A Beginning with Foresight

125 years ago, the first issue of today's ATZ appeared with "Der Motorwagen." Since then, it has accompanied the development of the automobile – from the motorized carriage to the vehicles we know today. Taking the occasion of the ATZ's anniversary, we are looking back this year in a series of ten articles on highlights, but also on curiosities, of automotive technology.

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1929 The first front page published under the name ATZ in July 1929 after the merger of the magazines "Der Motorwagen" and "Auto-Technik"

One can only describe it as a case of extraordinary foresight when a few visionaries saw a niche product, of which less than 9000 units were being produced worldwide each year, and were inspired to create its own association and even its very own magazine. It was in September 1897 that 51 men, including the "esteemed gentlemen Mr. Daimler from Cannstatt and Mr. Benz from Mannheim" founded the "Mitteleuropäischer Motorwagen-Verein," or Central European Motor Vehicle Association, and went on to publish its official organ called "Der Motorwagen" (The Motor Vehicle) in January 1898.

30 years later, the production of automobiles had dramatically increased, reaching 6.3 million vehicles worldwide. But dark clouds were already gathering on the horizon. The Wall Street Crash in October 1929 plunged the world into its greatest ever economic crisis. It also had a devastating impact on the automobile industry, with production collapsing to just 1.9 million vehicles in 1932. But once again, some of

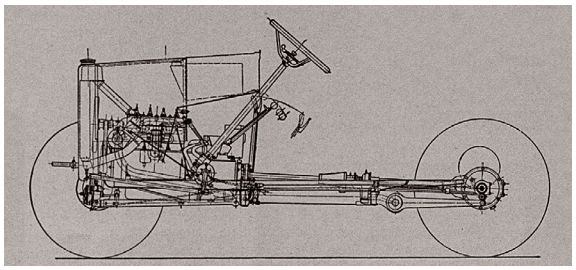

FIGURE 1 The BMW 3/15 PS "Dixi" was the first motor car of the Bayerische Motoren Werke in 1929 (© Springer Vieweg)

FIGURE 2 Electric trolley of the Electric Carriage & Wagon Company (© Springer Vieweg)

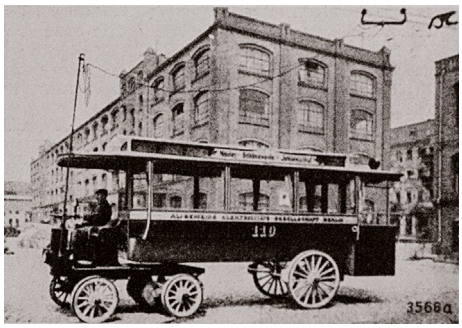

FIGURE 3 AEG experimental car with overhead line from 1898 (© Springer Vieweg)

FIGURE 4 The Austin A 40 as a test vehicle with fuel cell drive from 1971 (© Springer Vieweg)

the industry's pioneers had shown a very good understanding of the impending development. In June 1929, "Der Motorwagen" merged with the magazine "Auto-Technik," which had been founded in 1912, and the journal "Mitteilungen des Reichsverbandes der Automobilindustrie" to form "ATZ Automobiltechnische Zeitschrift," as it is still called today.

The leading article of the first edition in 1929 bears the simple title "Rationalization," describing an approach that is still being pursued now. Right from the start, the main focus of the magazine's reports was on the expert presentation of technical developments in automotive engineering. For example, the first edition starts right away with "The kinematics of the valve train in fast-running engines" and a technical article entitled "The Dixi 3/15 PS small car," which was embellished with numerous design drawings, **FIGURE 1**. This was followed in the next month's edition by a detailed portrait of "The Stoewer eight-cylinder car."

The emphasis was continually on powertrain technology, which the founding fathers in 1898 already wanted to see "limited to three types, namely vehicles powered by steam (…), by oil engines, and by electricity." Later, they had no qualms about exploring some curious blind alleys and ingenious visions. Sometimes, these even appeared in an article or sometimes even in a single sentence, as shown by this example from 1923 in "News on the coal dust engine": "It was clear that the gasoline or diesel engine would only represent the initial stages. The aim was to create an ideal engine that could be operated either by the most powerful explosives (...) or (...) by water or air."

While vehicles with electric motors are often classified as "alternative drive systems" today, they were originally considered to be an equal alternative. Even in the first edition in 1898, "The electric taxi cabs in New York," **FIGURE 2**, were worthy of a photographic report. Since then, ATZ has focused on electric mobility with varying levels of intensity and has also included the commercial vehicle sector. In its cover story in 1941, ATZ reported on electric trolleybuses for local public transportation and published a photo of the AEG test vehicle of 1898, **FIGURE 3**.

According to the German version of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, "Automotive engineers were already working intensively on fuel cell passenger cars around 1995." But more than two decades before that, in its November 1971 edition, ATZ had already reported on Union Carbide's test vehicle based on the Austin A40, **FIGURE 4**. "The car is equipped with an electric drive system consisting of a 6 kW DC motor powered by a 6 kW H_2/O_2 fuel cell combined with a lead-acid storage battery."

In 1987, ATZ published a technical article on a special drive element that was still under development. It was the "Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK)," which miraculously "does not require a clutch pedal." The article is illustrated with a detailed representation of all the transmission's components, which was without doubt of great interest to engineers. Looking ahead, the Porsche engineers commented at the time: "It is conceivable that, depending on their mood, drivers may be able to choose between driving a semi-automatic or fully automatic car simply by flipping a switch."

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