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1

Introduction and Contexts

Approaching May 1945 – imagining an ‘unimaginable’ community

This book departs from a single historical observation: in the years immediately following the unconditional surrender of Germany in May 1945, the radio was the best-preserved and most popular medium of mass communication. Almost without interruption from the mid-1930s to the late 1950s, the radio was not only the primary source of information, but also one of the cheapest sources of entertainment and one of the wealthiest supporters of culture. During the Allied occupation of Germany after 1945, this dominance was particularly pronounced. Most radio stations only fell silent for a matter of weeks or even just days before restarting under the authority of the Allied occupiers. By contrast, newspapers were locally bound and plagued by paper shortages, and cinemas were showing mostly older and foreign films while the German film industry slowly began production.¹ Indeed, an argument can be made that if ‘Germany’ was to be found anywhere in 1945, it was more in the airwaves than amidst the rubble landscapes, mass migrations and fragmented populations that characterized Europe at the end of the Second World War. Particularly during a period of time when the boundaries of nation and region, as well as ‘public’ and ‘private’, were being rebuilt and reconfigured, the dominance of a medium that both transgresses and helps to define such boundaries had profound implications for the way Germans came to imagine themselves and the nation(s) that would emerge. This book explores those implications by charting numerous ways that radio broadcasting addressed and maintained practices of everyday life in the western occupation zones that became the Federal Republic in 1949.

Ironically, perhaps, given that images of Germany's post-war destruction are iconic in narratives of German and European history, one of the most common terms used in describing Germany in 1945 is 'unimaginable'.² Indeed, such well-known images stand in for a scale of destruction that is difficult to fathom. Nearly two and a half million homes had been destroyed and just over the same number more were damaged, leaving behind 400 million cubic metres of rubble. Over seven million German soldiers and civilians had been killed, and an equal number of German soldiers remained in captivity. Malnutrition, cold and disease claimed further lives; three million people were homeless.³ With varying degrees of complicity from the population, the regime had systematically murdered nearly nine million people, some horrifying images of which were publicized shortly after the war as of 'shock of reality', and further challenge to the imagination of what 'Germany' was and meant.⁴

It is therefore not surprising that the phrase, 'whoever did not experience the time simply can't imagine it', has become an entrenched part of German memory culture, at once heartfelt, clichéd and problematic.⁵ It is heartfelt because it speaks of real and painful experiences of uncertainty, violence, deprivation and grief that for most had no precedent or later equivalent. It has become clichéd, not least as a recurring strategy or weapon in the intergenerational conflicts about the meaning of the Nazi past that have played out on a number of scales. It can serve as a means of capturing personal experience back from grander narratives of history, but also as plank in exculpatory narratives about involvement in, or engagement with, the Nazi past, and as part of the enduring myth that Germans had been silent about their own wartime and post-war suffering.⁶ It is also one of the underlying impulses of recent attempts on television to try to 'imagine' the experience of the Allied air war or the expulsion from the East with a combination of documentary footage and eyewitness narratives.⁷ It is this embedding in generational politics that makes the claim of unimaginability problematic for historians, because as Elizabeth Heineman has pointed out, while the immediate claim seems to be about whether personal experience can be conveyed to those who were not 'there', it is actually made on behalf of 'everybody' who was.⁸ The problem is that notions of life as 'unimaginable' fix attention on a scale of inquiry localized around *immediate* personal experience, whilst raising questions at a different level: Who was 'everybody'? Where was 'there'? These are questions not of personal, cross-generational imagination, but of horizontal imagination between contemporaries; at issue are not immediate, but *mediated* experiences and spaces. They demand

closer inspection of the mediated interaction between the localized and broader spheres of the social, and, as such, exploration of the media that made that possible. In taking up these questions, the goal is not somehow to explode 'the myth of unimaginability' but explore it and take seriously the questions it raises.⁹ The radio, as the dominant medium of the time, provides an important venue for doing so.

Germany in 1945 did in fact pose considerable challenges to the imagination in Benedict Anderson's (itself almost clichéd) definition of nations as 'imagined communities'.¹⁰ Importantly, Anderson points out that the sense of national belonging rests on individuals 'imagining' their fellow country folk as living with them in a (roughly) bounded space, stepping forward together with them in time. The Nazi state had worked hard to amplify such images by creating mass events, especially on the radio, that sought to portray a uniform and racially based 'national community' which bridged regional and class divisions. To the extent that they had ever been effective, these nationally imagined spaces grew thin and fragmented with the centralized structures of the state that had propped them up. The state of 'Germany' had more or less ceased to exist by the middle of 1945 and virtually all of its boundaries, both internal and external, were tentative, and Germans themselves were scattered across and beyond all of them. Oral history has astutely captured the problems in 'imagining' Germany via the experiences around the end of the war than the war's official end in May of 1945. Although it was arguably the most significant historical caesura of the twentieth century, it made little or no impression on the bulk of the German population. Attempts at compiling the experiences of the war's end reveal not a grand 'flashbulb' event but a scattering of different experiences and personal events. Some remember the first arrival of Allied troops, others their expulsion and flight from lands in the East; the arrival home of loved ones, or news of their death.¹¹ Political events such as the founding of the two German states in 1949 often do not stand out in memory half so much as things experienced more personally such as the currency reform, the first real coffee or butter or any one of a number of individual experiences that marked an even tentative return to 'normality'. But this raises, rather than answers, questions about the way the boundaries around the realm of personal experience were drawn, and how 'normality' was defined, which exploring the role of the radio in relation to daily life, as opposed to major events, can help to explain.

In spite of its central position in daily lives, and dominant role in the mass media ensemble at the time, the radio has been largely invisible in private and public memories. On the level of personal memory,

when asked, individual listeners normally forget the content of regular radio programmes and remember instead their regular listening habits and the domestic contexts in which they listened.¹² Public memories of radio in the 1940s are also quite fragmented and obscure, rather than illuminate, the role radio played in everyday life. After 1945, images of *Volksempfänger* ('people's receivers') with Hitler's voice barking through them quickly became standard cinematic code for a distant and dominating Nazi regime intruding upon private space. At the same time, many popular performers and programme genres from the 1930s and 1940s continued on almost seamlessly after the war's end and are remembered fondly and publicly to this day, mostly divorced from their connection to Nazi institutions.¹³ Images of radio in the years after the war, to the extent that they appear at all in public memory, normally emphasize radically new elements, such as RIAS in Berlin and its propaganda war with the East, or jazz from the newly established American Forces Network, far out of proportion to the listenership they actually had at the time.¹⁴

As in memory, the presence of radio also has been invisible or fragmented in history. Particularly in Anglophone scholarship, the dominance of the radio has remained inversely proportional to the attention it has received in the cultural history of post-war Germany compared with work on literature or cinema.¹⁵ For many years, historical study of the radio in Germany did not deal with the programme, and was confined almost exclusively to history of institutions, an emphasis that stemmed not least from the contemporaneous and ongoing struggles between public service broadcasters and the state(s), and in particular the debates over privatization.¹⁶ A separate line of inquiry, coming out of German literary studies, produced a number of studies focussed around literary radio drama, which, much like studies of post-war cinema in Germany, until recently had been concentrated mostly on a few specific 'high' quality authors.¹⁷ At the start of the 1990s, debates among media historians in Germany on how to conduct history of the programme saw fruition in a number of detailed studies that began to incorporate more thorough analyses of programme production and output, as well as available audience research, within the framework of institutional histories.¹⁸ The occupation period has continued to be a focus of attention for many of these studies, certainly not least because it was the period of time when the current public service broadcasting institutions, which have often commissioned or supported such historical work, were founded.¹⁹ Konrad Dussel's studies have had the broadest temporal range among studies of this kind. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, Dussel traces long-term patterns in the development of the programme as a whole,

highlighting both continuities and ruptures between the different political eras and systems during the radio's tenure as primary medium.²⁰ While valuable for its documentary qualities, Dussel's work offers very little by way of theory or interpretation, however, beyond observation of general trends such as 'Americanization' or 'Westernization'. Building on existing trends, current research, notably that by Hans-Ulrich Wagner, has been particularly strong in following the people in broadcasting, resulting in a historiography that is rich in human voices and individual agency, and has also provided important insights into the dynamics of continuity and change at occupied radio stations.²¹

The last decade has seen important steps towards bringing the growing body of historiography on the radio into closer contact with more theoretically oriented work on German culture and society. The growing understanding that mass media, and in particular radio, should be considered as a central focus of social and cultural history in Germany has led to fruitful scholarship that has de-centred institutional histories and adopted a number of productive new approaches.²² The group of feminist historians headed by Inge Marßolek and Adelheid von Saldern has made very valuable contributions to understanding how radio broadcasting helped to embed the structures of authoritarian control in everyday life both in the Nazi era and in the early years of the GDR.²³ These works, along with the ground-breaking work by Kate Lacey on women's radio in Weimar and Nazi radio, have drawn most explicitly on the methods of cultural studies to contextualize radio programming more thoroughly to bring contested and often contradictory meanings and readings into view.²⁴ In particular, they have brought parts of the programme, particularly 'target group' or 'service' programmes aimed at specific audiences, notably women and rural audiences, as well as entertainment shows into view as important areas for critical scrutiny. In an important 1999 essay – embedded, appropriately, in an edited volume devoted to broader questions of German memory – Inge Marßolek sketched out a number of areas and ways in which post-war radio addressed past and present in 1945 Germany. She pointed above all to areas of continuity such as 'high' literature and 'non-political' entertainment based around nuclear families in the domestic sphere, which allowed for ongoing collective narratives of identification that bypassed the Nazi regime.²⁵ There is still much to be done, however, in carrying these concerns forward into the post-war era and the transformation to democracy in the Federal Republic.

I will approach these issues theoretically and methodologically by both stepping back and stepping closer. Stepping back involves problematizing the nation after 1945 more thoroughly with regard to the radio.

This may sound obvious or redundant. Surely no nation has been more problematized than Germany, particularly after 1945, and scholarship within broadcasting history has been especially alert to the way that the problems of past and present facing Germany were discussed and/or ignored on the radio from the occupied stations. Recent studies such as Christoph Classen's that examine in depth how the National Socialist past was addressed in the radio programmes in the immediate post-war era are a case in point.²⁶ What remains to be more thoroughly explored and explained, however, is what it meant that these and other messages came through the radio, and how (and whether) occupied radio stations in a defeated and divided nation were able to speak as German stations to German audiences. Such an approach also has implications for how we are able to assess the radio's use in constructing narratives of memory. I follow here Alon Confino's assertion that

we should look for traces of National Socialism not only in artefacts and practices created intentionally to represent it, but also in social practices and representations where they were not directly discernible and fairly unpredictable. These kinds of sources, practices and representations may ultimately reveal more about attitudes and beliefs.²⁷

To do this, it is necessary to view broadcasting practice over a longer period of time and to explore a broader range of programmes and structures. I do this here through an examination of broader constructions of time and space through broadcasting.

Accounts of national belonging at least since Benedict Anderson have pointed to nations as peculiar spatio-temporal experiences that are generally expressions of modernity itself.²⁸ The visions of a population in a bounded space, stepping forward together in clocked, calendrical time rest upon a series of social relations that have been 'disembodied' from face-to-face interaction through a number of mechanisms, not least of which are print and later broadcasting media.²⁹ Such senses of community are maintained through a series of great and small rituals, some of which are coalesced around key public 'sites of memory' and periodic collective remembrances, others around repetitions of barely conscious, banal linguistic and visual routines in everyday life.³⁰ As British broadcasting historian Paddy Scannell has observed, broadcasting's simultaneous presence in public and private space gives it the ability to interweave these senses of personal and public almost seamlessly into an intelligible sense of the broader world. Scannell takes obviousness and

ordinariness as *'precisely* the intended, achieved and accomplished effect of broadcast output' and highlights the ability of radio and television to appropriate, create and maintain temporal routines, mark certain times as special or exceptional, and refer routinely to common spaces, both 'public' and 'private'.³¹ As scholars of collective memory in the tradition of Maurice Halbwachs have pointed out, such frameworks of collective experience are important, even essential, prerequisites not only for collective memory but also for individual memory formation.³² The aspects of radio that support such collective frameworks of time and space are thus probably the most important to consider when studying its role during a time when the physical, political and symbolic spaces of Germany were being restructured.

General accounts of broadcasting and modernity more or less presuppose gradual change following the initial embedding of new media, which make them at once problematical and promising for analyzing the extreme case of post-war Germany. But how are we to understand the meaning of the radio as a generator of ordinariness and routine supporter of times and spaces during a period when routines in both spheres are interrupted? Kate Lacey has fruitfully addressed the forceful dynamics of modernity in pre-1945 Germany by taking the notion of crisis as a key paradigm for understanding continuity and change during the first two decades of broadcasting in Germany.³³ Taking these same notions on board, we may usefully approach the positioning of the radio as it crossed the 1945 divide under the paradigm of normalization. This shift in terms is not meant to project the 'no-experiments' conservatism of the Adenauer era back in time onto the occupation, but to acknowledge a basic shift in perception of Germany's times and spaces after 1945. Importantly, Lacey defines a moment of crisis as containing the 'threat or promise of radical change', that is, as something that is impending – even when that sense is ongoing.³⁴ After 1945, the widespread and well-founded perception in Germany was that the catastrophe (however defined or indefinable) *had occurred*, and the material and symbolic destruction of public and private realms was either its essence or one of its main consequences. A further contrast to the period that Lacey describes is that by 1945 the radio had been embedded thoroughly into everyday life and, particularly given its dominance among the media, no longer seemed so much a potential force of radical change, but part of a 'normal' life. A close examination of what it meant that the radio was a 'normal' medium in an extraordinary time gives us the opportunity to explore historically the possibilities and limits of broadcast media to structure experience.

The importance of the radio in helping to reconstruct 'normal' visions of domestic spheres in relation to public spaces is underlined by the heavy but ambiguous ideological loading of such spaces in Nazi Germany as well as in the early years of both German republics. As the medium which was able to enter both spheres, the radio had been particularly implicated in these processes.³⁵ Building upon conservative visions from the Weimar Republic, National Socialism had increasingly mobilized images of private domesticity as ideal images of the racialized 'national community' and as safe maternal refuge from the modern public world. As the social mobilization and war rendered other signifiers of national normality obsolete, the regime called upon such images to do more and more work. These contradictory dynamics between public and private further called into question the traditionally (if always shakily) gendered divide between these spheres, and also made domestic realms increasingly the most available sites of resistance against the regime. Bringing these issues forward to explore more thoroughly the radio's role in reconstructing the boundaries and meaning of public and private space in occupied Germany brings it fruitfully into contact with recent works that have explored the role of domesticity and consumption in forming personal and national narratives.³⁶ The heavy emphasis in the Adenauer era on private prosperity as the basis for the new nation also relied heavily on images of 'normal' domestic spaces and traditionally gendered roles. As recent scholarship has pointed out, these images were actually shot through with ambiguities and silences that betrayed the complex and contradictory forces working through them.³⁷

Placing the radio within these historical and theoretical contexts informs, and demands, a step closer towards the texts. The central concern with the ways the radio mediated normality brings a new set of texts, and a new set of readings, into the focus of inquiry. For one, we must look beyond the limitations of more quantitatively oriented analyses of the programme that have thus far formed the basis of much research on the radio. Such analyses, exemplified by the work of Konrad Dussel, are based around notions of genre as well as broader categories such as information, education and entertainment as more or less stable entities which offer at best a limited understanding of the issues at hand.³⁸ Instead, drawing on existing scholarship and samples from a wide range of programmes, I will look for signifiers of time and space within and around a variety of different programmes and programme genres to gain closer insight into the ways shows were positioned with regard to their listeners' lives and experiences. This further necessitates attention to presentational and

performative issues such as voice, gender, accent and mode of address, which identify speakers and position them routinely within a number of cultural and social frameworks. As I will show, far from being 'mere' incidental aesthetic issues, especially within the context of occupation and reconstruction, such aspects of programming were important areas where notions of German identity were contested.

Structurally, the book is designed both as a series of extended individual essays and as a continuing narrative that explores the embedding of the radio in West German society after 1945. Each chapter explores a different aspect of radio broadcasting, and the way in which it addressed aspects of, and contemporaneous debates about, the times and spaces of Germany after the war. Roughly speaking, each chapter works from the general to the specific, outlining broad contexts and then showing how certain media structures, programmes and/or texts operated within them. In addition, each chapter outlines one or more fruitful points of dialogue with wider discourses in German cultural history and media and cultural studies. I do not intend to map these dialogues exhaustively here, but to shed light on the issues immediately at hand. In a more polemic vein, however, I do hope to show how new avenues in cultural history and cultural studies may be opened up by placing the radio more thoroughly within these contexts. As a whole, the book builds towards an account of one way that various constructions of time, space, personality and gender coalesced, namely around the problematic national notion of *Heimat*. As this study is focused on the national construction of identity in what became the Federal Republic, an equally thorough study of broadcasting in the Soviet zone, which was to become the GDR in 1949, has not been undertaken. The analysis of broadcasting in the West has been greatly enriched by the recent appearance of a number of excellent studies that have dealt with radio programming in the East and of the propaganda wars that took place in the airwaves over Berlin.³⁹ Because the situation in western Germany was markedly different from the listening situation in Berlin, however, I have chosen not to consider the programmes of the Western stations in Berlin as a part of this study. This, too, has polemic reasons. All too often, the very active propaganda war on Berlin radio has been taken as a reflection of the situation in Germany as a whole, without considering the very different role which the Cold War played on the stations that the bulk of Germans tuned in to. The important role of the Eastern broadcasting as interlocutor and competitor, as well as the effects of the beginning Cold War on station staff and programming in the West will of course be considered.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will set the stage for this inquiry by tracing two different narratives, the ways in which radio was embedded in Germany from its inception through the occupation period. The first outlines how the radio was institutionally, politically and socially embedded in Germany. This is intended in part as necessary background for readers less familiar with German broadcasting, and in part to highlight the continuities and ruptures in the structures of broadcasting vis-à-vis developments in social and political spheres. The second looks at one way that radio was culturally embedded in Germany, showing the many ways radio has been tied up intricately in the times and spaces of *Heimat*, one of the most enduring visions of normality in Germany. It will show how this concept helped to mediate some of the vital contradictions of states as well as broadcasting structures in Germany.

In Chapter 2, I look to the temporal structures of the programme to explore how the relationship between the private world of individual experience and the public world of historical events were addressed and maintained in the radio programme. I will trace the historical development of this relationship in Germany, showing how the radio became embedded in everyday routine during the Nazi era, and how radio programmes of the post-war era addressed these routines. At the centre of this analysis is the way in which the relations between 'ordinary' time and 'extraordinary' times and events were constructed through the radio schedule, and the possibilities for radio listeners to place their individual experiences within imagined collective routines. Finally, I will explore the contemporaneous debates about 'light' music in the programme. I will point in particular to the dynamics of time that were expressed in these debates, from the belief on the part of many programmers that such music was largely empty 'time filler' to the paradoxical dynamics of nostalgia and progress expressed in the music and in discourse surrounding it.

Chapter 3 turns attention to the way narratives of continuity and change were articulated through the personalities, and more specifically the voices, on the radio. It highlights the ambiguous positioning of those who spoke on the radio, sometimes as exemplary models for a new Germany and sometimes as ordinary representatives of their audiences. It explores how such issues of representation were underscored by aspects of presentation that are peculiar to the radio, namely its ability to address audiences intimately and familiarly, and shows the often conflicting way these aspects were constructed and mobilized in post-war broadcasting. In presenting unknown voices to listeners, the post-war radio stations highlighted such 'unaffected' traits as the hallmarks of a

'new person' in the new non-militaristic Germany that was to come. At the same time, however, well-known personalities were also able to emphasize their ongoing connections with the audience, in part through their own more familiar voices and address. These ambiguities are then explored more closely through the performances of famous cinema stars on the radio to show how their familiar characteristics were reproduced and partly transformed through their performance.

In Chapter 4, I will explore further the role of the radio in constructing public and private space by examining in detail programmes that addressed women by situating these programmes within post-war debates about the role of women in the German society. In light of recent work which has reconsidered this role, I will argue that the radio, and in particular women's radio, played a seminal role in shaping the consciousness of women in post-war consumer society. I will first explore the ambiguous position that women occupied with regard to public and private space in post-war Germany, and then show how the position of women at the radio stations reflected these ambiguities. I will then show the way in which the role of women in post-war German society was negotiated in particular through its structuring of women's time. Drawing on Erica Carter's study of the role of the female consumer as a focus of national identity in the social market economy of the 1950s, I will argue that the radio contributed significantly to the construction of these identities in the occupation era through implicit and explicit addresses to women as rational consumers of time.⁴⁰ I will further point to the fundamental tensions between such forms of address and other national narratives of femininity.

In Chapter 5, I will show how the constructions of 'normal' private spaces and times described in the previous chapters were mapped on the markers of space in the radio programme. Building on the methodological framework outlined below, I will show how the radio stations identified themselves with the regions they served by means of a number of symbols and habits in radio programming. Rejecting previous approaches to the study of regional identity that have focused solely on traditional genres of regional programming, I will show how markers of space functioned across a wide range of regular programmes to present listeners with a vision of a space that was at once inhabitable and memorable, albeit in complicated ways. This discussion will draw especially on the idea of *Heimat* as it developed in Germany over the years leading up through the end of the war, and in the reconstruction of the nation that followed, and argue that it is a key concept that underlay many of the structures of radio programming.

States, stations and listeners 1923–1949

On 3 June 1945, in the first official broadcast from Stuttgart since Germany's unconditional surrender, US military commander Fred G. Taylor announced, 'From today onward Radio Stuttgart will attempt to be worthy of all who listen to its broadcasts. It will attempt to erase the memory of the past and its previous shameful role in it.'⁴¹ Apart from the highly questionable possibility, and even more questionable wisdom, of erasing a past that appeared so indelibly present in June of 1945, Taylor's comments are interesting in that he spoke of the radio in Stuttgart as if it were something that had always been there. Even though the station had been destroyed, its staff dispersed, and the regime that controlled it defeated, he referred to 'Radio Stuttgart' as if the institution were continuing. Referring to 'the radio' in much the same way as one would refer to 'the sky' was of course as common 60 years ago in Germany as it is nearly everywhere now. But 'the radio in Germany' 60 years ago was more problematic. The first half of the twentieth century saw five different states called 'Germany', each with a unique set of boundaries, and the licence fee on any radio set that lasted through the first three decades of broadcasting would have been paid to between three and five different institutions, depending on location.⁴² Yet within this illustration of the discontinuity of broadcasting in Germany, points of continuity are also apparent, namely the location of the stations and the licence fee (and to this could be added broadcast frequencies for most of the period in question), and it is these continuities and discontinuities I will outline here.

The system of broadcasting that developed in Germany during the Weimar Republic reflected many of the paradoxes and instabilities of the state. It was at once decentralized and part privately owned, and yet it was also subject to control by ministries of the national and state governments. The Ministry of Post (RPM) owned at least 51 per cent of the voting capital in all of the stations, set and collected the radio licence fees and owned all of the transmitting equipment. Local capital, often in combination with the *Deutsche Stunde*, a private production company, and the *Dradag*, a news service sponsored by the Ministry of the Interior, provided the rest. The stations and their programmes were likewise overseen by state-government-appointed radio commissioners, committees and councils. The broadcast space of Germany was divided into nine regional monopolies owned by private companies, which began broadcasting programmes between 1923 and the end of 1924.⁴³ The regions served by each of these monopolies were defined neither by political boundaries of states nor by the actual range of the radio waves, but

rather by the series of postal districts that were assigned to each station.⁴⁴ As such, the broadcast areas were often comprised of multiple states or provinces. In addition to the main station in each region, there were in most cases one or more smaller secondary stations (*Nebensender*), which served primarily to relay the signal from the main station, but in most cases also produced some of their own 'local' programmes (see Figure 1.1). In addition to nine regional stations, a long-wave station meant to reach all of Germany was set up to broadcast from the large transmitter at Königswusterhausen near Berlin. Though the station was initially set up to augment the programmes of the regional stations with 'higher' quality offerings, its position as the central station made it more and more synonymous with both the nation and the state of Germany. The *Deutschlandsender*, initially just the name of the station's 35-kW transmitter, came more and more to be used as the name of the station.⁴⁵

Radio stations that crossed regional and social boundaries thus carried with them the sense of speaking for and to an audience that was defined not only by their region or state but as Germans. In light of this situation, the radio was considered subject to censorship via the

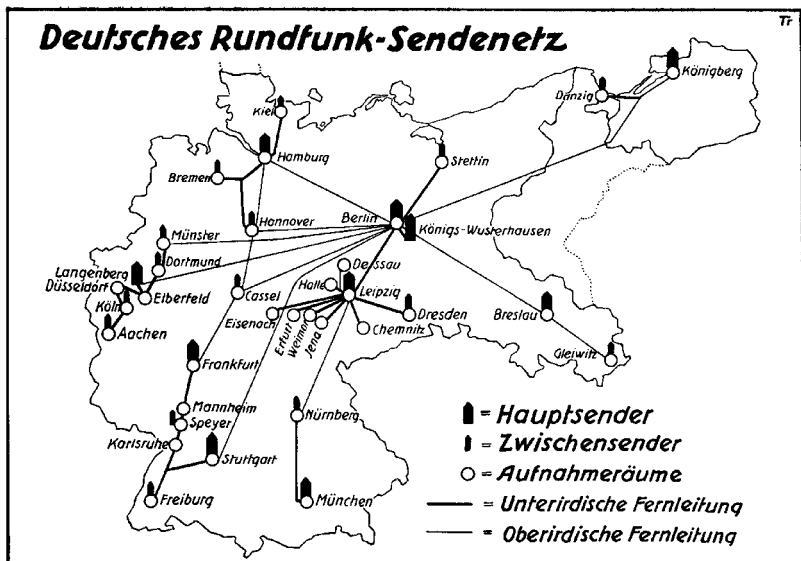


Figure 1.1 Main and secondary stations in Germany ca. 1927. The view here of an interconnected system belies the fact that stations mostly operated independently. Source: Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv.

national government.⁴⁶ Even before the National Socialists took over, the sense of national crisis in the latter years of the Weimar Republic led the conservative elements in government to take control of radio broadcasting. In 1932, all private interests were bought out by the states and the national radio company (*Reichs-Runfunkgesellschaft*, hereafter RRG), under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior, was given broad decision-making powers over the stations. In addition, the technological connections were also put in place that would enable every station to carry the same programme simultaneously.⁴⁷ Any doubt about what the stations were to represent was eliminated by the directives given to the programme-makers at the stations:

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.⁴⁸

Thus, when the National Socialists came to power less than a year later, they took over a system of broadcasting that was institutionally, technologically and symbolically geared towards the nation – and towards the state.

Shortly after the elections of 5 March 1933, which formally gave the Nazis political power in Germany, two things were uppermost on Hitler's agenda: the start of 'an ambitious propaganda and enlightenment campaign to prevent political lethargy', as well as the political 'co-ordination' (*Gleichschaltung*) of the states not controlled by National Socialist parliaments.⁴⁹ Both activities meant fundamental, and sometimes contradictory, changes for radio broadcasting. Seizing upon the radio as the medium best able to reach all of the population, the regime gave control over the radio almost entirely into the hands of the newly created Ministry for Public Information and Propaganda (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*, hereafter RMVP) under the leadership of Josef Goebbels. This process was aimed first and foremost at eliminating the influence of the individual states over the radio. The RMVP not only directly produced the central policy and programme guidelines for the stations, it controlled their finances as well. This meant that all personnel decisions at the stations went through the ministry in Berlin, as well as the collecting and distributing of money from licence fees – less and less of which was allocated to the individual stations over the years. From early 1933 on, Nazi policies were directed towards

'co-ordination' of public institutions. This term, with its connotations of mechanical efficiency and process streamlining, meant nothing less than establishing Nazi party control over every public institution. At the radio stations, this meant dismissing most of the top personnel, as well as all Jewish staff. All in all, 'co-ordination' was carried out at most stations by June of 1933, and approximately 13 per cent of the radio staff in Germany had been dismissed.⁵⁰ Over time, the ranks of Nazi party members working at the radio stations swelled, as many party members sought to use their influence to obtain work, and existing employees joined in order to further their careers.⁵¹ By 1934 over half, and by 1937 nearly two-thirds, of the employees of the radio stations were Nazi party members.⁵² In April 1934, all stations changed their name to *Reichssender* ('station of the Reich') and a uniform structure of organizational responsibility was imposed. In the months and years that followed, radio stations outwardly emphasized their identification with the regions they served, while internally they were brought under tighter central control from Berlin. New station identification tunes that were 'typical' of each region were adopted in 1935 and the radio schedules swelled with programmes that showcased the tradition of the region.⁵³ Wherever possible, such expressions of 'essential' regional culture were brought together into national productions, where listeners would be able to hear the 'typical' voices of their own region alongside 'typical' voices from all over Germany.

If the government of Weimar Germany had seen the radio as implying the nation by its crossing of regional boundaries, it was only after the Nazi takeover that the radio was actually able to reach something that demographically resembled the entire 'nation', and even then, it was far from complete. The relatively high cost of the devices, not to mention the unmistakably bourgeois content of most programming, ensured that Weimar radio was the almost exclusive domain of the middle class. Beginning in 1932, a number of factors came together to cause rapid expansion of radio listening. First was the sense of national crisis. Radio sales increased sharply starting already in 1932, due to an increased desire to be kept abreast of unfolding events, combined with moves to invest savings in durable goods should there be another monetary crisis as there had been in 1923.⁵⁴ In addition to those driven to the radio by the sense of crisis, many more listeners were soon added by the concerted efforts of the Nazis to ensure that their message would be carried to as many people as possible. Strong drives among the working classes and in rural areas encouraged everyone to become radio listeners out of a sense of national duty. Germans were told that 'whoever excludes himself from

German radio runs the danger of missing out on the life of the nation'.⁵⁵ In order to enable as many people as possible to be able to listen, the Nazis developed an inexpensive radio, the *Volksempfänger* ('people's receiver'). The first model, the VE301, came on the market in 1933 at a price of RM 76, about half the price of any other model on the market.⁵⁶ In 1938, an even cheaper model, the small DKE38, came on the market for the price of RM 35. These cheap radios could be paid for in monthly instalments drawn directly by employers from a worker's wages, with reduced or waived licence fees. As a result, the numbers of radio listeners swelled by the millions, including listeners in the lowest income brackets.⁵⁷ The equation of radio listening and citizenship was defined both positively and negatively. The special deals on radios described were not available to Jews or other people whom the Nazis considered 'un-German'.⁵⁸ Later on, Jews were even banned from owning radios altogether. Thus, the mass addressed by the radio programming of the Nazi state came to resemble – demographically, if not necessarily ideologically – the 'national community' envisaged by the Nazis. The *Volksempfänger* was designed to help keep this community national by only reliably picking up stations closer to 'home' in the airwaves, although this, like all other 'technical fixes' to prevent listening to foreign stations, was not very successful.⁵⁹ As Currid has pointed out, like so many other aspects of Nazi-era mass culture, the national orientation of radio listening was not total but rather revealed a number of breaks and contradictions particularly as it tried also to accommodate consumer capitalism.⁶⁰ The clearest example of these contradictions was that until the start of the war, schedules of other nations were printed in programme guides and could be received by anyone with a strong enough receiver.

The greatest changes both in the Nazi state as well as in the radio stations came with the outbreak of war. What had begun as the administrative and economic 'co-ordination' of the stations was finally completed with the centralization of the programme production. The final phasing out of 'local' broadcasting was only one part of a larger shift in the radio landscape created by the war. Within a week of the start of the war, listening to foreign stations became a crime, punishable by stiff fines, imprisonment, or (theoretically) death.⁶¹ The radio was to represent Germany and Germany only. The territory of this exclusive realm did not remain stable, however. Having already expanded first by the addition of Saarbrücken in 1935, and then the stations in Austria in 1938, the war saw the rapid expansion of the 'German' radio domain. In the initial 'lightning' phase of the war in 1939–1940, Warsaw, Lodz and Prague became 'German' stations. Furthermore, smaller stations for the troops

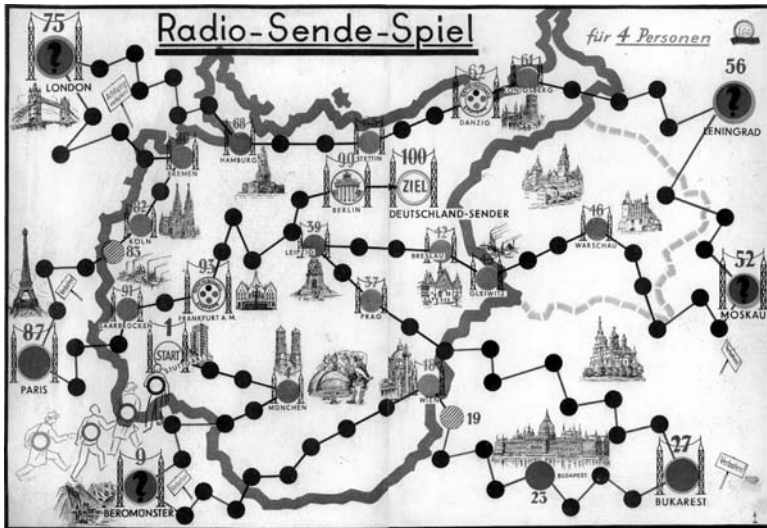


Figure 1.2 'The radio broadcast game', 1940. Source: Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv.

could often be picked up by listeners in Germany as well. To help even the children to learn which stations could be listened to legally, a board game was invented with a map of Germany, showing the boundaries of the wartime Reich, along with those stations that had been captured (see Figure 1.2).

There was enough confusion that both sides in the propaganda war, especially in its latter phases, operated 'black' stations, which masqueraded as networks for the forces, but carried with them misinformation, demoralizing and/or divisive reports.⁶²

The 'enemy' station best-known to listeners in Germany was the BBC's German Service. In addition to programmes by Hugh Carleton Greene and Lindley Fraser, much of the programme was produced by German émigrés, who spoke anonymously to emphasize the fact that this was a British station.⁶³ The largest push for the BBC German Service came from the start of the Normandy invasion through the end of the war, broadcasting a full 10 hours per day during prime time.⁶⁴ As American and British troops entered Germany from the West in March of 1945, the BBC began to broadcast instructions from General Eisenhower to Germans in the areas occupied by Allied troops. A joint base was set up in 1944 at the newly recaptured Radio Luxembourg, which broadcast a combination of material from the BBC's German Service, the London-based 'American

Broadcasting Station in Europe' (ABSIE) and the New York-based 'Voice of America' during the day, and was a so-called 'black station' by night.⁶⁵ As Allied bombing raids destroyed more and more of the cities, German radio once more became a local matter, if only in a limited capacity. In many cities, emergency transmitters and wire broadcasts were made available during bombing raids when the main broadcasting transmitters shut down in order to pass on emergency information.⁶⁶ One by one, the German stations fell silent as both Eastern and Western fronts retreated and collapsed. Some were destroyed either as a result of Allied bombing or of 'scorched earth' actions by the SS.⁶⁷ Some, such as Hamburg, Berlin and Munich, were taken more or less intact by the Allies.

The establishment of broadcasting under Allied occupation was largely an improvised affair, dependent in large part on which stations were taken by which army. Prior agreements among the Allies had only foreseen taking control of all media, but not what was to be done with them. Vague plans for national broadcasting under four-power control were discussed and a 'Multipartite Radio Committee' of the Allied Control Committee was even created but nothing ever came of it.⁶⁸ The first radio station to come back under Allied control was Hamburg, which was taken mostly intact when the city surrendered peacefully to British troops on 3 May 1945. By the evening of the next day, the small team of control officers who had been specially trained for the assignment of restarting broadcasting in Germany had put the station in order and begun broadcasting.⁶⁹ Work began almost immediately to restore Cologne, the other major station in the British zone. In June 1945, broadcasting, along with newspapers and other publishing in the British zone were placed under the control of the 'Public Relations/Information Services Control' (PR/ISC).⁷⁰ The British adopted the model of the BBC for the institution, with a public service structure, and a centralized service, with Hamburg as the production centre of a 'home service' for the entire zone.⁷¹ This central service was dubbed the *Nordwestdeutsche Rundfunk* ('North-West German Broadcasting', hereafter NWDR) when Cologne began broadcasting in September of 1945. Although the name change implied a new service that would extend over the entire zone, the bulk of the station's operations, as well as programme production, remained in Hamburg.

The British hired Hugh Carleton Greene (later Sir Hugh Greene 1909–1987) to take the position as chief controller of the NWDR in October of 1946, who was known and trusted by many German listeners, as well as the many exiles who had worked for the BBC during the war.⁷² By the time Greene arrived, the NWDR with 2.9 million registered radios was

the third largest broadcasting company in Western Europe after Radio-diffusion Francaise and the BBC.⁷³ The state structures surrounding this broadcasting system, however, were only just beginning to form. The tensions that ensued between the centralized structure of the NWDR and the growing influence of the federal states would plague the NWDR for its entire existence. Particularly the politicians of the new state of North Rhine-Westphalia, an area that had been served by the radio station in Cologne since 1926, were not prepared to accept a broadcasting system that subordinated their home station to Hamburg.

In contrast to the British, American authorities saw establishing a decentralized, regional structure of broadcasting in the first months after the war as a first step towards the creation of the federal political structures that they envisioned for a future German state. In order to counter what they saw as the development of centralized structures in the Soviet and British zones, the American authorities acted swiftly to create a federal system of government. A decree of 19 September 1945 created the three federal States of Bavaria, Greater Hesse and Württemberg-Baden. Each of the primary radio stations, Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Munich, became the official radio station of the new state, broadcasting from the capital of the state.⁷⁴ On 25 October 1945, the secondary station at Nuremberg was also brought online, and for a short time, it 'produced' the only show broadcast that was on every radio station in Germany, the war crimes trials of the central ranks of the Nazi party. The trials ran every day except Sunday from 20 November 1945 until 1 October 1946. Frankfurt and Stuttgart followed Munich, coming back on the air in the first week of June. These stations were at first provisional due to wartime damage to both, but work on both continued for months and they expanded their reach and remit.

The French zone, and the broadcasting that accompanied it, was in many ways an afterthought of the occupation. The French were not officially granted the zone until 12 July 1945, when the other Allied powers were already setting up basic administration in theirs and there were only small relay stations in their zone. In light of this, the decision was taken to build a new network of stations for the entire zone with its centre in Baden-Baden. Baden-Baden was both the seat of the military government, and its location close to the French border also allowed for the necessary materials and information for the station to be brought over from France relatively quickly.⁷⁵ Unlike the other radio stations in the Western zones, the stations of the French-held areas had German heads from the start of broadcasting, and the French control officers played a slightly lesser role than their British and US counterparts. After

a brief period from October 1945–February 1946, when the station at Koblenz broadcast independently, the full network of the *Südwestfunk* ('South-West Radio', hereafter SWF) began broadcasting 31 March 1946.

The skeleton crews of control officers who started up the new stations could not produce any but the most basic programmes. They set about almost immediately to build up a staff of German employees, some of whom had already been employed in broadcasting, and some of whom were starting anew. The number of employees grew steadily throughout the occupation, although as I will discuss in Chapter 3, the turnover rate in some sectors was relatively high. In general, by the start of 1946, however, the stations had a core German staff who were producing the bulk of the programme, under advice, guidance and censorship of the Allied control officers.

Developments in the Soviet zone were in some ways similar and in some very different from those in the Western zones. The radio station in Berlin had been abandoned on 1 May, as Soviet troops took over the city and as such had been taken almost entirely intact. Even though the station in Berlin's Masurenallee was in the British sector when the city was divided, the Soviets kept control of the building. The radio station in Leipzig, at first under American jurisdiction, came back to life locally in the summer of 1945, eventually taking the name and much of the range of its Weimar-era predecessor, the *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk* ('Middle-German Radio', hereafter MDR).⁷⁶ Regional stations in the northern half of the zone mostly relayed the programme from Berlin, and the stations in the southern half relayed the programme of the MDR. Whereas in the Western zones, efforts were being made to create a broadcast system totally separated from government influence, broadcasting in the Soviet zone was created from the start as a state-run institution. Responsibility for building the new radio station in Berlin was given to Hans Mahle (1911–1999), a member of the group of Moscow exiles centred around Walter Ulbricht. A short time later, in December of 1945, however, all radio production was placed under the authority of the German Central Administration for Popular Education (*Deutsche Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung*) in the Soviet zone. The failure of the negotiations for four-power control of broadcasting in Berlin led the US occupation authorities to begin their own radio station. What began as wired broadcaster DIAS (*Drahtfunk im Amerikanischen Sektor*) in November of 1945 became wireless station RIAS (*Rundfunk im Amerikanischen Sektor*) on 5 September 1946. While the other stations in the US zone were eventually given over into German hands, RIAS remained under US control. During and after the 1948–1949 blockade of

Berlin, the station became a symbol of the ongoing US presence in the city, and developed into one of the iconic institutions of the Cold War.⁷⁷

The deterioration of relations between the Soviet Union and the British and American Allies that began in late 1946 had an almost immediate effect on broadcasting institutions. After the speech by the US Secretary of State James Byrnes in Stuttgart in September 1946, and particularly after President Truman laid out the so-called 'Truman doctrine' in March of 1947, criticism of the Soviet Union and the administration of the Soviet zone was not only allowed, but encouraged at the stations in the US and British zones. A number of left-leaning staff from both the US and British-controlled stations either quit or were dismissed, and a number of them moved over to the Soviet zone (see Chapter 3). This new state of affairs also increased the pressure to turn the radio stations over into German hands, although first steps towards this goal had already begun. Already in January 1946, the US Information Control Division ordered stations to reduce the numbers of American officers at the stations and appoint German heads of station by 30 June, although only Radio Frankfurt managed this with its appointment of Eberhard Beckmann. At Radio Munich, American station head Field Horine, along with two other American officers, handed in their resignations in December of 1946 in protest over US occupation policy in general and denazification policy specifically. By contrast to the other Western zones, the French were neither as opposed to the Soviet Union, nor were they in any hurry to turn the station over fully into German hands. In Friedrich Bischoff, they already had a German station head who was widely respected and with whom they could work, and the bulk of the station was run by German employees, so that the growing tension between the other Allies did not have the sort of wide-ranging impact on personnel make-up and overall programming at the station that it had in the British and US zones.

In spite of the desire to hand them over to Germans, the deliberations on what form the broadcasting institutions should take were long and intense. Although some of the structures varied from station to station, they are mostly remarkable for their similarities. They were handed over to Germans as public companies, financed by listeners' licence fees. Control over the stations was split between a director (*Intendant*), who was responsible for the programme and the day-to-day running of the station, an administrative council and a broadcasting council, made up of representatives of society. The British were the first to hand over their station into German hands, on 1 January 1948.⁷⁸ Stations in the US and French zones followed over the course of 1949.⁷⁹ By the time the stations were handed over, the Allied presence in them was minimal, and

they had been running essentially under German direction for months. If anything, operating under Allied control had shielded the stations from political and other social groups that quickly scrambled to gain influence over the stations, particularly through the newly appointed station councils.

By the end of 1946, the radio map of Germany was one that was mostly familiar to the German radio audience (see Figure 1.3). Geographically, most of the stations had remained largely in the same place, with

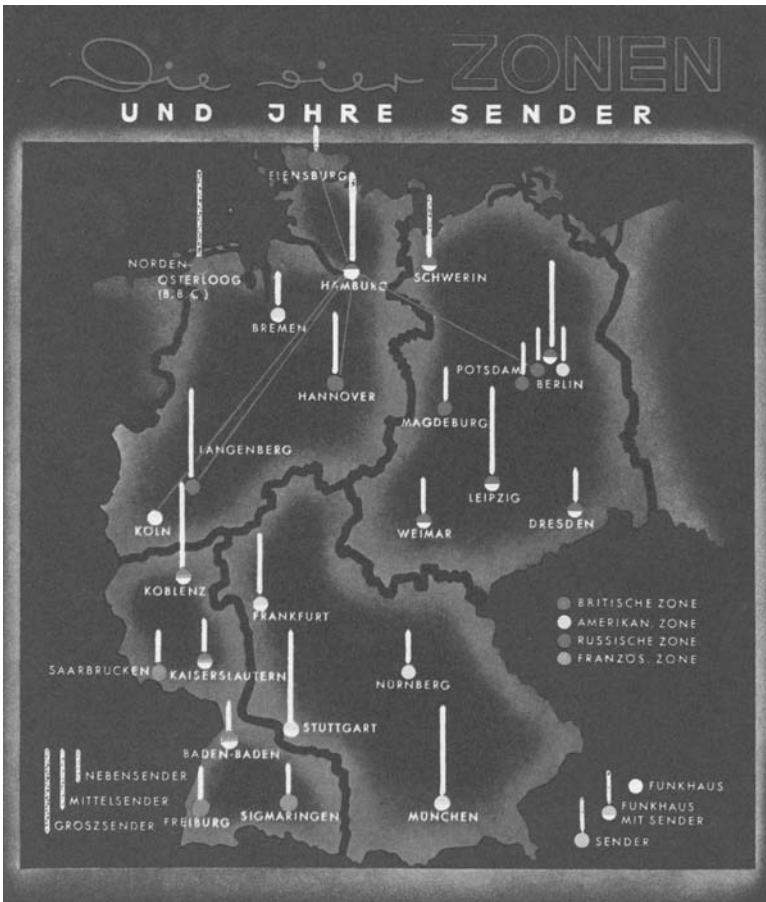


Figure 1.3 'The four zones and their stations' *Hör Zu*, December 1946. Source: Axel Springer AG.

the exception of the French zone. Technically, the radio landscape of broadcast frequencies had remained largely the same since the early Nazi era, when they were laid down by international convention in Lucerne in 1933. Over the course of the war, the situation had descended into chaos, as warring nations saw no need to respect each others' rights in the airwaves, but long-established domestic stations continued to operate on their regular frequencies. A convention to draw up a new frequency map of Europe met in Copenhagen in 1948. Germany could only be represented by the occupation powers and, as such, did not fare very well. Each occupation zone was granted two AM frequencies. The plan, which took effect in 1950, forced fundamental changes to take place on Germany's broadcast map, particularly the rapid development of an FM network, but for most of the occupation period, the stations stayed in their familiar physical and technical positions.

Whilst embodying some of the major shifts in the political landscape of Germany, the institutions of radio broadcasting also showed great continuities. Even before the occupation zones, let alone the states, were established, all of the major stations except Cologne were broadcasting on the same frequencies as they had before and during the war. The Post had continued to collect licence fees largely unchecked by the end of the war and the collapse of the state.⁸⁰ The amount of the licence fee, traditionally collected monthly by the postal carrier, as well as the official licence form, remained the same.

On one level, this division of radio broadcasting among the Allied powers and their zones was a further mark of the defeat and division of Germany. The armed Allied soldiers who controlled access to all of the radio stations throughout the occupation were reminder enough of this, as were the regular station announcements telling listeners they were hearing a station of the military government. On another level, however, the new radio order also represented in many ways a return to the decentralized broadcasting system that had been established in the Weimar Republic and slowly centralized by the Nazi state in the years leading up to the war. In addition, while they were controlled by Allied officers, many of whom were returned exiles from Germany, the bulk of the station staff were Germans who had lived in Germany during the Nazi era and had experience – at least as listeners, and many as producers – of the radio programming of that time.

The dominance and continuity of the radio was not total. Although the radio stations themselves were set up very quickly after the end of the war, not all of the potential listeners had the opportunity to receive them. A survey on radio coverage in the US zone during the winter of

1945/1946 summed up: 'Less than one-half of the population had radios in good working order. But nearly one in three radios in the zone was a two-tube *Volksempfänger*. Practically no radios were operated by batteries. Middle-wave lengths could be picked up by nearly all sets, but one-third of the sets were equipped to receive short-wave also.'⁸¹ The lack of radios that ran on batteries meant that radio listening also depended on there being available electricity, a distinct disadvantage given the power cuts that were common in Germany throughout the occupation.⁸² It should also be noted that in spite of Nazi efforts to promote rural radio listening, radio was also still mostly an urban affair. Not only were the numbers of actual radio sets much lower in the country, the stations themselves, particularly at the start of occupation, did not always reach far out of the cities.⁸³

In the Western zones, the shortage of radios was exacerbated by the fact that 80 per cent of the radio production before 1945 had been in factories in the East that were confiscated or dismantled after the war. As radio production in the West started back up, the radio device re-enacted the phases of its development. In order to be able to distribute radios immediately, factories began by producing simple crystal sets with headphones.⁸⁴ Since the start of radio broadcasting in Germany, building one's own radio out of various component parts had been a popular hobby, and in the post-war era, this 'hobby' became a valuable skill for those who could obtain the parts. In the British zone, where there was almost no radio manufacturing industry, there were many different approaches to the problem.⁸⁵ Orders were given to town mayors to acquire a few good quality radio receivers to which loudspeakers in public places could be attached, so that news information could be made available to those who did not have their own sets. In places where this was attempted, however, it was reported that listeners preferred making do with the few available newspapers to radio listening in public.⁸⁶ Public radio listening was probably too closely connected with its use in the Nazi era for credibility or comfort. In order to meet the high demand and limited financial means of their audience, the British authorities contracted with the new radio manufacturers in their zone to create what would essentially be the next version of the *Volksempfänger*. This new *Jedermann-Gerät* ('everyman-device'), as it was known, featured some improvements over its Nazi predecessor, the most notable of these being FM reception. This new designation for the 'standard' radio receiver is quite telling about the changing emphasis of the radio after the war. Whereas *Volksempfänger* emphasizes the entire mass of listeners, *Jedermann-Gerät* focuses on the individual consumer. Not

surprisingly, would-be purchasers of the new device actually had to wait until 1948 before it came on the market, and even then, it was not yet at a price that could be considered for 'everyman'.⁸⁷

In spite of these difficulties, radio listening in Germany expanded rapidly. On 1 July 1948, there were 6.25 million registered radios in the Western zones.⁸⁸ A registered radio was normally equated to five actual listeners, by which calculation there were over 31.25 million radio listeners – roughly 70 per cent of the population.⁸⁹ The number of licensed radios represents a low estimate of the numbers who were actually listening, due to high levels of unlicensed listening, which continued from the end of the war until the early 1950s.⁹⁰ As consumer items, radio sets held a special status somewhere between luxury and necessity. Immediately after the war, any device that could be made to function was generally used gladly, no matter how improvised. Whereas families saved and waited to purchase other household goods such as refrigerators and vacuum cleaners until the mid- to late 1950s, new radios were more often acquired as soon as money was available for them.⁹¹

For most listeners throughout the occupation period and well into the 1950s, listening to the radio meant almost exclusively listening to their 'home station' (*Heimatsender*).⁹² When asked, listeners almost uniformly cited 'good reception' as the reason for this.⁹³ The signal strength of the post-war stations, as well as the quality of most of the available radio sets made receiving most 'outside' stations difficult.⁹⁴ As late as 1948, nearly one third of the listeners in the British zone could still not pick up the stations in the US zone.⁹⁵ Though they took note of this degree of listener 'loyalty', it did not make the Allied occupiers complacent. Upon becoming aware of this phenomenon, the Americans concluded that 'if a rival station increased its power, or if better receiving sets were available, audiences might shift accordingly'.⁹⁶ As I will show in Chapter 5, this assessment showed an incomplete understanding of the habits and preferences of Germans with regard to their local stations. The official handing-over of the radio stations from Allied into German control, while significant in the history of broadcasting in Germany, was essentially a non-event for most listeners.⁹⁷ There had indeed been ceremonies to mark the occasion at each of the stations, the identification announcements no longer announced 'a station of the military government', and in the American zone, even the names of the stations had changed, but from the point of view of station staff or daily programme, there were no other immediate changes. For listeners in Bavaria, in particular, this was a return to the name, and to the role the station had had before the 1933.

Radio as 'voice of the Heimat'

Though it is my concern here to show the ways in which the radio reproduced a sense of 'normal' times and spaces of Germany, it is obvious but nevertheless necessary to note that neither the space nor the time of Germany had been 'normal' since broadcasting began. As we have seen, the tensions between the region, state and radio station in Germany may have been exacerbated by the occupation, but they were by no means unique to it. In fact, if one can speak of a 'normal' experience of the nation of Germany, in the sense of something familiar and continuous, I would argue that a feeling of unresolved tension in space must form a significant part of it.⁹⁸ Since the nineteenth century, the idea of Heimat has been mobilized in Germany to reconcile its scattered geographical and cultural past with the idea of the nation-state of Germany. Instead of focusing on central, national symbols, the idea of nation based around the Heimat looks to provincial spaces as evidence of a common German past. Heimat enthusiasts of the nineteenth century set out to preserve, catalogue and display the *Eigenart*, or unique quality, of their region and its traditions as part of an authentic Germanness. By the time of the First World War, Heimat had become a widespread, everyday understanding of the nation, one that has been taken up in various forms and for varying agendas in every state that has called itself Germany since. This peculiar interweaving in Germany of local and provincial space with this particular project of national identity means that even today it is difficult to talk about regional identity, or even regions, without implicitly or explicitly talking about Heimat. As Anton Kaes pointedly states, 'scenes of provincial life are never innocent in Germany'.⁹⁹ In order to understand the processes of national identity in post-war radio, it will first be my task to examine this particular complex of symbols and demonstrate the way they operated in and around the radio. In so doing, I will also place the radio in the centre of the debate on construction and meaning of Heimat in the post-war era. While the Heimat phenomenon has been repeatedly explored with regard to film and television, in particular surrounding Edgar Reitz's 1984 series *Heimat*, the radio has been largely absent in the discussion.¹⁰⁰

While the term 'Heimat' and many of its associated symbols have become embedded in the discussion of regional space, their meaning has been anything but consistent historically. As a product of the fundamental tension between two often irreconcilable ideas of space, it is the nature of Heimat that it is inexact, changeable and often paradoxical. Indeed, Hermann Bausinger argues that Heimat is best understood

not as an entity unto itself, but as an ongoing historical problem.¹⁰¹ In showing the way that the idea of Heimat has operated within the radio programme, I will draw largely on Alon Confino's study of the development of the Heimat movement in Württemberg before the First World War.¹⁰² This does not contradict my assertion that Heimat must be considered in its specific historical context. Though his focus is on a different historical context, his method of examining Heimat as a system for making the nation 'everyday mental property' that operated across numerous modes of public expression resonates strongly with the project at hand. Indeed, as I will demonstrate, most of these symbolic processes continued to function in the radio programmes of post-war Germany, even though their meaning was necessarily changed by the different context in which they operated.

From the outset of broadcasting in Germany, the Heimat idea has played a vital role in the construction of the radio and its relationship to the people and nation it served. The creation of nine regional broadcasting monopolies was often touted as a 'natural' reflection of the notion put forth by nineteenth-century scholars that 'Germany' consisted of nine different but related tribes (*Stämme*), an idea that had become common-sense enough by 1919 to be written into the constitution of the Weimar state.¹⁰³ Once the stations were established, the radio programming set out to reflect the *Eigenart* of the regions. The ability to report live allowed reporters to go out into provincial spaces and bring the countryside that is at the centre of Heimat imagery into the homes of the mostly urban audience.¹⁰⁴ Listeners from broad areas could participate in the 'unique' characteristics of individual localities. As a verbal medium, the radio was able to address listeners in the unique voice of regional dialect, soon giving rise to radio's designation as the 'voice of the Heimat'.¹⁰⁵

The National Socialists, once they took over power, wholeheartedly embraced the Heimat idea in their policies, but in their own particular version of it that leaned very heavily on their ideas of race.¹⁰⁶ 'Blut und Boden' ('Blood and Soil') became the primary designation for the Heimat idea, with the connotations that those without the 'blood tie' to the land should be forcibly removed and/or murdered. With regard to the countryside, the 'blood and soil' idea was laid down by law in 1933 in the Law of Hereditary Property (*Erbhofsgesetz*), which stipulated that all farms must be owned by those who could prove their German or 'tribal' blood. Even whilst starkly centralizing the production of the radio programme, the Nazis were also keen to emphasize the regional uniqueness of each station and region. Increasingly, however, the production

of the local *Heimat* became part of national productions, in which several regions were presented at once, each in a stylized form that would be intelligible to listeners from other regions.¹⁰⁷ Once the war began, the *Heimat* became the *Heimatfront*, and the production of *Heimat* no longer focused on the specific places of Germany, but rather on producing an image of Germany as a whole as a cosy, intimate place in contrast to the foreign world where the soldiers were fighting. During the war, the representations of locality were first erased from the radio stations and then from the radio programmes themselves, due to the practical considerations of producing a programme for the entire nation and the increased ideological focus on the centralized Nazi state as the sole symbol of the German nation. In the end, as Celia Applegate notes, the forced mobilizations of National Socialism and war 'required of Germans a nationalism to which all bonds of locality had necessarily to be sacrificed'.¹⁰⁸ Though it had drawn very heavily on the idea of *Heimat*, particularly in its representations of and on the radio, the Nazi state had stretched *Heimat* to its breaking point.

After the war, *Heimat*, with its focus on provincial and regional spaces, became once more a powerful focus of identity in Germany. The mostly failed attempt by the Nazis to conflate *Heimat* in the minds of Germans with the National Socialist state and its central apparatus in Berlin helped allow the idea of *Heimat*, particularly in its aspect of regional representation, to be 'pulled out of the rubble of the Nazi Reich as a victim, not a perpetrator'.¹⁰⁹ The identification with the region was further compounded by the country's political division as well as the scattering of its population. Indeed, as Bausinger comments,

It is not surprising that *Heimat* was once more writ large immediately after the Second World War (as it had been, incidentally, after the First). The powerful *Reich* had been smashed; the people were bound into smaller units, distilled first onto the division into occupation zones and then bounded into federal states and administrative localities that sought to determine and reinforce their own identity. The influx of 'Heimat-expellees' was also meaningful for the consciousness of *Heimat* – the loss of *Heimat* of these migrants and refugees underlined the value of *Heimat*.¹¹⁰

Between those soldiers who remained in captivity, those who had been bombed out of their homes and those who had been expelled from the East, over 20 per cent of the population of Germany was no longer where they 'belonged' on the map of Germany, and the map was obsolete to

boot.¹¹¹ According to the census from October 1946, a substantial portion of the population of the US and British zones consisted of people who were not natives to the region where they were living.¹¹²

In some ways, the contained, local world ostensibly envisaged in Heimat imagery had been created by the destruction of the war. Following the exceptional mobility of the war, which had uprooted millions of people from their daily routines and familiar surroundings and scattered them across Germany and the globe, most Germans found themselves essentially 'stuck' in one place. Roads and railways were destroyed, the forms of public transport that were running were always packed full, and the boundaries between the occupation zones were largely impassable for the average citizen. As much as Germans were 'stuck', however, they were also perpetually on the move. The scattering of the population coupled with the need for sustenance meant that many people were routinely making longer journeys than 'normal'. The search for lost relatives, the attempt to obtain goods from the country, or simply the trip from the only available housing to the only available work, all required many people to make relatively long journeys and to interact with a wide range of people. This paradoxical mobility in destroyed, uncertain spaces only increased the longing for the (re)construction of the cosy, private, graspable space of Heimat.

The heightened consciousness of Heimat in public discourse went hand-in-hand with productions of Heimat in the reconstruction of popular entertainment in Germany. This was particularly the case in cinema, where the genre of the *Heimatfilm* accounted for one in five German films made between 1947 and 1960.¹¹³ Set against the backdrop of rural places such as the Bavarian Alps or the Lüneburg Heath, these films portrayed a cosy local world where tensions between foreign and familiar, past and present could be safely negotiated. Indeed, the sense of place described above, of a static realm 'suffused with the tropes of mobility' is very similar to that which has been identified by Johannes von Moltke as one of the defining features of the spatial settings in the post-war *Heimatfilm*.¹¹⁴

In examining the appeal of Heimat symbolism to post-war audiences, it is important to remember Confino's key point that as much as it emphasizes the particular characteristics of specific regions, Heimat is also, and perhaps primarily, a *national* idea. Its purpose is to provide a mechanism by which the markers of local and regional identity become intelligible to 'natives' and 'outsiders' alike as evidence of membership in a larger German whole.¹¹⁵ The Heimat view of the landscape is the modern, aesthetic gaze of the tourist, that is, someone who is always standing at a remove. Indeed, Heimat imagery was a vital part of tourist advertising

from the late nineteenth century through the Nazi era, and in different form was an integral part of reconstruction of the tourist industry after the war.¹¹⁶ As a space that is at once viewed from 'outside', and yet at the same time an intimate, 'internal' space where the (German) visitor can feel 'at home', Heimat always makes reference to a larger entity than the local space it portrays. In this regard, the Heimatfilm is a case in point. Though foregrounding the landscape of a specific region, such films were clearly aimed at, and readily consumed by, an audience that went well beyond the borders of the region they portrayed, though seldom beyond the borders of Germany and Austria. A complex of national symbols that could thus offer a vision of an authentic Germanness without explicitly referring to the boundaries of Germany, or even necessarily Germany itself, resonated strongly at a time when the definition of Germany was still uncertain.

The notion of Heimat integrates geographically and culturally distinct places by creating a sense of a common past that makes an integrated present seem natural. As such, Heimat symbolism is fundamentally about reconciling the 'authentic' local past with the modernized present 'to overcome the inherent strangeness' between them.¹¹⁷ Heimat appears as a past that shines through on the modern present. If there is any persistent feature, or indeed meaning, of Heimat, then it is this 'simultaneity of the unsimultaneous'.¹¹⁸ Understanding Heimat as a representation of space that does not deny, but rather embraces, modernity lies at the heart of recent re-evaluations of the long-standing interpretation of Heimat as a deeply anti-modern nostalgia for a pre-modern past. From the Heimat images of the nineteenth century, which frequently included modern factories amid the 'traditional' townscapes, to 1950s Heimatfilms, where rural spaces are filled with cars and other trappings of modernity, the idea of Heimat has been to portray a modernity that does not stand at odds with tradition.¹¹⁹ Perhaps more than any other modern development, the radio was able to realize uniquely this simultaneous 'presence' of past and present that represented the ideal experience of Heimat. Without having to travel at all, radio listeners were able to take part in village festivals, Heimat evenings and concerts in historic town halls, all of which celebrated a common past, even in the midst of the most modern of surroundings.

Within the context of post-war reconstruction, this dual aspect of Heimat, its simultaneous embrace of both modernity and its apparent opposite, acquired particular importance. No matter how great the nostalgia for local, rural spaces might have been, not even the most energetic post-war *Heimatler* wanted to see Germany's industrial progress halted.

The widespread fear of the Morgenthau plan – far out of proportion to the seriousness with which it was regarded by the Allied powers – and the general outrage at the dismantling of German industrial sites by the Allies provide ample evidence that the vision of a modern Germany was just as important as any longing for unspoiled rural space.¹²⁰ Indeed, with the destruction of Germany, modernization meant not only bringing Germany technically back ‘up-to-date’ with the rest of the world, it also meant moving symbolically *beyond* the recent Nazi past. Axel Schildt notes a very similar trend in the advertising for the domestic tourism industry in the early Federal Republic.¹²¹ Prospectuses for German destinations at once highlighted the modern free time amusements of bars, motorboats and cinemas, as well as ‘Heimat-evenings’ and, for example, ‘a valuable look at Frisian folkways, language, old traditions and lovely traditional costumes’.¹²² Similarly, post-war Heimatfilms, which were also a form of tourism promotion, were filled with the trappings of modern life, especially cars.¹²³

Perhaps one of the most enduring and implicitly understood images of Heimat is its gendered quality. Heimat always appears as the feminine aspect of the nation that remains at home. Heimat does not go to war, but rather it is what the nation goes to war to defend. Women, almost always portrayed as mothers, become the ‘human protagonists’ of the Heimat.¹²⁴ As I will lay out in greater detail in Chapter 4, these feminine visions of the homeland were particularly mobilized through the radio during the war. In speaking to the soldiers in the field, the radio adopted a feminine voice suffused with tropes of domesticity to create an image of a normal Germany enduring at home while the war fronts expanded across Europe. After the war, feminine imagery was once more particularly mobilized as a symbol of the new, peaceful nation of Germany that developed.

Because it looks to those aspects of culture that are supposedly ‘eternal’ and ever-present, Heimat appears also as a process of perpetual *rediscovery*. This rediscovery can take on many forms. In romantic novels, it was seen in contrast to *die Ferne* (‘the distance’) or *die Fremde* (‘foreign lands’) where one travels, eventually to return to the Heimat.¹²⁵ Similar narratives are staples of the post-war Heimatfilm, which often centre around characters who come into the provincial space from outside and must be (re-)integrated into the community. Certainly this aspect was also central to Heimat in its guise of tourist advertisement: Germans were invited to rediscover the country which had been rendered alien to them by the war. Such rediscovery was also a powerful trope in the production of the region in the radio programmes. In a seminal article, Horst O. Halefeldt

described developments in German broadcasting as a series of periodic 'rediscoveries' of the local world by broadcasters and listeners.¹²⁶ Within the limited mobility of everyday life, this 'rediscovery' of places that were still close, but far less reachable than they had been, was both of practical and symbolic importance to numerous listeners. As we shall see, the radio reporting on the state of reconstruction drew very heavily on the language of rediscovery inherent in Heimat symbolism in presenting the process to its listeners.

Contained within this apparent process of perpetual rediscovery is also a narrative of perpetual loss.¹²⁷ As an idea that had grown in response to the changes and loss in ways of life experienced in the shock of modernity, Heimat after the war came to embody the more dramatic losses of the prisoners of war, the bombed out city-dwellers and above all the refugees from the East. What is remarkable about this sense of loss is its ambiguous position between time and space; it is never clear whether the loss of Heimat refers to a time that has passed, or a place that has been removed. This ambiguity can be seen clearly in the following rumination on Heimat by Paul Land, a popular announcer at Radio Stuttgart, announcing a song in one of his regular 'Operetta Cocktails':

What is Heimat? A pretty word? You hear it. It has resonance. You read it in a book, but it stays just a 'word,' as long as one lives at home. But Heimat is everything, if one is far from it, Heimat is the great longing when one is away in foreign lands, where the people have different customs, other fashions, other languages. Millions of people during the war sensed for the first time what else Heimat is besides a word; that it is *everything* we have. And still today millions of our brothers live in foreign places; they feel what Heimat means. For them: the Heimat song from the operetta 'Monika'.¹²⁸

Land first spoke of Heimat in the present tense ('it is everything that we *have*'), as if it were Germany 'now' and the loss of Heimat meant the physical removal into 'foreign' lands. Once he had played the song, however, he referred not to the longing and loss specifically of the prisoners of war (many of whom may well have been listening), but rather of *everyone*, himself included: 'When the longing for *our* Heimat has stirred up *our* hearts, what makes more sense than the "Flight into happiness"?' This, too, is the title of an operetta and . . . doesn't it say a lot?¹²⁹ Suddenly, Heimat was not lost in space, but in time, and not so much a place that could be escaped *to* in any physical sense, but rather an experience of loss that must be escaped *from*.

Land's portrayal of Heimat as 'just a word as long as you are at home' returns us to the notion with which I began this discussion: Heimat is ultimately a vision of normality. This is perhaps its greatest affinity with radio, and it is small wonder that Heimat was one of the terms most often connected with the radio after the war. In common parlance, *Heimat-sender* was used to refer one's 'local' station, or else to the station to which one paid the licence fee. The term 'voice of the Heimat' was once more unproblematically invoked in connection with the post-war radio.¹³⁰ The flexibility of the term also continued undiminished. With reference to the soldiers still in captivity, the 'Heimat' invoked was Germany; in the struggle for regional broadcasting in Cologne or Koblenz the 'Heimat' was primarily a 'unique' cultural region that required a 'voice' in the air that would reflect its 'authentic' character. This flexibility of meaning must also be understood historically: the Heimat envisaged on the radio in 1923 was not always the same thing as Heimat in 1933, or in 1943, which were quite different again from many aspects of Heimat that have been discussed after 1945. One way or another, however, the question in Germany – in 1923, in 1933, in 1943 and after 1945 – was never seriously *whether* the radio should be the 'voice of the Heimat', but rather *what* Heimat its voice(s) should represent and *how*. It is this question, ultimately, that this book will address.

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