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*Airworld:
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'LET US FLY YOU WHERE THE SUN IS': AIR TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

HASSO SPÖDE

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Today, 700 million international arrivals are registered around the world, two thirds of these arrivals for 'purposeless' tourist travel. Europe's Mediterranean beaches alone attract around 100 million sun worshippers.¹ This gigantic migration is only conceivable on the basis of an industrialisation of travel: organisation, lodging, and transportation require elaborate logistical planning and technology. It is commonly thought that aviation was the cause of the victorious march of mass tourism.² The aeroplane did in fact make it possible for us to reach almost any point on the globe in a few hours: put more critically, 'Man has reached the limits of his cage'.³

However, this conclusion was already reached by the French geographer Jean Brunhes in 1909. Although mass air travel was still unimaginable, and holiday vacations were still a privilege limited to the upper echelons of society, this was the dawn of mass tourism. In Great Britain, the beaches of Blackpool and Brighton thus drew hundreds of thousands on good days, and German seaside resorts claimed almost one million vacationers and visitors; Switzerland registered a total of over 20 million foreign overnight stays. The transportation required for this was achieved with the railroad. In terms of the relation between tourism and aviation, two precisely opposite causal links are conceivable: either the aeroplane helped mass tourism to achieve its breakthrough – or mass tourism guaranteed the breakthrough for the aeroplane.

The 'Heroic' Age of Aviation

It would be an entirely different question to explore the relations between aviation and war. For our purposes, we must be satisfied with the remark that World War I brought an enormous push of innovation in flight technology and also instigated an awareness of the strategic importance of the air. The popularity of air travel was promoted by the so-called 'ace pilots', those flyers who during the war were able to down more than four planes, like the 'Red Baron', Manfred von Richthofen.

The Daredevil Years of Air Travel

Although the Treaty of Versailles not only forced Germany to make very high retribution payments, but

also forbade an air force and limited aeroplane construction, it ultimately served to promote entrepreneurial endeavours in the area of aeronautics. Numerous pilots bought military planes in order to try their luck as stunt airmen or to begin a flight service. Around 30 companies specialising in flight were active in post-war Germany. The airline industry began to blossom, even if until 1926 most aeroplanes had to be manufactured abroad. The first airline in Germany was opened in 1919.⁴ The Deutsche Luft-Reederei (001) transported politicians (like President Ebert) and files from Berlin to the National Assembly in Weimar, where the deputies negotiated the constitution and were to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. The two-hour adventure cost the substantial sum of 700 Reichsmarks, approximately half the annual income of a bricklayer.

Air travel was nothing for people with weak nerves. As one set of passenger guidelines explained, 'Special clothing will be distributed at the airport. In case of warmer weather, only a cap and protective glasses are required'. Regarding the most precarious moment of flight, the passenger was merely told, 'On take-off, after 100–200m of rolling the machine elevates – almost unnoticeably – from the ground'. Photography was allowed, but: 'When holding the camera out of the plane, strong air pressure should be expected'.⁵ This referred to the F 13, developed by Junkers in 1919. The all-metal cabin aeroplane became the prototype of all civilian planes. With windows that could be opened, heating, and cushioned seats, it was more comfortable for the four passengers than the open military planes (002). Since then, the experience of flight became increasingly marked by a cabin interior cut off from the outside world. The second 'revolution' after the F 13 in this light was the Boeing 307 in 1938, with its own climate-controlled pressurised cabin in which the passengers floated restfully above the clouds (005). Of course, even today the ambivalent psychic state between euphoria and panic caused by overcoming gravity has still not entirely dissipated.⁶

The queasiness felt by passengers was at first due to quite real risks. As late as 1930, around every tenth flight in Germany ended with an 'unforeseen landing', one of every 150 ended in human injury. Although such

1 Source: *Voyage* 1 ff. (1997 ff.)

2 See for example Peter J. Lynn and Marc L. J. Dierix, 'From Privilege to Popularity: The Growth of Leisure Air Travel since 1945', *Journal of Transport History*, 15 (1994).

3 Quoted in Daniela Trom, 'Natur und nationale Identität. Der Streit um den Schutz der Natur um die Jahrhundertwende in Deutschland und Frankreich', *Nation und Emotion. Deutschland und Frankreich im Vergleich. 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Etienne Francois et al., Göttingen, 1995, p. 147. On tourism's phase of expansion see: Hasso Spode, *Wie die Deutschen Reise-weltmeister wurden. Eine Einführung in die Tourismusgeschichte*, Erfurt, 2003. The sources used in this essay come primarily from the Historisches Archiv zum Tourismus (HAT) at the Willy-Scharnow-Institut für Tourismus of the Freie Universität Berlin.

4 On this, see Joachim Wachtel, 'Gebucht nach Berlin', *Die Reise nach Berlin*, eds. Dieter Vorsteher, et al., Berlin, 1987, pp. 145 f. Already during the years 1910–14 a flight service was operated by the Deutschen Luftschiffahrts-AG. The take-off of the German aeronautics industry could not be stopped by the Versailles treaty. In 1925, for example, planes from the Dessau's Junkers plant would make up 40 percent of all aeroplanes used. See Walter Scheiffele, *Bauhaus. Junkers. Sozialdemokratie. Ein Kraftfeld der Moderne*, Berlin, 2003, p. 77.

5 Wachtel, 'Gebucht nach Berlin'.

6 This was shown by the applause on the landing of charter aeroplanes. See Rainer Schönhammer, *n.Bewegung. Zur Psychologie der Fortbewegung*, Munich, 1991. The fact that present day aeroplanes still have windows is primarily thanks to the fear of flying and claustrophobia. See Rualf Metzler, *Zukunft unbegrenzt. Die fantastischen Aussichten des Flugverkehrs jetzt und in den nächsten Jahren*, Munich, 1967, p. 106.

7 See Christoph Asendorf, *Super Constellation. Flugzeug und Raumrevolution. Die Wirkung der Luftfahrt auf Kunst und Kultur der Moderne*, Vienna and New York, 1997. Until 1940, the number of deaths sank to around 3 for every 100 million passenger kilometres flown: the improvement around 1930 is shown by the decrease in both fatal and non-fatal accidents from one in every 0.4 million km in 1926 to one in every 2.9 million km in 1931. Sources: Wulf Bley, *Deutsche Luft Hansa A.G.*, Berlin, 1932, p. 62; Heinz Schamp, *Luftverkehrsgeographie. Deutschlands Lage im Weltluftverkehr*, Wiesbaden, 1957, p. 11, and footnote 10.

8 Friedrich A. Fischer von Poturzyn, *Luft Hansa. Luftpolitische Möglichkeiten*, Leipzig, 1925, p. 24; see also *Die Luftreise*, October 1932, pp. 55 ff.

9 This in turn encompassed further airlines. On the following see Deutsche Lufthansa (DLH), *Firmenfestschriften*, 1929, 1975 and 1980; Karl-Dieter Seifert, *Der deutsche Luftverkehr*, Volume 1, Bonn, 1999; Albert Fischer, *Luftverkehr zwischen Markt und Macht, 1919–1937. Lufthansa, Verkehrsflug und der Kampf ums Monopol*, Stuttgart, 2003; and Wachtel, 'Gebucht nach Berlin'.

10 Martin Wronsky, *Deutscher Luftverkehr. Sonderdr. WGL-Jahrbuch*, Munich and Berlin, 1927, p. 11. Wronsky was here referring to Hans Grimm's bestseller, which played a fateful role in the development of Hitler's thinking.

11 Seifert, *Der deutsche Luftverkehr*, pp. 344–345, Brockhaus Edition 15, Volume 9, 1928, pp. 452 f. On the USA, see: Joseph Corn, *The Winged Gospel: America's Romance with Aviation*, New York, 1983; Roger E. Blistein, *Flight in America. 1900–1983*, Baltimore and London, 1984; Blistein, 'Travel by Air: The American Context', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 33 (1993); Robert J. Serling, *Eagle – the Story of American Airlines*, New York, 1985.

'hard' landings usually went well, around the world there were an estimated 10 deaths per 100 million passenger kilometres of flight. Suspiciously, one listened to the unsteady rattle of the motor – and prayed that the interruptions might only last a few seconds! But soon, the passengers were more able to relax: the trend towards creating 'artificial environments' also made flying safer.⁷ The gyroscopic compass, flight indicator, direction finder, and automatic pilot made it possible to fly by instrument. Together with more robust motors, multiple-motor planes, fixed inspection schedules, professional pilot training, and stricter state regulation, it was possible to lower the number of accidents markedly.

Air Policy

Despite the risks, as early as 1920 air routes dedicated solely to tourist travel began operation in Germany and in the US (from Miami to sinful Havana or from Berlin to the seaside resort Usedom). Germany, highly interested in a civilian 'air policy' that helped to mitigate the limitations entailed by the Versailles treaty, was also one of the initiators of the IATA, the International Air Traffic Association, founded in 1919. The first international connection, however, was established in 1920 by the Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij voor Nederland en Koloniën (KLM) between Amsterdam and London. But air travel strategists were already thinking far into the future. Since England, France, Holland and other colonial powers had to pursue primarily the establishment of air connections to their distant colonies, Germany was left with the strategic goal of constructing long distant routes to the gaps in the geopolitical system: the Far East and America. At the same time, the goal was also to develop intra-European travel. While many countries, like Hungary, kept their air space closed except for a few 'flight corridors', some stretches were already jointly operated by numerous companies in a pool or in joint ventures.

The Junkers press spokesman Friedrich A. Fischer von Poturzyn, a pioneer of 'the possibilities of air policy', set the tone in 1925: '[A]ir travel is either international – or it is nothing at all!⁸ But the first task at hand was to put an end to the destructive competition on the national level. Subsidies were cut, and, bowing to pressure from

the national government, the two largest carriers firms in Germany, Deutsche Aero Lloyd and Junkers Luftverkehr,⁹ fused in 1926, and the Deutsche Luft Hansa AG was born. The name was Fischer von Poturzyn's creation, and Aero Lloyd's crane was chosen as the emblem. With stock holdings of 26 percent and re-instituted subsidies, the national government was the most important owner of this new company, which was now to be operated strictly in accordance with 'business principles'.

Air policy was of course more than keeping the books; flight symbolised the future. 'One needn't be a Jules Verne or a Wells to see how soon multi-motored large aeroplanes [...] will carry travellers and goods to all countries of the planet, across the blue world of our globe, which has become so small', the Luft-Hansa director Martin Wronsky effused, and added a prognosis that fatefully would soon be fulfilled: the Germans 'have recently been described in a brilliant book as a "people without space". Air travel shows us ways to new space'.¹⁰

But a quite 'unheroic' tourism was also to play a crucial role in the operations of the new company; especially the *Bäderdienst*, or 'seaside service', to the North Sea and the Baltic was expanded. The entire network of air routes was 20,000 km; 56,000 passengers were flown on these routes with 162 aeroplanes, two-thirds of all German airline traffic.¹¹ Foreign destinations included London, Paris, and Malmö. In 1929, the initial dramatic growth in passenger numbers was again on the decline, due to the outbreak of the Depression. Nonetheless, Luft Hansa was still able to invest.

Around 1930, with just over 100,000 passengers German airline travel exceeded the English and the French by three times. Although an airline had already opened in 1914 in Florida, the air craze in America first began in 1927 with Lindbergh's ingeniously marketed transatlantic flight. The kilometres flown per year were barely higher than those in smaller Germany, the approximately 40,000 km route network only half that of Europe. Now, however, the rapid expansion of the air routes began to take off in the United States. United, Transworld, Eastern, American, and Pan American engaged in a brutal competitive struggle. Preferred by the government, Pan Am took on the leading role in foreign business, especially with Latin America. Around

12 Deutsche Lufthansa, Firmenfestschrift 1936, p. 50.
 13 Ibid., pp. 53 f. and p. 89. Görings famous dictum, 'I decide who's a Jew!', was applied to Milch – who was of 'mixed' descent. Milch, a former fighter pilot, prepared the integration of DLH into the Nazi system; in 1938 he was made General Inspector of the Air Force, in 1940 General Field Marshal; in 1942 President of the DLH and in addition was delegated to the Speer's 'Office of Central Planning', where one of his tasks involved the atomic bomb program. In 1944, he fell out of favour with Göring. On the following, as in footnote 8 and Bibliographisches Institut, ed., *Schlag nach! Wissenswerte Tatsachen aus allen Gebieten*, Leipzig, 1941, pp. 395 ff.
 14 See Friedrich A. Fischer von Poturzyn, *Luftmacht. Gegenwart und Zukunft im Urteil des Auslands*, Heidelberg, 1938; the subsidies of the DLH sank from 62.8 percent in 1932 to 40.6 percent in 1938. On this, see Fischer, *Luftverkehr zwischen Markt und Macht*, p. 315.
 15 Seifert, *Der deutsche Luftverkehr*, p. 345.
 16 'Blitz' was a fashionable word of a fast time, which would soon culminate in the Blitzkrieg. As early as 1936–37, DLH flew part of the Legion Condor to Spain – the 'Condor' was also a word of the new time. 17 Between 1931–1937, the LZ 127 transported also passengers on a total of 65 flights to South America – with a menu at the Captain's Table, and amazing views ('endless palm forests along the coast') (*Die Luftreise*, August 1932, pp. 12 ff).

the world, the more economical all-metal planes began to dominate airline fleets: the Junkers Ju 52 (1932) (003) and the streamlined Douglas DC-3 (1935), which would become the most frequently built aeroplane in the world (007, 008). In Germany, Lufthansa (the one word spelling was introduced in 1933–34) consolidated its position still further. Almost every European country now had its own airline, from the French Air Union (which in 1933 was absorbed by Air France), to British Imperial Airways, the Italian airline SISA, the Belgian state carrier Sabena, Swissair, or the tiny Danish Luftfartsselskab. Not least the Soviet Union, on the basis of its own air travel industry, greatly expanded its Aeroflot (which in 1937 also took over the German-Russian Deruluft); in 1935 it possessed a network of air routes that stretched over 47,000 km.

The Crane and the Swastika

Like Stalin, Hitler was thrilled by technology and air travel. A sensation in 1932 were the five election campaign tours, on which he flew 35,000 km – high above Germany – while his competitors took the train on the ground. In 1936, Lufthansa proudly advertised its part in helping Hitler to become chancellor with a celebratory publication. In 1932, as it was put in retrospect, 'the number of special flights grew dramatically, since Lufthansa repeatedly provided the Führer [...] the fastest, multi-motor aeroplanes of the time. Through this, it became possible for the Führer and his fellow fighters to carry the National Socialist idea to all regions [Gau] of the Fatherland'.¹²

The connection to the National Socialists paid off for Lufthansa. When Hermann Göring, once an ace pilot in the First World War and a civilian pilot in Sweden, was named Minister for Aviation, he made Erhard Milch, a member of Lufthansa's board of directors, his 'closest associate'.¹³ Little changed in terms of strategy: already before 1933, Lufthansa had been following the 'same goals in traffic policy and technology'. Able to harvest the foreign political and economic crop that had been sown by the democratic governments in the Weimar Republic, the Nazi regime was not only able to begin building up an air force in 1935, but also encouraged Lufthansa's policy of expansion. The economy

recovered, and the 'chains of Versailles' were 'burst'. In 1934, Hitler held the opening speech at the IATA convention. 'Flight is victory', Lufthansa proclaimed.

By this point, all major European cities were connected by airlines, and in North America as well the network became even tighter. After the United States, the 'Third Reich' finally achieved the status of an air power,¹⁴ and in German civil aviation only Lufthansa could profit from this development. In 1935 it could for the first time cover half of the operating costs through ticket sales: after the elimination of the remaining competitor, the Deutsche Verkehrsflug AG, it held a practical monopoly on the German market with 94 percent of all passengers (1938).¹⁵ Lufthansa nonetheless remained highly innovative. Thus, fast domestic connections were established with the small Heinkel He 70 (010), which flew speeds of up to 360 km.¹⁶ For long distance routes, however, regular passenger service could only operate over land or with stops on islands. Beginning in 1938, Lufthansa served the route Berlin–Athens–Bagdad–Teheran–Kabul. It took four days to get to Afghanistan, the price of 1300 Reichsmarks included room and board, feeder service, and tips. This geopolitical prestige object would in the following year also fly to Bangkok, but the extension to the ally Japan did not come about due to the outbreak of war. Similar long distance routes were operated by Air France (Paris–Hanoi), Pan Am (San Francisco–Manila), or KLM (Amsterdam–Batavia, now Jakarta) (→ 393). Lufthansa succeeded in establishing a regular connection to South America in 1934 – in cooperation with Air France, and to the annoyance of the United States. The ocean between Gambia and Brazil was bridged with seaplanes and 'swimming airports', a complicated system only suited for postal service.¹⁷ (011, 012) This was also attempted for longer stretches over the North Atlantic, but never came into use.

Instead, Lufthansa bought into the Zeppelin company to establish a direct connection to New York. The airships LZ 127 (like Jules Verne's *Robur the Conqueror*, it had circumnavigated the world in 1929) and LZ 129 (013) (248 m in length, the largest airship in the world) now connected Europe and America with regular service. The giants floated across the Atlantic at a leisurely pace of 130 km/h. The impressive technology was matched

by the futuristic interior design, with Bauhaus inspired aluminium furniture in the smoking room (014). The route became a symbol of progress, but soon it would come to symbolise the risks of progress as well. The cool luxury and the peace offered by a 50 hour flight for 1000 RM veiled the carelessness of the operators, that already in the second year of operation – in May 1937 resulted in catastrophe: LZ 129, the *Hindenburg*, exploded while docking in Lakehurst, New Jersey.¹⁸ Not only the 36 deaths – airship accidents had already resulted in up to 73 deaths – but more the media presence of the accident, the visual power of the fire ball and the dramatic radio reportage, made the *Hindenburg* into a symbol of technological risks.

Civil Aviation before Take Off

But even without the debacle of Lakehurst, the zeppelin would probably have remained only a brief episode in the history of air travel. A new generation of four-motor land aeroplanes allowed new achievements: the Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor, the Boeing 307 Stratoliner and the Junkers Ju 90 (015) (as well as the Douglas DC-4 and Lockheed Constellation, completed during the war). In 1938, the Condor, which could fly at speeds of 430 km/h, achieved the non-stop flight from Berlin to New York. On the eve of the war, in technological terms the aeroplane was already able to compete with railroad and ship lines. Like this a complex network of means of transportation, routes, trans-shipment centres, security systems, provisions, and information, civil aviation was ready for 'take off'.

The airport, just like train stations in the nineteenth century, now served as the imposing entryway to this system; instead of provisional solutions, now modern logistical and aesthetic solutions were to provide worldly elegance. Pioneering here was the reconstruction of the Zentralflyhghafen Berlin Tempelhof, begun in 1936. The complex, opened in 1923, was already Germany's largest airport.¹⁹ The location had an additional invaluable advantage: its central urban location. Ernst Sagebiel was commissioned to build the airport; once an associate of Erich Mendelsohn, who had emigrated to America, he was later Göring's architect for Berlin's monumental

Ministry of Aviation, now the Federal Ministry of Finance. The hangars and the area for arrivals and departures are placed along a 1.2 km long arc; the planes can roll directly into the hangars, making it an airport of short distances (017, 018). In the centre, attached to the main hangar on the city side is a spacious terminal hall, which opens onto an impressive plaza. The side facing the city is in a monumental neo-classicist style, whereas from the runway side the building appears as an elegant steel and glass construction. On the roof, spectator stands were planned to hold 80,000 – a truly impressive gateway to the planned European capital 'Germania'. But like Prora, a structurally similar gigantic Nazi seaside resort on the island of Rügen, the almost completed building was not opened during the Nazi era: it instead served the air force. But even if the architectural style might run contrary to current tastes,²⁰ Tempelhof remains an ingenious solution, the 'mother of all modern airports', as Norman Foster put it.²¹

Not only did airports become more impressive, passenger comfort also began to come into its own. Already in 1928, Lufthansa introduced 'flying dining cars', and an experiment was even made with film screenings during flight. In 1938, the first 20 stewardesses took up service on the Condor; following American models outfitted with a uniform and 'with sassy sailor's caps, these first German stewardesses were selected from among 2000 applicants.²² The great interest in this position reflects the prestige of flight. But the everyday life of flying was sobering: long approaches, delays for hours or even days, on board the deafening roar of the engines, headaches and an up and down which made the vomit bag an absolute requirement.²³ All of this compounded the already prevalent fear of flying. In fact, the relative risk of death was incomparably higher than that on trains – but the absolute risk was certainly low.²⁴

After a series of accidents in 1936–37, a broad campaign was launched in the United States to make America 'air-minded':²⁵ from newspaper ads ('Afraid to Fly?') and free flights for wives (it was known that they were afraid when their husbands used the aeroplane) to 'Air Babies' toys, intent to make even the little ones excited about flight. The United States had long overtaken Europe in terms of air travel,²⁶ counting in 1937 almost

¹⁸ Although the danger of explosion was known, the zeppelins were filled with hydrogen, since helium was rare and expensive. (LZ 129 would have required almost half of the annual production of Helium in the United States.) In 1938, Lakehurst was still served (*Weltreise-Zeitung*, 24.4 [1938], p. 22), but on Göring's order the almost complete LZ 130 and the LZ 131 – waiting in the dockyard – were demolished. Since also the British R 101 burned and a number of other airships crashed, the fate of these aircraft were sealed.

¹⁹ Approximately 100,000 departures, around 50,000 in Frankfurt, Munich, and Hamburg. See Werner Treibel, *Geschichte der deutschen Verkehrsflughäfen. Eine Dokumentation von 1909–1989*, Bonn, 1992, p. 17.

²⁰ Thus, Asendorf makes the critical observation that the construction 'allows nothing of the function to be recognised' (Asendorf, *Super Constellation. Flugzeug und Raumrevolution*, p. 152). On the debate about so-called 'Nazi architecture', see my article on 'Mass Tourism, Fordism, and the Third Reich', *Journal of Social History* (in press).

²¹ Quoted by Asendorf, *Super Constellation. Flugzeug und Raumrevolution*; see also Matthias Heisig and Michael Thiele, *Landing at Tempelhof*, Berlin, 1998.

²² Wachtel, 'Gebucht nach Berlin', pp. 154 and 161.

²³ See Bilstein, 'Travel by Air: The American Context', pp. 276 f. and note. 10.

²⁴ In fact, the relative risk of death in air travel was around 100 times that of train travel. The estimates are taken from Schamp, *Luftverkehrsgeographie*; Brockhaus, Fifteenth Edition, Volume 7, 1928; Statistisches Bundesamt: *Bevölkerung und Wirtschaft 1872–1972*, Stuttgart and Mainz, 1972. In Germany, 460 people died in air accidents in 1937, compared to 1027 in train accidents; the first with 120 million, the latter 51 billion passenger kilometres, which even results in a 200 times greater risk. However, the highest number of traffic fatalities were due to automobile: 9700, or 86 percent of all traffic fatalities (Bibliographisches Institut, *Schlag nach!*, p. 345).

²⁵ See Scribner's Magazine, Nr. 104/3. Sept. 1938, S. 7 ff., also Bilstein, *Flight in America* and Bilstein, 'Travel by Air: The American Context'.

²⁶ Bibliographisches Institut, *Schlag nach!*, p. 398; Schamp, *Luftverkehrsgeographie*, p. 9; see also Seifert, *Der deutsche Luftverkehr*, pp. 344 f. Around the world, 2–4 million passengers were flown.

1.3 million passengers, in Germany around 0.3 million, in Great Britain 0.2 and Italy and France around 100,000. This meant that on annual average a mere 1 percent of the US population flew, while in Germany only 0.5 percent took to the skies.²⁷ Price was not responsible: 'It's fear not fare that keeps the public on the ground', as one American magazine put it. This was also true of Germany, where Lufthansa fares had now come below the price of a first class rail ticket.²⁸

The choice between 'fast and prestigious or comfortable and safe' was not decided in favour of the aeroplane, at least in Europe, where the distances were shorter and the rail system was more tightly woven. The aeroplane was used by prominent figures from business, politics, and culture – their flights had little to do with vacations. In affluent circles, it was much more the car that was increasingly used as a tourist mode of travel. There was however no lack of attempts to open up the leisure market. Thus, Lufthansa offered beside the beach service also flights to Heidelberg and to the mountains, and Air France maintained a route from London to the Riviera, while Swissair served Swiss resorts. As a whole, the portion of tourist travel in European civilian air travel might have been approximately 10 percent.²⁹

The role of air travel was thus accordingly modest in German tourism. In 1937, there were 8 million registrations of guests at vacation sites but only a total of 323,000 airline passengers. While perhaps 30,000 tourists booked flights on Lufthansa, over 1.5 million 'Volksgenossen' ['national comrades'] had gone on holiday with the Nazi leisure organisation *Kraft durch Freude* [Strength through Joy, or KdF].³⁰ Similarly marginal was Lufthansa's spectacular seaside resort service. In the summer of 1938 the resorts at the Baltic and the North Sea counted 1.3 million arrivals, but only six thousand of those arriving had come by water plane to the eight landing sites. (→ 373)³¹ Thus, just as tourism – despite KdF and the English holiday camps – remained primarily a phenomenon of the upper and middle classes, the aeroplane remained something reserved for the 'upper ten'.

However, the psychological effect was entirely the opposite. The sporty exclusive allure that exuded from the fascinating new technology allowed a few passengers to fly into the future. Into a future of streamlined progress,

luxury, and fashion, into a global society without borders. In May 1939, an English magazine put it: 'In these days of international tension and alarm it is really quite heartening to read the summer timetables of the regular air services. Most companies might easily have used "Forget the Frontiers" as a slogan.'³²

Technologically quite advanced, air travel served as a screen onto which more sweeping social fantasies were projected. Air-mindedness was neither only a phenomenon of the post-war period, nor was it limited to certain countries.³³ Even if in reality many still avoided the aeroplane, it had long conquered the souls. Fischer von Poturzyn had announced the new age, an age of 'three dimensional politics'.³⁴ In his view, early humanity had only known one dimensional 'street routes', a thousand years ago the two-dimensional 'area' was added; today, however, with the 'ocean of the air', a further quantum leap had been made. This notion of a 'spatial revolution'³⁵ was by no means new. One hundred years prior, the poet and journalist Ludwig Rellstab had celebrated the destruction of 'all spaces and times' by the steam locomotive. The railroad pioneer Friedrich List saw in it a 'Hercules in the crib that will redeem the peoples of the world from the plague of war'. The railroad would overcome the 'hate of nations' and take even the 'lowest' to 'far-away beaches'.³⁶ Those were precisely the same hopes and expectations that now were tied to the aeroplane.

With the attack on Poland on 1 September 1939, these hopes were burst: aviation was placed in the service of war. A fundamental innovation was the jet engine, which in 1939 was tested in the Heinkel He 178, and in 1944 came to be used in the Messerschmitt fighter jet Me 262. But such 'miracle weapons' were not decisive for the war. Although the German aviation industry remained technologically more advanced in many ways, its capacities remained limited. While in 1944, 41,000 planes were built, in the United States alone 96,000 were produced. Ignoring all warnings, the production was long suppressed on orders from Hitler and Göring; a devastating bombing war was not part of their scenarios. On the wings of the success of his Stukas on the fronts, air force chief Göring in 1940 emphasised that 'you could call me Jones' if ever an

27 This is true considering that the actual percentage was lower, since many passengers flew a number of times. In the United States domestic travel, the aeroplane achieved between 5 and 8 percent of the 16 million passengers of the Pullman trains. See Bilstein, 'Travel by Air: The American Context', p. 279; Scribner's Magazine, 1938, p. 8.

28 A one hour flight from Berlin-Hamburg cost 25 RM, the two and a half hour journey in the 'Fliegenden Hamburger' train around 30 RM (Bibliographisches Institut, *Schlag nach!*, pp. 379 f. and 399f).

29 Lyth and Dierix, 'From Privilege to Popularity: The Growth of Leisure Air Travel since 1945', p. 98. Tourist travel in Europe made up 9 percent of all flights in 1932.

30 Hasso Spode, 'Arbeiterurlaub im Dritten Reich', Timothy W. Mason, et al., *Angst, Beibehaltung, Zucht und Ordnung*, Opladen, 1982, p. 298.

31 Of the 7069 passengers, some even were intending to continue their travels. See *Vierteljahresshefte Stat. Dt. Reichs*, 47 (1938), p. IV.52 und *Statistisches Jahrbuch des Deutschen Reichs*, 58 (1939-40), p. 252.

32 *The Bystander*, 5.3 (1939), p. 196.

33 Asendorf attributes 'air-mindedness' to the United States (see *Super Constellation. Flugzeug und Raumrevolution*, p. 269) and Lyth and Dierix to Great Britain ('From Privilege to Popularity', p. 102).

34 Fischer von Poturzyn 1925, pp. 1 f. Twenty-five years later, R. Buckminster Fuller developed a similar notion. Fuller suggested that for 500,000 years, the world was only made of isolated points, while the railroad had created lines, and now the three-dimensional era had begun. See Asendorf, *Super Constellation. Flugzeug und Raumrevolution*, p. 267.

35 An excellent source on images of flight is Asendorf, *Super Constellation. Flugzeug und Raumrevolution*, 1997; on the train as a space destroying time machine, see Spode, *Wie die Deutschen Reiseweltmeister wurden* 2003, Chapter 2.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 58 and 61f.

37 In 1917–18, a few individual bombing raids were flown. But it took until the 1930s for bomber fleets to be built up, and Italian, Japanese, and German military targeted them against the civilian population. With the outbreak of World War II, they declared that they would restrain from such attacks.

Trusting in the success of the 'Blitzkrieg', Germany neglected to develop a long-range bomber, and only undertook a modification of the Condor for this purpose. The air war against the German civilian population became a doctrine with the British cabinet decision in February 1942 that bombing be directed primarily against German working-class areas. 'Area bombing' was however not able to break the 'morale of the enemy', as Arthur Harris later admitted, instead producing a defiant 'will to endure'. In 1944, when 1.2 billion tons of bombs rained down, arms production reached its highest levels. Nonetheless, only with the debacle of the Napalm bombs in Vietnam was the doctrine of 'area bombing' called into question. See Erhard Kläss, ed., *Der Luftkrieg über Deutschland 1939–1945*, Munich, 1963; Jörg Friedrich, *Der Brand. Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940–1945*, Berlin, 2002.

38 Those responsible for 'area bombing' and the two atomic bombs afterward were not convicted as war criminals, but celebrated as heroes. But the Germans also quickly wanted to forget: on the one hand, as a psychological mechanism, on the other, due to the lacking legitimacy of such a complaint. In Brockhaus, a German encyclopaedia, one looks in vain for an entry on 'Bomber-Harris', whose work left such lasting traces – but there is mention made of a number of 'ace pilots' from World War I.

39 See Asendorf, *Super Constellation. Flugzeug und Raumrevolution*, Part 4, as well as note 10.

40 1952: 0.9 deaths per 100 Million passenger kilometres; 1962: 0.6 per million; 1967: 0.3 per million (Brockhaus Sixteenth Edition, Volume IV, 1953, p. 159; Brockhaus, Volume VII, 1953, pp. 366 ff.; Brockhaus, Seventeenth Edition, Volume II, 1966, pp. 665 ff.; Meyers Neues Lexikon, First Edition, Volume 5, Leipzig, 1961, p. 500; Schamp, *Luftverkehrsgeographie*, pp. 9 ff.; Bilstein, 'Travel by Air: The American Context', p. 286). On the history of Aeroflot, see *Flieger-Jahrbuch 1964*, pp. 47 ff.

41 John B. Lansing and Ernest Lilienstein, *The Travel Market 1955*, Ann Arbor, 1957, pp. 31, 65 ff. The (holiday) travel intensity, defined in slightly different ways, measures the share of the population that travels per year: see *Voyage*.

enemy plane would fly over the borders of Germany. Two years later, the 'Third Reich' sank in ash and rubble: the horror had returned to its originators.³⁷

The Golden Age of Air Travel

While in the aftermath of World War I, the so-called chivalrous age of air jousts could flow into a sporty image of flying, now Anglo-American area bombing had robbed flying of all its optimistic, progressive innocence. Nonetheless, a rapid and fundamental suppression of the destructive side of flight set in after World War II.³⁸ The next two decades thus became the golden age of civil aviation, directly picking up on the heroic phase from the inter-war period and ultimately culminating in the normalisation of flight.

This era was also the beginning of the 'American century' (H. R. Luce) – of course countered by the Soviet Union, the only power that had spread its colonial realm as a consequence of the war. But the charm of the red flags remained limited in comparison to the 'American way of life'. Besides Coca-Cola, rock and roll, chewing gum, and filtered cigarettes, it was Boeing and Pan Am that symbolised the new age.³⁹ If World War I finally made the United States a great power, they were now the unquestioned leading power of the West and thus the aeronautics industry as well. This military industrial complex now sought to conquer the civilian market.

To the extent that the safety of passenger planes increased, the fear of flying decreased, and enthusiasm for the newest means of transportation grew.⁴⁰ Already in 1945, the number of worldwide passengers had more than doubled in comparison to pre-war years. According to the vague estimates available, in 1949 over 20 million people seem to have used the aeroplane. By 1955 it was almost 70 million. The Hercules nurtured during the interwar period now could leave its crib. The largest airline with around 8 million passengers was the Soviet Aeroflot, but in national terms the United States dominated. Leading the market was American Airlines with 5.8 million passengers, followed by Eastern with 4.8 million, and United with 3.9 million in 1953, the long distance companies TWA and Pan Am (PAA) reached a passenger volume of 3.1 and 1.6 million, respectively. In

Europe, only the British BEA, founded in 1946, and Air France could compete (1.6 and 1.3 million passengers, respectively); traditional carriers like KLM with 0.6 million passengers were distant followers up, and Lufthansa no longer existed.

The largest growth market was that the domestic American airline industry. In 1951, the number of flight passengers exceeded that of the Pullman long distance trains. According to a survey, a little more than half of all flights were undertaken for non-business reasons, but this is not necessarily the same thing as tourism. On the one hand, compared to many European countries, holiday travel intensity was low in the United States, on the other, flying remained something reserved for the upper middle classes; by far the most important means of transportation was the automobile.⁴¹ While airlines worked with travel agencies and hotels on the tourist market, they were slow to start offering tourist and second class or economy seats, following the model of the railroad. Both were introduced in 1952 and 1958, respectively, also on transatlantic flights. This market grew in leaps and bounds, despite the still high prices. The normal fare for the direct flight Berlin–New York was thus 484.50 DM, in the tourist class 329.80 DM.⁴² This was certainly not more expensive than the ship, since one also saved a week of travel. In 1956–57, aeroplane passenger volume exceeded that of ship travel on the North Atlantic routes: here, the number of passengers soon reached the two million mark.

It was the era of the Lockheed Super Constellation. Since its first flight in 1948, the elegant propeller plane with its spacious accommodations and ultimately with speeds of up to 540 km/h dominated the IATA routes:⁴³ passengers were spoiled with extravagant menus and drinks, during the day passengers were free to smoke, and at night the beds were pulled out. Since the prices were fixed, the airlines attempted to outdo each other in terms of service. The price system – supported domestically by the national regulation authorities, internationally by the IATA – was still entirely kept within a bourgeois-elite model of tourism, which still gave flying an exclusive, polyglot character.

Airline offices, located at the best city addresses, exuded the cool elegance of the most modern interior

42 This was about equivalent to a worker's average monthly salary. See *Hapag-Lloyd Luftkursbuch*, Winter 1952–53.

43 In 1945, the association of airlines was reformed as the International Air Transport Association; in addition there was the International Civilian Aviation Organisation (ICAO). See *Lufthansa-Jahrbuch* 1990, pp. 48 ff.

44 See Robert A. M. Stern et al., *New York 1960. Architecture and Urbanism between the Second World War and the Bicentennial*, New York, 1995, pp. 381 ff.; *Das Deutsche Luftkursbuch* 1, 1953.

45 In addition, the French and English expanded their airfields at Tegel and Gatow. In 278,000 flights, 2.1 million tons were flown to West Berlin: see Wachtel, 'Gebucht nach Berlin', pp. 162 ff.

46 Erhard Milch also profited from the new tolerance: convicted in 1947 to a life sentence, he was freed in 1954.

47 On this and the following, see Hans M. Bongers, *Deutscher Luftverkehr. Entwicklung – Politik – Wirtschaft – Organisation. Versuch einer Analyse der Lufthansa*, Bad Godesberg, 1967; Karl-Dieter Seifert, *Der deutsche Luftverkehr*, Volume 2, Bonn, 2001; DLH-Firmenestschriften 1975 and 1980.

48 *Meyers Lexikon*, First Edition, Volume 2, Leipzig, 1961, pp. 489 f. On Interflug, see: Karl-Dieter Seifert, *Weg und Abstieg der Interflug. Der Luftverkehr der DDR*, Bonn, 1994.

49 Even here, Adenauer was faster: a week before, he had flown with the DLH to Moscow to negotiate the return of German POWs.

design: clear lines with much glass and steel. The foreign offices of the (half) state-run airlines were also to propagate a positive image of the country in question.⁴⁴ Thus Japan Airlines, El Al, KLM, and Alitalia maintained exquisite offices on New York's Fifth Avenue (→ 209, → 210); on Berlin's Kurfürstendamm not only PAA or BEA had offices, but also airlines that could not even serve the half city, like Air India, KLM, Sabena, and later of course Lufthansa. Essential in these offices were the blinking world maps and aeroplane models (201). The children pressed their noses flat on the showcase windows, the fathers smoked Peter Stuyvesant cigarettes, the 'flavour of the great wide world', and on the weekend one visited the airport to be able to experience a feeling of worldly elegance.

The Crane Rises from the Ashes

The 'great wide world' was still divided in two. In 1946, the first American civilians landed at Berlin's Zentral-flughafen, which lay well preserved in the bombed out US sector; beginning in January 1948, Germans were also allowed to use Tempelhof. In June, however, for ten months the airport had to be left to the cargo planes that supplied the three western sectors with coal and food.⁴⁵ With Stalin's dilettantish attempt to force West Berlin into the Soviet occupied zone by blocking the access routes, the Cold War had broken out. For the West Germans, there was a pleasant side to this: wartime enemies became allies. The Berliners standing up to the Soviets caused a well of sympathy in the USA: the beginning of a long friendship that would remain almost entirely unclouded until 1968 – a friendship underwritten by the aeroplane. Instead of punishing the Germans,⁴⁶ they were given funds from the Marshall Plan, and Allied terror bombers were transformed by the Berlin Airlift into friendly 'Raisin Bombers'.

On one point, however, the friendship reached its limits: the Americans did not once again want to have their hegemony in air travel challenged by the Germans. While the Japanese were already allowed to found an airline in 1951, the Federal Republic was still forbidden to own and operate aeroplanes (this stipulation was even more strict than the Treaty of Versailles, which otherwise

was not supposed to be repeated). Nonetheless, the Federal government prepared to begin the reconstruction of Lufthansa, which had been dissolved in 1945. The company was finally registered in 1953, with the Federal government as main owner; as a precaution, the company was named Aktiengesellschaft für Luftverkehrsbedarf [Air Travel Services Corporation, or LUFTAG]⁴⁷ A provocative step, but the US aeronautics industry was grateful for new customers, and an agreement was reached on the delivery of Super Constellations and Convairs. When it began to become clear that the USSR was going to allow East Germany to operate and build aeroplanes, the end of the ban had come. In 1954, Luftag again became Deutsche Lufthansa (DLH). However, negotiations with the Western powers allowed only for a special permission for the import of the planes ordered: at first only for training purposes. But for better or worse, the Paris Treaties guaranteed the Federal Republic air sovereignty in 1955, and Lufthansa took up operations (024). The first flight abroad brought a proud Chancellor Adenauer to Paris. At the same time, two new charter airlines also came onto the scene: LTU and the Deutsche Flugdienst, which later became the Lufthansa subsidiary Condor.

On the other side of the Iron Curtain, airline operations also began with the Deutsche Lufthansa, the 'socialist traffic company of the GDR' (025) – not to be confused with the Deutsche Lufthansa AG, 'the air traffic company dependent on monopolies and closely woven together with German militarism and fascism'.⁴⁸ In September 1955, a half year after Adenauer's visit to Paris, Prime Minister Grotewohl flew with the GDR Lufthansa to Moscow.⁴⁹ The socialist 'crane' served a number of necessarily quite short domestic flights (in 1980 these were ended) as well as the most important cities of the Eastern bloc. The disagreement over the names brewed under the surface, bursting out into the open when the two airlines attempted to fly to the same place: Belgrade. When in 1963 the matter came before the Yugoslavian courts, the GDR ended the comedy: by transferring their Lufthansa to Interflug (026), which just in case had already been founded in 1958.

Like all state airlines, the East German Lufthansa and later Interflug served to promote the country. But

50 Departing passengers in 1950 from Berlin and Frankfurt in 1960: 0.8 every 1 million; 1970: 2.8 to 4.4 million. See Treibel, *Geschichte der deutschen Verkehrsflughäfen*, p. 36.

51 Wolfgang A. Kittel, 'Die Deutsche Lufthansa als Förderer des Fremdenverkehrs nach Deutschland' (lecture), 1962.

52 Passenger numbers grew from 0.7 million in 1955 to 5.5 million in 1971, but sank as a result of the Berlin Treaty, to then around 1989 again reach 4.5 million. The percentage of air travel in Berlin in domestic travel was up through the 1960s two thirds, to 1973 over 50 percent, and in 1989 still more than one third. Seifert, *Der deutsche Luftverkehr*, p. 2.

53 See Spode, *Wie die Deutschen Reiseweltmeister wurden*.

54 See Peter J. Lyth, 'History of Commercial Air Transport', *Journal of Transport History*, 14 (1993) and Lyth and Dierix 1994; Lyth strongly emphasises the special role of the British. On Germany, see Spode, 'Wie die Deutschen Reiseweltmeister wurden', *Goldstrand und Teutonengrill. Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte des Tourismus in Deutschland, 1945–1989*, ed. Spode, Berlin, 1996.

55 Frankfurt counted in 1961 only 20,000 charter passengers, in 1967 already 0.6 million. See *Flughafennachrichten*, 4 (1968), p. 41.

the West German Lufthansa was much successful in this: it acquired a good reputation, and soon was counted as one of the leading European airlines. In the long distance routes, pre-war plans were realised by 1960: the airline now served North and South America as well as the Near and Far East, flying as far as Bangkok. In 1964, Lufthansa achieved profits for the first time. Frankfurt Airport was built up as an international hub, replacing politically isolated Berlin (023).⁵⁰ Lufthansa understood itself as the most important 'supporter' of incoming tourism. As a member of the board of directors pointed out, even the name alone developed a 'general promotional effect'⁵¹, further supported by the on-board service: the passengers enjoyed 'German hospitality, be it through serving beer and wine from kegs, be it through typically German meals, of which the Lufthansa soup pot already enjoys great popularity among the American guests'. In 1962, DLH operated 95 city offices abroad, 40 of these in North America alone – in comparison with four official government tourism centres. The Public Relations Division also launched exhibitions, congresses, and festive events. These activities were not solely motivated by economic interests, but also political ones: 'The most promotion should be done for Berlin, even if Lufthansa cannot serve Berlin'.

Here, the GDR airline had a significant advantage: it could – using Schönefeld Airport, located on the outskirts of Berlin – serve its capital city. The three air corridors to the island of West Berlin in contrast remained restricted to the airlines of the Western powers until reunification. A most profitable business, since a large portion of domestic air traffic went to Berlin.⁵² In addition, the air routes, and thus Pan Am, BEA, and Air France, had to be subsidised by the West German federal government. Even the Eastern side profited from this relic of the Occupation Statute: Interflug, which like all Eastern bloc airlines was not a member of IATA, could establish itself among West German tourists and so-called 'guest workers' as an affordable, but also excellent, high quality alternative. In 1963, for these purposes a border crossing connecting West Berlin to Schönefeld was set up along the Berlin Wall, which had been built two years prior. Thus, some holiday travellers flew from Hanover to Tempelhof, where they took the transit bus to

Schönefeld, where there would then check into their flights to Tunis.

Up, Up, and Away

Interflug increasingly became a charter airline serving the West, and thus relied on an expanding market segment: mass tourism. The social opening of air travel was thus driven from two sides: a sales and a technological aspect. The price policy of the IATA could be circumvented when a tour operator ordered whole ticket contingents from a charter airline along with the hotel beds at the holiday destination. Due to the guaranteed full booking (the IATA airlines were only about 60 percent booked), the charter carriers could fly more cheaply. This principle of the inclusive tour (IT) or 'all inclusive holiday' was almost as old as the railroad. In 1841 Thomas Cook had rented his first special train, and with special trains and busses the Nazi organisation *Kraft durch Freude* had brought serial production in holiday travelling to full blossom.⁵³

The Rise of Charter Tourism

Charter flights first became popular in Great Britain, Scandinavia, and West Germany. Now even those with a moderate income in search of relaxation could head for Costa Brava or Majorca. In late 1960s England, the portion of all-inclusive among vacationers had reached around 8 percent.⁵⁴ The same share was achieved by the aeroplane as a means of transport in West Germany; here as well, charter flights had grown over-proportionally.⁵⁵ Majorca trips – by train and ship – were already offered by Dr Tigges in 1934; starting in 1956, the island was served by charter airlines – at this time, still an expensive pleasure. At the beginning of the 1970s, however, the boom of all-inclusive air holidays began in many countries. In West Germany, the great demand for foreign travel allowed this market to expand especially dramatically: in 1968, for the first time over 50 percent of all holiday journeys went abroad (in Great Britain, as in the GDR, it was only 15 percent). But the car was still the dominant mode of transportation to Austria and Italy. However, with the large tour operators

56 This number includes all arrivals, departures, and transit passengers. Fischer *Weltalmanach 2000*, Frankfurt am Main, 1999, p. 1246.

57 See Metzler, *Zukunft unbegrenzt*, pp. 133 ff. In contrast, the project of a European airline failed.

58 Jet plane also displaced the turbo prop planes. In 1959, jet planes made for 8 percent of world air traffic in terms of tons/km, in 1969 89 percent; the number of world passengers grew from 100 to 200 million (around 2000 around 2.5 billion). See Brockhaus, *Seventeenth Edition*, Volume 9, pp. 665 f.; see also Meyers Lexikon, First Edition, Volume 2, p. 307; *Flieger-Jahrbuch 1964*, pp. 38 ff. Die German aviation industry, in contrast to Lufthansa, had been destroyed over the long term, and had nothing from this boom. In West Germany, it was forced to produce small cars until in 1959 the licensed construction of military aircraft began (it then however also became a driving force behind Airbus). East Germany was far more advanced here: not only was a Soviet turbo prop plane manufactured in the GDR (IL 14 P), but the East Germans also developed their own jet airliner. Since the '152' crashed just as it was to be presented to Khrushchev in 1959, and then hardly found any buyers, aeroplane construction was stopped (www.flughafen-dresden.de).

entering the market in the early 1960s – 'Neckermann macht's möglich' ['Neckermann makes it possible'] was one of the advertising slogans of the time, referring to one of the main charter companies – the foundations for a mass use of air travel for tourism had been laid. By 1970, over half of all German all-inclusive tourists landed in Palma de Mallorca – the picturesque insider's tip became a 'cleaning ladies island'. At the same time, the good flight connections guaranteed that the wealthy and beautiful settled here as well.

Lufthansa also participated in the business of offering cheap seats with its subsidiary Condor and contracts with non-IATA airlines, like Aeroflot. Not only the airlines of the Eastern bloc countries undermined the IATA system, but also smaller Western state-owned lines, like Loftleidir (now Icelandair), and especially British entrepreneurs, in particular Freddy Laker, whose Skytrain even regularly flew to New York as of 1977. Cheap carriers like Court Line and People's Express did go bankrupt, but at the same time the trick had become established to issue a fictitious hotel voucher with the ticket, thus legally exempting an IATA flight from the fixed price system. For this the IATA airlines even themselves opened up seats (ITX tickets). At the same time driven and profiting from this loosening of the fixed price system, IATA introduced special fares (like the APEX ticket of 1975).

But the system of price regulation could no longer be maintained. In the Western capitals, the neo-liberal credo gained the upper hand. At the latest, deregulation in the United States in 1978 marked the beginning of the end of the state airlines with their role as agents of national promotion (airport construction and kerosene of course remained subsidised.) One of the first to go bankrupt was the once proud Pan Am, and just recently even Swissair was hit by this fate. But the expansion of air travel proved the policy of liberalisation right – London, the world's busiest air hub, counted over 85 million passengers at the turn of the millennium, Chicago-O'Hare, which since the 1970s has been the world's largest airport, over 70 million, and Frankfurt over 40 million.⁵⁶ The 'flavour of the great wide world' that had earlier been effused by Stuyvesant cigarettes has long been lost in the endless corridors and security

checks – not only because smoking is prohibited, and since the 1970s terror attacks have required increasingly more complex security measures, but also because this is the unavoidable price of the democratisation of flying. The ecological costs of this rise in air travel, and whether the retreat of the state from 'air policy' is actually in the national interest, are different questions altogether.

Europe, at any rate, was well advised to build up an aeronautics industry under state direction in the 1960s.⁵⁷ Today, after the collapse of the Russian aeronautics industry, only Airbus Industries keeps the Boeing-McDonnell-Douglas group from holding a world-monopoly. We thus come to the technological side of mass tourist air travel. Since the Messerschmitt fighter had shown the superiority of the jet propulsion, the British introduced the first passenger jet in 1949, the two-engine Comet (028). Spectacular crashes caused it to fail on the market, but other jet airliners had success beginning in 1954–55, in particular the 900 km/h fast Boeing 707 (027), but also the French Caravelle (030) and the Soviet Tupolev 104 (031). In the 1960s the more efficient jet planes finally pushed out the propeller planes, which went back to the pre-war period.⁵⁸ When Lufthansa retired its last Super Constellation from service in 1967, the next generation of jet airliners was already in development, taking off in 1969 and 1972 on their first flights: the Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet (032) for large numbers of passengers and long distances, and the Airbus (033) for medium numbers of passengers and distances. At comparable costs these 'wide-bodied jets' could carry twice as many passengers as the jet planes in use up until then. The dam preventing the mass use of air transport for tourist purposes was thus finally broken. At first, the plan had been to use the extra space for luxury: reclining seats, clubrooms, bars, game rooms, etc. But the premonition had by a pessimist already before the first jumbo was in the air would become reality: 490 passengers would be 'herded in' like a pack of sheep and all comforts that initially were installed in the early period of enthusiasm would later be removed. Instead of menus cooked in the on-board galleys, there would be 'soft rolls in plastic foil', and the rows of seats would be placed as close together as possible.⁵⁹

59 On airbus and jumbo jet plans, see Metzler, *Zukunft unbegrenzt*, p. 115.
60 With approximately 75 percent, travel intensity in 1989 was around 10 percent higher than in West Germany. See on the GDR: Spode, 'Wie die Deutschen Reiselweltmeister wurden'; on West Germany: Cord Pagenstecher, 'Der touristische Blick', Diss., Freie Universität Berlin 2003. West Germans flew five times as much as the East Germans. See Gesamtdt. Institut, *Zahlenspiegel. BRD-DDR*, Third Edition, Bonn 1988, S. 67.
61 'The perfumes of the tropics... have been corrupted ... [by a busyness that] mortifies our desires' (Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Triste Tropiques*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman, New York, 1973, pp. 23–24). The critique of tourism is almost as old as tourism itself – but it is not (only) an elitist complaint, but also indicates the deep ambivalence of modernity. On this and the de-localisation of travel, see Spode, *Wie die Deutschen Reiselweltmeister wurden*; for more on the problem of de-localisation, see Pagenstecher, 'Der touristische Blick'.

Conclusion: Interchangeable Destinations

The generation of aeroplanes from around 1970 still dominates the skies today. The supersonic prestige projects of the period, like the Tupolev (034) and the Concorde (→ 264), long remained a towering leftover from the golden age of flying, well into the time when the aeroplane had already become a 'normal' means of transportation. With the last flight of the Concorde in 2003, the superplane that permanently ran at a loss, this proud relic of 'airmindedness' was also sent to its grave. Symbolic for both the golden and the 'normal' age of air traffic are its most prominent fossils: once the elegant Super Constellation, with its strangely elite sounding name, futurist and global in its reach. Now, the fat and comfy jumbo jet, which allows families to take off for their beach holidays with the greatest ease in its confidence inspiring mammoth tummy.

Today, civil aviation is to a large part dependent on tourism, but mass tourism was by no means a result of air travel. The technological watershed in the history of tourism is much more fundamental: the replacement of muscle power with motors. Steam-driven boats and railroads introduced the truly epochal 'space revolution' which caused mobility to cease being a social privilege. Already Thomas Cook demanded successfully: 'We must have railways for the millions!' The aeroplane has not increased the number of travellers, but only the distances involved.

Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than the comparison between East and West Germany. The travel destinations of GDR citizens were geographically quite limited, while for West Germans the world was open, if the money was available. But the basic structures of tourist travel differed little in the two states. Thanks to state-organised social tourism and the increase in purchasing power, the GDR achieved even a higher intensity of travel than the FRG in the late 1980s – the East Germans had become 'world champions of travel'.⁶⁰ But they hardly used the aeroplane, travelling instead by car and train.

The aeroplane did not create any entirely new practices of tourism: the repertoire of holiday travelling was basically set before World War II, with city trips on

the one hand and the three S's – sun, sand, and sex – in the de-localised 'south' of the beach holiday on the other. While holiday travellers and advertisers emphasise the 'distinctions' between destinations, in a broader historical framework the shared characteristics are far more revealing. From this perspective it makes no difference whether the trip – as was true already around 1900 – reached Usedom, 'Berlin's bathtub', in two and one half hours, or, as is the case today, in the same time reached Majorca. The *Kraft durch Freude* project of a mass resort for 20,000 'national comrades' on Rügen was an anticipation of what was realised in the 1960s in Benidorm on the Costa Blanca. By now countless such holiday factories have long been in existence. Already in the 1920s, Siegfried Kracauer spoke of a 'the growing interchangeability of the destination' [*Vergleichgültigung des Reiseziels*]; today, what Karlheinz Wöhler calls 'tourism without distance' has become a reality. The aeroplane has indeed played a decisive part in this, making possible the globalisation of the South, from Thailand to the Dominican Republic. For such countries, tourism has in the meantime become an important economic factor. The loser is in any case the environment due to the increase in transportation, perhaps in the end also travel itself.

The aeroplane as a 'normal' means of mass transportation cannot fulfil its promise of the 'somewhere else' – instead it causes the 'somewhere else' increasingly to disappear. Man has not only 'reached the limits of his cage', but also increasingly designs this cage as a homogenous space, at best marked by differences of a carefully maintained local colour. Already in 1955, Claude Lévi-Strauss darkly noted this: 'Journeys, those magic caskets full of dreamlike promises, will never again yield up their treasures untarnished'.⁶¹ In its heroic and its golden age, the aeroplane was an emissary of the future; it opened the magic caskets wide, only then to fill them with cheap factory products.

esign Museum

AIRWORLD