

## NAZI PROPAGANDA: THE RADIO

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*From 1 April 1934 German radio was unified in the 'Reich Radio Company', of which the previous state stations were now merely branches with the title of 'Reich Radio Stations'. The regime made great efforts to encourage the spread of radio ownership and arranged the production of cheap radios such as the so-called 'people's receiver' for 35 RM payable in instalments. By 1939 70 per cent of German homes had a radio, three times the number in 1932 and the highest percentage of radio ownership in the world. The cheap radios were designed with a limited range so that they would be unable to receive foreign broadcasts. In addition, the regime placed great emphasis on the encouragement of community radio listening in factories, offices, cafes etc.*

### **1) Diary entries of Jochen Klepper, a writer and broadcaster who used to be a member of the SPD and whose wife was Jewish**

*30 March:* I had just finished 'Atlantis' on time. Now it was a case of rehearsing it quickly for Saturday. The rehearsal had to be cancelled. The manuscript had not been duplicated because the firm with which the radio station had up to now been working quite happily is Jewish. The records I ordered were removed from me because either the firm or the composer... or the conductor is Jewish. I had to dismiss my most reliable announcer because he is Jewish. What is left of the station is almost like a Nazi barracks: uniforms, uniforms of the Party formations.

*25 May:* Three hours before the beginning of the broadcast the controller received the denunciation. I was a member of the SPD. I was supposed to have said myself that I ought to be one of the first to go. Jewish family—The denunciation as effective as it could have been: it came via the National Socialist Radio Listeners [Association].

*26 May:* Now the Damocles sword of denunciation is no longer hanging over me. The controller Arenhövel<sup>1</sup> knows that I was a Social Democrat and that my wife is Jewish. His response: close friends of his were also religious Socialists, that didn't bother him at all. My marriage was my own affair. But because of these things the renewal of my contract has to be postponed and my name can only rarely appear in the programmes.

*5 June:* Braun and Arenhövel are hard put to keep me on. I have no prospects and an income which in the opinion of my superiors in no way reflects my work and my achievements. I have to work anonymously. Whole series which from A to Z are my intellectual property and bear the ever-clearer stamp of my work go out under the name of other lazier and less talented authors! Even as a producer I have to remain anonymous, have to put up with everything simply because I was a religious socialist and have a Jewish wife.

*7 June:* When I arrived at the radio station I was asked to see the controller who informed me briefly that 'until my case had been finally settled I must stop work immediately and leave'.

### **2) Speech by Goebbels to the controllers of German radio (25 March 1933)**

We make no bones about the fact that the radio belongs to us and to no one else. And we will place the radio in the service of our ideology [Idee] and [the speaker bangs on the lectern] no other ideology will find expression here [...]. The radio must subordinate itself to the goals which the Government of the national revolution has set itself. [...]

I consider radio to be the most modern and the most crucial instrument that exists for influencing the masses.

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Arenhövel had worked for the *Völkischer Beobachter* and Goebbels' *Der Angriff* and was head of the literature section of the Nazi cultural organization *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*.

I also believe—one should not say that out loud—that radio will in the end replace the press [...]. At all costs avoid being boring. I put that before everything [...]. So do not think that you have the task of creating the correct attitudes, of indulging in patriotism, of blasting out military music and declaiming patriotic verse—no, that is not what this new orientation is all about. Rather you must help to bring forth a nationalist art and culture which is truly appropriate to the pace of modern life and to the mood of the times. The correct attitudes must be conveyed but that does not mean they must be boring. And simply because you have the task of taking part in this national enterprise you do not have carte blanche to be boring. You must use your imagination, an imagination which is based on sure foundations and which employs all means and methods to bring to the ears of the masses the new attitude in a way which is modern, up to date, interesting, and appealing; interesting, instructive but not schoolmasterish. Radio must never go down with the proverbial disease—the intention is clear and it puts you off.

I am placing a major responsibility in your hands for you have in your hands the most modern instrument in existence for influencing the masses. By means of this instrument you are the creators of public opinion. If you carry this out well we shall win over the people and if you do it badly in the end the people will once more desert us [...].

### 3) Newspaper article from a local paper in Neu-Isenburg (16 March 1934)

Attention! The Führer is speaking on the radio. On Wednesday 21 March, the Führer is speaking on all German stations from 11.00 to 11.50 am. According to a regulation of the Gau headquarters, the district Party headquarters has ordered that all factory owners, department stores, offices, shops, pubs, and blocks of flats put up loudspeakers an hour before the broadcast of the Führer's speech so that the whole work force and all national comrades can participate fully in the broadcast. The district headquarters expects this order to be obeyed without exception so that the Führer's wish to speak to his people can be implemented.

### 4) Propaganda Poster (1936)

