

Letter from the Rudolf Mosse Publishing House to a Former Subscriber to the *Berliner Tageblatt* (May 12, 1933)

Abstract

During the period of “coordination,” or *Gleichschaltung*, media outlets (newspapers, magazines, radio, etc.) also faced ever-greater control by National Socialist officials and supportive editors, journalists, and broadcasters. This process did not happen overnight, and a few publishers retained independence longer than others. One such voice of dissent came from the Jewish-owned Rudolf Mosse publishing house, in particular through its newspaper, the *Berliner Tageblatt*. Published between 1872 and 1939, the liberal daily constituted one of the most important independent media outlets in the country after 1933. Its reputation shielded it for a time from Ministry for Propaganda interference in an attempt by Goebbels to maintain the façade of a free press within Germany on the international stage.

In this letter to a former subscriber to the *Tageblatt*, the publishers attempt to convince this reader not to cancel his subscription. Notable is the publishers’ emphasis on the relative independence of the *Tageblatt*, compared to others, and the importance of maintaining this newspaper’s publication to avoid Germany’s “international isolation.” The publishers were desperate to remain afloat financially in a very difficult political climate while continuing to provide objective journalism without provoking the government into shutting them down, which eventually happened on January 31, 1939.

Source

RUDOLF MOSSE PUBLISHING HOUSE
HEAD OFFICE
BERLIN SW100

Most honorable sir!

We greatly regret your decision to cancel your subscription to the *Berliner Tageblatt* as we have always regarded our readers as friends and comrades and attached less importance to the economic context. We would therefore be grateful if you would send us a short note explaining why you have taken this step. It is probably due to false rumors and chatter that we can easily refute in a satisfactory way.

Or do you believe that in the current circumstances other publications can better represent your interests? If you cannot be moved to immediately renew your subscription, we would be pleased to send you the *Berliner Tageblatt* at no cost for a limited time in order to allow you to make comparisons. These will definitely not be to the disadvantage of the *Tageblatt*, particularly when you consider that, due to its substantial influence abroad, the newspaper sees itself compelled to pursue a uniform overall editorial policy in order to prevent Germany from becoming intellectually isolated abroad. For this reason, it cannot express criticism as strongly as do other publications with less responsibility. On the other hand, every word of criticism carries greater weight on its pages.

If you have been told that we have been sold to the Reich, to Hitler, to Hugenberg, to Papen or to some other buyer, your informant has lied. The truth is that the publisher of the *Berliner Tageblatt* has magnanimously transferred all his businesses to a charitable foundation, whose surplus funds will benefit the victims of war irrespective of denomination over a period of fifteen years. The foundation is

being run as a private limited company and its management is completely independent.

We look forward to hearing from you and would be happy to provide further details.

Yours faithfully,

RUDOLF MOSSE PUBLISHING HOUSE
Head office

On behalf of (signature)

12. May 1933

Source of English translation: Letter from the Rudolf Mosse Publishing House to a Former Subscriber (May 12, 1933), Jewish Museum Berlin, 2013/79/0, in *1933: The Beginning of the End of German Jewry*. Available online at:

https://www.jmberlin.de/1933/en/05_12_letter-from-the-rudolf-mosse-publishing-house-to-a-former-subscriber.php

Source of original German text: Brief von der Direktion des Verlags Rudolf Mosse an einen Abonnenten (12. Mai 1933), Jewish Museum Berlin, 2013/79/0, in *Der Anfang vom Ende des deutschen Judentums*. Online verfügbar unter:

https://www.jmberlin.de/1933/de/05_12_brief-des-verlags-rudolf-mosse-an-einen-ehemaligen-abonnenten.php

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