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### **International Reactions to the Birth of Nazi Propaganda**

- **Original German Text:** Speech to the Press on the Establishment of a Reich Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (March 15, 1933), in Joseph Goebbels, *Revolution der Deutschen: 14 Jahre Nationalsozialismus*. Oldenburg, 1933, pp. 135-50.  
**English Translation:** Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Nazism, 1919-1945*, Vol. 2: *State, Economy and Society 1933-1939*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000, pp. 186-87.  
**GHDI Link:** [https://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1579](https://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1579)

On March 15, 1933, chief Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels delivered a speech in which he declared the creation of the Ministry of Popular Entertainment and Propaganda. The intent behind this speech was to test the capabilities of radio as a means of spreading news. Goebbels aimed to explain the intent of the creation of this new ministry and what he planned to accomplish with it. The transcript of his speech was recorded and put into a German biography on Nazis that was published that same year. The speech would later be translated into English in 2000 by Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham and published in a history textbook on Nazis. The original transcript can be borrowed from various institutions while the translated text can be found online on the German History in Documents and Images website.

Prior to his position in the Ministry of Popular Entertainment and Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945) oversaw producing propaganda for the Nazi party. He had been introduced to Hitler after reading a copy of *Mein Kampf*. Hitler realized Goebbels's talent for speaking and publicity and would make use of it in his ascent to power<sup>1</sup> A week prior to the speech, Hitler had used his position as chancellor to create a ministry to dedicating to spreading information in a "widespread propagandistic and educational effort."<sup>2</sup> Goebbels had been in talks with Hitler over how this ministry should be structured. There were to be five main departments:

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth J. Campbell, "Joseph Goebbels: Propagandist," *American Intelligence Journal* 30, no. 2 (2012): 237.

<sup>2</sup> Helmut Heiber, *Goebbels*, (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1972), 111-112.

press, radio, film, theater, and propaganda<sup>3</sup>. Goebbels's speech would take place just one day after he was sworn to establish his position as a minister and popularize the use of the radio.

The international community was aware of changes going on in Germany at the time. The LA times reported on Goebbel's promotion the day it happened, noting Goebbel's new control on all the government's publicity avenues<sup>4</sup>. The Chicago Tribune would note two days later changes Goebbels had been making to the way German press worked. It notes how Goebbels believed the press is like a keyboard the government plays<sup>5</sup>. TIME magazine would corroborate on this metaphor in their article on Nazi propaganda in July of 1933. TIME noted how future events like book burning and Jew sterilizing were spoken with such furor that it became a sensation<sup>6</sup> It would seem initially the outsiders looking into Germany at the time had not yet comprehended the full extent of Goebbels and the Nazi Party's intentions.

As 1933 went on, various political scientists, writers, and so began to understand the full extent of Goebbels's words. Roger Nelson was a journalist who was able to view the rise of Nazi Germany firsthand and saw the changes brought upon by the Ministry of Propaganda. Nelson realized that Goebbels was able to "sell" an image of the Nazi party, one that began with unification of the press<sup>7</sup>. Nelson published his paper in June, just three months after Goebbels assumed power over the press. J. Emlyn Williams noted similar things in how new guidelines were put in place for German newspaper that are broad enough to strike down any unfavorable reports.<sup>8</sup> Finally, a French newspaper in November of 1933 published secret instructions that were given to officers that were instructions how to spread propaganda overseas<sup>9</sup>. Goebbels's name was beginning to carry serious influence for those who understood what was going on in Germany. His March 15 speech carried heavy influence through 1933 that many realized but had not understood the full implications of.

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<sup>3</sup> Ralf Georg Reuth, *Goebbels*, 1st U.S. ed., (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993), 173.

<sup>4</sup> CLEAN-UP DRIVE BEGUN BY NAZIS: EXECUTIVES OF MANY CITIES DISMISSED BY HITLERITES SOCIALIST MAYORS OF BERLIN SUBURBS GIVEN "LEAVES" NINE HUNDRED COMMUNISTS OF BAVARIA IN CUSTODY." 1933.*Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Mar 14, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Sigrid Schultz, 1933, "HITLER ORDERS NAZIS HELD IN JAIL RELEASED: DECREES GERMAN PRESS IS "TOOL OF GOVERNMENT." *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963)*, Mar 16, 7.

<sup>6</sup> "TIME Magazine Cover: Joseph Goebbels - July 10, 1933." 1933, TIME.Com, July 10, 1933.

<sup>7</sup> Roger B. Nelson, "Hitler's Propaganda Machine," *Current History (1916-1940)* 38, no. 3 (1933): 289.

<sup>8</sup> J. Emlyn Williams, "Journalism in Germany: 1933," *Journalism Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (1933).

<sup>9</sup> Ernst Kris, "GERMAN PROPAGANDA INSTRUCTIONS OF 1933," *Social Research* 9, no. 1 (1942): 46-47.

## Annotated Chronological Bibliography

"CLEAN-UP DRIVE BEGUN BY NAZIS: EXECUTIVES OF MANY CITIES DISMISSED BY HITLERITES SOCIALIST MAYORS OF BERLIN SUBURBS GIVEN "LEAVES" NINE HUNDRED COMMUNISTS OF BAVARIA IN CUSTODY." 1933. *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Mar 14, 7. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/clean-up-drive-begun-nazis/docview/163123840/se-2>.

- The section on Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda takes up a minor section in a much larger section on Germany at the time. It is one of the earliest mentions of Goebbels's promotion to minister and mentions Hindenburg as well despite Goebbels being associated with Hitler.

Schultz, Sigrid. 1933. "HITLER ORDERS NAZIS HELD IN JAIL RELEASED: DECREES GERMAN PRESS IS "TOOL OF GOVERNMENT."." *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963)*, Mar 16, 7. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hitler-orders-nazis-held-jail-released/docview/181400977/se-2>

- This is another early mention of Goebbels and his promotion. This article focuses on things Goebbels touched on in his speech, namely what he plans to do as a minister. It is an early mention of the "keyboard" analogy that is used again later.

Nelson, Roger B. "Hitler's Propaganda Machine." *Current History (1916-1940)* 38, no. 3 (1933): 287–94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45337202>.

- This source was written June of 1933 when the author lived in Germany as the Nazis rose to power. It has firsthand account knowledge of the tactics Goebbels and other Nazis used. It directly quotes Goebbels in how he believed Nazi propaganda worked.

"TIME Magazine Cover: Joseph Goebbels - July 10, 1933." 1933. TIME.Com. July 10, 1933. <https://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19330710,00.html>.

- An entire TIME article dedicated to the shifts in Germany. Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda play a surprisingly small role in this article, but the article does recognize their importance. It sees how Nazis were able to get the support and morale of Germans up when they were at an all-time low. It also mentions the "keyboard" analogy once more.

Williams, J. Emlyn. "Journalism in Germany: 1933." *Journalism Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (1933): 283-288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769903301000404>

- Another journal that discusses the changes in German press at the time, more specifically newspapers. It directly cites Goebbels as the reason for these changes and his rationale for them.

KRIS, ERNST. "GERMAN PROPAGANDA INSTRUCTIONS OF 1933." *Social Research* 9, no. 1 (1942): 46–81. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40981833>.

- This was written quite a bit of time after 1933 but still has important information regarding Nazi propaganda. It goes over what a French newspaper in 1933 published over

instructions for overseas Nazi propaganda. It demonstrates how Goebbels was not just limiting the scope for his ministry to not just Germany and Europe but the Americas as well.

Heiber, Helmut. *Goebbels*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1972.

- This is an English translation of the German book by the same name, written by Verlag Otto H. in 1962. It is a biography of Goebbels life that focuses attention to Goebbels's life. It goes over detail of what happened in the beginning of March, from the establishment of the ministry to Goebbels's speech.

Reuth, Ralf Georg. *Goebbels*. 1st U.S. ed. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993.

- This is another English translation of a German book. The original book was published in 1952 and the translator was Krishna Winston. It is another biography on Goebbels that provides more insights on the aims and goals of the Ministry of Propaganda.

Campbell, Kenneth J. "Joseph Goebbels: Propagandist." *American Intelligence Journal* 30, no. 2 (2012): 125–34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26202024>.

- A much later biography on Goebbels and his approach to propaganda. It ties Goebbels more to Hitler than previous biographies, directly citing Goebbels position being a product of Hitler's admiration.