

## Volker Briese

# Separating bicycle traffic. Towards a history of bikeways in Germany up through 1940.

Translated from the German by John S. Allen (<http://john-s-allen.com>)

### Translator's note, April, 2015:

I consider this paper to be of great relevance in describing various forces and interests involved in political decisions about bicycling, and I thank the author for giving me permission to translate it. He has reviewed the translation and offered a few new comments and references. The paper in the original German is online at <https://radunfaelle.000webhostapp.com/volker-briese-geschichte-radwegebau.pdf> or [http://john-s-allen.com/pdfs/Volker\\_Briese\\_Radwegebau.pdf](http://john-s-allen.com/pdfs/Volker_Briese_Radwegebau.pdf).

The description of bikeway promotion and construction when the National Socialist regime ruled Germany may be of special interest to some readers, but the years from the 1890s through the 1920s offer a more apt comparison with developments in other countries, then and later.

I have attempted to provide an accurate but also readable translation, though no translation can precisely convey the author's meanings. Meanings of words differ, but beyond this, meaning is created in the mind of the reader and reflects the reader's store of knowledge. This will generally be quite different for a person who must read a translation. I welcome comments and corrections.

I have added a table of contents and two appendices, one describing and listing German names for different parts of roads and paths, with translations, and another listing translations of the names of organizations and government entities. I have also added a few footnotes to explain matters which might not be obvious to non-German readers, and in one case, reflecting recent research.

There is no English word which conveys the scope of meaning of the German word "Radfahrweg" and so I have used the word "cycleway" to mean, generally, a bikeway: usually but not always, one which is on a street or parallels a street. I describe this issue in more detail in the first appendix.

### Author's Foreword, March, 2011:

The manuscript which has been made available here as a PDF dates from 1993. The following publications are excerpts or abridged versions of the manuscript:

- Zurück in die Zukunft. Radwegebau vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg [Back to the Future: Bikeway construction before the Second World War]. In: Radmarkt, 5/1993, pp. 50-62
- Opium für die Radfahrer [Opium for Cyclists]. In: aktiv Radfahren, 1/1994, pp. 36-42
- Automobilverbände bestimmen Fahrradpolitik [Motorists' Organizations Determine Bicycle Policy]. In: aktiv Radfahren, 2/1994, pp. 96-98
- From Cycling Lanes to Compulsory Bike Path: Bicycle Path Construction in Germany, 1897-1940. In: Cycle History. Proceedings of the International 5th Cycle History Conference, Cambridge, England, September 1994. San Francisco 1995, pp. 123-128.

As there have been repeated inquiries about the complete manuscript, I am making this PDF version available for full contextual review and proper citation. This version is based on the manuscript from 1993, which has not been revised or corrected. The main conclusions of the work nonetheless still appear to be valid.

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## Separating bicycle traffic. Towards a history of bikeways in Germany up through 1940.

### 1 Introduction: Goals of the research

In his degree dissertation in the field of urban planning and landscape architecture at the Gesamthochschule Kassel [University of Kassel]<sup>1</sup>, which primarily addresses the years 1920-1960, Burghard Horn determined that there had previously been no general, chronologically gap-free, research- and fact-based work covering the entire history of planning for urban cycling. He attempted to give the first summary of this topic.

What Horn says about the history of bicycle planning can also be said about the entire social history of cycling in Germany.<sup>2</sup>

The present study too can offer only an incomplete account of cycling history. No attempt will be made to cover the entire history of bikeway planning theories and design concepts; rather, the main thrust of this work will be to test certain hypotheses and to evaluate certain assertions, conjectures and myths found in discussions about the history of bikeways in Germany. The reality and ideology of cycleway planning and construction [Radfahrwegebau] will be examined in the light of a source which will be described in detail later. In this way, historical background can serve to shed light on the significance of current cycleway planning measures [Radfahrwegebauaßnahmen] as a major concern in national and local cycling politics.

Indeed, on various occasions<sup>3</sup>, it has been asserted in traffic-engineering and political literature that separate bikeways (which, however, as late as the third decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were mostly being called cycleways [Radfahrwege]), were being demanded *for reasons of safety* as early as 1890. This

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Burkhard Horn: Vom Niedergang eines Massenverkehrsmittels -zur Geschichte der Städtischen Radverkehrsplanung. Unveröffentlichte Diplomarbeit im Fachbereich Stadt-und Landschaftsplanung Gesamthochschule Kassel, Sommersemester 1990 [On the decline of a mass transport mode: unpublished dissertation in the field of urban planning and landscape architecture, University of Kassel, summer term 1990].

<sup>2</sup> cf. Volker Briese: Bücher zur Fahrradgeschichte: Kuriositätenschau für Freaks oder Grundlagen für fahrradpolitische Strategien. [Books about the history of cycling: curiosities for freaks, or a basis for strategies in the politics of bicycling]. In: Radfahren 1/1993, pp.78-83

<sup>3</sup> cf. Bundesminister für Verkehr und Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club (ADAC) (Hrsg.): Sicherheit für den Radfahrer. Ergebnisse und Schlußfolgerungen aus dem Städtewettbewerb 1980, Bonn/München, o.J. p. 22 [Federal Transport Minister and the German Automobile Club (ADAC) (publisher): Safety for Cyclists: Conclusions and Implications from the 1980 Urban Competition, Bonn/Munich, no date, p. 22]: "Already in 1890, the construction of bikeways was being recommended for safety reasons." Similarly G. Ruwensroth et al.: Mit welchen Maßnahmen kann eine stärkere Benutzung des Fahrradverkehrs im Nahverkehr unterstützt werden? [What measures can foster more use of cycling for short trips?] and Schriftenreihe "Städtebauliche Forschung" des Bundesministers für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau [among the urban development publications of the Federal Minister of Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development], Bonn 1978: "In 1890, separate bikeways were being promoted above all for safety reasons." According to Horn (p. 16), the demand for separate "cycleways" was based for the most part on danger to pedestrians, danger from horses and the risk of crashes due to the wantonly reckless conduct of some bicyclists. Nonetheless, Horn (p. 18) describes the main issue with installation of bicycling infrastructure around the turn of the century as the improvement of surfaces and not the separation of modes, somewhat contradicting the explanations given earlier.

assertion was not substantiated in that literature, and has been repeated, clearly without fact-checking, by various authors.

The present study is based primarily on a systematic review of the trade journal “Radmarkt”, which has been published at regular intervals since 1886, with various additions to its name over the years. This study finds no evidence to support the assertion, already mentioned, that safety concerns played an important role from the beginning onward in the discussion of separate bikeways. The earlier cycleway concept aimed much more toward better, that is, easier and more comfortable, cycling than on the urban streets and rural roads of the time, which were mainly conceived of as for horseback riders, carriages and wagons. Separation was not a main concern, as can be recognized because cycle lanes [Radfahrstreifen] on the roadway or immediately adjacent to it were not regarded as a second-class alternative. Only at the end of the 1920s, when the streets had already been greatly improved for the increasing amount of motor traffic and also for cyclists, was the goal of protecting cyclists from the faster motor traffic introduced: the goal which in the years that followed served as the almost exclusive rationale for construction of bikeways, and for laws making their use mandatory. Indeed, the advocates of separated bikeways continue to be guilty of unambiguous claims of safety through separation, which is in fact not achieved with the usual bikeway designs<sup>4</sup>.

While motoring interests, at times with the assistance of cyclists and their organizations, succeeded in getting the nation and the cities to construct good, drivable streets, even limited-access highways, at great expense, (and even before 1933 apparently also to envision possible military applications), there was very little construction of cycleways before the First World War, and it was mostly financed by the cyclists themselves. Only at the end of the 1920s did it become a concern that mass use of bicycles (12 million) was interfering with the frictionless flow of fast motor traffic (not yet even 1 million motor vehicles). Construction of sidepaths [Radwege] first occurred in Germany as an emergency/job-creation measure, with payment of labor costs – though for a long time not to the extent which was described in published plans: at most ¼ of the planned 40,000 km was completed before the war. The cyclists or cyclists’ organizations were usually required to come up with the supplies.

The bikeway theme gained more momentum as the need arose to justify the massive promotion of motoring by the National Socialist regime. Bikeways, indeed cycleway networks, which had originally been demanded by the cyclists and which are good for riding, are until this day only rare exceptions. But since 1926, the mandatory use of sidepaths, wherever they exist, however poor they are for riding, and with this, unimpeded motor travel on many streets, has been massively promoted and has become a central rule of conduct for cyclists.

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<sup>4</sup> The study “Unfälle mit Radfahrern in Bayern” [Crashes involving bicyclists in Bavaria] by Horst Hülsen (HUK-Verband [Association of German Liability, Accident and Motor Insurers], Beratungsstelle für Schadensverhütung. Mitteilung Nr. 33, Köln 1993, S.8 [Information Center for Loss Prevention, Memorandum # 22, Cologne, 1993, p. 8]) does not state the case clearly even at present: “Bikeways result in either greater safety in road segments or reduced safety at junctions.” However, the severity of crashes on streets without bicycle facilities is greater than on streets with bikeways. R. Schnüll et al.: Sicherung von Radfahrern an städtischen Knotenpunkten, Bericht der Bundesanstalt für Straßenwesen zum Forschungsprojekt 8952 1992. [Safeguarding cyclists at urban intersections, Report of the Federal Highway Research Institute in Research Project 8952, 1992.]; W. Angenendt et al.: Verkehrssichere Anlage und Gestaltung von Radwegen, Bericht V9 der Bundesanstalt für Straßenwesen, 1993 [Traffic-safe Installations and Design of Bikeways, Report B9 of the Federal Highway Research Institute, 1993] Author’s comment, 2015: The proponents of separation continue to put forward the safety argument, but their numbers are decreasing. At present, the mandatory bikeway law is being softened, in favor of bike lanes on the street.

## 2 “Radmarkt” as a source

Burkhard Horn based his research primarily on an analysis of urban-planning and traffic-engineering journals and the traffic-engineering literature<sup>5</sup>. The literature of general and technical cycling history draws information from old books about cycling, cycle sport periodicals and biographical materials and archives. Cycles and accessories preserved in private collections and museums can also be important sources.

The traffic-engineering literature only occasionally touches on the societal and political context of technology, and takes little account of cycling organizations and institutions, while on the other hand, the literature of sport cycling offers little insight into traffic engineering and planning.

The content of the trade periodical “Radmarkt”, the main source used in the present study, falls somewhere in between. Since the start and up through the present, “Der Radmarkt” has been published almost without interruption, in peak years even weekly, and with as many as 200 pages per issue. The last discussion of bikeways in the 55<sup>th</sup> year of publication, 1940, is found in issue 2551. On average, approximately 46 issues were published per year. This periodical, unlike any other in the cycling field, offers very continuous reporting about the bicycle business (industry and commerce), bicycle technology, and the societal context through the entire time period of research. It is safe to assume that themes which “Radmarkt” takes up were important ones in their time.

“Radmarkt” was at first only a free product listing. Bit by bit, the editorial content grew, though the connection with advertisers was at times barely concealed. In spite of this, the editorial content often included committed though politically restrained material. “Radmarkt” persistently advocated for various interests related to cycling: for a while, “Radmarkt” was more nearly the official house organ of the Association of German Bicycle Dealers [Verband deutscher Fahrradhändler], and at other times, of the bicycle manufacturing industry. “Radmarkt” kept its distance from the cycling sport associations, whose own periodicals were not always very positive about the dealers and the industry, but there was reporting on this situation, and the associations often had the opportunity to state their positions in “Radmarkt”. The workers’ cycling club “Solidarität”, however, the largest German cyclists’ membership organization in the 1920s, comes off poorly in “Radmarkt” for, among other things, having its own bicycle factory and selling directly to members – an annoyance to the rest of the bicycle industry and to dealers. In any case, “Solidarität” was explicitly a political organization, and “Radmarkt” supposedly did not engage in politics. Except for certain homages to the Kaiser and the Fatherland during the First World War which were understood not to be political, “Radmarkt” held quite consistently to its abstinence from politics. During the time of the National Socialist regime, “Radmarkt” did allow itself to become swept up in the general propaganda effort. But with respect to the bikeways, it is possible to act on the assumption that “Radmarkt” was fairly consistently neutral in the struggle between cyclists and motorists, even though it used the name “Radmarkt und das Motorfahrzeug” [Bicycle Market and the Motor Vehicle] at the time of the second article which will be used as a source here, from 1905. In this way, the publisher, to this day Gundlach, or the Gundlach subsidiary of the Bielefeld publishing house, recognized that the bicycle industry and dealers were turning toward motorized vehicles. The NS regime’s promotion of motoring may also have contributed to there being no noticeable distancing from the regime when reading between the lines in “Radmarkt”. Rather, preponderantly, there is acceptance.

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<sup>5</sup> Especially the professional publications “Technisches Gemeindeblatt”, “Deutsche Bauzeitung”, “Die Straße”, “Verkehrstechnik” [Municipal Technical Newsletter, German Construction Industry Journal, The Street, Traffic Engineering] and the dissertations of Hans-Joachim Schacht: Die Bedeutung des Radfahrweges für die städtebauliche Planungsarbeit [The significance of cycleways in the task of urban planning]. (Diss. TH Dresden) Dresden 1933 and Wilhelm Seidensticker: Fahrrad und Radweg städtebaulicher Beziehung [Bicycle and bikeway in the urban planning context] (Diss. TH Hannover) Bochum 1937

As the sport cycling organizations also were not opposed to motor sports, and lengthened their names in the 1920s – for example the Arbeiter-Rad-und Kraftfahrerbund “Solidarität” [Solidarity Workers’ Cyclist and Motorist Federation] and Deutscher Rad-und Motorfahrer-Verband “Concordia” [Concordia German Cyclist and Motorist Association], it is fair to say that “Radmarkt” depicts the discussion of the bikeway theme well. In many cases, published articles are not the work of journalists or the editors, but verbatim statements from organizations and federations, such that these articles nearly qualify as primary sources.

### 3 From cyclists’ path [Radfahrerweg] to mandatory-use sidepath [Fahrradweg]

#### 3.1 The first demand: rideable strips on streets

As already sketched in the introduction, the first demand for parts of streets reserved for cyclists, “cyclists’ paths” [Radfahrer-Weg]<sup>6</sup>, resulted from the difficulty of riding on a roadway “which had paving designed for heavy wagons, and so mostly of large basalt blocks, because small cobblestones could not withstand the pounding long enough.”<sup>7</sup> A much less costly treatment would suffice with the light weight of bicycles, and could also be more comfortable. This argument for cyclists’ comfort, applying mostly to main streets, did not, however, suffice to convince the authors of the need for “massive installation” of cyclists’ paths. Rather, it established that there were few parts of Germany where rural roads satisfied the demands of cyclists. Conditions on the unpaved roads were mostly such that “a few dry days sufficed to put the road surface into such a state that frightful clouds of dust were the inevitable result.”<sup>8</sup>

Heavy wagons and the hoofs of animals stirred up this dust, which inconvenienced and annoyed pedestrians and cyclists. The dust was more than just a nuisance: it consisted in part of the decomposing excrement of horses, cattle and sheep, and so it “without any doubt was unhealthful for those who inhaled it.”<sup>9</sup>

The utility of cycling was a primary motivation for these first demands for cycleways [Radfahrwege]: the optimization of bicycle travel for the physician, the businessman, the tradesman who wanted to reach their destinations in the city without using the roadway which horses used. In 1897, “Radmarkt” reprinted an article from Velo-Sport which says that the bicycle “also gives individual freedom of movement to the world of business, which depends on free exchanges between individuals. This is the advantage of the bicycle in traffic and this is also its relevance. We must therefore strive to make the best use of this advantage, to bring the full extent of its value to bear, and we think that this can occur if the construction of special ways for cyclists is undertaken.”<sup>10</sup> The positive health effects of cycling, of physical exercise, took second place to this rationale.

It was said in 1901 that the suitability of the rural roads for cycling had already improved markedly, though not that of urban streets. Especially the streets which led out of the cities, and which were of special importance to cycletourists, were said to be overloaded by wagons and in many cases hardly usable by cyclists. For this reason, “advocacy for special parts of the street [Wegabteilungen] for cyclists”<sup>11</sup> would have to be extended into a promotion of cycletouring which would also work to the

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<sup>6</sup> ff. Radmarkt #318, 1897, p. I/III.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. I

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p III

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Radmarkt 1897, # 368, p. XV f.

<sup>11</sup> Radmarkt # 536, 1901, p. 7

advantage of the bicycle industry and of public health. It is important to note that the advocacy was not yet for a *separate* bikeway, but rather, for a *strip* such as would later be described as a cycle lane. The bicycle was seen as intermediate between a pedestrian and a wagon, and so an appropriate lane must be created. Because travel on the streets which led out of cities was especially difficult for cyclists, cycletourism would languish, and the bicycle industry would experience this as a decline in bicycle sales. The road surfaces were broken up by heavy wagons and were slippery with horse excrement, making them hazardous for cyclists. Here, the safety concern arose, although it was very secondary, and in an entirely different context.

### 3.2 Separation of travel modes

At the First International Road Congress (Premier Congrès International de la Route, Erster Internationaler Straßenkongress) in Paris in 1908, guidelines for the design of public streets were developed, with particular attention to motor traffic. A recommendation of the Congress “to provide separate paths [Bahnen] for cyclists and horseback riders along the streets” is frequently reported, though without substantiation.<sup>12</sup> Different types of vehicles should be separated on “deluxe avenues” wider than 6 meters.<sup>13</sup> The separation was not necessarily of bicycles, but rather at that time, when bicycles could still keep up with motor vehicles and were often faster, might be of wagons and horses. Likewise, C. Redtmann, in his 1919 article “Die Landstraße der Zukunft” [The Highway of the Future], looking into requirements of new types of traffic, contemplates separation of motor vehicles from wagons, not from bicycles. “If conditions no longer allow both types of traffic to coexist safely on a roadway of the usual width, then in most cases an attempt should be made to increase safety through the creation of separate travel lanes for motor vehicles, while paying as much attention as possible to their legally recognized characteristics.”<sup>14</sup> The design of the roads should make it possible to travel at 80 km/h. Fast motor vehicles stir up clouds of dust, and so the roads should be surfaced in tar or asphalt, as required to meet the needs of motor vehicles. The bicycle would have no place on the “highway of the future.” The requirements of road design for motor traffic advanced ever further into the foreground.

The first cycleways were parts of the roadway improved for cyclists in the cities of Bremen, Hamburg and Lüneburg, or were paths for fitness and recreational travel, mostly near cities (above all Magdeburg, but also Hannover).

### 3.3 Cyclists’ federations demand cycleways

In 1915, the cycletouring director [Fahrwart] of the German Cyclists’ Federation [Deutscher Radfahrerbund]<sup>15</sup> Gregers Nissen (Altona) advocated for recreational *cycling trails* [Wanderpfade für Radfahrer] away from main rural roads. These routes would be like the ones already in existence in the Netherlands, promoted by the Dutch Cyclists’ Federation [A.N.W.B], and modeled on existing hiking trails. Because of the unpleasant dust generated by motor traffic, these touring routes would preferably not be along main rural roads. Traffic safety and the risk of crashes were still not brought forward as

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<sup>12</sup> Radmarkt #909, 1908, p.9

<sup>13</sup> ibid

<sup>14</sup> Radmarkt, #1445, p. 17

<sup>15</sup> Translator’s note: “Bund” can be translated as “Federation”, “Association” or “Union”. A *Bund Deutscher Radfahrer*, mostly a racing organization, exists as of 2014. The primary advocacy organization as of 2014 is the Allgemeiner deutscher Fahrrad-Club (German Cycling Federation ADFC). Author’s note, 2015: The name of the ADFC was chosen as a kind of provocation, based on the name of the auto club ADAC; however, the ADAC did not allow itself to be provoked, and has long ignored the ADFC.

rationales. Nissen praised the road network in the Lüneburg Heath [Lüneburger Heide], where a few workers with shovels could improve a significant length of a route in one day, because only leveling often was necessary to create cycle lanes.<sup>16</sup>

Cycleways advocated in 1916 by the “Verein der Fahrradhändler von Köln und Umgebung” [Bicycle Dealers’ Association of Cologne and the Cologne Region] would likewise mainly make riding more comfortable, and conserve rubber. This measure would appear more effective than the reduction in bicycle travel ordered by the Minister of War during the First World War. Separated strips for cyclists between the sidewalk and the roadway, called “Radfahrsteige und Wege” [raised sidepaths and cycleways]<sup>17</sup>, would promote sport cycling and help to improve fitness of soldiers. Aside from that, the bicycle was often the only way for disabled veterans to get around. Installations of this type in Hannover, Magdeburg, Bremen and Frankfurt am Main were mentioned as examples.

In 1919, and so after the war, the German Cyclists’ Federation took the initiative and advocated for the installation of cycleways as emergency work projects. To be sure, conditions on streets in large and medium-sized cities had improved. Streets in the centers of cities were almost all asphalted or had smooth wood-block paving well-suited for cycling. However, cycling was prohibited on many good streets in the city centers: bicycle traffic was required to use much worse secondary streets. Streets which led out to the edges of the cities and were described as hardly rideable were seen as a serious problem. An appeal by the German Cyclists’ Federation says, among other things, that “the bicycle is today much less a recreational vehicle than a transportation mode which the nation and municipalities can no longer ignore...the national and local governments can and should no longer look on complacently while terrible corduroy and paved road surfaces, and rural roads which are hard to ride on, make travel many times slower and more difficult, cause an enormous amount of damage to machines and tires, squander cyclists’ energy through an increase in effort which is not in keeping with the times, and finally cause an alarming increase in the number of crashes.”<sup>18</sup>

It still cannot be determined here whether the crashes to which allusion was made were collisions, in particular with motor vehicles, or between cyclists, or single-bicycle crashes and falls. Statistics on crashes, which will be discussed later, were gathered nationwide starting in 1907; “Radmarkt” published them and commented on them in detail. Most casualties involving motor vehicles were pedestrians, drivers themselves or passengers. A cyclist was involved in only about 11% of collisions with a motor vehicle. Protection of cyclists from motor vehicles was still not a major concern. Rather, the appeal was for a good surface for cyclists on the street, or if that was not practical, next to the street. Poorly-paved streets should be provided with cycle *lanes* made of paving bricks, or at the very least of top-quality, smooth-cut paving stones.

The demand was made that “on rural roads which are hard to ride and are heavily used by cyclists, a lane should be created on at least on one side by shoveling away irregularities and removing mounds of grass.”<sup>19</sup> The cities with cycleways which have already been named were mentioned, and also the situation in Rhineland and Westphalia, for example Cologne, and Saxony, where there were intolerable conditions inside and outside the cities. “Cyclists are impeded everywhere; cycling is made impossible. Bicycle travel is nonexistent on the rural roads in the Rhineland, for example in the Cologne region, because the use of a bicycle involves risk of loss of life.”<sup>20</sup> The risk being described, however, probably is

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<sup>16</sup> Radmarkt, #1312/13, p. 3

<sup>17</sup> Radmarkt, #1312/13, p. 3

<sup>18</sup> Radmarkt #1457, p. 4

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, p. 3

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, p. 5

due to the condition of the roads (terrible corduroy surfaces and paving), less due to differences in vehicle speeds. The need was to make it possible to ride on good and dust-free streets and roads. Special consideration should be made for women who rode for the sake of their health, and for disabled veterans. “The authorities must create proper conditions for cycling in the interest of travel, of physical exercise, of public health, so that sport cycling takes its rightful place as a popular activity.”<sup>21</sup>

### 3.4 The first guidelines

A pamphlet, “Bicycle Traffic, Its Significance in the National Economy and the Installation of Cycleways” [Der Radfahrverkehr. Seine volkswirtschaftliche Bedeutung und die Anlage von Radfahrwegen],<sup>22</sup>, written by the retired Magdeburg city engineer Dr. [Magdeburger Stadtbaurat a.D. Dr. Dipl. Ing.] Henneking, was distributed by the German Bicycle Manufacturers’ Association [Deutscher Fahrrad-Industrieller Verein] in 1926 in a press run of 4000 copies. Even this pamphlet, republished in a revised edition in 1927, primarily addressed practical accommodation and frictionless movement of bicycle traffic in large cities and in the countryside. Henneking cites, in detail, the “Guidelines for the Creation of Cycleways” [Richtlinien für die Schaffung von Radfahrwegen]<sup>23</sup> from the Traffic Management Committee [Ausschuss “Verkehrsregelung”] of the Research Association on Streets for Motor Traffic [Studiengesellschaft für Automobilstraßenbau (STUFA)], which he himself had strongly influenced. These guidelines addressed cycling as an important travel mode and came to the conclusion that bicycle traffic fundamentally would best be accommodated by the creation of separated bikeways, whose design would reflect local conditions and the characteristics of the bicycle.

Still, the rationale to do something for bicycle traffic here is not danger for cyclists, but rather the volume of bicycle traffic, which makes it necessary to ensure unimpeded and frictionless bicycle travel. The theme of safety makes a weak appearance when Henneking states that the sport and recreational cyclists would be unusually numerous at some times and places on rural roads on Sundays and holidays and should be able to “move along unimpeded and without danger next to the motor vehicles, and other vehicles.”<sup>24</sup>

The rideable strip could for a long time optionally be a cycle lane, raised only slightly above the roadway. Though such a strip had earlier been almost a standard measure, the STUFA guidelines of 1927 found it acceptable only on streets “in which the installation of separate cycleways is impossible due to lack of space, high cost, or other reasons.”<sup>25</sup> In what follows, comfort, the actual justification for cycleways even in 1927, was described: “As long as the street is surfaced with noiseless paving – asphalt, tar, concrete or wood – the installation of separate cycle lanes along the edges is generally unnecessary.”<sup>26</sup>

Numbers of crashes are not yet brought forth as a justification in Henneking’s writings, but the danger of motor vehicles for cyclists is recognized: “The greater the volume of motor traffic on rural highways, the more hazardous cycling on these highways becomes.”<sup>27</sup>

By this time, high speeds had made automobiles dangerous, but these speeds were condoned. Cyclists would have to move aside onto separated cycleways. “The only real solution to the problem of hazard-

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> cf. Dr. Ing. Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr. Seine volkswirtschaftliche Bedeutung und die Anlage von Radfahrwegen [Bicycle Traffic, Its Significance in the National Economy and the Construction of Cycleways]. Magdeburg 1927

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, p. 11 ff.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12 f.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, p. 13

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p. 41

free accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian (!) traffic on rural roads, which becomes more and more difficult from year to year, is the creation of cycleways, separated from the actual roads.”<sup>28</sup> But another rationale for cycleways, no longer prominent today, became ever more so in the following years: “This pressing necessity cries out for the attention of the working population who uses the bicycle as a transportation mode, of recreational cyclists, *and of motor traffic as well, to free it from disturbances and issues with bicycle traffic.*”<sup>29</sup> (author’s emphasis)

To support his position, Henneking cites an article by Ewald Genzmer, who advocates separated cycleways in order to protect the “public” – that is, pedestrians – from cyclists. Here, an obviously timeless issue is brought forward: cyclists’ indiscipline. The newer kind of cycleways, in combination with the mandatory use law which was massively propagandized from 1934 onward, do not make cycling faster, but rather channelize it or even slow it down.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.5 “Will the cyclist finally get off the street?”<sup>31</sup>

This question is the title of an article from 1928 in which the case is for the first time made explicitly, first and foremost, “that something must happen soon if the great increase in motor traffic in Germany is not to lead to easily imaginable untenable conditions due to crashes, which unfortunately are already a daily occurrence.”<sup>32</sup>

In this way, cyclists’ original advocacy for a good riding surface [Fahrbahn] as a separate cycleway [Radfahrweg] when it cannot be created on the street itself, is fundamentally perverted. Separate bikeways have only one task: to remove cyclists, as a disruptive element, from the roadway. In articles from the following years of intensive construction of these separate bikeways, there is no longer much to find about their riding qualities. Indeed, even the concept of the cycleway [Radfahrweg] becomes replaced, if only gradually, by “bicycle way” [“Fahrradweg”] (as in the traffic law) or only “bikeway” [“Radweg”] (as in later publications of the Imperial Association for the Construction of Cycleways [Reichsgemeinschaft für Radfahrwegebau], which from 1938 on used only the name Imperial Association for the Construction of Bikeways [Reichsgemeinschaft für Radwegebau]).<sup>33</sup>

What we see here is the demotion of cycling in the face of the massive promotion of motorization, once the National Socialists had taken power.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.42

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Author’s note, 2015: To this day, the media highlight the danger of cyclists to pedestrians when riding on sidewalks or on combined sidewalks/sidepaths which must be shared with pedestrians.

<sup>31</sup> Radmarkt #1916, 1928, p. 21

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> According to Hellmuth Wolff, Professor of National Economics [Professor für Volkswirtschaft] at the University of Halle, the contraction of the word “Radfahrweg” to “Radweg” was taken up and spread further by the Reichsgemeinschaft on the basis of this suggestion. In his paper “Cycling Economics” [“Die Fahrradwirtschaft”] (Halle 1993, p. 66, Proceedings of the Seminars on Traffic Engineering at the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg [Schriften des Seminars für Verkehrswesen an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg], Wolff provides an explanation: “As we say ‘footpath’ [Fußweg] and not ‘pedestrian path’ [Fußgängerweg], ‘riding path’ [Reitweg] and not ‘horse path’ [Reittierweg] or ‘rider path’ [Reiterweg], ‘bikeway’ [Radweg] is not only the more comfortable but also the better expression.” His comparisons are weak, however, as the longer version is not “Radfahrerweg” [bicyclist path] but “Radfahrweg” [cycleway, cycling path], corresponding to the path for riding or walking. His claim, rather, stands in opposition to the concept of the bicycle sidepath [Fahrradweg] in the traffic law.

### 3.6 The mandatory bikeway law [Radwegebenutzungspflicht]

The new traffic laws in 1934, first in Prussia and then throughout the Third Reich, were announced under the heading “Traffic discipline for all” [Verkehrsdziplin für alle],<sup>34</sup> because they were about disciplining cyclists.

Already in 1926, the Empire-wide “law for motor traffic” [Verordnung für den Kraftfahrzeugverkehr] was expanded with a model law for general traffic on public streets. Most of the states enacted similar provisions.<sup>35</sup> Here, already, was the mandatory bikeway law, in § 25 under the heading “Prohibitions and Restrictions on Ways” [Verbote und Beschränkungen von Wegen]: “Separated paths which have been provided for cycling (cycleways) [Radfahrwege] are to be used, to the degree that they suffice to accommodate bicycle traffic; otherwise roadways intended for vehicles.”<sup>36</sup> Admittedly, this formulation left a lot of room for interpretation. Henneking described somewhat more precisely the conditions under which the mandatory bikeway rule applied. Some conditions, such as the existence of a coherent network of bikeways, are not fulfilled even today in most cities: “If the cycleways in a city are in good physical condition, and especially if they are extensive enough to form a coherent network for long stretches, then traffic-policing measures which grant to cyclists the exclusive right to use cycleways and which prohibit the use of other parts of the street are definitely warranted, in the interest of orderly traffic management.”<sup>37</sup>

The Traffic Management Committee [Ausschuß “Verkehrsregelung”] of STUFA still did not fully recognize that the mandatory bikeway law was already in effect in many of the states and cities, as the paragraph on enforcement in its Guidelines for the Creation of Cycleways [Richtlinien für die Schaffung von Radfahrwegen] includes these words: “If appropriately engineered measures have created travel lanes [Verkehrswege] for cyclists on rural roads, or if there are separate cycleways, then legal and enforcement provisions should regulate their use, as well as bicycle traffic on the other parts of the street.”<sup>38</sup> Apparently, regulation of bicycle traffic on the other parts of the street meant prohibition of cycling.

In 1926/27, a mandatory bikeway law was in all likelihood no problem at all for most cyclists, because, first of all, there were still few cycleways in most cities, and also, the paths and cycle lanes which had been installed up to that time were designed to improve cycling. They offered a surface which was better than that of the roadway. If the streets had a good, rideable surface, than according to the recommendation by the cycleway guru Henneking, a cycleway was not necessary. Still, there were already cycleways at that time which were in poor repair and hardly rideable – and so cyclists would use the roadway. This practice led to complaints by other road users and to traffic stops by police. Henneking saw the solution to this problem in most cases to be good maintenance of the cycleway.<sup>39</sup>

A traffic law enacted in Berlin in 1929 included a mandatory bikeway provision prohibiting cyclists from using the roadway if there was an adjacent cycleway. The Central Office for Cycleways [Zentralstelle für Radfahrwege], funded by the bicycle manufacturing industry (about which more will be said in Chapter 7) had this to say: “...a rule which is justifiable if the cycleways, as often is not the case, are wide enough and are only intended for travel by conventional bicycles. There are large numbers of narrower cycleways used by tricycles, as well as cargo bicycles and cargo tricycles, as the rule makes no

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<sup>34</sup> Radmarkt #2238, 1934, p.7

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Horn: Vom Niedergang ... , p.44

<sup>36</sup> Cited by Horn: Vom Niedergang ...p.45

<sup>37</sup> Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr, p.34f.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 14

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 33f.

distinction. The cycleways which should be ridden only on conventional bicycles naturally suffer from this.”<sup>40</sup>

The 1929 Berlin law also required, among other things, that bicycles must be walked only on the roadway and not on the sidewalks. Neither the Central Office nor the cycling organizations were involved in drafting this law. Rather, the slogan apparently applied: you take care of the cycleways, and we'll write the traffic laws!

The mandatory bikeway law was not a topic addressed in “Radmarkt” in the 1920s, but that changed in 1934. Although this law was not new, 1934 marks its first use to impose discipline on cyclists.

New policing regulations for street traffic [Polizeiverordnung für den Straßenverkehr] went into effect on April 1 of that year in Prussia. The mandatory bikeway rule for “bicycle paths” [Fahrradwege] (no longer cycleways [Radfahrwege]) is in § 39: “The parts of the street specially designated for cycling (Fahrradwege) are to be used, if of single width, in one direction and if of double width, in both directions. Otherwise, the roadway must be used.”<sup>41</sup> What is single width is not stated in the regulations themselves. The guideline from STUFA in 1927 was for a minimum of 1m,<sup>42</sup> however the suggested minimum width for two-way cycleway was 1.5m, while the Prussian regulations indicate a double width.

These Prussian policing regulations were the precursor of the Imperial Street Traffic Regulations [Reichs-Straßen-Verkehrs-Ordnung (R.St.V.O.)] which went into effect on October 1, 1934.<sup>43</sup>

The mandatory-use rule for special types of paths, including bicycle ways, is stated in § 26 of this regulation, and was publicized starting in 1934: “If a street is designated for individual types of traffic (footway, bicycle path, bridle path), then this traffic is restricted to the part of the street allocated to it.”<sup>44</sup>

In an article “Cyclists and traffic safety” [Radfahrer und Verkehrssicherheit],<sup>45</sup> Dr. Franz Berthold links § 26 to § 25 and maintains that failure to use the cycleways [Radfahrwege] runs counter to the fundamental rule of the R.St.V.O, established in the interest of all participants in traffic, and so can be penalized. § 25 reads: “Each participant in public traffic must act in such a way as not to harm others, or more than is unavoidable under the conditions, delay or inconvenience them.” Here, again, can be seen the ever clearer theme in construction of bikeways, the elimination of disturbances by cyclists to motor traffic.

Nonetheless, there was clearly confusion about the mandatory bikeway rule: the bicycle path [Fahrradweg] concept was hardly to be found anywhere but in the traffic regulations – not in general discussions.

In 1937, “Radmarkt” reported on a ruling of the Prussian superior court [Kammergericht] (source: Juristische Wochenzeitschrift [Lawyers' Weekly], volume 12/37) according to which “it is the duty of every cyclist to use cycleways [Radfahrwege] when they are present, and that he may be penalized if he rides on the roadway instead.”<sup>46</sup> The court described the defendants' objection that he did not feel as safe on the cycleway as immaterial. If he felt this way, the ruling continues – just not up to the

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<sup>40</sup> Radmarkt #1989, 1929, p.15

<sup>41</sup> Radmarkt #2238, 1934, p. 8

<sup>42</sup> Df. Henneking, p. 12

<sup>43</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2265, 1934, p.6 and #2271, p..27f.

<sup>44</sup> Radmarkt #2271, 1934, p.28, cited without the paragraph number and so possibly not entirely verbatim

<sup>45</sup> Radmarkt #2271, 1934, p.32

<sup>46</sup> Radmarkt #2396, 1937, p. 5

challenges of traffic in a large city – then it would be his duty as a cyclist to avoid such heavily-traveled streets and to reach his destination in another way or by another route. Given these factors, it would be incompatible with the will of the people for the defendant to be entitled to use the roadway rather than the cycleway.

In the following years, “Radmarkt” repeatedly printed excerpts from the R.St.V.O as tips about “traffic safety for cyclists”.

In 1935,<sup>47</sup> below the rule requiring a bicycle to have a brake (“coaster brake is acceptable”), bell, rear reflector or red electrical taillight and headlight “which should not blind other participants in traffic”, Rule #2 is “As a matter of principle, use cycleways when available!”

In 1938, the #1 “important rule of conduct” is “cyclists must as a matter of principle use cycleways.”<sup>48</sup>

This intensive propaganda for the mandatory bikeway law, only in 1934 and later, suggests that cyclists often were dissatisfied with the narrow sidepaths with cheap and deteriorating surfaces which had been installed along well-constructed streets, and instead would rather use the roadway. In particular, the legal prohibition on overtaking, and the narrowness of the sidepaths which made overtaking impossible, or possible only by breaking other laws,<sup>49</sup> often led to conflicts with the police.

However, there is no discernible evidence of opposition to the mandatory bikeway law by cyclists’ organizations.

In 1934, Willi Schirmer, Executive Director of the German Cyclists’ Association [Deutscher Radfahrerverband], into which all citizens’ cyclists’ organizations had been (forcibly?) merged, stated that looking at the R.St.V.O. objectively, there was no reason for any concern on the part of cyclists. Schirmer describes as agenda items in the cycling politics of the Federation: “1. Against the suppression of cycling to serve the interests of other modes of transportation. 2. Against unbalanced traffic enforcement directed against cyclists.”<sup>50</sup> In addition, there was opposition to number plates, cyclist licensing, prohibition of riding in congested inner urban areas and of on-street parking – but support for cycleways.

In this context, the opposition to the prohibition of on-street parking is interesting. Though this prohibition certainly had been suggested, the traffic law did not yet prohibit it. Photos from the 1920s and 1930s show that parking bicycles at the side of the street with one pedal up on the curb was common. Presumably, motorists who also wanted to park at the side of the street criticized this practice from time to time.

It was reported as an oddity “that in England, cyclists themselves expressed strong opposition to the construction of bikeways, without giving a sensible explanation; perhaps only because of their obstinate support for the existing order.”<sup>51</sup> Obviously, the English were not subjected to such a massive propaganda campaign telling them that bikeways were being constructed for the benefit of cyclists.

The mandatory bikeway law bears a relationship to the gradually increasing rejection of cycle lanes, which had been almost standard in most cities, and especially in the city centers. While cycle lanes were included in the tally of bikeway achievements, they were increasingly tolerated only as exceptions,

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<sup>47</sup> Radmarkt #2314, p.15

<sup>48</sup> Radmarkt #2459, p.943

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Henneking: Radfahrverkehr, p. 26f.

<sup>50</sup> Radmarkt #2271, p.22

<sup>51</sup> Radmarkt 1938, #2461. p. 973

because they remained part of the roadway and did not separate to the same degree as a sidepath behind a curb, grass strip or row of trees. Today, many planners again more often recommend cycle lanes as the better solution, thanks to the good visibility of cyclists, yet government authorities still reject cycle lanes, because the mandatory bikeway law cannot be effectively applied on them, an issue which for the most part clearly dates back to the bikeway concepts of the 1930s.

#### 4 Cycleways and cycletouring

In discussions of cycleways, and, for example, when political success is measured in kilometers, there is often no precise distinction to be made between recreational sidepaths alongside rural roads, paths serving fitness and recreational purposes in urban parks and state forests, and sidepaths or cycle lanes adjacent to/on urban streets and rural roads used for everyday transportation. The distinctions among these are not clear in the same way that it is not always possible to say whether a cycling trip is a utility trip, for example a work trip, or a recreational or pleasure trip. Again after the First World War, sport cycling came into discussion, and not only in terms of racers and cycletourists, but of cyclists in general – so, including the millions who used the bicycle “for work-related purposes.”<sup>52</sup> This is certainly not entirely inaccurate, as even everyday utility bicycle trips are a type of athletic activity – though without the competitive aspect: healthy transportation.

On the other hand, cycleways which were used primarily for touring and recreation had different administrative and surface requirements.<sup>53</sup> In financing, above all, a marked distinction was made in the late 1920s and especially in the 1930s between sidepaths along streets, which cyclists were forced to use in order to leave the roadways free for motor traffic, and paths away from streets in parks and forests, for which government funding was virtually unavailable.

From the very beginning, promotion of bikeways included mention of their importance for cycletouring – especially so, when the promotion came from the bicycle dealers and the bicycle industry. These took an interest in cycletouring because tourists rode expensive bicycles. City bicycles, in everyday use from the turn of the century onward and then explosively following the First World War, were mostly cheap and were not very profitable.

In 1901, “Radmarkt” published an article titled “The Bicycle Industry and Cycletouring” [“Fahrrad-Industrie und Radtourismus”]<sup>54</sup>, which, unlike other articles, looked very positively on the possibility of riding on rural roads. The main problem for cycletourists was seen to be urban streets and especially the main streets leading out of cities. The construction of cycleways “on the main streets” would massively promote cycletouring, and would “give an even greater boost to the bicycle industry and to cycling for the good health of the people than has been seen in any earlier period of development of the bicycle.”<sup>55</sup>

In 1914, a “Federation of Cycling Interests” [Verband von Fahrradinteressen], which cannot be precisely identified, advocated a “Central Office” for the promotion of cycleways [“Zentralstelle” für die Propagierung von Radfahrwegen] to oppose further decline in cycletourism<sup>56</sup>.

The interest of cycling sport organizations also turned strongly toward cycletouring, which could be promoted through the construction of “recreational trails” [Wanderpfade]<sup>57</sup> for cyclists like those for hikers.

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<sup>52</sup> Henneking, p.16

<sup>53</sup> cf. Henneking, p. 23 ff.

<sup>54</sup> Radmarkt #536, p. 3-9

<sup>55</sup> Ibid p. 9

<sup>56</sup> Radmarkt #1188, 1914, p. 15

<sup>57</sup> cf.. Radmarkt #1242/43, 1915, p.1

The first cycleways, as constructed above all in Magdeburg and Hannover, were mostly intended for recreational use.<sup>58</sup> In an article in "Radmarkt" in 1929 about the differing approaches to the construction of cycleways "before the war and at present,"<sup>59</sup> Henneking notes that "before the war, it was only a few men who, out of their love for sport cycling and for touring by bicycle, had enough motivation to take action...These men recognized that for cycling to be enjoyable recreation, suitable cycleways must be constructed."<sup>60</sup>

If the recreational theme and the promotion of cycletouring were also pushed into the background by the theme of crash prevention in the promotion of cycleways, they still remained as elements of bikeway ideology, because they reinforced the image of bikeway builders' working for the good of cyclists.

Correspondingly, cycleway advocacy organizations which were founded almost everywhere at the end of the 1920s included representatives of tourism organizations.

Max Trunz, the Director of the Central Office for Cycleways [Zentralstelle für Radfahrwege], which was founded in Berlin in 1927, was, however, not entirely happy with promotion of tourism in general as a way to support cycletouring and cycleways. "All authorities and associations which must attend to promotion of tourism now absolutely have the duty, more than previously, to grapple with the thought that that the cycletourist represents an unusually large percentage of tourism, and that the promotion of cycling must above all be the object of attention."<sup>61</sup> He refers to a pamphlet "By bicycle through Switzerland" [Auf dem Fahrrad durch die Schweiz], which aggressively promotes cycletouring. Trunz criticizes the fixation of many tourism organizations on car touring, for which expensive roads were being built. A traveler in a motor vehicle would often be viewed as a demigod. Trunz also, however, can report examples in which the mistake is recognized. A very expensive motor vehicle access road to the Nürburgring [motor racing loop] was built. "What did that accomplish?" he asks. "Very heavy motor traffic has been fed into this area, but on the other hand, the hoped-for improvement in its local economy has not occurred, because the motorist is encouraged to race to his destination on this nice, almost straight stretch of road. Traffic has been attracted, but it passes through without stopping."<sup>62</sup> Trunz raises a point which was rarely heard then, a phenomenon which is only today becoming recognized in some locales interested in tourism: cycling as the element which does most to increase vitality of the local economy. In the Ahr valley, in 1929 a cycleway costing 254,000 mk. was being constructed – a price which indeed seems very high, but which is trivial in comparison with the funding of roads for motor vehicles. The Swiss apparently knew "the value of the cyclist as a tourist, who is much more likely to stop than the motorist, and that he also seeks food and lodging to an extent which the motorist does not."

The Lüneburg Heath is mentioned again and again as an example of successful political attention to tourism – how the farmers, on their own, dug up the heather and shoveled away the layer of sand underneath to expose a firm layer of soil. In this way, an entire network of woodland paths in the Heath was created, and it attracted a hundred thousand visitors. "The cycleways, in this way, made a first-order contribution in opening up of access to the Heath, in making it known and in bringing its economy to the present high point."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> cf. Radmarkt #1600. p.47f.

<sup>59</sup> Radmarkt #1987, 1929, p. 11f.

<sup>60</sup> ibid

<sup>61</sup> Radmarkt #1991, 1929, p. 13

<sup>62</sup> ibid

<sup>63</sup> ibid p. 11

When planning for cycleway networks is discussed, the number 40,000 km is mentioned again and again as a basic goal, as it includes not only inner urban bikeways, but also touring routes which connect cities and counties, or which lead cyclists into scenic areas such as the Lüneburg Heath.

Henneking also dedicates a detailed section to “Leisure Trips by Bicycle”<sup>64</sup>, in which he points out the importance of cycleways and wayfinding information for them, citing the example of those already in place in the Netherlands through the efforts of the A.N.W.B.

## 5 Construction of cycleways in north-German cities before the First World War

The same cities are often named as being active in construction of cycleways and cycle lanes around the turn of the century. Cities applied concepts which differed in detail. It would be fruitful to conduct thorough case studies of these pioneering bikeway-building cities, as Thomas Froitzheim and Arne Lüers have done for Bremen<sup>65</sup>, in order to identify historical connections. Here, a short look into the start of efforts in and around the cities of Bremen, Hamburg, Lübeck, Hannover and Magdeburg will be attempted, to the degree that available sources permit.

### 5.1 Bremen

Without our taking up a discussion here of “firsts,” so popular in historical research into cycling, as to which city was first to build special bikeways, the source material suggests first looking into Bremen, where cycle lanes were installed on the roadway starting in 1897.<sup>66</sup> These were 2.50 meters wide, intended for travel in both directions, composed of bricks made from coal ash<sup>67</sup> or copper-refinery slag (scoria bricks)<sup>68</sup>, and in the middle of the roadway. The bicycle was the fastest road vehicle in the years around the turn of the century, and so, slow or stopped vehicles did not impede bicycle traffic.

Henneking, who was very influential in the movement to construct cycleways in Magdeburg, where sidepaths and cycle lanes at the sides of the street were favored, criticized cycle lanes in the middle of the street, such as also existed in Lübeck: “As long as vehicular traffic on these streets was light and, in particular, motor vehicle traffic was not yet significant, these level and smooth cycle lanes reflected the desires of cyclists. Because of the increase and change in traffic, such lanes are no longer in keeping with the times.”<sup>69</sup> Starting in 1910, Bremen adopted the Magdeburg model, with slag brick cycleways at the sides of the roadway.

More and more roadways were paved in asphalt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, offering better conditions for cycling than the slag brick strips, which could deteriorate due to weather and heavy use. Disputes then arose between cyclists, who would rather ride on the roadway, and the police, who were supposed to see to it that the cyclists used the cycleways and would vanish from the roadway. As already described, a mandatory bikeway law existed nationwide only starting in 1934, though local authorities could

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<sup>64</sup> Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr, p. 53 ff.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Froitzheim, Arne Lüers: Radfahren in Bremen, in: Hartmut Roder (Hrsg.): Verkehr in Bremen: buten und binnen; Fahren, Fahrräder, Flugzeuge, Bahnen, Busse & Taxen. [Cycling in Bremen, in Hartmut Roder (publisher): traffic in Bremen, inside and out: ferries, bicycles, aircraft, rail, buses and taxis] Bremen 1987, p. 41ff.

<sup>66</sup> cf. Ivar Miloschewski and Harry Schwarzwälder: Das Fahrrad in Bremen. In: Bundesminister für Verkehr (Hrsg.): Dokumentation 1. Internationaler Fahrradkongreß Velo/City 10.-12. April 1980, Bremen, Verlauf und ausgewählte Beiträge, [The Bicycle in Bremen, in Federal Minister of Transport (publisher): Documentation of the first International Velo/City Bicycle Conference, April, 1980, Bremen: Proceedings and selected papers] p. 70f.

<sup>67</sup> according to Miloschewski/Schwarzwälder

<sup>68</sup> according to Henneking: Der Radverkehr ... p. 83

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*, p. 83

already impose one. Still, even without an ordinance imposing mandatory use, the construction of separate ways for different types of road users brought with it a sense of ownership or entitlement. This had already begun with the relegation of pedestrians to sidewalks, called “Bürgersteige” (“people ways”). Because bikeways of water-bound (stone dust) materials became unusable at some times and in some places, Bremen constructed tarred bikeways from 1930 on. Although there were also some private cycleways in Bremen which cyclists were allowed to use only if they paid an annual fee, the city understood itself to be in charge of constructing cycleways.

## 5.2 Hamburg

The situation was similar in Hamburg, with construction and most financing of bikeways by the city. “Radmarkt” reported in 1919: “Even 20 years ago, the City of Hamburg provided 250,000 marks for the construction of raised bicycle sidepaths and other bikeways inside and outside the city, and by now this has risen to 2 million marks.”<sup>70</sup> Gregers Nissen from Altona reported in 1926 that the city government of Hamburg had already disbursed the first allocations of 250,000 marks 25 years earlier (!): “The Hamburg city government, farsighted in this respect, had in the course of time probably installed a more widespread network of cycleways to serve cyclists’ interests, than any other city in Europe.”<sup>71</sup> It cannot be confirmed whether Nissen was correct about this. Still, *one* competitor can be ruled out: Copenhagen, where the construction of cycleways began in the 1930s, then became very intensive. “Under my direction,” Nissen reported in 1926, “several times, men from the Copenhagen city government and the Dansk Cyclist Forbund have studied the technical features of the Hamburg cycleways, and obtained the necessary materials from Public Works Department representatives [Baudeputation]. In this field of activity, Copenhagen, the queen city of sport cycling among the seats of royalty in Europe, was way behind. With Copenhagen’s partially very bumpy streets, its cyclists found the first *Cykelstriber* to be beneficial; and the tipping point has been passed, such that Danes up through government officials and royalty ride bicycles.”<sup>72</sup>

## 5.3 Lübeck

The situation in Lübeck was different: Starting in 1900, cyclists had to pay a licensing fee for the construction of cycleways. Cyclists were issued number plates for proof that they had paid.<sup>73</sup> Funded in this way, “numerous good cycleways crisscrossed the city, so that it was possible, on avenues yet, almost everywhere to reach the borders of the state.”<sup>74</sup> Henneking reports on a practical solution, separating motor vehicle and bicycle traffic on the heavily-traveled avenue which led from Lübeck to Travemünde and the international airport of that time, with an adjacent two-track street railway.

With funding from the licensing fee, the cycleway network in Lübeck had been mostly completed by the outbreak of the First World War. Less than the yearly 25,000 Marks was needed to repair war damage, and in 1919, the majority of the city council decided to do away with the fee. As cycling had come to be seen as an indispensable transportation mode, “which a wide variety of residents can no longer do without in their work,”<sup>75</sup> it would be unjust to impose a “special tax” on cyclists. The requirement for a

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. Radmarkt 1457, 1919, p. 5

<sup>71</sup> Gregers Nissen: Radfahrwege. In: Radmarkt Nr. 1857, 1926, S.17. Author’s note, 2015: Lübeck, like the other Hanseatic cities Hamburg and Bremen, was in some respects more than only a city, and so this probably refers to the state boundaries..

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*

<sup>73</sup> Radmarkt #1454, p. 31 f.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*

<sup>75</sup> *ibid*

number plate (really, proof of having paid the fee) was nonetheless maintained. It was believed that the number would now serve to regulate cyclists' conduct in traffic.

## 5.4 Hannover

In Hannover, construction of cycleways began with a recreational path in the Eilenriede urban forest. The bicycle racing club, which dissolved in 1900, presented 20,000 marks to the Magistrate of the Capital and Imperial Residence City of Hannover for the purpose of construction of cyclists' paths [Radfahrerwege]. A fee of one mark per year was imposed for basic maintenance of the paths. In 1921, this small fee was raised to 7.50 marks, without arousing strong protests from the cyclists. In 1922, however, the climate between the city and the cyclists had become tense, due among other things to a ban on riding to the Cafe Kröpcke, a restaurant near the central plaza of the city. The fee to ride in the Eilenriede was to be raised to 20 marks. The cyclists were not ready to pay that much. Besides, it was not much fun to ride on the paths, because pedestrians spread across them, in spite of signs which explicitly prohibited them, and even presumed to sit on benches which were intended only for cyclists. Marshals had to keep the pedestrians away from the pricey cycleways.<sup>76</sup>

In 1936, a note in "Radmarkt" praised the cycleway installations in Hannover as exemplary.<sup>77</sup> For 35 years, the article reported, as a matter of policy, all new streets had been provided with cycle lanes. In all, there were 120 km of such cycle lanes. In addition, there were 80 km of separate paths [besondere Radfahrwege], for the most part in the nearer and more distant surrounding area. "For new construction and reconstruction of the urban streets, cycleways are now prescribed as a matter of policy."<sup>78</sup>

## 5.5 Magdeburg

The city most often mentioned in connection with the construction of cycleways is Magdeburg, clearly thanks to licensed engineer Henning, the cycleway guru in the 1920s, who held the position of city engineer in Magdeburg for a long time and wrote again and again for lay readers about his field of experience. The Magdeburg Association for Cycleways [Magdeburger Verein für Radfahrerwege e.V.] was founded in 1898. It took up the installation of cycleways in Magdeburg and the surrounding area, working together with the city government. For a long time, Henning was in charge of the Public Works and Park Department [Tiefbau- und Gartenverwaltung].<sup>79</sup> We have him to thank for a very vivid depiction of the Magdeburg Association for Cycleways and of its work, cited here in detail: the Association was a "coalition of business people and public officials; some, who worked for the city or the state, could influence the city government to some degree. In the morning, before the work day, the members would ride bicycles through the large and beautiful parklands of Magdeburg to an outlying location, drink their morning coffee, when possible take a morning bath in the Elbe River, and then following their 1- or 1 ½-hour sojourn in beautiful natural surroundings, energized by cycling and swimming in flowing water, they would return to their day's work at the counter or in the office. These men recognized that suitable cycleways must be constructed for cycling to be fully enjoyable and fully to achieve its recreational potential."<sup>80</sup> In this way, people set out to work on the project of creating a network of cycleways for sport and recreation, but also soon for business and commuter trips. The city government built the cycleways in the "urban area" [Weichbild der Stadt], and "the Association built the

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<sup>76</sup> Radmarkt #1600, 1922, p. 47f.

<sup>77</sup> Radmarkt #2362, 1936, p. 13

<sup>78</sup> ibid

<sup>79</sup> cf. Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr, 1927

<sup>80</sup> Radmarkt #1987, 1929, p. 13

ones which “led out into the surrounding area.”<sup>81</sup> The Magdeburg solution for cycleways was an unobtrusive strip on one side or on both sides, separated where possible from the roadway by a curb. This concept also was included in the Guidelines for the Creation of Cycleways [Richtlinien für die Schaffung von Radfahrwegen] of the Research Association on Streets for Motor Traffic [Studiengesellschaft für Automobilstraßenbau (STUFA)], published in the spring of 1927, which became a very authoritative reference in the waves of construction of cycleways in the following years.

The Magdeburg association grew from 500 members in the year after its founding to 49,000 in 1927. The First World War interrupted the growth in membership, but the loss due to the war was made up by 1921. In 1929, the Magdeburg network of cycleways was described as totaling 400 km. The Association itself funded a considerable part of their construction, to the extent of “hundreds of thousands of gold marks”<sup>82</sup> over the years. At first, construction was funded only as a self-help effort, but soon funding also came from the city government. In addition, there were large donations by “enthusiastic and wealthy members of the association.” But the Magdeburg cyclists, too, were not happy to be soaked for the construction of cycleways. In 1922, almost all factions uniformly rejected a bicycle tax of 25 marks, which would affect 30,000 cyclists. “The Magistrate pointed out in vain that the bicycle was apparently the only transportation mode which had not yet been taxed, and that the city, in installing cycleways, was making special efforts which served only cyclists.”

## 6 Cycleways in other countries: precursors or progeny?

The idea of cycleways did not originate in Germany. Robert A. Smith, in his book “A Social History of the Bicycle”<sup>83</sup> mentions several bikeway projects in the USA which were already built, and yet more planned, before the turn of the century, especially in the eastern states. But in the USA, unlike in Germany, advocacy for “improved streets and highways” stood in the foreground. Also, at that time, bikeways were used almost entirely for recreational trips. As the bicycle transitioned in Europe from a sport and recreational device used by wealthy people into everyday transportation for an ever-increasing part of the population, Americans had already abandoned it for the automobile. “The Bicycle Craze” was already finished.<sup>84</sup>

Available information indicates that the concept of cycleways in Germany differed in a particular way from the concepts in other countries, and especially so in the 1920s and 1930s. Neither in the Netherlands nor in Denmark – to name two countries which today still have an extensive network of bikeways in cities and in rural road corridors – was the promotion of bikeways bound up with such a massive promotion of motorization. This may also be why the bikeways in those countries remained in place to a greater extent after the Second World War, rather than to be removed, as they were in Germany up through the 1970s, to widen roadways and provide parking spaces. It is much more plausible that cycleways in Denmark and the Netherlands were constructed for the purpose of more comfortable and safer cycling, and only to a smaller extent to clear the streets for faster motor traffic.

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<sup>81</sup> Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr, p. 76

<sup>82</sup> Radmarkt #1987, 1929, p. 13

<sup>83</sup> New York (American Heritage Press) 1972.

<sup>84</sup> Translator’s note: The bicycle industry in the USA collapsed quickly 1898-1900 due to market saturation. Bicycles are durable goods, and industry collapse is not the same as collapse in bicycle use. Cycling no longer rated as a fashion statement when ordinary people could afford bicycles – but motor vehicles only became affordable by ordinary people in the USA some 10 years later. At the turn of the century, streetcars and walking, not automobiles, offered the main competition to bicycling for daily transportation in urban areas. Also suppressing bicycle use, a cartel prevented the importation of European bicycle tires, forcing the use of the single-tube bicycle tire, which was very difficult, often impossible to repair.

The earliest article, from 1897, which is cited here as evidence of the promotion of cycleways, mentions that foreign countries, especially Belgium, had “moved forward with the shining example.”<sup>85</sup> And again in 1935, the exhibition “Germany Needs Cycleways!” [Deutschland braucht Radfahrwege!], organized by the Imperial leadership of the National Socialist Party, the Central Office for the People’s Social Welfare [Hauptamt für Volkswohlfahrt] and the Imperial Society for the Construction of Cycleways [Reichsgemeinschaft für Radfahrwegebau], gave examples from the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark illustrating “how relatively far behind Germany is in constructing cycleways.”<sup>86</sup>

In Denmark, the construction of cycleways first really got underway in the 1930s. In 1927, Henneking published photos from Copenhagen showing streets dominated by cyclists, but still no separation of bicycle traffic from motor traffic.<sup>87</sup>

A 1920 report, “A Nation on Bicycles” [Eine Nation auf Rädern] by Charles Paul Engel<sup>88</sup>, depicts the world of Dutch cycling in rosy colors: “The constantly increasing use of the bicycle in Holland naturally makes the desire for good cycle lanes grow ever stronger, and today, a closely-spaced network of good bicycle streets [Fahrradstraßen] now parallels the main rural roads, thanks to the efforts of the Algemeen Nederlandsch Weelrijders Bond [ANWB, Dutch Cyclists’ Federation<sup>89</sup>]. Equally good bicycle streets also lead from these main roads to all small localities which are off to the side.”<sup>90</sup> In no other country in the world, said Engel, was anything like this done to the same extent. The “bicycle streets,” which the author may not have called “cycleways” because they differed so greatly from the narrow, cheaply constructed ones in Germany, were constructed by the government, increasing bicycle use, which was already heavy anyway. A later article<sup>91</sup> from 1930 somewhat moderates the euphoria about cycling in the Netherlands: people rode bicycles in the smaller cities because there were hardly any local-line railroads or streetcars, and a land-use pattern with many single-family homes resulted in sprawling built-up areas 6-8 km across when a city had a population of 75,000 to 100,000. Streetcars and buses do not work well in such situations. The article also mentions a bicycle tax of 2.50 florins yearly, resulting in revenues of more than 7.5 million florins yearly for the national government. Foreigners who cycled longer than three months in Holland also had to pay this tax. The provinces of Brabant and Limburg had an additional road tax. In any case, the special cycleways built using this funding, called “Rijwielpad” [along-side cycle paths] were reported to be of very good quality: “On every street, on at least one side but usually on both, there is a specially paved, brick or tile path.”<sup>92</sup>

The Dutch bicycle tax also played a role in the acrimonious dispute in 1932 over a cycleway fee between the Central Office for Cycleways [Zentralstelle für Radfahrwege] under Max Trunz and the sport cycling organizations. Trunz called for a fee, but the sporting organizations objected. Trunz argued: “...in the Netherlands, members of cycling organizations pay 2 florins (3.20 Reich marks), non-members 4 florins

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<sup>85</sup> Radmarkt #318, 1897, p.III

<sup>86</sup> Radmarkt #2307, 1935, p. 11f.

<sup>87</sup> cf. Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr, 1927, pp. 71-73. cf. also Radmarkt #1857, 1926, p.17. An MGM Traveltalks film from 1938 shows the same.

<sup>88</sup> Radmarkt #1530, 1920, p.13f.

<sup>89</sup> Translator’s note: The ANWB now (2015) maintains the same name in Dutch but uses the English name “Royal Dutch Touring Club”; see its English Web page, <http://www.anwb.nl/over-anwb/vereniging-en-bedrijf/organisatie/english-page>. It now mainly provides on-road help, legal assistance and touring information to motorists as well as cyclists.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 13

<sup>91</sup> Radmarkt # 2104, 1931, p..7f.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 8

(6.40 Reich marks) per year. It is a joy to see that precisely these contributions have led to the Netherlands' becoming the land of cyclists and cycleways. So, a compulsory payment will never restrict cycling...but on the contrary, will very powerfully advance it." <sup>93</sup> Trunz did not prevail, but the concept of participation of cyclists in funding construction of cycleways still lived on in Germany.

Though no numbers were given, it was maintained "that in Holland, thanks to cycle paths whose design is exemplary, the crash rate could be reduced to a minimum." <sup>94</sup>

In 1927, Henneking, though certainly no opponent of cycleways, attributed the low crash numbers to Dutch cyclists' better conduct: "It occurs to no cyclist (in Amsterdam, (where, according to the illustrations in Henneking's article, there were still no cycleways – V.B.) to disrupt traffic by riding unreasonably fast. All road users clearly understand that they have to fit in with the rules of travel." <sup>95</sup>

In the 1930s, there was intensive construction of bikeways in other European countries besides Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark: also in France, England and Switzerland. "Radmarkt" reported in 1938 that in spite of 1.5 million bicycles sold per year in the USA – mostly, however, children's and sport bicycles – no cycleways had been constructed, except in a few eastern cities. <sup>96</sup>

Whether Germany had pulled ahead with its bikeways, as "Radmarkt" asserted in 1938, <sup>97</sup> cannot be determined, though to be sure, there was a very intensive expansion of the network at that time. It can, however, be stated with confidence that the German cycleways were poorer in quality than those in the Netherlands and Denmark. Narrow bikeways in England like those in Germany were described, <sup>98</sup> and so it is not surprising that English cyclists objected strenuously to the construction of cycleways. <sup>99</sup>

## **7 The victims should sacrifice themselves: on the perversion of self-help in the construction of bikeways**

Self-help by cyclists and bikeway associations has already been discussed in the two previous chapters. The key problem with this was financing. It can be shown how, in Magdeburg and elsewhere, wealthy friends of cycling, perhaps also bicycle dealers and others with an economic interest in cycling, built bikeways before the turn of the century which often were open only to members of an association, or to cyclists who paid an annual fee. In other places, there was a type of bicycle tax which paid for bikeways, among other things. Proof of payment was by way of so-called year-sleeves [Jahresringe] affixed to the bicycle so that the cyclist would not have to be stopped at a checkpoint, a burden which people had to bear long enough in the years when cyclists were also required to carry licenses. A person whose bicycle carried such a sleeve or plate was allowed to ride on the quasi-private cycleways which were mostly in parks or woodlands. Sport cycling clubs mostly did not take part in construction of these bikeways and rejected helping to pay for them.

In 1932, in a letter to the Imperial Chancellor, a "Consortium for the Advancement of Cyclists' Interests" [Konsortium zur Förderung der Radfahrer-Interessen], which cannot be precisely identified, requested the introduction of a mandatory number plate, personal liability insurance for cyclists and an administration charge which would largely go to pay for cycleways. The Imperial Ministry of Transport

<sup>93</sup> Radmarkt #2144, 1932, p.14

<sup>94</sup> Radmarkt # 2307, 1935, p.15

<sup>95</sup> Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr, 1927, p. 69f.

<sup>96</sup> Radmarkt #2451, 1938, p. 979

<sup>97</sup> Radmarkt # 2461,1938, p. 979

<sup>98</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2368, 1936, p.6, according to which sidepaths in England were at least 1.5m wide and should be separated from both the sidewalk and the street by a setback.

<sup>99</sup> cf. Radmarkt Nr. 2461, 1938, p. 979

[Reichsverkehrsministerium] replied that it did not support such measures, “as implementing them would impose a far too much heavier burden on the segments of the population which depend on the bicycle. Already in 1922, cyclist licensing had been repealed, in order to make cycling more accessible.”<sup>100</sup>

Also then in the 1920s when construction of cycleways was taken up as an emergency- or job-creation measure, for example in the context of voluntary work service, cyclists had, beyond this, to be asked to reach into their pockets. Where work for construction of cycleways was voluntary, labor costs for agencies responsible for construction were eliminated.<sup>101</sup> Some cycleways, especially recreational paths, however, could be constructed using simple techniques and materials, and the percentage of the expense to pay laborers was especially high. These paths were constructed only when the cyclists’ organizations would pay for materials. The Imperial Institute for Placement of Employees [Reichsanstalt für Arbeitvermittlung] paid the workers, and the state provided equipment.<sup>102</sup> The Berlin Association for Cycleways [Berliner Verein für Radfahrwege] financed the materials through the sale of year sleeves, costing 50 pfennigs, and contributions by members. In other cities – as has been reported at length for Magdeburg – the organizations had large intakes of money and could make significant contributions. Max Trunz, in addition to his position as Executive Director of the Central Office, whose office location was in Berlin, was also the chairperson of the Berlin Association for Cycleways. He complained that neither the cyclists nor bicycle dealers there had, for a long time, been ready to make such large payments. Year sleeves were not mandatory, and nonmembers were also allowed to use the cycleways. The City of Berlin rejected a cycleway tax as antisocial. Trunz attempted to make a mandatory payment more appealing to the population of Berlin, which still voted Social Democratic, by pointing out the societal significance of the job creation measures. “We want, on our part, to combat unemployment by means which are available at this time; to open a safety valve of activity for youth, and again to create workers rather than drones. We can do this only if every cyclist attaches a year sleeve – if he can buy one in every bicycle shop, in every newsstand, at the post office.”<sup>103</sup> Trunz ended his call with words which continued to be heard in the coming years: “The year sleeve is the German cyclist’s badge of honor!”

The discussion of voluntary contributions to construct bikeways, or bicycle taxes, of whether cyclists would be required to pay for the construction of bikeways, continued following the so-called takeover of power by the National Socialist regime, and more generally, the rattling of collection cans for all kinds of purposes remained a common sound in German cities and towns.

In 1934, Max Trunz was apparently still the executive at the Central Office for Cycleways. In the style of the new era, while begging for financial contributions by cyclists and bicycle dealers, he quoted Dr. Ley, the Leader of the German Labor Front, [Deutscher Arbeitsfront]<sup>104</sup>: “Socialism is the order of the day. He who makes a conscious sacrifice is thinking socially. Whoever does not sacrifice forfeits the right to ask for anything: he then has cast himself out of the nation!”<sup>105</sup> Trunz implied that the main goal in construction of cycleways was still to serve cyclists, writing that “The year sleeve of the path organizations must become the badge of honor of the German cyclist, who, with his tiny contribution,

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<sup>100</sup> Radmarkt #2163, 1932, p. 6

<sup>101</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2110, 1931

<sup>102</sup> Radmarkt #2137, 1932, p. 7

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 8

<sup>104</sup> Translator’s note: The National Socialist substitute for labor unions, which had been outlawed on May 2, 1933.

<sup>105</sup> Translator’s note: this reads more tersely in German, in the choppy style of National Socialist rhetoric:

“Sozialismus ist das Gebot der Stunde; sozial denkt, wer bewußt Opfer bringt! Wer nicht opfert, hat das Recht verwirkt, etwas zu fordern; er steht dann außerhalb der Nation!”

willingly given by any reasonable person, helps himself, but also helps the entire people by creating jobs.”<sup>106</sup>

However, Trunz’s rationale was no longer very convincing. Already in 1932, to be specific, he rather vaguely described traffic safety as a reason to build bikeways, along with job creation: “We want to wage war against the dangers of the street and protect human life with bikeways.” And in second place, already, a goal followed which surely would not incite cyclists to help with financing: “We also want to help with motor traffic, to make it flow more smoothly and so to make it more economical: insurance premiums also could be reduced within a foreseeable time frame, if the disruptive cyclist is removed from the actual roadway.”<sup>107</sup> His suggestion on how to economize, that cycleways could make motor traffic safer and so could “indirectly” create “car-only streets” did not open the wallets of cyclists, which at that time were not bulging either.

When in 1934, Trunz and the Central Office for Cycleways were replaced, first by the “Cycleway Construction” [Radfahrwegebau] Section of the unified cyclists’ organization, the German Cyclists’ Association [DRV] and a few months later by the Imperial Association [Reichsgemeinschaft], Hans-Joachim Schacht, the central figure [(Leiter)] in these new organizations, made clear that despite the centralization and the subordination to the “General Inspector for the German Road Sector” [Generalinspektor für das deutsche Straßenwesen], who must approve all projects and planning, cyclists would still be counted on for financial assistance. If they did not want to pay, then the new political system would pull out all the stops: “The General Inspector for the German Road System regards self-help by cyclists to be the primary source of financing of the construction of cycleways. As it would be inequitable for only the organized cyclists in the German Cyclists’ Association to pay for this self-help, and because the DRV has taken on part of the financial self-help through the establishment of the Cycle Path Construction Section ... it remains only to include all cyclists, to bring them in on the cycleway construction fee.”<sup>108</sup>

Bringing them in amounted not to a fee mandated by law, but rather to the application of pressure through party organizations such as the Arbeitsfront, which ran the NSBO [Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellenorganisation, National Socialist Factory Cell Organization].<sup>109</sup> Through “promotional work” in individual businesses “the workers who are cyclists are to be recruited for the cycleway fee by enrolling them in lists.”<sup>110</sup> The “Imperial Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda” [Reichsminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda]<sup>111</sup> assisted with this work, in which it was always to be borne in mind “that cyclists are fellow Germans [Volksgenossen, literally “comrades”] from lower social classes and for whom every pfennig counts.”<sup>112</sup> That last quote is from Schacht at a press conference where he, together with representatives of the Ministry of Propaganda and the Imperial Site Group for Construction [Reichsbetriebsgruppe “Bau”] of the Arbeitsfront, set out the plans for expansion of a network of bikeways in Germany. Little could be extracted from the impoverished cyclists, and so the bicycle industry and dealers, the industry associations and professional organizations, as well as insurance and other interests should become involved in the “self-help action.” That people should not be stingy about “self-help” contributions was made clear in a bellicose article in “Radmarkt” by a Dr. Helfer, who evidently had close ties to the National Socialist power structure. He

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<sup>106</sup> Radmarkt #2246, 1934, 9. Juni, p. 9 ff.

<sup>107</sup> Radmarkt #2137, 1932, p. 8

<sup>108</sup> Radmarkt #2249, 1934, p. 5

<sup>109</sup> Translator’s note: See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Socialist\\_Factory\\_Cell\\_Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Socialist_Factory_Cell_Organization)

<sup>110</sup> Radmarkt #2249, 1934, p. 55

<sup>111</sup> Translator’s note: Joseph Goebbels, see <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/joseph-goebbels>

<sup>112</sup> Radmarkt #2255, 1935, p. 7

demanded strict control of use of cycleways which were built by bikeway organizations: “whoever rides on such a bikeway without a year sleeve is to be regarded as a social parasite, and (it – V.B.) is a good occasion for action by the as is hoped, soon-to-be-organized Traffic Militia of the SA [Sturmabteilung, Assault Detachment, the “Brownshirts”], or the NSKK [Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrer Korps – National Socialist Motorist Corps! V.B.]”<sup>113</sup>

What was being called self-help was merely collection of money for construction of bikeways, centrally planned and carried out according to a single set of guidelines without the participation of cyclists or their organizations. Skillful misrepresentations preserved the ideology of self-help, as in the following statement about the methods of the Imperial Association for the Construction of Cycleways [Reichsgemeinschaft für den Radfahrwegebau]: “Building upon the Führer principle, this gives to anyone who would like to contribute and who is qualified, not only the ability to participate selflessly and altruistically, but also possibly to make sacrifices.”<sup>114</sup> “The funding collected through the self-help action, promotional and membership contributions is assembled centrally, managed by the General Inspector for the German Road Sector and tirelessly applied to the construction of cycleways.”<sup>115</sup> For collectors – in keeping with this statement by the Imperial Association for the Construction of Cycleways e.V., – the information that localities and districts where money was collected would get “special” attention was reassuring: “In the areas where the interests are willing to make sacrifices for the construction of cycleways, much can therefore be accomplished.”<sup>116</sup>

Nonetheless, the donation for bikeways remained “voluntary”. Cyclists were subjected to massive moral pressure by the National Socialist regime’s propaganda machine. When the German Cyclists’ Association proposed the introduction of a general bicycle use tax to the imperial government in 1935, seeing this as the only possibility of bringing the cycleway program to reality, the response was a blunt refusal.<sup>117</sup> The answer was tantamount to a reprimand of the so-called “Leader of the German Cyclists’ Federation” [Führer des Deutschen Radfahrerbundes] when the letter from the government emphatically protested against the attempt “publicly to foist disagreeable suggestions of the German Cyclists’ Association and the Imperial Association for Construction of Cycleways on the authorities.”<sup>118</sup> The government referred to discussions with the petitioners in which a mandatory payment by cyclists was rejected as incompatible with a reduction in the tax on motor vehicles.

Also, in a memorandum to all of the states and provinces responsible for maintaining streets and roads, the General Inspector for the German Road Sector, Dr. Todt, emphasized the sociopolitical aspect of cycleway construction, and excluded a special tax for cyclists: “Even only social considerations demand increased attention to this transportation mode. For this reason, it does not work to seek the financial solution of the problem only through private self-help by the bicycle interests. Also, all demands for a mandatory, special tax by the Empire on cyclists for construction of cycleways have no chance of success, from now on as before, for social and political reasons.”<sup>119</sup> But he also makes it clear that it would not be correct to say that the Empire must consider itself obligated to make its resources for constructing cycleways available to incorporated bodies or private offices. The Empire’s resources would be only for cycleways along Imperial highways, of which approximately 700 km had been constructed over the previous two years, at a cost of 2.8 million marks.

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<sup>113</sup> Radmarkt #2289, 1935, p. 13

<sup>114</sup> Radmarkt #2261, 1934, p. 6

<sup>115</sup> Radmarkt #2261, 1934, p. 6

<sup>116</sup> Ibid

<sup>117</sup> cf. Radmarkt # 2318, 1935, p. 10

<sup>118</sup> Ibid

<sup>119</sup> Radmarkt #2321, 1935, p. 9

## 8 Centralization of the construction of cycleways

The construction of separated bikeways, whether on the roadway or alongside rural highways, or in woodlands and parks, began relatively spontaneously through the initiatives of individual friends of cycling, as was described in Chapter 5. The design of the bikeways depended on local conditions: there were no unified guidelines and no government standards. The first cycleways were citizen initiatives in the purest sense of the word, either as self-help actions of cycleway associations, or as installations which had been promoted by citizens but which were partly financed and constructed by the cities. Cities which pioneered in construction of cycleways were among others the Hanseatic cities of Bremen, Lübeck and Hamburg, which distinguished themselves with citizen-based city charters.

The recommendation by the 1908 Paris International Roads Congress to install separated roadways for cyclists on avenues <sup>120</sup> doesn't deserve too much emphasis.

When, in 1914, a "Federation of Cycling Interests" [Verband von Fahrradinteressen] advocated for a centralized office <sup>121</sup> which would manage the installation of cycleways throughout the German Empire, and a tax on cyclists, dealers and manufacturers, there was no great agreement, and not only because of the tax. Instead, local organizations, which could form regional and state federations, were suggested. There was concern that an expensive, bureaucratic organization would be ineffective.

The first evidence for the involvement of an Empire-wide sport cycling organization, the German Cyclists' Federation [Deutscher Radfahrer-Bund], is from 1915, when its cycletouring director [Bundesfahrwart], Gregers Nissen, advocated cycleways. He referred to the Dutch A.N.W.B., which evidently had been involved already for some time as a national organization, especially in the installation of recreational bicycle trails. The Federation, however, did not want to make a financial contribution, but rather only to allow its local clubs individually to petition municipalities for construction of cycleways. <sup>122</sup>

After the war, there was a new push by the Federation when possibilities arose to construct cycleways as emergency work projects and so to give unemployed people productive jobs.

The editor of "Radmarkt" took advantage of the 1919 General Assembly of the German Bicycle Manufacturers' Association [Verein Deutscher Fahrrad-Industrieller], to suggest a central entity to promote cycling interests. <sup>123</sup> Lüders, who later unequivocally identified himself as a National Socialist, here anticipated an organizational form which is typical in fascist systems, but which sometimes can be found in democratic systems (for example in the Austria of the Grand Coalition <sup>124</sup>). This form can be described as corporatist, but was not achieved even once in Germany to such an degree after 1933. Lüders described the suggested goal-oriented association itself, which he called the "Imperial Committee for the Bicycle Sector" [Reichsausschuß für Fahrradverkehrswesen (Raff)] <sup>125</sup> as a "corporation" which would include "manufacturers, wholesalers, dealers, users and representatives of all government agencies with an interest in cycling, tourist promotion offices, periodicals in the field, daily newspapers, and briefly, all consumers in the bicycle sector." <sup>126</sup> One area of activity of this

<sup>120</sup> cf. Radmarkt #909, 1908, p. 7-11

<sup>121</sup> cf. Radmarkt #1188, p. 15

<sup>122</sup> cf. Radmarkt #1242/43, p. 1 ff.

<sup>123</sup> cf. Radmarkt #1482, 1919, p. 3-7

<sup>124</sup> Translator's note. A grand coalition is of parties with differing ideologies to form a majority in a multi-party government. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand\\_coalition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_coalition).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p. 5

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

coalition should be cycleways, and Lüders also considered the shared use of footways, which was mostly rejected in the discussion of bikeways. His call for centralization was, however, ahead of its time in 1919.

A first step toward this unification, and with it, centralization, was the publication in 1926 of Henneking's pamphlet "Installation of Cycleways" [Anlage von Radfahrwegen] by the German Bicycle Manufacturers' Association in a print run of 4,000 copies, with distribution to government officials, sport cycling clubs and others who would be interested. An expanded new edition appeared in 1927 with the title "Bicycle Traffic: its significance to the national economy, and the installation of bikeways" [Der Radfahrverkehr. Seine volkswirtschaftliche Bedeutung und die Anlage von Radwegen].

In the spring of 1927, "Guidelines for the Creation of Cycleways" [Richtlinien für die Schaffung von Radfahrwegen] based on the principles laid out by Henneking, were published by the Traffic Management Committee [Ausschuss "Verkehrsregelung"] of the Research Association on Streets for Motor Traffic [Studiengesellschaft für Automobilstraßenbau (STUFA)]

Also in 1927, the call was made to "Create cycleways for the city and the country" [Schafft Radfahrwege für Stadt und Land!]<sup>127</sup> All German cycling clubs and touring organizations were asked to take part in the work. Rarely are these signatories found together: Dr. Diem, Imperial German Committee for Physical Exercise [Deutscher Reichsausschuß für Leibesübung]), Carl Miller, League of German Touring Clubs [Bund Deutscher Verkehrsvereine], Gregers Nissen, League of German Cyclists [Bund Deutscher Radfahrer, the merger of the German Cyclists' Federation [Deutscher Radfahrer-Bund] with the General Union of Cyclists [Allgemeine Radfahrer-Union], Niemann, Solidarity Workers' Cyclist Federation [Arbeiterradfahrerbund "Solidarität"] and Otto Kramer, German Bicycle Manufacturers' Association [Verein Deutscher Fahrradindustrieller].

In July/August 1927, the Bicycle Manufacturers' Association [Verein der Fahrradindustriellen, VDFI] established a Central Office for Cycleways [Zentralstelle für Radfahrwege] in Berlin.<sup>128</sup> Its office was inside the office of the Association. Its task was to promote the installation of cycleways throughout the Empire, to make relevant technical suggestions, and to offer assistance to interested communities. The Central Office worked under a mandate from the "Working Group for the Propagation of Bikeway Concepts" [Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Propagierung des Radwegegedankens], in which the sport cycling clubs, but also motoring clubs and others, were participants.

In 1928, the Central Office reported that the Imperial Ministry of Labor had indicated that it was ready in principle to promote the installation of cycleways as emergency projects.<sup>129</sup> It would be possible to apply for government funding.

The Prussian Ministry of the Interior, along with the Ministry of Agriculture, State-owned Lands and Forests [Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Domänen und Forsten] had published in a circular "that in the current major reconstruction of the road network, urban streets and rural highways, bicycle traffic should be separated from other traffic to the extent possible." This goal, the circular indicates, could be achieved without a large additional financial burden.<sup>130</sup>

The Central Office, with its Director, Max Trunz, became the actual central information-gathering and promotional body for the construction of cycleways. It had an important function, to motivate local bikeway organizations and to supply them with promotional materials, going as far as the marketing of so-called year sleeves. A small part of the amount paid for the materials went to fund the operation of

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<sup>127</sup> cf. Radmarkt #1867, 1927, p. 31 f.

<sup>128</sup> cf. Radmarkt #1970, 1929, p. 17

<sup>129</sup> cf. Radmarkt #1924, 1928, p. 41

<sup>130</sup> ibid

the Central Office. The Central Office did not restrict itself only to the narrow field of construction of cycleways, but also took positions and provided information on other aspects of bicycle planning and of the traffic laws for cyclists. An important rationale of the Central Office had to do with safety.

The Central Office did not, however, construct cycleways: it did not collect or distribute funding for that purpose.

In 1928, the Central Office had an exhibit on the installation of cycleways at the annual German Labor Exposition [Jahresschau Deutscher Arbeit] "The Engineered City" [Die technische Stadt] in Dresden.<sup>131</sup>

There was no lack of controversy about the work of the Central office, and Max Trunz may have been in part responsible. He took highly unpopular positions, for example, advocating a mandatory fee for all cyclists. He was from time to time reeled back in by his sponsors. There was particular tension between the Central Office and the sport cycling organizations, as is clear from a 1930 article by Trunz in "Radmarkt": "Some sport clubs appear through their pronouncements to be sympathetic with the movement, but they do not intend to make even the tiniest sacrifice to work for it. Not Eisenach Carnival barking, but rather only deeds can help."<sup>132</sup> In his last article in "Radmarkt" as Director of the Central Office, in 1934, Trunz described the sport clubs as lead weights, and said that the regional bikeway organizations had mostly given up on working with them if real results were to be achieved.<sup>133</sup> He also was dissatisfied with support from bicycle dealers: "The conduct of the majority of bicycle dealers offers additional grounds for complaint. Here too, the manufacturers should be pressing much more strongly for cooperation."

The Central Office did not work to reduce motorization, but rather saw the construction of cycleways as a measure to accompany it. When disbursement was made to reconstruct streets properly for motor vehicles, then in most cases a proportional amount should be allotted for construction of cycleways, rather than funding's being redistributed. Not least of all, this policy reflects the interests of the sponsors of the Central Office. The bicycle industry was involved in motorization, as many firms manufactured not only bicycles but also motorcycles and automobiles, or parts for them. But also "the sport and professional motor-vehicle circles" had "gladly affiliated themselves with the Working Group for the Propagation of Bikeway Concepts."<sup>134</sup> The insight that cycleways at the least also had advantages for motorists had occurred by 1930 only to top organizations in motoring circles, and so Trunz saw it as an important task for the Central Office to spread it more widely.

A few months before a quasi-governmental coordination agency replaced the Central Office, Trunz summed up the work of the previous 7 years: "Thanks to hard, self-sacrificing work, the concept of cycleways is now generally understood in all official quarters."<sup>135</sup>

We can assume that there were approximately 1000 km of cycleways in Germany at the time the Central Office was founded: then another 2500 had been completed by 1933.<sup>136</sup> Adding another 700 in 1933/34 gives a total of approximately 3200 during the time of the Central Office. This accomplishment, without centralized management and under extremely unfavorable economic conditions, can be seen in a proper light if we count the 6,000 km of cycleways which actually were constructed in 1934-39, under centralized management and with a gigantic propaganda effort, and not the planned 40,000 km total. In 1935, Dr. Helfer, who was cited earlier, was full of praise in advance for the "experts" and "skilled

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<sup>131</sup> cf. Radmarkt #1931, 1928, p. 21f.

<sup>132</sup> Radmarkt #2027, 1930, p. 21

<sup>133</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2246, p. 9

<sup>134</sup> Radmarkt #2027, 1930, p. 21

<sup>135</sup> Radmarkt #2246, 1934, p..9

<sup>136</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2447, 1938, p..518

workers” of the Imperial Association for the Construction of Cycleways [Reichsgemeinschaft für den Radfahrwegebau e.V.], which had been created only a year earlier, and his criticism of the organization of earlier bikeway construction misses the mark. Helfer wrote, under the headline “construction of cycleways: a task of great economic, traffic-engineering and cultural significance”: “Since 1927, construction of cycleways was promoted on a large scale with unfortunately inadequate financial support from the German bicycle industry, Unfortunately, the results were unsatisfactory, because each of the different cycleway organizations in the Empire worked for itself and because unplanned work cannot lead to the goal.”<sup>137</sup>

This quote describes the opposite of the organization of the next phase of cycleway construction: central management by the General Inspector for the German Road Sector, unified concepts and implementation by “experts” and “skilled workers”, consolidation of the federations and clubs which were to support this work through the “self-help action” which has already been described.

The first move in this direction did not last long. In the summer of 1934 (and probably in June of that year), after agreements had been reached between the bicycle manufacturers, the bicycle dealers’ association – which now belonged to the “Imperial Mechanical Trades Federation” [Reichsverband des Mechaniker Gewerbes] – and the German Cyclists’ Federation [Deutschen Radfahrer-Verband], a “Cycling Path Construction Division” was established within the Federation as a “head office” for cycleway construction.<sup>138</sup>

Hans Joachim Schacht, the central figure in cycleway planning in the following years, and the chief of this division, described the scope of work: “all measures which must be taken on and promoted so that everywhere, in the interest of the bicycle sector, enough cycleways are installed.”<sup>139</sup> The Division understood itself as a clearinghouse for all plans for construction of bikeways, in order “immediately” to place “the required documentation” before the General Inspector for the German Road Sector, who coordinated and approved all roads projects, and so also cycleway projects. “An important task of the Cycleway Construction Division is to provide technical guidance, above all in reviewing of planning documents. The guidance, however, also involves taking positions on road projects which have been proposed by other agencies, and furthermore, the compilation of model street cross-sections and the setting of standards for cycleways”<sup>140</sup>. Main tasks, as with the Central Office, also included “propaganda projects.”

Soon, in August, 1934, the Cycleway Division of the German Cyclists’ Federation was reorganized as the “Imperial Association for the Construction of Cycleways, Incorporated” [Reichsgemeinschaft für Radfahrwegebau e.V.].<sup>141</sup> Despite its organizational form as a corporation, it was regarded as a government office, and it functioned as one. It was “under the general supervision of the General Inspector for the German Road Sector.”<sup>142</sup> Dr. Helfer commented a year later on the creation of the Imperial Association: “For a while, the newly-organized German Cyclists’ Federation attempted to achieve successes through its Cycleway Division, but this attempt was doomed to fail because too few cyclists would listen to what this purely sport-oriented organization called for. Through the intervention of the General Inspector for the German Road Sector, the pressing need for close coordination between the path organizations and interested allies was met, and the Imperial Association for Cycleways,

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<sup>137</sup> Radmarkt #2289, 1935, p. 12

<sup>138</sup> Radmarkt #2249, 1934, p. 55

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.* On the role of Hans Joachim Schacht in bikeway planning, cf. Horn: Vom Niedergang ... Kassel 1990

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57

<sup>141</sup> Radmarkt #2261, 1934, p. 6f.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6

Incorporated, came into existence.”<sup>143</sup> On the one hand, Helfer saw the weakness of the newly created German Cyclists’ Federation, but on the other, he praised the restructuring of the sport cycling sector as a “favorable moment”, which could effectively spur the all-inclusive, powerful Federation, the “army of its millions of members,” to action. “This would be precisely the blessing of the new, goal-oriented leadership, which unlike the earlier regime is not dependent on the favor or disfavor of the members.”<sup>144</sup> There had, however, never been an army of millions of organized sport cyclists; the Federation had only 150,000 members in 4,480 clubs in 1935<sup>145</sup>. That is not even half the number of members of the Solidarity Workers’ Cyclist Federation when it was smashed by the Nazis.

Although the reorganization of the office for bikeway construction reflects a distinct criticism of the sport cycling organization, the General Inspector for the German Road Sector at first “declared” its Leader, retired Cavalry Captain Franz Ohrtmann, “to be in charge of the Imperial Association.”<sup>146</sup> Schacht became the executive in charge of technical issues. The Imperial Association should “spread the idea of cycleways, balance the various interests and undertake the many preparatory tasks.”<sup>147</sup> 16 district offices of the Imperial Association, which had been structured according to the authoritarian “Führer principle,” were opened, blanketing the Empire. The construction of cycleways was highlighted as a goal of highest national importance. “All powers which wish to take part in the promotion of bicycle traffic and so of road traffic as a whole, in the interest of accident prevention, health and the well-being of our People, and the development of the nation and economy, must get on the same page.”<sup>148</sup>

Success was reported shortly after the founding of the Imperial Association: “All relevant Imperial and state ministers have instructed their offices to devote additional attention to the installation of cycleways, and to undertake this with the Imperial Association for Cycling Path Construction and their designees by means of measures to this effect. The German Association of Municipal Councils [Gemeindetag], the Imperial Works Communities for ‘Construction’ and ‘Transport and Public Works’ of the German Labor Front [Reichsbetriebsgemeinschaften ‘Bau’ und ‘Verkehr und öffentliche Betriebe’ der Deutschen Arbeitsfront], the Association of German Touring Associations and Spas, Incorporated [Bund Deutscher Verkehrsverbände und Bäder e.V.], the organizations in the cycling and motoring sectors as well as the top-level organizations in civil engineering have become members and have made themselves and their subsidiaries available for promotional measures, for self-help actions, for engineering work etc.”<sup>149</sup> Also, cycleway associations which still existed were integrated into the Imperial Association.

The General Inspector had the collaboration of the Imperial Ministry for Enlightenment of the People and Propaganda in creating the Imperial Association. Precisely this collaboration makes it clear to what extent the construction of cycleways was a propaganda effort and an ideological action, and the actual construction activity was much less important. That is also clear from the discrepancy between the centralized organization of bikeway construction, and its nonetheless largely decentralized funding through states and municipalities and the “self-help actions” described above. Centralized funding existed only for cycleways along Imperial highways. In 1935, General Inspector Todt reported that 2.8 million marks had been spent in each of the past two years to build about 700 km of cycleways.<sup>150</sup> Other

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<sup>143</sup> Radmarkt #2289, 1935, p. 12

<sup>144</sup> Radmarkt #2290, 1935, p. 16

<sup>145</sup> Radmarkt #2321, 1935, p. 5

<sup>146</sup> Radmarkt #2261, p. 6

<sup>147</sup> *ibid*

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7

<sup>149</sup> Radmarkt #2267, p. 9

<sup>150</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2321, 1935, p. 9

than that, agencies responsible for road maintenance could only hope for grants for construction of cycleways and get assistance from the Imperial Institute for Work Placement and Unemployment Insurance. The closing words of the article by Dr. Helfer which has already been cited more than once offer an example of the loud-mouthed propaganda about cycleway construction, along with its actual intent: "Hundreds of thousands of foreigners will visit Germany for the upcoming Olympic games. Certainly we shall show them the Adolf Hitler highways – the Imperial Autobahns – but also the little man's streets, the cycleways. Let us show the astonished foreigners new evidence of a forward-looking Germany in which the motorist not only on the Autobahns but also on all streets finds free, safe travel without danger from the cyclist."<sup>151</sup>

In 1935, just a year after the creation of the Imperial Association, it went public with a large traveling exhibit about cycleways. The banner above the exhibit read "Germany Needs Cycleways".<sup>152</sup> It was indicated that at the time, approximately 5,000 km of cycleways existed in Germany, while a minimum of 40,000 km was calculated to be necessary.<sup>153</sup>

In 1936, participation of the sport cycling association was formally dropped. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, its Leader stepped down as the chairman of the Imperial Association "by mutual agreement with the General Inspector for the German Road Sector"<sup>154</sup>. Called to replace him was Dr. Klose, the leader of the "Stone and Earth" Imperial Works Community of the German Labor Front [Reichsbetriebsgemeinschaft "Stein und Erde" der Deutschen Arbeitsfront]. A tight integration of the Imperial Association into the Labor Front followed. The construction of cycleways was described as a "sociopolitical problem" deserving special promotion by the national government and the Party.

Hans Joachim Schacht, technical Leader at the Imperial Association, also held the position of honorary Leader of the Touring Division of the German Cyclists' Federation [Deutscher Radfahrer-Verband, DRV] and so was to convey the impression that it still had an influence on the Imperial Association, though probably not strong, and that the Imperial Association shared an office with the Cyclists' Federation. When the letter of appreciation to the departing chairman speaks of the "previous joint office",<sup>155</sup> it may, however, be inferred that the Imperial Association, with its new chairman, had moved its office.

The centralization and definitive integration of the cycleway issue into the government and Party apparatus was now complete. According to Helfer, it must "inevitably lead to successes which could not be dreamt of before."<sup>156</sup> In reality, the achievements were rather modest, even if the clearly rather generous total published in 1939 is to be believed. According to this, in the "old Empire" [not including the Sudetenland and Austria, which Germany had annexed – trans.] there were not yet even 10,000 km of cycleways and cycle lanes. In the time when the Imperial Association was at work, as already noted above, approximately 6,000 km were constructed. This achievement must also be viewed in the context of the 3,500 km of Imperial Autobahns built up through 1945 and for which many times the amount of resources was made available.

In 1939, Hans-Joachim Schacht, representing the Imperial Association, wrote that the urgent program of bikeway construction could be wound down in another ten years. According to his analysis, another 35,000 km were still needed in cities and counties. The schedule reflects grants which the Empire was to

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<sup>151</sup> Radmarkt #2290, 1935, p. 17

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Radmarkt #2305, 1935, p. 12, #2306, p. 15, #2307, p. 11f.

<sup>153</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2307, p. 12

<sup>154</sup> Radmarkt #2350, 1936, p. 55

<sup>155</sup> *ibid*

<sup>156</sup> Radmarkt #2289, 1935, p. 12

make soon to construct cycleways.<sup>157</sup> In 1940, “Radmarkt” described data and reports of the Imperial Association about, among other things, the status of bikeway construction, concluding that it was hopeful in view of the war which had recently started: the construction of cycleways had suffered “no complete interruption due to the war. Certainly, the highways are now emptied of motor vehicles, but when they must once again carry fast traffic, bicycle traffic should already be on safe bikeways.”<sup>158</sup> “No complete interruption” is, though, a weak, indeed euphemistic way to describe the very abrupt cessation of the construction of bikeways during the course of the war. A new phase of cycling politics began after 1945, but cannot be addressed here.

## 9 Alternatives and parallel measures

### 9.1 Bridle paths become bikeways

The problem which had to be faced with cycleway solution as an ideology but with very limited actual construction was an ever greater number of cyclists, the majority of whom were dependent on the bicycle for inexpensive daily transportation. They took up space on the streets and so impeded the emerging motor traffic, though motoring was still accessible only to a small minority. Together, cyclists and motorists had driven horses and horse-drawn vehicles from the streets. To be sure, friends of equestrian sports successfully resisted this trend for a long time: they belonged to upper social classes and were influential in city politics. Nonetheless, the bridle paths in parks and woodlands and along the sides of streets became ever more disused. The resistance to conversion of bridle paths into cycleways finally collapsed when the gentlemen riders found it better to put their social status on display with a luxurious auto than with a saddle horse. If bridle paths as well as cycleways should still be built along avenues as of 1908,<sup>159</sup> in 1919 the German Cyclists’ Federation suggested that “the only very lightly-used bridle paths should be converted into cycleways as quickly as possible.”<sup>160</sup> A 1921 report from Cologne indicates that pressure from the local association of bicycle dealers had led the city to convert bridle paths into cycleways.<sup>161</sup>

An advantage of cycleway solution over others in managing the conflict between auto and bicycle was that it was possible to convey the impression of optimization of cycling, or at least for both sides. Henneking described the problem in 1929: the motor vehicle had taken control of the streets; “the pedestrian, the horsedrawn wagon and the cyclist must back down, or they will be heedlessly shoved aside!” “The pedestrian is allowed only to use the designated part of the street corridor, the sidewalk; the horsedrawn wagon increasingly disappears from the urban picture, and in rural areas, is forced onto the back roads; if the cyclist would like to save himself from the same fate, he needs separate cycleways.”<sup>162</sup> Henneking does not say here what distinguishes the separate cycleway from the part of the street corridor designated for pedestrians. Precisely the curb-separated “modest strip”<sup>163</sup> cycleways on the edges of streets which Henneking recommended do nothing but force cyclists off the street, at the very least when the roadway has a good surface such as the cycleway rarely offers.

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<sup>157</sup> Radmarkt #2447, 1938, p. 519

<sup>158</sup> Radmarkt #2551, 1940, p. 11

<sup>159</sup> cf. Radmarkt #909, p. 9

<sup>160</sup> Radmarkt #1457, 1919, p. 3

<sup>161</sup> cf. Radmarkt #1547, 1921, p. 53

<sup>162</sup> Radmarkt #1987, 1929, p. 11

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13

## 9.2 Cycling bans

In many cities, cycling bans were instituted as an alternative solution to the problem described above. Cyclists had already known these in the previous century, when bicycles were almost completely banned in some cities, and banned from main streets in many. At that time, the bicycle was regarded as a sporting device, if no longer as a rude nuisance: not yet as a transportation mode. The earliest travel bans, which also applied to the first automobiles, were based on protection of the “public” from disturbances: fast cyclists startled pedestrians and spooked horses. With the later cycling bans in city centers, the rationale was the inability of many cyclists to fit into the heavy and fast motor traffic.

In 1927, Henneking held cycling bans or detours not to be a lasting solution, as cycling had become a mass transportation mode: “Street designs, mostly decades old, did not anticipate the great increase in bicycle traffic. There are already large German and foreign cities in which more than one in four people is a cyclist. The way that police traffic patrols in some large cities, despairing of a systematic solution, have prohibited bicycle traffic and usually also motorcycle traffic from certain streets and areas with heavy traffic, and required the cyclists either to take long detours or to walk their machines for several hundred meters on the prohibited segments, is no final solution.”<sup>164</sup> Evidently, cyclists did not comply with the rules, as happens now in large pedestrian zones.

With appropriate design, then, the cycleway would offer a satisfactory solution for all travel modes.

Nonetheless, bans on riding and detours onto side streets would remain as emergency alternatives or as threats. A decision by the Berlin Mayors’ Assembly [Berliner Bürgermeisterversammlung]<sup>165</sup> which points in this direction finds agreement from Henneking, writing in 1934 about cycling and safety: “to the extent that that there are important problems making the installation of separate cycle paths away from streets [besondere Fahrradwege] (!) impossible, there will probably remain no other solution than to ban cycling on the main streets and on the other hand, to reserve the parallel streets for cyclists only.”<sup>166</sup> This position is interesting in its suggestion that a ban on cycling on some streets could be counterbalanced by designation of side streets for cycling only. Again, in 1939, in an article about cyclists and traffic accidents, another author suggested, in the light of the now even more massive use of bicycles for transportation and the increased numbers of crashes, that if the construction of bikeways were not possible, an emergency measure to achieve frictionless street traffic would be to divert bicycle traffic onto dedicated cycling or detour streets, especially at peak times.<sup>167</sup>

## 9.3 Widening the roadway

It was also considered whether the increasing traffic volume could be accommodated by widening the streets without separation of the travel modes. Trunz showed with statistics from Bavaria that the risk of crashes did not decrease, but that in fact the number of crashes increased on the best-upgraded streets.<sup>168</sup> That street upgrades seldom serve to increase traffic safety is well-known today, though too little attention is given to this in the cleanup [Sanierung] of street conditions in the former German Democratic Republic. And, in the 1930s, upgrading, which is possibly justifiable in some cases, was not coupled with traffic-calming measures, at the least for speed reduction. Just as now, there were appeals

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<sup>164</sup> Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr . . . , p. 20f.

<sup>165</sup> Mayors of districts in Berlin

<sup>166</sup> *ibid*

<sup>167</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2519, 1939, p. 8

<sup>168</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2162, 1932, p. 5

to motorists, and demands “to carry on a forceful education effort directed toward motorists”<sup>169</sup> to reduce the numbers of traffic accidents, in the majority of which the motorists were at fault.

#### 9.4 Traffic education and lighting laws

The bikeway construction propaganda was also coupled with appeals to cyclists, with initiatives to introduce traffic education in the schools, and with specifications for technical improvements to bicycle equipment. An important theme in the 1930s was standards for bicycle lighting, retroreflectors, white-painted rear fenders, pedal reflectors etc., not infrequently suggested by consortia of automotive interests, above all the German Automobile Club [D.D.A.C., Deutsche Automobil-Club], as the ADAC was called during the “Third Reich” and which worked closely with the National Socialist Motorist Corps (NSKK).<sup>170</sup>

### 10 The rationale: bikeways for cyclists’ safety and crash statistics

It was already been pointed out above that the theme of cycleways’ increasing safety for cyclists through separation from motor vehicle traffic emerged only late in the discussion. At first, comfort dominated as a rationale; then, as the bicycle became a mass phenomenon, and until the late 1920s, the frictionless flow of traffic. In the following decade, crashes involving cyclists became more common. That is not surprising, considering that the number of cyclists increased from approximately 12 million in 1927 to almost 20 million in 1939,<sup>171</sup> while motorization also increased, though more slowly than expected. It can simply be said that especially in large cities, which grew larger, traffic increased, and that individual transport modes became more widely used, and in this way the streets and travel imposed greater risks. It can be added that trips, for example between home and work, became longer. And ever more, the bicycle was used for these trips. Hazards arose due to automobile traffic, which became faster, and which also was allowed to increase by transport policy which favored motoring, especially after 1933. At first, pedestrians above all were endangered, although, at least in cities, they already, had separate travelways (sidewalks). Sidepaths also were supposed to be built for cyclists, and in theory should be safer. But also motorists themselves were endangered – above all, motorcyclists, who had a much larger mode share than today. Because of the novelty of motor vehicles, most drivers were beginners, and also, motor vehicles were extremely unsafe in the light of today’s standards. If crash numbers are counted in proportion to mode share, cyclists came out better than pedestrians or motorists.

For this reason, I would like to assert that the concept of “traffic safety through construction of sidepaths” is an element of the ideology which is supposed to convey to cyclists that sidepaths benefit them. There is no convincing evidence for a safety effect of sidepaths.

Also, crash statistics do not support the need to impose order on cyclists through mandatory bikeway laws. The traffic safety rationale was applied because it appeared that cyclists who are separated from faster motor traffic should be safer. Despite sidewalks on almost every street – separate space for pedestrians – they still appeared in the crash reports. Very little thought was given to crossing the roadway at intersections and entries from side streets, now that the roadway had been freed of pedestrians and cyclists, and increasingly also of horse-drawn vehicles. Measures to slow the increase in motor traffic were not the order of the day in a time of intensive cycleway propaganda which was above all also a time of promotion of motoring.

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<sup>169</sup> Radmarkt #2519, 1939, p. 8

<sup>170</sup> The NSKK and the D.D.A.C. shared a seat on the advisory council of the Imperial Association for the Prevention of Road Accidents [Reichsverkehrswacht], according to its 1936 charter. Cf.. Radmarkt #2342, 1936, p. 9

<sup>171</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2519, 1939, p.8

From the turn of the century onward and more so after 1933, the order of the day was to configure streets to meet “the requirements of motor vehicles”.<sup>172</sup> Traffic safety was to be achieved “along with the fullest possible consideration for the legitimate characteristics of motor traffic.” These included, for a fact, a speed of 80 km/h, still astonishing at the time (1919), and a goal in street design and traffic laws was to make this possible everywhere. The dominant paradigm was that of the Imperial Autobahns, whose construction as “Adolf Hitler highways”<sup>173</sup> had been planned in its essentials long before the “takeover of power.” The cycleways were sold as a sop, as “streets for the little man,”<sup>174</sup> though they at the very least served, exactly so, to “free up travel” for the motorized minority.<sup>175</sup>

No detailed investigation of trends in number of crashes, considering cycling, can be offered here. The reference material, however, allows us to use examples to analyze the traffic-safety rationale, which mostly takes a shortcut directly to the demand for cycleways.

In the German Empire, official motor vehicle statistics were first assembled in 1907.<sup>176</sup> At that time, there were only 25,815 motor vehicles, and 60.8% of the passenger vehicles were motorcycles. Crashes involving motor vehicles were recorded as “harmful incidents” [schädigende Ereignisse] in the statistics. Collisions between cyclists and collisions between cyclists and public transport vehicles were not counted; neither were crashes which involved only one cyclist – probably numerous, considering the poor streets. In 12.7% of collisions with a motor vehicle, the other party was a cyclist. Predominantly, pedestrians were struck by motor vehicles. In the following years up to the start of the First World War, as “Radmarkt” published or reported the motor vehicle statistics, the crash numbers increased in proportion to the number of motor vehicles. It can be assumed that the number of cyclists during the entire period 1907-1940 increased by many times as much as that of motorists, also the cycling mode share, but the percentage of crashes in which a cyclist collided with a motor vehicle long remained about the same.

In 1931, “Radmarkt” reported on a study of the risks of cycling carried out by Professor Wolff of the University of Halle on an assignment from the Central Office for Cycleways.<sup>177</sup> Dr. Wolff examined crash statistics in detail and reached the conclusion that the risks of cycling were small in comparison with those of other modes, especially motorcycling and travel in passenger vehicles. This result must, however, be held in some doubt, because the official crash statistics are only reproduced in part, and depend strongly on inconsistent police observations and crash report forms. Wolff’s study actually is counterproductive of the Central Office’s propaganda, with its strong rationale of crash risks.

The report gains credibility for precisely this reason, as the Central Office certainly wanted a result which would support its rationale. The study proves that the question of safety was only a pretext: despite the cycling mode share in several cities, at least three to six times as large as that for motoring, cyclists accounted for only 5-6% of the fatalities in traffic, and 23% of injuries, but motorists, approximately 45% of fatalities and 40-42% of injuries. The number of pedestrians involved in crashes, still very high before the First World War, decreased because more and more trips which had been made on foot were now being made on bicycles, which even people of modest means could now afford.

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<sup>172</sup> Radmarkt #1445, p. 15

<sup>173</sup> Radmarkt #2290, 1935, p. 17

<sup>174</sup> *ibid*

<sup>175</sup> Author’s note, 2015: After World War II, the ADAC had a slogan, “Freie Fahrt für freie Bürger.” [Free travel for free citizens.]

<sup>176</sup> cf. Radmarkt #839, 1907, p. 11 ff.

<sup>177</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2106, 1931, p. 6 ff.

These statistics cannot be interpreted even to show a relative increase in cycling crashes. While the total number of fatal crashes increased between 1926 and 1928, the percentage for cycling crashes fell from approximately 6.8% to approximately 5.2%. Here is a verbatim quote from the report: "Compared with the mode share, which we have determined to be 55-75% of all vehicles based on the traffic counts above, 3-4 times fewer cyclists had crashes than would actually correspond to their mode share. These numbers depict a flat trend, indeed a slight decrease in the involvement of cyclists in crashes."<sup>178</sup> While the report attributes the reduction in cyclists' crashes to their improving understanding of the traffic law and to increasing caution, the editor of "Radmarkt" suggests the positive effect of the introduction of a requirement for a rear-facing retroreflector. Nonetheless, crash prevention becomes more strongly applied as an important rationale for the construction of cycleways, culminating in the poster for the Imperial Association's 1935 exhibit, where under the heading "Cycleways Prevent Traffic-Accidents" "Radfahrwege verhüten Verkehrs-Unfälle!" it is asserted that 25 crashes occurred in 10 km of streets, but only 3 in 10 km of cycleways.<sup>179</sup> How these numbers, which have often been repeated, came to be cannot be determined. It is clear, however, that only street segments were compared, not intersections. There were no numbers comparing the changes in overall crash rates due to construction of cycleways.

In 1934, a Dr. Franz Berthold wrote about "cyclists and traffic safety". He spoke of a 30-43% percentage of cyclists in the total of crashes. He gave the number of cyclists as 15 million,<sup>180</sup> though there were surely fewer than 2 million motor vehicles at the time.<sup>181</sup> Farther down in his article, he stated that the percentage of cyclists in the crash total was "a much greater one than for other travel modes"<sup>182</sup> Unlike Wolff, however, he did not give this number in relation to the percentage of cyclists in the traffic mix. The cause of bicycle crashes, Berthold maintained, was entirely the behavior of cyclists in Germany (Berlin), who often rode much too fast, unlike in Copenhagen, where there were few crashes despite the many cyclists – indeed, it's the shape of the handlebars (drop bars, as used by racers, which unlike the upright bars have people almost looking down at the ground and lead to a "speed psychosis"). Having said that, crashes result inevitably from the type of street space allocation. If there are as many cyclists as pedestrians, then the cyclists, like the pedestrians, have a claim to their own path. "The possibility of hazards resulting from the actual conditions at this time must in every case be diminished with more cycleways."<sup>183</sup>

Berthold too did not provide the convincing proof for crash-prevention by cycleways, though it continues to be asserted, over and over.

In 1936 there was another report of research by Prof. Wolff. (Though his name was spelled with only one "f" in "Radmarkt", this was probably the same professor from Halle who was quoted earlier.) Wolff calculated that the construction of cycleways led to a "a reduction in the figure for traffic crashes of 15 to 1."<sup>184</sup> Evidently, this was a magical number like the one reported in the poster for the exhibit already mentioned.

Also in 1936, there was a report on crash rates in the first quarter of that year, according to which there were 50,200 crashes, in which 1,496 people were killed and 28,603 were injured.<sup>185</sup> The percentages for the different travel modes are interesting: approximately 23 motorists for every 7 cyclists and 4

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<sup>178</sup> *ibid*

<sup>179</sup> Radmarkt #2306, p. 15

<sup>180</sup> Cf. Radmarkt #2271, 1934, p. 30f.

<sup>181</sup> In 1935, approximately 250,000 new cars were registered (cf. Radmarkt #2368, 1936, p. 6).

<sup>182</sup> *ibid*, p. 31

<sup>183</sup> *ibid*, p. 32

<sup>184</sup> Radmarkt Nr. 2373, p. 5

<sup>185</sup> cf. Radmarkt, Nr. 2361, p. 10

pedestrians. A cyclist was held to have caused only 8.1% of crashes involving cyclists. The total number of cyclists in 1936 was estimated at 16 million, and that of motor vehicles, 2 million.

In 1939, Gunter Ohlbrecht took up the theme “cyclists and traffic crashes.”<sup>186</sup> Although by this time – unequally in the different regions – about ¼ of the cycleways which were considered to be necessary had been completed, the article speaks of a frightful toll of cyclists killed. Wolff’s study counts 301 in 1926, 355 in 1927, 491 in 1928 and 435 in 1929, compared with 2098 fatal motorcycle crashes<sup>187</sup> with almost 12 million cyclists and a much smaller number of motorcyclists. The number of cyclists is reported as almost 20 million in 1939, with over 2,000 killed in traffic. That would be a quadrupling in ten years, despite less than a doubling of bicycle and motor vehicle traffic. In any case, this number of crashes, and this is the tenor of Ohlbrecht’s article, does not raise a particular warning flag for cyclists, as, despite the large mode share, which had not decreased despite the increase in motorization, but in fact had further increased, cyclists accounted for 27% of traffic fatalities. And also, complaints of motor vehicle owners, as reflected in the “NS-Rechtsspiegel”, [Mirror of National Socialist Justice], where drastic measures were advocated, indicated that only 11 percent of the crashes involving cyclists were the cyclist’s fault. Furthermore, Ohlbrecht is hopeful about the protective effect of cycleways for motorists. However, he also sees the need for a “forceful educational effort” for motorists, in order to prevent crashes, most of which they cause.

The order in which he states his rationales for construction of bikeways is interesting: “For this reason, the installation of cycleways serves not only to make fast travel easier, but also to protect the life and health of our cyclists.”<sup>188</sup>

In his article “Die Fahrradwirtschaft” [Bicycling Economics] from 1939, Hellmuth Wolff addresses crash trends in detail. Like Ohlbrecht, he reports the percentage of cyclists in traffic fatalities in 1936 as about 27%, and decreasing: (1937 = 24%, 1938 = 21%)<sup>189</sup>. The same holds for the overall involvement of cyclists in crashes: 17.7% in 1936, 16.3% in 1937 and 14.1% in 1938. The percentage for motor vehicles is twice as high, despite their small numbers. Wolff relates the crash numbers for cyclists and motorists to the distance traveled in kilometers, and comes to the conclusion that the cyclists have ¼ the crash rate of motorists. Also as far as compliance with the law, cyclists do not come off badly: the police report that cyclists cause only 10-12 of their crashes. For this reason, Wolff must confess “that their behavior, all in all, is much better than their reputation”.<sup>190</sup>

Wolff is entirely open about the central motivation for construction of bikeways: cyclists “disrupt street traffic, and indeed, most of all, the speed of motor traffic ... it is not possible to equalize the speeds: we would otherwise have to give up on motorization.”<sup>191</sup> “Probably, the huge army of cyclists alone could to an extent be brought into lockstep, but the other users of the street, especially motorists, have the right to another and indeed much faster speed.”<sup>192</sup> He shows that speed limits are no solution to the problem with an example from the U.K., where, in spite of such measures, the percentage of fatalities for cyclists is higher than in Germany.

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<sup>186</sup> cf. Radmarkt # 2519, 1939, p. 8f.

<sup>187</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2106, 1931, p. 7

<sup>188</sup> Radmarkt #2519, 1939, p. 8

<sup>189</sup> Wolff, Hellmuth: Fahrradwirtschaft, p. 51

<sup>190</sup> Wolff, Hellmuth: Fahrradwirtschaft, p. 55

<sup>191</sup> Wolff, Hellmuth: Fahrradwirtschaft, p. 55

<sup>192</sup> Wolff, Hellmuth: Fahrradwirtschaft, p. 57

Nonetheless, Wolff admits that Imperial statistics do not support his proposition that “mixed traffic is the actual reason that cyclists frequently crash.”<sup>193</sup> Statistics from some large cities more nearly support the proposition. More than half of cyclist fatalities there were in collisions with motor vehicles.

Wolff saw traffic education of children and adults as a way to reduce crashes; also, technical improvements to bicycles (generator lights, a second brake), reorganizing space (removal of gates from front yards) and finally, the construction of bikeways.

Though Wolff’s research, reported above, reported that bikeways could result in a 15:1 decrease in crashes, he now refers to results from Berlin according to which the crash rate on roadways is reported as 8 times as high as on the bikeways.<sup>194</sup> This statement doesn’t lead much of anywhere, because it is not stated which types of bikeways were studied. Obviously, the risk is very low on a bikeway which is truly separate, away from the street.

The following statement also probably offers only an inconclusive suggestion of the safety effect of bikeway construction: “The construction of bikeways in the past 3 years has evidently been of the greatest significance in the steady, absolute decrease in the number of cyclist fatalities in traffic crashes over the past three years.”<sup>195</sup> If there were 2,332 cyclists killed in 1936, then there were “only” 1,545 in 1938. There was no such decrease for other participants in traffic in this time period. There is no explanation why the construction of bikeways should have had this positive effect in this precise time period. Cyclists had covered considerable numbers of kilometers since the end of the 1920s, and yet cyclist fatalities increased through 1936, up to the currently unimaginable number of more than 2,000. In all, there were more than 8,000 traffic fatalities in 1936 in the German Empire.

Percentages of crashes involving cyclists in large German cities in 1939 must also be interpreted with caution, and certainly not as proof of the safety effect of cycleways.<sup>196</sup> There is insufficient information about bicycle use, the bikeway network and the total number of crashes. Hannover was among the cities with the most bicycle traffic<sup>197</sup> and is also among those which made the greatest efforts to extend the bikeway network,<sup>198</sup> but at 50% had the highest percentage of cyclist traffic fatalities. Also the 33.9% percentage in Hamburg, under almost the same conditions as in Hannover, does not indicate any discernible success for bikeway construction. Nürnberg on the other hand, a city with heavy bicycle traffic but practically without bikeways, does somewhat better with 31.7% cyclist fatalities. Stuttgart, to name a city which with 21.4% had a smaller percentage of cyclist fatalities, also had a low cycling mode share and few cycleways. There is no recognizable relationship between the construction of bikeways and crash trends, and even a negative one, if the pioneering bikeway cities Hamburg and Hannover are considered.

## **11 Cycleways to remove disturbances to motor traffic, and to legitimize the construction of the Autobahns. The interest of motoring organizations (DDAC, NSKK) in cycleway construction**

With regard to the ideological function of cycleway propaganda which has been made explicit in the previous paragraphs, it is surprising how often in the 1920s and 1930s the advantages of bikeways for motorists were recognized and even described in print. In today’s discussion, motoring interests only

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<sup>193</sup> Wolff, Hellmuth: Fahrradwirtschaft, p. 58

<sup>194</sup> Wolff, Hellmuth: Fahrradwirtschaft, p. 78

<sup>195</sup> Wolff, Hellmuth: Fahrradwirtschaft, p. 78

<sup>196</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2535, 1939, p. 4

<sup>197</sup> cf. Radmarkt Nr. 2545, 1940, p. 1

<sup>198</sup> cf. Horn: Vom Niedergang ... , p. 92

rarely indicate that they have an entirely self-serving interest. One of the few public examples is the report on the results of the urban “Safety for Cyclists” competition which the ADAC organized in 1980 with the support of the Federal Minister for Transport: the bikeway is represented as the royal road for cyclists. This report indicates that the ADAC had long favored bikeways. Already 1960, at a time when many sidepaths were being removed to widen streets or redesignated as parking lanes, the long-time ADAC president Hans Bretz wrote: “The good reason that we as motorists step forward for the construction of bikeways, which we have advocated for years, is that we need homogenous traffic: that is, streets for each category of traffic.”<sup>199</sup>

The not-yet-so-strong confrontation between cyclists, who were a clear majority of road users, and motorists in the 1930s may help to explain openness then about the motoring interest in construction of cycleways. Motorists and cyclists did not yet carry as heavy and emotional burden as in the 1970s, when the cyclists found themselves forced into the status of a poorly treated minority and had to take assertive action to get themselves noticed and effect improvements. To pacify this minority, and thoroughly according to its demands, sidepaths were built. This did not cause too much pain, and at least, then as before, was also advantageous for motorists.

That the main source cited here, the trade magazine “Radmarkt” also clearly states the advantage of bikeway construction for motorists, also reflects that it is not a cyclists’ magazine, but rather a publication directed toward readers in a broad range of bicycle businesses. These were by the turn of the century, at the latest, increasingly not only cyclists, but also a population which had an increasing economic interest in the growing motorization. Still, as was already pointed out in the introduction, even cycling clubs were not opposed to motorization. Bicycle racing and motor racing were not seen as in opposition to one another, but rather, the motor vehicle was seen as a natural follow-on to the muscle-powered one.

And so we find positions which were hardly inimical to motoring even in the 1920s, despite the undeniable damage due to motor traffic, which exacted an unbelievably high price in blood. Almost always, there is a balancing of the interests of the motorist and cyclist, through cycleways.

In 1908, cycleways on avenues were recommended at the International Roads Congress in Paris, the majority of whose attendees were motoring representatives, and it was the Research Association on Streets for Motor Traffic (STUFA), founded in 1924, which in 1927 released the “Guidelines for the Creation of Cycleways”,<sup>200</sup> certainly not for the benefit of cyclists, but rather, precisely in the framework of its mission, the design of streets for motor vehicles.

Similarly, the first cycleway bible, Henneking’s “Der Radfahrverkehr” [Cycling Traffic], which first and foremost addresses the issue of coping with the greatly increased amount of bicycle traffic, also points out the advantage of cycleways for motorists: the creation of separated cycleways would be a requirement in the interest of “the working population, which uses the bicycle for transportation, of the recreational cyclist, and also of motorists, to free them from of disturbances and of concern for traffic with bicycles.”<sup>201</sup>

It is not surprising that the Central Office, founded by bicycle manufacturers, most of whom in 1927 also made motor vehicles or motor-vehicle parts, represented cycleway construction as also being in the interest of motorists. Various statements by the Director of the Central Office include formulations of

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<sup>199</sup> ADAC and BMV (publishers): Sicherheit für den Radfahrer. Ergebnisse und Schlußfolgerungen aus dem Städtewettbewerb 1980. Empfehlungen für die Praxis. [Results and Conclusions from the Urban Competition, 1980. Suggestions for Practical Application] Bonn/Munich, no date, p. 22

<sup>200</sup> cf. Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr, p. 11 ff.

<sup>201</sup> Henneking: Der Radfahrverkehr, S.42

this type. To be sure, Trunz pokes a bit at governments which concern themselves too much with the construction of streets for motor vehicles while ignoring the 12 million cyclists, but he makes clear that the advocacy of the Central Office for cycleways is also supported by interests which favor increased motorization. "The development of both travel modes (bicycle and motor vehicle, V. B) is inseparable and has also led to the unflagging affiliation of the sporting and professional circles of motoring with the Working Group for the Propagation of Bikeway Concepts. Unfortunately, the idea of cycleways is too new in the lower levels of these groups to have received the respect it is due."<sup>202</sup>

In the same year, Dr. Waldemar Koch's article justifies funding for the construction of bikeways primarily through the advantage of autonomous bicycle traffic for cyclists "who again can enjoy riding."<sup>203</sup> Secondly, motorists have the advantage "of no longer living in a cloud of worry about colliding with cyclists."<sup>204</sup>

Emblematic of the climate at that time is an argument between a cyclist and a motorist, brought to a peaceful end by a third person, perhaps a leader in a bicycle association or the Central Office, in the following way: "You two will never work together and never become friends! Both of you, combine your efforts to see that separate bikeways are installed on all streets in large cities and all rural highways. Then you will each have your own realm, and neither can impede or disturb the other."<sup>205</sup>

Even more clearly than in his first summing up of the work of the Central Office, Trunz, still also the Director of the Berlin Association for Cycleways, described the goal of cycleway construction: "We want to wage war against the dangers of the street and protect human life with bikeways."<sup>206</sup> Trunz was thinking not only of cyclists but also of motorists when he wrote earlier to advocate a cycleway through the Tiergarten section of Berlin, so that cyclists "would not find themselves constantly in danger of their lives in the maelstrom of traffic, and besides, also seriously endanger motorists"<sup>207</sup> on the public streets. Trunz described a second goal: "We also want to help with motor traffic, to make it flow more smoothly and so to make it more economical: insurance premiums also could be reduced within a foreseeable time frame, if the disruptive cyclist is removed from the actual roadway."<sup>208</sup> Besides, already in the Central Office era, the construction of bikeways was financed by the government if it relieved the streets themselves of the burden of bicycle traffic. The interest in construction of cycleways cannot be demonstrated more clearly. And finally, it was Trunz's idea that any street could be made into a motor-only street at relatively low expense: "Already today it is possible immediately to install several thousand kilometers of cycleways on available land, and so to make motor traffic safe on stretches of the same length."<sup>209</sup>

One consideration in folding the Cycling Path Construction Division of the German Cyclists' Association and then the Imperial Association for the Construction of Bikeways into the government and Party structure of the National Socialist regime was that the motoring interests would be in reliable hands in the organizations which succeeded the Central Office. The German Automobile Club (DDAC) and the National Socialist Motorist Corps (NSKK) cooperated, and the entire operation was under the supervision of the motorway builder Todt, who held the bombastic title General Inspector for the

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<sup>202</sup>Radmarkt #2027, p. 21

<sup>203</sup>Radmarkt #2035, p. 13

<sup>204</sup>ibid

<sup>205</sup>Radmarkt #2056, p. 12

<sup>206</sup>Radmarkt #2137, 1932, p. 8

<sup>207</sup>ibid p. 7

<sup>208</sup>ibid p. 8

<sup>209</sup>Radfahren #2246, 1934, p. 12

German Roads Sector. The Imperial Association issued propaganda for cycleways “in the interest of the 15 million cyclists and in the interest of the motorization of traffic.”<sup>210</sup>

In 1935, Dr. Helfer, very closely following the form and content of National Socialist bikeway politics, even reported that the DDAC and the NSKK were very sympathetic with the idea of a tax for bikeways, and were even considering making a financial contribution.<sup>211</sup>

Without difficulty, a wealth of evidence can be found for motorists’ interests’ specifically being taken into consideration through the construction of cycleways. The DDAC also did not disaffirm this.

The article by Dr. Albrecht Gottschalk, District Business Leader of the DDAC for District 20, Hanse, Hamburg, provides evidence from an original source.

“Even years ago, from the side of the organized motorists, it was often emphatically pointed out that there was a pressing need also to care for cyclists, and wherever possible, to install cycleways for them.”<sup>212</sup> Cycleways would enable smooth flow of bicycle traffic. If there were no cycleways on some streets, “then, despite the unusual width of the roadway, a huge danger to travelers would result, both because of the cyclists and for the cyclists.”<sup>213</sup> The bikeway concept which is still applied today was displayed in a very flattering light by the automobile clubs. Little would be demanded, “as it is only a modest and narrow part on both sides of the street, through whose installation the cyclist is protected and the main part of the street is freed up for the relatively faster motor vehicles.”<sup>214</sup> The advantage was supposed to be not only one-sidedly for cyclists, but abundantly very much also for motorists. Only one thing could be demanded by the motorist, as the main user of the street: namely, “that the cyclists use the cycleways which have been provided for them and not engage in pleasure rides two and three abreast on the main part of the street!”<sup>215</sup> Not only urban cycleways but also those along rural highways benefit motorists: “It is not only always here the cyclist who suffers in a collision, but also often the motorist who must swerve into a tree or ditch at the last moment to avoid the cyclist. 99% of these unfortunately so common accidents can be prevented if the cyclist has his own narrow lane on the road and whenever possible can ride entirely separately from the actual motorway.” “Force the cyclist by law to use the cycleway and prohibit him from using the main roadway. Only in this way does the cycleway serve its purpose in the city as well as in the country.”<sup>216</sup> And finally, the sanctimonious formula which is very similarly recited today by the German Road Safety Council, which is dominated by motoring interests: “So, not motorists versus cyclists, but motorists and cyclists together in the interest of everyone!”<sup>217</sup>

A final citation from the highest level shows what the construction of cycleways was about then, and unquestionably is now, as well: The General Inspector for the German Road Sector, Dr. Todt, demanded that the authorities which were responsible for maintaining roads build cycleways, because self-help would not be sufficient to carry out the task and all demands for a special bikeway tax imposed by the Third Reich on cyclists would have no chance of succeeding, for social and financial reasons, then as before. He indicates the concern that the construction of bikeways also would be an important

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<sup>210</sup> Radmarkt #2267, 1934, p. 9

<sup>211</sup> Cf. Radmarkt #2290, 1935, p. 16

<sup>212</sup> Radmarkt # 2311, 1935, p. 8

<sup>213</sup> cf. Radmarkt #2290, 1935, p. 16

<sup>214</sup> *ibid*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid* p. 9

<sup>216</sup> *ibid*

<sup>217</sup> *ibid*

prerequisite for progress with motorization, through the elimination of serious hazards when mixing the two types of traffic.<sup>218</sup>

Aside from the direct interest of motorists the construction of sidepaths, there is an indirect one, for which evidence appears repeatedly in articles in “Radmarkt”. Construction of cycleways also satisfied social needs by offering compensation to the so-called little man for the enormous expense of construction of the Autobahns and other promotions of motoring, whose military purposes had to be kept largely under cover. In this way, the construction of bikeways during the National Socialist times was one action among others which often did not measure up to the projections and promises made for them. In 1935, the NS regime was intensifying bikeway propaganda, and also started in with propaganda about motorization for the people. From 1935 on, the KDF [Kraft durch Freude, Strength Through Joy]<sup>219</sup> car (the Volkswagen) could be ordered, but it was never delivered.

## 12 Conclusion

Government authorities which build bikeways, as well as politicians and organizations which demand them and promote them, really ought to acknowledge their purpose: to serve primarily to make motor traffic flow smoothly. This is true above all for the narrow strips constructed even today and often only marked off from the sidewalks. A historical account shows very clearly how cyclists and their organizations have swallowed a tranquilizing pill with sidepaths, which actually served to free up the streets for motor traffic. In the early period of increasing prosperity in the Federal Republic, cyclists willingly climbed into automobiles, if able to afford them, and without putting up resistance, turned the streets over to motor traffic. Rapidly, the idea of sidepaths was abandoned. With the renaissance of the bicycle in the 1970s, bikeway propaganda once again appeared. The existence test for the purpose of sidepath construction, freeing the roadway for motor traffic, is the unbending perpetuation of the mandatory bikeway law.

How did the District Business Leader of the DDAC for District 20, Hanse, Hamburg, Albrecht Gottschalk, formulate this in 1935? “Only in this way does the cycleway serve its purpose in the city as well as in the country.”<sup>220</sup>

## 13 Appendix, translator’s note: German words for roads and paths

German words which have commonly understood meanings similar to those in English may carry different connotations due to their different construction and word roots. German word order also can be very different from that in English, and thanks to the “glue” of German cases for nouns and pronouns, German sentences can be very long. To convey meaning in clear English, sentence structure sometimes must change, and word use also must sometimes change.

In English, we say “hang,” but we say “independence”, using French and Latin root words. The equivalent words in German are “hangen”-- and “Unabhängigkeit”: syllable by syllable: Un-off-hang-ish-hood, using native word roots. Thanks to their use, coined compound words are common in German,

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<sup>218</sup> Radmarkt #2321, 1935, p. 9

<sup>219</sup> Translator’s note: “Kraft durch Freude” was the National Socialist organization, part of the Arbeitsfront, which promoted and organized recreational activities, cruises and tourism, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strength\\_Through\\_Joy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strength_Through_Joy). The KdF car therefore was being represented as an instrument for leisure travel and liberation from drudgery.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. Translator’s note: the same quote was used in Section 11. Author’s note, 2015: There are several repetitions to strengthen the argument. The text was not intended for publication, and it would have had to be reworked. The introduction indicates that the text is not in finished form.

and they can express subtle differences in meaning. Also, a larger vocabulary of abstractions is accessible without the need for memorization.

In the present paper, the author describes, among other things, how changing word use over the years reflected societal change. And, often, German words which identify various types of bikeways do not correspond to common usage of similar words in English. So, I'll provide a short glossary here to explain the meanings of some German words.

Also, there is a question of emphasis. To an American, the word "bikeway" will generally conjure up an image of a rail trail or a path along a waterfront. "Radweg" in German translates exactly as "bikeway" and can cover these possibilities but much more likely refers to a path alongside a street.

### 13.1 Some important root words:

"Bahn" is "roadway" – the part of the street actually used by wheeled vehicles: not including medians, traffic islands, curbs, grass strips and sidewalks.

"Fahr-" means "travel", cognate to the English "fare" as in "farewell".

"Rad" is German for "wheel" and also short for "bicycle", a term dating back to the 19th century high-wheeler bicycle, which was also called a "wheel" in English.

"Straße" is "street" but refers to the entire street corridor, not only to the part traveled by vehicles. The odd-looking letter "ß" is not a capital "B" but a double "S" (long S followed by a normal S, as seen in the US Declaration of Independence, and used after some vowel sounds in German).

"Weg" is like the English "way" as used in "highway" and translates loosely as "path", but may also refer to a lane or path in a street corridor: for example "Fußweg" (footway) is "sidewalk", and "Bordsteinweg" (border-stone-path: curb path) can be a sidewalk or bikeway behind a curb.

### 13.2 Compound words and common expressions.

"Besondere Wege für Radfahrer", literally "special paths for bicyclists" is a general term applying to all bikeways, whether on, adjacent to or away from streets.

"Chaussée" is "roadway" in French, but in German it means "avenue" or "boulevard" – a major, arterial street, or rural road.

"Fahrrad" ("travel-wheel") is the complete word meaning "bicycle."

"Fahrradweg", literally "bicycle way" (but usually alongside a street and behind a curb, see below) is used in the traffic law; it became contracted to "Radweg" in the vernacular and in general use.

"Gehsteig" is a sidewalk behind a curb, and "Fahrsteig" is an early term for a bicycle sidepath, though it now means "moving sidewalk". "-steig" ("climb" – English cognates "stack", "stair", "step") indicates that it must be climbed onto.

"Radfahren" ("bicycle travel") is the German word for "cycling".

"Radfahrer" (fem. "Radfahrerin"), literally "bicycle traveler" or "bicycle driver", is "cyclist". I have adopted the British usage of "cycling" and "cyclist" but I use "bicycle" as the word for the machine.

"Radfahrerweg" translates as "cyclist's path" and is used by the author in making a comparison. It was historically used only rarely.

“Radfahrstreife” (“cycle-travel strip”) is a cycle lane, as commonly understood, at the same level and adjacent to other lanes on a street, or in the German context sometimes slightly elevated – generally taken out of the width of the roadway or created by widening it.

“Radfahrweg” translates syllable by syllable as “bicycle travelway” or, for compactness, “cycleway”, the translation I use. A “Radfahrweg” usually is on or adjacent to a street. The word was an early formulation, starting from a time when the goal was to provide a rideable strip on a street with bumpy stone paving. The earliest cycleways were often in the middle of the street rather than at the edges.

“Radweg”, literally “bikeway”, is a contraction of “Radfahrweg”, replacing it in the 1930s and continuing in use through the present. The terms “sidepath” and “cycle track” are often used in English, but they are emotionally laden: “sidepath” is preferred by opponents and “cycle track”, by proponents. I am generally using “bikeway”, except when a more specific meaning is clear from the context.

## 14 Appendix: Names of organizations and government entities

Another note from the translator:

There is considerable ambiguity in translation of the German words Bund, Club, Gemeinschaft, Gesellschaft, Organisation, Verband, and Verein. These most literally mean Union, Club, Association, Collective, Organization, Federation and Group, but the meanings overlap, and translations may differ. There are no standard English names for many German organizations, while others may have adopted English names with literal meanings unlike the German ones.

I have used the names given in the table below, also indicating the year(s) in which their use is referenced. The Web site [www.linguee.de](http://www.linguee.de) has been especially useful in finding previously used English translations of such names.<sup>221</sup>

“Reich” (English cognate: “realm”— from the Latin regis, (king) by way of the French roi and royaume — is an empire: a nation and its colonies; also “reichen” is the verb “to reach” in German. The German national government used the word “Reich”, even between the two World Wars, after Germany lost its overseas colonies and before it colonized and invaded neighboring countries. I translate “Reich” as “Empire” or “Imperial” to convey its flavor in German, except in contexts well understood to English-speaking readers e.g. “Third Reich.”

Original expression	English translation	Date
Algemeen Nederlandsch Weelrijders Bond A.N.W.B.	Dutch Cyclists’ Federation	Before 1900-present
Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club (ADAC)	(Inclusive) German Automobile Club	Ca. 1970
Arbeiter-Radfahrerbund “Solidaritat”	Solidarity Workers’ Cyclist Federation	1900-1935
Arbeiter-Rad-und Kraftfahrerbund “Solidaritat”	Solidarity Workers’ Cyclist and Motorist Federation	1905
Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Propagierung des Radwegegedankens	Working Group for the Propagation of Bikeway Concepts	1927
Ausschuß “Verkehrsregelung”	Traffic Management Committee	1927

<sup>221</sup> <http://www.linguee.de/deutsch-englisch> , retrieved April 13, 2015.

Berliner Bürgermeisterversammlung	Berlin Mayors' Assembly	1934
Berliner Verein für Radfahrwege	The Berlin Association for Cycleways	1920s
Betriebsgemeinschaft	Works Community	1935
Bund Deutscher Radfahrer	League of German Cyclists	1934
Bund Deutscher Verkehrsverbände und Bäder e.V.	Association of German Touring Associations and Spas, Incorporated	1935
Bundesminister für Verkehr	Federal Minister of Transport	1980
Bundesminister für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau	Federal Minister for Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development	1955-
Deutscher Automobil-Club, D.D.A.C.,	German Automobile Club	1936
Deutscher Fahrrad-Industrieller Verein	German Bicycle Manufacturers' Association	1926
Deutscher Arbeitsfront	German Labor Front	1934
Deutscher Radfahrerverband	German Cyclists' Association	1934
Deutscher Radfahrerbund	German Cyclists' Federation	1915, 1919, 1934
Deutscher Rad- und Motorfahrer-Verband "Concordia"	Concordia German Cyclist and Motorist Association	1905
Deutscher Verkehrssicherheitsrat	German Road Safety Council	1993
Erster Internationaler Straßenkongress (Premier Congrès International de la Route)	First International Roads Congress	1908
Gemeindetag	German Association of Municipal Councils	1935
Generalinspektor für das deutsche Straßenwesen	General Inspector for the German Road Sector	1934
Hauptamt für Volkswohlfahrt	Central Office for the People's Social Welfare	1935
HUK-Verband	Association of German Liability, Accident and Motor Insurers	1993
Jahresschau Deutscher Arbeit	German Labor Exposition	1928
Konsortium zur Förderung der Radfahrer-Interessen	Consortium for the Advancement of Cyclists' Interests	1932
Magdeburger Verein für Radfahrwege e.V.	Magdeburg Association for Cycleways, Incorporated	1898-1927-
Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Domänen und Forsten	Ministry of Agriculture, State-owned Lands and Forests	1927
Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellenorganisation, NSBO	National Socialist Factory Cell Organization	1934
Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrer Korps, NSKK	National Socialist Motorist Corps	1935-1945
NS-Rechtsspiegel	Mirror of National Socialist Justice	
Reichsanstalt für Arbeitvermittlung	Imperial Institute for Placement of Employees	1920s

Reichsausschuß für Fahrradverkehrswesen (Raff)	Imperial Committee for the Bicycle Sector	1919
Reichsbetriebsgemeinschaft	Imperial Works Community	1935
Reichsbetriebsgruppe 'Bau']	Imperial Site Group for Construction	1933-1945
Reichsgemeinschaft für (den) Radfahrwegbau, e.V.	Imperial Association for the Construction of Cycleways, Incorporated	1934-1938
Reichsgemeinschaft für Radwegbau	Imperial Association for the Construction of Bikeways	1938-1940
Reichsverkehrswacht	Imperial Association for the Prevention of Road Accidents	1936
Reichsminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda	Imperial Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda	1933-1945
Reichsverkehrsministerium	Imperial Ministry of Transport	1932
Rijwielpad	Along-side cycle paths (Dutch)	1920
Richtlinien für die Schaffung von Radfahrwegen	Guidelines for the Creation of Cycleways	1926
Studiengesellschaft für Automobilstraßenbau (STUFA)	Research Association on Streets for Motor Traffic	1927
Sturmabteilung	S.A., Assault Detachment, the "Brownshirts"	1933-1945
Tiefbau- und Gartenverwaltung	Public Works and Parks Department	1920s
Verein der Fahrradindustriellen, VDFI	Bicycle Manufacturers' Association	1927
Verein der Fahrradhändler von Köln und Umgebung	Bicycle Dealers' Association of Cologne and the Cologne Region	1916
Verein Deutscher Fahrrad-Industrieller, VDFI	German Bicycle Manufacturers' Association	1929
Verband deutscher Fahrradhändler	Association of German Bicycle Dealers	1920s
Verband von Fahrradinteressen	Federation of Cycling Interests	1914
Verbote und Beschränkungen von Wegen	Prohibitions and Restrictions on Ways	1926
Verein der Fahrradindustriellen, VDFI	Bicycle Manufacturers' Association	1927
Verein Deutscher Fahrrad-Industrieller	German Bicycle Industry Association	1919
Verordnung für den Kraftfahrzeugverkehr	Law for motor traffic	1926
Zentralstelle für die Propagierung von Radfahrwegen	Central Office for the Promotion of Cycleways	1914
Zentralstelle für Radfahrwege	Central Office for Cycleways	1927-1934