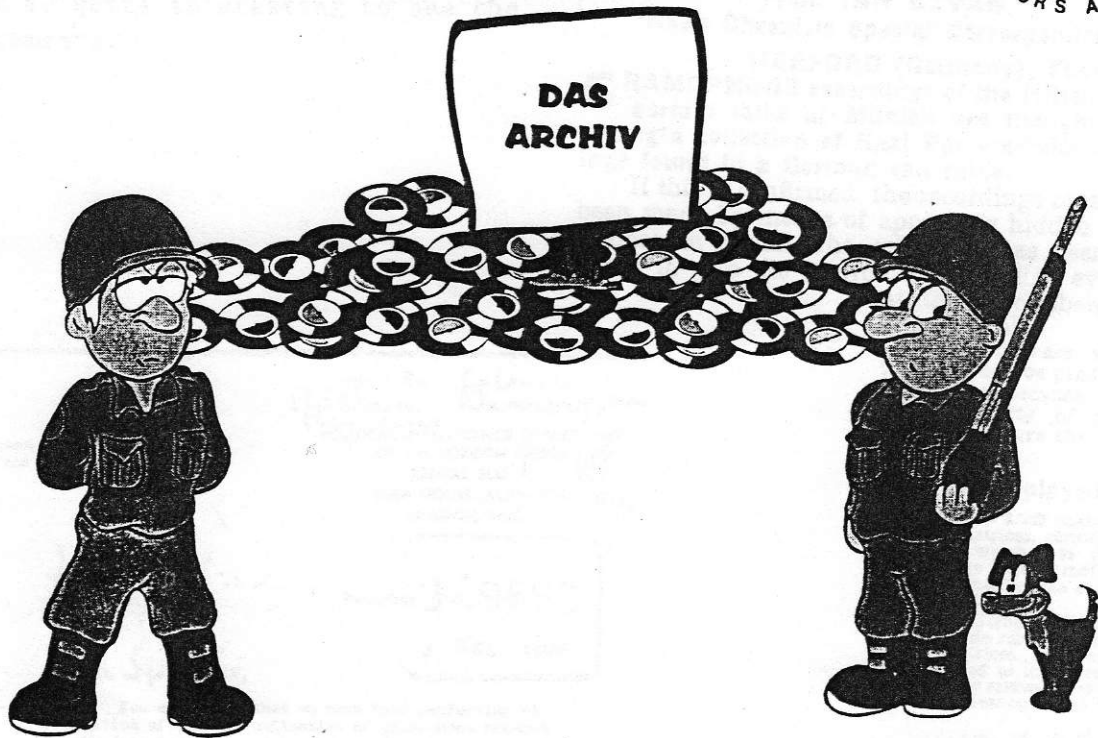


TUNE INTO YESTERDAY

ISSUE 35



CAPTURE OF THE GERMAN RADIO ARCHIVES IN 1945

The capture of the German Radio Archives in 1945

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Graeme Stevenson writes ; I recently spent two days at the Public Record Office in London and found the following documents indexed under the Nuremberg War Crimes files (FO I050/I43I) concerning the capture of the German Radio Archives in 1945. ORCA would like to thank Tim Padfield at the PRO for giving us clearance to reprint items from the file in TTY. The capture of the archive is quite a famous story amongst collectors of war recordings, so it is quite interesting to see the original documents.

NEWS CHRONICLE.

7 NOV 1945

Cutting dated

194

Secret recordings may preserve Munich talks

From IAN BEVAN
News Chronicle Special Correspondent

HERFORD (Germany), Tuesday.
GRAMOPHONE recordings of the Hitler-Chamberlain talks at Munich are thought to be among a collection of Nazi Party official recordings found in a German salt mine.

If this is confirmed, the recordings must have been made by means of apparatus hidden in the conference room. The collection has been kept secret in case the records were used as evidence at the Nuremberg war crimes trials.

It now appears unlikely that they can be produced at Nuremberg because of the legal difficulty of proving when and where the records were made.

Being played

More than 4,000 metal negatives, or matrices, constitute the collection, which was the property of the Reichsrundfunk-Gesellschaft, the German equivalent of the B.B.C.

British Signals staff have already made records from many of the matrices, and these are being played to intelligence officers and war crimes investigators, who are endeavouring to identify the voices.

Unfortunately no list of recordings has been found and there are no identification marks on the matrices.

The voices of Hitler, Goering, Ley and other party leaders are generally clearly recognisable to anyone who has heard them on the radio, but it needs a detailed knowledge of Nazi activities to place the time and occasion of many of the records just from hearing the voices.

The custodian of the collection said that they are records of conversations, meetings and speeches which the Nazi Party wished to keep for historical purposes.

Private talks

He believed that among them were many private conversations between the Nazi leaders, and also recordings of important diplomatic negotiations, such as the Hitler-Chamberlain talks.

Some of the matrices had been willfully thrown into the salt by the German guards in the hope that they would be destroyed by corrosion, but the low humidity in the mine preserved them unharmed.

Telephone
TEMPLE BAR 1281

*copy to Colonel
Phillimore, Nuremberg, soon
then enter*
POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT
OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE,
CENTRE BLOCK,
BUSH HOUSE, ALDWYCH, 1/12
LONDON, W.C.2

November 30th, 1945

1 DEC 1945

copy to
Dear Scott Fox,

You are aware that we have been conducting an examination of a large collection of gramophone records unearthed in Germany, and I am attaching a report on his investigation by Captain W. Glanville Brown who has been in charge of the party.

Since writing this report, Captain Glanville Brown has received an answer from Nuremberg requesting a number of the records specified in the catalogue. He has succeeded in finding about half of these and is despatching them to Church House today, after which we propose to regard the operation as completed.

*Yours ever,
Leonard Ingrams*

R.D.J. Scott-Fox, Esq.,
The Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

The capture of the Nazi Radio Archives in 1945

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Report on German Gramophone Records

by Capt. W. Glanville Brown

The party detailed to examine the gramophone records began work on November 14th.

There are more than four thousand records here. The BBC authorities had already examined a cross section of them and we examined a further cross section. All were records of German broadcasts, mostly of speeches by leading Nazis, but some of demonstrations or music. One, which appears to be of a Xylophone solo, with accompanying applause, sounds as though it is a broadcast from a dance hall or night club.

Almost all the records have nothing to identify them except for numbers on both sides, but it is to be noted that the numbers on the two sides bear no relationship to each other. There are a few rare cases where the numbers on the two sides are in sequence, but such cases are so rare that these sequences appear to be occasional accidents. In the huge majority of cases the two sides of the same record have nothing to do with each other from any point of view. For example, one record has on one side a speech by von Papen made in 1932 and on the other side a speech by Hitler made in 1937. It is therefore quite impossible to arrange the records in order according to their German numbers.

If, which is by no means certain, we have here all the records from the lowest to the highest numbers, with none missing, it would in time be possible to identify them all, for speeches are preceded by, and ended with, statements by announcers. This would, however, only be possible if none, or at least not many, are missing, and would, in any event, be an extremely lengthy job, for some speeches cover as many as sixteen records. If too many are missing, identification would have to be dependent on former BBC monitors recognising voices and this clearly presents great difficulties. I can imagine how at least the British judges at Nuremberg would hesitate to accept, as conclusive proof, a monitor's uncorroborated evidence that the voice on a record was that of one of the accused.

Sorting and indexing the records was clearly a most complicated and lengthy job and it was difficult to know how to begin. We were, however, helped by two

things. One was the presence here of a representative of the BBC European Service, who had with him an official German catalogue of records of broadcasts made between 1929 and 1936. The other was the presence here of Captain Gordon of the British prosecuting team at Nuremberg, who told us that what we wanted were speeches by the accused before 1936. A cross-section of records was therefore taken and the numbers were compared with the catalogue. They were found to correspond. To make absolutely certain that all the numbers on the records correspond to those in the catalogue would clearly have been a very lengthy job and we had to work quickly. It was therefore necessary to assume that all the numbers were correct, as they probably are. Captain Gordon was told the position and wired Nuremberg informing them and asking which speeches were wanted.

To find such records when Nuremberg's reply arrived we needed an index and we therefore started making one. With only six people it became clear, after an afternoon's work, that this would take us about a fortnight. Also it seemed senseless to use for this work, requiring only an ability to read and write figures, a little care and moderate intelligence, capable linguists most of whom had been reluctantly spared from work in London, where their qualifications were urgently needed. Having made the necessary arrangements, I therefore took the records round to a Polish Repatriation Camp, where the records were indexed by a hundred Poles in one day. I then brought the records back. Meanwhile, I had let all but two of the party go back to London, after arranging to recall them if necessary. They could not be of any use until we had an index and we got a reply saying what records were needed.

It is as well to explain of what the indexing consists. Each record has now been given a number by us, an index has been made showing to which two numbers already on each record our number corresponds, and the records are now in order according to the numbers which we have given them. With the help of the official German catalogue (which we have managed to borrow) it will therefore now be possible to find any record needed up to 1936. If we can get an official German catalogue up to a later date we can then find records up to that date also. We have therefore sent a message to Hamburg asking for any official German catalogues they can find from 1936 up to as late a date as possible. We have also asked them whether they can send us such catalogues or not, to find out for us the numbers of the records containing Ribbentrop's

The capture of the Third Reich Radio Archive in 1945

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1941 and 1942 speeches on the anniversary of the Tripartite Pact. We have asked for these because Capt. Gordon mentioned during a later visit that they would be quite glad to have them. I have not recalled the rest of the team in order to help find them because Captain Gordon gave me the impression that it was not very important, and to find them without the numbers would be an immensely lengthy job. Meanwhile, from the catalogues we have made a list of all the recorded speeches of those now accused at Nuremberg from 1929 - 1936.

In all this work I have had the greatest possible assistance from Messrs. Freudenthal and Kish, who have been most industrious, competent and helpful in every possible way.

I understand that these records may be of great use to the BBC European Service, but I am increasingly doubtful whether they will be of any use whatever at Nuremberg. On these records, when one hears the Nazi leaders, one hears them making public speeches. I doubt whether any of them has ever made, in a public speech, a statement or admission which could be used against him at Nuremberg. From the newspaper reports the evidence which is being given appears to consist of secret documents and minutes of secret meetings. Nor is this surprising, for even the docile Germans might have objected if the Nazis' true aims had been stated in public.

I imagine this is why, when Captain Gordon wired Nuremberg, explaining what we had found and asking which records they wanted, he received no reply. It was only when, at my request, he repeated the question on the telephone, that reference was made to Ribbentrop's 1941 and 1942 speeches on the anniversary of the Tripartite Pact, and in particular a remark in one of them that Russia had enough food to feed all Europe. If this is the most damning thing that can be found in Ribbentrop's public speeches, is there really any point in spending further time on them?

Having practised at the Bar before the war, I know that what one does when presenting a case where one has strong points, is to concentrate of them and not waste time with weak points which merely distract attention from one's strong ones. In view of this, what likelihood is there of anyone bothering about Ribbentrop's 1941 references to Russia's food supplies when one considers what infinitely stronger evidence there appears to be against him?

We have telephoned PID three times asking them to enquire of Hamburg what are the numbers of Ribbentrop's 1941 and 1942 Tripartite anniversary speeches, and in addition for an official catalogue. I am informed that PID has passed the enquiry to Hamburg twice. A reply by telephone was expected on Friday, but we have still had

The British prosecuting team at Nuremberg must be very busy, but they know what we have got and I have no doubt they would get in touch with us very quickly if they thought we had anything which would be of any use to them. The fact that they have sent us no message suggests to me that they feel our records are useless to them. It is true that one of them mentioned two speeches by Ribbentrop, but this was when asked on the telephone, after ignoring a telegram, and I believe that if they were really wanted, the request would have been repeated and in a far more official manner.

To find the records containing these two speeches by Ribbentrop would be a lengthy task even if we get their numbers from Hamburg. If we do not get their numbers it would be an immensely lengthy job. I do not feel justified in asking the remainder of the team again to leave their jobs in London for this purpose unless Nuremberg really does want these speeches. In any event I have myself been posted from PID to R.A. Depot, Woolwich w.e.f. next Saturday December 1st.

May I have further instructions?

(Sgd.) W. Glanville Brown, Capt.

Nov. 26th, 1945.

<p>177 2.</p> <p>945</p>	<p>U</p> <hr/> <p>WAR CRIMES</p>	<p>U 9728</p> <p>6 DEC 1945</p>
<p>Registry Number } U 9728/9562/73</p> <p>FROM Mr. Lionard Jugram P.I.D. Bush House To: Mr. Scott-Fox No.</p> <p>Dated 4th Dec. 1945.</p> <p>Received in Registry } 6th Dec. 1945.</p>	<p><u>German Gramophone Records.</u> Refers to his letter of the 30th November No. U.9562/9562/73. Encloses a final report from Captain Glanville Brown of the captured German Gramophone records. Suggests sending Captain Gordon the complete catalogue and should he require any further records efforts will be made to supply same.</p>	

The capture of the Reich Rundfunk Archives in 1945

To: P.I.D.

COPY

PAGE II

Additional Report on German Gramophone Records by Capt. W. Glanville Brown.

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Shortly after I had forwarded my previous report on the same subject, Captain Gordon telephoned from Nuremberg and gave us a list of the records which they wanted. It is, I think, better to use the word side rather than record, as the two sides of a record have (as explained in my previous report) almost always nothing to do with each other.

Seventy-five (75) sides were asked for by Nuremberg, but of these we have only been able to find thirty-six (36). It so happens that two of these sides are on the same record, so that thirty-five (35) records of those requested are being made available by us. Also I am sending another record of a speech by von Papen made at the time of his visit to Rome with Goering in April 1935. We did not know that we had this when I told Captain Gordon the position, so I have added this one on my own responsibility. I am therefore sending altogether thirty-six (36) records. A list is attached.

It will be realised that we have had to work quickly and that there have inevitably been some mistakes in consequence. Some of the figures on the records are very indistinct, the indexing was done by Polish soldiers, their handwriting was not always very legible, and the sheets they had written were typed out later. Considering all this it is surprising that we have only discovered one mistake, although we must have examined over a hundred sides of records, since the indexing was done. Nevertheless there was one mistake, and if all the eight thousand and more sides of records were examined it seems virtually certain that more mistakes would be discovered. It is therefore possible that some of the records wanted by Nuremberg, but which we cannot find, may in fact be here after all. It seems to me almost certain, however, in view of the very low percentage of error which we have so far discovered, that mistakes cannot possibly account for over half the records being missing. Almost certainly, then, these are not the complete records for a certain period. Indeed the fact that we have found about half the ones we were trying to find suggests that they may be about half the records and that the other half may be hidden somewhere else.

The index we have made is, I think, a useful beginning, but it was made quickly, when working against time, and is NOT foolproof. It could be the basis of a reliable index, but it is not a thoroughly reliable index as it now stands.

(Sgd.) W. Glanville Brown, Capt.

November 30th, 1945.

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