CHAPTER SIX

THE LANDPOLIZEI, THE “POPULAR MOOD,”
AND POLITICAL POLICING

At 11 p.m. on 16 September 1952, the two Hauptwachtmeister Reinwald and Paulus of the Landpolizei detachment in Landkreis Schrobenhausen left the crowded dance floor during a wedding party at an inn in the village of Gachenbach. To the steady beat of traditional folk music, they had been busy checking the identification papers of the merrymakers. Having worked up a thirst, they were headed downstairs to the cellar bar for a quick beer before resuming their night-time foot patrol. A few minutes later, the unmarried and appropriately named mechanic Josef Rauscher entered. According to Reinwald’s subsequent report, Rauscher suddenly said in a loud voice, “That pig-dog (Sauhund) Adenauer, he ought to be hanged; he’s good for nothing, and I’ll be right up there next to him!” After raucously singing the Federal anthem and sundry Bavarian folk melodies, he then left the bar. Recognized as a local, Rauscher was arrested by the Landpolizei at his house soon after. The exact charge is not known. The subsequent interrogation and background checks with higher Interior Ministry and police sources turned up no previous political or criminal activity. Reinwald’s report noted that when Rauscher spoke his “insulting words against Herrn Bundeskanzler,” the inn was full of guests who “by their expressions clearly disapproved.” Unfortunately, the report does not specify whether Rauscher sang the currently acceptable third strophe of the national anthem (Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit) or the repudiated imperialist/Grossdeutsch first strophe (Von der Maas bis an die Memel). In any case, in the interest of avoiding a disruptive fracas, Reinwald had restrained himself from taking any action to eject Rauscher during his outburst. The interrogation resulted in a written apology from Rauscher that attributed his remarks to too much drinking. He denied any membership in radical extremist parties, and ended with

1 German “Rausch” roughly approximates English “intoxication.”
a formal written retraction of his insulting statements against the first democratically elected chancellor of the new Federal Republic.²

At the end of June 1957, the Landpolizei station chief for the Kreis of Traunstein sat down to compose a monthly report on the mood of the population (Stimmungsbericht). He had previously gathered that month’s raw material from his patrolmen, who regularly noted down a kaleidoscope of current conversational topics from the area for the information of his superiors in the police and the Bavarian government. Themes for that month’s report from Traunstein included changes in the nature and frequency of resentful comments and complaints lodged by natives against the remaining temporarily housed refugees in the district, the impact on the local economy of new wage demands by unions, complaints by food store customers about excessively high prices, the political exploitation of a recent accident at a nearby Bundeswehr garrison by local electoral hopefuls, public reactions to the attempted “streamlining” of local government, and local resistance to official commemorations that “trivialized” the anniversary of the 17 June 1953 uprising in East Germany.³

The station chief in Traunstein was only one of the thousands of policemen in Bavaria during the 1950s who were faced with this regular chore. During the 1959 Christmas season in the district of Weilheim, for example, other Landpolizei officers were busy duly noting down the public comments of people such as an old man venting about the shortfall between pension and expenses, and a mother of four who blamed “big financial powers” for her inability to feed her four children properly. Patrolmen had unobtrusively eavesdropped on both conversations while inspecting a food store during the holiday rush.⁴ Throughout the Adenauer period, thousands of such monthly reports flowed in to the Landpolizei headquarters and the Interior Ministry from rural police stations all over Bavaria, synthesizing hundreds of thousands of casual comments and other observations overheard by policemen from conversations in public places.


³ PolPräsOB, 941, Bericht über die Stimmung in der Bevölkerung, Landpolizeiinspektion Traunstein to Presidium Oberbayern, 1 July 1957.

⁴ PolPräsOB, 971, Bericht über die Stimmung in der Bevölkerung, Landpolizeiinspektion Weilheim to Presidium Oberbayern, 31 December 1959.