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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Contents

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).