

Every Member of the Nation—a Radio Listener! (before 1936)

Abstract

The Nazis prided themselves on being a political force which utilized modern technology to reach citizens in new ways. Radios served an important role in this aim, and the regime launched a campaign to provide affordable radios to every German household in 1933. The “Volksempfänger” or “People’s Radio” was designed to be simple and affordable, and placing one in every household was an important part of the Propaganda Ministry’s plans. Joseph Goebbels recognized the political power of this medium, but he also learned to limit the time given to political messaging because of popular demand for light entertainment, such as radio dramas, or the *Wunschkonzert* (Request Concert for the Military) during the war years. The “People’s Radio” had a simple design to keep its prices low, but this simplicity also provided a second benefit—at least for the regime—in that it had a very limited range, making it less likely that Germans could tune in to foreign radio signals unless they lived closer to the border. This advertisement from around 1936 depicts the “People’s Radio” and the regime’s promise of making radios available “for every member of the nation”—a phrase that also served to distinguish between those people who did not belong to the “racial community.” Jews, for instance, were banned from owning radios after January 1, 1939.

The poster was published by the “Reichsverband deutscher Rundfunkteilnehmer e.V.,” a nationalist interest group founded by German nationalists in 1930 and headed by Goebbels from 1932. Under his direction, an “art department” was set up to train journalists and radio announcers loyal to the party line. By 1936 radio was entirely controlled by the regime, so the organization had become redundant and was dissolved.

Source



Source: Poster, before 1936. Artist: Uhlen. Publisher: Reichsverband deutscher Rundfunkteilnehmer e.V. bpk-Bildagentur, image no. 00008849. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at requests@artres.com (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de (for all other countries).

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