# Section Two
# The Press under Strain

# Chapter Four:
# German Press in the Third Reich

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The National Socialist press and cultural policy is considered to this day to have been so effective that it is still regarded as a model for the successful manipulation and "Gleichschaltung" of the population in dictatorships, i.e., the establishment of a system of totalitarian control over the individual. The key to the success of this fateful manipulation of the masses was its comprehensive strategy, its strict principles and thorough organisation, namely

- strict ideological foundation and control;
- the organisation of the Party;
- a National Socialist press;
- expropriation and takeovers of other publishing houses;
- "Gleichschaltung" and control of the media;
- legal rules to govern journalism;
- daily briefing and control of the press.

Besides these mostly organisational measures the manipulation of the masses was achieved through consonance in news coverage and through rhetorical and stylistic devices; simplification: "One People, one Reich, one Leader" (*Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer*), emotionalization: "National Community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and personalization: "Cult of the Leader" (*Führerkult*). These rhetorical devices are still considered to be important tools for the manipulation of the masses and they explain the manipulative power of NS propaganda.

## *1. Principles of the Nazi state and the importance of the press*

From the outset, the supremacist and inhuman National Socialist ideology aimed for the mobilisation of emotional forces. It appealed to instinct and emotion, blood and soil, honour and the fulfilment of duty towards the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the national community (Lexikon der Geschichte 2001, 558-559). Intellectual discourse was considered despicable. All sectors of the population and all aspects of social and political life were to be integrated into the National Socialist movement to enforce National Socialist programs (Pürer and Rabe 1996, 63-64). The aim was the elimination of individualism (*die Enteignung des Menschen* = the expropriation of people) and the totalitarian control over the individual. Intellectual freedom therefore had to be suppressed, particulary in under-aged youth (Pleticha 1984, 114).

Particularly the conservative middle classes, which had been robbed of their leading social role following the abdication of the German Kaiser, soon embraced the National Socialist ideology. Unemployment in the years of the Great Depression (1929-1933) made workers, farmers and intellectual workers receptive to the promises of the National Socialists and they increasingly won their support (Pleticha 1984, 76).

Public opinion was no longer shaped by a free press and public discussion, but by a vast propaganda machine. For National Socialists, the press was primarily a political tool to attain and keep political power and to educate the German people in Nazi ideology. It was the organ and the mouthpiece of National Socialism (Hagemann 1970, 13). Hitler himself believed the press to have "truly formidable" significance. It was, he believed, impossible to overestimate its importance as a means of continuing education. Readers were mostly simple-minded and gullible and it was the state's responsibility to monitor their "education" (Koszyk 1972, 348-349). In the 10 o'clock conference on 3 April 1940, he stated that the press should adapt propaganda to the "intellectual level" and "receptive capacity of the most simple-minded". "Should the aim, however, be to influence a whole nation it, is essential that you do not overestimate the intellectual capacity of people" (Hagemann 1970, 13). Hitler was convinced that it was his responsibility to "keep close tabs" on the press (Koszyk 1972, 349).

Not only was objective reporting not called for, but forbidden. Facts and tendentious commentary merged together and became virtually indistinguishable (Hagemann 1970, 13). Any press publication, be it a professional journal or a daily newspaper, was forced to submit to daily governmental directives and to maintain strict discipline.

At the same time, the aim was also to instrumentalise the press in an effort to manipulate public opinion to the end of creating the best possible image of Germany abroad (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 64). These two aims were hard to reconcile.

## *2. The organisation of National Socialist Propaganda*

The man who felt up to the task was Dr. Joseph Goebbels. He had known Hitler since 1925 and as German propaganda minister had been responsible for the organisation of the election campaigns of the Nazi Party (*NSDAP* = National Socialist German Workers' Party) since 1930. In 1933 he was appointed Reich Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (*Reichsminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*) and became responsible for "the control of all aspects of German intellectual life, propaganda for the state, German culture and science, public relations on a national and an international level and administration of all institutions serving these purposes."

That same year, the Reich Chamber of Culture (*Reichskulturkammer*) was established at his initiative, with Goebbels in charge. This allowed him total control of the entire German cultural life, including film, music, theatre, the press, literature and publishing, the fine arts and the radio with a total of 250,000 members.

Goebbels was a natural rhetorician and skilled strategist. On the one hand, he was a master of polemics who acted on his conviction that "Nowadays, we do not need

politicians, but fanatics and berserks", a thought he recorded in his diary on 28 May 1925. On the other hand he was also skilled in gentle manipulation when announcing that the press would be so finely and effectively organised that it would become a willing instrument in the hands of the government. The versatility of his methods made it easy for Goebbels to adapt to all political developments and the progression of the war: Showy propaganda and display of power in times of confidence in victory were replaced by sympathy and understanding for the needs of the population when the tide turned. "We have to go easy on people. (…)" he noted in his diary on 28 April 1940: "The German people are entitled to some relaxation and entertainment in these hard times."

Goebbels himself was a journalist and had founded the successful Nazi tabloid *Der Angriff* (The Attack) in 1927. He was said to be hard-working and meticulous and was constantly getting personally involved in the production and publication of media products. A fervent admirer of Hitler – and his successor for the duration of one day – he had a genius for the propaganda that Hitler had envisioned in *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle): "To understand the emotional imagination of the masses and find the psychologically appropriate way to attract their attention and capture their hearts".

The structure and organisation of Nazi propaganda did not always run smoothly nor was the *Gleichschaltung* of the press always achieved. The overlapping of responsibilities of party and government staff led to unclear leadership caused by rivalries and conflicts of competence. Goebbels was head of the Nazi Party's central propaganda office (*Reichspropagandaleiter der NSDAP*), a party organisation, Reich Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (a government agency) and president of the Reich Chamber of Culture (a professional organisation). As such he was Reich Press Officer Otto Dietrich's superior, but his coequal on party level. Max Amman was their coequal in his function as the Nazi Party's Leader for the Press (*Reichsleiter für die Presse der NSDAP*), but at the same time subordinate to Goebbels in his function as President of the Reich Press Office. On the other hand, however, Goebbels was dependent on Amman who owned the Eher Publishing House and as such published his books and paid his royalties. Thus, within the party there were three Reich Leaders (*Reichsleiter*) with overlapping responsibilities in the management of the media. Personal animosities, mutual dependence and struggles for power therefore often resulted in confusing and contradictory instructions (Braun 2007, www.shoa.de). In the end, however, it was Goebbels who prevailed.

### *3. Gleichschaltung and control of the press*

The Reich Chamber of Culture, which had been established in September 1933, was a professional organisation with compulsory membership that also included the Reich Press Chamber. It can be said that its president, Max Amnan, Hitler's fellow soldier in the First World War and early member of the Nazi Party, was a professional in this field: He was head of the National Socialist Party's main publishing house that pub-

lished the party's newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter* (People's Observer). Amman had achieved the *Gleichschaltun*g of the Publishers Association as early as 1934 and thus controlled the entire German publishing industry. The Reich Press Chamber played an important role in preliminary censorship and was responsible for keeping journalists under close surveillance.

The most important tool of National Socialist control of the press was the *Schriftleitergesetz* (Editorial Law) that became effective in January 1934 and obligated each *Schriftleiter*, i.e., each journalist or editor, to perform set tasks. Editors' responsibilities were strictly limited to commercial and administrative aspects. Thus, journalists were freed from their dependence on the editor whose place, however, was taken over by the National Socialist state. Journalists were accountable to the National Socialist state and were therefore forced to toe the party line and to submit to the official press policy. To be allowed to work, journalists had to file a personal application and had to officially register as *Schriftleiter*. This guaranteed complete control over all members of the profession. Moreover, membership in the Reich Association of the German Press (*Reichsverband der deutschen Presse*) was compulsory for every journalist (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 70).

The profession of journalism was only open to citizens of the Reich of verifiable Aryan descent who were not married to non-Aryans and who were qualified for "the task of influencing public opinion". The National Socialist *Schriftleiter* was expected to be biased, to be a propagandist and fighter for the Nazi regime and not merely to relate facts professionally. Professionalism was not necessarily required. Consequently, the intellectual elite in journalism dried up, as numerous publishers were of Jewish descent. Following the coming into effect of the law, 1,300 lost their jobs and 2,000 went into exile. Many were arrested or taken to concentration camps (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 70).

Training of journalists comprised a traineeship and requisite additional courses at the Reich Press School in Berlin, established in 1935 (Wilke 2002, 483). The Reich Press School was a boarding school that had a similar teaching system and organisation as the elite schools and other educational establishments of the National Socialists (Napolas). At 6.45 am sharp, students were roused roughly by the janitor. He acted as staff sergeant of the company and exacted punishments from recalcitrant students like sweeping the hall or wiping the blackboard. An endurance run through the Tiergarten-park was followed by morning ablutions and breakfast and the obligatory study of the morning papers. Classes started at 9 o'clock. Good table manners were important. Latecomers had to donate money to the *Winterhilfswerk*, a National Socialist charity (Müsse 1995, 196-197). The schoolday started with the *Tagesschau* news and their journalistic presentation was discussed. Press agency news had to be edited into commentaries, squibs and reports. The trainer took care that students kept politically in line with Nazi doctrine.

> In every lesson and in every exercise, students should be ideologically trained to abide by National Socialist principles by showing them what National Socialist newspapers ought to look like (quoted after trainer Fritz Zierke 1937, 225).

Not every student could be sure to survive until the end of the course – even during the courses, students were sifted and sorted out. Those who did not conform were sent away. Trainees that had been sent away prior to finishing their training courses and had not been barred from the profession had to register again after a certain period of time had elapsed (Müsse 1995, 204-205).

### *4. Daily press conference of the Reich Government with press directives*

In order to gain control over press information right at the source, the two large German press agencies – the *Wolffsche Telegraphenbüro* (Wolffs Telegraphic Bureau) and the *Telegraphen Union* (Telegraph Union) – were merged into the *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro*, *DNB*, (German News Agency). The state controlled *DNB* was actively involved in the control of the media: It edited news and enforced their publication. Guidelines for news coverage were dictated by the Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda's ministerial conference and the news were then publicized as so-called "circulation news" that newspaper were forced to publish. At times, Propaganda Minister Goebbels himself wrote the news for the German News Ageny (Wilke 2002, 486).

The Reich Government's daily press conference was the most important instrument of National Socialist control of the press. Only a selected group of journalists and government representatives were allowed to attend. At these press conferences, that were always scheduled for the morning, the press was given detailed directives, sometimes including official versions of news items stipulating bias and comprehensiveness of coverage down to the smallest details like size of headlines and placement of specific features. Directives regarding events that the press was not allowed to research and topics that had to be suppressed were also issued (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 73).

Initially, prohibitions and official versions were not necessarily predominant. It seems that a uniformity of content in the German press was not considered desirable from the first, as this could have damaged credibility. This only changed with the introduction in 1940 of the exactly worded *Tagesparole* (Message of the Day). There was scarcely any part of life that was not covered by the *Tagesparolen*: politics, art, culture, the party, horse racing, pictures of the *Führer*, midwives, physical exercise, the growing of vegetables etc. The provincial newspapers that did not have a correspondent in Berlin were instructed via the regional offices of the Ministry for Propaganda (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 74). Special press conferences were held for magazines and the foreign press. Therefore, the foreign press was often given less strict directives, which helped maintain a positive image abroad. Magazines were moreover controlled by the official *Magazin Information* (Magazine Information) and from 1938 onwards by the *Zeitschriftendienst* (Magazine Service) (Wilke 2002, 488).

Although all participants in the Reich Press Conference were required to destroy the written directives, it was possible to document them after the war. Scholars estimate their number at approximately 100,000 (Wilke 2002, 487) – evidently the Ministry of

Propaganda left nothing to chance. For the years 1935/1936, the case of Walter Schwerdtfeger, financial editor with the financial paper *Börsen-Zeitung* in Berlin, has been documented. Schwerdtfeger had allegedly passed on press directives to foreign correspondents over a period of several months. The *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court) sentenced him to life imprisonment for treason – a mild sentence, considering that the death penalty had been demanded (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 120).

It can be therefore considered sheer mockery what Goebbels told the press in June of 1937: Freedom of opinion, he "consoled" them, was a luxury that only a people like the British could afford, while in Germany this question would only be open to consideration in a few decades' time. Thus, freedom of the press was made out to be a deficiency that only National Socialism had been able to eradicate (Hagemann 1970, 17-18). Even the expression "freedom of the press" was proscribed:

> Fourth *Tagesparole* (Message of the Day) issued at the press conference of 20 June 1941, at noon: There is cause to remind you that in democracies the term freedom of the press is used as a screen and that therefore measures taken to regulate the press must not be understood as curtailing the freedom of the press. The reason for this reminder is the headline "Freedom of the press curtailed in Sweden" published in a Berlin newspaper. In fact, the freedom of the press is not being curtailed, but deficiencies are eliminated and the true freedom of journalism is restored.
> (Hagemann 1970, 70)

The first general "guidelines for the behaviour of German newspapers in times of war" were first announced by Reich Press Officer Otto Dietrich to reporters on 3 September 1939. The term "war", for instance, was to be used with great care. Large headlines about military information had to be based on statements by the *OKW* (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, the Wehrmacht High Command – the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces). Reports issued by the *NS-Gaudienst* had to be published in their entire length (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 112-113). It can be assumed that this wasn't beneficial to the appeal of the press.

Military news as well as certain terms were not supposed to be quoted to foreign newspapers, unless they had been confirmed and approved by the *OKW*. Certain "embarrassed commentaries by foreign countries" were to be referred to as "commentaries chewed out of a dip pen". First-hand reports from soldiers were considered as competing with press conference reports. These "reports from the front" had to be authorized by the author's military superior as well as by military censorship (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 114). Therefore, it was impossible to add vividness to newspaper content using these reports.

Moreover, journalists were required to make sure that everything that appeared in print conformed to party doctrine. As the politics section in most newspapers consisted mainly of prescribed material, the culture, entertainment and local sections had to be adapted accordingly. However, newspapers did not wholly comply with these instructions, to give readers some respite from the war (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 114).

Even the publication of jokes or caricatures was governed by strict criteria without suppressing "healthy humour". Of course there were also rules for the puzzle pages: They had to be in consonance with the rest of the newspaper in order to avoid politically

sensitive issues ("political impossibilities" in NS jargon) in puzzle questions (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 115).

Particularly during the final phase of the war, the *Hauptschriftleiter* (editors-in-chief) were compelled to make certain without any further delay that the culture sections of newspapers took the seriousness of the situation into account and hence only published contributions that focused on the *Volk's* (German people's) willingness to fight and make sacrifices, on their courage, endurance and loyalty, or on those values that "we are called upon to defend in our fight for freedom: our country, our family etc.". Publication of any other "neutral" matters for the mere entertainment of the readers was barred and editors-in-chief were held personally responsible for any violation of this order (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 115).

While the *Schriftleitergesetz* (Editorial Law) helped "to breed the creatures needed by the Third Reich", it also presented some insurmountable problems. Day to day, journalism was governed by fear, as journalists were always in danger of risking their lives for one line of print. The risk, moreover, was incalculable. Some journalists resorted to drab "hymns of praise" while others were literally shocked into muteness. Most newspapers printed pages upon pages of uncommented speeches by NS leaders to stay on the safe side. In editorial meetings, the Reich Press Conference's press directives ordained the choice of topics and distribution of pages and the newspapers were assembled accordingly, mostly without much enthusiasm or care (Müsse 1995, 68). As a consequence, NS newspapers lost readers in droves (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 76).

Head of the Reich Press Chamber Max Amman therefore sought to reduce the number of newspapers by means of closedowns and mergers in order to restore the newspaper industry to its "former financial health". This way, he could also eliminate competition to National Socialist newspapers (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 72).

### *5. Closedowns of publishing houses and takeovers*

The rise to power (Machtübernahme) of the National Socialists in Germany had been preceded by a prolonged period of economic depression. The newspapers of the then Weimar Republic had already been struggling with financial difficulties in the 1920s. The depression increased their economic and hence also their political dependence, intensified the concentration of the press and above all weakened the democratic and liberal press. In 1932, there still existed 4,703 daily and weekly newspapers, including supplements and special editions, half of which had political affiliations (Wilke 2002, 481), as, for instance, the *Fränkische Kurier*, the *Schwäbische Merkur* and the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (Koszyk 1972, 170, 214, 215).

A large number of these newspapers were owned by the nationalist German Hugenberg trust. Hugenberg, an industrialist, had been building his media conglomerate following strict economic criteria since 1914: Based on the August Scherl publishing house that published influential high-circulation Berlin newspapers (*Berliner Lokal-*

*Anzeiger* and *Berliner Nachtausgabe*) and magazines (*Die Woche* and *Allgemeiner Wegweiser*) as well as an associated directory publishing company and 50 provincial newspapers, Hugenberg had succeeded in converting his trust into one of the three big publishing companies in Berlin (the other two were Mosse and Ullstein). What made the Hugenberg trust so menacing was its unscrupulous political instrumentalisation (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 54-55).

Following Alfred Hugenberg's strategy, industrial production methods had to be applied to the press. Only trusts that were organised "the American way" with a large number of newspapers and magazines, state-of-the-art printing presses, joint distribution, propaganda and news services would be able to produce on an industrial level and therefore be interesting to investors. The consolidation of this type of corporation presupposed that "the concentration of capital as well as the character of its publications which catered to mainstream taste were maintained". Hugenberg believed that thanks to mass circulation this type of industrially produced and distributed publications would have a stronger political impact then press publications of the traditional type, notwithstanding their seeming superficiality (Müller 1968, 25). As chairman of the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (DNVP, German National People's Party), Hugenberg had been using his media resources to support anti-republican propaganda since 1928 and had thus materially contributed to Hitler's rise, even though he never succeeded in getting a foothold in the National Socialist Party (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 54).

One of the most drastic measures adopted by the National Socialist government was the forcible closedown and takeover of publishing houses by the *NSDAP-Zentralverlag*, the main Nazi publishing house. As early as February 1933, a legal ordinance put an end to the freedom of the press "in order to fend off communist and seditious acts of violence". A law about the "confiscation of communist property" that became effective on 26 May 1933 authorized the expropriation of communist publishing companies. In July of 1933, it was complemented by a law about the "confiscation of seditious and 'anti-*Volk*' property", i.e., the property of those who were seen as enemies of National Socialism. This specifically referred to the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei*) and the press. Property owned by Communists and Social Democrats was confiscated and assigned to the National Socialist publishing houses (Wilke 2002, 482).

This also served the purpose of ensuring the existence of the National Socialist provincial press publishing houses, many of which were facing bankruptcy. Property that had been confiscated by means of forcible closedowns of publishing houses was mostly sold at a give-away price to the *Gau*-press (the regional press in National Socialist Germany). Another option was for the *Gau*-press to simply take over the premises of the closed-down publishing houses, including printing plants and offices. The *NSDAP-Zentralverlag*, headquartered in Munich, also assumed joint ownership of most of the still existing important and well-known newspapers, buying no less than a 51 % share far below market price (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 72-73).

The systematic expropriations came in waves: In December 1933, the foundation of new newspapers was banned. A second expropriation wave followed in 1934, at a

time when the German press was suffering a severe structural crisis due to dwindling readership. The third wave of *Gleichschaltung* and suppression started in 1941 and was justified with war requirements and paper shortage (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 76-77).

Expropriations during the war took place step by step:

1. In May 1941, 550 small and medium-sized newspapers were closed down,
2. a further 950 newspapers were closed down following the capitulation at Stalingrad and until the end of 1943,
3. from late summer 1944 on, following Stauffenberg's attempted assassination of Hitler.

At the end of 1944, there remained only 625 privately-owned newspapers with 4.4 million circulation (= 17.5 %), while 325 daily newspapers with 21 million circulation were controlled by the NSDAP (Wilke 2002, 486).

### *6. National Socialist Party press*

Early on, the NSDAP founded newspapers in Germany in order to propagate its ideas and political slogans. Long before the National Socialists disposed of provincial newspapers, they had already been publishing an official party organ. As early as 1920, the NSDAP purchased the *Völkischer Beobachter* (People's Observer) (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 99) that not only served as the Nazi Party's official newspaper but became the flagship of the National Socialist press. This newspaper, that was subheaded Fighting Paper of the National Socialist Movement of Greater Germany (*Kampfblatt der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung Großdeutschlands*), was turned by Hitler into a propaganda organ. The texts were characterised by lurid headlines and bold presentation and abounded with slogans and emotional catchphrases; their tone was rude, aggressive and cynical. Heroic and mystical elements were used in an attempt to convey quasi-religious feelings (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 84-85). The journalistic standard was rather low. The paper did not have any correspondents abroad and therefore largely abstained from reporting on foreign affairs and concentrated on enforcing the goals of National Socialism by means of propaganda, focusing on fighting political enemies within Germany. The layout was not modernised. While all other newspapers had already switched to the more easily readable Antiqua type font, the *Völkischer Beobachter* stuck to the old-fashioned German type font until 1941. The title page with its large lurid headlines often resembled a placard (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 100).

By 1939, circualtion of the *Völkischer Beobachter* had gone up to 750,000 copies, reaching just under 1.2 million copies in 1941. Party and government officials were forced to subscribe (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 86).

The National Socialist regional and local newspapers are subsumed under the term *Gau*-press. Typically, these papers only disposed of meagre funds because they lacked long-term subscribers and advertising customers. Editorial offices were housed in provisional-looking rooms and headed by unqualified volunteers. This was reflected in

the primitive makeup of their Nazi propaganda newspapers *(Kampf-Zeitungen*) that abounded in defamations while providing little if any factual information. Sometimes the *Gauleiter* (district governors: each *Gau* or administrative region of the NS government was headed by a *Gauleiter*), seeking to maintain prestige and power, acted as editors-in-chief. In 1928, the *Gau*-press already included 37 newspapers, five of which were daily papers, 31 weekly papers and one biweekly. 19 of these publications were official party organs and displayed the *Reichsadler* (the imperial eagle) and the swastika on the front page. In 1932, an official party news agency, the *Nationalsozialistische Korrespondenz,* was established that supplied the party press with National Socialist-oriented news (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 78-80).

During the war, the regional press gained in political importance in its function as so-called "homeland press" (*Heimatpresse*). Its role was to strengthen the morale both at the "home front" **and** at the "war front". The local news section was deemed especially valuable for soldiers, as it strengthened "the bond with the family and the homeland" (R. Sulzmann, editor with DP, 1940), while the politics section lacked interest as news items were out-dated by the time the newspaper reached the front. For every 100 soldiers there were about 18 small or medium-sized provincial papers and only two big daily newspapers. The newspaper was supposed to influence "not only the reader at home but also the soldier at the front" (quoted after G. Rzehulka, editor with DP, 1941, 91) (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 127).

Most of the NSDAP party organs had strangely opposing objectives or missions. While on the one hand, they were supposed to appeal to a wide variety of readers, on the other hand, they had – by all means possible – to fulfill their role as propaganda organs for the regime and the party. This, however, did not hold true for the *Stürmer. Der Stürmer*, literally "The Stormer", had only one objective: the fight against the Jews. The Jews were blamed for every single crime or reputed evil. There was scarcely one edition of this Nuremberg weekly that did not "report" extensively and in detail on sexual crimes allegedly committed by Jews. Thanks to this type of topic, *Der Stürmer* managed to increase circulation from 20,000 copies sold in 1933 to approximately 400,000 in just two years. However, *Der Stürmer* was not, strictly speaking, a party organ, but was privately owned by Franconian *Gauleiter* Julius Streicher. It instigated the continued issuing of anti-Jewish ordinances and created a climate of fear and intimidation (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 104). *Der Stürmer* was subject to some controversy within the government. The brutal attacks on everything Jewish provoked negative reactions abroad, a situation that at certain times was considered undesirable. Circulation was temporarily suspended during the 1936 Olympic Games (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 104-105).

### *7. The conservative middle-class press*

At the time of the rise to power of the National Socialists, there existed conservative newspapers like the *Bremer Nachrichten,* the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt,* the *Han-*

*noverscher Kurier* and the *Kölnische Zeitung* that were able to maintain, albeit under severe restrictions, their different political affiliations after their incorporation into the NSDAP press trust. In many of the larger cities they competed against newspapers of the *Generalanzeiger* ("General Advertiser") type, i.e., newspapers which catered mainly to the interests of regional business rather than focusing on political coverage. Among the most important newspapers of this type were the *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, the *Hamburger Anzeiger,* the *Hannoverscher Anzeiger* and the *Würzburger Generalanzeiger*. Shares in this type of newspaper were typically owned by the Hugenberg media conglomerate (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 58-59).

In the long run, no major newspaper could successfully elude control by the NSDAP. In 1938, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (DAZ),* one of the major and also internationally known Berlin newspapers, was also surrendered to the party-owned *Deutscher Verlag* (German Publishing House, formerly *Ullstein)*. Due to its strictly conservative character, the *DAZ* refused to be intimidated by the National Socialists. However, at the end of May 1933, this refusal to budge cost editor-in-chief Fritz Klein his job. Following Klein's daring commentary on the "fraternal strife" between the Chancellor of the Reich and the Austrian Chancellor (Dollfuss), publication of the paper was prohibited for three months at Hitler's personal order. The publishers appointed London correspondent Karl Silex as new editor-in-chief and the *DAZ* was allowed to resume publication on 8 June. This concession was probably due to the significance of the *DAZ* abroad that Goebbels and Hitler were well aware of. Goebbels was very clear about it: He said to Silex that he would use him and Kircher (from the *Frankurter Zeitung*) "for his own purposes for as long as they saw fit". Silex answered: "The minute I get the impression that I am being misused, I will stop being a journalist and will become a sailor again". Goebbels replied: "This is the first answer I have ever gotten from a conservative middle-class journalist that has earned my respect" (quoted after K. Silex 1968, 141) (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 59-60).

The illustrated mass press, for instance the mass circulation women's magazines were also "brought into line" (*gleichgeschaltet*). For readers, this was probably hardly noticeable, given the fact that women's magazines as a rule had not been known to address female emancipation within the family or in business, or political topics, even before the *Gleichschaltung.* The leading *Blatt der Hausfrau* (The Housewife's Magazine), that was published by *Ullstein,* consequently had not warned against the National Socialists prior to 1933. On the one hand, the magazine did not want to lose readers, on the other hand, this behaviour was consonant with its traditionally "apolitical" image (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 74-75).

The National Socialists could therefore tie in seamlessly: They, too, were not interested in raising political awareness among women, so that overtly political issues remained largely absent from women's magazines even after 1933. The *Blatt der Hausfrau,* that had a circulation of 575,000, offered the usual reliable mixture of female heart-to-heart talk, household tips and tricks, needlework, fashion, a bit of fiction, a crossword puzzle and illustrated features. Less bombastic than the biggest women's magazine, the *NS-Frauenwarte,* the *Blatt der Hausfrau* still presented a similar type

of woman: the mother and homemaker. The fact that as early as 1933 many women had jobs and that female labour was increasing was almost entirely disregarded (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 74-75).

The National Socialists handled commercially successful enterprises carefully. Changes were introduced gradually and secretly. The *Ullstein Publishing House*, at that time the largest of its kind in Europe, was sold at one tenth of its value to a NS trust corporation in 1934. In 1937, it was renamed *Deutscher Verlag* (German Publishing House). For the readership hardly anything changed. The well-known sewing patterns *Sei Sparsam Brigitte, nimm Ullstein-Schnitte* (Be thrifty, Brigitte, use Ullstein's sewing patterns) became *Ultra-Schnitte* (Ultra patterns) (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 75).

The religious press also had to be brought under Nazi control. As early as 1933, the National Socialists, using inquisitional methods, succeeded in incorporating all chains of religious newspapers into the holding company *Phönix GmbH* that had been established for this purpose. Thus, they managed to take control over the religious press as well – the big Jewish Publishing Corporations were already in their power. At the beginning of 1938 – by then most of the transactions had been completed – the *Gauleiter* were informed in a secret circular memorandum that the *Phönix* newspapers' mission was to spread propaganda among those parts of the population that were not reached by the party press (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 66-67).

While readers remained loyal at the beginning, many of the former religiously-oriented newspapers soon began to lose subscribers due to the continued harassment by prominent local NS leaders and the pressure to conform and adapt contents. There were cases of clergymen who cautioned their community against reading the newspaper they had once supported and recommended that they subscribe to a religious magazine – or resort to the Bible. This magazine press included a few intellectually sophisticated periodicals like *Gral, Stimmen der Zeit* and *Hochland*. They were tolerated by the National Socialists as this was the only way to channel and control potential opposition (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 67-68).

### *8. Relaxation of restrictions and opposition*

Despite the comprehensive measures taken, the Third Reich did not completely succeed in gaining total control over the whole of the press. This was due to the complexity of the propaganda machine, to conflicts of competence within the system and personal animosities among its leaders. The press directives, which were not always followed, also failed to establish uniformity in newspaper content. Moreover, foreign policy considerations and the desire to maintain some level of credibility abroad led National Socialists to tolerate, albeit only temporarily, a few critical newspapers and journalists that did not conform to the regime (Wilke 2002, 489).

From the outset, Goebbels tried to refrain from a pedantic National Socialist indoctrination in the sphere of the press and of culture. He believed that German middle-

class culture had to be reconciled with the emotional impact of National Socialist doctrine. Besides films, theatre plays and literature for the nationalistic indoctrination of the German people, the regime therefore also promoted cultural events – either high-class cultural events or light entertainment – that were completely apolitical in character (Broszat 2007, 103).

Another exceptional case was the weekly *Das Reich* that was founded as late as 1940 with the express permission of Goebbels. It was a political and cultural weekly, a mixture of daily newspaper and political monthly, and the first of its kind in Germany. Allegedly, the British *Observer* had served as a model. To guarantee the success of this weekly – also as a publication of international prestige – it was to be freed of *Tagesparolen* that were considered to be the main reason for the monotony of the German press. It aimed for an orientation toward the reader and a non-official character. The magazine was also supposed to engage in a philosophical debate with National Socialist ideology and to appeal to the culturally and politically educated classes in Germany and abroad. Special emphasis was put on the arts pages. Editorial staff worked mostly independently, i.e., the section chiefs were responsible for layout and content. However, they were not – as had originally been intended – wholly freed of the Reich press conference's directives, even though they had more possibilities to elude pressure from the state (Impekoven and Plank 2004, 28-35). However, already in 1942, the first *Hauptschriftleiter* (editor-in-chief) resigned from his post (Impekoven and Plank 2004, 40). *Das Reich* was obviously falling in line with National Socialism.

In order to reach the cultured readers, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* was also allowed to continue publication until 1943, following the resignation of its Jewish publishers and editors. The same held true for the formerly Jewish *S. Fischer-Verlag* (the *Fischer* Publishing House) and its philosophical and literary *Neue Rundschau* that made few concessions to the regime thanks to its courageous publisher Peter Suhrkamp (Broszat 2007, 104).

The role of journalists in the Third Reich remains a controversial issue. Some claim today to have "written between the lines" in order to defy the press regulations. Some verifiable strategies that journalists used to oppose the regime were, for instance, the early mention of a current topic before instructions had been issued, disguising topics using historical examples, literary "disguises" (for example use of fables), indirect messages, irony, camouflage, stylistic nuances like the use of the subjunctive (Wilke 2002, 490).

Thus, the non-political sections of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* became more and more important. Here, carefully chosen poems could be published which did not join in the chorus of ever-present propaganda (Wilke 2002, 490). Also the Catholic newspaper *Hochland* took a clear stand against National Socialism – discernible only to the initiated – by means of historical analogies, "fitting" quotations, apocalyptic warnings and other forms of insinuation (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 68).

Journalists required a lot of courage even for small acts of opposition. They, too, risked prosecution by the courts, interrogations by the *Gestapo* (the secret state police), passport withdrawals or being taken to concentration camps. But there were journalists

who had the courage to oppose the regime, as for instance Ursula von Kardoff from the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. Her professional career ended with her flight from Germany in February 1945. Her last lines hit the mark: "I hope that I haven't sold myself to the *Promi* (The Ministry of Propaganda) during these years and that I've never written anything that directly contradicted my beliefs. But I was lucky, because I worked for the arts section, so I've been spared a lot of trouble. Our newspaper will soon be closed down." In 1946, Ursula von Kardoff reported on the Nuremberg trials for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and in 1950 became a member of the editorial staff (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 150-154).

### *9. The way to today's freedom of the press: Allied press laws*

After the war and the collapse of the Third Reich, all newspapers in Germany were forbidden. The role and functions of the press were laid down in the Allied Control Council Laws of 1945. Publication of newspapers and magazines was dependent on licenses. Only those who had proven to be politically untarnished were eligible for these licenses (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 55).

Altogether the structural changes enforced by the Western Allies (and in different ways by the Soviets) were so fundamental that one speaks of the "zero hour of the press" (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 184). The newspapers had to rely on material provided by the news agencies of the occupation forces and were subject to censorship after the fact by the Allied Press Officers. The Allied High Commission did not issue the general license that marked the end of press control until 1949, four years after the end of the war (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 55-56).

The personnel decisions were far less transparent. The attempt to rid the German society of any remnants of the Nazi regime encountered the same difficulties in the sphere of the press as it did in other areas of German society. The careers of the heads of the National Socialist publication industry, the party press and the propaganda machine had definitely ended in 1945. Those, however, who had done a "normal" job as journalist or publisher in the Third Reich were not held accountable in the process of de-Nazification. Apparently, journalistic work was not in itself relevant to the verdicts reached by the civil courts (*Spruchkammern*), whereas membership and rank within the NSDAP and its organisations was considered a decisive factor. Most journalists were able return to their profession from 1946/47 onwards, following the de-Nazification process. Until then, however, the strict political selection criteria of the Press Departments of the military governments applied (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 185-187).

Apart from the media companies, publishing houses that had conformed to the regime during the Third Reich also attempted a fresh start. During the Third Reich, the *Bertelsmann* publishing company had published editions of German literature for the *Wehrmacht* (the armed forces) but had also distributed nationalistic and anti-Semitic literature. The license for a restart of the publishing house was issued to the son of the Mohn family, who returned from war captivity in 1947 and was considered politically

untarnished. Only very late on did the publishing house commission an investigation into the company's history that was published in 2002 (*Die Bertelsmann-Chronik*).

Our current press system can be more easily understood in the context of the period of National Socialism. A negative heritage has been transformed into positive efforts. The fundamental right to the freedom of the press is guaranteed in article 5 of the German Constitution. For the past decades, the Constitutional Court has time and again defended the freedom of the press against claims from society, from business and industry and especially against political claims.

There are few nationwide newspapers, most of the press is regional. All newspapers are independent privately-owned enterprises and party-owned daily newspapers hardly exist anymore. And the profession of journalism is free – there is no official job title and the profession is open to everybody.

The newspapers were able to regain their image and their importance for the reader. There are also crises in the press market, but Germany ranks close behind Scandinavian countries in newspaper use.

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# Chapter Five:
# Betrayal, Heroism and Everyday Life in the Norwegian Press during the German Occupation of Norway 1940-1945[1]

*Rune Ottosen*

## *Introduction*

The state of Norwegian journalism during World War II is not *one* unified history. There was no press front during the war. The newspapers and the individual colleagues were caught just as unaware by the German invasion as was the rest of the population. The stories and the individual fates that are brought out in this article therefore tell something in their own way about how the Norwegian journalistic world was turned upside down on April 9, 1940. These stories, whether they deal with deeds that are heroic or treasonous, provide a little of the mosaic that is constitutes the history of the war. They are at one and the same time typical and atypical of their era. Because there is no "representative" fate to be found, the accounts can do little more than speak for themselves. Yet the choices taken by the individual staff members and newspapers can constitute some of the changes in press history.

Out of the 650 members of the Norwegian Press Association of 1940, only 298 were still working on February 1, 1943. By the end of the war, only 100 were working. Many of them went into exile, mostly in Stockholm, London or New York. According to an overview provided by the Norwegian Press Association there was a total of 133 journalists in exile. After the war the schism between those who returned from exile, and those who had remained in their jobs in Norway would give rise to a certain number of conflicts between former colleagues.

Viewed from hindsight, it would be interesting to have posed the question of what might have happened had the body of Norwegian journalists constituted of a purely journalistic union at the outbreak of the war. Might one consider that such a union could to a stronger degree have established a united line among journalists – indeed, even contributed to a press front? The Norwegian Press Association functioned more as an association of the whole branch, where the interests of the owners were at the forefront. The Journalist Group (*NPJ*) of the Norwegian Press Association, the nearest that one came to a trade union at that time, was a weak organization, where the division between the labor press and the bourgeois journalists was far from yielding a unified line when the war broke out. "After the annual general meeting of *NPJ* in March 1941, the Journalist Group [went] into hiding due to the fear of intervention", as the journalist Egil Meidell Hopp expressed it in his role as provisional chairman in 1945. The sources

1 This article is based upon a short and updated version of a chapter in the book *Fra fjærpenn til Internet. Journalister i organisasjon og samfunn*, published by the author in 1996. It has been translated from Norwegian to English by Richard Dailey.