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FIGURE 1. The Berlin Congress Hall, aerial view (courtesy of Eleanor Lansing Dulles).

THE BERLIN CONGRESS HALL 1955-1957

Barbara Miller Lane

DURING HIS fourth and last visit to West Berlin, in May 1958, John Foster Dulles told the city's House of Representatives that "here in Berlin cooperation has become real in stone and mortar."¹ The Secretary of State was referring, first, to the cooperation of West Germany and the United States in protecting West Berlin from Soviet encroachments, and second, to a building called the "Congress Hall." The Congress Hall, which in reality had little stone and mortar in it, since it was built of steel and concrete, was a center for international conferences and an occasional meeting place for the West German Bundestag. The building was erected by the United States government as its contribution to the International Building Exposition held in Berlin in 1957. Designed by the American architect Hugh Stubbins, the Congress Hall was supervised by a committee of the American Institute of Architects led by Ralph Walker, and was also overseen by Eleanor Lansing Dulles, sister of John Foster Dulles, who acted as client for the Department of State. The building was strikingly unusual. Consisting of a double-arched roof above a curving auditorium and glass-enclosed circulation spaces, the Congress Hall appeared to hover like an alien visitor amid the wreckage of wartime destruction (Fig. 1). It was located at the heart of Berlin's historic center, near the Platz der Republik, the Reichstag, and the Brandenburg Gate. It was also, therefore, in close proximity to the sector border, and surrounded by the worst of the bomb damage of 1945: the site of Hitler's bunker was nearby (Fig. 2).

The Congress Hall was greeted by fanfare and publicity almost from its inception. In press releases and elaborate ceremonies from 1955 on,

1. "Address by the Honorable John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, at a Reception given in his Honor by the Berlin City Government, Schoeneberg Rathaus, Berlin, Germany, Thursday, May 8, 1958," Department of State Press Release No. 253, in John Foster Dulles Papers (Princeton University Libraries, Princeton, N.J.) [Hereafter, JFD Papers].



FIGURE 2. Berlin, central area, 1954. Key: 1—Congress Hall; 2—Platz der Republik; 3—Reichstag; 4—Brandenburg Gate; 5—Sector border; 6—Soviet war memorial; 7—Hitler’s bunker; 8—Stalinallee; 9—Hansaviertel; 10—First site proposed for Congress Hall. (From Baedeker, 1954).

high-ranking government officials of the United States, West Germany, and West Berlin emphasized the importance of the building as a symbol of German-American friendship and also of the right of free speech as contrasted to Soviet repression in East Berlin, across the sector border. On the occasion of the cornerstone ceremony, for example, President Eisenhower wrote:

I wish to greet the people of Berlin and express my sincere hope that this building will well serve the high purposes for which it was designed. This cooperative effort of the German and American people is not only a symbol but an instrument to serve the cause of liberty and those basic human values which we are committed to preserve.²

Ambassador David K. E. Bruce employed the occasion of the opening of the building to say: "Two great political philosophies now bestride, in opposition, a bewildered world. One asserts that Man is the Servant, not the Master, of his State or Fate. . . . It is obvious that a divided Germany constitutes an insuperable barrier to the relaxation of international tensions. . . . Man was born to be free."³ And, according to Heinrich von Brentano, the German Foreign Minister: "The entire German people gratefully welcomed the news of . . . the construction of the Conference Hall [*sic*] at the East sector boundary and have recognized it as an example of the unity of their destiny with the free world."⁴ Similar ideas were expressed at ceremonies marking the progress of the building by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce, American High Commissioner James B. Conant, Undersecretary Robert Murphy, West Berlin Governing Mayor Otto Suhr, and his successor Willy Brandt.⁵ Some, like

2. Statement made for the cornerstone ceremony, quoted in *Department of State Bulletin*, October 29, 1956, p. 670. Reprinted in *Kongresshalle Berlin*, brochure prepared for the opening in the Fall of 1957, in Hugh Stubbins Papers (Cambridge, Mass.) [Hereafter, HS Papers].

3. "Ambassador Bruce's Address for the Opening of the Congress Hall, Berlin, September 19, 1957," Ralph Walker Papers, 1916-1970, Berlin Files, "Ceremonies" (George Arents Research Library for Special Collections, Syracuse University Libraries, Syracuse, N.Y.) [Hereafter, RW Papers].

4. Heinrich von Brentano to Eleanor Lansing Dulles, Bonn, December 9, 1955, RW Papers, Berlin Files, "Miscellaneous."

5. Department of State Press Release No. 691, December 12, 1955, in RW Papers, Berlin Files, "Miscellaneous"; *Department of State Bulletin*, October 29, 1956, pp. 668-671; *Kongresshalle Berlin: Benjamin Franklin Stiftung Cornerstone Ceremonies*, October 3, 1956, a bound volume in the Archives of the American Institute of Architects (Washington, D.C.) [hereafter, AIA Archives]; and "Publicity," RW Papers, Berlin Files, which included press reports on official statements at all the ceremonies which attended the progress of the building (establishment of Benjamin Franklin Foundation, October 14, 1955; Laying of Cornerstone, October 3, 1956; Richtfest, May 7, 1957; Opening, September 19-October 1, 1957; Transfer of Title from Foundation to City of Berlin, April 26, 1958).

Ambassador Bruce, spoke not only of free speech, but also of the reunification of Germany under democratic leadership.

Thus, in its location, form, and functions, and in both American and German political rhetoric, the Congress Hall was a propaganda building. Its public image reverberated with Cold War symbolism. The building was uniquely associated with the German policies of President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles; the Truman administration had also given symbolic gifts to Berlin, and the Eisenhower administration supported many other buildings there, but none focused public attention and official rhetoric in the way that the Congress Hall did.⁶ The associations of the building, with the hope for German reunification under the aegis of a strong and anti-Soviet alliance with the United States, and, more specifically, with the Dulles name, were perpetuated after John Foster Dulles' death by the ceremonial renaming of the major street giving access to the building, the old and famous Zeltenallee. The Hall now stands on the John-Foster-Dulles Allee.⁷ When a portion of the building collapsed in 1980 as a result of material fatigue and insufficient maintenance, these associations were well-remembered in Germany, and have played some part in the recent decision of the West Berlin and West German governments to restore the building.⁸

One of the reasons for the extraordinary publicity and ceremony which surrounded the Congress Hall was the innovative character of its design. That it was "modern" was itself an innovation: with the significant exception of American participation in the recently completed United Nations

6. Under United States military government, between 1948 and 1952, a new Free University was founded with financial support from the Ford Foundation and from American aid; a replica of the Liberty Bell was presented to the city and hung in the building which housed the West Berlin government; and an American Memorial Library was donated to the city. See Kurt Landsberg, "Neue Wege zu Bildung und Wissen," in *Berlin Kommt Wieder: Ein Buch vom Wirtschaftlichen und Kulturellen Aufbau der Hauptstadt Deutschlands* (Berlin-Grünwald, 1950), pp. 64-67; and "Laying the Cornerstone of the American Memorial Library at Berlin," *Department of State Bulletin*, July 7, 1952, pp. 3-6.

7. The Zeltenallee was rechristened on July 25, 1959. Speakers at the ceremony included Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter and Eleanor Dulles. See USIS Press Release No. 2569 and *Der Tagesspiegel*, July 26, 1959, in JFD Papers.

8. On the collapse of the south arch, the report of the engineering team hired by the Senat to determine the causes of the collapse, and the debate over whether to reconstruct the building, see: *Der Tagesspiegel*, June 1, 1980; *American Institute of Architects Journal*, 69 (May 1980); *Engineering News Record*, February 16, 1984; reports and clippings, HS Papers and Eleanor Lansing Dulles Papers (Washington, D.C.) [hereafter, ELD Papers]; and the transcript of the sitting of the West Berlin Senat on January 17, 1984, sent to the author with supporting documents by the Senator für kulturelle Angelegenheiten. The Senat resolved to rebuild on September 27, 1982; the Abgeordnetenhaus allocated the funds in the fall of 1983; and the final decisions were made by the Senat in January 1984.

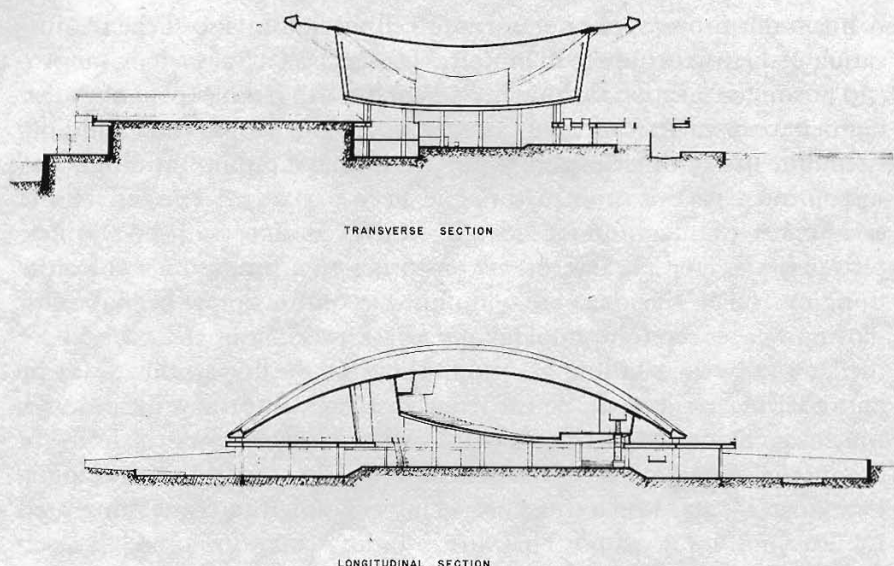


FIGURE 3. Congress Hall, sections (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.).

buildings in New York City, the patronage of the American government had always been reserved to buildings which displayed a clear stylistic link to the classical tradition. But the Congress Hall was innovative even within the recent tradition of modern architecture. Visually the building form is an elongated dome, with segments at the north and south sides exploded in the soaring winglike curves which led to the nickname "the pregnant butterfly"⁹ (Figs. 1, 3). Structurally, the building is a kind of dome turned inside out, a form achieved by the use of hyperbolic paraboloid curves and a reinforced concrete structural system which is partially a shell structure, and partially a suspended "tent" of cables and rods, covered in concrete.¹⁰ Shell structures, "in which the thickness of the material is

9. The phrase was first used by a State Department official in July 1955, and quickly caught on as an affectionate nickname (Hugh Stubbins, interview, July 13, 1983). In using the term "elongated dome" I refer to the visual impression made by the longitudinal curve of the building. I do not mean to suggest that the roof structure was that of a conventional dome.

10. Werner Koepke, "The Berlin Congress Hall," *Betonbau des Inlandes*, 41/42 (May 1958): Special Issue for the 3rd International Congress on Prestressed Concrete, sent by Fred N. Severud to

slight in relation to surface area," were still in their infancy in the 1950s, although there were important prototypes in France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, and Spain: factories, sports arenas, and aircraft hangars had been the most frequent applications of shell systems before the 1950s.¹¹ Certainly the technique had not yet been employed in any major public buildings. The suspension aspect of the structure had been partially developed, in the early 1950s, in a stadium for Raleigh, North Carolina, built by Matthew Nowicki with Fred N. Severud as consulting engineer, as he was for the Congress Hall.¹² The idea of developing an eccentric domelike shape employing new concrete technology goes back to some of the projects for the United Nations buildings, and to the Kresge Auditorium at MIT by Eero Saarinen, still under construction in 1955.¹³ But the winged dome, which has reappeared in so many permutations since the Congress Hall—in Saarinen's TWA terminal in New York or Jørn Utzon's Sydney Opera House, for example—and which therefore seems so familiar today, was invented by Stubbins for Berlin.¹⁴ That the building was "invented" is itself astonishing in a government building, since government patronage is not only usually conservative but also, and particularly in a democratic political system, discouraging to true innovation, since both design and decision-making tend to be carried on by committee. Thus the Congress Hall marked a radical break, with the traditions of government patronage in general and those of American government patronage in particular, and with the norms of modern architecture as they existed in the early 1950s.

This article is a study of how and for what purposes the Congress Hall came to be designed and built. It is therefore to a large extent a study of architectural form, structure, and symbolism, and of architects and their

Ralph Walker on July 16, 1958 with additional translation and explication, in RW Papers, Berlin Files, "Miscellaneous." Koepke stresses the suspension aspect of the structure even though he had rejected Severud's original design in which support was provided by a net of cables alone. See p. 172 and n. 92.

11. Pedro Guedes, ed., *Encyclopedia of Architectural Technology* (New York, 1972), p. 260. See also more generally under the headings "concrete" and "shells." Some early prototypes were hyperbolic paraboloids and saddle-shaped; these, however, lacked the suspension aspect of the Congress Hall roof.

12. See, among others, Frei Otto, in *Bauwelt*, 44 (1953): 89–93; Ernest Wood, "A Radical Settles Down in Raleigh, N.C.," *American Institute of Architects Journal*, 69 (1980): 54–60; and especially Fred N. Severud, "Materials combined to advantage—concrete in compression, steel in tension," *Civil Engineering* (March 1954): 52–55.

13. See pp. 159, 166 and Fig. 16.

14. Eero Saarinen and others, TWA Terminal, New York, 1956–1962; Jørn Utzon, Sydney Opera House, 1956–1968 (completed by others, 1973).

patrons. But in the process of telling that story, it becomes necessary to touch on many aspects of more general political history: on such matters as the history of Berlin, the general pattern of German-American relations in the 1950s, the role of what was termed "psychological warfare" in the Eisenhower administration, and the internal workings of the State Department under John Foster Dulles. It is necessary also to characterize the lives and personalities of the three individuals—Eleanor Dulles, Ralph Walker, and Hugh Stubbins—whose collaboration made patronage by committee unnecessary and innovation possible.¹⁵

The first ideas for the Congress Hall can be traced to the planning visit which Dulles, Walker, and Stubbins made to Bonn and Berlin in April 1955, but the origins of American patronage for the building go back a little farther. Soon after the workers' uprising in East Berlin had been crushed by Soviet forces in June 1953, the West German government decided to make West Berlin the site of an international architectural exhibition. The exhibition was to have three purposes: to aid the reconstruction of the war-damaged city; to attract international attention to the progressive character of West Berlin; and to lay the basis for a reunified future capital for Germany.¹⁶ An additional motive in both Bonn and West Berlin was the need to compete with the much-touted reconstruction along the Stalinallee in East Berlin, begun in 1952¹⁷ (Fig. 4). The exhibit was

15. I began work on the Congress Hall while I was a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts of the National Gallery of Art, in the spring of 1983; I was working on a general history of government architecture in Europe and the United States since 1870. In the process of interviewing Eleanor Dulles and Hugh Stubbins about the Congress Hall, however, I came to believe that it deserved a much fuller treatment than I had originally planned, and I wanted also to make use of the help of Mrs. Dulles and Mr. Stubbins at a time when they were eager to talk about the building, that is, when they were concerned about its reconstruction. I want to thank them both for giving me a great deal of time and very free access to their papers; I am indebted to the CASVA also, for supporting a research project which diverged, for a while, from the main one; and to Bryn Mawr College, which has provided research support for the project during the fall and winter, 1983–1984.

16. See Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, Abteilung Landes- und Stadtplanung, *Hauptstadt Berlin: Planungsgrundlagen für den städtebaulichen Ideenwettbewerb 'Hauptstadt Berlin'* (Berlin and Bonn, 1957); and Bundesminister für Wohnungsbau, Bonn und Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, Berlin, *Hauptstadt Berlin: Ergebnis des Internationalen städtebaulichen Ideenwettbewerbs Hauptstadt Berlin* (Stuttgart, 1960). See also, Senator Dr. Karl Mahler, "Internationale Bauausstellung 1956," *Bauwelt*, 44 (1953): 681–683; Hubert Hoffmann, "'Die neue Stadt' als Ausstellung," *Bauwelt*, 45 (1954): 469–470; and Karl Otto, "Ausblick auf die Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1956," *Bauwelt*, 45 (1954): 761–762. The opening of the exhibition was postponed in the spring of 1955 to 1957: "Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1957," *Bauwelt*, 46 (1955): 374.

17. See citations in n. 16, and "Exhibit in Berlin is aimed at Reds," *New York Times*, July 7, 1957. On the Stalinallee, see Jürgen Käding, *Baumeister der Stalinallee* (Berlin [East], 1953); and



FIGURE 4. Stalinallee (courtesy of Landesbildstelle, Berlin).

therefore always seen as partially permanent. Its first stage was to be a new housing quarter in the devastated Hansaviertel at the northwest edge of the Tiergarten (Fig. 2). The Hansaviertel housing was conceived along the lines of the famous Weissenhof Siedlung built during the Weimar Republic at Stuttgart as a demonstration of the potential contribution of modern architecture to modern dwelling forms. As at Weissenhof, innovative architects from all over the world were asked to participate individually rather than as the official representatives of their home countries.¹⁸ A later phase of the exhibition was to be a show of plans, this time by German architects only, for a new government center for Berlin reaching from the Tiergarten in the west across the sector border to the Alexanderplatz in the east.¹⁹

Herrmann Henselmann — Gedanken, Ideen, Bauten, Projekte (Berlin [East], 1978). The Stalinallee was built from 1952 to 1964; since 1961 it has been called the Karl-Marx Allee.

18. On participants, see n. 16, and *Wegweiser durch das neue Hansa-Viertel* (Berlin, n.d. [c. 1959]). On the Weissenhof Siedlung, see Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany 1918–1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).

19. The Hansaviertel section, when it opened, also included pavilions with exhibition space. One exhibition was on “The City of Tomorrow”; another was devoted to “International Modern Architecture.” See *Interbau Berlin 1957* (Berlin, 1957); *New York Times*, July 7, 1957; and citations in n. 16.

Late in 1954, however, the West Berlin government offered an official invitation to the United States government to participate in the exhibition. This request was channeled to Eleanor Dulles, who as Special Assistant to the Director of German Affairs within the State Department was often in Berlin, and who had a passion for architecture and for German reconstruction.²⁰ Mrs. Dulles²¹ was not particularly interested in American participation in the Hansaviertel development, nor in some sort of temporary American pavilion; from the first she had a vision of a permanent American structure, on a site somewhat apart from the Hansaviertel section.²² Sometime during the winter of 1954–1955 she suggested to the executive director of the American Institute of Architects the creation of a blue-ribbon committee to oversee the creation of a permanent American contribution to West Berlin, and largely as a result of her continuing pressure on individuals at State, the committee was created on March 2, 1955, with Ralph Walker as its chairman.²³ The new committee met with

20. It is not entirely clear when this invitation was issued, or to whom; for somewhat conflicting evidence on date, see Eleanor Dulles' memorandum of October 19, 1955 in RW Papers, Berlin Files, "Miscellaneous"; *Department of State Bulletin*, May 9, 1955, p. 767; and the letter in which Cecil B. Lyon, Director of the Office of German Affairs in the State Department, asks for help from the AIA, February 28, 1955, in RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee."

21. Eleanor Lansing Dulles was married to David S. Blondheim, a philologist at Johns Hopkins University, and was the mother of two children. She continued to use her maiden name for professional purposes, as many women did in the 1930s. After David Blondheim's death in 1934, she resumed the Dulles name for social purposes as well, but added "Mrs." to it, to protect her children from awkwardness.

22. See Cecil B. Lyon to Edmund Purves, Executive Director, AIA, February 28, 1955, in RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee": "Mrs. Dulles has told you that we consider the United States participation in this exhibit to be desirable since it would both afford us an opportunity to show to the rather isolated Berliners what progress has been made in construction and architecture in this country, and it would also constitute a further tangible indication of the abiding interest of this country in the people and problems of West Berlin." And, in the same file, Clair W. Ditchy, President of the AIA, to Ralph Walker, March 2, 1955: "Because of its [i.e., the building's] location next door to the Iron Curtain, the Department of State feels that it has unlimited propaganda possibilities and is prepared to arrange for the necessary Federal funds to make sure that whatever the United States displays is second to none." Both letters imply a large and important undertaking, somewhat separate from the rest of the exhibition.

23. Ditchy to Walker, March 2, 1955, RW Papers. The other initial members were Charles Luckman, Nathaniel A. Owings, John Harbeson, and Moreland Griffith Smith. All were senior partners in large, well-established and very well-known firms; in addition, they collectively represented the mid-west, the east coast, the west coast, and the south, a consideration that Moreland Smith believes was important in their selection. See his letter to the author of October 7, 1983. This account of procedures, negotiations, and personalities is pieced together from the recollections of Eleanor Lansing Dulles (interviews, April 4 and 20, 1983; October 26, 1983; February 4, 1984; and correspondence April 1983–March 1984), Hugh Stubbins (interviews May 3, July 13–14, 1983; correspondence since that time), and the Ralph Walker Papers, especially the memoranda and notes in the "AIA Committee" File.

Eleanor Dulles and two other representatives of the State Department at the Octagon, the Washington headquarters of the AIA, on March 25, for a briefing on the Berlin situation. The group resolved to send its chairman to Berlin with Mrs. Dulles as soon as possible, and agreed to select an architect for the building to accompany them. Hugh Stubbins was the unanimous choice of the committee; by March 28 he had been asked if he would agree to do the job, and if he could be ready to leave for Berlin within two weeks. He accepted, and the committee's plans were reported to the Board of Directors of the AIA on March 29. Rarely in history has a major government commission been set in motion so rapidly. Long before a design was decided upon, Dulles, Walker, and Stubbins each developed a sense of extreme urgency about the building. Each, in their separate ways, devoted great personal energies and deep personal convictions to the realization of the Congress Hall.

Born in 1895, Eleanor Dulles already had several careers behind her when she began to manage the "Berlin Desk" at the State Department in 1952.²⁴ A PhD in economics at Harvard (Radcliffe) in 1926, at a time when the academic study of "the dismal science" was still virtually closed to women in this country, she obtained important academic appointments, first at Simmons College and then at Bryn Mawr College and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania (1927-1935). During the same period she published path-breaking studies in monetary theory which gained her an international reputation among analysts of inflation and depression.²⁵ She entered government service briefly in 1931, as a member of the Hoover Commission, and permanently in 1936, when she became head of the Finance Division of the Social Security Board in Washington. In 1942 she joined the Board of Economic Warfare, and became a principal economic analyst at the Department of State. She was a United States representative at Bretton Woods. In May 1945 she was named American

24. The "Berlin Desk" did not really exist. In 1952, there was a "Bureau of European Affairs" within the State Department, and under it, an "Office of German Affairs." Within this, Eleanor Dulles' position was initially rather undefined, and the titles which she used varied. There is no biography; I have used her memoirs, *Chances of a Lifetime* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1980) [hereafter, *Chances*] and her oral histories at Princeton and Columbia Universities. Leonard Mosley's *Dulles: A Biography of Eleanor, Allen, and John Foster Dulles and Their Family Network* (New York, 1978), is amusing, but unscholarly and often inaccurate.

25. *The French Franc 1914-1928* (New York, 1929); *The Bank for International Settlements at Work* (New York, 1932); "The Evolution of Reparation Ideas," in *Facts and Factors in Economic History; Articles by Former Students of Edwin Francis Gay*, ed. Arthur H. Cole, et al. (Cambridge, Mass., 1932); *The Dollar, the Franc and Inflation* (New York, 1933); *Depression and Reconstruction; A Study of Causes and Controls* (Philadelphia, 1936).

Financial Attaché to Vienna, where she played a large role in the solution of the Austrian monetary crisis. Remaining in Austria until the end of 1948, she also worked toward the ending of four-power occupation and toward the establishment of full Austrian sovereignty, a goal which was finally achieved by her elder brother in 1955.²⁶

A commitment to European affairs and to economic reconstruction had shaped most of the actions of Eleanor Dulles' life,²⁷ but the activities of the years from 1942 to 1948 strengthened these commitments and gave her a taste of power, leading her to hope that she could play an active part in European reconstruction. The years in Vienna also shaped her attitudes to the Soviet Union:

The Cold War began in Austria in 1946. . . . I had considerable concern and some sympathy for the Russian Revolution. I had observed various aspects of Russian behavior in the last months of the war, but I had not given up hope of cooperation with the Soviets. . . . I had to change many of my ideas as months went on. . . . The pattern became clear to me. . . . The Soviet aim was clearly to reduce Austria to abject compliance with what the Russians wished and to build a communist state and strong pro-Moscow group.²⁸

During the same period a brief visit to Berlin in March 1947 showed her the economic devastation of war at its most extreme, and the depredations of the Russians at their most extreme. She must, even then, have longed to return to Berlin. Instead, she returned to the United States where she served first the German/Austrian Division of the State Department and then, from June 1951 to December 1952, the National Production Authority. She was rescued from this—by then, to her—uninteresting work by a friend and former colleague, James W. Riddleberger, who made her his assistant in the Office of German Affairs in the State Department in December 1952. She set out immediately for Berlin.²⁹

26. The Austrian State Treaty of May 15, 1955 guaranteed Austria full sovereignty in return for neutrality and disarmament, and paved the way for Austrian admission to the United Nations.

27. Immediately after her graduation from Bryn Mawr College in 1917 she went to France where she worked for war relief agencies: first the Shurtleff Relief Committee and then the American Friends Service Committee. Here she learned techniques which she used after 1942; see, for example, her remarks on counterpart funds in *Chances*, p. 169. At the Paris Peace Conference she visited "Uncle Bert" (Robert Lansing, Secretary of State) and both her brothers, and began to learn about Foster's opposition to reparations: *Chances*, pp. 66–69; see also Michael A. Guhin, *John Foster Dulles, A Statesman and His Times* (New York, 1972), pp. 26–38. She became a vigorous critic of reparations, and of the Versailles Peace Treaty (*Chances*, pp. 181–182).

28. *Chances*, pp. 207–208. The Russian insistence on reparations, which seemed so irrational to her in economic terms, convinced her that Soviet aims must be political.

29. On the trip to Berlin in March, see *Chances*, pp. 183–184. She was visiting the well-known art historian Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, who "showed me the city. The S-Bahn, the elevated railroad

In Berlin, Eleanor Dulles had a position of less clear-cut authority than she had had in Austria, yet her work in Berlin has earned her far greater recognition. She had learned in Austria how to achieve her goals without a clear authority:

In September 1945 I found my men colleagues reluctant to give women a chance. . . . My solution was to think out what would be most constructive for Austria, who would be able to help in achieving these objectives, and then to go forward as if I had the power and the authority. . . . The Austrians thought I had rank—which I had not. What I had was the will to maneuver and to manipulate the power that others had. It was a serious, exacting, yet rewarding game.³⁰

In Berlin, however, the game was more difficult, if even more rewarding, since the “power that others had” included the power of her elder brothers.

The fourth child and second daughter born to Allen Macy Dulles and Edith Foster, Eleanor had been the tomboy of the family, and had grown up in an atmosphere of both intimacy and competition with her brothers. Foster, her elder by seven years, had more authority for her than Allen did, but they all had shared ideas and aspirations from an early age. Foster read and commented upon her doctoral dissertation; both Eleanor and Allen read and commented upon Foster Dulles’ foreign policy memorandum of the spring of 1952, which helped to make him Eisenhower’s choice as Secretary of State.³¹ This relationship continued even after Foster Dulles assumed office, and after Allen Dulles was confirmed as head of the CIA. Both Allen and Eleanor facilitated Foster’s first meetings with Adenauer, and it was Eleanor who sent the new Secretary of State his first full-scale briefing on the economic situation in Berlin.³²

winding through Berlin, gave us an overview. Elizabeth showed me where the Russians were moving machinery out of the factories and piling it on freight cars.” Elizabeth Holt, whose husband was posted to the American Mission in Berlin, and who herself served the Women’s Affairs Section of the British Military Government Office, also made her friend aware of many specific examples of Russian brutality to individual Berliners. I am indebted to Mrs. Holt for sharing with me her recollections of this and many other matters. On Eleanor Dulles’ appointment to the Office of German Affairs, see *Chances*, pp. 243–245, and the rather different interpretation in Mosley, *Dulles*, p. 293.

30. *Chances*, pp. 207–208.

31. John Foster Dulles, “A Policy of Boldness,” *Life Magazine*, May 19, 1952, pp. 146–148. Section V of this article, which makes a strong case for the role of “psychological warfare” in American foreign policy (“we should use *ideas* as weapons”), was influenced not only by Eleanor and Allen, but also by Eisenhower himself. See Eisenhower to Dulles, April 15, 1952, and Dulles to Eisenhower, April 25, 1952, JFD Papers.

32. The first contact between John Foster Dulles and Konrad Adenauer was arranged by Allen Dulles, but Eleanor made frequent contacts from the time of her arrival in Germany. The importance of Allen and Eleanor in Foster’s relations with Adenauer was also stressed by Roderick O’Connor

Foster's sister was increasingly useful to him during his six years in office.³³

After January 1953, however, the three had to maintain a public relation of some delicacy. Of this relationship, Eleanor Dulles has said, "I was not supposed to be noticeable."³⁴ Her arrival in Berlin was immediately reported by newsmen, however, and from that time forward she was often noticed. In fact, it has frequently been assumed that she owed her position in Berlin to the appointment of John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State. The truth was somewhat more complicated. Eleanor Dulles herself likes to stress that her reappointment at State took place before her brother's confirmation in office,³⁵ and there seems little doubt that Foster exerted some pressure, during his first months in office, to persuade her to move to a different area of government service. But it is also clear that Eleanor was determined to remain where she was, and that Foster did not persist, despite some rather adverse initial publicity.³⁶ And of course the Dulles name made it easier to "go forward as if I had the power and the authority. . . ." She did so, with an insistence which brought her the dislike of many at State, the admiration of others, and the love and devotion of many Germans. As Willy Brandt wrote, "She was a passionate and moving advocate of our cause. . . . Sometimes her colleagues (including those in the American Embassy at Bonn) found her zeal excessive. I treasured it."³⁷ Yet with the power of the name came great constraints, for all three Dulleses: they told each other less than one would expect, and acknowledged each other officially as little as possible. Behind this polite

(Oral History, JFD Papers). For the briefing on the economic situation in Berlin, see Eleanor Lansing Dulles, "Preliminary Comment on Berlin Visit—General Impressions," January 15, 1953, in John Foster Dulles Papers (Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas) [Hereafter, "Preliminary Comment"].

33. For example, she made contacts for him, not only with Adenauer, but also with Gerstenmeier, Heuss, Suhr, and Brandt. She told him when and where to pay attention to Ambassador Krekeler and Minister von Brentano, and what to say to Chancellor Raab of Austria. See the Eleanor Lansing Dulles Files in the JFD Papers and the Memoranda of Telephone Conversations, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library (copies at Princeton). This was, of course, part of a pattern in the behavior of the Secretary of State: he relied for information and advice upon a very small group of trusted people, causing his ambassadors extreme frustration. See, among others, James B. Conant, Oral History, JFD Papers.

34. Eleanor Lansing Dulles, Oral History, JFD Papers, p. 108.

35. *Chances*, pp. 242–245, and letter to the author, August 3, 1983.

36. See, for example, "State Department is a Family Affair," *Baltimore Sunday American*, May 17, 1953. The family association was also quickly noted by European commentators; see, for example, "Intercepted Radio Broadcasts," June 24, 1953, in Eleanor Dulles Files, Allen Dulles Papers (Princeton University Libraries, Princeton, N.J.).

37. Willy Brandt, *Begegnungen und Einsichten* (Hamburg, 1976), p. 84.

public posture, which seems to have penetrated even their private relations with one another, there was restraint, a sense of public obligation, a common view of American foreign policy and of the Soviet danger, mutual admiration and affection—and the old competitiveness. Eleanor Dulles has said of Allen that he was in awe of Foster, but that he also wished he had his brother's job; she may have shared that wish, from time to time.³⁸

When Eleanor Dulles first reached Berlin as an official of the State Department, pressure already existed in both Germany and the United States for a major increase in American aid to Berlin.³⁹ Her review of the situation was typically impatient: capital investment was urgent, methods for deploying American loans should be streamlined, and the conservative attitudes of German bankers overcome; stockpiles should be increased to provide an increased source of counterpart funds—all of these measures must most urgently be addressed in order to counter unemployment, both of native West Berliners and of the refugees flowing from the east. Housing conditions must be improved, tourism promoted, and, as important as almost any other measure, morale must be increased by reassurance about “West German support,” and “American understanding.”⁴⁰ As a liberal economist, she was well aware of the importance of public works and especially building construction, both for employment and morale; in her economic writings she had, moreover, given particular prominence to the importance of public confidence for economic recovery.⁴¹ And in Berlin, “confidence,” as she saw it, meant confidence in West German and American support. She therefore sought American support for building of every type: housing, university building, health facilities, and American buildings which would encourage tourism.⁴² It is not surprising, then, that she saw the invitation to participate in the Interbau exhibition as an opportunity to build a large and permanent structure which would have an important symbolic significance for morale.⁴³ Clearly, too, she wanted a strikingly different-looking building, to attract attention and visitors. With the date

38. Oral History, JFD Papers, p. 92.

39. See *Department of State Bulletin*, March 2, 1953, pp. 328–329, and Margaret Rupli Woodward, “Berlin Rebuilds: The Economic Reconstruction of West Berlin, 1948–53,” *Department of State Bulletin*, April 19, 1954, pp. 584–588.

40. “Preliminary Comment.”

41. This argument was stressed in *The French Franc*, and appears in each of her economic writings thereafter.

42. Interview, February 4, 1984; “Preliminary Comment”; *Chances*; and John Foster Dulles to Conrad Hilton, January 25, 1955, JFD Papers.

43. There were also personal factors which led Eleanor Dulles to become a patron of architecture. She had some desire, herself, to be an architect, and had commissioned two houses for herself, for which she took an active part in planning and design. Of these houses, she always says, “I built

of the opening of the exhibition only a year and a half away, she turned to the Washington headquarters of the American Institute of Architects, in order to find the best architects, and quickly.

When he was chosen as chairman of the "AIA Committee to advise the Department of State on the Berlin building Exposition," Ralph Walker was approaching the height of his career. Born in 1889, Walker was a senior partner in the prestigious New York firm of Voorhees, Walker, Foley and Smith. Before the Second World War, he had won national and international recognition as the designer of the Barclay-Vesey Telephone Building (1923–1936), which received the Gold Medal of the Architectural League of New York, and of the Irving Trust Building (1929–1932). He had gone on to a long series of commissions from the telephone company, and to major designs at the Century of Progress exposition in Chicago (1933) and at the 1939 World's Fair in New York. Together with many other participants at the 1939 World's Fair, Walker joined the design team for the United Nations buildings in New York. Other major commissions immediately after the Second World War included the Hayden Memorial Library at MIT (1946–1949) and the Argonne National Laboratories in Chicago (1952).⁴⁴

Walker's buildings—and his career—occupy a curious position in American architectural history, one of "moderate modernism." Along with Raymond Hood and Ely Jacques Kahn, Walker was regarded in the late 1920s and early 1930s as a creator of an indigenous, entirely American, modern style.⁴⁵ Again like his friends Hood and Kahn, Walker combined a crafts-

... " (interviews; *Chances*, pp. 147, 164). In hiring an architect for the second of these houses, she intentionally chose a young man, so that she could "tell him what to do" (interview, April 4, 1983). She was, in addition, a skilled carpenter: when she moved to Washington, she took up this craft; during her years at the Social Security Board she built many pieces of furniture, two boats, and a cabin. This occupation helped to absorb her energies during a period of grief after her husband's death; eventually, however, it became a too-consuming addiction, and she had to give it up (*Chances*, p. 341; interviews). She was also particularly moved, during her first visit to post-war Berlin, by the plight of a destitute sculptor, who used any materials he could get to create novel-looking, architectural works (*Chances*, p. 183; Elizabeth Holt).

44. Carol Willis, "Ralph Walker, 1889–1973," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* (New York, 1982), IV, 363; obituary, *New York Times*, January 18, 1973; Joseph Norwood Bosserman, *Ralph Walker Bibliography*, American Association of Architectural Bibliographers (Summer 1960); and Ralph Walker, *Ralph Walker—The American Institute of Architects—1921–1961* (privately printed, 1961), copy in RW Papers, short series, 1950–1964. This relatively small group of papers, within the larger collection at Syracuse, relates almost exclusively to Walker's conflict with the AIA in the early 1960s. I am indebted to Mrs. Willis for much additional information and for some of my interpretations; any errors, of course, are my own.

45. See, for example, George H. Allen, "Dynamic Energy and Modernism," *Architectural Forum*, 54 (May 1931): 609–610.

manlike love of color and natural materials with a consuming interest in modern technology; to this group of architects, both seemed compatible. Walker's projects for Chicago included futurist visions of forests of incredibly high towers, as yet impossible to build, and many of his buildings for the telephone company experimented with metal surfacing.⁴⁶ Sometimes his love of technology bordered on gimmickry: his Borden Pavilion at the New York World's Fair included a rotary cow stall, or "Roto-Lactor," for automated milking.⁴⁷ Gimmickry could, however, lead to invention: his "Vitarama," also developed for the New York Fair, influenced the later Cinerama. Yet Walker greatly disliked the slick repetitiveness—the "machine-made" look—of the nascent "international style" and he became a critic of its early manifestations at the Architectural League Show of 1931 and the Museum of Modern Art Exhibition of 1932. He saw himself as a defender of humanitarian values, and these, he thought, included "cussed individualism," a devotion to high art, and to nature. The modern movement in its European version seemed to him to deny these values.⁴⁸

Immediately after the war, Walker was asked by the AIA to represent it at meetings of the Union Internationale des Architectes; Walker became one of the principal organizers of this group, which he saw as a rival to the Corbusier- and Gropius-inspired Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) which was also reviving in the first postwar years. These activities brought Ralph Walker to the presidency of the AIA in 1949 (to 1951) and into prominence in Washington. Shortly after his inauguration, President Eisenhower appointed Walker to a new Presidential Advisory Commission on Housing; soon thereafter, Walker helped to form, together with Pietro Belluschi and Henry R. Shepley, a new committee to advise the Foreign Buildings Operations (FBO) of the State Department "as to appropriate designs for embassies, residences and other American buildings abroad."⁴⁹ Clearly, Ralph Walker was the obvious choice

46. On Walker's projects and executed designs, see the many citations in Bosserman. The visionary drawings are in the RW Papers.

47. Illustrated in *The New York World's Fair 1939/40*, ed. Stanley Appelbaum (New York, 1977).

48. See, for example, Ralph Walker, *Ralph Walker, Architect* (New York, 1957), and *A Fly in the Amber* (New York, 1957). On international modernism, see especially "Too Much Streamlining," *Architect and Engineer*, 137 (May 1939): 8; "What is Happening to Modern Architecture?" *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* [New York] (Spring 1948); "The Architect as a Modern," *American Institute of Architects Journal*, 13 (1950): 57–61, 119–124.

49. *Ralph Walker—The American Institute of Architects—1921–1961*, p. 10, RW Papers; see also *The Chancery Building Program* (Washington, D.C., 1975); Carleton Knight, III, "Significant Clients: Slayton at State," *American Institute of Architects Journal*, 74 (1983): 36–42; and Lisa Redekop, "Architecture in United States Embassies," Bryn Mawr College, May 1983.

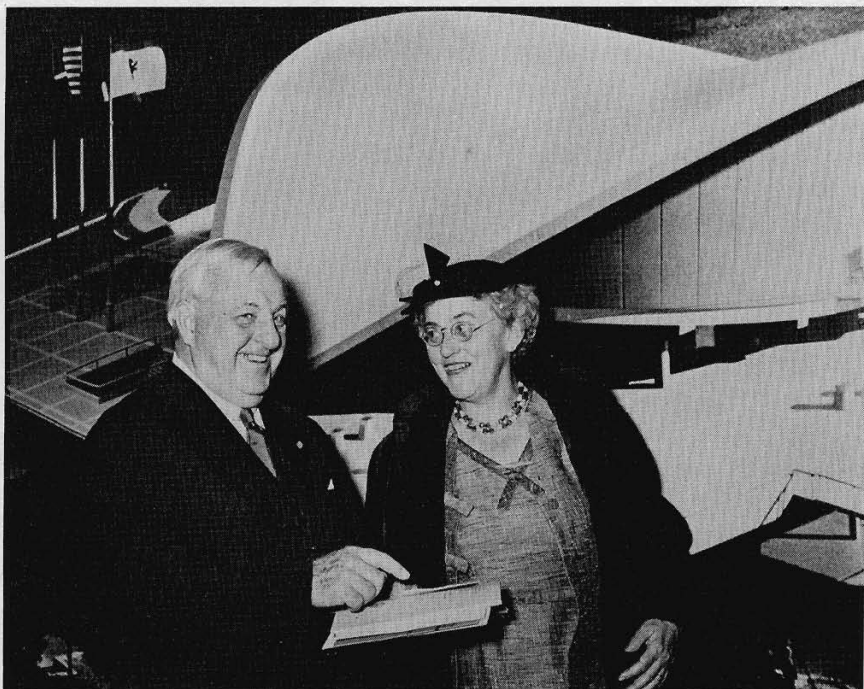


FIGURE 5. Ralph Walker and Eleanor Dulles (courtesy of Eleanor Lansing Dulles).

to chair a new committee on a State Department building in Berlin. It is also clear that Walker eagerly accepted this opportunity for direct involvement in the planning of a major government building abroad: he hoped to set his own stamp on the re-emerging European architecture, and he welcomed the prospect of collaboration with Eleanor Dulles, whom he termed an “unusually responsible representative of the State Department” (Fig. 5). He also thought of the job as a major step in assuring close relations between American government patronage and the American Institute of Architects.⁵⁰

The third member of the team was perhaps not such an obvious choice at the time, although Hugh Stubbins proved to be not only an inspired and innovative designer, but also a skilled diplomat and businessman, and as enthusiastic about the propagandistic purpose of the building as

50. Ralph Walker, draft of a letter to Clair Ditchy, April 8, 1955 and Ralph Walker to Charles Luckman, June 19, 1955; RW Papers, Berlin Files, “AIA Committee.”



FIGURE 6. Eleanor Dulles and Hugh Stubbins (courtesy of Eleanor Lansing Dulles).

either Eleanor Dulles or Ralph Walker (Fig. 6). Hugh Asher Stubbins, Jr. was born and spent his childhood on a farm outside of Birmingham, Alabama. He began the study of architecture and engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he gained an understanding of and respect for modern materials and technology, and practical problem-solving. He entered the Master of Architecture program at Harvard in 1933, received his degree in 1935, and went to work for Royal Barry Wills, a leading designer of private dwellings in a neo-colonial style, well-known for his craftsmanlike planning and attention to detail. Very soon thereafter, Stubbins won a series of awards in national design competitions (in partnership with Marc Peter), and at the improbable age of twenty-eight became an assistant to Walter Gropius, refugee from Hitler's persecution, newly appointed as the dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Stubbins set up his own practice at the same time, and received a number of commissions for small buildings and dwellings. From 1941 to 1945, he set his architectural work aside and went to work for a series of engineering firms; here he worked on a radar-jamming device and on a prototype of the heat-seeking missile.⁵¹ Stubbins returned to Harvard and to close association with Gropius after the war; when Gropius retired as dean in 1952, he was appointed acting dean until the appointment of José Luis Sert. In 1954 Stubbins was selected by the State Department to design a legation for Tangier.⁵² His design, modest and humane in scale, combined an arcade of thin-shell concrete with patterned walls and colorful mosaic floors. The legation was rationally planned, artful in its use of materials, sympathetic to native tradition, and technologically advanced — qualities which would reappear in Stubbins' later work.

Recent writing on the development of American architecture during and immediately after the war suggests that Stubbins' association with Gropius, the founder of the Bauhaus, and Sert, the president of CIAM, should have made his candidacy anathema to Walker and to government patronage.⁵³

51. Interview, July 13, 1983; Hugh Stubbins, *Architecture: The Design Experience* (New York, 1976); William Dudley Hunt, Jr., in *Contemporary Architects* (New York, 1980), pp. 783–785. I am indebted to Mr. Hunt for much additional information. See also Susan Strauss, "Hugh Stubbins," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, IV, 146–147.

52. "US Legation for Tangier," *Architectural Forum*, 103 (July 1955): 156–158; and interview, July 27, 1984.

53. There has been a strong tendency in historical and critical writing about architecture in recent years to assume that émigrés from Europe, and especially from Germany, revolutionized American architecture in the late 1930s by importing an "international style" which was unrelated to any historical tradition or any indigenous tradition. See, for an extreme and cantankerous, but amusing, summary of this position, Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House* (New York, 1981), especially pp. 45–48.

But association was not the same as discipleship. As Stubbins tells it, the attitude of Cambridge architects when Gropius was appointed was one of "wait and see," and he became Gropius' assistant only after many conversations about the need for preserving American architectural traditions and strong regional variations in architecture.⁵⁴ Nor did either the Bauhaus, the international style, or CIAM appear at the time as uncongenial to American government patronage as later historians have imagined: Gropius himself was seeking government commissions at this time, and Sert had already become known for his view that the "international style" should become more "monumental" in order to better serve the needs of government in the future.⁵⁵ CIAM, in other words, was no longer the rather left-wing, and relentlessly avant-garde, organization it had been before the outbreak of the Second World War. There was much more consensus among architects in the 1950s than historians have usually understood.

Whatever Walker thought of these associations, the choice of Stubbins was largely Walker's doing. He knew Stubbins' work from the Foreign Buildings Operations of the State Department, where the advisory committee had recently recommended Stubbins' Tangier legation design. Stubbins also suited Walker's belief that younger men should be given a chance at major commissions, and that the designer of the Berlin building, who would be, Walker thought, closely supervised and guided by the AIA committee, should not yet be a Fellow of the AIA. Eleanor Dulles concurred immediately in the committee's recommendation, and stood behind the choice in early April, when negotiations showed signs of lengthening. She liked what she had seen of Stubbins' work, and in addition she must have seen him as potentially congenial to the Germans, because of the association with Gropius, and because he had some experience in Germany.⁵⁶ She probably understood that he would be acceptable to James B. Conant, still president of Harvard during part of Stubbins' term as acting dean of the School of Design and now, since 1953, United States High Commissioner to Germany. It is also very likely that both Walker and Eleanor Dulles thought that in Hugh Stubbins they had selected a tractable young-

54. Interview, July 13, 1983. According to Stubbins, "Gropius was charming. He agreed to everything."

55. See, among others, Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (New York, 1980).

56. Ralph Walker, draft letter to Ditchy, April 8, 1955; *Ralph Walker—The American Institute of Architects—1921–1961*, RW Papers; Eleanor Dulles to Hugh Stubbins, April 11 and April 14, HS Papers, "Eleanor Lansing Dulles." Stubbins had visited Germany in 1954 as part of a team of American businessmen, politicians, and educators.

ster (at forty-three, Stubbins was very young for a major government commission). If so, they were wrong. Stubbins was always his own man, and very rapidly assumed command of the design of the Congress Hall. To the extent that he drew on the ideas of Dulles and Walker, he did so by choice and inclination.

On April 20, 1955, Ralph Walker, Eleanor Dulles, Hugh Stubbins, Moreland Griffith Smith, and Howard Eichenbaum (second vice-president of the AIA) flew to Germany, beginning a ten-day study trip to plan the American contribution to the Interbau exhibition.⁵⁷ When this "subcommittee" (of the AIA committee, as they called themselves) set out, the nature and purpose of the American building was altogether uncertain; they returned with a program, a method of financing, a site, a timetable, and some outlines of a design. In Bonn for only about twenty-four hours, the group met a rather distracted reception from James B. Conant. They conferred about a wide variety of buildings: a museum of science, a health clinic, a typical American kitchen, a cinerama, a youth club, a museum, a monument to peace, a United States information center, and a place of worship were suggested as possibilities.⁵⁸ On April 21, the group proceeded to Berlin, where they were briefed by Robert Brandin, head of the Economic Affairs Division of the American High Commission in Berlin, and by Paul Hertz and Otto Busack, the two Berlin senators with

57. Of the original committee members, in addition to Walker, the chairman, only Moreland Smith wanted to go. Howard Eichenbaum went along at the insistence of the Board of Directors of the AIA, which was concerned about the extent of AIA responsibility for the project; RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee." Though Smith and Eichenbaum did not play much part in developing the program or the design, they were congenial to the others, vigorously endorsed the project, and were, from time to time, significant in gaining support for the Congress Hall. For the details of this trip see: the extensive set of handwritten notes which Stubbins kept in HS Papers, "Miscellaneous Data April 1955-June 1955" [hereafter, HS handwritten notes]; a similar group of handwritten notes in RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee"; and the draft press release of April 25, 1955 in HS Papers, "Berlin Miscellaneous Data," which gives an extended description of the trip. The term *Kongresshalle* appears for the first time in *Der Tagesspiegel*, Berlin, May 4, 1955, in HS Papers, "Miscellaneous Data." The program, referred to on p. 152, appears in slightly different forms in both Walker's and Stubbins' handwritten notes; the cost estimates, plans, and sketches appear only in Stubbins'.

58. According to Eleanor Dulles, *Chances*, p. 258, Conant suggested the kitchen, and she took it ill. But Conant could not have had much attention to spare for this project on April 20: this was the day that he as American High Commissioner had to announce the treaties disestablishing the United States High Command in Germany, which also granted full sovereignty to the Federal Republic. His own future status was at this time still a little uncertain; he did not become United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic until May 14; see James B. Conant, *My Several Lives* (New York, 1970), chap. 43, especially pp. 590-591.

whom Eleanor Dulles had worked most closely. They met also, at various times in the next few days, with Henry Parkman, Assistant High Commissioner for Berlin; Otto Suhr, the governing mayor; Willy Brandt, the leader of the dominant Social Democratic Party in the West Berlin House of Representatives; Rolf Schwedler, Senator for Building; and Hans Stephan, one of Schwedler's assistants. They learned of the Berlin Senat's plans for the Hansaviertel in detail, and of ideas about the construction of a new government center leading from the Platz der Republik to the area beyond the Museumsinsel. They visited the American Memorial Library, and they became aware of plans for a new American information center, the Amerika Haus. Above all, they met with each other, to discuss how to surpass these other buildings without duplicating them. Eleanor Dulles was most interested in the idea of a "working museum" of some sort, but was also attracted by the idea of a large auditorium where the Bundestag could meet when it convened in Berlin. Ralph Walker, with his experience at the Union Internationale and at the UN, suggested a site for international conferences of scientists, artists, and humanists. Alternative names, such as Lincoln Hall, the Congressional Hall of Arts and Sciences, Franklin Hall, and Amity House, were proposed, with the group finally settling on a "Hall of Congresses." This term was shortened in press releases to "Congress Hall," or *Kongresshalle* in German, and the latter name was perpetuated by German news coverage. After much discussion, they decided to dedicate the building to Benjamin Franklin, whose career seemed to them to symbolize an ideal combination of democratic principles, American patriotism, and commitment to European affairs. They agreed also that the building would have a "two-fold purpose: a) Promotion of free exchange of ideas and participation in present day arts and sciences; b) Demonstration of US architecture and planning to fullest extent possible." They agreed on a program which included an auditorium for twelve hundred people, six conference rooms, large exhibition spaces, administrative offices and services, a restaurant and bar, a "quiet court," and large open terraces around the building. Stubbins, who with Walker had roughed out the program, also sketched a schematic plan for the building and projected cost estimates; the planning of the building thereafter was guided by these early decisions.

The visit to Berlin had a profound effect upon the architect members of the group. Walker had not been there before; Stubbins had, but only briefly. Both men were deeply impressed by the extent of wartime destruction, by the signs of reconstruction in the west, and by the lack of

it in the east. Walker wrote that he came away with “strong reactions to the . . . great psychological differences which exist between the same people separated physically by a ragged line drawn across a map. . . . The sun, without question, seems to shine brighter on the West side. . . .”⁵⁹ Stubbins wrote in his notebook during the visit that “Berlin is like a prison for its inhabitants—[it is] hard to go beyond [its] limits,” and concluded that a design which reached beyond those limits would have a “great psychological and political effect.”⁶⁰ While Eleanor Dulles and the State Department had already considered the “psychological” effects of new building in Berlin, and had seen the American contribution to Interbau as potential propaganda against the east, the architects began to subscribe to these ideas in Berlin.⁶¹ Stubbins began to see the need for a design which was “daring . . . , completely free,” one of “great promise [which] puts no limitations on the achievements that may be made within.”⁶² While still in Berlin, Walker, Stubbins, and Eleanor Dulles collaborated upon a draft press release (the text of which Eleanor Dulles would use repeatedly in stage-managing the further development of the building) which reveals the common view they reached at this early stage of the project. They shared, it said, an “ardent belief . . . that of all the rights men have or desire, the right of free speech is probably the most important and . . . in West Berlin, an outpost of freedom, an idea which would have an obvious spiritual and political significance. . . .” A new building which expressed this idea “would not only be of benefit to the free part of Berlin, but would also be a shining beacon beaming toward the East.”⁶³ Stubbins recalls that this view of the building—as a “shining beacon beaming toward the East”—led the group in all its conversations with German officials to insist on a site near the sector border, and one surrounded by extensive open space, to ensure visibility.⁶⁴ These requirements led, toward the end of their visit, to an acrimonious confrontation with Mayor Suhr.

In their initial discussions with officers of the West Berlin planning commission, the group was offered a huge site, almost equal to the south-

59. Ralph Walker, “Notes Concerning the Hall of Congresses in Berlin,” May 18, 1955, ELD Papers. On Stubbins’ earlier visit, see n. 56.

60. HS handwritten notes, marginalia.

61. See n. 22.

62. Brochure of October 1956 issued in both German and English for the Cornerstone Ceremony of October 3; a copy of the text in the HS Papers establishes Stubbins’ authorship.

63. Draft press release, April 25, 1955; the draft is by Eleanor Dulles with comments by both Stubbins and Walker, and reappears in many versions in 1955; see HS Papers and RW Papers.

64. Interview, July 13, 1983.

east quadrant of the Tiergarten⁶⁵ (Fig. 2). This site would have placed the new building directly on the sector border, abutting, to the northeast, the Brandenburg Gate, and to the southeast, the old ministerial quarter where Hitler's chancellery and bunker had been located. The group accepted with alacrity, but when Mayor Suhr was informed of the idea, he rejected it angrily. A second site, north of the Tiergarten and west of the Platz der Republik, in the area known as "In den Zelten," was agreed upon as a compromise. This site was much smaller than the other, and more distant from the Brandenburg Gate, but still not far from the sector border as it bent around the Platz der Republik, and considerably closer to the Hansaviertel (Fig. 2). It was also in close proximity to the areas planned for a new government center, on a direct axis with the ruined Reichstag, and fronted directly on the Spree, which, as a transportation artery, had its own symbolic significance. The group, and particularly Eleanor Dulles and Hugh Stubbins, were also very enthusiastic about this site.⁶⁶

It is difficult, at this distance in time, to be sure what the issues in this debate were, but it is very likely that they had to do with memories of Hitler's plans for the Platz der Republik. Under Hitler's rule, which gave great importance to the propaganda value of architecture, the area around the Reichstag was seen as a focal point in the replanning of central Berlin: Hitler's chief architect Albert Speer planned and often displayed models of a huge complex of buildings at the head of a new "north-south axis" with its apex at the Platz der Republik (Figs. 7a, 7b, 8). These buildings included a giant domed hall for mass meetings spanning the Spree at the northernmost part of its bend, a complex of offices which would encase the old Reichstag, and, to the west of the square, extending through the "In den Zelten" area, a huge new chancellery for Hitler.⁶⁷ These

65. Draft press release, April 25, 1955. A draft letter from Mr. [Henry] Parkman to Dr. [Otto] Suhr, April 26, 1955 (in HS Papers, "Miscellaneous Data") attempted to secure Suhr's agreement, and led to the confrontation. Parkman's letter was drafted by Eleanor Dulles, and is an example of how she worked: by drafting letters, cables, and memoranda for individuals involved on both sides of any issue (she drafted a reply for Suhr as well—see HS Papers, "Miscellaneous Data"), she had a course of action which suited her, but was also well-informed, on the desk of an official before he had had time to inform himself elsewhere. This tactic is also described in *Chances*. Since she flew back and forth from Berlin and Bonn to Washington, she was able to use the procedure on both sides of the Atlantic.

66. *Chances*, pp. 258–259, and interview, April 4, 1983. Eleanor Dulles' memory of these events appears to be essentially correct, even though in *Chances* she has placed the visit in 1956. See also Ralph Walker to Eleanor Dulles, May 8, 1955, HS Papers, "Eleanor Lansing Dulles." Walker would have preferred the larger site.

67. Lars Olof Larsson, *Die Neugestaltung der Reichshauptstadt: Albert Speers Generalbebauungs-*

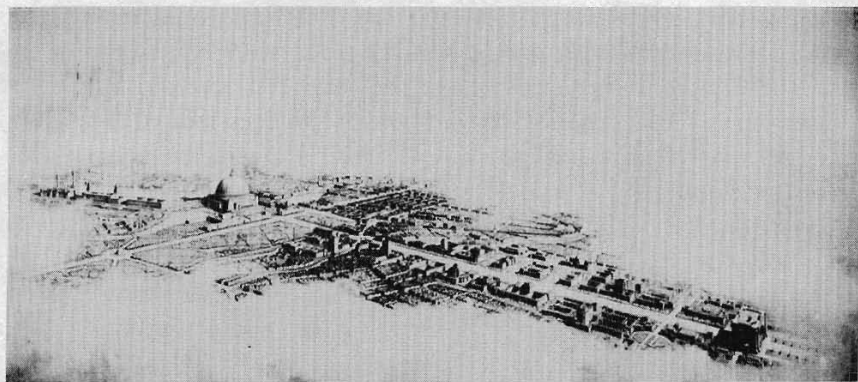


FIGURE 7. (a) Albert Speer, drawing of proposed plan for north-south axis, Berlin, c. 1942. (Courtesy of Lars-Olof Larsson.)

megalomaniac ideas were not accomplished, of course; indeed, on their grander scale they date from the later stages of the war. But their intent had been to replace the Platz der Republik as a center of republican government, not by a return to the Imperial imagery of the period before the Weimar Republic, but by buildings symbolic of Hitler's new order. It is unlikely that the Americans knew much about these plans, but Hans Stephan, who initially worked with them on the site, had been one of Speer's principal assistants in preparing the plan for the north-south axis; by offering the group the first site, he may have been hoping to preserve the area along the Spree for a new version of Speer's monumental grouping.⁶⁸ If this interpretation is correct, then it is also probable that Suhr, a Social Democrat, understood Stephan's purposes, and was infuriated by them. The reason he gave to the group of Americans, however, was a desire to preserve the green spaces of the Tiergarten intact. The group returned to the United States on April 30 with provisional approval by the Berlin government of the site and the planned program and with a blueprint

plan für Berlin (Stockholm, 1978). See also Barbara Miller Lane, "Albert Speer, 1905-1981," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, IV, 115-116 and additional bibliography cited there. The final location of the Congress Hall was on the spot where Speer had planned to put the greenhouse for Hitler's enormous new residence.

68. Larsson, who is Stephan's son-in-law, concurs in this interpretation; see his letter to the author, January 29, 1984. See also *Chances*, pp. 258-259.

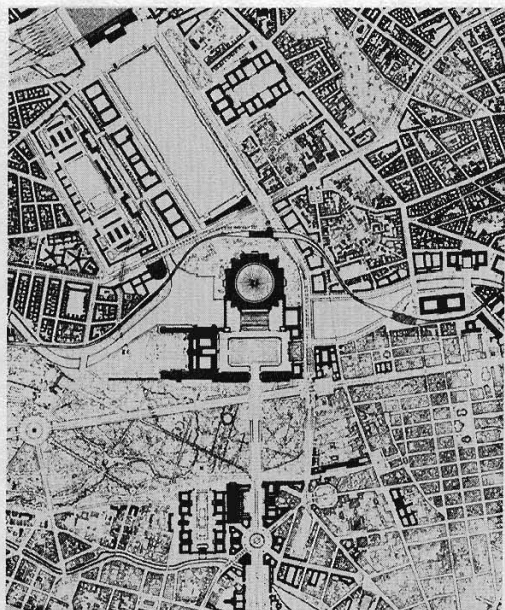


FIGURE 7. (b) Albert Speer, drawing of plan for north-south axis. (From Lars-Olof Larsson, *Die Neugestaltung der Reichshauptstadt*, Stockholm, 1978.)

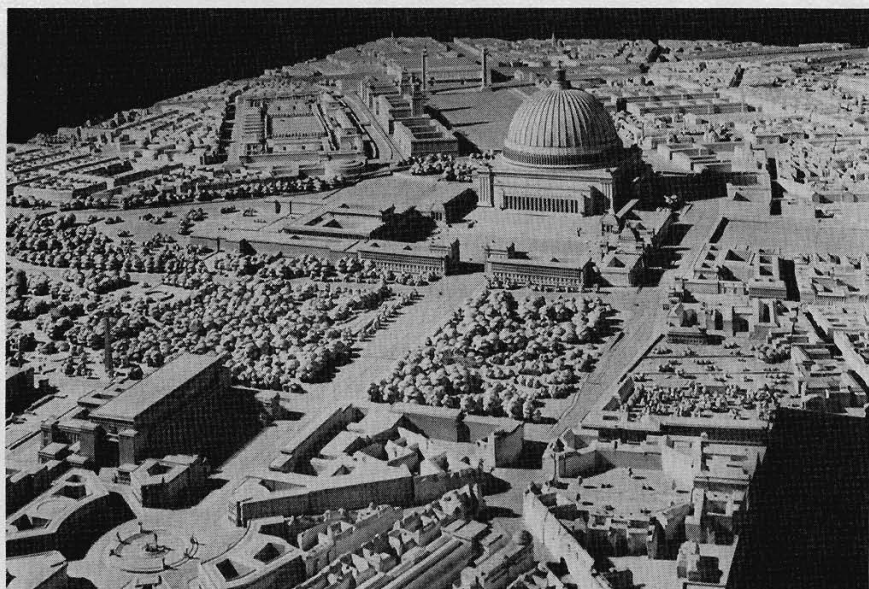


FIGURE 8. Albert Speer and Adolf Hitler, Platz der Republik with domed hall, model, c. 1942 (courtesy of Lars-Olof Larsson).

for a method of financing. It was now necessary to obtain full American approval, actually to allocate the funds, and, of course, to design the building.

When the group returned to the United States, it was still not entirely clear who the principal client for the building was: whether it was the AIA or the United States government, and if the latter, whether the State Department, via the office of Foreign Buildings Operations (FBO), the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), the United States Information Agency (USIA), or some other agency or individual altogether. These matters were not clarified for many months. Between April and December 1955, Eleanor Dulles "played the game" and "went forward as if" she "had the authority." She played German approval against American bureaucracy, using the public announcement of the "gift of the American government" in Berlin, and the postponement by Berlin planners of the opening of the exposition to accommodate this gift, as a lever to secure preliminary approval by five government agencies for the plan, a letter of intent from the FBO, and some official publicity.⁶⁹ She then played AIA approval against the FBO (in which Stubbins and Eichenbaum helped her) and showed Stubbins and Walker how to secure fuller German approval, on the basis of still very preliminary designs.⁷⁰ Aided by Nelson Rockefeller, she played the OCB against the State Department, and made preliminary legal arrangements for the creation of the Benjamin Franklin Foundation which, independent of both FBO and AIA, would act as client.⁷¹ Meanwhile, growing

69. According to the minutes of the meeting of May 25, 1955 of the Operations Coordinating Board (JFD Papers, Eisenhower Library), Eleanor Dulles obtained OCB "concurrence" in the project. Invoking this support, she arranged a meeting on May 27 between the "subcommittee" and representatives of the Department of State, the FBO, the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), and the USIA, which produced a letter of intent and some interim funding; see HS Papers, "Eleanor Lansing Dulles," correspondence of the two weeks preceding the meeting; and Walker to Stubbins, June 15 and August 3, 1955, RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee."

70. Eichenbaum and Stubbins took preliminary designs to the AIA Convention at the end of June, where Eichenbaum made a glowing report. Eleanor Dulles and Eichenbaum were able soon thereafter to obtain official commendation from AIA officers; Stubbins and Walker used these commendations to circumvent the FBO and to secure partial German approval in Berlin. This in turn helped the group obtain further support in Washington. The complexities of these negotiations are fully documented in the RW Papers and the HS Papers. See also Board of Directors of the AIA, Minutes, June 18, 23, 25, 1955, AIA Archives.

71. *Chances*, p. 257, and interview, February 4, 1984. Rockefeller's assistance is important, given his interest in architecture and the arts, and his important role as a patron of architecture (see Bleeker, citation in n. 86). As special assistant to the President in 1955, and as occasional chairman of the OCB (he chaired the meeting of April 6, 1955 which authorized funds for the travel of the group to Berlin; the meeting of May 25, on the other hand, was chaired by Undersecretary of State Herbert Hoover, Jr.), he was in a good position to provide support to the project. The HS Papers

interest in the building in Washington, together with the Secretary of State's increasingly pro-Adenauer stance, helped Eleanor Dulles to convince her brother of the importance of the project. It was John Foster Dulles who established the Benjamin Franklin Foundation, granted legal authority to Ralph Walker as its chairman, and committed one million dollars in United States funds to its support. When he made these commitments in October 1955, the Secretary of State was about to depart for the four-power conference of foreign ministers at Geneva, which would discuss possibilities for German reunification.⁷²

In the spring of 1955, it was also not yet clear who was designing the building—Ralph Walker and the AIA subcommittee, Hugh Stubbins, or even Eleanor Dulles. In his presentations to the AIA, Ralph Walker often stressed the supervisory role of the subcommittee, and he himself always claimed to have written the program.⁷³ On several occasions during 1955, he prepared sketches of some aspects of the design for Eleanor Dulles to look at, and during the early stages of the design process, there is some evidence that Stubbins and Eleanor Dulles intentionally kept him at a distance.⁷⁴ Eleanor Dulles, of course, did not prepare sketches, but she expected to be consulted at each stage of the design, and she has always

show, in addition, that he was expected to be at the meeting of August 3, 1955. It is impossible to pursue this question at present, however, since the Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers (both personal and federal service) were closed by his executors when he died in 1979.

72. "Memorandum of Understanding between the United States of America, acting through the Department of State, and the Benjamin Franklin Foundation," October 28, 1955; Letter from the Secretary of State to Ralph Walker, October 14, 1955; Letter from Ralph Walker to the Secretary of State, October 18, 1955; "Instrument establishing the Benjamin Franklin Foundation," October 10, 1955; all in the ELD Papers. The Benjamin Franklin Foundation was an international, non-profit organization, with headquarters in Berlin; the idea was Eleanor Dulles', who was inspired by the Ernst Reuter Foundation; the purpose of the Foundation was to hold and disperse funds, so that, among other benefits, the expiration of the United States fiscal year would not dissipate funds allocated from American Foreign Aid for the Congress Hall. The Foundation began with Walker, Eichenbaum, and Smith as Directors, but soon added, as American members of the Board, Albert I. Edelman, Leon Chatelaine, Jr. (treasurer of the AIA, and soon to be its president), Kenneth Perry, William Culbertson, and Abraham Sonnabend; and for Germany: Otto Busack, Paul Füllsack (who acted as treasurer), August Weltzien, Anton Kohlenbach, Georg Rahn, Gustav Schnevoight, and Andreas Paulsen. The Foundation worked so well that it continued after the completion of the Congress Hall (though Walker was no longer chairman), and helped to fund and supervise other building projects in which Eleanor Dulles was active. For a full accounting of income and expenditures through February 1957, see Paul Füllsack to Ralph Walker, February 20, 1957, HS Papers.

73. See, for example, "Report to the Board of the American Institute of Architects . . .," June 15, 1955, RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee"; and *Ralph Walker—The American Institute of Architects—1921–1961*, RW Papers.

74. RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee."

believed that she had a decisive influence on the evolution of Stubbins' design out of his preliminary sketches.⁷⁵

While still in Berlin, Hugh Stubbins had begun to sketch tentlike structures and eccentric-looking domes; back in Cambridge he put his office to work developing these proposals while he himself continued to draw unusual rooflike arrangements. These, depicted together with airplanes, showed his desire to evoke associations with airborne travel.⁷⁶ Also among these earliest sketches was one with a concave roof which had some of the implications of flight which Stubbins sought. The two images, the dome and the concave arch, appear in the margins of design proposals which Stubbins had his office prepare for Eleanor Dulles to look at early in June (Fig. 9). She was shown three major proposals, one tent and domelike (which appears at the upper right of Fig. 9); one of low masses, asymmetrically arranged; and one of a segmented semi-sphere, bent over a plaza and reflecting pool (Fig. 10). The last was Stubbins' preference, but he was not certain that it was dramatic enough. They discussed the proposals, visited Eero Saarinen's auditorium under construction at MIT, and the Arts Festival at the Boston Common. Eleanor Dulles said that she preferred the segmented sphere, but she also liked the concave form.⁷⁷ As Stubbins recalls these events, he was still himself dissatisfied, until one morning in June, when he was sitting in his garden reading the *New York Times*, the solution came to him of a segment of a sphere which was both convex *and* concave. He visualized this roof as hovering above a broad plaza, which was itself a story above ground level and surrounded by heaped up earth.⁷⁸ Fred Severud helped him realize this new conception, which appears in the sketch of a site plan in Figure 11, and in the renderings of July 1955 shown in Figures 12 and 13. This was the design which Stubbins presented to Eleanor Dulles, Howard Eichenbaum, and some representatives of the State Department on July 11, 1955. Dulles and Eichenbaum were very enthusiastic; Eichenbaum wrote of the drawings that "The same spirit of design, both in the UN building and the Unesco building, has been expressed in Hugh Stubbins' design of the Berlin project, that is, an expression of today, and . . . bespeaks of today's great architects, Har-

75. *Chances*, pp. 259-260; interviews.

76. HS handwritten notes (dated April 24, 1955). See also the loose sketches in HS Papers, "Miscellaneous Data."

77. Hugh Stubbins, memorandum of telephone call from Eleanor Dulles, June 17, 1955, HS Papers, "Eleanor Lansing Dulles."

78. Interviews, May 3, July 13, 1983.

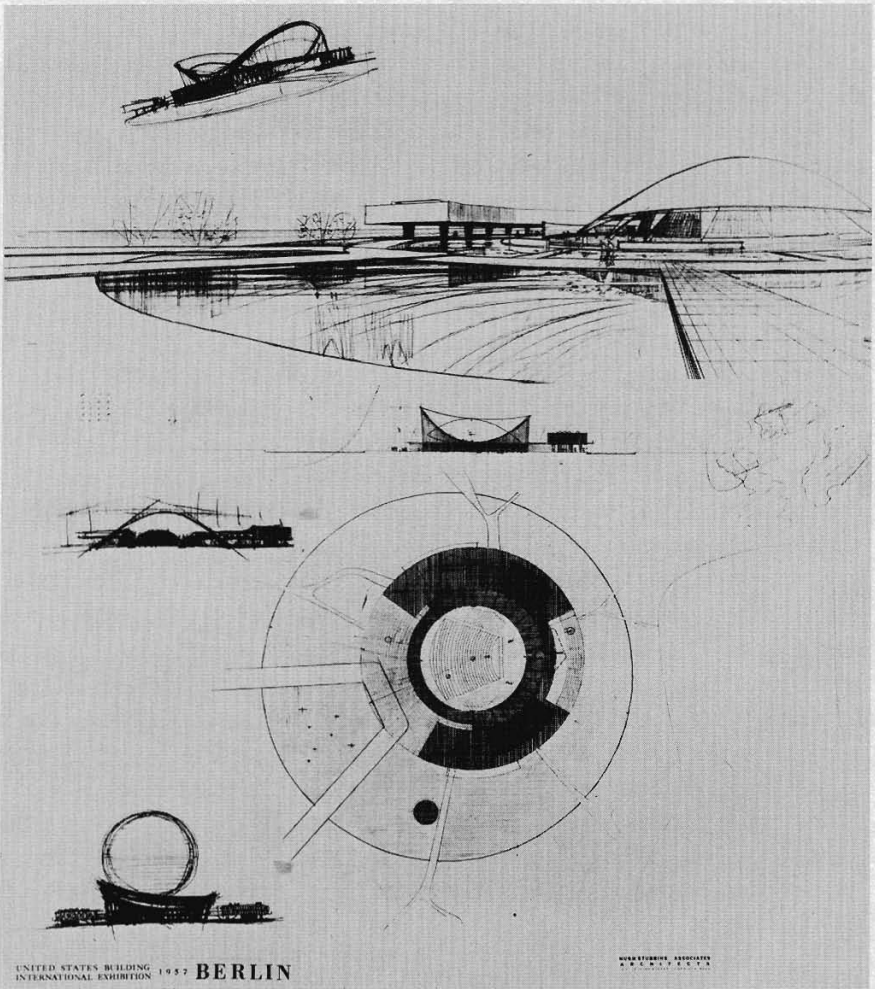


FIGURE 9. Hugh Stubbins, sketches for the Congress Hall, June 1955 (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.).

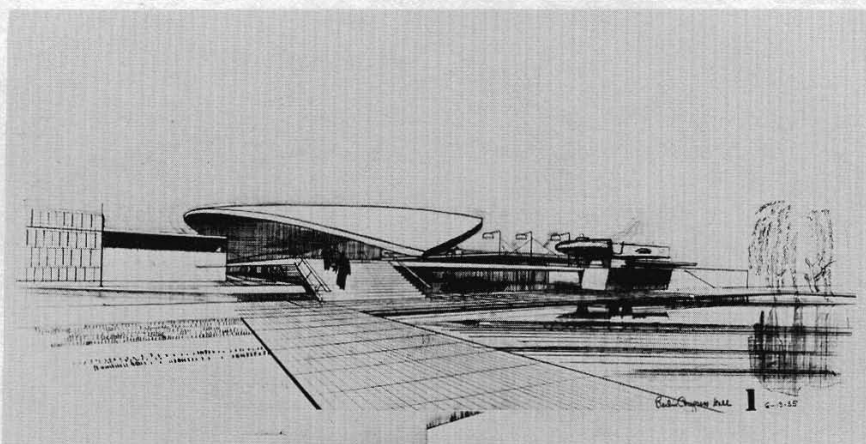


FIGURE 10. Hugh Stubbins, "scheme 1," June/July 1955 (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.).

ri-son, Le Corbusier, Nowicki, and even Wright."⁷⁹ It was agreed that the proposal would form the basis of a presentation by Stubbins and Walker to the Germans at the end of July, and to officials in Washington at the beginning of August. Walker had not yet seen the designs. When he did, despite efforts by Eleanor Dulles to prepare him for the novelty of the forms, he was not entirely happy.⁸⁰ But he soon wrote her that "I think the 'Pregnant Butterfly' is beautiful"; and he gave Stubbins his full support at the end of July, when the two went to Berlin to present the design to German officials and to select the German architects who would be associated with Stubbins on the project.⁸¹ On August 3, Stubbins presented plans, sketches, and a model to the president and some board members of the AIA, together with representatives of the State Department and the OCB. The Washington presentation was a major step forward, even though it did not lead to the contracts for which Stubbins had hoped: for the first time the State Department announced its official approval of the project and the way was paved for the establishment of the Ben-

79. Howard Eichenbaum to Eleanor Dulles, July 20, 1955, RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee."

80. RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee." Eleanor Dulles to Ralph Walker, July 11 and 22, 1955, HS Papers, "Berlin: Architectural Committee." According to Eleanor Dulles (interviews), Walker continued throughout the summer to hope for a copper covering on the roof.

81. Ralph Walker to Eleanor Dulles, August 24, 1955, RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee."

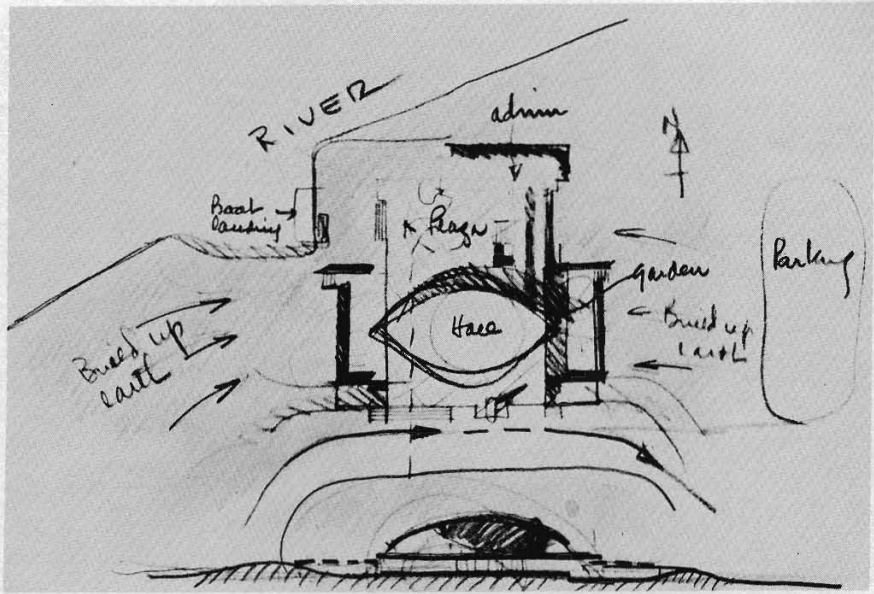


FIGURE 11. Sketch of site plan by Hugh Stubbins, June/July 1955 (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.).

jamin Franklin Foundation and formal approval by the Berlin House of Representatives.⁸² By December, the design had reached its final form, although disagreements between the American and German engineers over how to construct the roof would continue throughout the first half of 1956. From mid-1955 on, however, Stubbins was freed by Eleanor Dulles' support to develop the design and presentation, and to concentrate on getting the building built. Eleanor Dulles from that time forward was occupied in the difficult task of channeling counterpart funds to a building project whose costs considerably outran initial projections; Ralph Walker managed the foundation and the funds, gave eloquent speeches at all the ceremonies which attended the progress of the building, and worked very hard and effectively to raise private money to support the festivities at the opening in September 1957.⁸³ As one follows the sequence of events,

82. The Berlin Abgeordnetenhaus approved the project on November 3, 1955; Eleanor Dulles to Hugh Stubbins, November 8, 1955, HS Papers, "Eleanor Lansing Dulles."

83. RW Papers, Berlin Files, "AIA Committee." See also, pp. 179-181.

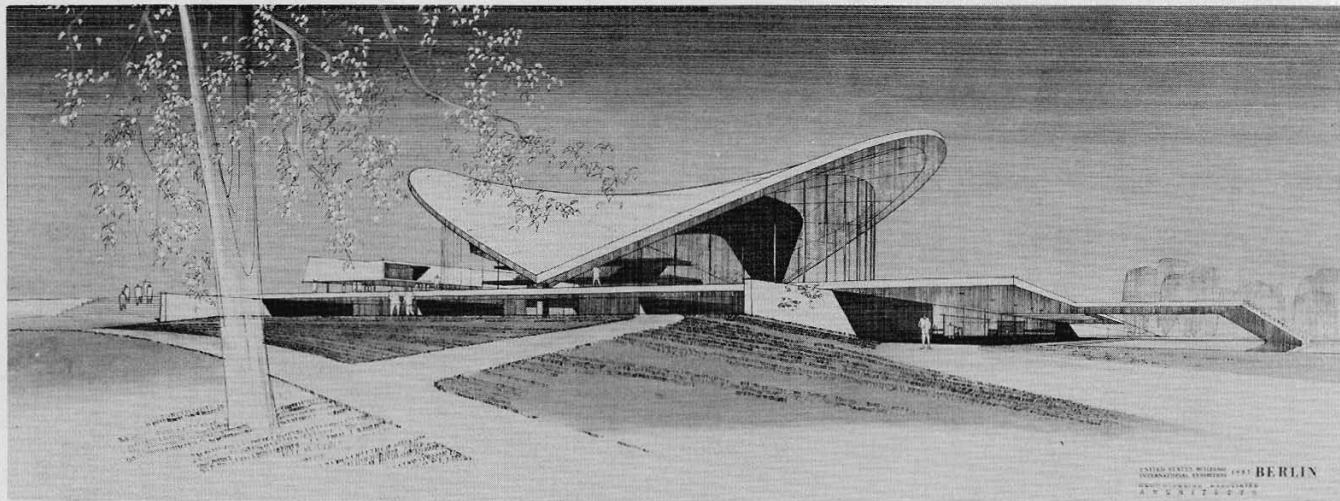


FIGURE 12. Rendering of the exterior of the Congress Hall by Stubbins, July 1955 (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Cambridge, Mass.).

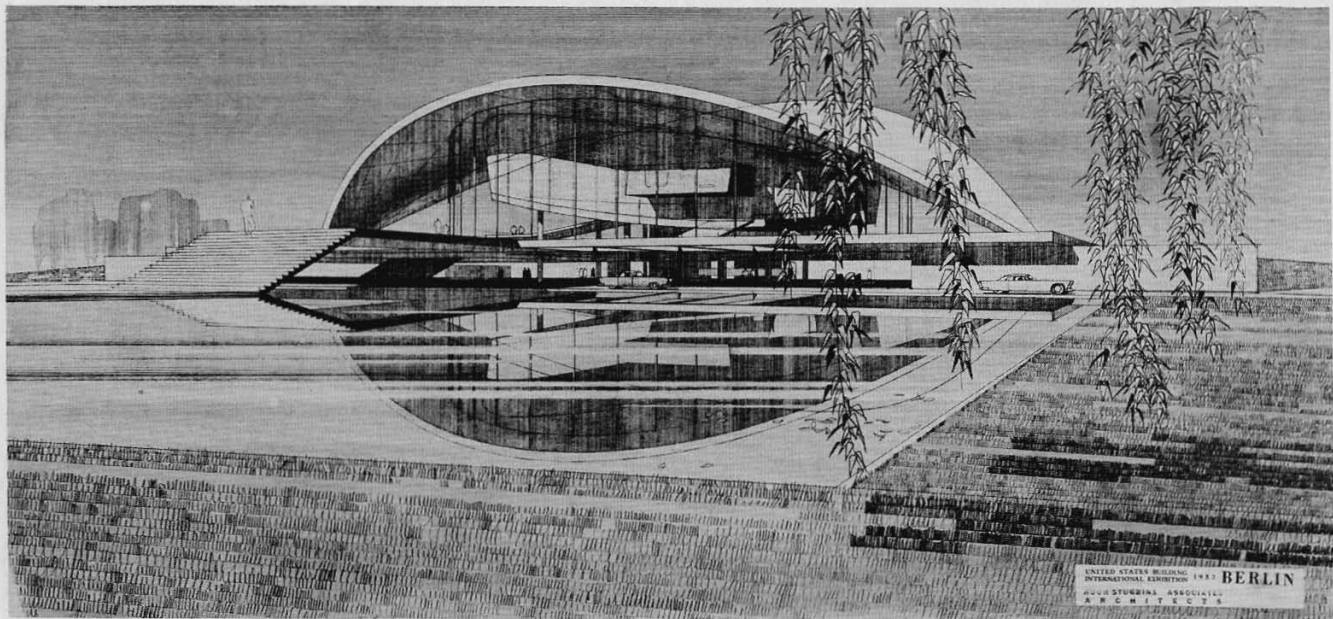


FIGURE 13. Rendering of the exterior of the Congress Hall by Stubbins, July 1955 (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Cambridge, Mass.).



FIGURE 14. The Congress Hall as executed (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Cambridge, Mass.).

it becomes clear that the design was Stubbins' own throughout; Walker's belief, and that of Eleanor Dulles, that they shared directly in the design stemmed from the rapport among the three, and from their common commitment and enthusiasm. On the other hand, both Walker and Dulles contributed to the design indirectly, by suggesting some of its underlying ideas.

For, although the design was clearly Stubbins' own, there were nevertheless influences upon it. Any architect draws upon a store of tradition, remembered images, and associations when designing a building, and this would have been especially true for a building of novel appearance and political intent. Any analysis of such influences must remain to some extent hypothetical, because of the essential privacy—and even irrationality—of the creative process. But when one understands the images, traditions, and associations which may have influenced the architect, one has greater insight into the symbolic purposes of the building, and a clearer understanding of the attitudes of its audience.

In its final external form (Fig. 14), the Congress Hall had evolved from a mixture of images and references. From the start, the “subcommittee”

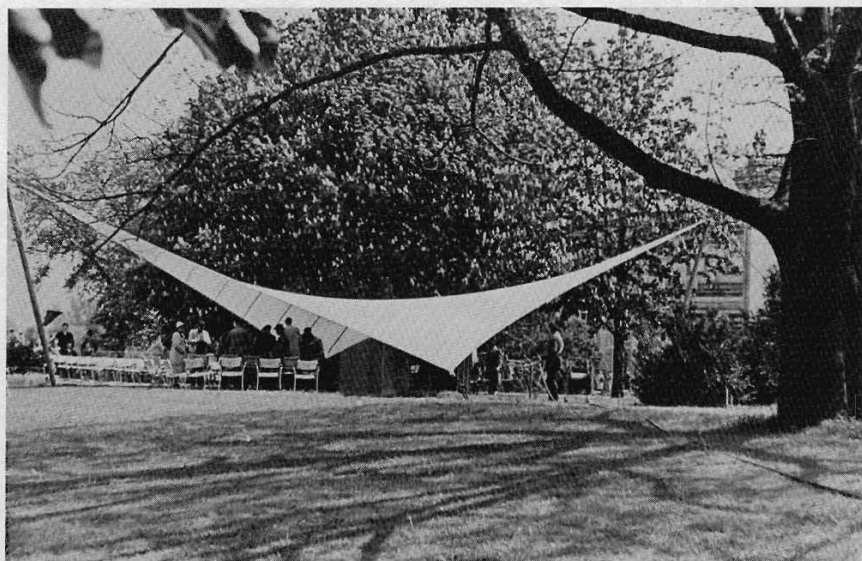


FIGURE 15. Frei Otto, Music Pavilion, Kassel, 1955 (courtesy of Museum of Modern Art, New York).

had wanted something both extensively visible and strongly symbolic. From the start, too, Stubbins had begun to think of tents, wings, domes, and spheres: the final design represented a unique blending of these early ideas. The idea of tents was obviously associated with that of an exposition, and perhaps with that of a fair as well. The association with the site, too, was clear: "In den Zelten" meant "among the tents," and referred to the era when the Hohenzollern kings had erected tents along the Spree for the entertainment of the better classes, although the area had long since become one of more permanent pavilions and restaurants, and was, in any case, almost entirely ruinous when Stubbins first visited it. It is also possible that Stubbins had seen the tentlike cable structures of Frei Otto, which were being exhibited widely in Germany in the middle 1950s, and would appear at the Interbau exhibition (Fig. 15). These ideas are often approximated in the early sketches, and led, for a time, to a consideration of a form similar to that used by Saarinen at MIT (Fig. 16).



FIGURE 16. Eero Saarinen, Auditorium and Chapel, MIT, 1953–1956 (courtesy of Balthazar Korab, Ltd.).

The desire to give the building “wings” was entirely understandable, given the isolated, island-prison character of West Berlin, the memories of the air lift, and the associations with freedom and movement which the building was intended to have. But wings are not so easy to bestow on a building: the search for them led rather rapidly to the concave roof which Eleanor Dulles liked, and to forms closely associated with the Raleigh stadium (Fig. 17) which Stubbins had seen in photographs, though not in actuality.⁸⁴ The attractiveness of this kind of image may also have led him to Severud.

These forms were startling, unusual, entirely new, and thus in keeping with Stubbins’ earliest inclinations: “I wanted something very unusual, really exaggerated. The form [of the roof] is not a logical one, for an au-

84. Interview, May 3, 1983.

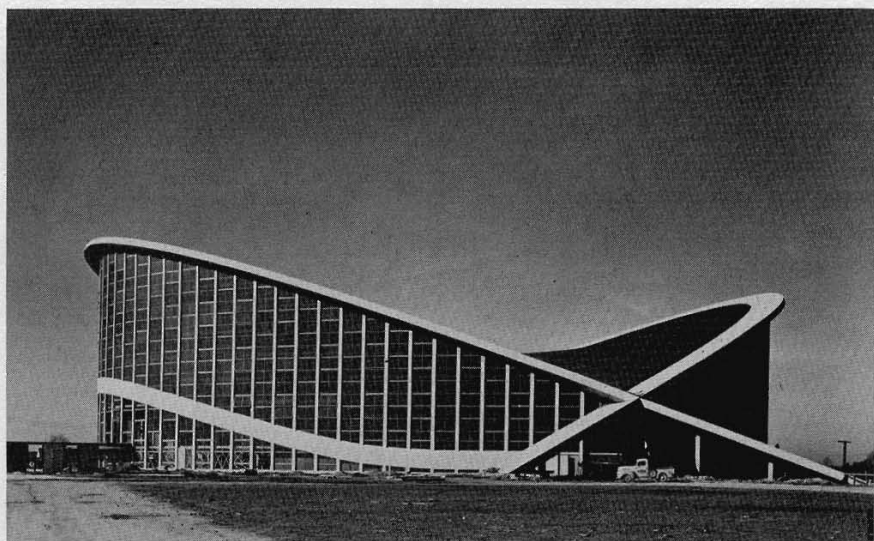


FIGURE 17. Matthew Nowicki, with Fred N. Severud and others, Dorton Arena, Raleigh, N.C., 1948–1953 (courtesy of Severud, Perrone, Szegezdy, Sturm).

ditorium.”⁸⁵ But why were domes and spheres an early component of Stubbins’ design process? Domes were not a widely used architectural form in Germany, with the exception of the “onion domes” of south Germany, which Stubbins had visited the year before the inception of the Berlin project. Closer to hand was of course the planned great hall for the Platz der Republik often displayed by Hitler and Speer and well-known to Stephan, which resembled St. Peter’s, St. Paul’s, and the United States Capitol, inflated to a giant scale (Fig. 8). The Germans would have remembered this project well, and might have discussed it with some members of the American group. Whether Stubbins knew of Speer’s building or not, its resemblance to the United States Capitol reminds us of another source for the imagery of domes and spheres.

When the UN General Assembly was being designed, in the spring of 1947, a great deal of discussion focused on the use of a dome. Inconspicuous as the dome is in the final version of that structure, it was very

85. Interview, July 13, 1983.

important to Wallace K. Harrison, who said, "We tried the design with flat roofs. We tried it with straight roofs. We tried all sorts of things. All sorts of motifs, designs, configurations. And the dome was the only one which, when we took it into models, looked well. Looked well inside and outside."⁸⁶ Harrison was also influenced, not only by aesthetics, but by the preferences of Senator Warren Austin, who held out the hope of a large congressional appropriation to aid in the construction of the General Assembly if the building had a dome. He argued (as paraphrased by Samuel Bleeker) "that the dome was the symbol of capitols of democratic governments everywhere. All the state capitols and, most importantly, Congress itself had a dome. How, he wondered, could we fail to provide the United Nations with a dome—the signature of democracy."⁸⁷ While there is no record in Stubbins', Walker's, or Eleanor Dulles' papers of a similar argument, Walker, as a former member of the UN design team, would have raised these issues during the earliest brainstorming meetings in Berlin. In this connection, it is worth remembering that for a time the committee called the structure a "congressional" hall. Eleanor Dulles had to help seek congressional approval for the aid appropriation for Berlin, and at first she was concerned about the role of the Congress Hall in this process, although the aid budget was so large that the Congress Hall proved not to be a controversial item.⁸⁸

The early plans for the UN General Assembly were, in any case, very widely published, and the considerations which entered into the design of the UN buildings widely discussed.⁸⁹ Thus, Stubbins would have had many visual impressions of the UN buildings; the interior of the Congress Hall auditorium was in fact closely modeled on the General Assembly chambers in form and finishing, as well as in the provision for simultaneous translation facilities. The comparison had, as we have seen, occurred to

86. Quoted from interviews by Samuel E. Bleeker, *The Politics of Architecture: A Perspective on Nelson A. Rockefeller* (New York, 1981), p. 84.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 85. On the symbolism of domes in general, see E. Baldwin Smith, *The Dome, A Study in the History of Ideas* (Princeton, N.J., 1950). On domes in American government buildings, see Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types* (Princeton, N.J., 1976), especially p. 58; and Henry-Russell Hitchcock and William Seale, *Temples of Democracy* (New York, 1976).

88. Interview, February 4, 1984. See also HS handwritten notes, and Eleanor Dulles to Hugh Stubbins, May 14, 1955, HS Papers, "Eleanor Lansing Dulles."

89. See, for example, *Architectural Record*, March 1946, February 1947, April 1947, November 1947, May 1950; *Architectural Forum*, June 1947, August 1947, October 1947, May 1950, November 1950, April 1952, and December 1952.

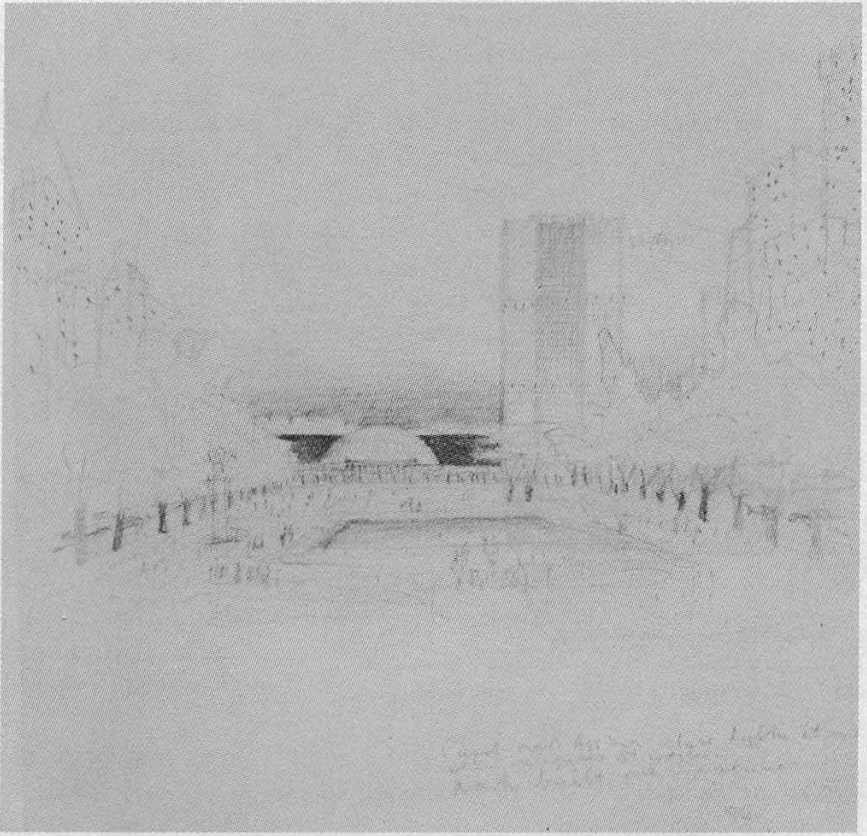


FIGURE 18. Sketch of project for United Nations, New York, Sven Markelius, 1947 (courtesy of Arkitekturmuseet, Stockholm).

Eichenbaum at an early stage. Stubbins would also have seen the earliest projects for the Secretariat and the General Assembly, published in *Architectural Forum*: these included many domes. In the project of Sven Markelius, the dome was interpreted as a clearly defined hemisphere, without the adornments of traditional domes (Fig. 18). In the meetings of the UN team, the sphere was described as symbolizing the globe, or a unified world; Markelius' dome was an outgrowth of this kind of discussion.⁹⁰ Markelius' dome was only half a sphere, but Markelius, who had

90. Interview with George A. Dudley, July 6, 1984. Mr. Dudley, an early member of Harrison's firm, was secretary to the United Nations Board of Design during all its sittings in the spring and summer of 1947 and possesses a complete set of minutes which will form the basis for his forthcoming book on the United Nations buildings.



FIGURE 19. Max Abramovitz and Wallace K. Harrison, Theme Center, New York World's Fair, 1939–1940 (courtesy of Abramovitz, Harris and Kingsland).

worked at the New York World's Fair with Harrison, Nowicki, and, among others, Ralph Walker, was almost certainly remembering the interpretation of the dome used at that exhibition — the perisphere, which, together with the trylon, had formed the “theme center” of the Fair (Fig. 19). At the Fair, too, the sphere had been intended to signify a unified world, and inside the perisphere had been the most popular exhibition of the Fair: “democracy,” the city of the future, the same theme which was to

be exhibited at Berlin.⁹¹ The theme center was very well known to prewar Americans, and powerfully memorable. It would be surprising if Stubbins had not remembered both the Markelius dome and the periphery. But if he did not, Ralph Walker would have reminded him.

Construction of the Congress Hall began in June 1956 and was completed in the fall of 1957. The collaboration of Stubbins, Severud, and the German associate architects Düttmann and Mocken with the German supervising engineer Werner Koepke and with various German contractors introduced major changes in the original structural conception, and produced a number of subtle modifications in the appearance of the original design. These modifications were intended to assure all concerned of the stability of the structure.⁹² In its final form, the roof structure was a thin concrete shell ($2\frac{3}{4}$ inches above the auditorium) reinforced in different sections with different sizes of pre-stressed steel rods. The main inner roof over the auditorium was attached to a reinforced concrete ring, stabilized and partially supported by the auditorium walls. The great spreading arches were then hung from this stabilized ring and were supported at their two lower extremities by two huge steel and concrete buttresses at east and west (Fig. 3). Another innovative aspect of the structure was completed below grade, where a powerful pre-stressed tie rod connected the buttresses to prevent them from spreading, and was imbedded in the foundations. The rest of the structure was more conventional: a concrete foundation was laid on deep piles, because of the swampy ground; reinforced concrete walls and columns rose from the foundation to support the mezzanine and upper terraces (and to offer additional support to the auditorium). Thus the soaring roof, the auditorium, and the buttresses formed one structural system within another, more traditional one.⁹³ Needless

91. On the Fair and the Theme Center, see especially Helen A. Harrison, ed., *Dawn of a New Day: The New York World's Fair, 1939/40* (New York, 1980).

92. Severud's original conception had involved a suspended cable roof, but Koepke insisted on a modified thin-shell structure, and on the redesign of the edge of the arches. Neither Stubbins nor Severud was entirely happy with these changes, but both agreed to them. The most obvious visual consequences of the modifications in the structure was the thickening of the segments of the arches which cantilevered out beyond the plane of the auditorium — this was dictated by the addition of more steel in this area and by the redesign of the edge of the arch; see Koepke, "The Berlin Congress Hall." The result was a heavier profile, which was reflected in the Berliners' nicknames for the building: "the pregnant oyster" (no longer a "butterfly"), and "Mrs. Dulles' Hat"; see cartoons, HS Papers, "Publicity."

93. *Engineering News Record*, February 16, 1984; according to this article, the planned restora-



FIGURE 20. The Congress Hall under construction, 1957 (courtesy of the Arents Research Library, Syracuse, New York).

to say, the resources which had to be committed to this complex structure were themselves impressive and complex: more than two thousand railroad cars ferried steel and concrete across the Soviet zone to West Berlin during the fifteen months of construction; the total cost of the building approached four million dollars.⁹⁴ Yet the design and construction of the building were suited to its time and place: the structure made use of the most advanced technological methods developed by both victor and vanquished during the Second World War, while the methods of laying and pouring reinforced concrete, which depend on the construction of extremely elaborate wooden and metal scaffolding and formwork, and are so labor-intensive that they are not widely used in the developed nations today,

tion will come closer to the original design than the executed building did. According to Hugh Stubbins (interview, July 27, 1984), who is an official consultant to the reconstruction, the roof will be a cable structure similar to Severud's design, but it will be hung entirely from the buttresses, so that roof and auditorium will be divorced.

94. *Kongresshalle Berlin*, brochure prepared for opening in 1957, in HS Papers.



FIGURE 21. The Congress Hall under construction, 1957 (courtesy of the Arents Research Library, Syracuse, New York).

were appropriate to the labor market of postwar Berlin, where unemployment was still a severe problem in the middle 1950s⁹⁵ (Figs. 20, 21). At the same time, the pace of construction was extremely rapid, and offered to the reconstructing West German economy a prime example of what Hitler had liked to call “the American tempo.”

To accentuate the sweep of the roof arches, the flat land along the Spree was built up somewhat around the ground floor of the Congress Hall, which is surrounded by large terraces, automobile access from the sides, and a ramp leading from the Zeltenallee across a reflecting pool to a large outdoor plaza. Above the plaza, the arches rose up to the north and south, and curved downward to their buttresses at east and west. Despite the

95. Unemployment in West Berlin stood at 207,000 or 21 percent of the total labor force in 1953, according to Woodward, “Berlin Rebuilds”; this was, however, a drop from 31 percent in 1950. Of course, it was difficult to measure rates of unemployment before the wall, when many workers moved back and forth between the sectors with relative ease.



FIGURE 22. Congress Hall, view from the Grosse Stern (courtesy of Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, Berlin).

relatively low profile of the building, the swelling white curves of the roof were visible from great distances on the ground, while to an observer approaching by air, the double arches appeared prepared for flight⁹⁶ (Figs. 22, 1).

The interior spaces of the building included, in addition to the 1200-seat auditorium, conference rooms, a theater, a restaurant, several bar and lounge areas, a small bookstore, and a substantial area for offices and administration (Fig. 23). By far the largest amount of internal space, however, was taken up by circulation areas: by the exhibition hall, the "great hall," the foyer to the auditorium, and the many ramps and stairs which connected the five levels of the building.⁹⁷ These interior arrangements, like those of the exterior plaza and its approaches, gave a visual impression of people always in motion; that this impression was intended is made

96. Until the completion of Tegel Airport in 1974, nearly all western flights to Berlin passed directly over the Congress Hall, in order to land at Tempelhof.

97. *Kongresshalle Berlin*, booklet distributed at the opening, September 1957, in HS Papers.

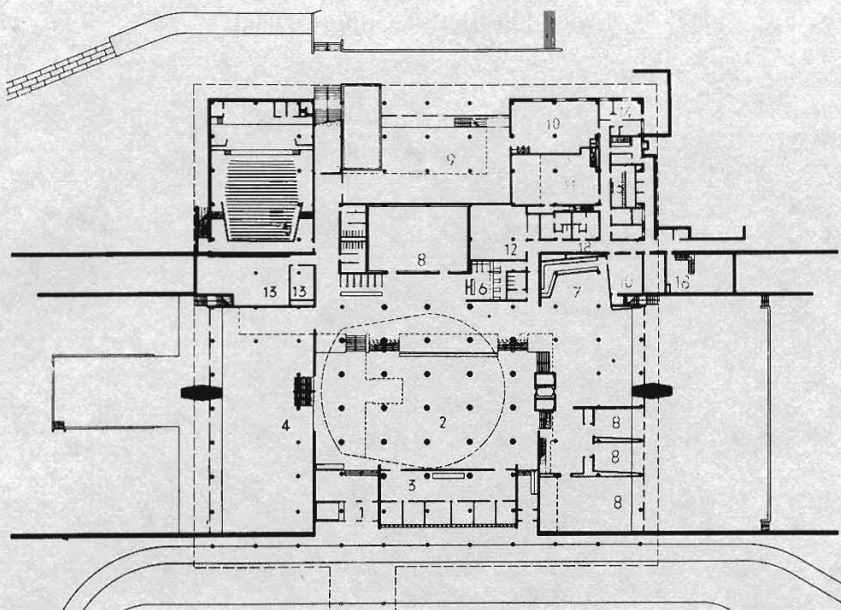


FIGURE 23a. Congress Hall, plans. Ground floor. *Key:* 1-Entrance; 2-Great hall; 3-Administration; 4-Exhibition hall; 5-Theater; 6-Telephone and wire facilities; 7-Bar and Lounge; 8-Conference room; 9-Restaurant; 10-Kitchen; 11-Boiler room; 12-Receiving room; 13-Services; 14-Caretaker's apartment.

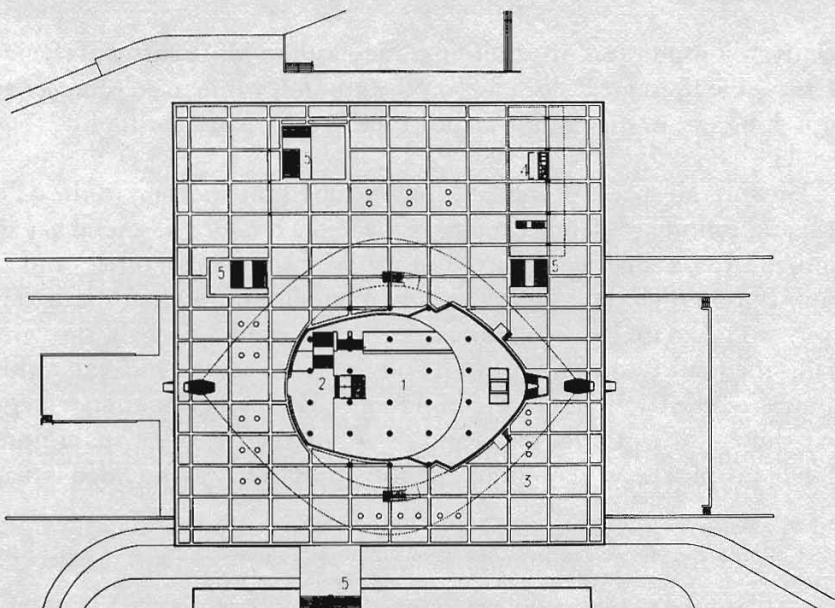


FIGURE 23b. Congress Hall, Plaza level. *Key:* 1-Upper part of Great hall; 2-Foyer; 3-Plaza; 4-Cafe bar; 5-Stairways.

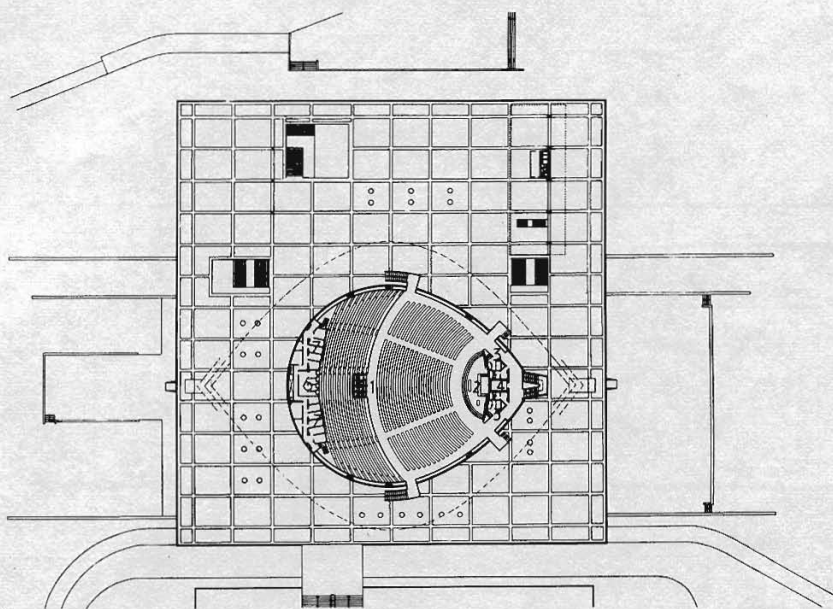


FIGURE 23c. Auditorium. *Key:* 1—Main auditorium; 2—Speaker's platform; 3—Retiring rooms; 4—Elevator; 5—Main entrance; 6—Projection booths; 7—Translator's television and radio booths. (Figures 23a, 23b, and 23c are courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.)

clear by the architect's renderings, in which people are almost invariably shown either in motion or about to move: standing, walking, climbing (Figs. 24, 25). The interiors were elegantly sparse—concrete walls and piers in the public areas, with some wood trim for acoustical control; wood and acoustical paneling in the auditorium (Fig. 26). Although the auditorium, theater, and one conference room were internal and lit artificially, much of the interior was flooded by natural light from the large glass areas under the roof arches. Another unusual feature of the building was its wealth of communication facilities. In addition to the simultaneous translation arrangements provided in the auditorium, there were booths for movie and television projection and a radio broadcasting area in the auditorium; throughout the rest of the building there were thirty telephone booths, telegraph and teletype rooms, broadcasting, television, and recording rooms, a press room with teletype connections, and a sound system con-

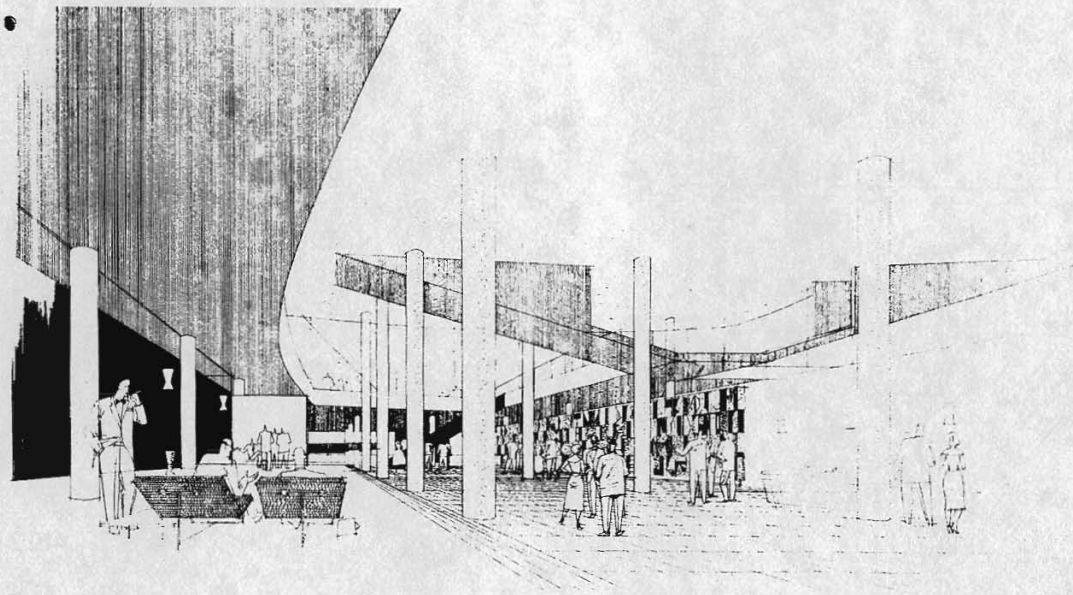


FIGURE 24. Hugh Stubbins, rendering of interior of "great hall" (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.).

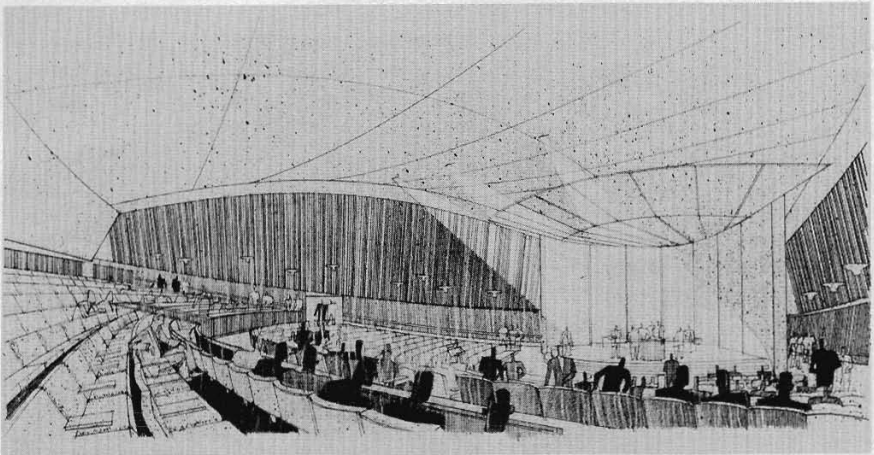


FIGURE 25. Hugh Stubbins, rendering of interior of auditorium (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.).

nected to all areas of the building. Such facilities, often taken for granted in meeting halls today, were available in 1957 only in the UN General Assembly building. Not only the interior and exterior forms of the Congress Hall, but also the planning and facilities, were expressive of the building's purpose: they suggested movement, interaction, and a great deal of talk.

The Berlin Congress Hall opened with elaborate ceremonies during the last weeks of September 1957. A series of German-American symposia were held in the Hall during these weeks, on "Music and the Fine Arts," "Science and Education," "Theater," "The Old World and the New"; participants included Theodor Adorno, Virgil Thomson, Will Grohman, Isamu Noguchi, Ernst Fraenkel, Ralph Walker, and Willy Brandt. Plays by Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, William Saroyan, and Eugene O'Neill were performed, with Lillian Gish and Ethel Waters in starring roles. Both Eileen Farrell and Martha Graham gave solo performances; Virgil Thomson conducted a program of Brahms and Schumann, together with works of his own and of Aaron Copland. The Juilliard String Quartet also performed, as did a number of European companies.⁹⁸ A demonstra-

98. "Congress Hall Berlin" (large bound program distributed at opening ceremonies), in ELD Papers. The ceremonies also marked the beginning of a photographic exhibit, "Land and People of the United States," designed by Nancy Newhall and Herbert Bayer.



FIGURE 26. The Congress Hall auditorium (courtesy of Hugh A. Stubbins and Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.).

tion of German-American friendship and cultural cooperation, with particular emphasis on music, art, and theater, had been planned by Walker, Stubbins, and Eleanor Dulles from the start of the project as a fitting christening for the Hall; the opening was, however, much more ambitious than they had originally foreseen, and both Ralph Walker and Moreland Smith devoted enormous energies to raising the money for it.⁹⁹ The opening was also the occasion of Ambassador Bruce's fulminations against the division of Germany; at this time, too, Clare Boothe Luce, representing the Secretary of State, coined the phrase about the symbolism of "stone and mortar" which John Foster Dulles would use in 1958.¹⁰⁰

99. This conception of the opening ceremonies appears to have been proposed to the group by Melvin Lasky, editor of *Der Monat*, who also presided at the beginning of the opening; see Lasky-Dulles and Lasky-Stubbins correspondence, HS Papers, "Eleanor Lansing Dulles." For additional information on the planning of the ceremonies, see Stubbins-Dulles correspondence, June-September, 1957, HS Papers, and correspondence of Ralph Walker with Moreland Griffith Smith and Virginia Inness-Brown, 1957, RW Papers. Inness-Brown was very active in the fund raising.

100. See "The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce to Represent Secretary of State at Berlin Congress Hall Opening," Department of State Press Release No. 475, August 23, 1957, in RW Papers, Berlin Files, "Ceremonies."

The ceremonies brought many visitors and great attention to the building, and were attended by extraordinary publicity. The opening received a full-color spread in *Life*, long articles in the *New York Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, *Die Welt*, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and many other magazines and newspapers. Architectural periodicals devoted many issues, not only to the form and structure of the building, but also to its cultural and political purposes.¹⁰¹ Commenting on the ceremonies and the publicity, Secretary Dulles wrote to President Eisenhower: "this Berlin building—the Congress Hall . . . was conceived and completed almost entirely as a result of the imagination and persistence of my sister Eleanor at the Berlin desk of the State Department. . . . This is the kind of thing we need more of."¹⁰²

More of what, though? More publicity, more American buildings in Berlin, more government patronage for symbolic architecture, more public statements about the reunification of Germany? There were, of course, many more American buildings built in Berlin after the Congress Hall, and Eleanor Dulles played a significant part in getting them built, but they never attracted the same kind of attention and publicity. American government patronage did shift slowly to more "modern" buildings both in Europe and in the United States after the Congress Hall was built, but again, with less fanfare, and for the most part with less aesthetic success. Nor were these later American buildings, in Berlin or elsewhere, seen as symbolic in the ways in which the Congress Hall originally was.

John Foster Dulles, Clare Boothe Luce, and Ambassador Bruce partially misunderstood the Congress Hall: it was neither "stone and mortar" nor, in itself, suggestive of German reunification. The origins of its symbolism were American, and went back first to the tradition of capitols and "Congress" halls in this country, and second to the more recent international aspirations of the New York World's Fair and the United Nations buildings. Beyond these allusions, and more important than them, was the dominant metaphor of flight suggested by the soaring arches. And, to nearly

101. *Life Magazine*, November 25, 1957, pp. 65–70; *New York Times*, September 20, 1957 (and October 16, 18, on sessions of Bundestag in Congress Hall); *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*, 75 (1958); *Bauwelt*, 48 (1957); *Architectural Forum*, 108 (1958): 116–121, 170–172; see also clippings from a large variety of German and American newspapers and periodicals in HS Papers, ELD Papers, and RW Papers.

102. John Foster Dulles to President Eisenhower, October 3, 1957, JFD Papers. See also John Foster Dulles to Clare Boothe Luce, September 25, 1957, JFD Papers, which thanks Ambassador Luce for taking "so effective a part in the Berlin affair."

all observers, the Congress Hall also suggested a hopeful future for the most innovative kind of modern technology. Thus, although the building may have acted as a "shining beacon" toward the east for a while, inherent in it were no implications for German unity; rather, it symbolized the American presence in West Berlin, and communication: American communication with Berlin and West Germany. Brentano and Adenauer could therefore approve of the building, but so could Willy Brandt.

Public understanding of the symbolism so intensely concentrated in the forms of the Congress Hall, and in its site and construction methods, gradually faded. The connection to an American tradition of domes and capitols was not widely understood even at the time, and the winged references to the airlift lost their potency as recollections of 1948 began to dim. The erection of the wall between East and West Berlin in 1961, and the acceptance of this act by both Washington and Bonn, put a dramatic end to hopes for a united capital in Berlin, and buried these recollections still further. East Berliners scarcely visited the Congress Hall at all after 1961, and western visitors tended to be those who had come to look at the wall. Berlin was now two cities, and its vital centers shifted away from the wall, to the west and to the east. New flight patterns and traffic patterns made the Congress Hall less visible, and a new major conference center in West Berlin made it less useful. In both West and East Berlin, too, the building boom of the 1960s and 1970s brought a measure of architectural uniformity. Many new and unusual-looking buildings were erected in West Berlin; in East Berlin, the Stalinallee project had been completed, and Stalinist architecture was supplanted by buildings that more and more resembled the most "modern" buildings of the west. Thus, the Congress Hall ceased to stand out as an example of the most innovative modern architecture (Fig. 27).

The Congress Hall was imitated in both Germanies and throughout the world. In some cases, such as Saarinen's TWA terminal in New York City and Utzon's Opera House in Sydney, the metaphor of flight was emulated, but without, of course, the significance which it had had in Berlin. Generally, however, what inspired imitation was not the Congress Hall's symbolic content, but its crisp undecorated forms, its apparent break with the past or with a traditional urban context, and its employment of advanced construction technologies.¹⁰³ In the 1970s it shared in the op-

103. Examples include several stadiums and swimming pools in both East and West Germany, and the "Teapot" Restaurant in Berlin-Warnemünde. See Werner Prendell, *Gesellschaftliche Bauten: Einrichtung der Bildung, Kultur, Versorgung, Gesundheit und Erholung* (Berlin [East], 1974).



FIGURE 27. View from Funkturm and Ernst Reuter Platz along the Strasse des 17. Juni toward the Brandenburg gate and East Berlin, 1971 (Congress Hall is visible at upper left of center) (courtesy of Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, Berlin).

probrium directed toward “modern” architecture by a new generation of architects throughout western Europe and the United States, people who saw the architecture of the fifties and early sixties as formalist, and as worshipping technology for its own sake.¹⁰⁴ The collapse of the south arch in 1980 was greeted by some critics as further evidence of these flaws.¹⁰⁵ The decision of the Berlin and West German governments to reconstruct the Congress Hall has revived attention and jogged memories about the

104. See, for example, G. R. Blomeyer and B. Tietze, eds., *In Opposition zur Moderne* (Wiesbaden, 1980); Bent C. Brolin, *The Failure of Modern Architecture* (New York, 1976); Malcolm MacEwen, *Crisis in Architecture* (London, 1974); and, for a survey of the new attitudes, Cesare De Seta, *Origini ed Eclipse del Movimento Moderno* (Rome, 1980).

105. For a summary of such criticism see Peter Stürzebecher, “Symbolbruch oder Bruchkonstruktion? Zur Archaeologie der Berliner Kongresshalle,” in *In Memoriam Kongresshalle Berlin: Realistische Phantasien über die Zukunft unserer Ruine* (Berlin, 1981), no page numbers [ca. 1–10], the catalog of an exhibition held in Berlin from November 6, 1980 to January 17, 1981. See also entries in the exhibition by Peter Cook, Günther Feuerstein, Daniel Gogel, Friedensreich Hundertwasser, Paul van Rafelghem, and Superstudio.

fuller significance of the building. The reconstruction, planned for completion in time for Berlin's 750th anniversary in 1987, will again be part of an international exposition of housing and city planning, which involves the revivification of the Platz der Republik area.¹⁰⁶ Whether the restored building can well serve its new functions in this new context remains, of course, to be seen.

For historians, however, the future of the building is less interesting than is what it tells us about the past. The Berlin Congress Hall was a specific product of its place and time. "Modern architecture" was beginning to be seen as a legitimate style in the United States in the early 1950s. Its practitioners were beginning to seek, and in a few cases to find, government commissions. "Psychological warfare," in the form of American aid and American information services, had been waged in Europe against the Soviets since at least 1947, but the arts did not play a significant role in this process until the Eisenhower administration, which also began to take an interest in modern architecture. Thus the Congress Hall project met with relative enthusiasm in Washington from its inception at the beginning of 1955. With the failure of the Geneva conferences to permit discussion of the reunification of Germany, additional American and West German gestures of support to West Berlin were seen as necessary by both governments in the winter of 1955-1956. The Congress Hall which, owing to the energy of Stubbins, Walker, and Eleanor Dulles, was already in the rendering and late model stage during the last months of the Geneva conferences, was viewed by both German and American statesmen as an appropriate symbolic gesture; it is doubtful that, without this international crisis, either government would have given so much aid and encouragement to the design, construction, and financing of the building. Economic conditions in West Berlin and West Germany also made the building possible: without the beginnings of a rapid economic recovery fueled by American aid, together with the presence of plentiful cheap labor, the complex hyperbolic paraboloid roof forms, even the entire reinforced concrete supporting structure itself, could not have been accomplished.

Most of all, however, the building grew out of the personalities and aspirations of its three principal makers. Each was committed to innova-

106. See Doug Clelland, ed., "Post-War Berlin," *Architectural Design*, 52 (1982), and "Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin," *AD Profile* (1983). See also *Architettura*, 27 (July 1981): 386-389; *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*, 214 (1981): xl-xli; and *Architectural Review*, 169 (1981): 325-328.

tion but was also a profound patriot, deeply aware of roots in some American tradition. To each, in fact, innovation itself seemed to be an American tradition. Each was stirred by the destruction of Berlin and by the challenge of rebuilding it "for democracy." Each, in his or her own way, was extraordinarily forceful personally, and each was at a stage in life when a dramatic action in the service of one's country was particularly appealing. Thus, the Congress Hall speaks clearly of American foreign policy in the middle 1950s, and of postwar Berlin before the wall, but it also represents an important chapter in the history of modern architecture and its relation to modern patronage. Architectural historians have led us to believe that architecture in the second half of the twentieth century is the joint product of large-scale bureaucracies, corporate or governmental, and unwieldy committees of architects and engineers. The Congress Hall was created with the help of, but also despite, the bureaucracies of two governments, with the help of, but also despite, one ponderous professional organization and its committees — by innovative individuals. Architectural innovation, then, was possible at Berlin in 1955 because it was pursued by individuals, by people who had "the will to maneuver" and who were inspired by background and circumstance to create new forms.

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