



Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

“Strength Through Joy Organization” in the Ideological Fortification of Nazi Germany”

Nazi Almanya’sının İdeolojik Tahkiminde “Neşe Yoluyla Güç Örgütü”

Gökberk Yücel ^{a,*}, Fatih Doğan ^b

^a Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Amasya Üniversitesi, Merzifon İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü, Amasya/Türkiye.
ORCID: 0000-0002-0299-1722.

^b Dr. Yurt Dışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, Ankara/Türkiye.
ORCID: 0000-0003-0185-3243.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 31 December 2020

Received in revised form: 02 February 2021

Accepted: 11th February 2021

Keywords

Ideology

Totalitarianism

National Socialism

Organization of Strength Through Joy

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the role, position, and function of the Organization of Strength Through Joy (Kraft durch Freude- KdF), which was established in 1933, in Nazi Germany. In the context of the projection on the social and economic structure of the aims of totalitarian regimes to intervene in social life without leaving any gap, in Nazi Germany, KdF organized events that affected many points of social life, especially holiday organizations, and strengthened the Nazi regime until the year it ended its actions, taking the principles and goals of national socialism at the center of these activities. At this point, the KdF first played a major role in increasing the trust and loyalty regarding the Hitler government. Second, it constituted one of the transporter and application areas of the eugenics politics at the point of Nazism's project of creating a pure race. Finally, it contributed to the establishment of socio-economic and socio-cultural harmony between German society in accordance with the ideological structure of Nazism, and to the cultural production based on this harmony.

MAKALE BİLGİSİ

Makale Geçmişi

Başvuru tarihi: 31 Aralık 2020

Düzeltilme tarihi: 03 Şubat 2021

Kabul tarihi: 11 Şubat 2021

Anahtar Kelimeler

İdeoloji

Totalitarizm

Nasyonel Sosyalizm

Neşe Yoluyla Güç Örgütü

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, 1933 yılında kurulan “Neşe Yoluyla Güç Örgütü (Kraft Durch Freude-KdF)”nın Nazi Almanya’sındaki rolü, konumu ve işlevi incelenmesidir. Totaliter rejimlerin hiçbir boşluk bırakmaksızın toplum hayatına müdahale etme amaçlarının sosyal ve ekonomik yapıdaki izdüşümü bağlamında Nazi Almanya’sında da KdF, faaliyetlerini sona erdirdiği yıla kadar başta tatil organizasyonları olmak üzere sosyal hayatın pek çok noktasına temas eden ve Nazi rejimini tahkim edici etkinlikler düzenlemiş, bu etkinliklerin merkezine ise nasyonal sosyalizmin ilke ve hedeflerini almıştır. Bu noktada KdF birinci olarak Hitler iktidarına ilişkin güven ve sadakatin arttırılmasında büyük rol oynamıştır. İkinci olarak Nazizm’in arı ırk yaratma projesi noktasında öjenik siyasetinin taşıyıcısı ve uygulama alanlarından bir tanesini teşkil etmiştir. Son olarak Nazizm’in ideolojik yapısına uygun olarak Alman toplumu arasında sosyo-ekonomik ve sosyo-kültürel uyumun tesis edilmesine, bu uyum esasında kültürel üretilmesine sağlanmasına katkı sağlamıştır.

1. Introduction

Totalitarian regimes require the masses to trust and be loyal to both the regime and the ideological concepts they have established in terms of the imaginative conception of society. In this context, leader(ship), party, and ideology form the

main components of totalitarian regimes that complement each other in the consolidation and mobilization of society. Defining the good and the ideal according to the ideological concepts of totalitarian regimes and directing the masses towards this goal also does not leave an independent or autonomous space for the individual in the life of society.

* Sorumlu yazar/Corresponding author
e-posta: gokberk.yucel@amasya.edu.tr

Therefore, public and private spaces are designed along the lines of the ideological goals of the leadership and the regime.

The present study tries to provide an answer to the question: What is the role, position, and function of "Organization of Strength Through Joy (Kraft durch Freude-KdF)" established by the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), which took power in 1933, in the regime and ideology of National Socialism. Besides, the issues of what kind of relationship exists between the institutional structure of KdF and the Nazi regime, and what the fields of activity of KdF cover within the framework of this relationship are among the focus of the study. In this context, the main assumptions of the study are as follows: In totalitarian regimes, social organizations are established under the control of the state to strengthen the loyalty of the masses to the regime. This kind of structure plays a major role in the legitimacy and ideological fortification of the regime. There is a relationship between the KdF and the German leadership and NAZI ideology in line with its founding purposes. KdF has a scope that coincides with the German project of pure-superior race and robust healthy society.

The historical analysis method was used in this study. It aims to evaluate the historical process in political, economic, and social terms and to determine the phenomenal realities while asking the questions of what happened, why, and how it happened in the establishment of the causal relationship between events and the analysis of the facts. This study provides an overview of Nazi Germany based on the foundation, aims, goals, and actions of the KdF. In this sense, the case of KdF sets the limit of this study about determining the application areas of the administrative and ideological concept of Nazi Germany. In this context, totalitarian regimes were not included in the first section, instead only right-wing totalitarianism and its ideological approaches were discussed in terms of reasons, aims, and means of intervention in social life. In the second section, the political atmosphere under which the Nazi rule emerged and the ideological concept of national socialism was briefly explained in terms of the role and function of the KdF in Nazi Germany. Finally, the role of the KdF in the ideological fortification of Nazi Germany was explained in detail in the third section.

2. Theoretical Framework: Right Totalitarianism and Its Ideological Concept

Totalitarian regimes, which emerged in the early 20th century, is a type of regime that dominates the individual's thoughts and behaviors from their beliefs and values to daily life with the motive of fully controlling the political, economic, and social life, and acts to establish an ideal identity/society, which does not allow the individual an autonomous area independent of the state in the state-individual relationship and removes all borders related to it. (Durgun, 2012: 197). The most significant point in the disappearance of the boundaries between the state and the individual is to deliver education or doctrine to the society according to the ideological concept of the leader and ruling elite that established the totalitarian system (Arendt, 1976: 438). In this context, ideology has become an indispensable

element of totalitarian regimes. Through ideology, the political system has been politicized by its actors, parties, and subsidiaries as a whole with its method and language. In totalitarian regimes, ideology does not have a basis that is nourished, questioned, and renewed by pluralist and alternative debates. While ideologies establish a common fate or identity between leadership and society, they have become an instrument of fortification, and an important role in the mobilization and consolidation of the society by offering society irrefutable admissions of who they are, what they live for, how they think and act, even what they should believe (Linz, 2017: 36-37).

The ideological domination of totalitarian regimes is set up on the failure of liberal, conservative, or social-democratic ideologies within the democratic system (Arendt, 1976: 460). The central politics' lack of success to produce solutions to political, social, and economic crises and the extreme decline in the social and economic welfare of the society led to pessimism and despair all over the country. The ideological programs of totalitarian regimes consist of ideas and tools that offer solutions to these deep and severe crises in countries. However, the ontological foundation of ideologies has emerged based on historical and natural laws. In this respect, while Bolshevism is based on Marx's class conflict, racial laws inspired by Darwinism and natural laws are highlighted in fascism (Arendt, 1976: 463). In this sense, totalitarianism is divided into right and left totalitarianism with its ideological and methodological differences and orientations.¹

Right totalitarianism arose as fascist ideologies. Fascism includes an ideological concept that establishes the rebirth of nations from a dark and depressing period inspired by S. Payne to a revolutionary and radically changing ultra-nationalism basis (Todd, 2010: 7). In this ideological fiction, the leader cult and extreme elitism aim at keeping the society in constant war motivation depending on the insecure other. When he declared his dictatorship in Italy after World War I, Mussolini associated his party's name with fascism. He constructed his historical connotations on the ancient Roman authoritarianism (Todd, 2010: 8). According to Lipset, Fascism gained its main support from the lower and middle class, stuck between big capitalist firms and socialism, especially the communism threat (Todd, 2010: 9). In contrast, fascism criticized its sharing relations instead of capitalism itself. That is to say, it is based on national unity that protects private property, based on the rejection of class politics while maintaining large industrial sectors under state control utilizing monopoly capitalism. This motto also paved the way for intervention in social life. Chambers and unions related to professional groups were taken under state control, non-fascist unions, associations, and political parties were forbidden. Worker and employer corporations were established under the responsibility of the fascist state and their representatives were elected with the approval of The Grand Council of Fascism. However, the freedom of the press was abolished by the fascist state, and opposing discourses and actions against the fascist regime were heavily penalized by the established special courts (Durgun, 2012: 202-205).

¹ For the differences between Right and Left Totalitarianism, see. Linz, 2010: 104-120.

While stating the characteristics of fascist ideology, Theodor W. Adorno emphasizes this ideology's approach to individual preferences. In line with this; it is likely, in countries ruled by a fascist regime, that a conflict between "happiness achieved by personal choices" and "happiness of society" occurs. In such a case, the main point is the total happiness achieved by the "people's community". According to the understanding of people's community, thought to be above the personal preferences of individuals, individuals are expected not to submit to their desires. About achieving equality, the pressure is adopted rather than providing a wider range of activities for individuals. In this respect, "repressive equality" is a part of fascism (Adorno, 2005: 146). In the examples of Italy and Germany, similar to what Adorno pointed out, systematic centralism was adopted about achieving community happiness through the regime. The area, whose boundaries are established by the authority, appears as the area where individualism is completely rejected, and the state can suspend individual preferences in cases when it regards as necessary in ensuring social happiness. In addition, the epistemic meaning attributed to the concept of society legitimized the regime's control over individuality.

Social Darwinism, as well as racism and eugenic politics that developed accordingly, are the other factors in the ideological concept of Fascist Regimes. The genetic succession, discovered by Gregor Mendel in his studies in the 1860s, was rediscovered in the 1900s and turned out to be one of the suitable areas of fascist/racist politics (Eryücel, 2020: 60). Yet again, on the eve of the 20th century, his anthropological studies shaped fascist/racist politics. Anthroposociology studies started with Vacher de Lapouge's "L'Aryen" in 1899, highlighted two important issues. The first one is social Darwinism which regards life as an arena of struggle, and which is based on the understanding that one has to feed in order to survive and kill to feed. The second one is the direct association between the level of development and civilization of the human race and its physical structure.

Additionally, with the anthroposociological studies of such researchers as Hans F. K. Günther and Joseph A. Comte de Gobineau, it was assumed that there were differences between races and hierarchical relationships in agreement with these given differences. At this point, it was claimed that the Aryan (pure) race is the most developed and civilized race (Toprak, 2015: 18-19). The second emphasis of Lapouge in his anthroposociology studies is that social selection distorts the operative mechanism of the natural order by disrupting natural selection. As a result, it was claimed that the lower races led to the degeneration of the race by substituting the eugenics, ie the superior races, and thus the *good* ones perish and the *bad* ones survive. Therefore, positive discrimination was provided to lower races through the social selection and as a result, eugenic wealth was spoiled (Toprak, 2015: 22-24). This understanding resulted in the questioning of the human-centered Enlightenment philosophy and the universal values such as equality, freedom, and democracy that it put forward.

Eugenic politics in fascist governments were based on two complementary foundations. The first one was to prevent the present discrimination of lower races by social selection due to the assumption that human races are the product of an

inherited structure. Therefore, in the context of aiming to create a pure race, the purity and superiority of the races were tried to be well-maintained. For instance, marriages between low-inferior races and pure races, except for sexual intercourse between chosen ones, were prohibited. Given that, xenophobia and anti-Semitism were strongly encouraged by fascist ideologies (Eryücel, 2020: 78). The second one was the transmission of the genetic codes of superior races to future generations, and the nurture of mentally and physically strong and healthy societies. Eugenic politics' project of raising a healthy generation was implemented in the way of preserving the genetics and health of the races that were believed to be superior, instead of applying it to cover all of the citizens.

At this point, reproduction of people with hereditary diseases, those with asocial characteristics, and those with contagious diseases were prevented. Also, policies were implemented to increase the health, economic, and social welfare of the society aimed to be built (Eryücel, 2020: 68). Thus, it was intended to prevent the occurrence of bad habits in society, to encourage sports and a healthy lifestyle, and concerning these, to create various political instruments and institutions under state control. For example, Italian Fascism, as the successors of the noble Roman civilization and the creators of the new fascist state, aimed at improving fertility and preserve the generation in the superior Italian race (Eryücel, 2020: 126). Fascist governments created political tools and institutions under the total control of the state to both invoke the doctrine and reorganize the masses consistent with racist/eugenic politics.

These may be organizations to defend the regime, such as secret police and intelligence services that carry out racist and genocidal violence and terror of the regime, sweep aside individuals and structures opposing the regime, and keep the society under control (Linz, 2010: 70; Durgun, 2012: 203) as well as the institutions and organizations that increase the sense of gratitude and loyalty towards the leader and the regime, reinforce the supreme qualities and protector role of the leader among the society, and are active in social and cultural life in agreement with the goal of ideological consolidation and ideal society (Linz, 2010: 57). For example, "Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro" (OND or The National Recreational Club) was established in Italy in 1925 under the control of the Fascist Party to serve different purposes with such departments as sports, public education, and travel. In consort with a supervisory understanding of how the individuals should spend their leisure time, this structure aimed at influencing the ideological orientations of individuals and to contribute to the increase of their productivity through physical education and professional development. As a semi-state organization, OND provided millions of "ordinary Italians" the opportunity to be included in a modern vacation (Griffin, 1991: 72).

3. The Ideological Concept and Tools of Nazi Germany: National Socialism

The end of World War I constituted the defining moment of the political, economic, and social crises and depressions for Germany. With the Treaty of Versailles signed after WWI (1919), Germany was subjected to heavy sanctions and reparations. Alsace-Lorraine was restored to France, West Prussia, Upper Silesia, and Poznan were ceded to Poland,

Danzig was acknowledged as an autonomous region under the auspices of the League of Nations, and East Prussia was separated from the rest of Germany under the name of "Polish Corridor". Besides, any integration between Germany and Austria was prohibited, and the German army was limited to no more than 100,000 men. Furthermore, The Left Bank of the Rhine was demilitarized. In line with the "the War Guilt Clause (or Article 231)" article, one of the famous articles of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was imposed heavy reparations, and the total cost of these reparations was determined in the Paris Conference in 1921 (Fulbrook, 2009: 60-63).

The Weimar Republic, established after the Treaty of Versailles, tried to maintain the economic order with the heavy reparations placed on Germany's shoulders, and due to the Great Depression of 1929, the social and economic welfare level of the German society decreased further. Not only inflation rates increased in the German economy, but unemployment also started. The number of unemployed people, which was 1.3 million in September 1929, reached 3 million in September 1930 and 6 million in 1933 (Fulbrook, 2009: 66, 97). The Great Depression of 1929 also influenced the political system due to the increasing social and economic depression in Germany. The delicate structure of Weimar democracy was fragmented and the de facto presidential administration period began. The instability of the German governments also brought about this result. In addition to the desperation of the central politics in the country's problems, the conflicts of the central parties both within themselves and with each other, as well as the growing socio-economic and socio-cultural divisions becoming effective in the politics of the parties, paved the way for the extremist and rigid structures in Germany to gain strength (Fulbrook, 2009: 84).

As a result of democratic elections, the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei - NSDAP) came to power in 1933 in this social and economic depression atmosphere. Shortly after it seized the power, Germany began to be dragged into a totalitarian regime. The Nazi administration targeted to transform Germany consistent with the National Socialism ideology, embracing the motto of "one nation, one state and one leader (führer)". Although it was aimed to build a state in which the Party and its ideology would infiltrate every aspect of public and private life, the transformation of Germany into a totalitarian state was not accomplished (Bendersky, 2014: 99). At this point, while Hitler negotiated with justice and military bureaucracy to establish his absolute will and law, he aimed at designing the social space entirely. In May 1933, all unions were terminated and the "The German Labor Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront or DAF)" was established. The reorganization of trade and employers' unions by the German Labor Front also demonstrated that social and economic life was attempted to be directly coordinated by the regime (Metraux, 1985: 246). Also, those working in the field of Agriculture and Farming were united under the roof of the Reich Food Corporation administration, and tradesmen and small businesses under the umbrella of the "the Council of Industry and Trade" (Handwerks-,

Handels-, und Gewerbeorganisation or HAGO). In January 1934, Hitler abolished the Reichsrat (a legislative body in the Weimar Republic) and ended the federal system. He made the final move of his totalitarian regime with the death of Hindenburg in August 1934. Presidency and Chancellor offices were assigned to Hitler and the whole bureaucracy pledge loyalty to the leadership (Führer). In this process, in order to consolidate the Hitler regime, anti-people's community elements (Volksgemeinschaft) were purged through paramilitary organizations such as the "the Storm Detachment (Sturmabteilung or SA)" and "Protection Squadron (Schutzstaffel or SS)" (Fulbrook, 2009: 114-116; Scheck, 2008: 164).

On the one hand, the Nazi Party tried to strengthen its regime, on the other hand, it tried to fulfill its promises in its program such as saving Germany from the Great Depression of 1929 and reestablishing its international reputation, reducing unemployment and poverty, breaking the chains of the Treaty of Versailles, and making the German society prosperous. In fact, under Hitler's rule, unemployment rates were decreased and poverty was diminished as a result of social solidarity organizations such as the "Winter Relief of the German People (Winterhilfswerk or WHW)" (Scheck, 2008: 157). The Nazis, who attempted to keep all segments of the society under control and developed the tools to do so, implemented policies aimed at creating an ideal society as well. While inviting the people to social solidarity and national unity, social equality, sharing, and support programs were developed for the poor. In this context, it has been tried to inculcate a sense of solidarity to workers, farmers, and women to ensure that they would stand firmly and closely adhere to each other especially under the pressure of war.

In addition, they tried to establish the society they idealized with the political engineering project.² German society, which they consider to have superior qualities, was intended to be transformed into a racially pure and homogeneous "people's community". At this point, they regarded Gypsies, Jews, homosexuals, people with hereditary diseases, and disabled people as a polluter factor (alien blood) in a pure race (Fulbrook, 2009: 119-120).

Due to this understanding, laws enacted at that time resulted in mandatory sterilization of the mentally ill or people with certain physical ailments. In this way, a large number of people were prevented from having children by sterilizing them to preserve the healthy generation (Ehmer, 2004: 33-34). The Aryan German race, fictionalized by National Socialism, was depicted as a healthy community that worked for its country in all conditions. Another reason for being physically fit arose from the belief that regardless of their social status people were soldiers in a possible war. In line with this understanding, German lands were under constant threat and this threat would be eliminated by individuals who were physically ready for war. According to Adorno, there is a constant danger of war in the nature of fascism. Fascism aims to make this situation known by the masses (Adorno, 2005: 149).

National Socialism was a totalitarian regime that projected the transformation of Germany both mentally and

² The Nazis claimed that there were at least six major race types among the Germans, and the tall, blond, and blue-eyed "Scandinavian" type was the most valuable one. In the long term, Nazi policies were based on the

employment of members of the "higher" race in the state service and preventing the reproduction of "lower races." For more information, see, Scheck, 2008: 169.

institutionally, and where state violence and terror were heavily implemented, based on the homogenized superior race claim at this point. In a speech he delivered in February 1933, Josef Goebbels stated that the Nazi rule was the breakthrough of a new period in German history and that those who did not believe in this would have no place in German territory, and announced that a radical change process had begun with the help of national socialism and a radical reform would be implemented in all areas. Besides, in March 1933, Goebbels described the methodological framework of the Nazi administration, while talking about an organization model in which the whole German nation would have the principles of national socialism and would be mobilized (Bendersky, 2014). According to Julius Binder, who actively supported the National Socialist movement and was a member of the Nazi Party, the state had a unique, autocratic, and legendary power based on its own authority. According to this view, the state, considered as the will of the nation, needs an organ that can activate itself. The state can be a nation-state under the leadership of a "divine" leader who is aware of and implements the will of the people. The people are acknowledged as a "subject" by the state only on the condition of "leadership" and "unity of the people". As a result, the individual is only a "dead matter" and as an individual humans should have no rights. Individuals can only have particular rights as a "farmer, soldier, worker, spouse, family member, government official" regarding their function within the national community (Jovanov, 2016: 161-162).

According to National Socialism's perception of society, the "people's community" must, first of all, be a community of success. Human labor used for production should be evaluated as thoroughly and comprehensively as possible. Those who do not want to contribute to this process should be excluded from the national community. Those who refuse to work should be trained, if need by violence, to change their minds. Those categorized as "unimproved" should be permanently imprisoned in concentration camps (Schembs, 2014: 153). According to such a productivity-based approach, performance is of crucial importance for the employee. In increasing this performance, KdF took an active role both mentally and physically, and through the organized programs, a continuous improvement of the employees was aimed with regard to performance and loyalty to the regime. In this respect, the individual's freedom area is only subject to society's general freedom area in National Socialism's perception of society. Consequently, the "state" is accepted as the institutional basis of all authoritarian practices, the guarantee of the stability and integrity of the society.

4. "Strength Through Joy" As The Ideological Domination of National Socialism

4.1. The Establishment of KdF

Tourism had rarely been organized, in the modern sense, before 1933 in Germany. During this period, a large part of the tourism sector served the bourgeoisie, in other words, the socio-economic level of the people was a determining factor in taking advantage of travel or tourism opportunities before 1933. Since when the working class was unable to make use of vacation opportunities in this period, it was not possible to talk about a mass request for the use of this right. In this

regard, KdF, thinking that the gap in this area must be filled, carried out several studies on the holiday understanding of workers before its establishment. As a part of these studies, 42,000 of the workers working in Siemens company were interviewed, and it was revealed that 28,500 of these people did not take a vacation outside the Berlin district (Mason, 1977: 183). These studies in which it was concluded that the gap existing in this area needed to be filled were effective in the establishment of the organization.

Established on November 27, 1933, as a part of the German Labor Front (DAF), KdF maintained its activities until the beginning of World War II. Although it had operated in various fields such as theater, adult education, and day trips since its establishment, the organization achieved its popularity with the holiday organizations. The structure, which was the most comprehensive of the mass holiday practices carried out by the state, was also an explicit example of the regime's interventionist perception of the state.

Robert Ley, who also headed the parent organization DAF, was appointed as the head of the organization by Hitler's order and, he maintained this duty until 1945. It was observed that Hitler's direct order for the establishment of the KdF was effective as a driving force. In this context, the following statement of Hitler speeded up the establishment process of the organization (Spode, 1982: 290):

"I want the workers to get enough vacation and everything to be done to make this break and their spare time a real fun for them. I want individuals with strong nerves, because you can really do an extraordinary politics with a people who have a good temper."

Following this statement, in an attempt to justify the foundation of the organization, Ley said, on November 17th, that "We lost the World War I since we lost our courage. A good senior politician cannot do politics with people whose nerves are on edge. For this reason, the Führer wants the nerves of his people to remain healthy and strong" (Hachtmann, 2014: 95). Ley pointed to KdF as regards what was meant by "an extraordinary politics" expressed by Hitler (Spode, 1982: 290). As stated by Ley, allowing the enemy soldiers to rest at particular intervals was a significant factor in the loss of World War I. For the reason that, resting the fighting soldiers at certain intervals enabled the parties to send their fit and rested soldiers to the front. Stating that German soldiers had to stay in the trenches for months on the contrary, and, as a result, the soldiers and the country lost their courage, Ley declared that he was given the task of establishing the KdF, taking into account the possible war situation, (Hachtmann, 2014: 95-96). Another issue playing a role in the establishment process of KdF was the regime's aim to win the workers over ideologically. In this context, the right to annual vacation leave for each employee turned out to be one of the most popular goals of the national socialist social policy, and the regime preferred to recognize the acquisition of this right through the KdF. The practice of "vacation for all", initiated to put social reforms designed for workers' movements into practice, was regarded as the most important step taken in this direction (Graf, 1995: 109).

In 1933, when the KdF was established, an unusual transformation in the field of tourism came about and the tourism service, previously operated by companies or

individual business owners, started to be provided by the state. As the first step, the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda decided to nationalize the tourism sector. Joseph Goebbels, head of the above-mentioned ministry, aimed at making the ideology of the regime dominant in almost every field. Starting from 1936, this initiative, tried to be based on economic reasons, was followed by a series of legal regulations. Through regulations aiming to carry out the activities in tourism directly by the state and to have absolute control in this field, all companies and enterprises operating in the tourism sector came under the domination of the regime. As a consequence, it became obligatory to obtain the permission of the regime for all of the activities from conferences or seminars to be organized to the content of activities to be carried out in this sector. These regulations, anticipating totalitarianism in the sector from people who would work in these activities to the brochures to be issued, also paved the way for the intervention of the regime in all kinds of activities (Semmens, 2005: 147-148).

It was stated, during the establishment phase of KdF, that it was a poor copy of its Italian counterpart, OND. The examination of two organizations reveals that there are concrete differences primarily in terms of structure. The Italian model adopted a classification method in line with the occupational groups whereas the German model allowed different occupational groups to have a holiday together. In this aspect, the Italian model emphasized the class difference with the obligation of being a member of occupational groups working in the same field. In this context, Ley, even though acknowledging the OND's success, argued that the structure they were to establish would be more comprehensive. He also stated that, unlike its Italian counterpart, KdF would be a more inclusive organization instead of covering only certain social classes and professional groups. He also added that, with this organization intended to be established, all people would feel at home, and that the business owners would be given opportunities to take part in the activities along with the workers. According to Ley, such an organization would also contribute to the shaping of the correct National Socialist order (Spode, 1982: 291-292).

Another criticism that KdF was a structure similar to OND originated in the name of the organization it used during the establishment process. To such an extent that, Ley was first preparing a preliminary version of an organization based on the OND model in September 1933, and it was announced that a new organization, named "After Work", was established on 17 November 1933. Ten days after the announcement, the name of the organization was changed to "National Socialist Community, Strength through Joy". The emphasis on the people's community was highlighted by stating that the organization in question was different from its Italian counterpart in that it was not based on class. Yet again, different from the Italian model, it was stated that the primary aim of KdF was not to provide simple sources of joy for people, but to increase the performance of employees (Spode, 1982: 290-292). It was observed that central national agencies based on the Italian or German model were established by all right-wing dictatorships in Europe within five years after KdF started its activities in November 1933 (De Grazia, 1981: 239).

KdF also differs from its Italian counterpart in its capital structure. KdF directly carried out all of the activities and practices that OND carried out through private agencies. KdF, supported directly by the state, diverged from the Italian model with its economic opportunities. For example, while OND organized discounted journeys for twenty-five or more groups (such as 35 percent discount), the KdF carried out these activities directly without intermediaries for a low fee (De Grazia, 1981: 181). KdF, fostering a series of innovations from the number of social events to the number of participants, was able to increase its popularity in that period. To such an extent that, while the number of vacationers was 2 million in 1934, it increased to 10 million in 1938 (Spode, 1982: 298-299).

4.2. KdF: The Ideology and Goals of the Organization

The effect of the trauma experienced in Germany after World War I manifested as individual dissatisfaction in German society at that time and KdF aimed to bridge the gap caused by the deficiency and to eliminate this dissatisfaction.

The effects of the existing regime's world view were directly reflected in KdF's perception of tourism. According to this understanding, the "people's community" approach was presented as an alternative solution to the relatively demoralized masses. This approach was also put into practice by the regime as a method that may be effective in eliminating social divisions. Thus, the determination to acquire/unite the community was explicitly mentioned in opposition to the class struggle assumption of socialism. With this aspect, KdF was designed as a mass organization and aimed to eliminate the class distinction as well (Baranowski, 2005: 133).

One of the aims of KdF was that individuals should attain the high culture offered to them with the organized activities. This new culture, presented by the regime, was based on the physical discipline of workers and promised them a new identity by changing their existing habits (Baranowski, 2005: 128). Physical discipline was also a reflection of National Socialism's ideal of the healthy German race. Founded by the regime to raise physically and mentally healthy individuals, KdF became a tool for designing individual life under National Socialism. Accordingly, German society was a healthy society and must raise healthy individuals. Thus, the regime should be able to intervene in individuals when necessary. Intervention in the individual sphere would also ensure that the practices to be put into effect by the authority would not be questioned as a result of the created fear. KdF used its activities and practices as a tool in raising this awareness and meeting the soldier capital in case of war.

The fact that KdF offered vacation opportunities at a relatively reasonable price made it possible for the regime to transform this service into a tool. It was aimed to increase the living standards of the people as well as predicting that these opportunities would increase the loyalty and trust towards the regime. National Socialism found the opportunity to satisfy the needs of the regime, especially in the field of war industry, through the segment that was believed to establish its trust and loyalty. (Spode, 1982: 326).

Another purpose of the KdF, which tried to be carried out by considering political interests from the very beginning, was to become a factor in the coexistence of Germans living in

different parts of the country, primarily without a class difference. The opportunities offered to the people by the regime were used as an instrument in propaganda activities, and it was thought that this would also contribute to the strengthening of people's connections with the regime. The dissemination of the "people's community" concept also paved the way for German citizens to regard themselves as superior to other nations. In this context, it was aimed to nurture individuals who became gradually politicized with the holiday organization and strengthened their relations with the regime.

The tours, organized by KdF and undertaken within the country, not only, provided the participants the opportunity to visit different parts of the country, but also, enabled participants from different regions to socialize with each other as well. It was thought that the notion of "vacation together" would eliminate the regionalism that Nazism regarded as exhausting as much as class divisions in the way of ensuring national harmony (Baranowski, 2005: 133). Employing the cheap holiday opportunities offered by KdF, it was anticipated to keep German citizens away from the features perceived as cultural threats by the regime, and it was believed that these opportunities could contribute to their commitment to the "Germanness" (Deutschtum) with a joint loyalty (Baranowski, 2004: 121).

The cheap holiday organizations also served as a way to keep the oppressive and authoritarian face of National Socialism out of sight. Thus, the sentiment that the new system was better was intended to instill in citizens. Also, it was ensured that all of the people in the community benefitted from the holiday opportunity, which was previously only accessible to people with high socioeconomic status, and, in the end, the propaganda that the regime treated all of the citizens equally gained ground.

Enabling the working class to acquire the consumption habits and behavioral patterns of the bourgeoisie also formed the foundation of National Socialism's vacation strategy. In this context, a mass holiday concept was adopted by the state through extending the holiday periods. The holiday concept of the new period anticipated a total control whose content was determined by the regime. Thus, the understanding of vacation, which normally indicates individual behavior and personal preferences, turned into a mass movement and became instrumental in the formation of a new lifestyle (Spode, 1982: 276). Workers and small-scale business owners who did not have the opportunity to travel before found the opportunity to have a holiday with the travel card applications designed by KdF. This practice allowed even workers with a low salary to take a vacation (Graf, 1995: 112).

Ley argued that the organization should not be organized concerning a simple holiday logic while planning how the KdF should be organized structurally and ideologically. In addition to the trips to be organized, it was aimed to foster values such as discipline and companionship in individuals. In this context, KdF organized a large number of activities to keep the workers as "patriots" while providing them a sense of civilization (Spode, 1982: 291). In order to increase the popularity of this mass holiday concept, some of the rights workers had at that time were also improved. For example, the minimum annual leave periods for industrial workers were increased from three days to six days, and young people

and those who attended holiday courses run by National Socialist organizations were given additional leave days (Mason, 1977: 183).

According to Ley, another purpose of KdF was to form an organic link between workers' motivation to work and the nation-state. In this respect, working should be realized as a responsibility towards the society they live in, instead of just earning an income. In doing so, the "social inferiority complex" of workers needed to be excluded first. The activities, carried out by the KdF with the participation of people from all spheres of life, would not only eliminate this class difference but also directly influence the performance of the workers (Spode, 1982: 293). According to Ley, who believed that being unaware of what to do or being bored would lead to the emergence of provocative and ultimately criminal ideas, "there was nothing more dangerous for a state than this" (Spode, 1982: 291).

It was thought that the holiday organizations operated by the KdF would also help the regime in its ideological war with Marxism. With this intention, the propaganda that "German workers are doing what Marxism could not accomplish by sailing the seas with their own ships" was countered through the German Labor Front. Even though 98% of the collective bargaining had vacation provisions until 1929 as a result of the pressure of the unions, it was seen that these rights were not given to the workers until the collective bargaining provisions were accepted by the National Socialists. As a consequence, Germany became the country that had the most comprehensive holiday arrangements in the international arena (Graf, 1995: 109).

National Socialists argued that individuals' free time should be regulated by a central authority. Such a control mechanism would also prevent individuals from being influenced by all elements thought to be dangerous by the regime. At this point, KdF played an important role in keeping individuals under the absolute control of the state and strengthening their relations with the regime. On the other hand, this structure was seen by the participants as an opportunity to escape from political and economic pressure. Considered as a way to get away from daily life and increasing pressures under National Socialism, the KdF was regarded as a kind of evasion of National Socialism's irrational imagination (Mason, 1977: 185-186).

Established under the DAF and actively operating in a political way, KdF characterized one of the most important components of National Socialist ideology. Although the organization indicated, in its establishment, that it would implement a strategy aimed at increasing the performance of the workers, it was clearly seen that the mentioned performance increase would not occur all of a sudden as the issue was also directly related to the class conflict. In this respect, KdF, on the one hand, primarily intended to keep the social peace and increase business performance, on the other hand, it aimed to increase the acceptance of National Socialism through propaganda and ideological education. Along with all these, another mission attributed to KdF was that it embraced a leading role in the reinforcement of social solidarity and contributed to social trust. This would also lead to reducing the burdens caused by class conflicts or war (Mason, 1977: 182-183). As stated above, the mission foisted on the individual by the National Socialist regime was that s/he must work for the society in which s/he lived.

Individual work would also contribute to the economic development of society. The regime's primary aim of increasing work efficiency brought about a series of unethical practices directed at the working population. To such an extent that, most of the taken measures intended to maintain a healthy and strong workforce, and medical science was used as a tool to maximize the workforce. For example, it became progressively more difficult to admit a worker as a patient during this period, and additional medical approval and report were needed to do this. Doctors were ordered to issue a report that a worker cannot work only in exceptional circumstances (Proctor, 2002: 100). In this way, medical science was deviated from its intended format and transformed into a bio-political field that was required to serve the interests of the regime. As a result of these strict practices towards the aim of full employment, the unemployment rates decreased. For example, while the number of unemployed people was about 6 million in 1933, this number declined to an annual average of 2.7 million in 1934 and then to 2.1 million in 1935. In consequence, in 1936, full employment aim was achieved in the construction and metal industry. In 1937 and 1938, a great number of entrepreneurs started to complain about the lack of new participation in the labor market (Benz, 2000: 97).

4.3. Activities Carried Out by KdF

It was seen, in 1935, that KdF became the fastest growing organization compared to other national socialist organizations. The structure, whose number of members increased dramatically and extraordinarily, had 125,000 volunteers and 5,000 full-time employees (Spode, 1982: 294). KdF, which initiated its first travel tours in the country only three months after its launch, provided holiday opportunities to tourists from regions such as Berlin, Dresden, Hamburg, Königsberg, Essen, Dortmund, and Hannover to many regions such as Silesia mountains, Bavaria and Thuringian forests (Baranowski, 2005: 130). It was anticipated that by bringing people from all over the country together in domestic tourism, regional, religious and class differences would be reduced, and it was intended to enable that people/tribes (Stämme) from different cultures in Germany would know, understand and value each other. It was thought, by the regime that, tourism activities would also play an important part in the participants' willingness to be a unified German community and in realizing their "racial uniqueness" through the experience of being a tourist (Semmens 2005: 146).

In addition to domestic travels, KdF organized international tours as well. In this context, short trips to cities such as Cairo, Istanbul, and Jerusalem were also organized. Although KdF expressed that it provided opportunities for its citizens to see different countries with organized tours, the main purpose at this point was to compare the level of development in these countries with Germany and to increase the sense of trust in the regime (Zuelow, 2015: 140). However, the tourism activities organized by KdF differed from traditional tours. This was due to the regime's purpose to build a new identity through the holiday opportunity. In such a way that, participants were requested not to dress like a model in a fashion show to set a standard in the dress of the participants, to ridicule the clothes of the people traveling from different regions and differing traditionally, to consume excessive alcohol, and to contact people from different

countries (Baranowski, 2005: 131; Graf, 1995: 114). Such an understanding was a reflection of the regime's political practices and efforts to transform society. Yet, the National Socialist ideology saw no harm in replacing the tradition with the most appropriate, by purging it when necessary. In addition, considering the people participating in these organizations from different regions of Germany, it can be seen that this initiative was put into practice with the tendency to homogenize all the differences.

The cruise ships Wilhelm Gustloff and Robert Ley, built specifically for KdF, started to operate in the seas in 1938 and 1939. There were Libraries, swimming pools, recreation rooms, large sunbathing areas on these ships where only one travel category was offered to passengers. This luxurious holiday offered without a class difference also improved the regime's propaganda opportunities. With the morning ceremonies and different rituals performed on the decks under the flags of the regime, the feeling of trust in the regime was tried to be reinforced. Furthermore, to demonstrate the military power of the country, it was ensured that these cruise ships encountered German warships while they were sailing (Baranowski, 2005: 130). In this sense, the rituals of coming across warships appear as a reflection of the regime's political propaganda rather than being accidental.

The controlling attitude of KdF persisted in overseas travels. Even on long journeys, participants were forced to listen to radio programs broadcasting in German, to stick to strict daily schedules, and even they were not allowed to disembark outside countries such as Portugal or Italy. According to KdF, the commitment to the homeland was tried to be protected outside the country by providing a safe environment to all travelers (Graf, 1995: 114). The aforementioned German radio broadcasts aimed to ensure that the travelers did not hear anything except what was offered to them by the regime. It once again becomes clear, with these examples, that the understanding of vacation, expected to be shaped by the individual's own decision, was determined by the central authority as a result of the oppressive and paternalist approach of the period.

According to official statistics, the number of those participating in holiday trips increased from 2.3 million in 1934 to 10.3 million in 1938, and the number of those participating in other leisure activities increased from 9.1 million to 54.6 million. In 1939, KdF's annual sales reached RM 2.5 billion (Reich Mark). According to Timothy W. Mason, although these figures shared with the public by the regime are doubtful, the Strength Through Joy turned into a massive organization of undoubted size (Mason, 1977: 185).

It is seen that the tours organized by KdF in the relevant period were cheaper compared to their equivalents. For example, a 7-day trip to Norway Fjords was 59.50 RM, an 8-day Baltic Sea or around Italy was 63 RM, and a 12-day Italy and its colonies travel was 150 RM. These all-inclusive prices were much cheaper than private tour operators (Graf, 1995: 112).

In addition to these domestic and international travel organizations, another holiday organization initiated by KdF was the project of building a large holiday resort called Prora on the island of Rügen. This facility planned to provide an example for the holiday resorts to be built in the future

attracted attention with its huge structure. Although it was completed in 1939, this barracks-style building holding 20,000-beds, consisting of restaurants, theater halls, and its own train station, was never put into operation (Benz, 2000: 102).

5. Conclusions

The KdF is the most important illustration of the Nazi totalitarian regime's social organization both as an ideological and intervention tool. Until 1933, the socio-economic level and social status played a decisive role in the notion of vacation in Germany, and accordingly individuals' perception of vacation was shaped by their income level. The Nazi regime attempted to take the advantage of this situation created by the victimization and impoverishment in the German social structure to guarantee the rapid expansion of National Socialism and tried to implement National Socialism's community project by removing the civil privileges that only certain social groups had. At this point, KdF was used as a tool by the regime to attain its ideals. A Nazified tourist culture developed shortly after the Nazis took the power. For example, Nazi literature clearly supported the introduction of new landscapes or attractions that were considered as "worth seeing" by the Nazi regime in the new era. These practices were codified into discourses that were markedly politicized and filled with the ideas of national socialism. The Nazi regime formed completely new tourist attractions in cities such as Berlin and Weimar with its comprehensive reconstruction program (Semmens, 2005: 150).

The holiday opportunity offered by National Socialism to its citizens through the KdF was materialized through passive participation as all the regulations regarding what can be done during the vacation period were designed according to a militarist order where strict rules and military rituals were applied. In this respect, KdF acted as a structure in the disguise of National Socialist ideology. Used as an ideological tool by National Socialists, holiday organizations were transformed into a tool of ideological renewal rather than a physical one. Therefore, in the design of holiday contents, socialization was emphasized rather than individualization. Although those who grasped this opportunity did not become Hitler's most loyal followers, they were influenced by Nazi propaganda. This partial failure was partly because of the utopian expectations set up after the foundation of the KdF. In the final analysis, KdF provided services to people who accepted its cheap offers. The expectation that was believed that workers could spend their free time similar to an academic through the activities of KdF was failed in this aspect (Spode, 1982: 326).

The fact that self-criticism was not very usual among the leaders of National Socialism paved the way for KdF not to be understood appropriately in the following periods. To such an extent that, KdF, which should be considered as a structure where an individual need was met without any alternative, was not able to surpass the view of an organization that was created and designed with fear and pressure in the eyes of people and (Mason, 1977: 186-187). This feature of the Nazi regime is the reflection of the homogeneous and ideal social structure. In other words, the fact that people with different social status had a holiday at

the same time and under the same conditions temporarily enabled them to remove their social differences.

Despite the improvements in the vacation leave of the workers and the advantage of cheap holiday opportunities, it is not possible to talk about the "democratization of travel" in this period. The reform of the employees' annual spare time was ultimately used as a tool to integrate these people into the Nazi state. In this respect, an understanding of a controlled holiday contradicted a perception of a free holiday. Furthermore, a system in which the privileges accorded to the bourgeoisie were abolished was never implemented as claimed by the national socialists (Spode, 1982: 327).

KdF was dedicated to developing its own unique mass tourism organization and culture industry. Ideological thought directed this organization, the best price/performance was tried to be offered to the workers, and the alleged success of the regime in the operation of this service was exuded to the participants through propaganda. Leisure activities also provided opportunities to deliver doctrinal education. During this period, KdF made very rapid development, organizing all kinds of leisure activities from symphony concerts to boat trips, theater to popular sports. Not only did it made these opportunities accessible to everyone but also it contributed to the relative increase in social satisfaction and production (Mason, 1977: 184-185). From the chess clubs to the pigeon fanciers club, there is almost no sphere left that Ley and, by implication, the regime could not be involved in. Thus, KdF had become a "social monopoly" (Spode, 1982: 294-295).

The slogan of the KdF "Travel in Happy Germany" served as a striking illustration both to celebrate the success of the Nazis and to hide the regime's violence and state terror activities. This leisure organization in the ideological form of the Third Reich was relatively successful as a result of the perceived incompatibility between vacation and fear/violence.

These phenomena were intertwined in the regime's rule. In this context, under Hitler's rule, tourism never stood on the periphery of the Nazi campaign, instead, was a part of the regime consistent with totalitarian regimes. The holiday, shaped in the form of a collective structure, supported a strengthening of the consciousness of the community in line with the ideals of the regime, and the activities carried out together increased individuals' ability to act on a vast scale in a possible situation such as war. The war environment that emerged towards the end of the 1930s began to influence the activities of the KdF. From September 1, 1939, the travel activities of the KdF were almost completely mothballed, and the organization previously responsible for organizing touristic tours had to deal with the troops going to the war (Spode, 1982: 310). Finally, on September 4, 1939, the war economy regulation including the holiday ban entered into force (Karl, 1995: 262). This regulation, which was issued with the idea that manpower would be needed in case of a possible war, paved the way for KdF to suspend its activities and finally terminate it.

References

- Adorno, T. W. (2005). *The Culture Industry, Selected Essays in Mass Culture*, London: Routledge.
- Arendt, H. (1976). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York & London: Harvest Book.
- Baranowski, S. (2004). *Strength Through Joy. Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baranowski, S. (2005). Radical Nationalism in an International Context: Strength through Joy and the Paradoxes of Nazi Tourism, (Ed.) K. John Walton, *In Histories of Tourism, Representation, Identity and Conflict* (pp. 125-143). Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Bendersky, J. W. (2014). *A Concise History of Nazi Germany* (Fourth Edition), Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Benz, W. (2000). *Geschichte des Dritten Reiches*, München: C.H. Beck oHG Verlag.
- De Grazia, V. (1981). *The Culture of Consent. Mass Organisation of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Durgun, G. B. (2012). Otoriter ve Totaliter Rejimler, (Ed.) Ü. Özdağ, *In 21. Yüzyılda Siyaset: Devlet ve Siyaset Yönetimi* (pp. 179-208), Ankara: Kripto Publication.
- Ehmer, J. (2004). Nationalsozialistische Bevölkerungspolitik in der neueren historischen Forschung, (Ed.) Mackensen Rainer, *Bevölkerungslehre und Bevölkerungspolitik im Dritten Reich* (pp. 21-44). Opladen: Leske & Budrich, Opladen.
- Eryücel, E. (2020). *Ulus İnşâ Sürecinde Öjenik Siyaset ve İrkçılık*, Ankara: Liberte Publication.
- Fulbrook, M. (2009). *A History of Germany 1918-2008: The Divided Nation* (Third Edition), New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Graf, J. (1995). *Die notwendige Reise, Reisen und Reiseliteratur junger Autoren während des Nationalsozialismus*. Stuttgart: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung.
- Griffin R. (1991). *The Nature of Fascism*. London: Routledge.
- Hachtmann, R. (2014). Arbeit und Arbeitsfront: Ideologie und Praxis, (Ed.) Buggeln Marc, Wildt Michael, *Arbeit im Nationalsozialismus* (pp. 87-106). München: De Gruyter/Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH.
- Jovanov, R. (2016). Recht und Wirklichkeit, Rechtserneuerung im Nationalsozialismus. (Ed.) Konitzer Werner, Palme David, *Arbeit, Volk, Gemeinschaft, Ethik und Ethiken im Nationalsozialismus* (pp. 151-167), New York: Campus Verlag Frankfurt.
- Karl, M. (1995). Landwirtschaft und Ernährung im Deutschen Reich, (Ed.) Salewski Michael, Wegener-Schulze Guntram, *Kriegsjahr 1944, Im Großen und Kleinen* (pp. 251-266). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart.
- Linz, J. J. (2017). *Totaliter ve Otoriter Rejimler* (Fourth Edition), (Trans.) Ergun Özbudun, Ankara: Liberte Publication.
- Mason, T. W. (1977). *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich, Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Metraux, A. (1985). Die angewandte Psychologie vor und nach 1933 in Deutschland. (Ed.) C. F. Graumann, *Psychologie im Nationalsozialismus* (pp. 221-262), Berlin: Springer..
- Proctor, R. N. (2002). *Blitzkrieg gegen den Krebs, Gesundheit und Propaganda im Dritten Reich*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Ausgabe, Klett-Cotta.
- Scheck, R. (2008). *Germany, 1871-1945: A Concise History*, Oxford & New York: Berg.
- Schembs, K. (2014). Korporativismus, Arbeit und Propaganda im faschistischen Italien (1922-1945), (Ed.) Buggeln Marc, Wildt Michael, *Arbeit im Nationalsozialismus* (pp. 141-164). München: De Gruyter/Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH.
- Semmens, K. (2005). Travel in Merry Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich, (Ed.) John Walton. K., *In Histories of Tourism, Representation, Identity and Conflict* (pp 144-161), Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Spode, H. (1982). Arbeiterurlaub im Dritten Reich, (Ed.) Sachse Carola, Siegel Tilla, Spohn Wolfgang, Spode Hasso. *Angst, Behohnung, Zucht und Ordnung. Herrschaftsmechanismen im Nationalsozialismus* (pp. 275-328), Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag GmbH, Opladen.
- Todd, A. (2010). *The European Dictatorships: Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini* (8th Edition), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Toprak, Z. (2015). *Darwin'den Dersim'e Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji* (Third Edition), İstanbul: Doğan Books.
- Zuelow, E. G. E. (2015). *A History of Modern Tourism*, London: Palgrave.