

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

How Allies used black propaganda radio in WWII



\* Radio 1212

Fritz Messere – SUNY Oswego  
BEA 2023

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## White, Grey and Black Propaganda

- White – persuade by telling your story truthfully
- Grey – persuade using communication from an unattributed or hidden source (e.g. – messenger may be known but the true source of the message is not). The objective is to advance ‘your’ viewpoint.
- Black – goes beyond hiding the identity of the source to falsely attributing it to a different entity. Black is considered subversive and provocative – usually prepared by ‘secret’ agencies or intelligence sources.

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## British Radio Propaganda Prior to SHAEF

- British efforts were centered around the Political Warfare Executive (PWE)
- Early (1939) efforts included dropping leaflets but were seen by many as not particularly effective.
- BBC was thought to be mostly 'white' by friends to be a mouthpiece of the government. On occasion would send coded message via announcements or within a story
- PWE was originally set up in separate and secure entities that operated individually

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

Denis Sefton Delmer – became the lead propagandist for Britain.

- Originally a journalist for Daily Express, then a worked for BBC German Radio Service.
- At PWE he created Gustav Siegfried Eins or GS1, the first of the black radio stations
- Purpose – to spread disturbing and disruptive news to induce Germans to distrust their government and to disobey it.
- And, to weaken the German machine from within
- Britain lacked high-powered AM transmitters



# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

Aspidistra - Summer 1940 Britain buys the world's most powerful Medium Wave (AM) transmitter from RCA.

- At 500,000 watts it was capable of reaching all of Europe with a strong daytime signal
- With directional antennas it could provide broadcasts to specific locations
- Station was built into a bomb proof bunker
- Named from lyrics of a popular song (Biggest Aspidistra in the world)





# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

- SHAEF – acronym for Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces
  - General Dwight (IKE) Eisenhower designated Supreme Commander after commanding operations in Mediterranean
  - Had authority over all the branches (air, sea, and land) of the armed forces of all countries in the Allied United Nations (e.g America, Britain, Canada, Free French, Australia, Brazil, etc.)
  - Planned and executed Operation Overlord (D-Day invasion of Europe and Allied victory in Western Europe)
  - Had to meld previous planning into this new operation
  - Already had ideas for using radio propaganda

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Eisenhower and Aspidistra, the beginning

- May, 1941 Britain starts using Aspidistra to reach Germans. Mostly BBC news service broadcasts, Delmer got some usage for black stations
- 1943 Eisenhower asks to use the station to broadcast on both German and Italian frequencies false info that Italy had capitulated to the Allies (black propaganda)
- Eisenhower hoped Italian military officers would withdraw from combat giving Allies an easier victory in Italy
- Churchill opposed this thinking it would harm the reputation of the United Nations (Allies) for telling the truth

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Eisenhower and Aspidistra and SHAEF

- 1943 – 1945 Aspidistra was used for Soldatensender Calais (e.g Soldier's Station from Calais)
  - Station claimed to German armed forces station directing news and entertainment to front-line troupes
  - Provided news unavailable over real German radio stations
  - Regularly spread rumors and gossip to portray Nazi leaders in bad light
  - Many Germans listened, knowing it was an Allied operation because thought it was safer than tuning into BBC, VOA.
  - Previously Roosevelt hired Colonel William "Bill" Donovan and sends him to Europe and Britain to survey the status of the war. Donovan comes back to the U.S and reports on British operations



# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Eisenhower changes propaganda tactics

- Viewed psych warfare as part of the tactics used in military operations, not as a strategic weapon
- Radio, therefore, was no different than any other weapon in the military arsenal
- Created a political subcommittee to provide advice and plans for propaganda and psychological warfare
- Merged operations of OSS (Office of Strategic Services-US), OWI (Office of War information – Allied) and PWE (Political Warfare Executive – British)
- Placed military over civilian control of propaganda

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Example of Guidelines for Military Control

29 August 1944

Memorandum to: Mr. F. C. Oechsner

From: Mr. Rae Smith

1. MO Branch recommends that a black radio station should be conducted by the most high-powered transmitting equipment available in France, for the purpose of stimulating and directing the internal developments of Germany which will most effectively shorten the war and prepare the German people for the occupation and the future of their country. Such an operation could not be conducted from England without taking time for other operations which it is desirable to continue. Specifically, the function of such a radio operation would be to encourage political movements and conflicts subversive to the discipline and cohesion of the German civilian population and armed forces.

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Proposal for Radio Operations

### PROPOSAL FOR MO-OSS RADIO BROADCASTING OPERATION

1. PURPOSE--Through radio broadcasts ostensibly emanating from within the Reich and sponsored by dissident groups to persuade the German people that:

- a. They have lost the war.
- b. They must repudiate the Nazi party.
- c. They must do everything in their power to stop hostilities

2. FACILITIES--The Minister of Information of the Provisional French government has granted the use of a 24 KW transmitter in Paris from 2200 to 0100 hours daily for the use of MO-OSS. In addition, studio and recording facilities have been made available by the French Ministry and PWD has offered like cooperation. The French have further offered the services of radio technicians.



# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Proposal for Radio Operations

4. PROGRAMMING--All programs will be in the German language and will be designed to carry out the idea that they originate within Germany and are prepared and delivered solely by Germans. In outline, they will comprise:

a. Entertainment: Music, comedy, and sketches of an escapist, nostalgic sort. A variety of recordings of old German songs are available and through HQ-Washington, a steady flow of new recordings is assured.

b. News: Accurate spot news based on such military intelligence as may be secured through liaison officers plus news obtained from monitoring DNB and emphasizing the contrasts and omissions as between home and foreign news transmissions.

c. Propaganda: Speeches, discussions, and spot announcements carrying out the themes detailed in para. 1.



# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

SECRET

- 2 -

ANNIE

27 January 1945

Sheet B

NEWS ROUNDUP

AIRCR: NEWS ROUNDUP:

Heavy fighting continues in the battle for Strasbourg. The one German bridgehead over the Moder River in northern Alsace still stands despite fierce American attempts to dislodge it. On the Roer front, Wehrmacht forces are continuing to build up their defenses on the East bank of the Roer River. Practically all of the territory on the West bank of the Roer has been successfully evacuated. In the Eifel, American forces have been checked on the Our River line. German transport was again subjected to air attack yesterday. And terror bombers came over Prun, Reydt and Kaiserslautern. Refugees pouring into the Rhineland from the East report the scenes of bitter strife and confusion they witnessed there. Soviet forces have driven through to the Gulf of Danzig and cut off East Prussia. And they are only 15 kilometers from Koenigsberg. In Silesia, Hindenburg had to be abandoned to the Soviet invaders.





# Telling Stories about People defying the SS

## INTRODUCTION:

In a disused mine between the Saar villages of ENSDORF and SCHWELBACH 5,000 men, women and children are sheltering. For seven days Party officials, local officials, police and S.S. tried to get the 5000 out of their refuge. At last they threatened to blow up the entrance to the mine and bury the people inside alive. Under the leadership of their priest ~~XXXXXX~~ and a few staunch women the people refused to leave. Now they are only 800 metres away from the American lines. The five thousand people have made up their minds to await the end of the battle of ENSDORF in the darkness of their mineshafts.

## NARRATIVE

On Saturday December 2 the first shells fell on ENSDORF. The inhabitants had not been warned that the Americans were close to the Saar River. They had received no evacuation orders. At the Rathaus they were told by the deputy Burgomaster, Franz Seidel, that there was no transport for them, no petrol. They must shift for themselves. The town must be evacuated. Some went back to their homes to improvise what shelter they could in cellars and barns. Others packed cases and bundles onto pams and barrows and prepared to leave on foot. During the night the shelling went on and on the Sunday morning the trek out of ENSDORF began.



# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Internal Assessment of Black Radio

HQ & HQ DETACHMENT  
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES  
European Theater of Operations  
United States Army  
(Main)

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 843099

APO 413  
30 June 1945

MO BRANCH

PROGRESS REPORT 1 - 30 June 1945

### GENERAL:

The first important report on the success of Operation "Capricorn" from within Germany is worthy of note. The MO group serving with the German Mission has returned to Biebrich from an extended tour of Bavaria. Included in those questioned were three of the leaders of the Bavarian Freedom Movement that became active in the final period of German collapse. The three men interrogated were considered highly intelligent and all had been officers in the Wehrmacht, all had listened to BBC, ABSIE and Soldatensender West and were full of intelligent criticism of these programs. The leader of the MO unit asked them if they had heard of "Hagedorn". The group said that they had listened to him regularly and directed our people's attention to the difference in presentation and sincerity between an obvious fake such as Soldatensender and a "true underground leader such as Hagedorn speaking from within Germany". They went on to state that Hagedorn had expressed most admirably the feelings of all anti-Nazis and that he had properly timed a call for a people's rather than a palace revolution. In several instances, these men, in their normal speech, reflected passages from the Hagedorn scripts almost verbatim. They stated that as far as they knew, Hagedorn had eluded capture by the Nazis and they hoped that we would locate him as they felt that he would be of great help to the Allies in meeting their occupation problems.

This is one of the most amazing comebacks from intelligent listeners that any black radio program has ever had and indicates that not only was the cover of the station never penetrated, but that the scripts themselves and the moving and dramatic voice of our actor actually served as a rallying point in the last days of the collapse.



# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Internal Assessment of Black Radio

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# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

276 Inf Division  
No. 2313/44 secret

Army Command 1  
IcAO No. 330/44 secret

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority 1180 857/48

Appendix "C.2" to  
21 A Gp/17430/P & PW  
dated 26 August 1944

Corps Headquarters LXXXVI  
army corps  
Section Ic 468/44 g.h.  
5.4.44

Information sheet  
for Unit and Subordinate leaders under  
the jurisdiction of Army Command.

**SECRET**

Inf. Regiment 987  
Received: 9.4.44  
Section Ia No 333/44 secret  
Notice 5 x enclosures:-

II. Inf. Regt 987  
II B.H. recd. 10.4.44  
No. 243/44 secret  
Enclosures: file secr.

- 1) Distributor: battalion 5, 6, 7, 8.
- 2) to G. instructions (signature)) (copy)

## DANGEROUS ENEMY PROPAGANDA

### WARNING AGAINST THE SO-CALLED "SOLDATENSENDER CALAIS"

A disguised enemy station operating under the assumed name of "soldatensender Calais" can be heard frequently within our Army, recently to an increasing extent. The way and manner in which the enemy propaganda operates, must be described as extremely dangerous, as primitive minds cannot identify it. The enemy station mixes up genuine and invented news items and it begins transmissions mostly by broadcasting the Wehrmacht Communique and the conferring of Knightcrosses. Thus it actually achieves some credulity, in fact to a large extent so, with unprejudiced listeners.



# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Non-German Propaganda

### Themes for non-Germans:

1. Patriotism demands that non-Germans participate in the liberation of their own countries. Non-Germans in Europe are the vanguard of the armies of liberation.
2. German resisters must not be allowed any longer to fight on non-German soil and endanger non-German lives and property.
3. This last attempt by the Germans to impose their will on non-Germans must be liquidated.
4. Ending German resistance is an essential step in rounding up war criminals.
5. German resistance must not be permitted to delay the restoration of non-German prisoners of war and labour conscripts to their homes and families; German resistance must not be permitted to delay national rehabilitation.
6. The moral standing of European nations will be influenced by the degree of activity they have shown against the Germans.
7. Participation of quislings in German resistance is a criminal action and will be dealt with as such.

### AIM THREE

(See Annexe II, Appendix III of OVERLORD Plan)

To enlist all possible aid in facilitating the elimination by United Nations forces of pockets of resistance.

### Objectives

- A. To demonstrate to the people of Europe that their aid is still essential to the United Nations.

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND 857146

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Propaganda in Song

### DER FUEHRER HAT'S BEFOHLEN



Wir marschieren u die Wette Um die Wette mit dem Tod  
Frankreichs Fluren, Russland Steppe Hunger, Leid und Hass und  
Not.

Der Fuehrer h a t ' s befohlen;  
Am Waldrand schrein die Dohlen  
Um uns.

Finster draeut die Nacht, die Kalte; Dumpf und schwer der Schritte  
hall.

Weib und Kind, oh Gott, erhalte  
Schuetz' Euch vor der Bomben fall.

Der Fuehrer h a t ' s befohlen;  
Am Waldrand schrein die Dohlen  
Um uns.

Doch fuer uns, da hilft kein Klagen; Ewig kann's nicht dunkel sein.

Einmal werden froh wir sagen;

Heimat,  
du bist wieder mein.

Und Hitler muss vergehen;. Doch Deutschland wird bestehen  
Fuer uns.

Melody and third verse from "Moorsoldaten" and first and second  
verse and chorus by H.S.

### THE Fuhrer ordered it



We march in a race To race with death  
France's fields, Russia's steppe Hunger, suffering and hate and  
need.

The Fuehrer ordered it;  
At the edge of the forest the jackdaws shriek  
About us.

The night is dark, the cold; Dull and heavy the footsteps echo.

Wife and child, O God, preserve  
Protect yourself from the bombs falling.

The Fuehrer ordered it;  
At the edge of the forest the jackdaws shriek  
About us.

But for us, no complaining helps; It can't be dark forever. Once glad  
we shall say;

Hometown,  
you are mine again

And Hitler must perish. But Germany will survive  
For us.

Melody and third verse from "Moorsoldaten" and first and second  
verse and chorus by H.S.



# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Success of Eisenhower's Use of Radio

*info. sent to Sec. of War 27/11*

**SECRET** *Handwritten: m, Hawaii, PWP/1888*

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS  
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE  
Psychological Warfare Division

*Raw* **SECRET**

REF 091-412 19 November, 1944.

Summary of previous Psychological Warfare Directives  
and instructions for their use. **7195**  
PWR

**1. INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVICE TO GERMAN CIVILIANS, BEHIND REAR LINES**

a. 1. In order to achieve uniformity, these will be issued by Psychological Warfare Division, Supreme Headquarters, A.E.F., either in a "Voice of SHAEF" or "Voice of Military Government", or in a leaflet. Army Groups and Armies should not issue such instructions on their own authority unless they are of a strictly tactical nature and of limited local significance; and then only by leaflet and public address. All instructions issued over Radio Luxembourg must be coordinated with SHAEF.

b. Appendix 'A' gives the current list of instructions in current SHAEF leaflets, and current BBC and ASSIE output.

c. In order to improve and enlarge these instructions, Army Groups should send in suggestions to SHAEF based on intelligence at their disposal.

d. There is now sufficient evidence available to state that, of the German population who disobeyed the Nazi evacuation orders and remained behind, a considerable number were influenced by the SHAEF instructions, and associated them with the name of General Eisenhower. It is important to exploit this to the full by associating General Eisenhower's name as often as possible with such instructions and with leaflets dealing with life under Military Government. The name of the Supreme Commander should be used as often as possible in broadcasts. Prints are being sent to each Army Group and Army of the standard photograph of the Supreme Commander. No other photograph should be used.

**2. FOREIGN WORKERS AND PRISONERS OF WAR.**

a. Appendix 'B' contains a new "Voice of SHAEF". This supersedes

**DECLASSIFIED**  
Authority *110740085*



# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## Success of Eisenhower's Use of Radio

- DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND 740085
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# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

Just one more tidbit

## ACCESS RESTRICTED

Item No. 8701 Date \_\_\_\_\_

Now filed in CIA Job No. 79-00332A

has been withdrawn from this file:

Job No. \_\_\_\_\_

Box No. \_\_\_\_\_

Folder No. \_\_\_\_\_

The item has been withdrawn because it contains security classified information or otherwise restricted information.

National Security Act of 1947

Authority

1947

Date

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority AND 843099

WITHDRAWAL NOTICE

# SHAEF and Radio Propaganda

## For Further Research

A great deal of information has been published about radio propaganda. But what is left to research

- There are many books and articles do a wonderful job of providing an overview of the use of black radio stations
- Radio Warfare by Larwence Soley is perhaps most complete but there are many others.

The SHAEF papers (and there are tens of thousands of them) could provide additional insights into the victories as well as the many failures of using propaganda in the theatre of conflict.

I am still working through many documents and hope to continue this work. Perhaps this presentation will interest some of you to look into this fascinating time. It could be a profitable journey.



