

song was sung (the Nazi party anthem, essentially) and a radio address by Hitler ("Sports and the New Man") was pumped into the hall over loudspeakers. The *Gleichschaltung* of Germany's anti-alcohol organizations followed shortly thereafter: Jews were excluded and a new "Jew-free" organization was formed to unite the movement.⁷⁸

Economic considerations were a mainstay of the Nazi distrust of alcohol. Nazi authorities complained as early as 1935 that Germans were spending three billion reichsmarks per year on alcohol,⁷⁹ enough to buy millions of Volkswagens or other useful commodities. At the forty-fourth annual meeting of the Antialcoholism Association that year, Dr. Werner Hüttig of the Office of Racial Policy argued for a stepped-up campaign against alcohol abuse in the Hitler Youth, in schools, and at work. Alcohol was cast as a threat to the "combat-readiness" of Germany's youth, and officials of the Hitler Youth equated the damage caused by drink to that caused by a brain tumor. Hitler Youth leaders pointed to the Führer's admonishment that the future of Germany belonged not to drinkers but to fighters.⁸⁰

Plans to combat alcohol were put into place in the early months of 1933. The Nazi version of May Day—the "day of national work" in the new incarnation—was declared alcohol-free,⁸¹ as were many other party-sponsored events and facilities, including the training quarters for Germany's Olympic athletes. A November 1, 1933, ordinance barred advertisements judged as violating the "political will of the German people"; the law explicitly prohibited ads for alcoholic products directed at youth or using nonadult imagery. A 1939 amendment barred any suggestion of "health-promoting" properties of brandy, cordials, or bitters; also barred was any hint of nutritional or hygienic virtues, or any suggestion that an alcoholic product might aid in digestion or stimulate the appetite (an exception was made for certain bitters containing soothing botanicals). Advertisers were no longer allowed to refer to alcohol as "liquid food," and in no case were terms implying medical endorsement to be permitted—terms like "stomach doctor" or "health inspector" (*Mageninspektor*, *Sanitätsrat*, *Blutlikör*, etc.). Stiff new penalties (fines and imprisonment) were decreed for anyone

caught violating the bans—including editors or publishers printing such claims in their magazines or newspapers.⁸²

Traffic accidents were another concern of Nazi *Anti-Alkoholiker*. Alcohol was recognized as a major cause of automobile accidents, a not insignificant matter in Germany of the mid-1930s, with more than a quarter of a million traffic accidents per annum resulting in more than ten thousand deaths. Accidents were much more common on Mondays than on Wednesdays, a consequence, in the eyes of some, of weekend binging. Official estimates were that more than two-thirds of the nation's traffic fatalities were the direct result of alcoholic intoxication.⁸³ The problem was taken seriously by Nazi leaders: Himmler in 1937 sent a letter to each of Germany's 1.7 million licensed drivers, cautioning against the dangers of drinking and driving.⁸⁴

The campaign was extended to the workplace, when Robert Ley of the German Labor Front sought to replace on-the-job beer drinking with on-the-job tea drinking. In 1940, Ley launched a much-advertised "operation tea" (*Teeaktion*) to promote the consumption of nonalcoholic beverages at work: 120,000 kilograms of black tea were pressed into blocks and supplied to all factories where workers labored in temperatures in excess of twenty-eight degrees Celsius. (Alcohol was known to have particularly serious consequences in hot environments.) The project was apparently a success,⁸⁵ though it is perhaps not out of place to note that Ley himself was a notorious drunk and was reprimanded on at least one occasion for presenting a public speech while inebriated.

A more ambitious campaign was launched to increase the consumption of cider and fruit juices, along with alcohol-free malt beer, mineral water, and vegetable drinks. Labeling laws were an ongoing concern, and a great deal of effort went into deciding how much alcohol a beer could have and still call itself "alcohol-free." Energies also went into the creation of a new generation of beverages from liquefied vegetables—apparently something like tomato juice or V-8 juice today. The journal *Gärungslose Früchteverwertung* (Fruits without fermentation) described new methods of producing alcohol-free drinks, which Nazi magazines and public health journals vigorously promoted.