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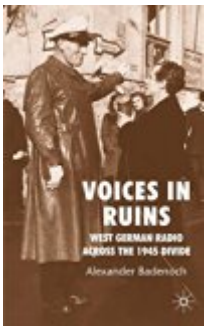

Alexander Badenoch. *Voices in Ruins: West German Radio across the 1945 Divide.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 289 pp. $69.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-230-00903-5.

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Commissioned by Susan R. Boettcher

Alexander Badenoch's new book provides a new analysis, informed by media and cultural studies, of a key period in (West) German broadcasting from 1945 to 1949, when broadcasting was under the supervision of the Allied occupying forces, but increasingly run on a daily basis by German staff. This period is significant for several reasons. First, by this time radio had embedded itself in the fabric of everyday life so that it was no longer exceptional. As a medium, its infrastructure was relatively intact so that, practically, broadcasting could continue "across the 1945 divide" (p. 78). It was also, if not dominant, at least very important. By July 1948, 70 percent of Germans had access to a radio set and coverage was greater than that of newspapers, which were regional and had been plagued by paper shortages. And yet, as a tainted medium, radio needed of denazification, as it had been been the object of *Gleichschaltung* during the National Socialist period and used for propaganda purposes. "Without the radio, we would never have conquered Germany," Adolf Hitler wrote in the 1938 *Manual of German Radio*.[1]

Although he provides a useful sketch of it in his first chapter, Badenoch is not primarily interested in documenting the institutional history of broadcasting in the three western zones (his analysis attends to the variations between the zones, but deliberately leaves out the complicating, special case of Berlin). That history is already well documented. Rather, he is concerned with the place and theoretical implications of the radio in daily life, and in its special ability to interweave the public and private spheres and thus allow "normality" to be imagined.[2] He thereby situates his innovative study alongside more theoretical analyses of the medium during other eras (including Kate Lacey's work on German radio and gender from its inception until 1945) as well as research such as Erica Carter's, which examines how the everyday (especially domesticity and consumption) has been employed in the creation of both individual and national narratives.[3] Perhaps most significantly, he places his work in dia-

logue with the scholarship of Alon Confino and Johannes von Moltke on the complex notion of *Heimat*, a cultural moment at which various discourses about time, regional space, and gender coalesce, making the nation "everyday mental property" (p. 27).[4] As he demonstrates, *Heimat* was a device with which radio--often referred to as the "Voice of the *Heimat*"--had a special affinity, since both invested in and generated visions of normality. By pulling into focus the hitherto underanalyzed dimensions in which *Heimat* operated in the immediate postwar radio context (including in programs not immediately identifiable for any particular *Heimat* focus), Badenoch contributes greatly to our knowledge of this device in the period immediately prior to its spectacular efflorescence in German film.

Chapter 2 demonstrates the way in which postwar radio--with its rapid regularization of program schedules--could be employed by individual listeners to structure their day and thereby gain a sense of "ordinary" time and normality during a destabilized period. Radio's special quality meant that individuals were also able to place their own routines within imagined collective (albeit depoliticized) routines, given that they imagined others to be listening in their respective homes too. By attending to the tenor of morning and breakfast programming, for example, he shows how "a predictable and personable vision of a normal nation going about its daily routine" was conveyed (p. 59). In this chapter, as elsewhere, Badenoch identifies a sense of continuity "across the divide" which radio was able to provide: in many instances, radio formats were carried over from the prewar and even wartime periods. His analysis of the place of "light" music, which had been prominent during the Nazi years but was generally deemed unproblematic after the war, is a pertinent case in point. It explains how this music, with its links to the radio past--unlike its rival: far less popular, imported jazz--"appeared as a way forward that also provided a way back through national time and domestic space" (p. 75).

The third chapter pulls into focus the German broadcasters, who typically had to legitimate themselves both to Allied authorities (whose policy changed with developments in the Cold War) and to the listening public, which often suppressed grievances towards the occupiers. In primarily analyzing modes of presentation rather than content, this chapter again demonstrates dimensions of continuity (and discontinuity) with pre-1945 broadcasting. Badenoch reveals some discontinuity--show hosts such as Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk's (NWDR) political reporter Peter von Zahn were favored for a softly spoken and open "new person" manner, far removed from the authoritarian, "barked" tone associated by some with Nazi-era broadcasting. As Badenoch then details more fully in his next chapter, the number of female hosts also increased (even outside of traditional "women's programs"). At the same time, however, many who had been employed under the National Socialists, particularly in the less openly political program areas, continued in or resumed broadcasting careers. The radio even served as a venue for unofficial denazifications (such as NWDR reporter Axel Eggebrecht's interview with actor Mathias Wieman). In the process, these and other radio personalities became sites at which "narratives of 'normal' German identities were produced and contested" (p. 80). Rehabilitation of older personalities was, in part, possible through their very familiarity; such figures were represented as having been true to themselves throughout the recent period, and therefore as having personal legitimacy. They thereby furnished a model for individual listeners to order their own pasts. The redemption of Nazi-era stars such as Wieman also provided a useful narrative of the nation's redemption, even if it contradicted the coexisting "new person" discourse.

Badenoch's fourth chapter examines the roles of women, including in so-called women's programs, which ever since the Weimar era had sought to "control and direct women's consumption activities" (p. 145). He also considers women as listeners at a time when more women listened to the radio than men, and they listened longer. The role of women was subject to new anxieties at the time, related to the "surplus" of women and high levels of prostitution; radio was coded as feminine and had long been associated with the "feminine space of the home" (p. 125). As Badenoch explains, radio was therefore key in helping to shape women's consciousness in the immediate postwar era. Even before the 1950s, when, as Erica Carter has shown, the rational, middle-class housewife-consumer took on an important role in conceptions of German citizenship, women's programs addressed postwar German women as "rational consumers of time" (p. 11). This image was imbued with "eternal" feminine roles as wife or mother, and thus mediated between the modern economy and the "eternal" past. As early as the late 1940s, then, it was supplying an important new model of Germanness.

Chapter 5, the longest in the book, connects elements of this study of gender with a focus on radio's function in the construction and bounding of national space in the imagination of listeners. Badenoch takes time to recap the ways in which regional identity was viewed by the different occupiers. He then details closely the complex ways in which *Heimat* operated on the radio, even when it did not appear to; that is, when broadcasters were not specifically addressing regional topics in "traditional" *Heimat* programs, but rather simply addressing audiences of women and children, for example. Through this device, listeners were often connected with the local region (and given a sense of its special, essential qualities); however, they were also provided with "a rallying point for protest against programs, music, or voices that were perceived of as 'foreign'" (p. 175). While the focus was ostensibly local and often deliberately intimate, underlying concerns were just as frequently primarily national, just as a *Heimat* program about a local town inevitably boiled down to "its generic quality as the epitome of a *German* town" (p. 178). As Badenoch shows, the Cold War setting was also critical in the development of the radio *Heimat*. When it became clear that the expellees would not be able to return home, their interests began to be accommodated by western *Heimat* radio programs that now added a concern with integrating the culture of these "lost" eastern regions as well.

Badenoch's comprehensive study of several important facets in this key period in German broadcasting calls upon a wide range of sources, from radio transcripts to the print media, and is a welcome contribution to the field. It is also accessibly written. It will be of value not only to scholars of German studies and historians of postwar Germany--especially to those with an interest in daily life in the immediate postwar period and in the complex operation of tropes of *Heimat* beyond the typical foci of moving image and print--but also to media studies and cultural studies scholars generally, and to all those who have an interest in what might be at stake when individuals listen to the radio.

Notes

[1]. Quoted in Jacques Attali, ***Noise: The Political Economy of Music***, trans. Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), cover text.

[2]. He follows Paddy Scannell's insight here in Scannell's ***Radio, Television & Modern Life*** (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), esp. chapter 6.

[3]. Kate Lacey, ***Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio and the Public Sphere, 1923-1945*** (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); and Erica Carter, ***How German is She? Postwar German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman*** (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

[4]. Alon Confino, ***The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory: 1871-1918*** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Johannes von Moltke, ***No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema*** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

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