

Chart. 16 | The “KdF-Seaside Resort Rügen” in the Propaganda

Long before the competition in 1936 the newspapers reported on the project Prora. The postponed competition and all the other events connected to its realisation – such as the laying of the foundation stone, the opening of the railway track or the topping-out ceremony – were discussed in detail in newspapers, magazines or on the radio. Although the project was at odds with the military armament, which had priority in any case, the Prora plan served propagandistic purposes.

It was known to every “Volksgenosse” in the German Reich that a giant seaside resort for workers was under construction.

The propaganda emphasized the alleged progressive pro-labour character of the KdF-spa and celebrated the construction as a “socialist act”. Also, the so called luxury of the small and simple rooms which were all fitted with the same sea-view, was appraised in a propagandistic way.

The mood/ humour of the workers, who had to carry the main burden of the war preparation was considered to be depressed, which is why a propaganda trump such as the KdF-spa was very convenient for the regime. Even though the closer circle of power knew that the war would forestall a KdF-holiday at the sea and Prora was already referred to as the “biggest German military hospital”, the construction and the prospect of a holiday at the sea was a convenient element for the stabilisation of the “People’s Community” and thus the regime. KdF was the “sharpest weapon” against “defeatists” and “barraters”. Widely spread drawings and photographs nurtured the illusion of a private happiness beyond the imminent war.

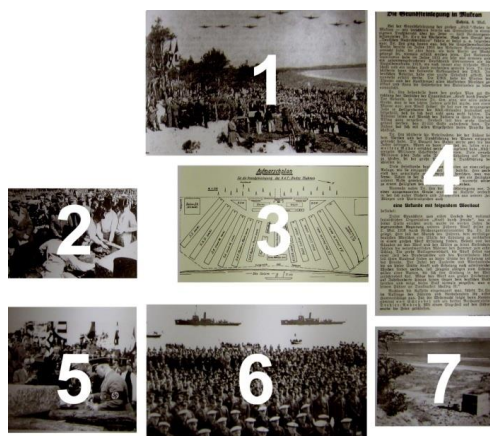


1. KdF Advertisement 1939. The buildings of Prora, the wharf and the landing bridge are emphasised in the background

Archive Documentation Center Prora

Chart .17 | The Laying of the Foundation Stone

The date for the laying of the foundation stone for the “KdF-Seaside Resort Rügen”, was consciously set on the 2nd of May 1936, the third anniversary of the “Storming of the Trade Unions”. The memory of this trump was meant to be appropriately framed by the laying of the foundation stone which was prepared with military precision by the party, “Strength through Joy”, the Reich’ s fatigue duty, the Wehrmacht and the state railway. Provisional car parks, sanitary tents and field kitchens were set up in order to serve tea with rum after the laying of the foundation stone. 12000 people were expected who came in free special trains, even from Stettin. In order to guarantee a smooth course of the event the local newspapers published the arrival and departure times of the trains and a deployment plan for the different military and paramilitary formations. A naval unit from Pillau was situated at the Prorer Wiek and over the heads of the visitors flew a squadron from the military airfield near Greifswald.



1. Laying of the Foundation Stone on the 2nd of May 1936, Robert Ley laying a document in the foundation stone.

Federal Archive Koblenz

2. Laying of the Foundation Stone on the 2nd of May 1936, a brick layer at the laying of the Foundation Stone

Archive Documentation Center Prora

3. The deployment Plan for the Laying of the Foundation Stone in Prora was revealed in the Press. Every uniformed official in the region was meant to be present.

Stralsunder Tageblatt vom 29. April 1936

4. Newspaper article on the Laying of the Foundation Stone.

Stralsunder Tageblatt 4th of May 1936

5. An airplane echelon during the laying of the Foundation Stone 1936.

Archive Documentation Center Prora

6. Laying of Foundation Stone on the 2nd of May 1936- War Ships at the Prora wharf and sailors after having arrived at the beach.

Archive Documentation Center Prora

7. The “orphaned” Foundation Stone for the “KdF Seaside Resort” for which construction started two years later. *Arbeitertum, 1936*

Chart. 18 | Exhibitions

The public presentation of the “KdF-Seaside Resort”, in the form of exhibitions, pursued different intentions. In 1935 the aim was firstly to enforce the plan to create a seaside resort for 20.000 holiday makers within the inner/ closer circle of power. The exhibition at the Nuremberg Rally in September 1935 served this intention, as well as the presentation during the second annual conference of the “Strength through Joy” organisation in November 1935. Furthermore, the respective presentation was part of the self-portrayal of the German Labour Front’s leisure time organisation. It was interested in presenting itself as a modern organisation targeted to the social demands of the “People’s Community”.

At the Paris World exposition in 1937 it was about reputation. The intention was to convey a peaceful and social image of the regime, referring to the seaside resort in connection with technological progress, labour, production and recreational activities.

Numerous paintings dealing with the subject “labour” and two mosaics named “Strength through Joy” contributed to the visualisation of the idealised picture of the worker in the German “People’s Community”. At the first German Architectural and Handcraft Exhibition which took place from January to April 1938, the Prora project was represented by ten single objects: a blue print, water colour drawings, as well as numerous models were exhibited. Like in all previous presentations modernity and the social political commitment was emphasised. The exhibition was meant to account for National Socialist architecture and art. It was generally addressed to the German public. The “KdF-Seaside Resort” had the particular impact that it was a major project in the course of its realisation. The project served and later advanced into an effective advertisement for the National Socialist social policy. The promising prospect of a new life style in the German working class played a central role. As a concept Prora smoothed the way for a new mass cultural influence which devolved on the KdF organisation in the field of leisure time. The “Volksgenosse” was meant to be incorporated into the “Volksgemeinschaft”, even during his holiday.



1 . Inside Title page of the German catalogue for the World Exhibition in Paris, 1937.

Exhibition Catalogue of the International Exhibition for Art and Engineering in Paris, 1937

2. Excerpt from the index of the displayed exhibit of the German catalogue at the World Exhibition in Paris, 1937.

Exhibition Catalogue of the International Exhibition for Art and Engineering in Paris, 1937

3. The „KdF- Seaside Resort Rügen“ at the World Exhibition in Paris, 1937.

Arbeitertum, 1937

4 . Register of the German curators and collaborators, that were awarded from the international jury, 1937. Clemens Klotz is mentioned as a prize winner.

Internationale Ausstellung Paris 1937 für Kunst und Technik.

5 . The „KdF- Seaside Resort“ in the first German architecture- and handicraft- exhibition in Munich, 1938.

e1: *Hannover Anzeiger, 24. Januar 1938*

e2/3: *Arbeitertum, 1938*

6 . Exhibition about the „KdF“ with beach paraphernalia for the “KdF-Sea Resort”, 1938

Unter dem Sonnenrad, 1938

7. The cover picture of the exhibition catalogue „Gesundes Leben-frohes Schaffen“ in Berlin, 1938

Ausstellungskatalogs „Gesundes Leben – Frohes Schaffen“, 1938

8. Robert Ley and Rudolf Hess appraise a model of the planned building complex, which was framing the festivity compound in the centre of the „KdF- Sea Resort Rügen“ in the exhibition „Gesundes Leben-Frohes Schaffen“ in Berlin, 1938

Bundesarchiv Koblenz

9 . Exhibition of the draft of the construction division of the German Labor Front on the „Nazi Party Congress“, 1935

Der Aufbau, 1935

10. A relief presentation of the draft of the construction division, presented in an exhibition at the „Nazi Party Congress“, 1935

Der Aufbau, 1935

Chart. 19 | The “KdF Seaside Resort” in Prora in the Media

The press in the entire German Reich, provincial papers, local newspapers and national newspapers had already reported in 1935 on the project to build a big seaside resort for workers. The radio and the “German newsreel” also attended to the subject. The laying of the foundation stone on 2nd May 1936, three years after the destruction of the Trade Unions, offered the opportunity to detract from this crime and to emphasize the “social services” of the National Socialist state. The social conditions of the workers were tense anyway: Stagnating wages, increasing prices and the scantiness of food were the activators for a wide discontentment of the population towards the regime. The spectacle concerning the “Seaside Resort for the Twenty Thousand” was meant to detract from the existing social problems and tensions.



1 . Various propaganda slogans regarding the construction of the “KdF Seaside Resort”.
Federal Archive Koblenz

z1 One of the most effective advertisements for the “Third Reich”- Report by the SPD, 1939.

A report from an informant, April 1939. From time to time, the German public is informed about the construction progress of the KdF Bath on Rügen. In the summer of 1939 it will most likely be opened with loud racket and self adulation. For the German bourgeois, this luxurious “Bath for the Plebs” is a thorn in their sides. There is a stubborn rumor which claims that Ley received a strong reprimand due to this unnecessary waste of money. I witnessed the construction of this complex last summer. It is a complex that is impressive in its size stretching for many kilometers and is on one of the most beautiful spots on the island, situated between Binz and Sassnitz. The whole island is under the sign of this monumental structure. An autobahn leading to the KdF bath, a KdF train station and swarms of visitors. It is one of the most successful advertisements for the Third Reich. Nine tenths of the workers in Germany will only get to see the bath on pictures. German workers are already discussing how this is a great social service provided by the Third Reich without figuring it out for themselves, that this social institution is a complete farce in regards to the breakup of other social achievements.

Germany Reports of the Social Democrats Party Germany (Sopade), 1934- 1940, 1980.