

Oona Leganovic

FUNKERSPUK

1. What happened in the USA

2. What happened in the Weimar

Republic

3. Outlook (and some miscellaneous
stuff)

Five questions to bear in mind

- What is regulated?
- Why is it regulated?
- How is it regulated?
- Who regulates?
- Who cares?

What Happened in the USA

- Amateurs & maritime uses
- The Beginning of Broadcasting
- The Four Radio Conferences
(1922-1925) of Secretary of
Commerce, Herbert Hoover

Amateurs & Radio in WW1

By 1916 there are 10.000 licensed
radio amateurs

The Beginning of Broadcasting

- KDKA in Pittsburgh covers the 1920 presidential elections
- By the end of 1920 there are 30 stations broadcasting
- 1924 there are already 500

„Throughout speeches given by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, who was in charge of radio at the time, as well as congressional hearings on free speech and radio, First Amendment concerns recurred like a Wagnerian leitmotif; government and industry censorship of programs, listeners' rights to receive information via the airwaves, and speakers' rights of access to the medium, including use by political candidates and speakers wishing to present viewpoints counter to those of mainstream society.“

Louise M. Benjamin

The First Radio Conference, 1922

30 Individuals: persons in
charge of broadcasting,
politicians & amateurs

The First Radio Conference, 1922

Herbert Hoover:

1. public interest is paramount
2. who is "to broadcast and to what purpose"
3. direct advertising is to be curbed

this meant: "preventing signal interference, selecting quality broadcast programming, and thwarting censorship and ownership monopolies"

listeners: insisted on receiving
for free

speakers: wanted access

broadcasters: wanted a tax,
didn't want 'un-American views' &
'distasteful material'

The Second Radio Conference, 1923

- more interference problems
- Special interests
- Different classes of
broadcasting equipment

The Second Radio Conference, 1923

A judgement about the value
of different kinds of
broadcasting

An Early Patent War

Cross Licensing & absurd Patents

AT & T vs. WHN

The issue of censorship

Publicity nightmare - not
enforcable in the long run

The Third Radio Conference, 1924

100 Delegates

- establishing high power stations
- controlling advertising
- establishing a priority of broadcast material

The Third Radio Conference, 1924

Industry says:

- Have to pay for talent
- sort out programming
our (them) selves
- development of long distance
networks

but:

6000 letters were send to Hoover on
behalf of small stations

Third Radio Conference, Outcome

GOVERNMENT SHALL NOT REGULATE THE
MATERIAL

Consequences:
fees instead of direct censorship

in general:
entertainment as public interest

**radio overcrowding becomes a
problem (again)**

The Fourth Radio Conference, 1925

500 Delegates

promises of 'program diversity
brought to listeners by a
reliable, corporately controlled
radio industry' (did not hold,
but anyway)

The Technocratic Mindset

Slotten: „New, complex electronic inventions like radio and television seemed mainly to involve problems of science and technology rather than fundamental issues of private property, democratic rights, or economic control.“

Recurring Political Themes in the Radio Discussions in the USA

"responsible free speech":

"discussion" vs. "public welfare"

"public interest": "pro-industry"
vs. "diversity"

free speech & liberty:

Repressionists vs. Libertarians

What happened in Germany

- The very early things & WW1
- The Weimar Republik
- (The Third Reich)

The Very Early Things

Hans Bredow (1879-?) :

- Competition with Marconi (as 'Telefunken')
- The first music broadcast
- Head of the radio broadcasting commission that was established after the failed revolution

WW1

- The Army sends a daily report from 'Hauptfunkstelle Königs

Wusterhausen'

- 190 000 men are trained as radio operators

(After) WW1

**The (failed) Revolution of 1918
makes heavy use of radio in
general, and seizes control of
the 'Wolff'sche Telegraphen-
Bureau' in Berlin.**

A Prerequisite

It is only allowed to sell
strictly passive apparatuses that
only receive a small middle-
length wave band

Friedrich Kittler:

„Mass communication, in other words, is only allowed, when there is everything to consume or listen to, but nothing left to listen in to.“

Friedrich Kittler:

„Reception, . . . , is nothing but
an euphemism for systematically
hindered interception.“

*Rockmusik - Ein Mißbrauch von Heeresgerät,
in: F.Kittler, SHortcuts*

The Weimar Republik

- Establishment of public broadcasting in 1923 (state-owned)
- 100 000 'Left-over' military radio operators from WW1 demand a say (but don't get it)

**„There are serious objections
against the general legalisation
of the use of receiving apparatus
for reception of arbitrary
messages, . . .**

„... like it has happened in particular countries in which the state doesn't concern himself with the conveyance of wireless messages in national communication, ...“

„... because it would make it technically possible for everybody to listen in to all the messages in the air.“

Position of the RPM in 1919

Public Broadcasting

„Complying with the Weimar
Constitution, a morally
justifiable cheeriness had to be
the goal.“

Leisure is work

Entertainment has to be useful.

Some numbers (late 1920ies):

10% of broadcasting time

dedicated to news & information,

30% to entertainment and 60% to

education (reverse to their

popularity)

Politics have to stay
outside

Bredow: Only the government has
the right to use radio
broadcasting in a political way,
not the radio stations.

Who cares?

Only those who have to. Most decisions are made behind closed doors, there is no such thing as a public debate.

'Black Listeners'

The Self-Assembly of radio receivers is widespread but unlicensed reception illegal.

1924: The First German 'Funkausstellung'

About 300 000 new licensed
listeners.

Three Kinds of Broadcasting Organisation (H. Pohle)

1. Broadcasting as a private enterprise

2. Broadcasting as a public institution

3. Broadcasting as a state owned monopoly

Three Kinds of Broadcasting Organisation (H. Pohle)

In other words: The American, the
British and the German system.

Louise Benjamin, Freedom of the Air and
the Public Interest

Konrad Dussel, Hörfunk in Deutschland,
Politik, Programm, Publikum

Heinz Pohle, Der Rundfunk als Instrument
der Politik

Hans Jürgen Koch / Hermann Glaser, Ganz
Ohr

Hugh R. Slotten, Radio and Television
Regulation

Friedrich Kittler, Short Cuts