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Reviewed work(s):
Source: *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (June 2004), pp. 312-346
Published by: The University of Chicago Press
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/422932
Accessed: 27/12/2012 08:18

Volk and *Heimat* Culture in Radio Broadcasting during the Period of Transition from Weimar to Nazi Germany

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In reconstructing the past, historians create certain images of a period. Many scholars associate Weimar culture with a lively avant-garde, modern mass culture, and a broad, well-developed workers' cultural movement. Weimar radio too has usually been regarded as an instrument of modernity and plurality. Nazi Germany—a society with antimodern and racist features in art and culture—stands in stark contrast to these key elements of the imagined Weimar culture. Recent historical analyses, however, paint a rather more complex picture, emphasizing continuity before and after Hitler came to power. These views are not meant to reduce the importance of the fundamental rupture of 1933; rather, they are intended to demonstrate that the NS-regime evolved out of Weimar society. The continuities between the Weimar Republic and the NS-regime concerned, above all, the years of the Great Depression (1929–33) and the era of Presidential Governments (1930–33). Cultural changes during that time included a backlash against the avant-garde of Weimar and a growing role for conservative and reactionary elements in politics and culture.[1] Radio was closely involved in this development during the era of transition from Weimar to Nazi Germany.

This article concerns one crucial component of the history of that transition—the promotion of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts. Questions arise such as: What prompted the rise of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture in late Weimar radio? Which political strategies and hopes were tied to the enhancement of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture? How did *Volk* and *Heimat* culture connect with the idea of a *Volk* community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and a German national culture? What role did *Volk* culture broadcasts play in the period of transition from Weimar to Nazi Germany?

Volk and *Heimat* culture cannot simply be equated with regionalism or regional culture. While these concepts cover all types of politics and culture related to a particular region, the notion of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture should be attached to a special cultural and ideological concept that was characteristic

[1] An excellent introduction is Georg Bollenbeck, *Tradition, Avantgarde, Reaktion: Deutsche Kontroversen und die kulturelle Moderne 1880–1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999).

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of Germany at that time—that of regional identities. In many articles published since the 1980s, regional identities have been defined as "mental maps" of the people grounded on an intimate knowledge of the region as a social territory.[2] Studies of regional cultures, inspired by the current European notion of a "Europe of regions," indicate that regional movements in various locations have been linked with different ideas and goals and bear different relations to their nations. Celia Applegate presents an outstanding overview in her 1999 article "A Europe of Regions."[3]

Previous historical research has been split between the history of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, on the one hand, and radio, on the other. With respect to German broadcasts this article is the first to connect these topics systematically.[4] The primary goal of this study is to investigate the impact on radio of the *Heimat* concept, which includes the issue of regional and national identity and interests.[5]

Given that radio was the leading medium of the interwar period, the status of research in this area is not very satisfying. For many years the historiography of radio has focused on institutional development and on political issues,[6]

[2] Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley, Calif., 1990).

[3] Celia Applegate, "A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (1999): 1157–82. Many thanks to Renate Schumacher for her comments.

[4] For the Austrian radio, see Hans Veigl, "Sendung und Auftrag: Volkskultur zwischen Volksmusik und Volkstumsideologie in den Programmen der RAVAG und des Reichssenders Wien 1924 bis 1945, Part 1," *Relation* 3, no. 2 (1996): 85–144. Veigl has a similarly critical view on *Volk* and *Heimat* culture radio broadcasts.

[5] The concept of folk and *Heimat* culture can be best studied in the literature on the *Heimat* movement. A quick overview of diverse research in this area is available in Edeltraud Klueting, ed., *Antimodernismus und Reform: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Heimatbewegung* (Darmstadt, 1991). An example of a book on a regional *Heimat* movement is Werner Hartung, *Konservative Zivilisationskritik und regionale Identität: Am Beispiel der niedersächsischen Heimatgeschichte 1895 bis 1919* (Hannover, 1991). A remarkable study is Alon Confino's book, whose title reveals his main thesis: *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999). Although it deals with Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and the history of national memory, his work inspired the whole research field on German regional culture and its relationship to the construction of national identity. Celia Applegate took the Palatine *Heimat* movement as an example of the Imperial and Weimar period and came to similar conclusions: Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials.* Recent studies such as Charlotte Tacke's book on monuments in the nineteenth century have emphasized that the representatives of the region had common interests with those of the nation, but that regional identities and interests were also based on their own sources. Charlotte Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum: Nationale Symbole in Deutschland und Frankreich im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1995).

[6] Winfried B. Lerg, *Rundfunkpolitik in der Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1980); in

while the societal and cultural relevance of the new medium has only been partially researched.[7] A change in the analyses of radio programs is recognizable, however, in recent studies by Felix Leonhard's research group and by Konrad Dussel.[8] These researchers were committed to a broad understanding of their topic, and they supply a wide range of information, including a few paragraphs on *Volk* and *Heimat* culture. Further information is also available in three recently published books, one on the Stuttgart radio, the second on radio journals, and the third on radio entertainment and gender after 1933.[9]

The present article deals primarily with the *Volk* and *Heimat* culture concepts formulated by radio politicians and with public discourses on this topic. For the period before 1933 there are unfortunately no audio documents or transcripts of such broadcasts available;[10] thus, reports in radio journals are the only sources. These reports should give a rough impression of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts before 1933.[11]

I. Radio as the Leading Medium

In the new era of popular culture that followed World War I, film and radio must be seen as part of an ensemble that also included magazines and cheap novelettes. Yet because of its impact on daily life, especially within the home, as well as its widespread use as a means of education, radio was the leading medium in the interwar and postwar period; it was replaced by television only

general, see Konrad Dussel, *Deutsche Rundfunkgeschichte: Eine Einführung* (Konstanz, 1999).

[7] Exceptions are Carsten Lenk, *Die Erscheinung des Rundfunks: Einführung und Nutzung eines neuen Mediums 1923–1932* (Opladen, 1997); Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1996).

[8] Joachim-Felix Leonhard, ed., *Programmgeschichte des Hörfunks in der Weimarer Republik,* 2 vols. (Munich, 1997), vol. 2; Konrad Dussel, *Hörfunk in Deutschland: Politik, Programm, Publikum (1923–1960)* (Potsdam, 2002).

[9] Thomas Penka, *"Geistzerstäuber" Rundfunk: Sozialgeschichte des Südfunkprogramms in der Weimarer Republik* (Potsdam, 1999), pp. 179–80; Lu Seegers, *Hör zu! Eduard Rhein und die Rundfunkprogrammzeitschriften (1931–1965)* (Potsdam, 2001), pp. 308–14; *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden,* vol. 1, *Radio im Nationalsozialismus: Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung,* ed. Inge Marßolek and Adelheid von Saldern (Tübingen, 1998); vol. 2, *Radio in der DDR der fünfziger Jahre: Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung,* ed. Adelheid von Saldern and Inge Marßolek (Tübingen, 1998).

[10] This information comes from the Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv, Frankfurt (DRA Ffm). All sources mentioned in this article were studied there. I would like to express my thanks for its support, and especially for that of Renate Schumacher.

[11] For the NS period, there are some other examples in the first volume of Marßolek's and von Saldern's study *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden.*

in the late 1950s. In the first years of its existence listeners were to be found especially in big cities among middle-class people—that is, white-collar workers, professionals, officials, and the self-employed. An assessment from 1930 reports that 66 percent of all listeners were from these groups; only 25 percent were workers.[12] The price of the radio apparatus and the monthly fees were too high for many workers' families, so some workers built their own apparatus, mostly in special clubs, such as the workers' radio club (*Arbeiterradiobund*) founded in 1924. In 1926 there were 1 million radio owners; by 1928 that number had increased to 2 million, and by 1930 it had reached 3 million.[13] The number of listeners increased steadily, especially during the Great Depression as well as during the Third Reich, as radio increasingly became an integral part of the daily lives of many families. In late 1938 around 60 percent of all households owned a radio.[14]

In contrast to the pattern seen in the development of the film industry, the organization of radio in Weimar Germany was closely connected to both the Reich and the states (*Länder*). In 1923–24 nine regional broadcasting stations were established in Berlin, Leipzig, Munich, Frankfurt am Main, Stuttgart, Breslau, Münster, Hamburg, and Königsberg. The tenth radio station was the long-wave *Deutsche Welle* in Berlin. Private capital financed these ventures in part, but the state governments (*Länder*) and above all the Reich held shares in the companies that ran the stations within their borders. Unlike the systems in England and Austria, the German radio system had strong regional components, although the formal borders of the states were not identical with the broadcast ranges of the radio stations. During the last years of the Weimar Republic, using the region as the organizational basis for every radio station became an ever greater part of the discussions among radio politicians. When territorial shifts between the broadcasting companies were discussed, the notion of the regional cultural area (*Kulturraum*) became a substantial element in the bargaining process.[15] Regional broadcast organizations such as the northern Norag in Hamburg became aware of the "cultural capital" (to borrow a term from Bourdieu) located in the region. Norag was pleased that the range of its airwaves more or less corresponded with a region of common culture,

[12] J. Blauner, "Wer hört alles Rundfunk? Berufsstatistik der deutschen Hörerschaft," *Radiowelt* 8, no. 46 (1931): 1477–78.

[13] Lenk, p. 125.

[14] Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien, "Zeitgeist" in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg, 1995), p. 210.

[15] Klaus Pabst, "Kulturlandschaften als Alibi: Strukturfragen der frühen Sendegesellschaften," in *Rundfunk in der Region,* ed. Walter Först (Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 51–87, here pp. 80–82.

which was not always the case with other radio stations. Despite the strong regional components of the German radio system, however, it was the Reich that dominated the system from the beginning of radio broadcasting in Germany in December 1923. Its influence was guaranteed, first, by a central holding company called the Reich Radio Company (*Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft*), whose biggest shareholder (with 51 percent) was the Reich Post Office. This umbrella organization, headed by radio commissioner (*Rundfunkkommissar*) Hans Bredow (1926–33), held more than half of the shares in each of the nine regional broadcasting companies and therefore could supervise the stations. Second, the Reich Interior Ministry—in an arrangement with the states—was responsible for the appointment of three of the five members of the supervisory committees (*Überwachungsausschüsse*) that had to be attached to every regional broadcasting station, and the Reich was to be consulted before the state government appointed members of the less influential radio cultural advisory boards (*Kulturbeiräte*). Third, all the news to be broadcast on radio was provided by the *Dradag Zentrale Nachrichtenagentur,* a publicly traded company with a majority (51 percent) government ownership. *Dradag* was controlled by the Interior Ministry, which in turn could use its influence with the company to control regional broadcast news. Finally, the Reich Post Ministry was the owner of all the technical equipment of the stations and was authorized to charge fees for its use by the regional stations.

In July 1932 a new Reich radio law was passed under the politically reactionary Reich Chancellor von Papen, now known as Hitler's backer (*Steigbügelhalter*). Under the influence of the German National *Volk* Party (DNVP), von Papen and his assistant Erich Scholz expanded the Reich's power so extensively that the regional radio stations came to be completely directed by the Reich and its Reich Radio Company. Private capital owners, who were a minority of the shareholders of the regional radio companies, were forced to sell their shares, so that the regional companies became publicly owned corporations. The Reich held 51 percent and the states 49 percent of the capital. State commissioners appointed by the Reich were allowed to control the radio programs of all regional stations more intensively than before. In sum, radio was brought into line (*gleichgeschaltet*) before Hitler came to power.

Certain principles shaped radio programs from the start. First, programs were meant to be apolitical, noncommercial, and neutral. The majority of Weimar radio politicians were anxious to dissociate radio from party politics. State censorship, which characterized Weimar radio from its beginning, was supposed to prevent political interference in radio programs. This predemocratic and idealistic understanding of politics and the view of the state as an institution above parties was part of the Imperial German legacy that was passed on to Weimar. Closeness to the state was not seen as a problem of democracy. The state-oriented organization of Weimar radio was far removed from Bertolt

Brecht's utopian view that radio was a new communicator in a desired alternative society.[16]

Second, radio was supposed to be focused on education (*Bildung*), and this principle was combined with various hopes that society could be changed. Social democrats and bourgeois reformers of education saw radio as a means of popularizing high culture and good taste because people could listen to concerts or lectures more easily than before. At the same time radio could familiarize people with new technological developments and other scientific topics. The radio policy makers hoped to uplift the public's tastes and level of knowledge, which would have the effect of marginalizing commercialized and "Americanized" mass culture. Radio policy makers agreed that radio should primarily serve the education of the people and popular participation in high culture. The medium was seen as a cultural factor (*Kulturfaktor*) per se.

The third principle that shaped radio programming was the notion that radio should advise people on how they could cope with the challenges of modernity and everyday problems. For these purposes the programs were partly diversified: in the morning there were special broadcasts for housewives, and in the afternoon there were programs for young people. Special broadcasts were also aired for farmers.

Fourth, radio was intended to exert a stabilizing influence on the family. In the morning it would enrich the housewife who listened to the radio while doing her chores; this was supposed to keep mothers at home. In the afternoon radio could keep children from playing in the streets, and in the evening it could prevent fathers from going to pubs.

These principles roughly determined the nature of radio programs, but not completely: people's desire for light entertainment and music was so strong that the program directors had to give in. Eventually entertainment dominated programming, and this segment was even enlarged during the Third Reich.[17] One of the compromises between radio program makers and the audience was the expansion of broadcast time devoted to musical medleys (*Bunte Abende*), in which light music could be mixed with the seemingly more valuable operetta and *Volk* music. Musical medleys were especially prominent during prime time, when they were thought to bind the family together. They were seen as a means of satisfying all the different wishes of the audience in one broadcast.[18]

[16] Bertolt Brecht, "Der Rundfunk als Kommunikationsapparat," *Blätter des Hessischen Landestheaters* (July 1932), p. 16.

[17] In 1937, 69.3 percent of programs were music broadcasts, and most of them were supposed to entertain people. Daniela Münkel, "Produktionssphäre," in Marßolek and von Saldern, eds., 1:45–128, here p. 103.

[18] Alfred Bofinger, "Bunte Abende—Das künstlerische und unterhaltende Prinzip in der Programmgestaltung des Rundfunks," in *Aus meinem Archiv,* by Hans Bredow (Heidelberg, 1950), pp. 308–11.

II. *Volk* and *Heimat* Culture

As already mentioned, the concepts of regionalism and provincial culture have had a number of meanings and functions in the history of modern societies; they have been embedded in a variety of political contexts and strivings ranging from democratic grassroots activities to fascist racism. *Volk* and *Heimat* culture in Germany took on special forms.[19] A characteristic feature of modern German history, especially since the end of the nineteenth century, has been the dominance of conservative and even preracist and racist thinking within provincial culture, leading to the kinds of regional identities associated with *Volk* and *Heimat* culture. The advocates of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, emphasizing the need for cultural reform to promote the creation of a "real *Volk,*" held lectures, wrote pamphlets, supported plays written in dialect, founded *Heimat* and city museums, and "discovered" the *Volk* as the subject of the new *Volk* history and *Volk* studies (*Volkskunde*) at universities.

For these various groups of advocates, *Volk* and *Heimat* culture seemed to have a *longue durée;* it appeared to be subject neither to social and political change nor to caesuras, and it seemed to be concealed but not really destroyed by industrialization, urbanization, and the other consequences of rapid modernization. *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was regarded as a means of linking the past to the present and was expected to offer a firm foothold in unstable times. Its fascination for reformers of the time derived from the idea that it was both timeless and innovative: conventional, familiar, and eternally appreciated, on the one hand, and young and dynamic, on the other. Appeals to *Volk* and *Heimat* were seen as the only adequate response to the challenges of modernity and the so-called mass society. *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was conceived of as "good entertainment"—an excellent substitute for cheap amusements and "Americanized" commercial culture, which were often seen as mental drugs and therefore as dangerous to mores and customs, including conventional gender roles. The idea of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, conceived of as a historical heritage, was thought to represent all people of a region and not just a specific class; it could therefore serve as a powerful weapon for those who resented the development of a class-oriented workers' culture, which was widespread in Germany at the time. Those who constructed the notion of the *Volk* in this way emphasized that the term "workers" could never replace the term "*Volk.*" These advocates of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture claimed that there was no workers' culture but only a *Volk* culture, which was a classless and therefore true com-

[19] Ernst Waldinger, "Von der Heimatkunst zur Blut- und Bodendichtung," *German Quarterly* 13 (1940): 83–87, here p. 83. See also, e.g., Raulff, who stated the essential differences between the concepts of German folk history and the French *Annales* at that time. Ulrich Raulff, *Ein Historiker im 20. Jahrhundert: Marc Bloch* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995) p. 30.

mon culture. It was "sane, seemingly without leadership, just flowing along, because an immortal spirit accompanies it: the spirit of the soulful German Romantic!"[20] The promoters of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture believed that the allegedly apolitical features of their *Volk* concept could gain them many supporters across party lines.

From today's perspective, *Volk* and *Heimat* culture is both an essential part of and a counterpart to the dynamic processes of modernization.[21] No analysis of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture that focuses only on dichotomies, such as modern versus antimodern, can do justice to its multiple functions. What seemed to be symbols of durability were in fact characterized by continuing alteration. The changes were less a natural development than an "invention of tradition" (to quote Hobsbawm). The "marriage" of modern radio and so-called traditional *Volk* and *Heimat* culture symbolized combinations of old and new. As Anthony Giddens puts it, the history of modernity consists in large part of reconstructing traditions that were previously dissolved by it.[22]

Radio was an important partner in supporting *Volk* and *Heimat* culture. There were some common interests between the radio program makers and the promoters of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, who were all cultural reformers. First, both groups sought common ground in concepts beyond party politics. Although partisanship could never be totally eliminated from radio, state censorship made so-called apolitical subjects, such as *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, attractive. *Volk* and *Heimat* culture could be related, to some extent at least, to cities as well as to villages and rural culture. According to its advocates, it was important to regard a city like Hamburg or Berlin not primarily as a world metropolis but rather as a city rooted in the regional *Volk*—which was expressed, for instance, in dialect.[23] The second mutual interest was the opposition of radio toward a class-oriented culture of workers. Third, several radio

[20] Wilhelm Grunicke, "'Arbeiterrundfunk?'" *Funk* 36 (1926): 303–4, here p. 303. Other radio policy makers, such as von Polenz, regarded the neglect of the factory workers in folk culture broadcasting as a problem; Benno von Polenz, "Heimat- und Volkskunde in den Darbietungen der Mirag," in *Zum fünfjährigen Bestehen des Mitteldeutschen Rundfunks: Beiträge aus dem Kreise des Kulturellen Beirats,* ed. Fritz Kaphahn (Leipzig, 1929), pp. 37–42, here p. 41.

[21] Compare Gottfried Korff, "Einstein, Prinzhorn, Geist: Nicht volkskundliche Ansätze zu einer Volkskunst-Theorie der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Volkskunst: Referate der Österreichischen Volkskundetagung 1995,* ed. Herbert Nikitsch and Bernhard Tschofen (Vienna, 1997), pp. 379–97, here p. 381.

[22] Anthony Giddens, "Tradition in der posttraditionalen Gesellschaft," *Soziale Welt* 44 (1993): 445–86. For the concept of invented tradition, see Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition,* ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, 1983).

[23] Werner Brink, "Heimat vor dem Mikrophon," *Rufer und Hörer* 4, nos. 6/7 (1934/35): 268–71, here p. 269.

program directors supported *Volk* and *Heimat* culture because they appreciated its cultural content, especially the *Volk* art (*Volkskunst*).[24] Fourth, the emphasis on *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was stimulated by the fact that radio stations were connected to the regions in which they were located. And fifth, radio politicians saw *Volk* and *Heimat* culture as a means of uplifting people's tastes. The cultural elevation of the public by means of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was based on a vague concept of culture that had been discussed since 1924[25] but that came increasingly to the fore during the last years of the Weimar Republic. The assumption was that the people's tastes would evolve organically; and since radio policy makers wanted to elevate the tastes of their various audiences, *Volk* culture was considered a good first step. In one article, Leo Kestenberg, a professor of music who was committed to music programming in Weimar radio, wrote about the importance of improving people's musical education through radio and the fight against "musical dirt and trash," simultaneously praising the "simple little *Volk* song" as a means of education.[26] Although an art song (*Kunstlied*) was regarded as more valuable than a *Volk* song, as the national conservative publicist Wilhelm Grunicke put it in the journal *Funk,* "it was the secret of the process of evolution that this included the lower forms in order to protect the strength of organic growth."[27]

III. *Volk* and *Heimat* Culture in Radio Programs

There is no real possibility of quantifying *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts because, as a rule, such programs were not preserved in the archives of the radio companies.[28] Moreover, the records of such programs did not list the contents of broadcasts in detail. And there were many types of broadcasts that contained *Volk* culture components. *Volk* songs, for example, could be played as individual songs in mixed music programs or as groups in complete *Volk* song programs. The statistical category "lectures" also contained some *Heimat*-oriented features. The same goes for the categories of biographies of important men, historical narrative (*Geschichte in Einzeldarstellungen*), and cul-

[24] H. Thurn (Berlin), "Was der deutsche Rundfunk will und vermag," *Der Deutsche Rundfunk* 4, no. 5 (1926): 290–92, here p. 291.

[25] See Mario Krammer, "Der Rundfunk im Dienste des deutschen Gedankens," *Funk* 5 (1924): 82–83; F. Alfred Beck (Harpen-Bochum), "Die national-kulturgeistige Aufgabe des deutschen Rundfunks," *Der Deutsche Rundfunk* 3, no. 43 (1925): 2753–55.

[26] Leo Kestenberg, "Musik und Volksbildung," *Die Sendung* 7, no. 4 (1930): 54–56.

[27] Grunicke.

[28] Information from Renate Schumacher, DRA Ffm, personal communication, Sept. 26, 2001; see also Karl H. Karst, "Regionalsprache im Massenmedium: Mundart und Dialekthörspiel," in Först, ed. (n. 15 above), pp. 251–324, here p. 324. Thus, it is not possible to give percentages of this type of program with respect to programming as a whole.

tivation of the German language (*Pflege des deutschen Sprachgefühls*). Only the category *Heimat* studies (*Heimatkunde*) had an exclusive focus on provincial culture.[29]

Volk and *Heimat* culture broadcasts already existed from the beginning of public radio broadcasting in December 1923,[30] but they gradually increased in the late twenties. Although clear statistical evidence is not available, some other sources may demonstrate this shift. To be sure, on the one hand, Weimar radio was never dominated by this genre and no director would have liked his program to be characterized as a program of provincialism;[31] but on the other hand about half of the program directors were said to have favored inclusion of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture.[32]

By 1930 there were also discussions about which kinds of broadcasts were best suited for *Volk* and *Heimat* culture. The question arose whether the modern artistic form of the radio play (*Hörspiele*), which demanded high quality and willingness to experiment, was appropriate for this kind of material. In the eyes of many radio policy makers this type of program was not well suited to the historical and provincial contents of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture.[33] Radio policy makers such as Fritz Worm looked for other ways of presenting *Volk* and *Heimat* culture in radio and began to promote live broadcasting of local and regional events. This allowed the studios to exploit their technical abilities to broadcast sounds that were characteristic of particular regions. Another option was to broadcast dialogues between people from various regions, each promoting his or her area. In Worm's view the most important thing was to produce a lively broadcast.[34]

To be sure, there is no way of checking how modern *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts really were. There are, however, some descriptions of what the shift

[29] This can be concluded from the concept of the Norag program, presented in the fourth session of the Norag radio cultural advisory, November 25, 1927, Staatsarchiv Hamburg STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[30] For further details, see Theresia Wittenbrink, "Rundfunk und literarische Tradition," in *Programmgeschichte des Hörfunks in der Weimarer Republik,* ed. Joachim-Felix Leonhard (Munich, 1997), 2:996–1098, here pp. 1025–27. For the Frankfurt radio station SWR, see August Soppe, *Rundfunk in Frankfurt am Main 1923–1926: Zur Organisations-, Programm- und Rezeptionsgeschichte eines neuen Mediums* (Munich, 1993), p. 418.

[31] Report on the session of the Bavarian radio cultural advisory board, October 5, 1932, in DRA Ffm, A 1/23.

[32] According to Renate Schumacher, personal communication, September 26, 2001.

[33] Karst, pp. 265–67. Between 1927 and 1933 Wefag broadcast about forty provincial plays, which was far less than Norag, which broadcast thirty-one in a single year, 1927; Karst, p. 263.

[34] Fritz Worm, "Heimatdarstellung," *Rufer und Hörer* 1, no. 2 (1931/32): 76–80, here pp. 78–79.

toward *Volk* and *Heimat* culture around 1930 actually meant at several radio stations. We will examine these here before going on to look more intensively at the Hamburg Norag station.

Funkstunde AG Berlin, a capital city radio station with a bourgeois-conservative profile,[35] broadcast thirty-one lectures covering *Heimat* studies (*Heimatkunde*) and Germanness (*Deutschtum*) and fifty-nine musical medleys, "cheerful evenings" *(Heitere Abende),* and cabaret evenings in 1931; in 1927 there had only been twenty-one such musical programs.[36] The Central German broadcasting company Mirag AG, which focused on highbrow music and literature and presented the famous Leipzig Fair to its audience, also excelled in the spreading of *Volk* culture. Within the space of three years the number of its *Volk* culture evenings increased from five to fourteen. Furthermore, the station broadcast ninety-four studies of *Volk* culture in a lecture series. It also produced *Volk* culture broadcasts in which information and stories about particular regions were narrated by an old man who wandered from one area to another. Sixty such programs were broadcast between 1925 and 1928.[37] In 1930 the program director of Mirag AG stated that the station was airing regular reports about Middle German (*Mitteldeutsche*) landscapes, companies, and institutions. It also broadcast special programs in which the cultural peculiarities and the customs of various areas were discussed, and talks in dialect were aired, especially sagas.[38]

All about the same time, Westfalians succeeded in obtaining special broadcasting time on the west German radio, Werag (until 1927: Wefag AG), to present their provincial culture.[39] These *Heimat* broadcasts from Werag evoked and strengthened public interest in *Heimat* plays.[40] In 1931 the station broadcast a new fifty-part series called "Westfalian *Lebensraum,*" which was intended to demonstrate the connection between regional and German national *Volk.* These broadcasts were the result of an admonishment some years before by the *Sauerland Heimat* association: it had complained that Werag, located in Cologne-Rhineland, had not devoted enough time to the Westfalian *Heimat.*[41]

[35] In *Materialien zur Rundfunkgeschichte,* ed. Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv Frankfurt (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), 2:26.

[36] The program of the Funk-Stunde AG Berlin from January 1 until December 31, 1931, pp. 19–20; Bredow (n. 18 above), p. 37.

[37] Von Polenz (n. 20 above).

[38] "Die Sendeleitung spricht," September 1, 1930, in DRA Ffm, A 2/32.

[39] Wolf Bierbach, *Rundfunk zwischen Kommerz und Politik: Der Westdeutsche Rundfunk in der Weimarer Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), p. 190.

[40] Kurt Stapelfeldt, "Der Rundfunk als Träger und Erhalter der Heimatkultur," *Rundfunk Jahrbuch 1929* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 233–43, here p. 239; Karst (n. 28 above), p. 253.

[41] They did not take into consideration that Werag had already started a program in 1926 with the title "The Westfalian Kulturkreis," which corresponded to the series "Der

Among all the radio stations, the Frankfurt station Süwrag, under its director Dr. Hans Flesch, was the most liberal, broadcasting profiles of intellectuals and open-minded discussions of both modern art and workers' culture. Nevertheless, it also broadcast programs on *Heimat* subjects and created a series on Frankfurt dialect poetry,[42] although Flesch surely did not support the radio concept of *Volk, Stamm,* and *Heimat* culture. The Stuttgart radio station, Sürag, which was primarily committed to culture for educated people, also propagated Swabian culture. In 1932 its program contained descriptions of the various local landscapes and of life in small towns (*völkisches Leben*), including reports on *Volk* customs and dances, half-forgotten stories, pictures, and memorials.[43] The Munich station extensively broadcast Bavarian culture.[44] According to the Bavarian radio politicians, it had more broadcasts than any other station on the so-called indigenous *Volk,* and *Heimat* art played a big part in these programs.[45] And in the east of Germany, the Silesian radio station was especially active in sponsoring local culture and was quite innovative in using modern media genres, such as broadcasts of live events.[46] Between 1928 and 1932 Silesian radio increased the number of broadcasts on the culture of its borderland.[47] To summarize, by 1932 at the latest, radio politicians were paying more attention to *Heimat* than was officially reported.[48]

IV. Two Examples

Concrete insights can be gained into the cooperation between radio stations, the *Heimat* movement, and *Heimat* museums, as well as *Heimat* researchers

rheinische Lebensraum"; see Leo Flamm, *Westfalen und der Westdeutsche Rundfunk* (Stuttgart, 1993), p. 87; see also Leo Flamm, "Westfalen und der WDR," in *Rundfunk in der Region,* ed. Walter Först (Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 205–50, here p. 210.

[42] Soppe (n. 30 above), p. 418, see also p. 322.

[43] Session of the Southwest radio program committee, April 3, 1933, in DRA Ffm A 1/42.

[44] Bredow (n. 18 above), p. 40.

[45] Report on the session of the Bavarian radio cultural advisory board, October 5, 1932, in DRA Ffm, A 1/23.

[46] Heinz Pohle, *Der Rundfunk als Instrument der Politik: Zur Geschichte des deutschen Rundfunk von 1923/38* (Hamburg, 1955), p. 72; Renate Schumacher, "Radio als Medium und Faktor des aktuellen Geschehens," in Leonhard, ed. (n. 8 above), 1:423–622, here p. 614. For further examples, see Wittenbrink, "Rundfunk" (n. 30 above), pp. 1025–27; Theresia Wittenbrink, "Zeitgenössische Schriftsteller im Rundfunk," in Leonhard, ed., 2:1098–1196, here pp. 1125–33.

[47] Margrit-Esther Schauerte, "Die Oberschlesienfrage in der Schlesischen Funkstunde in Breslau 1924–1932," manuscript, pp. 105, 124–25, 151–52, 156–57, in DRA Ffm. An "airwave battle" occurred between the Polish Kattowitz and the German Gleiwitz radio station.

[48] "Mitteilungsblatt für die Leiter der deutschen Rundfunkgesellschaften," March 1933, in DRA Ffm, A 1/125.

(i.e., practitioners of *Volk* studies, or *Volkskunde*), through an examination of the northern regional broadcast organization Norag, located in Hamburg. Along with the Bavarian and Silesian radio stations, Norag became a center of the *Volk* and *Heimat* cultural movement in Germany. Its leading role was due to the efforts of Dr. Kurt Stapelfeldt, the assistant director of Norag, and its director, Hans Bodenstedt. Stapelfeldt, who regarded the promotion of the *Heimat* movement as "one of the most responsible tasks of radio broadcasting,"[49] had worked for the Hamburg press (*Hamburger Nachrichten*) before he joined Norag. In 1925, at the age of twenty-five, he took over the financial department of Norag, and in 1929 he became a member of the Norag board of directors. Stapelfeldt's further career was fostered by the new radio law enacted in 1932, which enabled him to become the head of the programming department of the central radio organization of Germany, the Reich Radio Company—not least because he was a German conservative nationalist. In 1933, however, he was dismissed because of his close association with Weimar radio.

Together with his friend Hans Böttcher, Stapelfeldt conceptualized a great deal of the Norag program. As philologists, both were members of Quickborn, an association that promoted the Low German language and culture. Stapelfeldt had good connections to Hamburg educators. Together with the new Hamburg University he helped to found a branch of the adult education center (*Volkshochschule*) of radio, the "Hans-Bredow-School for *Volk* studies" (*Volkswissenschaften*), which was devoted to Low German as well. He also worked with the Christian-German theater association (*Bühnenvolksbund*) and the Low German theater association (*Niederdeutscher Bühnenbund*), founded in 1919. Under Stapelfeldt's leadership, Norag donated a prize for the winning entry in a competition intended to foster *Heimat* plays.[50] Stapelfeldt wanted Norag to be both a virtual *Heimat* "museum" (for the ears) and a virtual *Heimat* theater that would make people familiar with the history and the peculiarities of Hamburg and its region.[51] *Heimat* memorabilia collectors, authors who wrote in Low German, and researchers of *Heimat* culture all worked with Norag in one way or another to help awaken people's interest in *Heimat* topics.[52]

Stapelfeldt's support for the Heimat movement was related to his belief in the ontological notion of the *Stamm* or *Volksstamm*—the idea that there existed

[49] Stapelfeldt, "Der Rundfunk," p. 234.

[50] Hans Bodenstedt, "Vortrag über das Winter Programm," in twelfth session of the Norag radio cultural advisory board, August 30, 1930, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[51] "Nordischer Rundfunk: Zur Psychologie des Noraghörers; Eine Programmbegründung," in *Rundfunk-Jahrbuch 1931* (Berlin, 1931), pp. 93–117 (including pictures of some regional pecularities); see also Stapelfeldt, "Der Rundfunk," p. 240.

[52] Stapelfeldt reported that the newspapers thought they did not have enough space to support such strivings; Stapelfeldt, "Der Rundfunk," pp. 235, 240.

in each distinct region of Germany a native stock or tribe with an eternal strength and power linked to that particular region and landscape—for example, the *Stamm* of Lower Saxons in Lower Saxony.[53] Each *Stamm* was thought to be a unity (*Einheit*) that had developed organically from prehistoric times.[54] The genuine roots of a *Stamm,* allegedly buried by industrialization and urbanization, could be rediscovered, for instance, by preserving the old language. Norag supported the Low German language by using it in *Heimat*-related broadcasts and by broadcasting Low German plays and amateur performances. In contrast to the museums and theaters, radio broadcasts could penetrate people's homes, and the Norag program producers knew that the intruder should "not be a stranger"—thus they deliberately used Low German.[55] Hailing *Volk* and *Heimat* culture as a treasure, Stapelfeldt wanted to rescue it from the dangers of industrialization and urbanization.

Stapelfeldt was fascinated by the fact that radio could reach many more people by broadcasts than associations, museums, and theaters could reach through the *Heimat* evenings they organized. Therefore he believed that radio should take over the task of awakening *Heimat* consciousness. Stapelfeldt emphasized "love for the soil" (*Liebe zur Scholle*),[56] but he was also interested in the city:[57] radio broadcasting was not explicitly antiurban when it supported *Volk* and *Heimat.* Its focus and goal was the promotion of indigenous culture, which encompassed both rural and urban environments. Urban culture was to be seen as part of regional culture. While other radio stations increased the number of their *Volk* and *Heimat* culture programs during the Great Depression, Norag was far ahead of them. It had already started this type of broadcast in 1925, and during the three years from 1925 to 1928 Norag broadcast 250 *Heimat* evenings, 250 *Heimat* lectures, and 100 *Heimat* programs designed for young people.[58]

Another example of *Heimat* cultural programming comes from a radio station in Silesia. Alfred John reported in a radio journal about the content and goal of a 1931 Breslau radio program titled "*Heimat Schlesien!*" In his view,

[53] Kurt Stapelfeldt at the meeting of the Reich Radio Company, May 15, 1930, in BArch Koblenz, R 78/892, 6 (1930); Stapelfeldt, "Der Rundfunk," p. 234.

[54] Kurt Stapelfeld at the meeting of the Reich Radio Company, May 15, 1930, in BArch Koblenz, R 78/892, vol. 6 (1930); Halefeldt mentions this problematic radio policy only very briefly. Horst O. Halefeldt, "Ein Sender für acht Länder: Die Norag; Regionaler Rundfunk in der Weimarer Republik," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 41 (2001): 145–70, here pp. 158–59.

[55] "Nordischer Rundfunk," p. 98.

[56] Cited in Wittenbrink, "Zeitgenössische Schriftsteller" (n. 46 above), p. 1126.

[57] "Nordischer Rundfunk," pp. 96–97. As a neoconservative, Stapelfeldt was also fascinated by modern technology. Schumacher (n. 46 above), pp. 473, 592.

[58] Tenth session of the program advisory board of the German radio companies, February 6, 1928, in BArch Koblenz R 48/4F83.

the first task of such a broadcast was to impress the audience by "reflecting the essence (*Wesen*) of a German landscape and its life." He remarked that in this type of broadcast big cities were to be avoided, because the most distinct characteristics of the people of a region were to be found among farmers and inhabitants of small towns, who were deeply rooted (*verankert*) in their *Heimat.* Landscape and people were intimately (*innig*) connected, according to John. The task of *Heimat* art was "die seelische Ausschöpfung deutschen Volkstums" [the full utilization of German *Volk* culture]. Its goal was the rescue of many cultural values that were being buried (*verschüttet*) through the misery and haste (*Not und Hast*) of the time; thus *Heimat* culture broadcasts would contribute to the "rebirth of the German spirit" (*Wiedergeburt deutschen Geistes*). Because of their commitment to this idea, program director Fritz Walther Bischoff and his staff had prepared two series of broadcasts about Silesia. One dealt with old Silesian artists and musicians and the other with old traditions, such as rural spinning rooms (*Spinnstuben*). In these "cheerful evenings" (*heitere Abende*), dialect was used and sentimental songs about the *Heimat* were aired.

Alfred John's report contributed to the popularization of this type of broadcast. His article began with a sentimental *Heimat* poem and ended with the text and music of a song about the *Heimat.* The report included three pictures, one depicting an old female Silesian farmer, another reproducing an old engraving of a Silesian landscape, and the third depicting *Rübezahl,* the well-known mythical figure of this region. John noted that this type of broadcast had "great success" (*starken Erfolg*) with its audience.[59]

This example shows that the conceptions of radio policy makers about *Volk* and *Heimat* culture actually inspired these broadcasts and that their impact was multiplied by radio journals and other media. There was, of course, a wide range of *Volk* and *Heimat* broadcasts, and some of them—for example, those of the Frankfurt radio station—did not express such highly sentimental feelings as this Silesian one did, attempting "only" to make people familiar with the region they lived in and its cultural heritage. Thus, it is not any single broadcast but rather the *ensemble* of broadcasts and the cultural-political concepts that lay behind them that must be critically examined.

V. Popularity of *Volk* and *Heimat* Culture

All these examples of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts raise the question of their popularity. In general, information about audiences is rare. Some de-

[59] Alfred John, "Heimat Schlesien! Schlesische Volkskunde im Schlesischen Sender," *Funk* 7 (1931): 54.

ductions might be made, although a reliable assessment of the effects on audiences of this kind of broadcast is impossible since the texts could be appropriated in different ways—for example, they could be perceived as emotional fulfillment or regarded just as "superficial fun."

There was some opposition to these *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts. Despite the "Hour of Work" programs that some stations produced and some broadcasts of poems about industry and workers, the *Volk* and *Heimat* culture concept in radio programming neglected the urbanized industrial workforce.[60] Thus a great number of left-wing and republican intellectuals as well as trade unionists, socialists, and communists opposed the concept. In Neumünster many people signed a petition expressing their dissatisfaction with the Norag program. The workers' radio association wanted changes, too.[61] In Paderborn, Hermann Tölle, who worked for Werag and was appointed chair of the workers' council (*Betriebsrat*), rejected *Heimat* radio plays, arguing that radio had to present the real problems of mankind and to awaken and move the audience more.[62] Another critic was Professor Erik Nölting, who gave a lecture during one of the sessions of the radio cultural advisory board. He argued that the search for the organic roots of culture in *Heimat* art was only a romantic escape and that the old saga heroes could not be models for modern times. Instead, radio should convey the world as it was to the people.[63]

Obviously there were differences in culture and taste between rural and urban listeners. The social context in which listening took place had a bearing on how people appreciated and appropriated media texts, and the closer radio broadcasting came to people's lives and to their own desires, the greater the chance that the medium would become popular. With respect to *Volk* culture, discrepancies emerged between the cultural contexts of the majority of listeners and the features of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture. As mentioned earlier, the majority of listeners in the Weimar period were urban middle-class people whose tastes tended toward modernity in art and entertainment. *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, however, usually had a rural background and, as a consequence, was most popular among rural listeners.[64] In fact, rural listeners loved military music, *Volk* music, and men's choruses as well as, in northern Germany, Low German

[60] Sti[. . .], "Arbeiterfunk," *Der Deutsche Rundfunk* 6, no. 23 (1928): 1501.

[61] For both statements see the fourth session of the Norag cultural advisory board, November 25, 1927, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1 and of the eighth session of the Norag cultural advisory board, March 16, 1929, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[62] Karst (n. 28 above), p. 267.

[63] DRA Ffm, A 1/42; compare also minutes of the session of the Frankfurt radio cultural advisory board, October 27, 1932, in DRA Ffm, A1/142.

[64] See Lazarsfeld's contemporary research. Desmond Mark, *Paul Lazarsfelds Wiener RAVAG-Studie 1932: Der Beginn der modernen Rundfunkforschung* (Vienna, 1996), pp. 11, 19.

radio plays and musical medleys. They preferred so-called cheerful (*heitere*) programs and did not like jazz music.[65] Yet although *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts had their main audience in rural areas, radio was not widespread in rural areas at that time. Stapelfeldt's efforts to include broadcasts on urban life in its *Volk* and *Heimat* culture programs might be seen as an attempt to attract urbanites. Presumably some urban listeners were also fascinated by the strangeness of the so-called old rural culture, while others were primarily attracted by the sensational medium per se and indifferent to the content of the broadcast.

According to questionnaires, entertainment programs, including musical medleys, enjoyed great popularity.[66] An assessment from 1930 estimated that variety programs and musical medleys were more popular than pure *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts. *Volk* culture broadcasts and variety programs were, however, not always at odds with one another. Musical variety programs were a successor to cabarets, and the rise of variety sketches and musical medleys in radio programs resulted from an attempt to satisfy disparate tastes by presenting a wide variety of material within the same program. Musical medleys containing *Volk* music and sketches relating to particular regional cultures were integral parts of these programs. They were a means of catering to the audience's diverse interests and tastes so as to bind listeners together virtually. "Rhineland evenings," for instance, which belonged to this type of broadcast, attracted diverse strata in both rural and urban audiences.[67]

Unfortunately, we cannot gauge the popularity of the pure type of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture program, which gave information on regional culture and customs. It is clear, however, that people did not like long, tiring lectures that assumed a preaching tone (*belehrend*), and thus radio programmers had to adopt modern forms of performances.[68] We have to assume that Norag was successful. Stapelfeldt estimated that 40–50 percent of the officially registered radio owners listened to *Heimat* evenings and other *Heimat* broadcasts.[69] The real *Heimat* evenings in theaters had audiences of about 300,000 people a year, but Norag was thought to attract audiences of 15–20 million people.[70]

[65] This information is on the Norag radio region. First session of the North German radio program committee, February 9, 1933, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[66] None of these questionnaires met the standard of modern empirical methods. See Hansjörg Bessler, *Hörer- und Zuschauerforschung* (Munich, 1980), p. 31.

[67] Wittenbrink, "Rundfunk" (n. 30 above), p. 1025.

[68] Hans Bodenstedt, lecture on the winter program, tenth session of the Norag cultural advisory board, October 29, 1929, and eighteenth session of the Norag cultural advisory board, November 26, 1931, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[69] Stapelfeldt (n. 40 above), p. 236.

[70] Ibid. The figures reflect the sum of audiences and not the sum of different individuals.

In sum, the various contemporary evaluations of the popularity of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts were not homogenous at all. To be sure, the type of performance was an important factor for success, but it is impossible for historians to arrive at solid conclusions about the impact of media in the past.

VI. *Volk* Community—*Volk* and *Heimat* Culture

There is a good deal of evidence that *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was often linked to the concept of *Volk* community (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Such a community would exist in a society in which all groups thought and acted in harmony with each other because there were no internal divisions based on class, ethnicity, country, city, or region, making parties and interest groups superfluous. Originally the term community (*Gemeinschaft*) was introduced by Ferdinand Tönnies as a counterpart to the term "society" (*Gesellschaft*).[71] Tönnies interpreted community (*Gemeinschaft*) as a unified, consensual, and harmonious small group living together. His concept became popular after World War I and took on a magical aura in the following decade. The term could be filled with different contents and used in various contexts. While the liberals once pursued an ideal of social integration through discourses and education, often combined with nationalism,[72] the conservatives were more inspired by the vision of a classless and ontologically defined *Volk* community. The Nazis coopted the term *Volksgemeinschaft* in their official program of 1920 for their own racist purposes. Based on many pamphlets and other writings it seems that the term in general became more and more dominated by reactionary and (pre) national socialist contents. This means that the notion of *Volk* community and the related expressions of nostalgia for soil, *Stamm,* and, in part, blood and race became metaphors for antidemocratic feelings and an emotionalized longing for an idealized, socially harmonious past. Although the concept was illusionary and could only be put into practice on symbolic levels and as performances, the idea of a harmonious society—beyond all rational discourses—legitimized what was in fact a policy of exclusion by creating the appearance of a policy of inclusion. Radio was intended to play an important role in the virtual creation of this apparently harmonious society.

Social reality contradicted this ideal. In 1932, at the peak of the Great Depression, there were 6 million people unemployed in Germany. The social needs of all the people on the dole and their families were unprecedented. The crisis affected not only the economic and social sectors but also politics. By July 1930 the so-called Presidential governments of Brüning, von Papen, and

[71] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft,* new ed. (Darmstadt, 1963).

[72] With respect to the concept of *Heimat* museums, see Martin Roth, *Heimatmuseum: Zur Geschichte einer deutschen Institution* (Berlin, 1990), p. 61.

von Schleicher had all ruled by the emergency powers act. The election of September 1930 revealed a breakdown of the republican parties and was a signal for the rise of Nazism. The Social Democrats had no realistic strategy for coping with this political crisis, which ended their influence in the Reich in March 1930 and in Prussia in July 1932. Public space was increasingly occupied by paramilitary SA-storm troops, who often fought against communists and socialists. Culture was also touched by the overall crisis. The workers' cultural movement and the avant-garde became defensive, the republican-democratic culture lost its influence, and the cultural backlash in favor of conservatively oriented cultural ideas and practices began advancing. For many people the social, political, and cultural fragmentation of the society was frightening and led to desperation. In this profound social crisis the idea of a *Volk* community as a way of overcoming the fragmentation of society fascinated more people than ever before and was seen as a potential form of rescue. Many ordinary people's longing for an end to all the street battles and economic disasters was increasing. Hitler could play this card and forecast a new age based on the principles of a harmonized community unified by *Stamm, Volk,* and race.

In this era of transition radio played an important role. Hans Bredow, state secretary in the Reich post ministry and supervisor of radio affairs, saw radio as an "instrument of culture and equilibrium." In his view radio should not lead to further "strife" between "German brothers" but was instead to be an "instrument of peace."[73] While Bredow apparently had in mind a kind of societal harmony initiated by radio, the sociologist Benno von Wiese wanted radio to serve a "higher entity."[74] Stapelfeldt went a step further when he interpreted the principle of neutrality in radio programming as referring directly to the "ideal of a *Volk* community," which allegedly went beyond purely economic interests and fragmented worldviews. This comment, given at a conference, was applauded. It is worthy of note that Stapelfeldt introduced the term "*Volk* community" by saying, "excuse the term, it is a catchword."[75] His apology for using the term *Volk* community may indicate his awareness of the transition from thinking in vague terms of a harmonious "higher entity" to promoting the specific idea of a soil-bound *Volk* community.[76]

Volk community was intended not only to harmonize the classes but also to reconcile urbanites with people in the countryside. State official (*Ministerial-*

[73] Cited in Pohle (n. 46 above), p. 61.

[74] Benno von Wiese, "Die Auswirkungen des Rundfunks auf die soziologische Struktur unserer Zeit," meeting of the Reich radio company, May 15, 1930, in BArch Koblenz, R 78/892, 6 (1930).

[75] Stapelfeldt, in ibid.

[76] Compare also Christoph H. Werth, *Sozialismus und Nation: Die deutsche Ideologiediskussion zwischen 1918 und 1945* (Opladen, 1996), pp. 143–45.

rat) Dr. Lobedanz saw one of the tasks of radio as addressing the rural people, who in his view tended to be isolated. In doing so he wanted to foster mutual understanding between urbanites and rural people, promoting the creation of a *Volk* community.[77] And in November 1932 even Dr. Wilhelm Schüller, a lawyer and the head of the board of directors (*Vorstandsdirektor*) of the culturally liberal and modern Frankfurt radio station, stressed the idea of a "new *Volk* community" that allegedly had already emerged or was emerging and that the radio was obliged to support.[78]

Furthermore, the idea of *Volk* community was supposed to be a means of solving cultural problems. Culture was in a "severe crisis," as the conservative radio policy maker Fritz Kaphahn wrote in 1931:[79] "Culture is no longer a closed construction of objective values that all classes would interpret in the same way; the spiritual and social developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially the World War and the revolution, have filled the so-called German culture with so many tensions and contradictions . . . that one can no longer talk of a united form. . . . Its creators regard it as one of the greatest means of helping our *Volk* toward a unified culture and a fundamentally spiritual attitude based on a social foundation, *Volk* community."[80] This example demonstrates once more that *Volk* community was an attractive buzzword during the Weimar Republic and especially in the Great Depression.[81] The Nazis took over the idea because *Volk* community was amenable to the implantation of racial ideas.

The inner connection between the Norag concept of favoring *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, on the one hand, and the concept of *Volk* community, on the other, was expressed for example in the nationalistically oriented radio periodical *Der Deutsche Rundfunk*. It claimed that because Norag was committed to *Heimat* and landscape it solved the *Volk* community issue in practice.[82] *Volk* and *Heimat* culture were becoming essentials of the *Volk* community.[83] *Volk*

[77] See the eighteenth session of the Norag cultural advisory board, November 26, 1931, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[78] Wilhelm Schüller, "Betrachtungen zum Programm," Rundfunkvortrag November 19, 1932, in DRA Ffm, A 1/42.

[79] Fritz Kaphahn, "Die kulturellen Beiräte," *Rufer und Hörer* 1, no. 6 (1931): 263–68, here p. 265.

[80] Ibid., p. 265.

[81] Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik: Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalsozialismus zwischen 1918–1933* (Munich, 1968), p. 251.

[82] "Walpurgisnacht—Brocken—Norag," *Der Deutsche Rundfunk* 17 (1925): 1071.

[83] For further information, see Hermann Bausinger, "Zwischen Grün und Braun: Volkstumsideologie und Heimatpflege nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Religions- und Geistesgeschichte der Weimarer Republik,* ed. Hubert Cancik (Düsseldorf, 1982), pp. 215–28, here pp. 218–20.

and *Heimat* culture related to *Stamm* was seen as an expression of a regional *Volk* community, and every regional *Volk* community was supposed to serve as a part of an overall German national *Volk* community.

VII. National Culture and Radio

To be sure, thinking in national categories seems to be natural. Recent research, however, reveals many different contexts in which national identities and national policy have been included. Each nation has had its myths and its principles on which nationality has been based. In Germany, nationality was first bound to a unified state only in 1871, and it was based less on the principles of liberty and other civil rights than on the strength of unification "from above" as well as on the idea of a "nation of culture" *(Kulturnation)* and the "common blood" of all Germans. Both *Kulturnation* and "common blood" ideology played a role in the development of bourgeois German consciousness, and later on both served as sources for radio program concepts. Around 1900 a third component was added: regional *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was brought together with national identity. The region and the nation were meant to support and supplement each other—or, as Alon Confino puts it, the nation was supposed to become a local metaphor—although in reality the mutual relations were rather complex and also included tensions. The idea of *Heimat* was conceptualized not only as a cultural component of a particular region but also as a cultural component of the nation.[84] An example of the national idea of *Heimat* may be seen in the plans of the General Director of the state museums in Berlin, Wilhelm Waetzold, in 1932. Waetzoldt was eager to renew the state collection of German *Volk* science *(Volkskunde)* and to open a German *Volk* museum—that is, a *Heimat* museum with a national scope exhibiting all the traditional items of German *Volk* history.[85]

National identity was continually redefined and adapted to new patterns in society and in the world, such as those created by World War I. The perception of World War I, the opposition to the Versailles Treaty, and especially the fight against the allies' accusation of German war guilt came together in a collective feeling of many Germans that their nation's honor had been destroyed. The rejection of the Versailles Treaty, hopes of territorial revision, and aspirations

[84] For the genesis of this link, see Confino (n. 5 above). With respect to the Weimar era, see Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials* (n. 2 above).

[85] Wilhelm Waetzoldt, "Für ein deutsches Volksmuseum," *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung,* August 7, 1932. In some ways, the idea of *Heimat* was also supported by the so-called reform pedagogy of the 1920s. Focusing on a lively education of pupils based on perception and experience, the reform pedagogy could easily be connected to the *Heimat* museum movement. The movement also impressed and influenced the representatives of museums in other countries. Roth (n. 72 above), p. 144.

toward the reconstruction of German greatness were common to all types of Weimar nationalism. The political contexts and goals of nationalism differed, however. Apart from the Social Democrats, republican nationalism was primarily bound to the liberal-democratic parties, namely, the German Democratic Party (DDP) and the German *Volk* Party (DVP).[86] Stresemann's ambiguous foreign policy is well known: a non-revanchist policy regarding France and an open-handed policy—that is, a concealed revanchist policy—regarding Poland. His moderate and republican nationalism was increasingly overtaken by a self-radicalizing right-wing nationalism that used national issues as a motor for a "negative integration" coalition directed against the Republic and its representatives.[87]

Although nationalism did find outlets in radio during the late Weimar era, such tendencies were mostly expressed only indirectly and combined with the demand for more centralization. Even Wilhelm Schüller from the culturally liberal Frankfurt radio said in November 1932 that radio should create more "consistency and harmony" (*Einheitlichkeit und Gleichklang*) and a "new awareness of the life of the German *Volk*" (*neues Lebensgefühl des Deutschen Volkes*), and he argued that radio should be not only a mirror but also a guide (*Wegweiser*) of the time.[88] In other words: centralized radio was to become a pioneer of nationalism.

The cultural salvation of the nation was sought in both classical German high culture and in regional culture in the form of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture. A close connection between classical culture and nationalism developed throughout the Weimar Republic. This was scarcely a coincidence. According to Ernest Gellner, a canon of high cultural classics became "the pervasive operational culture of an entire society."[89] These also made up the core of an imagined German identity and lay at the heart of the construction of national culture.[90]

In one way or another, German classics were common ground for republi-

[86] Jürgen C. Heß, *"Das ganze Deutschland soll es sein": Demokratischer Nationalismus in der Weimarer Republik am Beispiel der Deutschen Demokratischen Partei* (Stuttgart, 1978).

[87] Klaus Megerle, "Element nationaler Integration und politischer Konsensstiftung? Zum Stellenwert der Außenpolitik für die politische Kultur der Weimarer Republik," in *Politische Teilkulturen zwischen Integration und Polarisierung: Zur politischen Kultur in der Weimarer Republik,* ed. Detlef Lehnert and Klaus Megerle (Opladen, 1990), pp. 219–49, here p. 249.

[88] Schüller (n. 78 above).

[89] Ernest Gellner, "The Coming of Nationalism and Its Interpretation: The Myths of Nation and Class," in *Mapping the Nation,* ed. Gopal Nalakrishnan (London and New York, 1996), pp. 98–145, here p. 107. His reflections on people's mapping of a nation are connected with his consideration of the development of industrialized societies.

[90] For more details, see Joes Segal, "The Work of Art as a Mirror of National Identity: Public Debates on Art and Culture in Germany during World War I," *European Review of History—Revue Européenne histoire* 4, no. 1 (1997): 9–17, here pp. 15–16.

cans, nonrepublicans, and all the groups in between. In the view of the pedagogy professor Hermann Nohl and other scholars of German literature, the period of Storm and Stress (*Sturm und Drang*), the phase of Classicism, and the era of Romanticism were all to be seen as an entity, a "German Movement"—or, as others called it, the "Goethe-period."[91] This "umbrella" strategy was an attempt to underplay the great differences between Goethe's and Schiller's classicism, on the one hand, and Herder's romanticism, on the other. While Goethe was grouped with the timeless representatives of high German culture, the Romantics—for example, the Grimm brothers, Adam Müller, and Joseph Görres—were well suited to bind national culture with regional *Stamm* culture. This strategy of lumping together these groups had been used since the unification of the Reich in 1871.[92] The celebration of Sedan Day as a national day of commemoration or the formation of many soldiers' clubs to promote a living collective memory of the war, which was defined as a war of unification, are the most well-known examples of nation building through cultural practices. The First World War furthered the nationalization of the region and the idea of *Heimat,* expressed for instance in the term *Heimatfront.*[93] Here was the model that inspired many conservative nationalists during the Weimar Republic. It gave rise to the hope that Germany might be renewed, and not least through the renewal of the regional and national cultures bound together by people's love of both the regional *Heimat* and the national fatherland (*Vaterland*).[94] Thus it was not a coincidence that the radio politician Mario Krammer stressed, immediately after radio began its public program at the end of 1923, that it was a politically important task to teach people to love their *Heimat.* This would not exclude the love of the *Vaterland,* because, he declared, *Heimat* was part of a multifaceted Germanness (*Deutschtum*).[95] In his view the *Stamm*-bound regions and their culture (*Stammeslandschaften, Stammeskultur*) were crucial for the "entire fate of the *Vaterland.*"[96]

Because of the wounds nationalism received in World War I and in the Versailles Treaty, the idea of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture became an object of

[91] Holger Dainat, "'Dieser ästhetische Kosmopolitismus ist aus für uns': Weimarer Klassik in der Weimarer Republik," in *Weimar 1930: Politik und Kultur im Vorfeld der NS-Diktatur,* ed. Lothar Ehrlich and Jürgen John (Cologne, 1998), pp. 99–122, here p. 111.

[92] See Confino (n. 5 above).

[93] For further information, see Stefan Haier, "Volkskunde und Heimatpflege: Geschichte und Problematik eines distanzierten Verhältnisses," in Klueting, ed. (n. 5 above), pp. 357–58.

[94] Andreas Kuntz, *Das Museum als Volksbildungsstätte: Museumskonzeptionen in der dentschen Volksbildungsbewegung, 1871–1918,* 2d ed. (Marburg, 1980), pp. 77, 79.

[95] Mario Krammer, "Rundfunk als politischer Erzieher," *Funk* 8 (1924): 137.

[96] Krammer, "Der Rundfunk" (n. 25 above), pp. 82–83.

surreptitious revisionism by the Weimar state: it was meant to support the old and new ethnic Germans living outside of Germany (*Auslandsdeutsche*),[97] strengthening the regions near the German national borders in particular and preventing Germans living abroad from being assimilated into foreign cultures. The Reich declared its support of such efforts as a national task. This was a consequence of the idea that common blood and not citizenship determined who was German and who was not. The airwaves were considered a good way to reach Germans who were living abroad in the bordering countries. The radio policy makers, responsible for the propagation of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, cooperated with the German Institute for Germans Living Abroad *(Auslandsinstitut)* in Stuttgart.[98] The Reich Center of *Heimat* Services (*Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst*), also responsible for Germans living abroad, admonished the Chancellor of the German Reich to pay more attention to the integration of the Reich Center of *Heimat* Services into the radio organizations and their programming policies.[99] In 1929, the Ministry of Popular Education of Saxony declared that Saxony should work to preserve Sudeten German culture, not least through radio, as a national task.[100] In fact, almost all regional broadcast companies worked to strengthen German culture in the borderlands next to them—Alsace in the southwest, Luxembourg in the west, Denmark in the north, and Poland in the east—by programming *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts.[101] Already in 1927, Stapelfeldt at Norag cleverly emphasized the common features of regional and national radio policies when he indicated that the support of Low German could strengthen not only the Lower Saxons but also the North Schleswig people against Danish influence.[102] *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was seen as a "state-building factor" that should benefit the Reich idea in the "endangered borderland" ("im gefährdeten Grenzland als staatsbildenden Faktor dem Reichsgedanken nutzbar zu machen").[103] Similar

[97] In general, Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials* (n. 2 above).

[98] Bredow (n. 18 above), p. 40.

[99] Letter of the Reich Center of Heimat Services to the Undersecretary of the Chancellery of the German Reich, November 11, 1931, in DRA Ffm, A 1/23.

[100] Letter of the Ministry of People's Education (*Volksbildung*) of Saxony to the Ministry of External Affairs (*Auswärtige Angelegenheiten*), December 21, 1929, documents of the chancellor office (Staatskanzlei) 7344, in DRA Ffm, A 2/32.

[101] Stapelfeldt (n. 40 above), p. 236. With respect to Alsace, see Sylke Berner, "Elsaß-Lothringen im Rundfunkprogramm 1924–1932, dargestellt am Beispiel des Süddeutschen Rundfunks AG" (master's thesis, University Darmstadt 1998), in DRA Ffm; with respect to Upper Silesia, see Schauerte (n. 47 above).

[102] Fourth session of the Norag cultural advisory board, November 25, 1927, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[103] Tenth session of the radio program committee of the German radio companies, February 6, 1928, in BArch Koblenz R 48/4F83. Executive Officer (*Regierungsrat*) Dr. Stoltz (supervisory committee) complained that Norag neglected national German

interpretations can be found with respect to the "Silesian hour." This broadcast was strongly recommended as an example to programmers because it dealt with regional *Heimat* art as a means of promoting a "rebirth of German spirit."[104] The so-called Silesia question was regarded as both a national and a regional issue.[105] Especially in Upper Silesia, divided between Germany and Poland since 1921, nationalistic and revisionist tendencies had been omnipresent since 1927–28 and were radicalized between 1930 and 1932, inspired by the idea that this region had been influenced much more by the old German *Stämme* than by the Slavic ones.[106]

VIII. National Unification versus Regional Particularism

A model of programming focusing on national culture was provided by the new central radio station *Deutsche Welle,* whose programs could be received all over Germany. Professor Johann G. Hermann Schubotz, member of the liberal German Democratic Party, was in charge of the station. Although he supported debates concerning radio broadcasting in general, he evidently adopted the nationalist idea without any public discussion of its problematic features. On January 1, 1933, when the *Deutsche Welle* was officially renamed *Deutschlandsender,* Schubotz (although, ironically, he was politically acceptable to the Nazis only until March 1933) made clear that the *Deutsche Welle* had been in the vanguard of the movement to place greater emphasis on the idea of nation and Reich. According to Schubotz, the station had to reflect the variety of German culture and occupy the common ground of German will, knowledge, and feeling. "The German spirit had made important contributions during the course of history . . . the Reich station felt obliged to familiarize listeners with this. The specific German features in music and literature deserve the first place in the program of the *Reichstation,* which bears the proud name of *Deutschlandsender.* Thus it will be the most important representative of German culture and German being (*Wesen*) in foreign countries."[107]

The inner tensions between regional *Volk* and *Heimat* culture and national German culture were expressed and symbolized by the many dialects. Clearly attempts were made to restrict the increasing number of dialect broadcasts,

events. This statement was opposed by Senior Executive Officer (*Oberregierungsrat*) Nissen, who saw the danger of bragging about Germany. Ninth session of the Norag cultural advisory board, September 14, 1929, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[104] John (n. 59 above), p. 54; see also Schauerte (n. 47 above), p. 90.

[105] Schauerte, pp. 93, 104.

[106] Ibid., pp. 105, 124–25, 151–52, 156–57.

[107] Cited in "Das Ende der Deutschen Welle," *Der Deutsche Rundfunk* 11, no. 3 (1933): 9–10.

which were seen as instances of radical regionalism. Dresden broadcasting policymaker Alfred Simon, who favored the high German language, declared that the advance of high German was based neither on aesthetics nor on the "taste of the educated" but served "the nation." Not only could it legitimize and support Germans' demand to be a "people of the world" (*Weltvolk*), but it also "serves ourselves." Referring to Wilhelm von Humboldt's views, Simon pointed out that language represented the spirit of a people. "We should take care that our language will be the symbol and image of our unity!"[108] He argued that high German could be understood by all and therefore should be the language of broadcasting. He considered dialect appropriate only "for someone whose character and language derived immediately from the landscape and would not make sense without it."[109] In sum, Simon advocated a very limited use of dialect and general use of high German because of the worldwide importance of German national culture.[110]

Moreover, concepts were developed that were intended to decrease radio's separation of regional *Volk* and *Heimat* cultures from one another in order to promote more public awareness of the common features of Germans. Because traveling into other regions was still too expensive for many people, remote regions remained strange to them, and the various dialects symbolized this strangeness. Thus the idea emerged that the exchange of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts between radio stations would assist mutual understanding among the various regional cultures.[111] In the predepression years, regional broadcasting stations had rarely exchanged their programs[112]—the idea was interpreted as a step toward unwanted centralized nationalism and unification.[113] The region-specific *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was often regarded as a natural counterpart to centralized German-Prussian nationalism. Bavarian *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, for example, could never be interpreted as German na-

[108] Alfred Simon, "Mundart und Hochsprache im Rundfunk," *Rufer und Hörer* 1, no. 6 (1931): 256–63, here p. 263.

[109] Ibid., p. 263.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Krammer, "Der Rundfunk" (n. 25 above), p. 83.

[112] By 1928 only some program exchanges had taken place. Frankfurt SWR and Stuttgart Sürag stations established a program association. Around a quarter of the programs of each station were eventually taken over by its partner. Wolfgang Schütte, *Regionalität und Föderalismus im Rundfunk: Die geschichtliche Entwicklung in Deutschland 1923–1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 1971), pp. 104–6; Karl Christian Führer, "Auf dem Weg zur 'Massenkultur'? Kino und Rundfunk in der Weimarer Republik," *Historische Zeitschrift* 262 (1996): 739–81, here p. 779.

[113] See, e.g., Claudia Marwede-Dengg, "Rundfunk und Rundfunkpolitik in Bayern 1922–1934" (Ph.D. diss., University of Munich, 1981); fourth session of the Norag cultural advisory board, November 25, 1927, and twelfth session, August 30, 1930, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

tional culture, which was symbolized by the metropolis Berlin. The Württemberg Ministry did not want to increase exchanges with other stations since it worried about the looming dominance of Berlin culture.[114] In 1932, the Mecklenburg-Schwerin Minister of Culture did not think much of the centralization of radio programming either, because that would spread a "uniform metropolitan culture" across Germany. Instead, he wanted to avoid any "leveling influences." Such statements reveal the tensions between the national metropolis and the various state capitals, between Berlin as the center and symbol of the national culture, on the one hand, and the various centers of regional culture, such as Munich, Hamburg, and Stuttgart, on the other.

Despite many reservations, the unifying tendencies of radio programs were strengthened in the last Weimar years. In 1930 the regional broadcast companies arranged an exchange of *Heimat* evenings.[115] In 1932, with the passage of the new Reich radio law, the influence of the central program council increased. One of the council's most important tasks was to arrange an exchange of programs among various regions in order to diffuse "characteristic *Stamm* culture" interregionally.[116] The Berlin *Funkstunde* had already begun working toward this goal as early as 1930, when it produced a radio series on the various German regions.[117] So-called German (!!) *Heimat* evenings were included in the program, which was broadcast all over Germany.[118] The central program council was also instructed to ensure that regional transmitters broadcast national festivals.[119] According to the new radio regulations—the "*Richtlinien für die Sendungen des deutschen Rundfunks*"—all radio stations were obliged to broadcast material supporting the idea of the Reich (*Reichsgedanken*), on the one hand, and stressing the value of people's immediate surroundings, such as family, *Heimat,* and region, on the other.[120] Meanwhile, some regional transmitters contributed voluntarily to the creation of a national culture. Stuttgart radio, for example, had a series called "German addresses," which was in some ways a continuation of Fichte's speeches to the German nation. The first address was given in 1932 by Hans Johst, who belonged to Hitler's circle.[121]

[114] Twelfth session, August 30, 1930, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[115] Report on the meeting with the heads of the German radio companies, August 23, 1930, in BArch Koblenz R 78/893.

[116] Pohle (n. 46 above), p. 56. Kurt Magnus, director of the Reich radio company, was the chairperson.

[117] Hans G. Kahle at the meeting of the Reich radio company, May 15, 1930, in BArch Koblenz, R 78/892, (1930), p. 6.

[118] Wittenbrink, "Rundfunk" (n. 30 above), p. 1026.

[119] Pohle (n. 46 above), p. 95.

[120] In DRA Ffm, A 1/41.

[121] See Joseph Roth's critical statements, in Irmela Schneider, *Radio-Kultur in der Weimarer Republik* (Tübingen, 1984), p. 225.

Nationalists such as Mario Krammer praised the Stuttgart radio for its "national advertisement" in this nationally oriented program.[122]

The issue of whether the promotion of regional *Volk* and *Heimat* culture should be one of the primary tasks of the radio companies and whether this could lead to a unified German *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was intensively discussed from many perspectives. Some expressed their doubts—as did, for instance, the literary scholar Josef Nadler, who played a role in public life later in the Third Reich. In 1930 he argued that the main task of radio was not to emphasize regional *Volk* and *Heimat* culture but rather to increase awareness of the common features of all German *Stämme.*[123] It is no wonder that the right-wing National Radio Listeners' Association (*Bund Nationaler Rundfunkhörer*) fought specifically for a German national radio that would embody the "idea of a *Volk* community in German radio."[124] Clearly, at the end of the Weimar Republic the nationalization of cultural issues and topics, especially regionally bound culture, was under way.[125]

As long as criticism was possible, the nationalization of radio was an extremely controversial topic. The journalist Joseph Roth, for example, characterized this latest phase of Weimar radio as the "national epoch of radio."[126] Kurt Tucholsky and other intellectuals spoke disparagingly of the "patriotic broadcast," complaining, for instance, that the national anthem, *Deutschlandlied,* was played continually.[127] The critics also objected to the frequent broadcast of military march songs. On days commemorating military battles, militarism and royalism, both symbolizing the old Wilhelminian Reich, dominated the airwaves.[128] In sum, according to the critics, the programming was more

[122] Mario Krammer, "Ein Besuch beim Stuttgarter Rundfunk," *Funk* 16 (1924): 250.

[123] Karst (n. 28 above), p. 266.

[124] Bodenstadt on the Winter program, in twelfth session of the Norag cultural advisory board, August 30, 1930, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1 (*Kulturbeirat*).

[125] See also Hans Veigl, "Volkskultur zwischen Volksmusik und Volkstumsideologie in den Programmen der RAVAG 1924 bis 1945, Part 2," *Relation* 3, no. 2 (1996): 57–146, here p. 79; Seegers (n. 9 above), p. 311.

[126] See Joseph Roth's critical position in Schneider, p. 225; examples of Norag in Lilian-Dorette Rimmele, *Der Rundfunk in Norddeutschland 1933–1945: Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Organisations-, Personal- und Kulturpolitik* (Hamburg, 1977), pp. 24–25.

[127] Compare Ernst Moritz Häufig, "Der Kampf um den Rundfunk," *Die Weltbühne* 19, no. 1 (1925): 716–17, here p. 716. Häufig was among the authors of *Weltbühne.*

[128] Hermann Hieber, "Kritik am Rundfunk," *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus: Zeitschrift für geistige und politische Gestaltung* 2, no. 4 (1931): 189–91, here p. 190; for the previous period, see Susanne Großmann-Vendrey et al., "Auf der Suche nach sich selbst: Anfänge des Hörfunks in Deutschland; Oktober 1923 bis März 1925," in *ARD-Jahrbuch* 83, ed. Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Hamburg, 1983), pp. 41–62, here p. 55; for further information, see Schumacher (n. 46 above), pp. 474–75, 607–9.

and more characterized by patriotic features.[129] Nevertheless, when the Nazis came to power, provincial *Volk* and *Heimat* culture had been all but harmonized with German national culture in late Weimar radio.

IX. Continuities and Breaks after 1933

In a session of the radio program committee (*Programmbeirat*) of the Southwest German radio station, Dr. Carl Gebhardt, deputy of the Reich government, spoke of a change in the times (*Zeitwende*) and quoted a speech by Goebbels. According to Goebbels and Gebhardt, the period of individualism was over and a new period of *Volk*-oriented thinking was about to begin. Gebhardt emphasized the continuity with radio policy before 1933: even before Hitler came to power, radio had been anxious to "create a *Volk*" (*Volk zu bilden*) through its broadcasts and had interpreted the notion of educating the people (*Volksbildung*) in the sense of creating a *Volk*—a statement that can be confirmed by our analysis.

For the future, Gebhardt saw a further task for radio in honoring the "great Germans" and cultivating a new cultural heroism.[130] With respect to the exploitation of the "great Germans," continuities could be traced back through the classic renewals that began after 1900 and again after 1918, especially in the last years of the Weimar Republic.[131] Goethe had been grouped with the timeless representatives of high German culture and thereby made useful for diverse cultural politicians in the Weimar Republic; a similar process took place in the Third Reich.[132] In that case, the superiority of Goethe and other "great Germans" was invoked to promote the burghers' escape into German inwardness (*Innerlichkeit*), allowing the Nazis to establish their racial dictatorship without massive opposition by the non-Jewish cultural elites.

It was easy to make changes in radio programs after 1933. The Nazis increased their control over radio in terms of both administration and program supervision. The Reich Post and the Ministry of Interior lost their power to

[129] Schneider, pp. 206–8.

[130] Minutes of the session of the Southwest radio program committee, April 3, 1933, in DRA Ffm A 1/42.

[131] Lothar Ehrlich and Jürgen John, "Weimar 1930: Politik und Kultur im Vorfeld der NS-Diktatur," in Ehrlich and John, eds. (n. 91 above), pp. vii–xxxviii, esp. p. ix; see also Adelheid von Saldern, "'Kunst für's Volk': Vom Kulturkonservatismus zur nationalsozialistischen Kulturpolitik," in Adelheid von Saldern, *Politik—Stadt—Kultur: Aufsätze zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg, 1999), pp. 169–205; Bollenbeck (n. 1 above).

[132] See Karl Robert Mandelkow, "Zwischen Weimar und Potsdam: Aspekte der Goetherezeption in den zwanziger und dreißiger Jahren in Deutschland," in Ehrlich and John, eds., pp. 123–38, here pp. 120–21.

the new Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, headed by Josef Goebbels. A Reich Broadcasting Board (*Reichsrundfunkkammer*) under the leadership of Horst Dressler-Andress took control of all professionals in this area. The various regional stations were renamed in a move that signaled this centralization—for example, the Hamburg station was now known as *Reichssender* Hamburg. Reich Program Chief (*Reichssendeleiter*) Eugen Hadamovsky was responsible for all programs. Moreover, the Nazis limited the ability of regional radio stations to create their own programs, while forcing the stations to carry expanded programming from the central broadcasting station, *Deutschlandsender.*[133]

During the Third Reich the Nazis promoted the purchase of radios. Even workers could afford the much cheaper new *Volksempfänger* and *Kleinempfänger.* Step by step, radio emerged in the villages as electrification made rapid progress. At first, radio was introduced in inns; then it gradually spread among the villagers, initially to pastors, teachers, and some officials, then to retailers and artisans. Farmers were the last group to become interested in radio.[134] During World War II radio gained further importance for both villagers and urbanites, not only allowing them to listen to the BBC (although this was strictly forbidden) but also providing entertainment and information in a frightful time.

With respect to programming, there were a number of broad changes. First, there was a shift in favor of political speeches by Hitler, Goebbels, and other Nazis, who used radio extensively for propaganda purposes. Second, the number of music and entertainment broadcasts increased. Third, live broadcasts—reporting everything from NS-Party days to sporting events—expanded. Fourth, there was a further shift toward *Volk* and *Heimat* culture in radio programming. In 1937, for example, Reichssender Hamburg (the former Norag) produced 1,298 *Heimat* broadcasts, and 78 percent of all broadcasts in the current events department (*Zeitgeschehen*) were regarded as regionally bound.[135]

The Nazis hoped, in vain, that *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts would become the most popular of all programs. Although the number of rural listeners increased during the Nazi regime, thanks to the relatively cheap new radio sets, *Volk* music was—according to a questionnaire of 1935—not as popular as expected at this time.[136] It is, however, unclear what the questioners expected and exactly what they meant by the term *Volk* music.[137] Presumably

[133] Schütte (n. 112 above), p. 147.

[134] First session of the Norag program committee, February 9, 1933, in STA-HH St.Pr IzII Bb1.

[135] Schütte, p. 168.

[136] Bessler (n. 66 above), p. 31.

[137] It is not known exactly how folk music was presented by radio. A contemporary

radical NS-programmers hoped *Volk* music would compete successfully with modern "dance music,"[138] which obviously did not happen. This does not mean, however, that *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts had no success in the NS period. The *Königswusterhäuser Landbote*—a series broadcast beginning in 1934 that sought to harmonize relations between provincial cultures and the national German culture—was very popular.[139] In general, of course, the popularity of NS *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts depended on the performances—the more vivid and eventful they were, the more attractive was the broadcast—and usually the Nazis made the most of such opportunities.[140]

Stamm-oriented concepts of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture could easily be linked to Nazi racist nationalism. The Nazis tried to integrate the regional cultures with the culture of national Germanness, and they spoke of a "decentralized German unity program" (*dezentralisiertes deutsches Einheitsprogramm*). The regionally bound *Volk* and *Heimat* culture would serve, they thought, as one of the means of regaining national greatness.

Moreover, the idea of *Volk* community, with its close connection to a partly "invented tradition"[141] of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, which had already become popular among conservatives before the Nazis had come to power, led to a smooth transition in *Volk* programming from the late Weimar to the NS-regime.[142] The Nazis were, however, anxious to connect the variety of regional *Volk* and *Heimat* culture not only to regional *Volk* communities but also to a German national *Volk* community. One such effort was the "hour of the nation" (*Stunde der Nation*), which was broadcast by the long-wave *Deutschlandsender* every workday between 7 and 8 P.M. These broadcasts were produced by the various regional stations and were aired across Germany and even broadcast to foreign countries in order to expand cultural knowledge about the various regions—an effort that also had had its beginning in the (late) Weimar period.

The Nazi trend of instrumentalizing regional *Volk* and *Heimat* culture for nationalist-racist purposes caused tensions between Nazi politicians and many

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view of how to present folk music is given by Heinrich Werlé, *Volksmusik im Rundfunk* (Berlin and Schöneberg, 1932), p. 58.

[138] Heinz-Günter Deiters, *Fenster zur Welt: 50 Jahre Rundfunk in Norddeutschland* (Hamburg, 1973), p. 51.

[139] Monika Pater, "Rundfunkangebote," in Marßolek and von Saldern, eds. (n. 9 above), 1:129–243, here pp. 172–87.

[140] See, e.g., Franz Aloff, "Volksfestgestaltung durch Rundfunk," *Rufer und Hörer* 3, no. 12 (1933/34): 529–34; Ferdinand Eckhardt, "Der Rundfunk als Mittler einer wahren Volkskunst," *Rufer und Hörer* 3, no. 7 (1933/34): 299–303.

[141] For general issues, see Hobsbawm and Ranger (n. 22 above); Benedict Anderson, *Die Erfindung der Nation: Zur Karriere eines folgenreichen Konzepts,* German trans. (Frankfurt am Main, 1988).

[142] See, e.g., Flamm, *Westfalen und der Westdeutsche Rundfunk* (n. 41 above), pp. 88–92.

Heimat associations, which wanted to concentrate only on their own regions and not to be involved in the construction of a German national *Volk* and a German *Heimat* culture. To be sure, the nationalization of the radio programs had already begun before 1933 and the tensions arising from this concept had already existed in Weimar Germany, but after 1933 dictatorship gave them a new weight. Despite the compatibility of regional cultures and German national culture, and despite their virtual synthesis in radio broadcasting, the inner tensions that were deeply embedded in the relationship between regionalism and nationalism persisted during the Nazi period, possibly leading some people to distance themselves from the NS-regime. This was, however, not always the case. Because the overall context of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture broadcasts had changed with the introduction of the racist NS-dictatorship, these broadcasts could in some cases strengthen cultural resistance to the centralized dictatorship but in others create a niche that made people feel quite comfortable during the prewar era of the Third Reich and therefore gave the NS-dictatorship the opportunity to implement its racist policies.

In general, the various types of *Volk* culture broadcasts in Nazi radio were not politicized and racialized in a direct way. Rather, the use of symbols and signs, the prescription of gender roles in NS-society, and the virtual creation of a notion of *Volk, Volk* culture, *Volk* community, and national Germanness dominated the medium. These ideas were eventually synthesized with the notion of a War-*Volk* family to produce a new link between "all of us," silently excluding the "others," particularly the Jews. Racism became the (hidden) background and ideology of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture programs as well as of the ideas they promoted on the concept of the *Volk* community and the German nation. Although the ontological concept of *Volksstamm* and *Heimat* culture was not necessarily racist, a racist tone could already be heard in the Weimar period among right-wing elements committed to racial ideas. In the new era of NS-dictatorship, however, racist ideas became extremely radicalized and were made the basis of policies and actions. The blood metaphor, which was included in the idea of *Volkstamm* and *Heimat* culture as the common feature of this people, changed into an emphasis on a special type of blood—that is, "Aryan blood." And all opponents to racism were silenced by force. Neither the propaganda of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture nor the ideas of *Volk* community and German nationalism displayed a real break in 1933. Instead, it was their infiltration by a "legitimized" and radicalized racism, based on a monopolistic political system—that is, the dictatorship—that characterized the shift in this area.

X. Conclusion

The revitalization of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture after 1900 was expected to give people a feeling of security on ontological grounds. Its strength was founded

on emotion and expressed in ritualized procedures, such as dancing or singing. In Germany the undemocratic *Stamm*-related features that were usually connected with *Volk* and *Heimat* culture dominated, and they were used by all conservatives as a means of fulfilling the desires of part of the population. The polyvalence of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture allowed it to be used by the Nazis as well in the service of their radical racism. Hermann Strobach comes to similar conclusions about *Volk* and *Heimat* culture before 1933: "It was this conservative-nationalistic stance which contributed to the conservative development of German *Volkskunde* and its effectiveness before 1933, and which was apparently not only integratable but even ideologically useful for German fascism precisely during the time when it seized and stabilized its power."[143]

During the Great Depression some changes became apparent—above all a greater focus on *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, *Volk* community, and German nationalism. These three elements, which are not necessarily mutually interrelated, developed into components of a superordinate concept encompassing all three. *Volk* and *Heimat* culture was considered the common ground of the two other elements. It was seen as a way of making *Volk* community and German national culture understandable, visible, and audible—that is, it was thought to be a means of popularizing them.

Radio played an important role in this endeavor. Of course the *Volk* and *Heimat* culture programs were not the majority of radio programs, but they were an essential component of programming, especially at Norag. As we have seen, program makers did not turn to democratic and republican traditions and definitions of provincial culture; instead, their point of reference was an ontological *Stamm* culture with its allegedly authentic customs and songs, which were seemingly timeless. Within this framework, gender roles were also mostly seen as conventional, although even then they were never monolithic.

In sum, looking at modern European and American history one recognizes that regional culture has basically had a polyvalent character, which means that it could be combined and linked with various political ideas and political systems. Theoretically the concept of *Heimat* in Weimar culture was also polyvalent. But democratic and republican interpretations of *Heimat* remained underdeveloped at the time and had no chance of gaining dominance in the public sphere, or even of becoming prominent enough to balance concepts of *Volksstamm* and *Heimat* culture. Instead, as this article has shown, conservatives were able to deploy a systematically developed cultural strategy of promoting *Heimat*- and *Stamm* culture, especially around 1930. This did not pave

[143] Hermann Strobach, "'. . . but when does the prewar begin?' Folklore and Fascism before and around 1933," in *The Nazification of an Academic Discipline: Folklore in the Third Reich,* ed. James R. Dow and Hannjost Lixfeld (Bloomington, Ind., 1994), pp. 55–68, here p. 60.

the way for a democratic-pluralistic society; on the contrary, it facilitated the exclusion of people who were considered "aliens" to the *Heimat* and *Volk* community. It was easily adapted to support the Nazis' racist goal of creating a German *Volk* community based on regional *Stämme* and cleansed of all "impure" people. Due to the dictatorship and the *Gleichschaltung* (elimination of political opponents) in 1933 other conceptions of *Heimat* culture had no chance of gaining ground. The NS dictatorship suppressed any viewpoints that might counterbalance the racial policies of *Volk* community—some of which had been promoted by radio critics and radio policy makers in Weimar Germany.

After 1949 in the GDR, the state and the SED differentiated between the earlier concept of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, which the Nazis had co-opted and which was supposed to be banned, and a new socialist approach combining *Heimat* and *Volk* art into a new kind of laymen's art (*Laienschaffen*).[144] In some ways, the concept of socialist *Volk* and *Heimat* culture, which included an homage to the GDR state and its brand of socialism, was again an attempt to instrumentalize *Volk* and *Heimat* culture for state-related purposes. Yet outside this strategy there were also many lively regional and local cultural practices tolerated by the state during the time of the GDR. It is striking that the people's references to "their" regions and "their" cities began to increase during the late 1970s and 1980s. And it is no coincidence that, in 1989, the states (*Länder*) and their regional cultures were among the few elements of stability that facilitated the difficult transition from GDR socialism to West German capitalism.

In West Germany, regional cultures were among the features conserved from the past that helped people adapt to the demands of the new state after 1949. After the *Heimat* concept was de-Nazified in the 1950s, elements of *Volk* and *Heimat* culture were presented again in broadcasts. They were expected to provide a complex remedy that would help to fill the lacuna created by the loss of the old Reich. The conventional version of the *Heimat* concept was also challenged after the war by the many refugees, who had lost their *Heimat* and were strangers in the new region. Their integration into their new *Heimat* demanded that the *Heimat* concept no longer refer only to the old stock of a region—that is, to the *Stamm.* Therefore the *Heimat* idea was broadened by propagating the notion of a "spiritual *Heimat*" (*geistige Heimat*). Moreover, in contrast to the situation in the late 1920s, Westernization and Americanization of the Federal Republic produced enough counterforces to allow cultural pluralism and a political culture of democracy to gain ground, especially in the late 1950s and the 1960s. The student movement in 1968 and the grassroots

[144] Laymen's art in a socialist spirit was officially propagated beginning with the first Bitterfelder Conference in 1959.

movements of the late 1970s and 1980s fostered attacks on the old idea of *Heimat* culture, which was replaced by a more critical view. The History Workshop and other grassroots movements were committed to the history of regional cultures. They were no longer interested in the old antidemocratic, conservative concepts of *Volksstamm* and *Heimat* culture; rather, they wanted to explore the history of various social groups in the cities they lived in—above all, that of workers, women, and later also the Jews. They also made the "discovery" that democratic and republican traditions were rooted in regional culture.[145]

There are still, however, many somewhat modernized *Volk* and *Heimat* culture shows on television in prime time. As was always the case, *Volk* and *Heimat* culture attracts a relatively large stratum of viewers in industrialized societies when the producers of these broadcasts use modern means. Stapelfeldt and, later, the Nazis were "pioneers" of attractive radio performances. Nowadays, one of the secrets for the success of *Volk* and *Heimat* performances on TV—for example, the show *Musikantenstadl*—still lies in the combination of the modernity and fantasy of the choreography with simply composed melodies, subject matter that idealizes individual happiness, and settings in seemingly familiar regional backgrounds. Millions of people are attracted to this kind of entertainment because of their feelings of uncertainty and longing for a sane world.[146] These performances, however, do not grow out of a *Volk* community concept (*Volksgemeinschaft*), unlike earlier times, but exist as a consequence of cultural pluralism.[147] There has been another slight shift since 1989, as trends of restoring old feudal, national, and regional traditions and monuments (e.g., the Berlin castle) have gained new ground. Of course, this revival does not mean that history will repeat itself, because the overall political and social contexts are quite different now—but it does mean that controversies about the dominance of public memories and public interpretations of regional and national pasts remain on the political agenda.

[145] In this context the History Workshop movement must be mentioned as a pioneer of the shift.

[146] Klaus Neumann-Braun, *Rundfunkunterhaltung: Zur Inszenierung publikumsnaher Kommunikationsereignisse* (Tübingen, 1993), pp. 95–97. This is only one possible explanation.

[147] Cultural pluralism was already on the historical agenda when the new generation of young people was increasingly attracted by American influences on popular culture, especially from the late 1950s onward.