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From Nordic Romanticism to Nordic Modernity: Danish Tourist Brochures in Nazi Germany, 1929–39¹

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In June 1937, leaders of the Nazi state including its chief ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, *Luftwaffe* Commander-in-chief Hermann Göring, and the Transport Minister and General Director of the State Railways Julius Dorpmüller, as well as racial scientists such as Alfred Ploetz, celebrated the fourth annual congress of the *Nordische Gesellschaft* (Nordic Society) in Lübeck.² The society had acted as an interlocutor of German interactions with the Nordic countries since 1921. Originally it had functioned as a locally based organization concerned primarily with trade, commerce, and cultural exchange, but from 1933 onwards the society became a Nazified institution with increasing representation across the Third Reich. Present at the festivities were also cultural and political personalities from the Nordic countries, although these were not as prominent as the organizers might have liked.

While the week-long celebration of German-Nordic relations—this ‘bridge over the Baltic Sea [...] from *Volk* to *Volk*,’ as the congress was portrayed in the German press³—ran its course, the local daily newspaper of Lübeck wrote extensively on the Northern countries.

¹ This article is a re-written version of Chapter 4 of my Master’s thesis, ‘“In wenigen Stunden dort”: The Tourist Association for Denmark and Its Promotional Efforts in Nazi Germany, 1929-1939’ (Master’s Thesis, Central European University 2017). My greatest thanks are reserved for my thesis supervisor Marsha Siefert. I genuinely appreciate the amount of ink she spilled on the many drafts I sent in her direction, and the time she devoted to much needed consultations. I am also grateful for the insightful comments and feedback I have received from Balázs Trencsényi, Johan E. Strang, Eszter Timár, Lise H. Rasmussen, Christopher T. Wendt, and Constanze Jeitler. Their feedback greatly improved the quality of the article. So did the comments from the two anonymous reviewers.

² E.g. the entire volume of *Der Norden* 7 (July 1937); Unknown Author, ‘Vierte Reichstagung der Nordischen Gesellschaft – Fragen des Verkehrs (Fourth Conference of the Nordic Society – Questions related to traffic),’ *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* (6 June 1937); both found in Allgemeines (Zeitungsausschnitte) Band 1 (Akte d. Weltwirtschaft Instituts Kiel) 1921–1937: 1, Vereins- und Verbandsarchive, Nordische Gesellschaft, Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck (General (Newspaper cuttings) Volume 1 (Records of the Institute of Global Economy, Kiel) 1921-1937: 1, Association Archives, Nordic Society, Archive of the Hanseatic City of Lübeck).

³ E.g. Alexander Funkenberg, ‘Brücken über die Ostsee (Bridge over the Baltic Sea),’ *Völkischer Beobachter* (*National Observer*), Berlin (18 June 1937).

Thus, on June 19 the readers of *Lübecker General-Anzeiger* could read about ‘Denmark, the land of peasants’ as part of an article series on the country and people of ‘Der Norden (the North).’⁴ ‘From whichever side one enters the little kingdom,’ the article proclaimed, ‘one impression determines the character of this state: the peasant is the pillar of the country.’ After hailing the ‘unique appeal of the Danish landscape’—found away from ‘Copenhagen, the country’s beautiful capital’—where ‘the peasant dominates the scene,’ the author went on to describe the Danish peasant cooperatives and agricultural production system in some detail.

The 1937 article embodies a peculiar blend of romanticized notions, linked closely to images of the North rooted in nineteenth-century romanticism and the pseudoscience of Nordic race theory popularized after the First World War. At the same time, it showcases an affinity for a progressive, corporate, and communal organization of society and production processes, also linked to modern technology. The latter is emphasized by the fact that the piece was accompanied by an image of the bridge over the Little Belt, a modern feat of engineering whose construction had been completed only two years earlier.

This essay investigates how those notions combined to make a basis for *Turistforeningen for Danmarks* (The Tourist Association for Denmark’s - TAD’s) promotion of Denmark to Nazi Germany in the 1930s. It asks how such differing conceptualizations of *Norden* struggled in TAD’s visual and textual content of tourist brochures, how the content of these publications developed throughout the 1930s, and what this says about the multi-faceted nature of the image of Denmark as a Nordic country as promoted by TAD. Ultimately, these questions amount to an effort to understand how Danish promotional efforts in Germany in the 1930s used and negotiated between competing perceptions of *Norden* as a geographical and cultural region in the mental topographies of the tumultuous interwar years; or, more

⁴ Unknown author, ‘Der Norden. Land und Leute (The North. Country and People)’, *Lübecker General-Anzeiger* (19 June 19 1937).

concisely, how TAD sought to sell the nation in the North to an important market for the fledgling Danish tourist industry, namely that of Nazi Germany.

In this effort, TAD utilized various tourism imaginaries related to *Norden* already present—as illustrated in the article described above—in Germany. When discussing ‘tourism imaginaries’, I use the notion as Noel B. Salazar has theorized it. Inspired by Paul Ricoeur, Salazar describes imaginaries as ‘socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people’s personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices.’⁵ With regards to tourism, he holds these imaginaries to operate through ‘stories, images, and desires, running the gamut from essentialized, mythologized, and exoticized imaginaries of otherness to more realistic frames of reference [which] often function as the motor setting the tourism machinery in motion.’⁶ For my purpose, I understand these imaginaries to interact with and be reinvented, reiterated, and reproduced through TAD’s cultural and commercial self-fashioning. Put crudely, the tourism imaginaries available to TAD in Germany fell in three overall but far from distinct categories: A Nordicism rooted in eighteenth and nineteenth century romanticism; Nordic race theory, as popularized in the 1920s; and a notion resembling what has been called ‘Nordic modernity.’

In the following, I argue that while TAD did indeed invoke both textual and visual references to the two former types of imaginaries it would eventually settle on a notion of what constituted *Norden* in its promotional material that relied heavily on the idea that *Norden* constituted an exceptional development especially in socio-economic and political regards. Yet, neither the racial nor the romanticist shadings of the much-contested concept of *Norden* disappeared entirely from the promotional material. In fact, a main point of this article

⁵ Noel B. Salazar, ‘Tourism Imaginaries: A Conceptual Approach’, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39, 2 (2011), 863–882.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 865.

is precisely that TAD did not find these backward-looking imaginaries incompatible with but—to a certain extent—integral to the framing of *Norden* as a particularly modern region.

What I am interested in here is primarily the ways in which multiple intertwined visions of *Norden* framed the promotion of Denmark throughout the decade. As such, I am more comfortable thinking about multiple co-existing and often struggling *Nordens*. Seeing *Norden* as constructed and rather plastic, this article approaches the concept through its usages and by probing how the various actors in question actively constituted it.⁷ I furthermore rely on Reinhardt Koselleck's notion of Janus-faced concepts facing backwards and forward in time simultaneously. *Norden*, I argue, certainly entails both of these temporal dimensions. Finally, the presence of *Norden* as a regional mental framework did not necessarily entail an opposition to or replacement of national categories. On the contrary, as Bo Stråth and Øystein Sørensen have pointed out, *Norden* played out in different ways as a constitutive—but not dominant—element in the nation building projects in the various national Scandinavian contexts.⁸

The primary contribution of this article, then, is to highlight the various valences of the notion of *Norden* that went into the emergence of the concept of Nordic modernity, by emphasizing how this development rather seamlessly incorporated seemingly progressive and retrospective visions of the meaning of *Norden*. Recent historical research treats the nationalist and anti-modern elements of *Norden*—if at all—as strategic concessions in a mostly domestic political context.⁹ While finding this explanatory framework useful, this article adds to it by investigating the projection—for promotional purposes—of the image of

⁷ To a certain extent, the approach outlined here is inspired by Iver B. Neumann, 'A region-building approach to Northern Europe', *Review of International Studies* 20 (1994), 53-74.

⁸ Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth, 'Introduction: The Cultural Construction of Norden', in Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth (eds.) *The Cultural Construction of Norden* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1997), 1-24.

⁹ Examples of this include Niels Kayser Nielsen, 'Demokrati og kulturel nationalisme i Norden i mellemkrigstiden – en realpolitisk højredrejning? (Nordic Democracy and Cultural Nationalism in the Interwar Period – a Pragmatic Turn to the Right?)', *Historisk Tidsskrift (Sweden)*, 124, 4 (2004), 581-603; and Carl Marklund and Peter Stadius, 'Acceptance and Conformity: Merging Modernity with Nationalism in the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930', *Culture Unbound*, 2 (2010), 609-634.

Norden into one international context. Seen from this perspective, the social democratic notion of Nordic modernity encompasses both progressive and retrospect elements.

In the following, I first outline the existing tourism imaginaries related to a specific symbolic geography of the North, both in cultural and racial terms; that is, in the form of Nordic romanticism and Nordic race theory. After having outlined these pre-existing imaginaries, as they were used and seen from a Nazi German perspective, I probe their reinvention, reiteration, and reproduction in TAD's promotional efforts throughout the 1930s in the largest part of the article. In order to show to which degree the version of *Norden* promoted to a German audience was specifically 'nazified', I devote a part of the analysis to a comparison of two brochures aimed at German and British audiences respectively. Finally, I conclude the analysis by tracing the emergence of *Norden* as a social configuration in the promotional material. First, however, I turn to a vision of *Norden* that was arguably more popular in Weimar Germany.

The discipline often known as *der Nordische Gedanke* (the Nordic Ideal) was popularized in the tumultuous twenties of the Weimar Republic. It resulted from a scientific shift in which mid-nineteenth-century German liberal anthropology transformed into a nationalist, eugenically inspired science in which the hierarchies of racial types and their characteristics became the predominant concerns.¹⁰ Hans F. K. Günther's *Rassenkunde des*

¹⁰ The exact causes of this shift have been the topic of much scholarly debate. The school of liberal anthropology, founded by such figures as Adolf Bastian and Rudolf Virchow and adhering to a positivistic epistemology stressing a fundamental unity of mankind, lost out to a 'diffusionist revolution' at the turn of the century. Andrew Zimmerman, Woodruff D. Smith and H. Glenn Penny respectively argue that this was a result of German anthropology's entanglement with German imperialism; caused by the rise to prominence of a generation disappointed in their distanced, apolitical, and empiricist stance; or the consequence of interactions between their institutions and an increasingly demanding public sphere. Woodruff Smith, *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany* (New York, NJ 1991); Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago, IL 2001); H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill, NC 2002); While entertaining slightly different emphases, Robert Procter and Andrew D. Evans have noted that it was only with the experience of and defeat in the First World War; an incentive to be 'nationally useful' given institutional insecurity in the post-defeat crisis; as well as the German loss of empire that anti-liberal elements of German anthropology crystalized into a nationalist, eugenically inspired science and shifted focus from the external others made up by colonial subjects to the others

deutschen Volkes (Racial Science of the German People, 1922) can justifiably be ascribed the status as the movement's founding document. The book had gone through sixteen printings by the time the Nazi party assumed power,¹¹ and Günther was arguably the most successful popularizer of the Nordic ideal in Germany.¹²

Although outlining the existence of six European races in later editions, the original version of *Rassenkunde* lists only four: 'the Nordic,' 'the Western,' 'the Eastern,' and 'the Dinaric.'¹³ Of the European races, Günther prioritized the Nordic, which was conceived as 'tall, long-headed, narrow-faced with a prominent chin; a narrow nose with high bridge; soft light hair; deep-lying blond eyes; rosy-white skin color.'¹⁴ Although his race definition stressed physical rather than psychological distinctions, Günther devoted almost twenty pages to the mental characteristics of the Nordic race in which he linked physical and mental traits, warned of 'the slow death of the Nordic race via the city,' and summed up its psychological constitution in three words: 'courage,' 'sagacity,' and 'veracity.'¹⁵ He linked physical health and sound mental characteristics effectively to the countryside, which held primacy in the cultural hierarchies of Nordicism.

Psychological as well as physiological, the race had supposedly carried these traits along as it migrated from the hardening environment of its ancient homelands.¹⁶ Like most other racial anthropologists, Günther made clear distinctions between races and peoples. The German *Volk*, Günther worriedly estimated a few years later, consisted of no more than 6 to 8

within. See Andrew D. Evans, 'Race Made Visible: the Transformation of Museum Exhibits in Early-twentieth-century German Anthropology', *German Studies Review*, 31 (2008), 87–108; and Robert Proctor, 'From Anthropologie to Rassenkunde in the German Anthropological Tradition', in George W. Stocking, Jr. (ed.) *Bones, Bodies, Behavior: Essays on Biological Anthropology*, ed. (Madison, WI 1988), 138–179.

¹¹ Hans F. K. Günther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (München, 1922); On its print and sales numbers, see Hans-Jürgen Lützhöft, *Der Nordische Gedanke in Deutschland 1920–1940 (The Nordic Ideal in Germany 1920–1940)* (Stuttgart, 1971), 31–32.

¹² For these efforts, he was acknowledged in the German racial anthropological community even if the validity of his scientific work was often deemed questionable Christopher M. Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 2005), 62.

¹³ Günther, *Rassenkunde*, 18–20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 128–145, especially 130 and 135.

¹⁶ Lützhöft, *Der Nordische Gedanke*, 118.

percent undiluted Nordics.¹⁷ While Günther thus made no direct link between any Scandinavian *Volk* and the Nordic race, he still found it rather unproblematic that the racial and geographical North could be easily confused.¹⁸

In general, his movement held Scandinavia in high regard. The popularity of the Nordic countries could furthermore rely on a long-standing German tradition of *Nordlandromantik* (North Romanticism). Indeed, the German fascination with the ‘unaffected,’ ‘wild,’ and ‘sublime’ nature of the North served as a refuge from the control and constraints felt to emanate from the adherence to ‘progress’ long before the popularization of race theory.¹⁹

What is more, a newfound *Zug nach dem Norden* (draw towards the North) would increasingly manifest itself in journeys along the coasts of Western Norway. These *Nordlandsreisen* (Trips to the North) would, for example, set out for North Cape—Europe’s northernmost point—from 1845 onwards.²⁰ The tourism imaginaries related to these travels are exemplified in an article published in 1836 in a German ladies’ lexicon. As recounted by Hasso Spode, the lexicon

enthused over the ‘sublimity’ of this ‘wonderful land with its fabulous past and wild romantic (*wildromantischen*) nature’: The ‘long extremely blond (*hochblonden*) Norwegians were since the dawn of time sea heroes on all seas. [...] Sagas about Thor and Odin and the lovely Freia formed the old doctrines of this wondrous people.’²¹

Thus, the adherents of Nordic race theory could draw upon a long-standing tradition of Nordicism in order to find what Lützhöft describes as the search for ‘a mirror image of the

¹⁷ See Proctor, ‘From Anthropologie to Rassenkunde’, 151.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁹ Hasso Spode, ‘Nordlandsfahrten. Norwegen als Idee und als touristische Destination (Nordland Journeys. Norway as Idea and as Tourist Destination),’ in Sonja Kinzler and Doris Tillmann (eds.) *Nordlandreise. Die Geschichte einer touristischen Entdeckung (Trip to the North. The History of a Touristic Discovery)* (Hamburg, 2010), 16–33, here: 19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

German soul (*Seele*).’ This they would find in Scandinavian history, romantic culture, and especially in the idealized peasant societies.²² In other words, the projection of Scandinavia as pre-industrial, romantic, anti-urban, and *völkisch* (folkish/national) served as a pre-modern counter-image to the chaos of modern Weimar Germany.²³ While the Nazi leadership came to view Nordic race theory as increasingly suspicious, since it promoted a racial elitism and division even *within* the German *Volk*, ‘the Nordic aesthetic remained central to popular iconography and visual propaganda’ according to a recent article by Christopher Hutton.²⁴ Undoubtedly, the German audience was highly literate in the visual language of both racialized and romanticized Nordicism in the 1930s.

Already in the late 1920s, however, state officials concerned with tourism in Denmark understood the potential of the popularized Nordicism when engaging potential visitors. At a meeting with TAD in 1927, A.J. Poulsen—the head of the Press Office of the Foreign Ministry, who would play an instrumental role as TAD was reorganized, professionalized, and made a semi-official organization seven years later—presented impressions from the Danish General Consulate in Hamburg. According to his own account of the meeting, Poulsen agitated for the use of paid advertisement in German papers, while stating that ‘a still growing stream of tourists’ could be expected from Germany, since ‘many circles are now adjusting to take in the foreign cultural input (*Kulturstof*), which they would formerly fetch in France and Italy, from the Nordic countries.’ Furthermore, he went on, ‘at different locations in Germany,

²² Lützhöft, *Nordische Gedanke*, 208–233.

²³ See Field, ‘Nordic Racism’, 532; But Scandinavia served as more than just an object of nostalgic longing for the adherents of Nordic race theory; it was also part of a future-oriented vision where modern science and (eugenic) technology were essential elements. In a sense, Scandinavia served as the projection of the past which Günther and his followers sought to make their future in a version of what Roger Griffin has termed ‘palingenetic modernism.’ See Roger Griffin, ‘Tunnel Visions and Mysterious Trees: Modernist Projects of National and Racial regeneration, 1880–1939,’ in Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling (eds.), *Blood and Homeland. Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900–1940* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 417–456; Griffin’s notion stresses the link between ultra-nationalistic ambitions of a national palingenesis—that is, rebirth—in the face of perceived spiritual decline and physical degeneration (coming together in the contemporary terminology of ‘decadence’) and a scientific modernism through which it was thought that society could be revitalized and national decline be reversed.

²⁴ Christopher Hutton, ‘Racial ideology as elite discourse: Nordicism and the visual in an age of mass culture’, *Social Semiotics*, 27, 3 (2017), 355–347, quote: 344.

[by the] *Nordische Gesellschaft* for instance, a steady effort is made to drive German tourists northwards.²⁵

The *Nordische Gesellschaft* did indeed play a role in promoting leisure travel to the North, often with Denmark as the first stop.²⁶ The society would continue to do so after it was essentially turned into an ideological and propagandistic prolongation of the Nazi apparatus following 1933²⁷—when its effective leadership was taken over by Alfred Rosenberg,²⁸—by facilitating trips of *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth) groups to the Nordic countries among other things.²⁹

In the *Nordische Gesellschaft*'s promotion of its yearly *Nordlandsreisen*, different authors close to the association wrote long pieces in regional papers that deliberated not just

²⁵ Letter from A.J. Poulsen in the Press Office of the Foreign Ministry to the General Consul in Hamburg, November 14, 1927, 113–91, 1909–1945 Gruppeordnete Sager, Udenrigsministeriet (The Foreign Ministry), Rigsarkivet (The Danish State Archives). My italics.

²⁶ The *Nordische Gesellschaft* entertained a tourist agency, Nordische Verkehrs G.M.B.H. Lübeck, as part of its organization. In the 1920s and early 1930s, its offers included trips to the Soviet Union along with group travels to Scandinavia aimed specifically at academics and students. See Nordische Verkehrs G. M. B. H., *Sonderreise der Nordischen Gesellschaft nach Finnland, Sovjet-Russland, Letland veranstaltet von der Nordischen Verkehrs G.m.B.H. (Special Trip of the Nordic Society to Finland, Soviet Russia, Latvia, arranged by the Nordic Traffic Company)* (Lübeck 1928), and Nordische Verkehrs G. M. B. H., *Gruppenreisen nach Skandinavien (Group Trips to Scandinavia)* (Lübeck 1928) both in Nordische Verkehrs G. M. B. H. Reiseprogramme (Travel Programs) (Akte d. Weltwirtschaftsinstitut Kiel), 1928, 4, Nordische Gesellschaft, Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck; Unknown Author, 'Nordlandsreise für deutsche Studenten (Trip to the North for German Students)', *Kieler Zeitung* (19 June 1925) in Allgemeines (Zeitungsausschnitte) Band 1 (Akte d. Weltwirtschaft Institut Kiel) 1921–1937, Nordische Gesellschaft: 1, Vereins- und Verbandsarchive, Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck. See also Frederik Forrai Ørskov, "'In wenigen Stunden dort': The Tourist Association for Denmark and Its Promotional Efforts in Nazi Germany, 1929-1939' (Master thesis, Central European University, 2017), 30-33.

²⁷ The extent of the *Nordische Gesellschaft*'s travel activity is difficult to ascertain since the Society's archival documents went up in flames during the allied bombing of Lübeck in 1942. Yet, according to a note in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, the *Nordische Verkehrs G.M.B.H* arranged 38 school trips bringing more than 45.000 school children 'over the sea' in 1937 as well as 18.000 passengers on 27 trips. 'The destination of many trips,' it is noted, 'was Copenhagen, but smaller Danish cities were visited as well.' The popularity of the trips was beyond doubt, as 'each and every spot were sold out for the Society's weekend-trips.' See Unknown author, 'Der Zug nach dem Norden', *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* (29 October, 1937) in Allgemeines (Zeitungsausschnitte) Band 1 (Akte d. Weltwirtschaft Institut Kiel) 1921–1937, Nordische Gesellschaft: 1, Vereins- und Verbandsarchive, Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck; See also Erika L. Briesacher, 'Cultural Currency: *Notgeld*, *Nordische Woche*, and the *Nordische Gesellschaft*, 1921–1945' (Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University 2012), 214.

²⁸ The 'Supreme council' of the *Nordische Gesellschaft* would, after the inclusion of Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop in the spring of 1938, include: von Ribbentrop, *Reichsbauernführer* R. Walther Darré, *Reichsminister* Dr. Frick, *Reichsleiter* Alfred Rosenberg, *Reichsführer-SS* Himmler, *Reichsorganisationsleiter* Dr. Ley, *Reichsjugendführer* Baldur von Schirach, *Stabschef der SA* Lutze, *Reichssportführer* von Tschammer und Osten, and the Major of Lübeck, Dr. Drechsler. See Unknown Author, 'Reichsaußenminister von Ribbentrop im Oberste Rat der Nordischen Gesellschaft (Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop in the Supreme Council of the Nordic Society)', *Der Norden*, 15 (1939), 4: 131.

²⁹ See Ørskov, "'In wenigen Stunden dort'", 3–4.

the upcoming journeys but also the underlying ideological and cultural motivations for the trips northwards. In an article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* (*National Observer*) advertising the ‘Deutsche Nordlandsreise 1936,’ the organization’s *Reichsgeschäftsführer* (Executive Director) took on a by-then oft-discussed topic, namely the hierarchy of north– and southbound travel.³⁰ ‘The German people’s longing for the South (*Südsehnsucht*) is much talked about,’ writes the author, ‘but it is easily overseen that the roots of the vitality (*Lebenskraft*) have always been located in the North and that the South has brought many a blossom to a splendid development but has never been able to strengthen the *constituent power of life*.’³¹ It is also overlooked, the article goes on,

that, in historical and daily life, a longing for the North can be found in any true German. Every year, tens of thousands of German people (*Volksgenossen*) find their way to the North Sea and the countries of the North [...] We believe that the fact that many more Germans travel to the North Sea than to the Mediterranean is not just caused by cheaper prices, but rather an unconscious, primal feeling of belonging to the Nordic world (*nordischer Weltzugehörigkeit*).

This, according to the *Reichsgeschäftsführer*, was the background for the upcoming trip with the *MS Milwaukee*, onboard which leading German and Nordic personalities, films, and artworks (including folk dances and folk music) would purvey to the travelers ‘the best possible way to get to know the character of the North.’³² In her impressive study on the tourist industry in Nazi Germany, Kristin Semmens has convincingly argued that Italy was the preferred ideological destination for international tourism among the Nazi leadership.³³ The above example, however, serves to show that other forces in Nazi society—such as the

³⁰ See Lützhöft, *Der Nordische Gedanke*, 209; also Spode, ‘Nordlandsfahrten’.

³¹ Ernst Timm, ‘Deutsche Nordlandsreise 1936 (German Trip to the North, 1936),’ *Völkischer Beobachter, Berlin* (14 December 1935) in *Allgemeines (Zeitungsausschnitte) Band 1 (Akte d. Weltwirtschaft Instituts Kiel) 1921–1937: 1, Vereins- und Verbandsarchive, Nordische Gesellschaft, Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck*; emphasis in the original.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler’s Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York, NJ 2005), 135–137.

Nordische Gesellschaft—sought actively to overturn this hierarchy. As I have shown elsewhere, more than 20.000 Germans on average did indeed stay the night at hotels in Copenhagen alone each year throughout the 1930s, while one-day excursions by ship became increasingly popular throughout the decade, with more than 28.000 passengers making the journey in the 1938 season.³⁴

In a similar promotional account, another author describes the itinerary for the same trip in some detail—the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norwegian fjords, the ‘*Hansestadt* (Hanseatic City of) Bergen,’ and then southwards to Hamburg like the Vikings (albeit peacefully, the reader is assured)—before reflecting upon the bonds between Germany and the North in *völkisch* terms:

The relations between Germany and the North, which are founded on the basis of a shared composition of a common and geographically and racially connected living space (*Lebensraum*), deserve the strongest and most lasting support, [and] are better cherished through in-depth knowledge of Nordic countries, Nordic people, the Nordic life and its special forms of expression, the Nordic tradition of history and sagas, the old Nordic peasant and seafarer culture, than through lectures and books. We go into the country [...] out of the conviction that these countries have something to bring to the new Germany.³⁵

Selling its tours to the Nordic countries, the Nazified *Nordische Gesellschaft* thus combined Nordic race theory and *Nordlandromantik* to provide a portrayal of the North as a travel destination in terms not only compatible with but even highly attractive to an audience influenced by Nazi ideology. The shared living space—defined racially—served as justification for a romanticized longing for the North, its peoples, history, and cultures. Here, an understanding of the Nordic countries is not an alternative to but rather the essential

³⁴ Ørskov, “‘In wenigen Stunden dort’”, 24-41.

³⁵ Heinrich Jessen, ‘Wir fahren in den Norden’, *Nordische Rundschau*, Kiel (8 May 1936) in Allgemeines (Zeitungsausschnitte) Band 1 (Akte d. Weltwirtschaft Instituts Kiel) 1921–1937: 1, Vereins- und Verbandsarchive, Nordische Gesellschaft Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck.

precondition for a thorough understanding of ‘the new Germany.’ While, as we shall see, TAD would not explicitly invoke these racialized and romanticized imaginaries of the North, they were certainly familiar to the target audiences and could thus be reinvented, reiterated, and reproduced in the association’s promotional efforts in Nazi Germany. It is to these promotional efforts that the rest of this article is devoted. Before turning to the travel brochures at the center of my analysis, however, I will first give a very short account of the history of TAD and then turn briefly to another medium whose potential for tourist promotion caught the eye of the tourist association in the 1930s: postage stamps.

The Tourist Association for Denmark was a voluntary, idealistic organization, which—in various configurations and institutional set-ups—had served as the main institutional force mediating between state, commercial, and popular interests related to tourism in Denmark since its inception in the aftermath of the successful Nordic Fair in Copenhagen in 1888.³⁶ By the early 1930s, however, influential voices in public opinion as well as state and tourist officials came to believe that the organization’s structure was insufficient in an era of emerging mass tourism. Budgetary limitations, organizational constraints, and an old-fashioned mindset, it was argued, caused the organization to produce promotional material that was out of touch with the demands of the era. In the first months of 1934, the government-commissioned ‘Foreign Ministry’s Committee on Tourist Propaganda Abroad (CTPA)’ was created, in December that year the committee’s report on *Danmarks Turistpropaganda (The Tourist Propaganda of Denmark)* was published, and in the spring of

³⁶ Hans Joakim Schultz, *Dansk Turisme i 100 år (Danish Tourism through 100 years)* (Aarhus 1988), 19; For other accounts of the history of TAD, see Mikael Frausing, ‘Et lykkeligt fornuftsægteskab? Turistforeningen for Danmark mellem hjemstavnsturisme og eksportturisme ca. 1888–1967 (A Happy Marriage of Convenience? The Danish National Tourist Organization c.1888–1967)’, *Kulturstudier*, 1 (2010), 25–52; Knud Secher, *100 år i dansk turisme. Turistårbogen 1989 (100 years in Danish tourism. The Tourist Year Book 1989)* (Århus 1989); Xenius Rostock, *Jubilæumsaarbog 1938 (Jubilee Year Book 1938)* (Copenhagen 1938); and Ørskov, “In wenigen Stunden dort”, 43-83.

1935 the association was re-organized into a domestic and a foreign department, the latter of which was now run on a professional basis while receiving substantial state funding.³⁷

With the reorganization of TAD in 1935, the organization could devote more resources to its promotional efforts abroad. With more resources new promotional initiatives followed. For example, the leadership of the association took part in various efforts at redesigning Danish postal stamps, a medium increasingly perceived as valuable to tourist promotion in the public debate by the end of the 1930s. In 1936, for example, TAD co-organized a design competition calling for ‘proposals for a series of stamps, which through their illustrations were to work for propaganda purposes for Danish tourism at home and abroad.’ In the spring of 1937, Mogens Lichtenberg—the post-re-organization leader of TAD’s foreign department—sat on the jury for a similar competition organized by a major daily, which stressed the value of stamps as widely circulated advertisement.³⁸

Anne Marie Rechendorff and Andreas Marklund have shown that contributions to stamp design competitions in the late 1930s signified ‘that parts of the population wanted stamps which visualized Denmark in a broader fashion than through references to the state, the king, and national historical milestones.’ Some of these desired ‘popular’ (as opposed to the canonized official) stamps consisted of images inspired by the modern and industrialized nation, partly of (rural and provincial) landscapes including touristic highlights. As such, Rechendorf and Marklund conclude, stamps became part of a struggle between elitist and popular visions in Danish national self-identification.³⁹

I argue that these tensions would reverberate in the country’s promotional efforts abroad. Besides elitist (statist) and popular—folkloristic, rural, and provincial—elements,

³⁷ Udenrigsministeriets Udvalg for Turistpropaganda i Udlandet, *Danmarks turistpropaganda* (Copenhagen 1935).

³⁸ Anne Marie Rechendorff and Andreas Marklund, ‘At visualisere en nation: Frimærket og det nationale i mellemkrigstidens Danmark (Visualizing a nation: Stamps and the nation in Denmark in the inter-war period)’, *Kulturstudier*, 1 (2015): 121–153, e.g. 136–148. Quoted from 145.

³⁹ *Ibid.*: 149–151.

however, a particular string of modern visions interacted as well. These related, in particular, to the Danish crafts industry, infrastructural aspects, and the social state. The different ways these elements played out throughout the 1930s and the ways they were configured when aimed at Nazi Germany are particularly interesting for the present study. These different configurations are telling with regards to the manner in which images of the Danish nation were negotiated in the semi-official sphere that TAD constituted, and how these images drew upon various understandings of the nation available among the different (commercial, popular, statist) actors making up the framework of TAD.

Here it is worth noting that while the following analysis will not build upon documents shedding light on the genesis of individual tourist brochures and the considerations that informed their design,⁴⁰ such considerations were indeed made. At a meeting of leaders of local tourist associations, Lichtenberg, the person with the overall responsibility for the central association's promotional material from 1935 onwards, encouraged his audience to make choices regarding style, content, and design based upon the 'place, for which propaganda is being made, or the audience one hopes to engage.'⁴¹

Returning to the years prior to TAD's reorganization, however, romanticist Nordicism persisted in the touristic appeal, and not only through the efforts of the *Nordische Gesellschaft*.⁴² This is evident in a 1929 TAD brochure, in which Denmark is marketed as

⁴⁰ If these exist, I have been unable to locate them.

⁴¹ Mogens Lichtenberg, 'Fremstilling af Brochurer (Production of Brochures),' in *Turistforeningen for Danmark*, in *En Samling Foredrag Holdt ved Turistforeningens Turistlederkursus 1938 (A Collection of Lectures given at the Tourist Association's Tourist Leader Course 1938)*, 44–68 (Copenhagen 1939), 44–45;

⁴² On the persistent romanticism in modern tourism, see Hartmut Berghoff, "From Privilege to Commodity?" in *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000*, ed. Hartmut Berghoff et. al. (Basingstoke, England/New York: Palgrave, 2002), 163; Furthermore, Jonathan Culler hints at one reason such romantic notions for the past are still central to tourism today, when asserting that "one of the characteristics of modernity is the belief that authenticity has been lost and exists only in the past—whose signs we preserve (antiques, restored buildings, imitations of old interiors)—or else in other regions or countries." See Jonathan Culler, "Semiotics of Tourism," *The American Journal of Semiotics* 1 (1981), 1/2: 127-140, quote 132.

*Das Land des Meeres (The Land of the Sea)*⁴³ (Figure 1). On the cover, a dark-haired woman stands on a beach wearing a bathing suit, her arms outstretched so as to make her body form a cross, her face turned sideways and her hair caught in the ocean breeze. Heavy on text compared to later publications, the brochure is also saturated with romanticist and Nordicist notions. The booklet works as a descriptive tour through the country—arriving in Jutland by train from Hamburg, then touring the peninsula before leaving for Funen, Sealand, and Bornholm—in which the sea, unsurprisingly, occurs as a persistent reference point.

A Herderian-style romanticism is pronounced already as the imagined traveler arrives in Jutland and ‘steps on the soil (*Boden*) of this country, beloved by all cultural nations (*Kulturvölkern*) of the earth.’ On this soil stands Ribe, the old dome-city in southeastern Jutland where, according to the brochure, ‘the air is suffused with the folk songs (*Volksliedern*), the sagas of the land which float above the pointed roofs of the half-timbered houses.’ On the Western coast of Jutland, to cite another example, the sand dunes are accompanied by ‘the organ sound of the sea’ swelling up ‘from the past,’ and ‘nowhere does such a melancholic Adagio sound through nature as when the ‘white nights’ lay their fragrant silver veil on this pale, Nordic world,’ for example at the migrating coastal dune Råbjerg Mile to the North of the peninsula.⁴⁴

The ‘Nordic world’ is a recurring theme throughout the text as well. Describing the island of Funen, the text invokes a poetic saying that ‘over the castles near cities and fjords, sing the larks about life in the North.’⁴⁵ Elsewhere, imitations of ancient Viking songs along with romantic poetry add Nordic flavor, while the terms *Nordisch* and *Norden* are used liberally.

⁴³ Danmarks Turistforening (The Danish Tourist Association), *Dänemark. Das Land des Meeres* (Copenhagen 1929), archived in 491: 1934 – 1937, Turistbrochurer (Tourist brochures) (1923–1986), Danmarks Turistråd (The Danish Tourist Council), Rigsarkivet.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3–6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

Landscape descriptions are prominent throughout; while not always explicitly invoking Nordicist imagery, they consistently operate within a romantic discourse. Furthermore, the description of Copenhagen is largely focused on architectural sights, as well as museums, sculptures, and squares, and even contains a paragraph devoted to the ‘seductive rhythm’ of the metropolis.⁴⁶ While especially the mention of Copenhagen’s leisurely sides points towards a modernist framing that would become more prominent in the tourist material from this point onwards, the brochure’s text is by and large quite a traditionalistic, romanticist, and at times Nordicist piece of travel writing.

The visual imagery of the brochure is solidly rooted in the romanticist tradition of tourism as well. For the most part, its photographs portray either castles and other (often neo-classical) historical buildings, or landscape panoramas and vistas. As described by Orvar Löfgren among others, looking for the picturesque in castles and framing the sublime in nature from carefully selected viewpoints became an institutionalized and absolutely integral part of upper-class leisure travel from the eighteenth century onwards.⁴⁷ The panoramas of the hilly landscapes of Jutland, for example, are perfectly in line with this tradition (Figure 2), even if the scenery does not quite match the sublimity of the Niagara Falls or the Swiss Alps, the original objects of eighteenth century travelers’ admiring gazes. Other visuals include photographs of idyllic streetscapes, sand dunes and beaches, as well as female gymnasts at a folk high school on Funen (Figure 3).

The gymnasts are not addressed in the text, but visually they nonetheless represent a body culture that moved ‘between the pre-modern and the modern,’ according to the late Niels Kayser Nielsen, and was thus closely related to the temporal imaginings of fascist

⁴⁶ Turistforeningen for Danmark, *Dänemark. Das Land des Meeres*, 12–16.

⁴⁷ Orvar Löfgren, *On Holiday. A History of Vacationing* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1999), especially 13–40.

ideologies.⁴⁸ The building serving as the background for the gymnasts is the Ollerup Gymnastic Folk High School, whose leader—Niels Bukh—in the words of Nielsen, ‘was perhaps Scandinavia’s most illustrative example of [... a] combination of essentialism, body fixation and longing for authenticity in the 1930s.’ The prominence he enjoyed internationally and domestically in the interwar years stands as a testament to the wide concern given to mental and physical health across the European continent, as expressed in the idealization of sport.⁴⁹

While Bukh strove for authenticity and saw his gymnastics as ‘primitive,’ he simultaneously insisted that they were based on highly scientific principles, just as the process of subjectification at the core of his body culture transformed the body into ‘the domicile for the forward-looking, utopian strategies of the self’—Bukh’s modernism was a palingenetic one.⁵⁰ What is more, the gymnasts were carefully selected—with a preference for blue-eyed blondes—so that ‘each individual girl was to incarnate the general and abstract Nordic ideal body in the hard toil for bodily perfection.’⁵¹ Unsurprisingly, Bukh was a household name among the Nordacists in the *Nordische Gesellschaft*, as his gymnasts performed at its annual festival.⁵²

In 1934, while ‘The Foreign Ministry’s Committee on Tourist Propaganda Abroad’ (CTPA) was still at work, TAD (in cooperation with the Danish State Railways) published a four-paneled double-sided German-language brochure entitled ‘Dänemark’ in 20,000

⁴⁸ Niels Kayser Nielsen, ‘The Cult of the Nordic Superman – Between the Pre-Modern and the Modern’, *The Sports Historian*, 19, 1 (1999), 61–80.

⁴⁹ Gunther Mai, *Europa 1918 – 1939. Mentalitäten, Lebensweisen, Politik zwischen Weltkriegen (Europe 1918-1939. Mentalities, Ways of Living, Politics between the World Wars)* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer GmbH 2001).

⁵⁰ Nielsen, ‘The Cult of the Nordic Superman’, 74; On palingenetic modernism, see Griffin, ‘Tunnel Visions and Mysterious Trees’.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵² A series of photographs depicting Bukh and his gymnasts at the Second Reichstagung appeared in Unknown Author, ‘2. Reichstagung der Nordische Gesellschaft (2nd Conference of the Nordic Society)’, *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, June 28, 1936 in 90, *Allgemeines (Zeitungsausschnitte) Band 1* (Akte d. Weltwirtschaft Instituts Kiel) 1938–1944, 2, Nordische Gesellschaft, Vereins- und Verbandsarchive, Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck.

copies.⁵³ The folder had a particularly economic profile, advertising Denmark to be ‘at the moment, [...] the **cheapest** tourist country’ on the frontispiece (Figure 4).

TAD’s annual report from 1934 states that the ‘Dänemark’-brochure ‘propagates [...] its message] “through the eye.”’ ‘The maxim “Denmark, Land of the Sea,”’ it is further pointed out, ‘finds expression in the cover’s bathing motifs.’⁵⁴ Indeed, the brochure is heavily illustrated and very light on text compared to the 1929 version. The text strikes a very practical note; stripped of romanticized description, the brochure provides only basic information on travel routes and prices, as well as itineraries devoid of any sight descriptions. In accordance with TAD’s own description, the imagery is called upon to do the promotional work beyond the economic argument.

The 1934 brochure’s visuals link it to the 1929 booklet in a certain sense. Many motifs are similar to the ones portrayed visually and textually in the earlier publication. The brochure is still focused largely on landscapes, castles, and idyllic streetscapes, although in a more balanced fashion than the landscape-heavy 1929 brochure. What is most markedly different, however, is the visual introduction of female beachgoers on bikes and on the beach, not just on the cover but interspersed inside the brochure as well (Figure 5). The ‘beach girl’ would become a standard icon in Danish tourist marketing in the following years, so much so that ‘the cult of the beach girl’ would be the subject of rather spirited public debate from time to time. As hinted further above, the Nordic body ideal came through in the promotional efforts before TAD’s reorganization, as it would do after its reorganization in 1935 as well.⁵⁵

⁵³ Turistforeningen for Danmark, *Dänemark* (Copenhagen 1934), archived in 491: 1934 – 1937, Turistbrochurer (1923–1986), Danmarks Turistråd, Rigsarkivet; on the number of copies, see ‘Årsberetning 1934 (Annual Report 1934),’ in 441, 07798, Årsberetninger 1924–1965, Turistforeningen for Danmark, Rigsarkivet, 4.

⁵⁴ Turistforeningen for Danmark, *Årsberetning 1934*, 4.

⁵⁵ According to Schultz, *Dansk Turisme i 100 år*, 53 (image caption); Much more could be said about the gendered aspects of the promotional material and how it intersects with the images of female beauty in Denmark and Germany in the interwar period. As is equally true for the occurrence of beach girls and female gymnasts in the promotional material, they allowed for a—by the standards of the 1930s—rather revealing depiction of the female body without breaking with perceived decorum. Overall, the predominance of female figures in the promotional material is hardly coincidental. Neither is it surprising that they would often appear in what scholars of contemporary tourism brochures have identified as objectified representations showcasing female

After this reorganization, according to Mikael Frausing, the newly professionalized TAD's 'increased economic resources had, first of all, brought about a considerable increase in the quality of the material, but furthermore the publications were, for the first time, results of a collected strategy for marketing abroad.' Now all promotion abroad was coordinated by the organization's foreign department under the direction of Lichtenberg, resulting in greater continuity between subsequent series of brochures as well as a larger degree of differentiation of brochures in accordance with the audiences aimed at⁵⁶

The first series of brochures after the re-organization of TAD, distributed in 1936, features a remarkable mixture of commercial, popular, and statist influences.⁵⁷ On page three, the state is represented visually by images of the king, a royal guard, and a view of the royal castle framed by classical columns and an equestrian statue. The official imagery is supplemented by a text proclaiming that 'Denmark is the oldest Kingdom in Europe.' However, even in this manifestation of statist symbols, the text devotes more attention to the popular grounding of the monarchy. Thus, it is highlighted that

in his plainness and sobriety, in his cordiality and closeness to the people (*Volksverbundenheit*) King Christian X. leads his people by example, beloved and feted, where he shows himself, whether on his daily morning ride [through Copenhagen] or amidst the festive joy of his people.

submissiveness or subordination, or in the category 'photographs of attractive young women in advertisements and brochures that promote tourism.' While the topic needs further research, it would seem that a sexualized side of the Nordic body ideal materialized in the promotional efforts. E.g. Ercan Sirakaya and Sevil Sonmez, 'Gender Images in State Tourism Brochures: An Overlooked Area in Socially Responsible Tourism Marketing', *Journal of Travel Research*, 38, 4 (2000), 353–362, quote: 361; and C. A. Heatwole, 'Body Shots: Women in Tourism-Related Advertisements', *Focus* 39, 4 (1989), 7–11.

⁵⁶ Frausing, 'Et lykkeligt fornuftsægteskab?', 47; Furthermore, in some senses *Danmarks Turistpropaganda* (Denmark's Tourist Propaganda)—the committee report resulting from the work of CTPA—in itself constituted, or at least pronounced, a shift in TAD's approach to the promotion of the Danish landscape, stressing that while neither in the mountainous, picturesque, mythical North, nor on par with the cultural and historical behemoths of Western Europe or the attractions of more southerly climates, Denmark still had plenty to offer, partly because 'The tourists are not anymore, as they often were in times past, only mountaineers and salmon anglers. Nor do they all possess such a great interest in art and history that this alone determines the destination of their trip. And finally, in the last decades the amount of tourists has risen with hundreds of thousands who cannot afford to travel to the Pyramids.' See Udenrigsministeriets Udvalg for Turistpropaganda i Udlandet, *Danmarks turistpropaganda*, 9–15. Quote: 10–11.

⁵⁷ Turistforeningen for Danmark, *Ferien in Dänemark (Vacation in Denmark)* (Copenhagen 1936) in 491: 1934–1937, *Turistbrochurer (1923–1986)*, Danmarks Turistråd, Rigsarkivet.

The next double-page counters the official narrative even more effectively. Here, smiling faces of ordinary-looking people, seemingly from the country-side, and images of ‘the sunny Danish landscape’ and a ‘Midsummer-celebration’ provide a popular and folkloristic framing, quite literally, to a textual description under the headline ‘The Danes’ (Figure 6). The text echoes the visual language’s focus on rural life in the open spaces by highlighting the connection between the people and its physical environment. That is,

[h]earty and amiable, cheerful and happy, the Danes are really children of their country with its bright fairy summer nights, with the harmonic landscape, with the green oak and beech forests, with the wide fields and grasslands and the gently waving hill chains [...]

As was the case for almost all of TAD’s promotional material from the late 1930s, the same brochure was published in a slightly altered English-language version as well.⁵⁸ The subtle differences in content for the versions aimed at Germany and Great Britain, respectively, suggest different perceptions of the target audiences among the marketers at TAD. They might thus hint at the degrees to which some tourism imaginaries related to the notions of a romantic and racialized *Norden* were prioritized above others in material aimed at Germany relative to Great Britain.

In contrast to the Anglophone version, the German-language version of the 1936 brochure leaves unmentioned that the country entertains ‘the most advanced social laws in the world.’ While visually alike in everything but the cover pages, the two different versions of the brochure differ in textual details throughout. On the second pages of the brochures, for example, the features of Denmark as a travel country are summed up. According to the English-language version, Denmark is:

The sea-girt land of the **Vikings**.

The land of **Shakespeare’s Hamlet**.

⁵⁸ Turistforeningen for Danmark, *Denmark next* (Copenhagen 1936) in 491: 1934–1937, Turistbrochurer (1923–1986), Danmarks Turistråd, Rigsarkivet.

The land of **Hans Christian Andersen**.

The land with the wonderful **Beaches**.

[...]

In the German-language version, the country is advertised as:

The land of **Nordic Folk Culture (Volkskultur)**

The land with the beautiful **Beech Forests**

The land with the **roaring Ocean**

The land with the **mild Summer Nights**

[...]

In this example, the Anglophone version carries more concrete historical and cultural references than the material aimed at Germany, which puts stronger emphasis on folkloristic notions related to romantic readings of the Danish landscape. While this landscape differs quite markedly from that of the mountainous Scandinavian Peninsula with which much *Nordlandromantik* was associated, it does nevertheless fit quite well into the folkloristic imaginaries of the North centered around the Nordic peasant.

Copenhagen also occupies a double page, well over half of which is devoted to photographs showing a mixture of historical buildings, museums, and sculptures (the inclusion of the Little Mermaid had become mandatory at this point) and festive life at Tivoli Gardens and *Dyrehavsbakken (The Animal's Park Hill)*, a less known, older amusement park north of Copenhagen. At the same time, 'endless rows of bicyclists' made their way into the visual as well as textual representation of the capital city; in the portrayal of Copenhagen, the contours of a distinctively Nordic modern are taking shape.

Another element, which goes to show TAD's commercial interests, appears in a section entitled 'Denmark is cheap.' The text focuses on what can be bought for little money: 'Danish agricultural products are exquisite, Danish arts and crafts, especially Danish glass, porcelain and silver, enjoy world-wide reputation (*haben Weltruf*).' Before the re-organization of TAD, advertisements for Danish art craft such as Royal Copenhagen and George Jensen—

whose Managing Director had played an important part in CTPA—had been quite prominent in the tourist brochures, for example in a ‘Copenhagen’ brochure from 1931 (Figure 7). With the professionalization of TAD, however, and as commercial actors and the state now each paid into the association’s promotional efforts, the crafts had moved into the text as attractions in themselves.

The following year, TAD’s brochures celebrated the king’s twenty-five-year jubilee. Apart from textual alterations made to accommodate for the jubilee festivities, however, all but the covers were exact reprints of the 1936 editions.⁵⁹ Once again, however, the different cover motifs adorning the brochures aimed at Germany and Great Britain respectively hint at the subtly different promotional approaches pursued in TAD’s efforts to attract tourists from these radically different political and cultural contexts (Figure 8).

The cover image for the Anglophone poster depicts a woman lying on a beach. A small child sits next to her. The woman is young with shoulder-length curly blonde hair. Her bathing suit is red with a tint of pink, and above her waist is a white belt. She is depicted slightly from above and front-on, although her head is turned sideways, facing the child next to her. The child, dressed in blue, sits on what appears to be a map of Great Britain and Northern Europe inserted into the bottom of the frame. The eyes of the child are directed at a point on the western coast of Jutland to which the woman points. In the poster prepared for Germany, a similar looking woman is accompanied by a young man. She wears a dress which is more conservative than the bathing suit in the image produced for distribution in England. Its color is a regular red and it is divided nearly halfway by a white belt as well. The woman is depicted from the side, with a hat in her lap. The man sits slightly behind and above her. Both are looking longingly at the idyllic nature behind them. Their focus seems to be on a burial mound rising above a landscape of yellow fields, blue streams, and green forestry.

⁵⁹ E.g. Turistforeningen for Danmark *Årsberetning 1937*, 5 in 07798, 441, 07798, 441, *Årsberetninger 1924–1965*, Turistforeningen for Danmark, Rigsarkivet.

There are some obvious similarities at play here: both images consist of two individuals focusing their attention on a symbolic object, both are anchored linguistically through almost identical headings, and in both cases, the backgrounds portray the romanticized ‘Danish’ landscapes of the hilly countryside and the wide and sandy beach on Jutland’s western coast. There are similarities to be found on a more symbolic level as well. The red and white clothing of the young blonde women is hardly coincidental and adds national symbolism to the youth, beauty, and Nordic traits embodied in their appearances. In general, both images connote youth, vitality, and closeness to nature, while neither urban settings nor elitist tourist attractions such as monuments and museums are showcased. In the same vein, whereas the woman on the cover made for a British audience literally points to a geographical connection between Great Britain and Denmark easily surmountable with modern technology, the same connection is made in the linguistic message on the image adorning the cover of the brochure distributed in Germany: ‘there in a few hours.’

Nonetheless, one monument appears symbolically on the cover of the German-language brochure. Through her posture, the direction of her gaze and the sideways direction from which she is depicted, the woman evokes the statue of the Little Mermaid as seen from the Copenhagen waterfront (Figure 9).⁶⁰ The statue, which after the reorganization of TAD rose to prominence as a national touristic icon,⁶¹ alludes to the romanticist values and indeterminate longings with which the fairy tale of the Little Mermaid is saturated. Thus, rather cleverly, another layer of meaning is added to the brochure cover—one that bears traces of the romanticized Nordicism tourist culture that was otherwise becoming less prominent in the promotional material.

In general, the organic and past-oriented symbolism is stronger in the images presented to the German traveler as compared to the Anglophone brochure, hinting that TAD

⁶⁰ I owe my thanks to Eszter Timár for this observation.

⁶¹ Frausing, ‘Et lykkeligt fornuftsægteskab?’, 49.

found such imageries more likely to be appealing to an audience in Nazi Germany than in Great Britain. The image on the cover of the brochure distributed to Great Britain leaves a more modern impression, the style being fairly simple without the idyllic and detailed backdrop of the German image. The beach as a landscape invites relaxation and vacationing (with the stress on vitality, to be sure), whereas the hilly fields make excellent destinations for youthful hikes while providing a setting in which the longing tourist can be one with history and the primordial landscape signified by the burial mound. Furthermore, the healthy child in the British image does not only symbolize family values but points towards future generations as well. The idealized couple exploring the villages and hillsides, on the other hand, is engulfed in the romanticized organic past; in this imagined experience, albeit only ‘a few hours’ distant, the modern world already seems far away.

However, beyond the cover art, the promotional material consistently took up additional modern elements. As a case in point, infrastructure became an increasingly important element in Danish tourist marketing throughout the 1930s. As the brochures became more functional, some containing little more than practical information, means and routes for travel rose in prominence in the visual language of the promotional material. Bridges (of which three major ones were constructed in Denmark over the course of the decade) and trains became the exemplary visual symbols signifying this heightened sense of mobility, which in itself held clear modern connotations. This was evident to a certain extent in the 1936 brochures (reprinted in 1937) but would reach a high point by 1939 as a new set of folders was produced. These, drawn in a rather simple drawing style adding to the modern feel, were almost devoid of the romanticized imagery that had been so dominant a decade earlier. Here, bridges, cars, bikes, trains, and even airplanes featured instead of landscape panoramas (Figures 10 and 11).

Two German-language publications of different lengths were distributed by TAD in 1939. The shorter folder was almost entirely devoted to conditions, means, and regulations for travel in the country, while the longer—promotional as opposed to informational—version included sections of a more descriptive character, as well as a map complete with brief descriptions of forty different tourist sights. The first four sections of the brochure carry headlines all meant to serve as descriptors of Denmark as a ‘land of the past,’ a ‘land of the Middle Ages,’ a ‘modern land,’ and a ‘well-ordered land.’ Other sections deal with hotel standards, food culture, travel infrastructure, amusement, and sports.

Remarkably, specific tourist sights are absent in the visuals of the brochure while more abstract illustrations of a lure-blowing Viking, a castle on a hill and a straight, orderly road stand in their stead. Textually, these sections are identical to similar sections of the corresponding Anglophone brochure published the same year. In a sense, then, they duly illustrate a self-understanding neatly summed up in the slogan ‘Denmark, the old land with the modern life’ propagated in the brochure.⁶² This was in many ways in line with the Danish Social Democratic Party’s self-understanding after its transformation from a worker’s party to a people’s party in the late 1920s and early 1930s.⁶³ Having successfully integrated national and romantic concepts into its ideology, however, the party stood tall on the progressive legislation achieved on social policy throughout the 1930s.⁶⁴ In this, the Janus-faced nature of the concept of *Norden*—which concurrently allowed for progressive and retrospective interpretations—was particularly useful.

As a brand of ‘Nordicity,’ to use a term coined by Christopher Browning, crystallized in the post-war era, the progressive interpretations of *Norden* would come to dominate.

⁶² In the Anglophone version, the phrasing is: ‘Denmark, the land of tradition and modernity.’

⁶³ E.g. Nielsen, ‘Demokrati og kulturel nationalisme i Norden’.

⁶⁴ Elsewhere, I deal with the state’s promotion of its social legislation to Nazi Germany in regard to the occupation context. See Frederik Forrai Ørskov, ‘Screening *The Social Face of Denmark* to the Nazis: Social Policy as subdued Resistance during the German Occupation of Denmark,’ *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 43, 2 (2018).

Nordicity thus carried entirely different connotations from the ones of interwar Nordicism in both racial and cultural terms. Nordicity as a brand was construed as a specific approach to conducting international relations, in which peace-building operations featured along with ‘internationalist solidarism’ and the image of ‘egalitarian social democracy’ constituted elements of the ‘Nordic exception’ in the Cold War.⁶⁵

The interpretation of *Norden* as a region turned concept, especially its social aspects, rose to prominence in the 1930s as a competing—if not actually conflicting—vision alongside the romantic (and racial) notions of Nordicism and *Nordlandromantik*. Although not a particularly social democratic concept at the outset of the interwar era, *Norden* had to a large (although not entirely hegemonic) degree become attached to social democracy by the end of the 1930s. The concept was contested among contemporary political actors but encompassed such features as egalitarianism, (peasant) freedom, pragmatism, and social progressivism, while also standing in close relation to other concepts such as the notion of *folkhemmet* (the people’s home) and being part of composite concepts such as ‘Nordic democracy.’⁶⁶

Perhaps unsurprisingly, elements related to social progress were completely absent in the 1929 folder. At a time when the Social Democratic Party had only briefly held power, a discourse of a specific Nordic social model was yet to crystallize (although awareness of a high social standard existed to a certain degree and had indeed been noted outside of Scandinavia already at the turn of the century⁶⁷) and thus did not appear in the promotional material either. Already in 1931, however, traces of a discourse emphasizing societal progress appeared in a trilingual—Danish–, German–, and English–language—booklet entitled ‘A

⁶⁵ See Christopher Browning, ‘Branding Nordicity. Models, Identity and the Decline of Exceptionalism’, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 42, 1 (2007), 27–51.

⁶⁶ On the elements making up the cultural construction of *Norden*, see especially Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth, ‘Introduction’, 1–24; On the contestations of core concepts within the notion of *Norden*, such as ‘Nordic Democracy,’ see Jussi Kurunmäki and Johan Strang (eds.), *Rhetorics of Nordic Democracy* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2010).

⁶⁷ See e.g. Peter Stadius, ‘Visiting Nordic Modernity around 1900. Spanish Images,’ in Kurunmäki and Strang (eds.), *Rhetorics of Nordic Democracy*, 194–207.

Visit in [sic!] Copenhagen,' which, under the heading of 'facts and figures about København [sic!]' featured an entire section on social conditions in the capital city. Here, Copenhagen was described as a 'happy' and 'democratic' city; statistics were given on payment, housing, and living conditions in general—including the number of telephones and bicycles—while both hospital standards and care of the elderly were subjects touched upon.⁶⁸

The presence of such elements would gradually increase during the 1930s. In *Danmarks Turistpropaganda* the interest taken by foreign visitors in Danish societal conditions was highlighted in the report's discussion of Denmark's possibilities as a tourist country. According to the text, the foreign visitors would 'again and again' recognize Denmark's status as 'one of the countries in the world where the social measures have made most progress.' Moreover, visitors were said to link the ostensibly 'thoroughly democratic' and egalitarian social order to notions of the *folk*, understood as a thoroughly democratic concept, making for 'a truly free Kingdom, a country without any great social opposites.'⁶⁹

This understanding was reflected to a certain extent in the German-language brochure from 1936, where the description of the popular monarchy discussed further above featured under the headline 'a democratic Kingdom.' In fact, the text holds, Denmark is among Europe's 'most modern democracies.'⁷⁰ Only with the brochure in 1939, however, would an entire page be devoted to the well-orderedness of the country. The manifestation of this order was two-fold: as cleanliness and in the Danish social legislation. The latter, it was understood, 'conferred upon the entire Danish nation a happy and peaceful character,' which 'hundreds of foreign politicians and national economists study each year.' At the same time, the cooperative movement is described as a unifying force, making 'the Danes feel like one single

⁶⁸ H.F. Ulrichsen, *København (Copenhagen)* (Copenhagen 1931), 13–21 in 490: 1929 – 1933, *Turistbrochurer* (1923–1986), Danmarks Turistråd, Rigsarkivet.

⁶⁹ Turistforeningen for Danmark, *Danmarks Turistpropaganda*, 12–13.

⁷⁰ Turistforeningen for Danmark, *Ferien in Dänemark*.

big family.’⁷¹ As such, the brochure mirrors the construction of an exportable ‘Nordic model’ based on the notion of ‘Nordic democracy’ combined with universalistic socio-political principles that would take shape by the late 1930s as well.⁷²

Finally, the focus on cleanliness resembles what Sofia Eriksson has found in a study of interwar tourism to Sweden. Eriksson shows that visitors traveled to the country with the expectation to find ‘a space for modernity and progress even prior to their experience of it.’ Such seekers of modernity were not only political pilgrims but also non-political tourists who ‘emphasized another aspect of cultural modernity; that of cleanliness and racial whiteness.’⁷³

According to Eriksson, the obsession with cleanliness among travelers to Sweden as early as the 1920s was partly linked to notions of progress of modernity but also to ‘an increased popularity of and preoccupation with the Scandinavian race and culture’ among English- and German speakers. As such, Eriksson links it to a perceived Nordic body culture and ‘an athletic lifestyle [which] was explicitly linked to the Nordic blood flowing in their veins.’⁷⁴ In the Danish promotional material, these connections implicitly appear—in addition to the examples discussed above, the same brochure emphasizing the cleanliness of the country mentions both the affection for hiking among the Danish youth and the achievements of Danish swimmers at the Berlin Olympics in 1936.⁷⁵ Race, body culture, and cleanliness all

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² On the promotion of a specific ‘Nordic Model,’ which began to be recognized as an alternative societal model internationally and promoted as such by social democratic politicians and intellectuals from the late 1930s onwards, see among others: Jussi Kurunmäki and Johan Strang, ‘Introduction: “Nordic Democracy” in a World of Tensions’, in Kurunmäki and Strang (eds.) *Rhetorics of ‘Nordic Democracy’*, 9–36; Carl Marklund, ‘Sharing Values and Shaping Values: Sweden, “Nordic Democracy,” and the American Crisis of Democracy’, in Kurunmäki and Strang, *Rhetorics of ‘Nordic Democracy’*, 114–140; and Ørskov, ‘Screening *The Social Face of Denmark*’; Kazimierz Musiał, ‘Tracing Roots of the Scandinavian Model. Image of Progress in the Era of Modernisation’, *Working papers: Gemenskaper Gemeinschaften 17*, 19–29 (Florence 1998).

⁷³ Sofia Eriksson, ‘A Rarity Show of Modernity. Sweden in the 1920s’, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37, 1 (2010), 74–92, quote from 75; Among the ‘political pilgrims’ were journalist travelers such as Marquis W. Childs, who popularized the notion of the Swedish political system as constituting “the middle way” in the Anglo-American world in a popular book from 1936. Marquis W. Childs, *Sweden: The Middle Way* (New Haven, CT 1936).

⁷⁴ Ibid., 83–84.

⁷⁵ Turistforeningen for Danmark, *Wir treffen uns in Dänemark (We will meet in Denmark)* (Copenhagen 1939) in 491: 1934 – 1937, Turistbrochurer (1923–1986), Danmarks Turistråd, Rigsarkivet.

stood alongside social progressivism and ‘modern democracy’ to inform the image of *Norden* being promoted by the late 1930s.

The promotional efforts of The Tourist Association for Denmark towards Germany, analyzed above, thus developed from utilizing long-standing tourism imaginaries featuring highly romanticized language and visual imagery rooted in nineteenth century tourist culture in the late 1920s to include a relatively large proportion of commercialized and forward-looking discourse by the end of the 1930s. This latter discourse featured elements linked to the commercial, statist, and popular interest represented in TAD in various configurations before and after its re-organization in 1935. By the end of the decade, the marketers at TAD would give increased weight to commercial and statist elements in the material; perhaps an unsurprising development, given that the funding of TAD after its reorganization predominantly came from those sources.

Romanticized and past-oriented imagery and descriptions along with recognition that the fascination for the North drove many visitors to the country would not disappear entirely, however. Rather, in the promotional material it would combine with notions of social progress, modern infrastructure and comfort as well as modern living (in the form of the capital city’s amusement and bicycling cultures, for example) to constitute a peculiar image of the nation and its embeddedness in *Norden*.

The act of national characterization analyzed here resulted from an intended interaction with an audience situated in Nazi Germany. Compared with the Anglophone versions of the same brochures, the promotional material aimed at the German tourist did indeed feed upon romantic and somewhat racial Nordicist tourist imaginaries to a greater extent. While blond, blue-eyed women were pervasive in all of TAD’s marketing from mid-century onwards, romanticized landscape descriptions and symbols, often related to notions of a perceived authentic *völkisch* culture, were undoubtedly more pronounced in the German

material. Despite these differences, however, the promotional material analyzed here did not embrace pre-existing and readily available tourism imaginaries related to Nordicism and Nordic race theory to nearly the same extent as did the Nazified *Nordische Gesellschaft* in its promotional efforts.

TAD's promotional material, instead, would eventually shed more and more of its former romanticized discourse and visual imagery in favor of a discourse of Nordic modernity quite different from, albeit not uninfluenced by, the images related to Nordicism and Nordic race theory. The re-organization of TAD seemingly only reinforced this trend. The professionalization of the organization, and the increased resources allocated to its promotional efforts, did not result in much more than a subtle accommodation to its audience in Nazi Germany. Rather, in TAD's promotional material aimed at Germany in the 1930s an exercise was carried out in which the image of what constituted Denmark, Danish character, and the country's place in the symbolic geography of *Norden* was negotiated through the perceived need to represent and promote the country abroad as a beacon of modernity.