

## Thomas Mann in the Studio of an American Radio Station (c. 1940)

### Abstract

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Thomas Mann (1875-1955), one of Germany's most important writers and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (1929), was a determined and articulate opponent of the Hitler regime. Although his own works did not fall prey to the book burnings of 1933, those of his brother Heinrich (1871-1950) and his son Klaus (1906-1949) did. In 1938, after several stays abroad, he and his family emigrated to the United States, where, in 1940, he began recording a series of monthly radio addresses entitled "German Listeners!" ["Deutsche Hörer!"]. The five- to eight-minute recordings were transferred to records in the United States and then sent to London, where the BBC broadcast them to Germany. Mann's addresses thus became part of the Allies' demoralization tactics. The number of regular listeners in Germany is estimated to have been rather small, especially since listening to foreign radio stations was considered a "radio crime" and severely punished. Nonetheless, Hitler reacted to the attacks of his famous critic by smearing him in his speeches. In 1952, Mann and his family moved back to Europe because of growing McCarthyism in the United States. It was hard for Thomas Mann to reconcile himself with Germany, however, since in his opinion Germans shared a collective guilt for the crimes of National Socialism. He and his family decided to settle in Switzerland, where he died in 1955.

### Source

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