THE HOLOCAUST AND ITS CONTEXTS

Nazi-Organized Recreation and Entertainment in the Third Reich

Julia Timpe

The Holocaust and its Contexts

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List of Frequently Used German Terms and Abbreviations

Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF)	German Labor Front
Kraft durch Freude (KdF)	Strength through Joy, the Nazi leisure organization
Amt Feierabend	Department of Leisure Time
Sportamt	Sports Department
Deutsches Volksbildungswerk	Institute for the Education of the German People
Amt für Reisen, Wandern und Urlaub	Department for Travel, Hiking and Holidays
Amt für Volkstum und Heimat	Department for Folklore and Homeland
Amt "Schönheit der Arbeit"	Department of "Beauty of Labor"
Bunter Abend	An evening of entertainment; literally, "colorful evening"
Kameradschaftsabend	Social evening event for employees of a factory/company; literally, "comradeship evening"
Sportappell	Sport event for workers of a factory/company; literally, "sport muster"
Nazi Ideological Terms:	
Volksgemeinschaft	"People's community" or "racial community"
Volkskörper	"People's body" or "body of the people"
Volksgenossen	"People's comrade" (member of the *Volksgemeinschaft*)
Lebensraum	An aspect of Nazi ideology determining its territorially expansionist polices; literally, "living space"
Gleichschaltung	Process of Nazi takeover of German society and politics after 1933; literally, "synchronization" or "coordination"
Volk	People
Kultur	Culture
Gau	Administrational district in Nazi Germany
Reichsmark	German currency from 1924 to 1948; 1 *Reichsmark* (RM) contained 100 *Pfennige*

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Nazi "Joy Production" and the Leisure Organization "*Kraft durch Freude*"

How much fun could Germans have during the Third Reich? How joyful were their daily activities at work, at home, and during their leisure time under Adolf Hitler's dictatorship? Such questions might sound absurd given our knowledge of the terror, injustice, discrimination, persecution, violence, and murder that took place in Germany between 1933 and 1945 under Nazi rule and the horrors of war and genocide that this regime brought to Europe and the world. But I maintain it is still important to think about fun in Nazi Germany. I do not mean the sadistic pleasure that some of the perpetrators of Nazi atrocities may have taken in their crimes. I mean comparatively ordinary fun and happiness or joy as experienced by "ordinary" Germans. But questions about fun and happiness are questions about the experiences and feelings of individuals, the sort of questions that are rather difficult, if not impossible to answer from a historian's standpoint. What the historian *can* do, however, and what I will undertake in this volume, is to examine a particular and prominent vision of bringing fun and joy to Germans in Nazi Germany. In short, I will discuss in this book a Nazi project to "make Germans happy."[1]

This book will explore this Nazi promise of joy as it was intended to be realized by the Nazi regime's vast leisure organization, *Kraft durch Freude* [*Strength through Joy*]. I will examine the plans, propaganda, practices of

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KdF and, whenever the source base allows, the perception and reception of these during the Third Reich. In doing so, I will show that providing joy and happiness—or often, as I will suggest, simply "fun"—was an important Nazi goal, a central element of Nazism that constituted a joyful, positive counterpart to the regime's murdering of millions it considered enemies of the German *Volk*. I will argue that, as such, the Nazi concern for providing happiness and creating experiences of fun was not merely a strategy of distraction intended to keep the German populace docile; rather it was intrinsically linked to the Nazi dream of purifying and strengthening the German *Volksgemeinschaft* or "racial community,"[2] for the intention was that this should be a happy community.

Kraft durch Freude (which I will refer to as KdF, the abbreviation also often appearing in the sources), the organization at the center of this book, was a subsidiary of the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* [DAF or German Labor Front]. The DAF was effectively the single, large-scale Nazi trade union established in May 1933 to replace Germany's free trade unions, recently outlawed by the then brand-new Nazi regime.[3] When it was first founded, KdF was called *Nach der Arbeit* [After Work].[4] This name highlights the fact that the Nazis initially modeled their new leisure organization on a similar institution that had existed in Fascist Italy since 1925.[5] This latter organization, which provided all kinds of recreational activities to adult Italians, was called *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (OND).[6] This institution is usually rendered in English as the "National Recreational Club," but the term *Dopolavro*[7] may be literally translated as "after work," which is the notion replicated in "*Nach der Arbeit*."[8] Very soon, however, the Nazi leisure organization's name was changed to "*Kraft durch Freude*."[9]The new title was deemed more appropriate to represent the scale of Nazism's "joy production" ambitions: its leisure organization's aspirations went well beyond the comparatively simple after-work programs of *Dopolavoro*.[10] The difference in ambitions between the two organizations seems apparent in the way that *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* tended to function as an umbrella structure for sectorally or locally organized *dopolavori* or working-men's clubs. Thus the Italian organization included different clubs for different companies, for different areas, and for different industries (for example, the postmen's club or the steelworkers' club) as well as for different types of workers (distinct clubs for blue and white collar workers, for instance). KdF tended to retain a larger perspective and its goal of building a *Volksgemeinschaft* pushed it to minimize differences, not confirm them. Notably, KdF targeted all (Aryan) Germans, not only

workers. The new name also underlined a second aspect of the leisure organization's mission, its instrumentalist goal of giving strength to the German people. KdF was interested in creating joy for Germans as this joy would function to make them strong.[11]

KdF's arsenal of leisure activities was manifold. Most prominently, KdF was a tourism provider, but it also offered sports classes of all kinds, made available subsidized tickets for cultural events, and arranged theater and opera performances, concerts, and vaudeville shows. KdF also promoted amateur art and had a branch concerned with adult education. Additionally, it was concerned with the improvement of life and conditions in the industrial sphere, and with beautification of rural villages. These many different activities and programs were administrated via several KdF sub-departments, whose number and organizational set-up changed throughout the Third Reich.[12] The most important departments included the *Amt für Reisen, Wandern und Urlaub* [Department for Travel, Hiking and Holidays] and the *Sportamt* [Sports Department], respectively responsible for offering vacations and sports classes, *Amt Feierabend* [Leisure Time Department], which was in charge of arranging entertainment events of all kinds, the *Amt für Volkstum und Heimat* [Department for Folklore and Homeland], which focused on events with a more *völkisch* character, as well as the *Deutsches Volksbildungswerk* [Institute for the Education of the German People] and the *Amt "Schönheit der Arbeit"* [Beauty of Labor Department]. The latter was mostly concerned with the cleanliness and functionality of industrial worksites, while the former offered education programs for adults.

While having diverse individual foci, all KdF's departments shared the organization's general goals. The first of these goals was the creating and stabilizing of a community of all "Aryan Germans" according to the Nazi vision of a unified *Volksgemeinschaft* beyond social and regional differences. KdF's second ambition was to provide enjoyment and happiness to all (Aryan) Germans. Both these goals were closely intertwined. The creation of happiness was to be both the means for building the "racial community" but in turn the result of the achieved racial community. I will refer to KdF's activities towards its goal of creating happiness as "joy production."

Before explaining in a little more detail what kind of "joy" KdF had in mind, I would first like to offer a couple of general clarifications in regards to this "joy production." The first concerns its audience. Nazi "joy production," and the operations of its leisure organization, did not

of course target all Germans. Only those defined as "Aryan" by Nazi ideology were included, while members of groups that the Nazis deemed "racially inferior" were excluded. In this regard, KdF's policies and practices were in full correspondence with the exclusionary nature of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* as stressed in recent scholarship.[13] The second clarification concerns the "actuality" of the "joy production." As alluded to above, this book deals primarily with an analysis of an envisioned Nazi *project*. This is different from an examination of the social reality of the Third Reich. A large part of this book will be concerned with reconstructing this project from the perspective of the Nazi regime and of KdF itself. Thus, plans, agendas, and goals will often take center stage. This is a consequence of the available sources. There is a plethora of brochures, booklets, magazines, and books that were published by KdF (or the DAF) available. A large part of my analysis will be based on these propagandistic sources. From among these, the fortnightly magazine *Arbeitertum,* an official publication (beginning in 1933) of the DAF, will be a central source. Inevitably, such texts must be read warily as they will often be merely intentional or programmatic—that is, expressing plans and goals not necessarily implemented or achieved—or, of course, propagandistic. I believe, however, that it is unproductive to dismiss these sources as "mere propaganda." First, the goals of KdF are interesting and important to understand and, when read carefully, these texts allow us important insights into KdF's goals. Second, we can learn from these propaganda sources how KdF "marketed" its work.[14] For a historical analysis of these points, it is not necessary to know whether these propagandistic announcements were always realized, nor even whether people believed such announcements at the time.[15] Indeed, it is also important to realize that, whether they believed it or not, the German population was in fact subjected to this propaganda—it was part of the everyday experience of Germans living in the Third Reich and can and should be analyzed as such.[16]

In addition to the presentation of KdF's plans and goals and (intended and sometimes already implemented) practices, the book will also address how these were negotiated, both within the organization and by a larger audience in the Third Reich.[17] This "audience"—or KdF's "negotiation partners"—consisted of the German population as well as different branches of the Nazi administration, government, and police system, whose writings also form an important part of the source base for this book. And, whenever possible, I will also deal with the perspectives of participants in KdF's programming.[18] These perspectives allow what is presented in the

following chapters to be not merely an account of grandiose plans made by the Nazi regime. Importantly, it is, at least to some extent, also an account of an operation that was actually implemented. Here, my analysis has been informed by research and methods from the field of *Alltagsgeschichte* [history of everyday life], and its agenda of reconstruction social practices "from below."[19] In this regard, this book will illustrate the ubiquity of KdF's "joy production" effort, which was already partially in place during the Third Reich[20] – and will thus augment an existing body of scholarship concerned with highlighting the role of pleasure and entertainment in the Third Reich. At the same time, looking at the implementation of KdF's plans also allows us to see how a regime with the totalitarian ambition of the Third Reich sometimes permitted—or even created—spaces of autonomy. This will especially become clear in my discussion of KdF sports. Here it will be argued that spaces emerged where processes of individual, opportunistic adaptation could and did take place. However, these spaces were almost never loci of resistance and were rather spaces of adaptation that caused no real threat to either KdF or the Third Reich as a whole.[21] To an extent then, in this context, it could be said that my work agrees with older readings that saw the Nazi leisure organization's function as that of "distraction."[22] For KdF, however, I argue this occurred in a much more complex manner than argued by earlier scholars. When individuals used KdF('s) spaces for their own needs and plans, this can be described as a form of *Eigensinn* as characterized by Alf Lüdtke.[23] These *eigensinnig* "appropriations" then, in turn, tied up workers' energies and thus prevented more radical acts against the regime. In this particular way, KdF and its practices could have distracted opposition against the Third Reich. To argue that distraction was the main purpose of KdF,[24] however, would be to mistakenly dismiss the genuineness of KdF's efforts to improve Germans' working lives, living spaces, and free time.

"Nazi Joy"

What did the word "*Freude*" or "joy" in KdF's name mean to the organization's planners, exactly? Etymologically, the German noun "*Freude*" is related to the German adjective "*froh*" (cheerful, glad, blithe). Even though there are no indications that KdF's founders or functionaries knew about this, it is interesting to note that "*froh*" stems from the Norse word "*frár*," meaning "fast" and may be related to the Sanskrit word *pravát*, which means in modern German "*Vorwärtsdrang*"/"*schneller*

Fortgang,"["forward thrust"/"fast progress"].[25] Thus, it might be argued that embedded in the organization's title was a connection to both activity and productivity—two aspects that incidentally also play a role in the kind of "joy" KdF wished to produce.[26] Certainly, the joy used within KdF's discourse was an unstable, polysemic notion. The explorations in this book dealing with KdF's practices, propaganda, and reception will highlight how the concept of "joy" structures a somewhat complex story. At the same time, it will also become clear that this concept was itself complex, multifarious, and even contradictory. As was so often the case in Nazi thought, there is neither a fully-developed nor a coherent theory behind the concept. One might imagine that in Nazi ideology, "joy" would be defined as whole-hearted participation in the Nazi regime and embrace of its ideals and that, conversely, anyone who was committed to Germany and Nazism must also be joyful. Something like this was, of course, encoded in KdF's program. However, it would be wrong to think that such embracing of Nazism was considered a prerequisite for joy—rather, it was conceptualized as the final consequence of KdF's joy, but nothing that necessarily had to be part of experiencing its (practices of) joy.

Most crucially, "joy" in KdF's conception was a creative force; it would lead to more strength for each German and, in turn, for Germany overall. KdF was not merely the organization of "joy," but the organization that sought "strength through joy." If the strength was the strength of an aggressive "Aryan" race, then KdF created joy in Germans to make them strong. That is, joy was a precondition for strength—perhaps a cause of strength. This argument was certainly maintained by KdF, along with the symmetrical claim that a successful Germany—a victorious Reich giving full expression to German territorial and cultural needs—would make its citizens joyful. There was a deeply circular relationship between "strength" and "joy."

One aspect of the ambiguous, conflicted character of KdF's concept of joy was that the leisure organization's programming operated with both a normative notion of joy—a "joy" that was more "high-brow," or more "German"—and with activities whose "joys" could be described as more direct or simple—or more fun! This was due to the fact, that, overall, KdF engaged diverging concepts of "culture." It was an overarching goal of the organization to "bring culture" to Germans, especially German workers (as I will show in Chap. 3). However, the organization's cultural work in this realm was ultimately not programmatically defined and was located in a tension between "high-brow" culture and "low-brow" entertainment.[27]

As such, KdF's cultural work can stand *pars pro toto* for Nazi cultural politics in general; as Jost Hermand has pointed out, it would "be hardly possible to speak about an integrated or even ideologically coherent Nazi cultural politics. High brow [culture] stood next to low brow, archaic next to technological, demanding next to trivial-entertaining."[28] As we will see later in the book, KdF opted more and more for "low-brow" culture. The organization understood that larger audience numbers could be more easily obtained through less "proper" amusements. As an institution, KdF was interested in actually producing joy, even when not always sure what this meant. In fact, because KdF did not really know what joy was, it did not have to always try to meet its own demands for joy in any coherent manner.

We probably get the closest to a definition of KdF's joy when considering how the organization wanted to "produce" this joy, that is, by looking a little more closely at KdF's overall approaches and goals. Here, we can distinguish three features. For KdF, the "joy" it sought should be the outcome of voluntary participation. It also should have, if possible, an active component and be experienced collectively. In addition to KdF's "joy production," these three aspects were also entwined with the leisure organization's goal of "community building."

KdF's emphasis on voluntary participation, in the sense that taking part in KdF events was to be entirely optional, might seem surprising given our perceptions of the totalitarian character of the Third Reich. However, KdF's programmers understood that the organization's overall ambitions of producing happiness, relaxation, and fun would not necessarily sit well with forced attendance. Indeed, such a permissive attitude might have grown out of a strong belief in the genuine appeal of KdF's program to Germans, although the consideration that acting to enforce attendance would take up too many resources was also almost always relevant.

A second feature of KdF's work, and especially of the "joy production" it envisioned, was the centrality of participant activity. Its leisure programs were to have, whenever possible, an active component. This was based on the belief that only actively pursued leisure could lead to true relaxation and eventually new strength.[29] Nazism held work and the activity of work in the highest esteem, and, not very surprisingly, its conception of leisure emphasized being active, too.[30] Work and diligence were considered necessary requisites for "true happiness" and taking this same perspective on leisure, KdF encouraged Germans to make "good use" of their free time, and to spend it in an active manner, doing sports, producing art,

participating in cultural performances, or learning new things via KdF's educational branch.

The third general feature of KdF's work was "collective experience." The aim was for Germans to spend their leisure time together with others, passing their after-work time in groups beyond the traditional family setting, enjoying together a play, a concert, or another artistic performance. Taking part in these activities together would lead to some sort of communally experienced joy, at least according to KdF's thinking, either during or after the event. This insistence on fostering moments of collective happiness—rather than individual joy—was, of course, closely tied to the larger Nazi vision of creating a harmonious *Volksgemeinschaft*.[31] Individuals that were entertained by KdF were always in fact enjoying entertainment that was to be productive and useful for the community overall. KdF's after-work events were meant to be beneficial for Germans, who would enjoy these events and become "spiritually" enriched. And then they themselves were to act on that enrichment—by becoming artistically active, by participating more in community events, but of course also by being more productive at work. Ultimately, it was intended to further and strengthen the envisioned Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*.

Scholarship on *Kraft durch Freude* and the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*

The first comprehensive studies of KdF date back to the 1960s and 1970s; these were dissertations by German historian Wolfhard Buchholz and American scholar Laurence Van Zandt Moyer.[32] My book is especially indebted to Buchholz's research, which provides a very useful institutional history of *Kraft durch Freude*.[33] Buchholz suggests that KdF was meaningful for the stabilization and persistence of the Nazi regime as it furthered the integration of workers into German society by regenerating their productivity and boosting motivation and ideological indoctrination. This assessment stands in contrast to Van Zandt Moyer's thesis. His dissertation, focusing on KdF's historical development and socio-political role in the Third Reich, contends that the leisure organization was not successful in winning the German workers' support for National Socialism, or in the construction of an egalitarian, undivided German nation or *Volksgemeinschaft*. Despite these divergent readings of the effects of KdF, however, both works fit into a larger body of scholarship on the Third

Reich and the working class in which KdF was generally presented as a tool designed to help the Nazis appease and win over the German working class; the perspective of this body of scholarship would support, therefore, the "distraction argument" I have already mentioned.[34]

Much of the newer scholarship on KdF deals with consumerism, in particular tourism. KdF's Department for Travel, Hiking and Holidays was responsible for organizing inexpensive recreational trips of varied length—both distance and duration—within Germany and beyond. Most of the Travel Department's program consisted of weekend trips within Germany. However, the department also had its own flotilla of passenger ships and ran several week-long cruise trips to European destinations such as Portugal, Madeira, Norway, or Italy—in fact, its Italian destinations even included the then Italian-controlled state of Libya in North Africa. According to KdF's own statistics, participation numbers in KdF trips rose from 2 million people in 1934 to over 9 million in 1936.[35]

In line with its work in other areas, KdF's Travel Department (propagandistically) focused first of all on German workers and claimed that it was opening new and previously unattainable travel possibilities to them.[36] However, an analysis of KdF's travel programs reveals the discrepancies between Nazi propaganda and social reality quite clearly: Only a small fraction of the participants on KdF trips—and on its cruises in particular—actually belonged to the working class.[37] Even though KdF's travel was less expensive than previous commercial offers, it was still often beyond the financial reach of German workers. Regardless, the Travel Department and its activities and promises were without doubt one the most popular aspects of KdF (and maybe even the Third Reich), both in contemporary reception and in the post-war memories of many Germans.

This popularity certainly also contributed to the aforementioned fact that the majority of the scholarly literature on KdF deals with its travel program. This is true of the most recent German-language monograph on the organization, by Sascha Howind, which examines KdF's activities during the pre-war years, especially tourism.[38] Shelley Baranowski's book, the most recent English-language comprehensive study of the Nazi leisure organization, also has a strong focus on KdF's Travel Department.[39] Baranowski argues that KdF's programs, and especially its tourism, represented a way for the Nazis to fulfill the consumerist demands of Germans. Her argument is somewhat mirrored in Wolfgang König's study on Nazi consumer products: for him, KdF travel is one example of Nazism's failed attempt to set up a consumer society. [40] Other new research has also shown

that Nazism overall was concerned with building a consumer society.[41] Most controversially, Götz Aly has argued that the Third Reich's policies in this regard above all sought to ensure that Germans benefitted materialistically and financially, in order to gather their support for the Nazi regime.[42]

While my book builds in many ways on the comprehensive work carried out by Baranowski, it departs from her argument by contending that KdF was not first and foremost part of Nazism's *ersatz* answer to US consumerism. The Nazi leisure organization was less driven by such "materialistic" goals, but instead focused on a sort of "ideal enrichment" of the German population. As I will show, KdF's activities were meant to make people *feel* happier through (collectively experienced) joyful activities rather than by providing material or financial incentives.[43]

While previous scholarship has dealt extensively with KdF's tourism,[44] other areas have been relatively under-researched.[45] This imbalance is one of the reasons that my book will not explore KdF's tourism in detail but will alternatively focus on the leisure organization's activities in the area of sports[46] and culture,[47] and also on the so-far little discussed work of KdF for the Wehrmacht and in concentration camps. Despite travel not being my focus, it should be noted here that the features of KdF's "joy production," which have been outlined above and which will be looked at in more detail in the following chapters, are also apparent in KdF's travel. Most prominent is the element of "collective experience." KdF's travel planning was governed by an underlying concern to foster community. KdF vacations were group vacations, and were consciously conceptualized as being directed against "holiday individualists."[48] To an extent, Germans who went on holiday with the Travel Department were thus meant to already briefly experience what the Nazis wanted for all areas of Germans' lives: a unified *Volksgemeinschaft*. There was also a geographical element to this "community building." KdF Travel had the important educational objective of making Germans more familiar with their home country.[49] Its vacations were supposed to help overcome any kind of separatism at the local or regional level: most KdF trips aimed to introduce German tourists within Germany to the inhabitants and customs of the other regions they visited, and the tourists were for their part to act as emissaries of their region to others,[50] "but simultaneously to recognize their kinship with the inhabitants of the regions where they spent their vacations."[51] In short, traveling with KdF was meant to reveal to tourists how regional variations constituted an enriching diversity rather than

differences hindering exchange or community.[52] Overall, the characteristics of KdF's travel correspond to the leisure organization's foci on collective experience and active and voluntary participation—and in fact, we can see these similarities right down to specifics: for example, the social evenings that I discuss in Chap. 3 were replicated onboard cruise ships and during other trips. Thus, in KdF's vacation program we can also find an explicit emphasis on "joy production" during the trips, participants were to be constantly entertained through games, music, and dance.[53]

KdF's travel programs therefore embraced collectivity at all levels: tourists in convivial groups experiencing and sharing Germany's regional and national identities. I have already indicated how this type of collectivity—communal activities and community building—was central to KdF's goals. KdF's goal of community building is entwined with the Nazi notion of *Volksgemeinschaft*, which it is important to discuss in more detail, for it is a concept that is prominent in KdF's self-descriptions.[54] Furthermore, the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft* has in general recently moved to the center of the scholarly debates about the Third Reich and its policies and practices, especially for those scholars who study the reasons for and extent of its popular support. This is a departure from an older body of literature in which the term was dismissed as purely propagandistic and deemed a myth not worthy of investigation.[55] Newer scholarship has emphasized that, while the Nazi-propagated ideal of an egalitarian community beyond class differences was certainly never realized, its promise of unity in a re-emerging Germany was attractive and seemed plausible to many Germans.[56] Using the term "*Volksgemeinschaft*" as a category for analysis,[57] historians have looked more closely at "social practices" during the Third Reich as they occurred "on the ground."[58] My study thus builds on this wealth of scholarship.[59] These historians have pointed out that "*Volksgemeinschaft* was the National Socialist social promise,"[60] and that in line with this concept, the Nazi regime promised to Germans "various offers of community […] and the chance of social participation."[61] My work contributes to this scholarship by showing that KdF was certainly one prominent and popular example of such an offer. Also, I would suggest that the leisure organization and its "joy production" played a crucial role in this *Volksgemeinschaft* promise as it could create (at least momentarily) experiences for Germans that might suggest to them that the realization of this promise had already been achieved. Here I would follow Peter Fritzsche, who has argued in regards to KdF (and its travel program) that it was through "the consumption of *Erlebnis*, experience," that the leisure

organization's efforts "promoted both a greater sense of social equality among Germans and an abiding sense of entitlement as *Volksgenossen*."[62] KdF's activities probably at least made it look more convincing to quite a few Germans at the time that the overall *Volksgemeinschaft* would soon be fully realized.[63] Thus, the leisure organization's (perceived) success functioned in this sense metonymically for the (future successes of the) *Volksgemeinschaft* and the Nazi regime overall.[64]

Chapter Overviews

This book's exploration of KdF's community building through collectivizing "joy production" begins in Chap. 2: "The *Volksgemeinschaft* at Play." This chapter looks at sports and games as arranged by the organization. KdF offered sports courses in all kinds of disciplines, with an emphasis on providing affordable and easily accessible activities for all strata of German society. There was a special effort to reach workers and to bring exercise into the factories; to that end, KdF set up so-called "Factory Sport Communities." Chapter 2 introduces two important aspects of the overall thesis of this book. First, I will show that KdF's sports took place in a very playful manner, meant to be accessible and enjoyable for "ordinary" people. As will become clear, the intention of such courses was to afford relaxation to ("Aryan") Germans, while also ensuring that they did some sort of exercise and participated in a pleasant team-building effort for the sake of the overall *Volksgemeinschaft*. Second, related to the theme of KdF's attempt to forge all "Aryans" into one united community, the chapter will highlight the importance of KdF sports in regards to Nazi policies and attitudes towards the German working class. Especially in the day-to-day routines of factories, KdF-organized sports came to play an important role in the experiences and attitudes of German workers. For many who had been active in working-class sports associations that had been outlawed by the Nazi regime in 1933, KdF sports classes were the only available sites to continue their athletic activities. KdF sports could thus help the regime to integrate many of these workers, at least superficially, into the new regime and its community. However, as I will also show in Chap. 2, there were also cases where workers tried to subvert KdF's programs and use its infrastructure independently of the Nazi regime's intentions.

The re-formation of Germans' bodies and the *Volksgemeinschaft* were only one side of KdF's overall undertaking. KdF's "joy production" also consisted in large parts in arranging entertainment events of all kinds. This

activity will be at the focus of analysis in the two middle chapters of this book. In Chap. 3, I explore the cultural programming of KdF, especially in the arena of theater, opera, and vaudeville. I will show that, as was the case in many other areas of the Third Reich, the history of this activity cannot be characterized as an homogenous or even smooth process. Rather, there are many conflicts, tensions, and ambiguities to be encountered when looking closely at the contexts, plans, and practices of KdF's arranging of cultural events. Originally, performances organized or underwritten by KdF, such as plays or concerts and opera performances, were closely tied to the objective of "bringing culture to workers" as a way to foster the realization of the Nazi-envisioned, "classless" *Volksgemeinschaft*. KdF's programming was intended to allow German workers (first and foremost) access to previously unaffordable or inaccessible cultural events. In some regards, KdF adhered to this agenda even throughout the years of World War II. I will demonstrate this in Chap. 3 by discussing the organization's involvement with the annual Wagner opera festival in Bayreuth, Bavaria. The chapter will also show, however, that KdF often opted for more "low-brow" events, mostly arranging entertainment-focused productions such as comedies, popular music concerts, or variety shows. Additionally, it will become clear that any form of political education or direct indoctrination into Nazi ideology took a back seat to "joy production" through entertainment.

This focus on "joy production" through fun and amusement will become even more apparent in Chap. 4, which deals with the entertainment events KdF arranged for German soldiers. Troop entertainment for the Wehrmacht—a thus far somewhat underexplored topic in the historiography on World War II and Nazi Germany—became an important part of the leisure organization's portfolio after 1939. During the war, KdF sent touring solo artists and ensembles to German-occupied areas, where they staged plays, concerts, variety shows, and other entertainment events for German soldiers. Once again, we see in Chap. 4 how KdF's focus was on easily accessible, primarily amusing content—despite the fact that such programming was by no means an uncontested development at the time. The chapter will also highlight that, in addition to providing entertainment for Wehrmacht soldiers, the leisure organization also brought its "joy production" events into Nazi concentration camps, such as, KdF's staging of theater, musical, and vaudeville performances for concentration camp personnel in places like Auschwitz or Majdanek.

What may be called the "internal" and "external" dimensions of "joy production" will be looked at more closely in Chap. 5. Whereas KdF's

sports and entertainment activities can be said to apply "internally," to German people themselves (their body and minds), the organization also worked to create the vision of a happy *Volksgemeinschaft* by altering the "external" places in which people lived and worked. This final chapter examines KdF projects of shaping work sites and living spaces, which were primarily the mandate of the organization's Beauty of Labor department. The department implemented so-called "beautification campaigns" to clean and rebuild the German shop floor and the German countryside. I will examine this undertaking in Chap. 5, suggesting that this shaping of spaces can be seen as an attempt by KdF to micro-manage Germans' lives as part of a Nazi "civilizing mission" driven by Nazi ideas about race, class, and space. In addition to an examination of the beautification campaigns, this "civilizing mission" can only be fully understood through a reconsideration of some of KdF's cultural activities as they relate specifically to the villages. Therefore, Chap. 5 includes a discussion of initiatives such as village community evenings and village books. The chapter concludes by looking at the overlap between KdF's internal and external activities, in the extension of cleaning from factories and villages to the bodies—and then the minds—of factory workers and villagers. Ultimately, KdF's reform work was intended to help overcome social differences, thereby strengthening the "racial core" of the German *Volk* and beautifying the German living space. KdF's spatial strategies worked to create places in which people would live or work happily and would then join the organizations other sports and culture programs in order to strengthen the *Volksgemeinschaft* through "joy production."

Notes

1. The importance of joy in Nazism has been pointed out before. As the editors of 2011 volume *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany* state in their introduction, joy was "one of the most important promises the Nazi movement made"; Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d'Almeida, "Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany: An Introduction," in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, ed. Pamela E. Swett, Ross, Corey, and Fabrice d'Almeida (Houndmills/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1.
2. Please refer to note 54 for the different ways the term can be translated.
3. A comprehensive history of the German Labor Front has recently been provided by Rüdiger Hachtmann; see Rüdiger Hachtmann,

Das Wirtschaftsimperium der Deutschen Arbeitsfront 1933–1945 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012). On the history of the DAF, see also Rüdiger Hachtmann, "Arbeit und Arbeitsfront: Ideologie und Praxis," in *Arbeit im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Marc Buggeln and Michael Wildt (Munich: De Gruyter, 2014), 87–106; Rüdiger Hachtmann, "'Volksgemeinschaftliche Dienstleister'? : Anmerkungen zu Selbstverständnis und Funktion der Deutschen Arbeitsfront und der NS-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude,'" in *"Volksgemeinschaft": Mythos, wirkungsmächtige soziale Verheißung oder soziale Realität im "Dritten Reich"?*, ed. Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012), 111–31; Michael Schneider, "'Organisation aller schaffenden Deutschen der Stirn und der Faust' : Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF)," in *"Und sie werden nicht mehr frei sein ihr ganzes Leben": Funktion und Stellenwert der NSDAP, ihrer Gliederungen und angeschlossenen Verbände im "Dritten Reich,"* ed. Stephanie Becker and Christoph Studt (Berlin: LIT, 2012), 159–78; Michael Schneider, *Unterm Hakenkreuz: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung 1933 bis 1939* (Bonn: Dietz, 1999), esp. 102 f. and 168–243; Gunther Mai and Conan Fischer, "National Socialist Factory Cell Organisation and the German Labour Front: National Socialist Labour Policy and Organisations," in *The Rise of National Socialism and the Working Classes in Weimar Germany* (Providence/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1996), 118–36; Matthias Frese, *Betriebspolitik im "Dritten Reich" : Deutsche Arbeitsfront, Unternehmer und Staatsbürokratie in der westdeutschen Großindustrie 1933–1939* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1991); Matthias Frese, "Arbeit und Freizeit. Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront im Herrschaftssystem des Dritten Reiches.," in *Reaktionäre Modernität und Völkermord: Probleme des Umgangs mit der NS-Zeit in Museen, Ausstellungen und Gedenkstätten*, ed. Bernd Faulenbach and Franz-Josef Jelich (Essen: Klartext-Verlag, 1994), 58–69; Ronald Smelser, "Die 'braune Revolution'? : Robert Ley, Deutsche Arbeitsfront und sozialrevolutionäre Konzepte," in *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, ed. Wolfgang Michalka (Munich/Zurich: Piper, 1989), 418–29; and Ronald M. Smelser, *Robert Ley: Hitler's Labor Front Leader* (Oxford: Berg, 1988).

For a discussion of various specific topics in regards to the history of the German Labor Front, see Rüdiger Hachtmann, "Kleinbürgerlicher Schmerbauch und breite bürgerliche Brust: Zur sozialen Zusammensetzung der Führungselite der Deutschen

Arbeitsfront," in *Solidargemeinschaft und Erinnerungskultur im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ursula Bitzegeio, Anja Kruke, and Meik Woyke (Bonn: Dietz, 2009), 233–57; Rüdiger Hachtmann, "Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront im Zweiten Weltkrieg," in *Krieg und Wirtschaft*, ed. Dietrich Eichholtz (Berlin: Metropol, 1999), 69–107; Karsten Linne, "Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront und die internationale Freizeit- und Sozialpolitik 1935 bis 1945," *Neunzehnhundertneunundneunzig* 10, no. 1 (1995 1995): 65–81; Karsten Linne, "Sozialpropaganda : Die Auslandspublizistik der Deutschen Arbeitsfront 1936–1944," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 57, no. 3 (2009): 237–54; Karl Heinz Roth, *Facetten des Terrors: Der Geheimdienst der "Deutschen Arbeitsfront" und die Zerstörung der Arbeiterbewegung 1933–1938* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2000); and Robert Schwarzbauer, "Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront in Salzburg : Instrument zur totalen Kontrolle," in *Machtstrukturen der NS-Herrschaft*, ed. Helga Embacher (Salzburg: Stadtgemeinde Salzburg, 2014), 166–206. Older, still influential works on Nazi social politics are Timothy W. Mason, *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich: Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1977); and David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany, 1933–1939*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966).

4. At the inauguration event for *Nach der Arbeit*/KdF, Adolf Hitler was credited with having conceived of the organization, and of having demanded that it "ensure for [him] that the people keep its nerve; since you can only do politics with a people of strong nerve"; Anatol von Hübbenet, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Aufbau und Arbeit* (Berlin: NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude," 1939), 2. (Unless otherwise noted, all translations of German primary sources and secondary literature are by the author.)
5. Nazi leaders such as Robert Ley, the head of the German Labor Front, quite openly admitted that the Italian institution had been the model for their own leisure organization; see, for example, Robert Ley, *Durchbruch der sozialen Ehre* (Berlin: Mehden, 1935).
6. A comprehensive English-language study of Fascist Italy's Leisure Organization is: Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

7. The term seems to have been coined in Italy in 1925 to name the new organization.
8. Victoria de Grazia calls *Dopolavoro* "a hybrid institution," which "was at one time or another a technocratic scheme, a fascist trade union recreation hall, a state regulatory agency, and a fascist party auxiliary;" de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent*, 16. For the relationship between *Dopolavoro* and *Kraft durch Freude*, see also Daniela Liebscher, "Faschismus als Modell: Die faschistische Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro und die NS-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude' in der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Faschismus in Italien und Deutschland: Studien zu Transfer und Vergleich*, ed. Sven Reichardt and Armin Nolzen (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 94–118.
9. Neither the name change nor the desire of the Nazi organization to move beyond its Italian inspiration precluded cooperation between the two organizations. *Dopolavoro* supported KdF's vacation trips; see, for example BArch R 4902/1029, page 1, "Reichsamtsleiter Dreßler-Andreß gibt Rechenschaft. Deutsche Arbeiter werden nach Italien und Japan reisen," *Deutsches Nachrichten Blatt,* June 12, 1937; as well as Max Everwien, "Nachklänge von der KdF.-Fahrt nach Rom: Dopolavoro, Freizeitgestaltung in Italien," *Arbeitertum,* Nov. 15, 1937, 13–4. In February 1938, Achille Starace, the Party Secretary of Italy's National Fascist Party, and Robert Ley, the leader of DAF and KdF, signed an agreement that started a vacation exchange program between Germans and Italians and their respective leisure organizations; BArch NS 22/551. Despite such cooperation, there was also competition between the two organizations. Nazi propaganda repeatedly stressed that KdF was the more successful leisure organization. A 1936 article, for example, proudly remarked that KdF, a mere three years in existence, could boast 35 million participants, in flattering contrast to *Dopolavoro*'s approximately 2 million; Max Everwien, "Die Italiener erfassen nur 2 Millionen Menschen, KdF betreut 35 Millionen: Dopolavoro und 'Kraft durch Freude'. Andere Länder, andere Sitten," *Arbeitertum,* Feb.1, 1936, 17.
10. See IfZ Munich F 104; "Protokoll des Gespräches mit Herrn Dreßler-Andreß am 22. Juli 1974 in Berlin-Karlshorst."
11. But I wish to be careful of the word "instrumentalist." As I will presently mention in regard to KdF's goal of building the Nazi

Volksgemeinschaft, joy would help create that "racial community," but *Volksgemeinschaft* would also create joy. Likewise, KdF sought to use joy to create strength, but in fact strength also brought joy, and the organization seemed genuinely to desire both for the German population, alongside the wish to form the German population for the Reich. It is a central theme of this book that KdF really was interested in "joy production," which was thus not just a tool for other goals.

12. In 1934, a KdF booklet listed 11 departments, of which three (the Bursary, Department for Youth, and Department for Press and Propaganda) were joint departments with the German Labor Front. The other eight were the Department for Organization, the Educational Department, the Department for Cultural Affairs, the Department for Travel, Hiking and Holidays the Department of Beauty of Labor, the Department for Self-Help and Settlement, the Sports Department, and the Department for Folklore and Homeland.
13. Scholars such as Michael Wildt have shown that both inclusion and exclusion were central elements of this concept; see Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt, "Einleitung," in *Volksgemeinschaft: Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2009), 17.
14. It is also important to stress that KdF's propaganda can be mostly described as "positive" propaganda, in the sense that it constituted promises and mostly describes (future, yet seemingly attainable) situations of joy, contentment, and individual and collective enjoyment, rather than propaganda that focused on warnings and stoking fear. Both kinds of propaganda were part of the Third Reich's overall propagandistic arsenal; for a discussion on how these kinds of Nazi propaganda were linked to the goal to strengthen the *Volksgemeinschaft* through evoking collective emotions, see Thymian Bussemer, *Propaganda und Populärkultur: Konstruierte Erlebniswelten im Nationalsozialismus* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 2000), 2–3 and 73–142. On the emotionality of Nazi ideology and on the role of positive emotions for the Third Reich's attractiveness amongst many Germans considered from a socio-psychological perspective, see Gudrun Brockhaus, *Schauder und Idylle: Faschismus als Erlebnisangebot* (Munich: Antje Kunstmann, 1997).

15. On this aspect, see Bussemer's point about the "parasitic reception" of Nazi propaganda, briefly explained in the next note.
16. Here, I build on the work of communication scientist Thymian Bussemer, who has argued that Nazi propaganda created for many Germans experiences that they perceived as emancipatory, while many were—at the very same time—quite critical of some of the propagandistic content and only picked up those contents of Nazism's popular propaganda that appealed to them (Thyssemer characterizes this as a "parasitic" way of dealing with Nazi propaganda); see Bussemer, *Propaganda und Populärkultur*, 3.
17. For this, I especially relied on administrative sources from various Nazi organizations, including KdF, which are largely held in Germany's Federal Archives in Berlin (*Bundesarchiv*; in short BArch). Other archives from which material in this book has been drawn are listed in the Bibliography.
18. However, the scarcity of ego-documents on experiences with KdF must be stressed—there are few sources available that give first-hand insights about KdF's practices (neither sports nor cultural events). For example, the Deutsches Tagebuch Archive (DTA) in Emmendingen, Germany had no more than a few diaries that mentioned KdF. KdF is also conspicuously seldom mentioned in the interviews of several oral history projects on the Third Reich. Transcripts of these interviews can be found in the archive "Deutsches Gedächtnis" in Lüdenscheid (here on referred to as "Archiv 'Dt. Gedächtnis'"). Overall, the extent to which these everyday experiences with KdF are omitted from personal accounts of the time, such as diaries, or from post-war testimonies is quite remarkable. This absence in the sources might be due to the fact that the writers of letters or diaries perceived the organization's activities as too banal or quotidian to mention in their accounts. For post-war texts, individuals might have been careful not to stress positive experiences during the Third Reich, either for fear of being perceived as Nazis or because they wished to stress the negatives and atrocities of Nazi Germany, accordingly de-emphasizing or omitting "positive" aspects.
19. *Alltagsgeschichte* emerged in (West) Germany in the 1970s as history writing from "below." On the concepts and theory—as well as examples—of this approach, see Alf Lüdtke, *The History of Everyday Life : Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); esp. ibid., "What Is the History of Everyday Life and Who Are Its Practioniers?," in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3–40. A very useful overview is provided by Andrew Stuart Bergerson; see Andrew Stuart Bergerson, *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 258–269. For a useful summary of the achievements of *Alltagsgeschichte* research and suggestions for future scholarship, see Paul Steege et al., "The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter," *Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 2 (June 2008): 358–78. For an early debate about writing the everyday history of the Third Reich, see Martin Broszat, *Alltagsgeschichte der NS-Zeit. Neue Perspektive oder Trivialisierung?: Kolloquium* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1984). The present book, while inspired by the questions and approaches of *Alltagsgeschichte*, cannot provide a complete "history from below" of KdF due to the limited availability of appropriate sources.

20. Sopade reports, i.e. reports by the exiled Social Democratic Party, point to the fact that workers enjoyed KdF events and saw them as a sign that life under Nazis was better than before; see, for example, reports from March and May 1935 in Klaus Behnken, ed., *Deutschland-Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade)* (Petra Nettelbeck, 1980). A 1949 public opinion poll reveals KdF's popularity among Germans, even four years after the end of World War II. KdF is listed in several answers to the question: "Was there something you particularly liked about National Socialism?"; Institut für Demoskopie, *Das Dritte Reich: Eine Studie über die Nachwirkungen des Nationalsozialismus* (Allenbach: Institut für Demoskopie, 1949), 11. KdF was also mentioned by some interviewees who responded affirmatively to the question "Do you believe that National Socialism is a good idea, but was badly executed [during the Third Reich]?"; ibid., 22.
21. Conceivably, KdF was content enough that its goal of "joy production" be generally realized, even if this occurred in part beyond the grasp of the organization's "hands-on" micro-management.
22. For a broader version of such an argument, according to which the Nazi regime employed entertainment to "distract" from its crimes, see Hans Dieter Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein* (Munich/

Vienna: Hanser, 1983). See also Hans-Ulrich Thamer, *Verführung und Gewalt: Deutschland 1933–1945*, (Berlin: Siedler, 1986), 427.

23. *Eigensinn*, or sometimes *Eigen-Sinn*, refers, per Lüdtke, to the "willfulness, spontaneous self-will, a kind of self-determination, an act of (re)appropriating alienated social relations on and off the shop floor" that he discovers in his analysis of workers' everyday life; see Lüdtke, *History of Everyday Life*, 313.
24. This distraction argument was first raised during the Third Reich in reports compiled for the (exiled) Social Democrat party; for example, one reports states that "KdF distracts, helps with setting up a smoke-screen for the brains, functions propagandistically for the regime;" Behnken, *Deutschland-Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade)*, 1456.
25. See "froh" *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache* (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 2002); "Freude," *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache* (Berlin ; New York: De Gruyter, 2002).
26. Alongside "joy," I will also use "fun" to describe the content and effects of KdF's activities. "Fun," which translates to the German "*Spaß,*" is not often employed in KdF's own writings. However, "fun" captures the actual emphasis of many KdF activities quite well. I mostly use "joy" and "fun" interchangeably for variety, but I am more likely to use "fun" if an activity or event emphasizes light-hearted amusement. On possible conceptual categorizations of "fun"—or the impossibility thereof, see Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1949), 3.

    Additionally, we should recall that "*Freude*" could also be translated as "happiness," and "*froh*" as "happy." But "happiness" is a term equally broad and in need of conceptualization; for a philosophical history of the concept, see Darrin M. McMahon, *Happiness : A History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005). Overall, I again use these different terms mainly for variety. Nonetheless, in both German and English, concepts such as joy and joyfulness, happiness, cheerfulness, contentment, well-being, amusement, merriment, and enjoyment, even bliss and ecstasy, while all closely related, are not always interchangeable. I try to use the word that seems most appropriate where this makes a difference.
27. On the concepts of "high" and "low" culture for the German context, see Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand, eds., *High and Low*

Cultures: German Attempts at Mediation (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).

28. Jost Hermand, *Deutsche Kulturgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt Primus, 2006), 135.
29. Tiredness leads to "emptiness of the soul and the body," according to KdF's leader Robert Ley, which is "not averted or filled up by putting the human being on a day bed and letting him stare at the ceiling, but only through feeding new nourishment to soul and body"; BArch R 43 II/557, page 4, "Kraft durch Freude. Kundgebung der Deutschen Arbeitsfront. Dr. Ley über die Feierabend- (sic) 'Nach der Arbeit.'"
30. For a history of the debate in Germany on the importance and meaning of work, see Joan Campbell, *Joy in Work, German Work: The National Debate, 1800–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). For the role of "work" in the Third Reich, see Marc Buggeln and Michael Wildt, eds., *Arbeit im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: De Gruyter, 2014); and here esp. Michael Wildt, "Der Begriff der Arbeit bei Hitler," in *Arbeit im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Marc Buggeln and Michael Wildt (Munich: De Gruyter, 2014), 3–24; and Harriet Scharnberg, "Arbeit und Gemeinschaft. Darstellung 'deutscher' und 'jüdischer' Arbeit in NS-Bildpropaganda," in *Arbeit im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: De Gruyter, 2014), 165–68.
31. In 1936, Horst Dreßler-Andreß, then KdF's chief executive officer, explained that KdF's work was helping to avert "the atomizing effect of spending one's leisure time individualistically, which is not following the natural life form of a social community, that is the community of the people;" Horst Dreßler-Andreß, *Die kulturelle Mission der Freizeitgestaltung* (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1936), 6.
32. Wolfhard Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude' : Freizeitgestaltung und Arbeiterschaft im Dritten Reich" (Dissertation, Ludwig Maximilian University, 1976); and Laurence Moyer, "The Kraft Durch Freude Movement in Nazi Germany: 1933–1939." (Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1968).
33. For a shorter overview on the institutional structure of KdF, see Hermann Weiss, "Ideologie der Freizeit im Dritten Reich: Die NS-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude,'" *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 33 (1993): 289–303. For a discussion of KdF's role within the

Third Reich's social policy, see Friedhelm Vahsen, "Freizeiterziehung als Sozialpolitik: Die Kulturarbeit der NS-Volkswohlfahrt," in *Soziale Arbeit und Faschismus. Volkspflege und Paedagogik im Nationalsozialismus.*, ed. Hans-Uwe Otto and Heinz Sünker (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1989), 133–61. For a specific discussion of women's participation in KdF, a brief but insightful discussion is provided in Anson Rabinbach, "Organized Mass Culture in the Third Reich: The Women of Kraft Durch Freude," in *The Rise of the Nazi Regime: Historical Reassessments*, ed. Charles S. Maier, Stanley Hoffman, and Andrew Gould (Boulder/London: Westview Press, 1986), 97–105.

34. Much of this scholarship is based on the seminal work of Marxist historian Timothy W. Mason; see Mason, *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich: Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft.*; or ibid., *Social Policy in the Third Reich : The Working Class and the National Community* (Providence: Berg, 1993). KdF as a tool for appeasement is part of the picture of the Third Reich's somewhat worker-friendly policies being born out of purely opportunistic—and ultimately deceitful—motives. (In fact, Mason himself remained for a long time unconvinced of Nazism's success in "winning over" German workers—but see his later qualifications in "Die Bändigung der Arbeiterklasse im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland: Eine Einleitung," in *Angst, Belohnung, Zucht und Ordnung: Herrschaftsmechanismen im Nationalsozialismus*, eds. Carola Sachse et al. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982), 47.) However, later scholars, many of them *Alltagsgeschichte* historians, have contested the "distraction" interpretation. Alf Lüdtke, for example, argues that the Nazis were rather successful in appealing to workers by making "symbolic offerings"; see Alf Lüdtke, "What Happened to the 'Fiery Red Glow'? Workers' Experiences and German Fascism," in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 207; see also Alf Lüdtke, "'Ehre der Arbeit': Industriearbeiter und Macht der Symbole. Zur Reichweite symbolischer Orientierungen im Nationalsozialismus," in *Arbeiter im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Klaus Tenefelde (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991), 343–92; and Alf Lüdtke, "The Appeal of Exterminating 'Others': German Workers and the Limits of Resistance," *The Journal of Modern History* 64 (December 1,

1992): 46–67. As indicated above, my own study follows Lüdkte and I would suggest that KdF's practices could be read as such "symbolic offerings."

35. Werner Kahl, *The German Worker Sees the World* (Berlin, 1940), 39. For 1938, Timothy Mason states that over 10 million Germans participated in KdF cruises alone; Mason, *Social Policy in the Third Reich*, 160.
36. For the intended "energizing" effects the travel was to have on workers, see Kahl, *The German Worker Sees the World*, 20; also Karl Busch, *Unter dem Sonnenrad* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1938), 92f.
37. See Hans Winkler, *Legenden um Hitler:* "*Schöpfer der Autobahnen*," "*'Kraft durch Freude' für den Arbeiter*," "*Überwinder von Versailles*," "*Vorkämpfer Europas gegen den Bolschewismus*" (Berlin: Colloquium, 1961), 34.
38. Sascha Howind, *Die Illusion eines guten Lebens: Kraft durch Freude und nationalsozialistische Sozialpropaganda* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2013).
39. Shelley Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
40. See Wolfgang König, *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft: "Volksprodukte" im Dritten Reich. Vom Scheitern einer nationalsozialistischen Konsumgesellschaft* (Paderborn/Munich: Schöningh, 2004), 12.
41. For a recent study on consumption in the Third Reich, see S. Jonathan Wiesen, *Creating the Nazi Marketplace: Commerce and Consumption in the Third Reich* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). On the relationship between consumption and the ideology of *Volksgemeinschaft,* see also Birthe Kundrus, "Greasing the Palm of the Volksgemeinschaft? Consumption under National Socialism," in *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lifes*, ed. Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 156–70; and Hans-Werner Niemann, "'Volksgemeinschaft' als Konsumgemeinschaft?," in *"Volksgemeinschaft": Mythos, wirkungsmächige soziale Verheißung oder soziale Realität im "Dritten Reich"?*, ed. Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann (Paderborn et al.: Schöningh, 2012), 87–109. For a longer study, see the

aforementioned König, *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft*. For the controversy around the role of consumption in Nazi Germany, see Hartmut Berghoff, "Gefälligkeitsdiktatur oder Tyrannei des Mangels? Neue Kontroversen zur Konsumgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht (GWU)* 58 (2007): 502–18. For a useful introduction into the history of consumption in the Third Reich, with a focus on Germans' experiences, see Tim Schanetzky, *"Kanonen statt Butter": Wirtschaft und Konsum im Dritten Reich*, Die Deutschen und der Nationalsozialismus (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2015). For a more in-depth discussion of Nazi economic policies, see J. Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Viking, 2007).

42. See Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State* (New York: Metropolitan, 2007).
43. KdF's leader Robert Ley waxed extremely lyrical on this topic: "Previous rulers believed that the people could only be made happy by providing full stomachs. Material demands, material desires were the sole content of their statesmanship. Yes, I dare to claim that even if they had succeeded, our people would not have been any more happy, but rather more unhappy than ever. We National Socialists know that we cannot remedy material destitution overnight. […] But we know that we can have all Germans partake in the rich and high culture of German arts, music, theater and film, briefly put, in the joy and beauty of life in our people"; BArch R 43 II/557, page 5.; "Kraft durch Freude. Kundgebung der Deutschen Arbeitsfront. Dr. Ley über die Feierabend- [sic] 'Nach der Arbeit.'" Often, however, such views seem to protest too much, as if KdF (or the overall regime) was trying to disguise the fact that it lacked the resources or motivation to make material differences to workers' lives.
44. There are a couple of works that deal exclusively with the work of KdF's Travel Department. Bruno Frommann stresses in his dissertation that KdF trips, while having a political intent, remained apolitical enterprises and thus should be considered first and foremost as tourist events; Bruno Frommann, "Reisen im Dienste politischer Zielsetzungen : Arbeiter-Reisen und 'Kraft durch Freude'-Fahrten" (Dissertation, University of Stuttgart, 1992). In contrast, Kristin

Semmens argues in her study of commercial tourism in Nazi Germany that "tourism's real value was political" and that for KdF travel and other encounters, the level of "nazification" was highly dependent on its locality; Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (Houndmills/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 12 and 190. For a short discussion of the (everyday) perspective of KdF tourists and their hosts, see Kristin Semmens, "A Holiday from the Nazis? Tourism in the Third Reich," in *Life and Times in Nazi Germany*, ed. Lisa Pine (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 142–146. Hasso Spode has written seminal articles on KdF tourism; see Hasso Spode, "'Der deutsche Arbeiter reist': Massentourismus im Dritten Reich," in *Sozialgeschichte der Freizeit*, ed. Gerhard Huck (Wuppertal: Hammer, 1980), 281–306; and ibid., "Arbeiterurlaub im Dritten Reich," in *Angst, Belohnung, Zucht und Ordnung: Herrschaftsmechanismen im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Carola Sachse et al. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982), 275–328. See also Anton Badinger, "Lust auf Lebensraum: Massentourismus im Nationalsozialismus," in *Inszenierung der Gewalt. Kunst und Alltagskultur im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Hubert Ch. Ehalt (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1996), 101–35. For a more recent discussion of KdF travel and its role within the DAF, see Daniela Liebscher, "Mit KdF 'die Welt erschliessen': Der Beitrag der KdF-Reisen zur Aussenpolitik der Deutschen Arbeitsfront 1934–1939," *Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts* 14, no. 1 (1999): 42–72. For a discussion of KdF's cruise ships, see Heinz Schön, *Die KdF-Schiffe und ihr Schicksal: Eine Dokumentation* (Stuttgart: Motorbuch-Verlag, 1987); Wolfgang Müller, *Die Flotte der NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude"* (Martenshagen: Sundwerbung DSM, 2005); and Sascha Howind, "Das 'Traumschiff' für die 'Volksgemeinschaft'? : Die 'Gustloff' und die soziale Propaganda des Dritten Reiches," in *Die Wilhelm Gustloff*, ed. Bill Niven (Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2011), 27–60. For an ethnographic study of Germans' experiences on KdF cruise ships; see Claudia Schallenberg, "KdF: 'Kraft durch Freude' : Innenansichten einer Seereise" (Master Thesis, University Bremen, 2005). For an article on KdF's planned seaside resort on the island of Rügen, see Shelley Baranowski, "A Family Vacation for Workers: The Strength through Joy Resort at Prora," *German History* 25,

no. 4 (2007): 539–59; and Gritt Brosowski, "Die Nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude' und das erste 'KdF'-Seebad Prora auf Rügen," *Fundus* 4 (1999): 261–96.

45. One partial exception is some detailed research on KdF's department *Schönheit der Arbeit* [Beauty of Labor]. While scholarly publications about this department's practices and propaganda are not nearly as numerous as those about the Travel Department, Chup Friemert has written a book-length study on Beauty of Labor's activities, and Anson G. Rabinbach an in-depth article; see Chup Friemert, *Produktionästhetik im Faschismus: Das Amt Schönheit der Arbeit von 1933 bis 1939*. (Munich: Damnitz, 1980); and Anson G. Rabinbach, "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich," *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, no. 4 (October 1976): 43–74. Baranowski also dedicates a large section of her study to Beauty of Labor; see Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy*, 75–117.
46. My analysis of KdF's sports builds on a solid body of scholarship, especially the seminal work by Hajo Bernett; see Hajo Bernett, *Nationalsozialistische Leibeserziehung* (Schorndorf b. Stuttgart: Hofmann, 1966); Hajo Bernett, *Sportpolitik im Dritten Reich aus den Akten der Reichskanzlei* (Schorndorf bei Stuttgart: Hofmann, 1971); and Hajo Bernett, "Nationalsozialistischer Volkssport bei 'Kraft durch Freude,'" *Stadion* 5, no. 1 (1979): 89–146. Sports are among the various KdF leisure activities in factories discussed in Carola Sachse, "Freizeit zwischen Betrieb und Volksgemeinschaft: Betriebliche Freizeitpolitik im Nationalsozialismus," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 33 (1993): 305–28. For a recent overview of sports in the Third Reich, which uses sports in the town of Göttingen as a case study, see David Imhoof, "Playing with the Third Reich: Sports, Politics and Free Time in Nazi Germany," in *Life and Times in Nazi Germany*, ed. Lisa Pine (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 161–86.
47. The other reason for my focusing on KdF's sports and culture instead of its tourism activities is that my primary concern is on the "everyday" practices of Germans during the Third Reich. KdF's propagandistic claims notwithstanding, it cannot be argued that the organization's vacation program made travelling in the Third Reich an "ordinary," "day-to-day" activity for many people.
48. See Kahl, *The German Worker Sees the World*. Kahl states: "Unlike the ordinary tourist who puts up in one of the big hotels and is

more or less always surrounded by the same sort of people and served the same type of meals, the Strength through Joy tourist, in his capacity as a son of the people, has greater facility in forming contacts with his landlords as well as with the local inhabitants and therefore hears more and sees more"; ibid. See also Robert Ley, *Ein Volk erobert die Freude* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1937), 23f. Ley claims: "With [KdF] it is much more fun and much more 'pleasant'" and that "rather than a gathering of a more or less random mass of 'individualists,' there is a happy community, in which social differences are blurred and a true comradeship comes into being."

49. See Hübbenet, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Aufbau und Arbeit*, 47f.: "The foundation of the KdF travel business is naturally formed by vacation trips within Germany, which shall acquaint each German with the beauties of his homeland."
50. See for example, Busch, *Unter dem Sonnenrad*, 93.
51. As Shelley Baranowski has pointed out, the Travel Department was very active in ensuring that these processes could be realized: it organized "get-togethers with locals during their stay [and] KdF required local officials as well as proprietors who fed and housed vacationers to host the events, which ranged from displays of local customs and costumes to hikes"; Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy*, 210. On KdF-tourists' hosts, see also Semmens, "A Holiday from the Nazis? Tourism in the Third Reich," 144–146.
52. This even applied on KdF cruises to non-German destinations. Activities on KdF ships included events dedicated to displaying the customs of individual German regions. For example, during a voyage of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* to Rome, folk dance groups performed dances from their home regions in traditional costume; see Busch, *Unter dem Sonnenrad*, 93. In general, international travel was believed to enhance the travelers' appreciation of Germany. This becomes clear in KdF publications that stress that German tourists, while enjoying their trips to foreign places, came also to realize how "orderly," "developed," or just familiar and "German" Germany really was; see Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy*, 187.
53. Photographs from KdF's cruise trips illustrate this stress on entertainment—it was, of course, also very important to KdF to constantly publish "evidence" of how "fun-filled" its activities were; see, for example, *Arbeitertum*, Sonderheft Madeirafahrt 1936, 11 and back cover and *Arbeitertum,* December 1, 1941, 10.

54. *Volksgemeinschaft* has been variously translated in English as "ethnic community," "folk community," "national community," or "racial community." In this book, I will mostly use the German term. When, usually for variety, I opt for English, I will use "racial community" to emphasize that this concept was deeply embedded in Nazi racial thinking, as summarized by Kurt Bauer: "The National Socialists aspired to a racial social utopia of a racially pure, Aryan-German *Volksgemeinschaft* in a Eurasian space dominated by Germany"; Kurt Bauer, *Nationalsozialismus : Ursprünge, Anfänge, Aufstieg und Fall* (Wien: Böhlau, 2008), 109. In fact, *Volksgemeinschaft* was by no means a "Nazi term"; it had been part of German (political) discourse since the nineteenth century, and became very prevalent during World War I, see Bajohr and Wildt, "Einleitung," 10; and Michael Wildt, "Die Ungleichheit des Volkes: 'Volksgemeinschaft' in der politischen Kommunikation der Weimarer Republik," in *Volksgemeinschaft: Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2009), 40. On the usage of the term in the Weimar Republic, see ibid.
55. See Heinrich August Winkler's review of Mason's *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich*: Heinrich August Winkler, "Vom Mythos der Volksgemeinschaft," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 17 (1977): 1–15.
56. See Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung: Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007), 92. For a similar point about *Volksgemeinschaft*'s "powerful integratory force," see David Welch, "Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People's Community," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 2 (April 2004): 238. This new direction has not been an uncontested shift; for a somewhat critical account of how historians use the concept, see Ian Kershaw, "Volksgemeinschaft: Potential and Limitations of the Concept," in *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lifes*, ed. Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 29–42; for a defense of the concept, see Michael Wildt, "Volksgemeinschaft: A Modern Perspective on National Socialist Society," in *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany*, ed. Steber and Gotto, 43–59. For a short overview of this historiographical debate, see also Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto, "Volksgemeinschaft: Writing the Social History of the Nazi

Regime," in *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany*, ed. Steber and Gotto, 10–15.

57. As a source term, there is no clear-cut definition of *Volksgemeinschaft*—in fact, its vagueness might have been one its advantages—although, as mentioned in note 54 the term does not even originate with the Nazis; see Wildt, "Die Ungleichheit des Volkes," esp. 24. See also Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 38.
58. See especially Dietmar von Reeken and Malte Thiessen, eds., *"Volksgemeinschaft" als soziale Praxis: Neue Forschungen zur NS-Gesellschaft vor Ort* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2013); see also David Reinicke et al., eds., *Gemeinschaft als Erfahrung : Kulturelle Inszenierungen und soziale Praxis 1930–1960* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2014).
59. This new research has culminated in a series of rich and wide-ranging essay collections: Reinicke et al., *Gemeinschaft als Erfahrung*; Steber and Gotto, "Volksgemeinschaft: Writing the Social History of the Nazi Regime"; Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann, ed., *"Volksgemeinschaft": Mythos, wirkungsmächtige soziale Verheißung oder soziale Realität im "Dritten Reich"?: Zwischenbilanz einer kontroversen Debatte*, Nationalsozialistische "Volksgemeinschaft" (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012); and Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft: Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2009).
60. Steber and Gotto, "Volksgemeinschaft: Writing the Social History of the Nazi Regime," 2. See also Schmiechen-Ackermann, *"Volksgemeinschaft."*
61. Kerstin Thieler, "Gemeinschaft, Erfahrung und NS-Gesellschaft – Eine Einführung," in *Gemeinschaft als Erfahrung: Kulturelle Inszenierungen und Soziale Praxis 1930–1960*, ed. David Reinicke et al. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2014), 7.
62. Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, 61. That the Nazis were eager to create momentary experiences of a "realized" *Volksgemeinschaft* is also posited by Markus Urban in his analysis of the Nuremberg Party Rallies; see Markus Urban, "Die inszenierte Utopie: Zur Konstruktion von Gemeinschaft auf den

Reichsparteitagen der NSDAP," in *"Volksgemeinschaft,"* ed. Schmiechen-Ackermann, 135–57.

63. My reading of KdF as a "partial fulfillment" of a larger promise builds on work by Ulrich Herbert and Norbert Frei; see Ulrich Herbert, *Arbeit, Volkstum, Weltanschauung: Über Fremde und Deutsche im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verl., 1995), 95f; and Norbert Frei, *1945 und Wir : Das Dritte Reich im Bewusstsein der Deutschen* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005), 122 f.
64. For a recent discussion of the overall reasons for the popularity of the Third Reich amongst Germans, see Thomas Rohkrämer, *Die fatale Attraktion des Nationalsozialismus: Zur Popularität eines Unrechtsstaates* (Paderborn et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2013). See also Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich, Bavaria 1933–1945* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1983).

CHAPTER 2

Volksgemeinschaft at Play

"Don't you fancy joining […] and being as young and happy as you once were?" teases a 1935 article in a KdF magazine, before going on to promise: "In the fresh air and sun, your body will stretch out and enjoy its freedom. […] You will be strong and happy, healthy and powerful […] and you will be rewarded with a new and enriched attitude towards life."[1] These fine promises advertised a sports course offered by KdF's Sports Department.[2] The department was responsible for arranging sports and games for the German population and as such was one part of a large network of Nazi sport organizations, a network that grew out of the regime's obsession with strong and healthy bodies.[3]

The early activities of KdF's Sports Department focused on calisthenics, swimming, and track-and-field, but soon other kind of sports were integrated into the program so that, by 1936, a KdF propaganda brochure

Some of the arguments made in this chapter can also be found in Julia Timpe, "'Männer und Frauen bei fröhlichem Spiel': Ziele, Gestaltung und Aneignungsversuche von KdF-Betriebssport," in *Sport und Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Frank Becker and Ralf Schäfer (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016).
I have also related some ideas presented in the following to institutional practices in the Third Reich in an article I wrote with Elissa Mailänder, Alexandra Oeser, and Will Rall, to be published in the forthcoming volume *Ruptures in the Everyday: Views of Modern Germany from the Ground*, edited by Andrew Bergerson and Leonard Schmieding.

J. Timpe, *Nazi-Organized Recreation and Entertainment in the Third Reich*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-53193-3_2

could boast that there was practically no kind of sport that the leisure organization did not offer.[4] It ran so-called "open classes," which met on a regular basis, often weekly, and which everybody could join at any time.[5] In addition, KdF arranged special sports events, such as seasonal Sports Days and the so-called *Sportappelle* [Sports Musters] for German factory workers. The organization also came to dominate the arena of company sports when it launched what it called Factory Sports Communities all over Germany.[6] These enabled industrial workers to participate in sports programs that were offered on or near the grounds of their work places.

The head of KdF's Sports Department was Reichssportführer [Reich Sports Leader] Hans von Tschammer und Osten,[7] who also led the centralized German sports association of the Third Reich, the *Deutscher Reichsbund für Leibesübungen* [DRL, the German League for Physical Exercise].[8] The DRL was a product of Nazi *Gleichschaltung* practices, the measures undertaken by Hitler's government in the first stage of its rule to gain control over all areas of the political, economic, and social life of Germany. The Nazis were especially ruthless and comprehensive in their attacks against their political opponents. When striking at Germany's socialist parties and their organizations, the Nazis also dissolved German workers' sports associations—such as the *Arbeiter-Turn- und Sportbund* (the Workers' Gymnastics and Sports Federation, or the ATSB) and the *Kampfgemeinschaft für Rote Sporteinheit* [the Fighting Community for Red Sport Unity, often referred to as *Rotsport*, or Red Sport]—as well as individual workers' sports clubs; leading functionaries of these associations were persecuted and sent to concentration camps or murdered.[9] These workers' sports clubs had been important sites for the working-class movement since the nineteenth century. They were founded as counterparts to late-Imperial Germany's nationalistically orientated bourgeois gymnastic associations, which often barred workers from membership, and they grew into a crucial part of both the Communist and Social Democratic milieus in Germany.[10] Thus, the closure of these clubs greatly weakened leftist opposition to the Nazi regime. At the same time however, in shutting down these clubs, the regime had also opened a potentially dangerous void: Where would all of these former worker-athletes go? What would they do in their free time? While in itself the dissolving of workers' sports clubs closed down potential sites of working-class opposition to the Nazi regime, the danger, from the regime's point of view, was that this might only be a temporary effect. The Nazis were aware of the risk that the former participants in these clubs could, as an alternative, start underground

activities. Consequently, the Nazis were eager to fill this newly opened void with their own sports offerings, and the founding of KdF Sports Department, especially its activities in German factories, must be seen in this context.

Using sports to incorporate these workers into the envisioned Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* was one way the leisure organization sought to contribute to the building and fortification of this community; another facet of this goal was an interest in physicality and corresponding efforts to improve Germans' bodily strength through sports and exercise. Both were connected to KdF's other main objective in the realm of sport, producing joy for Germans and improving the quality of their everyday life. KdF's implementation of these goals will be the focus of this chapter, which will also explore how the organization (either willfully or unconsciously) opened up spaces for opposition-minded individuals and groups in the areas of sports.

If we are to believe statistics published by KdF, its sport activities met with growing enthusiasm from the German population: participation numbers rose from 630,000 in 1934 to 3.5 million in 1935, and then almost 6 million in the first half of 1936.[11] In 1937, the leisure organization spoke publicly of over 6.5 million people taking part in KdF sports nationwide; a different report even claimed over 9.5 million participants attending over 500,000 different sports events.[12] German Jews, however, could not join this ever-growing network of KdF sports programs. They had been officially excluded since 1935, in line with the Nuremberg Laws.[13] And KdF's antisemitism went further: trainers working for KdF were not allowed to teach "non-Aryans" outside the programs of the leisure organization, either in private or within the setting of another club.[14] KdF's sports organizers even spatially segregated its programs from Jews, as a photograph from 1935 illustrates: It displays a group of people in front of a sport field, where a SA-man holds up a sign announcing that KdF sports activities were ceasing on this specific field, as it was also accessible to Jews.[15]

Inevitably, the beginning of World War II affected KdF's sports activities, but it did not bring them to an end. Reich Sports Leader von Tschammer und Osten described in letters to his former employees and sport instructors, who were now soldiers at the front, how sports remained part of everyday life in wartime Germany. In the summer of 1940 he wrote that the *Reichssportfeld*, the large sports and recreational area around the 1936 Berlin Olympic Stadium, had "turned into a paradise for Berliners who

seek here strength and relaxation in their free time." On every weekday evening, von Tschammer und Osten reported, "old and young, fat and slim are doing sports on all fields, on all tracks and in the pools," and adds: "It is hard to believe that it's war when one sees this."[16] In 1940, KdF still arranged approximately 257,000 courses, which were attended by over 7 million people.[17] In the following year, the organization's statistics listed 2.3 million participants in KdF sports courses and over 9.4 million people taking part in Factory Sport events.[18] The number of KdF Factory Sports Communities also grew during the war, reaching 21,000 in 1941. Special sports events for German workers also continued during the war, sometimes even seeing higher participation numbers than in the pre-war years.[19]

But the war certainly limited KdF's efforts to produce joy through sports. Longer work hours left workers with little time and strength to do sports, notwithstanding the insistence of KdF and sports functionaries that in such circumstances its exercise programs were especially useful.[20] In addition, sports facilities were increasingly hard to secure. In October 1940, a Factory Sports Attendant at the Hermann-Göring Werke in Berlin felt the need to rejoice because: "We have a sports hall! It cost us a lot of effort before this came finally true, because several gyms, which we were to have 'as sure as death,' were transformed very recently into barracks rooms."[21] A few months earlier, the same company had had to postpone a planned bowling competition due to the ongoing threat of enemy bombing.[22] And in September 1943, the same Factory Sports Attendant was forced to cancel the event "Sports Day of Good Will," since its venue, a sports field near Berlin's Olympic Stadium, had been damaged the night before by enemy bombs, leaving the field unusable.[23] Of course, such practical difficulties are not surprising during a war.[24] In the face of such difficulties, the visible persistence of KdF and its sports attendants is noteworthy.[25] Despite all obstacles, KdF Factory Sports endured the longest of all the leisure organization's activities in Germany, and continued even after September 1, 1944, when a cessation of all other cultural activities had been ordered.[26]

Healthy Bodies, Happy People

KdF created enjoyable and accessible opportunities for frequent and intensive exercise in order to improve, among other goals, Germans' health and strength. The aim of the Sports Department was to reach as many people

as possible rather than necessarily to promote individual athletic excellence; this goal was expressed in the somewhat egalitarian motto, "It is not about how far somebody jumps – but that he jumps."[27] Healthier and stronger Germans would be more productive, and thus benefit the German state and its Nazi government, and so for KdF "sports and games were of decisive importance […] for the day-by-day struggle for the existence and the productive capacity of a nation."[28] Indeed, although KdF tended to emphasize the fun side of sport, participation in sports could also be considered a German's "duty to his people." In the Third Reich[29] workers, especially, were expected to improve their bodily strength. In May 1939 a KdF sports brochure stated that, just as the peasant had no right to let his farm run to seed but had instead the duty to contribute to the feeding of his people, the worker had "no right to let his body deteriorate but rather [had] the responsibility to maintain his body as a power source of productivity."[30] Although I would like to emphasize that the general assumption behind KdF's sports was that they should be relatively non-competitive and thus made them more fun, this sense of fun also made them more attractive and so a more effective way to advance general health and overall productivity. This is encapsulated in a message that was printed in each of the organization's annual Sports Tickets, the document required for participation in KdF's sports program. The words in the inside cover of this passport-like booklet were a message from Robert Ley, who, in his capacity as head of KdF, affirmed that "It is not our goal to raise matadors; we only want to have healthy and happy people in the factories. For, having a healthy people is 90% of the solution of the whole social question."[31] This message outlines a role for KdF sports that is instrumentally interested in nurturing a society of healthy, productive factory workers, but also concerned with creating happiness for people in that society, each aspect feeding another.

This concern to advance Germans' health is also discernible in visual depictions of KdF's sports activities, especially when considered side-by-side with more familiar imagery from mass demonstrations mounted by the Nazis, for example, those taking place at the annual Nazi Party Rally in Nuremberg. These were often also sports performances, images of which typically portray large groups of people exercising in strict synchronous formation to enact a perfect choreography[32] which, according to Boaz Neumann, "organized and integrated the assembly of individual bodies into a single organic body."[33] By contrast, pictures of KdF's sports classes are often starkly different—even though many of these, too, were intended

for propagandistic purposes.[34] Thus, an image of a KdF class that was published in the magazine *Arbeitertum* in 1937 shows a group of "ordinary people" doing sports, or more precisely, a stretching exercise. These men and women are not homogeneously dressed, and they are certainly not creating a geometrically perfect formation and do not perform completely in sync. Where the choreographed performances in Nuremberg produced images of geometrically perfect ranks of athletes, this picture seems to emphasize that the group is almost shambolic. The same contrast is apparent in a second photograph that accompanies the same article. This is a picture of an older, balding man with a small belly carrying three medicine balls. If the Nuremburg images contain the archetype of the strong, healthy Aryan, this somewhat portly individual is almost its antithesis.[35] Of course, publishing this picture was quite deliberate on the part of KdF and the magazine *Arbeitertum*. It was an important goal of KdF to improve Germans' health, and so tellingly, this article's title was "*Krieg gegen den Bauch*" ["War Against the Belly"] and the text clarified that KdF's sports courses targeted "the less well-built, the fat and buckled ones, the older ones," with its activities being "an effective remedy against the flabbiness and stiffness of bodies and a medicine for lung, heart and metabolism."[36] The goal was to motivate "ordinary" Germans who did not usually involve themselves with sports. Thus, the sports and exercises were intended to be as easy as possible and not to require any great athletic skill, so that anybody could join immediately "and also see what he [could] still achieve." The *Arbeitertum* images show active sports participants who seem to be a friendly, relaxed group rather than a forbidding cadre. The message is clearly that people who might be interested in a KdF sports class should encouraged to try a class. Then, once having been to a class, they would enjoy coming back because of the "liveliness and diversion" offered by KdF sports.[37]

The message from Ley printed on every KdF Sports Ticket urged that a healthy population was 90 percent of the solution to the social question, but for Ley and KdF, the activities of the Sports Department went beyond physical health: These activities were not "only a means to keep the body healthy and fresh" but had "a deeper sense than mere physical exercise" because KdF's sports also set out to further the "mentally and spiritually healthy interior development" of participants, so as to "transform Germans' free time into a source of strength through recreation that produces joy."[38] This statement points to a holistic approach, to an attempt to strengthen and harmonize both body and soul; the mentioned "joy production" was clearly a major characteristic of KdF's

sports programs. The Sports Department's activities were meant to entertain Germans as much as to boost their fitness. Of course, both of these ambitions went hand in hand, and even though the goal was to engage as many participants as possible, KdF propaganda still very much emphasized the "fun" element. Sport classes run by the organization had names such as *Fröhliche Gymnastik und Spiele* [Happy Calisthenics and Games].[39] In fact, it is astonishing how often the words "*Freude*," "*fröhlich*," or "*froh*" ("joy," "happy," or "cheerful") appear in propaganda writing about KdF's sports activities. "Men and women happily at play – this is typical KdF-operation" reads a caption to photographs in a KdF sports brochure from 1936, showing a group of men and women sitting next to each other on a lawn, smiling and laughing, some of them with either their legs or their arms held high, engaged in a game involving a medicine ball.[40] In the same brochure, Ley summarizes the Sports Department's task as the transformation of "the after-work-time of the German worker through happy physical exercises into a source of happiness and healthy life force."[41] As it is pointed out in writings on the leisure organization, KdF sports classes were conducted as "funny, and playful exercise courses"[42] and were often accompanied by music—because "with music, everything is going to be even more beautiful."[43] Thus, KdF classes were purposefully informal and consciously set a tone that was diametrically opposed to that prevailing in classes of established sport clubs prior to the Nazi era.[44] Sport historian Hajo Bennett sees a "mood of light-heartedness and cheerfulness" in KdF sports and even observes that a "rediscovery of play seems to occur."[45] And KdF sports brochures do seem to highlight playfulness, emphasizing how much laughter was part of its programs and providing detailed instructions for games that should be integrated into the exercise hours; many of them variations of playing tag or other children's games.[46] Writings on KdF's sports events were typically richly embellished with photographs, photographs that also tend to illustrate participation in a KdF sports class as playful and enjoyable. For example, a 1935 article entitled "A happy KdF Sports Hour" depicts a group of men sitting in a line on a sports field, who are clearly entertained by the ballgame they are playing.[47] The central message here is undoubtedly that "doing sports is fun." A very similar mood, if even more pronounced, is conveyed by a photograph from a KdF sports event entitled "Cheerful Calisthenics on the Shores of the Wannsee"[48] (Fig. 2.1). It depicts men and women taking part in a game that resembles a conga line acted out in the water; they are visibly having a lot of fun.

Fig. 2.1 KdF organizes games and sports at the Wannsee (bpk image Nr. 30031559)

Such images portray more than simple fun however, as KdF's "joy production" was also directed towards creating the *Volksgemeinschaft*. We have noted that images such as those of the mass exercises at Nuremburg create a regimented sense of perfect synchrony, while images of KdF exercisers are rather more chaotic. But this does not mean that the KdF images show disunity, or that the images do not symbolize Nazi ideals. In fact, the image of the men and women playing in the Wannsee is a good representation of KdF's work towards fostering the *Volksgemeinschaft*: the participants are formed into some sort of order, of course, as necessary to play the game, but not into strict ranks. Instead there seems to be an overall feeling of participation and belonging, especially symbolized here by the physical contact of the participants. At the same time, the image does illustrate KdF's effort to fortify Germans' bodies, both on an individual level and as a collective. According to Nazi ideology, individual German bodies unitedly formed a *Volkskörper* [body of the people], a body which the Nazis would ensure was a "homogenous and self-regulating organism."[49] KdF sports were almost always events that involved groups of people in gymnastics and physical games such that the ultimate focus was not on the

single individual but on the collective, not on peak performances by gifted individuals but on as many healthy participants as possible. Thus, KdF sports served to entice each individual German to do at least some sort of exercise—an effort that the Nazis hoped would eventually strengthen the entire German *Volkskörper*: Doing sports would not only benefit the individual, but also directly contribute to "the strength and health of the [German] nation[,]helping to make its future secure." In this logic, each individual's value to the community was enhanced by sports, as "[the] individual, whose body, mind, and spirit are harmoniously developed, will never be a burden on the community, but will always be a useful member of all the interests [sic] which serve the community."[50] Such rhetoric from writings on behalf of KdF shows that, for the leisure organization, doing sports had an importance beyond the individual (body) and the Sports Department's activities were believed to function for the sake of the community and to assist in development of the overall strength of the German *Volksgemeinschaft*, both physically and spiritually. Nonetheless, if we compare the previously discussed photographs of the portly, balding man with his medicine balls or the Wannsee conga line to those of the Nuremburg mass exercises, KdF Sports, consistent with the organization's focus on fun and "joy production," seem much more oriented towards the "community" of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, compared to a different vision of the *Volkskörper* presented in the Nuremburg images.

This is not to say that KdF's interest in the *Volksgemeinschaft* and the *Volkskörper* is somehow relatively benign. The opposite is very clear in the racial component of KdF's approach to sport. Importantly, for the Nazis sport was a specific means to achieving "recovery, fortification, the breeding of our race, a deeply-stalwart German *Volk*."[51] In KdF's sports, the link to "breeding" is especially apparent in the Sports Department's activities for women and for Germany's rural population. Women had initially been excluded from KdF's sports activities; when the Sports Department started its work, many of its programs catered exclusively for men. This gradually changed, however, and all classes were also opened to women. Furthermore, KdF also offered classes specifically for women, emphasizing that for working women in particular, physical exercises were important "as the female body is more likely and more disadvantageously subject to physical damage through work than men." Exercise was portrayed as a national duty of all girls and women, a duty in order to stay healthy, strong, and productive, both as workers and (future) mothers.[52] By 1936, women made up the majority of participants in KdF Sports classes.[53]

Although KdF sports were initially restricted to men, their expansion to include women is highlighted in the organization's brochures, which contain many pictures showing men and women doing sports side by side. These co-ed sports activities helped in yet another way to support the idea of an undivided, harmonious *Volksgemeinschaft*. Despite such ostensible equality, KdF's approach towards sports remained strongly gendered, something that is closely connected to the previously mentioned racial element.[54] KdF's worries about women's health—which it sought to enhance through its exercises—often stemmed directly from, or was at least related to, a greater concern for the health of the women's offspring. Very often, when presenting the sports activities to young women, the Sports Department made sure it identified some of the young women as mothers.[55] In advertisement photographs, women were shown with their young children. "Where mothers play with their children, a happy and strong race [*Geschlecht*] will grow"[56] reads the caption of one such image. A 1938 publication called for exercises for women "since only strong women can bear strong children."[57] During the war, the organization began to offer special classes for toddlers and their mothers.[58] All this points to the Sports Department's predominant concern in regard to its female participants: The mother, or mother-to-be, was KdF's target audience, not the woman per se.[59]

This concern with offspring was even more pronounced in KdF's sports activities in the countryside. Here, the Sports Department initiated the foundation of so-called *Dorfsportgemeinschaften* [Village Sport Communities].[60] The name of these initiatives suggests they closely resembled KdF's sports in German factories—its Factory Sports Communities—but in fact, the leisure organization's programming in rural areas was deliberately different from its offerings in the urban context. In the villages, there was a strong focus on what were referred to as "*völkisch* gymnastic exercises."[61] These *völkische Leibesübungen* mainly included sports activities that already had a tradition in the villages, such as ball games, bowling, horse riding, or wrestling.[62] KdF encouraged villagers to practice these sports together, hoping that this would promote their sense of community and local patriotism; for the same reason, the organization also set up competitions between neighboring villages.[63] For KdF organizers, such events were considered especially apt "to re-awaken old traditions and to let new ones develop."[64] Local Sports Attendants were put in charge of village sports activities, and KdF lobbied for the building of more sports facilities in the countryside.[65]

Overall, KdF functionaries hoped that sports would help to improve the rural population's attitude towards their life and place of residence

and foster rural dwellers' loyalty to their native community and region, diminishing any desires to abandon the countryside and thus halting the ongoing *Landflucht* [flight from the land].[66] KdF also promoted sports to enhance the population's health, and the leisure organization's writing on this topic evinces direct links to Nazi racial thinking as well as eugenics: sports were presented as an important and "fruitful" arena for match-making and consequent procreation. KdF-arranged sports activities in the villages were intended to enable "individual girls and boys get to know each other, learn about their value in games, competitions and special achievements." Succinctly put, in a KdF brochure, "The exercises thus fulfill certain breeding prerequisites."[67] Such statements were in line with the "blood and soil" ideas that were prominently promoted by Richard Walther Darré, the *Reichsbauernführer* [Reich Leader of Peasants]. Darré firmly believed that sports in the countryside were necessary in order to facilitate the "breeding" of German peasants, whom he considered "a new nobility" and the racial backbone of Germany. That is, for Darré, the health and strength of the peasant was particularly crucial, for the peasant was the most archetypal of all Germans, the ultimate source of the Aryan race. In his 1935 article "We and Gymnastic Exercises," published in *Odal*, his *Magazine for Blood and Soil*, he claimed that "the farm youth has to exercise, so that they can do justice to their task of bringing sufficient health into marriage. […] the German farm youth must exercise […] for the sake of their physical health but also for the idea of breed selection."[68] Clearly, for Darré, physical exercise was not just playing around. At least in its theoretical writings, KdF adapted his interpretation of sports and physical exercises as tools to ensure the production of racially superior German farmers. Accordingly, its sports activities in the countryside were meant to help secure the future of a traditional, village-based peasantry and thus significantly support what many Nazi thinkers considered a central foundation of the German nation's stability and future.

From the Sports Field to the *Volksgemeinschaft*: "Factory Sports Communities"

As I have already indicated, KdF's intention to fortify the "racial community" of all Germans was not only enacted by working towards strengthening the German *Volkskörper* through increased exercising. Quite literally helping realize this "community" was also an aspect of the small-scale

environment of KdF's Sports Department programs for these programs set out to ensure that Germans from diverse social strata would do sports together. In particular, the Sports Department launched programs that introduced workers to disciplines that earlier had been rather exclusively the domain of the upper-classes, such as tennis, golf, horse-riding, or sailing.[69] That this was a conscious strategy is clear in a public notice reproduced in a 1934 *Chicago Daily Tribune* article. The notice, from Danzig, concerned KdF's provision of horseback riding for workers and asserted: "Workmen, you need no longer stand aside enviously, believing that riding is only for the wealthy […] Under national [sic] Socialism such privileges for one class have been cast on the scrapheap."[70] In addition to sports courses in these "elitist" disciplines, KdF's Sports Department also organized sailing trips on the Baltic Sea or skiing vacations in Germany's mountainous regions.[71] Such programs were born out of KdF's agenda to help German workers overcome their exclusion from the higher classes of society and their leisure activities. Rather than reflecting social divisions in the realm of sports, such divisions were to be dissolved, and then sports would become an instrument to efface social differences in general: "In the future, there will be no more middle-class and proletarian sports," the Reich Sports Leader declared in 1935, "only German sports for all the people."[72]

KdF's particular focus on workers—for, after all, the organization was a subsidiary of the German Labor Front—led to the Sport's Department implementing its work directly on the shop floor. One aspect of this was the promotion of the building of swimming pools, sports fields, and gym rooms on the grounds of factories.[73] Von Tschammer und Osten called sports grounds near factories "places of happiness and of joyful cavorting [*Stätten des Frohsinns und der Tummelfreude*]."[74] And Robert Ley proclaimed that KdF's initiatives to bring sports fields and facilities to workers made the organization an "institution, which is capable of bringing some happiness into the grim existence of the working people, in particular to those who have to work day after day in factories and who are not blessed with the goods of fortune, money and property."[75]

In addition to providing sporting infrastructure for factory workers, KdF also established Factory Sports Communities, as mentioned throughout this chapter. These *Betriebssportgemeinschaften* were set up in German companies nationwide from 1936. According to von Tschammer und Osten, establishing these Factory Sports Communities would lead to an "advancement of national health [and an] increase of viable working

age and of productivity" while at the same time furthering a community among all factory members.[76] Ley agreed with this notion and declared that "Factory sports are community sports and that's the way more and more community is created. Everybody will take part here, from the plant manager to the apprentice boy, doing all kinds of sports."[77] For Ley, factory sports facilities were to become the "drill grounds of the factory community."[78] In many cases, however, these Factory Sports Communities were not the innovation that KdF wanted them to seem, but simply a renamed version of sports clubs previously established in Germany companies. Such sports clubs had been around since the late-nineteenth century,[79] but a 1936 decree by Tschammer und Osten forced these clubs to give up their independence and to start operating under KdF's aegis even though they would still be financially supported by the respective companies rather than by KdF.[80] In many cases, there was also continuity with regard to sports community personnel: KdF's Sports Attendants, who were in charge of running the Factory Sports Communities, were often the same people who had previously served as chairmen of company sports clubs.[81]

On a political level, KdF's creation of these Factory Sports Communities was also a reaction to a situation caused by the Nazi *Gleichschaltung* practices that had destroyed Germany's workers' sports clubs. The Nazis were afraid that the members of these clubs would now identify the still-existing independent company sports clubs as their new "havens." This fear was not entirely baseless according to reports of the exiled Social Democratic Party and post-war statements by former working class athletes.[82] Taking over these company sports clubs was thus, for KdF, an ideal opportunity to get even closer to workers' everyday lives while gaining control of a site that might breed oppositional thought and activity. Importantly, KdF sports, be it in factory settings or beyond, sought not to come across as coercive or overbearing. Instead, again and again, the organization emphasized the voluntary character of KdF's company sports offerings.[83] For example, von Tschammer und Osten stated that the Factory Sports Communities were intended to give sports the widest possible basis and "that this wide basis can only be achieved through voluntary commitment and through taking pleasure in physical exercise."[84] KdF's insistence on the voluntary character of its sports in the factories reveals once again that joy and happiness were the primary outcomes it desired of its activities, and KdF's leader recognized that this could not be achieved through force or any form of pressure.

Voluntary participation as a leading principle and "joy production" as a core objective continued to matter to KdF after its takeover of company sports. KdF's Factory Sports Community in the Osram Company in Berlin serves as an example for this. First, some general information about the sports activities available to Osram workers: by 1939, they could participate in 12 different types of sports, namely "calisthenics, football, track and field, handball, swimming, boxing, hockey, tennis, rowing, skiing, bowling, table-tennis;"[85] there were special groups for women in the disciplines of gymnastics, track and field, handball, swimming, hockey, and rowing. There was a 25,000 m^2 sports area in Berlin as well as several smaller sports fields situated at Osram's individual factory sites. Osram workers had access to "six well-tended tennis courts," a "large grass sports field[, a] regulation dirt track[,] several community rooms" and a club house equipped with a bar as well as "a magnificent swimming lake" that sported a beach, a diving platform, and 25-meter swimming lanes. Osram's employees could also avail themselves of "two ample boathouses with all the latest technical gear" and two "simple, but healthy sleeping rooms for the rowers with a total of 40 beds."[86] Evidently, rather prosperous and luxurious provisions were provided for worker-athletes at Osram, with a clear focus on health and relaxation.[87]

Photographs, published in an Osram sports newsletter, documenting these facilities and the sports activities taking place there, portray fit and healthy men and women. Often groups are displayed, emphasizing the community character of Osram sports. But, although these are pictures of the Osram Factory Sports Community, factory life or work is totally absent from the images. The images resemble advertisements for a holiday resort. Many of the female athletes, in particular, are smiling, illustrating company sports at Osram as a joyful affair, hardly lacking a fun component. As pictures such as these illustrate, KdF's work in the arena of company sports was, like all its activities, motivated by the urge to produce joy for Germans. Via Factory Sports Communities KdF could conveniently build on already existing infrastructures created by individual companies—all of Osram's sports infrastructure was financed by the company—and reach workers directly at their workplaces, turning shop floors into spaces of leisure and fun.

In addition to regular sports classes arranged by Factory Sport Communities, KdF also hosted special sports events at individual factories. Every German company was expected to take part in one of these *Sportappelle* [Sports Musters], which KdF began to run in the summer

of 1938.[88] At first they were directed only at men between the ages of 18 and 55, but starting in 1939, female workers between the ages of 21 and 30 were also targeted.[89] In its inaugural year, the *Sportappell* consisted of three parts. First, in the *Wettbewerb des Guten Willens* [Competition of Good Will], whose very title seems to signal friendly motivation, the workers had to push a medicine ball of 2 or 3 kilos for at least 6.5 meters or 8.5 meters (for women and men, respectively), had to jump at least 2.80 meters, and run a distance of 1,000 meters in under 6 minutes. The *Sportappell*'s second part was a team competition involving three activities: hurdles, medicine-ball pushing, and a 1,000 meter relay run. The third part of the event did not directly involve athletic performance at all; it was instead an evaluation of the company's Factory Sports Community and its regular activities.[90]

These details of the *Sportappell* make it clear that KdF's main motivation for this event was not the promotion of stellar individual performances, nor did it even emphasize competition among the factory's workers. Instead, there was a strong emphasis on community. The Sports Departments' intention in organizing these special events was to inspire as many workers as possible to do (more) sports, while simultaneously enhance the bonding between the workers for the sake of a strong (factory) community.

However, these *Sportappelle* were not popular among German workers. The events took place outside working hours, thus cutting into the workers' already quite limited free time. Factory Sports Attendants, in charge of implementing these events in their respective companies, seemed to have had a hard time motivating people to attend, as evident from the somewhat coercive tone attendants often assumed in the announcements of the events. For example, the 1941 notice for the *Sportappell* at the Osram factory in Berlin stated that opting out would be an act of ill will and questioned non-participating workers' loyalty to their colleagues and their commitment to the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*-project: "If your wish for community is truthful, then you take part."[91] It seems likely that such blunt wording was a reaction to workers not participating in previous years.[92] But then again, such small threats might have been the only stricture available to organizers. There is no evidence to suggest that workers who abstained from participating suffered any punishments or repercussions, and even at their most aggressive, the announcements also fall short of allusions to anything of this sort, not wanting to violate KdF's general principle of voluntary participation.

With the onset of World War II, KdF began to substitute the *Sportappelle* with less regular Sports Days. Summer Sports Days had an emphasis on track-and-field disciplines, while Winter Sports Days incorporated activities like skiing, ice-skating, "winter hiking" and, if the terrain permitted it, sledding. The overall goal of these events continued to be the motivation of as many workers as possible to do sports rather than a focus on the achievement of individual record sports performances, and the entertainment of Germans through sports activities. This is exemplified by KdF's 1942 Winter Sports Day for Companies, a nationwide event attended by over 300,000 workers, that included hiking and Bavarian curling, as well as "snowman building" and a scavenger hunt. Physical exercise at a competitive level was surely not at the center of this Sports Day, for reports on it emphasized that "Coffee and Cake, meals of stew with nourishing sides [at some companies], and later on, comradeship evenings with prepared or improvised entertainment programs – all this made the Winter Sports Day a pleasant experience."[93]

The pre-war *Sportappelle*—or Sports Musters—may have had a more martial name, but just like the Sports Days, they too had a fun component. Undoubtedly, they had a somewhat militarized style—from the name to the pomp and ceremony depicted in images of the events: workers lining up in ranks at the flag ceremony[94] or marching in formation onto the sports field.[95] This militarism extended to the captions on such images, with a photograph in the KdF publication *Unter dem Sonnenrad* bearing the description, "Forming Up for Factory Sports." Yet not everything in this very image is militaristic; in particular, many of the depicted men and women are in fact smiling, despite their orderly lines and formal posture. Maybe these smiles reflect cheerful anticipation of their coming sporting activities, or perhaps they were simply enjoying themselves in the moment of the photograph.[96] Granted, these are official pictures, used as propaganda for KdF. Given the organization's concern about presenting a positive image of itself, it was unlikely to depict visibly unhappy or discontented people in published photographs of its activities. Nevertheless, it is significant that KdF chose a picture that showed people who looked happy and amused rather than solemn and serious, in this way rather undermining the disciplinary aspect of their ranked formation. Thus, this propagandistic choice foregrounds, once more, KdF's project of "joy production". Other images of KdF Sports events at factories, including *Sportappelle*, also reveal that discipline and military-style training were not as central as the strong fun component. A photograph from the 1941 "Sports

Fig. 2.2 A "Happy Factory Community": Games at the "Sports Muster of Good Will" for Volkswagen employees, 1941 (bpk image Nr. 30031928)

Muster of Good Will" at the Volkswagen Company conveys a rather playful atmosphere, showing workers engaged in games of "competitive pulling"[97] (Fig. 2.2). The depicted participants do not wear sports attire, but instead their usual work clothing. This demonstrates that KdF was mostly interested in getting everybody to exercise: it preferred the casualness of people participating in their work or street clothes rather than seeking top performances from ambitious competitors requiring specialized gear. The diversity of the clothing in this photograph—some participants are in suits, others wear work coats—also suggests that manual workers and clerks are seen here exercising together. This lack of segregation could be read as a successful realization (or at least, depiction) of KdF's explicit goal of forming a unified *Volksgemeinschaft* on the small scale of a single factory. Then again, it could also be argued that the mixed clothing in fact counteracted this very goal. In addition to suits and work coats clearly marking the differentiation between clerks and managers on the one hand and workers and craftsmen on the other, there was also a system of ranks denoted by armbands (two for master craftsmen, one for foremen.) The internal hierarchy of the employees was thus visually connoted and so,

KdF, although probably consciously targeting community building and the effacing of class differences in this event, in fact fell well short of that goal.

The event at the Volkswagen Company seemed to have been quite jolly for the participants all the same, and a similarly cheerful mood appears to have prevailed at another KdF Factory Sports Event, from 1935 or 1936. The photograph shows three men and a woman happily involved in a game or sport.[98] If we take this snapshot to be characteristic of the entire event (and, again, even if we take the propagandistic aspects of such photographs into account, we can at least say that KdF in fact chose to publish photographs depicting joy), it was clearly about entertaining the workers while engaging them in sports. These cases thus contradict a common interpretation of the Sports Musters as having been all about militarism and the preparation of workers for upcoming war efforts.[99] While I do not wish to argue that militarism played no role at all nor to deny that these more playful exercises might have worked in the long term to help war preparations by improving the physical condition of Germans,[100] I think it is important to emphasize the non-militaristic, playful, and lighthearted character that KdF Factory Sports often had. All KdF's sports, including the seemingly militaristic Sport Musters, were primarily concerned with "joy production."

Whose Joy? Attempts to Appropriate KdF Sports

Despite the leisure organization's hopes, KdF's involvement in Factory Sports Communities did not succeed in ending the potential of such communities to be "havens" for worker-athletes. Conversely, there is evidence that KdF's very own institutions became sites where former ATSB and Rotsport athletes could maintain their contacts, networks, and activities.[101] From a post-war survey conducted among individuals who had been organized in working-class sports clubs prior to the Third Reich we know that about one-third of those who continued to do sports during the Third Reich did so within KdF's framework.[102] Furthermore, sometimes this participation may have been grounded in vital political goals. A Communist strategy paper obtained by the Gestapo actively encouraged participation in sports activities organized in factories, since "each cent used for sports means a cent withdrawn from the armament effort."[103] And then, there was the so-called "Trojan Horse" strategy, also developed by the Communist Party. According to this strategy, members of the (Communist) opposition were expected to disguise their political work

against the Nazis by infiltrating KdF's network, which was then to become the new site of their activity. In Saxony, Alfred Nothnagel used this strategy to set up a Communist youth group and to protect it from prosecution by the authorities of the Nazi regime. When making excursions with his group in the environs of Leipzig, his "girls and boys disguised in leather trousers, skirts and colorful shirts […], and musical instruments" were officially a KdF hiking group—Nothnagel had arranged that one of his participants apply for a license as a KdF Hiking Attendant. The disguise worked. In the summer of 1939, during a camping outing, the group found itself confronted by a patrol of Hitler youth boys, who immediately stopped bothering them upon being shown the KdF license. Then, when some members of the group were arrested and questioned by the Gestapo, as happened for example in the fall of 1939, having papers that proved their group was officially a KdF group led to their release.[104]

The Gestapo was certainly suspicious of such putative KdF groups, however, and in the case of the Nothnagel group, we can see how something of a cat-and-mouse game developed. On the one hand, Communists tried to infiltrate or rather appropriate KdF programs by, for example, establishing KdF groups or classes that were de facto gatherings of Communists, sometimes with the concrete goal of doing political work directed against the Nazi regime. On the other hand, the Gestapo was very aware of this, and eager to shut down these "false" KdF activities, thus in turn trying to (counter-)infiltrate these groups. An anecdote from a participant in a KdF-sports class organized by Nothnagel and his fellow resistance fighters provides a vivid example of this. It also reveals how the Communists in such groups were themselves aware of the infiltration attempts by the Gestapo and that they had the capacity, at least in the episode recounted in this anecdote, to fend off the attacks. When "a new guy, wearing a trench coat and carrying a briefcase" showed up to one of Nothnagel's "KdF" sports classes, the suspicions of the Communist participants who were "all in short pants and sports shirts" were aroused. They "critically observed [him] during dressing," and "did not miss the police stamp in his sports shoes." Once the police spy was found out, the group acted quickly: "A short notice to the coach was sufficient, and after the gymnastic part we did not play dodge ball [*Völkerball*], usually very popular, but rather hard 'roll ball': whoever has the ball can be attacked by everybody. The 'new guy' had the ball most of the time and was treated accordingly. He certainly reported back to his [police] office with the bruises to testify that we pursue hard, serious sports. No one ever came again."[105]

In this case, the Communist group managed to prevail against the authorities. However, the anecdote shows that even when anti-Nazi workers were successful in doing sports with other members of their own milieu, using KdF's frameworks as disguises, they still had to be constantly on the lookout for Gestapo informers in their midst. In this case, they might have been successful in demonstrating that their sports activities were "serious," but how serious could their political work be under such circumstances?

Alfred Nothnagel and his group are not the only case where we can see a form of appropriation of KdF's infrastructure and programs by Socialists. When a female Nazi party member took part in a KdF hiking event in Rostock in 1936, she noticed that no one used the Hitler greeting at all. She investigated matters further and discovered that many of the boys in the group organizing the event had belonged to former Socialist and Communist Youth organizations, and that they would only sing Nazi songs and perform the Hitler greeting if the Hiking Attendant of the *Gau*, a party member, was present. She heard that on other occasions, they said goodbye to each other by clenching their fists, that is, by using the socialist salutation.[106] Similarly, as in the case of the Nothnagel group, we can see how KdF events became sites where individuals and groups were able to carve out for themselves somewhat autonomous spaces where they could associate with politically like-minded people and transgress the predominant Nazi discourse. Their behavior fits with the notion that Alf Lüdtke termed "*Eigensinn*," which describes a set of practices and expressions, often pranks and parody, that constitute "part of an effort to be left alone, 'with and by themselves' (*bei sich*)."[107] Andrew Bergerson has described *Eigensinn* as "stubbornly persistent habits of everyday life through which ordinary people express themselves publicly in revolt against established authorities."[108] The appropriation of KdF programs in order to maintain old networks and practices of sociality fits into this category to an extent, also because, although there was a degree of secrecy and covering up involved here, it is questionable how much these developments can be described as a true revolt or resistance.

The sources suggest that the KdF and other German authorities were usually aware of these attempts to "appropriate" KdF's programs but that little enough was done to curtail these developments. On the one hand, this suggests that they were not considered a real threat. In addition, it appears that some KdF functionaries were so lenient because they confidently believed that the leisure organization's programs would ultimately help "tame" the anti-Nazi attitudes of groups and individuals. A folk dance

group in Braunschweig, for example, consisted of a large group of former members of Marxist youth groups and was led by Social Democratic activist Franz Bosse, who had been imprisoned for the possession of illegal Communist publications in 1933.[109] Granting his dance group the official imprimatur of a KdF class had been a step that Gestapo authorities, both in Braunschweig and Berlin, had been wary about, citing "grave reservations about a complete takeover of a tightly integrated group that is made up of two-thirds former Marxists." The Gestapo in Berlin worried that the cohesion between the former Marxist dancers would remain high and they might work towards undermining the leisure organization.[110] Similarly, Gestapo officers in Braunschweig feared that the incorporation of the group would infuse "Marxist and *bündisch* ideas" into KdF.[111] Leading KdF representatives in Braunschweig, however, ignored these warnings to a large extent. Instead, they reported to the Gestapo in Berlin three months later that the former Marxist dancers were now all owners of KdF's annual sports tickets and took part in a weekly KdF dance class. This class was not led by Bosse, but by Nazi party members. As an open class, other people were allowed to join any time, so that the KdF office in Braunschweig was convinced that "difficulties could not arise in the future."[112] Clearly, KdF's employees in Braunschweig were very confident in the power of their programs.

A similar case occupied authorities in the town in Guben in the Lusatia region. Here, a KdF dance group was led by instructor Erich Meister, who had a past as an active member of the *Sozialistische Arbeiter Jugend* (the SAJ, or Socialist Workers Youth). In fact, Meister had received his training as a physical education instructor from the Social Democratic party and had led a "Proletarian Folk Dance Group" in Guben before 1933.[113] Given Meister's background, an investigation of his KdF group was set in train and the group put under surveillance. However, once again, nothing came of this. The investigation's report concluded that Meister was "hardly in a position to unfold any kind of political activity during his dance classes."[114] But the surveillance did demonstrate that the "warmth and spirit which is expected from National Socialist events" was absent from Meister's classes and that "disinterest *vis-à-vis* National socialism" prevailed among members of the group. The local office of KdF's Sports Department was thus urged to introduce girls and boys from other Nazi associations into Meister's KdF dance classes. This was so that "the participants coming from previously Marxist circles could gradually be educated [to become] National Socialists."[115]

Not only did KdF organizers not seem to worry too much about former Marxists turning up among the ranks of their participants or even instructors; in some cases, they even actively sought out former Socialist or Communist workers with known athletic prowess and hired them to be KdF Factory Sport Attendants, at least in Bavaria. According to a 1937 Sopade report, the "workers who were put in charge of the arrangement of sports activities at their factories" were often recruited from among athletes with known leftist political leanings[, an approach which was] in KdF's eyes a strategy to win over more workers for the organization's program.

This desire to accrue as many workers as possible to their programs also meant that KdF was largely eager to eschew politics in its sports programs—a strategy that seemed to have worked, at least in regard to gaining participants. This is illustrated in the testimony of a woman cited in a 1936 report for the exiled Social Democratic Party (Sopade). She had participated in a KdF swimming class, together with about 50 other women, and recounted afterwards that "matters were barely [Nazi] party driven" and that "one hardly ever hears a *Heil Hitler*." As someone who had previously been active in a now outlawed working class sports club, she "felt at home" and was "positively surprised to find nothing National Socialist about this class's content and execution."[116] And in a post-war interview, Hildegard C. fondly remembered the KdF hikes she had participated in near Chemnitz, especially for the "wonderful camaraderie" she experienced while hiking together with other young people "who did not go to the Hitler Youth" and "who wanted to have their freedom."[117] It appears that KdF was thus successful with its events in reaching people who did not subscribe to Nazi politics.

Many workers who moved to KdF do not seem to have done so for the sake of Nazism. Indeed, in some cases, as we have seen, KdF sports programs were actively sought out as "homes" by former worker-athletes to function as sites where the members of the outlawed Socialist and Communist organizations could come together and socialize.[118] However, despite their roots in earlier Socialist or Communist fellowship, these get-togethers appear to have consisted, for the most part, in straightforward sports activities. This might explain their failure to provoke much concern among the German authorities, and in particular, the leisure organization. Thus, it seems plausible that KdF assisted the stabilization of the Nazi regime in a no more complicated way than just occupying the time of oppositional-minded workers who participated in its sports classes, even

those workers who still might have had subversive motivations in mind. Additionally, I would also argue that KdF was not worried by such activities because they ultimately did not jeopardize its overall goals of reaching as many people as possible with its sports activities and then facilitating its "joy production."[119]

KdF's sports played a crucial role in the leisure organization's effort to build a happy and healthy *Volksgemeinschaft*. Playful and accessible exercises were geared towards improving Germans' fitness, but also to socially and politically integrating German workers. The goal was the creation of a "*Volk in Leibesübungen*," a people united in physical exercise.[120] To that end, KdF's sports programs provided joyful collective experiences. The direct physical connection that many KdF's exercises fostered among its participants was, on a micro level, a realization of the Nazi promise of a *Volksgemeinschaft* and a strong and homogenous *Volkskörper*. In Chap. 5, we will see that the leisure organization not only tried to shape Germans' bodies in order to create a joyful community of all "Aryans," but also targeted their work and living spaces.

Notes

1. "Eine frohe 'KdF-Sportstunde,'" in *Leibesübungen mit Kraft durch Freude* (1935), issue 2.
2. This chapter builds its exploration of KdF's sports especially on the seminal work by Hajo Bernett; see in particular Hajo Bernett, "Nationalsozialistischer Volkssport bei 'Kraft durch Freude,'" *Stadion* 5, no. 1 (1979): 89–146. For the institutional history of KdF's Sports Department both before and during the war, Wolfhard Buchholz's dissertation was very helpful; see Wolfhard Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude' : Freizeitgestaltung und Arbeiterschaft im Dritten Reich" (Dissertation, Ludwig Maximilian University, 1976), 288–296, 320f and 351–354. For a brief discussion of KdF sports in Austria, see Matthias Marschik, *Sportdiktatur : Bewegungskulturen im nationalsozialistischen Österreich* (Vienna: Turia Kant, 2008), 188–193. There are some publications dealing with specific aspects of KdF sport: For KdF sports for older people, see Andreas Luh, "Seniorensport im historischen Wandel: Von der Riege 'Alldeutschland' und der 'NS-Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude' zu der seniorensportlichen Konzeption der Gegenwart," in

Bewegung, Spiel und Sport im Alter. Neue Ansätze für kompetentes Altern, ed. Edgar Beckers, Joe Ehlen, and Andreas Luh (Cologne, 2006), 32–51; for KdF's hiking activities, see John A Williams, *Turning to Nature in Germany: Hiking, Nudism, and Conservation, 1900–1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 99–104. Michaela Czech's study on women's sports in the Third Reich also has a short section on KdF's sport for women, see Michaela Czech, *Frauen und Sport im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland : Eine Untersuchung zur weiblichen Sportrealität in einem patriarchalen Herrschaftssystem* (Berlin: Tischler, 1994), 68–71.

3. For a documentation of NS sports and sport politics, see Hajo Bernett, *Sportpolitik im Dritten Reich aus den Akten der Reichskanzlei* (Schorndorf bei Stuttgart: Hofmann, 1971). On sports in Nazi Germany, see also ibid. *Untersuchungen zur Zeitgeschichte des Sports.* (Schorndorf bei Stuttgart: Hofmann, 1973); *Nationalsozialistische Leibeserziehung* (Schorndorf b. Stuttgart: Hofmann, 1966); Wilhelm Joch, "Sport und Leibeserziehung im Dritten Reich," in *Geschichte der Leibesübungen*, ed. Horst Ueberhorst, vol. 3/2 (Berlin/Munich/Frankfurt: Bartels & Wernitz, 1981), 701–42. See also Lorenz Peiffer, "Körperzucht und Körpererziehung im Dritten Reich," in *Sportstadt Berlin in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Sportmuseum Berlin (Berlin, 1993), 178–91; Nadine Rossol, "Performing the Nation: Sports, Spectacles, and Aesthetics in Germany, 1926–1936," *Central European History* 43, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 616–38; and David Imhoof, "Playing with the Third Reich: Sports, Politics and Free Time in Nazi Germany," in *Life and Times in Nazi Germany*, ed. Lisa Pine (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 161–86. For Nazi sports in Austria, see Marschik, *Sportdiktatur*. A very useful bibliography on sports in the Third Reich is Lorenz Peiffer, *Sport im Nationalsozialismus: Zum aktuellen Stand der sporthistorischen Forschung. Eine kommentierte Bibliographie* (Göttingen: Die Werkstatt, 2005).
4. See Reichsportamt der NS.-Gemeinschaft KdF, ed., *KdF-Sport im Bild* (Berlin, 1936), 2.
5. Participation in KdF's sports courses was possible after the purchase of an annual sports ticket (*Jahressportkarte*) for 20 Pfennig

and an annual fee of 30 Pfennig, in addition to the individual fee for a specific course as determined by the organizing KdF office. Members of the German Labor Front received a discount on the class fees. The sports ticket, which looked similar to a passport and was adorned with a swastika, served as a record for class fees paid and participation hours as well as the sports performances achieved by its holder; see BArch NS 20/48.

6. Company Sports in Nazi Germany have been explored in Andreas Luh, *Betriebssport zwischen Arbeitgeberinteressen und Arbeitnehmerbedürfnissen: Eine historische Analyse vom Kaiserreich bis zur Gegenwart* (Aachen: Meyer & Meyer, 1998), 208–337. See also the dissertation by Sebastian Fasbender on company sports and workers sports in the Rhine and Ruhr area: Sebastian Fasbender, *Zwischen Arbeitersport und Arbeitssport: Werksport an Rhein und Ruhr 1921–1938* (Göttingen: Cuvillier, 1997).
7. SA-man von Tschammer und Osten became a member of the *Reichstag* for the Nazi party in March 1933 and was appointed *Reichssportkommissar* and *Reichsportführer* in April 1933; see Wolfgang Benz, Hermann Graml, and Hermann Weiß, *Enzyklopädie des Nationalsozialismus* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1997), 889. For a biography of von Tschammer and Osten, see Dieter Steinhöfer, *Hans von Tschammer und Osten. Reichssportführer im Dritten Reich* (Berlin/Munich/Frankfurt a.M.: Bartels & Wernitz, 1973); and also Volker Kluge, "Hitlers Statthalter im Sport : Hans von Tschammer u. Osten," *Sozial- und Zeitgeschichte des Sports* 7, no. 3 (1993 1993): 29–42. Von Tschammer und Osten resigned from the leadership of KdF's sports in 1939, to be succeeded by his former deputy Karl Lorch; see BArch NS 22/756, Bd. 2; Anordnung 20/39 des Reichsorganisationsleiters, "Ernennung Pg. Lorch zum Leiter des Sportamtes."
8. In 1938, the association was renamed *Nationalsozialistischer Reichsbund für Leibesübungen* [NSRL, or National Socialist League of the Reich for Physical Exercise]; see Hajo Bernett, *Der Weg des Sports in die nationalsozialistische Diktatur: Die Entstehung des Deutschen (Nationalsozialistischen) Reichsbundes für Leibesübungen*, Bd. 87 (Schorndorf: Hofmann, 1983).
9. See Arnd Krüger, "The German Way of Workers Sport," in *The Story of Worker Sport*, ed. Arnd Krüger and James Riordan

(Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1996), 18. In 1928, the workers' sport movement had ca. 1.2 million members and more than half of them were in the ATSB; see Fritz Wildung, "Die Arbeitersportbewegung nach der Revolution," in: *Illustrierte Geschichte des Arbeitersports*, ed. Hans Joachim Teichler and Gerhard Hauk (Bonn: Dietz, 1987), 30. At the beginning of the 1930s, the membership number of the ATSB had risen to ca. 1.3 million and Red Sport had 150,000 members; see Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann, *Nationalsozialismus und Arbeitermilieus: Der nationalsozialistische Angriff auf die proletarischen Wohnquartiere und die Reaktion in den sozialistischen Vereinen* (Bonn: Dietz, 1998), 463. The destruction of the workers' sports movement is described in Hajo Bernett, "Die Zerschlagung des deutschen Arbeitersports durch die nationalsozialistische Revolution," *Sportwissenschaft* 4 (1983): 349–73. See also Hans Joachim Teichler, "Ende des Arbeitersports 1933?," in *Arbeiterkultur und Arbeitersport*, ed. Hans Joachim Teichler (Clausthal-Zellerfeld: DVS, 1985), 196–234; Hans Joachim Teichler, "'Wir brauchten einfach den Kontakt zueinander': Arbeitersport und Arbeitersportler im 'Dritten Reich,'" in *Illustrierte Geschichte des Arbeitersports*, ed. Hans Joachim Teichler and Gerhard Hauk (Bonn: Dietz, 1987), 231–41; and Petra Krüger, "Ende des Arbeitersports 1933?," in *90 Jahre Arbeitersport*, ed. Franz Nitsch, Juergen Fischer, and Klaus Stock (Münster: LIT, 1985), 115–18.

There was some regional variation in the persecution of the workers' sports movement in Germany, and some workers' sports clubs managed to continue with their sporting activities for some time, sometimes openly, sometimes secretly; see Jörg Lölke, "'Wir sind nicht sang- und klanglos untergangen!': Der Turn,- Sport- und Musikverein 'Glaswerk' als Sammelpunkt Jenaer Arbeitersportler in der NS-Zeit," *Sozial- und Zeitgeschichte des Sportes* 8, no. 2 (1994): 36–48. On Nazi *Gleichschaltung* in the area of sports, see also Arnd Krüger, "'Heute gehört uns Deutschland und morgen…?' Das Ringen um den Sinn der Gleichschaltung im Sport in der ersten Jahreshälfte 1933," in *Sportgeschichte: Traditionspflege und Wertewandel*, ed. Wolfgang Buss and Arnd Krüger (Duderstadt: Mecke Druck und Verlag, 1985), 175–96;

and G. A. Carr, "The Synchronizaton of Sport and Physical Education under National Socialism," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education* 10, no. 2 (1979).The history of workers' sports vis-à-vis the Nazi *Gleichschaltung* has been the focus of some local studies: in addition to the above-cited work by Lölke on a sports club in Jena, an account on the fate of workers' sports associations in rural Württemberg can be found in Klaus Schönberger, "Die Arbeitersportbewegung in Württembergischen Landgemeinden und ihre Zerschlagung 1933," in *Arbeiterkultur und Arbeitersport*, ed. Hans Joachim Teichler (Clausthal-Zellerfeld: DVS, 1985), 168–82; for the situation in Bremen, Wurttemberg and Hesse, respectively, see Klaus Achilles, "Die Zerschlagung der Arbeitersportbewegung in Bremen," in *Arbeiterkultur und Arbeitersport*, ed. Hans Joachim Teichler (Clausthal-Zellerfeld: DVS, 1985), 183–95; and Reiner Fricke, *Spaltung, Zerschlagung, Widerstand: Die Arbeitersportbewegung Württembergs in den 20er und 30er Jahren* (Schorndorf: Hofmann, 1995); Horst Giesler, *Arbeitersportler, schlagt Hitler! Das Ende der Arbeitersportbewegung im Volksstaat Hessen : Ein Beitrag zur Sozial- und Sportgeschichte Hessens* (Münster: LIT, 1995).

10. For a history of working-class sports in Germany, see Diethelm Blecking, *Arbeitersport in Deutschland 1893–1933: Dokumentation und Analysen* (Köln: Prometh, 1983). For a shorter summary, see Krüger, "The German Way of Workers Sport." See also Hans Joachim Teichler, "Aktuelle Aspekte zur Geschichte der Arbeitersportbewegung in Deutschland," *Stadion* 34, no. 1 (2008): 43–60. See also Ibid. For an overview of the historiography on the topic, see Eike Stiller, *Literatur zur Geschichte des Arbeitersports in Deutschland von 1892 bis 2005: Eine Bibliographie* (Berlin: trafo, 2006); and Hans Teichler, "Literaturübersicht zum Arbeitersport," in *90 Jahre Arbeitersport*, ed. Franz Nitsch, Jürgen Fischer, and Klaus Stock (Münster: LIT, 1985), 143–50.
11. See Reichsportamt der NS.-Gemeinschaft KdF, *KdF-Sport im Bild*, 1.
12. See BArch R 4902/6329 for all these statistics. The higher number might be due to the inclusion of Sports Musters and other factory sports events; however, these numbers might just be inflated by KdF's propagandistic intentions.

13. See Bernett, "Nationalsozialistischer Volkssport bei 'Kraft durch Freude,'" 102.
14. See DAF, NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude," Reichssportamt, *Dienstordnung für Sportliche Lehrkräfte bei der NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude"* (Berlin, 1935), 8.
15. See USHMM, photograph # 31649; also bpk image Nr. 30011467. The implications in this photograph and the SA man's sign are interesting. First, the photograph indicates that KdF's spatial segregation of "Aryan" Germans and Jews precludes their using the same space even at different times, a quarantining of space that relates to notions of pollution and cleanliness, as will be discussed in some more detail in Chap. 5. Second, if we take this photograph at face value, the Jewish use of the field seems to impose a loss of privilege to KdF and its participants. Of course, stationing an SA man with a sign that highlighted a field's unavailability for use by the Jewish might have been an effective way to stoke Germans' resentment of Jews. Interestingly, such a tactic would seem to assume that KdF sports were important to people, while it also rather literally enacts the idea of *Lebensraum*.
16. Sportmuseum, Nachlass Wetzel, Nr. 32–75.
17. See Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude,'" 354.
18. See ibid.
19. In 1941, the *Frühjahrslauf der Betriebe* (Spring Run for German Factory Workers) had 1,618,620 participants from 14,122 companies, corresponding to a 131% increase in individual participants and a 135% increase in companies involved. Over 2.5 million workers participated in the 1941 summer sports day (*Sommersporttag der Betriebe);* see Bodo Lafferentz, *Bericht des Leiters der NS.-Gemeinschaft KdF. Pg. Dr. Lafferenz zum Jahrestag der NSG. KdF. am 27. November 1941: Sonderdruck für die DAF.-Propagandawalter und -Redner.* (Berlin: Deutsche Arbeitsfront, Propagandaamt, Zentralbüro, 1941), 10.
20. For example, HGW's Sport Attendant in Berlin reported in January 1942 that "factory sports had taken a back seat given the strong demands upon the workforce," due to HGW's being involved in the armament industry; see NWA 2 Nr. 9921, letter by HGW's Factory Sports Attendant to German Labor Front, *Gau* Sports Department Berlin from Jan. 6, 1942. The head of

Brandenburg's section of the German Alpine Club wrote in a letter to the *Reichssportführer* that "now in times of war, most comrades (*Kameraden und Kameradinnen*) are strained more than usual at their workplaces," adding that "These, especially, are in need of relaxation and recreation through sports;" see ibid.; letter by Dr. Heinrich Kirchhoff to von Tschammer und Osten from May 29, 1940.

21. NWA 2 Nr. 9922; letter by Schwalbe, Factory Sport Attendant from Oct. 19, 1940. Schwalbe also asked HGW workers to help black-out the windows of the newly founded gym (against bombers) at the start of sports classes.
22. See NWA 2 Nr. 9922; letter by Schwalbe, Factory Sport Attendant.
23. See NWA 2 Nr. 9921; letter to the Reich Sports Department, Administration of Reich Sports Field from Sep. 13, 1943.
24. In this particular case, the missed event was made up for with a soccer game; see NWA 2 Nr. 9922, letter by Factory Sports Attendant Schwalbe from September 17, 1943.
25. Some of them even reported back to Germany about bringing their work to the front when they were drafted as soldiers; see "KdF.-Sport auch an der Front," *Der Kraft-durch-Freude Sportwart*, 1940, issue 10, 3.
26. See Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude'," 355f. Most cultural activities were brought to a halt by a decree of Goebbels. In the area of sports, after September 1944 all events had to take place after hours and could only be run by unsalaried sports teachers. (As we will see in the following chapters the general decree did not stop all cultural activities either.)
27. Karl Busch, *Unter dem Sonnenrad* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1938), 162f.
28. Paul Stemmer, "The Organization of Leisure Time of German Workers through the National-Socialist Fellowship Kraft Durch Freude," in *World Congress for Leisure Time and Recreation, German Addresses for Committee[s] I-XI* (Rome, 1938), 5. [Published in English.]
29. Bruno Malitz, *Die Leibesübungen in der nationalsozialistischen Idee* (Munich: Eher, 1933), 18. Malitz also asserted that the Nazis were involved in a project to "plant sports again into the spiritual earth of folklore [*in die seelische Erde des Volkstums*]"; ibid.

30. W. Delingat, "Deine Aufgabe," *Der Kraft-durch Freude Sportwart,* May 1939, issue 1, 1.
31. See BArch NS 20/48. There may be a certain irony in this statement, given that it was printed in a document that was in fact a performance record—each class attended and fees paid were noted down here—but it was certainly meant in a motivational way.
32. See, for example, an image from a Nazi mass-sporting event at the 1938 Party Rally, published in a 1939 book on the Nuremberg Rally; Julius Streicher et al., eds., *Reichstagung in Nürnberg* (Berlin: C. A. Weller, 1933), 141. For a discussion of the Nuremberg Rally, and the role of mass demonstrations, military exercises, architecture, performance of speech, mass excitement, and sacralization at these events, see Bernd Ogan and Wolfgang W. Weiß, eds., *Faszination und Gewalt: Nürnberg und der Nationalsozialismus: Eine Ausstellung* (Nuremberg: Pädagogisches Institut der Stadt Nürnberg, 1990), 58–75. On the Nazi Party rallies, see also Nadine Rossol, *Performing the Nation in Interwar Germany: Sport, Spectacle and Political Symbolism, 1926–36* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 103–108. For a discussion of the role of the Nuremberg Party rally in creating the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft,* see Markus Urban, "Die inszenierte Utopie: Zur Konstruktion von Gemeinschaft auf den Reichsparteitagen der NSDAP," in *"Volksgemeinschaft": Mythos, wirkungsmächige soziale Verheißung oder soziale Realität im "Dritten Reich"?*, ed. Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann (Paderborn et al.: Schöningh, 2012), 135–57. For a discussion about the role of the stadium as a formative space for Nazism, and on the spatial design of the Nuremberg Party Rally in particular, see also Boaz Neumann, *Die Weltanschauung des Nazismus: Raum – Körper – Sprache* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010), 77–78.
33. Boaz Neumann, "The Phenomenology of the German People's Body (Volkskörper) and the Extermination of the Jewish Body," *New German Critique* 36, no. 106 (Winter 2009): 164.
34. For a more general discussion of images of sports in the Third Reich, see Rolf Sachsse, "Fotografie und Film im Sport des NS-Staates : Eine kommentierte Foto- und Filmpräsentation," *SportZeiten* 7, no. 2 (2007): 57–71. See also Gabi Langen, "Kraft und Anmut. Die nationalsozialistische Körperästhetik in der Sportfotografie," *Fotogeschichte* 16, no. 62 (1996): 45–54.

35. On the Nazi attempt to use sports to create strong Aryans , see Arnd Krüger, "Breeding, Rearing and Preparing the Aryan Body : Creating Supermen the Nazi Way," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 16, no. 2 (1999 1999): 42–68.
36. Heinz Siska: "Krieg gegen den Bauch – und weshalb er gerade die Ängstlichsten angeht: Betriebssport für alle," *Arbeitertum* (7/14), October 15, 1937, 17.
37. Kayser, "Gibt es einen 'KdF-Sport'?" *Der Kraft-durch-Freude Sportwart*, 1940, issue 16, 3.
38. Robert Ley, *Deutschland ist schöner geworden* (Munich: Eher, 1939), 94.
39. See, for example, *Dienstanweisung des Sportamtes der NSG "Kraft durch Freude"* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Arbätsfront 1937), 9.
40. See Reichsportamt der NS.-Gemeinschaft KdF, ed., *KdF-Sport im Bild* (Berlin, 1936), 12.
41. Ibid, 1.
42. Rudolf Kratsch, "Auch ein Beitrag zur sozialen Frage. Ein Volk treibt Sport in der NS-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude,'" *Arbeitertum*, Oct. 15, 1.
43. See Reichsportamt der NS.-Gemeinschaft KdF, *KdF-Sport im Bild*, 1.
44. See Bernett, "Nationalsozialistischer Volkssport bei 'Kraft durch Freude,'" 106.
45. Ibid.
46. See, for example, "Neckspiele," *Der Kraft-durch-Freude Sportwart,* 1941, issue 21, 13f.
47. "Eine frohe 'KdF-Sportstunde, '" in *Leibesübungen mit Kraft durch Freude* (1935), issue 2.
48. Fr. M., "Fröhliche Gymnastik am Wannseestrand. Die größte deutsche 'Kraft durch Freude'-Gemeinde," *Arbeitertum* (6/9), Aug. 1, 1936, 13.
49. Paula Diehl, "Körperbilder und Körperpraxen im Nationalsozialismus," in *Körper im Nationalsozialismus: Bilder und Praxen*, ed. Paula Diehl (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2006), 9–30. On the concept of the *Volkskörper,* see also Neumann, *Die Weltanschauung des Nazismus: Raum – Körper – Sprache*, 129–142; and Neumann, "The Phenomenology of the German People's Body (Volkskörper) and the Extermination of the Jewish Body."

50. Stemmer, "The Organization of Leisure Time," 5.
51. Malitz, *Die Leibesübungen in der nationalsozialistischen Idee*, 50.
52. BArch NS 5 I/231, article in the newspaper *Hakenkreuz* from 1936, titled "Fröhliche Gymnastik und Spiel für Frauen und Mädchen."
53. According to Michaela Czech, the ratio of women to men in KdF sports classes in 1936 was 60:40; see Czech, *Frauen und Sport im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland*, 68. A DAF publication for women from 1936 even claims that 75 percent of all participants in sports classes were female; see Deutsche Arbeitsfront, *Tagewerk und Feierabend der schaffenden deutschen Frau* (Leipzig: Otto Beyer, 1936), 98.
54. There was a general opposition to certain kinds of sports for women among Nazi functionaries, as illustrated by this statement of SA Sports Functionary Bruno Malitz (who would later work for KdF's Department "Beauty of Labor"): "We National Socialists dismiss sports for women, we approve of gymnastic exercises [*Leibesübungen*] for them." Malitz rejected sport that "deforms, decomposes, destroys," and instead favored "gymnastic exercises, without struggle and without training"; Malitz, Die Leibesübungen in der nationalsozialistischen Idee, 36ff. (Malitz worked for Beauty of Labour from 1934 to 1941 and was afterwards Nazi district leader [*Kreisleiter*] of Görlitz.)

    Corresponding to this disapproval of women's performances in sports is the omission of any mention at all of KdF in Antje Fenners' book on the history of female track and field in the first half of the twentieth century—it played no role; see Antje Fenner, *Das erste deutsche Fräuleinwunder : Die Entwicklung der Frauenleichtathletik in Deutschland von ihren Anfängen bis zum Jahr 1945* (Königstein: U. Helmer, 2001).
55. Regardless of their presentation as mothers, many of the women depicted in KdF publications were relatively young and it not too far-fetched to suspect that "sex sells" was a significant consideration for KdF publicists; see Udo Pini, *Leibeskult und Liebeskitsch* (Munich: Klinkhardt und Biermann, 1992). At first glance, this might appear counterintuitive given Nazism's reputation for creating a sexually repressive society. Dagmar Herzog's book *Sex after Fascism* has demonstrated, however, that such a reading of

the Third Reich would be misleading, pointing out that the regime's attitude toward sexuality was indeed a complicated one, but certainly not merely repressive; see Dagmar Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

56. See Reichsportamt der NS.-Gemeinschaft KdF, *KdF-Sport im Bild*, 1.
57. Hans Krapfenbauer, *Die sozialpolitische Bedeutung der NS.-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude"* (Nürnberg-Zirndorf: Bollmann-Verlag, 1938), 45.
58. Clearly, in this KdF was attempting to cater for the altered demographics of wartime. The population within Germany was now predominantly female, and many of the young mothers participating in KdF classes would have been (temporarily, at least) *de facto* single-mothers. By offering classes that also included toddlers, KdF gave these women the chance both of physical exercise and some relaxation.
59. On Nazi ideas on sports for women, see also Gertrud Pfister, "Biologismus, Eugenik, Rassenhygenie," in *Sportstadt Berlin in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Sportmuseum Berlin (Berlin: Sportmuseum Verlag, 1993), 68–73.
60. See Wolfgang Hirschfeld, *Die Betreuung des Dorfes* (Berlin: DAF, 1939), 33. On KdF's sports activities in the countryside, see also Schnauck, "Der Sport muß auf's Land: Der Einsatz des Sportamtes der NSG 'Kraft durch Freude'," *Arbeitertum,* Apr. 1, 1937, 24.
61. Hirschfeld, *Die Betreuung des Dorfes*, 33.
62. For a more detailed description of these games and others, as well as their place in the annual cycle of village life, according to KdF, see Hirschfield's account of "Peasant games, gymnastic exercises with a folk background," in ibid., 153–159.
63. Ibid., 33.
64. StA WF, 127 Neu Nr. 4722; section "Leibesübungen auf dem Lande" from manuscript "Von der Aufgabe und vom Wesen der Dorfgemeinschaftsarbeit," 21–22.
65. StA WF, 127 Neu Nr. 4722; section "Leibesübungen auf dem Lande" from manuscript "Von der Aufgabe und vom Wesen der Dorfgemeinschafsarbeit," 21–22.

66. See Hirschfeld, *Die Betreuung des Dorfes*, 159. The issue of *Landflucht* will be discussed in Chap. 5, along with a more detailed discussion of KdF's work in the countryside and its specific conditions and contents.
67. Ibid.
68. SA GS, Nachlass Darré Nr. 200; Walther Darré, "Wir und die Leibesübungen," *Odal: Monatszeitschrift für Blut und Boden*, Heft 10, 3. Jahrgang, April 1935, 710ff. Darré's influence on KdF's work in the countryside will be examined in Chap. 5.
69. See Busch, *Unter dem Sonnenrad*, 170f.; and Kratsch, "Auch ein Beitrag zur sozialen Frage," 1 and Krapfenbauer, *Die sozialpolitische Bedeutung der NS.-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude,"* 50.
70. "Nazis Offer Free Horseback Rides to Danzig Workers," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 30, 1934.
71. Krapfenbauer, *Die sozialpolitische Bedeutung der NS.-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude,"* 50.
72. Hans von Tschammer und Osten in *Der Angriff,* Jul. 9, 1935, 4; quoted after Laurence Moyer, "The Kraft durch Freude Movement in Nazi Germany: 1933–1939." (Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1968), 104f.
73. This occurred often in cooperation with KdF's "Beauty of Labor" Program. However, KdF often did not bear the financial burden for these innovations; instead, the companies were made to pay out of their private funds, see Reichsportamt der NS.-Gemeinschaft KdF, *KdF-Sport im Bild*, 1.
74. BArch R 36/2090; speech by von Tschammer und Osten, in "Schafft Betriebssportanlagen," 9.
75. Claiming to have received strong international recognition for the work his leisure organization had done in the previous four years of its existence, Ley continued boastfully: "We have shown to the world, how one can make people happy, using completely new ways and following unique revolutionary thoughts"; BArch R 36/2090; speech by Robert Ley, in "Schafft Beriebssportanlagen: Keine Luxus- sondern Zweckbauten. Keine Stadien, sondern Übungsplätze." ["Establish Factory Sports Establishments: Not luxury, but functional buildings. Not stadiums, but sports grounds."]
76. Hans von Tschammer und Osten, quoted after, Wilhelm Schnauk, "Betriebssport in der Betriebsgemeinschaft," *Arbeitertum*, Jul. 15, 1937, 6.

77. Robert Ley, quoted after ibid., 7.
78. Robert Ley in 1937, quoted after Bernett, "Nationalsozialistischer Volkssport bei 'Kraft durch Freude,'" 114. Even though Ley employs a rather militaristic tone here, it should not be read as an indication of the leisure organization's shifting away from "joy production." Rather, his statement highlights that the sports activities were, as they had been from their very beginning, concerned with the building of community.
79. See Luh, *Betriebssport zwischen Arbeitgeberinteressen und Arbeitnehmerbedürfnissen*.
80. Fasbender has argued that KdF's entry into the field of company sports was a move initiated by KdF's umbrella organization DAF as an attempt to gain more influence over the inner politics of companies in order to eventually have more power to determine the economic decisions of these companies and of Germany overall; see Fasbender, *Zwischen Arbeitersport und Arbeitssport: Werksport an Rhein und Ruhr 1921–1938*, 248. For Hajo Bernett, financial considerations were the main reason for KdF's intervention into company sports, as this brought financial relief for KdF with companies now responsible for meeting the bills. As evidence, Bernett cites a statement by a former KdF administrator who wrote in 1946, "[to] refloat the stranded boat [of KdF sports classes], the work of the Sports Department was now relocated into the companies"; G. Mumme, quoted after Bernett, "Nationalsozialistischer Volkssport bei 'Kraft durch Freude'," 115. If this was indeed the reason for the KdF's involvement in company sports, the strategy failed: by 1939, subventions for KdF sports still stood in a ratio of 5:1 against the revenue it gained from sports classes; see Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude,'" 124.
81. See Fasbender, "Zwischen Arbeitersport und Arbeitssport," 252. Fasbender also suggests that for the Krupp company, there were even "signs that […] against the expressed order of the KdF Sports Department, there was a double-tracked procedure with regard to company sports. The traditional *Kruppsche Turngemeinde*, the Gymnastics Community of the Krupp Company, appears to have continued to exist, alongside the newly established Factory Sports Community of Krupp, and to have continued to receive benefits from the company under its old name.

82. See Teichler, "Ende des Arbeitersports 1933?" 210. Teichler details that several worker-athletes stated they participated in "company sports (prior to its appropriation by KdF) […] as alternatives [which were,] at least until 1937, tolerated retreat areas for former worker-athletes"; ibid., 211.
83. See, for example, Wilhelm Schnauk, *"Betriebssport in der Betriebsgemeinschaft," Arbeitertum*, July 15, 1937, 7. This "voluntariness" referred to both workers and companies. The latter had the choice to either make their company sports clubs part of KdF or transform them into private clubs (a transformation, however, which required a name change to eliminate all references to the company from which the club originated); see BArch, R 36/2090; "Verordnung des Reichssportführers von Tschammer und Osten über die zukünftigen Aufgaben des Sportamtes der N.S-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude'." A 1938 text entitled "Factory sports as social task" by Franz Mende, the head of DAF's Social Department, stated that when given this option, "with a few exceptions, the former company sports clubs […] incorporated themselves into the newly created [KdF] Factory Sports Communities"; BArch, R 36/2090; Franz Mende, "Betriebssport als soziale Aufgabe."
84. "Der Reichssportführer zur Umgliederung der Firmensportvereine. Ergänzung zur Durchführungsbestimmung, Absatz 2 der Verordnung vom 16. 12. 1936." The language in this decree is somewhat curious, for von Tschammer und Osten writes that he *anticipates* ("ich erwarte") that this will be achieved—his word choice suggests a certain powerlessness on his part in this regard.
85. Handball here refers to the Olympic team sport that is still very popular in Germany rather than to the variations on "squash without a racquet." Bowling refers to forms of pin bowling or skittles, which have a long tradition in Germany, rather than to games like bowls or pétanque. Football, of course, means soccer.
86. LAB Berlin Rep. 231 Nr. 768; *Osram- Sport: Monatsnachrichten der Betriebssportsgemeinschaft Osram*; Jan. 1938, 3.
87. It needs to be reiterated that this was not a result of KdF's efforts, but rather grew out of an old tradition of company sports at Osram. The leisure organization (or DAF, as its superordinate institution) simply "inherited" these facilities, taking them over as its "own" programs and activities.
88. DTMB, I. 2.024 059; Robert Ley, "Aufruf des Reichsorganisationsleiters zum Sportapell der Betriebe 1938."

89. See LA Berlin, A Rep. 231 Nr. 427, 2; *Osram-Bekanntmachung*, Nr. 38/38 and LA Berlin, A Rep. 231 Nr. 427, 1; *Osram-Bekanntmachung* Nr. 39/42. The *Sportappelle* took place at least until 1942; see Helmut Heiber, *4: Regesten Band 2* (Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1983), 842.
90. See DTMB, I. 2.024 059.
91. LAB A Rep. 231 Nr. 431, Bd. 1, page 194; *Osram Bekanntmachung an die Gefolgschaftsmitglieder der Berliner OK-Betriebe*, Sep. 11, 1941.
92. See also StA WF, 12 Neu 13, Nr. 37820.
93. *Wintersporttag der Betriebe 1942 ein großer Erfolg : Erfahrungsbericht des Sportamtes der NSG "Kraft durch Freude"* (Berlin, 1942), 3. However, despite the usual emphasis on happiness and amusement, KdF (and the companies involved in actually organizing these sports days) did not forget to be pragmatic and cost-effective: "In several districts, a special competition in shoveling snow formed a part of the winter sports day. Since it seemed to have received the applause of many, this will be continued and used for the benefit of winter traffic"; ibid., 4.
94. See bpk, image Nr. 300390640; Factory Sports Muster of workers of a factory in Bautzen, Saxony, around 1938.
95. See bpk, image Nr. 30032184l; sports event in 1941 for employees of the Volkswagen factory in Wolfsburg, Lower Saxony. For Hajo Bernett, the militaristic format of the Sports Musters is evidence for his larger argument that the character of KdF's sports underwent a fundamental change after its entry into the area of company sports, becoming more competitive and losing the fun component of their earlier years; see Bernett, "Nationalsozialistischer Volkssport bei 'Kraft durch Freude'," 118.
96. Another possibility is, of course, that they smiled because they knew their picture was being taken. However, even this would suggest some readiness to participate in the spirit of the event.
97. The participants are engaging in an exercise designated "Competitive pulling as physical exercise" ["*Wettziehen als Körperertüchtigung*"], which seems to be a form of tug-of-war.
98. See bpk, image Nr. 30039063; Participants in a KdF Factory Sports events, location unknown, 1935 or 1936.
99. See, for example, Peiffer, "Körperzucht und Körpererziehung im Dritten Reich."

100. More important than physical preparation for war seems to have been a sort of mental preparation related to the aspect of community building (through joy), as is illustrated in a wartime report from the Borsig company. After many of its workers had been drafted into the German army, the Factory Sports Community, in order "to keep in close touch with them" and as a form of the "most beautiful work of comradeship" sent them 25,000 letters and packages. Soldiers on vacation attended the Sports Community's events, so that the report could conclude: "War has given us more than ever the proof that the comradeship of sports is comradeship for life"; DTMB, I. 2.001. 578, Bericht über das soziale Geschehen im Werk Borsig der Rheinmetall-Borsig Aktengesellschaft," 30. Thus, war preparation through sports might have been much more a form of mental training in connection to community building than the exercising and improving of workers' physiques.
101. See Frese et al., *Betriebspolitik im "Dritten Reich": Deutsche Arbeitsfront, Unternehmer und Staatsbürokratie in der westdeutschen Großindustrie 1933–1939*, 403 and Teichler, "'Wir brauchten einfach den Kontakt zueinander': Arbeitersport und Arbeitersportler im 'Dritten Reich,'" 240. Of course, doing sports and meeting within KdF's sports framework was not the only strategy open to (former) members of worker sports clubs. For a discussion of how worker-athletes were active in "wild sports" outside institutional frameworks or how entire workers sports clubs managed to survive by (faking) "*Gleichschaltung*," see Schmiechen-Ackermann, *Nationalsozialismus und Arbeitermilieus*, 501–515.
102. See Teichler, "Ende des Arbeitersports 1933?" The survey was conducted by Teichler, who inquired whether the former worker-athletes were able to continue their sports practices, and if yes, under what circumstances. There were 55 affirmative answers to the first question; ten answered the second question with "through attendance of communal sports classes or KdF courses" while seven responded "factory sports teams," probably also referring to KdF initiated activities; see ibid., 199–200.
103. Communist Strategy Paper, originating in Prague, obtained by the Gestapo (now in: BArch R 58/665), quoted after Teichler, "Ende des Arbeitersports 1933?," 212.

104. See BArch SgY 30/2058. These memoirs of Alfred Nothnagel, interspersed with testimonies of former participants in his group, mention several such instances in which the group's KdF-façade diverted police persecution of its members.
105. BArch SgY 30/2058, page 153–155; memoirs of Alfred Nothnagel, here reported by K. Scheffler.
106. BArch NS 5 IV/39; page 34; enclosure to letter to the *Amt Information* from Jul. 23, 1936, subject: "Werratalfahrt v. 8.-15.8.1936/Kreiswanderwart Vg. Adolf Lau, Rostock."
107. Alf Lüdtke, "What Happened to the 'Fiery Red Glow'? Workers' Experiences and German Fascism," in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 227. On *Eigensinn*, see also Introduction.
108. Andrew Stuart Bergerson, *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 264.
109. See BArch R58/316, page 44; letter from May 20, 1937.
110. BArch R58/316, page 44; letter from May 20, 1937.
111. Ibid., page 43; letter from May 5, 1937.
112. Ibid., page 50; letter from August 4, 1937. Such disobedience is an interesting example of how KdF's inner workings are characterized by "polycratic" governance, thus mirroring the rule of the Nazi state overall.
113. See BArch R 58/316, page 33; letter to the head of KdF's Sportamt Lorch from October 16, 1936.
114. BArch R 58/316, page 37; report from December 23, 1936.
115. BArch R 58/316, page 38; report from December 23, 1936.
116. Sopade, July 1936, 884. That Nazi rhetoric and politics were "muted" in KdF environments might have made it easier for many leftist workers to join the organization's classes. But of course, many turned to KdF simply because they had no other opportunity to continue their sporting activities. The woman quoted above who attended a KdF swimming class is a good example of this pattern: she said that she "first had concerns about participating in a KdF event," but then realized "that there [was] no other option." Later, she added in her report for Sopade: "The fact of the matter is that one cannot avoid KdF if one wants to do sports or go on vacation, and this is rather universal"; ibid. There

were also cases of worker-athletes who opened up to KdF in an attempt to "save" and conserve sports facilities that used to belong to Germany's leftist parties and their associated sports organizations, see Bernd Stöver, *Berichte über die Lage in Deutschland: Die Lagemeldungen der Gruppe Neu Beginnen aus dem Dritten Reich 1933–1936* (Bonn: Dietz, 1996), 327f.

117. Institut Biographie, Interview with Hildegard C., July 1987 (full name known to author.)
118. This was also suggested in the report on the dance group in Guben, which worried that if no "intervention" to bring in Nazi-minded youth were to take place, the dance group would continue provide opportunities to meet for members from former Marxist youth clubs; BArch R 58/316, page 38; report from December 23, 1936.
119. There is no reason to assume that the cheerfulness of KdF's sports did not also affect workers who stood in opposition to the Nazi government and had joined KdF sports classes solely because they had either had no other option or because they wanted to appropriate the leisure organization's framework so that it could serve as the site of continued networking and socializing among leftist circles.
120. W. Delingat, "Deine Aufgabe," *Der Kraft-durch Freude Sportwart,* May 1939, issue 1, 1; see also Krapfenbauer, *Die sozialpolitische Bedeutung der NS.-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude,"* 56.

CHAPTER 3

Kultur for the *Volk*

Wagner for All: KdF in Bayreuth

"We National Socialists can rightly claim that there is nothing of beauty and greatness in Germany in which the working man cannot have a part."[1] Robert Ley's proud 1939 claim praised his leisure organization's activities in bringing culture to all strata of the German population, and referred in particular to the organization's involvement with the Bayreuth Wagner Festival, the annual performance of Richard Wagner's works in his opera house in Bayreuth, Bavaria.[2] Starting in 1937, KdF sent workers to attend the prestigious opera performances in Bayreuth.[3] It was a modest enterprise in the first year, but in 1938 3,500 KdF patrons visited Wagner's "Green Hill," attending special performances of *Parsifal* and *Tannhäuser*.[4] In the summer of 1939, KdF gave out 7,000 tickets discounted to a third of the regular price,[5] and now there were four performances for the leisure organization's patrons: *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Parsifal* and two stagings of *Tristan und Isolde*.[6] According to an article in the DAF newspaper *Angriff*, KdF brought an eclectic mix of people to Bayreuth, including plumbers, accountants, secretaries, farmers, pipe fitters, chemists, engineers, clerks, lathe operators, and bank assistants. Before seeing the opera performances, they were given an introductory lecture on Wagner's works (in Bayreuth or, in some cases, previously in their hometowns).[7] Making Wagner's operas accessible in this way to this particular audience fitted two of KdF's main goals. First, it corresponded with the organization's agenda

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of bringing together Germans from different strata of society as a building block towards a unified *Volksgemeinschaft*. Secondly, and ultimately in the same vein, KdF's involvement in Bayreuth was driven by its ambition to give members of the lower classes access to Germany's cultural life, especially its "high-brow culture." Here, KdF's functionaries had identified a disconnection that they believed would have dire consequences for Germany: the estrangement of German workers from the world of German culture was supposed to lie at the core of Germany's class conflicts during the nineteenth and especially the early-twentieth century.[8] In other words, they did not consider material needs to have been the reason for workers' discontent during previous decades, but rather the workers' lack of proper access to the world of arts and culture.[9]

KdF set out to remedy this. It promised that in Hitler's Germany "it no longer depend[ed] on being poor or rich whether one can partake of Richard Wagner or Goethe or Schiller."[10] The organization diagnosed an "inferiority complex" with regards to the arts among those Germans who did not belong to the upper or middle classes,[11] but its cultural events and performances were intended to help overcome this and to make culture accessible to everyone. Germans' collective participation in such cultural events was considered an important step towards the building of a unified *Volksgemeinschaft*.[12]

KdF's activity at the Wagner Festival was undoubtedly an embodiment of the undertaking to bring culture to all strata of the German population. After the start of the war, the leisure organization's involvement in Bayreuth increased. Hitler himself had decreed in April 1940 that the festival should continue to operate during the war under KdF's aegis (alongside the continuing stewardship of Winifred Wagner), and is quoted to have said: "I want us to have the most beautiful and best culture. I do not want the German culture to be, like in England, only for the upper crust of society. I want it to benefit the entire German nation."[13] Accordingly, KdF thenceforth administered the entire festival, now called the "War Festival". In this wartime version of the festival, Wagner's operas were performed predominantly for audiences consisting of armament workers and German soldiers, especially those on convalescence, all who received free tickets. KdF also arranged their travel to Bayreuth and also their room and board during the festival.[14]

During the war years, KdF arranged visits to Bayreuth for approximately 100,000 people to see 70 performances,[15] and all this despite increasing difficulties due to the ongoing war.[16] These numbers represent

the organization's attempt to deliver on Ley's promise that KdF's involvement in Bayreuth would "prove to the people and to the world that we carry the arts to the workers and to the soldiers, to the broadest masses of the people." There could be no better place than Bayreuth, he argued, to act on the organization's conviction that "culture and arts are not only for the few, and they are not closed off by a high wall from the people" and its concomitant "task to impart our great cultural treasure to the widest masses."[17]

The first KdF-run War Festival, in the summer of 1940, received national and even international attention. The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, described the festival as a "spiritual reward to wounded soldiers and laborers employed at the front and in the armament industries, who will be honored guests of the 'Strength Thru Joy' [sic] organization."[18] The *New York Times*, too, covered the festival in an article that reads almost like an advertisement for KdF, informing its readers that the event was "produced on a scale as elaborate as in peace time" and drew an audience of "some 1,250 soldiers and workers."[19] Propagandistically, the Bayreuth War Festival was clearly a success. But what about the reaction of the "new" audiences KdF brought to Bayreuth? Pre-war articles in the DAF newspaper *Angriff* had emphasized how deeply moved those Germans, who bought discounted KdF-tickets to visit Bayreuth, had been.[20] According to a post-war account, this positive reception was also shared by the workers and soldiers who attended the War Festival: their "eyes [were] shining" with joy, more affected than any previous audience in Bayreuth—"Soundlessly, deeply emotionally, they followed the plays [operas], in which the best German artists sought to give their best."[21] This description very much resembles those found in the news coverage of the event during the Third Reich. KdF's magazine *Arbeitertum* chronicled workers and soldiers who were "enraptured and breathless" when listening, who were overwhelmed by the performances, and who reacted in "deeply moved silence."[22]

Of course, all these sources have a propagandistic bias and are written more or less from the perspective of the festival's organizers.[23] However, reports by the SD, the intelligence agency of the SS, which were meant for internal use only and thus have no need for any emphasis on propagandistic "outreach" also include similar accounts of positive responses from participants.[24] According to these reports, broad circles of the German population had taken notice of the festival, seeing it "as a new sign of the interior strength of Germany" and appreciating that it "particularly

honored […] the class of manual workers." The feedback the SD collected from participants was overwhelmingly positive.[25] The event was described as "exemplary" and "fabulous," the SD report concluding that the 1940 Bayreuth Festival not only "further[ed] the sympathy of the working population for […] *Kraft durch Freude*, but more generally for the [Nazi] party."[26] An SD report for a later festival, in 1943, also stated that guests "were completely enthused and satisfied." This report cites a Reich Labor Service Leader who testified that she was "so happy to have experienced this," and an East Prussian armament worker who stated that she would never forget her visit. A soldier, who had lost his eyesight in the war, claimed that he "could stay […] forever and listen to the sounds and the singing, which moved me into a different world." The event seemed to have had the sort of motivational effects KdF hoped for: a woman from Düsseldorf who was mentioned in the report said that her visit to Bayreuth would positively affect her work life and productivity, since she was now provided with "new courage and strength for my coming work;" and a "heavily wounded soldier" exclaimed that the performance had made it clear for him that "It is worthwhile to fight until the end for a people that is capable of such cultural events in times of need."[27]

However, there are also some reports that make KF's work in Bayreuth sound less than successful. For example, the SD found that some guests resold the tickets they had received for free from the leisure organization in order to invest the profit "in alcohol or other scarce commodities." Others "slept during the performances due to ignorance or lack of interest."[28] It appears that KdF's project of "bringing culture" to Germans was not always reciprocated in ways the organization would have wished.

The ambivalence in the overall reception of KdF's activity in Bayreuth is exemplary of the mixed reception of KdF's cultural programming nationwide.[29] Symbolically, Bayreuth's festival was certainly the pinnacle of KdF's cultural work, and especially of its agenda to "bring culture to the people." But in quantitative terms, the festival was just one among very many KdF programs set up by its "Leisure Time Department" [*Amt Feierabend.*][30] Millions of Germans participated in KdF-arranged theatrical and musical performances and attended its art exhibitions and vaudeville shows. These events, and in particular those that KdF staged directly on the shop floor, will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter.[31] We will see how many of them were—unlike the Bayreuth Festival—very accessible, entertainment-focused affairs, despite increasing criticism from other agencies within the NS regime. The importance of "bringing culture

to the worker" as an element of realizing the Nazi vision of a harmonious, class-less "racial community" was thus more or less superseded for KdF by the organization's commitment to "joy production." In what follows, I examine how KdF's cultural practices vacillated between "bringing culture" and "entertaining." While this is not a development with distinct phases and a clear-cut outcome, I would argue that overall, amusement and entertaining took center stage—a tendency that scholars have also found in other areas of Nazi Germany's cultural policy.[32]

Bringing Culture and Community to the Shop Floor

(Classical) music performances on behalf of KdF were not limited to Wagner's Green Hill; in its brochures, the leisure organization boasted that "the best orchestras and the most famous conductors" performed at its behest,[33] including the prestigious Berlin Symphony Orchestra,[34] which put together a special KdF concert series. Subsidized by the German Labor Front, the Nazi party, and the Reich Culture Chamber,[35] KdF's Leisure Time Department was able to offer discount tickets to the symphony for less than one Reichsmark.[36] In 1937, the KdF reputedly staged 3,760 concerts all over Germany; in total, 1,903,271 people attended these, with many of the concerts also simultaneously broadcast on the radio. By 1938, KdF's Leisure Department had succeeded in reserving contingents of tickets for its organization for selected concerts at every single German concert hall.[37] For smaller cities that did not have their own municipal orchestras, KdF organized performances of touring orchestras, especially the Nazi *Reichs-Symphonieorchester*.[38] Additionally, KdF arranged for musicians to perform in German factories. The renowned conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, for example, led one such "factory concert" [Werkkonzert] in March 1943; a photograph from the event shows him conducting next to heavy machinery for an audience of workers[39] (see Fig. 3.1) Also a photograph album from the Osram company in Berlin depicts a concert by a Wehrmacht orchestra in August 1938.[40] The photograph shows a factory courtyard full of people standing closely around an orchestra in the center of the space. From the clock on the building wall, we can tell that it is almost 12.30 pm: like many of these events, this concert took place during the workers' lunch break.[41] As the picture illustrates, it drew quite a number of listeners.[42] It is interesting to see that KdF's underlying

Fig. 3.1 KdF factory concert conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler, 1943 (bpk image Nr. 3002146)

goal with these events—the creation of a close-knit *Volksgemeinschaft*, here between soldiers and workers—was already spatially enacted by the performance: The soldier-musicians performed in the middle of the Osram workers; the photograph, taken from a high-angle, reveals a huge mix of people, soldiers and workers, men and women, unsegregated and standing closely together.[43]

KdF's concerts in factories, however, were not always received in the way the organization had hoped for. For example, a concert for the female workers of a large textile factory in Saxony left many in the audience disgruntled. The folk music concert was performed by a student choir and took place during the workers' lunch break, which had been moved for the occasion from noon to one o'clock, meaning there were quite a few "rumbling stomachs" in the audience. After lunch, according to report about the event by Sopade, the (exiled) Social Democratic Party, the workers "were given the opportunity to dance with the students […] so that in this way the *Volksgemeinschaft* could find its expression. [But] they [then] had to make up for the lost hours of work by working 15 minutes longer for a few days."[44] For many of the workers, this decision led to a considerable loss of free time as the quarter-hour delay meant they missed

their trains; they were consequently quite unhappy about the event and, according to the Sopade report, did not agree with the local press that this concert embodied "Socialism of the Deed"[45] The event thus did not bring the happiness KdF desired to the women workers, instead it disturbed their lunch and brought about an enforced sacrifice of free time.[46]

In addition to concerts, KdF also transformed the German shop floor into a venue for visual and sculptural art.[47] The leisure organization mounted exhibitions inside German factories—by May 1938, 1,574 of them had been set up in the factory halls or break rooms of industrial plants, viewed by over 4 million German workers.[48] Bringing exhibitions directly to the workers' sites of labor allowed them see items normally only found in museums, thus saving workers the time, courage, and financial outlay that visiting a museum would otherwise have entailed.[49] Without ever having to enter the "temples of the bourgeoisie," German workers could now savor visual arts directly at work—although this had to happen outside work hours, of course. KdF publications celebrated the fact that workers could now go to exhibitions during their lunch break, "without having to put on a new collar."[50] Transferring the museum experience onto the shop floor corresponded neatly with KdF's agenda of bringing culture and arts into the everyday lives of German workers; as KdF propaganda put it, "arts [had now] descended into the daily routine of the worker."[51]

On display in a factory exhibition might be art pieces by the workers themselves or more or less professional art works. The former would have been produced with KdF's stimulation and assistance, for example, in arts classes run by the organization's educational branch, the *Volksbildungswerk*. The latter were meant not only to edify, but also to motivate the workers to make art themselves; the objectives of KdF's factory exhibitions were not limited to the passive display of art before the eyes of a perhaps unappreciative audience. Rather, KdF wanted to "establish the prerequisites for the acquisition of a deeper understanding of art" in this new audience of workers. A KdF brochure thus suggested that an exhibition would make apparent "the creation of sculpture from a stone block to a monument or the erection of a building from the early sketches until the final plan and the actual execution."[52] Visiting these exhibitions was to be a learning experience for workers, who were assumed to be unfamiliar with such things. At times, this educational project was pushed even further: not only were paintings and sculptures brought into the factories, but sometimes also the artists themselves, who would explain their pieces and their work processes and answer questions from the workers.[53]

Although KdF sought to activate understanding and appreciation of visual art among workers, the "cultural learning" experience provided through these factory exhibitions (and musical performances) was still essentially passive in the sense that the workers were the audience for the artistic endeavors of others. But passive listening and watching was not the final stage in KdF's scheme. The Nazi effort to bring together arts and the workers on a regular and, if possible, even daily basis went further. For the Nazi leisure organization, the ultimate goal was to involve its participants actively in its events. That is, in the organization's thinking, people enjoying something passively, as an audience, was fine (especially as part of group, in line with KdF's other main principle, that of community-building), but the joy and happiness would be of a higher quality if it was evoked through an activity, through active doing rather than passive consuming.

This fundamental principle was also applied to factory exhibitions. Workers were not to stop at merely viewing art they were encouraged to produce art. Visiting factory exhibitions were meant to inspire such artistic activity.[54] "Bringing culture to the workers" thus also meant motivating workers to be artistically productive, creating things themselves, which could then be showcased in turn in the factory exhibitions. The presence of workers' own art in the factory exhibitions was believed to have an even greater motivational effect, demonstrating that workers could produce art and so inspiring yet more workers to do so.[55]

In line with KdF's focus on community building, the exhibitions also set out to bridge the gap between professional artists and workers. The announcement for a factory exhibition of contemporary drawings, watercolor, and oil paintings in Berlin claimed that visiting the exhibition would give workers "an understanding of the methods of a visual artist" and help them "realize that for his creative work he [the artist] also requires craftsmanship."[56] This text brings out clearly the constant link between KdF's educational urge to bring culture to workers and the leisure organization's broader goal of building a *Volksgemeinschaft*. While the goal of holding a concert at Osram by the Wehrmacht orchestra was to bring soldiers and workers together, this art exhibition aimed to bridge the gap between workers and artists. Artists, too, according to KdF's message, were "handworkers," and thus shared much with industrial workers. KdF hoped therefore to prompt both groups, particularly the workers, to recognize this kinship. Both producers and consumers of art were considered equals—as were all other members of the *Volksgemeinschaft*—and were

consequently interchangeable. KdF's project to "bring high art to the workers" was, as we can see here in the case of factory concerts and exhibitions, understood quite literally in terms of space; at the same time, it also tried to motivate workers to be artistically active. The leisure organization attributed equal value to both professional and amateur art; in fact, it constantly, and apparently consciously, blurred the line between them. For KdF, the output of "joy" was important, and since artistic activity of any kind was potentially enjoyable, the leisure organization valued amateur activities as highly as professional ones.[57]

Interestingly, in these factory exhibitions we can detect acts that could be described as displays of *Eigensinn*—not unlike those identified in Chap. 2, in the sporting and social activities of leftist workers utilizing KdF's framework of sports activities. In the case of factory exhibitions, however, these *eigensinnig* actions were not usually about maintaining socialist networks. Instead, we find attempts to promote avant-garde modernist art, defying the official agenda of the Nazi regime. Important instigators of such actions were Hans Weidemann, a painter who was, in 1934, head of KdF's "Culture Department," (a predecessor of the Leisure Time Department), and his deputy, Otto Andreas Schreiber, also a painter, and the head of the department's Fine Arts section.[58] They put on shows for KdF, mostly in factories, and included works by artists that would later be officially deprecated by the Third Reich's infamous "Degenerate Art" exhibition, such as Max Pechstein, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, or Otto Pankok.[59] The presence of work by these artists in a KdF exhibition was, however, not widely advertised.[60] And of course, this type of action was an exception. The case points, nonetheless, once again to the lack of micro-managing on the part of the leisure organization when it came to the execution of events, which meant that spaces were sometimes opened up that allowed for diverging and deviant activities within the framework of KdF programs, by either participants or even, as in this case, middle-level executives.

There is also some evidence that another facet of KdF's cultural programming was availed of for *eigensinning* activity. On the shop floor, KdF hosted so-called "Comradeship evenings" (*Kameradschaftsabende.*) These were get-togethers for employees of a given company that took place on or near the factory grounds; the evenings might involve performances of all kind and were often accompanied by free drinks and sometimes even food.[61] According to Sopade reports, these comradeship evenings were at times transformed into spaces where old networks could be maintained.

As one report pointed out, these comradeship evenings were "the best meeting points for old comrades [socialist workers] and their families. The stupid Nazi-guff is tolerated, [so that workers are able] to, at least sometimes, meet up in a social context."[62] Another report claimed that KdF's events provided "the opportunity to very casually meet up with good old friends and animatedly discuss, with a glass of beer, exactly the opposite of what the evening's organizers had aimed for."[63]

However, there are also reports that illustrate that KdF's comradeship evenings were indeed quite successful in achieving what the organization had aimed for. As the name of the event denotes, a Comradeship Evening was intended to foster a feeling of community and equality amongst the workers within one factory. With these factory evenings, KdF sought to initiate a family-like bonding between employees and employers. Briefly put, both were to party cheerfully together. And indeed, the evenings were successful in "making an impression on the workers," as one Sopade report put it.[64] Comradeship evenings were especially popular with workers due to the material incentives they offered; for example, a participant in such an event recounted, in a November 1935 report for the Marxist opposition group Neu Beginnen, that the event provided "good food and abundant drinks" as well as "cigarettes and cigars," and that the majority of the workers subsequently referred to it as a nice evening.[65] And a Sopade report from the same year quotes a worker who, together with his colleagues, had received food and drink coupons at the Comradeship Evening of his company; in addition, women were given a chocolate bar and men five cigars or a packet of cigarettes.[66] Alcohol consumption, based on free drinks, played a crucial role, and contributed to the success of the evenings; as Sopade noted bitterly, "in the end, the number of beer coupons is pivotal" to the workers.[67] At a Comradeship Evening in Silesia each participant was gifted a bottle of wine, causing "carousal and uproar" the entire night and much enthusiasm.[68] And the frequent Comradeship Evenings at the Berlin Telefunken Company were reported to typically become "big benders," with some workers partying and drinking all night only to "arrive in a barely tolerable state at work in the mornings."[69]

KdF was probably not very happy that in this case its event ended up draining workers' productivity, but overall, having created a platform for workers' collective celebration was certainly something that gratified the organization. If the Comradeship Evenings were supposed to further KdF's agenda of community building, then in fact, many participants appreciated the sentiment of community evoked by these events, as, for

example, when a company director would give a speech that emphasized how all employees of a factory were equally valued members of the company.[70] KdF's Comradeship Evenings helped overcome workers' negative feelings towards their management, and fostered the belief that comradeship between workers and management could actually be realized. As a Sopade report admitted: "Especially in smaller companies […] the illusion of true comradeship emerges easily from these comradeship evenings. But even in bigger firms one can hear the opinion that it will do no harm to a manager if he has once to dance with a female factory worker."[71] In the light of such developments, some Sopade reports assumed a disillusioned and somewhat cynical tone, lamenting that KdF had apparently managed to mute much of workers' previous class-militant attitude: "In the past, workers went on strike for weeks because of a 2 cents wage decrease; today they are [already] happy when they have the chance to get drunk together with their director."[72]

Overall, many Sopade reports and those by the Marxist opposition group Neu Beginnen, stand as evidence for the popularity of KdF's comradeship evenings, and also suggest that these events functioned beneficially towards the Nazi goal of a unified *Volksgemeinschaft*. The reports do not suggest, however, that these events did much in terms of explicit political education or even indoctrination. A 1937 Sopade report, referring to a KdF evening that included a vaudeville performance, stated: "The event lacked any political touch. […] The evening was a success in terms of the atmosphere, but hardly in a political respect,"[73] and another report from 1938 asserted vehemently that workers' participation in KdF events did not mean that they were pro-Nazi.[74] While the programs of some Comradeship Evenings included speeches by representatives of the German Labor Front or its leisure organization, Sopade described these as not much more than a "a nuisance for workers, which they put up with in order to enjoy KdF's materialistic offers."[75] Another report suggested that workers were willing "to swallow a lot of Nazi-nonsense" in order to enjoy "inexpensive opportunities to find easy relaxation" and the "light entertainment" provided.[76] Workers happily came along to these evenings despite their potential Nazi political content. They enjoyed KdF-organized performances, a lot of beer and, in some cases, appreciated getting a glimpse of the Nazi-promised *Volksgemeinschaft*.[77]

KdF's cultural and entertainment events on the shop floor were, needless to say, significantly affected by the beginning of the war. For one thing, the war brought about a change in the composition of Germany's

workforce. Many German workers became soldiers, and to replace them, German companies relied on foreign forced laborers in large numbers.[78] KdF adapted to these changing realities and began to offer recreational programs to these foreign workers. "Everywhere German and foreign workers are at work to contribute to the ultimate victory, KdF is willing to provide the necessary compensation for their tireless producing," stated a 1944 text by the German Labor Front.[79] The emphasis here on the general goal—contributing to Germany's *Endsieg*—is less surprising than the means DAF and KdF were willing to employ. The so-often celebrated "joy-giving" was consciously not limited to Germans, but extended also to foreigners working for the Germans. While this might seem somewhat paradoxical given Nazi ideology's belief in the racial inferiority of foreign workers, it fitted into the organization's underlying assumption that "joy giving strength" was a necessary element of the industrial production process. KdF was willing to make "inferior" foreigners happy if this would boost their productivity and help the German cause.[80] Of course, none of this could be described as anything but cynical, as many, if not all, foreign workers had not actually elected to help the Germans, but rather were forced to do so. KdF either simply ignored this, or, more likely—and more tellingly—believed that it did not matter for its project. In other words, KdF's belief in its own work and its effects was so total that KdF functionaries were convinced that its "joy-production" would work in any case, even if "applied" to non-willing participants.

In practice, this meant that labor camps in Germany also became the site of recreational events, including social evenings, movie screenings, concerts, and sports.[81] Some of these events addressed certain nationalities in particular among the foreign workers; for example, at the camp set up for the workers of the Herman-Göring-Werke (HGW) in Salzgitter, some movies were screened in Czech[82] and others in Italian.[83] In Nuremberg, KdF hosted events for French and Walloon workers,[84] while a "social afternoon" at the Eastern Worker Camp in Karlshorst near Berlin was advertised under the title "Ukrainian songs, melodies and dances."[85] A 1944 leisure event for foreign workers at Berlin's Borsig Company is recorded in a photo album. The pictures from the event, which took place at the workers camp, markedly resemble those of a prewar Comradeship Evening for German workers. The first shows a musician, most likely himself one of the foreign workers, playing a guitar on stage, while the audience of men, who appear to be rather well-dressed, look on. Another photograph displays a man in a Nazi uniform giving a speech on a lectern decorated

with the symbol of the German Labor Front, while a young man with an accordion, probably another foreign worker, sits next to the same guitar player and looks directly into the camera.[86] The album also contains a photograph showing a group of young women, most likely female workers from the East ["*Ostarbeiterinnen*"] who appear to have received an award. Some of them wear what look like traditional costumes. This again shows that the event was organized in a way that allowed foreign workers to express themselves according to their own traditions and cultures, and not so that it could function as a tool for making these workers familiar with German language and culture. In other words, these leisure events were less concerned with political education or demonstrating German superiority, but were more interested in achieving relaxation and cheerfulness, even for foreign workers.

Of course, as Shelley Baranowski has pointed out, KdF's programs for foreign workers in Germany were not on par with the organization's programs for Germans. In comparison, "foreigners received short shrift. [… and] KdF entertained foreign workers separately and belatedly"[87] Some recreation activities were hosted for foreign workers, but the emphasis during the war inevitably remained on German workers. Apart from the aforementioned activities for foreign workers that KdF arranged in the Hermann-Göring-Werke in Salzgitter, film, vaudeville, and cabaret events were also staged for the company's German workforce during the war. There were even guest performances by famous artistes such as actress-singer Marita Gründgens or comedian Heinz Erhardt.[88] Other companies also hosted elaborate, often circus-like events with performances of all kinds by musicians, acrobats, dancers, and comedians.[89]

These leisure activities on the shop floor were only one aspect of KdF's wartime work. The leisure organization was very concerned in its propaganda to demonstrate the necessity of this continued "joy production" despite the ongoing fighting. Robert Ley stated in 1939: "When arms speak, the muse must remain silent: this used to be the saying. Today, however, we are convinced that the noise of arms and arts are no opposites."[90] In Ley's use of this image, KdF would make the "muses" sing in order to provide the necessary support for "arms," that is, Germany's war effort. In 1940, Ley added that, in times of war, "all sources for the preservation and development of the nation's complete strength must be opened up." He claimed that KdF's wartime work came out of a lesson learned in World War I: "In 1914, any kind of joy was forbidden; today the temples of art are open and one finds that the nation is drinking to the

fullest from its culture's wellspring and enjoys it decently."[91] In such statements, Ley was attempting to fend off potential attacks that might argue that in such a difficult period there was no time and money for these kinds of activities: in opposition, Ley and other KdF functionaries claimed that entertainment and "providing happiness" for Germans was indispensable for a German victory.[92] Ley's allusion to 1914, and the supposed neglect of happiness in that war, yokes KdF's role tightly to the general Nazi promise of overcoming earlier German failures in World War I.[93] A 1940 article in the Nazi weekly *Illustrierter Beobachter* demanded that "joy should not get a raw deal, especially now, in a time that requires more strength than ever before."[94] And in 1943, a KdF social evening in the North-West of Germany was given the somewhat defiant sounding title: "*Man muss sich nur freuen können*." ["One just must be able to enjoy oneself."] This title seems to imply that happiness, or rather retaining the capacity for happiness, was considered every German's duty. In other words, Germans had to be willing to be entertained (and to be made "happy")—and then the rest would be taken care of by KdF. And once such amusement and happiness was "activated," neither Germans nor Germany had reason to be concerned. As long as Germany's population was (able to be) happy, the message suggests, there was no doubt of a glorious German future, including victory in the war. In this sense, a willingness "to be happy" emerges as a *leitmotiv*, and as a demand KdF and the Nazi regime made of every German. A similar sentiment is also included in a song by comedian Udo Vietz, called "Laughing is healthy." Vietz was one of the many entertainers who performed for KdF during World War II and, in this song, he summons his audiences to "laugh in spite of it" and to "laugh in [their] enemy's eye" in order to win. By always laughing, went the song's message—which was underlined through several expressions of laughter ("hihihi," "hohoho," and "hahaha") throughout the song—those laughing "can make the impossible possible."[95] Just by "acquiring laughter," as Vietz's song put it, Germans could successfully face the particular challenges posed by the war. In other words, there was a requirement for Germans to be generally willing to be cheerful and "entertainable." The war in fact meant a more exigent demand for happiness, health, and strength. KdF was to be the supplier of this—and the population had to step up and play the part of willing receiver.

As Corey Ross has pointed out, "the very years in which the Nazis unleashed the most destructive war in history actually marked a high point in the legitimization and popular consumption of public amusements.

Never before were Germans so encouraged to indulge in light entertainments, […] the regime placed the greatest emphasis on pleasure."[96] KdF played a prominent role in this undertaking.

During the war, coverage of KdF's leisure activities in the press and elsewhere was rooted in—and expressed—faith in an eventual German victory, a victory which, furthermore, would then be beneficial for the next phase of the leisure organization's ambitions.[97] Limitations in KdF's current activities were even acknowledged, but were always connected to the promise that the war would eventually lead to a greater range of leisure activities and even more happiness for the German population. KdF's happiness was thus not only the means to gain a German victory; a victory for Germany would, it was believed in turn, result in even greater happiness—again also provided through KdF; as Ross has put it, "The wages of victory would be enjoyment."[98]

Putting on a Show: KdF's Theater and *Bunte Abende* [Social Evenings]

Beyond the shop floor, KdF's Leisure Department was especially active in the realm of theater.[99] Here, too, the organization was driven by the goal of making available previously exclusionary aspects of (Germany's) culture to not-so-well-off "Aryans;"[100] in the analysis of Konrad Dussel, "theater politics mutated into integrative social politics."[101] KdF's Leisure Department succeeded in significantly raising the number of theatergoers in Germany after 1933. As one scholar has put it, visiting the theater was transformed into a "national duty" in the Third Reich, a duty Germans seem to have eagerly assumed, the number of theatergoers dramatically climbing from perhaps as low as half a million in 1932 to as high as 14 million in 1938.[102] Robert Ley claimed in 1935 that millions of Germans, who before 1933 had never seen the inside of a theater, had now begun to visit theatrical performances.[103]

These high numbers were the outcome of a large amount of advertising and propaganda, but even more so of pricing policy. KdF signed contracts with German theaters all over the country, allowing the organization to buy tickets *en bloc*; this block buying and the fact that KdF was subsidized by the German Labor Front then enabled the organization to resell these tickets at a cheaper price than the regular admission.[104] These agreements with theaters also meant that special performances only for KdF were

staged. In some cases, KdF even took over the running of entire theaters or founded new ones. One of these latter KdF ventures was the Theater des Volkes [Theater of the People] in Berlin, a predecessor of the Großes Schauspielhaus.[105] Opening in 1934, it performed theatrical and musical works in order to "bring art to the people and the people to art."[106] In its first months of operation, entrance for all members of the German Labor front was free; later, tickets would range between 50 and 75 Pfennig, an amount still about half the price of regular tickets.[107]

The Theater des Volkes opened with a performance of Schiller's play *Die Räuber*, starring Heinrich George as the protagonist Franz Moor. In addition to KdF's head Robert Ley, both Joseph Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister, and Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess were present at the premiere; Hitler himself would attend several performances at the theater in the following years.[108] Other theaters that KdF acquired or rented included the Theater am Nollendorfplatz and the Volksoper (formerly: Theater des Westens) in Berlin, the Mellini Theater in Hanover, the Friedrich Theater in Dessau, the Apollo Theater in Cologne, and the Zentraltheater in Magdeburg. From 1940 on, KdF also ran the Märchentheater der KdF [Fairy Tale Theater of the KdF] in Berlin.[109]

An emphasis on light entertainment is apparent when looking at the programs of these theaters.[110] The Theater des Volkes' first production may have been a Schiller drama, but in 1935 it started to move away from performing serious plays from the classical canon. Instead, lighter pieces were more often performed, and, beginning with the 1936–37 season, the Theater des Volkes exclusively staged light-hearted operettas.[111] In the Mellini Theater, KdF had taken over a theater that had been considered one of the leading vaudeville theaters around the turn of the century,[112] and Magdeburg's Zentraltheater was also popular for its vaudeville performances and operettas.[113] The Apollo Theater troupe, when performing in occupied Paris in 1941, put on a show consisting of dancing and acrobatics.[114] KdF's widely promulgated ambition to bring more culture to Germany was, in its implementation in the theatrical realm, more like an ambition to entertain; during the war, especially, the sources suggest that when KdF said "theater," it meant mostly "vaudeville theater." In this period, as Richard Evans has pointed out, "most theatre-goers, especially the new ones, were in search above all of entertainment."[115] KdF delivered on that.

An impressionistic, but nonetheless interesting, insight into KdF's theater can be gained from the personal diaries of, and post-war interviews

with, participants in these events. Helmut R., for example, who was an apprentice in Kassel during the Third Reich, remembers his regular visits to the theater in his diary, visits which were only possible for him through KdF's inexpensive tickets. He purchased a monthly subscription for 60 Pfennig, allowing him to attend one show per month. He stresses that these theater visits were very important to him, so that KdF and its initiatives had a significant impact on his life and his sense of well-being.[116] Similarly, the diary of Ida T., a young gardener, affords us an impression of what attending cultural events, possible for the very first time because of KdF, meant for people's outlook on life. Ida chronicles her visiting a performance of the musical comedy called *Das kleine Hofkonzert* on a warm summer evening.[117] She wore her "long, bright-blue dress," and she thought she looked very pretty. Mingling with "other elegant people" and enjoying the "warm night, and the light […] play on stage" was something she greatly enjoyed, and she concluded her entry with the statement that "This is called 'life.'"[118] For Ida, going to the theater that night was clearly a transporting experience, and part of this was that she could be "among other elegant people." That night she could enjoy a bourgeois lifestyle which, as a gardener and the daughter of a miner, she might not otherwise have participated in. In this sense, her diary can be read as an example of an aspiration among members of the lower classes to more culture and its associated glamour. This aspiration, of course, had been asserted again and again in KdF propaganda, and the leisure organization had promised to realize just such "desires," although in Ida's case we again see the typical KdF ambiguity between 'culture' itself and the trappings of an exciting and glamorous lifestyle.

Not everybody's memories of theater experiences enabled by KdF had this "grandiose" tone, however. Take the case of Hermann B., born in 1909, who was a worker at Krupp from 1935 until 1944. In a post-war interview he stated that KdF enabled him to go to the theater. In fact, he emphasized that, during the period of the Third Reich, he attended operas and theater performances more frequently than at any other point in his life. However, he did not attach much importance to this experience. While Hermann B.'s report confirms KdF's success in bringing "culture" to the German workers, he himself did not credit the leisure organization for this. Nor did he claim that their (inexpensive) programs were a direct incentive for him to go to the theater or the opera house. Instead, his reasoning is much simpler and not really related to the goals of the Nazi leisure organization. He visited operas and theaters so frequently at the

time, he says, only because "nothing else was going on." However, even if Hermann, as a Social Democratic worker, was more than reluctant to give KdF any credit, it is still true that his going to the theater *was* made possible by KdF, and so the leisure organization's offerings became part of his everyday experiences, although he did not subscribe to its goals or to those of the Nazi state overall.

While the word "culture" in KdF's agenda to "bring culture to the people" might have been a misnomer in some regards, the organization certainly seemed to respond to the "*to* the people" part when it invested in a mobile theater that travelled to more remote rural areas to make sure that Germans there could also partake of KdF's entertainment offers. The first KdF mobile theater, referred to as the *Reichstheaterzug* [Reich Theater Train] consisted of two modern omnibuses, designed by Daimler-Benz.[119] It was first deployed in 1934 to bring theater performances into rural areas of the Baden *Gau*.[120] Over the years, the *Reichstheaterzug* visited many German regions with its "Artistry, Acrobatics, Dance, Songs, Humor," provided for either for a small fee or, in poorer areas, even for free.[121] A 1938 KdF *Arbeitertum* article praised the mobile theater for reaching the "farthest patches of our fatherland," performing "in the dance halls of village pubs, in gymnasiums […] and even in factories – and, by the way, in a manner as colorful and entertaining as the variety shows in the metropolises!"[122] KdF's concern for "bringing culture to workers" similarly led to the Leisure Department's founding of a touring company for the entertainment of workers involved in the building of Germany's *Autobahns*.[123] Again, in the case of this so-called *Reichsautobahnbühne* [Reich Highway Theater] we can see that KdF's understanding of culture was defined according to popular taste—the *Reichsautobahnbühne* staged folk plays such as *Krach um Jolanthe* ["Quarreling about Yolanda"], about a farmer and his pig—a popular comedy of the *Volkskomödie* genre in the 1930s.[124]

The *Reichstheaterzug*'s focus was on entertainment and pure amusement. Political education seems to have been largely absent from the mobile theater's performances—even though the undertaking itself was political.[125] It was part of KdF's effort to homogenize the population across social and regional boundaries towards a unified *Volksgemeinschaft*, by making theater, vaudeville, and music accessible all over Germany. In other words, what we see here with the *Reichstheaterzug* is paradigmatic for KdF's work overall: content mostly devoid of politics in the service of an overarching political goal.

Overall, KdF's work in theater predominantly emphasized "light entertainment," when it came to its programming—a focus that was even more obvious in the organization's arranging of "social evenings," the so-called *Bunter Abende*. These were evening programs that offered performances and entertainment; the bill for such an evening could include everything and anything, ranging from folk dances, singing, recitals, theatrical skits, and acrobatics, to puppetry, vaudeville and performances by comedians and magicians. A *Bunter Abend* that took place in the town of Weinheim in 1936 was announced "as a cheerful evening" and "a major assault on our funny bones." The evening for which "all of Weinheim ha[d] been waiting […] for a long time," according to the announcement, featured two theatrical scenes—"Whoever goes traveling" and "On the sport field"—several dance performances, various "funny songs," songs from the operettas *The Gypsy Baron* and *The Count of Luxembourg*, and on top of all this a short comedy play and humorous speeches in dialect.[126] With such *Bunte Abende*, KdF acted most directly on its goal of "joy production." Numerous Gestapo reports point to the popularity of these events. For example, a 1935 Gestapo report from Aachen posited that these evenings had become "an institution for the relaxation-seeking population," and that everyday life in Germany had become unimaginable without them."[127] Gardener Ida T. notes in her diary about a KdF social evening she attended the summer of 1937, that the "3.5 hours [of] artistry, ballet, trapeze art and beautiful music," overwhelmed her, being "[t]oo much of a good thing." She also remarked that this KdF event was enormously popular with "thousands of people" attending every night.[128]

The popularity of these kind of events probably had something to do with the fact that they offered "light entertainment" rather than the "high-brow culture" referred to in KdF's more programmatic writing about "bringing culture to the people." Again, in its cultural programming, and despite its own propaganda, KdF very often went out of its way to please its audiences. This meant presenting amusing, simple, and light entertainments: operettas and vaudeville instead of operas and classical music, and comedies and folksy farces instead of theatrical works from the canon of the *Bildungsbürgertum*. This was not an uncontested strategy and encountered harsh criticism from within the Nazi regime. Quite a few observers deemed many of KdF's entertainment events to be silly, tasteless, and not infrequently even vulgar.

Comedians and the jokes they told at KdF events were a particular focus of such attacks. A good example is a 1935 Gestapo report from

Potsdam, which criticized "jokes [that] were often of very low quality, which caused irritation among many in the audience."[129] Although humor at a KdF event might be "bawdy," it ought not be "piggish," according to this report, which denounced the inappropriate jokes as "Jewish-style chaffing [which] must not be promoted by a Nazi organization."[130] Very similar criticisms—less the antisemitism—can also be found in reports by the Sopade; for example, KdF evenings in Berlin in 1936 are described as "lowly vaudeville of the most inferior kind," where "[i]nsinuating, dumb and impertinent expressions from the swamp of lowly eroticism are common."[131] Another report from the same year writes, about KdF's programs staged in Westphalia: "The most stupid means are just about good enough to fog the mind of the German worker. Everybody runs riot. […] The most tasteless and eccentric ideas emerge. Here one can discern a degree of stupidity and lack of wit, which is simply impossible to surpass."[132] The author of this report directs his diatribe mostly at the KdF event for lacking standards and decency. However, some of his anger also clearly results from the fact that workers, in no small number, eagerly participated in these events, permitting themselves be "fogged" and apparently enjoying all the "stupidity." The report began its account of KdF's carnival participation with the claim that "today in Germany, merriness, too, has to be organized."[133] In Nazi Germany, merriness was indeed organized, and, most importantly, successfully so.

That the reports of the exiled Social Democrats criticized the content of the Nazi leisure organization's events is hardly surprising. However, it is important to emphasize that a similar rejection of KdF's events is also to be found in writings by the Gestapo (as already quoted above), the SD, and Joseph Goebbels and his ministry, the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda [the *Reichsministerium für Volksäufklärung und Propaganda*, or RMVP.] All of these bodies displayed a disdain for "tasteless" low-brow culture and called for more quality when it came to KdF performances. Especially during the war, even as SD reports noted "how gratefully the population receives the large scale operation of KdF's cultural operations in the war," they at the same time included harsh criticism of the KdF-organized social evenings and vaudeville shows, which were often denigrated as too obscene. A report from Thuringia, for example, denounced the KdF event "*Liebe ist Trumpf*" ["Love is Trumps"] as a great disappointment, its humor "raunchy and entirely inappropriate for the youth." A "*Meisterabend froher Unterhaltung*" ["Masterly Evening of Happy Entertainment"] staged by

KdF in Danzig, was strongly criticized for its "dancer performing almost naked," and an observer of KdF vaudeville shows in rural areas around Chemnitz, Saxony, commented on their "tasteless erotic jokes" and demanded that such events "whose entertainment only consists of steamy salaciousness should disappear."[134] All these reports about "tastelessness" and "dirty jokes," and the suggestions that KdF pandered to the lowest expectations of its audience, are clear evidence that KdF predominantly offered light, amusing, silly, and "fun-centered" entertainment. In other words, the reports reveal that KdF did indeed act on its commitment to provide easy amusement, even if it was considered by some as either silly or distasteful.

A major opponent of such programming was Joseph Goebbels. His diaries suggest that he had initially been quite enthusiastic about KdF, but by 1936 he was more reserved.[135] After visiting a Bunter Abend organized by KdF in Berlin, he noted that the program was "somewhat mediocre. […] Sometimes all this gives the impression of *panem et circenses.* But to an extent it has to be like that."[136] During the war, his criticisms became more drastic. By 1940, Goebbels was dismissing KdF as a pure "Mumbo Jumbo Movement." ["*Rummelbewegung*"] [137] He demanded that "the emcees [at KdF events] lapse less frequently into dirty jokes than has been the case so far," (although he was more forgiving of the "disrobement of female bodies.")[138] Goebbels's Ministry pushed to have KdF incorporated into the Nazi party's propaganda central office (*Reichspropagandaleitung*), or at least those KdF branches that were involved in arranging lectures and talks, as the RMVP deemed the leisure organization's work in these realms "nonsensical and harmful."[139] Overall, Goebbels was eager to avoid entertainment leading to a kind of "hyper-optimism" amongst Germans during the war.[140] Instead, people should always have "real corset stays," as a RMVP memorandum put it[141]—it appears such a corset was required to contain KdF's exuberant excess of entertainment.

SD reports blamed the 'low quality' of KdF events on the war situation, which led to shortages of appropriately trained staff and talented artists who could work for the leisure organization. "[S]ystematic and, especially, skilled cultural work" had thus become difficult, said a 1941 SD report, since those working for KdF "often lack the necessary interior involvement and responsibility. Often, they approach the execution of cultural events just like a merchant [does] sales of his merchandise."[142] However, while the war certainly hindered KdF's work in general, and probably did not help the standards of its performances in particular, criticism of the

quality of KdF's work had been around almost since the inception of the organization. Thus, the bemoaned "lack of quality" was more an outcome of the organization's commitment to "joy production" than to any contingencies of the war. And KdF's complete lack of reaction to all this criticism was a stark expression of its loyalty to its own particular goals.

So, despite continuous criticism, KdF stuck to its agenda of "joy production" via easy and accessible entertainment events, and, according to a 1943 SD report, it struck the right chord in doing so: "Overall, the light tone of the entertaining, easygoing and unproblematic performances answers the needs of most of the […] audiences best. 'Very difficult fare' is rejected almost 100 percent of the time."[143] In the summer of 1944, Goebbels tried to put a halt to all the rumbustiousness by issuing a decree which stated that "obvious principles of interior cleanliness were often not adhered to during vaudeville performances and when putting together the so-called social evenings." It was unacceptable, said Goebbels, "that during [leisure] events […] a sinking […] into areas of sexual unsavoriness and vulgar and dirty jokes occurs" and he decreed "that this shall be inhibited in the future by any means necessary." Performers were warned that upon violating such guidelines for a "clean and decent ethos," they and organizers of their performances would be "held accountable" and should be prepared to deal with the consequences.[144] What exactly these consequences were to look like, however, remains unclear. Possible punishments are not discussed, and other sources do not reveal whether this decree was ever seriously enforced. However, it was not long before KdF's provision of cultural events came to an almost complete stop. Goebbels issued a decree in September 1944 that severely restricted KdF's cultural activities and led to the closing of all theaters and the shutting down of museums, galleries, exhibitions, and most orchestras in Germany.[145]

In the last year of its "joy production", KdF increasingly focused on bringing distraction to Germans who were suffering under the circumstances of the war. For example, it launched a new event series in May 1944 which was called "KdF on Sunday Mornings" and intended predominantly for "soldiers, the evacuated or the bombed out, and [workers]."[146] These gratis KdF events occurred on Sundays, the scheduling was a response to the increased working hours required by the war, which had made it impossible for many workers to attend weekday events. The events set out to "bring edification and strength in a generous manner to those people's comrades, who at this moment of global reversal [*Weltenwende*] seek and struggle for a new internal foothold."[147] KdF continued its activities in

German cities affected by Allied bombings.[148] In some cases, KdF even brought cultural performances into ration distribution offices and bunkers. This was not always appreciated by the population; for example, a 1943 SD report quoted a Berliner who demanded that KdF should adjourn its programs at least until all the bodies of the recent attack had been buried. Others berated those who visited KdF's cultural events shortly after the attacks as "slackers" who were "impious."[149] A concert in a large bunker in Berlin had to be halted after twenty minutes, since the people present in the bunker unanimously expressed the sentiment "that the performances might very well have been meant in a nice way, but now enough of this." In another instance, women in a bunker near Berlin's Zoological Gardens demanded the immediate ending of a musical performance after a warning about impending aerial bombing attacks had been issued.[150] Discursively, KdF's social evenings also made it into the bunkers, as a joke that circulated during the 1940s among the population hiding from bombing raids in the basements of German cities.[151] The joke or parody followed the formula of a playbill[152] for a KdF event and stipulated that there was now a "basement party in the club 'Lights Off'" with the following program[153]:

1. Introduction: Wailing Sirens
2. Common Song: "All the birds are already here"
3. Welcome Address [by] Speaker Air Raid Warden
4. March played on the home organ: "With Bombs and Grenades"
5. Male Choir: "I sit here in the basement deep"
6. Female Choir: "What comes from on high"
7. Talk: "We as an Air Defense Community" by the Air Raid Warden or his deputy
8. Show: "Nightly Fireworks" [with the special participation of] "Tommy—London" "Flak – Berlin"
9. Common Song: "Good Morning, Good Night"[154]

The joke also included an officious proviso that referred to another hallmark of KdF's evening entertainments, alcohol, and simultaneously had a dig at the leisure organization's focus on community building: "Drinks that are brought along may only be consumed by the entire house community, and not alone in the darkest corner of the basement."[155] The joke juxtaposes the format of a KdF event with the realities of war faced by Germans in the last years of the Third Reich to make a bitter point. Yet the very fact that a KdF event provided the frame of reference for such a

detailed joke speaks to the familiarity the majority of Germans had with KdF's programs.[156] The joke may critique KdF, but it also testifies that KdF's "joy production" had become the widespread phenomenon the organization had set out to create.

Notes

1. *Angriff* article by Robert Ley, "Bayreuth" from August 6, 1939; quoted after Brigitte Hamann, *Winifred Wagner: A Life at the Heart of Hitler's Bayreuth* (Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt, 2005).
2. Wagner was one of Hitler's favorite composers, and Hitler once stated "Whoever wishes to understand National Socialist Germany must know Wagner;" quoted after Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 52. The dictator had a personal relationship with the Wagner family, especially the composer's daughter-in-law, Winifred Wagner, who had been an ardent early supporter of Hitler and who ran the festival after the death of her husband in 1930; see Brigitte Hamann, *Winifred Wagner: A Life at the Heart of Hitler's Bayreuth* (Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt, 2005). On KdF in Bayreuth, see also Hans Daiber, *Schaufenster der Diktatur: Theater im Machtbereich Hitlers* (Stuttgart: Neske, 1995), 116–118.

   The Wagner festival was just one of many that KdF was involved in; another example was the Luisenburg-Festspiel in Wunsiedel in Upper Franconia; see Esther Trassl, "Freizeit und Kultur in Wunsiedel während der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus (1933–1945)," *Archiv für Geschichte von Oberfranken* 78 (1998 1998): 381–401.
3. KdF and Bayreuth had previously cooperated, in 1935, when the leisure organization set up a Wagner festival in Detmold, as an offshoot of the Bayreuth event; see Hannes Heer, *Verstummte Stimmen: Die Bayreuther Festspiele und die "Juden" 1876 bis 1945: Eine Ausstellung*, 2. Edition (Berlin: Metropol, 2012), 175.
4. See *Angriff* article "3500 fuhren mit KdF nach Bayreuth" from August 9, 1938; quoted after Scheubel, ed., *Mit Richard Wagner Zum Endsieg*, 74.
5. See Max Lenz, "Der deutsche Arbeiter in Bayreuth: 7000 KdF-Gäste besuchen die Festspiele in Bayreuth," *Arbeitertum*, September 1, 1939, 6.

6. See *Angriff* article "7000 fahren diesmal mit KdF nach Bayreuth" from June 1, 1939, quoted after Scheubel, ed., *Mit Richard Wagner Zum Endsieg*, 79.
7. See ibid., 80; and Lenz, "Der deutsche Arbeiter in Bayreuth," 6.
8. Sometimes KdF's functionaries blamed this disconnection on Marxist ideology and politicians; cf. BArch NS 5 I/365; article from February 10, 1934 in *Rheinfront* by Werner Haverbeck.
9. In the Nazi view, this latter situation was at the very least the indirect cause of Germany's political and social division: deprived of any access to the sphere of German arts and culture by the propertied classes, German workers were much more susceptible to Jewish and Marxist propaganda, ultimately leading to class struggle among the German people; see Deutsches Volksbildungswerk, *Arbeitsjahr 1938* (Berlin, 1938), 50.
10. Deutsches Volksbildungswerk, Arbeitsjahr 1938 (Berlin 1938), 50.
11. BArch R 43 II/557, page 5; speech by Robert Ley on KdF from November 27, 1933.
12. As Joan Clinefelter points out, "mass participation in cultural events [in the Third Reich] was experienced as proof that the *Volksgemeinschaft* had been realized;" Joan L. Clinefelter, "Representing the Volksgemeinschaft: Art in the Third Reich," in *Life and Times in Nazi Germany*, ed. Lisa Pine (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 188f.
13. Adolf Hitler, quoted after Brigitte Hamann, *Die Familie Wagner* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2005), 123.
14. For the 1940 Bayreuth festival, KdF/DAF assumed 700,000 Reichsmark of the total cost. According to Geerte Murmann, the overall cost of the 1940 festival was 1,234,207 RM, of which 500,000 RM was paid by the Party Chancellery; see Geerte Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg: Deutsches und Alliiertes Fronttheater* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1992), 124f. Rischbieter, however, claims that, in addition to the 700,000 RM from the DAF/KdF, the 1940 Bayreuth festival was supported by 400,000 RM from the private funds of Adolf Hitler; see Thomas Eicher, Barbara Panse, and Henning Rischbieter, *Theater im "Dritten Reich": Theaterpolitik, Spielplanstruktur, NS-Dramatik* (Seelze-Velber: Kallmeyer, 2000), 32.
15. See Erich Ebermayer, *Magisches Bayreuth, Legende und Wirklichkeit* (Stuttgart: Steingrüben, 1951), 215.

16. The war, however, and the limitations it imposed, increasingly disrupted the festival, and in the last year, only one opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,* was staged. It might be more than a coincidence that this piece is the only comedy among Wagner's mature works—this turn to comedy in the depths of war might be read as yet another piece of evidence for my argument regarding KdF's strong emphasis on "joy production". The final performance of this opera at Bayreuth, on August 9, 1944 was also the last opera performance in the Third Reich; see Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 377.
17. Robert Ley, quoted after Arthur Backert, *Feierabend und Freizeit im Kriege* (Bayreuth, 1940), 7.
18. "Wagner Festival," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jul. 7, 1940.
19. "Baireuth [sic] Festival Opens on War Note," *New York Times*, July 17, 1940.
20. See *Angriff* article "Drei, die Bayreuth erlebten" from August 11, 1937, quoted after Scheubel, ed., *Mit Richard Wagner zum Endsieg*, 59; or *Angriff ar*ticle "35000 fuhren mit KdF nach Bayreuth" from August 8, 1938, quoted after ibid., 74f.
21. Ebermayer, *Magisches Bayreuth*, 215.
22. Richard Kopsch-Rossin, "Arbeiter und Soldaten erleben Bayreuth. Als Gäste des Führers besuchen sie mit KdF. die Richard-Wagner-Kriegsfestspiele," *Arbeitertum,* Aug. 15, 6. A similar assessment of the overwhelming emotions experienced by the audience is repeated in a later *Arbeitertum* article; cf. Heinrich Guthmann, "Bayreuth: Arbeiter und Soldaten erleben die Festspiel in lautloser Ergriffenheit," *Arbeitertum,* August 1, 1941, 7.
23. The post-war account just cited was written by Erich Ebermayer, a friend of Winifred Wagner and for a time her attorney in her post-war denazification trial; see Eva Weissweiler, *Erbin des Feuers: Friedelind Wagner—Eine Spurensuche* (Pantheon, 2013), 143.
24. However, even though SD reports likely exaggerated positive feedback on these events less than would be the case in other official texts about the KdF, it is still important to consider that the interviewees would have known or at least suspected that they were talking to a Nazi official when giving their statements, perhaps leading them to portray their experience in a more positive light. The interviewees probably also form something of a self-selected group as the trip to Bayreuth was a reward for workers

and soldiers, who may have been chosen for this reward because of their clear support for the regime.

25. Cf. also Konrad Dussel, *Ein neues, ein heroisches Theater? Nationalsozialistische Theaterpolitik und ihre Auswirkungen* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1988), 137.
26. SD report from Aug. 26, 1940, in Heinz Boberach, *Meldungen aus dem Reich, 1938–1945 : Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS*, vol. 2 (Herrsching: Pawlak, 1984), 1508. [In the following: *Meldungen aus dem Reich.*]
27. SD-report from Sept. 27, 1943, in Ibid., 2:5809.
28. Ibid. Similar evidence that workers and soldiers were not all that interested in the high culture of which they had supposedly been so long deprived can be found at the Salzburg festival. Paul Hörbiger, a famous Austrian actor, reported: "At the next performance, the soldiers had to sign a form upon entering, so that they really would go in. They then really went in – but then directly left again at the other side, in order to sell their tickets to those people from Salzburg who waited there;" quoted after Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg*, 125.
29. Of course, similar ambivalences can be found when it comes to the reception of KdF's tourism activities, see Shelley Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 165ff.
30. Before 1936, the Leisure Time Department was called *Kulturamt* [Department of Culture] and was part of KdF's Department for Folklore and Homeland. In February 1936, it was relaunched as the Leisure Time Department. Overall, this department passed through several metamorphoses and reorganizations within the overall structure of KdF. An important force driving this continuous restructuring was the antagonism between high Nazi functionaries, especially Robert Ley and Alfred Rosenberg and, to a lesser extent, Joseph Goebbels. On Rosenberg and his conflicts with other leading Nazis, see Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Austalt, 1970). For the conflict in the realms of cultural policy and bureaucracy (between Rosenberg, Goebbels, Ley, and Bernhard Rus, Minister of Science, Education and National Culture), see Jonathan Petropoulos, *Arts as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 19–50.

31. For this analysis, I build on wide-ranging scholarship on Nazi cultural politics and entertainment in the Third Reich (see next note). For a discussion of KdF's cultural activities in the larger context of the history of mass culture in Germany, France, Great Britain, and Fascist Italy, see Kaspar Maase, *Grenzenloses Vergnügen: Der Aufstieg der Massenkultur, 1850–1970* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1997). Maase's overall examination of the history of mass culture during the Third Reich finds that there were no major changes in this area in comparison to earlier periods, but that the Third Reich's policies affected the future of mass culture in Germany as it created new promises and wishes; see Ibid., 196–234, esp. 232–234. p. 196–234, esp. 232–234.
32. See, for example, Jan-Pieter Barbian, "Die Beherrschung der Musen : Kulturpolitik im 'Dritten Reich,'" in *Hitlers Künstler*, ed. Hans Sarkowicz (Frankfurt a.M./Leipzig: Insel, 2004), 73. Thymian Bussemer has pointed to the Third Reich's strong focus on popular culture; see Thymian Bussemer, *Propaganda und Populärkultur: Konstruierte Erlebniswelten im Nationalsozialismus* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 2000), 77. Important essay collections on popular culture in Nazi Germany are Carsten Würmann and Ansgar Warner, eds., *Im Pausenraum des "Dritten Reiches" : Zur Populärkultur im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland* (Bern/New York: Lang, 2008); and Corey Ross, Pamela E Swett, and Fabrice d'Almeida, eds., *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany* (Houndmills/Basingstoke, Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Much scholarship on entertainment (and popular culture) in the Third Reich deals with Nazi cinema; see Mary-Elizabeth O'Brien, *Nazi Cinema as Enchantment: The Politics of Entertainment in the Third Reich*, Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004); Bernd Kleinhans, *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Kino: Lichtspiel in der braunen Provinz* (Cologne: PapyRossa, 2003); Sabine Hake, *Popular Cinema of the Third Reich* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002); Karsten Witte, *Lachende Erben, toller Tag: Filmkomödie im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 1995); Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema*, Post-Contemporary Interventions (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); see also Harro Segeberg, ed., *Mediale Mobilmachung*,

Mediengeschichte des Films (Munich: Fink, 2004). On Nazi cinema, see also Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996); David Welch, "Nazi Film Policy: Control, Ideology, and Propaganda," in *National Socialist Cultural Policy,* ed. Glenn Choma (New York: St. Martin's Pr., 1995), 95–129. Not only in cinema, but in theater, too, the focus was on comedies; see, for example, Dussel, *Ein neues, ein heroisches Theater?*; Daiber, *Schaufenster der Diktatur*, 29; Patrick Merziger, *Nationalsozialistische Satire und "Deutscher Humor": Politische Bedeutung und Öffentlichkeit populärer Unterhaltung 1931–1945* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010), 255–262; see also Rainer Stommer, *Die inszenierte Volksgemeinschaft : Die "Thing-Bewegung" im Dritten Reich* (Marburg: Jonas, 1985), 158. Dussel provides a statistical overview on the number of performances of light plays; see Dussel, *Ein neues, ein heroisches Theater?* 319–325. For a discussion of the role of entertainment in literature, see Carsten Würmann, "Entspannung für die Massen: Die Unterhaltung--sliteratur im Dritten Reich," in *Zwischen den Zeiten*, ed. Uta Beiküfner (Berlin: Edition Lotos, 2000), 9–35.

33. Anatol von Hübbenet, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Aufbau und Arbeit* (Berlin: NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude," 1939), 36.
34. Cf. Pamela M. Potter, "The Nazi 'Seizure' of the Berlin Philharmonic, or the Decline of a Bourgeois Musical Institution," in *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, ed. Glenn R. Cuomo (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 39–65.
35. The Reich Culture Chamber [*Reichskulturkammer*, short RKK] had been founded in 1933 as a tool to facilitate the Nazi *Gleichschaltung* of Germany's cultural life. Headed by Joseph Goebbels, the RKK consisted of seven departments ("chambers"), dealing with music, theater, press, radio, film, literature, and the fine arts. On the RKK, see Volker Dahm, "Die Reichskulturkammer und die Kulturpolitik im Dritten Reich," in *"Und sie werden nicht mehr frei sein ihr ganzes Leben" : Funktion und Stellenwert der NSDAP, ihrer Gliederungen und angeschlossenen Verbände im "Dritten Reich,"* ed. Stephanie Becker and Christoph Studt (Münster: LIT, 2012), 193–221; Uwe Julius Faustmann, *Die Reichskulturkammer: Aufbau, Funktion und*

Grundlagen einer Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts im nationalsozialistischer Regime, Berichte aus der Rechtswissenschaft (Aachen: Shaker, 1995); and, for a shorter overview, Robert Brady, "The National Chamber of Culture (Reichskulturkammer)," in *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich*, ed. Brandon Taylor and Wilfried van der Will (Winchester: Winchester Press, 1990), 80–88.

36. See Misha Aster, *"Das Reichsorchester" die Berliner Philharmoniker und der Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Siedler, 2007), 212. According to Aster, "KdF concerts were cheap and easily accessible, but at the same time they were bombastic events with national socialist rituals, fanfares and superlatives—and swastikas everywhere;" Ibid., 214.
37. See Hübbenet, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Aufbau und Arbeit*, 225.
38. The so-called "orchestra of the *Führer*" was founded in 1931 to realize National Socialist ideas in the field of culture and music; see Hans-Jörg Koch, *Das Wunschkonzert im NS-Rundfunk* (Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2003), 33. See also E. Valentin, "Musik für jedermann! Betrachtungen zum fünfjährigen Bestehen des NS-Reichssinfonieorchesters," in *AMZ* 63 (1936), 769f.; quoted in Nina Okrassa, *Peter Raabe* (Cologne/ Weimar: Böhlau, 2004), 270. See also Michael Kater, *The Twisted Muse : Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 33f.
39. The image can be found at bpk, image Nr. 50071597. On concerts for Krupp workers, see Historisches Archiv Krupp, Essen WA 41/ 73–125, page 266; "Rundschreiben KdF" to Krupp's factory attendant (Betriebsobmann) from Oct. 15, 1941.
40. DTMB I 2 060 ALB.
41. For all its commitment to culture, the regime's priority was high levels of production, so KdF events in factories were strictly restricted to outside work times.
42. It is quite conceivable that Osram made attendance mandatory; from several sources, it is obvious that companies were not as committed as the leisure organization to following the principle of "voluntarism" when it came to leisure activities.
43. At an earlier concert at Osram, which took place in June 1935 in one of the company's assembly halls, this discourse of community

building was clearly evident. The announcement for the event read: "The soldiers are coming to the workers, and the workers are going to the soldiers! Both – workers and soldiers – fight shoulder to shoulder for the new *Reich*!"; LAB A Rep. 231 Nr. 660; announcement by the *N.S. Betriebszellen Osram Hauptgeschäft und Werk D* from Jun. 1, 1935, "Die N.S.-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude' bringt Reichswehr-Musiker in den Betrieb!"

44. Klaus Behnken, ed., *Deutschland-Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Parei Deutschlands (Sopade)* (Petra Nettelbeck, 1980), 1071. (= September 1935; in the following: Sopade.) Afterward, according to the report, the student singers were given a meal "in a special room," which was surely not so conducive to community building.
45. Ibid.
46. Criticism of KdF factory concerts, especially because they took place during workers' lunch hours, can also be found in Sopade reports from Bavaria. Here, workers also complained that they did not like the kind of music (often classical) that was performed; Sopade, March 1937, 344.
47. For a general overview of Nazi politics and assumptions about arts, as guided by the *Reichskulturkammer* under Goebbels, see Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, & Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993). For a documentation of visual arts in the Third Reich see Josef Wulf, ed., *Die bildenden Künste im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Gütersloh: S. Mohn, 1963).
48. Hübbenet, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Aufbau und Arbeit*, 36f. On KdF's factory exhibitions, see also Michael Tymkiw, "Art to the Worker! National Socialist Fabrikausstellungen, Slippery Household Goods and Volksgemeinschaft," *Journal of Design History* 26, no. 4 (November 2013): 362–80; NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude," Amt Feierabend, *Der Arbeiter und die bildende Kunst. System und Aufgabe der Kunstausstellungen in den Betrieben (Werkausstellungen, Fabrikausstellungen)* ([Berlin]: NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude," Amt Feierabend, 1938).
49. The leisure organization also organized excursions to museums, which included introductory lectures and guided tours that

attempted to bring art closer to people who had not previously been visitors to museums.

50. StA WF, 119 N, Nr. 21; KdF Monatsheft Gau Sued Hannover-Braunschweig, Jan. 1941; article "Zwischen zwei Schichten: Von der KdF.-Arbeit in einem grossen Werk."
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. On the representation of workers in the arts during the Third Reich, see Okrassa, *Peter Raabe*, 270.
54. This is in line with Eric Michaud's assessment: "The notion of 'creative work' certainly lay at the heart of the whole National Socialist system;" Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, 195.
55. One report by the SS's security service claims, at least, that factory art exhibitions set up by KdF in East Prussia, Thuringia, Berlin and Silesia successfully managed to awaken an interest in fine art among a large part of the German working class; see *Meldungen aus dem Reich,* 1037, here Nr. 80 from April 22, 1940.
56. LAB A Rep. 231 Nr. 660; announcement from Dec. 13, 1937 by *Betriebsobmann* Kleeberg to Osram workers.
57. In fact, KdF prioritized amateur art in many cases. There were two reasons for this: first, amateur theater or dance groups were less expensive; second, KdF believed that active involvement in making art of any kind produced strength, and perceived the production of mental or physical strength as its foremost goal.
58. See Ernst Klee, *Das Kulturlexikon zum Dritten Reich: Wer war was vor und nach 1945* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 2007), 493 and 586.
59. See Hildegard Brenner and Ernesto Grassi, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus*, 167/168 (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch-Verlag 1963), 73. See also Reinhard Merker, *Die bildenden Künste im Nationalsozialismus: Kulturideologie, Kulturpolitik, Kulturproduktion*. (Cologne: DuMont, 1983), 136.
60. See Brenner/Grassi, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus,* 86. Weidemann soon lost his position due to his support for "degenerate artists;" see Klee, *Das Kulturlexikon zum Dritten Reich*, 586.

61. The bill for such an event was usually covered by the respective company, so the events were not infrequently presented as gifts from employers to their workers.
62. Sopade, December 1935, 1458.
63. Sopade, July 1935, 846. It is important to note in this instance that reports from Sopade and other Socialist opposition groups must be taken with a grain of salt. Sometimes, the reports were shaped by motivational desires to spur the fight against Nazi Germany. Thus, they would have emphasized (and probably over-emphasized) both any disaffection with the Nazi regime and its ideas they could identify among workers, as well as small acts of defiance like the "appropriation" of KdF's comradeship evenings.
64. "Aus den Betrieben," Sopade, April 1936, 496. Adopting a conciliatory tone towards the workers, the report added "that not even intellectuals could elude [this effect]."
65. Neu Beginnen, report for September/October 1935 (written Nov. 1935,) 629. On the reporting by Sopade and Neu Beginnen, see Bernd Stöver, *Volksgemeinschaft im Dritten Reich: Die Konsensbereitschaft der Deutschen aus der Sicht sozialistischer Exilberichte* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1983), 55–114.
66. Sopade, July 1935, 793f. At an event a month later, at the same company, no such gifts were handed out and the workers were asked to pay for drinks and food themselves. This meant that, in contrast to the earlier event, "not even half of the workforce was in attendance;" ibid.
67. "Aus den Betrieben," Sopade, April 1936, 496.
68. See Sopade, May 1935, 580.
69. Neu Beginnen, report for September/October 1935 (written November 1935,) 629.
70. See ibid.
71. "Aus den Betrieben," Sopade, April 1936, 496.
72. Sopade, March 1935, 285.
73. Sopade, March 1937, 343.
74. See Sopade, February, 1938.
75. "Aus den Betrieben," Sopade, April 1936, 496.
76. Sopade, July 1935, 846. Sopade reports criticized this attitude of acceptance and that workers lacked "the awareness according to boycott such festivities;" Sopade, December 1935, 1458. They

participated, according to Sopade, even though they "feel very well that with KdF, wool is pulled over their eyes;" Sopade, April 1939, 468.

77. The argument that KdF came to function as *pars pro toto* for the (future successes of the) Nazi regime overall, a sort of "proof" that the Nazi movement was already fulfilling parts of its promises, and was thus to be believed about the even greater (positive) effects it predicted for the German population in the future, builds on work by Ulrich Herbert and Norbert Frei. See Ulrich Herbert, *Arbeit, Volkstum, Weltanschauung: Über Fremde und Deutsche im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1995), 95f.; and Norbert Frei, *1945 und Wir : Das Dritte Reich im Bewusstsein der Deutschen* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005), 122f.
78. On foreign workers in Nazi Germany, see Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany Under the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
79. BArch NS 9/160; exact date not given.
80. The apparent contradiction highlights the dual roles of concentration camps as both "work camps" and "extermination camps" and the tensions inherent in the notion of "extermination through work;" see, for example, Ulrich Herbert, "Arbeit und Vernichtung. Ökonomisches Interesse und Primat der Weltanschauung im Nationalsozialismus," in *Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte? Zur Historisierung und Historikerstreit*, ed. Dan Diner and Wolfgang Benz (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1987), 198–236. See also section 4, "Arbeit in den Konzentrationslagern" in Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christoph Dieckmann, eds., *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Entwicklung und Struktur* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998), 554–751.
81. For a discussion of KdF events for forced laborers in Berlin and Brandenburg, see Andrea Wekenborg, "Lagerleben und Hierarchien in Anweisungen und Erlassen: Die Pragmatik der Reglementierung ausländischer Arbeitskräfte," in *Arbeiten für den Feind: Zwangsarbeiter-Alltag in Berlin und Brandenburg (1939–1945)*, ed. Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz and Karoline Noack (Berlin: be.bra, 1998).
82. There was also an event called *Tschechen-Konzert*, which presumably referred to a performance of Czech music, maybe also by Czech musicians.

83. NWA 2, Nr. 10531, 1; *Lagerzeitung der Herman Göring Werke*, "KdF-Veranstaltungsblatt für Monat Januar 1940."
84. See Michael Maass, *Freizeitgestaltung und kulturelles Leben in Nürnberg 1930–1945 : eine Studie zu Alltag und Herrschaftsausübung im Nationalsozialismus* ([Nuremberg]: Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, 1994), 334. Overall, Maas finds references to 367 cultural events for foreign workers in Franconia and 502 events in labor camps in Nuremberg's newspapers.
85. LAB, A Rep. 231 665.
86. A photograph of a cabaret event in the leisure-time hall of Labor Camp 6 in Watenstedt, as reproduced in Wysocki's book, is strikingly similar to the photograph from the Borsig Company. The Watenstedt photo also captures an audience before a stage decorated with a swastika flag, on which a piano player (presumably) accompanies a person who looks to be singing (unless they are simply smiling); the singer is either a woman, or a man in a woman's dress (the picture is blurry and somewhat hard to make out); see Gerd Wysocki, *Arbeit für den Krieg: Herrschaftsmechanismen in der Rüstungsindustrie des "Dritten Reiches" : Arbeitseinsatz, Sozialpolitik und staatspolizeiliche Repression bei den Reichswerken 'Hermann Göring'* (Braunschweig: Steinweg-Verlag, 1992), 280.
87. Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy*, 215f.
88. See Wysocki, *Arbeit für den Krieg*, 281. Due to the popularity of the events, HGW was forced to introduce "party passes" that were issued via the company's payroll office and regulated admission. This system of passes thus meant the company could use the events as a tool of social control.
89. See LAB A Rep. 231, 665. The emphasis of these evenings was clearly on light, amusing entertainment.
90. BArch NS 22/553; "Waffenlärm und Kunst sind keine Gegensätze: Dr. Ley eröffnete das Deutsche Volksbildungswerk des Reichsprotektorats Böhmen-Mähren," *Völkischer Beobachter,* December 4, 1939.
91. Robert Ley, quoted after Backert, Feierabend und Freizeit im Kriege, 4.
92. Of course, KdF was not the only agent that provided leisure and entertainment for Germans on the home front during World War II. Radio, especially, played an important role; for a discussion of this (and particularly the *Wunschkonzert*, Germany's most popular radio show during the war) see Koch, *Das Wunschkonzert im*

NS-Rundfunk; see also Lisa Pine, *Hitler's "National Community": Society and Culture in Nazi Germany* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2007), 169–181. For an examination of popular music during the Third Reich, see Marc Brüninghaus, *Unterhaltungsmusik im Dritten Reich* (Hamburg: Diplomica-Verlag, 2010); for a brief (and more general) overview of music in the Third Reich, see Pine, *Hitler's "National Community,"* 215–226; and Linda Maria Koldau, "Musik im Nationalsozialismus," in *Die Kultur der 30er und 40er Jahre*, ed. Werner Faulstich (Munich: Fink, 2009), 209–32. Mass entertainment through movies and radio during World War II are discussed in Corey Ross, "Radio, Film and Morale: Wartime Entertainment between Mobilization and Distraction," in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, ed. Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d'Almeida (Houndmills/Basingstoke, Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 154–74. For an overview of popular culture in the Third Reich, including the war years, see Würmann and Warner, *Im Pausenraum des "Dritten Reiches."* Michael Maass's case study of leisure time activities in the city of Nuremberg also covers the war period; see Maass, *Freizeitgestaltung und kulturelles Leben in Nürnberg 1930–1945*. For a discussion of how the regime employed cultural politics to further its war efforts, see Birthe Kundrus, "Totale Unterhaltung? Die kulturelle Kriegsführung 1939–1945 in Film, Rundfunk und Theater," in *Die deutsche Kriegsgesellschaft 1939–145*, ed. Jörg Echternkamp, vol. 2 (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2005), 93–158.

93. For Shelley Baranowski, KdF's primary motive sprung from the Nazi regime's "desire to avoid a repetition of 1918, when the collapse of civilian resolve brought the removal of the monarchy and the emergence of the Weimar 'system;'" Shelley Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy*, 214. Naturally, the Nazis believed that the "Weimar system" had already been replaced with a better regime; this belief, taken one step further, led to the faith that this regime could not be defeated in World War II, at least if its central pillars—prominent among them, "joy" for Germans arranged by KdF—were only maintained.
94. "Sommer ohne 'ihn,'" *Illustrierter Beobachter* 37 (1940), 951. Interestingly, the article illustrated the claim with photos that show several young women who, smiling and laughing, seem to

be greatly enjoying themselves—even though, as the title of the article ("Summer without him") points out, their boyfriends or husbands were away at the front.

On this magazine's history in the Third Reich, and esp. during World War II, see Eva Vieth, "Die letzte 'Volksgemeinschaft' : Das Kriegsende in den Bildern einer deutschen Illustrierten," in *Kriegsende 1945 in Deutschland*, ed. Jörg Hillmann and John Zimmermann, Beiträge zur Militärgeschichte ; 55 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2002), 267–268.

95. Udo Vietz, "Lachen ist gesund;" quoted after Volker Kühn, *Deutschlands Erwachen : Kabarett unterm Hakenkreuz 1933–1945* (Weinheim: Quadriga, 1989), 217.
96. Ross, "Radio, Film and Morale," 156.
97. For example, this is reflected in the title of a May 1940 article: "After the victory, we [will] again travel southwards: Memories of the first trip of the KdF ship 'Robert Ley' to Tenerife, Spain."
98. Ross, "Radio, Film and Morale," 161. Ross does not refer specifically to KdF, but his argument, concerning German war entertainment in general fits quite well with my argument about KdF as producing joy to support victory, in order to attain an even more joyful situation for all Germans after the victory.
99. My discussion here builds on strong body of scholarship. On KdF's role in the sphere of theater in the Third Reich, see especially Dussel, *Ein neues, ein heroisches Theater?*, 132–140. A brief but useful overview of theater in the Third Reich is Pine, *Hitler's "National Community,"* 183–198. For more in-depth studies, see Bogusław Drewniak, *Das Theater im NS-Staat* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1983); Dussel, *Ein neues, ein heroisches Theater?*; Daiber, *Schaufenster der Diktatur*; Eicher, Panse, and Rischbieter, *Theater im "Dritten Reich"*; and Gerwin Strobl, *Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society, 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Useful essay collections are Glen W. Gadberry, ed., *Theatre in the Third Reich, the Prewar Years: Essays on Theatre in Nazi Germany* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995); and John London, ed., *Theatre under the Nazis* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2000). A rich documentation of the topic is Josef Wulf, ed., *Theater und Film im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Gütersloh: S. Mohn, 1964).

100. A survey of workers' leisure time activities, conducted in 1933–34 at the Siemens factory in Berlin, had revealed that 80 percent of its workers rarely or never visited cinemas and theaters. The survey conclusions were based on 42,000 responses to questionnaires; see *Siemens-Mitteilungen* 151, Jul. 1934, quoted in Wolfgang Zollitsch, *Arbeiter zwischen Weltwirtschaftskrise und Nationalsozialismus: Ein Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte der Jahre 1928 bis 1936* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 131. KdF also brought theater into factories. True to its general ambition of fostering active participation in cultural events, some programs encouraged workers to stage theater performances themselves, often in large groups, within the physical space of a factory. In the spring of 1934, for example, 1,000 employees at Berlin's Siemens plant collaborated to perform a play entitled *Aufbruch 1933*; see BArch NS 26/276. This was supported by KdF's *Amt für Volkstum und Heimat*, which fostered the idea that amateur artistic expressions were the ideal, a credo based on the notion that a genuine national, people's art could only come from below, from the people, as an active, creative process; see BArch NS 5 I/365. Accordingly, the department also organized other participatory cultural activities on the shop floor, like singing, dancing, or making music; for example, see. BArch NS 5 I/209.

101. Dussel, *Ein neues, ein heroisches Theater?*, 137. See ibid., 132–140 for a discussion of KdF's "bringing culture to the people" in the realm of theater.

102. See Drewniak, *Das Theater im NS-Staat*, 44. Drewniak finds that the number of theater goers rose from 520,000 in 1932 to 1.6 million in 1936. The numbers in primary sources do not completely agree with each other, but a rising trend is confirmed by all the figures: A 1937 newspaper reports 4.6 million KdF theater visitors for 1935, 4.85 million for the following year and 13.5 million for 1937; BArch R 4903/6329, page 8; "'Kraft durch Freude' als volkswirtschaftliche Leistung," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, December 9, 1937. A 1939 KdF report, however gives 9 million participants for KdF theater events in 1937, 14 million for 1938 and 8 million theater visitors for the first half of 1939; BArch R 4902/ 4736; "Stolzer Jahresbericht des praktischen Sozialismus," *Deutsches Nachrichtenblatt*, July 21, 1939.

The latter report explicitly excludes vaudeville performances and social evenings, partially explaining the lower numbers for 1937.

103. See BArch NS 22/781; "Tätigkeitsbericht über die Leistungen der NS-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude' von Dr. Robert Ley."

104. According to Laurence Moyer, KdF-subsidized tickets were on average 35 percent cheaper than the normal price; see Laurence Moyer, "The Kraft Durch Freude Movement in Nazi Germany: 1933–1939." (Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1968), 97.

105. On the Theater des Volkes, see Hans Severus Ziegler, *Das Theater des deutschen Volkes* (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1933).

106. Karl Busch, *Unter dem Sonnenrad* (Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1938), 135. See also Yvonne Shafer, "Nazi Berlin and the Grosses Schauspielhaus," in *Theatre in the Third Reich, the Prewar Years*, ed. Glen W. Gladberry (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1995), 103–19.

107. See Moyer, "The Kraft Durch Freude Movement in Nazi Germany," 97. However, despite many free tickets and wide-ranging advertising for the theater by KdF and DAF, attendance at the theater was poor in its early days, as KdF propagandist Hübbenet wrote in 1939, claiming that this demonstrated how detached many Germans had been from the theater before the beginning of the Third Reich. He then highlights that this had changed over the years, through the positive work of KdF, and that by 1939, KdF theater events would typically be sold out; see Hübbenet, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude,"* 34.

108. See Eicher, Panse, and Rischbieter, *Theater im "Dritten Reich,"* 84.

109. For the Theater am Nollendorfplatz, see LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 05 1091. For the other theaters, see Eicher, Panse, and Rischbieter, *Theater im "Dritten Reich,"* 32.

110. For a more extensive quantitative analysis of light entertainment at German theaters from 1919 to 1944, see Dussel, *Ein neues, ein heroisches Theater?*, 319ff.

111. See Eicher, Panse, and Rischbieter, *Theater im "Dritten Reich*," 84. On operettas in the Third Reich, see Wolfgang Schaller, *Operette unterm Hakenkreuz : Zwischen hoffähiger Kunst und "Entartung"* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007); see also Koch, *Das Wunschkonzert im NS-Rundfunk*.

112. Klaus Mlynek and Dirk Böttcher, *Stadtlexikon Hannover von den Anfängen bis in die Gegenwart* (Hannover: Schlütersche, 2009), 437.
113. See Peter Petsch and Maik Hattenhorst, *Magdeburg: die Geschichte der Stadt 805–2005* (Dössel: Stekovics, 2005), 437.
114. See KdF-Theater Apollo, Köln, *Gastpiel in Paris, 1941* (theater program booklet).
115. Richard Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009), 568. Evans points out that theater directors "were told that pessimistic or depressing plays were not to be put on." To an extent, this contradicted a declaration by Goebbels, from the beginning of the war, that asked theaters to shy away from "exaggeration and stylelessness which go against the seriousness of the times and the national feeling of the people;" telegram by Goebbels from November 27, 1939; quoted after ibid. In general, this type of difference between Goebbels's demands and KdF practices led to significant disputes between Goebbels and his ministry on the one hand and Ley and KdF on the other.
116. DTA, 1317/II. Full name of diary writer is known to author, but shortened in compliance with anonymization regulations.
117. This piece was written by Edmund Nick in 1935; a year later, the piece was adapted as a movie of the same title by the UFA; in 1945, there was a remake, which was only released in 1950.
118. DTA, 1512,3. Full name of diary writer known to author, but shortened in compliance with anonymization regulations.
119. Daimler-Benz also financed a third of the production costs; see BArch NS 15/47; "Deutsche Arbeiter schaffen den ersten deutschen Theaterzug," *Der Deutsche,* Jun.10, 1934. The use of the bus speaks to an infatuation KdF had with modernity. Articles on the touring *Reichstheaterzug* proudly discuss the technological abilities that could transform a bus into a stage in a very short time, see BArch, NS 15/47; "Der Reichstheaterzug kam: Dt. Krone bereits passiert – Er bringt Freude ins kleinste Dorf," *Deutsch Kroner Kreis-Zeitung*, July 1, 1935. KdF's infatuation with modernity often seems in conflict with its interest in traditional or "authentic" Germanness, especially in its activities in the countryside (see Chap. 5).
120. BArch NS 15/47; "Deutsche Arbeiter schaffen den ersten deutschen Theaterzug," *Der Deutsche,* Jun.10, 1934.

121. Cf. BArch, NS 15/ 47; "Der Reichstheaterzug kam: Dt. Krone bereits passiert – Er bringt Freude ins kleinste Dorf," *Deutsch Kroner Kreis-Zeitung*, July 1, 1935. The article mentions that the performances cost between 30 and 50 Pfennig, depending on location, and no fee at all in economically deprived areas.
122. F. Neubauer, "Sensation in der Werkhalle: Der Reichstheaterzug spielt in Betrieben," *Arbeitertum*, August 1, 1938, 17.
123. This building project was conducted under the surveillance of Fritz Todt, the "Inspector General for the German Road System," and was part of the "Four-Year Plan" initiated in 1936 to help Germany's economy and fight employment; see Norbert Frei, *National Socialist Rule in Germany: The Führer State 1933–1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 73; see also Erhard Schütz and Eckhard Gruber, *Mythos Reichsautobahn. Bau und Inszenierung der "Straßen des Führers" 1933–1941* (Ch. Links, 1996), esp. p. 78.

A 1937 newspaper article claimed that the idea of bringing theater performances to the labor camps, which had been set up along the newly-built highways as part of the so-called "*Sonderaktion für die Reichautobahn,*" originated with Adolf Hitler himself; see BArch NS 15/47.

124. See Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg,* 71. *Krach um Jolanthe* was reportedly one of Hitler's favorite plays, which he saw several times; see Volker Kühn, "Der Kompaß pendelt sich ein: Unterhaltung und Kabarett im 'Dritten Reich,'" in *Hitlers Künstler: Die Kultur im Dienste des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 2004), 356. For more information on the play and its author, as well as its genre, the *Volkskomödie* (a form of dialect theater that was very popular in the Weimar Republic and early Third Reich in rural Germany), see Merziger, *Nationalsozialistische Satire und "Deutscher Humor,"* 262–271 and 255–262 respectively. For a discussion of the movie based on the play, which was produced in Germany in 1934, see ibid., 275f. The play was also turned into a very popular radio play in Nazi Germany, see ibid. 284.

However, some more canonical pieces were also performed at the *Reichsautobahnbühne*, for example Heinrich von Kleist's *The Broken Jug*. For a detailed description and analysis of this performance on the Highway Stage, see Martin Maurach, "'Der zerbro-

chene Krug' auf der Autobahn: Die Reichsautobahnbühne 1936/37 zwischen Hochkultur und 'Volksgemeinschaft', Traditionalismus und Modernität," in *Im Pausenraum des Dritten Reiches: Zur Populärkultur im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland*., ed. Carsten Würmann and Ansgar Warner (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2008), 61–86.

125. It was important for KdF organizers to emphasize this absence, most likely because they were eager to attract as many people as possible and wanted to avoid scaring them away with politics. Accordingly, the director of the *Reichstheaterzug*, a Mr Geller, a Nazi party member, responded to the question of what his stage offers with: "Joy! And nothing else. To suspect some kind of political secondary aim is absurd;" BArch, NS 15/47; "Der Reichstheaterzug kam: Dt. Krone bereits passiert – Er bringt Freude ins kleinste Dorf," *Deutsch Kroner Kreis-Zeitung,* July 1, 1935.
126. BArch NS 5 I/231; "Bunter Abend der NS-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude'," November 27, 1936.
127. See Bernhard Vollmer, *Volksopposition im Polizeistaat: Gestapo- und Regierungsberichte 1934–1936*, 2 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1957), 251 (= "Lagebericht für den Monat Juni 1935."); see also ibid., 157f, 186f. and 208. (= "Lagebericht für den Monat Januar 1935," "Lagebericht für den Monat März 1935," and "Lagebericht für den Monat April 1935.")
128. DTA, 1512, 3.
129. Sibylle Hinze, *Die Lageberichte der Geheimen Staatspolizei über die Provinz Brandenburg und die Reichshauptstadt Berlin 1933 bis 1936. Der Regierungsbezirk Potsdam.* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998), 389. (= "Lagebericht der Staatspolizeistelle Potsdam für November 1935," Dec. 4, 1935.)
130. Ibid.
131. Sopade, July 1936, 885.
132. Sopade, February1936, 165.
133. Ibid.
134. SD-report from December 2, 1940, in *Meldungen aus dem Reich,* 1825.
135. Goebbels mentions KdF several times in his diary. He refers to it for the first time in October 1933 in the context of a meeting he had with Robert Ley, discussing the setting-up of a "*Feierabend-Organization*" [after-work organization]; Joseph Goebbels, *Die*

Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1998) Part I, Vol. 2/III, 294; entry from October 19, 1933. Goebbels's entries at this time suggest that he was rather enthusiastic and supportive about the founding of the leisure organization: for example, "[It] will be a very huge movement." (*"Wird ein ganz großes Werk."*); ibid. Part I, Vol.2/III, 324; entry from November 28, 1933.

136. Goebbels, *Tagebücher*; Part I, Vol. 3/II , 145; entry from August 1, 1936.

137. BArch R 55/20001c; "Protokolle der täglichen Konferenzen des Reichsministers Goebbels mit den Abteilungsleitern," here from April 1, 1940.

138. Ibid.

139. BArch R 55, 20001c; "Protokolle der täglichen Konferenzen des Reichsministers Goebbels mit den Abteilungsleitern," from April 11, 1940. The memoranda of the Ministry's daily meetings specify that one Herr Fischer, quite possibly Hugo Fischer, an early Nazi party member and, since 1938, head of the Nazi party Central Propaganda Office, was to officially demand this from KdF. I did not find any documents verifying that this incorporation took place.

140. This opinion runs somewhat counter to Robert Ley's rhetoric, cited above, that KdF could make the muses sing in service of arms, and that one of Germany's failures during World War I had been to forget the necessity of joy. Ley and Goebbels may have genuinely differed over how much and what sort of joy was appropriate during war, but again we should not forget that such rival opinions also represent a polycratic jockeying for power.

141. BArch R 55, 20001c; "Protokolle der täglichen Konferenzen des Reichsministers Goebbels mit den Abteilungsleitern," from April 11, 1940.

142. SD report from December 1, 1941, in *Meldungen aus dem Reich,* 3049. An earlier SD report, from March 1940, discussed coal shortages, traffic limitations, and the end of public transportation discounts as war-related circumstances that negatively affected the number of participants in cultural events organized by KdF in German cities; see BArch R 58/149, page 164; SD report from March 8, 1940.

143. SD report, from winter 1943, quoted after Christoph Kleßmann, "Untergänge – Übergänge. Gesellschaftliche Brüche und

Kontinuitätslinien vor und nach 1945," in *Nicht nur Hitlers Krieg. Der Zweite Weltkrieg und die Deutschen*, ed. Christoph Kleßmann (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1989), 95. An increasing "*Vergüngungssucht*" ["addiction to joy"] that grew proportionally to the bombing of German cities has also been described by historian Ulrich Heinemann; see Ulrich Heinemann, "Krieg und Frieden an der 'inneren Front'. Normalität und Zustimung, Terror und Opposition im Dritten Reich," in *Nicht nur Hitlers Krieg*, ed. Kleßmann, 40.

144. BArch R 56 I/37; page 15; decree by Goebbels, reproduced in a letter from July 20, 1944 to the heads of all propaganda departments.

145. See Wolfhard Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude' : Freizeitgestaltung und Arbeiterschaft im Dritten Reich" (Dissertation, Ludwig Maximilian University, 1976), 357. By June 1944, KdF's Theater des Volkes had been forced to shut down because of damage from bombs; see Eicher, Panse, and Rischbieter, *Theater im "Dritten Reich,"* 85. As mentioned above, the *Bayreuth Kriegsfestspiele* also ceased operation in the summer of 1944. On the shutting down of theaters in September 1944, and KdF's/Ley's resistance, see Daiber, *Schaufenster der Diktatur*, 351.

146. BArch R 36/2363; memo from May 8, 1944.

147. BArch R 36/2363; KdF circular from the Leisure Department's Reich office to all KdF *Gau* offices from March 20, 1944.

148. See, for example, Maass, *Freizeitgestaltung und kulturelles Leben in Nürnberg 1930–1945*, 333. Maass describes here how KdF organized a three-hour-long social evening with various vaudeville acts in the already heavily bombed city of Nuremberg.

149. See BArch R58/ 191, page 44; SD report from Dec. 1943.

150. Ibid.

151. Unfortunately, Kurt Hirche, who recorded this joke as part of a larger compilation, does not give a date for this text (although he typically does for other jokes he collected).

152. The joke seems like something that would have worked best in printed form—in direct imitation of a playbill—but Hirche does not provide any information about where or in what form (written or oral) he encountered the parody.

153. Quoted after Kurt Hirche, *Der "braune" und der "rote" Witz*. (Düsseldorf: Econ, 1964), 186f.
154. The song titles come from or allude to the following: for (2), "*Alle Vögel sind schon da*," a popular German children's song, based on a poem by Hoffmann von Fallersleben; for (4), the Prussian Military March "*Mit Bomben und Granaten*," composed by Benjamin Bilse in 1880; for (5), "*Im tiefen Keller sitz ich hier*," a folk song composed in the late-eighteenth century; for (6), *"Was kommt dort von der Höh*," a German student song from the eighteenth century, used by Johannes Brahms in his *Academic Festival Overture*; for (9), Brahm's "Cradle Song."
155. Hirche, *Der "braune" und der "rote" Witz*, 187.
156. This joke was only one of many that had KdF as their background; for a useful source collection in this regard, see Hans Sonntag, *Witze unterm Hakenkreuz* (Berlin: Verlag am Park, 2006); Jörg Willenbacher, *Deutsche Flüsterwitze: das Dritte Reich unterm Brennglas* (Karlsbad: Verlagsanstalt "Graphia," 1935); also Jörg Willenbacher, *Deutsche Flüsterwitze*: *Das Dritte Reich unterm Brennglas* (Karlsbad: Verlagsanstalt "Graphia," 1935); or Alexander Drożdżyński, *Das Verspottete Tausendjährige Reich : Witze* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1978).

CHAPTER 4

KdF's "Warfare for Joy"

The *Reichstheaterzug*, had been on the road since 1934, and KdF celebrated its mobile theater for its ability to entertain in the "farthest patches of the [German] fatherland," as described in Chap. 3.[1] But with the advent of World War II, the *Reichstheaterzug* set out on even longer journeys, now deployed by KdF to visit members of the Wehrmacht away at the front. In 1940, the *Reichstheaterzug* even voyaged to a new continent when it was shipped to Libya to entertain German soldiers stationed in North Africa. By 1943, on the occasion of KdF's tenth anniversary, the Nazi press agency DNB boasted that the *Reichstheaterzug* had travelled a cumulative distance of over 215,000 km, or "five times the circumference of the earth"[2] (see Fig. 4.1).

That the *Reichstheaterzug* not only continued to operate during World War II, but in fact, in providing troop entertainment, greatly expanded its activity, stands *pars pro toto* for the history of KdF during the war years. This chapter will illustrate that the leisure organization became a major player in the realm of troop entertainment for the German army.[3] Almost predictably, this activity was not uncontested and drew much criticism, but it nevertheless expanded continuously, eventually dominating all other areas of KdF's work. The leisure organization followed German soldiers wherever the war was being fought, organized events for injured Wehrmacht members during their convalescence in military hospitals, and even brought its entertainment programs into concentration camps. This

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Fig. 4.1 KdF's *Reichstheaterzug* on tour, 1939 (Bildarchiv Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-2006-0195)

chapter looks at the content of these programs, the logistics of putting them on and how they performed, their reception by audiences, the artists who participated in them, and the perspective of leading Nazis and representatives of several German agencies on KdF's entertainments. I will describe KdF's performances and their contexts, and I will show how KdF's troop entertainment activity was very much guided by the leisure organization's commitment to light amusement and "joy production." The years of World War II and the mass destruction created by the Nazi regime did not halt its entertainment efforts; instead, that destruction was accompanied by another campaign, one that was quite aggressive, and certainly persistent, expensive, and exhaustive—a "warfare for joy."

The entertainment of Wehrmacht soldiers lay within KdF's purview because of a 1939 agreement between the leisure organization, the Wehrmacht, and the Propaganda Ministry. According to this deal, the Wehrmacht would finance KdF to arrange entertainment programs for soldiers. In practice, that meant KdF was in charge of organizing programs including almost every sort of cultural activity with the exception of film

screenings, which were the responsibility of the Propaganda Ministry.[4] The Wehrmacht provided KdF's artists with food and housing, arranged their transport and the locations for their performances and, in some cases, laid on fuel for their vehicles.[5]

KdF's entertainment mandate from the Wehrmacht was not limited to soldiers stationed at the front. The leisure organization also arranged events for injured soldiers during their convalescence in military hospitals. KdF's cultural programs for wounded soldiers took place both inside hospitals and in municipal theaters all over Germany. I previously discussed how KdF went about "bringing culture" to injured soldiers at the "War Festival" in Wagner's opera house in Bayreuth. Naturally, much more mundane events were more common, including variety shows for wounded soldiers with titles such as "*Froher Nachmittag für unsere Verwundeten*" ["Happy afternoons for our casualties"],[6] which were staged on a regular basis in local theaters. But not all wounded soldiers were ambulant so, in addition to these bigger shows, KdF also employed smaller artist ensembles, or even individual artists, to perform in hospitals, bringing entertainment right to the soldier in his sickbed.[7] Puppet shows, for example, were particularly popular[8] because as acts that only needed limited paraphernalia they could perform in one sick room and then easily move on to the next ward.

The leisure organization also offered participatory activities for soldiers, including courses in arts and handicrafts. Such programs built on the prewar experience the organization had gained through its work in German factories. Similarly, KdF also transferred the idea of the "factory exhibition" into military hospitals and arranged for the display of art in hospitals, sometimes including art produced by the soldiers themselves. Not only art, but also artists came, as KdF sometimes brought professional fine artists to visit military hospitals to sketch portraits of hospitalized soldiers. This was meant both as a distraction for bedridden soldiers and to help realize KdF's goal of bringing "culture to the people": even a wounded soldier could connect with the fine arts.[9]

Again similarly to its prewar practices, KdF's cultural events and programs were matched and complemented by those arranged by the organization's Sports Department. Helpfully, of course, sports activities could also speed up soldiers' healing and recovery. KdF's Sports Department offered workshops to prepare sports trainers for their work with wounded soldiers. Eventually, over 200 such trainers worked in over 250 military hospitals, where they arranged games and directed exercises and calisthenics for wounded soldiers.[10] According to one KdF sports teacher, the sports

activities for wounded soldiers were conducted in the "fresh-cheerful style [normal for] KdF's classes" and included "a lot of games and community work."[11] An emphasis on cheerfulness or playfulness can also be discerned in photographs of KdF's sports programs for wounded soldiers,[12] suggesting that in this work KdF stayed in sync with its overall cadence of "joy production."[13]

When it came to the entertainment of soldiers stationed at the front, KdF's leading role was not uncontested. The ins and outs will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter, but at this point it is important to stress that KdF was not the only agency involved in troop entertainment in Nazi Germany: in addition to the Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment, the Reich Chamber for Culture (the *Reichskulturkammner*, or RKK) and its different constituent chambers also played an important role. Furthermore, the department of Alfred Rosenberg, responsible for the ideological and intellectual education of the Nazi party, was involved when it came to providing lectures and reading material to German soldiers at the front.[14] This multiplicity of agencies and responsibilities was the source of many issues, and, despite several attempts and agreements,[15] and despite the all-embracing approach of KdF, the situation around troop entertainment remained in a state of chaotic competition. Throughout the war, KdF, the Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment and the Wehrmacht each maintained their own independent budget for their activities related to entertaining soldiers,[16] thus financing and perpetuating a "colorful, disorderly coexistence of troop entertainments of all kinds."[17]

KdF's predominant role in troop entertainment centering on theater at the frontline at the beginning of the war may be said to have grown naturally out of its prewar activities in mobile theatrical and other cultural performances, such as the *Reichstheaterzug,* and also to have been a continuation of the organization's prewar collaboration with the Wehrmacht. Since the beginning of 1937, KdF had set up large-scale theater events for workers, employed by the Reich Labor Service, building the *Autobahnen* and the Siegfried Line.[18] The infrastructure and know-how developed through this work gave KdF a head start when it came to organizing theater entertainment for soldiers at the front. As the war began, KdF also benefited from its pre-existing relationship with the Wehrmacht. This had been initiated in 1936 by an agreement between Ley and the Minster of War, Werner von Bloomberg,[19] and put the leisure organization in charge, not only of entertaining Wehrmacht soldiers in their free time, but also of providing them with KdF-built housing [*KdF-Wehrmachtsheime*].[20]

Sending Out the Troupes: KdF's Front Entertainment Performances and Performers

In addition to the *Reichstheaterzug*, KdF quickly sent out more mobile stages after September 1939. An SD report from November of that year (only a couple of months into the war) stated that the leisure organization already operated ten stages purely for German soldiers stationed on the Western Front;[21] by 1942, two years into the war, a KdF brochure on troop entertainment from 1942 claimed that 1520 KdF stages were touring occupied France and Belgium.[22] In geographical terms, by October 1941, KdF's activities had already expanded to Italy, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, and southeastern Europe. Entertainment was also made available to soldiers at the Eastern front, albeit on a considerably smaller scale (Fig. 4.2).[23]

The number of KdF-organized troop entertainment events continued to grow throughout the war. In 1941, the DAF reported that *circa* 188,000 KdF events for soldiers had taken place,[24] performed by over 4,000 KdF-hired artists,[25] with attendance numbers reaching 68 million.[26] In Belgium

Fig. 4.2 KdF entertainment for German soldiers in Russia, 1943 (Bildarchiv Bundesarchiv, Bild 101I-698-0016-29)

and France alone, a KdF brochure boasted running over 50,000 events in the first two years of the war, and claimed that, overall, more than 24,000 artists had performed for soldiers on more than 1,600 stages.[27] In July 1944, KdF leader Bodo Lafferentz bragged in an article in the Nazi newspaper *Der Angriff* that there were 836,000 troop entertainment events during the war, attended by overall 275 million German soldiers.[28]

What exactly did all these artists do—what sort of events was KdF providing for German soldiers? The memoirs of the Wehrmacht paratrooper Rudolf Adler, born in 1919, provide a glimpse into the everyday experience of "front theater" among German soldiers. In March 1943, when Adler was stationed in Russia, a front theater troupe came to visit. Their stage was mounted in an old shed: white sheets were used for decorations, spotlights and improvised heaters were set up, and a theater with space for an audience of 150 soldiers created. The show lasted 90 minutes, writes Adler, and consisted of performances by a "pretty female accordion player and two dancers," followed by "some sort of vaudeville program with magicians and such like." Adler remembers the delight the performance caused: "We were all very excited and forgot everything that had happened before. This all happened 4 km behind the front. Again and again, one could hear the roar of guns. […] that really was something special!"[29]

Adler's testimony reveals that front theater was often make-shift, but also that the performances were very much appreciated for the diversion they brought. The troupe stayed for one week, playing once each day, in order to reach all German soldiers stationed in the area.[30] Even though Adler refers to the performance as "theater," his descriptions are of shows that might be more aptly characterized as vaudeville with music and dance.[31]

According to a KdF report from 1941, about 40 percent of all KdF events in 1941 were theatrical performances (including opera and operetta), 15 percent were concerts, 30 percent of the events were vaudeville shows, and 30 percent could be categorized as "cabaret" ["*Kleinkunst*"].[32] An analysis of KdF's overall troop entertainment program from the same year paints a similar overall picture. The majority of the events listed here were concerts (44) or theatrical performances (42),[33] in addition to 20 "social evenings," 20 vaudeville performances, 18 lectures, 16 programs that explicitly offered "music, singing and dance," eight cabaret shows, six opera programs, three magic shows, and two puppet performances. This program once again highlights KdF's "joy focus," which becomes even clearer when the 42 theater performances are broken down by genre: 19

were comedies,[34] 13 were folkloristic "amusing stories," and, of the mere nine that merited the label "*Schauspiel*" [drama], only one was a "tragedy." Thus, KdF can again be seen sacrificing its original goal of "bringing culture" to its audience, putting the emphasis, instead, on easily accessible and amusing "joy productions".

This "joy production" most often took the form of light music and vaudeville acts, especially in the so-called *Bunte Abende*. Such events constituted a large proportion of all KdF's performances for soldiers, as can be seen from the records of the performances that were offered for different Wehrmacht divisions. For example, 19 out of 31 events organized by KdF for the Fourth Mountain Division in November 1940[35] fell into this category. These *Bunte Abende* carried titles such as *Alles in Ordnung* [Everything in Order] or *Rhythmus der Freuden* [Rhythm of Joy].[36] In December 1940, half of all the 28 entertainment events for the division were vaudeville evenings, titled for example *Heitere Bühne* [The Cheerful Stage,] or *Lachende Kleinkunst* [Laughing Cabaret]. Vaudeville shows remained the most common form of entertainment in the following months, the soldiers being able to attend, in January and February 1941, events with such titles as *Heiteres Kunterbunt* [Cheerful Motley], *Tausend Takte Heiterkeit* [One Thousand Beats of Happiness], *Konfetti* [Confetti], *Bunter Abend* [Colorful Evening], *Wohl bekomm's* [Cheers!], and *Freude und Lachen* [Joy and Laughter]. And even when more traditional theater substituted this vaudevillian fare, the pieces were often comedies. For example, in February 1941, KdF arranged for the division performances of musical comedies by the Stuttgarter Kammerspiele and of the lightly bawdy folk play *Das Herz in der Lederhos'n* [The Heart in Lederhosen]. Other theatrical pieces staged for the division included the comedy *Dieses Wasser trink ich nicht* [I don't drink this water] and the folk play *Anna Susanna*. Plays that might merit the label "high-brow," such as Schiller's *Wallenstein* (performed twice for some of the division in December 1940 by the Wuerttemberg State Theater) were such an exception in the repertoire as to clearly prove the rule that, overall, KdF focused mainly on presenting the soldiers in this division with light and entertaining pieces.[37] The strong commitment to amusing light entertainment revealed in this detailed overview of the leisure organization's events for the Fourth Mountain Division, while the division was stationed at home, can also be seen when analyzing the programs KdF offered German soldiers in occupied countries.[38] It would be very hard to argue that this type of troop entertainment realized the organization's putative goal of

"bringing culture to the people," which was so prominently celebrated in its programmatic writings. Rather, a perusal of KdF's troop entertainment programs reveals a consistently strong focus on light entertainment and concomitantly scant concern for performances of "high-brow" art, even when troops were stationed in the relative stability of Germany itself.

Detailed reports of the actual contents of the programs as performed are rare, but there are sources that function as (albeit brief) reviews of the performances staged at KdF events for soldiers: the famous race driver Hans Stuck included in a diary a short description of the show put on by a front entertainment troupe called "*Drei und ein Schifferklavier*" ["Three and an accordion"], consisting of one male and two female performers. Paula von Reznicek, Stuck's wife, who, with her husband, toured German-occupied Europe as part of the troop entertainment program describes the performances as "first-class" and their program as "entirely cheerful […] He sings classical operetta quite well […] She does comedic presentations and songs, partly in costume, all bawdy [and] sometimes rather funny chansons […] The very pretty girl, just 18 years old plays a couple of fairly difficult solo pieces, which brings stamping and clapping from the soldiers."[39] One-and-a-half years later, Reznicek's diary chronicles more performances, by the front theater troupe "*Wer lacht mit?*" ["Who laughs along?"]. According to Reznicek, the troupe comprised some dancing girls, a magician, a whistler, and some acrobats. It put on a "varied program" and, although Reznicek was not taken by the "rather naked and not necessarily attractive girls," she seems genuinely impressed by the final act, an ensemble of French comedy-acrobats who earned "endless applause."[40]

Wehrmacht divisional reports also include short descriptions and even critiques of KdF performances. For example, from a 1943 report of the 257th division we learn that the program "*Und die Musik spielt dazu*" ["And the Music plays along"] involved "attractive emcees," but a merely "mediocre cellist" and "average female dancer," while a tenor displayed some talent but his voice was affected as one of his lungs had previously been winged by a bullet.[41] The event "*Mit Tempo und Schwung*" ["With Tempo and Verve"] was performed by an ensemble consisting almost entirely of women, including singers, a pianist and accordionist, a comedian, a dancer, and an illusionist. While the latter two were only "average," the other acts drew "rapturous applause" from the soldiers.[42] Such descriptions of KdF performances (given from an audience perspective), though brief, help us understand what happened on often make-shift stages in front of entertainment-hungry soldiers. Performances

tended to be "mixed bags," both in content and standard, while artistic excellence and the dissemination of "high culture" content were not usually prominent features: instead light entertainment predominated, often highlighting bawdy humor, and making sure there were pretty girls on stage. Furthermore, descriptions like those cited above suggest that this kind of programming appealed to its audiences and that KdF's events were successful with the soldiers who attended them. However, KdF's events did not garner universally positive receptions, nor were the positive views uncontested. Some of the less positive feedback on KdF events for soldiers will be considered later in the chapter.

As noted above, from the beginning of the war, troop entertainment was funded by the Wehrmacht but carried out by KdF.[43] This framework meant that the artists who performed for the troops were engaged by KdF and hence remained civilians and did not become members of the army.[44] In certain regards the artists were treated as part of the army's retinue with regards to transportation: they received Wehrmacht travel licenses, for example, and could use military trains.[45] On the other hand, responsibility for billeting its artists fell on KdF. The organization requisitioned hotels[46] and established homes for its traveling artists throughout German-occupied Europe, for example in France (Lille, Bordeaux, and Paris), in Poland (Kraków), in Latvia (Riga), Serbia (Belgrade), Greece (Athens), and Norway (Oslo).[47] Despite these more salubrious possibilities, artists travelling for KdF most often had to make do with rather improvised lodgings—sometimes in local hotels, sometimes in civilians' houses—and the artists were not always happy with their accommodation. In 1940, KdF put up members of the female dance chorus "Hiller Girls" in a (former) brothel in Brussels; this prompted several dancers to quit the tour and the chorus.[48]

The size of KdF troupes and the scale of its events varied greatly. Some ensembles consisted of only three of four people, while others could be quite large; the German Opera from Berlin sent 450 people for performances at the Western Front.[49] Some performers also travelled as individual KdF troop entertainers. Among these, the magician Marvelli was particularly celebrated in the leisure organization's publications for travelling to the African desert on behalf of KdF.[50] The varied scale of KdF endeavors is reflected in Wehrmacht correspondence about troop entertainment in occupied Denmark, which utilized three categories: major events with troupes of up to 30 members, who required a hall and proper stage equipment for their performances, which were planned for up to

200 attendees; medium events with ensembles of up to five people who could perform for 50–200 people without requiring a hall; and small events, where between one and three performers entertained an audience of 10–50 people.[51] Often, ensembles performed several times in one place, meaning that in sum they might reach audiences of several hundred or even over a thousand soldiers at one location.[52] Ideally, entertainment events for soldiers were to take place weekly,[53] with large events to be staged at least once a month.[54] In many geographical areas, however, this plan could never be realized,[55] and Wehrmacht reports chronicle the soldiers' disappointment about the lack of entertainment. In most cases, KdF put together ensembles by hiring artists through agencies.[56] The troupes were often little more than improvised, the artists in an ensemble sometimes only meeting each other for the first time when they were already abroad.[57] Towards the end of the war most performances were given by small ensembles or solo artists; Reich Culture Chamber lists of wage permissions for artists working for German troop entertainment suggest that, during 1944 and early 1945, KdF hired performers who could perform alone or as part of duos and trios, including various types of musicians— a pianist, an accordionist, a violinist, and (opera) singers—as well as acrobats, a magician, and a comedian.[58]

All throughout the war, German troop entertainment efforts suffered from a lack of suitable artists.[59] Instituting compulsory front service for artists was debated for a long time by both KdF and the Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment, but was not completely introduced until January 1944.[60] Instead, KdF tried to attract artists by offering high wages[61]—something else that attracted much controversy and criticism, criticism that is discussed later alongside other negative perspectives on KdF's front performances and performers. Some of these criticisms were part of larger issues related to the administrative rivalries in the realm of troop entertainment. Specifically with respect to paying artists, the Reich Culture Chamber set up a special office in 1943 that took general charge of finding and recruiting artists for KdF and the other Nazi agencies involved in troop entertainment activities.[62] Although the function of this new "*Künstler-Einsatzstelle*" extended across several troop-entertainment agencies, Alexander Hirt sees it as a specific attempt by the Reich Culture Chamber to gain more control over KdF, with the latter now only able to hire artists approved by the former.[63] In practice, one of the main effects of this development was that it became much more difficult for KdF to employ artists for troop entertainment, hindered by a lengthy bureaucratic

process and administrative backlogs: in the spring of 1944, KdF's troop entertainment department complained in a letter to the Reich Propaganda Ministry that out of 1,500 requests for artists submitted by January that year, only 200 had been processed.[64] As noted above, Goebbels had introduced compulsory conscription for front artists in January 1944, but in reality this only exacerbated KdF's problem, which was that there were fewer and fewer artists available for troop entertainment: Goebbels's conscription program included a provision that artists working for an orchestra or theater at the "home front" were exempt from being conscripted. To KdF's dismay, this created a "loophole" that was utilized by many performers.[65]

While attempting to attract professional artists by paying higher wages, KdF also sought to overcome the lack of performers by using non-professionals, hiring many amateur artists who would work as entertainers for KdF alongside their regular jobs. This approach was instituted quite early in the war. By 1941, an *Arbeitertum* article profiled such an amateur ensemble. Under the title "*Kabarett der Namenlosen*" ["Cabaret of the Nameless,"] the article celebrated a group of male and female armament-industry workers in the Magdeburg region, who performed in their free time as singers, magicians, dancers, comedians, musicians, and acrobats for wounded and vacationing German soldiers.[66] Intriguingly, the German author and satirist Erich Kästner had used the very same term, a cabaret of the nameless, to describe a club in Berlin where, each Monday night, the stage was given over to amateur artists. Kästner describes how the actual focus of the evening was to ridicule the performers.[67] Although the appearance in *Arbeitertum* of the same appellation is probably coincidental and it is unlikely that KdF functionaries knew about Kästner's text, it is nevertheless quite interesting that KdF duplicated one of the most extreme forms of the "Weimar culture" that Nazism so disdained. The parallel to the club described by Kästner also raises the possibility that similar ridicule was also directed at KdF's amateur artists. KdF sources are silent about this, but if this was the case, it is even imaginble that such cruel mirth might satisfy KdF goals of "joy production."

To find new amateur artists for its programs, KdF hosted talent shows and casting events. An *Arbeitertum* article about one of these events, held in Berlin in 1943, had the telling title "*Musterung der Namenlosen*."[68] Here, the prospective performers are again *namenlos* [nameless] but the talent show is also characterized as a military muster. Clearly, the performers and their work are being linked and likened to the selfless military

service of soldiers. This was quite typical: Making a virtue of necessity, KdF often represented itself using this motif of selfless contribution in its publications about its wartime work.

Reputedly, KdF had little need to advertise for amateur artists, as interested performers quickly started to sign up *en masse*. Of course, much of this desire to perform for KdF would have been motivated by the ambitions of individual performers, whose primary desire might just have been to get on stage in front of an audience, rather than to "serve" the war effort. However, noting that these performers were taking on unpaid work[69] on top of their regular jobs, and that the call went out in 1943—that is, in the very depths of the war—suggests that this very positive response to the opportunity to perform for soldiers also reflects a belief among the volunteers in (the necessity of) "joy production." Also, simply, KdF's popularity is evident: people wanted to be part of it.

Exporting Joy: "German Vaudeville" for All of Europe

Germany's military progress across Europe during World War II was supported by parallel actions in the realm of culture and entertainment: as William Abbey and Katharina Havekamp noted, "In the wake of the German armies which moved across much of Europe […], the Nazis conducted a cultural campaign in which theatre, in all its forms, was a major component."[70] This campaign was not entirely in the hands of KdF,[71] but the leisure organization played a major role when it came to creating cultural events for (German-speaking) civilians in occupied regions and cities throughout Europe. Paris provides a prime example of this development. The German army had taken the French capital in June 1940, Hitler being famously photographed touring its boulevards on June 28.[72] Soon afterwards, by late summer, attested the US newspaper *Christian Science Monitor*, the cultural life of the city was fully "Germanized": the "Champs Elysées, [the] nearest Paris equivalent to New York's Fifth Avenue, looks more like Berlin today than the capital of France."[73] Cafés had become "soldatenheims" and "soldatenkino[s]" had popped up in the middle of Paris, alongside KdF theaters "where German language plays [were] produced by traveling companies of the Nazi strength through joy [sic] organization." Significantly, the claim made in the article's headline, "Paris Germanized," is primarily substantiated in its text by cultural evidence: cafés, cinemas, theaters, and music—concerts by German bands for German soldiers "held several times a week in Paris parks and squares"

while "occasionally troops march[ed] through the streets singing."[74] The *Christian Science Monitor* points out that the overall workforce employed in German entertainment efforts amounted to 120,000 people, who were busy putting on plays, vaudeville, cabaret shows, opera performances, lectures, and talks.[75]

The *Christian Science Monitor* mainly observed the "Germanization" of Paris through the number of cultural events that were being organized by Germans and for Germans, but does not really discuss the events themselves. But taking control of organizational matters would only have been the first stage of a process by Nazis (and KdF) which the *Christian Science Monitor* referred to as "Germanization." Paris was, of course, a special target, not just the capital of France, but also a symbol of culture (and nightlife), a particular jewel to reflect the importance of German culture.[76] Thus, German cultural politics in Paris overall were motivated by the eventual goal that Germany would dominate the cultural sphere in the French capital.[77] KdF was *ex officio* not a key player in achieving this goal, its wartime function in occupied territories being (nominally) limited to the entertainment of troops.[78] This goal is, nonetheless, at times discernible lurking behind the leisure organization's activities and the way they were advertised. And sometimes it is not hard to discern at all: in 1941, on behalf of the Wehrmacht, KdF brought a performance by the Mannheim National Theater of Richard Wagner's *Die Walküre* to the Paris Opera House. The symbolic charge of this importation—or imposition—of an opera by Hitler's favorite composer, based on heroic German mythology, into the heart of Parisian cultural life is clear.[79]

It would be misleading, however, to see this "high art" KdF event as typical of what the leisure organization did in Paris. In fact, here, too, KdF remained loyal to its commitment to providing amusement and entertainment to German soldiers—events that consisted of vaudeville acts rather than demanding art music. A very brief look at KdF's *Deutsches Soldaten-Theater* [German Theater for Soldiers] in Paris makes this quite clear. The theater, which opened during the summer of 1940 and offered daily and free performances[80] was extolled, in an *Arbeitertum* article from the same year, as a place to be entertained by the "best German vaudeville art." What this entertainment exactly entailed can be easily inferred from the pictures that accompany the article, which depict several artists doing acrobatics. The program performed was entitled "Cheerful Vaudeville" ["*Heiteres Variete*"] and included "ballet, music, acrobatics" and (possibly)[81] comedy. It is clear that the theater's emphasis was on light entertainment.

What tended to happen on stage during KdF performances in Paris is documented in a movie clip from (probably) 1940. The show started with ballet dancing—the sort of "ballet" that involves high kicking and turning somersaults—followed by an artist juggling while wire-walking. Next was a comical bit involving a man dressed as a cowboy riding on (presumably) two people dressed as a horse. Then there was more dancing, roller-skating, acrobatics and juggling, a man doing tricks on a unicycle, a contortionist dance act, and more floor acrobatics. The movie clip lacks sound, but it is not difficult to imagine that this performance evoked quite a bit of laughter; certainly that is what it looks, overall, to be trying to do: the program clearly aimed to entertain by being diverting and amusing.[82]

So, regarding its activities in Paris, when KdF was asked to "counter" esteemed French culture with its German equivalent, it chose to present the "best German vaudeville art." But it is important to notice that, while KdF's show was clearly vaudeville it is rather hard to see what was especially "German" about it. KdF's conception of "German art" was continually shifting and was never conclusively defined, but it most clearly referred to works of art stemming either from the traditional cultural heritage or from the classical German canon. "Cheerful vaudeville" does not really fall under this definition, nor is it easy to see how presenting the best vaudeville, German or not, would lead to the "Germanizing" effects the organization hoped for. Once more, there was a clear discrepancy between KdF's agenda of "bringing culture" and what the leisure organization did in practice. Indeed, what KdF's use of the empty term "*German* vaudeville" shows is that the organization was aware of this discrepancy, which it feebly tried to cover it up using relatively empty labels instead of actually addressing it. This is because the goal of "Germanizing" ran contrary to that of KdF's "joy production." Thus, the "German Theater for Soldiers in Paris" was not just a place to see a good show; it was also a place where KdF's goals of "Germanizing" and "joy production" visibly collided, the former collapsing on impact while the "joy production" carried on. This "Germanizing" effort was the "international cousin" of KdF's prewar effort to familiarize German workers with German high culture, which likewise tended to lose out to other concerns. Familiarizing Germans with German high culture, and the "Germanizing" effort to introduce (ethnic German) populations abroad to "high-brow" German culture eventually failed for KdF. These related failures came about because KdF always stuck much more to its "joy production." This stubborn focus on joy at

the expense of other goals is particularly noteworthy given the ongoing criticism the organization endured for it—as we will see in the following section.

KdF's Troop Entertainment Under Fire: Excessive Wages, Bad Jokes, and Loose Women

In 1944, the German Labor Front's executive director Otto Marrenbach claimed that KdF's wartime troop entertainment had until then provided up to 720,000 events.[83] KdF's activities in this realm became more and more central to the organization's self-concept as the war progressed. This is reflected in a large-scale administrative reorganization of KdF that took place in 1943: all its previously separate departments were unified into one giant war division, whose main focus was troop entertainment and leisure time programming for workers.[84]

From the perspective of KdF, troop entertainment became its central activity during the war. Of course, providing distraction, theater, and other cultural performances for soldiers was not unique to Nazi Germany[85]—and even within the Third Reich KdF was not the only agency active in this area. In fact, despite KdF's swift ascent to being a large-scale and predominant player in the field of troop entertainment, its role as such remained contested throughout the war. Before we get to these contestations and outside portrayals of KdF's work, let us first quickly look at how KdF itself presented or, more to the point, celebrated its own activities. Self-eulogizing was necessary for KdF in order to defend its position against competing agencies, such as the Ministry of Propaganda, for example, but also to fend off more basic questions about how much energy, time, money, and personnel should be invested in matters of entertainment during times of war.

Thus, KdF invested quite a lot of energy into "celebrating" its troop entertainment activity. In speeches and writing during war time, KdF's functionaries emphasized the close connection between German culture and the war, arguing that while, for his part, "the German soldier [fought] for the valuable goods of German culture," for its part, the leisure organization, took great pains to ensure that "this culture also accompanie[d the soldier] into the field."[86] KdF's entertainment work, both on the "home front" and for German soldiers, was presented as an integral part of Germany's war effort. Robert Ley proclaimed in this regard: "In this

war, next to the sword stands the lyre."[87] Ley's reference to "*this* war" also seems to make his statement a comment on World War I, suggesting that KdF was providing an element (the lyre) that had been importantly absent in the earlier war[88]—thus, more investment in the arena of entertainment was presented as a crucial step to preventing a similarly negative outcome for the German campaign.

Although the purpose of such arguments was to justify the logistics and resources KdF required, the organization's publications tended to portray its contribution to the fight in more concrete and immediate terms. Thus, the organization typically styled itself as a loyal comrade to each German soldier, a sidekick he could not do without, following him wherever he went.[89] Articles about KdF's troop entertainment work in the DAF-magazine *Arbeitertum* included images of artists "active in remote places, far away from their homes," places often identified by descriptors such as "lonely sites," simultaneously paying tribute to the sacrifices made by soldiers while stressing the point that KdF, too, went literally to the "end of the world" for the entertainment activities for soldiers (unsurprisingly, in wartime, exact geographic details were often perforce omitted). KdF, of course, was not in fact directly involved in fighting the war, and it did not march into battle beside the soldiers. But, despite its goal being to produce entertainment, the image it projected of itself and its artists was not that of unserious entertainers. Rather, it highlighted struggle and sacrifice: KdF was serious about entertaining, which was conveyed, for example, in published photographs that showed KdF artists struggling with hostile weather conditions. But difficult conditions were no real obstacle to KdF and its brave performers: "Despite impassable roads, despite the snow and cold, the line of KdF events always advances just behind the fighting front," claimed KdF's director Lafferentz in 1941.[90]

Of course, it must be noted that KdF did not always live up to their propagandistic claims. As we know from complaints from the Wehrmacht, several remotely located units were never visited by KdF performers—German troop entertainment mostly took place at the rear of the action.[91] This, however, should not mean that we should dismiss KdF's propaganda from our attention, especially as it is also interesting in terms of the audiences it must be addressing. First, one audience group comprised the soldiers at the front for whom the notion of KdF as an entertaining and supportive Sancho Panza was meant to be appealing and convincing. Then there were Germans at home who were meant to be gladdened that KdF was helping the troops shoulder the burden of war and impressed

by the travails both troops and KdF confronted for the sake of Germany. Third was the organization itself, eager to celebrate its self-image, if only to motivate its employees and volunteers. And last but not least, there was the large group consisting of the organization's rivals in the polycratic system of the Third Reich, an often antagonistic audience against whom such justifications were thought to be necessary and potentially effective. Culture in the Third Reich was a field on which several leading Nazis competed and where different ideological strands of Nazism collided.[92]

This competition among leading Nazis and Nazi agencies, as well as among strains of Nazi ideology, is also visible in the realm of front theater. I have detailed above how KdF became the first major player in this field after the beginning of the war. This "supremacy," however, was quickly contested, especially by Joseph Goebbels and the agencies he headed, the Ministry of Propaganda and the Reich Chamber of Culture.[93] Furthermore, there were frequent clashes between KdF and the Wehrmacht over the implementing of the entertainment of soldiers.

One important, and ongoing, point of contention was the roles, behaviors, and conditions of the artists working for KdF, and in particular their wages. For the artists, performing as an actor, musician, acrobat, comedian, or in any other entertainment capacity in KdF's troop entertainment program came with the benefit of not having to serve as a soldier (for men) or to fulfill wartime duties in the industrial sector. Consequently, one not uncommon, if often somewhat concealed, accusation was that KdF performers were "shirkers." The celebration by KdF of its performers as selfless individuals who sacrificed much and (literally) went to great lengths to do their jobs under adverse conditions has also to be seen in this context. Portraying the performers as close supporters of German soldiers in the most distant locales transformed the artists into the soldiers' "comrades-in-arms" and made their activity an indispensable part of the war effort, thus refuting any accusations of shirking.

KdF's troop entertainers also often faced a second, related charge, most often advanced by the Propaganda Ministry and the Reich Culture Chamber. This was that they were "war profiteers."[94] Fundamentaly, this charge of profiteering came down to the basic concern that KdF paid its performers too handsomely, for which it was heavily criticized. In his diary, Goebbels complained that a front artist could receive up to 500 Reichsmark for one evening's work.[95] During the course of the war, he decreed several salary cuts for artists: For example, in October 1940, 2,000 RM was set as the maximum monthly income of a front artist,[96]

and in 1942, this was fixed at 800 RM.[97] However, Goebbels's outraged diary entries on the topic persist, suggesting that such measures ultimately failed to fully resolve the issue. Early in 1944, Goebbels was still upset about the issue and protested bitterly that an artist, for example a "simple ballet dancer," might make more money for performing at the front than an army colonel would for fighting there.[98] KdF responded to these criticisms by pointing out that paying high salaries was the only efficient means to recruit sufficient numbers of performers for troop entertainment. In a letter to Goebbels from May 1944, Ley argued that other measures, such as the "compulsory service for front artists had been unsuccessful." Because of these failures, combined with the pressure to keep salaries down, lamented Ley, "the quality of events has suffered greatly and […] when being paid low salaries the really good artists are no longer available."[99] And in fact, internal complaints in the Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment in 1944 suggest that KdF reacted to this problem by ignoring the decreed salary cut and paying its performers more than the 800 RM officially allowed.[100] As Hirt points out in comparing German and British troop entertainment during World War II, the offer of high wages remained an important element of recruiting artists for front entertainment in Germany, contrary to the case in Britain.[101]

Complaints about KdF's excessively high wages for its artists can also be found outside the area of troop entertainment. A Gau report from Pomerania about a KdF-hired travelling ensemble that performed for a camp of resettlers complained that it was "madness to pay 40 RM to a female dancer, who does little more than flaunt naked flesh while prancing around [only] more or less gracefully." The report doubted the artists' professionalism and suspected that the "[female] dancers, accordionists, or so-called singers have, in a work-shy manner, run away from some workplace without any preparation or training" [to be performers].[102] In addition to the issue of wages, we encounter here a twofold criticism pertaining to the performers. First, the quality of the artists and the value of their performances are questioned; second, the behavior of female artists is criticized. These two criticisms of a particular ensemble performing for resettlers in Germany were also prominent in the attacks on KdF's troop entertainment across Europe, as I will discuss below.

Not unlike the negative reception of KdF's theatrical and vaudeville performances in the prewar years or during the war at the "home front," its front entertainment also faced widespread criticism among members of the Wehrmacht. There are numerous sources that illustrate the discontent

of soldiers with KdF's programming. For example, a 1941 report of the 392nd Infantry regiment, then stationed in France, criticized the inadequate quality of KdF's events. The report criticized "flat vaudeville shows" put on by the leisure organization and stated that the soldiers' "wish for serious, valuable performances—good lectures, theater plays, comedies—is getting louder and louder."[103] Criticisms like this were raised throughout the war, growing more insistent in its final years. For example, a 1943 *Bunter Abend* for soldiers was described by a Wehrmacht officer as a performance consisting of "an announcer, a pianist, a questionable female dancer, several female 'singers'—one meaner, more vulgar and more cynical than the other, both in in lyrics […] and in tone of voice." Overall, he said, the evening had lacked any trace of art or even of "good mood" ["*Gemüt*"], and he declared it an "impertinence."[104] Similar critiques can also be found in private letters soldiers wrote home from the front. One soldier, in a letter from October 1942, commented on a cabaret show by a KdF troupe: "It was pathetically bad. I'd rather see nothing at all" ["*Es war zum Heulen. Dann lieber gar nichts*".][105] Another soldier wrote in December 1942: "We were again at the theater. The program was by KdF. Honestly, such a terrible program I had not seen so far."[106] When a group of soldiers from Pomerania complained in March 1944 about the tasteless jokes, ineptitude, and the overall "artistic inferiority" of KdF leisure events, an investigation of the leisure organization's troop entertainment programs in this region was launched.[107] The results were very negative. On the first day of the investigation, officers of the Wehrmacht straightforwardly rejected three of the five examined programs; one officer stated that in "future one would rather abstain from KdF events for months then again confront one's soldiers with such rubbish."[108] In some instances, KdF's performances were deemed to be so sub-par by soldiers and their commanders that travelling ensembles were sent home before the end of their tours.[109]

Criticism of KdF's front theater came not only from soldiers and officers, but was also voiced loudly and repeatedly by the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. As we have just seen, this ministry, with Goebbels at its head, was very concerned that KdF was overpaying its artists. But the concern also extended to the quality of KdF's offerings. In April 1940, Goebbels noted in his diary that KdF was in the need of better standards,[110] and in December of the same year, he diagnosed KdF events as being "of too low a standard and […] its emcees tell too many dirty jokes." He also criticized the "great deal of naked dancing" in the

countryside and claims that he "intervene[d] energetically [in this matter], not to be moralizing, but for concerns of good taste."[111]

This intervention described in December 1940 (if it ever happened) did not, however, solve the problem, and Goebbels continues to complain in his diary about KdF's troop entertainment; for example, in April 1944, he deemed KdF's troop entertainment programs "outright horrific."[112] In fact, the longer the war lasted, the lower the perceived standards of KdF events seem to have fallen. One reason for this was, as we have seen Ley lamenting, the ever decreasing availability of artists. As the war progressed, one reason KdF could access fewer and fewer artists was that they were now increasingly being drafted into the military.[113] As Murmann points out, the situation became that "One took whomever one could get, and those were not exactly top performers."[114]

It is important to note that not everybody was that upset with KdF's front entertainment programming. There are also less negative reactions to KdF's events to be found in soldiers' letters from the front. Quite a few of these draw a positive, if not necessarily always very enthusiastic, picture. Soldiers often welcomed the "distraction" that the front entertainment programs offered.[115] Some letters also suggest that soldiers noticed but did not necessarily mind the moderate quality of the programs. In 1943, for example, a soldier fighting in the East reported on the visit of "front theater […] with a girl singing, a girl dancing and a girl announcing. Together they were roughly 100 years old. Four men accompanied them musically and all in all it was a nice evening […] Certainly, they don't send the best ones to Russia, but for us, it is entertainment."[116]

In addition to the quality of the performances, the behavior and attire of female artists working for KdF's troop entertainment was a point of contention for soldiers, and even more so their commanders.[117] Of course, female performers per se were not necessarily a problem; in fact, as a 1939 report from an infantry division pointed out, soldiers were particularly interested in seeing "pretty [and] young female dancers and acrobats."[118] The memoir by paratrooper Adler, discussed earlier in this chapter, points to the fact that the presence of female artists and actors contributed greatly to the attractiveness of front theater to soldiers. Adler's positive review of the theater show he attended concluded with the words: "After the performance the run on the women started. Everybody wanted to hold their hands. Invitations were extended." Even though he was not successful that night (due to the fact that, "it was clear that the girls would end up with the officers"), he and his friends were luckier the following week,

when three actresses from the troupe came to visit them privately. They were treated to potato fritters and Adler's "gentleman skills." In his memoirs almost 60 years after the war, Adler still fondly remembers the details of this night, including the names of the actresses, and recalling how the evening's diversion was very welcome.[119]

However, there were more than a few critical reports concerning female front artists. Their ways of dressing, perceived as risqué, and displays of (partial) nudity were particularly criticized. For example, a 1941 report from an Infantry regiment argued that "the many nude performances in the vaudeville shows" were counterproductive to the army's efforts to ensure that soldiers would "restrain themselves toward French women."[120] That performances which were perceived as excessively sexualized could lead to "unrestrained" actions by German soldiers was also a worry voiced by Goebbels in his diary. In July 1940, agreeing with Hitler's opposition to the plan to employ ballet dancers as part of the front entertainment program, he notes that this would be "out of the question for soldiers who have not seen women for such a long time." The underlying concern was that soldiers would act on their urges, which KdF had provoked, or at least augmented, and "fraternize" with women in occupied Europe, either consensually or non-consensually. For Goebbels, such sexual transgression, was, of course, undesirable on the basis of Nazi racial thinking, as is very clear in a diary entry where he admonishes German soldiers who "get sick by French women or […] help them with first-class children, which then help to improve the [French] race." A result which, of course, Goebbels did not approve of.[121] Another, related, concern was the occurrence of sexual relationships between front artists and soldiers, especially officers. We have just seen Adler's memoirs alluding to this, the paratrooper having to resign himself to the fact that the women preferred officers to men of his rank. Writings by female front artists also suggest similar possibilities, if often quite discretely.[122] A little less coy, although still needing to be read "between the lines," was a 1942 directive from a Wehrmacht commander that complained that "the social associations between the forces or rather individual members of the Wehrmacht and KdF ensembles, […] especially women, has in some instances evolved in a manner and to an extent which cannot be tolerated in the interest of the productive efficiency [of the artists] and the maintenance of the discipline of the forces."[123] Interestingly, it is clear here that the concern was less about the "morality" of relationships between front artists and members of the Wehrmacht, or that they might jeopardize previously

existing bonds back in Germany, but more about a lack of military discipline amongst soldiers and officers.[124]

Parallel to worries about how female artists and their performances might provoke unwanted sexual activity on the part of German soldiers was a concern regarding the effects of KdF's (German) female artists on the local populations they would encounter in occupied Europe. "Inappropriately" dressed performers in trousers instead of dresses or skirts, sporting "glaring makeup" and "large green or blue glasses with horn-rimmed frames" under "crazily dyed" hair, as vividly described in a letter from the Eastern front, would create the wrong impression of German women among the locals, who, just like the German soldiers, dubbed these women "German gun broads" [*Flintenweiber*].[125] The front artists described in this letter could hardly be said to correspond to Nazi ideological standards which held that a women should remain within the "smaller world [of] her husband, her family, her children, and her home" as Hitler had stipulated;[126] instead, they appear to have been too eccentric and "liberated" to conform to Nazi gender ideas. Arguably, however, this "liberation" was in fact a consequence of, or at least occurred in a space created by, these women being on the front, far away from Germany.[127]

Despite the recurring criticism, there seem to have been few or no attempts on the part of KdF at the level of policy to "correct" such behavior by its female front artists. There is, however, evidence for propagandistic endeavors in this regard. In its public representation of the work of its female performers, KdF ensured that they aligned their activities with officially defined Nazi gender roles. An example is an *Arbeitertum* article from 1942 featuring a female solo artist employed by KdF to entertain German soldiers stationed in Northern Europe.[128] The way the performer, called "Frau Eve," is portrayed here differed greatly from the image of female performers perceived (and criticized) by Wehrmacht soldiers, commanders, and others involved in the organization of front entertainment described above. Notably, the article is not in the least interested in Frau Eve's performances—in fact, it never becomes quite clear what she actually does when she goes on stage! Showcased instead are her personal qualities as a caring, family-oriented, motherly woman. She is displayed in the article's photos taking the time to look at soldiers' pictures of their wives and children, and the text comments that because she "herself is a mother, [each soldier] can speak [to her] about his beloved home."[129] This reference to

Frau Eve's motherhood is hardly incidental—her motherly domesticity is further emphasized in other photographs accompanying the article that show her cooking and handing out food to the soldiers.

Arbeitertum's depiction of Frau Eve highlights a very different conception of the woman at the front to that which emerges from soldiers' criticisms of female front artists. The latter views suggest that there might have been a significant discrepancy between the self-image KdF propagated and their actual "on the ground" practice. KdF's actual practice was determined by various factors: earlier I noted practical pressures around wages, and the unavailability of potential artists drafted into the military as the war progressed. But the gap between the *Arbeitertum* image of the motherly Frau Eve and other reports of KdF's women performers again makes visible one of this book's main points: amid various tensions and paradoxes, KdF's practice was genuinely focused on fun. The criticisms KdF bore for providing the wrong sort of women, or the wrong image of women again show KdF was persistently concerned with fun, even bawdy fun, for the organization obdurately provided this sort of entertainment despite censure. The Frau Eve article shows that KdF did manipulate the image of its female performers, but there is little evidence that it changed its actual practice accordingly. And in fact, in that regard, Frau Eve shares a surprising amount with the part-naked dancers KdF was taken to task about. She is an ideal, but she is an active ideal, actually visiting soldiers and feeding them. Be it a loving, mother figure like Frau Eve or a lively, sexy chorus girl, KdF was concerned with bringing support, fun, or solace to the soldiers at the front. Overall, KdF is clearly interested in producing actual strength through actual joy—with actual women entertainers at the front—even when this can be said to backfire. In summary, the complaints about KdF's entertainment programs for soldiers highlight two important aspects of KdF's work and outlook. First, the recurring criticism about performances that are "too light" can be taken as further evidence that KdF events were indeed characterized by a focus on "joy production," insofar as this is captured by the "light entertainment" focus. Further, it is important to note that KdF hardly ever reacted to these criticisms; instead, the organization rather stubbornly stuck to its agenda, sacrificing its other goal of "bringing high culture." In the final section of this chapter, I will turn to another place that KdF visited with this "joy production": Nazi concentration camps.

Happiness and the Holocaust: KdF's "Joy Production" in Nazi Concentration Camps

KdF's troop entertainment activities were not strictly limited to members of the Wehrmacht. SS men, including those serving as guards in concentration camps, were also embraced by KdF's "joy production." Organizationally, the leisure organization's work in concentration camps was based on an agreement between Reichsleiter Robert Ley, head of DAF and KdF, and the Reichsführer SS, Heinrich Himmler from February 1940.[130] On the one hand, as my analysis in the sequel of KdF's activity in the camps will show, neither its programs there nor their execution differed much from the leisure organization's entertainment work for the Wehrmacht. Performances mostly fell into the "light entertainment" category and were staged by touring solo artists and ensembles. Indeed, from KdF's perspective, concentration camps were just another space for its ever extending "joy production," which had been growing since the beginning of World War II. On the other hand, it is this very "normalcy" that warrants a closer look at KdF's work in the camp. It highlights how concentration camps were an integral element of the Nazi war effort.

KdF entertainment events happened on a regular basis in Nazi concentration camps; from the camp's administrative perspective, they were an integral part of the organization work of each camp's "Department IV," which was responsible for the "caretaking and ideological education" of the camp's personnel [*Abteilung VI Fürsorge und weltanschauliche Schulung*].[131] In general, this department has only recently become the focus of scholarly discussion, partly because of the complicated source situation.[132] When it comes to the activities of SS-men and concentration camp guards in their free time there is less material available to historians. However, the discovery of the so-called Höcker Photo album, which contains images of SS men and female auxiliaries from the Auschwitz concentration camps spending their leisure time at the nearby SS recreation home Sola Hütte—sunbathing, enjoying blueberries, dining and drinking, listening to accordion music—has revealed to us, despite the scarcity of sources, there were indeed many "good times" to be had the in concentration camps, that is,—for SS personnel.[133]

Another rare and chilling source reflecting joyful free-time activities in Auschwitz is the diary of Johan Paul Kremer. Kremer, born 1883, was a physician, professor of anatomy, and a member of the SS, who worked at the Auschwitz concentration camp between August and November

1942.[134] During this time, Kremer, as a camp doctor, oversaw executions and was present at gassing; he also researched starvation, dissecting the bodies of concentration camp inmates.[135] But from his diary, we learn that his days in Auschwitz were not only filled with "work"—there was also time for recreational activities. He writes about sun-bathing in the garden of the camp's nearby Waffen-SS home and bike trips into the surrounding areas.[136] Sometimes, Kremer also mentions entertainment events he attended on the site of the camp. On September 20, a Sunday, he writes about listening to a concert performed by the camp orchestra,[137] and he chronicles his participation the following week in a comradeship evening at the camp that included "dinner, free beer and tobacco" and "musical as well as theatrical performances."[138] In November, 1942, he attended a vaudeville performance in the camp community building [*Gemeinschaftshaus*]; Kremer describes this as "quite grand." According to his diary entry, the performance consisted of dogs performing tricks as well as "two bantam cocks which crowed in unison on command." In addition, the SS men in Auschwitz were entertained by acrobats—, Kremer mentions a "packaged man"—and a group of [trick] cyclists.[139] While not specifically labelled as such by Kremer, this event was likely organized by KdF. As will be clear in the following, it is not unlike many other entertainment programs KdF ran for SS personnel in Auschwitz or in other concentration camps for that matter. Almost all of them could be categorized as "easy entertainment."

For the period between May 1942 and December 1944, about 38 entertainment events set up by KdF in Auschwitz can be found in the sources.[140] The majority of them were vaudeville shows (13 events); in addition, there were seven opera and seven theater performances, six concerts, two dance performances, and four lectures. All these took place in the camp's "comradeship house" [*Kameradschaftsheim*], a sort of SS club house. Some of the camp's administrative records contain detailed instructions on the seating at the events, which was organized hierarchically. Members of the camp personnel were allowed to bring their wives, but were asked to remain seated afterwards until the commander and his guests had left. Some explicit regulations—reminders not to come too late, not to be too loud or not to leave in the middle of the shows—suggest that unruly behavior might have occurred during previous events, probably fueled by the beer that was available at some of them.

In addition to writings from individuals working at concentration camps, another possible glimpse into the history of KdF entertainment

might be gained through writings and testimonies by artists who performed in these camps. However, while documents about KdF events in camps such as Auschwitz, Stutthof, or Majdanek[141] suggest that many musicians, actors, dancers, and acrobats came to concentration camps, source material from the artists' perspective is very sparse and hard to find. In the post-war period, actors involved in Nazi-organized entertainment tended to be reticent if not entirely silent about their work during the war, especially if it took place in concentration camps. Most famous is the case of Dutch actor and singer Johannes Heesters, a film star in Germany both in the Nazi period and later. Heesters has publicly denied that he ever performed in a concentration camp, and, in 2008, sued author and director Volker Kühn for claiming the opposite.[142] It is clear, however, that he was *at* the Dachau concentration camp in 1941 as a member of the ensemble of the Munich theater with which he was acting at the time.[143] This visit is documented in a photo album, which the artists later received from the camp staff as a commemorative gift. Heesters admits that he was there, but denies having performed during this visit; however, the dedication in the album suggest that there was a performance for the SS by (some members of) the ensemble that day. In any case, a photo in the album suggests that there was a form of "contact," between the visiting artists and the concentration camp inmates: we see the visitors from the Munich theater listening to an orchestra whose members are Dachau inmates in striped uniforms.[144]

These theater visitors attending a camp orchestra concert parallels Kremer's account of a concert of the Auschwitz's camp orchestra. These concerts were given by musicians who were prisoners of the camp on orders of the camp officials. Such musical performances—put on by entire orchestras, smaller ensembles, or individual artists—occurred in many camps, and may be categorized as "forced music, " that is music that was performed not of the incarcerated musicians' own volition, but as mandated by orders.[145] In addition to forced music, concentration camp inmates also engaged in "voluntary" musical performances, in which music served "as a form of cultural resistance."[146] Similarly, there were both forced and voluntary theatrical performances by concentration camp inmates.[147] None of this, however, was related to KdF's programming; all the events that the leisure organization ran for camp personnel were staffed with (touring) artists hired from outside the camp.

There are no records of inmates performing on behalf of KdF, and there is no record of KdF's programs being open to those imprisoned in

concentration camps (i.e., the inmates were never the audience for KdF events). Nevertheless, in some instances, there was (at least visual) contact between performers and inmates. Dieter Borsche, for example, a German actor who would become a film star in post-war Germany, recounts seeing camp inmates when visiting the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1943 as part of a theater ensemble performing for the SS. He and his colleagues were "astonished" that the inmates were very lightly dressed, despite the winter weather. Borsche also mentions a more direct contact between prisoners and performers, at a "generous feast" provided by the SS for the ensemble, where inmates waited on the actors.[148] Borsche's recollections are similar to those of an actress who went to perform at the Buchenwald concentration camp, "for soldiers," as she puts it. The actress remembers seeing few inmates overall during her visit, but she did have an encounter with a prisoner who "was shaven, emaciated, in striped prisoners' clothing" when she had to go back to the stage to retrieve a forgotten prop. The prisoner was tidying up the chairs used by the audience during the performance, but remained silent and pretended not to see her.[149]

It is hard to know exactly what to make of these "encounters" between performers and the life of the camps, including the evident treatment of the prisoners, partly because of the scarcity of the evidence. However, that performers were present in the camps, and that they were able to observe some of the conditions suffered by the inmates—the treatment and condition of the inmates seems to have been quite evident to the two performers just mentioned—indicates that the function of the camps was allowed to be quite transparent: the performers, after all, were not members of the SS and, especially as they belonged to touring ensembles, could be expected to interact quite widely with German society as a whole. It is interesting to consider if it might have been that less transparency regarding the operation of the camps would have been preferred, yet that the role of entertainment was actually thought to outweigh this concern. There is no evidence regarding this possibility, however. But, on a different level, that KdF performed in the camps says something about the coupling of "joy" not only with "strength" but also with "destruction" that took place via KdF activities.

An analysis of the titles of the plays and vaudeville shows hosted Auschwitz reveals, once again, how much KdF's programming was dominated by its goal of "joy production." In KdF-organized performances in Auschwitz, "light entertainment" reigned supreme. Performances that could be categorized as "serious" or "high culture" were rare, despite

KdF's original claim that it would focus on these kinds of events: the camps were no exception to the organization's failure to bear out its general claim to bring "culture to the Volk." Thus, in terms of theater, the most frequent type of entertainment staged in Auschwitz was not classical German plays but rather comedies or "droll plays" [*Schwänke*]. For example, in April 1943, there were performances of the plays *Hilde and the 4 Horsepower*[150] and *Gitta hat einen Vogel* [literally: Gitta has a bird; idiomatically: Gitta has a screw loose].[151] In the same month, an event dubbed a *Humorous Evening* [*Humorvoller Abend*] took place, featuring several dancers, a comedian, a juggler, the "4 Eckhardos" performing "top acrobatic performances," someone described as "the human corkscrew" (another contortionist, presumably), and several musicians.[152] In the following October, camp personnel could attend the show *Artistic Adventures* [*Artistische Abenteuer*], whose adventurers included a magician, a juggler, a tightrope walker, several female dancers, "funny cyclists," and a ventriloquist.[153] Other vaudeville shows brought magicians, step dancers, and various musicians[154] into Auschwitz's *Kameradschaftsheim*.

Similar performances were staged by KdF for personnel in the Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig in Poland; in the commandant's orders of this camp, 61 KdF events are listed for the period between October 1942 and August 1944. This means that on average three leisure events were put on per month for the personnel of this concentration camp. These events included plays staged in the theater of the nearby city of Elbing—many of them rather light-hearted, unsophisticated comedies with titles such as "*Wie gefällt Euch meine Frau*?" ["How do you like my wife?"],[155] "*Eifersüchteleien*" ["Jealousies"],[156] or "*Der Mann mit dem Klempner*" ["The Man with the Plumber"],[157]—as well as vaudeville shows hosted in a tavern in the village of Stutthof. More than half of these events, however, took place within the camp. Here, in the comradeship house, the camp personnel could enjoy plays (again, usually comedies), attend concerts, very often of "light music," or, most often, be treated to vaudeville shows with titles such as "*Fröhlicher Bilderbogen*," ["Cheerful picture sheet"],[158] "*Sterne für Dich*" ["Stars for you"],[159] "*Ich soll Dich grüßen*," ["I am to send best regards"],[160] "*Lachende Kleinkunst*" ["Laughing Carabaret"],[161] and "*Nette Sachen, die Freude machen*" ["Nice Things that Bring Joy"].[162]

These programs seem rather benign—the presence of children in the audiences is even mentioned,[163] and, as noted above, do not differ from the performances staged by KdF either at the front for Wehrmacht soldiers or, for that matter, for civilians at the "home front." They speak to KdF's

ever-present interest in light entertainment. However, it could be argued that these camp performances (and their performers) directly supported the crimes of the Holocaust, given that they were intended to entertain and uplift camp personnel. Put briefly, in the camps, the "Strength" created "through Joy" was exercised to help commit the murder of millions in an effective manner.

Notes

1. F. Neubauer, "Sensation in der Werkhalle: Der Reichstheaterzug spielt in Betrieben," *Arbeitertum,* August 1, 1938, 17.
2. "Zehn Jahre 'Kraft durch Freude'—720 000 Veranstaltungen für die Wehrmacht-Betreuung der Bombengeschädigten—500 Erholungsheime," *DNB,* November 26, 1943, in: BArch R 4902/4735, page 1.
3. KdF's troop entertainment is an understudied topic. However, in my analysis, I build on scholarship that deals more generally with troop entertainment in Germany during World War II, specifically Frank Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe: Die Truppenbetreuung in der Wehrmacht 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005). Additionally, Alexander Hirt has provided an in-depth comparative discussion of troop entertainment during World War II in Germany and Great Britain; see Alexander Hirt, "'Die Heimat reicht der Front die Hand.' Kulturelle Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg 1939–1945. Ein deutsch-englischer Vergleich" (University of Göttingen, 2009). On Nazi troop entertainment, see also Alexander Hirt, "Die deutsche Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Konzeption, Organisation und Wirkung," *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 59, no. 2 (2000): 407–34; Sam Lebovic, "'A Breath from Home': Soldier Entertainment and the Nationalist Politics of Pop Culture during World War II," *Journal of Social History*, 47, no. 2 (WIN 2013): 263–96. Front theater is discussed in Geerte Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg: Deutsches und Alliiertes Fronttheater* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1992); and Erika Kaufmann, *Medienmanipulation im Dritten Reich: Ziele und Wirkungsabsichten mit dem Einsatz von Theater und Fronttheater* (Vienna, 1987). The role of music in Nazi troop entertainment is explored in Heike Frey, "Und jeden Abend 'Lili Marleen': Zur

Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg," in *Paradestück Militärmusik: Beiträge zur Wirkung staatlicher Repräsentation durch Musik*, ed. Peter Moormann, Albrecht Riethmüller, and Rebecca Wolf (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2012), 125–50; Dorothea Kolland, "Faust, Soldatenlieder und 'Wunschkonzert': Deutsche Frontbetreuung," ed. Dorothea Kolland and Puppentheater-Museum (Berlin) (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1997), 33–55; Hans-Jörg Koch, *Das Wunschkonzert im NS-Rundfunk* (Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2003). Frey has also explored the reception of German troop entertainment during World War II by looking at soldiers' letters; see Heike Frey, "'… Aber es war mal eine Abwechslung': Truppenbetreuung im Spiegel von Feldpostbriefen," in *Schreiben im Krieg – Schreiben vom Krieg*, ed. Veit Didczuneit and Thomas Jander (Essen: Klartext, 2011), 419–28.

4. BArch NS 18/591; see also Wolfhard Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude': Freizeitgestaltung und Arbeiterschaft im Dritten Reich" (Dissertation, Ludwig Maximilian University, 1976), 298; see also Hirt, *Kulturelle Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 130.
5. Hirt, *Kulturelle Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 130. In practice, KdF first paid all expenses, but would then be reimbursed later; see ibid. Often, KdF was also in charge of the travel arrangements of travelling theater ensembles and orchestras. Sometimes, they hired professional travel agencies to help with this. This was, for example, the case for a tour of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra on behalf of KdF to Belgium, France, and Spain in 1943. Here, KdF collaborated with the French travel agency MER; see Misha Aster, *"Das Reichsorchester" die Berliner Philharmoniker und der Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Siedler, 2007), 301; this article also reproduces a detailed one-day travel plan for the orchestra, ibid.
6. Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude,'" 312.
7. For a very brief reference to two entertainment events in a military hospital, see Walter Robak, *Mein lieber Vater!, Mein lieber Junge!: Ein Briefwechsel zwischen der Heimat (Ruhrgebiet) und verschiedenen Stationen an der Front zwischen 1939 und 1944* (Nienburg: Marcus Rene Duensing, 2007), 137.

8. Ursula Bach, "'Denn wie man den Teufel wehrt, hat Euer Kasper uns gelehrt': Puppenbühnen an der deutschen Front," in *FrontPuppenTheater: Puppenspieler im Kriegsgeschehen*, ed. Dorothea Kolland (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1997), 77.
9. Herbert Leisegang, "So kümmert sich "Kraft durch Freude" um unsere Verwundeten," *Arbeitertum,* Jun. 1, 1940, 8.
10. Bodo Lafferentz, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude im Kriegsjahr 1941* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1942), 17. See also; Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude,'" 321.
11. Alex Kayser, "Verwundete werden schneller gesund: Erfolgreicher Einsatz von KdF.-Sportlehrkräften bei der Verwundetenbetreuung," *Arbeitertum,* Jul. 15, 1940, 9.
12. See ibid.
13. While playfulness was emphasized in KdF's propaganda, the organization tried not to equate this with "childishness." The distinction is made clear in the remarks of a sports class participant published in 1940 in the DAF-magazine *Arbeitertum*. This injured soldier said that he enjoyed the class, but also asserted his masculinity, stressing that the sports activities "have shown us that we are still full men" and adding that he was confident of eventually returning to the front "for the final battle" (Kayser, "Verwundete werden schneller gesund," 9). This soldier's keenness to emphasize his masculinity might be read as springing from a concern that KdF was running a "playtime," but the propaganda, at least, wants to show how KdF provided enjoyable, manly games.
14. Hirt, "Die deutsche Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 416. For an in-depth study of Alfred Rosenberg, his department "Amt Rosenberg," which was responsible for cultural policy, and its ongoing struggle with other Nazi agencies, including KdF, see Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1970).

    And, of course, there was also a concern for soldiers' leisure beyond the arranging of cultural events and activities. For example, there were also numerous publications by the Nazi party that sought to entertain German soldiers, such as books of jokes and funny stories; for example, see Werner Lass and Hans-Adolf Weber, *Landser Lachen: Fronthumor Dieses Krieges* (Munich: Zentralverlag der N.S.D.A.P., 1944).

15. See Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe*, 149 f.
16. Hirt, "Die Deutsche Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 420 f.
17. Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg*, 102.
18. For example, KdF hired Cologne's well-known Millowitsch Theater to perform for Siegfried Line workers; once the war began the Millowitsch ensemble was switched to touring France and Belgium, its last tour taking place in 1944 (the Millowitsch Theater remained successful after the war, led by Willy Millowitsch, who took over from his father in 1940); see Dorothea Renckhoff, *Willy Millowitsch: Lebensbilder, Theaterbilder* (Cologne: Wienand, 1996), 36 f. For KdF's prewar work at the Siegfried Line and the rivalry there between the organization and Goebbels's Ministry in this regard, see Hans Daiber, *Schaufenster der Diktatur: Theater im Machtbereich Hitlers* (Stuttgart: Neske, 1995), 310.
19. See Wolf-Eberhard August, *Die Stellung der Schauspieler im Dritten Reich* (Munich: W. August, 1973), 171 f.
20. This new task led administratively to the creation of a new KdF department, the *Reichsamt für Wehrmachtsheime* [Reich Office for Wehrmacht Homes]; see Horst Dreßler-Andreß, *Drei Jahre Nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Ziele und Leistungen* (Berlin, 1936), 29. The agreement between Ley and Blomberg and the new department are also discussed in BArch NS 22/781.
21. SD report from November 8, 1939, in Heinz Boberach, *Meldungen aus dem Reich, 1938–1945: Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS*, vol. 2 (Herrsching: Pawlak, 1984), 433.
22. *Zwei Jahre Wehrmachtbetreuung in Belgien und Frankreich im Auftrage des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht durch die Deutsche Arbeitsfront NSG- "Kraft durch Freude"* (Cologne, 1942), 4.
23. Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe*, 56. See also Hirt, *Kulturelle Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 56. During the beginning of 1942, only 55 out of a total of 251 KdF troupes were dispatched to the occupied Soviet Union; in the summer of that year, the number of performances was still regarded as insufficient. In 1943, however, KdF intensified its efforts to "bring joy" to German soldiers in the East: more than half of all KdF artist troupes were now being sent to the Eastern Front and to Finland (Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe*, 322 f.).

24. Reichspropagandaleitung der N.S.D.A.P and Deutsche Arbeitsfront, *Aufklärungs- und Redner-Informationsmaterial der Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP und des Propagandaamtes der Deutschen Arbeitsfront*, Blatt 9/167, 1943. Daiber states that there were 100,000 Wehrmacht events organized by KdF, 250,000 in 1941 and 570,000 in 1942. (Daiber, *Schaufenster der Diktatur*, 310).
25. Lafferentz, *KdF im Kriegjahr 1941*, 2.
26. Reichspropagandaleitung der N.S.D.A.P and Deutsche Arbeitsfront, *Aufklärungs- und Redner-Informationsmaterial der Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP und des Propagandaamtes der Deutschen Arbeitsfront*, Blatt 9/ 167, 1943.
27. *Zwei Jahre Wehrmachtbetreuung in Belgien und Frankreich,* 4. The brochure does not clarify, however, if these numbers refer only to KdF's activities, or also include events set up by other agencies. At the beginning of the brochure, a "comradely collaboration" between KdF, the Wehrmacht commands in Paris and Brussels, and the Troop Entertainment Department of the Propaganda Ministry is mentioned, but these other agencies are not elsewhere alluded to as event organizers in the remainder of the text.
28. Article from July 21, 1944; cited in Hirt, "Die Deutsche Truppenbetreuung Im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 408.
29. Rudolf Adler, *Der verlorene Haufen: Erinnerungen eines Fallschirmjägers* (BoD – Books on Demand, 2004), 114.
30. Ibid., 115.
31. For a discussion of KdF's preference for vaudeville, see Reinhold Batberger, *Der Jahrhundertjongleur Francis Brunn: Ein Portrait* (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 2008), 61.
32. Lafferentz, *KdF im Kriegjahr 1941*, 13 f.; see also: Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude,'" 315.
33. Nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude, *Die KdF-Truppenbetreuung* (Berlin, 1941). Here I refer to what the ensembles listed could offer. There were thus, for example, 55 *distinct* musical programs offered, but most programs were of course performed several times. (Counting repeat performances, then, there may well have been more actual theater performances than concerts).

34. Of course, the category of "comedies" could also include "highbrow" plays. However, these would still be defined by the intent to evoke laughter, and it that manner fulfill KdF's main goal.
35. At this time, the division was stationed in southern Germany.
36. BArch RH 28/4/43; all programs named here and throughout this paragraph were performed several times.
37. BArch RH 28/4/43. In February 1941, only two events organized by KdF for the Fourth Mountain Division could be categorized as having "serious content," these were two lecture talks given by speaker Dr Rösler on Gemany's "Colonial Course" and "Colonial and World Politics."
38. For Denmark, for example, there are sources on tours by both the Berolina-Kammer-Orchester and the *Reichstheaterzug* in 1940. While the latter presented a "large vaudeville program," the former staged the comedies *Der Herr Doktor Musin* and *Roman einer Waschküche* [Novel of a Washhouse]. Neither play can be counted as a building block in the canon of "high German culture."
39. Paula Stuck von Reznicek: "Wehrbetreuung: Reise- und Erlebnisberichte. Bd. 2 Norwegen: 26.9.1940–9.12.1940," BArch Freiburg MSG/2/15640, pag 119; diary entry from Dec. 2, 1940. On Hans Stuck, his prominence in the Third Reich, and the role of his wife in his self-promotion, see Franz Bokel, "Das Unternehmen Stuck: stars and public relations in Hitler's Deutschland," *Montage/AV* 6.2 (1997): 93–112.
40. Paula Stuck von Reznicek: "Wehrbetreuung: Reise- und Erlebnisberichte. Bd. 11 Frankreich: 8.10.1941–19.3.1942 ," BArch Freiburg MSG/2/15649, page 19f.; diary entry from March 16, 1942.
41. "*Erfahrungsbericht über geistige Betreuung (K.d.F., Film, Vortrag),*" by the 257th Infantry Division from March 31, 1942; in BArch Freiburg RH 26/257/47.
42. Ibid.
43. Letter from *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* from Sep. 17, 1940; in BArch Freiburg RW 38/61.
44. Letter by *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* from Jan. 1, 1942, in: BArch Freiburg RW 6/178.
45. Rudolf Absolon, *Die Wehrmacht im Dritten Reich*, Bd. VI: 19. Dezember 1941 bis 9. Mai 1945 (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt, 1995), 467.

46. Reznicek writes that in Brussels and Paris she was put up in KdF-requisitioned hotels. (See Paula Stuck von Reznicek: "Wehrbetreuung: Reise- und Erlebnisberichte. Bd. 7 Frankeich: 1.5.1941–2.6.1941," BArch Freiburg MSG/2/15645, pages 4 and 10; diary entries from May 5 and May 6, 1942).
47. One of these homes was even mentioned in the *New York Times* in 1941, which reported that "permanent cultural and recreational centers for German soldiers [would be] built throughout Norway." Notably, these "Centers for Nazi Soldiers," as the article called them, although coming under the administration of KdF and the Wehrmacht, were to be funded by donations from the German public (Hitler had offered example, donating 1 million Reichsmark); "Center for Nazi Soldiers," *New York Times*, February 3, 1941. The founding of the centers and Hitler's donation were also reported in the *Christian Science Monitor*: "Permanent Centers for Nazis in Norway," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 3, 1941.
48. Maria Milde, *Berlin Glienicker Brucke: Babelsberger Notizen* (Berlin: Universitas, 1978), 49.
49. *Zwei Jahre Wehrmachtsbetreuung in Belgien und Frankreich,* 4.
50. Nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude, *Die KdF-Truppenbetreuung*, 17.
51. "Tätigkeitsbericht Nr. 1 Kommando 416. Infanterie-Division, Abt. 1.c" for Dec. 27, 1941 to Jun. 6, 1942, 4, in BArch Freiburg RH 26/46/11.
52. See, for example, a 1942 list of attendance numbers from the 258th Infantry Division in Russia; in BArch Freiburg RH 26/258/92 or list from the 163rd Infantry Division from July 1943, in BArch RH 26/163/87.
53. Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe*, 329. The performances were free of charge for the soldiers.
54. Report from 416th Infantry Division from March 3, 1942, 1; in BArch Freiburg RH 26-46/11.
55. Frey, "… Aber Es War Mal Eine Abwechselung," 423.
56. Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg*, 121. See also Daiber, *Schaufenster der Diktatur*, 310.
57. Ibid.
58. NARA A 3339–RKK V015.
59. For a more detailed discussion of the recruitment of artists for German troop entertainment (not limited to KdF) and the

ongoing issue of a shortage of performers, see Hirt, "Die Deutsche Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 421f.

60. Ibid., 423.
61. Ibid., 425f.
62. Hirt, *Kulturelle Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 107.
63. Ibid., 111.
64. Ibid., 112.
65. Hirt, "Die Deutsche Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 423.
66. "Das 'Kabarett der Namenlosen'," *Arbeitertum,* November 15, 1941, rear page.
67. Kästner's text may be found in Anton Kaes, Martín Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 563.
68. Ursula Haver, "Musterung der Namenlosen: Das Freizeitstudio der NS-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude' sucht Künstler für die Truppenbetreuung," *Arbeitertum,* April 1, 1943, 8–9.
69. I could find no evidence of salaries paid to any of these performers.
70. William Abbey and Katharina Havekamp, "Nazi Performances in the Occupied Territories: The German Theatre in Lille," in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. John London (New York/ Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 262.
71. For example, the German Theater in Lille, which is the focus of Abbey and Havekamp's article, was largely under the auspices of the Ministry of Propaganda. However, even here, some guest KdF productions were staged, and KdF also had a say when it came to the theater's overall annual program; ibid., 268 and 270. For more information on German theaters set up in occupied Europe, see Daiber, *Schaufenster der Diktatur*, 308f. and August, *Die Stellung der Schauspieler im Dritten Reich*., 177f.
72. See Don Nardo, *Hitler in Paris: How a Photograph Shocked a World at War* (North Mankato: Capstone, 2014), 4f.
73. The article also describes the "Champs Elysées [as] a popular place [for] German officers to stroll and the café terraces bordering the avenue invite many of them" and also observes cafés with signs advertising they are "For Aryans only," albeit only a few; "Paris 'Germanized'," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 1, 1940.
74. "Paris 'Germanized'," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 1, 1940.

75. These numbers were sourced from the German Labor Front and are quoted from Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg*, 212f. For a discussion of Parisian cultural life under Nazi occupation beyond KdF offerings, see Alan Riding, *And the Show Went on: Cultural Life in Nazi-Occupied Paris* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010). For an examination of Nazi German cultural politics for Paris, see Kathrin Engel, *Deutsche Kulturpolitik im besetzten Paris 1940–1944: Film und Theater* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2003).
76. A slightly different example of Paris's cultural significance to Nazi Germany's self-image can be seen in Hitler's professed admiration for the city's architecture, which, he demanded Albert Speer to surpass in Berlin following their tour of the city in June 1940. Notably, Hitler was a particular fan of Charles Garnier's ornate Opéra building, which would soon be hosting German productions (see later); Heinrich Breloer and Rainer Zimmer, *Die Akte Speer: Spuren eines Kriegsverbrechers* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2006), 100.
77. For a description of these German cultural occupation politics, see Engel, *Deutsche Kulturpolitik im besetzten Paris 1940–1944.*
78. This situation may have been intended to change after the war. In Eastern Europe, the post-war plan was for KdF to begin "producing joy" in German settlements as it had already been doing in Germany before the war (and presumably parallel functions were imagined in other occupied lands). Meanwhile, as things actually stood in occupied Paris, and even though KdF's work was officially limited to the entertainment of troops, it was rather active there and "had taken good care of itself," as Geerte Murmann writes, with its new Parisian office located at the very prominent address of 101 Champs Elysées. A report in the DAF-magazine *Angriff* claimed that "the curious French would peek into [its] windows;" adding that "the interest was understandable. A new world was opening up;" Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg*, 212f.
79. The KdF brochure advertising the event highlighted another German influence on Parisian opera. The Parisian opera house had undergone a technological makeover in 1936–37 when new electrical apparatus for controlling the lights and colors on stage had been installed. This renovation had been partly carried out by "famous German companies," as the KdF brochure stresses, surely seeking to point out another, rather different, way that this French cultural site was being "Germanized"; *Die Deutsche*

Arbeitsfront NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude" veranstaltet im Auftrage des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht "Walküre" von Richard Wagner: Gastspiel des Mannheimer National Theaters in der Pariser Oper (Paris, 1941), 1–5.

80. The sources are not entirely clear, but performances were probably free only to members of the German army.
81. Just the first letter "H" of a word is legible on the article, but this is probably for "*Humor*," indicating comedy was part of the performance; see "KdF in Paris," *Arbeitertum,* Sep. 15, 1940, rear page.
82. *KdF Performance in Occupied Paris*, accessed December 27, 2015, http://www.ushmm.org/online/film/display/detail.php?file_num=4715.
83. Otto Marrenbach, "Die Kriegsarbeit der DAF. März 1944," 16; in: USHMM RG 42.42 M, Reel 32 AJ 40 1444.
84. Amtliches Nachrichtenblatt der Deutschen Arbeitsfront (2/1943), Anordnung 10/43, and Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe*, 84. The new department was called "*Arbeitsgebiet KdF-Truppenbetreuung*" [KdF Troop Entertainment Department.] See also Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude'," 302. P. Stemmer headed the new division.

    The reorganization also meant that the Institute for the Education of the German People [*Deutsches Volksbildungswerk*], which had been a KdF department, was now disassociated from the leisure organization, becoming an independent agency. Previously, the department had supported KdF's troop entertainment efforts, instructing or equipping soldiers in ways that enabled them to be creatively active while away at the front. For example, the *Volksbildungswerk* as part of KdF offered soldiers crafts, model making, and painting, and had transported around 20 tons of tools to the front in order to facilitate creative activities for soldiers, according to an agreement with the Wehrmacht from the winter 1940/41.
85. On the British ENSA (Entertainments National Service Association), see, for example Basil Dean, *The Theatre at War* (George G. Harrap, 1956); or Andy Merriman, *Greasepaint and Cordite: The Story of ENSA and Concert Party Entertainment during the Second World War* (London: Aurum, 2013). For a

comparative study on British and US troop entertainment during World War II, see Richard Fawkes, *Fighting for a Laugh : Entertaining the British and American Armed Forces, 1939–1946* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1978). For a discussion of USO Camp shows for US Soldiers, see Lebovic, "A Breath from Home."

86. Lafferentz, *KdF im Kriegjahr 1941*, 2.
87. Cited in *Zwei Jahre Wehrmachtbetreuung in Belgien und* Frankreich, 4.
88. Conversely to World War II, the German army was not involved in larger efforts to entertain its soldiers during World War 1. (For a brief overview of German troop entertainment in WWI, see Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe*, 18–37.)
89. An 1940 *Arbeitertum* claimed "KdF wants to be your comrade, who accompanies you in your free time and in this way wants to assist you, when you are fulfilling your duty to the people and the *Führer*;" Draudt, "KdF betreut die Kriegsmarine," *Arbeitertum,* April 1, 1940, 5.
90. Lafferentz, *KdF im Kriegjahr 1941*, 2.
91. Hirt, "Die Deutsche Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 433.
92. Jan-Pieter Barbian summarizes how Nazi cultural policy was characterized by "diffuse goals, improvised solutions to problems and continuous competitive fights;" Jan-Pieter Barbian, "Die Beherrschung der Musen: Kulturpolitik im 'Dritten Reich'," in *Hitlers Künstler*, ed. Hans Sarkowicz (Frankfurt a.M./Leipzig: Insel, 2004), 40; see also Peter Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches: Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (Munich: Hanser, 1992), 41. See also Hirt, *Kulturelle Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 17.
93. In his diary, Goebbels mentions conflicts over front theater with Robert Ley and his organization and complains that "in that area, KdF wants to take the initiative away from us" (Entry from October 6, 1939; in Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Aufzeichnungen 1923–1941*, vol. 7 [Munich: Saur, 1998], 140). On October 8, 1939, he writes in his diary that he and Ley had reached an agreement about troop entertainment, according to which he was in charge of planning and KdF's role was execution; ibid., 7:143. This, however, was not how things would happen in reality.

94. On a more detailed overview on the back-and-forth about the wage issue, see Hirt, *Kulturelle Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 118ff.
95. Entry from February 26, 1942; in Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Diktate 1941–1945*, vol. 3, (Munich: Saur, 1993), 376f.
96. Entry from October 8, 1940; in Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Aufzeichnungen 1923–1941*, vol. 8 (Munich: Saur, 1998), 366.
97. Entry from July 21, 1943; Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Diktate 1941–1945*, vol. 5 (Munich: Saur, 1993), 161.
98. Entry from March 30, 1944; in Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Diktate 1941–1945*, vol. 11 (Munich: Saur, 1993), 592.
99. Letter from Reichsleiter Robert Ley, head of German Labor Front to Reichsleiter Dr. Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, from Mai 4, 1944; in BArch R 56 I–37, page 25.
100. Hirt, "Die Deutsche Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 426.
101. Hirt, *Kulturelle Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 128.
102. BArch R 56 I/37, page 30; "Auszug aus dem Tätigkeitsbericht für den Monat Februar Gau Pommern."
103. BArch, RH 26/169/93 (Freiburg); *Stimmungsbericht* by 392nd Infantry Regiment from January 25, 1941. A similarly critical account was given in 1941 by the 220th Anti-Tank Battalion; see ibid., *Stimmungsbericht* by the 230th Anti-Tank Battalion from January 25, 1941.
104. Officer's report on KdF evenings for the Wehrmacht from May 1943, cited in Hirt, "Die Deutsche Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 430.
105. Letter from October 11, 1942 by H.S., in Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation, 3.2002.0827; cited in Frey, "… Aber es war mal eine Abwechslung," 422.
106. Letter from December 18, 1942 by G.L., in Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation, 3.2002.0883; ibid. For a source that summarizes several criticisms about front theater (from the perspective of the Wehrmacht), see letter by Walther Camerer, published in Josef Wulf, ed., *Theater und Film im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Gütersloh: S. Mohn, 1964), 213f.

107. BArch R 56 I/37, page 30; "Auszug aus dem Tätigkeitsbericht für den Monat Februar Gau Pommern." The text is not signed, nor is its author indicated in any other way, but its format suggests that it was an excerpt from a report by the *Sicherheitsdienst* of the SS.
108. BArch R 56 I/37, page 30; "Auszug aus dem Tätigkeitsbericht für den Monat Februar Gau Pommern."
109. Hirt, "Die Deutsche Truppenbetreuung im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 430.
110. Entry from April 24, 1940; in Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Aufzeichnungen 1923–1941*, 1998, 8:70.
111. Entry from December 6, 1940; in Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Aufzeichnungen 1923–1941*, vol. 9 (Munich: Saur, 1998), 37.
112. Entry from April 7, 1944; in Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Diktate 1941–1945*, vol. 12 (Munich: Saur, 1993), 68.
113. On the situation of artists in the Third Reich and the "God-gifted list" of artists exempt from military mobilization, see Oliver Rathkolb, *Führertreu und gottbegnadet : Künstlereliten im Dritten Reich* (Vienna: ÖBV, 1991).
114. Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg*, 233.
115. See letters discussed in Frey, "… Aber es war mal eine Abwechslung," 425.
116. Letter from July 10, 1943 by A.H. in Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation 3.2002.7130, quoted after Ibid.
117. This type of concern was not unique to Germany. For a discussion of the role of women in US troop entertainment, and especially on debates about the risk of overly sexualized female performers, see Lebovic, "A Breath from Home," 273ff.
118. Report by the 252nd Infantry Division from November 24, 1939, in BArch Freiburg RH 26/252/126.
119. Adler, *Der verlorene Haufen*, 114f.
120. BArch RH 26/169/93 [Freiburg]; *Stimmungsbericht* by 392nd Infantry Regiment, January 25, 1941.
121. Entry from July 26, 1940; in Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Aufzeichnungen 1923–1941*, 1998, 8:239.
122. See, for example, letters by front entertainer Brigitte Erdmann to her mother; published in Walter Kempowski, *Das Echolot : Ein Kollektives Tagebuch, Januar und Februar 1943* (Munich: A. Knaus, 1993).

123. Letter from October 21, 1942 by commandant or army area 525; BArch RH 19-III/490, fol. 277; cited from Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe*, 346.
124. For a broader discussion of the Wehrmacht's dealing with issues of sexuality at the front, see ibid., 336–358.
125. BArch R 56 I/37, page 6.
126. "Hitler's speech to the Nationalist Socialist Women's Organization, September 1934," in Roderick Stackelberg and Sally Anne Winkle, *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts* (London: Psychology Press, 2002), 182–184.
127. For a discussion on how the image of women changed after the beginning of World War II in German movies, see Irina Scheidgen, "Frauen an der Filmfront: Weiblichkeitsbilder in Wochenschau, Kultur- und Spielfilmen der Kriegszeit," in *Träume in Trümmern*, ed. Johannes Roschlau (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 2009), 75–90.
128. "Eva im Schnee: Eine Frau bringt Freude auf einsame Posten," *Arbeitertum* (11/5), March 1, 1942, 9.
129. Ibid.
130. See BArch, NS 4 Hi/ 20, page 134; circular by the head of the SS-Hauptamt from February 26, 1940.
131. Günter Morsch, "Organisations- Und Verwaltungsstruktur Der Konzentrationslager," in *Der Ort Des Terrors: Geschichte Der Nationalsozialististischen Konzentrationslager*, ed. Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel, vol. Bd. 1: Die Organisation des Terrors (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005), 71. As Stefan Hördler has pointed out, in the second part of the war, its cooperation with KdF in setting up entertainment events was almost the entirety of the Department's activities; Stefan Hördler, "Die KZ-Wachmannschaften in der Zweiten Kriegshälfte: Genese und Praxis," in *Bewachung und Ausführung: Alltag der Täter in Nationalsozialistischen Lagern*, ed. Angelika Benz and Marija Vulesica (Berlin: Metropol, 2011), 140f.
132. For a new work on the ideological education for SS-men, see Hans-Christian Harten, *Himmlers Lehrer: Die Weltanschauliche Schulung in der SS 1933-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2014), esp. 226–302. See also review by Daniel Kuppel on Harten's book in H-Soz-Kult; www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-22936; last accessed March 27, 2016. For a case study of SS-schooling in the

Stuthof concentration camp, see Marc Buggeln, "Die weltanschauliche Schulung der KZ-Wachmannschaften in den letzten Kriegsmonaten: Der 'Nachrichtendienst für die SS-Männer und Aufseherinnen in den Außenkommandos' im KZ Stutthof 1944/45," in *Bewachung und Ausführung: Alltag der Täter in nationalsozialistischen Lagern*, ed. Angelika Benz and Marija Vulesica (Berlin: Metropol, 2011), 170–83.

133. For more information on the Höcker-Album, see Judith Cohen, Rebecca Erbelding, and Joseph Robert White, "Three Approaches to Exploring the Höcker Album in High School and University Classees," *In: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators* 1, no. 1 (2009): 53–62. See also Stefan Hördler, Christoph Kreutzmüller, and Tal Bruttmann, "Auschwitz im Bild: Zur kritischen Analyse der Auschwitz-Alben," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 63, no. 7/8 (2015): 622–629. For a collection of documents reflecting the "good times" for perpetrators involved in the Holocaust, see Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, eds., *"The Good Old Days": The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders* (New York: Free Press, 1991). On the Sola-Hütte, see Piotr Setkiewicz, "Das Aussenkommando SS-Sola Hütte," *Hefte von Auschwitz* 25 (2012): 193–202.
134. Jadwiga Bezwińska and Danuta Czech, eds., *Auschwitz in den Augen der SS. Rudolf Höß, Pery Broad, Johann Paul Kremer* (Oświęcim: Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1997), 234.
135. Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 292.
136. Diary of Johann Paul Kremer, cited in Bezwińska and Czech, *Auschwitz in den Augen der SS*, 161.
137. Diary of Johann Paul Kremer, cited in ibid., 156. For more information on the camp orchestra in Auschwitz, see Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust*, 175f. Camp orchestra concerts should be categorized as "forced music." KdF was not involved in this, as will be discussed.
138. Diary of Johann Paul Kremer, cited in Bezwińska and Czech, *Auschwitz in den Augen der SS*, 157.
139. Diary of Johann Paul Kremer, cited in ibid., 164. The "packaged man" was presumably a contortionist of some sort.
140. These numbers refer to the entertainment events I found in the records for Auschwitz for the specified time period; see USHMM

RG.11.001M Zentralbauleitung, reel 23 and USHMM RG.04.006. This is not a definitive number, though, because I cannot determine with certainty that all these events were in fact organized in association with KdF. Therefore the number of KdF events could be smaller. There are also some months that are not represented in the records so the number might also be higher.

141. Later, I will discuss the programs chronicled for the Auschwitz and Stutthof concentration camp. I have also found programs listed in concentration camp records for the concentration camp Majdanek and Hinzert; see USHMM RG 15.184M.0015.00000168 and BArch NS 4 Hi.

142. "Mit den Nazis ist jetzt aber Schluss," article in Welt/ Tagesspiegel, accessed December 29, 2015, http://www.tagesspiegel.de/weltspiegel/mit-den-nazis-ist-jetzt-aber-schluss/1389554.html; see also "Heesters legt Berufung gegen KZ-Urteil" WAZ.de-article, accessed December 29, 2015, http://www.derwesten.de/panorama/heesters-legt-berufung-gegen-kz-urteil-ein-id608387.html. See also Johannes Heesters, *Auch hundert Jahre sind zu kurz : die Erinnerungen* (Munich: Langen Müller, 2003), 174.

143. Heesters claimed in his memoirs that the ensemble had no choice not to visit Dachau; he even asserts that the visit was in fact a punishment imposed by the Nazi authorities for oppositional attitudes among the theater's actors; see Johannes Heesters, *Es kommt auf die Sekunde an: Erinnerungen an ein Leben im Frack* (Munich: Blanvalet, 1978), 167.

144. The photographs from the album (but not the album's dedication) have been reproduced in Simone Rethel-Heesters and Beatrix Ross, *Johannes Heesters: Ein Mensch und ein Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2006).

145. See Guido Fackler, *"Des Lagers Stimme" – Musik im KZ: Alltag und Häftlingskultur in den Konzentrationslagern 1933 bis 1936* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2000), 30 and 329–368. For a brief overview of the topic, see Guido Fackler, "Music in Concentration Camps 1933–1945," *Music and Politics* 1, no. 1 (2007).

146. Fackler, "Music in Concentration Camps 1933–1945," 15. For music in concentration camps, see also Lisa Graham, "Musik Macht Frei: Choral Music Composed and Performed in the Nazi Concentration Camps, 1938–44" (Dissertation, University of

Southern California, 2001); Bernd Sponheuer, "Beethoven in Auschwitz : Nachdenken über Musik im Konzentrationslager," in *"Entartete Musik" 1938*, ed. Hanns-Werner Heister (Saarbrücken: Pfau, 2001), 798–820; Christoph Dompke, *Unterhaltungsmusik und NS-Verfolgung* (Neumünster: Von Bockel, 2011), 257–273; and Guido Fackler, "Cultural Behaviour and the Invention of Traditions: Music and Musical Practices in the Early Concentration Camps, 1933-6/7," *Journal of Contemporary History* 45, no. 3 (July 2010): 601–27. For the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, see Juliane Brauer, *Musik im Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen* (Berlin: Metropol, 2009). For music in the Buchenwald concentration camp, see Elisabeth Brinkmann, "Musik im Konzentrationslager Buchenwald," in *"Entartete Musik" 1938*, ed. Heister, Hanns-Werner (Saarbrücken: Pfau, 2001), 779–97. On inmates' other cultural activities, such as reading, singing or drawing, see also Christoph Daxelmüller, "Kulturelle Formen und Aktivitäten als Teil der Überlebens- und Vernichtungsstrategie in den Konzentrationslagern," in *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager – Entwicklung und Struktur*, ed. Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christoph Dieckmann, vol. 2 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998), 983–1005. Drawings and painting from inmates of concentration camps and ghettos have also been explored in a large 2016 exhibition at the German Historical Museum in Berlin, see Walter Smerling and Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg, *Kunst aus dem Holocaust: 100 Werke aus der Gedenkstätte Yad Vashem* (Cologne: Wienand, 2016). A dissertation on drawings of concentration camp prisoners from Neuengamme and Ravensbrück by Christiane Heß is forthcoming; see Christiane Heß, "Perspektivenwechsel : Zeichnungen aus dem Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück," in *Das Frauen-Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück*, ed. Insa Eschebach (Berlin: Metropol, 2014), 259–74. For a discussion on how sports, especially soccer, could function as entertainment for inmates of the Theresienstadt concentration camp, see Veronika Springmann, "Zwischen 'Entertainment' und 'Punishment': Sport in nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern," in *Die Spiele gehen weiter*, ed. Frank Becker (Frankfurt a.M. et al.: Campus Verlag, 2014), 238–242. Many of the studies about concentration camp inmates' daily life also include sections on cultural activities. For the

Sachsenhausen concentration camp, see Manuela R. Hrdlicka, *Alltag im KZ: Das Lager Sachsenhausen bei Berlin* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1992), 75–78. For a discussion of cultural activities, including making music, writing, and drawing in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, see Thomas Rahe, "Kulturelle Aktivitäten jüdischer Häftlinge im Konzentrationslager Bergen-Belsen," *Menora* 4 (1993 1993): 111–38. Cultural activities, including poetry, painting and drawing, singing, and storytelling by inmates of the Ravensbrück concentration camp are discussed in Jack G. Morrison, *Ravensbrück: Everyday Life in a Women's Concentration Camp, 1939–45* (Princeton: Wiener, 2000), 146–166.

147. On theatrical performances in Nazi concentration camps; see Angela Esther Metzger, *Wahrheit aus Tränen und Blut: Theater in nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern von 1933–1945: Eine Dokumentation* (Hagen: E. Walter, 1996); Lisa Peschel, "The Prosthetic Life: Theatrical Performance, Survivor Testimony, and the Terezin Ghetto, 1941–1963" (Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2009); Alvin Goldfarb, "Theatrical Activities in Nazi Concentration Camps," *Performing Arts Journal* 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1976): 3–11; Alvin Goldfarb, *Theatre and Drama and the Nazi Concentration Camps* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1983); and Rebecca Rovit and Alvin Goldfarb, eds., *Theatrical Performance during the Holocaust: Texts, Documents, Memoirs*, PAJ Books (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). On cabaret in concentration camps, see Peter Jelavich, "Cabaret in Concentration Camps," in *Theatre and War 1933–1945: Performance in Extremis*, ed. Michael Balfour (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 137–63; and Dirk Mulder and Ben Prinsen, eds., *Lachen Im Dunkeln: Amüsement Im Lager Westerbork* (Münster: LIT, 1997).
148. Wulf, *Theater und Film im Dritten Reich*, 197f.
149. Murmann, *Komödianten für den Krieg*, 180.
150. Performance in the *Kameradschaftsheim Auschwitz* on April 1, 1943; USHMM RG.11.001M Zentralbauleitung, reel 23.
151. Performance in the *Kameradschaftsheim Auschwitz* on April 15, 1943; USHMM RG.11.001M Zentralbauleitung, reel 23.
152. Performance in the *Kameradschaftsheim Auschwitz* on April 27, 1943; USHMM RG.11.001M Zentralbauleitung, reel 23.

153. Performance in the *Kameradschaftsheim Auschwitz* on October 10, 1943; USHMM RG.11.001M Zentralbauleitung, reel 23.
154. These and more were part of an event called "*Großer bunter Abend*," which took place in Auschwitz's Kameradschaftsheim on June 17, 1943; USHMM RG.11.001M Zentralbauleitung, reel 23.
155. Performance from December 14, 1942; USHMM RG 04.058M. 0209.00000038.
156. Performance from August 16, 1943; USHMM RG 04.058M. 0209.00000114.
157. Performance from December 29, 1942; USHMM RG 04.058M. 0209.00000038.
158. Performance from August 1, 1943. USHMM RG 04.058M.0209. 00000112.
159. Performance from July 19, 1943; USHMM RG 04.058M.0209. 00000215.
160. Performance from October 6, 1943. USHMM RG 04.058M. 0209.00000125.
161. Performance from February 2, 1944; USHMM RG 04.058M. 0209.00000165.
162. Performance from November 29, 1943. USHMM RG 04.058M. 0209.00000131.
163. One event for Auschwitz SS personnel, on April 28, 1943 was a meal followed by a "*Großer Bunter Nachmittag*" that was advertised to be particularly suitable for children; RG.11.001M Zentralbauleitung, reel 23. By contrast, the announcement of a KdF event in August 1943 in Stutthof/Danzig made sure to point out that children were not permitted to attend the program (USHMM, RG 04.058M.0209.00000117), a special clarification that must be read as evidence that the children of SS personnel were a not an unusual presence at KdF's entertainment events.

CHAPTER 5

Creating a Clean, Beautiful German *Lebensraum*

Small, picturesque villages of ancient timber-framed houses nestled in peaceful German landscapes. Hard-working and contented German peasants, robust and healthy, predominantly clad in traditional garb. A feeling of oneness with nature, and of safe removal from modern civilization and its discontents. These are the postcard-like images, illustrating their corresponding notions encountered in a KdF book about the leisure organization's work in rural Germany.[1]

The earlier chapters of this book have looked at KdF's "joy production" through sports and culture. However, the organization's "joy production" was also about transforming spaces, in particular living and work spaces. This spatial approach is particularly visible in KdF's work in Germany's rural villages. The background idea of "joy production" as a sort of civilizing mission moves much more to the fore in KdF's plans for villages. Of course, the civilizing mission is equally present in other areas of KdF's activity, especially the factories, as this chapter will also examine.[2] First, however, to fully understand this civilizing program in the factories, KdF's rural work, especially in regard to community building, needs to be highlighted.[3]

KdF's spatial project in rural Germany is distinctly evoked by the type of images described in the first paragraph. Of course, as a sub-department of the German Labor Front, KdF's main concern was Germany's working class, especially urban, industrial workers. This, however, did not mean

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that it did not also try to reach Germany's rural population, including workers who lived in the countryside, and farmers and their families. KdF's bringing its programs to the countryside was an integral aspect of fulfilling its overarching goal of creating and fostering a unified *Volksgemeinschaft* embracing all geographical regions and societal strata of the German Reich. Indeed, the importance of the *Volksgemeinschaft* to the Germany envisioned by Nazi ideology, and the importance of the countryside and its villages to the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, meant that KdF's rural work was central to its activities overall.

However, KdF's "joy production" in the countryside also faced specific challenges, deriving from larger issues of politics, economics, and ideology. Accordingly, in the eyes of KdF, transferring urban activities *in toto* into the villages was not feasible. Instead, the organization attempted, at least partly, to adapt to the "special" requirements it identified for the countryside. In this regard, it is important that KdF did not operate in a vacuum. This sometimes led it to act quite differently in different settings as much of its work could be influenced by external factors, voices, and discourses. In the countryside, these were especially the problem of "*Landflucht*" ["flight from the land"], the ideology of "*Blut und Boden*" ["blood and soil"], and Richard Walter Darré, the *Reichsbauernführer* [Reich Leader of Peasants] and his circle.[4]

Nazi agrarian politics was greatly influenced by the ideology of Richard Walther Darré.[5] According to Darré, the German peasantry constituted the racial core of the German nation. Consequently, he believed that the fate of Germany and its peasantry were inextricably linked, arguing that a weakening or destruction of the German agricultural class would eventually and inevitably lead to Germany's overall demise. This also meant that any racial renewal—and Darré deemed that such a process was necessary—would have to be realized through the German peasantry. "The center of the race question is rooted in the German peasantry," he argued in 1929, and "you can only save your race if you lead it back to the soil it grew from."[6] This ideology championed by Darré is usually referred to as "blood and soil."[7]

KdF wanted to further the blood-and-soil agenda in the German countryside. Many of the activities offered by the leisure organization aimed to disseminate the values of this ideology. In fact, an analysis of its work reveals a quite literal occupation with both the "blood" of Germany's rural inhabitants, in the organization's attempts to improve their physical and mental well-being, and the "soil" of the German villages, in interventions

to "beautify" the rural landscape. These activities can be located along trajectories defined in terms of "person"/ "place" axes, that is, in terms of their engagement with the "village as people" and with the "village as place." This might also be categorized as an "internal"/"external" differentiation. We can also see here KdF's "holistic" approach: it wanted to shape or form Germans both internal and externally. To look at the personal or internal aspect, I will first analyze the KdF activities aimed at the rural population's personalities, that is, its offerings for the villagers' mental "improvement," namely village community evenings and other cultural events.[8] Then I turn to the so-called "Village Books" introduced by KdF. These can be understood as being occupied equally with both persons and place. They represent KdF's attempt to "spiritually" link the peasants to the space of their villages and their history and future. I will then analyze KdF's external activities concerned with place: the so-called "beautification programs," which directly aimed to (re)form the German countryside, that is, its "soil." KdF's attempts to beautify rural Germans' living spaces were in fact organized by its department *Schönheit der Arbeit* [Beauty of Labor]. This analysis of the beautification will then be augmented by a return to the factory shop floor, where Beauty of Labor was also heavily invested in beautification campaigns. The beautification campaigns in factories make it especially clear how KdF's concerns moved from cleaning spaces to cleaning bodies. It is here then that a relation becomes visible between KdF's "hygiene" programs and Nazi extermination policies.

KdF's work in the countryside, as noted above, cannot fully be understood without considering another powerful motive behind its activities there: the fight against the *Landflucht* [flight from the land] of the rural population. The phenomenon of *Landflucht*—and the term—predates the Nazi regime, referring to a massive migration of Germans away from the countryside that had been underway since the late-nineteenth century. In 1882, the rural population of Germany constituted 41.6 percent of the whole population; a mere 25 years later, in 1907, it had fallen to just 28.4 percent.[9] This decline continued during the following decades, and it did not cease during the Third Reich.[10] The *Landflucht* greatly alarmed the Nazi government, both for economic and ideological reasons.[11] Nazi Germany preferred to have a strong agricultural sector capable of supporting the country's needs, and the regime needed to ensure there was a sufficiently large workforce to realize this production. Ideologically, as the discussion of blood and soil demonstrated, the Nazis thought of the

rural population as the core of the German race, and were thus worried about the potential disintegration of this core by the ongoing flight from the land.

The Nazi regime's first action regarding *Landflucht* was a decree issued in 1934 that prohibited industrial firms from hiring workers from the agricultural sector. In addition, a so-called "*Land Dienst*" was instituted; this was a voluntary service program for working in the countryside.[12] KdF's efforts to improve the living and working conditions of the rural population—to make rural life more attractive—also constituted an attempt to halt the flight from the land. Thus, part of KdF's goal was that its beautification work would improve the villagers' lives enough to deflect any urges to leave the villages. In this regard, KdF was less concerned with the economic situation,[13] but rather pointed to the "cultural" situation of rural Germans.[14] Robert Ley, head of KdF, and Darré explicitly argued that the flight from the land was above all a cultural problem. They claimed that culture had been taken away from the village, leaving it "soulless,"[15] and that KdF's task was to return the village's culture and its soul.[16]

Transforming German Villages into Happy Communities

One of the first activities KdF undertook in the countryside was the arrangement of *Dorfgemeinschaftsabende* [village community evenings].[17] Let us begin with an analysis of this type of cultural event. This analysis will uncover how this facet of KdF's work in rural Germany fit in with the organization's overall goals, but also it where it diverged from parallel social evenings in KdF's urban program.

Robert Ley described the village community evenings as a means "for carrying the thought of 'Strength through Joy' into the countryside."[18] As ever, one of the central motives of Ley and KdF, as highlighted even in the name of these events, was the building of community. In KdF's activities, the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft* seems to have had something like a fractal structure, such that the strong, joyful national community of Germans would be made up of local communities that were equally strong and joyful on their own scale. Thus, while some of KdF's tourism activities, for example, sought to create a sense of commonality that spanned the country, overcoming regional differences and rivalries, as briefly explained in this book's introduction, the natural target of its countryside activities

was the community at the local level. So, the village community evenings were designed to augment cohesion among the rural population, and to bring the entire village together as a whole, its individual members becoming properly part of the village, rather than just socializing with various cliques or other population segments. The leisure organization considered *Dorfgemeinschaftsabende* as an especially useful way to foster such unity, since they could "widen the circle of community beyond the single home and the neighborhood,"[19] bringing the entire village population together. On the one hand, this recognition that building the village community as a whole meant integrating the different social groups within it is reminiscent of the need to unite Germany's regions and other groups at the national level. Furthermore, once the village community was re-established, KdF organizers hoped that the evenings could then serve as a reminder to the whole village community of its participation in the "life struggle of the German people."[20] On the other hand, the village community evenings are quite directly comparable to the "comradeship evenings" KdF organized in factories, which I examined in Chap. 3. Both type of events strove to unify the different social strata that existed where they took place; in the case of the factories, a key impetus was uniting factories as single communities embracing workers, managers, and owners.

However, although community building was the main goal of both comradeship and village evenings, KdF organizers made a special effort in the villages to exclude "excessively urban" elements from the design of these latter events. Instead, they focused on the presentation and practice of traditional, *völkisch* contents. According to 1935 guidelines, the evenings were to be mainly solemn in character: they were to be ceremonies rather than casual parties. Village community evenings were designed to be a time of "interior, spiritual edification" for the rural working population of the countryside, bringing the villagers together as a "community fatefully linked with the soil and *Volk*."[21] Overall, nine village evenings per year were envisioned, six in the winter season and three in the busier summer season. All inhabitants of the village would attend. Each evening was to have a specific theme—either spiritual or political—and KdF's Institute for the Education of the German People proposed that the event should be opened by a speech given by a local figure, followed by a song sung together by all attendees. The theme of the evening would then be taken up in a lecture lasting about 20 or 25 minutes. This educational talk would be the center point of the evening, framed by performances by local folk groups, including musical pieces and choir-singing, recitals, folk dance,

folk plays, and so on. All performers were to be native to the village, while the speaker would be chosen by the local (county or district) educational office of the Nazi party. The conclusion of the evening would be a collective "*Heil*" to the Führer and a communal song, this time a verse of the German national anthem and a verse of the *Horst-Wessel Lied*, the Nazi party anthem.[22]

Prior to each event, the program had to be approved by the district representative of KdF's Institute for the Education of the German People. Smoking and drinking were banned, in order to keep up the "character of a ceremony." Clearly, there was a worry that the evenings, meant to be educational, could turn into riotous drinking parties.[23] For the same reason, there was no dancing allowed after the official program concluded. Regulations such as these reflect how KdF worked on the assumption that German peasants had not yet reached a sufficiently civilized state. Here, we can discern a clear discrepancy between the celebratory tone KdF propaganda frequently adopted when referring to the German peasantry—the fount of German culture or civilization—and the sort of villagers the organization expected to deal with in reality. We see the belief of KdF organizers that their abstract ideals around the character of the German rural population were not yet in fact a reality, and that they saw it as their task to reconcile this "gap." In the countryside, therefore, KdF's work was part of a broader civilizing effort that the organization perceived to be necessary.[24]

That KdF was engaged in a civilizing mission in the countryside is peculiar in two ways. First, as has been reiterated, the countryside, home of the *völkisch* German peasant, was, ideologically, supposed to be the source of German culture, not a place in need of civilization. Second, as this book argues in general, KdF was primarily interested in "joy production", but the descriptions of the village community evenings make them sound rather boring, if the goal is "joy production", it is a rather solemn sort of joy. As we have seen, ideologically or propagandistically, KdF did sometimes construe its concept of joy in more "elevated" terms, be these the joy of great art or the joy that belonged to the countryside folk through their participation in the German spirit—and the intent of the "ceremonial" village evening seems to have been to access this type of joy. But such high-flown notions notwithstanding, one of the central points of this book is that in fact, KdF was more concerned with joy construed as fun, quickly leaving Schiller and Wagner behind for farce and bawdy songs, for example. The fact that the village community evenings leaned

more towards a solemn type of "joy production" seems to go against that argument. But in the end, this is not all that odd. We should not take KdF to be consistent and monotonic in its goals—if only because the organization was always quite adaptable and pragmatic—so the resurgence of solemnity in certain of its activities is not surprising, especially as the space in which this occurred was that of the village, already understood to be a rather special place.

Instead, what is in fact remarkable is that, despite the supposed special role of the village, KdF eventually moved the community evenings away from their solemn tone. Here KdF's consistency is apparent, as it once again moves towards the fun side of "joy production", even in the special space of the village. One development was that village community evenings moved from under the umbrella of the Institute for the Education of the German People to be organized instead by KdF's Leisure Time Department, and with this move we see a shift in later writings about village community evenings to designing events with a stronger focus on recreation and entertainment. For example, a 1939 KdF book described the goal of the evening as helping people "to relax […] from the sorrows and toil of work, to make them happy, to lead them together within the community."[25] The idea of community building is maintained, but now the organization recognizes that the community comes together in more ordinary joys—relaxing after work—than in meditations on *völkisch* themes. The same book also included recommendations and descriptions for several games to be played at the events, such as *Ohrfeigenpartie* ["game of cuffing ears"], *Stockstechen* ["stabbing of sticks"], and charades,[26] as well as suitable songs for a "cheerful village community evening." I find it hard to say that games about slapping people's ears and hitting them with sticks are fun, but they certainly sound riotous, while the cheerful songs seem much more fun than the more politicized music in earlier programs.[27] In other words, the goals of the village community evenings seem to have shifted from (politicized) education to "joy production."[28]

However, despite such later emphasis on "joy," Nazi ideology and its dissemination was never entirely abandoned in the arrangement of *Dorfgemeinschaftsabende*. For example, KdF suggested that the venue for a village community evening should be decorated "simply and without kitsch"—meaning that the organizers ought to abstain from using "paper chains and swastika flags," since that would be "too cutesy"; however, the organization did assert that a "painting or a well-done bust" of Adolf Hitler should nonetheless definitely be present.[29] Here, we see a feature

of KdF's overall work that appears very clearly in its activities in the countryside: the organization's rather intrusive and over-meticulous tendency to micro-manage events and circumstances through the establishment of very clear and strict guidelines.

Such detail and apparent caution can be identified in all areas of KdF's work in the villages. The leisure organization's publications include extremely comprehensive suggestions for its cultural work in rural Germany, including, for example, extensive lists of songs and dances or theater pieces that were considered appropriate to be performed by villagers. To an extent, of course, this impression of "over-regulation" stems from the fact that we are in fact looking at regulations; again, the analysis here examines what KdF wanted, and does not necessarily capture what KdF actually did. However, it also appears that KdF in the countryside was indeed more "bold" or upfront in endorsing certain ideals, and admitting to this openly, than we saw in its organizing of leisure activities in factories.[30]

An important element in the programming of village community evenings was the performances by actors, musicians and singers, dancers, and other entertainers. Often, these performers would be villagers themselves because KdF preferred amateur performances in the countryside. This speaks to the organization's generally favoring active participation over passive attendance when it came to leisure events, something that was especially stressed in the countryside.[31] Amateur acting and singing, both in their active and their communal aspects, were considered to have an "enlightening" function for the rural population: as a KdF writer put it, "[w]hen peasants perform as lay actors, then we can feel their searching, wrestling and fighting for clarity regarding cultural, political, ideological and social questions."[32]

On the one hand, this sounds surprisingly like a very liberal conception of artistic participation, as individuals are invited to consider and confront their own philosophical assumptions through art. On the other hand, and much less surprisingly, the outcome of the villagers' searching fight for clarity was to be carefully guided—a specific clarity was the aim,[33] and confining village performances to the villages themselves was important to avoid accidental misdirection. A key concern of KdF's biggest work in villages was to halve the "flight from the land," partly by providing attractive entertainment. But this was also a risk, because entertainment associated with the cities, which conveyed an aura of the city as an attractive place, could inspire or strengthen villagers' desires to leave for the urban centers.

Accordingly, it was crucial that cultural events "be an affair 'of the village' itself […] independent of the city." As KdF guidelines warned, "the village must not connect the performances even with the thought of the city, for then every wrong and undesired temptation is avoided."[34]

Such concerns affected both the nature of the cultural events staged in villages, and who was involved in them, including the village community evenings and other cultural events that KdF put on.[35] Local amateurs were favored as performers, while the events were not supposed to be fancy shows full of "flash and tinsel" ["*Flimmer und Flitter*"]—rather, KdF was sure that "unfussy sporting and acrobatic performances would impress the peasant much more." Also to be eschewed in village entertainment events were emcees cracking "sleazy jokes" or musical performances influenced by "foreign sounds, either Jewish sweetness or Negro-rhythms" ["*jüdisch-süßlichen oder Neger-rhythmischen Klängen*"].[36] While performances by "good traveling theaters" or puppet shows were acceptable for the villages, better were theater performances by amateur theater groups as these were capable, in the eyes of KdF, of "cultivating fresh, authentic lay theatre close to the people."[37] Likewise, if at all possible, local singing and musical clubs were to be heavily involved in KdF's cultural events in villages. Such preferences show the leisure organization's focus on building community while striving to "separate" its activities in the countryside from its urban programming. Again, this approach contradicts the idea of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* spanning social and regional differences. However, as we have also seen, KdF's way of creating a harmonious *Volksgemeinschaft* across all of Germany also embraced the strategy of recognizing (or creating) local spaces—be these literal (countryside versus city) or conceptual (such as class differences)—and also seeking a harmonious community in these spaces as part of the greater *Volksgemeinschaft*.

With the beginning of the war, the framework for village community evenings shifted slightly. The evenings were now to constitute "hours of communal connection between front and homeland,"[38] a venue for informing those villagers who remained at home about the frontline experiences of other Germans, particularly those of their neighbors and family members. Village community evenings also became sites for the commemoration of war victims who had lived in the village.[39] Underlying these developments was KdF's concern with keeping up the morale of the rural population during the war. The regime needed the support and productivity of the agricultural sector, especially economically. KdF wanted to sustain the farmers' sense of being involved in the war, even as they remained

geographically removed from the fighting. The goal was the formation of a spiritual community between the farmers and the rest of Germany, particularly including the soldiers at the front. In this regard, village community evenings were one of the prewar activities that, because they were seen as fostering a feeling of community, were assigned a high importance by KdF once the war had begun. Obviously, any light relief resulting from entertaining at village community evenings was also embraced by KdF organizers, since entertainment for the war-weary population was in line with these general concerns.

Linking Place and People: KdF's *Dorfbuch* [Village Book]

I raised a distinction at the start of this chapter between the internal and external directions of KdF's "joy production." The type of cultural activities described in the preceding pages, as well as KdF's sports offerings were aimed at the rural population mainly "internally," that is, these activities targeted villagers' bodies and personalities. Externally, KdF's work was also interested in the "place" where the German population lived, a concern that was most distinctly expressed in its beautification campaigns, which will be discussed later in this chapter. In this section, we will look at a KdF initiative that sought to bridge both perspectives: linking the village as a place (external) and the villagers as persons (internal). This initiative was the organization's encouragement of the villagers to produce a *Dorfbuch*, or village book.

This village book was to be a tome "in which each village's history and present should be chronicled as a way to reconnect the villagers to their village and its past." This book was meant to be comprehensive, encompassing all aspects of village life including "economy, folklore, population development, villagescape, village meadows etc."[40] and to function as a "permanent source of life for the village community."[41] Drawings and images were to be included, alongside any newspaper articles or public announcements pertaining to village life. Characteristically, KdF, in its usual micro-managing style, issued detailed guidelines on how to devise a *Dorfbuch*.[42] The books were to be written in "[s]imple language, understandable by everybody" so that they would be accessible to all villagers.[43] Once again, the tone is patronizing, revealing KdF's belief in the necessity to "civilize" the rural population. Most importantly, the village book's

representations of the village and village life and history were supposed to always link the village's individual situation to that of the overall German Reich and vice versa.[44]

This latter requirement was made even more urgent after the beginning of the war. As we have already observed, the support of the countryside for the war and its involvement in it was crucial for the Third Reich, and the *Dorfbuch* was now a tool to secure that support. It accomplished this function by being transformed into a means of communication between front and home, its most important documents now becoming reports and letters from villagers who were away at the front serving as soldiers. In the village book, the "war with all its events and contexts was to be anchored to the family, and to the village."[45] In addition, and in parallel to the inclusion in the book of the village's history during earlier wars and strife, the village book was also now to record the history of the village during this conflict, as it happened, so that future generations could learn from it about the war and their village's participation in it. Anton Link, a local Nazi leader and a KdF activist in rural Hesse, exclaimed that "later generations have the right to learn how we coped with the economic matters and demands which were forced upon us; how neighborly help began and how the homeland came to constitute a solid, steel-hard structure."[46] Such comments make it clear that the village books were directed not only at the villagers' present and at their past, but also intended to be a connection to the future and future generations of the village. KdF intended its community building to transcend generations. The book was to represent the village through time, meaning in particular that it would link villagers of different time periods, creating a community across time. One detail that is also apparent from Link's statement just quoted is, of course, the Nazi promise that Germany would win the war, a victory possible partly because of the strength of the "steel-hard" villages. This represents the dynamic between the Nazi regime's overall promise of creating a happy Germany through expanding the Reich and the joy KdF was already producing, a joy from which Germans could gain the strength to achieve the even more happy future Reich. It is quite interesting that KdF imagined that a book could contain so much power in order to transcend time, and to transcend space, connecting the village to Germany, and connecting the villages to their soldiers fighting afar. However, KdF clearly conceptualized the *Dorfbuch* as yet another tool to support the formation the German *Volksgemeinschaft* and to make Germany's villagers feel a part of it.[47]

Country Meets City: KdF's *Werkdorfgemeinschaften* [Village-Factory Communities]

The analysis of KdF's work in the countryside revealed the organization's strong interest in community building, and in relating the village community to the greater *Volksgemeinschaft*. But we also observed KdF's worry in its rural work that villagers would be contaminated by urban concerns or desires. This is a particular, if not stark, instance of a tendency for the vision of an overall *Volksgemeinschaft* to become partitioned in KdF's activities. But, just as the village book could look beyond the immediate locale, another important initiative in which KdF pursued the goal of fostering a harmonious *Volksgemeinschaft* beyond social and regional differences was the *Werkdorfgemeinschaft* project, again initiated by KdF's Beauty of Labor department. The goals of this project were laid out by Bruno Malitz of KdF in the DAF magazine *Arbeitertum* in 1938. Malitz defined KdF's role to "bring city and village close, so that one respects the other."[48] To bring such closeness and respect closer to reality, Beauty of Labor proposed the setting up of a *Werkdorfgemeinschaft,* which literally translates as a "community between village and factory." More specifically, what was envisioned was a liaison—a type of twinning—between the inhabitants of a village and the employees of a factory, which would lead to exchange and friendship between the two groups. The idea was for factories to be twinned with a village in proximity to where their recreation or holiday homes were located—homes they had built also due to new KdF initiatives. In the case of factories, which did not have recreation homes, the company was to choose a village to be a "comradeship village," becoming both the other partner in the *Werkdorfgemeinschaft* and the factory employees' vacation destination.[49]

Overall, founding *Werkdorfgemeinschaften* would establish an ongoing exchange between village and city from which both partners could benefit. One advantage Malitz mentions is that villages could learn from the factories as they began their beautification projects, the experience of factories in KdF cleaning and refurbishment projects (see below) being particularly relevant.[50] A second factor Malitz emphasizes is that the factory-village partnership would extend across generations: "The village will be a homeland for all the children whose parents are employed in the

factory. In this way, from early on in his or her life, the child from the city will get acquainted with the village and its life. The city dweller will learn to respect the villager, and the villager will learn about the worries and hardship of the people in the city." Just as we saw that the *Dorfbuch* was to transcend space and time to create a community, so the village-factory community would have the same power.

Aside from the repeated emphasis on community building across generations, the directionality of this latter strategy merits some attention. The benefits of shared experiences seem mainly to move from the city to the village. The villagers learn from the factory workers how to improve the village. Participants move in both directions—villagers visit the factories, and factory workers holiday in the village—but this bidirectional movement is weighted more to one side than the other. This time, the village has the advantage, so to speak: when the factory workers visit the village it becomes the homeland for their children, whereas when the villagers visit the factories they discover that they do not wish to remain in the city. That the villagers would make this latter discovery was, of course, instrumentally quite important to KdF, as it represents once again an attempt to defuse the temptations that might lead villagers to abandon rural Germany and move to the city.

We have seen a certain duality to KdF's perspective on village life, both the fount of German culture, and an underdeveloped place in need of being civilized. A similar tension seems to be played out in Malitz's plans: the villages need the help of the factories, and there seems to be no question but that the factory workers will continue to work in the factories and live in the cities, yet the villages are self-evidently better than the factories, because the villagers will clearly wish to remain there and these spaces will become the homeland for the factory workers' families too. Nonetheless, Malitz posited that reciprocal visits between members of the "village community" and the "factory community" would eventually lead to the two communities forming a new "unit, as the community of the German people."[51] This is the type of belief that seems to have driven the *Werkdorfgemeinschaft* idea as well as other KdF projects, especially regarding the countryside, but it often seems like a notion to cover gaps, from the literally spatial to those of culture or class. Speculatively, it is interesting to think that KdF's tendency to revert to simple "fun production" rather than ""joy production"" was a pragmatic reaction to fill such gaps with something more realistic.

Cleaning Germany's Rural *Lebensraum*: KdF's Making of "Beautiful Villages"

We now turn to KdF's *"Dorfverschönerungsaktionen"* ["campaigns for the beautification of the village"], which constituted a central part of KdF's actions in the countryside and which were, according to the analysis here, its most externally concerned initiative. The leisure organization believed this to be another important measure in the struggle against the *Landflucht*. This initiative was undertaken by Beauty of Labor, and included the cleaning and restoration of the streets, squares and houses in villages, and the building of new roads. The project also sought to remove "ugly advertisements" and to ensure that fences, walls, and hedges were well maintained and looked attractive. An additional objective was the building of sports fields, swimming pools, and other recreational infrastructure, as well as kindergartens, homes for the Hitler Youth, and facilities for other communal functions.[52]

Carrying out beautification projects and improvements was envisioned by KdF as a multistep process. For example, a 1938 schedule for the district of Braunschweig (Brunswick, in today's Lower Saxony), laid out a three-year plan for local villages to become "Beautiful Villages." The first step for each village was to clean up rubbish and free itself of "ugly" advertisements. Then, during the first year, each newly "Clean Village" was to begin building a swimming pool and other community facilities, such as kindergartens, community houses, and KdF halls. In the second year, the goal was the "cultivation" of the village: a "Cultivated Village" would boast newly designed village squares, renovated and repainted houses, and so on. At the end of this second year, KdF had scheduled a competition to determine which village was the "Most Cultivated Village" in the district. In the final year, the beautification campaign would culminate in the perfection of the village's appearance, and the completion of the new community buildings. At the conclusion of the campaign, another competition would select which of the newly "Beautiful Villages" was to be awarded the title of the district's "Most Beautiful Village."[53]

The beautification campaigns in German villages ceased at the beginning of the war. But up to that point, more than 5,000 villages had been "beautified," according to a DAF publication.[54] And even after 1939, KdF continued to urge villagers to take care of the appearance of their home place, taking account of the effect of changes wrought by the war. For example, KdF urged that the red and yellow signs indicating air-raid

shelters should be installed in a manner that "blended into the villagescape," rather than in a way that would "disfigure [the] doors and gates" of the village.[55] Similarly, villagers were told to comply with blackout requirements not by using "simple board panels, which indeed do not let out any light during the night, but which blemish the farmhouse during the day" but rather with folding shutters more in keeping with the traditional appearance of farm houses.[56] The number of public notices and announcements would naturally increase in wartime, but KdF was also concerned that these not be untidily posted anywhere and everywhere but instead only on the village notice board—and if the village didn't have a notice board, then it should install one. Another worry was that villages would be tastelessly decorated with "war kitsch," as supposedly had happened too often during World War I. KdF sometimes even contradicted other official wartime advice. For example, some air-raid defense publications recommended that farmers spread dung on the windows of basements used as shelters in order to make them gas-proof, but KdF expressed concern that this would damage the village's appearance.[57]

It is worthwhile digressing at this point to notice that the beautification campaigns initiated by KdF within Germany have many parallels to Nazi settlement plans, especially the plans for German settlements in the East, that is, in conquered territories in Poland and the Soviet Union. These settlement plans were rooted in a fundamental tenet of Nazi ideology, which was that the Germans, constituting a superior race, were in need of greater *Lebensraum*. Accordingly, the Nazis saw Eastern Europe as a place where, after the war and the enslavement of the territories' native peoples, new German settlements would emerge.[58] Several Nazi agencies were involved in the planning of these settlements and, after the war had begun, setting these plans in motion; among the agencies involved were the SS *Rasse und Siedlungshauptamt* [SS Race and Settlement Main Office][59] and the *Hauptamt Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, or *VoMi* [Main Welfare Office for Ethnic Germans], under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler as the *Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums* [Reich Commissar for the Strengthening of the German Ethnic Stock; RKFDV]. The German Labor Front, KdF's parent agency, was also involved in the organization of new German settlements in the East, at least in their planning stages.

The plans of these agencies for the East shared some of the goals that had guided KdF's beautification campaigns. The new villages in the East were going to be clearly structured, orderly and clean, offering an environment

for German peasant life that would be rooted in *völkisch* traditions and Nazi blood-and-soil ideology. These plans placed great emphasis on fostering feelings of community in these villages. Building the infrastructure for leisure and recreation was seen as a tool for implementing this goal. In November 1940, in his capacity as RKFDV, Himmler ordered that the settlement villages in the East were to be equipped with a range of community facilities, including, for example, a Nazi party office building with a room for celebrations, a village inn with a hall for ceremonies, as well as premises where physical exercises could take place.[60] These instructions very closely resemble Beauty of Labor's plans for German villages.

There is no evidence that KdF actively participated in the Nazi regime's settlement plans and practices in the East. But this situation does not seem to have been intended to continue. Hitler's own vision for Eastern Europe seems to explicitly involve KdF: In October 1941, Hitler described how the Third Reich would transform Eastern Europe into "a blossoming parkland of exceptional beauty" in which it would be "Ley's final task to remove the lethargy of the minor key."[61] Hitler's mention of Robert Ley, head of the German Labor Front and of KdF, can surely only mean that these organizations were intended to be active in German-occupied Eastern Europe after the war. Also intriguing is Hitler's remark that Ley's mission was to do away with the "lethargy of a minor key." Here, Hitler, who is usually little involved with KdF, appears to specifically endorse KdF's project of "joy production", demanding that not even a trace of unhappiness should remain (for Aryan Germans) once the Nazis were in full control of the area: even his somewhat poetic metaphor seems to echo KdF's tendency to move towards the fun of music in energetic major keys.

Hitler was not the only one who envisioned a future role for KdF in the East. Others provided more concrete plans. For example, Fritz Arlt, of the SS and RKFDV, drew up guidelines for the settlement of Eastern Upper Silesia in 1942 that delineated KdF's function in providing "cultural compensation measures."[62] Such plans speak not only to the centrality of KdF's mission within the Third Reich; they also show how the basic assumptions and goals on which KdF founded its work were not limited to the organization's self-conception. Instead, they can only be understood as a part of larger discourses in which several Nazi agencies and their policies were embedded.

Let us now return to KdF's beautification campaigns in Germany itself. Before the war, these often went hand in hand with the process of choosing a particular village to become a KdF *Musterdorf* [model village]. Then, KdF and other Nazi organizations would engage in a concerted

program to "beautify" this *Musterdorf*. The village of Wendhausen, near Braunschweig was one site selected for this transformation. The process took several months and included painting garden fences, cleaning up farmyards, pulling down decrepit barns and building new ones, broadening and straightening streets, and so on. In addition, Wendhausen's pubs were supplied with new wrought-iron signs, while "ugly" advertisements were removed.[63] KdF described its intent for such villages as being to "return its original state [*Ursprünglichkeit*] to the German village, but also to leave a mark of modern thinking on its exterior."[64]

This intention is stated in an *Arbeitertum* article about Wendhausen and the results of KdF's beautification campaign there. The article also included a picture that shows a group of women in traditional costumes sitting with spinning wheels in front of a traditional northern German house; the caption reads: "Spin, spin! Mother and daughter sit in the evenings in front of the pretty, half-timbered houses."[65] Neither the image nor its caption could be said to highlight the stated commitment to "modern thinking." Quite to the contrary, this picture reveals how much a return to traditional lifestyles, including the corresponding gender roles, was part of KdF's vision for the countryside.

In addition to the image, the curious wording of the article's statement of KdF's agenda, as quoted just above, merits further comment. Notably, the village is not to be brought back to its original state rather that *Ursprünglichkeit* is to be returned to the village. This suggests that it has fled; one could see here an echo of the Nazi fear of *Landflucht*. Even more notable is the statement that KdF intends to "leave its mark," that is to impress the organization's ideas onto the village. The transformation was thus not an activity that originated with the villagers. KdF's beautification work clearly proceeded through top-down intervention.

It is hardly surprisingly that such disenfranchisement was not met with much support from the targeted populations. It also did not help the popularity of the beautification campaign that the tone of voice in KdF's writings on this topic could be both condescending and meddlesome. A 1937 KdF directive, for example, criticized the lack of flowers in the windows of houses in northern and central Germany and demanded that "understanding and love for this [decoration] must be instilled again." Furthermore, it stressed that, overall, the farmers in these regions had "the worst gardens in Germany."[66]

The hesitation of villagers to embrace these meddling campaigns can be inferred from a 1936 letter by a Silesian *Landrat* [district administrator] to the mayors of villages in his district, rallying their support for beautification.

He appealed vigorously to villagers' sense of community and patriotism. But the *Landrat* also demanded that villagers should be compelled to participate in the beautification efforts if they did not voluntarily chose to do so (the letter was also copied to the district's police offices). The *Landrat* clearly sees quite a stark need to overcome inertia among the villagers, and even anticipates policing resistance, perhaps suggesting that he had previously experienced antagonism towards beautification.[67]

Notwithstanding KdF's tendency to tell villagers what to do, and the villagers' tendency not to want to listen, active participation by the rural population in the beautification campaigns was central to KdF's program. Overall, this was in line with KdF's commitments in its programming for active participation. For this specific case, two more motives can be identified. On the one hand, this was a way for KdF to save money, as the organization sought to have most of the beautification work completed by the villagers themselves using their own resources.[68] Of course, this means KdF was asking rather a lot of the villagers, probably accounting for some of their resistance to getting involved.

Yet, on the other hand, KdF's insistence on building the success of the beautification campaigns cooperatively with the villagers also stemmed from the belief that "true" village beautification had to come from the inhabitants of the place themselves, and that it would be "wrong to shape the village from the city."[69] A 1939 KdF brochure bemoaned how bringing "civilization from the city to village, destroys village culture,"[70] a complaint that may highlight several parallel aspects of the beautification program. As we have seen, KdF's activities in the countryside were partly motivated by its worry about *Landflucht*. Making the villages more beautiful would make remaining there more attractive. But KdF did not seek to make the villages *comparably* attractive to the cities, but rather wished the villages to be distinct places. The villages were important in blood-and-soil ideology as the source of "German-ness." Some of the sources of this ideology relate to tensions in Nazism between a romanticized view of traditional life and a drive towards modernity,[71] echoed here in the somewhat odd distinction between culture (in the village) and civilization (in the city). Finally, there is the persistent Nazi obsession with pollution, often played out in spatial terms. In an image from Stuttgart from 1935, as discussed in Chap. 2, we saw that KdF preferred not to use a sports field because it was sometimes also used by Jews, as if the space remained "polluted" by Jewishness even at times when no Jews were actually present. Here, ironically, the concern is that German life in one space, the city, can destroy another German space, the village and the countryside.

The fear that the countryside could be polluted by the city is one of the recurring factors that we have seen driving KdF's work in the countryside, related to two very important elements in the organization's perception of rural Germany, namely the problem of *Landflucht*, exacerbated in KdF's conception by the central place of the village in blood-and-soil ideology. However, despite these particularities, there is also much in KdF's rural program that is similar to its work elsewhere. The goals of community building in order to reach a happy *Volksgemeinschaft*,[72] active participation, and an increasing shift to amusing "joy production" in cultural entertainments are almost universal in KdF's work. Furthermore, KdF's somewhat totalitarian intrusion into the everyday life of Germany's rural population, apparent in the villagers being compelled to clean up their homes and surroundings, represents an ambition to micro-manage Germans' lives that was also evident other spheres. The beautification campaigns, which have been explored in this section, were not unique to KdF's work in the countryside. We observe a similar undertaking in Germany's industrial sphere, which is discussed in the next section.

Cleaning Germany's Industrial *Lebensraum*: KdF's Making of "Beautiful Factories"

When asked in a 1985 oral history interview about the effects the Third Reich had on the scythe factory his father owned at the time, a businessman from the Ruhr,[73] laughed and answered: "Well, have a look outside, there are two lovely trees out there, between the two workshops. That is the only visible testimony." These two trees, he goes on to explain, were planted during a campaign by KdF's Beauty of Labor department, and he adds that "then we also had some flowers standing here in the factory, in the foundry, standing on the window [sills]."[74]

This interview presents us with an example of the fine-grained detail that Beauty of Labor involved itself with in its work in factories. Such micro-managing also incorporated everything from designing furniture for cafeterias and workers lounges to the cutlery used in factory dining areas.[75] Other beautification activities also took place that were on a larger scale and particularly focused on factory architecture and landscaping.

To improve Germany's working sites, Beauty of Labor set in motion the building and renovation of workrooms, cafeterias, and bathrooms and shower facilities in factories all over Germany. Courtyards, gardens, and sometimes even larger park areas were created as spaces for break-time

recreation and relaxation for workers. DAF statistics, first published in 1940, record the improvement (or new building) of 17,000 courtyards, 26,000 work rooms, 24,000 washrooms and dressing rooms, 18,000 dining and break rooms, as well as 3,000 sports facilities.[76] Another source speaks of investments amounting to over 600 million Reichsmark in these (re)constructions in the period 1933 to 1938.[77] All these interventions were meant to further the "improving of workers' living conditions and moving closer to the ideal of a classless People's Community," as Albert Speer remembered in his memoirs in 1970.[78] In their writings, KdF's functionaries took great pains to emphasize that the organization's interventions into German workspaces were more than just cosmetic changes or forms of (commercial) advertisement and that they were not "mere" rationalization procedures.[79] Instead, as KdF-writer Anatol von Hübbenet put it, the beautification efforts were "expressions of an ethical mindset" that reflected the Nazi regime's belief in the "honor and dignity of work and [those] working."[80] For historian Anson Rabinbach, through Beauty of Labor "the utopian promise of an industrial society where work was beautiful and the class struggle abolished was given political and administrative form."[81]

At the core of Beauty of Labor's activities were its campaigns to clean up and improve the workplaces of Germany's industrial workers.[82] About once or twice a year, Beauty of Labor promulgated a theme that would be the focus of its efforts in the coming months. The first such campaign began early in 1935 and was called "*Sonne und Grün allen Schaffenden*" ["Sun and Green for All Workers"]. A poster for this campaign is show in Fig. 5.1; it illustrates a worker opening the factory doors to the light of a blue sky and the beauty of blossoms. In the background, other factories are visible, integrated into a very pleasant green and unindustrialized parkland. The keywords of the campaign's title are clearly illustrated—sunlight and nature—while Beauty of Labor seems almost to be showing that it will return the factory—and above all, the workers—to a countryside-like space.

In May 1935, the focus was on limiting noise in factories ("*Kampf dem Lärm*" or "Battle against Noise"), while the new campaign in the second half of the year was called "*Gutes Licht—Gute Arbeit!*" ["Good light—Good Work!"].[83] This latter campaign involved testing the illumination of work sites all over Germany. If a factory or work environment was found to be too dark, Beauty of Labor's consultants would advise improvements, including repainting walls in light colors and the installation of new or

Fig. 5.1 Poster "Sun and Green for All Workers," 1934 (Bildarchiv Bundesarchiv, Plak 003-018-040)

better lamps.[84] Such improvements would presumably benefit productivity (allowing workers see what they were doing!) and health, but were also meant to make the workplace a happier place to be. It is also hard not to read some of Beauty of Labor's propaganda around its lighting initiatives as implying that the organization was bringing metaphorical light to workers' lives as well as actual lamp light.

The next campaign was launched in February 1937 and was concerned with hygiene facilities for workers in factories. *"Saubere Menschen im sauberen Betrieb"* ["Clean People in a Clean Plant"] was the slogan of this Beauty of Labor push for the installation of new dressing rooms, washing facilities, and toilets.[85] Later that year, the organization took on ventilation in factories and workrooms in a campaign under the rubric "*Gesunde Luft im Arbeitsraum*" ["Healthy Air in the Work Space"]. A survey conducted by Beauty of Labor had revealed that almost every third worker in Germany complained about the stale air and bad ventilation of their work place.[86] Consequently, Beauty of Labor set out improve ventilation, again to create "healthy working environments in the beautiful work spaces of a happy Germany."[87]

In 1938, the department initiated the campaign "*Warmes Essen im Betrieb*" ["Hot Food in the Plant"]. Beauty of Labor encouraged more factories to establish canteens that would provide more workers with hot and healthy meals, although even in 1938 the canteens were asked to serve dishes that did not contain too much meat and fat, because of potential shortages;[88] instead, the campaign pushed for an increased use of soy flour in factory kitchens.[89]

Beauty of Labor's campaigns and all its other activities were heavily and quite aggressively advertised via a myriad of publications—in the form of newspaper and magazine articles, brochures or books, all of which typically included photographs—as well as through conferences, rallies, and exhibitions.[90] A favored tactic in Beauty of Labor's propaganda was the "before-and-after" photo, or similar contrasting images, that highlighted the organization's achievements (Fig. 5.2). For example, an exhibition was opened in Dresden in 1936 to publicize Beauty of Labor's activities, and it prominently displayed before-and-after pictures that evidenced the progress of the cleaning efforts in factories. The Dresden exhibition also included a fully equipped office room outfitted with prototypical "Beauty of Labor" furniture, characterized by "beauty of form, functionality" and the fact that they were "exclusively made from German wood."[91] The room was well-lit, both through two large windows as well as with additional lamps, reflecting Beauty of Labor stipulations from the "Good

Fig. 5.2 Poster for Beauty of Labor's factory cleaning campaigns, advertising what a pleasant, cleaned up, well-maintained factory should look like compared to the sort of chaotic, gloomy, and dirty site KdF wanted to eliminate, 1934 (Bildarchiv Bundesarchiv, Plak 003-018-035)

Light—Good Work" campaign, which was already running. In other rooms of the exhibition, visitors had the chance to admire state-of-the art lockers, a canteen with prototypes of Beauty of Labor crockery and work-place ornaments, from flowers to slogans used as wall decorations.[92] The exhibition clearly illustrates Beauty of Labor's commitment (propagandistically at least) to the types of ideas noted above: the model office seeks to retain the "functionality" of Taylorism but ameliorates it with "beauty"—while the note that the furniture is made of "German wood" recalls the pragmatic concern with agricultural (and industrial) autonomy, plus, of course, nationalistic pride.

In addition to print publications and conferences and exhibitions, Beauty of Labor also made several short documentary movies to propagandize its activities and campaigns. The first of these was produced in 1934 and had the eponymous title *Schönheit der Arbeit*. The very immediately titled[93] 1938 movie *Licht* [Light] explained and supported the "Good Light—Good Work" campaign, while the movie *Deutsche Arbeitsstätten* [German Work Sites] from 1940 sought to demonstrate how "healthy, clean work environments serve the conservation of [Germans'] health." The movie *Gesunde Luft* [Healthy Air], produced to highlight Beauty of Labor's campaign for better ventilation in factories and workrooms, focuses on ventilation machinery, while the documentary *Heimat im Werk* [Home at Work] chronicles the setting up of Beauty of Labor facilities in a small factory.[94] Other documentary movies produced by Beauty of Labor included *Wir und das Werk* [We and the Factory], about the building of a swimming pool for the employees of a power plant, and an animated movie in color called *Musterbetrieb AG* [Model Plant Inc.], both released in 1936.[95]

Similarly to what was occurring regarding village beautification, Beauty of Labor's initiatives in factories were rarely directly financed by KdF. Instead, improvements frequently depended—often entirely—on unpaid after-work labor carried out by the factory workers themselves, or were paid for by the companies running the factories, with Beauty of Labor's input in such cases being purely "motivational." In fact, Beauty of Labor was not mandated to actually enforce any changes in the realm of industrial labor, as its role was purely advisory.[96] However, its representatives were to be given access to all areas of any factory that they wished to inspect. From 1933 to 1938, employees of the department went on almost 60,000 factory tours, assessing work conditions and beautification needs.[97] What the inspectors found caused KdF much dismay: of 400

factories visited in April 1934, only 10 percent met with Beauty of Labor's approval.[98]

Even though the department had no real legal power to enforce their recommendations for beautification, it did have the means to put pressure on factories and their managers, ranging from posting signs on factories that labelled them "*Bruchbude*" ["dumps"] to forcing managers out of their jobs. After the war, Albert Speer, the head of the department (as well as Minister of War Arrangements and War Production) summarized the work of Beauty of Labor as follows: "First we persuaded factory owners to modernize their offices and have some flowers about. […] Lawns were to take the place of asphalt. What had been wasteland was to be turned into little parks where workers could sit during breaks. We urged that the window areas within factories be enlarged and workers' canteens be set up."[99] Speer's summation stresses that KdF's role in the beautification was largely "advisory." Of course, such advice, transmitted as described above, might also be called coercive. But, either way, most of the time KdF initiated projects but did not execute the required changes to a factory's infrastructure, buildings, and landscapes.

From 1936 on, the German Labor Front ran a competition among German businesses, dubbed *Leistungskampf der Betriebe* [Performance Battle of the Companies], the winners of which would be recognized as an *NS-Musterbetrieb* [Nazi model company], an endorsement awarded for one year at a time. As Shelley Baranowski has pointed out, this competition proved to be a strong incentive for German factories to implement the KdF-envisioned "factory community,"[100] and Wolf Buchholz calls it "another means of leverage" for Beauty of Labor to see its recommendations and plans realized.[101] An evaluation by Beauty of Labor of a company was a required step to its becoming an *NS-Musterbetrieb*. The department had a long list of assessment criteria for this evaluation, including, but not limited to, the architecture and upkeep of the buildings, the design and maintenance of green spaces, the standard of work spaces, especially with regard to cleanliness, lighting, wall colors and ventilation, the quality of bath- and washrooms, as well as the ornamentation of the factory's interiors with paintings, sculptures, and other "artistic embellishment." Additionally, Beauty of Labor checked on the provision and condition of canteens and community rooms, radios for communal listening, outdoor relaxation spaces, roof gardens equipped with places to sit and lie down, parade grounds, comradeship homes and kindergartens, holiday homes, and factory-owned flats for workers and homes for single mothers.[102]

As we noted, not only did KdF lack executive powers, it also had very restricted funds for implementing all its planned improvements itself. However, in its propaganda, KdF turned its failure to provide money for beautification programs into a merit. It argued that it was not "necessarily money" that was required to "beautify work and work sites," but rather "skill," "understanding," and "insight" into the "soul of the working comrade."[103] Many publications point out that Beauty of Labor's work could be done in a "cost-effective" manner—which often meant that the (more or less voluntary) work of employees was necessary. "Removing dirt costs no money" was the argument in a 1939 KdF brochure—all that was needed to improve work sites was "the realization of the indignity of the state [of dirty factories] and the will to remove the latter."[104]

However its plans were actually achieved, KdF always made sure it took full credit for the results. Its brochures proudly displayed pictures of workers relaxing in factory swimming pools or sun-bathing on comfortable loungers on the roofs of their work places during breaks.[105] Work sites were transformed into spaces of leisure—or at least, so KdF promised and claimed. This transformation was also visible in its development of sports facilities discussed previously. Doing sports together was intended to bring fun and happiness. Similarly, working—and spending time at one's worksite—was to be a joyful experience in the Third Reich. For German villagers, this spatial component of "joy production" was extended to their homes and villages, given the special Nazi concern about the peasantry as the core of the Aryan race, on the one hand, and the worry about the *Landflucht* on the other. In brief, beautification campaigns in both factories and villages were another important element of KdF's "joy production."

Clean Aryans in a Clean *Lebensraum*

One of the core emphases of KdF's spatial activities was cleaning—whether this was cleaning up factories or beautifying villages. The descriptions of various KdF initiatives in this chapter have already alluded several times to KdF's interest in cleanliness, sanitation, hygiene, well-lit spaces, and so on. This section will examine how this interest in external cleanliness also had an internal component that extended to trying to clean people. To understand this it is first necessary to highlight the fact that KdF assumed a link between physical and moral filth. This moral motivation is very clear in the way KdF talked about its work to clean and beautify German factories. It was not just that Germany's factories needed to be spruced up so that work could happen in spaces that were more conducive to more and

better work. Beauty of Labor's cleaning also had a more explicit political background.

For KdF, the shabby state of the factories had a source: in its publications, the leisure organization explicitly blamed "Marxism" for the filth and dereliction of (many of) Germany's factories. Marxist politicians and labor leaders, so went KdF's charge, had not only caused this state, but had even instigated it purposefully, to "advertise […] the infamous class-struggle lie."[106] This second assertion is crucial: Marxism and Socialism are not merely inadequate or mistaken systems that inadvertently produce bad outcomes; rather they are portrayed as expressly creating filth and the implication is unavoidable that the physical filth and dereliction of the factories is the immediate symptom of the moral filth and dereliction of the Marxists and Socialists. This type of point is emphasized again and again by KdF functionaries: after a period of filth and decay caused by the Marxists and Socialists, it is KdF that is now cleaning things up.

But there was more to this than just tidying up the leftover mess of the Marxists. In fact, KdF was making another assumption, that the filthiness of these dirty places would also dirty the people themselves, their minds and spirits as much as their hands and bodies. We noticed that the discourse around the village beautification program always contained a tension, if not a contradiction, between the lauding of the intrinsic value of the German villager and the worry that this villager in fact needed to be civilized or could be tempted or polluted by urban values. Something similar seems apparent in the discourse around factory hygiene and cleanliness. Beauty of Labor seems to have wanted its initiatives to have the no-nonsense appeal to workers (and managers) of creating the type of environments that they would naturally desire themselves. The problem, however, was that some of the workers might find Marxism's promises more appealing than KdF's promises and projects.[107] KdF's discourse characterized the Marxist as "other." Yet, the organization's own claim that the filth deliberately created by the Marxists remained a problem also admitted the possibility that KdF ("us") was affected by the Marxist's dirt ("them"). Cleaning the factories to remove the physical dirt was tantamount to cleaning the community of workers of the influences that could make them morally dirty (either "Marxist" or otherwise objectionable from the KdF's perspective) as well.

Thus, Beauty of Labor's concern for cleanliness not only targeted factories, but also had workers themselves in its sights. The German worker was to be cleansed. The clean German worker in a clean factory, who could wash himself in modern, hygienic, and clean bathrooms whose installation

had been motivated by Beauty of Labor, is a recurring image in KdF publications.[108] "*Anständig*" ["decent"], "*gepflegt*" ["neat"], "*ordentlich*" ["orderly"], and *"sauber"* ["clean"] are traits these pamphlets frequently praise in KdF-beautified factories, the work done there, and the workers themselves. Eventually, KdF hoped this cleansing of the workers at work would extend to all spheres of their lives: having scrubbed themselves clean of physical dirt after work in the new factory washrooms, they would then engage activities to clean up their physical and mental health, namely sports, cultural, and community activities, all supported by KdF.

This anxiety about cleanliness is not unique to KdF, or to the Nazis overall. In fact, it links KdF to the reformers of the bourgeois hygiene movement in Germany and Europe during the nineteenth century. The practical interventions of such reformers into health and sanitation were closely connected to a discourse about the inadequate moral behavior of the "dirty classes." The point of the last few paragraphs has been that a very similar fusion between discourses on physical dirt and "moral filth" pervades writings related to Beauty of Labor. Anson Rabinbach even sees Beauty of Labor as creating a ritual of cleanliness: the "elimination of that dirtiness, which for Freud was 'incompatible with civilization,' took on a ritualistic character in 'Beauty of Labor.'" The point of this ritual was to erase again the "'low instincts' and immorality which were said to have been bred in the industrial plants of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries […] by removing the unhygienic sources of disease and depravity."[109] But KdF's logic went a step further. Not only were the factories to cease being breeding sites for depravity, they were to be flipped into positive exemplars for people such that the cleaning of workers' places of employment would eventually also lead to cleaner worker homes. KdF director Dreßler-Andreß argued in 1935 that "[i]f the scene of his labours is well-lit and bright, with rooms that are models of cleanliness and orderliness, the worker will also be clean and bright, and take pleasure in beautifying and looking after his family home."[110]

Dreßler-Andreß's suggestion that factories and other workplaces might be exemplars of good living overall does not merge easily with the idea within the *Werkdorfgemeinschaft* concept that rural dwellers who visited factories in the cities would learn to prefer their own home villages. This type of tension is partly the result of KdF's being such a large organization whose different functionaries working on different projects did not necessarily think alike or always see the same big picture. But it also may reflect a point made earlier, that KdF's goal of constructing an overall German

Volksgemeinschaft seems to have been partly predicated on building harmony in local communities first, yet these different communities were not always easy to harmonize with each other. Nonetheless, the cleanliness discourse is clearly related to a type of border policing and the creation of categories of "us" and "them," as we noted regarding the "filthy" Marxists.

More generally, then, underlying the Beauty of Labor program was the assumption that only entirely "clean" Germans were worthy *Volksgenossen*, only they would be useful members of the German *Volk*, only they would they sufficiently strengthen the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Of course, *Volksgemeinschaft* was, as Nazi ideology decreed, only open to so-called "Aryans;" that is, only racially pure and superior individuals could become a part of this *Volksgemeinschaft*. German workers—if they were not Jewish—fulfilled this requirement. Their "filthiness," physical, mental, and possibly ideological—Marxist—could be cleansed. (By contrast the filth of Jews and other groups was held to be intrinsic and irremediable.) In this sense, KdF hoped through its program "Beauty of Labor" to both define and consequently to strengthen the Nazi envisioned *Volksgemeinschaft*.

A theme of this chapter has been the spatial component of KdF's *Volksgemeinschaft* project. We have just seen that a connection was made between cleaning factories and cleaning workers in all aspects of their lives, and this mirrors the link between beautified villages and the villagers, who were regarded as the racial core of Germany. This close link of spatial cleanliness and the strength or purity of the *Volksgemeinschaft* recalls another spatial concern of the Nazi regime: It was a central Nazi ambition to gain a (clean) *Lebensraum* for Aryan Germans, and this ambition drove many of the atrocities committed by the regime.[111] KdF was also concerned with providing clean spaces for clean people, so it is instructive to think about KdF's beautification activities in this context of *Lebensraum*: in this light, both the factory floor and German villages appear as a microcosms of the larger desired living space, and the beautification campaigns as facets of a larger project that would be realized later on a macroscopic and much more murderous scale.[112]

Notes

1. See Wolfgang Hirschfeld, *Die Betreuung des Dorfes* (Berlin: DAF, 1939).
2. There has been little scholarly work dealing specifically with KdF's work in the countryside, so my discussions in this chapter will be

mostly drawn from analyses of primary sources on this matter. My discussion of KdF's "beautification" work in the factories, as this was undertaken by KdF's department Beauty of Labor builds on detailed research by several scholars. I am especially indebted to Shelley Baranowski's writing on Beauty of Labor; see Shelley Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 75–117. I also drew on the scholarship of Chup Friemert, Anson Rabinbach and Wolf Buchholz; see Chup Friemert, *Produktionästhetik im Faschismus: Das Amt Schönheit der Arbeit von 1933 bis 1939.* (Munich: Damnitz, 1980); Anson G. Rabinbach, "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich," *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, no. 4 (October 1976): 43–74; and Wolfhard Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude': Freizeitgestaltung und Arbeiterschaft im Dritten Reich" (Dissertation, Ludwig Maximilian University, 1976), 70–87.

3. It is important to clarify that most of the analysis of this chapter is concerned with what KdF wanted, rather than what it in fact did, or how this was received. Partly, this has to do with the availability of sources, but the main reason is that the greatest divergences between KdF in the countryside and its work as discussed in earlier chapters appears on this level of the organization's "desires," so it is important to explore these. Given this focus, an examination of rural inhabitants' reception and agency regarding KdF is largely omitted in this chapter. I do not mean to imply, however, that these villagers were apolitical individuals who simply accepted or flatly rejected what the KdF did and wanted.
4. To put KdF's work into its proper perspective, a brief consideration of the state and position of agriculture in the Third Reich and the relationship between the countryside and the Nazi government is useful: generally, this relationship produced few conflicts, at least compared to that between the regime and KdF's main constituency, the German working class. There was much less opposition towards the Nazi government amongst German peasants, and correspondingly less fear of such (potential) opposition within the regime. As Albrecht Ritschl and Gustavo Corni point out, a Nazi takeover of the agrarian sector, at least in terms of its political administration at a local level, had already taken

place *before* 1933. This prepared the ground so that once the Nazi government was in charge nationally "the National Socialist principle of penetration of all sectors of society and life from top to bottom" could be introduced quickly and without much resistance in the German countryside; see Albert Ritschl, "Wirtschaftspolitik im Dritten Reich – Ein Überblick," in *Deutschland 1933–1945. Neue Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft*, ed. Karl Dietrich Bracher, Manfred Funke, and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen (Bonn: Bundeszentrale fur politische Bildung, 1992), 123. See also Gustavo Corni, *Hitler and the Peasants: Agrarian Policy of the Third Reich, 1930–1939* (New York: Berg, 1990). After 1933, the everyday life of the villages and their local clubs and associations was gradually penetrated further leading to a "permanent takeover" by Nazism; see Caroline Wagner, *Die NSDAP auf dem Dorf: Eine Sozialgeschichte der NS-Machtergreifung in Lippe* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1998), 257. The present chapter will deal with KdF's part in this process.

5. Darré (1895–1953) embraced ideas of the nineteenth-century *völkisch* movement and theories about the superiority of a Nordic race. His two books, *Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen Rass* (*Peasantry as the Life-Source of the Nordic Race*, 1929) and *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden (New Nobility from Blood and Soil*, 1930), became founding texts of the Nazi "*Blut und Boden*" [blood-and-soil] ideology. Darré joined the Nazi party in 1930. He was in charge of the party's agrarian policy, and it was due in large part to his propagandistic campaigns that the party managed to secure the votes of a majority of the rural electorate; for a case study on the Nazi "seizure of power" in rural Germany, see Zdenek Zofka, *Die Ausbreitung des Nationalsozialismus auf dem Lande: Eine regionale Fallstudie zur politischen Einstellung der Landbevölkerung in der Zeit des Aufstiegs und der Machtergreifung der NSDAP* (Munich: Kommissionsbuchhandlung R. Wölfe, 1979). In 1933, Darré became *Reichsbauernführer* (Reichs Leader of Peasants) and Minister for Agriculture. Once in office, "Darré got down to implementing his ideology of 'blood and soil' and making it one of the pillars of the Third Reich;" Gustavo Corni, "Richard Walter Darré: The Blood and Soil Ideologue," in *The Nazi Elite*, ed. Ronald Smelser and Rainer Zittelmann (New York: New York University Press,

1993), 21. Over the years, however, he began to lose power, especially since his policies turned out to reduce the efficiency of agricultural output, and he was forced to surrender his office in 1942; see Ritschl, "Wirtschaftspolitik im Dritten Reich," 127.

6. Letter from Darré to Edgar Jung from March 4, 1928; quoted after Gustavo Corni and Horst Gies, *Blut und Boden: Rassenideologie und Agrarpolitik im Staat Hitlers* (Idstein: Schulz-Kirchner, 1994), 68.
7. On Darré's blood-and-soil ideology, see Clifford R. Lovin, "Blut und Boden: The Ideological Basis of the Nazi Agricultural Program," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28, no. 2 (June 1967): 279–88. For a more general treatment of the term, and its history before and after Nazi Germany, see Anna Bramwell, "Blut und Boden," in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, ed. Etienne Francois and Hagen Schulze, vol. 3 (Munich: Beck, 2001), 380–91. Of course, Darré and his fellow blood-and-soil ideologues were not unique in making such a connection between the fate of a nation and its peasantry. Nationalist discourses that celebrated the rural people and folk culture and dreamed about a return to the land had been prevalent in Europe since the Romantic era of the eighteenth century and can be traced back to thinkers such as Rousseau and Herder, as can the fear that civilization is a threat to primordial values that are only to be found persisting in the rural sphere. In the twentieth century's interwar period such fears became very prominent in Europe, as Mark Mazower points out: "a deep-rooted ambivalence could be encountered across Europe about the social and biological consequences of urbanization. […] [A]s the political outlook in Europe darkened, this public love affair with an idealized countryside intensified. Across the continent, the modernist idiom of the 1920s […] gave way in the arts to a more nationalist concern with the organic and with life close to nature. Rationalism was replaced by an emphasis on the instinctual, individualism by the tribal and communal life, the brain by the body;" Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 92–94. Although part of a broader trend, Darré's version of this general motif, however, acquired its uniqueness and violent viciousness by his linking it to biological racism. This racism assumed German-Aryan superiority, and that this superiority needed to be

realized through the extermination of others and through expansion into new living spaces, thus giving the German "blood" more "soil" to prosper in and rule over. For a more detailed discussion on how the Nazi blood-and-soil ideology set the ground for the regime's genocidal mass killings, see Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

8. Another element of KdF's activities that "internally" targeted Germans was its sports and other physical activities directed at people's bodies, which is discussed in Chap. 2.
9. Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866–1918* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1990), 199.
10. Corni and Gies, *Blut und Boden*, 50f.
11. For a brief example of a Nazi analysis of the causes and consequences of the flight from the land in Germany, see Hans Bach, *Vom Dorf zum Volk: Behelf für die weltanschauliche Schulung des Bauerntums* (Reichsnährstand-Verlag, 1940), 68–71.
12. See Corni and Gies, *Blut und Boden*, 226.
13. Some of this lack of motivation may be attributed to a lack of means to remedy economic problems.
14. In a text jointly written by Ley and Darré regarding KdF's leisure-time work in the countryside from 1937, the authors argued that German peasants had been deprived in the past, in a period vaguely described as that of the "class struggle," from any of the cultural wealth Germany had produced. This diagnosis was very similar to that frequently presented by KdF propaganda with regard to the situation of German workers.

    The aforementioned directive by Martin Bormann, too, considered "cultural work" [*Kulturarbeit*] as the necessary step against the flight from the land. In his directive, Bormann calls for a reinforced effort by all representatives in the villages and districts in the realm of culture. Identifying the "cultural life in the village as one of the most important political management tools," he orders: "It must be the goal, next to cultural events which are brought from outside, to awaken the numerous self-forces of the village […] and to use them in an appropriate organizational form under the direct influence of the party as a means of political leadership for our events and celebrations. This will not only deepen the rootedness of the farmers and farm laborers within their vil-

lage community, but will also counteract in an ideological respect party-hostile influences, which particularly in the countryside impede the political implementation of National Socialism;" BArch NS 6/821, page 118, *Reichsverfügungsblatt der NSDAP* from September 9, 1941, Anordnung A 40/41.

15. A similar argument can be found in an article from May 25, 1938 in the newspaper *Hannoversches Tageblatt*, summarizing a meeting of the working group "The Beautiful Village" Gau South-Hanover-Brunswick; NHStA, Nds. 120 Hannover Acc. 58/65 Nr. 126.
16. Ley and Darré clarified that such attempts to "culturally conserve and revive the village" would also be fruitful and profitable for Germany as a whole. Here we see again how this concern about *Landflucht* was connected to the blood-and-soil idea that "the village [w]as the people's eternal fountain of youth"; BArch R 4902/6329, page 19, "K.d.F. übernimmt Feierabendgestaltung auf dem Lande," *Nationalsozialistische Landzeitung,* March 19, 1937. Thus, any improvement to the village and the joy and strength of the villagers would eventually spread out to benefit the entire Reich.
17. Officially, KdF did not start its work in the countryside until 1937, when a decree by Darré on March 13 of that year, followed by a directive which Ley issued five days later, on March 18, led to each *Gau*'s KdF assigning one of their employees to the *Sonderaufgabe Landbetreuung* ["special task of taking care of the countryside"]; BArch NS 22/782; directive by Robert Ley from March 18, 1937. From that point, KdF's work in the countryside became administratively part of its Leisure Time Department. Even before 1937, however, some of KdF's departments had been active in the countryside—we will encounter examples of such activity in the following pages. This speaks to the polycratic character of Nazi Germany, a polycracy that also seems to have been instantiated in the leisure organization. Regional differentiations and competition between KdF's sub-departments led to non-linear, parallel chronologies.
18. BArch NS 22/782; directive by Robert Ley from Mar. 18, 1937. KdF's organizing of "*Dorfgemeinschaftsabende*" in each rural district was ordered directly by Robert Ley for the first month of the organization's program, that is, April 1937. For April 1937, Ley

also announced a two-to-three-day workshop for KdF organizers active in the rural areas, in which the aims and procedures of KdF's work in the countryside would be further explained.

19. Ludwig Caps, "Der Dorfgemeinschaftsabend: Unser Volk im Lebenskampf des deutschen Volkes," in *Dorfbuch und Dorfabende im Kriege*, ed. Hans Lorenzen (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1940), 9ff.
20. Ibid.
21. BArch NS 22/755, "Richtlinien für die Volksbildungsarbeit auf dem Lande" from March 25, 1935. As ceremonies rather than parties, the village community evenings seem to have had a rather different emphasis than typical factory comradeship evenings, which seem to have been more like parties (see note 23). That the village evenings were to be distinctly *völkisch* is the same concern we saw above that village life not be distorted by urban influences; but that the villagers were supposed to be solemn and ceremonial shows that their special relation to *Blut und Boden* was not necessarily without burdensome consequences.
22. Ibid.
23. This deprecation of smoking and drinking may be related to the special status accorded to village life by blood-and-soil ideology, but it may also have been a practical concern related to incidents that had occurred at comradeship evenings in factories, as discussed in Chap. 3.
24. More specifically, KdF aimed to edify the villagers with the spirit of patriotism, Nazi ideology, and Germany's history and cultural riches; BArch NS 22/755, "Richtlinien für die Volksbildungsarbeit auf dem Lande" from March 25, 1935.
25. Hirschfeld, *Die Betreuung des Dorfes*, 20.
26. The illustration used to explain charades is curiously, of all imaginable words, "liberalism." The text proposed acting out the German term "*Liberalismus*" using three images: "*Lieber*" [dear], "*Aal*" [eel], and "*is Mus*" [literally "is mush," meaning is worthless/stupid.]
27. Hirschfeld, *Die Betreuung des Dorfes*, 93. Among the suggested songs, an interesting choice is the traditional tune "Die Gedanken sind frei" ["Thoughts Are Free"], a song celebrating the freedom of thought—see the previous note for a similar irony. On the other hand, another of the suggested folk songs, "Froh zu sein

bedarf es wenig" ["Not Much Is Needed to Be Happy"], could be a theme song for KdF.

28. Of course, it is important to clarify that the discussion in this paragraph is based on KdF writings of how the organization wanted the village community evenings to run. That is, this is a discussion of what KdF wished to achieve, not necessarily of what it actually did. But the more serious community evening programs described above were also desiderata, and we cannot be sure that the evenings were ever implemented as such. Indeed, the later descriptions—both because they are presumably "evolved" from attempts to run the earlier evenings, and by their nature—seem more likely to have occurred, and to have attracted more people.
29. Hirschfeld, *Die Betreuung des Dorfes*, 89. On the regime's wider rejection of "kitsch," see Natalia Skradol, "Fascism and Kitsch: The Nazi Campaign against Kitsch," *German Studies Review* 34, no. 3 (2011): 595–612.
30. This may have to do with the fact that KdF saw less necessity to be restrained about this than in the urban context (see note 4 above). Conversely, it also suggests the urgency of the need to "civilize" the countryside's population that KdF detected.
31. Of course, amateur participation was also fostered in other contexts; as Chap. 3 has discussed, KdF was quite active in promoting workers' amateur art production, ranging from theatrical performances to paintings that would be displayed in art exhibitions in the factories. A prominent amateur component of KdF's "joy production" in regard to active participation by large groups of people together was singing. The setting up of choirs was advertised in villages, but also in factories, where it was labelled "*Werksingen*" ["Factory Singing"]; see Karl Busch, *Unter dem Sonnenrad* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1938), 148.
32. Hirschfeld, *Die Betreuung des Dorfes*, 89. Of course, in addition to such programmatic hopes, there was also a more pragmatic reason for KdF organizers to embrace amateur plays. This has to do with the plays' practicability and their advantage of being rather cheap in comparison to professionally staged performances. Quite similar economic and practical concerns also led KdF to make an effort to popularize puppet shows in the countryside. It seems, however, that this endeavor was not very successful; see

ibid., 161. For information on (the non-enthusiastic) reception of puppet shows; see reports on KdF's rural work from the *Gaus* of East-Hanover and Westphalia-North; ibid., 55.

33. Here, I do not so much mean that the villagers were meant to become convinced of Nazi ideology as such, but rather that they were to come to appreciate the value of their own lives in the countryside. Of course, this was consonant with blood-and-soil's ideological construction of the German peasant, but there is a more immediate construal: given KdF's focus on "joy production", the villagers were supposed ultimately to encounter joy rather than, say, existential perplexity through their artistic presentation—an encounter that would then have the beneficial practical effect of helping keep them on the land.
34. StA WF, 127 Neu Nr. 4722; manuscript "Von der Aufgabe und vom Wesen der Dorfgemeinschaftsarbeit," 21.
35. Just to clarify, although the emphasis of this chapter's analysis so far has been the village community evenings, these events were not the only form of cultural programming offered by KdF. Other events were quite similar, or even exactly the same, as those run in the cities (even though KdF saw this as a potential problem, as discussed above). For a more detailed description of these "joy production" undertakings, see Chap. 3.
36. Ibid.
37. StA WF, 127 Neu Nr. 4722; section "Sonstige Veranstaltungen auf dem Lande" from manuscript "Von der Aufgabe und vom Wesen der Dorfgemeinschafsarbeit," 16–19.
38. Hans Lorenzen, *Dorfbuch und Dorfabend im Kriege* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1940), 5.
39. Ibid. Such information was to be delivered by soldiers vacationing at home (in the villages), by reading aloud Wehrmacht reports and letters from the front, and by collectively tracing war developments on maps. Additionally, village community evenings could include the screening of a movie about issues relating to the army.
40. BArch NS 25/1291; Hans Lorenzen, *Das Dorfbuch als Grundlage dörflicher Erziehung und Volksbildung.*
41. BArch R 36/2379; *Das Dorfbuch als Mittelpunkt des dörflichen Lebens* [brochure].
42. For example, the book was to address the village's situation in several historical epochs, such as the period of Charlemagne's

rule, of the First and Second Empires, and so on; the book was to discuss the village's economic situation and its geography, including its location in regard to rivers, and to thoroughfares from medieval trade routes to the newly-built *Autobahn* system. The guidelines also reveal the influence of Nazi ideology in their clear expression of the idea that the German people had always lived under a state of permanent threat from foreign entities. Thus, for example, Franconian villagers were explicitly asked to describe their village's history during the times of the Magyar attacks and in the periods of occupation by foreign armies during the Thirty Years' War and the Napoleonic era. Additionally, the guidelines included a suggestion to make entries in the book on the topic "Jews are settling! Disappearing again after 1933"; Deutsches Volksbildungswerk Gau Mainfranken, ed., *Rüstzeug zur Kulturarbeit auf dem Lande* (Würzburg, 1939), 37.

43. A KdF brochure explained: "The peasant must feel that what is written there is written especially for him in the language of his surroundings […]"; BArch R 36/ 2379, *Das Dorfbuch als Mittelpunkt des dörflichen Lebens.*
44. Village books, KdF suggested, could also become part of village community evenings, or form the basis for an exhibition in the village about itself.
45. BArch NS 25/1291, page 15; Anton Link, *Das Dorfbuch als Führungsmittel im Kriege.*
46. Ibid, page 16. This communication from the front to the village, gathered in the *Dorfbuch* was complemented in the other direction by the so-called *Heimatbrief* (Letter from the Homeland), a letter sent by local Nazi party authorities to a village's soldiers on the front, reporting on the situation of their home village or village district; see BArch NS 25/1291, page 16, Anton Link, *Das Dorfbuch als Führungsmittel im Kriege* and Lorenzen, *Dorfbuch und Dorfabend im Kriege*, 8.
47. There is another aspect of the *Dorfbücher* and the *Heimatbriefe* (see previous note) that should not be ignored. KdF publications emphasize that a crucial benefit of these writings was the "objective" style of their descriptions of events at home, an objectivity that did not have the same potential to disturb soldiers' morale as private letters that might "sometimes in individual cases [contain] descriptions of inadequacies" (ibid., 7). Such statements reveal

the Nazi party's attempt to control the information given to the soldiers about the situation in the villages and, not surprisingly, problematize the type of communication that these documents were meant to achieve. The irony is probably inevitable that "objectivity" was hardly ever going to be a large part of the *Dorfbücher*'s, and thence the *Heimatbriefe*'s, "producing" of the stories of the villages.

48. Bruno Malitz, "Das Problem der Werkdorfkameradschaft: Schönheit des Dorfes – Freizeitsstätten und Sportplätze," *Arbeitertum*, November 15, 1938, 9.
49. Here, Malitz is assuming that the company or factory would provide support for its employees' holidays, as promoted by KdF.
50. Indeed, it was intended that factory managers would participate directly in the village beautification workgroups.
51. Bruno Malitz, "Das Problem der Werkdorfkameradschaft: Schönheit des Dorfes – Freizeitsstätten und Sportplätze," *Arbeitertum*, Nov. 15, 1938, 9.
52. BArch NS 22/553, *Völkischer Beobachter*, December 1, 1940.
53. StA WF, 128 Neu 162; letter from the KdF-Department "Beauty of Labor," Gau working group "The Beautiful Village" to the German Community Council [*Deutscher Gemeindetag*], Braunschweig, January 11, 1938.
54. Otto Marrenbach, *Grundlagen der deutschen Sozialordnung: die Gesamtarbeit der Deutschen Arbeitsfront* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 1942), 133.
55. Deutsches Volksbildungswerk Gau Mainfranken, *Rüstzeug zur Kulturarbeit auf dem Lande*.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. On Nazi resettlement policy, see Robert Koehl, *R.K.F.D.V.: German Resettlement and Population Policy, 1939–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957); Rolf-Dieter Müller, *Hitlers Ostkrieg und die deutsche Siedlungspolitik: Die Zusammenarbeit von Wehrmacht, Wirtschaft und SS*, (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1991); Bruno Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung im Osten* (Birkhäuser, 1993); Czesław Madajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan* (Munich/New Providence: Saur, 1994); Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut: das Rasse-und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die*

rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003); Ihor Kamenetsky, *Secret Nazi Plans for Eastern Europe; a Study of Lebensraum Policies* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1961); and Uwe Mai, *"Rasse und Raum": Agrarpolitik, Sozial- und Raumplanung im NS-Staat* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002). For a discussion of specifically agriculture-oriented planning, see Michael Hartenstein, *Neue Dorflandschaften: Nationalsozialistische Siedlungsplanung in den "eingegliederten Ostgebieten" 1939 bis 1944* (Berlin: Köster, 1998). For plans for the settlement of German farmers in the Western occupied zones, see Hans Schaefer, *Bürckels Bauernsiedlung : Nationalsozialistische Siedlungspolitik in Lothringen während der "verschleierten" Annexion 1940–1944* (Saarbrücken: Pirrot, 1997). For similar Nazi plans about re-settlement of German farmers within Germany, as part of a program of "internal colonization," see Jan Smit, *Neubildung deutschen Bauerntums: Innere Kolonisation im Dritten Reich: Fallstudien in Schleswig-Holstein* (Kassel: Gesamthochschulbibliothek, 1983).

59. Müller, *Hitlers Ostkrieg und die deutsche Siedlungspolitik*, 83. Similarly to other areas in the Third Reich, charge of the settlement policies was the subject of a polycratic struggle. The division of the German Labor Front that was directly involved here was its *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Insititut* [Labor Science Institute]; I could not find any evidence that KdF was also involved in this area of settlement planning.
60. "Allgemeine Anordnung Nr. 7/11 des Reichsführers SS Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums," November 26, 1940, "Grundsätze und Richtlinien für den ländlichen Aufbau in den neuen Ostgebieten"; cited from Hartenstein, *Neue Dorflandschaften*, 95.
61. Madajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan*, 24f.
62. Fritz Arlt, Siedlung und Landwirtschaft in den eingegliederten Gebieten Oberschlesiens (Berlin: Deutsche Landbuchhandlung Sohnrey, 1942), 55. From 1940 on, Arlt was Himmler's RKFDV representative for Upper-Silesia; see Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 102ff.

KdF may also have been utilized in quite another way in the occupied areas of the East. KdF's travel program brought Germans to

explore these newly acquired territories in order to display the "backwardness" of this territory and concomitant necessity for the Nazi authorities to "civilize" them. In the words of Gerhard Ziegler, a Nazi settlement planner in Silesia: "One could see in Silesia, like nowhere else in the Reich, the almost incredible decline of civilization from this German cultivated landscape to the Polish one. One should actually bring half of the people once on a KdF trip from West to East, on a route of not much more than 100 kilometers, that is, approximately from the branches of the Altvatergebirge (High Ash Mountains) to Bendzin. On such a trip, almost no words would be required to make clear to everyone the difference between the German and the Polish organization of space. This is where one automatically understands what kind of task we will face when reforming the Eastern territories into German areas"; cited in Hartenstein, *Neue Dorflandschaften*, 32. While KdF trips to Silesia certainly took place, I could find no evidence that they were ever explicitly designed after the manner suggested by Ziegler.

63. "Gau Südhannover-Braunschweig: Musterdörfer wurden eingeweiht. Die Dorfverschönerungsaktion der NSG 'Kraft durch Freude' in vollem Gange," *Arbeitertum*, Sep. 15, 1936, 25. According to the article, alongside KdF, the German Labor Front, the *Reichsnährstand* (Reich Food Office,) the *Reich Arbeitsdienst* [Reich Labor Service], and the *Technische Nothilfe* [Emergency Technical Help] were involved in this campaign.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. StA WF, 127 Neu Nr. 4722; KdF directive from Mar. 17, 1935.
67. Letter from Landrat Kühn from April 15, 1936, reproduced in Herbert Steinwarz, ed., *Wesen, Aufgaben, Ziele des Amtes "Schönheit der Arbeit": Veröffentlichungen des Amtes "Schönheit der Arbeit," 1934–1937* (Berlin, 1937), 117–120.
68. A 1935 KdF decree issued in Braunschweig stated that the organization was neither able nor allowed to provide any cash to the villagers to fund their efforts; StA WF, 127 Neu Nr. 4722; KdF directive from March 17, 1935.
69. HA Hann. 180 Hannover b. Nr. 231, "Keine verniedlichten Dörfer, bitte! Tagung der Gauarbeitsgemeinschaft 'Das schöne Dorf'," in *Hannoversches Tageblatt* from Dec. 8, 1938

70. BArch NS 22/551, "Die Dörfer werden schöner" in *KdF Monatsheft der Gau Süd-Hannover-Braunschweig*, January/February 1939.
71. Blood-and-soil ideology, as propounded by Richard Darré in particular, is discussed above.
72. In a KdF brochure on the organization's work in the countryside, this was summarized by stating that it was KdF's task to establish "the clean and life-enjoying [*lebensfrohe*] village, where a lively and outgoing village community lives"; Hirschfeld, *Die Betreuung des Dorfes*, 30.
73. Name of interviewee known to author, but omitted in accord with anonymization regulations.
74. Interview from March 22, 1985, conducted by Rainer Potratz; transcript at Archiv "Deutsches Gedächtnis," Lüdenscheid, Germany.

    Beauty of Labor's involvement in planting flowers also emerges as a central theme in post-war interviews conducted among workers of the Bremen shipyard Vulkan. Several workers who were employed at Vulkan during the Third Reich recognize a flower bed in a contemporary picture that they were shown by the interviewer Waltraud Markgraf, and they attribute its existence to Beauty of Labor; one interviewee also mentions that the department planted several small trees next to Vulkan's foundry; Waltraud Markgraf: "'Schönheit der Arbeit'?: Interviews zur Geschichte. Der Bremer Vulkan in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus.," in *Bremer Großwerften im Dritten Reich*, ed. Peter Kuckuk, Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte Bremens; 15 (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1993), 165f.
75. Marrenbach, *Grundlagen der deutschen Sozialordnung*, 80. See also Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 57. Among his other responsibilities, Speer was in fact nominally the head of KdF's Beauty of Labor department. In the referenced passage from his memoirs, he recalls with some pride the department's manufacturing of "well-shaped flatware [cutlery]" and "sturdy furniture" to be used in German factories.
76. Marrenbach, *Grundlagen der deutschen Sozialordnung*, 81.
77. August Piontek: "'Kraft durch Freude' auf dem Vormarsch: 'Schönheit der Arbeit' mit neuen Plänen," *Arbeitertum*, Feb. 15,

1938, 4. This statistic also included KdF-built holiday homes for workers. The 600 million Reichsmark paid for "20,741 workrooms, 13,122 maintenance areas and parks, 15,595 cafeterias and lounges, 20,455 security complexes and dressing rooms, 2,557 community houses and holiday homes, 2,107 sports facilities"; Busch, *Unter dem Sonnenrad*, 76f. Timothy Mason cites a sum of over 200 million Reichsmark spent by German companies on Beauty of Labor–related investments up to 1938; Timothy Mason, *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich: Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1977), 188 and 252.

78. Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 57.
79. Anatol von Hübbenet, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Aufbau und Arbeit* (Berlin: NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude," 1939), 24.
80. Ibid., 23.
81. Anson G. Rabinbach, "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich," 66. Rabinbach stresses that KdF, although it approved of the productivity gains that efficient work procedures could achieve, seemed to genuinely wish to transcend the bare technologization of Taylorism and restore a humane aspect to the workplace.
82. For a quick overview, see Anson G. Rabinbach, "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich," 45. The campaigns are discussed in length in Friemert, *Produktionästhetik im Faschismus*, 118–254.
83. "In den Betrieben wird das Licht gemessen: Der Arbeitsplatz bekommt besseres Licht," *Arbeitertum*, Nov. 1, 1935, 21.
84. Ibid. See also Friemert, *Produktionästhetik im Faschismus*, 146–175.
85. Ibid., 185.
86. Bruno Malitz, "Die neue Aktion des Amtes 'Schönheit der Arbeit' braucht die Mithilfe aller: Es wird ausgelüftet!," *Arbeitertum*, September 1, 1937, 19.
87. Ibid.
88. See Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy*, 80; Ronald M. Smelser, *Robert Ley: Hitler's Labor Front Leader* (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 215.
89. Joachim Drews, *Die "Nazi-Bohne": Anbau, Verwendung und Auswirkung der Sojabohne im Deutschen Reich und Südosteuropa; (1933–1945)* (Münster: LIT, 2004), 155.

90. On Beauty of Labor's "PR campaign," see Marrenbach, *Grundlagen der deutschen Sozialordnung*, 79. For a short analysis of articles in Beauty of Labor's magazine *Schönheit der Arbeit*, which began publication in May 1936, see Wolfgang Eggerstorfer, *Schönheit und Adel der Arbeit: Arbeitsliteratur im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1988), 162–178.
91. W. Krause: "Propaganda statt Paragraphen." Sonderschau des Amtes "Schönheit des Amtes "Schönheit der Arbeit," Arbeitertum, Dec. 15, 1935, 21.
92. Ibid.
93. In fact, the titles of almost all the Beauty of Labor documentaries are rather direct and simple. It is generally unusual, of course, to give complex titles to films, even documentaries, but this simplicity may also support a certain idea in Beauty of Labor's publicity that its initiatives were no more than "common sense" (and contrasts interestingly with the typical contortions of much Nazi writing, including texts produced by KdF).
94. Deutsches Volksbildungswerk, *Kulturfilm-Verzeichnis* (Berlin, 1942.)
95. "Reichstagung 'Schönheit der Arbeit'," *Arbeitertum*, Oct. 15, 1936, 23.
96. Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude'," 78.
97. Hübbenet, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Aufbau und Arbeit*, 23.
98. Smelser, *Robert Ley*, 214.
99. Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 57.
100. Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy*, 110.
101. Buchholz, "Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude'," 79.
102. Anatol Hübbenet, *Das Taschenbuch Schönheit der Arbeit* (Berlin: Amt "Schönheit der Arbeit," 1938), 80f.
103. W. Krause: "Propaganda statt Paragraphen." Sonderschau des Amtes "Schönheit der Arbeit," *Arbeitertum*, Dec. 15, 1936, 21.
104. Hübbenet, *Die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Aufbau und Arbeit*, 25. The title page of a 1939 *Arbeitertum* magazine displayed the successes of these ("voluntary") cleaning activities: it depicts a factory yard where men and women relax on benches in a terrace-like, leafy area decorated with potted plants and

shrubs. Beauty of Labor had redesigned this yard, probably with the support of the factory's workers, for *Arbeitertum* as proof that "much can be achieved with little means"; *Arbeitertum*, September 1, 1939, title page.

105. Ibid., 93.

106. KdF publication "Sauberkeit und Ehre gehören zusammen," cited from Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy*, 92.

107. The creation by the Nazi regime of the German Labor Front, and thence of KdF, to replace the trade unions that it had dissolved acknowledged an existing gap to be filled.

108. It is important to highlight the propagandistic nature of such bathroom images, which appeared again and again in KdF publications. KdF certainly wanted to set up bathrooms, in pursuit of its "cleaning agenda," and the centrality of this goal is underlined by the ubiquity of these images. However, the images more represent an agenda than a reality. This becomes particularly clear in the interviews conducted by Waltraud Markgraf with workers who were employed at the shipyard Vulkan in Bremen during the Third Reich. Presented by Markgraf with images of Beauty of Labor sponsored wash- and bathrooms at Vulkan from 1937 and 1938, several of her interviewees do not remember the facilities and deny that they had access to such bathrooms, speculating that they must have been for white collar workers only. As one interviewee puts it: "These washrooms, they were for the upper crust [only]." Markgraf, "'Schönheit der Arbeit'?," 166–169.

109. Anson G. Rabinbach, "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich," 59.

110. Horst Dreßler-Andreß, *Drei Jahre Nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude": Ziele und Leistungen* (Berlin, 1936.) [Text partly in English.]

111. Boaz Neumann, "The National Socialist Politics of Life," *New German Critique* 85 (2002): 111. In fact, there is an uncanny similarity between the discourse around KdF and that around (early) concentration camps. For example, a 1936 article on Dachau used adjectives like "clean," "immaculate," and "orderly" to describe the living and working conditions of the inmates—these words could have been in a KdF brochure; "Konzentrationslager Dachau," *Illustierter Beobachter*, December 3, 1936; see also Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses*

of a Concentration Camp, 1933–2001 (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 28. The cover illustration for the article is reproduced as figure 12 in Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 78.

112. Alf Lüdtke has pointed to this relation in his analysis of letters from the front that were sent by workers-turned-soldiers to their former employers. Lüdtke shows that the worker's previous obligation to be clean and to work cleanly had been carried over into their behavior as soldiers in combat. Lüdtke argues that "To these people, their original claim to perform a 'clean' job at home increasingly became linked to the efficient killing operations of the army. In the end, participation in the extermination of 'others' might appear to many as the ultimate fulfillment of those cherished notions of 'German quality work';" Alf Lüdtke, "The Appeal of Exterminating 'Others': German Workers and the Limits of Resistance," *The Journal of Modern History* 64 (December 1, 1992): 66f.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

In 2009, the German neo-Nazi party NPD went public with their plans to open a KdF-museum in an abandoned furniture store in Wolfsburg, Lower Saxony.[1] This site was of great symbolic significance. The city of Wolfsburg is home to the headquarters of the Volkswagen company, and, in fact, both company and town had been founded together by the Nazis in 1938. The entire undertaking ran under the aegis of the German Labor Front. The newly established town was called "Stadt des KdF-Wagens" ["City of the KdF Car"] during the Third Reich, this name being an explicit reference to Volkswagen's prestige project, the construction of the so-called "KdF car," the predecessor to the VW Beetle.[2] The building in which, in 2009, the NPD envisioned creating the new museum was located quite prominently, close to the main Volkswagen plant. While the scheme never came to fruition,[3] it caused much dismay and provoked significant public protest. This plan and the reactions to it show, first, on the most basic level, how much KdF is still remembered in Germany. Second, the decision of the neo-Nazi party to commemorate KdF in a museum highlights how the leisure organization's work continues to be seen as a "positive" achievement of the Third Reich.[4] For the NPD, a museum commemorating KdF would have been an ideal way to celebrate the larger Third Reich and especially its "achievements" in the field of social politics; the party may have been able to use the museum as a way to "win over" today's Germans to their political and ideological platform. Equally, those protesting against

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the museum may also have been worried, not just about this manifestation of neo-Nazism, but specifically about the potential "advertising power" of KdF, precisely because they too might in fact have considered KdF to have been a somewhat positive element of what was overall a criminal and mass-murderous regime. In other words, both in the plans for, and counter-reactions to, the museum, we can discern a certain consensus about the powerful propagandistic effect of the KdF "brand"—a power that seems still to endure (at least the NPD appear to think so, and the protesters against the museum may have also feared this).[5]

Let me be clear that this book's focus on "joy production" is not intended to give any credence to potential perceptions that KdF was a good thing. We should not be tempted to think of it as a distinct, positive element of an otherwise horrendous regime. Rather, it was an integral part of that regime. Its primary motivation was the furthering of the central goal of Nazi ideology, namely the building of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. However, much of what KdF did and wanted to do—as well as much of what it propagandized— made appeal to ideas and aspirations that, on face value, could be considered positive or good: what, after all, is bad about building pleasant break rooms, or encouraging fun physical fitness? In fact, many aspects of the "joy production" described in this book might still sound appealing to us today. But crucially, of course, KdF's goals were always embedded in the overall goals of the Third Reich. This point goes beyond the simple observation that KdF was an organization set up and run by the Nazis. In fact, rather than noticing that KdF's goals were embedded in those of the Third Reich, we might almost assert that the goals of the Third Reich were embedded in those of KdF. The interest in "joy production" was not unique to KdF because ensuring German (Aryan) happiness was the core agenda of the Nazi regime.

What this "joy production" consisted of has been the question that this book has tried to answer through examining the plans, practices, and propaganda of the leisure organization *Kraft durch Freude*. Overall, I have stressed that all KdF's activities—across sports, culture, troop entertainment, and beautifying villages or designing industrial workspaces—were dominated by the agenda of bringing everyday joy to "Aryan" Germans. This "joy production" was also part of the fostering of the Nazi-envisioned *Volksgemeinschaft*. I have described how, in order to pursue these interconnected goals, KdF engaged in a very large variety of activities and programs.

I also showed that, in some regards, KdF's favoring of "joy production" and attempting to please its audiences in order to help foster the "racial community" led to its "sacrificing" other objectives to which the leisure

organization or other parts of the Nazi regime subscribed.[6] For example, in the area of sports, KdF chose to focus on easy, accessible and, if possible, amusing fitness exercises. Instead of promoting exercising in the expectation of creating high levels of sporting performance, KdF's sports activities were conducted in a rather playful manner, with a focus on fun, and on collective experiences of joy. Another example, in the area of the arts, was what happened to KdF's goal of "bringing culture to the people," motivated by the idea of making "high-brow" performances and works of arts accessible to Germans, especially members of the working class, who had previously not had much contact with these worlds. While I discussed how KdF did adhere to this goal by running factory art exhibitions or by hosting the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, I also showed that in many (or most) instances the organization tended to prioritize performances that would be rather difficult to categorize as "high-brow." The types of shows KdF put on came to be dominated more and more by vaudevillian-style acrobatics and songs or populist comedies.

One consequence of KdF's predominantly favoring this particular form of "joy production" was that the organization received a lot of criticism; I have examined some of these criticisms at length, including harsh judgments of KdF for low standards of performance, for underdressed female performers, and for excessive dirty jokes. I have also shown that KdF was quite a flexible organization. This flexibility makes it even more remarkable that KdF's reaction to all these criticisms from many different directions seems to have been, quite stubbornly, not to address them at all in its programming. I have suggested that this speaks very strongly to the organization's commitment to "joy production", even as it transformed the meaning of "joy production" compared to what some other perspectives within the Third Reich might have preferred.

When looking at criticisms of KdF, it is important not to lose sight of the origin of some of this censure in what might be called the turf wars of Nazi (cultural) politics. KdF's mandate as the overall provider of leisure, recreation, and entertainment in Nazi Germany and for the Wehrmacht was contested. Other Nazi actors and institutions that were also active in the field of cultural politics, most particularly two bodies headed by Joseph Goebbels, the Ministry of Enlightenment and Propaganda and the Reich Culture Chamber,[7] as well as Alfred Rosenberg's *Nationalsozialistische Kulturgemeinde* [National Socialist Culture Community] constantly sought to take over sectors of KdF's work. One prominent area in which these rivalries and contestations were very apparent was, as this book has discussed, that of troop entertainment.[8]

In regard to KdF's "joy production", be it in the spheres of sports, culture, or beautification of work and living spaces, another salient characteristic was a tendency, on the face of it, to eschew any directly political, National Socialist content. This trait was clearly a consequence of the leisure organization's principal orientation towards German workers. As KdF's programmers acted from the assumption that many workers might have political allegiances with socialist milieus, a rather "apolitical" tone was established at KdF's leisure events, in an attempt to ensure that this clientele would not be driven away.

But of course, it would be overly simplistic—and dangerously mistaken—to assert that KdF's "joy production" was devoid of politics and Nazi ideology. Again, as this book has shown, KdF was centrally concerned with creating and strengthening the *Volksgemeinschaft*, a mainstay of Nazi ideology. Through its "joy production" for Aryan Germans, it thus occupied a place at the center of the Third Reich's ideologically driven politics. Crucially, KdF's approach was to include Germans in the *practices* of the *Volksgemeinschaft* through (voluntary, joyful) participation, rather than involving them in a more "intellectual" or abstract discourse. In that regard KdF's activities channeled the *Volksgemeinschaft*'s (supposed) power to ensure the "emotional bonding" of Germans to the regime. In other words, KdF was very important in the *Volksgemeinschaft* discourse, not only because it promised a "golden future," but also because it was already (partially) enacting it.[9]

Reaffirming the centrality of KdF's goals to Nazi ideology, in particular the *Volksgemeinschaft*, also dispels another possible reading of the organization's role in the regime. This is the reading of KdF as a mechanism for distracting Germans from the "true face" of the regime. This reading would suggest that some of KdF's activities had genuinely "positive" or "appealing" effects, but that these only existed as ways to disguise more sinister goals or even to manipulate people into participating in the regime's furthering of these sinister goals. This reading of KdF was already extant during the Third Reich: recall the assessment I cited above from a 1935 Sopade report that "KdF distracts [and] helps with setting up a smoke-screen for the brains."[10] It has also been posited by subsequent historians, who have seen the organization as a tool of the regime's larger ambition to set up a "*schöne Schein*" or "beautiful appearance" in order to appease or even win over the German people.[11]

Given the claim that KdF was integral to the Nazi regime, what can be said about its relation to the Holocaust? KdF as an organization was

not involved in the murders of the Holocaust. In this book I have shown, however, that KdF did provide entertainment for camp personnel—even inside the camps—and in that sense, the organization was involved in the mass killings by providing recreation for the perpetrators. Indeed, it could be argued that providing the perpetrators with experiences of joy in their leisure time may have contributed to their capacity to "efficiently" fulfill their part in the "Final Solution". More generally, KdF clearly saw itself as providing strength to the German people for the war effort.[12]

While there was, in regards to its activities, a certain distance between KdF and the perpetration of the Holocaust, there is closer link when it comes to the context of the Holocaust. KdF's "joy production" was intended to create and strengthen the *Volksgemeinschaft*. But conversely, access to KdF's "joy production" was limited to those whom the Nazis considered members of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Indeed, the very definition of *Volksgemeinschaft* was based on inclusion and exclusion. It was this exclusionary politics that lay at the core of the Holocaust. KdF's very central concern to enable the *Volksgemeinschaft* thus connects its intentions and practices quite directly to the Holocaust.

On the face of this politics of inclusion and exclusion, however, it might conceivably be maintained that KdF was more involved with the inclusive aspects of *Volksgemeinschaft* than with exclusionary politics (even though this inclusion already implied exclusion of others). Indeed, as this book has shown, the organization's myriad initiatives were eager to have people actively participate in KdF's events and include themselves in its activities. This participation was then supposed to create the emotional bonding of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The active and the joyful characteristics of the envisioned participation are both especially important. Briefly put, KdF was helping Germans practice being members of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, to the extent, as noted a few paragraphs ago, that KdF was already constituting the realization of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Thus, it is imaginable that for some Germans, actively practicing at being members of the *Volksgemeinschaft* might have led to feelings of actual membership. But then it is also imaginable that this sense of active membership, acquired with KdF in the context of leisure, could then have extended to other practices in which the Nazi regime needed Germans to participate.

Alongside the sinister potential of KdF's inclusionary project, mechanisms of exclusion were also embedded in the organization's inclusionary practices. This is most clearly identifiable in the discussion of the spatial component of KdF's "joy production" and its agenda to beautify Germans'

living and work spaces, as discussed in Chapter 5, where I explored Beauty of Labor's initiative to clean workers. This cleansing not only pertained to physical dirt, it also had a moral component. In fact, this discourse of cleansing dirty workers—and of teaching them to cleanse themselves—is very much related to discourses around early concentration camps in Germany. In these camps of the prewar years, "Community Aliens," that is individuals whom the Nazis believed to be outside the *Volksgemeinschaft*,[13] were to be re-educated, that is, cleaned of polluted ideas or values. A 1936 article in the magazine *Illustrierter Beobachter* reported on this effort. This text is uncannily similar to KdF's writing on its work in factories. Words like "clean," "immaculate" and "orderly" were used to describe the living and working conditions of the inmates in Dachau.[14] This rhetoric echoes that of KdF's brochures almost exactly.

Of course, we should not forget that there are important differences between the practices and populations of early concentration camps and the wartime camps. In later camps, the notion of re-education was ever more overshadowed by the idea of extermination. Nor was cleaning/re-educating as a way to include people into the *Volksgemeinschaft* even a possibility for many of the inmates of the wartime concentration camps, given Nazism's racial belief system. The Nazis did not want to re-educate but to exterminate. This was another form of cleansing, the cleansing of the German *Lebensraum*. The mindset that KdF had already promoted, that a joyful *Volksgemeinschaft* needed clean spaces occupied by people who kept themselves clean, seems to have been creating a set of practices that foresaw the cleaning of the *Lebensraum* of those who were incapable of being clean. Thus, it can be argued that KdF's practices foresaw and possibly prepared those of the Holocaust.

Notes

1. See "NPD plant Museum in Wolfsburg," n.d., http://www.braunschweiger-zeitung.de/id524297.html [last accessed on May 22, 2012].
2. To be fully precise, the town was called "Stadt des KdF-Wagens bei Fallersleben," as it was located near an existing village called Fallersleben. In 1945, the British administration renamed the town Wolfsburg, after an ancient castle in the area. Present-day Wolfsburg, buoyed by Volkswagen, is the richest German city *per capita*. On the foundation of the town in the Third Reich, see

Marie-Luise Recker, *Die Großstadt als Wohn- und Lebensbereich im Nationalsozialismus: Zur Gründung der "Stadt des KdF-Wagens"* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus 1981). See also Stephan Krull, ed., *Volksburg Wolfswagen : 75 Jahre "Stadt des KdF-Wagen," Wolfsburg* (Hannover: Ossietzky, 2013). On Volkswagen's history in the Third Reich, see Hans Mommsen und Manfred Grieger, *Das Volkswagenwerk und seine Arbeiter im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf: Econ, 1997). See also Bernhard Rieger, *The People's Car: A Global History of the Volkswagen Beetle* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2013).

3. The plans were averted largely by the city of Wolfsburg acquiring the empty building; see "Wolfsburg: Stadt wehrt sich gegen Rechtsextremen-Museum 'Kraft durch Freude'," *FOCUS Online*, n.d., http://www.focus.de/panorama/vermischtes/wolfsburg-stadt-wehrt-sich-gegen-rechtsextremen-museum-kraft-durch-freude_aid:411421.html [last accessed on May 22, 2012]; and Andreas Speit, "Rechtes Museum in Wolfsburg: Keine 'Kraft durch Freude' mehr," *die tageszeitung*, March 2, 2010, sec. Deutschland, http://www.taz.de/!47786/ [last accessed on May 22, 2012.]
4. This recalls the early post-war polls discussed in this book's introduction, which evidenced KdF's popularity in Germany in 1949: many interviewees named KdF when asked to indicate something they had particularly liked about the National Socialist regime; see Institut für Demoskopie, *Das Dritte Reich: Eine Studie über die Nachwirkungen des Nationalsozialismus* (Allenbach: Institut für Demoskopie, 1949), 11.
5. A more complex example of the difficulties of dealing with the memory of KdF (and its "material remains") can be seen in the debates around the gigantic (though unfinished) KdF seaside resort in Prora, on the German Baltic island of Rügen; see "German Youth Hostel Opens in Giant Former Nazi Resort," *Spiegel Online*, June 7, 2011, http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/beach-fun-in-hitler-hotel-german-youth-hostel-opens-in-giant--former-nazi-resort-a-772573.html [last accessed May 25, 2012]. See also Dorit Unnasch, *Zwischen Politik, Erinnerung und Kommerz: Vom schwierigen Umgang mit dem Kraft durch Freude-Seebad Prora auf Rügen* (Saarbrücken: Müller, 2007); and Stefan Wolter, *KdF und Kaserne: (Un)sichtbare DDR-Geschichte in der Jugendherberge Prora. Spurensuche am Standort* (Halle:

Projekte-Verl. Cornelius, 2011). On KdF's project for this giant seaside resort in Prora, see Hasso Spode, "Fordism, Mass Tourism and the Third Reich: The 'Strength through Joy' Seaside Resort as an Index Fossil," *Journal of Social History* 38, No. 1 (Autumn 2004): 127–55; Shelley Baranowski, "A Family Vacation for Workers: The Strength through Joy Resort at Prora." *German History* 25, No. 4 (2007): 539–59; Gritt Brosowski, "Die Nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft, Kraft durch Freude 'und das erste, KdF' – Seebad Prora auf Rügen," *Fundus* 4 (1999): 261–96.

6. The flexibility or "openness" that is apparent in KdF's programming here could also lead to unintended consequences. Such consequences included attempts by worker-athletes to appropriate KdF sports, as described in Chap. 2, or the way in which female artists working for KdF in its front entertainment programming transgressed Nazi gender roles and ideals, as touched upon in Chap. 4.
7. For a discussion of the role of the *Reich Culture Chamber* under Joseph Goebbels in the arena of Nazi cultural politics, see Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, & Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
8. This book has highlighted how the Propaganda Ministry was especially interested in seizing control of troop entertainment from KdF. A different example of an attempt on KdF's "turf" would be the effort by Rosenberg in the prewar years to either control or displace KdF's cultural programming, especially as carried out by its Leisure Time Department. This was grounded in a fundamental difference between Ley and Rosenberg in their conceptions of what culture should be: briefly put, Ley wanted a new "workers culture," while Rosenberg promoted a "folk community culture;" Jost Hermand, *Stile, Ismen, Etiketten: Zur Periodisierung der modernen Kunst* (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1978), 110. On Rosenberg, his office, and the Third Reich's polycratic turf wars around it, see Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt., 1970).
9. A similar point about a partially realized or at least experienced *Volksgemeinschaft* is also made in the more recent scholarship on Nazi Germany's "racial community;" see, for example, Joan

L. Clinefelter, "Representing the Volksgemeinschaft: Art in the Third Reich," in *Life and Times in Nazi Germany*, ed. Lisa Pine (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 188 f.; Norbert Frei, *1945 und Wir : Das Dritte Reich im Bewusstsein der Deutschen* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005), 122 f.; and Rolf Pohl, "Das Konstrukt 'Volksgemeinschaft' als Mittel zur Erzeugung von Massenloyalität im Nationalsozialismus," in *"Volksgemeinschaft": Mythos, wirkungsmächtige soziale Verheißung oder soziale Realität im "Dritten Reich"? Zwischenbilanz einer kontroversen Debatte*, ed. Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012), 71.

10. The passage in the report reads in full: "KdF distracts, helps with setting up a smoke-screen for the brains, functions propagandistically for the regime. How sustainable these effects are, to what extent the distraction from the rough facts of the cutback of wages and the social sector will succeed, for how long the dictatorship-recipe of "Bread and Circus" [including "Strength through Joy"] will be effective is an open question;" Behnken, *Deutschland-Berichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade)*, 1456.

11. See especially Peter Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches: Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (Munich: Hanser, 1992). Ironically, these types of argument seem to concede that KdF's activities did have some genuine positive effects. Otherwise the smoke screen would not have worked.

    Of course, it might be argued that appealing to emotions rather than the intellect—as I suggested in the previous paragraph (of the main text)—is another form of manipulation. However, my point is that creating the emotional bond is not a manipulation that leads to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, it already *is* the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Certainly, this argument further depends on the assumption that the *Volksgemeinschaft* is itself more than just a propagandistic tool. However, as I discussed in the introduction, I agree with those scholars that beginning with the "mere propaganda" assumption is a mistaken reading of *Volksgemeinschaft* and not instructive for understanding people's experiences and expectations in the Third Reich.

12. Of course, it is nearly impossible to determine the actual causal effects of its activities, but KdF's continuous efforts towards "joy production" and keeping up morale, at the front and at home in

Germany, may at the very least be speculated to have had regime-stabilizing effects.

13. See Detlev Peukert, *Volksgenossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde* (Cologne: Bund, 1982).
14. "Konzentrationslager Dachau," *Illustierter Beobachter*, December 3, 1936; see also Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933–2001* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 28. The cover illustration for the article is reproduced as figure 12 in Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 78.

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Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB)
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