

The Propaganda Ministry and Centralized Regulation of Music in the Third Reich: The 'Biological Aesthetic' as policy

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Reflecting the moods and ideals of a society, music has frequently been subjected to governmental regulation. Plato, fearing that deviation from the established norm in music might upset the social order, recommended a regulatory board to preserve musical purity. In more recent times and with less contemplative speculation, songs and anthems with political connotations or musical settings of certain offending texts have been suppressed. The Soviet Union, for example, once banned the playing of the former imperial anthem. Such attacks on specific musical expression have usually been transitory, occurring during war or revolution. Not until the emergence of National Socialism in Germany was an attempt made to impose an aesthetic theory upon music in general. The imprecision of that theory left its implementation to political expediency. Music became a centre of intra-party rivalry. Policies regarding its censorship, the promotion of composers and even the livelihood of performers were primarily, although not exclusively, controlled by the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, and changed according to the dictates of political necessity. Neither the theory nor its attempted implementation have hitherto been examined by historians.¹

In the formative years of the National Socialist movement, some of its members espoused a biological theory of music which assumed that each race had a propensity for certain kinds of musical expression. Dr Hans F. K. Guenther, from whom the Nazis borrowed their basic assumptions, was the principal proponent of 'genetic aesthetics'. In 1920 Guenther was awarded a chair in anthropology at the University of Jena. In 1922 he published his *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, wherein he claimed to have discovered unique Nordic racial traits which had synthesized to form the musical genius of the Germanic Volk. Guenther contended that most of the great German composers bore those traits, which he recognized in the physiognomy of Haydn, Mozart, Weber, Liszt, Wagner, Bruckner and others.

Richard Eichenauer and Karl Blessinger both welcomed Guenther's conception of Nordic genius. The foremost musicologist associated with the emerging National Socialist Party, Eichenauer studied music and linguistics at the Universities of Leipzig and Munich. From 1919 to 1935 he taught music at the Realgymnasium in Bochum. During this period he wrote articles on music in

Sonne, the journal of the racist Nordic Ring. In 1932 he published his *Musik und Rasse*. Blessinger taught music theory, ear training, and music history at the prestigious Bavarian State Academy of Music in Munich throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1920 his *Die Musikalischen Probleme der Gegenwart und ihre Loesung* had attacked modern musical trends, though he had not yet associated Jews in music with artistic decadence. Both Eichenauer and Blessinger joined the National Socialist Party in 1932. Within two years a coterie of other prominent biological musicologists were active, including Karl Hasse, Paul Treutler, Fritz Metzler, Walter Trienes, Alfred Lorenz, and Herbert Gerigk,² the last to achieve pre-eminence as a theoretician in the Third Reich. Since Gerigk acknowledged in 1941 that Eichenauer and Blessinger were seminal theoreticians of biological musicology, one may consider their work as collectively representative of National Socialist music theory.³

Music was hardly the universal language of mankind for the Nazis. Rather it had always been an expression of racial or ethnic characteristics. Music history, therefore, was to be considered as an adjunct of the history of race, and musical composition an expression of the *volk* soul. Both Eichenauer and Blessinger contended that music had been at the centre of a struggle between racial influences throughout the history of Western Europe. The Jewish influence had obtruded in the early liturgical music of the western Church. The subsequent victory of polyphony over the Gregorian plainsong constituted in turn a Germanic victory over the Jewish cantorial influence. Palestrina's work on behalf of polyphony, therefore, established him as a posthumous Nordic *volk* hero.⁴ In Bach, Nordic polyphony represented the most perfect musical expression of the *Volkish* cosmology.⁵

Diatonic harmony, like polyphony, was isolated as another Nordic trait rooted in Indo-European antiquity.⁶ Eichenauer endowed it with an instinctive sanction, and condemned deviation from it as alien. It is hardly surprising, then, that such anti-Semitic musicologists as Eichenauer and Blessinger should have attributed the deviations from diatonic harmony in the nineteenth century to the earlier emancipation of the Jews in western Europe. Their characterization of Jewish music was as convoluted as it was fallacious. Both tortuous and simplistic, their assessment of it is nevertheless essential to their theories. They presented it as follows.

Jewish music was religious music. Emanating from a priestly class, it reflected the Jewish conception of god. Unlike the Greeks and ancient Germans who honoured rather than feared their gods, the Jews grovelled before their own, with whom they had a unique relationship as a people. Their music was life-denying, fluctuating between expressions of asceticism and orgiastic ecstasy. Its tonal system was mechanized, its scales chaotically moved by half-steps with no key. Melody, therefore lacked harmony, its purpose being to narcotize by repetition. With no relationship between the words of the text and the notes, the melodic line was ornamented to such an extent that the words were no longer comprehensible.

Eichenauer and Blessinger went on to maintain that in the nineteenth century Jews began to inculcate musical forms and tastes of decadent urban and cosmopolitan cultures, where racial mixing had already blurred the

genetic ideal of musical beauty. Through their control of the press, Jews made and broke careers of musicians. In Mendelssohn they produced a composer who wallowed in smooth and shallow music, in Meyerbeer a panderer. In the twentieth century the ultimate calamity was visited upon the nordic ideal of musical beauty. Jews were held responsible for destroying the conventional scales of harmonic polyphony,⁷ leaving a chaos of atonality, dodecophony and, through their control of public taste, propagandizing an unwitting listening public that cacophony was really the respectable avant-garde of musical composition. Simultaneously, Jews sold jazz, a primitive Negroid product, introducing its rhythm into serious music and disseminating its influence in popular music. Indeed, the separation of music into serious and popular categories bore the mark of Jewish salesmanship. The biological musicologists found it natural, even inevitable, that the pioneers of jazz in serious music were Jewish as were the avant-gardists of half-and quarter-tone harmony and the 12 tone scale.

But the condemnation of these ostensible heresies was not complemented by a close analysis of contemporary musical orthodoxy. If the biological musicologist refused to declare that legitimate music history had expired with the death of the nineteenth century, what remained tolerable to the folk soul in new music? What new music could be composed, heard and accepted? The problem was not unprecedented. Richard Wagner, after all, could not identify the specific Jewish character of Mendelssohn's music in 1869 without prior knowledge of Mendelssohn's Jewishness.⁸ Aside from specific heresies, no more precise association between the elements of composition and race could be established than the equation between Jewishness and adulteration. Therefore, Nazi musicology became a tautological exercise in genealogical research rather than an analysis of forms and composition. While some future sociologist or social historian may establish a connection between an ordered or regimented society and traditional diatonic harmony in music, it is not at all apparent that such an association, either frank or subliminal, moved either the theoreticians or the masters of music policy after 1933.

The biological aesthetic was first invoked in the National Socialist movement by Alfred Rosenberg, aspirant to the role of official philosopher of the Party. Neither musician nor musicologist, he appropriated the simplistic association of composition with race from Guenther's theories. Turning to racial politics in 1918, Rosenberg had joined Dietrich Eckart in Munich on the editorial board of the anti-Semitic *Auf gut Deutsch*. Through Eckart, Rosenberg met Hitler and in July, 1921 became editor-in-chief of the *Voelkische Beobachter*, the organ of the Nazi Party.⁹ Rosenberg's most famous book, *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, first appeared in 1922 under the title, *Philosophy of Germanic Art*. In it he undertook to reconcile classical aesthetics, which concentrated studies upon the object of the aesthetic experience, and romanticist theories, which scrutinized the emotions of the beholder. Rosenberg discovered the missing link: race and the racial ideal of beauty, which, he contended, existed in both subject and object. Thus, he rejected the notion of a universal aesthetic which would be applicable to all subjects and objects. Rather, artistic distinction was commensurate with hereditary characteristics. The singularity of Germanic art, for example, was

predicated upon the emotional apperception of the subject as beholder, who, having the same genetic constitution as the Germanic artist, would perceive the object with an appreciation which one of another race could not have acquired.¹⁰

Armed with this subjective critical 'method', Rosenberg established the **Kampfbund fuer Deutsche Kultur** (Fighting League of German Culture) in 1927. This organization for the protection of Nordic culture had no official connection with the National Socialist Party; nevertheless, such luminaries as Heinrich Himmler and Gregor Strasser signed the original protocol, and the address of the organization at that time was Munich, Schellingstrasse 39, which was also the address of the editorial board of the *Voelkische Beobachter*. Alleging non-partisanship, Rosenberg sought to attract the support of all 'good Germans', including those who might fight artistic modernism but would not serve the Nazi Party. The Kampfbund did, indeed, attract Socialists, Democrats and Centrists—virtually any who resented the prevailing artistic trends of Weimar were welcome. Ambitious 'men on the make'—what the Germans colorfully call *Konjunkturritter*—were especially prominent in the organization and used the debates about German *Kultur* for personal advancement. Indeed, its catholicity impeded Rosenberg's control of the Kampfbund.¹¹

Aspiring to direct National Socialist policy regarding the arts, Rosenberg in fact led an organization relatively weak in terms of party influence and ineffective in its implementation of aesthetic theory. A campaign to engage the enemies of German art in battle, particularly in the field of music, began in 1929. Its high point was an attack in the *Voelkische Beobachter* upon the editorial board of the *Muenchener Neueste Nachrichten* for unfavourable criticism of Hans Knappertsbusch, the blond conductor of the Bavarian State Opera and successor to the Jew, Bruno Walter. By 1931, the defense of Knappertsbusch against his Jewish critics constituted the Kampfbund's major action. Here, as in the future, the Kampfbund used what had become its most distinctive technique—loud public denunciation.¹²

One of Rosenberg's subordinates, Walter Stang, suggested a plan which would make the Kampfbund powerful in spite of its non-party status.¹³ He proposed that the organization form a *Besucherorganization* (theatre-goers' association). Accordingly, in 1932 Rosenberg established his subsidiary organization, the *Kampfbundbuehne* (Theatre of the Fighting League). Its purpose was to enroll subscribers and buy blocks of seats at concert, theatre and opera performances to influence the repertoire. In the winter season, 1932–33, the *Kampfbundbuehne* concentrated their efforts in Munich, Berlin and Breslau. These ended in financial catastrophe, because the program offerings became so limited that the concerts did not attract sufficient subscribers.¹⁴

The National Socialist Party, having seized power in January, 1933, still had no official office for the arts. Rosenberg led a non-official and bankrupt *Kampfbundbuehne*. within the so-called *Reichsleitung* of the Party there was an office for folk-culture (*Abteilung Volksbildung*), but it had been weakened by Strasser's expulsion from the Party in December 1932.¹⁵ Obviously, supervision of the arts in the new Reich would become a matter to be resolved by a new agency, perhaps a branch of the established civil bureaucracy. The power

struggle between individuals and agencies for such supervision ensued almost immediately following the 'seizure of power'. Rosenberg's expectation that he might win the struggle through his existing organization vanished during the course of 1933-34. One important reason was his failure to understand the extent to which civil authorities as opposed to Party functionaries would control such regulatory institutions in the Reich. Rosenberg's failure led the more intelligent and effective Kampfbund members to desert him for posts in the civil bureaucracy. For example, Hans Hinkel, who as Director of the Kampfbund in Berlin was virtually independent of Rosenberg, quickly moved into the Ministry of Education under Bernhard Rust and finally, in 1934, into the Reich Propaganda Ministry of Dr Joseph Goebbels.¹⁶ After Germany became a one-party state, Rosenberg struggled to obtain official status in the Party for his Kampfbund, while the wily Propaganda Minister planted a foot in both party and state. Goebbels succeeded to this unique position by his supervision of both the Party Propaganda Office and the new Reich Ministry of Propaganda. He distinguished himself as the first to effectively circumvent Hitler's practice of creating competing State and Party offices, a lesson in practical politics lost on Rosenberg. Indifferent to the aesthetic theory to which Rosenberg was ideologically committed, Goebbels nevertheless would have to preside over the purification of Germanic art.

While Rosenberg's Kampfbund was disrupting performances to purge German music of Jews in the summer and autumn of 1933, the more significant struggle for control of permanent regulatory machinery was being waged between the Propaganda Minister and the National Socialist labour leader, Robert Ley. Ley, too, was unconcerned with the aesthetic theories espoused by Rosenberg, and in 1933 was primarily interested in gaining control of artists as members of professional unions. The organization through which he hoped to achieve success was the Arbeitsfront, a National Socialist coalition of labour and professional unions, which after May 2, 1933, became the official state labour organization in the Reich. In April 1933 Gustav Havemann, a member of the Berlin Kampfbund who had studied under Joseph Joachim in Berlin and was himself at 51 a successful violinist, used a forged authorization from the Party to establish the Reichskartell deutscher Berufsmusiker (National Cartel of German Professional Musicians). In this action Havemann answered to Hinkel, a politician on his way out of the Kampfbund and an ally of Dr Goebbels. In September, 1933 the Reichskartell was incorporated as the Reich Music Chamber (Reichsmusikkammer) within the newly formed Reich Chamber of Culture (Reichskulturkammer), the latter presided over by Goebbels, being no more than an aggregation of the six individual chambers. Havemann was joined in this work by the equally ambitious Heinz Ihler, a down-and-out 40-year-old music student and sometime accompanist for silent films in Berlin who had joined the NSDAP in 1927. These two *Konjunkturritter* received important posts in the Music Chamber as a reward for their initiative and for their success in persuading Richard Strauss to act as titular President of the new Music Chamber.¹⁷

The law establishing the Reich Chamber of Culture seemed to settle the debate about regulation of the arts in the new state. According to the preamble:

It is not the intention of the National Socialist state to create culture from above. Culture emanates from the Volk, and the responsibility of the state is to fight against harmful influences on the arts and to promote that which is worthy of the Volk: all in the spirit of service to the national community. In this sense the creative talents of the Reich will remain free. However, it will be necessary to gather all fields together (in the Chamber of Culture) under the auspices of the Reich and to subordinate them to the unitary will.¹⁸

Membership in the six individual chambers was obligatory for all, including Jews, who wished to practice their profession in Germany. Members were subject to the authority of their respective chamber, and the chambers were subordinate to Dr Goebbels in his capacity as President of the Chamber of Culture. Goebbels arranged a merger of the Chamber of Culture and the branches of the Arbeitsfront which had, until the creation of the Chamber, claimed to represent the professional artistic unions. Just as Rosenberg had lost control of artistic policy in his failure to become official aesthetician, so Ley was now denied his ambition as professional unionizer.

In November 1933 Hitler allowed the formation of Kraft durch Freude (Strength Through Joy) as a recreational adjunct of the Arbeitsfront. This new organization became a richly endowed rival of Rosenberg's declining Kampfbundbuehne. The creation of both the Chamber of Culture and Kraft durch Freude was accomplished without the inclusion of Rosenberg in either, and for that matter both were established without consultation with him.¹⁹ Thus, by the end of the first year of the Nazi experiment, Rosenberg found himself the self-appointed philosopher of Nazi art without an institutional power-base from which to implement his ideas.

In January 1934, in a sudden upturn of fortune, Rosenberg was appointed the Supervisor for the Total Spiritual and Ideological Training of the NSDAP (Beauftragter des Fuehrers fuer die gesamte geistige und weltanschauliche Erziehung der NSDAP). The complex of duties and offices which he supervised was simply referred to as the Rosenberg Office. This post in the Party apparatus gave him technical authority over the policies of Ley's Kraft durch Freude in the work of dispensing German culture to the worker in his free time.²⁰ It also compelled Rosenberg to integrate his Kampfbundbuehne within his new Office. These terms would have been an appropriate price for Rosenberg to pay for the merger had he been able, thereby, to implement his ideas through Dr Ley's organization.²¹ But Ley, again the better politician, prevented him from doing so.

As leadership in the organizational hierarchy of party and state eluded him, Rosenberg, the guardian of artistic purity, resorted to the tactic which had served him best in the early days of the Kampfbund: denunciation and attack. He now had an office, a staff and several journals (including *Die Musik*, one of the more prestigious professional publications of the pre-Nazi period). Campaigns were planned in the Music Department of the Rosenberg Office and a related subdivision of the Office, the Archive for Cultural Politics (Das Kultur-politische Archiv); the latter was nothing more than a central collection

point where information against Rosenberg's enemies or enemies of German art was now amassed. Rosenberg, in his former capacity as administrator of the Kampfbund fuer Deutsche Kultur, had already initiated a purge of Jewish musicians which he continued under the aegis of his new office. Many, if not most of the prominent Jewish musicians and the few courageous opponents of the régime had already emigrated in 1933. The purge incidentally solved one of Goebbels' problems.

By 1934, then, overlapping Party and State agencies competed to regulate the arts. Lest Rosenberg's fervour undermine his authority, Goebbels the politician had to secure his undisputed ascendancy. His administrative organization of the Reich Chamber of Culture was designed to fulfill that goal.

Goebbels staffed the Reich Chamber of Culture with professional artists rather than old party fighters. Of course, when the two qualities were combined, as they rarely were, so much the better. The professionalism of the Reich Chamber of Culture was nowhere better exemplified than in the Music Chamber, with its President, Richard Strauss. At 70, Strauss was still possessed of a formidable talent and capacity for experimentation. If he had not gone so far in new directions as Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Toch or Antheil, neither was he identified with the conservatives either as composer or conductor. Nor was he a member of the Party. He was rightly considered non-ideological in political matters. From the viewpoint of Goebbels he seemed perfectly suited to head a professional union which could command the respect of musicians in Germany, many of whom, it was well known, had grave misgivings about the future in which they would, through the Chamber be 'subordinated to the unitary will'.

Goebbels' professionalism, however, provided Rosenberg with an opportunity to challenge his dedication to the racial aesthetic. The conflict emerged in the Furtwaengler-Hindemith affair. **The conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic had taken up cudgels for the famous composer, whose work was modernistic and experimental.** Both Furtwaengler and Hindemith were protected by Goebbels while criticized by that part of the press controlled by Rosenberg.²² Hitler intervened on the side of Rosenberg, and Goebbels was obliged to make a sudden shift. Complete victory, however, was denied Rosenberg, who had to admit that in the case of Hindemith (or any other such matter) he had no authority to speak officially. Furtwaengler was restored to the post from which he had resigned during the fray, and the matter was resolved by a forced reconciliation between the conductor and Rosenberg.²³ The Hindemith affair demonstrated that Rosenberg, if not official aesthete, was still a formidable figure, particularly when Hitler deigned to intervene.

The lesson was not lost upon Strauss, whose opera *Die schweigsame Frau* was nearing completion at the time of the feud. The opera, begun in 1933, had a text by Stefan Zweig, who had emigrated in 1933. The course of action for Strauss, in so delicate a position, was to keep in touch with the Chancellory through his superior, Goebbels. In May, 1934 Strauss wrote to Zweig that he had asked the Propaganda Minister if there were any political objection to the librettist, and that Goebbels had said no.²⁴ A year later, with the premiere scheduled in Dresden on June 24, 1935, the situation had changed. Rosenberg mounted a new offensive and, foreseeing another conflict, Goebbels modified

his support for the performance of the opera. When the programme notes were printed, Zweig's name was deleted, to the great consternation of Strauss, who threatened to withhold the work altogether. A cancellation would have been very awkward, since the Fuehrer planned to attend the Dresden premiere.

At the same time Strauss wrote to Zweig:

For me there are only two categories of men: those who have talent and those who do not. And I consider the concept of the 'Volk' only significant when it means an audience. Whether Chinese, Bavarians, New Zealanders, or Berliners, the Volk concerns me only if it has paid at the box office. . . .

Then the composer added a paragraph which was a response to Zweig's complaint that Strauss was too closely identified with the Nazi apparatus.

That I am play-acting the role of President of the Reich Music Chamber has no other significance than that I wish to prevent even greater misfortunes for German musicians. I would have taken this annoying job under any regime but neither Kaiser Wilhelm nor Herr Rathenau ever offered it to me. . . .²⁵

This letter was seized by the political police and forwarded to Hitler in Berlin. The results were immediate and disastrous, leaving a permanent impress on the character of music censorship and its administration in the Reich. On July 6, a representative of the Propaganda Ministry called on Strauss at his home in Bavaria and demanded his immediate resignation as President of the Reich Music Chamber.²⁶

The contest between Goebbels and Rosenberg had been proceeding since the seizure of power in 1933; in fact, its roots could be traced to the period 1928-29. But until the Strauss affair in the summer of 1935, the methods of attack and counterattack, while certainly not genteel, had at least been masked by a façade of co-operation in the 'work of national restoration'. Now, however, the struggle became so vehement that it could no longer be concealed from the public. With ideological purity his shield, and denunciation his sword, Rosenberg began another attack upon his rival. The Archive for Cultural Politics was activated, dossiers were assembled, and beginning in 1935 a muck-raking pamphlet was circulated within the Rosenberg organization. In particular, attacks were levelled at the political past of Goebbels' subordinates. It was in this pamphlet, called *Cultural-political Information*, that the fight over Strauss' *Die schweigsame Frau* was prepared. Herein, too, Hindemith and Furtwaengler came under attack in 1935. During the Strauss case in October 1935, the sheet was widely circulated among important party and state offices in the Reich without any pretence of co-operation with Goebbels.²⁷

With confusion reigning in the Propaganda Ministry during the Strauss affair, Rosenberg thought himself at last to be on the verge of victory and hence asked Hitler to create for him a position as Reich Minister of Philosophy and Culture (Reichsminister fuer Weltanschauung und Kultur). This appointment would have given him the coveted civil post and left Goebbels with severely restricted functions as 'Propaganda' Minister.²⁸ Had Rosenberg known Hitler

better, that is to say, had he been a better politician, he would not have asked the impossible. Hitler declined to resolve the competitive strife.

The Strauss affair which destroyed the careers of many around Goebbels, greatly enhanced the power of one man—Hans Hinkel—who above all others was associated thereafter with the regulation of the arts in the Propaganda Ministry. He had impeccable credentials. A party member since 1921, he was associated with both Rosenberg and Goebbels until early 1934. In Berlin he had created a branch of the Kampfbund which was the most influential of all district offices, eclipsing even that of Munich, the organization's headquarters. In his capacity as Kampfbund Director in Berlin he had managed much of the purge of Jewish musicians in 1933. To insure his future, he had also entered the Ministry of Education under Bernhard Rust as a special commissar for artistic matters, and to be absolutely safe he was associated with Goebbels in the publication of the Berlin party organ, *Attack* (Angriff). In mid-1935 he had wisely chosen to co-operate fully with the Propaganda Minister.²⁹ Because of his familiarity with the racial aesthetic, perhaps even because of his commitment to its tenets, he assumed control of the house-cleaning that the Hindemith–Furtwaengler–Strauss affairs necessitated. Hinkel was appointed Overseer of Culture in the Reich (Reichskulturwalter) and in that capacity was the liaison of the Propaganda Ministry with the various branches of the Reich Chamber of Culture. This post gave him supreme authority in cultural matters, for he was in fact the voice of Goebbels in this area.

With Goebbels' approval, Hinkel produced a list banning composition: 'Prohibited Musical Works', the first of its kind. It was issued September 11, 1935, four days prior to the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws. A copy was duly sent to Rosenberg. It contained 110 names, mostly of composers who wrote light music; nearly all of those listed had previously been identified as Jews, most of whom were living and had emigrated. Only a few who composed serious music were included: George Antheil, Alban Berg, Ernest Bloch, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Aaron Copland, Ernst Kreneck, Erik Satie and Jaromir Weinberger. The publication of this list was important, not because of its comprehensiveness (it seems to have been a random selection devised for appearance rather than effectiveness), but because of its source.³⁰

Hinkel determined to establish the primacy of the Propaganda Ministry in the regulation of the arts by reducing the Music Chamber to a mere professional union and removing most of its regulatory authority to a division of the Propaganda Ministry. He first eliminated the undesirables in the Reich Music Chamber who had made the organization such a liability. By the end of July he had effected the necessary changes. The minor luminary, Peter Raabe, a conductor whose identification with the National Socialist line in musicology was more a matter of politics than conviction, became Strauss' successor as President of the Music Chamber. The founders of the Chamber, Ihler and Havemann, were, like Strauss, to be removed. Hinkel was able to oust Havemann, but Ihler, who retained Goebbels' favor, could not be dislodged.³¹ In June 1935 Hinkel had reprimanded Ihler for allowing a Jew to continue as a member of the editorial board of an official publication of the Music Chamber, *Music in the Mind of the Times* (*Musik in Zeitbewusstsein*). Because of the aura of

illegitimacy which surrounded this journal (Ihlert personally profited from its enforced sale to provincial Music Chamber authorities), Hinkel caused it to be eliminated as an official publication of the Chamber.³² Moreover, officers of the Chamber were directed to undertake the elimination of all Jews. Regional offices were instructed to send in the records of "non-Aryan" members, namely, all professional musicians who were Jewish. In Berlin at the central office, the process of expelling these Jewish musicians from the Chamber commenced. Loss of membership automatically prevented them from practicing their profession.³³

An enlargement of the Music Chamber accompanied its 'aryanization', and the illusion that censorial power resided there. In all major cities where concert seasons were held, a new position was created: Municipal Music Councillor (Staedtische Musikbeauftragter), an appointee of the local division of the Music Chamber who had the approval of both party and civil authorities in the locality. The councillor when appointed was charged with the arrangement of the local concert season. According to an official pronouncement of the Music Chamber, dated October 7, 1935, all concerts in the Reich were to be registered in advance with the local music councillor.³⁴ This so-called 'obligatory registration' (Anmeldepflicht) was never enforced: consequently, the music councillor was usually a decorative functionary who represented the Music Chamber in his municipality.

The law of 1933 which had established the Reich Chamber of Culture and its subdivisions implied that each of the six chambers were entrusted with powers of censorship. Even before the repercussions of the Strauss affair in 1935, however, censorship had never been exercised by the Music Chamber. Hinkel's innovations finally rationalized the administrative exercise of censorship. Censorship rested with Goebbels; but to advise the Minister and to administer the 'policy' in music, a hitherto powerless subdivision of the Propaganda Ministry, 'Division M.', was activated. In March 1937 the Division was given a permanent head, Dr Heinz Drewes.³⁵

Drewes, a young conductor who had also been associated with the Kampf-bund, sought to complete Hinkel's reforms. Careful to maintain a correct anti-Semitism in the work of the Division, there is no evidence that he was motivated by the Rosenbergian aesthetic. He acted as chief advisor to Goebbels, whose understanding of and interest in serious music was scant. The Drewes office, therefore, became one of the most independent in the Ministry, and even the illusion of professional self-regulation vanished.³⁶

In September 1937 Goebbels directed Drewes to establish a unified music policy. Precisely how this was to be done was left to Drewes. 'Order Concerning Undesirable and Harmful Music' (Anordnung ueber unerwuenschte and schaedliche Musik), issued in December, was probably the work of Drewes. It did not define 'undesirable' and 'harmful', but it created the Reichsmusik-pruefstelle (Examining Agency for Music).³⁷ The Pruefstelle received a generous and separate budget while it was subsumed under Division M. In a departmental report dated March 1943, the Pruefstelle's work was defined:

. . . to test new musical publications from opera to popular dance music

including recordings; to supervise film music; to eliminate the music of enemy states and music which is un-German; to promote contemporary German composition; to supervise musical programming in the Reich, i.e. writing reports evaluating musical works for other offices.³⁸

What the agency actually did with its RM 30,000 annual budget is not clear, for throughout its seven-year life it published only four short lists of 'undesirable' music. In all, there were only 41 citations in this list: most of those enumerated were single pieces of a trivial sort. Included are complete works of only five composers: Rudolf Friml, Roderich Bass, Robert Stolz, Ignace Paderewski and Irving Berlin. Such popular titles as 'On Linger Longer Island', 'Take Your Pick and Swing', 'Frankie and Johnny' and the Yiddish song 'Bei mir bist du schoen', which enjoyed world-wide popularity in 1938, were also included.³⁹

Criteria for the work of Division M. and the associated Pruefstelle were never published, nor was one enlightened to hear the pronouncements of Goebbels and Hitler on what constituted healthy German music. In elucidating his 'Commandments for the German Musician' on the occasion of National Music Day in 1938, Goebbels left no clue concerning these guiding precepts:

- (1) The nature of music lies in melody not in construction and theory.
- (2) All music is not suited to everyone.
- (3) Music is rooted in the nature of the Volk.
- (4) Music is the most sensitive of all the arts and requires more empathy than reason.
- (5) Music is that art which most deeply affects the spirit of man.
- (6) If melody is the basis of all music, it follows that music must always return to melody: the root of its being.
- (7) No German heritage is more glorious than its music, and the Volk should be led to partake of it.
- (8) Musicians of our past are representatives of the majesty of our people and command our respect.⁴⁰

Even the reference to 'melody' was useless since there can be 12 tone, atonal, as well as diatonic melody.

In addition to such ostensible guidelines there was the omnipresent caprice of the Fuehrer whose quixotic tastes rather than ideology determined the direction of music regulation in a host of individual cases. Hitler's decisions, or in some cases his failure to make decisions, encouraged the institutionalization of the struggle between Goebbels and Rosenberg. Similarly, judgements made by the Fuehrer in music could cause a shift in position on certain composers or performers. For the Fuehrer music had its own ineffable rules.⁴¹

Hitler's Wagner and Bruckner mania was well known, but did not indicate any commitment to the tenets of the racial musicology. His enjoyment of Lehar's operettas was in no way impaired by the fact that Lehar's collaboration with Jewish librettists had brought the composer under fire from Rosenberg's Kampfbund. Hitler's appraisals of famous artists often caught the Propaganda Minister off guard and compelled a shift in the position of the Ministry. Careers

were made (Werner Egk) and broken (Paul Hindemith) for no better reason than the Fuehrer's whim. Hitler's unconcern with National Socialist music theory was explicit in a speech delivered at Reich Party Day in 1938.

It is entirely impossible to express a *Weltanschauung* in terms of musical composition. Existing compositions which were most widely accepted in their own time can create an impression of an age in history. However, it is impossible to represent certain scientific, political concepts or political events in music or even to hope to do so. Therefore, there is neither a Music History of the National Socialist Party nor a music *Weltanschauung*, just as philosophical concepts cannot be illustrated or explained in music. . . . To express our *Weltanschauung* in music is neither possible nor necessary. Therefore, it is nonsense for some one to suppose that a party interpretation must be pronounced over music which is played . . . or to think that such a pronouncement is possible at all. In such circumstances the accompanying text itself ought to make clear the composer's philosophical or ideological intentions.⁴²

One could surmise, then that all non-vocal music was free from Nazi surveillance. Historians who search for an official compendium of prohibited music look in vain. What happened to music politics after 1936 represented the *reducto ad absurdum* of the biological musicology. The all-important basis for censorship was not form, nor content (unless textual), but origin (Jewish or enemy), and even this could be negotiated. This practice was supplemented by the predilections of those higher placed, from Hitler to Drewes.

Regulatory details were decreed by the Propaganda Minister, following and because of the outbreak of World War II. One decree forbade the printing and performance of Jewish and enemy music. Another specified that the compositions of English, Polish, Russian and French music (except Chopin and Bizet's *Carmen*) were prohibited. Also forbidden was alien music 'in so far as it is composed by or originated from Jews and Negroes'. Another decree forbade the music which the Pruefstelle declared 'undesirable'. Prohibitions were published in the *Official Report of the Reich Music Chamber* and also in the directives sent to the press by the Propaganda Ministry called the *German Press Service* (*Deutscher Zeitschriftendienst*).⁴³

The war brought a host of categorical prohibitions: the first of November 1939 and the last of February 1942.⁴⁴ These exclusions were based entirely on political contingencies and subject to the vagaries of the fortunes of war. In an attempt, made in 1943, to portray France as an ally in the fight against the Anglo-American forces, the ban on French music was lifted, and in November 1943 newspapers were instructed to treat French music as though no ban had ever been imposed.⁴⁵ Just how *politique* the Ministry might be in matters of music policy may be seen in the 'Instructions to the Press' of September 1944, announcing that reporters were not to criticize 'swing' (anathematized by Rosenberg) since 'the radio will likely play more of it in the months to come by popular demand of our troops'.⁴⁶

Recent research has revealed the limits of Hitler's power particularly by the

Gauleiter. Similarly, the implementation of controls of the arts throughout the Reich were limited not only by Hitler's caprice, the fortunes of war and bureaucratic competition but also by local authorities. On the one hand, it was of utmost importance for musicians and local cultural authorities to know how the 'wind was blowing' in the Propaganda Ministry. On the other hand, there were local interests which had to be served. This was particularly so in cities like Munich and Dresden where opera houses and orchestras with proud and long traditions were in direct competition with similar Berlin institutions which were under the direct control of the Propaganda Minister in his position as Gauleiter of Berlin.

In competition for control, the local institutions often had a strong arm in their own Gauleiter. In Nazi law the Gauleiter was vaguely responsible for cultural matters in his Gau. While the rules called for co-operation between the Gau and the Reich authorities in such matters, there were many instances of direct confrontation and contests of will in the direction of music regulation. Goebbels often crossed swords with Gauleiter Martin Mutschmann of Saxony and with the powerful Adolf Wagner, Gauleiter of Munich-Upper-Bavaria. For example, Mutschmann officially decreed the suppression of jazz (swing) in his Gau in 1943 to the irritation of Goebbels who wished to maintain the illusion of unitary controls.⁴⁷ However, most of these conflicts were less public than the Mutschmann declaration. In Bavaria a running battle ensued between Goebbels and Gauleiter Wagner over the prominence and independence to be accorded the Bavarian State Opera: this was a fight which Goebbels lost, once again, because of Hitler's intervention on behalf of conductor Clemens Krauss and Wagner.⁴⁸

In the formulation of opera and concert season offerings, in the promotion of certain composers, and in the assignation of local music prizes the attitude of the Propaganda Ministry was only the principal consideration. Conflicts, when they arose, were nearly always of a political, seldom of an aesthetic nature. This, of course, was predictable given the previous behavior of the managers of the cultural affairs in the Reich and the utter vagueness of the 'guidelines'. Thus it was that the Bavarian State Opera was able to continue the performance of Strauss operas with libretti by the 'half-Jew' von Hofmannsthal, and the Munich Philharmonic was able to perform Stravinsky and Bartok without dire consequences.⁴⁹

Although continually denounced by the Rosenberg Office, even some German composers who remained in the Reich and who had been specifically attacked by name continued to work and to have their compositions performed. Boris Blacher, Paul Hoeffler and Hermann Reutter had either been students of or were influenced by the emigrés, Schoenberg and Hindemith. Karl Orff and Werner Egk were very generously supported by the Propaganda Minister who imagined them the most promising of the new generation and 'safer' in the bargain. All were in ill favour with Rosenberg who was only too glad to take time out from other concerns to supply information about their artistic or ideological intolerability.⁵⁰

The purge of German music during the Third Reich was carried through essentially in 1933 and 1934. That purge had driven abroad or into silence

Jews and those with Jewish associations or those with sufficient civil courage to protest. Thus it was that Arnold Schoenberg and the members of the 'school' which had developed around his pioneering style, Alban Berg and Anton Webern, were in exile or silenced by 1934. Nevertheless, many 'modernists' still received a hearing as late as 1944.

'Experts' of the Goebbels Ministry were not anxious to delineate decadent qualities lest they obliterate entirely what remained of musical creativity in the Reich. Rosenberg, however, continued to interfere in these matters. On several occasions Herbert Gerigk, the head of Rosenberg's music department since 1935, decried a composer, though more privately than in the early days of the institutional struggle. Nevertheless, Rosenberg's influence was negligible when, by 1938, the semi-official party aesthete tilted with new windmills, now in foreign policy. By this time Goebbels, through Hinkel and Drewes, had ordered his affairs in such a way as to make the Ministry reasonably safe from attack without adapting Rosenberg's rigid, ideological view.

Nothing better captures the character of National Socialist music policy than an argument which occupied Gerigk and Drewes in the last year of the war. German violinists had only two cadenzas for the Beethoven Violin Concerto and these, awkwardly, were written by Jews: Fritz Kreisler and Joseph Joachim. In a letter to Gerigk, dated June 16, 1944, Drewes laid the matter to rest:

One must take the position that this matter [the offending Jewish cadenzas] is not particularly urgent since here creativity is less involved than the simple arrangement of Beethoven's own thematic material.⁵¹

If the administrators of *Musikpolitik* (that German word which conveniently can mean both music policy and politics) in the Third Reich lacked commitment to the tenets of the biological musicologists, the same cannot be assumed of the theoreticians themselves. It over-taxes the imagination to suppose that Eichenauer or even Rosenberg himself, busied themselves contriving pseudo-scientific theories of creative causation against the day when the machinery of the state would marshal their arguments as policy. From the viewpoint of the ideologically committed, however, it was calamitous that Goebbels seized the machinery.

Hannah Arendt says of propaganda and totalitarianism that 'a mixture of gullibility and cynicism is prevalent in all ranks of totalitarian movements, and the higher the rank the more cynicism weighs down gullibility'.⁵² Under sentence of death at Nuremberg, Rosenberg reflected upon the failure of his Kampfbund to implement his ideas: 'Somehow a way around organizational lust for power, culture-destroying systematization and gigantomania would have to have been found.'⁵³ To the end, the Supervisor for the Total Spiritual and Ideological Training of the NSDAP remained a slow learner, and one of the least cynical of those with rank.

In National Socialist Germany, the subordination of immutable principles to the political requirements of propaganda extended to the arts. In the hands of Goebbels and his co-workers, *Musikpolitik* was, therefore, no policy at all, but another aspect of social engineering through propaganda in which mendacity

remained an all-important feature. It may be that the biological musicology was victim in the end, not of Rosenberg's ineptitude, but of a basic feature of Nazi totalitarianism.

Notes

¹ Most recent scholarship concerning National Socialist policies in the arts, has focused upon literature. That is understandable since literature is that art form to which censorship and governmental regulation is most readily applied. Unfortunately the regulation of literature is atypical of *Kunstpolitik* in general. Hildegard Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des National-sozialismus*, Reinbek, 1963, focuses upon the early struggle for institutional controls. This is also true of her 'Art in the Political Power Struggle of 1933 and 1934' in Hajo Holborn (Ed.), *Republic to Reich*, New York, 1972. Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, *Art under a Dictatorship*, London, 1954, is largely concerned with the fate of the graphic and plastic arts after 1933. The five-volume documentary collection edited by Joseph Wulf, *Kunst und Kultur im Dritten Reich*, Guetersloh, 1963-64, is uneven in its presentation of the subject. The volume entitled *Funk und Presse* is the most felicitously conceived. The volume *Musik im Dritten Reich* contains much important material, but introductory comments are too brief to furnish a basic understanding of the relevance of the documents which follow. The documents reproduced emphasize the anti-Semitic aspect of National Socialist *Musikpolitik*, but do not reveal more of the nature of the machinery of controls beyond the reproduction of a few official schematic outlines. Because of the destruction of much of the evidence (The files of the Reichsmusikkammer, for example, were totally destroyed in an air raid on November 22, 1943.), treatment of the subject in biographies of Goebbels and studies of the Propaganda Ministry tend to be episodic. One of the most important works to undertake a detailed analysis of the institutional rivalry between Rosenberg and Goebbels is that by Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner: Zum Machtkampf im national-sozialistischen Herrschaftssystem*, Stuttgart, 1970. Here, however, the author's subject is Rosenberg and not art policy as such.

² For an extensive bibliography of works on race and music see Adolf Seifert, *Völklied und Rasse: Ein Beitrag zur Rassenkunde*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1943, pp. 86-93. For a brief distillation of the essential ideas of biological musicology see Walter Trienes, *Musik in Gefahr*, Regensburg, 1940.

³ Herbert Gerigk (Ed.), *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik, Mit einem titelverzeichnis juedischer Werke*, Berlin, 1941, p. 7.

⁴ Richard Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse*, Munich, 1932, pp. 142-45. Karl Blessinger, 'Rassenforschung und rassische Erkenntnis auf dem Gebiete der Musik' in *Ziel und Weg*, vol. 24, 1938, 673.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 32, 54, 98.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 301.

⁸ Richard Wagner, *Das Judenthum in der Musik*, Leipzig, 1869, pp. 27-30.

⁹ Bollmus, p. 19.

¹⁰ Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung des seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkamps unserer Zeit*, Munich, 1935. See also Robert Pois (Ed.), *Race and Race History and Other Essays by Alfred Rosenberg*, New York, 1970, pp. 126-74.

¹¹ Berlin Document Center (hereafter cited as BDC) (RKK-Heinz Ihler), Friedrich Burgstaller to Goebbels, March 28, 1933.

¹² The three major articles carried in the *Voelkische Beobachter* (hereafter cited as *VB*) concerning the 'Knappertsbusch case' are dated February 7, 9 and 27, 1929.

¹³ Walter Stang was born in 1895. He was a member of Freikorps 'Oberland' and participated in the march to the Feldherrnhalle in 1923. He acquired his doctoral degree at Erlangen in 1926, writing a dissertation on Walter Flex. He died in 1945 in his flight from advancing allied troops.

¹⁴ Bollmus, p. 38.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 264.

¹⁷ BDC (RKK-Ihler), Ernst Kraemer to Richard Strauss, June 6, 1934.

¹⁸ Gerd Ruchle (Ed.), *Das Dritte Reich*, Berlin, 1934, pp. 330-32.

- 19 Bollmus, p. 52.
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 54-59.
- 21 Hans-Guenther Seraphim (Ed.), *Das politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs 1934/35 und 1939/40*, Munich, 1946, p. 96.
- 22 Wulf, *Musik im Dritten Reich*, pp. 337-41.
- 23 Bollmus, p. 76.
- 24 Erich Mueller von Asow, *Richard Strauss: Thematisches Verzeichnis*, Vienna, 1962, Vol. II, p. 391.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 395.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 396.
- 27 German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, The National Archives, Records of the Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, Series T-70 (hereafter cited as T-70) R 108, 3631748-3631757.
- 28 Bollmus, p. 278.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 264.
- 30 T-70, R 108, 3631757.
- 31 Bundesarchiv (Koblenz), R 56 I/8, Reichskulturkammer files Hinkel to Funk, July 22, 1935.
- 32 BDC (RKK-Friedrich Mahling), Memorandum, June 21, 1935.
- 33 *Amtliche Mitteilungen der Reichsmusikkammer* (hereafter cited as *AMdR*), August 14, 1935. This elimination of Jews as performers coincides with the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935.
- 34 *Dienstanweisung fuer staedtische Musikbeauftragte*, September 1937 (this was an occasional publication of the Reichsmusikkammer for official use only).
- 35 Willi A. Boelcke, (Ed.), *Kriegspropaganda 1939-1941* (Stuttgart, 1966), 175 and 577. Heinz Drewes was born in Gelsenkirchen in 1903. He attended university in Berlin, Leipzig and Cologne. From 1926 to 1930 he was the conductor of the German National Theatre in Weimar. From 1930 to 1937 he was General Music Director in the city of Altenburg. During this period he belonged to the circle around Hans Severus Ziegler who counted among the biological aestheticians. It was Ziegler who organized the exhibition of 'decadent' music in 1936 under the auspices of the Propaganda Ministry. It may be that it was this association with Ziegler that brought Drewes to the Ministry.
- 36 BDC (RKK-Heinz Drewes), Kurt Rowinski Memorandum, September 1, 1949.
- 37 *AMdR*, December 18, 1937.
- 38 T-70, R 1, 3503734-3503746.
- 39 *AMdR*, September 1, 1938; April 15, 1940; May 15, 1941; July 15, 1942.
- 40 *Ibid.*, June 1, 1938.
- 41 On the subject of Hitler's tastes in music see, Albert Speer, *Erinnerungen*, p. 145 and Bollmus, p. 102.
- 42 *AMdR*, September 15, 1938.
- 43 *Ibid.*, August 15, 1941.
- 44 *Ibid.*, October 1, 1939; February 15, 1940; July 15, 1941; February 15, 1942; June 15, 1943.
- 45 *Ibid.*, November 15, 1943.
- 46 *Zeitschriftendienst*, September 1944, A707.
- 47 Staedisches Archiv, Munich, KA 395/6 Karl Ehrenberg Memoranda July 5, 1943 and August 13, 1943.
- 48 Bayerisches Staatsministerium fur Kultus und Unterricht, Akten des Staatstheaters: Allgemeines, Goebbels-Mezger, September 9, 1941.
- 49 For the details of this struggle between Berlin and Munich see author's dissertation, 'Music in the Third Reich' (University of Kansas, 1970).
- 50 BDC (Werner Egk), Denkschrift, July 4, 1942; Staedisches Archiv, Munich, 'Musikpreis', KA 43.
- 51 Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris, CXLII-360.
- 52 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1958, pp. 382.
- 53 Alfred Rosenberg, *Letzte Aufzeichnungen: Ideale und Idole der Nationalsozialistischen Revolution*, Göttingen, 1955, pp. 179-80.