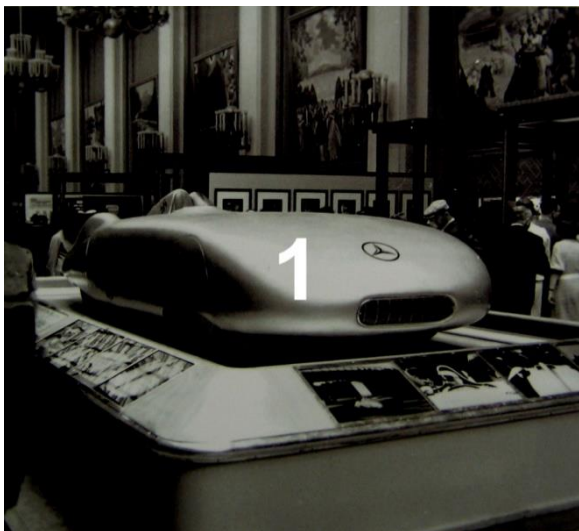


Chart. 89 | Modernity

The belief that the Third Reich was in many ways a modern state and a world wide leader in technical and engineering discoveries, persists even 60 years after the Second World War. Socially and communally this was considered to be the case as well. Examples such as the Reich's Autobahn or the nullification of class differences are often stated. Without a doubt, the potential of modernity, its seeds already sewn during the Weimar Republic, began to develop under the Third Reich, especially within the area of industrial rationalization. It was characteristic of the Third Reich that Hitler personally preferred investing within the automobile and autobahn sector: the neglecting of rail traffic would, however, prove to be of negative effect during the Second World War.

NS propaganda and self portrayal principally suggested that all social and technical improvements are of National Socialist origin. Contrasting this modern approach were voices within the NSDAP that were critical of the modernization of the agrarian sector, even prior the seizure of power. They argued for the "Return to the Soil" of the farmers and claimed that technical rationalization and the increased use of machines, contributed to an increase in mass unemployment. German big industry was also meant to be remodeled into a "Craftsmanship Class" in order to lower unemployment numbers. These plans would lose in meaning as the War preparation would become more intense: such ideas would be viewed as backwards and averse to technology, its exponents viewed as refusing to change with the times.

The NS race ideology strongly contributed to slowing down technical and social processes – especially the removal of engineers and scientists of non Aryan origin. Further development of theories by Jewish scientist could yield strong consequences.



1. Mercedes Racing Model in the German Pavillon at the World Exhibition in Paris, 1937.

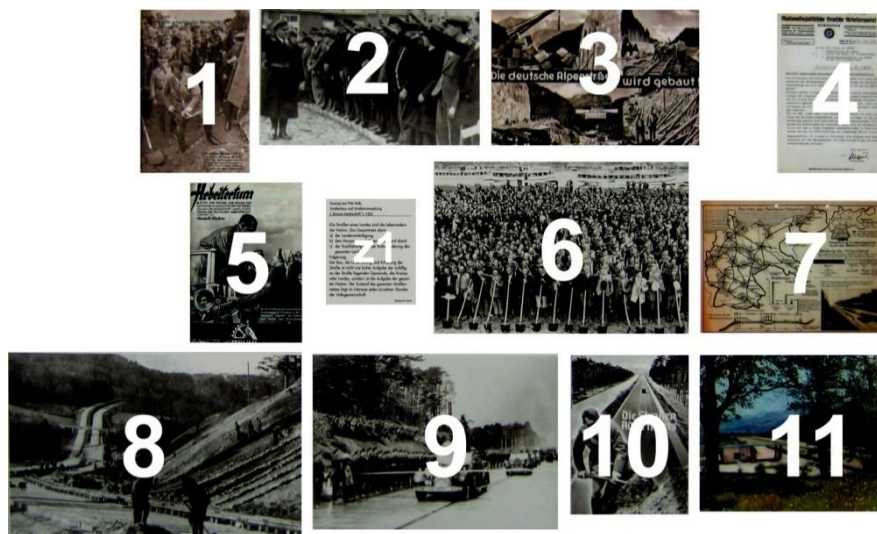
Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation

Chart. 90 | Myth of the Reichsautobahn

The Autobahn has to this day, lost none of its mythical character and the legends that are associated with it. They are still considered as an achievement of Hitler's, as a representation of progress in the Third Reich and successful program to reduce mass unemployment. These views were, however, fabrications created by the propaganda of the NS state.

The plans to build an autobahn stretch back to the German Empire. The first Autobahn was the AVUS (Automobile Traffic and Practice Streets), which was completed by 1921 in Berlin. Plans to extend connections between Hamburg and Frankfurt (Main), Basel and München, Leipzig and Berlin were continued. Shortly after being declared Chancellor of Germany, Hitler claimed these ideas as his own. Already by June 1933, continuation on the building of the autobahn would commence. Hitler assigned the role of "General Inspector of Road Engineering" to the engineer Fritz Todt. Until the beginning of the war in 1939, about 3300 kilometres of the 6900 was completed. During the end of 1941, Todt declared the closing of various construction sites due to the outbreak of "Total War".

The construction of the autobahn never really had a great impact on the level of unemployment. The highest involvement of workers working on the autobahn would be around 125 000 by the end of July 1936. Problems at the construction sites would persist with the introduction of "Non Local Workers". They would come from regions that suffered a high grade of unemployment and would be forcibly sent to construction sites that were situated far away. The separation from their families, the poor accommodation and the long trek from the housing facilities to the construction site, would lead to tension and "inner resignation". This would go so far as to include open resistance and strikes.



1. Hitler turning „the first spadeful of earth“ at the first segment of the Reich's Autobahn at Frankfurt am Main, 23rd of September 1933.

Arbeitertum, 1933

2. „Work Plea“ from autobahn workers at a construction sight between Berlin- Stettin, 1935

German Historical Museum Berlin

3. Autobahn Propaganda – The German Alp Road is being built, 1935.

4. Newsletter from the NSDAP – Reich's Administration 23.06.1938, mirroring the authority disputes of various NS and party administrations. Here the question is, who will cover the costs for dressing the Austrian Autobahn builders.

Federal Archive Berlin

5. Cover of the magazine „Arbeitertum“, Juni 1935. Hitler at the opening of the first section of the autobahn Frankfurt-Darmstadt

Arbeitertum, 1935

6. Appeal of the builders of the autobahn construction at the Main shore in Frankfurt, September 1933

Staatsarchiv Frankfurt am Main

7. The connections of the Reichsautobahn, 1934/35

Bundesarchiv Berlin, Diesterwegs Merk- und Arbeitsblätter, Reihe: Deutschvolkkunde

8. Building of the Reichs Autobahn in the south of Germany.

German Historical Museum Berlin

9. Opening a segment of the Reichs Autobahn near Frankfurt by Adolf Hitler, 19th of M 1935.

State Archive Frankfurt am Main

10. Title page of the NS Brochure „The Streets of Adolf Hitler“ by the General Inspector of German Road Engineering, Fritz Todt. Fritz Todt created the myth that Hitler was the originator and designer of the Reichsautobahn, 1938.

German Historical Museum Berlin

11. Newly built Gas Station near the Reichsautobahn by Rosenheim, around 1942.

German Historical Museum

Z1 Excerpt taken from Fritz Todt,
Road construction and administration
„*Brown Memoir*“, 1932

The roads of a country are the life veins of a nation. The overall network serves:

- a) the defense of the country
- b) the civilian transportation and freight traffic
- c) the development and cultural assistance of the whole country

Conclusion: The construction, maintenance and preservation of the roads is not the duty of the community, district or county, but the duty of the whole nation. The condition of the whole road network lies in the interest of every community of the “People's Community”.

Federal Archive Berlin

Chart. 91 | The Fascination of Technology

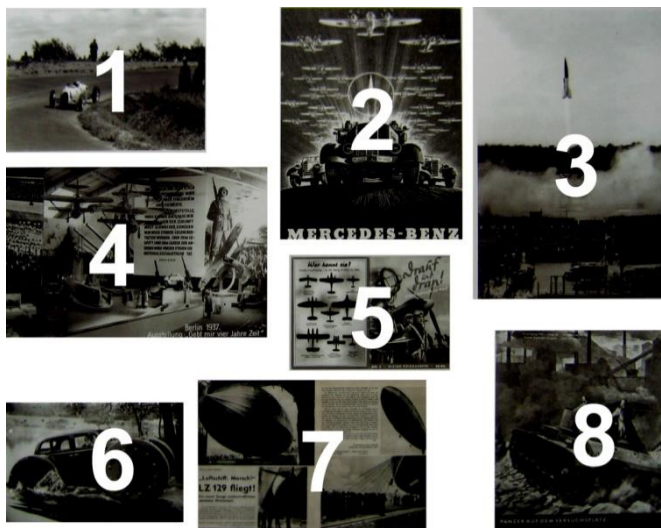
National Socialism would make use of the more fascinating sides of technology in order to further their propaganda orientated goals. It was a medium for national integrity and for enhancing the self esteem of the German collective. Hitler would define himself as a "Technology Freak", stating Fritz Lang's movie from 1927 "Metropolis", as one of his favourites.

The technological enthusiasm of the regime would be shared by a large portion of the civilian population. The Technology Cult orientated itself towards technological top quality products, in the civilian sector this would include automobiles, aeroplanes, zeppelins and radio devices. It must be stated, that less advanced alternatives such as the KdF Wagen or the "Volksempfänger" (Folk Receiver) would be used within the realm of Mass Consumption. In general, though, the number of technical products such as telephones, refrigerators, electric stoves and the electric hairdryer would increase. Of these, models should be produced that would be affordable for most people. The prospect that almost everyone could be part of this Technology Culture, with its standardised cheap products, belonged to one of the most efficient propaganda tools of the NS regime.

In this spiritual political climate, it came as no surprise that racing drivers such as Rudolph Caracciola and Bernd Rosemeyer or pilots such as Ernst Udet would become Sport Idols. The legendary "Silver Arrows" from Mercedes would cause quite a spectacle and demonstrate the technical 'superiority' of the Germans. As Hitler once quoted: "The best automobile roads of the world are in Germany, the fastest cars were built by us. The results of the big international races are proof of this."

Ultimately, the technological enthusiasm of National Socialism would eventually spill over to the area of military technology. The regime would find, even within this field, a sense of fulfilment in war. The German weapons were already tested in the Spanish Civil War. This would be popularized in films like "Stuka" or "Baptism by Fire". Later, tanks such as the "Panther" or "Tiger" would be stylized as masterpieces of German Engineering craft. A rumour which had mass impact was that a "Wonder Weapon" was being used, which would lead to a turning point in the war.

The public would not get to see jet fighters such as the ME 262 or the V1 and V2 rockets, yet belief in their efficiency would still remain widespread. Altogether, the technological military advancements in German would prove to be a fiasco: The ongoing rivalry between economy and politics and the fragmented financial and military staff, would hinder development considerably. The general deficiency in basic research and development, resulted in a short coming within airplane construction, atom research, and the realm of High Frequency Technology and Radar Technology.



1. Bernd Rosemeyer in his Auto Union Racing car at the German Grand Prix in Nürnberg, 26th of July 1936.

Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation

2. Magazine Commercials from Mercedes-Benz with Wehrmacht Vehicles and Airplanes, 1943.

Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation

3. Launch of an „A4“ Rocket (called „V2“) at the Army Testing Grounds near Peenemünde, 1943.

Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation

4. Propaganda Exhibition „Give Me Four Years Time“ in the Berlin Exhibition Hall. The Exhibition was meant to glorify the innovation of the Army, Air Force and Marines, 1937.

Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation

5. Cover of an issue from the series „The Small War Booklet“ with images of various Airplane Types, 1940.

German Historical Museum Berlin

6. An invention by the Walter Bodenstein. Four Bateau wheels were mounted in place of the wagon wheels, which combines the float with the water propulsion. The front wheels serve as a rudder and the back wheels paddle wheels as a form of locomotion. This too is a bit of a curiosity.

German Historical Museum

7. Propaganda article from the magazine „Arbeitertum“, August 1938. Regarding the technical achievements of the Zeppelin Airship LZ 129.

Arbeitertum, 1938

8. Fascinated by Weapon technology. Excerpts from the painting by Ferdinand Staeger, 1941.

Arbeitertum 1941ss