

## Material C: Group Work sheets

### Kraft Durch Freude

The NS Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude (the National Socialist Organization Strength through Joy), was a subset of the [Deutsche Arbeitsfront](#), the national German labor organization. All members of the DAF were also members of the KdF, and as basically any worker was a part of the DAF, so too were they in the Kraft durch Freude. The KdF was essentially designed for the purpose of providing organized leisure for the German work force. Interestingly enough, the DAF calculated that the work year contained 8,760 hours of which only 2,100 were spent working, 2,920 hours spent sleeping, leaving 3,740 hours of free time. Thus the driving concept behind the KdF was organized "relaxation for the collection of strength for more work." The KdF strived to achieve this goal of organized leisure by providing activities such as trips, cruises, concerts, and cultural activities for German workers. These events were specifically directed towards the working class, and it was through the KdF that the NSDAP hoped to bring to the "common man" the pleasures once reserved only for the rich. By opening the door for the working class to easily and affordably take part in such activities, it was believed that the labor force could be lulled into being more flexible and productive.

There were many aspects of the German KdF program, including wildly popular and easily affordable international cruises provided by an extensive fleet of KdF liners and smaller waterway pleasure vessels. Trips were organized to the coasts of Norway, Spain, and Italy, as well as destinations on the Baltic Sea, and the German and Danish coasts. The KdF also sponsored and organized a wide variety of other activities, including retreats, day trips, tours, concerts, theater and opera performances, art exhibits, and other cultural and historical displays and events, all of which were supposedly designed to aid the "average" German enjoy their free time more. It was hoped that this would help in creating a healthier, more educated and more productive workforce.

Another aspect of the KdF organization was the provision for workers to have a right to vacation and paid holidays, a concept totally unique to the period in nearly all nations of the world. Even hourly and temporary workers were extended these sorts of concessions. Another major aspect of the KdF was the attempt to make the automobile a reality for as many Germans as possible. To this end, the world famous Volkswagon was created and an extensive system was setup to allow nearly anyone to purchase and own one. The Volkswagon (The Peoples Car) was extensively used by the German Wehrmacht in a military role also - the military versions of the VW are often compared not entirely without basis to the American Jeep.

When WWII began in 1939, one of the most important functions the KdF helped serve was in the provision of the majority of its fleet of ships for use by the German Kriegsmarine, mainly as hospital ships or barrack vessels. The largest and most famous KdF ship, the [Wilhelm Gustloff](#), served initially as a hospital ship

during WWII, later as a barracks ship, and was sunk in January of 1945 with a loss of 9,343 lives, the largest single naval loss in history. The KdF also helped setup and staff rest homes for German troops, provided concerts and films for soldiers at the front, helped distribute amenities to traveling and returning men at railway stations, and other major points in Germany and abroad.

The KdF was never in any way a paramilitary organization like many of the other auxiliary groups of the period. It existed solely to provide pleasure and relaxation, initially to German workers and later to Wehrmacht troops as well. Its overall goal was to create and mold a controllable work force, but as a result it also provided millions of Germans with pleasures and rights never before experienced by the average person.

The following is an excerpt from a 28 page publication entitled "Das danken wir dem Führer!" published in 1938 after the incorporation of Austria into the German Reich. It further expresses the ideas, plans and achievements of the German KdF. It highlights many of the actual achievements of the KdF and thus serves as an important reference point.

"The dignity of labor is evidenced by improvements in the appearance of the work place. Wherever one looks in Germany, ugly dark buildings are vanishing. The "Beauty of Labor" movement in today's Germany is not empty talk or an impossible demand, but living reality. Large sums that formerly would have been wasted in strikes and lockouts have been used since 1933 to improve work places. 23,000 places have been transformed from soulless drudgery to pleasant places to work. 6,000 factory courtyards now offer space for real relaxation, which was not true in the past. 17,000 canteens and lounges, 13,000 shower and changing rooms have been transformed. The dirtier the work, the cleaner the workers. More than 800 community buildings and 1200 sport facilities, including over 200 swimming pools, have been established. The crew quarters in over 3500 ships have also been improved."

"The NS Society Kraft durch Freude brings cheer and pleasure to workplaces through concerts and art exhibits. The art exhibits alone introduced more than 2,5 million workers to the creations of true German art. Just five years ago, it was obvious that the great works of German culture belonged to a small group of the upper class. Besides the factory concerns and art exhibitions, the NS Society Kraft durch Freude uses theatrical performances, other concerts, singing and musical groups to introduce the creations of German art to every working German. 22 million citizens have attended theatrical performances, 5.6 million the KdF concerts, and 17 million have found relaxation in more than 40,000 cabaret and variety performances, gaining thereby new strength for their daily work."

"Of no less importance is the KdF's vacation program. Earlier, German workers did not know what to do with their, at best, five days of annual vacation. They could not visit the beauties of the German landscape, much less travel abroad. The NS Society Kraft durch Freude gave German workers the possibility of vacationing at the beach or in the mountains, or to explore the homeland. Over 20 million have

participated in KdF trips since 1934. That is more than a quarter of Germany's population. 19 million citizens participated in 60,000 vacation trips at home. Hand to hand, they would stretch from Berlin to Tokyo. KdF trains have traveled 2,160,000 kilometers, or 54 times around the world. The nine large KdF cruise ships have covered a distance equal to twice the distance from the earth to the moon. They have carried German workers to Madeira, Italy and Norway, broadening their horizons and giving them unforgettable experiences. Three additional ships will be added to the KdF's own fleet of four. A KdF resort is being built on the island of Rügen. It will not be the only one. A series of other vacation and spa resorts will be built. They will fulfill the Führer's wishes at the start of the NS Society Kraft durch Freude: to lead a cheerful, creative and strong people to success in the world."

## The Book Burning:

NAZI SA Stormtroopers and student groups armed with this list on the night of May 10, 1933, surged into libraries and bookstores in university towns all over Germany. These events were also staged on May 11. They organized Wagnerian spectacles, marching in long processions by torchlight, singing Party songs, and chanting the 12 "theses,"--their manifesto for the "purification" of German literature and thought. The students proudly wore their caps with the colors of their university corps. SA and SS bands in many towns provided suitable musical accompaniment. The students then threw the seized books on to huge bonfires. The events were choreographed by the Ministry of Propaganda. Students would announce the authors of the books and explain why they were being burned.

One student called out, "Against class warfare and materialism: for the *volks* community and an idealistic lifestyle, I deliver to the flames the works of Marx and Kautsky." Another shouted, "Against decadence and moral decay; for discipline and morality in family and state, I deliver to the flames the works of Heinrich Mann, Ernst Glaeder and Erich Kästner." Note the idealistic rhetoric of these young Germans. There were in all about 34 public book burnings staged throughout Germany in the spring and summer of 1933. [Goodell] More than 20,000 books were burned on May 10 at the Berlin Opernplatz book burning alone. In Munich as many as 70,000 people watched the NAZI book burning ceremonies.

The book burnings like many Nazi ceremonies were carefully scripted well beforehand by The Reichsministry of Propaganda. One scholar explains, "They were scripted events. It involved the rectors and leaders of the colleges, the leaders of the town. The students were assisted by the librarians--some of whom were beginning to be Nazified. [Goodell] The participation of the librarians is particularly striking. Books were a revered part of German culture and the librarians were the keepers of that heritage. One scholar explains, "For some it was straight fear and for others enthusiasm for the new regime." [Stern]

### ***12 Thesis***

Goebbels helped draft 12 Theses regarding books. They demanded that only Germans (meaning Aryan Germans) be allowed to publish in the German language. Any Jew publishing a book would have to publish in Hebrew and books appearing by Jewish authors, whether written in German or not, would have to be labeled as translations.

### ***Authors***

The primary target of the Nazis were Jewish authors. There were many Christian German and foreign authors also selected for the bonfires.

## **Jewish authors**

Jewish authors were all burned, no matter what the subject are point of view. Jewish authors included: Albert Einstein, Vicki Baum, Max Brod, Alfred Doebelin, Albert Einstein, Lion Feuchtwanger, Sigmund Freud, Heinrich Heine, Emil Ludwig (Cohn), Magnus Hirschfeld, Franz Kafka, Karl Kautsky, Richard Katz, Karl Marx, Felix Salten, Kurt Tucholsky, Jakob Wassermann, Franz Werfel, and Stefan Zweig. German-writing authors from Prague were Franz Kafka, Franz Werfel ("The Song of Bernadette"), Max Brod and Richard Katz. They were Jews, so their books were burned. Some were also Communists, earning them even more Nazi vituperation.

A few prominent names are mentioned below:

**[Albert Einstein](#)**: Albert Einstein by 1933 was increasingly acknowledged as one of the greatest physicists of modern times. But because he was Jewish he was dismissed from his academic posts and his books were burned.

**Heinrich Heine** (1797-1856): Heinrich Heine one of Germany's greatest poets. Heine was Jewish, although he converted to Protestantism when he was a student. In the Nazi scheme he was still Jewish so his books were burned. I am not sure that he really said or wrote what you are quoting. Heine wrote poems that became part of Germany's cultural heritage. Many of Heine's poems were set to music by famous composers like Mendelssohn (another converted German Jew) and Johannes Brahms.

## **German Christian authors**

The works of many non-Jewish German writers also had their books burned. These writers had expressed ideas differing from the Nazi world view in some way. Some of the German authors targeted were: Bertolt Brecht, Hermann Hesse, Erich Kästner, Thomas Mann, Erich Maria Remarque (All Quiet on the Western Front), and Rainer Maria Rilke. There were many more.

## **Foreign authors**

The works of many foreign authors were burned. Hitler adopted the term "ink-slingers" for these authors who displeased him. Some of these writers included famous American (John Dos Passos, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, [Ernest Hemingway](#), Sinclair Lewis, Margaret Sanger, and Upton Sinclair), English (H.G. Wells), French, and Russian (V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky) authors as well as those from other countries.

## **Nazi Art:**

Art was considered to be one of the most important elements to strengthening the Third Reich and purifying the nation. Political aims and artistic expression became one. The task of art in the Third Reich was to shape the population's attitudes by carrying political messages with stereotyped concepts and art forms.

True art as defined by Hitler was linked with the country life, with health, and with the Aryan race. "We shall discover and encourage the artists who are able to impress upon the State of the German people the cultural stamp of the Germanic race . . . in their origin and in the picture which they present they are the expressions of the soul and the ideals of the community."(Hitler, Party Day speech, 1935)

### **Modern Art had no place in the Third Reich:**

#### ***Artists banned by the Third Reich:***

Pablo Picasso, van Gogh, Felix Mendelssohn, Gustav Mahler, Max Beckmann, Wassily Kandinsky, Emil Nolde, George Grosz, Marc Chagall, Arnold Schoenberg, Lovis Corinth, Otto Dix, Alexej von Jawlensky, Paul Klee, Ernst Barlach, Bertold Brecht,...

#### ***Artists favored by the Third Reich:***

[Richard Wagner](#), [Franz Stassen](#), Carl Orff, [Richard Strauss](#), [Herbert von Karajan](#), Clemens Krauss, Marlene Dietrich.

### ***"DEGENERATE" ART***

Hitler, who, ironically, had been rejected twice from Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts, eagerly assumed the role as the ultimate art critic - deciding the fate of all art objects that existed in occupied countries.

The years 1933-37 were critical for artists in Germany. In 1933, the National Socialist Society for German Culture was formed. The aim of this organization was to halt the "corruption of art" and inform the people about the relationship between race and art. By 1933, the terms "Jewish," "Degenerate," and "Bolshevik" were in common use to describe almost all modern art.

In 1937, Nazi officials purged German museums of works the Party considered to be degenerate. From the thousands of works removed, 650 were chosen for a special exhibit of Entartete Kunst. The exhibit opened in Munich and then traveled to eleven other cities in Germany and Austria. In each installation, the works were poorly hung and surrounded by graffiti and hand written labels mocking the artists and their creations. Over three

million visitors attended making it the first "blockbuster" exhibition.

Hitler's process of "purification" began with raids on museums and galleries in which impressionist and abstract paintings, drawings, and sculptures were removed. The Nazis were as passionate about their contempt for "unacceptable" art as they were practical. While almost 5,000 pieces were burned, works by renowned artists such as Picasso that were likely to fetch high bids on the international art market were auctioned off in Switzerland to raise money for the Nazi party.

## Architecture and design in Nazi Germany

The Nazi revolution in Germany needed architecture to bequeath a new image to history, and to offer contemporary society a strong rallying point. The Classical, monumental style replaced the modern style. In the 1930s, nationalism for the first time took solid form as nationalist art.

The Nazis used architecture to celebrate their image. Nazi architecture consisted of two phases between 1936 and 1940, firstly, the great set pieces of party edifices and secondly, the plans for Berlin, Nuremberg and Munich, the key cities of the Third Reich. Nazism architecture existed largely within the minds of two central personalities, Hitler and Albert Speer.

The National Socialist's united view on architecture was the rejection of a modern style. The Quaint vernacular style for housing and a monumental style for public buildings became the order of the day. But The National Socialists did not wholly rejected modern technology. They often used the most advanced building techniques hidden behind neoclassical facades. Along with the rejection of modern architecture came a rejection of the corresponding furniture.

Modern Movement suffered instant eclipse after the National Socialist seizure of power in January 1933. The modernist tendency to reduce all form to abstraction made it an unsatisfactory manner in which to represent the power and ideology of the state. The need to treat the problems posed by representation or lack of it has increased rather than diminished over the years. In general sense, New Tradition may be taken as evidence of the failure of abstract form to communicate.

Neo Classicism had the task of giving expression to the existing forms of government, of legitimizing them and of contributing to their consolidation. The ideal model was the Greek temple, the Renaissance palace, the Baroque castle, and the Classicist building of the Empire era. The format of the buildings became monumental.

Hitler's Germany required the purge of foreign elements and architecture linked to establish governmental functions, expressive of the great German national cultural traditions or the regionalist 'blood and soil' ethic of the German people. Official Nazi policy required a monumental neo classical solution to big buildings while local housing was to be in the vernacular of the area. For example, the thatch in Saxony or wide spreading eaves in Vavaria.

In Germany the main proponent of the neo classical style, before Speer, was Paul Troost, who designed the House of German Art in Munich and is considered to have exerted a powerful influence on Hitler's own architectural taste.

Albert Speer, the chief architect of the Third Reich, he designed the Zeppelin Field in Nuremberg (1936). The old arena, capable of holding 200,000, was not

large enough, and Speer was commissioned to build the Zeppelin Field Stadium, which accommodated 340,000 spectators. At one end of the Zeppelin Field there was to be a large 'Hall of Honor' with a Memorial Chapel within. Speer designed the German pavilion (1937), it stood directly opposite to the Soviet pavilion. Five hundred feet high, it was completed by a tall tower, crowned with the symbol of the State - an eagle and a swastika. Speer's pavilion was conceived as a monument, another symbol of German pride and achievement. It was to broadcast to the international world that a new powerful Germany and its technical achievements were the result of a mass will and restored national pride.

Speer undertook the project for Reconstruction for Berlin (1939-43). It was designed to become the ultimate architectural realization of National Socialist ideology, and it had a giant avenue from south to north, which was the highlight of the new city. In 1938, Speer finished the design for the first part of Berlin's Great Axis Avenue, 4 miles long, flanked by 400 streetlights that he had designed. The east-west axis would 'cut through the chaotic development of the cold city'. Eventually it was to stretch over 30 miles from east to west and 25 miles from north to south. It was planned to be a monumental centre.

In 1925, Hitler had sketched a triumphal arch and a large assembly hall, both of which were to become the symbols of the New Berlin. The triumphal arch was to span a distance of 285 feet and rise 325 feet, dwarfing the Eiffel Tower. On it the names of the fallen heroes of the Great War were to lie inscribed. It was planned to be constructed via traditional method and used no reinforced concrete, as Hitler believed that by this approach the architecture would hold a ruin value when it had been destroyed.

## The Hitler Youth

The Hitler Youth went back to the 1920s. However, once the Nazis achieved power it became a huge state organization aimed at controlling and indoctrinating the Nation's youth. Baldur von Schirach was its leader.

### Structure:

Boys 10 to 14 belonged to the *Jungvolk*, then from 14 to 18 were in the actual HJ, the commonly used abbreviation for *Hitler Jugend* (Hitler Youth). Each boy was given a performance booklet recording his progress in athletics and Nazi indoctrination throughout all of his years in the HJ.

Girls 10 to 14 joined the *Jungmädel* and from 14 to 18 belonged to the BDM, the commonly used abbreviation for *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (League of German Girls). The girls wore a schoolgirl-style uniform with skirts and blouses along with army-style hiking boots.

However, the Hitler Youth organization was primarily male oriented and would remain so throughout the duration of the Third Reich, although the HJ and BDM did share common traits including a very heavy emphasis on competition.

Just about every task, no matter how big or small, was turned into an individual, team, or unit competition. This included boys and girls sports, the quality of singing during propaganda marches, and Winter Aid collections. Boys and girls were kept constantly busy. The Nazis capitalized on the natural enthusiasm of young people, their craving for action and desire for peer approval, hoping, ultimately, each young person would come to regard his or her HJ or BDM unit as a home away from home, or perhaps as their real home.

Activities for boys included games of hide and seek called 'Trapper and Indian,' and war games in which the boys formed platoons, put on red or blue arm bands, then were supposed to hunt down the 'enemy' and rip off the other color arm bands. This often resulted in fist fights and outright brawls between platoons. Younger, weaker boys got pummeled while platoon leaders stood by or even encouraged the fighting. Ripped shirts, along with scrapes and bruises were common during these field exercises which were intended to toughen them up.

### Leadership Schools

By the end of 1933, the Hitler Youth organization had absorbed twenty German youth leagues and totaled over 3.5 million members, an enormous increase from a year earlier, before Hitler's acquisition of power, when it had numbered just 107, 956. But this rapid increase also brought big problems, namely the lack of trained, politically reliable local youth leaders. New members absorbed from

non-Nazi youth groups brought along non-Nazi sentiments and also struggled to adjust to the strict regimentation and tighter discipline of the Hitler Youth.

To resolve this problem, *Reichsführer* (leadership) schools were established throughout Germany offering three week cram courses on Nazi racial principles and German history along with practical leadership training, rigorous physical activity and rifle shooting. By August 1934, Schirach reported that over 12,000 Hitler Youth leaders and 24,000 Jungvolk leaders had completed these courses.

### The Year of Training

Schirach labeled 1934 as "The Year of Training," and proclaimed during a speech, "...Whoever marches in the Hitler Youth is not a number among millions but the soldier of an idea. The individual member's value to the whole is determined by the degree to which he is permeated by the idea. The best Hitler Youth, irrespective of rank and office, is he who completely surrenders himself to the National Socialist world view."

In September, Hitler Youth made a notable appearance at the annual Nuremberg rally, an event well-documented in the propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* by Leni Riefenstahl. A ten minute sequence shows Hitler's emotional appearance before the enthralled assembly inside the sports stadium amid frequent shouts of "Heil." In his speech he told them, "Regardless of whatever we create and do, we shall pass away, but in you, Germany will live on...And I know it cannot be otherwise because you are flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood, and your young minds are filled with the same will that dominates us...And when the great columns of our movement march victoriously through Germany today I know that you will join these columns. And we know that Germany is before us, within us, and behind us."

In October, amid the slogan "Blood and Soil," the Reich's Land Service was introduced, offering young city dwellers the opportunity to experience life on German farms. All HJ and BDM members were expected to participate, helping to bring in the harvest, while learning the value of hard labor and the simple life.

By 1935, about 60 percent of Germany's young people belonged to the Hitler Youth. Schirach declared it "The Year of Physical Training" and introduced the second major annual HJ event -- the Sports Competition. Medals were awarded to youths who performed rigorous athletic drills and met strict physical fitness standards. Every summer, a day would now be set aside as the "Day of the State Youth" for these events.

School schedules were adjusted to allow for at least one hour of physical training in the morning and one hour each evening. Prior to this, only two hours per week had been set aside. Hitler also encouraged young boys to take up boxing to heighten their aggressiveness.

