Read and interpret an engaged artwork:

John Heartfield, *Come and see Germany!*

*Document analysis*

The Exhibition *European sport under Nazism: from the Olympic of Berlin to the London Olympics (1936 - 1948)* offers a series of unpublished documents (posters, photographs, collages, cartoons) indicative of the political and ideological tensions of that time (Nazi propaganda, boycott the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936, etc.).

The pages devoted to the exhibition offer, from the graphic processes used, a reading and an interactive analysis of a photomontage by John Heartfield, *Come and see Germany!* Highlighting the denunciation of the Nazi regime on the eve of the Berlin Olympics opening in 1936.
Come and See Germany!
AIZ, n°27, 1936.
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Nature
The document is a photomontage that is to say a collection of photographs. The main elements give the impression of being reported, "Glued" on the document. Invented by the Berlin Dadaists, photomontage has expanded considerably after the First World War. Deliberately provocative and satirical, it is widely used by propagandists and publicists. Seemingly simple, it can be understood by a wide audience.

Source
The document is part of the weekly journal AIZ, Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung, illustrated journal of workers founded in Berlin in 1926. It transfers its activities in Prague when Hitler came to power (1933). The draw is up to 500 000 copies. AIZ advocates a pro-Soviet line. It is the heir of the first newspaper systematically employing photography for purposes of propaganda, Sowjet-Russler im Bild (Russia in pictures), launched in 1921. In AIZ, photomontages, including these of John Heartfield, were instruments of anti-Nazi and Communist propaganda.

Date
On 1st July 1936, AIZ devotes a special issue on the Olympic Games of Berlin to protest the official propaganda of the Nazi regime. John Heartfield takes this opportunity to parody the official propaganda. Adept of the saying "Caricaturing for laughs and denouncing" good connoisseur of popular culture, the author of "Come and See Germany" shows here all the mastery of his art.

Auteur
Born Helmut Herzfeld (1891-1968), John Heartfield published in this weekly paper, between 1930 and 1938 nearly 250 photomontages. At that time, it is one of the main figures in this emerging technic. In 1916 he Anglicized his name to protest against German nationalism. Member of the Communist Party under the Weimar Republic (1919-1933), major figure in the Dada movement in Berlin, he could be considered as the master of photomontage of his time and as Louis Aragon’s "prototype and model for the anti-fascist artist".

Titre
"Come and see Germany! ». It is a call to go to Germany to attend the Olympic Games. The arch on which is written the title can be seen as a border that athletes are invited to cross. The title is in English: Easier to understand by nations around the world.

Catchphrase
"Der Zweck Vons Janze" Olympiagäste, im Gleichschritt - Marsch! Visitors of the Olympic Games, march, forward. This text is in German, the language change is defined by the border crossing represented by the arcade. Throughout the Reich, German is the official language.

The title and the accompanying text is a call to go to the Olympics in Berlin. They might suggest that it is a document of Nazi propaganda. The detailed analysis of the document shows that it is, rather, a denunciation of the regime.
By focusing on the major elements of the document, it is possible to explain graphics choices made by John Heartfield.

**Five athletes**
Tied by the nose like cattle couplers, athletes are holding flags representing their respective countries. On July 1st, 1936, date of publication of the document, competitors from around the world are preparing to go to the Olympics in Berlin despite calls for a boycott that flourish here and there.

**Little man who pulls the strings**
In contrast to the five athletes, it's a small man who seems to pull the strings. He’s no one but Joseph Goebbels, Propaganda Minister of the Reich (his club foot is turned into hoof). He is small and puny. He is the opposite of the Aryan man advocated by the Nazi regime. But he's leading the "herd". John Heartfield uses satire to expose the inconsistency of Nazi ideology.

**The Olympic rings**
They allow the reader to immediately identify the event: the Olympic Games in Berlin. A second level of interpretation shows that this event of universal significance is in the hands of the Nazi regime. Athletes are also represented as a herd of cattle in the hands of the Nazis.

**The SS flag**
The flag in the hand of Goebbels means that these games become a sporting event to the glory of Nazism. Despite the proliferation of boycott movements in both France and the United States, nations finally decide to go to the Berlin Olympics. Through this photomontage, John Heartfield denounces this attitude which consequences are not only giving full respectability to the Nazi regime that never stopped showing his anti-Semitic (the Nuremberg Laws in 1935) and warmongering (remilitarization of the Rhineland in March 1936) nature.

**Conclusion**
The focus on the different elements of this image shows that, far from being an instrument of Nazi propaganda, John Heartfield’s photomontage is a scathing denunciation of the Hitler regime that exploit the Olympics for ideological purposes. Implicitly, the author criticizes both the nations and the sports worlds’ naivety, facing the Nazis objective.