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# Exploring NS-Propaganda as Social Practice

*Inge Marszolek*

In 1944, a radio listener wrote to a high official in the Ministry of Propaganda, Dr Karl Scharping, who was responsible for NS-Broadcasting, asking "if it was not possible to deal with the Jewish question more often, e.g. in lectures etc. This issue has disappeared completely from the print press as well from the air-waves, though it is the most important topic for our times." The writer continues to complain by stating that in times of national misfortune some people express even some sort of compassion with these 'poor Jews'.<sup>58</sup> He was concerned that on one hand the Jewry has not given up its plan to soften the German power from the inside. On the other hand, people might have the impression that the government has revised their politics concerning the Jews. Such a letter by a listener, written at a time when it had become obvious that the war was lost, might not be representative – but nevertheless this letter describes the situation in the media, especially in the German radio very correctly. Anti-Semitic propaganda was more or less only dealt with by the big shots of the regime, in their speeches held at mass-meetings, which were transmitted on air-waves. This result contradicts our view of the NS-radio, which in the Third Reich, and in post-war Germany as well, was conceived as 'Goebbels-Schnauze' (Goebbels-mouthpiece), as the lead propaganda-medium of the Nazis.

## *Preliminary remarks*

What I am going to present here are some reflections on a new perspective on propaganda: I am fully aware, that of course, my view is not totally new, but it may broaden our understanding of propaganda and the power structure. As the present work is in progress, my paper can only be fragmentary. First, I shall outline the methodological design of my project, and in a second part I present some empirical results focussing on the representations of Jews in the radio. I am fully aware that we need to look into all kind of different media, focussing as well the products as well as the institution and the structure of the programming.

The idea for my project was triggered by a German Studies Association panel in September 2003 on "Radio and Newsreel Propaganda in Nazi Germany", where Jeff Herf and myself presented two papers both dealing with the representation of the Jews in Nazi broadcasting.<sup>59</sup> Herf's paper looked at the

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58 Letter to Scharping, 22 September 1944, Bundesarchiv Berlin (Federal Archives, BA Berlin), R-55-521.

59 The panel was planned by David Bathrick and myself. Anson Rabinbach commented. I have to thank him for the idea of "propaganda as social practice". The paper, presented by J. Herf, 'His Master's Voice: Goebbels, World War II and the Jews'. My paper dealt

anti-Semitic propaganda from the top, concentrating on Goebbels daily 'Presseanweisungen' (press instructions) and other articles, which were partly air-waved unfolding a picture of propaganda which was characterised by the regular anti-Semitic barrages of Goebbels and others. I myself looked into the radio programming as a whole and tried to analyse different texts taking into account the perspective of the imagined audience, coming to different conclusions. In combining these perspectives from the top and from below, our understanding of how propaganda worked became more complex. Thus, the two papers were complementary rather than contradictory.

### *Understanding Nazi*

It is obvious that the first studies on Nazi propaganda were made during the war by researchers of the Allied forces. Of course, these studies were marked by the special situation.<sup>60</sup> But until recently, propaganda has been mainly researched from the top down, concentrating almost exclusively on files of the Reichspropagandaministerium etc. Implicitly, our understanding of propaganda is reproducing the way the NS-past was memorised in post-war Germany: there were 'these few Nazis on the top', and Goebbels and the Führer in particular, who were manipulating the German people by brainwashing them with the Weltanschauung.<sup>61</sup> Since then some research has been carried out,<sup>62</sup> but there are still several blind spots to cover. As far as I see there are at least two main problems:

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with 'Representation of Jews in the NS-Broadcasting'. The third paper was given by Kay Hofmann, 'The German Newsreel and Antisemitic Propaganda'.

- 60 E.g. Derrick Sington and Arthur Weidenfeld, *The Goebbels Experiment: A Study of the Nazi Propaganda Machine* (New Haven, 1943).
- 61 Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann criticised this understanding already in 1994. Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann, 'Historische Dimensionen der Propaganda', Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann (eds.), *Propaganda: Meinungskampf, Verführung und politische Sinnstiftung 1789-1989* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), pp. 7-20.
- 62 Some impact and new methodological insights came from a research project financed by the German Research Foundation focusing on the history of propaganda in both German states. See Gerald Diesener and Rainer Gries (eds.), *Propaganda in Deutschland: Zur Geschichte der politischen Massenbeeinflussung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 1996). Stimulating for my reflections: Thymian Bussemer, *Propaganda und Populärkultur: Konstruierte Erlebnisswelten im Nationalsozialismus* (MA-thesis, Wiesbaden, 2000). Rainer Gries proposes to broaden the notion of propaganda meaning to combine the semantic realms of advertising and propaganda: Rainer Gries, 'Zur Ästhetik und Architektur von Propaganda: Überlegungen zu einer Propagandageschichte als Kulturgeschichte', Rainer Gries and Wolfgang Schmale (eds.), *Kultur der Propaganda: Überlegungen zu einer Propagandageschichte als Kulturgeschichte* (Bochum, 2005), pp. 9-35.

1. Though new media studies<sup>63</sup> have changed our understanding of the consumer's appropriation logics of media, most historians do not take this knowledge or set of methodological tools into account. Though they use media texts, some scholars still do not take into account the media itself, e.g., they do not make the distinction between different media and their different consumer publics.<sup>64</sup> It might be very fruitful to ask which kind of information was published in which context, whether the symbolic imagery changed and which linguistic patterns are dealt with. This leads to the question how the different readers (listeners) might have decoded the articles in embedding their message into their every-day life experience.

2. When we look at propaganda as social practice, the picture becomes more complex. For example: researching other media such as the radio – at that time the leading media –, the newsreel and the press (as David Bankier<sup>65</sup> did for the war period) or documentaries (Kay Hofmann<sup>66</sup>), the findings are somewhat irritating or at least contradictory to our expectations.

To sum up the results: Neither in the newsreel, nor in the documentaries, nor on the radio does the anti-Semitic figure of the Jew play a significant role. Although during the war a lot of propaganda films were screened by the propaganda units, only a very small amount was included in the newsreel. As Daniel Uziel underlines, most of the anti-Semitic footage and photography produced by the propaganda units were made for documentary reasons and not meant to be published.<sup>67</sup> Anti-Semitic images were merely used for the defamation of the enemies, especially of the Soviet Union, but also of the USA after their declaration of war. Even when Goebbels tried to launch a new anti-Semitic wave after the discovery of the Soviet massacre at Katyn, the response of the German press to the initial directives were rather reluctant. So Goebbels tried to win control over the press by pulling out some young fanatic reporters from the *Propagandakompanien* (propaganda units). But after June 1943, the anti-Semitic wave again waned. Bankier explains that after the Katyn campaign came to an end, "the Jews had disappeared from Germany's landscape and their extermination

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63 Up to now the impact of Anglo-American cultural studies is enormous. Most recently media research became an issue in modern anthropology. A good survey: Roger Bromley et. al (eds.), *Cultural Studies: Grundlagentexte zur Einführung* (Lüneburg, 1999); Claus Pias et.al. (eds.), *Kursbuch Medienkultur: Die maßgeblichen Theorien von Brecht bis Baudrillard* (Stuttgart, 1999); Tamar Liebes and James Curran (eds.), *Media, Ritual and Identity* (London-New York, 1998).

64 A good example is the in other aspects excellent book by Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 2001).

65 David Bankier, 'Signaling the Final Solution to the German People', David Bankier and Israel Gutman (eds.), *Nazi Europe and the Final solution* (Jerusalem, 2003), pp. 15-39.

66 Kay Hofmann, paper presented on the GSA conference 2003.

67 Daniel Uziel, 'Wehrmacht Propaganda Troops and the Jews', *Yad Vashem Studies* XXIX, (2001), pp. 27-63.

had become routine. All these factors made the Final Solution yesterday's news and the non-party press considered it a 'dead' topic and hardly devoted any further space to it.<sup>68</sup> Although the anti-Semitic propaganda against the Soviet Union and Bolshevism was common, in the radio it was used much more cautiously.

Looking into other media besides the non-party-print press, a very similar result can be found. Take, for example, NS broadcasting. The radio presents the cheerful side of the 'Volksgemeinschaft' (community of the people) – the Jews being excluded. In 1933, their voices were banned from the airwaves and during the war the few who were left, were not even allowed to listen. And besides the few films dealing with Jews, like *Der ewige Jude* (The eternal Jew), in the films produced in Nazi-Germany especially during the war, Jews apparently were not-existent.

There are different possible conclusions: Bankier assesses the technique of 'implicit presuppositions' and the 'deliberate vagueness' the Nazis used when speaking about their anti-Semitic policies and about the fate of the Jews, as tools to induce the readers to construct their own readings and to link it with what they already knew.<sup>69</sup> By this imposed guesswork the Nazis wished to avoid public discussion. Taking my own research on the radio as a base, however, I would like to stress a different reading, namely that we have to consider the differences between the media itself. The radio during the Nazi period developed from an educational media into an entertainment media. Therefore, to present anti-Semitism in an explicit way to the listeners might have troubled the calming routines of everyday life. There might even have been a sort of division of labour in the propaganda: the speeches of Goebbels, etc, had anti-Semitic allusions, sometimes hidden, sometimes rather outspoken. But after Stalingrad the fluid and scattered knowledge of the annihilation of the Jews had to be prevented from becoming more assessable by all means available.

#### *Methods and approaches: propaganda and media*

A lot of comparative media research following these lines still has to be done. The media as a whole have to be studied as a network of different systems and different genres, each of which is linked to the others and continuously refers to others. The 'division of labour' (who is speaking in which way about the Jews and the war) not only exists concerning the propaganda itself but as well between the media, because they address different consumers. Cultural studies have changed our view of the media in general, specifying that listening, watching and reading are practices of consumers, which cannot be totally controlled. De-coding and encoding of media texts are corresponding. This means that in

68 Bankier, 'Signaling', pp 38-9.

69 Ibid., p. 39.

the perspective of the regime to make the anti-Semitic propaganda successful meant to ensure that people consumed media. Focusing on how the Nazis sought to influence German gentiles' acceptance or participation in the racial anti-Semitic issues, it may increase or enhance our knowledge of Nazi Germany to look more closely at the different representations of Jews, to do it systematically in all media and to analyse the linguistic constructions and the symbolic content of the imagery. Referring to Anglo-American cultural studies, e.g., to Stuart Hall<sup>70</sup> I want to stress the multifaceted appropriation logics of the consumers of media texts. Or, to refer to Michel de Certeau, we have to understand the process of appropriation as a social practice: "It is cunning and scattered but it is spreading everywhere, silently almost invisible, because it does not express itself in its own products but in its dealing with the products imposed by the ruling economic order."<sup>71</sup>

Referring to the statement of the listener quoted above, we have to ask, based on the concept of the primacy of the 'Weltanschauung' (world view) as Ulrich Herbert<sup>72</sup> and other scholars have developed, how the Nazi managed to penetrate all social strata with their racial utopia. Of course, the media come into our view. But besides the assumption that the media played a central role as a transmitter between the Nazi regime and German society, there are but some studies concerning the representation of Jews in German media. One exception is the movies of course. But up to now, no systematic research has been done on the print media, not even on the 'Stürmer'. The book by Robert Gellately, 'Backing Hitler', is based on the analysis of print media as well as on police files etc, but when dealing with Jews, Gellately mostly relies on judicial files, not on the press.<sup>73</sup> Speaking of my own field of research, the radio, there are no studies which focus directly on the representation of Jews. Again, there is one exception that the German radio archives published all programmes from the years 1930-46, dealing with Jews.<sup>74</sup> But again, as the archive concentrated on collecting the political programming, especially on the speeches given by officials in the Third Reich, the book contains speeches from Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, Ley, and even from men from the middle ranks of the party. Mostly these speeches were held in front of a selected National Socialist audience, and these speeches were broadcast. The entertainment programming, lectures and radio play are rarely preserved as a source, sometimes the texts can be found.

70 Stuart Hall et al. (eds), *Culture, Media, Language* (London, 1980).

71 Michel de Certeau, *Kunst des Handelns* (Berlin, 1988), p. 13.

72 Path breaking: Ulrich Herbert, *Best: Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft, 1903-1989* (Bonn, 1996).

73 Gellately, *Backing Hitler*.

74 *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben unter den Bedingungen der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft*, vol. 1: *Tondokumente und Rundfunksendungen 1930-1946* (Potsdam, 1996).

This means that my assessments are precarious, not based on a reliable source. Only a precise analysis of press announcements of the radio programme can produce more reliable material. Anyway it is contradictory to the historic research, looking for the invisible, as I try to do here.

### Radio

My research is based on texts from entertainment programming, on radio plays and on political programming during the war. Let me just mention some important characteristics of German broadcasting: The German broadcasting went on the air waves in October 1923, the time of inflation in the Weimar Republic. Those who were responsible, the pioneers of radio as well as politicians, regarded the radio as an instrument of education, transmitting the values of German culture to German society. It was during the time of National Socialism that German broadcasting became not only a media for everybody – the people's radio set, 'Volksempfänger', – but as well a media of entertainment. But in 1933 it was heavily contested whether NS-Broadcasting should transport and develop a special Nazi culture or become an instrument of propaganda. After a short time of experiments, however, Goebbels forced more entertainment programmes putting aside the purely propagandistic rallies of Nazi-leaders. To come to my point: The non-representation of anti-Semitism in radio programming has to be seen in the context of the changing of the role of the radio itself.

The disappearance of Jews from the radio in 1933: The process of 'Gleichschaltung' meant the cleansing of the radio stations from Jewish journalists, authors, musicians and technicians. But that was not all: Jews were banned from the airwaves completely: No music composed by Jews was played, no Jewish literature was read. In the realm of high culture this could be done easily as the avant-garde music of Schönberg and others had not conquered a broader public in the 1920s. In the realm of popular culture, however, these changes were dramatically. And of course they had to be negotiated with the listeners. Konrad Dussel, author of a profound study on radio history, describes, that 40 percent of operettas were labelled as 'entartet'.<sup>75</sup> To offer some names: Emmerich Kalman and Paul Abraham operettas were indeed very popular not only in Germany but in the entire world.<sup>76</sup> I want to stress that this music was of a kind which fitted perfectly into the concept of 'Schmalz' and kitsch propagated by Goebbels and his 'Reichskulturkammer'. Still, these melodies were replaced by music composed by 'Aryan' composers, and by folksongs – and military

<sup>75</sup> Konrad Dussel, *Hörfunk in Deutschland: Politik, Programm, Publikum (1923-1960)* (Potsdam, 2002).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

marches.<sup>77</sup> Whether there were any critical reactions, I do not know at this stage of my research.

Next, I want to introduce two famous entertainment programmes that were, compared to contemporary radio programmes, writing modern media history. First, 'Der frohe Samstagnachmittag' (The merry Saturday afternoon) was transmitted by the Cologne radio station from October 1935 till October 1939, and, second, to the legendary flagship of NS-entertainment, the 'Wunschkonzert (request concert) für die Wehrmacht', aired from September 1939 till summer 1941. I will deal with this programme in more depth later on. To sum up, in both programmes the NS-Weltanschauung can only be found in small doses ('Wunschkonzert') or in a very subtle way.

50-60 percent of the 'Merry Saturday' was 'serene, popular music', operetta, popular songs, folk music and military marches.<sup>78</sup> The other half consisted of radio programmes; the core of these was called *laterna magica*. This was presented by three cheerful guys who symbolised by their different dialects the tribes of the 'Volksgemeinschaft'. In the tradition of the genre, petit bourgeois everyday life anecdotes with hierarchically structured gender relation came at stage. The message was: Everyday life would not be endangered by the dramatic political changes. Jokes about Jews would obviously re-politicise everyday life and would have brought the time and history back into the programme. We do know from psychologists that the routines of everyday life are getting more steadily the more endangered they are. Clinging to these routines means to reassure oneself especially in times when changes are penetrating dramatically into the private life.<sup>79</sup> These routines are niches protecting against the demands of politics. By transmitting these messages in the radio, they stabilised the regime itself.

It was not accidental that the 'Merry Saturday' programme went on the air in 1935. This was a time, when the NS-broadcasting was not 'Volksrundfunk' (people's broadcasting) at all. But in 1935, Goebbels and the director of German Broadcasting, Eugen Hadamovsky, had won against those who wanted more propaganda in the radio. Goebbels gave the order that broadcasting should take into concern the wishes for entertainment of the German people. That meant that the music programmes, and especially popular music, constituted 70 percent of

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>78</sup> Monika Pater, 'Rundfunkangebote', Inge Marszolek and Adelheid von Saldern (eds.), *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden: Radio zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung*, vol. 1, (Tübingen, 1998), pp. 195-7; Dussel, *Hörfunk*, pp. 214.

<sup>79</sup> See Heide Gerstenberger, 'Acquiescence?', David Bankier (ed.), *Probing the Depth of German Antisemitism: German Society and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1941* (Jerusalem, 2000), pp. 19-35. She introduced this perspective into the historiography on the Third Reich.

the programme.<sup>80</sup> Again, there was only a remainder of 30 percent radio talks where anti-Semitic propaganda could be voiced. In the transcripts of programmes published by the DRA (German Radio Archives), there are some splinters of news reel or lectures which transport some anti-Semitic stances. To give you an example: On 27 November 1938, shortly after the so-called 'Reichskristallnacht', a probably fictitious talk was aired between Gunter d'Alquen, since 1935 director of the SS press Schwarzes Korps, and a worker of a Berlin printing office.<sup>81</sup> I have to mention that the November riots, initiated by the SS and the Party, did not meet the approval of the majority of the 'Volks-genossen' who were, in this case, bystanders rather than participants. In the radio talk, d'Alquen refers explicitly not only to the reaction of foreign countries but also to those who pretend to pity the Jews. The worker called Pluschka is introduced as the prototype of a simple worker, member of the trade unions before 1933 and not a party member, or an 'Alter Kämpfer'.

D'Alquen said: "We of course don't have as much contact with Jews as the 'Spießermadame' in a shop or an author in a coffeehouse." These are stereotypes used by both the workers movement and the Nazis to characterise the 'lazy representatives of the bourgeoisie'. Both characters claim that the leadership of the labour movement (the so-called 'Bonzokratie') had been Jewish, and that, therefore, the labour movement had not succeeded against the 'Jewish plutocracy'. Pluschka finally suggests that the Jews should have their own territory and nation. But responding to a question of D'Alquen: what if they do not want that, because they like to be parasites in their hosting countries, he concedes: In that case, one has to force them, "denn wer nicht hören will, muß fühlen".

I read this text as a negotiation with those who, from the perspective of the regime, still kept some distance to its racial policies. (There is a great similarity to some of the programmes from the 1 May 1933.) In the radio talk the pogrom is legitimated in an indirect way. Especially interesting is that the answer of Pluschka hints to the importance of the pogrom as the starting point of the annihilation of the Jews. Different to the speeches in front of a selected public, d'Alquen tries to persuade those who are not standing completely behind the racial politics. But I see this as an exception in the radio.

#### *Radio play and setting the mass on stage*

Obviously the radio play was a genre that seemed to be compatible with NS-formats. But looking closely into the texts, and into scholarly research on NS radio plays, it becomes very clear that again the Jew, or the topic of anti-Semitism, is not present or is dealt with in a hidden way. This concerns all racial issues. There is only one radio play at all dealing with racial hygienic measures

80 Dussel, *Hörfunk*, p. 220.

81 *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, vol. 1, pp. 124-7.

(up to now the text cannot be found). Different from the movies, where 'Jud Süß', of course, is the film in which Jews are presented from the Nazi perspective, there is no similar radio play. Again, the changes of the genre itself, and in the changed role of the radio in NS society, offer an explanation. Looking to the May celebrations of 1933, which became an extraordinary radio event, the NS broadcasts mimicked the so-called speaking choir movement invented by the Socialist cultural movement. The radio play the 'symphony of labour', transmitted by loudspeakers on the Tempelhofer Feld and in the whole country, explored the possibilities to melt together a radio play and the 'völkisch Thing' play.<sup>82</sup> A good example gives Richard Euringers' 'German Passion from 1933', first planned as a radio play, but set on stage in Heidelberg on the 'Thing' place in 1934, very successful as a book and folk theatre. In this play, which revolves around the heroism of male sacrifice, Jews are mentioned but once.<sup>83</sup> They are quoted as being enemies as well as the Marxists and 'Himbeerchristen' (red Christians) in the country.

To make the community event visible or audible was crucial for the propaganda in the Third Reich. One may argue that the setting on stage of the Reichsparteitage etc in the media was very similar to the radio plays. Even at a time, when the mass events and celebrations were more limited, the radio reports, in which the radio represented the 'Volksgemeinschaft' and the 'Volksgemeinschaft' became the radio, played an important role in the programme. If we talk about the development of a specific National Socialist culture and its transportation by the radio, it might be true for this genre.

#### *Entertainment during the war*

On the whole, the programming structure was not changed – though there were only two stations. In the framework of a 'musical offensive' to divert – there was mainly music on the airwaves, around 13 hours, which was interrupted by the newsreel and other programmes referring to the political situation. Non-political verbal programmes were restricted. Goebbels even gave the order to limit the announcing of music to a minimum. This gives us a hint, that the listeners decoded what they heard sometimes in a very subversive way. E.g. Hans Hinkel, who was the 'Reichsrundfunkkommissar', instructed that texts of popular songs like 'Again a wonderful day gets to an end' should not go on airwaves because it might be misunderstood by the listeners, meaning that the listeners

82 Inge Marszolek, 'Aus dem Volke für das Volk: Die Inszenierung der 'Volksgemeinschaft' um und durch das Radio', Inge Marszolek and Adelheid von Saldern, *Radiozeiten: Herrschaft, Alltag, Gesellschaft (1924-1960)* (Potsdam, 1999), pp. 121-135, here p. 126.

83 See Reinhard Doehl, *Das Hörspiel zur NS-Zeit: Geschichte und Typologie des Hörspiels* (Darmstadt, 1992), pp. 53-5.



put this song in the context of the end of the war.<sup>84</sup> Whereas after the outbreak of the war mostly classical music was transmitted, Goebbels ordered – reacting to complaints of the listeners – that again popular music received a bigger part and all propaganda should be embedded in a sort of entertaining quilt. To quote Goebbels: “Nobody’s soul will be damaged by listening to Lehar or Lincke, or Mackeben and Kollo (all composers of operetta and popular songs, I.M.), but this will be the case, if he is listening to English stations, what people are doing partly not in listening to the news but because they like the ‘schmissige’ music.”<sup>85</sup>

Looking at the flagship of Nazi radio entertainment, the ‘Wunschkonzert für die Wehrmacht’, war was presented in a narrative of anecdotes.<sup>86</sup> The ‘Volksgemeinschaft’ was constructed at home as well as at the front, the radio was the bridge. The enemy at the front, but as well at home, or the Jew being the arch enemy inside and outside of the NS-Volksgemeinschaft was not visible but still present. The makers of this programme knew that they were skating on thin ice – growing even thinner the longer the war lasted. Because with news from the eastern front, the soldiers writing of the cold winter, of the death of their comrades etc, war could no longer be told in images of merry tales and even not in sentimental and kitschy description of the mourning of a mother for her dead son. This scene is one of the key scenes in the film ‘Das Wunschkonzert’. The need for a reservoir of interpretations and values which might give a sense to this war, taking into account the sacrifices and fears of the families at home could not be coped with by ‘Wunschkonzert’. This might be the reason that this programme was stopped in 1942.

#### *Propaganda in wartime: the example of Hans Fritsche*

The last example refers to the genre: ‘Politisches Wort’ (political word). In 1942, Hans Fritsche became responsible for the political programmes in NS broadcasting and the director of the broadcasting department of the ministry for propaganda.<sup>87</sup> Fritsche, who had already worked as a radio commentator, now was on the airwaves every Saturday commenting on international press and radio programmes. One of the consequences was that his comments were aimed at the United States and Great Britain. A reading of the manuscripts, a part of which are in the archives, again clearly shows that Fritsche is very reluctant to address racial issues, e.g. by presenting the Anglo-American enemies in an anti-

Semitic way.<sup>88</sup> To be sure, we find stereotypes of the plutocracy and Bolshevism, which a listener would always have linked to anti-Semitic discourse. But Fritsche takes great care to construct the image of a young European community, linked together by fate, which has to be defended. This defence happened as well in Sicily as at the eastern front, as in the German cities, where the ‘Volksgenossen’ were resisting against the terror of the bombing: “These millions and millions of men in the bombed areas are the real heroes of the war, who are carrying an invisible oak-leaf medal, and all generations of the different people of Europe will honour them.”<sup>89</sup>

In some texts, he refers to the image of Jews driving Roosevelt into the war without naming the Jews explicitly: “These as the same elements, who today, sitting at a long distance from the front, cry for the invasion, who are inciting the bombing and air terror against us, hoping that nobody can fight them and who are destroying monuments of a culture, the beauty and greatness of which they cannot imagine ...”<sup>90</sup>

Again the Jew is absent, is a hidden subtext. Fighting for the freedom of Europe is fighting for a continent without Jews. There is only one text in which Fritsche referred to the so-called ‘Greuelpropaganda’ which was linked to the annihilation of the Jews. He stressed the need to be ‘solid as a rock’.<sup>91</sup>

The main argument aims to support the ‘Volksgemeinschaft’ by underlining its strength. “The German people are the core of Europe. They are in contact with secret sources of power, with this giant of legends, who gets his power to fight by touching the ground.”<sup>92</sup>

Reading these scripts leaves me with the impression of a secret understanding of the stereotype of the Jewish global conspiracy and the exclusion of the Jews in the NS visions of a New Europe. On the base of these texts it is not possible to decide whether this included the knowledge of the atrocities. But I do assess that, from the perspective of Fritsche, a propaganda which linked the United States and Great Britain too closely to the assumed ‘conspiracy of international Jewry’ seemed to be problematic. In view of the signs of a defeat the superiority of the U.S. would have been linked with the alleged omnipotence of the Jews. That was why Fritsche referred to the mystical power of the ‘Volksgemeinschaft’ which was compatible with the racial utopia and attributed to stabilise Nazi society even when the war went on.

88 The manuscripts of Fritsche’s talks are partly preserved in the archives, BA Berlin R 55-1357.

89 Commentary, 31 July 1943, BA Berlin R55-1357.

90 Commentary, 3 July 1943, *ibid.*

91 Document of the ‘Erkundungsdienst’, 22 December 1942, *ibid.*

92 Commentary, 27 December 1943, *ibid.* For the NS-discourse on Europe see Axel Schild, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika: Studien zur westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft der 50er Jahre* (Munich-Oldenburg, 1999).

84 Hinkel to Reichspropagandaminister, 23 January 1943, BA Berlin R 55/1254.

85 Protocol, 21 May 1941, quoted after Dussel, *Hörfunk*, p. 207.

86 Pater, *Rundfunkangebote*, pp. 229. Hans-Jörg Koch, *Das Wunschkonzert im NS-Rundfunk* (Cologne-Vienna-Weimar, 2003).

87 Dussel, *Hörfunk*, pp.231-40.

## Conclusions

Given the limitations of my sources and the lack of a profound analysis of Radio programming in the Third Reich, my conclusion can only be preliminary and fragmentary. Instead of giving culture or entertainment a specific National Socialist colour, the Nazis opted for more entertainment as a relief for the 'Volksgemeinschaft'.

After the broadcasting was cleansed from Jewish voices, and after a short time of experimenting, the NS-radio, under the dominant influence of Goebbels, developed from an educational to an entertainment media. German broadcasting set the cheerful side of the 'Volksgemeinschaft' on stage. Negotiating the realisation of the anti-Semitic policies was not cheerful, anti-Semitic jokes might provoke irritations and fear for those who were not 100 percent Nazi followers and were partially disturbed by the racial policies which introduced violence against the Jews in everyday life. This was even truer in a serious discussion, either in the radio plays, in coverage, commentaries etc.

The setting of the 'Volksgemeinschaft' on the virtual stage of the air-waves took many different forms, e.g. in interactions between the audience and the radio, in visualising the radio, – a well-known example is the famous painting of Padua, which was distributed in millions as an advertisement for the broadcasting companies – or in live transmissions of mass rallies, which were propagated by public loudspeakers to the ears of the listening masses.<sup>93</sup> With the war approaching, the programme contained even more popular entertainment aiming to entertain the 'Volksgenossen', to divert them from the information from the front, from the persecution policies and from an anti-Semitism which legitimated violence against the Jews in everyday life. With the defeat at Stalingrad, the turning point of the war, German gentiles should be diverted from their vague or profound knowledge of the annihilation of European Jewry in the East. I see two clues to understanding these developments: the first one I mentioned already: Propagating the image of the Jewish enemy, when the information of the retreat and the defeat of the German Wehrmacht was penetrating German society, might have been decoded as a new proof of the omnipotence of the Jews, now linked to the figure of the American Jew. But there is another aspect: The Nazis may have feared that defeat becoming imminent then the hidden feeling of shame and guilt towards the Jews might submerge and might be directed against the regime. As we know, after 1945 this collective consciousness was projected to the small elite of the Nazis and the German people as a whole conceived themselves as victims of a murderous regime.

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93 Schmidt, 'Radioaneignung', Marszolek, Saldern (eds.), *Zuhören*, pp. 243-360.