Albert Speer
20th Century Personality

Contents

Speer Lecture Notes 2-11
A Speer Chronology 11
The Life of Albert Speer 12
Judging Albert Speer 13-17
Albert Speer (from Wikipedia) 18-20
Architecture and Design in Nazi Germany 21
Albert Speer - Failed Penitent 22-25
Interviews with Gitta Sereny 26-27
Albert Speer (from HSC OnLine) 28
Albert Speer and the Immorality of the technicians 29-33
Speer Affadavit - 1977 33
The Führer’s Buildings by Albert Speer 34-35
Speer Book Reviews 36-41
Wartime reports debunk Speer as the Good Nazi 41
Cross-examination of Albert Speer 42-56
Images of the Zeppelin Field at Nuremberg 57
The type of questions you are likely to receive:

Describe the rise to prominence of the Twentieth Century personality you have studied. (10 marks)

'Those who are inspired by an ideal rather than self-interest make the biggest impact on history.'

To what extent does the study of your personality support this view? (15 marks)

Time allowance:
18 minutes for Part A – heavy factual content
27 minutes for Part B – argument, richly supported with factual content

Speer’s background and context

- wealth and privilege
- highly educated and cultured
- apolitical – but that was part of the Weimar Republic’s problem
- professionally trained 1923-1927 as an architect at Institute of Technology near Karlsruhe, then the Institute of Technology in Munich and finally at the Institute of Technology in Berlin-Charlottenburg. In Berlin studies under Professor Heinrich Tessenow
- 1928 – gets a job as Tessenow’s assistant at the Institute of Technology in Berlin-Charlottenburg
- 1929 – Depression hits Germany

Speer’s susceptibility to Nazism

- Nazi’s appealed to the middle class, professionals, farmers, conservatives, big business
- modern trends – breakdown of established order – sexual liberation – new forms of art and music
- economic chaos/disorder – rising fear of communism – Russia provided unpleasant role model
- deep resentment over World War One – Dolchstoss – Versailles – November Criminals

Speer’s decision to join the Nazi Party

- 5 December 1930 – hears Hitler speak to 5000 professors and students at the Neue Welt (New World) assembly room at the Neuköllner Hasenheide beer hall in Berlin and is captivated.
- long walk in a pine forest to reflect – hope that “peril of communism could be checked” and that “economic recovery” was possible.
- a few weeks later in January 1931 – hears Goebbels at the Berlin Sportpalast. Less impressed but disturbed to see crowd mistreated by police in the street after the meeting. The next day he applies for membership of the Nazi Party. Becomes member 474,481 of the Nazi Party. Joins SA at the same time.
- He is sent to Munich for Hitler’s approval – briefly meets the Führer – plans are “agreed”
- Later appointed to assist Troost in renovating the Chancellery in Berlin – Troost was from Munich and was not familiar with the building industry in Berlin – Speer was. Speer added a balcony from which Hitler could
present himself to the crowds below.

- Troost dies – 21 January 1934 – Speer appointed Hitler’s architect at age of 28
- Speer given the commission to design the Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg in 1934
- Speer becomes one of the Obersalzberg elite in 1937
  - The Berghof
  - Speer’s House
  - Speer’s Studio
- The relationship between Speer and the Führer

### The neo-classical style of Nazi architecture

- Modernist style before the Nazis – the Bauhaus school of architecture – Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe – not embraced by the Nazis – Nazis ban the Bauhaus in 1933 after coming to power
- Nazis opposed modernism – instead they embraced
- a quaint vernacular style for housing – e.g. thatch rooves in Saxony, wide eaves in Bavaria
- monumental neo-classical style for public buildings

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Paul Ludwig Troost

Speer’s studio on the Obersalzberg

The Berghof

The site of the Berghof today - almost nothing left

The Berghof terrace

Speer’s house on the Obersalzberg

The Bauhaus
• Classical architecture of Greece and Rome – Doric and Ionic architecture as the inspiration
• Nazi architecture was modelled on Greek temples, Renaissance palaces, baroque castles and classicist buildings of the Empire period

The classical architecture of Ancient Rome

• Buildings were large, stone buildings to represent the power and ideology of the state – designed to legitimise and consolidate the new form of government
• Built to last for 1000 years
• Speer proposed “Theory of Ruin Value” which Hitler embraced – even in ruin, the buildings would look impressive and would inspire future generations

Examples of Nazi architecture in the neo-classical style:
• The Air Ministry

The Air Ministry building as it still exists today

• The New Reich Chancellery – constructed in less than one year in 1938

Part of a model of the new Reich Chancellery

A model of the new Reich Chancellery

• The House of German Art – designed by Paul Ludwig Troost

The House of German Art in Munich

Gall, Hitler and Speer inspecting the House of German Art

• The Berlin Olympic Stadium – designed by Werner March, completed by Speer

The model of the Berlin Olympic Stadium site
The remains of the Congress Hall today

The Berlin Olympic Stadium during the games

- The Reichsparteitagsgelände (Reich Party Day Grounds) in Nuremberg
- The Luitpold Arena – liturgy of ceremony honouring the “blood flag” devised by Hitler and Speer
- The Congress Hall – today the venue for Documentation Centre Nuremberg
- The German Stadium – 400,000 spectators for Aryan Games (replacement for Olympic Games)
- The Zeppelin Field – expanded to hold 340,000 spectators
- The “Cathedral of Light” – 130 searchlights at 1934 rally and subsequent rallies

A photograph from the Documentation Centre Nuremberg showing the buildings both built and intended for the Nuremberg Reich Party Days Grounds

A diagram of the Reichsparteitagsgelände in Nürnberg showing the relative sizes of the constructions

The Zeppelin Field with its Zeppelin Tribune designed by Albert Speer. This field was the site of the many of the massed rallies of the Reich Party Days.
Reconstruction of the Pergamon Altar in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin

Model of the Pergamon Altar that provided Speer with his inspiration for the Zeppelin Tribune in Nuremberg

The Parthenon - a Greek building much admired by Speer

The Court of Honour in the new Reich Chancellery

The Luitpold Arena

The "Cathedral of Light"

The remains of the Zeppelin Tribune today

Mosaic Room 24/4/45

New Reich Chancellery

The Mosaic Room in the new Reich Chancellery
The Berlin Olympic Stadium today

The columns surrounding the Berlin Olympic Stadium

The Berlin Olympic Stadium from the Bell Tower

The Marble Hall in the new Reich Chancellery

The proposed interior of the Congress Hall

The exterior of the Congress Hall today

The rear of the House of German Art today

A model of the proposed German Stadium in Nuremberg
• The German Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World Exhibition – 500 feet high – designed to appear to stop the advance of communism - won a gold medal. The model of the Zeppelin Field won a Grand Prix.

Speer’s plans for the reconstruction of the Reich Capital – Germania
• 30 January 1937 – appointed Inspector General of Buildings for the renovation of the Reich Capital
• giant north-south axis – 4 miles long – 400 street lamps crossed by an east-west axis
• Triumphal Arch – sketched by Hitler in 1925 – 95 metres wide – 120 metres high – Arc de Triomphe could fit within its arch!
• The Volkshalle - domed hall – 200 metres high, 300 metres in diameter. 17 times the size of the dome of St Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican
• Jews evicted to make way for rebuilding and to rehouse Germans similarly evicted

The Volkshalle viewed through the Triumphant Arch

The Volkshalle towering over the nearby Reichstag

The Parisian Arc de Triomphe to be dwarfed by Speer’s plan

The front of the Volkshalle
Speer’s appointment as Minister for Armaments
• 8 February 1942 - Albert Speer assumes Todt's position after Todt was killed in a plane crash.

Speer’s achievements as Minister for Armaments
• quickly became adept at political manoeuvring and infighting – transformed ministry into a dominant force
• tank production increased five fold
• aircraft production increased fourfold
• production peaked in 1944, in spite of round-the-clock allied bombing
• not permitted to use women for labour so resorted to forced labour from the occupied territories
• war was extended as a result
• but can we rely on the production figures?

Defying the Führer
• defied scorched earth orders of the Führer, at the risk of his own life.
• claims he planned to assassinate Hitler in the Bunker
• visited Hitler in Berlin on 24 April 1945 to tell him he countermanded his orders

Trial and imprisonment
• The Nuremberg Trial Indictments
  1. Conspiracy to commit crimes against peace
  2. Planning, initiating and waging wars of aggression
  3. War-Crimes
  4. Crimes against humanity
Indictments presented in Berlin - 18 October 1945
Trial begins in Nuremberg - 20 November 1945
Albert Speer testifies - 21 June 1946
Sentences delivered - 1 October 1946
  12 - death (including Bormann in absentia)
  3 - life imprisonment
  2 - 20 years

The court in progress in Nuremberg

The Room 600 courtroom in Nuremberg today

The building in which the Nuremberg Trial was held

Speer - 20 years on counts 3 and 4
1 - 15 years imprisonment
1 - 10 years imprisonment
3 - acquitted

Speer was indicted on all four points and was found guilty on points 3 and 4 and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment that he served in Spandau Prison from 1946 to 1966.

Death sentences carried out by hanging - 16 October 1946

The relics of Speer’s architectural work for the Nazis
• The red marble from the new Reich Chancellery – now in Mohrenstrasse U-Bahn Station, Berlin
• and in the Soviet War Memorial at Treptower Park, Berlin
• The Guard Houses at the Victory Column in Berlin
• The street lamps near the Victory Column in Berlin
Speer Guilty or Innocent?

- Naive non-political technocrat?
- Committed fascist, exploitative racist and clever liar?
- Did he not work with missionary fervour for his Führer?
- Did not the Führer’s death bring tears to his eyes?
- Did he not join the SA as well as the Nazi Party?
- He visited the Mauthausen Concentration Camp on 30 March 1943. It had previously been a granite quarry and it was converting to an armaments factory – but he claimed not to have seen mistreatment of workers. This was his only visit to a concentration camp.
- Was he at Himmler’s speech in Posen on 6 October 1943? Did he know? “The weight of the evidence about the extent of his knowledge of the crimes is indeed crushing,” concludes Fest.
- He met the gauleiters, including Hanke, at Rastenburg on 7 October 1943 – Sereny says he must have been told.
- He personally visited the Mittelwerk Plant (Dora) in the Harz Mountains where V2 rockets were being manufactured on 10 December 1943 – he knew the conditions of the slave labourers.
- In the summer of 1944, Karl Hanke warned him not to visit Auschwitz.
- So why did British and American prosecutors at Nuremberg not press for the death penalty?
- Sereny says he gave the judges what they wanted – legitimacy for the trial process.
- Speer’s subordinate (Fritz Sauckel) was hanged – of the 5 million workers forced to work in Germany, thousands died of illness, malnutrition and overwork.
- But Speer did, alone among the Nazis:
  - recognise, even if late, the enormity of the Nazis’ crimes
  - accepted responsibility for his role in the Nazi regime, against legal advice
  - expected the death sentence, but still accepted responsibility
  - acknowledge the appropriateness of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials
  - return to society a penitent and anonymously donated much of his book profits to Holocaust survivors

A Speer Chronology

19 March 1905 - Albert Speer born, Mannheim Germany.
1923-1927 – Trains as an architect at Institute of Technology near Karlsruhe, then the Institute of Technology in Munich and finally at the Institute of Technology in Berlin-Charlottenburg. In Berlin studies under Professor Heinrich Tessenow.
1928 – gets a job as an assistant at the Institute of Technology in Berlin-Charlottenburg.
5 December 1930 – Hears Hitler speak to students at the Hasenheide Beer Hall and is entranced.
January 1931 – He becomes member 474,481 of the Nazi party.
1 May 1933 - May Day rally at the Tempelhof Field, which Speer designs.
1933 - Developes a close personal friendship with Adolf Hitler.
21 January 1934 – Paul Ludwig Troost, Hitler’s architect, dies.
1934 - Designs the new Zeppelin Field at Nuremberg.
1935 – Speer invited to live on the Obersalzberg in close proximity to Hitler’s Berghof.
1936 – Berlin Olympic Games – original stadium designed by Werner March – remodelled by Speer.

Early 1937 – appointed Inspector General of Buildings for the renovation of the Reich Capital (Germany).
1937 – Speer’s design for the German Pavilion at the Paris World Exposition wins a gold medal.
January – December 1938 – supervises building of the new Reich Chancellery.
8 February 1942 - Albert Speer assumes Todt’s position after Todt was killed in a plane crash.
30 March 1943 – Albert Speer visits Mauthausen concentration camp as it was being switched from forced labour in a granite quarry to a munitions factory.
6 October 1943 – Himmler speaks at Posen Castle outlining the nature of The Final Solution.

19 March 1945 – Hitler calls for the application of a “scorched earth” policy.
April 1945 - Adolf Hitler expresses the opinion that among his cabinet, Speer is the “best of them all.”
24 April 1945 – Speer’s final visit to Berlin. He confesses to Adolf Hitler that he has been countermanding his orders for scorched earth.
30 April 1945 – Hitler suicides.
1 October 1946 – Speer sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.
1 October 1966 – Released, along with Hitler Youth leader Baldur von Schirach, from Spandau prison in Berlin after their twenty-year sentence. This leaves one solitary prisoner maintained at the facility, Rudolf Hess.
1969 - Inside the Third Reich (Erinnerungen [Recollections]), 1200 pages secretly written while in Spandau.

Speer’s deputy, Fritz Sauckel (on left)

Hitler the architect with Speer
Albert Speer, the son of an architect, was born in Mannheim, Germany 19 March 1905. He grew up in the family residence in the picturesque university town of Heidelberg under rather emotionally cold conditions. Like his father and grandfather before him, young Albert studied hard and became an architect, though Speer himself actually had preferred a degree in mathematics. Once he completed his architectural studies in Munich he took up a junior academic position at the Institute of Technology in Berlin-Charlottenburg and became assistant to Professor Heinrich Tessenow, a champion of simple craftsmanship in architecture. Tessenow would later be critical of the monumental scale of Speer's plans for Berlin.

He met and fell in love with Margarete Weber, a lovely open-minded girl. After completing his studies they got married but without the blessing of the Speer family as his fiancée was not of the same social class as the Speer family but in time the Speers came to accept Albert’s choice of his wife.

In January 1931, Speer joined the NSDAP and soon was offered a succession of commissions for the party. He felt fortunate to have been given this opportunity to build and create in a world full of unemployment. His talent and ability were quickly recognised and soon he came to the attention of the leader of the party, Adolf Hitler.

Because of the same burning interest for architecture Speer became one of Hitler's best friends. This friendship was different to the others around the Führer as Speer had no political intentions and was not eager for power. In 1933 Hitler was appointed Chancellor. After proving his skills in a variety of small and large projects Speer spent more and more time in the "inner circle" at the Führer's side.

Hitler demanded buildings that could stand the test of time and last for a thousand years! Hitler believed that in Speer he had found the man who would enable him to realise his dream. To create buildings that would last for a thousand years was a real challenge! Speer was asked to build the new Reich's chancellery and he accepted. Construction commenced in January 1938 and Hitler needed the building completed within the year but Speer assured him that it all would be ready in time! This was a promise Speer probably wished he had not given as it seemed impossible to complete the large official building in that time. Hitler was amused as he wanted to see if the young architect really could manage to do what he promised. Albert Speer employed an army of labourers to work in shifts. He planned everything in detail, supervised it all and was able to take an impressed Hitler for a tour before the date agreed upon. The Führer expected to find workers on the site at least making last minute adjustments, but the place was not a construction site - it was a huge impressively Reich Chancellery ready to be used at that very moment! Through this Speer proved that he was not only a talented architect but also a great organiser.

Together Hitler and Speer made plans for the new Berlin, a capital that was to be the finest and most important in all of Europe. Indeed, it was anticipated that this would be the new world capital and it would be renamed Germania. All was set to be completed in the early 1950's but the work was finally halted by the war.

When Doctor Fritz Todt, the genius behind the great autobahn project, died in a plane crash on 8 February 1942 Hitler chose Speer ahead of Göring to succeed Todt as Reichsminister for Armaments and Munitions. Speer was never interested in politics, never used a military weapon and knew nothing of armaments but responded to the call of duty and accepted. His genius proved adaptable and he soon proved himself to be the right man for the job. He mobilised German industry by introducing principles of mass production, "democratic" economic leadership, improvisation, and a general anti-bureaucratic approach that resulted in a dramatic boost in German production. The result was that things ran smoother, better and faster. As usual he acted without pretence and won the hearts and minds of his colleagues and workers around Germany and even in some of the occupied Western countries. Speer became a powerful man despite (or thanks to) his unconventional methods. He tried to minimise bureaucracy and keep the working men and women in mind.

At the end of the war he did his best to save Germany’s infrastructure and even whole German cities from destruction for the sake of the German people. At great personal risk he disobeyed Hitler's orders calling for the ruthless demolition of anything of possible use to the enemy on evacuated German territory. In addition, he actively enlisted others to preserve resources for German reconstruction once the war was over by using his position to countermand Hitler's orders. He couldn't see how making the civilians suffer even more could change a war that was already lost.

After Hitler's suicide, and in accord with his political testament, Karl Dönitz, the commander of the Navy, was appointed the new Führer. As most of Germany was occupied by allied forces and Berlin was lost, Dönitz, Speer and a few others where left with only a small area of Germany and some occupied territories to the north over which to rule. Dönitz ordered the end of the destruction of resources in Germany and the remaining occupied territories. He also tried to negotiate a peace treaty but in the end had to surrender unconditionally.

After the war, Speer was the only one of the accused to accept responsibility at the Nuremberg trials. His life was spared but he was sentenced to twenty long years in prison. Dönitz who wasn't politically involved until the very end received a ten year sentence.

During the years of imprisonment, Speer kept in contact with his family and in secrecy started to write his memoirs. In 1966 he was released from Spandau prison and in 1969 his memoirs were published, first in Germany under the title Erinnerungen (Recollections) and later in English-speaking countries under the title Inside the Third Reich. He later published Spandau: The Secret Diaries which told the tale of his twenty years in Spandau prison.

The great architect and organiser Albert Speer passed away in London in 1981.
Judging Albert Speer
by James Mason

Trying to judge Albert Speer as an architect

Architectural megalomania

Hitler's conception of architecture was highly political. Speer remembers Hitler talking frequently about the impact of architecture on people's attitudes to ancient civilisations. 'All that remained to remind men of the great epochs of history was their monumental architecture, he would philosophise. What had remained of the Emperors of Rome? What would be left to witness to them if their buildings had not survived?'29 Hitler's orders to Speer regarding the nature and scale of Germania make it clear that he wanted to ensure that the Third Reich left a lasting and powerful impression for all time. The major buildings were to be in the classic Greek style and all were to be enormous: the Great Stadium in Nuremberg would hold 400,000 spectators, the great domed hall in Berlin (Volkshalle) would hold 150,000. The dimensions were intended to dwarf the buildings that inspired them: the Great Hall would be five times larger than St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, the great north-south avenue would be two and half times longer and also wider than the Champs Elysées, and the Arch of Triumph would be over twice as tall as its Parisian namesake. Furthermore, the constant redevelopment of the Führer's Chancellery gives us an idea about how Hitler's plans for the dimensions of his buildings developed throughout the Third Reich. In his autobiography, Speer points out that the floor plans for Hitler's new Chancellery building for Germania (which was never built) involved a massive expansion of the original building, which in itself had been rebuilt in 1931. From the former Chancellery, built in 1931, Hitler's aspirations had now multiplied seventy-fold. That gives you some idea of the proportions by which his megalomania had evolved.30

Well after the event, Speer labelled these dimensions as examples of megalomania. However, the Dutch historian Dan van der Vat is convinced that Speer was as great a megalomaniac as Hitler: 'It cannot be emphasised too strongly that Speer expanded on his patron's plans, increasing the dimensions of the Great Dome and other features. Megalomania was undoubtedly the driving force ...'31 Further evidence can be obtained from examining Speer's book Inside the Third Reich (1970). When discussing Hitler's reaction to his new Chancellery in 1939 and its impact on his plans for a new Chancellery in Germania, Speer says: 'Hitler was well pleased with the long hike the diplomats had to take in the recently completed Chancellery ... I therefore doubled the distance [in the new building] .. making it somewhat more than a quarter of a mile.' 32 So on this occasion it was Speer who initiated the enormous dimensions of the plan for the Germania Chancellery. In reality, if Speer did indulge in this sort of behaviour it was in the clear knowledge that Hitler would approve. Hitler may well have been a megalomaniac and Speer may have shared these dreams, but Speer was the architect acting for a client and it is Hitler's dreams that dominated the size and shape of the new plans.

The fate of Berlin's Jews

A further criticism of Speer focuses on the human cost of his actions as Hitler's architect and as Inspector-General of Buildings in Berlin. In April 1939 the Nuremberg Laws were amended to include the Tenancy Agreement with Jews. This enabled landlords to evict Jewish people 'if alternative accommodation was available'. In the early stage, the eviction of Berlin's Jews from their homes was an administrative issue that would not necessarily have come to Speer's attention. Responsibility had been given to the Building Inspectorate and it would have witnessed Departmental abuses. By 1941 with the British bombing of Berlin, accommodation was desperately needed for those who were homeless. In March 1941 a meeting was held at Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda to discuss what to do with the remaining 60,000 to 70,000 Jews living in Berlin. Goebbels was represented at the meeting by Leopold Gutterer, Speer and the Building Inspectorate by Clahes, and the SS by Adolf Eichmann. Eichmann was asked to deal with the problem, and his superior, Reinhard Heydrich, did so quickly, arranging the transportation of the Berlin Jews to the ghettos of Eastern Europe and, eventually, to extermination camps such as Auschwitz. Goebbels made comments about the meeting in his famous diary, but for many years it was not clear whether Speer was informed of the meeting or its results. Speer was asked about this issue at the Nuremberg War Trials of 1946.

While denying any knowledge of or responsibility for what had happened to the Jews, Speer did claim to be 'overcome by an unbearable feeling of failure and inadequacy' and that he had been blind to their fate as a result of burying himself in his work.33 This denial of prior knowledge but expression of regret was accepted, if only because there was no evidence to contradict it.

The Chronik problem

In 1969 research by the British historian David Irving in the Bundesarchiv in Germany and the Imperial War Museum in London brought to light evidence that Speer had indeed been briefed by his representative, Dietrich Clahes, on the important meeting and therefore would have known what was to happen to Berlin's Jews.

With an eye to the future, between January 1941 and December 1944 Speer's assistant Rudolf Wolters had kept a daily written record of the work done by Speer, which Speer read and initialled regularly. At the end of the war, the original Chronik (as it was called) was hidden from the Allies and was secretly presented by Wolters to Speer upon his release from prison in 1966. Recognising its historical importance, and also with an eye to self-promotion, Speer gave the Chronik to the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz so that it could be read by future historians. The writer Gitta Sereny is convinced that Speer did not know that, over the previous twenty years, Wolters had amended the Chronik in places that would be embarrassing to Speer. This process of alteration came to light when David Irving noticed that the original Chronik in the Bundesarchiv and the version in the Imperial War Museum contained minor differences. On Wolters' death in 1983 the full and unedited version of the Chronik was given to the Bundesarchiv, and within it there were references to the meeting on the Berlin Jews, initialled by Speer. Therefore, Speer did know about this meeting, would have known that the Jews would be transported east, and had lied about it at Nuremberg.

In 1982 the historian Matthias Schmidt used this discrepancy to write an attack on Speer. It was called The End of the Myth and it argued that Speer had systematically 'laundered' the versions of these events in order to hide his knowledge and therefore his guilt. Gitta Sereny was more cautious in her conclusions. 'I am convinced,' she wrote, 'that although Speer certainly knew by 1941 that the Berlin Jews were being deported, it is virtually certain he had no idea they were going to their death.'34 Despite this limited defence, it is clear that Speer had lied at the Nuremberg War Trials and for many years after about his knowledge of the fate of the Jews of Berlin.

Trying to judge Albert Speer as head of armament production

Speer's success

Speer's leadership had a remarkable effect on German armament manufacturing. During his tenure the production of guns, tanks, planes and ammunition all rose significantly. The new Mark II Panzer tank of 1943 required 50 per cent fewer man-hours to produce than its predecessor, while output per worker rose 60 per cent between 1939 and 1944.
despite the intense Allied bombing.

Speer gave some of the credit for the ideas he used so successfully to a previous wartime German leader of armaments production. The real creator of the concept of industrial self-responsibility was Walther Rathenau, the great Jewish organiser of the German economy during the First World War. He realised that considerable increases in production could be achieved by exchange of technical experiences, by division of labour from plant to plant and by standardisation.35 However, it is Speer himself who receives the credit for the production increases achieved after his appointment as Reich Minister for Armaments in February 1942. The British historian Allan Bullock commented: ‘...by 1944 he was responsible for the whole of the German war economy, with fourteen million workers under his direction. It was Speer who, by a remarkable feat of organisation, patched-up the bombed communications and factories, and somehow or other maintained the bare minimum of transport and production without which the war on the German side would have come to a standstill. Without Speer, Hitler would have lacked the power to stage his fight to the finish.’36

Can we trust the figures?

The first criticism of Speer’s work in this field comes from Dan van der Vat. He focuses on the means by which the production figures have been so carefully calculated and preserved, given the chaos of Germany in 1945. He comments:

Speer somehow managed ... at the end of January 1945 to draw up a Rechenschaftsbericht [an account of his stewardship of the Ministry], addressed to his 300 most senior associates and dated 27 January. This enormous report ran to 10,000 words ... and contained a mass of production statistics upon which Speer’s reputation as an economic miracle-worker largely rests. 37

In other words, van der Vat is very reluctant to make a judgment of Speer’s success that is so dependent on statistics and data that Speer himself prepared. Van der Vat sees the Rechenschaftsbericht as a deliberate attempt by Speer to secure a favourable judgment from history and historians, particularly as he knew that there would be few other sources of such detailed information. Although this may be a harsh conclusion, as there is plenty of anecdotal evidence of Speer’s success, van der Vat is correct to point out the difficulties in making conclusions based on evidence drawn from a single source, particularly when that source is written by the person under investigation.

The use of slave labour

Rather like the issue of Berlin’s Jews, the second criticism of Speer’s success in armament production focuses on the human cost. Much of the increase in armament production rested on the exploitation of foreign workers and prisoners of war, often in horrendous conditions. Speer claimed that the appropriation of these men was the responsibility of his deputy, Fritz Sauckel. The same Nuremberg court that gave Sauckel the death penalty in 1945 also sentenced him to death for his part in the Holocaust. However, Speer admitted that he was impressed by the early tests he witnessed of the V1 rockets. The weapons were produced at Peenemünde on the Baltic coast, and in 1944, 5500 V1 weapons were launched at London and other targets. When allied bombing destroyed Peenemünde, production of the new, more deadly V2 rocket began at the Dora manufacturing site in the Harz Mountains. In this underground complex of caves and bunkers thousands of prisoners worked on the V2 program, a weapon with a one-tonne warhead and a speed of 4800 kilometres per hour. The control of the prisoners was the responsibility of the SS.

Conditions for the prisoners at Dora were extreme. They worked in permanent semi-darkness, there was no medical support, and the death rate was close to 7 per cent per month. On 10 December 1943 Speer visited Dora and saw the full horror of the SS rule. A French worker, Jean Michel, described the site in his 1975 book Dora:

The missile slaves ... from France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Russia, Poland and Germany ... toiled eighteen hours a day ... for many weeks without tools, just with their bare hands ... ammonia dust burnt their lungs ... they slept in the tunnels in cavities which were hollowed out: 1024 prisoners in hollows on four levels which stretched for 100 yards ... We all had dysentery. They laughed and laughed when we tried to get up and out of the shit.39

Sixty thousand men were sent to work at Dora and thirty thousand died. Speer admitted that the scenes at Dora had appalled him: ‘the air in the cave was cool, damp, and stale, and it stank of excrement. The lack of oxygen made me dizzy too.’40 Although Speer did order improvements for the workers at Dora, including the construction of a new hospital to care for the many wounded prisoners, the success of his efforts were well looked after. But if the visit to Mauthausen does not ruin Speer’s version of events, his visit to the labour site at Dora certainly does.

The Dora missile factory

During the war Germany had begun the production of rockets. These were called the V weapons (V for Vergeltung or retribution), and although Speer himself never placed much faith in these so-called ‘miracle’ weapons he nonetheless gave high priority to the rocket program. Hitler believed that the new weapons would win the war, and even Speer admitted that he was impressed by the early tests he witnessed of the V1 rockets. The weapons were produced at Peenemünde on the Baltic coast, and in 1944, 5500 V1 weapons were launched at London and other targets. When allied bombing destroyed Peenemünde, production of the new, more deadly V2 rocket began at the Dora manufacturing site in the Harz Mountains. In this underground complex of caves and bunkers thousands of prisoners worked on the V2 program, a weapon with a one-tonne warhead and a speed of 4800 kilometres per hour. The control of the prisoners was the responsibility of the SS.

Conditions for the prisoners at Dora were extreme. They worked in permanent semi-darkness, there was no medical support, and the death rate was close to 7 per cent per month. On 10 December 1943 Speer visited Dora and saw the full horror of the SS rule. A French worker, Jean Michel, described the site in his 1975 book Dora:

The missile slaves ... from France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Russia, Poland and Germany ... toiled eighteen hours a day ... for many weeks without tools, just with their bare hands ... ammonia dust burnt their lungs ... they slept in the tunnels in cavities which were hollowed out: 1024 prisoners in hollows on four levels which stretched for 100 yards ... We all had dysentery. They laughed and laughed when we tried to get up and out of the shit.39

Sixty thousand men were sent to work at Dora and thirty thousand died. Speer admitted that the scenes at Dora had appalled him: ‘the air in the cave was cool, damp, and stale, and it stank of excrement. The lack of oxygen made me dizzy too.’40 Although Speer did order improvements for the workers at Dora, including the construction of a new hospital to care for the many wounded prisoners, the success of his efforts were well looked after. But if the visit to Mauthausen does not ruin Speer’s version of events, his visit to the labour site at Dora certainly does.

Trying to judge Albert Speer: did he know about the Holocaust?

At the Nuremberg War Trials, Speer denied knowledge of the Holocaust but accepted responsibility in so far as he had been a senior member of the government that carried it out. This helped to create a positive impression among the judges and watching media. The famous American journalist William Shirer noted: ‘Speer ... made the most straightforward impression of all ... during the long trial [he] spoke honestly and with no attempt to shirk his responsibility.
and his guilt." Speer maintained this line in his book Inside the Third Reich when it was published after his release from prison. However, since then evidence has come to light that during the Nazi period he knew far more about the Holocaust than he had previously admitted. This evidence focuses on two events: the first a speech by Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, to a meeting of Nazi officials in Posen, the second a number of visits Speer made to the Ukraine (in Russia).

**Himmler's speech at Posen**

In October 1971 Erich Goldhagen published an article entitled 'Albert Speer, Himmler and the Final Solution' in Midstream Magazine, about a secret meeting of the Nazi officials in Posen (eastern Germany) on 6 October 1943. He claimed that Speer had spoken in the morning about the efforts that some Nazi Gauleiters (Nazi leaders in charge of regions within the Reich) had made to obstruct a total mobilisation of the economy and how steps would be taken to prevent this. In the afternoon, however, Himmler spoke in full and frank detail about the Holocaust. For example, he said:

> With its few words, the sentence 'The Jews must be eradicated' is easily said, gentlemen. For him who must carry out what it requires, it is the very hardest and gravest task that exists ... I ask you truly just to listen to what I say to you in this circle, and never to talk about it.42

Goldhagen claims that Himmler was doing this on Hitler's orders, 'to draw everyone in the upper ranks of the Nazis into the net, so that no one could henceforth dare to break ranks, claiming innocence or ignorance'.43 Goldhagen was particularly interested in a part of the speech in which Himmler actually mentions Speer by name. Himmler was reiterating the message Speer had given earlier that day about overcoming obstructionism:

> So this ghetto made fur coats, clothes and suchlike. When we wanted to get at it earlier, it was said: Halt - you are disrupting the war economy! Halt - arms factory! Of course that has absolutely nothing to do with party comrade Speer, you can do nothing about it. It is the so-called arms plants that party comrade Speer and I will clean up in the next few weeks and months.44

The text in bold is highly significant. The only reason Himmler would say 'you can do nothing about it' is if Speer was sitting nearby and Himmler had chosen to look at him and acknowledge his help. When this article came out in 1971, Speer denied that he was at the afternoon session, claiming that he had set off to see Hitler at his headquarters in east Prussia. Knowing the damage this article would do, he even went so far as to get written statements from businessman Walter Rohland and the Posen conference organiser Harry Siegmund to support his claim. Ultimately, Speer's denial and the statements do not convince even his most supportive biographers. Gitta Sereny said, 'There is simply no way Speer can have failed to know about Himmler's speech, whether or not he actually sat through it. I believe that this was the turning point in his relationship with Hitler, even though it took a long time for it to be a complete reversal - if it ever was.'45 Sereny does not seem to believe Speer, but she also clearly makes the point that, even if he wasn't there in the afternoon, he knew and worked with plenty of people who were there. She finds it impossible to believe that none of them would have told Speer about Himmler's speech. One person present when Himmler spoke was Karl Hanke, Speer's close friend who had given him his early architectural commissions in the 1930s. Furthermore, the date of the meeting is significant, as it was only two months later that Speer visited Dora and saw an example of Himmler's methods and this was only a few weeks before Speer suffered a physical and nervous breakdown. Sereny is convinced that, after 1943 and the events at Posen and Dora, Speer knew about the Holocaust and knew how foreign workers were being treated.

**Dneprpetrovsk**

It is also possible that Speer had seen evidence of Nazi brutality well before Posen and Dora. On 20 January 1942 Speer visited the Ukrainian city of Dneprpetrovsk to see the construction and infrastructure work being done by one of his organisations. He would return a number of times over the course of that year. Only a few months before his first visit, the city had seen a highly public massacre of Jews. On 5 and 6 October 1941 Einsatzgruppe C, Kommando 5, under the command of SS General Friedrich Jackeln and the infamous Colonel Paul Blobel, had killed 30 000 Jews. Jackeln reported that the city's Jews were publicly herded to the outskirts of the city where they were machine-gunned and buried in the anti-tank ditches left by the Russians. Over the next five months, 'stragglers' were rounded up and shot in the old Jewish cemetery. The killings were done in such a way that they would have been widely known about by both the Germans and the Ukrainians. Gitta Sereny makes clear what she thinks about Speer's defence that he was never told: ‘... his persistent later claim that despite frequent trips to the front and the occupied eastern territories during the next years, and despite his increasingly wide circle of friends among the Wehrmacht command, he never knew anything of the horrors being committed there is entirely untenable.’46

**Trying to judge Albert Speer as Hitler's friend**

It is widely agreed that their common love of art and architecture meant that Albert Speer and Hitler were particularly close during the Third Reich. In his recent biography of Hitler, published in 2000, Ian Kershaw made the following observation:

> Probably the closest that Hitler came to friendship was in his relationship with Joseph Goebbels and, increasingly, with his court architect and new favourite, Albert Speer, whom in January 1937 he made responsible for the rebuilding of Berlin. Hitler frequently sought out their company, liked their presence, was fond of their wives and families, and could feel at ease with them.47

According to Kershaw, Hitler's reasons for friendship with Speer may actually have gone further: 'Hitler perhaps found in the handsome, burningly ambitious, talented and successful architect an unconsciously idealised self-image. ...'48 Therefore, their friendship could certainly have been the result of their shared interests, but it may also have been because Speer was everything that Hitler had wished he had been. Speer was born into a wealthy family, he was a success at school and university, and he was genuinely talented in those subjects that Hitler had wanted to specialise in. The German historian Joachim Fest, in his highly regarded study Speer: the Final Verdict (1999), is also fascinated by the nature of the bond between the two men. They were united by what he calls 'an emotional relationship'. He drew Speer to him like no one else, he singled him out and made him great.'49

**The relationship sours**

There are a number of theories as to why Speer's relationship with Hitler soured after 1943. Speer himself argued that his 1943 speech threatening the Gauleiters at Posen had helped the Party Chief Martin Bormann to isolate Speer from Hitler. Speer wrote:

> Bormann, it soon became plain, had at last found a way to undermine my standing with Hitler. He went on chipping away incessantly and for the first time with some success. I myself had given him the means. From now on I could no longer count on Hitler's support as a matter of course.50

Speer also blamed Bormann for manipulating the loyalty of his deputies, Karl Hanke and Xavier Dorch, and encouraging them to deal directly with Hitler, thereby weakening Speer.
However, there was much more to it than this. Speer's serious illness at the start of 1944 had two important effects on the relationship between Hitler and Speer. First, it removed Speer from the inner circle for a significant period, thereby breaking the previous close bond with Hitler. Speer described it in this way:

My illness had removed me too far from the true focus of power. Hitler. He reacted neither negatively or positively to all my suggestions, demands and complaints. I was addressing the empty air; he sent me no answer. I was no longer counted as Hitler's favourite Minister and one of his possible successors.\footnote{51}

Second, the extended recuperation period enabled Speer to re-evaluate his loyalties and the progress of the war. Van der Vat noted:

For Speer the long illness at the beginning of 1944 had brought disenchantment with Hitler personally. This was closely allied to a general disillusionment that was patchy ... but grew stronger as reality crowded in. Next came active disobedience, in the form of Speer's well-attested, effective resistance to Hitler's scorched-earth policy, accompanied by open dissent as he sent Hitler challenging memoranda and abdicated his day-to-day responsibility for arms production to Saur.\footnote{52}

Speer's opposition to the scorched-earth policy is widely discussed and is a matter of consensus among historians. In van der Vat's words again:

The International Military Tribunal \cite{at Nuremberg} gave Speer credit in its judgment on the main Nazi war criminals for resisting Hitler's scorched-earth policy, in the occupied western countries as well as Germany, 'at considerable personal danger to himself'.\footnote{53}

The disagreement between historians on this matter is over Speer's motivation. Some consider that these actions show a genuine souring of the relationship with Hitler. However, others, van der Vat included, believe that Speer was acting cynically, with an eye to the future once Germany had been defeated. An example of this is the reported discussions Speer had with his friend Dieter Stahl about planning to kill Hitler. If this is true, Speer had made the ultimate break from Hitler. It would appear that he might have become as disenchanted with Hitler and the Nazis as those who had helped the Stuaffenberg bomb plot of 1944 and therefore had moved to active opposition. Speer wrote:

Chance had brought me into closer personal relations with the head of our munitions production, Dieter Stahl ... I began discreetly asking about the new poison gas and whether he could obtain it. Although the request was extremely unusual, Stahl answered readily enough ... I found myself saying: 'It's the only way to bring the war to an end. I want to try to conduct the gas into the Chancellery bunker.'\footnote{54}

Many historians have doubted that Speer intended to kill Hitler, and van der Vat is particularly scathing about this:

Careful consideration leads to the conclusion that this 'gas the Führer' plot was no more than bunker bunkum ... Exactly two years before he allegedly planned to kill Hitler by introducing poison gas into the bunker ventilation system, Speer sanctioned precautions that made the whole harebrained scheme impossible in any event ... perhaps he forgot ... the assassination fantasy came in handy at Nuremberg, supported as it was by independent evidence from Stahl.\footnote{55}

Van der Vat argues that Speer would have known that it would have been impossible to kill Hitler in this manner because of the precautions he himself had ordered. However, in discussing the scheme with the industrialist Dieter Stahl, whom Speer had saved from the Gestapo, Speer knew he would have 'evidence' to use in his defence at any future war trial. An intelligent man, Speer was coming to the conclusion that the war would end with Germany's defeat and he began to manoeuvre himself for the aftermath of that defeat.

**Conclusion: the battle with truth**

Albert Speer was not only a highly intelligent man but also a very complex man who, with Hitler's sponsorship, built and designed enormous structures and received awards, fame and fortune as a result. Is it any wonder that he therefore idolised Hitler? In building the new Chancellery in 1938-39 and in designing Germany, Speer demonstrated a talent for organising major construction projects, on time and within budget. This led to his second career as the minister in charge of armament production. Speer was a huge success in this field, too. Production rose dramatically and Germany was able to continue fighting for three more years. Speer's problems began when he visited Dora and Posen and places like Dnepropetrovsk that confirmed the rumours that he had heard about the wild excesses of the Nazi regime. To continue working for Hitler would be to accept these crimes and to be guilty of complicity. To stop would be to break with his hero – Hitler - and to threaten all that he had achieved. From 1943 onwards he wrestled with this problem, privately at his desk, in prison after 1946, publicly at the Nuremberg War Trials and in print.

Many writers have suggested that his confession of guilt at Nuremberg was not genuine but rather a deliberate, planned and calculated act to avoid the death penalty. More recent research has now established that Speer certainly lied in some of his evidence at the trial. After his release in 1966 Speer presented himself as a decent civilised man who was full of remorse for his past actions. The press generally accepted this, and through his writings, which condemned the Nazi regime, he was seen as the 'repentant Nazi'. But was he a repentant Nazi?

In his book Albert Speer: The End of a Myth\cite{1989}, the German historian Matthias Schmidt condemns Speer unequivocally:

In the long run, however, historians will not and cannot be satisfied with Albert Speer's self-portrait: Too much of it is myth, legend; too little of it historical truth. We have no choice but to call Speer's writings the most cunning apologia [explanation] by any leading figure of the Third Reich.\footnote{56}

The Dutch historian Dani van der Vat is also a fierce critic:

The eviction of the Jews does not put Speer on the bridge of the SS Holocaust or even in the engine room; but he was in the first-class saloon, driving steerage passengers out into the gathering storm. And he was in the Captain's cabin when their subsequent fate was discussed over coffee and cake, as his memoirs deny but the diaries of Goebbels confirm. Of course he showed remorse. But remorse, regret for past action is not synonymous [the same] with contrition [sorrow], true repentance deriving from knowledge of one's guilt and a desire to atone. There can be no repentance without remorse; but there can certainly be remorse without repentance. If Speer was sorry, it was for himself.\footnote{57}

Van der Vat believes that Speer saw enough to know what was happening and showed remorse, but he does not believe that this is genuine repentance. He suggests that Speer was in fact just 'a liar, a fraud and a hypocrite'. He was a ruthless and very ambitious man, an opportunist who believed that this is genuine repentance. He suggests that Speer would have known that it was fact just 'a liar, a fraud and a hypocrite'. He was a ruthless and very ambitious man, an opportunist who worked hard and efficiently to meet his goals and support Hitler's war. To maintain this power base and this influence, Speer knew of the mass murders in the east but simply chose not to get involved. Speer never got over the brief time that he was rich, successful and Hitler's friend. For the rest of his life he had to apologise for the one thing that gave his life real meaning.\footnote{58}

In 1995 the Austrian journalist Gitta Sereny wrote a very important book, Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth. It was the end result of years of interviews and meetings with Speer, and a genuine bond of friendship developed between them. For a while Sereny actually lived in the Speer household and she came to have a sympathy and respect for the man.

Sereny saw Speer as an intensely lonely man, and Speer admitted that he had a loveless childhood, growing up without the capacity for human feeling. There was a missing dimension in Speer, the capacity to feel or to express pity, compassion or sympathy. He was, said Sereny, 'an emotionally blocked man'. He had always felt like an...
outsider, even in the days when he exercised great power in Nazi Germany. Other Nazi leaders treated him as an outsider, a man protected and elevated by his special friendship with Hitler. Unlike most of the Nazi leaders, he was highly educated, cultured, softly spoken and well mannered - in Nazi circles very much the odd man out. Perhaps it is only the matter of a loner's temperament,' said Speer. 'I have never quite belonged anywhere. In fact the closest Speer ever came to belonging was at Hitler's side, for here he found something close to happiness.

Speer also spoke to Gitta Sereny with an openness never seen before. Perhaps in the late 1970s he realised that his life was near its close and here was an attempt to unburden himself of guilt. Sereny comes closer than any other writer to revealing the real Albert Speer. She believes that he certainly knew of the murder of the Jews and that his constant refusal to face the issue was in fact the great lie of his life. He was a complex, withdrawn, unhappy man who felt a genuine and overwhelming sense of guilt that he found difficult to express. He lived in a 'twilight world between knowing and not knowing'. He had very few friends in his life, and he never felt relaxed. 'There was that wall between him and others,' writes Sereny, 'and he accepted it. He made do, I think, because he didn't know how to do anything else.'60

Gitta Sereny was more willing to believe that Speer had made a genuine commitment to repent:

Via Posen and Dora, at long last he acknowledged Hitler's madness; through the revelations at Nuremberg and the confrontation with the reactions of the civilised world came his realisation and horror at what had been done, his feelings of personal guilt, his wish, almost, for death and yet fear of execution. Out of all this - most of all, his continuing and tormenting awareness of guilt - out of all this, came to be another Speer.61

A few weeks before his death in 1981, Speer telephoned Gitta Sereny from his London hotel. She said she sounded happy and drunk. 'What I wanted to tell you was that after all I think I haven't done too badly,' he told her. 'After all I was Hitler's architect, I was his Minister for Armaments and Production, I did serve twenty years in Spandau and coming out I did make another career. Not bad after all, was it?'62

Notes

30 ibid., p. 227.
34 Sereny, op. cit., p. 228.
35 Speer, op. cit., p. 292.
37 van der Vat, op. cit., p. 226.
42 Quoted in van der Vat, op. cit., p. 167.
43 Sereny, op. cit., p. 389.
44 Quoted in van der Vat, op. cit., p. 167.
45 Sereny, op. cit., p. 402.
46 ibid., p. 285.
48 ibid., p. 35.
51 ibid., p. 446.
52 van der Vat, op. cit., p. 221.
53 ibid., p. 200.
54 Speer, op. cit., p. 576.
55 van der Vat, op. cit., p. 223.
57 van der Vat., op. cit., p. 368.
60 Sereny, op. cit., p. 149.
61 Sereny, op. cit., p. 718.

Transcript from the trial of Albert Speer, 1946

Jackson (prosecuting lawyer): You knew the policy of the Nazi Party and the policy of the government towards the Jews, did you not?

Speer: I knew that the National Socialist Party was anti-Semitic, and I knew that the Jews were being evacuated from Germany.

Jackson: In fact you participated in that evacuation, did you not?

Speer: No.


The Four Counts in the Nuremberg Indictment

1. Conspiracy to commit crimes against peace
2. Planning, initiating and waging wars of aggression
3. War-Crimes
4. Crimes against humanity

Speer was indicted on all four counts. He was found guilty of 3 and 4 and sentenced to from four to twenty years of imprisonment

The Nuremberg judgements - an original document
Albert Speer
from Wikipedia

(March 19, 1905 – September 1, 1981) was born Berthold Konrad Hermann Albert Speer in Mannheim, Germany, the second of three sons. He is sometimes called 'the first architect of the Third Reich'. He was Hitler's chief architect in Nazi Germany and in 1942 became Hitler's minister for armaments and had considerable success reforming and streamlining Germany's war production. After the war Speer was tried at Nuremberg where he expressed remorse and was sentenced to 20 years in Spandau prison. After his release, he became a successful author, writing a number of semi-autobiographical works until his death in London in 1981 from natural causes.

Early years

Although Speer was an architect, he originally wanted to become a mathematician when he was young. He ended up following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and studied architecture. He began his architectural studies at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology; his decision to study locally instead of at one of the more prestigious institutes was dictated by the inflation of 1923. In 1924 when the inflation had stabilized, Speer transferred his studies to the more esteemed Munich Institute of Technology. In 1925 he transferred again, this time to the Berlin Institute of Technology. It was there that he was under the tutelage of Heinrich Tessenow, Speer had a high regard for Tessenow and when he passed his exams in 1927 he became Tessenow's assistant. His duties as assistant involved teaching seminar classes three days a week. Although Tessenow himself never agreed with Nazism, a number of his students did, and it was they who persuaded Speer to attend a Nazi Party rally in Neue Welt (New World) assembly room at the Neuköllner Hasenheide beer-hall in Berlin on 5 December 1930.

Speer claims to have been apolitical as a young man; nevertheless, he did attend the rally. He was surprised to find Hitler dressed in a neat blue suit, rather than the brown uniform seen on Nazi Party posters. Speer claimed to have been quite affected, not only with Hitler's proposed solutions to the threat of communism and his renunciation of the Weimar Republic, but also with the man himself. Several weeks later in January 1931 he attended another rally at the Berlin Sportpalast, though this one was presided over by Joseph Goebbels. Speer was disturbed by the way he had whipped the crowd into a frenzy, playing on their hopes. Although Goebbels' performance offended Speer, he could not shake the impressions Hitler made on him. After the rally he witnessed police abusing Nazi supporters in the streets. The next day he joined the Nazi Party as member number 474,481. In this same year (1931) he married Margarete Weber.

Speer's first major commission as a Party member came in 1932 when Karl Hanke (whose villa Speer previously worked on) recommended him to Goebbels to help renovate the new District Headquarters in Berlin, and, later, to renovate Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry. While working at the Propaganda Ministry he happened to see the designs for the May Day rally on 1 May 1933 at Tempelhof field. He sneeringly commented that they looked like the "decorations for a rifle club meet". When Karl Hanke asked if he could do anything, Speer replied that he could and was given the task to help Paul Troost renovate the Chancellery in Berlin after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933. Originally from Munich, Troost had few contacts in Berlin and Speer was able to assist his in this regard. Speer's most notable work on this assignment was the addition of the famous balcony from which Hitler often presented himself to crowds that assembled below. Speer subsequently became a prominent member of Hitler's inner circle and a very close friend to him, winning a special place with Hitler that was unique amongst the Nazi leadership. He was invited to live on the Obersalzberg above Berchtesgaden in 1937 and was often invited to spend the weekend at the Berghof with Hitler discussing architectural plans for the new Germany. Hitler, according to Speer, was very contemptuous towards anybody he viewed as part of the bureaucracy, and prized fellow artists like Speer whom he felt a certain kinship with, especially as Hitler himself had previously entertained architectural ambitions.

First Architect of the Reich

When Troost died on 21 January 1934, Speer was chosen to replace him as the Party's chief architect. One of his first commissions after promotion was perhaps the most familiar of his designs: the Zeppelintribune, the Nuremberg parade grounds seen in Leni Riefenstahl's propaganda masterpiece, Triumph of the Will.

The grounds were based on ancient Doric architecture of the Pergamon Altar in Anatolia, but magnified to an enormous scale, capable of holding two hundred and forty thousand people. At the 1934 Party rally on the parade grounds, Speer surrounded the site with one hundred and thirty anti-aircraft searchlights. This created the effect of a "cathedral of light," (which referenced columns) or, as it was called by British Ambassador Sir Neville Henderson, a "cathedral of ice". Nuremberg was also to be the site of many more official Nazi buildings, most of which were never built; for example, the German Stadium would have held another four hundred thousand spectators as the site of the Aryan Games, a proposed replacement for the Olympic Games. The Congress Hall was one of the Nuremberg buildings that was completed. While planning these buildings, Speer invented the theory of "ruin value." According to this theory, enthusiastically supported by Hitler, all new buildings would be constructed in such a way that they would leave aesthetically pleasing ruins thousands of years in the future. Such ruins would be a testament to the greatness of the Third Reich, just as ancient Greek or Roman ruins were symbols of the greatness of their civilizations.

In 1937 Speer designed the German Pavilion for the 1937 international exposition in Paris. Speer's work was located directly across from the Soviet Pavilion and was designed to represent a massive defence against the onslaught of communism. Both pavilions were awarded gold medals for their designs.

Speer was also directed to make plans to rebuild Berlin, which was to become the capital of a "Greater Germany" — Welthauptstadt (World Capital) Germania. The first step in these plans was the Olympic Stadium for the 1936 Summer Olympics, designed by Werner March. When Hitler saw the nearly completed stadium he was appalled by the glass partitioned walls that he felt looked too fragile for a Nazi building that should represent strength. He said he would never enter such a building. At the last minute, Speer altered the stadium to include massive stone cornices and stone cladding that satisfied the Führer's tastes. Speer also designed the new Reichs Chancellery, which included a vast hall designed to be twice as long as the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles. Hitler wanted him to build a third, even larger Chancellery, although it was never begun. The second Chancellery was damaged by the Battle of Berlin in 1945 and was eventually demolished by the Soviet occupiers after the war, its red marble being used to clad the Mohrenstrasse U-Bahn station and the Soviet War Memorial in Berlin.

Almost none of the other buildings planned for Berlin were ever built. Berlin was to be reorganized along a central three-mile-(five kilometre) long avenue. At the north end Speer planned to build the Volkshalle — an enormous domed building, based on St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The dome of
the building would have been impractically large; it would be over seven hundred feet (over two hundred meters) high and eight hundred feet (three hundred meters) in diameter, seventeen times larger than the dome of St. Peter's. At the southern end of the avenue would be an arch based on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, but again, much larger; it would be almost fourteen times (120 m) high, and the Arc de Triomphe would have been able to fit inside its opening. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 led to the abandonment of these plans.

During his involvement in the rebuilding of Berlin, he was allegedly responsible for the forced evictions of Jews from their houses to make room for his grand plans, and for re-housing German citizens affected by this work. Later the evictions were taken to heart by Joseph Goebbels, whose troubles due to the effects of allied bombing. 75,000 Jews in total were evicted but the degree of Speer's knowledge of these evictions remains an issue for debate. He was also listed as being present at the 6 October 1943 Posen Conference at which Himmler explicitly informed the Nazi hierarchy of the "final solution to the Jewish question" (Endlösung der Judenfrage), a charge Speer later contested by saying that he had in fact left early.

Speer did have an architectural rival: Hermann Giesler, whom Hitler also favoured. Both accompanied Hitler, along with the sculptor Arno Breker, on Hitler's early morning tour of Paris on 23 June 1940, just one day after the armistice with the French was signed at Compiegne. There were frequent clashes between the two in regard to architectural matters and in closeness to Hitler.

Minister of Armaments

Hitler was always a strong supporter of Speer, in part because of Hitler's own frustrated artistic and architectural visions. A strong affinity developed between Hitler and the ambitious young architect early in their professional relationship. For Speer, serving as architect for the head of the German state and being given virtual carte blanche as to expenses, presented a tremendous opportunity. For Hitler, Speer seemed to be capable of translating Hitler's grandiose visions into tangible designs which expressed what Hitler felt were National Socialist principles.

After Minister of Armaments and War Production Fritz Todt was killed in an airplane crash on 8 February 1942, Hitler appointed Speer as his successor in all of his posts. Hitler's affinity for Speer and the architect's efficiency, evidenced by his work on the Reichs Chancellery, and avoidance of party squabbling are believed to have been considerations in Speer's promotion. In his autobiography, Speer recounts that the power-hungry but lazy Hermann Göring raced to Hitler's headquarters at Rastenburg in East Prussia upon word of Todt's death, hoping to claim some of Todt's responsibilities. Hitler instead presented Göring with the fait accompli of Speer's appointment.

Faced with this new responsibility, Speer tried to put the German economy on a war footing comparable to that of the Allied nations, but found himself incessantly hindered by party politics and lack of cooperation from the Nazi hierarchy. Nevertheless, by slowly centralizing almost all industry control and cutting through the dense bureaucracy, he succeeded in multiplying war production four times over the next two and a half years, and it reached its peak in 1944 during the height of the Allied strategic bombing campaign. Another big hurdle in his way was the Nazi policy excluding women from factory work, a serious hindrance in war production and a problem unknown to Germany's enemies, who all made use of the female workforce. To fill this gap, Speer made heavy use of foreign labour, a considerable portion of it forced labour.

Speer was considered one of the more "rational" members of the Nazi hierarchy, in contrast to the raging Hitler, grotesque Göring, fanatical Goebbels, and perverse Himmler. Speer's name was found on the list of members of a post-Hitler government envisioned by the July 20 plot to kill Hitler. However, the list had an annotation "if possible" by his name, which Speer credits with helping save his life from the extensive purges that followed the scheme's failure. By his own account, Speer considered assassinating Hitler in 1945 by releasing poison gas into the air intake vent on the Führerbunker, but backed down for a number of reasons.

Independent evidence for this is sparse. Some credit his revelation of this attempt to him as a reason for his arrest in 1945 when, after one of these lectures, he was arrested and sent to the Nuremberg trials. At the trials, Speer was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment in Spandau Prison, West Berlin, largely for his use of slave labour. At the trials, the prosecution introduced as evidence a photograph of Speer visiting the Mauthausen concentration camp on 30 March 1943, where he is clearly shown surrounded by emaciated prisoners. The prosecution claimed this proved Speer was well aware of The Holocaust. However, Speer held that he was only given a "V.I.P." tour of the concentration camp, meaning he was never shown the more vile side of the camp's purpose. Speer visited on this occasion as the camp was undergoing a transition from its original use as a granite quarry to an armaments factory which would have brought its work under the aegis of Speer's ministry.

Immediately after the war, there seemed to be little indication that Speer would be charged with war crimes. Speer travelled unprotected and openly participated in the so-called Flensburg government for weeks, in the presence of Allied officers. Upon request, he actually held a series of widely-attended lectures for officials of the Allied occupying powers on various topics, including the mistakes made by the Nazi government in industrial and economic affairs (although he never during these lectures spoke about slave labour) and the effectiveness of the Allied strategic bombing campaigns. Some journalists and spectators even expected that Speer would be appointed by the occupying powers to help restore Germany's economy. However, any such speculation ended when, after one of these lectures, he was arrested and sent to Nuremberg for trial. At the Nuremberg trials after the war Speer was one of the few Germans to express remorse, but he was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment in Spandau Prison, West Berlin, largely for his use of slave labour. At the trials, the prosecution introduced as evidence a photograph of Speer visiting the Mauthausen concentration camp on 30 March 1943, where he is clearly shown surrounded by emaciated prisoners. The prosecution claimed this proved Speer was well aware of The Holocaust. However, Speer held that he was only given a "V.I.P." tour of the concentration camp, meaning he was never shown the more vile side of the camp's purpose. Speer visited on this occasion as the camp was undergoing a transition from its original use as a granite quarry to an armaments factory which would have brought its work under the aegis of Speer's ministry.

According to interviews after his imprisonment, as well as his memoirs, Speer adopted a "see no evil" attitude towards the Nazi atrocities. For example, through one of his friends, Karl Hanke, he learned in the summer of 1944 of Auschwitz and the large number of deaths taking place there.
He then purposely avoided visiting the camp or trying to get more information on what was taking place. In his autobiography, he claims that he had no direct involvement or knowledge of the Holocaust, although he faults himself for blinding himself to its existence. He certainly was aware, at least, of harsh conditions for the slave labour, especially after his visit on 10 December 1943 to the Mittelwerk Plant (Dora) in the Harz Mountains where V2 rockets were being manufactured. Some critics believe that his books underestimate his role in the atrocities of the era. Newly released documents suggest that Speer knew a lot more about the atrocities than he was telling, but hard evidence for that remains very thin.

One problem with assessments of Speer's complicity in the Holocaust comes from his status in post-war Germany—he became a symbol for people who were involved with the Nazi regime yet did not have (or claimed not to have had) any part in the regime's atrocities. Even today, German historians such as Joachim Fest tend to have a high opinion of him, while non-German historians take a lower view. As film director Heinrich Breloer remarked: "[Speer created] a market for people who said "believe me, I didn't know anything about [the Holocaust]. Just look at the Führer's friend, he didn't know about it either."

**Imprisonment**

His time in prison, painstakingly documented in his secret prison diary, which was later released as The Spandau Diaries, was described as consisting mainly of a mind-numbing and pedantically enforced routine, incessant petty personal rivalry between the seven prisoners, a pervasive and bloated prison bureaucracy, and the passing of many false hopes of premature release. After some time Speer, and most of the others, had established secret lines of communication to the outside world via sympathetic prison staff. Speer made full use of this by, amongst other things, writing innumerable letters to his family (which were restricted to one outgoing page per month under official regulation) and even having money spent on his behalf from a special bank account for a variety of benign purposes.

Speer, as recounted in his diary, made a deliberate effort to make as productive use of his time as possible. In the first decade, this took the form of putting on paper the first draft of his tell-all memoirs, an act Speer considered to be his "duty" to history and his people, he being the sole surviving member of Hitler's inner circle and in possession of knowledge and a degree of objectivity that no other had. As the prison directors both forbade the writing of a memoir and recorded each sheet of paper given to the prisoners, he wrote much of his memoir secretly on toilet paper, tobacco wrappings, and any other material he could get his hands on, and then had the pages systematically smuggled out.

All the while Speer devoted much of his energy and time towards reading books from the prison library, which was organized by fellow prisoner and ex-Grand Admiral Erich Raeder. Speer was, more so than the others, a voracious reader and he completed well over 500 books in the first three years alone. His tastes ranged from Greek drama to famous plays to architectural books and journals, partly from which he collected information for a book he intended to write on the history and function of windows in architecture.

Later, Speer took to the prison garden for enjoyment and work. Heretofore the garden was divided up into small personal plots for each prisoner with the produce of the garden being used in the prison kitchen. When regulations began to slacken in this regard, Speer was allowed to build an ambitious garden, complete with a meandering path, rock garden, and a wide variety of flowers. The garden was even, humorously, centred around a "north-south axis", which was to be the core design element of Speer and Hitler's new Berlin. Speer then took up a "walking tour of the world" by ordering geography and travel books from the local library and walking laps in the prison garden visualizing his journey. Meticulously calculating every metre travelled, he began in northern Germany, went through the Balkans, Persia, India, and Siberia, then crossed the Bering Strait and continued southwards, finally ending his sentence in central Mexico.

**Release**

His release from prison in 1966 was a world-wide media event. He then revised and published the several semi-autobiographical books he had begun in prison. His books, most notably Inside the Third Reich and The Spandau Diaries, which were secretly written during his incarceration and systematically smuggled out, provide a unique and personal look into the personalities of the Nazi era and have become much valued by historians. Speer died of a cerebral haemorrhage in London, England, on September 1, 1981 — exactly 42 years after Germany invaded Poland.

Speer's daughter Hilde Schramm became a noted left-wing parliamentarian. Speer's oldest son (born in 1934), also named Albert, became a successful architect in his own right, and was responsible for the design of Expo 2000 (the world exposition that took place in Hanover in the year 2000), design of the Shanghai International Automobile City and the Beijing Olympic complex. Arnold Speer, Speer's youngest son born in 1940, became a community doctor.

*From Wikipedia entry on Albert Speer in 2006* with corrections and additions by Mr Newton
Albert Speer, the chief architect of the Third Reich, designed the Zeppelin Field in Nuremberg (1936). The old arena, capable of holding 200,000, was not large enough, and Speer was commissioned to build the Zeppelin Field Stadium, which accommodated 340,000 spectators. At one end of the Zeppelin Field there was to be a large 'Hall of Honour' with a Memorial Chapel within. Speer designed the prize-winning German pavilion for the Paris World Fair (1937). It stood directly opposite the Soviet pavilion. Five hundred feet high, it was completed with a tall tower, crowned with the symbol of the State - an eagle and a swastika. Speer's pavilion was conceived as a monument, another symbol of German pride and achievement. It was to broadcast to the international world that a new powerful Germany and its technical achievements were the result of a mass will and restored national pride.

Speer undertook the project for the Reconstruction of Berlin (1939-43). It was designed to become the ultimate architectural realisation of National Socialist ideology, and it had a giant avenue from south to north, which was the planned highlight of the new city of ‘Germania’. In 1938, Speer finished the design for the first part of Berlin's Great Axis Avenue, 4 miles long, flanked by 400 streetlights he had designed. The east-west axis would 'cut through the chaotic development of the old city'. Eventually it was to stretch over 30 miles from east to west and 25 miles from north to south. It was planned to be a monumental centre of the Reich. In 1925, Hitler had sketched a triumphal arch and a large assembly hall, both of which were to become the symbols of the New Berlin. The triumphal arch was to span a distance of 285 feet and rise 325 feet, dwarfing the Eiffel Tower. On it the names of the fallen heroes of the Great War were to lie inscribed. It was planned to be constructed via traditional method and used no reinforced concrete, as Hitler believed that by this approach the architecture would hold a ruin value when it had been destroyed.

Neo Classicism had the task of giving expression to the existing forms of government, of legitimising them and of contributing to their consolidation. The ideal model was the Greek temple, the Renaissance palace, the Baroque castle, and the Classicist building of the Empire era. The format of the buildings became monumental. Hitler's Germany required the purging of foreign elements and an architecture to glorify the power of the state, expressive of the great German national cultural traditions or the regionalist 'blood and soil' ethic of the German people. Official Nazi policy required a monumental neo-classical solution to big buildings while local housing was to be in the vernacular of the area. For example, the thatch in Saxony or wide spreading eaves in Bavaria.

In Germany the main proponent of the neo classical style, before Speer, was Paul Ludwig Troost, who designed the House of German Art in Munich and is considered to have exerted a powerful influence on Hitler's own architectural taste.

The Nazi revolution in Germany needed architecture to bequeath a new image to history, and to offer contemporary society a strong rallying point. A new form of the Classical, monumental style (Neo-classicism) replaced the modern style. In the 1930s, nationalism for the first time took solid form as nationalist art. When the Nazis had their consolidation of power completed, they used architecture to celebrate and promote their image. Nazi architecture consisted of two phases between 1936 and 1940, firstly, the great set pieces of party edifices and secondly, the plans for Berlin, Nuremberg and Munich, the key cities of the Third Reich. Nazi architecture existed largely within the minds of two central personalities, Hitler and Albert Speer.

In the beginning there was an overlap of the old and the new. Until 1930 the Party did not openly criticise the industrial and social building programs of architects like Walter Gropius or Mies van der Rohe. The National Socialists united view on architecture was the rejection of a modern style. The quaint vernacular style for housing and a monumental style for public buildings became the order of the day. But the National Socialists did not wholly rejected modern technology. They often used the most advanced building techniques hidden behind neoclassical facades. Along with the rejection of modern architecture came a rejection of the corresponding furniture.

The Modernist Movement suffered an instant eclipse after the National Socialist seizure of power in January 1933. The modernist tendency to reduce all form to abstraction made it an unsatisfactory manner in which to represent the power and ideology of the state. The need to treat the problems posed by representation or lack of it has increased rather than diminished over the years. In general sense, New Tradition may be taken as evidence of the failure of abstract form to communicate.

Address: http://www.geocities.com/rr17bb/hitler.html
Albert Speer-Failed Penitent
by Associate Professor Winton Higgins
(Macquarie University)

To an extraordinary degree, Speer's career and innermost thoughts are now an open book. For me, his case goes to the core of two major historical problems. First, how decent people come to collude in radical evil on an appalling scale. Second, how the explosive and toxic truth of the crimes in question comes to be hidden afterwards in perpetrator and bystander societies.

Albert Speer was Hitler's main architect during the high season of what he himself called "architectural megalomania" during the Third Reich. More importantly, he was the brilliant Minister for Armaments and Munitions in the Reich from 7 February 1942 to the end of the war. He is usually credited with being, after Hitler, the second most powerful man in the Reich in its last years, and with prolonging the war by several months in giving the German military a new lease of life by sharply raising the efficiency of the German arms industry. At the Nuremberg war crimes trial he narrowly avoided being hanged through his sweeping acceptance of his own moral and legal responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi regime through his membership of it, his civilised manners, and his claim that he personally was ignorant of the abominations in question.

The Holocaust is the central abomination for which he claims guilt by association but personal ignorance. He spent twenty years in Spandau prison in Berlin, after which he underwent two major resurrections. First, his confessions became publishing sensations, and he established himself as an international multimedia personality as a result. Second, he was the object of another publishing sensation five years ago when Gitta Sereny published her 750 page multiple prizewinning study, Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth. Though he died on 1 September 1981, he will no doubt stage a third resurrection when his youngest grandchild comes of age and his personal archive in Koblenz is opened.

Early years

Albert Speer was born on 19 March 1905, the second of three sons, into a very wealthy family in Mannheim. His grandfather and father were architects, and young Albert followed in their footsteps. His father was a liberal and sympathised with the pan-European ideals that blossomed in Europe in the wake of World War One. Speer completed his architectural education at the Berlin Institute of Technology in 1927, and married Margarete Weber, with whom he'd fallen in love at the age of 17. The marriage would last until 1927, and married Margarete Weber, with whom he'd

On its face this is an impressive mea culpa. It typifies a stream of such statements that the postwar Speer would deliver, starting at Nuremberg in 1946. What he does not say, however, was that at the same time as he joined the party he also joined the SA, the Brownshirts. A little later he would transfer from the SA to civilian membership of the SS. A large question mark thus hangs over his "frivolous" Nazism. Another question mark hangs over his claimed lack of antisemitism. Misleadingly, he says Hitler "mentioned the Jewish problem only peripherally," and continues: "But such remarks did not worry me, although I was not an anti-Semite; rather, I had Jewish friends from my school days and university days, like virtually everyone else." It was another postwar cliché, one that glossed over a near-universal antisemitism in the interwar period in Germany.

Relationship with Hitler

Speer tired of his meagre academic salary, briefly moved back to Mannheim to start his own architectural practice, but in the same year received his first architectural assignment from the party. The party chiefs liked his work and his impressive efficiency in renovation work, and suggested he return to Berlin. The Nazis came to power in January 1933, and he assisted Hitler's main architect, Paul Ludwig Troost, in the refurbishing of the Chancellor's residence. Speer supervised the work on site. Hitler took a keen interest in architecture, in fact imagined himself to be a great architectural and artistic intelligence, and came to inspect the work every day. In this way the young architect became a close friend of the new Chancellor of the Reich to the extent that either of them was capable of such a relationship.

Sereny calls the relationship "almost erotic." Speer reports a colleague as telling him: "Do you know what you are? You are Hitler's unrequited love." Each massively compensated for the other's insecurity. Hitler used Speer as the platform for his renaissance-man persona, abruptly taking hours off from the affairs of state to discuss aesthetic fine points with his architect. Speer flattered Hitler by entering into the charade, treating him as he would a professional colleague and a social equal. Hitler was surrounded by low-life characters from the wrong side of the tracks like himself. In Speer he found a handsome and cultivated friend from the right side of the tracks. And naturally, to be embraced by his ruler and personal hero went straight to the twenty-eight year old's head. As Speer artlessly comments, "Now I had found my Mephistopheles. He seemed no less engaging than Goethe's." Hitler's taste for monumental masonry to commemorate his rule grew, and Troost died on 21 January 1934. Speer rocketed to fame. He designed the massive Nuremberg stadium for party rallies, to Hitler's euphoric satisfaction. In 1937, the year Hitler laid the foundation stone for it, Speer's model of this stupendous folly won the Grand Prix at the Paris World Fair in Paris. That same year Speer yielded to pressure to move his family to Obersalzburg, the Alpine retreat village in which Hitler, Göring and Bormann - the
inner circle, were already nestling in. Hitler was not just to be a friend and client, but a neighbour as well. It was here that the great imperial and architectonic dreams were dreamt around the Berghof (Hitler's chalet) open fireplace late at night. With his sarcastic sentimentality, Hitler befriended his colleagues' wives and mistresses, and became kind old Uncle Adolf to their children. After the war broke out, and not least when its tide turned against the Reich, life in Obersalzburg became even more intense and fanciful.

Minister for Armaments and Munitions

Up until February 1942, Speer insists, he had nothing to do with the governance of the Third Reich. He was an architect in private practice with a client, friend and neighbour called Adolf Hitler, and that was it. He was thrown into government on 8 February when the then Reichsminister for Armaments and Munitions, Dr Fritz Todt, died in an air crash, and Hitler anointed Speer his successor. The appointment was a dramatic success. The leadership style of the Reich was ineffectual, the civilian population barely mobilised for the war effort, industrial co-ordination was haphazard, and corruption rife. Speer threw himself into this mess as the great reformer, earning the hatred of the likes of Bormann and Göring, the suspicion of Goebbels and Himmler, and the deepened admiration of Hitler. But, he insists, he kept his nose to the grindstone and paid no attention to their machinations or what they got up to in their respective portfolios.

Here we reach a critical point in the story. From the Nuremberg trial to his death, Speer maintained that he was guilty by association of the crimes of the regime, but that he himself personally knew nothing about them until the prosecutors presented their irrefutable evidence. In other words, in his sophisticated way, he repeats the standard postwar German alibi, Wir haben nichts gewusst - we knew nothing. We now know we have every right to question this alibi in the case of every adult citizen of the Reich. We have even more right to question it in the case of a longstanding member of the Nazi Party and of the SS, and an intimate of the regime's leaders, as Speer was up to February 1942. What then are we to make of this alibi after he effectively becomes the second most powerful member of the regime? How could Speer possibly convince his Judges and his public of this preposterous notion? The question is crucial. If someone in his position could get the alibi to stick, then so could virtually every other German apart from the 500,000 directly involved in the killing process.

The problem ushers in another masterful mea culpa. Speer in uniform

Speer in uniform

He seemed confused and spoke falteringly, with many breaks. He advised me never to accept an invitation to inspect a concentration camp in Upper Silesia. Never, under any circumstances. He had seen something there which he was not permitted to describe and moreover could not describe.

I did not query him. I did not query Himmler. I did not query Hitler. I did not speak to personal friends. I did not investigate - I did not want to know what was happening there. Hanke must have been speaking of Auschwitz. During those few seconds, while Hanke was warning me, the whole responsibility had become a reality again. Those seconds were uppermost in my mind when I stated to the international court at the Nuremberg Trial that as an important member of the leadership of the Reich, I had to share the total responsibility for all that happened. For from that moment, I was inescapably contaminated morally; from fear of discovering something which might have made me turn from my course. I had closed my eyes. This deliberate blindness outweighs whatever good I may have done or tried to do in the last period of the war. Those activities shrink to nothing in the face of it. Because I failed at that time, I still feel, to this day, responsible for Auschwitz in a wholly personal sense.

Note the expressions "deliberate blindness" and "at that time." that is, summer 1944, for we'll come back to them. Of course, if Speer already knew about the Holocaust at that time, this passage would have been an elegant way to drastically reduce his culpability rather than write it large as he is claiming to do. And some circumstantial evidence supports him. Hitler's peculiar style of dictatorship worked on compartmentalisation, secrecy and euphemism. There was no such thing as a Cabinet meeting. Functional leaders met him more or less on a one-to-one basis, and the more problematic orders were commonly given in oral form only. He had a habit, too, of shielding the quiescer souls around him from unpleasant information.

On the other hand, the Holocaust killing machine and German war industry intimately intermeshed. "Planet Auschwitz" exemplified the link. It housed the biggest killing installation, but also major defence industries using huge quantities of slave labour. Overwork, mistreatment, starvation, exposure and epidemics in slave labour camps constituted typical weapons of mass murder of the Jews in particular. In other contexts Speer freely confesses that he ordered even greater exploitation of slave labour, and took an active interest in its procurement and use. As Lord Shawcross, his prosecutor at Nuremberg, would complain decades later, Speer's deputy Fritz Sauckel hanged for his role in the slave labour system, doing Speer's bidding. Why didn't Speer?

The "good" that Speer did or attempted to do, which he refers to in the above quote, consists mainly in his countermanding and thwarting Hitler's scorched-earth policy towards German infrastructure and industrial capacity as the Allies advanced. Speer recognised Hitler's personal disintegration, and even prepared to kill him. Speer showed extraordinary personal courage in defying Hitler. He even returned to Berlin shortly before the latter's suicide to tell him so and to take his leave. At the time Hitler was sunk in paranoia and was ordering the summary execution of several of his faithful servants.

Speer after the war

There can be no doubt, either, that Speer showed great personal courage at Nuremberg. He opted to take full personal responsibility against legal advice and in the face of the fury of his twenty co-defendants, his former colleagues in the Reich leadership. He describes his horror, revulsion and self-hatred as the chief prosecutor, Sir Hartley Shawcross (as he then was), presented the appalling photographs and newsreel footage of the Holocaust. Speer felt he deserved the death penalty, and that it was almost certain. He cooperated fully with the prosecution, and his own statement to the court reads like an addendum on collective responsibility to the prosecutor's summing up:

Even in an authoritarian system this collective responsibility of the leaders must exist; there can be no attempting to withdraw after the catastrophe. For if the war had been won, the leadership would probably have raised the claim that it was collectively responsible.

After some hard "horse trading" the panel of eight judges
sentenced eleven of the defendants to death, seven to various terms of imprisonment, and acquitted three. Speer, in the second category, seems not have felt any relief. He waived his right of appeal. He suffered a sleepless night on 16-17 October 1946 as he heard his condemned colleagues' cells being unlocked one by one, their names shouted out to summon them to the scaffold erected in the gymnasium two floors below. The next day he and the six other survivors had the gruesome job of cleaning out those cells and the gymnasium.

In July 1947 these seven were transferred to Spandau prison in Berlin, where Speer met "the most important person in my life," he would claim. He was Georges Casalis, the French protestant prison chaplain, an intellectual who had spent thirty years in the Resistance. After their first overwhelming meeting, Speer told Casalis:

I've been sentenced to twenty years, and I consider it just. I want to use this time that has, in a manner of speaking, been given to me. What I want to ask you is: Would you help me become a different man? 8

In Casalis' first impression of Speer, "he was, under the extraordinary cool he affected, the most guilt-ridden, the most tortured man I had ever known." 9 Casalis stayed at Spandau for three years. Under his guidance Speer turned his prison cell into a monastic one. He used his time well, burying himself in books, many on philosophy and theology, and in memoir and journal writing. These interests survived Casalis' departure, but without him Speer would lack the intellectual and spiritual determination to achieve his goal of becoming "a different man."

Later, an even more demanding interrogator would challenge his honesty and not be satisfied with facile mea culpas and expedient evasions. She was his second child, Hilde, born in 1936. As a father, Speer was a disaster, having paid so little attention to his six children that he was a stranger to them even before his imprisonment. Hilde alone among them showed intense filial feeling towards him. At the same time she was very intelligent and deeply disturbed by her father's crimes. She is "perhaps the most moral person I have ever met," Sereny comments. 10 From 1954 she wrote to him continually in prison, expressing her love, and interrogating him about his wartime role. She threw him a lifeline into a world of human love, and he sweated blood over his four hundred letters to her, in many of which he tries to get beyond the slick phrases. By degrees the mask slips in this correspondence. In protesting his "entirely clear" conscience on the question of antisemitism to Hilde, for instance, Speer adds the astonishing sentence: "I really had no aversion to them, or rather, no more than the slight discomfort all of us sometimes feel when in contact with them." But even to Hilde, Speer sticks to his alibi.

Speer's imprisonment ended in October 1967. His 2,000 manuscript pages of memoirs were edited down and published in 1969, bringing a new wave of fame and fortune. Then came his Spandauer Tagebücher in 1975, published in English as Spandau: The Secret Diaries in 1976. Subject to the reservations expressed in this paper, both provide extraordinary insight into the workings of Hitler's court, Hitler's personality and modus operandi, and into Speer's own mind. Especially in The Secret Diaries we find him frankly oscillating between revulsion for Hitler, self-remonstrance, and brooding over the strategic blunders that brought the Third Reich down. These books also renewed the hatred towards Speer of old Nazis and new denialists. He would remain an ambivalent partisan in the battle for historic truth literally to the day he died.

But Speer received a direct hit from quite a different source, one deeply suspicious of his claim to personal ignorance of the Holocaust as it unfolded. The enemy this time was Professor Erich Goldhagen of Harvard University (father of Daniel Goldhagen of fame today).12 Goldhagen's challenge concerned a critical meeting of Gauleiter and other top Nazi brass at Posen on 6 October 1943. During the morning Speer had made a forceful speech threatening to "deal firmly with" any of them that stood in the way of his efforts to prioritise and co-ordinate war production. 13 After lunch Himmler gave a long speech of far greater importance. For the first and last time he informed the assembled Reich leadership absolutely explicitly of the Holocaust. Himmler was going badly, and Himmler's motive for this drastic departure from routine secrecy was to bind the leadership to a shared culpability as a way of reinforcing solidarity. He sought to preclude the possibility of any of them breaking ranks, seeking a separate peace or deals with the Allies. 14 In other words, he tried to prevent precisely the sort of tactic Speer would use at Nuremberg. (Towards the end of the war, incidentally, Himmler himself would try to make a deal with the allies to save his skin.)

Goldhagen claims that Speer, even if he miraculously escaped being informed of the Holocaust up to then, could not have escaped Himmler's speech. Alarmingly, it came several months before the meeting with Hanke quoted above. There is no doubt Speer was there that day, but in a desperate attempt to salvage his alibi after Goldhagen's attack, he claimed that he left the meeting at lunchtime, before Himmler's speech. The record (and Speer's own memoirs) refer to the despair, indignation and heavy drinking at the end of the day, but Speer claims this was a reaction to his own speech, and makes no mention of Himmler's. And, again miraculously, none of Speer's many friends and colleagues who undoubtedly heard Himmler's speech made the slightest reference to it thereafter in his presence.

Speer soldered on, in the face of this exposé. He began work on a book on the SS. In 1979 or 1980, at the age of 75, he fell in love with a woman half his age. It was his first truly erotic relationship, he told a friend. At all events, it was in the erotic embrace of this newfound love that Speer quite unexpectedly suffered a massive stroke and died a few hours later, on 1 September 1981.15

The Sereny connection

Ironically, it was the arch-denialist of present fame, David Irving, who inadvertently brought Speer together with his brilliant biographer, Gitta Sereny. In 1977 Irving brought out his 926-page Hitler's War, 16 wherein he argued that Hitler never ordered the Holocaust and knew nothing about it until October 1943 at the earliest. Sereny, a happy combination of journalist, historian and sleuth, checked Irving's sources and published, with Lewis Chester, a total refutation of Irving in the Sunday Times. 17 She very soon received two letters from Speer, congratulating her on putting the matter to rest so definitively. He went on to vilify the efforts of denialists like Irving to falsify the record. He also admired her magisterial study of Franz Stangl, commandant of Treblinka death camp. 18 And he asked her to get in touch. When she did, she recognised her next project. She spent many days with him during the following four years, the last of his life, gently but relentlessly probing what she saw as the weak points in his story and his character. She assiduously cultivated friendships with members of his family and his closest postwar collaborators. All these contacts, as well as public archives, yielded an enormous amount of documentary material as well.

Fourteen years after the death of its subject Sereny published her gripping masterpiece. I can't do it justice in the space available here, but a few words are in order. Undoubtedly it is one of the most insightful books I have read about the Holocaust, and a deeply moving and challenging study of a perpetrator. She lets us look over her shoulder as she interrogates her informants, studies their verbal and facial expressions and body language, and as she pores over the wealth of documents that they place in her hands. The psychological nuances in her dynamic portrait of Speer bring us very close to him. But she neither individualises nor psychologises the historical record. She does not lose herself in Speer's subjectivity.
Albert Speer Handbook

Sereny's Speer is an intelligent, thoughtful individual who sincerely feels a need to account for his actions and to overcome the character flaws that took his life in such a disastrous direction. In later life at least, he develops considerable integrity. But in the end the project of "becoming a new man" fails. The lifelong habit of expedient self-preservation is too strong. Speer's honesty too unconvincing, his confessions too facile, too fluent, his treatment of those who still support him too exploitative. In particular, she cannot credit Speer's plea of ignorance before the Posen meeting of 6 October 1943, nor his claim not to have heard Himmler's speech that fateful afternoon. As we have seen, Speer accused himself of "deliberate blindness" for not investigating Hanke's ominous hints in 1944. Sereny's Speer is wilfully blind, and has no need to investigate these hints, because he already knows where they'd lead, and has no intention of going there again.

She leaves open the possibility that Speer successfully repressed the information about the Holocaust he undoubtedly received. In the frontpiece of her book she quotes Visser 't Hooft: "It is possible to live in a twilight between knowing and not knowing." Speer lived in just such a twilight. But repression is a psychological possibility only; it can never be a moral one.

**Speer as case study**

From any serious historian's point of view, nothing could be more wrong headed than to caricature Albert Speer as a ruthless operator who clawed and flattered his way to the top, completely lacked any moral sense at his zenith, cunningly avoided being hanged for his crimes, and then made another successful career as a redeemed man. Apart from being inaccurate, this caricature would lead us away from why Speer is historically important, paradigmatic of his perpetrator society. Speer attracted postwar attention because, unlike the other Nazi leaders, he was deep down a sound fellow, could have been one of us. That initial attractiveness provides the clue to his historical and philosophical importance, his ability to teach us something about how decent people come to commit appalling crimes, and about how to handle the toxic psychic residue they leave behind.

In conversation with Sereny, Speer criticizes his address to the Nuremberg tribunal for not including the social dimension. The root cause of the Holocaust, he sees now, is not our manipulation by a handful of evil men armed with means of mass propaganda, but rather "our moral disintegration." 19 For my money he is right, so long as we include him as both witness and paradigm of the moral disintegration in question, the peculiar moral decay of interwar Germany. German research in recent years has revealed that practically every occupational and professional corps leapt onto the Nazi bandwagon with alacrity. Professional ethics, from the Hippocratic Oath to the normal sense of professional responsibility built into professional accreditation counted for nothing; the spoils the Nazis offered for co-operation alone mattered. The leadership of the Third Reich itself was a kleptocracy. The German armed forces once had a proud record of honouring codes that protected civilians and rules of engagement, yet every branch of the military participated in the Holocaust.

Contrary to postwar myth, no-one needed to be coerced. Reichsmarks, uniforms and honours were the currency for the vast majority of Germans, not terror. Speer exemplifies the phenomenon of PhDs and LLDS leading death squads, of doctors playing prominent roles in death camps, of scientists supporting the hocus-pocus of race theory, of church leaders snuggling up to this unprecedentedly evil regime. To point this out is not to demonise the Germans but rather to sensitize us to the consequences of a similar moral disintegration in our own societies, and teach us the urgency of identifying the early warning signs and reacting before it is too late.

Speer also exemplifies the intergenerational tragedy of postwar German society. The perpetrator and bystander generations flee into cocoons of denial, falsehood or repression, in an attempt to preserve their own self-respect, or the honour of their country, or to retain the love and respect of their children and grandchildren. The truth is so explosive it would destroy everything, they assume. The truth is something one must defend oneself against - hence Speer's apt subtitle, "his battle with truth." The Leitmotiv of Speer's life. And yet, as in the case of Albert and Hilde Speer, all these enterprises fail unless the truth is brought out into the daylight and dealt with. National identities survive disgraces that are atoned for; it's the skeletons in the cupboard that are the real worry. And Hilde Speer wasn't looking for a father with a good alibi; she was looking for one who would level with her. Sadly, she looked in vain.

**A Basic Bibliography**


This is a veritable masterpiece of historical research, investigative journalism and gripping prose, which raises all the deeper questions and moral issues about Speer. It includes extensive commentary on the other two works below.


Speer's first publishing sensation after his release from Spandau prison and supposed rehabilitation as a functioning moral subject. Lots of "inside-dopester" material comes forward here, both about how the Third Reich was governed, and the intimate circle around Hitler at Berchtesgaden. It is artfully written, but "ducks and weaves" on the curly questions.


This is Speer's second and last post-prison publishing sensation. A highly edited version of his voluminous prison diary which records his snatches of memory, his ongoing Angst, and the amazing contradictions in his thinking about his Nazi past.

**Footnotes**

10. Sereny 1995:12. Hilde and Albert's relationship exemplifies the intergenerational anguish in many postwar German families where the father or grandfather had a dubious role in the war. It comes very close to the problematic in Costa-Gavras' compelling film, *The Music Box*.
14. See Sereny 1995: 386-401, which includes the relevant excerpt from Himmler's speech.
17. 10.7.77
Interviews with Gitta Sereny

Notes on the interviews with Phillip Adams, Magnus Magnusson and Wendy Barnaby

Phillip Adams – 03 April 2003 – Late Night Live

Gitta’s relationship with Speer is reminiscent of Jodie Foster playing mind games with Hannibal Lecter.

What did she receive from Speer? In their 4 years of talking (and he dies at the end of this period), Speer taught her more about Hitler and the Third Reich than she had learnt in the 30 odd years beforehand, and she found this immensely curious. He talked about the Final Solution and still is, the great mystery of our time – the human “black hole”.

Before beginning her time with Speer, as she always does with interviews, she told Speer how she felt about him. This was because these were more like dialogues or discussions, which took place over a long period of time. The interviewee must not think that she is their friend. She is a professional journalist, and journalists take advantage of peoples’ desires to talk about themselves, so they must be aware that whatever is said will be printed. These dialogues are quite difficult to do, so a journalist needs to be experienced.

However, she did get what the judges at Nuremberg could not get - Speer’s reluctant acknowledgment that he knew what was happening, but he could not say it so he gave her a paper to read where he had written it. It had never been published. He read it in German then added a footnote, slightly diminishing it: “What I regret most, and I always will, is my tacit consent to the murder of millions of Jews.”

His footnote on “tacit” read “I mean, not knowing, but looking away.”

She said to him that this was impossible, even illogical – how can you look away from something you don’t know? But Speer would not and could not speak any more of it to her.

He had an immense ability to seduce people. David Putnam, the filmmaker, who felt, during a feature film he made with Speer, that he was falling under his thrall, acknowledged this. How did she cope with this? She tries to seek for the human being behind the monster, the love within the hate, which puts her at risk. She grew to like him, and especially his guilt – she worked with him, and she did after all, write the book with him so she did develop a relationship with him — he knew of her family, her husband.

A lot has been written of lately about evil, as it is something that the modern world is fascinated by. “A man who has lost all morality can scarcely be spoken of as a human being, but a man who regains his morality cannot be called evil.” Gitta believes that every time a person can admit guilt it takes away some guilt from all of us.

At Nuremberg, all prisoners passed the psychological test that showed they were technically sane, even Hess. Speer cheated on the Rorschach test – he thought it was absurd so he invented things that the psychologists wanted to hear!

The beginning of the great lie of his life was when he found out two things:

• In October 1943, the plan to murder the Jews, and he knew of her family, her husband.

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Speer claimed he was travelling there in the afternoon of the sixth and arrived at night. The point of the speech was to describe to the Nazi hierarchy the plans for the extermination (the first time this word was said) of the Jews. None of the Nazis, not even Hess, himself, uttered the phrase “gas chambers” so there is just a possibility that, until Nuremberg, Speer and the others did not know how the deaths occurred. Most of the exterminations occurred in Eastern Europe (Poland and Russia) — up to 3 million were gassed in specific camps in Poland in 1942 and 1943. About 2 million Jews were shot in Eastern Europe. Gitta wanted to get Speer to admit to all the deaths. He was sentenced for the slave labour system, not the extermination of the Jews.

There was an erotic component to Speer’s love for Hitler — he was in love with Hitler and Hitler certainly loved him!

In fact, Speer’s whole career was caused by an extraordinary attachment to Hitler, and it was the same for the German people in a lesser but the same way. Gitta says it is hard to understand the relationship between Hitler and Speer and Hitler and the German people. But despite his closeness to Hitler, Speer could not have changed the Final Solution — no one could have done anything after the invasion of Russia, though the churches could have done something before this, but the Pope and the Catholic Church did nothing and after Barbarossa, it became “an unstoppable storm” as Hitler was obsessed with the Jews.

What was Speer’s religion? He was a conventional Christian, but he gave up any formal attachments to the Church and was only a “believer in God” as encouraged by the Nazis. In Spandau he took up a serious study of theology — he read Karl Barth’s (still volume Dogmatics) which was difficult reading! He read lots of Jewish theology too.

Did he deserve to hang? Gitta says yes, but then she couldn’t have talked to him!

Magnus Magnusson – 01 July 2001 – ABC’s Books and Writing

Gitta’s importance is that she is prepared to go where angels (and the rest of us) fear to tread – using the interview as the basis for her research, she tries to get as close to the “why” of things as possible.

The young Gitta (born 78 years ago in 2001) was present at the first Nuremberg rally and experienced the Anschluss and its effects and she was “intoxicated by fear”.

In wartime, most soldiers feel this temptation; euphoria of fear can provoke this feeling. But it is dangerous and it explains why wars are important in the lives of those who experience them. As a teenager Gitta was in wartime France and she narrowly escaped arrest. She found this exciting — she also helped some British flyers whose plane had crashed — one of them was 22 and she was 17! She hid him in an orphanage where she worked as a nurse — he slept in the children’s dormitory — ages 3 to 13 and they also felt the excitement and knew the danger.

In 1945 she joined UNRAA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) as a child welfare officer. She looked after refugee/separated/slave labourer children, aged 10 years and up. Gitta talks of her “Dachau experience”. As her first assignment for UNRAA, she had to look after children there — the first concentration camp — it was not a camp for Jews, but for political and religious prisoners. In the last 2 months of WW2, people were made to walk there from northern camps to get away from British and Russian troops advancing into Germany. Dachau had 20 000 in the space for 4 to 5000. She was shocked to find that lots of these were children. Why send them to a concentration camp? Yes, could understand political opponents in a dictatorship! There were also German children – families of 20 July Plot conspirators. They were from the German elite — how terrifying to find oneself in prison with the people they had been taught to despise since they were born!

She also found there “racially valuable”, stolen children from Eastern Europe aged from 2 to 12 years – 250 000 were taken but difficult to prove this.

They were mostly from Poland and the Ukraine and were chosen because they were racially excellent and they had been given to German families or institutions to raise. They were all very kind, the “adopted” parents loved the children and they did not lead terrible lives. But it was terrible when they were taken from their “new” families — this led to an awful moral problem of what to do with them.
Gitta: In 2000 young Germans ask the same moral questions – their reaction is an intellectual exercise, not an emotional one as it had been for 40 years. Gitta admires Speer for facing his past better than anyone else has done – not like Australia’s treatment of Aborigines. The Germans for facing their past better than anyone else has ever done. Gitta was the last of many who helped him reflect. It happened because of love (like Stangl), his profound love for Hitler (not homosexual) – he was not the only one who felt this but he was the only one to whom Hitler returned this love.

Question: How does she differentiate between how to assess Stangl and Speer?

Gitta: Stangl became a murderer, in a big way – 1,100,000 in Treblinka – his trial took place in Germany which is significant for how the Germans dealt with their part in Nazism. Speer became aware quite late (October 1943) of the Jewish genocide. No one in the Nazi hierarchy could not have known about the killings once the invasion of Russia began. They were able to rationalise these as “actions of war” and this was accepted by the Allies who did nothing about it. They were acts mostly against civilians and so they said that this was not part of war. They got the German people and the Allies to believe that the actions were OK, they accepted the Nazi interpretation. The extermination of the Jews was Hitler’s obsession, but it was not the centrepiece of Nazism. They killed 3 million Polish Christians and 3 million Polish Jews – history has not made this clear enough.

Question: Your book is called “The German Trauma” – does today’s generation accept it or not?

Gitta: In 2000 young Germans ask the same moral questions – their reaction is an intellectual exercise, not an emotional one as it had been for 40 years. Gitta admires Germans for facing their past better than anyone else has done – not like Australia’s treatment of Aborigines. The situation in Germany in 2001 is dangerous – unemployment is high, there is fear of foreigners taking jobs, especially in the old East Germany. But they now have strong laws regarding attacks on foreigners, especially Jews. Racism should always be fought, both by passing laws and by individual protest.

Sereny’s responses to questions from the audience

• Speer used “blocking” mechanism to “deal with” the genocide.
• There is a potential for neighbours to turn on neighbours – is this not in us all? Only have to look at Ireland.
• Religious/ethnic opposition is the most dangerous thing in the world – Serbs/Croats, Muslims/Christians. German racist fears were cleverly played on. Hitler’s Willing Executioners by Daniel Goldhagen is a book that Gitta disagrees with – it said that since the early 19th century Germans were exterminationalist and anti-Semitic. But what they were most afraid of was Bolshevism - since the end of World War One - Hitler used this cleverly. He was clever! It is historically inaccurate to diminish him – he nearly won World War Two!
• Could it happen again? After Speer’s reflection, would he do it again? Gitta says no – it wasn’t only she that helped him. A French priest Georges Casalis helped him to reflect and acknowledge honestly his role. Speer rewrote parts of his book after he left Spandau because he felt that he had to “fit into” a German society that was different. He worked on himself for 30 years and he respected this.
• How does Germany now deal with her collective guilt? Even 15 years after reunification, Germany still hasn’t worked out how to deal with it.

Wendy Barnaby – 23 March 2000 – ABC’s Books and Writing

Comparison of Speer book and Mary Bell book – content very different but do have a common thread = childhood had robbed them of the capacity to feel, yet they still had a moral sense – total rejection in childhood. Speer’s parents did not like him – mother liked oldest, father the youngest. Story from time of Stalingrad, when he was Minister for Armaments, his youngest brother was on leave and then returned to Stalingrad. A message came through that he was dead and Speer’s secretary overheard a phone call from Speer’s mother. She said, “It should have been you!” three times and then hung up.

Speer was sent to gaol for 20 years primarily for the system of forced labour, and for which he should have been hanged. He never felt guilty for it, never once regretted it. But he did feel guilty about the Jewish genocide from the moment he knew about it, but thought it was not his fault because he did not know about it until 1943. Casalis realised that Speer could only slowly change on an intellectual so he brought him books, all on ethics, so 20 years of reading (five or six thousand) must have changed his morality.

Gitta tried to see his daughter first but she would not see her. A French priest Georges Casalis helped him to reflect. He was 68 when she met him and he felt it was time for him to go deeper, not always willingly – he was still building defences and retreating behind smokescreens. It was difficult to become a different man.

• Could he love Hitler without actively and consciously hating the Jews? Yes! But it is an extraordinary phenomenon. In Ian Kershaw’s biography of Hitler Volume 2, he makes clear the extent of Hitler’s anti-Semitism and the way he raised it in the Nazis as being almost casual. The Jewish genocide was a huge secret but Hitler talked about it so often that it became less important.

How does Germany now deal with her collective guilt? Even 15 years after reunification, Germany still hasn’t worked out how to deal with it.
Albert Speer - HSC OnLine

Background
Albert Speer was born on 19 March 1905 in the German city of Mannheim. His father and grandfather were architects. He was the second of the three boys. None of his immediate family was caught up in the fighting of the First World War. He was only 13 at the end of the war and too young to fight, but he always remembered the food shortages of 1918.

Speer was educated at a private elementary school and then at a state high school (Oberrealschule). He preferred to study mathematics but his parents wanted him to follow the family tradition. Speer went to the Technical University at Karlsruhe near Heidelberg and then to a more distinguished Technical University in Munich. In 1925, he moved to Berlin to complete his studies. He formally graduated in February 1928 and took up an academic post.

Speer's role in the Nazi Party
In December 1930 Speer attended a Nazi rally where he heard Hitler speak and shortly thereafter he applied for membership of the Nazi Party. He was accepted on 1 March 1931. This preceded Hitler's rise to the position of Chancellor by almost two years and suggests that he joined through conviction rather than the pragmatism that drove later converts. Speer said he joined because of fear of communism, fascination for Hitler and rejection of the Treaty of Versailles with its imposition of German guilt for the First World War. He joined several Nazi organisations including the NSKK (motoring corps), becoming head of his local sub-branch.

In 1933 Speer did his first architectural job for the Hitler government. He also became their Commissioner for the Artistic and Technical Presentation of Party Rallies and Demonstrations after impressing them with his design for a huge outdoor rally on May Day 1933. The design involved the vertical hanging of striped Nazi flags, ten storeys high, and the use of 150 searchlight beams to form a cathedral of light. From 1933 Speer was a close acquaintance of Hitler and a regular guest at the dictator's table. In 1936 Hitler conferred on Speer the title of Professor as a mark of his personal esteem.

Speer was a workaholic who neglected his family (eventually numbering six children). By 1937 he established himself as the Nazi's leading architect. In 1937 he was appointed Inspector-General of Constructors for the Reich Capital (Berlin — to be renamed Germania) and given the rank of the highest German civil service grade. Speer's talent for organisation served him well as a public servant. By 1941 his empire included hundreds of trucks and barges to carry building materials to Berlin and a building staff of thousands who could be quickly mobilised to repair British air raid bomb damage. In December 1941 he offered the services of his vast department to the general war effort.

Speer claimed that he was not anti-Semitic, although this was a major platform of the party to which he belonged and for which he worked. In his role overseeing the construction of Berlin, he was directly responsible for the eviction of Jews from their homes, supposedly to make their flats available for resettling non-Jews whose homes were damaged in air raids. Tens of thousands of flats were cleared by his order. Historians, however, have not resolved whether or not Speer was actually present at the 1943 Posen meeting where Himmler explained that the final solution meant the complete extermination of all Jews, but his biographer, Dan van der Vat, insists he must have known of it and was probably there. On the other hand, Speer ignored the racial or religious characteristics of his own staff as long as they performed efficiently.

In February 1942, after the death in an air crash of Hitler's Minister for War Production, Speer was appointed to take over all Todt's offices, which gave him responsibility for the German construction and energy industries. He reorganised munitions production to use resources more efficiently. His ministry gained the power to punish arms manufacturers or construction contractors who made false claims for labour, equipment or resources. His first move under this provision was to send two managers to a concentration camp (without trial) for using conscription-exempt workers as domestic servants.

Within six months Speer had increased the German output of ammunition, cannon and tanks. He stressed flexibility, initiative and improvisation. Hitler's respect for experts in general and personal regard for Speer in particular gave Speer unusual freedom. In May 1942 he was appointed one of two co-dictators of transport (with Milch). The railways became more efficient. Vast labour forces were sent to build roads for the army then invading the Soviet Union. In September 1943 (by which time the war was going very badly for Germany) Speer was promoted to become Reich Minister of Armaments and War Production.

Many of the labourers used in Speer's various activities were slave-workers from concentration camps, workers conscripted from occupied countries or prisoners of war. For the purely practical reason that healthy workers work harder, Speer tried to ensure that his workers at least received an adequate diet.

In January 1944 health problems put Speer into a clinic and long convalescence (until April 1944). During this period of isolation and reflection he apparently became disenchanted with Hitler. By this time the war situation had become so bad for Germany that even Speer's administrative talents and efficiency drives were unable to stem the tide of disasters. In mid-1945, when Hitler ordered his Minister of Armaments to stop producing fighter aircraft in order to increase anti-aircraft gun production, Speer ignored the Führer's orders for the first time. In November 1944 Speer admitted privately to Goebbels that it was unrealistic to believe in a German victory. In January 1945 he publicly admitted that even the secret weapons, the V1 and V2 rocket bombs, would not save Germany.

In February 1945 Speer apparently decided to remove Hitler by gassing him in his bunker. He justified his decision by a passage from Mein Kampf in which Hitler had argued that a leader who betrayed the interests of his own people should be removed. Speer claimed that he gave up on this project because he found the bunker roof heavily guarded by the SS and an inaccessible new three-metre high chimney for the bunker's air vent. Biographer Dan van der Vat is very sceptical about this and raises questions about whether Speer ever seriously intended to go through with it. He points out that the Speer knew the ventilation fitting of the bunker were designed so that any poison gas put in would run out again. Speer spent the last months of the war trying to save Germany's manufacturing base and trying to resist Hitler's scorched earth policy, which would have had the effect of destroying all industrial plant and resources that they left behind. He probably saved thousands of bridges, canals, communication and power installations not only in Germany but also in the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

After Hitler
When Hitler committed suicide on 30 April 1945, he bequeathed the leadership to Admiral Dönitz. Speer joined the Dönitz government as Minister for Economics and Production. He was therefore a member of the Cabinet that unconditionally surrendered on 7 May. After a strenuous interrogation by the Allies, Speer was placed under armed guard on 21 May. He was one of the defendants at the Nuremberg trial, accused of participating in the Nazi violation of international treaties and of participating in the Nazi crimes against humanity. His charge particularly specified his use of forced labour. His defence argued that his work was concerned with technology and not political. He was found guilty of the charge based on his use of forced labour and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. He was released in 1966. He died in 1981.
Albert Speer and the immorality of the technicians

Extract from Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich*

The task which I have to fulfil is an unpolitical one. I felt comfortable in my work so long as my person and also my work were valued solely according to my specialist achievement.

Albert Speer in a memorandum to Hitler

The processes of a people’s demoralisation usually take place imperceptibly, concealed in the social structure. It is only in great upheavals that the seemingly firm shell of a society’s self-assurance is broken and in the real state of its general consciousness laid bare. In the course of its breathtaking advances during the past hundred years technology has developed, along with its own ideology, its own morality, based upon earlier ideas of the autonomy of the scientific spirit. Not only technology itself but all technological work came to be held exempt from value-judgements, and just as there were supposed to be no ‘evil’ discoveries or inventions, so the technological genius remained untouched by the moral aspect of any relationship in which it might be involved. The fundamental and tacit assumption developed that technology does not serve any alien power; it is now itself power. Having long outgrown its original function as a tool, it is now no longer an instrument of power but the bearer of power. Behind such convictions an ethical subjectivism was at work which looked down contemptuously upon public affairs and saw morality exclusively in the context of private life. Profoundly involved in the world of ends, its vision and thought were concentrated solely upon its self-given aims and left the management of the state to whoever wanted to bother with it. The satisfaction of personal good conduct within the narrowly restricted zone of individual action went hand in hand with remuneration of any knowledge of the effective environment within which all activity takes place. This attitude, which might be justified in an orderly world based upon unified convictions and criteria, became involved with the maelstrom of problems raised by the modern totalitarian systems beneath the surface of all traditional ideas. It became clear that there was something unsatisfactory about the sort of political naivety that went with keeping oneself to oneself, doing whatever duty or professional code seemed to require, and taking no responsibility for the framework of force within which even strictly specialized activities must operate; (1) the more so since totalitarian regimes specifically counted on that naivety and depended on it for a good deal of their success.

The self-chosen isolation of the technological mind is one of the keys to its total readiness to serve, and the specialist who sees himself solely as a function in an environment which he normally sees nor wishes to see as a whole meets totalitarianism halfway. Hitler’s vision of the future as a termite state (2) originated in this picture of the totally isolated man concerned exclusively with his limited objectives, and he carried this vision to its logical conclusion: an elite consciousness perpetually susceptible of being thus perverted. The first stages were seen in 1933, when countless people placed their technological and organizational skills at the service of the new masters without the slightest trace of disquiet, enabling the transition to the Third Reich to take place without friction in key social sectors - a striking illustration of that ‘clicking into place’ of the bureaucratic mechanism which Max Weber has described in his writings as the prerequisite for the seizure of power in a modern society (3) It was a crucial step in the establishment of National Socialist power.

As almost nowhere under the Third Reich, Albert Speer, Hitler’s architect and later Minister of Armaments, represented this type of the narrow specialist and his technocratic amorality, until both met their refutation in him. For it was not so much ambition, the lure of an exalted career, and the almost unlimited creative possibilities open to a court artist which kept him for so many years tied to a regime whose methods were bound to be repulsive to a man of his origins and character. It was predominantly his belief that his role was to serve the terrorism, of which he was well aware, the persecution of minorities, arbitrary decisions, concentration camps, aggression against other countries were not his business; all this was ‘politics’, whereas he was an architect, a technologist, an artist. Even at Nuremberg he still maintained that his ‘task was a technological and economic one’, not political, and to the question did he not, as an educated man, realize that the forcible transportation of foreign workers was contrary to the law of nations, he replied that he was an architect and all he knew about law was what he read in the papers. (4) It was entirely in keeping with this that although he regularly and credibly, before the Tribunal, repudiated the use of violence, he based this repudiation not upon humanitarian considerations but upon the practical point that it hindered his constant ministerial efforts to increase output. (5)

To see a figure like Albert Speer as an example of the work-obsessed artist’s alienation from the world and his times would be a fundamental misunderstanding of the problems involved. For all his exceptional gifts, he was no ‘génie bête’, nor was he insensitive, unimaginative, or deaf to conscience. On the contrary, he was intelligent, life-orientated, and no doubt also sensitive, but imbued with the traditional anti-social indifference of the artist and technologist, which left him dead to all challenges of political origin. At the same time he sought to keep the imperative demands of the regime at a distance by pointing out that his was a non-political profession, and no doubt this was partly why he refused honorary rank in the SS. (6)

Towards the end of the war, however, when he found himself faced with the self-destructive extremism of Hitler, Bormann and Goebbels, this argument manifestly would not do. For a time Speer tried to avoid a decision: his memoranda from that time ceaselessly reiterate that he wants to keep out of politics and emphatically document the untenable situation of a man who has sought to evade the consequence of a political policy which he has simultaneously played a prominent part in and ignored. It is true that he later stated privately at Nuremberg that in the end it was Hitler who transgressed against the principles of selfless expertise and pursued only his own self-interest and desire for fame; (7) but this was the fallacy that, in a far more dishonest form, permeated the apologia put out by Hitler’s bourgeois-conservative partners.

From the day he set out to gain dominion over Germany until his withdrawal into the concrete cavern deep under the Reich Chancellery, the slogan ‘a war of ashes’, and his end in 200 litres of blazing petrol, Hitler was always consistent, never once deviating from his chosen path. Albert Speer, on the other hand, broke away at the turn of the year 1944-5, when in joining the resistance movement and the preparations for the assassination of Hitler he sought to correct the fallacy of the regime whose methods were bound to be repulsive to a man of his origins and character. It was predominantly his belief against the principles of selfless expertise and pursued only humanitarian considerations, arbitrary decisions, concentration camps, aggression against other countries were not his business; all this was ‘politics’, whereas he was an architect, a technologist, an artist. Even at Nuremberg he still maintained that his ‘task was a technological and economic one’, not political, and to the question did he not, as an educated man, realize that the forcible transportation of foreign workers was contrary to the law of nations, he replied that he was an architect and all he knew about law was what he read in the papers. (4) It was entirely in keeping with this that although he regularly and credibly, before the Tribunal, repudiated the use of violence, he based this repudiation not upon humanitarian considerations but upon the practical point that it hindered his constant ministerial efforts to increase output. (5)

To see a figure like Albert Speer as an example of the work-obsessed artist’s alienation from the world and his times would be a fundamental misunderstanding of the problems involved. For all his exceptional gifts, he was no ‘génie bête’, nor was he insensitive, unimaginative, or deaf to conscience. On the contrary, he was intelligent, life-orientated, and no doubt also sensitive, but imbued with the traditional anti-social indifference of the artist and technologist, which left him dead to all challenges of political origin. At the same time he sought to keep the imperative demands of the regime at a distance by pointing out that his was a non-political profession, and no doubt this was partly why he refused honorary rank in the SS. (6)
says it is a 'mystery' that Speer, after so many personal triumphs, never denounced his objective and critical-intellectual attitude. (8) With some justification he has been credited with the rare virtue of civil courage, (9) which emphatically distinguished him from Hitler's muted and subservient entourage. In fact Hitler's stuffy demonism invariably paled in vain against Speer's practical expertise and clear-headedness.

Speer's exceptional quality comes out in an account by one of his former colleagues, Dietrich Stahl, of their first meeting in autumn 1944. 'For the first time,' Stahl stated at Nuremberg, 'I found to my complete surprise a leading and responsible man who saw the real situation soberly and clearly, and who not only had the courage to say things that put his life in danger but was also prepared to take resolute action.' (10)

Despite a rationalism that was fired by concrete objects rather than ideologies, Speer was capable of the sort of enthusiastic belief out of which devotion to high (and often horrible) ideals grows. He never, of course, lent himself to the undignified Byzantine fawning that Hitler increasingly demanded and which his company of favourites all readily offered. He seemed always to be conscious that he was not like the rest of them, and nothing demonstrates his position as an outsider among Hitler's henchmen more clearly than Goring's remark at Nuremberg: 'We ought never to have trusted him!' (11) It was undoubtedly the whole range of these qualities and circumstances that gained him the respect of many, including many opponents. Thus for example the conspirators of 20th July 1944 placed Hitler's minister on their cabinet list, although he had never sought contact with them, and even in the cross-questioning by the chief American prosecutor at Nuremberg, Justice Robert H. Jackson, an element of personal respect comes through. (12) Speer was almost the only one of the accused to confess his own failure, without prevarication and without transparent excuses, openly to admit his responsibility, and to answer with a simple 'No!' the question: did he wish to plead that he was carrying out the Fuhrer's orders? 'In so far as Hitler gave me orders and I carried them out, I accept responsibility for them; however, I did not carry out all his orders.' (13) Unlike the majority of his fellow-accused, he declared a residue of loyalty to Hitler, in spite of all the contradictions in their relationship, and even after their bitter clashes during the last months. In fact he owed a great deal to Hitler, who had taken an intense personal liking to the young architect after meeting him through Goebbels. Speer came of an old family of master-builders, who had joined the NSDAP in 1931, and in addition to a few minor undertakings as a private architect, had carried out two commissions for the Berlin Gauleiter's office the following year. (14) At the beginning of 1933 the technical arrangements for the staging of the major rally of 1st May on the Tempelhofer Feld were entrusted to him. Here he first showed his skill in improvisation, using rapidly erected flag-poles and, in the final display in the evening, inventive lighting effects to create the atmospheric pageantry which stylized petty-bourgeois longing for the liturgy which stylized petty-bourgeois longing for the holy and beautiful. (21)

At times there were evidently open differences of opinion between himself and Speer; for when Wilhelm Furtwangler once remarked that 'it must be wonderful to build in such a grand style according to one's own ideas', Speer is said to have replied ironically, 'Just imagine someone saying to you: it is my unshakeable wish that henceforth the "Ninth" shall only be performed on the mouth organ.' (20) All planning was monotonously and indistinguishably determined by 'gigantic' proportions, after the traditional ambition of dictators to create in huge buildings monuments that would outlast the short-lived dominion of their own persons. This aim rings out over and over again in Hitler's speeches. At the Reich Party Rally of 1937, he stated:

'Because we believe in the everlasting continuance of this Reich, in so far as we can reckon by human standards, these works too shall be eternal, that is to say they shall satisfy eternal demands not only in the grandeur of their conception but also in the lucidity of their ground plans, the harmony of their proportions. Therefore these buildings are not to be conceived for the year 1940, nor for the year 2000, but are to tower up like the cathedrals of our past into the millennia to come.

And if God perhaps makes today's poets and singers into fighters, then at least he has given these fighters architects who will see to it that the success of their fight receives everlasting substantiation in the documents of a unique great art. This state shall not be a power without culture nor a force without beauty.' (21)

These successes launched Speer on a soaring career which brought him, still under thirty, a multitude of offices and commissions. In 1934 he was commissioned to design the Reich Party Rally grounds at Nuremberg. The same year he became head of the 'Beauty of Work' Department, and at the beginning of 1937 he was appointed General Architectural Inspector for the Reich capital, responsible, as Hitler stressed, for systematically 'turning Berlin into a real and true capital of the German Reich'. (15) Together with Speer, Hitler, now catching up with his earlier dreams of becoming an architect, planned the redesigning of the other German cities with huge buildings and parks in an imitative style in which pseudo-classical elements, excessive in size, and lack of charm combined to create a solemn emptiness. The Konigsplatz in Munich or the New Reich Chancellery, said by a contemporary to be 'the first state building to have forestalled- the shadow of all future buildings', as well as countless sketches, designs and half-finished works, gave and still give an oppressive idea of these plans. (16) Speer proved a brilliant executant of the line inspired by Hitler, that of insane monumentality. The same writer speaks of 'buildings of faith', in which 'the Fuhrer's word is converted into a word of stone'. Speer willingly transferred his personal admiration for his patron and Fuhrer to the latter's architectural ideas, of which it might rightly be said, as the wife of party architect Paul Ludwig Troost said of Hitler's views on art in general, that he had got stuck at the year 1890. (17) Hitler's taste for the pompous decadence of a painter like Hans Makart was in keeping with his liking for the vapid classicism of the Vienna Parliament Building which, together with the Opera House and the insignificant but ostentatious buildings on the Ringstrasse, he recalled as the most powerful architectural impressions of his youth in Vienna. He could stand and admire them for hours, he wrote. (18) The ornate and forced, the smooth, undemanding and technically precise, Richard Wagner and the allegory 'The Sin' by Franz von Stuck, a student of Piloty, were pointers to his artistic taste, which, with the vengefulness of the failed art student, he elevated to a norm both in governmental cultural politics and in official buildings. (19)

The Konigsplatz in Munich or the New Reich Chancellery, during the Tannenberg celebrations, and finally during the Reich Party Rally of 1937, he stated:

At times there were evidently open differences of opinion between himself and Speer; for when Wilhelm Furtwangler once remarked that 'it must be wonderful to build in such a grand style according to one's own ideas', Speer is said to have replied ironically, 'Just imagine someone saying to you: it is my unshakeable wish that henceforth the "Ninth" shall only be performed on the mouth organ.' (20) All planning was monotonously and indistinguishably determined by 'gigantic' proportions, after the traditional ambition of dictators to create in huge buildings monuments that would outlast the short-lived dominion of their own persons. This aim rings out over and over again in Hitler's speeches. At the Reich Party Rally of 1937, he stated:

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Such considerations were reflected in the designs prepared under Hitler's sustained and fervent influence. He once said that if the First World War 'had not come he might have been - indeed probably would have been - one of Germany's leading architects, if not the leading architect.' (22) The extant plans show every sign of arrogant megalomania. A domed hall was to be raised a hundred feet high to seat 100,000. Among the party buildings designed to give the city of Nuremberg 'its future and hence everlasting style' was a...
congress hall for 60,000, a stadium 'such as the world has never seen before.' (23) And a parade ground for a million people. The excavations alone would have called for 40 miles of railway track, 600 million bricks would have been required for the foundations, and the outer walls would have been 270 feet high. Hitler paid particular attention to the durability of the first great monumental materials, so that thousands of years later the buildings should bear witness to the grandeur of his power as the pyramids of Egypt testified to the power and splendour of the Pharaohs. (24) 'But if the movement should ever fall silent,' he declared as he laid the foundation stone for the congress hall at Nuremberg, 'then this witness here will still speak for thousands of years. In the midst of a sacred grove of ancient oaks men will then admire in reverent awe the splendour of the Pharaohs.' (25) And he remarked effusively to Hans Frank, 'They will be so gigantic that even the pyramids will pale before the masses of concrete and colossi of stone which I am erecting here. I am building for eternity, for, Frank, we are the last Germans. If we ever dare to disappear, if the movement were to pass away after many centuries, there would be no Germany any more.' The desire to convey to those distant millennia the impression of his own greatness, when 'perhaps the Huns or the barbarians will rule over Europe,' also revealingly prompted him to order a sketch to be made showing the projected congress hall as a vast ruin. (26)

In spite of the growing number of offices he held in the progress of his career, Speer's position and influence were based exclusively on his close personal relationship with Hitler; and in the knowledge that he had no institutional power but only a position of confidence, he kept well out of the rivalries between the leading office-holders. His ambition remained non-political, and up to 1942, when he was appointed a minister, he had 'never made a speech in his life'. (27) At the same time he was by temperament more unselshless than the warring holders of top-level power, more attracted by the tasks than the power.

During all these years Hitler's relations with Speer had a remarkable sentimental character in striking contrast to the coldness and self-interest of his other human contacts. Perhaps he saw in the young architect, with his energy, brilliance and ability to achieve extraordinary results with apparent ease, his other self, freely developed and without the twists placed by a malevolent destiny to which, in his all-pervading self-pity, he still ascribed the failure of his early ambitions. In an essay written in 1939 Hitler paid Speer an unusual compliment; he described him as 'an architect of genius' and along with his 'artistic talent' praised especially his 'unparalleled organizational ability'. (28) It has rightly been pointed out that Speer was one of the few exceptions to Hitler's deeply rooted suspicion of men of middle-class origin, and Speer himself stated, 'If Hitler had had friends, I should have been his friend.' (29) Moreover he was not untouched by the numerous expressions of personal favour Hitler so openly showed him. He clearly revered Hitler at this time and, in his unworldliness as an artist and technologist, saw no reason to distort his emotions. In so far as reality contradicted the somewhat fanciful ideas he had of it, he simply shut it out. There was nothing of which, in his mixture of political innocence and restricted specialist outlook, he was less aware than that he had become the accomplice of a regime the temple of its millennial expectations. Now he crossed the Dnieper, Goebbels asked suspiciously what had happened to all the extra production (34) But Speer's successes spoke for themselves, and Hitler said his youngest minister was the 'most efficient minister'. (35) Without the efforts of Speer, who by 1943 had concentrated more than 80 per cent of German industrial capacity in his hands, Hitler would unquestionably not have been able to continue the war so long and might possibly, as Speer himself conjectured, have had to admit defeat as early as 1942 or 1943. (36)

This consideration clearly demonstrates the whole dubious nature of these efforts, and undoubtedly Speer gradually came to see this dichotomy, even if, in his technocratic self-assurance, he may not have sensed it personally. In his speeches at this period he forever quotes production figures, output, productive capacity, as though intoxicated by these deceptive credit balances, and the pseudo-military jargon in which he described industrial production - 'the mobilisation of output reserves', 'the breaking down of bottlenecks', and so on - played with figures that were entirely detached from political reality and left no room for intrusive thought. (37) Not until spring 1944, when he was ill for several months, does he seem to have broken away from his specialist fixations and cast off the habit of thinking exclusively in terms of achievement and efficiency. For it was obviously these months that released in him those elements of inner conflict which from now on never left him. According to his own statement, he had already, at the height of his success in summer 1940, recognized the first signs of the inner flaws and dubious characteristics of National Socialist rule: its boastful arrogance, its greed, and the excesses of the bad winner. (38) Nevertheless he had kept up his expert's indifference, had continued to satisfy his ambition in the midst of people whom he was beginning to despise, and to build for the regime the temple of its millennial expectations. Now he began to discover his ministry according to its technical power at his disposal brought with it political responsibility. He may have come to this point through the realization that in the meantime every increase in production consumed the nation's basic substance and could only be maintained for a limited time. Moreover, at this stage of a war that was being waged by ever more total methods, he must have been persuaded predominantly by concrete facts; he must have had a technocrat's concern over the past and threatened destruction of so many factories, mines, roads, bridges and transport installations. Doubt was increased still further when he saw Hitler, after summer 1944, begin to lay the blame for the course of the war upon the failure of the German people and in no case upon himself', and under the slogan 'victory or annihilation' take steps to convert the increasingly senseless prolongation of the war into preparations for total self-destruction. With this discovery Speer entered the 'crisis of his life'. (39) Loyalty struggled with his sense of responsibility. He had
a lot to thank Hitler for. The distinction of personal affection, the generous provision of artistic opportunities, influence, fame: all this had meant a great deal to him. But he had always preserved an idealistic readiness to place the cause above persons, and his sober, calculating temperament was permeated by a very German, romantically tinged enthusiasm that felt behind trite, sentimental sayings the core of a categorical imperative. His later memoranda to Hitler prove this very clearly; in one of them he confessed that he could work only with a feeling of inner decency, with conviction and faith, (40) preconditions which Hitler now palpably placed in question. For a short time he attempted to blur the alternatives and avoid a decision between personal emotional attachments and the interests of the country and its people, for example in his memorandum of 18th March 1945. But a few weeks earlier he had already begun to circumvent the measures which Hitler had ordered for the destruction of areas threatened by the advancing enemy. (41) In an effort to make the Fuhrer more reasonable and alert him to the breakdown of the war effort now inevitable for economic and technical reasons, Speer wrote innumerable memoranda. In one dated 30th January 1945 beginning 'The war is lost' he tried to combat the illusions of the fantasy world of the Fuhrer's headquarters. He made a comprehensive analysis of the situation, but without achieving anything more than the henceforth unconcealed hostility of Bormann and also of Goebbels, who for a long time had stood by him.(42) Hitler, on the other hand, in view of the opening sentence, refused to read the memorandum at all. (43) Speer slipped into disfavour and thereupon, with typical independence, he began systematically to work against Hitler's plans for the demolition of Germany. In spring 1945 the conflict took a dramatic turn. On 18th March, when Hitler, in his memoranda to the Fuhrer's headquarters a memorandum predicting 'with certainty' the imminent 'final breakdown of the German economy' and stressing that it was the Fuhrer's responsibility to ensure the conditions for the continued existence of the German people, there was a violent quarrel. The crux of it was summed up by Speer in a subsequent letter to Hitler:

When I handed you my memorandum on 18th March I was firmly convinced that the conclusions which I had drawn from the present situation for the preservation of our national strength would definitely meet with your approval. For you yourself once stated that it is the task of the government, in the event of losing a war, to preserve the nation from a heroic end.

Nevertheless you made statements to me in the evening from which, if I have not misunderstood them, it emerges clearly and unambiguously that if the war is lost the nation too will be lost. This fate is inescapable. It would not be necessary to take any account of the basis which the nation needs for its survival on the most primitive level. On the contrary, it would be better to destroy even these things. For the nation would have proved itself the weaker and then the future would belong exclusively to the stronger nation of the East. Those who remained after the struggle would in any case be to inferior; for the Good would have died. After these words I was deeply shaken. And when a day later I read the demolition order and shortly after that the evacuation order, I saw in them the first steps towards the carrying out of these purposes. (44)

While Hitler's egocentricity clearly took the form of disappointed hatred of his own people, Speer went to work openly against his plans. Although his authority to give orders was expressly withdrawn, he travelled to zones near the front, convinced the local authorities of the senselessness of the orders they had received, had explosives immersed in water, and supplied the controllers of important undertakings with submachine guns with which to protect themselves against the demolition squads. When eventually called to account by Hitler, he repeated that the war was lost. Hitler gave him twenty-four hours to think it over. But instead of an assurance that he had understood his order, he handed him a detailed memorandum analysing their mutual relationship and demanding withdrawal of the demolition order of 19th March.(45) Nevertheless, he finally succeeded in propitiating Hitler to the extent of regaining his official powers. Exploiting the general confusion of orders, Speer then issued numerous instructions, some in the name of other authorities such as the Army High Command or the Reich Railways, some in his own name, which he withheld from Hitler and which at times merely served the purpose of intensifying the chaos and paralysing the work of destruction. At the same time he took steps to circumvent the intention of leading officials to escape responsibility by fleeing abroad. (46) Finally, in his 'despair', as he said, he evolved a plan to kill Hitler, along with the self-centred company that had buried itself in the bunkers of the Reich Chancellery in a mood of apocalyptic doom, by feeding poison gas into the underground ventilation system. Hitler, in Speer's view, had originally been called upon by the people, and 'he had no right to gamble away their destiny along with his own'.(47) But a last-minute alteration to the ventilation shaft carried out on Hitler's own instructions frustrated this plan. Once again Hitler had escaped an attempt on his life.

And yet this was not the end of their curious relationship. Many factors were involved. According to Speer's own confession, he feared to appear a coward; at the same time, no doubt, some isolated impulses of loyalty remained; and finally there was the psychological phenomenon that every period of enlightenment was succeeded by a relapse into the protective darkness of the old blind faith. In any case on 23rd April 1945 Speer, filled with 'conflicting emotions', as he himself stated, flew into encircled, burning Berlin in order to say farewell to his colleagues and 'after all that had happened, to place myself at Hitler's disposal'. (48) Unhesitatingly, he admitted what he had done to circumvent the order of 19th March. But instead of the expected outburst of rage, Hitler remained calm and seemed impressed by Speer's candour. He let him go unharmed, though his name disappeared from the cabinet list which Hitler drew up a few days later as part of his will. 'They were all under his spell,' Speer said of Hitler's leading henchmen, 'They obeyed him blindly, with no will of their own, whatever the medical term for this phenomenon may be.' (49) But he was the exception, the only man in Hitler's immediate entourage who refused to sacrifice either his own will or the guidance of his own reason and character, as the majority did so eagerly. The apologetic nature of the memoirs and autobiographical notes the others wrote at this time set forth the thesis of Hitler's compulsive power and the ostensibly irresistible magic of his will. Speer's example proves that it was rather the weakness and insignificance of the men who made up his entourage that ensured the 'Fuhrer' his unchallenged superiority right to the end.

However, in spite of all his distinguishing qualities, human and moral, Hugh R. Trevor-Roper has called Albert Speer 'the real criminal of Nazi Germany, for he, more than any other, represented that fatal philosophy which has made havoc of Germany and nearly shipwrecked the world. For ten years he sat at the very centre of political power but he did nothing.' (50) But this judgement is as mistaken about the structural characteristics of a highly industrialised society as it is about the nature of totalitarian regimes and the individual's power to work against them. In fact, until 1942 Speer neither sat at the real centre of political power in any relevant sense, nor did he 'do nothing'. But he did represent a type without which neither the National Socialist nor any other variety of modern totalitarianism could have succeeded: the expert who sought to guarantee himself an irreproachable existence by retreating into the ostensibly unpolitical position of his profession, confining himself to his work in order to glorify his inaction 'doing his duty'. In so far as such men, however influential, kept their distance from the events of the day, wore no uniform, indulged in no acts of havoc and promulgated no laws, and arrested no one, they remained from a technical legal point of view free from tangible guilt. Nevertheless, having defined his own positions and potentialities, they did not do enough to prevent the establishment and spread of violence; they are open to the
reproach of having refused to accept responsibility for what was going on. For a plea of duty amounts to very little in a state where uniforms are worn, acts of violence performed, and people arrested and killed. He who can appeal only to his own irreproachable behaviour cannot claim, however much personal satisfaction he may derive from doing so, that he has emerged from this experience uncorrupted. Furthermore, heroes are rare and in bad times weakness and blindness are for many a technique of survival. Such people are not on that account criminals.

Albert Speer admitted this failure. It took him a long time to appreciate this personal guilt, not merely from a specialist’s traditional contempt for politics, but also because of the exceptional complexity of moral insights in a world of partial and divided responsibilities. Nevertheless he did not evade the final confrontation, and if he had greater power than others he also showed greater resolution.

He was sentenced at Nuremberg to twenty years’ imprisonment. But his attempt to escape responsibility behind his role as a technocrat was not mentioned in the explanation of the verdict; for this is not a matter that lies within the jurisdiction of the criminal code, but one of conscience. Both under interrogation and through his defence counsel, he kept returning in a strangely compulsive manner to the problem of responsibility, which he emphatically admitted in a kind of belated reckoning up to be his ‘self-evident duty’.

In my view there are two kinds of responsibility in the life of the state. One kind of responsibility is for one’s own sector; for this one is, of course, entirely responsible. But over and above this I am of the opinion that for quite decisive matters there is and must be a collective responsibility, in so far as one is one of the leaders, for who else should bear responsibility for the course of events? (51)

Speer was found guilty on the grounds of his participation in the forced labour programme.

**Speer affadavit 1977**

*Albert Speer, in an affidavit, sworn and signed at Munich on 15th June 1977, deposed as follows:*

Hatred of the Jews was Hitler’s motor and central point perhaps even the very element which motivated him. The German people, the German greatness, the Empire, they all meant nothing to him in the last analysis. For this reason, he wished in the final sentence of his testament, to fixate as Germans, even after the apocalyptic downfall in a miserable hatred of the Jews.

I was present at the session of the Reichstag of 30th January 1939, when Hitler assured us that in case of a war, not the Germans, but the Jews would be annihilated. This dictum was pronounced with such certainty that I would not have felt permitted to question his intention to carry it through. He repeated this announcement of his intentions on 30th January 1942, in a speech I also know of: ‘The war would not end, as the Jews imagined, by the extinction of European-Aryan peoples, but it would result in the annihilation of the Jews. This repetition of his words of 30th January 1939 was not unique. He would often remind his entourage of the importance of this dictum.

When speaking of the victims of the bomb raids, particularly after the massive attacks on Hamburg in Summer 1943, he again and again reiterated that he would avenge these victims on the Jews; just as if the air-terror against the civilian population actually suited him in that it furnished him with a belated substitute motivation for a crime decided upon long ago and emanating from quite different layers of his personality. Just as if he wanted to justify his own mass murders with these remarks.

So long as Hitler had temperamental outbursts of hate, there was yet hope for a change towards more moderate directions. But when, however, it was the final and coldless which made his outbreaks against the Jews so convincing. In other areas when he announced horrifying decisions in a cold and quiet voice, those around him, and I myself knew that things had now become serious. And with just this cold superiority he declared also, when we occasionally had lunch together, that he was set to destroy the Jews in Europe.

In Summer 1944, the District Leader of Lower Silesia, Karl Hanke, paid me a visit. Hanke had distinguished himself by bravery in the Polish and French campaigns. He was certainly not an easily frightened person. Therefore it was of particular moment, when, at that time, he told me in a shocked manner, that monstrous things were happening in the concentration camps of his neighbouring district, Upper Silesia. He said he was there and would never be able to forget what atrocities he had witnessed there. Admittedly, he did not mention any names, but he must have meant Auschwitz in Upper Silesia. From the agitation of this battle-hardened soldier I could derive that something unheard of was happening, if it could cause this old party leader of Hitler’s to lose his composure.

Hitler’s method of work was that he gave even important commands to his confidants verbally. Also in the leader’s records of my interviews with Hitler completely preserved in the German Federal Archives - there were numerous commands even in important areas which Hitler clearly gave by word of mouth only. It therefore conforms with his method of work and must not be regarded as an oversight, that a written order for the extermination of the Jews does not exist.

That the Jewish inmates of the extermination camps were murdered was established at Court (IMT), by witnesses and documentation, and in fact not seriously contested by any of the accused. Himmler’s speech before the SS leaders of 4th October 1943, which clearly illustrated the happenings in the extermination camps, was not discredited as forgery by the defence, as it for instance happened with the ‘Hossbach-Protokoll.’

Frank has never disputed the genuineness of his diary that by his own admission, he surrendered to the Americans on the occasion of his arrest. The diary contains remarks proving that the Jews in Poland were, except for a remainder of 100 000, quite annihilated. The accused also accepted these statements of Frank’s and criticism was limited to the stupidity in handing over this incriminating diary to the ‘opponents.’

Schirach confirmed in a confidential conversation already during the trial, that he was present at a speech which Himmler gave to the district leaders in Posen (on 6th October 1943), in which Himmler clearly and unambiguously announced that the projected killing of the Jews had been largely carried out. He returned to this subject, which weighed on his mind also during his imprisonment in Spandau.

In his final address to the Court, Goering spoke of the serious crimes which had been uncovered during the trial and he condemned the atrocious mass murders which he said escaped his comprehension. Streicher also condemned the mass murders of the Jews in his final address. For Fritzche, also in his final address, the murder of five million was a horrifying warning for the future. These words of the accused’s support my contention that in the Nuremberg Trial the accused as well as the defence have recognised as a fact that the mass murders of the Jews had taken place.

The Nuremberg Trial stands for me still today as an attempt to break through to a better world. Still today I acknowledge as generally correct the reasons of sentence by the International Military Tribunal. Moreover, I still today consider as just that I assume the responsibility and thus the guilt for everything that was perpetrated by way of, generally speaking, crime, after my joining the Hitler Government on the 8th February 1942. Not the individual mistakes, grave as they may be, are burdening my conscience, but my having acted in the leadership. Therefore, I for my person, have in the Nuremberg Trial, confessed to the collective responsibility and to the complicity today still. I still see my main guilt in my having approved of the persecution of the Jews and of the murder of millions of them.
The Führer’s Buildings


Heads of state have often encouraged the arts, and in particular the building arts. The Rococo princes of the eighteenth century built impressive palaces and gardens, giving architects of that day the chance to exercise their creativity.

The Führer, too, is a head of state who builds, but in an entirely different sense. His major buildings that are beginning to appear in many cities are an expression of the essence of the movement. They are intended to endure for millennia and are part of the movement itself. The Führer created this movement, came to power because of its strength, and even today determines the smallest details of its structure. He does not build in the manner of earlier heads of state who were prosperous contract-givers or patrons; he must build as a National Socialist. Just as he determines the will and nature of the movement, so also he determines the simplicity and purity of its buildings, their strength of expression, the clarity of the thinking, the quality of the material, and most importantly, the new inner meaning and content of his buildings.

Building is not merely a way of passing time for the Führer, rather a serious way of giving expression in stone to the will of the National Socialist movement.

It is unique in German history that at decisive moments the Führer concerned himself not only with the larger questions relating to the world view and politics of the new era, but simultaneously and with the knowledge of an expert began to build monuments in stone that will express his political will and cultural ability in the coming millennia. After long centuries of confusion, these buildings express a clarity and strength that will result in an entirely new style of architecture.

From his youth, the Führer was as interested in questions of architecture as of social policy, as a passage he wrote in 1924 in "Mein Kampf" shows:

"As my interest in social issues developed, I began to study thoroughly. It was a new and previously unknown world for me. It was natural that I also followed my passion for architecture. Next to music, it seemed to me the queen of the arts. Working to understand it was not "work" for me, rather a great pleasure. I could read or draw until late into the night without ever becoming weary. My faith increased that after many years my dreams would become reality. I was firmly convinced that I would win fame as a builder." He explains in "Mein Kampf" how important these impressions of his years in Vienna were:

"During this period I developed a picture of the world and a world view that became the granite foundation of my actions. I have needed to make only a few additions to the views I formed then, but no changes.

The opposite, in fact.

I believe today that the general outline of a person’s thinking is determined in his youth, as far as such thinking ever develops."

The Führer never gave up his youthful love for the building arts. War and revolution, however, so shook the governmental and national life of Germany that Hitler, who had become increasingly concerned with political questions as a soldier, decided to become a politician.

He said: "Would it not be ridiculous to build houses under such circumstances?"

He was completely serious about becoming a politician, but it was a difficult decision to leave the architecture he loved. He remained true to it, and continued thinking about it. Today, too, it remains his great love.

In the first exciting years of his political struggle, he was as interested in the symbolic expressions of the movement as in its structure. He developed the swastika flag — and thereby the national flag of the German people. He developed the party's eagle symbol — and thereby the symbol of the Third Reich. He proposed the symbols of the SA and the SS, and developed the original format of his numerous mass meetings. He also laid out the ideas that today guide the construction of all the buildings at the Reich Party Rally grounds in Nuremberg.

Through numerous discussions, he laid out not only the broad outlines of the party rallies, but also spent hours developing the precise guidelines for the appearance of the individual formations of the party, for the parades with flags and the decorations of individual pillars. People in Nuremberg even today preserve the Führer’s sketches and drawings from this period.

In times of tension when he devotes his full energy to his great goals, time spent with the arts is not "work," but "delight."

At the proper time, fate introduced him to Paul Ludwig Troost, with whom a close friendship soon developed. Professor Troost had an architectural impact on him similar to the influence Dietrich Eckart had on his political thinking.

The first building that these two men worked on was also the first and still small building of the movement, the "Brown House" on Brienner Street in Munich. It was only a matter of remodeling, though as the Führer often said later, it was a major endeavor for the party at the time.

The Braunehaus (The Brown House)

One can already see here the characteristics of the buildings that followed after the seizure of power: austere and plain, but never monotonous. It was simple and clear, with no false decoration. Decorations were few, but each was in its proper place. The material, form, and lines were elegant.

The plans for the remodeling came from the Professor Troost's same simple studio on a back street in Munich, from which plans later came for the Königsplatz in Munich, the Museum of German Art, and many of the Führer's other buildings. The Führer never reviewed the plans for these important buildings in his office.

For years he visited Professor Troost in his free time. Then, free from his political duties, he became himself fully in the plans. The Führer was interested not only in the general plans, but also in every detail, every material used, and much was improved as the result of his suggestions. The Führer has often said that these hours of common planning were his happiest hours and gave him the deepest satisfaction. They gave him new strength for his other plans. Here he had the chance to devote himself to his buildings in the few free hours that his political duties left him.

In the years before the takeover, Hitler discussed the buildings he planned to build with Troost. During the winter
of 1931/32, they discussed the future work on Munich's Königsplatz, resulting in many beautiful proposals. Before the takeover of power, the final layout of the square had been decided.

The Königsplatz in Munich during the Nazi years

The Glass Palace burned down in Munich in 1932. In the midst of all his other concerns, the Führer had to worry about the then government's bland proposal to replace it, a plan that was begun before he took power. When one compares the original model with that of Troost's current "Museum of German Art," one sees more clearly than anywhere else how the ideas of the Führer influence his buildings.

Until his death, Paul Ludwig Troost was the Führer's irreplaceable architect. Troost understood how to give his ideas the proper architectural form.

In his major speech at the cultural session of the at the 1935 Reich Party Rally, the Führer gave Professor Troost the highest praise a contemporary architect could receive:

We should be filled with pride that the greatest German architect since Schinkel has built his first and unfortunately only monuments for the new Reich and for Germany. They will stand as stone memorials of a noble and truly Germanic architecture.

It gives the Führer pleasure to see the plans for a building, but it is as great a joy to see the buildings going up.

When he visits the site of a building project, accompanied often by only a few aides, he is a complete expert. His technical questions about the foundation, the strength of the walls, and construction difficulties are clear and always address the unsolved problems. After the experts have doubted that a solution to a problem can be found, he often makes a proposal, though unlike anything else, always proves a clear and easy solution.

Each new step, each new detail in a building wins his thorough attention and approval. In all his pleasure in the details, he never forgets the overall characteristics that all his buildings display.

The Führer's buildings use hand-hewn natural stone. Natural stone and Nordic bricks are our most durable building materials. Although they are more expensive in the short term, in the long term they are the most economical. Durability is always the most important principle. The buildings of our Führer will speak of the greatness of our age to future millennia. As the eternal buildings of the movement rise in the various cities of Germany, they will be buildings of which people can be proud. They will know that these buildings belong to everyone, and therefore to each individual. The Führer's buildings will determine a city's nature, not department stores, administrative buildings, banks, and corporations.

The Führer had this to say about the cities of the past and future:

In the 19th century our cities began to lose the character of cultural centres and became simply human settlements.

When Munich was a city of 60,000, it wanted to be one of the major German centres of culture. Today nearly every industrial city claims this honour, usually without being able to show any significant accomplishments of its own. They are nothing more than collections of houses and apartment buildings. How can such an insignificant place have any appeal? No one will have particular loyalty to a city that lacks any individuality at all, that avoids anything resembling art.

Even the big cities are becoming poorer in real works of art even as they increase in population.

The modern era has done nothing to increase the cultural level of our big cities. All the glory and treasures of our cities are the inheritance of the past.

Our big cities today have no towering monuments that dominate the area and that are symbols of their era. The cities of antiquity were different. Each has a particular monument in which it took pride. The character of the cities of antiquity came not from private buildings, rather from the community's buildings which were constructed not for their age, but for eternity. They reflected not the wealth of a single owner, but the greatness and significance of the community.

The Germanic Middle Ages exemplified the same principle, though in a different artistic form. The Gothic cathedral fulfilled the same purpose as the Acropolis or the Pantheon.

If Berlin were to suffer the fate of Rome, posterity would think the characteristic expressions of our culture to be the department stores of some Jews or the hotels of some businessmen.

Our cities today lack a towering symbol of the community, and one cannot therefore be surprised that one's own city also lacks such a symbol.

One has to see the Führer's major buildings at the Königsplatz, the Museum of German Art in Munich, and the party rally buildings in Nuremberg from this perspective. They are a beginning, but an important one. In the housing projects of the Führer, too, we are at the beginning of new developments.

It is natural that one first thinks of the big projects when one considers the Führer's building projects.

But one must know that these projects do not exhaust the Führer's activities.

The very opposite.

We know from his speeches the importance Hitler puts on improving the social conditions of every German such that they will be able to take pride in the community's larger accomplishments. The Führer made clear the importance of housing in "Mein Kampf." He wrote:

I learned quickly what I had previously not understood: The nationalization of a people requires the creation of healthy social conditions as a foundation for the individual's education.

Official statistics show the increase in new and remodeled dwellings in the Reich:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>159,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>202,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>319,439</td>
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These figures show more plainly than words the rise in good housing under the Führer's government. This trend will continue and increase significantly once "the projects necessary for our security have been completed, buildings that are necessary and which cannot be postponed."

Then the monuments of National Socialism will tower like the cathedrals of the Middle Ages over healthy workers' apartments and new factories.

The tasks before us are immense, but the Führer gave us all courage though his words at the cultural session of the Reich party rally.

Men will rise to such great tasks. We have no right to doubt that if the Almighty gives us the courage to strive for immortality, he will also give our people the strength to create for eternity.
Speer Book Reviews

Albert Speer: His Battle With Truth by Gitta Sereny

Gitta Sereny's biography meticulously re-creates for the reader the professional, emotional, and psychological life of Albert Speer, Hitler's architect and later his Minister of Armaments. Throughout the 12-year history of the Third Reich, Speer remained one of Hitler's most trusted confidants and one of the most powerful political leaders of the Nazi Party.

Research and written over an eight year period, Albert Speer weaves together information from innumerable personal interviews with Speer, his family, close friends, and professional colleagues, the author's own solid grasp of German history, and critical readings of Speer's own writings, including various drafts of his memoirs, Inside the Third Reich, first published in 1969.

Throughout, Sereny consciously avoids the pitfalls of many Speer biographers, who seek to either blame or exculpate Speer for the Nazi's atrocities. Instead, she succeeds in helping the reader understand a "morally extinguished" man and place into context "all the crimes against humanity which Hitler initiated, which continue to threaten us today, and of which Speer, who was in many ways a man of excellence, sadly enough made himself a part." Well over 700 pages, Albert Speer is not a quick read, but superbly written and meticulously researched, it is a pleasure to read, providing unprecedented insight into one of the most complex figures in modern German history.

Review by Bertina Loeffler

The Good Nazi: The Life And Lies Of Albert Speer by: Van Der Vat, Dan

Portraying himself during the Nuremberg trials as an 'unwitting collaborator,' Albert Speer stood out among the accused as the one 'good Nazi.' In this hard-hitting biography, Dan van der Vat reveals Speer to be otherwise: a dedicated servant of the party who, as Hitler's minister of wartime production, was the Nazis' principle exploiter of forced labour.

The Good Nazi: The Life And Lies Of Albert Speer by: Van Der Vat, Dan

Dan van der Vat, a Dutch-born British journalist, makes an effective case in The Good Nazi, a well-written and skeptical account, that while the slippery (Albert) Speer knew for years about the atrocities, he was able to pretend that he only "suspected ... that something appalling was happening" to Europe's Jews. As a result, he was one of only two top-ranking Nazis to escape the hangman, drawing a 20-year prison sentence instead.

On the stand at Nuremberg, Albert Speer, the self-described "second man in the Reich," denied any direct knowledge of the Final Solution. But was he really the innocent functionary he claimed to be? And was he sincere in accepting his share of the Nazis' "collective guilt"? This hard-hitting biography says no—that Speer's avowals of ignorance and repentance were a self-serving sham.

The New York Times Book Review, David Murray

Inside the Third Reich by Albert Speer

From 1946 to 1966, while serving the prison sentence handed down from the Nuremberg War Crimes tribunal, Albert Speer penned 1,200 manuscript pages of personal memoirs. Titled Erinnerungen ("Recollections") upon their 1969 publication in German, Speer's critically acclaimed personal history was translated into English and published one year later as Inside the Third Reich. Long after their initial publication, Speer's memoir continues to provide one of the most detailed and fascinating portrayals of life within Hitler's inner circles, the rise and fall of the third German empire, and of Hitler himself.

Speer chronicles his entire life, but the majority of Inside the Third Reich focuses on the years between 1933 and 1945, when Speer figured prominently in Hitler's government and the German war effort as Inspector General of Buildings for the Renovation of the Federal Capital and later as Minister of Arms and Munitions. Speer's recollections of both duties foreground the impossibility of reconciling Hitler's idealistic, imperialistic ambitions with both architectural and military reality. Throughout, Inside the Third Reich remains true to its author's intentions. With compelling insight, Speer reveals many of the "premises which almost inevitably led to the disasters" of the Third Reich as well as "what comes from one man's holding unrestricted power in his hands?"

Review by Bertina Loeffler

Inside the Third Reich by Albert Speer

Albert Speer's "Inside the Third Reich" presents a historical view of daily events within the highest ranks of the Nazi power structure. He is able to humanise the Third Reich to a chilling degree, since he demonstrates again and again how little different these men were from many men. The very ordinariness of the high ranking German officials presents the reader with a vivid illustration that this could happen again!

Albert Speer may have a bit of self-interest in his presentation of events through his own eyes, but the most striking sense of the book is that he is, in fact, an extremely likable man, and a man of thoughtfulness and conscience. His personal struggle to accept the wider meaning of his wartime activities demonstrates the capacity of a decent man to be swept away in indecent activity on the basis of personal pride in a job well done, a personal search for recognition and admiration, and an all too human ability to see through blindsers for a very long time.

When we see some of the events currently taking place in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, especially in places where there is considerable ethnic cohesion and substantial economic distress, we see once again a fertile field for a drift into human atrocity. Given the locally accepted concepts that German people were "special" as well homogeneous, that perpetuation of the economic reorganisation of Germany was critical to a return to tolerable life, and that the return to pride in self and nation would allow all Germans to lift their heads once again, Albert Speer took his place among others of talent and energy. They made a government and an economy work.

The sad fact that the Third Reich was led by a lunatic, who became even more insane and maniacal as time went by, was partially an accident of history.

Many good men, especially bright young men, follow a leader in the wrong direction, and later come to defend their wrong choice of leaders in part from loyalty, and in part to explain themselves to themselves. They cannot see that their emperor has no clothes because they are too close to him, and because they cannot bear to look at the fact that they were duped.

Eventually, realisation comes, but often far later than it would have if they had not been totally embroiled already. After I read Albert Speer's book, I admired him for coming forward to present his personal story of a man who did it all wrong, but who owed himself and humanity an account, and paid it.

Review by Charlane A. Wainwright

Inside the Third Reich by Albert Speer

Albert Speer has given one of the most detailed accounts of activities inside the Third Reich that the world has ever seen. Inside the five hundred and twenty six pages of his memoirs lies every single detail that he could possibly dig up; from what they ate at dinner at Obersalzburg to what kind of weapons Hitler was dreaming up in the last moments of...
the war, it is in this book. From the outside it seems as though Speer is just giving a detailed account of what happened so that the world would get a better understanding of what went on in the inner workings of the Third Reich, but there is more.

This book contains every little piece of factual information that Speer could have possibly found from his youth to the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945. It is by no means brief and devoid of information, rather it is filled with vivid almost overflowing with too much fact of the lives of the officials on the inside. The mere fact that Speer could remember the information or dig it up shows just how well he was paying attention to detail throughout the entire life of the Reich. It also shows that this book serves more than the purpose of merely his memoirs.

Also included in this book are many pictures and descriptions of things that Speer must have found to be of great importance in his career and life. From personal pictures of Hitler, to the model of the Nuremberg stadium that was to house over 400,000 spectators Speer gives the reader some insight as to what was and is important in his life. In the three sections of pictures that are included in this book are three distinct sections of Speer's career during the Reich. In the first section there are many pictures of Hitler and some of the things that were created before Speer was granted power in the Reich. In the second there are many pictures of what was to become of Germany after they won the war. Pictures of Berlin's new town centre and the great hall, and even a picture of the French minister show how Speer thought that this was just a job and how important these things were to him. In the last set of pictures when Speer was minister of armaments there are many pictures of the collapsing Reich, pictures of the new kind of architecture that he was doing in designing weapons and pillboxes, and a lone picture of Speer and Hitler in winter where both are nothing but black silhouettes. This picture alone shows how desolate and sombre the mood of these two was. The picture alone shows the reader how the life and times of Speer and the Reich went, from boom to bust. That boom and bust theme is also repeated in the book, only this time is great detail.

Throughout this book Albert Speer is trying to get a message across to the reader, for he knows that he will go down in history as an infamous man in a infamous Reich. His theme seems to be one of a man who was caught up in a situation and could not control what happened to him. So he attempted to do the least amount of damage while he was in that situation. By spending little time on how he used concentration camp prisoners to fill labour positions in his armament industry, it is almost as though he believes that the reader will not know that he participated in this atrocity. Speer also plays the role of an accomplice to the crimes, but was just really an architect who was doing his duty to his friend and his country.

All of the factual information that is contained in Albert Speer's memoirs is very insightful to what went on during the new infamous years of the Third Reich. From these pages the reader can find out how life was for these high and low ranking Nazi officials, from the beginning bliss to the ending sorrow. Speer does a good job in digging up all the factual information that he could get his hands on to make this book as informative and true to reality as possible, but that factual information only goes so far. The biggest glaring defect of this account of the Reich is the non-existent coverage of all the different types of camps the Nazis set up for various reasons. By adding in all of the war machinery to the pictures, he secures his place as just another piece in the juggernaut of war.

All in all, I felt that this book was good with the potential to do much better. If Speer would have just come clean and admitted to the role he played in the Holocaust it would have been a much more true-to-life account. I do give Speer credit though; he went back and obtained all of the necessary information to make this a very accurate account of what went on during the Third Reich. This was easily a book that I would read again to pick up on all the details that I missed the first time, or even a book I would read for leisure. It is also probably one of the best accounts of what happened during the war that the world will ever see from a primary source.

The Two Worlds of Albert Speer : Reflections of a Nuremberg Prosecutor by Henry T., Jr. King, Bettina Elles

“I knew Albert Speer better than any American,” said Henry King during an interview, at 26-years-old, the youngest prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials and the author of “The Two Worlds of Albert Speer: Reflections of a Nuremberg Prosecutor” (University Press of America). It was not a comment filled with braggadocio. In 1946, fallow and a few years out of Yale Law School, King dreamt the dreams of many young men: accomplish a great deed or participate in a grand undertaking.

Hearing about a friend’s appointment to the American “team” at Nuremberg, King immediately applied for a position. Within a few months, he arrived at Nuremberg in the middle of a rainstorm and soon found himself collecting evidence against Erhard Milch, deputy chief of the Luftwaffe (German Air Force), who was charged with participating in Nazi slave labour and human experiment programs. King also interviewed Reichsmarshall and Luftwaffe chief, Hermann Göring and Wilhelm Keitel, the chief of staff of Germany’s military high command.

But frozen in King’s memory were the interviews with Speer in a bleak interrogation room. “Speer was remarkably composed and unshaken; he seemed to possess an inner security and composure that many of the others lacked,” King recalls. His composure was all the more remarkable because of the unique and key role he played in the Third Reich.
“From 1942 to 1945 not only was he one of the men closest to Hitler, but he was also one who influenced Hitler’s decisions. At one time in late 1943, Speer was reputed to be Hitler’s heir apparent.”

Speer was unemotional, analytical, almost regal in his deportment. And unlike the other twenty defendants, he accepted full responsibility for his actions that haunted me then and still does today was why Speer, who appeared so decent and honest, was a close collaborator of Hitler,” King writes. “Why had he served such a monster.” Nearly half a century would intervene before King could offer any answers.

Speer spent the next 20 years locked away in Spandau prison (kept incommunicado except to his attorney and family). After his release, he became a best-selling author with Inside the Third Reich (1970) a personal look into the sanctum sanctorum of the Nazi leadership and Spandau: The Secret Diaries (1976) which described his imprisonment. King continued practising law, including a stint as general counsel to the U.S. Foreign Economic Aid Program, moving to the private sector and eventually settling in as a professor of international law at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

In 1966, King reestablished contact with Speer, but was unable to pursue his goal of a book until his retirement from TRW where he served as general counsel of Automotive Operations. King interviewed Speer repeatedly (including Speer’s last interview, one month before his death in 1981). He consulted the Nuremberg records, his own notes and the literature on Speer and the Nazis. He also interviewed Speer’s daughter and Traudl Junge, Hitler’s secretary, who observed the interaction between Hitler and Speer.

King’s book carefully plots the conditions and events in Speer’s life that drew the architect toward the summit of Nazi power. Speer was politically naïve, despite his aristocratic background, growing up in a cold, emotionless family, where intellectual prowess was demanded and ambition expected. Introduced to the Nazis at Berlin’s Institute of Technology, Speer fell victim — as did millions of Germans — to the zeitgeist of Nazi Germany before the war, a time when the promise of a new Reich seemed to represent an unfettered, glorious future.

Speer’s ability to organise was quickly recognised, reaching new heights at the Nuremberg rallies. His Pantheon-like “Cathedral of Lights,” established Speer’s chilling brilliance for displaying raw power. The final, crowning jewel, that firmly enthroned Speer to the Nazis fold was his artistic talent which brought him within handshaking distance of Adolf Hitler. Now, Hitler, the failed Viennese artist, would live vicariously through Speer’s artistic triumphs.

The Nazis’ world was Albert Speer’s first world, according to King. It was among the Nazis that Speer performed with remarkable thoroughness and unquestioned devotion, rising to the position of the Third Reich’s Architect and Minister of Armament Production. Indeed, if Speer’s artistic triumphs contributed to physical manifestation of how the Nazis’ viewed themselves, his star as Armament Minister shone even brighter. Experts estimate that Speer’s contribution to industrial production lengthened the war by at least two years.

Despite Speer’s success, he began to enter his “second world,” according to King, even before Germany’s surrender. Speer was the only top Nazi to act in defiance of Hitler—and did so openly. He refused to carry out Hitler’s “scorched earth” policy that would destroy the remains of German industry. Speer’s second world is “where his horizon broadened and his values changed,” writes King. “The second and succeeding world of Albert Speer was the horizontal world of the questioning spirit. This was a world of ethical and cultural values, a humanistic world . . .”

In The Two Worlds of Albert Speer, King deftly presents how naiveté, seduction and ambition drove Speer to the pinnacle of Nazi power. He concludes that Speer was clearly unique among the top Nazis that survived the war. Speer accepted responsibility for his actions and offered mea culpas for his sins. During and after his imprisonment, Speer pondered his actions and began to search for some degree of redemption until the end of his life.

While supporting the prison sentence Speer received, King ably demonstrates that Speer was not some cardboard character from the Nazi past. Rather, he was a complex and brilliant individual who confronted issues of good and evil on a scale that most of us cannot imagine. King succeeded in his search for a great undertaking with his successful role in the prosecution of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg.

More than one half century later, he succeeds with another marvellous undertaking: the writing of The Two Worlds of Albert Speer.

Review by T.S. Peric

Speer: The Final Verdict, by Joachim Fest

Albert Speer was a man of many talents: an accomplished architect, an organizational genius and a master of career advancement. He rose early and quickly through the ranks of the Nazi leadership, first as Hitler’s choice for remaking Berlin and later as the minister of armaments. As a member of Hitler’s inner circle, Speer’s education and professionalism set him apart from the majority of German leaders, men with little understanding of the world beyond their own ideologies and self-interests.

Speer was nevertheless a deeply flawed individual. Intelligent and driven, he was also narrow-minded and uncritical. Indeed, as German historian Joachim Fest concludes in “Speer: The Final Verdict,” he was the archetype of the organization man, that stalwart symbol of industrial capitalism and the bedrock of middle classes the world over. And it’s this quality, more than anything, that allowed Speer to follow Hitler and the Nazis through peace and war.

But unlike Hermann Göring, Heinrich Himmler and others, Speer had turned against Hitler by early 1945; as Allied troops advanced on Berlin, he dashed around the country, trying to block implementation of the Führer’s “scorched earth” dictum. And thanks to his admission of guilt during the Nuremberg trials and the subsequent publication of his memoirs “Inside the Third Reich,” even today observers see Speer in a different light from other Nazis, as an example of how ordinary people could get swept into the fray and, confused or frightened, find themselves in a position of moral culpability. Speer proves for many that the majority of Germans who participated in the Third Reich should bear little blame for the decisions of a cabal of men who knew how to take advantage of them.

Fest, however, rejects the apologists track in favor of a more complicated reading. Fest, who helped Speer write “Inside the Third Reich,” agrees that Speer was less immoral than simply blinded by his own ambition. But Speer lacked the moral compass we expect to find in people; he was, for Fest, an “incomplete person.” And what he lacked in moral, critical faculties, he made up for in a laser-like focus on the goals set before him:

He had turned into one of the machines that he had produced: hi-rev, insensitive, and purely mechanical. It was a kind of autism that had taken hold of him. Incapable of seeing things in perspective, he no longer questioned the goals he was so feverishly working toward, and stifled all moral doubts, if indeed any arose, in the ethos of pure functioning.

For instance, despite his later disavowals, strong evidence indicates Speer knew of tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews being shipped off to camps. While there is little indication he knew of the industrial slaughter going on, he also knew of Hitler’s annihilationist anti-Semitism; only a man whose morals have been blinded by his own ambition, Fest concludes, would have failed to connect the dots.

Eventualy, Speer faced a trial in Nuremberg, and it was this 11-hour change of heart that saved him from execution at Nuremberg (this despite heavy opposition from the Soviet
prosecutor). Nevertheless, Fest is unconvinced the turn had anything to do with a sudden moral awakening: rather, it was rooted in Speer’s fear of watching Hitler destroy the infrastructure and economy he had helped build (and, Fest ventures, that he hoped to oversee as a part of whatever post-war government emerged).

Fest argues from almost the first page that one cannot understand Speer without understanding his relationship with Hitler, and the majority of his analysis revolves around dissecting their odd relationship — at times homoerotic, at times verging on emotionally sadistic. Hitler saw himself in Speer: an artist, a visionary, someone with both a deep appreciation of culture and a knack for leadership. At one point Hitler even hinted at Speer’s succeeding him as Fuhrer. In all likelihood, Hitler envied Speer as much as he valued his friendship. In any case, by the middle of the war, Speer’s growing frustration with Hitler’s increasingly erratic prosecution of the war allowed other members of the Nazi elite, in particular Himmler and other pretenders to the throne, to push Speer out of the inner circle.

"Speer: The Final Verdict" is a misleading title — though to be fair, it is not the title of the original German edition (simply called "Speer: A Biography") — because it is very much Fest’s attempt to make us see Speer on his own terms. He pays little attention to Speer’s architectural aesthetic, and instead tries to answer a specific question: how could Speer, who was undoubtedly less ideological than his cohorts, nevertheless fail to see the horrors driving the regime? In concluding Speer’s culpability lay less in conscious decisions than in his personality type, Fest does more than condemn a man — he condemns an entire way of living. Speer simply did his job and never asked questions, for fear of being confronted with the truth. And while the truth in Speer’s case was more horrible than most of us will ever confront, Fest nevertheless sees a disturbing universal analogue in his subject. While men like Hitler are rare, men like Speer are common. And yet it is precisely men like Speer who make the horrors that lie in the minds of dictators into reality.

Review by Clay Risen

Speer: The Final Verdict, by Joachim Fest

For people who spoke so ardently about Aryan beauty, the leading Nazis sure were a funny-looking lot. Of course, it all began with Hitler, the beady-eyed chap with the bristly little moustache and the greasy forehead flapping in the breeze of his own hysterions. The drug-addled Reichmarshal Hermann Göring, whose compliant decadence wrecked the Luftwaffe, had an icy stare peering out from a sallow, bloated face. The arch anti-Semite, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, was a diminutive, club-footed and rat-faced character. About SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, who calmly arranged the execution of millions, a snide associate once opined "If I looked like him, I should not speak of race at all." And from there, the view seldom improved.

But then there was Albert Speer, Hitler’s principal architect and, later, the efficient organizer of the German war machine. While the rest of his cohort were case studies in every human weakness (and looked it), Speer’s handsome face exuded cultivation and inner serenity. In fact, filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, the director of "Triumph of the Will," said that it was a glimpse of him in a newspaper photograph that helped quell her doubts about the Nazis. "When I saw that photograph," Riefenstahl told Speer biographer Gitta Sereny, "I thought how extraordinary that a man with a face like that should be for Hitler -- if he was, I thought, then there had to be something to it all."

Joachim Fest’s new biography, "Speer: The Final Verdict," which appeared in Europe last year and is now hitting American bookstores, picks up on the suggestion, made first by Sereny, that Hitler and Speer’s relationship had a homoerotic (though not a homosexual) intensity. In either case, their mutual admiration and devotion shaped Speer’s life. "If Hitler had any friends," Fest quotes Speer at Nuremberg, where he sat charged with war crimes, "I would have been his friend."

This, the fourth book-length biography of Speer, has many virtues. Its author, a historian who worked with Speer in editing the former Nazi’s memoirs, packs the complicated conundrum into 300 pages and offers an even-handed assessment that dutifully surveys all the controversies. Nonetheless, it is the second-best book written on Speer, after Sereny’s "Albert Speer: His Battle with the Truth," a more extensively researched and readable book (if somewhat digressive and overlong at a sprawling 700 pages). Readers looking for a short, thorough review of Speer’s entire career will find it neatly packaged here.

Riefenstahl surely exaggerated, in retrospect, both her doubts about the Nazis and the role that Speer’s image played in dispelling them. Speer’s success as a filmmaker was certainly an impression Speer made on most of the people he met. Even the judges and prosecutors at Nuremberg, who sentenced Speer to a 20-year prison term for war crimes, concurred that he was a higher calibre of man than the rest of Hitler’s inner circle.

The privileged scion of two generations of wealthy architects, Speer’s manner contrasted sharply with that of the thick-neck arrivistes comprising both the Nazi rank and file and its leadership. But it wasn’t only superficial traits that got Speer off from the "repulsive bourgeois revolutionaries" (the phrase is Speer’s) that surrounded him. For, when it came to certain defining matters of grave consequence, as we shall see, Speer chose differently than the rest.

A latecomer to the Nazi Party, plucked from youthful obscurity by Hitler’s personal favour, Speer, at age 28, replaced Hitler’s deceased chief architect in 1934. The two jointly began to conceive a reconstruction of Berlin that would make it "the grandest and most beautiful city in the world."

It is easy to forget that Hitler ruled Germany in peace for four years before plunging into the foreign policy that ignited the war -- or that the Führer could scarcely show his face in public for the adoring masses that hemmed him in wherever he went. Yet this was so, and during this period, Hitler treasured the company of the handsome young architect who made the Führer’s own thwarted artistic dreams come vividly to life.

Speer would later call the architectural vision he dreamed up with Hitler "monstrous," and indeed, its gigantic, pretentious pseudo-classicism expressed little beyond the worship of brute, despotic power. In any case, the onset of war smashed Hitler and Speer’s dreamy idyll. By 1940, Hitler dominated all of continental Europe and was hailed by many, Speer among them, as the greatest conqueror in the history of the world.

Unfortunately, the weakness of Fest’s book is one of its principal premises. Fest argues that Speer epitomized the naive nonpolitical technocrats whose obedience made Hitler’s triumph possible. Although this excursive line is at least as old as Sereny’s Nuremberg defence and became a kind of orthodoxy ("the Speer legend" as Geoffrey Barraclough put it in an unsparing 1971 attack in the New York Review of Books) it fails to be convincing when accompanied by the record of Speer’s career.

Though Speer may never have been either a devotee of the Nazi ideology or more than a casual anti-Semite, his uncritical identification of Germany with Hitler’s aims infused him with a missionary fervour. It was his willingness, as an architect, to take on and meet seemingly impossible deadlines that confirmed the impression of a dedicated follower and convinced Hitler that he was suited for greater responsibilities.

In February 1942, Fritz Todt, Hitler’s minister of armaments and the builder of the Autobahn, died in a suspicious and still-unexplained plane crash. The following morning, Hitler named Speer to assume the vacated post. The "nonpolitical" Speer’s metamorphosis into a calculating political infighter and power broker was complete.

Speer, who had no prior experience with armaments of any kind, transformed the "small and not very influential"
ministry into a dominant one. Within a year, he was the undisputed dictator of the German war economy. "He had scarcely achieved one success before he extend his tentacles towards a further accretion of power," Fest notes.

This remarkable feat of political manoeuvring brought immediate results: Tank production increased fivefold and plane production fourfold by the war's end. Two factors permitted Speer to succeed where his predecessors had failed: He had the full faith of the Führer behind him, and he worked with fanatical zeal. Speer basically abandoned his wife and six children to work 18- to 20-hour days in his new job. Fest carefully describes how Speer brought about these political changes, but he lapses into shopworn formula toward the end of the relevant chapter.

"Speer himself asked himself what the purpose of the 'Speer revolution' was or what it set out to achieve, nor did he face up to any of the many questions raised by his actions."

It makes more sense, however, to say that a man who strives to build more and better weapons for a war being waged by a leader he unreservedly admires knows exactly why he is toiling. He is building weapons -- yes, because he wants to win the war.

Fest offers no plausible rejoinder to this argument and resorts to evasion and omission to defend his thesis. For instance, Fest notes that Speer joined the Nazi Party in 1931, but not that he also joined the brown-shirted paramilitary SA, or that the Nazi Motor Corps he joined a year later was a wing of the SS. Speer was no jackbooted street fighter. But an SA membership surely raises doubts about his supposed nonpolitical detachment, doubts that Speer and Fest have both suppressed.

A few years before his death, Speer told Sereny: "Of course I was perfectly aware that he sought world domination. What you -- and I think everybody else -- don't seem to understand is that at that time I asked for nothing better. I wanted nothing more than for this great man to succeed." It seems to me, is that he was both scheming to present himself in the most sympathetic light at Nuremberg and also coming to a uniquely principled acceptance of his own guilt at the same time.

This remarkable stance won him the respect of even his prosecutors and just may have saved his life. Speer was convicted for his use of millions of slave labourers brought in from occupied territories to build armaments in German factories. Thousands of these 5 million workers died from illness, malnutrition and overwork. The stocky, coarse-mannered, blunt-featured subordinate who actually seized the workers Speer requisitioned was hanged.

The criteria for judgment at Nuremberg seemed disturbingly arbitrary to some. Many former Nazis went to their deaths for less than what some of the Allied generals had done. But the principle established there, however imperfect its realization, was sound: Those who serve governments that sponsor atrocity should expect a day of reckoning. On this point, Speer alone of his peers achieved moral clarity.

For the peaceful years from 1933 to 1939, which Speer spent immersed in architectural fantasy with Hitler, were, after all, also the years in which the concentration camps and the most fearsome police state in world history were built. And they were the years in which the Nuremberg Laws steadily tightened the noose around the necks of Germany's Jews.

By 1942, when Speer took over as armaments minister, the order legalizing the slaughter of innocents on the Eastern Front had already been issued in advance of the Russian invasion. Hitler was finally turning toward his great historical task, the enslavement of Russia.

Such were the ambitions of the man Speer saw fit to serve, admire and love until the late autumn of 1944. Such was the man that Speer felt he needed to risk flying through Allied controlled skies to bid farewell to in an underground bunker in besieged Berlin. The responsibility for having been seduced into believing in and working for such a man cannot simply be pinned on the seducer. The seduced had choices too, choices of action and inaction, and these choices cut to the heart of what every German must confront when asked: What did you do during the war?

In the last few months of the war, Speer did take a stand against his patron and friend. When an embittered Hitler ordered the destruction of all German industry in advance of the Allied armies closing on Berlin, Speer openly defied him. He travelled the country, convincing local officials to ignore the orders at the risk of his own life. This action stands alongside the failed July 20, 1944, army plot to kill Hitler as one of the shamefully few brave and conscientious acts of a Nazi leader.

The made no similar stand in 1942 or in October 1943, was Albert Speer's great crime. And he knew it. And, as Fest notes in his concluding chapter, this awareness makes Speer unique in the bloody history of totalitarian politics. It
Wartime reports debunk Speer as the Good Nazi

by Kate Connolly in Berlin

(Filed: 11/05/2005)

Address:

Albert Speer, Hitler's architect and munitions minister, was fully aware of and involved in the mass murder of Jews despite his lifelong claims to the contrary, new documents have shown.

Speer's reputation in Germany as the "Good Nazi" who stood by Hitler only because it enabled him to fulfil his dreams to become an architect of international acclaim, has been blackened by the disclosures that he was fully informed of the human destruction in Auschwitz, the largest of the Nazi's murder factories.

His insistence that he knew nothing about Auschwitz or the crimes against Jews, meant that he was the only leading Nazi to escape execution following the Nuremberg trials. Instead he was sentenced to 20 years in prison and after his release in 1966, went on to become the best-selling author of books such as Inside the Third Reich and Spandau: Secret Diaries. He died in 1981, spending his last years in London.

His insistence that, despite being the closest Nazi to Hitler, he knew nothing of the Holocaust, led to many Germans adopting a similar stance of denial.

The new disclosures have formed the backbone of a documentary drama called Speer and Him, the first part of which was broadcast this week, the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe. It debunks the myth of the benign family father who happened to fall in with the wrong crowd.

The film's director, Heinrich Breloer, said: "[He created] a market for people who said 'believe me, I didn't know anything about it. Just look at the Führer's friend, he didn't know about it either.'"

The documents uncovered by the Berlin historian Susanne Willems include a Third Reich report from May 1943 that refers to a "Prof Speer special programme" to expand the Auschwitz camp so that it could serve as a death camp. The report, on which Speer made copious handwritten notes in the margins and over the text, refers to the fact that Auschwitz's role as a work camp had "recently been expanded to include the solution to the Jewish question".

The gassing of Jews began at the latest in the spring of 1942. The report was compiled after Speer, who as the head of armaments for the Third Reich was responsible for overseeing the distribution of building materials, dispatched two of his advisers, Desch and Sander, to investigate a number of concentration camps around Germany and Poland, including Auschwitz.

They reported being shown "everything" at the camp by its leader, Rudolf Hoss, who gave them a "short report on the erection and purpose of the whole concentration camp site".

Further research by Miss Willems has shown that on the day of Desch and Sander's visit, 900 Polish Jews were murdered in the gas chambers.

Following the visit and resulting report, Speer approved the shipment of a thousand tons of steel to the camp to enable its expansion.

The head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, wrote to Speer to thank him "very much".

Breloer argues that Speer was more than just a "cog in the works". He said: "He was not only entangled in the works, he was the terror itself."

The drama also concentrates on Speer's plans to expel thousands of Jews from their homes in Berlin to free building space.

Gitta Sereny, the London-based author of the 1995 book Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth, yesterday accused Breloer of stripping Speer of "the honesty he always showed". In an interview with Die Welt, she said: "The Jewish question, for which he carried no personal guilt, was for him a huge psychological strain," she said.

"We have to ask ourselves first and foremost what did he feel about Jews? I'll tell you: nothing. He was anything but an active hater of the Jews. They were irrelevant to him."

She added that Speer had had "no time" to concern himself with the workings of the Holocaust machine.

"Speer had no time, he had an unbelievable amount to do, what one would nowadays call a workaholic. The most important thing for him was Hitler - Hitler filled and fulfilled his life."
Cross-examination of Albert Speer

Transcript from the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial

THE PRESIDENT: Do any of the other defendants' counsel want to ask questions? Then, do the Prosecution wish to cross-examine?

MR. JUSTICE ROBERT H. JACKSON (Chief of Counsel for the United States): Defendant, your counsel divided your examination into two parts which he described first as your personal responsibilities, and secondly as the political part of the case, and followed the same division.

You have stated a good many of the matters for which you were not responsible, and I want to make clear just what your sphere of responsibility was.

You were not only a member of the Nazi Party after 1932, but you held high rank in the Party, did you not?

SPEER: Correct.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And what was the position which you held in the Party?

SPEER: I have already mentioned that during my pre-trial interrogations. Temporarily in 1934 I became a department head in the German Labour Front and dealt with the improvement of labour conditions in German factories. Then I was in charge of public works on the staff of Hess. I gave up both these activities in 1941. Notes of the conference I had with Hitler about this are available. After 2/8/1942 I automatically became Todt's successor in the central office for technical matters in the Reichsluftfahrtministerium.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And what was your official title?

SPEER: Party titles had just been introduced, and they were so complicated that I cannot tell you at the moment what they were. But the work I did there was that of a department chief in the Reichsluftfahrtministerium. My title was Hauptsleiter or something of the kind.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: In the 1943 directory it would appear that you were head of the "Hauptamt fur Technik."

SPEER: Correct.

SPEER: And your rank appears to be "Oberbefehlsleiter"?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes, that is quite possible.

SPEER: As I understand it, you held high rank in the Party?

SPEER: Well, compared to the other tasks I had it was very little.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And you attended Party functions from time to time and were informed in a general way as to the Party program, were you not?

SPEER: Before 1942 I joined in the various Party rallies here in Nuremberg because I had to take part in them as an architect, and of course besides this I was generally present at official Party meetings or Reichstag sessions.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And you heard discussed, and were generally familiar with, the program of the Nazi Party in its broad outlines, were you not?

SPEER: Of course.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: There is some question as to just what your relation to the SS was. Will you tell me whether you were a member of the SS?

SPEER: No, I was not a member of the SS.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: You filled out an application at one time, or one was filled out for you, and you never went through with it, I believe, or something of that sort.

SPEER: That was in 1943 when Himmler wanted me to get a high rank in the SS. He had often wanted it before when I was still an architect. I got out of it by saying that I was willing to be an ordinary SS man under him because I had already been an SS man before. Thereupon, Gruppenführer Wolff provisionally filled out an application form and wanted to know what my previous SS activities had been in 1932. It came up during his inquiries that in those days I was never registered as a member of the SS, and because of this they did not insist on my joining as I did not want to become a new member now.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And why did you not want to be a member of the SS, which was after all one of the important Party formations?

SPEER: No, I became well known for turning down all these Honourary ranks. I did not want them because I felt that one should only hold a rank where one had responsibility.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And you did not want any responsibility in the SS?

SPEER: I had too little contact with the SS, and did not want any responsibility in that connection.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now there has been some testimony about your relation to concentration camps, and, as I understand it, you have said to us that you did use and encourage the use of forced labour from the concentration camps.

SPEER: Yes, we did use it in the German armament industry.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And I think you also recommended that persons in labour camps who were slackers be sent to the concentration camps, did you not?

SPEER: That was in the beginning of the so-called Bummelanten, and by that name we meant workers who did not get to work on time or who pretended to be ill. Severe measures were taken against such workers during the war, and I approved of these measures.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: In fact, in the 10/30/1942 meeting of the Central Planning Board you brought the subject up in the following terms, did you not quoting Speer: "We must also discuss the slackers. Ley has ascertained that the sick list decreases to one-fourth or one-fifth in factories where doctors are on the staff who examine the sick men. There is nothing to be said against SS and Police taking drastic steps and putting those known to be slackers into concentration camp factories. There is no alternative. Let it happen several times, and the news will soon get around." That was your recommendation?

SPEER: Correct.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: In other words, the workmen stood in considerable terror of concentration camps, and you wanted to take advantage of that to keep them at their work, did you not?

SPEER: It is certain that concentration camps had a bad reputation with us, and the transfer to a concentration camp, or threat of such a possibility, was bound to reduce the number of absentees in the factories right from the beginning. But at that meeting, as I already said yesterday, there was nothing further said about it. It was one of the many remarks one can make in wartime when one is upset.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: However, it is very clear and if I misinterpret you I give you the chance to correct me that you understood the very bad reputation that the concentration camp had among the workmen and that the concentration camps were regarded as being much more severe than the labour camps as places to be in.

SPEER: That is correct. I knew that. I did not know, of course, what I have heard during this Trial, but the other thing was a generally known fact.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, it was known throughout Germany, was it not, that the concentration camps were pretty tough places to be put?

SPEER: Yes, but not to the extent which has been revealed in this Trial.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And the bad reputation of the concentration camp, as a matter of fact, was a part of its usefulness in making people fearful of being sent there, was it not?

SPEER: No doubt concentration camps were a means, a menace used to keep order.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And to keep people at work?

SPEER: I would not like to put it in that way. I assert that a great number of the foreign workers in our country did their work quite voluntarily once they had come to Germany.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, we will take that up later. You used- the concentration camp labour in production to the extent that you were required to divide the proceeds of the
labour with Himmler, did you not?
SPEER: That I did not understand.
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, you made an agreement finally with Himmler that he should have 5 percent, or roughly 5 percent, of the production of the concentration camp labour while you would get for your work 95 percent?
SPEER: Not quite.
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, tell me how it was. That is what the documents indicate, if I read them aright.
SPEER: Yes, it is put that way in the Führer minutes, but I s should like to explain the meaning to you. Himmler, as I said yesterday wanted to build factories of his own in his concentration -camps. Then he would have been able to produce arms without any outside control, which Hitler, of course, knew. That 95 percent arms production which was to have been handed to Himmler was to a certain extent a compensation for the fact that he himself gave up the idea of building factories in the camps. From the psychological ; point of view it was not so simple for me to get Himmler to give up this idea when he kept on reminding Hitler of it. I was hoping that he would be satisfied with the 5 percent arms production we were going to give him. Actually this 5 percent was never handed over. We managed things quietly with the Operations staff of the OKW and with General Buhle, so that he never got the arms at all.
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, I am not criticizing the bargain, you understand. I don't doubt you did very well to get 95 percent, but the point is that Himmler was using, with your knowledge, concentration camp labour to manufacture arms, or was proposing to do so, and you wanted to keep that production within your control?
SPEER: Could the translation come through a bit clearer? Would you please repeat that?
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: You knew at this time that Himmler was using concentration camp labour to carry on independent industry and that he proposed to go into the armament industry in order to have a source of supply of arms for his own SS?
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: You also knew the policy of the Nazi Party and the policy of the Government towards the Jews, did you not?
SPEER: I knew that the National Socialist Party was anti-Semitic, and I knew that the Jews were being evacuated from Germany.
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: In fact, you participated in that evacuation, did you not?
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, I gather that impression from Document L-155, Exhibit RF-1522, a letter from the Plenipotentiary for the Allocation of Labour which is dated 3/26/1943, which you have no doubt seen. You may see it again, if you wish. In which he says...
SPEER: I know it.
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: "At the end of February, the Reichsführer SS, in agreement with myself and the Reich Minister for armaments and munitions, for reasons of state security, has removed from their places of work all Jews who were still working freely and in camps, and either transferred them to a labour corps or collected them for removal." Was that a correct representation of your activity?
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Will you tell me what part you had in that? There is no question that they were put into labour corps or collected for removal, is there?
SPEER: That is correct.
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now you say you did not do it, so will you tell me who did?
SPEER: It was a fairly long business. When, in 2/1942, I took over my new office, the Party was already insisting that Jews who were still working in armament factories should be removed from them. I objected at the time, and managed to get Bormann to issue a circular letter to the effect that these Jews might go on being employed in armament factories and that Party offices were prohibited from accusing the heads of these factories on political grounds because of the Jews working there. It was the Gauleiter who made such political accusations against the heads of concerns, and it was mostly
in the Gau Saxony and in the Gau Berlin. So after this the Jews could remain in these plants.
Without having any authority to do so, I had had this circular letter from the Party published in my news sheet to heads of factories and had sent it to all concerned, so that I would in any case receive their complaints if the Party should not obey the instruction. After that the problem was left alone, until September or -October of 1942. At that time a conference with Hitler took place, at which Sauckel also was present. At this conference Hitler insisted emphatically that the Jews must now be removed from the armament firms, and he gave orders for this to be done this will be seen from a Führer protocol which has been preserved. In spite of this we managed to keep the Jews on in factories and it was only in 3/1943, as this letter shows, that resistance gave way and the Jews finally did have to get out.
I must point out to you that, as far as I can remember, it was not yet a question of the Jewish problem as a whole, but in the years 1941 and 1942 Jews had gone to the armament factories to do important war work and have an occupation of military importance; they were able to escape the evacuation which at that time was already in full swing. They were mostly occupied in the electrical industry, and Geheimrat Bucher, of the electrical industry that is AEG and Siemens did not lend a helping hand in order to get the Jews taken on there in greater numbers. These Jews were completely free and their families were still in their homes.
The letter by Gauleiter Sauckel you have before you was, of course submitted to me; and Sauckel says that he himself had not seen it. But it is certainly true that I knew about it before action was taken; I knew because the question had to be discussed as to how one should get replacements. It is equally certain, though, that I also protested at the time at having skilled labour removed from my armament industries because, apart from other reasons, it was going to make things difficult for me.
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: That is exactly the point that I want to emphasize. As I understand it, you were struggling to get manpower enough to produce the armaments to win a war for Germany.
And this anti-Semitic campaign was so strong that it took trained technicians away from you and disabled you from performing your functions. Now, isn't that the fact?
SPEER: I did not understand the meaning of your question.
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Your problem of creating armaments to win the war for Germany was made very much more difficult by this anti-Jewish campaign which was being waged by others of your codefendants.
SPEER: That is a certainty; and it is equally clear that if the Jews who were evacuated had been allowed to work for me, it would have been a considerable advantage to me.
THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Justice Jackson, has it been proved that you did not make an agreement with the Operations Staff of the OKW and General Buhle?
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: No, that is not quite true.
THE PRESIDENT: Perhaps the defendant could tell what the signature is.
The document was shown to the defendant.
THE PRESIDENT: The defendant could tell what the signature is.
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MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And you told us also, quite candidly, on that day that it was no secret to you that a good deal of the manpower brought in by Sauckel was brought in by illegal methods. That is also true, is it not?

SPEER: Well, in any event, you knew that at the Führer conference in August 1942 the Führer had approved of all coercive measures for obtaining labour if they couldn't be obtained voluntarily, and you knew that that program was carried out. You, as a matter of fact, you did not give any particular attention to the legal side of this thing, did you? You were 'after manpower; isn't that the fact?

SPEER: That is absolutely correct.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And whether it was legal or illegal was not your worry?

SPEER: I consider that in view of the whole war situation and j of our views in general on this question it was justified.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes, it was in accordance with the policy of the Government, and that was as far as you inquired at the time, was it not?

SPEER: Yes. I am of the opinion that at the time I took over my office, in 2/1942, all the violations of international law, which later which are now brought up against me, had already been committed.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And you don't question that you share a certain responsibility for that program for bringing in whether it is a legal responsibility or not, in fact for bringing in this labour against its will? You don't deny that, do you?

SPEER: The workers were brought to Germany largely against their will, and I had no objection to their being brought to Germany against their will. On the contrary, during the first period, until the autumn of 1942, I certainly also took some pains to see that as many workers as possible should be brought to Germany in this manner.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: You had some participation in the distribution of this labour, did you not, as among different plants, different industries, that were competing for labour?

SPEER: No. That would have to be explained in more detail I do not quite understand it like that.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, you finally entered into an agreement with Sauckel, did you not, in reference to the distribution of the labour after it reached the Reich?

SPEER: That was arranged according to the so-called priority grades. I had to tell Sauckel, of course, in which of my programs labour was needed most urgently. But that sort of thing was dealt with by general instructions.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: In other words, you established the priorities of different industries in their claim for the labour when it came into the Reich?

SPEER: That was a matter of course; naturally that had to be done.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes. Now, as to the employment of prisoners of war, you whatever disagreement there may be about the exact figures, there is no question, is there, that prisoners of war were used in the manufacture of armament?

SPEER: No, only Russian prisoners of war and Italian military internees were used for the production of arms. As for the use of French and other prisoners of war in this production I had several conferences with Keitel on the subject. And I must tell you that Keitel always adopted the view that these prisoners of war could not be used in violation of the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention. I can claim that on the strength of this fact I no longer used my influence to see that these prisoners of war should be used in armament industries in violation of the Geneva Convention. The conception, of course, "production of arms" is very much open to argument. It always depends on what position one takes, whether you have a wide conception of "armaments" or a narrow one.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, you succeeded to Dr. Todt's organization, and you had all the powers that he had, did you not?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And one of his directives was dated 10/31/1941, a letter from the OKW which is in evidence here as Exhibit 214, Document EC-194, which provides that the deputies of the Reich Minister for arms and munitions are to be admitted to prisoner-of-war camps for the purpose of selecting skilled workers. That was among your powers, was it not?

SPEER: No. That was a special action which Dr. Todt introduced on the strength of an agreement with the OKW. It was dropped later, however.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now, on 4/22/1943, at the thirty-sixth meeting of this Planning Board, you made this complaint, did you not, Herr Speer? Quoting: "There is a statement showing in what sectors the Russian POW's have been distributed, and this statement is quite interesting. It shows that the armament industry only received 30 percent. I always complained about that." That is correct, is it not?

SPEER: I believe that has been wrongly translated. It should not say "munitions industry"; it should say, "The armament industry received 30 percent."

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: I said "armament."

SPEER: Yes. But this is still no proof that these prisoners of war were employed in violation of the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention, because in the sector of the armament industry there was ample room to use these workers for production articles which, in the sense of the Geneva Prisoner of War Agreement, were not armament products. However, I believe that in the case of the Russian prisoners of war, there was not the same value attached to strict observance of the Geneva Convention as in the case of prisoners from western countries.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Is it your contention that the prisoners were not used I now speak of French prisoners of war that French prisoners of war were not used in the manufacture of materials which directly contributed to the war, or is it your contention that although they were used it was legal under the Geneva Convention?

SPEER: As far as I know, French prisoners of war were not used contrary to the rules of the Convention. I cannot check that, because my office was not responsible for controlling the conditions of their employment. During my numerous visits to factories, I never noticed that any prisoner of war from the western territories was working directly on armament products.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Just tell exactly what French prisoners of war did do by way of manufacture. What were they working on?

SPEER: That I cannot answer. I already explained yesterday that the allotment of prisoners of war, or foreign workers, or German workers to a factory was not a matter for me to decide, but was carried out by the labour office, together with the Stalag, when it was a question of prisoners of war. I received only a general survey of the total number of workers who had gone to the factories, and so I could get no idea of what types of labour were being employed in each individual factory. So I cannot give a satisfactory answer to your question.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now let us take the 50000 skilled workers that you said yesterday you removed and put to work in a different location, that Sauckel complained about. What did you put them to work at?

SPEER: Those were not prisoners of war.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Let us take those workers. What were you doing with them?

SPEER: Those workers had been working on the Atlantic Wall. From there they were transferred to the Ruhr to repair
the two dams which had been destroyed by an air attack. I must say that the transfer of these 50000 workers took place without my knowledge, and the consequences of bringing 50000 workers from the West into Germany amounted to a catastrophe for us on the Atlantic Wall. It meant that more than one-third of all the workers engaged on the Atlantic Wall left, because, too, we were afraid they might have to go to Germany. That is why we rescinded the order as quickly as possible, so that the French workers on the Atlantic Wall should have confidence in us. This fact will show you that the French workers we had working for the Organization Todt were not employed on a coercive basis, otherwise they could not have left in such numbers when they realized that under certain circumstances they, too, might be, taken to Germany. So these measures with the Organization Todt in France were only temporary and were revised later. It was one of those mistakes which can happen if a minister gives a harsh directive and his subordinates begin to carry it out by every means in their power.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Are you familiar with Document EC-60, which reports that the labour organization of Todt had to recruit its manpower by force?

SPEER: At the moment I cannot recollect it. Could I see the document?

SPEER: Yes, if you would like to. I just remind you that the evidence is to the contrary of your testimony on that subject.

Page 42, the paragraph which reads: "Unfortunately the assignments for the Organization Todt on the basis of Article 52 of the Hague Convention on Land Warfare have for some time decreased considerably, because the larger part of the manpower allocated does not turn up. Consequently further compulsory measures must be employed. The prefect and the French labour exchanges cooperate quite loyally, it is true, but they have not sufficient authority to carry out these measures."

SPEER: I think that I have perhaps not understood correctly. I do not deny that a large number of the people working for the Organization Todt in the West had been called up and came to their work because they had been called up, but we had no means whatsoever of keeping them there by force. That is what I wanted to say. So if they did not want to work, they could leave again; and then they either joined the resistance movement or went into hiding somewhere else.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Very well. But this calling-up of French workers for service in the Reich or in France. But here again I must add that as far as the record is concerned, we have only this extract which you read. We have not got the date, and we do not have the signature, if any, on the document.

SPEER: I was not able to make out from my own direct recollection to get out the facts, and I was not really offering the document for its own sake. I will go into more detail about it, if Your Honour wishes. There is a great deal of irrelevant material in it.

THE PRESIDENT: If you do not want to offer it, then we need not bother about it.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: A great part of it is not relevant.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: The quotation is adequately verified.

THE PRESIDENT: In that case you may refer to it without the document being used. Then we need not have the document identified as an exhibit.

SPEER: I was merely refreshing his recollection to get the facts of the case. We have not got the date, and we do not have the signature, if any, on the document.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: It is a long document, and it is a very large document.

THE PRESIDENT: Could you tell us what it is or who signed it? It is a very long document, apparently, is it?

SPEER: It is a long document, and it is a report of the Oberfeldkommandant L-H-L-L-E is the name of the signer.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, if you would like to. I just want to ask you about your testimony concerning the proposal to denounce the Geneva Convention.

You testified yesterday that it was proposed to withdraw from the Geneva Convention. Will you tell us who made those proposals?

SPEER: I think that I have perhaps not understood correctly. I do not deny that a large number of the people working for the Organization Todt had large offers of work. They went there voluntarily, unless, of course, you see direct coercion in the pressure put on them through the danger of their transfer to Germany, and which led them to the Organization Todt or the blocked factories.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Were they kept in labour camps?

SPEER: That is the custom in the case of such building work. The building sites were far away from any villages, and so workers' camps were set up to accommodate the German and foreign workers. But some of them were also accommodated in villages, as far as it was possible to accommodate them there. I do not think that on principle they were only meant to be accommodated in camps, but I cannot tell you that for certain.

THE PRESIDENT: Has the document been introduced before?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: I was just going to give it to you. The document from which I have quoted is United States Exhibit 892.

Now, leaving the question of the personal participation in this
MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Going back to the characteristics have been much better for us if we had not gone in for this one could almost build a fighter. It is quite clear that it would opinion was the same, since for the equivalent of one rocket Army circles they were of the same opinion as I, namely, that Kammler the task of firing off these rockets over England. In Himmler, in this case. He gave one ObergruppenFührer consequence we had no particular interest in developing the same three, who by every possible means wanted to make the whole plan.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Can you identify others of the group that were advocating gas warfare?

SPEER: In military circles there was certainly no one in favour of gas warfare. All sensible Army people turned gas warfare down as being utterly insane since, in view of your superiority in the air, it would not be long before it would bring the most terrible catastrophe upon German cities, which were completely unprotected.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: The group that did advocate it, however, consisted of the political group around Hitler, didn't it?

SPEER: A certain circle of political people, certainly very limited. It was mostly Ley, Goebbels and Bormann, always the same three, who by every possible means wanted to increase the war effort; and a man like Fegelein certainly belonged to a group like that too. Of Himmler I would not be too sure, for at that time Himmler was a little out of favour with Hitler because he allowed himself the luxury of directing an army group without being qualified.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now, one of these gases was the gas which you proposed to use on those who were proposing to use it on others, and I suppose your motive was...

SPEER: I must say quite frankly that my reason for these plans was the fear that under certain circumstances gas might be used, and the association of ideas in using it myself led me to make the whole plan.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And your reasons, I take it, were the same as the military's, that is to say, it was certain Germany would get the worst of it if Germany started that kind of warfare: That is what was worrying the military, wasn't it?

SPEER: No, not only that. It was because at that stage of the war it was perfectly clear that under no circumstances should any international crimes be committed which could be held against the German people after they had lost the war. That was what decided the issue.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now, what about the bombs, after the war was plainly lost, aimed at England day after day; who favored that?

SPEER: You mean the rockets?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.

SPEER: From the point of view of their technical production the rockets were a very expensive affair for us, and their effect compared to the cost of their output was negligible. In consequence we had no particular interest in developing the affair on a bigger scale. The person who kept urging it was Himmler, in this case. He gave one ObergruppenFührer Kammler the task of firing off these rockets over England. In Army circles they were of the same opinion as I, namely, that the rockets were too expensive; and in Air Force circles, the opinion was the same, since for the equivalent of one rocket one could almost build a fighter. It is quite clear that it would have been much better for us if we had not gone in for this nonsense.]

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Going back to the characteristics of this gas, was one of the characteristics of this gas an exceedingly high temperature? When it was exploded it created exceedingly high temperature, so that there could be no defence against it?

SPEER: No, that is an error. Actually, ordinary gas evaporates at normal atmospheric temperature. This gas would not evaporate until very high temperatures were reached and such very high temperatures could only be produced by an explosion; in other words, when the explosives detonated, a very high temperature set in, as you know, and then the gas evaporated. The solid substance turned into gas, but the effects had nothing to do with the high temperature.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Experiments were carried out with this gas, were they not, to your knowledge?

SPEER: That I can tell you. Experiments must certainly have been carried out with the gases.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Who was in charge of the experimentations with the gases?

SPEER: As far as I know it was the research and development department of the OKH in the Army ordnance office. I cannot tell you for certain.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And certain experiments were also conducted and certain researches conducted in atomic energy, were they not?

SPEER: We had not got as far as that, unfortunately, because the finest experts we had in atomic research had emigrated to America, and this had thrown us back a great deal in our research, so that we still needed another year or two in order to achieve any results in the splitting of the atom.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: The policy of driving people out who didn't agree with Germany hadn't produced very good dividends, had it?

SPEER: Especially in this sphere it was a great disadvantage to us.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now, I have certain information, which was placed in my hands, of an experiment which was carried out near Auschwitz and I would like to ask you if you heard about it or knew about it. The purpose of the experiment was to find a quick and complete way of destroying people without the delay and trouble of shooting and gassing and burning, as it had been carried out, and this is the experiment, as I am advised. A village, a small village was provisionally erected, with temporary structures, and in it approximately 20000 Jews were put. By means of this newly invented weapon of destruction, these 20000 people were eradicated almost instantaneously, and in such a way that there was no trace left of them; that it developed, the explosive developed, temperatures of from 400 to 500 centigrade and destroyed them without leaving any trace at all.

Do you know about that experiment?

SPEER: No, and I consider it utterly improbable. If we had had such a weapon under preparation, I should have known about it. But we did not have such a weapon. It is clear that in chemical warfare attempts were made on both sides to carry out research on all the weapons one could think of, because one did not know which party would start chemical warfare first.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: The reports, then, of a new and secret weapon were exaggerated for the purpose of keeping the German people in the war?

SPEER: That was the case mostly during the last phase of the war. From August, or rather June or July 1944 on I very often went to the front. I visited about 40 front-line divisions in Army circles they were of the same opinion as I, namely, that the rockets were too expensive; and in Air Force circles, the opinion was the same, since for the equivalent of one rocket one could almost build a fighter. It is quite clear that it would have been much better for us if we had not gone in for this nonsense.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Going back to the characteristics of this gas, was one of the characteristics of this gas an exceedingly high temperature? When it was exploded it
a belief which had grown up amongst the people. Only in the
dock here in Nuremberg, I was- told by Fritzsche that this
propaganda was spread systematically among the people
through some channels or other, and that SS Standartenführer
Berg was responsible for it. Many things have become clear
to me since, because this man Berg, as a representative of the
Ministry of Propaganda, had often taken part in meetings, in
big sessions of my Ministry, as he was writing articles about
these sessions. There he heard of our future plans and then
used this knowledge to tell the people about them with more
imagination than truth.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: When did it become apparent that
the war was lost? I take it that your attitude was that you felt
some responsibility for getting the German people out of it
with as little destruction as possible. Is that a fair statement
of your position?

SPEER: Yes, but I did not only have that feeling with regard
to the German people. I knew quite well that one should
really avoid destruction taking place in the occupied
territories. That was just as important to me from a realistic
point of view, for I said to myself that after the war the
responsibility for all these destructions would no longer fall
on us, but on the next German Government, and the coming
German generation.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Where you differed with the
people who wanted to continue the war to the bitter end, was
that you wanted to see Germany have a chance to restore her
life. Is that not a fact? Whereas Hitler took the position that if
he couldn't survive, he didn't care whether Germany survived
or not?

SPEER: That is true, and I would never have had the courage
to make this statement before this Tribunal if I had not been
able to prove it with the help of some documents, because
such a statement is so monstrous. But the letter which I wrote
to Hitler on 29 March, in which I confirmed this, shows that
said he so himself.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, if I may comment, it was
not a new idea to us that that was his viewpoint. I think it was
expressed in most of the other countries that that was his
viewpoint.

Now, were you present with Hitler at the time he received
the telegram from Göring, suggesting that Göring take over
power?

SPEER: On 23 April I flew to Berlin in order to take leave of
several of my associates, and I should like to say this quite
frankly after all that had happened, also in order to place
myself at Hitler's disposal. Perhaps this will sound strange
here, but the conflicting feelings I had about the action I
wanted to take against him and about the way he had handled
things, still did not give me any clear grounds or any clear
inner conviction as to what my relations should be toward
him, so I flew over to see him. I did not know whether he
knew of my plans, and I did not know whether he would
order me to remain in Berlin. Yet I felt that it was my duty
to run away like a coward, but to stand up to him again. It
was on that day that Göring's telegram to Hitler arrived. This
telegram was not to Hitler, but from Göring to Ribbentrop; it
was Bormann who submitted it to him.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Submitted it to Hitler?

SPEER: Yes, to Hitler.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: What did Hitler say on that
occasion?

SPEER: Hitler was unusually excited about the contents of
the telegram, and said quite plainly what he thought about
Göring. He said that he had known for some time that Göring
had failed, that he was corrupt, and that he was a drug addict.
I was extremely -shaken, because I felt that if the head of the
State had known this for such a long time, then it showed a
lack of responsibility on his part to leave such a man in
office, when the lives of countless people depended on him.
It was typical of Hitler's attitude towards the entire problem,
however, that he followed his statement up by saying: "But
let him negotiate the capitulation all the same."

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Did he say why he was willing to
let Göring negotiate the capitulation?
the group around Hitler, ever went to him and said, "The war is lost." Nor did I ever see these people who had responsibility endeavour to unite in undertaking some joint step with Hitler. I did not attempt it for my part either, except once or twice, because it would have been useless, since at this stage, Hitler had so intimidated his closest associates that they had no wills of their own.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, take us the Number 2 man, who has told us that he was in favour of fighting to the very finish.

Were you present at a conversation between Göring and General Galland, in which Göring, in substance, forbade Galland to report the disaster that was overtaking Germany?

SPEER: No; in that form, that is not correct. That was another conference.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, tell us what there is about General Galland's conversation with Göring, as far as you know it.

SPEER: It was at the Führer's headquarters in East Prussia in front of Göring's train. Galland had reported to Hitler that enemy fighter planes were already escorting bomber squadrons as far as Liege and that it was to be expected that in the future the bomber units would travel still farther from their bases escorted by fighters. After a discussion with Hitler on the military situation Göring upbraided Galland and told him with some excitement that this could not possibly be true, that the fighters could not go as far as Liege. He said that from his experience as an old fighter pilot he knew this perfectly well. Thereupon Galland replied that the fighters were being shot down, and were lying on the ground near Liege. Göring would not believe this was true. Galland was an outspoken man who told Göring his opinion quite clearly and refused to allow Göring's excitement to influence him. Finally Göring, as Supreme Commander of the Air Force, expressly forbade Galland to make any further reports on this matter. It was impossible, he said, that enemy fighters could penetrate so deeply in the direction of Germany, and so he ordered him to accept that as being true. I continued to discuss the matter afterward with Galland and Galland was actually later relieved by Göring of his duties as Commanding General of Fighters. Up to this time Galland had been in charge of all the fighter units in Germany. He was the general in charge of all the fighters within the High Command of the Air Force.

THE PRESIDENT: What is the date of that?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: I was going to ask.

SPEER: It must have been toward the end of 1943.

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Justice Jackson, perhaps we had better adjourn now.

[Recess was taken.]

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, very few were very valuable, were they not?

SPEER: The art treasures were valuable, not the workers.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: To him?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, let me ask you about your efforts in producing, and see how much difficulty you were having. Krupp's was a major factor in the German armament production, was it not?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: The biggest single unit, wouldn't you say?

SPEER: Yes, but not just to the extent I said yesterday. It produced few guns and armaments, but it was a big concern, one of the most respected ones in the armament industry.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: But you had prevented, as far as possible, the use of resources and manpower for the production of things that were not useful for the war, is not that true?

SPEER: That is true.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And the things which were being created, being built in Krupp's, whether they were guns or other objects, were things which were essential to carrying on the economy or to conducting the war? That would be true, wouldn't it?

SPEER: Generally speaking one can say that in the end every article which in wartime is produced in the home country, whether it is a pair of shoes for the workers, or clothing, or coal is, of course is made to assist in the war effort. That has nothing to do with the old conception, which has long since died out, and which we find in the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, at the moment I am not concerned with the question of the application of the Geneva Convention. I want to ask you some questions about your efforts to produce essential goods, whether they were armament or not armament, and the conditions that this regime was imposing upon labour and adding, as I think, to your problem of production. I think you can give us some information about this. You were frequently at the Krupp plant, were you not?

SPEER: I was at the Krupp plant five or six times.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: You had rather close information as to the progress of production in the Krupp plant, as well as others?

SPEER: Yes, when I went to visit these plants, it was mostly in order to see how we could do away with the consequences of air attacks. It was always shortly after air raids, and so I got an idea of the production. As I worked hard I knew a lot about these problems, right down to the details.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Krupp also had several labour camps, did they not?

SPEER: Of course, Krupp had labour camps.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Krupp was a very large user of both foreign labour and prisoners of war?

SPEER: I cannot give the percentage, but no doubt Krupp did employ foreign workers and prisoners of war.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, I may say to you that we have investigated the Krupp labour camps, and from Krupp's own charts it appears that in 1943 they had 39245 foreign workers and 11234 prisoners of war, and that this steadily increased until in 9/1944 Krupp had 54990 foreign workers and 18902 prisoners of war.

Now, would that be somewhere near what you would expect from your knowledge of the industry?

SPEER: I do not know the details. I do not know the figures of how many workers Krupp employed in all, I am not familiar with them at the moment. But I believe that the percentage of foreign workers at Krupp was about the same as in other plants and in other armament concerns.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And what would you say that percentage was?

SPEER: That varied a great deal. The old established industries which had their old regular personnel had a much lower percentage of foreign workers than the new industries which had just grown up and which had no old regular personnel. The reason for this was that the young age groups were drafted into the Armed Forces and therefore the concerns which had a personnel of older workers still retained a large percentage of the older workers. Therefore the percentage of foreign workers in Army armaments, if you take it as a whole and as one of the older industries, was lower than the percentage of foreign workers in air armaments, because that was a completely new industry which had no old regular personnel.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now, the foreign workers who were assigned to Krupp let us use Krupp as an example were housed in labour camps and under guard, were they not?

SPEER: I do not believe that they were under guard, but I cannot say. I do not want to dodge giving information here, but I had no time to worry about such things on my visits. The things I was concerned about when I went to a factory were in an entirely different sphere. In all my activities as Armament Minister I never once visited a labour camp, and cannot, therefore, give any information about them.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well now, I am going to give you some information about the labour camp at Krupp's, and then I am going to ask you some questions about it. And I am not attempting to say that you were personally responsible for these conditions. I merely give you the indications as to what the regime was doing and I am going to ask you certain questions as to the effect of this sort of thing on your work of
production. Are you familiar with Document D-288, which is United States Exhibit 202, the affidavit of Dr. Jager, who was later brought here as a witness?

SPEER: Yes, but I consider that somewhat exaggerated.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: You don't accept that? MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: What is your personal knowledge of the conditions. What is the basis of your information that Dr. Jager's statement is exaggerated?

SPEER: If such conditions had existed, I should probably have heard of them, since when I visited plants the head of the plant naturally came to me with his biggest troubles. These troubles occurred primarily after air raids when, for example, both the German workers and foreign workers had no longer had a shelter. This was then described to me, so that I know that what is stated in the Jager affidavit cannot have been a permanent condition. It can only have been a condition caused temporarily by air raids, for a week or a fortnight, and which was improved later on. It is clear that after a severe air raid on a city all the sanitary installations, the water supply, gas supply, electricity, and so on, were out of order and severely damaged, so that temporarily there were very difficult conditions.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: I remind you that Dr. Jager's affidavit relates to the time of 10/1942, and that he was a witness here. And, of course, you are familiar with his testimony.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well now, I call your attention to a new document, which is D-361, and would become United States Exhibit 893, a document signed by the office chief of the locomotive construction works, describing conditions of his labour supply, foreign labour.

And I am not suggesting I repeat I am not suggesting that this was your responsibility. I am suggesting it is the responsibility of the regime. I should like to read this despite its considerable length. This is dated at the boilermaking shop, 2/25/1942, addressed to Hupe by way of Winters and Schmidt.

"I received the enclosed letter of the 18th of this month from the German Labour Front, sent to my private address, inviting me to the Office of the German Labour Front. I tried to settle the business, which I did not know about, by telephone. The answer from the German Labour Front was that the matter was very important and called for my personal appearance. Thereupon I asked Herr Jungerich of the Department for Social Labour Matters whether I had to go. He answered, 'You probably do not have to, but it would be better if you went.' About 9:50 I went to Room 20 at the place indicated and met Herr Prior.

"The following provided the subject of this conversation, which Herr Prior carried on in a very excited manner, and which Herr Prior stated that if one was no good, then another was; that the Bolshevists were a soulless people; and if 100000 of them died, another 100000 would replace them. On my remarking that with such a coming and going we would not attain our goal, namely the delivery of locomotives to the Reichsbahn, who were continually cutting down the time limit, Herr Prior said, 'Deliveries are only of secondary importance here.'

"My attempts to get Herr Prior to understand our economic needs, were not successful. In closing, I can only say that as a German I know our relations to the Russian prisoners of war exactly, and in this case I acted only on behalf of my superiors and with the view to the increase in production which is demanded from us.'"

It is signed, "Sohling, Office Chief, Locomotive Construction Works.' And there is added this letter as a part of the communication, signed by Theile:

"I have to add the following to the above letter: "After the Russian POW's had been assigned to us on the 16th of this month by labour supply, I got into touch with Dr. Lehmann immediately about their food. I learned from him that the prisoners received 300 gr. of bread each between 0400 and 0500 hours. I pointed out that it was impossible to last until 1800 hours on this ration of bread, whereupon Dr. Lehmann said that the Russians must not be allowed to get used to western European feeding. I replied that the POW's could not do the work required of them in the boiler shop on that food, and that it was not practical for us to have these people in the works any longer under such conditions. At the same time I demanded that if the Russians continued to be employed, they should be given a hot midday meal, and that if possible the bread ration should be split so that one-half was distributed early in the morning and the second half during our breakfast break. My suggestion has already been carried out by us with the French POW's and has proved to be very practicable and good.

"Unfortunately, however, Dr. Lehmann took no notice of my suggestion, and on this account I naturally had to take matters into my own hands and therefore told Herr Sohling to get the feeding of the Russian POW's organized on exactly the same lines as for the French POW's, so that the Russians could as soon as possible carry out the work they were supposed to do. For the whole thing concerns an increase in production such as is demanded from us by the Minister of munitions and armaments and by the DAF."

"Now, I ask you, in the first place, if the position of the chief of the locomotive construction works was not entirely a necessary position in the interests of production? SPEER: It is clear that a worker who has not enough food cannot achieve a good work output. I already said yesterday that every head of a plant, and I too at the top, was naturally interested in having well-fed and satisfied workers, because badly fed, dissatisfied workers make more mistakes and produce poor results. I should like to comment on this document. The document is dated 2/25/1942. At that time there were official instructions that the Russian workers who came to the Reich should be
treated worse than the Western prisoners of war and the Western workers. I learned of this through complaints from the heads of concerns. In my document book, there is a Führer protocol which dates from the middle of 3/1942 that is, 3 or 4 weeks after this document in which I called Hitler's attention to the fact that the feeding both of Russian prisoners of war and of camp workers was absolutely insufficient and that they would have to be given an adequate diet, and that moreover the Russian workers were being kept behind barbed wire like prisoners of war and that that would have to be stopped also. The protocol shows that in both cases I succeeded in getting Hitler to agree that conditions should be changed and they were changed.

I must say furthermore that it was really to Sauckel's credit that he fought against a mountain of stupidity and did everything so that foreign workers and prisoners of war should be treated better and receive decent food.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, we will go on with the conditions later. Because I am going to ask you, if you are not responsible and Sauckel is not responsible, who is responsible for these conditions, and you can keep it in mind that is the question that we are coming up to here.

I will show you a new document, which is a statement, D-398, which would be Exhibit USA 894-A, taken by the British-American team in the investigation of this work camp at Krupp's.

Well, D-321. I can use that just as well. We will use Document D-321, which becomes 893.

THE PRESIDENT: 894 was the last number you gave us. What number is this document that you are now offering?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: 398 was 894. 321 will be 895.

Now, this relates to an employee of the Reich Railways. None of our investigation, I may say, is based upon the statements of the prisoners themselves.

"I, the undersigned, Adam Schmidt, employed as Betriebswart on the Essen-West Railway Station and residing... state voluntarily and on oath:

"I have been employed by the Reich Railways since 1918 and have been at Essen-West Station since 1935. In the middle of 1941 the first workers arrived from Poland, Galicia, and the Polish Ukraine. They came to Essen in trucks in which potatoes, building materials and also cattle had been transported, and were brought to perform work at Krupp's. The trucks were jammed full with people. My personal view was that it was inhuman to transport people in such a manner. The people were packed closely together and they had no room for free movement. The Krupp overseers laid special value on the speed with which the slave workers got in and out of the trucks. It was enraging for every decent German who had to watch this to see how the people were beaten and kicked and generally maltreated in a brutal manner. In the very beginning when the first transport arrived we could see how inhumanly these people were treated. Every truck was so overfilled that it was incredible that such a number of people could be jammed into one. I could see with my own eyes that sick people who could scarcely walk they were crowded people with foot trouble, or with injuries, and people with internal trouble) were nevertheless taken to work. One could see that it was sometimes difficult for them to move. The same can be said of the Eastern Workers and POW's who came to Essen in the middle of 1942."

He then describes their clothing and their food. In the interest of time, I will not attempt to read the entire thing.

Do you consider that that, too, is an exaggerated statement?

SPEER: When the workers came to Germany from the East, their clothing was no doubt bad, but I know from Sauckel that while he was in office a lot was done to get them better clothes, and in Germany many of the Russian workers were brought to a considerably better condition than they had previously been in Russia. The Russian workers were quite satisfied in Germany. If they arrived here in rags, that does not mean that that was our fault. We could not use ragged workers with poor shoes in our industry, so conditions were improved.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, now, I would like to call your attention to D-398.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, before you pass from that, what do you say about the conditions of the transports? The question you were asked was whether this was an exaggerated account. You have not answered that except in reference to clothing.

SPEER: Mr. President, I cannot give any information about this transport matter. I received no reports about it.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, I will ask you about Exhibit 398, which becomes USA-894. I mean Document 398, which becomes Exhibit 894, a statement by Homer, living in Essen:

"From 4/1943 I worked with Lowenkamp every day in Panzer Shop 4. Lowenkamp was brutal to the foreigners. He confisicated food which belonged to the POW's and took it home. Every day he maltreated Eastern Workers, Russian POW's, French, Italian, and other foreign civilians. He had a steel cabinet built which was so small that one could hardly stand in it. He locked up foreigners in the box, women too, for 48 hours at a time without giving the people food."

"They were not released even to relive nature. It was forbidden for other people, too, to give any help to the persons locked in, or to release them. While clearing a concealed store he fired on escaping Russian civilians without hitting any of them."

"One day, while distributing food, I saw how he hit a French civilian in the face with a ladle and made his face bleed. Further, he delivered Russian girls without bothering about the children afterwards. There was never any milk for them so the Russians had to nourish the children with sugar water. When Lowenkamp was arrested he wrote two letters and sent them to me through his wife. He tried to make out that he never beat people."

There is a good deal more of this, but I will not bother to put it into the record.

Is it your view that that is exaggerated?

SPEER: I consider this affidavit a lie. I would say that among German people such things do not exist, and if such individual cases occurred they were punished. It is not possible to drag the German people in the dirt in such a way. The heads of concerns were decent people too, and took an interest in their workers. If the head of the Krupp plant heard about such things, he certainly took steps immediately.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, what about the steel boxes? The steel box couldn't have been built? Or don't you believe the steelbox story?

SPEER: No. I do not believe it; I mean I do not believe it is true. After the collapse in 1945 a lot of affidavits were certainly drawn up which do not fully correspond to the truth. That is not your fault. It is the fault of after a defeat, it is quite possible that people lend themselves to things like that.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, I would like to have you examine Document 258, and I attach importance to this as establishing the SS as being the guards:

"The camp inmates were mostly Jewish women and girls from Hungary and Romania. The camp inmates were brought to Essen at the beginning of 1944 and were put to work at Krupp's. The accommodation and feeding of the camp prisoners was beneath all dignity. At first the prisoners were accommodated in simple wooden huts. These huts were burned down during an air raid and from that time on the prisoners had to sleep in a damp cellar. Their beds were made on the floor and consisted of a straw-filled sack and two blankets. In most cases it was not possible for the prisoners to wash themselves daily, as there was no water. There was no possibility of having a bath. I could often observe from the Krupp factory, during the lunch break, how the prisoners boiled their under-clothing in an old bucket or container over a wood fire, and cleaned themselves. An air-raid trench served as shelter, while the SS guards went to the Humboldt shelter, which was bombproof. Reveille was at 5 a.m. There was no food served in the morning. They marched off to the factory at 5.15 a.m. They marched for three-quarters of an hour to the factory, poorly
clothed and badly shod, some without shoes, and covered with a blanket, in rain or snow. Work began at 6 a.m. The lunch break was from 12 to 12.30. Only during the break was it at all possible for the prisoners to cook something for themselves from potato peelings and other garbage. The daily working period was one of 10 or 11 hours. Although the prisoners were completely undernourished, their work was very heavy physically. The prisoners were often maltreated at their work benches by Nazi overseers and female SS guards. At 5 or 6 in the afternoon they were marched back to camp. The accompanying guards consisted of female SS who, in spite of protests from the civil population, often maltreated the prisoners on the way back with kicks, blows, and scarcely repeatable horrible language. It often happened that individual women or girls had to be carried back to the camp by their comrades owing to exhaustion. At 6 or 7 p.m. these exhausted people arrived back in camp. Then the real meal was distributed. This consisted of cabbage soup. This was followed by the evening meal of water soup and a piece of bread which was for the following day. Occasionally the food on Sundays was better. As long as it existed there was never any inspection of the camp by the firm of Krupp. On 3/13/1945 the camp prisoners were brought to Buchenwald Concentration Camp, from there some were sent to work. The camp commandant was SS Oberscharführer Rick. His present whereabouts is unknown.

"The rest of it doesn't matter. In your estimation that, I suppose, is also an exaggeration?"

SPEER: From the document...

DR. FLACHSNER: Mr. President . . .

THE PRESIDENT: May I hear the answer. I thought the defendant said something.

DR. FLACHSNER: May I call the attention of the Court to the document itself, of which I have only a copy? It is headed "Sworn on oath before a military court," and there is an ordinary signature under it. It does not say that it is an affidavit or a statement in lieu of oath, or any other such thing, it says only, "Further inquiries must be made," and it is signed by Hubert Karden. That is apparently the name of the man who was making the statement. Then there is another signature, "Kriminalassistent Z. Pr." That is a police official who is on probation and who may later have the chance of becoming a candidate in the criminal service. He has signed it. Then there is another signature, "C. E. Long, Major, President." There is not a word in this document to the effect that any of these three people want to vouch for the contents of this as an affidavit. I do not believe this document can be used as an affidavit in that sense.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, Mr. Justice Jackson? Do you wish to say anything?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: The document speaks for itself. I am not as I have pointed out to this witness, I am giving him the result of an investigation. I am not prosecuting him with personal responsibility for these conditions. I intend to ask him some questions about responsibility for conditions in the camp.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there is a statement at the top of the copy that I have got, "Sworn on oath before a military court."

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes, they were taken in Essen, in this investigation. And of course, if I were charging this particular defendant with the responsibility there might be some argument about it. They come under the head they clearly come under the head of the Charter, which authorizes the receipt here of proceedings of other courts.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you got the original document here?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.

[An document was submitted to the Tribunal.]

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal sees no objection to the document being used in cross-examination.

Did you give it an exhibit number?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: I should have; it is USA-896.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.
"The subject:
"Cases of Deaths of Eastern Workers.
"Fifty-four Eastern Workers have died in the hospital in Lazarettstrasse, 4 of them as a result of external causes and 50 as a result of illness.
"The causes of death in the case of these 50 Eastern Workers who died in illness were the following: Tuberculosis, 36 (including 2 women); malnutrition, 2; internal haemorrhage, 1; disease of the bowels, 2; typhoid fever, 1 (female); pneumonia, 3; appendicitis, 1 (female); liver trouble, 1; abscess of the brain, 1. This list therefore shows that four-fifths died of tuberculosis and malnutrition."

Now, did you have any reports from time to time as to the health conditions of the labour which was engaged in your production program?

SPEER: First I should like to comment on the document. The document does not show the total number of the workers to which the number of deaths refers, so that one cannot say whether that is an unnaturally high proportion of illness. At a session of the Central Planning Board which I read here again, I observed it was said that among the Russian workers there was a high rate of tuberculosis. I do not know whether you mean that. That was a remark which Weiger made to me. But presumably through the health offices we tried to alleviate these conditions.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: There was an abnormally high rate of deaths from tuberculosis; is there no doubt about that, is there?

SPEER: I do not know whether that was an abnormal death rate. But there was an abnormally high rate of tuberculosis at times.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, the exhibit does not show whether the death rate itself was abnormally high, but it shows an abnormal proportion of deaths from tuberculosis among the total deaths, does it not? Eighty percent deaths from tuberculosis is a very high incidence of tuberculosis, is it not?

SPEER: That may be. I cannot say from my own knowledge.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now I would like to have you shown . . .

THE PRESIDENT: Did you give that a number? That would be 899, would it not?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: 899, Your Honour.

Now, let me ask you to be shown Document D-335. This is a report from the files of Krupp, dated at Essen on 6/12/1944, directed to the "Gau Camp Physician, Herr Dr. Jager," and signed by Stinnesbeck.

"In the middle of May I took over the medical supervision of the POW Camp 1420 in the Norggerathstrasse. The camp contains 644 French POW's.

"During the air raid on 24 April of this year the camp was largely destroyed and at the moment conditions are intolerable.

"315 prisoners are still accommodated in the camp. 170 of these are no longer in huts, but in the tunnel in Grünerstrasse on the Essen-Mulheim railway line. This tunnel is damp and is not suitable for continued accommodation of human beings. The rest of the prisoners are accommodated in 10 different factories in Krupp's works.

"Medical attention is given by a French military doctor who takes great pains with his fellow countrymen. Sick people from Krupp's factories must be brought to the sick parade too. This parade is held in the lavatory of a burned-out public house outside the camp. The sleeping accommodations of the four French medical orderlies is in what was the urinal room. There is a double tier wooden bed available for sick bay patients. In general, treatment takes place in the open. In rainy weather it has to be held in this small room. These are insufferable conditions! There are no chairs, tables, cupboards, or water. The keeping of a register of sick is impossible.

"Bandages and medical supplies are very scarce, although people badly hurt in the works are often brought here for first aid and have to be bandaged before being taken to the hospital. There are many strong complaints about food, too, which the guard personnel confirm as being justified. "Illness and less manpower must be reckoned with under these circumstances. "The construction of huts for the accommodation of the prisoners and the building of sick quarters for the proper treatment of the sick persons is urgently necessary.

"Please take the necessary steps.

(Signed) Stinnesbeck."

SPEER: That is a document which shows what conditions can e after severe air raids. The conditions were the same in these cases for Germans and foreign workers. There were no beds, no cupboards, and so forth. That was because the camp in which these things had been provided had been burned down. That the food supply was often inadequate in the Ruhr district during this period was due to the fact that attacks from the air were centred on communication lines, so that food transports could not be brought into the Ruhr to the necessary extent. These were temporary conditions which we were able to improve when the air raids ceased for a time. When conditions became even worse after September or October of 1944, or rather after November of 1944, we made every effort to give food supplies the priority for the first time over armament needs, so that in view of these difficulties the workers would be fed first of all, while armaments had to stand back somewhat.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, then you did make it your business to get food and to see to the conditions of these workers? Do I understand that you did it, that you took steps?

SPEER: It is true that I did so, and I am glad that I did, even if I am to be reproached for it. For it is a universal human obligation when one hears of such conditions to try to alleviate them, even if it is somebody else's responsibility. But the witness Riecke testified here that the whole of the food question was under the direction of the Food Ministry.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: And it was an essential part of production, was it not, to keep workers in proper condition to produce? That is elementary, is it not?

SPEER: No. That is wrongly formulated.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, you formulate it for me as to what the relation is between the nourishment of workers and the amount of production produced.

SPEER: I said yesterday that the responsibility for labour conditions was divided up between the Food Ministry, the Health Office in the Reich Ministry of the Interior, the Labour Trustee in the office of the Plenipotentiary General for the Allocation of Labour, and so on. There was no comprehensive authority in my hands. In the Reich, because of the way in which our state machine was built up, we lacked a comprehensive agency in the form of a Reich Chancellor, who would have gathered all these departments together and held joint discussions. But I, as the man responsible for production, had no responsibility in these matters. However, when I heard complaints from factory heads or from my deputies, I did everything to remove the cause of the complaints.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: The Krupp works . . .

THE PRESIDENT: Shall we break off now?

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Any time you say, Sir.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal wish to hear from defendants' counsel what arrangements they have found it possible to make - with reference to the apportionment of time for their speeches.

DR. NELTE: I should like first of all to point out that the defendants' counsel, with whom the Tribunal discussed the question of final defence speeches during an earlier closed session, did not inform the other defendants' counsel, since they were under the impression that the Tribunal would not impose any restrictions on the Defence in this respect. I personally, when I raised my objections, had no knowledge of this discussion, as my colleagues who conferred with you earlier have authorized me to explain. On the suggestion of our counsel, the individual defendants have discussed the decision announced in the session of 13 June 1946, and I am now submitting to the
Tribunal the outcome of the discussion; in doing so, however, I shall have to make certain qualifications, since some of my colleagues are either not present or differ in their opinion on the apportionment of time.

The defendants' counsel are of the opinion that only the conscientious judgment of each counsel can determine the form and length of the final defence speeches. Trial, notwithstanding the generally recognized right of the Tribunal, as part of its responsibility for guiding the proceedings, to prevent a possible misuse of the freedom of speech. They also believe that, in view 1 of this fundamental consideration and in view of the usual practice of international courts, the Tribunal will understand and approve that the defendants' counsel voice their objection to a preventive restriction of the freedom of speech, for a misuse on their part must not simply be taken as a foregone conclusion. This fundamental attitude is, of course, in accord with the readiness of the Defence to comply with the directives and the wishes of the Tribunal as far as is reconcilable with a proper conception of the defence in each case. Under this aspect the individual defendants' counsel have been asked to make their own estimates of the probable duration of their final pleas. The result of these estimates shows that despite the limitations counsel have imposed upon themselves, and with due respect to the wishes of the High Tribunal, a total duration of approximately 20 full days in court is required by the Defence.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Nelte, the Tribunal asked Defence Counsel for an apportionment of the 14 days between them.

DR. NELTE: I believe, Mr. President, my statement makes clear that it appears impossible to accept that principle. If the Tribunal should decide that 14 full days as indisputable, then the entire Defence will submit to that decision. But so far as I know, it will be quite impossible, under such circumstances, to obtain agreement among Defence Counsel, and considerable danger therefore exists that counsel who make their pleas later will be under pressure of time.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think the Tribunal probably fully understands that you think 14 days you and your brethren consider that 14 days is too short but, as I say, what the Tribunal asked for was an apportionment of the time, and there is nothing in what you have said to indicate that you have made any apportionment at all, either of the 14 days or of the 20 days which you propose.

DR. NELTE: The period of 20 days was arrived at when each defendant's counsel had stated the presumed duration of his speech. It would, therefore, be perfectly possible to say that if the Tribunal should decide the duration of 20 days, then we could state our solution for the length of the individual speeches. But it is impossible, in practice, to apportion the time, if the total number of days is only 14. You can rest assured, Mr. President, that we have all gone into the question conscientiously and that we have also reflected on the manner in which individual subjects can be divided among individual defendants' counsel; but the total number of about 20 days appears to us, without wanting to quote a maximum or minimum figure, to be absolutely essential for an apportionment. It is perfectly possible, Mr. President, that in the course of the speeches . . .

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Nelte, as I have indicated to you, what the Tribunal wanted to know was the apportionment, and presumably you have some apportionment which adds up to the 20 days which you say is required; and the Tribunal would like, if you have such an apportionment, that you should let them see the apportionment, or if you have no such apportionment, then they would wish to hear from each individual counsel how long he thinks he is going to take. If you have got a list, it seems to the Tribunal that you could hand it in.

DR. NELTE: The figures are available and they will be handed to the Tribunal, but some of my colleagues have said that their estimates are only valid on the assumption that no more than 14 full days are to be granted. That is the point of view of which I said earlier that it differed in some respect. But we all thought that the decision of the Tribunal was only a suggestion, and not a maximum to be apportioned. I hope, Mr. President, that your words now are also to be understood in that way, and that the Tribunal will still consider whether the proposed period of 14 days could not be extended to correspond with the time which we consider necessary.

THE PRESIDENT: What the Tribunal wants is an apportionment of the time as between the various counsel. That is what they asked for and that is what they want; and either we would ask you to give it to us in writing now, or we would ask you, each one of you, to state how long you anticipate you will take in your speech.

DR. NELTE: I think that I may speak on behalf of my colleagues and say that we shall submit our estimates to the Tribunal in writing.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Nelte, the Tribunal feels that it would like to have the apportionment now. It gave notice before, yesterday I think it was, that they were wishing to hear defendants' counsel upon the question of the apportionment this afternoon at 2 o'clock; and they would, therefore, like to have that apportionment now.

DR. NELTE: In that case, I can only ask that the Tribunal hear each individual counsel, since naturally I cannot say from memory how each made his estimate.

THE PRESIDENT: You could have had it written down; but if you have not got it written down, no doubt you cannot remember. But perhaps you had better give us what you would take.

DR. NELTE: I estimated 7 hours. My colleague Horn, for Ribbentrop, just tells me he requires 6 hours.

THE PRESIDENT: We will take each counsel in turn, if you please.

Yes, Dr. Stahmer?

DR. OTTO STAHLGER (Counsel for Defendant Göring): Seven hours.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Sauter?

DR. MARTIN HORNS (Counsel for Defendant Von Ribbentrop): May I, on behalf of Dr. Siemers and Dr. Kranzburger, ask to allot each of them 8 hours?

DR. SAUTER: For the case of Funk, 6 hours, and for the case of Von Schirach, 6 hours.

DR. SERVATIUS: For Sauckel, 5 hours.

THE PRESIDENT: Wait a minute. I cannot write as quickly as all this. Who was it that Dr. Horn wished to represent? Siemers and who else? And how many hours was it?

DR. HORN: Dr. Siemers and Dr. Kranzburger, 8 hours each.

DR. SERVATIUS: For Sauckel, 5 hours.

D. KAUFFMANN: For Kaltenbrunner, approximately 4 to 5 hours.

DR. HANNES MARX (Counsel for Defendant Streicher): For Streicher, 4 hours.

DR. SEIDL: For Hess and Frank, 11 hours together.

DR. OTTO PANNENBECKER (Counsel for Defendant Frick): For Frick, 5 hours. I remember from the list that Dr. Bergold wants 3 hours for Bormann. Dr. Bergold is not present, but I remember that the list said 3 hours.

DR. RUDOLF DIX (Counsel for Defendant Schacht): For Schacht, 5 hours.

PROFESSOR DR. FRANZ EXNER (Counsel for Defendant Jodl): For Jodl, 5 hours.

DR. KUBUSCHOK: For Papen, approximately 5 hours.

DR. STEINBAUER: For Dr. Seyss-Inquart, 5 hours.

DR. FLACHSNER: For Speer, 4 hours.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: For myself, Mr. President, 8 hours. For Professor Jahress, who before the final pleas will deal with a technical subject, 4 hours.

THE PRESIDENT: What will Professor Jahress speak about?

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: About a subject approved by the Tribunal, namely the general question of international law.

DR. SEIDL: The defence counsel for the Defendant Rosenberg said that he would require 8 hours.

DR. FRITZ: Mr. President, I would ask the Tribunal to take into consideration that the case of Fritzsche has not yet been considered.
presented and that therefore I cannot give exact information; but I estimate approximately 4 hours.

THE PRESIDENT: Now, Dr. Nelte, the Tribunal would like to know first of all whether counsel propose to write down and then read their speeches.

DR. NELTE: As far as I have been informed, all defence counsel are going to write down their speeches before delivery. Whether they will actually read every word of the text, or whether they will read parts of it and submit other parts, is not yet certain.

THE PRESIDENT: Have they considered whether they will submit them for translation, because, as the Tribunal has already pointed out, it would be much more convenient for the members of the Tribunal who do not read German to have a translation before them. It would not only greatly assist the Tribunal, but the defendants themselves if they do that.

DR. NELTE: This question has not yet been settled. We discussed it, but have so far not come to a final conclusion. We think that the short time now available may perhaps make it impossible to translate the manuscripts into all four languages.

THE PRESIDENT: The defendants' counsel, of course, understand that the speeches, if they are submitted for translation, will not be communicated to anybody until the speech is actually made. So they will not be given beforehand either to the Tribunal or the Prosecution or anything of that sort, so that the speech will remain entirely private until it is made. And the second thing is that, of course, a great number of the speeches will be delayed by the counsel who precede them and, therefore, there will be very considerable time during either the 14 days or some longer period, if such a longer period is given, which will enable the speeches to be translated, and Defence Counsel will appreciate that if their speeches are written down they can tell exactly how long they will take to deliver, or almost exactly.

And there is one other thing I want to bring to their attention. There are 20 or 21 defendants, and naturally, there are a variety of subjects which are common to them all; and there ought to be, therefore, an opportunity, as it appears to the Tribunal, for counsel to divide up the subjects to some extent between them and not each one to deal with subjects which have been dealt with already, any more than they ought to have been dealt with in evidence over and over again; and I do not know whether counsel for Defence have fully considered that in making this estimate of the time they laid before us.

Anyway, the Tribunal hopes that they will address their minds to these three matters: First of all, as to whether they can submit their speeches for translation in order to help the Tribunal; secondly, whether they will be able, when they have got their speeches written down, to assess the time accurately; and thirdly, whether they cannot apportion the subjects to some extent among them so that we shall not have to listen to the same subjects over and over again.

I do not know whether the Prosecution would wish to say anything. The Tribunal has said, I think, in the order which we made with reference to this question of limitation of time, that they anticipated that the Prosecution would take only 3 days. Perhaps it would be convenient to hear from the Prosecution whether that is an accurate estimate.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes, My Lord, the Prosecution do not ask for any more than the 3 days. It might conceivably be a little less, but we do not ask for any more than the 3 days.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: I should like, Your Honour, to call your attention to this. I hope it is not expected that we will mimeograph and run off on our mimeograph machines, 20 days of speeches or anything of that sort. We simply cannot be put under that kind of a burden. I think it is a citizen of the United States is expected to argue his case in the highest court of the land in one hour, and counsel's own clients here have openly scoffed at the amount of time that has been asked. This is not a sensible amount of time to give to this case, and I must protest against being expected to mimeograph 20 days of speeches. It really is not possible.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal would like to know whether the Prosecution intend to let them have copies of their speeches at the time that they are delivered.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: As far as the closing speech of the Attorney General is concerned, we certainly did expect and hope to give the Tribunal copies of the speech.

THE PRESIDENT: And translations?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes, that will be done. My Lord, I just wondered, out of optimism it was Dr. Nelte who said that it would take a long time to translate. I know, as far as translating into English is concerned, we had the problem of a 76 page speech each day, and that was done by our own translators in one day. So I hope that perhaps Dr. Nelte has been a little pessimistic about that side of the problem.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal will consider the matter. Now, the Tribunal will go on with the cross-examination. [The Defendant Speer resumed the stand.]

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: I think perhaps, Your Honour, the photographs in evidence are left a little unintelligible, if the record does not show the description of them. I shall read it briefly.

"Torture cabinets which were used in the foreign workers' camp in the grounds of Number 4 Armour Shop and those in the dirty neglected Russian Camp were shown to us, and we depose the following on oath:"

"Photograph 'A' shows an iron cupboard which was specially manufactured by the firm of Krupp to torture Russian civilian workers to an extent that cannot possibly be described by words. Men and women were often locked into a compartment of the cupboard, in which hardly any man could stand up for long periods. The measurements of this compartment are: Height 1.52 meters; breadth and depth 40 to 50 centimetres each. Frequently even two people were kicked and pressed into one compartment. The Russian..."

I will not read the rest of that.

"Photograph 'B' shows the same cupboard as it looks when it is locked."

"Photograph 'C' shows the cupboard open."

"In Photograph 'D' we see the camp that was selected by the Krupp Directorate to serve as living quarters for the Russian civilian workers. The individual rooms were 2 to 2.5 meters wide, 5 meters long, and 2 meters high. In each room up to 16 persons were accommodated in double tier beds."

(Document USA-897)

I think that covers it.

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Justice Jackson, one moment. I think you ought to read the last three lines of the second paragraph, beginning, "At the top of the cupboard..."

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Oh yes, I am sorry.

"At the top of the cupboard there are a few sieves like air holes through which cold water was poured on the unfortunate victims during the ice-cold winter."

THE PRESIDENT: I think you should read the last three lines of the penultimate paragraph in view of what the defendant said about the evidence.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: "We are enclosing two letters which Camp Commandant Lowenkamp had smuggled out of prison in order to induce the undersigned Hofer to give evidence favorable to him."

And perhaps I should read the last:

"The undersigned, Dahm," one of the signers personally saw how three Russian civilian workers were locked into the cupboard, two in one compartment, after they had first been beaten on New Year's Eve 1945. Two of the Russians had to stay the whole of New Year's Eve locked in the cupboard, and cold water was poured on them as well."

I may say to the Tribunal that we have upwards of a hundred different statements and depositions relating to the investigation of this camp. I am not suggesting offering them, because I think they would be cumulative, and I shall be satisfied with one more, D-313, which would become Exhibit USA-901, which is a statement by a doctor.
The President: Mr. Justice Jackson, was this camp that you are referring to a concentration camp?

Mr. Justice Jackson: Well, it was, as I understand it, a prisoner-of-war camp and a labour camp. There were labour camps and prisoner-of-war camps at Essen. I had not understood that it was a concentration camp, but I admit the distinction is a little thin at times.

This document reads:

"I, the undersigned, Dr. Apolinary Gotowicki, a physician in the Polish Army, was taken prisoner by the Germans on 1/3/1941 and remained as such until the entry of the Americans. I gave medical attention to the Russian, Polish, and French prisoners of war who were forced to work in various places of Krupp's factories. I personally visited the Russian Prisoner of War camp on the Ruhrmain which contained about 1,800 men. There was a big hall in the camp which could house about 200 men comfortably, in which 300 to 400 men were thrown together in such a catastrophic manner that no medical treatment was possible. The floor was cement and the mattresses on which the people slept were full of lice and bugs. Even on cold days the room was never heated and it seemed to me, as a doctor, unworthy of human beings that people should find themselves in such a position. It was impossible to keep the place clean because of the overcrowding of these men who had hardly room to move about normally. Every day at least 10 people were brought to me whose bodies were covered with bruises on account of the continual beatings with rubber tubes, steel switches, or sticks. The people were often writhing with agony and it was impossible for me to give them even a little medical aid. In spite of the fact that I protested, made complaints and petitions, it was impossible for me to protect the people or see that they got a day off from work. It was difficult for me to watch how such suffering people could be dragged to do heavy work. I visited personally, with danger to myself, gentlemen of the Krupp administration, as well as gentlemen from the Krupp Directorate, to try to get help. It was strictly forbidden, as the camp was under the direction of the SS and Gestapo, and according to well-known directives I had to keep silent, otherwise I might have been sent to a concentration camp. I have brought my own bread innumerable times to the camp in order to give it to the prisoners, as far as it was possible, although bread was scarce enough for me. From the beginning in 1941 conditions did not get better, but worse. The food consisted of a watery soup which was dirty and sandy, and often the prisoners of war had to eat cabbage which was bad and stank. I could notice people daily who, on account of hunger or ill-treatment, were slowly dying. Dead people often lay for 2 or 3 days on the beds until their bodies sank so badly that fellow prisoners took them outside and buried them somewhere. The dishes out of which they ate were also used as toilets because they were too tired or too weak from hunger to get up and go outside. At 3 o'clock they were wakened. The same dishes were then used to wash in and later for eating out of. This matter was generally known. In spite of this it was impossible for me to get even elementary help for facilities in order to get rid of these epidemics, illnesses, or cases of starvation. There can be no mention of medical aid for the prisoners. I never received any medical supplies myself. In 1941 I alone had to look after all of these people, and apart from that, I had scarcely any medical supplies. I could not think what to do with a number of 1,800 people who came to me daily begging and complaining. I myself often collapsed daily, and in spite of this I had to take everything upon myself and watch how such suffering people could be dragged to do heavy work. I visited personally, with danger to myself, gentlemen from the Krupp administration, as well as gentlemen from the Krupp Directorate, to try to get help. It was strictly forbidden, as the camp was under the direction of the SS and Gestapo, and according to well-known directives..."
workers, were you not?

SPEER: I was interested in a high output of work, that is
obvious, and in addition, in special cases. . .

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, special cases part of
production is in all cases, is it not, dependent upon the
sickness rate of our labour force, and is it not a fact as a man
engaged in production you will know this that the two
greatest difficulties in manpower and production are sickness
and rapid turnover, and that those factors reduce production?

SPEER: These two factors were disturbing for us, but not as
extensively as your words might suggest. Cases of sickness
made up a very small percentage which in my opinion was
normal. However, propaganda pamphlets dropped from
aircraft were telling the workers to feign illness, and detailed
instructions on how to do it. And to prevent that, the authorities concerned introduced certain
measures, which I considered proper.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: What were those measures?

SPEER: I cannot tell you in detail, because I myself did not,-
insist these penalties, nor did I have the power to do so;
but as far as I know, they were ordered by the Plenipotentiary
General for the Allocation of Labour in collaboration with
the Police or State authorities; but the jurisdiction in this
connection was with the -authorities responsible for legal
action.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Now, if you did not know what
they were, how can you tell us that you approved of them?
We always get to this blank wall that nobody knew what was
being done. You knew that they were at least penalties of
great severity, did you not?

SPEER: When I say that I approved I am only expressing my
wish not to dodge my responsibility in this respect. But you
must understand that a minister of production, particularly in
view of the air attacks, had a tremendous task before him and
that I could only take care of matters outside my own field if
some particularly important factor forced me to do so.
Otherwise, I was glad if I could finish my own work and,
after all, my task was by no means - a small one.

I think that if during the German air attacks on England you
had asked the British Minister of Production whether he
shared the worries of the Minister of Labour and whether he
was dealing with them, then he would with justification have
told you that he had something else to do at that time, that
he had to keep up his production and that he expected
the Minister of Labour to manage affairs in his sector; and no
one would have raised a direct accusation against the British
Minister of Production on that account.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, production was your
enterprise, and do you mean to tell me that you did not have
any records or reports on the condition of the manpower
which was engaged in production, which would tell you if
there was anything wrong in the sick rate or anything wrong
in the general conditions of the labour?

SPEER: What I knew is contained in the reports of the
Central Planning Board; there you will get a picture of what I
was told. Although there were many other meetings I cannot
tell you in detail what I knew, because these were things
outside my sphere of activity. Naturally, it is a matter of
course that anyone closely concerned with the affairs of State
will also hear of matters not immediately connected with his
own sphere, and of unsatisfactory conditions existing in other
sectors; but one is not obliged to deal with these conditions
and later on one will not remember them in detail. You
cannot expect that of me. But if you have any particular
passage, I shall be glad to give you information on it.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: All right; assume that these
conditions had been called to your attention and that they
existed. With whom would you have taken it up to have them
corrected? What officer of the Government?

SPEER: Normally, a minister would send a document to the
Government authorities responsible for such conditions. I
must claim for myself that when I heard of such deficiencies
I tried to remedy them by establishing direct contact with the
authority responsible, in some cases the German Labour
Front, where I had a liaison officer, or in other cases my

letter was transmitted to Sauckel through my office of
manpower deployment. My practice in this respect was that
if I did not receive a return report I considered the matter
settled; for I could not then again pursue those things and
make further inquiries whether they had been dealt with or
not.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: With Krupp's, then, you would
not have taken it up? You think they had no responsibility for
these conditions?

SPEER: During visits to Krupp's discussions certainly took
place on the conditions which generally existed for workers
after air attacks; this was a source of great worry for us,
particularly with regard to Krupp. I knew this well, but the
reports from Krupp were not different from I cannot
remember ever being told that foreign workers or prisoners
of war were in a particularly bad position. Temporarily they
all lived under very primitive conditions; German workers
lived in cellars during those days, and six or eight people
were often quartered in a small basement room.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Your statement some time ago
that you had a certain responsibility as a Minister of the
Government for the conditions I should like to have you
explain what responsibility you referred to when you say you
assume a responsibility as a member of the Government.

SPEER: Do you mean the declaration I made yesterday that I . . .

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Your common responsibility,
what do you mean by your common responsibility along with
others?

SPEER: Oh, yes. In my opinion, a state functionary has two
types of responsibility. One is the responsibility for his own
sector and for that, of course, he is fully responsible. But,
above all that I think that in decisive matters there is, and must
be, among the leaders a common responsibility, for who is to
bear responsibility for developments, if not the close
associates of the head of State?

This common responsibility, however, can only be applied to
fundamental matters, it cannot be applied to details
connected with other ministries or other responsible
departments, for otherwise the entire discipline in the life of
the State would be quite confused, and no one would ever
know who is individually responsible in a particular sphere.
This individual responsibility in one's own sphere must, at all
events, be kept clear and distinct.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, your point is, I take it, that
you as a member of the Government and a leader in this
period of time acknowledge a responsibility for its large
policies, but not for all the details that occurred in their
execution. Is that a fair statement of your position?

SPEER: Yes, indeed.

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: I think that concludes the cross
examination.

The accused in the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial
Scenes from the Zeppelin Field at Nuremberg, then and now

The Zeppelin Tribune and the Cathedral of Light

The podium from which Hitler once spoke

Crowds of Hitler Youth on the Zeppelin Tribune

The flag stand today

The flag stands - six flags per stand

The Cathedral of Light