

**Background:** The following essay was published in the Nazi monthly for propagandists. It shows in a satirical way some of the problems Nazi speakers faced before 1933.

**The source:** *Wille und Weg*, 1 (1931), pp. 188-189.

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## How I Treat a Speaker

by Heringsblatt

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The speaker is a creature who knows everything. It is, therefore, unnecessary to meet him at the train station, since he will surely find the way to my house on his own. I live in a suburb outside town, so the two-and-a-half-hour walk will do him good. Speaking is a healthy occupation, after all; they are in good shape. When the speaker arrives at my front door, I'll still be at the office. Unless my wife is doing something else, she'll be at home. If she isn't home, the speaker can certainly find something to do for a while. We have a nice museum, for example, as well as the old Swedish fortifications. If my wife happens to be at home (though why should one assume she would be?), the process is as follows. My wife will bring him to the kitchen. Why should the poor man sit alone in his room and be bored? Neither my wife nor I want that. First my wife, then I, will tell him all our political opinions. We can talk about such matters better than anyone. That's a good way to start. Then we take out all the old family pictures. This is so exciting that he will scarcely notice the noise of my four children, but rather despite the weariness caused by his long train ride (which isn't all that bad), he'll be able to listen attentively to my flow of words. After all, I want to be a speaker too some day. The speaker will see that I am already gifted.

After we have eaten, we go to the meeting. It's best to go on foot; a little rain doesn't matter. The meeting begins. My introduction should be as long as possible, since one must become known, after all. It's a pleasure to hear oneself talk. Then I introduce the speaker, and explain that he will now speak. After the speech, I make sure as many people as possible have a chance to talk to him. I've noticed that speakers just beam with joy when lots of people want to talk with them after a speech. If the party propaganda central office has banned discussion periods after speeches, I hold one anyway. People want that in my area, and besides I thereby fight the slogan of the SPD **[Socialists]**: "The masses will win."

There are always a lot of people standing around the speaker after the meeting. That's time time to ask the speaker "How much should I pay you?" Of course, I know that it is uncomfortable for the speaker to ask for an honorarium. He will likely say "the cost of my train ticket, Mr. Heringsblatt." After all, one has to know to keep one's local group treasury full. I then pay the speaker what he asks for in coins. That way, everyone knows and hears what he is getting. Why shouldn't everyone know? Mostly I give the speaker only the return fare or even half of that — he can, I assume, walk the rest of the way! "You tell me, my friend, that this speaker has over 2000 marks in political fines to pay? Well, I never knowingly engage such a speaker. And please don't tell anyone, since we surely don't have the money to help him out!"

After we talk until 3 a.m. in the morning, we head home. You know that I live in the outskirts of the city. Someone takes a shot at us on the way home. My, what times we live in! The speaker sleeps on the sofa in the living room. Party member Knorpel wanted to get him a hotel room with a proper bed, but I want to be sure the speaker has the honor of sleeping on the local group leaders's sofa. We talk for

another hour. Since I have to be up at six, I wake the speaker at 5 to give him the opportunity to bid me farewell. As we part, I encourage him to ask my *Gauleiter* **[the regional party leader]** for the part of the honorarium I didn't pay. My *Gauleiter* is happy to make up the difference.

Now you know why my local group never has any financial problems.