



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Title	Monumentality and modernity in national socialist architecture : the North-South axis of the Greater Berlin Plan
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Qualification	PhD
Year	2004

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Monumentality and Modernity in National Socialist Architecture
The North-South Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan

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PhD in Architectural History
The University of Edinburgh
2004

Thesis Title:
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The North-South Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan

Abstract:

The contentious relationship between modernism and totalitarianism is a key element in the architectural history of the twentieth century. Post-war historiography, as established by emigré scholars such as Nikolaus Pevsner and Sigfried Giedion, refused to admit any overlap between the high modernism of the 1920s and the architecture of National Socialism. A definition of modernism as the essential architectural expression of liberal democracy precluded the possibility that the modernist agenda might also have informed totalitarian building practice. National Socialist architectural history cannot be fully explored without being set within the broader historical context of modernity. Similarly, a true understanding of modernism in architecture must, necessarily, embrace its authoritarian aspects.

On 30th January 1937, Albert Speer was appointed as *Generalbauinspektor* (GBI, the General Building Inspector), responsible for remodelling Berlin as “*Germania*”, the capital of the Third Reich. This project can be seen as the paradigmatic statement of National Socialist architecture. For the North-South Axis of Berlin, the GBI office collected a large variety of designs contributed by both modernists and conservative architects, from the Great Hall in the north, through the Triumphal Arch, to the South Railway Station. The mega-plan positioned Berlin at the forefront of contemporary international debate on the modern metropolis.

This thesis clarifies the architectural discourse in which the Greater Berlin Project was produced. The association of monumentality with National Socialist architecture in the 1930s created a polarisation between the classical tradition and radical modernism that provoked vigorous and acrimonious debate that lasted into the 1980s. The social and cultural conditions in which Hitler and Speer’s notion of monumentality was embedded are interpreted from the perspectives of psychology, aesthetics and cultural significance. The pre-1930 designs and theories of modernist German architects paved the way for National Socialist monumentality by advocating a Neo-classical style combining historicity and technical advancement. The ambition to reconstruct Berlin as a world capital was modelled on plans developed by Speer’s modernist planning predecessors, such as Martin Mächler and Martin Wagner, and on international examples of capital reconstruction, e.g. Paris, Vienna and Washington DC. The Berlin project was thus rooted in a wider historical and international architectural context. Major projects on the North-South axis offer a diverse range of projects in which a Modernist monumentality is articulated by series of dominant, high-rise buildings. Administration buildings commissioned by private companies on the axis offer significant examples of the way in which National Socialist monumental building practice operated under the conditions of a dynamic, planned economy.

In the attempt to reconcile the paradoxical and competing aspirations for monumentality and historicity on one hand, and for technological advance on the other, the planning of Berlin reflects the wider paradoxes of National Socialist ideology.

Candidate's Declaration

Thesis Title: Monumentality and Modernity in National Socialist Architecture –
The North-South Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan

Candidate's name: Hsiu-ling Kuo

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, that the work is my own, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Signed:

Date:

30 Jun. 2024

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was developed with the supervision of Professor Iain Boyd Whyte, who provided generous help and guidance throughout my PhD in Edinburgh and Berlin. I have also appreciated the advice of Bernd Nicolai in preparing for the fieldwork in Trier and the feedback from Volker Welter in the early stages of writing up the thesis. I would like to thank the examiners of this thesis, David Frisby and John Lowrey, who offered insightful comments and suggestions for further development of the manuscript.

Some parts of this thesis were presented in the history colloquium at the Technical University, Berlin, Germany and in the 55th annual meeting for the Society of Architectural Historian in Richmond, USA. I am grateful to the colloquium coordinator, Alexander Sedlmaier, the session chair, Paul Jaskot and the respondent, Kathleen James-Chakraborty and both audiences for their valuable commentaries. I would also like to acknowledge the stimulation provided by conversations and discussions with scholars: Zygmunt Bauman, Jeffrey Diefendorf, Anthony McElligott, Wolfgang Schäche and Wen-Ji Wang.

Research for this thesis was undertaken in a number of libraries and archives. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the archivists and staff at the following institutions: Bundesarchiv (Berlin) and Landesarchiv (Berlin), the library of Humboldt University, Staatsbibliothek, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Technical University, Berlin, and Trier University.

I cannot thank enough my friends and colleagues: Bruce Currey for his consistent support and provocative stimulation, and Scott Johnston for encouragement and painstakingly editing the final draft of the manuscript. Finally I owe an enormous debt to Fu-Ming Kuo, Chih-Yuan Kuo, Tseng Chiao and to my late father, Dong-Hong Kuo, whose support forms the major force of my work.

Introduction

The contentious relationship between modernism and totalitarianism is a key element in the architectural history of the twentieth century. Post-war historiography, as established by émigré scholars like Nikolaus Pevsner and Sigfried Giedion, refused to admit any overlap between the high modernism of the 1920s and the architecture of National Socialism. Similarly, National Socialists never officially acknowledged their connections with modernism, despite being highly influenced by it. What is commonly recognised today as the history of modern architecture was to a large extent created jointly by architects in the 1920s and supported by historians and critics of the Modern Movement from the 1930s onwards. The definition of modernism as the essential architectural expression of liberal democracy precluded the possibility that the modernist agenda might also have informed aspects of totalitarian building practice. National Socialist architectural history cannot be fully explored without being set within the broader historical context of modernity. Likewise, a true understanding of modernism in architecture must necessarily embrace its authoritarian aspects.

The historiography as established by leading post-war historians such as Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Nikolaus Pevsner and Sigfried Giedion played a key role in defining a modernist International Style that promoted the Modern Movement. Kenneth Frampton and William Curtis, later generation modernist historians, adopted this view uncritically in their writings on the general history of modern architecture. Aside from the mainstream modernists, alternative views have been developed by critical historians such as David Watkin, Manfredo Tafuri, Francesco Dal Co, Bruno Zevi and Leonardo Benevolo, who saw modern architectural history in a broader light and believed that the history of twentieth-century architecture had more to offer than the Modern Movement. Instead of a pure political account, the discourse of modernity and the historical context of modern architecture, from which National Socialist architecture emerged, must be presented from social and cultural perspectives.

It is undeniable that architecture is widely associated with politics. In *Architecture and Politics in Germany 1918-1945* published in 1968, Barbara Miller Lane illustrated the way in which architecture had been exploited by both

conservative and progressive groups through political manipulation. Lane's research contributed significantly to an understanding of the relationship between National Socialist architecture and its political ideology.¹ However, the approach of polemically dividing architecture into the conservative and the radical, the political and the secular, had been taken as *the* only appropriate way to interpret National Socialist architecture without a critical distance. It reduces the complexity and the problem of totalitarian architecture to a simple political issue. Francesco Dal Co and Sergio Polano pointed out this crisis in their record of interviewing Albert Speer in 1978:

For too long the architecture of Albert Speer has been synonymous with 'Nazi Architecture.' This is at once a reductive and consoling hypothesis. It has only served this game of those who have wanted to keep fenced out of the sacred garden of modern architecture (or the Modern Movement) anything that could radically call its continuity into question. The history of the architecture of totalitarian regimes cannot be allowed to enter into that historiographical mythology. For deviations as radical as those represented by 'totalitarian architecture' the blame has fallen on those easiest to identify: Speer and Hitler, Piacentini and Mussolini, Zdanov and Stalin. Facile axioms justify moral judgments that could not but be univocal. But architecture is not univocal, nor do its infinite paths lead everyone to the same goals.²

Instead of accepting the presumption of the exclusive primacy of the political aspect of architecture and enlarging this misconception, equal attention deserves to be paid to other distinctive themes, such as the social and aesthetic aspects of architecture. One-sided doctrines are to be subjected to criticism. Art, history and philosophy are themselves products of social development. To avoid the danger that they might

¹ Peter Blundell Jones emphasized this view again in 'Architecture and Political Legitimation,' *Architectural Review* (July, 1996): 64-65.

² Dal Co, Francesco and Polano, Sergio. 'Interview with Albert Speer' *Oppositions*, No. 12 (Spring, 1978): 39. Equally critical view is presented in Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co's *Modern Architecture (Architettura Contemporanea)* (New York: Abrams, 1979; original edition, 1976).

‘indirectly endorse the processes themselves’,³ their origins and the broader context in which they are embedded must be discerned and critically examined. In his introduction to *A History of Architecture* Spiro Kostof noted that modern historians’ mission was to write

a more inclusive definition of architecture and, consequently, a more democratic view of architectural history. The aim is to put aside the invidious distinctions between architecture and building, architecture and engineering, architecture and speculative development; to treat buildings with equal curiosity whether they are religious in intent, monumental, utilitarian, or residential; ... and to have genuine respect for the architectural achievement of cultures regardless of origin and their racial and theological identities.⁴

What Kostof proposed is an objective mind to construct the history of architecture, but the question remains: how to avoid subjective and arbitrary interpretations and adopt a rational approach to reading and writing the history of events in which one has had personal involvement? The subjective and ‘mythic memory’ of the victims are set against the ‘rational’ understanding of others, who are not directly related to the historical event.⁵ To detach history from moral interpretation of some kind is an impossible task both from the point of communication and of social and cultural prejudices.

³ Ted Hornderich, *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 290.

⁴ Kostof, Spiro. *A History of Architecture: Settings & Rituals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 15-16.

⁵ Saul Friedländer, *Reflections on Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1993), 11.

1 Historiography and Literature Review

1.1 Architectural history as interpreted/created in National Socialist propaganda

National Socialist Germany constructed a version of modern architectural history in Germany between 1933 and 1945. This was different from the mainstream architectural history portrayed by Modernist historians in England and in America. In what we recognise as a blatantly propaganda style, the National Socialists' view of history was promoted with ambitious monumental building schemes by the GBI (*General Bauinspektor*, General Building Inspector) architects and architectural critics in the party propaganda publications including newspaper, art journals and art reviews. Their approach, their usage of terminologies and architectural concepts in the National Socialist press, was strikingly similar to that promoted by the 'progressive' modernist historians in the 1920s and 1930s. The Modernists' theme of searching for and defining 'the spirit of the time' received equal, if not more, emphasis in National Socialist publications.

National Socialist ideology and racial theory culminated in an extremely modern and science-based theory, in particular the notions of health and hygiene. This resembled modernist architects' concern for a white, healthy and hygienic living environment. Goebbels argued in 1930 in an article entitled 'Why are we enemies of the Jews?' that one of the reasons that the 'real' Germans must act against the Jewish, the Capitalist, the bourgeoisie, the Marxists, individualism, and class and rank distinctions, was that they formed the destructive system that hindered the progress of the country and damaged the 'healthy power of the people'. He called for a Socialist Germany of 'all the people' but excluding the 'people' from the above categories.⁶ Concern for the health of the German race was a notorious theme constantly repeated in National Socialist propaganda, including art and architectural publications.

In 1938 in *Das Bauen in Neuen Reich*, Gerdy Troost, the widow of Hitler's favourite architect - Paul Ludwig Troost, accused '*Neue Sachlichkeit*' architects of

⁶ Joseph Goebbels, 'Why are we enemies of the Jews?' selected in *The Weimar Republic Resourcebook* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 137. [Original edition 'Warum sind wir Judengegner?' in *Die verfluchten Hakenkreuzler; Etwas zum Nachdenken* (Munich: Franz Eher Nachfolger, 1930), 1-28]

propagandising Jewish Bolshevism and of ignoring the cultural value of the German homeland.⁷ In her sophisticated account of architectural achievements in the Third Reich up to 1938, National Socialist architectural history was presented with buildings designed by Troost, German Bestelmeyer, Johannes and Walter Krüger, Werner March, Franz Ruff and others. The combination of the modernist architectural concept and advanced technology in their projects was never acknowledged. Instead of modernist catchphrases such as orientation, sunlight and rational planning, Troost spoke of technology, order, aesthetics and international architectural trends. Industrial buildings for instance must seek to offer the German public a delightful providence and to improve the work environment with the help of technology and craftsmanship.

*Es ist für das deutsche Volk eine glückliche Fügung, daß sich die außerordentliche Vermehrung seiner Arbeitsstätten, ... aus dem Wesen der Technik kann die Kraft einer einordnenden Weltanschauung sinngemäße Formen entwickeln. Bauten von Maß und Ordnung, wirksam durch sparsame und klare Linien, Sinnbild der präzisen sauberen Arbeit, die in ihnen geleistet wird, sind hier gestaltet worden. Sie ergeben eine schöne Gesamtwirkung. Beton, Stahl und Glas treten offen hervor: **Wie hell, wie ideenreich, wie großzügig sind diese technischen Bauten.***⁸

According to what she regarded as the ‘world view’ (Weltanschauung) of the latest architectural development in the 1930s, Troost promoted the use of modern building materials - concrete, steel and glass – to build pleasant workspaces, which stimulated audacious, yet disciplined, creativity in the workers. The idea of modernity, as interpreted here by Troost, was to incorporate the most advanced technology into a highly disciplined and mechanic society. Providing a standard ideal work environment for the workers was to reduce the number of factors that could endanger a smooth, frictionless, productive operation in factories.

⁷ Gerdy Troost, *Das Bauen im Neuen Reich* (Bayreuth: Gauverlag Bayerische Ostmark, 1938), 9.

⁸ Troost, 72-3. (My boldface)

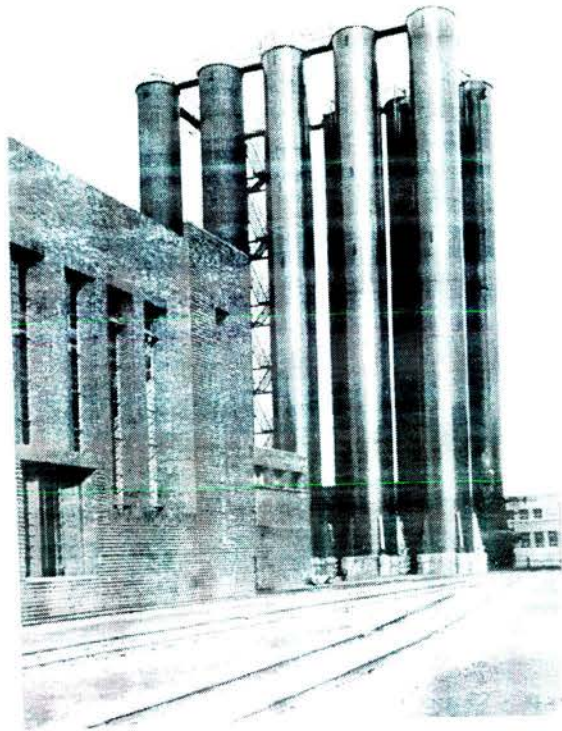


Figure 1 Fritz Kremmer, Martin Schupp and Heinrich Bärsch, Opel Factory, Brandenburg, 1932-33. (Gerdy Troost, *Das Bauen im Neuen Reich*, 1938, 98)

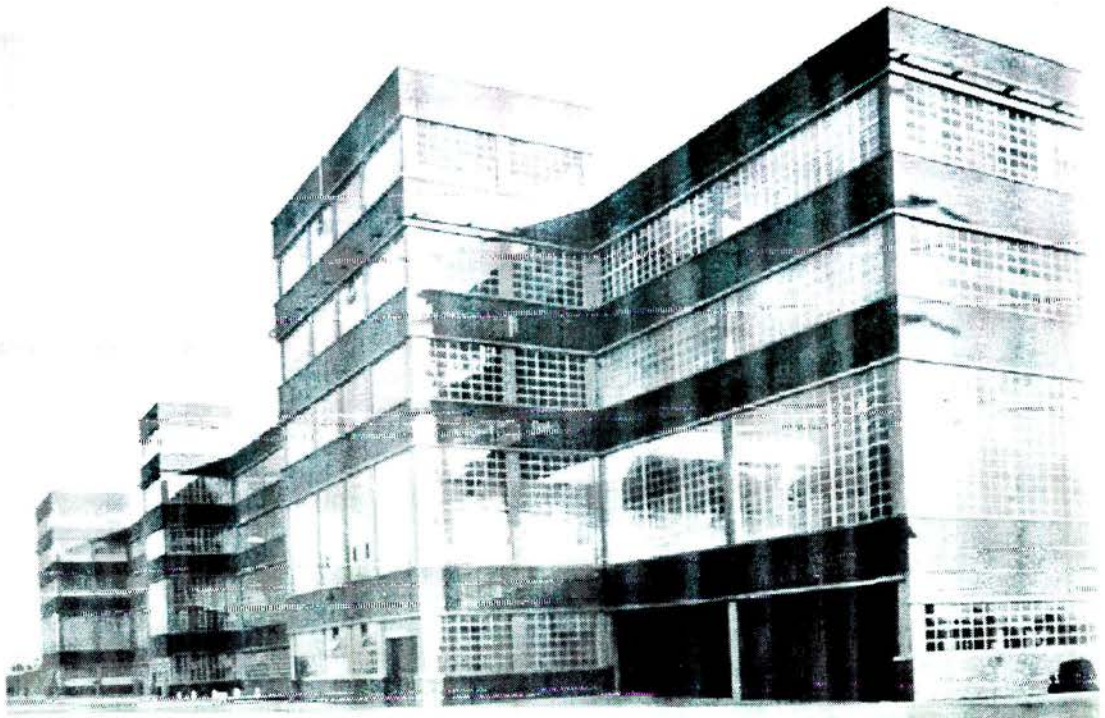


Figure 2 Heinrich Bärsch, Opel Factory, Brandenburg, 1932-33. (Troost, 101)

In the decades when building technology progressed at a revolutionary pace, the exploration of an architectural style that was appropriate for the time was a task taken on board both by modernists and by National Socialists. In ‘*Stilschöpfung*’⁹ in 1939 Erich Stürzenacker argued that the creation of an exceptional contemporary style could be achieved only through the will (*Wille*) and dynamism of architects. Bearing in mind the *Weltanschauung* and world architectural developments and combining them with classical revivals – such as Gothic and Baroque, architects must make good use of advanced technology. Technology was for Stürzenacker ‘*die Dienerin und Änregerin stilistischer Entwicklungen, was uns am Beispiel der Gotik besonders deutlich wird, wo die Möglichkeit der Technik und des Materials bis zu unkonstruktiven Überspitzungen ausgenützt werden. Immer sind die Fortschritte von Technik und Stil Hand in Hand gegangen.*’¹⁰

In September 1943, *Die Baukunst* published ‘*Von Beruf des Baumeisters*’ by Rudolf Wolters, the key National Socialist architectural critic. The article was intended, on the one hand, to illustrate the history of German architecture and, on the other, to be a manifesto that indicated the future development of a new national style for Germany. In a tone not dissimilar to that of Ruskin and of Morris in England in the 1850s, Wolters argued that modern technology had caused various problems for contemporary cities. Architects who over-indulged themselves in new technology caused enormous damage to existing organically developed cities. He described Germany as suffering a cultural decline of which architecture was a clear example. Architectural development in Germany showed how landscape and cities had been destroyed, how architects had lost control over the world they built and over the excessive use of technology, and how the artistic homeland of Germany had fallen into ruins. He also condemned the negative consequences of the establishment of the railway network and of the industrial revolution thus:

Als der erste Eisenbahnzug von Nürnberg nach Fürth rollte, konnte keiner voraussehen, was hieraus noch entstehen sollte. In wenigen

⁹ Erich Stürzenacker, ‘*Stilschöpfung*’ in *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich*, volume 3 issue 5 (May 1939): 220-22.

¹⁰ Stürzenacker, 222.

Jahrzehnten entstand ohne übergeordnete Planung ein ausgedehntes Eisenbahnnetz. Der Schienenstrang zerriß die Landschaft, eiserne Brücken überspannten Täler und Flüsse, Lokomotiven dampften in die gewachsenen oder planmäßig angelegten Städte, Gleisanlagen machten sich vor den Toren mit ihren wuchernden Abstell- und Güterbahnhöfen breit, verbauten das Vorland der Städte und zerschnitten ganze Stadtteile. Großen eiserne Hallen schossen aus dem Boden zur Aufnahme der Dampflokomotiven und standen in fremdem Material maßstabslos neben den alten Steinbauten der Städte. Je größer die Industrialisierung wurde, um so mehr wuchsen die Lasten und Geschwindigkeiten der Bahnen, um so schwieriger wurden die baulich-technischen Lösungen. Der Architekt erkannte seine neue wesentliche Aufgabe nicht, er wandte sich vielmehr vom Technischen ab und übersah die städtebaulichen Probleme, die täglich mit dem unerhörten Wachstum der Städte schwieriger wurden.¹¹

Rejecting the exaggerated fascination with advanced technologies, Wolters was highly antagonistic to the over-indulgence of modernist architects in technology and industrialisation. He disapproved of architects who failed to give priority to functional city planning. With the emergence of new technology architects in the twentieth century had lost their way and often lacked a sense of history. After a period of what he called 'eclecticism', there was an urge to find a new style. However, the *Jugendstil*, for example, that emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century was, according to him, a 'bad' innovation. It was a movement created by painters, commercial artists and architects who put more emphasis on form than on content, creative ideas, or 'healthy' constructions ('*gesund Konstruktiven*').

¹¹ 'When the first railway was constructed from Nuremburg to Fürth, no one could foresee what would ensue. In few decades, an expanding network of railway system appeared without systematic planning. The railway tracks shattered the landscape, iron bridges spanned valleys and rivers, and locomotives disposed steam in the growing cities. Great and disproportionately large iron halls sprouted up in the cities to accommodate these steam engines, next to old stone buildings.' (my translation) See Rudolf Wolters, 'Vom Beruf des Baumeisters' in *Die Baukunst* (September, 1943): 147.



Figure 3 Franz Gerwin, construction site in Ot am Atlantik, a drawing celebrating building technology, published in the same issue as Wolters' article – 'Vom Beruf des Baumeisters'. (*Die Baukunst*, Sept. 1943)

Wolters also attacked architects who abandoned the use of ornament and promoted *Sachlichkeit* (Functionality). He regarded the dismissal by these architects of the Classical architectural language of columns, ornament, cornices and all other decorations to be evidence of the 'bankruptcy' of architectural achievement. According to Wolters the notion of *Sachlichkeit* accomplished nothing, but reduced the architect's capability to build and to design.

Die Sachlichkeit, im Grunde nichts anderes als künstlerisches Unvermögen, wuchs sich bald zu einer erstaunlichen Unsachlichkeit aus. Man baute nicht nur nackt und kahl, man versuchte darüber hinaus, die überkommenen Konstruktionen zu verneinen und die neue Form in einer Darstellung der modernen technischen Möglichkeiten zu suchen. Man nahm den Häusern die Sockel, stellte sie auf Beton- oder Stahlpfähle, legte Öffnungen, Fenster und Türen auf die Ecke, ... kurz

*alles neuen Technischen.*¹²

Pointing out the Modernists' mistakes in reducing architecture to pure machine and new technology, Wolters presented architects who designed what he regarded as true architecture, namely Heinrich Tessenow, Peter Behrens, Hermann Muthesius, Bonatz and Wilhelm Kreis. In Wolters' view, they had correctly devoted their architectural career to the 'naturally' developed classical styles. Masterpieces in the early 1910s designed by Behrens (Mannesmann Administrative Building, The German Embassy in St. Petersburg), by Bonatz (Stuttgart Central Railway Station, motorway bridges) and by Kreis (the Augustus Bridge in Dresden) were regarded as manifestations of the German architecture of the new century, embodying rationality and the most advanced technology. In exploring new possibilities basing on classical styles, these architects inherited the architectural heritage and continuity that were both recognised and promoted by the National Socialist Party. They were praised for not refraining from applying columns or beams wherever these were necessary.

Wolters denounced criticism of the style created by these architects. Their style was not a simple conservative Neo-classical approach. Instead, they stood for National Socialist artistic creativity that stemmed from the life of their time and was supported by modern technology.

*Wer heute von »Neoklassizismus« spricht, hat das Wesen unseres Bauens nicht verstanden. Dieses Wesen liegt in der neuen Aufgabe, in der neuen großen-allgemeinen Bestimmung unserer Bauten, die in ihren Grundrissen, ihren räumlichen Dispositionen und ihren städtebaulichen Forderungen ohne Vorgang sind und nur aus dem Inhalt unseres nationalsozialistischen Lebens stammen.*¹³

The architecture of the National Socialist era had to be modern and creative, but not without restraints; with historical insight, but not mere plagiarism. The architectural features favoured by National Socialist architects, as explained by Wolters, paid homage to a highly valued tradition. Architects of different ages had always taken

¹² Wolters, 150.

¹³ Ibid., 159.

examples from the past and refined them. Plagiarism was ruled out. The need to search for inspirations from past styles and new technology was meticulously justified.¹⁴ What Wolters attempted to define was an architecture that took the middle way among different new architectural trends. It represented everything and nothing - an approach reflecting the way National Socialist politicians advanced their political dogma.

1.2 Literature Review - The Modern Movement and the *International Style*

In discussing modernity and modernism, it is helpful to distinguish the usage of the terms of 'Modernism' and the 'Modern Movement' in recent architectural history. These terms are often confused or used casually without clear differentiation. A movement suggests an organised event or a series of actions aimed at achieving a shared goal by a group of like-minded people. One major difference between the two terms is that while the Modern Movement is a coherent and unique approach, Modernism covers a wide range of activities, e.g. Futurism, Art Nouveau, Expressionism, the Bauhaus school and the CIAM (*Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne*) and events whose objectives underpin the general notion of Modernism. Modernism was less related to 'organizations than with the broader Modernist culture, which contained problems that were inherent in Modernism itself.'¹⁵ While the Modern Movement is one major current that has continuously led and influenced architectural development since the first launch of the *International Style* by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in 1932, Modernism involved a larger debate conducted at a deeper cultural level in society. This includes art and architecture as well as film, theatre, literature, music and dance. It is important to point out that Modernism must be understood as a discourse that absorbs new events and developments as they take place.¹⁶ Instead of a simple presentation of a collection of events or movements, discourse seeks to understand the way in which events pass from premises to consequences. A more accurate definition and deeper

¹⁴ 'Das Zuvielverstehen vom Technischen oder vom Historischen kann zum Feind des freien Fluges der Gedanken werden, kann die Intuition erdrücken und schließlich zum Plagiat führen.' See Wolters, 162.

¹⁵ Royston Landau, 'The History of Modern Architecture That Still Needs to Be Written,' in *Architectural Association Files*, no. 21 (Spring: 1991): 50.

¹⁶ Ibid..

observation of Modernist culture are conducive to a better understanding of the discourse of architectural Modernism.

In his prophetic *Modern Architecture, Romanticism and Reintegration* (1929), Henry-Russell Hitchcock discussed the latest architectural styles by tracing architectural trends since 1750 - 'the Age of Romanticism' (which continued to be popular until mid-nineteenth century). Architecture in the decades from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century concurrently encompassed the Classic and the Gothic, forming an art and architectural trend, which Gilbert Scott called the 'New Tradition'.¹⁷ Inheriting this perspective, Hitchcock spoke of the 'New Tradition' with a mixture of styles ranging from Romanesque, Medieval, and Classic to Gothic, from which the 'New Pioneers' of modern architecture were to draw impulses. In his final chapter 'Towards a New Architecture', he analysed the projects submitted to the competition for the Palace of League of Nations; in particular he highlighted Le Corbusier's project as the representative example of the emerging international trend.

Three years later, in 1932, Hitchcock and Philip Johnson collaborated in an exhibition catalogue *The International Style – Architecture Since 1922*. In an attempt to define what modern architecture is, the two authors *created* an architectural tradition that was highly selective. They discerned a division between European functionalists such as Hannes Meyer, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Erich Mendelsohn and 'progressive' architects such as Le Corbusier, J. J. P. Oud, Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who, in their opinion, were the leading figures of an international trend that had prevailed in the West in the previous ten years. The 'International Style' was defined in their book in terms of volume, regularity, the use of surfacing materials and decoration. Unlike the European functionalists who 'mistakenly' indulged in the technological aspect of functionality, the 'progressive' architects, as categorised by Hitchcock and Johnson, recognised the existence and the full importance of the new trends. Volume was to replace the effect of mass and

¹⁷ Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture, Romanticism and Reintegration* (New York: Payson & Clarke, 1972; First edition, 1929), 72-3. For an account of the making of the Modern Movement, see Giorgio Ciucci, 'The Invention of the Modern Movement' translated by Stephen Sartarelli. *Oppositions*, no. 24 (Spring, 1981): 68-91. The article referred to a series of modernist events in the 1920s and investigates in particular the impact of *Weissenhofsiedlung* exhibition (1927), the League of Nation competition (1928), the first CIAM congress (La Sarraz, 1928) and the conflicts among the CIAM architects.

solidity, popular in conventional architecture. In contrast to the aesthetics of the picturesque, the 'underlying regular rhythm' in asymmetrical plans was to exist in most buildings to take account of modern standardisation.¹⁸ Largely shunning decoration, modern architecture is presented in a purer style of the past with details 'required by structure or symbolic of the underlying structure'.¹⁹

Nikolaus Pevsner in the *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* in 1936 established a rather improbable lineage for the Modern Movement from Morris to Gropius. In his foreword to the Pelican Edition, 1960, Pevsner proudly reminds the reader of his position as the creator of the history of the Modern Movement: 'It is gratifying to see that a subject which, when I first tackled it, was shunned by serious scholars has now become the happy hunting ground for American and German and indeed some English students busy on theses, dissertations, or otherwise.'²⁰ What Pevsner called the 'New Tradition' based on the architecture of the 'Machine Age' is a genre consisting of Bauhaus, Mies and Gropius, who inherited the true legacy of the modernist tradition from Pugin, Morris, Sullivan and Wright, and from Beaux-arts to Art Nouveau. There was no mention of alternative trends which also stemmed from these 'New Traditions' and which were at the time emerging in different countries around the world - the most popular of which was the tendency to create a variety of modern versions of historical classicism.

Another influential figure in the pro-Modern-Movement league is Sigfried Giedion. In his *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941) Giedion differentiated Modernist architects from those in the past according to the way they approached architectural history. Whereas nineteenth century architects cobbled together their architecture by selecting and copying past designs accumulated throughout history, Modernists worked creatively on how to combine 'past, present, and future ... as the indivisible wholeness of human destiny.'²¹ He pointed out that the mistake of the nineteenth century revivalist architects was to treat certain forms of arts as universally valid for every age without making substantial changes to adapt to their

¹⁸ Henry-Russell Hitchcock & Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: Norton, 1966; original edition, 1922), 58.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

²⁰ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978; first published in 1936), 17.

²¹ Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1967 (original edition, 1941), xxxvii.

time. The task of the historian, as proclaimed by Giedion, was to ‘uncover for his own age its vital interrelationships with the past’ and not to restrict and to distort the future by basing it solely on the past. Historians must also ‘correct an epoch in the light of [their] own opinions’ and explain why history evolved in a particular directions.²² But Giedion ignored his own prejudices towards the history of totalitarian architecture. This prejudgement already precluded any ‘interrelationship with the past’ to be indiscriminately and positively written in history, despite the fact that Giedion himself acclaimed an undistorted presentation of historical events to be one of the important factors for historians to observe.

In their immediate post-war discussions, architects and historians expressed much concern about the extent to which monumentality was a feature of totalitarian political ideologies. Cautious though modernist historians and critics might be, they nevertheless often employed language and strategies not dissimilar to the political and military propaganda of National Socialism. The symposium of the *Architectural Review* in September 1948 brought together leading modernist historians and architects at the time including Gregor Paulsson (University of Uppsala), Hitchcock (MIT and Wesleyan University), William Holford (University of London), Giedion (University of Zurich), Gropius (Bauhaus and Harvard University) and Lucio Costa (Brazil) and Alfred Roth (Switzerland). This can be seen as amounting to an architectural treaty that defined the status and territory of Neo-Classicism and modernism in the dispute over monumentality. The Editor of the *Architectural Review* spoke of a modernist victory and claimed that modern architecture had ‘won its battle against’ totalitarian revivalism. Monumentality was on the one hand perceived as an urban phenomenon, and on the other hand, as redolent of the images of the totalitarian states of the 1930s.

Democracy and monumentality are perceived by some in the symposium as two ideas that contradict each other. Other commentators maintained that modern architecture could not avoid the controversial aspect of monumentality by simply denouncing it completely. One Swiss art critic, Peter Meyer, for instance, argued in 1938 that instead of adopting the alternative of developing monumentality organically, modern architectural theory had ignored the monumental and forced it

²² Ibid., 7-17.

into exile. Consequently, the element of monumentality was left to be exploited and misused by 'non-modern' architectural styles.²³ Meyer defended Le Corbusier's monumental design for the *Musée d'Art Moderne* (1927) as a fully modern building that successfully imposed a classic human scale on technology through architecture. This statement was subsequently rejected by his Swiss counterpart, Hans Schmidt, who believed that the Modern Movement and modernists had imposed the 'human scale of technology' on architecture, instead of the other way round.²⁴

Responding to the proposal to reclaim the element of monumentality for modernist architecture, the Swedish architect and critic, Paulsson argued that monumentality was exclusively imperialistic and anti-democratic, and was therefore not desirable: 'Genuine monumentality can only arise from dictatorship because it is an adequate expression of its emotional complexes.'²⁵ Totalitarian regimes often employed monumentality to strengthen their power to rule society and the people. Paulsson held the view that the nature of democratic society was essentially anti-monumental. He criticised modernist town planning for its logo-centric tendencies and for its exaggerated need for civic centres, whilst neglecting the improvement of general living conditions. To create a civic centre as a monumental focal point unnecessarily exhausts society's limited available resources. Speaking in a tone similar to that of the later post-modernists who called for a diversity of alternatives and differences, Paulsson argued that important aspects of town planning had been neglected by mainstream modernists who had given priority to the development of civic centres. Reconciling the needs of different areas in a town was a complex task that needed to take account of the various organically existing factors in each individual area. According priority to the establishment of a major focal civic centre and compromising the rest of the town to strengthen the central authority tended towards a totalitarian society.

Architecture has aimed at satisfying human life, but to this life too few dimensions have been given. The human being as a psychological,

²³ Christiane C. and George R. Collins, 'Monumentality: a critical matter in modern Architecture,' in *The Harvard Architectural Review*, vol. 4 (Spring, 1984), 21.

²⁴ Ibid..

²⁵ Editorial Board symposium transcription, 'In Search of a New Monumentality,' *Architectural Review*, vol. 104, no. 621 (September, 1948): 123.

above all as a socio-psychological part of society has been forgotten. ... It is the character of the natural area in which a human being spends his daily life which determines his way of living, and the formation of his values are bound up with his physical environment.²⁶

Modernist ideas of standardization and the development of a basic theory to apply to all cities are seen here to be invalid. Each human life is a living organism, unique in shape, diversity and content. Individuals cannot be treated homogeneously.

Hitchcock, on the contrary, maintained that monumentality in the sense of durability and solidity depended on what posterity would later recognise as impressive monumental expressions of each historical period. Instead of addressing the issues of social and political ideology that create monumentality, Hitchcock focussed on a formalistic discussion of monumental architecture, ranging widely from fifth-century B.C. Greek temples to nineteenth-century warehouses. Modernist doctrines of functionalism, including such considerations as construction methods, the presumption of ephemerality and rapidly changing technology, tend to discourage monumentality in design. But it is a field worth modernist exploration, since it has long been 'completely sterile'.²⁷ In proposing to experiment with redeveloping the expression of the monumental, Hitchcock did not reject the possibility of compromising with traditional pseudo-monumentality in order to provide central structures for communities. In Hitchcock's view the appearance of monumentality had an important symbolic role, and this had to be recognised by city planners.

Giedion believed that the major task for contemporary architecture, apart from construction and urbanism, was to recapture the element of monumentality. By offering only functionality, modernist architecture could not meet communities' need for buildings to represent their social and ceremonial life. According to Giedion, monumentality was shared by both progressive and 'reactionary' governments, despite their ideological differences. The quest for monumentality was universal and common for every period in history. To some extent in accordance with the National Socialist view of monumental architecture, Giedion thought civic centres as focal points in cities to be an important element in urban planning, because by hosting

²⁶ Ibid..

²⁷ Ibid., 125.

‘collective emotional events, where the people play as important a role as the spectacle itself, and where a unity of the architectural background, the people and the symbols created by artists will arise again.’²⁸ Giedion’s account of the civic monumental expression discriminated against other interpretations of monumentality that were not constructed within the ‘white and clean’ modernist context. He stressed that the modern civic centre that properly expressed the spirit of its own age had to be nowhere near slums and had to be surrounded by greenery.

Other critics held a more unprejudiced view. Lucio Costa believed that the functional works of modernists could achieve monumentality through appropriate symmetry and proportion. Monumentality did not need to be limited exclusively to civic centres and could be applied to a range of types of buildings in which the quality of monumentality is implied by the dimensions and volumes, and even by plastic forms. This broader definition of monumentality expanded the range of building types that could be considered as monumental, to include for example silos, factories and industrialised farms. Alfred Roth also proposed a positive understanding and a positive interpretation of monumentality. He defined it as ‘the transcendental, most inspired expression of the essence, the will, the greatness of an epoch. Monumentality, if true, is transfigured truth and spiritual greatness; if false, it is a concealed lie and an idol of material dimensions.’²⁹ Roth also recognised the diversity and heterogeneity of the democratic era, which corresponds to the growing differences in both individual and collective life styles. From a rather capitalist standpoint, he held the view that the spiritual standard of a society depended on the spiritual values of those who were able to commission.

Aside from the English and American critics cited above, the Italian architectural historian, Bruno Zevi, interpreted modern architectural history with a profound understanding of the social and cultural context in Europe, where modernist movement originated, and with a good knowledge of American modern architectural development. Highly influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, Zevi accentuates the influence of the ‘organic architecture’, which originated in the Arts and Crafts movement and which was expatiated on by Wright in America and in post-war Italy in reaction to the Fascist Neoclassicism. Not unlike Watkin’s attack on

²⁸ Ibid., 127.

²⁹ Ibid., 128.

Pevsner, Zevi criticised Giedion for over-emphasising the Bauhaus style, Le Corbusier and the sources of tectonics and abstract 'isms' in the Modern Movement while ignoring other important European architects, such as Voysey and Mackintosh in Britain and the Secessionists in Vienna.³⁰ Instead of insisting on the centrality of Le Corbusier, viewing what came before him 'as an immature attempt; what came after ... as decadence', Zevi believed that the story of modern architecture should be learned through a thorough investigation of both the social and historical foundations of architectural development and as well as 'the moral world and inner inspiration of artists'³¹ in contrast to pure objective historical evidence.

Modern historians commonly agreed that the Industrial Revolution initiated a whole series of 'reactions' in a world where machine production rapidly became the driving force of society. However, Leonardo Benevolo, with a continental philosophical perspective, gave a broad account from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution in his *History of Modern Architecture* (1960). Defining the nature of architecture and architectural changes after the revolution was as much an unsettling issue for philosophers as for artists and architects after the Enlightenment. For more than one hundred fifty years Classical architecture was to be continually imitated and revived in mainstream architectural developments. The complex of classical motifs and antiquities in the history of Western architecture, as Benevolo defines it, originated from the approach that imposed super-historical characters on historical events with specific choices. 'The supposed natural and inimitable laws of architecture were expressed in certain constants, deduced roughly from Roman monuments, from Vitruvius or even from the works of modern masters; their universality was an attribute given by history, not inherent in their nature.'³² History decides the value and meaning of historical events, including rules and facts appearing as basic and unchallengeable as the universal laws of architecture or the lineage of architectural development.

Three decades after the *International Style* was published, however, the problem with this approach of modernist historiography became more than apparent. Reyner

³⁰ Andrea Oppenheimer Dean, *Bruno Zevi on Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 29.

³¹ Bruno Zevi, 'A Message to the International Congress of Architecture,' in *Metron*, v. 31-32, 1949, 10. See Dean, 30.

³² Leonardo Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, vol. 1 (London: K. Paul, 1979), xxiii.

Banham criticised the traditional Austrian-German approach to art history. Giedion's Wölfflinian style historiography, according to Banham, misleadingly suggested that formalistic similarities alone proved historical connections between architectural projects. The Rationalist inclination overlooked purely aesthetic factors of style and misinterpreted the history of modern architecture.³³ Most historians agreed that their task was to establish a full coherent view of the past with a logical and consistent theory, despite the fact that their view would inevitably be affected by the discourse and preconceptions of their time. Reyner Banham pointed out that with the pretext that history was 'a deliberate, not accidental' presentation of the past facts, Giedion's 'emphasis on continuity left him at liberty to overlook anything that he did not wish to deal with, as being mere 'débris'.³⁴ The role of historians' prejudices was left unresolved in this discussion.

The problem with the notion of the *International Style* was evident also in the fact that Hitchcock and Johnson's precepts failed to attract subsequent followers and were not in practice implemented in later buildings. William Jordy of Brown University pointed out at the MAS Symposium of 1964 that the International Style defined by Hitchcock and Johnson represented the new architecture of the 1930s, instead of prophesying how architecture would develop in the coming decades. Even the leading architects cited by the authors did not build or design in this style after the book's launch. As William Jordy rightly pointed out 'if one seeks the outstanding buildings designed after 1932 which continue in the image of the Style described in their (Hitchcock's and Johnson's) book, few are to be found.'³⁵ To be more precise, the International Style in fact marked the *end* of an architectural development rather than the start, as they claimed it to be. Additionally, the so-called *International Style* also failed to acknowledge a strong Neo-classical tendency that emerged everywhere in the industrialised world in the 1930s.

Although Hitchcock and Johnson both reckoned that it was an exaggeration to suggest the publication of the *International Style* had such a great impact on modern

³³ Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 1996; original, 1960), 309-10.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 310.

³⁵ William Jordy, 'The International Style in the 1930s,' *American Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 24, no. 1 (March 1965), 11.

architectural development,³⁶ historians and critics at the 1964 MAS symposium were mostly sceptical about the achievement of the notion – *The International Style*. They were concerned about whether or not it had justifiably represented an existing architectural trend that the international community had shared since the 1930s. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy attacked the book as an ‘unconcerned mixture of truth and opinion, quality and cliché, ... an astonishing document, declaring Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and, of all people, the Dutch architect Oud, to be the unquestionable leaders of modern architecture.’³⁷ Both Moholy-Nagy and Jordy pointed out that émigré architects such as Mies in America and Mendelsohn in Israel still employed strong Neo-classical monumental features in projects produced after their exile. Mies’ designs in particular showed neo-Schinkel characteristics throughout his architectural career. His design for the Reichsbank (1933) and the administration building for the silk industry in Krefeld, 1937, were controversial projects that left clear traces in his later projects in the USA in the 1950s, such as the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago (1952-56).

In opposition to Giedion and Pevsner, historians such as Watkin, Tafuri, Dal Co, Zevi and Benevolo, despite employing different approaches to history, were all critical of this dominant and unchallengeable historical approach that prioritised the status of the Modern Movement and the International Style in the history of modern architecture.

In the 1970s David Watkin, the most rebellious figure in the writing of modern architectural history, attacked modernist historians for having uncritically adopted a neo-Hegelian approach – *Geistesgeschichte* - established by Austrian-German scholars such as Winckelmann, Wölfflin and Riegl.³⁸ According to Watkin, Popper and Gombrich, both émigrés from German speaking countries in the 1930s, were far more introspective and reflective than historians of the previous generation about the relationship between their intellectual origins and National Socialism. In particular, the cultural climate of art historical research, established by Winckelmann and

³⁶ Hitchcock responded to the criticism in the MAS symposium of 1964 with the remark that ‘It has been suggested by some unkind people that the very fact that we *wrote* the book helped ... to produce the later situation. ... I am afraid that I myself can’t believe that writers about the arts influence history to that extent.’ Ibid, 26.

³⁷ Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, ‘The Diaspora,’ in *American Society of Architectural Historians*, volume 24, no. 1 (March, 1965): 25.

³⁸ David Watkin, ‘Sir Nikolaus Pevsner: A Study in Historicism,’ *Apollo* (September 1992): 168-72.

Hegel, who considered art and architecture as art forms representing the spirit of a country and of the age, was subjected to constant scrutiny. Pevsner, however, inherited neo-Hegelian historiography less critically from his supervisor, Wilhelm Pinder in Leipzig. Ernst Gombrich supported Watkin's view in this battle against the 'cult' of the Modern Movement and addressed this issue in a letter to Watkin:

What is wrong in the ideology of functionalism is the pretence to be 'scientific', to be based on knowledge rather than faith. (It has this in common with Marxism and other recent ideologies.) Granted that it has all the arrogance of religious movements, the faith that it must be right and that it will win because the God of history is on its side, this does not make it bad architecture or even a bad religion.³⁹

Proceeding from the critical position of Popper and Gombrich, Watkin argued that Plato was the philosopher who started the long tradition of totalitarian ideology. This prototype of totalitarianism can be traced to Plato's *Republic*, where 'the slate of human society and human habits' should be wiped clean in order to provide a *tabula rasa* for artists to 'sketch the outline of the social system.'⁴⁰ Drawing a comparison between Pugin's *Contrasts* (1836) and Pevsner's *Pioneer of the Modern Movement* (1936), Watkin pointed out that in this exactly one-hundred-year development of architectural theory and history, there existed an unchallenged morality defining what society 'ought to be'. The 'needs' of twentieth-century society were first sketched by these reformist architects and historians; and then the public was made to conform to them. The 'spirit of the age' was forged by art and art criticism, instead of being represented through them. The 'needs', Watkin further asserted, 'of course, are the invention of the critics who speak of them. They are needs only in so far as they are needed to realize the beliefs associated with a particular political or social programme which could only be imposed by a party but which may by no means be widely shared.'⁴¹ Watkin's implication here is clear: Pevsner's theory of the Modern

³⁹ A letter from Ernst Gombrich to David Watkin. quoted in *Morality and Architecture Revisited* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001; first edition, 1977). xvii.

⁴⁰ From Plato, *Republic*, 501a, quoted by Watkin, *Morality and Architecture Revisited*, xxviii.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

Movement is no less totalitarian than the political propaganda of Fascist and Nazi ideologies, from which Pevsner claimed the Modern Movement to be so different. Architectural critics and historians in this determinist tradition ranging from Viollet-le Duc and Le Corbusier to Giedion, could for the most part not perceive any alternative notions beyond their idealized Utopian vision. They overlooked the fact that ‘from Plato to Choisy there existed architectural traditions, mainly Classical or Gothic, so strong that successive debates about style were generally contained within them.’⁴²

To Watkin, Modernist architecture repeated the architectural debates that had been ‘prefigured’ in the past and was not as innovative as it claimed to be. The Hegelian approach, which was commonly adopted by modernists even before the First World War, suggested that one must identify the spirit of the time and devote one’s energy to bring this idea into fulfilment. Artists of the *Zeitgeist* anticipated the future from the present and denounced the past: ‘whatever the World spirit may be aiming at, it must be something new. Thus the old is being devalued while the unknown and untried at least carries within itself the possibility of harbouring the seeds of the future.’⁴³

Incidentally, Watkin’s critical account in the seventies was by no means an isolated voice. Other historians outside the mainstream modernist historiography also suggested in different writings that modern architectural history had been handled polemically. Barbara Miller Lane in 1968 had pointed out that National Socialist architecture inherited a political view from the Weimar Republic – an era in which most modernist architecture was commissioned. Although Lane regarded National Socialist ‘modern’ as bearing no resemblance to the work of the ‘progressive’ modernists, she held the view that discussion of Nazi architecture must trace the sources of the Republican years in order to obtain a complete picture of National Socialist architectural policy.⁴⁴ She also argued that architects, like Speer and May, often made statements for the purpose of political propaganda, when explaining the

⁴² Ibid., 5-6.

⁴³ Ernst Gombrich, ‘The Father of Art history’: A Reading of the Lectures on Aesthetics of G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) in *Tributes: Interpreters of our Cultural Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 66; quoted by Watkin, xxiii.

⁴⁴ Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany: 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985; first edition, 1968), 3.

aim and goals of their work to their patrons and to the public. They perceived themselves as ‘creators of an architecture which was uniquely expressive of a ‘new era’; but neither architects, nor their patrons, nor their audience understood that the roots of their inspiration were far more complex than they believed.⁴⁵

William Curtis, like Frampton, belongs to the group of loyal followers of Modernism, and his reading of modern architectural history placed stronger emphasis on its social and cultural perspectives. *Modern Architecture since 1900* (1982) held the view that modern architecture should exploit new means of construction to meet contemporary requirements of function and aim at representing modern experiences and morality to achieve the betterment of the human condition. The elements of modern architecture should be applicable to unique situations created by modern human life and by the machine culture. In brief, modern architecture should be based on thoroughly innovative and symbolic forms that reflect contemporary realities instead of being burdened by the ‘rag-bag of historical styles’.⁴⁶ The most distinctive change in Curtis’ book is that ‘modern architecture’ had now officially been equated with and replaced by the terms of the ‘Modern Movement’ and ‘modernism’.

Kenneth Frampton in his survey of modern architecture - *Modern Architecture: a critical history* (1985) highlighted the Nazi seizure of power in 1933 as the end of the Modern Movement in Germany. The conservative Schultze-Naumburg’s anti-rationalism and his resistance to Functionalist architecture are considered to be the dominant trend in architectural politics of the Third Reich. Whereas the organic forms of the late Arts and Crafts movement shared by Heinrich Tessenow, Hugo Häring and Hans Scharoun were applied to most vernacular architecture, State architecture sought a Classical heritage in the Schinkel School and in the Prussian style of Gilly, Langhans and Schinkel. Frampton claimed to have come from the Frankfurt School himself and was therefore aware of the dark side of the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, his interpretation of this ‘darkness’ merely strengthened the already dominant dichotomy in mainstream architectural history and reinforced already highly prejudiced views of what is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ architecture. Architectural

⁴⁵ Barbara Miller Lane, ‘Architects in Power: Politics and Ideology in the Work of Ernst May and Albert Speer,’ *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xviii:1 (Summer 1986): 283-4.

⁴⁶ William Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996; first edition, 1982), 11-12.

debates on aesthetic and formal issues coincided fully with moral judgements. Other dimensions of discussion in the debate on modern architecture in relation to the Classical style and Nazi and totalitarian architecture are not mentioned by Frampton. For him, the 'taste for Neo-Classical monumentality' is exclusively a fascist phenomenon and was only favoured by such totalitarian regimes as Germany, France, Italy and the USA. Intriguingly the USA is included in the list of totalitarian states, although not Britain and her former colonies. Frampton added that, 'the [American] Federal Government was too conservative to become a patron of the New Tradition.'⁴⁷ Following the historiography established by the Modernist historians, Frampton's 'critical' history is not alone in separating the Neo-Classical style of the 1930s from the architectural history written by Modernist historians. 'Classical references,' according to Frampton, 'however abstract, are as incomprehensible as they are patronizing.'⁴⁸ Despite being a modernist, he followed the Classicist notion that architectural components such as 'ramps, walkways, lifts, staircases, escalators, chimneys, ducts and garbage chutes' must be concealed behind the façade, so that 'the main body of the building was free to express itself'. This is later criticised by Benevolo as 'a suppression of empirical fact that enabled architecture to symbolize the power of reason through the rationality of its own discourse.'⁴⁹ This treatment of architectural components appears as early as the Victorian age, when a civic façade was usually required to mask the 'rough' industrial engineering structure of public buildings.

The manipulative nature of modernist historiography is more than apparent. This is certainly not recognised by the modernists themselves, despite the fact that the image of their leading architects was so selectively presented that it can be considered as propaganda. Stanford Anderson rightly suggests that Mies' and Gropius' success is the result of the architectural publications and education produced by an increasingly polemical group centred on the Museum of Modern Art, New York.⁵⁰ The Modern Movement, instead of being a general architectural

⁴⁷ Leonardo Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, vol. 1 (London: K. Paul, 1979), 9.

⁴⁸ Benevolo, 10.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁵⁰ Stanford Anderson, 'The "New Empiricism – Bay Region Axis": Kay Fisker and Postwar Debates on Functionalism, Regionalism, and Monumentality', *Journal of Architectural Education* (February 1997): 197-207.

tendency in the first half of twentieth century, was carefully forged by Giedion, the leading Modernist historian, and the closely allied Le Corbusier and CIAM. Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani suggests in his various writings that National Socialist architecture was developed in the historical background of the turn of the twentieth century and ‘represented no real break’ with the architectural history in the past.⁵¹

1.3 Reflections on Modernity: Enlightenment project - machine, rationality and technology

Freedom, in whatever shape it appears, is another name for constraint. ... What the critical theorists call liberation or emancipation is nothing more (or less) than the passing from one structure of constraint to another, a passing that will always be attended by the ‘discovery of new possibilities,’ but of possibilities that will be no less (or more) constrained than those that have been left behind.

~Stanley Fish⁵²

The historicity that defines and ascribes additional value to classical motifs is constantly reiterated by architects throughout history. The repetition of the classical style created within this system a tension that became the main force stimulating later architectural revolutions. Scrutiny of and scepticism about one’s own cultural and social production - in this case, architecture - came with the philosophy of the Enlightenment. The new Enlightenment attitude, which scrutinised the universality asserted in the previous age, brought the old historical perspective into question. However, the change did not take place overnight, because this revivalism since the

⁵¹ See Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani, ‘Berlin Modernism and the Architecture of the Metropolis.’ *Mies in Berlin*, compiled by Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002, 34-65, and *Moderne Architektur in Deutschland 1900 bis 1950. Reform und Tradition*, compiled by Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani and Romana Schneider (Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1992).

⁵² Stanley Fish, ‘Critical Self-Consciousness. Or Can We Know What We’re Doing?’ in *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 459-60.

Renaissance was to continue until at least the end of the Second World War, when the close association of classicism, power and the atrocity of the totalitarian regimes finally terminated this trend that had lasted for more than three centuries in western architectural history. In other words, had it not been for the extreme exploitation of totalitarian regimes, classical revivalism would most likely have continued to stimulate architectural debates today.

The Enlightenment concept of democracy provided architects with individual freedom, although it depended largely on how democracy was defined. Considering various architectural styles throughout history, there was indeed a stage in architectural history when architects took their freedom to produce a large variety of recycled designs, for instance, Gothic-revival, Baroque-Revival, neo-Byzantine and many others. However, according to the modern historicism of the Frankfurt School, individuals can never be fully free from their social and historical context. Especially is this the case with architects, whose patronage relies heavily on powerful religious authorities or political states.

Modernity, the history of modernism and National Socialist architecture have in recent decades been explored in the light of post-modern critical theory. The *Einverständnis* and 'validity-claims'⁵³ (borrowing Habermas' terminology) of various disciplines of critical and historical studies have provided critical insights into the understanding of modernity.

The concept of modernity can be traced back to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers, seeking to achieve 'objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic.'⁵⁴ In the process the potentials of these areas would be freed from superstition and mystery. The Enlightenment philosophers wanted to make practical use of these specialized cultures for the enrichment of everyday life and more specifically for the rationalisation of everyday life. Arts and sciences were expected to promote 'not

⁵³Jürgen Habermas in his 'What is Universal Pragmatics?' clarifies understanding (*Verständigung*) and the importance of an agreement (*Einverständnis*) in the possible communicative action. 'Agreement is based on recognition of the corresponding validity-claims of comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness, and rightness. We can see that the word *understanding* is ambiguous.' (119) See Jürgen Habermas, 'What is Universal Pragmatics,' William Outhwaite (ed.) *The Habermas Reader* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 118-31.

⁵⁴Habermas, 'Modernity: An Incomplete Project,' selected in *Postmodern Culture*, edited by Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1985; First published, 1983), 9.

only the control of natural forces but also understanding of the world and of the self, moral progress, the justice of institutions and even the happiness of human beings.⁵⁵

The typical characteristics of modernity, as commonly accepted by critical social theorists today, are progress, technology and bureaucracy. Since the eighteenth century there existed the assumption that modernity was both distinctive from and superior to any civilization preceded it; and the modern era also believed in the notion that it knew fully ‘what modernity is all about.’⁵⁶ In order to achieve progress in society, modern nation-states, be they capitalist, socialist or communist, were often ‘prepared to sacrifice an entire generation or more’ and ‘to minimize the human costs of each step in the process.’⁵⁷ Workers were trained to meet the specific demands of technological production. Their tasks were quantified and standardised in a fashion that they were measurable. The workforce was transformed into a state of ‘machinelike functionality’.⁵⁸ The individual’s contribution was reproducible. Standardisation reduced the value of his contribution, and of his sense of personal worth. Thus, individuality was diminished through homogenisation incorporated into the work process, and was eventually replaced by anonymity.

The ‘modernized’ society used machines, technology and standardization to achieve progress in society by substituting human ‘defects’ with technology – an objective that was mystically saturated with optimism. The notion of progress, coinciding with ‘advancement’, carried the mission of civilization forward to a better world. It suggested a linear journey of human civilization that either moved forward and proceeded, or retreated. No other alternatives were envisaged. In criticising the authority of science, Hannah Arendt argued that the idea of progress was an irrational belief that dominated nineteenth century industrial society.

Progress, to be sure, is a more serious and a more complex item offered at the superstition fair of our time. The irrational nineteenth-century belief in *unlimited* progress has found universal acceptance chiefly because of the astounding development of the natural sciences, which,

⁵⁵ Ibid..

⁵⁶ Peter and Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner. *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 7.

⁵⁷ Ibid..

⁵⁸ Ibid., 26.

since the rise of the modern age, actually have been ‘universal’ sciences and therefore could look forward to an unending task in exploring the immensity of the universe.⁵⁹

Thus civilisation, driven by unending progress, sees the task of mankind as moving ‘forward’ and discriminates between what belongs to the past and what jeopardises the possibility of achieving progress. This includes the weaker and the minorities – a notion of modernity highly exploited by social Darwinists. Fascination with the notion of progress and with advanced technology is closely associated with faith in scientific methodology, which is not questioned in the modern age.

Aside from these elements, modernity also consists of self-consciousness, self-determination and self-realization, as defined by Habermas. The products of the Enlightenment such as the ‘conscious’ and the ‘unconscious’, forces of production and of destruction, ideology and notions of freedom all clash with each other in the modern age, without clear logical connections. Thus, the complexity of self-consciousness, self-reflection and self-criticism in modernity is that they are ‘at once intuition and emancipation, comprehension and liberation from dogmatic dependence.’⁶⁰

Berger teased out the complexity of modern consciousness by discussing it at two hierarchical levels: the primary ‘carriers’ of technological production and the bureaucratically organized state; and the secondary ‘carriers’ of urbanization. Within the organized state, society is a ‘mobilized stratification system’: the ‘private sphere’ is a key context of individual life. Layers of the system are built upon it, from the distinctive institutions of scientific and technological innovation, mass education and the extension of it, to the mass media as communication.⁶¹ Urbanization should be understood both in the sense of the growth of cities and the expansion of urban life styles. Closely related to this theme is the increase of ‘mobility’, both the physical mobility of emigration between countries and cities, and social mobility between different classes.

⁵⁹ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (London: Allen Lane, 1970), 61.

⁶⁰ Fish, Stanley Fish, ‘Critical Self-Consciousness, Or Can We Know What We’re Doing?’ in *Doing What Comes Naturally, Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 448-9.

⁶¹ Peter and Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner, 103.

One way to look at the diminished heterogeneity of modernity, also suggested by Habermas, is that Enlightenment has been manipulated to such an extent that its elements are no longer linked to one another as in other regular functional contexts. This therefore creates a unique condition where ‘unwilling accomplices in a contradictory process [are] permeated by oppositional conflict.’ As a consequence, ‘the differences and oppositions are so undermined and even collapsed that critique can no longer discern contrasts, shadings, and ambivalent tones within the flat and faded landscape of a totally administered, calculated, and power-laden world.’⁶² In modern society with conscious social manipulation, the idea that society shares a common goodness, which a ‘correct’ order automatically leads, vanishes. No event takes place without undergoing constant and ceaseless negotiations of power. Thus, as pointed out by Peter Dews, the co-ordination of action becomes increasingly dependent on explicit, argumentatively achieved agreement, rather than on the background consensus of the world.⁶³ This is so much the case in modern society that the substantial existence of individual life, and indeed of the general world, grows to be increasingly divided from each other. To a large extent Habermas neglects the universalist component of modern consciousness, as criticized by Lyotard, who regards his ‘emancipatory pluralism’ as equivalent to ‘a retreat into fragmented and particularistic forms of consciousness.’

It has been argued that the scientific and technical knowledge of modernity is cumulative, either being accumulated in a regular, continuous and unanimous form or a periodic, discontinuous and conflicting one.⁶⁴ Apart from the issue of consciousness and society, the methodology of science is accepted without being subjected to scrutiny in the modern age. Post-modern critics tend to challenge its legitimacy in order to understand how the authority of science was established within the discourse of modernity. Lyotard argued that the

question of the legitimacy of science has been indissociably linked to that of the legitimation of the legislator since the time of Plato. From

⁶² Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987), 338.

⁶³ Peter Dews, ‘Habermas: Autonomy and Solidarity,’ in Hall et al, *Modernity and Its Futures*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 364.

⁶⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 9.

this point of view, the right to decide what is true is not independent of the right to decide what is just, even if the statements consigned to these two authorities differ in nature. The point is that there is a strict interlinkage between the kind of language called science and the kind called ethics and politics: they both stem from the same perspective, the same 'choice' if you will – the choice called the Occident.⁶⁵

It is crucial to recognise this problematique of the knowledge of science when discussing modernity. Once the legitimacy of the foundation of science, on which technological advancement largely relies, is uncovered and normalised, its esoteric authority becomes as questionable as knowledge in any other domain.

All in all, the optimism created since Enlightenment was seen to have been shattered in the twentieth century. Aside from problems of morality and humanism, as observed by Habermas, the segregation of knowledge also plays a deciding role in undermining this optimism. 'The differentiation of science, morality and art has come to mean the autonomy of the segments treated by the specialist and their separation from the hermeneutics of everyday communication.'⁶⁶ The growing division in knowledge has prevented interactions among different disciplines and caused the false negation of culture.

1.4 Modernism – Artists' responses to modernity

Negative - Arts and Crafts Movement and Spirituality

Radical artists at the turn of twentieth century looked for inspiration to nature. Natural forces, it was hoped, would reshape society to create a better world. They spoke of spirit (*Geist*), feeling (*Fühlen*) and will (*Wollen*).⁶⁷ The *Neue Möglichkeit* and spirituality in art were constant themes in artistic discussion. Architects seemingly took upon themselves the mission and the authority to reorganise and re-design a better world based on their own vision. This tradition can be traced back to

⁶⁵ Ibid..

⁶⁶ Habermas, 'Modernity: An Incomplete Project,' 9.

⁶⁷ Timothy O. Benson, 'Fantasy and Functionality: The Fate of Utopia,' in *Expressionist Utopias: Paradise, Metropolis, Architectural Fantasy*, edited by Timothy O. Benson, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1994, 14.

the Renaissance, when Alberti claimed architecture as the greatest of the arts; architects therefore represented the Renaissance notion of the 'complete man'- in other words, the hero and in Nietzsche's term, the 'superman'.⁶⁸

The Arts and Crafts movement was one modern example with which artists attempted to reform society through arts and architecture. It had a direct and profound influence on twentieth century architectural development. After the industrialism of the late nineteenth century, the Arts and Crafts movement was founded by theorists, architects and designers in Victorian Britain. They sought to provide a spiritual harmony as an alternative to industrial harshness. The movement was a reaction against the Industrial Age and widely promoted the usage of vernacular materials in architecture. The main theme was that all creative arts are equally important and the process of production as important as the finished product. Most of the Arts and Crafts leaders were from the middle class. They aimed at abolishing divisions between art and industry, and between art and craft.⁶⁹ This idea was endorsed by German art critics, both Modernists and National Socialists. Wolters, propagating National Socialist architecture, spoke of *Baumeister*, instead of architects; and of *Bauformen* instead of architectural style, in order to give importance to tradition, conventional apprenticeship, handicraft and the creativity of the craftsman.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago Press, 1991), 19.

⁶⁹ See Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1995; original, 1991).

Jede Zeit aber profiliert und detailliert anders. Das liegt schon in der immer neuen Stellung der architektonischen Aufgabe. Die Staufer stellten andere Aufgaben als die Karolinger, Friedrich der Große andere als Philipp II. ... Es gibt jedoch ungeschriebene Gesetze der Bauformen, die der Baumeister instinktiv fühlen muß, die ebenfalls schwer erlernbar sind, denen jedoch der Architekt durch gründliches Studium des Alten und unermüdliche entwurfliche Arbeit näherkommt.⁷⁰

As A. W. N. Pugin rejected the early Victorian fashion of classical architecture, and favoured a revival of the medieval Gothic, Wolters too spoke of a revival of the styles of the country's past glories.

John Ruskin and William Morris, the most distinctive figures in the movement, echoed Pugin's belief in the utility of Gothic design and in the nature of Gothic style in his celebrated *The Stones of Venice* (1851). Ruskin condemned the artistic restrictions imposed by machine-oriented Victorian Britain and promoted freedom of expression for builders and craftsmen. Ruskin re-introduced morality to art and believed society could be improved through reforming its art. His advice to artists and designers to turn to nature for inspiration and instruction also profoundly influenced architects at the turn of the twentieth century, such as Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Secessionists, and later National Socialist artists. Their vernacular and organic house styles inspired most German housing designs, especially after the publication of Hermann Muthesius' *Das Englische Haus* in 1904. From the use of local material, room arrangement, roof style, to the warm welcoming interior settings, their concept of designs, both romantic and practical, was popularized throughout Europe and America. Additionally, Morris' promotion of settlement houses, which aimed at providing accommodation, group craft classes and fellowship, formed an urban counterpart to the rural home industries. Member of the Arts and Crafts movement generally believed that good quality designs and good social conditions depended largely on each other. Their ideas were to be extensively

⁷⁰ Wolters, 167.

followed and explored by urban planners throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

In Germany the period between the end of the Bismarck era and the collapse of the Weimar Republic produced important cultural circumstances, which gave rise to the most sophisticated articulation of modernity. Hermann Bahr, the Austrian art critic wrote extensively for the Secessionist movement in both Germany and Austria. His *Die Moderne* (1890), written in a manifesto tone - the literary style typical for the turn of the twentieth century - presented the utopian idols shared by many of his contemporary artists, architects and theorists. Starting by expressing his discontent with existing social conditions, Bahr remarked, 'everywhere I searched with tremulous desire, but nowhere was there an answer.'⁷¹ He continued to define the idea of modernity, 'Modernity exists only as our desire, while outside it is everywhere, outside of ourselves. It is not in our spirit. This is the agony and sickness of our feverish, frothing century: life has departed from the spirit.'⁷² Bahr evoked a spiritual sensation. Modern man must transform himself to become the 'new human being' through self-purification and denounce all remaining old attitudes. 'Truth' was every bit as substantial and unchallengeable in his modern belief: 'We have no law other than the truth, as it is experienced by everybody.'⁷³ Later as a spokesman for the Austrian Secessionists, he illustrated this utopian concept of an artists-based community in *Ein Dokumente deutscher Kunst*, the manifesto of the movement:

We must build a town, a whole town! Nothing else will do. The authorities will give us a field, ... then we will create a world there. It means nothing if somebody builds merely one house. How can it be beautiful houses when the street layout isn't beautiful? ... No - a field; otherwise nothing can be done. ... there we will then demonstrate what we are capable of; throughout the layout and down to the last detail, everything controlled by the same spirit, ... but in the middle, like a

⁷¹ Hermann Bahr, 'Die Moderne' originally published in *Moderne Dichtung* (1 January 1890), translated by Christiane Crasemann Colins, published in Francesco Dal Co, *Figures of Thoughts and Architecture*, 288-91.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 288-89.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 291.

temple in a sacred grove, a house of work, artists' studio together with craftsmen's workshops, where the artists would now always have the calm and ordered crafts, and the craftsmen would always have the liberated and purging art close at hand, until both would, so to speak, grow together as a single person.⁷⁴

Artists demanded a new piece of land to establish a meticulously detailed utopian world that could ensure minimum compromise with and influence from existing society. The Arts and Crafts movement ideal of equal importance between handicrafts, craftsmen and artists is clearly echoed and further celebrated in Darmstadt, an artists' colony representing the spirit of modernity abroad in both Austria and Germany at the turn of the twentieth century.

The idealization of handicraft and social reform was never fully accomplished, due to the impossibility of transforming theory into practice. Superfluous refinements could after all be sustained only by rich and wealthy patrons. The vehicle of the Arts and Crafts movement was the vernacular style. But privatization and the pursuit of luxury compromise the intended balance between artists, handicraft and society without distinction among members of society.⁷⁵ The linear relationship between handicraft and natural aspirations that nourished the working community was broken, since superfluous refinement found its place around the domestic hearth, the urban home and the metropolitan dwelling.⁷⁶ Bourgeois households in the age of consumption were the dominant force that brought the objectification of handicraft.

The dichotomy of culture and civilisation was connected to a patriotic tendency in the conservative camp. For instance, Moeller van den Bruck's definition of 'style' is Gilly's Classicism and Schinkel's Prussianism. Style demands a monumentality that 'embraces the warrior's strut, the legislator's tongue, the scorn for the moment, and the rendering of accounts before eternity,' where 'the unity of artist and people is built, a unity that means to impose itself on history.'⁷⁷ The key word for German

⁷⁴ Herman Bahr, *Ein Dokumente deutscher Kunst*, 1901, quoted by Ian Latham, *Joseph Maria Olbrich* (London, 1980), 6.

⁷⁵ Francesco Dal Co, *Figures of Architecture and Thoughts: German architecture culture 1880-1920* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 31.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

modernism, *Sachlichkeit*, is used symbolically in *Der Preussische Stil* to combine the tendency in the Werkbund with the concept of a 'German Style' for political and economic purposes. The Prussian style is encoded with patriotic notions of the origin of civilization, cultural harmony and the preservation of the highest cultural value of the German Volk. By exploiting the idea of a national style, Moeller van den Bruck also interpreted and defined the political concepts of *Deutschtum* and *Preussentum* for the conservative nationalists. Other cultural critics such as Walther Rathenau also praised Prussian virtues as the most valid for Europe and Germany; and the nature, customs and essence of every German village should be preserved and defended. They were of such a high quality that they would therefore become the strongest and the most dominant in the world in the future.

Karl Scheffler in his *Die Architektur der Großstadt* (1913) shared with Oswald Spengler, Paul de Lagarde and Wilhelm Riehl the vision of the *völkisch* tradition. The ideology expressed in the concept of the garden city - the value of the single-family residence, the bond to the soil, the preservation of regional and local characteristics, is highly influential. Scheffler regarded the main task of architecture as the definition of 'the forms and modalities of a radical therapy aimed at overcoming the acute sickness represented by the large city in the development of modern civilization.'⁷⁸ This feature was fundamentally shared by the Werkbund members, such as Hermann Muthesius, Fritz Schumacher, Theodor Fischer and Heinrich Tessenow. It was also commonly believed that the problem of the *Großstadt* demanded a balance between its two components, *Kultur* and *Zivilisation*.

Affirmative – Futurism, Werkbund and Le Corbusier

The Werkbund between 1907 and the outbreak of the First World War aimed at transforming beauty and quality - an aesthetic value that defended traditional morality and politics - into compatible and useful means for the exercise of the power of the state. This was a dominant tendency that most modern German architecture shared. The *Haus der Freundschaft* competition in Constantinople in 1916, jointly organised by the Werkbund and the *Türkische Vereinigung*, is one good example for this trend. Prominent contemporary architects were invited to this event,

⁷⁸ Ibid., 56.

including Peter Behrens, German Bestelmeyer, Paul Bonatz, Hugo Eberhardt, Martin Elsässer, August Endell, Theodor Fischer, Bruno Paul, Hans Poelzig, Richard Riemerschmid and Bruno Taut. The project presented the political and cultural statement that the Werkbund and the central Europe were both products of a single project with a single principle.

The concepts of 'German Style' and an universal *Wohnkultur* fostered by the Werkbund's activities was a broader political project that aimed at representing the culture of '*Mitteleuropa*.' The emphasis on its centrality, and therefore assumed its dominant status, in European culture was the prime factor that caused the Werkbund's architectural activity to revolve around politics. The Werkbund's program was, as Dal Co pointed out, intended to reconcile 'the aims of design with those of the political realm in a convergence of common principles but not of common experiences'.⁷⁹ The intertwining of architectural and political experience took place coincidentally as a result of a conscious political manoeuvre.

Similarly affirmatively in their response to modernity were the Italian Futurists active in the 1910s. The image of the Futurist city is an efficient, fast-moving machine, which appeared striking in an age when the dangers of the machine and of the damage caused by industrialization were provoking growing concern. The critical stance of the Arts and Crafts movement towards the machine, and the concept of restoring and conserving the historical heritage in Italy proposed by Ruskin and his followers were emphatically not shared by the Futurists. Instead, they celebrated the beauty of the straight line and metallic severity of modern machinery, which was later enhanced by the modernist in the 1920s. The city – the modern metropolis – was the prime inspiration for all Futurist activities. The machine dynamic in the heart of the contemporary city was regarded as the ideal context of the Futurist architecture: 'We will sing of the stirring of great crowds – workers, pleasure seekers, rioters and the confused sea of colour and sound as revolution sweeps through a modern metropolis.'⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ibid, 231.

⁸⁰ Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' published in 1909. quoted in Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996; first edition, 1977), 7.

The modern phenomenon and other emerging changes in the metropolis were vividly portrayed by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti – the leader of the movement - in *Le Futurisme*, 1913:

The contradictory forces of the banks, the leaders of fashion, revolutionary trade unions, ... electricians etc. the right to strike, equality before the law, the authority of numbers, the usurping power of the masses, the speed of international communications and the habits of hygiene and comfort, demand large well-ventilated apartment houses, railways... tunnels, iron bridges, vast high speed liners, ...immense meeting halls and bathrooms designed for the rapid daily care of the body.⁸¹

Sant'Elia's 'power station as the cathedral of the electric religion' and Marinetti's 'beautiful great humming power station' both illustrated Futurist optimism in modernity and the worship of the machine aesthetic. Their most innovative architectural idea, proposed by Sant'Elia was that houses would last for less time than their creators, and that each generation must build its own city. The fundamental characteristics of the Futurists were independent from the past, impermanent, and above all, ephemeral. The new architecture was to be totally revolutionary and to be based on calculation and simplicity. Elasticity and lightness were to be provided by new materials such as concrete, steel, glass, cardboard and textile fibre, substituting stone, wood and bricks. Lines were to be dynamic, oblique and elliptical. Materials should be left bare, raw or violently coloured. Artists were no longer to seek inspirations from nature, but from machines. The streets were no longer to be at ground level, but would both plunge deep down into the earth and climb many storeys up into the sky to embrace the dynamic metropolitan traffic.

Leading modernist architects, such as the Futurists and Le Corbusier, had strong faith in modernist planning. They were not however aware of their authoritative tendencies. The idea of architects as master planners, the elites, who understood what was best for society and who would lead it to a better world, is similar to the

⁸¹ Ibid., 124.

totalitarian approach. Despite this, historians such as Lars Olof Larsson and Stephen Helmer commonly held the view that Le Corbusier's *Contemporary City for Three Million People*, 1922, emphasised more the idea of 'order' than of dictatorship.⁸² However, less controversially, Le Corbusier's tendency to lean towards authoritarianism appeared clearly during his association with the French Vichy regime. He perceived the architect as a regulator 'empowered by absolute government authority to work out the nation's urban destiny on the basis of 'objective' principles.'⁸³ As were most architects and intellectuals of the time, Le Corbusier was equally unaware of the potential for abuse inherent in the idea of 'objective science' and of the ruler's power.

Apart from the authority imposed from above by architects, architectural projects involve other types of power relationships. Building guidelines, regulations and prescriptive specifications for architectural competitions and projects embody interests of different social groups. Texts that specify the functions and needs of a building are themselves the outcome of various power manoeuvres. Be they for prisons, hospitals, offices, commercial complexes, residential houses, or urban planning, the regulations imposed are rarely discussed explicitly.⁸⁴ The meticulous details in texts represent the power relationships that are to shape and to decide the final result of an architectural project.

⁸² Stephen D. Helmer, *Hitler's Berlin: The Speer Plans for Reshaping the Central City* (Michigan: University Microfilms International Research Press, 1985, 1980), 83; and Lars Olof Larsson, *Die Neugestaltung der Reichshauptstadt Albert Speer GBI Plan für Berlin*. (Berlin and Stuttgart: Hatje, 1978).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁸⁴ Thomas A. Markus and Deborah Cameron, *The World Between the Spaces: Buildings and Language* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002).

2 The Discourse of Monumentality before 1933

2.1 The 'Monumental' Tradition⁸⁵

The word 'monumental' in Latin, *monumentalis*, *monument-um*, conveys the sense of 'something that reminds.' In *Conversations-Lexikon* (1853), the definition of 'monumental art' is '*Monumente, Monumentale Kunst. Monumente sind Kunstwerke, meist von größerer Ausdehnung, welche zum Andenken an eine merkwürdige Begebenheit oder hervorragende Persönlichkeiten errichtet werden. Dazu kann die Baukunst, die Sculptur und die Malerei aufgerufen werden.*'⁸⁶ While the commemoration of a distinct event or person is the chief meaning, the characteristics of gigantism and impressiveness are already commonly recognised in the definition of monumental art. The *Illustriertes Bau-Lexikon* (1866) defines monumental to be '*ein Gebäude dann, wenn in seinem Äußeren sich ausdrückt, daß es nicht für den Privatgebrauch oder für vorübergehende Zwecke errichtet ist, sondern daß es dem öffentlichen Leben dient und demgemäß für lange Zeiten bestehen soll.*'⁸⁷ A monumental building is not erected for private or temporary use. It is public property serving social and communal purposes. On the one hand, 'monumental' pertains to communal value; on the other hand, durability is also an important feature relating to 'historical value', one of the three layers of Alois Riegl's analysis of monuments.

The major definition of 'monumental' is twofold: a) having impressive and imposing scale and b) serving as a monument. These are intertwined in the discourse of monumentality in the German-English context today. In English, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word monumental means primarily 'extremely great, stupendous, massive and permanent', while a secondary meaning is 'pertaining to a monument or memorial structure, to monuments in general, historically prominent and significant, and comparable to a monument in massiveness and permanence'.

⁸⁵ The theme of 'monumental' as monument and its relation with commemoration and national identity, especially in the Kaiser Wilhelm era, is a well-researched area and will therefore not be included in this thesis. A selection of essays in *Kunstverwaltung, Bau- und Denkmal-Politik im Kaiserreich*, compiled by Ekkehard Mai and Stephan Waetzoldt, gave a sophisticated account of debates and discourse of *Nationaldenkmäler Bewegung* from various aspects.

⁸⁶ F. A. Brockhaus, *Conversations-Lexikon*, Vol. 10, no. 10 (Leipzig, 1853), 642; cited by Lutz Tittel, '*Monumentaldenkmäler von 1871 bis 1918 in Deutschland Ein Beitrag zum Thema Denkmal und Landschaft*' in *Kunstverwaltung, Bau- und Denkmal-Politik im Kaiserreich*, edited by Ekkehard Mai and Stephan Waetzoldt (Berlin: Mann, 1981), 216-18.

⁸⁷ Oscar Mothes, *Illustriertes Bau-Lexikon*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1866, keyword: "monumental" quoted in Tittel, 216.

Also as François Choay pointed out in his discussion of monumentality and memory, the current usage of the words monument/monumental, aside from their commemorative connotation, is also associated with the idea of aesthetics and gigantism.⁸⁸ However, in German *monumental* is defined as ‘significant, formidable, vast’ (*ganz erheblich*), ‘impressive’ (*imposant*), ‘massive’ (*gewaltig*), ‘enormous size’ (*ungeheuer groß*), and ‘of gigantic mass’ (*vom riesigen Aufmaß*). It refers almost exclusively to scale and to the sense of being impressed or overwhelmed. The equivalent of ‘monument’ in German is *Denkmal* or *Grabmal*, which does not indicate ‘*monu-*’ as a linguistic root. *Monumental* is an adjective derived from the English word ‘monument’ and was not in common usage in Germany until the mid-nineteenth century.⁸⁹ Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the meaning of ‘monumental’ in architecture came increasingly to stress the size and dimension of buildings.⁹⁰ For instance, Spemann’s *Kunstlexikon* (1905) says, ‘*Monumental, (wird) von einem Kunstwerk und namentlich von Gebäuden gesagt: groß, einfach, auf alles Kleine und Kleinliche der Form verzichtend.*’⁹¹

Edmund Burke remarked in his comparison of the concept of the sublime and the beautiful that, ‘sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth, and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; ... beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive.’⁹² This highlights the essential connection between the sublime and the monumental. It is that which is beyond our ability to measure and thus comprehend evokes a sublime response in the viewer. It is the great, the impressive and the monumental that we call the sublime. If the sublime is one of the essential elements of monumentality, the manipulation of the unconsciousness of the masses becomes crucial to the control of a nation’s art and culture. The fascination of monumentality is that it can effortlessly absorb individuals into magnetism of the masses.

⁸⁸ Françoise Choay, ‘Alberti: The Invention of Monumentality and Memory,’ *Harvard Architectural Review*, Vol. 4 (Spring, 1984): 99.

⁸⁹ Major dictionaries compiled in nineteenth century such as *Schauplatz der Künste und Handwerke* (1769), *Baukunst der Alten* (1796), *Wörterbuch zum Beruf der Aesthetik der Schönen Künste* (1810) do not have entries for the word ‘monument’.

⁹⁰ Tittel, 218.

⁹¹ Wilhelm Spemann, *Kunstlexikon* (Berlin und Stuttgart, 1905), 639; quoted by Tittel, 218.

⁹² Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967, 124.

At every stage in history architecture attempts to imitate nature. The aim is to reproduce ‘the harmonious system of cosmic laws.’⁹³ In search of a balance between nature and human society, the notions of the sublime and harmony provide a utopian foundation for a rational architectural theory. The focus on megalomaniac and impressive dimension of monumentality, however, is detached from the notion of the sublime, for monumentality in the colossal sense loses reference to the scale of the body and creates a contrast between stone and the sublime. This void in between, according to Verschaffel, is a space where proportions cease to make sense and ‘cannot be filled any more by a body ... but only by a *mass* of people. It asks for a leadership governing a monstrous gigantic body or a machine....’⁹⁴ The unprecedented enormous resources required to achieve monumentality in architectural construction inevitably drive society to technology and machine. In this sense monumentality, a manmade sublime, further dissociates itself from the true notion of the sublime that is to be experienced in nature.⁹⁵

The German philosophical tradition of Kant, Schiller and Hegel held that art was subjective thought and it did not possess material properties on the basis of which it could be judged. Despite being designed by artists, a work of art mirrors nature. Schiller said that ‘art must abandon actuality and soar with becoming boldness above necessity; for Art is a daughter of Freedom, and must receive her commission from the needs of spirits, not from the exigency of matter.’⁹⁶ From this point of view there are hardly any substantial grounds to debate functionalism. For if the fulfilment of spiritual needs is the nature of art, to search for and to create monumentality is more an artistic task than the satisfaction of the functional demands of necessity and utility. Stone was the material for the construction of powerful monumental buildings thousands of years before iron was introduced in constructional techniques. Throughout the nineteenth century stone remained the most convincing material to create powerful and monumental effects both visually

⁹³ Denis Hollier, ‘The Architectural Metaphor,’ in *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1992; original edition, 1989), 34.

⁹⁴ Bart Verschaffel, ‘The monumental: on the meaning of a form’, *Journal of Architecture*, vol. 4 (Winter 1999): 335.

⁹⁵ See also David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (London: MIT Press, 1994).

⁹⁶ Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, trans. Reginald Snell (New York: Ungar, 1965), 26, quoted by Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 169.

and psychologically. Additionally, the aesthetic discourse that regarded architecture as the art of the mass also provoked considerable resistance to the use of iron in Germany, where stone continued to be preferred. The amazement produced by the astonishing stone Egyptian temples discussed in Hegel's *Aesthetic* is a typical example.⁹⁷

Throughout the tradition of German Romanticism, the theme of death was explored in philosophy, literature, art, architecture, music and cinema. It was in some way 'an art rejected by the Nazis, who nevertheless participated in the sensibility behind it and who of course adopted and integrated its theme. ... For the Nazis, this motif of death takes on a special dimension – urgent, essential, in some ways religious, mythical.'⁹⁸

Fragments of history are petrified as monuments to compensate for our incapability to handle death and the incompleteness unveiled by death. Architectural monuments have been the most popular form adopted by society to cope with the void produced by death. Thus, by conceptualising and petrifying death, we assuage the fear of it; and the mind can rest assured that the unknown has been explored. One criticism of National Socialist architecture was its combination of kitsch and death. The stone romanticism shared and promoted by the National Socialists was simplified to cater for the common taste. This was the style chosen by society to cope with the unsolvable void of death that caused both excitement and fear.

Monuments are built for the past, the dead and the victims. In Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, the techniques of making art and creating monuments are seen 'as stratagems – which themselves are, not coincidentally, minutely institutionalized and monumentalized – that transform the work of art into a residue and into a monument capable of enduring because from the outset it is produced in the form of that which is dead. It is capable of enduring not because of its force, in other words, but because of its weakness.'⁹⁹ The enigma produced by large-scale monuments demonstrates not the strength, but the weakness of society. Heidegger holds the view that it 'may even

⁹⁷ See further discussion in Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 195.

⁹⁸ Saul Friedländer, *Reflections on Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1993), 42.

⁹⁹ Gianni Vattimo, 'Ornament/Monument,' in *The End of Modernity*, trans. Jon Snyder (London: Polity Press, 1988), 79-89.

be thought of in the sense of an architectural monument that contributes to form the background of our experience, but in itself generally remains the object of a distracted perception.¹⁰⁰

Oswald Spengler maintained that the experience of collective life eliminated the terror of death. However, the issue is not death and terror in everyday lives; rather, it is a 'ritualized, stylized, and aestheticized' death, which acts as a carrier of symbolic and ideological horror and monstrosity.¹⁰¹ The 'achievements' of modern society created by the political and economic dominance of the bourgeoisie enlarged the growing tensions in modern society. This provides an explanation for the conflict between men and modernity. Saul Friedländer noted that,

Neither liberalism nor Marxism responds to man's archaic fear of the transgression of some limits of knowledge and power ..., thus hiding what remains the fundamental temptation: the aspiration for total power, which, by definition, is the supreme transgression, the ultimate challenge, the superhuman combat that can be settled only by death.¹⁰²

The supreme power of the unknown and of nature that was inaugurated by the sublime in Wilhelmine Romanticism emerged at the turn of the century as a force that was tamed by the National Socialist leadership.

The need for monumentality exists throughout architectural history: from ancient Greek and Rome amphitheatres, medieval cathedrals, classical palaces and villas and early twentieth century state buildings, to modern high-rise office buildings. The dominant group in each era, be it political, religious, monarchical, colonial or commercial, seeks to demonstrate power by constructing in the monumental style. While monumentality was a recurring theme for architecture in the late nineteenth century, the phenomenon of monumentomania can be traced back to the Wilhelmine era - a consequence of an insecure nation struggling to assert itself on the world stage, a process that gradually separated Germany from European

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 80.

¹⁰¹ Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991: first edition, 1926,1928), 228-29.

¹⁰² Saul Friedländer, *Reflections on Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1993), 136.

rationalism.¹⁰³ The Bismarck cult had a profound anti-liberal influence on the political ideologies that shaped the establishment of German nationhood.¹⁰⁴ Bismarck monuments, built all over the country, were designed both to commemorate and to impress by virtue of the gigantic scale of their design. With the advent of the National Socialist regime, monumentality referred not directly to the construction of monuments and memorials, but rather to the grandiose effect created by buildings.

For political reasons, the National Socialist party debased the neo-Baroque style and the statuomania of the Wilhelmine bourgeois and rejected them as symbols of old conservative monarchical order.¹⁰⁵ In comparison to the Wilhelmine era, surprisingly few monuments or memorials were erected during the Third Reich period. Monumentality was a quality that National Socialist architects aimed to express in most public and major building projects.

The concept of monumentality relates not only to civic and historical monuments, but is also closely related to the element of order in classical architecture. This suggests symmetry, repetition, rhythm and balance as well as a sense of spatial amplitude and dimensional grandiosity.¹⁰⁶ Due to its association with National Socialist architecture, monumentality in post-1945 Western architecture has been and remains associated with the swastika and all the evil that symbol evokes. Critics such as Leon Krier argued that the monumentality of National Socialist architecture was not designed to frighten; its purpose was 'to raise enthusiasm and to seduce, to impress and overwhelm the masses, to offer protection and ultimately to deceive the captivated souls as to the final intentions of the industrial-military system.'¹⁰⁷ Yet it is specifically through this two-fold effect that Hitler's architecture achieved success: to seduce, impress and offer a false sense of security on the one hand, and to overwhelm, to frighten, to intimidate and to enslave, on the other.

¹⁰³ Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments, Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997* (London: Reaction Books, 1998), 66.

¹⁰⁴ See a detailed discussion on Bismarck statues by Michalski in the Chapter 'Bismarck and the Lure of Teutonic Granite' in *Public Monuments, Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997*, 56-76.

¹⁰⁵ Michalski, 93-4.

¹⁰⁶ See Franco Borsi, *The Monumental Era, European architecture and design 1929-1939* (London: Lund Humphries, 1987), 52.

¹⁰⁷ Leon Krier, 'An Architecture of Desire' *Architectural Design* 56, no. 4 (1986): 36.

After several decades of attempts to de-Nazify monumentality, this key architectural feature is no less contentious now than the post-war era. In discussing the elements of death and monument in Christo's wrapping of the Reichstag, Andreas Huyssen addresses controversial 'German questions' regarding monumentality in today's circumstances.

To what extent is the monumental a hidden dimension within modernism itself? Why is it that our prevailing notion of monumentality is so one-dimensional and itself immovably monumental that such questions usually do not even emerge? What is it that makes monumentality ... such a negative object of desire? Why is it that the reproach 'monumental' functions like a death sentence to any further discussion?¹⁰⁸

Post-war Anglo-German scholars have generally refused to juxtapose modernism/modernity with National Socialism. This view is to a large extent still current in Germany and architectural studies, particularly in relation to the historical epicentre: architectural planning and construction in Berlin. How should the public, Germans in particular, regard past and contemporary monumental architecture in the Potsdamer Platz? If building on a large and overwhelming scale was ultimately an unavoidable tendency of modern architectural development, how should German citizens experience monumental architecture against the background of the troubled and notorious history of the Third Reich and the Holocaust?

2.2 Monumentality: the Crisis of Modernism

The pursuit of monumentality in terms of scale was a goal shared by both classical architects and modernist architects. The Italian Futurists, the German Expressionists, and the Russian Constructivists all sought to present the aesthetics of the sublime and the grandiose with new technologies and machines.¹⁰⁹ Debates on monumentality began before the First World War. In '*Architektur*', an article published in 1910,

¹⁰⁸ Andreas Huyssen, 'Monumental Seduction' in *New German Critique*, no. 69 (Fall, 1996): 189.

¹⁰⁹ Christiane C. and George R. Collins, 'Monumentality: a critical matter in modern Architecture,' in *The Harvard Architectural Review*, vol. 4 (Spring, 1984): 15.

Adolf Loos pointed out the danger of the future of architecture becoming ‘the gravestone and the monument’¹¹⁰. Contrary to this negative evaluation of monumentality, Walter Gropius called for a new monumentality in a lecture he delivered in 1911 on ‘Monumental Art and Industrial Building.’¹¹¹ Gropius argued that monumentality stemming from the forms of buildings was capable of expressing the inner purpose of a building. The task of architects was to reveal this inner purpose of architecture with their artist talents. New types of buildings would require new forms to express this inner concept. Gropius also used modern industrial buildings such as Poelzig’s Chemical Factory at Luban and Behrens’ Turbine Factory in Berlin to illustrate the architecture of new monumentality, for which simplicity was the essential element to an authentic expression.

In an article appeared in *Architectural Review*, 1912, C. H. Reilly defined the necessary qualities for monumentality. Using the Dublin Customs House by James Gandon as an example, Reilly’s monumentality is in line with the nineteenth-century Anglo-American Classical school, which looked to ancient Greek and Roman culture for inspiration. His four essential qualities for monumentality were: unity of conception, mass, a large scale and absolute refinement. While ‘a complete unity’ is a design from which ‘nothing can be taken or added’, a large scale is also ‘necessary for monumental effect’.¹¹² However, not all four elements must be achieved at the same time for a building to be monumental. Both small cottages and large public buildings can be monumental by having unadorned proportions. The key for good monumental architecture is ‘emotion sincerely felt’. Reilly’s four qualities of monumentality, though they may appear conservative, summarize main elements in the discussion of monumentality before and after his time.

This widely discussed architectural theme inevitably attracted and continues to attract interest from different political ideologies, in particular totalitarian states, which went further to incorporate the grandiose effect to create the image of the supreme power of the dictatorship. A common anxiety of the post-war era was how

¹¹⁰ Adolf Loos, ‘Architektur’ (1910), in *Trozdern: Saemtliche Schriften* (Vienna: Herold, 1962); quoted by Barbara Miller Lane, *National Romanticism and Modern Architecture: The search for a new monumental architecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 247.

¹¹¹ Walter Gropius’ lecture, ‘Monumentale Kunst und Industriebau,’ April 10, 1911; see Winfried Nerdinger, *Der Architekt Walter Gropius* (Berlin: Mann, 1985), 9.

¹¹² C. H. Reilly, ‘The Monumental Qualities in Architecture’ *Architectural Review*, vol. 32, no. 191 (October 1912): 196.

to achieve monumentality in architectural design without being associated with images of totalitarian states.

Monumentality appeared to be a lost territory which theorists of the Modern Movement were eager to re-claim from totalitarian regimes. After the controversial competition for the Palace of the League of Nations in 1927, where modernists believed the jury of the League had ‘killed’ monumentality in modern architecture,¹¹³ the major debate over monumentality emerged again in 1943, led by mainstream modernist historians, namely Sigfried Giedion and Henry-Russell Hitchcock. Up to this point, modernists had to choose either to stop embracing monumentality, to abandon it altogether, or to differentiate between the monumentality of the Modern Movement and that of totalitarianism.

In a discussion on monumentality with Giedion, the artist Fernand Leger and the architect Jose Luis Sert were both concerned that monumentality was ‘a dangerous thing,’ and it would be ‘dangerous to revive a term that had become so debased’¹¹⁴, by association with various forms of tyranny. To Giedion – one of the leading modernists - there existed however, an unmistakable distinction between architecture since the nineteenth century and the historical heritages created prior to that, such as the Acropolis, Gothic cathedrals and Renaissance churches. Architectural revivalisms in the nineteenth century had so misused the concept of monumentality that the architectural styles associated with such notions ‘became poisonous to everybody who touched them’, whereas historical buildings before the nineteenth century were ‘great monumental heritages of mankind’.¹¹⁵ The outcome of the discussion among Leger, Sert and Giedion was the publication of the ‘Nine Points on Monumentality’ (1943), in which the concept of monumentality was redefined:

Monuments are human landmarks which men have created as symbols for their ideals, for their aims, and for their actions. They are intended to outlive the period which originated them, and constitute a heritage

¹¹³ Sigfried Giedion, ‘The Need for a New Monumentality,’ in *Harvard Architectural Review*, vol. 4 (Spring, 1984), 56.

¹¹⁴ Leger and Sert were writing on this theme with Giedion in the early 1940s. See Sigfried Giedion, *Architecture, You, and Me: the diary of a development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1958; German edition, 1956), 22.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

for future generations. As such, they form a link between the past and the future.¹¹⁶

Statements such as creating ‘a link between the past and the future,’ ‘the expression of man’s highest cultural needs,’ and ‘the translation of their collective force into symbols’ echo the ‘spirit of the collective feeling’ propagated by the National Socialists to represent ‘their’ modern time.

Modernist critics after 1945 believed the architecture of democracy could contain no element of monumentality, since the sheer scale of construction could be achieved only by establishing strong political power in society:

A totalitarian nation demands buildings which will express the omnipotence of the State and the complete subordination of the individual. When modern architecture tries to express these things, it ceases to be modern, for modern architecture has its roots in the concept of democracy.¹¹⁷

Giedion in his *Architecture, You and Me*, published in 1958, devoted several chapters to this continuing debate over monumentality. Distinctions were clearly drawn between what he called the ‘pseudo-monumentality’ of fascism and the ‘new’ and ‘correct’ monumentality, which was promoted by him and by Modernists. Following the traumatic experience of the totalitarian regimes of 1930s and 1940s, society mistrusted the concept of a central elite leadership and the abuse of architecture to serve as symbols to re-enforce its power. In the German-Austrian *Zeitgeist* tradition, Giedion asserted further that, ‘Monumentality springs from the eternal need of people to create symbols for their activities and for their fate or destiny, for their religious beliefs and for their social convictions. Every period has the impulse to create symbols in the form of monuments, ...’¹¹⁸ Following this argument, National Socialist monumentality that claimed to represent the spirit of its time was equally ‘true’ and as valid as the modernist notion of architecture.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 48-49.

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth Mock (ed), *Built in USA: 1932-1944* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1944), 25.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 28.

2.3 Monumentality and the Leading National Socialist Architects

He (Poelzig) may have felt in tune with the atmosphere of the years that prepared the ground for it. I describe the time like this because the sudden growth of the movement in the years leading up to 1933 did not take place in a vacuum. National Socialism – or should I say, an atmosphere related to it – was one of the decisive factors that shaped public life in those years.

Julius Posener¹¹⁹

It was in the ‘atmosphere’ of the years leading up to 1933 that the roots of National Socialist architecture were nurtured. The mentors of the GBI architects were often prominent German architects whose careers had culminated during the Weimar period, although not all of them directly contribute to the Greater Berlin project. Hans Poelzig and Heinrich Tessenow, for instance, had more than just one or two National Socialist sympathisers among their pupils. Many of the thirty strong staff of the GBI office had studied with Tessenow before joining the team.¹²⁰ These included Albert Speer, Rudolf Wolters and Friedrich Tamms, who later became active and leading figures in the party. They shared the conviction that the National Socialist movement must change not only the state and its political ideology, but also every aspect of the lives of the German people. They believed architecture must represent the spirit of *the* great era and transform the essence of *Völkische Kultur* into a visible form that would endure for centuries. This approach to architecture was by no means innovative and indeed was part of the *Weltanschauung* anticipated by the architects of an earlier generation. For a better understanding of the development of National Socialist monumentality, it is therefore essential to investigate how the architectural discourse of monumentality was perceived by these architects before and during the Third Reich regime.

¹¹⁹ Posener, 250.

¹²⁰ Francesco Dal Co and Sergio Polano, ‘Interview with Albert Speer’ *Oppositions*, no. 12 (Spring, 1978): 48.

Due to the 'dis-organisation' of political power, many of the mutually contradictory goals were never fully under control of a single leadership. The power divisions among National Socialist party leadership were never coherent and free of conflict. As characterised by Tim Mason, 'It is of decisive importance' that leaders of the National Socialist movement

were in no way united among themselves; they were neither an organized group with regular functions, nor were they pursuing practical common goals. Their policy concerns were limited to their own jurisdictions, and they were frequently in competition with each other. In no sense did they furnish a possible basis for general policy-making. They were agreed only on the desirability of making Germany, in particular the country's government and administration, more National Socialist. The decay of policy-making institutions combined with the specific contentlessness of the ideology to generate a larger historical process, which, once firmly in motion, was not fully in the control of those who held power – not, because the (dis-) organization of political power, the manner in which decisions were reached and the normative power of the demand for the most radical solutions all limited the effective range of choice.¹²¹

National Socialist policymaking was not as self-conscious and consistently administered as 'Hitlerists' suggested. Likewise there was no consistent and unified policy in National Socialist architecture throughout the Third Reich.¹²² The building projects of the National Socialist regime reflected a series of conflicting ideas rooted in the decades prior to the Third Reich. The major architectural debates in the first two decades of the twentieth century, such as issues concerning 'type', standardisation, the use of modern construction materials and the use of ornaments, did not come to an end in Germany with the advent of the Third Reich. Debate

¹²¹ Tim Mason, *Nazism, Fascism and the Working Class. Essays by Tim Mason*, edited by Jane Caplan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 216.

¹²² Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985; First edition, 1968), 9.

continued, though heavily coloured by the political issues arising from policy conflicts and power struggles within the National Socialist Party.

The sources of monumentality presented by leading architects before 1933 were intertwined with such related themes as monuments, monumentality and its representation; central leadership and the focal point; industry, standardisation, fusions of technology and Neo-classicism. The way these leading architects perceived the above architectural principles indicates a continuing attention on National Socialist monumentality from the turn of the century through the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich. The work and ideas of a number of architects closely and directly involved with Albert Speer and the GBI office illustrate the continuity of the notion of monumentality before and after the coming to power of National Socialist Party in 1933.

Speer's architectural training and architectural network played an important role in the shaping of the architectural style of National Socialism. Hitler trusted not just Speer's ability to design and undertake massive monumental projects, but also his evaluation and knowledge of architects. Speer's recommendation was often the main factor in the appointment of architects for major projects in the Third Reich. In his memoir, Speer once recalled the planning for the area around the Pariser Platz in the Greater Berlin project,

Here I assigned major commissions to those men I considered Germany's best architects. Paul Bonatz, after many designs for bridges, was given his first high-rise commission: the High Command of the Navy. Hitler was especially pleased with the grand scale of the design. German Bestelmeyer was assigned the new Town Hall, Wilhelm Kreis the High Command of the Army, the Soldier's Hall, and various museums. Peter Behrens, the teacher of Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, who had long worked for the AEG electrical company, was entrusted with building the firm's new administrative building on the grand boulevard.¹²³

¹²³ Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London: Phoenix, 1997; original edition, 1970), 212.

The Berlin project involved a large number of architects. Despite political rivalry with the chief party ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, Speer consistently succeeded in winning Hitler's support. He also on several occasions invited his teacher Heinrich Tessenow to abandon his handicraft designs and the planning of small towns for work on grand official buildings for the GBI. These invitations were never accepted.

The discussion in the following section focuses on monumentality in works by architects who built extensively before the 1930s and had either played an important role in Speer's architectural education, e.g. Hans Poelzig (1869-1936) and Heinrich Tessenow (1876-1950), or had worked for the Greater Berlin Project of the Third Reich, e.g. Peter Behrens (1868-1940) and Wilhelm Kreis (1873-1955).

i. Monument, monumentality and its representation

The flourishing cult of the monument throughout Germany has been widely interpreted as a façade that disguises the inner insecurity of the patrons of these monuments. The exaggerated scale and ornaments of monuments were façades to mask unstable political power. As Lutz Tittel has suggested, the stronger the sense of insecurity over the unification of a nation was, the stronger was the urge to construct national monuments and symbols of the nation state.¹²⁴ This arises from the need to construct a psychological shelter where there is no danger of one's nation being attacked or dissolved. The national monuments movement was intended to connect the public with the Prussian Kaiser and his Reich. Granite, marble and bronze – materials that are long lasting, gave substance to the notion of eternity. Nonetheless, the mass construction of monuments was not a specifically Prussian phenomenon. It was a pervasive architectural tendency in the modern era.

In Germany, the classicising of monuments in the Greek-Revival style was widespread both in Germany and abroad in the late nineteenth century. Participating in this international trend, German architects won competitions for monument designs abroad, for example Bruno Schmitz's Emmanuel Monument, Rome, and the Indiana State War Memorial, USA.¹²⁵ At home a large number of Bismarck

¹²⁴ Lutz Tittel, 'Monumentaldenkmäler von 1871 bis 1918' in *Kunstverwaltung, Bau- und Denkmal-Politik im Kaiserreich*, edited by Ekkehard Mai und Stephan Waetzoldt (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1981), 264.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 252.

Memorials was also erected. Kreis, Tessenow, Poelzig, Behrens, Mies and many others all submitted designs to competitions for Bismarck monuments. They belonged to a generation, which was deeply patriotic and believed in supporting the image of the nation and expressing its patriotism through constructing monuments. Each of their designs, despite complying with a broadly accepted manner for such monuments, revealed distinctive personal styles. As Julius Posener observed, Poelzig's monuments had inner truth, Tessenow's were masterful and Kreis', self-conscious.¹²⁶ What these memorial projects had in common was that they all sought to express the sombre simplicity and powerful effect of monumentality.

The art and architectural critic, Karl Scheffler, believed that any element of pathos in monumentality invoked 'undisciplined instincts,' which had special appeal for the mass. Similarly, Kreis, who had made his name in competitions for the Bismarck tower in as early as 1896, interpreted monumentality as an untamed natural intuition in architecture:

*das einfache Majestätische der ungeschmückten Architekturform drängte sich mir für monumentale Werke als eine Notwendigkeit auf. Nach schlichtestem Ausdruck zugleich und größtem Inhalt strebend, wollte ich eine Architektur schaffen, wie die großen Meister der Musik Symphonien schufen, keine zusammengestellte schöne und reiche Fassade, sondern ein Hymnus von Kraft und Jugend.*¹²⁷

The unadorned dignity provided by the non-ornamented architectural form is required for the monumental effect. The plainest expression aspires to the largest content, which creates not a rich and elaborate façade, but an underlying hymn to energy, austerity and youth. The style of Kreis' monuments is a combination of nineteenth-century archaeological revival and of 1920s functional architecture. Kreis was greatly inspired by the ancient civilizations of the Euphrates, the Nile and the Tiber – cultures that lent heavily on the theme of death both religiously and politically. He also drew important inspiration from large-scale monuments such as Greek and Egyptian tombs, temples and altars. His designs for monuments and

¹²⁶ Julius Posener, *Hans Poelzig: Reflections on His Life and Work* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), 40.

¹²⁷ Carl Meissner, *Wilhelm Kreis* (Essen, 1925), 10-11; quoted in Tittel, 253.

crematoria were colossal, imposing and uncompromisingly aggressive, expressing a solemn monumentality. The uses of stone for monument both envisualized and invigorated the idea of ‘death, power and eternity’ – motifs that were frequently repeated in the designs for the tombstones and Bismarck monuments in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁸ In one of Kreis’ studies of a Bismarck Memorial, ‘*Der Held*’ (the hero) was to be engraved on the robust stone façade in order to mark and eternally to commemorate the death, the power and the contribution of the national hero. In projects such as the Bismarck National Monument (1912; Figure 4), the Hygiene Museum in Dresden (1926; Figure 10) and the Museum Island in the Greater Berlin Project (1937-1943) he steadily achieved eminence in Germany in this particular architectural genre.

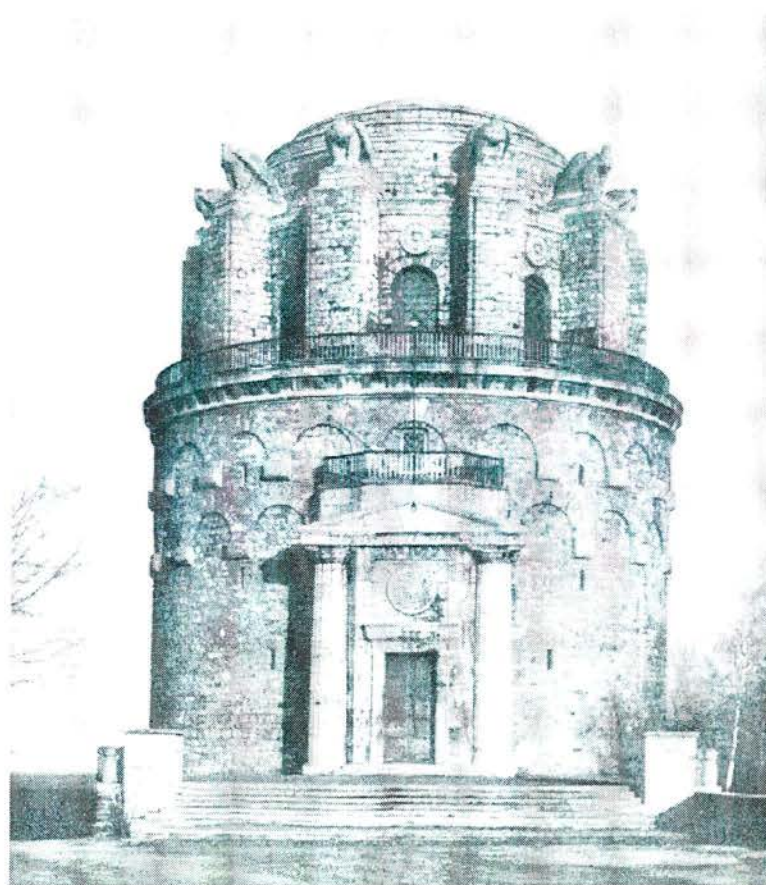


Figure 4 Wilhelm Kreis, Bismarck memorial in Stettin, 1912-14.
(Nerdinger and Mai, *Wilhelm Kreis*, 1994, 40)

¹²⁸ Ekkehard Mai, ‘Von 1930 bis 1945: Ehrenmäler und Totenburgen’ in *Wilhelm Kreis: Architekt zwischen Kaiserreich und Demokratie, 1873-1955*, Winfried Nerdinger and Ekkehard Mai (ed.) (München/Berlin: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1994), 160.

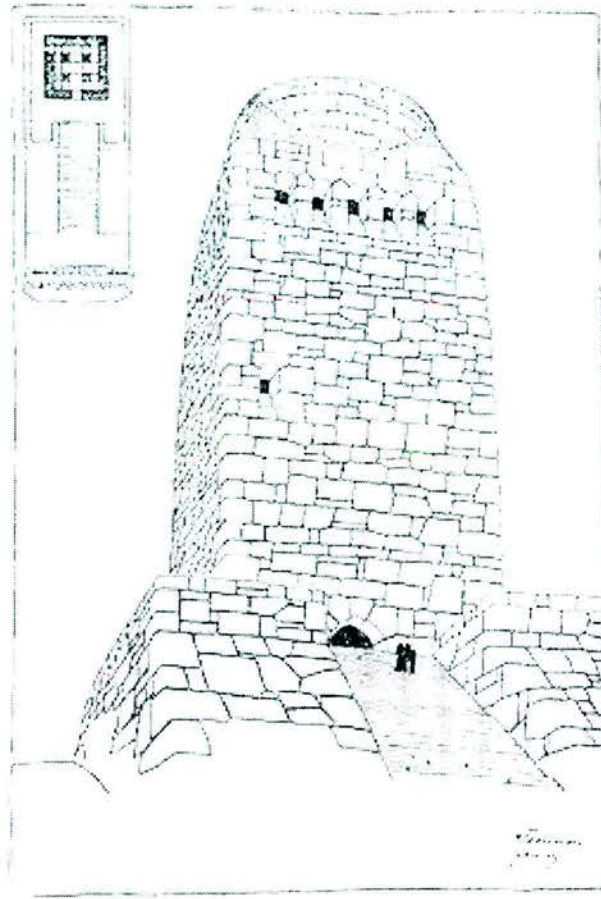


Figure 5 Heinrich Tessenow, Bismarck Tower. Sketch, 1903. (Julius Posener, *Hans Poelzig*, 1992, 41)

Like most designs of Bismarck monuments, Tessenow's designs for monuments captured the notions of death and eternity with solemnity. Tessenow worked primarily on designs for housing schemes and handcrafts, and never clearly defined what role the expression of monumentality should play in architecture, but he treated this theme with considerable attention in his non-housing projects. In his design for a Bismarck tower of 1903 (Figure 5), the large-scale geometrical form - the typical robust features of cubic form and cylinders - is ritually introduced to the visitor by an ascending open stairway. The solemnity created by simplicity and the non-ornamented mass is contrasted with small human figures close to the entrance portico and accentuates the grandiosity. This is a distinctive characteristic that underlines the aesthetics of monumentality. In Tessenow's design, military death was dignified with patriotic heroicism and was defended in the fortress-like monument, which was to be built with rough-cut heavy stones for eternal commemoration.

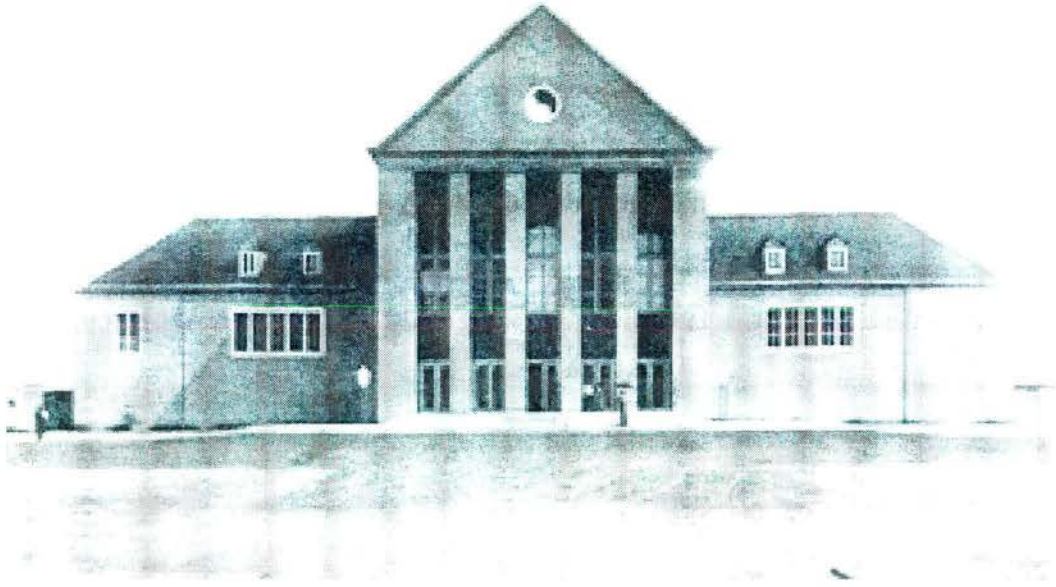


Figure 6 Heinrich Tessenow, Festhall, Hellerau, 1910-12. (Kathleen James Chakraborty, *German Architecture for a Mass Audience*, 2000, 74).

In a design for the Hellerau School Tessenow (Figure 6) employed a combination of classical and vernacular references through which the individual and the collective, the private and the public are reconciled. He embraced classical features, so long as they could be incorporated into every day life, and which directly resonated with the suggestion that form could be dictated by function.¹²⁹ The Hellerau School design shows Tessenow's contribution to monumental Neo-classicism in the 1910s. This tendency was developed further in 1930. Tessenow won the competition for the *Neue Wache* in Berlin, surpassing designs submitted by other eminent Berlin architects. These included Blunck, Poelzig, Behrens and Mies van der Rohe. Walther Curt Behrendt praised the form and spirit of Tessenow's design for the *Neue Wache* for its success in transforming Schinkel's original design into a monument of its time and for achieving an intense and profound monumentality. In 1936, Tessenow submitted several designs for competitions held by the National Socialists. The Olympia Art Exhibition, Berlin, with double arches surrounding the central hall, gives a more neo-Biedermeier appearance of Germanness than of Italian classicism.¹³⁰ However, Tessenow's design for a *Kunst*

¹²⁹ Michael Hays, 'Tessenow's Architecture as National Allegory: Critique of Capitalism or Protofascism?' *Assemblage*, vol. 8 (February, 1989): 117.

¹³⁰ Kenneth Frampton, 'A Synoptic View of the Architecture of the Third Reich,' *Oppositions*, no. 12 (Spring, 1978): 58-59.

durch Freude seaside resort on the island of Rügen in the Baltic, achieved simplicity and austerity and evoked, according to Frampton, a 'solemn, earth worshipping culture'. The banqueting hall of the building is not merely a place for dining and celebrations, but a quasi-religious site for political 'worship'. The long series of vast piers provides an illusion of a sacred temple amidst high forests of a northern landscape beside the sea.¹³¹

Death, eternity and memory, key themes relating to monument construction, were widely exploited politically in Germany, especially after the First World War. The ambivalent relationship between death and the Great War haunted the whole nation. Walter Benjamin wrote that,

War – the 'eternal' war that they talk about so much here, as well as the recent one – is said to be the highest manifestation of the German nation. It should be clear that behind their 'eternal' war is concealed the idea of cultic war, just as behind the most recent war hides the idea of technological war; ... it is precisely this loss of the war that is tied to Germanness. ... These attempts began with an effort to pervert the German defeat into an inner victory by means of confessions of guilt, which were hysterically elevated to the universally human.¹³²

In the nationalist definition, the symbolism of the notion of winning or losing a battle was dramatised and internalised to such an extreme that victory assumed primary importance as if it were a 'universal' principle shared by all mankind. The meaning of individual lives was reduced to minimum. 'To win or lose a war reaches so deeply ... into the fabric of our existence, that our whole lives become that much richer or poorer in symbols, images and sources. And since we have lost one of our greatest wars in world history, one which involved the whole material and spiritual substance of a people, one can assess the significance of this loss.'¹³³ The Nazi's demonic liaison of technology and war was displayed through architectural decoration. As

¹³¹ Ibid., 60-61.

¹³² 'Theories of German Fascism,' in *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings, Volume 2, 1927-1934*, edited by Michael W. Jennings, et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 315.

¹³³ Ibid..

Benjamin observed, the city was decorated with terror through the introduction of banners, artificial light, iron and steel. The milieu of terror is spread by the ingenuity and obsession with technology of the architects, not to mention weapons themselves. Kreis' project for the Army Museum was decorated by canon at cornice level. Similarly the plaza in front of the South Railway Station was also decorated with arms captured from defeated nations, such as France, Russia and others. The design of the façade of the Soldier's Hall, which is discussed in Chapter four of this thesis, shows the same military motif.

Benjamin described the way in which technology had been exploited to turn Berlin into a non-human war zone: 'by day the sky was the cosmic interior of the steel helmet, and by night the moral law above. Etching the landscape with flaming banners and trenches, technology wanted to recreate the heroic features of German Idealism. It went astray.'¹³⁴ To pursue technological advancement in the name of patriotism, National Socialist architects were to turn Berlin into a field filled with cultic architecture which was to incorporate memory, representing the past; death, defining the present; and technology, symbolising the promising future that lay ahead for Germany. Interpreting technology with a false Idealism, the National Socialists brutally reduced the mystery of nature to mere machinery.

While speaking regularly of the expression of monumentality, Poelzig did not advocate a definition of monumentality that was universally valid from the past to the present. Like other aspects of society, monumentality must also adjust itself with time. '*Die Monumentalität des scheinbar für die Ewigkeit Gefügten werden unsere Fabriken nie zeigen können: ein jeder Bau kann nur das zum Ausdruck bringen, was seines innersten Wesens Kern ist.*'¹³⁵ The superficial definition of monumentality as eternity cannot reflect the fabric of a society. Poelzig used utility architecture as example to illustrate his argument. For example, a medieval thick-walled house without any windows must be adapted by modern technology to admit light and build a brighter environment in which a modern life style could take place. Strong thick walls and piers, which created dark shadows, no longer represented the inner nature of modern life. Monumentality of this kind was therefore not desirable. True monumentality must reflect the inner concept of buildings.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 319.

¹³⁵ Poelzig, 'Der neuzeitliche Fabrikbau' in *Der Industriebau* 2 (1911), 496.

The fact that any phenomenon or historical event is considered to be important and ought to be commemorated, and further to be put into solid form in public spaces, establishes values that are officially recognised and promoted by the state and the artist, if not popularly accepted by all members of society. War memorials in particular, which enlist the universal sympathy felt for the dead, are the most politically manipulative forms of architecture, through which political ideologies and social values are shaped and re-enforced. They were presented as castles or memorials for the 'dead', not 'victims'. Here ambiguity astounds. The dead are also victims, but the term 'victim' lacks masculinity, and conveys no sense of the heroic – of the power both to defend and to attack. And the function of commemoration was to endorse the value of heroic sacrifice, not passive suffering which for many was the distressing reality.

Not being restrained by the notions of death, eternity and patriotism, Behrens saw monumentality as representing the spirit of its time. In 1908 Behrens spoke in the *Hamburger Kunstgewerbeverein* of 'monumental art as the highest, the intrinsic expression of the culture of a time. Such an art finds its expression, naturally, in that realm where a people are most accomplished, where they are most intensely engaged, by which they are moved.'¹³⁶ Here the idea of art and architecture as a representation of society is clearly indicated. Similar to Kreis' and Scheffler's view (as discussed in the first part of this section), Behrens also emphasised the impact monumentality created on the public. In an article entitled, 'Was ist monumentale Kunst?', which appeared in the same year in *Kunstgewerbeblatt*, Behrens argued that monumentality was not determined by the size of architecture, but by its ability to provoke emotion in the general public. It can be found 'at the point which a people holds in highest esteem, which most deeply affects it, and by which it is animated and moved. It may be the place from which power is exercised, or that which receives the most fervent adoration.'¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Stanford Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the twentieth century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), 192. Anderson's quotation of Behrens lecture in *Hamburger Kunstgewerbeverein* on 8 April 1908.

¹³⁷ Peter Behrens, 'Was ist monumentale Kunst?' in *Kunstgewerbeblatt*, xx, no. 3 (1908-9): 46, quoted by W. Pehnt, *Expressionist Architecture*, 63.



Figure 7 Peter Behrens, German Embassy in St Petersburg, 1912. (Alan Windsor, *Peter Behrens*, 1981, 173)

Behrens' theory of monumental art suggested that 'the development of monumental art has always been the expression of a definite group of the powerful interests in an epoch.'¹³⁸ He illustrated this idea with the examples of monumental art that represented the power of the Church in the Middle Ages; the 18th century Baroque style of royalty; and nineteenth century architecture of the bourgeoisie. Monumental art of the early twentieth century, it followed, would emerge from the distinctive power establishment of its time - modern industry. Monumentality represents the power and the perceptions of a selected group, which are often the artist and the patron. Therefore monuments say more about 'the way the erectors of monuments and the respective artists see things than ... the historical events themselves and the personalities to which they are dedicated.'¹³⁹ Behrens regarded 'the powerful interest' of his epoch to be modern industry and promoted the idea that function and material must be integrated with history to express monumentality. Monumental art, according to his prediction, would emerge as the embodiment of the

¹³⁸ 'Düsseldorf. Mannesmannröhre-Werke. Zur Erinnerung an die Einweihung des Verwaltungsgebäudes der Mannesmannröhren-Werke' in Düsseldorf. 10. December 1912 (Düsseldorf: Mannesmann, 1913), 85. Quoted in Stanford Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), 192.

¹³⁹ Stefanie Endlich, 'The Monument as a Work of Art and Sign of Remembrance,' *Daidalos* no. 49 (1993): 91.

spirit of the early twentieth century. This statement predicted how architecture would later develop in the Third Reich, although the spirit of monumental architecture as modern industry was replaced by patriotism.

Architecture does not imitate but constitutes and reflects order in society. It reproduces and reinforces the social hierarchy through its visual articulation. The classical language of ancient Roman architecture was accordingly revived throughout the history of western architecture. States and architects alike often pay homage to political and social systems. Just as spoken languages are intertwined with the social structure in complicated ways, so architectural languages also evolved in similarly complex ways. The process of adapting architectural features to their use and meaning in society illustrates the social ideology in which architects and society are embedded. The elements of Neo-classicism and monumentality were part of the architectural language architects employed with clear intentions and awareness of what images these features would present to the world.

Architecture is the expression of the very soul of societies, just as human physiognomy is the expression of the individual's souls. It is, however, particularly to the physiognomies of official personages (prelate, magistrates, admirals) that this comparison pertains. ... It is, in fact, obvious that monuments inspire social prudence and often even real fear.¹⁴⁰

The stillness and silence imposed by monuments provokes and intensifies the fear of the mass public towards the majesty of authority. Monuments in this power play between official authorities and the people are reduced to mediators that reinforce the power that produces them, through which the people and the monument for the people became antagonistic. For the fact is that most public monuments erected by the state or religious authorities rarely represent a collective memory of everyday life. They are gestures that publicly and officially acknowledge social disciplines and values. It is a memory that is censored and manipulated through a chosen architectural style that represents the power wielded by the powerful. In the case of

¹⁴⁰ Georges Bataille, *Oeuvres Complètes / I Premiers écrits*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 171; quoted in Hollier, 46-47.

the expression monumentality between the 1910s and the 1930s in Germany, the Neo-classical style was to convey key themes such as death and eternity and transform them into a celebration of politically promoted social values such as militarism and patriotism.

In the representation of society architecture not only reveals, but also disguises. The collective crime, for instance, is concealed by its legitimatisation in the form of public display. Architecture 'covers up the site of the crime with discreet monuments to make it be forgotten. Architecture does not express the soul of societies but rather smothers it.'¹⁴¹ War monuments, for instance, provide a theatrical stage where the collective consent and approval are given to military actions – but their signification and moral basis are left unexamined. The death are dignified and petrified in the Neo-classical monuments as part of the glorious history for eternal commemoration. Architecture here lends itself to society as historical references that signify the past, the present and the future. Freud has the notion that society is based on the common wrong and on crimes committed in common. The function of architecture is to defend society against the threat posed from within society. The entire system of oppression in society is reflected in architecture and the ideology that produces it. Architecture absorbs the ideology of society. It processes and petrifies the cultural phenomenon into substantial and visible forms. Monumentality in this context can be seen as a form that visualises 'a relation between time and stone'.¹⁴² It seeks an image in space to represent time in explicit forms.

ii. Central leadership and the focal point

Architects and intellectuals after the First World War took part in the struggle against the chaos and disintegration of Germany in the period following the collapse of the Empire. The goal of such movements as the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst*, the *Novembergruppe* and the Bauhaus in Weimar was to create a new spirit that would lead society to new achievements. Behrens and the Viennese Secessionists had at the turn of the century in Darmstadt (1901) involved themselves in 'sacred' rites in the pursuit of spiritual truth. This was echoed two decades later in the ideal of building

¹⁴¹ Denis Hollier, 'The Architectural Metaphor,' in *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1992; original edition, 1989), 47.

¹⁴² Bart Verschaffel, 'The monumental: on the meaning of a form,' *Journal of Architecture*, vol. 4 (Winter 1999): 335.

utopia and of an elite-led community defined and given context by art and architecture.¹⁴³ Most leading Third Reich architects, including Behrens, Bonatz, (Emil) Fahrenkamp and Kreis, were associated in some way or other with Expressionism, which today is seen as ‘a workshop in which the basic ideals of modern architecture were hammered out.’¹⁴⁴ Knowledge of new and revolutionary construction materials such as steel, concrete and glass was so widespread that no contemporary architect could design and build without being aware of them.

Bruno Taut, whose book *Die Stadtkrone* was published in 1919, played a leading role in the Expressionist movement, which proposed that under the leadership of artists architecture could transform society and create a better world. With the help of the collective, the community force could incorporate human life into a holistic unity.¹⁴⁵ The out-of-scale drawings in his *Alpine Architektur* (1919) presented an extraordinary vision that was celebrated by the Expressionists and the Futurists alike.¹⁴⁶ Humans were reduced to ant-like figures dwarfed by imposing towers on buildings that manifested an optimistic faith in endless productivity and constructional potential in the age of the machine. Monumentality in the form of unlimited productivity provided solid ground upon which Expressionism evolved. Along with the sublime effect of monumentality, function and construction caught the capricious and imaginative nature of the Expressionists. Creativity in construction is irrational. Wolfgang Pehnt remarked, ‘Where it appeared possible to achieve powerfully massive effects, logic had to take a back seat.’¹⁴⁷ This was to be the underlying sentiment of architects, like Behrens, Kreis and Poelzig, who were involved with Expressionism at the height of this movement and later with National Socialist building projects.

Despite being ideologically different, these ideas were exploited by Hitler and by the National Socialist propagandists to achieve a completely different end, namely the interest of political power. The emphasis on a central, a focal point in the city

¹⁴³ Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1987), 122-24.

¹⁴⁴ Wolfgang Pehnt, *Expressionist Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), 198.

¹⁴⁵ Iain Boyd Whyte, *Taut and the Architecture of Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). See also, Volker Welter, ‘From locus genii to heart of the city’ in *Modernism and the Spirit of the City*, edited by Iain Boyd Whyte (London: Routledge, 2003), 43.

¹⁴⁶ Pehnt, 208.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

with the *Stadtkrone* – the City Crown - lent itself unintentionally to the National Socialist concept of the ideal layout of a city. Streets, squares and buildings of the glorious Prussian past were to be kept. The liberal spirit of the Weimar period was criticized for its lack of a unified and central leadership. The National Socialists emphasised the proud and noble Prussian heritage. Thus the glorious German heritage was reflected in its city layout and town planning. An article published in *Bauwelt* in 1937 highlighted Speer's emphasis on the heritage of the historical quarter in the heart of Berlin as representative of a central focus in the reconstruction plan:

*Vor allem fehlte jene großzügige Linie, die der neuen Reichshauptstadt auch baulich jene beherrschende Stellung gab wie sie die mittelalterliche Stadt besatz oder wie sie die preussischen König und seine beiden Vorgänger durch die Erbauung des Schloßgebietes, der Dorotheen- und Friedrichstadt als damals großartige städtebauliche Entwicklung in einem Zuge geschaffen. Bis heute so erklärt Prof. Speer, sind Straßen, Plätze und Bauwerke aus dieser Zeit der repräsentative Teil der ins Uferlose gewachsenen Stadt geblieben.*¹⁴⁸

History was interpreted selectively to highlight a patriotic conservative identity that demonstrated the need for centralised power. National Socialism and its architecture appropriated Prussian monarchic history in the same way as it adapted classical styles. Thus it could effortlessly achieve the required effect without creativity or originality. This was a widespread strategy for totalitarian states, and 'it appeals to and affirmed the 'eternal' or 'ancient' systems of *total order* – the law of the tribe, the authority of history, the paternal principle of the master, the filiative principle of the vernacular.'¹⁴⁹ Installing focal points in a city creates an apparent hierarchy of buildings in the cityscape. This symbolises a clear and strong central leadership, which would be recognised instantly both by the residents of the city and visitors to the city. The themes of architecture reflect the ideology of society.

¹⁴⁸ 'Ausbau der Reichshauptstadt,' *Bauwelt*, 1937, issue 49, 1106.

¹⁴⁹ Hays, 122.

Opposed to the idea of centralised power both in a city and in the country, Tessenow saw the growing division between metropolis and villages after industrialisation as a serious problem. In *Handwerk und Kleinstadt*, published in 1919, Tessenow alerted society to the unpredictable danger of machine logic.

It seemed to us, looking at things superficially, that whatever we desired was no longer an impossibility – and we did desire many things. Our epoch really seemed to want to bring heaven down to earth. To achieve this end, even the most laborious task could generally become almost acceptable. We worked indefatigably, using all our strength, and when we rested, we did so only in order to be able to work harder. We might even have employed the devil himself... as a co-worker.¹⁵⁰

Tessenow foresaw the problems that were to come with the over-ambitiousness of the modernity project, in particular the sharp divide between village and town. ‘Between village and metropolis exists a dangerous similarity in that they do not produce but overproduce, and that they do not consume but overconsume. ... Metropolis and village are two different ways of life. They can assist each other superficially, but they are unable truly to connect to or fertilize each other.’¹⁵¹ The debate here saw the problem of the irreconcilable gap between metropolis and village as arising from essential differences, deepened by industrialisation.

iii. Industry/standardisation, fusions of technology and Neo-classicism

Not unlike the situation in Britain after the successful and profitable experiments in the use of iron and glass to create large-scale buildings such as the Crystal Palace, 1851, faith in and excitement over architectural forms in the West reached its zenith. For the first time it was possible not only to construct buildings on an ever-larger scale, but also to re-create any historical style with less labour at a lower cost. Adapting historical styles for contemporary building projects was merely a matter of demonstrating one’s knowledge of how to apply these styles to modern buildings in

¹⁵⁰ Heinrich Tessenow, ‘Metropolis, Town, Village,’ in *Handwerk und Kleinstadt*, translated by Christiane Crasemann Collins, selected in Dal Co. *Figures of Architecture and Thoughts: German Architecture Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 313.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 314-5.

the right context. The question of whether to embrace technology was a widely discussed philosophical, social and cultural issue throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century; and it attracted equally significant attention in the realm of art and architecture.

Through world exhibitions, English art and technology became the most advanced and ingenious model available. Robert Dohme in his book *The English House*, which appeared in 1888, illustrated the relationship between the English mentality and high quality domestic design. The single-family house in the countryside was considered to be the most admirable feature. Hermann Muthesius, affiliated to the German Embassy in London in 1900, worked on a thesis that dealt not only with the development of the contemporary modern English house, but also with the historical and social context in which it was embedded. Muthesius highlighted the particularity and value of the English way of life. He noted that much attention was paid to the surrounding geographical and climatic conditions of the English house, which he called 'English conditions'. This was later to be called upon by the German *Heimatschutz* and conservative Nationalists as a good basis on which to establish a 'German Style' that echoed the 'Blood and Soil' theory.

Muthesius interpreted the English country house in terms of functionalism and developed the idea of an industrial aesthetic from the Arts and Crafts Movement.¹⁵² He proposed that the *Werkbund* should produce designs of standardised machine-made buildings and furniture for everyday use. Both Muthesius and Behrens were exponents of standardization. Behrens praised Muthesius' work for its artistic quality of being 'typical'.

Typical art ... is the highest aim of all artistic activity. It is the strongest and the finite expression of personality. It is a mature and lucid solution for the design of any object, because it is free from the incidental. In both these senses the best works of any artist will always be typical.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Hermann Muthesius, *The English House (Das Englische Haus)*, translated by Janet Seligman, London: Granada publishing, 2000 (original edition, 1904).

¹⁵³ Julius Posener, *From Schinkel to the Bauhaus*, Architectural Association paper no. 5 (London: Lund Humphries, 1972), 45. (Original source not specified by the author.)

The task of the Werkbund architects was to design for standard industrial products through cooperation between progressive elements of industry and traditional handicraft.¹⁵⁴ Muthesius regarded a commonly accepted taste and a harmonious culture as the precondition for the creation of typical forms. The notion of ‘typical’ and type led to standardisation and industrialisation. Muthesius also proposed to connect industrial architecture and Neo-classicism through ‘type’ to produce a harmonious national style. He saw in this formula the possibility of creating ‘architectural forms corresponding to universal laws of aesthetic perception’ and of designing industrial buildings that would restore ‘the very artistic traditions and cultural values’ that industry had helped to destroy.¹⁵⁵



Figure 8 Peter Behrens, the AEG Turbine Factory, 1910. (Stanford Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for Twentieth Century*, 2000, 137)

Having a consistently positive attitude towards industry and standardisation, Behrens gave expressive form to industrial materials and to the rhythms of the industrial process in his earlier buildings like the AEG Turbine Factory in Berlin and

¹⁵⁴ Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund – the Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 3.

¹⁵⁵ Alan Colquhoun, *Modernity and the Classical Tradition, Architectural Essays 1980-1987* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991), 76-77.

the Mannesmann Administration Building in Düsseldorf. As early as 1903, in an attempt to find a new form that would represent the new sentiment of industry – its ‘masculinity, power, the great effect,’ Behrens had turned his back on *Jugendstil* and had adopted Neoclassicism,¹⁵⁶ In the design of the Turbine Factory in 1910, Behrens achieved a monumental and dynamic effect with features of Classical architectural language such as tympanum and piers, expressed through new materials of steel, concrete and glass. This project was particularly important for it successfully bridged the gap between industry and conventional ‘high’ art at the end of the first decade in the twentieth century. Although Behrens’ lasting fame rests on the industrial design for this building, his work in this period that was closest to his later AEG Administration Building for the Berlin Axis was the German Embassy in St. Petersburg, completed in 1912. It was widely acclaimed by National Socialist critics for the representative value of its combination of aesthetics, culture, and German nationhood. This powerful design, successfully linking Prussian Classicism and politics, was a realisation of an architectural style balanced between culture and technology, tradition and the modern. At the time of its completion it was hailed in *Die Bauwelt* and *Kunst und Künstler* as the first ‘official’ triumph of modernism.¹⁵⁷ Tilmann Buddensieg endorses this reading of Behrens’ ‘Prussian order’ as historical homage to the architectural languages of Prussian masters such as Langhans, Gilly, and Schinkel. The status of this building as a work of modernist Prussian Classicism was reinforced by association with Mies van der Rohe in the early stage of the project. Behrens considered the architectural task of his time as the art of how to bring ideas that had been technically impossible in the previous era of Neo-classicism into a practical fulfilment. In other words, his goal was to balance and reconcile among function, technological capabilities, and aesthetic values. Like Poelzig, Behrens tried to bridge the gap between engineering and Neo-classicism. They both believed in architectural progress that acknowledged Classical principles.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Posener, *Hans Poelzig: Reflections on His Life and Work*, 18.

¹⁵⁷ Tilmann Buddensieg, ‘Die Kaiserlich Deutsche Botschaft in Petersburg von Peter Behrens,’ in *Politische Architektur in Europa vom Mittelalter bis heute – Repräsentation und Gemeinschaft*, ed. Martin Warnke (Cologne: Du Mont Buchverlag, 1984), 380.

¹⁵⁸ Posener, *Hans Poelzig* (1992), 26.

In his manifesto to the Werkbund in 1914, by now a rather industrial and business oriented organisation, Behrens emphasised the importance of establishing a clear 'type' for applied arts in Germany and a high level of taste of art for industrial export.¹⁵⁹ In keeping with Muthesius' campaign, the assertion of 'type' fell in with the Werkbund slogan - to give form to everything '*from the sofa cushion to the urban planning*'.¹⁶⁰ In the pre-First World War *Werkbund Yearbooks* from 1911 to 1914, automobiles, steam engines, ships, bridges and silos were presented as examples of 'good' industrial form - a notion that was taken on by Le Corbusier later to formulate the machine aesthetic.

Despite of the emphasis of bridging between traditional handicrafts and modern industry, the idea of 'type' stimulated a major controversy in the Werkbund and provoked antagonism from the pro-craftsmanship members including Poelzig and Tessenow. In a lecture to the Werkbund, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Werkbundes* in 1919, Poelzig condemned the Werkbund's mistake in 'prostituting' itself with industrial activities and economic exploitation. True craftsmanship, which is spiritually inspired by creative artwork instead of technical perfection, had been neglected. He spoke firmly of the artistic and eternal quality of art and craftsmanship. 'Any artist or craftsman who does not want to create things of eternal value is neither a true artist nor a craftsman.'¹⁶¹ Craftsmanship and artistic conscience should not be compromised or adapted to economic considerations such as export possibilities. The value of Arts and Crafts works was spiritual and eternal, like those of the Middle Ages. Similarly in architecture, a true understanding of its classical spirit was essential in the reforming of 'the appearance of our homeland which has been so disfigured by the half-hearted architecture of recent decades...'¹⁶²

While some Werkbund members were promoting the concept of 'type' and standardisation, others were concerned with the consequences of industrialisation. The divide between the city and the village, caused by industrialisation, triggered reaction against the dominance of the machine and over-production. Tessenow

¹⁵⁹ Posener, 23.

¹⁶⁰ Hermann Muthesius, 'Wo stehen wir?' in *Jahrbuch des deutschen Werkbundes* (1912), p. 16. See Campbell, *ibid.*.

¹⁶¹ Hans Poelzig, speech to the Werkbund, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Werkes*, 1919, no. 4, 109-24. Reprinted in Julius Posener, *Hans Poelzig: Reflections on his life and work*, Kristin Feireiss (ed.) (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), 130.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 132.

regarded the metropolis pragmatically as the opposite of nourishing, for it did not produce to satisfy material needs, it only consumed.

The large city has never been very maternal, never a good birthing place, but it has always excelled at what it is best at being today: a place of commerce, a center of traffic, a place of entertainment, etc. ... At the opposite extreme are barn and stable. In between are the domestic living room and the workshop, or small town and handicraft. Of necessity, these two depend on each other; one without the other is an impossibility.¹⁶³

Man in the village works mostly physically; and in the metropolis intellectually. Tessenow was against large-scale urban planning. He proposed in the *Handwerk und Kleinstadt* the model of the *Kleinstadt* to cover the dramatic gap between modern metropolis and villages. Although one can see the influence of the English Arts and Crafts idea in Tessenow's advocacy of the values of the artisan and of the handicrafts, he avoided any imputation of Englishness in his work and emphasised its association with *Völkisch* values and with the German soil on which the future of the *Volk* would be cultivated. Handicrafts and domestic space, as promoted by Tessenow and many other pro-Arts-and-Crafts theorists, are mediators between the metropolises and villages. To avoid the extremes of capitalism and communism, Tessenow promoted the *Kleinbürgerschaft*, a 'middle way', as the future direction for German society.¹⁶⁴

Kreis did not clearly speak of 'type' and standardisation, but he, as well as Behrens and Paul Bonatz, was reserved about what would come after standardisation - internationalisation. They sensed that new architectural concerns such as objectivity (*Sachlichkeit*) in industrial construction and monumentality in public buildings were part of historical development and could not be separated from what their generation inherited from history. Kreis criticised the tendency of internationalisation and stated that, '*Wir sind keine Hottentotten, die keine Baugeschichte hinter sich haben und es*

¹⁶³ Ibid., 315.

¹⁶⁴ Michael Hays, 'Tessenow's Architecture as National Allegory: Critique of Capitalism or Protofascism?' *Assemblage*, vol. 8 (February, 1989):114.

hieße Verwilderung, nach dem Vorgange unvölkischer, internationaler Verneinung, das auf die Seite zu werfen, was sich unter der Wahrheit der Konstruktion als unvergänglicher Formenbestand kristallisiert hat.’¹⁶⁵ While national identity was closely connected with vernacular style and historicity, internationalization was equated with denouncing one’s national identity. Kreis’ advocacy of combining past styles with modern building materials and methods as the major contemporary architectural task was shared by the *Deutsche Werkbund*. Between 1911 and 1915, Kreis adopted a combination of new materials and classicism in his designs for the departmental stores in the Rheinland region. These warehouses and stores were built in the Art Nouveau style, after the success of Alfred Messel’s Wertheim department store in Berlin and of Josef Maria Olbrich’s warehouse in Düsseldorf. The facade with a massive span of pillars and glass interpreted the Neo-classical style with the advantage of modern technology.

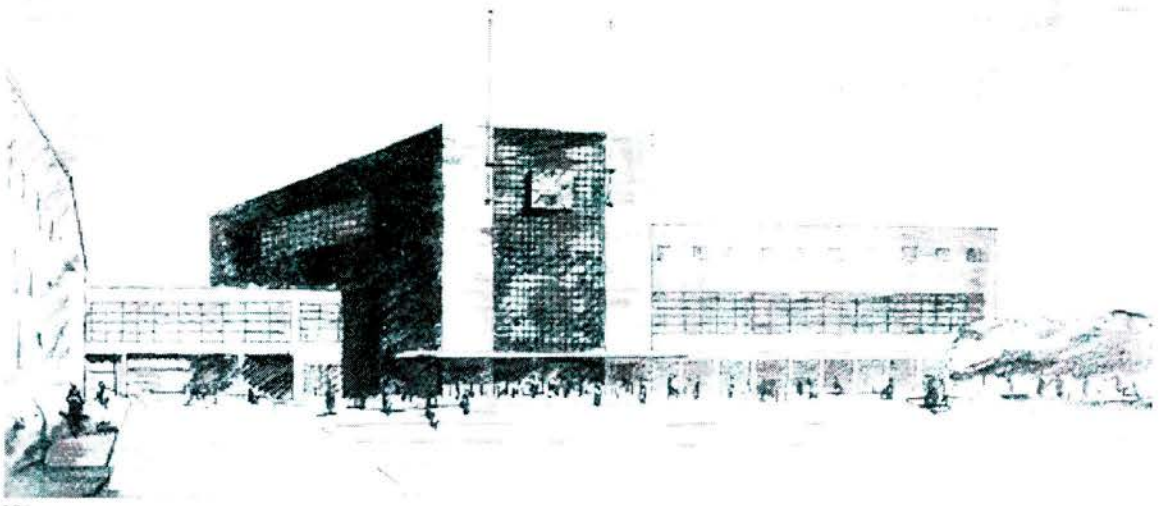


Figure 9 Wilhelm Kreis, Design for a City Hall, Cottbus, 1928-29. (Nerdinger and Mai, *Wilhelm Kreis*, 1994, 255)

Kreis did not design exclusively in the monumental Neo-classical style. Some of his designs displayed a bright modernist outlook. His project for the City Hall of Cottbus, was not only simple and stripped of ornament, but also in every sense modern. The concept of ‘type’ and the prefabrication of materials were adopted in the design. Using glass, iron and concrete as the principal materials, it bore architectural features that call to mind Gropius’ Bauhaus, Dessau, 1925-26: the flat-

¹⁶⁵ B. Hanftmann, *Wilhelm Kreis*, in *Der Baumeister*, 1905, issue 1, 1, quoted by Winfried Nerdinger. ‘Repräsentant der deutscher Architektur,’ in *Wilhelm Kreis* (1994), 15.

roof cubic mass, asymmetrical plan, walls glazed with large screens of windows, simple non-ornamented pillars and wide ribbon windows. Additionally, the fully sheltered bridge corridor connecting the city hall to the abattoir echoed Gropius' Dessau design, in which a similar construction provided a glazed corridor and a sheltered path between the two main buildings in the school.

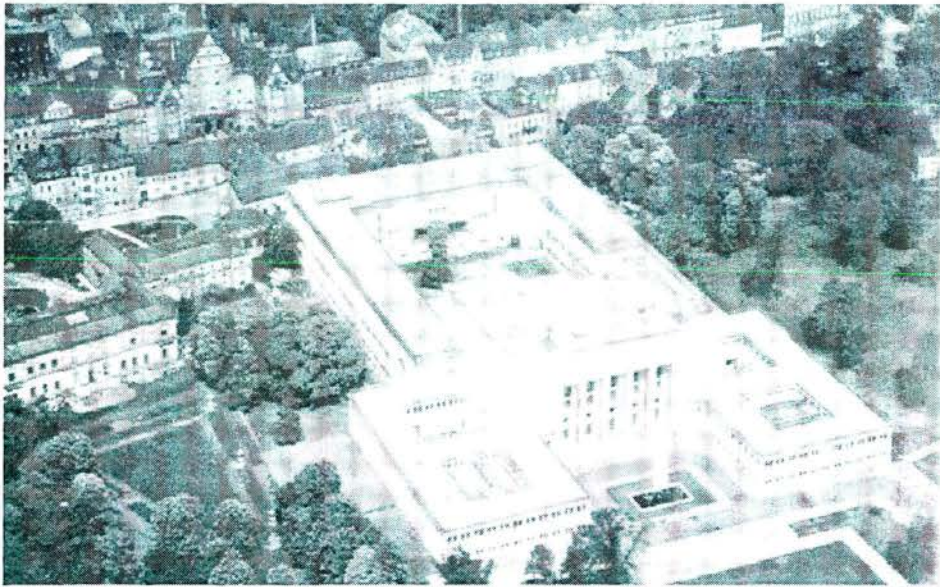


Figure 10 Wilhelm Kreis, Deutsche Hygiene Museum, Dresden, 1926. (Nerdinger and Mai, *Wilhelm Kreis*, 1996, 161)

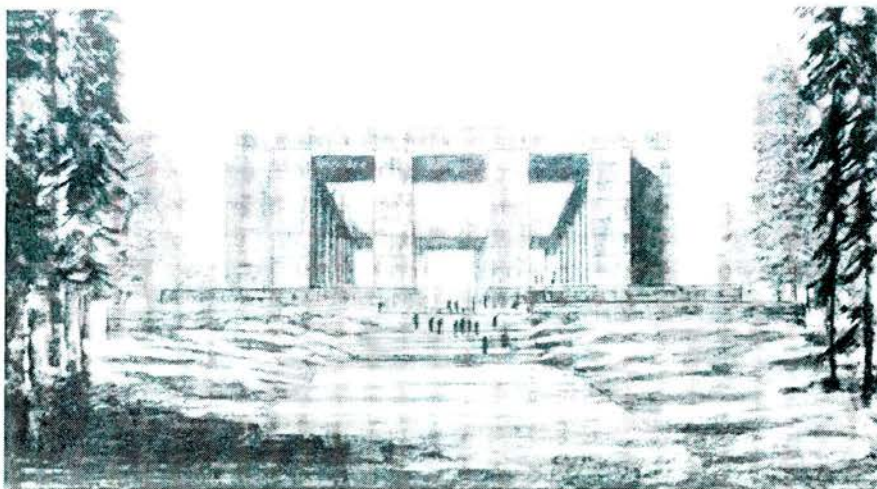


Figure 11 Wilhelm Kreis, 'Monument of the Reich', Bad Berka, competition design, 1931. (Nerdinger and Mai, *Wilhelm Kreis*, 1994, 161).

Simplicity and functional forms were widely appreciated among modernist architects in the early twentieth century. Kreis had in many of his designs

demonstrated his support for this tendency. As he wrote in 1929, '*Dekorationen machen wir jedenfalls hier nicht, auch keine Nachahmungen, weder alter noch neuer Moderne ... Ich habe seit über 30 Jahren immer wieder ganz Einfaches, Allerschlichtestes versucht und bin nichts anderes geworden, als ich immer war.*'¹⁶⁶ Buildings in the new modern style must be non-ornamental and simple. Between 1920s and 1930s, Kreis produced a wide range of building projects of different types, including museums, monuments, and office and administrative buildings. The basic forms of his designs in the late 1920s - colossal non-ornamented rectangular masses with simplified classical motives – were repeated in his later designs for the National Socialist regime. Above all, the megalomaniac style with stripped clean classicism was predominant in his designs. *Deutsche Hygiene Museum* in Dresden, 1926 (Figure 10) and the design for *Reichsehrenmal* at Bad Berka, 1931 (Figure 11) are two examples that demonstrate his mature style prior to his participation in the work of the GBI. The *Bad Berka* monument embodies the sacred, the spiritual and the ceremonial ambience of monumentality. The *Deutsche Hygiene Museum* - simple and stripped of ornament and regulated and contained - appears to be the prototype for most of Kreis' later designs for the North-South axis of the Greater Berlin plan, e.g. the Soldiers' Hall and the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (*Oberkommando des Heeres*).

Poelzig saw monumentality as an architectural form that enhanced tradition with new technology. From 1906 onwards, Poelzig's designs often combined monumental style with functionality. The strength and expandable feature of iron could create lighter constructional structures to achieve monumentality, hitherto unattainable. Observing the flourishing capitalist commerce, Poelzig noted in an article entitled '*Der neuzeitliche Fabrikbau*' in *Der Industriebau* (1911) that large commercial buildings represented the perfect expression of the time. They were the key monumental task for architecture today. Apart from the dynamics motivated by commerce, architecture of the new era must also not ignore the importance of conventional building knowledge:

¹⁶⁶ *Neue Bauten und ein Brief von Wilhelm Kreis, Präsident des B.D.A., in: WMB 13, 1929, 246, quoted by Dietrich Neuman, 'Wilhelm Kreis und das Bürohaus in den zwanziger Jahren,' in Wilhelm Kreis: Architekt zwischen Kaiserreich und Demokratie, 1873-1955, edited by Winfried Nerdinger and Ekkehard Mai (München/Berlin: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1994), 118.*

Ohne das eingehende Studium der Vergangenheit, ohne Versenkung in die tektonischen Grundbedingungen der alten Architektur, wird man für die neuen Aufgaben nicht die volle Freiheit finden, ihnen nicht den treffendsten Ausdruck geben können. Aber bei den Nutzbauten fehlen alle berechtigten oder sentimentalen Rücksichten auf liebgewordene äußerliche Züge vergangener Epochen, die den gestaltenden Künstler vom geraden Wege des Ausdrucks abweichen lassen.¹⁶⁷

On the one hand, through careful studies of the past and of the fundamental tectonic condition of historical buildings, one could avoid being diverted by non-sentimental and wholly functional construction. On the other, neither a patron's sense of taste, nor any specific logic, which would lead him to a straightforward route, should disturb an artist's creativity. Only then can artistic fantasy be liberated from backward looking triviality and diverted into large and practical architectural tasks that could best present the particularity of each era. The monumental task of artists was to produce a strong expression to represent the spirit of their time. In line with the handicraft movement at the turn of the century in Germany, Poelzig argued that the aesthetics of iron construction lay in employing up-to-date construction methods and adopting a grid framework to reduce the dimension of each particular component. Iron grid and ornament-filled brick design can be seen in many of Poelzig's designs. Most of Poelzig's industrial buildings, theatre and public space designs expressed elements of monumentality that differed from traditional monumental construction. Through employing modern technology in conjunction with the quality of traditional craftsmanship, Poelzig succeeded in achieving objectivity, the aesthetics of naturalistic material and classical monumental representation. Poelzig's projects such as the I. G. Farben Administration Building, 1928-30, demonstrated an austere and powerful Classicism. It manifested a combination of noble workspace and prestigious corporate values, of centralised

¹⁶⁷ Hans Poelzig, 'Der neuzeitliche Fabrikbau' in *Der Industriebau* 2 (1911), reprinted in Jerzy Ilkosz und Beate Störkuhl, *Hans Poelzig in Breslau: Architektur und Kunst 1900-1916* (Delmenhorst: Aschenbeck & Holstein, 2000), 494.

power and of the glorification of the labour force.¹⁶⁸ The bare façade, defined by strong boxy lines and decorated with simple pseudo columns, was a typical style for government commissioned public or representative buildings like Kreis' Museum of Hygiene, Dresden.

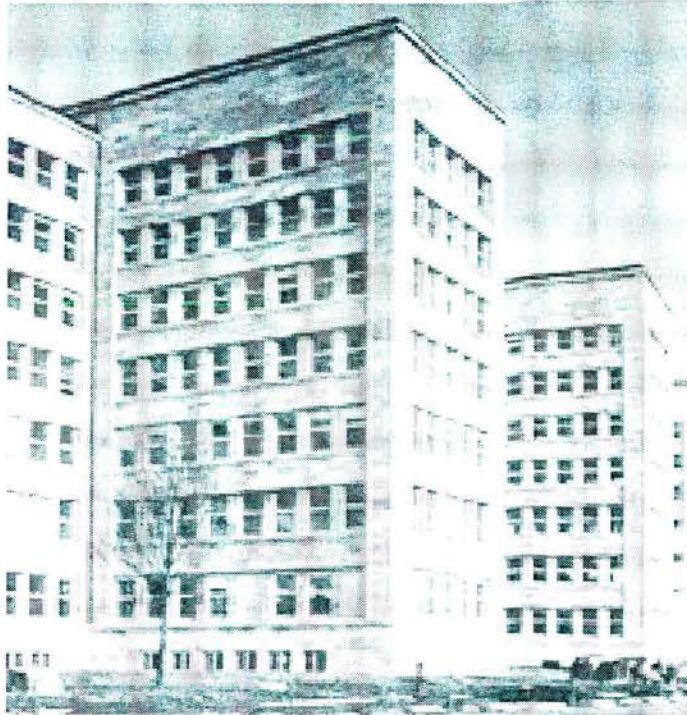


Figure 12 Hans Poelzig, the pared-down Neo-classical style for office buildings, entrance front of IG Farben Administration Building, Frankfurt am Main, 1928-30. (Posener, 1992, 231)

Poelzig did not denounce technology altogether, yet he considered excessive admiration and the mystification of technology inadequate: ‘one ought not to glorify technical form. And it would be too easy to take pleasure in every single gas pipe and radiator, every concrete structure, to try and show every technical contraption in the belief that this was the proof of Modernity.’¹⁶⁹ Poelzig was aware of the modern phenomenon of the ephemeral and was critical about it. Technology was to him a temporary fashion that would be replaced with time. ‘Everything that is technical,

¹⁶⁸ Bartetzko, 26.

¹⁶⁹ Hans Poelzig, ‘The Architect,’ speech given at the 28th Federal Assembly of the Bund Deutscher Architekten in Berlin on 4 June 1931, reprinted by Julius Posener, *Hans Poelzig* (1992), 190. However easy it might have appeared, it was to take more than half a century for ‘gas pipes and radiators to be recognised fully as art, e.g. Piano and Rogers’ Pompidou Centre in 1977.

and thus every purely technical form, is transitory; man relentlessly destroys it when it no longer serves its purpose.¹⁷⁰ Poelzig saw the ephemerality of technology as its limit - in contrast to art, which is of 'eternal value'. The aesthetics of the machine and 'a machine for living', as proposed by Le Corbusier and other Modernists in the twenties, judged architecture purely by technical consideration. This could not be sustained, for natural materials such as stone and wood still played the main role in building construction in Poelzig's time. Technical materials such as iron and concrete were to complement and help to create the best possible architecture, not to replace natural materials altogether.

Poelzig found ambivalent point among the mist of conflicting ideas in the dynamism of Weimar era. He stood as a mediator between conservatism and socialism, between naturalistic and materialistic aesthetics, and between a comparatively traditional concept of monumentality and modern technology. Exploring the practical, technical, social and cultural aspects of architecture was more important than any other aspect. Technology was for Poelzig a minor element, which would often be disguised with monumental dramatic façades. According to him, to disguise the steel structure with stone was rational and necessary because 'steel structures not only had to endure being covered up for purely technical reasons as well as for durability, but also because architects wanted to pretend they did not exist'. New materials and technology had little independent form of expression.¹⁷¹ His *Schauburg* project (Figure 13), a massive amphitheatre with endless Roman arches, was designed to host an indoor audience of 20,000. On the other side of the theatre, the stage was to be open to outdoor audiences in harmonious natural landscape. The symbolic small human figures strolling among the stone-covered piers provided a sense of scale of the building. It was strategically important for the New Architecture to dignify the stone-covered functional architecture with classicism, for this solved the problem that the status of the New Architecture was unstable. Classicism authenticated the grandiose in functional architecture by

¹⁷⁰ Hans Poelzig, 'On Architecture in Our Time.' ('Von Bauen Unsere Zeit') *Die Form* (1922). Reprinted by Posener, *Hans Poelzig* (1992), 181.

¹⁷¹ Poelzig, 'On Architecture in Our Time.' ('Von Bauen Unsere Zeit') *Die Form*, no. 1, 1922. Reprinted in Posener, *Hans Poelzig* (1992), 183.

endowing it with a sense of historicity, but without fundamentally denying its modernity and mobility.¹⁷²



Figure 13 Hans Poelzig, Schauburg, 1932. (Posener, 1992, 252)

Although protesting against Werkbund's tendency of over-emphasising practicality and economic exploitation, Poelzig believed that the demands and constraints imposed by private clients were sources of vital inspirations for architects.

No artists can create anything worthwhile without resonance from his client; indeed it is only through harmonious collaboration between both parties that an authentic building can be created. For this to happen a spark must pass from the client to the architect. No architect can work

¹⁷² · *Mit der Klassik war gewissermaßen Zeitenstillstand verbürgt, ohne daß Der in funktionalistischem Bauen manifestierte Anspruch auf zeitgemäße Modernität und Beweglichkeit grundsätzlich aufgegeben worden wäre.* See Dieter Bartetzko, 'Zwischen Freiheit und Bindung – Die versteinerte Moderne in Hans Poelzigs IG-Farben-Gebäude' in *Hans Poelzig: Die Pläne und Zeichnungen aus dem ehemaligen Verkehrs – und Bamuseum in Berlin*, Matthias Schirren (ed.) (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1989), 31.

for long without conditions and constraints, without a commission. His creativity will wither; there is nothing worse than to tell an architect he can do what he likes.... The struggle with the client keeps the architect on his toe; in free market, whether rightly or wrongly, ... but it keeps us alive, ...¹⁷³

Unlike some highly criticised modernist architects, who neglected the real needs of the users and residents of the buildings they designed, Poelzig's willingness to adapt and reconcile architectural ideals with his client's demands was a positive and practical approach to modern society. Ironically this positive attitude towards reconciliation between artists and the 'free market' failed to secure more commissions in the later stages of his life. In a changing political climate, seeking opportunities to gain commissions was for many architects more crucial than examining the ideology of the ruling political regime. In 1933, in a letter to a friend Poelzig wrote, '*Haben Sie denn gar keine Beziehungen zu Nationalsozialisten, das ist das einzige, was jetzt hilft.*'¹⁷⁴ Although he submitted projects to National Socialist competition such as the Reichsbank extension project, Poelzig never won competitions held in the Third Reich and was never called upon by Speer, who had been pupil and assistant in Tessenow's studio – a colleague who was a distant rival of Poelzig. Posener defended Poelzig and argued that, 'No one can say he (Poelzig) belonged to the group of architects who offered their services enthusiastically, to the many who said that National Socialism was just what they had been waiting for. He stayed in the background and became more and more withdrawn'.¹⁷⁵ Poelzig and his architectural influence did not leave Germany and remained constantly visible.

¹⁷³ Poelzig, 'The Architect,' speech given at the 28th Federal Assembly of the *Bund Deutscher Architekten* in Berlin on 4 June 1931, reprinted by Posener, *Hans Poelzig*, 192–94.

¹⁷⁴ Poelzig, a letter to Käthe Lassen on 5th May 1933, quoted by Matthias Schirren, 'Eine 'Bauhütte' für Berlin – Hans Poelzig und sein Meisteratelier an der Preußischen Akademie der Künste' in *Hans Poelzig: die Pläne und Zeichnungen Verkehrs- und Baumuseum in Berlin*, edited by Matthias Schirren (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1989), 24.

¹⁷⁵ Posener, *Hans Poelzig: Reflections on His Life and Work* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), 253.

Technology and modernity directed by the driving urge of mankind to progress are a part of the human condition that is strong and uncontrollable by the human mind. Simmel observed that ‘life is made infinitely easy for the personality in that stimulations, interests, uses of time and consciousness are offered to it from all sides. They carry the person as if in a stream and one needs hardly to swim for oneself.’¹⁷⁶ In the ‘stream’ of time and life, the option to stop the flow does not exist. Architects at the beginning of the twentieth century inadvertently ‘unleashed the techniques and emotions which they proved unable, or perhaps only unwilling, to master’¹⁷⁷. Speer and the GBI architects, with the support of the authoritarian state, attempted to take control over technology, but ended being destroyed by it.

The development of all architectural styles and movements depends on more complicated elements than merely a stylistic preference for any particular architect. It is driven by the contemporary discourse and is entangled with the cultural and social context. In his memoirs Speer recalled that on one occasion at Maxim’s in Paris, in front of an elite French and German group at the beginning of the war, he had spoken of the casual theory he had formulated based on the rise and fall of the architectural styles of the French Revolution and Napoleon’s Empire. He commented with hindsight that if he had thought it through carefully, the ‘Late Empire’ style he had designed for the Third Reich would in fact forecast the end of Hitler’s regime.¹⁷⁸ Speer’s historical determinist remark says only that he had a limited understand of architecture, its development and its history. At the extreme, Leon Krier’s admiration of Neo-classical architecture overvalued Speer’s architectural achievement. But Krier was not completely wrong in arguing that most political and cultural ideas of the architectural elites of Weimar, such as Tessenow, were ‘absorbed, developed and

¹⁷⁶ Georg Simmel, ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’ in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, translated by Kurt H. Wolff. (New York: Free Press, 1950), 422.

¹⁷⁷ Kathleen James Chakraborty, *German Architecture for a Mass Audience* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 94.

¹⁷⁸ The theory Speer formulated was that the French Revolution ‘developed a new sense of style which was destined to replace the late rococo,’ which was treated ‘with lightness and good taste’. But ‘Late Empire had achieved a resplendence and wealth that could scarcely be surpassed. Late Empire had expressed the end point of a stylistic evolution which had begun so promisingly with the Consulate. ... Within it were revealed signs of decay which were a forecast of the end of the Napoleonic era. Compressed within the span of twenty years. I said, we could observe a phenomenon that ordinarily took place only over centuries: the development from the Doric buildings of early antiquity to the fissured baroque facades of Late Hellenism, ...’ See Speer, 232.

finally discarded by the leading thinkers of National-Socialism.¹⁷⁹ Behrens, Kreis, Tessenow and Poelzig, instead of going into exile, stayed on in Nazi Germany. Despite mistrusting the National Socialist regime and its 'incompatible promises give to workers, craftsmen and industrialists alike,'¹⁸⁰ they optimistically imagined there were at least aspects of ideology they could identify with. Political incidents that disfavoured some radical architects started in the early 1920s and grew increasingly hostile for them in the Third Reich, e.g. the Dessau Bauhaus closed down in 1922; after Hilberseimer and Kandinsky were expelled from the Bauhaus, the school closed in Berlin on 10th August, 1933; Martin Wagner was discharged from the board of directors of the Werkbund, which was soon absorbed into the *Kampfbund*; and Poelzig, the director of the State Schools for Architecture, Painting and Applied Arts in Berlin, was replaced by Schmitthenner.¹⁸¹ Yet all this did not end modernists' influence on and interaction with the National Socialist regime. Architects, including Luckhardt, Gropius and Wagner, continued the attempt to win support from National Socialist organisations such as the *Kampfbund*. In an era when politicians delivered obscure messages with constantly changing policies, it was difficult to detect the monstrous nature of National Socialism. Few architects left Germany without having exhausted the last resort to sustain their careers.

Architecture was the media through which *Zeitgeist* was conveyed. The Hegelian approach that art can and should represent the spirit of the time was seen in architectural thinking from the late nineteenth century onwards, and was employed later by modernist historians, Giedion, Hitchcock and Pevsner (see chapter one). The task of artists and architects was to seek forms that most appropriately represented the cultural, economic, social and political achievements of their time. Since the time when the German nation state came into being, art had already been performing 'a world-historical mission'.¹⁸² Architecture continued to maintain a position of extraordinary importance in the shaping of National Socialist regime. Prominent architects such as Behrens, Tessenow, Poelzig and Kreis each manifested their individual interpretations of this great mission in unique ways, not without

¹⁷⁹ Leon Krier, 'An Architecture of Desire' *Architectural Design* 56, no. 4 (1986): 33.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁸¹ Tafuri, Manfredo and Dal Co, Francesco. *Modern Architecture*. (New York: Abrams, 1979 (original published as *Architettura Contemporanea*, 1976), 271.

¹⁸² Andreas Huyssen, 'Monumental Seduction,' in *New German Critique*, no. 69 (Fall: 1996): 193.

interaction with each other and with their contemporaries. Some of them (Behrens and Kreis) chose to participate in the National Socialist project and to build, and some others passively shunned political engagement. Nonetheless, their contributions to contemporary developments, to the sophisticated reservoir of German architecture that was founded on the diverse western architectural tradition, were consistently and starkly visible despite political changes. Totalitarian power is, as Hays noted, 'revalidated, however unwittingly, by intellectuals operating by rational consent to articulate, maintain, or elaborate some prior ideas or worldviews. Authority is maintained by the consensus of cultural agents as well as by repression.'¹⁸³ This chapter paid particular attention to the works and architectural ideas of Behrens, Kreis, Poelzig and Tessenow, to the concern for monumentality in their work, and to their direct involvement with both Speer's architectural education and the Greater Berlin projects. These architects were by no means the only architects engaged in these debates at the time. Monumentality attracted the wide attention, particularly from 1910 onwards, of other prominent German architects of the time, among them Fritz Schumacher, Theodor Fischer, Martin Wagner and Ludwig Hilberseimer. Their significance for and influence on National Socialist architecture will be discussed where relevant in other chapters.

It is misleading to speak of an exclusively National Socialist architectural style. Speer and his GBI office brought together architectural talents and styles that had been highly developed in Germany prior to Hitler coming to power. The preference for applying Neo-classical ornament to simple modern building blocks was chosen from a range of diverse architectural tendencies rooted in architectural debates in the Germany of 1910 to 1930. As Speer once admitted, without the direct and indirect contributions made by Behrens, Bonatz and Kreis, the reconstruction of the new Capital for the Third Reich would have been impossible.¹⁸⁴ This is not an exaggerated statement about the contribution of architects who had both designed and built extensively in Germany before 1933. Their architectural careers and their

¹⁸³ Hays, 122.

¹⁸⁴ Speer referred to Kreis' contribution specifically in his conversation with Helmut Artz, but he would certainly have agreed that the same notion should be applied to other leading architects working for the Third Reich, with whom he established consistently good relationships. See Helmut Artz, Kreis' Godson wrote in 'Der Patenonkel', in *Wilhelm Kreis*, Nerdinger and Mai, 216.

contribution to the notion of monumentality demonstrate the continuity of Germany architecture.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Pehnt, 205.

3 Reshaping Berlin - the metropolis and urban planning in the early twentieth century

The *possible* had failed, and could not *not* have failed, even though it had been 'possible'. An ideology was dying. History dealt the final blow. ... So history, stimulated by utopianism, killed utopia off.¹⁸⁶

~Henri Lefebvre

There is a sense in which every town planning contains both a utopia and a heroic, yet authoritarian, element. Although its purposes may seem purely practical, it does claim to offer, like the utopian work, a permanent solution to the flux and flow of the ever-changing city. The plan is always intended to fix the usage of space; the aim, the state regulation of urban populations.¹⁸⁷

~Elizabeth Wilson

Reshaping Berlin into a *Weltstadt* was a prime concern for German city planners and critics in the 1920s. Werner Hegemann, Martin Wagner, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Walther Curt Behrendt, Hugo Häring all proposed ways of achieving *Weltstadt* Berlin in their writings, as will be seen below. The shared aim was a capital of Germany that would bear international comparison. This sentiment was seized upon by Hitler and the National Socialists to promote their political ideology. '*Berlin als Reichshauptstadt eines 65 Millionen Volkes muß städtebaulich und kulturell auf solche Höhe gebracht werden, daß es mit allen Hauptstädten der Welt konkurrieren kann.*'¹⁸⁸ Hitler regarded Berlin as an unkempt provincial city that needed strong order and discipline in order to become an international capital. He stated, 'Berlin is a big city, but not a real metropolis. Look at Paris, the most beautiful city in the world. Or even Vienna. Those are cities with grand style. Berlin is nothing but an unregulated accumulation of buildings. We must surpass Paris and Vienna.'¹⁸⁹ Berlin

¹⁸⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity*. Translated by John Moore. (London & New York: Verso, 1995), 78.

¹⁸⁷ Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago Press, 1991), 20.

¹⁸⁸ See Werner Durth, *Deutsche Architekten, Biographische Verflechtungen 1900-1970* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1986), 131; a report of the party conference on 19th September 1933.

¹⁸⁹ Hitler's remark, recalled by Speer. Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London: Phoenix, 1997);

must be both a modern metropolis and a museum of monumental architecture,¹⁹⁰ for Hitler saw the art and architecture of a capital as the best way to represent the power of the ruling class. The Neo-classical style of the Prussian monarchy and of Ludwig I in Munich was Hitler's favourite models. But Berlin was not the starting point of the National Socialist movement; it was the goal.¹⁹¹ Taking full control of Berlin – the heart of the nation - was the only way to govern the whole of the German Reich.

3.1 International Examples of Re-shaping *Großstadt*

In 1772 the Elector of Brandenburg unified the Prussian State. In his public address at the coronation of King Friedrich II the Jesuit Father Vota said, *'Ihr habt die Manufakturen nach Berlin gelockt, die für eure Länder lebendige Gold- und Silberbergwerke sind, und man kann Berlin das Paris Deutschlands nennen ...'*¹⁹² By referring to Paris as the model for Berlin - the capital of the new Reich - Vota implied that Prussia was now a major European power able to compete with France. Werner Hegemann in 1930 compared Germany with Paris and London of the same period:

*Das 'Paris Deutschlands' hatte beim Regierungsantritt des preußischen Königs-Kandidaten etwa 190,000 Einwohner. Das Paris Frankreichs hatte gleichzeitig (nach einer Schätzung Vaubans) 720,000 Einwohner. Etwa um dieselbe Zeit überholte die Einwohnerzahl Londons die von Paris. Im Kleinen Holland hatte Amsterdam nur etwa 100,000 Einwohner; aber es übertraf womöglich Paris und London an bürgerlichem Wohlstand und rasch fortschreitender bürgerlichem Wohlstand und rasch fortschreitender bürgerlicher Kultur.*¹⁹³

Berlin despite having a much smaller population would nevertheless fulfil its potential to become the capital of a culturally strong and prosperous Germany. In the years immediately after the Great War, Berlin progressed much faster than urban planners had previously anticipated. This was pointed out by urban critics of the

original edition, 1970), 122.

¹⁹⁰ Durth, 132.

¹⁹¹ See Gerhard Kiersch and others, *Berliner Alltag im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1981), 7.

¹⁹² Werner Hegemann, *Das Steinerte Berlin, Geschichte der Grössten Mietkasernenstadt der Welt* (Berlin: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1930), 87.

¹⁹³ Ibid..

1920s in their discussions of re-planning Berlin. The capital was compared with Paris and London. Walter Curt Behrendt wrote in *Das neue Berlin* in 1929 that with its dynamic building development, the city of Berlin had been transformed into the liveliest city in Europe. Its streets at night, lit by the flamboyant glow of commercial neon, were as bright as in the daytime. The number of automobiles increased rapidly and the growth in traffic was constant. Furthermore, ‘*Diese Berlin steht heute im Begriff, aus der Hauptstadt des Deutschen Reiches, aus einer nationalen Metropole, die es bisher gewesen ist, eine internationale Weltstadt zu werden*’¹⁹⁴. Berlin had been characterised by Schinkel as the capital of a northern military state. Schinkel once produced a design for the area around what was to become the Lehrter Bahnhof in Berlin, which proposed a monumental cathedral on a north-south oriented axis across the Spree. Behrendt saw this design as the archetype for later plans for reshaping Berlin, where a central railway station would replace the cathedral to mark the entrance to a modern world city. In the same journal, Heinrich Mendelsohn, the architect, planner and property investor, suggested in ‘*Zum Platz der Republik*’ that the planning of Berlin should look to examples in Paris and London for inspiration. The major governmental square in Berlin should demonstrate German unity in the way the *Place de la Concorde* symbolised French imperial power in Paris. While London had Hyde Park and Paris had the Bois de Boulogne, the *Tiergarten* would play the same role for Berlin in providing both easy access for traffic and a recreational area for the city.¹⁹⁵ Searching for a better model on which to re-design Berlin in 1930, Werner Hegemann in *Das Steinerne Berlin* also looked to examples of international metropolises: the underground system and the Garden Cities around greater London, the growth of population and the traffic condition in the heart of Paris, and the central rail network in New York.¹⁹⁶

In drawing up their master plan for the transformation of Berlin into ‘*Germania*’, Hitler and Speer drew not only on earlier discussions on the planning of Berlin, but also looked – as the leading German city planners had done before them – to the other great world capitals: Vienna, Paris, London, New York and Washington.

¹⁹⁴ Walter Curt Behrendt, ‘*Berlin wird weltstadt – Metropole im Herzen Europas.*’ *Das Neue Berlin*, issue 5, 1929 (reprinted by Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1988), 98.

¹⁹⁵ Heinrich Mendelsohn, ‘*Zum Platz der Republik*’ *Das Neue Berlin*, issue 7, 1929 (reprinted by Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1988), 145-47.

¹⁹⁶ See Hegemann, 409-48.

Vienna

From 1880 to 1913 land and house prices increased sharply in Vienna. At the Stephansplatz - the most expensive square in Vienna - the price of land increased from 1,000 crowns to 2,200 crowns per square metre. According to one record published in a workers' newspaper, land price inflation in suburban area was even higher.¹⁹⁷ There was no legislation to protect tenants' rights. This affected the working class especially badly. They were often evicted from their houses because they were not able to pay the rent. The demand for housing increased dramatically. In 1858, under the Emperor Franz Joseph I, the grandiose Ringstrasse scheme was first proposed to replace the existing ramparts of the city. This was the first reconstruction since the Baroque era. Although the major patrons for the buildings were the middle-class and the aristocracy, the working class benefited from the construction of public facilities such as parks and a new water supply system. In contrast to Haussmann's Paris, the Ringstrasse, with a variety of public and private buildings, was open to all types of construction including palaces, residential houses, the Imperial Forum housing the Museum of Arts and Natural History, the civic theatre, the opera house, the university and the town hall. Each of them was designed separately in different styles by different architects including Theophil von Hansen and Gottfried Semper.

Different attempts to reorganise the city of Vienna were made by architects in the late nineteenth century. Camillo Sitte in *City Planning According to Artistic Principle* (1889) proposed to reorganise the western part of the *Ringstrasse* in Vienna. The monumental buildings along the *Ringstrasse* were conceived as projects that were in harmony only with the street itself. It lacked coherence with the 'cityscape'.¹⁹⁸ The vast empty spaces surrounding the buildings were particularly criticised by Sitte for not having the 'compactness of artistic effect', which was essential to achieve the grandeur of successful city planning. Wagner's proposal in 1890 for a network of underground, surface and overhead tracks that extended all over the city offered a solution to traffic congestion and integrated the old centre of Vienna with the suburban area.

¹⁹⁷ Brigitte Hamann, *Hitlers Wien. Lehrjahre eines Diktators* (Piper, Munich & Zurich, 1997), 202.

¹⁹⁸ Andrew Herscher, 'Städtebau as Imperial Culture, Camillo Sitte's Urban Plan for Ljubljana' in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 62, no. 2 (June, 2003), 215.

Hitler studied the plan of Vienna in his youth. In *Mein Kampf*, he noted the impact that Viennese architecture invoked in him in his high-school years: ‘my interest in architecture as such increased steadily, and this development was accelerated after a two weeks’ trip to Vienna which I took when not yet sixteen. The purpose of my trip was to study the picture gallery in the Court Museum, but I had eyes for scarcely anything but the Museum itself. ...it was always the buildings, which held my primary interest. For hours I could stand in front of the Opera, for hours I could gaze at the Parliament; the whole Ring Boulevard seemed to me like an enchantment out of *The Thousand-and-One-Nights*.’¹⁹⁹ Hitler derived inspiration for new public buildings in the Greater Berlin plan from the architectural complex of *Ringstrasse* with its sequence of major public buildings. Speer recalled Hitler’s special attachment to the architecture in Vienna, noting that Hitler ‘admired the way the *Ringstrasse* buildings were simple, like monuments – every building is on its own, part of a series of independent buildings which relate to each other. And Hitler wanted Berlin to be built in a similar way.’²⁰⁰ The architects of the *Ringstrasse* – Theophil von Hansen, Heinrich von Ferstel, Gottfried Semper and Siccard von Siccardsburg- had a strong influence on Hitler’s vision of what a *Weltstadt* should be.

Paris

By the mid-nineteenth century the streets of medieval and baroque Paris were inadequate to carry the burden of modern traffic. Old houses could not cope with the sanitary problems produced by the fast growing population resulting from the industrial revolution. After the 1848 revolution a new kind of conservatism emerged in Europe - Napoleon III in France and Bismarck in Germany. Town planning became an important instrument for social reform in Napoleon’s France. As Leonardo Benevolo has noted, the new authoritarian and popular right wing, ‘regarded direct state control of many sectors of economic and social life as necessary; it therefore carried out a series of reforms which in part continued those of the preceding two decades but which differed from them by their co-ordinated

¹⁹⁹ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London: Pimlico, 1997; first edition, 1943), 18.

²⁰⁰ Dal Co, Francesco and Polano, Sergio. ‘Interview with Albert Speer’ *Oppositions*, no. 12 (Spring, 1978): 47.

character and counter-revolutionary bias.²⁰¹ In the new Paris, Georges-Eugène Haussmann superimposed a new system of straight wide roads upon old districts. Roads and houses were pulled down to make way for large boulevards connecting the main centres of the city and the railway stations. While the straight and wide streets provided efficient routes for traffic, fast military access to the heart of the city was also one of the major concerns. In addition to monuments and housing construction on a massive scale, Haussmann modernised the water and drainage systems of the old Paris. This was the first modern example of a complicated combination of technical and administrative provisions to be coherently and efficiently executed in a city of over one million inhabitants.²⁰²

Industrialisation and urbanisation in Paris required a massive supply of new housing. Rather than the workers, it was the middle class emerging after the Second Empire in Paris who generated the demand for new houses. In Haussmann's plan to reshape Paris, the façade of the department blocks along the new streets carried minimal details because standardisation and lack of decoration reduced building costs. Instead of following strict classical notions of proportion in each building, Haussmann emphasised long perspectives for streets and created an overall effect of 'strength, mass and outline in the terminal buildings' on the boulevards.²⁰³ Both Napoleon III and Haussmann regarded architecture as a means of defining modernity, the changed realities of political power and national identity.

Despite the fact that the architect-leader liaison between Speer and Hitler was less successful in comparison to that between Haussmann and Napoleon III, the way both Haussmann and Speer served their respective rulers was similar in many ways. Haussmann claimed to be *the* architect of Napoleon III; and Speer, of Hitler. Haussmann wrote shortly after being appointed prefect of the Seine that the Emperor had shown him a plan of Paris carefully marked with different coloured inks to indicate degrees of urgency for the reformation of the city. Speer emphasised that the design of and the buildings on the Greater Berlin Plan were the result of Hitler's vision. One of the many objectives of the careers of both men as the favoured architects of the Emperor and of the Führer was to manipulate politicians by

²⁰¹ Leonardo Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1971), 63.

²⁰² *Ibid.*.

²⁰³ Anthony Sutcliffe, *Paris, An Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 88.

mastering a range of techniques from flattery to intrigue. They also exploited the talents of architects who worked for them, giving detailed instructions for every detail, even to distinguished and experienced architects. They supported architectural innovation, so long as it could produce striking effects.

Hitler and Speer regarded Paris as a model for an ideal capital, a world city, as the yardstick against which the reconstruction of Berlin was measured and must emulate. It is reported that on 25th June 1940 after Germany conquered Paris, Hitler was overwhelmed by the city and remarked that,

*Berlin muß in kürzester Zeit durch seine bauliche Neugestaltung den ihm durch die Größe unseres Sieges zukommenden Ausdruck als Hauptstadt eines starken neuen Reichs erhalten. In der Verwirklichung dieser nunmehr **wichtigsten Bauaufgabe des Reiches** sehe ich den bedeutendsten Beitrag zur endgültigen Sicherstellung unseres Sieges. Ihre Vollendung erwarte ich bis zum Jahre 1950.²⁰⁴*

The reconstruction of Berlin was given first priority. In the forming of the great ‘new Reich’, the execution and the completion of the Germania project was seen as an important step to the realisation of Hitler’s imperialist dream. Paris was the heart of Napoleon Bonaparte’s empire – the biggest modern empire on the European continent. To surpass this status, Hitler believed that Germany must expand her territory, and Berlin must become a capital city of commensurate power and stature.

The idea of cutting through the heart of old metropolises was not a concept that was the exclusive reserve of the authoritarian state power. Modernist architects in the twentieth century led by Le Corbusier commonly advocated this totalitarian method of urban planning. Discussing the problems in the old Paris in *The City of Tomorrow*, Le Corbusier insisted on the primacy of straight lines in modern town planning in the chapter ‘Physic or Surgery’. At certain stage in the planning process, architects would confront ‘a real need for a clearance’ to tackle problems in an old city, which would lead ‘to the removal of old buildings and consequently to open spaces, and

²⁰⁴ Durth, 139-40.

long avenues and vistas.²⁰⁵ Le Corbusier praised Colbert's foresight in having provided Paris with wider and straighter avenues and Haussmann's determined 'surgery' that cleared away the 'intolerable' areas in the heart of the city. Le Corbusier gave credit to Haussmann's surgery for making modern motor traffic possible in the Paris of his time. Nonetheless, the wide streets built by Colbert and Haussmann were obsolete shortly after they were completed, as Le Corbusier observed. Past generations had not been able to foresee the development of modern technology. Many streets in the past had been built as dead ends and not as thoroughfares. Modern architects would therefore have to take drastic steps in future developments and avoid problems of this kind, which made it so difficult and costly to adapt to modern conditions. In order to achieve this, a radical approach - was inevitable.

In the 'sick' and problem-ridden old centre of Paris, Le Corbusier considered a rational and 'dispassionate' demolition and reconstruction plan to be the only feasible solution. This was not only financially profitable, but also a solution to social problems of the time. Le Corbusier used metaphors of modern medicine, such as 'infected part of the city,' 'surgery', 'a powerful dose of medicine' – the commonly accepted scientific notions, to convey his rationalist ideas for architecture and city planning. This was merely to follow the natural 'law of survival' in densely populated cities.²⁰⁶ In the *Plan Voisin*, the heart of Paris was to be divided into two parts: one commercial area, which was to cover 600 acres of Paris, and a residential zone. Between the commercial and residential areas there was to be an underground central station connecting the two. His plan, according to Le Corbusier, was to make 'a frontal attack on the most diseased quarters of the city, and the narrowest streets...'²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning*, trans. by Frederic Etchells, (London: Architectural Press, 1946), 273.

²⁰⁶ 'The law of survival operates perpetually and with a recurring and brutal force. The great city, with its throbbing and its tumult, crushes the weak and raises the strong. ... And these great cities challenge one another, for the mad urge for supremacy is the very law of evolution itself to which we are subjected.' See Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning*, trans. by Frederic Etchells, (London: Architectural Press, 1946), 105.

²⁰⁷ Le Corbusier, 285-86.

London

Architects had a profound and long-established interest in British architecture. From Schinkel, Muthesius, Hegemann to Speer, they not only read theories developed by British architects, but also travelled to the country to have first-hand experience in its architecture. By the end of the nineteenth century, more than a century after the start of the industrial revolution, British architecture played an exemplary role in its search for answers to the problems of the burgeoning metropolitan cities. Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* was translated as *Gartenstädte in Sicht* in German by Maria Wallroth-Unterilp in 1907 and had a significant impact on the contemporary discussion of urban planning in Germany. (See discussions of theories of Martin Mächler and Martin Wagner in the later part of this chapter.)

Aside from the dispersion of the metropolitan population, traffic was also a major problem. Speer and the GBI architects visited London on several occasions between 1937 and 1939 to observe the development in the world's leading industrial metropolis. The construction and regulation of the London underground system was of particular importance to the planning of the Greater Berlin network.²⁰⁸ Schelkes reported that in 1937 it was common knowledge that Speer and the GBI officials flew in an old Junkers aircraft to London for a few days, combining leisure and study in London and in its environs.²⁰⁹ There were other examples of German and the National Socialist architects learning from architectural models in London, such as trips made by Muthesius (see Chapter Two, pp. 66-67) and by Pinnau (see Chapter Five, pp. 211-22).

American cities: New York and Chicago

Urban development in large American cities had attracted enormous attentions from the Berlin elites, since the Chicago School made its name with the innovative design and technology to build skyscrapers at the end of the nineteenth century. The optimistic and progressive cities of the 'American Dream' were central to the discussion among Berlin planners, led by Martin Mächler and Martin Wagner.

²⁰⁸ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London: Phoenix, 1997; original edition, 1970). Also see Durth, 137. Cäsar Pinnau was sent to London to see examples of newly opened luxury hotels when designing the Grand Hotel on the North-South Axis. See Chapter 5 in this thesis.

²⁰⁹ Durth, 137.

Despite general admiration, many critics were sceptical of these American models. As early as 1910, Scheffler pointed out in his text on the destiny of Berlin that, historically speaking, *Gross Berlin* had the advantage of being part of the old European culture. Berlin, he argued, should adopt the boldness and optimism of the North American cities and incorporate them into the historical environment of European capitals.

Es will Einem in solchen Augenblicken eines höheren Optimismus scheinen, als sei Berlin der letzten Konsequenzen der amerikanischen Kolonistenkühnheit fähig und könne das Neue und Kühne doch zugleich maßvoll schön veredeln, weil es die Stadt eines Landes ist, das auf gefestigte alte Kulturtraditionen zurückblickt; als vermöchte das Einem als möglich vorschwebende Groß-Berlin sich das alte Kulturgewissen Europas zu bewahren und doch auch den Wirklichkeitssinn Amerikas zu haben und als könne es gerade aus seiner besonderen Determination Vorteile ziehen, wie keine andere Stadt der alten oder der neuen Welt.²¹⁰

While the responses towards the American city were mixed, the sentiment shared by the urban German theorists in the 1910s was that it was crucial to learn from the most advanced examples in the world.

For a capitalist society, only when investment yields no return, are problems regarded seriously and actions taken. In many US cities, the solutions took the form of zoning, amortisation and regulations favouring landowners. Town planners favoured large scale planning and expansion, including shifting the poorer population from the over-dense conventional central area towards the outskirts of the town as answer to the problem of limited availability of houses and living spaces in city centres. Decentralisation was held to be the most plausible solution to counter unlimited vertical growth and horizontal expansion in the central area of the city. Careful reorganisation and reconstruction of the over-developed city and its division into smaller towns with lower living costs were ideas that were seriously evaluated in the United States. By the 1920s large metropolises worldwide suffered a serious

²¹⁰ Karl Scheffler, *Berlin ein Stadtschicksal* (Berlin: Westend Erich Reich, 1910), 260-61.

shortage of houses. American cities such as New York, Boston and Chicago were often examples for German urban planners to study, because of the experience of these cities and the advanced development of high-rise buildings.

Berlin, the *Weltstadt*

The notions of Berlin as a world city (*Weltstadt*) and metropolis (*Großstadt*) were widely discussed at the turn of the twentieth century. Artists and architects, such as Peter Behrens, Hermann Muthesius, Bruno Paul and other Werkbund members, who had introduced a new functionality in the first decade of the twentieth century, celebrated the dynamics and the beauty of the metropolis.

Contrary to this, however, some critics held the view that the rapid growth of the German capital was an intrusion into nature. Georg Hermann's '*Weltstadt*' illustrated the way in which the artificial infrastructures of transportation, city planning and mass housing for a fast growing population could be seen as an affront to the rural area surrounding the capital.²¹¹ Karl Scheffler disparaged the notion of the *Weltstadt* because it diminished the distinctive characters of the individual city. '*Jede Stadt ist ein Individuum,*' argued Scheffler, '*An jede einzelne denkt man zurück wie an eine Persönlichkeit; jede hat ihre besondere Stimmung, ihre Atmosphäre, eine nur ihr eigentümliche Physiognomie und einen Gesamtcharakter, der sich unvergeßlich einprägt.*'²¹² He held the view that the physiognomy of Berlin was shaped by its distinctive historical development. Each Kaiser left the footprint of his reign on Berlin in the shape of a distinctive architectural style, from that of Gontard, Langhan and Gents in the reign of Friedrich Wilhelm the Second, of Schinkel in the reign of Friedrich Wilhelm the Third and of Hitzig and Waesemann in the reign of Friedrich Wilhelm the Fourth. Wilhelm II, in particular, initiated the use of modern industrial forms to represent the state. The Wilhelmine Style later became the symbol of the Reich.²¹³

Ludwig Hilberseimer in *Grossstadt Architektur* (1927) argued that the metropolis was the product of the capitalist economy and was the natural

²¹¹ Timothy O. Benson, 'Fantasy and Functionality: The Fate of Utopia,' in *Expressionist Utopias: Paradise, Metropolis, Architectural Fantasy*, edited by Timothy O. Benson (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1994), 24-25.

²¹² Karl Scheffler, *Berlin ein Stadtschicksal* (Berlin: Westend Erich Reich, 1910), 1.

²¹³ Scheffler, 192.

consequence of the global industrialisation of the world. The dynamics of the local economy reflected international competitive conditions. The extraordinary concentration of activity and the density of population in large cities resulted in a rhythm of life inconceivably faster and more intense than previously, and which quickly suppressed any sense of individual and local identity. Large cities had become international in character and were no longer capital cities for the princes or monarchs of small states, which had earlier created their own unique characteristics. Hilberseimer rejected the stigmatisation of the *Großstadt* as a capital that lived on material supplies from the rural hinterland, and where nothing but bureaucracy was produced. He pointed out that the leading role and contribution of the *Großstadt* to economic development and intellectual activity had been overlooked. Observing examples of town planning in Canberra, New York and Washington, Hilberseimer praised their rational decision in choosing straight and diagonal lines for the network of street. Arranging building blocks orthogonally brought a further advantage of straight streets, which relieved the congested traffic.²¹⁴

Despite this strong tendency towards internationalisation and to looking to international capital cities for inspiration, some architects were sceptical, and discouraged a mindless imitation that ignored the particularity of German culture. Bruno Taut, for instance, argued strongly against the inappropriate juxtaposition of Berlin with other international capitals such as London, Paris and New York. Taut criticised arbitrary comparisons between Berlin and other capitals and ill-considered proposals to imitate the examples of these cities, because this process ignored the characteristics and differences of every city. Paris, for instance, was the world capital in its own right, but the case of its urban development was unique and incomparable to Berlin. ‘*Wer Paris in seinem vollen Inhalt begreift, wird mit Bedauern die Unvergleichbarkeit von Berlin und Paris einsehen und damit auch die Unmöglichkeit für Berlin, Paris in seinen Hauptwesenszügen nach zueifern.*’²¹⁵ Although the quays, bridges and the large axis from the *Louvre* to the *Arc de Triomphe* were glorious and impressive, Taut insisted that one could not overlook the processes involved in this achievement. The hundred years organic development and cultivation of a city like London or Paris could not be imitated or artificially re-created elsewhere.

²¹⁴ Ludwig Hilberseimer, *Großstadt Architektur* (Stuttgart: Hoffmann, 1927), 6.

²¹⁵ Bruno Taut, ‘*Via London – Paris – New York – Neu-Berlin,*’ selected in Balg, 236.

3.2 Problems in the old Berlin of the 1900s

European capitals expanded rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth Century. The core area of Berlin had around 500,000 residents in 1860. The population increased to 1.7 million in 1890, twenty years after the first Reich was founded. By the turn of the twentieth century, Berlin already had 3.8 million residents. Projecting this growth rate forward, the '*Gross-Berlin*' competition at 1908 called for a plan for a city of 5 million inhabitants.



Figure 14 Three photographs showing the living condition in the slums in old Berlin, 1920. (Ilse Balg, *Martin Mächler- Weltstadt Berlin*, 1986, 333)

Living conditions in the old Berlin deteriorated dramatically at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to the official record around 1.09 million out of 2.4 million residents lived in flats in 1905, where each room equipped with heating facilities could accommodate up to 13 people. 158,500 Berliners lived in 23,786 single-room houses, in which every heated room accommodated 6 to 13 people. Among 249,457 single-room apartments, some 34,000 had no kitchen or any additional room, and some 188,000 had a kitchen and no additional rooms. By 1925, 70,743 Berliners still lived in cellars.²¹⁶ On average there were 5.8 apartments per property and 17 residents per household. 10.81% of apartments were single-room

²¹⁶ Hegemann, 21. A similar discussion and record of the housing density and living conditions in Berlin were published under the title, '*Stadt und Siedlung*' in *Deutsche Bauzeitung* (no. 14, 1931): 121; reprinted in Balg, 330-31.

including kitchen. Only 28.04% of one-room apartments had an extra kitchen attached to them.²¹⁷

Already in the late nineteenth century, city-planners like Reinhard Baumeister in *Stadt-Erweiterungen in technischer, baupolizeilicher und wirtschaftlicher Beziehung* (1876), and Josef Stübben in *Der Städtebau* (1890) had recognised the most crucial issues for the *Großstadt* to be traffic circulation and the shortage of good, hygienic urban housing with adequate water, air and sanitation.²¹⁸ Similarly, Otto Wagner in *Moderne Architektur* (1896) spoke of the *Großstadt* in the German tradition of rational city planning which was concerned with such issues as traffic, housing, sanitation and industry. The expansion of the heart of the historic city - Haussmann's monumental achievement in Paris - was seen as the archetype for the successful modern reconstruction of a metropolis.

Karl Scheffler, Otto Wagner and August Lux all extolled urban life in the new industrial society with its technological advancement and commerce. They shared a preference for the formal and uniform evolution of urban modernity.²¹⁹ The participants in the *Gross-Berlin* competition commonly looked for uniformity in the cityscape, the concept that played a major role in German architectural development at the beginning of the twentieth century. As Scheffler argued, 'the goal of a new urban architecture must be uniformity, the integration of entire blocks of dwellings. From society's need for uniform floor plans comes the artistic demand to reduce all buildings to the same type.'²²⁰ Furthermore, in order to achieve this uniformity and to improve the urban space, urban planners would inevitably play a leading role in controlling the way a city was to be.

Es ist nicht möglich zu hoffen und zu erwarten, die Großstadt werde sich aus innerer Notwendigkeit selbst rein und klar aufbauen, sie werde wachsen wie ein natürlicher Organismus; der Städtebauer hat in diesem Fall vielmehr tendenzvoll zu wollen und weit vorausschauend zu

²¹⁷ Balg, 331.

²¹⁸ Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 148.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 151.

²²⁰ 'Ein Weg zum Stil' *Berliner Architekturwelt* 5 (1905) quoted & translated in Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani, 'Berlin Modernism and the Architecture of Metropolis', *Mies in Berlin*, compiled by Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll (New York: Museum of Modern Art), 38.

*disponieren. Und er hat in wesentlichen Punkten das Gegenteil von dem zu wollen, was in früheren Jahrhunderten erstrebt wurde.*²²¹

The role of urban planners was to fulfil and give substance to the expectations and dreams of the past generation. The conservatives among the elites generally considered the dramatic and sudden expansion of the metropolis as promoting unwelcome anarchical tendencies, leading to potential dangers for society.

In 1908 Martin Mächler submitted a design to the *Gross-Berlin* competition. In response to criticisms from his contemporaries he modified the project in 1917 and again in 1919. With a clear north-south oriented axis, crowned by the 'Platz der Republik' at the north end and the Potsdamer Bahnhof at the south, the project aimed at creating a governmental and administrative centre appropriate to a capital city.

This plan was vigorously discussed in the economic and architectural circles in the 1920s, particularly those aspects to deal with solving traffic problems. In an article, 'Das Projekt Mächler', Hugo Häring, the leader of the *Ring*, highlighted the debate over whether Berlin needed a central station for all railway traffic or several separate stations specifically for long-distance trains. In the discussion of Mächler's plan for re-shaping Berlin, Häring focused on the practicality of combining tramways, buses, elevated railways and an underground system.

²²¹ Karl Scheffler, *Die Architektur der Großstadt* (Berlin: Bruno-Assirer, 1913), 5-6, 9-10.



Figure 15 Martin Mächler, North-South Axis of Berlin, 1917.
 (Thorsten Scheer, et al. *Stadt der Architektur, Architektur der Stadt, Berlin 1900-2000*, 2000, 202)

In Mächler's plan, the housing theory was partially based on the concept of the Garden City movement developed by Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin in England. New towns such as Letchworth with a population of 35,000 residents, and Welwyn - around 40,000 - provided sustainable examples of healthy and comfortable residential towns serving large metropolises such as London. Mächler's understanding of the Garden City concept was to divide the *Großstadt* into separate residential and working areas. The core area of the city was to consist of workplaces. These would be surrounded by residential areas in the outer circle of the city. Fast commuter trains would connect the residential and the working areas. Each satellite was itself a self-contained residential town, which remained economically and administratively integrated with the central city. This was different from the English Garden City movement that proposed satellite cities to be places both for work and dwelling. These towns were to be self-contained as far as daily life was concerned. The products manufactured in each town were to be transported to the big city to be exchanged for goods from other towns.

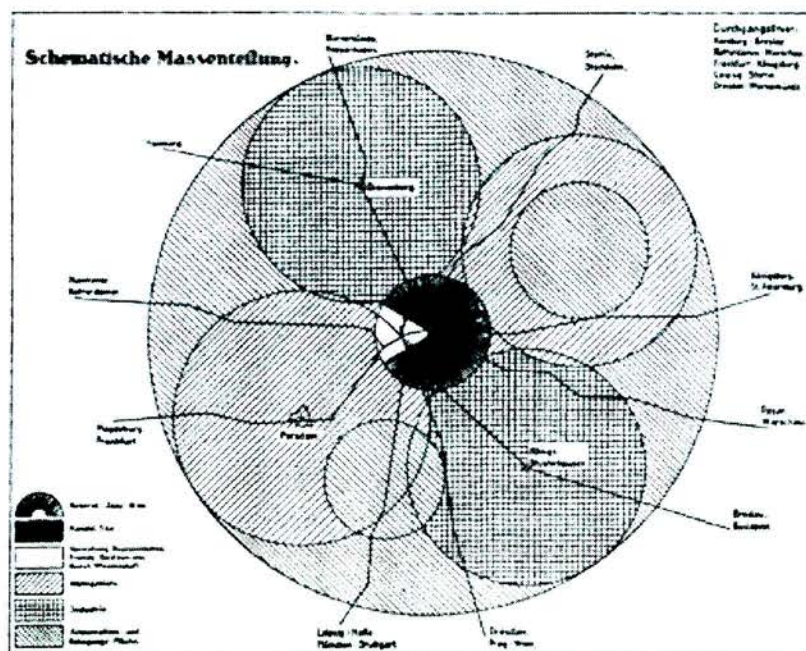


Figure 16 Mächler's general plan for the Greater Berlin area, published in *Der Städtebau*, issue 1-2, 1920. (Ilse Balg, *Martin*, 44.)

In his plan for rebuilding Berlin Mächler specified a 50-kilometer radius around the city town hall. He divided the *Großstadt* into large circular areas (Figure 16). Each

would be allocated particular social and economic activities. The five-kilometre inner radius around the city hall would be devoted to commerce, considered by Mächler as the most vital activity for the city. Another 5-kilometre outwards was designated as a transitional area to be used flexibly for both the inner and outer area as the need arose. To the east, a 60-degree segment of the circle was to be used for administration and governmental buildings, hotels, and arts, research and educational institutes. Between the central circle and the edge of the *Großstadt*, large areas were designated for industrial and intensive agricultural production. In addition, there were to be areas for the preservation of the natural environment. The area allocated to industrial housing would have to accommodate both factories and workers. The water supply ran through from the northeast to the southwest to supply the massive housing area. Mächler attempted to solve the traffic problem by replacing the existing termini with two main railway stations at each end of the inner city axis. The existing terminal stations (*Güterbahnhof*), such as Lehrterbahnhof and Anhalterbahnhof, were to be removed to avoid congestion and complexity in the network. The Berlin traffic network was to be completed with an underground line running through the city with different connecting points for long- and short-distance journeys.

Public buildings such as administration and governmental buildings had been allocated randomly and without any unified plan over the years of Berlin's urban development. The reason for this was partly political and partly historical. It was financially impossible to demolish and rebuild these buildings in a single operation. The idea of a unified grouping of government offices had never before been realised.²²² Nevertheless, the principle of systematic grouping had been implemented on a smaller scale, for example residential or workers communities. For the newly established modern industrial sites, a uniform layout arranging public buildings in relation to traffic intersections had been preferred. Mächler believed that these successful efficient and rational planning for small towns could be applied to larger cities, and to the nation as a whole. Mächler wrote in *Städtebau* in 1920 explaining his plan for Berlin:

²²² Martin Mächler, 'Ein Detail aus dem Bebauungsplan Gross-Berlin', *Der Städtebau* volume 17, no. 5/6, 1920; reprinted in *Martin Mächler- Weltstadt Berlin*, 47.

Dieses Erfordernis bedingt höchste Konzentration im allgemeinen, konstruktiv einfachste Gruppierung und wirtschaftlich sparsamste Wirkungsweise jedes einzelnen Faktors. ... Dasselbe, was hier für die kleineren Gemeinschaften maßgebend ist, trifft für die größeren Gemeinschaften, die Stadt und den Staat, in noch weit höherem Maße zu. Alle staatlichen und städtischen Repräsentations- und Verwaltungsgebäude müssen sich um den Verkehrsmittelpunkt, den Haupteingangspunkt der Staatsgemeinschaft, gruppieren, der in unserem Falle durch den Mittelpunkt des äußeren Verkehrs, den Treffpunkt des Eisenbahnfernverkehrs (Zentralbahnhof), den Schnittpunkt der Hauptfernstraßenzüge, den Sammelpunkt des inneren Verkehrs (Verbindungsstraßen, schnell- und Straßenbahnnetz) und den Kommunikationsmittelpunkt des geistigen Verkehrs nach innen und außen.²²³

Mächler was convinced that a centrally controlled systematic street network was the only way to incorporate different demands into the world economy and into a well-coordinated modern society.

The desire to establish Berlin as a world capital was widely expressed by contemporary German urban planners, such as Hugo Häring, Ludwig Hilberseimer and Martin Mächler. In 1925 Martin Wagner was appointed Berlin's Building Commissioner (*Stadtbaurat*) to redesign the city. In a letter to Wagner in 1927, Mächler emphasised that, '*Eisenbahnen, Autobahnen, Flugzeuglinien, Telephon, Radio, Fernsehen, Überlandleitungen usw. Werden sie nicht nur mit deutschen, sondern auch der europäischen und der internationalen wirtschaftlichen Einheit in Verbindung bringen.*'²²⁴ With the help of modern communication technology, Berlin would be transformed into a world city.

Hilberseimer in his 1927 publication put forward a proposal for re-planning the *Großstadt* Berlin, which he had designed in 1924. Starting from the centre of the capital, the plan was to restructure the inner city and to regroup the population. The

²²³ Ibid..

²²⁴ '*Martin Mächler und sein Kontrahent Martin Wagner.*' in *Das Neue Berlin*, 1929; reprinted in *Martin Mächler- Weltstadt Berlin* (Berlin: Wannsee Verlag, 1986), 231.

inner circle of the city was reserved for shops. Streets would be rationally regulated. Narrow, unhealthy and badly constructed buildings were to be demolished and replaced. Hilberseimer emphasised that there should be no historical sentiment in the re-building scheme, because the task of urban planners was '[not] to preserve the past, but to prepare the roads to the future.' ('[nicht] die Vergangenheit zu konservieren, sondern der Zukunft Wege zu bereiten.')²²⁵ Haussmann's Paris was seen by Hilberseimer as a successful example of reshaping the core of a historical city to provide a friction-free traffic environment.



Figure 17 Ludwig Hilberseimer, the North-south Street of a high-rise city, 1924. (Ludwig, Hilberseimer, *Groszstadtarchitektur*, 1927, 18).

The system of satellite towns in Britain might solve housing problems, but it provided no answer to traffic problems. On the other side of the Atlantic in America, building skyscrapers had been a way to find more space for over-crowded cities. The concentrated use of space involved in the development of skyscrapers enabled the city to provide residents with more spaces for parking, and could also be used for schools, hospitals, sanitation, sports and leisure purposes. However, the consequence of building in high density was more traffic congestion and other issues in living condition. With the erection of each skyscraper more existing offices were to face problems in obtaining sufficient light and air. Traffic was to become worse in rush

²²⁵ Ludwig Hilberseimer, *Groszstadt Architektur* (Stuttgart: Hoffmann, 1927), 8.

hours. In cities like New York and Chicago, where skyscrapers were prevalent, heavy lorries carrying supplies and small vehicles could face the prospect of spending several hours in the city centre as a result of congestion. To deal with these problems Hilberseimer consulted Le Corbusier's plan for 3 million residents in *Urbanisme* (1925) and proposed a plan of a skyscraper city for 4 million residents. He sought to transform the *Großstadt* into an efficient organism to provide more space, air, hygiene and comfort.

In contrast to Le Corbusier's plan, Hilberseimer emphasised vertical communication in high-rise buildings, where living and working spaces occupied different levels. Each building itself would be self-contained with working, dwelling, commerce and other facilities for everyday life. There would be no need for streets connecting separate buildings in different areas, for each building would be largely self-contained, though an external traffic network would still be provided. By regulating the distance between skyscrapers (to be equal to the height of the buildings) the plan guaranteed good lighting and plentiful air. Hilberseimer's plan was based on a population of one million and could be multiplied to a 4-million population city to suit greater Berlin. It required an area of only 5,600 hectares to accommodate such a population, while the old Berlin had 2 million people living on 6,600 hectares.

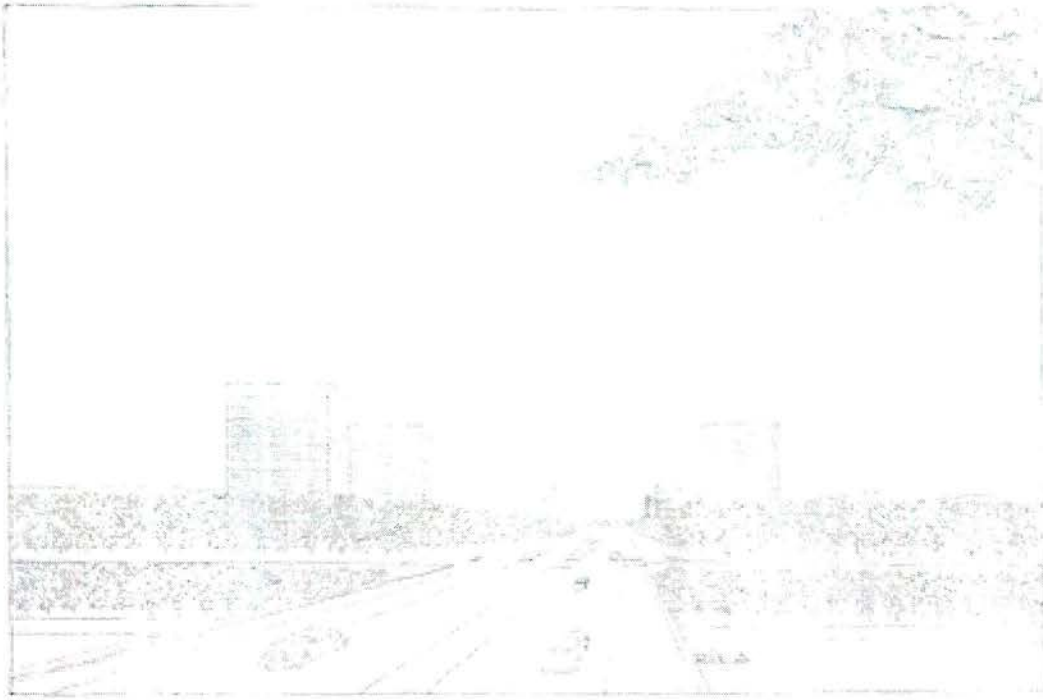


Figure 18 Ludwig Hilberseimer, design for a Hochschulstadt, dated later than 1930, probably submitted to the *Hochschulstadt* competition in 1937. (Sheer, 197).

Despite massive urban planning schemes drawn from examples of international metropolises, the uniqueness of a city - its particular economic and political character - was not to be neglected. Hilberseimer quoted Mächler to illustrate this point:

Das wirtschaftliche, soziale und politische Leben eines Volkskörpers ist das eines gewaltigen, überpersönlichen Individuum. Auch er hat deshalb ein registrierendes, ein allen Anregungen beständig ausgesetztes und selbst Anregungen zu geben befähigtes Instrument notwendig, das in ihm dieselbe Rolle spielt wie das Gehirn im menschlichen Körper. Die natürliche Vorbestimmung, zu diesem Instrument physiologisch ausgestattet zu werden, trägt die Mittelpunkt- und Hauptstadt eines Volksorganismus. Sie ist Akkumulator, Generator und Regulator aller materiellen und geistigen Kräfte der Volksgemeinschaft.²²⁶

²²⁶ Martin Mächler, 'Eine Ergänzung des Gesetzentwurfes zur Bildung eines Stadtkreises Groß-Berlin' in *Der Städtebau* (1920): 3; quoted in Hilberseimer, *Großstadt Architektur*, 20.

Hilberseimer developed his high-rise city based on rational notions, such as ‘logic, efficiency, geometry, repetition, and uniformity’.²²⁷ In his *Friedrichstadt* development project (1929; Figure 19), gigantic modern blocks were to be installed in the heart of old Berlin, like Le Corbusier’s *Voisin Plan*, which also ignored the cultural, social and historical context. This was a development embraced by Modernists at the time who believed radical ‘surgery’ and drastic action must be taken in order to solve the accumulated problems of the old metropolis. Hilberseimer later submitted his high-rise city design to the GBI official competition for the Hochschulstadt on the East-West Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan in 1937 (Figure 20). Hilberseimer did not win this competition, but his rational vision of a modern high-rise city - the monumental scale of space arrangement and traffic solution - were to some extent shared by the GBI architects. Hermann Distel’s designs for the Hochschulstadt on the East-West Axis and the residential projects for the Marine Barracks (see Figure 21 and 22) on the North Axis both bore traces of modernist urban planning concept.



Figure 19 Ludwig Hilberseimer, a proposal for a new building complex in Friedrichstrasse, 1929. (Sheer, 165)

²²⁷ Lampugnani, ‘Berlin Modernism and the Architecture of Metropolis’ (New York: Museum of Modern Art), 49.

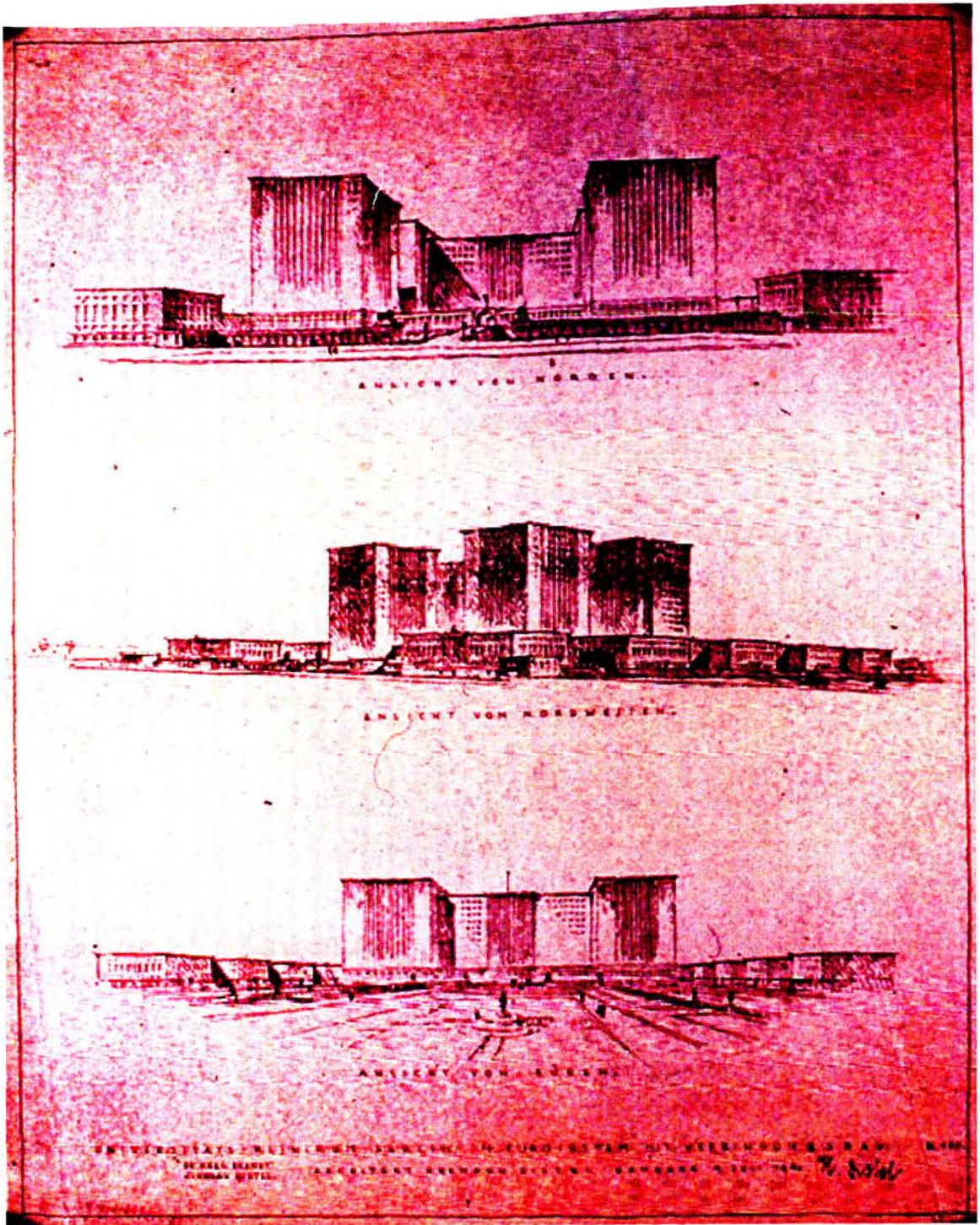


Figure 20 Hermann Distel, drawings for university buildings for the Hochschulstadt on the East-West Axis, 1940. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3615)



Figure 21 The GBI, a drawing for Marine barracks in modernist style high-rise residential buildings along the wide boulevard. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3637).



Figure 22 The GBI, a drawing for Marine barracks in modernist style high-rise residential buildings along the wide boulevard. (Bundesarchiv, R4606, KS 3637).

The multi-level segregation of traffic could be seen in as early as 1914 in Sant'Elia's *Citté Nuova* with different levels for pedestrians, automobiles and trains.²²⁸ The division of functions in streets and cities was a common approach in urban planning between the wars.²²⁹ Le Corbusier in his *Ville Contemporaine* (1925) segregated the traffic, so that each mode of transport would have its own reserved level, e.g. pedestrian, underground, motorway and long and short distance trains. Separate lanes would be provided on motorways according to speed, and similar principles would be applied to railways. Hilberseimer in his design of a 'high-rise city' not only included a multi-level traffic system, but also placed a residential city above the commercial city, so that residents could reach their places of work with a minimum loss of time.²³⁰ Later, at the fourth CIAM congress (1933) with the theme 'The Functional City', Le Corbusier initiated discussion on the differentiation of functions in Modernist town planning. 'The Athens Charter', CIAM's new guideline for urban planning, recommended that the major functions of residence, recreation, work and transportation must be separated into divided zone.

Traffic circulation was one of the main problems in the continually expanding Berlin. As the growing urban population created increasingly severe traffic congestion in the capital, so new solutions to regulate pedestrian and automobile traffic were urgently needed. In as early as 1914, Peter Behrens already expressed concerns in solving traffic problems and re-organising streets in a modern city. He wrote in the *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes* about his idea of the 'aesthetics of motion'. His view was that the modern city could not develop with irregular, winding streets and idyllic squares on the medieval pattern. Instead it must 'proceed according to well-thought-out, comprehensive plans with broad, straight streets' which could run for very long distances.²³¹ The late 1920s saw a rigorous debate on how best to tackle the problems of rapidly growing traffic in the old Berlin. The journal - *Das neue Berlin* (launched in 1926) - was dedicated to urban issues in the capital of Germany. Opinion about the solutions to the rapid expansion of the metropolis was divided between erecting high-rise buildings and focusing on the

²²⁸ See Antonio Sant'Elia, *Antonio Sant'Elia, the complete works*, New York: Rizzoli, 1987.

²²⁹ Elmar Holenstein, 'Excursus: Monofunctionalism in Architecture between the Wars (Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus)' *Oppositions*, no. 24 (Spring, 1980): 49.

²³⁰ Holenstein, 52.

²³¹ Quoted and translated by Lampugnani, 56.

traffic problems. Building more houses and high-rise blocks was the immediate solution to the shortage of houses. But American examples in Chicago and New York had demonstrated that the crisis following skyscraper construction exacerbated the traffic problem. In *'Städtebauliche Probleme in amerikanischen Städten und ihre Rückwirkung auf den deutschen Städtebau'* - a report on Wagner's observation of urban issues in America - Roman Heiligenthal set out the practicable alternatives proposed in American cities. These included roadways at different levels so as to segregate traffic according to speed and direction, traffic interchanges and a level free of vehicular traffic.²³²

Streets in Berlin were undergoing reconstruction in order to take more automobile traffic in the 1920s. The problem posed by growing numbers of automobiles was to revolutionise the layout and levels of street traffic. The number of motor vehicles rose from 38,000 in 1925 to 82,000 in 1928 - a 116% increase of traffic over three years in the streets of central Berlin, e.g. Leipziger Straße and Unter den Linden. Car prices had fallen by 63% between 1913 and 1928. Continued German economic growth would lead to a further considerable drop in real terms. A solution for congestion in the main traffic artery of the Alexanderplatz - Königstraße - Jägerstraße - Tiergartenstraße - Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche could be delayed no longer.²³³ Projecting the above data with a scientific calculation, Wagner concluded that only major re-construction could cope with the predicted increasing traffic flow over the coming 25 years.²³⁴

To improve traffic efficiency, Wagner spoke of opening up the heart of Berlin and constructing wide streets, but he only partially agreed with Haussmann's and Le Corbusier's drastic approaches to the reconstruction of Paris. Haussmann's colossal plan would take far too much time to implement, even in the hands of good architects; and Le Corbusier's 'machine' approach neglected the modern metropolis

²³² Roman Heiligenthal, a report on Martin Wagner's *'Städtebauliche Probleme in amerikanischen Städten und ihre Rückwirkung auf den deutschen Städtebau'* in *Das Neue Berlin 1929*, issue no. 11 (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1988), 234-5.

²³³ Martin Wagner, *'Verkehr und Tradition: Zur Frage des Durchbruchs durch die Ministergärten'* from *Das neue Berlin*, 1929, issue no. 7, 129-130; reprinted in *Martin Wagner, 1885-1957, Wohnungsbau und Weltstadtplanung: Die Rationalisierung des Glücks* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1985), 112.

²³⁴ Martin Wagner, *'Städtebauliche Probleme der Großstadt'* (Lecture from the 'Berlin' lecture series, special issue on 18.3.1929 (Berlin, 1929); reprinted in *Martin Wagner, 1885-1957, Wohnungsbau und Weltstadtplanung: Die Rationalisierung des Glücks* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1985), 105.

as a living organism. The city of Berlin was undergoing major reconstruction focusing specifically on important traffic junctions and within 3 to 10 years to create new forms for public squares such as the Alexander Platz, Potsdamerplatz, and Hallesche Tor. Wagner insisted that the function and the form of public squares in a world city must be differentiated from these smaller cities. Squares were gates for traffic to the inner city, and a closer study would be essential in order to obtain results that could merge form, purpose, site, elevation, surface and walls into an organic unity. There existed no organically formed world city square anywhere in Europe; they would have to be created through careful planning. Roadways, tracks and paths would be built at different levels for tramways, cars and pedestrians. Good quality designs to attract consumers to the squares to visit shops, restaurants, department stores and offices on the square would also be important. Lighting would be especially important to give the squares a new appearance at night. Colour, form and commercial lighting would be essential elements for the new city squares.

*Man darf nicht vergessen, daß Weltstadtplätze Raumbildungen sind, die im Gegensatz zu dem Bandverkehr der geradlinigen Straßenzügen stehen. ... Ein Weltstadtplatz ist Haltepunkt und Durchgangsschleuse in einer Form: Haltepunkt für die Konsumkraft und Durchgangsschleuse für den Fließverkehr.*²³⁵

Wagner's vision of the centre of a metropolis was an area bustling with the commercial activities of shops, restaurants, warehouses and offices. Speer's vision of a dynamic commercial street was planned in a similar fashion, but the massive scale and the large numbers of buildings such as military headquarters, governmental bureaus and war memorials would have overshadowed and eliminated the humanistic and dynamic side of the modern metropolis.

In a lecture delivered in 1929 about the reconstruction of the new Berlin, Wagner presented the vision of the future capital of Germany thus: *'Berlin muß eine schöne Stadt, eine Friedensstadt, eine Werte schaffende Arbeitssatdt, muß eine Kunst- und Geistesstadt, muß eine Reichshaupt- und Weltbürgerstadt werden. Auf diesem Wege hat Berlin zu leben bereits begonnen, und auf diesem Wege wird Berlin*

²³⁵ Wagner, 'Städtebauliche Probleme der Großstadt', 106.

*groß, geistig groß und geistig mächtig werden.*²³⁶ Berlin must aim at establishing a great city: culturally, spiritually and intellectually. The modern city, according to Martin Wagner, required freedom for design and persistence in continuous and consistent development. It required not a single renewal, but the dynamic to construct and to demolish all old physical and cultural forms. *‘Was wir also an Generalplänen für eine neue City aufstellen können, sind Wunschpläne, die schön, ideal und durchdacht sein sollen, die aber nicht den Fluch in sich tragen dürfen, einen Ewigkeitswert zu besitzen. Sie sollen unserer Handlung eine Richtung geben, aber uns nicht binden.’*²³⁷ In 1929, the highest building in Berlin was only three-and-a-half storeys. According to Wagner, wide and empty areas were available in Berlin for new construction work, so it was unnecessary to consider building either high, or deep underground.

Before starting the massive construction of high-rise buildings in the city, issues such as the cost of developing the infrastructure would also have to be considered. Streets would need to be widened, sufficient new parking facilities established, affordable public transport (including underground railways) developed, and financial provision made for an adequate force of public employees including police and firemen. Wagner also suggested using the experience of re-designing the Alexanderplatz project as an example to re-shape Berlin.²³⁸

The traffic capacity of a square was expected to accommodate the traffic of streets merging from different directions. The increase of traffic had to be calculated in advance for twenty-five years, but not for longer. To predict longer than 25 years would be unrealistic, and unhelpful.

Kein Städtebauer oder Verkehrstechniker wird die Entwicklung des Verkehrs über die nächsten 25 Jahre hinaus einschätzen können. Aus Angst vor der steigenden Verkehrsbedeutung die Plätze in der Gegenwart zu groß anlagen, hieße Nationalvermögen vergrunden. Man wird darum in Zukunft mit einer mindestens 25jährigen Amortisation

²³⁶ Wagner, 107.

²³⁷ Martin Wagner, ‘Ein Generalplan für Hochhäuser?’ (1929), manuscript from Martin Mächler plan collection, TU Berlin: *Martin Wagner, 1885-1957. Wohnungsbau und Weltstadtplanung: Die Rationalisierung des Glücks* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1985), 108.

²³⁸ Wagner, ‘Ein Generalplan für Hochhäuser?’ 110.

*aller Aufwendungen für Weltstadtplätze zu rechnen haben, um sie später nach neuen Anforderungen neu formen zu können.*²³⁹

This notion of the ephemeral and the modern expressed here by Wagner in the context of Alexanderplatz resembled the ideas put forward in the Futurist manifesto: each generation should create its own architecture and build its own city. The city should adapt to the changing needs of a society. Buildings therefore should last only as long as the lifespan of one generation.

This would mean large-scale demolition after a period of 25 years or so. Extensive areas of the city would thus be freed for renewal and reconstruction in accordance with the requirements of the time. These construction activities in key squares such as Alexanderplatz would, in turn, create strong dynamics for the old city:

In dem Augenblick, wo sich das investierte Kapital auf größere Erträge und höhere Abschreibungen einstellt, auf Abschreibungen innerhalb eines Zeitraumes von 25 Jahren, ist die Bahn für ständige Erneuerungen des Stadtkörpers freigemacht. Der Städtebau erhält damit eine Dynamik, wie wir sie uns nicht besser wünschen können. Er wird damit freier und ungebundener. Jede Generation kann sich dann ihren Stadtkörper so gestalten, wie sie ihn braucht.

Every generation would build the city in the way that best met their practical needs. This provision for a continuing dynamic would in the future be appreciated, since the economy and development of the city would no longer be burdened by its historical heritage. The issue of aesthetics and design would be tackled in such a way that would enable form and content of the city to be closely and directly connected.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Wagner, 'Städtebauliche Probleme der Großstadt' 58.

²⁴⁰ 'Eine Gemeinschaft, eine Wirtschaft, eine Entwicklung, die sich durch Überlebtes nicht selbst fesseln will, wird über diese Dynamik im Städtebaues wird auch das ästhetische Problem, das Problem der Gestaltung des Stadtkörpers ein anderes Gesicht erhalten; Formen und Anschauungen werden mit den Generationen wechseln. Form und Inhalt werden inniger aufeinander abgestellt sein.' See Martin Wagner, 'Städtebauliche Probleme der Großstadt', 104.

Le Corbusier's widely circulated *Urbanisme* was translated into German in 1928, four years after its French original edition. Le Corbusier's formal and aesthetic issues, however, were not the only aspects that attracted the attention of German architects. Issues such as the development of a clear and organic structure for building construction and discussions of social problems provoked major debates. Hugo Häring commented that,

*Freilich wollen wir die Anregung nicht gering einschätzen, die von dem Glanz seines Weltbildes ausgeht. Nur vertrauen wir ihm nicht in seinem Glauben an die allein selig machende Macht der Geometrie, vertrauen wir Corbusier nicht, wenn er uns glauben machen will, daß die großen Werke der Ingenieure und unsere Maschinen Erfolge der Geometrie sind.*²⁴¹

Sceptical about Le Corbusier's emphasis on large-scale engineering work, Häring remarked that not all curved routes were made by donkeys after all, and not all donkeys walked in a curved line. One should not therefore preclude curved lines. Le Corbusier's comparison of people's walking patterns with those of donkeys was irrelevant to urban designs.

Wagner also examined Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin* in the article, 'Städtebauliche Probleme der Großstadt', in 1929. Wagner pointed out major problems in this urban planning scheme for the heart of Paris.

Ich will unterstellen, daß sein neuer Weltstadtplan den Gipfel der Vernunft, der Schönheit und der Zweckmäßigkeit erreicht hat. Ich will annehmen, daß sein lichtdurchflutetes Manhattan mit dem idealen Verkehrsnetz, den grünen und den schwarzen Parkanlagen und den 50 bis 60stöckigen Geschäftshäusern, der idealste Weltstadtplan ist, den sich ein Künstler und Städtebauer ausdenken kann. Aber wie ihn ausführen? Als ich sein neues Buch über den Städtebau las, war ich von vielen prächtigen Worten und Thesen begeistert, und dann suchte und

²⁴¹ Hugo Häring, 'Der überlebte Corbusier: Grundprobleme des neuzeitlichen Städtebaues,' selected and reprinted in Ilse Balg, *Martin Mächler- Weltstadt Berlin* (Berlin: Wannsee Verlag, 1986), 234.

*fand ich die Stelle seines Buches, wo sein neuer Weltstadtplan mit Mark und Pfennig begründet werden sollte. ... Der berühmte Städtebauer hatte keine Zeit gefunden, die wirtschaftliche Bilanz für sein städtebauliches Reformwerk aufzustellen.*²⁴²

Le Corbusier's urban planning theory was inspiring to architects and planners for its artistic originality and technological advancement, but he did not take practical financial matters into consideration. The plan was unrealistic and impractical in terms of economic and land policy. Obtaining such a large area of land as proposed by Le Corbusier for his scheme was virtually impossible in a capitalist society. To overcome this problem, Wagner proposed a socialist solution - to take land into public ownership and to devalue all buildings on the land within a period of 25 years. Without such political renewal the urban reform plan of Le Corbusier could not be fulfilled. What could be achieved in Le Corbusier's scheme would only be piecemeal, and Le Corbusier called it 'anatomical dissection' would in effect be the renewal of the old city (*Stadtkörper*) through demolition, construction and extension quarter by quarter.

Berlin, as other major European cities of the beginning of the century, experienced a dramatic increase in population. A new and difficult task was presented to architects – the urgent demand for more houses to accommodate this population. From 1913 to 1928, the growth alone in Berlin's population (275,000) was three times as great as the total population of many large cities. Indeed, a city of 100,000 was considered large at the time and qualified for the description "Großstadt". Accompanying the increase of population, larger flows of economy and of commodity transportation also developed. Berlin was prosperous in every respect. The spirit of the new Berlin with a sense of patriotism encouraged citizens to actively participate in the world community. *'Der Geist des neuen Berlins ist ein Weltbürgergeist, der über den lokalpatriotischen Bürgergeist des alten Schlages hinaus wachsen muß. Dieser Weltbürgergeist wird sich auch seinen Stadtkörper nach Inhalt und Form zu schaffen haben.'*²⁴³

²⁴² Wagner, 'Städtebauliche Probleme der Großstadt', 104.

²⁴³ Martin Wagner, 'Das Neue Berlin – die Weltstadt Berlin'; reprinted in Ilse Balg, *Martin Mächler-Weltstadt Berlin* (Berlin: Wannsee Verlag, 1986), 229.

Wagner in 1929 defined the most difficult task facing architects and city planners. He said that full consideration should be given to a variety of urban issues in the planning of the new Berlin: schools, hospitals, governmental offices, handicrafts and industrial centres must be taken into account; designs must provide multi-level traffic flows; and buildings must accommodate existing institutions. Modernist ideas of a healthier society with access to transport must be accompanied by leisure facilities such as sport fields and open-air or indoor swimming pools. In the meantime, each region must maintain its own vernacular aesthetics and flexibility in adapting space to technological achievement. These all had to be carefully considered with a sense of ‘a world city’s responsibility’.

Ob es sich um die Gestaltung des Verkehrs unter, auf oder über der Erde handelt, ob der Bau großer Schulen, Krankenhäuser oder Verwaltungsgebäude geplant wird, ob Fabriken, Kraftzentren und Bürogebäude errichtet werden, ob Hallen- oder Freiluftbäder mit Spiel- und Sportplätzen neu erstehen, ob Großmarkthallen und Schlachthäuser gebaut werden, ob die natürlichen Schönheiten der Umgebung der Weltstadt der Volksmasse erschlossen werden, ob neue Ansiedlungen entstehen und veraltete Wohnviertel neuen Geschäftsvierteln weichen, ob Straßendurchbrüche dem gesteigerten Verkehr neuen Bewegungsraum schaffen, ob Plätze neu geformt und dem gesteigerten Verkehr angepaßt werden.²⁴⁴

Competitions for re-developing Alexanderplatz, Potsdamer Platz and Leipziger Platz were major architectural events in Berlin between 1928 and 1929. These projects aimed primarily at creating an urban space able to accommodate the increasingly heavy traffic. For instance, the submissions in the competition for Alexanderplatz - Berlin’s gateway to Eastern Europe, were representative of how planners saw the solution to this problem.

The debates about redesigning Alexanderplatz focused on two major issues: a) whether or not a project in such a scale was necessary for Berlin, and b) whether it

²⁴⁴ Wagner, ‘Das Neue Berlin – die Weltstadt Berlin,’ *ibid.*.

actually solved the traffic problem, which was already severe at the time. The architect and urban planner, Heinrich Mendelsohn, supported the idea of extending the traffic network to the underground. Connected with the existing railway system, the underground service would be accessed through three or four major underground stations, giving residents in the suburbs cheap, fast and comfortable transport to the square. This idea was emphasised by the objective of developing Berlin as a *Weltstadt*.

Die Energie, mit welcher der Alexanderplatz nicht nur oberirdisch, sondern erst recht auch unterirdisch neu gestaltet wird, die Tatsache, daß neben den oberirdischen Verkehrsmitteln sich drei bis vier der wichtigsten Untergrundbahnhöfe treffen, ermöglicht es den Bewohnern des Hinterlandes, in den großen Einfallstraßen in den Abendstunden auf bequemstem, schnellstem und billigstem Wege dem Alexanderplatz zuzuströmen. Die Voraussetzung hierfür ist, daß am Alexanderplatz für die Bedürfnisse einer Weltstadt vorgesorgt wird, wozu die großen Bauten, die ja neu gestaltet werden, die erwünschte Gelegenheit geben.²⁴⁵

In contrast to Martin Wagner's plan, which sought to plan twenty-five years ahead, Mendelsohn believed it was necessary to think one hundred years ahead in planning major public spaces in Berlin - especially in terms of their traffic problems.²⁴⁶ Only in this way could the central squares in the metropolis integrate the growing satellite towns into metropolitan Berlin.

Differing from other art forms such as paintings and sculpture, architecture had primarily a functional purpose according to Wagner. If it failed to fulfil its function, a building lost its spiritual and economic meaning. Historical buildings in Berlin existed side by side with modern commercial premises. According to Wagner,

²⁴⁵ See Heinrich Mendelsohn, 'Die Stadt am Alexanderplatz' *Das Neue Berlin 1929* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1988): 102.

²⁴⁶ Mendelsohn, 104. 'Jetzt werden die Plätze bzw. Verkehrspunkte Berlins für die nächsten 100 Jahre geprägt. Mögen sich die Trabantenstädte noch so groß entwickeln, so werden die Verkehrspunkte, die zur Zeit durch eine größere Anzahl sich schneidender Untergrundbahnlinien zu Konzentrationspunkten ersten Ranges werden, aus der Geschichte Berlins nicht mehr wegzuwischen sein!'

however, these practices failed to grasp the deeper meaning of modern metropolitan life and had killed any notion of creativity in the free market economy. ‘*Ohne jede Begeisterung für die Gegenwart und für die Zukunft, ohne tiefe Lebensbejahung “erledigen” die modernen Städte ihre “Amtsgeschäfte” und merken dabei gar nicht, daß die “freie” Wirtschaft ihnen jedes schöpferische, großformende und begeisternde Leben ertötet hat.*’²⁴⁷ In Wagner’s ideal modern world the machine was not an object of worship, but simply a tool that could liberate people from long hours of laborious and soul destroying work. The goal was to reduce drastically the numbers of hours people needed to work and to create more free time for the workforce: ‘... *wenige Herrenmenschen die Maschine schon heute dazu benutzen, um sich aus ihrem 6stündigen einen zwei- oder ein- oder null-stündigen Arbeitstag zu machen, der gewaltigen Mehrheit aller Erwerbstätigen aber den Weg in das Land planvoller Kürzung unseres täglichen Arbeitstages versperren.*’ Such was Wagner’s ‘machine’ manifesto: ‘*Mehr Maschinenzwang, aber mehr Menschenfreiheit! Mehr Maschinentempo, aber mehr Menschenruhe! Die Maschine ist der Weg, aber der Zweistundentag ist das Ziel!*’²⁴⁸ Traffic, providing the infrastructure for a modern metropolis, demonstrated the dynamism of modern life. Shortened working hours were anticipated as a result of the speed and efficiency of modern traffic and production methods. Wagner dealt with the problem of the unforeseeable future with his theory of dynamic world city planning. He saw a positive and promising future for the modern city – rational, purposeful and above all, well organised.²⁴⁹ Machine-driven efficiency would lessen the burdens of labour.

One major difference between Mächler’s and Wagner’s plans for Berlin was that Wagner believed deeply in the concept of the *Stadtkrone* and artificial planning, while Mächler maintained that the organic growth of a cityscape must not be neglected. Wagner found no conflict in city planning between the will of the individual and the strong imposition of state authority.

²⁴⁷ Martin Wagner, ‘*Weg und Ziel der Planwirtschaft*’ in *Der rote Aufbau* (1932); reprinted in *Martin Wagner, 1885-1957, Wohnungsbau und Weltstadtplanung: Die Rationalisierung des Glücks* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1985), 114.

²⁴⁸ Wagner, ‘*Weg und Ziel der Planwirtschaft*,’ 115.

²⁴⁹ Ludovica Scarpa, ‘*Martin Wagner oder die Rationalisierung des Glück*’, in *Martin Wagner, 1885-1957, Wohnungsbau und Weltstadtplanung: Die Rationalisierung des Glücks* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1985), 9.

Solange die Krone noch die Stadt, den Staat und das Reich beherrschte, da war wenigstens noch ein Wille persönlicher Verbundenheit sichtbar; der seinen repräsentativen Ausdruck in einem Stück Städtebau fand, das den F[r]emden heute noch als Berlin gezeigt wird. Aber mit der Demokratisierung des Reiches und des Staates ist auch diese persönliche Verbundenheit zwischen der Stadt und ihren Obrigkeiten geschwunden und durch einen selbst für den Fachmann kaum noch überblickbaren Verwaltungs- und Instanzenapparat ersetzt worden, der die Reichshauptstadt auseinanderregiert und sie wirtschaftlich wie kulturpolitisch an den Rand des Abgrundes bringt.²⁵⁰

In a monarchy, argued Wagner, the leadership was clearly defined and the ‘will’ of each individual was more likely to be unified under its authority. The unified community would have the will to cooperate in order to shape the capital to represent a consensual national image. On the contrary, in a democratic society the emphasis on individuality and the right to question authority, would threaten the disintegration of economic and cultural policies.

Both Wagner and Mächler belonged to the German Garden City Society. Wagner supported the concept of self-contained satellite-towns in accordance with the English Garden City theory. He believed the ultimate aim of city planning was to dissolve the metropolis and develop self-contained and self-sufficient small towns with a population of 5,000 residents, which were to offer jobs, shops and schools. These towns were to be connected with other towns and the cities of no more than 30,000 residents through railways, motorways, air traffic, telephones, radios and television. Wagner was an exponent of the machine economy, in which the factors of production would be proportionally divided among ‘labour – machinery – capital’ (*‘Mensch-Machine-Kapital’*). His theory was that in the new world of 1934 - the scheduled time for the completion of Berlin’s reconstruction under Wagner’s directorship - these factors of production could be allocated in accordance with econometric formulae for determining the ideal proportions of investment. Machines

²⁵⁰ · *Martin Mächler und sein Kontrahent Martin Wagner* in *Das Neue Berlin*, 1929; reprinted in Ilse Balg, *Martin Mächler- Weltstadt Berlin* (Berlin: Wannsee Verlag, 1986), 230.

were perceived as durable, fast and strong, and as a relatively inexhaustible source of energy.²⁵¹

Mächler tackled city-planning problems directly in the political, commercial and industrial aspects of modernity. His theory offered 'concentration' as a solution. While old and deteriorating houses must be modernised, factories and industrial installations were to be removed from the city centre and replaced by official public buildings. Mächler valued the organic development of a city highly and held the view that,

*Städte sind geschichtlich gewachsene Siedlungsformen; man kann lebendige Städte nicht künstlich erzeugen, sondern man muß die alten Städte nach den Kräften ihres organischen Wachstums umzuformen versuchen, dadurch werden gerade in den Weltstädten der Technik auf Dauer gewaltige Aufgaben gestellt, deren Lösung auf ganz natürlichem Wege eine fortlaufende Beschäftigung zur Folge haben: Was soll aus den bestehenden Städten werden, Martin Wagner?!*²⁵²

Mächler's preferred approach to urban planning was to create an environment where continuous dynamic activity in Berlin would not be disrupted. He also opposed Wagner's plan, which proposed artificially forged 'chain cities'. His reasoning was that '*Berlin hat nicht eine City, Berlin als Ganzes und per se ist Deutschlands City, - symbolisiert in der Monarchie durch das Berliner Stadtschloß auf der Spree-Insel und die Wilhelmstraße als Sitz der Ministerien, in der Republik durch den Deutschen Reichstag ...*'²⁵³ Berlin was unique in its form and its status in Germany. It was not therefore sensible to speak of a universal large city model valid for all major German cities.

By the late 1930s, German planners' criticisms of modern urban planning proved to be justified. New problems were emerging in the major American cities,

²⁵¹ 'd.h. jedem Erwerbstätigem standen 4 Kapitalklaven und 20 Maschinensklaven zur Verfügung.' See 'Martin Mächler und sein Kontrahent Martin Wagner' in *Das Neue Berlin*, 1929; reprinted in Ilse Balg, *Martin Mächler- Weltstadt Berlin* (Berlin: Wannsee Verlag, 1986), 231.

²⁵² 'Martin Mächler und sein Kontrahent Martin Wagner' in *Das Neue Berlin*, 1929; reprinted in Ilse Balg, *Martin Mächler- Weltstadt Berlin* (Berlin: Wannsee Verlag, 1986), 232.

²⁵³ 'Martin Mächler und sein Kontrahent Martin Wagner,' 232.

previously regarded as models for the most advanced examples of large-scale urban planning in the world. In the preface to Hegemann's *City, Planning, Housing*, the editors, William Forster and Robert Weinberg, noted that the short-sighted solution of building skyscrapers to meet the demand for office space in the city had created metropolitan traffic congestion, and that the introduction of motor vehicles had exacerbated the traffic problem. Municipal finances were strained to the limit to improve and develop the immense public infrastructure, such as bridges, tunnels and rapid underground railways. The modern way of life, which aimed at securing a better living environment, had created its own dilemma: 'It is a vicious cycle: expansion, overbuilding, higher land values, higher taxes, higher rentals, overcrowding, obsolescence, financial loss, blight.'²⁵⁴ Forster and Weinberg also pointed out that unlike the nineteenth century city planners, who devoted their skill to grandiose architectural schemes, 'today the less ostentatious but far more vital functions of planning involve the elimination of congestion, the control (but not destruction) of individual enterprise, the improvement of public health by modern sanitation, recreation and better living and working conditions, the diminution of financial loss by means of zoning, and amortization of both public and private investments.'²⁵⁵

3.3 *Germania* – National Socialist Berlin

Already in 1924 when the draft of *Mein Kampf* was completed, Hitler had expressed his views on city and urban development. He held that, although German cities in the nineteenth century had expanded rapidly in size, they were losing their cultural significance. The expansion caused by the growth of the proletarian population had had temporary and fortuitous results. These had no long-term 'cultural' value. Hitler defined culture narrowly to be conventional artistic and scientific development. Big cities in the past with a population of more than fifty thousand possessed 'cultural' worth as a consequence of aristocratic patronage and residency. At a time when the population of Munich reached around 60,000, it already had a flourishing culture and

²⁵⁴ Werner Hegemann. *City Planning Housing, Volume III, a graphic review of civic art, 1922-37*, edited by William W. Forster and Robert C. Weinberg, foreword by Sir Raymond Unwin (New York: Architectural Book Publishing, 1938), vi.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*.

artistic life. This was in marked contrast to many dull and banal industrial towns of a similar size. For Hitler, the essential problem in these industrial towns was that they had

no monuments dominating the city picture, which might somehow be regarded as the symbols of the whole epoch. This was true in the cities of antiquity, since nearly every one possessed a special monument in which it took pride. The characteristic aspect of the ancient city did not lie in private buildings, but in the community monuments which seemed made, not for the moment, but for eternity, because they were intended to reflect, not the wealth of an individual owner, but the greatness and wealth of the community.²⁵⁶

Governmental agencies, Hitler argued, had to play the major role in the construction of large cities. He noted that the importance of large state buildings could be seen in the ruins left by most ancient civilisations. The memorable buildings were public edifices such as public statues, temples and palaces. In Berlin a lack of investment in public building had led to the domination of the skyline by privately financed department stores and hotels. Furthermore, Hitler was critical of the fact that these privately built projects had been built only for temporary use, not for eternity. 'And in them there is no dominant higher idea. ... our city of the present lacks the outstanding symbol of national community which ... sees no symbol of itself in the cities. The inevitable result is a desolation whose practical effect is the total indifference of the big-city dweller to the destiny of his city.'²⁵⁷ Despite his grandiose vision for *Germania*, Hitler's plan for Berlin, according to Speer, was incomplete. As Speer noted:

Hitler's city plan had one major fault: It has not been thought through to the end. He had become so set on the notion of a Berlin Champs Elysées two and a half times the length of the original in Paris that he

²⁵⁶ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London: Pimlico, 1997; first edition, 1943), 240. According to Hitler, the draft of this book was finished by 1924.

²⁵⁷ Hitler, 242.

*entirely lost sight of the structure of existing Berlin, a city of four million people. ... For Hitler, it was a display piece and an end in itself.*²⁵⁸

Hitler's interest lay exclusively in monumental buildings, and he showed no concern either for traffic management or for residential areas or for greenery. In comparison with Hitler's indifference to the social dimension involved in reshaping Berlin, Speer contributed to Berlin's urban development. According to Speer himself, he once made a promise to Hess that 'for every brick used for these ostentatious buildings, I would use one for a residential structure.'²⁵⁹ Leibbrand, the Director of the Reich Traffic Ministry, intended to use the opportunity of Hitler's monumental plan for Berlin to re-organise the city's railway system. Speer and Leibbrand solved the traffic problem by planning a *Ringbahn*. The capacity of the Berlin railroad network would be expanded by two tracks to divert long-distance traffic. Two central stations were to be installed in the north and in the south and the smaller, nineteenth-century terminal stations would be removed.

Beside the plan of establishing a clear North-South Axis for greater Berlin, as proposed by Mächler, the idea of shaping an East-West Axis across the city was also suggested. In 1930 Hegemann already pointed out the importance of continuing to develop the existing East-West main street into a more defined axis to reach the greater Berlin area. '*Die Durchbildung der königlichen, aber seit 1869 bedeutungsvoll vom Turme des Rathauses beherrschten Haupt-Straßenachse Berlins und die Steigerung ihrer Wirkung bis zur künstlerischen Vollendung ist ein großes Ziel der monumentalen Entwicklung der kommenden Hauptstadt Deutschlands.*'²⁶⁰ Monuments to Berlin's past stood along and defined the East-West axis, and it was there that the city's heritage had to be preserved. Speer built on the work already done for the North-South Axis, transforming it into the shape of the Cross by combining it with the existing East-West axis.

²⁵⁸ Speer, 124.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 127.

²⁶⁰ Werner Hegemann, *Das Steinerne Berlin, Geschichte der Grössten Mietkasernenstadt der Welt* (Berlin: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1930), 204

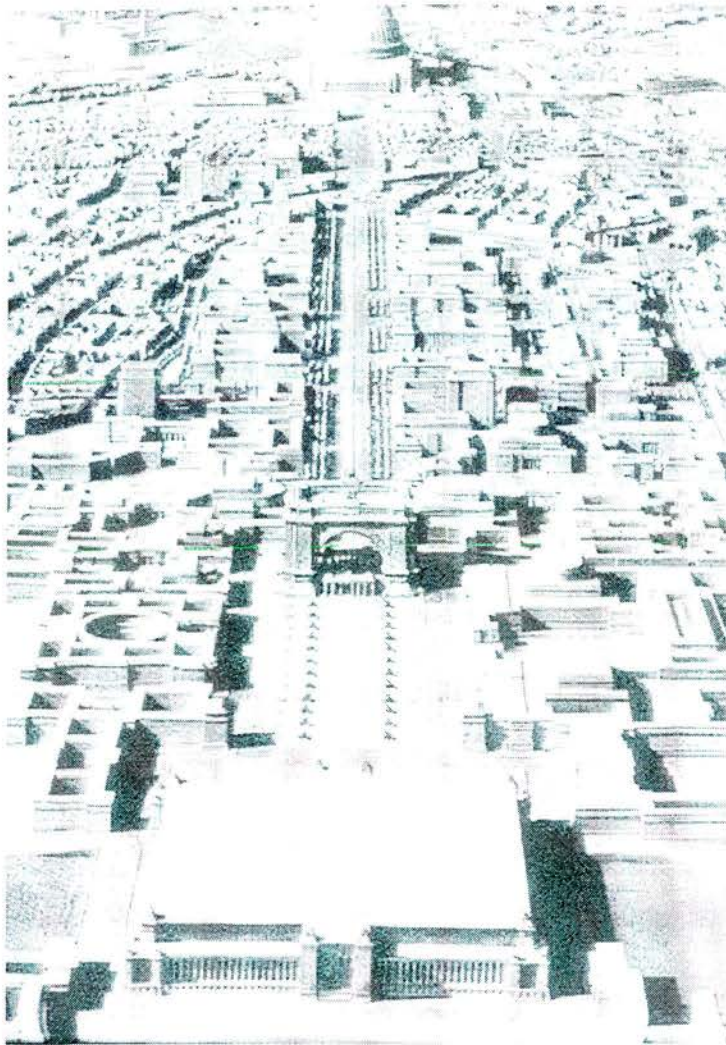


Figure 23 A model for the focus between the Great Hall and the South Railway Station on the North-South Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan, 1942. (Schäche and Reichhardt, 42)

The plan for transforming Berlin into Hitler's ideal capital city was officially announced with the appointment of Speer as the General Building Inspector (Generalbau Inspektion) on 30th January 1937. In a speech for the occasion in Reichstag, Hitler stated,

Als äußeres Zeugnis für diese große Epoche der Wiederauferstehung unseres Volkes ... soll nunmehr der planmäßige Ausbau einiger großer Städte des Reiches stehen. Und an der Spitze die Ausgestaltung Berlins zu einer wirklichen und wahren Hauptstadt des Reiches. Ich habe daher an diesem heutigen Tage, ähnlich wie für den Bau unserer Straßen, für

*Berlin einen Generalbauinspektor ernannt, der für die bauliche Ausgestaltung der Reichshauptstadt verantwortlich ist und dafür Sorge tragen wird, in das Chaos der Berliner Bauentwicklung jene große Linie zu bringen, die dem Geist der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung und dem Wesen der deutschen Reichshauptstadt gerecht wird. Für die Durchführung dieses Planes ist eine Zeit von 20 Jahren vorgesehen.*²⁶¹

The Greater Berlin plan was to provide a guideline for the previously 'chaotic' state of construction in the capital. Key members in the GBI office included Speer's old architect friends, Rudolf Wolters and Willi Schelkes, the municipal architect, Hans Stephan, and the lawyer – Gerhard Fränk.²⁶² This core group worked together under Speer's leadership to discuss, to monitor and to make decisions regarding every detail of the projects in the Greater Berlin Plan. Their tasks ranged from holding meetings in the Model Hall in the Reich's Chancellery to discussing models and drawings for the general plan of the Greater Berlin project drawn to different scales, to site inspections of demolition and construction work.²⁶³

²⁶¹ Adolf Hitler, Speech in front of the Reichstag building in 1937, cited in Lars Olof Larsson, *Die Neugestaltung der Reichshauptstadt Albert Speers Generalbebauungsplan für Berlin* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1978), 27.

²⁶² Werner Durth, *Deutsche Architekten: Biographische Verflechtungen 1900-1970* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1986), 134.

²⁶³ The models and drawings for the monumental project were produced with a scale of 1:1000, 1:1500, or 1:4000. (See document 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix 2) Despite this, the drawings can be as large as 5 to 6 metres long in order to cover the area of the full North-South Axis.



Figure 24 An article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* announcing the completion date for the East-West Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan. (*Völkischer Beobachter*, 12 April 1938)

The main structure of the Greater Berlin Plan was a combination of Martin Mächler's North-South Axis and the existing East-West Axis. Speer made no attempt to associate the metaphor with Christianity. The cruciform pattern itself derived from the shape of the human body. Leonardo da Vinci had demonstrated the relationship between the human body and the universe through his Universal Man module. The location of the most significant and vital part of the city would mirror the location of the head and the heart in the human body, establishing a hierarchical pattern of buildings on the axes. While the longer axis was more important than the shorter one, the focal points on both axes helped to create the effect of unity and authority. In the Berlin plan, the emphasis was given to the upper part of the main axis, where the

head of the structure was located, reflecting the classical notion of architecture and the human body. This is an architectural notion 'transposed directly from our own experience of being in the world in our largely symmetrical bodies.'²⁶⁴



Figure 25 Leonardo da Vinci, the Universal Man. (www.mindgraphic.ch/news.html)

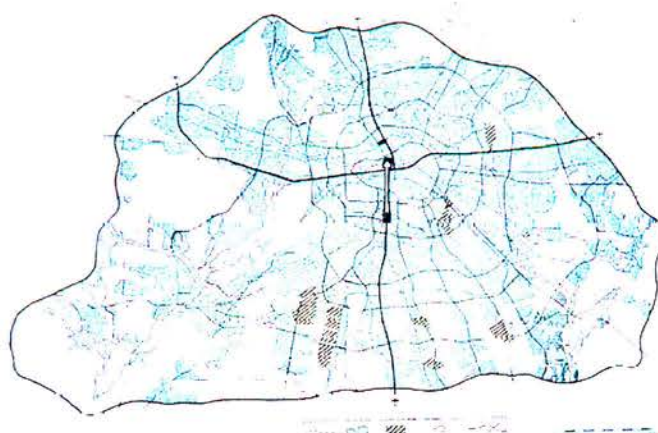


Figure 26 The GBI office, the general plan for the reconstruction of Reich's Capital, Berlin, 1942. (Schäche and Reichhardt, *Von Berlin nach Germania*, 1998, 40)

The general planning of the Greater Berlin project evolved rapidly. With the assistance of Julius Lippert, the mayor of Berlin, massive demolition to make way for the Greater Berlin project started in April 1937.²⁶⁵ Demolition and progress for each building on the axis started simultaneously. In November 1937, Hitler laid the foundation stone for the *Wehrtechnische Fakultät*. The East-West Axis was to be modelled mostly on an existing axis from the Museum Island, through the Brandenburger Gate to the *Grosse Stern*, which Speer moved from its original location in front of the Reichstag to the West Axis. Widening Charlottenburger Chaussee, the East-West Axis then ran up Kaiserdamm and what is now called Theodor-Heuss Platz, and was extended through the edges of the Grunewald and reach the site of the new *Wehrtechnische Fakultät* (University of Defence Studies) and the *Hochschulstadt* (the University City) on the bank of the Havelsee at Pichelswerder. However, the principal North-South Axis was to be aligned

²⁶⁴ Peter Blundell Jones, 'Architecture and political legitimization' *Architectural Review* (July 1996): 68.

²⁶⁵ Wolfgang Schäche and Hans Reichhardt, *Von Berlin nach Germania: Über die Zerstörungen der »Reichshauptstadt« durch Albert Speers Neugestaltungsplanungen* (Berlin: Transit Verlag, 1998), 153.

exclusively with new projects. It was to be 125 metres wide. 100 metres of that were to be reserved for automobile traffic. Traffic moving north-south and east-west through the centre of Berlin would be diverted in a detour around the Great Hall (*Große Halle*) and the Great Square (*Großer Platz*). Traffic in the greater Berlin metropolitan area would benefit from the outer ring road, designed to connect the four ends of the two main axes.

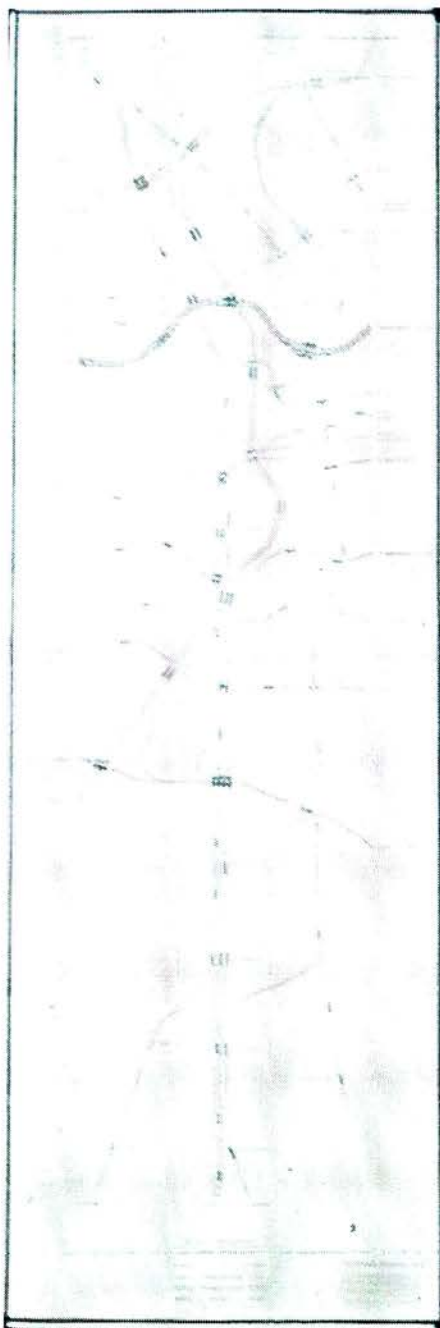


Figure 27 Proposals for traffic arrangement in the reconstruction of Berlin, 1942. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3747/3)

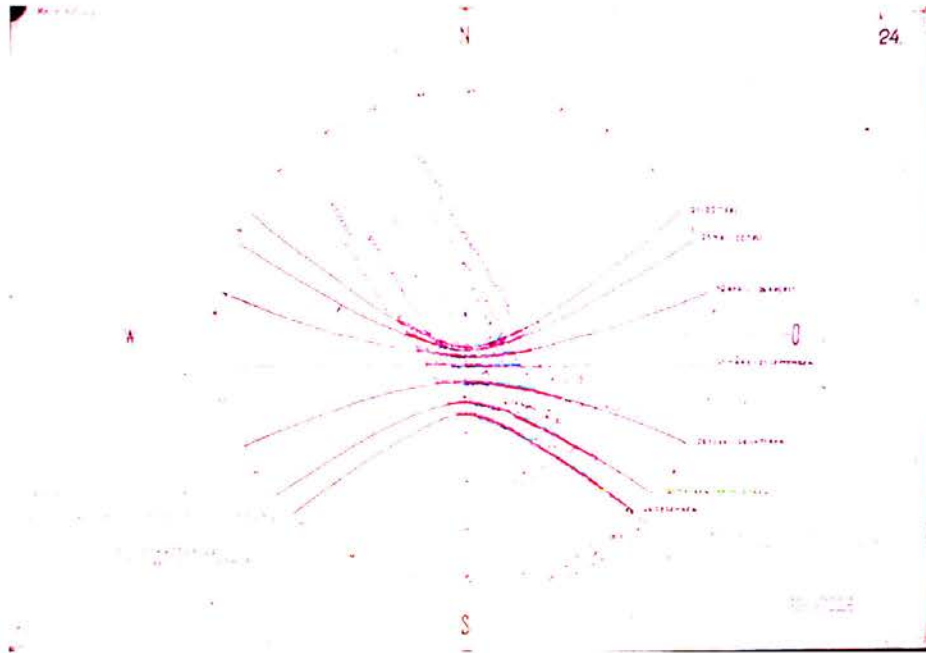


Figure 28 The GBI office, a drawing showing the study of sunlight received from different angles of a site. (Bundesarchiv, R4606, KS 3659)

Speer's planning policy, not dissimilar to modernist urban planning theory, neglected the organic growth of the metropolis and destroyed the existing cityscape. Speer and the GBI's designs for the North-South Axis were in no major respect different from the urban plans drawn up for Berlin between 1910 and 1933. The Greater Berlin Plan, based on the plans created by modernists in 1920s, stemmed from the discourse of modern urban planning both locally and internationally. It can therefore be asserted that the Greater Berlin Plan, as part of National Socialist architectural practice, 'represented no real break with the past.'²⁶⁶

Controversies emerging from modernist planning theory in the 1940s demonstrated a similar complexity for both modernists and the National Socialists in their exploitation of modernist planning theory. A decade after its creation, the urban planning theory of Le Corbusier and of the CIAM group was denounced by some critics as being loosely considered. In a letter to the Spanish émigré architect, José Luis Sert in 1940, Louis Mumford pointed out 'a serious flaw' in the general outline for urban planning:

The four functions of the city do not seem to me to adequately cover the

²⁶⁶ Lampugnani, 65.

ground of city planning: dwelling, work, recreation, and transportation are all important. But what of the political, educational and cultural functions of the city: what of the part played by the disposition and plan of the buildings concerned with these functions in the whole evolution of city design. ... The organs of political and cultural association are, from my standpoint, the *distinguishing* marks of the city: without them, there is only an urban mass.²⁶⁷

The rationalisation and simplification of CIAM's approach to architecture and urban planning are fundamental problems for the modernism led by Le Corbusier. Modernist architects and planners believed deeply in their ability to change society through creating an architecture that was white, modern, hygienic and rational. Their failure to recognise the diversity of civilisation and the versatility of life as an organic experience was to lead to problems in the coming decades; the most devastating of which was the social disintegration of the local communities. National Socialist planning theory, as developed by Speer and the GBI, incorporated all the problematical and unresolved problems of the modernist planning of the 1920s. Megalomaniac / monumental urban planning exposed the danger of the abuse and the misuse of modernity. This phenomenon, as summed up in Henri Lefebvre's analysis of modernity, demonstrated modern society's infatuation with technological advancement. 'It is obvious that it is to everyone's advantage that optimum use be made of machines. It is obvious that on the microeconomic level a new machine for a given production' will reduce the amount of labour input such variable capital and wages needed for that production.²⁶⁸ Modern society was trapped in the dilemma that in every aspect modern man relied on the machine, and at the same time risked being made entirely subservient to it. This, of course, was the powerful appeal of National Socialism, which offered to release the individual from all personal fears, worries and responsibilities – which would be carried by the Party. Faith in the leader and the party released the individual from the burdens of personal responsibility.

²⁶⁷ Letter from Lewis Mumford to Sert, 28 December 1940 (Sert Archive, Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University), quoted by Eric Mumford in 'CIAM urbanism after the Athens Charter,' *Planning Perspectives*, no. 7 (1992), 397.

²⁶⁸ Henri Lefebvre, 77.

4 Monumentality and Major Projects on the North-South Axis

In the Greater Berlin Plan, buildings inspired by modernist theories and equipped with the latest technology dominated the North-South Axis. Speer and the GBI architects invested a great deal of time in each individual building in the Greater Berlin Plan. These monumental designs pandered not only to Hitler's ambition to dominate the world, but also to Germany's desire to participate in the international community. From the Great Hall and the Triumphal Arch to the South Railway Station, these mega-scale buildings represented Hitler's determination to transform Germany into a world leading modern state technological-wise, political-wise and nationalistic-wise.²⁶⁹ In this chapter a series of theoretical discourses - the international style of the 1930s, eternity and the 'ruin theory', the focal point, death, Hochhaus debates and mobility - are chosen to interpret major projects on the North-South Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan, which include the Great Hall, the Soldier's Hall, the Triumphal Arch, the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces and both the North and South Railway Stations.

Countries in Europe and in the USA built widely in the Neo-classical style between 1910s and 1930s. Examples of buildings designed by world-renowned architects demonstrate that monumental Neo-classicism was the prevailing international style of the 1930s. In exploring the potential of Neo-classicism as a representative style for National Socialist architecture, Speer invented the 'Theory of Ruins' to exploit both the notion of eternity in architecture and the use of a combination of traditional and modern building materials - stone and concrete-iron. While the Neo-classical Style and the Ruin Theory played the underlying themes for the projects on the North-South Axis of the new Berlin, key motifs of the

²⁶⁹ Interviewed by Gitta Sereny, Speer explained: 'Of course I was perfectly aware that he sought world domination. ... What you - and I think everybody else - don't seem to understand is that at that time I asked for nothing better. That was the whole point of my buildings. They would have looked grotesque if Hitler had sat still in Germany. All I *wanted* was for this great man to dominate the globe.' See Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth* (London: Picador, 1995), 186. It did not seem to occur to Speer that the effect of coldness and uniformity that he created in his buildings was to shatter humanity and individualism of the modern world in the twentieth century, pointed out by Frederic Spotts. See Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (London: Hutchinson, 2002), 335. At the stage of the German historical condition in the 1930s, the price for constructing a super modern state at all costs was the sacrifice of individual needs to those of the state. This eventually led to slave workers, to the atrocities of the Holocaust and to the Second World War - a record that has ever since scarred the image of National Socialist architecture.

monumental architecture - focal point, death and monument and the sublime - were also intensely encoded in the North-South Axis. The debates on the high-rise buildings and the concern of mobility showed National Socialists' emphasis on modernisation and their ability to master the most advanced building technology. The analyses here serve as exemplary arguments to examine the inspirations of National Socialist architecture. While other theoretical avenues could also have been used to propose meanings for the buildings, the themes alighted on here appeared to be most promising within the discourse of monumentality.

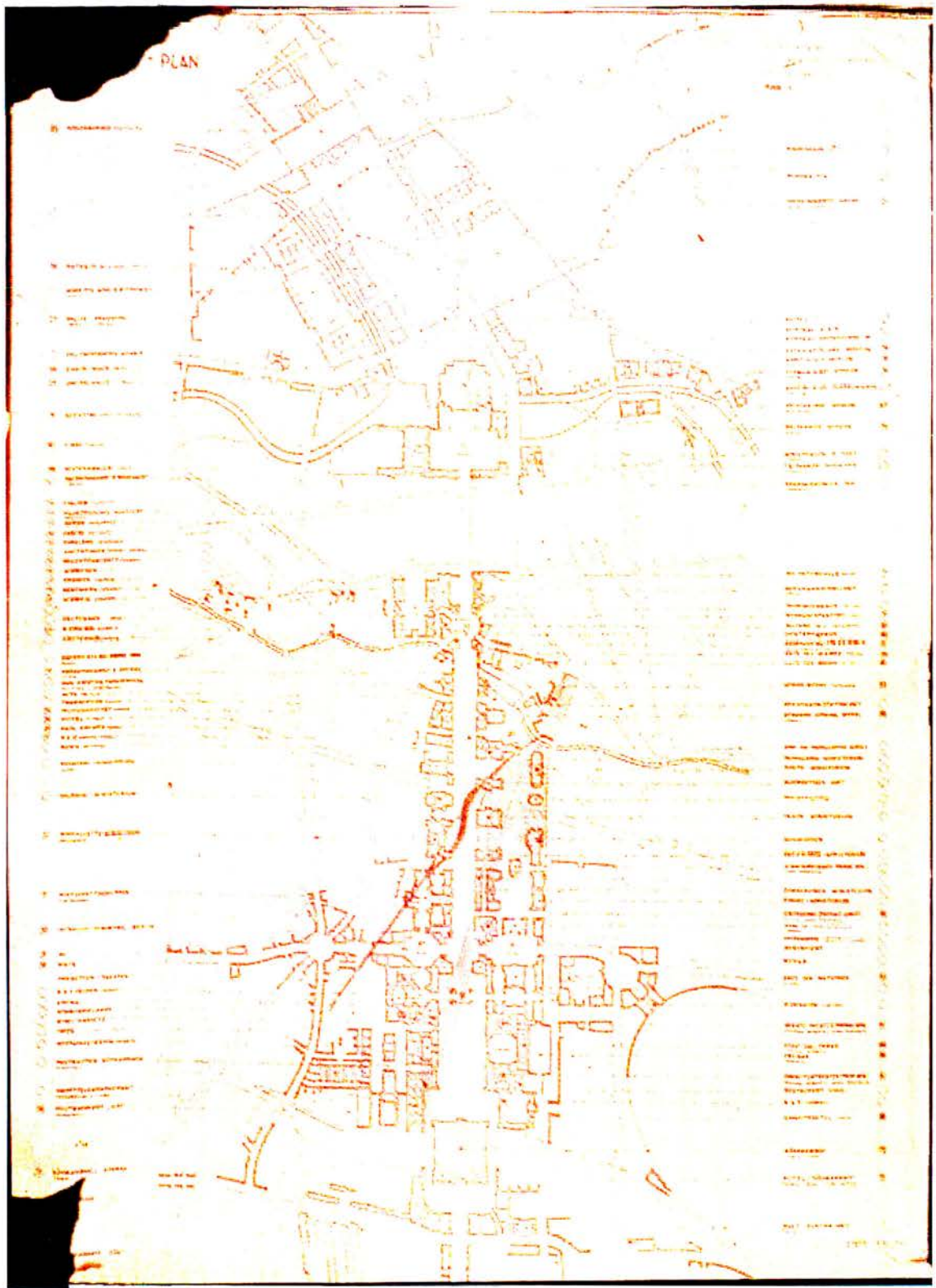


Figure 29 The general plan of the North-South Axis in the Greater Berlin Plan. (Bundesarchiv, R4604, KS 3575)

4.1 Neo-classicism and the 'international' style of the 1930s

The most significant examples of Neo-classical architecture in the Prussian state were undoubtedly the work of Schinkel. Schinkel's primary architectural concern was the search for the laws of timeless architecture. Stylistic issues were of secondary importance; one could choose to apply Roman arches, Greek colonnades or Gothic vaults and design well-structured buildings accordingly. This approach to architectural aesthetics was, however, problematic. Julius Posener pointed out, although proportion and geometry were carefully calculated in ancient Egyptian, Greek and Gothic architecture, they were applied with different methods and with different measures. The claim that certain universal or eternal laws exist in the great western architectural tradition was therefore incorrect.²⁷⁰ Schinkel made no distinct statements to define architectural features such as composition, balance, unity or ornament. This allowed his architecture to be open to interpretation in different eras by artists and architects, and even politicians and patrons of art.²⁷¹ German architects, both modernist and National Socialist, were agreed on the quality of Schinkel's work and looked to his architecture for inspiration. Speer, Wolters and other GBI architects commonly claimed to be pupils or followers of the Schinkel School. Using the Wilhemine Neo-classicism to emphasise their connections to the Prussian heritage, the National Socialists looked towards international to develop a style that could represent the modern and progressive state of Germany.

The need for building designs to be updated internationally partially resulted from the architectural competitions initiated by the emergence of international exhibition halls in the second half of the 19th Century. World exhibitions had had a profound influence on German and Austrian art and designs and stimulated artists and architects carefully to review their achievements. 'The potential for exposure at the London exhibition, particularly in contrast to its much smaller national forerunners, inspired awareness of the worldwide conditions of artistic development'. This in turn called attention to 'Germanic backwardness' and to the fact that 'foreign

²⁷⁰ Julius Posener, 'Schinkel's Eclecticism and "the Architectural"', *Architectural Design*, vol. 53 (11/12, 1983): 37.

²⁷¹ Although some definitions of these architectural features can be found in *Das architektonische Lehrbuch* published after Schinkel's death, Schinkel did not make deliberate attempt to define them in his architecture.

competition was seen by most critics as a necessary if painful realization.²⁷² The desire to become part of the international community and to participate in the most advanced technological and artistic developments, as noted in the previous chapter, was gradually to dominate discussion in German artistic and intellectual circles for several decades.

By the 1920s and the 1930s – a period when the National Socialist architects acquired their architectural training, the most prevailing architectural style was the Neo-classical style incorporating with modern technology was being developed on the path towards modernisation internationally. In *The Monumental Era, European Architecture and design 1929-1939*, Franco Borsi documented a large collection of designs of 1930-Neo-classical style across Europe, from England, France, Italy, Austria and Germany to Russia - for example, Basil Spence's stripped clean neo-classical style for a National Library, 1931-32; the Royal School of Architecture, Portland Place, London; Giles Gilbert Scott's Cambridge University Library, 1931; Carlu, Azema and Boileau's Palais de Chaillot, 1937, in Paris; Victor Horta's design for the Gare Centrale, 1940, in Brussels; and Hans Poelzig's design for the new *Reichshauptbank*, 1932, in Berlin. Each of these represented a balance between modernism and classicism, which European architects in the 1930s, strived to achieve.

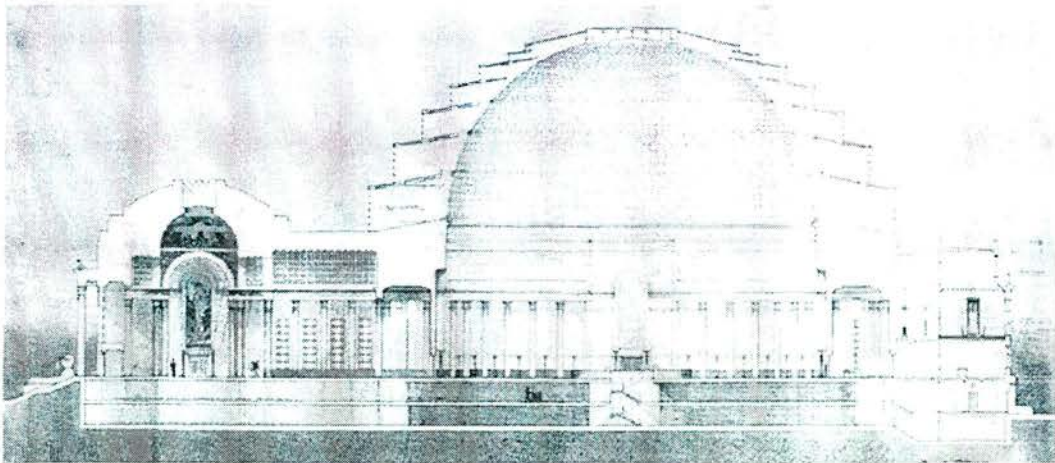


Figure 30 Basil Spence, Design for a national library prepared as a submission for the Soane Medallion, 1931-2. (Franco Borsi, *The Monumental Era*, 1987)

²⁷² Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 144.



Figure 31 Gilbert Scott, elevation of Cambridge University Library, 1931. (Borsi, 100)

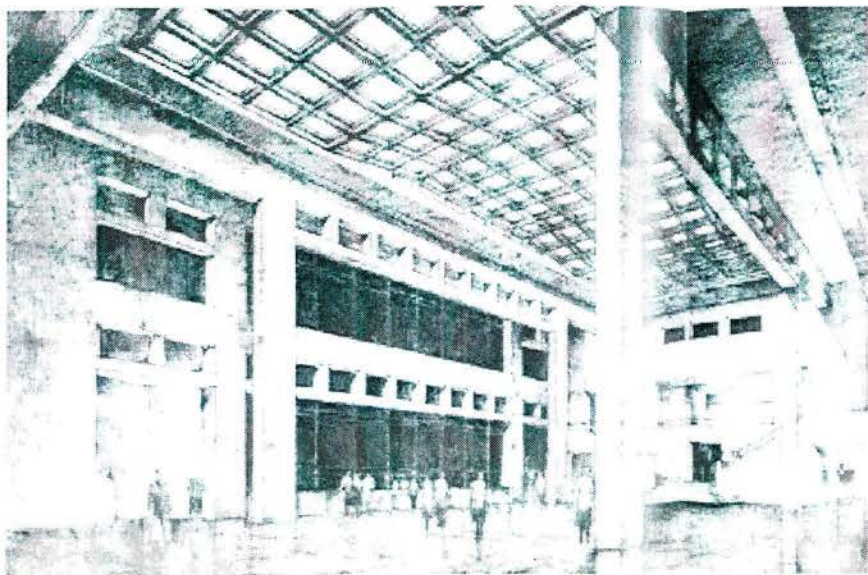


Figure 32 Victor Horta, a competition design for the Gare Centrale, Brussels, 1940. (Borsi)

Borsi notes that Marcello Piacentini in *Architettura d'Oggi* ('Architecture Today') of 1930 drew no distinction between the Modern Movement and other contemporary trends. Instead his view on architecture was an eclectic mix of 'the Milan of Gio Ponti and Baldassare Lancia, the Stockholm of Hoffberg, the Paris of Auguste Perret, and the Germany of Emil Fahrenkamp and Dominikus Boehm, while taking a Constructivist-Novecentist view of Russia, of the Germany of Hans Poelzig,

Walter Gropius and Wilhelm Kreis, the Holland of Johannes Duiker and the France of Victor Bourgeois and the latest Henri Sauvage'. Neo-classicism and modernism were also combined and expressed in Piacentini's Rome University City project.²⁷³ Rejecting the modernist view that Neoclassicism was essentially conservative and reactionary, Borsi argues that modern architecture, unadorned and refrained from decoration, ornamental relieves and classical columns, was a modern Classicism that 'proposed the prevalence of elementary geometry together with the cerebral and rational nature of architecture, refused all forms of romantic mimicry, organicism, or naturalistic inspiration and indulged in mechanicism, in the machine as the product of human rationality and as the achievement of technical progress.' Designs by these European architects demonstrated that the true international style in Europe and the USA in the 1930s was not the white architecture offered at Museum of Modern Art by Hitchcock and Johnson, as 'The International Style', but rather the pared-down Neoclassicism with an imposing and monumental scale, favoured in the buildings listed above. They articulated the contemporary demands for strong monumentalism with simplicity, unity and elegance. Contrary to the view suggested by some historians that National Socialist architecture was antagonistic towards modernist rational approaches,²⁷⁴ the adaptation of the Wilhemine Neoclassicism National Socialists to accord with the international style of the 1930s was a version of monumentalism pursued by worldwide contemporary architects.

Evidence of the GBI architects looking to international examples of Neo-classical style for inspiration can be seen in the National Socialist Party publications. In the *Bauwelt*, 1936, for instance, buildings and plans of the Capitol Hill complex in Washington D.C., USA (Figure 33, 34 and 35), were shown in the discussion of planning procedures for large-scale public buildings. The Neo-classical style designs for ministerial buildings were illustrated with admiration. The editor of the *Bauwelt* praised Roosevelt's initiative to construct the Capitol Hill complex in such a way that

²⁷³ Franco Borsi, *The Monumental Era, European Architecture and Design 1929-39* (London, Lund Humphries, 1986), 27.

²⁷⁴ Both Joachim Petsch and Barbara Miller Lane both hold the view that there were two major tendencies in National Socialist architecture - Wilhemine Neoclassicism and Heimatschutz racist conservatism. They were set in opposition to the New Architecture (*das Neue Bauen*). See for instance Joachim Petsch, *Kunst im Dritten Reich* (Cologne: Vista Point, 1983), 18.

the enormousness and power were consistently incorporated into and expressed in this plan.

*die, wenn auch für unser Empfinden vielleicht nicht befriedigend, immerhin durch die imponierende Einheit einen außergewöhnlichen Eindruck von Größe und Macht hinterlassen. ... Mit bewundernswerter Schnelligkeit meisterte diese Behörde die gewaltigen Aufgaben, die plötzlich an sie gestellt wurden, und erwarbdurch ihre Arbeitsverfahren den Ruf, mit zu den Pionieren des wiederaufbaues der amerikanischen Wirtschaft zu gehören.*²⁷⁵

The ability for the state authority to execute the monumental construction efficiently, through which it boosted country's economy, was also highlighted. The economical aspects was taken as one of the reasons why the large scale building projects like the Greater Berlin Plan and other National Socialist building projects should be promoted.



Figure 33 A photo of New Ministries complex in Washington DC, used as an illustration in the *Bauwelt* 6, 1936. (Iain Boyd Whyte collection)

²⁷⁵ *Bauwelt*, 1936, issue 6, 363.

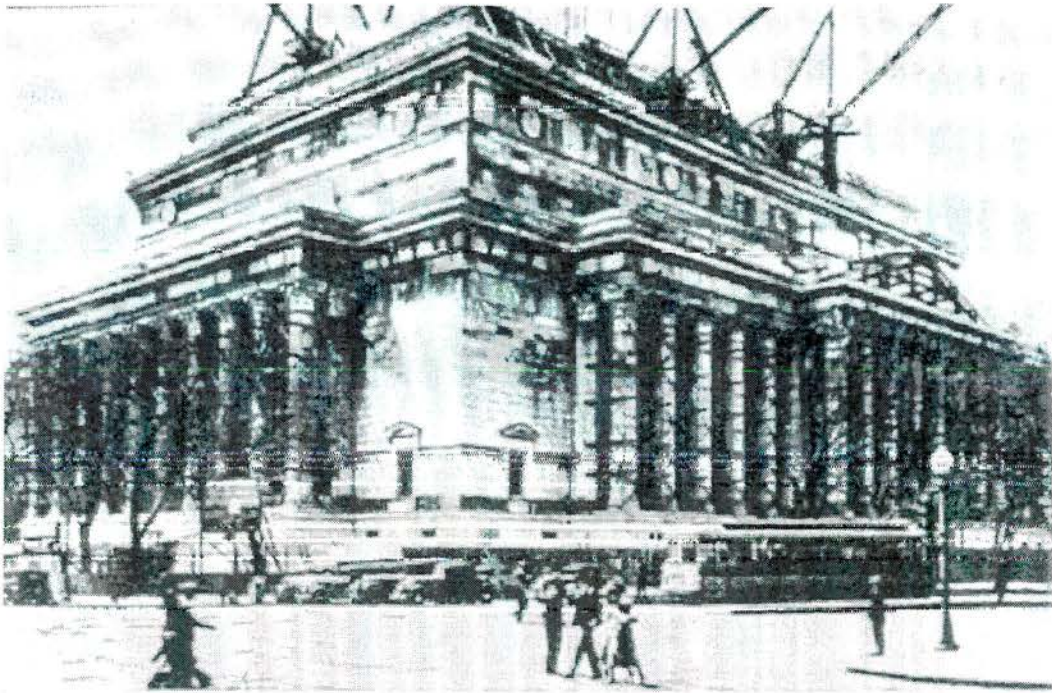


Figure 34 A photograph of the building of the National Archives in Washington under construction. Illustration in the *Bauwelt* 6, 1936 (IBW collection)



Figure 35 A photograph of the Ministry of Trade in Washington DC. The façade with neo-classical columns and attics was placed in the centre of the photograph and was juxtaposed with the car park filled with modern automobiles. Illustration in the *Bauwelt* 6, 1936. (IBW collection)

Hierarchical arrangement in architecture was used in American designs as a display of political power. Criticising the concept of hierarchy used by the New York architect, Daniel Burnham, Robert Goodman pointed out that the nature of the use of hierarchy in architecture was ‘to visually reinforce hierarchical political structures.

The more magnificent and monumental the official public places, the more trivial the citizen's personal environment becomes and the more he tends to be awed by the official environment.²⁷⁶ Certainly, just as every section of Capitol Hill represented the power of the nation of the USA, Hitler's Berlin plan was also a public symbol that demonstrated 'the essence of fascist architecture – glorifying the state by making individual efforts seem insignificant.'²⁷⁷ In Berlin, clear hierarchy was also established on the North-South Axis with the expression of monumentality from the pseudo-religious dome of the Great Hall, the patriotism of the Soldier's Hall, the public square around the Triumphal Arch, to the civic entrance of the South Railway Station.

The GBI architects produced designs not only for the Greater Berlin Plan, but also for smaller competitions or projects in cities all over Germany. They often worked on several projects at one time and submitted designs to different projects led and supervised by Speer's GBI office. For instance, the competition for the University City complex (*Hochschule Wettbewerb*), at the west end of the East-West Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan, collected altogether 745 designs by architects, such as Hermann Distel, Hans Meyer, Hans Richter, Erhard Schmid, Fritz Tamm and Karl Werner,²⁷⁸ many of whom were also involved with other major projects across the Third Reich. Additionally, there were also 72 designs submitted by architects abroad, from countries such as Austria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Brazil, Argentina, Palestine, Afghanistan and the USA. These competition entries provided an alternative venue for Speer and the GBI architects to familiarise with the latest international architectural talents and development in the process of designing the Greater Berlin Plan.

²⁷⁶ Robert Goodman, *After the Planners* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972), 142.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 147-8.

²⁷⁸ Bundesarchiv R4606.516.

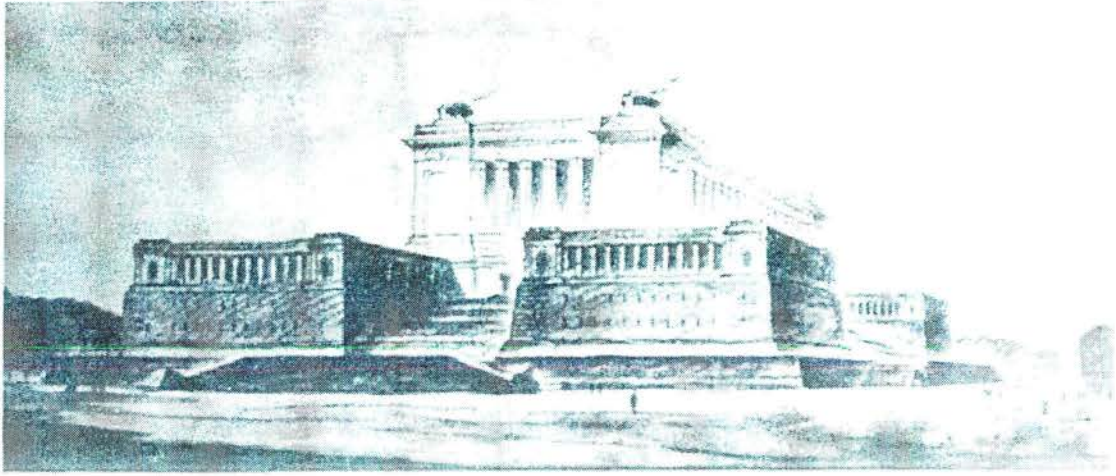


Figure 36 Hanns Dustmann, the *Auditorium Maximum* (“Langemarckhalle”) of the University Complex on the West Axis, around 1938. (Schäche & Reichhardt, 94)

Contemporary architects, both in Germany and abroad, employed the architectural languages of Neo-classicism. They adopted in their designs modernist concepts consciously or unconsciously. While the consistent cornice lines and the Neo-classical stone facades of buildings in the Berlin Plan helped to bring the plan together visually, major monumental buildings on the North-South axis also provided visual and symbolic punctuation points.²⁷⁹ Hanns Dustmann’s design of the *Auditorium Maximum* (Figure 36) for the University City complex, for instance, was in the Greek temple style. It was likely to be modelled on Friedrich Gilly’s design for a monument to Frederick II. The stairs leading up to the entrance high above the ground level, the Doric columns and caldrons of flames indicated the worshipping and commemorative function of the building. The project was later named as ‘Langemarckhall’ to honour the casualties of students in a patriotic anti-war demonstration in 1914.²⁸⁰ Speer later reproduced the model of Gilly’s competition design and published an article along with photographs of the model in *Die Baukunst* in 1942. He highlighted the aesthetic value of monuments in Neo-classical style and the way they represented the Prussian history.

²⁷⁹ Paul Jaskot, ‘Anti-Semitic Policy in Albert Speer’s Plans for the Rebuilding of Berlin.’ *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (December, 1996): 625.

²⁸⁰ Schäche and Reichhardt, 91.

4.2 Stone, eternity and the 'Ruin Theory'

The dilemma for the architect of using iron was that while it increased the functionality of a building, it lacked the ability to express monumentality. This is a criticism that had been repeated by countless architects since Semper. From 1830 to 1880, there was a series of debates on whether iron could replace stone in architecture to create monumental effects. Ludwig Bohnstedt in his article, 'Significance of Iron for Architecture,' ('Über die Bedeutung des Eisens für die Baukunst') in *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, 1867, rejected the potential of iron to express monumentality. This view did not take account of the functional aspects of iron such as its strength and durability. Architects who preferred the use of stone were cautious about the thin and hollow shape of iron, which could not express the full mass of the human body.²⁸¹ Many considered iron to be alien and inappropriate for this 'high' artistic task. Otto Wagner had similar doubts about iron. But he believed in the ingenuity of architects that would eventually solve the problem, thereby creating 'iron forms that would appear monumental to everyone.'²⁸² Wagner had in 1892 discussed the difficulty of evaluating the use of stone and iron in relation to modern city planning. He recognised the problems created by large modern cities due to their sheer size and density - features without precedent in history. This 'modern condition' emerged when new rail systems and their technology invaded the traditional cityscape and urban spaces conventionally occupied by monumental stone architecture. Modern engineering works, such as bridges and rail lines with their alien appearance of ironwork, intruded into the image of the city and its monuments as an organic classic-looking unity.²⁸³ The notion of monumentality, monumental appearance and its historical association with heavy stone architecture, is the main theme in Wagner's theory. His design work for the Vienna Stadtbahn demonstrated a series of innovative alternatives for using iron forms to express monumentality. Similarly, Karl Scheffler acknowledged the problem of using iron to replace stone in his chapter of 'Stein und Eisen,' in *Moderne Baukunst*. The new type of architecture

²⁸¹ Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 191.

²⁸² Neumeyer, 121.

²⁸³ Fritz Neumeyer, 'Iron and Stone: the Architecture of the Großstadt,' in *Otto Wagner: Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity*, edited by Harry Francis Mallgrave, (Santa Monica: Getty Centre, 1993), 116.

required new aesthetic theories to establish a new balance between art and its purposes, 'simply because crude iron girders and columns could hardly be screened from view with stone facings or traditional facades.'²⁸⁴

Despite of the heated debate over whether buildings constructed with modern materials of iron and concrete should be covered with stone, some architects maintained that the value of the stone built architecture was irreplaceable. In the 1920s Hegemann stated that building in stone in public spaces was necessary to represent the nobility of a cultured society:

*Gesellschaftliche Lebensbildung findet unvermeidlich ihren genauen Ausdruck in den Räumen, in denen sie sich bewegt, mögen sie Akropolis oder Forum heißen, - oder Place Royale, Champs Elysées und Revolutionsherde der Pariser Altstadt, - oder Londoner City und Square, 'Mein Heim ist meine Burg' und die Gartenstadt des Engländers, - oder Menagerie am Denkmal Wilhelms I., Siegesallee und Dom Wilhelms II., Kurfürstendamm und Berliner Mietkaserne mit Hinterhöfen und achtundsiebzig-köpfiger Durchschnittsbevölkerung.'*²⁸⁵

According to Hegemann, these cities of extraordinary power were all built in stone. 'Jede Stadt ist der Steinerne, aber genaue und untrügliche Ausdruck der geistigen Kräfte, die im Laufe der Jahrhunderte ihren Bau, Stein auf Stein, zusammenfügten.'²⁸⁶ Hegemann regarded stone to be an accurate and reliable expression of the spiritual force accumulated over time. He also argued that the style of a nation had to carry the history of its civilisation. He used the simile of a snake changing its skin. The new skin of a snake bears traces and patterns of the old layer, so must the development of architectural styles relate to the past.²⁸⁷ This position is probably derived from Semper's theory of 'Stoffwechslung' – according to which,

²⁸⁴ Neumeyer, 117.

²⁸⁵ Werner Hegemann, *Das Steinerne Berlin, Geschichte der Grössten Mietkasernenstadt der Welt* (Berlin: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1930), 18.

²⁸⁶ Ibid..

²⁸⁷ 'Eine Schlange, der die Haut zu eng wird, wirft sie ab und schafft sich eine neue geräumigere. Aber ihr neues Kleid sieht dem alten zum Verwechseln ähnlich. Werner Hegemann, *Das Steinerne Berlin, Geschichte der Grössten Mietkasernenstadt der Welt* (Berlin: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1930), 18.

architectural motifs moved progressively from material to material: wood to stone, stone to iron.²⁸⁸

Speer manipulated the durable quality of stone and the idea of eternity to invent his 'Theory of Ruins'. It provoked much criticism because of his superficial understanding of the value of classical ruins and the opportunist exploitation of the relationship between the image of classical ruins and the commemorative value of monuments. Speer's theory was inspired by the dreary sight of the remains of a Nuremberg streetcar depot, where modern iron and concrete technology had already been employed to good effect before the Third Reich. To make way for Zeppelin Field, the streetcar system had to be removed. In the process of reconstruction, 'the iron reinforcements protruding from concrete debris' were left rusting on the site. Speer noticed that the new visual effect created by modern materials such as iron and concrete would not appeal to Hitler's architectural Romanticism. But Speer was trained as a modernist architect. He was acquainted with the contemporary technologies available to him, not those of ancient Roman architecture. It was therefore important to persuade his patron that modern technology was capable of providing what was commissioned. Speer recalled in his memoir,

The idea was that buildings of modern construction were poorly suited to form that 'bridge of tradition' to future generations which Hitler was calling for. It was hard to imagine that rusting heaps of rubble could communicate these heroic inspirations which Hitler admired in the monuments of the past. My 'theory' was intended to deal with this dilemma. By using special materials and by applying certain principles of statics, we should be able to build structures which even in a state of decay, after hundreds or (such were our reckonings) thousands of years would more or less resemble Roman models.²⁸⁹

The Third Reich was to be as glorious, if not more glorious, than the Roman Empire – the monumental dream constantly portrayed in National Socialist propaganda. The

²⁸⁸ Gottfried Semper, *Wissenschaft, Industrie und Kunst: und andere Schriften über Architektur, Kunsthandwerk und Kunstunterricht* (Mainz: Florian Kupferberg, 1966).

²⁸⁹ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 97.

party's architecture must therefore be compared with and modelled on the architecture of the Roman Empire. This became an imperative for Hitler after he went to Rome in 1938 to see the 'Mostra Augusteo' – the exhibition held in the Forum – of Augustinian Rome. A symbolic act of homage to the Empire was the ceremony of passing fasces - a ritual imitated by the Fascists and the Nazis to legitimize the origin of their ideology. Hitler envied the Italian fascists their heritage of the historical monuments of the Roman Empire. He believed that the monuments of previous generations were essential to establish a powerful national identity. Speer's theory managed to 'bridge' Hitler's admiration of ancient monuments and his ambition for his legacy to be admired in the future.

The value of classical ruins, to which Speer's theory referred, was that they linked memory of the past to the present. There had been an established tradition in art history for the iconological exploitation of images of Roman ruins for their historical value. This can be seen in Alois Riegl's analysis of the popular genre of painting ruins among the Dutch seventeenth-century painters. Riegl pointed out that the Dutch painters were fascinated by

everything Romans passed as a symbol of earthly power and grandeur. Ruins were to convey to the beholder the truly Baroque contrast between ancient greatness and present degradation. The regret for this decline, and with it the wish that the ancient might have been preserved, was, as it were, an indulgence in pain which gave rise to the aesthetic value of Baroque pathos...²⁹⁰

Riegl illustrated the historical connotation of Roman ruins in relation to the Dutch creation of the Baroque style in the seventeenth century. Dissatisfaction and discontent with the current state of the society was dramatized by contrasting it with romantic images of the past. This stylistic romanticism explains the revival of Neo-classicism. Martin Damus analysed the National Socialists' craving for the everlasting value of architecture and pointed out that,

²⁹⁰ Alois Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin [1903],' *Oppositions* 25 (Fall, 1982): 31.

Der Eindruck von scheinbar zeitlosen und für die Ewigkeit errichteten Bauwerken entsteht darüber hinaus durch die Verwendung von Pfeilern, Säulen und schwerem Gebälk, ebenfalls in Anlehnung an antike Vorbilder. ... Die Bauwerke, aber auch noch ihre Ruinen sollten als Denkmäler für alle Zeiten von der Größe des sogenannten 1000-jährigen Reiches zeugen, so wie die römischen Ruinen noch immer von Macht und Glanz des Römischen Imperiums erzählen.²⁹¹

Ancient ruins and classical columns were employed in National Socialist architecture to establish the aesthetic of forged ruins to create an instant classical historical effect without waiting for the passage of time. Building monuments and cultivating commemorative value in them bore witness to National Socialists' ambition that the Reich should last not only a thousand years, but should also leave its heroic landmark forever. Contradictorily in the meantime, a monument as ruins equally bears witness to the fact that buildings can be ephemeral, and would not last forever. The tension between the need for the monumental and the eternal, and the consciousness of the ephemeral and the transitory was exposed here. There were at the one end of this phenomenon, as pointed out by Baudelaire, the main characters of modernity: the provisional, the transitory, the ephemeral and the fashionable. And at the other end was the fascination of origins, myths and the everlasting. Yet this demonstrated that these obsessions were not 'just reactionary state ideology or its cultural-ideological reflection. Its truth ... was that it demonstrated how nineteenth century modernity itself, contrary to its liberal and progressive beliefs, remained bound up with the constitutive dialectic of enlightenment and myth.'²⁹²

Residing in the present, Speer's theory superficially interprets memory of the past and was intended to forge a memory for the future generation. Like many of his designs and ideas, the discussion of ruins in relation to the use of stone and iron did not originate from Speer. It is difficult to tell to what extent Speer was informed about modernists' debates on the status of iron and stone in the years when conventional methods of architectural construction were most challenged. The title of

²⁹¹ Martin Damus, *Sozialistischer Realismus und Kunst im Nationalsozialismus*. (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1981), 78.

²⁹² Huyssen, 192.

his article, 'Stein statt Eisen' in the Four Year Plan suggests that Speer was aware of the theme. When Speer created his Theory of Ruins to promise a classical outlook for the future of his architecture, he certainly knew of the unstable and experimental quality of iron and concrete in his day. Ironically, as Alex Scobie points out, the examples of Roman buildings mentioned by Speer and Hitler to support their 'Ruin Theory' were not built of stone. Like most Roman imperial buildings, the Pantheon, the Baths of Caracalla, and Hadrian's' mausoleum are constructed with brick-faced concrete and faced with marble.²⁹³

National Socialist monumentality was intended to impress not only contemporaries, but also generations to come. The intention was to 'honour sacrifice, to mourn loss, to acknowledge achievement, to remember courage, to recall cost, to identify danger, to reiterate principle.'²⁹⁴ Monumentality was also highly saturated with memory of various kinds: 'generational memory, memory in public culture, national memory'²⁹⁵ - memory that is eventually petrified and turned into architecture.

Arthur Moeller van den Bruck suggested that Prussian Classicism would revive a sense of Spartan nobility. The elegant fragility of the castles and small German country houses would fulfil their mission to be, in effect, national monuments. Monumentality would confirm the nation's destiny. Had Gilly's design of the Monument for Frederick II been erected, Berlin and Prussia would have received the greatest architectonic focus, where the will to infinity would have been established through the 'will in stone'.²⁹⁶ National Socialist officials shared the view that establishing the historical continuity between the Nazi regime and the German Prussian past was essential to the legitimacy of the Third Reich regime. This was taken so seriously as to some extent to be self-defeating. It was seen as necessary to make connections with every aspect to establish continuity with the past:

²⁹³ Alex Scobie, *Hitler's State Architecture, the impact of classical antiquity*. (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), 95.

²⁹⁴ Steven Johnston, 'The Architecture of Democratic Monuments,' *Strategies*, vol. 15, no. 2 (November, 2002): 197.

²⁹⁵ Andreas Huyssen, 'Monumental Seduction,' in *New German Critique*, no. 69 (Fall: 1996): 181.

²⁹⁶ 'Wille zur Ewigkeit als Wille in Stein sich niedergelassen hat!' Van den Bruck, *Preussische Stil*, 137; quoted by Helmut Weihsmann, *Bauen unterm Hakenkreuz: Architektur des Untergangs* (Vienna: Promedia, 1998), 36.

Bei der Konstruktion von historischer Kontinuität zwischen der historischen Tradition und der ideologisch verbrämten Produktion des Dritten Reiches einerseits und der Parallelisierung von 'uralter' und jetziger Autorität andererseits griff die NS-Publizistik auf Diskursebenen zurück, die tief im Geist der Romantik wurzelten und jenseits der Ratio lagen. Man suchte krampfhaft nach Kontinuitäten, Linearitäten und Parallelitäten mit der 'glorreichen' deutschen Geschichte – von den Stauferkönigen über Barbarossa, Wallenstein, Prinz Eugen und Friedrich den Großen bis zu Bismarck. Mehr noch: Man bediente sich des Mythos und der Pathosformeln der Vergangenheit.²⁹⁷

The mystification of high art in stone and the celebration of its everlasting quality gave the new elite in power the opportunity to maintain a social order that privileged them. Infinity was an idea that the powerful and the privileged of society clung to in order to demonstrate and to secure their existence and their continued domination.

Man wollte gleichermaßen dem Ausland wie dem einfachen 'Volksgenossen' imponieren; man wollte die Macht und die Unbezwingbarkeit des Staates demonstrieren. Das 'Volk' sollte aus den Bauwerken des Regimes die immer wieder beschworene 'ewige' Dauer von dessen Herrschaft spüren ...²⁹⁸

The architecture of the regime must be an expression not only of spiritual leadership, it must also promise everlasting security and stability, led by the dictator.

The focal point - the Great Hall

The Great Hall complex, consisting of the Great Hall, the New Reich Chancellery, the Supreme Command of Military and the Brandenburger Gate, was the central focal point of the Greater Berlin Plan. This was clearly indicated from the very

²⁹⁷ Wehsmann, 35.

²⁹⁸ Wehsmann, 24.

beginning of the planning.²⁹⁹ The site to which this project was allocated and the exceptional attention given by Hitler and Speer had pre-determined its role of being the focal point of the Greater Berlin Plan.

The Great Hall was intended to be the gathering point and the great community centre for the capital, if not for the whole nation. This idea of having a central focal point in a city was not a National Socialist innovation.³⁰⁰ Designs based on the ideals of a central focal point and of a city crown can be seen in the *Festspielhaus* in Bayreuth (opened in 1875), in the artist colony of Mathildenhöhe at Darmstadt (1900-14) and in Tessenow's Hellerau School (1911). Other influences included Paul Scheerbart, Theodor Fritsch's *Die Stadt der Zukunft* (1896) and Otto Kohtz's *Gedanken über Architektur* (1909).³⁰¹ The most renowned example was certainly the *Stadtkrone* published in 1919, in which Bruno Taut created the vision of a city dominated by a centrally located, glass temple. His Crystal House was the focal point in the centre of a city. Like a lighthouse by a dark and stormy coast casting its dazzling beam, the shimmering crystal house, surrounded by much lower buildings, would act as a spiritual focus offering spiritual reassurance to every corner of the city. It carried the light that symbolised culture, knowledge and power. The idea that society could be transformed under the guidance of art and architecture was not an invention of Taut. Both the British Arts and Crafts movement and German artists in the late nineteenth century broadly shared this faith in the intellectual leadership of the arts and artists. Additionally, the Louvre and the Palais Royale in Paris were Hitler's inspiration for the design of the Great Hall complex. This complex consisting of Hitler's Palace and the future Headquarters of the Reich were the focal points on the Axis, to which Hitler paid most attention: 'Just as the Champs Elysées finds its dramatic focus in the residence of the French kings, so the grand boulevard was to culminate in a group of buildings which Hitler regarded as central to his political activities.'³⁰²

²⁹⁹ A clear layout of the North-South axis was announced to the public in *Völkischer Beobachter* on 3rd June 1938.

³⁰⁰ This was also pointed out by Reichhardt and Schäche, 109.

³⁰¹ For a detailed account, see Iain Boyd Whyte, *Bruno Taut and the Architecture of Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 76-82.

³⁰² Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 225.

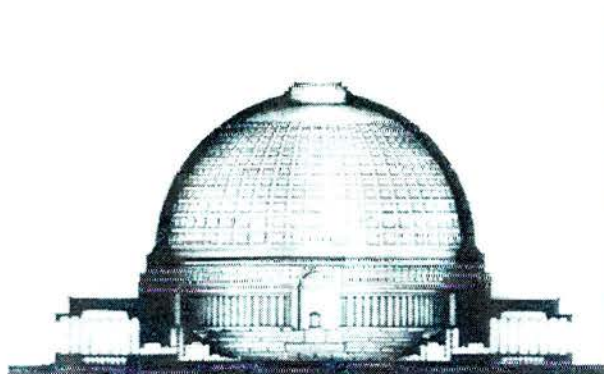


Figure 37 Albert Speer, the Great Hall, 1939. (Schäche, 1998, 113)

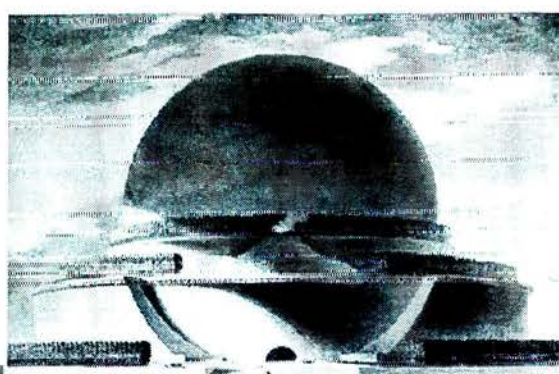


Figure 38 Etienne Le Boullée, Newton's cenotaph. (<http://www.vitruvio.ch/arc/neoclassical/france/newtonscenotaph.htm>)

The dome in Latin - domus - originally means house, house of God, chief church, Cathedral in a city; and dom in Latin – domus, domin-us - also has the meaning of master, ruler, chief and owner.³⁰³ The imposing dome of the Great Hall was to be the greatest assembly hall in the world and would essentially be a place for political ‘worship’. Speer called the Great Hall a ‘cult space’ (*Kultraum*).³⁰⁴ During the planning phase Speer had gone to see St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. He recalled that upon his visit to Vatican he realised that the size of the cathedral ‘had little to do with the impression it creates. In work on such a scale, I saw effectiveness is no longer proportionate to the size of the building. I began to be afraid that our great hall would turn out disappointingly.’³⁰⁵ Despite of this, the Berlin dome, as perceived by Hitler and Speer, was in all respects a buildable and sustainable project. It was not comparable to the massive globes of Claude Nicolas Ledoux and of Etienne Le Boullée, which, though no larger than Speer's Great Hall, were never intended to be built.

The central, domed space of the Great Hall, intended to be the world's largest, was designed to have a capacity of 150,000 to 180,000 people. These figures were the result of a scientific calculation based on the medieval town Ulm with a population of 15,000 and a cathedral of 2,500 square metres. On this basis, Speer remarked that the Great Hall for 150,000 people was actually too small for Berlin, a city with a population of 4 million. The diameter of the circular interior was to be

³⁰³ *Oxford English Dictionary* online, the entry ‘Dome’ and ‘Dom’.

³⁰⁴ Speer, *Erinnerungen* (Munich: Propyläen, 1969), 167.

³⁰⁵ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 225.

252 metres.³⁰⁶ The inner diameter of the oculus alone was to be 46 metres, while the diameter of the entire dome of the Pantheon in Rome is 43 metres and that of St Peter's, 44 metres. The interior of the Great Dome was to be sixteen times the volume of St. Peter's cathedral.³⁰⁷ The niches set into the round interior wall would be decorated in golden mosaics, while the wall itself in contrast was to be 'perfectly monochrome'.³⁰⁸ The surface area of the whole building would cover around 23 million square metres and was to be several times larger than the Capital Hill in Washington DC.

Speer had available to him a large team of engineers from across the Third Reich to provide all the necessary technical assistance for the Great Hall, e.g. acoustic experts and bridge construction engineers with relevant experience in steel span and reinforced concrete construction.³⁰⁹ The research for acoustics in the Great Hall, for instance, was undertaken in great detail with the goal of achieving good sound effects with orchestral, organ and military music. Consideration was given to the height of the dome, the appropriate materials lining the dome (either mosaics or natural stone), where best to install speakers, and as well as the best room temperature and humidity.³¹⁰

Additional technical issues concerning this project included the construction of the foundations, how to deal with the problems of raising the site on the Spree riverbed area,³¹¹ and the shortage of construction materials to meet such a huge scale project. For this project alone, 8,000 masons and craftsmen were to be brought to Berlin from all over the Third Reich. A workers' village (*Arbeiterstadt*) in Spandau was specially built for the construction of the Great Hall. The village was to be a fully self-contained satellite town connected to the building site by a single rail track at the eastern edge of Spandau. This was to bring into the satellite town the necessary utilities, and to transport the half-finished or prefabricated building units

³⁰⁶ The height of the Great Hall including the eagle on the top of the dome was to be 320 metres, the length of each side, 315 metres. Framed by a ring of one hundred 24-metre high white marble pillars with a niche setback at the entrance of 50-metre high and 28-metre wide. Above the dome there was to be a lantern of a 46-metre diameter crowned with a gold-coated Reich eagle and swastika. The entrance façade was to be double columned. See Reichhardt & Schäche, and Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, the section on 'The Globe,' 220-233.

³⁰⁷ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 223.

³⁰⁸ Albert Speer, 'Grosse Halle, Berlin 1937-40,' *Architectural Design*, no. 56, issue 4 (1986): 39.

³⁰⁹ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 224.

³¹⁰ Landesarchiv, no. 195, 24 September 1938.

³¹¹ Reichhardt & Schäche, 117.

into the Great Hall building site for assembly there.³¹² The Spree and canal behind the site destined for the Great Hall was to be widened by 40 metres in order to take the traffic needed for transport building materials from outside Berlin to the site. The harbour on the canal was intended to be turned into a goods station and the canal was to be opened for public use after the completion of the Great Hall in 1943.³¹³

The National Socialists denounced large private buildings that dominated the cityscape of Berlin and reduced the impact of major public buildings as focal points in the city. They recalled representative importance of old historical buildings. Rudolf Wolters noted that,

Die mächtigen staufischen Dome bildeten die deutschen Städte des Mittelalters: um die Monumente formten sich die Städte. Dome, Burgen und Schlösser waren das Herz der Städte, der Halt und der Stolz ihrer Bewohner. Noch heute bilden wir mit Bewunderung auf die gebauten, immer lebendigen Denkmäler unserer Vorfahren. Noch heute vermögen sie vielfach die Silhouetten der Städte zu Charakterisieren, deren Weichbilder seit langem um ein Vielfaches gewachsen sind. Wie groß und bezwingend aber waren diese Bauten zur Zeit ihrer Erbauung als die damals kleinen Städte sich erst um sie bildeten!

*Die sächsischen und staufischen Dome aber waren nicht nur Mittelpunkte ihrer Städte, sie waren darüber hinaus nationale Baudenkmäler - sie waren das Einzige, in dem wir den Reichsgedanken der ersten deutschen Kaiser noch heute versinnbildlicht vor uns sehen.*³¹⁴

The town hall was a symbol of the size and the power of a city and was designed to dominate the cityscape, whereas the cathedral was not merely the central point for

³¹² Bundesarchiv, KS 3734. The balance between work and exercise for a healthy life was taken into consideration. Large open-air swimming pools, a football field and a volleyball field nearby. Workers and craftsmen were to be accommodated in rows of standardised houses. Every detail of the design was designed in a megalomaniac scale and systematic calculation by Carl Lörcher (e.g. 25 complexes of housing blocks, 20 beds per room and each room with a size of 17 metres x 8.25 metres.).

³¹³ Bundesarchiv, R4606/1209, 19 May 1938.

³¹⁴ Rudolf Wolters, 'Wilhelm Kreis und die Bauten des Oberkommandos des Heeres' *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich* (February, 1939).

the city, but a symbol for the state and the nation. No private house should be allowed to surpass them in height. This visual effect could help to create the sense of a strong and unified community. The city centre was of a great importance in the city plan. The construction of a meaningful and large central focus was a pivotal point from which a new city could gradually extend further and develop. A clear focal point would enable a city with a great past to progress in a positive direction in the future. By this, Speer meant not only visually and concretely, but also spiritually and historically. Berlin was especially important, because it was not just any German city. As the capital of the Reich, Berlin should embody symbolic meaning, as *Unter Den Linden* and the Brandenburger Gate had done for the Prussian Empire. Hitler in his speech on the 12th December 1938 emphasised the importance of constructing colossal monumental buildings.

Es ist nötig, daß die wirklich großen Aufgaben einer Zeit auch groß gestellt werden, d.h., die Öffentlichen Aufträge müssen, wenn ihre Lösung Ewigkeitswert in sich tragen soll, in eine bestimmte Relation gebracht werden zu den Größenordnungen des sonstigen Lebens. Wir müssen so groß bauen, als die technischen Möglichkeiten dies heute gestatten, und zwar bauen für eine Ewigkeit.³¹⁵

This principle was to be applied not exclusively to Berlin, but also to other German cities, for example Hamburg – city of trade and Nuremberg – city of the party.

Death and monument - the Soldier's Hall

The Soldier's Hall as part of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (OKH) project on the North-South Axis was the façade of the OKH complex. It was to be the representative commemoration site for the war dead of the Third Reich. The design of this project showed how the relationship between death and sacrifice were promoted in National Socialist architecture. The actual construction of this project also exposed the death and the enslavement of the marginal groups of society to

³¹⁵ Ibid..

serve the monumental achievement of the Third Reich.

Monuments with commemorative values were extraordinarily important to National Socialism. Themes of the sublime and death were manipulated in their political and architectural propaganda. Speer and the GBI propagandists, for instance, contributed several articles in *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich* in 1939 and in 1943 to illustrate the value of Kreis' monumental designs.³¹⁶ The National Socialism sought a monumental style that would succeed in conveying the idea of battle, sacrifice and *Volksgemeinschaft*, and would celebrate the martyrdom of the holy brotherhood. His designs for National Socialist monuments and cenotaphs emphasised the theme of death and sacrifice. Kreis illustrated the meaning of this notion in his designs that *'Keine Kunst ist so groß, so ernst und heilig, als die Tat des Helden, das Leben hinzugeben für das Vaterland.'*³¹⁷ Sacrificing one's life for the *Vaterland* was a heroic action through which the citizen fulfilled the historic mission of every patriot. One of Kreis' detailed sketches for the façade of the Soldier's Hall showed that the following words were to be engraved on the frieze of the building: *'Ich habe den Kampf Gewählt – habe mich ihm verpflichtet, bleibe ihm treu, bis mich die Erde deckt, dass sie meine Freunde töten, ist möglich dass sie mich töten, ist auch möglich, dass wir kapitulieren: niemals, niemals, niemals!'*³¹⁸ The motifs of sacrifice, death and eternity were to be visually manifested in on the most representative monument on the North-South Axis.

The Soldier's Hall as the most symbolic war memorial in the capital of the Third Reich was to be a monument of the death, metaphorically and practically. Speer recalled that 'in the crypt of the Soldier's Hall innumerable places were reserved for the sarcophagi of the commanders' of the wars on neighbouring countries.³¹⁹ The peculiar relationship between the monument and heroic death was exploited in this project. Suzanne von Faulkenhausen pointed out that, 'as an image of the hero's return to mother earth, the monument's crypt was intended to convey, with a sort of "holy shudder," the heroic dimensions of his death. The temple erected

³¹⁶ Albert Speer, *'Wilhelm Kreis zu seinem Siebzigsten Geburtstag'* in *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich* (March, 1943): 41-57; Hans Stephan, *'Das Lebenswerk des architekten Wilhelm Kreis.'* *ibid.* 58-72.

³¹⁷ Wilhelm Kreis, *'Kriegermale des Ruhmes und der Ehre im Altertum und in unserer Zeit.'* reprinted as document 71 in Anna Teut, *Architektur im Dritten Reich 1933-1945* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1967), 222.

³¹⁸ *Bundesarchiv*, R4606/772, 19 January 1940.

³¹⁹ Albert Speer, *Spandau: the Secret Diaries* (London: Collins, 1977; original, 1975), 159.

over it signalled the triumph over death through the act of public commemoration.³²⁰ Through sacrificial death, soldiers would return to mother earth – the sublime landscape of Germany. Monuments as pseudo-religious temples accommodating ritualistic ceremonies, which helped to justify National Socialist militarism were important devices both on the Axes on the Greater Berlin Plan and the newly occupied German territories.

In October 1939, Speer visited Kreis' Atelier at Matthäikirchplatz and suggested several variations in his designs for the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces, Soldier's Hall and Museum of the World War. Kreis often worked far ahead of the building schedule. In July 1941, the lighting effect of the Soldier's Hall was brought into discussion. Von der Trappen sent in three sketches for alternative possibilities in lighting arrangement. The area to be illuminated was carefully measured and planned. The effect of light on statues, columns, stairs, the building and surrounding streets was meticulously designed, so that a stage effect for theatres would be created.

An Stelle der Lichtmaste für die Strassenbeleuchtung sind vor dem Bauwerk-Mittelstück 4 Pylon aufgestellt, die hoch sein müssen, weil sie einerseits die Strasse auf eine Entfernung von fast 50 m aufhellen sollen, andererseits eine Aufhellung der Treppen und eine Anleuchtung des Bauwerkes zu bewirken haben. Es sollen in den Pylonen leuchtende Flächen in Richtung des Bauwerkes geschaffen werden. Diese Flächen müssen einige qm gross sein, sofern sie ihre Aufgabe, ausreichende Aufhellung zu schaffen, erfüllen sollen, da anderenfalls Blendung nicht zu vermeiden wäre. Die Höhe der Lichtpunkte für die Strassenbeleuchtung (an diesen Pylonen) dürfte nicht unter 10 m sein, die Höhe der leuchtenden Flächen nicht unter 6 m.³²¹

The lighting effect of modern technology, which Speer took pride of, was to be used to transform the buildings into a 'theatre' at night for the display of the dramas of the

³²⁰ Suzanne von Falkenhausen, 'The Sphere: Reading a gender metaphor in the architecture of modern cults of identity,' in *Art History*, vol. 20, no. 2 (June 1997): 259.

³²¹ *Bundesarchiv*, R4606/722, 21 July 1941.

death.

Apart from the Soldier's Hall, Kreis' designs for other war memorials showed a similar approach. Following Speer's suggestion, Hitler nominated Kreis in May 1941 to be in charge of the Office for the construction of German War Memorials. This office was responsible for erecting memorials throughout the Third Reich following Hitler's military victories. Kreis regarded the interplay between architecture and sculpture, and architecture and classical value as a symbol of the art of what he saw as the heroic epoch in which he lived. After the initial military successes of the National Socialist regime, *Totenburgen* – castles of the dead - became popular as signposts in the German conquered Europe. The tradition of Bismarck monument design remained evident in the design of these *Totenburgen*. While a unified German style was maintained, local materials were used and regional characteristics could be integrated into the design of *Totenburgen*.³²² Like most *Totenburgen* designs erected in the 1930s in Germany, Kreis' drawings show these monuments on high hills or on the edge of cliffs with small memorial rooms for ceremonial functions showing clear homage to Gilly's and Schinkel's romantic Neo-classical monuments. They represented the value of sacrifice, of community, of national unity and of equality in death as a commitment to the living. Sketches for these monumental designs featured widely in Third Reich propaganda as a model for national monuments.

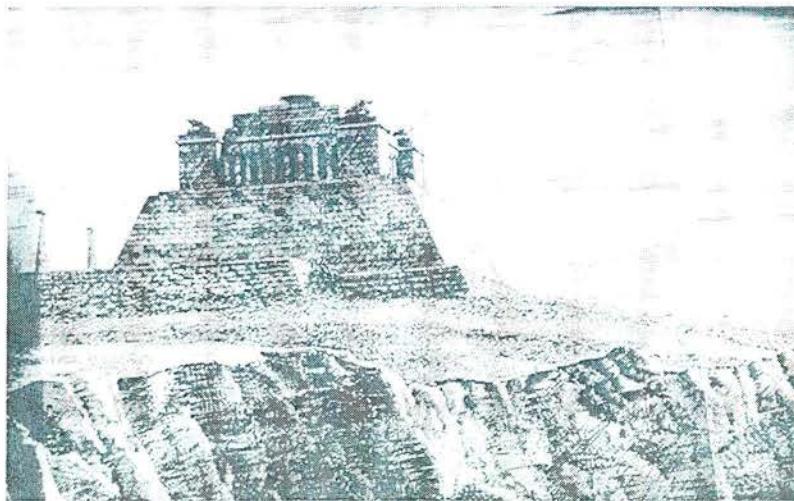


Figure 39 Wilhelm Kreis, *Totenburg*, 1941. (*Kunst im Deutschen Reich*, 1942)

³²² Michalski, 104.

The architecture of power - the Triumphal Arch

The Triumphal Arch (*Triumphbogen*) was designed by Speer following Hitler's sketch from the mid-1920s. With a height of 120 metres and a width of 170 metres, it was to provide a fulcrum on the great axis between the Great Hall and the South Railway Station. It was intended as a monument on which names of 1.8 million soldiers who had died in the First World War were to be engraved in granite.

Speer and the GBI often modified and re-defined their designs in response to military events and developments, for instance the victories on the Eastern Front prompted Hitler and Speer to elaborate the mythological basis and political symbolism of the colossal Great Hall and the monumental Triumphal Arch. Speer wrote in his memoirs that:

It seems to all of us that with every passing month we were almost effortlessly drawing nearer to the reason for the arches of triumph and the avenues of glory. The Great Hall and the Berlin Palace of the Führer suddenly acquired a real background: the victories in Poland and Norway, the conquest of France.³²⁶

Speer admitted later in his life that he was not well versed in classical antiquities and could hardly understand the essence of any classical architecture despite reading related books several times during his post-war imprisonment in Spandau. His architectural training by Heinrich Tessenow focused on how to design and build houses in technical and formalistic terms, rather than historical or theoretical ones.

For the past twelve months I have been reading four to five hours daily. I still find it hard to grasp the difference, beyond generalities, between classical antiquities, the Renaissance, European classicism, and my own efforts. At best I might say that Paestum or the Greek temples on Sicily have a more powerful and more emotional effect upon me than all the works of the Italian Renaissance. The same is true for Prussian

³²⁶ Speer, 159.

classicism, most of all the work of Gilly and Schinkel.³²⁷

In retrospect Speer seems to have had neither a distinctive view on, nor knowledge of, architecture of the past and present. He was capable merely of producing models and drawings of buildings to meet his patron's demands. Often Hitler showed a comparatively greater interest than Speer in the history of classical architecture and concerned himself more passionately with details of each model the GBI architects produced for the Berlin *Germania* plan. Speer admitted that he was not as impressed by classical antiquity as Hitler had been in their trip to Florence. He recalled that 'Hitler was affected altogether differently. When he returned from his visit to Italy in 1938 he spent a whole evening talking about the tremendous impression the Renaissance Florence had made upon him, especially its imperial classical antiquity.'³²⁸



Figure 40 Kutuzov Arch, Moscow. (www.xenophongi.org/rusarmy/artymuseum/kutuzov.htm)

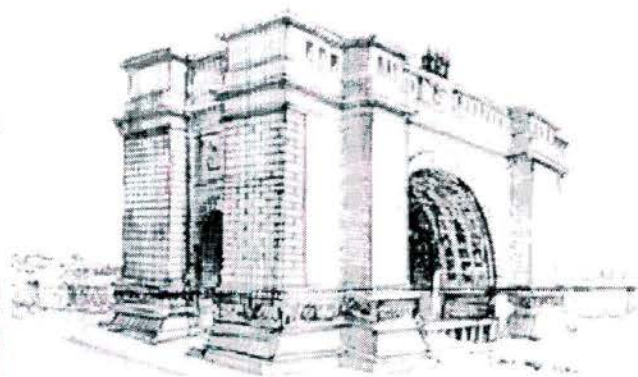


Figure 41 Adolf Hitler, drawing of a triumphal arch, 1925. (Schäche and Reichhardt, 1998, 136)

The sketch of a Triumphal Arch (Figure 41) by Hitler, on which the Arch in the Great Axis was modelled, was a fine drawing for an amateur. It certainly demonstrated Hitler's interest in the architecture of the Beaux-Arts classical revival. There is no clear source suggesting what Hitler's inspiration for this drawing had been. It is an unconventional design compared to most triumphal arch designs, which

³²⁷ Ibid., 124-25.

³²⁸ Ibid., 125.

are commonly modelled on the Arch of Constantine in Rome. This prototype design consists of one central main arch and two subordinate arches, one on either side. The closest example to Hitler's drawing to be found is the Kutuzov Triumphal Arch (built in 1813) (Figure 40) in Moscow. The design presented by Speer on the Axis was a colossal cube with one main arch going through the centre of the monument and crowned with statues on both the north and the south sides of the building. The massive arch of this monument, as shown in the model displayed in the GBI office, was not open to automobile traffic like the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, but would remain part of the Square of the South Railway Station Square, where only pedestrian access was to be permitted. Overlooking the railway station square, the Triumphal Arch was meant not only to impress visitors to the German capital by providing a monumental view towards the Great Dome at the north end, but also to serve as a focal point on the square, where a massive crowd could be accommodated on party rallies and similar public occasions. The sculptural reliefs on the Triumphal Arch were not independently figural. It was designed by the leading National Socialist sculptors - Arno Breker, Josef Thorak, Adolf Wamper and Kurt Schmidt-Ehmen. The statues were 'intended to merge visually with the walls, colonnades or porticoes' of the building.³²⁹ They represented ideal human figures of different professions in society – warriors and athletes, instead of individual idols to be commemorated or worshiped.



Figure 42 Werner Hegemann, Washington DC, a view looking at the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. (Hegemann, *City Planning Housing*, 1938, 17)

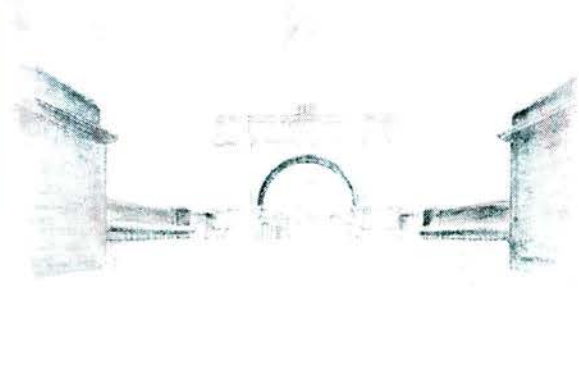


Figure 43 A view of the Triumphal Arch from the South Railway Station, 1939. (Schäche and Reichhardt, *Von Berlin nach Germania*, 1998, 138)

³²⁹ Sergiusz Michaelski, *Public Monuments, Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997* (London: Reaction Books, 1998), 96.

The cost for the Triumphal Arch on the grand boulevard was estimated at between 250 and 350 million Reichsmarks. The chosen site for this project had to be moved 55 metres northwards, after the ground quality had been surveyed.³³⁰ The large plaza, on which the Triumphal Arch was to stand, was to be a space to demonstrate military power of the Third Reich. Visitors stepping out of the South Railway Station were expected to be ‘overwhelmed, or rather stunned, by the urban scene and thus the power of the Reich.’³³¹ Almost picturesquely, Speer described what visitor’s would experience when they arrived at the Grand Boulevard: ‘Sighting through the two hundred sixty foot opening of the great arch, the arriving traveller would see at the end of a three-mile vista the street’s second great triumphal structure rearing out of the haze of the metropolis: the great hall with its enormous dome...’³³²

The Greater Berlin Plan was designed not only to provide a better environment for the mass public in Berlin and in Germany, but also to impress Germans abroad as well as the Germans of the future generations. Furthermore, it was to create public spaces large enough to accommodate mass meetings for political purposes. Hitler and his propagandists knew well that the only way for his regime to outlive his opponents was not merely to modify its political statement whenever necessary, but to recruit as many supporters as possible. The function of its architecture was to, as Dal Co revealed,

evoked the multiform presence of the regime among the ‘essential communities’ that formed the body of the nation, exalting its metahistorical, primordial, and racial unity according to a system of values that emerged as negative when compared to the decisively historical character of the tradition on which the architectural culture of the turn of the century intended to base its own organic program. For this reason, Nazi architecture had no definitive style.³³³

National Socialist architecture, in its very nature reactionary or

³³⁰ Bundesarchiv, R 4606/1209, 26 July 1939 and 5 March 1942.

³³¹ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 199.

³³² *Ibid.*.

³³³ Francesco Dal Co, ‘The Stone of the Void,’ in the *Oppositions* (1984, no. 26): 103.

'metahistorical', created its own diverse genre, which in itself encompassed considerable complexity. Monumentality, one of the key features in both modernist and National Socialist architecture, demonstrates through its different themes the authoritarian potential of architecture 'at the service of' the society.

From the outset, the architectural models of the Greater Berlin Plan, in particular the designs for the North-South Axis, were Hitler and Speer's 'playground' in the model display room in the Reich's Chancellery. They regularly spent hours on these models and discussed how to bring their dream world into fulfilment - a cinema for premieres, a cinema for two thousands people, an opera house, three theatres, a concert hall, a building for congresses, a hotel of twenty-one stories, and a variety of theatres and luxury restaurants. Speer remarked later, after his release from Spandau, that when he looked back, he realised their plan was regimented and 'completely lack a sense of proportion.'³³⁴ Speer and Hitler's over-ambitious and megalomaniac plan for the Greater Berlin resulted finally in the destruction of the city's historic past. Architecture was seen as a single event connected with history only through forging its historicity, which is detached from the process of organic historical development and is in reality ahistorical.³³⁵ The plan for the city produced an entirely new urban space, related neither to history nor to the memory of the everyday life of Berliner residents. Tafuri and Dal Co termed it a 'mute universe' that presents only the 'accents' of the symbol of power.³³⁶

Hochhaus debates - Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (OKH)

Several projects in the Greater Berlin Plan were designed to be skyscrapers. This included buildings in the Hochschulstadt complex, the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (Oberkommando des Heeres), the Grand Hotel and others. The inclusion of the high-rise buildings on the Axes further tied in National Socialist architecture and the contemporary international architectural discourse.

³³⁴ Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London: Phoenix, 1997), 198.

³³⁵ The events that Speer created through architecture were undistinguished in themselves and represented 'only an abstract and superior idea of Order'. See Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, New York: Abrams, 1979 (original published as *Architettura Contemporanea*, 1976), 277.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*.

The 'skyscraper' emphasises the expression of the 'vertical'. The vertical manipulation of new construction materials such as iron, steel, glass and concrete began to fascinate most contemporary architects after the success of the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London. In the Greater Berlin competition of 1908, Karl Wach and Bruno Schmitz proposed a monumental skyscraper on the Potsdamer Platz. The precedents for this design were Chicago and New York, but they had to be 'Germanised'.³³⁷ The development of American skyscrapers received increasing attention after the First World War. In the 1920s, New York buildings and American skyscrapers were often the centre of German architectural discussion.³³⁸ Images of skyscrapers dominated articles published by architects such as Erich Mendelsohn ('*Russland Europa Amerika*'), Richard Neutra ('*Wie baut Amerika*')³³⁹, Martin Wagner ('*Das Neue Berlin*') and Ludwig Hilberseimer ('*Großstadtarchitektur*').

In Germany 'skyscraper fever' (*Hochhausfieber*) emerged in 1919 when various competitions for skyscraper projects began to be held in major German cities. Skyscrapers were assigned the role of what Bruno Taut called the 'City Crown' - a form of symbolic spiritual leadership functioning at both religious and political levels. In 1920 and 1921 Bruno Möhring produced several *Turmhäuser* designs in Berlin. Carefully choosing the sites, he tried to avoid the concentration and traffic problems already confronting the development of skyscrapers in Chicago and New York. Equally committed to this style was Otto Kohtz, who also proposed some skyscraper designs in order to give 'the eye a focus and direction.'³⁴⁰ Mies' Friedrichstrasse tower of 1919 - the drawing of the third skyscraper project he developed in the 1920s - stood in the middle of Old Berlin on a monumental scale, while at the same time adapting its dimensions to the existing urban plan. 'It realized

³³⁷ Lampugnani, Vittorio Magnago. 'Berlin Modernism and the Architecture of the Metropolis,' *Mies in Berlin*, compiled by Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), 40.

³³⁸ See Walter Curd Behrendt, 'Das erste Turmhaus in Berlin,' in *Die Woche*, No. 9, 1922; Peter Behrens, 'Zur Frage des Hochhauses', in *Stadtbaukunst alter und neuer Zeit*, March 1922, 841-43; Werner Hegemann, 'Das Hochhaus als Verkehrsstörer und der Wettbewerb der Chicago Tribune,' in *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst*, August 1924, 296-309. Ludwig Hilberseimer, 'Das Hochhaus,' in *Das Kunstblatt*, June 1922, 525-531; Mies van der Rohe, 'Hochhäuser,' in *Frühlicht*, issue 4, Summer 1922. More sources can be found in Dietrich Neumann, *Die Wolkenkratzer Kommen! Deutscher Hochhäuser der Zwanziger Jahre* (Braunschweig/Wiesbaden: Vieweg & Sohn, 1995).

³³⁹ Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, Oxford: Architectural Press, 1996 (first edition, 1960), 309.

³⁴⁰ See Otto Kohtz, *Büro-Turmhäuser in Berlin* (Berlin, 1921) quoted and translated by Lampugnani, *ibid.*, 41.

not only beliefs of the radical constructivist, and functionalist architectural avant-garde ... but also ... the vision of basic, unadorned, uniform, and forthright blocks imagined by early-twentieth-century German architectural thinkers, especially Scheffler.³⁴¹ Skyscrapers had since become a heated topic in Berlin architectural circles in search of a solution to the fast growing metropolis. Manhattan skyscrapers were criticised because they exposed office workers to poor working conditions with long hours of artificial lighting and limited workspaces. They also caused serious traffic congestions in the area surrounding the buildings.

Martin Wagner expressed his concern over the lack of reasonable proportion in American architectural planning that was appearing in exhibitions at the time. In 1929, he illustrated this by pointing out the problems of scale and space in the high-rise projects submitted to the Chicago competition.

*Man greift zu Hochhäusern, gegen die der Tribune Tower ein Waisenknabe ist. Eine Stadt der Türme soll erstehen! Für ein halbes Jahr! O Kosten! O hilfloser Besucher, der du dich in diesem Wald von Kathedralen zurechtfinden sollst! O Aussteller, der du wünschst, von 100 Millionen Besuchern gesehen zu werden! Nein, das geht zu hoch, zu weit, zu breit! Das ist eine mengenhafte Übersteigerung, die das Große klein und das Gewaltige hilflos macht.*³⁴²

Wagner criticised American society for boasting that it was the biggest and the greatest in the world, whilst it did not realise that size and quantity mattered very little. He suggested that Americans should pursue quality instead of quantity, and work on exhibitions that were 'exemplary, small but genuine, expensive but seldom meant for eternity! Show us that the New World can also grasp the importance of timelessness.' (*'klein, aber echt, kostbar, selten ewig wirkend, beispielhaft! Zeigt, daß die Neue Welt auch in die Tiefe des Zeitlosen eindringen kann.'*)³⁴³ In an epoch when most German architects were captivated by the wonders of advanced American

³⁴¹ Lampugnani, 46.

³⁴² Martin Wagner, 'Pläne einer Weltausstellung Chicago, 1933,' *Das Neue Berlin* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1988): 172.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*.

building technology, Wagner's scrutiny of American culture and architecture appeared to be perceptive and provocative.

Another widely discussed issue regarding high-rise buildings in Berlin was the uniformity of the height of buildings in the city centre. Werner Hegemann was concerned with the historical fabric of the city.

*Die Erscheinung des Straßenzuges Unter den Linden vom Pariser Platz bis zum Friedrichs-Forum war nie vorbildlich. Die 44 Häuser, die Friedrich II. fort baute, solten großartig wirken und wurden deshalb meist – aber auch wieder nicht einheitlich – vier Geschosse hoch, was vergleichen mit dem Zeughaus schon zu hoch ist. Im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert wurden die Häuser noch höher und ihre Architektur verwildert. Alle Privathäuser Unter den Linden müßten sich den öffentlichen Bauten beiden Enden der Straße dienend unterordnen...*³⁴⁴

Unlike the well-regulated apartment buildings in *Rue de Rivoli* and around the *Place de la Concorde* in Paris, the development of private buildings on the *Unter den Linden* in Berlin had resulted in an anarchic and chaotic effect. Modern urban planning emphasised the value of a disciplined and regulated cityscape. Hegemann supported the idea of regulating the building height on the main streets of the capital, especially the *Unter den Linden* in the early 1930s. He used Paris and New York as examples. The profit motive frequently drove the private sector to favour building higher to maximise the returns from land. The result was that the excessive height of these private buildings destroyed the uniformity of historic streets. The height of all buildings must therefore be regulated like New York skyscrapers, where the top floors of higher buildings were set back. *'Solange nicht die Gesimshöhen aller Häuser einheitlich und möglich niedrig und ihre Fassaden harmonisch entwickelt werden, darf die Hauptstraße und via triumphalis Berlins keinen Anspruch auf künstlerische Würde machen.'* Setting back the higher floors of skyscrapers was highly acclaimed in the 1925 competition - *'Wie soll Berlins Hauptstraße Unter den Linden sich im Laufe des 20. Jahrhunderts gestalten?'* But it was never put into

³⁴⁴ Werner Hegemann, *Das Steinerner Berlin, Geschichte der Grössten Mietkasernenstadt der Welt* (Berlin: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1930), 203.

practice.³⁴⁵

Speer spoke of the high-rise designs on the North-South Axis as one of the many aspects of his Greater Berlin project that demonstrated the technological advancement of the National Socialist building industry and of architectural practice led by his GBI office.

Both axes were to be lined by tall office buildings which would be scaled down at either end, passing by degrees into lower and lower buildings until an area was reached of private homes surrounded by considerable greenery. By this system I hoped to avoid the usual strangulation of the city center. This plan, which arose necessarily out of my axial structure, led the areas of greenery along the radii deep into the heart of the city.³⁴⁶

The Greater Berlin Plan inherited a similar rationale. According to Speer's retrospective critique, they had in their plan 'set aside block units of between five hundred feet and six hundred and sixty feet even for private businesses. A uniform height had been imposed on all the buildings, as well as on all the storefronts. Skyscrapers, however, were banished from the foreground. Thus we deprived ourselves of all the contrasts essential for animating and loosening the pattern. The entire conception was stamped by a monumental rigidity that would have counteracted all our efforts to introduce urban life into this avenue.'³⁴⁷ To achieve the uniformity of the axis, Speer maintained that the height of the buildings along the axis must be unified, despite being aware of how the height limit would restrain the organic development of urban life in the area.

³⁴⁵ Ibid..

³⁴⁶ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 125-6.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 198.

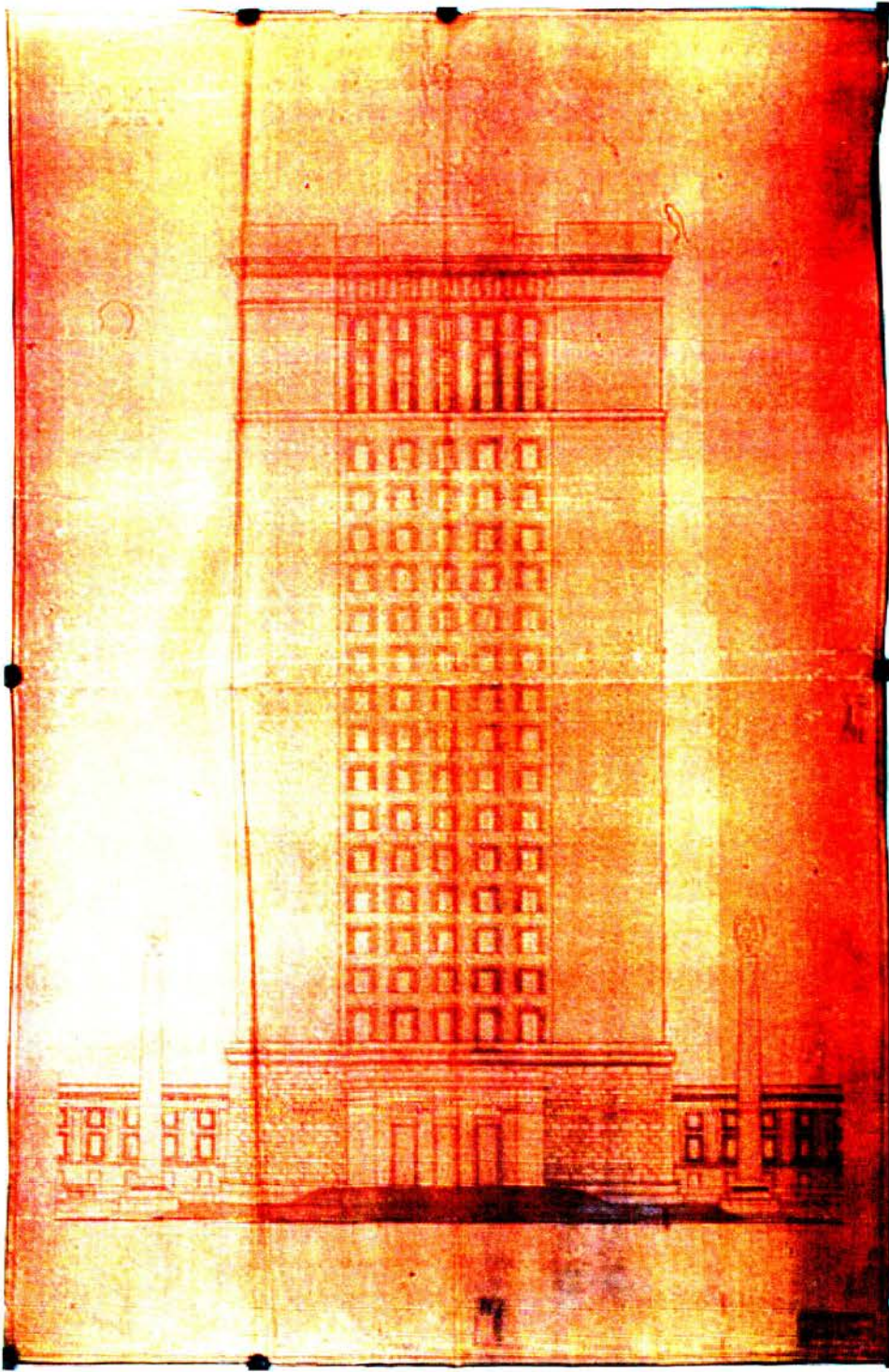


Figure 44 Wilhelm Kreis, the high-rise Chief Building of the Supreme Command of Armed Forces. (Bundesarchiv, R6506, KS 3700)

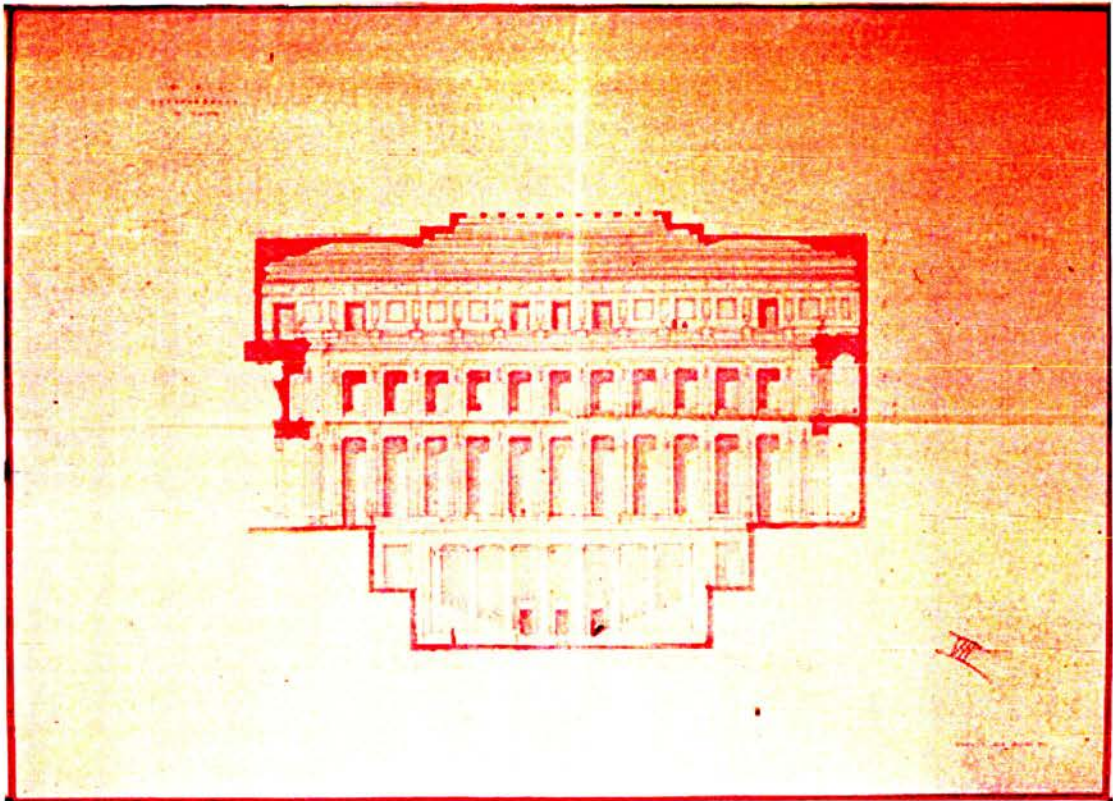


Figure 45 Wilhelm Kreis, cross section of the main building off the Supreme Command of Armed Forces. It shows the classical details for the modern skyscraper on the North-South Axis. (Bundesarchiv, R4606, KS 3700)

Among major German architects who participated in this debate in the 1920s were Peter Behrens, German Bestelmeyer, Paul Bonatz and Wilhelm Kreis. They later formed the principal architectural force for Speer's GBI office for the Greater Berlin project. The skyscraper was to be installed on the North-South Axis - the 'representative street' of National Socialist Germany. High-rise buildings such as Kreis' project for the Supreme Command of Armed Forces complex (Figure 44) and Cäsar Pinnau's Grand Hotel Project (Figure 74 and 75) were scattered along the axis to accompany Speer and Hitler's Great Dome and Speer's South Railway Station. The motif of the 'greatest boulevard in the world' was clearly illustrated. We do not know to what extent Speer and the GBIs were aware of the international debate about skyscrapers. It is however well established that members of the GBIs were sent abroad on various trips to inspect the latest urban planning development and architectural designs in metropolitan cities abroad. Pinnau, Wolters, Gotthold Nestler and the sculptor, Arno Brecker, had all been sent abroad to collect information on the most advanced international architectural developments. Drawing upon the evidence

set out below, we can say Speer and the GBIs must have been aware of most contemporary architectural publications on related issues. In the manifesto-ish *International Style*, Henry Russell-Hitchcock wrote, 'Skyscrapers have their proper place in the modern city, but they must be so widely spaced that they relieve congestion rather than aggravate it.'³⁴⁸ This must have affected the arrangement of high-rise buildings on Speer's North-South Axis. Skyscrapers are spread out widely, to avoid creating serious traffic congestion.



Figure 46 Wilhelm Kreis, A drawing for a school in the Greater Berlin Plan. It followed the same style as the school of the Supreme Command of Armed Forces. (Bundesarchiv, KS3616)

Kreis' enthusiasm for high-rise buildings can be seen in his participation as a juror for skyscraper competitions in Berlin in the 1920s. He also submitted designs to some of them. His designs for high-rise buildings showed a hybrid of the German national monument and the Chicago School skyscrapers. Like most other high-rise projects in Germany, few of Kreis' designs were executed due to lack of financial resources and the restrictions imposed by the architectural regulations in Berlin. Besides, the problems of American skyscrapers, such as traffic congestion and uncontrolled development were widely known to German critics. Learning from the

³⁴⁸ Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: Norton, 1966; original edition, 1922), 42.

American experience, Kreis proposed alternative styles for skyscrapers that would avoid causing unhealthy working environments.

First of all, the height of buildings must be restricted, where such restrictions were appropriate. But higher buildings would be permitted, wherever that was appropriate. Most importantly, traffic circulation in areas surrounding skyscrapers must be carefully planned, so that a balance between work and the capital, and traffic and the capital could be achieved.³⁴⁹ Regulations relating to high-rise blocks in Germany first appeared in January 1921. However, due to the problems this type of buildings tend to create such as depriving sunlight from the neighbouring buildings, causing traffic congestion and damaging the cityscape, permissions would be granted only in exceptional cases.³⁵⁰ In the same year, Kreis designed a project for a 27-storey office block in Düsseldorf. This tower block, 160 metres high, was to be part of a 5- to 7-storey high building complex and provide a café on the first floor and an extensive area for offices and exhibition halls above this level. While the layout of the complex recapitulates Sullivan's archetypal skyscraper – the Auditorium Building in Chicago (1887-9) - the motif and style of the tower block recalls Kreis' designs for Bismarck monuments. In addition to that, another of Kreis' designs won first prize in a competition for the Wilhelm-Marx-Hochhaus in Allee Platz, Düsseldorf. This was an iron and concrete construction. At 55.70 metres high, it was to be the highest skyscraper in Europe. Kreis had a great passion for skyscrapers. In 1924 Erich Mendelsohn wrote a letter to protest against the building authority's conservative attitude. He managed to win support from Kreis and other important architectural figures at the time, e.g. Mies, Bonatz, Scharoun, Gropius, and Poelzig, to promote the development of skyscrapers. Against the trend of the so-called 'Edelsaule' (the noble column) – a division of the German Art Nouveau movement at the turn of the century, the young Kreis was praised for his 'mature' approach in his designs for Wilhelmine monuments and the Bismarck Towers, which followed the design and the proportions of Gilly's style.³⁵¹ Strong patriotism and support for

³⁴⁹ Dietrich Neuman, 'Wilhelm Kreis und das Bürohaus in den zwanziger Jahren,' in *Wilhelm Kreis: Architekt zwischen Kaiserreich und Demokratie, 1873-1955*, edited by Winfried Nerdinger and Ekkehard Mai (München/Berlin: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1994), 107.

³⁵⁰ Regulation regarding multi-storey buildings in *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, 4 January 1921, 48, quoted in Neuman, 107-8.

³⁵¹ Rudolf Wolters, 'Wilhelm Kreis und die Bauten des Oberkommandos des Heeres' in *Die Kunst im*

national identity, which had never before been strong in his other works, was fully expressed in these designs.

The Supreme Command of Armed Forces (OKH), designed by Kreis for a site to the west of the Soldier's Hall, was one of the few skyscraper projects on the North-South Axis. It was located between Victoria Straße and the North-South Axis to the east, and Bendlerstrasse to the west. It was to border the Tiergarten in the north and the Landwehrkanal in the south. An area of 40 hectares was allocated to house different bureau of this organization. The Soldier's Hall was to be directly connected with this complex and represented the three major branches of the Armed Forces. The OKH complex was to centre around a massive courtyard which would be 160 metres wide and 400 metres in length. The reason for installing this heavy and tall complex (Figure 44) on the west of the grand axis, according to Wolters, was to balance the constructions on the east side, and to bring diversity to the Great Axis, similar to Haussmann's 'North-South breakthrough' a hundred years ago in Paris.³⁵² The height of the tower block was to be 128 metres, and a statue of 24 metres high was to be added on top of this highrise project. In the OKH complex, four identical building blocks were arranged around a rectangular courtyard. This was to be connected to the Tiergarten with an obelisk in the north marking the entrance and to the focal point – a high-rise building to the south. The high-rise tower was much taller than most of the other buildings on the axis. The basic principle of this tower design was modelled on the Sullivan style American skyscrapers. It would consist of a base, a middle section which could be adjusted to accommodate different numbers of storeys as required, and an upper section which would have a roof storey in the classical style such as the designs of Sullivan's Schiller Building (1891-2) or his Stock Exchange Building (1893-4). The Supreme Commission high-rise building resembled a classical column. The rustic lower section formed a pedestal faced with stone. The middle section of 15 storeys stood on a miniature base. This connected the lower part and the architrave and led to the cornice-like top section with clearly defined profiles. Pseudo-metopes and –dentils characterised the attempt at modelling on the Classical Order. But despite this, the building overall was poorly proportioned. On the top of the high-rise block a warrior statue designed in the ancient Greek style

Dritten Reich (Feb., 1939): 47-63 (47).

³⁵² Wolters, 49.

was placed to overlook the entire court. Echoing the body politics – images of the robust body figures - of the National Socialism, the entrances of the west fronts were to be guarded by large and figurative statues.

Mobility - the North and the South Railway Station (*Südbahnhof*)

‘[U]p to the nineteenth century a town was centered from the outside. To-day the city’s gates are in its centre. For its real gates are the railway stations.’

Le Corbusier, *City of Tomorrow*³⁵³

Hitler and Speer recognised the role of central railway stations as gates of a modern city. The designs of the two major stations – the North Railway Station (*Nordbahnhof*) and the South Railway Station (*Südbahnhof*) - of the Greater Berlin Plan carefully dealt with the mobility both inside and outside the stations. As the gates of the capital, these two stations would be receiving visitors from all over Germany and abroad. In order to represent the best of the Third Reich, they must be grandeur in style and modern in function.

The North Railway Station was to be installed at the border between the districts of today’s Moabit and Wedding,³⁵⁴ It was to be part of the Great Pool complex (*Großes Becken*) crowning the north end of the main axis. The grand set of stairs descending from the ground level to the lower level concourse was to provide connections between the entrance hall and the platforms. Theodor Dieksmeier’s cross-section drawing of the station clearly shows the use of a multi-track system, developed by William Wilgus in the New York Central Terminal³⁵⁵. The interior of the North Railway Station reflected the influence of modern American engineering and of a simplified Beaux-Arts style.

³⁵³ Le Corbusier, *City of Tomorrow and its Planning*, trans. by Frederic Etchells (London: Architectural Press, 1946), 109.

³⁵⁴ Schäche & Reichhardt, *ibid.*.

³⁵⁵ William Wilgus, the Chief Engineer for the New York Central Terminal, created the system to solve the over-loaded railway traffic in New York in 1902. See Kurt C. Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal: Railroads, Engineering, and Architecture in New York City*; (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 56-59.



Figure 47 Area plan for the North City on the North-South Axis.
(Bundesarchiv, R4606, KS3573)

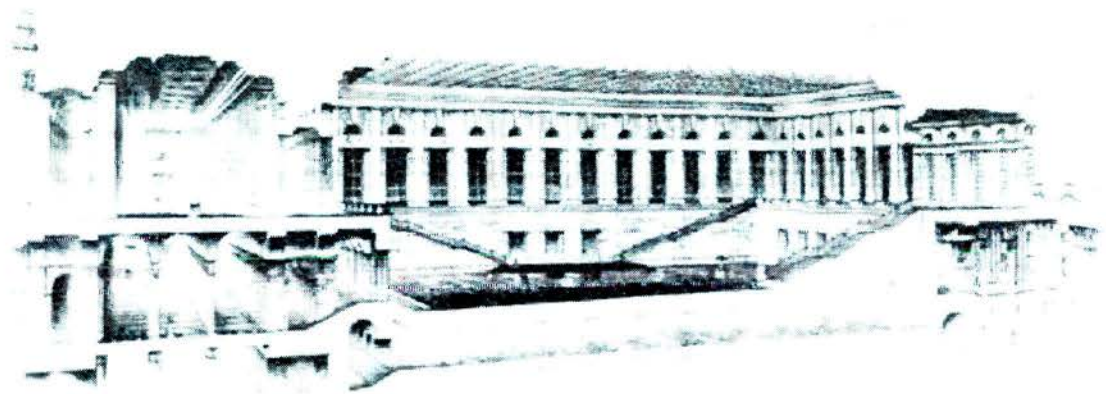


Figure 48 Theodor Dieksmeier, Interior of the North Railway Station. (Schäche, 1998, 105)

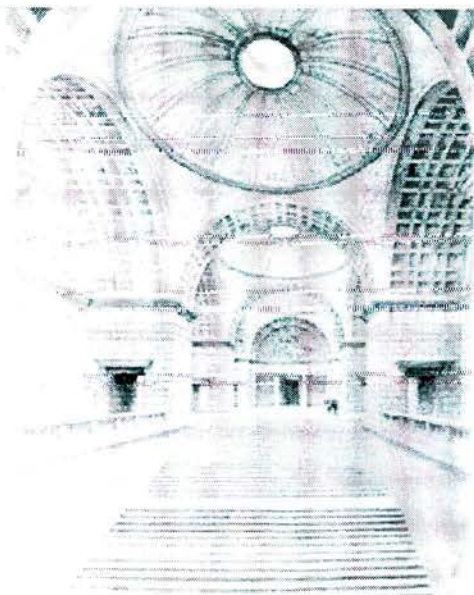


Figure 49 Interior of the Great Pool, 1940. (Schäche, 1998, 107)



Figure 50 German Bestelmeyer, Berlin City Hall, 1940. (Schäche, 1998, 107)

The mobility of the North Railway Station (Figure 48) was to provide easy access for the residents in the Greater Berlin area to the mega-outdoor leisure centre of the Great Pool complex. The Great Pool (Figure 49) - a large-scale Roman style swimming pool - was to be installed on the North axis in order to bring 'urban life' into the out-of-proportion monumental plan. The Pool was designed to be the largest open-air swimming pool in the world, surrounded by a large number of changing rooms, summer terraces and coffee houses, which was to form a sport and leisure centre for the city. To fill such a large-scale swimming pool, a research group – the

German Ground Mechanic Research Centre (*Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft für Bodenmechanik*) was appointed to investigate the use of underground water in combination with filtered water from the River Spree.³⁵⁶ In the centre of the west bank of the Great Pool was the Berlin City Hall (Figure 50) designed by German Bestelmeyer, the respected Munich architect. A complete symmetrical design with two high towers created a sense of solemnity and a focal point for the North axis. This City Hall provided a balance between the North Railway Station (designed in 1941) and the vast dome of the Great Hall. The inner side of the Dome was to be coffered like the Pantheon in Rome, so that the interior of the Great Hall would be in the Roman Imperial style. The Police Headquarters (*Polizeipräsidium*) and the Supreme Command of Marines (Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine), both designed by Paul Bonatz and Kurt Dübbers, were to be allocated at the bank of the Great Pool alongside the City Hall. For the High Command of Marine two alternative designs were produced by Hans Freese, and by Paul Bonatz and Kurt Dübbers. Bonatz, also an eminent architect at the time, eventually undertook the major designs of the Great Pool complex: the High Command of Marines and the Police Headquarters. Combining the use of stone, coffered groin vaults, Greek Doric columns, Romanesque tympanums and the grand stairs in the long massive entrance hall, the effect was monumental and, above all, uncanny. The planning of the whole north complex was largely complete by 1940. A site plan dated 25th September 1940 shows the layout and the architects to whom each building had been assigned.³⁵⁷ (See Document 2 attached at the back of the thesis)

³⁵⁶ Bundesarchiv, R4606/1421, 21 December 1939.

³⁵⁷ Bundesarchiv (Plan section), KS 3575 (2).

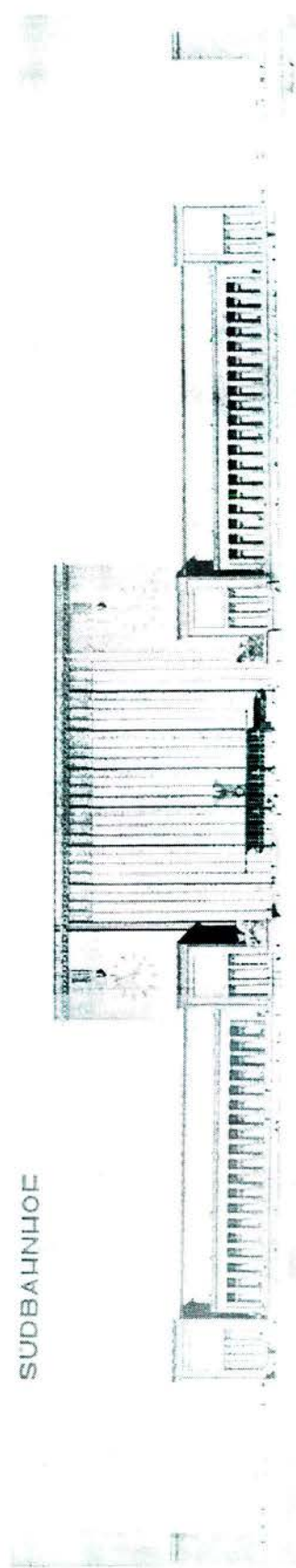


Figure 51 Emil Kleinschmidt, South Railway Station, 1939. (Landesarchiv, Berlin, Pr. Br. Rep. 107)

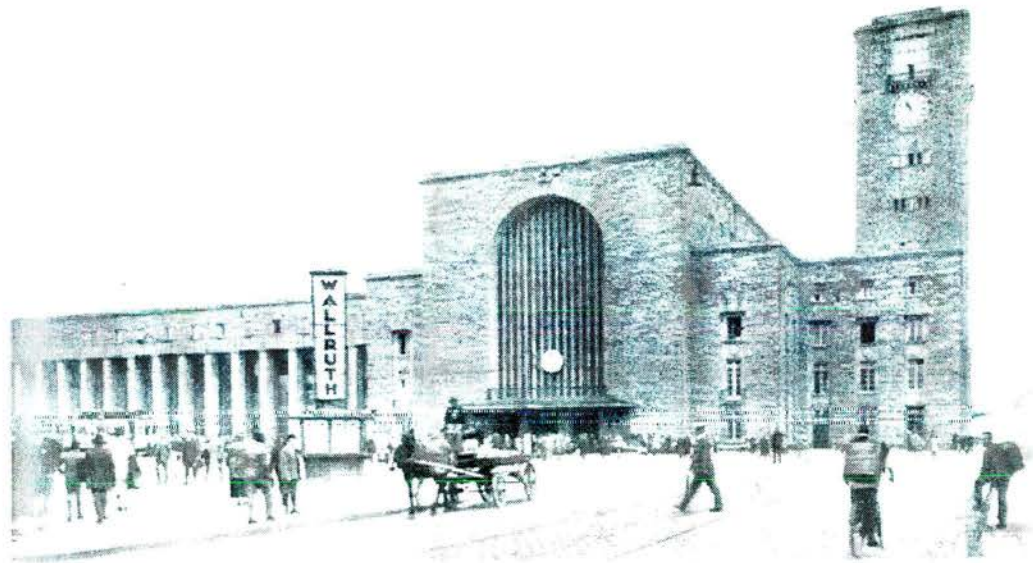


Figure 52 Paul Bonatz and F. E. Scholer, Stuttgart Railway Station, 1911-28. (Barbara Miller Lane, *National Romanticism and Modern Architecture*, 2000, 237)

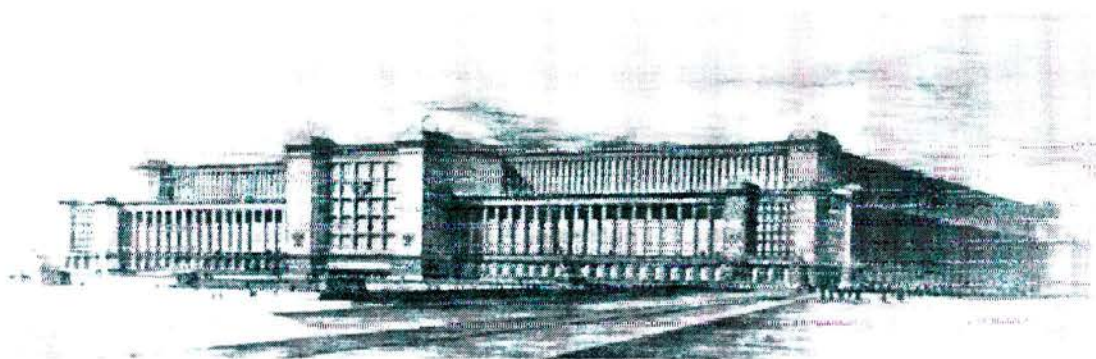


Figure 53 Albert Speer, South Railway Station, 1940. (Schäche and Reichhardt, 140)

The South Railway Station project was first designed by Emil Kleinschmidt (Figure 51) between 1938 and 1939. Kleinschmidt's design resembled Paul Bonatz and F. E. Scholer's Stuttgart Railway Station (Figure 52)³⁵⁸ in its use of Romanesque arches, heavy stones and the formal simplicity. Speer was unsatisfied with drawings submitted by Kleinschmidt and subsequently assumed responsibility himself to produce a design (Figure 53). To the south of the Triumphal Arch, the building was directly to face onto the 1,000 metres long by 330 metres wide Railway Station

³⁵⁸ The Stuttgart Railway station, despite a touch of its neo-Romanesque style, was regarded throughout the 1920s as an important example of modern architecture, for its 'asymmetrical massing and formal simplicity,' and 'has continued to be viewed by scholars as a forerunner of modernism.' Barbara Miller Lane, *National Romanticism and Modern Architecture: The search for a new monumental architecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 259-260.

Square that formed the southern climax of the central North-South Axis. It was intended as a major terminal for visitors to visit the capital of the Reich. The façade of the main entrance hall was to be covered with glazing with massive colonnades at both wings. At the upper level, another pair of colonnades set back from the façade would form the cubic volume of the entire building. The role and cultural implications of the South Railway Station project in the Greater Berlin Plan need to be examined within its social, political and economic contexts. Focal points and city 'crowns' like the monumental and pseudo-religious Great Dome and the modern and high-tech South Railway Station were designed to support the Third Reich's attempt to establish its capital as the metropolis of the modern world.

Speer's design for the South Railway Station was intended to be multiple-function development, commercially, politically and culturally. The values represented by the architecture of the South Railway Station had featured prominently in international architectural debate in the first half of the twentieth century. The style, interior design and rail track arrangement of this project bore close resemblance to railway stations designed and built internationally in the same period, e.g. Grand Central Station in New York (1903-13) and the Central Station, Milan (1931). Speer described the project of the South Railway Station as his most satisfying concept. Located at the southern end of Hitler's grand boulevard, the station would have 'offset the great blocks of stone dominating the rest of the avenue' with 'its steel ribbing showing through sheathings of copper and glass'. Four levels of traffic circulation were to be linked by escalators and elevators and were 'to surpass New York's Grand Central Station in size.'³⁵⁹ This was to help to transform Berlin into a city whose economy would be supported by a modern and efficient infrastructure. The South Railway Station, along with the North Railway Station, was to replace several small railway stations and to reorganise the entire railroad network in Berlin. This rail network was to be complemented by suburban railroads and by the Ringbahn.

³⁵⁹ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 198.

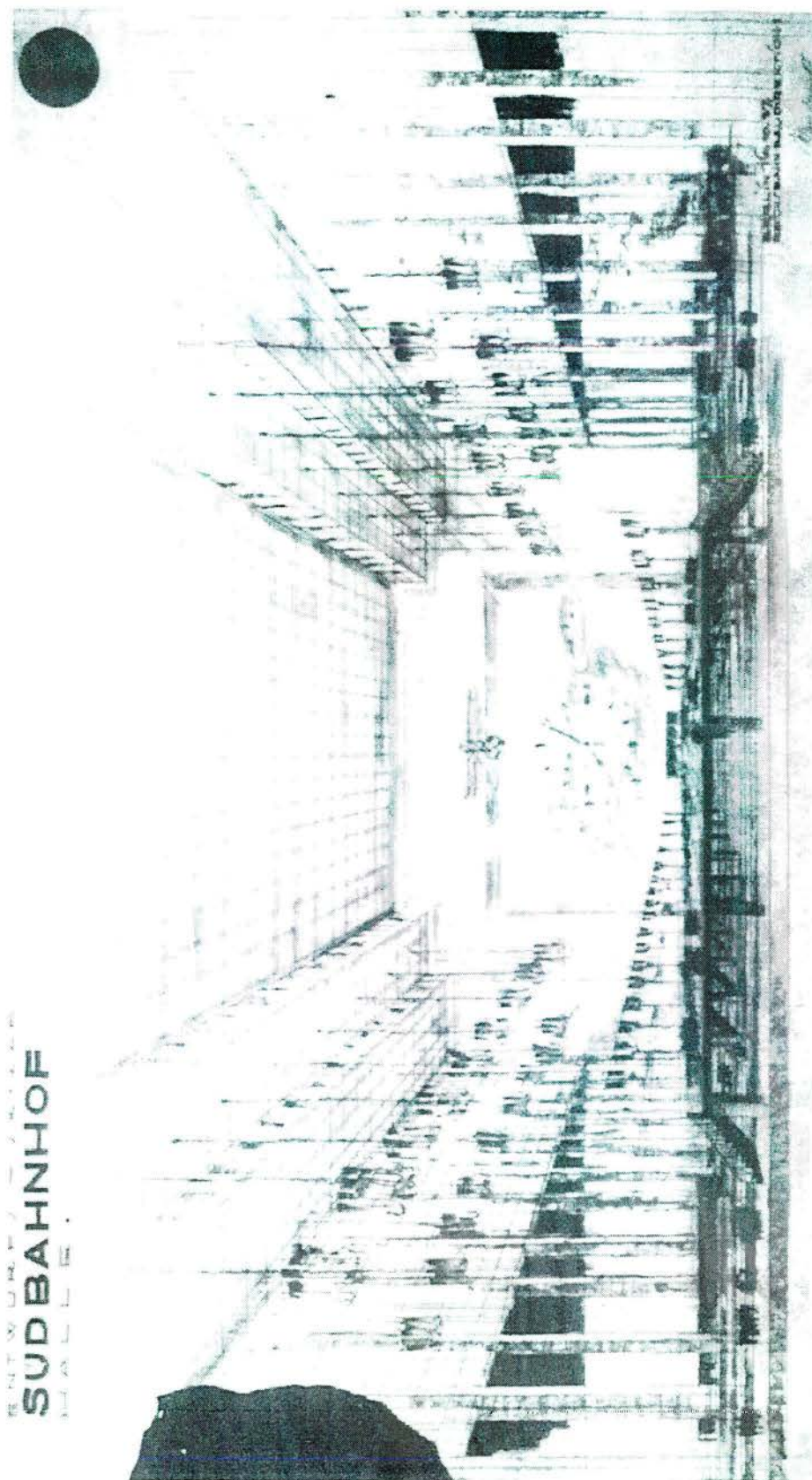


Figure 54 Interior of the South Railway Station, 16.10.1937. (Landesarchiv, Berlin, Pr. Br. Rep. 107, 63)

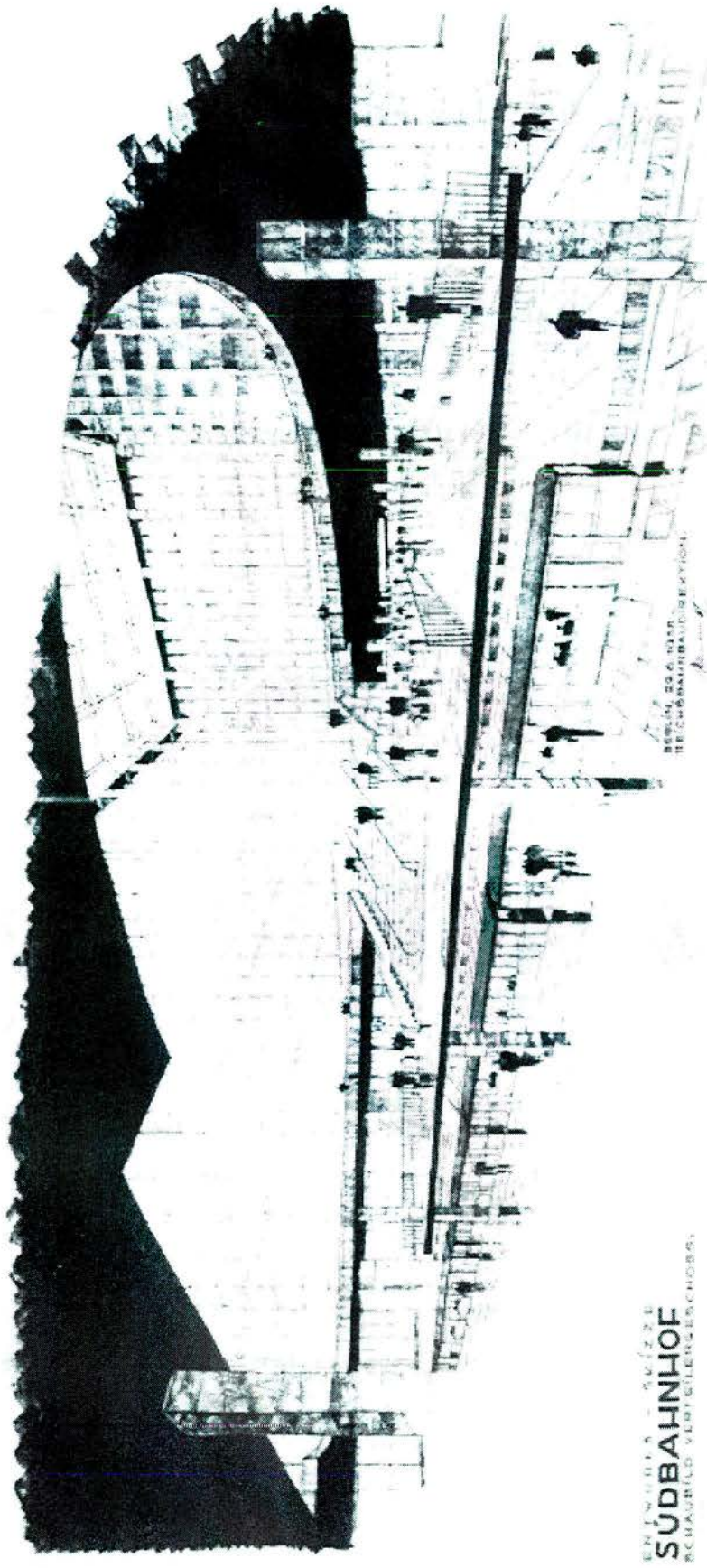


Figure 55 Interior of the South Railway Station, 29.6.1938. (Landesarchiv, Berlin, Pr. Br. Rep. 107, 187)

Julius Posener once argued that modern technology had no place in National Socialist ideology. Their aim of National Socialism was ‘to *replace* building technology with craftsmanship’, and ‘to push the old crafts techniques to inconceivable dimensions and thus declare modern technology to be redundant.’³⁶⁰ However, the projects of the North and the South Railway Stations proved this statement to be incorrect. The mobility and efficiency these designs intended to create for the Greater Berlin had employed the most advanced technology available to Speer and the GBI in the 1930s and the 40s. Although National Socialist architects disguised the modern construction of their architecture with Neo-classical façades, this was not the case with all National Socialist architecture. Their designs for industrial factories, department stores, housing, airport, train sheds and railway stations were mostly modern in concept.

The attraction of Neoclassicism for totalitarian regimes lies in its ability to forge an impression of nobility, wealth, stability and permanence. In the case of National Socialism it was important to achieve the imperial splendour and to be the forefront of modernisation at the same time. The Greater Berlin project created the height of monumentality, which is unique in every sense. This extreme form of monumentality and the false evaluation of architectural values were abandoned by the National Socialists themselves at the later stage of the Third Reich reign. Hitler’s invasion of neighbouring countries and the outbreak of the Second World War put the monumental Berlin project on hold. The diversion of available financial and human resources to the war made the already difficult task of supplying and distributing massive quantities of building materials to a monumental project impossible.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ Julius Posener, *Hans Poelzig: Reflections on His Life and Work* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), 252-3.

³⁶¹ Paul Jaskot, ‘Building in Berlin during the war,’ in *The Architecture of Oppression*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 94-103.

5 Private Commissions and Monumental Constructions on the North-South Axis

5.1 Industries and the Third Reich

Karl Scheffler pointed out in *Moderne Baukunst* in 1908 the importance of combining commercial power with architectural innovation. The functional requirements of office buildings for the private sector faced architects with an entirely new design challenge. On the one hand, commercial architecture had to be 'efficient in a bureaucratic and rational sense';³⁶² on the other, it had to celebrate and support the commercial life style of the fast growing metropolis.

The Great Depression in Germany in the inter-war years caused various segments of the middle classes to unite in their common political interest. It not only created a unified class-consciousness, it also provided the basic elements for economic reform. None of the political parties seeking the support of the middle class could discount this phenomenon.³⁶³ Individuals in Germany were experiencing a sense of vulnerability far more acute than at any other time in history. The need to establish a community according to shared interests and a common sense of identity to defend and reinforce their social existence was particularly apparent among the bourgeoisie. This led to the establishment of business associations, whose interests and status were based on the widespread 'anti-labour' attitude of the middle class. In the 1920s, people from other social classes also gathered to form guilds in order to protect their own interests. After the collapse of the German monarchy and defeat in the First World War, the majority of the middle class voted for democratic parties. When the hyperinflation of the early 1920s destroyed the savings of the urban middle class and undermined the economic order, the majority of middle class votes went to conservative parties antagonistic to the Weimar Republic. The National Socialists exploited the situation in which a middle class had become united through anti-capitalist, anti-labour and anti-democratic sentiments, and through its newly found class ideology. 'For the majority of the German upper and middle classes, democracy

³⁶² Fritz Neumeier, 'Iron and Stone: the Architecture of the *Großstadt*,' in *Otto Wagner: Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity*, edited by Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: Getty Centre, 1993), 117-8.

³⁶³ Arthur Schweitzer, *Big Business in the Third Reich* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 81.

was merely one political credo, one mode of government among many, to be chosen according to its practical usefulness in a specific situation.³⁶⁴ Nazi political ideology attracted a middle class that supported neither Capitalism, nor Marxism. National Socialism adopted the strategy that ‘deliberately placed itself between right and left, East and West.’³⁶⁵ Hitler’s desire was to integrate apolitical Germans into the political process and in turn to become political tokens for ‘democracy’. It was, in today’s term, a ‘third way’ that helped Nazism to convince the politically indifferent Germans that their policies alone could offer salvation for a country whose economy was deeply in turmoil.

After the National Socialist party’s success in the election in September 1930, leaders of major industries in Germany started to view the NSDAP (*Die Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, established in February 1920), in a more positive light. Hitler’s banker – Hjalmar H. G. Schacht publicly expressed his admiration for NSDAP’s vitality and commented that no other party could rule the country against ‘the will of the nearly six and a half million Germans who had cast their ballots for the Nazis.’³⁶⁶ In a move to gain popular support, National Socialist politicians called for a dramatic increase in income tax on the wealthy, and reduced taxes on low incomes. Additionally, there was more criticism of big business for the threat it posed to smaller businesses and tradesmen. Despite this, big business in the Third Reich remained privileged and powerful. The relationship between business and the regime was always conditional and changeable, but it operated on a mutually satisfactory basis. Hitler provided business the ‘political conditions necessary for survival, growth and for domination of the European economy.’³⁶⁷ Industry and business created employment for the party. Additionally, the output of modern industry was essential to Hitler’s ambitious plans for war.

In the final months of 1932, the financial alliance between big business and the National Socialist party became significant.³⁶⁸ The commitment of German industry

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 77.

³⁶⁵ Saul Friedlander, *Reflections on Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1993), 68.

³⁶⁶ Henry Ashby Turner, *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 144.

³⁶⁷ John Gillingham, *Industry and Politics in the Third Reich: Ruhr coal, Hitler and Europe* (London: Methuen, 1985), 32.

³⁶⁸ Schweitzer, 102.

helped Hitler to fulfil his overweening ambition. Attempts at solving the Great Depression through democratic government were seen by many to have failed by the early 1930s. The middle class and industry in general turned to establish direct contacts with high-ranking members of the National Socialist party. In 1932, for instance, I. G. Farben arranged a meeting in Berlin with Hitler through Professor Haushofer and Rudolf Hess. The purpose was to clarify the firm's financial interest and to determine their position in relation to the National Socialist Party. Hitler guaranteed that his government would give positive encouragement and support to I. G. Farben in producing synthetic gasoline. Thus the establishment of Hitler's government would promote I. G. Farben's economic interest.³⁶⁹ In February 1933 a meeting of industrialists with Hitler and Hermann Göring, arranged by Hjalmar Schacht, decided to finance the Nazis in the election in March 1933. Later private companies such as I. G. Farben, Krupp AG and the United Steel Works of Germany all played active roles in various ambitious plans to establish a strong political and economic network. Karl Krauch, the director of the I. G. Farben - the model Nazi corporation - helped to design the Four Year Plan and contributed substantially to it. It produced more than half of the petroleum consumed in the Third Reich by 1941 and was the major supplier to the Luftwaffe. The company coordinated with Göring, who later became the business chief at the National Socialist Party and eventually one of 'Europe's Europe's greatest and most ostentatious multi-millionaire business magnates'.³⁷⁰ I. G. Farben subsequently expanded between 1933 and 1945 to become the most dominant and influential corporation in the Third Reich.³⁷¹

According to Arthur Schweitzer, three different models of private capitalism combined to influence the Nazi regime. Firstly, private business used its power to force the state to adopt its policies and to achieve private economic goals. Secondly, political groups, e.g. the party, the army and the bureaucracy, defined political goals for the state to pursue. Economic resources were called upon to realize non-economic goals. Finally, the private appropriation of the resources of the state by military,

³⁶⁹ Ibid..

³⁷⁰ Allan Merson, 'The Nazism and Monopoly Capital'. The paper was originally read in the History course of the Communist University in 1972. Reprinted from *Our History*, no. 57 (Summer, 1973). Available at: <http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv6n2/nazis.htm> [20/2/2004].

³⁷¹ Gillingham, 163.

political or economic groups led to political dictatorship.³⁷² Political change and uncertainty meant economic instability. Most big industries were uneasy about the inconsistent and unregulated economic policies of the NSDAP as it grew stronger in the first half of 1932. I. G. Farben, for instance, was largely concerned about the incoherence of National Socialist economic policy. In the Weimar Republic the Brüning cabinet had extended protection to synthetic gasoline against imports from abroad. This had greatly increased the firm's returns from its investments in this line of production. It had been reasonably successful during the Great Depression when it had exported half its output. It was later proved that domestic synthetic gasoline production cost far more than importing it. I. G. Farben had no choice but to abandon its vast investment in this technology with great loss.

The possibility of the NSDAP assuming power caused much anxiety to the leadership of I. G. Farben. The firm had long been under fire from the Party and was singled out as the major example, among many large corporate companies in Germany, of 'profiteering by stockholders at the expenses of the general welfare' and as a tool of 'money-mighty Jews'. From then onwards, I. G. Farben was dogged by anti-Semitic attacks from the National Socialist Party. This however was brought to a halt in 1932 after a meeting between Bütefisch and Gattineau of I. G. Farben and officials and representatives of the National Socialist Party. Hitler guaranteed that if the NSDAP came to power, the National Socialist press would cease criticism of I. G. Farben's hydrogenation project and would continue the protective tariff on petroleum since the production of synthetic gasoline would fit ideally into Hitler's plans to extend car ownership and use, and to construct an extensive autobahn network.³⁷³

National Socialism started as an ideology of the middle classes, of crafts and trades, of independent professions and of corporations. By 1934 the development of the corporate interests of industrialists and financiers had begun to challenge Hitler's imperialist appetite.³⁷⁴ In addition, industries in Germany in the late 1930s were flourishing and sought every opportunity to promote themselves in the public

³⁷² Schweitzer, 412.

³⁷³ Turner, 248-9.

³⁷⁴ Leon Krier, 'An Architecture of Desire' *Architectural Design* 56, No. 4 (1986): 34.

arena.³⁷⁵ They sought involvement in government construction projects. The grand avenue in the Greater Berlin project was not to be fully aligned with government buildings in a lifeless city centre. Two-thirds of the length of the street was to be reserved for private buildings in a monumental scale. Various governmental agencies attempted to displace these private business buildings. They were dissuaded by Speer and by the GBI, with Hitler's support.³⁷⁶ The quest for monumentality in National Socialist architecture was to demonstrate historical continuity with Bismarck's Prussian State and (unintentionally) with the Weimar Republic. The National Socialist 'will to triumph'³⁷⁷ was to be demonstrated both in governmental and in industrial and commercial buildings. The stated ambition was to present Germany 'as concerned with method, clarity of mind, technique, seriousness and commitment to work, far from its experiences of power, defeat, the unfair Treaty of Versailles, the disintegration of the putsch period and inflation.'³⁷⁸ The investment and involvement of private industries in the Greater Berlin project were essential in forming a strong economy in the Third Reich. However, most of the private industries involved did not commit themselves whole-heartedly to their building contracts with the GBI. After the outbreak of the war, financial difficulties and the continuous disruption of work in factories meant that budgets for the construction of new offices had to be put on hold. Peter Behrens, for instance, the architect of the AEG Administration Building – the most developed private project on the North-South Axis – did not receive payment from the AEG until Speer wrote an official letter to the company.³⁷⁹ The problem had been that the AEG board for the new Administrative Building claimed that the architects would receive their payment only on completion of the project. The war however prevented the project being completed. But Behrens' design work had long been completed.

³⁷⁵ Francesco Dal Co and Sergio Polano, 'Interview with Albert Speer' *Oppositions*, No. 12 (Spring, 1978): 48-49.

³⁷⁶ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, (London: Phoenix, 1997; original edition, 1970), 98.

³⁷⁷ This was also articulated in the party propaganda movie - *Triumph of the Will* - for the Olympic Games in 1936, directed by Leni Riefenstahl.

³⁷⁸ Franco Borsi, *The Monumental Era, European architecture and design 1929-1939* (London: Lund Humphries, 1987), 107-8.

³⁷⁹ Bundesarchiv, R4606/2562.

Like their approach to history and culture, Speer and Hitler interpreted art and architecture superficially.³⁸⁰ Although National Socialist architecture employed a variety of local and international architectural styles, Speer and his GBI architects fail to develop a solid and consistent theoretical basis, despite the fact that there was no shortage of art propaganda. Speer lacked the intellectual sophistication to conduct theoretical discussions. Neither conventional Beaux-Arts classical doctrines nor modern experimental approaches played any substantial role in National Socialist architectural practice. GBI architecture benefited from the architectural achievements of previous eras and depended largely on experienced architects who had had major success before working for the GBI. Function and formalistic concerns constituted major parts of National Socialist architecture. This was particularly distinctive in the different styles employed by the GBI for the public administration buildings and industrial buildings. Whereas the public buildings were austere, focusing on providing functional office spaces, industrial factories were built in a modern functional manner where the space was designed to guarantee the highest productivity. Hitler and Speer both believed architectural styles should be chosen according to the purpose of the building. In Speer's memoirs, he recalled Hitler's remark on modern steel and glass architecture:

Do you see this façade more than three hundred metres long? How fine the proportions are. What you have here are different requirements from those governing a Party forum. There our technical solution is the appropriate thing. But if one of these so-called modern architects comes along and wants to build housing projects or town halls in the factory style, then I say, he doesn't understand a thing. That isn't modern, it's tasteless, and violates the eternal laws of architecture besides. Light, air, and efficiency belong to a place of work; in a town hall I require

³⁸⁰ Speer admitted frankly that Hitler and he did not have a diverse understanding of architecture. Even the stylistic issue was considered at an external superficial level. Speer wrote later in 1952: 'The fact that his - and my - architecture operated with traditional stylistic elements, with columns, arcades, cornices, pilasters, which were hardly compatible with the caterpillar treads of armoured vehicles, or with cannon barrels and gun carriages, seemed to trouble him no more than it does the Russians today. Because he saw only outward effects, he thought in entirely eclectic terms and had no scruples about placing domes beside motors and arcades beside mortars.' In Speer, *Spandau: the Secret Diaries*, (London: Collins, 1977; original, 1975, first English, 1976), 206.

dignity, and in a residence a sense of shelter that arms me for the harshness of life's struggle. Just imagine a Christmas tree in front of a wall of glass. Impossible! Here, as elsewhere, we must consider the variety of life.³⁸¹

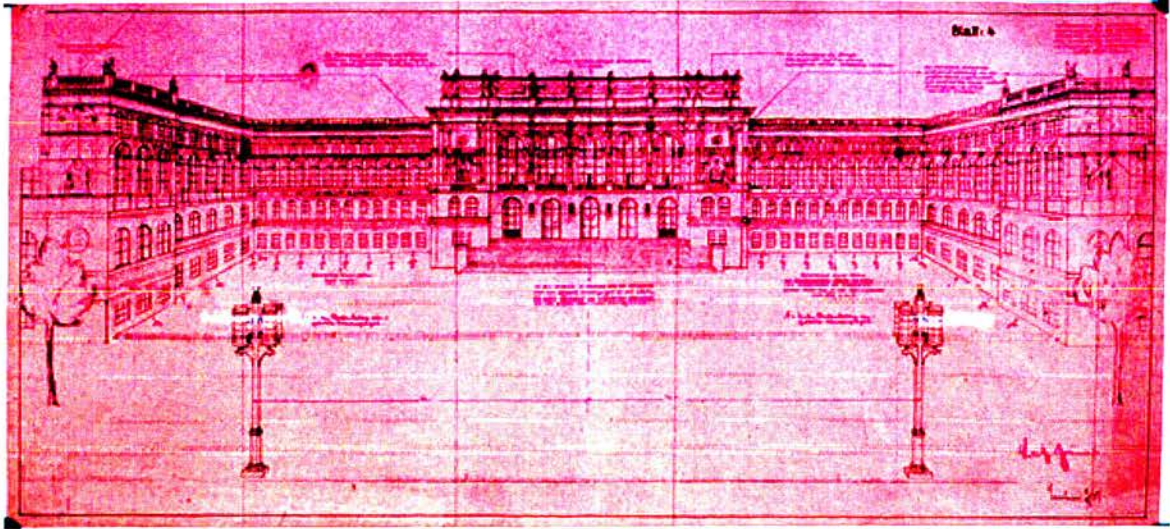


Figure 56 A GBI produced drawing showing the plan for light installation in a Neo-classical style building. Despite the claims that modern technology must be applied to modern style buildings, this plan shows that the GBI employed modern lighting technology to illuminate statues and classical architectural features. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3570)

Modern technology was admirable so long as it was applied to specifically modern typologies and served modern functionality. This also led to the idea that perceived architectural styles as a collection of different costumes in the wardrobe that could be selected and worn to suit different occasions. Architectural styles and forms were perceived as being capable of application according to function and occasion. Neo-classicism was seen as a black-tie costume for the most representative buildings in the capital. Modern cubic buildings with transparent glass were workers' uniforms demanding practicality and promoting efficiency. (This corresponded closely to the way in which international modernist architecture developed.) This flexibility in adopting architectural styles was not appreciated by the modernists in the 1930s, but it appeared to differ little from Posener's interpretation of Schinkel's idea that one could choose to apply Roman arches, Greek colonnades, or the Gothic church style to a well-structured building according to requirements.³⁸² Certainly Speer's

³⁸¹ Speer, *Spandau*, 191 (my boldface).

³⁸² Julius Posener, "Schinkel's Eclecticism and "the Architectural"" in *Architectural Design*, vol. 53 (11/12, 1983): 37.

technocratic understanding of architecture cannot be compared to that of Schinkel, who created great architecture with a profound knowledge and comprehension of classical and Greek architecture. It is worthwhile noting that Speer himself seldom referred to Schinkel directly in the discussion of architectural heritage and styles.

Speer's architectural policy for the use of National Socialist buildings was clearly hierarchical. The Prussian Classicism and the Roman Imperial style were applied to high-rank party buildings, e.g. the Reich Chancellery and the Great Hall; the Romanesque style for the SS constructions, e.g. party buildings in Ordensburg and Olympia Stadium; the *Rohbau* functionalism³⁸³ for official buildings, e.g. the Air Force Ministry and major administrative buildings in the Greater Berlin plan; and modernist functionality and technology for industrial factories and military barracks, e.g. the Opel Factory Brandenburg and the Marine's Barracks in Berlin plan. In a propaganda publication in 1940, the theme of the GBI's campaign for '*Schönheit der Arbeit*' was presented. The idea was to create a workspace that took responsibility for the health of every German worker by providing better working conditions and surrounding areas both architecturally and environmentally. Herbert Steinwarz asserted that the 7 million people unemployed in the years before the National Socialists came to power was a consequence of the failure of governments of the time to provide efficient, healthy and beautiful working spaces for the workers. The fundamental requirements of order and hygiene (*Ordnung und Sauberkeit*), and of transparency and clarity (*Übersicht und Klarheit*) had been overlooked. The guidelines for the construction of new workspaces were set out forward by the '*Schönheit der Arbeit*' office:

1. *Zweckmäßiges, solides, übersichtliches und wirtschaftliches Bauen,*
2. *Einsatz aller technischen Erkenntnisse auf dem Gesamtgebiet der technischen Hygiene und*
3. *Beachtung der baulichen Gestaltung der Nebenanlagen im Betrieb.*³⁸⁴

The need to construct functional, sturdy, transparent and economic buildings with

³⁸³ This is translated as 'carcass functionalism', see Iain Boyd Whyte, 'Reflections on a polished floor: Ben Wilkins and the Reichskanzlei of Albert Speer' in *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall, 1998): 54-63.

³⁸⁴ Herbert Steinwarz, 'Schönheit der Arbeit,' *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich*, (February 1940): 19.

modern standards of hygiene was highlighted. Steinwarz stated further that the improvement of the work environment was important since that was where workers spent most of their waking hours. This project resulted in the construction of several thousand changing rooms, bathrooms, washrooms, kitchens and community rooms in community residences to reinforce the sense of collectivity. Up to 1939 more than one million Reich marks were spent on this project, either to build new, or rebuild existing work places throughout Germany. The ethic behind the '*Schönheit der Arbeit*' was to promote a better working environment in order to incorporate workers into the demands of efficient production lines. Modern technology and ideas of well-being such as light, hygiene and order were in keeping with National Socialist ideology. Concerns for maximising the technology available for lighting could be seen in projects such as Zeppelfeld in the Nuremberg Rally Ground, the East-West Axis and key official buildings.

5.2 Efficiency and bureaucracy - AEG Administration Building

The design of the AEG Administration Building on the grand axis demonstrated modern concerns with efficiency in conjunction with bureaucracy in National Socialist architecture. Following the precedent of the St. Petersburg Embassy, 1910-12, Behrens sought in the AEG Administration Building on the North-South axis to reconcile the historical and formal language of Prussian Classicism with twentieth century technology and the demands of mid-twentieth century commerce. This project also bore a great resemblance to the Mannesmann Administration Building, Düsseldorf (1911-12; Figure 57) in terms of both building type and function, making it a critical point of reference in the discussion of his new design for the Berlin axis. The apparent axial division and interior framework construction permitted flexible, functional, and well-lit workspaces in the Mannesmann building.³⁸⁵ It was highly influential as an innovative design for buildings of this type. In Behrens' address at the dedication of the main office building of Mannesmann on the 10th December 1912, he gave his thoughts on the requirements for a good and successful modern industrial administrative building. Not only should the working environment provide

³⁸⁵ Modernist architectural concepts were presented and emphasised in the official party journal. See Heinrich Wolff, 'Der Neubau des Hauptverwaltungsgebäudes der AEG. in Berlin: Architekt Peter Behrens.' in *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich* (October 1939): 453.

the maximum convenience for the employees, it should also be flexible with regard to the arrangement of space, the requirements of efficient movement within the building, and should also be well-lit:

The plan shows how all the offices lie on the outside of the building and are without exception lighted by the same arrangement of windows. For that reason this building is probably at present ... one of the brightest and best lighted office buildings in existence.³⁸⁶

Behrens also discussed issues central to the modernist architectural debate in Europe, such as heating, sound insulation, communication, and the leisure and health of employees. Due to the success of his pre-war industrial projects the rationality and modernist characteristics in Behrens' work survived the attacks of the extreme right in the Third Reich and was accepted by National Socialist architectural propagandists.



Figure 57 Peter Behrens, Mannesmann Department Store, Düsseldorf, 1911-12. (Stanford Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the Twentieth Century*, 2000, 195)

³⁸⁶Behrens's address, 'Zur Erinnerung an die Einweihung des Verwaltungsgebäudes der Mannesmannröhren-Werke in Düsseldorf. 10. Dezember 1912' (Düsseldorf: Mannesmann, 1913) quoted and translated in Stanford Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), 194-200.

In January 1938 the district authority called for the demolition of the old Administrative building of the AEG on Alexander Ufer and Friedrich Karl-Ufer, which were on the planned North Axis of the Great Berlin Project. Concerned about the predictable inconvenience and disruption, the AEG central office filed a long letter to Speer to complain about the difficulties they envisaged. The estimated cost of the whole scheme, which included selling the old site, buying new land, commissioning a new building project, and moving premises, was cited. The promised compensation from the local authority was valued at not more than six to seven million Reich Marks. But the purchase of the new 25,000 square metres of land would alone cost six and half a million RM, not to mention the further expenses arising from constructing the new building and its relocation.³⁸⁷ The AEG concluded by stressing the importance to the German economy of its export trade and its considerable involvement with the Four Year Plan, announced in 1936. If the problems listed were not solved, the AEG hinted that it would not be able to continue production to meet demand, both for the domestic and overseas markets. As a consequence the AEG strongly urged the GBI office to permit it to stay in the old administrative office until the new building on the main Axis had been completed.

Technical difficulties were encountered. Firstly, the authorities in charge of the demolition programme were local councils who were not directly accountable to the GBI. To reach agreement would mean a long and complex bureaucratic process between different agencies, at both national and local level. Secondly, Speer and his office had an ambitious timetable to follow. Demolition of the whole area affected by the North-South axis started in mid-1938. Before actual construction of the new projects began, the *Berliner Beobachter* announced that major work sites were to be opened on 14th June 1938 and it informed citizens of the inevitable inconvenience that would follow. Everywhere in Berlin, from north to south, from east to west, there would be both demolition and construction as new underground, Autobahn ring roads, memorials and other major building projects went ahead.³⁸⁸ Construction work on different parts of the plan was equally urgent in order to deliver Speer's

³⁸⁷ Bundesarchiv, R4606/2562. A letter from the AEG central office was sent to the GBI on 27 January 1938.

³⁸⁸ *Berliner Beobachter*, issue 154, 3. June 1938.

exaggerated promises. No delay caused by individual projects, such as the AEG case, was to be tolerated.

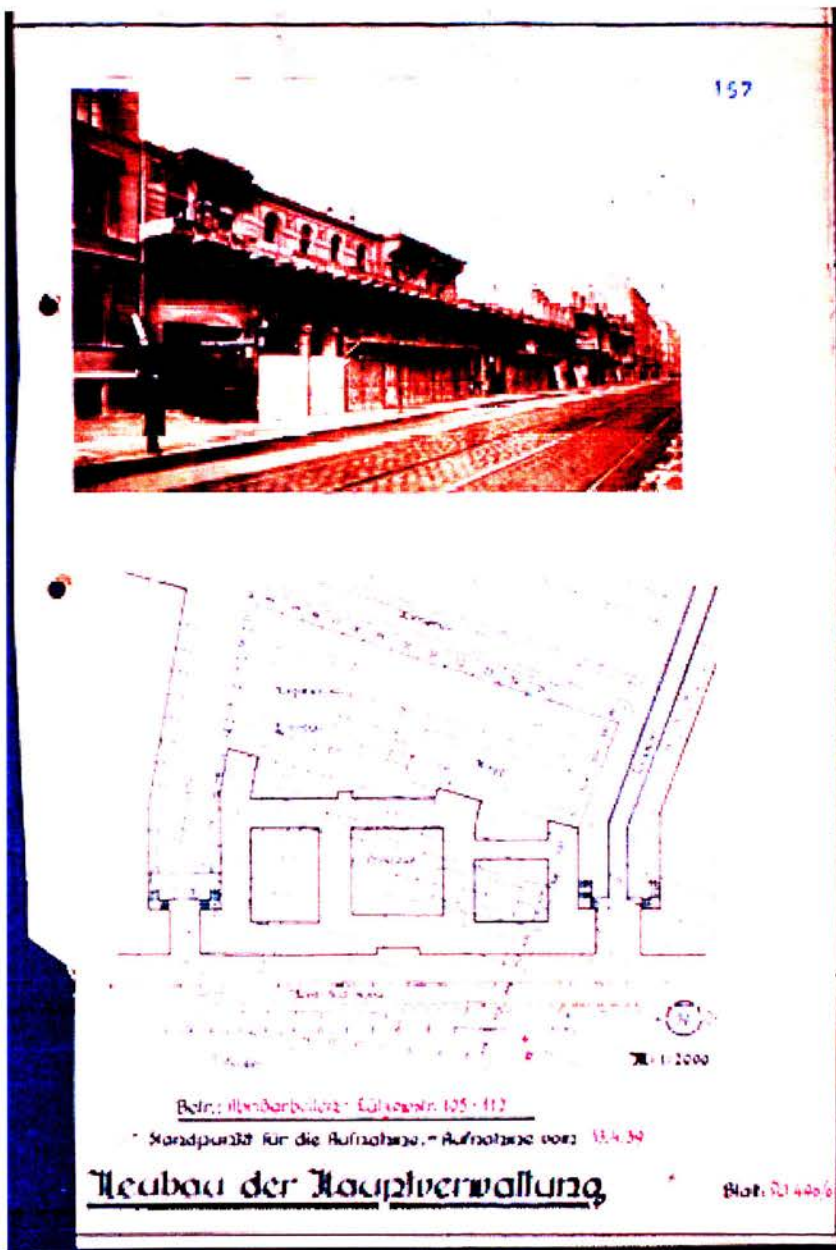


Figure 58 A photograph showing the demolition on the chosen site for the AEG Administration Building on the North-South Axis. (Bundesarchiv, R4606/2562)

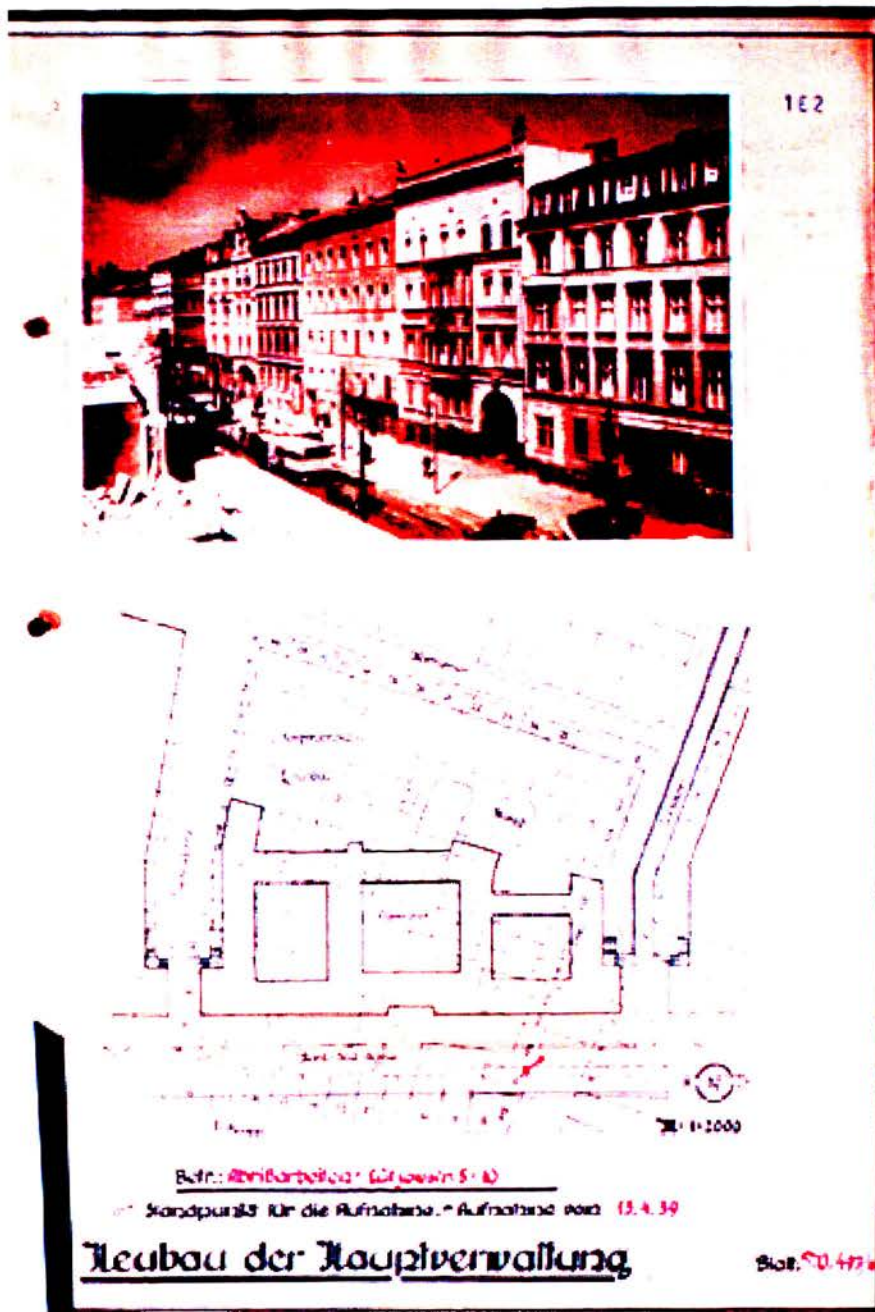


Figure 59 Record of the demolition on the chosen site for the AEG Administration Building on the North-South Axis. (Bundesarchiv, R4606/2562)

Georg Simmel in *The Metropolis and Mental Life* noted that efficiency, punctuality, calculability and exactness were elements of modernity that could already be observed in the metropolitan Berlin of 1913. After two decades of ‘progress’ and in the pursuit of modernity, the National Socialist regime was now creating extreme circumstances that exploited the idea of modernity to the limit.

Inevitably, the outcome was clashes between concerns for the individual, for humanity and for the organic development of social life on the one hand, and the interest of machine driven efficiency and calculable social progress on the other.³⁸⁹ Under the pressure of Hitler's unrealistic ambition to build 'Germania', Speer had to prove that his GBI office could achieve the efficiency others could not through completing the most monumental projects in the shortest possible time, in accordance with perhaps unachievable deadlines set for each part of the construction in the Greater Berlin Plan.

Subsequently the GBI and the AEG reached a compromise regarding the timetable for demolition and construction. Speer avoided confrontation over the financial implications by forwarding them to the Financial Ministry. The damage and loss to AEG was immense; nonetheless, they were allowed to negotiate over the area of building land they were to purchase and the scale of the project they intended to build. The ultimate agreement was a compromise between Speer and the AEG. Speer and the GBI appeared to be more than ready to negotiate and compromise in their dealings over the establishment of private projects in the Greater Berlin Plan. This can be seen in other projects discussed later in this chapter, e.g. the Agfa Administrative building, the Allianz Administrative building and the Grand Hotel project.

In order to obtain more design ideas for the AEG Administrative Building, the GBI and the AEG central office together organised a competition in January 1938.

³⁸⁹ See Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life,' in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. Kurt Wolff (New York: Free Press, 1950), 413.

Für die Projektierung des Neubaues Der Hauptverwaltung. Gegenstand des Wettbewerbes ist ein Projekt für das neue Verwaltungsgebäude der AEG. Es werden Grundriß-, Schnitt- und Ansichtszeichnungen, aus denen die generelle Anordnung hervorgeht, gefordert. Die Zahl der Grundrisse, Schnittzeichnungen, Ansichtszeichnungen und Schaubilder bleibt dem Architekten freigestellt. Die an das Gebäude zu stellenden Anforderungen sind aus nachstehender Beschreibung ersichtlich. Die Projekte sind bis zum 15.6.38 fertiggestellt.³⁹⁰

The AEG announced the competition guideline. There were three main categories: location, exterior features and interior arrangement. The guideline specified details of the exact type of the building the AEG required. This included: the size of the site available, the number of storeys, the height of each storey, the height and width of the façade, the size of offices, the number of rooms required, and the height of the ground floor, down to the details of the type of stone preferred.³⁹¹ Most of the concerns were modern in concept. The guidelines also addressed the particular problems of building in the modern, twentieth century city. For instance, vehicle access was to be made as convenient and efficient as possible, and there was to be an underground station with an exit directly leading to the basement level of the AEG building. This would provide their staff with direct and short connections.³⁹² The aim of the project was to establish a highly efficient, disciplined model that owed much to AEG's experience of standardisation in industrial production. Just as their manufactured goods each had a definite size, pattern, and colour to secure maximum efficiency and quantity control in the production process and in communicating information about their products, the project competition guideline also specified every detail of the planned AEG building.

³⁹⁰ Bundesarchiv, R4606/2562.

³⁹¹ Bundesarchiv, supplement to protocol 28.1.1938.

³⁹² Before designing the South Railway Station, Speer was instructed by Hitler to look at the example of the Grand Central station of New York for inspiration. Albert Speer, *Spandau: the Secret Diaries* (London: Collins, 1977; original, 1975, first English, 1976), 198.

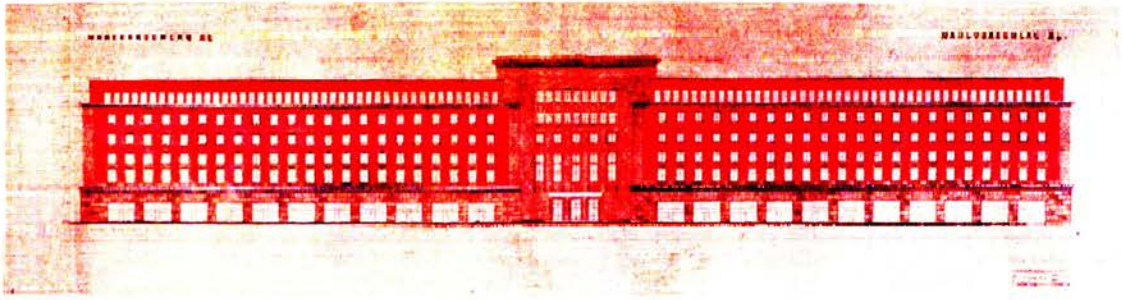


Figure 60 Hans Freese, a design submitted to the AEG Administration Building competition. Speer initially preferred this design to Behrens'. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3735)

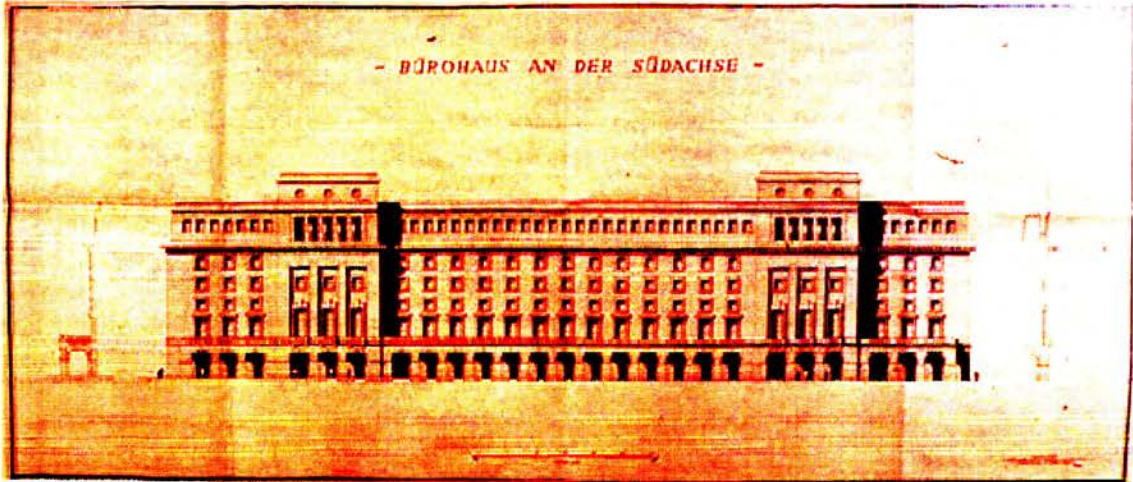


Figure 61 Wach & Rosskotten, design for an office building on the South Axis, dated March 1942. Despite of a different façade composition, the overall level distribution was the same as most private administration buildings. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3735-15)

The list of architects invited to submit designs to the AEG competition included Freese (Figure 60), Reichle, Behrens, Ermisch, and a team of architects, Wach & Rosskotten (Figure 61). The chairman of the board of AEG, Hermann Bücher, was accompanied by Speer to evaluate the drawings hung in the GBI office. Although some of the 15 submissions were judged to be weak, the competition as a whole was considered a success. Speer highlighted the designs by Freese and by Behrens and appeared to favour Freese's scheme.³⁹³ Eventually Speer was persuaded by Behrens' long-term partnership (since 1907) with the AEG and accepted AEG's final decision. Besides, Behrens had managed to secure Speer's support in an episode involving Konrad Nonn before starting this project. Nonn had attacked Behrens for having close associations with 'Communists and Jews,' such as Herwarth Walden, the

³⁹³ 'Vor allem gefällt Herrn Speer der Entwurf Freese, Dresden. Der Entwurf Peter Behrens gefällt wegen des allgemeinen Reliefs der Fassaden, jedoch bemängelt Herr Speer die Detailsbildung der Profile und Gesimse, die zu hölzern zu sein scheinen.' See Bundesarchiv, R46.06.2562, Protocol on 17 June 1938.

director of the Sturm Gallery in Berlin, and had suggested that as a 'Bolshevist', Behrens was not a suitable architect to undertake tasks close to the Führer or to participate in the Greater Berlin Plan.³⁹⁴ Speer, who had respect for Behrens and his previous achievement, saved Behrens from this hostility by pointing out the achievement of his project for the German Embassy in St. Petersburg (1912; Figure 7). This was the first open competition for private administrative buildings on the North-South Axis. The experience and outcome of this event were to be used as precedents to develop other similar projects on the Axis, and especially the designs submitted in this case were later conveniently adapted to other building projects on the axis by the GBI.

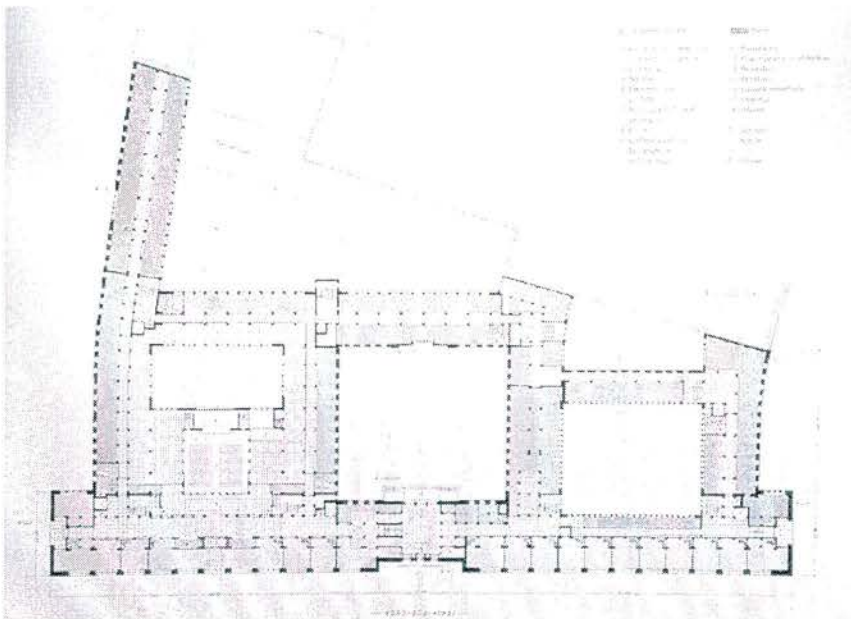


Figure 62 Peter Behrens, Site plan for the AEG Administration Building. (*Die Kunst im Dritten Reich*, 1939)

³⁹⁴ See Alan Windsor, *Peter Behrens: architect and designer* (London: Architectural Press, 1981), 172-3.

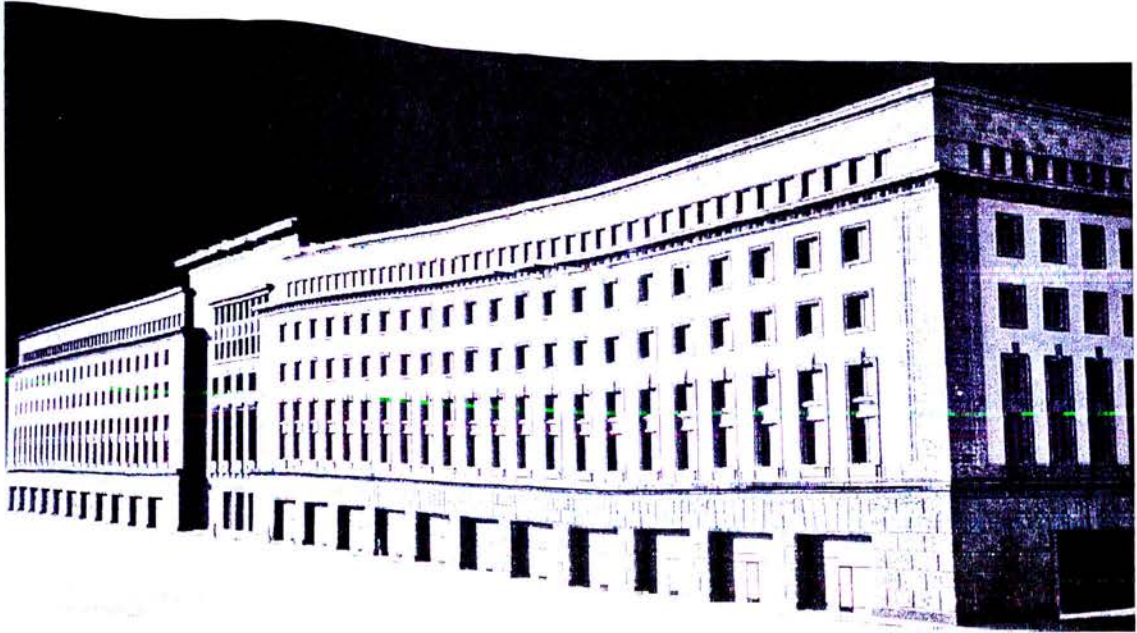


Figure 63 Peter Behrens, model of the AEG Administration Building. (*Die Kunst im Dritten Reich*, 1939)

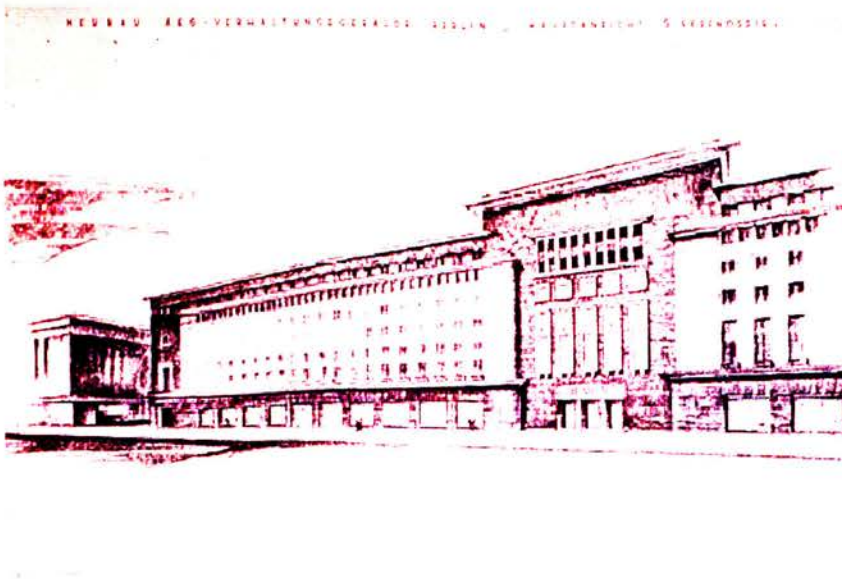


Figure 64 Peter Behrens, A drawing of the AEG Administration Building on the North-South Axis. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3735)

After Behrens won the commission in October 1939, the GBI published an article written by the architect, Heinrich Wolff, to promote Behrens' work in the official art journal, *Die Baukunst*.³⁹⁵ Such publications were common in the

³⁹⁵ Heinrich Wolff, 'Der Neubau des Hauptverwaltungsgebäudes der AEG. in Berlin: Architekt Peter Behrens.' in *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich* (October 1939): 447-54.

development of the major projects for the Greater Berlin Plan between 1937 and 1943. The article portrayed a highly selective version of Behrens' academic and architectural achievements, which included his teaching experience at the Düsseldorf Art School and the Vienna Academy of Art. Behrens' designs, influenced by classicism, were featured prominently, whereas his associations with the *Deutscher Werkbund* and *Jugendstil* were not mentioned at all. His pre-war industrial projects were highly praised for their 'rationality,' a term exploited by both conservative and progressive architects.

Wolff's article in 1939 described the AEG Administrative building as being *modern* in every sense:

*Hier werden in Blöcken von je 220 Meter Länge Bürohausbauten entstehen, die im Erdgeschoß Läden, Gast- und Unterhaltungsstätten aufnehmen. Umfangreiche Beleuchtungsmaßnahmen sollen, wie der Generalbauinspektor bereits in seinen grundsätzlichen Darlegungen über die Neuplanung im Januar 1938 betont hat, zur Lebendigkeit des Straßenbildes beitragen: 'Großzügige Lichtreklame der Privatbauten, Beleuchtung und Anstrahlung der öffentlichen Gebäude werden dem hier zu erwartenden starken Verkehr ein glänzender Rahmen sein, sodaß die Straße ein außergewöhnlich lebendiges, großstädtisches Bild zeigen wird.'*³⁹⁶

The light cast from the new shopping venues would fully illuminate the Main Axis. The aim was to create a lively commercial and entertainment space like the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin today. Modernist concepts such as the use of minimum space to ensure maximum productivity, offices allocate for maximum sunlight and

³⁹⁶ 'Office blocks, each 220 metres long will be constructed here, which at ground level will house shops, restaurants, and recreational facilities. Extensive lighting installations will contribute to the liveliness of the streetscape, as indicated by the General Building Inspector in his general outline of the new planning of January, 1938: "The large-scale illuminated advertisements on the private buildings and the floodlighting of the public buildings will create a shining enclosure for the heavy traffic flow that is expected, so that the street will present an exceptionally lively and metropolitan picture.'" Wolff, 449.



Figure 65 Peter Behrens, drawing of the night view of the AEG Administration Building. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3735)



Figure 66 Hans Freese, drawing of the night view of the AEG Administration Building. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3735)

Spaces reserved for greenery were incorporated in this design. Most of the concerns are valid, even today.³⁹⁷ The office block was to house four thousand working places.

³⁹⁷ See Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the twentieth century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), 200.

a meeting room, numerous sales and exhibition rooms, as well as a spacious lecture hall with stage furnishings. A four-metre difference in floor levels necessitated the installation of ramps and stairs on the two side-wings of the building to facilitate both vehicle and pedestrian traffic. The North-South Axis underground system, which penetrated this complex, was carefully planned with traffic access routes. Hundreds of parking spaces would efficiently relieve potential traffic congestion in the area. In addition to ten staircases, several paternosters and massive lifts were to be installed to provide vertical circulation. The seven-metre high representative main entrance hall would lead visitors to a large central courtyard, which was to host community activities with a capacity for five thousand people. Moreover, a restaurant and an official leisure area were located on the upper floor next to a business meeting room to accommodate 2500 people, complemented by two large roof gardens for staff recreational use.³⁹⁸



Figure 67 Drawing of the façade at the south side the AEG Administration Building. It shows different traffic levels to access the building. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3735)

After Behrens' return from the Vienna Academy to Berlin in 1936 he was appointed to a post in the Prussian Academy of Arts. His involvement in the AEG project on the main Axis was taken as a serious commitment to the regime, and was

³⁹⁸ Wolff, 452.

used for propaganda purpose in *Kunst der Deutschen Reich*. How to achieve a balance between artistic originality and practical restraints was the dilemma of modernist architects working under the political and economic constraints of the Third Reich. Both Georg Krawietz and Tilmann Buddensieg have respectively argued that architecture under the GBI was controlled by such restraints and was therefore an '*unfreie Kunst*' (art without freedom); and architects worked as if wearing a '*Zwangsjacke*' (strait-jacket).³⁹⁹ Having said that, the question remains: do not planners of major cities or metropolises require significant authority in order to maintain the consistency of the whole design?

In contrast to conventional city planners, Speer and the GBI demanded much tighter control over the design of individual elements. Speer as the chief inspector meticulously followed the construction processes in every detail. He took part in experimenting with new construction materials. Alex Scobie suggests that the National Socialist regime banned 'the use of modern materials in state buildings.'⁴⁰⁰ However there is no proof that any particular building material was officially banned in the Third Reich. In the case of the AEG, the first private project designed for the North-South Axis, Speer often discussed details of façade design and was personally involved in design and construction decisions and in experiments with materials, such as the choice of a combination of iron and concrete and natural stone not previously used in Germany. Speer instructed that, '*auch für den hinteren Teil des Gebäudes die Ausführung in Mauerwerk zu studieren und Eisenbeton und Mauerwerk im Materialverbrauch einander gegenüber zu stellen.*'⁴⁰¹ When Behrens proposed a type of conglomerate building brick produced near Vienna for the façade of the AEG building, Speer agreed, but not without reservations, and he personally conducted experiments in the use of these materials.⁴⁰² The designs of most building on the Axis appeared to many to be plagiarised from an earlier Neo-classical style. In fact, the GBI and Speer worked with architects with no previous experience, and the

³⁹⁹ Georg Krawietz, *Peter Behrens im Dritten Reich* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaft, 1995), 110.

⁴⁰⁰ Alan Scobie, *Hitler's State Architecture: the impact of classical antiquity* (Yale University Press, 1990), 13.

⁴⁰¹ Bundesarchiv, R4606/2562, protocol on 27 August 1938.

⁴⁰² Bundesarchiv, R4606/2562, protocol on 11 October 1938.

result was an original and interactive process through which National Socialist architectural history was created.

5.3 Commercial streets - Agfa Administrative Building



Figure 68 Gotthold Nestler, drawing for Agfa Administration Building on the North-South Axis. (Bundesarchiv, KS3623)

Martin Wagner illustrated his ideas on the relationship between modern cities and consumerism in the *Alexanderplatz* competition in 1929. He pointed out that shops, department stores, offices and bars had to be adapted to the ‘lines of flow’ in streets with fast traffic and to the ‘lines of strolling’ in slower pedestrian passages.⁴⁰³ They also had to be eye-catching. According to Wagner, the ‘most elementary forms, which make a distinct artistic statement during the daytime as well as during the evening hours, are basic requirements of the metropolitan square. Light flooding *in* by day and light flooding *out* by night gives the square an entirely different appearance. Colo(u)r, form and light (advertisements) are the three main structural elements.’⁴⁰⁴ The manipulation of modern commercial illumination was a well-established idea in the 1920s following the newly invented lighting technology.

Similarly on the North-South Axis in Berlin, Speer and Hitler anticipated a bright, energetic metropolitan city, instead of a solemnly cold empty space. The prime concern in this monumental plan, as Speer noted, was ‘to create the impression of a modern street in a modern city. There were also theatres and huge cinemas to bring life in, a quarter with colored lamps, and squares to serve as islands of calm

⁴⁰³ Martin Wagner, ‘Das Formproblem eines Weltstadtplatzes,’ *Das Neue Berlin* 2 (1929): 33, quoted by Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani, in *Mies in Berlin*, 59.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*.

with small shops around them. I wanted to bring in some life so as not to have just an exhibition of huge buildings.⁴⁰⁵ Speer illustrated how this was to be achieved on the grand axis. Inviting to strollers, there would be ‘quiet interior courtyards with colonnades and small luxury shops set apart from the noise of the street. ... Electric signs were to be employed profusely. The whole avenue was also conceived by Hitler and me as a continuous sales display of German goods which would exert a special attraction upon foreigners.’⁴⁰⁶ Well-lit commercial passages, in the same style as Behrens’ and Freese’s designs for the AEG building (Fig. 60, 62 and 63.), were to be installed in luxurious and busy arcades in privately commissioned buildings along the length of the axis. The purpose was to meet economic as well as stylistic requirements. Hitler and Speer’s concept of the ideal capital was to be a dynamic urban metropolis. Commerce would inevitably play a key role. They also relied on this aspect to attract major private industries in German speaking countries to invest in the monumental building projects.

An article on the project of the Agfa Administrative Building project was published in January 1940 in *Die Baukunst*, a National Socialist party publication. This announced Agfa’s official commitment to the Greater Berlin plan and emphasised the Düsseldorf architect, Gotthold Nestler’s connection with the architectural training he received at the Kreis School. Association with the school of Wilhelm Kreis, the architect who had worked on numerous monumental projects in previous decades, appeared to guarantee a patriotic style fully supported by the National Socialist Party.

*Der Neubau wird die Verkaufsabteilungen verschiedener ‘Agfa’ Erzeugnisse ...aufnehmen. Den Entwurf stellte der Düsseldorfer Architekt Gotthold Nestler, der aus der Schule Kreis hervorgegangen ist, unter der Leitung und nach den Richtlinien des Generalbauinspektors für die Reichshauptstadt auf.*⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ Dal Co, Francesco and Polano, Sergio. ‘Interview with Albert Speer.’ *Oppositions*, No. 12 (Spring, 1978): 48.

⁴⁰⁶ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 198.

⁴⁰⁷ ‘Die Baukunst’ in *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich*, January 1940, 3.

The Agfa project was presented to the public to follow the AEG Administration Building as another promising building project with substantial investment from industry.

The Agfa office block was to be located at the southwest corner of the *Runder Platz*. The front of the building was to be 115 metres long and to be the same height as the AEG building (the height of the ground floor - 8.5 metres, the height to the cornice - 28 and to the attic - 34).

*Dieser Hof liegt um einige Meter tiefer als die Nordsüdstraße, da sich hier bereits das Ansteigen der Großen Straße herzwischen sein, während von der Potsdamer Straße aus eine niveaugleiche Zufahrt möglich ist. Autogaragen werden sich unter dem ganzen Hof befinden. In seinem Innern wird das Gebäude, in dem 1500 Gefolgschaftsmitglieder ihren Arbeitsplatz haben, mit allem modernen Zubehör eingerichtet werden. Das Erdgeschoß wird ebenso wie die anderen Großbauten der Nordsüdachse Läden, Restaurants u. ä. aufnehmen, damit das Leben der Straße stets ein lebendiges ist.*⁴⁰⁸

Like all other major private projects on the axis, the ground level of the Agfa Administration Building complex was to be adjusted to connect neighbouring streets with the grand axis. The project would engage a large number of workers, thus helping to fulfil the National Socialist party's promise to modernise the country and to create employment and a modern infrastructure for the German public.

Modern materials and technology were to be introduced in the Agfa project to construct the massive dimension of the building and to achieve its durability and its monumental quality.

Die Konstruktion des Hauses ist die gleiche wie die der monumentalen Bauten unserer Zeit. Eisen und Eisenbeton ersetzen den Stein nur dann, wenn eine zwingende Notwendigkeit vorliegt. So wird auch dieser Bau massiv gemauert... Doch werden Dimensionierung und Ummauerung

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid..

*derartig bemessen, daß eine längste Haltbarkeit gewährleistet ist.*⁴⁰⁹

National Socialist architects and architectural critics had no problem using materials such as iron and concrete, and in adopting the idea of replacing iron-concrete combinations with the conventional use of stone. The typical procedure involved the initial production of a model of a building on a 1:100 scale for presentation to the GBI office. Once the designs were approved by the GBI and by the patrons, 1:10 scale models would be made for more detailed discussions. Eventually a full-scale model would be constructed on the building site. This emerged from the AEG project documentation. In the case of the Agfa project, a one tenth scale model was displayed in the GBI office in the Reich's Chancellery, but the full-scale model stage was never reached.

5.4 Modern construction materials - Allianz Administration Building

The managing director of the Allianz and Stuttgarter Insurance Company, Kurt Schmitt, was introduced to Hitler in 1930. He later became the Minister of Economics in the Third Reich regime and was highly committed to the policies of the National Socialist Party.

The task of designing the Allianz Administration Building was entrusted to the architects – Karl Wach and Heinrich Roskotten. The site for this project was between the southeast corner of the Runder Platz and the Landwehrkanal.⁴¹⁰ For a reason that is not now clear the project progressed more slowly than other major private buildings project. As early as July 1937, a sketch of the building was presented to the GBI and the Allianz. At the first meeting, Speer suggested that the ground floor, which would be an 8-metre high arcade, should be illuminated by large scale commercial neon lighting so as not to appear severe, but to promote it as a commercial venture.

As early as 1937 Speer already had a vivid picture of the way in which the North-South Axis of the Greater Berlin was to be. He described the

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid..

⁴¹⁰ Bundesarchiv. R4606/2786, 23rd July 1937.

general effect of the axis, which the GBI planned to achieve for the Axis:

Die Bauten des Runder Platzes und der anschliessenden Strasse sollen durch ihre besonders detaillierte Behandlung dazu dienen, die wenigen Grossbauten der NS-Achse noch grösser und monumentaler erscheinen zu lassen, d.h. Hervorhebung durch diesen Gegensatz.⁴¹¹

In order to maintain the monumental effect for other governmental projects on the Axis, the design of the Allianz project could not be allowed to dominate. The building was to be Allianz's prestigious representative office in greater Berlin and the Brandenburg area. In the basement there would be cloakrooms, central heating installations, air-conditioning and rooms for other technical facilities. The building would consist of three courts. Extensive parking spaces and garages were to be placed in large inner courts, at the same time allowing for future space requirements to cope with the anticipated growth of automobile use.

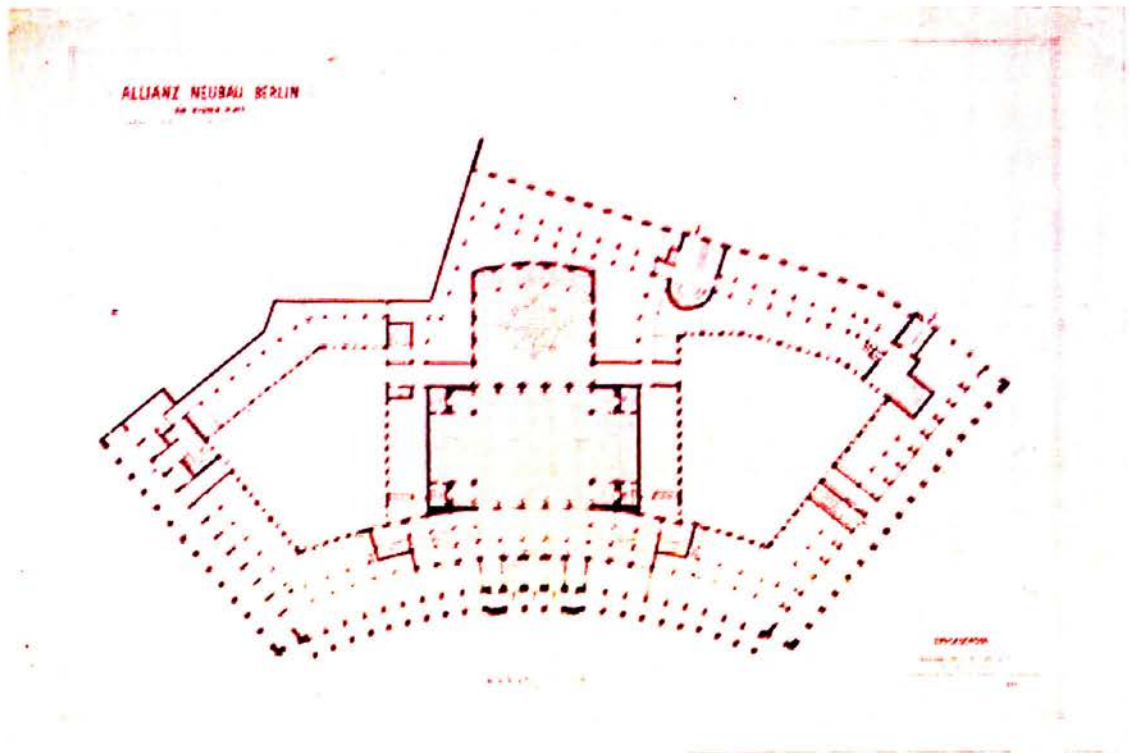


Figure 69 Karl Wach and Heinrich Rossokotten, Site plan for Allianz Administration Building.

⁴¹¹ Ibid..

(Bundesarchiv, KS 3721)

The construction of the Allianz building would involve modern materials, such as iron and concrete, faced with polished stonework. The materials for the construction of the façade were detailed in the protocol of May 1939:

Bei dieser Gelegenheit habe ich festgestellt, dass man den gesamten Bau, so wie er geplant ist, als Eisenbetonbau bezeichnen kann. Lediglich die Pfeiler der Arkadenreihe, die den Balkon trägt am Runden Platz, ist massiv aus Werkstein aufgebaut. Alle übrigen Pfeiler des Gebäudes sind aus Eisenbeton, der nach aussen mit 10 cm starken Platten verkleidet ist.⁴¹²

The ground floor columns for the buildings facing the Runder Platz, and for these on the Potsdamer Straße as well as those on Eichhorn Straße, were to be built in iron and concrete. The building was to be modern in terms of structural construction and the use and the allocation of office space. However, the façade carvings at the attic level were to be made purely of stone to create a superficial Neo-classical effect.

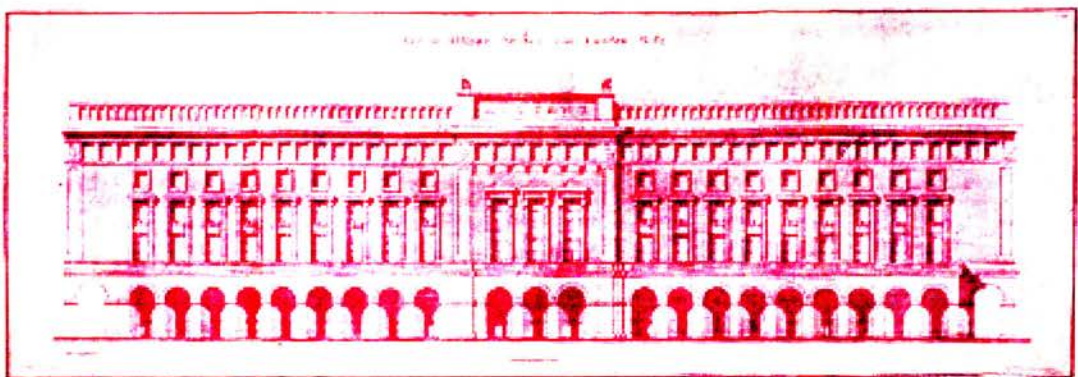


Figure 70 K. Wach and H. Rosskotten, Façade of Allianz Administration Building.
(Bundesarchiv, KS 3721)

Speer's close involvement in the architectural detailing of the projects on the Axis was demonstrated again in the record of the discussions on the Allianz project. In the meeting of 19th June 1940, attended by Speer, Maiholzer - the director of Allianz company, the architects Wach and Rosskotten, Rudolf Wolters recorded that,

⁴¹² Bundesarchiv, R4606 2786, 13th May 1939.

*Die jetzige Ausführung des Kämpfergesimses entspricht nicht dem Wunsche von Professor Speer. Das Gesims könne ruhig kräftig gehalten werden. Die Lösung würde sich ohnehin bei Änderung des Mauerwerks bezw. Pfeilers aus der dort dann festgelegten **Architektur organisch entwickeln**. ... Prof. Speer wünscht ein stärkeres Hervortreten des Sockels.*⁴¹³

Although Speer had specified that the project would include certain ‘organic’ (or ‘natural’) architectural features, it was not precisely clear what this would amount to. Discussion at the meeting also dealt with questions such as whether and where to install a plinth, which arch profile to use in the arcade, and where to set the corner pillar.⁴¹⁴ In January 1942, due to financial problems, Allianz abandoned the original plan to build underground connections from the Administration Building to the S-Bahn and U-Bahn stations. The plans for the basement and the courtyard were also suspended.



Figure 71 Peter Behrens, Studies of corner profiles of the building, the AEG Administration Building. Same procedure was carried out for the Allianz and other projects on the Axis. (Bundesarchiv, KS3735)

⁴¹³ Ibid.. (my boldface.)

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.. *‘In der Erörterung über die Ausbildung der Arkaden wird von Dr. Wolters die neue Anregung gegeben, evtl. auch zu prüfen, ob nicht ein Gewölbe möglich sei. Die zurückgesetzte Begleitkante an dem Eckpfeiler des Gebäudes soll unter dem Gurtgesims herumgeführt werden. Dieser Eckpfeiler soll ausserdem nach Möglichkeit verbreitert werden.’*

5.5 Patrons and financial problems - The Grand Hotel Project

The idea of building a luxurious hotel on the axis first appeared in June 1938 Speer discussed this with the architect, Cäsar Pinnau, and advised him to go to London and to major cities in America to gather ideas.⁴¹⁵ Speer also separately consulted Albert Heilmann, the Yugoslav Consul in Berlin, and Freiherr von Hertling of the Swiss Hotelier's Association, about possible joint sponsorship for a grand hotel on the North-South Axis. But their responses were not encouraging. Freiherr von Hertling pointed to financial difficulties and to inappropriate timing for such a hotel project. It would be massive, expensive, and above all, held out little prospect of profitable returns. The economic situation was not favourable. Demand for hotel rooms was weak. Room rates consequently were too low to yield returns adequate to attract investors. The situation in Berlin was not comparable to that in America or England. Herr Voss, Director of the Esplanade Hotel in Berlin, reached a similar conclusion. He asserted that comparisons with London were neither useful nor valid. London was an exceptional example, which did not reflect conditions in the overall tourist market in Europe. In Berlin the economics of the hotel industry were very worrying and governmental support would be needed. Freiherr von Hertling's analysis suggested that in the case of Berlin, hotels with more than five to six hundred beds could not be profitable. Yet Speer's proposal was for a grand hotel with 15,000 beds. The world-renowned hotels, the Waldorf Hotel in New York opened in 1931 had around 1,400 guest rooms, and the Dorchester Hotel in London prided itself on its luxurious ballrooms that could accommodate up to 800 people. The intended scale for the Grand Hotel project was ten times larger. The high-rise motif, discussed in the section on 'Hochhaus debates' in this thesis (pp. 167-76), also apparent in this design, showed the influence of American examples of skyscraper hotels.

⁴¹⁵ Bundesarchiv, R4606/2825, 21 June 1938.



Figure 72 Grand Central district, area around Waldorf Astoria Hotel. (Hegemann, *City Planning Housing*, 1938, 17)

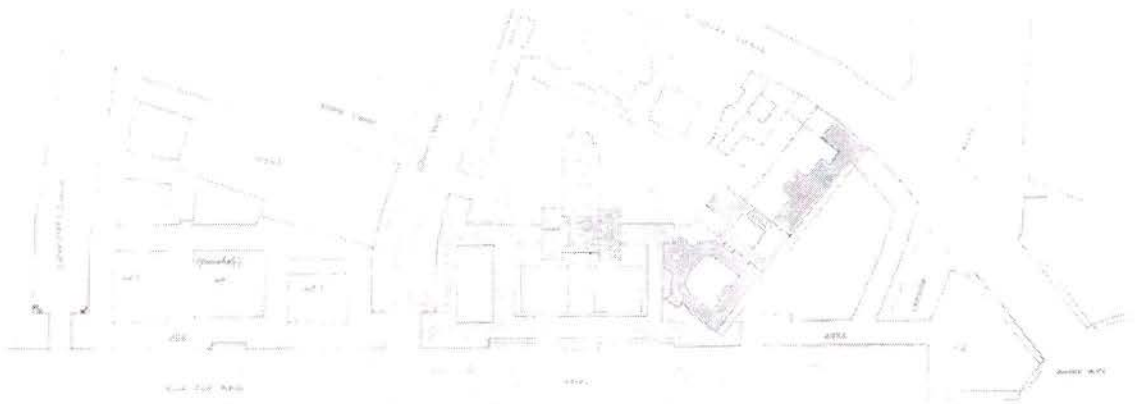
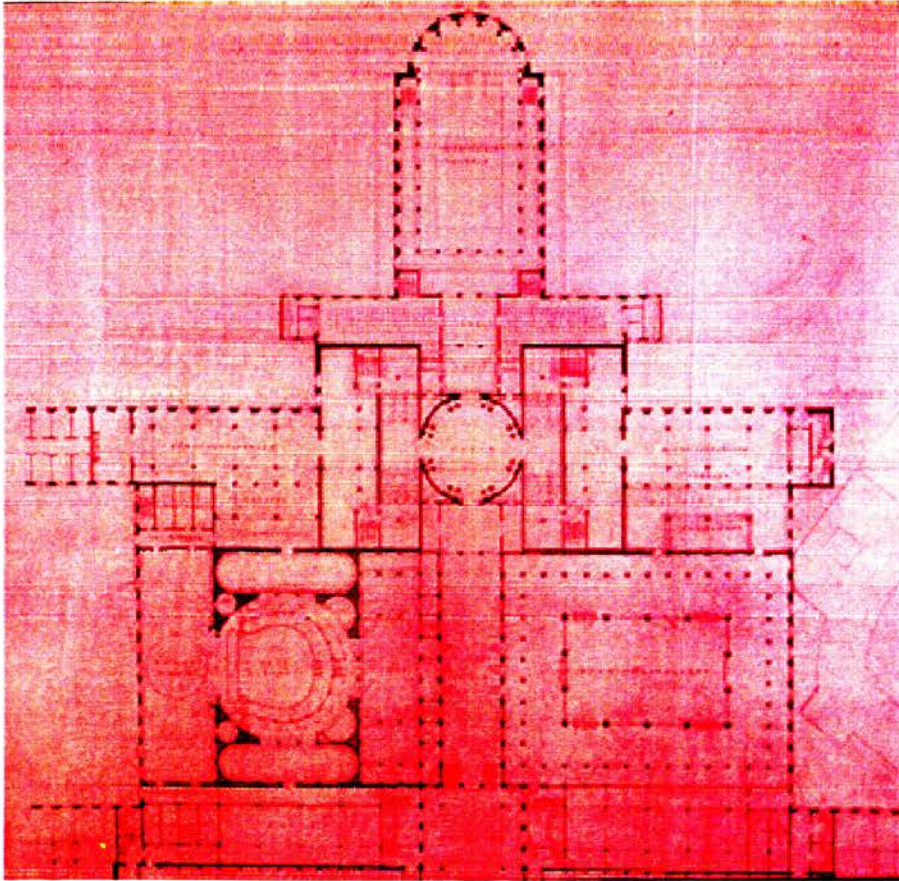


Figure 73 Site plan for some privately commissioned buildings on the west side of the North-South Axis, including the Grand Hotel project. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3719, reproduced by HLK, original document – 98 x 290 cm)



**Figure 74 Cäsar Pinnau, Grand Hotel project on the North South axis.
(Bundesarchiv, KS 3719)**

The Grand Hotel project was to be built close to the South Railway Station on the west side of the main axis. Between Gotthold Nestler's Agfa administration building and Behrens' AEG Administration building, Cäsar Pinnau was to design three projects – the Fire Brigades Association (*Feuersozietät*), the Grand Hotel complex and the Bremen House.

The high-rise tower in the Grand Hotel complex was to consist of 31 storeys. A luxurious restaurant, a terrace café and a large theatre were to occupy the ground floor. Between the second and the 6th floors, there were to be offices and conference rooms. Hotel rooms were to occupy the 7th to the 27th floors; and from the 28th floor upwards there would be a tower restaurant, a special members' room, a salon, and finally the roof terrace.⁴¹⁶ The arrangement of the Grand Hotel was to meet modern standards of comfort and to provide the most luxurious leisure accommodation for

⁴¹⁶ Bundesarchiv, KS3719, 2 January 1941.

visitors in the newly reconstructed German capital.



Figure 75 Cäsar Pinnau, plan of the 30th floor, the Grand Hotel project on the North-South Axis, 1940 (Bundesarchiv KS3719, reproduction)

In March 1939, Pinnau presented his first drawing to Speer and to the GBI. Speer was involved with the Grand Hotel project from the outset. Advising Pinnau on the architectural drawings, he said:

Der Turm möglichst weit nach hinten geschoben stehen muss. Die Höhe des Turms ist etwas zu reduzieren.

Die Anfahrt muss nach Möglichkeit im Hofe sein, jedoch am besten unterirdisch, damit der Hof als grüner Restoranthof ausgebildet werden kann. Die Grossgarage für 500 Wagen ist im Lageplan im Prinzip in Ordnung.⁴¹⁷

To make way for a terrace restaurant with a view on the lawns in the courtyard, Speer suggested underground parking spaces for 500 vehicles to replace the usual courtyard parking.

The styles of the surrounding buildings were taken into account when designing the Grand Hotel project. In July 1939 Pinnau requested a copy of the drawings of the

⁴¹⁷ Bundesarchiv, R4606/2825, 9 March 1939.

Agfa and of the AEG buildings from Herr Wolff of the GBI. The Grand Hotel complex was to include new accommodation for the Fire Brigade and its offices, other office blocks, and parking for 514 vehicles. The same approach was also applied to another hotel project, which was allocated to the area between the AEG and the Agfa Administrative Buildings. This was intended to be an area for leisure activities to include large-scale theatres, cinemas and a philharmonic concert hall.

At a later stage, Heilmann wrote to Speer to express his concern about illogicalities in the design concept, which would make Speer and Hitler's monumental project impracticable. The arbitrary adaptation and inappropriate use of architectural settings failed to take into consideration the need for realistic proportions in relation to their environment and to the culture and the history of the city. Speer instructed Pinnau to design a hotel large terrace café at street level. This had been inspired by his visit to Paris. Heilmann wrote a critical account on the Grand Hotel project on the North-South Axis:

In Paris bei den Champs Elysées handelt es sich um eine viel kürzere, verkehrsreiche Verbindungsstraße, die die dicht bevölkerte frühere Festung Paris mit dem wichtigsten Wohnzentrum, dem Westen, verbindet und in den letzten 70 Jahren organisch gewachsen ist, während es sich bei der Nordsüdachse um eine Bauanlage handelt, die im Laufe von 10-15 Jahren durchgeführt wird und gerade in Anbetracht ihrer großen Breite auf jeder Straßenhälfte kräftiger Hilfsmittel der Belebung und Befruchtung bedarf, wenn sie nicht eine tote, kalte Pracht werden soll, was für längere Zeit nicht nur im Hinblick auf das große Regierungsviertel sehr zu befürchten ist. Ich darf Sie daran erinnern, daß die vor 100 Jahren in München von König Ludwig I. Einheitlich erbaute LUDWIG STR. Wohl das beste Vorbild, das wir haben, 70 Jahre lang eine tote Straße blieb, die erst in den Letzten 30 Jahren – auch unter meiner Mitwirkung- einigermaßen belebt wurde. ... Die Nordsüdachse hat bei 150 m Breite ohnehin kein Vis-à-vis und für das Publikum keine normale Verbindung zur gegenüberliegenden Seite, was sich wirtschaftlich höchst bedenklich auswirken wird, so daß alles zur

*Belebung und Befruchtung der Straße geschehen muß, wenn nicht das Hotelprojekt, ja selbst die ganze Straße, schweren wirtschaftlichen Erschütterungen aus gesetzt werden soll.*⁴¹⁸

Hitler's ambition in creating Berlin as 'Germania' was in fact to build a German Paris. But he did not grasp the essential differences between the two cities. The exaggerated modernity of urban design rendered the Berlin Plan implausible. The enormous width of the North-South Axis (or boulevard) would create an atmosphere far from desirable for a vibrant commercial and business street. Pedestrians on one side of the Axis would scarcely be able to see people on the other side. Besides, the cost of maintaining this major hotel in its first few years after completion, when no shop would be open for business, was another contentious issue. Finally, Heilmann highlighted the difference between the climate in Berlin and that in warmer cities:

*Wenn wir Berlin immer Sommer hätten, würde ich die Lösung mit den Terrassen vielleicht noch für tragbar halten, aber vom geschäftlichen Standpunkt aus spielen die 8 übrigen Monate, die übrigens die wichtigsten sind, eine ausschlaggebende Rolle, da Berlin in den Sommermonaten von 1 Million der Bevölkerung verlassen wird. Deshalb schließen im Sommer auch die Theater. Die Terrassen können im Winter nicht benutzt werden, liegen öde und leer da und bedeuten für die Straße alles andere als eine Belegung und Verschönerung. Paris ist gegenüber Berlin auch im Jahresdurchschnitt um 3 wärmer, was sich in der Ausnutzung dieser Terrassen merklich fühlbar macht.*⁴¹⁹

Heilmann suggested that the area of the North-South boulevard between the Soldier's Hall and the South Railway Station would attract neither shops nor visitors. Nor were the financial prospects promising for hoteliers, and he personally would not put his own money and reputation at risk. In response, Speer expressed his and the Führer's unchangeable determination to add a massive terrace café to the Grand Hotel. But Speer accepted the need to establish shops on the streets some years before the

⁴¹⁸ Bundesarchiv, R4606/2825, 25 September 1940.

⁴¹⁹ Bundesarchiv, R4606/2825, 30 September 1940.

opening of the terrace café.

The complex relationship between German big business and the National Socialist Party was demonstrated in the privately commissioned projects in the Greater Berlin plan. Major industries regarded the opportunity to establish their representative offices in the newly reconstructed capital as essential to their future success. Junker, Lufthansa, the House of German Wine, the House of German Beer, the Ufa Film House and many others all requested sites for their representative offices. Financial problems apart, the symbolic importance of Speer's North-South Axis was fully recognised and supported by German big business. Throughout the planning and construction of the Greater Berlin, most architects tended not to object to Speer's involvement. His interventions were more to impose censorship over style rather than to offer creative art and architectural advice. Often the designs were dismissed on the ground that they were 'too' monumental. It seems clear that Speer's concern was that these buildings might outshine the supposedly main focal point of the city, his (and Hitler's) own design for the Great Hall complex.⁴²⁰

Today the form of the monumental does not appear to be outdated. It has been incorporated with modern commerce to articulate the relationship between social power and the past. In the contemporary post-modern world, society finds its own way to tackle memory and time. Bart Verschaffel noted that this is the 'privatisation of memory,' and 'the recording of private lives, the virtualisation and multiplication of public spaces inevitably lead to a loss of relevance of the environment, designed by architects. One no longer needs real space and stone to deal with time: neither to commemorate, nor to make power real or to make ordinary lives special. But simultaneously the cultural heritage, monuments and historical city centres are celebrated and cherished as never before.'⁴²¹

⁴²⁰ Designs being marked 'too monumental' appeared in more than one case. For instance, Pinnau's Hotel project was inspected in one occasion by Speer. The result was: '*Herr Speer sah sich den Entwurf für das Hochhaus des Hotels an und bestimmte, daß der höhere und kräftiger profilierte nicht genommen wird, da er zu monumental sei.*' Budesarchiv; R4606/2825. 12th April 1940.

⁴²¹ Bart Verschaffel, 'The monumental: on the meaning of a form', *Journal of Architecture*, vol. 4 (Winter, 1999): 336.

Epilogue

Architecture and the Mass Psychology of Monumentality

The projects in the North-South axis of the Greater Berlin Plan appeared monotonous in style and in layout. This was the result of Albert Speer and the GBI's meticulous supervision and, more importantly, of the desire to create a centrally controlled and highly disciplined society after the 'chaotic' and 'degenerate' Weimar period. National Socialism saw it as having great political potential to combat the loose social order and the disruptive nature of a society without a social hierarchy in the Weimar years. The GBI produced a strict grid city plan for the capital in contrast to the less disciplined city planning policy of the Weimar Republic. Helmut Weihsmann suggests that National Socialist designs for buildings and monuments such as towers, columns and obelisks were installed on a massive scale as 'city crowns'. These monuments were designed to stand out from the organic cityscape and serve as symbols of spiritual leadership, so that the *neue Geist*, representing 'the new spirit' of National Socialism, would be visible everywhere in the territory of the Reich. Monumental architecture - in the shape of 'buildings of faith' - helped to channel the public into a totalitarian and unified system of order. German cities and landscapes would in turn be covered with prototypes embodying the National Socialist party ideology. Its ethos and the sense of community would also be accommodated in its architecture.

Städte und Landschaften Deutschlands mit Hilfe von 'Bauten des Glaubens' nach einem totalitären Ordnungs- und Einheitssystem zu verändern, das Land gleichsam mit einem ideologischen Einheitsmuster zu überziehen und so der Bevölkerung in der großdeutschen 'Gesinnungs- und Volksgemeinschaft' einen Platz zuzuweisen, der den Menschen ihre politische Unmündigkeit vor Augen führen sollte.⁴²²

Monumental architecture was a direct embodiment of the 'higher ethos' of the community and of collective power. In contrast, the political power of each ordinary

⁴²² Helmut Weihsmann, *Bauen unterm Hakenkreuz: Architektur des Untergangs* (Vienna: Promedia, 1998), 22.

individual in society was minimum and vulnerable. The visual and spatial effect created by monuments and monumental buildings intimidated the individuals who saw and visited them. The power relationship between the imposing building and the intimidated individual can be seen as a theatrical experience designed dramatically to reinforce the public's sense of being confronted by the absolute collective/state power.

Through the 'monumental effect', the National Socialist regime asserted its overall authority and power over the masses. Explicit orders and detailed legislation were therefore of secondary importance in controlling society. The creation of the sense of awe was of primary importance. The National Socialists devoted much more energy to implementing their architectural ideals than establishing a thorough framework of political legislation. The goal was to create a monumental impression that would overwhelm and intimidate the viewers with the scale and power of the regime.⁴²³

The fascination and attraction of buildings on the monumental scale reflects a particular psychological pattern. Based on Sigmund Freud's Theory of Idealisation, Theodor Adorno in his reflection in 'Culture Industry' pointed out the importance of 'self' in the psychological relationship between fascism and the mass. It is the satisfaction of the narcissism and the idealisation of the 'self' that the fascist leader invoked in his followers. The idolisation of the *Führer*/leader is a form of self-indulgence and the love of 'self' projected by each individual member of the mass.

By making the leader his ideal he loves himself, as it were, but gets rid of the stains of frustration and discontent which mar his picture of his own empirical self. This pattern of identification through idealization, the caricature of true conscious solidarity, is, however, a collective one. It is effective in vast numbers of people with similar characterological dispositions and libidinal leanings.⁴²⁴

The idolised leader represents everything one wishes to be. Thus it is important for

⁴²³ Wehsmann, 24.

⁴²⁴ Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry; Selected essays on mass culture*, edited by J. M. Bernstein (London and New York: Routledge, 2002; original edition, 1991), 140-41.

the *Führer*/leader to manipulate his public image to fulfil what his followers lack, either materialistically or psychologically. But the individuality of each member in the mass must first be diminished in order to enable the transference of the 'self' to idol worship. The 'self' can no longer be independent and distinct from others. It must be homogenised, so that members of society would wish for similar things and evolve in one single direction. The political slogans and the image of a powerful, and at the same time 'friendly' and 'fatherly', *Führer* therefore work together to provide for a society in which individuals are highly frustrated and oppressed.

According to Sigmund Freud, this can be seen as an appropriation of mass psychology from the oppressors. In a chapter entitled, 'Other Accounts of Collective Mental Life' (1921), Freud spoke of the mass psychology and argued that the most important factor that unifies the crowd is the 'intensification of emotion' on the part of every member of the group. Differing from the relationship between the 'self' and idols, the mutual interaction among the mass public takes place at the same time.

The fact is that the perception of the signs of an emotional state is calculated automatically to arouse the same emotion in the person who perceives them. The greater the number of people in whom the same emotion can be simultaneously observed, the stronger does this automatic compulsion grow. The individual loses his power of criticism, and lets himself slip into the same emotion. But in so doing he increases the excitement of the other people, who had produced this effect upon him, and thus the emotional charge of the individuals becomes intensified by mutual interaction.⁴²⁵

The sacrifice of individual interests in favour of the broader aims of the community and of society is seen by authoritarian state as a virtue to be promoted. The more the individual becomes uncertain of his personal value and power, the quicker he yields to the group. In the process, the power of the group is reinforced at an even faster pace. 'Something is unmistakably at work in the nature of a compulsion to do the

⁴²⁵ Freud developed this point basing on McDougall's theory of 'the Group Mind'. See Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, translated by James Strachey (London: the Hogarth Press, 1949; original text published, 1921), 27-8.

same as the others, to remain in harmony with the many. The coarser and simpler emotions are the more apt to spread through a group in this way.⁴²⁶ National Socialist propaganda is fully charged with ‘coarse and simple’ emotions. Group behaviour observed by Le Bon, McDougall and Freud, such as ‘the display of coarse emotions’, impulsive and violent actions, ‘less refined sentiments’, and hasty judgment, are particular features of the society in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

George Bataille distinguished Fascist leadership from other social ideologies in that they came to power with the support of the electorate. The German and Italian leadership is a distinctive ‘heterogeneity,’ that is overwhelmingly supported by the public. Both the Duce and the Führer derived the foundation of their power from the fascist parties and from their personal leadership of them. But Bataille argued that despite much political manipulation, both these dictators were elected by democratic processes.

Under fascist leadership, the community as a whole is in a sense in a hypnotic state which enables the leader-follower relationship to function. In Bataille’s theory, the leader is the person who simplifies the collective will. He unifies and presents the unconscious tendency to violence in the community.

Considered not with regard to its external action but with regard to its source, the force of a leader is analogous to that exerted in hypnosis. The affective flow that united him with his followers – which takes the form of a moral identification of the latter with the one they follow (reciprocally) – is a function of the common consciousness of increasingly violent and excessive energies and powers that accumulate in the person of the leader and through him become widely available.⁴²⁷

By identifying with the powerful leader, the general decay of moral consciousness leads to loss of control over the violent tendencies that exist in society both individually and collectively. Hitler and Mussolini are thus the incarnations of the

⁴²⁶ Ibid..

⁴²⁷ Georges Bataille, ‘The Psychological Structure of Fascism’(1933-34) translated by Carl R. Lovitt, *New German Critique*, 16 (1979): 71.

most extreme form of these negative forces. The ultimate reason for this urge for strong leadership is the immobility and impotence of society.

Power and violence can be two sides of the same coin. They are the same in the sense that both depend on force, but different in the way they function in society. Hannah Arendt has a similar observation of mass psychology in her investigation into violence. One distinction 'between power and violence is that power always stands in need of numbers, whereas violence up to a point can manage without them because it relies on implements.'⁴²⁸ The collective power of the mass is multiplied by the interactions among the group. With the effective manipulation of collective power, the leader can easily succeed in invoking this power to construct or destroy the world. This process is an instinctive and psychological one, and points to 'a growing tendency towards the abolition of psychological motivation in the old, liberalistic sense. Such motivation is systematically controlled and absorbed by social mechanisms which are directed from above.'⁴²⁹ In other words, mass psychology is then controlled and manipulated by a super-imposed authority from above.

Thus the political power imposed by a fascist state and dictator over their people is clearly the power of potential violence. Arendt observed that a man might take pleasure when he imposes himself and turns others into 'the instruments of his will'.⁴³⁰ Beside pleasure and satisfaction, this is also a form of self-assurance. Violence is an abuse of power, which consists of imposing one's own rule on others; making them act as one chooses; and asserting one's own will against any resistance. The more resistance one encounters, the greater the pleasure to be derived from conquering the 'other'. The 'will to triumph', created by a strong sense of insecurity, orchestrates the elimination of the 'other' and the 'different' into a well-controlled world under surveillance where no resistance, no enemy exists. But a world without resistance cannot be the ultimate goal of totalitarian state. The duality of oppression and resistance plays an essential role in the operation of totalitarian ideology. Without resistance the power play of the system ceases to function. To sustain a violent state, the regime or the leader in particular requires support from the majority

⁴²⁸ Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence* (London : Allen Lane, 1970), 42.

⁴²⁹ Adorno, 151.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

of society. The dictator, 'who is but one solitary individual, stands far more in need of the general support of society than any other form of government.'⁴³¹ The tyrant, as the oppressor who rules against all, needs support from the majority, if not all, of the public in the practice of violence.

It is an illusion to suppose that the dictator, as an individual, holds absolute power over a totalitarian society. Had the dictator been able to impose his will without taking account of the mass will, the manipulation of the public would not have been necessary. The distinction between totalitarianism and democracy is thus challenged. A democracy lacking tolerance and conscience is capable of practicing violence and is equally as authoritative and exploitative as pure fascism. Atrocities may well be perpetuated by or in the name of a majority that ignores human values and lacks morality.

Among the mass of people, individuals cannot but be deceived by a strong leader, whose persuasive and dynamic rhetoric persuades a disoriented public to follow in the direction the leadership desires - no matter how illogical and irrational that may appear to be. The operation of the leader-mass relation is not without friction. Contradictions and problems exist in the process of oppression. The fascist dictatorship needs complete trust from those whom they rule. What most threatens the leadership is that the oppressed might lack faith. 'Just as little as people believe in the depth of their hearts that the Jews are the devil, do they completely believe in their leader. They do not really identify themselves with him but act this identification, perform their own enthusiasm, and thus participate in their leader's performance.'⁴³² Contrary to the idea that the mass public identifies with the leader and submits consciously to the supposed collective will and interests at the community, Adorno believes that suspicion and distrust generally exist in a totalitarian society, especially towards the leader. The suspicion about the fictitious nature of the claims of totalitarian leadership, Adorno suggested, is the reason that the crowds under fascist rule turns into 'merciless and unapproachable' mass. The whole process of the manipulation of mass psychology would rapidly collapse once the public started to reason. Thus, the anxieties, the insecurities and the suspicions that exist within the group are expelled and exorcised through the cruellest form of

⁴³¹ Ibid., 42.

⁴³² Ibid., 152.

mass action and behaviour. Dictators never cease to be aware of the extent to which their ideological base is fictitious and feeble, and against this background are constantly aware of the need for caution in dealing with their own public. The state and the party elites, despite recognising the complexities inherent in the process of enslaving the mind of the public, are not free themselves from the operation of mass psychology. Adorno implies that as a group under fascist dictatorship the mass cannot be rational. But he does not mention the fact that many influential intellectual elites, namely some of Nietzsche's followers and Heidegger⁴³³, chose to contribute to the fascist ideology at a time they had the option not to.

Despite his sceptical attitude towards technology, Heidegger spoke positively of National Socialism's 'encounter between global technology and modern humanity'. This passage appeared in his lectures published in the *Introduction to Metaphysics* in 1935. Heidegger described this encounter as 'the inner truth and greatness' of National Socialism.⁴³⁴ Heidegger's involvement and support for National Socialism is controversial, and yet undeniable. He equates National Socialism with a reign of technology, mechanism and gigantism. Denouncing America and Russia as 'the same hopeless frenzy of unchained technology and of the rootless organization of the average man',⁴³⁵ he believed that Germany with its 'new order' could fulfil its historical mission to reverse its destiny and to avoid the danger of losing its last spiritual strength. Heidegger saw Germany's strength as enabling it to outlive the decline of an enfeebled Western civilisation and eventually helping the declined West to overcome 'the darkening of the world'.⁴³⁶ He stated that,

When the farthest corner of the globe has been conquered technologically and can be exploited economically. ... Our people, as standing in the center, suffers the most intense pressure – our people,

⁴³³ See Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989. Apart from his themes of 'the return to the fatherland' and university politics that saluted to Hitler in 1933, Heidegger delivered public speeches supporting National Socialism between 1933 and 1944 and was particularly influential in the Freiburg region. His membership of National Socialist party was active until 1945.

⁴³⁴ Habermas, a student of Heidegger, highlighted this point in the 1953 new edition and protested against the fact such a statement was published after National Socialist atrocity.

⁴³⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000, 40.

⁴³⁶ Anson Rabinbach, 'Heidegger's Letter on Humanism,' *New German Critique* 62 (1994): 12. See Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. (Yale University Press, 2001).

the people richest in neighbors and hence the most endangered people, and for all that, the metaphysical people. We are sure of this vocation; ... All this implies that this people, as a historical people, must transpose itself – and with it the history of the West – from the centre of their future happening into the originary realm of the powers of Being. Precisely if the great decision regarding Europe is not to go down the path of annihilation – precisely then can this decision come about only through the development of new, historically *spiritual* forces from the center.⁴³⁷

His nationalist and racial notions suggest he believed that Germany was entrusted with this task because of its cultural history and superiority of its contribution to philosophy and the arts. Heidegger's philosophy has a profound influence on modern philosophy. Despite his close involvement with National Socialism, the question of whether Heidegger is a victim or exploiter of National Socialism is still subject to constant debates. Likewise, controversy continues over the role and function of National Socialist architecture.

The sense of insecurity arising from the perception of Europe as an endangered civilisation creates the need to construct the great and the monumental in order to create a façade in the face of the political, economic and technological threats from other parts of the world. This was what motivated the National Socialist regime to make exaggerated promises of the 'Thousand Year Reich' in each of GBI's architectural projects. The need to impress and overwhelm party members was the constant driving force in National Socialist policy. Nonetheless, power comes fundamentally from 'the people.' Collectively 'the people' are not always wise and careful enough to detect the danger of being misled. Carl Jung regarded the holocaust and National Socialism to be 'the first outbreak of epidemic insanity'. It was

an irruption of the unconscious into what seemed to be a tolerably well-ordered world. A whole nation, as well as countless millions belonging to other nations, was swept into the blood-drenched madness of a war

⁴³⁷ Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935), trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 40-41.

of extermination. No one knew what was happening to him, least of all the Germans, who allowed themselves to be driven to the slaughterhouse by their leading psychopaths like hypnotized sheep.

The whole nation was in a hysterical state when they signed the contract with the devil, but this does not change the fact that this was a decision made by the German people.

And, so it was that the Germans allowed themselves to be deluded by these disastrous fantasies and succumbed to the age-old temptations of Satan, instead of turning to their abundant spiritual potentialities, which, because of the greater tension between the inner opposites, would have stood them in good stead. But their Christianity forgotten, they sold their souls to their technology, exchanged morality for cynicism, and dedicated their highest aspirations to the forces of destruction. ... Just think for a moment what anti-Semitism means for the German: he is trying to use others as a scapegoat for his own greatest fault!⁴³⁸

Paying homage to Goethe's Faustian metaphor and analogy, Jung evoked an apparent and universal morality in human behaviour by clearly rationalising and dramatising the distinctions between the good and the evil. Even in a hysterical state of being, like Dr. Faust's, the unconscious evil must be exposed to the conscious mind through a logical dialectic. Germany under National Socialism fully embraced technology to enable society to progress. The notion of progress with efficiency prevailed, and morality and humanism were left behind.

⁴³⁸ Carl Jung, *Jung on Evil* edited by Murray Stein (London: Routledge, 1995), 194-95.

Conclusion

The dilemma that faced us in our work proved to be the first phenomenon for investigation: the self-destruction of the Enlightenment. ... If enlightenment does not accommodate reflection on this recidivist element, then it seals its own fate. If consideration of the destructive aspect of progress is left to its enemies, blindly pragmatized thought loses its transcending quality and, its relation to truth. In the enigmatic readiness of the technologically educated masses to fall under the sway of any despotism, in its self-destructive affinity to popular paranoia, and in all uncomprehended absurdity, the weakness of the modern theoretical faculty is apparent.

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, 1944⁴³⁹

Fascism did not result from chaos, from the heat of madness, but was administered through an impeccable, faultless and unchallenged rule of law and order. The good Nazis were, after all, those who like you and me, did what was expected of them, followed orders.

Peter Beilharz, 2000⁴⁴⁰

A German publishing house recently cancelled their publication contract with Thor Kunkel, a young German author, for his book on the Nazis' unknown trade in pornographic films. The reason is that the hero in the book works for a fictional SS Hygiene Institute in Berlin. A job like this is too rational and glamorous for a Nazi and contradicts the demonic image that the National Socialists were given in history. Besides, Kunkel downplays the Holocaust in the book.⁴⁴¹ This is one of many examples of how the modern history of the first half of the 20th century is still filled with overwhelming prejudices. Today the history of National Socialism and other totalitarian regimes is still subjected to bias treatment. Brian Ladd noted that 'it is too

⁴³⁹ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London and New York: Verso, 1997), xiii.

⁴⁴⁰ Peter Beilharz, *Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectic of Modernity* (London: Sage, 2000), 98.

⁴⁴¹ 'Porn und Drang,' the *Guardian*, 12 February 2004, available at <http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/generalfiction/story/0,6000,1146259,00.html>

easy to see Nazism and modernism as polar opposites'. He emphasised that it is simply a generalisation to regard the Third Reich as 'the dark side of speed, motion, and industrial modernity: air travel and air forces, autobahns built for tanks and armies, boxcars full of Jewish prisoners, industrialized death on the battlefield and in concentration camps.'⁴⁴² The history of National Socialism and the Holocaust represents the archetypical problem of both the dilemma and complexity inherent in modernity. Thomas Mann pointed out that, 'the really characteristic and dangerous aspect of National Socialism was its mixture of robust modernity and an affirmative stance toward progress combined with dreams of the past: a highly technological romanticism.'⁴⁴³ The post-war historical account of modernity has been merely a starting point for deeper reflection and for the de-mystification of what has taken place in history. Postmodern intellectuals might have acknowledged the approach that locates National Socialist history in the context of modernity, yet attempts to deny a legitimate connection are constantly re-surfacing.

As mentioned in the introduction (page 9) to this thesis, National Socialist architecture has commonly been excluded in the history of modern architecture. Critics and historians of German Studies such as Winfried Nerdinger, Barbara Miller Lane and Kathleen Chakraborty regarded National Socialist architecture and Nazism as a historical aberration, a mutation totally outside the development of modernity.⁴⁴⁴ The 'self-destructing' element of the Enlightenment is denied through this exclusion of National Socialist phenomena in the discourse of modernity. National Socialist architecture is indeed radically different from the architecture of democratic states in its means of production⁴⁴⁵ and the political ideology that nurtured it. However, it is by no means an independent and separate architectural genre in history. Horkheimer

⁴⁴² Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: confronting German history in urban landscape* (Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 1997), 124.

⁴⁴³ Thomas Mann, 'Deutschland und die Deutschen,' in *Thomas Mann: Essays, Band 2, Politik*, ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Herman Kunzke, 1977), quoted by Jeffery Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, culture, and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 2.

⁴⁴⁴ See Lane, Barbara Miller. *Architecture and Politics in Germany 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985; First edition, 1968); Winfried Nerdinger, *Bauhaus Moderne im National-sozialismus, zwischen Anbiederung und Verfolgung* (Munich: Prestel 1993); Chakraborty, Kathleen James. *German Architecture for a Mass Audience* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁴⁴⁵ It was produced by forced labour and the exploitation of civilians. See Paul Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression: The SS, Forced Labor and the Nazi Monumental Building Economy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

and Adorno rightly pointed out that the incapability to accommodate the unknown and the incomprehensible is the weakness of the modern theoretical faculty. To counter this weakness, reflections on National Socialist architecture must be taken in through considering the particularity of the social and cultural context of the Third Reich within the broader stream of modernity.

The divide between modernity and National Socialism led to the Nazification of certain architectural styles. This unbending and unquestioning link between architectural style and political ideology echoes, ironically, the efforts of the National Socialist Party in the 1920s to enforce this link. After the 1945 this Nazification of architectural styles was recognised, accepted and re-enforced by modernists in France, in Britain and in the USA, when advocates of modernism dismissed the possibility of using or of being associated with architectural



Figure 76 A tourist poster announcing Germany's accomplishments, 1937 (?). It juxtaposed the term 'modern', images of the 'Rohbau' architecture and National Socialist Party symbols – the Eagle and the Swastika.

(<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/posters2.htm>, 17/7/03)

styles related to National Socialism, such as the Neo-classical style and monumentality. International congresses and conferences on modernist architecture formulated a strategic polemic position, which echoed the post-war political situation. This calls into question the interpretation of modern architectural history devised by the Modernists and their followers. The outcome of the Modern Movement was both political and emotional. There was a powerful need to differentiate the values and associations of their architecture from those produced by totalitarian ideology. As demonstrated in chapter one of this thesis, Modernists deal

in catchphrases that cannot fully describe forms and designs of the buildings in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴⁴⁶ They managed to claim a victory in architectural history by creating a discourse full of symbolic icons, images and terminologies (e.g. the ‘white,’ ‘cubic,’ ‘glass’ buildings and the term the ‘International Style’) specifically designed for so-called Modern Architecture. Their biggest success was to equate the Modern Movement (or the International Style) and modern architecture. The history of modern architecture is a record of architectural styles that serve and are most celebrated by the cultural elites of society. The so-called ‘progressive’ and modern architecture of the International Style from the 1920s onwards was a style that mostly applied to private houses with affluent patrons. Governments and the public who were sceptical towards the cold simplistic modern style were denounced as kitsch and were excluded from the debates.

Amidst the intellectual optimism and utopianism in 1909, Henry van de Velde stated in *The Future of Our Culture* that, ‘it is impossible to lead the masses systematically and unexceptionably toward a refinement of thought, feeling and sense. They are not prepared for it, and such steps could only lead to a disastrous confusion of these three faculties, as well as to several generations of irremediable decadence.’⁴⁴⁷ This vision sharpened the division between the elite and the masses, who, in his view, were inferior and therefore incapable of cultivating refined sentiments. European history in the following decades demonstrated that the masses were indeed not prepared for the demands and the fast pace of modernity. The utopian dream of architects at the turn of the century was to build a man-made paradise, which ‘would be conceived by the architect and would, by implication, remain under the ultimate control of the architect.’⁴⁴⁸ Speer and Hitler embodied their dream of ruling the Thousand Year Reich through re-planning Berlin and through meticulous control and supervision of styles. Architects with different political ideologies were expelled from the Third Reich, but they nevertheless continued to influence German architecture.

⁴⁴⁶ Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, 321.

⁴⁴⁷ Henry van de Velde, ‘Die Zukunft unserer Kultur,’ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 11, 14, 15, and 16 April 1909. Translated by Donald Flanell Friedman, selected in Dal Co, 312.

⁴⁴⁸ Iain Boyd Whyte, *Bruno Taut and the Architecture of Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 225.

Architects must build. In order to receive commissions, architects modify their designs to meet the requirements of patrons or of governments. Governments were frequently the major patrons for large-scale building projects, and this was especially the case in Germany after the First World War. This patronage and its concomitant political censorship created a clear and highly unified architectural policy in the Third Reich. Speer exercised overall supervision and control over the general style of buildings in the Greater Berlin Plan, while not actually designing each individual project. Yet the GBI office was not as powerful and influential in determining the architectural style and project development of the Third Reich as Speer claimed in his memoirs. On the one hand, Hitler's writings criticised the cultural policies of the Weimar Republic, and National Socialist Party activists such as Alfred Rosenberg attacked the new architecture and waged war upon progressive architects. On the other hand, architects such as Wilhelm Kreis, Heinrich Tessenow and Peter Behrens, who had been involved with modernist development, created designs for various projects that resembled the buildings they had produced before 1933. They developed building types of the National Socialist architecture including museums, housing schemes, public buildings, representative offices and industrial constructions. These architects sought to implement conservative architectural modernism during the Third Reich, and adapted their pre-1933 design vocabulary to meet the needs of the National Socialist regime. Monumentality, eternity and the demands of the central leadership were emphasised through the application of standardisation and the fusion of technology and historical classicism. The importance and influence of Peter Behrens, Wilhelm Kreis, Heinrich Tessenow and Hans Poelzig on the architecture of the 1930s have been underestimated by later historians of the National Socialist movement⁴⁴⁹. This was a consequence of the excessive attention paid to Albert Speer by the propaganda machine of the Third Reich and by journalists and historians after the Nuremberg Trial. Standardisation and industrialisation created ways of mass production and provided illusions for National Socialists to build large and grandiose, and to bring their monumental building plans into fulfilment.

⁴⁴⁹ See footnote 448.

One of the most important functions of architecture is the representation in public spaces of cultural, social and political values. The mass psychology of monumentality is seen in public architecture through the pursuit of megalomaniac construction and the formation of focal points in a city (see projects discussed in chapter four). Individuals developed a sense of identity with the community, and a shared sense of its history, in relation to these visually dominating focal points. 'But simply placing an ambitious work of architecture on a ground of buildings does not necessarily provide these buildings with a centre – this is one lesson taught by Brueghel's Tower of Babel, which turns a cold shoulder to the surrounding city.'⁴⁵⁰ One can argue that Taut's vision of the City Crown and the need to create focal points in a city were wrongly adapted by the National Socialists. But the urban reforming projects in Berlin produced before the Third Reich by city planners such as Martin Mächler and Martin Wagner demonstrate the influences of the Weimar architectural discourse on Speer's Greater Berlin plan. They also serve as examples that exposed the incomplete and the problematic parts in modernist architectural concept. The Greater Berlin project was the Babel tower, which represented the ambitious monumental building project; but it was detached from the city for which it was designed. The National Socialists claimed that their architecture represented the greatness of the Prussian past, achieving a balance between Hellenic tranquillity and the simplicity of modern functional architecture, and combining what was essential and glorious in the past with the contemporary social condition. In reality the connections between the buildings and the life and history of the residents were to be forged by National Socialist propaganda. The Greater Berlin Plan was used as an architectural model for city planning throughout the Third Reich, for example in Hamburg, Dresden, Nuremberg and Munich.

As a consequence of the exploitation by the National Socialists and by other totalitarian states, the perception of Neo-classical styles has been revised dramatically. The debate over whether or not the classical style was appropriate for contemporary use was automatically concluded with denial after 1945, despite the fact that this had been an issue discussed again and again by historians and architects since the late 18th century, if not earlier. The development of National Socialist

⁴⁵⁰ Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998), 287.

architecture resonated with the international architectural trends of the 1930s and the 1940s. The focal points in the city, the Neo-classical style and monuments, the high-rise buildings – themes that were emphasised in the Nazi architectural propaganda – were the subject of heated debates in Europe and in the USA. The National Socialists' ambition was to turn Berlin into not only the *Germania* for the 'Great German Reich', but also into an international leading *Weltstadt* – to take part in and to dominate the world community.⁴⁵¹

Speer and the GBI employed modern construction materials, modern work ethics and an emphasis on commerce in the design and execution of privately commissioned projects on the North-South Axis. They reveal the intertwining of National Socialism and modernity at a deeper level. The examples of private administration buildings show how the execution of private projects in the Greater Berlin Plan was more complicated than that of the official projects. These examples represented the outcome of a process of negotiation and compromise between the National Socialist regime and private commissioners who represented important elements of modern society. Modernist architects under the National Socialist regime, with a strong emphasis on tradition, culture and modern technology, adjusted their designs to accord with the GBI to create a style for their time. Among the modernist architects who contributed to National Socialist architectural development were Mies and Gropius, once pupils of Behrens. Both had entered the competition for the Reichsbank in 1934.⁴⁵² Far from being an 'aberrant chance mutation', the Greater Berlin Plan, the major and the biggest building project in the Third Reich, embodied aspects of international modernism. The same powerful statement linking artistic restraint with patrons' power and urban control was brought to New York City in 1957 by Behrens' pupil, Mies van der Rohe, in the shape of the Seagram Building on Park Avenue, the axis of Manhattan.

⁴⁵¹ The appropriate adaptation of classical styles was discussed in different decades in Britain, France, Germany and other countries. Classical revivals, such as Greek Revival, neo-Palladianism, Gothic Revival, neo-Baroque and Neo-classicism, never went out of fashion until the end of the Second World War.

⁴⁵² 'Was machen jene Bauhäusler während des Dritten Reichs, die nicht emigrierten? Ferner: Ist es nicht wichtig, daran zu erinnern, daß selbst Gropius und Mies van der Rohe 1934 Entwürfe für die NS- Ausstellung "Deutsches Volk-Deutsche Arbeit" beigetragen haben und dabei Hakenkreuze einzeichnen?' See Paul Betts, "Die Bauhaus-Legende. Amerikanisch-Deutsches Joint-Venture des Kalten Krieges," in *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Alf Lüdtke, Inge Marßolek and Adelheid von Saldem (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 287-88.

It is legitimate to suggest that ‘monumental and memorial architectures are the architectures of totalitarianism, the societies of control, of phallic consumption.’⁴⁵³ But did architects in the so-called democratic countries not design and build monumental architecture in the past and indeed do they still not do so today? In the past two years the debate over designs for reconstruction of the Twin Tower site in New York has revived the issues of memory, monument and monumentality as matters of heated controversy. This study of the monumental project of Greater Berlin reminds us that the epicentre of modernity was Nazism and various forms of totalitarianism, which operated with full legitimacy in their time. The Enlightenment project, for all its focus on reason, was driven in its logic by irrationality. In its corrupted and extreme form, this (ir)rationality enabled the tyranny of the totalitarian regimes.

The sentiment commonly shared by the Anglo-American countries is that Fascism and Nazism are exclusively European experiences, in particular the Holocaust in Germany. It does not happen in democratic societies. But throughout history and in the current global condition, we see that fascism does not happen simply to ‘the other’, it is near us, and everywhere around us. By investigating the most controversial example of Fascism at the epicentre of Europe – National Socialist Germany - I anticipate a deeper understanding of Fascist phenomenon and its cultural production around the world. Modernity has been undergoing a long period of whitewash in Europe since the mid-1940s. Yet the outcome of this traumatising process is far from a dictatorship-free world. The power of the frustrated and oppressed ego in our society has been transformed into disguised democracy. We accept this ‘creative destruction’⁴⁵⁴ as the norm and fail to realise that the notion of modernity and democracy are ‘by no means simple and agreed-upon concepts.’⁴⁵⁵ Fascism and Nazism were widely adapted to local cultural contexts in the Far East from the 1930s onwards and indeed throughout the post-war era in military practice, in ritualistic public ceremonies and through political censorship in art, architecture and other cultural productions in society. Art and

⁴⁵³ George Bataille and Elizabeth Grosz both agree on this point. Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), 161.

⁴⁵⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, *The Bauman Reader*, ed. Peter Beilharz (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 202.

⁴⁵⁵ Edward W. Said, ‘A window on the world’, Edward W. Said, *The Guardian*, August 2, 2003.

architecture in the Far East came to resemble the art and architecture created by European totalitarian regimes in the twenties and the thirties. Because of the nature of absolute power in totalitarian dictatorships, the influence of totalitarian art and architecture through its Asian dictator followers arrived in the Far East earlier and more efficiently than the international modernism promoted by western capitalism. Modernity, as a wider context for cultural activities and the most significant revolution in the last two centuries, was exported most efficiently from Western Europe to the rest of the world through mid-nineteenth century European colonialism and imperialism. Neo-classical colonial and totalitarian architecture outside Europe carry distinctive traces of western modernity. The impact of totalitarian architecture (National Socialist architecture in particular) in modern architectural history is stronger and more diverse than recognised. Understanding the history of totalitarian architecture is key to understanding how modernity and its metamorphosis have taken place in Asia, the Far East and other parts of the world.

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Appendix 1

[*Bundesarchiv, KS3575 (2) (8 September 1941)*]

List of Projects and Architects on the North-South Axis

The east side of the Axis:

Pumpenhaus (Stadt)

Turmbauten

Oberkommando Marine(Bonatz/Dübbers)

Bürobau OKW

Bürobau Reichsführung, SS

Museum Inseln: Ostawistisches Museum (Kreis), Ägyptisches Museum(Kreis), Germanisches Museum(Kreis), Museum d. XIX. Jahrhunderts(Urlichs), Völkerkunde Museum(Dustmann), Weltkriegs Museum(Kreis)

Ministerium Dr. Todt (GBI Deutsche Strassenwesen) (Tamms)

I.G. Farben-Industrie (Emmerich)

Branenburger Tor (Dammeier)

Reichsmarschallamt (Speer)

Thüringenhaus (Giesler)

Allianz am Runden Platz (Wach und Rosskotten)

Brunnen des Rundplatz (Breker)

Kameradschaftsh.D.D.Künstl.(Dierksmeier und Flehr)

Haus des Bieres (Freese)

Haus des Weins (Freese)

Henkelwerke (Petersen)

Reichsbahnzentralamt

Hermann Göring Werke(Rimpl)

Kino am Propaganda Ministerium

Propaganda-Ministerium

Justiz-Ministerium
Auswärtiges AMT
Philharmonie
Innen-Ministerium
Reichsoper
Erziehungs-Ministerium
Schauspielhaus (Propag.Min., 3000 Personen)
Ernährungs-Ministerium
Reichsfinanz-Ministerium(Weygandt)
Grosskino (Propag. Minist.) (Klaje) 6000 Personen
Arbeits-Ministerium (Tamms)
Ingenieur-Haus (Tamms)
Reserviert
NSDAP
Haus der Nationen (Klaje)
Triumphbogen (Speer)
Flughagen (Sagebiel)
Variété-Theater (Propag.Min.) (Pinnau/Schmidt) 4000 Personen
Restaurant (Pinnau)
N.S.V. (Pinnau)
Einheitshotel (Pinnau)
Südbahnhof (Speer/Rimpl)
Hotel/Südbahnhof (Rimpl) 2500-3000Betten
Post-Zentralamt (Werner)
Stadtbaubewerkschule
Reichsversichanstalt (Richle, Model presented on 17.11.38)
Reichszollschule
Südstadtsportfelde
Südfluchthafen

The **west side of the Axis:**

Nordbahnhof (Dierksmeier)
Rathaus (Bestelmeyer-Ermisch)
Moabiter Block D. Wehrmacht
Polizei-Präsidium (Bonatz/Dübbers)
Kaffee
Zellengefängnis Moabit
Zirkus Busch (Roth)
Grosse Halle (Speer)
Reichstag (Speer-Brinkmann)
F.-Bau (Speer)
Reichskanzlei(Speer)
Oberkommando D. Wehrmacht

Botschaften Area: Italien(Hetzelt), Französisches Konsulat (Moshamer),
Fascio (Hetzelt), Finnland (Burkhardt), Argentinien (Büning und Bohnen),
Dozentenschaft (Schaudt), Sweden, Spanien (Krüger), Dänemark (Schaudt),
Schweiz (Ebhardt), Gästehaus (March), Slowakei (Listmann), Gästehaus
(Tischer)

Soldatenhalle (Kreis)
Wehrmachtkasino (Kreis)
Lichtspielhaus (Schuppe/Dierksmeier/Stich)
Nachrichtengebäude OKH (Kreis)
Oberkommando d. Heeres (Kreis)
Haus d. Deutsch. Fremdenverk.(Röttcher und Dierksmeier)
UFA
AGFA (Nestler)
Transocean (Seeger)
Feuersozietät (Pinnau)
Hotel (Pinnau)
Haus Bremen (Pinnau)

AEG (Behrens/Himmel)
Block (Hentrich)
Reichsverkehrs-Ministerium (Diecksmeier, Dürkop, Kleinschmit)(March)
Kolonial-Ministerium
Wirtschafts-Ministerium (Dustmann)
Wirtschaftsgruppen (Dustmann)
Automobilindustrie/Werlin
Triumphbogen: Rimpl(L) Tamms(R)
SS
NSFK
Operetten-Theater
KDF-Block(Schmidt)
Arena (West of KDF)
Schauspielhaus
Kino / Varieté
Oper
Postministerium(Werner)
Postbauten Südbahnhof (Schreiber)
Haupttelegraphenamnt (Dierksmeier and Flehr)
Postbahnhof „Süd“ (Schreiber)
Südbahnhof Südbau (Rimpl)
Südpersonenbahnhof
Gesellschaft für Luftfahrtbedarf
Junkers (Lossow und Kühne)
MAGGI
Staatliche Baugewerkschule
Reichsakademie für Gesundheitsforschung (Sagebiel)
Reichsarchiv
Kasernen-Erweiterung (Schmidt)
Militär-Akademie
Technische Polizei Akademie (Richter)
Verkehrsakademie

Kaserne Leibstandarte (March)

Aufmarschplatz

Appendix 2

Permission to access the drawings of the GBI office was given by the Bundesarchiv in Berlin. The original drawings were made at a scale of 1:500, 1:1000 and even 1:4000. Due to the large scale, many were difficult to reproduce, either by photography and photocopying. Document numbers 1, 2 and 3 were individually traced by the researcher in the drawing collection room of the Bundesarchiv.

List of documents:

Document 1. Cross section of buildings on the South Axis; length 1:1000, height:1:500. [Bundesarchiv, R4606 KS 3573 (6); traced by the researcher in the archive, March 2001]

Document 2. Site plan between the North Railway Station and the Great Hall, 1940. [Bundesarchiv, R4606 KS3575; traced by the researcher in the archive, March 2001]

Document 3. The general plan of the North-South Axis in the Greater Berlin Plan with a list of the names and architects of projects. [Bundesarchiv, R4604, KS 3575]

Document 4. Document 4. The South City between the South Railway Station and an airport further southwards. [Landesarchiv, Berlin. Pr Br Rep. 107 (Karten) No. 266 (1/2)]

Document 5. Werner March, the site plan for a stadium and marching field in the South City of the Greater Berlin Plan. (Bundesarchiv, KS 3733).