

Introduction

# Media and Their Users in Nazi Germany

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Nazi Germany was, among other things, a modern media society. By the early 1930s, nearly everyone in Europe was consuming some mass media, probably a mix of printed, visual, audio, and perhaps, occasionally, already audiovisual media. When the Nazis came to power, it was true for Germans as for people across Europe that almost all they knew about their society and the world they lived in they knew through mass media.<sup>1</sup> And there are good reasons to assume that what they thought and felt about what they knew was in some or other way related to their interactions with those media and what other media consumers said about those subjects.

National Socialists understood the potential of mass media. They made skillful use of the ones that were accessible to them as they gathered followers into a mass movement, e.g., staging the kinds of events that provoked newspaper coverage, which made the young movement look bigger and more impressive than it was at the time.<sup>2</sup> And as soon as they controlled the government, they began to take control of the media, pressuring publishers, directors, and producers, when pressure was needed, to get rid of all media practitioners the Nazis considered politically and/or from their racist point of view undesirable. With their dismissal and the rest falling into line, unwanted content disappeared. Consequently, patterns of interpreting current events no longer competed publicly.

## **Audiences and Their Choices**

However, this enforced coordination (*Gleichschaltung*) did not mean that German media consumers no longer made choices.<sup>3</sup> For example, subscribers to the

Communist and Social Democratic papers that the Nazis had shut down had to decide whether to subscribe to another newspaper and, if so, to one owned or published by the Nazi Party or one of the bourgeois papers that were still independent. And everybody who read a newspaper chose how much attention to give to the political news, perhaps even clipping out articles to put into their diary or preferring to read more of the local news, sports, human interest stories, and ads.<sup>4</sup> Germans who did not yet own a radio had to make up their minds whether one of the new, comparatively low-priced *Volksempfänger* receivers fit into their budget. And all radio owners chose whether or not to tune in to the heavily advertised live broadcasts of Hitler's speeches and the regime's spectacles, and, if they did, whether to follow the Nazi Party's suggestion and point their radios out their open windows for others to hear.<sup>5</sup> Those without radios still had to decide whether or not to listen to such special broadcasts with their better-equipped neighbors<sup>6</sup> or join a communal reception (*Gemeinschaftsempfang*), if one had been set up in their neighborhood. Book readers could either choose from the selections of public libraries, which had been cleansed of books the Nazis considered *undeutsch*, or they could buy their reading material at bookstores, which were free to sell the works of German non-Nazi and foreign authors as long as their books did not openly criticize the Nazi regime.<sup>7</sup> In the theaters, moviegoers found a variety of apolitical, entertaining feature films, both domestic and foreign, so long as Germany was not at war with the country from which they came. And they could watch films with obvious National Socialist messages, like *Hitlerjunge Quex*, *Triumph des Willens*, *Heimkehr*, and *Jud Süß*. But whatever they chose, the accompanying program, which included a newsreel and an educational short (*Kulturfilm*), was not up to them. Though television did not involve the kinds of choices the other media did, a visit to a reception parlor (*Fernsehstube*) to see this latest medium free of charge did become an option in 1935, but only for people in and around Berlin. However, the heralded *Volksfernseher* for home consumption never materialized because of the war, and the television sets from the reception parlors were moved to military hospitals to entertain wounded soldiers of the Wehrmacht.<sup>8</sup>

Whatever media products Germans decided to consume, they had to make sense of them. The fact that the propaganda ministry, established a few weeks after Hitler's appointment as chancellor, banned some media products and controlled the production of the rest, demanding that journalists and filmmakers support, or at least not criticize, Nazi policies, was by no means a secret. Audiences understood that the new government had ended the Weimar Republic's pluralistic media offerings, and they were well aware of the presence of its propaganda. But how did they feel about it, and how did they respond? Nobody thinks of oneself as blindly believing propaganda. So, how did readers, listeners, and viewers who liked the regime rationalize their approval so as to see themselves as self-determining media consumers with agency? When did they find occasions for doubt or disagreement in order to feel good about subscribing to the rest?<sup>9</sup> And what did those media consumers who missed opposing political views and the

cultural representations the regime considered corrosive do? How many, or rather how few, were the Germans who risked reading the underground material produced and distributed by activists of the KPD or tried to get hold of the reports on the situation in Germany assembled by the SPD's executive board in exile?<sup>10</sup> A less dangerous alternative was to buy foreign newspapers, perhaps German-language Swiss papers, or tune in to foreign radio broadcasts. Until the start of the war, foreign papers were available at kiosks and library reading rooms, and German radio guides announced foreign programs and their frequencies.<sup>11</sup> Yet turning to a foreign newspaper or radio channel did not guarantee that one would read or hear criticism of the Nazi regime. On an ordinary day with no important political events occurring in Germany, foreign news sources might not have even mentioned German politics, or the new German regime might at times have even received appreciative coverage, at least in its early years. Still, these media were not under the control of the Nazi propaganda ministry and could offer outside perspectives to Germans eager for different views.

The propaganda ministry made clear its intolerance of critical discussion and the careful weighing of arguments in the media, in particular with regard to politics. Accordingly, many media products left little leeway for interpretation in their messages. Those in the audience who were already convinced of the message might have welcomed this, for it confirmed their view, letting them feel empowered. But the chances that the media would sway the unconvinced by blaring such messages at them must have been pretty slim, for nothing could prevent such consumers from ignoring the messages or taking away a different one. Journalists who did not want simply to execute the ministry's directives and readers who wanted to think that they thought for themselves both seem to have taken refuge in ambiguity. After the end of the Third Reich, several journalists claimed that they had tried to write "between the lines," and many readers remembered searching for hints as to what they signaled there.<sup>12</sup> If in retrospect we do not find certain cases of such claims convincing, it does not follow that there was no ambiguity in media products in Nazi Germany. Some were more ambiguous; others were less so. But all were subject to readers' interpretations; in fact, they all had to be interpreted if consumers were to make sense of them. Therefore, studying the different ways in which audiences could have made and actually did make sense of media products is a fruitful way to better understand the social and cultural history of the Third Reich.

## Media and Propaganda in the Historiography on Nazism

Most mass media were still quite new at the time, and many Nazi media products reached audiences of a size later media producers could only dream of. Thus, the media and their audiences frequently come up in the historiography on Nazism. Yet it is a matter of real consequence whether authors look at the media only or primarily from the perspective of the regime, that is to say, focus on its propa-

ganda efforts and media policy of *Gleichschaltung*, or whether they also consider the media from the perspective of audiences and conceptualize the former's possible effects on the latter as the results of an interplay among media policies, intended messages, media products themselves, the conditions under which audiences received them, and the reception of actual audiences. The first, and older, approach has led many authors to conclude that the Nazis' employment of media made their propaganda highly effective, while because the latter approach is best pursued in case studies it has produced much more specific findings that cannot be easily generalized into an overall evaluation of the effects of media consumption in the Third Reich.

Looking at Nazi propaganda with a focus on the men in charge of controlling and issuing instructions to the media was the dominant approach in historical research in the first three decades after the end of World War II. It led researchers to study the writings of Hitler and Goebbels, who saw themselves as the gifted creators and masterminds of Nazi propaganda. Historians in this tradition regularly cite Hitler's notorious claims in *Mein Kampf* (1925) that the "art of propaganda" is finding the "psychologically correct form" to attract the attention and then reach the hearts of "the broad masses," whose intelligence is limited, attention span brief, and forgetfulness enormous, all in line with the 1920s' dominant theories of mass psychology. Therefore, the artful propagandist appeals to people's emotions, particularly their resentments; confines his message to very few points; and repeats them over and over in the course of simple, one-sided arguments.<sup>13</sup> (One would like to know what well-disposed readers of *Mein Kampf* made of this assessment of audiences, given that they themselves were members of them.<sup>14</sup>) The reservoir of Goebbels's quotations about propaganda is much larger. Contrary to Hitler, who did not like to put anything in writing, Goebbels was eager for posterity to find his comments on everything in his newspaper articles, books, essays, speeches, and diaries. As the minister of propaganda, he portrayed himself as a genius who could steer audiences wherever he wanted, the virtuosic conductor of a massive propaganda machine, and, at the same time, the most astute critic of its output.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Goebbels was far more pragmatic than ideological and, so, wrote all kinds of different things in different contexts about propaganda, whatever he thought would work or bring him Hitler's approval, which he craved.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, authors can find his pithy phrases on whatever aspect of Nazi propaganda they want to argue was characteristic: that no realm of public life could escape its influence; that every media product carried invisible propaganda; that propaganda was most effective in small, unnoticed doses; or that the most important thing was for journalists not to be boring ("nur nicht langweilig werden"). It was through historians' uncritical acceptance of such claims that Hitler and Goebbels, in particular, have come to be seen as the masters of mass persuasion that they dreamt of being. However, documenting dreams of irresistible influence is not discovering evidence that the dreams came true.

It is true, though, that the Nazi regime was very invested in propaganda and continuously increased the staff assigned to it.<sup>17</sup> The Nazis believed their stab-

in-the-back legend, according to which Germany had not lost World War I on the battlefield but in part because of its weak propaganda, which had failed to keep up the morale of the home front. The Allies had won because of their skillful propaganda, which had welded their citizens together and undermined the resolve of Germans. So the Nazis were determined to learn from the Allies how to win the next war by winning the propaganda war. Once appointed chancellor, Hitler took information policy seriously enough to force the conservative members of his cabinet to agree to a new Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda) with broad authority over media and culture taken from other ministries and agencies; it was tailor-made for Goebbels, the NSDAP's propaganda leader, though he had expected to be given even more power.<sup>18</sup> When he was appointed minister, soon after the elections in March 1933, Goebbels addressed separate inaugural speeches to summoned representatives of the press, radio, and film industry in which, among other things, he let them know that it was now their task to win over the 48 percent who had not voted for the new government and its "national revolution."<sup>19</sup> The media had the power to shape public opinion, Goebbels stated, and this "people's government" (*Volksregierung*) would not be satisfied with a minority that merely put up with it. Therefore, the media were to work on the not yet persuaded "until they have fallen for us" ("bis sie uns verfallen sind").<sup>20</sup> In the elections in November of that year, the NSDAP, as the single list on the ballot, received 92 percent of the vote from the 96 percent of eligible voters who turned out.<sup>21</sup>

Though this increase in popular approval demands explanation, arguing that it was the result of vigorous media activity confuses correlation with causation. Yet many contemporaries and later historians and other scholars have assumed that the coordinated (*gleichgeschaltet*) media were crucial in generating and maintaining the Nazi regime's remarkably broad approval among Germans, no majority of whom ever voted for the NSDAP in a free election. In his final statement as a defendant before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in August 1946, Albert Speer constructed the argument that would suit many Germans for some time to come:

Hitler's dictatorship differed in one fundamental point from all its predecessors in history. His was the first dictatorship in the present period of modern technical development, a dictatorship which made complete use of all technical means in a perfect manner for the domination of its own nation. Through technical devices such as radio and loudspeaker, eighty million people were deprived of independent thought. . . . Earlier dictators during their work of leadership needed highly qualified assistants, even at the lowest level, men who could think and act independently. The totalitarian system in the period of modern technical development can dispense with them; the means of communication alone make it possible to mechanize the subordinate leadership. As a result of this, there arises a new type: the uncritical recipient of orders.<sup>22</sup>

Speer, who self-interestedly set himself up as the expert insider and adviser to the Western Allies, was not the only one to identify the modern mass media as the

central factor in creating and keeping mass support. Many Americans at the time, who wondered how a nation as cultivated as Germany, with its love of Goethe and Beethoven, could have fallen for such a demagogue and supported a regime that had committed unprecedented mass crimes against humanity, suspected the media of manipulative powers. Among the American military government's first denazification measures were to shut down newspapers and broadcasters and close movie theaters in its zone of occupation.<sup>23</sup> It then issued licenses and work permits only to publishers, radio directors, journalists, filmmakers, and theater owners who passed its screening procedures, and it controlled their content for some time.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1950s, the theory of totalitarianism took two of the essential characteristics of totalitarian regimes to be the interaction of propaganda and terror and the state's monopoly of the means of mass communication.<sup>25</sup> Wanting to see commonalities in Soviet and Nazi rule as this theory did, the fact that both regimes established propaganda ministries and were explicit that their point was to shape public opinion was convenient to notice. However, the theory and its ideal types were not based on empirical research, of which there was almost none of Nazi Germany and none at all of the Soviet Union at the time. The theory's anti-Communist leaning and its tendency to celebrate Western democracies in contrast to totalitarianism at the height of the Cold War fueled other researchers' skepticism and so made comparative empirical studies seem uninteresting. Hence, there were none. Nevertheless, the theory's notions of totalitarian rule and indoctrination exerted a great influence on the early historiography on Nazism. In his seminal book *Die deutsche Diktatur* of 1969, Karl Dietrich Bracher wrote of the steps the Nazi Party took toward "total domination and manipulation of all thoughts and emotions." Because Nazi ideology was eclectic to the point of incoherence, Bracher ascribed Germans' supposedly widespread acceptance of it to pervasive irrationality and Nazi orators' appeals to "subconscious regions" of their mass audiences.<sup>26</sup> Such explanations in terms of mysterious psychological mechanisms decreased over the years but not the conviction of many historians in the remarkable effectiveness of Nazi propaganda. Many alluded to the novelty of modern mass media, the fact that, except for the press, they were relatively new to their audiences, although most did not go into detail.<sup>27</sup> Some authors speculated that the Nazis had employed the psychology and techniques of advertising.<sup>28</sup> And many surmised that the radio had been the most potent tool in mobilizing consent, some of whom simply repeated Goebbels's dictum that the radio was "the most modern and the most important instrument to influence the masses that exists," a line he had used to flatter the broadcasting representatives he had gathered for one of his inaugural speeches as propaganda minister.<sup>29</sup> Other authors pointed to the medium's nationwide scope and its potential reach into every home, workplace, and tavern.<sup>30</sup> Occasionally, authors seem to have inferred from the fact that easily sexualized words like 'intrusion' (into intimate spaces) and 'reception' (of radio waves) were typical of the German discourse that the radio had a peculiar power over women because they were more "receptive" to its messages than men.<sup>31</sup> But it is striking how little this literature considered the fact

that the radio's ability to reach people in their homes depended on the decisions they made there. The Nazis understood this. Realizing that listeners could switch the radio off or tune in to another station, possibly a foreign one, when a program was too political, too propagandistic, too serious for their taste, or simply boring, from the end of 1933 onward the propaganda ministry instructed broadcasters to supplement political programming with more, and lighter, entertainment.<sup>32</sup> The real purpose of all this light entertainment was to keep listeners tuned in, content, relaxed, and "ready to receive" the "Führer" whenever he addressed the nation.<sup>33</sup> But it must have occurred to everyone that no programming could hold listeners in such a state of receptiveness, for, first of all, they must be listening rather than letting the radio play in the background.

Historical images of German mass audiences may well have aided this long-held thesis about the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda. The Nazis' many annual festivals and holidays—the Party rallies in Nuremberg, the Reich Harvest Thanksgiving Festival on the Bückeberg, and May Day, to name just a few—drew huge crowds of their followers. One main reason for these events was for participants to feel themselves to be among thousands of like-minded supporters of the regime, a part of a "national reawakening" and a "people's community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Communal radio receptions were intended to generate the same feeling of community on a smaller scale, and one reason why the regime limited the number of movie theaters was so moviegoers would watch certain specially promoted political films in sold-out theaters, not half empty ones.<sup>34</sup> The supposed effects of such mass events on their participants were portrayed in and advertised through official press photography and newsreel footage. These showed the crowds performing their assigned role as "the people" supporting the regime, as repeated quasi-plebiscites, so to speak, and the regime used such images to legitimize itself domestically and to the rest of the world. Consequently, still and film photographers sought out motifs like uniformed members of Nazi organizations arrayed in formation at attention; endless columns of men marching in step, with and without flags and torches; and crowds of cheering spectators performing the Hitler salute, and they figure prominently in the visual records of the Nazi period. In employing such images, most authors at least mention their propagandistic function, but many seem not to free themselves from their effect, prefiguring the thesis of successful propaganda. To be sure, what these pictures show did take place; Germans marched and cheered in the millions. But in trying to understand and explain the mobilization of broad consent and occasional enthusiasm, historians should ask further questions. What exactly does a photograph show, and what does it leave out? Whom might it have elated at the time, and whom was it supposed to frustrate or scare? What other, noncommissioned photographs of the same event are there, and what different impressions do they give? Clearly, there are many such questions to ask.

In the 1970s, historians began to pay closer attention to people's behavior and opinions in Nazi-Germany, and studies ever since have contradicted the conception of the Third Reich as a totalitarian dictatorship that engineered consent

through terror and indoctrination. With the turn from political history to, first, social history, which soon included the history of people's everyday lives (*Alltagsgeschichte*), and, then, gender history, and, finally, cultural history and its many specializations since the 1990s, the older thesis that concerted Nazi propaganda manipulated Germans into atypical attitudes they otherwise would not have taken up has been undermined in various ways.<sup>35</sup> By studying specific social and professional groups, political and religious milieus, inhabitants of certain regions and towns, as well as gendered groups and age cohorts, historians, unsurprisingly, have reconstructed a broad spectrum of attitudes and practices: Germans who remained unimpressed by Nazi propaganda; Germans who doubted, who wavered in their attitudes, and who changed their minds several times; Germans who did not need to be manipulated because they were already committed to National Socialism's goals; and Germans who were determined to get for themselves whatever they could out of the regime and its brutal vision. Studies have also shown, again unsurprisingly, that people often had no single attitude toward the regime but adopted different attitudes in accord with their changing personal situations and their perceptions of them.<sup>36</sup> One might have adjusted to some circumstances, accepted certain impositions, welcomed some measures whole-heartedly, and participated in some campaigns but grumbled about others; one might even have rebelled at some point, while remaining indifferent to what one thought did not affect one. Thus, historians' attempts to determine who was "a real Nazi"<sup>37</sup> or "fanatical" antisemite, who "only" went along to get along, and who was a genuine opponent turned out to be problematic because they were based on overly simplistic assumptions. Nazi rule is better analyzed as a social practice, an ambiguous field of unequal relationships in which actors adjusted their thoughts and behavior to their perceptions of the particular situation they found themselves in and in which the existence of force was compatible with willing consent.<sup>38</sup>

The refinements in social, gender, and cultural history corresponded with the shift in the field of communication studies from the earlier thesis of the power of mass media to an understanding of their limited effects and concepts of active audiences whose members choose from the media on offer according to their interests and expected gratifications. In regard to propaganda, studies showed that media users' views seldom deviate from those of their in-groups, that is, peer-groups have more influence than media.<sup>39</sup>

Building on then recent insights of both social historians and communication researchers, Ian Kershaw introduced a research design in his 1983 article "How Effective Was Nazi Propaganda?" that he hoped would lead historians to a more nuanced understanding of the subject.<sup>40</sup> He began by pointing out that Nazi propagandists set themselves extraordinarily ambitious goals, namely, to get the public to adopt a "drastically restructured value system"<sup>41</sup> and, in the regime's last years, to persuade it of final victory despite the obviously desperate military situation. Kershaw argued that any such propaganda would have been very unlikely to succeed. *Prima facie*, then, the thesis of the success of Nazi propaganda seemed implausible in virtue of facts that its defenders glossed over.

But in order not to make the opposite mistake and see ineffectiveness everywhere, Kershaw needed to know what the aims of Nazi propaganda were. He determined that its overriding aims were to prepare the population psychologically for war and maintain its morale once it began. In addition, he identified four central themes—"national community," "racial purity," hatred for enemies, and trust in leadership—and specified four patterns in the public's thinking that determined its reception of these themes: (1) values were already widely accepted; (2) prejudices prevailed because of ignorance, which he called a 'vacuum'; (3) opinions were mixed; and (4) strongly held counter-opinions and disbelief were common. The first pattern, the most promising for propagandists, promoted the success of two themes, namely, hatred for enemies, specifically the political left or "Marxism," and trust in leadership, i.e., the Hitler cult. According to Kershaw, German antisemitism was a case of pattern (2); it could prevail because of the vacuum of ignorance. Few Germans had regular contact with Jews, and nothing in their education opposed antisemitism. So, the second pattern conditioned the public's reception of propaganda about "racial purity." Kershaw found evidence, mostly the findings of the *Bayern-Projekt* at that time, that antisemitic and other racist propaganda "was by no means as effective as has frequently been assumed."<sup>42</sup> For example, the Nazi regime had troubles in its first years persuading Germans, including Nazi Party members, to cut their business ties with Jews when they promoted their material self-interest. And Germans' response to the persecution of Jews was more indifference and lack of empathy than enthusiastic approval, Kershaw claimed. He expected that propaganda on the theme of "national community" would also have been of limited effectiveness because of pattern (3). The population held mixed views on social policy and already had class, religious, and regional allegiances. Though many Germans found the idea of unity and harmony among "Volksgenossen" ("ethnic compatriots") attractive, they remained well aware of social divisions, and the war exacerbated them.<sup>43</sup> The regime's predominant propaganda aim of readying the population for war met in the late 1930s with the counter-opinion of most Germans, who were afraid to go to war yet again, and the aim once the war had started of maintaining morale on the home front met from 1942 onward with more and more disbelief that Germany could win it. Thus, Kershaw argued, propaganda on the fourth pattern was an almost total failure.

Kershaw's article has been very influential.<sup>44</sup> It loosened the old thesis's grip on historians of Nazism and showed them the need to think about audience receptiveness to different themes of propaganda. It soon became the dominant thesis that the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda depended on a combination of the regime's political and military successes and the material benefits it provided consumers.<sup>45</sup> Yet, as plausible as these modified assessments of the effects of propaganda may be, they are neither based on historical studies of media during the Third Reich nor on empirical research of media consumption and audience reception. Since the appearance of Kershaw's article, historical studies of the press, radio, movies, and television in Nazi Germany have given historians a better

understanding of how these media functioned and how the regime used them before and during the war. So, though they are still rare, studies of audience reception no longer have to start from scratch.

## The Press

Karl Christian Führer argues convincingly that it was the daily newspapers that reached the largest audiences, which were larger, geographically wider, and socially more inclusive than the radio and movie audiences that have received so much more attention in the literature.<sup>46</sup> He also questions the conjecture that the journalistic monotony that resulted from the closing of hundreds of papers and the Nazis' rigid press regulations led to a significant decline in newspaper readership and to a loss of trust in the information reported in the coordinated papers already soon after the Nazis came to power, and not just when the war was going badly for Germany.<sup>47</sup> In his study of Hamburg as a media metropole, Führer argues that during the first two to three years of Nazi rule overall circulation in the city either remained relatively high or declined slightly but then rose, so that by 1938–39 at the latest almost all of Hamburg's households subscribed to one of the three big coordinated local dailies, one of which was the official Nazi Party paper that the Party expected its members to subscribe to.<sup>48</sup> The figures lead him to hypothesize that subscribers to the Social Democratic and Communist papers, which were prohibited and had their resources confiscated in 1933, did abstain from reading the press for a few years but then joined the growing number of Hamburg's newspaper readers. Rather than diagnosing a "press crisis" following the Nazis' takeover of power, Führer advises historians to recognize the continuing prevalence of daily newspaper consumption, which was remarkable given that Germany was still suffering from the world economic crisis.<sup>49</sup> Though his calculations are plausible, he bases his argument on what he considers the doubtful accuracy (because driven by wishful thinking) of one Sopade report in the summer of 1936 that newspaper circulation had fallen significantly in most of Germany. But he does not acknowledge that it was not the only such report.<sup>50</sup> The Sopade report assumed that readers were growing discontent with so much propaganda in newspapers, an assumption that fits the results of the Nazis' own internal security reports on the public mood during the first years of their rule.<sup>51</sup> After their early accounts of euphoric responses to the takeover of power, informants reported that some Party members were getting tired of the massive political mobilizing; they complained about the many meetings and demands for donations; they were getting bored by constant propaganda; and they expressed dislike of the Party newspapers and magazines. David Bankier infers from the internal reports of the Gestapo and the SD (Sicherheitsdienst) that he studied that the circulation of the Party's periodicals steadily declined "after the first year of Nazi rule, when the new system's inability to fulfil all its promises became apparent."<sup>52</sup> Several of the reports mentioned cancellations of subscriptions to

Party newspapers and a drop in sales; a number revealed that readers found their accounts of the regime's achievements largely exaggerated; others recorded comments to the effect that it no longer made sense to read more than one paper since they all said the same things. However, the reports also warned that when the press provided too little information on certain subjects, rumors flourished; people then tried to read between the lines and sought out more independent news sources. Informants reported that local church periodicals gained readers, and issues of foreign newspapers were quickly bought out and passed on to others who also felt misinformed.<sup>53</sup> Aware of these reservations on the part of some in the audience, the Nazi Party often concealed its or its central publisher's takeover of a newspaper, obviously hoping its readers would not notice, or at least not mind enough to cancel their subscriptions. To be sure, the regime did not take over all, or even most, of the hundreds of mostly local bourgeois newspapers. And though it banned leftist papers immediately after coming to power, it allowed what had been liberal and conservative papers to continue publishing, though under strict supervision.<sup>54</sup> Among these were the country's most renowned and widely read papers: *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Berliner Tageblatt*, and *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. There were several reasons for this tolerance. In the first year after Hitler was appointed chancellor, the Nazis still had to tend to their alliance with conservative elites. The new regime also needed able journalists to write high-quality, credible content, for it did not want international observers to think that it was dictatorial or journalistically provincial. Most importantly, it wanted to win over the readers of bourgeois papers, many of whom had not voted for the NSDAP, through those papers aligning themselves with the regime.<sup>55</sup> Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz argue that the propaganda ministry expected on the basis of publishers' conduct so far that the bourgeois press would play a central role in National Socialism's imminent penetration of German society.<sup>56</sup>

It seems that the regime did not expect the Party's periodicals to be able to attract readers through their journalistic quality. It pressured new Party members, and civil servants, to cancel their old subscriptions and switch to the *Völkischer Beobachter* or the local Party paper. In some locations, the increase in subscribers to the Party paper lagged behind the rise in new members; so the NSDAP aggressively solicited subscriptions door-to-door. This practice may well have kept the local Party papers in business, but it is not likely that it made them more popular with coerced readers or raised their confidence in their reporting.<sup>57</sup>

To understand better how the members of different audiences read newspapers in the Third Reich, we would need many more and much better analyses of newspapers' content than we have.<sup>58</sup> At best, historians have paid attention to articles about certain events.<sup>59</sup> However, every reader of the time read the paper selectively, choosing from an issue's diverse offering of national, international, and local news, all more or less explicitly political; film, theater, and concert reviews; serialized novels; caricatures, "jokes," and crossword puzzles; and personal and commercial ads. Though we will never know exactly what readers chose to read or how many chose which items, the study of whole issues reminds historians that

readers went through their own selection processes and informs them about the possible ways for readers to have made sense of the material they selected.<sup>60</sup> This approach shatters the notion that readers could not help but be manipulated by what they read, and it makes us aware of the sort of deliberate decision that tolerating obviously hyperbolic and polemical statements of propaganda requires.

Patrick Merziger chooses a different approach to argue that the *Gleichschaltung* of the media did not lead to a *Gleichschaltung* of the audience. He shows that the Nazi satirical magazine *Die Brennessel* offended those many of its readers who did not find its occasional ridicule of the bigotry and backwardness among the Party's true believers funny. The complaints became so numerous and so bitter that the magazine had to publish an apology and, eventually, refrain from such satire.<sup>61</sup> Letters to the editors of *Der Stürmer* and *Das Schwarze Korps* also demonstrate that audiences of Nazi followers were neither homogenous, passive, nor necessarily uncritical of government policies. Unlike the offended readers of *Die Brennessel*, most of these letter writers did not oppose the editors; they embraced their radicalism or even aspired to outdo it. And the editors encouraged readers to write by publishing their letters regularly. *Der Stürmer* was the place to write to for those antisemites who wanted to denounce their fellow citizens, including Party members, publicly, by name and often address, for patronizing Jewish shops and businesses, socializing with Jews, or being in some other way lax in their antisemitism. Others wrote to demand the death penalty for *Rassenschande* (race defilement) or to express their impatience for all of the Jews to be killed.<sup>62</sup> *Das Schwarze Korps*, the weekly of the SS, had a broader agenda than *Der Stürmer* and cultivated a more literate, eloquent criticism in the name of a purer, more fundamentalistic version of National Socialism. Its readers wrote in to denounce Jews and "Jew-lovers"; condemn the Churches, especially Catholic clerics; criticize Party functionaries' lack of commitment; deplore the bureaucracy; bemoan court sentences they found too mild; and call for even harsher and swifter measures against all those the Nazis considered to be their enemies.<sup>63</sup> These examples show that readers of Nazi periodicals were not simply receiving messages and no longer thinking for themselves. The same must be true for readers of the non-Nazi press, and it would be fascinating to learn more about the ways in which they made sense of their readings.

## Radio

The reach of the radio in the Third Reich has been overestimated. What the literature often recounted as the remarkable success story of the *Volksempfänger*, which brought Hitler's voice into everybody's home, to the "last village,"<sup>64</sup> is no longer the state of research. It is true, though, that the regime wanted everyone, across the country, to be able to listen to the radio. When the Nazis took power, the broadcasting system, which the state had just recently taken control of, fell into their hands, and they immediately replaced all of its objectionable

employees with party careerists, which made radio the most thoroughly Nazi-fied medium.<sup>65</sup> A nationwide audience was to be reached through inexpensive receivers that households on tight budgets could afford. The idea was not new; even the name ‘*Volksempfänger*’ already existed. But the Nazis had the political will and persistence to get radio manufacturers to collaborate in producing a receiver that all retailers would have to sell for a fixed price well below more elaborate models.<sup>66</sup> The historian of economics and technology Wolfgang König has conclusively debunked the myth that the *Volksempfänger* was constructed to be incapable of receiving foreign broadcasts. According to König, though reception varied by location, the *Volksempfänger* was made to receive not only the regional Reichssender but also the nationwide Deutschlandsender located in Königs Wusterhausen, a few kilometers south of Berlin; so, it was technically able to pick up most of Europe’s big broadcast stations.<sup>67</sup>

The *Volksempfänger* sold very well in its first two years on the market, almost 1.5 million units. But then sales dipped. Despite intense advertising and an installment plan, the regime could not expand radio ownership much further. Though it proclaimed “total radio distribution” (“totale Rundfunkfassung”), functionaries knew that most *Volksempfänger* owners were white-collar workers. Though inexpensive, the *Volksempfänger*, together with the monthly broadcast fee, was beyond the budgets of most blue-collar workers. Nevertheless, the regime decided against lowering the fee, for the state, mostly the propaganda ministry, counted on the income.<sup>68</sup> Instead, it demanded that the industry come up with an even simpler, cheaper model, the *Deutsche Kleinempfänger* (commonly known as *Goebbels Schnauze*), which, beginning in 1938, generated another and larger increase in sales. In 1933, 25.4 percent of households owned a radio; the number rose to 57.1 percent in 1939 and to 65.1 percent in 1941.<sup>69</sup> Though a significant rise, it was far too small to meet the regime’s announced goal of reaching every household via radio, nor was it noteworthy in international comparison, especially given that no other country’s government had put so much pressure on the industry and so much effort into promotion. In 1941–42, Germany was in a third place in Europe, behind Sweden and Denmark, in the number of radio owners per 1,000 inhabitants (not to mention the huge lead of the United States), and the relative increase between 1934 and 1942 was considerably higher in France and Norway.<sup>70</sup> However historians of Nazi Germany evaluate this development, those in the Nazi regime responsible for increasing the radio audience were clearly disappointed in the results of their efforts. There remained a significant gap in radio ownership between the cities and the countryside, where many of the inhabitants polled expressed no interest in owning a radio because they did not have the money or leisure time and rural reception was often poor.<sup>71</sup> In the cities, however, surveyed industrial workers said they were very interested but most could not afford a radio and the expenses that came with it. Deregistration for financial reasons was also typical in this group. By far the largest group of radio owners during the Third Reich was the urban middle classes: the self-employed, white-collar workers, and civil servants.<sup>72</sup>

Communal receptions for special radio events, like broadcasts of Hitler's speeches and Nazi party celebrations, were a strategy to enlarge the listenership and at the same time to get listeners to control each other's listening, since radio owners could not be made to tune in and listen attentively at home, even if the state declared it a "national duty."<sup>73</sup> Ideally, the assembled listeners, like those at the broadcasted event, would share a feeling of being in the "*Volksgemeinschaft*." To achieve this, Goebbels, who was often the announcer for broadcasts of Hitler's speeches, described the atmosphere in the hall, like the excited anticipation of Hitler's appearance, trying to transfer some of a mass rally's effects on its attendants to people who were not there.<sup>74</sup> It is hard to evaluate the success of communal receptions. Hundreds of newspaper articles described large groups of committed listeners, but other sources reveal the problems and risks that communal receptions involved. On town squares, it was technically difficult to reproduce a good range of sound. Speer's grandiose plans for *Reichs-Lautsprechersäulen* (Reich Loudspeaker Columns) were never carried out, except for a test run in Breslau.<sup>75</sup> In factories, offices, and taverns, sound fidelity was less of a problem, but these gatherings ran the risk that people would not show up, not pay much attention, express dissatisfaction about what they heard, or leave early, each of which everyone could notice.<sup>76</sup>

This brings us to the effects of broadcasting on audiences and their reception, which are not considered by authors who describe the radio as an "immediate instrument of rule" or an element of a "comprehensive power technology."<sup>77</sup> Naturally, many responses were possible to, say, hearing Hitler give a speech. Janosch Steuerer quotes from the diary of a nineteen-year-old gardener's apprentice, whom he calls Inge Thiele. She came from a poor working-class family and had earlier sympathized with the left but then decided that she "believed in Adolf Hitler." Shortly after writing that, she listened, together with her boss, the gardener, and his family, to the broadcast of Hitler giving a speech to workers at the Siemens-Schuckertwerke in Berlin, which was the climax of the election campaign in November 1933. In her diary, she noted that Hitler "spoke so plainly and cordially, stressed so vividly his originating from the working classes," which was why Thiele believed that he understood workers' "woes and wishes." "Involuntarily," she wrote, she had joined the live audience's shouts of "Heil Hitler" and "Sieg Heil" and added that everybody seated in the living room in front of the radio, "the old and the young ones," had been enthusiastic.<sup>78</sup> Victor Klemperer, the professor of Romance languages who as a Jew had been forced into early retirement, listened to the same broadcast, but in his diary he made fun of the lofty introduction of the speaker: "The savior comes to the poor." He continued, "Then over forty minutes Hitler. A mostly hoarse, overly screaming, agitated voice, long passages in the whining tone of the preaching sect-leader."<sup>79</sup> From Kurt Tucholsky, we have yet another distinct sort of commentary. During the earlier election campaign in March 1933, he tuned in to one of Hitler's speeches and wrote to his friend Walter Hasenclever: "The voice is not as disagreeable as one should think—it only smells a bit of trouser bottom, of man, unappetiz-

ing, but otherwise okay. Sometimes he over-roars, then he vomits. But otherwise nothing, nothing, nothing.”<sup>80</sup> In contrast to Tucholsky in exile in Zurich, the conservative school teacher Luise Solmitz from Hamburg eagerly filled in what Hitler had not explicitly said. After listening to the broadcast of his speech on 10 February 1933 from the Berlin Sportpalast, Solmitz wrote in her diary, “he expressed what we had felt, he did not promise that from tomorrow on everything would become better, but he did promise that from now on the German spirit would guide Germany again, that is, he did not say it, but it was the sense.” She, too, thought that Hitler had “over-raised himself” (“sich übersteigert”) a bit but immediately added that he was “not so much an orator but a genius leader.” She and the three others with whom she had sat in front of the radio were excited by what they heard, and they all had tears in their eyes.<sup>81</sup> The quotations from these four writers should suffice for my point. Radio listeners’ responses were quite individualistic; so, they tell us more about the individual listeners and the circumstances of their listening than about the speeches they heard or the staging of the broadcasts. Historians who want to illustrate their theses about the effects of political broadcasts during the Third Reich can choose from a wide spectrum of responses. But none can be generalized. It is their diversity that is informative.

As diverse as reception was, many radio listeners in 1933 agreed on one thing, namely, they had heard enough political speeches and explicit propaganda, and they wanted more entertainment programming. Once the propaganda ministry realized that that sentiment was widespread, it reacted promptly. In May 1933, Goebbels restricted the number of speeches broadcast to two per month. And program analyses show a continuous rise in the percentage of music beginning in 1934. Only between the annexation of Austria in March 1938 and the early months of the war did spoken word programming again dominate.<sup>82</sup> Listeners insisted that the radio was primarily for their entertainment; it should enrich their leisure time, lift their mood, and accompany them through their hours at home. As the regime wanted to keep “this millionfold invisible telephone connection” open to as many people as possible,<sup>83</sup> it accommodated the audience’s common preferences to keep it happy and tuned in. As a result, as researchers have pointed out, listeners received the radio’s political content in the audience’s preferred musical context. However, to infer from this that listeners paid attention to and approved of it is just speculation.

The situation changed significantly with the start of World War II. The public’s increased demand for continuously updated news generated another wave of radio purchases and turned listeners’ attention to spoken word programs. It seems that in many homes the radio played in the background all day long, so that residents would not miss any *Sondermeldung* (special announcement).<sup>84</sup> More Germans than previously felt the need to follow current events in order to evaluate what the war meant for them and their families. Just as the war began, however, the regime outlawed listening to foreign broadcasts, creating the new political crime of *Rundfunkverbrechen* (broadcasting crime). The official rationale was that the enemy engaged in psychological warfare and the aim of foreign

broadcasting was to demoralize the German home front, which was the regime's biggest concern as a consequence of the stab-in-the-back legend. According to the preamble to the new decree, the government knew that all responsible Germans would feel a duty to comply; therefore, it was issuing the decree only to alert those *Volksgenossen* who lacked such a sense of responsibility.<sup>85</sup> Within the government, the law was controversial. The Minister of Justice, Franz Gürtner, feared, first, that the law would be interpreted domestically and internationally as evidence of a lack of trust between the government and the German people; second, it would undermine audiences' confidence in the accuracy of news coverage; and, third, it would invite mass denunciations.<sup>86</sup> As it turned out, some of his concerns were well founded. Though the risk of denunciation may have deterred some of the radio audience from listening to foreign broadcasts, or at least from talking about what they learned from them, the law apparently did heighten mistrust of the news, and it aroused in some listeners a sense of being entitled to ignore it.<sup>87</sup> According to the reports of both Sopade and the SD, there was evidence that listening to foreign broadcasts was widespread, even among supporters of the regime,<sup>88</sup> and informants reported that many Germans saw it as a harmless peccadillo.<sup>89</sup> For example, the *Geheime Lageberichte des SD* from 8 July 1943 stated that listening to foreign radio was on the rise, though people did not admit to it, and many argued that the British were allowed to listen to foreign broadcasts and that the German radio's insufficient information was driving people into the clutches of the enemy's propagandists.<sup>90</sup> The report was later corroborated by some polls the American occupiers took in the last days of the war. Conducted independently of each other, they found that about 51 percent of those polled stated that they had listened to foreign radio stations. Radio Luxembourg was most often mentioned followed by the BBC's German-language service and some Western *Soldatensender* (military broadcasters); Radio Moscow was frequently described as unpopular.<sup>91</sup> Since the questionnaires were anonymous, there was no incentive to brag or ingratiate oneself with the occupiers. In polls conducted in three Hessian towns in late April and early May 1945, pollsters found that 43 percent of respondents who had listened to foreign broadcasts had started before the war, 23 percent after the German defeat at Stalingrad, 19 percent after the Allied landing in Normandy, and 15 percent only in 1945.<sup>92</sup> More men than women had listened, and the higher one's education, the more likely one was to have tuned in to foreign stations and to have begun relatively early.<sup>93</sup> Listeners primarily wanted foreign news: 41 percent thought it truthful; 24 percent thought it gave them a better understanding of events; and 22 percent were explicit that they had wanted to compare the German and foreign news coverage in order to make up their own minds.<sup>94</sup>

The demand for accurate news coverage of the war grew with Germans' anxiety about losing and with the realization that German news media reported only carefully selected, biased information and phrased it propagandistically to get the audience to hold out, if for no other reason than fear of the Allies' "revenge." However, contrary to the hopes of Allied broadcasters and the exiled Germans

participating in their programs, the occasional but widespread listening to foreign broadcasts did not generate political opposition inside Germany.<sup>95</sup> That possibility had indeed worried the Nazi regime, as it was obviously impossible to prevent listeners from tuning in to foreign broadcasts, and the temptation to do so had grown since the regime had reduced the radio's offerings to the single national program of the Großdeutscher Rundfunk.<sup>96</sup> So, Nazi officials may not have been unhappy over the decline in the supply of radios that began in 1942. With the prioritizing of the military's needs, private owners could no longer replace their broken receivers or get them repaired, while the bombing campaign against German cities destroyed more and more of them.<sup>97</sup> People wrote to government and Party officials begging for receivers and spare parts, and SD informants reported the growing frustration of those without functioning radios.<sup>98</sup> It is well possible that many of the frustrated missed the music programs more than the spoken word programs, for music halls, concert venues, and theaters were closed in summer 1944, and the radio, together with those movie theaters still functioning, were the only sources of public entertainment.<sup>99</sup>

## Film

The fact that movie theaters were kept open to the end of the war indicates the importance the propaganda ministry assigned to moviegoing and film. Goebbels never tired of telling people how much well-made films could achieve and how much he knew about making them. But, again, the propaganda ministry's ambitions for the medium do not establish that film had such powerful effects. And, as with radio, the literature often overstates its reach. It is true that theater attendance rose each year after the Great Depression and reached what was probably the all-time peak in Germany in 1943.<sup>100</sup> But throughout the interwar period, nearly a quarter of the population seems not to have been interested enough in movies to hassle with the transportation, spend the money, and take the time needed to watch them. Even though the Nazi regime undertook efforts to reach a wider rural audience, e.g., through *Tonfilmwagen* (mobile film units), moviegoing remained an urban habit, with teenagers and young adults significantly over-represented in the audience.<sup>101</sup> It was not until the war that attendance figures rose so high as to indicate that moviegoing had become a habit across the society, including previously underrepresented milieus and age groups. Gerhard Stahr argues that it was the newsreels that brought them into the movie theaters,<sup>102</sup> for Germans were anxious for information, specifically visual information, about the war's progress. And they kept coming to the theaters even when the newsreels' certainty of victory became less believable because they then needed distraction from the war. "The cinema did not mobilize the population for war, rather, the war mobilized the population for the cinema," Stahr concludes.<sup>103</sup> In contrast, Joseph Garnarcz attributes the remarkable rise in ticket sales during the war to the heightened appeal of feature films, especially the blockbusters that the Nazi

regime realized through larger budgets and making big production companies, which it had recently nationalized, compete.<sup>104</sup> The standard cinema program consisted of commercials, a *Kulturfilm*, the newsreel, and a feature film. Historians do not know which part of the program lured which members of the audience into the cinema; while some may have had clear preferences, others might have enjoyed the moviegoing experience as a whole. But we do know that they were all in the situation that there were no longer many consumer goods on which to spend their disposable income. That is, as the demand for leisure-time gratifications rose significantly in the course of the war, movie theaters had fewer and fewer competitors.

High and rising ticket sales clearly indicate that most moviegoers enjoyed the films they chose and expected to enjoy their next choices. The success of movies largely depends on fulfilling moviegoers' expectations and their subsequent word of mouth.<sup>105</sup> Advertising and press campaigns raise awareness, but they alone cannot make a film a blockbuster. For most of the Third Reich, production companies were private enterprises that had to ensure enough of their films drew large enough audiences to recoup their substantial costs. The pattern of commercial cinema is that the films running at the same time differ considerably in their box office success. A few account for a large percentage of overall ticket sales; several do okay; and many are quickly withdrawn and do not come close to covering their production costs. Thus, production companies repeatedly need blockbusters. They can work in popular genres, hire stars, include catchy songs, and invest in visual effects, but the audience determines success or failure. This was also true in Nazi Germany.

To draw large audiences, filmmakers must avoid what is likely to displease or offend viewers. Since politics is inherently controversial, the film industry considers political films, which, at best, appeal to a small minority, box-office poison. Even mere statements or insinuations of ideology in an otherwise purely entertaining movie risk interfering with some viewers' enjoyment, who may then not recommend the movie. So, it should come as no surprise that by far the largest number of movies produced and released during the Third Reich offered conventional entertainment with melodramatic, comical, and suspenseful plots; lavish sets and costumes; popular actors; and emotional music, all without explicit political or ideological content.<sup>106</sup> Relatively few featured obvious propaganda, and most of these were commissioned and sponsored by the state. Many of those seemingly innocuous movies had an afterlife in the second half of the twentieth century,<sup>107</sup> and scholars have since debated whether they have hidden ideological messages needing thorough analyses to uncover or whether they fulfilled a political function for the regime exactly because they abstained from politics and, so, constituted positive mood-management for audiences.<sup>108</sup>

This debate is reminiscent of one that National Socialists already had among themselves. Many of the party faithful deplored the predominance of light entertainment movies and demanded a National Socialist cultural revolution on the big screen.<sup>109</sup> One finds repeated complaints in Nazi Party documents that most

German movies were still, as in the despised Weimar Republic, set in glamorous locations with happy upper-class characters and silly, superficial escapist plots, all of which these critics considered *undeutsch*. Some of them believed that an uninterrupted influence of “Filmjuden” in the industry was responsible for the alleged continuity;<sup>110</sup> others blamed the “arrogant film clique” in the premiere cinemas on Berlin’s Kurfürstendamm, who ensured that “new ‘German’ films with ‘German’ themes like rural life” were not released in other theaters.<sup>111</sup> Goebbels, who had established the propaganda ministry’s control of the whole German film industry and often personally intervened in productions, was fickle on the issue.<sup>112</sup> Time and again, he demanded better films that conveyed in their “attitude” more than their subject commitment to National Socialism, and he publicly damned many movies, but at the same time he promoted conventional entertainment to keep audiences happy and the production companies profitable. So he rejected all demands of party functionaries to make movies about the Nazi movement and its organizations, like the early propaganda films *SA-Mann Brand* and *Hans Westmar*, that opportunistic production companies had made in 1933 after the takeover of power to cash in on the Nazi Party’s popularity and curry favor with the new rulers.<sup>113</sup> These two films had not been popular with much of the audience, and Goebbels had since dismissed propaganda in the form of National Socialists marching across the screen and Party slogans in the dialogue.<sup>114</sup> But it is obvious to all who read his diary and articles that Goebbels frequently changed his assessment of movies, for example, in response to Hitler’s comments or when audiences did not respond as he had expected, and that he had no clear notion of the kinds of feature films he wanted to be made.

The Nazi debate indicates that the presence of political, ideological messages in entertainment movies was largely up to individual viewers, that is, what they took to be political and how carefully they looked for it. In 1938, an author complained in *Wille und Macht*, the biweekly paper for Hitler Youth leaders, that Germany had “become political” but the cinema was still “an apolitical oasis,” except for some newsreel segments. He continued, “A really clever person might claim that even if there are no propaganda films [“Tendenzfilme”], there still is propaganda [“Tendenz”] tucked away beneath film’s surface details. This person, though, will have a hard time finding examples to prove his point.”<sup>115</sup> After the Third Reich, it was difficult for film scholars and historians to believe that so many of the movies made in those twelve years had been apolitical, given that the Nazis had considered film to be an especially powerful mass medium and counted on its “ability to mobilize emotions and immobilize minds,” as Eric Rentschler puts it.<sup>116</sup> Again, the discovery of messages was a matter of individuals’ film analyses. Particularly in early postwar work, authors assumed that Nazi ideology was a consistent set of distinct convictions, and they searched movie plots and dialogue for them.<sup>117</sup> In 1991, Stephen Lowry criticized this narrow understanding of Nazi ideology. He pointed out that it was eclectic and sometimes contradictory and that in order to work effectively through movies it had to tie in with beliefs and desires widespread in the audience.<sup>118</sup> Inspired by critical

theory, he advocated a broader understanding of ideology that went beyond the glorification of leaders, the denunciation of Jews and other supposed enemies, the promoting of duty and sacrifice, and “Blut und Boden” (“blood and soil”) romanticism, which would have resonated only with those viewers who already had such ideas. Lowry extended his own film analysis to protopolitical and structural issues like confirming the status quo, inculcating desired behavior, and checking critical impulses. And he provided examples showing how to find such “latent ideology” in a film’s narrative structure, *mise en scène*, cinematography, and montage. Lowry and like-minded film scholars acknowledged that much of what they identified as ideological in movies from the Third Reich was not specifically Nazi or fascist, but it still served the regime’s interests.<sup>119</sup>

If we apply this notion of films’ latent ideology to the audience in the context of the reception of individuals, we can assume that these movies may well have reassured some viewers and reconciled others to the political situation. But they also may have allowed still others to consume them as escapism without connecting them to the present. Perhaps they reminded some of not so very different movies before 1933 or from Hollywood.<sup>120</sup> Such scope for audience reception is underlined by Ernst Offermanns’s finding that Jewish moviegoers in Nazi Germany shared many of the rest of the audience’s preferences.<sup>121</sup> The most popular movies at the Filmbühne of the Jüdische Kulturbund, the only place where Jews could safely watch movies after they were banned from theaters in December 1938, were among the most generally popular of the year they came out. One of the common favorites was the historical melodrama *Robert Koch* (1939), starring Emil Jannings, for which some scholars have outlined National Socialist and even antisemitic readings.<sup>122</sup> But though Jews watched these movies in circumstances clearly different from other Germans, there is not much reason to think that they read them subversively. Only very few German movies may have allowed for such readings.<sup>123</sup> The propaganda ministry took care of that. Broad audience consensus on popular movies was not so much based on their scope for interpretation but, rather, on the widely shared appreciation for stars, captivating plots, alluring scenery and costumes, and high production values.

However, there were some obvious propaganda films as well. After the first, clumsy productions in 1933,<sup>124</sup> few had Nazi protagonists or were even set in the present (what the Nazis called ‘Zeitfilme’). Most were historical dramas with unambiguous heroes and villains, which invited viewers to determine for themselves which present-day people they resembled. Several of these movies did fairly, or even very, well at the box office. So, it turned out that there were enough moviegoers who were not put off by political propaganda in movies to encourage production companies to keep making them. It seems, then, that the risk such films raised for production companies had less to do with the audience and more with the possibility that the government would change its policy during a film’s production. For example, at one point the regime wanted anti-Bolshevik and pro-English propaganda films, but that changed with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the beginning of the war. It was not much dif-

ferent with domestic policy issues. Several film projects were aborted, and some completed films were never released. In other cases, the propaganda ministry demanded cuts and changes, including the reshooting of scenes, which increased costs and made producers hesitant about risky subjects.<sup>125</sup> However, when we look at what audiences wanted we find that propaganda movies also needed stars, entertaining plots, and high production values to become blockbusters. *Heimat*, *Pour le Mérite*, *Jud Süß*, *Wunschkonzert*, *Ohm Krüger*, and *Die große Liebe*, to name some of the best known, filled theaters for weeks.<sup>126</sup> Most propaganda blockbusters came out during the war, when attendance figures were skyrocketing. So, the war may have whet moviegoers' appetite for their vicious denunciations of "enemies." Yet, it is also clear that a majority consumed them as entertainment.<sup>127</sup> Documentary-style propaganda films like *Triumph des Willens* and *Der ewige Jude* were also seen by millions, but, despite their promotion through special screenings and praise in the press, attendance never came close to that for the most successful propaganda feature films, which followed the conventional recipe for success. One wants to know more about their audience reception, but there have been few case studies.<sup>128</sup>

Reconstructing audience reception must take the whole programs into account. No matter how many political or ideological messages viewers detected in the feature film, there were definitely more in the *Kulturfilm* and the newsreel.<sup>129</sup> Before the war, the propaganda ministry only gradually exerted its influence on the content of the four different newsreels then produced, which presented the genre's typical mix of exciting events, sports, exoticism, and human interest or animal stories, by demanding more coverage of Nazi spectacles.<sup>130</sup> With the beginning of the war, though, the ministry replaced the four newsreels with *Die Deutsche Wochenschau*, which it intended to turn into its most forceful propaganda vehicle, reaching the largest audience possible and "building a bridge between the front and the homeland."<sup>131</sup> Much effort went into the project. All of the cameramen were inducted into the Wehrmacht and deployed in combat, and the resulting footage made audiences feel they were in the middle of the fighting. To make the intended reception possible, the newsreel's issues had to be up-to-date, which required that the necessary steps happen quickly: military censorship of the footage, editing it, synchronizing the rough cut with accurate sounds of combat and martial music, writing and recording the narration, Goebbels's and Hitler's reviews and changes, and, finally, printing enough copies for every movie theater to give it a timely screening. By several months into the war, the process was well rehearsed, and with the German invasion of France in 1940 *Die Deutsche Wochenschau* was enthusiastically received in the theaters, according to the press and the SD's informants.<sup>132</sup> The editing was dynamic; the sounds were exciting; and the images were gripping, for example, shots from the cockpit of a fighter plane. However, it turned out that to maintain its popularity with audiences the newsreel also needed the German military to maintain its advance. Once that ended, in the winter of 1941, the images became monotonous—training and everyday military life—and audiences grew bored and more critical. In-

formants reported that audience members, soldiers on furlough among them, loudly objected to what they thought was staged or inaccurate.<sup>133</sup> What annoyed even more viewers was that the newsreel continued to proclaim victories. Apparently, Goebbels could not convince Hitler that the newsreel should prepare the audience for the coming hardships.<sup>134</sup> When they no longer could be denied, in summer 1944, the newsreel turned to the propaganda of fear to justify its appeals to hold out. But that could not draw people to movie theaters; in fact, informants reported that people came in late or left early to avoid the newsreel.<sup>135</sup>

The reports of such unruliness among audience members raise a final issue that I mention as a subject for future study. Though most people go to the movies with people they know, it is still true that films, unlike the other mass media, are consumed collectively in anonymous gatherings. From the beginning, there has been a custom of noisily commenting, applauding, and jeering during a screening. Although German movie audiences had become more disciplined over the decades, the possibility remained that audience members would spontaneously voice their opinion for all in the theater to hear. Before they came to power, the Nazis had staged protests in and in front of movie theaters as a way to attract media attention and get films withdrawn, most famously *All Quiet on the Western Front* in 1930.<sup>136</sup> Even after they had taken power and controlled film distribution, some Nazis continued the practice. Early on, they fabricated some movie-theater riots, for example against Jewish and “Jewish-looking” actors.<sup>137</sup> It is also true that informants for the SD reported that Göring, swelling his opulent uniforms, often provoked laughter; Goebbels’s mistress, the actress Lída Baarová, was booed; and during the war audience members complained that advertised goods were not available.<sup>138</sup> To be sure, the Nazi regime did not have to fear that an insurrection would start in movie theaters. However, these facts remind historians not to underestimate the agency of movie audiences.

## Television

The Nazi regime promoted television primarily for national prestige; it did not affect media consumption much.<sup>139</sup> At the 1928 International Radio Exhibition in Berlin, visitors considered television prototypes as technological sensations despite their very poor image quality. Long before it became possible, tele-vision—seeing what was happening far away—was a universal fantasy. In order to beat the British, the Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft (Reich Broadcasting Corporation) announced in April 1935 the “world’s first regularly broadcasted television program” and in the following weeks opened fifteen public television parlors (*Fernsehstuben*) in and around Berlin, in which on three days of the week about thirty visitors could watch a mixed program of one and a half hours on small screens free of charge. Only some cabaret acts were broadcasted live; the rest of the program was clips from cinema newsreels and feature films. So visitors probably came to witness the innovation, and perhaps in anticipation, since several Nazi

publications asserted that television sets would be on sale to the public in the near future; some even spoke of a *Volksfernseher* (people's television set). However, the claim was a bold exaggeration, as the broadcasting range was still limited to Berlin, the few home-receivers were handmade and expensive, and mass-production was years away. The television did score the regime a domestic and international propaganda success during the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936. The most advanced equipment for live broadcasting was employed; the number of *Fernsehstuben* was increased, some with large-screen sets; air time was extended to eight hours per day; and about 10,000 daily visitors showed up to watch. But this level of popularity was temporary. After the Olympics, programing returned to a few live acts and coverage of current events, for example, the party rallies, that was amateurish in comparison to the newsreels. Soon after the war began, the *Fernsehstuben*'s sets were moved to military hospitals. In the end, it seems that once the fascination had worn off most of *Fernsehstuben*'s regular visitors were people who could not afford the movies, and some may have been just as interested in a warm, dry place as in the program.<sup>140</sup>

## Audiences of Nazism

Most who study the history of National Socialism agree that it would be enlightening to know more about the Third Reich's media audiences, the attitudes with which people consumed the products they chose, and the effects both individual media products and media coverage in general had on recipients. However, most authors point, with much regret, to the fact that there is no scientific opinion research from this time.<sup>141</sup> Several discuss the degree to which the various SD reports, together with Sopade's *Deutschland-Berichte* and the reports gathered by Neu Beginnen, can make up for the lack.<sup>142</sup> However, the authors in this volume look at less-studied kinds of promising primary sources and test a number of different approaches to the study of audiences and their reception.

The first such source that may come to mind is ego-documents like diaries and letters of the time. A historian must study many such documents to find a significant number of comments on media and its reception, for the desire to engage such subjects was rarely the reason why someone wrote a diary entry or letter. A "significant" sample, I suggest, is one that allows us to reconstruct a spectrum of responses on the basis of which we can discuss which kinds of circumstances may have made which kinds of responses more or less likely than others. Such reconstruction is more fruitful than classifying individuals into sorts and trying to determine (and getting frustrated about) how many cases of each sort constitute the practical equivalent of the social scientist's representative sample.<sup>143</sup>

*Janosch Steuwer* has studied about 140 diaries from the Third Reich.<sup>144</sup> In his contribution to this volume, he focuses on entries from the summer of 1934 in which diarists tried to make sense of newspaper and radio reports that the government had dispatched members of the SS to kill the SA leader Ernst Röhm and

more than one hundred other men in order to thwart the (fictional) *coup d'état* they had (supposedly) planned. In this case study, Steuwer reassesses Kershaw's central thesis in *The "Hitler Myth"* that Germans' widespread blind belief in this tale laid the groundwork for their remarkably enduring admiration of the Führer and the "detachment of Hitler in popular consciousness from the Nazi Party itself and from the misdeeds and sullied repute of local Party bosses."<sup>145</sup> Beginning with the fact that Thomas Mann, reading various foreign papers in exile in Zurich, never doubted that the government's talk of the planned putsch was its excuse for what really was the cold-blooded murder of former accomplices who had become inconvenient, Steuwer asks whether consumers of the controlled news in Nazi Germany could also distinguish facts from lies. Rather than just assessing diarists' opinions as part of a discussion of the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda, Steuwer found sources that allow him to study how diarists formed their opinions. He shows that they understood that the regime expected them to keep themselves informed politically and to trust the controlled media. Therefore, among the diarists who blindly believed the legend of the "Röhm putsch" were some who used their diaries to demonstrate to themselves that they were fulfilling the regime's expectation. Want of evidence and contradictions in the news coverage did not go unnoticed, but these diarists explicitly dismissed their importance. Steuwer calls them "emphatically uncritical." And, knowing their whole diaries, he can tell us that in this instance they reaffirmed an attitude they had already decided to take toward Nazi media and Nazi rule in general. Thus, the dubious news of the putsch did not affect their faith in either. The same was true for another group of nondissenting diarists who Steuwer calls "emphatically critical." They used their diaries to prove to themselves that, though they supported the regime, they did not believe whatever they read but made up their own minds about political matters. It is striking, however, that none of the many diarists Steuwer studied either questioned the story of Röhm and his co-conspirators plotting against Hitler or criticized their assassination. Rather, the emphatically critical rejected the media's glorification of Hitler as the guarantor of order and morality and criticized his decision to keep Röhm on after the Nazis' leftist political opponents had revealed and scandalized his homosexuality in 1931–32. (Apparently, the political opposition and Nazi supporters shared the homophobia that made the invention of homosexual men conspiring against the state plausible.<sup>146</sup>) Uncritical and critical news consumers came to the same (false) assessment of the story as true. Steuwer concludes, *contra* Kershaw, that German society was not held together so much by a shared, steadfast loyalty to Hitler as by controlled media communication that gave Germans different ways to consume fake news.

*Annina Hofferberth* searched ego-documents for evidence to challenge the propagandistic images of hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic participants and spectators at the annual party rallies in Nuremberg. It turns out that one does not come across so many archived diaries and letters whose authors comment on this climax of the calendar of Nazi festivities; in eight archives, Hofferberth found sixteen such ego-documents. She discusses the eight most instructive in her chap-

ter. It is at first surprising that none of the authors wrote about the rallies' most prominent events; rather, they took note mostly of the sort of nonpolitical occurrences historians would consider trivial and hardly worthy of study. However, her findings suggest that historians will misunderstand what participants and visitors took from the rallies if they study just the official programs. First of all, nobody attended the full program because, as Hofferberth explains, tickets were expensive and, as her sample of ego-documents shows, authors found the nightly fireworks, a Luis Trenker movie playing in town one year, and the old city of Nuremberg at least as attractive. Catching a glimpse of Hitler, even if it was only as his limousine sped by, was something people waited as many hours for as they would have needed to get a good place for an official event or speech. Besides, the few writers who mentioned attending a speech wrote that they caught only a few sentences. Yet they seem not to have been upset about this. One was much more moved by joining with the crowd in singing the national anthem. On the other hand, local residents complained about the crowds blocking traffic and filling the street cars, the noise and drunkenness, and the rally participants that some apparently felt obliged to host. Though there is an element of chance in Hofferberth's sample, it does prove that Nazis and the Party's supporters recognized some of the rallies' shortcomings, got bored, and criticized the behavior of rowdy Nazis. However, it also proves that their disappointments did not make them any less supportive of the regime.

*Bernhard Fulda* also found telling letters and diary entries that shed new light on audiences' reception of the "Degenerate Art" exhibitions, the first of which opened in Munich in summer 1937 and the others in about sixteen different cities in the following months. With a total of 3.2 million visitors, this traveling show of changing collections of expressionist, social-critical, and abstract artworks presented as *entartet* was one of the Third Reich's most successful propaganda campaigns. But Fulda argues that it was more successful than historians realize in that its clear-cut distinction between art that was undesirable, or not even considered to be art, and the great German art it promoted enjoyed a long afterlife with 'undesirable' and 'great' switched. He also argues that the openness of works of art to the judgements of viewers allowed for competing interpretations of the exhibitions' remarkable success. Did visitors buy into the denunciation, or did many of them come to enjoy sophisticated works of modern art for the last time, since German museums would no longer exhibit them? Such overly general questions reproduce the wishful thinking of the time, but they have nevertheless found their way into history books. In rejecting them, Fulda lays out other possible motivations for visiting an exhibition that the newspapers said was immensely popular, produced long queues, was free of charge (in Munich), and entrance to which was supposedly prohibited to those under the age of sixteen. And his findings in private communications further complicate the picture in fruitful ways. All of these visitors believed that they had been members of an audience with polarized opinions about the exhibited works and their denunciatory display. However, while several praised the works of some artists—Fulda focusses

on Emil Nolde—and defended them against the National Socialist rejection as *entartet*, they were happy to accept that denunciation of the other works. This was also true of Nolde himself, who successfully demanded that his paintings be removed from the traveling exhibition and its catalogue.

Letters are also the starting point of *Hannah Ahlheim's* study of an activist audience among the readership of *Der Stürmer*. From 1935 onward, the vulgar, hateful, antisemitic weekly published letters to the editors in which readers proudly announced that they had built and erected wooden display cases—so-called *Stürmerkästen*—photographs of which they included, in which they posted for the local public the most recent issue of their beloved paper. At first, it was only the letter-writers who posed for the camera in front of their cases, but soon little scenes of *Stürmer* readers gathered around a newly erected *Stürmerkasten*, including whole families and local professional groups, were staged and photographed. *Der Stürmer's* publication of the photographs seems to have spurred imitation and competition, and over time the pictured *Stürmerkästen* got bigger, more inventive, and more richly decorated with antisemitic slogans and carvings. In this way, *Stürmer* readers, who must have been aware of the disdain many people, including Nazi Party members, had for their pornographic paper, empowered themselves both as regards the hundreds of thousands of other *Stürmer* readers and in their local communities. In their letters to *Der Stürmer's* editors, they often described their unveiling ceremonies for their new cases as a triumph enjoyed after a long struggle against local authorities or opposition. The cases forced all passersby to react to them and the issues of *Der Stürmer* on display in one way or another. Ahlheim argues that these *Stürmer* activists turned the sites of their *Stürmerkästen* into political arenas. Their efforts to spread antisemitism intensified when activists used their *Stürmerkästen* to post lists of the names and addresses of local Jews, shops owned by Jews, and the names of Gentiles who had been observed, and sometimes even photographed, still shopping in them. By erecting *Stürmerkästen*, staunch *Stürmer* readers changed the local political climate. Jews felt threatened by these demonstrations of antisemitism, and the display cases and their effects contributed to their increasing social isolation and the decline of their businesses. *Stürmerkästen* enabled the most radical readers of a paper to which many Germans turned up their noses to make themselves heard, seen, and feared and to push for more radical antisemitic policies.

*Peter Fritzsche* turns our attention to another way in which audiences in the Third Reich actively participated in National Socialist policies and antisemitic violence. Since their “years of struggle” (*Kampfzeit*), Nazis had practiced call-and-response rituals; in the best-known example, someone yells “Sieg” and the crowd responds with “Heil” as loudly as possible. The Nazis carried this effective strategy for energizing a crowd from their years in the opposition over to public mass gatherings from 1933 onward. Thus, spectators not only became part of Nazi propaganda by appearing in photographs and films of mass audiences, which seemed to prove the propaganda’s effectiveness, they also helped create an impressive (or scary, depending on the listener) soundscape. Fritzsche is con-

vinced that audiences knew the performance that was expected from them and showed up (and paid entrance fees!) exactly because they wanted to be part of the chorus responding to the call. Goebbels was eager to include a similar kind of excitement and approval in the radio broadcasts of Hitler's speeches. The noise of the impatiently waiting crowds and then their feverish applause of the speech would confirm for listeners that it was the Führer who spoke. And those radio listeners who felt no inclination to join in the applause would realize how marginalized they were. From the beginning, Fritzsche stresses, the Nazi repertoire of calls and responses included threats of anti-Jewish violence, for example, "*Juda verrecke! / Deutschland erwache!*" ("Jews, Drop Dead! / Germany Awake!"). He argues that these calls and responses made the participants complicit and reiterated the Nazi logic that Jews had to die in order for Germany to survive, a logic that an increasing number of Germans reversed once they feared that the bombs falling on their cities were the punishment for their having set synagogues on fire some years previously.

Audience members can themselves become producers of media messages by submitting contributions. As I mentioned earlier, *Der Stürmer* and *Das Schwarze Korps* invited readers to send in their letters to the editors, complaints, jokes, denunciations—everything that would show the government that a part of the audience demanded even more radical or consequential racial policies. Two contributions consider some of the ways in which audience members' own media products can elucidate the process of reception. Historians have investigated this connection for photography by comparing amateur and official Nazi photographs,<sup>147</sup> examining what amateur photographs of violence against political opponents and Jews reveal about the attitudes of onlookers<sup>148</sup> and studying the typical motifs of German soldiers' snapshots of the war and how they arranged them in albums.<sup>149</sup>

*Michaela Scharf* adds to this body of work by examining amateur films of the *Reichsautobahn*, a frequent motif in Nazi propaganda and, as it turns out, a popular subject of amateur filmmakers. Scharf found sixty-six Austrian home movies of trips that include footage of the *Reichsautobahn*, in several of which scenes of driving on the freeway take up more running-time than those of the sites the filmmakers were driving to. As she shows, amateur filmmakers got their inspiration from the many films of the "*Straßen des Führers*" that the regime produced, well aware of the representative power of these newly built long lanes set into the landscape and reaching to the horizon, and from the literature for amateur filmmakers, which advised them to imitate these impressive filmic images of effortless motion. Analyzing two examples of film amateurs' visions of the new freeway and their personal mobility on it, Scharf identifies the elements of the Nazis' visually rich *Reichsautobahn* propaganda that these amateurs appropriated for their filmic self-representations and those that they ignored. Neither amateur was a high-ranking Nazi and probably not even a member of the Nazi Party, and, yet, they found personal filmic means to express their satisfaction with the regime's offer—to the few well-to-do automobilists—of enjoying the sensa-

tion of smooth, fast driving and exploring the attractions of their homeland, the *Reichsautobahn* being the newest, most modern, and most auspicious one. Scharf suggests that these personal films, whose viewers would not have been suspicious that they were made with propagandistic intentions, were more effective than official advertisements at convincing their audiences that the Nazi regime had brought about a new era of hitherto unknown progress and pleasure as promised.

*Julia Torrie's* case study of so-called France books confirms Scharf's idea. She shows that the German occupation government in Paris invited ordinary soldiers from across the ranks of the occupation forces to contribute stories, essays, art works, and photographs to these publications to inform their audience of soldiers about the country they occupied. It held contests, organized exhibitions, and printed catalogues of the submitted works and always announced that ordinary members of the occupation forces, not members of the propaganda companies, had produced them. However, this was not always true, and even when it was, contributors' writings were usually edited or even rewritten to make them fit the occupation government's propaganda lines better. This practice indicates that the regime thought that audiences would be more drawn to media products and more easily convinced of their messages if they believed that they were not the work of propagandists. Torrie also argues that the number and variety of France books indicate that many German soldiers stationed in France were interested in learning about the country and its culture and history; that is, they considered themselves to be culturally knowledgeable, appreciative conquerors, and they wanted to see the German occupation of France as a civilized endeavor to right the wrong of the outcome of World War I. At least that was the interpretation of soldiers' occupation experiences that the France books offered, and it was an interpretation many of the amateur writers, photographers, and artists seemed to have been happy to support and help spread. According to Torrie, the France books by and for German soldiers are yet another example of the high degree to which Nazi rule was a "participatory dictatorship" and of how it blurred the line between the producers and consumers of propaganda.<sup>150</sup>

Another approach to studying audiences and their reception despite the scarcity of reliable primary sources is to investigate how media producers conceived of their audiences, tried to address them effectively, changed their strategies when they were unsatisfied with the results, and how they assessed the effects of those changes. *Jochen Hung's* chapter pertains to the years before Hitler was appointed chancellor, when the NSDAP was gaining more and more votes. In the early 1930s, the Nazi Party's newspapers were not winning as many readers as the party was new voters, which leads Hung to conclude that many Germans at the time voted for the Nazi Party but read prodemocratic, or at least non-Nazi, newspapers and magazines that probably dismissed, ridiculed, or otherwise expressed disdain for these political climbers on the far right. This at least is how the editors of the big, nationally distributed newspapers of the two liberal publishing companies in Berlin, Ullstein and Mosse, diagnosed the situation. Hung argues that the papers' lack of influence on at least part of their readership

shook these editors hard, for German journalists had traditionally seen themselves as opinion-leaders whose papers took clear political stands and explained to their audiences why theirs were the right positions to take. Consequently, Hung argues, they were forced to acknowledge that readers picked and chose from papers much more independently than they had assumed and, insisting on making up their own minds, resented being lectured to about politics. The companies' newspapers' various responses were uncannily similar to what we see today. Some papers devised new sections and invited readers to contribute to them in order to ensure them that they were taken seriously. Several editors ordered political reporters to eliminate any partisanship from their reporting, which some commentators criticized as political opportunism and argued that circumstances demanded even clearer and more precise argumentation. Others realized that the press had paid too much attention to the Nazis in the past and thereby made them appear more significant than they then were but had now become with their unintended support.

*Pamela Swett* also studies observations that audiences could not be persuaded or manipulated as easily as expected. By the late 1920s, the advertising industry, the media sector probably most suspected of psychological manipulation, had come to realize that it could no longer underestimate the audience and had to address both men and women as mature consumers who based their choices on information, experience, and what they considered trustworthy advice. That understanding was not much changed by the events of 1933. The Nazi regime did not appreciate ingratiation and early on passed the Law for the Protection of National Symbols (*Gesetz zum Schutz nationaler Symbole*), prohibiting the commercial use of the swastika and other party emblems and slogans. Businesses that wanted to increase their sales by insinuating their support for the new government had to find less blatant ways of doing that. At the same time, the propaganda ministry wanted to induce advertisers to work for the government's interest, stimulate the economy, and inform the "*Volksgemeinschaft*" about the consumer behavior that was expected of it while also denouncing what it considered to be underhanded business and advertising practices, a reproach it leveled almost exclusively against businesses owned by Jews. Advertising of consumer goods got tricky even before the war, in 1936, when the regime no longer wanted to stimulate their consumption and the Four Year Plan limited their production in favor of rearmament and other war-related industries. Advertisers then had to figure out how to tell consumers to conserve relevant raw materials in ways that still fostered their companies' ends and from which inferior substitutes they should dissociate their brands to safeguard their reputation. Swett shows how the Nazi regime's ability to control market activity was limited with respect to advertisers as well as consumers. And she reminds us, once again, that supposedly clear distinctions between historical media producers and consumers obscure our understanding of how media worked in the Third Reich. Both advertisers and the regime were keen to learn about consumers' opinions, and many consumers seem to have been happy to discuss their ideas, so that the distinction between the

senders and the receivers of messages was blurred in the ensuing multidirectional communication, and their power relations shifted case by case.

*Neil Gregor's* contribution begins with his insights that the Nazi regime was not the only possessor of agency and its propaganda did not inevitably synchronize public opinion. He argues that 'propaganda' connotes a top-down process and that we should reject the received view that the regime's long-lasting popularity verifies the effectiveness of its propaganda, since that thesis can be neither falsified nor confirmed. It is more productive to investigate how everyday media products were adapted to National Socialism and which kinds of audience reception and appropriation they made possible. Gregor's study pursues this line on the basis of concerts' advertising brochures and programs. For decades, concert hall culture had been an essential part of German cultural nationalism, a bourgeois practice that showed one belonged to an affluent group that appreciated high-brow culture and knew how to dress for and behave at its presentations. Concertgoers conceived of these conventions as apolitical, and many probably wanted them to remain so. But in the years after 1933, concert programs featured more and more small changes in aesthetics and content, which gave audiences both a sense of continuity and an opportunity to reimagine their musical preferences in new, e.g., more obviously nationalistic, ways. However, Gregor argues that this openness did not constitute a limitation to the regime's ideological reach. Quite the opposite, the wide range of nationalistic cultural rhetoric familiarized people with National Socialism and, so, made one's own gradual adjustment to it feel natural and not contradictory to one's earlier attitudes and values.

German news media reported some of the regime's crimes and uses of terror, for among their functions were intimidating potential opponents, enforcing the social isolation of targeted groups, and making the population accomplices through their cognizance and acquiescence.<sup>151</sup> Yet they rarely published visual documentation of Nazi violence. Many of the photographs of Nazi atrocities that come to mind today were taken by onlookers and circulated privately, if at all. For example, the regime instructed the press not to print any images of the anti-Jewish violence and destruction of synagogues and other Jewish property that occurred on 9 November 1938, and newspapers obeyed.<sup>152</sup> The prohibition against photographs of the mass killings of civilians behind the Eastern Front, however, must have been policed quite loosely, as the many private photographs that German soldiers, police, and SS men took show that the photographer did not feel the need to be secretive. In concentration and death camps, the prohibition was easier to enforce, but perpetrators may also have been less proud of their deeds and therefore less inclined to violate the order. However, there were a few officially permitted exceptions.<sup>153</sup> The best-known official photographic series from a death camp is the album the SS entitled *Umsiedlung der Juden aus Ungarn* ("Resettlement of the Jews from Hungary"), better known today as *The Auschwitz Album*. It contains nearly 200 photographs that the camp's Erkennungsdienst (Identification Service) took upon the arrival of various deportation trains bringing Jews from Hungary to Birkenau between May and July 1944. *Ulrike*

*Koppermann* argues that the photographs chosen for the album and their arrangement into seven chapters that follow the steps of the selection process indicate that Höß, the camp's commandant, intended it to demonstrate to SS leaders, and perhaps some government officials, how efficiently the SS at Auschwitz-Birkenau selected the relatively few Jews fit for forced labor from the hundreds of thousands of deportees. We can only speculate about whether the recipients of the album's probably fifteen handmade copies understood its narrative in exactly this way. However, the album found another audience its producers had not intended to address. One of the copies was discovered during the liberation of the camps, and between 1980 and 2005 four different editions were published and thousands of copies sold.

Contrary to the producers' intentions in 1944, the audience decades later viewed the album as a means to commemorate the dead and return some of their faces to the otherwise anonymous victims of mass murder. In her study of this reception, *Koppermann* analyzes the four editors' choices of titles, layouts, and commentaries and a large number of critics' reviews. It turns out that few reviewers considered these editorial choices and their effects. Most just presented their personal readings of the historical album as if the edition they were reviewing granted them direct access to it. Several commented on the fact that the photographs showed neither physical violence nor the gas chambers to which all those not selected for forced labor were sent shortly after being photographed. Some reviewers voiced their discomfort over looking into the faces of people about to be murdered. At the same time, they thought they could read the album against its producers' intentions and reappropriate it for the commemoration of the victims. *Koppermann* shows how all of the editions, in slightly different ways, encouraged this reading by focusing not on the SS's likely interests but on the remarkable story of the album's discovery. It was an Auschwitz survivor, Lili Jacob (later Zelmanovic, later Meier), who in the turmoil of forced evacuations and camp liberations found and kept the one known copy, which some Nazi or SS official must have left behind during his flight. Jacob identified several members of her murdered family in some of the photographs and recognized herself in one. As a witness in the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt, she presented the album to the court, and in 1980 she donated it to Yad Vashem, which permitted the editions. Some editors titled the album after her, and many reviewers called it her "family album"; so it was long assumed that the album specifically documented her transport. Only recently have historians proved that the photographs are of at least four different transports. Thus, it seems that the album's arrangement of the photographs makes viewers think either that they document the selection for one transport or that the selection process at Birkenau was so well established that it always went the same way, which was likely the message to the intended audience.

In addition to perpetrators' and accomplices' photographs and rare film footage, which had had only limited, private audiences during the Third Reich, postwar audiences' visual imagination of the Holocaust is based on the films

(and photographs) that Allied film crews shot of the liberation of the camps and other places of mass murder. In his contribution, *Bernhard Gross* argues that these shocking images were well known to German moviegoers after the end of the war since the Allies screened their atrocity films to them. Gross does not study empirical sources of audiences' responses but as a film scholar takes a different approach to audience reception. He analyzes both atrocity films' and postwar feature films' modes of addressing their German audiences. He employs neo-phenomenological film theory, which does not distinguish between spectator and film. Rather, Gross conceives of them as together constituting filmic perception, with the film offering different ways it can be perceived and spectators choosing from among them or, rather, emotionally responding to some but not to others. Gross first examines Allied atrocity films' unconscious aesthetical structure and identifies three of their central topoi: addressing the individual; displaying the act of perception, thereby making the spectator self-conscious of her or his own act of perceiving; and underlying disorder and order. He then argues that these topoi migrated from Allied atrocity films to many German postwar feature films, which reconfigured them in one of two ways. Gross discusses several examples of films that alluded to iconic scenes of suffering Nazi victims but replaced the victims with Germans suffering from bombings or displacement. Such films, which appropriated victimhood for all Germans, were popular with postwar audiences for some time. A few less popular films took the second alternative and filled the void that Allied atrocity films inevitably left by telling fictitious stories of victims of Nazi persecution who escape from a deportation train or concentration camp and survive to start life over. Gross does not discuss films' narratives; he points our attention to their filmic modes of expression in regard to *mise en scène*, cinematography, style, and the rhythm of montage. Gross's contribution, like Koppermann's, demonstrates that the endeavor of this volume—to better understand audiences of Nazism—must not limit itself to sources from the Third Reich.

I do not want to adopt *Jane Caplan's* last words to this volume in my first words to it. For it is not up to me as its editor to judge whether our contributions succeed at what we set out to achieve. These thorough media analyses of diverse, largely unknown primary sources by (mostly) historians and media, literature, and film scholars hopefully illuminate the fruitfulness of combining the insights and methodologies of media studies and history, particularly micro-, everyday, and cultural history. Our close-up studies of historical media uses reveal that they are much more complex than scholars usually realize, especially when they suspect that media have harmful effects, as historians of Nazi Germany have for quite some time.

Not all of our findings will come as a surprise. It was to be expected that audiences of Nazism did not just receive messages and understand them in the intended ways. Neither will it be news that the Nazi regime realized that it needed much of its audience to be satisfied with most of its media consumption, that is to say, that its media policies could not ignore common needs, expectations, and

tastes but had to cater to them to some degree. But even those of our readers who think of audiences as active, heterogeneous, and willful and, so, do not assume that media have very powerful effects may be astounded to learn that the fact that media users made their own choices of what among the available media products to consume and their own decisions about how to make sense of them lead to productions of meaning that helped stabilize the dictatorship. In their selective appropriations of media, it seems that many Germans chose content that did not require them to entertain serious concerns about the regime's inhumanity but, rather, what would quiet any worries they may have had. And this may have been easier since most everybody else seemed to do the same and competing patterns of how to interpret what was going on had disappeared from the media.

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## Notes

I warmly thank Greg Sax for his sensitive, astute editing of this introduction and for our many and intense discussions over its ideas, both of which together finally enabled me to say exactly what I wanted to say in this still foreign language.

1. I have borrowed this from Niklas Luhmann's statement: "Was wir über unsere Gesellschaft, ja über die Welt, in der wir leben, wissen, wissen wir durch die Massenmedien." N. Luhmann, *Die Realität der Massenmedien* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 1996), 9.
2. M. Wildt, *Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 40–41. On Nazi use of media and propaganda before 1933 in general, see G. Paul, *Aufstand der Bilder. Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz Nachf., 1992).
3. This approach is in line with one of the basic arguments in J. Caplan, *Nazi Germany: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), particularly 73–87. My introduction owes a lot to Jane's book and our ongoing conversations about how to write the history of Nazism.
4. Janosch Steuwer found many newspaper clippings in the diaries he studied. And Corey Ross points to a German survey of media use in Saxonian villages from 1939 that found that most who subscribed to the local daily read the local section and advertisements while less than a half read the political section. J. Steuwer, "Ein Drittes Reich, wie ich es auffasse". *Politik, Gesellschaft und privates Leben in Tagebüchern 1933–1939* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017), see, e.g., 401–2 and passim; C. Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 322–23.

5. The *Völkischer Beobachter* encouraged party members to do so on 4 March 1933, when for the first time all German radio stations broadcasted Hitler's final election campaign speech live from Königsberg. M. Favre, "Rundfunkereignisse im Dritten Reich (1933–1939). Fallstudie und Erfahrungsbericht," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 66, no. 11/12 (2015): 663–80, 668.
6. Luise Solmitz, who called herself and her family "Zeitgenossen 2. Ranges" because of their lack of a radio receiver, vividly described her listening to the broadcast of the "Tag von Potsdam" at her neighbors' and their different perceptions. Cited in B. Meyer, "Tagebuch Luise Solmitz," in *Bedrohung, Hoffnung, Skepsis. Vier Tagebücher des Jahres 1933*, ed. F. Bajohr, B. Meyer, and J. Szodrzynski, 143–270 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013), 178.
7. See H. D. Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein. Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933–1945* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1981), 7–19.
8. H. Zeutschner, *Die braune Mattscheibe. Fernsehen im Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Rotbuch, 1996).
9. Birthe Kundrus points out that one solution seems to have been to see oneself as an expert on propaganda and determine what of it was well done and what was too exaggerated. B. Kundrus, "Totale Unterhaltung? Die kulturelle Kriegführung 1939 bis 1945 in Film, Rundfunk und Theater," in *Die Deutsche Kriegsgesellschaft 1939 bis 1945*, vol. 2, ed. J. Echternkamp, 93–157 (Munich: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2005), 148. (The volume was translated into English.)
10. On the illegal Communist press work in Hamburg, see K. C. Führer, *Medienmetropole Hamburg. Mediale Öffentlichkeiten 1930–1960* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 2008), 327–28; on Sopade's *Deutschland-Berichte*, small parts of which were sent back to Germany, see B. Stöver, *Völkergemeinschaft im Dritten Reich. Die Konsensbereitschaft der Deutschen aus der Sicht sozialistischer Exilberichte* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1993), 73–74.
11. Foreign Communist and Socialist media were excluded. Listening to Radio Moskau was prohibited, and several cases were prosecuted already before the war. M. P. Hensle, *Rundfunkverbrechen. Das Hören von "Feindsendern" im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), 17–26.
12. See N. Frei and J. Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Beck, 1989), 121–35; C. Studt, ed., "*Diener des Staates*" oder "Widerstand zwischen den Zeilen"? *Die Rolle der Presse im Dritten Reich* (Münster: LIT, 2007).
13. A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Franz Eher, 1925), chapter 6: "Kriegspropaganda," 193–205. For an overview of theories of the masses and propaganda in the 1920s and National Socialists' receptions of them, see T. Bussemer, *Propaganda. Konzepte und Theorien* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2005), 61–193.
14. Those readers probably took refuge in what in media studies is called the 'third person effect': the conviction that others can and need to be influenced by propaganda much more than oneself. However, according to the findings of Othmar Plöckinger, who reconstructs *Mein Kampf's* contemporary reception in detail, topics other than propaganda figured much more prominently in the early debates that were still shaped by *völkisch* far-right rivalries. Only one review in *Deutschlands Erneuerung* of 1925 explicitly praised Hitler's remarks on mass propaganda and psychology; most others ignored this subject. Georg Stark in his 1930 book *Moderne politische Propaganda*, published by the NSDAP Reichspropagandaleitung, mentioned *Mein Kampf* only twice and in passing—in other words, by no means as a foundational text on the matter. Gerhard Schultze-Pfaelzer, a follower of Otto Straßer, in his 1931 brochure "Anti-Hitler" suspected that Hitler was actually afraid of the masses. He argued that Hitler's request that his speeches be sched-

- uled in the evenings, since audiences would then put up less mental resistance, could only mean that he did not trust the opinions he offered them. O. Plöckinger, *Geschichte eines Buches. Adolf Hitlers "Mein Kampf" 1922–1945*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011), 333, 353, 360.
15. Patrick Merziger has pointed out that the literature's frequently occurring image of Goebbels as a "genius conductor" ("genialer Orchesterleiter") was actually invented by Goebbels himself. By uncritically quoting Goebbels's depictions of a cleverly orchestrated media system serving a single purpose, authors certify (beglaubigen) the propaganda minister's daydreams (Träumereien) of omnipotence. P. Merziger, *Nationalsozialistische Satire und "Deutscher Humor." Politische Bedeutung und Öffentlichkeit populärer Unterhaltung 1931–1945* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010), 27–28.
  16. P. Longerich, *Joseph Goebbels: Biographie* (Munich: Siedler, 2010), 675–91.
  17. For a condensed overview, see W. Ranke, "Propaganda," in *Enzyklopädie des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. W. Benz, H. Graml, and H. Weiß, 34–49 (Munich: dtv, 1997).
  18. If things had gone according to Goebbels's wishes, he would also have been responsible for *Volksbildung* (people's education), including the oversight of schools and universities. See Longerich, *Joseph Goebbels*, 211–18.
  19. Goebbels tacitly included in this calculation the 8 percent of the NSDAP's right-wing bourgeois coalition partners: the DNVP and Der Stahlhelm. The NSDAP alone did not garner a majority of votes even though the opposing parties ran in the face of credible threats of violence.
  20. "Rede vor der Presse über die Errichtung des Reichspropagandaministeriums, 15 March 1933," in J. Goebbels, *Revolution der Deutschen: 14 Jahre Nationalsozialismus* (Oldenburg: Stalling, 1933), 135–50; excerpts from this speech as well as from his speeches to representatives of the broadcasting industry, on 25 March 1933, and the film industry, at the Kaiserhof on 28 March 1933, are translated into English in D. Welch, *The Third Reich. Politics and Propaganda* (London: Routledge, 1993), 136–54.
  21. All other parties had been banned by this time. The only list on the ballot was dominated by Nazis and included some "guests," who were known supporters of Nazi policies. On the function of such elections, see H. Richter and R. Jessen, "Elections, Plebiscites, and Festivals," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Third Reich*, ed. R. Gellately, 85–117 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
  22. Speer's final statement on 31 August 1946, in *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, vol. 22 (Nuremberg, 1947), 405–7, online at <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/icwc/dokumentation/dokumente/protokolle-nuernberg/ntvol22.pdf>, last accessed 10 December 2022.
  23. Cf. E. F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944–1946* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1975).
  24. B. Chamberlin, *Kultur auf Trümmern. Berliner Berichte der amerikanischen Information Control Section Juli–Dezember 1946* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1979), 11–15.
  25. As arguably the most influential formulations, see H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd ed. (1951; Cleveland: Meridian, 1958), esp. 341–62; C. Friedrich and Z. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, 2nd ed. (1956; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), esp. 129–47.
  26. K. D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur. Entstehung – Struktur – Folgen des Nationalsozialismus*, 6th ed. (1969; Frankfurt/M.: Ullstein, 1979), 164.
  27. E.g., H.-U. Thamer, *Verführung und Gewalt. Deutschland 1933–1945* (1986; reprint, Berlin: Siedler, 1998), 412, 427–29; B. J. Wendt, *Deutschland 1933–1945. Das "Dritte Reich"*

- (Hannover: Fackelträger, 1995), 137–44; L. Herbst, *Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–1945* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1996), 85.
28. E.g., Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur*, 164; Wendt, *Deutschland*, 137.
29. “Ansprache an die Intendanten und Direktoren der Rundfunkgesellschaften,” 25 March 1933, reprinted in H. Heiber, ed., *Goebbels Reden*, vol. 1: 1932–1939 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1971), 82–107, quotations on 91 and 106 (“das allermodernste und . . . das allerwichtigste Massenbeeinflussungsinstrument, das es überhaupt gibt”); quoted, e.g., in Wendt, *Deutschland*, 139–40; W. Benz, *Geschichte des Dritten Reichs* (Munich: Beck, 2000), 60.
30. E.g., Herbst, *Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland*, 86.
31. As a particularly egregious recent example, see O. Jungen, “Erregerphantasien. Eine sentimentale Schneise im frühen Radiodiskurs,” in *Die Massen bewegen. Medien und Emotionen in der Moderne*, ed. F. Bösch and M. Borutta, 307–24 (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 2006). Jungen also adopts Marshall McLuhan’s bold thesis that Hitler owed his political existence only to the radio and public-address systems, 308. For a critical analysis of gendered conceptions of listening, see K. Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1996), particularly 17–53.
32. More on this below.
33. In 1934, the Reichsender Köln phrased its self-conception as follows: “The main task of German broadcasting is to keep the German ready-to-receive for the hours, in which the Führer steps in front of the people in order to speak to them. It is our biggest concern to keep this millionfold invisible telephone connection to the heart of the people operable and effective, so that, in the case of an emergency, really everybody hears the Führer.” My translation. (“Hauptaufgabe des deutschen Rundfunks ist es ja, den deutschen Menschen in Empfangsbereitschaft zu halten für die Stunden, da der Führer vor das Volk hintritt, um zu ihm zu sprechen. Diese millionenfache unsichtbare Telefonverbindung zum Herzen des Volkes betriebstüchtig und leistungsfähig zu halten, damit im Ernstfall auch wirklich alle den Führer hören, – das ist unsere größte Sorge.”) “Der Reichsender Köln,” *Reichs-Rundfunk. Entwicklung, Aufbau und Bedeutung* 10, no. 57 (1934): 71–73, 72.
34. B. Kleinhans, *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Kino. Lichtspiel in der braunen Provinz* (Cologne: PapyRossa, 2003), 29.
35. Instructive primary sources became available in those years through editions of the Gestapo’s and Sicherheitsdienst’s internal secret reports on people’s uttered opinions on the one hand, and, on the other, of the reports from sympathizers of the former labor movement gathered by the executive of the Social Democratic Party and the socialist group Neu Beginnen in exile. All these reports relied on informants with limited contacts and their own agendas, which interpretations must take into consideration. H. Boberach, ed., *Meldungen aus dem Reich. Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS*, 18 vols. (Herrsching: Pawlak, 1984ff.); T. Klein, ed., *Die Lageberichte der Geheimen Staatspolizei über die Provinz Hessen-Nassau, 1933–1936*, 2 vols. (Cologne: Böhlau 1986); W. Ribbe, ed., *Die Lageberichte der Geheimen Staatspolizei über die Provinz Brandenburg und die Reichshauptstadt Berlin* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998); H.-J. Rupieper and A. Serk, eds., *Die Lageberichte der Geheimen Staatspolizei zur Provinz Sachsen 1933 bis 1936*, 3 vols. (Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2003–2006); K. Behnken, ed., *Deutschland-Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade) 1934–1940*, 7 vols. (Salzhausen: Nettelbeck, 1980); B. Stöver, ed., *Berichte über die Lage in Deutschland. Die Lagemeldungen der Gruppe Neu Beginnen aus dem Dritten Reich 1933–1936* (Bonn: Dietz, 1996).

36. See Martin Broszat's description of this discovery during their *Bayern-Projekt*: M. Broszat, "Vorwort," in *Bayern in der NS-Zeit. Soziale Lage und politisches Verhalten der Bevölkerung im Spiegel vertraulicher Berichte*, ed. Broszat, E. Fröhlich, and F. Wieseemann, 11–20 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1977), 11; for a critical evaluation of this famous early project's potential and limits, see M. Wildt, "Das 'Bayern-Projekt,' die Alltagsforschung und die 'Volksgemeinschaft,'" in *Martin Broszat, der "Staat Hitlers" und die Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. N. Frei, 119–29 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007).
37. See J. Steuerer and H. Leßau, "Wer ist ein Nazi? Woran erkennt man ihn? Zur Unterscheidung von Nationalsozialisten und anderen Deutschen," *Mittelweg* 36, no. 23.1 (2014): 30–51.
38. See A. Lüdtke, "Die Praxis von Herrschaft. Zur Analyse von Hinnehmen und Mitmachen im deutschen Faschismus," in *Terror, Herrschaft und Alltag im Nationalsozialismus. Probleme einer Sozialgeschichte des deutschen Faschismus*, ed. B. Berlekamp and W. Röhr, 226–45 (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1995).
39. See P. F. Lazarsfeld and E. Katz, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by the People in the Flow of Mass Communication* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1955); and E. Katz, J. G. Blumler, and M. Gurevitch, "Uses and Gratifications Research," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 4th ser. 37 (1973–74): 509–23, to name two of the most influential studies.
40. I. Kershaw, "How Effective Was Nazi Propaganda?," in *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations*, ed. D. Welch, 180–205 (London: Croom Helm, 1983).
41. *Ibid.*, 182.
42. *Ibid.*, 190–91. My discussion of this thesis does not consider later research on the attitudes of Germans toward German Jews and on their learning about the ongoing mass murder of Jews in Eastern Europe because my interest here in Kershaw's 1983 essay is its methodological approach to measuring the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda.
43. In the last two decades, a renewed discussion of the *Volksgemeinschaft* as a powerful idea at the time and of the term's analytical potential has put forward many more aspects, which, again, are not relevant to the focus of this introduction.
44. See, e.g., U. von Hehl, *Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2001), 29–30; R. J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 217; M. Grüttner, *Das Dritte Reich 1933–1939* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2014), 340.
45. E.g., Thamer, *Verführung und Gewalt*, 434; Herbst, *Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland*, 89.
46. K. C. Führer, "Die Tageszeitung als wichtigstes Massenmedium der nationalsozialistischen Gesellschaft," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 55 (2007): 411–34. David Bankier assigns the press "a vital role as an agent of political socialization." D. Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion under Nazism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 20.
47. This hypothesis can be found in, e.g., Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 141–49; von Hehl, *Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft*, 28; Thamer, *Verführung und Gewalt*, 434.
48. Führer, *Medienmetropole*, 323–441.
49. Führer, "Tageszeitung," 417.
50. "Das deutsche Zeitungswesen," in *Deutschland-Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands*, vol. 3, 777–825. Führer's main argument against the calculations in the Sopade report is that it compares the circulation figures for 1934 and 1935 to those of 1932, which were too high as they included large numbers of free copies as well as returns. However, the Sopade copyeditor did mention the "Auflagenschwindel" common in 1932; yet, unlike Führer, he or she assumed that Nazi papers after 1933 might well have also

- published overly high figures, since the Werberat der deutschen Wirtschaft exercised far less control over them than over the non-party papers.
51. However, the report's estimations of a huge decline in readership as high as 45 percent was most probably far too optimistic.
  52. Bankier, *Germans and the Final Solution*, 21.
  53. *Ibid.*, 22–23.
  54. O. J. Hale, *The Captive Press in the Third Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964); K.-D. Abel, *Presselenkung im NS-Staat. Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Publizistik in der nationalsozialistischen Zeit* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1968); Frei and Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*. The Nazi regime also allowed Jewish German papers to continue to publish until November 1938, when they were all prohibited, and the propaganda ministry established the *Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt* as the only Jewish paper permitted in Germany. See M. Nagel, "1933 als Zäsur? Zu Erscheinungsbedingungen und Funktionen der deutsch-jüdischen Presse vor und nach der Machtübergabe an die Nationalsozialisten," *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 17 (2015): 131–66; K. Diehl, *Die jüdische Presse im Dritten Reich. Zwischen Selbstbehauptung und Fremdbestimmung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997).
  55. The *Presseanweisungen* (press instructions) journalists received from the propaganda ministry were to be followed and then destroyed. However, some journalists kept and hid their notes; so historians can study those parts of the instructions. H. Bohrman and G. Toepser-Ziegert, *NS-Pressenanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*, 7 vols. (Munich: Saur 1984–2001); for reporters' reception of the instructions, see the memoirs of one of the collectors of notes, Fritz Sängler, *Politik der Täuschungen. Mißbrauch der Presse im Dritten Reich. Weisungen, Informationen, Notizen 1933–1939* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1975).
  56. Frei and Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*, 25. In the same vein, Führer argues that it was exactly the papers with a tradition other than the Nazi "Kampfzeitungen" that had to do the real work of National Socialist education ("die eigentliche nationalsozialistische Erziehungsarbeit"). It was a game whose roles were distributed between the party papers and the non-party papers, which the Nazi Party could always end if it wanted. Führer, *Medienmetropole*, 345, 354–55.
  57. See the detailed analysis for Hamburg in Führer, *Medienmetropole*, 338–43, 387–92. Informers for the Gestapo in Aachen reported that subscribers had said they had taken out subscriptions under duress and planned on canceling them as soon as possible. Bankier, *Germans and the Final Solution*, 26.
  58. Most of them are either old, committed to the totalitarian approach, or not analytical but descriptive or memoirs: E. Martens, *Zum Beispiel: Das Reich. Zur Phänomenologie der Presse im totalitären Regime* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1972); M. Boveri, *Wir lügen alle. Eine Hauptstadtzeitung unter Hitler* (Olten: Walter-Verlag, 1965) (on the *Berliner Tageblatt*); G. Gillissen, *Auf verlorenem Posten. Die Frankfurter Zeitung im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Siedler, 1986); M. Zeck, *Das Schwarze Korps. Geschichte und Gestalt des Organs der Reichsführung SS* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002); D. Roos, *Julius Streicher und "Der Stürmer" 1923–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2014).
  59. S. Paweronschitz et al., eds., *Zeitungszeugen 1933–1945. Die Tageszeitung in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*, collectors ed. (London: Albertas Limited, 2009–2013).
  60. Corey Ross studies German media with regard to international trends and reminds us that also in the Third Reich newspaper readers wanted to be entertained just as much as they wanted to be informed. Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 321–30; in the

- same vein, see K. C. Führer, "Pleasure, Practicality and Propaganda: Popular Magazines in Nazi Germany, 1933–1939," in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, ed. P. Swett, C. Ross, and F. d'Almeida, 132–53 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
61. P. Merziger, "Die Ermächtigung des Publikums im Nationalsozialismus? Leserbeschwerden und NS-Propaganda in den Unterhaltungsmedien – Die Satirezeitschrift *Die Brennessel*," *sowi. Das Journal für Geschichte, Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur* 4 (2005): 26–39; for more details see Merziger's monograph: *Nationalsozialistische Satire und "Deutscher Humor*," 113–40.
  62. F. Hahn, *Lieber Stürmer. Leserbriefe an das NS-Kampfblatt 1924–1945* (Stuttgart: See-wald, 1978), 188–245; Roos, *Streicher und "Der Stürmer."*
  63. Zeck, *Das Schwarze Korps*.
  64. This is exactly the message in the animated advertisement film *Die Schlacht um Miggershausen* (Commerz-Film AG, 1937). In the village of Miggershausen the rural economy is failing because the inhabitants live behind the moon and have no clue how to farm effectively, until an army of *Volksempfänger* attacks the village, storms into each house, and teaches the residents how to be successful and happy. (The film might still be available on YouTube.)
  65. Between 10 and 20 percent of the broadcasters were dismissed, primarily those in higher positions, and replaced with young party functionaries, most of whom had no broadcasting experience. A. Diller, *Rundfunkpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Munich: dtv, 1980), 56–168; K. Dussel, *Hörfunk in Deutschland. Politik, Programm, Publikum (1923–1960)* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2002), 55–69; Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 279–86.
  66. A. Diller, "Der Volksempfänger. Propaganda- und Wirtschaftsfaktor," *Rundfunk und Geschichte* 9, no. 3 (1983): 140–56.
  67. All of these stations, like the Deutschlandsender, transmitted on the longwave band. Near the border, foreign stations might have been better received than German stations. For overseas stations, however, one would have needed an extra component to receive the shortwave band. Nazi Party periodicals highlighted the *Volksempfänger's* ability to receive international stations, that is, until the war. W. König, *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft. "Volkprodukte" im Dritten Reich. Vom Scheitern einer nationalsozialistischen Konsumgesellschaft* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004), 25–99, here 39, 94.
  68. *Ibid.*, 57–68; Diller, *Rundfunkpolitik*, 161–68.
  69. Citing an official statistic of 1941, König points out that these figures were for all registered receivers, including those in offices, factories, and taverns, so that the percentage of private households with radios was slightly lower. König, *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft*, 83.
  70. *Ibid.*, 84–89.
  71. They were the target group of the advertisement film *Die Schlacht um Miggershausen* mentioned in endnote 64. However, as this film was screened in movie theaters, it seems likely that the ruralites who rejected the radio might have also rejected (far away) movie theaters and therefore never seen it.
  72. For more details, see U. C. Schmidt, "Radioaneignung," in *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden I: Radio im Nationalsozialismus. Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung*, ed. I. Marfölek and A. von Saldern, 243–360 (Tübingen: edition diskord, 1998).
  73. Führer cites several sources that claim that newspapers that printed a complete transcription of Hitler's speeches on the following day always sold better than on other days. Führer, *Medienmetropole*, 400.

74. C. Epping-Jäger, "Laut/Sprecher Hitler. Über ein Dispositiv der Massenkommunikation in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus," in *Hitler der Redner*, ed. J. Kopperschmidt, 143–57 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003); D. Gethmann, "Radiophone Stimmeninszenierungen im Nationalsozialismus. Eine medienwissenschaftliche Perspektive," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 8 (2011): 277–85.
75. König, *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft*, 92–93.
76. Complaints about uninterrupted noise and customers in taverns eating, drinking, and talking during Hitler's speech are cited in C. Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 262; Sopade reports about workers sneaking out and grumbling about unpaid overtime and even protesting after the broadcast are cited in M. Favre, "Rundfunkereignisse," 678–80.
77. I. Marßolek, "'Aus dem Volke für das Volk.' Die Inszenierung der 'Volksgemeinschaft' im und durch das Radio," in *Radiozeiten. Herrschaft, Alltag, Gesellschaft (1924–1960)*, ed. Marßolek and A. von Saldern, 121–35 (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 1999), quote ("unmittelbares Herrschaftsinstrument") on 121; Gethmann, "Radiophone Stimmeninszenierungen," quote ("Instrumente einer umfassenden Machttechnologie") on 285.
78. J. Steuwer, "*Ein Drittes Reich, wie ich es auffasse*," 394–95. (Hitler "sprach so einfach und herzlich, betonte so eindringlich sein Herkommen aus den Arbeiterkreisen, daher das Verständnis für deren Nöte und Wünsche, dass ich unwillkürlich in das Heil Hitler und Sieg Heil mit einstimme. Alle waren begeistert, die in unserem Stübchen versammelt waren, alt und jung".)
79. V. Klemperer, *Tagebücher (1918–1959)*, online at <https://www.degruyter.com/data-base/klemp/html?lang=de>, entry 11 November 1933, last accessed 6 April 2023. ("Der Erlöser kommt zu den Armen. . . . dann über 40 Minuten Hitler. Eine meist heisere, überschrieene, erregte Stimme, weite Passagen im weinerlichen Ton des predigenden Sektierers.")
80. K. Tucholsky, letter to Walter Hasenclever, 4 March 1933, reprinted in Tucholsky, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 20: *Briefe 1933–1934*, ed. A. Bonitz and G. Huonker (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1996), 15. ("Die Stimme ist nicht so unsympathisch wie man denken sollte – sie riecht nur etwas nach Hosenboden, nach Mann, unappetitlich, aber sonst geht's. Manchmal überbrüllt er sich, dann kotzt er. Aber sonst nichts, nichts, nichts.")
81. Cited in Meyer, "Tagebuch Luise Solmitz," 158. ("er sprach aus, was wir empfunden haben, er versprach nicht, daß es von morgen an besser werden könne, aber er versprach, daß von nun an der dtsh. Geist wieder Dtschl. leiten solle, d.h., das sagte er nicht, es war der Sinn. . . . Er ließ die Rede auf Dtschl. vaterunserartig u. mit 'Amen' ausklingen, u. er übersteigerte sich etwas. Ist ja auch nicht Redner, sondern genialer Führer. Eine Begeisterung! Es standen uns vier Menschen die Tränen in den Augen.") One of these three other people was Solmitz's also very conservative Jewish husband Fredy.
82. D. Münkler, "Produktionssphäre," in *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden I*, ed. Marßolek and von Saldern, 45–128, here 99–105; Dussel, *Hörfunk in Deutschland*, 176–243; Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 330–40.
83. See the quote in endnote 33.
84. Führer, *Medienmetropole*, 100–101. The way radio announcements suddenly appear in diary entries and letters confirms that many had made it their habit to let the radio play until the end of the program; see, e.g., I. Hammer and S. zur Nieden, eds., *Sehr selten habe ich geweint. Briefe und Tagebücher aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg von Menschen aus Berlin* (Zurich: Schweizer Verlagshaus, 1992), 148, 150, 309.

85. "Die Reichsregierung weiß, daß das deutsche Volk diese Gefahr kennt, und erwartet daher, dass jeder Deutsche aus Verantwortungsbewusstsein heraus es zur Anstandspflicht erhebt, grundsätzlich das Abhören ausländischer Sender zu unterlassen. Für diejenigen Volksgenossen, denen dieses Verantwortungsbewusstsein fehlt, hat der Ministerrat für die Reichsverteidigung die nachfolgende Verordnung erlassen." "Verordnung über außergewöhnliche Rundfunkmaßnahmen vom 1. September 1939," in *Reichsgesetzblatt I* (1939): 1683, online at [https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Verordnung\\_%C3%BCber\\_au%C3%9Ferordentliche\\_Rundfunkma%C3%9Fnahmen](https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Verordnung_%C3%BCber_au%C3%9Ferordentliche_Rundfunkma%C3%9Fnahmen), last accessed 10 December 2022.
86. Hensle, *Rundfunkverbrechen*, 26–37; for Gürtner's concerns, see 26.
87. See Führer, *Medienmetropole*, 99–106, for several examples of what in particular triggered disbelief and rumors from early on in the war.
88. K.-H. Reuband, "'Schwarzhören' im Dritten Reich. Verbreitung, Erscheinungsformen und Kommunikationsmuster beim Umgang mit verbotenen Sendern," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 41 (2001): 245–70; Kundrus, "Totale Unterhaltung?," 145–47.
89. Hensle therefore assumes that the newly created offense did not trigger a wave of denunciations. Although *Rundfunkverbrechen* were obviously often committed, the number of special court trials was relatively small. Hensle, *Rundfunkverbrechen*, 347.
90. *Meldungen aus dem Reich*, vol. 14, 5447. According to a report of 24 November 1941, a campaign in which local party groups attached cardboard warnings to the tuning dials of people's receivers was considered to be insulting. *Meldungen aus dem Reich*, vol. 8, 3016. Riedel quotes the bulletin for political leaders about how to conduct the campaign politely and assertively. Riedel, *Lieber Rundfunk*, 127. Reuband assumes that the campaign was soon canceled. Reuband, "'Schwarzhören,'" 252.
91. A. Diller, "Haben Sie Auslandssender gehört? Eine amerikanische Hörerbefragung am Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs," *Rundfunk und Geschichte* 24 (1998): 54–62. The BBC began their German-language program in September 1938 and had raised its weekly hours to thirty-three by October 1943; the Americans ran German programs since they entered the war; and Radio Luxembourg was taken over by American forces in September 1944. The stations Germans clandestinely tuned in to also depended on which they best received in their locality. Also see Hensle, *Rundfunkverbrechen*, 319–28.
92. Diller, "Haben Sie Auslandssender gehört?," 60. These were the periods the questionnaire offered.
93. This poll result is not supported by the trials of those indicted of *Rundfunkverbrechen*. In the two districts of the *Sondergerichte* (special courts) of Berlin and Freiburg that Hensle selected for his study, he found that most German defendants were middle-aged, lower-class men with no higher education or political affiliation. About a fifth of those indicted were forced laborers from Western countries. Hensle, *Rundfunkverbrechen*, 346.
94. Diller, "Haben Sie Auslandssender gehört?," 57.
95. Reuband, Hensle, and Führer argue that most of the so-called *Schwarzhören* were probably not politically motivated but, rather, acts of nonconformity often consistent with agreement or even loyalty to Hitler or the regime in other respects. Reuband, "'Schwarzhören,'" 270; Hensle, *Rundfunkverbrechen*, 328–33; Führer, *Medienmetropole*, 104. Other authors mistrust the high number reported for Germans who later said that they had listened to foreign broadcasts. See, e.g., König, *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft*, 95.
96. Since June 1940, all German stations were interconnected: Diller, *Rundfunkpolitik*, 372–86.

97. König, *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft*, 96–99.
98. *Meldungen aus dem Reich*, vol. 11, 4108, and vol. 15, 5941–45.
99. According to Führer, residents of cities targeted by the Allied bombing campaign might have found interruptions in broadcasting even more informative about imminent attacks than the news. Führer, *Medienmetropole*, 106–11.
100. All of the reported figures are estimates and apply to different territories, but the trend is unambiguous. See Spitzenorganisation der Filmwirtschaft e.V., *Filmstatistisches Taschenbuch 1961* (Karlsruhe: Neue Verlags-Gesellschaft), 69.
101. The attraction of the cinema was (and has always been) more than the movies shown, especially for young people for whom it provided a (dark!) place without adult supervision where they could go with romantic interests or friends. For most consumers, going to the movies was a leisure-time highpoint, meant not longer being a child and, in some cases, having the means to invite somebody out. On movie attendance in rural areas, see C. Zimmermann, “Landkino im Nationalsozialismus,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 41 (2001): 231–43; Kleinhaus, *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Kino*.
102. G. Stahr, *Volksgemeinschaft vor der Leinwand? Der nationalsozialistische Film und sein Publikum* (Berlin: Hans Theissen, 2001), 168–85. He bases this conclusion on the rise in ticket sales for theaters in the outskirts of large cities that screened the main feature film later and often for longer than downtown theaters. Thus, a significant number of moviegoers seem to have gone for the current newsreel, taking into account to not see a new movie. *Ibid.*, 174–75.
103. *Ibid.*, 283–84. My translation. According to Stahr, the answer to the question in his book’s title is that only during the war years could one say that something like the “Volksgemeinschaft” sat in front of the screen.
104. J. Garncarz, *Begeisterte Zuschauer. Die Macht des Kinopublikums in der NS-Diktatur* (Cologne: Herbert von Halem, 2021), 116–25. Strangely, Garncarz ignores the newsreels and Stahr’s thesis. Klaus Kreimeier characterizes the nationalization of the biggest production companies as a “Zusammenschaltung,” leading to a “arbeitsteilig organisiertes Verbundsystem.” K. Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story. Die Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* (1992; reprint, Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 2002), 321.
105. *Ibid.*, 45–68.
106. G. Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik. Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reichs* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1969); Garncarz, *Begeisterte Zuschauer*, 182–205; Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 311–21. Ross adds, “the film world was probably the least Nazified segment of the cultural elite.” *Ibid.*, 313.
107. E. Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). Rentschler lists retrospectives, special and matinee screenings, and television broadcasting not only in West Germany but also in East Germany and the marketing of video retailers, including American commercial distributors, 2–5.
108. The latter is the thesis of Clemens Zimmermann, Birthe Kundrus, and Corey Ross, which several historians who do not work on film also defend. C. Zimmermann, *Medien im Nationalsozialismus. Deutschland, Italien und Spanien in den 1930er und 1940er Jahren* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), 175; Kundrus, “Totale Unterhaltung?”; Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*, 311–21, 346–63; N. Frei, *Der Führerstaat. Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft 1933 bis 1945*, 8th ed. (1987; Frankfurt/M.: dtv, 2007), 111; Wendt, *Deutschland 1933–1945*, 311.

109. Stahr, *Volksgemeinschaft vor der Leinwand?*, 121–34; F. Moeller, *Der Filmminister. Goebbels und der Film im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Henschel, 1998), 151–226.
110. G. Eckert, “Filmtendenz und Tendenzfilm,” *Wille und Macht. Führerorgan der nationalsozialistischen Jugend* 6, no. 4 (15 February 1938): 19–25, reprinted in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 503–7, 503. For another example, see A. Jason, “Der jüdische Einfluß auf die Filmindustrie,” *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 6, no. 64 (July 1935): 53–63.
111. Of course, this was again an insinuation that Jews were to blame, and the following sarcastic suggestion that an author made in *Das Schwarze Korps* in 1935 became indeed the case in 1938: “Die sollten doch einen eigenen abgesonderten ‘Familienzirkus’ bekommen.” “Premierentiger,” *Das Schwarze Korps*, 24 April 1935, 5. I say more on screenings at the Filmbühne of the Jüdische Kulturbund below.
112. See Moeller, *Filmminister*, on taking control, 82–150, on changing positions, 151–312.
113. See D. Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933–1945*, rev. ed. (1983; London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 2001), 40–49, 61–78; Moeller, *Filmminister*, 154–60; Stahr, *Volksgemeinschaft vor der Leinwand?*, 105–6.
114. See Goebbels’s speech, “In den Turnhallen,” Berlin, 19 May 1933, reprinted in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 442–47. Another reason one only rarely sees swastikas and Hitler salutes in German movies of the time is that Goebbels did not want German film exports and market shares to be further limited; they had been falling since 1933.
115. Eckert, “Filmtendenz und Tendenzfilm,” 504: “Und auch wer ganz klug sein will und meint, daß es zwar an Tendenzfilmen fehle, daß aber die Tendenz in den Einzelheiten der Zeichnung des Films enthalten sei, kann für solche Argumentation kaum Beispiele anführen.” In the text, I quote Rentschler’s translation in *Ministry of Illusions*, 19. Goebbels sanctioned the paper, and in his diary he called the chief editor a “dumme Rotznase.” Moeller, *Filmminister*, 190.
116. Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusions*, 1.
117. See, e.g., D. S. Hull, *Film in the Third Reich. A Study of German Cinema 1933–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); E. Leiser, “Deutschland, erwache!” *Propaganda im Film des Dritten Reiches* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1978); D. Hollstein, “Jud Süß” und die Deutschen. *Antisemitische Vorurteile im nationalsozialistischen Spielfilm* (Frankfurt/M.: Ullstein, 1983); Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema*.
118. S. Lowry, *Pathos und Politik. Ideologie in Spielfilmen des Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991), 28.
119. Lowry, *Pathos und Politik*, 32, 34; see also K. Witte, *Lachende Erben, Toller Tag. Filmkomödie im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 1995); Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusions*; S. Hake, *Popular Cinema of the Third Reich* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001); M.-E. O’Brien, *Nazi Cinema as Enchantment in the Third Reich* (Rochester: Camden House, 2004).
120. On American movies screened in Germany before fall 1940, when rumors had it that Hollywood had several anti-Nazi films in production, see K. C. Führer, “Two-Fold Admiration: American Movies as Popular Entertainment and Artistic Model in Nazi Germany, 1933–1939,” in *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Führer and C. Ross, 97–112 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); M. Spieker, *Hollywood unterm Hakenkreuz. Der amerikanische Spielfilm im Dritten Reich* (Trier: WVT 1999).
121. E. Offermanns, *Die deutschen Juden und der Spielfilm der NS-Zeit*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 2008). But Jewish audiences had a somewhat greater appreciation for American movies.

122. Leiser, "Deutschland, erwache!," 93; J. Toeplitz, *Geschichte des Films*, vol. 3: 1934–1939 (Berlin: Henschel, 1979), 263; H. Segeberg, "Die großen Deutschen. Zur Renaissance des Propagandafilms um 1940," in *Mediale Mobilmachung. Das Dritte Reich und der Film*, ed. Segeberg, 267–91 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2004), 276–77; Garncarz, *Begeisterte Zuschauer*, 176–79.
123. Klaus Kreimeier points to the biopic *Friedrich Schiller* (1940), which presented the poet as a national hero, but let him express the historical Schiller's accusation against tyrants' oppression of the mind, a scene some moviegoers applauded. Kreimeier, *Ufa-Story*, 330–31. Also see K. Witte, "Ästhetische Opposition. Käutners Filme im Faschismus," *Sammlung. Jahrbuch für antifaschistische Literatur und Kunst*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt/M.: Röderberg Verlag, 1979), 113–23.
124. Less clumsy and more popular that year was *Hitlerjunge Quex*. See Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusions*, 53–69; F. Koch, "Hitlerjunge Quex und der hilflose Antifaschismus," *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, Supplement 31 (1993): 163–79; on the special screenings' opulent stagings, see K. Schilde, "Hitlerjunge Quex – Welturaufführung am 11. September 1933 in München. Blick hinter die Kulissen des NS-Propagandafilms," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 59, no. 10 (2008): 540–50.
125. The war changed this situation. Before the war, obvious propaganda meant that a film could not be distributed domestically. With the German occupation of more and more countries, the territory for distribution grew.
126. See the reconstructed yearly rankings in Garncarz, *Begeisterte Zuschauer*.
127. Stahr, *Volksgemeinschaft vor der Leinwand?*, 233.
128. The film most studied in this respect is *Jud Süß*. See, e.g., Hollstein, "Jud Süß" und die Deutschen; D. Culbert, "The Impact of Anti-Semitic Film Propaganda on German Audiences: *Jew Süß* and *The Wandering Jew* (1940)," in *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich*, ed. R. A. Etlin, 139–57 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); A.-M. Lohmeier, "Propaganda als Alibi: Rezeptionsgeschichtliche Thesen zu Veit Harlans Film *Jud Süß* (1940)," in "Jud Süß." *Hoffude, literarische Figur, antisemitisches Zerrbild*, ed. A. Przyrembel and J. Schönert, 201–20 (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 2006); K. Hickethier, "Veit Harlans Film *Jud Süß* und der audiovisuell inszenierte Antisemitismus," in "Jud Süß," ed. Przyrembel and Schönert, 221–43; A. Nolzen, "Hier sieht man den Juden, wie er wirklich ist . . ." Die Rezeption des Films *Jud Süß* in der deutschen Bevölkerung," in "Jud Süß," ed. Przyrembel and Schönert, 245–61.
129. The most thorough analyses of *Kulturfilme* are in P. Zimmermann and K. Hoffmann, eds., *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland*, vol. 3: "Drittes Reich" 1933–1945 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005).
130. K. Hoffmann, "Menschen, Tiere, Sensationen. Die Wochenschauen der 30er Jahre," in *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films*, vol. 3, 211–30.
131. Heinrich Roellenberg, director of the *Deutsche Wochenschau* in 1940–1941, quoted in K. Hoffmann, "'Sinfonie des Krieges.' Die Deutsche Wochenschau im Zweiten Weltkrieg," in *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films*, vol. 3, 645–89. On the *Deutsche Wochenschau* during the war, also see Moeller, *Filmminister*, 364–402.
132. The *Meldungen aus dem Reich* covered every issue of the *Wochenschau*.
133. See, e.g., *Meldungen aus dem Reich*, no. 51, 9 February 1940, 740–41; no. 249, 8 January 1942, 3138–40; no. 259, 12 February 1942, 3300.
134. See P. Bucher, "Goebbels und die Deutsche Wochenschau. Nationalsozialistische Filmpropaganda im Zweiten Weltkrieg 1939–1945," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 2 (1986): 53–69.

135. *Meldungen aus dem Reich*, no. 364, 4 March 1943, 4892.
136. See K. Nowak, *Projektionen der Moral. Filmkandale in der Weimarer Republik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015), 265–304.
137. See Stahr, *Volksgemeinschaft vor der Leinwand?*, 115–61.
138. Stahr found evidence that in 1944 a close-up of a roasted chicken was ordered cut from a Danish movie: *Volksgemeinschaft vor der Leinwand?*, 235.
139. Zeutschner, *Die braune Mattscheibe*; K. Winker, *Fernsehen unterm Hakenkreuz. Organisation, Programm. Personal* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1996); W. König, “Der Einheits-Fernsehempfänger. Gemeinschaftsgerät für einen Zukunftsmarkt,” in *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft*, 100–114.
140. “Eine große Zahl von Besuchern kehrt ständig wieder. Die meisten gehören ärmeren Volksschichten an, die durch die Teilnahme an den Fernsehvorführungen die Ausgaben für den Kinobesuch ersparen.” Bericht der Reichspostdirektion Berlin, 1 May 1937, quoted in Zeutschner, *Die braune Mattscheibe*, 142.
141. E.g., Wendt, *Deutschland*, 142; von Hehl, *Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft*, 86.
142. Kershaw, “How Effective was Nazi Propaganda?,” 181; Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution*, 1–10; Stöver, *Volksgemeinschaft*, particularly 15–34; P. Longerich, “*Davon haben wir nichts gewusst!*” *Die Deutschen und die Judenverfolgung 1933–1945* (Munich: Siedler, 2006), 23–53, 316–18; Stahr, *Volksgemeinschaft*, 16–55; Kundrus, “Totale Unterhaltung?,” 142–51; Garnarcz, *Begeisterte Zuschauer*, 62–64.
143. I have spelled out this argument in U. Weckel, “Rehabilitation historischer Stimmenviel-falt. Rezeptionsforschung als Kulturgeschichte,” in *Historische Medienwirkungsforschung. Ansätze, Methoden und Quellen*, ed. T. Birkner, P. Merziger, and C. Schwarzenegger, 21–51 (Cologne: Herbert von Halem, 2020).
144. Steuer, “*Ein Drittes Reich, wie ich es auffasse*,” here 27.
145. I. Kershaw, *The “Hitler Myth”: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (1987; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.
146. S. zur Nieden, “Aufstieg und Fall des virilen Männerhelden. Der Skandal um Ernst Röhm und seine Ermordung,” in *Homosexualität und Staatsräson. Männlichkeit, Homophobie und Politik in Deutschland 1900–1945*, ed. zur Nieden, 147–92 (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 2005). The press in exile had to look on helplessly as Hitler usurped the political left’s sex-and-crime story about Röhm and almost turned himself into the victim and finally the rescuer. *Ibid.*, 186.
147. R. Sachsse, *Die Erziehung zum Wegsehen. Fotografie im NS-Staat* (Dresden: Philo Fine Arts, 2003); M. Umbach, “Selfhood, Place, and Ideology in German Photo Albums, 1933–1945,” *Central European History* 48, Special Issue 03 (2015): 335–65.
148. K. Hesse and P. Springer, *Vor aller Augen. Fotodokumente des nationalsozialistischen Terrors in der Provinz* (Essen: Klartext, 2002); C. Kreutzmüller and J. Werner, *Fixiert. Fotografische Quellen zur Verfolgung und Ermordung der Juden in Europa* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2012); C. Kreutzmüller, H. Simon, and E. Weber, *Ein Pogrom im Juni. Fotos antisemitischer Schmierereien in Berlin, 1938* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2013); T. Medicus ed., *Verhängnisvoller Wandel. Ansichten aus der Provinz 1933–1949: Die Fotosammlung Biella* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2016); see also some of the short chapters in G. Paul, *Bilder einer Diktatur. Zur Visual History des “Dritten Reiches”* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2020).
149. P. Jahn and U. Schmiegelt, *Foto-Feldpost. Geknipste Kriegererlebnisse 1939–1945* (Berlin: Elefant Press, 2000); P. Bopp and S. Starke, *Fremde im Visier. Fotoalben aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Bielefeld: Kerber, 2009); F. Guerin, *Through Amateur Eyes: Film and Photography in Nazi Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

150. Julia Torrie convincingly adopts the term from Mary Fulbrook, who uses this “somewhat oxymoronic expression” in regard to the GDR to underline the fact that its citizens were at one and the same time “constrained and affected” by the GDR’s political and social system and “also actively and often voluntarily carried” it. In a similar vein, Frank Bajohr has introduced the terms ‘Zustimmungsdiktatur’ (‘consensual dictatorship’) and ‘Handlungsgemeinschaft’ (‘community of action’) to the study of Nazi Germany. M. Fulbrook, *The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 12; F. Bajohr, “‘Community of Action’ and Diversity of Attitudes: Reflections on Mechanisms of Social Integration in National Socialist Germany, 1933–45,” in *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives*, ed. M. Steber and B. Gotto, 187–99 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
151. H. Arendt, “Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility,” *Jewish Frontier* 12, no. 1 (1945): 19–23, online at <https://hannah-arendt-edition.net/textgrid/data/3p/pdf/III-004-organizedGuilt.pdf>, last accessed 3 August 2021; Longerich, “*Davon haben wir nichts gewusst!*,” 201–328; F. Bajohr and D. Pohl, *Der Holocaust als offenes Geheimnis. Die Deutschen, die NS-Führung und die Alliierten* (Munich: Beck, 2006).
152. K. Hesse, “‘Vorläufig keine Bilder bringen.’ Zur bildlichen Überlieferung des November Pogroms,” in *Es brennt! Antijüdischer Terror im November 1938*, ed. A. Nachama, 136–45 (Berlin: Stiftung Topographie des Terrors, 2008); C. Kreuzmüller and B. Weigel, *Kristallnacht? Bilder der Novemberpogrome 1938 in Berlin* (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin, 2013).
153. In April 1942, Heydrich signed a decree confirming Himmler’s order of 12 November 1940 that prohibited photographs during executions and added that if such photographs were officially necessary, they were to be archived. Fabian Schmidt and Alexander Zöller have argued that the fact that Himmler’s prohibition “was renewed at several levels” suggests that it was “widely ignored.” However, the various violations and exceptions they list hardly support their hypothesis that the SS may have planned to document Nazi mass murder systematically on film. F. Schmidt and A. O. Zöller, “Atrocity Film,” *Apparatus: Film, Media and Digital Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe* 12 (2021), online at <https://www.apparatusjournal.net/index.php/apparatus/article/view/223/515>, last accessed 3 August 2021.

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- Century Germany*, ed. Führer and C. Ross, 97–112. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
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