

Government Guidelines for Radio Broadcasters (July 1932)

Abstract

In the Weimar Republic, broadcasting consisted mainly of private radio. Since the reception of radio broadcasts had been legalized for private households in 1923, a network of decentralized, federal broadcasters was formed, whose programming was carried by private, regional broadcasting companies. Since 1925, however, broadcasting in the Weimar Republic was under the control of the Postal Ministry, which held the majority of votes in the Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft [National Broadcasting Corporation], the umbrella organization of regional broadcasting companies. Political broadcasts in particular were subject to censorship, which is why most broadcasters avoided political content and limited themselves to entertainment programs. In July 1932, the government under Reich Chancellor Franz von Papen issued new "Guidelines for the Reorganization of Broadcasting," which reflected the government's national-conservative policy. In November, Papen also enforced the centralization and nationalization of the regional broadcasting companies, which finally turned radio into a state organ. The content of all broadcasts was now monitored by so-called "radio commissioners" and the government was given daily broadcasting time for its own political communication. This paved the way for the future control [Gleichschaltung] and instrumentalization of radio by Nazi propaganda.

Source

Guidelines for the Reorganization of Broadcasting

- i. The German radio serves the German people. Its programs unremittingly penetrate the German home and are heard throughout the world. This influence on nation and family and the effect abroad place the directors and employees under a particular obligation.
- ii. The radio participates in the life work of the German nation. The natural ordering of people in home and family, work and state is to be maintained and secured by the German radio. The radio does not therefore speak to the listener only as an individual, but also as a member of this natural national order.
- iii. German radio adheres to Christian beliefs and behavior and respects the sincere convictions of dissenters. That which degrades the Christian faith or endangers the custom and culture of the German people is excluded from German radio.
- iv. Radio serves all Germans within and without the borders of the Reich. It binds Germans abroad with the Reich and permits Germans at home to share in the life and fate of Germans abroad. It is the duty of the German radio to cultivate the Idea of the Reich.
- v. Radio participates in the great task to educate the Germans as nation state and to form and strengthen the political thinking and will of the listener.
- vi. The admirable strengths and goods inherited from past generations of Germans and the German Reich are to be respected and increased in the work of the German radio. The radio must also develop and cultivate an understanding for the particular conditions and requirements of the present.
- vii. It is the task of all stations to cultivate the collectivity and the entirety of the community of the German people. The regional stations will therefore begin with the particular characteristics of the

people in their catchment area and to communicate the rich and varied lives of the German clans and regions.

Source: Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies, Gender, German Radio and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, pp. 51–52.

Source of original German text: Erwin Fischer, *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Rundfunks und Fernsehens*. Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1957, pp. 85–86.

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