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Some quantitative aspects of Kraft durch Freude tourism, 1934-1939

Hasso Spode

In recent years research on tourism during the Third Reich has gained momentum.¹ While the scholarly and public debate on Nazism is focussed on war and genocide, a handful of studies (re-)discovered² the regime's attempts to foster consumerism during the pre-war years in order to maintain the inner "social peace". In this context, the objective of "winning the hearts of the workers" was to be reached not only by verbal upgrading of manual work ("honour of labour") but also by offering hitherto unattainable consumer goods. Cheap mass produced "popular" goods, like radios and refrigerators, were to symbolize the "people's community" (Volksgemeinschaft) of equal "national comrades" (Volksgenossen), and so to dissolve the working class with its leftist traditions as a social and political formation.³ While the promised land of plenty remained mere propaganda in most cases⁴ – e.g. the "popular car" – the "breaking of the bourgeois travel privilege" indeed made considerable progress. Cheap vacationing became a centerpiece of the so-called "Socialism of Deed".

Popular mass tourism was organized by the travel department⁵ of the huge Nazi organization for leisure time with the bombastic name National Socialist Community "Strength through Joy" (Nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude"; NSG "KdF"). It was founded in late 1933 as a branch of the German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront; DAF), the pervasive pseudo trade union. Accompanied by a torrent of propaganda, KdF tourism started in February 1934. Within a few weeks KdF became the world's biggest tour operator. As intimated, valuable studies on KdF, its travel activities and its political intentions have appeared. "Hard" figures, however, have still rather sparsely been used to back the analysis. This article attempts to fill this gap in quantitative knowledge about KdF tourism. Thus, my intention here is not to offer new interpretations but simply to place some tools⁶ at further disposal. A basis for any judgement on KdF tourism, of course, is the number of participants. The records of KdF headquarters were destroyed in 1945, so that there are no internal overall data.⁷ KdF and DAF provided the public with lots of figures but because of the dictatorship caution is advisable, both as regards reliability and

validity. In order to obtain overall figures compatible with scholarly standards, the complete travel program of one KdF district was collected and turned into an electronic data set.

The data source is the monthly program of the small Bavarian KdF district of Mainfranken: the Programmheft, a sort of magazine published by each district (Gau)⁸. Besides articles about tourist regions, general propaganda etc. it contains time schedules and prices of the offered trips (and it is noted if a trip has been cancelled). Between 1934 (when KdF travel started) and 1939 (when it stopped due to the war) altogether 345 holiday trips, cruises and longer hiking tours with approx. 98,000 participants⁹ were undertaken in Gau Mainfranken. The Gau counted almost exactly 1 % of all KdF members in Germany.¹⁰ By and large, the trips were distributed by the KdF headquarters among the districts in accordance with their membership, KdF Data Mainfranken may therefore be considered a representative sample.¹¹ Nonetheless, all results are informed estimations.

The findings allow for calculations of the price level, destinations etc., and also help to adjust the overall figures of KdF travel activities. KdF distinguished four types of trips:

- *Kurzfabrt* (KF), i.e. “short trip” or excursion, usually without overnight stay;
- *Wanderfabrt* (WF), i.e. guided “hiking tour”, usually without overnight stay;
- *Urlaubsfabrt* (UF), i.e. “holiday trip”, of one or two weeks;
- *Seefabrt* (SF); i.e. “cruises” one, of mostly one and up to three weeks.

Outings and hiking tours had long been common among the working class; thus, when the regime spoke of «breaking the bourgeois privilege» the all-inclusive holiday meant holiday trips (UF) to German health, seaside, and summer resorts,¹² the “jewel” of the program being the cruises (SF) to prestigious destinations such as Madeira, Norway or the Mediterranean. Table 1 shows the distribution of participants among the types of trips sold by KdF.¹³ Except for the cruises and some overland trips by bus and by ship to allied Italy (1937- 39, total of 145,000), all went to domestic destinations. Like all other statistical series of the Third Reich these figures, too, suffered from the expansion of the borders when in 1938 the official peace rhetoric was replaced by a bluntly aggressive foreign policy.

Table 1: Trip participants

Type	Short trips (KF)	Hiking tours (WF)	Holiday trips (UF)	Cruises (SF)
Usual duration	1 day (max. 2)	1 day (1 % as UF)	1-2 weeks	1- 2 weeks
Year (a)			Million (b)	
1934	1.8	0.1	0.4	0.06
1935	4.8	0.4	1.0	0.12
1936	6.2	1.1	1.3	0.12
1937	6.8	1.6	1.4	0.13
1938 (c)	5.9	1.2	1.2	0.12
1939 (d)	5.1	1.1	1.0	0.14

a) Probably business years; cut-off date: 27th Nov.

b) "Altreich" only (i.e. without the territories annexed in 1938/39).

c) For "Großdeutsches Reich" (i.e. including participants from former Austria and - to a small extent - the Sudetengau) total numbers read: KF: 6.8; WF: 1.9; UF: 1.5; SF:0.13.

d) Not comparable: firstly, it is uncertain whether participants from the annexed territories were excluded; secondly, on the 1st Sept. travel stopped.¹⁴

The comparison of the figures published by DAF, on the one hand, and KdF, on the other, and the results from the KdF Data Mainfranken, surprisingly shows that the official figures were of rather high reliability. It is certain that sometimes the numbers of participants were somewhat exaggerated,¹⁵ but the suspicion of the regime's opponents that they were just "fantasy"¹⁶ proved to be, nevertheless, wrong – the allegation indicates how shocked the resistance was by the success of KdF tourism: they could not believe it! – The validity of the official figures, though, was rather poor since they mostly (and generally for 1934-1936) did not distinguish between KF and UF. Put together excursions and journeys figures looked even more impressive than they really were. By the outbreak of war, some 7.5 million package holidays had been organized by KdF,¹⁷ at least 0.7 million of them were spectacular cruises abroad with the KdF fleet. In addition, some 31.5 million excursionists and more than 6 million hikers had been clients of the KdF travel department. Participants in all trips amounted to more than 45 million.

But what did these figures mean in relation to the other, the "free" commercial tourism? Here, and for what follows, tourist travel is defined as leisure travel (or vacation trips, respectively) with a minimum duration of 3 days.¹⁸ Thus, KdF short trips and most of the hiking tours remained non registered. All-German travel

statistics (Fremdenverkehrsstatistik) were compiled in the 1920s and mid 1930s and an exhaustive registration of arrivals and overnight stays was established.¹⁹ As a result of the Great Depression tourism had faced a dramatic decline. A lowest point was reached in 1932/33, when overnight stays fell to the level of around 1909; then they recovered and since 1936 outstripped the Weimar years.²⁰

For measuring the role of KdF tourism in German tourism as a whole the number of arrivals is not a suitable variable;²¹ instead, the number of overnight stays provides a more convincing quantification. KdF/DAF never published data on overnight stays. But these may be computed from figures in Table 1 multiplied by the average duration of KdF trips according to the sample of KdF Data Mainfranken. Table 2 shows the KdF share of German travel in terms of overnight stays. Only the traffic of Germans in Germany is taken into account: inbound and foreign travel as well as KdF trips outside the Deutsches Reich have to be excluded.²²

Table 2: KdF and overall travel

Overnight stays ^(a)			
	Dt. Reich	KdF	KdF
Year ^(b)	Million	Million	%
1934	59,6	2,7	4.5
1935	71,6	7,8	10.9
1936	84,6	9,4	11.1
1937	100,2	9,6	9.6
1938 ^(c)	110,0	(8,8)	(8.0)
1939 ^(d)	107,4	(2,9)	(2.7)

a) Reich: domestic travel of Germans; KdF: UF and WF (of > 2 days) to domestic destinations; 1938/39: "domestic" means the "Altreich" only.

b) Cutoff date: Reich: 30th Sept.; KdF: probably 27th Nov.

c) Hardly comparable; KdF overnight stays including holiday trips to annexed Austria: 9.8 mill.

d) Not comparable; holiday travel stopped 1st Sept.; KdF overnight stays including holiday trips to the annexed territories: approx. 8.3 mill. (see also Table 5).

Table 2 shows that KdF travel amounted to more than a tenth; initially growing faster than the total numbers but then stagnating while commercial travel continued to grow. KdF's actual share of tourist travel, however, was higher because the overall figures of overnight stays included business and health travel.²³ Reliable data on the proportion of tourist and non-tourist traffic are not available. Still, it is very likely that holiday makers caused the majority of the overnight stays, i.e. 50 + x %²⁴ So, at a rough guess, KdF's share of the domestic tourist travel reached around 15 %

(or even more) of the total.²⁵ In any case, the role of package holidays was unique for that time.

In 1936/37, however, obviously an upper limit was reached, both in relative and in absolute terms. The reasons were twofold. Firstly, aggressive planning led to growing demand – in particular by the Wehrmacht – for transport capacity; more and more KdF had to charter busses instead of whole trains. Secondly, among the working class – about half of the population – a social border was reached: despite the unrivalled prices of KdF holiday trips, wages – controlled by the regime – were so low that they did not allow for further increase in the participation of (non-skilled) labourers in tourism; in particular working-class families with children could not afford a KdF holiday trip but at best a short trip.²⁶ Among the millions of KdF excursionists streaming on Sundays into the seaside resorts, tourist towns and beauty spots (KF and WF) workers might even have been the majority but it was different in the case of KdF vacationing. It seems that on average on the UF-trips the share of workers was less than 40 %, on the SF-trips less than 20 %.²⁷ And these shares were probably even decreasing in the two years preceding the war. Thus, after a phase of rapid growth KdF travel remained stagnant on an admittedly high level. In addition, conflict with the tourist industry intensified: as soon as tourism recovered, the crowds of vulgar KdF clients – be it excursionists or holiday makers – were no longer welcome in the exclusive seaside resorts and spas. Fully aware of these problems, the regime at least partly abandoned its initial main objective of integrating the working class into the Volksgemeinschaft by symbolically “breaking the bourgeois travel privilege”. Instead, as the figures indicate, KdF increasingly had to help with other tasks, in particular supporting the economic and ideological integration of depressed, remote areas (Notstandsgebiete like the Eifel mountains) and since 1938 of the annexed territories. Facing permanent complaints by the associations of tourist business, KdF more and more withdrew from the chic resorts and finally made Austria – now called Eastern March (“Ostmark”) – the main destination. Former Austrians were strongly overrepresented among KdF clients.²⁸ At the same time, KdF increasingly served the needs of the middle classes, in particular salaried employees, and last but not least of the “bigwigs” from the DAF and the Party. The travel program became diversified and included more rather costly²⁹ trips (yet, there were still differences from the commercial middle and upper middle class tourism where families - and their children - set the tone.³⁰ The following tables reflect these tendencies; Table 3 shows the price trend and structure.³¹

Table 3: Price structure of the trips

Prices in Reichsmark ^(a)						
	Average	Range.	Std.dev.	per day	<31 RM	>55 RM
Year ^(b)	RM	RM	RM	RM ^(c)	paid by % of participants	
1934	34.60	15-65	11.48	4.44	34.6	3.7
1935	38.89	12-62	15.38	4.52	39.6	30.8
1936	36.70	8-64	14.94	4.53	44.3	17.3
1937	35.68	9-76	15.15	4.57	41.8	21.8
1938	46.24	6-150	31.06	5.03	33.5	28.0
1939	48.13	11-150	28.32	5.23	17.7	20.2
Total	40.89	6-150	22.71	4.81	34.3	21.6

a) UF, SF, and WF (of > 2 days).

b) Calendar years.

c) Includes transport, accommodation, and food and drink; extra costs (UF only) were estimated at 25-40 %.³²

Not only did the average price level rise considerably in 1938, but the jump in the standard deviation indicates the greater variety of the program. The minimum of the price range was marked by spartan hiking tours, the maximum by lavish cruises and journeys to Italy. Roughly speaking, up to 30 RM was in the reach of skilled workers;³³ those offers became rare in 1939. The same tendencies are also readable in the duration of the trips: In 1934, 7 % of the trips lasted longer than 8 days, in 1939, the percentage went up to 47 %; Table 4 shows the average length.³⁴

Table 4: Length of the trips

Duration in days ^(a)			
Year ^(b)	Average	Range	Std.dev.
1934	7.8	4-10	1.2
1935	8.6	4-14	2.2
1936	8.1	3-15	2.6
1937	7.8	3-15	2.8
1938	9.2	3-18	3.8
1939	9.2	4-19	2.7
Total	8.5	3-19 ^(c)	2.8

- a) UF, SE, and WF (of > 2 days).
- b) Calendar years.
- c) In some districts cruises up to 21 days were offered.

Table 5 reflects the spatial shifting of KdF overland travel.³⁵ First from the elegant spas to the simple summer resorts, then – in the “Großdeutsches Reich” – from the “Altreich” to former Austria.

Table 5: Types of destinations of the trips

Out of 10 participants of domestic trips travelled to ^(a)				
Year ^(b)	Health resorts and spas	Seaside resorts	No typical tourist community ^(c)	Annexed territories ^(d)
1934	6	4	0	
1935	6	1	3	
1936	4	2	4	
1937	4	2	4	
<i>Without the trips to the annexed territories (“Altreich” only):</i>				
1938	2	2	6	
1939	0	4	6	
<i>Including the trips to the annexed territories (“Großdeutsches Reich”):</i>				
1938	2	2	5	1
1939	0	1	2	7

- a) UF and WF (of > 2 days) to domestic destinations.
- b) Calendar years.
- c) Esp. summer resorts (Sommerfrische) and communities with hitherto virtually no tourism.
- d) All types of communities in Austria (and the Sudetengau).

The figures in Tables 2- 5 indicate a shift in the main objective of KdF tourism: from social to national integration. This reorientation went hand in hand with a shift in the perception of Nazi popular tourism: the first sensational phase was followed by a second adaptive phase.³⁶ KdF gradually lost its aura of a revolutionary breakthrough of the “Socialism of the Deed”. Like all material achievements, mass tourism became “normalized”; additionally, it turned out that despite the unrivalled price level the financial barriers remained all too high for the majority of Germans.³⁷ Thus, the regime’s hopes that, thanks to KdF, the worker would gratefully turn into

a «dedicated follower of the Führer» vanished. More and more KdF was regarded simply as a low-budget tour operator instead of a means to «create the people's community». The abbreviation KdF increasingly acquired the notion of second-class tourist experience, while at the same time, the middle classes took over the most attractive offers such as sea voyages and the circular tours to Italy.

The long-term psychological effects, however, tell quite a different story. It seems that KdF had lastingly widened the "horizon of opportunities" (G. Schulze): it was a dream machine that put the idea of vacationing within reach of the lower classes and so paved the way to the consumer society that emerged after the war. Decades afterwards you could find pensioners, without sympathy for the Nazi ideology itself, recounting with shining eyes their first ever holiday trip, organized by «Kraft durch Freude».

J4, ch. 4f; the same 200
J5, ch. 5. I am deeply indebted to
3. The ultimate ratio of the "people's community" was
socially "alien" or politically dangerous. An additional fu-
loved to speak of the "peace" that KdF would promote.
4. Cf. König, Wandern, Urlaub (RWU), i.e. Department for Trav-
5. Amt Reisen, Wandern, Urlaub (RWU), i.e. Department for Trav-
6. Most of the data presented here were compiled long ago but he-
my master thesis (Spode 1979) as well as from its revised digest (Spode
least outside Germany, until the topic was rediscovered. Even less noti-
consumption, respectively.
well as the master thesis by Frommann 1977. Time was not ripe for to-
raft report by Horst Dreßler-André, 1933-1938 KdF-Reichsleiter, with who
Programmheft, ed. by Gauamt Mainfranken, Würzburg 1.
not paginated (Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz: Fha 835).
of the trip (and realized) trips of > 2 days have been weighted with an average
nounced (see below) and the means of transportation (bus or railway). The
sed on many different sources (regional statistics, travelogues etc.), cf. Spode
rship automatically included that of KdF. The 1st Jan. 1938 the DAF counted
were from Gau Mainfranken. Calc. from Partei-Statistik, ed. by Reichsorgan.
Arbeitsfront, s.l. s.a., pp. 76ff, 82ff, 94. (Together with the family members, Ku-
participants from Mainfranken calculated by means of the averages was slight-
a satisfactory result, in particular since the shares differed more or less from t-
Mainfranken the hiking tours - hiking was more popular in Southern Ger-
reliable official data, 1.1 % of all participants in holiday trips (UF) in 1936,
but 4.3 % in hiking tours (WF). Calculated from Programmheft Mainfranken 3f.
standard trip of one or two weeks to spas, seaside or summer resorts made app-
of KdF vacationers simply went on "normal" summer holidays. The rest of U-
xpensive) special offers, such as skiing holidays, bike and motorbike tours,
- (for details see the literature in fn. 1 and 6).
nte des Sieges. Die Gesamtarbeit der Deutschen Arbeitsfront von 1933
ntical with 5 Jahre "Kraft durch Freude". Leistungsbericht der NS.-
738, Berlin 1938, pp. 32f; and for calculations was used: KdF Data
ung in Deutschland, s.l. 1936, pp. 6f; Gesamtrechtschaftsbericht
Die DAF, ed. by Geschäftsführer der DAF, s.l. s.a., pp. 116f; G.
"ung und Ziele, Berlin 1940, pp. 160f; for further sources
and 1982, p. 297 (fn. 102).
a smaller scale; overall figures are not available. Cf.
7. Ein Volk erobert die Freude. Zum 4. Jahrest-
24. On the other hand, sometimes pl-
Partei Deutschlands [Sc
also expected thr
ter

- 1939; the actual total might be slightly higher. Counting the participants from the "Altreich" only, the total was around 7-7.2 mill., incl. KF and WF around 43 mill. (in terms of figures that would make 62 % of the 69 mill. inhabitants).
18. ...like present-day definitions of the "travel intensity" require a minimum duration: the leading German survey "Reiseanalyse", e.g., defines it as the quota of the inhabitants older than 14 who made at least 1 trip of at least 5 days during last year: see *Voyage. Studies on Travel & Tourism* 4 (2001), p.167.
19. The number of reporting communities rapidly grew, resulting in an artificial increase in the registered guests/arrivals (Neumeldungen) and overnight stays (Übernachtungen). However, the bias was limited because the more frequented spots were included earlier than the sleepy summer resorts. In 1936 a decree - VO zur Fremdenverkehrsstatistik v. 27.4.36, RGBl I (1936), p.404 - improved the statistics again so that it comprised all important communities. The data ("Halbjahresstatistik") were published in *Vierteljahrshefte zur Statistik des Deutschen Reichs*, further information and summaries esp. in *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich und Wirtschaft und Statistik*. Cf. the literature in Spode 1982, p.298 (fn.106).
20. Cf. the estimated overall index in Hoffmann 1965, p.687, and the indices for Berlin and Nauheim in Spode 1979, p.89.
21. It provided at best for an idea of the number of travellers.
22. Source: Germany: calc. from *Vjh. Stat. DR 43ff(1934ff)*, passim; *Stat. Jb. DR 58(1939/40)*, p.76; KdF: KdF Data Mainfranken acc. the formula: $(t - 1) \times (UF + (WF / 100))$, where t is the average duration.
23. As König 2003, p.266 (fn.25), rightly objects against Spode 1982, pp.299f.
24. In 1938/39 of all overnight stays 14 % fell into seaside resorts, 51% into health resorts, 12 % into small and medium towns, and 23 % into cities. As a guide number the share of non-leisure traffic is assumed in the seaside resorts <5 %, in the other categories <50 %. Cf. *Nationalatlas 2000*, pp.22f.
25. The higher the value of x, the lower the quota and vice versa.
126. ...as DAF experts internally harshly criticized: Th. Bühler: *Deutsche Sozialwirtschaft. Ein Überblick über die sozialen Aufgaben der Volkswirtschaft*, Stuttgart/Berlin 1940, pp.47f.
27. Including quite a few tickets sponsored by the employers (1938/39 altogether 0.46 mill. trips had been partly or fully subsidized, cf. Mason 1977, p.252; Baranowski 2004, p.71). In 1937 the travel intensity among the working class was 2-3 %; between 1934 and 1939 probably around 10 % made at least one KdF holiday trip, among them especially male skilled workers from the industrial regions. In the Weimar Republic "cheap" package holidays had costed around 100 RM and thus were unaffordable for workers - nevertheless, the small travel agency of the trade unions had even offered tours for 350 RM. For the quota of workers cf. summarizing Spode/Steinecke 1991, p.86.
- The data on the social structure of the vacationers stem from polls published by KdF and also from some reports on trips by agents of the secret services. Like the official numbers of the participants, the official social data often are rather reliable but they are of little validity. E.g., a sampling of 18 trains (n = prob. > 10,000) from Gau Berlin in 1937 found out: 39 % manual workers (prob. incl. artisans), 28 % salaried employees, 3 % civil servants, 3.5 % pensioners, 2.5 % freelancers and self employed persons (however, it is possible that the sampling included KF, too). Acc. G. Adam: *Aus der praktischen Tätigkeit der NS.-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude"*. In: *Weltkongreß "Arbeit und Freude"*. Rom 1938. *Deutsche Referate*, Berlin 1938, p.22. Of all participants of "overland trips" (n = 32,220; prob. only UF and longer WF) from Gau Thuringia in 1937/38 - as far as I know the best published poll - were 30 % male (prob. incl. artisans) and 17.6 % female workers, 11.8 % male and 9 % female salaried employees, 1.7 % male and 0.1 % female civil servants, 2 % male and 0.7 % female self employed, 1.9 % male and 1.5 % female apprentices, 16.5 % housewives, 7.2 % other (maids, soldiers, farmers etc.); for cruises (n = 2412; SF) the shares read: 20.2 % male (prob. incl. artisans) and 4.8 % female workers, 15 % male and 19.8 % female salaried employees, 10 % male and 1.7 % female civil servants, 6.2 % male and 1.4 % female self employed, 15.9 % housewives, 5 % other. Acc. *5 Jahre NS.-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude"*. Gau Thüringen. *Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, s.l. s.a., pp.12f. Reports on KdF trips by undercover Social Democrats mentioned the social composition in a vague qualitative manner (n of the statements = 57; sometimes > 1 statement in one report): approx. 26 % of the statements said that there were no or only a few workers, 37 % spoke of the middle classes predominating, also 37 % of many (skilled) workers among the vacationers. Calc. from Spode 1-6(1934-1939), passim.
28. In 1938 they held a share of 18 % of all KdF trips compared to 8 % of the DAF membership; see Table 1 and fn. 10 (on the much smaller annexed territories of the Sudeten and Memel no data available).135. Source: KdF Data Mainfranken; categories of the communities acc. *Vjh. Stat. DR 47(1938)11*, pp.51ff (the figures are rounded to 10 % in order to avoid a misleading impression of accuracy).
29. Compared to free tourism, KdF's prices remained unrivalled. At least, some 200 RM arose for a holiday trip; package holidays were rare, not to speak of cheap ones; cruises could cost more than 1000 RM. In 1937 the MER, the biggest

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Μερικές ποσοτικές πλευρές του Τουρισμού Kraft durch Freude (Δύναμη Μέσω της Χαράς), 1934 - 1939

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Τα τελευταία χρόνια η έρευνα γύρω από τον τουρισμό στη διάρκεια του Τρίτου Ράιχ έχει αποκτήσει νέα ορμή.¹ Ενώ πανεπιστημιακός και δημόσιος διάλογος γύρω από το Ναζισμό επικεντρώθηκαν στον πόλεμο και τη γενοκτονία, λίγες μελέτες (ξανα)ανακάλυψαν² τις απόπειρες του καθεστώτος να προωθήσει τον καταναλωτισμό κατά τη διάρκεια της προπολεμικής περιόδου, ώστε να διατηρηθεί η εσωτερική «κοινωνική ειρήνη». Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η επιδίωξη να «κερδηθούν οι καρδιές των εργατών» έπρεπε να γίνει πράξη όχι μόνο μέσω της λεκτικής αναβάθμισης της χειρωνακτικής εργασίας («η αξία της δουλειάς»), αλλά και μέσω της προσφοράς έως τότε απρόσιπων καταναλωτικών αγαθών. Φθηνά, μαζικής παραγωγής «λαϊκά» αγαθά, όπως ραδιόφωνα και ψυγεία, συμβόλιζαν τη «λαϊκή κοινότητα» (Volksgemeinschaft) αποτελούμενη από ίσους «εθνικούς συντρόφους» (Volksgenossen), κι έτσι θα διέλυαν την εργατική τάξη με τις αριστερές της παραδόσεις ως κοινωνικό και πολιτικό σχηματισμό.³ Ενώ η επαγγελθείσα γη της αφθονίας έμεινε στις περισσότερες περιπτώσεις απλή προπαγάνδα⁴, π.χ. το «λαϊκό αυτοκίνητο»), «η διάτρηση του ασυκτού ταξιδιωτικού προνομίου» σημείωσε πράγματι σημαντική πρόοδο. Οι φθηνές διακοπές έγιναν το «καύχημα» του αποκαλούμενου «Σοσιαλισμού της Πράξης».

Λαϊκός μαζικός τουρισμός οργανώθηκε από το Τμήμα Ταξιδιών⁵ της τεράστιας οργάνωσης των Ναζί για τον ελεύθερο χρόνο με το στομφώδες όνομα Εθνική Σοσιαλιστική Κοινότητα «Δύναμη μέσω της Χαράς» (Nationalsozialistische Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude", NSG "KdF"). Ιδρύθηκε στο τέλος του 1933 ως κλάδος του Γερμανικού Εργατικού Μετώπου (Deutsche Arbeitsfront, DAF), ενός πανταχού παρόντος, ψευδο-εργατικού συνδικάτου. Το KdF Τουρισμού ξεκίνησε το Φεβρουάριο του 1934, συνοδευόμενο από ένα χείμαρρο προπαγάνδας. Μέσα σε λίγες εβδομάδες, το KdF έγινε το μεγαλύτερο τουριστικό πρακτορείο του κόσμου. Όπως ήδη αναφέρθηκε, έχουν εμφανιστεί σημαντικές μελέτες για το KdF, τις ταξιδιωτικές του δραστηριότητες και τις πολιτικές του προθέσεις. Εν τούτοις, ποσοτική αποτύπωση με αριθμητικά στοιχεία έχει μάλλον σποραδικά χρησιμοποιηθεί για να υποστηριχθεί η ανάλυση. Το παρόν άρθρο προτίθεται να καλύψει το συγκεκριμένο κενό στην ποσοτική γνώση γύρω από το KdF Τουρισμού. Επομένως, πρόθεσή μου εδώ δεν είναι να προσφέρω νέες ερμηνείες, αλλά μόνον μερικά εργαλεία⁶ για περαιτέρω χρήση.