy life."[266] He supposed that the experience might be a good learning opportunity for the teens and prevent them from going down the wrong path.

SMAG Orders No. 30 and 273 gave police departments and health authorities even more power to remove women they deemed to be sources of contagion from society and institutionalize them.[267] For example, Order No. 30 authorized the creation of 'care homes for STD patients' (*Fürsorgeheime für Geschlechtskranke*) in each district. Women who

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[262] Evans, "Bahnhof Boys," 617.
[263] Evans, "Bahnhof Boys," 617.
[264] Evans, *Life Among the Ruins: Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin*, 131.
[265] Evans, "Bahnhof Boys," 617-18.
[266] Evans, "Bahnhof Boys," 618.
[267] SMAG Order No. 30 also encouraged doctors from Berlin, Dresden, Greifswald, Halle, Leipzig and Rostock to undergo a six-week training course on detecting and treating sexual infections. In this course, physicians learned how to use 'fever syringes,' which are discussed in Chapter Three; Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 26-7.

were suspected of having a venereal disease but refused examinations or in-patient treatment could be involuntarily confined in these institutions, synchronizing SOZ health policies with those of the Soviet Union.[268] According to Schochow and Steger, Soviet 'prophylactoria' were established in the 1920s "to treat sex workers with STDs as well as to provide education and job training in order to improve their skills and opportunities for employment."[269] After 1945, Soviet "persons with STDs, as well as sex workers and women who infected military personnel" could be compulsorily admitted, "treated for venereal diseases, educated through work and political information, and thus transformed into 'socialist personalities.'"[270] Likewise, Order No. 273, issued on December 11, 1947, mandated that all women who disregarded their physicians' directives by having sex while knowingly infected, who prematurely ended compulsory hospital treatments, or who contributed to the spread of venereal diseases in any other way should be forcibly admitted to a welfare home.[271]

According to Schochow and Steger, conditions were dire in these homes. In the Leipzig-Thonberg welfare home (Figure 5), which became a closed venerology ward in 1952, "accommodation in the winter of 1946/47 was inadequate. There were hardly any blankets, and some of the rooms had a maximum temperature of 6 degrees Celsius."[272] In the Zwickau care home for STD patients (1946), patients stole food and resources from one another and "the heating fuel was so scarce that [they] had to sleep in rooms where the

[268] Orzechowski, Woniak, Schochow, Steger, "Policy Approaches Toward Combatting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Occupation Zone," 3.
[269] Schochow, Steger, "Women Education in the Soviet Prophylactoria" 1951.
[270] Schochow, Steger, "Women Education in the Soviet Prophylactoria," 1952.
[271] Orzechowski, Woniak, Schochow, Steger, "Policy Approaches Toward Combatting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Occupation Zone," 4.
[272] Steger, Schochow*, Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 25.

temperature at night dropped below -8 degrees Celsius."[273] Health authorities also relied on painful drugs like Salvarsan and Neosalvarsan to treat those with syphilis and gonorrhea. These traditional therapies were incredibly dangerous. They had a laundry list of side effects, and administered via injections, caused women a significant amount of pain.[274] They also required prolonged hospital stays involving repeated smear tests. Lisa Haushofer writes,

> The duration of hospitalization was considerable. In the case of gonorrhea, the treatment usually required "a minimum of three weeks, in the most favourable cases," whereas hospitalization for syphilis was required "during the whole course of the arsenic-bismuth therapy," which meant a minimum of 9 weeks.[275]

Occasionally, these treatments even ended in death when "the drugs administered were dosed too high or were not tolerated."[276] In eastern Germany, these SMAG orders remained in force until 1961. SMAG Order No. 273 also mandated, "if someone is one of the people who frequently have sexual intercourse, the court can, in addition to the punishment, order them to be placed in a workhouse."[277]

Finally, police raids on bars, clubs, and cafés occurred throughout this period. A People's Police report held in Landesarchiv Berlin writes, "A successful GeKra[278] raid using police officers and members of the criminal police was carried out by the Weisensee

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[273] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 25.
[274] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 761; The side-effects of Salvarsan and Neosalvarsan treatments were sometimes tested on local inhabitants in the German colonies. In German Southwest Africa, Walther writes, "the use of Salvarsan was limited to the hospitals in Windhoek and Keemanshoop, where the attending physicians were ordered to keep an exact log 'so that later a summary report could be submitted to the Imperial Colonial Office.'" Likewise, "in reports from East Africa, several doctors detailed their use of the arsenic compound to treat these various diseases, including how they administered Salvarsan, the dosage, and the frequency of the drug's use"; Walther, *Sex and Control*, 110.
[275] Haushofer, "'The 'Contaminating Agent': UNRRA, Displaced Persons, and Venereal Disease in Germany, 1945-1947," *American Journal of Public Health*, 2010, 10.2105/AJPH.2008.153098
[276] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 761.
[277] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 17.
[278] The term "GeKra" is used as a short form of *Geschlechtskrankenheiten* or sexually transmitted disease.

police inspection with the participation of the health department on August 21, 1948."[279]

Likewise, the monthly report for January 1949 states,

> a) PI - Mitte - On the intelligence of the railway criminal police, 3 raids (21, 23, 24) were carried out at the Stettin train station. Here, 61 people were forcibly placed, 15 of whom were taken to Department KIM II/3 because of suspicion of sexual diseases. In addition, 32 females were forcibly transferred to other locations and also sent to the above-mentioned department.
> b) Treptow – during the raid carried out in this district, 56 people received summonses for examination in the health department
> c) Köpenick – 19 people were forcibly brought before the Köpenick Health Department. Since 11 of them do not have any regular work, they were reported to the employment office. 2 females were arrested during a check by members of the occupying power because of constant contact with Soviet officers.[280]

During this month, a total of 208 prostitutes were "cleared up" in Berlin.[281] Such 'GeKra' raids continued throughout the Cold War.

Conclusion

In the prologue to *Selling Sex in the Reich*, Harris discusses the social profile of a woman named Cornelie Bauer. Born in 1890, Cornelie's first prostitution-related arrest came in 1907 when she was just seventeen years old. After her second arrest in 1911, the Leipzig *Sitte* added her name to their prostitute registry. Between 1911 and 1922, Cornelie was arrested twenty times for "violations of moral regulations."[282] By 1925, she had been arrested six more times for prostitution and prostitution-related offenses, and between 1925 and 1930, another sixteen.[283] By 1935, a police officer wrote to the Gestapo asking for "the quickest resolution to my application from November 29, 1935 concerning the detention

[279] Landesarchiv Berlin, Ministerium des Innern Bestand Nr. 26, Präsidium der Volkspolizei Berlin 26/146.
[280] Landesarchiv Berlin, Ministerium des Innern Bestand Nr. 26, Präsidium der Volkspolizei Berlin 26/146.
[281] Landesarchiv Berlin, Ministerium des Innern Bestand Nr. 26, Präsidium der Volkspolizei Berlin 26/146.
[282] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 3.
[283] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 3.

of Bauer in Moringen" concentration camp. His application was approved and Cornelie was sent to Moringen, however, her name appears in police reports again after 1938. In 1940, Cornelie entered and exited police custody for the last time. She told a police officer that she was "tired of this sort of treatment" and was "seeking something quieter at my age of fifty." Her record ends here.[284]

Cornelie was one of many prostitutes who, throughout several regime changes, recurrently found themselves caught within a discourse of 'dangerousness.' Born in the German Empire, the police arrested her for the first time under the Imperial Criminal Code. She "violated moral regulations" throughout the First World War and was frequently jailed during the Weimar Republic. Such imprisonment occurred as feminist campaigners advocated for the abolition of the regulatory system, and the 1927 Law for Combatting Venereal Disease decriminalized prostitution. During the Nazi years, she was one of many perceived sexual deviants stripped of their rights under the Reichstag Decree and shipped to a concentration camp. She likely lived throughout the occupation period as well, which was characterized by sexual violence. If Cornelie had continued working into her fifties, she would have faced comparable stigmatization in the GDR. Such continuity underscores the central argument of this chapter: state intervention in women's sexual lives remained consistent across different political contexts. At the same time, Cornelie's case illustrates that, despite state surveillance, women continued to exchange sexual services for money.

[284] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 3.

Chapter 2: "She Led a Parasitic Existence in our Workers and Peasants State": Prostitution in East Germany, 1949-1989

In September 1951, the East German city of Magdeburg hosted a conference for district dermatologists and venereologists from the state of Saxony-Anhalt. At this medical summit, a venereologist from the town of Osterburg boasted that most of his "venereal patients are wary of becoming sexually ill again." According to a Bundesarchiv document titled "Reports from Saxony-Anhalt," "he attribute[d] this to the fact that he uses the old treatment methods [Salvarsan and Neosalvarsan] for certain people" despite having access to penicillin.[285] When another delegate from the district of Stendal "took the floor" shortly after, he "emphasized that he was also in favour of this method but that…hwG people consulted with the Prime Minister and then questions were asked as to why the older methods were used and no penicillin was injected."[286] In his opinion, too many sexually infected women walked away from his clinic without being sufficiently punished for their actions. According to Markus Wahl, Dresden venereologists also ascribed a moral function to penicillin in the early 1950s. They refused to give the one-day treatment to women who could not identify the source of their infection, and purposely inflicted pain during smear tests to teach them "to abstain from random sexual encounters."[287]

With their strong emphasis on punishment and social hygiene, these actions by East German venereologists highlight the politicization of prostitution and venereal disease control in the GDR.[288] They suggest that regulation was not only a way to separate the

[285] I would like to thank Markus Wahl for giving me a complete copy of this file; Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672.
[286] Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 September 195: BArch, DQ1/4672.
[287] Wahl, "Doing Drugs in Socialist East Germany," 301.
[288] Schochow, Steger, "Closed Venereology Wards in Hospitals of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Ministry for State Security (MfS)," 225.

sexually infected from the 'clean' in East Germany - it also functioned as a mechanism for welfare and legal authorities to discipline women they believed to be, in Milan Dobeš' words, "inconvenient to the regime."[289] This chapter focuses on the period between 1949 and 1989.[290] It argues that SED policymakers adopted moralizing attitudes and regulatory frameworks from earlier regimes such as registration, medical screenings, and police raids. Officials also relied on older terminology such as 'hwG,' and 'asocial' to classify women and viewed many of the same character traits (feeble-mindedness, etc.) as inheritable. Unlike previous regimes, however, the East German regulatory framework was oriented towards 're-educating' women whose sexual habits they deemed 'promiscuous' and turning them into 'socialist personalities.' Because socialism was expected to create a superior society, the perseverance of prostitution and its associated venereal diseases were signs of moral failure, and of people failing to live up to the high socialist ideal. Because prostitutes posed a threat to the unity and security of the regime, the MfS believed that they had to be disciplined, re-educated, or removed/isolated from society.[291]

By examining the Stasi and K1 files of women categorized as sexually deviant by the state, many of whom became informers, the first half of this chapter outlines legislative objectives and repressive attitudes towards prostitution in the GDR. I juxtapose the SED's rhetoric about women's emancipation with the firsthand experiences of women involved in the sex trade, detailing their motivations, and living conditions. Using the same data set, the second half of this chapter analyses female Stasi informers' lived experiences of state

[289] Dobeš, "Prostitution as a Special Form of the Offence of Social Parasitism in Socialist Czechoslovakia," 86.
[290] Bashford, *Imperial Hygiene*, *2.*
[291] Dobeš, "Prostitution as a Special Form of the Offence of Social Parasitism in Socialist Czechoslovakia," 86.

surveillance and regulation pre-recruitment. The frequent run-ins with the police, and admissions to social homes, workhouses, prisons and venereological wards found in their secret police files suggest that these were favoured regulatory techniques in East Germany, and that they were used to remove perceived undesirables from society – even without evidence of criminal wrongdoing or sexual infection.

The Formation of the German Democratic Republic and Objectives of the SED Party

For forty years, the SED Party had considerable influence over prostitution and venereal disease policy in East Germany. Established in 1946 after the unification of the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) and the Communist Party of Germany (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*, KPD), the SED Party was initially co-chaired by Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl. From the outset, they had a clear vision of the direction they wanted to take Germany. When Pieck and Grotewohl outlined the SED Party's goals in April 1946, they emphasized "liberation from all forms of exploitation and oppression, economic crisis, poverty, unemployment, and the threat of imperialist war."[292] The path to achieving this liberation was socialism. Upon the creation of the GDR on October 7, 1949, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin bestowed primary SED decision-making power on Walter Ulbricht. He became First Secretary of the SED Party, and East Germany was consolidated into a one-party state.

[292] "Principles and Aims of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (April 21, 1946)," published in: *German History in Documents and Images,* https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/principles-and-aims-of-the-socialist-unity-party-of-germany-april-21-1946

On October 14, 1949, the German People's Council, which was controlled by the SED, ratified a new East German constitution.[293] With several provisions dedicated to improving the living conditions of women, this legislation reflected the Party's commitment to creating a society based on equality and shared responsibility. Article 7 afforded men and women equal rights; Article 15 outlined women's right to employment, emphasizing their expected contributions to the state; Article 18 ensured equal pay for equal work, and Article 35 promoted equal educational opportunities for men and women.[294] The constitution also guaranteed women access to health care, housing, maternity leave, and childcare support to make their joint roles as citizens, workers, wives, and mothers "less guilt-inducing."[295] The state expected all women, but especially those from the lower classes, to make full use of these new rights and assume socially useful occupations. In fact, leaders expected the constitution's impact to "be so profound that no remnants of the old society were to survive, including prostitution and all the social conditions that led to it."[296]

The optimistic belief that prostitution would disappear under socialism resonated with the works of older, nineteenth century figures. In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx defines prostitution as a "social ill" that stems from the

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[293] Popular vote played no role in the ratification of the new constitution; Fulbrook, *A History of Germany, 1918-2014: The Divided Nation,*144.

[294] "Constitution of the German Democratic Republic (Oct 7, 1949)," published in*: German History in Documents and Images,* https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/constitution-of-the-german-democratic-republic-october-7-1949

[295] Notably, there was no parallel legislation to help men reconcile fatherhood with their own participation in the workforce; "Constitution of the German Democratic Republic (Oct 7, 1949)," published in*: German History in Documents and Images,* https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/constitution-of-the-german-democratic-republic-october-7-1949; Herzog, *Sex After Fascism*, 71.

[296] Simic, "Prostitution in Socialist Yugoslavia: from Stalinism to the Yugoslav Way," 252; Leonie Kleinschrot, "Gender Norms under Socialism and Capitalism: A Historical Examination of Attitudes towards Maternal Employment in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany" *Comparative Population Studies* 48, 2023, 156.

patriarchal nature of capitalist society. He argues that working-class women are forced to sell their bodies in capitalist societies because they do not receive the same education and employment opportunities as men. If socialism gave them equal opportunities, he writes, prostitution would be eradicated.[297] Marx also calls prostitution a "complement" of the capitalist system in *The Communist Manifesto*.[298] He states, "The abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of free love springing from that system, i.e., of prostitution, both public and private."[299] Friedrich Engels echoed this argument in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* and *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, maintaining that "the position of women, of all women, undergoes significant change" when they are afforded the same rights as men.[300] Finally, in *Die Frau und der Sozialismus*, German socialist and SPD co-founder August Bebel defined prostitution as the product of an economic system in which, disadvantaged as both workers and women, women had little choice but to take up exploitative work in order to sustain themselves and their dependents.[301] He anticipated that the creation of a society where every citizens had the same opportunities would do away with the trade.[302] He writes, "The woman of future society is socially and economically independent; she is no longer subject to even a vestige of dominion and exploitation; she is free."[303]

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[297] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto*, Prometheus Books, 1988.
[298] Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition*, Verso, 1998, 56.
[299] Marx, Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 56.
[300] Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 1884, 40.
[301] August Bebel, Woman under Socialism (1879, published in: *German History in Documents and Images,* https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1763
[302] August Bebel, Woman under Socialism (1879, published in: *German History in Documents and Images,* https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1763
[303] August Bebel, Woman under Socialism (1879, published in: *German History in Documents and Images,* https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1763

Based on these emancipatory works, Ulbricht maintained that prostitution was no longer a public concern in the socialist GDR. A 1975 Diploma Thesis of Humboldt-Universität students Hartmut Dürning and Jurgen Hardtmann housed in the Stasi Records Archive echoes this belief. Their thesis, titled "Studies on the Phenomenology and Aspects of the Criminal Investigation of Crimes According to StGB 249 – with Special Consideration of Prostitution" reads:

> Equal rights for women are fully enshrined in the law in socialist society. The right to work for education is constitutionally regulated, and a number of socio-political measures emphasize the position of women as mothers and active members of the socialist community. The woman under socialism is not compelled, like the woman under capitalist rule, to sell her body as a commodity in order to keep herself and often the whole family alive by engaging in prostitution.[304]

Dürning and Hardtmann also described socialist "men who have been freed from exploitation and oppression as a 'race of men who have never in their lives had the opportunity to buy women.'"[305] Nevertheless, the commercial sex industry continued to flourish for many of the same reasons as it did under capitalism.

Economic and Social Factors Leading to Prostitution

In "Selling Sex under Socialism: Prostitution in the Postwar USSR," Siobhan Hearne writes that "on the international stage, state officials boasted that prostitution had disappeared under Soviet socialism as there was no economic need for women to sell sex."[306] At the same time, however, "Party officials and the central and regional level, law

[304] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit: Studien zur Phänomenologie und Aspekte der kriminalistischen Untersuchung von Straftaten gemäß 249 StGB – under besonderer Berucksichtigung der Alternative Prostitution," 9. July 1975. BStU 000009.
[305] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit: Studien zur Phänomenologie und Aspekte der kriminalistischen Untersuchung von Straftaten gemäß 249 StGB – under besonderer Berucksichtigung der Alternative Prostitution," 9. July 1975. BStU 000018.
[306] Hearne, "Selling Sex Under Socialism," 291.

enforcement and medical workers, as well as ordinary Soviet citizens and foreign tourists, were well aware that that these statements were false. Prostitution was a permanent feature in Soviet cities throughout the 1950s and 1980s."[307] The same can be said about Soviet satellite states like Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and East Germany.

Although the SED Party considered prostitution to be an aberrant activity for newly emancipated East German women, it remained a path forward for many. Not all poor women turned to prostitution, but the first and most obvious reason for why it lingered was poverty. Individuals at the poorer end of the economic spectrum like Hildegard N., who, when asked why she went into prostitution during a 1955 interrogation, answered, "I went into prostitution to make money that way," sold their bodies out of economic necessity.[308] They sold sex for some measure of security because promises of adequate housing, wages, and welfare benefits ultimately failed to improve their living conditions. A cache of People's Police and Stasi reports illustrate just how little some women had. While discussing the housing situation of a sex-selling woman from Berlin in 1958, an MfS officer commented that while she did appear to have a fixed address, her financial situation was "very bad. She had hardly any furniture in the apartment, and she almost always wore the same clothes. Light and gas were shut off."[309] The fact that her electricity and gas had been shut off suggests that she had been unable to pay rent for a long time. Likewise, the 1964 file of Marianne H. from Leipzig noted that "she sometimes begged for DM 1.00 because she had nothing to eat."[310] Her landlady was quoted as saying that she used money

[307] Hearne, "Selling Sex under Socialism," 291.
[308] BArch, MfS, AU 698-58, "Vernehmungsprotokoll der Beschuldigten" Berlin, 31. 3. 1955, BStU 0050.
[309] BArch, MfS, AU 1498-58 Bd. 2. "Betr: [Redacted]" Berlin, 28. 01. 1958 BStU 0054.
[310] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 611-77, Bd. 1. "Bericht" Leipzig, 02. 04. 1964 BStU 000096.

from one male suitor to purchase new, clean underwear, and funds from another to buy herself a coat.[311]

When Karin B. stood before a court on prostitution charges ten years later, details of her poverty also emerged. According to her court file,

> The defendant gave the impression that she did not like this life in the bars, on the streets and in strange beds at all. This girl lived for seven months without a permanent residence and without regular income. She had no friends – I mean, real friends. She was probably hungry sometimes too. And every time she knew exactly what she was going to give herself up for. For a bank note. For a dinner. I can't imagine that she liked this life, and the defendant says it herself: she was deeply relieved when the People's Police took her from a strange apartment one night. Literally: "I don't care what happens to me – I can't carry on like this."[312]

Moreover, the poor state of Greta T's dwelling is referenced in a 1976 investigation report. In this document, an officer summarized a neighbour's denunciation letter. He paraphrased the original letter's contents as follows: "She didn't believe in cleanliness at all. She had no washing facilities in her room, and she had to use a water pipe in the hallway, which she didn't use…She had two old flatbeds to sleep on. She used old blankets and her coat to cover up."[313] Her denouncers purportedly "questioned whether she ever cleaned the room" and could not comprehend why men did "not shy away from this milieu."[314] The officer proceeded to note that Greta's electricity had been blocked because "she so far has been extremely easy and wasteful with the money she has earned and has not always kept up with her payments such as rent and the like."[315] She "possessed nothing except her most

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[311] Importantly, some sex-selling women may have used jewellery or clothes to conceal poverty. Therefore, it may not be as recognizable to researchers; BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 611-77, Bd. 1. "Bericht" Leipzig, 02. 04. 1964 BStU 000117.
[312] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 2186.
[313] BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 1917-78, "Ermittlungsbericht" Leipzig, 12. 04. 1976 BStU 000066.
[314] BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 1917-78, "Ermittlungsbericht" Leipzig, 12. 04. 1976 BStU 000066.
[315] BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 1917-78, "Ermittlungsbericht" Leipzig, 12. 04. 1976 BStU 000066.

necessary clothes," he concluded.[316] Finally, a doctor provided the following account of 'hwG' women committed to the venereology ward of the Prenzlauer Berg Hospital Fröbelstraße (formerly Nordmarktstraße 22):[317]

> When these patients are admitted, one notices that they are mostly people who have no idea about personal hygiene and cleanliness. Most of the time these patients are not only for days, but for weeks unwashed, as can be seen in part due to the heavy crust of dirt that can be detected on the body. Of course, these patients must first be informed by the nurses to clean themselves thoroughly every day, which for some patients is difficult.[318]

Because this doctor was more concerned with his female patient's primitivity and inability to govern themselves than their living conditions, we will return to this quotation in a subsequent section. In the meantime, it serves as a reminder of both the inherent biases of this material, and the way that women were looked down upon socially and medically.[319]

Criminal records can be viewed as another indicator that many women who came to the attention of the MfS and DVP were not only financially unstable, but also had little else to sell besides their bodies under socialism.[320] Left without social support, many women resorted to criminal activities to meet their basic needs. Out of the twenty-three

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[316] Based on these Stasi files and others like them, it is reasonable to believe that most lower-class prostitutes occupied a room instead of an apartment. Though unfurnished and lacking electricity due to financial instability, these rented rooms probably served as women's only private space in the GDR. At the same time, in cases like Greta L., her denouncers shock that "men do not shy away from this milieu" suggests that suitors also had access to her private residence; BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 1917-78, "Ermittlungsbericht" Leipzig, 12. 04. 1976 BStU 000066.

[317] This ward was created in 1952 as part of the Charité dermatology clinic. It later became Berlin Buch; Schwules Museum, "With Legs Wide Open Exhibit," Visited by author on June 22, 2024.

[318] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 859.

[319] Antje Kampf, "A 'little world of your own': Stigma, Gender and Narratives of Venereal Disease Contact Tracing," *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine* 12:2, 2008, 244.

[320] Not all criminal records stemmed from real crimes. The Stasi file of IM Rose reveals that she was "arrested for resistance because on the way home from a birthday party, she got in trouble with her husband and the police because they were singing loudly in the street. A policeman grabbed her hard and she resisted"; BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AIM 389-57, 2. 2. 1956, BStU 000032; Another Friedrichshain woman "was under the influence of alcohol..in the car she kicked one of the crew members in the body and spat on the other VPs and insulted them with the words "you dogs, you pigs, you SED pigs! The accused was sentenced to 8 months in prison in accordance with Section 330 of the Criminal Code."; Landesarchiv Berlin C Rep 303 Nr. 305

women present in a People's Police report from the small Thuringian town of Eisenach, for instance, nine had a criminal record of theft, three of asocial behaviour, one of vagrancy, and one of property crimes.[321] Notably, vagrancy was an umbrella term used to describe an array of crimes. The files of other individuals contain similar data. The Leipzig South District Court sentenced Greta T. to six months imprisonment for fraud and six weeks for commercial indecency, but she engaged in other criminal behaviour out of desperation such as borrowing and selling her landlord's toaster.[322] Likewise, in a report titled "Suspicions of anti-Sociality and Fraud," the Criminal Police wrote that 'Nonne' had rent debts exceeding 1800 Marks, and legal costs of 1100 marks. It is reasonable to believe that she turned to prostitution to free herself from debt because, as they write, "there is a suspicion that she is indebted elsewhere."[323] Throughout DVP and Stasi files, the offense of theft appears often, suggesting that it was an efficient way for women to put food on the table for themselves and their dependents.[324] This is not surprising. According to Harris, it was also "the most common crime for which Leipzig's prostitutes were arrested" in the 1920s.[325] These sources, and the connections between female poverty and prostitution that they expose, raise questions about the degree to which the lives of prostitutes really changed under socialism. They reveal that as the SED Party commanded women to

[321] BStU, BV Erfurt, Abt. II, 760, "Betreff: Personenaufstellung" Volkspolizei-Kreisamt, Eisenach, Abteilung K - Komm I. 1973.
[322] BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 1917-78, "Ermittlungsbericht" Leipzig, 12. 04. 1976 BStU 000066.
[323] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88, Berlin, 06.08.84 BStU 0013.
[324] Interestingly, People's Police officers who reported their personal items being stolen had their reports thrown out when it came to light that they had spent time with a prostitute. On December 16, 1956, "an employee from Potsdam reported the theft of a wallet containing 130 DM and 40 West Marks…during the investigation it became known that the employee from Potsdam had already had sex with prostitutes from Alexanderplatz on several occasions and was also with such women at the time of the crime. Even if the facts ascertained that the employee lost his money, it was not clarified"; Landesarchiv Berlin C Rep 303 Nr. 305; Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 70.
[325] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 70.

abandon sex work in favour of more productive labour, it also failed to offer them any economic alternatives. Thus, prostitution remained a way out for many East German women from the poorer classes who could afford neither rent nor necessities.

As a result of these criminal offences, many women found themselves caught in a vicious cycle of entering and exiting prison. A letter dated July 9, 1956, stated that Irene N. was "only recently released from Butzow after two years imprisonment. Since May 19, she has been back in Butzow."[326] IM Blondi was incarcerated in StVE Leipzig, having confessed to earning over 100,000 M through illegal currency exchange and prostitution, and several women were held in UHA II, a remand prison on Magdalenenstraße and Keibelstraß*e*. Known as Magdalena, UHA II was East Berlin's only pre-trial detention facility that imprisoned women. A report from 1982 stated, "the control subject was imprisoned for antisocial behaviour pursuant to section 249 StGB with a custodial sentence of 5 months. She served her sentence from April 5, 1980, to Feb 4, 1981…In November 1981 she was imprisoned again according to 249 and served her prison sentence until August 1983." [327] According to the People's Police, these punishments had little educational effect on women because they were "viewed by them as a matter of honor. Many of these people have never had a regular employment relationship and are completely uninterested in one, so that after serving their sentence they return to the fornication trade."[328] The state's inability to provide for its people was never alluded to.

This omission is particularly striking because poor living conditions were not unique to women in the GDR. According to Paul Betts, 1950s housing arrangements were

[326] BStU, Mfs-BV Schwerin, 925/57, 9. 7. 1956.
[327] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 238-84, Bd. 1. Reg-Nr 8218/82 "Information – VPKA – Delitzsch K/I, 12.01.1984. BStU 000106.
[328] Landesarchiv Berlin, C Rep. 303, Nr. 305.

especially dire: "52 percent of residences were one or two rooms only, while 31 percent had three rooms. Central heating was available in less than 3 percent of residences; less than 30 percent of housing had a toilet and only 22 percent a bath."[329] So, while the constitution benefited some women, many, particularly those from impoverished backgrounds, continued to face significant barriers accessing government services. Many of the women whose stories are documented in Stasi and People's Police files lacked skills because they were given few opportunities in life and did not have the privilege of dedicating time to studying.[330] For example, several women were reported to be illiterate.[331] A district doctor from Halle wrote, "What can be said about Frau Vogelsang from a general medical perspective is that she is a patient with clear imbecility (illiterate)."[332] Others, like Greta T. left school in grade seven without having formally completed her education.[333] This inevitably impacted their ability to earn a living wage throughout their adult lives and made prostitution one of the best employment options that they had. At the same time, criminal records made it difficult for women to find well-paid work in the conventional labour market. This issue was part of a larger problem in the GDR, where even women without criminal records struggled to access well-paying jobs in male-dominated employment sectors. As Susanne Kranz and others have shown, despite SED promises of female emancipation and gender equality, male-headed companies continued to hire more men than women. When they did hire female employees, they

[329] Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 124; Eli Rubin, *Amnesiopolis: Modernity, Space and Memory in East Germany,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 21.
[330] Wendy Harcourt, Karijn van den Berg, Constance Dupuis, Jacqueline Gaybor (eds), *Feminist Methodologies: Experiments, collaborations and Reflections,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 15.
[331] Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672.
[332] Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt,20 September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672.
[333] BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 1917-78, "Abschrift" Leipzig, 18. 02. 1975 BStU 000075.

usually relegated them to traditionally feminine, poorly paid positions.[334] Such discrimination incentivized women to turn to prostitution.

The Stasi's own hiring practices reflected the sexist assumption that women made undesirable employees. They seldom hired them as full-time employees (*Hauptamtliche Mitarbeiter)*, fearing that their 'feminine issues' would disrupt the work process. For example, young women would become pregnant, require maternity leave, and miss work when their children fell ill whereas young men would not.[335] Cooper points out that "The Stasi generally considered women with children unsuited to jobs that required long hours and constant availability. The likelihood of pregnancy also appears to have been used as an argument against promoting women."[336] Similarly, Gieseke writes that Erich Mielke believed it was impractical to "plan the Stasi's tasks around the opening times of daycares."[337] The Stasi also branded women past childbearing age too talkative to be effective workers and relegated them to devalued clerical work, in addition to positions as gardeners, daycare workers, cooks, and cleaners.[338]

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[334] Susanne Kranz, "Women's Role in the German Democratic Republic and the State's Policy Toward Women," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 7:1, 80. For more on women and work in the GDR see: Cooper, "Patriarchy within a Patriarchy: Women and the Stasi"; Katharina von Ankum, "Political Bodies: Women and Re/Production in the GDR," *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies in German Literature and Culture* 9, 1994; Eva Finzel, "'Equality' for Women, Child Rearing, and the State in the Former German Democratic Republic," *Women's Studies International Forum* 26:1, 2003; Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic, (*Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2007); Pamela Fischer, "Women and Employment in East Germany: the Legacy of the GDR," *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law* 32:4, 2010; Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2014: The Divided Nation*; Joyce Marie Mushaben, "From State Paternalism to Private Patriarchy: East German Women" in Joyce Marie Mushaben, *What Remains? The Dialectical Identities of Eastern Germans,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023); Leonie Kleinschrot, "Gender Norms under Socialism and Capitalism: A Historical Examination of Attitudes towards Maternal Employment in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany."

[335] Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2014: The Divided Nation*, 196-197.

[336] Cooper, "Patriarchy Within a Patriarchy: Women and the Stasi," 5-6.

[337] Bruce, *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi,* 73.

[338] Angela Schmole, *Die Spitzenfrauene des MfS: Bei der Staatssicherheit diente das weibliche Personal nur selten in gehobenen Stellungen*, 112; Angela Schmole, "Frauen im Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (MfS): Die Frauengruppe ist ca. 20 Mann stark. Wer sie leitet, ist unklar." *Heft* 34, 2001, 15-19.

As the GDR entered its second decade and living standards increased slightly, women began to turn to the trade out of secondary necessity.[339] Women like IM Jenny Marx recognized that they could earn more money, including international hard currency, from prostitution than from their primary professions, so they sold sex while also holding regular jobs.[340] According to Stasi estimates, Marx earned upwards of 40,000 M and a few thousand DM "through her work as an hwG Person" at the Leipzig Trade Fair.[341] Because the Leipzig Trade Fair, hosted semi-annually in Leipzig's city center, attracted upwards of 600,000 people, women accumulated large amounts of money relatively quickly.[342] According to one female informer, she usually earned enough income at the Messe "to last until the next fair."[343] Given the frequency of phrases such as "it is known that she takes vacation for the spring and autumn fairs," "she is released from work due to her illness or her child's illness or takes leave" and "she is often written off sick, probably has a doctor that writes sick notes without any problems" in archived Stasi files from BV Leipzig, it is likely that Marx took vacation days or called in sick from her day job to earn income through prostitution.[344]

Despite having financial support from wealthy family members in the West and a full-time job, Nina T. also sold sex.[345] She put her regular salary into savings, and used

[339] See Paul Betts, *Within Walls* for more on East German living standards throughout the 1960s.
[340] Importantly, Jenny Marx was also the name of Karl Marx's wife.
[341] In 1986, the Stasi wrote that another woman worked four days a week, but "the rest of the time they need to work as an hwG-Person," earning 300M per encounter; BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Lpz-Stadt 851 "Operativinformation 10/86" Leipzig, 15. 01. 1986; BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig, KDfS Lpz-Stadt, 851, "Operativinformation 10/86" Leipzig, 15. 01. 1986 BStU 0001.
[342] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 291.
[343] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 293.
[344] BStU, MfS, BVfs Lpz, KDfS Lpz-Land 3434, "Information" Leipzig, 22. 07. 1987, BStU 0001.
[345] Detecting this form of prostitution was the most complicated for police. Because Nina was legitimately employed, she would have possessed a workbook and legitimate certificate of employment; Dobeš, "Prostitution as a Special Form of the Offence of Social Parasitism in Socialist Czechoslovakia*,"* 93.

income generated through prostitution to pay for luxuries and vacations.[346] In her Stasi file, Nina is reported to have declared, "I know that I would not have been able to have such an account balance on my fixed monthly salary alone."[347] For Nina, prostitution was also a way to procure beautiful and costly consumer goods in a planned economy. According to her 237-page interrogation record, she received three mohair turtleneck sweaters, three summer sweaters, five summer dresses, one sport and one wool dress, eight pairs of tights, a dark blue maxi coat, a grey-white winter coat, two pairs of boots, hot pants, nightgowns, slippers, a corduroy pantsuit, soap and Nivea cream, cosmetics, false eyelashes, a pearl necklace, a 14-carat gold ring, and a leather wallet as payment for sexual intercourse performed between 1968 and 1971. She also received alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, sweets, and Hungarian salami.[348]

Coincidence also led some women to enter prostitution. In *Prostitution in der DDR*, Brüning outlines two scenarios where this was the case. In the first, a young Leipzig woman visited her friend's apartment and "noticed the modern and luxurious furnishings…After a few glasses of wine, the two women's conversation turned to how they could make a lot of money quickly. The inexperienced woman learned that her host was prostituting herself. Without further ado, the two women went together to engage in street prostitution on Leipzig's Nordstraße."[349] The second scenario involves Ruth K., who will also be discussed in Chapter Four. In an interview, she told Brüning,

> I can start with my first experience. I don't know anymore how old I was then. I was between 17 and 19. Sort of that age. And I hitchhiked because my parents lived in Thuringia, and I trained as a nurse here near Potsdam. And then I went

[346] BArch, MfS, GH 13-73, Bd. 1. "Vernehmungsprotokoll," 10. 5. 1972 BStU 000205.
[347] BArch, MfS, GH 13-73, Bd. 1. "Vernehmungsprotokoll," 10. 5. 1972 BStU 000205.
[348] BArch, MfS, GH 25-72, Bd 1., "Vernehmungsprotokoll," Berlin, 30. 11. 1971. BStU 000090; "Verhehmungsprotokoll," 1. 12. 1971, "Vernuhmungsprotokoll," 6.12.1971.
[349] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 236.

> with a Frenchman who seemed ancient to me, but he definitely wasn't 30 yet. And then he asked me, he gave me 150 Marks. And he asked me if I would do it with him for that. I didn't think about it.[350]

Finally, prostitution continued to flourish because there was a market for it. The number of customers always exceeded the number of prostitutes themselves.[351] In an interrogation report from May 11, 1964, one male citizen explained why he solicited sex under socialism:

> Because of my bad experiences I made the decision not to marry again. I therefore began to have intimate relationships with prostitutes in 1956, recognizing that this was morally better than the usual cheating used by unmarried people for the purpose of satisfying their sex drive. In the period from 1956 to my imprisonment, I often changed relationships in order not to let the prostitute and myself to come into closer personal contact. Altogether I got to know about sixty or seventy prostitutes whose acquaintances I made mostly near the Alexanderplatz S-Bahn station…I maintained relationships with the individual prostitutes solely to satisfy my sexual needs.[352]

A DVP Lieutenant also argued that "sexual differences" between he and his wife, combined with his wife's "domineering and unreasonable personality," "led him to seek sexual balance" on Nordstraße. His commanding officer wrote: "From the outset, he did not aim for contact with hwG people, but he saw this as the easiest way."[353]

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[350] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 234.

[351] While other studies on modern prostitution cite drug addition as a motivating factor, there was no mention of it in the consulted files.

[352] The Stasi arrested him because he was a spy for the West German Federal Intelligence Service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*, BND). His interrogation report notes that he "did not let [a prostitute] go to the toilet [in his home] because I had just hung-up films with spy information in my bathroom to dry at the time of her visit"; BArch, MfS, AU 7175-66 Bd. 1. "Haftbeschlus" Berlin, 1. 10. 1963 BStU 000208.

[353] BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AOPK 750/88, "Einleitungsbericht zur OPK 'Nord'" Leipzig, 03. 03. 1987 BStU 000011.

Perceptions of Prostitution in the GDR

Prostitution remained necessary and/or advantageous for women – even under a socialist model of government. At the same time, its continued existence suggested that socialism was not working, and that the SED Party was failing to control its population. To maintain the appearance of control and explain why female citizens – who had seemingly been given everything they needed to exit prostitution – continued to exchange sexual services for money, the SED used rhetoric from the eighteenth century to argue that they were 'perverse,' 'sexually abnormal' and 'degenerate.' They also framed prostitution as an individual failure instead of a structural problem, which led to the increased policing of women's lives. As Barbara Havelková explains in her study of socialist Czechoslovakia, "when the person in prostitution was conceptualised as an agent making a free choice, she could be judged for making the 'wrong' choice. She was then perceived as a 'villain' and thus a legitimate object for control and punishment."[354]

Because Stasi files reflect the biases and attitudes of their male creators, sketches of mental deficiencies and moral degeneracy appear in hundreds of women's files. A handful of case files from the 1950s even use identifiers such as 'tramp' and 'brothel maiden.' In 1958, the Stasi wrote of Elke. W: "From that day until her imprisonment, she led a tramp's life and frequented the towns of Oranienburg, Potsdam, Teltow, Strausberg and West Berlin…the VP arrested her and warned her four times because of her tramp life."[355] Similarly, in April 1959, VPI Prenzlauer Berg sent VPI Friedrichshain an excerpt from a prostitute's interrogation transcript. The woman in question, who was accused of pandering

[354] Havelková, "Blaming All Women: On Regulation of Prostitution in State Socialist Czechoslovakia," 180.
[355] BArch, MfS, AU 1572-58, Bd. 2. "Wesentliches Ermittlungsergebnis" Frankfurt-Oder, 04. 06. 1958 BStU 000010.

and commercial indecency, was referred to as a *Bordelldirne* or "brothel maiden" by Prenzlauer Berg personnel.[356] Their use of the term *Dirne* is particularly interesting because it was used by German authorities to refer to young, unmarried women from the lower classes (sex-selling and not) between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries.[357] Most of the time, though, language of degeneracy was used. For instance, the MfS assessed Marianne H. as a "depraved and morally degenerate person."[358] They identified another young Berlin woman "as a morally and character degenerate person who never did regular work. i.e., lives as prostitute." She was repeatedly described as a "degenerate, mendacious, ordinary asocial, who, in addition to her immoral lifestyle, lives off fraud."[359] A series of brief descriptions of 'hwG' women's character and demeanor found in a 1973 People's Police report from Eisenach reinforces these judgments (Figure 6). In this report, eight 'hwG' designated women were described as "stupid." A mix of type-written and hand-written descriptions accompany a series of headshots reading: "primitive," "asocial, naïve," "stupid and primitive, physically fat," "stupid, keen on men," "primitive," "antisocial behaviour, stupid," "stupid, outspoken hwG person."[360] Two women from Leipzig, described as "stupid and talkative," were seen as living "a primitive way of life," while a woman from Potsdam was labeled "gullible, naïve," and "mentally primitive." Out of thousands of files, I have found only one case where a female described another woman as stupid. IM Anton Meyer wrote of another female subject in 1982: "*Schließlich sieht sie*

[356] BArch, MfS, AU 281-60 Bd. 1. "Betr: Verdact der Kuppelei" Berlin, 1. 4. 1959, BStU 0015.
[357] Schwules Museum, 'With Legs Wide Open," Visited by author June 22, 2024.
[358] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 611-77, Bd. 1. "Ermittslungsbericht" Leipzig, 2. 4. 1964, BStU 000095.
[359] BArch, MfS, AU 43-56, Bd. 1. "Betr: [Redacted]" Berlin, 22. 06. 1955, BStU 000196.
[360] BStU, BV Erfurt, Abt. II, 760, "Betreff: Personenaufstellung" Volkspolizei-Kreisamt, Eisenach, Abteilung K - Komm I.; BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 395-87. IKMO Reg.-Nr. 183/69 "Berichtete," 09.12.80. BDVP – Abteilung K – Dezernat I – Leiter des Dezernats – 50 Erfurt, 4.4.1973.

doof aus" or "After all, she looks stupid."[361] Similar attitudes can be found throughout DVP files. Like the Nazis, the Stasi also adopted the nineteenth century term 'feebleminded.' This indicates that older beliefs surrounding the interconnectedness of prostitution, female promiscuity, and 'feeblemindednesses' remained unchallenged during this period.[362]

In several instances, although terms such as 'primitive,' 'stupid,' or 'feebleminded' may not appear in the files, the Lombrosian belief that prostitution was something only undertaken by primitive people shines through the pages.[363] In the case of the Prenzlauer Berg doctor discussed earlier in this chapter, his depiction of women as having "no idea about personal hygiene and cleanliness" was intended to emphasize their lack of civilization. The same can be said of his moralizing lamentations about his female patients needing to be taught the virtues of cleanliness. Similarly, in *VEB Bordell*, Falck quotes an unidentified healthcare worker who conducted gynecological examinations on women he was disgusted by:

> The undisciplined behaviour of the majority of those being examined is intolerable in normal consultation hours…when you look over to the waiting room during a screening, you are always amazed at how the majority of those gathered there can make an impression on men….the majority of women are in such an external condition that it should be easy for lovers to renounce the 'sin'…also the inner condition is in no way inferior to the outer one and is as unkempt as the latter.[364]

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[361] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 2185/87 Bd. 2. "Bericht" Leipzig, 14. 03. 1982 BStU 000219.
[362] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 611-77, Bd. 1. "Ermittlungsbericht" Leipzig, 02. 04. 1964 BStU 000095.
[363] Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) was an Italian eugenicist and anthropologist. Together with William Ferrero, he wrote the first criminological text to study the female criminal, titled *The Female Offender* (1898). After examining the bodies/skulls of 225 "normal women," 176 "female criminals" (i.e. thieves) and 685 "prostitutes," Lombroso argued that female criminals, including prostitutes, could be identified by certain aesthetic traits. He made observations such as: "female thieves, and above all prostitutes, are inferior to moral women in cranial capacity and circumference, and their cranial diameters are less; but, on the other hand, their facial diameters are larger, especially in the jaw" and "almost all anomalies occur more frequently in prostitutes than in female offenders, and both classes have a larger number of the characteristics of degeneration than normal women." Thus, the concepts of the "born criminal" and "born prostitute" were born; Cesare Lombroso & William Ferrero, *The Female Offender*, (New York: Appleton, 1898), 74, 85.
[364] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 826.

The idea that this demographic needed to be taught habits like bathing to become self-policing citizens mirrors People's Police beliefs about mental hygiene. In one document held in Landesarchiv Berlin, an officer wrote that, "cleanliness has a psychological impact…you involuntarily walk on tip toes across a neatly maintained floor, and you move forward in a clean suit. But where there is already dirt, you adapt to the dirt and lose the feeling of cleanliness."[365] To the Stasi, the contraction of sexual infections was evidence of prostitutes' specific inferiority. The Stasi wrote of Elke W. in 1958: "indicative of the moral depravity of the accused is the fact that in November 1957 she contracted a venereal disease and had to be forcibly subjected to medical treatment by a doctor."[366] This rhetoric played a key role in the state's exertion of biopolitical power over the female body.[367]

The SED's second explanation for why prostitution did not fade away under socialist law goes hand in hand with the first. They anticipated that prostitutes had profound psychological issues that set them apart from so-called normal GDR citizens. Specifically, they were "unstable and weak-minded people" with pathological sexual desires.[368] Their sexual desire was so excessive, functionaries held, that it often outweighed their ability to think rationally or participate in socialist society. On this subject, Dürning and Hardtmann wrote in their thesis, "What is characteristic of the prostitute in this group is that the social and sexual maldevelopment has progressed to such an extent that…she is unable to accept

[365] Landesarchiv Berlin, C Rep 303, Nr. 59.
[366] BArch, MfS, AU 1572-58, Bd.2. "Wesentliches Ermittlungsergebnis" Frankfurt-Oder, 04. 06. 1958
[367] Kayla Strauss, "Girl Power in the Shadow of Biopower," *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 22:3, 2024, 674.
[368] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt – Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit," BStU 000025

her position, tasks and perspective in our socialist society."[369] Authorities labelled women as 'oversexed' predators even when the way that they saw themselves did not correspond.[370] Nina. T. rejected the terms that the Stasi associated with her sexuality, stating, "I would like to say that my sexual disposition is normal, and there were no compelling reasons for my frequently changing male acquaintances." For her, sex was simply a means to a desired end.[371] Likewise, the Stasi file of IM Barbara Schwarze declared: "she doesn't have any moral remorse and regards her actions as normal."[372] Other women that the state attempted to place outside of the sexual norm slept with different men but did not consider themselves to be prostitutes at all. Eva B. was insulted when the Stasi approached her to be an informer based on her prostitution work in 1978. According to her file, she did "not put herself on the same level as prostitutes" because "she wants to have a good time, seeks out men she likes and doesn't take 'lump sums' for nights out. She accepts gifts such as jewellery, textiles, or money given to her by contacts without her wish."[373] In an interview with historian Steffi Brüning, Eva explained that instead of using the term prostitution, she would say she "was engaged in sexual adventures and short-term relationships in exchange for gifts."[374] Nonetheless, the state labeled her a prostitute.

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[369] I have only seen one case where the female candidate appears to agree that she has a strong sexual disposition. In a contact interview with Elfriede F. from 1981, the following statement is recorded: "on her own initiative, she informed the signatories that she is currently undergoing medical treatment to curb her sexual needs, and that the treatment is having a positive effect on her." Later in her file, another officer wrote, "currently, she is undergoing neurological treatment to reduce her desire for masturbation, approximately 3-4 times a day." Even still, Elfriede's own words are absent from the document; BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AKAG 201-89, Bd 1. "Betreff: Befragung der…." Leipzig, 10.07.1981 BStU 000067; BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt – Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit," BStU 000022.
[370] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt – Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit," BStU 000022.
[371] BArch, MfS, GH 13-73, Bd. 1.
[372] BArch, MfS, BV, Lpz. AOG 395-87, "IKMO Reg.-Nr. 183/69 Bericht" 09.12.80.
[373] BStU, MfS, BVfS Potsdam, Abt. XVIII 433_1, "Bericht zum Kontaktsgespräch" Potsdam, 16. June 1989. BStU 000201.
[374] Steffi Brüning, "Prostitution in der DDR" *Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv*, https://www.digitales-deutsches-frauenarchiv.de/themen/prostitution-der-ddr

To state actors, another signifier that prostitutes were different to the point of abnormality was their apparent negative attitude towards work.[375] Because revenue generated from prostitution was considered unearned, state actors applied the Nazi-era descriptor of 'work-shy' or *Arbeitsscheu* to individuals who were unable to prove they had regular employment despite being physically capable.[376] They also designated women like Erika, who were regularly absent from work without an excuse, as a 'work-shirker' or *Arbeitsbummler*.[377] According to Erika's K1 file, she "was absent 78.75 hours without any explanation."[378] By the time she was formally reprimanded at her place of work, she had missed 192.5 hours since the time of her hiring at her respective company.[379] The K1 considered Erika's violations of socialist labour discipline to be proof that she was a socially useless non-producer or 'welfare parasite' who freeloaded on other people's work, thereby harming both herself and the collective.[380] These perceptions had wide-reaching implications for women who performed sexual labour, as they shaped laws, regulations, and policies. The identity ascription of 'abnormal,' for instance, framed somebody's sexuality as deviant, dangerous, and as intricately connected to contagion, vice, and crime.

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[375] The files of women who participated in the sex trade often include the phrases "does not work a regular job," "roams around," "floats around," "loafs at work," and "doesn't break a leg at work"; BStU, MfS, HA II 1044, Berlin, 9 .7. 1986; BStU, BV Erfurt, Abt. II, 760.
[376] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 67.
[377] Richard Millington emphasizes that employment did not always stop citizens from engaging in behaviour that was considered deviant. In 1962, he writes, SED officials in Magdeburg complained that "younger workers who had recently finished their apprenticeships and had begun to earn money did not know what to do with their newly found, albeit modest, wealth. They were choosing to 'pour it down their throats' and then committing criminal acts in their inebriated state"; Richard Millington, "State Power and 'Everyday Criminality' in the German Democratic Republic" *German History* 38:3. 2020, 445.
[378] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AKAG 201-89, Bd 1. "Einschätzung der Persönlichkeit des IKM/R-Kandidaten" Leipzig 26. 02. 1982 BStU 000080.
[379] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AKAG 201-89, Bd 1. "Einschätzung der Persönlichkeit des IKM/R-Kandidaten" Leipzig 26. 02. 1982 BStU 000080.
[380] Jane Freeland, "Creating Good Socialist Women: Continuities, Desire, and Degeneration in Slatan Dudow's 'The Destinies of Women,'" *Journal of Women's History* 29:1, 2017, 90; Dobeš, "Prostitution as a Special Form of the Offence of Social Parasitism in Socialist Czechoslovakia," 84.

This reinforced a demand for their social exclusion and gave the Stasi a way to exercise control over their bodies.

Administrative Responses to Prostitution in the 1950s

Because the continued existence of commercial sex conflicted with socialist ideals, authorities subjected prostitutes – particularly those in poverty since they were the most visible – to considerable censure. Prior to formulating their own prostitution policy in line with Soviet ideology in 1961, East German policymakers relied on existing terminology such as 'hwG,' and 'asocial,' as well as disciplinary measures from earlier regimes. For example, the Soviet parentage of SMAG Orders No. 25, 30, and 273 ensured that they remained legally valid throughout the 1950s. In the absence of a formal vice squad, however, lower-level administrators like the People's Police, municipal health authorities and the MfS became responsible for enforcing them. The People's Police continued to add the names of women they deemed to be legally definable as prostitutes, meaning those who engaged in "sexual intercourse or acts similar to sexual intercourse for material or financial gain and indiscriminately solicit[ed] a partner in public for this purpose" to central registers.[381] They also recorded the names of purportedly 'unrestrained' or 'unbridled' women, considering them to be "extremely dangerous not only for the spread of venereal disease but also for disseminating moral contagion."[382] In a report from August 15, 1951,

[381] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt – Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit," BStU 000022.

[382] Notably, the registration of 'hwG' women was more arduous than authorities anticipated. In 1957, a government meeting was held to address the prevalence of sexual infections in East Germany. During this meeting, a representative from the People's Police discussed how difficult it was to register hwG women, noting that "everything takes place in bars today so that it is difficult to control. In Berlin, the unrecorded hwG persons are estimated to be around 3000, who pose a constant threat," Brüning, *Prostitution in der* DDR, 54; Maria Höhn, *GIs and Frauleins: The German American Encounter in 1950s West Germany*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 147.

for example, a Dessau venereologist referenced "the large group of hwG people from whom all infections originate."[383] The People's Police used the Weimar-era acronym 'hwG' to identify these individuals, believing that they endangered the public order just as much, if not more than prostitutes.

West German authorities shared this concern about the presence of 'hwG' women, judging them to be more difficult to manage and more dangerous than 'professional' prostitutes. In May 1953, for instance, the German Association for Public and Private Welfare's 'Nonsettled and Uprooted' committee met to discuss the problem of sexual immorality. At this meeting, which was attended by West German psychiatrists, social hygienists, magistrates, police officers, and social welfare representatives, a municipal representative from the city of Mannheim stressed that "the question of brothels was irrelevant…because the new enemy is not the professional prostitute, but the secret prostitute and the [promiscuous] individual."[384] Frankfurt's chief social welfare worker agreed, declaring that "professional prostitutes were not the problem because they knew the rules of the game and played by them conscientiously." She considered 'hwG' individuals to be more dangerous because they "were convinced that they have a right to their way of life."[385] While professional prostitutes represented order, she stated, "the unrestrained life of the hwG person created a public 'annoyance' and thus presented a great source of disorder."[386] What behaviour constituted an annoyance was to be decided by disciplinary actors.

[383] Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672.
[384] Höhn, *GIs and Frauleins: The German American Encounter in 1950s West Germany*, 147.
[385] Höhn, *GIs and Frauleins: The German American Encounter in 1950s West Germany*, 147.
[386] Höhn, *GIs and Frauleins: The German American Encounter in 1950s West Germany*, 147.

Considering all women who engaged in pre-marital and extra-marital sex to be sources of disorder and venereal diseases, law enforcement required registered 'hwG' women to undergo smears and blood tests at the counseling center for sexually transmitted diseases every eight days. Some had to go twice a week.[387] This weekly testing was referred to as the "duty to perform," and the dates and results of each test were written on registration cards.[388] If somebody missed an exam, they could be immediately confined to a prison or closed hospital. The legal basis for this provision was Section 327 of the Criminal Code, 'Violation of Barrier Measures,' which stated that anybody who knowingly violated bans "ordered by authorities to prevent the introduction or spread of a contagious disease will be punished with imprisonment of up to two years or a fine."[389] Twenty-five-year-old Hilde W. had numerous convictions under Section 327. On February 7, 1953, she was convicted of "violating the barrier measures (prostitution)" and received seven months in prison. On December 14, 1953, she received three months in prison for the same offense. On July 1, 1954, she received three months in prison for "lack of ID and homelessness." On May 20, 1955, she received three months for violating the registration regulations. Lastly, on November 22, 1955, she received seven months in prison for once again violating the barriers measures (prostitution).[390]

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[387] Simic, "Prostitution in Socialist Yugoslavia: from Stalinism to the Yugoslav way," 249-267.
[388] In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault charts the shift away from "irregular and rapid" medical inspections towards a system of "regular observation that placed the patient in a situation of almost perpetual examination." He writes, "Disciplinary power is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time, it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection," Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* 186-7; Simic, "Prostitution in Socialist Yugoslavia: from Stalinism to the Yugoslav Way" 249-267.
[389] BStU, MfS, AS 86/59, Bl. 80-90; "Return of Republic Refugees" December 5. 1956 https://www.ddr-im-blick.de/jahrgaenge/jahrgang-1956/report/rueckkehr-von-republikfluechtlingen/
[390] BStU, MfS, AS 86/59, Bl. 80-90; "Return of Republic Refugees" December 5. 1956 https://www.ddr-im-blick.de/jahrgaenge/jahrgang-1956/report/rueckkehr-von-republikfluechtlingen/

The case of Hildegard N. from 1956 had a similar outcome. Hildegard was registered as an 'hwG-Personen' in September 1955 but suffered several bouts of sexual infection before then. She was charged with "knowingly endangering the health of their partners by engaging in sexual intercourse though the doctor prohibited it due to her health history" under Clause 5 of the 1927 'Law for Combatting Venereal Diseases'.[391] The People's Police wrote:

> The accused is a dodgy element who, through frequently changing sexual intercourse, despite sexually transmitted diseases, harmed the health of many citizens of our republic and especially those of the members of the National Peoples Army. She damaged her health and the health of other people, so the doctors were forced to file a criminal complaint against them in order to isolate them from society by punishing them. She led a parasitic existence in our workers' and peasants' state, stole and lied to her relatives, and knew how to use lies to gain the trust of members of the National Peoples Army…The accused is mentally very active and fully responsible under criminal law, as well as being able to recognize the social danger of her criminal acts. She was forbidden to engage in sexual intercourse during her treatment and continued her frequently alternating sexual intercourse.[392]

According to a letter sent by the People's Police to the Schwerin Polyclinic, Hildegard had been convicted of a prostitution offense and sentenced to one-year imprisonment in a carceral institution. She was exiled to a workhouse three years prior for being work-shy in 1952. These punishments, designed to isolate and ostracize her from society, were imposed on her for leading "a reckless life at the expense of the working people and because of her repeated illness with gonorrhea."[393] The case files of two other Schwerin women indicate they were also "repeatedly venereal" during this period. They were both "placed in the

[391] BArch, MfS, AU, 333-56, Bd. 2. Politiklinik-Krankenhaus Schwerin, Amulatorium – "An das Volkspolizeikreisamt Abt. Kriminalpolizei – AK Schwerin, 2.6.1956 BStU 000139.
[392] BArch, MfS, AU 333-56, Bd 4., "Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik Ministerium fur Staattsicherheit" Schlußbericht, Berlin, 18.8.1956 BStU 000006.
[393] Politiklinik-Krankenhaus Schwerin, Amulatorium – "An das Volkspolizeikreisamt Abt. Kriminalpolizei – AK Schwerin, 2.6.1956 BStU 000139.

Schwerin-Görries sanitorium," with one having been admitted "several times for treatment."[394]

The double standard of 'infected' woman vs. 'clean' man is further exemplified by the case of Else L., whose life was intruded upon by the People's Police under the pretext of VD.[395] On February 2, 1957, the People's Police accused Else, a registered 'hwG' person, of carrying and passing a venereal disease to a member of the National People's Army, with whom she had intimate relations in October 1956.[396] Despite the passage of several months, he had identified her as the source of his current affliction. After forcibly removing her from her apartment, a criminal police officer admitted her to the Halle hospital's skin and venereal disease ward for "observation."[397] Inside this institution, medical personnel forced her to forfeit all her personal belongings, bathe, and don institutional clothing. They also subjected her to a painful gynecological exam. Five days passed before Else learned that her smear test did not detect any sexual infections, and that she was being held unethically. She promptly fled the polyclinic without her nurses' permission and returned home to her apartment. Angered by her unlawful confinement and seeking revenge, Else made leaflets reading "Hands Off the National People's Army" and

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[394] BStU, MfS, BV Swn, AP 925-57, "Abschrift" Schwerin, 7. 6. 1956, BStU 0004; BArch, MfS, BV Swn, AIM 632-52 Bd.1. "Bericht" Schwerin, 22. 02. 1952.

[395] Kampf, "A 'little world of your own': Stigma, Gender and Narratives of Venereal Disease Contact Tracing," 235.

[396] Because Stasi files are seldom single documents, we can understand why Else's story progressed the way it did by reviewing more of her file. Her record indicates that as a "severely sexually ill" juvenile, she bounced between homes for delinquent youth and workhouses. She cycled through the criminal justice system in early adulthood, receiving prison sentences for forging documents, "defying state authority" and "violating the law for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases." These infractions prompted health authorities, civilian law enforcement and the Stasi to label Else an 'hwG' person. The Stasi also categorized Else as "morally depraved" and "morally unsound." Of her mental state, they wrote: "the accused is a pseudological psychopath: i.e. a person who puts forward stories made up out of a need for recognition and a desire for sensation; to make yourself feel important." Presumably the Stasi's use of the term "pseudological" is meant to denote Pseudologia Fantastica, a psychiatric condition known to cause pathological lying. Their use of it is gendered; BArch, MfS, AU 290-50, Bd. 1. Halle, 6. 6. 1957, BStU 0164.

[397] BArch, MfS, AU 290-50, Bd. 1, Berlin, 2.3.1957 BStU 0110.

stuck them onto the walls of their Paracelsusstraße and Keilstraße barracks.[398] Before she could do the same to the barracks on Stalin-Allee, however, she was "stopped in the street by the same police officer who had fetched me on February 2 and brought back to the hospital." After being denied leave from the venereal ward once again despite the absence of gonorrhea, she pocketed "a polyclinic stamp, a prescription book and over 115 prescription forms, some of which were stamped" and escaped.[399] Fearing that she would be taken back to the hospital for a third time, she attempted to flee to West Berlin. Not even one hour later, however, Else was arrested for slandering the National People's Army, theft, espionage, and planning to leave the GDR. There was no leniency for her. Rather, she was sentenced to two years in prison. Upon her arrival at the carceral institution, Else "stressed that she will commit suicide as soon as she can."[400]

Police Raids and Other Spatial Strategies

Like earlier regimes, East German authorities often displaced women who engaged in transgressive sex from specific locations to protect public decency and disguise the persistence of commercial sex. During the first decade of the GDR's existence, the People's Police prepared and conducted two or three 'GeKra' raids per month in every city.[401] These cleansing operations, while only a temporary solution, targeted a dense network of venues

[398] When asked why she chose to disseminate pamphlets, she replied that she "had a hatred against the army and wanted to take revenge," BArch, MfS, AU 290-50, Bd. 1.
[399] BArch, MfS, AU 290-50, Bd. 1, Berlin, 2.3.1957 BStU 0134.
[400] BArch, MfS, AU 290-50, Bd. 1. Halle, 6.6. 1957, BStU 0160.
[401] Welfare authorities from the Central Office for Combatting Venereal Diseases were not permitted to ID anybody or carry out checks without the involvement of the People's Police; Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 795; Hearne, 'Selling Sex under Socialism: Prostitution in the Postwar USSR*"* 294-5.

that the police deemed to be hotbeds of prostitution and its associated infections.[402] Although I was unable to locate documents outlining exact raid protocol, Andrea Rottmann's description of police raids on queer bars is likely applicable here.[403] Rottmann states:

> In preparation for the 1957 raids on queer bars, officers noted the license plates of cars that were parked in front of the establishments, documenting owners' data in the files. They observed what kind of crowd gathered in the bars, what patrons were doing, and at what time of the night places were busiest. With this information collected, meticulous action plans for the raids were written and the sketches of bars' interiors drawn, complete with exits, windows (barred or not), music box, toilets, and tables and chairs. The "Xs" [in these sketches] show where officers were to be positioned to stop patrons from fleeing.[404]

When plainclothes officers entered a bar, they checked IDs and flung any individuals they judged to be overtly sexual into jail, where health authorities could take them to the hospital and examine them the next morning. They subjected many to either compulsory hospitalization or work education.[405] When Karla S. contracted a venereal disease in 1952 through what she called "immoral behaviour and a bad lifestyle," she did not visit a hospital out of fear of registration and imprisonment. Instead, she sought refuge in the anonymity of Berlin stating, "I assumed that the health department would report me as a carrier of the infection and then I would go to the [closed] hospital for treatment."[406]

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[402] For information on the raiding of queer bars in the GDR, see Andrea Rottmann, "Queer Home Berlin? Making Queer Selves and Spaces in the Divided City, 1945-1970" Doctoral Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2019. See also: Andrea Rottmann, *Queer Lives Across the Wall: Desire and Danger in Divided Berlin, 1945-1970*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023).

[403] I have based this assumption on statements made by the collective of sex workers who curated the Museum of Sex Work at the Berlin Schwules Museum. They write, "the communities of sex workers and queer people have always been closely overlapping and intertwined. Both stand outside the norms of traditional family and reproductive labour and their realities challenge social constructions of gender and sexuality. Our struggles have been one and the same – we have walked the same streets, visited the same bars"; The Schwules Museum, "With Legs Wide Open," Visited by the author on June 22, 2024.

[404] Rottmann, "Queer Home Berlin? Making Queer Selves and Spaces in the Divided City, 1945-1970," 141.

[405] Rottmann, "Queer Home Berlin? Making Queer Selves and Spaces in the Divided City, 1945-1970," 141.

[406] BArch, MfS, AU 27-53, "Haftbeschlus" Berlin 1. 11. 1952, BStU 000063-68.

By forcefully entering spaces and using SMAG Orders No. 25, 30, and 273 to act against so-called 'sexually permissive' women, the DVP tried to eliminate sites of prostitution and moral infection from East German society. While these regulations sought to limit the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, it is clear from the historical evidence that many victims of these massive raids were not ill. In January 1950, People's Police and health authorities conducted nineteen raids in Magdeburg. Though they arrested 167 individuals, only twelve were sick.[407] Brüning reports that 171 raids took place across the GDR in March, during which the police captured 1,753 people. Only fifty-one of them showed signs of syphilis or gonorrhea.[408] She also refers to Central Office statistics from the same month, which indicate that 5,435 individuals underwent screenings. 4,742 people were screened multiple times, but only eighty-three were ill.[409] The work file of Anna Wollin, a thirty-eight-year-old informant, reflects the realities of these operations on the ground. The People's Police expelled Wollin, described as a "street girl" who frequented the harbors of Stralsund "from morning to evening," from the city on March 13, 1952, during one of these cleansing operations. One day later, a Stasi Lieutenant reported that "she was identified during a cleansing of Stralsund," may have been relocated to the Ribnitz district, and "has not yet been traced…her whereabouts cannot be determined."[410] Likely, Wollin was not infected with a venereal disease, and her targeting by the People's Police in a massive show of police power only worsened her living conditions.

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[407] Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672
[408] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 50.
[409] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 52.
[410] A *Fahndungsersuchen* or formal search request was initiated for Wollin two years later June 9, 1955; BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AGI 250-253, "Bericht, Betr: Frau Trude Ruhbart, 20.3.1952 BStU 0012; "Bericht," 14.9.1953. BStU 0016; "Aktennotiz," Rostock, 15.9.1953.

Transcripts from a series of venereology conferences held in the early 1950s further complicate this narrative of women as primary carriers of sexual infection. First, they reveal many of the same members of the People's Police who would have been arresting women they suspected of being sexually infectious repeatedly contracted venereal diseases themselves. The District Venereology Conference held in Magdeburg on September 20, 1951, even kicked off with the statement, "our biggest problem child is still the People's Police."[411] At this conference, a district venereologist from the Saxon town of Torgau reported that of nine new male syphilis cases in January 1950, eight of the individuals were members of the People's Police. Halle's venereologist also reported, "as in the previous month, attention is once again drawn to the relatively high proportion of members of the DVP. Of the 22 new gonorrhea cases, 12 were People's Police officers."[412] The district venereologist from Dessau went even farther, stating "among our new arrivals are members of the People's Police. Two of them were discovered through surprise morning checks…for this reason, the Dessau district Kreisambulatorium felt compelled to investigate the entire police force of the Werkheim-Nord."[413] Several venereologists also reported hosting educational lectures for members of the People's Police.[414] This was their only male-

[411] Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672.
[412] Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672
[413] Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672.
[414] Transcripts from a 1980 general meeting demonstrate that members of the WSE, the paramilitary unit of the Stasi, also had sexual relationships with the same women whose behaviour they were responsible for monitoring and controlling in Suhl. It was reported that several members of the WSE frequented the apartment of one hwG-woman in particular. While not all visits resulted in intimate relationships between the parties, a professional soldier alleged that one sergeant had had "multiple personal contacts" and intimate relations at least seven times. Another had "about 15 personal contacts, [and] about 10 intimate relationships." A Private had six intimate relationships, and another sergeant fifteen. Regulations were outlined to prevent further contact of the members of the WSE members with hwG persons, or rather, to protect soldiers from those cast as loose women. The specific measures included eating in low-quality restaurants instead of five-star establishments, reduced alcohol intake, and limiting their opportunities for freedom of activity. Lastly, the report called on individuals WSE members to reform their behaviour and

oriented control measure, indicating that authorities were more concerned with the sexual behaviour of young, single women. In the words of Antje Kampf, "to be single and to be female meant to be tainted and stereotyped."[415]

Notably, these transcripts also offer information about which female citizens contracted venereal diseases in January 1950. A report from Haldensleben identified the "female professional groups dealing with new diseases" as follows:

Syphilis:	2 housewives 1 housemaid 1 consultation assistant
Gonorrhea:	2 housewives 4 unemployed people 1 office clerk 1 housemaid 1 server

The Haldensleben district venereologist concluded: "It is noticeable that only one waitress, no hairdresser and no other people who are subject to regular examination for sexual diseases are listed."[416] This observation is striking for two reason: first, it shows that certain groups of lower-class women were believed to be the primary transmitters of sexual infection. Second, it acknowledges that this assumption was not substantiated by the data.

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personal habits when it came to interactions with 'hwG' women, and to educate themselves on the dangers of associating with them; BStU Archiv BV Suhl, Abt KuSch Nr. 2698, "Abschlußbericht zum Urgang von Angehörigen der WSE mit HWG-Personen," 1. 10. 1981. BStU 0008, Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt,20. September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672.

[415] Kampf, "A 'little world of your own': Stigma, Gender and Narratives of Venereal Disease Contact Tracing," 235.

[416] Where men were concerned, 1 carpenter, 3 workers, and 1 pharmacy assistant contracted syphilis, and 2 workers, 1 contractor, 1 roofer, 1 driver and 1 butcher contracted gonorrhea; Meldungen aus Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 September 1951: BArch, DQ1/4672.

Zoning Ordinances

In addition to registration and the constant mounting of raids, prostitutes faced restrictions on their movements, places of residence, and behaviour.[417] These policies remained essentially unchanged from the First World War, indicating a continued concern with 'deviant' female sexuality. For example, because "prostitutes who live on the well-known-streets either look out the window or stand in front of their front door with the apartment key in a seemingly harmless manner in order to show their customers that they are free," legislation banned them from living on the first floor of apartment complexes.[418] They could also be forced to resettle if neighbours felt they "caused a nuisance."[419] Greta L.'s case illustrates this. From October to December 1955, Greta lived on the "first floor of an apartment complex. During this time, she had constant visits from men with whom she locked herself in a furnished room for up to three days. She was expelled from this apartment due to her poor lifestyle and constant dealings with men…she was arrested by the People's Police in late April or early May and is said to still be in custody."[420]

The People's Police also prohibited real or suspected prostitutes from visiting certain areas of cities. This included military areas like Soviet barracks, although many women migrated there, nevertheless. Women wanted to be close to Soviet officers because such relationships could protect them from sexual violence, and occupation soldiers also had a higher standard of living than German civilians. A Stasi report from 1951 discussed a woman from Schwerin who maintained close ties with the Red Army:

> She socializes with members of the Red Army. According to information, she sleeps in her apartment during the day and goes to the members of the Red

[417] Wagenaar, "Why Prostitution Policy (Usually) Fails and What to Do About it?," 4
[418] Landesarchiv Berlin C Rep. 303, Nr. 305.
[419] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 6.
[420] BStU, MfS, BV Schwerin 925/57, "Horst Lehmann' Angenommen" 7.06.1956.

> Army at night. She has a child from a Soviet officer born in August and [who] is in Anna Hospital for malnutrition. She allegedly receives a lot of money from Soviet soldiers and leaves smartly dressed.[421]

One year later, another case emerged involving twenty-year-old Marion K., also from Schwerin, who complaints described as "a slave to the Red Army who earns her living through prostitution." The Stasi depicted her as leading an immoral lifestyle by "associating with girls of her own kind" and members of the Red Army.[422]

To address the regularity of prostitution around Soviet barracks, the Chief of the German People's Police issued "Service Instruction of the Chief of the German People's Police No. 18/55: Measures to Combat Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Prostitution" in April 1955. This document aimed to protect civilians and military officials by informing them about ways to guard against sexually transmitted diseases and discipline prostitutes. The first section of the document identified the problem at hand:

> In some districts, especially near barracked units, there are prostitutes and people suspected of being prostitutes. Many of these people come from other districts or counties. The prostitutes encourage sabotage, spread venereal diseases, and alarm the working population. Prostitution also [leads] to violence and other crimes.[423]

Subsequent sections outlined a series of disciplinary measures to clear the Red Army zones of prostitutes. These measures included an increase in the number of inspections performed in local areas; the expulsion of prostitutes from districts in which they do not live; issuing more arrest warrants and subjecting more women to detentions for upwards of six weeks at a time; more frequent registration of prostitutes and suspected prostitutes, and the

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[421] BStU, MfS, BV Suhl, Abt. XX Nr. 1294, "An die Abteilung IV, im Hause, Bericht" Schwerin, 8. 12. 1951.
[422] BArch, MfS, BV Swn, AIM 632-52 BD.1. "Auskunftsbericht" Schwerin, 26.2.52 BStU 000009.
[423] BArch, MfS, BVfS Lpz, BdL 10547, "Dienstanweisung des Chefs der Deutschen Volkspolizei Nr. 18/55: Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankenheiten und der Prostitution" (Service Instruction of the Chief of the German People's Police No. 18/55: Measures to Combat Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Prostitution), BStU 0001.

subjection of all persons suspected of prostitution to more frequent compulsory medical examinations.[424] This increase in medical examinations often led to social humiliation for the women involved, and in some cases, they resisted through physical means. One woman defended herself by "scratching, spitting, and biting" as she was taken to a clinic after her contacts with Soviet soldiers were revealed in 1961. She "tried several times to force the driver of the car to stop driving by trying to snatch the steering wheel from him."[425]

References to commercial fornication around Soviet barracks persisted into the late 1950s and early 1960s. In a report from 1958, the following description appears alongside a woman's photograph: "the above is not of good repute…she associates with Soviet soldiers who come to her apartment in the evening."[426] Likewise, a 1963 report titled "hwG-Persons in the district of Magdeburg-Ost" highlighted that this issue was still occurring on the Kleiner Anger, the banks of the old Elbe, and the Bridge of Peace, as well as at the Herrenkrug Hotel and Kunstlerkaluse and Hansa restaurants. It also occurred on Turmschanzenstraße.[427] The same Stasi file also includes the headshots of twelve young women suspected of frequenting Soviet barracks. In another case from the same year, a woman was observed meeting with members of the Red Army every day during the week of October 14, 1963. She met them at the tram waiting hall on the corner of Berliner-Chausee-Herrenkrugstraße "when it got dark, either alone or with her current girlfriend of the same age."[428] Two years later, in 1965, the Stasi described Ilsa G. as having had a bad reputation in Adlersdorf, a quarter of Berlin located in Treptow-Köpenick, because "her

[424] BArch, MfS, BVfS Lpz, BdL 10547, "Dienstanweisung des Chefs der Deutschen Volkspolizei Nr. 18/55" Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankenheiten und der Prostitution," BStU 0001.
[425] BStU, MfS, BV Mgb KD MD 73566, "Aktenvermerk" Magdeburg, 23. 2. 1961 BStU 0184.
[426] BStU, MfS, BV Mgb, KD MD 73566, Magdeburg, 1. 4. 1958 BStU 0080.
[427] BStU, MfS, BV Mgb, KD MD "Bericht" Magdeburg, 9.9. 1963 BStU 0031.
[428] BStU, MfS, BV Mgb, KD MD 75566, "Beobachtungsbericht" Magdeburg, 1. 11. 1963. BStU 0175.

male acquaintances [were] members of the Soviet Red Army…these connections have existed since 1945."[429]

Other areas of German towns and cities remained free to prostitutes but had an increased police presence. As the capital of the GDR and the country's largest urban metropolis, East Berlin had many "special traffic areas" known for their high concentrations of prostitutes and establishments associated with the sex trade.[430] A series of Stasi investigative orders from 1955 identify Berlin-Mitte as a prostitution hub where increased monitoring was needed around Gasthaus Rosenau on Gormannstraße, Café Burger on Wilhelm Pieckstraße, HO-Gaststatte Meisterkrug, and Gasthof Zum Panther on Rosenthalerstraße.[431] State security also kept track of the Friedrichstraße Goldbroiler and Linden-Corso restaurants and Sofia and Stadt Berlin hotels,[432] tourist areas such as Tucholskystraße, Oranienstraβe Kurfürstendamm, and Unter den Linden, and transportation hubs like the Mitropa restaurant in the Friedrichstraße Bahnhof, Oranienburger Tor, Potsdamer Platz and Alexanderplatz.[433] When asked how she made the acquaintance of men, for example, Hildegard N. answered: "To get to know these kinds of men, I went to existing bars near Alexanderplatz. Due to a somewhat conspicuous

[429] BStU, MfS, HA II 50669 "Abteilung XXI im Hause" Berlin, 8 October 1965.
[430] BArch, MfS, AU 43-65 "Betr: [Redacted]" Berlin, 22. June 1955, BStU 000193.
[431] BStU, MfS, BVfS Potsdam Abt. XVIII 433_1, "Bericht zum 2. Kontaktgespräch" Potsdam, 16. Juni 1988. BStU 000200; BStU 000203; Barch, MfS, AU 43-65 "Betr: [Redacted]" Berlin, 22. June 1955, BStU 000193
[432] According to the Stasi, Bulgarian and Polish citizens were pimps at the Interhotel Stadt Berlin. "They used female people from their home countries between the ages of 25 and 30" to attract the attention of FRG citizens and West Berliners; BStU, MfS, HA XXII 226 31, "Operativinformationen" 31 .07.1984 BStU 000003.
[433] BArch, MfS, AU 698-58, "Vernehmungsprotokoll der Beschuldigten" Berlin, 31. 3. 1955, BStU 0050; BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, AKG Nr. 3642, "VPKA Leipzig, Komm I, 3-208/85, 3-196/75, 20.07.1987.

behaviour in these restaurants, I then was approached by the appropriate men, with whom I then went along and had sex for a fee."[434]

According to the archival material, certain Berlin establishments became so popular over the course of the Cold War that women like Eva B. regularly commuted twenty-seven kilometers from Potsdam to visit them.[435] According to a Stasi contact interview from June 1988, Eva would take the bus to Teltow train station, which was relatively close, on Friday at 3:55 pm. She would catch the S-Bahn into Berlin-Mitte from Teltow, a town in the Potsdam-Mittelmark district. After arriving, she would head straight to Palastcafé for coffee, "where she meets acquaintances or makes new contacts." Her faded Stasi file continues: "In the evenings, with or without new contact partners, she attends the dance event in the Moskau dance coffee shop [on Karl-Marx-Allee], where she also makes contact with people.*"* She would stay overnight with her acquaintances or in a Berlin hotel and return to Potsdam with her two children by Monday morning.[436]

Disciplinary Measures

Because the most effective way to combat sexual immorality and infection was to target the source, which the state believed 'prostitutes' or 'hwG' women to be, women could be plucked from society and sent to isolated institutions for years.[437] The frequency with which correctional facilities like workhouses appear in the Stasi files, along with the nonchalant way they are discussed by state security services, suggests that they were a

[434] BArch, MfS, AU 698-58, "Vernehmungsprotokoll der Beschuldigten" Berlin, 31. 3. 1955, BStU 0050.
[435] A 1956 People's Police report from Landesarchiv Berlin also identifies prostitutes and hwG women as "residents of the outskirts of Greater Berlin, some of whom commute between the GDR, the Democratic Sector of Greater Berlin and the Western Sector": Landesarchiv Berlin, C Rep 303, 595.
[436] BStU, MfS, BVfS Potsdam Abt. XVIII 433_1, "Bericht zum 2. Kontaktgespräch" Potsdam, 16. Juni 1988. BStU 000200; BStU 000203; Barch, MfS, AU 43-65 "Betr: [Redacted]" Berlin, 22. June 1955, BStU 000193.
[437] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR,* 123.

popular discipline strategy for prostitutes and 'infected' individuals during the first two decades of the regime. According to Wahl, as early as 1946, Soviet authorities formed a commission to explore re-establishing the workhouse concept "in a socialist context. The ten appointed experts in this commission were all German, all occupied influential positions in East Germany after the Second World War, and at least four of them had been members of Nazi organizations."[438] After each member supported the reinstatement of the 1933 'Law Against Dangerous Habitual Offenders' in the GDR, Wahl writes, they attempted to disconnect themselves from the Nazi past.[439] Their final report recommending the introduction of workhouses to GDR penal law stated: "The workhouse in its current form not only contains no Nazi elements, but is also quite compatible with the democratic views of the time."[440]

Whereas Third Reich workhouses existed to isolate 'asocial' individuals from their social environments for indeterminant lengths of time, GDR workhouses functioned as a means of correctional education.[441] Re-education was meant to help women who displayed sexual deviance, meaning that their sexuality was distinct from the state's goal of reproducing a healthy workforce, or who suffered from an STI to understand the corruptness of their old way of life. Harsh punitive measures like forced labour were intended to prepare them for reintegration into society.[442] The Workhouse Dresden-

[438] This commission was known as the German Central Administration of Justice (*Deutsche Zentralverwaltung der Justitz*, DZVJ); Markus Wahl, "The Workhouse Dresden-Leuben After 1945: A Microstudy of Local Continuities in Postwar East Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 55:1, 2020, 127.
[439] Eduard Kohlrausch, who practiced criminal law in the German Empire and under the Nazis, declared "that in the case of a second incarceration of 'socially deviant' people, the extension of confinement to an indefinite period, introduced in the previously mentioned 'Law Against Dangerous Habitual Offenders, would be 'absolute progress' in criminal law"; Wahl, "The Workhouse Dresden-Leuben After 1945,"128.
[440] Wahl, "The Workhouse Dresden-Leuben After 1945," 129.
[441] They also isolated 'asocial' individuals from their social environments.
[442] Wahl, "The Workhouse Dresden-Leuben After 1945," 129.

Leuben, for instance, was an institution that offered "safe-keeping, compulsory treatment, and education through work for STD cases."[443] Women accused of work-shyness also found themselves behind its walls, in hopes that their 'idleness' could be cured by forced labour. Given that admission to such institutions carried potentially life-long stigmas, city officials tried to use these stigmas to dissuade other population members from making similar choices.

Indeed, many of the women whose cases are documented in prostitution-related Stasi files passed through one or multiple different workhouses in the 1950s and 1960s. Two months after IM Schwalbe became intimate with a twenty-year-old People's Police clerk in Hotel Astoria in January 1952, she was summoned to her local K1 office. They ordered her to report to the prosecutor's office on Stalinstraße, where she was arrested. For prostitution and spreading venereal disease, even though she did not have one, she was sentenced to one year in prison, and then a workhouse.[444] IM Monika Thiele "was in a youth workhouse from 1958-1960" because "her appearance in public and at home did not conform to the norms of our social life."[445] Another file from 1962 stated,

> The [candidate] is a morally completely depraved person…already at the age of 13, she was sexually ill and, for this reason, had to be admitted to the youth work center in Eilenberg because she wanted to evade health checks…however, the upbringing in the youth work center showed no success. After her release, the…immediately resumed intimate relationships with a wide variety of men. She is now under constant medical scrutiny.[446]

[443] Women with 'hwG' designations were held in individual cells inside an infirmary, which "suited the authorities needs for social and medical monitoring of 'promiscuous' people with STDS"; Wahl, "The Workhouse Dresden-Leuben After 1945," 131.
[444] BArch, MfS, BV Swn, AIM 632-52 Bd. 2. "Abschrift, Bericht" Schwerin, 05.04. 1952 BStU 000022.
[445] BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AIM 2839-62, Beschluß Rostock, 8. 12. 1961 STUA 0018.
[446] BArch, MfS, HA II 39769, "Bericht" Berlin, 22. 06. 1962 BStU 0003.

Notably, the chastisement of sexually active women increased after the SED's Fifth Party Congress in 1958. To increase living standards, the Party adopted the "Ten Commandments of Socialist Morality." Commandment Nine, which read, "You should live clean and decently and respect your family," asked citizens to reserve sex and sexual desire for monogamous, heterosexual relationships with reproductive potential. In this sense, it framed sexual hygiene as a socialist responsibility and encouraged citizens to watch their neighbours more closely and report violations of sexual norms.[447]

Prostitution Policy in the 1960s

All these disciplinary measures continued to be meted out throughout the 1960s. However, there were two significant departures from previous policies which granted East German authorities more power to deal with alleged sexual deviants. First, in line with the general Sovietization of Eastern Europe, the language used by East German authorities to refer to prostitutes became noticeably more Soviet.[448] Not only did the Stasi come to associate the term 'anti-social' – a remnant of Nazism– with 'anti-Soviet' citizens in need of socialist re-education, but Soviet terminology like 'social parasitism' and 'antisocial parasitic lifestyle' also found its way into official GDR discourse.[449] The vagueness of these terms, combined with the construction of the Berlin Wall (1961) and introduction of Paragraph 249 (1968), made it easier and more efficient for the MfS and People's Police to persecute women. Second, in step with Soviet campaigns to address rising levels of

[447] "Ten Commandments of Sociality Morality and Ethics" https://library.fes.de/FDGB-Lexikon/texte/sachteil/z/10_Gebote_der_sozialistischen_Moral.html
[448] Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2014: The Divided Nation*, 157.
[449] Katharina Lenski, "The Stigma of 'Asociality' in the GDR" in Enrico Heitzer, Martin Jander, Anetta Kahane, and & Patrice G. Poutrus (eds), *After Auschwitz: The Difficult Legacies of the GDR.* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2021).

venereal infection, the SED Party introduced their first prostitution-related legislation, titled, the 'Regulation on Prevention and Combatting of Venereal Diseases,' in 1961.[450] An expansion of SMAG Order No. 273, this decree identified prostitutes as sources of physical and ideological contagion and advocated for their forcible confinement to closed wards. In a break from earlier directives, the 'Regulation on Prevention and Combatting of Venereal Diseases' gave health authorities and the People's Police the authority to forcibly admit infected individuals to closed facilities, even if they had declined both inpatient and outpatient treatment.[451] Crucially, individuals who were "strongly suspected of being ill" or who officials believed *might* refuse treatment in the future could also be legally confined to a closed ward without consent.[452] "Strongly suspected of being ill" referred to people who frequently infected others with syphilis or gonorrhea or who changed sexual partners often.[453] All these rulings reflected the Soviet Union's intense focus on preventative medicine and medical surveillance.

The 'Regulation on Prevention and Combatting of Venereal Diseases' also regulated a network of ten closed care facilities across the country. These venereological institutions fell under the joint control of the SED Party, the GDR Ministry of Health (MfG) and the Stasi. Many of these wards resembled prisons with their barred windows and doors, and they functioned not only to cure sexually transmitted diseases but also to detain persons

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[450] For a detailed analysis of this legislation see Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 34-35.
[451] According to Brüning, the "People's Police were no longer allowed to bring people to the GKA on their own initiative" after 1961. The responsibility fell to medical authorities, and the "People's Police were only allowed to provide administrative assistance in the event of a physical threat." She says they broke these rules often; Brüning, "Prostitution in der DDR," *Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv*.
[452] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 100.
[453] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 1541; Orzechowski, Woniak, Schochow, Steger, "Policy Approaches Toward Combatting Venereal Diseases in the Soviet Occupation Zone," 4.

the regime viewed as asocial or 'moronic' and set them back on the socialist path.[454] The closed venereological ward in Halle (Saale) became a template for other VD wards in the GDR. (Figure 7).[455] It was built in 1961 deliberately to "discipline girls and women who did not meet the standards of the communist society."[456] In this period, Halle's 1963 house rules stated: "By means of [moral] education, it needs to be accomplished that, after leaving the hospital, the citizens will come to respect the rules of our state, display a good work discipline, and – in their behaviour in our society – follow our state's principles regarding the coexistence of citizens."[457] They concluded, "The duration of the stay in the closed ward is necessary for the recognition and the complete cure of their common illness, as well as for the preparation of their further life."[458] An accusation of prostitution or a venereal infection was enough to secure a symptomless girl or woman's admittance directly to this closed ward, where she would be required to strip, hand over her possessions, shower, and don institutional clothing in the form of a blue gown. Wardens would then question her about her sexual history, and she would be subjected to a painful gynecological exam. Steger and Schochow write, "In most cases, women were taken randomly and admitted to the closed venereology wards by the police. They were not informed about the purpose, type, and possible side effects of their medical treatments. It

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[454] Schochow, Steger "Closed Venereology Wards in the GDR," 68; Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 121.
[455] Steger, Schochow, "Education and Detention: Halle (Saale) as an Example of 'Geschlossene Venerologische Stationen' in East Germany," University of Kent, Centre for the History of War, Media and Society, https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/munitions-of-the-mind/2016/11/04/education-and-detention-halle-saale-as-an-example-of-geschlossene-venerologische-stationen-in-east-germany/
[456] Located at Kleine Klausstrasse 16 in a sixteenth century building, the Halle ward was previously an "observation and care centre for sexually ill girls and women"; Steger, Schochow, "Disciplining through medicine turning girls and women into 'socialist personalities' at closed venereological wards in communist east Germany (GDR)," 69.
[457] Steger, Schochow, "Disciplining through medicine turning girls and women into 'socialist personalities,'"69.
[458] Steger, Schochow, "Disciplining through medicine turning girls and women into 'socialist personalities,'" 69.

was performed without their consent and therefore constituted a violation of their physical integrity."[459]

Since VD wards served more of an educational than medical function, only a limited number of isolated women suffered from any real infection.[460] The remainder were institutionalized predominantly to awaken a sense of socialist responsibility and help them become "full members of society."[461] For example, young girls that the state "considered particularly promiscuous and easily manageable in education" were routinely institutionalized as 'vagrants.'[462] A thirteen year old was forcibly committed to the Leipzig ward because she was a "permanent runaway," and nineteen-year-old Greta L. was admitted to the Dresden Polyclinic for drinking alcohol.[463] Adult women who avoided regular work even though they were physically able or frequently left their workplaces without permission were also regularly institutionalized under the designation of 'female drifters.'[464] For example, the Stasi files reveal that a forty-five-year-old woman was admitted to Rostock's closed ward in 1969 "because she again skipped work and went on drinking bouts in her apartment."[465] Brüning quotes the People's Police file of another woman admitted to the ward in 1970: "She is not sexually ill…the admission was a preventative measure because she was wandering around and had no place to stay. The

[459] Steger, Schochow, "Disciplining through medicine turning girls and women into 'socialist personalities,'" 68.
[460] Out of the 235 women interned in Halle in 1977, for instance, only seventy women showed genuine signs of infection; Steger, Schochow, "Education and Detention: Halle (Saale) as an Example of 'Geschlossene Venerologische Stationen' in East Germany."
[461] In this regard, closed venereology wards in the GDR differed from their FRG counterparts, as closed wards in Hamburg, Heidelberg, and Munich continued to treat venereal infections in the 1960s; Schochow, Steger, "Were All Compulsorily Committed Women Prostitutes? Closed Venereology Wards in East Germany 1945-1990," 220.
[462] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 111.
[463] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 111, 117.
[464] Schochow, Steger, "Were All Compulsorily Committed Women Prostitutes? Closed Venereology Wards in East Germany 1945-1990," 216.
[465] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 105.

head carer confirmed that 'she was only admitted there because of her current situation.'"[466]

The DVP admitted Eva. B. to the Rostock ward around the same time, after a friend of her mother's denounced her. Having lost her youth to both the First and Second World War, Eva's mother encouraged her daughter to have fun and go out dancing while she was still young. Then, one night, she "was simply taken away" by a People's Police officer. Eva told Brüning, "My mother said, 'What is going on now?' Because he demanded an ID card from me. My mother said, 'Did you screw up? Did you do something political? Or did you steal?'"[467] It did not cross her mind that her daughter was being institutionalized for going dancing. This institutionalization began a chain of admissions, as her new status as a 'prostitute' or 'hwG' person led the police to detain Eva during Baltic Sea Weeks.[468] Rostock celebrated Baltic Sea Week, an international festival focused on culture, sports, and politics from 1958-1975.[469] By hosting foreign visitors from countries directly bordering the Baltic Sea (i.e. Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) and the Soviet Union, the GDR aimed to bolster its respect on the world stage.[470] To further aid these diplomacy efforts, authorities in the Hanseatic city asked citizens to "make their buildings look neat and tidy" and 'cleansed' the streets of individuals like Eva, who they perceived to be undesirable.

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[466] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 105.
[467] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 108.
[468] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 111.
[469] See Jan-Hinnerk Antons. "Public Diplomacy and Personal Encounter: The Triangular Relations between East Germany, Scandinavia and the Soviet Union at the Baltic Sea Week (1958—1975)," *ISTORIYA* 10:7, 2019.
[470] Jan-Hinnerk, "Public Diplomacy and Personal Encounter," 2019.

Paragraph 249

The frequency in which disciplinary actors interned women in closed wards increased with the addition of Paragraph 249 to the penal code. Known as the 'Impairment of Public Order and Security through Antisocial Behaviour' clause or the 'Asocial Paragraph,' it criminalized prostitution in the GDR.[471] It was modeled after the May 1961 Soviet law, 'On Strengthening the Struggle with Persons Avoiding Socially Useful Work and Leading a Parasitical Way of Life,' whose provisions called for the banishment of "individuals who made a living from the informal economy, refused to work or socialized with foreigners" for two to five years.[472] Paragraph 249 declared:

> (1) Anyone who impairs the social coexistence of citizens of public order and safety by evading regular work out of shyness, although he is able to work, shall be sentenced to probation, imprisonment, or imprisonment up to two years.
> (2) Anyone who engages in prostitution or otherwise impairs public order and security through an asocial lifestyle shall be punished in the same way.[473]

Mainly, prostitutes could be legally prosecuted regardless of whether they had regular work or not.[474] Violations of Paragraph 249, which were subject to judgment and could be interpreted arbitrarily, or a conviction of 'asociality' could result in prison sentences of up to two years. The state could sentence recidivists to five-year prison terms.[475]

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[471] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 37.
[472] Hearne, "Sanitising Sex in the USSR: State Approaches to Sexual Health in the Brezhnev Era," 180; See also: R. Beernmann, "The Parasite Law in the Soviet Union," *The British Journal of Criminology* 3:1, 1962; Shiela Fitzpatrick, "Social Parasites: How Tramps, Idle Youth, and Busy Entrepreneurs Impeded the Soviet March to Communism," *Cahiers du monde russe Russie - Empire russe - Union soviétique et États indépendants* 47:1-2, 2006.
[473] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle Loc. 1757.
[474] Havelková, "Blaming all Women on Regulation of Prostitution in State Socialist Czechoslovakia," 171; Orzechowski, Schochow, Steger, "Combatting Venereal Diseases as an Instrument of Politicised Medicine: Analysis on the Example of the Soviet Occupation Zone," 68; "Strafgesetzbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik – StGB – vom 28. Juni 1979" (Penal Code of the German Democratic Republic of June 28, 1979).
[475] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 69.

While the cornerstone of this law had been laid in the Reich Criminal Code of the German Empire and remained in place during the Third Reich, this version had dire consequences for vulnerable groups of women. First, the vagueness of the phrase 'impairing public order" gave bodies like the People's Police, Criminal Police, and MfS a convenient way to justify the surveillance of women they considered promiscuous. They could employ terms like 'social parasite' to intervene in women's lives without formal evidence of prostitution and decide for themselves how deviant behaviour should be categorized or punished.[476] In 1972 and 1973, Brüning says, East German legal authorities meted out a staggering number of criminal convictions for 'antisocial' behaviour under Paragraph 249. In Berlin alone, they sentenced 1,620 people, including at least 115 prostitutes, to labour education.[477] The Presidium of the People's Police viewed this as a success, making the remark that: "It is estimated that as a result of the measures taken by the staff by the end of June 1973, the capital was essentially free of all those who stubbornly persisted in antisocial behaviour and prostitution. The commission of other crimes by these people is thereby decisively prevented."[478] Of course, his self-congratulation did not align with reality.

Although prostitution was now legally *verboten*, and the policing of women suspected of engaging in the act tightened under Paragraph 249, the number of women who sold sex in East Germany did not decrease. There are several explanations for this. The first is that instead of eradicating prostitution as intended, Paragraph 249 forced female

[476] Timm, "Prostitution, Venereal Disease, and Militarized Masculinity," 244.
[477] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 126.
[478] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 153.

streetwalkers, the most visible members of the sex trade, underground.[479] Women abandoned street solicitation in favour of safer, off-street locations such as bars/pubs/taverns, cafés, restaurants, and hotels. In the fishing and transient seafarer city of Rostock, for instance, increased numbers of women generated their business in the Storchenbar on Langenstraße, the Trocadero at Doberanerplatz, the Newa bar in Interhotel Warnow, and the International Club of Seafarers, located within the boundaries of Rostock's old city or *altstadt*.[480] In Potsdam, they frequented Minsk, Klosterkeller, and Hotel Potsdam bars.[481] In Leipzig, the Stasi dubbed Nordstraße "a concentration point of hwG people" due to its proximity to the central train station (Figure 8), but more women visited the bars of Hotel Am Ring, Hotel Am Karl Marx Platz, and Hotel Merkur in the evening and night hours.[482]

This shift in legislation regarding 'anti-social elements' also sparked an increase in home-based or apartment prostitution. Since the 1950s, prostitutes and private citizens had been making their homes available for the practice of fornication. A 1958 police report reveals that VPI Friedrichshain launched an investigation into a woman for renting out her apartment. Her charge read:

> Since the beginning of September 1958, the accused has made their apartment available to other citizens for [prostitution]. In 30 cases, a prostitute was allowed to stay in their home so that they could have sex with male partners. The defendant frequented bars, joined young women, and invited them to her apartment with their partners. She entertained guests with alcoholic drinks, coffee, etc., and then encouraged them to have sex themselves…money was found under the vase after visitors left. Accused not only carried out the crime

[479] Dagmar Herzog, "Sex After Fascism: 'The East German Sexual Evolution,'" in Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (eds), *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 192.
[480] Evans, "Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany," 109.
[481] BStU, MfS, BVfS Potsdam, Abt. XVIII 364_1, "Information zur Person Angelika Techoban, geb. 29. 08. 1948." Potsdam, 22. April 1987 BStU 000070.
[482] BArch, MfS, BV LPz, AOG 395-87, Betr: Auftrag für einen auswärtigen IKM anlaßlich Einsatz Herstmesse 1984" Leipzig, 14.08. 1984 BStU 000024.

> of pandering but also pursued the professional act of fornication herself. The defendant can no longer remember how much money she made through his business conduct, but it must have been high, because the accused did not work, and met all her obligations on time.[483]

When interrogated, she stated, "It is true that I have given other people the opportunity to have sex in my home, but it was always in my presence and accordance with my personal needs and desires. As far as I received money for it, I didn't ask for it, and it was mostly used to buy drinks."[484] According to reports like that of IM Mike Krüger from 1986, Ada F. also "[took] her men home. In addition, she [made] her apartment available to prostitutes from the GDR. The apartment [was] tastefully decorated with expensive and sophisticated furniture. She exchanged the above apartment (one room) for a two-room apartment in Marzahn only 6-7 months ago in order to live closer to the center."[485]

Prostitution Policy in the 1970s and 1980s

As a phenomenon meant to disappear on its own under socialist ideology, prostitution was discussed less publicly in the 1970s than the 1960s. After the police charged Karin B. with prostitution in 1974, they judged her to be an isolated case and "an exception." Her court file read:

> An individual case in our court practice: Karin B., 17 years old, was charged with prostitution and received work training for up to two years. Karin B. is seventeen years old. But she hardly had any dreams. She dreams least of all about love. What she says about it sounds almost business-like, almost a little bitter. She is charged with prostitution. She made a living by selling herself. Prostitution - this is an isolated case in our judicial practice. Because socialism and the buying and selling of feelings are enemies of each other. And yet here stands this seventeen-year-old. As an exception.[486]

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[483] BArch, MfS, AU 281-60, Bd. 2, VPI Friedrichshain U Abteilung, Berlin 20.5.1959 BStU 0219, 0220.
[484] BArch, MfS, AU 281-60, Bd 2. "Ermittlungssache" Berlin, 26. 5. 1959 BStU 0016.
[485] BStU, MfS, HA XXII 1666_1 "Information zu perosnlichen verbingunen der…" Berlin, 18. 10. 1986. BStU 000060.
[486] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 2186.

Of course, disciplinary actors recognized that the teenager was not an exception. The Minutes of a People's Police meeting from March 10, 1971, emphasized the need for "immediate measures to change the situation in some of the capital's key restaurants, especially in the city centre, in order to overcome the phenomenon of prostitution." Among other things, the increased monitoring of the Mitropa, Goldbroiler, Saalbau, Plänterwald, Linden Corso, and Johanniseck, restaurants, in addition those in Hotel Sofia and the City of Berlin Hotel was suggested as an action plan.[487]

Not coincidentally, bids for stricter surveillance of prostitutes coincided with increased access to hormonal contraception and, after 1972, the legalization of abortion.[488] Like many women, female IMs endured dangerous abortion practices before 1972 as a means of controlling their lives. In February 1965, for instance, Leipzig IM Brigitte became pregnant without intending to. According to her file, she was put in touch with someone who performed an illegal abortion in their apartment, and she paid 800 marks for the procedure.[489] During a contact meeting of February 28, 1968, Nina T. also reported that she had had an abortion. She originally consulted a doctor in the Czechoslovak Soviet Socialist Republic (CSSR) who refused to perform the procedure on IMs because of societal disproval and abortion surveillance. He referred her to an unknown doctor who either conducted the operation or gave her something like Orasthin to terminate her

[487] Landesarchiv Berlin, C Rep. 303 Nr. 305, 10. 3. 1971.
[488] "Legalizing First Trimester Abortions in the GDR (March 13, 1972)," published in: *German History in Documents and Images*, https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/two-germanies-1961-1989/legalizing-first-trimester-abortions-in-the-gdr-march-13-1972
[489] BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89 Bd 4 Teil II Band 2, "Vernehmungsprotokoll" Berlin 30. 11. 1971.

pregnancy. She paid 300 Marks.[490] Margrit K. too, was originally summoned to her local police station on June 15, 1970, but could not accept the summons because she had to go to the hospital. She later told the police she did not go to the hospital because she was afraid of an operation. The operation in question was revealed to be an abortion. Her file reads, Margrit K. "is said to have recently done an abortion with the help of her girlfriend. The embryo was 'conveniently located' so there was no need to call a doctor."[491] These files reveal the prevalence of abortion, including self-induced abortion, within the IM community.

With increased access to contraception and reproductive health services, people could prioritize pleasure over reproduction in the 1970s. This 'sexual revolution' prompted venereologists and civilian law enforcement to clamp down on women they defined as promiscuous and mete out punishments in accordance with 1950s and 1960s legislation. They believed that without the fear of pregnancy as a safety valve, women's poor education and anti-socialist stance towards sex would lead to increased personal risk taking – that is, it would encourage women to have indiscriminate, unprotected sex and spread sexually transmitted infections.[492] In reality, many of the women who were subjected to legal compulsion preferred barrier methods like condoms over hormonal contraception. Because they made a living with their bodies, Falck writes:

> Prostitutes behaved conservatively when it came to condoms: for a group of 104 hwG people she surveyed in the 1970s…only five of them used hormonal

[490] Nina may have taken Orasthin, a contraction-inducing drug that was often smuggled from West Berlin for use in abortions. East German customs officials routinely seized vials hidden in cigarette packages, candy wrappers, and lipstick cases; "Vials of Orasthin (1961)," published in*: German History in Documents and Images*, https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/vials-of-orasthin-1961; BArch, MfS, GH 13-73, Bd 1. Title Redacted, Berlin, 6.3.1972, BStU 000053.
[491] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30. 06. 1970. "HSG: Leben und Gesundheit / Brennpunkte" Berlin, 22.03.70.
[492] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle Loc. 1950; Kampf, "A 'little world of your own': Stigma, Gender and Narratives of Venereal Disease Contact Tracing," 239.

> contraceptives. The hwG people would not only contracept, but at the same time protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases and therefore continued to use condoms with the consequence that the number of cases of sexually transmitted diseases did not increase for this group of people.[493]

Likewise, Hardtmann and Dürning wrote in their 1975 thesis: "the prostitute performs in public (mainly on the street, in exclusive restaurants, in bars) …in almost all cases, protective means are used that are delivered by the prostitute."[494]

The MfS also intensified their surveillance of women's bodies in the 1970s. Like venereologists and local police authorities, the secret police saw the expansion of sexual and reproductive freedoms as a sign of rising anti-socialist behaviour. However, unlike these local entities, détente policies provided the MfS with more time and money to put toward domestic surveillance during this decade. At the same time, Ulbricht was replaced by "more hardline" Erich Honecker as SED Secretary in 1971, and Erich Mielke, who had been Minister for State Security since 1957, was promoted to the Politburo, giving him unrestricted authority to issue intelligence orders.[495] This resulted in a drastic expansion of the Stasi. In addition to hiring more full-time employees, the apparatus "stepped up" efforts to deploy more unofficial informers, including women they perceived to be promiscuous.[496] In *Amnesiopoli*s, Eli Rubin offers the following statistics: "in the 1950s, the Stasi employed between 10,00 and 16,000 agents, and utilized between 20,000 and

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[493] 'Prostitute' and 'hwG' are used interchangeably in this quotation; Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc. 1950.
[494] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit: Studien zur Phänomenologie und Aspekte der kriminalistischen Untersuchung von Straftaten gemäß 249 StGB – under besonderer Berucksichtigung der Alternative Prostitution."
[495] The Politburo was the "most supreme policy-making body of the Communist Party"; Richard Popplewell, "The Stasi and the East German Revolution," *Contemporary European History* 1:1, 1992, 43; https://www.britannica.com/topic/Politburo
[496] Jens Gieseke, "East German Espionage in the Era of Détente," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31:3, 2008, 396.

30,000 collaborators…by the 1980s, the Stasi employed around 91,000 East Germans directly, many as officers or agents, and utilized 173,000 IMs."[497]

As the GDR intelligence network expanded, it also professionalized.[498] For example, in 1965, the GDR Council of Ministers raised the Academy of Law in Potsdam-Eiche (*Juristische Hoschschule Potsdam*, JHS), a 'Stasi school" which had existed since 1951, to the status of a legal university.[499] As a result, thousands of MfS employees received ideological training at this institution throughout the 1970s, taking classes on "operational subjects" and producing diploma and doctoral theses on subjects such as interrogation techniques, etc.[500] These exercises in state power not only standardized the mistreatment of vulnerable women, but also aimed to make their victimization as efficient as possible. For this reason, Renate Ellmenreich writes that the relationship between female sexuality and the Stasi became "broken and bent" during this decade.[501]

In the final decade of the GDR's existence, prostitution policies became laxer due to increasing state crises. Brüning notes that the revised criminal code of 1979 classified

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[497] Rubin, *Amnesiopolis*, 132.

[498] The creation of prefabricated mass housing structures called *Plattenbauen* also influenced the Stasi's professionalization by forming what Rubin calls the "Plattenbau panopticon." Because all the buildings in these new housing settlements were identical, Rubin states, and "because these buildings constituted the vast majority of the new settlements being built around the country, the Stasi could train its agents on one or two of the models of building, and the agents could then be ready for conduct surveillance and espionage anywhere throughout the country – the need for local knowledge, normally a major obstacle in police work, ceased to present such a problem." It is unclear whether any of the women whose stories are explored in this dissertation lived in *Plattenbauen*. I suspect that they did not, because they were typically reserved for elites. However, according to IM Mike Krüger's report on page 130, Ada F. moved into a "two-bedroom apartment in Marzahn" in 1986. Located in northeastern Berlin, Marzahn-Hellersdorf was the GDR's "largest prefabricated housing project"; Rubin, *Amnesiopolis,* 13, 132; BStU, MfS, HA XXII 1666_1 "Information zu perosnlichen verbingunen der…" Berlin, 18. 10. 1986. BStU 000060.

[499] "Rename Stasi Doctorates for Transparency, Official Says" *DW*, 2019. https://www.dw.com/en/the-stasis-in-house-doctorates-should-be-relabeled-says-official/a-51794794

[500] The JHS produced 175 doctoral theses and 3700 diploma theses; "Juristische Hochschule des MfS Potsdam (JHS)," Stasi Records Archive, https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/mfs-lexikon/detail/juristische-hochschule-des-mfs-potsdam-jhs/

[501] I would modify Ellmenreich's statement to read "*more* broken and bent" since evidence shows the Stasi began exerting their disciplinary power over women as early as 1951; Falck, *VEB* Bordell, Kindle Loc. 90.

prostitution as a punishable offense, stating, "Anyone who engages in prostitution or in any other way impairs public order and security by engaging in an antisocial lifestyle shall be punished," and that this became increasingly difficult to enforce on the ground.[502] For one thing, venereal wards began to shut their doors. Erfurt's Medical Academy, together with the VD ward at the Frankfurt (Oder) dermatology clinic, closed in 1977 due to staff shortages. Rostock's hospital closed in 1979, and the Halle Polyclinic closed in 1982.[503] These institutional closures meant that the responsibility for locating and treating 'hwG' persons fell on individual welfare workers.[504] Even if everyone was ideologically committed to the cause, limited manpower made this task unmanageable. As Antje Kampf writes, "wrong or out-of-date addresses gave contact tracers a tiring and often unsuccessful hunt around town" for transient individuals.[505] By 1986, according to Brüning, welfare workers were monitoring no more than ten 'hwG' women across the Leipzig district. By 1987, they were monitoring six, and by 1988, they were no longer monitoring any.[506] The Leipzig-Thonberg ward was the last to close in 1990.[507]

Conclusion

East German policymakers actively incorporated regulatory measures from earlier regimes into their control of female sexuality. With the People's Police assuming the role of a de facto Morals Police, they implemented policies reminiscent of the First World War

[502] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 99.
[503] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 182.
[504] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 99.
[505] Kampf examines gendered stigmas attached to venereal disease contact tracers in "A 'little world of your own': Stigma, Gender and Narratives of Venereal Disease Contact Tracing," 240.
[506] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 99.
[507] By the end of the decade, the Leipzig ward was administering HIV tests as part of their routine gynecological examinations; Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 138.

such as registration.[508] Likewise, they subjected prostitutes and suspected prostitutes to zoning ordinances, compulsory medical examinations or detention in a workhouse or prison, expelled them from districts in which they did not live and conducted 'GeKra' raids to cleanse East German society of capitalist vices.[509] These efforts aligned with prostitute's treatment across eastern Europe.[510] From social hygienists in the Weimar Republic, GDR authorities took the terms 'feebleminded' and 'hwG.' The latter, an ambiguous, catch-all abbreviation, offered disciplinary bodies an efficient way to identify 'promiscuous' or 'deviant' women who were not prostitutes. Closed venereology wards or hospitals also came about in Germany's Weimar era. Policymakers adopted Himmler's definition of 'asocial' without modification, in addition to SMAG Orders No. 25, 30, and 273 from the Soviet occupation period. These remained legally valid until 1961.

East German prostitution policy became noticeably more Soviet that year with the establishment of the 'Regulation on Prevention and Combatting of Venereal Diseases'. Based on Soviet models of disease control, this decree advocated for real or suspected prostitutes' forcible confinement to Soviet-style closed wards.[511] The 'Asocial Paragraph' was also modeled after the Soviet law, 'On Strengthening the Struggle with Persons Avoiding Socially Useful Work and Leading a Parasitical Way of Life.'[512] As Soviet terms such as 'parasite' found their way into prostitution policies, socialist initiatives to 're-

[508] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt – Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit," BStU 000022.
[509] BArch, MfS, BVfS Lpz, BdL 10547, "Dienstanweisung des Chefs der Deutschen Volkspolizei Nr. 18/55: Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankenheiten und der Prostitution," BStU 0001.
[510] See footnote 58 for sources. For additional reading see: C. Brenner, "Behind the Crime of 'Parasitism': The Hidden History of Prostitution in Socialist Czechoslovakia" and P. Komaromi, "Hunters, Hotels, and Hungarian Girls: Moral Panic at the Intersection of Prostitution and Tourism under Hungarian 'Consumer Socialism'" in S. Dolinsek and M. Saryusz-Wolska (eds), *Histories of Prostitution in Central, East Central and Southeastern Europe*, (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2023).
[511] Brüning, "Prostitution in der DDR," *Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv*.
[512] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 37.

educate' deviants also kicked off. It was in this environment of disciplinary medicine, to use the words of Steger and Schochow, that the Stasi collaborated with the People's Police and healthcare institutions to construct an intricate system for identifying and recruiting 'sexually deviant' women.

Chapter 3: "The Money Never Ends with Her": The MfS' Identification and Recruitment of 'Promiscuous' Female Informers

In 1970, the head welfare worker at the Rostock closed hospital, which operated from 1955 to 1979, began collaborating with the Stasi. Because of her senior position at the hospital on Johannisstraße 8 and her regular interactions with the 'asocial' women held there, the MfS recruited her as an IM.[513] As female patients cycled through the hospitals thirty-two beds, she supplied the Stasi with their names and medical reports. According to Brüning, her nine-year collaboration "put pressure on IMs that had already been recruited and made the Stasi aware of women who could be used as IMs."[514] Across the country, surveillant state institutions developed similar alliances with the Stasi. The MfS used the information these institutions supplied, and the laws and regulations they enforced, to expand their reach and maintain political and social control over vulnerable women.

In East Germany, gendered control extended beyond one space. Different state actors had their own reasons for becoming involved in women's private sexual lives, dispersing power and making it more pervasive.[515] It is clear from the preceding chapter that civilian law enforcement agencies like the People's Police monitored lifestyles they deemed immoral and worked with health authorities to curb the prostitution market, remove individuals they perceived as morally dangerous from society and re-educate them. But the MfS and K1 also had a personal stake in turning 'sexually permissive' women into secret police informants. And since all government agencies were allies under socialism, they

[513] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 105.
[514] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 104.
[515] See: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison*; Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.

trusted health personnel, with their intimate knowledge about this target group, to help them identify potential informants, whom they later extorted into collaboration. In this chapter, I argue that the Stasi would not have been able to identify or intimidate women into collaboration without exploiting regulatory measures from Chapter Two. In the late socialist period especially, case officers threatened to arrest, imprison, or admit potential informers to a closed ward if they refused to spy on their inner circles. They could also strip them of custody of their children.

After looking briefly at the larger historical context of prostitution and espionage, the first half of this chapter uses a rich source base of police records, civilian denunciations, and correspondence between venereology clinics and the MfS to explore the ways that female informers came to the attention of State Security. Several layers of the East German state converge here. For example, as the People's Police submitted the names of registered 'prostitutes' and 'hwG' women to the MfS, resident physicians and venereologists also sent them confidential information about female patients they were treating for sexual infections. Many women were denounced by their neighbours and other community members. Likewise, women's run-ins with the criminal justice system placed them squarely in the hands of the state. The second half of this chapter analyzes the use of blackmail. With striking regularity, police and secret police forces alike warned women that they could agree to collaborate or face arrest, imprisonment, and prosecution. They also threatened them with forcible admission to one of several closed venereological wards that dotted the country. After countless interrogation hours and reassurances that the state – and only the state – could provide them with protection, many women yielded to the pressure.

The Female Spy in History

Many of the individual case studies explored in this dissertation do not fit neatly with popular perceptions of female spies such as Mata Hari. In 1917, forty-one-year-old Margaretha Zelle MacLeod, better known as Mata Hari, was executed in France. Despite compelling evidence that she was innocent, the French War Ministry accused the Dutch courtesan and exotic dancer of wheedling information out of French and British soldiers during sexual encounters. She supposedly passed this information to the Germans. When her well-publicized espionage trial began on July 24, 1917, she was found guilty of using her physical appearance and sexuality to manipulate those around her.[516] When a military tribunal sentenced her to death by firing squad as punishment for her cross-border liaisons, the condemned woman allegedly blew a kiss to her executioners. Although Mata Hari's guilt remains a subject of contention amongst intelligence historians, her posthumous reputation as a beautiful but dangerous spy seductress continues to fascinate. Her name has become synonymous with the femme fatale archetype in espionage fiction, and in popular culture more broadly.

Certainly, this form of intelligence gathering existed, and continues to exist. In espionage terminology, it is referred to as 'sexual/sex espionage' or 'sexpionage.' Saša Mijalković defines this term as follows:

> 'Sexual espionage' ('sex espionage') is a slang term for gathering intelligence using a specific type of agency method, in which a member or an associate

[516] One report from her trial read: "One can see that a woman such as Mata Hari, with her successive liaisons, could play a useful role in obtaining the half-secrets that fit together. It is in vain that her partners tried to keep up their guard. In the battle of the sexes, men, so skilled in other things that they are usually the victors, are always defeated. This dangerous creature is even more so because her primary education permitted her, when she wished, to speak and hold herself correctly in order to create an illusion"; Mary W. Craig, *A Tangled Web: Mata Hari, Dancer, Courtesan, Spy*, (Stroud: The History Press, 2017), 144.

> agent of an intelligence of security agency attempts to obtain intelligence information from a person by establishing a pseudo-emotional relationship or engaging in a sexual relationship with the said person who possesses certain intelligence information…and building trust which would result in revealing, either consciously or unconsciously, the intelligence information of benefit to the service or by threatening to make public the compromising pornographic material in order to extort the intelligence from the person with whom they have engaged in sexual relations.[517]

Sex espionage can be performed by professional members of security services, Mijalković writes, but "a special category of agents consists of sex workers, i.e., persons who engage in prostitution (both male and female, heterosexual and homosexual alike), pornographic acting and persons who are not sex workers, but behave in a promiscuous manner."[518] During the Cold War, Soviet security services used this art of seduction, which became known as a 'honeypot' or 'honeytrap' operation, to sexually entrap individuals with classified information. The KGB, and spy agencies in other Soviet satellite states, used clandestine agents, known colloquially as 'swallows,' to spy on foreign officials by seducing them. In Milan Dobeš' article "Prostitution as a Special Form of the Offence of Social Parasitism in Socialist Czechoslovakia," he writes that, "The State Security apparatus used prostitutes to obtain compromising material on the aforementioned persons."[519] Andrea Peto's gender history of Hungarian intelligence services also refers to their use of women as 'honey trap' spies.[520]

The East German Stasi did hand pick young, attractive, uncommitted women to establish intimate relationships with diplomats, businessmen, or journalists from capitalist

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[517] Saša Milalković, "'Sex-espionage' as a method of intelligence and security agencies" *Original Scientific Paper,* 2014, 7.
[518] Milalković, "'Sex-espionage' as a method of intelligence and security agencies," 9.
[519] Dobeš, "Prostitution as a Special Form of the Offence of Social Parasitism in Socialist Czechoslovakia," 94.
[520] Andrea Peto, "A Gender History of Hungarian Intelligence Services during the Cold War," 197-212.

countries, but this was not typical.[521] According to recruitment files, the requirements of 'honey trapping' included an education, coming from a middle to upper-class family, and maintaining moral and physical cleanliness. Women needed to be attractive, free from obligations to husbands or children, ready to become sexually involved, and "must not be chatty."[522] Lastly, "they must be able to subdue and seduce any man" regardless of their target's age or appearance.[523] And, the Stasi Records Archive does provide some evidence of sex espionage within the organization. On November 1, 1972, the Stasi recruited IM Brigitte to seduce and collect information on Western men, particularly those over forty in stable financial positions, who visited GDR hotels.[524] Brigitte, with her long dark hair, modern attire and "average level of intelligence," was tasked with visiting different night bars in Leipzig and passing information onto the state.[525]

IM Anton Meyer also worked in this reconnaissance role. Born in 1949 in the Saxon town of Oberwisenthal, the Stasi first contacted Meyer on March 20, 1970.

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[521] The MfS also handpicked East German men to seduce West German women. The CIA website describes this initiative, which was run by Markus Wolf, as follows: "Because of the war, many women of marrying age had taken jobs in business, government, parliament, the military, and the intelligence services in West Germany, and they often had access to highly classified government secrets. With the shortage of eligible men – another consequence of the war – single West German women, eager for male companionship, became frequent targets for East German male spies who were only interested in them for one thing: secrets. These men from the East earned the nickname 'Romeo Spies'…The men selected for this program were trained in espionage and given false identities, typically of a deceased citizen or immigrant. They were they sent to West Germany with a specific espionage task to complete. Once there they identified a potential 'Juliet' who had access to the information they were after. They created a chance encounter, began an affair, and then propositioned the women to pass them secrets." As this example suggests, the MfS' use of sex in espionage extended beyond the women in this dissertation. Nevertheless, I argue that women in the prostitution milieu had a unique experience due to their vulnerable position in society; https://www.cia.gov/stories/story/romeo-spies/#the-man-without-a-face

[522] BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 611/77 Bd. 1. "Im Vorlauf – Notwendigkeit und Zielstellung" Leipzig, 20. August 1973. BStU 000011.

[523] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89, Bd. 1. Teil, I Band I, 1. "Treffbericht," Leipzig, 10.04.1975 BStU 000147.

[524] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89, Bd. 1. "Bericht über 2. Kontaktgespräch mit dem IM-Kandidaten 'Schwarze'" Leipzig, 20. 9. 1971.

[525] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89, Bd. 1. "Bericht über 2. Kontaktgespräch mit dem IM-Kandidaten 'Schwarze'" Leipzig, 20. 9. 1971.

According to her file, she declared her unconditional willingness to "carry out tasks that affect sexual areas" shortly after the MfS approached her. She was willing to report openly and honestly on these issues, the Stasi wrote, and "does not shy away from telling intimate details of her life."[526] Where her physical appearance was concerned, the Stasi was not flattering. At one point in her file, her case officer asserted, "the candidate is stoutly built and corpulent. For this reason, she is not especially sexually desired by men. Nevertheless, she maintains a number of connections because she is very [approachable] and always prone to jokes. She makes up for the above mentioned with her intelligence and sociability."[527] Likewise, another report stated, "Physically she doesn't seem very attractive, rather clumsy. But I consider her to be a tool for influencing men because she knows how to act in a tomboyish manner and is not sensitive…I have the impression that there is not an excessive number of male acquaintances, although a superficial assessment gives the impression of a somewhat 'easy girl.'"[528] However, these cases represent exceptions rather than the rule. Over the course of her research, Brüning was only able to identify as 'honey trap' operatives' four women in Leipzig, nine in Berlin, and twenty-three in Rostock. After reading thousands of pages of Stasi files, I have been able to identify fewer cases than Brüning. These figures reflect the Stasi's reluctance to engage supposedly promiscuous women as sex spies.[529]

[526] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89, Bd. 1. Teil I Band I, 1. 11. 1972.
[527] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 2185/87 Bd. 1, "Ermittlungsbericht" Annaberg, 16. 3. 1970, BStU 000025.
[528] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 2185/87 Bd. 1, "Bericht" 2.4. 1971, BStU 000025.
[529] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 211.

Prostitutes and 'hwG' Women as Stasi Informers

What was the day-to-day reality of informing for most women? Usually, working as a 'prostitute-informer' did not mean using sex as a weapon. The Stasi considered most 'promiscuous' women to be unsuitable for high-stakes intelligence operations, including those of a sexual nature. First, because they had violated a regulation or engaged in suspicious behaviour that warranted the state's attention in the first place, the MfS deemed them untrustworthy. Several reports mailed between the People's Police and the MfS describe prostitutes as embodiments of deceit. The character assessment of one woman from BV Schwerin, for instance, included an official note warning fellow Stasi personnel about the accused. While the female in question appeared to be polite and honest, "beneath [her] friendliness, cool deliberation, calculation, overemphasized consumer needs and scrupulousness in fulfilling life's demands are hidden."[530] Likewise, Anna K. from Mecklenburg was described as being "polite and friendly to people in the house, but she has a mendacious character, you can't believe anything."[531] Second, the MfS adopted the same social-hygiene-based logic as SED functionaries and considered anyone who was unwilling to make their living through regular employment to be unprincipled. They also assumed lower-class prostitutes were too interested in immediate financial gains to maintain long-term relationships with male intelligence targets, and too unintelligent to

[530] BArch, MfS, BV Swn, AP 621-87, Abteilung XX/5 "Sachstandbericht und Informationsbedarf zur person." Schwerin, 25.9.1981, 000098.
[531] BStU, MfS, Swn, AOP 30-54, Bd. 1. "Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik Ministerium fur Staatssicherheit Verwaltung Mecklenberg Abteilung VIII b 22.2.1952 Betr: Zientz, Hildegard" BStU 000016.

retain information or even understand which information would be useful to their case officers.[532]

Still, the Stasi sought access to the 'delinquent' milieu from which such individuals came. Because 'sexually deviant' women had a wide range of contacts in circles that the state deemed to be hostile or suspicious and associated with "people of the same species," their partnership allowed the state to infiltrate otherwise inaccessible segments of society.[533] In their MfS-sponsored thesis, Dürning and Hardtmann listed several reasons for why 'hwG' women made valuable informers:[534]

> It is absolutely necessary for security organs to know who a hwG person is and to give them priority.
>
> 1. Due to her frequent change of partners, she knows a large circle of people.
> 2. She maintains contact with other hwG people, anti-social people, criminals, and people at risk of being criminally injured.
> 3. Due to her negative environment, she herself is potentially at risk when carrying out other crimes.
> 4. Through her crime records, she often has information that can be important in the uncovering and solving of other crimes.[535]

At the same time, the MfS recruited real and suspected prostitutes to assist them in the "timely recognition of manifestations of organized prostitution, especially in connection with foreigners, as well as the detection and prevention of criminal offenses, the illegal

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[532] One dissertation defended at the Stasi law school defined prostitutes as "disposable" because "they do not possess the intellect that would be necessary to utilize them as external IMS effectively"; Hochschule des MfS, MfS, JHS 21437, 44; Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 178.

[533] Sometimes these connections arose from a lack of options. Because employers were reluctant to hire individuals with records, and the release from a workhouse, prison, or closed ward often had such records, they began to connect with one another and create their own communities; BStU, MfS, HA II 1044 Hauptabteilung Kriminalpolizei Abteilung I, Berlin 9.7.1986.

[534] The existence of this study on prostitution shows us that the Stasi viewed it as important research.

[535] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit: Studien zur Phänomenologie und Aspekte der kriminalistischen Untersuchung von Straftaten gemäß 249 StGB – unter besonderer Berucksichtigung der Alternative Prostitution" (Studies on the Phenomenology and aspects of the Criminalistics Investigation of Criminal Offenses to 249 StGB – under local authority of alternative prostitution), 20 BStU 000020.

crossing of the border, etc."[536] In a far cry from Mata Hari pillow-talk, they asked them to gather information on 'class enemies' in their inner circles. This included the names of fellow prostitutes and their clients, who were identified as Red Army soldiers, foreigners, and people with a history of delinquency. For example, the MfS recruited IM Luise "to disclose and educate persons who engage in prostitution." Through her, the Stasi gained insight into which prostitutes possessed foreign currency or missed mandatory examinations at the polyclinics.[537] IM Nonne received specific instructions to report on clients' sexual abnormalities and provide "precise assessments of prostitutes" in the vicinity of Berlin's Oranienburger Tor.[538] The Stasi recruited Barbara Schwarze with the "aim of gathering information from the area of commercial prostitution and its extensive contacts" and "clarifying criminal offenses in the area of asociality."[539] Notably, they also tasked incarcerated prostitutes with collecting information from fellow prisoners. The K1 tasked IKMR Clara Linzer with investigating gaps in security and recording inmate conversations, which she was meant to pass on to her case officer. They also instructed her to "assess new arrivals" in StVE Leipzig, and to unearth information about unsolved crimes related to prostitution.[540]

[536] BStU, MfS, JHS 22113, "Humbolt – Universität zu Berlin Sektion Kriminalistik, Diplomarbeit," BStU 000022.
[537] BStU, MfS, BV Rostock, AOG 1438/83, OG 1, BStU 000034.
[538] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88, "Kontaktgesprach" Berlin, 17 09 84. BStU 0022, Department I AG/S (AK).
[539] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89, Bd. 1. "Bericht über 2. Kontaktgespräch mit dem IM-Kandidaten 'Schwarze'" Leipzig, 20. 9. 1971.
[540] BStU, BV Lpz, AKAG 997/88 Bd. 2. 26. 03. 1986. BStU 000006.

Identifying Informants

The MfS decided which women they would recruit based largely on the types of police actions outlined in the previous chapter. First, an extremely small number of 'permissive' IMs contacted the Stasi themselves. Born in 1947, Magdalena N. was raised by staunch communists and was politically loyal to the SED Party. She was a civilian employee of the People's Police, not a prostitute, but "got in touch with the Stasi immediately and voluntarily" because she thought, "well, you're doing something good."[541] Likewise, Gisela (born in 1951) began to work as a prostitute in Berlin and Leipzig in the mid-1970s.[542] According to Brüning, she "contacted the MfS on her own initiative [in 1980] and offered the secret service information about a GDR citizen who had fled. The MfS subsequently recruited her as an IM."[543] These situations were rare.

Citizens played an active role in the identification of 'sexually deviant' informers. In many instances, women remained anonymous until a denunciation identified them by name. This is not surprising, given the history of self-policing in Germany. Evidence suggests that even without direct pressure from the Stasi, ordinary citizens already felt comfortable writing letters to the authorities. Not only was the surveillance of public and private behaviour a long-term tradition dating back to the German Empire, but denunciations had also escalated during the Third Reich. This meant that many East German citizens had experience denouncing their neighbours to the Gestapo for social or criminal violations like race defilement.[544] The East German Constitution also encouraged

[541] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 176, 271.
[542] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 271.
[543] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 271.
[544] Sace E. Elder, "Murder, Denunciation and Criminal Policing in Weimar Berlin," Eastern Illinois University, *Faculty Research & Creative Activity 20*, January 2006; See also: Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933-1945.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

citizens' cooperation by giving them the right to complain to their government.[545] Using direct and unmediated language, East Germans submitted criticisms about their housing situations, economic issues, material hardship, food queues, and problems with public transportation. Other letter-writers offered private information about moral offenses.[546] This created a "complainer culture," according to Paul Betts. In *Within Walls*, he states:

> By 1952, President Pieck personally received no less than 80,000 written citizen petitions. By 1962, the State Council received over 100,000 letters annually, and over 134,000 by 1988. But this was only the beginning. Thousands of complaints were sent to ministries as well as local and regional representatives on a monthly basis over four decades, adding up to hundreds of thousands of complaints filed every year, across every region. In 1989 alone, there were over one million complaints formally filed citizen complaints nationwide…nowhere else has the world seen such an elaborate and institutionalized complaint culture.[547]

At the same time, the Stasi actively encouraged East German citizenry to monitor and report on the activities of individuals they considered social outsiders. They framed denunciation as an easy way for people to help combat political and ideological subversion and listed a series of phone numbers in the phone book where they could be reached. Citizens had the option of anonymity, and many responded by inundating Stasi and criminal police offices with verbal accusations and 'informative' letters.[548] Such denunciations peaked after the passage of Paragraph 249, according to Sven Kozilius, as

[545] See Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*.
[546] Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic*, 176.
[547] Betts, *Within Walls*, 175.
[548] Any time phrases such as "we have been informed" appear in a Stasi file, it is safe to assume ordinary citizens submitted anonymous tip offs to authorities. They just have not been identified by name in the text; Robert Gellately, "Denunciations in Twentieth Century Germany: Aspects of Self-Policing in the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic," *Journal of Modern History* 68:4, 1996, 935.

citizens made "stronger attempts to distance [themselves] from people supposed to be inferior."[549]

These denunciations, now preserved in the Stasi Records Archive, were often transcribed, or typed by the police. Their contents challenge Gieseke's assertion that there was little "willingness among East Germans to denounce other people to the secret police," revealing instead that citizens treated women who appeared to be promiscuous with deep suspicion.[550] Presumably motivated by factors such as food and material shortages, prejudices or petty differences, self-preservation or political ideology, they willingly identified women who were unemployed, who had frequent male visitors, who consumed alcohol, who had connections to prostitutes, and who visited restaurants alone.[551] In another demonstration of Foucauldian biopower, citizens "administrated the norms of the population" by implicating women who owned luxury clothing or items, appeared heavily made-up in public, or seemed to take better care of themselves than those around them, highlighting continuities between wartime and post-war Germany.[552] For example, during the First World War, an interest in cosmetics "suggested a woman intimately bound to sex" on the German home front.[553] Consuming or even working near alcohol were also

[549] Sven Korzilius, "The Repressive Side of Social Policy in the GDR: Penal Laws Against 'Asocials' and 'Parasites'" in Sabine Hering, *Social Care Under State Socialism, 1945-1989: Ambitions, Ambiguities, Mismanagement,* Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009, 126.
[550] Petrungaro, "Police and Prostitution in Yugoslavia: A Nuanced Relationship," 173; Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990*, 80.
[551] Even in instances where denouncers outline their motives directly, we can never be truly certain why one citizen denounced another.
[552] Taylor, "Biopower," 44; See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.
[553] Page Dougherty Delano, "Making Up for War: Sexuality and Citizenship in Wartime Culture" *Feminist Studies* 26:1, 2000, 33.

considered precursors to prostitution and its associated venereal diseases.[554] Denunciations continued to target single women during the Second World War, with one notable difference: residents' definition of 'suspicious' sexuality became less about promiscuity and more about the racial component of women's sexual choices. This shift is exemplified by Patricia Szobar's work, in which she describes an anonymous postcard addressed to the Gestapo where the letter writer ruminated "about the 'offensive indecency' of many 'bitches' and 'whores,' especially 'that little so-and-so, Miss Lange,' who consorted with Jewish men."[555] Though the Stasi did not receive as many accusations of racial defilement or *Rassenschande*, they did receive some, and constructions of dangerous, adulterous women persisted.[556]

In the GDR, some civilian denunciations were incredibly brief and to the point. Amidst the 1958 investigation of Helene M. who was accused of renting out her apartment for prostitution purposes, a grocery shop owner claimed to have seen her buy two or three bottles of wine in his shop, along with a bottle of schnapps. She told him that her brother was visiting, but he suspected she was entertaining male callers with alcoholic drinks.[557] He passed the details of this encounter on to the Stasi, even though he did not have any proof of prostitution, because of the conflation of prostitution and alcohol. Another to-the-

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[554] The Stasi accused Ingrid K. from Suhl of being uncontrollable while under the influence of alcohol. Her case file states, "in her behaviour she is unrestrained, almost regularly she is under the influence of alcohol." Jessika A.'s file reads, "the way she expresses herself is often vulgar…she leads an immoral life and often comes home drunk at night. Residents threatened to call the DVP on her, and she said, 'oh the police, they can fuck me." Of Ulrike D., the Stasi wrote: "she drinks alcohol while socializing…in this state she is able to mix things up quickly with men." BStU, BV Suhl, Abt. KuSch Nr. 2698, 1. 10. 1981, BStU 0008; BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 611/77, Bd. 1. Leipzig, 20. 8. 1973, BStU 000011; BStU, MfS, BVS Potsdam, Abt. XVIII 364-1, IME Ulrike Potsdam, 14. 11. 1987.

[555] Patricia Szobar, "Telling Stories in the Nazi Courts of Law: Race Defilement in Germany," 1933-1945, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 2002, 142.

[556] Jessika A's file from footnote 524 also includes the statement: "She took a Negro to her apartment"; BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 611/77, Bd. 1. Leipzig, 20. 8. 1973. BStU 000011.

[557] BArch, MfS, AU 281-60, Bd. 2, "Anzeige wegen: Herausgabe von Telefonnummern gefunden in der Wohnung des Angeklagten", Berlin 20.5.1959, BStU 0219-0220.

point denunciation letter read, "The named is 40-42 years old and divorced. She looks for suitors in the Berlin-Mitte areas of Friedrichstraße / Tucholskystraße, but also in the localities of the Prenzlauer Berg district. It is not known to what extent she visits flophouses…she is well known among other prostitutes in the Tucholskystraße area."[558] A third letter stated:

> About 3 weeks ago, I met a…woman [on Nordstraße in Leipzig] and drove with her to her apartment. The sign on the door read the name…She is about 25 years old, attractive in appearance, and has a comfortable apartment. For GV [*Geschlechtsverkehr* or sexual intercourse], [you have] to pay by the hour, namely 200 per hour. She demanded this sum directly. Because the price was too high, I left the apartment.[559]

While it is unclear who instigated the sexual exchange on Nordstraße, this unidentified man's complaints about exorbitant pricing reveal him to be a customer of prostitution. However, the Stasi excused male indiscretions while regarding female promiscuity as evidence of women's immorality, inferior nature, and lack of self-control. In this regard, their views aligned with those of the SED. In 1966, for instance, an SED official stated that "although the responsibility of the male sex offender and the fact that he had broken the norms of socialist society could not be denied, the 'provocative and often inviting behaviour of women promotes a range of such offences.'"[560]

Indeed, I have only seen two denunciations of pimps or pimping (*Zuhälterei*) in Stasi files related to prostitution, both in Berlin. In 1984, an IM report titled "Re: The Pimp and Violation of Residence Restrictions for the Capital" stipulated: "The citizen with several criminal records has residence restrictions for the capital and is staying at...He can often be found in the restaurant Schusterjunge on Lychener/Dimitroffstraße, where he acts

[558] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG, 3130_88, "Betreff: Hinweis auf Prostitution," Berlin 22.08.84.
[559] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 395-87. IKMO Reg.-Nr. 183/69 "Berichtete," 09.12.80.
[560] Millington, "State Power and 'Everyday Criminality' in the German Democratic Republic," 451.

as a pimp for those who tend to be antisocial. He has been in the business for a long time."[561] Another report from 1985 stated: "[Anonymous] works as a pimp. He hangs out in the Palast Hotel with three or four women who 'do work' for him."[562] This man was known to discredit any woman who refused to pay him a distribution sum of thirty percent and routinely organized incidents to get women banned from bars. He would also accuse women of being Stasi informants in front of guests, hoping it would disrupt their business.[563] Notably, distribution sums enabled him to own "a piece of land with a single-family house in Berlin-Karow, which has a value of approx. 250,000 M. The interior is mainly from the NSW."[564]

Sometimes the Stasi even appeared to receive civilian denunciations from West Germany.[565] In 1987, for example, the City Council of Erfurt received an anonymous letter from West Berlin that they forwarded to the Stasi. It stated: "Dear Sirs, it would be of the greatest interest to take control of Frau…because of alcohol consumption and connection to prostitutes. She worked in the brothel Onderka, Gotthardt, Erfurt. I hope to have served you with this hint."[566] The MfS assumed the author was from Erfurt, but had the letter posted from West Berlin to remain anonymous.[567]

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[561] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88 Berlin, 06.08.1984 BStU 0014.
[562] BStU, MfS, HA XXII 266 31 "Operativ-Information Nr. 225/415/84 zur organisierten Prostitution in der Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin" Berlin, 31. 07. 1984 BStU 000639.
[563] BStU, MfS, HA XXII 266 31 "Operativ-Information Nr. 225/415/84 zur organisierten Prostitution in der Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin" Berlin, 31. 07. 1984 BStU 000639.
[564] BStU, MfS, HA XXII 266 31 "Operativ-Information Nr. 225/415/84 zur organisierten Prostitution in der Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin" Berlin, 31. 07. 1984 BStU 000639.
[565] BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, KD Erf, 1050, "An die Behörde der DDR. Abteilung: Alkehol / Prostituierte" Berlin, 23. 7. 1987. BStU 000003.
[566] BStU, MfS, EV Erfurt, KD Erf, 1050, "An die Behörde der DDR. Abteilung: Alkehol / Prositutierte" Berlin, 23. 7. 1987. BStU 000003.
[567] I would like to thank Robert Gellately and Gary Bruce for their assistance piecing this file together.

Other denunciations went beyond accusations of sexual promiscuity. On July 22, 1987, the Stasi received an angry letter from an anonymous whistleblower in Leipzig. They believed that their neighbour pursued prostitution at the Leipzig Trade Fair because although she worked relatively short hours, her income far exceeded that of a typical East German citizen. Unlike the source, who was struggling to pay the bills, the neighbour could afford expensive clothing and luxuries like a car. They attributed this disparity to the male visitors frequenting her apartment. The letter stated:

> The money never ends with her, after a meal, she can buy a car, a wall unit for the child, a wardrobe, palm trees…a colour television. She has a very large number of furnishings (chandeliers, colour television), and then everyday has a new wardrobe [and] bags. [She] constantly buys expensive furnishings in this economy. She spends around 1,000 a week on clothes, shoes, bags. You know the prices. Which normal citizen, no matter how well he earns, can afford that? We still work a lot of overtime and cannot afford it. The woman is single and hardly ever goes to work. Who can afford all that with a salary of 390M per month? She does that alone on petrol per month with her very many drives. She also has to live from it. Everyone can see that something isn't right. It is clear that foreign trading is being carried out…. everyone runs out of money, even if there is a short break before you start saving again. There is never a break for this woman. This has been the case every day for years. One major purchase after another and then everyday new clothes, shoes, bags, etc., and going to work is not and cannot be real. No married couple can do that. We know many who can afford a lot of good things, but this woman surpasses everyone by far…It also spreads AIDS to the husbands and thus to their families. You just can't stand idly by. The woman is so abnormally greedy.
>
> P.S. Her friend and her husband are doing things together with her. They can now afford the same things.[568]

To present themself as a diligent socialist citizen and make the accusation sound less like neighbourhood gossip, the writer identified the preservation of social order as their motivation for denouncing their neighbour: "This has not been written out of spite or envy,

[568] BStU, BVfS Lpz-Land, 3434, Leipzig, 22.07.1987, "Information" BStU 0003-0005.

but one has to pay attention to the law, order, security, and socialist morality. Even the few outsiders have to stick to it."[569]

Although citizens framed their denunciation letters within the discourse of prostitution, there was no way for their authors to prove that commercial fornication had taken place. After all, the majority had not witnessed the women they denounced participate in the sex trade. In the 1959 case of the grocery shop owner who accused a woman of soliciting sex from men, he could only point to the moral scandal of purchasing two or three bottles of wine and a bottle of schnapps as evidence of prostitution. The 1987 letter received by the City Council of Erfurt also relied on alcohol consumption and having several contacts who were prostitutes as proof of sexual misconduct. Still, accusations of prostitution drew the state's attention, placed women under surveillance, and invoked repressive action.[570] Even if they did not result in an arrest, they prompted the Stasi to open investigations on otherwise unknown women, increasing their likelihood of persecution and ultimately recruitment.[571] Women who offended the morals of their neighbours enough to be turned in to authorities could also be sent to a workhouse, have their apartments staked out or be otherwise spied on, interrogated, kept in a holding cell, etc. In all these ways, civilian denunciations considerably harmed women.

Denunciation By Medical Personnel

Female IMs whom the People's Police registered as 'prostitutes' or 'hwG' according to regulations also came into state purview after they received medical services

[569] BStU, BVfS Lpz-Land, 3434, Leipzig, 22.07.1987, "Information" BStU 0003-0005.
[570] Stefano Petrungaro, "Police and prostitution in Yugoslavia: a nuanced relationship," 173.
[571] Denunciations made against a procurer did not have the same result.

or physical examinations. They needed to undergo weekly gynecological examinations, and two percent of all district doctors, dermatologists, venereologists, and nurses in the GDR reported to the Stasi or Criminal Police as unofficial informants.[572] In this capacity, inspecting physicians routinely abused their position by passing particulars about their female patients' illnesses and situations on to the Stasi. One dermatologist and venereologist in Karl-Marx Stadt sent the MfS up to 470 reports about her female patients over the course of her informing career.[573] The Stasi then used this information to recruit.

Cooperation between clinicians, the Stasi, and the K1 paralleled the progressive Sovietization of East German prostitution policy. While cooperation did occur in the 1950s, it appears to have been on an irregular basis. In 1956, clinicians at the Poliklinik-Krankenhaus Schwerin Ambulatorium or Polyclinic-Hospital Schwerin outpatient clinic brought Hildegard N., an 'hwG' woman, to the attention of the Criminal Police in accordance with regulations to combat venereal disease. They noted that she had been registered as an 'hwG' woman since September 14, 1954, and had suffered from both contagious and chronic sexual infections in recent years (Figure 9). These illnesses were listed as follows:

Syphilis: 1951

Gonorrhea: 24.6. 1946 Chronic Gonorrhea
2.1.1947 Chronic Gonorrhea
12.8.1947 Acute Gonorrhea
30.4.1951 Chronic Gonorrhea
29.10.1951 Chronic Gonorrhea
25. 8. 1952 Acute Gonorrhea
6.9.1955 Acute Gonorrhea
3.3.1956 Chronic Gonorrhea [574]

[572] Steger, Schochow, "Closed Venereology Wards in the German Democratic Republic" 87.
[573] Steger, Schochow, "Closed Venereology Wards in the German Democratic Republic" 87.
[574] BStU, MfS, AU 3, Nr. 333/56, Bd. 2, "Poliklinik-Krankenhaus Schwerin Ambulatorium zu das Volkspolizeikreisamt Abt. Kriminalpolizei, AK Schwerin," Schwerin, 2. 6. 1956.

The Schwerin Polyclinic brought her to the attention of security services because, "According to our belief, she is very work-shy. [She] continues to lead a careless life at the expense of working people and, due to her repeated illnesses with gonorrhea, always consciously spoils the health of her [sexual] partners."[575] One year later, in 1957, another physician-informant operating under the alias 'Philatelist' supplied the Stasi with information about his young female patient. Though she had requested treatment for pelvic pain and inflammation after suffering a miscarriage, he suspected that she had received an illegal abortion. He told the Stasi that she would be discharged from the hospital shortly and encouraged them to recruit her. As an "attractive, light girl" who was not unintelligent, she would be "suitable for us to carry out certain tasks."[576]

After the passage of the 1961 'Regulation for the Prevention of Venereal Diseases' (Figure 10), collaboration between physicians and the MfS increased. In a report from 1973, the head dermatologist of the Rüdersdorf District Hospital, Dr. K. Lange, referred explicitly to an agreement made between himself and the Stasi. Presumably, this agreement was centered around him sending 'hwG' women in their direction. It read:

> Polyclinic of the Rüdersdof District Hospital – Skin Department
> District Council
> Dept. of Healthcare
>
> Dear colleague,
> Based on our verbal agreement, I would like to inform you about the citizens in the district who are referred to as 'hwG-Persons' in accordance with Section 18 of the Ordinance of February 23, 1961, on the Prevention of Venereal diseases.
>
> With the utmost respect,

[575] BStU, MfS, AU 3, Nr. 333/56, Bd. 2, "Poliklinik-Krankenhaus Schwerin Ambulatorium zu das Volkspolizeikreisamt Abt. Kriminalpolizei, AK Schwerin," Schwerin, 2. 6. 1956.
[576] Francesca Weil, *ZIELGRUPPE Ärtzeschaft, Ärtze also Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit der DDR,* Berichte und Studien 54, 197.

> Dr. K Lange
> Skin Diseases
> District Dermatologist.[577]

Attached to this letter were the names of twenty women, which have since been redacted by archivists. A meeting report from a Schwerin IM with the code name 'Doktor' also contained the following excerpt:

> Regarding his orders, he specified three female people who had very intimate relationships with men (see report). These people will be screened accordingly to determine whether they are suitable for us…the aim of the 'Doktor' is to establish closer contact with [redacted] and find out who she is having sex with outside of marriage or her husband.[578]

The report concluded: "he hasn't been able to find out anything about her in medical circles. The order remains in effect." [579]

The Stasi files of IM Karl, a doctor at a Magdeburg dermatology clinic, involved similar scenarios. From the late 1960s until 1989, 'Karl' provided the MfS with information about "citizens who were suspected of displaying promiscuous behaviour…[he] named first and last name, age, profession, and private address of the suspect – as well as the names of contact persons, that is, individuals the suspect was accused of having a sexual relationship with."[580] He also passed along women's medical records.[581] During his lengthy stint as an unofficial informant, 'Karl' denounced countless female venereal disease patients in the district of Schönebeck.[582] He brought one woman to the attention of

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[577] BArch, MfS, BV Ffo, KD Fü-Walde V, 425-72, Bd. 2. "Abschrift: Poliklinik des Kreiskrankenhauses Rüdersdorf – Hautabteilung" 05.04.1973 BStU 000014.
[578] BArch, MfS, BV Swn, AIM 495069 P-Akte, "Treffbericht" Perleberg, 26.2.1964. BStU 000067.
[579] BArch, MfS, BV Swn, AIM 495069 P-Akte, "Treffbericht" Perleberg, 26.2.1964. BStU 000067.
[580] Schochow, Steger, "Closed Venereology Wards in the German Democratic Republic," 85-6.
[581]Schochow, Steger, "Closed Venereology Wards in Hospitals of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Ministry for State Security (MfS)," 225.
[582] The file of Fürstenwalde IM Dr. Gerhard reveals that he was initially opposed to sharing personal information with security organs, but he "changed his mind on this, since he found out that the information

State Security, for instance, because she had been unemployed for six months and "lived together with different men." Though there was no evidence of sexual infection, 'Karl' had her committed to the Leipzig-Thonberg ward.[583] According to Steger and Schochow, "his other reports from the 1980s reveal that "personal and health-related information of underaged, foreign, or chronically ill women were handed over to the Stasi, with violations of medical confidentiality."[584]

It is worth noting here that most breaches of medical confidentiality went unpunished.[585] For example, in 1995, a district court in Nordhausen acquitted a physician of charges related to sharing a woman's medical files with the MfS. Because the physician had not treated the woman in question, the court determined that he did not violate any confidential doctor-patient relationship.[586] Predictably, such denunciations from medical personnel carried more weight than their civilian counterpart and guaranteed that the MfS would follow up. But the MfS also took matters into their own hands sometimes. Former inmates and employees of Central Polyclinic Halle have confirmed that Stasi officers occasionally visited the ward themselves. According to one employee, they "talked about

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was also treated confidentially by the comrades in the security organs. It is also clear to him that in the interests of the security of our state, such information must be made available to the security organs"; BArch, MfS, BV FfO, KD Fü-Walde V, 425-72 Bd.1. "Bericht über der Kontaktaufnahme" Fürstenwalde, 23. 05. 1973 BStU 000041.

[583] BStU Archiv der Außenstelle Magdeburg. BV Magdeburg, KD Schönebeck. 26 II/1. 5040/61 "Karl", Bl. 000169–000276; Steger, Schochow, "Closed Venereology Wards in the German Democratic Republic," 86.

[584] Weil, *ZIELGRUPPE Ärtzeschaft, Ärtze also Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit der DDR*, 86.

[585] This is a continuity from Imperial Germany. Andreas-Holger Maehle argues that during this period, "professional secrecy of German doctors was increasingly challenged by an ethos that public interests before patient privacy. This development became particularly tangible in cases of venereal disease"; Andreas-Holger Maehle, "Protecting Patient Privacy or Serving Public Interests? Challenges to Medical Confidentiality in Imperial Germany," *Social History of Medicine* 16:3, 2003.

[586] Weil, *ZIELGRUPPE Ärtzeschaft, Ärtze also Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit der DDR*, 86; Annette Tuffs, "One in 20 East German Doctors Spied on Patients or Colleagues," *The BMJ* 335:7630, 2007, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2099561/

inmates over coffee or read the patient files."[587] Likewise, a patient reported, "the Ministry for State Security were often at the station. At least three times a week, but not in uniform. But they always talked to prettier women there and when they came back, they always had cigarettes with them and sweets and everything."[588] Thus, the receipt of medical services brought women with 'prostitute' and 'hwG' designations into the Stasi's sphere of influence.

Registration Lists

The third way that female IMs became visible to state security services was through registration lists. The mandatory registration of prostitutes and 'hwG' persons in the GDR created a centralized database of purportedly sexually deviant women, which the Stasi was able to exploit relatively easily. Because the People's Police was one of the Stasi's most important partners, the MfS had access to the records that they kept, including registers which were left "hanging at [their] police station."[589] The People's Police also compiled and passed along the names of women who, while maybe not registered, had been recently placed under observation. Annotated lists of "Female Persons who are Looking for Male Acquaintances" appear in the archival material with striking regularity. In 1973, for instance, the Criminal Police from Erfurt's Mühlhausen District sent a document titled "List of hwG Persons in the Mühlhausen district who can possibly be contacted" to the

[587] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 100-1.
[588] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 100-1.
[589] Stasi Museum Berlin – Stasimuseum Berlin der Zentrale des MfS, "Die Volkspolizei – Dein Freund und Helfer," Visited 2022; Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 78.

Stasi.[590] The Erfurt K1 also sent the MfS lists of women searching for male acquaintances, as did those in the Worbis district.[591] A letter dated April 10, 1973, stated:

> In the Worbis district, 5 female persons were found which became known for their sexually immoral lifestyle and changing male acquaintances. The persons named under 2 and 3 are capable of being used outside of the local area if they are dealt with appropriately. The other people only stick with young hippies, gamblers and beat fans from surrounding and neighbouring areas.[592]

Another stated, "Referring to your letter of 03/20/1973, I am partly informing you of the following people with whom we can contact for operational purposes."[593] These lists included names, birth dates, addresses, physical characteristics, and political beliefs of local women, along with notes about their personalities, resilience, family dysfunctions, femininity, sexual identity, medical histories, and criminal police records. They also contained headshots and notes on women's cognitive abilities or 'primitivity' as discussed in Chapter Two.

The case of IM Rose is particularly illuminating, as her file began with a document titled "Report on the Person Becoming Known." Dated January 1, 1956, it stated that she "became known to the district officer through the VPKA Greifswald registration office." The police registered Rose after "it became known that she indulged in sex in the parks of Greifswald…even if it was 20 degrees cold. Recently, at her current job, it was noticed that she did not show up for work because she was completely drunk. Because of this way of

[590] BStU, BV Erfurt, Abt. II, 760, "Betreff: Termin vom 20.4.1973, Tgb. Nr. 586/73." BStU 000019.
[591] BStU, BV Erfurt, Abt. II, 760, Volkspolizei-Kreisamt, Eisenach, Abteilung K – Komm I. BDVP – Abteilung K – Dezernat I – Leiter des Dezernats – 50 Erfurt, 4.4.1973.
[592] BStU, BV Erfurt, Abt. II, 760, Volkspolizei-Kreisamt, Eisenach, Abteilung K – Komm I. BDVP – Abteilung K – Dezernat I – Leiter des Dezernats – 50 Erfurt, 4.4.1973.
[593] BStU, BV Erfurt, Abt. II, 760, Volkspolizei-Kreisamt, Eisenach, Abteilung K – Komm I. BDVP – Abteilung K – Dezernat I – Leiter des Dezernats – 50 Erfurt, 4.4.1973.

life, she is suitable to work for us as a light girl."[594] Like many women, she only became visible to the MfS because her name was added to a registration list.

The Criminal Justice System

Lastly, the MfS identified potential informers as they filtered through the criminal justice system. At least one woman became known to state security organs after she reported to the People's Police in Berlin-Mitte being raped by a Bulgarian citizen.[595] According to her Stasi file, she met this foreigner on May 22, 1985. He approached her while she was shopping in a department store. In the evening, she went alone to the Palasthotel Café where the foreigner sat with her at her table. After she returned to her apartment, someone rang the doorbell. "The foreigner in question immediately closed her throat and said that she should be quiet. This was repeated several times, with the foreigner asking her to undress and have GV [*Geschlechtsverkehr*, sexual intercourse] with him. Since the foreigner had acted brutally, she partially undressed and submitted to the man out of fear."[596]

Despite signs of strangulation such as still-visible choking marks and chain imprints on her neck when she reported the assault, the MfS evaluated her from an operational point of view. They determined that present circumstances notwithstanding, her good appearance, fondness for city life, independence, and language skills made her an ideal candidate for collusion.[597] The fact that she had connections to foreigners, stayed in

[594] BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AIM 389-57, Kreisdienststelle Greifswald, "Bericht über des Bekannt werden der Person" 10. 1. 1956. BStU 000012.
[595] BStU, MfS, HA II 1044, Archiv der Zentralstelle, Kriminalpolizei Abteilung I Berlin 30.7.1985.
[596] BStU, MfS, HA II 1044, Archiv der Zentralstelle, Kriminalpolizei Abteilung I Berlin 30.7.1985.
[597] BStU, MfS, HA II 1044, Archiv der Zentralstelle, Kriminalpolizei Abteilung I Berlin 30.7.1985.

lucrative hotels with high-profile people, and worked at the Berlin Press Café in Alexanderplatz also bode well for her use as an IM.[598] Of her character, the Stasi wrote:

> The [woman] is little comparable to people of the same species (profiled hwG people, etc.), especially with regard to their demeanor, their openness, and their position towards an employee of the criminal police (no deviousness, not presumptuous, not arrogant, etc.) Rather, she gives the impression of an uncomplicated person.[599]

Without revealing his real name or department, a Criminal Police employee introduced himself to her and, referencing the rape report she had made on May 25, 1985, used the excuse that there were still a few questions to be clarified to engage in conversation with her. [600]

Finally, the People's Police kept an eye on women arrested and imprisoned for crimes such as theft, robbery or, after 1968, asociality. They took note of women held in UHA II, a remand prison on Keibelstraße and East Berlin's only pre-trial detention facility that imprisoned women, and phrases such as "During their stay at UHA Berlin II, the responsible working group of Department II won over the [IM] for unofficial cooperation" appear often.[601] A K1 file from 1984 writes, "the above was found from April 19 to July 19 in the StV department in Berlin to serve a penalty for violating Paragraphs 249 and 141 StGB...the candidate is ready to work with the criminal police on a confidential basis outside of the penal system."[602] All these examples have shown that the Stasi identified

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[598] The Berlin Presse Café opened in 1973. It was a sister establishment to the Haus des Berliner Verlages, which housed some of East Germany's most prominent newspapers, including the *Berliner Zeitung*, the tabloid *BZ am Abend*, the woman's magazine *Fur Dich*, and *Freie Welt*. The Berlin Presse Café was a well-known gathering place for journalists in Alexanderplatz. There, they could read publications from all over the world at a time when access was restricted.
[599] BStU, MfS, HA II 1044, "Hauptabteilung Kriminalpolizei Abteilung I", Berlin, 9. 07. 1986 BStU 0019.
[600] BStU, MfS, HA II 1044, Archiv der Zentralstelle, Kriminalpolizei Abteilung I Berlin 30.7.1985.
[601] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88, "Begründung" Berlin, 24. 04. 1984. BStU 0006.
[602] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88 Berlin, den 06.08. 1984 BStU 0014.

potential informers through denunciations, registration lists, and collaboration with the People's Police.

The Recruitment Process

The assessment of a woman's IM potential commenced shortly after state security organs took notice of her. This involved placing her under intense secret police surveillance for months or sometimes even years. During this surveillance period, the MfS monitored individuals who visited the woman's property, listened in on her phone conversations, and opened her mail. They also conducted backgrounds checks on her inner circle. Sometimes they interviewed her neighbours. In a report submitted by IM Christa in 1979, an unnamed woman was said to have:

> Reported to the IM during a conversation a few days ago that she had to take some precaution in her behaviour. When asked about the reason for this, she said that at the end of last year, the Stasi asked about her in the house. Someone supposedly from the city council or district council appeared at her neighbour's house to obtain information about her. The neighbour was advised not to discuss the matter with anyone, especially not with her. Her neighbour did it anyway, because based on the [request for] confidentiality, she concluded that her visitor was actually from State Security.[603]

Ultimately, the more connections women had to negative hostile elements, the better their IM assessment was.

If after a surveillance period, a Stasi officer became uninterested in the individual, he pre-emptively 'archived' her operational material. If he believed that she might make a good collaborator, he formally petitioned his superiors to begin the 'advertising' or recruitment process. This process usually began with a summons and contact interview. We can begin to resuscitate women's voices in these transcripts, even though male

[603] MfS, BV Rst, AIM 1762/87 Bd. 1. 10. 8. 1979, BStU 0109.

interrogators assumed an air of moral and intellectual superiority. To convince their targets that they knew everything about their activities, they posed increasingly intrusive questions and inquired into the most personal areas of women's lives. Hildegard's interrogation, which took place from 11:00am to 12:00pm on March 31, 1955, went as follows:

> Q: In your statement on March 21, 1955, you state that you work as a prostitute. Indicate since when you have been indulging in prostitution!
>
> A*:* I have been pursuing prostitution for a year.
>
> Q: Your statements are completely unbelievable. You have been in prostitution for far longer than a year. Make truthful statements about it.
>
> A: I admit I have been in prostitution since early 1953. Since then, I have traveled to Berlin on average once a week for this purpose. Before early 1953 I could not engage in prostitution because I was sick with syphilis.
>
> Q: You were already working as a prostitute before you got syphilis. Make truthful statements!
>
> A: Before I got syphilis, I didn't do prostitution, because before I got sick, I did a regular job and earned enough money. I must admit, however, that before my illness – that is, before October 1951 – I had intimate relationships with a number of married men.
>
> Q: In todays interrogation, you state that you have had syphilis since October 1951. In your denial of identity, you state that you were employed in…until May 1952. So, since you are not allowed to work in a food processing plant with syphilis, there is a contradiction between your statements.[604] Clarify.
>
> A: I would like to correct my previous statement. I had not had syphilis since October 1951, but had already had syphilis since August 1951, which means that in August 1951, I got infected while having sex. In October 1951 I realized I was suffering from a sexual illness. Since I was scared to report to my job that I am sexually ill, I refrained from doing this and continued to work until May 1952. I did this even though I knew that I would no longer be at my job because syphilis diseases are not allowed at work.[605]

[604] Citizens working in the food industry were required to undergo health checks at stated intervals. This was also the case in the Soviet Union.
[605] BArch, MfS, AU 698-58, "Vernehmungsprotokoll der Beschuldigten" Berlin, 31. 3. 1955, BStU 0050.

As Stasi interrogators tried to obtain completely consistent stories, they placed an enormous amount of emphasis on women's sexual lives.[606] Contact interviews and interrogations reports occasionally border on pornographic as women were forced to divulge not only the names of every individual with whom they have had relations, but also minute details of each sexual experience. The case study of Nina T. demonstrates this invasiveness. Altogether, Nina's file contains forty-six pages of interrogation transcripts. Broken down by the time stamps in the upper right-hand corners of the pages, this amounted to almost sixty hours of intensive questioning. These pages contain explicit details about Nina's sexual history, which she did not always provide voluntarily, including her sexual routines with specific clients.[607]

But while some women's interrogation transcripts fill hundreds of type-written pages, others are limited to one or two pages. In her doctoral dissertation, "Women's Prisons and the Politics of Punishment in Nazi and Postwar Germany," Matzen argues that in these cases, "the files may speak volumes in their silence about interrogation practices and what events may have occurred."[608] Matzen cites the 1958 case of Hannelore W., who was accused of seducing a DVP member into leaving the GDR, as evidence. Though Hannelore's interrogation spanned seven hours, her file is only five pages long. Of the

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[606] Frederic L. Pryor, "On Reading My Stasi Files," *The National Interest* 38, 1994, 76.

[607] On March 6, Nina was interrogated from 8:00 am-10:00 am, 10:30 am-1:00 pm, 1:30 pm-5:30 pm, and 6:00 pm-9:30 pm. On May 8, 1972, Nina was interrogated from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. On the 9th, Nina was again subjected to interrogations beginning at 9:00 am and ending at 4:00 pm. On the 10th, she was interrogated from 8:00am to 4:00 pm. On the 11th, she was interrogated from 8:00 am to 4:30pm, and on the 12th, from 8:00am to 4:00 pm. On May 19, she was subjected to a two-hour interrogation. Lastly, on April 18, she was questioned from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and 1:00 to 4:00 pm; BArch, MfS, GH 25-73, Bd 1., "Vernehmungsprotokoll," Berlin, 8. 5. 1972, BStU 000184, BArch, MfS, GH 25-73, Bd 1., "Vernehmungsprotokoll," Berlin, 9. 5. 1972, BStU 000193, BArch, MfS, GH 25-73, Bd 1., "Vernehmungsprotokoll," Berlin, 12. 5. 1972, BStU 000216, BArch, MfS, GH 25-73, Bd 1., "Vernehmungsprotokoll," Berlin, 19. 5. 1972, BStU 000230.

[608] Matzen, "Women's Prisons and the Politics of Punishment in Nazi and Postwar Germany," 235.

minimal insight afforded to readers, Matzen states, "Perhaps Hannelore was left alone for the majority of the day, or maybe she had to repeatedly give testimony until she offered a version that interrogators wanted. The Stasi may have also treated her in such a horrific way that they knew leaving a paper trail would be grounds for possible retribution in the future. It was likely not difficult for some members of the Stasi to imagine themselves in the position of former Nazi Party members who were imprisoned in the GDR after the collapse of the Third Reich."[609]

For this reason, when comments such as Hildegard's "I would like to correct my previous statement" appear in MfS files, they should be interpreted through a lens of coercion. This is especially true if they appear after an earlier interrogation was broken off. For example, in an interrogation which took place on December 13, 1982, the Stasi asked twenty-three-year-old 'Blondi' about partners with whom she had had sexual intercourse for a fee. She responded that she could not provide the names of her partners because she only had brief encounters with them. When the MfS pressed her to give a more concrete answer, "the accused stated that she would not make any further statements on this issue without a lawyer. She also did not want to give an explanation for this decision." [610] The next page of her file is an interrogation report dated December 20, 1982. In this document, 'Blondi' has a completely different tone. She said, "During my interrogation on December 13, 1982, I was asked about partners with whom I had sex for a fee. I declined to answer that question that day. I was a bit confused on this day because I was given a lot of information…in the meantime, however, I have realized that my behaviour makes no sense,

[609] Matzen, "Women's Prisons and the Politics of Punishment in Nazi and Postwar Germany," 235.
[610] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 184_91 Band 1. "Aktenvermerk" Leipzig, 13. 12. 1982.

and I would now like to name a few names with whom I had a relationship."[611] It is unclear what transpired in the seven days in between these two interrogations, and what the MfS chose to leave out of the record. Nonetheless, I offer the following speculations.

First, as Nina's file indicates, the Stasi harangued women for information about the smallest details of their lives. This battle for consistency led to weeks or even months of hostile questioning. Because Stasi interrogators used physical violence in the early 1950s, abuse may have played more of a role in Hildegard's 1955 interrogation than those in later decades. Likewise, due to the Stasi's shift towards psychological manipulation or "no touch torture," 'Blondi' may have experienced night interrogations, solitary confinement, and sleep deprivation to a greater degree than Hildegard.[612] It is also possible that interrogation officers told both women that they could not sit down and would be unable to leave the room until they confessed.[613] As Gieseke writes, "MfS employees enjoyed flaunting their omnipresent image to the outside world. Those they targeted for persecution were confronted by their arrogance and despotism, in particular during interrogations."[614]

After this initial auditing process, recruitment procedures became much less bureaucratic and more individualized. The Stasi spent a considerable amount of time determining which recruitment strategies would give them the best chance of manipulating

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[611] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 184_91 Band 1. "Vernehmungsprotokoll der Beschuldigten" Leipzig, 20. 12. 1982 BStU 000310.

[612] Andrews Maercker, Susanne Guski-Leinwand, "Psychologists' Involvement in Repressive 'Stasi' Secret Police Activities in Former East Germany," *International Perspectives in Psychology, Research, Practice, Consultation* 7:2, 2018, 113.

[613] Fredric L. Pryor, "On Reading my Stasi Files," 76; Leslie Young, "Inside Berlin's Secret Stasi Prison" *Global News,* 2014. Accessed 6/9/2024. https://globalnews.ca/news/1509675/inside-berlins-secret-stasi-prison/

[614] The Stasi is also known for hiding yellow pieces of cloth inside the upholstery of their interrogation chairs. Because the interrogation process usually caused people to perspire, the MfS would seal this cloth in a glass jar in case they needed to track them later. They would track them using scent dogs; "State Security, A Reader on the GDR Secret Police" Stasi Records Archive, 116. https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/assets/BStU/de/Publikationen/EV_Lesebuch_EN_Auflage_02_barrierefrei.pdf

or limiting each individual women's freedom of choice, and since most female IMs from the prostitution milieu did not agree to inform at the outset, they regularly applied coercion.

The Blackmail of 'Promiscuous' Women

In the *People's State*: *East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, Mary Fulbrook writes that "a combination of feeling important, being attracted by small advantages, social rewards, material inducements [and] a sense of adventure" drove most Stasi informants to cooperate.[615] At the same time, she references Stasi estimates that blackmail played a role in around eight percent of collaborations.[616] Gieseke places this figure higher. He cites an internal survey of IMs conducted by the Stasi regional administration of Potsdam in 1967, where twenty-three percent of IMs listed pressure and coercion as their reasons for recruitment. An additional twenty-two percent cited these factors as secondary motives.[617] Because all these figures came from official Stasi polls, the real statistics were likely higher still. But no matter the exact percentage, women from the prostitution milieu were woefully overrepresented in this group.

The Stasi used mild to severe blackmail as an effective way to recruit informants.[618] They readily employed threats of arrest or prosecution under Stasi Guideline 21, "About

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[615] Fulbrook*, The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, 243.
[616] Fulbrook clarifies that this statistic does not account for situations where "coercion might be arguably too strong a word, but in which case the informant would undoubtedly have preferred not to have been caught in a threatening situation in which [collaboration] seemed the only viable option to 'choose.'" She proposes that this might be referred to as bullying rather than outright coercion; Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, 243.
[617] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police*, *1945-1990*, 92.
[618] The idea of blackmailing women into collaboration was not exclusive to the Stasi. Communist secret police forces in Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland also blackmailed their informants with compromising material and threats of imprisonment. Moreover, in "Blaming All Women: On Regulation of Prostitution in State Socialist Czechoslovakia," Havelková writes, "the police, both the regular and the political State Secret Police, used the threat of prosecution to force prostitutes to become informants;" Havelková, "Blaming All Women," 174.

Searching, Recruiting and Working with Informants, Secret Employees and People who Maintain Conspiratorial Homes."[619] This guideline encouraged the use of "bargaining chips," to borrow the Stasi's phrasing, to bring about cooperation. It stated: "This type has the most success with criminal persons, who can be held responsible due to their delinquency, but by offering that they can go unpunished if they sign a commitment to work with us."[620] It further explained, "The material must be so effective that the candidate prefers to work with the Ministry of State Security organs over an exposure of the compromising material."[621] In the following pages, I show that while anyone could be subjected to blackmail, secret police officials used regulatory control measures to coerce vulnerable women like Margrit K. into collaboration. On March 22, 1970, the People's Police enlisted thirty-year-old Margrit to report on prostitutes in her inner circle. She became known to the People's Police Inspectorate in Friedrichshain, Berlin, after several parties, including her neighbour, reported that she derived at least part of her monthly income (1000M) from prostitution in addition to holding her job as a hairdresser.[622] Likewise, IM Nikolas submitted the following letter of denunciation against Margrit:

> An approximately 30-year-old woman has been working on Dimitroffstraße since about March 10, 1970. She is said to be divorced. Because of her behaviour, the woman gave the impression that she was pursuing prostitution. When she was asked, she agreed. She immediately invited the connection to meet her. They live on the seventh floor of… customers must ring twice. Her price was 50M. [Margrit] lives in a well-furnished apartment (probably 3 rooms) and the apartment is very clean [and] various household appliances (TV, washing machine, refrigerator) are available. The woman is divorced and

[619] "Richtlinie 21: Uber die Suche, Anwerbung und Arbeit mit Informatoren, geheimen Mitarbeitern und Personen, die Konspirative Wohnungen unterhalten" November 20, 1952. Consulted in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.
[620] "Richtlinie 21: Uber die Suche, Anwerbung und Arbeit mit Informatoren, geheimen Mitarbeitern und Personen, die Konspirative Wohnungen unterhalten" November 20, 1952. Consulted in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.
[621] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle Loc. 1757.
[622] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970, "HSG: Leben und Gesundheit / Brennpunkte," 22.03.70 IM Nikolaus, BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970.

> previously married to a doctor. She has a regular group of customers, mostly well-off citizens who come to the GDR on business trips.[623]

After conducting a preliminary investigation, the K1 decided that Margrit, who we saw at the beginning of this dissertation, would make an excellent unofficial informer because she was beautiful, fashionable, and could quickly adapt to different social circles. The police summoned her to their office at 10:00am on June 23, 1970, and told her that they knew she was a prostitute. Margrit confirmed she had been working as a "street prostitute" at Oranienburger Tor in the district of Berlin-Mitte since February 1970 and had had sexual relations with around three or four clients a week. Before they released her, she was "shown the criminal nature of her actions [and] asked to think about how to make amends for her transgressions."[624]

One week later, on June 30, the police summoned Margrit back to their office. Prior to her arrival, her officer wrote in her file: "Should it become clear from [Margrit's] words that she is ready to assist the People's Police in the uncovering and clarifying of criminal acts, the obligation will be passed.… If [Margrit] is not willing to help the People's Police, the conversation will be continued with her about placing her child with a friend."[625] They informed her that unless she agreed to help the DVP identify the criminal activities of other prostitutes, she would lose custody of her child. Next, she would be forcibly interned in a venereal disease treatment center, even though she was in good health. After she completed this in-patient treatment, an arrest warrant would be issued and she would be imprisoned.[626]

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[623] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80, "IM Nikolaus," Berlin, 30.06.1970.
[624] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, "Vorschlag zur Werbung und Plan der Werbung," Berlin, 24.06.1970. BStU 000021.
[625] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970, "HSG: Leben und Gesundheit / Brennpunkte," 22.03.70 IM Nikolaus, BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970.
[626] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970, "HSG: Leben und Gesundheit / Brennpunkte," 22.03.70 IM Nikolaus, BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970.

With children to feed, Margrit agreed to cooperate with the K1. She expressed that "she would be willing to do anything to avoid going to prison" and having her children taken away.[627] The single mother signed her name under a document that read, "I hereby undertake to cooperate with the German People's Police on the basis of the incriminating material available against me. I declare my willingness to report any indications of criminal acts or antisocial behavior to the employee I know."[628]

Margrit's paper trail reflects the complicated nature of consent and coercion in East Germany. It challenges the commonly held belief that it was easy for people to say no to the Stasi and demonstrates that the regulatory framework around prostitution and public health provided convenient legal avenues for state coercion. When Paragraph 249 made prostitution punishable for up to five years imprisonment and conditions became even worse for women in the trade, Steger and Schochow write, "it was much easier for the Ministry for State Security to force women to cooperate with the intelligence services."[629] To an unprecedented degree, they threatened women with imprisonment, forcible confinement to a closed venereology ward, and always the removal of their children. Notably, the Stasi used children as a means of exerting pressure on other dissidents as well, and mothers more than fathers. After the MfS learned that twenty-six-year-old Katja sold sex in Hotel Bellevue in Dresden, they banned her from her house. In an interview, she told Falck, "The Stasi threatened to put my two children in a home." She was interrogated every morning for fourteen days, and eventually agreed to inform.[630] Of this form of

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[627] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970, "Bericht uber den berlauf der werbung," Berlin 03.07.1970, Dezernat I, Komm.II/3 BStU 000026.
[628] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, 30.06.1970, "Bericht uber den berlauf der werbung," Berlin 03.07.1970, Dezernat I, Komm.II/3 BStU 000026; Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 187.
[629] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 102.
[630] Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc. 2410.

female-specific blackmail, Annette Maennel comments: "if asked what I would have done if the Stasi had blackmailed me with my daughter, I know the answer: a lot."[631]

Assignment to a VD Ward as a Form of Blackmail

In *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, Steger and Schochow state that the Stasi forcibly assigned women who refused to collaborate with them to the Halle venereological ward.[632] It is not surprising that this proved to be an effective form of blackmail. Regardless of their health status, women threatened with in-patient treatment had good reason to fear the worst. As discussed in Chapter Two, women who became patients in a closed venereology ward were stripped of all their personal liberties and lost their ability to give consent. For example, the Halle ward became known as *die Tripperberg* or 'Clap' castle. It was comprised of thirty beds, a sterile examination room, and an office. Iron bars covered its windows and doors, visitors were prohibited, and women's heads were shaved.[633] A memo discovered by Steger and Schochow from 1962 stated, "because of the undisciplined nature of those admitted there, the so-called self-education collective of the patients intervened and shaved their heads completely bald as an education measure."[634] Immediately after the ward opened in 1962, criminal charges were levied against its head dermatologist, Dr. Gerd Münx, for carrying out brutal "educational measures." These educational measures included head-shaving, but also locking his patients in rooms and forcing them to sit on stools for days at a time.[635] Instead of stripping

[631] Annette Maennel, "Warum Haben Frauen Für Die Stasi Gearbeit?" 17.
[632] Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, 244.
[633] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 4.
[634] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 53.
[635] Steger, Schochow, *Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 133.

Münx of his license, however, the East German Ministry of Health recommend he treat his patients more humanely.[636] The Stasi also began to monitor Münx. According to a modest cache of reports from IM Claus Schneider, an informer and doctor in the ward, he only intensified his torment.[637]

Münx and one of his nurses, who former patients refer to as 'Sister Dora,' deliberately inflicted pain during daily, non-consensual smear tests. One way they did so was by choosing the thickest glass tubes for the swabs and, in the words of a former patient, "screwing them into the vagina."[638] These tubes were so large (often 12 cm long and 2-3 cm wide) that they caused injuries and bleeding upon removal. They also led to the 'defloration' of young girls. Former in-patient Bettina Weben, who spent four weeks in the ward, recalls: "I was in extreme pain, was bleeding, screaming, and then [Sister Dora] hit me on the thigh and told me not to mess around like that."[639] Another woman remembered Münx, who had practiced medicine under National Socialism, taking a "long, thick glass tube and ramm[ing] it deep into my abdomen. I screamed from the pain. He said, 'don't make such a fuss…no one is that virginal around here.'"[640] If gonococcal swabs were negative, as they often were amongst healthy individuals, Münx administered "fever syringes" to trigger dormant infections.[641] These injections caused short-term nausea,

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[636] After being told to treat his patients more humanely, Münx proceeded to create the Halle house rules.
[637] Claus Schneider's IM reports prove that the MfS was aware of the abuse which transpired in the Halle ward.
[638] This patient was admitted to the ward for "loitering." She recalled: "I was scared…yes I can remember that, that was when he examined me, it was like a glass tube that was screwed into the vagina and suddenly I was in so much pain, and then I bled, and I realized it was all wet…everyday we had to go to the chair…if you hadn't done that, you wouldn't have gotten out"; Steger, Schochow*, Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 82.
[639] Steger, Schochow*, Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 73.
[640] Steger, Schochow*, Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 82-3.
[641] These fever syringes likely contained the drug Pyrexal; Steger, Schochow, "Closed Venreology Wards in the German Democratic Republic," 81.

fevers, and seizures, but also long-term fatigue, headaches, vomiting, paralysis, shivering fits, and anxiety.[642] According to IM Claus Schneider, women who violated any regulations within the Halle ward could be subjected to a range of punishments.[643]

The treatment of female patients was so poor, and physical abuse occurred so frequently, Steger says, that they had to sign a confidentiality agreement upon their release from Halle. Also, many survivors are still haunted by their traumatic experiences today:

> The experiences in Halle often had disastrous consequences for the biographies of many of these women…These include fear of gynecological examinations, sleep disorders, sexual aversion and incontinence. Many are unable to enter into stable partnerships or become caring mothers. Elke Heinrich, for example, suffered three miscarriages, she never had children, which she attributes to her time in Halle. For Bettina Weben, every visit to the gynecologist is torture to this day.[644]

To honour the victims who entered or were entered into the Halle ward, a memorial stone now lies across the street from its former location (Figure 11). It reads:

> Between 1961 and 1982, the closed venereology ward of the Poliklinik Mitte city hospital was located at Kleine Klausstraße 16. Women and girls (from the age of 12) were admitted here on suspicion of a sexually transmitted disease – in many cases, however, without medical necessity and without information or consent. They were treated inhumanely and were supposed to be re-educated to become 'socialist personalities.' They were seriously injured as a result.
>
> This stone was erected to commemorate this injustice and to commemorate the women and girls affected.[645]

This memorialization effort highlights why, when given the choice between informing or being subjected to a degree of torture that we as readers can never truly comprehend, many women chose the former.

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[642] Steger, Schochow*, Traumatisierung durch politisierte Medizin*, 75, 85.
[643] Münx was never held criminally responsible for his abuse. He died in 2000.
[644] Von Stefan Locke, "Polikinik Mitte in Halle: Disziplinierung in der 'Tripperburg,'" *Frankfurter Allgemeine,* 14. 09. 2014.
[645] I obtained this information from visiting the site of the former Halle ward in November 2023.

Imprisonment as a Form of Blackmail

The alternative to forced segregation in a closed venereal ward was incarceration for an indefinite period. Two key charges could be used to arrest and imprison 'prostitutes' in the GDR. Until 1968, women could be arrested for prostitution or deliberately spreading sexual infections under Paragraph 361/6 of the Criminal Code. After 1968, they could be arrested and imprisoned under the ambiguous Paragraph 249. But because the People's Police took over the supervision of the East German prison system in 1951, and they had been trained to hate the 'class enemy,' anyone who appeared to lack socialist morality could be detained. This put real and suspected prostitutes in vulnerable positions. Presently, historiography on the East German prison system is insufficient. Studies on the treatment of female prisoners within the penal system are even scarcer. According to Matzen, "the transition of the penal system from the Third Reich to the two Germanies is the least understood period of German prison and gender history."[646] Nonetheless, it is possible to decipher several key elements of life for female prisoners.

First, primary sources from Barnimstraße women's prison (1868-1974) housed at Landesarchiv Berlin reveal that "a general examination of all female prisoners for Gonorrhea and Syphilis was carried out" upon admission.[647] After they passed through the door, protocol stated that a female guard would then search them. This protocol resembles that of StVE Leipzig, where many informers spent time. According to a BStU research publication on the Leipzig institution, inmates "were usually first taken to the reception

[646] Matzen, "Women's Prisons and the Politics of Punishment in Nazi and Postwar Germany," 7.
[647] Until 1933, most female prisoners at Barnimstraße 10 were prostitutes or individuals who had terminated their pregnancies. After the passage of Paragraph 249, there was another notable upswing in the number of 'asocial' women (i.e. prostitutes) incarcerated at this institution; Landesarchiv Berlin C Rep 303, 595.

cells, where they had to undress completely and have all their body openings checked by an employee, which most prisoners found extremely humiliating…although it was stipulated that only female employees were allowed to carry out a body search of arrested women, in practice there was sometimes a lack of female supervisors."[648] Prisoners were then interrogated, sometimes for upwards of fifteen hours at a time, and prohibited from leaning against any walls during this process.[649] From then on, the Stasi placed a "constantly high level of psychological stress on the prisoners" to render and keep them docile.[650] Alongside the use of 72-hour standing cells and water torture, they toyed with prisoners' perceptions of time by randomly turning their cell lights on and off and waking people up if they were not in proper "sleeping position."[651] This was intended to "induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power."[652] In Bautzen II, which was the only East German prison directly under Stasi-control, "a so-called isolation wing sealed off selected inmates from any human contact, so that some of them only saw a handful of different people during years of imprisonment."[653]

After admission to the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Stasi remand prison, located on Genslerstraße 66, women (who had not yet been tried, and were therefore legally innocent)

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[648] BStU, / BF Informiert 38/2017, "Martin Albrecht: Die Untersuchungshaftanstalt der Staatssicherheit in Leipzig," 103.
[649] Sometimes interrogators would tell the prisoner they could go back to their cell and sleep for the night, only to wake them up a short time later wearing a new pair of clothes; BStU, / BF Informiert 38/2017, Martin Albrecht: Die Untersuchungshaftanstalt der Staatssicherheit in Leipzig," 109.
[650] BStU, / BF Informiert 38/2017, "Martin Albrecht: Die Untersuchungshaftanstalt der Staatssicherheit in Leipzig," 112.
[651] According to Stasi posture regulations, prisoners were meant to sleep on their back, with their arms on top of the blanket.
[652] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* 201.
[653] Marcel Thomas, "Coming to Terms with the Stasi: History and Memory in the Bautzen Memorial," *European Review of History: Revue europeenne d'histoire* 20:4, 2013, 700; "Bautzen II – Der Stasi Knast," *Gedenkstätte Bautzen*, https://www.stsg.de/cms/bautzen/geschichte/bautzen_ii

were forced to strip and don men's underwear.[654] A traffic-light system ensured that prisoners did not see each other. If two detainees needed to cross paths, guards would turn one to face the wall.[655] Such isolation and social deprivation could last months, or even years. For those detained in the old, dark, damp basement of the prison, this isolation was further exacerbated (Figure 12). [656] Tour guides at the *Gedenskätte Berlin-Hohenschönhausen* also make it a point to tell tourists that the prison was designed with men in mind, and that the health needs of interned women were not met.[657] One gendered reality of prison was that women's bodies often ceased menstruating due to malnutrition or low-calorie consumption and physical duress. If they continued to menstruate, a lack of consideration for women's biology and ensured they received too few – if any – sanitary products.[658] Of her 1951 imprisonment in Hohenschönhausen, Elisabeth Graul said that "she was made to feel ashamed and embarrassed during menstruation – when she asked a guard for sanitary material, she [did] so 'mit hochrotem kopf' and there [was] no effort on the part of the prison to make her feel less awkward about having her period." She wrote, "I [had] to request every single piece separately. The security guard grinned."[659] Notably, none of these texts surrounding GDR prisons discuss the experiences of women perceived to be asocial.

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[654] Kim Richmond, "Negotiating 'Femininity' in the GDR Prison Narrative: Discourses of Character Development and Incorrigibility in Elisabeth Graul's Die Farce (1991)" *German Life and Letters* 63:3, 2010, 347.
[655] Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial Tour, visited in 2022.
[656] Prisoners referred to Hohenschönhausen's underground cells as the "U-Boat bunker"; Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial Tour, visited in 2022.
[657] Berlin- Hohenschönhausen was the largest of seventeen Stasi remand prisons (*Untersuchungsgefängnis*). It held political prisoners; Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial Tour, Visited in 2022.
[658] Presumably, if women wore the same sanitary products for days, it would result in bacterial or fungal infections. Alternatively, if they did not receive products, inadequate bathroom access caused them to live in blood-soaked clothing; Malaka M. Shwaikh. "Prison Periods: Bodily Resistance to Gendered Control." *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* 20, 2022, 35.
[659] Richmond, "Negotiating 'Femininity' in the GDR Prison Narrative: Discourses of Character Development and Incorrigibility in Elisabeth Graul's *Die Farce* (1991)," 347.

Beginning with twenty-nine-year-old IM Brigitte, the following case studies demonstrate how threats of imprisonment were employed. In 1971, the Leipzig MfS received an anonymous denunciation letter. The author had seen Brigitte get into the passenger seat of several vehicles with western license plates at the Leipzig Trade Fair, and presumably volunteered this information out of self-interest.[660] When the Stasi followed up on the accusation and conducted a thorough investigation into Brigitte's background, her neighbours informed them that she was a loner and "better whore" who belonged to a group of "easy girls."[661] Additionally, the Stasi learned that she had been registered as a prostitute with the People's Police since April 9, 1964, and that she did not have a permanent job.[662] They placed her under surveillance for several months before deciding that "although she thinks naively about certain things, she is definitely capable of working as an IM."[663] Her recruitment was then carried out "on political conviction with reference to the possibility of coercion by the Department of Internal Affairs (no employment – prostitution)."[664] The Stasi officer in charge of her recruitment created a battery of possible criminal offenses that she could be indicted for if she rejected their proposal, including vagrancy and asociality. They cautioned her that refusal might lead to a three-year prison sentence and emphasized that the only way for her to sustain her current lifestyle was to

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[660] Throughout its forty-year-rule, the SED Party worked to maintain a tightly sealed border around the GDR. Western license plates embodied everything about the western capitalist system and its values that the SED sought to suppress. As markers of Western excess, they were considered blatant threats to the GDR's authority. Anyone in possession of one was targeted as dangerous and surveilled; BStU, BV Leipzig, AIM 1021/89 Bd. 1. BStU 000039, Leipzig 26. 1. 1971.

[661] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 185.

[662] Her file read: "During the trade fairs she is said to work as a cigarette seller in a bar (according to personal information given from the wife of the source). It is assumed that she works in the Tivoli or Orion Bar during the fair. The source Hund also says that she sews fur hats at home." BStU, BV Leipzig, AIM 1021/89 Bd. 1. "Bekanntwerden des Kandidaten," BStU 000092, Leipzig 15. 10. 1972.

[663] BStU, BV Leipzig, AIM 1021/89 Bd. 1. BStU 000039, Leipzig 26. 1. 1971.

[664] "Bekanntwerden des Kandidaten," BStU 000092, Leipzig 15. 10. 1972, BV fur Staatsicherheit Abteilung VI.

work for the Stasi.[665] Her file read: "since she does not have any regular work and earns her living through prostitution…the candidate is recommended to maintain close, honest and reliable cooperation with the MfS in their own interest as otherwise they could get in trouble…"[666] Brigitte agreed to spy under pressure. Nevertheless, her file detailed that the "IM was recruited on the basis of belief."[667]

State security organs levied similar threats of imprisonment against Karla H. A thirty-seven-year-old woman from Potsdam, Karla became known to the MfS after three people denounced her "easy way of life" and "changing male acquaintances."[668] The Stasi studied her for nineteen months before contacting her and asking her to report on a female friend in the prostitution milieu. She initially declined, but agreed "after a lengthy conversation, the content of which is not exactly known."[669] The MfS wanted her as an informer because of her connections, and expected that she might agree to be one if she found herself in a high "psychological pressure situation."[670] Since they had an abundance of blackmail at their disposal, her supervising officer believed she might choose the "lesser evil of collaboration instead of being held criminally and publicly responsible."[671] Even though it was blackmail which resulted in Karla's agreement to be an IM, her case officer cited political conviction at first. He retracted this statement shortly after, admitting that the "conviction was brought about by compromising moral behaviour in connection with

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[665] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89, Bd. 1. "Treffbericht" Leipzig, 7. 01.1983.
[666] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 1021-89, Bd. 1 "Vorschlag zur Verpflichtung der in der IM-Vorlaufakte Reg.-Nr. XIII 550/71 registrierten Person" Leipzig, 15. 10. 1972. BStU 000100.
[667] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89, Bd. 1. "Abschlußbericht zu IM-Vorgang/IM-Vorlauf/GMS-Akte," Leipzig, 08. 6. 1989. BStU 000132.
[668] BStU, MfS, EV Erfurt, KD Erf, 1050.
[669] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 172.
[670] BStU, MfS, BVfS Potsdam Abt. XVIII 433_1, "Bericht zum 2. Kontaktgespräch" Potsdam, 16. Juni 1988. BStU 000200; BStU 000203; Barch, MfS, AU 43-65 "Betr: [Redacted]" Berlin, 22. June 1955, BStU 000193.
[671] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 171-2.

the material attitude of the IM. She seems to be clear that she would rather accept cooperation with the MfS than possibly get into trouble because of her immoral lifestyle."[672]

In December 1986, the MfS blackmailed twenty-four-year-old prostitute Sybille into collaboration.[673] Seeing as she had submitted a formal application to leave the GDR, they wanted her to monitor other 'deserters.' Assuming she would not agree to inform at the outset, the Stasi officers in charge of her case decided to pressure her. First, they tried to create a fake legal case against Sybille and one of her girlfriends for "planning an escape attempt."[674] This fell through due to a lack of evidence. Next, they tried to pit the two friends against each other. They summoned Sybille to an interrogation room and told her that her friend had sold her out by giving them compromising material about her immoral lifestyle. Her report stated:

> At the beginning of the questioning, Sybille is to be told in an offensive tone that does not tolerate contradiction that an acquaintance has given her information that she has an asocial lifestyle, does not have any regular work, lives as a prostitute, has changing intimate relationships with foreigners, etc. In doing so, she makes herself liable to prosecution.[675]

When Sybille refused to believe them, they had to rethink their strategy yet again. During the third and final attempt to recruit Sybille, an officer warned her that she would be imprisoned if she refused to inform, because he would confiscate her identity card.[676] If she could not produce identity documents when asked, she would be arrested immediately.[677] According to her BStU file, it still took five different discussions and

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[672] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 171-2.
[673] BStU, MfS BV Leipzig, AIM 1127/92, Teil 1, Bl. 35.
[674] BStU, MfS BV Leipzig, AIM 1127/92, Teil 1, Bl. 35.
[675] BStU, MfS BV Leipzig, AIM 1127/92, Teil 1, Bl. 35.
[676] BStU, MfS BV Leipzig, AIM 1127/92, Teil 1, Bl. 35.
[677] BStU, MfS BV Leipzig, AIM 1127/92, Teil 1, Bl. 35.

several different interrogation techniques before the "relationship between the candidate and the operational employee" became civil, and Sybille agreed to inform.[678]

The MfS used the threat of institutionalization to punish women who refused to work as informers. This form of extortion was so well known that it resulted in copy-cat criminals. An information bulletin from December 13, 1968, revealed that private citizens occasionally pretended to be members of the local police after abusing women. On December 2 of that year, around 6:30pm, the driver of a Skoda station wagon with a Halle license plate solicited sex from IM Marlon Forster – who is discussed in Chapter Five – for 40 DM, which she accepted. "After completing GV, the source received 10 M." The bulletin continued,

> After both had driven back to the city, he suddenly stopped and introduced himself as a lieutenant of the People's Police and told the source that he would either take her to the Thornburg infirmary or to the VPKA. He also showed an ID card, which the source could not see properly due to the darkness. She is of the opinion that it could have been a VP card possibly, but also a new drivers license. The source then left the vehicle without the driver making any effort to stop her.[679]

This was a larger problem, as the document concluded: "in conversations with hwG people, the source learned that the same driver had committed the same offense with two other females."[680]

Though the dynamics differed inside closed venereological wards and prisons, both served as instruments of exclusion and effectively sealed off women from society. These damaging experiences could have far-reaching consequences. In addition to public humiliation, women experienced a loss of autonomy. Their wills became secondary to

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[678] BStU, MfS BV Leipzig, AIM 1127/92, Teil 1, Bl. 35.
[679] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 618-75, Bd. 1. "Information," Leipzig ,13. 12. 1968 BStU 000094.
[680] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 618-75, Bd. 1. "Information," Leipzig ,13. 12. 1968 BStU 000094.

those of doctors and prison guards. Institutionalization also led to a loss of income, making it difficult for already-destitute individuals to support themselves and their families after their release. Because women remained the primary caregivers for their children in the GDR, even a short period of separation could have damaging effects on their families, and for women who served time in a penitentiary, the creation or expansion of a criminal record could affect future employment opportunities. Stigmatization surrounding 'immoral' sexual behaviour did the same. Lastly, the presence of a 'prostitute' or 'hwG' notation on a woman's record could result in legal punishments like the loss of rights. Every citizen was not entitled to their rights under the East German Constitution – the right to safety and security depended on who and what they were.

Conclusion

Monitored from multiple directions, so-called 'promiscuous' women living in East Germany had to navigate several repressive organs at once. As they registered with civilian law enforcement agencies like the People's Police and had restrictions placed on their movements, they also underwent regular gynecological examinations under the supervision of health authorities, and had their conduct monitored by the secret police. Women had to be wary that community members might denounce them to the authorities. In tracing collaborative efforts between the People's Police, health authorities and the MfS, this chapter has argued that the regulation of prostitution, specifically its emphasis on denunciation, registration lists, and forcible confinement to venereology wards, provided the Stasi with the infrastructure necessary to identify and blackmail 'promiscuous' women into becoming informers. In Chapter Four, I turn to women's day-to-day experiences after

the recruitment process. While the Stasi knew what tasks it wanted female IMs from the prostitution milieu to perform, the fact that they had been blackmailed prevented many women from carrying out such instructions effectively.

Chapter 4: The Day-to-Day Realities of Informing For 'Promiscuous' Women

In September 1983, the Criminal Police attempted to co-opt Isabel B. into informing on prostitutes and clients in Leipzig. Isabel came to their attention after a difficult life, having begun preschool in 1969, only to be placed in a children's home when her mother turned to alcohol after her father's death in 1970. Her childhood was spent bouncing between children and youth homes until she was eighteen years old; a pattern disrupted only by a brief stint with foster parents in 1971.[681] When she came of age in the early 1980s, Isabel allegedly spent most of her free time in Leipzig's Orion Bar, Toscana Bar and Tivoli Bar where she sought "the acquaintance of men, mainly those from capitalist states" and tried to establish intimate relations.[682] Her connections to foreigners made her an ideal IKM, and prompted the secret police to investigate Isabel's "residential area and workplace to determine behaviour, reputation, connections and contacts." They went as far as planting an informant in her apartment building before arranging several contact meetings to assess her suitability.[683]

According to a file titled "Operative Information," Isabel was initially interested in collaborating with the Criminal Police. She "took a positive view of the problems raised in contact talks" and proceeded to give the K1 information about operationally interesting people, specifically men from non-socialist countries who attended the Leipziger Messe.

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[681] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 402-85, Vernehmungsprotokoll der Beschuldigten, Leipzig 07. 12. 1982. BStU 0039.

[682] I say allegedly, because when asked "How often and with whom do you spent free time, which hobbies do you pursue?" Isabel responded that she played guitar well. Her "big hobby [was] reading," specifically adventure novels, and she enjoyed going to the movie theater with her boyfriend. She also watched TV in her free time, of which she stated: "I like the commercials the best. Mainly because beautiful things are shown. But I'm not envious and want to have everything…I am content with what I have," BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 402-85, "Vernehmungsprotokoll der Beschuldigten," Leipzig 07. 12. 1982. BStU 0039.

[683] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 402-85 "Plan der Aufklärung," Leipzig, 16. 11. 1983. BStU 0011.

Still, her commanding officer noted that "even at this point in time…it was already apparent that she was showing a lack of discipline in keeping to the appointments she had made about meetings."[684] When Isabel missed her first meeting, her commanding officer ordered a search of her apartment. She "was found but had to be woken up" after sleeping through her alarm.[685] Between November 1983 and 1984, she missed another ten meetings for the same reason. In November 1984, the MfS wrote: "Her interest in further confidential support became less and less, and after March 20, 1984, she stopped appearing at all. Attempts to visit her in her apartment were unsuccessful because she was not at home for a long time and sometimes did not open the apartment door."[686] Finally, the Stasi archived her material.[687] While we can never be certain of Isabel's motives, it appears that she was being deliberately unreliable to get the Stasi off her back. By exercising control over her body and quietly encouraging the MfS to pull her out of rotation, she was able to escape their control.

Having argued in Chapter Three that the Stasi used regulatory measures to identify and intimidate women into collaboration, Chapter Four examines IM-Stasi interactions post-recruitment. Specifically, it asks how these interactions intersected with their marginalized identities. In conversation with historian Steffi Brüning, whose foundational book established that prostitutes circumvented the DVP and the Stasi, the first half of this chapter argues that most of the women who found themselves in an informing position only agreed to collaborate with the state to protect themselves from arrest, harassment, or

[684] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 402-85 "Operative Information," Leipzig 23. 11. 1984 BStU 0069.
[685] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 402-85, "Treffbericht," 12. 03. 1984 BStU 0059.
[686] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 402-85, "Treffbericht," Leipzig 1. 9. 1984 BStU 0065.
[687] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 402-85 "Operative Information," Leipzig 23. 11. 1984 BStU 0069.

violence.[688] As politically detached individuals, they often lacked genuine interest in helping the Stasi identify hostile elements and remained ungovernable as a result. Furthermore, as a stigmatized and marginalized group of women for whom government intervention meant punishment, 'promiscuous' IMs used their previous experience avoiding police, social services, health authorities, and even members of the public to evade the Stasi. Years of purposefully and successfully protecting their anonymity by avoiding mandatory registration, skipping appointments at treatment facilities, and withholding information from law enforcement enabled some women to regain their bearings quickly after recruitment, and lent shape to their movement within the Stasi surveillance system.

To create a rounded picture of women's day-to-day interactions with the state, the second half of this chapter introduces an otherwise unstudied aspect of the Stasi: sexual abuse. Since the early beginnings of Stasi historiography in the 1990s, Stasi officers have been memorialized as having served as surrogate husbands and fathers for their female informers. However, the constancy and uniformity of sexual abuse in Stasi surveillance files suggests that some percentage of male personnel, including case officers, took advantage of vulnerable women. They viewed women who sold sex as sexually available due to the nature of their work and felt they deserved access to their bodies. This section focuses on the male experience in addition to the female because, in the words of Joan Scott, "to study women in isolation perpetuates the fiction that one sphere, the experience of one sex, has little or nothing to do with the other."[689] By doing so, it shows how the Stasi

[688] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 232.
[689] Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis," 1056.

accepted, or at least tolerated, sexual violence and male dominance over women, and emphasizes that physical violence and intimidation did not end after recruitment.

Daily Life as an Informer

After male employees recruited women they perceived to be 'hwG' or 'asocial' to report on their clients and inner circles, they became integrated into their daily lives as case officers.[690] The primary role of these officers, who varied in age and military rank and managed ten to eleven informers at once, was to ensure IMs monitored the activities of fellow citizens and passed on oral and/or written reports about them.[691] After determining the 'operational' value of new information, case officers would then provide their informers with fresh instructions. In return, the Stasi expected unconditional obedience. IMs were to forfeit their autonomy and place their "full trust in the operational employee."[692] If an informer demonstrated autonomous decision-making of any kind, they were considered insubordinate.

No doubt, some women took their job as an informer seriously and honestly wanted to help. After Magdalena N. introduced herself to the Stasi, she worked as a 'honey trap' agent for ten years.[693] Likewise, Eleanor L. wrote enough reports to fill six separate BStU folders, with each one containing several hundred pages. According to Brüning, Eleanor "reported on countless people and regularly listed the female regulars in the Rostock

[690] There were no female case officers; Miller, "The Stasi Legacy: The Case of the Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter," 58.
[691] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1999*, 82.
[692] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1999*, 80.
[693] Brüning explains that she stopped informing after a decade because "she didn't want to work for the Stasi anymore. Then she lost her job, became a prostitute to support herself and her son, started drinking, talked about her intentions to commit suicide, and then married a man who was also an addict"; *Prostitution in der DDR*, 27-9, 176.

bars."[694] Others found it more palatable to report on clients than sex-selling women. 'Nonne' reported on a bald "male person who has recently been seen in the bushes at the gate [Oranienburger Tor] near prostitutes."[695] Her type-written file read, "This person was seen by various prostitutes on several evenings driving after them. They noticed that he changed his outer clothing, wine-red anorak, etc. This person does not address women and does not seek their contact. The prostitutes are of the opinion that they are dealing with a man of abnormal sexual disposition." [696]

Nonetheless, we know from reading Stasi archival material that the realities of most women's daily lives did not align with the agreed conditions of informing.[697] Because many only agreed to work with the state to secure their personal safety, and to protect themselves from legal mechanisms of persecution, they had no real interest in supplying their case officers with information. Therefore, instead of monitoring their clients and support networks as requested, they often decided how many days and what hours they would work, and dodged the MfS when informing did not benefit them. To do so, they used skills that they acquired while skirting disciplinary actors. One police file summarized this correlation with the words, "Thanks to the experience they have gained with the People's Police and before the court, they subsequently know how to avoid being punished again."[698] In the following sections, I outline several ways that women exercised agency and resisted becoming IMs.

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[694] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 189.
[695] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88, "Kontaktgesprach," Berlin, 17 09 84. BStU 0022, Department I AG/S (AK).
[696] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88, "Kontaktgesprach," Berlin, 17 09 84. BStU 0022, Department I AG/S (AK).
[697] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police*, *1945-1999*, 80.
[698] Landesarchiv Berlin, C 303 595.

A handful of women managed to escape the scrutinizing gaze of the Stasi before the recruitment process even began. After one of Sonja F.'s sexual partners reported on her in the mid-1980s, the Stasi attempted to recruit her as an informant in the district of Berlin-Mitte. She was summoned to the police station, where she was interrogated and accused of unwillingness to work and asocial behaviour. Sonja acknowledged that she had multiple sexual partners; however, she denied ever receiving payment for sex.[699] She explained to the officer that she genuinely desired a long-term relationship but felt repeatedly let down by men. She suggested that because men typically sought short-term relationships, she should not be blamed for her 'asocial' behaviour. She asked Stasi officers empathize with her situation and pressed for her release from custody. In a subsequent attempt to prove to the officers that she had reformed, she insisted that she now had a permanent partner.[700] The officer took Sonja at her word, and noted that for this reason, as well as her "unkempt, uneducated, clumsy, low-level and worn-out" physical appearance, she would not make a good IM. He gave her a piece of paper outlining potential punishments for 'asociality' and warned her that she would be detained unless she found some form of productive employment soon.[701]

Twenty-four-year-old Anna, a "street girl" from Berlin, also managed to dodge the People's Police. They wanted her to report on citizens planning to flee the GDR, but she became stressed when they asked her to do so. According to her file, "The employee was able to calm her down and spoke to her primarily about her current situation." [702] One week later the police visited Anna at home and conducted a four-hour interview, but "she would

[699] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 186.
[700] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 186.
[701] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 186.
[702] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 185.

only disclose information that did not incriminate herself."[703] When a K1 officer tried to recruit her again four months later, she told him that she had no desire to join the fight against the class enemy. The officer then tried to blackmail her, which incensed her. She reiterated that she was not going to become an informer under any circumstances and demanded that the K1 keep their distance from her. Her attempts to thwart the recruitment process worked, Brüning says, and state security organs left her alone.[704] When the Stasi approached another woman in 1973, she told them that if she saw any "murder, drugs, or weapons," she would contact them.[705] Likewise, Brigitte attempted to use the words of her oppressors against them, claiming that she could not work as an informer because, as a woman, she was too chatty and would tell everybody everything.[706] These tactics were also tried by women who were not prostitutes. For example, Angela Merkel, who later became Chancellor of the reunited Germany, used the same strategy. When the MfS attempted to recruit her as a secret informer in the 1970s, she told them, "I am not a suitable candidate for a job whose main requirement is secrecy and discretion because I cannot keep my mouth shut and would immediately confess the truth to friends and relatives."[707] These examples of overt non-compliance are particularly striking because most of the time, blackmail was not an empty threat. As discussed in Chapter Three, refusals could have women imprisoned in a closed venereology ward, even without signs of infection, or arrested.

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[703] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 185.
[704] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 185.
[705] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 175.
[706] MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 1021/89, Bd. 4 Teil II Band 2, Bezirksverwaltung für Staattssicherheit Abteilung VI, Leipzig, 5. August 1985 BStU 000073.
[707] "Stasi wollte Angela Merkel anwerben," *Der Spiegel Online*, 19.05.2009. https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/ddr-vergangenheit-stasi-wollte-angela-merkel-anwerben-a-625764.html

Others exploited their connection with the MfS, using it to improve their circumstances. Because the state promised legal protection – and occasionally, financial benefits or access to housing – in return for collaboration, some women became visible because they sought immunity from persecution or early prison release. After a preliminary meeting with Angelika W., for instance, an interviewing officer wrote: "candidate was rejected at the meeting. Gave police the impression that she was teasing them and only wanted to work together to protect and cover her anti-sociality."[708] IM Barbara Schwarze was also rejected at first when her interviewing officer got the impression that she only wanted to work with the criminal police "to cover her prostitution and to seek personal benefits."[709] This is a reasonably common assessment in BStU files, suggesting that in the absence of other protections, women searched for ways to live by their own terms.

Creating Distance

Fearing that reprisals would be levied against them if they openly refused collaboration, other women agreed to inform but deliberately created distance between themselves and their case officers. They employed several sophisticated methods, the first being 'deconspiration' to do so.[710] According to the Stasi Records Archive website,

> Deconspiracy was the term used to describe the revelation of state security facilities, goals, working methods, and means, as well as people who were used in disguise by the Stasi for operational tasks…of particular importance was the deconspiracy of unofficial employees. This could be done by the IM himself, by consciously revealing himself to a third party, or unintentionally by

[708] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88, "Treffbericht," 23. 05. 1985.
[709] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 395-87, "Operative Informnationen" VPKA-Leipzig, Abt. K/Komm. 1. 25.6.1984 BStU 000008.
[710] Fears of deconspiration plagued every secret service organization in the former Soviet Bloc. For an in-depth discussion about "conspirativity" in socialist Romania, for example, see Verdery, "Ethnography in the Securitate Archive" and Verdery, *Secrets and Truths: Ethnography in the Archive of Romania's Secret Police*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014).

> violating the rules that were supposed to ensure the conspiracy. Deconspiracy was viewed as a serious harm to the Stasi and its work.[711]

In *The History of the Stasi*, Gieseke confirms that by revealing the details of their collaboration to a third party, whether it be a friend, family member, colleague, client, or stranger, informers could blow their cover and potentially render themselves useless as an IM.[712] However, in my own examination of the Stasi files, I have noticed that this act of resistance was not guaranteed to terminate a woman's contract. Because individual case officers decided which consequences their informers would receive, some women successfully exited the Stasi milieu because of this strategy while others did not. For example, when one woman told a restaurant full of guests that she worked for the MfS, she was released in writing. When another IM "violated conspiracy several times and disclosed her contact with the criminal police to a few connections," her case office wrote only that she must be more closely monitored.[713]

Withholding Information

Throughout the archived Stasi material, silence may be taken as a constitutive element of women's informing experiences. Whereas the latter half of this chapter observes male attempts at silencing female IMs, this section frames the unwillingness of women to pass information on to the state as a means of resistance and self-preservation. Because prostitution was stigmatized on so many levels, individuals who engaged in the trade had

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[711] "Dekonspiration" Stasi Records Archive, https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/mfs-lexikon/detail/dekonspiration/

[712] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1999*, 94.

[713] This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that one woman disclosed her collaboration to more people than the other. BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 395-87, "Operative Informnationen" VPKA-Leipzig, Abt. K/Komm. 1. 25.6.1984 BStU 000008; Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990,* 94; Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, 241.

previous experience managing what information outside sources like the police and health care providers received. They understood the necessity of confidentiality and secrecy when it came to criminal activity and contact tracing, and because it was nearly impossible for the Stasi to break the wall of silence if women were not forthcoming with information, they regularly withheld information (i.e. women's full names, working locations, etc.) from their case officers. As Brüning states, while "some command officers managed to develop effective cooperation, the majority of prostitutes repeatedly refused and only gave information when specifically asked."[714] This can be seen in the case of IM Simone, who allegedly tried "to cover up or conceal all information about her activities…as long as it [was] not specifically demanded."[715]

Likewise, after the Stasi asked Eva B. to establish contact with a registered prostitute in Rostock, she engaged in selective disclosure. In this instance, she refused to hand them any valuable information about the target because she was a close friend of hers.[716] For first sixteen months of Eva's cooperation, she submitted reports but deliberately withheld names from them. When the Stasi began to exert pressure on her, she complied with their requests and included names in her next report, identifying sixteen women who frequented Rostock's Storchenbar and five 'hwG' women. Despite this compliance, her response was clearly calculated, as each woman she named already worked for the Stasi. In this way, she continued to protect women in her inner circle.

[714] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 176.
[715] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 819-91, Bd.1. Leipzig, 9. 08. 1983, BStU 000054.
[716] Eva B. recalled having regular contact with this network of women, so much so that she told Brüning that they used to watch each other's children; Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 177-79.

Brüning writes, "Because Eva did not volunteer to inform, she was not prepared to spy on or incriminate her social network."[717]

Eva's experience and others like it suggest that prostitutes created networks to protect themselves against, or at the very least talk about, exploitation and abuse. Because the inherent danger of having sex with strangers created a sense of threat, they formed kinship or community ties and shared information about dangerous clients, pimps, physicians, and police officers. In a similar fashion, they created a Stasi whisper network and disclosed details about their IM activity with one another. Although we cannot assume that shared working conditions or life experiences always resulted in camaraderie or a social support network, the Stasi files shed light on some women's social networks. For example, a letter of denunciation revealed that several prostitutes shared "a flophouse on Oranienburgerstraße in the Mitte district of Berlin."[718] Whether these flats were for living, working, or both, women existed near one another and developed some form of relationship. We can also begin to piece together women's personal networks by looking at the names that appear in their files. For instance, the files of three informers from Karl-Marx Stadt – IM Marlon Forster, IM Irene Schneider, and IM Sylvia Sommer – refer to each other often. Snippets of information, such as Irene Schneider wanting "to visit IM Marlon Forster" in the evening of April 16, 1968, suggest that these women not only knew one another, but were friends who knew about each other's collaboration. [719] Moreover, because they were active in the same circles, their reports were often compared.[720] As

[717] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 176-77.
[718] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88, "Betr: Hinweis auf eine Prostituierte," Berlin 21.08.1984 BStU 0019.
[719] BStU, MfS BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 00001.
[720] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 000010.

vulnerable people subjected to high levels of physical, sexual and verbal violence, these informal whisper networks provided some semblance of protection.

Meeting Avoidance

The frequency with which meeting avoidance was reported in the Stasi files suggests that many women also used this strategy to limit their visibility to the MfS. Since medical and legal authorities conflated venereal disease with female sexuality, many informers had previous experience with avoidance, specifically with resisting sexual health care, and often failed to appear at compulsory medical screenings. Because the health care workers who conducted their gynecological exams had complete control over whether they were admitted to a ward or incarcerated, it was of decisive importance that they make themselves and their actions less observable whenever possible. Women were also subjected to dehumanizing treatment, abusive language, public humiliation, and physical pain at medical appointments, as doctors viewed them and their bodies as little more than carriers of disease.[721] Therefore, during their work with the Stasi, a sizable percentage of women found meetings anxiety-inducing and avoided them. Much like medical exams, meetings were sites where they could be seen and potentially arrested.[722]

After the Stasi recruited Emilia K. to secretly collect information on her social network, "she often de-conspired, appeared irregularly at the agreed meetings and did not accept suggestions of the employee."[723] She was released in writing in 1961. When she

[721] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 48.
[722] Foucault's description of medical examinations is relevant here: "it is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance which makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized"; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 184.
[723] BStU, MfS, HA II 50669 "Ausug" Berlin, 27.7.1965 BStU 0006.

was hired again in February 1963, "it also turned out that she did not appear regularly at the agreed meetings. She often had to go to her apartment to be visited. She then acted very snippy and arrogant towards the MfS employee. She was striving only for personal gain."[724] When she told people at a local drinking establishment that she was working for the MfS in October 1963, she was dismissed again.[725] This was likely a conscious effort at deconspiration. Sybille, who was very much aware that the Stasi was trying to manipulate her during recruitment proceedings, agreed to inform as the result of blackmail. However, she never trusted the Stasi and avoided meetings. When she attempted to travel to the CSSR and discovered that she had been formally barred from leaving Germany, she assumed that the Stasi was behind it, and that it was punishment for missing meetings. The MfS told her that her girlfriend was to blame, and that they would arrange for her to travel again if she worked harder as an informer. Following this incident, Sybille withdrew from the Stasi completely. That is the end of her BStU file.[726]

Honey Trap

So-called 'honey trap' agents negotiated with the state in similar ways. In 1956, for instance, the Criminal Police attempted to mold IM Rose into a "horizontal agent." Since she led an 'immoral' way of life in the northeastern city of Greifswald and occasionally missed work "because she was completely drunk," the state felt she was "suitable to work for us as a light girl."[727] When she was approached and asked to work in the intimate arena, however, she could not be persuaded to sacrifice her body for the state. She supposedly

[724] BStU, MfS, HA II 50669 "Ausug" Berlin, 27.7.1965 BStU 0006.
[725] BStU, MfS, HA II 50669 "Ausug" Berlin, 27.7.1965 BStU 0006.
[726] BStU, MfS BV Leipzig, AIM 1127/92, Teil 1, Bl. 35.
[727] BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AIM 389-57, "Abschrift" 10.2. 1956 BStU 000022.

told commanding officers that she "did not want to jeopardize things with her boyfriend because he wants to marry her after her divorce" and that "she had dreamed of Mata Hari for the last two nights and that she could never become one."[728] She agreed to work with the Criminal Police, however, after they assured her that "the circumstances described are just one of many tasks in our work."[729] She signed a written commitment and received instructions to monitor other 'deviants' within her circle of contacts.

Shortly after Rose's recruitment, she "fell into such a love affair with one of the main suspects that both wanted to marry…the GI no longer brought incriminating material but assessed the person positively."[730] Around the same time, she stopped attending meetings and writing reports.[731] As a solution, the Criminal Police suggested that Rose take up work in restaurants, since she visited them often. According to an excerpt from her file, "she was shown that she had the opportunity to visit restaurants where mainly students frequented. She was given the task of finding out which students they were and what the mood was among them.[732] She appeared at the meetings at first, but soon refused to work and was not interested." Ultimately, the MfS archived her files because "the GI does not have the necessary seriousness of interest in providing our bodies with the relevant information."[733]

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[728] BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AIM 389-57, "Abschrift," 10.2. 1956 BStU 000022.
[729] BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AIM 389-57, "Abschrift," 10.2. 1956 BStU 000022.
[730] It is unclear whether this relationship occurred. BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AIM 389-57 "Betr: übergabe der GI Problem an Gen. Lä. Greifswald," 31. 5. 1956 BStU 000036.
[731] BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AIM 389-57 "Betr: übergabe der GI Problem an Gen. Lä. Greifswald," 31. 5. 1956 BStU 000036.
[732] The Stasi viewed students as potential class enemies since they often led political protest movements. At the same time, they tried to recruit university students, specifically male students, as MfS employees. This practice was not limited to East German citizens. Sara Pugach discusses how and why the Stasi approached African students and tried to recruit them as IMs in her book *African Students in East Germany, 1949-1975*.
[733] The Stasi sometimes used the term 'Secret Informer' or *Geheimer Informator* (GI) to refer to IMs before 1968; BArch, MfS, BV Rst, AIM 389-57, "Abschrift," 10.2. 1956 BStU 000022.

In 1964, the MfS recruited twenty-three-year-old Margot D. after a series of criminal convictions. They approached her and told her that if she did not want to return to Leipzig, she could work for them getting to know western foreigners on an intimate level. As soon as she agreed, however, she began to dodge her case officer. Soon, she stopped going to meetings altogether.[734] Mari H. also rejected the Stasi's request for her to act as a 'honey trap' spy, even though they paid her to do so. According to her MfS report, when her supervising officer asked her to collect information from men at the Hotel Merkur, she "didn't take notice and told her supervisor that she had family obligations…She further explained that she has a colleague who is 27 years old and has no hesitation in going to bed with strange men and carrying out these orders."[735] At a subsequent meeting, she repeated that "she was still of the opinion that she would not 'go to bed' with any guest" and accused the Stasi of being too pushy.[736] Lastly, in 1973, IM Brigitte was approached by another female IM at the Am Ring Hotel Bar in Neubrandenburg who said she had a suitable western gentleman for her to have intercourse with. Despite Stasi expectations that she be indifferent to the age and appearance of males, IM Brigitte declined this offer when the IM revealed a man who was middle-aged and bald.[737] In this manner, Brigitte maintained quiet control over her sexual behaviour.

[734] BStU, MfS, BVfS Lpz, KDfS Lpz-Stadt 2532, Leipzig, 22. 04. 1981 BStU 0010.
[735] BStU, MfS, BVfS Lpz, KDfS Lpz-Stadt 2532, Leipzig, 22. 04. 1981 BStU 0010.
[736] BStU, MfS, BVfS Lpz, KDfS Lpz-Stadt 2532, Leipzig, 22. 04. 1981 BStU 0010.
[737] BArch, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 1021/89, Bd. 1. Teil I Band I, 1. "Treffbericht," Leipzig, 10.04.1975 BStU 000147; BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 611/77 Bd. 1. "IM Vorlauf – Notwendigkeit und Zielstellung," Leipzig, 20. August 1973" BStU 000011.

Options

Another group of women exercised their agency by becoming almost casual, sessional informers. To quote Brüning, they "revealed themselves, attended meetings and provided information when they had no other options available (i.e. they ran out of money for food and other expenses or lost their job) and re-established boundaries by distancing themselves when things were going well in their personal lives."[738] *Prostitution in der DDR* outlines Gisela F.'s experience, reflecting several of the themes discussed in this chapter. In 1981, Gisela was recruited as an IKMR during a one year and three-month prison sentence in StVE Leipzig. After she was charged with asociality and theft and imprisoned on June 25, 1981, "it was determined that she could potentially be suitable as an IKM. She has operationally interesting connections to people who are of operational interest; she can contact such people immediately after her release from prison."[739] This included lawbreakers, hitchhikers, and 'hwG-Personens' around Nordstraße. [740] Imprisoned with few civil privileges and little to lose, she agreed to inform. Gisela, who was described by officers as "not repulsive in appearance," informed for several years before she was arrested. After her release from prison in March 1985, she showed herself to be willing and dependable, in the words of her case officer, and reported on 'hwG' people/clients. Her activity tapered off after she entered an intimate relationship with a man she met at the Leipzig Fair.[741] Her case officer wrote, "all discussions with her about this

[738] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*,185, 232.
[739] During her interrogation, Gisela expressed a wish to have a tattoo removed from the outside of her left thigh during her time in prison. The Stasi promised to see to this tattoo removal "in order to establish a relationship of trust." It was removed by February 1, 1982. Her interrogator also brought her a bottle of Coca Cola as a sign of good will; BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AKAG 201-89, Bd 1. "Betreff: Befragung der." Leipzig, 10.07.1981 BStU 000031; "Kontaktsgrspräch" 01. 02. 1982; BStU 00068.
[740] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AKAG 201-89, Bd 1. "Antrag auf Bearbeitung" 17. September 1981 BStU 000012.
[741] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AKAG 201-89, Bd 1. "Begründung der Werbung" Leipzig, 26.92.1982 BStU 000085.

connection and arguments about its implausibility were unconvincing. The IKMR refuses further cooperation and expressed this in writing."[742] Gisela resumed her informing when this relationship ended but stopped answering calls from her case officer when she "took up professional work" and began dating someone else.[743] Her operational material was archived on January 2, 1989, after border troops caught her trying to swim across the East Berlin border. She was imprisoned, and her case officer concluded that "further unofficial cooperation will be refrained from."[744] For eight years, Gisela moved within the IM system and reaped the benefits of state protection.[745]

IM Carnation is another individual who agreed to inform while incarcerated but engaged in behaviour than ran counter to the state's aspirations after her release from prison. She was recruited to report on arrested people, fellow prisoners, and easy women in 1984 after spending two years and five months at UHA II in Berlin.[746] The Stasi assumed that she would continue to associate with negative crowds even after her release from prison, and, since she agreed to work for the state even outside of the penal system, ordered her to "develop further information on prostitution as well as information on the [Berlin] restaurant Trümmer-Kutte."[747] What they did not anticipate was for her to show any degree of agency. Her file stated, "despite repeated discussions, she repeatedly made unauthorized contact with other male and female arrested persons and violated house rules." It continued:

> In the operational work, she did not implement given instructions and orders correctly. She insufficiently fulfilled tasks assigned to her, as she put her own interests, such as unauthorized connection, into the foreground. She was also not trying to change her behaviour and to fulfill the given tasks with quality.

[742] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AKAG 201-89, Bd 1. "Absclußbericht", 24.02.1988, BStU 000122.
[743] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR.* Kindle, Loc 3978.
[744] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AKAG 201-89, Bd 1. "Absclußbericht", 24.02.1988, BStU 000146.
[745] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR,* Kindle, Loc. 3978.
[746] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88, "Antrag zur Bearbeitung als IKMR-Kandidat, Es wird vorgeschlagen die Strafegefangene," Berlin, 24.04.1984. BStU 0005.
[747] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88 "Treffbericht," 23. 05. 1985. BStU 0029.

> The written reports caused her difficulties, which is partly due to the lack of interest in the operational work.[748]

In a later file, the Stasi noted that because IM Carnation was still engaging in prostitution, "she could have gathered far more information, which was not the case."[749] Importantly, IM Carnation was just one of many informers who distanced themselves from the Stasi after being released from prison. Four decades earlier in the 1950s, this happened so often that it attracted the attention of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). A 1959 CIA memo declared: "The Ministry attempts to recruit the services of those prisoners who are about to be released through various types of pressure or inducements…this approach does not appear to have been too successful, however, since most of the prisoners agree to work for the Ministry only out of fear that if they refuse their sentences might be prolonged. Once on the outside, their collaboration has proved to be of little value."[750] IM Carnation's file ended with her requesting a break from informing because she had just received a new four-room apartment, which she devoted herself to furnishing.[751] Since by Stasi logic, "a multitude of problems arise when you get a new apartment, the candidate's request was granted."[752]

Linda, whose file is discussed in detail in Chapter Five, did the same. Though the MfS recruited Linda to monitor relationships between hotel employees and male guests in Schwerin, she removed herself from the milieu when she got engaged to a man from Berlin. When she called off her wedding, she started informing again. According to her file, she

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[748] BStU, MfS, Bv Bln, AKAG 3130_88, "Abschlußbericht," Berlin 15.05.1987 BStU 0035.
[749] "The East German Prison System," *Central Intelligence Agency*, April 1959. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-02771R000100300015-9.pdf; BStU, MfSm Bv Bln, AKAG 3130_88, "Begründung" 19. 04. 1988 BStU 0067.
[750] "The East German Prison System," *Central Intelligence Agency*, April 1959. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-02771R000100300015-9.pdf;
[751] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88 "Absclußbericht," 15. 04. 1987. BStU 0037.
[752] BStU, MfS, BV Bln, AKAG 3130_88 "Treffbericht," Berlin 17.7.1985 BStU 0033.

was only getting married because she was pregnant and had had a miscarriage.[753] When the Stasi warned her that her work as a prostitute was getting in the way of her IM work, since she had too many different sexual contacts and therefore put the agency at risk, she withdrew again. At the same time, she established a foothold and began negotiating with her case officer.[754] She demanded a better apartment, for instance, and threatened open protest if she did not get it. She also told people about her informing career, quit her regular job, and stopped responding to orders she did not want to fulfill.

Linda's case is fascinating because the MfS took pains to meticulously document all their issues with her. Her files are riddled with complaints about her continuous changing of jobs, consistent engagement in prostitution, and "character instability."[755] Of her retreat from tasks that she did not want to perform, the MfS wrote: "In the realization of the orders, the sexual satisfaction and attainment of personal benefits play an essential role. Maintaining contacts must be repeatedly and emphatically demanded."[756] Her disinterest in political events was noted, as was her "anger about unacceptable living conditions… threats of suicide, commission of criminal acts, public demonstrative acts, and submission of an illegal application to achieve relocation to the NSW."[757] As Brüning argues, Linda followed orders at the age of twenty, but not thirty-five. Over time, she learned how to leverage her position.[758]

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[753] According to Josie McLellan, "East Germany had by far the highest number of births outside of marriage in the Eastern Bloc." In 1980, the percentage of births outside marriage stood at 22.8%. By 1985, it was 33.8%; McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism,* 56-57; Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 170-711.
[754] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 171.
[755] BArch, MfS, AIM 9859-88, Bd. 1. "Kontrollbericht zum IMS Linda, Reg.-Nr. XV/396/72," Berlin 9.2.1984, BStU 000246.
[756] BArch, MfS, AIM 9859-88, Bd. 1. "Kontrollbericht zum IMS Linda, Reg.-Nr. XV/396/72," Berlin 9.2.1984, BStU 000246.
[757] BArch, MfS, AIM 9859-88, Bd. 1. "Kontrollbericht zum IMS Linda, Reg.-Nr. XV/396/72," Berlin 9.2.1984, BStU 000246.
[758] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 171, 190.

Certainly, demonstrations of agency could have consequences, and some women were punished if they declined to work or stopped working for the Stasi. The senior welfare worker from Rostock's closed hospital discussed in Chapter Three "assigned female IMs to the institution who did not work satisfactorily and, for example, failed to attend meetings with their senior officers."[759] But many women were not punished because their resistance went undetected. The Stasi and the police consistently under-estimated the intelligence and skills of the women they tried to recruit, who so often outsmarted them. The prevailing narrative being promoted by Stasi officers was that women failed to meet their case officers' expectations due to their inherent idleness and primitivity. They expected women's behavior to align with these 'recognizable' characteristics and had well-formed ideas about lower-class prostitutes' or 'hwG' individuals' capabilities. Of course, the fact that informers could "behave in a defiant manner without this being even noticed," to use Brüning's words, questions the established image of the Stasi as hyper-efficient. Instead, it makes officers appear incompetent, complacent, and unimaginative, and highlights a limitation of Stasi surveillance in the GDR.[760]

For example, in 1956, Marina J. agreed to inform for the MfS if she received a monthly sum in return. This was not uncommon, although monetary rewards were usually quite small. Although the original amount that she received was judged "disproportionate to her performance" in her file, suggesting that she did not inform and pocketed the cash,

[759] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 104.
[760] Of course, my historical subjects would not have read their Stasi files or seen the exact language used to describe them. However, their social interactions with official personnel made such attitudes clear. Additionally, to be involved in prostitution or have their name listed on an 'hwG' registry was to confront these morally loaded labels and experience 'othering' every day. It was therefore possible for informers to manipulate their case officers under the cover of mental degeneration or laziness, framing themselves as incapable of functioning on their own or comprehending their case officers' orders correctly due to their prostitute status; Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 189.

she continued to negotiate for more money. Her attempts to reap extra rewards, in the Stasi's opinion, were "inherent to the true character of a prostitute."[761] Likewise, when twenty-two-year-old Susanne P. began making excuses to get out of her monthly meetings, her case officer credited it to "the domestic milieu from which the IM comes."[762] It was a full year later when he realized that she had withdrawn entirely.[763] When Margrit K. continued to see clients and brought little information forward about them throughout the 1970s, her commanding officer attributed her lack of follow through to unintelligence.[764] He was not certain whether she was withholding information "because she assumes that the security organs are scaring away her clients who are able to pay, or because she is mentally incapable of grasping everything correctly…there is sometimes the impression that the IM does not really grasp the essence of the matter."[765] When Hanna R. failed to meet her case officer's intelligence gathering expectations, she was described as "helpless when it comes to certain questions where personal conclusions must be drawn," just as IM Simone's "great forgetfulness" was used to explain her "persistent false statements."[766] Similar logic was used when women deconspired. The MfS believed that lack of education and "below average intelligence" made "morally indignant women much more susceptible to deconspiration" than the average informer.[767] For this reason, they saw women who deliberately deconspired as too unintelligent to comprehend the need for secrecy. All these

[761] BArch, MfS, AIM 4589-58, "Beurteilung," Berlin, 29. 5. 56. BStU 000062.
[762] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 223.
[763] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 223.
[764] BStU, MfS, "Bericht uber den berlauf der werbung," Berlin 03.07.1970, Dezernat I, Komm.II/3 BStU 000026.
[765] BStU, MfS, AOG 22212_80 Berlin, "Einschätzhung des IM Anja Oyborg" Reg Nr. 240/70, Berlin, 17.12.1971. BStU 000038.
[766] BStU, BV Leipzig, AIM 1021/89 Bd. 1. BStU 000039, Leipzig 26. 1. 1971; BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 819-91, Bd.1. Leipzig, 09. 08. 1083, BStU 000053.
[767] Falck, *VEB* Bordell, Kindle, Loc. 70.

cases support Paula Kirby's statement that "the Stasi was capable of almost 'farcical incompetence.'" After reading her own file, she wrote that she "couldn't have made things any easier for them if she tried" by spending several hours in their view and yet they "still managed to miss all the interesting bits."[768]

Margrit's case also raises additional questions about the ways that women's experiences objecting to invasions of their privacy filtered into their informing careers. While the MfS requested some women have sex with foreigners, they warned others to limit their sexual contacts.[769] Many informers disregarded this counsel because the financial implications of stepping away from prostitution would be too great.[770] For example, in 1967, the Stasi accused Nina T. of carrying out sexual intercourse without a mandate to do so.[771] During a February 28, 1968 contact interview, they also ordered her to reduce her number of intimate contacts, providing her with the reason that she was endangering her unofficial work and putting herself at risk of pregnancy and VD. On this subject, she stated, "on various occasions the representatives of the security organs that I know have seriously advised me to live according to moral norms. I have, however, disregarded this advice."[772] During an extensive interrogation, she admitted to having had sex with several individuals for a fee, though she never had a fixed rate.[773] She created a booming business for herself and in each case, received large sums of money and western consumer products inaccessible in the GDR. Her Stasi file stated: "as a rule, the IM always

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[768] K. Hignett and Paula Kirby, "Interview: Paula Kirby on Life in the GDR" *The View East: Central and Eastern Europe, Past and Present.* https://thevieweast.wordpress.com/2014/02/14/paula-kirby-on-life-in-the-gdr/

[769] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 200.

[770] Harris, *Selling Sex in the Reich*, 63.

[771] BArch, MfS, GH 13-73, Bd 1. "Dekonspiration der inoffiziellen Zusammenarbeit" Berlin, 6.12.1971, BStU 000150.

[772] BArch, MfS, GH 13-73, Bd 1, "Verhehmungsprotokoll" Berlin, 10. 5. 1972, BStU 000206.

[773] BArch, MfS, GH 13-73, Bd 1. Redacted, Berlin, 6.12.1972. BStU 000053.

reported about it after the contacts," not before.[774] Clearly, she purposely did not tell the Stasi about her life or her so-called "indecent behaviours" because she knew they would have taken measures to prevent further acts of prostitution, therefore stopping her sole source of income.[775]

Likewise, IM Peggy agreed to work with the Stasi in 1968 and negotiated regular financial donations for her services. She was considered "an attractive young woman with high demands on life and certain experiences in dealing with male people, even in an elevated position, since she got to know them in brothels."[776] These brothels were in West Germany, specifically in Kaiserslautern, Duisburg, and Düsseldorf.[777] Though she attended fourteen meetings with her case officer in Berlin, "it became apparent that she was only insufficiently committed to establishing long term contacts with operationally interesting people."[778] "Despite more than ten years of cooperation," the MfS wrote, "it was not possible for Peggy to develop a political way of thinking."[779] She moved to West Berlin in June 1976 and, with the help of a lawyer, registered as a prostitute there.

As female IMs continued to engage in paid sex against the wishes of their case officers, some took advantage of the Stasi's fear of pregnancy. Ruth K. is one of several women who got married and, after her case officer continued to contact her, became pregnant. In an interview with Brüning, she stated, "I became really pressured and scared

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[774] BArch, MfS, GH 13-73, Bd 1. Dekonspiration der inoffiziellen Zusammenarbeit," Berlin, 6.12.1971. BStU 000151.
[775] BArch, MfS, GH 13-73, Bd 1. "Vernehmungsprotokoll," Berlin, 10. 5.1972. BStU 000207
[776] BStU, MfS, HA II, 24094, "IM Peggy, Beschluß uber die Archivierung des IM-Vorlaus," Berlin, 25. 01. 1984.
[777] BStU, MfS, HA II, 24094, "IM Peggy, Beschluß uber die Archivierung des IM-Vorlaus," Berlin, 25. 01. 1984.
[778] BStU, MfS, HA II, 24094, "IM Peggy, Beschluß uber die Archivierung des IM-Vorlaus," Berlin, 25. 01. 1984.
[779] BStU, MfS, HA II, 24094, "IM Peggy, Beschluß uber die Archivierung des IM-Vorlaus," Berlin, 25. 01. 1984.

and then I was pregnant and then the guy came for the last time…I said I can't do anything anymore. I'm pregnant. I was twenty-two there, but I was totally happy that they could no longer annoy me."[780] She continued to pursue sexual work. Another "female person from the Gotha District that makes male acquaintances easily" was also registered as pregnant and removed from rotation for this reason.[781] Women with children also used this to their advantage. In 1973, IM Irene Schneider got away with what the Stasi viewed as "negative behaviour" by emphasizing her role as a mother. Her case officer wrote of one encounter: "again, [the meeting] had to be carried out in the car because IM supposedly doesn't have much time because of her child." In the same report, he remarked that she had "no interest whatsoever in collaboration" and repeatedly stressed that she could not leave her house due to her child. [782] Clearly, the Stasi's success varied when it came to informers. These examples speak to their limited ability to control the actions of female IMs, and IMs' ability to contest or push back against the state.

The Sexual Abuse of 'Prostitute' and 'hwG' IMs

As preceding sections have demonstrated, Stasi case officers were incredibly involved in the everyday lives of their IMs. They presented potential informers to their superiors, determined the best way to bring about the solicited person's recruitment, and, if they agreed, evaluated their reports. They were also expected to be intensely familiar with their informers. For example, case officers were tasked with providing detailed descriptions about their female informers' facial features. A chart developed by the Stasi

[780] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, Kindle, Loc. 5897.
[781] BStU, BV Erfurt, Abt. II, 760, "Sonderhausen," 10.04.1973.
[782] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 000018.

law school in Potsdam asked them to describe "each part of the IM's face in detail," covering details such as a nose's bone structure, tip shape, width, and height.[783] The document also afforded case officers "eleven possibilities to choose from to describe the gait of an IM."[784] But while the exhaustive descriptions of women's age, height, build ('fat,' 'slim,' 'muscular'), hair colour and style, eye colour, ear size and prominence, mouth, complexion, clothing style, accessories, and general appearance (clean or dishevelled) which appear in women's files were presumably intended to help the MfS identify and tail these informers if needed, unnecessary descriptors such as "remarkably strong breasts" still construct the case officer's gaze as a distinctly male one.[785]

After familiarizing themselves with their female informers' bodies, case officers proceeded to concern themselves with women's personal affairs and private sexual habits. This familiarity was not always desired by women; however, it is largely because of this perceived closeness that Stasi case officers have been memorialized as surrogate husbands and fathers. This can be seen in the following examples. In one of the first studies of women and the Stasi, *Die Spitzenfrauen des MfS* (2005), Schmole frames the employer-employee relationship as a wholesome one. She states that for many female IMs, their case officer became a friend, surrogate spouse, and father-figure.[786] Barbara Miller makes a similar declaration in her doctoral dissertation, writing that "the relationship between the IM and the *Führungsoffizier* went beyond that of colleagues, and was perceived, at least on the part

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[783] Miller, "The Stasi Legacy: The Case of the Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter," 129.
[784] Miller, "The Stasi Legacy: The Case of the Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter," 129.
[785] Misogynist descriptions of women abound. For example, one IM is described as having *elefantenbeine* or elephant legs while another is written about like this: "she is known to us under the nickname 'Zirkuspferdchen' [circus/show pony]. The appearance is described as: highly teased hair, heavily made up, strikingly dressed ('zirkuspferdchen')"; BArch, MfS, Lpz, AIM 20819-91, Bd. 1., 27. 4. 1984. BStU 000099.
[786] Angela Schmole, *Die Spitzenfrauen des MfS: Bei der Staatssicherheit diente das weibliche Personal nur selten in gehobenen Stellungen,* 110.

of the IM, as a friendship…[this] lulled the IM into a false sense of familiar congeniality."[787] Cooper also argues that relationships between female IMs and male case officers often adopted a "family-like quality" as Stasi officers served as substitute fathers. Within this assumed relationship, paternal behaviour typically increased during important life events in women's lives such as divorce and pregnancy according to Cooper.[788] Interestingly, the Runden Ecke or Round Corner Museum, housed in former BV Leipzig (Figure 13), also references the "special" relationship between informers and their case officers. The English language audio tour declares, "an interesting aspect is the special relationship between the IMs and their case officers. Apart from the official business of their meetings, much time would be spent on political education and on addressing the IMs personal problems."[789]

Yet, a close reading of the Stasi files of so-called sexually deviant women reveal a chasm between this paternalist rhetoric and women's experiences on the ground. Instead of developing familial relationships with their case officers, many IMs categorized as 'hwG' or 'asocial' experienced violence at the hands of their Stasi superiors. Using the disciplinary hearing transcripts of Stasi and DVP personnel as evidence, the second half of this chapter focuses on female IMs' experiences of sexual harassment and abuse. It argues that while state security organs sought to punish the behaviour of women they believed to be 'hwG' persons or prostitutes, they were not prepared to punish the sexual crimes of their own employees when such women were concerned. Thus, female informers, especially those from the prostitution milieu, needed to take measures to protect themselves.

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[787] Miller, "The Stasi Legacy: The Case of the Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter," 126.
[788] Cooper, "Patriarchy within a Patriarchy: Women and the Stasi," 11.
[789] Museum in der "Runden Ecke," Leipzig, Visited by author on November 14, 2023.

As frontmen of the SED Party and individuals tasked with enforcing public order, Mielke expected Stasi officers to adhere to strict moral standards. On and off duty, they were to embody the 'Socialist Man' through their "labour discipline," "comradely cooperation," and devotion to socialism.[790] In their personal relationships, Mielke also expected them to be "cleaner, more honest than anyone…as clear as crystal."[791] To prevent MfS employees from associating with 'deviant' populations, for example, higher-ups launched detailed investigations into their employees' romantic partners. They also broke up marriages that deviated from socialist standards.[792] The Stasi's willingness to intervene in the marriages of its employees can be seen in an anonymous woman's file from 1965. It states, "She was married to an MfS employee, there are two children from this marriage. Since she is a prostitute…the MfS employee had the choice of either divorce or dismissal from the MfS…the marriage took place on 16.6.1961 since both parties led a morally ethical way of life."[793] At the same time, institutional and self-discipline were not synonymous, and the Stasi could not control every aspect of its employees' lives. As autonomous individuals, many MfS officers lived their personal lives as they saw fit, often in opposition to SED state ideology. According to a chart in the co-authored article, "The District Leadership Cadre of the Stasi," they received routine infractions for delinquent behaviour such as "drinking on duty, public drunkenness in uniform, compromising undercover operations, neglect of watchfulness, thoughtless action on duty, neglect of supervision of subordinates…improper handling of a service weapon…counterfeiting

[790] "Ten Commandments of Socialist Morality and Ethics" https://library.fes.de/FDGB-Lexikon/texte/sachteil/z/10_Gebote_der_sozialistischen_Moral.html
[791] Stasi Museum, Visited by author on November 23, 2022.
[792] Uwe Krähnke, Anja Zschirpe, Matthias Finster, Philipp Reimann, and Scott Stock Gissendanner, "The District Leadership Cadre of the Stasi," *German Politics & Society* 36:4, 2018, 14.
[793] BStU, MfS, HA II 50669, "Hauptabteilung, Kader und Schulung, Disziplineabteilung," Berlin, 1965.

documents, disobeying orders, [and the] unpermitted use of [a] company car."[794] Archival documents reveal that a handful of Stasi employees also faced disciplinary hearings for perpetrating sexual violence against female informers.

The following examples of sexual advances, aggression, and violence can all be found in the Stasi files. In 1956, twenty-five-year-old MfS Gen. Feldw. Schneider confessed to taking advantage of his female informer, Renate, by trying to enter a relationship with her.[795] He chose the restaurant Zur Knorre as the site of their first contact meeting because it served alcohol, before luring Renate to the bar of a different restaurant, Burgerkeller Meissen. According to his disciplinary hearing transcript, he consumed so much alcohol at Burgerkeller Meissen that he became pushy and physically aggressive towards his informer.[796] When he brought Renate home at midnight, he tried to enter her apartment several times, making her extremely uncomfortable. His trial report stated, "Gen. Feldw. Schneider brought this GI home, whereupon he became intrusive and asked the GI to take him into the apartment because he could no longer go to the office at this time. Despite the intrusiveness of Gen. Feldw. Schneider, the GI refused."[797]

Although Renate had very clearly refused his sexual advances, Schneider's behaviour repeated itself at subsequent meetings. This led the informer to exercise even more agency. First, she threatened to stop coming to meetings and end her cooperation altogether if he did not stop sexually harassing her.[798] Second, when Schneider requested

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[794] Krähnke, Zschirpe, Finster, Reimann, and Stock Gissendanner, "The District Leadership Cadre of the Stasi," 14.
[795] The term "Feldwebel," abbrev. Feldw. is used in the German military. It means sergeant, or staff sergeant.
[796] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden ZLP 680, BStU 0022, Meissen, 16.10.1957, "Punishment of Gen. Feldw. Clerk from KD Essen."
[797] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden ZLP 680, BStU 0022, Meissen, 16.10.1957, "Punishment of Gen. Feldw. Clerk from KD Essen."
[798] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden ZLP 680, BStU 0022, Meissen, 16.10.1957, "Punishment of Gen. Feldw. Clerk from KD Essen."

that Renate keep his behaviour from his boss, she refused. The fact that he "carried out further meetings with the GI in a purely formal manner" suggests that she may have also threatened him with exposure.[799] In this scenario, Renate was the target of unwanted sexual attention by her superior. By working with the MfS, she was subjected to a working environment that sexually objectified the female body, and she was forced to keep constant vigilance over her physical safety. As the following excerpt from Schneider's trial suggests, nobody else was going to protect her:

> Despite Gen. [Schneider's] long-standing work in the Stasi and the instructions and orders given to him, Gen. [Schneider] tried to enter into intimate relationships with a female GI and with an HWG person. In doing so, he violated the party's principles in the grossest manner, whereby he behaved in a highly immoral manner as a member of a military unit. As a result, the operational work in the cooperation with the GI [Renate] was decisively weakened, while on the other hand, the view of the MfS was discriminated against.[800]

By 1958, Schneider had drawn "no lessons from his previous disciplinary punishments" and continued to meet his female IMs in restaurants. Once both parties were under the influence of alcohol, he would suggest they continue the meeting at his apartment. To defend himself, he said that "he witnessed the same immoral acts by employees of the department."[801]

In 1959, it was revealed that twenty-eight-year-old Manfred Schiller committed forty-four criminal offenses in which he approached "easy-going" women that he encountered at work under the pretense of official necessity.[802] He took advantage of their

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[799] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden ZLP 680, BStU 0022, Meissen, 16.10.1957, "Punishment of Gen Feldw. Clerk from KD Essen."
[800] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden ZLP 680, BStU 0021 – 16.10. 1957 "Gen Feldw. [Redacted] – Born 31.10.1932 – clerk for the district service offices in Meissen."
[801] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden ZLP 680, BStU 0021 – 16.10. 1957 "Gen Feldw. [Redacted] – Born 31.10.1932 – clerk for the district service offices in Meissen."
[802] "Easy-going" was a euphemism for prostitute or sexually promiscuous; BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, ZPL Nr. 598, "MfS Bezirksverwaltung Dresden – Leitung – Straftenor," 6.3.1959. BStU 0044.

difficult situation and tried to convince them to have sex with him. An example of this is the events of March 3, 1959, when Schiller approached a female 'hwG' person in an immoral manner while investigating her apartment. He did not have an official order to do so.[803] He "violently grabbed her chest and between her legs" intending to have sex with her, but her physical rejection cast him off, according to the file. Notably, he had already received a disciplinary sentence of two days arrest on October 27, 1958, for approaching two other women under false necessity and pressuring them to have sexual intercourse with him.[804] In one case, Schiller "violently tried to put [one woman] down on the couch," but his plan failed because of her "resolute resistance."[805] In the other case, he raped her. He admitted to approaching another 'hwG' designated woman in August with the same intentions. Importantly, Schiller's sexual abuse was discovered not through any internal investigation, but because one of his abuse victims asked for his DVP card number and wrote it down. She later called an employee of BV-Dresden and told them over the phone that an employee of the district council had visited and assaulted her. When an employee of the human resources department checked the number, Schiller was revealed as the card-owner. His case file stated, "we are lucky that she wrote down the VP card number and the name because if she hadn't reported it, it might never have come out."[806] To reiterate, it was an informer's act of self preservation and agency which sparked the investigation into her abuser and ultimately led to his disciplinary hearing.

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[803] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, ZPL Nr. 598, "MfS Bezirksverwaltung Dresden – Leitung – Straftenor," 6.3.1959. BStU 0044.
[804] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, ZPL Nr. 598, "Betr: Durchfuhrung eines Parteiverfahrens gegen, [Redacted], 24.4.1959. BStU 0020," Dresden 31.3.1959, BStU 0018.
[805] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, ZPL Nr. 598, "Betr: Durchfuhrung eines Parteiverfahrens gegen, [Redacted], 24.4.1959. BStU 0020" Dresden 31.3.1959, BStU 0018.
[806] BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, ZPL Nr. 598, "Protokoll über die außerordentliche Mitgliederversammlung am" 7.11. 1958. BStU 0038.

Male Stasi employees continued to harass female IMs in the 1960s. For instance, Brüning cites a case file where a management officer in Rostock wrote that "due to the immoral behaviour of the employees at the time – they tried to establish an intimate relationship – the [IM] refused further cooperation."[807] Reference to abuse during this decade tend to appear more sporadically than the previous decade, however, administrative documents indicate that the exploitation of women was still very much an ongoing issue. For example, in 1962, the Stasi leadership in Karl-Marx Stadt created an action plan to combat the mistreatment of female IMs. Titled Command Nr. 53/62, it began: "when working with female unofficial employees, some employees have recently grossly abused the trust placed in them: they have thereby endangered the conspiratorial work of our organs and have caused great damage to the MfS' reputation among the population."[808] For this reason, Command Nr. 53/62 ordered meetings with female employees to be conducted by two male employees instead of one. It also asked unit or department heads to provide their subordinates with "documented instruction on the principles of cooperation with IMs" every three months.[809]

The Karl-Marx-Stadt Stasi released a separate but similar document in 1963. Titled "Collaboration with Female IMs," it made the heads of all district offices and operative departments responsible for ensuring that two employees instead of one went to meetings with female IMs. It also afforded them the responsibility of selecting which male personnel supervised female IMs. The instruction of full-time MfS employees about the principles of

[807] Brüning, *Prostitution in der* DDR, 224; BStU, MfS, BV Rostock, AIM 2201/89, Teil 1, Bl. 78. – BStU, MfS BV Berlin, AKAG 3130/88, Bl. 29. – BStU, MfS, BV Rostock, AOG 1438/83, Bd. 1, Bl. 40.
[808] BStU, MfS, BDL 400487, "Befehl Nr. 55/62," Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, Bezirksverwaltung Karl-Marx Stadt – Der Leiter, Karl Marx-Stadt, 19.9. 1962 BStU 0001.
[809] BStU, MfS, BDL 400487, "Befehl Nr. 55/62," Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, Bezirksverwaltung Karl-Marx Stadt – Der Leiter, Karl Marx-Stadt, 19.9. 1962 BStU 0001.

cooperation with female IMs, according to guideline 1/58, was to be repeated quarterly.[810] Attendance at these quarterly policy refreshers was mandatory and needed to be confirmed with employee signatures.[811] Together, these documents underline the extent of this problem. They reveal that the abuse of female informers was so prevalent that the Stasi had to assign twice the usual manpower to meet with women from the 'delinquent' milieu. This is in addition to the large number of police officers and welfare staff already assigned to them.[812]

Still, abuse continued into the 1980s. According to extra-secret documents which are marked GH or 'secret filing,' Comrade Sergeant Graf, a Stasi officer who had occupied a leading position in the agency since 1962, abused his official powers in at least seventy-six cases without reprimand.[813] The investigation began after his seventy-seventh offense, when Graf admitted to having a relationship with IM Katy Virits, an 'hwG-Person,' and her fifteen-year-old sister in his private apartment.[814] The father of another IM named Simone Götze also accused Graf of blackmailing his young daughter, and trying to have his way with her.[815] As the scope of the investigation widened, it became clear that Graf had "exploited internal information regarding female people to enter into sexual relations" and "ordered several employees under his command…to official meetings in order to induce them to commit immoral acts by exploiting his official position."[816] When asked

[810] BStU, MfS, BDL 400538 "An die Leiter aller Kreisdienststellen und operative Abteilungen" Bezirksverwaltung Karl-Marx-Stadt, Der Leiter, 10.4.1963 BStU 0001.
[811] BStU, MfS, BDL 400538 "An die Leiter aller Kreisdienststellen und operative Abteilungen" Bezirksverwaltung Karl-Marx-Stadt, Der Leiter, 10.4.1963 BStU 0001.
[812] Brüning, *Prostitution in der DDR*, 96.
[813] BArch, MfS, GH 2-84, Bd. 1, "Verneehungsprotokoll des Beschuldigten," Berlin, 27.6.1983 BStU 000241.
[814] BArch, MfS, GH 2-84, Bd. 1, "Verneehungsprotokoll des Beschuldigten," Berlin, 27.6.1983 BStU 000241.
[815] BArch, MfS, GH 2-84, Bd. 1. "Vorläufiges Gutachten," Berlin, Feb 15. 1983 BStU 000204.
[816] BArch, MfS, GH 2-84, Bd. 1. "Vorläufiges Gutachten," Berlin, Feb 15. 1983 BStU 000204.

precisely how he abused his power, he answered: "I abused my position by maintaining intimate relationships with women who supported the MfS on a voluntary basis within the framework of these connections. I [also] reported to members of the district office and asked them to have sexual intercourse with these female persons in my presence."[817] He confessed to withholding reports written by his female IMs and stuffing them inside a red folder, which was inside a safe in his home. He did so to cover his sexual misconduct, especially after he learned that measures were being taken against him. He stated, "I wanted to prevent my sexual activities from becoming known."[818]

To defend his behaviour during these proceedings, Comrade Sergeant Graf stressed that the Stasi had no concrete policies or instructions when it came to sexual exploits and that he was not the first one to commit such acts.[819] He also justified his actions by stating that "in spite of the sexual acts, which in my opinion were also a need of Katy and Simone, the operative work was aimed at fighting the enemy, as required."[820] The assertion that both victims were equally to blame for the abuse due to their "easy ways of life" is characteristic of these files. When a third female IM came forward and accused him of touching her hands and thighs several times after she forbade it, saying, "sir, you could be my father. I'm engaged, I don't want that," Graf still maintained his innocence.[821] Graf's argument that he was not the only one to commit such acts in the 1980s is supported by an information bulletin from May 22, 1986. In it, Stasi leadership wrote that due to "pronounced sexual dispositions and behaviour that is not compatible with socialist moral

[817] BArch, MfS, GH 2-84, Bd. 1, "Befragungsprotokoll des Angestellten," Berlin, 28.1.1983 BStU 000264.
[818] BArch, MfS, GH 2-84, Bd. 1, "Vernehmungsprotokoll des Beschuldigten," BStU 000021.
[819] BArch, MfS, GH 2-84, Bd. 1, "Befragungsprotokoll des Angestellten," Berlin, 28.1.1983 BStU 000264.
[820] BStU, MfS, HA I, Nr. 5393, "Aktenvermerk," Berlin 17. June 1983.
[821] BStU, MfS, HA I, Nr. 5393, "Aktenvermerk," Berlin 17. June 1983.

norms, there have been a large number of sexual derailments/aberrations in recent years, which are characterized by increasing intensity."[822] According to this bulletin, this affected male informers as well as employees. It accused IM Paul Weber and IM Werner Hill of exploiting their contacts with supposedly promiscuous "female IMs…as well as women with whom [they] met in the course of fulfilling official tasks." They located and observed these women using the Stasi monitoring equipment available to them, exhibiting gross misconduct.[823] Ironically, it was a secret Stasi audio recording which brought their misconduct to light.[824]

The abuse of female IMs, specifically those deemed 'asocial' or 'hwG-Personens' was viewed as negative not because women's lives were endangered, but because it was bad publicity, and represented an affront to East German morality and socialism.[825] It was also insubordination. Extending beyond any concern for the physical welfare of its employees, the Stasi only spoke out against sexual abuse because it slowed down conspiratorial efforts, damaged the agency's reputation in the eyes of the masses, and left its perpetrators vulnerable to the class enemy. The fact that Graf's files are marked 'GH' is incredibly telling, because it means that MfS protected him from exposure. The Stasi had a special 'GH' filing system, where they archived 13,000 "extra secret" documents. These documents, which often contained evidence of "moral or even criminal misconduct by MfS employees and their relatives, members of other armed forces or people from the SED cadres," were archived separately "because the supposedly all-powerful secret police

[822] BStU, MfS, HA I, Nr. 5393, "Information," Berlin, 22. 5. 1986. BStU 000005.
[823] BStU, MfS, HA I, Nr. 5393, "Information," Berlin, 22. 5. 1986. BStU 000005.
[824] BStU, MfS, HA I, Nr. 5393, "Information," Berlin, 22. 5. 1986. BStU 000005.
[825] Jane Freeland, "Behind Closed Doors: Domestic Violence, Citizenship and State Making in Divided Berlin, 1969-1990," Doctoral Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 2015, 77, 87.

could not under any circumstances admit to weaknesses among their personnel."[826] Second, assumptions about 'promiscuous' women as disorderly and sexually available led to not only toleration of violence against women, but an acceptance of it within the Stasi.[827] At the very least, physical and verbal aggression towards women was seen as unexceptional.

Presently, there is no estimate of how many presumed 'sexually deviant' IMs experienced sexual violence at the hand of their case officers. However, after the Stasi's 'GH' holdings became public in 2012, *Welt* reporter Sven Kellerhoff classified the collection as follows: "44% of the files filed here concern potentially explosive topics such as espionage or betrayal of secrets – or what the Stasi considered to be such. The second largest part, however, at almost ten percent, are violent and sexual crimes in which MfS employees were involved, mostly as perpetrators or suspects."[828] Within this ten percent, the abuse of so-called 'promiscuous' informers obviously occurred frequently enough to leave archival evidence from every decade of the GDR's existence. Given the abundance of scholarship that has identified the Stasi as a misogynistic intelligence agency, it is striking that scholars have devoted so little attention to the experiences of 'sexually deviant' women under state control. The documented cases of sexual misconduct

[826] "What Was Too Explosive for the Stasi to Archive" *Welt,* 2012. https://www.welt.de/kultur/history/article106196858/Was-sogar-der-Stasi-zu-brisant-fuers-Archiv-war.html

[827] Freeland, "Behind Closed Doors," 77.

[828] GH-classified documents had strict instructions: "GH files are to be stored sealed. Information is only to be given to the service that unit that deposited them. Loaning to other service units is only permitted if the permission of the service unit that deposited them is obtained. If a loan of files is requested, the applicants signature authority must be carefully checked. The documents will then only be sent by separate courier and only handed over personally to the head of the respective department. They must also be returned separately from other archive material and sealed, stating the new seal number"; "What Was Too Explosive for the Stasi to Archive," *Welt,* 2012. https://www.welt.de/kultur/history/article106196858/Was-sogar-der-Stasi-zu-brisant-fuers-Archiv-war.html

perpetrated by Stasi and K1 personnel provide insight into the daily lives of female IMs and their interactions with Stasi officers. They suggest that case officers seldom acted as a father figure if they considered their informer to be sexually deviant, and frequently abused their power instead. This resulted in the further victimization of a population already vulnerable to exploitation.

Conclusion

> Regulations and labels have honed our awareness of how to manipulate the gaze of others. Ordinances telling us what to wear and where to be have attempted to demarcate us from the 'respectable population'…as sex workers, we have become experts in transformation, using embodied practices around clothes, makeup, posture and language to make ourselves desirable to clients, invisible to law enforcement, and recognizable to each other. [829]

Without context, it is difficult to pinpoint when this excerpt was written. Despite being taken from the "With Legs Wide Open" exhibit at the Schwules Museum in 2024, it could just as easily have come from women classified by the East German state as 'hwG' or 'prostitute' several decades earlier. As this chapter has demonstrated, so-called 'promiscuous' IMs used their previous experience avoiding police, social services, health authorities and other citizens to evade the Stasi. By creating distance with their case officer to maintain their invisibility, skipping mandatory meetings, withholding, or selectively disclosing information, and disguising their acts of resistance as imbecility, they were able to move within the Stasi surveillance system. At the same time, by demonstrating that female cooperation with the MfS could entail sexual abuse, this chapter has also revealed new findings about male officers. As disciplinary hearing transcripts – marked 'top secret' by the Stasi – have suggested, some male personnel, including those tasked with overseeing

[829] The Schwules Museum, "With Legs Wide Open," Visited by author on June 22, 2024.

female informers, exploited vulnerable women. Registered prostitutes and other informers judged to be promiscuous were particularly vulnerable to such abuse, given perceptions of them as sexually available due to their occupation. Nonetheless, some female IMs inverted the power dynamic by threatening to expose their case officers' sexual misconduct or walk away from the MfS. It is largely because of their actions that so many disciplinary hearing transcripts were entered into in archival evidence.

Chapter 5: Stasisploitation?[830]: Contemporary Perceptions of the 'Promiscuous' Stasi Informer

In November 2002, the *FOCUS Magazine* article "Stasi: Mit Sex und Peitschen" (Stasi: With Sex and Whips) claimed that the MfS recruited "unstable or unrestrained women" as informers.[831] The article, which has been recently removed from the internet for unknown reasons, identified IM Marlon Forster, a "young blonde from Leipzig" known to have "sex indiscriminately" as one such woman.[832] At only twenty-four-years old, she became a ''honey trap'' spy or "active STASI whore" who "deliver[ed]" numerous suitors to the knife." As "the old police hooker" aged, however, *FOCUS* writes that she began to act hysterically. She came to embody "hatefulness of the worst kind," so much so that "even the Stasi executive officer had had enough" and cut the connection.[833] By reducing Forster to her body and framing her as an easily identifiable enemy, the 2002 article fused her memory with the erotic.

This portrayal of Marlon Forster's life is far from accurate. First and foremost, her Stasi file identified her as an orphan who grew up in foster care. As an only child, she had few "relatives or friends who could support her or whom she could possibly turn to" when she came of age.[834] In *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR*,

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[830] This term was coined by Thomas Lindenberger in his article "Stasisploitation – Why Not? The Scriptwriter's Historical Creativity in 'The Lives of Others'" *German Studies Review* 31:3, 2008.
[831] "STASI: Mit Sex und Peitschen," *FOCUS Magazine,* Nov. 11. 2002. http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/stasi-mit-sex-und-peitschen_aid_203726 .html
[832] "STASI: Mit Sex und Peitschen," *FOCUS Magazine*.
[833] According to Kathryn Olmsted, the framing of Forster as hateful is part of a broader cultural phenomenon. In her article "Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids: Gender and Espionage in the Early Cold War," she shows that female communist spies were often regarded as not only sexy, but also "filled with hatred." In the United States, newspapers such as the *Washington Pos*t "went through the thesaurus finding words to describe [Soviet spy Judith Coplon's] depth of hatred…she was 'coldly furious', 'a figure of fury and flame', her face contorted in a 'grimace of hate,'" 85.
[834] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz AOG 618/75, Leipzig 29. 08. 1962, BStU 000019.

Josie McLellan goes on to explain that Forster "lived on the margins of Leipzig society, renting a furnished room with no heating. Perhaps in a bid to escape these chilly conditions, she had taken to spending most nights in local bars. In this way, she had fallen in with a group of local prostitutes and may have even begun to work as a prostitute herself before her recruitment by the Stasi."[835] And, as the MfS archives reveal, after the Stasi caught Forster exchanging nude photographs for money, her recruitment became a "particularly sordid affair" involving blackmail.[836] Her file stated, "The available compromising material (nude photos) which was presented to the candidate eliminated the last remaining doubts in her mind. She states that she would do anything to make sure that this matter was forgotten."[837] For thirteen years, Forster informed on 'deviant' individuals in her circle. It was only after she became "too old" for prostitution and her name was removed from the 'hwG' list that her work with the Stasi ended.[838] Her case officer wrote, "for about three years, it has been noticed that she is no longer popular with male visitors to the bars and as a result her work results have continued to decline. This subsequently led to her not going to bars at all and withdrawing completely."[839] If, after she withdrew, her case officer asked her to carry out an order that she did not want to fulfil, she responded "with hatefulness, some of the worst kind."[840]

These discrepancies between *FOCUS Magazine*'s description of Marlon Forster and her actual life experiences suggest some of the ways Stasi-involved women have been sexualized in news media and popular culture. To analyze these portrayals further, this

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[835] McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism,* 103.
[836] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz AOG 618/75, Leipzig 29. 08. 1962, BStU 000019; McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, 103.
[837] BStU, MfS, Leipzig, 618/75, Bd 1; McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism,* 103.
[838] McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, 103.
[839] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz AOG 618/75, Leipzig 18. 2. 1975, BStU 000075.
[840] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz AOG 618/75, Leipzig 18. 2. 1975, BStU 000033.

chapter is centered around questions of Stasi history and cultural memory.[841] Using works of erotic and semi-erotic fiction as a source base, it examines how the memories of female informers like Marlon Forster have been constructed in popular culture. Central to this exploration is the concept of 'Stasi erotica.' First, I draw upon works of erotic fiction such as Len Bracken's *The East is Black* (2006) alongside Peter Alexander and Francis Milwoky's *DDR-Sex, Hobbynutten, Fremdgeher, Bettspitzel und die Stasi als Zühalter* (2014), and *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten, die Stasi, die Love* (2015) to outline the principal features of this genre, its producers, and its intended consumers.[842] The chapter continues by considering the eroticization of 'promiscuous' Stasi informers in pseudohistorical works like Rolf Kremming's *Von Strassenstrich bis Honigfalle: Wahre Geschicten über Prostitution in der DDR* (2022). These works present themselves as official histories of prostitution and the Stasi, even going so far as to cite real informer files to boost their credibility.[843] At the same time, they distort archival material for market appeal.[844]

By claiming authenticity but providing alternate, eroticized versions of the past – often centering around the narrative that Stasi encounters were pleasurable for women – I argue that these alternative histories reduce female IMs to empty, one-dimensional beings existing only for the male gaze. They perpetuate Stasi stereotypes linking 'prostitute' and

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[841] Alejandro Baer, "Consuming History and Memory Through Mass Media Projects," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 4:4, 2001, 492.
[842] Len Bracken, *The East Is Black*. (Indiana, iUniverse, 2010); Peter Alexander and Francis Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten, die Stasi, die Love*, (M. Hussock Verlag, 2015). Kindle. Peter Alexander and Francis Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten, Fremdgeher, Bettspitzel, und die STASI als Zuhälter,* (Publisher N/A. 2015). Kindle.
[843] I use the term citing loosely here, as no actual citations are present.
[844] Rolf Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle: Wahre Geschicten über Prostitution in der DDR*, (Bild und Heimat, 2020).

'hwG' informers with sexual abnormality or perversion, and by citing real sources as they do, blur the lines between fact, fiction, and memory.[845]

Decades after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, there remains a strong cultural fascination with East German history, specifically the secret police. While scholars continue to research its power and influence, the entertainment world continues to captivate audiences with cultural productions like *The Lives of Others* (2006), *The Same Sky* (2017), *Balloon* (2018), *A Stasi Comedy* (2022), and *Kleo* (2022). For example, the German-action thriller *Kleo* follows a female Stasi assassin named Kleo Straub. High-ranking Stasi officers frame and imprison her in 1987, but she is one of many political prisoners afforded general amnesty in 1989. She uses her new-found freedom to locate her Stasi file and determine which of her colleagues betrayed her, before embarking on a revenge spree. Beyond cinematic representations, there is also a large audience for historical and espionage fiction set in communist East Germany. Anna Funder's *Stasiland*: *Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall* inspired David Young to base his seven-book "Oberleutenant Karen Muller" series on the spy agency. His novels, *Stasi Child* (2016), *Stasi Wolf* (2019), *A Darker State* (2019), *Stasi 77* (2020), *Stasi Winter* (2020) and *The Stasi Game* (2021), have garnered praise from news outlets like *The Times*. *The Stasi File: Opera and Espionage – A Deadly Combination* (2014) and *Red Romeo: Stasi Gigolos and The Spy Hunter of Germany* (2015) by Peter Bernhardt have also gained a cult-like following alongside Dan Fesperman's spy-thriller *Winter Work (*2022).

The Stasi's utilization of sexuality for intelligence purposes has also caught popular attention. In the immediate post-war period, there was a "constant stream of exposés in the

[845] Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *Hi Hitler!: How the Nazi Past is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 13.

popular press discuss[ing] the Stasi's use of prostitution and seduction for intelligence purposes," Annette Timm writes. She points to the *FOCUS* article about Marlon Forster, with whom this chapter began, as but one example. [846] Though this fascination with female sexuality remains, it has taken a different form in recent years – a form which I refer to hereafter as Stasi erotica.[847] By my own definition, Stasi erotica is a sub-genre of erotic fiction set in Cold War East Germany.[848] This temporal backdrop is presumably chosen by authors due to its associations with power, violence, suffering, domination, and coercion. For instance, many storylines rely on the fact that female characters could not say no to the People's Police or MfS. Moreover, while Stasi erotica authors have the freedom to situate their narratives anywhere between 1950 and 1989, most take place after the passage of Paragraph 249 in 1968. The criminalization of prostitution serves authors ends because it gives male characters an excuse to deprive female 'sexual deviants' of legal protection and to perpetrate violence against these 'criminals' without being held responsible.

Stasi erotica has a male author base. It is also meant to be consumed by men despite scholarly recognition that erotic fiction is typically "both read and written by women."[849] I have only found one instance of female authorship, this being Hanna Keil's *Sex für die DDR: In den Fangen der Stasi*.[850] Keil has made a career writing historical erotica, with most of her work concentrating on eighteenth century Scotland. Historical disclaimers are another convention of Stasi erotica, with authors advertising their work as authentic and

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[846] Annette Timm, "The Most Beautiful Face of Socialism: Katarina Witt and the Sexual Politics of Sport in the Cold War" in Robert Edelman and Christopher Young (eds), *The Whole World Was Watching: Sport in the Cold War*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), 158.
[847] Timm, "The Most Beautiful Face of Socialism," 158.
[848] Maria Kraxenberger, Christine Knoop and Winifried Menninghaus, "Who Reads Contemporary Erotic Novels and Why?" *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8:96, 2021.
[849] Rachel Wood, "Sexual Consumption within Sexual Labour: Producing and Consuming Erotic Texts and Sexual Commodities," *Porn Studies* 2:3, 2015, 250.
[850] Hanna Keil, *Sex für die Stasi: In den Fängen der Stasi*, Independently Published, 2021.

claiming to be in possession of the truth.[851] Most works begin with a statement that the events and characters they depict are based on true stories, and that their 'recovered' versions of events are more honest than existing academic representations. For example, Kremming's title suggests his book offers "true stories about prostitution in the GDR," and *The East Is Black* claims to be "based on the true erotic story of a beautiful Berlin brunette during the fall of the Berlin Wall."[852] Similarly, in their books *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten, die Stasi, die Lover* and *DDR-Sex oder Hobbynutten, Fremdgeher, Bettspitzel und die Stasi also Zuhälter*, Alexander and Milwoky write: "All the intimacies revealed in these stories were of course not found in the BStU documents. It took extensive and imaginative, sometimes expensive private research and often a bit of luck to come into possession of them."[853] These disclaimers, which are also present in Nazisploitation cinema, are presumably meant to "reduce the unease readers may feel, and to situate the spectator between reality and fantasy."[854] In the words of Cara Anna-Marie Burgio, this "allows [readers] to have a tactile experience without having to confront any consequences of the real" and "creates a unique set of circumstances for the male gaze and sexual fantasy, whereby particularly deviant sexual practices and behaviours, such as those that concern

[851] Lindenberger, "Stasisploitation," 559.
[852] Bracken's text begins with the disclaimer: "This is a work of fiction. All of the characters, names, incident, organizations and dialogue in this novel are either the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously." Nonetheless, it is marketed as being based on a true story on his website; "Biography," Len Bracken's Website, https://lenbracken.com/bio.html; Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle: Wahre Geschicten über Prostitution in der DDR*.
[853] Alexander and Milwoky do not provide any additional details about the nature of this private research; Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten*, Kindle, Loc. 71; *DDR-Sex oder Hobbynutten, Fremdgeher, Bettspitzel und die Stasi als Zuhälter*, Kindle, Loc. 74.
[854] Cara Anna-Maria Burgio, "Visceral Pleasure, and the Nature of Abhorrent Sexuality: Power, Sadomasochism and the Eroticization of Fascism," Master's Thesis, La Trobe University, 2014, 76.

violence and non-consent, can be participated in transgressively without any need for explicit identification."[855]

How are Women Portrayed?

Authors of Stasi erotica categorize female characters in three ways. The first follows the basic formula of Nazisploitation. Historically, Nazisploitation is "a sub-genre of the 1970s exploitation cinema, such as 'Blaxsploitation' or 'Sexsploitation.'"[856] It sexualizes female Nazi officers or guards by placing them in tight uniforms and having them torture and sexually abuse concentration camp prisoners. The most well-known of these films is the Canadian production *Ilsa: Shewolf of the SS* (1975) by Don Edmonds. Similarly, male authors present 'Stasi women' as "sexually dominant, powerful, and authoritative [perpetrators] interested in order, submission and pain."[857] As full-time MfS employees and extensions of male power, they sexually humiliate men. For example, *STASI BITCH* is advertised as "a good humiliation tale" with "lots of abuse" from an evil and sadistic woman. It is abridged as follows:

> a sexy Lady East German interrogation officer abuses a man and his wife. The lady humiliates them and uses them for her own pleasure…if you like reading

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[855] Burgio, "Visceral Pleasure, and the Nature of Abhorrent Sexuality," 76.

[856] For more on the exploitation genre see: Lynn Rapaport, "Holocaust Pornography: Profaning the Sacred in 'Ilsa, She-Wolf of the SS,'" *Shofar* 22:1, 2003; Catherine L. Jones, "Sex-Crazed and Bloodthirsy: The Misrepresentation of Female Nazis in American Popular Culture" Master's Thesis, The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014; Stacy Banwell and Michael Fiddler, "Gendered Viewing Strategies: a critique of Holocaust-related films that eroticize, monsterize and fetishize the female body," *Holocaust Studies* 24:2, 2018; Michael Fiddler & Stacy Banwell, "'Forget about all your taboos': Transgressive memory and Nazisploitation," *Studies in European Cinema* 12:2, 2018; James J. Ward, "Beyond Nazisploitation, or the Complications of Nazism: Cinematic Representations by Lars von Trier, Volker Schlöndorff, and Quentin Tarantino," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 39:6, 2022; Yvonne Sims, *Women of Blaxploitation: How the Black Action Film Heroine Changed American Popular Culture*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers, 2006); Novotny Lawrence, *Blaxploitation Films of the 1970s: Blackness and Genre,* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Novotny Lawrence, *Beyond Blaxploitation*, (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2016); Novotny Lawrence and Gerald Butters Jr., "Introduction: Blaxploitation Cinema," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 52:4, 2019; Matt Richardson, "Ajita Wilson: Blaxploitation, Sexploitation, and the Making of Black Womanhood" *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 7:2, 2020.

[857] Kozma, "Ilsa and Elsa: Nazisploitation, Mainstream Film and Cinematic Transference," 60-61.

> about beautiful women doing all kinds of diabolical things, then the tales of Femdom Literature are for you.[858]

This text follows a brunette Stasi border guard named Gretchen Beck. To give readers an immediate understanding of who commands and who obeys, Beck wears a domineering (yet tailored) dark blue Stasi uniform and knee-high black leather boots. In this capacity, she resembles Ilsa Koch in *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS*. Ilsa "wears a white silk shirt unbuttoned to emphasize her cleavage, a red and black swastika armband, black leather belt and gun holster, black jodhpurs, knee-high black leather boots shined to a high gloss, black leather gloves, and a black officer's hat."[859] In her foundational essay "Fascinating Fascism," Susan Sontag ruminated on the "general fantasy" behind Nazi (and now Stasi) uniforms. More than "community, order, identity, [and] competence," she argued, Nazi SS uniforms are used to signify "legitimate authority, [and] the legitimate exercise of violence" in erotic works. When it comes to conventions of domination and enslavement, Sonntag concluded, "there is a master scenario available to everyone: the colour is black, the material is leather, the seduction is beauty, the justification is honesty, the aim is ecstasy, the fantasy is death."[860] Because of this link between uniforms and sadomasochism, Beck embodies cold cruelty. She is murderous and so dedicated to the Stasi that she inflicts psychological and physical torture on innocent, passive men.

Throughout this short, fourteen-page text, Beck is described as a "diabolical bitch," "wicked, selfish bitch," "wicked, sadistic brunette," "sexy female Stasi officer," "sexy interrogation officer," and "sadistic pervert." The same terminology can be found within the digital realm of pornography. Throughout my dissertation research, entering anything

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[858] *Stasi Bitch*, https://femdomliterature.com/index.php/nonillustrated-stories/
[859] Kozma, "Ilsa and Elsa: Nazisploitation, Mainstream Film and Cinematic Transference," 60.
[860] Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism" *New York Review of Books*, Feb 6, 1975.

even remotely related to prostitution and the Stasi into search engines like Google resulted in pornographic images and videos.[861] These recommendations appear to fetishize power, and perpetuate the narrative that Stasi encounters may have been pleasurable for so-called sexually uninhibited women. Under the heading "Stasi Interrogation!" for example, one link reads "Evil policewomen from the Ministry of State Security or Stasi in the former German Democratic Republic! One cruel bitch called Ilsa Brandt puts a captive through a severe whipping!"[862] Another video, which features two uniformed Stasi men whipping and humiliating a naked woman, is titled "Unter Kontrolle der Stasi."[863] In most cases, interacting with the Stasi was not only a pleasureless but a painful experience. The creation of these videos, which often incorporate Nazisploitation tropes, by private individuals highlights both the resilience of the exploitation genre and the collective memory of "Stasi women." It indicates that while the heyday of Nazisploitation has passed, and the horrors of the Holocaust have made sexualized media involving Nazis unsettling for many, global audiences remain intrigued by, or at least receptive to, the sexualization of the GDR.[864]

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[861] Throughout my research, I also came across several websites selling GDR/Stasi merchandise with explicitly sexual themes. As of July 2024, the website Redbubble is selling a T-Shirt with the words "Thot Patrol" and the East German flag positioned between the two words. Inside the flag there is a sword and a shield to signify the MfS. The use of the slang term "thot," often used to describe women with multiple sexual partners on social media, references the Stasi's control of women they deemed to be promiscuous. This raises questions about the influence of popular works, including those discussed in this chapter, on the design of such merchandise.
https://www.redbubble.com/i/t-shirt/Thot-Patrol-Official-Emblem-by-Devotee1973/34679091.WFLAH

[862] It may be a coincidence that whoever produced this video selected the name Ilsa. Alternatively, it may have been selected to reflect the cultural legacy of Koch, the so-called "Bitch of Buchenwald."

[863] https://xhamster.com/videos/under-control-of-the-stasi-10213558

[864] I am referring specifically to people's interest in Nazisploitation cinema and its associated Stalag Fiction here. Certainly, Nazism continues to intrigue many. As James W. Ward writes, "Audience interest in movies about the Nazis show no signs of abating. Whether in German productions like *Der Untergang* (Downfall, 2004) or American productions like *Valkyrie* (2008) and *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), the Third Reich continues to provide an inexhaustible reserve of narrative material, instantly recognizable characters, and extremes of behavior [sic] that few other historical experiences can match"; James W. Ward, "Utterly without Redeeming Social Value? 'Nazi Science' Beyond Exploitation Cinema" in Magilow, Bridges and Vander Lugt (eds), *Nazisploitation! The Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema and Culture*, 96. See also Rosenfeld, *Hi Hitler! How the Nazi Past is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture*.

The public's fascination with former East Germany (*Ostalgie*) and the Soviet Union, along with stereotypes about German women, have led to the ongoing marketing and consumption of East German women's experiences as pornography. [865]

In each of these instances, women act in brutal ways because they are depicted as sexually deviant.[866] Likewise, authors present female sexual deviance as the driving force behind the perpetration of Stasi crimes.[867] As this dissertation has demonstrated, it was men who instilled fear in, humiliated, interrogated, imprisoned, and tortured female IMs. In society writ large, they "murdered, tortured, kidnapped" and drove to suicide "approximately 300,000 of their own citizens."[868] I argue that this framing also contributes to the stigmatization and marginalization of sexually active women in the GDR by reinforcing perceptions of them as dangerous and volatile.

In contrast to their role as aggressive dominatrixes in the previous depiction, women in the second category are portrayed as vulnerable prey of hulking, hyper-masculine Stasi men. As both members of an intelligence agency and individuals with autonomy, MfS men are 'agents' in every sense of the word. Meanwhile, authors refer to female characters using the crude, reductive terminology of "Stasi Toys" or "Stasi Whores."[869] The first work to gain notoriety in this sub-category of Stasi erotica was Anthony Bobarzynski's *STASI SLUT* (Figure 14). Published by American "porno-publisher" Masquerade Books in 1991, its dust jacket states:

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[865] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16:3, 1975, 804; Steve Garlick, "Taking Control of Sex? Hegemonic Masculinity, Technology, and Internet Pornography," *Men and Masculinities* 12:5, 2010, 606.
[866] Sabine Elisabeth Aretz, "Sexualization of Female Perpetration in Fictional Holocaust Films: A Case Study of The Reader (2008)," *Genealogy* 3:52, 2019, 6.
[867] Aretz, "Sexualization of Female Perpetration in Fictional Holocaust Films," 5.
[868] Ralph Hope, *The Grey Men: Pursuing the Stasi Into the Present*, (Oneworld Publications, 2021).
[869] Aretz, "Sexualization of Female Perpetration in Fictional Holocaust Films," 2.

> Innocent Adina longs to escape there [sic] provincial middle-class life. There's only one problem: Adina lives in East Germany under the iron-fisted Communist government far for the sexually liberated, uninhibited debauchery of the West. When she meets a group of ruthless and corrupt STASI agents, She recognizes them as her only outlet for freedom. The agents use Adina as a pawn in their political chess game as well as for their gratification until she makes a final bid for freedom in the revolutionary climax of this Red-hot thriller![870]

Rife with spelling errors, thirteen bizarre references to seals and homoerotic Stasi water-polo, the English-language *STASI SLUT* was withdrawn from publication after a year.[871] It was re-released as *The East Is Black* in 2006 under the author's real name, Len Bracken, though much of its content remains the same.[872]

The East is Black begins by introducing an eighteen-year-old named Adina, who lives just outside of Berlin.[873] Her "childlike innocence" is stolen from her after an MfS agent named Richard catches sight of her bathing in a lake near her cottage. Framing this encounter as a meeting of opposites, Bracken writes, "after his years of ideological training, the state security agent with an eye on the scope thought of her as a fascist body he longed to socialize."[874] With "blind confidence" that he was on the right side of the law and of history, Richard rapes Adina and "through this act of bare negation, this humiliation, he, the masculine subject, transformed his object – now she conformed to the image he had of a proper STASI slut."[875] When she asks him why he raped her, he replies that it "wasn't

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[870] Anthony Bobarzynski, *STASI SLUT,* Masquerade Books, 1993.
[871] Today, the original version of *STASI SLUT* can be found in the Cornell University Library. It has an archival home within the "Situationist Collection, 1957-2005" which is described as "a collection of rare, printed materials, artwork and other images documenting the ideas and influence of the Situationist International." According to the Cornell Library website, Situationist International was "an international organization of social revolutionaries made up of avant-garde artists, intellectuals, and political theorists, prominent in Europe from its formation in 1957 to its dissolution in 1972"; Cornell University Library, Situationist Collection, 1957-2005, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM08111.html#a1
[872] Len Bracken's Website, https://www.lenbracken.com/bio.html
[873] Her age goes back and forth between eighteen and twenty.
[874] Bracken, *The East is Black*, Kindle, Loc. 49.
[875] Bracken, *The East is Black*, Kindle, Loc 337.

rape."[876] It is also insinuated that she desired and even provoked the assault. At this point in the narrative, Adina's body becomes a blank slate. Her value is reduced to her worth as a sexual object, and she remains an object to the men around her for the remainder of the text.[877]

After forcing himself upon her, Richard manipulates Adina into living at the communal apartment he shares with five other Stasi officers from his water-polo team. They are described as machine-like men with large necks, bright white teeth, brawny shoulders, and creased muscles. She becomes their 'sex slave,' as each man treats her body as his own property, abusing her and assaulting her repeatedly in the name of male bonding and military brotherhood.[878] To justify their abuse and confirm their total control over her, the Stasi men tell her that she is "property of the state, and we are the state."[879] Nonetheless, Adina claims to see "past their violence, which was merely a mask of their desire for her."[880] In the end, she learns to enjoy spending time with her brutish captors, viewing them as lovers instead of rapists. She reports feeling cleansed after sexual violence is perpetrated against her and, to use Bracken's words, "felt more like her true self than she had" before she ever encountered the Stasi.[881]

Written from Richard's perspective, *The East is Black* compels readers to view sexual violence through the eyes of a Stasi perpetrator. To quote Laura Mulvey, Adina is the "object of the combined gaze of spectator and all the male protagonists…She is isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualized. But as the narrative progresses, she falls in

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[876] Bracken, *The East is Black*, Kindle, Loc 335.
[877] Aretz, "Sexualization of Female Perpetration in Fictional Holocaust Films," 2.
[878] A line may be drawn here between the perpetration of sexual abuse by Stasi personnel discussed in Chapter Four and Bracken's discussion of male bonding in *The East is Black*.
[879] Bracken, *The East is Black*, Kindle, Loc 412.
[880] Bracken, *The East is Black*, Kindle, Loc 458.
[881] Bracken, *The East is Black*, Kindle, Loc 337.

love with the main male protagonist and becomes his property, losing her outward glamourous characteristics, her generalized sexuality, her show girl connotations; her eroticism is subjected to the male star alone. By means of identification with him, through participation in his power, the spectator can indirectly possess her too."[882]

Real Female Informers and Stasi Erotica

While all the books discussed so far have been works of fiction, a third subset of Stasi erotica is based on real female informer files. These files were most likely obtained under Article 32 of the Stasi Records Act, which states:

> Upon request, the Federal Archives provides the following documents for research for the purpose of political and historical analysis of the activity of the State Security Service, or of the power mechanisms of the former German Democratic Republic, or for the former Soviet occupation zone as well as for the purposes of the political education.[883]

Instead of engaging with these files in any analytical way, however, these authors use them to transform historical actors, some of whom are still alive today, into objects of sexual consumption. They trade the absence of eroticism in actual interrogation files and meeting reports for an overabundance of sexual imagery, especially where so-called 'promiscuous' IMs are concerned, and present sensationalized, inaccurate information as women's lived histories.[884] This misrepresentation can be seen in the following case studies, beginning with that of IM Irene Schneider.

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[882] Mulvey, "Visual Culture and Narrative Cinema," 811.
[883] Act Regarding the Records of State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic (Stasi Records Act) https://www.iuscomp.org/gla/statutes/StUG.htm
[884] Lindenberger, "Stasisploitation," 560.

IM Irene Schneider

Two of Peter Alexander and Francis Milwoky's works – *DDR-Sex, Hobbynutten, Fremdgeher, Bettspitzel und die Stasi als Zühalter* (2014)*,* and *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten, die Stasi, die Love* – include the chapter "IM Irene Schneider – Sex Kunsterlin und Chamaleon der Tschekisten 1964." This chapter, which is identical in both books, opens with Alexander and Milwoky introducing a woman named Verena. Verena, a single mother of three from Berlin-Mitte with "a voluptuous body," prostitutes herself to "make ends meet in the post-war famine periods."[885] When Verena's daughter Irene turns thirteen, she becomes jealous of her mother's income. At sixteen, the "elegantly slim and yet full-breasted young woman with the flowing hair, the large deep, black eyes…and narrow, noble facial features" begins to sell her body as well.[886] The authors write, "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree."[887] They also state, "this is how Irene's hobby hooker career began. Because once you've eaten forbidden fruit, you usually won't stop."[888] When she is nineteen, one of Irene's clients reveals himself to be a "super-hot SED official."[889] He helps transform the "shy Cinderella…into a self-confident calculating vamp" and the Stasi recruit her on November 2, 1964.[890] However, they dismiss the "hobby hooker and outspoken sex artist" soon after. According to Alexander and Milwoky, "The Magdeburg captains, first lieutenants and lieutenants of the SED snooping services achieved virtually nothing with IM Irene Schneider. Once they had succumbed to her sexual skills, they

[885] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten,* Kindle, Loc 1074.
[886] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten,* Kindle, Loc 2512.
[887] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten,* Kindle, Loc 2479
[888] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten,* Kindle, Loc 2512.
[889] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten,* Kindle, Loc 2512.
[890] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten,* Kindle, Loc 2543.

apparently refrained from forcing Irene S. to become an informant, for fear that her erotic weaknesses, which she had shown once or twice while on duty, might be exposed."[891]

The Stasi file of IM Irene Schneider paints a different picture. Born in the spa town of Bad Dürenberg in 1941, her father died in the Second World War. She was raised by her mother and grandparents and attended elementary school in Leipzig until grade eight. She also worked as a lab technician from 1956 to 1958.[892] According to her Stasi file, she "gave up this job because her fiancé didn't want her to work. Because of this fiancé, she fell into bad company and, as a teenager, was sentenced to 3 months in prison for theft" in December 1959. [893] Her engagement was broken off, and she began to sell sex in addition to working as a server and barmaid. In September 1960, authorities registered IM Irene Schneider as an 'hwG-Personen' because she contracted gonorrhea three times. Her file states that "she was required to undergo regular check-ups at weekly intervals." However, "she hardly followed this instruction and was continually picked up by health authorities and then subjected to checkups." [894] She was imprisoned "for her lifestyle" in July 1961 and admitted to the Leipzig-Thonberg hospital in September. [895] Schneider served a separate prison sentence of ten months in 1962 and "received admission to the [Halle] home for social care." During her time in Halle, the MfS characterized her as:

> Very arrogant in her nature and has a loose mouth. She only obeys the instructions of the supervisory staff reluctantly. When her attention is drawn to her undisciplined behaviour, she responds very snippily...she must be constantly educated so that she realizes how reprehensible her previous lifestyle was and that can only lead a decent life through regular work.[896]

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[891] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten,* Kindle, Loc 2641.
[892] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, "Vorschlag zur Werbung," Magdeburg, 2. 11. 1964 BStU 000009.
[893] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, "Vorschlag zur Werbung," Magdeburg, 2. 11. 1964 BStU 000009.
[894] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 000014.
[895] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 000014.
[896] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 000012.

After her release from Halle, Schneider was sent to a social home in the village of Klein Wanzleben, located just southwest of Magdeburg.[897] In Klein Wanzleben, she allegedly "reported on criminal acts committed by the director of the home."[898] A memo from 1966 credits her with playing "a decisive role in the [creation] of a criminal file, as a result of which the head of a home for social care was convicted of extensive criminal offenses and sentenced to four years in prison."[899] To the MfS, this "showed she was capable of working as an IM" and after a transfer to the Gommern social care home in 1966, she was recruited as one. According to a report from 1968, however, Schneider neither reported on her acquaintances nor attended meetings regularly.[900] After having a child sometime between 1960 and 1966, she used this to her advantage and claimed she did not have enough time to inform. She also "tried to make it credible that she was no longer coming to the city and that she could no longer indulge in fornication due to an abdominal illness."[901] The Stasi judged this to be a lie, because "a clerk himself had seen her on Eutritzscher Straße."[902]

The archived version of IM Irene Schneider's life is far less erotic than portrayed by Alexander and Milwoky, raising ethical questions. First, why did Alexander and Milwoky misrepresent Irene's story after both encountering and physically engaging with it in the Stasi Records Archive? Second, why did they present their new version of events as documented fact? Though one can only speculate on the answers to these questions, the authors appear to have been more interested in bolstering their credibility and attracting a wider audience than reconstructing the past or recovering women's voices from the

[897] Her new stepfather worked as a driver for VEB Karftsverkehr in Leipzig; BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, "Vorschlag zur Werbung" Magdeburg, 2. 11. 1964 BStU 000009.
[898] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 000022.
[899] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 000022.
[900] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 00007.
[901] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 000020.
[902] BStU, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 494/70, BStU 000020.

archive. While it is not my intention to act as a gatekeeper to the Stasi Records Archive, I do believe that approaching its holdings intent on producing work that is more sexual than scholarly would reduce the likelihood of having an affective archival experience.[903] Research without emotional labour or scholarly investment may have made the authors less inclined to see the historical value of the women they read about, affecting the language they used to speak about their bodies, and of course, their decisions to compromise already subaltern voices for the sake of entertainment. By writing against the patriarchal conventions that have coloured Stasi historiography since the 1990s instead of replicating them, but also by recognizing that women like IM Irene have scholarly value in and of themselves, this project better captures the complex realities of their historical experiences.[904]

IM Barbara Schwarze

Another chapter of *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten, Fremdgeher, Bettspitzel, und die STASI als Zuhälter* concentrates on IM Barbara Schwarze. Titled "Die Starnutte oder die Gräfin von Leipzig" or "The Star Hooker or the Countess of Leipzig," this section begins with the following statement: "to classify Barbara Schwarze as so easily among the hobby hookers would be an understatement and injustice...she was a high-class hooker, even

[903] See: Bernadette Brennan, "Being in the Archive: Affect and Scholarly Distance," *Archives and Manuscripts* 46:1, 2018; Lynette Russel, "Affect in the archive: trauma, grief, delight and texts. Some personal reflections," *Archives and Manuscripts* 46:2, 2018.
[904] In her work feminine embodied writing, Anna Pollen writes, "it appears that instead of standing against the masculine, the space created by women for women stands in its own right rather than claiming space to write and speak through its attack on the masculine"; Anna Pollen, "Writing as Labiaplasty," *Organization* 25:1, 2017, 129; Harriet Bradley, "The Seductions of the Archive: Voices Lost and Found," *History of the Human Sciences,* 1999, 1; Katie Barclay, "Falling in love with the Dead," *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice* 22:4, 2018, 462.

dubbed a star hooker by envious hobby hookers and admiring men."[905] In Alexander and Milwoky's version of events, the Stasi set their sights on the "star whore" because they deemed her to be unemployed, "engaged in illegal prostitution to an extreme degree," and guilty of one currency offense after another.[906] They call her into their office and subject her to an intense interrogation about her sex life. After this interaction, authors Alexander and Milwoky break the fourth wall, writing: "my god, colonel Schmidt must have put his hands to his head and asked…who was lying in her bed, who was she making happy with her sexual arts? Nonetheless, he and his colleagues would do their job."[907] They then describe Schwarze as a sex artist who enjoyed using men as sex slaves, writing:

> She was occasionally willing to swing the riding crop as a dominatrix. When doctors, teachers, judges, or master butchers slipped into the role of sex slave, the 'mistress' put on imported Nappa leather boots that almost stretched to the end of her wonderfully fleshy thighs, where the delicate leather edge was then attached to the four suspender straps that otherwise held the nylons.[908]

Alexander and Milwoky attempt to pass off this information as authentic by interspersing several excerpts from Schwarze's file. These documents, which look as though they have been created on Microsoft Word and copy-pasted into the book to make it appear more legitimate, have glaring inconsistencies. For example, in one of the supposedly real files, the description "female, hot, hwG/lesbian" is written under the heading "Necessary properties of the IM."[909] This is very obviously a modern falsification, as neither the K1 nor the MfS used the term 'hot' in any official capacity.

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[905] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 1433.
[906] The emphasis is my own; Alexander and Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 1460.
[907] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 1460.
[908] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 1587.
[909] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 1489.

At the same time, the presence of 'valid' information tells us that Alexander and Milwoky possessed Barbara Schwarze's lengthy BStU file.[910] Their chronology matches, as do their misogynistic descriptions of Schwarze as "very arrogant, overbearing and sometimes hysterical." The quotation "In public, she appears very conspicuously with her clothes and jewelry. She really wants to be the biggest. She has no regular work for weeks or months, but she goes to night bars every day and is constantly looking for and finding clients" also comes directly from her file.[911] Nonetheless, exaggerations remain. For one thing, the MfS did not support Schwarze selling sex. They wrote, "it is particularly necessary that she be integrated into a permanent employment relationship, if necessary, also with state coercion, and that commercial prostitution should be prevented."[912] The MfS even imposed a travel ban on her with the hope that she would cease her prostitution activity.[913] Finally, the name Countess of Leipzig does not appear to have been bestowed upon Barbara Schwarze in any sexual sense, as the authors suggest. Because she was known for her expensive taste and collection of antique music boxes, a West German journalist photographed her apartment. They published an article titled the "Countess of Leipzig" because of this photography session.[914] There is no mention in the files of Schwarze being a dominatrix, and with complete access to her records, one must consider why the authors deemed this a necessary detail to include.

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[910] By valid information I mean information that is also present in her Stasi file. I acknowledge that Stasi files are one-sided and not always reliable.
[911] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 395-87, "Operative Informationen," VPKA-Leipzig, Abt. K/Komm. 1. 25.6.1984 BStU 000008,
[912] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 395-87, "Operative Informationen," VPKA-Leipzig, Abt. K/Komm. 1. 25.6.1984 BStU 000008,
[913] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 395-87, "[Redacted]," Leipzig, 6. 12.1984 BStU 000033
[914] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 395-87, "Aus mehren inoffiziellen Informationen zur Person [Redacted]," 17. March. 1984.

Moreover, decidedly unsexy aspects of IM Barbara Schwarze's BStU file have been edited out.[915] When questioned about her supposed promiscuity and life as a classified 'hwG' person, she reported that her sexual behaviour and actions were standard.[916] This is a far cry from her role as a riding-crop wielding dominatrix. Moreover, in the fall of 1984, the Stasi described Schwarze's nerves as being "completely wrecked" and noted that she was admitted to a mental hospital.[917] She apparently lived in constant fear, so much so that her doctor had applied for her driver's license to be revoked because she would "pose a danger to all road users."[918] Ultimately, she collided with a vehicle after causing a traffic accident and died in 1987. She was only twenty-seven years old.

In this case, Alexander and Milwoky's departure from the archives and exploitation of recent history is problematic for several reasons.[919] For one thing, due to her premature death, Schwarze cannot speak out about her encounter with the Stasi, nor can she correct strangers' interpretations of her files.[920] Instead of searching for a path through this ethical challenge and taking adequate measures to preserve their subject's posthumous privacy, however, Alexander and Milwoky rewrote Schwarze's historical experience to appeal to the male gaze. In doing so, they erased Schwarze from her own narrative, which in turn prevents readers from understanding the reality of her uncomfortable situation.[921] This

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[915] BArch, MfS, BV, Lpz. AOG 395-87, "Betreff: Erstes Kontaktgespräch mit der Kandidaten," 13.11.81.
[916] BArch, MfS, BV, Lpz. AOG 395-87, "IKMO Reg.-Nr. 183/69 Bericht," 09.12.80.
[917] BArch, MfS, BV, Lpz, AOG 395-87, "Betreff: Auszug aus Treffbericht 0-302/706 vom 03.10.1984 zu [Redacted]," Leipzig, 23. 10. 84, BStU 000031.
[918] BArch, MfS, BV, Lpz, AOG 395-87, "[Redacted]," Leipzig, 6. 12.1984 BStU 000033.
[919] Mikel Koven, "'The Film You Are About to See Is Based on Documented Fact': Italian Nazi Sexploitation Cinema," in Ernest Mathijs and Xavier Mendik (eds), *Alternative Europe: Eurotrash and Exploitation Cinema since 1945* (London: Wallflower, 2004), 76.
[920] Roy, "File Based Autobiographies After 1989," 9.
[921] Strauss, "Girl Power in the Shadow of Biopower," 697.

omission also damages the reputation of her ante-mortem self.[922] By stripping Schwarze of her personhood and reducing her to a sexually insatiable object, Alexander and Milwoky also present her as being responsible for her own victimization at the hands of the Stasi, and as undeserving of readers' empathy. This perpetuates biopolitical beliefs that East German women who engaged in casual, paid, and unpaid sexual contact were sexually abnormal, voracious, and dangerous criminals instead of real people, and exposes an already marginalized population to more vitriol.

IM Linda

Freelance author and journalist Rolf Kremming also embellishes the Stasi files of real-life informers in his book *Von Strassenstrich bis Honigfalle: Wahre Geschicten über Prostitution in der DDR.* Though this work is not marketed as Stasi erotica, I have included it in this category because it sometimes resembles more of a fantasized history than an actual one. The jacket of *Von Strassenstrich bis Honigfalle* reads:

> The journalist Rolf Kremming bases his authentic observations on interviews with former whores [sic] and files from the Stasi Records Archive. With a foreword by the prostitute and prostitution activist Felicitas Schirow and coherent [sic] photographs, it succeeds in creating a multi-faceted presentation on the topic of 'purchased love in socialism!'[923]

In this text, Kremming 'analyzes' the Stasi files of IM Linda. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Stasi recruited IM Linda because of her extensive connections to "criminally endangered young people," specifically those in prison, ex-prisoners, and returnees to the

[922] According to T.M. Wilkinson, "we can describe people ante-mortem and post-mortem. The ante-mortem person has interests that can be satisfied or dissatisfied after death: for instance, interests in reputation. On this picture, before death the person has an interest in her reputation after death. If her reputation is ruined after death, then it is the ante-mortem person who, unbeknownst to her, is harmed." T.M. Wilkinson, "Last Rights: The Ethics of Research on the Dead," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 19:1, 2002, 34.
[923] Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle: Wahre Geschicten über Prostitution in der DDR*. Dust jacket.

GDR, in addition to her work as an "easy girl" in the city of Schwerin. She met her circle of contacts regularly and often attended parties with them.[924] Her case officer stated that her recruitment was carried out voluntarily out of belief in socialism; however, he also wrote: "the current motive for the cooperation is the toleration of prostitution by the MfS."[925] The latter was correct, as she acquiesced only after the MfS threatened to reveal her relationship with a much older, married man to her parents. Her officer stated, "this connection exists against the will of her parents...since she absolutely wants to avoid her parents finding out about the connection, it can be assumed that she agrees to a collaboration."[926]

The Stasi categorized IM Linda as open and honest, clean, and approachable, and recruited her to "secure the leisure sector" and monitor suspicious youth. There were no IMs currently working in this area.[927] After taking a job as a waitress in the Interhotel Stadt Schwerin, she was transferred to Main Department VI of BV Schwerin to report on hotel employees and their contacts.[928] Later, she moved back to Berlin, and the connection was re-established through Main Dept. VI/1. She continued to report on people with negative attitudes towards the GDR and operatively interesting connections.[929] In 1982, for instance, she reported that she had met a woman who frequented Hotel Metropol with male acquaintances. Linda wrote that if she were not already being used as an IM, she would be

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[924] BArch, MfS, AIM 9859-88, Bd. 1. "Beschluß," 10.08.1972. BStU 000009.
[925] BArch MfS AIM Nr 9859/88 Bd 1., "Auskunftbericht," Berlin, 9. 2. 1972, BStU 000245.
[926] BArch, MfS AIM Nr 9859/88 Bd 1, "Bericht über die geführte Aussprache mit dem IMS-Kandidaten Riebe," 18.11.1972; "Einschätzung des IMS – Kandidaten," 29.11.1972.
[927] BArch, MfS AIM Nr 9859/88 Bd 1., "Bericht," Schwerin, 10. 08. 1972. BStU 000028.
[928] Department VI handled cross-border travel; BArch, MfS AIM Nr 9859/88 Bd 1. "Absclußbericht IMS 'Linda,'" Reg.-Nr. II 396/72, 19.3.80, BStU 000220; "Hauptabteilung VI (Passkontrolle, Tourismus, Interhotel), Stasi Records Archive, https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/themen/organisation/Hauptabteilung%20VI/
[929] BArch, MfS AIM 9859/88 Bd 1, "Vorschlag," 15.9.1981, BStU 000237.

suitable for unofficial cooperation.[930] This was the relatively mundane nature of her informing career.

Kremming has manipulated these events. His chapter, "Ihr Körper war ihr bestes Kapital" or "Her Body Is Her Best Asset" begins with a description of IM Linda as a young, sexually open nineteen-year-old female who enjoyed Western music and "fucking under the bust of Lenin."[931] She is summoned to the Schwerin district administration office because Stasi officials believe that her sexual adventures could never satisfy her, and that she should work for them. In Kremming's version of her first contact interview, he states the following:

> [Her case officer] eyed her benevolently…the girl was far prettier than described in the logs. It was mid-August, and her hair and dress were soaked from the warm summer rain. Although Lieutenant did not want to let it get to him, he found her very attractive. As an unmarried man in his forties, he was very receptive to such charms.[932]

This excerpt centers Linda's story around the experience of the male subject, giving him priority. Her own thoughts are absent from the narrative, and by sexualizing her through an officer's gaze, Kremming reduces her to a passive, one-dimensional character. Shortly after this meeting, in Kremming's rendition of events, IM Linda agrees to be a 'honey trap' spy for the MfS. She becomes an erotic spectacle when the state places a microphone under her bed and on her ceiling, and the resulting noise is described by Kremming as "a welcome change for MfS sound technicians."[933] When she begins to deconspire, Stasi leadership sends male employees to Linda's bed with "checking orders."[934] Kremming says, "no

[930] BArch, MfS, AIM 9859/88, Bd.4, "Information," 03.03.1982. BStU 000102.
[931] Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle*, 72.
[932] Several authors make a special effort to let readers know that a male case officer is either unmarried and lonely, or married with a neglectful wife; Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle*, 82.
[933] Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle*, 82.
[934] Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle*, 83.

further details were given in the reports, but it can be assumed that there was no shortage of testers."[935]

Undoubtedly, Linda's experience has been heavily embellished. Among other things, I have found no evidence to support Kremming's 'testing orders' claim. I suspect that he took inspiration from the equally exaggerated 2002 *FOCUS* article "Mit Stasi: Sex und Peitschen." This article claims that a similar type of tester was assigned to IM Vera, a prostitute, because the Stasi did not trust her sexual behaviour. She "passed the exam."[936] By modifying Linda's case file and centering it around sexual acts which she may or may not have performed, Kremming strips her of autonomy. Additionally, his use of erotic language and failure to acknowledge the ways that she moved through the system, as discussed in Chapter Four, renders his account of her informing experience shallow.[937]

Young Ladies: The Infantilization of Female IMs in Erotic Fiction

In all these texts, infantilization is a glaring problem. Women, including real Stasi informers, are routinely painted as gullible and childlike. While there is a slim chance that this stems from Angela Schmole and Belinda Cooper's rendering of case officers as fatherly figures, this seems unlikely as the authors do not engage with relevant scholarship. For this reason, I consider their infantilization to be a projection of male fantasies, or at the

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[935] Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle*, 83.
[936] "STASI: Mit Sex und Peitschen," *FOCUS Magazine*, Nov. 11. 2002.
[937] While formulating these sections on the (mis)use of Stasi files, I found myself constantly returning to an excerpt by Harriet Bradley. She asks whether archival material is "the property of the researcher (who is likely to view them as the embodiment of her labour, her own capital); or of the funding body; or of those who gave up time to be interviewed? Here power relations enter into the archive more nakedly. Inevitably, as products of the researcher's labour the utterances of the 'subjects' of research become objectified. In consequence the researcher may become possessive about her archive, wary of its appropriation for others' gain as well as of possible abuse by others who may be less well intentioned. Who, indeed, owns the archive?" Bradley, "The Seductions of the Archive: Voices Lost and Found," 115.

very least an extension of views already held by authors. For example, the majority of Kremming's chapters focus on 'honey trap' agents, none of whom are older than the age of twenty-two. The chapter "Mit dem Nuttenzug nach Leipzig" or "With the Hooker Train to Leipzig" concentrates on Christina, a twenty-two-year-old who:

> Had everything Comrade Mielke wanted for his "operative beds." Blonde hair, which she liked to play with, which she accidentally brushed away from her face while looking dreamily in front of her. Her gaze had something helpless, her slender legs gave free rein to her fantasies. A mixture that pleases and confuses. When she sat on the bar stool, the fingers slid over her thighs, she had her perfect appearance. The country girl with pigtails and bruised knees, who grew up among cows and sheep, now played with men as if they were her dolls.[938]

Not only does his choice of words in describing Christina as a "country girl with pigtails and bruised knees" infantilize an adult woman, but it also sexualizes girlhood. In a similar manner, his description combines themes of virginity and sexual perversion.

Another chapter titled "Maria aus Leipzig" focuses on an eighteen-year-old named Maria. She resorts to a life of prostitution after fighting with her mother and running away from her family home in Leipzig. As a "young girl who thought less about schoolwork than about earning money and having practical lessons in sex education," Maria is arrested and taken to police headquarters. [939] There, a member of the K1 extorts her into working for them under the threat of imprisonment. When she changes her mind and decides that she does not want to work as an IM, she seduces her case officer. This makes him forget his duties. He is so mesmerized and love-struck by teenage Maria that she is free to walk away from the MfS without any consequences.

[938] Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle*, 91.
[939] Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle*, 55.

In perhaps the most striking example of infantilization, Kremming refers to IM Linda as a "young lady." This word-choice, whether it was intended to be patronizing or not, negates her of her adult status and suggests that he too views Linda as weak or childlike. It tells readers that he does not take her seriously which, in turn, affects their judgement about a very real historical subject.[940] Language used in *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten, Fremdgeher, Bettspitzel, und die STASI als Zuhälter* also reinforces male dominance over women. In the chapter "Papa Stasi und die Nympomanin Carmen 1964," a young, sexually insatiable exhibitionist named Carmen is forced to choose between collaborating with the MfS or being jailed for her immorality. Intimidated by "the hard hand of Papa Stasi," she agrees to cooperate under duress. Alexander and Milwoky write: "the naughty child immediately promised to support the MfS in every phase."[941] When Carmen violates her conspiracy agreement, "Papa Stasi, like many a disappointed and angry father, was seething with anger…the fuming dad decided that the People's Police should initiate preliminary proceedings."[942] Similarly, IM Irene Schneider signs a declaration to inform "in her little girls writing."[943] Finally, *The East is Black* characterizes Adina as being "like a child who wanted to please" her Stasi masters.[944] By stripping away these women's power and adult qualities while also subjecting them to sexual exploits on behalf of the MfS, these authors are sexualizing girlhood.[945]

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[940] Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle*, Kindle, Loc 949.
[941] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 103.
[942] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 220.
[943] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 2662.
[944]Bracken, *The East is Black*, Kindle, Loc 703; Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex oder die Staatsprostituierten,* Kindle, Loc 1305.
[945] Scholarship on the infantilization of women in pornography and semi-pornographic works is scarce. For information about the infantilization of women outside of porn see: Karen Sidani, "The Hyper sexualization of Young Girls and the Infantilization of Adult Women," *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research* 7:1, 2023; Nicole K. Stibbard, "Sexual Infantilization: The Peril in Consuming Little Girl Imagery," Master's Thesis, San Francisco State University, 2024.

Importantly, while women are treated like children by men in these accounts, they are simultaneously depicted as sexually insatiable. In *Sex for Money: Mit der Stasi im Bett,* the sexual exploits of 'honey trap' women like Madlaine S. are sensationalized through statements such as "former customers told us about sex practices that are not in any sex education book, but which for the protection of minors tells us to keep silent."[946] In *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten*, the body of a teenager named Lucy is described as a "voluptuous," "gorgeous," and "girly" all in the same page.[947] When she is sixteen ("but seems like a blossoming 23-year-old") she develops a voracious sexual appetite and learns how to "hypnotize a man during a conversation to such as extent that he soon desired her madly."[948] The Stasi is never able to recruit her for this reason.[949] Alexander and Milwoky even go so far as to report falling victim to Lucy's monstrous female power themselves when she was twenty-three.[950] They supposedly dropped to their knees and cried after she hypnotized them into having intercourse with her. This example offers unique insight into the minds of Stasi erotica authors because it exposes their pathology. As Robert Schultz contends,

> Every representation of a woman…can be 'read,' not for pleasure, and not for what it tells us about women, but for what it tells us about men. We have been shown that when a man regards such an image, he isn't looking at a woman, really, but a complicated sort of self-portrait. Everything has been arranged by conventions of his own making, shaped by his desire. The image is what he requires, and the woman represented is a missing person – an object and a mirage.[951]

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[946] Alexander, Milwoky, *Sex for Money: Mit der Stasi im Bett,* Kindle, Loc 1312.
[947] "Even at 13, Lucy looked like a vamp. Blooming, glowing, bold, devouring. Something like Marilyn Monroe in a girl version"; Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 2805.
[948] Alexander, Milwoky, *DDR-Sex, oder Hobbynutten,* Kindle, Loc. 2805.
[949] Every time a Stasi officer tries to recruit her, she seduces them.
[950] They did not work for the Stasi.
[951] Robert Schultz, "When Men Look at Women: Sex in an Age of Theory" *The Hudson Review* 48:3, 1995, 367.

By inserting themselves into this fictional story and claiming to have been hypnotized into having sex with Lucy, Alexander and Milwoky are able to maintain moral innocence while also participating in sexual practices coded as deviant and "reveling unself-consciously in voyeuristic pleasures."[952] By granting Lucy sexual powers, they also reinforce the sexist idea that female sexuality is monstrous while male sexuality is not. Notably, this is a common thread throughout their work. In an earlier discussion about which gender was responsible for the persistence of prostitution in the GDR, their statement: "men who, as a rule, were not monsters, but often had taken care of their families for decades and had also given their wives many happy hours during these decades – should we cast the first stone at them?" brings their misogyny to the fore. In all these ways, Stasi-involved women are simultaneously infantilized and hypersexualized.

Visual Representations and Normative Ideals of Beauty

Another phenomenon in these male-authored works is their intense focus on women's physical appearance. Because female characters are written almost exclusively to satisfy male fantasies, their appearances usually conform to sexy femme fatale stereotypes. According to intelligence historian Kathryn Olmsted, this trope affects female, Soviet spies' writ large. For example, in her article "Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids: Gender and Espionage in the Early Cold War," Olmsted argues that American journalists reduced spies Elizabeth Bentley, Priscilla Hiss, Ethel Rosenberg, and Judith Coplon "to gender stereotypes during the Cold War and portrayed them as neurotic

[952] Schultz, "When Men Look at Women: Sex in an Age of Theory," 367; *Nazisploitation!* 41.

old maids or svelte young seductresses."[953] Though the tabloids described Bentley as a young, svelte, blonde in 'form-fitting' clothes who seduced men into giving her confidential information, she actually had short brown hair, wore glasses, and looked much older than forty-years-old.[954] She did not sleep with any of her sources, but "right-wing newspapers seemed determined to make her play that part. For one thing, the Mata Hari image sold newspapers. But more important…the Communist woman was unnatural and dangerous, they believed – a black widow, whose extremist politics had caused her to lose her morals and seek to destroy men."[955] Likewise, after Coplon's capture in 1949, the *World-Telegram* described her as "an attractive, dark-haired girl with full lips and a shapely figure." She had "lips brilliantly marked with lipstick" and "a bosom which 'heaved,' 'quivered,' and, best of all, was inadequately 'obscured' by her thin blouse."[956] Olmsted writes, "all the common stereotypes about female communists and female spies were thrown together in the Coplon trial coverage, without regard to internal consistency. She was cold, ruthless, passionless; she was hot, sexy, raging passionate. Above all, she was an uncontrolled and uncontrollable 'mystery woman,' and therefore deceptive and dangerous."[957]

Olmsted's methodology can be applied to an analysis of Stasi erotica, since most female characters have been created for erotic impact. In *Sex for Money*: *Mit der Stasi im Bett,* Madlaine, a "Stasi hooker" from Leipzig, has "a model figure, jet-black hair, narrow, high, beautiful face, Thai eyes, with dazzling white rows of teeth, narrow but cherry-red

[953] Kathryn Olmsted, "Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids Gender and Espionage in the Early Cold War," *Intelligence and National Security* 19:1, 2004, 78.
[954] Olmsted, "Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids," 79-83.
[955] Olmsted, "Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids," 79-83.
[956] Olmsted, "Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids," 84.
[957] Olmsted, "Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids," 85.

lips, a slender figure, firm breasts."[958] Another IM, Marina, is "equally tall" but with "bright red lips twice to three times as plump as the amateur hooker Madeline."[959] Much like the cases of Bentley, Hiss, Rosenberg, and Coplon, these normative beauty standards hardly square with the photographs of female informers held in the Stasi Records Archive. Over the course of this project, I have collected over two hundred headshots of women classified by the DVP or MfS as 'prostitute' or 'hwG.' In these images, black squares obscure women's facial features for privacy; nonetheless, this form of visual evidence can still be analyzed using methodologies laid out by Jennifer Evans.[960] For example, in *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth Century German History*, Evans writes that Nazi officers looked at mugshots "and saw evidence of immorality objectively defined – the criminal within."[961] The same can be said about the Stasi. Though the women portrayed in these headshots are not easily identifiable prostitutes or criminals, the MfS used their photos as documentary evidence of deviant bodies and sexuality.[962] Evans also asks historians to "challenge the original purpose of the [police] photo, to render visible a tangible, bounded criminal identity" and to ensure their subjects "remain embodied, subjective, complex, human."[963] Employing this methodology, one notices that very few informers have hair past their shoulders. They exchange elements traditionally associated with prostitution such as exposed cleavage and conspicuous make-up for modest

[958] Alexander, Milwoky, S*ex for Money: Mit der Stasi im Bett, Kindle*, Loc 1294.
[959] Alexander, Milwoky, S*ex for Money: Mit der Stasi im Bett, Kindle*, Loc 1975.
[960] See Jennifer Evans, Paul Betts, Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann*, The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth Century German History,* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018); Evans, "Seeing Subjectivity: Erotic Photography and the Optics of Desire," *The American Historical Review* 118:2, 2013; Evans and Elissa Mailänder, "Cross-dressing, male intimacy and the violence of transgression in Third Reich Photography," *German History* 39:1, 2020.
[961] Evans, et al., *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth Century German History,* 61.
[962] Erin Gibbs Van Brunschot, Rosalind A. Sydie & Catherine Krull, "Images of Prostitution: The Prostitute and Print Media," *Women & Criminal Justice* 10:4, 2000, 66.
[963] Evans, et al., *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth Century German History,* 61.

turtlenecks, collared button-up blouses, and thick sweaters and jackets, contravening the Stasi's discourse surrounding prostitutional degeneracy.[964]

It is possible that the Stasi used women's professional headshots to create these registries. However, even if this were the case, the images depict a different version of 'hwG' women than the one in Stasi erotica. Instead of tall, blonde, busty women with red lips and pigtails, they were ordinary women who fit into their environment. These images would not fulfill the same erotic representation, so authors have chosen to modify their depictions of these women for the sake of the male gaze. When photographs of 'promiscuous' women do appear in these works, they are often uncited stock photos. One image in Kremming's book depicts a topless female model. Her nipples fall just outside of the frame, and she stares seductively at the camera with pursed lips. Her long nails are painted red, and she presses a tube of lipstick lightly against her mouth. The caption reads, "Attractive young women who were guilty of something were pressured by the Stasi to spy on the class enemy."[965] The inclusion of such generic photographs in association with 'promiscuous' IMs simplifies their interactions with the Stasi because, in Evans' words, they "tempt us with an immediate sense of knowing and recognition."[966] Rather than presenting readers with a Stasi headshot and encouraging them to think about the relationship between the photographer, the female subject, and the representation of the subject, the use of self-explanatory stock photos "gives rise to a particular, uncomplicated rendering" of Stasi informants. [967]

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[964] Leslie Choquette uses the phrase 'prostitutional degeneracy' in her article "Degenerate or Degendered? Images of Prostitution and Homosexuality in the French Third Republic," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 23:2, 1997, 220.
[965] Kremming, *Von Strassenstrich bis Honig Falle*, 156.
[966] Evans, "Seeing Subjectivity: Erotic Photography and the Optics of Desire," 434.
[967] Evans, "Seeing Subjectivity: Erotic Photography and the Optics of Desire," 437.

Blurring Readers' Knowledge

Finally, all these eroticized works, but especially those in the third category, deliberately blur readers' knowledge. Preoccupied with eroticized images of socialism, authors cite "nymphomaniac dispositions," and "unfathomable character traits" as primary reasons why women turned to prostitution, echoing Stasi discourse and ignoring social issues like poverty.[968] Furthermore, not only do they take the information contained in women's Stasi files at face value, but they also insert made-up dialogues into this archival material to thrill their readers. By offering their own, hypersexualized version of the past while also selling their work as a documentary life-story, they project false identities onto real people. For example, a close, line-by-line comparison of a Linda's carefully preserved file and Kremming's work is the only way to identify embellishments, and because the process of obtaining files from the Stasi Records Archive is complicated and time-consuming, most readers will not have this experience. This means that Linda's experience of living under what we today consider oppressive conditions will continue to be consumed and understood in a way that is severed from reality. A quote by Robert Schultz is worthy of consideration here. He states, "When our bodies are stripped not just of their clothes but of their personal stories, we are no longer persons."[969] Certainly, historians, journalists, and creative writers exercise varying degrees of creative freedom. While historical accuracy remains a primary obligation for historians, exact truths may be less important for creative writers. But by choosing to conduct research in an archive of state repression and to write about real female informers from the prostitution milieu, creative writers also assume some degree of moral responsibility. While semi-fictionalized accounts like Kremming's may be

[968] Alexander, Milwoky, *Sex for Money*, Kindle, Loc 93.
[969] Schultz, "When Men Look at Women: Sex in an Age of Theory," 377.

marketed as 'historical reassessment,' the inflation of 'promiscuous' informers' sexual appetites fail to honor the women whose images live on in the faded Stasi files.

Conclusion: Reading Agency in the Archives

When it comes to the Stasi, some women are reclaiming their own histories. Artist and former-East German citizen Cornelia Schleime's photo-text series *Bis auf weitere gute Zusammenarbeit, Nr. 7284/85* (Until Further Collaboration, Nr. 7284/85) begins with the following acknowledgement: "This work could only have been realized with the help of the GDR's Ministry for State Security and its many collaborators, who contributed in painstaking detail to these texts. To them I am thankful."[970] In what is now referred to as *Die Stasi Serie* (the Stasi Series), Schleime transposes photographs of herself into fourteen excerpts from her Stasi file.[971] These self-portraits, which she curated to "contradict the derisive and unsympathetic tone of the text" in 1993, allow her to "confront the image the Stasi [created] of her by engaging with her own surveillance files."[972] For instance, in one observation report, the Stasi write, "In the house itself all that is known about Schleime is that she is a painter by profession. She doesn't stay in the house during the day but is home regularly in the evenings. What is striking is that immediately after entering the apartment, [she] lowers the folding blinds so that no sight into the apartment is possible. Visits are only observed occasionally, and no one is known by name."[973] Layered over this text is a photograph of Schleime standing alone in a field of red flowers. She wears red sunglasses,

[970] Sara Blaylock, "Being the Woman They Wanted Her to Be: Cornelia Schleime Performs Her Stasi File," *Third Text* 35:2, 2021, 229.
[971] Blaylock, "Being the Woman They Wanted Her to Be," 229.
[972] Iman Salty, "Doorway to Dissidence: The 1979 Doors Exhibition in the GDR," *React/Review* 3:0, 2023, 100.
[973] Cornelia Schleime, *Stasi Series.*

red hoop earrings, and a red-button down shirt which is open, exposing her breasts. In another report, the Stasi write that "Schleime earns quite well in her job. The suspect is well dressed and wears Western clothing." On top of this text, Schleime has transposed an image of herself draped luxuriously across a bed, talking on the telephone. When asked about her motivation for the project, Schleime replied that it was "a way for me to free myself from this trauma."[974]

The *Stasi Series* uses a combination of visual and textual elements to highlight the power of language. It captures what life under constant surveillance was like for East German citizens and in doing so, stimulates important conversations about the impact of Stasi surveillance on identity. The same cannot be said about erotica written about female informers, as they overlook complicated discussions in favour of the fulfillment of male fantasies. Unlike Schleime, IM Barbara Schwarze could not engage with her Stasi files after the fall of the wall. She cannot comment on Alexander and Milwoky's appropriation of her Stasi file, nor can she articulate her own experiences working with the secret police. For these reasons, her reputation remains deeply intertwined with Stasi stereotypes portraying her as vengeful, sexually perverse, and deviant. Let there be no misunderstanding: the cultural phenomenon of Stasi erotica is encouraging more non-academics to engage with Stasi memory. The lines between fact and fiction are becoming blurred, and representations of female Stasi informers, such as Schwarze, as sexually available and insatiable beings are becoming more mainstream. By including these popular works in my academic work, I am not trying to give them more publicity, but instead attempting to challenge, and reorient these contemporary narratives.

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[974] Blaylock, "Being the Woman They Wanted Her to Be," 229.

Conclusion

In 1984, the Leipzig MfS recruited IM Simone to spy on foreigners staying at Hotel Merkur, located right next to Nordstraße and the city's central train station. Her task was to "gather information about their possible subversive/criminal activities."[975] Although the MfS classified Simone as a 'worker' and 'hausfrau,' they also noted her frequent visits to the Merkur hotel bar and categorized her as an active participant in the "horizontal industry" or *Horizontalgewerbe*.[976] The Stasi leveraged a previous three-year prison sentence, from which Simone was released early for good behaviour, to recruit her "on the basis of reparations" (i.e. blackmail). When she appeared at the Merkur hotel bar after her release, a Stasi employee gave her an ultimatum: "You will either work for us or serve the three years."[977] IM Simone chose to collaborate and appears to have provided the Stasi with intelligence information until September 1989.[978] However, in October, she failed to return to the GDR from a trip as planned. On November 21, twelve days after the accidental opening of the German-German border and thirteen days before Leipzigers occupied the "Runde Ecke," the Stasi – now rebranded as the Office for National Security (AfNS, Nasi) – accused IM Simone of fleeing the GDR illegally. This case from the Stasi Records Archive shows that despite the border being effectively open and the regime being in its dying phase, the MfS continued their regular operations, monitoring the movements and behaviour of women who deviated from socialist norms of femininity until their official

[975] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 819-91, Bd.1. Leipzig, 3. 2. 1984.
[976] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 819-91, Bd.1. Leipzig, 28. 03. 1984, BStU 000055
[977] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 819-91, Bd.1. Leipzig, 3. 2. 1984
[978] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 819-91, Bd.1. Leipzig, 3. 9. 1989, BStU 000274

dissolution on January 13, 1990.[979] It encapsulates the absurdity of the Stasi, and illustrates the lengths they went to in order to maintain control as the Ministry imploded and their country collapsed.

This dissertation examined the convergence of prostitution, venereal disease, and women's involvement in the Stasi surveillance system in East Germany from 1950 to 1989. Over five chapters, it argued that these concepts cannot be analyzed separately for several reasons. First, extensive collaboration between the Stasi, People's Police, and health authorities led to a disproportionate level of policing targeting vulnerable women. This collaboration allowed the Stasi to expand its surveillance into the carceral and healthcare systems, bringing women who might not have otherwise attracted Stasi attention under their control. Second, after recruitment, many informants who engaged in 'prostitution' or otherwise 'promiscuous' sexual behaviour used their experience evading health personnel and local police forces to resist the Stasi surveillance system. Third, the Stasi, like GDR authorities more generally, sought to control women's sexual behaviour but did not regulate male sexuality. When male employees sexually harassed or abused 'promiscuous' informers under their supervision, it was tolerated. Fourth, today's popular representations of Stasi 'prostitute-informers' oversimplify and oversexualize their experiences at the expense of historical accuracy.

Chapter One traced major legislative developments in prostitution and prostitution-related policies from Germany's early modern period until 1949. It provided readers with the background information necessary to understand state interventions into women's

[979] Simone's case officer concluded: "At the moment the IM's whereabouts are unknown (probably in the Federal Republic of Germany, possibly in Siegen) …Based on the presumed situation, a return of the IM to the GDR cannot be ruled out"; BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 819-91, Bd.1. Leipzig, November 21, 1989, BStU 000110

sexual lives in East Germany. Chapter Two began by describing SED Party officials' view that prostitution had been eliminated under socialism. Functionaries cited the emancipation of women, as laid out by the East German Constitution, as proof of its dissolution. Still, as this chapter showed, the sex trade continued to exist. Although socialism promised prosperity and economic security, it ultimately failed to do away with poverty and economic deprivation. Many impoverished women remained trapped in the sex industry to meet their basic needs including food, clothing, and shelter. However, because prostitution's persistence suggested socialism's failure and the inability of East German authorities to materially provide for their citizens, state actors characterized women who sold sex or were suspected of doing so, or who regularly had sex outside of long-term, committed relationships as asocial, deviant, depraved and degenerate. To protect their country's reputation on the world stage, SED elites – and consequently, the MfS – framed prostitution as a personal choice and moral failing instead of a systemic issue. To identify, isolate and destroy 'class enemies' in the prostitution milieu, the MfS recruited sex-selling women to spy on one another. Chapter Two also demonstrated that sexually deviant women were split into two categories: 'prostitute' and 'hwG.' Individuals who received these labels were incorporated into an official regulatory system, maintained by the People's Police and welfare institutions. As this examination showed, regulation was not only a way to separate the sexually infected from the 'clean' in the GDR – it also functioned as a mechanism for disciplinary actors to punish women they believed to be "inconvenient to the regime."[980]

Chapter Three interrogated the ways that the MfS recruited women it perceived to be 'promiscuous.' Since the Stasi extended its surveillance into carceral and healthcare

[980] Dobeš, "Prostitution as a Special Form of the Offence of Social Parasitism in Socialist Czechoslovakia," 86.

systems, the intelligence apparatus regularly threatened women with the choice between collaboration or arrest, imprisonment, and prosecution. After an informer's recruitment, the MfS or DVP attempted to assert and maintain their authority over them. This proved to be a difficult task. As discussed in Chapter Four, informants who engaged in 'prostitution' or other sexual behaviour perceived to be 'promiscuous' often slipped away from the MfS using their experience evading health personnel and local police forces. The MfS and People's Police consistently reported the absence of informers at meetings and their lack of dedication to the socialist cause. Further evidence of women's resistance includes their withholding of information from their case officers, creation of whisper networks, and leveraging of their 'inherited' primitivity to disguise acts against the state. Such acts of agency were imperative, considering the lack of legal protections afforded to female IMs. Chapter Four also used secret filings from the Stasi Records Archive to argue that 'hwG' and 'prostitute' informers experienced sexual harassment at the hands of male superiors, in addition to other forms of abuse. By examining women's exploitation and official responses to it, including the creation of a separate, "top secret" archive to bury allegations of sexual misconduct, this unstudied aspect of Stasi history demonstrated that violence against women was tolerated within the MfS and its affiliated state organs.

Chapter Five engaged in important discussions surrounding memory by examining contemporary perceptions of female Stasi informers from the prostitution milieu. It used erotic and semi-erotic works to show that female IMs are still portrayed as deviant, even sadistic, femme fatales in popular culture. As early as 2002, newspapers published exposés about supposed Stasi 'honey trap' agents like Marlon Forster and their uninhibited female sexuality. This laid the foundation for the more recent phenomenon of Stasi erotica, which

turns real women such as IM Irene Schneider, IM Barbara Schwarze, and IM Linda into the objects of male sexual allure. It claims authenticity despite inserting eroticized versions of the past into the MfS narrative, and frames Stasi encounters as pleasurable for women.

As a scholar who is interested in 'deviant' or 'disruptive' bodies and gendered strategies to contain and regulate them, I have used previously unexamined Stasi files to explore intersections between the regulation of prostitution in East Germany and MfS security demands. Drawing on Dagmar Herzog's statement that "sex can be the site for talking about very many other things besides sex and working through a multitude of other social and political conflicts," this exploration contributes to several historiographic discussions, including the history of the Stasi, the history of East Germany, the history of gender and sexuality in twentieth century Europe, the history of everyday life, and intelligence history.[981]

This research offers a new framework for understanding MfS control mechanisms. First, it reveals that the Stasi devoted considerable resources and manpower to monitoring women whom they judged to be 'promiscuous' as part of their mission to identify and eliminate 'class enemies' within the GDR. While the MfS classified multiple different groups of people as 'asocial' elements, including vagrants, work-shirkers, the homeless, alcoholics, and prostitutes, they deemed it especially necessary to eradicate 'prostitutes' and 'hwG' women from society. Not only did their continued existence represent the failure of the socialist project, but the MfS also saw them as "reservoirs of disease and transmitters of infection."[982] This stereotype distinguished them from other 'class enemies' and led to

[981] Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth Century Germany*, 8.
[982] John Scott, "Governing Prostitution: Differentiating the Bad from the Bad," *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* 23:1, 2011, 63.

an increased state presence in their lives. Second, by concentrating on the ways that the Stasi pathologized sexual deviance, particularly when it came to women, this study provides new insights into how the apparatus identified potential informants. It shows that the MfS weaponized prostitution control measures like registration and medical examinations to bring vulnerable populations under their control. Likewise, its revelations about denunciation letters targeting so-called 'promiscuous' women highlight a primary (albeit understudied) method through which vulnerable women attracted the Stasi's attention, while also challenging existing beliefs that there was little "willingness among East Germans to denounce other people to the secret police."[983] Third, while most historians acknowledge that the Stasi blackmailed IMs, this project is one of only two that have explored the ways blackmail techniques differed depending on the target demographic.[984] Since stigmatizing labels like 'sexually deviant,' 'hwG,' and 'prostitute' were mainly applied to women, they reinforced gender stereotypes portraying sexually active women as dangerous sources of syphilis and gonorrhea. Therefore, numerous regulations governing prostitution existed in the GDR. The Stasi exploited these existing laws and coerced some of the most marginalized and vulnerable members of East German society into cooperation.

This study also provides more evidence for the argument that the GDR sought complete control over their population but were ultimately never able to gain or maintain that control. The Stasi tried to have their hands in every segment of the population – indeed, they were monitoring 'class enemies' in the most subaltern parts of east German society – but, as Chapter Four demonstrated, they were not always successful in recruiting and

[983] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990*, 80.
[984] Steffi Brüning's book is the second study to do so.

controlling female informants because these actors exercised their own agency in diverse ways. Since they did not consent to being monitored or working for the MfS, they used their previous experience avoiding police, social services, health authorities, and even members of the public to manipulate the intelligence system and regained their bearings relatively quickly after recruitment. Though the language used by male case officers when describing their interactions with female informers shows us that they believed they were in complete control, the fact that female informers could defy the MfS without getting caught challenges the established image of the Stasi as hyper-efficient. It showcases the incompetence of some Stasi officers and highlights a limitation of Stasi surveillance in the GDR.

This dissertation is the first piece of scholarship to uncover and engage with the sexual misconduct that ran rampant among male MfS employees. As evidenced by their misogynistic commentary in the sources, these employees viewed vulnerable groups of women as sexually available and took extensive measures to protect their actions and the actions of their colleagues from exposure. One such action included filing reports in secret 'GH' archives. Sexual misconduct was so plentiful that the Stasi assigned two officers to every female informer to prevent abuse. They were more concerned about sexual crimes harming the reputation of the Stasi and the state than protecting vulnerable women or considering the consequences of their actions. Women were supposed to be socialist comrades, but instead male agents treated them as disposable beings undeserving of respect or protection. They used gendered language and stereotypes to reduce them to mere 'bodies' and used class-based stereotypes around hygiene, etc. to undermine their worth. There was also a clear class-based distinction between the officers and their subjects, as

Stasi personnel were typically more educated than female informers from the prostitution milieu.

Beyond Stasi historiography, this dissertation situates women's involvement in the Stasi surveillance system in the broader context of sexual morality. It adds to growing literature on the history of sex work by illustrating how older regulatory practices supported Stasi efforts to pathologize, punish, and control women whom they deemed sexually deviant. For example, seventeenth century German administrators could impose harsh and long-lasting punishments on individuals accused of sexual immorality without evidence. This allowed disciplinary actors like the MfS, People's Police, and welfare authorities to threaten women with forcible admission to a closed VD ward, even in the absence of infection. After identity ascriptions such as 'sexually abnormal' emerged in the eighteenth century, they were applied to women whose private sexual behaviour defied socialist norms in the GDR. The establishment of the French system of regulation in 1802 provided the Stassi with the necessary infrastructure (i.e., registration, medical inspections, imprisonment) to monitor women's sexual behaviour and to pressure them into collaboration. The strong emphasis placed on female disorder, sexual pollution, registration and denunciation during the First and Second World Wars encouraged German citizens to report 'deviant' female sexuality, a concept which expanded with the introduction of terms such as 'hwG' in the Weimar Republic and 'asocial' in the Third Reich, to the state. These vague, manipulable designations provided the Stasi with another way to exercise control over women's bodies. Post-war legislation gave the state additional tools to "hunt down" so-called sexually immoral women. SMAG Order No. 25, created a network of out-patient clinics and hospitals where women with venereal diseases, especially syphilis, could be

interned.[985] Similarly, Orders No. 30 and 273 authorized police and health departments to remove women they deemed to be sources of contagion from society and institutionalize them. These orders remained in effect until 1961, influencing the lives of countless East German women.

By bearing witness to the existence of hundreds of forgotten women who found themselves under police surveillance in East Germany, this dissertation also confirms that that sex trades existed in socialist regimes despite assurances they would disappear. The stories of Marianne H., who relied on income from sex work to clothe herself, Karin B., who, in the Stasi's words, regularly "gave herself up for a dinner," and other women similar to them highlight the precarious state in which many East Germans continued to live behind the Iron Curtain.[986] They demonstrate that while the SED Party commanded women to abandon sex work in favour of more productive labour, it failed to eliminate 'capitalist' problems like poverty and wealth, leaving women to confront the very real possibilities of starvation and homelessness.[987] Thus, prostitution remained a way out for many East German women from the poorer classes who could afford neither rent nor provisions. This research reminds us of the disconnect between ideology and practice in a state where everyone was supposed to be equal under the constitution. It also offers a new line of inquiry into the study of GDR social conditions in its analysis of the ways disciplinary actors used women's situations to blackmail them into informing.

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[985] Orzechowski, Woniak, Schochow, Steger, "Policy Approaches Toward Combatting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Occupation Zone in Germany (1945-1949), the German Democratic Republic (1949-1989), and the Polish People's Republic (1945-1989)," 2.
[986] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 611-77, Bd. 1. "Bericht," Leipzig, 02. 04. 1964 BStU 000096; Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 2186.
[987] BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AIM 611-77, Bd. 1. "Bericht," Leipzig, 02. 04. 1964 BStU 000096; Falck, *VEB Bordell*, Kindle, Loc 2186.

Finally, by examining the significant involvement of marginalized women in the Stasi surveillance network and ensuring that their experiences are not lost, this study contributes to an ongoing shift towards diversity and inclusion within the male-dominated field of intelligence history. It uses feminist methodologies of care to position women's experiences at the center of Stasi history, challenging the patriarchal conventions that have coloured the field for several decades. For example, intelligence histories seldom integrate intersectionality, gender, or sexuality into their work. "The vast majority of intelligence history focuses on operations and executive decision making," Eleni Bratt writes. "Especially in studies on the Cold War period, one of the major implications of this research focus is that women, in so far as they are not part of top leadership or critical to operations, are excluded from analysis."[988] Jess Shahan also calls gender "both an ever present and missing aspect of intelligence studies."[989] By conducting intelligence research about ordinary women from a feminist standpoint, this study reclaims space for female IMs in the Stasi narrative and fortifies their value as historical subjects. In doing so, it also challenges mainstream discourse about women's role in Cold War espionage, specifically the assumption that all female Stasi spies were sexually insatiable 'honey trap' agents for whom encounters with the Stasi were pleasurable. As evidenced by Chapter Five, the memory of female Stasi IMs is incredibly vulnerable to manipulation, and by bringing a dimension of human experience to the conversation, this study has helped to untangle fact from fiction.

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[988] Eleni Braat, "The Construction of Secret Intelligence as a Masculine Profession," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 35:4, 2022, 694.
[989] Jess Shahan, "'Don't Keep Mum': Critical Approaches to the Narratives of Women Intelligence Professionals," *Intelligence and National Security* 36:4 (2021), p. 570; Elise Stephenson, Susan Harris Rimmer, "Classified and Secret: Understanding the Literature on Diversity in the Intelligence Sector," *International Studies Review* 25:3, 2023, 4.

In *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth Century Germany*, Dagmar Herzog writes that "the history of sexuality in Germany and other aspects of German history articulated constantly with one another" and that they cannot "be told separately" for this reason.[990] This is precisely the case when it comes to the history of the Stasi. Now several decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the state is no more far removed from the policing of female sexuality. Even in liberal-democratic systems, men in positions of power continue to regulate women's bodies under the guise of protection, restricting their access to reproductive services and penalizing sexual behaviours that they consider deviant. This is especially true for low-income women and women of colour. Given the clear stakes, there is no better time to reflect on the surveillance of sex in twentieth-century Germany.[991]

[990] Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth Century Germany*, 3.
[991] Meda Chesney-Lind, "Policing Women's Bodies: Law, Crime, Sexuality, and Reproduction," *Women & Criminal Justice* 27:1, 2017, 1.

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Gedenk-Und Bildungsstätte Andreasstrasse
Museum in der "Runden Ecke"
Stasimuseum Berlin in der Zentrale des MfS
Schwules Museum

Archival Sources

Landesarchiv Berlin

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Stasi Records Agency (formerly BStU)

BV Berlin, BV Rostock, BV Neubrandenburg, BV Schwerin, BV Potsdam, BV Frankfurt (Oder), BV Cottbus, BV Magdeburg, BV Halle, BV Leipzig, BV Dresden, BV Karl-Marx Stadt, BV Erfurt, BV Gera, BV Suhl.
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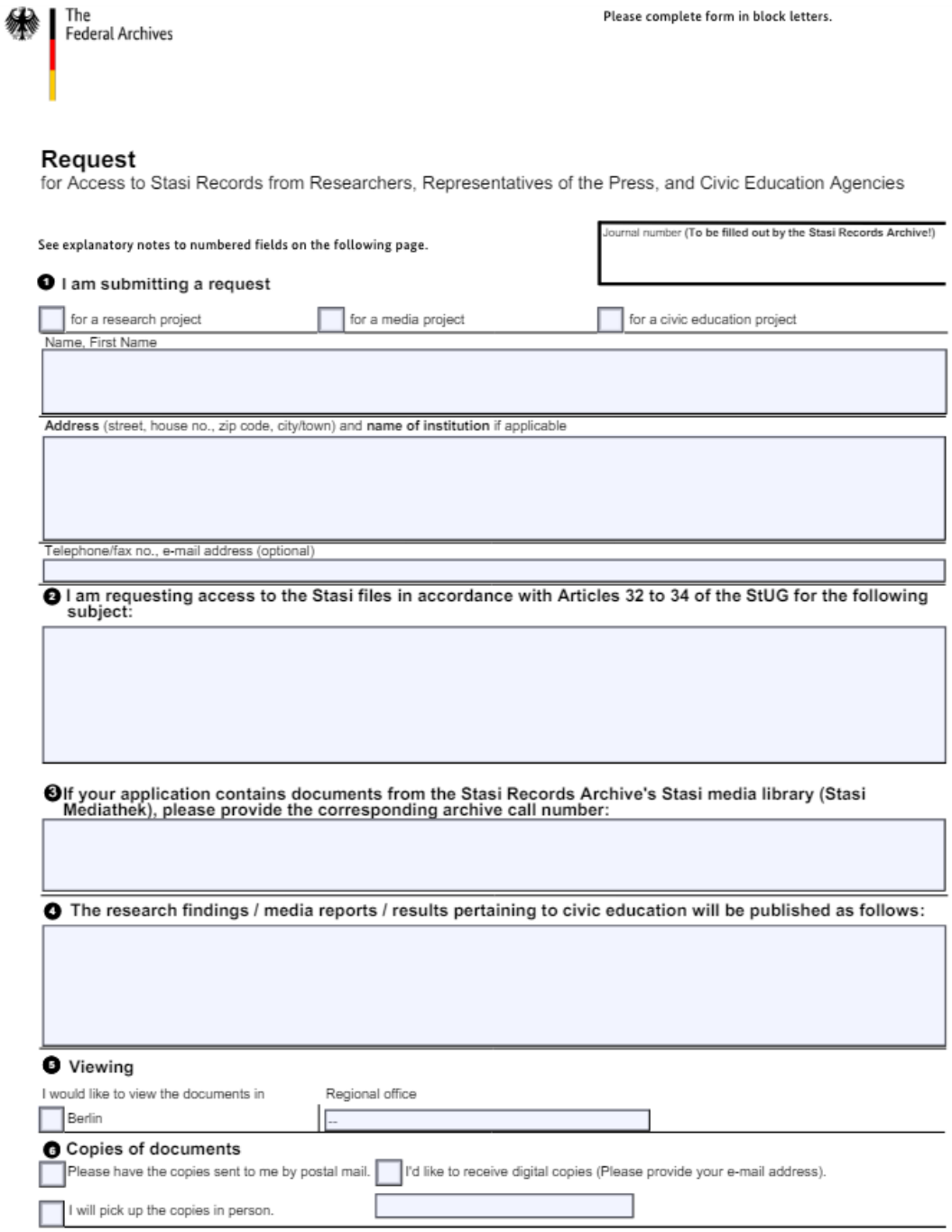
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Appendix



Figure 1: The Leipzig MfS used this Aktema VI ‘wet shredder’ machine to destroy files in the fall 1989. By shredding documents and mixing them with water, it turned them into a coarse mass of undecipherable material (see left); Museum in der “Runden Ecke.” Personal photograph by author. November 14, 2023.



The Federal Archives

Please complete form in block letters.

Request

for Access to Stasi Records from Researchers, Representatives of the Press, and Civic Education Agencies

See explanatory notes to numbered fields on the following page.

Journal number (**To be filled out by the Stasi Records Archive!**)

1 I am submitting a request

☐ for a research project ☐ for a media project ☐ for a civic education project

Name, First Name

Address (street, house no., zip code, city/town) and **name of institution** if applicable

Telephone/fax no., e-mail address (optional)

2 I am requesting access to the Stasi files in accordance with Articles 32 to 34 of the StUG for the following subject:

3 If your application contains documents from the Stasi Records Archive's Stasi media library (Stasi Mediathek), please provide the corresponding archive call number:

4 The research findings / media reports / results pertaining to civic education will be published as follows:

5 Viewing

I would like to view the documents in ☐ Berlin

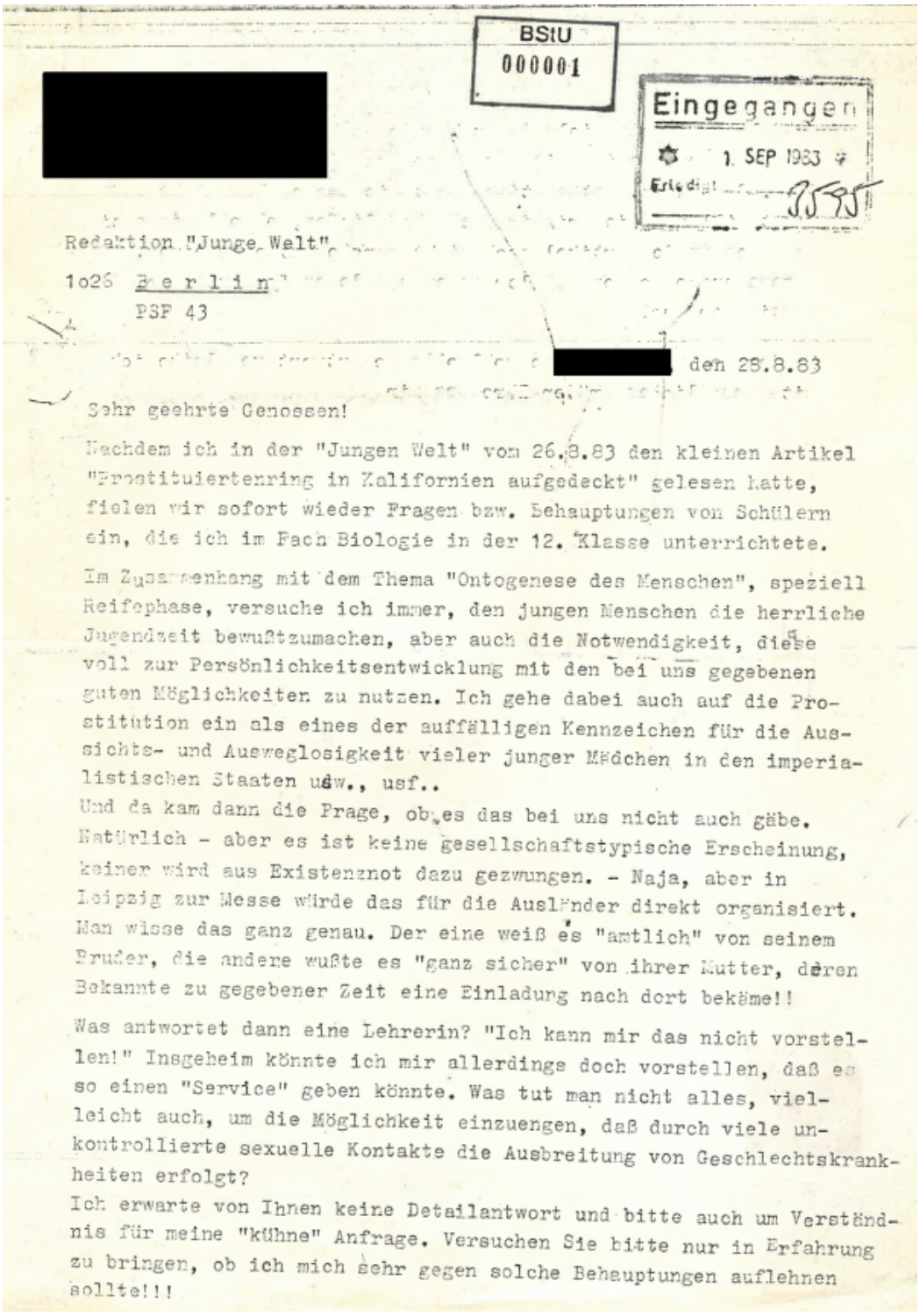
Regional office --

6 Copies of documents

☐ Please have the copies sent to me by postal mail. ☐ I'd like to receive digital copies (Please provide your e-mail address).

☐ I will pick up the copies in person.

Figure 2: Request For Access to Stasi Records from Researchers, Representatives of the Press, and Civic Education Agencies; https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/en/access-to-records/access-for-research-and-media/#c41077



BStU
000001

Eingegangen
1. SEP 1983
Erledigt

[redacted]

Redaktion "Junge Welt"
1026 Berlin
PSF 43

[redacted] den 28.8.83

Sehr geehrte Genossen!

Nachdem ich in der "Jungen Welt" vom 26.8.83 den kleinen Artikel "Prostituiertenring in Kalifornien aufgedeckt" gelesen hatte, fielen mir sofort wieder Fragen bzw. Behauptungen von Schülern ein, die ich im Fach Biologie in der 12. Klasse unterrichtete.

Im Zusammenhang mit dem Thema "Ontogenese des Menschen", speziell Reifephase, versuche ich immer, den jungen Menschen die herrliche Jugendzeit bewußtzumachen, aber auch die Notwendigkeit, diese voll zur Persönlichkeitsentwicklung mit den bei uns gegebenen guten Möglichkeiten zu nutzen. Ich gehe dabei auch auf die Prostitution ein als eines der auffälligen Kennzeichen für die Aussichts- und Ausweglosigkeit vieler junger Mädchen in den imperialistischen Staaten usw., usf..
Und da kam dann die Frage, ob es das bei uns nicht auch gäbe. Natürlich - aber es ist keine gesellschaftstypische Erscheinung, keiner wird aus Existenznot dazu gezwungen. - Naja, aber in Leipzig zur Messe würde das für die Ausländer direkt organisiert. Man wisse das ganz genau. Der eine weiß es "amtlich" von seinem Bruder, die andere wußte es "ganz sicher" von ihrer Mutter, deren Bekannte zu gegebener Zeit eine Einladung nach dort bekäme!!

Was antwortet dann eine Lehrerin? "Ich kann mir das nicht vorstellen!" Insgeheim könnte ich mir allerdings doch vorstellen, daß es so einen "Service" geben könnte. Was tut man nicht alles, vielleicht auch, um die Möglichkeit einzuengen, daß durch viele unkontrollierte sexuelle Kontakte die Ausbreitung von Geschlechtskrankheiten erfolgt?
Ich erwarte von Ihnen keine Detailantwort und bitte auch um Verständnis für meine "kühne" Anfrage. Versuchen Sie bitte nur in Erfahrung zu bringen, ob ich mich sehr gegen solche Behauptungen auflehnen sollte!!!

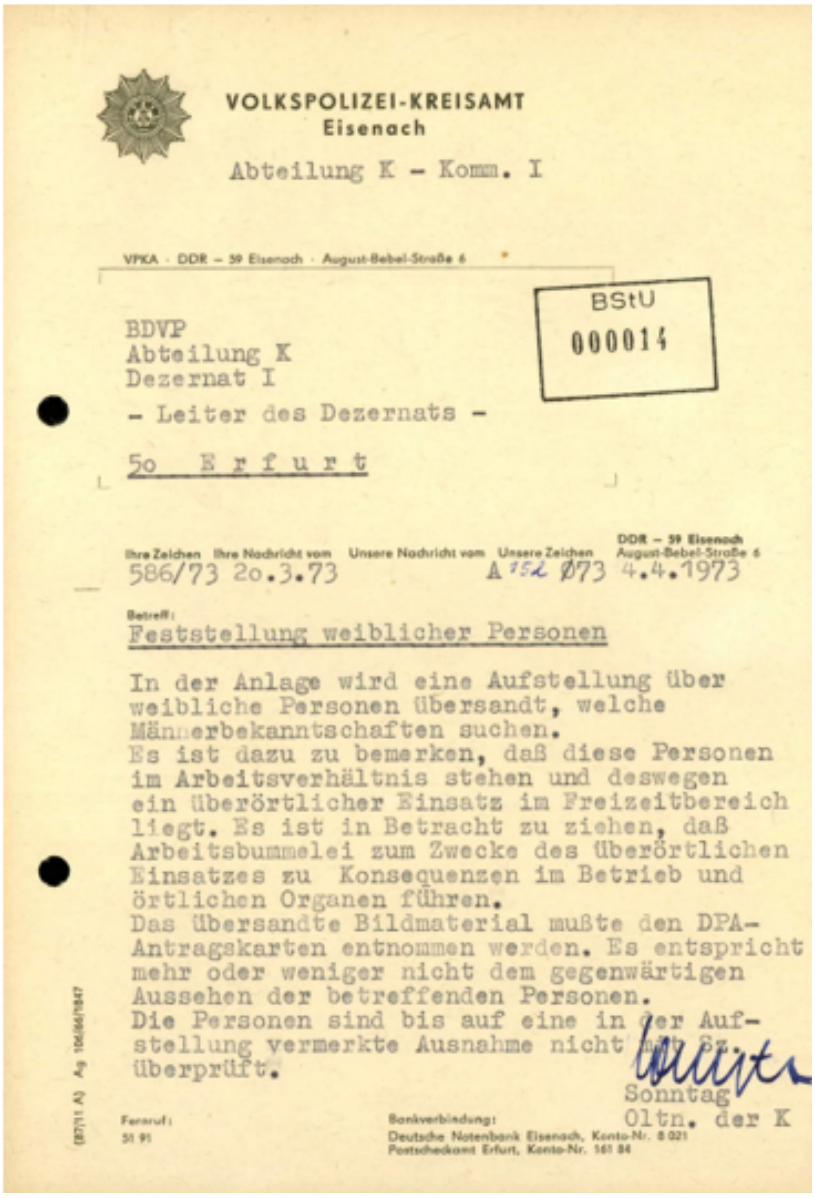
Figure 3: Letter from Twelfth Grade Biology Teacher to Stasi on Matter of Prostitution



Figure 4: Soviet Officers Harass East German Woman Near Leipzig Hauptbahnhof; Source: "Raped by the Red Army: Two Million German Women Speak Out," *Independent UK*, April 2009. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/raped-by-the-red-army-two-million-german-women-speak-out-16



Figure 5: Closed Venereology Ward in Leipzig-Thonberg, located on Riebeckstrasse 63. Personal photographs by author. November 14, 2023.



VOLKSPOLIZEI-KREISAMT
Eisenach

Abteilung K - Komm. I

VPKA · DDR – 59 Eisenach · August-Bebel-Straße 6

BStU
000014

BDVP
Abteilung K
Dezernat I
- Leiter des Dezernats -

5o E r f u r t

Ihre Zeichen	Ihre Nachricht vom	Unsere Nachricht vom	Unsere Zeichen	DDR – 59 Eisenach August-Bebel-Straße 6
586/73	2o.3.73		A 152 Ø73	4.4.1973

Betreff:
Feststellung weiblicher Personen

In der Anlage wird eine Aufstellung über weibliche Personen übersandt, welche Männerbekanntschaften suchen.
Es ist dazu zu bemerken, daß diese Personen im Arbeitsverhältnis stehen und deswegen ein überörtlicher Einsatz im Freizeitbereich liegt. Es ist in Betracht zu ziehen, daß Arbeitsbummelei zum Zwecke des überörtlichen Einsatzes zu Konsequenzen im Betrieb und örtlichen Organen führen.
Das übersandte Bildmaterial mußte den DPA-Antragskarten entnommen werden. Es entspricht mehr oder weniger nicht dem gegenwärtigen Aussehen der betreffenden Personen.
Die Personen sind bis auf eine in der Aufstellung vermerkte Ausnahme nicht [illegible] überprüft.

Sonntag
Oltn. der K

(87/11 A) Ag 106/66/1847

Fernruf:
51 91

Bankverbindung:
Deutsche Notenbank Eisenach, Konto-Nr. 8 021
Postscheckamt Erfurt, Konto-Nr. 161 84

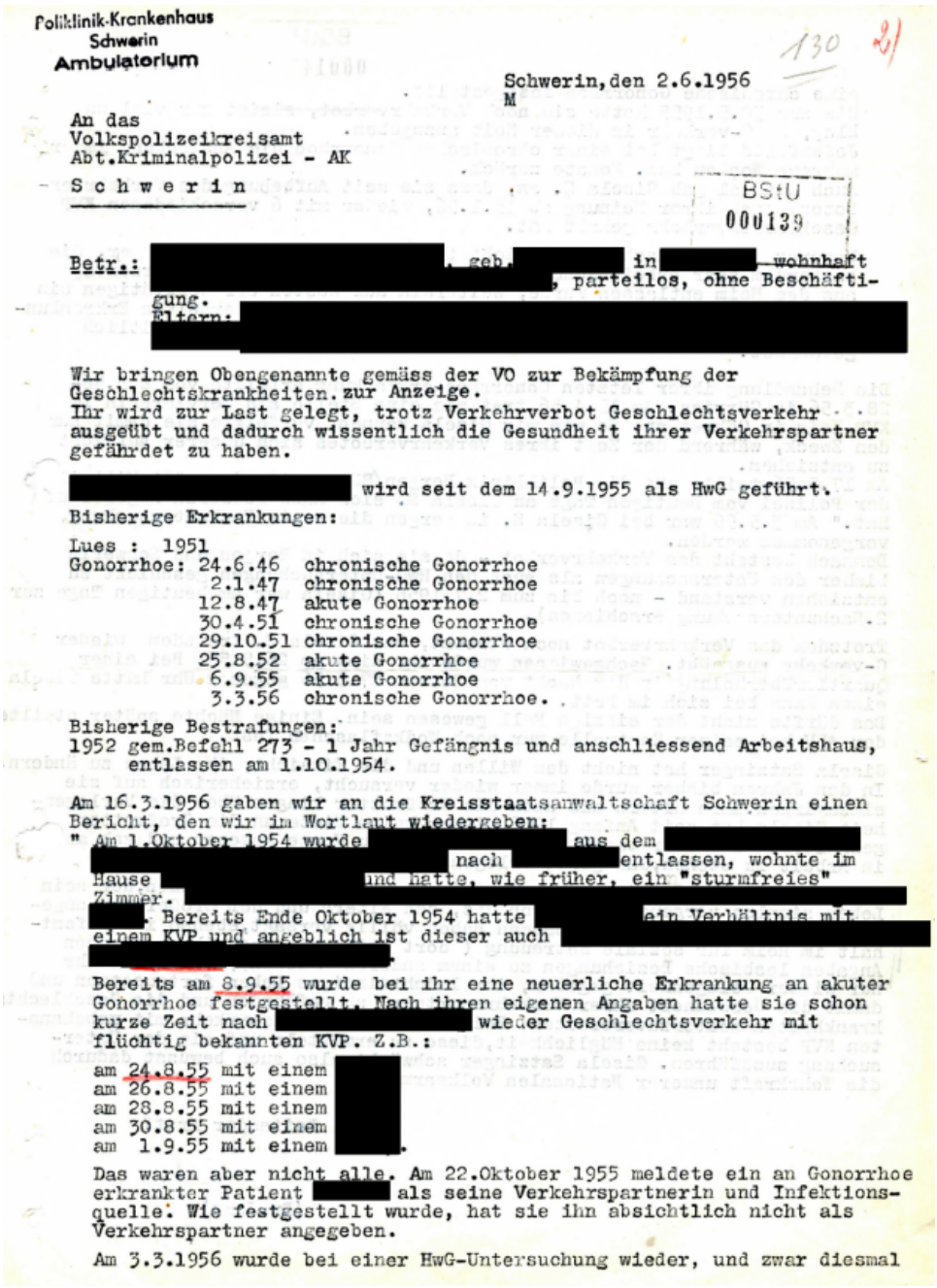
Figure 6: Letter from Eisenach People's Police to Stasi listing female persons with male acquaintances; Source: BStU, BV Erfurt, Abt. II, 760, "Betreff: Personenaufstellung" Volkspolizei-Kreisamt, Eisenach, Abteilung K - Komm I.; BArch, MfS, BV Lpz, AOG 395-87. I



Figure 7: Former closed venereology ward in Halle. Personal photograph by author. November 12, 2023.



Figure 8: Nordstraße, Leipzig in 2023; Personal photograph by author. November 2023.



Poliklinik-Krankenhaus
Schwerin
Ambulatorium

130 21

Schwerin, den 2.6.1956
M

An das
Volkspolizeikreisamt
Abt.Kriminalpolizei - AK
S c h w e r i n

BStU
000139

Betr.: [redacted] geb. [redacted] in [redacted] wohnhaft [redacted], parteilos, ohne Beschäftigung.
Eltern: [redacted]

Wir bringen Obengenannte gemäss der VO zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten zur Anzeige.
Ihr wird zur Last gelegt, trotz Verkehrverbot Geschlechtsverkehr ausgeübt und dadurch wissentlich die Gesundheit ihrer Verkehrspartner gefährdet zu haben.

[redacted] wird seit dem 14.9.1955 als HwG geführt.

Bisherige Erkrankungen:

Lues : 1951
Gonorrhoe: 24.6.46 chronische Gonorrhoe
2.1.47 chronische Gonorrhoe
12.8.47 akute Gonorrhoe
30.4.51 chronische Gonorrhoe
29.10.51 chronische Gonorrhoe
25.8.52 akute Gonorrhoe
6.9.55 akute Gonorrhoe
3.3.56 chronische Gonorrhoe.

Bisherige Bestrafungen:
1952 gem.Befehl 273 - 1 Jahr Gefängnis und anschliessend Arbeitshaus, entlassen am 1.10.1954.

Am 16.3.1956 gaben wir an die Kreisstaatsanwaltschaft Schwerin einen Bericht, den wir im Wortlaut wiedergeben:
" Am 1.Oktober 1954 wurde [redacted] aus dem [redacted] nach [redacted] entlassen, wohnte im Hause [redacted] und hatte, wie früher, ein "sturmfreies" Zimmer. [redacted]. Bereits Ende Oktober 1954 hatte [redacted] ein Verhältnis mit einem KVP und angeblich ist dieser auch [redacted].

Bereits am 8.9.55 wurde bei ihr eine neuerliche Erkrankung an akuter Gonorrhoe festgestellt. Nach ihren eigenen Angaben hatte sie schon kurze Zeit nach [redacted] wieder Geschlechtsverkehr mit flüchtig bekannten KVP. Z.B.:

am 24.8.55 mit einem [redacted]
am 26.8.55 mit einem
am 28.8.55 mit einem
am 30.8.55 mit einem
am 1.9.55 mit einem.

Das waren aber nicht alle. Am 22.Oktober 1955 meldete ein an Gonorrhoe erkrankter Patient [redacted] als seine Verkehrspartnerin und Infektionsquelle. Wie festgestellt wurde, hat sie ihn absichtlich nicht als Verkehrspartner angegeben.

Am 3.3.1956 wurde bei einer HwG-Untersuchung wieder, und zwar diesmal

Figure 9: Letter from Poliklinik-Krankenhaus Schwerin to Criminal Police in 1956 detailing Hildegard N.'s sexual history. Source: BStU, MfS, AU 3, Nr. 333/56, Bd. 2, "Poliklinik-Krankenhaus Schwerin Ambulatorium zu das Volkspolizeikreisamt Abt. Kriminalpolizei, AK Schwerin, Schwerin, 2. 6. 1956

GESETZBLATT

der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik

Teil II

Institut für Zivilrecht der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig

1961 | Berlin, den 7. März 1961 | Nr. 17

Tag	Inhalt	Seite
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Verordnung zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten.

Vom 23. Februar 1961

I.

Verhütung, Untersuchung und Behandlung

§ 1

Grundsätze der Verhütung und Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten

(1) Der Schutz der Gesundheit der Werktätigen, insbesondere der der Jugend, erfordert die Verhütung und Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten auf der Grundlage der neuesten medizinisch-wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse und Erfahrungen. Die Maßnahmen der Verhütung und Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten haben zum Ziel, Neuerkrankungen möglichst zu verhüten und Erkrankungen frühzeitig zu behandeln sowie Schutzmaßnahmen zu treffen, um die Übertragung der Infektion zu verhindern.

(2) Die Verhütung und Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten wird von den Organen des staatlichen Gesundheitswesens geleitet. Der Rat des Bezirkes und der Rat des Kreises hat für eine Koordinierung der Maßnahmen zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankeiten zu sorgen und insbesondere eng mit der Deutschen Volkspolizei und mit der Staatsanwaltschaft zusammenzuarbeiten. Bei der Erziehung und der weitgehenden Verhütung der Ansteckung stützen sie sich besonders auf die Mitwirkung der gesellschaftlichen Organisationen.

(3) Zur fachlichen Unterstützung bei der Durchführung der Maßnahmen des Rates des Bezirkes und des Rates des Kreises, Abteilung Gesundheits- und Sozialwesen, wird ein Facharzt für Haut- und Geschlechtskrankheiten mit der Bezeichnung Bezirks-Dermato-Venerologe bzw. Kreis-Dermato-Venerologe entsprechend den Richtlinien eingesetzt.

§ 2

Geschlechtskrankheiten

Geschlechtskrankheiten entsprechend dieser Verordnung sind die übertragbare (infektiöse) Syphilis (Lues I venerea), die akute und die chronische Form des Trippers (Gonorrhoe), der weiche Schanker (ulcus molle) und die Frühform der venerischen Lymphknotenentzündung (Lymphopathia venerea).

§ 3

Kranke und krankheitsverdächtige Personen

(1) Geschlechtskrank im Sinne der Verordnung sind Personen, die an einer im § 2 bezeichneten Geschlechtskrankheit leiden.

(2) Krankheitsverdächtig sind Personen,

a) bei denen sich Krankheitserscheinungen finden, die bei Geschlechtskrankheiten Vorkommen,

b) die nach den Umständen von einem Geschlechtskranken an gesteckt sein oder einen anderen mit einer Geschlechtskrankheit angesteckt haben können.

(3) Als dringend krankheitsverdächtig gelten Personen, die

a) wiederholt andere mit einer Geschlechtskrankheit angesteckt haben,

b) häufig wechselnden Geschlechtsverkehr haben oder häufig wechselnd geschlechtsverkehrsähnliche Handlungen mit anderen Personen vornehmen.

§ 4

Untersuchungs- und Behandlungspflicht

(1) Wer weiß oder mit der Möglichkeit rechnen muß, daß er geschlechtskrank ist, hat sich unverzüglich ärztlich untersuchen und im Krankheitsfalle ärztlich behandeln zu lassen sowie sich den notwendigen Nachuntersuchungen oder Nachbehandlungen zu unterziehen. Die Untersuchung und Behandlung im ansteckenden Stadium gilt als abgeschlossen, wenn hierfür eine schriftliche ärztliche Bescheinigung ausgestellt ist.

(2) Bei Beginn der Untersuchung oder Behandlung erfragt der Arzt, ob bereits zuvor eine ärztliche Untersuchung oder Behandlung stattgefunden und welcher Arzt sie vorgenommen hat. Der Kranke oder Krankheitsverdächtige ist verpflichtet, die erforderlichen Auskünfte zu geben und im Falle einer vorherigen Untersuchung oder Behandlung dem bisherigen Arzt innerhalb von 3 Tagen die weitere Untersuchung oder Behandlung nachzuweisen.

Figure 10: 1961 Regulation for the Prevention of Venereal Diseases (pg. 1)

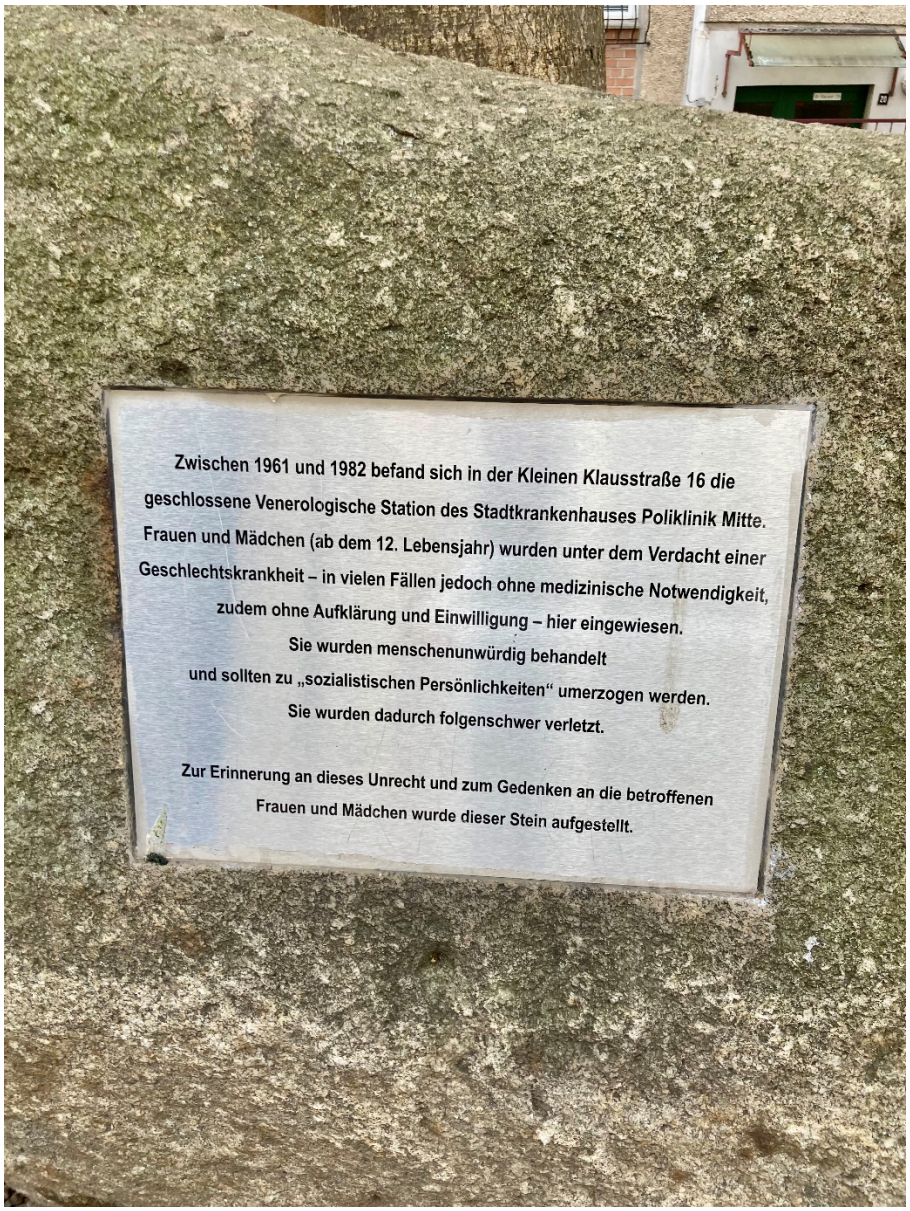


Figure 11: Memorial Stone on Kleine Klausstraße 16, Halle; Personal photograph by author. November 12, 2023.



Figure 12: The oldest, dampest, darkest part of the Hohenschönhausen prison complex, referred to by prisoners as the “U-Boat.” Personal photograph by author. November 21, 2022.



Figure 13: Museum in der "Runden Ecke," housed in former BV Leipzig. Personal photographs by author. November 14, 2023.

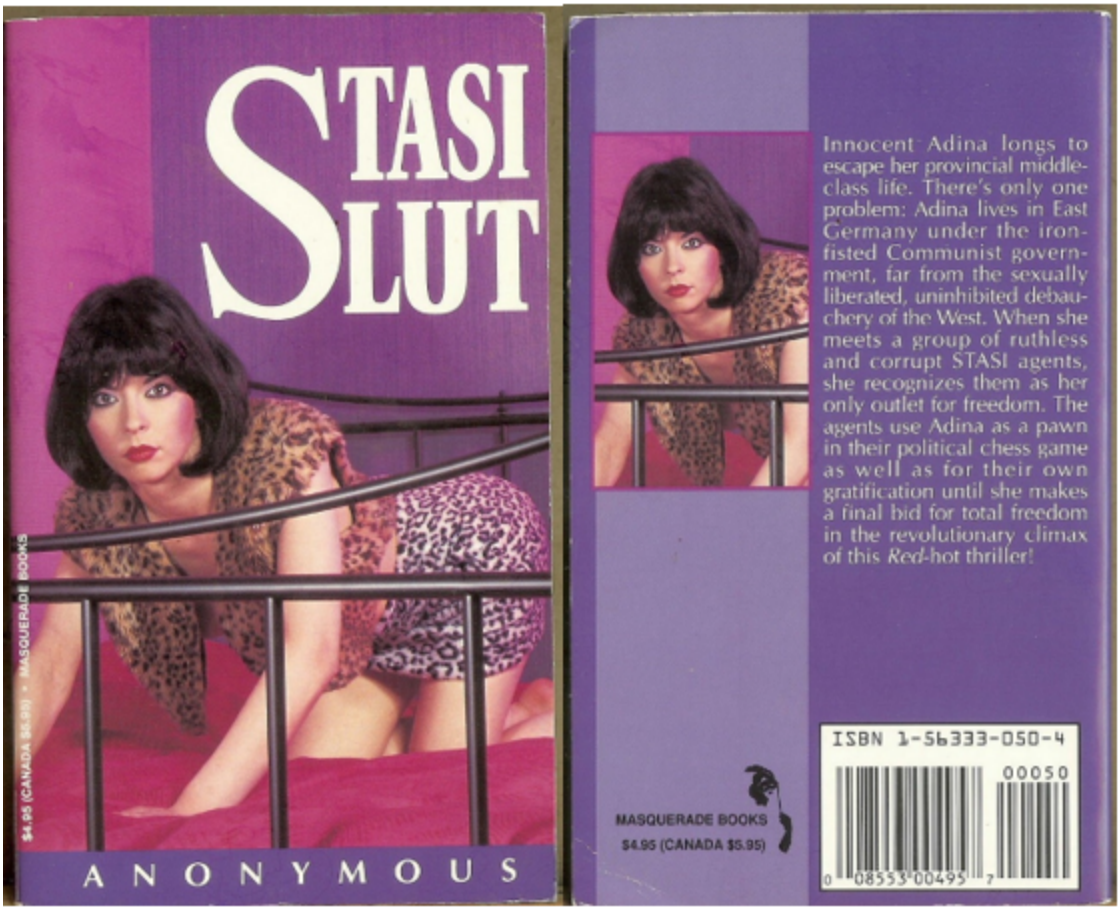


Figure 14: *Stasi Slut* by Anthony Bobarzynski

Curriculum Vitae

Jordyn M. Bailey

EDUCATION

2019-Present Ph.D, Department of Historical Studies, University of New Brunswick.

Dissertation: "Surveilling Sex: Prostitution and the East German Stasi, 1950-1989."

Supervisor: Dr. Lisa M. Todd

2017-2019 M.A., Department of History, University of Western Ontario

Thesis: "Arrival of the Fittest: German POWs in Ontario during the Second World War."

Supervisors: Dr. Jonathan F. Vance and Dr. Eli Nathans

2013-2017 B.A., Department of History, (Honors Specialization) University of Western Ontario

AWARDS

2024 German Historical Institute Washington, Invited to Participate in the Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History

2023 German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Short Term Research Grant

2022 Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society Research Grant

2022	Canada Graduate Scholarship - Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement
2022	Waterloo Centre for German Studies for Diversity & Inclusion Grant
2021	Central European History Society Research Grant
2021	Canada Graduate Scholarship, Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council
2021	German Academic Exchange Service **(**DAAD) Hochschulsommerkurse Scholarship
2020-2021	Magee Fellowship in Humanities and Social Sciences, University of New Brunswick
2020-2021	Magee-Corke Graduate Scholarship
2020 – 2021	Henry Harvey Stuart Research Fund
2019-2020	Magee Fellowship in Humanities and Social Sciences, University of New Brunswick
2019-2020	University of New Brunswick History Department Fellowship
2019-2020	University of New Brunswick School of Graduate Studies Scholarship

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2024-present	Senior Consultant in the Crime Prevention branch at the New Brunswick Department of Justice and Public Safety.
2021-2024	Conducted research in major German archives including the Stasi Records Archive, People's Police Archive, and Federal Archives of Germany.

2021 Research Assistant for "Prostitution, Medicine, and Health," in *A Cultural History of Prostitution in the Modern Period, 1920-2000*. London: Bloomsbury Academic Press, supervised by Dr. Lisa Todd.

2021 Research Assistant for *European Racism: A History in Documents.* Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2024, supervised by Dr. Lisa Todd and Dr. Gary Waite.

2020 Student Archivist at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick

2019-2020 Research Assistant for "Aftermath: Canadian Great War Veterans, Their Families, and the State, 1914-1962", Jonathan F. Vance, The University of Western Ontario (co-investigator), SSHRC Insight Grant, 2019

2019 Master's Thesis, "Arrival of The Fittest: German POWs in Ontario during the Second World War," University of Western Ontario, London 2019. *Supervisors:* Jonathan F. Vance and Eli Nathans.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2024 Instructor, HIST5007 Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century Europe, University of New Brunswick

2022-23 Academic Advisor, Faculty of Arts, University of New Brunswick

2021 Teaching Assistant for HIST1625: The Spy in History, University of New Brunswick

2020 Teaching Assistant for POLS1451: The American Presidential Election in Historical Context, The University of New Brunswick

2020 Teaching Assistant for HIST1625: The Spy in History, University of New

Brunswick

2019 Teaching Assistant for HIST1001: Past into Present, University of New Brunswick

2017-2019 Teaching Assistant for HIST1401: Modern Europe, 1715 to the Present: Conflict and Transformation, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND INVITED LECTURES

2024 Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History, hosted by the German Historical Institute, Berlin, June 23-25, 2024.

2023 **"**Realities of Life for 'Promiscuous' and 'Habitually Promiscuous' Women Recruited by the Stasi" German Studies Association, October 1 -3, 2023.

2021 Lecture, "The Ripples Internment Camp," Presented to Delta Kappa Gamma: Beta Chapter, November. 1 2021.

2021 Lecture, "The Ripples Internment Camp," Presented as part of the York Sunbury-Historical Society lecture series, October 21, 2021.

2021 "The Black Female Body and the STASI." Presented as part of the "Surveillance" Panel at the GDR Today VI – Minority Experiences of the GDR Conference, hosted by the Universities of St. Andrews and Birmingham, 16-17 September 2021 [virtual].

2021 "Like the Boys from Town, But More Polite: Encounters Between Canadian Women and German POWs." Presented as part of the panel "Global Sexual Encounters with Racialized 'Others' in War, Genocide and Captivity, 1905-1945," at the Enemy Encounters Conference, hosted by the Imperial War Museum Institute for the

Public Understanding of War and Conflict and the Cardiff University AHRC-funded project 'Strange Meetings: Enemy Encounters 1800-2020,' 19-21 July 2021 [virtual].

PUBLICATIONS

Lisa M. Todd, Jordyn Bailey and Allison L. Bennett, "Global Sexual Encounters with Racialized Others in War, Genocide and Captivity, 1905-1945" in *Enemy Encounters in Modern Warfare,* Palgrave MacMillan, 2024.

Bailey, Jordyn, "Thirty-Five Kilometers East of Fredericton: Ripples Internment Camp and its German POWS" *Silhouettes*, Associates of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. 2021.

Bailey, Jordyn, "Nazis are Welcome, But Canadians are a Burden: Internment Camps in Southwestern Ontario during the Second World War" in Nancy Dodman, ed, *Father Forgive: St George's Anglican Church and the London Region during the Second World War, 2021.*

Bailey, Jordyn, "Arrival of the Fittest: German POWs in Ontario during the Second World War" (2019). *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*. 6279. https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/6279