

Albert Speer His Battle w/ Train

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ALBERT SPEER: HIS BATTLE WITH TRUTH

*Gitta
Sereny*



Alfred A. Knopf New York 1995

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Speer was born in Mannheim on March 19, 1905. "I didn't know my pater-
nal grandparents," he said. "They died while my father was young. There
were rumors my grandfather had committed suicide, but it was never talked
about. Suicide, mental illness or diseases such as cancer were socially unac-
ceptable. My father and his four siblings were brought up by my paternal
grandmother." His father, he said, instead of going to university as he had
planned, became an apprentice to a firm of architects because the grandfa-
ther hadn't left any money.

This was no doubt true, but he had written precisely the contrary on the
first page of *Inside the Third Reich*. "My grandfather, Berthold Speer," he said
there, "became a prosperous architect. . . . Though he died young, he left
enough to provide for the education of his four sons." When I asked him
about this, he shrugged. "I didn't think it mattered," he said. "Why go into
these private matters, in print?"

It was his maternal grandfather, Louis Christian August Herrmann Hom-
mel, whom young Albert had liked best. "He was a real self-made man, the
son of a forester who worked himself up to become one of the leading indus-
trialists in Mainz—he owned a large machine-tool company. But he always
remained a very modest man. I remember his office: a hard chair—a stool,
really—and a standing desk; I liked that." He liked his grandfather's simplic-
ity, but more than that, he was, and would remain until his death in 1921
when Albert was sixteen, the only warm person in his family. "My grand-
mother—his wife—was pretentious, and stingy." "She counted the sugar
cubes in the kitchen," Margret said. "Would you believe it? She had a lock-
able sugar tin."

"She was a cold woman," Speer said. "My grandfather wasn't cold, but he
was a very silent man. I used to go shooting with him, and we would walk
and stalk for hours never saying a word—I loved that. At the same time, he
was a great organizer—I think that's where I got my organizing talent from.
It isn't that technocrats can't be romantics—" he added suddenly. "I think
he was very romantic: nature, music. . . ." Did that include women? "I don't
know." His tone at what he considered a flippant question was dismissive.
Too much is made of that aspect of a man's personality," Mainz, where the
Hommels lived, was a lively garrison city in his mother's youth. "They be-
longed to the social elite, of course," he said. "There were many balls, young
officers galore; she led a very social life, quite glamorous, I think."

Dr. Lili Fehrle-Bürger's mother became a close friend of Speer's mother
after the family moved to Heidelberg. "Frau Speer had been desperately in
love with; a brilliant and very temperamental young officer," she wrote in a
1979 letter, offering her help after reading my profile of Speer in the German
weekly *Die Zeit*. "He coldly deceived her, which drove her, brokenhearted,

meetings preceding the first NSDAP Party Day in Munich. Since 1921, he had been *Der Führer* and had adopted and was soon using with enormous effect the phrase "Germany Awake!" which—often with the outrageous addition of "Juda Verreckel!": "Jewry Perish!" (literally, "Croak!")—would within months become the battle cry of the masses.

But as far as young Speer was concerned, this might never have happened. In his letter to Margret of January 31, he does mention the lack of coal, but only in the context of the forced cancellation of half of Germany's express trains—the D-trains.

In forty days there will be no more coal. If by that time the Ruhr remains occupied we will have nothing but slow trains . . . which I would not recommend to you, because even without changing you would need ten and a half hours to get to Heidelberg. . . .

Two days before this letter was written, speaking in Munich on January 29, 1923, Hitler described his vision for Germany:

There are three things central to the future Germany: 1) The social concept: This presupposes the awareness of duty. The German civil service [the *Beamtentum*, whose support he then needed but of which, only eight years later and until the end of his life, he would speak only with contempt] and the German Army were models of social organization, and although these two groups could not offer bountiful remuneration in money or property, they turned out individuals who were prepared to offer up their lives for their people and the state. . . . 2) The national concept: identical for us Germans with social awareness. The more fanatically national we are, the more we must be concerned with the welfare of our society. . . . 3) The anti-Semitic concept: It confirms the racial rejection of what is essentially hostile to all that is German. Nationalism is above all inoculation against a bacillus, and the anti-Semitic concept is the necessary defense, the antibody if you like against a pestilence which today has a grip on the whole world. . . . If one goes even further, then two fundamentally opposed forces are engaged in a battle to the death. One force defends the validity of the creative personality, the other the power of money. . . . The first one at present is silent, the other is dominated and guided by stock market shares . . . whose victory would result in the destruction of our culture and [our] people. We live in a time when the external and internal enemy is ready for the final strike in order to destroy the German people.

What is happening now is the consequence of the Versailles Treaty, which was signed by the same people who today shout out their lying protests. . . . Any possibility of an effective German foreign policy presupposes a radical change in policy within. No state can make agree-

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ments with governments one . . . can only despise. . . We say we make no more concessions. We expect others to adapt themselves to our demands and needs or else be eliminated from the scene. . . . There is only one differentiation: one is either German or anti-German. The National Socialists spearhead the march of Germany, and we declare that we will not sit down at a table with criminals who already once stabbed us in the back. . .

Speer wrote to Margret almost every day throughout that February, the month of his *Abitur*. Most letters continued to report outings: to theaters, concerts, hikes, rowing, plus meticulously worked-out plans for the holidays, when she would be home.

The Saturday before his exam week, he told her that that morning his professor of German had advised the class not to work anymore that weekend, but to spend a good Sunday, perhaps going for a long walk with a friend—"or even better, a girlfriend," he said. Good man, that. But how can I follow his advice—you are not here, so I can't walk with you. Or could I . . . ?" What he wrote to her then not only shows a lively imagination but inevitably brings to mind his extraordinary "Walk around the World" in Spandau forty years later.

You know what I will do? I will make up for your absence by going for a walk with you in my thoughts. (One could say that all my letters are such thoughts.) I will describe my thoughts to you as I picture it [them]: I come to see you and ask whether you'd like to come with me to see Ibsen's *Wild Duck* on Sunday.

Do you think your father will permit you to come? Do you want to? I will telephone at once to Mannheim and order the tickets. *Auf Wiedersehen* [sic] then until tomorrow when I'll let you know about the tickets. . .

Next day, 24 January: we have the tickets, so I'll come to your house tomorrow around three to pick you up for our walk. The train is at 4:25. But so that you will understand what Ibsen is trying to tell us in his *Wild Duck*, let me briefly take you away from your domestic chores (for I imagine you in the sewing room) and tell you what I know. [He then gives a summary of the play.] And on our trip home in the train we'll discuss it.

A few days later he wrote the most explicit paragraph about his feelings:

One more bit about our friendship. I think we are much too careful about each other: this has got to change. Of course it's good that we both try not to hurt the other. But surely you, as I, are eager not to have our friendship be one of those one-day wonders, but rather something that will continue for a long time, perhaps for always. But we will never achieve this goal if we don't sometimes tell each other off, if we don't from

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at the bank—they said to go ahead; if I was offered something they'd help me. I didn't care what I was offered in money, as long as I could work there, for our future."

She got into the department that subsequently became the German Workers' Front (Arbeitsfront), working as a typist. "I took along a sandwich for lunch; sometimes an apple; I had no money at all aside from my fare, but I was over the moon: I had become part of the struggle—it was all I wanted."

IN THE ALREADY MENTIONED (but only partially quoted) letter which Speer wrote to his daughter Hilde from Spandau in May 1953 in reply to her question about his "guilt," he tried to confront the two main issues of his life: Hitler and the Jews. In her letter, Hilde, partly out of shyness, partly perhaps to protect him even from herself, had almost pointedly avoided the word "Jews." In his reply, however, he brought the subject up of his own volition. He judged this issue quite rightly to be uppermost in the minds of virtually the entire Western world, including, perhaps more than most, his profoundly moral young daughter. But that was not the only reason. There was an immense need, a stubborn drive in Speer, to confront it. But while in his "deep" talks with Georges Casalis at Spandau (and, much later, with me) every such mention was tinged with pain, here in what might be called the historical part of his letter to Hilde, he appears only to wish to rationalize it:

To start out with, when I first—I suppose one can say—encountered National Socialism about 1931, the party, probably in order not to discourage new applicants, was fairly reticent with regard to anti-Semitic propaganda, even though it certainly was part of their platform. In the economic climate of those years, communism—which has always benefited from bad times—had grown enormously and many people, including myself, came to wonder whether National Socialism, with its vitality and energy, wasn't the only valid alternative.

What was decisive for me was a speech Hitler made to students, and which my students finally persuaded me to attend. From what I had read in the opposition press, I expected to find a screaming, gesticulating fanatic in uniform, instead of which we were confronted with a quiet man in a dark suit who addressed us in the measured tones of an academic. I'm determined one day to look up newspapers of that time to see just what it was he said that so impressed me. But I don't think he attacked the Jews. . . .

In *Inside the Third Reich*, written twelve years later, Speer, apparently loath to admit that he had agreed to attend a major rather than a minor speech, underplayed the importance of that occasion, merely saying,

mediately turned back to me. "Actually," he said, "it wouldn't have been a good idea. Afterwards—I remember this well—I really needed to be alone. I had left our small car not too far away; I walked there, with crowds of people in the street. . . . My head was ringing. I sat down in the car and drove out of the city, into the woods. And there I went for a long walk."

"It must have been a long walk," Margret interrupted, again unexpectedly. It was always surprising if she spoke up. "I was worried."

"You were?" he said, sounding amazed.

"Well, yes, I was. Don't you remember, just the day before, two SA men had been killed in a demonstration?" The SA was Hitler's first paramilitary organization, set up in August 1921 as "Schutz und Sport Abteilung." Shortly afterwards renamed "Sturmabteilung," known as the "Brownshirts," it became the Nazis' first fighting force.

He shook his head. He didn't remember this and—as he later told me—was astonished that she did. "Isn't it amazing," he said, in a way sounding proud of her, "her coming out with that after fifty years?" He shook his head again and added that he was sure it would never have occurred to him that she could have worried about him. But the meeting, and the lonely walk, changed Speer's attitude to Hitler, and helped change his life.

"Above all else," he said quietly, "—and it was obviously the greatest mistake of my life—I felt he was a human being; I mean with that, I felt he cared: not only about Germany, which in his own terrible way of course he did, but that he cared about people. If you like, though it would never have occurred to me to put it like that at the time, that he cared about me . . . I mean . . .," he corrected himself, "about us, the young, individually. I am still convinced now that this was his greatest gift: to convey, not in words but by a kind of mass—and individual—hypnosis, that he cared about each of us, even, if you forgive the term, that he loved us. I didn't expect to feel that, you see; I abhor, yes, I abhor vulgarity and loudness, and that's what I had associated with him before that night. So you see, I made a double mistake in judgment, one before that night—for certainly he was not vulgar—and one afterwards, for certainly, at least in the accepted sense of the word, he could not love. But it took me years—a kind of lifetime—to realize that. Then of course, that night, what he said appealed to me. Believe me, in the context of the world then—the enormous growth of communism, and of its danger to Germany—it made sense."

And in a way I saw what he meant: for Germany then, and for that student audience in particular, it made sense. I had a photocopy of the report of this speech, as printed in *Der Angriff* on December 5, 1930, and offered it to him to read. "I know it," he said. "I looked it up some time ago." Hitler, as quoted, had said that the [first] World War had

. . . eliminated the gen [inferiors; he used and the much stronger words] Hitler readily its corollaries left Germany past twelve years the have been those of the

When nations abate heroism in the mistle it leads to a slow weakening of heroic elements. Cover examine what you feel your minds and make you to become part of nation.

I asked Speer if he had just as grating as he had fifteen years later. (This was his birthday, when he had explained that the war to preserve Germany's independence lost," he quoted Hitler not necessary to worry contrary, it is best . . . to itself to be the weaker, nation. The garbage left over, because the good of

"You are succumbing out of context," Speer said. I take the sting out of the think that is your purporting me. One could not know how I could not recognize. And oddly enough search for my first book by the word and, yes, made. But now visualize sphere in that hall, and word—even if I had not difference?

"Now of course I knew

In our circles we assumed that, as had happened in other radical movements, rough spots would be smoothed over with time. . . .

When, in early 1931, he and his students had attended a political meeting during which the speaker attacked their revered teacher Tessenow, they had written a furious letter of protest to Hitler. Speer, in Spandau, described the consequences:

What was important to us political infants was that the polite reply we received indicated that the people around Hitler seemed to respect our great teacher. Most important of all, we discovered, in the course of a seminar . . . that our master himself appeared to view the new Führer positively.

"Perhaps what is needed," he [Tessenow] told us, "is someone who thinks simply. Thinking has become too complicated. An uneducated man, something like a peasant, would find it much easier to solve our problems, just because he would not be corrupt. Someone like that, too, would have the strength to pursue simple ideas to their fruition."

As anything he said carried for us the authority of ultimate wisdom . . . we . . . assumed that what he meant with this rather vague (as I later realized) statement was the simple, uneducated, strong man, Hitler. . . .

In this part of the "Spandau draft," Speer avoids mentioning Hitler's anti-Semitism, or his own feelings about Jews, perhaps because he is addressing it to his old friend Rudolf Wolters, who knew both him and the situation well. But in his letter to Hilde in May 1953 (as later in *Inside the Third Reich*), he feels as always driven to explain and defend himself on this subject:

. . . I can't remember Hitler berating the Jews in that speech to the students. After I became a member of the party, some very bright Jews I knew in Mannheim knew that I had joined and one day not long afterwards one of them said, to my astonishment, "If it weren't for their anti-Semitism, I'd be joining them myself." You see, it didn't look all that dangerous. . . . But anyway, as far as practicing anti-Semitism or even uttering anti-Semitic remarks, my conscience is entirely clear. I really had no aversion to them, or rather, *no more than the slight discomfort all of us sometimes feel when in contact with them* [author's italics]. . . .

In 1968, when after three further drafts he wrote the final version of his reminiscences, he had of course forgotten that passing remark in his letter to his daughter fifteen years before, and made one of many dangerously unequivocal statements:

Even after joining the party, I continued to associate with Jewish acquaintances, who for their part did not break off relations with me, al-

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though they knew or suspected that I belonged to this anti-Semitic organization. I was no more an anti-Semite than I became in the following years. In none of my speeches, or letters, is there any trace of anti-Semitic feelings or phraseology. . . .

Whatever Speer knew or didn't know about what eventually happened to the Jews—and I will be examining this subject in detail later—he knew in 1930 that Hitler was an anti-Semite; like millions of other Germans and Austrians, none of whom would have dreamed of advocating or indeed desiring the murder of the Jews, Speer was at the very least (as he tells Hilde in this letter, so unperceptively assuming his passionately moral daughter's concurrence with his feeling) an instinctive anti-Semite.

CONSIDERING HIS later need to reassure himself as well as others about his motives for becoming actively involved with the party, it is perhaps not too surprising that, recalling those earliest days, Speer emphasized, to himself as much as to others, a different part of his life between 1931 and 1933: his attempt to set himself up as an independent architect. At least from early 1932, when the deepening depression caused a cut in university assistants' salaries, establishing himself professionally became his primary concern.

Wolters, less taken by Hitler than his old student friend, would later remember asking him why he had joined the party. "That man is no fool," Speer allegedly answered. "You'll see; he's going to be someone one day."

In early 1931 (he got this date, like many others, slightly wrong in *Inside the Third Reich*), Speer very nearly went to work abroad, as Wolters had done. He was invited to Afghanistan, to teach at the University of Kabul and to head a German team of young architects and city planners that would rebuild the country. He wrote in Spandau:

My father was very concerned that a stay abroad for several years could alienate me from the fundamental changes which were bound to take place in my own country. But what significance did that have by comparison to the fulfillment of our longing for adventures in foreign lands, a trip through India and working in a country where we could realize our ideals of a simple life? But no sooner had I more or less signed on the dotted line, and the great King of Afghanistan, under whose auspices all these idealistic improvements were to be carried out, had paid a state visit to the Reich President, Hindenburg, than the Afghans staged a coup d'état to rid themselves of their progressive head of state, who promptly travelled into exile in Italy. It was a monumental disappointment, but as fate would have it, the same year brought me the first building commission for the

party and soon afterwards a first meeting with the man who would so decisively determine my future. . . .

In all his descriptions of these first two years of the significant 1930s, Speer pointedly skims over his decision, taken almost immediately after joining the party, to accept a—however subordinate—party function when he became a member of the newly founded Motorists Association of the party and, being the only car owner in Wannsee, where he lived, was appointed head of section. He wrote in the "Spandau draft":

My assignments sometimes required me to call at the district HQ which was headed by a young man whose name I mention here because he would repeatedly have a decisive effect on my life. [Karl] Hanke, a miller by trade [Speer's memory had failed him here—Hanke had a degree in vocational teaching], was an uncomplicated but intelligent man, brimful of energy. In order to live up to the party's new respectable image, he had established the offices of the district HQ in an elegant villa in the select suburb of Grünewald. And discovering that I was an architect, he offered me the job of redecorating the villa.

Hanke in fact did not know Speer or his work. "How could he have? I hadn't done any," Speer told me. "No, I think it was quite simply that I happened on the scene, and I think we liked each other. Explanations are often simple, aren't they?"

Days were spent selecting wallpaper, curtains and paint. "I went quite crazy there in my choice of colors," said Speer. "I still don't know why: it was diametrically opposite to what Tessenow had taught us and I so loved."

"It was fantastic," said Annemarie Kempf. Though Speer didn't meet her until many months later, she was already doing odd jobs around the party offices as a volunteer. "Everybody was talking about him: he'd painted the outer office bright red and all the others canary yellow with red curtains. Some people thought it was crazy—I thought it was wonderful: it was so alive."

However, it was to be the last exciting thing Speer did for almost a year. With his salary cut to the bone, he needed to earn money despite his father's help, and he and Margret decided to move back to Mannheim, where his father (who to his later regret had just retired, at sixty-five) had offered to introduce him to prospective clients and meanwhile—for eating money—to let him manage the buildings the family owned there.

Willie Schelkes had graduated with honors in 1931 and was immediately invited by Speer to join him in the small architectural office he opened in Mannheim—the only one of the thirty-five graduates to be offered employment. "The salary was RM 150 a month," Schelkes said. "But believe me, I

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was glad to have jobs were as good

"It was a very countless letters I replies, the award have been pretty

"I didn't feel t erty in Mannheim quite a job. And houses old Herr and some other missions. But Speer easygoing, or at sions from the G months, but other office; of course Chef and I the B

Speer had co heim house wh was all we neede ing the week, if in Heidelberg."

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"It was a very discouraging time," said Speer. "Looking back on it—the countless letters I wrote to people my father knew, the polite 'no thank you' replies, the awareness too that I was living on my father's money—I must have been pretty depressed."

"I didn't feel that in him," Schelkes said. "His father owned a lot of property in Mannheim—they were really very wealthy—and managing these was quite a job. And we did do some architectural work: reconstructing one of the houses old Herr Speer owned—I think it was a shop on the ground floor—and some other small things too, though admittedly all piddling little commissions. But Speer didn't seem bothered—he always was extraordinarily easygoing, or at least it seemed so. Later, in 1932, he began getting commissions from the *Gauleitung* in Berlin—in fact I went to help him there for two months, but otherwise I stayed in Mannheim"—he laughed—"as his head of office; of course, there wasn't anybody there except he and I, so he was the *Chef* and I the *Bürochef*."

Speer had converted a dressing room and bath in the back of the Mannheim house where he was born into a tiny flat for himself and Margret. "It was all we needed," he said. "We always went away weekends, and even during the week, if we felt too cramped, we could always use my parents' house in Heidelberg."

Schelkes, in fact, during the unbearably hot summer of 1932, also stayed much of the time at the Heidelberg house—the only one of Speer's friends ever to be so honored. "I received an open invitation from Speer's parents to come there whenever I liked—I still don't know why," he said. He was taken aback—possibly more in retrospect than at the time—at the derogatory manner in which Speer's father discussed his son. "He really thought very little of him or of his talent," he said. Speer's mother on the contrary, he said, was positive and optimistic.

That Speer's mother was suddenly well disposed toward her middle son, whose childhood she had made so miserable, is attributable to the fact that Frau Speer had joined the party early in 1931 and now felt a kind of fellowship with Albert. She didn't in fact know that he too had joined—each hid this from Speer's father and from each other—but she knew of his first working contacts with the party. "I think my father would have been very angry that she joined the party," said Speer. "He despised the Nazis and always said they would be a catastrophe for the country. I don't know how he would have felt about my joining, probably resigned. He wouldn't have expected any better of me."

It was only in 1938 that his mother told him about having seen a parade of

SA men in Heidelberg in the spring of 1931. "She said it was the first time in years that she had sensed energy and joy in the people," Speer said. "She immediately joined, without ever having known anything about the party, because in the sea of pessimism that was Germany at the time, they made her feel optimistic."

Speer's activity for the party in Mannheim was evidently minimal—in the "Spandau draft" he doesn't mention it. In *Inside the Third Reich*, which he wrote when he had no doubt become aware that all the party membership archives had survived and were in American hands,* he briefly explained that "there was no Motorists Association [in Mannheim] so Berlin assigned me to the Motorized SS. At the time I thought that meant I was a member [of the SS], but apparently I was only a guest; for in 1942 when I wanted to renew my membership, it turned out that I had not belonged to the Motorized SS at all."

This—as we will see more fully later—was not a candid account for, as surviving SS records show, Speer joined on March 1, 1931, not just the party but the SA—the Brownshirts, then its active branch—and in the autumn of 1932 he specifically left the SA in order to join the SS Motorized Division. It should be said that many decisions at that time were purely bureaucratic ones. But while this can and probably does apply to the switch from SA to Motorized SS in the autumn of 1932, it is hard to see how it can apply to his originally joining not only the party but also the SA. Unimportant in itself, it points to a stronger commitment than he chose to remember later.

With the forthcoming elections looming in July 1932, the political battle became increasingly critical. En route to a long-planned faltboat holiday on the East Prussian lakes, Speer and Margret drove to Berlin, he said, to feel part "of the exciting election atmosphere and—if possible—to help. . . ."

He put himself and his car at the disposal of the NSKK Berlin West (the Nazi Party car pool) and was assigned to courier duty by its chief Will Nagel, whom six years later Speer would appoint his chief of staff. When he was sent to pick up a party official at the airport where the leadership group was to arrive, it provided him with his second opportunity to see Hitler up close. He described it in both the draft and *Inside the Third Reich*:

I saw a rather different Hitler there than the quiet, civilized man who addressed the students a year and a half before. He was nervous, obviously annoyed because the cars which were to pick him up had not arrived and he was kept waiting. He spoke angrily to one of his staff and, furiously pacing up and down, hitting his high leather boots with a dogwhip, gener-

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July 27, 1932: The Fichtelbrunn Stadium organized. His words are

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The building in Berlin's their Gau HQ was in the judicial offices. From a background of the Hindenburg stroll in the garden

SA men in Heidelberg in the spring of 1931. "She said it was the first time in years that she had sensed energy and joy in the people," Speer said. "She immediately joined, without ever having known anything about the party, because in the sea of pessimism that was Germany at the time, they made her feel optimistic."

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ally gave the impression of an ill-mannered and uncontrolled man. . . . [In his draft, but not in the book, he added] but I was already too involved in party doings to allow this unfavorable impression to affect my thinking.

The day after he wrote this, having thought it over, he added, to Wolters:

Re-reading this has made me wonder whether I'm losing myself in details which will interest neither you nor anyone else. I am of course moved, retrospectively, by a lot of probably immaterial matters. Well, later you and I can apply a determined red pencil to all this. I am trying not to conceal, whitewash or gloss over my development in any way, but rather, by putting myself back into that time while writing, to describe it exactly as it was. Thus, just as in the last part [of this draft] I am describing the negative aspects, by the same token I don't want here to diminish the positive ones, as they affected me at the time. . . .

What affected him most, erasing the momentary disappointment at seeing a different, not so pleasant Hitler, was the wild enthusiasm of the masses throughout that day and Hitler's insistence on confronting the equally wild, demonstrating Social Democrats and communists head-on, standing erect in his car. "I wouldn't have liked to be in his place," Speer writes. "I admired his courage then and I do now." Goebbels commented in his diary,

July 27, 1932: The Führer, late at night addresses 120,000 people at the Grünewalder Stadium. The largest open-air rally the movement has ever organized. His words are greeted with indescribable ovations. . . .

The next day was a decisive one for Speer's fate, as he wrote in Spandau:

Our faltboats were packed and we were to take the train to East Prussia that same night, but when I went to take my leave from [Nagel] he told me that Hanke—who had by now become organizational chief [under Goebbels as Gauleiter] of the Gau Berlin—wanted to see me. And when I hurried over there he immediately said, "I've been looking for you everywhere. Wouldn't you like to build our new district HQ?" I said, "Yes, certainly, if you want to entrust it to me."

"I'll propose it to 'the Doctor' [Goebbels] today," Hanke said. A few hours more and I would have been out of reach in the isolation of the Prussian lakes. For years after that, I considered it the luckiest coincidence of my life. And now? Well, anyway, it shows us how dizzily one's whole life can be affected by a few hours more or less.

The building in Berlin's elegant Vosstrasse which the party had selected for their Gau HQ was in the government district, almost adjacent to the presidential offices. From a back window, Speer could watch the ancient President Hindenburg stroll in the garden accompanied by politicians and Wehrmacht

officers. "Moving there," wrote Speer, "was also part of their 'respectability' campaign."

Again the commission was a conversion rather than new construction. "As I was always to do from then on," he wrote in Spandau,

I worked day and night, easy enough for a 27-year-old with good nerves. A valuable support for me then was a young secretary of Goebbels's, who took on working overtime to type my tenders at night—just as she now works nights on my "case."

This, of course, was Annemarie Kempf, who by the time Speer wrote his "Spandau draft" in 1953, had been working for several years in Bonn, where she had accepted a job for the sole purpose of being close to the government people who might be helpful to Speer in the campaign she, Wolters and Hilde had begun to get him out of Spandau.

"Karl Hanke introduced me to him in the summer of 1932," she told me. "Speer had just been given his first architectural commission and a desk in a kind of reception area in his office. Hanke asked me whether I could help him [Speer] a bit in whatever time I had left over after working—yes, unpaid—at the *Gau* office. I had of course already heard about him when he painted Hanke's office red. So I said, yes sure, and I started giving him a hand. That's also when they began to give me a bit of money.

"If I had to say what my first memory is of Speer," she said, "it would be of a big table, topsy-turvy full of drawings, designs and color patterns and him reaching out and always finding whatever he wanted, without even looking. The order of his mind even then simply cut through—simply ignored—chaos." With her analytical memory, she thus, as Speer himself might have done, pointed me toward Speer's greatest secret weapon: his sharp, orderly mind. "He seemed very poised for someone so young," she said. "But frankly, I didn't pay that much attention to him—I was doing a million things; he was not the center of my life. I was not committed to any man, but to the purpose of a politically and socially changed world."

That's how the long relationship started for young Annemarie, idealistic daughter of idealistic parents. "I had an enormous capacity for enthusiasm," she said. "But not for Speer. He didn't—how shall I put it?—he didn't provoke a personal, an emotional reaction; even later, I think he never wanted it from anybody—indeed, to go further, he probably did everything to avoid it. If there was anything conspicuous about him," she said, "it was his stillness, his calm. In fourteen years, I hardly ever saw him lose it."

"I didn't see much of Goebbels," Speer wrote in Spandau. "They were preparing for the November election and he only came around a few times,

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On October 1, exactly on time as Speer would always be, the conversion was completed. "Today we moved from our old, by now much-loved HQ to Vosstrasse, smack in the middle of the government district," Goebbels noted. "How long will it be," he wonders, "before we move again—to the Wilhelmstrasse [the Chancellery]?"

But they would have to wait. On November 6, 1932, after Goebbels joined in a wildcat transport strike in Berlin, the Nazis unexpectedly suffered a bad defeat at the polls, losing by more than two million votes. Speer and Margret had returned to Mannheim. "There wasn't anything else we could do," he told me. "The party didn't even have enough money to pay the few builders and painters I had working in the Vosstrasse. It was very embarrassing, both for me and Hanke." A week or so later, when Hitler came to see the reconditioned *Gau* headquarters and declared himself satisfied, Speer was already facing the fact that in Mannheim nothing had changed. There was still no work. By the end of that year, Willie Schelkes left.

"I opened my own office here in Freiburg," Schelkes said, when we talked there in 1985. "Actually it took off quite well, and when Speer, back in Berlin after the March elections had put the Nazis into power, asked me to join him there, I said, 'No, thanks.' I was doing all right in Freiburg, and also I wasn't that keen on the political scene that had emerged. You see, I had come out of the Bündische Jugend. We were also nationalists, but different from the National Socialists—certainly not anti-Semitic."

He was of course aware of the Nazis' anti-Semitism. "How could one not be?" he said. "Of course, one had no idea—I mean just no idea at all that they might actually kill, murder people. . . . That would have been inconceivable. Were they really thinking of that then? You know, I really doubt it. But anti-Semitism as a central issue of the campaign—yes, that one *couldn't* not see."

Nineteen thirty-two was Hitler's year of decision: Goebbels in his diary entries—and in *Der Angriff*—reported on the Führer's almost daily speeches from one end of Germany to the other.

Watching Hitler on old newsreels, and listening to his orations, it is almost impossible today to understand his phenomenal appeal to the masses. Conditioned as we are now to continuous visual confrontation with public personalities, most of whom have been so streamlined as to lose virtually all real personality, the rawness of Hitler's delivery seems ludicrously amateurish now. But as Joachim Fest, writing one of the best analyses of Hitler the speaker, says,

* . . . Those who think [his] success was entirely due to the unbridled, almost sensual extravagance of his delivery are mistaken; what it really was, was the calculated intermingling of frenzy and rationality. Standing always deadly pale and gesticulating in the light of projectors (after a few early failures he only spoke at night, with artificial lighting), hoarsely hurling his accusations and tirades, or almost whispering his declarations of faith and love for his listeners, he was always unflinchingly in control. . . .

As possibly no other politician in our time, Hitler understood the art of public speaking, of pauses, of silence, of inducing, inciting and enflaming passion. "I am ashamed of it now," said Speer, "but at the time, I found him deeply exciting."

The political situation was so unsettled that in January 1933 Hindenburg reluctantly had to name Hitler Chancellor in a coalition government. Hitler accepted, on condition that there must be one more election—but promised that would be the last. That was one promise he kept.

Speer and Margret felt desperate about being stuck in Mannheim. Of course, they had no idea they could ever become part of Hitler's circle—the thought never entered their minds. But having had a brief taste of the excitement and energy of that world, Mannheim seemed almost unbearably stale. "A country cannot be governed by such people," Speer thought after attending a membership meeting of the intellectually abysmal local party group. Goebbels wrote in his diary,

January 30/31, 1933: It is almost like a dream. Wilhelmstrasse is ours. The Führer is already working in the Chancellery. We are standing at the windows up there and watch as hundreds of thousands upon hundreds of thousands stream by their ancient President and young Chancellor and, by the light of thousands of torches, cheer and sing their gratitude. . . . The new Reich is born . . . victory after a struggle of fourteen years . . . we have reached our goal. The German revolution begins. . . .

Four weeks later, on March 5, following the controversial Reichstag fire and a number of acts of terror by the Nazis against the opposition, the Nazis, with the aid of a small right-wing party, were narrowly voted into power. And a week after this electoral triumph, Hanke telephoned Speer in Mannheim and asked how soon he could come to Berlin—there was work for him.

He had the oil changed in their small BMW sports car, they packed "a little suitcase" and he and Margret drove through the night to Berlin, where he reported to Hanke immediately on arrival. "Dr. Goebbels has just been named Propaganda Minister; you are to drive with him to see his new minister," Hanke told him.

On March 11, 1933, Speer shared Goebbels's ceremonial arrival at the beau-

* D.T.'s suggestion

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tiful nineteenth-century building on Wilhelmsplatz, built by the famous architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Goebbels in his diary:

March 11: The sun high in the sky shines warmly upon this wonderful Germany. The joy in work has returned. But an inspection of the working conditions in my new house . . . shows them to be very unsatisfactory. Workmen will have to be brought in to clean up these rooms. They'll have to get rid of all this stucco, and throw away the musty plush curtains: I can't function in these dark rooms; I need sunlight, clean, clear lines—I hate twilight.

According to Speer, Goebbels then and there commissioned him, of whom he knew nothing except for the little conversion of the Gauhaus, to undertake the necessary alterations. Speer wrote,

Again it was to be done in a great hurry, and again we worked day and night. Aside from designing some new furniture for the Minister's rooms—my first opportunity to apply what I had learned from Tessenow—I tried to respect Schinkel's interior designs.

Speer mentions in neither the draft nor *Inside the Third Reich* the difficulties he obviously had carrying out alterations in an architecturally protected building in a way which would both satisfy his own taste and meet Goebbels's requirements. The latter noted in his diary (his first mention of Speer was not until December 19, 1935):

March 13: As I have encountered nothing but problems for the reconstruction of the building and even the furnishing of my own rooms, I brought in without further ado some experienced old building hands I knew from the SA and the same night they tore out plaster and wood lining and threw it all down the ceremonial staircase. The next morning, when the worthy old bureaucrats arrived (who will be the next I'll throw down those stairs) they murmured their warning that I could end up in prison for what I had done. They haven't caught on that our revolution will not be stopped either by old men, old files, or old stucco. . . . [After less than two weeks the work was completed.]

March 23: Today my definitive move to my new ministry. The new rooms suit my taste; sunny, airy, full of light—here one can work. In the evening I celebrate the completion with my construction workers, all old comrades from the SA. . . .

Karl Hanke, who had been promoted to Minister's Secretary, continued his role as Speer's patron when, within days of finishing Goebbels's ministry, Speer saw on his desk the designs of the decor for the May 1 rally at Tempelhof Field. When he remarked that they looked like decorations for a shooting

match, Hanke said that if he thought he could do better, to go to it. That same night, Speer designed a platform and behind it three "huge, marvelous flags," as he described them in Spandau, "two of them black-white-red and the one between them the swastika banner, all of them fifteen meters high."

This was to be the first time Speer gave his theatrical talent free rein. "I got the best lighting technicians and together we set up beautiful effects with huge searchlights." Hitler apparently loved it—so much so that Goebbels claimed the idea as his own. (Tessenow's comment to Speer—"They are big, that's all"—stung slightly, but Speer consoled himself with the thought that Tessenow "didn't understand the country's new spirit.") As far as Speer knew, Hitler was still unaware of his existence. His next commission was to redesign the interior of Goebbels's new residence and to add a large reception hall. Speer lightheartedly promised to have it ready in eight weeks. In Spandau he described what happened:

When Goebbels told Hitler, he said it couldn't be done and Goebbels, no doubt to spur me on, told me of the Führer's doubts. . . . This started a wild 24-hour-a-day construction program in three shifts, with me snatching an hour's sleep here and there. Hitler, with his passion for construction, came over every few evenings to observe our progress and apparently continued to express his doubts—never to me, because Goebbels kept me in the background. . . .

It was during the preparation for the first party rally in Nuremberg after the Nazis came to power that Speer had his first encounter with Hitler, very soon after he completed Goebbels's residence. The rally organizers were having problems with the stadium decor and somebody remembered the architect who had designed the Tempelhof platform for the May 1 celebrations. Speer was flown to Nuremberg and, not unimpressed by this signal honor, rapidly drew some sketches—"not very brilliant," by his own admission. "For a background there I just replaced those huge flags I had invented for May 1 with a huge eagle, about twenty meters across, nailed to a truss like a butterfly."

The organizers didn't dare make a decision when shown the drawing, and sent the unknown young architect to see Rudolf Hess in Munich. "Only the Führer can decide this," said Hess, and he picked up the telephone. "He is here, you are going to his apartment."

"In Spandau I once teased Hess about his indecisiveness on that occasion," Speer said. "He immediately said he would never have dared make decisions such as this on his own; that Hitler reserved all important decisions for himself."

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In the Führer's second-floor apartment near Munich's elegant Prinzregentenstrasse, he was immediately taken in to Hitler. "And there I stood," wrote Speer in Spandau, "before Hitler, the Chancellor, who, it would seem, had just taken a pistol apart that was lying in pieces on the table in front of him. 'Put your drawings down here,' he said without looking up, pushing the pistol parts aside. He looked at the sketches with interest, but never looked at me. 'Agreed,' he said then and, ignoring my presence, turned back to cleaning his gun. I left."

He didn't remember if he had said anything to Hitler. "I don't know," he said. "Probably 'Guten Tag.' " No "Heil Hitler" and "Deutscher Gruss"? Isn't that what everybody was supposed to do? I asked.

"Well, I was never much one for raising my arm, not later either. I mean, it was so silly. Still, I should remember this," he said. But he didn't enlarge upon these details in either *Inside the Third Reich* or the draft. "I really think I just stood there," he said. "I was pretty confused, and that gun gave me a strange feeling." He laughed it away, as he often laughed away embarrassing topics. "It's probably all nonsense: all in my head, retrospective panic. I was probably just overcome with reverence," he said, mocking himself.

Although Hitler still knew nothing about him, as he would confirm to Speer a few months later, he was now on his way. That autumn, Hitler commissioned Professor Paul Ludwig Troost, one of Germany's grand old architects, to rebuild the Reich Chancellor's apartment in Berlin. "And here," said Speer, "I benefited from the fact that Troost and his wife, who was equally famous as an interior designer, lived in Munich and didn't know much about the Berlin building scene. Hitler remembered that some young architect in Berlin had finished Goebbels's flat in record time. And he gave orders that I was to join Troost's team to assist the building supervisor with local matters: the selection of building and decorating firms, and whatever else I could do to speed up the work."

This began with an inspection of the Chancellor's residence by Hitler, accompanied only, as would become the custom over the next months, by the building supervisor and Speer. "But you know, I had the feeling he didn't even see me; he never looked at me. During the many inspections he made of our progress—although he asked many questions, some of which were up to me to answer—he never addressed me directly. I came to feel that was just his way; I accepted it as, well, normal. Why should the great man talk to me? It was enough for me just to be there."

He hadn't thought it would lead to other commissions from Hitler. "This wasn't a commission for me; it was Troost's. And that seemed quite right to me—he was a famous man; I was nothing. I honestly think I didn't even

D.T. He paid no attention at all — he was like a girl who seeks to know a cat in a room by ignoring him

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see p 102

dream of anything extraordinary then, because even though I was there, in his presence, and certainly always very aware of it, I was aware too that he seemed oblivious of my existence."

During these noontime visits to the site, on which Hitler, accompanied only by an adjutant with two SS men in civvies unobtrusively in the background, would ask the supervisor—and, incidentally, Speer—"terse questions" about progress of the various assignments, his manner apparently changed entirely when talking, as he always did, to the construction crew. "I must say," Speer said, "the way Germany's most powerful man walked about there, unguarded and apparently not a care in the world, did seem quite extraordinary, quite wonderful to me. It was—I can't call it anything else—an ideal picture of modesty, and the workers felt and reacted to this, soon just calling 'Hello' when he arrived.

"There again, you see, no standing at attention or '*Deutscher Gruss*'—they felt at ease with him. It was very evident that he felt at home on site, and this, you know, was likeable—he seemed intent on avoiding any kind of playing to the gallery.

"How to explain this," he said, "so that someone today can understand, can imagine what it was like? Here was this man, who, it seemed as if by magic, had already in a few months changed our country beyond recognition. Everything in Germany was flourishing. The unemployed were back at work; there were work projects everywhere—we lived and breathed optimism.

"I think it's true to say that his lack of affectation captivated me, and, yes, I enjoyed living in this aura of reflected glory. A lot of people—my students and friends at the university, and Hanke and that crowd—they all knew I was working on that site, and questions rained down on me, not about the work, of course, but about him. Was it true, they asked, that he came every day? Virtually alone? Unguarded? 'That's pretty reckless of him,' the party people said, but actually, everybody was delighted, just as I was."

And then one day, at the end of the usual noon visit, Hitler, who had never seemed to notice him, suddenly turned to him as he was leaving and said, "Come along to lunch."

"Can you imagine this?" said Speer. "Here I was, young, unknown and totally unimportant, and this great man, for whose attention—just for one glance—our whole world competed, said to me, 'Come and have lunch.' I thought I'd faint. Just that morning, climbing about on the site, I'd got some plaster on my suit and Hitler noticed me looking doubtfully at my dirty sleeve. 'Don't worry about that,' he said. 'We'll fix it upstairs.' And upstairs he took me into his private quarters and told his valet to get his dark blue

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"The party elite were assembled for lunch—soon afterwards I would discover that he always had large groups for lunch—and Goebbels's eyes popped. He immediately noticed what I hadn't seen, Hitler's golden party badge, the only one of its kind. 'What are you doing?' he said sharply. 'What are you wearing there?'

" 'He is wearing my jacket,' Hitler said, and pointed to the seat next to him. 'Sit down here,' he said.

"Can you conceive what I felt?" Speer said again. "Here I was, twenty-eight years old, totally insignificant in my own eyes, sitting next to him at lunch, wearing his clothes and elected—at least that day—as virtually his sole conversational partner. I was dizzy with excitement."

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GERMANY IN 1933 was in a ferment of excitement, of new measures and of new enthusiasms. The ideals of National Socialism were attractive, even though there were rough spots in their execution. But it was obvious that the new regime was effective in dealing with many of the most worrisome problems: unemployment, housing, the national self-image savagely dented by the defeat in World War I and the Versailles Treaty. Every positive element in the national life was the creation of and personified by one man, the Führer, the leader of his people.

Speer's first lunch with this demigod was to remain in his mind forever. He reported on it several times in varying ways: in the "Spandau draft," in *Inside the Third Reich*, and in additional recollections during our conversations. Here first is the "Spandau draft," marginally fuller than the book:

During and after this lunch was the first time that Hitler asked me some personal questions. Only then did he discover that it was I who had been the designer for the May 1 celebration.

"Is that so?" he said. "And Nuremberg, was that also your design? There was an architect then who came to see me with the plans; but of course, that was you, wasn't it? Well, I would never have believed that you could have finished the Goebbels project by the deadline."

He asked nothing about my affiliation or activities in the party. Later, when I had occasion to observe him with others from whom he commissioned works of art, I realized that with artists he simply didn't care [about their politics]. Aside from my career as an architect, what he did ask a lot about, as I remember, were the buildings designed by my father and grandfather.

It was quite obvious that this luncheon would be of decisive significance for my future. A few years later, Hitler came back to it: "I noticed you during my visits to the site," he said. "I was searching for a young architect to whom I would be able to entrust my building plans one day. He had to be young because, as you know, these plans extend far into the future. I needed someone who, with the authority I conferred upon him now, would be capable of carrying on after my death. And that man I found in you."

"By the time he said this to me—I think it was about two years later—" said Speer, "a great deal had happened; I had become part of his circle and even though my first assignments from him were comparatively minor, I realized that there was now virtually no limit to what I might achieve."

In *Inside the Third Reich*, he said that for a commission to create a great building he would have sold his soul like Faust and that here he had found his Mephistopheles. But did he actually feel this at the time?

"No, of course not," he said. "That's the whole point—I unreservedly admired him, could see no fault in him and honestly could hardly believe my luck."

He could hardly believe his luck because even this extraordinary patronage did not yet convince him of his talent as an architect?

"Yes and no," he said, after some hesitation. "People who have never experienced the effect this kind of man has on those around him can hardly ever understand this. Although my life very quickly was almost exclusively focused on Hitler, and indeed, Hitler became my life, there were of course other people around. And the extraordinary thing was that his liking for me having become so obvious, so quickly, almost everybody around him reacted to it. I mean, architecturally I was still a nobody. All I had proved so far was that I could be quick. But all of them began to treat me, who at twenty-eight was younger than any of them, like 'somebody.' I never analyzed any of this then, but at that time I never analyzed anything; I just accepted—gratefully, I think, rather than as my due—that I was going to have a wonderful life, wonderful beyond any dreams." *

Very soon after that fateful lunch, Speer had become part of Hitler's small personal circle. He was expected to drop in at the beginning of Hitler's day in mid-morning for a brief chat or a bracing walk; was called in repeatedly at odd moments during the day to discuss architectural projects, or, more often, some of Hitler's sudden ideas and sketches; and had dinner with him and his intimates every night.

During that period, Hitler's close circle included his adjutants Wilhelm Brückner and Julius Schaub, both SS officers; Sepp Dietrich, the Commander of the SS Leibstandarte (Hitler's own SS regiment, entrusted with, among other things, his personal security); his two secretaries, Johanna Wolf and Christa Schröder; his personal photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann; and his longtime chauffeur, Julius Schreck, whose "peasant sanity" sometimes made Hitler face reality. "Hitler would sit in front with Schreck," Speer once told me, "and I would hear Schreck make caustic remarks about the fawning courtiers who surrounded him. He was the only person who was allowed such liberties."

Speer soon also regularly attended the daily luncheons which Hitler used

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to keep in touch with—and keep in check—his old political comrades; in those early years Goebbels and Göring also lunched with him almost every day.

Although wives (and Hitler's private secretaries) were frequently asked to the supper gatherings, and the entire household staff was invited in for the nightly film shows both in Berlin and Berchtesgaden, Margret for a long time was not part of this social scene. There were two reasons why this didn't strike her as strange: first of all (as she would tell me after we knew each other much better), she didn't dream that Speer's professional life with Hitler could ever include her in any way—Speer didn't tell her that a number of women were regular guests at his table. Secondly, however, something quite as momentous as Speer's own great experience had happened to her. She had long hoped to have children; in her concept of life that was the main purpose of marriage. And around the time in late 1933, when Hitler had entrusted Speer with his first personal commission—converting a large hall in the Chancellery overlooking the garden into a new office for him and adding a balcony in the front of the building from which he could accept the homage of the masses—Margret became pregnant. (Albert was to be born on July 29, 1934.)

During this pregnancy Speer was hardly ever home. During the last few months of 1933 and the first half of 1934 one commission followed another: all conversions, but all requiring completion in record time.

With Hitler's favor so manifest, approaches came from others too. At one of Hitler's luncheons that exhilarating winter, Göring asked Hitler whether it was Speer who was doing his residence. "Is he your architect [now], my Führer?" he asked. And although it was Troost—greatly admired by Speer—who was then still Hitler's official architect, Hitler blithely answered in the affirmative, whereupon Göring asked permission to have Speer remodel his own—only recently sumptuously refurbished—residence along the simple uncluttered lines of Hitler's new official home.

In order to be available to his patron at all times, Speer had rented a painter's studio a few hundred yards from the Chancellery to use as his office. For the first few months, his only full-time assistant would be Rudolf Wolters, just back from the Soviet Union.

Annemarie, now seventeen and still working for no pay in Goebbels's *Gauleitung*, came over sometimes to lend a helping hand. At the end of that year, however, she came down with TB and had to stay home for six months. After her recovery, she was at last given a paid job as editorial secretary at *Der Angriff*.

This was very different, she said, from the early exhilarating, easygoing days in the *Gauleitung* when there were no bosses or employees. As she put it

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in one of our early talks in Hamburg, they had all been "young people fired by their passion for a common purpose." It was not, she said, that at *Der Angriff* there were class differences—the party had been very successful in abolishing those. "No, the difference was that now it was no longer a *Kampfzeit*, a time of struggle. The party was in government now, and there was more pressure on everybody."

I suggested that working among journalists must have given her some indication of the restrictive way the party handled news, but she disagreed. She hadn't known enough to be a judge of that, she said. But as individuals, she said, "one felt no restrictions on how one was supposed to feel, act, or for that matter, talk. I have thought about it a great deal," she said. "As far as our awareness of personal freedom was concerned, I can assure you, we felt if anything freer than before." Nobody, she said, cared whether or not they took part in demonstrations. "I don't like crowds," she said, "so I never did. It was the same later when I was in Speer's office; whether it was during the years of his architectural work, or afterwards as a Minister, there was no question of anyone being required to attend political functions. If they wanted to, they did; if they didn't, well, then they didn't."

Early in 1934 Speer, just put in charge of a section of the Workers' Front named "Beauty of Labor," was told to design a new kind of barracks camp for the workforce constructing Fritz Todt's *Autobahnen*. Speer was delighted. By asking him to develop a model installation with proper infrastructure—kitchens, showers, laundry rooms, comfortable recreation rooms and sleeping cabins with only two beds rather than the depersonalized dormitories which had been the norm until then—Hitler, Speer felt, was showing the social attitude he had always expected to find in the National Socialist Führer.

"Very soon afterwards, though," said Speer, "he only seemed to want big constructions, representational buildings. It was, oddly enough, Goebbels and Hess—he perhaps more than anyone else—who would later keep asking me when I would start designing houses for people to live in. But this was much later; eventually I promised Hess that for every representational structure I built, I would put up a housing estate. In the end, of course, it didn't happen. It would have had to wait until after the war."

The successful design of the barracks camp—which in itself was but a drop in Speer's overflowing architectural bucket at the time—had the interesting sequel of Margret's first meeting with Hitler. Not writing about it in the "Spandau draft," he mentions it in passing in *Inside the Third Reich* but enlarged upon it considerably during our conversations.

At the beginning of 1934, having completed the design for the barracks camp, Speer received his first official appointment—as department chief on Rudolf Hess's staff. (Later, Goebbels, not to be outdone by Hess in this curi-

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ous wooing of Speer, would confer the same rank on him on *his* staff.) Speer told me that it was because of this new appointment that, in the early spring of that year, he was for the first time invited to one of Hitler's official receptions to which Karl Hanke, as a matter of course, also invited Margret. "And that was going to be a bit of a surprise for Hitler," he said, smiling.

We were walking in the woods above his Heidelberg house when he made that remark. What did he mean, I asked, and he replied, a little impatiently, that as he had never yet mentioned Margret to Hitler, she was bound to be a surprise.

I stopped dead on the path: I could see that in an ordinary patron-artist (or employer-employee) relationship, I said, the artist's private life could be immaterial. But this surely was different: here he had been talking for hours about the joy of Hitler's "total" interest in him, his many questions about his life for what was now almost nine months after that first lunch. How was it possible that his marriage of six years had never come up?

He looked puzzled. "I don't know," he said. Perhaps, he added, he hadn't mentioned Margret because he had been put off by Hitler's behavior toward Eva Braun, his mistress. "He hid her from everybody except his most intimate circle but at that point, even there, denied her any social standing and constantly humiliated her. It was a painful thing to see. She was really a very nice girl," he said, "young, shy and modest. I liked her right away and later we became good friends; she could use a friend."

He sounded sad about Eva Braun, and warm remembering her. Even so, his concern about Hitler's conduct toward his mistress didn't seem an adequate reason for his having virtually concealed from him Margret's existence. Without realizing it, Speer allowed me a glimpse of his complicated feelings for Hitler.

Clearly, Hitler's ill-mannered conduct toward Eva Braun, however disturbing to Speer, wasn't what had stopped him from mentioning his marriage. The real reason was that he had been in an emotional uproar ever since that first lunch. Speer was not—I repeat—a homosexual, but he was a deeply repressed romantic; Hitler created a strength of feeling in him he hadn't known he was capable of. He did not know what these feelings were, would not understand their "erotic" (rather than sexual) component until fourteen years later, when he read and, he told me, agreed with psychologist Alexander Mitscherlich's explanation (of which more later).

His not mentioning his marriage to Hitler was part of this complex storm of emotions into which, without ever making a conscious decision, he avoided injecting anything extraneous which might affect it, such as the fact of his marriage.

There had been a receiving line at the reception, Speer said, just Hitler,

Göring, Goebbels and Hess, with an adjutant to make the presentations. "When we came up to him and I said, 'My Führer, may I present my wife, Margret?' he looked taken aback, but then he just kissed her hand, as he did with all the ladies, and made one of his heavily gallant remarks to the effect that I had no doubt good reason for hiding my wife. But a little later—we were standing around having drinks before dinner—he came up to me and told the person I was talking with that he wanted a word with me. Then he said in what I thought was a curiously serious tone of voice, 'Speer, why didn't you tell me you were married?' I remember blushing, and I stammered something like I didn't know, and then he asked, 'How long have you been married?' I said, 'Six years, my Führer.' And then he asked how many children we had, and I said none. [He was obviously unwilling to say that Margret was then five months pregnant.] 'Six years married, and no children?' he said. 'Why?'

"All I could think was that I'd like the floor to open so that I could disappear. . . . Anyway, as you know, after that we had five children in fairly quick succession, and Ernst, our sixth, in 1943—or 1944, I'm not quite sure." (It was September 1943.)

It almost sounded as though he had the children for Hitler, I said. He looked up sharply but then deflected my impulsive remark with a shrug. "One might say so," he said. "Ah, well. . . ."

As Speer and Margret were standing together after dinner, Hitler joined them. "Your husband," he said to her, cupping her elbow, "is going . . . to put up buildings for me such as haven't been built perhaps for four thousand years."

"With pretty women," Speer told me, "he was, oddly enough, quite physical. He was always linking arms with them or, as he did that night with Margret, cupping their elbows."

According to several survivors of Hitler's circle I have spoken with, Hitler from that evening on took a special liking to Margret, often referring to her as "*Meine schöne Frau Speer*"—"My beautiful Frau Speer."

("Hitler liked Margret Speer very much," said Leni Riefenstahl, who was herself much appreciated by Hitler. "He presented her to me as 'My Frau Speer.' She was very pretty, and he really liked pretty women. He didn't want to do anything about them, as a man: I think basically he just liked to be—and to be seen to be—surrounded by them.")

But aside from that, Hitler had as little of moment to say to Margret as he did to any of the other wives. With very few exceptions, light banter was virtually his only way of social intercourse with women. Unfailingly courteous to them, warmly concerned for their health, he was very ready to chat about



Above: Albert Speer and his wife Mathilde. Right: Speer and his father, Albert, in 1941. Speer was a self-made industrialist; she was a social butterfly and an enamored of social marriage. Right: Five years later, in 1946, the Heidelberg he

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Above: Albert Speer's mother, Luise Mathilde, and his sixteen-years-older father, Albert Friedrich Speer, when they married in 1900, with her parents, Luise and Hermann Hommel. He was a self-made, immensely rich industrialist; she "counted the cubes in the sugar box." Speer's mother, a social butterfly as a girl, remained enamored of society life after her marriage. Right: Speer's parents forty years later, in 1940, in the garden of the Heidelberg house



music, theater, actors and, with someone like Riefenstahl, to talk knowledgeably about the lighter type of films which, with Wagner operas and the Wild West novels by Karl May, were his main distraction.

But he could show sharp irritation if, as a few did over the years, women showed any sign of stepping outside or beyond their role. Both his second senior secretary, Christa Schröder, a woman of some character and intelligence, and Henrietta von Schirach, the daughter of Hitler's photographer and constant companion, Heinrich Hoffmann, and wife of Baldur von Schirach (head of Hitler Youth), were said to have run afoul of Hitler when they attempted to argue with him. Christa Schröder dared to disagree with him when he objected to young soldiers smoking. He pointedly ignored her afterwards for weeks. "It was a long time before he forgave my *faux pas*," she says in her book *Er war mein Chef* (*He Was My Chief*).

Henrietta von Schirach allegedly asked Hitler if he knew how the Jews in Holland were being treated, after she had witnessed arrests in Amsterdam in the spring of 1943. She said in her memoirs, *The Price of Glory*, that she was forbidden access to the Berghof, where she had more or less grown up, from that day on.

Speer told me he hadn't been there when she confronted Hitler. "But I came soon afterwards and found the atmosphere very oppressed. Everybody was going around with dark faces, because all of us felt very protective of Hitler. On the *Berg* one made it a rule not to bring up anything disagreeable, in order to protect his short periods of rest." (Hitler's intimates often referred to his mountain retreat as "on the *Berg*"—the mountain.)

I suggested that unless they were aware of what was happening to the Jews, their concern about upsetting Hitler was difficult to understand. After all, he talked a great deal about the Jews himself. But Speer was not to be drawn out. "Of course, I myself wasn't present," he said again.

Interestingly, Nicolaus von Below, Hitler's longtime adjutant, wrote in his memoirs that both of the Schirachs were banished, not because of her courage but because of her husband's. Baldur von Schirach and his wife had come to visit Hitler at the Berghof on June 24, 1943. Hitler angrily recounted to Below later that Schirach had insisted that a way had to be found to end the war. "How does he imagine that can be done?" Hitler said to Below. "He knows just as well as I that there is no way out anymore, other of course than my shooting myself."

"Hitler was very put out over this conversation with Schirach," wrote Below, "and made very plain that he wanted nothing more to do with him. And indeed it was their last encounter."

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was left quite free. I was quite sure of my place in the universe. So meeting Hitler was fun rather than anything else—it was exciting, but I wasn't dazzled by the prospect.

"When everything came to an end," she said, "people fell over each other to represent life at the Berghof as horribly boring, with Hitler spouting endless nothings. Speer was guilty of that too—I say this despite our very real friendship with him. We were staying with the Speers at one point before his reminiscences were published, and I remember saying to him, after he gave us his manuscript to read, 'Now look, the Berghof chapter really isn't true. We all lived through this together, and Hitler's knowledge of history and art was phenomenal. Of course, the repetitions became tedious, but those first years particularly—how can you forget how excited we all were?' I asked him, 'And how many moments there were when we were happy?'"

(Speer had apparently given the von Belows his manuscript to read one evening, and then visited them—twice—in the middle of the night to find out what they thought of it. I was struck by this, as he had done a similar thing when I stayed with the Speers in 1978. As always, we had talked until after midnight. Margret had gone to bed hours before, and I finally suggested we should stop until the next morning. Half an hour later I was lying in bed, trying to read myself to sleep, when there was a soft knock at the door.

I got up, put on my dressing gown and found Speer, still fully dressed and clutching a thick sheaf of pages in both hands. "I suddenly remembered this tonight," he said. "I thought perhaps you could have a look at it and tell me what I could do with it." I took the manuscript from him and looked at it rather helplessly; it was well over two hundred pages, and I was already drowning in documentation from his archive. "I thought you might just leaf through it quickly now," he said. "It's profiles of all the men around Hitler," he said with his usual deceptive nonchalance. "I wrote them, with the help of questions from a British Intelligence officer, while I was held at Eisenhower's HQ in 1945."

I did read the manuscript through most of that night—it was impossible to put it down. And just as happened to the von Belows, around 4:30 a.m. I heard him come up the stairs and stop in front of my door. I confess I quickly—and pointedly—turned off my light. He tiptoed away then, but at 7:30 was waiting for me when I came down to breakfast. "What do you think?" he said, forgetting any "Good morning.")

"You know," Maria von Below continued, "I have never understood how diminishing the gifts Hitler so clearly did have made it any easier for people to live with having become bewitched by him. After all, he didn't gain the loyalty of decent and intelligent men by telling them his plan was murder and allowing them to see that he was a moral monster. He persuaded them be-

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cause he was fascinating. But to say that today is almost blasphemy. I don't know why so many people want to deny that extraordinary . . . spark in him. I often noticed later on how aware he was if one was not awed. I mean, if one seemed at ease with him, I think he liked that. He was immediately very nice to me."

Wasn't it that he was nice to all women? I asked.

"He was very polite to women," she said in that soft upper-class voice, "but he was 'nice' to people in different ways."

Did she like Hitler? I asked.

She wouldn't or couldn't answer that. "You know, it's easy to sneer, to criticize now," she said sadly, after a pause. "My children keep asking me how I—how we—could bear it. But my God, it was a different world then. For me, married for two months then to the most wonderful man I could imagine, the world was Klaus; in a way, Hitler was immaterial to me. I suppose you would have thought me rather lightweight, flippant. Klaus was a serious man, and with him seriousness entered my life. Of course, the more involved he became with Hitler, the more difficult it all became. As what Hitler did, thought and also his moods became increasingly important to Klaus, he of course became increasingly important to me too."

But she was flabbergasted when I interpreted this as her having begun to think critically of Hitler. "Oh, no," she said quickly, "I was in no position to judge him. . . ." She stopped and then tried to go on. "Only much later—quite late, and afterwards, when we, when we found out. . . ." The sentence trailed off. It is a reaction I have found time and again among Germans of that generation, especially those who had been close to Hitler. His terrible crimes were always on their minds, particularly when they came into contact with foreigners. Few of them had the courage to talk about their feelings even as much as Maria von Below did.

Margret Speer, however much she came to be at ease with me, could never bring herself to broach this subject.

From the day of that first reception she had attended, Margret came to belong to the Berghof circle Speer had already been part of for months. "Yes, she was always there," Maria said. "In Berchtesgaden always in the evening, but also very often for lunch."

But Margret never joined the party, Speer said. "Why should she have? They were philistines. One of us was quite enough. Hitler didn't care."

I once asked Margret herself in her husband's presence why she hadn't joined. She shrugged. Did she disagree with the Nazis' aims (as one fanciful American TV film about Speer later claimed)? "She was not political," Speer said, conclusively, and Margret was silent.

"She wasn't ever political, that's certainly true," her daughter Hilde said a

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told me when I asked if he had been aware of the crisis. "People will never believe me or understand when I say this, but my mind was on other things. When it was actually happening, of course, one could hardly avoid being 'aware,' as you put it, as the streets were full of soldiers and there was a crisis atmosphere. And as I saw Hitler every day, I knew of course that he was very perturbed. But certainly I did not see it as it was considered historically and politically later. At the time, in my rather special, inside-but-not-inside position, one got a pretty one-sided view, you know.

"I think even now, after untold numbers of books," he said, then smiled, "including mine, it hasn't been possible to convey the very special—the peculiar, I now realize—atmosphere of Hitler's world. You see—and I only learned to understand this later, when I had so much time to read in Spandau—when you think of government and those who govern, say, in England or in France, these men are professionals, whether as intellectuals or as civil servants. There were of course such people in Germany, but they were not around Hitler. With intellectuals he felt inferior and therefore distrusted them. And the civil servants he loathed. Furthermore, except for his 'Old Comrades,' he both instinctively and deliberately avoided the professional politicians. Except for the army people who were basically not chosen by him but assigned to him and then—yes, approved by him, if he liked their faces—the people he chose as his men were amateurs. That, after all, included me. When I became his architect, I was perhaps not an amateur, for I had studied, but I was certainly a novice. Later, when he appointed me to what was then probably the most difficult job in the land, Minister of Armaments and subsequently also of Production, for heaven's sake, in that I was a rank amateur. But what I wanted to point to—what I feel has never been quite understood—is the emotional atmosphere which reigned around Hitler and which, believe me, was extremely difficult to avoid. In fact, one was drawn by it and indeed drawn into it—even someone who by nature," he smiled again, "is as unemotional as I am."

But he would surely not claim to have been unemotional about Hitler? "No, I wouldn't," he said. "Anything but. . . . Anyway, to return to the Röhm Putsch: Hitler was very emotional when he arrived back from Bavaria where, most exceptionally, he had actually taken part in the attack on the SA. As a rule, you see, he not only avoided physical but indeed visual contact with violence. During the later stages of the war this meant that, however important it was for morale, it was virtually impossible to get him either to visit the front or the bombed cities.

"But after the Putsch he was full of outraged descriptions of what they had found in the lakeside hotel where the SA leadership meeting had taken place.

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He described much of it as a homosexual orgy. Nowadays people—I mean even people in society and the young—talk about these things as if they were nothing. But believe me, for most of us these were very strange and very unpalatable matters.

"And then, a few hours later, he returned, elated, from having called on Hindenburg, from whom he received very specific approval for the action. And that, you see, meant something, to me too: Hindenburg, after all, was 'The Old Man,' a proven man of honor."

Speer has written that Hitler's feeling of guilt (about ordering the murder of Röhm) was noticeable in his address to the Reichstag that night. But in our conversations he said he had not been aware of that until much later. "We weren't allowed [at Spandau] to read anything that had to do with the Third Reich, but when I came out I read up on it all, and then I recalled Hitler's mien and speech that night. You see, when it happened, just like when other things happened later—Austria, Czechoslovakia and so on—I suspect all I would have thought, if I thought at all, was that as Hitler was doing it, it had to be right."

During all those months Speer was rarely far from Hitler. "As I think about it now," he said, "I don't know how I managed to work as I did, because despite my frenetic work rhythm I had to be at his disposal whenever he called. Sometimes this was during the day, a call from an adjutant summoning me to lunch or for a chat about building—and this could be from Hitler in Munich to me in Berlin, and I'd have to drop whatever I was doing to get on a plane and join him. Or it was in Berchtesgaden, where he liked having those close to him around for lunch, for walks, for tea and then for his late suppers, the film shows and then long talks around the fire—these went on until late in the night, two o'clock or even later. Hitler himself never went to sleep until around 3 or 4 a.m. He was a night person; before the war he rarely started his day before 11 a.m. or even noon. It forced his staff into a kind of double life because the working day in Germany has always started at the latest at 8 a.m. But of course, at the time, one would never have thought of regretting—or complaining about—these crazy hours. Even though the long evening sessions were exhausting and, as time went on, increasingly boring, we were young and strong and always intensely aware of the honor of being one of the elect."

The Speers had rented a small hunting lodge in a village near Berchtesgaden. Speer thought it was ideal: close enough to be on call, but far enough away to retain some independence. But even this bit of privacy was soon to end. By mid-1935 Hitler had put at Speer's disposal a large house only minutes away from his own Berchtesgaden residence—the Bechstein Villa, where

years later—"But why? What is it for?" and he said, 'To thank you for your kindness,' and she said, 'But that isn't necessary, Herr Wolf; we know you have no money.' And that was Hitler," Irmgard said.

As the years went on, the little house—vastly expanded by Hitler with a huge sitting room, one wall an outsize window looking out to the stupendous mountains and Salzburg in the distance—became his Berghof, and the name came to be used for the whole compound. The Bechstein Villa—presented to him by the owners—became the guest house for VIPs, and luxurious establishments were built by Göring, Bormann and others in Hitler's entourage. The buildings on the mountain farms—bought by Bormann, who set up a foundation which raised funds by "voluntary" contributions from industry and a levy on the post office for the use of Hitler's picture on stamps—were torn down to provide the space for these.

The Irlingers, now in Hitler's domestic service, were to live in a flat in the newly built SS security quarters nearby. Before they moved in, Hitler would walk over almost every day to see how the building progressed. To the Irlingers, Hitler always was and, in a way, remained the "Herr Wolf" they knew as small girls. "Of course, life changed on the mountain," Rosa said. "It was very quiet when we were little. And then, after 1933, it became one vast construction site. Everybody our parents knew left; all the peasants, having sold their land to Bormann's foundation, went to live either on the other side of the mountain or in other parts of Bavaria altogether."

They looked puzzled when I asked if the people were angry about having to leave. "Why should they be?" Irmgard asked. "Bormann paid fairly, and people loved Hitler." Like their own parents, they said, most of them voted for him.

The change on the mountain was not only the additional security and the construction. "Above all," said Rosa, "it was people." Very suddenly, they said, "swarms of people started coming, by train, buses, cars, to tramp up the mountain and stand as close to Hitler's house as they could get, chanting rhythmically, 'We want to see our Führer!' until he came out. And then they would scream, applaud, sob, laugh hysterically, even fall to their knees." Rosa shook her head. "We could never understand it. To us he seemed no different; he was friendly, smiled—he was just Herr Wolf."

When Speer and Margret first came to live on the mountain in 1935, their first son, Albert, was one. Hilde was born in 1936, then Fritz in 1937; Margret, like her mother's shortened name, in 1938; Arnold in 1940; and Ernst in 1943. They lived there most of the time until almost the end of the war.

Margret talked to me about all her children, but the two she appeared to feel most at ease with were Arnold and Hilde. Speer spoke almost only about Hilde. Both of the parents—for different reasons—were eager for me to meet

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Speer was right about her resemblance to her mother. She is blond, blue-eyed, with a delicate face and a slim build. I suspect that Margret must have had a backbone of steel to achieve what she did—bringing up six children on her own—and she certainly passed that on to her eldest daughter. They are both intensely private women, though for different reasons: Margret was essentially inarticulate, perhaps because no one ever asked her to express herself. Hilde can talk to anyone and about every subject under the sun—but only by her own choice, and preferably not about herself.

She and I have talked in many places over the years: in Berlin, either in the apartment-hotel where I often stayed for weeks or in her large house which she shares with several friends and her husband, Ulf (they all live independently, but in a kind of community on separate floors—Hilde shared hers with their two children, Ruth and Moritz, both of whom are now grown); in Munich, where my husband and I had an apartment for the first years of my work on this book; and in London where she came to stay with us. I found in her some of her father's best qualities: curiosity, discipline, humor and of course that exceptional brain. In her, however, all this was very much married to humanity. She is a highly independent modern woman and an exceptional mother—contrary to her father, she knows how to love.

Hilde's memories of Berchtesgaden are in some respects almost idyllic, in others they have become traumatic. "My father, as I remember, only came rarely," she said. "Not more than once a month. I suppose it was only when Hitler was there, though I think he came less often than Hitler. Hitler spent a lot of time there in the years before—and the first years of—the war, much less later. I went up to see our house again in the 1950s and the people who owned it then showed it to me. It made our life up there come back to me with extraordinary vividness."

She had described it to me as "a small farmhouse," and the Speers' life there as "simple" in comparison with the massive Berghof, the Bechstein Villa and the Bormann and Göring properties. The Speer house is in fact fairly imposing but, given their life-style, one can imagine the family being cramped for space; the Speers and their children had a live-in staff of five: a housekeeper, a nurse-governess, two maids and a cook.

"My mother, and my father too, you know, no matter what he designed for Hitler, were anything but ostentatious," said Hilde. "Later I thought how right our parents had been to have us live a 'natural' life, as much like the village children as possible. Maybe it was my mother—she certainly seemed to make all the decisions about us children." She remembered those early years as a happy time. "Looking back, I think it's amazing how little we were aware of security or restrictions of any kind. Particularly when we were



simply being given the chance by Hitler to do the work—for him and for Germany—that was . . . happiness. It was all emotion, you know,” he continued, “very deep and pleasurable emotion. I mean, I couldn’t categorize these emotions, either then or later. Were my feelings mostly for the man, Hitler? For the country, Germany? For the work? I didn’t know nor, I suppose, did I need or seek to know. It was enough to feel something; above all, it was enough to *do* something.

“The prizes, well, I’m sure it must have pleased me, pleased all of us. Because, don’t forget—I certainly never did—that I didn’t work on my own. By the time of the Nuremberg project, and Paris, I had assembled a staff of brilliant young people. Later, while I was at Spandau, many of them made huge architectural careers.” (He pointed this out without bitterness, though later in our talks his tone would change.) “But it was the work that gave me joy, its purpose that gave me fulfillment. Now I quite like the idea of having won the prizes, because I suppose it does prove something about me as an architect, whatever I myself have come to think.”

Most of Speer’s architects, a number of whom contributed to the fund Rudolf Wolters set up when Speer was sent to Spandau, readily acknowledged the help they had had from him in their early career. Two who became very famous in the twenty years of his imprisonment would in fact suggest his joining their firms after his release. But not everyone agreed that Speer had always remembered the contributions made by his “staff of brilliant young people.”

In 1986, Leni Riefenstahl suggested I should go and see a former cameraman of hers, Walter Frentz, who had known Speer since their student days in Berlin and who, thanks to his help, had early in the war become the official Luftwaffe cameraman at Hitler’s HQ—a safe and fascinating job.

Frentz was a tall, slim man with a rugged face; he and his pretty wife, a painter, lived what looked like an idyllic life in a rather splendid house on Lake Constance, surrounded by paintings, books and picture-book scenery. What was strangely absent was almost any photographic evidence of his years of activity around Hitler. He claimed that most of it was destroyed or lost after the war (later I saw some of his photographs reprinted in a radical-right book).

Although charmingly talkative—one could see that he had excellent cocktail-party manners—he was exceptionally uninformative. Full of agreeable small talk, he claimed to have forgotten about almost everything connected with Hitler’s HQ, couldn’t recall a single person or event he photographed or any of many dozens of Hitler’s midnight tea gatherings he attended.

The exception to this amnesia (from which a lot of people suffered after having lived close to Hitler during his lifetime) were his memories—and

completing her immensely long autobiography, published in Germany in 1987 and in English in the early 1990s.

Like many others in Germany who were profoundly involved with Hitler, she tries almost obsessively to defend herself against the one accusation that seems to matter. She said time and again to me (and in her book) that she had never been anti-Semitic. "I told Hitler once that he shouldn't attack the Jews, that I could never dislike anyone because they were Jews or Negroes, and he said, 'You are young. You will learn to understand.' " Her book is full of such quotes—things many of us may have wished in our daydreams we had said to Hitler, but of course would never have dared say, even if we had had the opportunity. She is a complicated woman with formidable talents, and may well have come to believe her fantasies. Like practically every other contemporary witness I have talked to, she has no memory for dates, and many of her claims and quotes are contradicted by the Goebbels diaries, in which he meticulously noted each night everything he did, everyone he saw and a résumé of what had been said that day.

Goebbels, too, in his last nine years, wrote for posterity. On October 21, 1936, he concluded a very advantageous publishing contract for his diaries, with a huge advance of RM 250,000 and a guarantee after publication of RM 100,000 a year. One must never forget when reading his remarks that they represent *his* attitudes and *his* information at the time, which in our time may well be seen as disingenuous and often outrageous. Certainly his notes from 1936 on were addressed to future readers in a victorious Reich. It was essentially for them, for their appreciation of this glorious part of their history, that he recorded it. This point of view, however—and he stands almost unique in this respect—virtually guarantees the accuracy of his reports at least as far as they involved dates, policies and meetings with Hitler and his cohorts: the war won and the diaries published, these officials would no doubt have been the first to read them. What are less reliable are his reports and analyses of events abroad and, understandably enough, the personal aspects of the diaries. If one has some knowledge of the period and Goebbels's life after the Nazis came to power, one notes with interest his careful avoidance—after his contract was signed—of any mention of his almost compulsive sexual activity, about which he had previously written so frankly. He became remarkably discreet about his wife, Magda; his great love, the Czech film star Lida Baarova; and his longtime favorite assistant and State Secretary, Karl Hanke, with whom the ten-years-older Magda Goebbels, in despair over her husband's endless infidelities, in 1938–39 conducted a mutually passionate love affair until Hitler, using Speer as a messenger and mediator, ordered it ended.

Goebbels's recordings are thus, historically, if for no other reason than the immediacy of the notations, of the most unique significance. As a historical record, Riefenstahl's memoirs, written forty-plus years later, are irrelevant. But then, her book is not intended to teach history; it is meant to tell her own personal story as she needs to—and as she perhaps now does—remember it. If she chooses to underplay her former allegiance to the Third Reich, that is perhaps *her* way of “blocking” the unbearable.

It is obvious that she greatly liked Speer, though in some unimportant details (for example, Speer's first coming to her notice) Speer's 1969 book differs slightly from what she told me in 1986, when she was no doubt marginally adapting the story to fit in with the impression she wished to convey.

“I saw a photograph of him in *Der Angriff* in 1932,” she said. “That was just after I had met Hitler for the first time. At that time I was decidedly against the Nazis, not least because, living in the theater and film world, I had many Jewish friends [a fact a number of these friends later confirmed]. And when I saw that photograph, I thought how extraordinary it was that a man with a face like this should be for Hitler—if he was, I thought, then there had to be something to it all.” Speer described this differently and perhaps more believably; he quoted her as telling him in 1935 of having clipped that photograph when she saw it in 1932, thinking that “with that head” he might well play a part in one of her future films.

She finally met Speer in Nuremberg in 1934 during the rehearsals for *Triumph of the Will*, which was commissioned and actively supported by Goebbels. Throughout our conversations, and her subsequent book, she described Goebbels as her archenemy. One can only guess at the complications of a relationship between these two people, the desperately ambitious young Riefenstahl and the sexually rampant Goebbels. He was normally incapable of keeping his hands off beautiful women, particularly actresses who, as he was entirely in charge of theater and film, largely depended on his favor. But Hitler's undoubted admiration for Riefenstahl may well have acted as a brake on Goebbels.

Her book, in which, gratingly, she constantly refers to Goebbels as “that cripple” (he was handicapped from childhood with a clubfoot), unfortunately does not reveal the more complicated psychological reason for her enduring fury against him, which, one suspects, is more likely her shame at what she accepted from him, rather than anger at what he refused her. In fact, nothing Goebbels says in his diaries remotely suggests anything but a fairly close working relationship. Nor, aside from occasional impatience with her excitable nature and her tendency for intrigues, does anything he says point to animosity on either side. Remembering that there was no reason

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Speer used the German word *hörig*, descriptive of a gamut of emotions, from willing submission to servility to helpless passivity. It has no precise equivalent in English, and whenever Speer tried to convey in English this effect Hitler had on his environment, he met with complete incomprehension. This emerged clearly in a long interview (never broadcast) for *Panorama*, a British television program, not long after *Inside the Third Reich* was published. The BBC set up a brilliant panel with historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, American lawyer George Ball and one of their best commentators, Michael Charlton, as moderator. The first two knew Speer well, having questioned him in 1945-46 for British Intelligence and the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, respectively.

"From the point of view of most of us . . .," George Ball said to Speer during the discussion, "[what is] most baffling of all . . . is the constant references to the charisma or mystique or particular charm of Hitler. . . . From the point of view of anyone in my country, or I think in Great Britain, who had the experience of seeing motion pictures of Hitler or of hearing him on the radio, and seeing the things . . . he wrote . . . it was totally incomprehensible. How could anyone find a particular charm in this man? How do you explain it? This is the ultimate mystery I think, as far as we are concerned."

"It is only explicable," Speer replied (I am here slightly correcting his English), "if you agree . . . that there are human beings who have a kind of . . . magnetism or hypnotic quality. You try to evade this influence . . . get away from its effect . . . but you are in their . . . you are . . . [here he cannot do without the term *hörig*, which he realizes he can't explain, and so limits himself to a much weaker and less telling description] you depend on them."

Ball suggested that perhaps just the effect of power could explain charisma and Speer agreed that power exerted its own mystique. But he said that what had always puzzled him was how Hitler's effect on his environment had functioned just as effectively before 1933, when there was defeat upon defeat and crisis upon crisis and yet he succeeded, almost entirely by force of personality. "It remains a mystery," Speer said. "But the fact is that it is impossible to explain Germany before 1933, and from 1933 to 1945, without Hitler. He was the center of it all and always remained the center."

"You paint a picture in the book," said Charlton, "of these excruciatingly boring tea parties on the Obersalzberg. . . . You make it sound almost intolerable. So where did you have your private moments with Hitler which were of such value to you?"

"It was when [we discussed] plans, drawings," said Speer. "It was remarkable how quickly he could grasp the meaning of a plan, how—as very few people can—he was able to think in three dimensions, and how his phenomenal memory enabled him to recall corrections he made months before. . . . It was amazing to me, because he was the head of the state and had many other concerns and still he could deal with such small details in this, his private field. . . . At these times, when he was acting as an architect, he was really very relaxed, at his ease. You could contradict him, argue. . . ."

Charlton suggested that this may have been because Hitler, in the context of that relationship where Speer was the "professional" in charge, felt himself to be in a sense the weaker partner. Speer was clearly uncomfortable with that interpretation. "I would say," he said, "we . . . we were equals, we were on one level. . . ."

But actually the relationship was more significant than that, and was also entirely different from the one Hitler had with other architects to whom he entrusted large projects, such as Hermann Giesler, the most devout of National Socialists, who received the plum assignments of Munich and Linz and who, not without good reason, would become one of Speer's bitterest enemies.

One of Germany's most eminent psychologists, Alexander Mitscherlich, would later cause raised eyebrows when he suggested that there was "an erotic component in the Hitler-Speer relationship." But Speer told me, "He was not entirely wrong." Of course, neither Mitscherlich—nor Speer—meant by this active or even conscious homosexuality; that idea would have been absurd.

The truth, as it often is, was both more simple and more subtle. In looks and language, the tall, handsome young Speer probably came close to being a German ideal for the Austrian Hitler; as a member of a patrician family, with a distinctly upper-class but also unfailingly modest and restrained bearing ("He was always quiet, composed and soft-spoken," said Annemarie Kempf), Speer represented a class the lower-middle-class Hitler, when young, had only admired from afar; and the drive Hitler no doubt sensed in him very early responded in many ways to his own. And then, of course, the fact that architecture was his discipline powerfully provided, as Mitscherlich wrote, "the medium through which they [both emotionally uncommunicative] could communicate."

Many observers have remarked how the meetings with Speer in those pre-war years elated and relaxed Hitler and how he seemed happily, indeed gaily, to defer to him. Speer to me too vigorously dismissed the suggestion that in a sense he dominated Hitler in these discussions.

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stimulating and restful for him. He was very modest, you know, in a way." He did add, however, that in the years when their relationship related only to architecture, Hitler indeed did almost provoke argument, and seemed to enjoy it for its own sake, almost irrespective of whether he ended up right or wrong.

"I suppose," Speer said, "that one curious occasion on the Berghof in 1936 has some bearing. I was sitting across the table from him, with a lot of other people, and suddenly he fixed me with his eyes, quite obviously to 'give in or hold out'—you know that game, don't you, that children play?" Speer said he quite deliberately accepted the challenge. "I realize now," he said, "that the relationship must already have developed a great deal to have this happen. Well, I accepted his stare, returned it and made myself hold on." He laughed as he told me this, a sudden echo of the excitement of that day. "I don't know how long it lasted—it felt like a long time, many minutes. I could hear the buzz of voices around us while I felt this charged silence between him and me. It was he who looked away first. I had won." He laughed happily, recalling it.

But Speer's victories at that time, in architecture, over himself and over Hitler, however composed and relaxed he appeared, were not easily sustained.

"I remember," Margret Speer said at one point in our talks, "that during those first big years, 1934–36–38, Anni Brandt and I often talked about those strange attacks Albert had; I was very worried about them."

The "strange attacks" she spoke of started in mid-1934. He had completed two smaller commissions and had begun on the design of the Zeppelin Field in Nuremberg; with all this, he was continually on the *qui vive* for Hitler's frequent visits and summonses, hardly saw his family, hardly had any rest. "The attacks came often, almost regularly, so regularly that I always lived in fear of them," he told me. "It was a kind of claustrophobia: I would suddenly go pale, my heart would beat wildly, I'd have pins and needles in my hands and feet; I would feel ice cold and panic-stricken and be forced to lie down so as not to fall. It was particularly bad if I happened to be in an enclosed space, such as a train. I remember once they nearly stopped a train to get me to a hospital, until at the last minute, I managed to control it. I just thought it was fatigue. I was overworking like mad. I was, of course, examined—everybody was so worried about it. But nothing was found; it wasn't anything physical. Why otherwise would it have stopped miraculously in 1940 [when his life began to veer away from architecture], and never happened again even though, certainly after 1942 when I was Minister, I worked, if anything, harder, under even greater pressure?"

He knew that it was not his body but his nerves which were in panic. "It

was my unconscious realization," he said, "that I wasn't up to what was demanded of me; it was my fear of architecture, and of course my terror of losing the favor of the man I considered the greatest in the world."

Surprisingly, Margret Speer had never heard of the fainting fits he had had when he was six and horribly afraid of his brothers. "Is that true?" she asked him as we sat together that night. "When you were six?" He shrugged and suggested we pass on to another topic.

In the spring of 1936, inspecting a newly completed part of Fritz Todt's *Autobahn*, Hitler dropped a hint to Speer: "I have one more building commission to assign—the biggest of them all." Although it would be several months before Speer could see it "in black and white," as he put it to me, he had a pretty good idea that day on the *Autobahn* what it was, and that Hitler was letting him know that it would come his way.

Three months later, in June, Hitler showed him a plan approved by the Berlin City Council and the Mayor, Dr. Julius Lippert, for the reconstruction of Berlin. Lippert, Hitler said, was "an incompetent, an idiot, a flop, a nonentity." He had explained to him time and again the measurements he wanted for the grand processional avenue (in his "Spandau draft," Speer called it the Prachtstrasse—the Street of Pomp, or Magnificence), and time and again the same drawings, with the width of the avenue reduced by 30 meters (from Hitler's 120 meters to 90), were served up to him. In early summer he finally ordered Goebbels, as Gauleiter of Berlin, to replace the Mayor and sent for Speer.*

"I could have imagined the handing over of his 'biggest commission' to be slightly more solemn," Speer wrote in Spandau. "As it was, he just handed me the City Council's designs without further ado, told me what he wanted, and told me to get on with it."

In Spandau, the memory of this, his most triumphant moment, was very important to him; it covers thirty pages of the draft, with many sketches, toward the end of which—in its honesty a particularly poignant revelation—he confesses how much pleasure, and regret, he had found in recalling to his mind this great project. (It seemed to me highly significant, in the context of showing the honesty of the draft, that he did *not* include this "confession" in the eventual book.) In Spandau he wrote,

[The Berlin project] became my life and I realize that I cannot tear myself loose from it even now. *If I look deep into myself for the reasons now for my rejection of Hitler, then I think that aside from the horror in him that*

*Interestingly enough Goebbels didn't; he only informed Lippert that the reconstruction of Berlin was no longer his responsibility.

A Shared Devotion

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Nonetheless, Fritz he knew from his mo losing Wolters's frien life.

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now stands revealed, my personal disappointment plays a small part—my disappointment also that his political power game drove us into war and thereby destroyed what would have been my life [author's italics].

In the "Spandau draft," toward the end of this recollection in the draft of the planning for the near-total redesign of Hitler's Berlin, to be renamed "Germania," Speer names the architects to whom he confided the principal designs—among them, prominently, "my old university friend, Dr. Rudolf Wolters, to whom was assigned the most essential task, the Prachtstrasse."

When *Inside the Third Reich* appeared in Germany in 1969 (significantly without this list), there is little doubt that it would not have been in the architects' interest (all doing extremely well by then) to be publicized as co-creators of Speer's—that is, Hitler's—new Berlin. I only realized after working through the "Spandau draft" in the late 1980s that this was what Speer meant when he told Wolters that he didn't mention him in the book "in order to protect him."

By the time *Inside the Third Reich* appeared, Wolters might well have forgotten these few lines in the 1,200-page draft. But then, he no doubt had not expected or desired any acknowledgement of his collaboration with Speer under Hitler. What devastated him was that his help *after* the war, without which Speer could not have written the draft and therefore his books, was totally unacknowledged in the published version. Not only was his name unmentioned, but even his hometown, Coesfeld, was given a false name.

This would be a bitter blow to anyone, and how much more to Wolters after all he had done for Speer. His son, Fritz, wise and now very successful, watched his father's anger and despair for years. Fritz has had to overcome many bitter memories of his own, of his father, interminably busy with the Speers, almost entirely ignoring him during his entire life. "Toward the end of his life," Fritz Wolters told me, "he gave me some of his writings to read. 'It'll interest you,' he said. It was all about 1945 and afterwards; all about Speer, the Speer children, all that. I read them and I thought, 'Well, hell, where am I? I was around then—don't I exist?' Not one word about us, about his own family . . . and he gives me that to read, proudly."

Nonetheless, Fritz had always been intrigued by Speer and admired him; he knew from his mother, who for years was Margret Speer's best friend, that losing Wolters's friendship had been the worst blow of Speer's post-Spandau life.

"If only he had found a way just to mention my father by name, even without going into details," Fritz said, "it would have made all the difference." Not because it would have made up for Wolters's always having lived in

These bombastic ideas of France—didn't mind or be positively inclined at all, I began to distance myself from going to the Museum more than I had to.

I had a card from my wife that night with a large blacked around the Berlin decorations, and I remember a long time looking at heavy Austrian accent and all that, *'Das g'fallt*

—one was under the after that when he came to aide, sometimes with a one of us three—Wolfgang greet us. He was always new him. . . .

I, said Schelkes. "There chief. Speer had this very everybody. I suppose one that with Hitler too. It's didn't, because that was

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of his lunches at the guests, among them in at table was mostly propaganda. Here I used [Wilhelm] Oh-

nesorge, the minister of communications, when Hitler showed himself to be better informed than he on broadcast capacity. . . .

The third and fourth meetings were in Speer's Modellhallen at the GBI when Hitler came to view the Berlin plans. . . . He arrived through a back door which had been put in specially for his convenience, dressed in a grey suit. As it was forbidden to make notes in his presence, I always wrote detailed minutes immediately afterwards.

Of course from these few experiences I cannot judge Hitler's personality, but having shared with Speer his virtually daily contacts with him, and being familiar with Hitler's ideas, for example, on town planning, I think that commentators are making it easy for themselves now when, as they frequently do, they resort in their descriptions to simplistic epitaphs such as "buck private," "wall painter," "petit-bourgeois philistine," or "history's greatest criminal."

Annemarie's feelings about Hitler have undergone a profound and profoundly painful change over the years. But she too, in the early years with Speer and well into the war, idolized Hitler. Our talks, of course, went on for years, and like all the others who knew Speer well, on countless occasions when she spoke of Speer, she almost inevitably spoke of Hitler, as if the two were indivisible in her mind.

"For me, from the time I was very young," she said, "it was my country I loved, not any man. However, it is, I think, true to say that as time went on, the cause I supported with such passion and the person of Hitler did in a sense become merged."

She had seen him, watched him talking with Speer many times before she actually met him. "The first time was the evening of the day [in the summer of 1939] Speer completed the new Chancellery. A huge celebration was planned for the opening, but Hitler came to meet us the night before. We all went around the building with him and Speer, us walking behind them. I thought it was beautiful, I don't care what people say now. I was very proud that night. One has to imagine—well, it's almost impossible to imagine—the lights, the flowers everywhere, the excitement of it. I'd like to be critical in retrospect, but I can't be. To meet him on such an occasion . . . it's different from an ordinary meeting. This was still in peacetime, you know. Every day something happened which changed our future for us, and it happened through this man. I'm trying to tell you not what I feel now, but what I felt then. I can't say whether I found him 'likeable' or not; the term has no relevance. It was just joy; he belonged to the joy of it."

And this applied too, she said, to the planning of the new Berlin. "The model Speer had built downstairs took up almost a whole huge room. It was so beautiful, so complete, you know, with all the streets and trees and flowers

Annemarie, despite her deep affection for Speer, was not blind or insensitive to his deficiencies. When her much-loved father died in 1937, "Wolters immediately reacted," she said. "Speer—oh, he knew about it, but he ignored it. That did disappoint me. I was hurt."

Was it perhaps that it embarrassed him to show feelings, I asked, or did he simply not have them?

"He was the world's most inhibited man, and in time one came to accept it, shrug it off, you know—even laugh it off," she said. "He said to me once how amazingly personal Hitler could be." I asked him what he meant, because of course I never knew Hitler that way—socially, you know. And he went on to describe how often people, sitting next to Hitler at table, would come away feeling he had really wanted to know about them—cared about them. "I'm really not good at that, am I?" he said, and I said, "No, you aren't."

"Although I feel very differently about Hitler now," she said, "I think that the subsequent rejection by so many people of the buildings and the building plans was really the rejection of the system Hitler represented, and of his person. If a benevolent German ruler had decided to build such edifices, representing the stability and grandeur of his country, perhaps the world would not have objected as they did to the Hitler-Speer creations. I remember very vividly one occasion when Hitler came to see us, just after the war had broken out, and I heard him say to Speer, 'We must end this war quickly. We don't want war; we want to build.' Are we to think that that was a lie too? That everything was lies?"

Just a double system, that's all.

What Annemarie saw in those years was a man who wanted to rule a Greater Germany, and she could understand this, she said, from her own experience. "My mother had been born a German in Lithuania," she said, "which was predominantly German. When I was a child we would travel through Danzig; that was German. Journeying up the Memel, again half of that was German. So to me at that time, you see, the fact that Hitler wanted to unite all these German-speaking areas seemed geographically and morally right. The people there wanted to be German and had never been given a choice."

As for the countries of the East and Russia that Hitler coveted, said Annemarie, "I suppose we thought as we were now at war, one would have to finish the war and then there would be peace talks, treaties, and it would all be reorganized as Europe had often been reorganized in history, and often to the benefit of the people. And you mustn't forget what the vast majority of people in the world have not been able to believe—we knew nothing then of the horrors which emerged later. War in itself, when it broke out, was horrible enough; I knew many people, but I knew no one who wanted war. . . ."

At the time she didn't think that Hitler wanted war. "But afterwards, yes,

of course," said Annemarie. "Afterwards, when we learned what had been done in our name, I had to ask myself whether finally there were forces at work in Hitler which were incompatible with what is human. I know such an idea is unacceptable on a rational level. Speer, for instance, would try to avoid such a train of thought. But if one opens oneself to the whole abyss of what was done, and if one is prepared to confront one's own mourning, then one is almost inevitably led to this thought, for how can a man who brought about and allowed such horror have been human?"

On one of the many occasions when Speer talked about how at the outset he could not see Hitler for what he was, he described his own process of reassessment. "In the spring of 1937," he said, "Hitler said something to me that should have made me realize the extent of his megalomania. He came to my Berlin showrooms to look at the seven-foot-high model of the stadium. Talking about the Olympic Games, I pointed out to him that the athletic field did not conform to the proportions prescribed by the Olympic Committee. 'That's immaterial,' said Hitler. 'In 1940 the Games will be held in Tokyo, but after that, for all time to come, they will take place in Germany, in this stadium. And then it is we who will prescribe the necessary dimensions.'

"Thinking of this later, it was almost incredible to me that this didn't open my eyes. I was after all a sportsman, passionately interested in the Olympic Games since childhood, and I knew perfectly well that the whole universal concept of the event presupposed a change of venue every four years. How could he have thought he could bend the powerful world of sports to his will? How could he have wanted it? How could I not have realized that day that he was mad? Well, I didn't; I can almost still see myself smiling in admiration at his prophetic words. He had drawn me into his madness."

On May 14, 1953, Speer wrote to Hilde from Spandau:

... There is such a thing as mass hypnosis which—we have seen it before in the life of nations—can have incredible consequences. Let me remind you only of the witch-hunts of the Middle Ages, the horrors of the French Revolution, or the genocide of the American Indians. . . . In such periods there are always only a very few who do not succumb. But when it is all over everyone, horrified, asks, "For heaven's sake, how could I?"

A few months later, on November 18, 1953, at the end of a paragraph on this theme in his "Spandau draft," he says, "In those first years close to Hitler . . . I was ready to follow him wherever he led. . . ."

In 1937, Speer said, he had no idea where he was being led. He did not even realize that almost imperceptibly his role was changing when he received "the greatest commission" and then the signal honor of being named Generalbauinspektor.

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first at the GBI and subsequently as head of the Department of Administration and Finance at Speer's ministry.

"I must say that he interested me very much," Hettlage said. "In the final analysis, there was no one in Germany of his caliber; he was what I would call a 'psychic' [intuitive] organizer, a very special gift which went far beyond architecture or any specialty. And I suppose one must say that it was very perceptive of Hitler to recognize this talent so early.

"It was quite extraordinary how Speer didn't . . ." he paused, "how shall I put it? You know how some people exude strength and power? Well, here was this very young, quite extraordinarily powerful man, and there was nothing about him that showed awareness of that power. What one saw was someone exceptionally courteous, calm, friendly, humorous and modest. For years he never showed anger, even when he was angry, no fatigue even when he was seriously overworked, no tension when one knew of the problems which beset him."

(Oddly, despite his perceptiveness, Hettlage seemed unaware both of Speer's exhaustion and of what Margret described as his "strange attacks," of which Speer himself said, "Everyone was so worried about them.")

"It took a long time before I understood that there was a screen between him and others—a defensive mechanism of quite extraordinary proportions." Dr. Hettlage had seen the profile I had done of Speer, before we met. He smiled at me. "He raised that screen for you, didn't he? You got on together, didn't you? With Speer, that was what always counted," he said. "Strange, isn't it? What really determines the course of human affairs is finally never talent and intelligence. It's feelings, isn't it? Good and bad. For Speer, his father, Tessenow, Hitler—" He shook his head. "And we saw him as the rational man par excellence."

It was Hettlage who put his finger on a strange truth as early as the summer of 1938, as Speer had told me: "He had watched Hitler with me in front of the model of Berlin, and after Hitler had gone, Hettlage suddenly said, 'You know what you are? You are Hitler's unhappy love.' And you know what I felt? Happy. Dear God, I felt happy." When I asked if he had felt flattered, he looked startled. "Flattered?" he repeated and pondered the word. "No," he said. "Joyful."

Speer's first architectural designs—and even the interior decorating he did of places such as Goebbels's ministry—were still strongly influenced by Tessenow. Goebbels, originally delighted with the "quiet simple craftsmanship" of Speer's work, apparently soon tired of its esthetic purity and had his offices redecorated by someone working more to his taste for Germanic *Gemütlichkeit*.

But as Speer came increasingly under Hitler's influence, he changed.

Tessenow, when shown the first Nuremberg designs in 1933, delivered the devastating comment that they were only "big." He was no less dismissive five years later, when Speer showed him the plans for the new Chancellery and pointed out that he had completed them exactly to schedule. "Perhaps you should have taken a little more time," said Tessenow, drily.

And Speer's architect father, by then seventy-five years old and retired, was even more disapproving when Speer took him to see the model of Berlin. "By this time," Speer told me, sounding rather bitter as he recalled the event, "he had suddenly become proud of my success. He carried around a little notebook, and would read from it when he met his friends. 'Now he's been given the German pavilion to design for the World's Fair,' or 'Now he's going to rebuild Berlin,' or 'Now the Reich Chancellery.' But he didn't feel like that about the new Berlin when he actually saw it. He stood and looked at the model for a long moment. Then he said, 'You've all gone completely insane,' and walked out."

Paradoxically, Speer sounded almost pleased about his father's negative reaction as he told the story. But that wasn't what he had felt then. "At that time I was so blinded, I just attributed his reaction to the generation gap. As far as I was concerned, I was following my brief, which was to interpret the political spirit of the time, Hitler's spirit, and this meant gigantic dimensions. Of course I knew about my father's liberal credo, and I just thought he couldn't understand. Because he couldn't understand Hitler, he couldn't understand our time.

"But it didn't end there. The next evening he came to the theater with me. Hitler sat in a box across from ours and sent his aide to say that if the old gentleman was my father, he would like to meet him. As soon as my father stood facing Hitler, I saw him pale and tremble—his whole body shuddered as if he had the ague. He didn't appear even to hear Hitler's hymn of praise about me; he just bowed without having said a word and left the box. Outside, he stood for a long moment breathing deeply, then the trembling stopped.

"Stupidly, I thought he was just unbearably moved, and I was surprised by his unusual display of feeling. Although we had never touched each other in my life except on formal occasions, I remember I touched or perhaps even tried to take his arm. He pulled away quite sharply.

"Now of course I understand: emotionally, politically and, yes, morally on a different plane from the Nazis, he had somehow felt that night that other 'id' in Hitler—whatever it was—which I never sensed until years later."

When asked what he meant by "that other id" (which sounded so surprisingly and unexpectedly like the "not human" Annemarie had spoken of), he shook his head. "I don't know," he said. "I'm not much good at that kind of

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"The nightmare of his overall plans," said Bormann's son Martin, who was born in 1930, "has somehow been, not perhaps forgotten, but certainly overshadowed by the murder of the Jews, which was of course the most appalling of his crimes. But as a result of the fifty-year-long concentration on this horror, millions of people, above all the young, don't even know what might so easily have happened—the changes in the face of Europe which so nearly came about, and which would have affected and fundamentally changed every one of our lives and bred immorality into all human beings."

Rightly or wrongly it is the genocide of the Jews which has dominated not only the world's thinking about the Nazis since the end of the Third Reich, but also the conscience of most Germans.

Again, then, what could Speer—what could anyone in Germany—have known in the 1930s about the eventual fate of the Jews? The answer is that, at least in the early 1930s, aside from Hitler's and Goebbels's polemics, which few people—including Jews—took very seriously, very little. Mass murder was not yet thought of, although persecution of the Jews developed slowly and steadily, an eventually fatal infection of the body politic.

The first *Aktion* the Nazis organized, a one-day boycott of all stores in Germany belonging to Jews, was decided on within days of Hitler's coming to power. Goebbels in his diary describes the week leading up to it. Before the Nazis came to power he had already sold several extracts from his diaries to German newspapers for ready money, and may well already have planned eventual publication for all of them. Even so, his writing is not yet as cautious as it would become later, after he had signed his contract, and he expresses freely his conviction that the Nazis were being wronged by the Jews, and therefore any action was justified:

March 24 [1933]: We are very concerned about the atrocity propaganda against us abroad. The many German Jews who have emigrated incite everybody against us. . . . I am preparing a very cool and objective article for a large British newspaper to counteract it. . . .

March 26: My article for the *Sunday Express* against the horror propaganda has been well received and will assist us in England. The Führer, after pondering the problem in the quiet of his mountain retreat, called me to join him in Berchtesgaden. His decision is that we will only stop this kind of agitation against us abroad by dealing with the Jews in Germany who so far have lived in peace. We are going to organize a radical boycott of all Jewish-owned shops in Germany. This may make foreign Jews think again. . . .

March 28, 29, 30, 31: Today we announced the boycott: panic among the Jews . . . approval from all members of the government. . . . The boycott is fully organized. We press a button and it starts. . . . It will initially last one

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day; if the propaganda abroad ceases, we stop it; if not, there will be no mercy. . . .

April 1: Boycott fully effective in Berlin and the whole Reich. I drove . . . [through the business district] to see for myself how it was working. All Jewish shops are closed, each guarded by the SA. The people support us with exemplary discipline. An imposing spectacle . . . a huge moral victory for Germany: we have shown to everyone abroad that we can call on the whole nation for action without the least excesses. Once again the Führer found the right solution. . . .

Goebbels naturally did not emphasize the objections from Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's financial genius (later acquitted at Nuremberg), who warned him that attacks against the Jewish business community would be viewed unfavorably abroad and cause Germany economic damage. Whether it was these warnings or the "success" of the boycott claimed by Goebbels which led to it being stopped after one day remains a moot point.

As the boycott announcement was made both in the newspapers and on the radio and, affecting thousands of shops nationwide, brought the business life of whole streets in many towns to a standstill, it is unlikely that any adult in Germany could remain unaware that it was happening. But as Goebbels said, there was no violence, and this may well have led to the reaction Speer mentioned to his daughter in a letter from Spandau about earlier speeches and demonstrations, when he said that they didn't "take all this too seriously," ascribing the verbal abuse to "birth-pangs."

It is not without significance that this first consolidated act against the Jewish community is not mentioned in many postwar histories of the period. It would seem that neither all German nor other historians considered it any more worthy of attention than did the German population at the time—including Germany's 561,000 Jews. And indeed the passivity of the population encouraged the Nazi government to pass a few days later the first of many ordinances barring Jews from holding office or entering the professions.

Emigration accelerated throughout the 1930s, especially after the first of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, but most people in and outside Germany, including many Jews, still could not accept their significance and danger. Increasingly restrictive decrees were passed during the next three years, but the Nazis' approach to the introduction of these laws and regulations was cautious at first. The party leadership was very concerned about potential reactions abroad and wary of possible disapproval in Germany itself.

On August 25, 1933, Goebbels wrote that on Hitler's order the first party rally, at Nuremberg on September 2, would focus largely on the racial question:

Slight Discomfort

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He wants Rosenberg to speak; I warn him against [his fanaticism].

September 1: I rewrite my speech yet again, for reasons of our foreign policy moderating what I will say about the Jews. . . .

The feared reaction from inside Germany was not slow in coming. Time and again Goebbels's diary shows how many people in the arts—actors, composers, writers and conductors (many of them roundly condemned after the war as dedicated Nazis)—made considerable efforts in those first years on behalf of their Jewish colleagues. On June 27, 1933, Goebbels remarks on difficulties he is encountering at—of all places—Bayreuth. This was Richard Wagner's town and the site of the annual Wagner Festival, which Hitler always attended as the guest of Wagner's British-born daughter-in-law, Winifred.

Visit from Frau Thede [identity unknown] about Bayreuth. Another RM 300,000 are needed. [They are] insufferable in their procrastination about the Jewish question. But that's how it is with all the finance people. If [only] Wagner were [still] here. . . . [Wagner was an outspoken anti-Semite.]

July 7, 1933: Yet again arguments with [the great conductor Wilhelm] Furtwängler about the Philharmonic and the Jews.

Furtwängler fought for two more years for the Jewish members of his orchestra, only to give in at the end. Goebbels notes that Hitler agreed that Furtwängler's request to travel abroad was to be denied. And on March 2, 1935, Goebbels mentions what sounds like the final confrontation which caused the conductor to abandon his protests:

Furtwängler still tries to argue but then gives in, and consents to make our [agreement] public. What strange folk they are, these artists. Politically babies, all of them.

And a few months later, in 1936, he mentions that "Furtwängler [is] now good and obedient."

After the war the conductor, bitterly attacked in the British and American press, was asked why he had not taken a stand against the Nazis, and if this was impossible, why he hadn't left. Few of us believed him when he said, "I tried. They wouldn't let me."

Speer, a passionate music lover, had counted many famous musicians among his friends during the Third Reich. I asked him why, if these people had really not been devout Nazis, they—to whom the whole world lay open without language difficulties in practicing their art—had not made the obvious gesture and left?

He shook his head. "I really don't think people understand what it was like. People like Furtwängler, Wilhelm Kempff, Richard Strauss and others were considered to be, well, like national treasures. If they expressed disapproval or doubts, they would be argued with; if they remained unconvinced, they would be warned and put under open supervision. What would never have been allowed under any circumstances would be for them to leave—nothing so damaging to Germany's reputation abroad could have been permitted."

Goebbels's diary presents a whole parade of well-known names, all trying to maintain their friendships with—and protect—Jewish colleagues. In July 1935 he reports that the "*Stapo*" had intercepted a letter Richard Strauss had written to the writer Stefan Zweig, by then safely abroad:

It is not only impudent but pig-stupid. . . . Now we'll have to get rid of him too. These artists are all politically immoral. Here is Strauss . . . President of the [state] Music Association writing a letter to a Jew. Disgusting. . . .

Two days later Richard Strauss resigned his position and from then on devoted himself to composing. In May 1936 Austria's leading actress, Paula Wessely, tried to get a friend, the screenwriter Walter Reisch, exempted from the increasing restrictions of the Nuremberg Laws.

May 11: Have rejected Paula Wessely's request. She must learn to obey. . . . [Four days later Wessely's husband, Attila Hörbiger, also a mega-star of theater and film, travels to Berlin.]

May 15: Attila Hörbiger tries to save the Jew Reisch for his wife Paula Wessely. I refuse. We have to be strong about this. He leaves, tail between legs. . . .*

Between March 1933 and September 1935 the "Jewish question" figures prominently in Goebbels's notations, again and again with the admonition (to himself, one must suppose) "Slowly, slowly." In July 1935 Hitler ordered Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer* to be shut down for three months after it violently attacked Emmy Sonnemann, the actress Göring had married just two months before: she was known to have frequently interceded for Jewish friends and continued to do so after her marriage. Goebbels, who liked to think of himself as a "gentleman," had written repeatedly how much he deplored *Der Stürmer's* gross style and its constant "idiotic" calls to violence. "At last!" was his comment on Hitler's order, though he noted two days later that *Der Stürmer* had apologized to Sonnemann, whereupon the order was rescinded.

*Walter Reisch went to Hollywood where, among many other films, he wrote (with Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett) the Greta Garbo film *Ninotchka* for Ernst Lubitsch.

A Slight Discomfort

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The 1935 Nuremberg Rally, which Speer of course attended, opened on Wednesday, September 11; throughout the first three days and well into the night on Friday, September 13, Hitler, Goebbels, Hess and Wilhelm Frick (an "Old Comrade" who became Interior Minister) continued to adjust the speaking schedule. Despite the late date they canceled one speaker as being "too indelicate," and until the last moment "honed" the text of the laws Hitler was to announce and Göring was detailed to explain on Saturday night. "The great day!" Goebbels enthuses in his diary: the balloon was "taking off."

Gerald Reitlinger, in his classic *The Final Solution*, described the Nuremberg Laws as "the most murderous legislative instrument known to European history. . . . Though for the first time since feudalism the law recognized two degrees of humanity, it was probably not at all evident to the Jews of Germany that pogroms initiated by the police on Tsarist-Russian lines were implicit in the new decree."

This unawareness of what these laws would eventually mean extended far beyond Germany's Jews, to virtually everyone in and outside Germany—in part owing to the extreme care exercised by Hitler and Goebbels in their preparations, even to the detail of entrusting the actual "intolerably lengthy explanation of the decrees," as Goebbels put it, to Göring, who was a particularly tedious speaker on whom people were unlikely to focus attention for long. Speer would confirm this later: "He put one to sleep," he said, and added that he had not been "remotely aware of what Göring was talking about."

Of course, it was not yet genocide they were planning. We cannot know what was in the recesses of Hitler's mind, or even exactly when Reinhard Heydrich, the chief innovator of the "assembly line" extermination methods, first made his suggestions to Himmler. But from everything we have learned, it seems likely that the gas chamber murder of the Jews appeared feasible only when, first, the gassing of handicapped Germans and Austrians in Euthanasia "Institutes" provided a technical precedent, and second, when the shootings in the East brought no effective protest from the public or the armed forces.



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But there was a distinct method to the gradual exclusion of Jews from German public life, and a deliberate linking of the Nuremberg Laws to the general ideology of "racial purity." The Nazi drive to "cleanse" Germany of genetic and racial taints had already begun before the first Nuremberg Law, initially not involving the Jews. On July 14, 1933, only weeks after coming to power, the law "for the prevention of the propagation of hereditary illness" was announced, with sterilization measures to take effect on January 1, 1934. From that moment on, a whole series of laws "for the protection of German blood and honor" was passed back to back, on one hand affecting those who were considered genetically imperfect Germans, on the other hand Jews.

The first of the Nuremberg Laws announced by Göring in September 1935, still sufficiently generalized not to appear specifically directed at the Jews, established a new Law of Citizenship with two categories: the *Reichsbürger*, the citizen who had to be of "pure German blood," and the impure *Staatsangehöriger*, who was a subject of the state but not a citizen. The next stage, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, linking the Nuremberg Laws to the general ideology of "racial purity," decreed that the two categories were forbidden to cohabit, "in wedlock or outside it."

This was quickly followed by another statute on October 6, 1935, the Law to Safeguard the Hereditary Health of the German People, which ordered abortion where either partner suffered from a hereditary disease. Over the following three years, step by step, further clauses (now published without fanfare only in the *Reichsgesetzblatt*, the official gazette) were added. All Jews had to provide information on their financial holdings; all professions became closed to Jews, except that Jewish physicians could treat Jewish patients; Jews were excluded from German schools and institutions of higher learning; Jews were no longer allowed to own factories, publishing firms, places of entertainment or large stores. ("Trustees" took over all these for minute token payments, leaving small shops which could, for a time, sell to Jews only.) Jewish musicians had to leave their orchestras, actors their theaters, dancers their ballet companies, singers their opera houses: Jewish artists could perform only for Jews, and nothing a Jew wrote, drew or painted could be printed or exhibited.

As of October 5, 1936, all Jews' passports had to be stamped with the letter J. Appallingly, this was the joint idea of the Swedes, eager to avoid the threatened invasion of Jewish refugees, and a Swiss, Heinrich Rothmund, the federal Chief of Police, who, wishing to protect the Swiss tourist industry, which would suffer if visas for Germans were reintroduced, thought of this simple device to check Jewish immigrants into Switzerland. As of January 1, 1939, Jews had to add the name *Israel* to their signature (and women *Sara*) unless their first names were already suitably Hebraic. Finally they were forbidden

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to attend theaters or cinemas, and at the beginning of the war an 8 p.m. curfew was imposed "to prevent Jews from using the blackout to molest Aryan women."

How much of all this should Speer—and of course many others—have known?

Because the publicizing and enforcing of these regulations and events (aside from the *Kristallnacht*) continued to be kept low-key, the answer is probably that they *could* have known but didn't need to, unless there was a practical need or a psychological or intellectual determination to confront rather than ignore the issue.

As recounted earlier, Marion Riesser, who transcribed most of Speer's letters from Spandau, told me how her father, a Jewish academic of distinction, although pensioned off at the advent of the Nazis from his professorship in pharmacology and physiology at the University of Breslau, managed despite the Nuremberg Laws to find employment, albeit at a less illustrious institution, until he finally fled to Holland in 1939. There were other instances where employers courageously ignored the law.

Equally significant, given their profound involvement with the Jewish community and their commitment in those early 1930s to Zionism, was the reluctance of Jews such as Raphael Geis to leave their beloved Germany.

On November 25, 1934, Geis (at twenty-eight, almost the same age as Speer) wrote from Mannheim, where he had been appointed deputy rabbi, to his professor Ismar Elbogen, an eminent theological historian who continued teaching in Berlin until 1938. Geis had written happily three weeks earlier that it looked as if he was about to be offered a position in a kibbutz in Palestine, but his concern in the second letter—the job had not yet materialized—was not the danger of the Nazis to Germany's Jews, but that of inner conflicts between Jews of different persuasions within the Mannheim community—he feared it would "come to a bitter battle between the liberals and the rest of us, Zionists, Center-party, and Orthodoxy."

At the end of 1936, more than a year after the first Nuremberg Laws, Elbogen, writing from Berlin, advised Geis against emigrating to Palestine. "You are needed here," he said. "Here the demand for rabbis is urgent; in Palestine they are superfluous. . . . You lose nothing by putting it off and gain a great deal . . . quite aside from saving your mother's tears by staying. . . ."

On June 15, 1937, Geis became rabbi for the province of Hessen, Niederhessen and the Jewish community of Kassel. In 1938 he was offered the opportunity (and a visa) to go to the United States but declined in favor of remaining in Kassel, seat of one of the oldest and most distinguished Jewish communities in Germany. There, on November 10, the morning after the *Kristallnacht*, he was arrested along with thousands of others across Ger-

many, and sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp. Even though his imprisonment was relatively brief, the experience left indelible scars. He rarely talked about it, except thirty years later to Speer. Released after four weeks upon proof of a visa to Palestine, he finally left Germany in February 1939, to return as soon as it was practicable, in 1952.

Whatever explanations countless Germans, including those around Hitler, have given about their reactions to this first pogrom in modern German history, it was a watershed. Not because anyone knew or could know that three years later the Nazis would begin their systematic annihilation of European Jewry. But what it did—in contrast to the one-day boycott in March 1933 and the careful legal moves of the Nuremberg Laws—was to make violence by the state seem almost normal, and as we see from the reactions, acceptable. This is in marked contrast to Speer's reaction in 1931 to the police striking out at innocent people.

The necessity for this indoctrination was, as can be seen in Goebbels's diaries, appreciated very early. It was this achievement, accomplished with what was then unprecedented conditioning techniques, that laid the groundwork for as yet unspecified things to come, and went far beyond the intensification of anti-Semitism which made violence against Jews appear justifiable. It achieved the total personality change of a largely Christian-ethic-oriented and culturally sophisticated people which made possible the sweeping violence Hitler had always intended and which he now unleashed.

None of this happened without the knowledge and, to an appalling degree, the active cooperation of the rest of the Western world. The exodus of Jews, originally seen by the Nazis as a solution, declined as more and more countries—with the United States and Switzerland in the lead—closed their borders. When the war in the East brought additional millions of Jews into German hands, along with huge areas where dark undertakings could be quietly carried out, the decision was not long in coming. It had no doubt already been taken when Germany forbade any further emigration from occupied France and Belgium in May 1941; the Jews had to be kept where they could be caught, for the purpose now was no longer just to rid Germany of its Jews, but to eradicate Jewry in Europe.

Coupled with the improvements the regime had accomplished with employment, a stable currency and a huge wave of optimism among the young, and major coups in foreign policy in the Rhineland and in Austria, it had been possible for Hitler—without protest from decent Germans or a firm stand by Britain, France or the United States—to appropriate by blackmail the sovereign republic of Czechoslovakia; to declare war on Poland on a pretext so thin a child could see through it; to kill scores of thousands of handicapped Germans and Austrians of all ages; and to cover his extended Reich

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with a network of hundreds of concentration and labor camps where, mostly within sight of a blinded population, thousands of "disobedient" Germans (communists, devout Christians, Jews, Social Democrats) were whipped into compliance with the perfect police state to which later foreign slave workers were brought by the millions to serve Hitler's—and Speer's—war machine.

In a country where immorality and violence had been legitimized, with its Führer totally obsessed with Jewry, his secret order for the physical extermination of Europe's Jews, who were unwanted by anyone else and thus now entirely at his disposal, became an obvious final solution.

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VIII

Unleashing Murder

Nuremberg, July 1946

FLACHSNER (final speech in Speer's defense): The personal interrogation of the defendant and the cross-examination regarding his activity in the party have shown that Speer, by virtue of his position as an architect, exercised purely architectural and artistic functions even in the party setup. Speer was the Commissioner for Building on the Hess staff, a purely technical assignment. . . . Naturally [it was] purely for artistic reasons that the party took over responsibility for building . . . nothing at all to do with any form of preparation for war. . . .

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BETWEEN 1933 AND 1937, much of the world admired Hitler's pioneering ideas. During his first four years as Chancellor, he expanded the health, social security and old-age benefits pioneered by Bismarck and later adopted by the Weimar Republic. His elaborate public works included a network of *Autobahnen*, innovations such as traffic-free city centers with strict pollution control, and he further developed the existing parks and green areas. Most important, as Joachim Fest wrote in *Hitler*, "he returned a feeling of security to Germans after years of traumatic fears and economic depression, however objectionable his methods." And John Toland wrote in his *Adolf Hitler*, "If [he] had died in 1937, he would undoubtedly have gone down as one of the greatest figures in German history."

This was the time most people now like to forget, when American expatriate writer Gertrude Stein thought Hitler should get the Nobel Peace Prize; George Bernard Shaw passionately defended him; the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin lauded his "indomitable passion for justice, breadth of political vision, unerring foresight and a genuine solicitude for the welfare of his fellow citizens"; and Britons such as Lord Halifax (in reports to the Foreign Office) and David Lloyd George conferred their stamp of approval. "Hitler is a born leader of men, a dynamic personality with resolute will and a dauntless heart, who is trusted by the old and idolized by the young," wrote Lloyd George in the *Daily Express* after attending the 1936 Olympics. He had visited Hitler at the Berghof and then attended the party rally as his guest. "Heil Hitler," joked Lloyd George's daughter when he returned to Britain. "Yes, indeed, 'Heil Hitler,'" he replied. "A great man."

At the same time, activists such as Oswald Mosley in Britain, Charles Maurras in France, Leon Degrelle in Belgium and Chiang Kai-shek in China set up organizations along the lines of the Hitler Youth (which had adopted elements both from the romantic German-Christian Wandervogel and the political Soviet Komsomol), while right-wing Americans such as Charles Lindbergh openly sympathized with the rowdy, racist German-American Bund.

Dr. Theodor Hupfauer was one of the less-known passionate National So-

cialists of the early years, when the Nazis fought for and won power. As time went on he became one of the party's most important administrative personalities and for the last year of the war, as Speer's right-hand man at the Ministry, was loyal to the end, and indeed for the rest of Speer's life.

In 1985 and 1986 I spent a good deal of time with Hupfauer and his wife. They were then in their eighties and living in a book-filled flat in central Munich. Hupfauer had lost none of the sharp intelligence which enabled him to re-establish his spectacularly successful life very soon after Hitler's defeat. In many ways he was an archetypal modern organization man. His wife, though apparently a classically complaisant German wife, did, as will be seen, turn out to have had less benign functions under Hitler's rule.

The Hupfauers were disconcerting because although eager to talk and very informative, they had much to hide. But it was rather refreshing to find them making no secret of their early enthusiasm. "I was a convinced National Socialist," Hupfauer said. "I want nothing to do with all those people who now claim they weren't, that indeed they were resisters. I really sometimes wonder who it was who elected Hitler and fought and won all those battles for him. All of Germany, it now appears, was nothing but anti-Nazi. Disgusting.

"In 1931," he said, "there were twenty-eight parties in the Reichstag; no chancellor could have achieved a majority. In 1928 the SPD [Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, or Germany's Social Democratic Party] had 154 seats—in 1932, with seven million unemployed, 200 seats went to the Nazis.

"You have to think," he said, "that multiplying that 'seven million unemployed' figure by a conservative three to include families, there were then about twenty million people in need, with no unemployment insurance and only the most minimal social security benefits. When that earlier catastrophe, the inflation, struck, when a loaf of bread cost a million marks and butter and meat ceased to exist for millions of people, they grew to hate—really hate—anyone who had money, thereby exacerbating the already profoundly resented class system. Hitler's promises of a caring but disciplined socialism fell on very receptive ears. [The unemployment benefit system instituted under the Weimar Republic after World War I was virtually wiped out during the 1929–32 depression.]

"I remember it all very well," he said, "particularly because I was studying in Switzerland in 1927–28 and found myself confronted with heartbreaking contrasts every time I went home."

He had originally wanted to become a sports journalist, but when an uncle, who after spending twenty years in the United States had returned to Munich to become a famous lawyer, tempted him with an eventual partnership, he agreed to study law. "I was fascinated by politics—an interest my

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As of 1935 he set up four thousand panels with ten members each selected by individual concerns, five on each panel representing management, five labor. (The "Beauty of Labor" [Schönheit der Arbeit] organization, to which Speer assigned Willie Schelkes in 1935, was another part of the same endeavor.)

"It was these panels who did the work," Hupfauer said. "When problems arose, it was their job to sit until a decision was reached. This virtually always meant a degree of compromise on each side, but because they were sitting together rather than, as under the union system, apart, they had no way of *not* reaching an agreement. The rule was that they sat until they agreed, and that was that. It created both a common interest and a common responsibility.

"It is true that to some extent," he said, "we did impose decisions, for when positive decisions were reached in matters which were demonstrably in the common interest of all industries, we recommended to the Minister to pass laws which would make them matters of law. But of course, these were freely arrived at by workers and management deliberating together."

(As I said in the Introduction, I am quoting exactly what Hupfauer said during our many conversations. Obviously I had many reservations about what he was saying, but some of the favorable things he said about the Nazi regime were true enough: for example, they did reduce class distinctions between workers and management, civil servants and the professional classes, and created at least a degree of community interest and responsibility. Nevertheless, as he in fact admits, decisions arrived at by management and labor were not by free negotiation, but by politically supervised deliberations which had to continue until a decision could be agreed upon.)

Under the general economic rulings, Hupfauer explained, all salaries—including management's—were fixed. "But, as you can see very clearly now, the way to affect people's lives is not only—or even mainly—by offering them ever more money. This merely serves to create a never-ending upward spiral of price increases. What has to be done is to enable people to live enjoyably, according to whatever they earn." It was the recognition of this need—as relevant and necessary today, he said (in 1985) as fifty years ago—which brought about the Volkswagen, cheap holidays and hotels and, above all, cheap and good housing to buy or rent.

"It was an incredibly creative and exciting period," he went on. "People of my age were given unprecedented opportunities, and we came to feel there was nothing we couldn't achieve."

We have to consider this global atmosphere when we retroactively question the motives and reactions of someone like the thirty-one-year-old Albert Speer. What the admirers abroad didn't know, or didn't wish to see, any

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more than anyone in Germany, was Hitler's real plans for Germany and Europe which, for those who had bothered to read the book, he had outlined clearly enough in 1924 in *Mein Kampf* and which, having brutally eliminated opposition within his party, he began to set in motion in 1937.

In 1936, in my last term at an English boarding school in Sandwich, Kent—I was thirteen and, coming from Vienna, had spent two years there—my favorite teacher, Lee Hindley, had given me *Mein Kampf* to read. "Anyone who comes from your part of the world needs to read this," she said. Although finding it hard going, I did read it, and from that time on did not understand how anyone could be in doubt about Hitler's plans, including the annexation of Austria and the elimination of the Jews from public life, though of course not their physical annihilation. "If anyone had thought he was planning on [that]," Speer had written to his daughter from Spandau, "he couldn't have been elected." He was probably right that most Germans, however anti-Semitic, would have been horrified at the thought of outright murder.

In Germany, not only after but during Hitler's time, there was a curious snobbism about the literary merits of *Mein Kampf*, which sold millions of copies but, according to most people I asked, remained unread on most bookshelves. ("Nonsense," said Willie Schelkes and his wife. "Everybody had it, everybody read it. They just don't want to admit it. A funny place to draw the line, isn't it?")

"We probably leafed through it," Speer had said when I asked him, and Margret had nodded her assent. "But I got into difficulties at Nuremberg when during pretrial interrogations I first said I had read it and then, questioned by the Russian prosecutor during the trial, had to admit I hadn't. It was absurd, but I felt embarrassed about it—I'm not sure whether I was embarrassed about not having read it or about what it was. The truth is that Hitler told me not to bother reading it, that it had been outdated by events."

That sounds right, for oddly enough Martin Bormann's son told me ten years later that his father had told him exactly the same thing during the war, when he was barely in his teens. Actually, both Hitler and Bormann were wrong. The book, in spite of its lack of literary quality, was illuminating in its unequivocal revelation that Hitler's plans for Germany could only be achieved through wars.

Given that soon there were at least some Germans who opposed Hitler's plans for war (by 1937, these included Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg and General Werner von Fritsch, Foreign Minister Baron Konstantin von Neurath and, up to a point, even Göring), how could it be that not only the majority of Germans but even those in Hitler's circle remained either ignorant of or morally indifferent toward his real program, first for the appropri-

ation of sovereign nations, then for aggressive war and the subjugation of whole populations, and finally, entirely unassociated with needs or acts of war, the systematic murder of millions?

Already in October 1936, Hitler had told Mussolini's son-in-law, Count Ciano, that by 1939 Germany would be ready for war. Two months later Göring, now in charge of the Four-Year Plan, told a conference of air officials, industrials and top officials in Berlin that at the beginning of the New Year, "aircraft production [would be] increased as if mobilization had [already] been ordered."

By the summer of 1939, Hitler, while continually voicing both to the Germans and the Allied leaders his determination for peace, had annexed Austria (March 13, 1938), the Sudetenland (October 1, 1938) and Czechoslovakia (March 15, 1939). Despite desperate appeals from Vienna and Prague—and the Czech President Emil Hácha's heart attack when informed of Hitler's conditions—the Western democracies did nothing except lodge mild protests.

If little about the preparations for these acts, and worse ones like euthanasia and the murder of the Jews still to come, percolated as far as Hitler's intimates, then, according not only to Speer but many other members of Hitler's circle, it was because Hitler succeeded very early in imposing on those in his service a fetish for secrecy. This was formalized on January 11, 1940, in General Order No. 1 (*Grundsätzlicher Befehl Nr. 1*) which ordered that no member of a government or military agency was to be informed or seek to know more about secret matters than was required for the enactment of his or her duties. It was posted on the walls of every military office and communicated to all troops as well as party and government officials. Equally forbidden was the "thoughtless passing on of decrees, orders or information specified as secret."

In my talks with Speer he repeatedly emphasized the risks involved in any breach of this secrecy rule. "Hitler required us not only to compartmentalize our activities but also our thinking," he said. "He insisted that each man should only think about his task and not be concerned with that of his neighbor. Carried to its logical conclusion, and linked with his secrecy order, this meant much more than his wanting people to concentrate their minds—it meant it was dangerous not to."

But he himself, he said, for a long time didn't feel that this affected him. "For many years, really until well into 1943, I certainly felt in no danger from Hitler—on the contrary. And what's more, as I myself was basically only interested in my own work and wanted those who worked for me to feel the same way, I considered it the right—the efficient—way to govern. After 1943 I was in danger from others, though not yet from Hitler; as of July 20, 1944,

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there were indications Hitler no longer trusted me, and by 1945, yes, I felt in danger from Hitler too."

Hitler had never discussed his future plans with him, said Speer, except "in connection with building. In his closing speech at the 1937 Nuremberg Party Congress he emphasized his plan for 'a Germanic Reich of German nationals.' I happened to be present afterwards when his adjutant told him that Field Marshal Blomberg was so moved by this sentence, he had begun to cry. I saw how Hitler accepted this emotion as a confirmation of the Field Marshal's fundamental agreement with him in this matter.

"Very shortly after that evening in Nuremberg," Speer continued, "Hitler stopped me as we were going up the stairs to his flat in Munich. He told his retinue to go ahead, and when we were alone he said, 'We are going to create a huge Reich combining all Germanic people, starting in Norway and going down to northern Italy. I must still achieve this myself; nobody else has the experience or the will. If only I can keep my health. And your Berlin build-ings will be the crowning achievement. Do you understand now the need for their huge dimensions—the capital of the Germanic Reich?'"

Goebbels's diary of March 14, 1937, shows how the whole atmosphere around Hitler was impregnated with these feelings:

The Führer loves Berlin . . . more and more. Discussions with Speer about building projects, especially the new Munich Opera. . . . [This emphasizes the degree of Hitler's reliance on Speer for everything to do with his architectural plans, because Munich was not Speer's responsibility but had been given to his greatest competitor, Hermann Giesler, who profoundly resented Speer's special relationship with Hitler.]

Excellent about Austria and Czechoslovakia. We have to have both of these to round off our territory. And we'll get them, too. . . . Those little states suffer from a kind of primitive megalomania. When their citizens come to Germany, they are bowled over by our size and power. We need to emphasize it more; this is also the reason for the Führer's gigantic building projects. . . .

I asked Speer on one occasion if he had not understood that such a Reich could only come about by force, through war.

"You don't understand," he said. "It is the same with what he said to me two years later, in the summer of 1939, when we stood one night in front of the model of the great meeting hall and its enormous dome. Hitler pointed at the drawing of the German eagle with the swastika in its claws on top of the dome, which was to be 290 meters high. 'This is to be altered,' he said. 'Instead of the swastika, have the eagle perched on top of the globe.'"

*The Great Hall, which Speer often called the "Kuppelhalle" (Dome Hall), was planned to have a height of 726 feet, a diameter of 825 feet, with room for 180,000 standing spectators.

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"Of course I was perfectly aware that he sought world domination," Speer said. "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."

If Speer had said this at Nuremberg, he could have been found guilty on all counts instead of only two, and would probably have been sentenced to death. But why hadn't he said this in his book? I asked him.

"I'm not sure," he answered, and told me that he had written it down in Spandau but that, for a variety of reasons, he had suppressed or perhaps changed his feelings when writing the book.

I asked if it was that, by the time he wrote the book, he couldn't admit or thought he couldn't afford to admit feeling anything positive about Hitler. He looked up sharply. "Perhaps. Don't forget, I couldn't write the book in a void. Sitting down to write it, my Spandau-concentrated mind was in a way a blank page which, very suddenly in this intoxicating new environment, was inundated with impressions, opinions and conflicting feelings. I know that several of my erstwhile friends, especially Rudi Wolters but also Arno Breker, felt I was finally too sharp, too negative about Hitler. [Breker was his old sculptor friend to whom, during the Third Reich, he had given many commissions.] But the truth is, throughout the twenty years in Spandau I *felt* very negative about him—and about myself in his service—and paid for it, I think, with isolation [from his fellow prisoners]. But perhaps—that is true—I did feel somehow liberated when back out in the world, especially among the young, I suddenly discovered I was not alone in these feelings, and outside Spandau I was free to be as negative as I felt."

When trying to understand the reactions—and evaluate the later inactions—of Albert Speer, it must be done in the context of the atmosphere he lived in from 1933 on, of the lives of the men and women who were subject to the same influences he was, day in and day out, and thus, in the final analysis (for everything revolved around this), of the various moves made by Hitler.

After knowing so many of the people who lived around Hitler, I have no doubt that he did in a sense lead a double life. He compartmentalized his life, leaving the awesome decisions he made with top advisors such as Goebbels and Himmler and with his generals strictly outside his small private circle. In Goebbels's diaries, and the particularly reliable Below memoirs, there is further confirmation of this complex compartmentalizing.

One of the key documents of the Nuremberg trials was the Hossbach *Protokoll*, the record which Hitler's then military adjutant, Colonel Friedrich Hossbach, kept of a "most secret" meeting Hitler had on November 5, 1937, in the Wintergarden of the Reich Chancellery. Present were Field Marshal

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Werner von Blomberg, then Minister for War, Chief of Staff Freiherr Werner von Fritsch, Admiral Raeder for the Navy, Göring as head of the Luftwaffe, and Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath. This document provided the most damning evidence at Nuremberg of what the indictment called "conspiracy to wage aggressive war."

Speer—at that point only Hitler's architect—was not present, of course, and does not mention the meeting in his books. What is perhaps surprising is that Goebbels, who was Hitler's closest political ally and advisor, was not invited either. On November 6, 1937, he reports lunching with Hitler on the previous day. The subjects of their discussion were "restraint in propaganda," regarding the Czechs, and the churches. His only reference in that long entry to Hitler's crucial 4 p.m. conference that day is, "Führer has discussions with General Staff," and his subsequent notes make it clear that he was not informed of the subject matter of the meeting.

Luftwaffe adjutant Below, as a junior officer also not present, did find out about it a few days later when Colonel Hossbach, feeling a need for support from his military juniors at Hitler's court, asked him and Hitler's naval adjutant, Lieutenant Karl-Jesko von Puttkamer, to read—essentially to act as witnesses for—the "15- to 20-page handwritten" report he had written about the meeting.

In his memoirs, Below recalled his impression at the time that Hossbach felt this was "an extremely serious matter of fundamental importance which it was essential for us to know about." Colonel Hossbach's foresight in providing himself with witnesses for the 1937 report was justified when the original of his report, needed by the prosecution in Nuremberg to prove the Nazi "conspiracy to wage aggressive war," turned out to have disappeared. A photocopy which did turn up was introduced into evidence, giving rise to bitter defense arguments about its authenticity and validity.

However, Hossbach himself essentially authenticated it in his book, saying,

I don't know whether the document used by the prosecution at Nuremberg was my handwritten original or the copy, and I cannot say with absolute certainty that the wording of this so-called "Hossbach *Protokoll*" is identical with my original of November 10, 1937. But, after a great deal of thought, I have come to the conclusion that in essence the document here printed is a legitimate representation of the original.

In his almost three-hour presentation, Hitler showed himself to be extremely well informed about Europe, both politically and economically, and highly realistic in his evaluations of the future which, he said, had to be based on the assumption of a vastly increased standard of living in all Western

countries. Economically, he said, survival would only be possible through a linkage of the world market which was at present being seriously undermined by the Bolsheviks' destructive economic mismanagement. Rearmament could not be considered a viable basis for long-term economic stability.

Pointing out the problems in India and Ireland, he said he believed the British Empire to be no longer viable, France to be "inner-politically" corrupt and Italy and Spain to be driven by unrealistic territorial ambitions. Germany, however, he said, needed land. (Hossbach's own words, as quoted in Nuremberg, were stronger. "... It was [the Führer's] unalterable resolve," he wrote, "to solve Germany's problem of the *Deutsche Raumfrage* [Germany's living space] at the latest by 1943-45. . . . As history proves, Hitler said, this could only be achieved by confrontation . . . never without attendant risks. . . .")

In a three-page appendix to his book, Hossbach describes how the original report came to be written. Not schooled in shorthand, he said, he was unable to record the proceedings verbatim and therefore deliberately did not himself call his report a "*Protokoll*." But he took copious notes, above all of Hitler's explanations, which were expanded from a sheaf of handwritten notes Hitler had brought along and took away afterwards.

Fully aware of his responsibility, Hossbach was reasonably certain he had recorded everything essential Hitler said, but he could not give the same guarantee for his account of the give-and-take in the sharp arguments that followed between Blomberg, Fritsch and Göring. Hitler, who listened without comment, could not have been left under any illusion, Hossbach said, that his political proposals had met with agreement and applause; it was clear that both generals were rejecting any confrontational policy that would lead to war. "I consider that before history I committed a sin of omission," wrote Hossbach, "by not recording fully the position Blomberg and Fritsch took, and therefore showing insufficiently the unequivocal bitterness of their arguments."

He had worked for several days on his handwritten report, completing it on November 10, when he dated and signed it. He showed it to General Ludwig Beck, the Chief of the Army General Staff, who had not taken part in the meeting and was "devastated" by the content. Beck wrote a long critical commentary on it which was probably at least in part the reason for his premature retirement from the army eleven months later. Before handing it over to Blomberg, Hossbach had twice asked Hitler to read it, but Hitler said he had no time. "I thought that that was strange," writes Hossbach, "as he had described his presentation that day as his 'political testament.'" Blomberg took possession of the paper a few days later. General Wilhelm Keitel, then Blomberg's principal advisor, told Hossbach that the Field Marshal had

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approved the content of the report, initialed it and ordered it to be put in safekeeping at the Ministry. Much later, Hossbach learned that as Hitler's and the Third Reich's end approached, an officer had had the document copied, and gave the copy to a relative who eventually handed it over to an Allied official.

In *Inside the Third Reich* Speer very briefly mentions developments of major importance in early 1938 which in fact are well documented elsewhere. On February 2 the career diplomat Neurath was replaced as Foreign Minister by the former champagne salesman Joachim von Ribbentrop, the critical General Fritsch (who had been falsely accused of homosexuality) by Walther von Brauchitsch as Chief of the Wehrmacht, and Hitler appointed himself as head of all armed forces.

And on March 13, 1938, came the long-prepared annexation of Austria. Speer wrote in *Inside the Third Reich* that he was in Hitler's apartment when these events were decided upon or took place, thus—providentially, he implies, as he was only Hitler's architect—a witness to them.

Given this fact, and that the realization of the importance the world accorded to these developments must have come to him later, it does seem extraordinary that both in his book and the "Spandau draft" he mentions them in the chattiest of tones, and without the least indication that in 1938, when they occurred, in 1953, when he wrote the "Spandau draft," or in 1969, when he wrote *Inside the Third Reich*, he was aware of their political or moral significance.

And yet, once again there is just that slight difference between the two versions in the way he describes the Anschluss. In the "Spandau draft" (and in the book) he speaks of sitting in Hitler's sitting room in Berlin with Hitler's adjutant and other guests—Hitler having retired to his study—listening to the radio when the Austrian Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg announced a plebiscite for March 13 in order to allow the people to choose an independent or German Austria. Schuschnigg ended his speech—during which Hitler's adjutant had taken notes—with the words "Austrians, the time [for decision] has come." The adjutant, grabbing his notes, rushed up to see Hitler, reports Speer, and shortly afterwards Göring and Goebbels hurried in, in festive garb—"it was the ball-season, and a few days later, the Germans marched into Austria."

In the "Spandau draft" he makes it quite clear that he knew immediately that this was the prelude to the annexation of Austria. In the book, however, he distances himself from these events. "A few days later the Germans marched into Austria" is replaced by "Once more enlightenment came to me several days later and via the newspapers . . . on March 13 when German troops marched into Austria," he writes, giving the impression that no such

thought had previously entered his head—despite the fact that the Anschluss had been on the lips of everyone around Hitler for weeks, if not months, and that he had known exactly what Schuschnigg's speech would lead to.

There is yet another small and, on the face of it, unremarkable omission in the book. In the "Spandau draft," describing his own trip to Vienna ten days later in order to "prepare a hall for a grand Hitler rally," he wrote—with honest perception—"Wherever I went, the German car was recognized. Up to this day I am touched by the reception from the population: happy, hopeful, I would almost say virginally expectant. . . ."

In the book this has shrunk to "Everywhere in towns and villages German cars were cheered. . . ." It is such a very small omission one feels it is almost petty to mention it. And yet is it so trivial? For there is a difference. In Spandau in 1953, thinking back to this event, he admits to emotional involvement—"To this day I am touched. . . ."—and he uses emotional adjectives to describe the population: "happy, hopeful . . . virginally expectant."

Sixteen years later in Heidelberg, he rationalizes it: no emotion, no communicated joy with the "virginally expectant" Austrians. Here he represents himself as nothing more than a cool observer and—in order to drive home both his lack of involvement and, just in case anyone might not realize it, his own post-Hitler willingness for mea culpas—he asks at the end of the paragraph, "Did any of this concern me?"

ON MARCH 12, 1988, the fiftieth anniversary of the Anschluss, I wrote from Vienna for *The Times* (London) about it:

At 7:50 p.m. on Friday, March 11, 1938, Austria ceased to exist. At 9:30 p.m. Elfie, my best friend . . . phoned me. Could I meet her at the Johann Strauss statue in the park, she whispered. "Why are you whispering?" I asked her—idiotically, as I would find out. "Come," she said and hung up.

While I waited for Elfie in the deserted Stadtpark, I heard . . . that sound for the first time: that rhythmic shout of many voices, and then those words I had never heard before and couldn't quite make out from that distance: "Deutschland erwache! Juda verrecke!" ("Germany Awake! Jewry Perish!")

When Elfie arrived, we found ourselves standing stiffly in the dark, listening. Then she said, "My father—" and stopped.

"What's the matter with your father?" I asked.

"He is a Nazi," she said, her voice tight. "They told me tonight. He's been an 'illegal' for years." She cried. "He said I was never to speak to anybody at the school who was a Jew, and that anyway," her voice sounded

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them the Brekers, the Brandts and Magda Goebbels, were on an extended trip to the Doric temples of Sicily and southern Italy. For Goebbels's unhappy wife, whose husband was pursuing his love affair with the Czech film star Lida Baarova, the trip was an escape.

It would later be said that the intelligent and elegant Magda—a rare combination in that circle—had always been in love with Hitler and had married Goebbels only to be close to him. But although there were indications at the very end of her life, six years later, that this might have been true (and the von Belows among others always thought it was) Speer did not share this opinion.

For he had been witness to her profound love affair in 1939 with Karl Hanke. Their determination to marry was thwarted when Goebbels threatened to take the children away from her, and Hitler decreed that a divorce in his closest circle was out of the question. Speer acted as a mediator that summer; in the end Baarova was sent back to Prague, and Goebbels and Magda returned to their hearth and home. Hanke resigned and entered the army, but left it in 1941 to become Gauleiter of Lower Silesia.

About this time Hitler's young mistress, Eva Braun, who until then had divided her life between the Obersalzberg when Hitler was there and Munich when he wasn't, was given a bedroom in Hitler's Berlin residence. From then on Speer saw her almost every day. By this time an entirely platonic but affectionate friendship had developed between them.

In a curious way this friendship, her only one with one of Hitler's men, was to become another expression of Speer's special relationship with Hitler, who, totally controlling her life, let her off the leash to go to parties and skiing with the Speers, and even twice permitted her to accompany them on a trip abroad.

Speer felt that "Eva Braun has been much maligned. She was a very nice girl," he told me several times. He had been "discomfited," he told me, by Hitler's conduct toward the young woman. One night at the Berghof he heard Hitler say, as she sat next to him at table, that a highly intelligent man should always choose a primitive and stupid woman. On another occasion, when Speer was present at a dinner Hitler gave at the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Munich, which Eva Braun had been permitted to attend, although sitting far away from Hitler, he saw her blush deeply when Hitler, walking by without speaking, handed her an envelope. Later she told him that it was money, and that Hitler had done this in public on other occasions. "I felt horribly embarrassed for her," Speer told me. "Almost for the first time, I began to have a twinge of doubt about Hitler."

Although, on the face of it, their friendship was a "family" relationship and, whether traveling or dancing, Eva Braun went with the Speers as a cou-

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ple, Speer became her special confidant (she never talked about personal things to Margret). It was to him she would come in tears in 1943. "The Führer has just told me to find someone else," she sobbed. "He said he can no longer fulfill me."

"There were no two ways of interpreting this," Speer told me. "She made it quite clear: Hitler had told her that he was too busy, too immersed, too tired—he could no longer satisfy her as a man."

I wondered if she was tempted to take him at his word. "It was out of the question for her," he said. "Her love for him, her loyalty were absolute—as indeed she proved, unmistakably, at the end. She was very young, very shy and very modest."

Margret Speer, listening as we talked, had not found her so modest. "With us women, you know, she was quite aware of her position. On trips, she was very much the hostess. If Anni Brandt said, 'Let's go sightseeing,' but Eva Braun wanted to go swimming, it's swimming we went and that was that."

"Well, she was your hostess," said Speer, drily. "You never saw her behaving like that when she was out with us, did you? She was of course very feminine," he said, turning back to me. "A man's woman, incredibly undemanding for herself, helpful to many people behind the scenes—nobody ever knew that—and infinitely thoughtful of Hitler. She was a restful sort of girl. And her love for Hitler was beyond question."

Margret, on the surface so shy and vulnerable, tempted one to protect her, to shield her from one's own intrusive questions. But then the awareness of her almost unique position took over—these times I saw her, I felt, might be the last chance to hear direct testimony about an era, events and personalities whose few key witnesses were disappearing one by one. It was incredible to think that this shy and sensitive woman had for years seen Hitler as a private man day after day, had spent those twelve fateful years virtually in the exclusive company of the men closest to him—and their wives.

What was it like for the women who lived under Hitler's shadow? I asked her one day when Speer left us on our own while he dealt with urgent letters.

"Well, you know, it was heady living in that circle. He was always very gallant to women, very Austrian." Every sentence was interrupted by long pauses, reflections and retreats, to allow her, it seemed, to catch her breath. "One never . . . we all just chatted and we watched films." A question about having a serious or perhaps personal conversation with Hitler, during those many evenings around the fire at the Berghof, made her desperately uncomfortable. "Not conversations—it wasn't like that," she said, looking away from me. "He talked. We listened. You are looking for something that wasn't there. . . ."

I told her that I didn't seek to be indiscreet; I was only trying to get an

shook my head no, but kept looking at her. After several minutes, she managed to meet my eyes. "I can't," she said. "I like you very much, but I can't."

In fact, it was not quite fair of me to use the topic of euthanasia as a pressure point with Margret Speer. For although, in her horror at the turn our talk had taken, she couldn't even make herself protest her ignorance, the fact is that, protected as she was, she might well not have known about the Euthanasia Program when it was carried out. The intention was eventually to present it to the nation as a decision Hitler had long hesitated over, and finally only arrived at because petitions had been received from so many parents asking that their desperately ill children be allowed to die. But in fact the idea had been in his mind for years, probably from the time the hereditary-disease-prevention law was launched in 1933. Certainly he told his Minister of Health, Gerhard Wagner, on October 6, 1935 (when the law ordering abortions when necessary to safeguard hereditary health was published), that euthanasia would have to await the beginning of war, as then "the Church will not be able to put up any resistance."

Hitler's Euthanasia Authorization, written in October 1939 but backdated to September 1 to associate it with the outbreak of the war, was addressed on the Führer's letterhead to Philip Bouhler, head of the Führer Chancellery, which handled Hitler's special interests. He was assisted by equally odious personalities, SS Oberführer Viktor Brack and SS Oberführer Werner Blenkburg. These three, and the appalling psychiatrist-doctors Hermann Paul Nitsche and Werner Heyde, were all eventually involved as well with the death camps in Poland. Hitler's Euthanasia Authorization is a unique document in that it is the only order for murder that he signed; all the others were issued orally. It is also the first time Dr. Karl Brandt was mentioned:

Reichsleiter Bouhler and Dr. Brandt are charged with the responsibility for expanding the authority of physicians who are to be designated by name, to the end that patients who, in the best available human judgment after critical evaluation of their condition are considered incurable, can be granted Gnaden Tod [mercy death].

Signed: Adolf Hitler.

By this time the organization of this undertaking had already been in full swing for months. The Führer Chancellery* would administer it. Lists of German (and Austrian) mental institutions had been prepared, and thousands of registration forms ordered for the institutions to fill out to enable selection boards to choose the victims. The first three of what would eventually be about a dozen Euthanasia Institutes (Schloss Grafeneck near Stuttgart,

*This was a separate, small suite of offices located in a carefully secured part of the Reich Chancellery, with its own entrance at Tiergartenstrasse 4; hence it became known by the cryptic designation T4.

* the mother's cancer

Unleashing Murder

Schloss Hartheim: nation at Brandenburg psychiatrists, physicians men, had been app When a year later a the Führer Chancellor Charitable Foundation cynicism the Nazis n to the Aktion Rein euthanasia-trained p specifically for gassing huge labor camps with the Aktion Reinhard.

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Grafeneck near Stuttgart,

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Schloss Hartheim near the Austrian city of Linz and a former mental institu-
tion at Brandenburg an der Havel) were ready for their grim task. Nine psy-
chiatrists, physicians and pediatricians, all reputable and even well-known
men, had been appointed as early as July 1939 to head the organization.
When a year later a euphemism was needed to protect the respectability of
the Führer Chancellery, the euthanasia team was grotesquely renamed the
Charitable Foundation for Institutional Care, a term which, with the gross
cynicism the Nazis made their hallmark, would be extended two years later
to the Aktion Reinhard, the SS group, staffed almost exclusively with
euthanasia-trained personnel, that ran the four extermination camps built
specifically for gassing in occupied Poland. (Auschwitz and Majdanek were
huge labor camps with killing facilities in separate areas, and were not part of
the Aktion Reinhard.)

The Nazis were selective in their choice of euthanasia victims. As Franz
Stangl told me—he served as police administrator of Schloss Hartheim from
November 1940 and was later *Kommandant* first of Sobibor, then of Tre-
blinka—they reassured new staff that "four groups" with whom they might
have emotional ties were specifically exempted: "The senile; those who had
served in the armed forces; those who had been decorated with the Mothers'
Cross, for women who had borne many children; and relatives of euthanasia
staff." But there were other exemptions, above all of anyone with any possi-
ble connection to people around Hitler or to top people in the armed forces,
who would have been shielded from such knowledge and therefore any ne-
cessity to take issue with it.

Such people thus either would not have known about it at all or, if they did
(and perhaps, like many people, even agreed with the principle of euthana-
sia), would not have known the shocking details of the actual program, and
indeed could have neither imagined nor believed their horror.

Margret herself was far removed from contact with it. What is very diffi-
cult to accept is that the wives of those directly and continuously implicated
in these crimes—which of course Speer was not—could have remained in
total ignorance. One of the most telling examples here is Karl Brandt, Hitler's
personal physician, close friend of Albert Speer and husband of Margret's
closest friend, Anni, who—except when Brandt accompanied Hitler to his
field HQ—shared her husband's life throughout the war.

By all accounts, he was a fine surgeon and an attractive man with a first-
class mind. And yet, as the record amply proves and his own testimony at
Nuremberg in 1946–47 confirms, when Hitler appointed him Joint Chief of
the Euthanasia Program in 1939 he applied all his talents to these tasks, with-
out ever—as with considerable courage he admitted before he was hanged—
questioning the morality of Hitler's and Himmler's orders. (He did,

however, object to gassing the victims, on the basis that as it was a "medical program," they should be killed by injections, to be given only by doctors. He was overruled.)

* Brandt under cross-examination at his trial said that sixty thousand insane people had been killed, and that "feeble-minded and senile patients were included."* The killing of the insane (adults) officially ended in August 1941, though it continued unofficially until the end of the war. The killing of children ended officially that fall, though in reality they were still being killed as late as April 1945—some by hanging (see Chapter XIX). Brandt, no doubt for administrative rather than humane reasons, resigned his authority on children in 1942, though he still intervened in special cases.

Brandt was also involved in some of the appalling medical research carried out on concentration camp inmates. SS Dr. Ernst Grawitz wrote to Himmler in 1943: "SS Brigadeführer Dr. Professor Brandt has approached me to help him obtain prisoners to be used in his research . . . into epidemic jaundice. . . . It is now necessary . . . to inoculate human beings with germs cultivated in animals. *Todesfälle* [deaths] must be expected."

In other experiments carried out by Dr. Grawitz and Dr. Otto Siewers, wounds were deliberately inflicted, then infected with mustard gas. "Arms . . . are badly swollen and the pain is enormous," Grawitz wrote. Hitler requested that they confer soon with Brandt. "On account of the urgency of the order given him by the Führer . . . details were reported to Karl Brandt."

Aware of Hitler's secrecy rule and the need to protect the peace of mind of families and friends, one can well understand that men such as Brandt—and many others in similar positions—would not deliberately have informed their wives and friends of the nature of their work. But it is extremely difficult to believe that wives could have remained entirely ignorant, given the intensity of the work and the emotional impact it must have had on the men.

Indeed we have many examples of this from other men gravely implicated in Hitler's murders. When I was preparing my book *Into That Darkness* on the Commandant of Treblinka, I spent several days in 1972 in Unterammergau, a beautiful hamlet a few minutes from Oberammergau, where the famous Passion Play is enacted every ten years. I was talking to SS Corporal Gustav Münzberger, whose job it had been to drive the Jews into the gas chambers at Treblinka and who had recently been released after twelve years in prison. "Did you know what your husband was doing?" I asked his wife, a big woman with no apparent sense of right and wrong. "Well . . . he wasn't supposed to say of course, but you know what women are," she replied, with a touch of pride. "I probed and probed and finally he told me. . . ."

*This contradicts what Franz Stangl had been told, above.

* Hitler takes a trip through a mental hospital

Unleashing Murde

And in Brazil, I . . . after she found out . . . and Treblinka. "No! then, because I couldn't—I told our people the same in my husband's name."

In the middle of a wife and children out by the Americans. A martialled for defeat 23 Speer flew into Berlin before—as had just been summarily executed Himmler—"No doubt spirited Brandt away."

He mentions his "draft," on January 8. Goebbels, [Arthur] A court over Brandt," his reason than that he is safe. Maybe though known Brandt's [reaction through Hitler: it would be considered it]

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*Brandt was sentenced to death
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And in Brazil, I asked Franz Stangl's wife, Thea, if she had told anyone after she found out what her husband was doing as Commandant of Sobibor and Treblinka. "Nobody, oh, nobody," she said, "not for a long time, a year; then, because I couldn't stand it any longer—I just had to talk to somebody—I told our priest. He said he understood, and would have done the same in my husband's place. He absolved him. . . ."

In the middle of April 1945, two weeks before the end, Karl Brandt sent his wife and children out of Berlin to Thuringia, which was about to be occupied by the Americans. A few days later Hitler ordered him arrested and court-martialed for defeatism, for not moving them to the Obersalzberg. On April 23 Speer flew into Berlin, one of his goals being to spring Brandt from prison before—as had just happened to several other high-placed men—he could be summarily executed. On arrival in Berlin, however, he found that Himmler—"No doubt for his own good reasons," writes Speer—had already spirited Brandt away to the north.

He mentions his close friend Brandt just once in the 1,200-page "Spandau draft," on January 8, 1953, the day he began to write it. "Hitler appointed Goebbels, [Arthur] Axmann [Reich Youth Leader] and one other to sit as a court over Brandt," he writes, "and they sentenced him to death for no other reason than that he brought his wife to [the country] where she would be safe. Maybe though he had other reasons to do away with him. If I had known Brandt's [real] record I could have wished him to meet his end through Hitler: it would have been better for him."*

Did he consider it possible, I asked Speer one day in the mountains when he talked about Brandt, that Anni Brandt would have known nothing about her husband's activities? His answer was evasive. "Well, I knew nothing of that part of his activities," he replied. "I just knew that he was in charge of the Reich medical services."

I PUSHED FURTHER, asking again about Brandt's wife. "I think he would have kept these secrets very carefully," he said. "I really think he would have been more likely to drop a hint to me than to Anni, and he didn't. If he was involved in such dreadful things no one could have guessed this for a moment. He really did seem to be a man of excellence. Even if he acted out of conviction, as I suppose he must have, he would not have wanted his wife to know about it." He then said almost the same words Margaret had used the day before: "It would not have been a subject for discussion between them."

*Brandt was sentenced to death in the Doctors' Trial at Nuremberg, one of several which followed the first major trial of the top men in Hitler's government. He was hanged at Landsberg prison in 1948.

*V.T. — In situations like ours, the desire
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Association for Curative Education and Social Therapy, which by then was caring for some four thousand young people. "However handicapped they are," she said, "the spirit is always there. I never realized, perhaps until we talked now, that my deep conviction of the essentiality of this has its origin in our past: in the narrowness within which people thought and acted in the Nazi time. . . . If people then had more dimension, one would like to think—" She stopped. "I spend my life with people many of whom have been associated with this sort of work for umpteen years. And yet, it is only now, when the clock is turning all the way round, that they seem to be confronting what happened in their homes and in their hospitals forty-five years ago. Even if the rest of us didn't know what happened, or only knew it subconsciously or marginally, how could they not have known or not have faced it?

"I have sometimes wondered what would have happened if I had found out then what they were doing to children exactly like these I'm taking care of now. I think I would have had to do something about it, but—and I don't know how to make you understand this—it wouldn't have made me reject National Socialism. The convictions we held were too deep, too deep to abandon or even to doubt. No, I think I would have thought that there were evil spirits at work, and I would literally have gone out, I think, to look for them."

Would she have thought then that Hitler couldn't know about such things, that it was others who were the "evil spirits"?

"I'm afraid that's exactly what I would have thought," she said bitterly, "the famous 'Wenn der Führer das nur wüsste' ['If the Führer only knew this'] which people used to say about anything that went wrong."

I made a special point of asking Theo Hupfauer and his wife what they had known about euthanasia, for in February 1941 Hupfauer was named Commandant of the Ordensburg Sonthofen, an elite college for political education, on whose curriculum "hereditary health" and racial purity must have figured prominently.

"I was only the Commandant," he said evasively. "I didn't know about euthanasia. But let me add right away—I'm not against it. As you can see, it is now being discussed more and more."

It seemed inconceivable that as master of Sonthofen and high up in the German Workers' Front he would not have been informed about this program of fundamental importance for the New Germany.

"There was a notice on the wall of every office during those years," he said. "Did you know about that? It said 'Every man need only know what is going on in his own domain.'"

Sonthofen was his—and his wife's—domain as of April 1941. They had

get a feel of the black of humanity as brilliant as a
point of light in the darkness. Yes, I am part of them,
myself in the world, as in the water.

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There was, of course, no question of any "moment of crisis" other than the provocations carefully planned by Hitler. The Poles, deeply sensitive to their military weakness, had no wish whatever for a confrontation. Given the behavior of Britain and France when Hitler, unimpeded by anything except feeble diplomatic protests and wringing of hands, took Austria in March 1938 and Czechoslovakia in March 1939, the Poles had little reason to put their trust in the West. In fact the Western Allies did finally live up to their promises to Poland, although Hitler too had never thought they would. He had therefore at the ready a number of scenarios which would permit him to lay the blame for the outbreak of war on Polish "atrocities."

The best known—it was actually carried out toward the evening of August 31—was the seizing of the radio station at Gleiwitz on the Polish border: SS men, dressed as Polish insurgents, were to storm the transmitter, broadcast a proclamation and escape. But another more complicated plan was also carried out that day and, like the incident at Gleiwitz, was promptly reported on German radio as a provocation by the Poles. Here too, a company of Polish-speaking SS dressed in Polish uniforms seized the German customs post at Hochlinden in a staged skirmish with the border officials. Six corpses of Sachsenhausen concentration camp prisoners, who were brought to the area dressed in Polish uniforms with soldiers' passbooks in their pockets, were left lying there as proof of the battle. It was to be years before the full story of these staged provocations became known and accepted. (Speer told me that he had believed until Nuremberg that the Poles were to blame for the Gleiwitz attack.)

During supper that evening of August 23, Speer had seen Hitler in an unprecedented state of excitement when he was handed a message from Stalin announcing the imminent signature by the Soviets of the nonaggression pact. He jumped up from his seat, banged the table so hard that the glasses rattled and, visibly losing control, shouted hoarsely, "I've got them! I've got them!"

But it was only after dinner, when the ladies had left them, that Hitler, who had little faith in the discretion of women, showed his entourage the signal. "To see the names of Hitler and Stalin linked in friendship on a piece of paper," writes Speer in his book (and in the "Spandau draft"), "was the most staggering, the most exciting turn of events I could possibly have imagined."

Speer had believed in Hitler's—and Stalin's—good faith. "I think now of course," he told me, "that it was all part of his political game and perhaps Stalin's too. But however difficult it is to believe this now, I assure you I didn't know this then. Not only that, I believe to this day that Ribbentrop, who certainly was in a position to have known better, also believed him to be in good faith."

* D. T. - A. H. - would exhibit the pleasure
 of fraternity by listening to a
 practical joke played on someone
 they knew and despised.

In a way, Speer said, Hitler had always admired Stalin for his strength and for his ruthlessness. "Perhaps he really did think an entente between them through a division of Europe, or the world, was possible."

Of course, Speer would not have been privy to Hitler's words a mere two weeks before that fateful night when, on August 11, 1939, he had one of his many conversations unter vier Augen (~~under~~ four eyes) in the course of which he is known to have communicated some of his most important decisions. This one was with Carl Burckhardt, a Swiss, whom, as League of Nations High Commissioner in Danzig, Hitler is believed to have tried to use as a conduit to the Allies.

Burckhardt, who shortly afterwards became head of the International Red Cross, described his meeting with Hitler in his book, *Meine Danziger Mission 1937-1939*. "Everything I undertake is directed against the Russians," he reported Hitler as saying, clearly intending his words—which were tantamount to a guarantee to the Western Allies—to be communicated to them. "If the West is too obtuse to comprehend this, I shall be forced to come to terms with the Russians. Then, after crushing the West, I will turn all my forces against the USSR. I have to have the Ukraine, so that they can't starve us into submission as happened in the last war."

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler had abundantly shown his determination to go to war against Russia. But even if Speer hadn't read *Mein Kampf*, as he sometimes claimed, how was it possible, I asked, that he and no doubt other intelligent Germans at the time could fail to see through Hitler's "divide and conquer" strategy? It must surely have been obvious that he was determined to isolate the Poles. By driving a wedge between the Soviet Union and the British and French, he could discourage the Western Allies from assisting them; by presenting the Soviets with irresistible economic and political alternatives, he could stop them from coming to Poland's rescue. How could Speer not have seen this? How could they not have understood that nothing could have made Hitler abandon his sworn battle against Bolshevism?

"I think," said Speer wearily, "that we saw only what we wanted to see and knew only what we wanted to know."

Putting his signature on the most cynical treaty of the century, Hitler achieved on August 24 his greatest diplomatic triumph. On the face of it, it was a fairly simple contract. Both countries were to abjure aggressive action against the other for a period of ten years, with an option for a further five. The nitty-gritty, however, was contained first in the trade agreement signed four days previously and also in a secret protocol in which Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to use Hitler's war against Poland, scheduled for one week hence, to carve up Eastern Europe between them. Finland, most of the Baltic states and Bessarabia were promised to Russia and, once Hitler's war in

A Grey Path Indeed

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Poland had started (the Russians were to support it by invading Poland from their side), so was all of eastern Poland: 77,000 square miles with 13 million inhabitants.

Speer had telephoned his head of staff at the GBI the morning of August 24 (he would return to Berlin with Hitler the next day) to instruct him to set up a technical team whose assistance for the construction of bridges, roads, air-fields and bunkers he intended to offer to the Army High Command.

It didn't quite work out as planned. For while the team was duly ready for action when Speer returned to Berlin the next day, and General Friedrich Fromm, who was responsible for army mobilization, gratefully accepted his proposed help, Hitler—promptly informed by Bormann of Speer's independent step—immediately tightened the leash and forbade him to do anything except continue with building projects.

THEO HUPFAUER's career in the Workers' Front had developed enormously by that time. In 1938 he had been sent into Austria with the troops in order to set up Workers' Front organizations in what, in 1986 when we talked, he still called "the liberated areas." He felt that the Anschluss had been legitimate, both from a political and geographic point of view. "The 1918 Austrian State Treaty," he said, "specifically stated that Austria 'was part of Germany.'"

"I was amazed, though," Hupfauer said, "at the enthusiasm the Austrians demonstrated. Even though their economic situation was appalling and would obviously improve dramatically by annexation to the booming German economy, I had not expected that degree of enthusiasm."

He had remained in perfect agreement with Hitler over Austria and the Sudetenland. But when in March 1939, only months after the "peace in our time" agreements with Chamberlain and Daladier, it was Czechoslovakia's turn, he felt the first stirrings of discomfort.

"You mustn't think that we were unaware, or just sheep," he said. "We discussed this quite openly amongst ourselves. I always said that Hitler's greatest deficiency was his total ignorance of foreign countries and mentalities; after all, he never traveled. Except for his visits to Mussolini, later his trips to his military HQs first in the West and then in the East and his one quick trip to Paris, he never went anywhere. He simply was not a statesman," he said, repeating that Hitler's betrayal of the agreements had caused him "grave misgivings."

Nonetheless, Hupfauer continued in Hitler's service. Indeed, one of the proudest moments he remembered was when Hitler had been so impressed by articles he had written in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on individual

social responsibility, that he instructed Robert Ley, head of the Workers' Front, to have Hupfauer deliver the main speech at the ceremony awarding medals for "model industries" for 1937-39. "At the end," he said, "Hitler shook both my hands and said, 'This is the future,' and then—quite extraordinary—he delivered a fifteen-minute speech ad-libbing with perfect knowledge on the subject. He could do this, you know, about virtually anything. The range of his knowledge was quite fantastic."

Four months later, in August 1939, he and five friends were on a long-planned sailing trip in the Baltic intending to end up on the Isle of Man, when their money ran out in Denmark, in the pubs of Tivoli, and they had to turn back to Germany. Back at sea they met up with the German cruiser *Schleswig-Holstein*, whose commander had formerly been Admiral Wilhelm Canaris's deputy. Hupfauer had met him when he needed Canaris's authorization to visit certain army-controlled factories.

Asked aboard for a drink, the young vacationers asked the captain where he was heading. "He answered evasively," Hupfauer said, "but when we told him that we had originally intended to sail to Britain, he advised us to head home as quickly as possible."

Did they understand what he meant? "Yes, of course we did. Hitler had this idiot Ribbentrop as his advisor—it had to end badly. But I was really surprised when war came," he said. "None of us wanted it. It was stupid—at last we had work and things were looking up. What could we possibly gain by war?"

Did he now agree that it was Hitler, and not Poland, who had started hostilities? "Well, all right," he said, "but why didn't they just let him have Danzig—it was a legitimate request. . . ."

"It was a German city," his wife interjected. "I remember it well."

"The problem was that Ribbentrop had persuaded Hitler that Britain wouldn't enter the war," Hupfauer said. "It all hinged on that. One cannot know how he would have acted had he known—as certainly he should have—that Britain would of course live up to her agreements with Poland. They allowed Austria and Czechoslovakia to go, but traditionally their relationship with Poland was much stronger. And, politically, Poland was the bulwark—the frontier against Russian incursion into, and domination of, Western Europe. But these were all things Hitler was incapable of realizing. This blindness was his doom."

Hitler's drive into Poland was already dramatically successful when, on September 17, 1939, with German forces surrounding Warsaw, the Soviets finally performed a token incursion from the east which lasted less than a week, at the end of which Stalin presented Hitler with new demands. On September 27, Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, hastily dispatched to Moscow,

A Grey Path Indeed

agreed to the wily Russian in Estonia and offered Hitler a subsist Vistula—against a free Lithuania. This meant of the country's app under German contr

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Hitler, prepared to accept almost any conditions which would ensure Soviet neutrality and give him time to begin establishing his New Order in Eastern Europe, agreed. Not long afterwards, he also agreed to deliver to the Soviets RM 1 billion worth of military hardware, including planes, artillery and ships of the latest design, which, to the fury of his perplexed generals, gave the Soviets access to much of Germany's newest and most secret military technology. Hitler, however, was only too aware of Germany's shortages in raw materials (which, paradoxically enough, could have prevented him from carrying out his future plans in the East) and received as payment from the Soviets a million tons of feed grains, nine hundred thousand tons of oil, half a million tons of phosphate, half a million tons of iron ore and one hundred thousand tons of chromium ore. Another valuable concession was a guaranteed right of way overland through Russia for raw materials Hitler intended to purchase from Rumania, Iran, Afghanistan and the Far East.

It is curious how little the world knows even now about Poland's martyrdom during World War II. In eastern Poland, the USSR, intent on sovietizing their newly acquired lands, very quickly eliminated most of the Polish social and intellectual elite: judges, teachers, clergy, landowners and army officers, such as the fifteen thousand Polish officers murdered—it is thought, in May 1940—in the forest of Katyn, a crime only admitted by the Russians in 1990, after Gorbachev's *glasnost* had taken hold.

As Alan Bullock brilliantly demonstrates in his *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, with the important exception of Hitler's mania about the Jews—the ferocity of which Stalin, though by no means pro-Semitic, did not share—the two dictators' goals almost coincided here. Both, while milking the Polish land and people and appropriating grain and minerals wherever they could, immediately put into practice long-held colonization plans, the Russians importing thousands of Soviet families, the Nazis—both more ambitious and far better organized—hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans, mostly farmers.

It has so far been impossible to ascertain precisely how many Poles were killed by the Soviets or died in Siberia, though newly accessible archives may eventually enlighten us. One estimate is that one and a half million were deported, of whom about half perished. Even so, this number is fractional com-



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pared to Germany's slaughter of what is estimated to be about five and a half million people in Poland, including the two and a half million Polish Jews the Nazis gassed, shot or killed by working them to death. Geopolitically, Poland in a way served both the Soviets and the Nazis as a laboratory for the two dictators' plans for the future. As Bullock (who quoted the above figures) writes,

Just as the eastern half of Poland was the first foreign country on which Stalin imposed the social and political revolution on the Stalinist model which he was later to export to Eastern and Central Europe, so the western half was the first area in which Hitler could try out the racial principles that he saw forming the basis of the empire he dreamed of conquering as far east as the Urals. . . .

The Nazis' program for their parts of Poland was two-pronged. Northwest Poland, renamed the Warthegau—including Danzig, Posen, West Prussia and a large part of Silesia (only half of which, incidentally, had been Prussian before the Treaty of Versailles awarded it to Poland)—was incorporated into Germany, the beginning of the *Lebensraum* in the East Hitler had promised the Germans for years. Here, even before Warsaw, the bitterly defended capital, had been taken, Himmler and his favorite vassal, Reinhard Heydrich, his new Chief of Staff for Security, for the first time unleashed their newly created special forces, the Einsatzgruppen (Action Groups). These consisted of a curious riffraff of (when at full strength a year later) about three thousand men, many of them early volunteers for SS information or police sections, others disaffected professionals—lawyers, dentists, even press or government information officials and diplomats. All of them essentially civilians, they were trained for murder rather than war—the Einsatzgruppen trials after the war demonstrated that their three-week training courses in Pretzsch, Silesia, included no tactical instruction. But fanatical Nazis one and all, the four groups of six hundred men each, eventually led by a large number of highly qualified SS officers, were to become the scourge and terror of the conquered territories in Eastern Europe.

The central part of Poland, with a population of eleven million and containing the country's major cities (Warsaw, Krakow and Lublin), was turned into an occupied province with its General Government headed by Hitler's former lawyer, Reichsminister Hans Frank. It was into this part of conquered Poland, essentially the only part of the country to be allowed to remain Catholic and Polish, that the Einsatzgruppen deported millions of Poles from the to-be "Germanized" annexed areas—the "Warthegau," where their farms and homes were handed over to ethnic German settlers imported from all

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over Central Europe and the East. By mid-1941, two hundred thousand Volksdeutsche, repatriates from the Sudetenland and points east, had been settled in the reconstituted Prussia and Silesia, whose language entirely reverted to German and where the influence of Polish churches and culture virtually ceased to exist.

The General Government, meanwhile, also became the dumping ground for the 1.9 million Jews who had lived in the now German northwestern provinces. At this point, and until after the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union, the policy toward them was largely isolation and containment; they were herded into the ghettos of the General Government's cities. These were soon desperately overcrowded, with their inhabitants suffering appalling deprivations. Still, to some extent the ghettos became self-governing enclaves where, with schools, clinics, places of entertainment and of worship somehow organized, a semblance of normality continued for a time.

A secret memorandum from Himmler in May 1940 specified that the former Polish state and its varying "races"—Poles, Ukrainians, White Russians, Jews—were to be broken up:

... into the largest possible number of parts and fragments ... the racially valuable elements to be extracted from the hodgepodge...

The rest would be left to die. Within ten years, said the memorandum, the populations of the General Government "will be reduced to a remnant of sub-standard beings ... a leaderless labor force capable only of furnishing Germany with casual laborers. ..." Eventually "the Jews will be completely eliminated by a major deportation operation to Africa or some other colony," while the other people of the East should be driven further east, ceasing to exist as racial entities. (This suggests that in May 1940 the physical extermination of the Jews was not yet envisaged.)

In addition to eliminating the Polish educated classes, Himmler continued, their children would be carefully screened "so that those who are racially valuable" could be germanized, while the rest would be allowed only basic education, "not even being taught to read." His suggestions were well received by the Führer, as Himmler's chilling office note, headed "Special Train, May 28, 1940," shows:

I handed my report on the treatment of peoples of alien races in the East to the Führer. [He] read the six pages and considered them very good and correct. He directed, however, that only very few copies should be made; ... the report is to be treated with utmost secrecy. [After listing the officials who were to be informed, he adds,]

Everyone has to confirm that he has been informed of the fact that this is to be considered as a directive, but that it shall never be laid down in an order of one of the Main Offices: neither in the form of a mere excerpt nor from memory.

There is no doubt that Himmler took his cue here from Hitler, who time and again discussed his plans for the people of the East, above all from the point of view of education for the young. His *Tabletalk** often records such comments. For example, at dinner on July 27, 1941:

Nothing would be a worse mistake on our part than to seek to educate the masses there. It is to our interest that the people should know just enough to recognize road signs. At present they can't read, and they ought to stay like that. [A year later, on July 22, 1942, he returned to the subject:] Certainly no facilities for higher education: [which] would simply plant the seeds of future opposition to our rule. . . . Instruction in geography can be restricted to a single sentence: "The Capital of the Reich is Berlin." Elementary instruction in reading and writing in German. . . . Arithmetic and such-like is quite unnecessary. . . . Yes, the cities we build for our German settlers [these are the cities in the Occupied Eastern Territories he had by then asked Speer to build] should be beautiful, with wide streets, parks, and all facilities for leisure. As a special recompense for work well done, groups of natives can be taken to these towns—which ordinarily of course will be off-limits to them—to see how their masters live. . . .

There was one group of Easterners who were taken to Germany long before they could work, but even they went as a result of special selections. These were the Polish—and later Ukrainian and Russian—babies and toddlers who, after being examined by "experts in racial science," were judged worthy of being "germanized." The precise number of small children torn away from their parents to be brought up as Germans has never been known, but the search-and-find register at Arolsen, (then) West Germany, set up by the Allied relief authorities at the end of the war, showed almost a quarter of a million names of children sought by parents from Poland and the Ukraine.

It so happened that I became intimately involved with that particular aspect of the Nazi horrors when, as a child welfare officer for UNRRA—United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration—in the U.S. zone of Germany in 1945 I was in charge, for half a year, of a Child Tracing team. With

*Beginning in July 1941, Hitler's *Tabletalk* was recorded on Bormann's orders without Hitler's knowledge, because he felt that Hitler's discourses should be preserved for posterity. Although these quotations are dated after the Russian war began, Hitler was obviously saying much the same thing for months and years before the record began to be kept. For a fuller discussion of *Tabletalk*'s history, see Notes.

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the help of some young Hungarian friends with good contacts among the
population, I was able to locate about forty-five children, between three and
eight years of age, who were living with German farming families in our area
of operations but, according to local informers, did not belong to them.

Taking these children away from these families was one of the hardest
things I have ever had to do. These foster parents, who had accepted the chil-
dren as their own, loved them, and the children loved them in return. I took
the youngsters to a special center we had prepared, and lived and worked
there with them for months, for it took time even to begin repairing the
harm of the double violence that had been done to them: first when the Nazis
forcibly separated them from their parents, their homes and their language;
and second when we—essentially not much more gently—removed them
from what had become their adopted home and in most cases devoted adop-
tive parents.

It took even longer to find and reunite some of them with their real fami-
lies. Of my group of forty-five, thirty-eight turned out to have been abducted
from Poland, and in the spring of 1946 I took them—and about two hundred
from other areas—back there. They were the first children to be returned,
and just as I can't forget the pain of the German foster parents when they had
to see the children leave, I will never, as long as I live, forget the welcome they
received in Poland, never forget the faces of the parents, grandparents, un-
cles, aunts, brothers and sisters. The miracle of recognition of a long-lost
child by those who love them is awesome to behold.

But given what happened next, I was almost thankful that by the time the
Child Tracing program was abandoned some time later, only a fraction of the
alleged 250,000 children had been found. Hundreds who were found and
identified as having been taken away not from Polish but from Soviet par-
ents, among them seven of my group of forty-five, had still another trauma
awaiting them.

As a result of a political decision largely arrived at in Washington (and im-
posed upon the British), these children, unlike those from Poland, were
never to be returned to their families. In one of the most high-handed deci-
sions ever made by officialdom, the American and British governments, by
now in a state of cold war with the Soviets, decreed that no children were to
be returned to be brought up as communists. In one letter, replying to my
protests, the U.S. State Department said they were acting entirely in the in-
terest of the children, who could not be allowed to be subjected to the indoctrina-
tion they would no doubt suffer, and whose physical safety could not be
guaranteed if they were returned to the Soviet Union. (The seven Ukrainian
children then in my care were all under four.) I fought against this mon-
strous decision for months, supported every step of the way by Jack Whiting,

the Director of UNRRA in the U.S. zone. But we lost, and these infants, psychologically doubly brutalized, first for grotesque racial principles by the Nazis and then for equally outrageous ideological reasons by their so-called liberators, were sent overseas, to America, Australia and Canada, to yet another strange land and a strange tongue, again to be adopted or fostered by strangers.

"May God preserve us from ideological maniacs, wherever they are," Georges Casalis said, when late one night in France I recounted this story.

THERE WAS NO REASON for Speer to know what went on in Poland in 1939-40. Up to a point he had obeyed Hitler's order, that first week of the war, to concentrate on building projects. In the winter of 1939 he installed field headquarters for Hitler and Göring on two feudal estates in the Taunus mountains, near the French border. Göring was delighted with Kransberg. "Only castles would do for him," Speer said. But Hitler rejected this outright and told Speer to find him "something small and simple. It is not fitting that I revel in luxury while my soldiers live in dugouts."

"Given the money and effort that had been expended, especially for the communication network that was required for Führer Headquarters," Speer said, "that struck me as fairly contrary even then, despite my infatuation with Hitler. I didn't think that any soldier would object to Germany's leader living according to his rank. But I now think my doubts about his motivation were rather unfair because, as it turned out, he was entirely consistent throughout the war in his insistence on spartan living, especially when in the field."

Even though Speer had had to withdraw his offer to build for the army, he later proposed the same to the Luftwaffe, though much more discreetly. Soon he was not only designing airports and putting up buildings for them all over Germany, but took charge of developing their installation at Peenemünde, later the experimental site for the rockets which were to plague London.

But even so, he spent most of that first year of the war perfecting the designs for the area around the projected Great Hall, to be the venue for Hitler's future speeches in Berlin; on Göring's new residence there; and on the 350,000-seat Nuremberg Stadium. His team of architects, a number of whom like Speer had been deferred from active service by Hitler's orders, also completed the plans for the university, museum and hospital district of the new Berlin which Hitler insisted, war or no war, had to be ready by 1950.

On June 23, 1940, a few days after the fall of Paris, Speer accompanied Hitler on his three-hour dawn sightseeing jaunt to the capital of defeated France, along with architect Hermann Giesler and sculptor Arno Breker.

A Grey Path Indeed

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A euphoric Hitler, returning that night to his field HQ in a farmhouse on the France-Belgium border, sitting at a wooden table in the kitchen, ordered Speer to stop refining plans and to start the construction of Berlin and Nuremberg.

"Wasn't Paris beautiful?" Hitler marveled. "But Berlin must exceed it [in beauty]. When we have it done, Paris will forever stand in its shadow." For the remainder of 1940, Speer commuted between Berlin and Berchtesgaden, with Hitler constantly inspecting the plans and reminding him of the 1950 deadline.

"During that wonderful hot summer," Speer told me, "it really sometimes seemed as if he had nothing else on his mind. Of course, all of us were, I can only say, in a state of rapture. I had no doubt whatever that he was the greatest conqueror of all times, comparable to the giants of antiquity or the Middle Ages. If he believed the war was as good as over and we could go back to building our future, then that was what I would do. And so, grotesquely as it turned out, that summer, my thoughts and those of my colleagues were entirely on building."

By that time, of course, the unbelievable had happened. Waging an unprecedented *Blitzkrieg*, largely conceived by himself in collaboration with the Wehrmacht's adventurous strategist, General Fritz Erich von Manstein, Hitler had overrun Europe. Secure in the knowledge that his army, having first taken Poland in little more than eight days and then Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, Holland, Belgium and France in less than six weeks, he magnanimously—and incomprehensibly to all his generals—let the British execute their extraordinary evacuation of 338,000 men from Dunkirk with a motley collection of almost a thousand ships, destroyers, sailboats, ferries and motor launches. The energy Britain was capable of mobilizing during those extraordinary eight days, and the inability of Göring's Luftwaffe to halt the evacuation when Hitler, almost as if for sport, authorized it to give battle, should have given him pause. But he and his men saw only defeat in Britain's escape from the European Continent, and interpreted Churchill's addresses to the British people, as Goebbels put it with his inimitable elegance, as nothing more than "the yelping of a wounded dog." His diary entries during those weeks of triumph vividly describe the atmosphere:

May 27, 1940: ... Calais in our hands; with that we have England by the throat. ... May 28: In London they pray ... all they can do. ... May 29: Churchill speechifies, still impudent but sweating from every pore. ... May 31: The English try to escape across the channel. Luftwaffe attacks successfully. ... a wild rout. ... June 2: The British are incredibly cynical, representing their defeat as a signal victory. ... Their showing off gets on

* D.T. I was worried. Goebbels did not understand. "Nothing to offer but blood, sweat, toil & tears" (C.H.) Even some

* of our mind devoted souls in England were moved by Churchill.

one's nerves . . . [but] things are going magnificently now with Mussolini on our side. . . . God bless our work. Life is beautiful. . . . June 16: The world can speak of nothing but our capture of Paris. . . . Since June 5, 200,000 prisoners. The German flag flies over Versailles. Triumph. It makes one's heart beat stronger. . . . The Führer calls to tell me about the capitulation of the French; he is deeply moved. . . .

As of June 20, when the British successfully bombed German industrial targets, his entries become slightly less ecstatic, and on June 25 he touches for the first time on the topic which was to puzzle all of Hitler's men over the next months:

Führer has not decided whether he wants to attack England. Thinks it is necessary to keep the Empire intact. . . . If it falls apart, it will only go into other hands. . . . He would agree to peace with them on the basis of agreement that Europe ours, colonies remain theirs [but] compensation is paid to us for what was stolen from us after the World War. We are already negotiating. July 1: There is only one question [on everybody's mind]: when do we start for England? . . .

Eight years later, Churchill described in *Their Finest Hour* Britain's appalling paucity in matériel and training at that point:

Our armies at home were known to be almost unarmed except for rifles. There were in fact hardly 500 field guns of any sort, and hardly 200 medium or heavy tanks in the whole country.

Had Speer ever heard Hitler indicate that he knew of Britain's poverty in arms? "Later when I became Minister, we of course discussed these matters," he said. "I don't know what he knew or didn't know in those earlier years. But what I, and many other people, did learn to understand was that whatever the tactical reasons he gave to the generals, the fact is, he really didn't want to wage war against England. I told you earlier—many of his decisions were based on emotion. Here, too, it was not strategy but emotion that ruled. Hitler liked and admired the British. 'They are our brothers,' he often said. 'Why fight our brothers? And he was always sure—he said that often, too—that Britain would come around, would join him in the fight against Bolshevism. Of course, later, when he was forced to realize he had been wrong, he was very bitter, at the very end more bitter about them than about the Russians.'"

"They are our brothers" was a huge oversimplification by Hitler of his feelings about the British which, oddly enough, were shared for much of this century, until well after the end of World War II, by many Germans and Austrians, including Speer. Britons as people, rather than Britain as a country, represented excellence to them.

* D. T. The language is intriguing here.
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"I have always envied [Anglo-Saxons]," Speer said in a letter to Hilde on June 26, 1952, "their capacity for self-control." This was part of it, but by no means all. The British, men and women, were "gentlemen" in the eyes of the Germans, with all the connotations of the term: courageous, honest, "self-controlled" and—rightly, they felt, given Britons' obvious superiority—detached from and condescending toward lesser mortals. This may sound ridiculous now to the British themselves, but this emotional penchant, inexplicable or not, was a fact, one which enormously influenced Hitler's actions and therefore the course of the war and of history. For no one in Britain—Churchill least of all—was certain the country could have fought off a Nazi invasion in 1940.

Hitler made many mistakes, one of which was to present Britain with a year of breathing space with her army safely at home. This provided time for intensified production and training and immeasurable strengthening of her materiel and psychological alliance with the United States. Another error, after the shockingly rapid conquest of Yugoslavia and Greece, was the invasion of Russia, though even this was in his mind only a preliminary to greater things. He had asked the Wehrmacht to plan for an overland attack on India through Russia. A third and fatal misjudgment was his declaration of war on the United States.

Speer told me he was not aware of these daring visions: "Not so specifically." He pondered for a long time whether if he had known, he would have thought that Hitler was mad. "It's difficult to answer that, because from the perspective of today, of course I would or should have thought him mad. But thinking myself back into that time, I have to say I'm not certain. I think that in 1940-41 I thought him capable of achieving anything he wanted."

Speer's writing about his activities in 1940 and 1941—both in the "Spandau draft" and later in his books—is sparse, concentrating primarily on his continuing architectural work. He mentions only those commissions connected with the war which can be seen to be associated with his profession, such as (in the sequence he received these assignments) the assistance his organization, the GBI, provided for the Luftwaffe, building three huge factories in Brunn, Graz and Vienna for the production of their new medium-range dive bomber, the Junkers 88; the huge navy yard Hitler commissioned him to build in Norway in May 1941; the air-raid shelters he constructed across Berlin; and the armament factories he built all over Germany.

The tasks which, whether by intent or neglect, Speer doesn't describe in any of his writing happen to be those which either could be interpreted as having political connotations or might be considered as having put him in a position of learning about events of which he later claimed to have no knowledge. One such assignment began in the spring of 1939, when the launch of

him.
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his Berlin building program required the clearance of whole streets and apartment blocks and the rehousing of thousands of people. To deal with this problem, Speer set up a new department in the GBI, the Main Division for Resettlement, headed by an administrator who had recently joined him, Dietrich Clahes, former Prime Minister of Brunswick. A few months later, when, after the beginning of the war and the bombings by the RAF, increasing numbers of people were made homeless and the GBI was made responsible for dealing with bomb damage in the capital, the tasks of this department would vastly increase.

But through this relocation work, the GBI, perhaps inevitably, became almost from the start associated with the measures against the Jews. On April 30, 1939, a new statute—the Tenancy Agreement with Jews—was added to the Nuremberg Laws. It decreed that any Jewish tenant could be evicted if "alternate lodging was available to him." Thousands of landlords across the land immediately gave notice to their Jewish tenants; Jewish welfare organizations were ordered to make lodgings available for them with other Jews; and "resettlement divisions" were set up within the regional housing authorities of most German cities to deal with registration, applications and complaints and liaise with both Jewish agencies and those effecting or enforcing the departure of Jews from their homes.

In Berlin, where the GBI already had a long list of people awaiting rehousing, this responsibility was assigned to Clahes's new Resettlement Department, working with the other agencies that were necessarily involved.

Most of this early resettlement work, whatever its consequences on various groups, including Berlin Jews, was purely administrative and it is unlikely that Speer himself, by now heading an organization of thousands, knew much about the details involved. This benefit of the doubt, however, cannot be extended to him for the next stage involving the Berlin Jews, two years later, in early 1941.

On March 20, 1941, by which time British bombing had begun to bite and Speer's responsibilities were considerably extended, a meeting was called at Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda to discuss the problem of the remaining sixty to seventy thousand Jews in the capital. It was attended by both Adolf Eichmann and Clahes.

Leopold Gutterer, State Secretary at the Ministry of Propaganda, representing Goebbels, informed the group of a meeting between Hitler and Goebbels that week at which Hitler, though he had not yet decreed that the capital should be immediately cleared of Jews (mainly because about twenty-six thousand Jews were still working for armament production there), had "convinced Dr. Goebbels that the Führer will eventually be open to constructive suggestions about their evacuation."

Speer's representation in Berlin still used by preparatory work on of major bombing asked to work out a plan for Berlin.

It is impossible to imagine—the evacuation of Nuremberg that the thousand remaining the wives and children. Under cross-examination, Justice Robert Jackson in his closing arguments in 1941–42 on the full swing. These Jews still lived in their apartments.

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your suggestion, I think that they should cease to exist forever. Because a mere postponement to historically more propitious times seems to me a bad idea. For who then could take issue with a distorted interpretation which can only be strengthened by the fact of the pages having been withheld for years. As it stands now, anyone with any sense would consider your deletion of such pages quite legitimate. . . .

I hope that, despite the fog that surrounds us here, I am making myself quite clear. . . .

He did, as Wolters was to confirm on January 22, 1970, in a letter which is part lies and part truth:

Dear Albert,

Couldn't reply sooner to your letter from Selva as Marion and I spent all that time searching for the *Chronik* original. Without further ado: it has vanished without trace; it's gone; no longer here—it has ceased to exist. Well, I think it's just as well. Because if it did still exist, then, yes, one would have to hand it in as is. One certainly couldn't correct it again, for if that were discovered, it would be even more embarrassing. . . .

Having exercised my author's privilege of selection and editing in the first place, I had no hesitation to do so on the second occasion. But as a copy of the original [of the year 1943] apparently exists in London, I certainly would not wish to do it a third time.

So, as far as I am concerned, this is the end of this matter; I hope it is the same for you. If there are any complications, just blame it all on me—or Marion if you like: as an artist, meticulous organization of documents, understandably enough, is not her "forte." . . .

Three weeks later, Wolters repeated this letter, in more formal terms, for forwarding to the Federal Archives, which Speer duly did on February 13, 1970, with a covering note:

Dear Dr. Mommsen,

Unfortunately, my friend Dr. Rudolf Wolters has responded negatively about the *Chronik*. I enclose a copy of his letter of February 10. I'm sorry not to have been more successful in this matter: but hopefully, future historians will find the material that does exist in the Federal Archives valuable enough as it stands. . . .

In a closing paragraph, Speer offered Dr. Mommsen some historical film material he had rediscovered and, jocular as ever, wrote to Wolters by the same post: "I think Mommsen can be quite content now, given the films I sent him as a consolation prize."

Wolters had made a will in which he left his private papers to the Federal Archives in Koblenz, with access restricted to researchers approved by his

would ever have realized that there was a moral aspect to this transfer of umpteen-thousand apartments. If he had noticed it, what he would probably have done is get rid of that particular assignment as being too troublesome, potentially embarrassing. He never looked to take on things which were likely to create problems for him. After all," she shrugged, "what he wanted was success.

"However, having said that," she continued, "I have to tell you that the drama, the tragedy behind these orders, simply never entered one's mind. It was purely an administrative matter. Knowing what we know now, one can say that it should have meant something, that we should have asked ourselves what exactly was happening, why all these flats were suddenly available, etc., but we just didn't. It simply didn't occur to us." In any case, she honestly didn't think, she said, that Speer personally had anything to do with these flats.

Well, she was wrong about that. What Speer didn't know at the time of the correspondence with Wolters, or even years later when he tried to prevent the publication of Schmidt's embarrassing book, was that three notebook pages, on which he jotted down questions to raise in meetings with his staff, had somehow slipped among the thousands of pages of documentation which Wolters eventually bequeathed to the Federal Archives, and would establish his personal knowledge of the Jewish-owned flats beyond a shadow of a doubt.

The first, page 48, bears a date of January 20, 1941, and contains, besides two notes for the architect Hans Stephan, one for Dietrich Clahes, Chief of Resettlement Department: "Cl: Couple [*koppeln*]* action on the 1,000 Jewish flats with preparation for emergency quarters for people made homeless through bomb damage." The other two pages are undated, both appearing merely to be reminders to himself to ask Clahes for reports: "Cl." he jots down, "Report about 1,000 Jew flats," and adds in the next line, still directed to Clahes, "& various other things I haven't heard anything more about." The third page note is only "Clah. Report about 1,000 Jew-flat action."

Whichever way one looks at the crossed-out *Chronik* entries and at Speer's aide-mémoire, one can be absolutely certain on a number of points: the first, that Speer, although he eventually came to accept Wolters's "cleansing," had nothing to do with these deletions, which Wolters made while Speer was imprisoned at Spandau. Second, Clahes's presence at the March 21 meeting at

*The word *koppeln*—a somewhat ambiguous term not quite equivalent to the verb "to couple"—indicates here Speer's apparent intention that the GBI's "action on 1,000 Jewish flats" should be seen to be linked (obviously for reasons of public relations) with the humanitarian provision of emergency housing for people made homeless by air bombardments rather than with the evacuation of the Berlin Jews—which had already become a matter of concern to sections of the public.



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After Speer was named Minister, three years subsequent to his first experience of a rebuff, it was Hitler's chats with Giesler about the reconstruction of Linz—the city to which Hitler dreamed of retiring—that would provide him with some relief from the war's pressures. And having become exceptionally close to Bormann, Giesler then had ever readier access to Hitler, even at his military headquarters. But comparing their pedestrian encounters, as Giesler describes them in his book, with the elation many of Hitler's circle observed in their Führer in the earlier years after his talks and walks with Speer, one can see that although Giesler was certainly Speer's rival in architecture, he could never take on that very special role Speer played in Hitler's emotional life.

Giesler, for Hitler, was a talented architect he could use. He readily listened to experts and endlessly lectured anyone at hand, but the people he liked to talk with were those who stimulated him, with whom at times he could even spar. Speer filled these functions, but quite aside from this, in the golden years, he was for Hitler someone for whom he allowed himself some human feeling.

Speer, trying to describe it, told the Nuremberg court that if Hitler had had a friend, he would have been that friend. I think that is wrong, because "friendship" has to be mutual and Speer himself would never have allowed himself to feel that he was Hitler's "friend."

In 1975, thirty-seven years after the perceptive remark by the financial expert Karl Hettlage about Hitler's feelings for Speer, Alexander Mitscherlich, one of Germany's most eminent psychoanalysts and social psychologists, as I mentioned earlier, discussed that relationship. Writing in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* about Speer's just-published *Spandau: The Secret Diaries*, he said, "In his own way, Adolf Hitler loved Albert Speer and in his own way Albert Speer loves Hitler." Mitscherlich described it as an infinitely complex "homo-erotic (not sexual) relationship, the result of needs each could uniquely fulfill for the other." Mitscherlich told me he saw the origins of this strange "friendship" very much as I did. The young, handsome and pure Speer, he said, represented for Hitler a dream he might have had of himself; and Hitler for Speer was not only the instrument of realization of all his fantasies—that would have been too simple—but the hero, the strong and powerful protector he had sought since childhood.

"Yes," Speer said when we discussed this article, "Mitscherlich came closest to the truth."

THE EUPHORIA of the victory in France and Speer's concentration on practical problems of construction contributed to his blindness to

the beginnings of Hitler's evil. But it is clear that by 1941, by which time Poland had been under occupation for over a year and many thousands of Polish slave workers had been shipped to Germany, there were things Speer must have known and others which he "sensed." Soon we will learn what he refused—or couldn't bear—to see, and equally what others knew and didn't dare to tell him. But in any case reality inevitably entered his life, and indeed that of millions of Germans, with the invasion of Russia in June 1941.

We were sitting beside the big window in the Heidelberg house when I asked when he had first known that Hitler intended to invade Russia. The day after his trip with Hitler to Paris on June 28, 1940, he said to me, he heard the tail end of a conversation Hitler had with Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel and General Alfred Jodl. As Speer walked up to them to make his goodbyes, he heard Hitler say that by comparison to what they had just achieved in France, a campaign against Russia would be nothing more than a game in a sandpit. (In the "Spandau draft" he explains that the Army General Staff conducted "war games" with little flags in a sandbox.)

In the renewed excitement over building for the rest of that year, and the peaceful atmosphere in Berlin and Berchtesgaden, he told me, he had forgotten those words. Over that "wonderful hot summer" of 1940 Speer was not the only one to feel it was a time of "rapture" for Hitler and his jubilant Germans. There were victories on land, the skies over Germany's cities were as yet quiet, and confidence reigned that all past, present and future opponents were weak.

A bare three months later, this had begun to change. The air war had begun in earnest and, against all of Göring's assurances of the Luftwaffe's superiority, by the latter months of 1940 the RAF had begun to wreak havoc upon German cities.

In July 1940 Hitler had told the Chiefs of Staff to begin work on plans for a sharp, short Russian campaign to start in the spring of 1941. And on December 18, 1940, by now convinced that the only reason Britain was not giving up was her reliance on Russia and the United States, his Directive No. 21 for Operation Barbarossa finalized his orders for war against the Soviets:

The German armed forces must be prepared to crush Soviet Russia in a quick campaign even before the conclusion of the war against England. . . . Preparations requiring more time, if not yet begun, are to be started now and completed by May 15, 1941. The bulk of the Russian army in western Russia is to be destroyed by driving forward and creating deep armored wedges, and the retreat of units capable of combat into the vastness of Russian territory is to be prevented. . . . The ultimate objective is to establish a defense line against Asiatic Russia from a line running from the Volga River to Archangel.

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Then the last industrial area left to Russia in the Urals can be destroyed by the Luftwaffe. . . .

Only nine copies of this directive were distributed, but for the Wehrmacht Chiefs of Staff, everything from then on was to be subordinated to this over-riding purpose.

All of Hitler's war plans were based on the *Blitzkrieg* strategy which had succeeded so spectacularly in the West. As his plans for Russia matured, all based on a campaign lasting no longer than five months, a few warning voices made themselves heard among his generals. The Chief of the Army General Staff, General Franz Halder, consistently tried to warn Hitler against false optimism about Soviet weakness, and Admiral Erich Raeder tried to convince him that the primary goal had to be the defeat of Britain before Roosevelt brought the United States into the war on her side.

It is perhaps understandable that not only Hitler but the rest of the world, too, so misjudged the likely resistance of the Russians. Stalin had, after all, killed many of his best generals and industrial managers in the purges of the 1930s. But certainly, all the intelligence services failed in their evaluations of the size of Soviet manpower, the determination and ruthlessness of the political and army leadership and, above all, the innate quality of the Russian soldier. The example of Napoleon's terrible defeat—the possibility that Russian resistance could last through the winter—appears never to have entered Hitler's head.

As Speer was to discover later, the German army's winter uniforms, though on his and General Jodl's suggestion redesigned by the Munich sport firm that had equipped the Himalaya expedition, turned out to be unsuitable for the arctic cold of Russia's winter. "Our new wool production process," he wrote in Spandau, "which produced a fabric easier to work on and less bulky to wear, had not taken account of the fact that it is precisely the grease that was removed to reduce weight that provides protection from humidity. The Russian soldiers with their old-fashioned thick coats and heavy blankets were much better off than our men, whose resistance was doubtlessly often fatally undermined by being continuously cold and wet." The Russian campaign was eventually to cost Germany 3,250,000 soldiers' lives; more than 100,000 of them froze to death.

But this was still in the future. At the beginning of 1941, Hitler was busily extending his group of allies. Mussolini had already hastily joined him when the *Blitzkrieg* against France was so successful. Then Hitler concluded pacts with Rumania (whose oil he had to have; his admirer, the military dictator Ion Antonescu, was to stand by him until the end of the war), Hungary and Bulgaria, which he had softened up by giving them each, with Antonescu's

agreement, a portion of Transylvania, which had belonged to Rumania since the Treaty of Versailles.

He knew the traditionally pro-British Greeks would never join him peacefully, so the plans for Operation Maritsa, the invasion of Greece, were ready. When, early in 1941, his attempt to get Yugoslavia onto his side was blocked by an army coup, he invaded it as well as Greece, where Mussolini was mismanaging his invasion. Hitler's *Blitzkrieg* was again spectacularly successful, and he won that war in two weeks. By the end of April 1941, excepting the four neutral countries, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland, all of Europe was in his camp—except Russia.

The feverish preparations for Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia, over the first months of 1941 were interrupted in May, six weeks before he launched the attack on Russia, by what Speer would describe to me as "the second-worst personal blow of Hitler's life," Rudolf Hess's flight to England on Saturday, May 10, 1941. (The first had been the suicide of his love, his niece Geli Raubal, in 1931.)

Hitler—we are told by Nicolaus von Below, who was as usual on duty—was still in bed on Sunday morning when Hess's two adjutants, Karl-Heinz Pintsch and Alfred Leitgen, arrived at the Berghof carrying the Deputy Führer's letter informing Hitler of his flight to Britain and his naive plan to persuade the British to get out of the war.

Once again, as so often at decisive moments, Speer happened to be at the Berghof, apparently waiting to show Hitler new designs. Hess's "pale and agitated aides," he writes with one of his not infrequent embellishments in *Inside the Third Reich*, putting himself more "in the know" than he actually was, "asked if I would let them see Hitler first: they had a personal letter from Hess to transmit to him." In the more factual draft (and in Below's memoirs) it is not Speer who allows them—or is asked for—precedence. The other guests, including Speer, are quickly herded up to the second floor, where they would wait for hours, in ignorance of the dramatic events downstairs. Hitler, having hurried down and perused the letter handed to him by General Karl Bodenschatz (Göring's liaison officer with Hitler), bellowed for Bormann, and ordered adjutant Pintsch into his presence. Hess's unhappy aides, having admitted that they knew the contents of the letter, were arrested and taken off to a concentration camp.

Hitler's immediate concern appeared to be that Churchill would use Hess's arrival to convince Hitler's partners, Italy and Japan, that Hitler was asking for peace. "Who is going to believe," Speer quotes him saying, "that he isn't going on my behalf, that the whole thing isn't a plot behind the back of my allies? It can lead to the most terrible problems with them."

The concern over Italy's and Japan's goodwill led Hitler to issue an an-

nouncement that night: "breakdown, the symptom of God," wrote Goebbels in in the Reich. What will t

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nouncement that night that Hess's flight to Britain was the result of a mental breakdown, the symptoms of which had been noticed for some time. "My God," wrote Goebbels in his diary that night, "and that was the second man in the Reich. What will the world think of us?"

Actually Hitler had to fear something considerably worse than the suspi-
cion of his Axis partners and the mockery of "the world." This was the ap-
palling prospect of Hess—voluntarily or by being drugged or otherwise
coerced—giving away to the British the plans for Barbarossa, then scheduled
for June 22, with which he was fully familiar.

"I don't know how far advanced the British were with truth drugs then,"
Speer told me, "but voluntarily Hess would never have betrayed Hitler, of
that I am quite certain." In fact, in his letter to Hitler Hess had specifically
promised silence, and he kept his promise.

Hess, though still formally Hitler's Secretary and Deputy, had come to be
ever less welcome at Hitler's court, although meetings between them still oc-
curred. He was pessimistic, and he was long-winded about it. Hitler had
made it clear to Bormann, by then in charge of all appointments, that he pre-
ferred not to see too much of his depressing Deputy. Speer told me that Hit-
ler complained to him, "Hess always brought up unpleasant matters and
went on and on about them. Hitler hated being tackled on anything unpleas-
ant." What was certain, he said, was that Hitler had neither sent him on that
mission to Britain nor knew about it in advance.

Dr. Robert Kempner, who first assisted U.S. Chief Prosecutor Robert Jack-
son and subsequently became Deputy Chief Prosecutor under Telford Taylor
for the remaining twelve war crime trials at Nuremberg, disagreed. Both
Kempner's background and his position at Nuremberg were different from
all other prosecutors'. Born in Germany in 1899, son of a distinguished Jew-
ish family in Freiburg, he had become an eminent jurist, judge and professor
of law by the time he emigrated to America in 1939. Between then and 1945,
when he was named head of research for the U.S. Nuremberg prosecution, he
had become a leading expert on legal, political, police and intelligence tech-
niques of European dictatorships and foreign organizations in the United
States, advising the U.S. Department of Justice, the Office of Strategic Ser-
vices and the Secretary of War.

One of the most highly qualified men in Nuremberg, Kempner, as an
ultra-distinguished German Jew, was also one of the most resented by many
of the accused. Some defendants and many witnesses, however, readily col-
laborated with him when he questioned them prior to trials. One of these was
Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, Chief of the NSDAP Organizations of Germans
Abroad and State Secretary at the Foreign Office. Bohle, born in Bradford,
Yorkshire, in 1903 and thus an *Auslanddeutscher* like Hess (who was born in

1894 in Alexandria, Egypt), was a protégé and confidant of Hess's. He told Kempner that Hess phoned him on the evening of October 9, 1940, and asked him to come to his apartment in Berlin. After making sure his door was tightly shut, Hess told him he wanted to confide a very secret assignment to him which no one, neither Hess's own family and staff nor Bohle's, must learn of. "I chose you," Hess said, "because you speak English, know the British and consider our war with Britain as much a mistake as I do." He was working on a way to stop this war; was Bohle willing to help? "When I immediately agreed, he told me that above all others, my chief, Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop, must not hear even a breath of this intention as he would sabotage it at once. Hess then explained that he wanted to write to the Duke of Hamilton, whom he had met on the occasion of the Olympic Games, and who had great influence in Britain, to suggest a private meeting in Switzerland.

"He handed me the draft of the first part of a letter and asked me to translate it, right away, in an office next door," said Bohle.

Every few weeks after that until January 4, 1941, Hess called him to translate further drafts of the letter, the work of Hess's friend and political mentor, the professor of geopolitics Karl Haushofer, and his son, Albrecht.* "Later I heard that Hess had made a first attempt in mid-January to fly to England which, as well as the next one in February or March, he had to abandon for technical reasons," Bohle told Kempner. "I had no idea then that his intention was to fly directly to England. In fact, having served as his interpreter at a dinner with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor some time before, I had asked him to take me along to Switzerland where I thought he was going to meet Hamilton.

"If your plan comes to pass," I said to him, "please suggest to the Führer that I accompany you." In his reply he didn't mention Hitler, but nor did he say that Hitler knew nothing about the plan, and I have always been of the opinion that Hitler was informed. I heard that Hess—who since the beginning of war seldom wanted to bother Hitler and thus saw him only rarely—had had a four-hour-long private meeting with him at the Chancellery shortly before he left. And on May 13 when Hitler received the 'top men'—including me—on the Obersalzberg, he confirmed this meeting and said that Hess had asked him whether he still stood by his program of collaboration with Britain as stated in *Mein Kampf*. Hitler said he did. . . ."

One of the many things which supported his belief that Hitler had known, Bohle told Kempner, was that he learned later that when, after the Hess flight, Bormann had asked Hitler to sign the order for Bohle's arrest, Hitler

* Albrecht Haushofer was executed just before the end of the war, accused of participating in the July 20 conspiracy; his father later committed suicide.

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refused to sign it. "This was incomprehensible if Hitler really was totally uninvolved. Even though I didn't know about the flight itself," Bohle said, "I did far more toward bringing it about than Hess's secretaries, chauffeurs, servants and others who were locked up. I was questioned for a long time on May 14 by Heydrich and Gestapo Müller,* but was told to go home. The only explanation I could think of was that Hess had told Hitler of the help I had given him, but had asked that I be let off if the thing went wrong and Hitler was forced to disavow him." (This kind of loyalty toward a colleague would not have been uncharacteristic for Hess.)

Another significant contemporary witness, however, was equally certain that Hitler did *not* know—Luftwaffe General Adolf Galland, Germany's ace fighter pilot and Commander of the Fighter Force. He has authored two books since the end of World War II and, though a passionate Nazi until he realized that Hitler's madness was going to lose Germany the war, ended up a highly paid figure on the U.S. lecture circuit, much courted by the media. He remained every inch a General, not only with visitors but one senses also with his staff. His office in Bad Godesberg where he received me was sterile rather than empty; there were books on shelves, but they looked unread; there were ashtrays, but one doubted that any visitor would dare use them; and all of the framed photographs were of airplanes with stiff figures beside them. As an informant, however, he was exceptionally useful for, with the trained memory of the flier, everything he recalled was precise; conversations, one suspected, almost verbatim.

I went to see him in 1987. He was just back from lecturing in the United States and was due to leave again in two days for other speaking engagements abroad. I knew from Speer that he had had enormous problems both with Hitler and with Göring, and asked whether people questioned him about them after his lectures.

"I don't talk about individuals," he said. "I talk about airplanes and air strategy."

His only interest in Hess had been his orders to kill him. "If Hess went with Hitler's knowledge," he said, "and I have no reason to think he did, then certainly Hitler didn't let Göring in on it, because Göring told me in no uncertain terms to take up a squadron of fighters to pursue him and to shoot him down. Hitler was an actor—a very good one—but Göring not at all; if he told me to shoot Hess down, it was because he thought Hess was up there against the Führer's orders or wishes, and that was that."

The idea of flying to England, Hess told Speer in Spandau, had come to

*Obergruppenführer Heinrich Müller had been a police chief in Munich before the Nazis took power. Heydrich made him chief of the Gestapo in 1935, where he was Adolf Eichmann's direct superior. He was last seen in the Reich Chancellery bunker on April 29, 1945, and is thought to have escaped abroad.

him in a dream. There had been no intention, he said, to defy or embarrass Hitler in any way. What he wanted to get across to the British was what Hitler had said countless times and (no doubt with Hess's editorial assistance) had written in his second volume of *Mein Kampf*, which was that if Britain agreed to give him a free hand in Europe, he would in return guarantee the continuing security of Britain's empire.

In many of our talks, Speer showed his concern for and his sincere liking for Hess. "Officially," he said, "Hitler's attitude toward Hess, that he was a traitor and would have to be hanged when the war was over, never changed. But privately, I think, he was very attached to him. And you know, I never thought he was a traitor—I didn't even think it when it happened. Of course, I didn't know about Barbarossa then, but later, much later, the fact of Hess's absolute discretion about this when he was in England seemed the best proof to me, not only of course of his loyalty to Hitler, but really of his complete sanity."*

As it turned out, it was in the interest of both Germany and Britain to play down the Hess affair. Hitler, as I said, announced that Hess was mentally disturbed; Churchill told Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden "to treat him as a prisoner of war . . . but also as one against whom grave political charges may be preferred." Thus Hess began his imprisonment which, following his sentence at Nuremberg five years later, he would continue in Spandau to the end of his life.

ACCORDING to the Wehrmacht chronicler Helmuth Greiner, who was responsible for the war diary, it was at a conference on March 3, 1941, that the generals were to find out how radically Hitler's concept of the war in the East differed from theirs. In the Wehrmacht conference that day, during which Hitler mentioned for the first time the "necessity of eliminating the political commissars," he established his goals clearly enough. "The Jewish-Bolshevist intelligentsia," he said, "must, if at all possible, be eradicated in the course of the military operations." In Hitler's mind "intelligentsia," "Bolshevists" and "Jews" were inescapably linked, as was to be their "eradication"—by the army, together with Himmler's police.

"At this conference," testified Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel at Nuremberg, "Himmler was given extensive plenipotentiary powers covering all police actions which would become necessary in the occupied territory."

Ten days later, on March 13, Keitel released the written preamble of the

*Churchill to Roosevelt, May 17, 1941: "... Hess was extremely voluble. . . . The British Empire . . . would be left intact: . . . The old invitation to desert all our friends in order to save temporarily the greater part of our skin. . . . Germany had certain demands to make of Russia which would have to be satisfied, but [he] denied rumours that attack on Russia was being prepared."

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... The British Empire ... would save temporarily the greater part which would have to be satisfied, but

Kommissar Befehl (Commissar Order) which would be communicated to the army two weeks later. The preamble said,

In preparation for the political administration of the army's [future] area of operations, the Reichsführer SS [Himmler] by order of the Führer is charged with special tasks [Sonderaufgaben]* arising out of the conclusive and decisive struggle between two diametrically opposed political systems. Within the framework of these tasks, the Reichsführer SS acts independently and on his own responsibility. . . . The Army Chiefs of Staff are to settle details directly with the Reichsführer SS.

The only certainty the generals gathered from this apparently abstruse directive was that their authority was going to be usurped by the loathed Himmler and his SS. But two weeks later they would begin to know just what was meant by Hitler charging Himmler with "special tasks."

Hitler's orders for murder which, as Below was to recall forty years later, caused consternation among the generals and probably laid the seeds for the army's plot to assassinate him four long years later, were issued in stages, all basically before the campaign in Russia started. The wording of the Commissar Order—"by order of the Führer" and "Within the framework of these tasks, the Reichsführer SS acts independently and on his own responsibility"—though ostensibly applicable to political murders, was very soon applied to the assembly-line murder of the Jews, first by shooting and soon by gassing.

On March 30 in Berlin, Hitler, speaking for two and a half hours to the Wehrmacht General Staff, bluntly laid out the fundamental policy of his Russian campaign:

... Our task in Russia has to be to destroy the Red Army and to dissolve the Soviet state. It is a confrontation of two opposing ideologies. Bolshevism has to be seen as an association of criminals whose antisocial characteristics, infinitely dangerous to others, make them unfit for civilized human society. . . . We are going into a battle of annihilation. If we don't accept it as such, we may, being militarily stronger, gain a temporary victory now, but the enemy will then be able to re-emerge, ideologically revived, a few years later.

This is why, in the battle against Russia, our essential goal has to be the destruction of communism—through the annihilation of the Bolshevik commissars and the communist intelligentsia. . . . Commissars and communist politicians are criminals and must be treated as such. In the East, gentlemen, severity now is an act of kindness for the future.

*Since the Euthanasia Program, the prefix *Sonder-* (special) was the code word applied solely to operations connected with the different projects for murder: i.e., *Sonderkommando*, *Sonderbefehl* and—the most pointed—*Sonderbehandlung* (Special Treatment).

* D.T. Hewas so good at ~~so~~ defining others in the ~~group~~ world with which he had been a ~~friend~~

Later that afternoon, Keitel spelled it out for them. All political commissars who fell into the army's hands would have to be killed forthwith by the soldiers or, and there was an implicit threat here, handed over to the nearest SS or SD, the Security Service.

This was unprecedented in the annals of German military history. Notwithstanding accounts of German brutalities in Southwest Africa in the early twentieth century, and individual atrocity stories of World War I, the German army has traditionally far more often than not respected the law; German soldiers who committed offenses against either property or human life risked dire disciplining and even death. But Hitler's order threw over that whole concept; the pretext was—and would continue to be over the next years, when numerous laws governing the fate of war prisoners and the lives of occupied populations were revoked—that the Soviets had not signed the Geneva convention on military conduct in time of war. But the truth was something else and is of fundamental importance to history. With this Commissar Order, Hitler was setting in motion processes which, developing a fatal momentum of their own, would in a way change the world.

Absolutely essential to the carrying out of his awful vision, which was made inescapably clear in his address to the generals on March 30, was the fact that decent men were now to be directed to abandon all civilized rules of warfare and, restrained by nothing except their individual decisions and judgment, to commit political and ideological murders. For what has become abundantly obvious (though the soldiers, and for that matter the Wehrmacht generals in the field, would only find out gradually) is that the murder of commissars was only the beginning and, as can be seen from Hitler's words on March 30, was linked from the start to his two other and greater purposes—the elimination of the educated classes of Eastern Europe and the annihilation of the Jews.

In the Polish campaign, the soldiers had been left to fight the war while the Action Groups—the Einsatzgruppen—followed in their wake to attend to the civilian population. For the first year, the Jews were brutalized, but far more Christian than Jewish Poles were killed (a fact rarely acknowledged by either historians or the media). But to Hitler's fury, the Wehrmacht had soon protested against the "brutal and uncivilized" measures—the exact words to be found in several official protests—taken by Himmler and his men.

So the Russian campaign was planned differently from the start. Different from any other, this campaign was to be very specifically an ideological war in which no heretofore established rules applied. The Einsatzgruppen would virtually accompany rather than follow the troops; civilians in the stated categories would be dealt with by army and Action Groups together while military operations were being conducted. No soldier who killed under the

* D.T. discusses this.

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circumstances outlined was ever to be called to account; in the Eastern theater of war, no individual was ever to be considered responsible for actions causing the death of anyone in those categories.

Hitler's speech of March 30 is on the record. Keitel testified at Nuremberg about his subsequent meeting with the generals and said that Generals Emil Leeb, Fedor von Bock and Gerd von Rundstedt demanded that General Walther von Brauchitsch, as Commander-in-Chief, lodge an urgent protest with Hitler. In Nuremberg Brauchitsch said he finally hadn't protested to Hitler because he believed he could invalidate the Führer's order by strict injunctions to the troops against excesses.

The record does in fact show that such injunctions were issued, and also, as mentioned above, shows protests by numerous officers of the lower echelons. But in the slaughterhouse that Eastern Europe was to become, injunctions and protests would turn out to be useless. What Hitler taught us—to an extent greater than anyone else in history, though we would become aware of it again in Vietnam—is that a license to kill creates a momentum which defies moral sensibility and discernment and destroys the capacity of the individual to distinguish between good and evil or, and this is perhaps even worse, to act against a recognized wrong. This emerges disturbingly from Nicolaus von Below's memoirs:



... Hitler's concept of the Eastern campaign was radically different from the army's. While the Chiefs of Staff planned a traditional war, for Hitler it was a battle against the toughest and most ruthless of enemies. Indicative of this determination was Hitler's *Kommissar Befehl* in which he instructed the troops to shoot every commissar who fell into their hands without ceremony. This directive caused a great deal of alarm and I knew that, by individual commanders' decisions, it was withheld from many units.

It caused the first widespread opposition against a *Führer Befehl* I had heard of. And this was when I realized for the first time that other Hitler orders could also end up being systematically suppressed. What contributed more than anything else to my realization of this was [General] Halder's manifest, though (unfortunately) [he] never openly expressed contempt for Hitler's orders and also for many of his ideas, causing great confusion in me; I was very aware how [this greatly admired general] continuously suppressed his feelings. . . .

And thus we started out on a huge campaign, beset by divided loyalties and divided leadership—a great danger to a successful military operation.

However difficult it is to believe, Below, like Hitler's other young aides, his secretaries and all the intimate Hitler circle, knew nothing of the increasingly horrific plans for the civilian population in the East and for the Jews of

* Dr. H. was aware of this since the First World War and was one of the elements that drew me to him.

Europe. Strangely enough, they above all others were unlikely to be told by the few who did at that point know: Himmler, Heydrich, Göring and, later on, Goebbels.

Underrating Hitler has become a norm, less for historians of course than for the media, but it is the media which largely informs the public. It has never been quite clear why so many intelligent people find it more comforting to deprecate Hitler's manic gifts than to view them with awe. But he was by no means only manic—as already said, he could also be intelligent and considerate in his more personal relations. Certainly all those who lived around him were keenly aware of his exceptional capacity for compartmentalizing. Hitler would no more have had the ladies of his household—his four secretaries or the young wives of his aides, such as Below, and those of his closest associates, Speer and Brandt—disturbed with war horrors than he would have had the gentlemen of his court, and quite a few of them were indeed gentlemen, involved in his most secret of secrets.

I have asked a number of these people what they would have done if they had known of Hitler's plans for the murder of Poland's elite and of the Jews. It is a measure of their honesty that none of them simply said they would have departed in horror. I think several of them spoke the truth when they said that they would have felt horrified. But I believe that all of them would have tried to put it out of their minds: not because any of them were monsters, but because they were totally convinced that Hitler wasn't, and that therefore, whatever they might have heard couldn't have been quite as bad as it sounded—not "if the Führer knew."

The group I speak of here was, of course, very small and, with a few exceptions, such as again Speer and Brandt, lived in virtually cloistered conditions, as we have shown. It was only rarely, almost by accident, that they learned what had been the subject of Hitler's meetings "under four eyes."

Christa Schröder, Hitler's second senior secretary, told me of one such occasion when I talked with her in 1977. I mentioned that one of Bormann's former adjutants, Heinrich Heim (to whom he had entrusted the daily recording of Hitler's *Tabletalk*), had told me that he didn't think Hitler knew about the extermination of the Jews. Schröder laughed. "Oh, Heimchen—" she said, "he's too good for this life. Of course Hitler knew! Not only knew, it was all his ideas, his orders."

"I clearly remember a day in 1941, I think it was in early spring," she said.

"I don't think I will ever forget Himmler's face when he came out after one of his long, 'under four eyes' conferences with Hitler. He sat down heavily in the chair on the other side of my desk and buried his face in his hands, his elbows on the desk. 'My God, my God,' he said, 'what I am expected to do.'"

* When Himmler makes his speech to the Reichstag, he is thinking of himself. I told him to leave Himmler—that man is so ordinary that he will do anything

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Hitler's youngest secretary closest to liberating hers Traudl (Gertrude) Jung, dancer when she entered who had lived near Hitler that time with strangers. tions, before she finally pretty things, bright color

About sixty-five when tall, slender, well dressed we talked, she was very allow much humor. But would have loved to laugh

She was very young treated her with great urgency by Hitler, she a sturmführer (Lieutenant duties on Hitler's staff in

"He asked to be transferred, or knew anything

* Frau Schröder, appalled at her friends she still had from the time request during her lifetime.

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"Later, much later," she said, "when we found out what had been done, I was sure that that was the day Hitler told him the Jews had to be killed."

When I told this story to Speer a year later, he considered it highly probable. "Himmler was a very paradoxical personality," he said. "I have read many memoranda in which, for instance, he regulated precisely the treatment for workers in concentration camps—so many calories, so many vitamins—and if they had received them, believe me, it would have been enough. The fact that they didn't get it had less to do with Himmler than with the stupendous corruption in all administrative areas, with countless people amassing fortunes for themselves."

"Certainly he was cruel and ruthless in his persecution of individuals," he said, "but he did have this other side, and I can perfectly visualize him coming out of Hitler's office after one of those 'under four eyes' conferences, and slumping down at a desk and saying, 'My God, what I am required to do.' Perhaps he wasn't saying it to Christa Schröder, but rather to himself, as a reaction to what he had experienced on the other side of the door. Yes, I can see him having just that reaction. . . ."

Hitler's youngest secretary, perhaps the one who would eventually come closest to liberating herself from Hitler's magnetism and to facing reality, was Traudl (Gertrude) Junge (née Humps), a twenty-two-year-old former ballet dancer when she entered Hitler's service in November 1942. Like so many who had lived near Hitler, she was very unhappy at the idea of talking about that time with strangers. It was several years, after many telephone conversations, before she finally invited me to her home, a small apartment full of pretty things, bright colors and nice smells, on a residential street in Munich.

About sixty-five when I met her but looking many years younger, she was tall, slender, well dressed in a relaxed sort of way, with a quiet voice. When we talked, she was very serious—the things we talked about did not really allow much humor. But I felt that this was really someone with whom I would have loved to laugh.

She was very young when she became Hitler's fourth secretary, and he treated her with great kindness, almost like a daughter. Six months later, urged on by Hitler, she married one of his two valets, SS Leibstandarte Obersturmführer (Lieutenant) Hans Junge, who had asked to be relieved of his duties on Hitler's staff in order to serve on the Russian front.

"He asked to be transferred to the front not because he disagreed with the Führer, or knew anything terrible, but because he felt he was living in a claus-

*Frau Schröder, appalled at her own indiscretion, which she feared, if published, could cost her the few friends she still had from the time of Hitler, later asked me not to use her account. I complied with her request during her lifetime.

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trophobic environment. He told me, just before Hitler finally, after many previous rejections, granted his request for a transfer to active service, that he no longer knew the difference between what he really thought himself and what Hitler, or those around him, thought. 'I need to get myself into a position of thinking for myself,' he said."

They hadn't wanted to marry so quickly. "I think finally *he* did want it, firstly because he was going to the front—the usual 'not knowing' what would happen—but also because Hitler talked him into it. But I, not at all—I wanted to get to know this man slowly before making up my mind about my life. But the Führer wouldn't have it. He was going to have us marry, or else. I don't really know why. Certainly it couldn't have been because he wanted to be surrounded by young widows. Perhaps he thought it would keep Hans at HQ or because—you know, he really did care about all of us—perhaps he thought it would make Hans happy, make him feel at peace and fight even harder to stay alive."

During the subsequent years she would become very aware of the isolation Hans had talked to her about. "Perhaps I was only reacting to what he had said," she said, "or maybe I did become aware on my own of how deeply we were under Hitler's influence; I find it difficult now, so many years later, to be sure. Today the whole thing sounds almost impossible, the way we lived, I mean. Here we were, in the middle of a most dreadful war, at the very center of events and yet—I now know—we knew nothing, less even than people outside. Many of them did finally hear Allied broadcasts, but we never did. If they were perhaps affected by what their men, returning on leave from the front said, this didn't apply to us. None of our friends, relatives or—yes, husbands—ever talked about horrible experiences or doubts. They just changed and we didn't know why."

"In later years, after it was all over, some of the people from Führer HQ, generals and others, told me of their meetings with Hitler, how they would go in, fully prepared to tell him the truth of what was going on and the impending disaster. And then they would leave, having been overwhelmed by his personality, his reassurances, his opinions, analyses and orders. They found themselves unable to say a word to contradict him—it was as if he hypnotized people."

The word "hypnotized," describing Hitler's ability to bend people to his will, came up in almost every conversation about him. Even though many of those who had lived in his immediate surroundings professed to deplore Hitler's crimes, there was not only a defensive but, curiously enough, an almost pleasurable element in their descriptions of these hypnotic powers they had been subjected to. It was almost as if the fact that they—so few among so

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many—were in a position to provide such a description made them feel somehow proud. It was perplexing. And with the single exception of Traudl Junge, who had been the youngest member on Hitler's staff, none of them expressed a retroactive understanding that what he had hypnotized his people into was—however secondhand, however removed—participation in murder: of millions of Russians in POW camps, by starvation and exposure; of Jews and Gypsies, by shooting and gassing; of slave laborers and concentration camp prisoners, by overwork, hunger and torture.

Of all these untold murders—the estimates vary between the almost inconceivable figures of twelve million and twenty million civilians—the unique crime of the industrialized killing of the Jews has come to symbolize Nazi rule. The Nuremberg court would convict Speer almost solely for his use of slave labor and would virtually absolve him from any part in genocide. But he himself—and this is where he differed from the other accused—knew better. The murder of the Jews was central to his radical condemnation of Hitler, central to his awareness of his own guilt and absolutely central to his thoughts for thirty-five years. Starting, I believe, as a kind of hidden moral sore in the back of his mind well before the end of the Third Reich, by the time of the Nuremberg trial it would become his most intense problem of conscience. The extent of his knowledge was, as he once wrote me, the "cardinal problem of [his] life." It remained so until his death.

In order to understand how this "moral sore" came into being—not only in Speer but in a whole generation of Germans who, contrary to Speer, never took issue with it (and whose children and even grandchildren have had to face the consequences ever since)—we need to examine the sequence of decisions and events which led to the nightmare of the Final Solution.

Hitler's fantasies were certainly global, but his real perspective was always emotionally oriented and basically limited. The Jews he was primarily concerned with were for many years those in Germany and Austria. In *Mein Kampf*, so much of which is dominated by his loathing for the Jews, he does move toward a wider view of the problem but leaves an impression that he was paying lip service to the necessity of sounding world-minded, and that the real concern of this provincial man was always his province. However, he assumed for years that emigration was the answer. It was always the German and Austrian Jews he wanted to be rid of, from the very start—though in the early stages by emigration rather than by deportation, the limit of his intentions until well into the war.

Three developments between the late 1930s and the beginning of the war in Russia led him to the dreadful Final Solution of his problem. The first, recognized before the outbreak of war, was that, given the refusal of other nations

to accept anything but minimal numbers of Jewish immigrants, an enforced total emigration of Jews from Greater Germany would be impossible. Alternative means would have to be found to get them out of Germany.

The second, the possibility of one huge Jewish settlement, such as on the often-mentioned French island of Madagascar or alternatively in numerous ghettos in the East from which Jewish labor could be drawn, arose with the conquest of Poland. But the size of the Jewish population in Poland itself—where, as already decried, all “undesirables,” whether Polish Christians or Jews, were crowded into the occupied zone—made that impossible, as Hans Frank, the Governor-General, soon explained to Hitler.

The third development, the eradication of the Jews under cover of the murder of the Kommissars, which Hitler had provided for in his orders to the generals in March 1941, was at that point merely theoretical but would be executed a few months hence when his armies moved into the Baltics and the Ukraine.

As new information has emerged the last few years, it has become clear that the fatal decisions were taken in the course of a series of meetings in Berlin in the spring of 1941, such as the “under four eyes” Hitler-Himmler conference Christa Schröder recalled decades later. It would have been unthinkable for Hitler’s confidants in these private meetings to divulge what was said, so with a few exceptions the knowledge of them has died with the participants. On March 17, however, Governor-General Frank saw Hitler and was joined for only part of the meeting by Goebbels, who reported on the more harmless aspects in his diary the next day—the discussion about the Jews of Vienna, of Berlin and about Frank’s “containment” policy in Poland:

March 18: Vienna is almost cleared of Jews, and now it is the turn of Berlin; we discussed the details and also Frank’s putting them to work in Poland where they obediently do as they are told.

Three days later, on March 20, 1941, the significant meeting which linked all these events took place. As we already know, the decisions of this Hitler-Frank-Goebbels meeting were communicated by Goebbels’s favorite, Leopold Gutterer (who would become his Secretary of State two months later), to Speer’s representative Dietrich Clahes, and to Adolf Eichmann, who would be charged with organizing the progressive evacuation of Berlin’s Jews. Two days later, on March 22, Goebbels notes that there were annoying impediments to their evacuation plans:*

*The question of Goebbels’s information on the Jews remains puzzling. Although he finally records their fate quite precisely on March 27, 1942 (see page 350), he later quotes Hitler on May 25 saying that “by preference he would like to settle them all [not in Siberia, where they would be toughened but] in Central Africa . . . in a climate that would [weaken] them and their resistance.”

A Moral Sore

We have to go on; we need the possible?

This “need” for them to endure for years, was helpful to him at Nuremberg.

The Germans had Jews in Soviet territory and a half million of them managed to flee eastward within the advancing front. like all others, were planted in the mind to deal with all of them were to be transferred and killed.

Toward that end, a brief mention for the C (Gestapo), dispatched telegram on May 20, 1941. Jews from there. They managed to snap up and hamper emigration with many later euphemisms. any of the diplomatic closing sentence in the now undoubtedly clear.

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We have to go easy on the 30,000 Jews who work in armament produc-
tion; we need them—who would have thought this could ever become
possible?

This "need" for the highly qualified Berlin Jews for war production would
endure for years, well into Speer's later reign as armaments czar, and was
helpful to him at Nuremberg.

The Germans had, of course, always known of the enormous number of
Jews in Soviet territory. Literally millions of them—the estimate now is two
and a half million out of the four million who lived in prewar Russia—would
manage to flee eastwards, but even this migration left one and a half million
within the advancing German lines. To Hitler's thinking, the Russian Jews,
like all others, were "destructive bacilli," and with the killing seed firmly
planted in the minds of his generals, he expected their troops and Himmler's
to deal with all of them as his troops advanced. All European Jews meanwhile
were to be transferred to the Occupied Eastern Territories, to work and to be
killed.

Toward that end, Eichmann's office in Berlin, IV B4 (administrative ab-
breviation for the Central Emigration and Jewish Investigation Office of the
Gestapo), dispatched a circular to all German consulates in France and Bel-
gium on May 20, 1941, notifying them that Göring had banned emigration by
Jews from there. The official explanation was that if Jews who had fled there
managed to snap up some of the few available visas for overseas, it could
hamper emigration from the Reich. This deceptive explanation was in line
with many later euphemisms designed to hide the real fate of the Jews. Few if
any of the diplomats involved could have understood the meaning of the
closing sentence in this circular: "The Final Solution of the Jewish problem is
now undoubtedly close at hand."

They would not have known that the decision to liquidate physically the
Jews of Russia had now been made. It was communicated to the SS in April
and May. Obersturmbannführer Ernst Ehlers, a former civil servant, wrote
later,

As the Russian campaign approached, I was a member of Einsatz-
gruppe B. About April or May 1941 I was told that I was earmarked for
promotion as chief of Einsatzkommando 8 and that I was to report to the
police academy at Pretzsch [Silesia] where the Einsatzgruppen destined
for the Russian campaign were being formed. On the occasion of a staff
conference during which our duties were explained, we were informed
quite unequivocally that aside from combat against partisans, etc., we
would also have to carry through the liquidation of the Jewish population
in the rear. I could hardly believe this appalling disclosure . . . could hardly

believe that anything like this could be envisaged. . . . I finally decided to request a release from the proposed post . . . after which I was assigned, without ado, to HQ staff. . . .*

Speer was not alone in being kept in ignorance in 1940 and early 1941 of Hitler's military-political plans. The Gauleiter—Hitler's cadre of "Old Comrades" who were his political administrators, with enormous powers in their individual provinces—appear not to have known anything either. Even Goebbels, his most intelligent and politically his most indispensable vassal, who never showed any reluctance to confide all secrets to his diary though certainly explicit about getting rid of the Berlin Jews, is silent on Barbarossa until May 1941. He was obviously aware of it sooner, and on May 16 wrote, "It's supposed to start in the East on May 22—still depends on the weather."

The war against the Soviet Union began at 3:30 a.m. on June 22. Hitler, in the last days before it started, wrote Below, was "increasingly nervous and worried." It was only after midnight on June 22 that he heard him make a comment about the impending campaign. "It will be the hardest battle our soldiers will have to fight in this war," he said.

Speer, yet again near Hitler at a decisive moment, was invited to join him in his drawing room after dinner on June 21 to listen to a recording of a fanfare from Liszt's *Les Préludes*.

"Hitler told me this movement was going to be the victory fanfare of the Russian campaign," Speer wrote in his draft. "Hitler added, 'And we'll get ourselves all the granite and marble for our buildings we want.'"

In *Inside the Third Reich* Speer conveys the impression—without actually saying so—that he knew all about the invasion plan. In the draft which went to Wolters, who was well informed about the extent to which Hitler made Speer party to his plans, he adds, "You can see that I don't have that much to add to the historical record. I was as surprised as millions of other Germans the next morning that, breaking our treaty and without a declaration of war, we invaded Russia. . . ."

As soon as the Germans invaded the Baltic countries and then the Ukraine, they found that there were in these countries many wildly anti-Semitic locals thrilled to have a license to kill Jews. While this in no way diminishes Hitler's responsibility, it now seems probable that the first wholesale killing, particularly of women and children, began in the Baltics and was welcomed but not originated by the Germans.

It started the night of June 25–26, 1941, in Kovno, Lithuania's second city, four days after the Germans invaded. This was the first Baltic country they

*He may well have used relationships with superior officers to achieve this (see Münch, Chapter XVIII), but it shows once again that it was possible to avoid such assignments, without being punished.

entered after the basic precise plans as to how

The information obtained by SS Major General Jäger, who commanded Security Police and SI have the testimony, a (Friedrich Jeckeln) and then the northern Jews, he confirmed that added many details.*

The most significant of Lithuanian anti-Jews arrived. He informed Himmler immediately sought the Lithuanian Guard. It was they who launched the first action in the course of which had proved themselves them into what ended all volunteers, were chosen Jews, under the supervision of the Eleventh Battalion of Lithuanian units were considered time all but a fraction of the population posted on to Belorussia.

Thus, most significant who, one might say, picture Stahlecker, taken aback reported, surpassed and films to be made of the local population who spoke

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entered after the basic decision had been taken in Berlin, though without precise plans as to how to achieve their goal of the annihilation of the Jews.

The information on the murders in Lithuania was meticulously recorded by SS Major General Franz Stahlecker, Chief of Einsatzgruppe A, and Karl Jäger, who commanded Group A's Kommando 3 and later became head of Security Police and SD for Lithuania, with his HQ in Kovno. Furthermore we have the testimony, at his trial in Riga in 1946, of SS Gruppenführer (General) Friedrich Jeckeln, the Higher SS and Police Leader of first the southern and then the northern Army Group. One of the most efficacious killers of Jews, he confirmed there all the reports from his field commanders and added many details.*

The most significant part of the Stahlecker field reports concerns the activities of Lithuanian anti-Soviet "partisans" immediately after the Germans arrived. He informed HQ that contact with the German occupiers had been immediately sought by a nationalist-rightist group, the National Labor Guard. It was they who "with encouragement but without German cooperation" launched the first post-occupation pogrom in Kovno that night of June 25, in the course of which the killing began. By the end of July 1941 these men had proved themselves so effective that the German command organized them into what ended up being twenty police battalions. About 8,400 men, all volunteers, were charged with the wholesale murder of the Lithuanian Jews, under the supervision but not necessarily active participation of the Eleventh Battalion of the German Reserve Police. These particular Lithuanian units were considered so outstanding that by the end of 1941, by which time all but a fraction of Lithuania's 265,000 Jews had been killed, they were posted on to Belorussia and then to Poland to continue their work.

Thus, most significantly, it was the Lithuanians on their home ground who, one might say, pioneered the killing of women and children. In Kovno, Stahlecker, taken aback by the ruthlessness of the Lithuanian units which, he reported, surpassed anything the Germans had so far envisaged, ordered films to be made of the Lithuanian actions so as to "make clear that it was the local population who spontaneously took the first steps against the Jews."

What he meant was that upon commencing the mass murder, the German troops did not know what the process actually involved—above all, perhaps, what the killing of women and children would feel or look like. The films could therefore serve not only as evidence of the enthusiasm the Final Solution met with locally but also for purposes of legitimizing Nazi orders and orienting their own troops.

The familiar "obedience to orders" defense advanced at Nuremberg has

*Jeckeln was hanged in Riga the day his trial ended in February 1946. Stahlecker would fall prey to Estonian partisans in March 1942. Jäger killed himself in prison after his belated arrest in April 1959.

been totally refuted by the virtually inexhaustible German war archives, which have over the last few years supplied diligent historians with many examples of successful protests and requests for transfer from the murder units. These objections came not only from officers and soldiers of the Wehrmacht, which was to be expected, but also, as already noted in the case of Ehlers, from the Einsatzgruppen themselves and from the Reserve Police battalions belonging to the Ordnungspolizei, the paramilitary "police army" Hitler first created in 1933 to bypass the disarmament provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, from which thousands of men—some middle-aged, some young volunteers—were drawn for occupation and killing duties in the East.

A General Staff adjutant of Army Group North, with the rank of Colonel, reported,

When, in mid-morning of June 27, 1941, I arrived in Kovno, my car was held up by a huge crowd of people, among them many women who had climbed up on chairs and wooden crates or who lifted up their children to gain a better view. I supposed that the roars of applause, laughter and braying "bravos" were for a sporting event. But onlookers told me that "collaborators and traitors were at last getting their just deserts." When I pushed my way through, I witnessed what must be the most dreadful thing I have seen in two world wars. Using huge wooden clubs, they were beating men to death with them. . . . At GHQ [General Staff HQ] a little later I learned that the fact of these mass executions had been learned about with outrage . . . but were considered spontaneous acts on the part of the Lithuanian population, to be dealt with by local authorities without interference from the occupying German army. . . .

The General Staff Colonel avoids the word "Jews," and indeed during those first weeks of German occupation the Lithuanian nationalist gangs also murdered hundreds if not thousands of fellow Lithuanians who had collaborated with the Soviets during their period of occupation. A medic's report, however, made about the same time, was specific:

About 150 meters from my quarters there was a fort, I think Fort VII. We didn't actually see any executions but a technical sergeant took pictures of the men, women and children who were brought to the fort from Kovno during the day to be shot in the night. As far as I remember, they were all Jews; at least, everybody said it was all Jews.

During the first weeks, only Lithuanians did the killing; soon it was on German orders, as the infamous SS Colonel Jäger, Commander of Einsatzgruppe A's Kommando 3, wrote in his final report which covers his unit's "executions" from July to December 1941. It is a detailed account, providing his superiors with a careful breakdown of who was murdered when, and

A Moral Sore

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In his March 1941 report, Brack informed Himmler that, his investigations now completed, he could propose a method by which a one-time (two- to three-minute maximum) irradiation by means of two X-ray machines could sterilize "150-200 persons a day. This means that twenty such installations could deal with 3,000-4,000 a day." To carry out this process without the knowledge of the "persons thus dealt with," he proposed that special offices be set up to which these persons would be ordered to report to answer questions, and the machinery would be installed to carry out the irradiation "during the filling out of forms":

The irradiation, invisible to the subjects, would be organized to take the necessary 2-3 minutes. We have found that men require a higher intensity, for a shorter time—two minutes—and women a lower intensity requiring three minutes.

As, for obvious reasons, none of the customary precautions could be taken, the subjects, noticing burns over the subsequent days and weeks, would necessarily become aware that X rays had been applied to sterilize and castrate them but this, he said, would have become irrelevant. He estimated that the X-ray equipment for each installation would cost between RM 20,000 and RM 30,000, to which had to be added the cost of the building and protective shielding for the officials on duty.

But eventually it was decided that this proposal, though worth considering for concentration camps, where the tests had been carried out and where the process, already used for years on people suffering from hereditary diseases, would be widely applied over the following years to Jews as well as recalcitrant Christians, was impracticable for the huge numbers the conquerors would be facing in the East, for whom the radical solution was the only possibility.

In the beginning of August 1941, a conference of unit commanders of Einsatzgruppe C in Zhitomir, Ukraine, had learned that Higher SS and Police Leader General Jeckeln had brought the instruction from Himmler (who had just visited him) that all Jews not working for essential German industries, and their families, were to be shot.

"For me this was a devastating order," testified Erwin Schulz, the leader of EK5, "and one I knew I could not execute." He asked for an urgent appointment with Reich Security Personnel Chief Bruno Streckenbach in Berlin, who agreed with him that what was happening in Russia was murder, but said it was impossible to put a halt to it. However, he would be released and reassigned to his former post at the police academy Berlin-Charlottenburg.

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"I suffered no disadvantage whatever as a result of my intervention," Schulz said, and added that he was convinced these actions could not have been carried out if a number of commanders had, like himself, declared themselves unwilling to carry out the liquidations. "And I can't exempt the Wehrmacht officers in the area from responsibility. They were fully informed of the liquidations, and I have always been of the opinion that the avalanche could still have been stopped if [the command of] an army group had intervened. I do not know of any order, nor were there rumors of such orders, that anyone who refused to obey such orders would be destined for concentration camps."

The many reports by Higher SS and Police Leader Jeckeln, although not at all descriptive, confirm the sense of achievement the participants in these murders appear to have felt. One report, addressed to Himmler, covers specifically the activities from August 19 to October 9, 1941, of the five German police battalions he commanded in the Ukraine. (During this period, he also ordered, among untold others, the killing of 30,000 Jews of Dnepropetrovsk and the 33,771 Jews who would be remembered by the Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko in his epic *Babi Yar*.)

There had been sixteen actions executed entirely by five Reserve Police battalions during that period, Jeckeln told Himmler, during which 37,783 Jews had been shot. Jeckeln had achieved in those three months probably the largest overall number of murders under one command, though he was closely followed by SS General Otto Ohlendorf, who would be one of the few accused in Nuremberg who, to Göring's fury, freely admitted their crimes. As commander of Einsatzgruppe D in the Caucasus and the Crimea during the year after the invasion of Russia, he testified, his men "liquidated approximately ninety thousand men, women and children, all of whom, except for a few communist officials, were Jews."

(Dr. Flächsner, Speer's counsel, described to me his surprise at seeing Ohlendorf called as a prosecution witness, just as "pleasant and suave" in court as he had been in the Ministry of Economic Affairs in 1944, when Flächsner, representing a bank director who was in trouble over some minor infraction, had visited him to ask for his assistance. Ohlendorf promptly helped him. "He really was a most pleasant man," Flächsner said. "Imagine my astonishment in court when, sounding no different than he had in his office that day, he said coolly that, yes, he had ninety thousand Jews shot in Russia but that he had made sure it was done 'humanely.' I sat there and felt as if I had been struck by lightning. 'Ninety thousand Jews shot,' " he repeated, with something like awe in his voice. "But humanely.")

Neither Jeckeln, Jäger or Stahlecker—or for that matter Ohlendorf in 1941—appears to have had any moral scruples, but, exactly as if dealing with

an epidemic of rats, they contented themselves with factual reports on their elimination. Thus Stahlecker's account on January 31, 1942, reports that 229,052 Jews had so far been "eliminated" in the Baltic states and Belorussia. And he too concluded that "except for a few thousand work-Jews, Lithuania is virtually *judenfrei*."

Later reports or requests provide evidence of some concern on the part of individual German occupation administrators, but always only about specific acts or actions, never the *principle* of murder. The German area commander in Slutsk, Belorussia, for example, who witnessed an action carried out by the Eleventh Lithuanian Police Battalion—the most infamous unit active in Lithuania in 1941 and Belorussia in early 1942—requested that this battalion never be deployed again in his district; his argument was not an objection to the murder of Jews—that was not questioned—but rather to the apparent German sponsorship of the methods employed by the Lithuanians, which were having a bad effect on relations with the local population.

By the same token, Wilhelm Kube, General Commissioner for Belorussia, wrote in the summer of 1942 to Hinrich Lohse, Reichskommissar for the Ostland, asking whether the intention was to have "the Reich Jews sent to the East also dealt with by the Lithuanians and Latvians whose methods the native population here [so] reject. I beg you to give clear directives with due consideration for the good name of our Reich and our party, in order that these, I know necessary, actions be executed in the most humane manner."

Hitler was perfectly well informed of these actions. On July 16, 1941, in conference with Göring, Hans Lammers (Chief of the Reich Chancellery), Alfred Rosenberg (Minister for the Ostland) and Field Marshal Keitel, he ordered the intensification of the "pacification program" behind the Russian front. Germany, he said, would never withdraw from its newly won Eastern territories; he would create there "a Garden of Eden." To accomplish this, anyone hostile to Germany would be exterminated. Naturally, this vast area must be "pacified as quickly as possible . . . by shooting anyone who even looks askance at us—the best method," he said.

On July 17, 1941, he received Croatia's Prime Minister, Marshal Slavko Kvaternik. "The Jews are the scourge of humanity," he told him. "The Lithuanians, Estonians and Latvians are now taking their bloody revenge on them. . . . If a nation for any reason whatsoever tolerates one single Jewish family remaining among them, it represents a core of infection that would bring about renewed decay."

On July 31, 1941 (by which time many thousands had already been killed in the Baltics), Göring as Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan* formally

*Göring in 1936 had established the Four-Year Plan, in control of practically the whole economy.

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instructed Heydrich to set in motion the “Final Solution of the Jewish question.”

... herewith commission you to carry out all necessary organizational, material and financial preparations for an overall solution of the Jewish question in the European territories under German control. Insofar as this affects the jurisdiction of other central administrations, their interests are to be provided for.

You are to submit to me as soon as practicable a summary of the organizational and financial measures already taken for the execution of the intended Final Solution of the Jewish question.

The primary reason for this document was bureaucratic. In January 1939, Göring had appointed Heydrich to supervise the emigration and subsequent evacuation of the Jews from the Reich, which was treated as an economic matter and therefore came within the province of his Four-Year Plan. Given the meticulousness of the German bureaucratic system and despite the fanatically controlled secrecy of the Final Solution, any extension of Heydrich's powers thus required his official imprint.

On August 7, 1941, when typhus had broken out in the Warsaw Ghetto, Goebbels wrote specifically for the first time about killing the Jews:

The Jews have always been carriers of infectious diseases. One must either crowd them together in ghettos and leave them to it, or else liquidate them, failing which they will always infect the healthy civilized populations. . . .

Ten days later, on August 17, Goebbels visited Hitler. Below clearly recalled the occasion in his book forty years later:

In August, on Hitler's invitation, Goebbels appeared for the first time at Field HQ. During his two days there, he had several meetings “under four eyes” with Hitler. We learned only later that the subject under discussion was the problem of the Jews. Goebbels and Heydrich urged a solution. Goebbels was eager to expel the 70,000 Jews still in Berlin and wanted to ensure Hitler's agreement. Hitler was not prepared to give it as yet and only agreed—as was published in the *Reichsgesetzblatt* on September 1, 1941—that the Jews were to wear in future a yellow star on their outer clothes. The fundamental settlement of this problem [of the Berlin Jews] was to await the end of the Russian campaign when it would be solved—we heard—in “*grosszügiger Weise*.” [This term can be translated as either “generous manner” or “general manner.” Below obviously took the first meaning.] The outrageous cynicism of this remark only occurred to me after the war when the whole horror of the annihilation of the Jews emerged. At the time, I had no idea that the order for wearing a distin-

guishing mark was simultaneous with the last preparations for the Final Solution, nor that the *Einsatzgruppen* of the SS and police were already killing huge numbers of Jews behind the front and that, as of December 1941, Jews from all occupied countries in Europe were being gassed in extermination camps in Poland. Nor did I know anything of the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942.

Of course, considering retroactively after the war and while I was in prison, evidence from the war years such as Hitler's increasing outbursts against Jews, or incidental remarks I overheard from high SS leaders, I realized it should all have given me to think. But like many others I thought that the deportations of Jews to the East—which of course were no secret—meant that they were being used there for war production, which, given all the other foreign labor that was being employed, seemed plausible enough. It was only afterwards that I realized how horribly I had been deceived. . . .

But certainly, there is no question whatever in my mind that, written instructions or not, it was Hitler who specifically ordered the extermination of the Jews. It is unthinkable that Himmler or Göring could have undertaken such a step on their own. Very probably Himmler did not inform him about every detail, but he would have acted with his approval and in total agreement with him.*

Two days after the visit by Goebbels which Below described, Goebbels, back in Berlin on August 19, recorded the gist of their conversations in his diary:

The Führer is convinced that his prophecy in the Reichstag [January 30, 1939] that, if Jewry succeeded once more in provoking a war it would end with their annihilation, is coming almost uncannily true. . . .

Continuing his diary report of his conversation with Hitler on August 20:

It is outrageous and a scandal that the capital of the Reich still has 70,000 Jews, mostly parasites, spoiling not only the looks of our city but its atmosphere. . . . [The yellow star] badge will help, but the only real solution is eliminating them, a problem we must approach without sentimentality.

Twenty-six thousand Berlin Jews were working for war production, but for Hitler it was not only the consideration of their useful work which differentiated the German and Austrian Jews from others. Even while the emotional Hitler reserved his most passionate hatred for the Jews of Austria and

*Below, writing in 1980, explicitly refutes claims by the British writer David Irving that Below had supported his thesis that Hitler was neither responsible for nor until 1943 even aware of the genocide of the Jews.

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Germany, the politician Hitler knew very well that in Western Europe and in Germany in particular there were limits beyond which he could not go; many Germans and Austrians had known some "all right" Jews all their lives. As Himmler was to say later in a terrible speech addressed to his SS elite: "And then they come, eighty million worthy Germans, and each one has his own decent Jew. 'Of course the others are vermin, but this one is an "A1" Jew. . . .'" (A1 is a German expression for excellence: A [first letter in the alphabet], 1 [first number].)

Everything that happened at this point in Germany itself concerning the question of the Jews needs to be seen in context with the developing situation in Russia, including the Baltics, and here the degree to which Hitler's "strict secrecy" Directive No. 1 of January 11, 1940, justified itself in those first months of the Russian campaign is truly astounding.

First, the German Army General Staff during the first six months of 1941 prepared the invasion of Russia by gradually assembling on the Soviet frontier the largest military force in history (more than three million men) without apparently arousing any suspicion in Stalin's mind. Then the stream of directives emanating from Hitler over those first seven months of 1941, beginning with the *Kommissar Befehl*, all unmistakably orders for political and ideological murders, became known very soon to both officers and troops. And yet, as we have seen, only in isolated cases did any of them protest or even less divulge to anyone "outside" what was happening. However outraged they were, however passionately they rejected the orders for themselves, they kept the secret.

Thus, one of postwar Germany's most distinguished public personalities, Klaus von Bismarck, a friend of mine for more than three decades, revealed in his memoirs, published in 1992, something he had never told before. A devout Christian and anti-Nazi, he elected active service at the front in preference to a staff appointment, and hardly returned to Germany throughout the war. Writing of June 21, 1941, when his regiment, poised at the Russian frontier, was awaiting the order to attack, he says that, having been aware for a long time of Hitler's megalomania, they sensed that the attack on Russia that night was likely to be the beginning of the end. And then late that evening the *Kommissar Befehl* was issued. In his book he described what happened:

As the regiment's adjutant I had first sight of it. It said that the Soviet commissars, who accompanied each military unit, were . . . to be shot forthwith. . . . After repeated study of the text I knew that, whether the Soviets had accepted the Geneva Conventions or not, I would not execute such an order. As a Christian and as a human being . . . murdering people for no other reason than that they subscribed to different political con-

cepts . . . contravened everything I had been taught and was incompatible with my conscience.

Before passing the order on to my superiors, I assembled a group of my friends and told them that I was determined to refuse to carry out this order. All of them, joining me in rejection of this order, agreed to have me report our refusal to our commanding officer, with a list of our names.

This is what I did, and our commanding officer accepted my report without comment. As far as I know, no "commissars" were shot by our regiment to the end of the war, though many other Wehrmacht units appeared to have no hesitation to carry out the *Kommissar Befehl*.

Theo Hupfauer, who had known Speer quite well since 1934 and worked closely with him as of 1943, was among those who had very early knowledge of the events in Soviet territory. For this highly successful, thirty-three-year-old industrial labor expert well up on the career ladder, it was patriotism that motivated him to request leave from his safe job at the German Workers' Front. He had been exempted from military service as indispensable to industry, but by 1940 he was tired of making speeches bucking up the morale of factory workers and became desperate to join up.

"As the Wehrmacht wouldn't have me," he said, "I volunteered for the Waffen SS, where I had friends. They took me on at once." He did his basic training in Berchtesgaden, and was then sent to the SS officers' school at Brunswick. After five months—"Just too late for action"—he went to France as a Staff Sergeant and then to Holland "on invasion exercises [for Britain]—all nonsense. Then I wrote to Ley [Robert Ley, head of the Workers' Front], asking him to get me into the Leibstandarte because they got everywhere first.* Dietrich took me on at once, and from then on I went with them, first again to France, then through the Bulgarian, Yugoslav and Greek campaigns. We went through Yugoslavia and Greece like a knife through butter," said Hupfauer with glee when, during one of our many talks in Munich, he recalled the memorable occasion when they, a mere thousand men, coolly accepted the surrender of the Greeks' Epirus army of seven divisions. "What a glorious moment," he said joyfully.

Soon after that they made their way east through Poland and, as the Russian campaign started, with the advance troops of the Wehrmacht, into the Ukraine.

"Take it from me," he said, "the Ukrainians welcomed us with open arms." But, remaining in the Ukraine until the end of 1941, he witnessed the change in that popular acclaim. "The harm our civilian administrators did there was incredible," he said. "They spoiled it all."

*The Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler began as Hitler's personal guard, then, still commanded by Hitler's old comrade Sepp Dietrich, became an elite Waffen SS fighting regiment and eventually a Panzer division.

A Moral Sore

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These German occupation administrators were called *Reichskommissare*, and one of Hupfauer's old friends, Klaus Selzner, had been named Area Head of the Ukraine. It had been Selzner who seven years earlier, in 1934, as organizational chief of the Workers' Front, had persuaded Hupfauer to join it rather than go to America to study the U.S. judicial and labor systems. "We would sit together for hours, throwing ideas to and fro," he remembered. "He had an incredibly open mind, a very impressive man."

Hupfauer was appalled to find Selzner posted as a Kommissar in the Ukraine. "How could this good man accept it?" he said. "We knew what these Kommissars were doing; without their mishandling of the population, the entire Ukraine would have been on our side. We lost them because the politicians were incapable of recognizing their goodwill."

Toward the end of 1941, a *Führer Befehl*—one of Hitler's personal commands—recalled Hupfauer to Berlin with orders to go wherever there was bomb damage in industry and take charge of reorganizing the workforce. Just over a year later, this led to Speer's putting him in charge of the workers in the all-important Ruhrgebiet, the industrial core of Germany.

When Hupfauer returned to Germany he knew, as he had told me, that the Kommissars in the Ukraine were politically "spoiling Germany's chances there." Was he telling me that he didn't also know then that the Einsatzgruppen were murdering people?

"Not Jews," he answered quickly. "I knew nothing about Jews."

Hupfauer, I believe, didn't like Jews any more when we talked than he had during the Third Reich. At the same time (even though he, like practically all Germans of that generation, contested the "figures which are bandied about"), for him too, while the killings of other civilians in the conquered East, whether Jews or non-Jews, were somehow legitimate acts of war, Hitler's gas-chamber murder of the Jews was the unsurmountable "moral sore" on his mind.

"How could they?" he asked, when that subject came up, briefly. "You tell me, how could they do such a thing?" But he quickly veered away. "The other day you asked why I didn't resign when I learned about the Einsatzgruppen. I have been thinking about that. Why didn't I? [He was by now tacitly admitting his full knowledge of the Einsatzgruppen murders.] What would have been the sense? There were many others only too ready to take my place."

BY THE EARLY SUMMER of 1941 the GBI had been renamed Baustab (Construction Authority) Speer. Even then Hitler would occasionally drop in to the basement to feast his eyes on the model of Berlin, to em-

phasize the need for a "martial look" in the future capital and to tell Speer to increase the orders for granite from abroad for the Berlin buildings irrespective of the needs of the war economy. Speer paid lip service to his orders but took them with a grain of salt.

For by then, certainly not without Hitler's knowledge, his Baustab was working overtime—soon on twenty-four-hour shifts—to put up factories for war production all over Germany and occupied Europe, to equip Berlin with air-raid shelters and to repair bomb-damaged transport facilities all over the new Greater Germany: the Altreich plus the appropriated territories—Austria, the Sudetenland and the germanized section of Poland.

On November 24, 1941, Hitler, closing his eyes to the fact that the Russian campaign was rapidly becoming a catastrophe, asked Speer to head one of his grandiose projects: the construction of splendid New Towns in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, which were to house Germans transplanted into these rich lands as pioneers to oversee the workings of the land, the mines and industry. This was not just a pipe dream; by mid-1942 thousands of Germans, trained farmers and managers and their families, had been brought to the Ukraine to transform the economy for Germany's benefit.

Speer had lobbied for months to get Hitler to put off any further work on Berlin and other cities in order to devote the sophisticated construction apparatus he had created entirely to the war effort. "It was quite extraordinary how adamantly he opposed this," Speer told me. "You understand, by this time we knew that—quite contrary to us—Britain had fully mobilized, including, above all, putting women into factories and uniforms. It was totally impossible, and remained impossible to the end, to persuade Hitler that in total war women had to work in war production."

"The Baustab Speer," said Annemarie Kempf, during one of our early meetings in Hamburg, "was given enormous official responsibilities. We had organizational teams across all of Europe and in the Ukraine, and employed by now tens of thousands of workers." By extending Speer's responsibilities at the end of that fateful year well beyond architecture and beyond Berlin and Germany, Hitler, whether by design or by intuition, prepared him for his future.

Much more than what Speer understood—or didn't—about the Kristallnacht in 1938, what he might have known about Hitler's Euthanasia Program in 1939–40 or the evacuation of the Berlin Jews in 1940–41, it was the Ukraine in 1941 and afterwards that should have been the watershed for him and his staff, as it should have been for the German generals, officers and soldiers in the Eastern theater of war. For in those years they all became witnesses, or at the very least *Mitwisser*—sharers, or participants of the knowledge—of horrific crimes.

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By November 1941 the transport system in the East was threatening to collapse. Over the long front, the German army was entirely unprepared for the Russian winter which that year came exceptionally early. Tank engines and firing mechanisms froze, weapons became useless, and underdressed troops battled the frightening elements and well-equipped Russian soldiers who were used to the climate. Worst of all, the problem of resupplying the army had become virtually insoluble, for the Russians, while retreating all along the front (north, center and south), had proved themselves brilliant in the techniques of "scorched earth." Entirely indifferent to the fate of civilian populations, they had blown up hundreds if not thousands of bridges, roads and rail lines and destroyed rail yards, rolling stock, watering sheds and industrial installations.

In Speer's words, "What confronted the army, trying desperately to re-equip the front-line troops, was a frozen desert of destruction." Learning about the catastrophe from friends on the General Staff and top managers of the German railroad on his return from a brief art foray to Lisbon, Speer immediately proposed to Hitler to assign half his construction staff of sixty-five thousand men and his best engineers to repairing the Russian railway system. "It was extraordinary—" he told me. "Even then he couldn't bear to let me interrupt the Berlin building program. It took weeks before Fritz Todt was able to persuade him that his OT [Organization Todt] needed the expertise of our engineers to do the job. It is unbelievable to me now that even then, in full understanding of the catastrophic consequences of any delays, instead of being appalled by his indecisiveness I was touched by his attachment to our building plans."

Of course, the flagging war in the East was not Hitler's only problem then, for on December 11, 1941, four days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he declared war on the United States.

Nicolaus von Below writes that he was "very alarmed by this step. It showed his total ignorance of America's potential which had, after all, already determined the outcome of one war in our century."

Hitler was not entirely wrong when, in his long speech to the Reichstag on the afternoon of December 11, he said that war between the United States and Germany had been inevitable, because Roosevelt had always wanted it.

John Kenneth Galbraith, now one of America's "wise men," a wonderfully elegant, classically American intellectual with a long, thin, craggy face, was part of Roosevelt's "think tank" at the time. How determined was Roosevelt to get into the war? I asked him in 1988, sitting in his study in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"He was determined to help Britain absolutely to the utmost," he said. "After Austria and Czechoslovakia one knew of course what Hitler was

about, and we were absolutely certain we'd have to get into it. Yes, I think it's true to say we were committed: committed to a way of life, of political and ethical morals in total opposition to everything Hitler seemed to—no, *did*—stand for. We knew this from *Mein Kampf*, from his speeches and of course from his actions. I suppose it is true that the fall of France was the decisive point: we could not allow France to remain 'fallen'—we could not allow him to rule Europe, with his kind of rule. But given the mood of some of the country, it was extremely difficult. When, immeasurably aggravating his own problem, he attacked Russia, it was, of course, an enormous step forward for us. . . .

"When Pearl Harbor happened, we were desperate. I remember, I left Washington and went to the country—to think. We were all in agony. The mood of the American people was obvious—they were determined that the Japanese had to be punished. We could have been forced to concentrate all our efforts on the Pacific, unable from then on to give more than purely peripheral help to Britain. It was truly astounding when Hitler declared war on us three days later. I cannot tell you our feeling of triumph. It was a totally irrational thing for him to do, and I think it saved Europe."

By the time Speer and I were talking about this, he had come to agree with Hupfauer about Hitler's fatal mistakes being due to his ignorance about foreign countries. But that hadn't been his opinion in the early years of the war. When I asked him about Hitler's declaration of war on the United States, he shrugged. "I realize it must seem strange that I didn't focus more on this in my book, but actually I think it reflects what I felt at the time. I think we had heard Hitler talk so often about Roosevelt's politicking to get his people to let him go to war against us that we expected it. Perhaps, stupid as we were, we were even proud that Hitler had stolen his thunder, so to speak. As he said in the Reichstag: 'We always strike first.'"

But he had not realized what it would mean to have America's huge industrial potential ranged against Germany, he said. "If I thought about it at all, it would have been, like Hitler, that Japan was going to keep Roosevelt very busy. But principally my mind was taken up with my enormous concern about what was happening to our army in the East and with what I could do to ameliorate the situation."

A conversation Speer had with Todt on December 27, 1941, the day Hitler finally agreed to move both Speer's and Giesler's construction teams to Russia, was prophetic. "I went to see Todt at his house near Berchtesgaden," Speer said. "Given his exalted position, it was a very modest place; he and his wife were very modest, very quiet people. I liked him so much. He was very depressed that day. He was just back from a long inspection trip to Russia, and he told me how horrified he was by the condition of our soldiers.

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"Later I would remember his words and the utter sadness in his face when he said that he didn't think we could possibly win the war there. The Russian soldiers were perhaps primitive, he said, but they were both physically and psychologically much harder than we were. I remember trying to encourage him. Our boys were pretty strong, I said. He shook his head in that special way he had and said—I can still hear him—'You are young. You still have illusions.'"

Todt assigned the Ukraine—logistically the most important area—to Speer, and the central and northern army regions to Giesler. The two men's problems and their experiences there would be identical, as no doubt were the impressions and the knowledge their frequent trips from then on provided. It is significant that neither Speer in his books and his drafts nor Giesler in his memoirs would have one word to say about the horrors they must have observed there.

Giesler and Speer were both Hitler's loyal vassals. They, too, without doubt, considered the Eastern populations an inferior species even though Speer would never have employed Hitler's gross term, *Untermenschen*. Except for occasionally noticing (and drawing Hitler's attention to) the blond "Germanic"-looking Ukrainian girls, as Wolters noted in his *Chronik*, the native population didn't exist for either of them.

The first time Speer saw his new area of operation was on January 30, 1942, when, getting a lift on a Heinkel bomber from Hupfauer's commanding officer, Sepp Dietrich, who was returning to his tank battalion at the nearby front, he flew to Dnepropetrovsk, where his team under the leadership of one of his top construction engineers, Walter Brugmann, had begun work some weeks before.

On that first of many visits, he spent almost a week in this large industrial Ukrainian city. Later he would write how impressed he had been on subsequent trips after visiting the university complex the Soviets had begun to build there, "with facilities far beyond anything in Germany." But this initial stay, during which he confronted for the first time the freezing weather and the desolate conditions Todt had described to him a month earlier, was devoted almost entirely to working with his staff.

"Everything was under deep snow," he told me. "This had been a very important rail center, with many dozens of trains arriving and leaving every day; now only four trains a day came and went. My team was living and working on a train that stood on a siding. The station was now nothing but rubble. The Russians had destroyed everything including even much of their snow-clearing equipment, both for the rail yards and the airport, so even though the infrastructure had been re-created fairly quickly, all essentials, tools and machinery, had to be brought in. If you recall that it was August

when the Russians retreated, you can see how farsighted their 'scorched earth' measures were."

The construction team had arrived only a few weeks before Speer came. "We had a few small trucks, a few jeeps and command cars," he said, "but except for work around the yards, nobody went anywhere. That winter the army had thousands of Ukrainians clearing the streets, but it was all but useless. All they had were shovels and brooms, and the snow was relentless; while I was there it never stopped."

BY THE TIME Speer came to Dnepropetrovsk, the city was, as SS Gruppenführer Friedrich Jeckeln had reported to Himmler around the New Year, "almost though not entirely *judenrein*." Of all the Higher SS Police Führers, Jeckeln was probably the most conscientious. "If I give a difficult order to my men, then I go with them when they execute it. That is my duty," he would say at his trial in Riga four years later.

He was with Einsatzgruppe C, Kommando 5, when they entered Dnepropetrovsk on October 5, 1941, fresh from Kiev and the murders at Babi Yar a week before. With him, at the head of his own very special command, was that most efficient killer of Jews, the former Düsseldorf architect, SS Standartenführer (Colonel) Paul Blobel, a drunk and a monster.

By the time the German army had conquered Dnepropetrovsk in the middle of August, only some thirty thousand of the city's thriving Jewish community of about one hundred thousand remained, most of them old people and young children who hadn't been able to leave with the retreating Russian army. And when, six weeks later, Jeckeln and his experienced butchers arrived, it took them a mere two days to kill those thirty thousand.

A young Czech, Majer Neumann, from Volove (a town in the part of Ruthenia appropriated by Hungary after Hitler's partition of Czechoslovakia in April 1939), was there with a detachment of Hungarian troops. Although he was Jewish, Neumann was protected by his Hungarian army status, and he survived and emigrated to Arizona after the war. When he was interviewed there later, he described the Jews of Dnepropetrovsk walking, eight abreast, through the autumnal streets of the city whose population had been ordered to remain in their houses. But nobody could have remained ignorant of what happened, he said. The Jews carried their babies and bundles, and for two days machine-gunning could be heard from the antitank ditches the Russians had dug on the outskirts of the city which the Germans used for the killing and burying.

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Over the next five months, until March, Jeckeln reported to Berlin, they "wiped up stragglers": small groups of people who had managed to hide and who, when caught, were conveniently dealt with—an imaginative touch—in the Jewish cemetery.

On that first January trip to the snowed-in, destroyed city, there might have been little reason for either Speer or his people to have heard about killings which had largely taken place four months before. But the fact is that later he went there repeatedly, as well as to many other cities where similar horrors had taken place. Was it possible that then, too, neither he nor his staff ever heard about any of these murders?

Six months later, in June, several of his top people accompanied him on a week-long inspection of Organization Todt installations in "Russia-South"; among them were his chiefs of administration, personnel, supply and information—Gerhard Fränk, Erwin Bohr, Walter Schrieber and Rudolf Wolters—and of course Speer's private secretary, Annemarie Kempf. They traveled all over the southern army area and spent two days in Dnepropetrovsk.

It was in Alpbach, a beautiful village in the Austrian Tyrol, where Annemarie and I, walking through a snowy wood, came to speak about Dnepropetrovsk. She was appalled by the story I told her of the murder of the Jews there. Standing stock-still on that forest path, she was totally silenced by the account, and it is inconceivable that her horror was anything but real.

"It is not possible," she finally said, "simply not possible! You see, Speer wasn't alone there—we were with him. He might have seen various of the top commanders and administrators on his own, but we saw other people, lots of people. And nobody, not one single person, mentioned such events. As you were talking about it, I tried to revisualize the place, to recall the two days we spent there. And it remains inconceivable."

She kept coming back to this the following days. She had meanwhile rechecked Speer's book—which she had brought along—to see what he said about the Ukrainian trips and had found that he did not mention the one in the summer of 1942, and hadn't said much about the first one either. (Only in the first "Nuremberg draft"—his very first attempt at recording his reminiscences which later developed into the "Spandau draft" and then into *Inside the Third Reich*—was there a longer description of the January trip.)

"You said they buried them in shallow graves in antitank ditches on the periphery of the city. But, you know, when we were there it was unbelievably hot; we stayed at the House of Culture, and I remember washing my dress and hanging it out of the window to dry; fifteen minutes later I could put it back on. Dnepropetrovsk was not a big city, you know; if they really buried

thirty thousand people there in shallow graves, can you imagine what would have happened, even months later, in that heat?"*

"Of course," she said, "if this really happened, not that long before Speer's first trip there in January, and then intermittently until March, that would have a very special significance for us, because it would mean that a whole lot of people we knew must have deliberately hidden it from us."

I had of course discussed Dnepropetrovsk repeatedly with Speer, and he always said that he had never heard anything about murders of Jews there or in other Russian cities. "To me this is not surprising," he said. "Even my own people—if they knew, and I doubt that they did—would not have felt in a position to discuss it with me. I remember, in Dnepropetrovsk I dined one night with the District Governor [Selzner]; he didn't tell me anything either. But then, how could they have told me?" he asked. "Everybody knew how close I was to Hitler. How could they have risked speaking to me—me of all people—about the unspeakable?"

*Yes, I could imagine: Years before, the onetime Chief of the Church Information Branch at the Reich Security Office, Albert Hartl, had told me of a summer evening—that same hot summer in 1942—in Kiev when he was invited to dine with the local Higher SS Police Chief and Brigadeführer, Max Thomas. A fellow guest, SS Colonel Paul Blobel, had driven him to the general's weekend dacha. "At one moment—it was just getting dark," said Hartl. "We were driving past a long ravine. I noticed strange movements of the earth. Clumps of earth rose into the air as if by their own propulsion—and there was smoke; it was like a low-toned volcano; as if there was burning lava just beneath the earth. Blobel laughed, made a gesture with his arm pointing back along the road and ahead, all along the ravine—the ravine of Babi Yar—and said, 'Here lie my thirty thousand Jews.' "

* D.T. described it. He visits it one hot summer evening in 1942.

XI

A Fatal Appoi

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In the "Spandau draft" he described his long flight on February 7 from Dnepropetrovsk:

After leaving Kiev behind us we fly for hours over the uninviting Pripet marshes and finally, at last land at night at Rastenburg, which after my few days in Russia seems quite beautiful. . . .

After he reported his presence by phone, a car from the Führer motor pool picked him up, and at HQ he went straight to the mess hall to have his first real meal in days.

Hitler is not present. Dr. Todt, at HQ to report, is dining with him in private. Late in the evening he emerges from the long and, it appears, trying discussion looking strained and exhausted. I sit with him for a bit while he drinks a glass of wine.

In *Inside the Third Reich* he adds a few details: "He wore a depressed air. I sat with him for a few minutes while he silently drank a glass of wine without speaking of the reason for his mood."

At the end of what Speer describes here as a "rather lame conversation," Todt offered him a lift to Berlin in his plane early next morning, and Speer accepted.

There is a curious difference between Speer's various descriptions of his conversation with Hitler when he was invited to join him in his quarters around 1 a.m. that night. In his Nuremberg draft in 1946 he mentioned only talking about their building projects in Nuremberg and Berlin. In the "Spandau draft" in 1953 there is no mention of buildings, but a long conversation about the Russian situation:

He gets me to tell him of my impressions in southern Russia. I tell him as much as I can. He seems very interested and helps out with careful questions. We talk about the problems of reconstruction down there; the incomprehensible strategy of the Russian tank corps; and I tell him about the soldiers' evenings, with those sad songs. . . . I remember more and more and we talk about everything. Hearing about the soldiers' songs, he asks what the songs are about, and as it so happens that I have some texts in my pocket I give them to him to read. He becomes very silent.

After the war, Speer heard that Hitler had ordered those responsible for the printing of the songs to be court-martialed, and he comments on Hitler's "typical . . . mistrust and suspicion. . . . He was always sure . . . his clever questions . . . would allow him to come to important conclusions." And, he continued in Spandau:

[Before going to bed at 3 a.m., after leaving Hitler] I informed Todt's flight captain that I was too tired to join the flight that was due to take off

ing to the Commission of Inquiry had a self-destruct mechanism) exploded at low altitude." However, in his next-to-last draft he excised the next words: "But how, by whom and due to what was the mechanism activated? It is a question which allows latitude to all—however fantastic—speculation." He was still not sure how far to go in accusing Hitler, and only hinted at it by asking questions.

In the fourth and final draft, apparently written in 1968, he wrote, then crossed out, then reinserted, "Hitler seemed to treat Todt's death with the stoic calm of a man who must reckon with such incidents as part of the general picture." But then, still only in the final draft, he brings up a new theme: "... [Hitler] thought it was a successful act by the secret service of our enemies [i.e., the Allies]. But then, it is doubtful that he would have expressed to me any other conjecture. ..."

In the German edition of the book this became "... he thought it was a successful stroke by the secret services..."—without specifying which—the British, the Americans or his own.

In the English edition (which he carefully checked, according to his editor) the role of the "secret services" changes diametrically: "... he was going to have the [i.e., his own] secret services look into the matter."

In all published editions of the book Hitler's suspicion of "foul play" and the secret services is followed by this passage: "This view, however, soon gave way to an irritable, often indeed distinctly nervous reaction when the subject was mentioned in his presence. At such moments Hitler might remark, sharply, 'I want to hear no more about that. I forbid further discussion of the subject.' Sometimes he would add, 'You know that this loss still affects me too deeply for me to want to talk about it.'"

Hitler might have forbidden any further mention of the incident in his presence, but that did not end the mystery. Both the commission and Speer thought it necessary to mention two points: one, that the plane Todt was flying in, a Heinkel 111 converted for passenger use, "had been put at Todt's disposal for this trip by his friend, Field Marshal Hugo Sperrle, as his own plane was undergoing repairs. ..." and, two, that "this plane, like all courier planes, was fitted with a self-destruct mechanism which could be activated by pulling a handle between the pilots' seats whereupon the plane would explode."

The fact is that neither of these points was correct. Todt's eighteen-year-old fighter pilot son proved within months that there was no self-destruct mechanism on the plane. Thirty years later, Nicolaus von Below who, as the ranking air force officer at HQ, was closely involved with Todt's plans that day, remembered the plane, Todt's schedule and finally the Commission of Inquiry very differently in his memoirs:

A Fatal Appoin-

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my illusions then. In 1942 it would never have occurred to me that anyone could suspect me of such a terrible thing. Later—" He shrugged. "Well, people always talk, don't they? For most of them, gossip, the more malicious the better, is the spice of life."

When I then asked him directly about the other rumor I had heard—that Hitler might have had Todt eliminated, or knew who did—he shrugged and didn't reply. His many changes in the drafts and his description of Hitler's "distinct nervousness" are perhaps enough. What we will never know is whether it was Hitler, during the two hours he chatted with Speer that night while Todt slept, who suggested that Speer not join Todt's flight a few hours hence, but stay at HQ the next morning. It is the something Speer—however innocently he might have followed such a suggestion—could never have admitted, even to himself.

XAVER DORSCH had been one of the earliest *Mitwisser* of Hitler's treatment of populations in the East, and judging from at least one letter, he and Todt had discussed it. On July 10, 1941, less than three weeks after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Dorsch found himself in Minsk, the capital of Belorussia, and from there, after "consultation with Reichsminister Dr. Todt," sent the following report to the Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, Reichsleiter Rosenberg.

Subject: Prison camp in Minsk.

The prison camp Minsk, approximately the size of the Wilhelmsplatz [a large square in Berlin], contains about 100,000 POWs and 40,000 civilian detainees. The prisoners, crammed into this tight space, can hardly move and are forced to relieve themselves wherever they happen to stand. The security of the camp by one company of soldiers [between 100 and 200 men] can only be effected by brutal force. The problem of feeding the POWs being insoluble, they have largely been without nourishment for six to eight days and . . . are almost manic in their need for sustenance. The civilian prisoners are males from Minsk and surrounding districts aged between fifteen and fifty. Those who have families in Minsk are receiving food; their relatives crowd the gate in endless queues. But during the night, the other inmates assault and often kill them for a piece of bread or a bone.

The guards who are on duty day and night can only deal with this impossible situation by making indiscriminate use of their weapons. Given the army's priority on transport and supplies, there seems to be no possibility of redressing this chaotic situation. . . .

Anyone even marginally familiar with Todt's personality will realize the extent to which such conditions—however carefully worded Dorsch's letter



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estly say that I would have done anything. I would have agreed that they should be neutralized, put where they couldn't do any more harm."

When I asked if he felt now that this was a lack of civic courage, a lack of morality, he pondered for a long moment, got up to fix a curtain that didn't hang straight, and for quite a while looked out at the dark night. On his way back he straightened some books on a table and put another log on the fire. "If I just answered that question with 'yes,' " he said, "it would be too simple. For of course, *now* I think it was immoral. But what does that mean? Nothing. How can it help our understanding of those times, which is what you and I are trying to do here, I presume, for me to say yes, yes, mea culpa.

"Yes, of course, mea culpa, but the whole point is that I *didn't* feel this, and why didn't I? Was it Hitler, only Hitler, because of whom I didn't understand? Or was it always a deficiency in *me*? Or was it both?"

Speer's fifty-nine-page profile of Hitler, written when he was in custody at Eisenhower's HQ near Frankfurt in 1945, remains, I think, one of the most authoritative analyses that has been done of Hitler.

"One thing is certain," he says there. "All those who worked closely with him were to an extraordinary degree dependent on and servile to him. However powerful they appeared in their domain, in his proximity they became small and timid." This effect Hitler had on the people around him would preoccupy Speer for the rest of his life. He wrote in the Nuremberg draft:

In the autumn of 1943, after a visit to Führer HQ, Dönitz and I once discussed this hypnotic quality of his. And we realized that both of us had reduced our attendance at Führer HQ to once every few weeks for the same reason: to maintain our inner independence. Both of us were certain that we could no longer function properly if, like Keitel for example, we were continuously near him. We were sorry for Keitel who was so much under his influence that he was finally nothing but his tool, without any will of his own. . . .

This, he wrote in *Inside the Third Reich*, applied not only to Hitler's so-called Old Comrades but even more to those in Hitler's immediate surroundings who were subjected daily to the intensity of his opinions.

All of them were . . . mere puppets in his hands . . . without any will of their own. During my activity as his architect, I noticed that being near him for any length of time made me feel weary, exhausted and empty, as if it paralyzed any effort to act or think independently. It was because of this that, when he named me Minister, I tried to schedule my discussions with him two or three weeks apart, thereby maintaining detachment from him. . . .

Paradoxically, in the matter of daily or marginal decisions, he wrote, Hitler was immensely subject to influence from people who understood how to handle him. He wrote some of this in *Inside the Third Reich*, but more fully in the "Spandau draft":

He had one extraordinary deficiency, if one can call it that. He himself was not really manipulative, not in the accepted sense of the term. After all, he totally dominated his environment—he did not need to manipulate: he ordered. Thus, though he was certainly suspicious of others, he had no understanding of, no feeling for the game of manipulation, indeed no suspicion that anyone could slowly, steadily work on him and manipulate him so cunningly that he would finally be convinced that he, and he alone, had changed a long-held opinion. Göring, Goebbels, Bormann and up to a point Himmler, too, were masters at this game. It was Hitler's lack of awareness of this kind of subtle deception that helped these men to obtain and maintain their position of power.

* What he had seen many times, which applied both to others and to himself, he told me later, was Hitler's absolute refusal to listen to bad news. "He never wanted to hear that anything was wrong with the state of the army, or the war. On the other hand, what I can confirm is that during situation reports which I attended after I was named Minister, general officers, such as for instance Jodl, frequently did question Hitler's ideas and decisions. Most of them, you know, were not sheep but superbly trained technicians. When they thought Hitler was wrong they told him so. And what's more, he always listened and was quite capable of changing his mind. He had a great respect for experts.

"When I said 'if they thought Hitler was wrong,' " he explained, he wasn't referring specifically to moral issues, though, he added, "who is to say that military questions, involving the life or death of thousands of soldiers, are not also moral matters? Furthermore," he said, quite testily, "immorality in the pursuit of military goals was not restricted to the Germans."

He quickly pre-empted a point he thought I might have been about to make. "I know what you mean. Of course there were moral issues entirely particular to us and to that time."

Like many other Germans, by no means only of his generation, Speer was always convinced, with much justification, that any mention of "morality" by foreigners was bound to refer to the crimes against the Jews. It was never helpful to point out, to him or to other Germans of his generation, that this was their own feeling, a reflection of their own horror quite as much as that of many people in the world who associated Hitler's criminality mainly with what he did to the Jews. Speer—and others—could no more believe this than

* D. T. My fault. He had come to depend so much on his own intuition and instincts in conjunction with mine, that he was

they believed that I never understood the interpretation of Hitler

Of course, he did not want to be influenced by his own choice—from returned him, he said quickly, "I had to learn every figuratively."

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they believed that there were many people, such as myself, who felt that how- ever unique the crime against the Jews had been, this was a too limited inter- pretation of Hitler and of the catastrophe and tragedy he brought about.

Of course, he did feel now, he said, that his change of professional envi- ronment wrought changes in him, that it removed some blinkers from him, and by distancing him—even more than had already been the case, by his own choice—from the politicians he so despised and disliked, it had in a way returned him, he said, "to a culturally more familiar world. Of course," he added quickly, "I knew very little—really nothing about military matters. I had to learn everything. But, yes, they spoke my language, literally and figuratively."

I asked if, particularly in the last months of 1941, the generals he had now begun to hobnob with told him what was happening in the Eastern theater of war, and what they were ordered to do.

"Never," he said, repeating what he had said many times before. "Nobody ever told me anything. They would not have dared. I was too close to Hitler."

was interested in questions which did not originate with himself. He was interested only in day

XII

An Irresistible Challenge

Nuremberg, June 19, 1946

FLÄCHSNER: Can you briefly tell me . . . the extent of your task?

SPEER: I can best show you the development by dealing with the numbers of workers under my authority. In 1942, I took over the armament and construction programs with altogether 2.6 million workers. In the spring of 1943, Dönitz gave me the responsibility for naval armaments as well and at this point I had 3.2 million workers. In September 1943, in agreement with the Minister for Economics, Herr Funk, the production side of [that] ministry was transferred to me. With that I had 12 million workers under me. Finally, on August 1, 1944, I took over air armament from Göring. At that point, the total production of the Greater Reich, not counting that in occupied countries, was marshaled under me with 14 million workers.

July 30, 1946

From the final statement by the Chief Prosecutor for the Soviet Union, GENERAL R. A. RUDENKO: Speer was not only aware of the methods . . . employed for the forcible deportation into slavery of populations from occupied territories . . . but took part in decisions on the abduction of millions from their countries [to Germany]. Speer worked closely with Himmler; Himmler delivered to him [concentration camp] prisoners for labor in armament works; [and] branch-camps of concentration camps were established in many factories which operated under Speer's control. . . .

This is the true face of the accused Speer, and the real role he played in the crimes of the Hitler clique.

SPEER would come to Berlin were still His closest colleague him at the railway morning. They come by anxiety mentions it late which was later

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eral manager of the United Steel Works, demanded that the chaos be re-
 solved by placing the power of decision making in the hands of one man;
 industry didn't care who. When Funk (on Göring's instructions, as he told
 Speer later) rose to nominate Milch, the Field Marshal, already informed by
 Speer in a whisper of Hitler's instructions, declined the honor and told the
 conference that Reichsminister Speer had an immediate invitation for them
 from the Führer.

The Führer, said Speer, wished to see the participants in the Cabinet Room
 as soon as they could all get there. The conference would then reconvene in
 five days, February 18, "at my ministry," he announced, leaving no doubt in
 anyone's mind who was now in charge.

Shortly afterwards, having been briefed by Speer, Hitler, speaking for
 about an hour, made it even clearer. Göring, he said, could no longer look
 after armaments within the framework of the Four-Year Plan—it was too
 much for one administration to handle. This task would be turned over to
 Speer, who had proved his capacity for imaginative organization as head of
 the Baustab Speer, which had achieved astonishing feats in construction.

There was no mention of the "one man" rule industry had requested; that
 wasn't the answer, and both Hitler and Speer knew it. But in Hitler's salon
 before Speer took his leave, Hitler, with Martin Bormann standing by, ad-
 vised Speer to concentrate on industry for help. "It was once again extraordi-
 nary," Speer told me thirty-six years later. "He couldn't know what I was
 going to do because I didn't quite know it myself, not enough anyway to put
 it into words. And yet, I felt he did know. It was uncanny."

Speer, aiming his remarks at Bormann as head of the party secretariat, told
 Hitler that he was indeed planning to draw on people from industry, but
 that, as many industrialists had always kept aloof from the party, he would
 have to have a free hand to use anyone he needed regardless of the extent of
 their political involvement.

"Agreed," said Hitler in the terse manner he employed on such occasions,
 and instructed Bormann to make sure Speer was not troubled by "petty
 interference."

Speer had won his first major battle, but he now had five days before the
 group reconvened to put together a program which would not only be ac-
 ceptable to all the services and industry but, on an individual level, galvanize
 people into the enthusiasm and exceptional efforts needed to make it work.

Annemarie Kempf told me that Speer had immediately asked her to come
 with him to his new job. "But I couldn't make that decision," she said, "so I
 went on holiday to Carinthia, to ski. I loved skiing—it blew the cobwebs out
 of my mind. Near the village was an OT office, and two or three weeks into
 my stay, a messenger came to tell me to meet Speer in St. Johann, in the

genius for organization. Well, although "genius" is going rather far—it is true that the changes were quite simply due to proper organization. . . .

The authoritarian state not only doesn't admit criticism, but doesn't know what it is. Mistakes can be made for years without any opposition. . . . The needs of the army were in the hands of two enormous bureaucracies [one for weaponry and the other for war production].

When I studied architecture, it emerged very clearly that the students were fairly evenly divided into two groups: those who longed only for the day when they could become free and independent architects, and then the others whose goal was to exercise their profession in the service of the state until, at the appropriate age, they were eligible for pensions and security.

I'm not making a value judgment. It is simply that they were diametrically different people with different needs, the ones needing stability and security, and the others longing for responsibility, risk and a chance to compete.

Thus for instance, a man who chooses a military career is more likely to want to lead his troops into battles than to sit at a safe desk dealing with paperwork. So if officers ended up in war production they actually felt themselves to be failures, with resulting self-contempt and resentment. And basically, the more people resent what they do, the less considerate they are likely to become of others, and the less capable of constructive or creative thinking.

Now free enterprise, in which people choose their work rather than being assigned to it—as must happen in the military, the civil services and ministries—provides a very different scope. But the idea of getting industrial "technicians," as I will call them, to take over the leadership of armament production, was not mine. Todt had already begun drawing on them, and the real originator of this idea of industrial "self-responsibility" was Rathenau, who, charged by Hindenburg during World War I with the procurement of raw material, carried out this task not with functionaries [the despised *Beamten*] but high-powered industrialists. One of Rathenau's "old men" sat in Todt's ministry and played a considerable part in the changes already begun by Todt. . . .

Speer's letters from Spandau were quite descriptive and lively, showing how observant and reflective this "rational man par excellence," as Hettlage described him, had become. He often recorded interruptions by guards, fellow prisoners, the prison timetable, or breaks for rest, a period of reading or thought. While these interpolations do not show up in *Inside the Third Reich*, many of them reappeared in his second book, *The Secret Diaries*. Already in his private letters to his children, as well as here, he minutely and often humorously depicted the nature, duration and effect of interruptions, thereby

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providing not only a unique picture of the four-powers-controlled Spandau, but what is probably one of the most vivid and telling evocations ever of long-term prison life.

Thus he described, time and again, the changing light in his cell, or the sounds of the guards' steps and their carefree voices chatting in the corridors. ("I'm sure our prisoner voices never sounded carefree, even when—rarely enough in those first years—we did talk to each other," he said to me later.) Carefully noted are the duty visits of the prison directors, so different one from the other, depending not only on nationality but also on their time of service at Spandau. The French were from the start almost invariably lenient: "a tolerance born of indifference," he said once. The Americans were easygoing, curious about their charges and benign; he called it "the benevolence of plenty." The British were the most disciplined and formal, he said, "but always fair." He liked the American guards (and later, strangely enough, the Russians) best, but had the greatest respect for the British. The Russian directors and guards were in the first years the most difficult—angry, suspicious and wedded to rules—but then with the passage of years increasingly showed shy friendliness, and their family snapshots.

"When they were awful," he told me once, "I'd remind myself of what I had seen of the desolation of their lives. And when they were, yes, kind, it always reminded me of one icy winter day in Dnepropetrovsk, when my face had begun to freeze, and a street cleaner, taking his own clean handkerchief, helped me by massaging my face. I couldn't even remember what 'thank you' was in Russian; I said, 'Danke,' I think, and walked off. Afterwards I wished I had said something."

In many letters to Hilde—and in those to Wolters—he wrote about the music the chaplain played for them after the service on Saturdays, and about the books he read. Thus he continued his letter to Wolters about his innovations at the Ministry after an hour's interruption while the Russian duty guard "swanned about," controlling the cells through the peepholes. He said he had used the time to read about Pharaoh Ikhnaton, "a remarkable man in ancient Egypt." The interruption had given him time to remember that he had read somewhere that already in the French Revolution the Minister for War, Lazare Carnot, had successfully reorganized production by putting nonpolitical technicians in charge:

. . . demanding and receiving assurance, incidentally, that they would be protected from any interference by "politicals"! I don't suppose Rathenau knew about this precedent any more than Todt or I did when we followed the same path.

As you can see, the idea was not at all new. But the point about ideas is

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Hilde

born yes-man, could not accept these limitations of functions, and his frequent interference with the industrial commissions' privilege of "self-responsibility" for development and completion required Speer to intervene time and again. His greatest problem with Saur, however, was that as head of the technical section he was—as he had been under Todt—responsible for statistical reports. It was he who in the last year of the war, with almost daring fantasy, put together the production figures which were reported to Hitler almost daily.

"What this meant for me," Speer told me, "was that I could make Hitler happy by standing by Saur's figures, which particularly in the last months of the war were wildly inflated because he based them on orders, not on what actually survived after our immense losses through bombardments. Or I could make Hitler unhappy and provoke his anger by contradicting Saur, who with these crazily optimistic reports had gained a very secure foothold in Hitler's esteem. Of course, the closer we came to the end, the more anxious Hitler was to accept anything that appeared to indicate hope. One was constantly walking a tightrope between telling him the truth and risking not just being thrown out (which could have been a blessing) but being shot, or else going along with his fantasies in the hope of saving *something* for the German people."

It was mainly Saur and Dorsch who in 1944, while Speer was ill, would intrigue against and succeed in ousting three of Speer's closest collaborators, and who would come close to toppling Speer himself. Nonetheless, to a considerable degree, Speer protected both Saur and Dorsch at Nuremberg and, if certainly condescending toward Saur as he had always been, was comparatively kind about him in the "Spandau draft," where he wrote (though not in any of his books):

Even though rather loud, under his rough shell he had no doubt a good heart, which prompted him to intervene frequently for prisoners and foreign workers, though this was outside our competence. The fact that with increasing proximity to Hitler he became somewhat of a megalomaniac was not really his fault. It was par for the course for most of those around Hitler. . . .

Well, that's how our great Technical Ministry came to be. Of course, it meant, sadly, saying goodbye to architecture until I could complete my ministerial stint—my war job—and, as Hitler had specifically promised me, could return to my profession. . . .

"His unpretentiousness was incredibly attractive," said civil engineer Ernst Görner, who, in a comparatively lowly function, was to see a great deal of Speer after he became Minister. Görner was a tall, thin man, himself ex-

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bilization of the German labor force, including women. The second was to reorganize the whole economy to put it on a war footing comparable with that of the British, beginning with a suspension of all building projects not connected with the pursuit of the war.

There were two fundamental reasons why he lost these essential battles at the very beginning of his new responsibilities. First, the whole country and, more important, Hitler and his closest minions were so used to easy victories that the idea not just of possible defeat but of a conflict over many years to come was inconceivable to them. No armament reserves, nor any production plans, looked beyond the next six months because the whole of the German military economy was geared to Hitler's *Blitzkrieg* strategy—heretofore so brilliantly successful.

Second, as far as the civilian population was concerned, Hitler was determined that they were not to feel the war: as far as possible, they were to have everything they needed and, thanks to the conquest of so much of Europe with all its human and mineral wealth, in greater plenty than ever before.

Speer, however, almost from the day he took office, opposed this easy option. Total war, he told Hitler, required sacrifices and discipline from all Germans, whoever they were. But with these demands he came up against the personal interests and pet ideas of Nazi Germany's most privileged men, the Reichsleiter and Gauleiter—all Hitler's "Old Comrades." They immediately lobbied against using women in war production—an offense, they said, against the sacred nature of German womanhood—and against any interference with their pet building projects, planned for their own or their provinces' benefit.

The principal culprit here was Martin Bormann, Chief of the Party Chancellery (and in 1943 officially named Hitler's Private Secretary), with his never-ending rebuilding of the Obersalzberg, which he, as administrator of the Führer funds, considered his private fiefdom. Though Hitler temporarily accepted Speer's suggestion for a construction moratorium, Bormann soon convinced him that construction at his mountain retreat had to continue. ("It looked like one huge building site, to the end," Speer said. "When the Americans occupied it, they still found work crews beaver away at new villas and bunkers ordered by Bormann.")

All the other Gauleiter and party bigwigs followed Bormann's example. Thuringia's Gauleiter, Sauckel—one of Hitler's favorites—insisted on carrying on with his Party Forum at Weimar; Robert Ley, head of the German Workers' Front, experimenting with pigs on his model farm, needed a mammoth new pigsty; the Gauleiter of Posen needed a new residence and renovations of Posen Castle and the principal hotel. (More than a year later, Speer and Goebbels, attending a Gauleiter conference there, would angrily com-

* If it couldn't be done quickly, then it was either not worth doing or had been sabotaged.

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That day in 194 varian boarding s during holidays, photographs and invited his mother for tea. He remembered giving us chocolate

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ment on the [prohibited] use of bronze for the doorknobs at the hotel.) Ley, Keitel and a number of others had to have luxurious private trains; and with the increasing bombardments, all the Gauleiter, Göring and Hitler himself wanted more and safer personal bomb shelters. Hitler also wanted the representational Schloss Klessheim near Salzburg renovated, and Himmler had acquired a property near Berchtesgaden for what he called his "second family"—his mistress, Hedwig Potthast, who had been his secretary, and their two children.

(It was here that, late in the war, fourteen-year-old Martin Bormann, Bormann's eldest son and Hitler's godchild, had an experience that would plant the seeds in him for what was eventually to become a very different life. He was, of course, a passionate young Nazi, immensely proud of his "strict but just" father and of his Führer—his family and Hitler's circle, significantly enough, called young Martin *Kronzi*, for Crown Prince.

Martin was sixty when we met first in 1990, when I attended a therapy group composed of children of high-ranking Nazis. A former priest who had become a teacher, he was a tall man with iron-grey cropped hair, an ascetic face and—although he could be very funny and both he and his wife, Cordula, love to laugh—an essentially grave mind. It was at this group meeting, part of a project initiated by the Israeli psychologist Dan Bar-On to help the children of Nazi "perpetrators" come to terms with their background, that Martin told an appalling story which we repeatedly discussed later.

That day in 1944, he was at home on the Berghof for holidays from his Bavarian boarding school at Feldafing. In the morning he was busy as usual during holidays, running errands for his father and Hitler, carrying films, photographs and maps to and fro. One afternoon, however, Frau Potthast invited his mother to bring him and his younger sister Eike to her new house for tea. He remembers the house as standing "in a wild sort of garden. She gave us chocolate and cake; it was nice."

Later, Frau Potthast said she would show them something interesting, a special collection Himmler kept in what had become his special lair. She led the way up to the attic.

"When she opened the door and we flocked in, we didn't understand what the objects in that room were—until she explained, quite scientifically, you know," Martin said, his voice now toneless. "It was tables and chairs made of parts of human bodies. There was a chair . . . the seat was a human pelvis, the legs human legs—on human feet. And then she picked up a copy of *Mein Kampf* from a pile of them—all I could think of was that my father had told me not to bother to read it as it had been outdated by events. [Speer had told me that Hitler had said exactly the same thing to him.] She showed us the cover—made of human skin, she said—and explained that the Dachau

prisoners who produced it used the *Rückenhaut*, the skin of the back, to make it."

He said they fled, his mother pushing them ahead of her down the stairs. "Eike was terribly upset," he said, "and I was too." It hadn't helped them much, he said, when his mother, trying to calm them, told them that their father had refused to have the book in the house when Himmler had sent him a similar copy.

Not much more than a year later, when it was all over, Martin, now a penniless fifteen-year-old refugee on a mountain farm in Austria who didn't know where his family was and whether his mother and siblings or his father were alive, saw photographs in a Salzburg newspaper of the horrors that had been discovered in the concentration camps. "People said that the photographs had to be fakes, but I knew it was all true," he said, his face red with stress. "After what I had seen in that attic I had no doubts at all, ever. . . ."

"The swine," said someone who was present as the story was recounted.

"To call those people swine," said Martin Bormann's son, "is an insult to swine.")

LATE THAT SPRING of 1942 Speer realized that dealing effectively with the Gauleiter was beyond him, and that if he wanted their help in the procurement and distribution of labor, he needed one of them on his staff to help him. He suggested to Hitler that his old mentor Karl Hanke, now Gauleiter of Lower Silesia, be appointed to that role. But here again Speer failed: Hitler said that Hanke had not been Gauleiter long enough to wield sufficient influence. He had discussed it with Bormann and he was going to appoint Fritz Sauckel as Commissioner General for the Allotment of Labor—he was the right man for the job.

"Do whatever you can for the Minister for Armaments," he adjured Sauckel two days later when, in Speer's presence, he handed the document of nomination to his "Old Comrade." There were 250 million people now available to the German labor market in the countries occupied by the Reich, he said; Sauckel should have no problem.

Even so, Speer, well aware of Ernest Bevin's radical war-labor program in Britain, under which not only all men but also millions of women not on active service were mobilized for production and moved about wherever they were needed, tried to impress Sauckel with the need to recruit labor from the huge available ranks of German women. Sauckel and Göring, on whom he called for support, flatly refused. Sauckel, with Göring nodding enthusiastic assent, recited the Gauleiter credo—factory work could be morally harmful

A Maelstrom of Intrigue

to German womanhood children. (Speer, describing to Wolters, "When and Sauckel and be furious

After getting Hitler's a this fundamental decision above all mothers of may the Führer has commissariates territories some 400,000 girls."

(By 1943, Speer writes reduced the number of 1,200,000 in June 1939 to brought down by a mere :

Attempts were made al occupied East and West I berg trial, the court was st in Poland and the Ukrain housing, medical care, re; ently paradisaical existenc volunteers' families at ho however effective the proj in the Ukraine, the numb and therefore had to be i; more, although (contrary many factory and farm n foreign workers with extr: could in the end not keep foreigners were not "gues were called in postwar Gei kommissar for the Ukrain stationed in Kiev: "We a lowliest German worker i valuable than the popula: Hitler Youth seven month

Whether [Eastern] na me only insofar as we ne no interest to me. Whet haustion while digging a as the antitank ditch for

to German womanhood, possibly even putting at risk their ability to bear children. (Speer, describing this period in Spandau, added a bracketed comment to Wolters, "When German women read this, they will praise Göring and Sauckel and be furious with me.")

After getting Hitler's agreement, Sauckel informed his fellow Gauleiter of this fundamental decision: "In order to provide the German housewife, above all mothers of many children, with tangible relief from her burdens, the Führer has commissioned me to bring into the Reich from the Eastern territories some 400,000-500,000 carefully selected, healthy and strong girls."

(By 1943, Speer writes in his Notes to *Inside the Third Reich*, Britain had reduced the number of female domestic servants by two-thirds, from 1,200,000 in June 1939 to 400,000. Over the same period in Germany, it was brought down by a mere 140,000, from 1,582,000 to 1,442,000.)

Attempts were made almost immediately to persuade young people in the occupied East and West to volunteer for work in Germany. At the Nuremberg trial, the court was shown copies of placards which had been distributed in Poland and the Ukraine offering all kinds of inducements—money, good housing, medical care, regular holidays at home, and aside from this apparently paradisaical existence for themselves, extra food and clothes rations to volunteers' families at home. It should have worked, but it didn't, because however effective the propaganda was at first, particularly in Poland but also in the Ukraine, the number of volunteers was almost immediately too small and therefore had to be increased by other less benevolent means. Furthermore, although (contrary to public assumptions after the war) there were many factory and farm managers in Germany who did their best for their foreign workers with extra food and time off, many of these good intentions could in the end not keep pace with the official rules. These specified that the foreigners were not "guest workers" (as later generations of imported labor were called in postwar Germany) but *Untermenschen*. As Erich Koch, Reichskommissar for the Ukraine, said in a speech in early 1943 to party members stationed in Kiev: "We are a master race, which must remember that the lowliest German worker is racially and biologically a thousand times more valuable than the population here." And Himmler told the leaders of the Hitler Youth seven months later:

Whether [Eastern] nations live in prosperity or starve to death interests me only insofar as we need them as slaves for our culture, otherwise it is of no interest to me. Whether ten thousand Russian females drop from exhaustion while digging an antitank ditch or not interests me only insofar as the antitank ditch for Germans is completed.

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And to begin with, he was surprisingly successful with volunteers from the Ukraine. I was told that their trains to Germany were decorated with flowers and banners. I didn't see this myself, but it was perfectly possible. People I knew who went East found the population there to have such a low standard of living that the incredible [to them] wealth of our soldiers must have given them an impression of enormous riches in the West.

But when the volunteers' trains arrived in Germany they were soon disillusioned: upon the order of the SS, their quarters were like prison camps behind barbed wire . . . to prevent them from spreading communist propaganda. One can easily see why, among the many things forbidden to them, they were also barely allowed to write home!

Sauckel, it has to be said, was appalled by these rules, imposed by others than himself, not to speak of how I felt. I told Hitler as soon as I learned of this, and he did immediately order the removal of the barbed wire. But that wasn't all by any means: when some weeks later I visited the Krupp works in Essen, I found out that the Russian workers' rations were so minimal that they couldn't work properly. Again I told Hitler, who ordered that they were to be better fed. Of course, all this wasn't really my business, but at that point Sauckel was glad to have my help—and I to give it.

"Sauckel and I actually got on quite well," Speer would tell me later. "In fact, in some ways I got on better with him than with Saur. At least he had no pretensions; he was what he was, a simple, rather primitive man. His family was rather nice; we went to see them once in Weimar—he had many children, and they were very nice. He was of course not up to this huge job; his experience had been political, not administrative or organizational. Thuringia, where he had been Gauleiter, was the province where Bormann had his political beginnings—hence his loyalty to Sauckel. If one wants to understand Hitler's Germany, one must never underrate the importance of the 'old fighters' in the scheme of things," he said. "In many ways they were not only Hitler's most faithful servants, but his emotional backbone too.

"Hitler was a chameleon, you know. He changed 'color'—i.e., personality, expression, behavior, above all his manner of speaking—depending on the group he was with, the place, the time of day . . . but it was almost always calculated. That was part of his genius, but also part of his need. He relaxed with only two kinds of people: his Berghof 'family' and the 'old fighters.' Of these, Sauckel was one of his favorites. In earlier days he often went to visit

him in Weimar, staying at the old Hotel Elephant which Sauckel had had specially renovated for him. In public Sauckel could be very angry, irascible, but in private he was actually quite pleasant. . . ."

I asked how he had felt when Sauckel was sentenced to death. "I don't know how to reply to that," he said, and then tried all the same to find an answer. "So many were sentenced to death, one's feelings were blurred, except that, yes, there was that awful, that shameful relief that it wasn't oneself."

"The time I felt really badly about him," he added after a few moments, "was earlier on, during the trial, when out of the blue he suddenly said to me one day that he was sorry about the difficulties we had had. I mumbled something about it having been Bormann who had created the difficulties, which was true but meaningless in the context of his friendly remark. And that's what I thought of first when I heard about his sentence: that he had said something generous to me, and that I had not known how to return the kindness."

His lack of response was another example of that "wall" between himself and others he had pointed out before, and confirmed here by those last sad words. In the "Spandau draft" he continued,

A little later [in 1942] a new problem arose when the Russian workers discovered that they were getting only a fraction of the salary paid to Germans. This was actually in consequence of a decision by Hitler and Goring long before workers were imported that, given the low living standards in the East, prices and salaries there were to be kept radically low after occupation, in order to reduce the cost of production there for us. At a conference which I attended with Sauckel, Goring did finally raise salaries for those of the Russians who came to Germany voluntarily, but even so, their salaries remained much lower than those of Germans.

Hitler, at dinner at his Rastenburg headquarters on May 4, 1942, had made the same point:

The integration of twenty million foreign workers at cheap rates into the German industrial system represents a saving which . . . is greatly in excess of the total debts contracted by the State. A simple calculation—which curiously enough seems to have escaped the notice of most of our economic experts—will show the correctness of this contention: the foreign worker earns approximately a thousand marks a year, compared to two thousand marks for a German worker. Work out what this comes to in toto, and you will see that the final gain is enormous.

Speer continued, in the "Spandau draft":

Of course all these initial mistakes were fatal to getting the Easterners to come voluntarily—though in my view that would have been impossible

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The demands for additional millions of slaves from the East came with increasing frequency. In the early spring of 1942, as has been shown, Sauckel was told to bring in two million men and "400,000-500,000 healthy girls." On March 17, 1943, in another letter to Reichsminister Rosenberg, he demanded another million men and women from the Eastern territories, to be delivered within four months. These requests for the dispatch to Germany of millions of slaves continued with increasing brutality until very late in the war—indeed, as will be shown, well beyond the point when most of the Army High Command, the industrialists and Speer knew perfectly well the war was lost.

The conditions under which these men and women who were forcibly brought to Germany worked is illustrated graphically by a list of regulations, issued as early as mid-1941 by the Minister for Finance and Economy for the state of Baden, titled "Directives on the Treatment of Foreign Farm Workers of Polish Nationality."

The workers, the document said, had no right to complain, leave their place of employment, use bicycles, attend churches, visit places of amusement or take part in any cultural activity, engage in sexual intercourse, use trains, buses or other public conveyances, or change employment for any reason whatever. There was to be no established limit to working hours, which were entirely at the employer's discretion. Workers were to be housed away from German households, "in stables, etc.," and "Every employer has the right to administer corporal punishment [other documents provide revoltingly precise descriptions on how] if persuasion and reprimands fail."

Sauckel's directions to housewives a year later about their employment of domestics from the East echoes these already established rulings: "Domestics do not have the right to request time off; if their work is satisfactory, they may leave the home for three hours once a week, until the onset of darkness; however, they are prohibited from entering restaurants, cinemas, or churches. The duration of their service is indefinite. . . ." For them, too, sexual intercourse was forbidden; an infringement of this order was punishable by transfer to a concentration camp.

Sauckel's report to Hitler on April 15, 1943, on the completion of one year as his Plenipotentiary for the Allocation of Labor, clearly denotes success: ". . . I can report that 3,638,056 new foreign workers were distributed to all sectors of the German war economy from April 1 of last year to March 31 of this year. . . . [Of these,] 1,568,801 were assigned to armament production. . . ."

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IN THE SPRING and early summer of 1942—with Western and much of Eastern Europe increasingly harnessed to Germany's plough, and Russia apparently well on the way to being "blitz-occupied" like the rest of Europe—hopes for an early victorious end to the war ran high in Germany. In his *Tabletalk* between April and July 1942, Hitler hardly mentions the war, and the newspapers of the Reich, as Speer writes in the "Spandau draft," reported the latest offensive in the East as if no further Russian resistance was to be expected.

General Fromm, with whom Speer was in the habit of lunching once a week in a private room at Horcher's restaurant, was not so optimistic. The only chance of still winning the war, he told Speer on one of those occasions in late April, was if Germany created a dramatic and uniquely effective new weapon. He was in touch, he said, with a group of scientists who were capable of producing something that could annihilate whole cities—possibly put the whole of the British Isles out of action. He proposed that Speer should come with him to see these men, who in fact were not under his or Speer's authority but that of the Ministry of Education, which had been keeping them on the tightest leash.

"You must understand," Speer said to me, "I knew next to nothing about science, and also I wasn't that interested. This was supposed to be part of Göring's job; technical things were more my thing. On the other hand, meeting these incredible people that day in May 1942 did suddenly make me aware of possibilities I hadn't even thought of before."

Speer's account in the "Spandau draft" of his feelings about the production of an atom bomb, and the actions he took after several meetings with the physicists of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, including the Nobel Prize winners Otto Hahn and Werner Heisenberg, is much terser and once again subtly different from the description he gives in his book. The change in emphasis demonstrates clearly the effect that freedom, and exposure to the feelings of young people in the world of the late 1960s, had on his thinking.

In Spandau he recalls being staggered by the first meeting with "these fantastic people," and although his account is very short, he was obviously determined to encourage and assist the physicists toward the production of an atom bomb.

Their group, Heisenberg told Speer, had been in the forefront of nuclear research after Hahn's discovery of nuclear fission in 1938, and some useful work had been done with the support of the military after the outbreak of war. But they had never received the total support required for such difficult and costly research and were therefore now no doubt far behind the Ameri-

cans, who were apparently devoting enormous resources to atomic research. Additionally, the scientists said quite openly, the Americans were profiting from the forced departure from Germany and the emigration to the United States of some of Germany's greatest scientific brains.

Replying to Speer's question as to what they would need in money, materials and additional staff in order to proceed, they said a few hundred thousand marks, some of the young scientists who had been drafted, some barracks and small amounts of restricted metals: steel, nickel, etc. Their first step would be to build a small cyclotron.

Speer, surprised by the modesty of their demands, said that as Minister of Armaments he could easily give them many times that, but Heisenberg replied that their research was too far behind to make greater resources useful at that point. They couldn't bypass the interim experiments which were essential in the approach to "the big one."

Hitler's knowledge of atomic science, Speer wrote, was limited to his disapproval of anything that appeared even remotely associated with Einstein, for whom he had conceived an irrational hatred. It was therefore Hitler's rejection of what he called "Jewish physics" which had led to the Ministry of Education's shortsighted suppression of support for the atomic scientists. Candidly admitting his wartime attitude, Speer wrote in Spandau in 1953,

Thanks to the insane hate of the leadership we allowed ourselves to lose a weapon of decisive importance. If, instead of backing the—in the final analysis—ineffective rockets with hundreds of millions, we had devoted them to supporting atom research from the start, it would have been more useful for the war.

As it was clear that no results could be expected for a long time even with the support he would now provide, he wrote, he carefully avoided telling Hitler about these fantastic possibilities. He knew only too well that once Hitler's enthusiasm was aroused, he would ignore all problems and, in almost total ignorance of the requirements of science, would blindly insist on immediate results. For the same reason Speer had tried for months—though unsuccessfully—to keep Hitler away from any personal contact with the other "miracle weapon," the rocket.

But as he needed support against the Ministry of Education, which had failed to stop the mobilization into active service of the valuable young scientists, he suggested to Göring (thereby flattering him into helping him get these young men exempted) that he should take the war-oriented development of science under his wing. "Of course, egocentric as he was, I couldn't tell him about the atom bomb any more than I could Hitler," he wrote, "but my suggestion did briefly get him out of his [lethargy] and he did in fact help

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of Education, which had he valuable young scien- m into helping him get e war-oriented develop- ric as he was, I couldn't Hitler," he wrote, "but and he did in fact help

me in getting several hundred young scientists released. Heisenberg and his team were delighted."

"It took me a long time before I got used to all this secrecy business," he told me. "Later it would become second nature, but during those first months it was difficult to know to whom it was safe to speak openly. I got on very well with Goebbels then and really for a long time afterwards, and I nearly blundered there. When I told him that in theory there was a possibility of miracle weapons, he wrote a lead article with a big headline, 'Miracle Weapons on the Way.' That taught me a lesson."

But with all this, Speer, in the "Spandau draft," leaves no doubt that, understanding perfectly well the potentially devastating military application, he was extremely eager to support the atomic research and, indeed, hoped against hope that the Americans would not be as successful as he suspected they were likely to be.

It is evident that in 1953, writing his "Spandau draft," he had no intention of denying this stand. Indeed, he demonstrates this by one of his little parenthetical side remarks to Wolters, which often assumed particular significance later. Here, writing that "the small cyclotron they succeeded in building is still in Heidelberg," he adds in brackets a remark he did *not* use in his book: "I do hope Heisenberg is not now claiming that they tried, for reasons of principle, to sabotage the project by asking for such minimal support!"

Heisenberg did in fact try precisely that after the war, when he told the Allies that he had had reservations about building a bomb, but the record shows that the facts were quite different. In a conversation in German-occupied Copenhagen in September 1941 with the Danish Nobel Prize-winning physicist Nils Bohr, which Bohr subsequently reported to his associates at the Nils Bohr Institute, Heisenberg had made his political stand crystal clear.

His team, he told Bohr, had gone some way toward discovering a way to produce an atom bomb. Germany was going to win the war, probably quite soon, and Bohr should join them now in their efforts.

Bohr was apparently staggered—it is not quite clear whether by the fact that a bomb was being discussed as a real possibility or because the *Germans* might be producing it. But he was a Danish patriot and also, quite aside from that, an anti-Nazi. Soon afterwards, he left occupied Denmark for Sweden and England, where he was welcomed at Cambridge. Heisenberg would claim later that Bohr had misunderstood him in 1941, that he had come to him to get his help in setting up an international front of physicists united against the production of an atom bomb. This discrepancy has been a matter of dissension among physicists for many years, most recently in Thomas Powers's book, *Heisenberg's War*. Powers accepted some of Heisenberg's claims which are now shown by Speer's Spandau account to be false.

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Bormann, he said, was "definitely the most dangerous of them all. He came to have quite unique power over Hitler's life. From very early on, 1935 I think, when he was on Hess's (Führer Deputy) staff, he very carefully administered Hitler's finances: his income from *Mein Kampf*, which was of course enormous, the buying and selling of land on the Obersalzberg and—a brilliant financial coup—the royalties Hitler received for the use of his picture on postage stamps.

"Hitler was punctilious about paying his way from his private funds. For instance, he paid his housekeeper and the rent for his Munich apartment, contributed to the domestic staff at the Berghof, and he paid for all the furniture in his private residence at the Reich Chancellery (*Reichskanzlei*). Of course, not for the state apartments later, but anything that was for him personally, he paid for."

That also applied to paintings he bought. Heinrich Heim, who on Bormann's orders took down most of Hitler's *Tabletalk*, and who was an expert in graphics and paintings, was sent on several art-buying trips to Italy and France, and it was well known that Hitler paid the bills. Heim confirmed this to me later, during several talks in Munich in 1985.

"Of course Bormann's power grew immeasurably after Hess's flight to England in 1941," said Speer. "Long before then, he had succeeded in virtually eliminating Hess from contact with Hitler, which was no doubt one of the reasons for his crazy trip. After he had gone, Bormann (who, incidentally, then behaved appallingly toward Hess's wife) very quickly, really within days, took over his functions and had himself appointed Führer Secretary, which meant that he was in charge of Hitler's environment and thereby really controlled his daily life. He was always with him or near him, the only one who was in such continuous and permanent contact."

That didn't mean that other people, including Speer, could not see Hitler privately. "In the final analysis," he said, "Hitler was his own man; Bormann's control—and power—only went as far as Hitler allowed it to go. Hitler trusted him implicitly but, although Bormann was always there, he had no personal relationship with him. He valued him immensely for his quite incredible diligence and as a totally loyal vassal, but always as a vassal. In all my years near Hitler, and the countless days and evenings on the Berghof, I don't think I ever heard Hitler make a private remark to him."

Possibly except for Göring, he said, who—until his physical deterioration and Bormann's manipulation of Hitler against him sharply reduced his influence—was indeed for many years the number-two man in Germany, all these political men who were closest to the power center, Hitler, functioned not as single entities but in groups.

The most powerful of these, as of the spring of 1942, was the trio of Bor-

mann, Lammers and Keitel. Bormann's power, quite aside from his proximity to Hitler, stemmed from his dominance of the party as head of the Party Chancellery, a position he had held since 1933; Lammers was head of the Reich Chancellery, thus the top bureaucrat in the government; and Keitel was a Field Marshal and Chief of Staff of the Wehrmacht. "They eventually closed a ring around Hitler," Speer said, "Bormann controlling access by the party, the 'old fighters' and the Gauleiter; Lammers by Ministers and other bureaucrats; and Keitel, of course, the military."

The one who, despite being close to Bormann, remained outside this, and essentially an independent force to the end, he said, was Himmler. "These relationships of the leading men can only be fully understood if one realizes that all of it was no more and no less than a battle for succession."

He never felt that Goebbels had this particular ambition. "He was without doubt the most intelligent of all these people," he said. "He was a university graduate, as one could clearly deduce from his vocabulary and his diction. Contrary to Göring, Himmler and Bormann, he had a facility for detachment from daily events. He was not egocentric either; nor was he a coward. He told Hitler his views, including when he felt the war was over, and Hitler always listened to him. He was, I think, a genius in propaganda, and I think one can say that he made Hitler as much as Hitler made him. His was a very complex personality—totally cold."

Speer didn't think Goebbels had any thought of succeeding Hitler. "Though in 1944," he said, "when essentially there was no hope left and he was probably the only one who continued to have ready access to Hitler, he did become very active both in political and military policy making. But one felt it was then *faute de mieux*, because he felt there wasn't anybody else to take it on."

All this made Goebbels sound rather benign, I said.

Speer smiled at that idea. "Yes, it is dangerous, isn't it, to say anything positive about people of that time? Because inevitably it sounds like admiration or approval. In retrospect, no, I don't think Goebbels was in the least benign; in the very worst part of Nazism—the measures against the Jews in Germany—he was the moving spirit. And he was 100 percent in agreement with Hitler's other ambitions. But I only learned to understand all this fully much later. At the time, and for quite a long time, Goebbels and I became allies, allies in understanding what most of the men around Hitler didn't—or didn't want to—understand: the forces which were ranged against us, the strength of Britain's commitment, the historical strength of the Russians at war, the industrial strength of the Americans and the absolute necessity for our committing ourselves to 'total war' if we were to have any chance at all.

"Bormann was Hitler's catastrophe," he said. "He understood nothing ex-

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Speer felt that not only Himmler. "He was of course and he came very close within a state."

When we spoke in the *venstaat* (in the United States the least successful book. It states within—perhaps different from the others, like Goebbels' whole concept that from the time of the Röhm Putsch SS, which he had adopted as a successor of the Führer of the Reich, Himmler, which is no doubt difficult because he did so in a significant and pedantic little way. He had remarkable qualities of long reflection before coming on the whole turned out to be that doesn't indicate an in-

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cept Hitler's magic and Hitler's power. And as we can see from Lenin-Stalin and I suppose also Hitler-Hess, diligent, devoted and ambitious Secretaries did become Deputies, and in Stalin's case, successors. Certainly, after Bormann had essentially eliminated Göring from power—or Göring had eliminated himself—he and Himmler were in the forefront, and for a long time they worked hard to maintain a cordial working relationship."

Neither Bormann nor Hitler, Speer said, had any understanding of the dynamics of foreign policy, or of the world, but "inner-politically" they were in charge.

Speer felt that nobody had really understood or adequately described Himmler. "He was of course in a way mad, but he was very, very effective and he came very close to achieving his aim, which was to set up a state within a state."

When we spoke in the summer of 1979 Speer had begun work on *Der Sklavenstaat* (in the United States titled *Infiltrations*) which was to be his last and least successful book. It dealt with Himmler's efforts to set up a parallel SS state within—perhaps even to replace—the Nazi government. Different from the others, like Göring or Bormann, Speer told me, Himmler had a whole concept that from the start, "and particularly," he specified, "from the time of the Röhm Putsch, was based on succession. The title Reichsführer SS, which he had adopted already in 1929, clearly predestined him as successor of the Führer of the Reich. It is difficult to characterize or really describe Himmler, which is no doubt why most writers have failed in the attempt. It is difficult because he did seem, as many of them have said, such a very insignificant and pedantic little man. But in fact, he was anything but 'little,' and he had remarkable qualities: the quality of patience to listen; the quality of long reflection before coming to decisions; a talent for selecting his staff, who on the whole turned out to be highly effective people. So you see, in the end that doesn't indicate an insignificant personality.

"There was, of course, that other side to him, which in the eyes of more sophisticated people—and there were those, you know—just made him ridiculous. But precisely because romantic mysticism appeals to the German character, this had an enormous effect and was very attractive, especially to simple minds and the already brainwashed young: his determination to emphasize the value of the race—of German stock; excavations he ordered all over Europe to find proof of old German cultures; anthropological research he funded in Japan and Tibet with the goal of discovering—or confirming—the Germanic origin of these admirable Asian nations."

But people were not fools, I said. How could anybody believe this nonsense?

"As history shows, many did. I myself knew very little about any of this,

until quite late. Essentially I think he will always remain something of a mystery. One explanation for his success might well be found in the very quality many people have mocked," he said. "He looked and talked like a schoolmaster, which is what his father was. And"—he smiled—"Germans like professors. When Himmler addressed his young disciples, we can be sure he didn't rant and rave; the enormities he said will have been pronounced firmly but quietly, in middle-class German—very effective. He was, of course, a very reserved, no, more than that, a very closed man, I gather, even to those close to him. There was little social contact between him and Hitler, or of course any of us. I think his secret was that he was a perhaps unique mixture of a clear-sighted realist, who knew exactly what he wanted and how to get it, but also to an extraordinary extent a 'dreamer'—of dreams which, as was after all horribly proved, *did* have an enormous appeal to Germans.*

"What affected me after I became Minister," Speer said, "were the practical aspects of Himmler, his determination to insert his SS into every area of German life, and his incredible success with this. As I said, he probably effectively started this after Hitler eliminated Röhm, in 1934, but he laid the foundations even before then. By the time I became really aware of him, he appeared to have on his staff a well-trained man for every single field of activity, by no means only areas commonly associated with the SS. What it came to mean was that wherever there was a gap, Himmler had a man ready to fill it. His aim, quite clearly, was to have available a leader generation whose talents and training could be applied—universally."

Historically, he said, the mistake has been to think of Himmler's "apparatus" in terms of a series of organizations—the SS, Waffen SS, the Police or SD, the Gestapo and so on. "That wasn't it at all," he said. "There was only one structure which embraced all of it, and that was the SS, to which everything else was subordinated and which thus controlled it all. Interestingly, while all this involved hundreds of thousands of people, very few of them became known as individuals; it was as if his own bent for anonymity was impressed or imposed on them."

One of Himmler's closest associates, he said, was his childhood friend orthopedic surgeon Dr. Karl Gebhardt, Gruppenführer in the SS and head of Hohenlychen, a hospital where this eminent physician conducted particularly atrocious human-guinea-pig experiments on concentration camp prisoners (the specific crime for which he was hanged in 1947) and where Speer—convinced that Gebhardt had been told to kill him—nearly died in 1944.

Himmler's closest aide was his personal assistant, Gruppenführer Rudolf

*The German word he used for "dreamer" was the disparaging *Phantast*.

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Brandt (not to be confused with Hitler's doctor and Speer's friend, Karl Brandt). His principal liaison officer with Hitler (at times also with Speer) was his Chief of Staff, Obergruppenführer Karl Wolff, who after a short stay in prison lived happily in a charming house in Bavaria overlooking Lake Starnberg until he died in 1984.

Speer certainly knew, but chose neither to speak nor more than marginally write about, the man Himmler considered for many years his own Crown Prince. Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, arguably the darkest personality on the Nazi firmament, was certainly a very talented man, whose ambition it was, without any doubt, one day to follow in the steps of or to supplant his chief.

Blond, handsome, vain and ragingly ambitious, he was, paradoxically, a fine musician, a champion skier and fencer, a fearless pilot and an outstanding organizer. At the same time, though married, and by all accounts devoted to his children, he was a virtually friendless loner. In 1931, when he was twenty-seven, Himmler named him Chief of the SD (Security Service); by 1934, his SD had become established as the party's Intelligence Service. By 1939, now chief of RSHA (Reich Security Main Office) which also encompassed the Criminal Police (*Kriminalpolizei*, or *Kripo*) and Gestapo, Heydrich was probably the most dangerous man in Germany, intensely feared by the few who knew him, or knew of him.

(Judith Holzmeister, beautiful daughter of one of Austria's finest architects, was an immensely talented student at the Reinhardt-Seminar in Vienna when the Germans marched into Austria in 1938, and became one of the finest actresses on the German-speaking stage. She came home that fateful night of March 11, 1938, to find her one-year-old brother listening to the Chancellor, Kurt von Schuschnigg.

"Except for the radio, the flat was all dark," she told me in Vienna, when we were exchanging memories of that day fifty years later. "My mother was in Paris, my father in Turkey [where he would remain]. I didn't turn a light on either, just stood next to my brother as we heard Schuschnigg say his goodbye in that heavy voice—'May God protect Austria.' We knew in that second that our life was torn apart—that the future was empty."

She had been in love for several years with a young communist. "So you see, I knew what the Nazis were; he'd taught me. I had no illusions." Her friend had fled Austria that very day but was sent back in 1941 on a mission. "They caught him," she said. "He was beheaded."

Judith went back to school when it reopened a few days after the Anschluss, but otherwise stayed home until one night an actress friend persuaded her to come out to dinner with her and a "nice young German" she had met. "She said he was going to bring a friend."

nothing of a mystic in the very quality of his mind. He looked like a schoolboy. Germans like people who can be sure he has been pronounced guilty. He was, of course, a man, I gather, even when he and Hitler, as a perhaps unique case, wanted and how he dreamed of and how he appealed to Germans."

Himmler's "apparatus" of the SS, the Police or the Gestapo. "There was only the SS, to which everything was referred. Interestingly, very few of them were for anonymity was

his childhood friend or in the SS and head of the SS conducted participation in the concentration camp prison (in 1947) and where he killed him—nearly died in

Gruppenführer Rudolf

The two German officers the girls dined with that night were pleasant enough, both exceptionally handsome and—especially the one Judith mostly danced with—knowledgeable about music and theater, the main subject of conversation until the end of the evening.

And what did she think about the Anschluss? he asked her, smilingly, when he drove her home. "You may be a perfectly nice man," she said, "but I think the Nazis are bandits who have no business stealing other people's countries, and your Brownshirts are disgusting brutes."

He roared with laughter. "Well, we'll have to change your mind about that, won't we?" he said.

Unexpectedly, her mother had returned from Paris that evening, and she and Judith's brother were waiting up for her. They listened to her account of the outing and that final exchange with the handsome young officer. What was his name? her mother asked. "Reinhard Heydrich," she replied. "Oh, my God!" said her evidently well-informed mother.)

IN 1941, HIMMLER, eager to put some distance between his ambitious subordinate and the center of power in Berlin, got Hitler to name Heydrich Reich Protector of Bohemia-Moravia (Czechoslovakia), replacing the ineffectual diplomat Konstantin von Neurath (later the oldest prisoner at Spandau).

Heydrich's brief governorship, during which he managed to persuade a surprisingly large number of Czechs to cooperate with him, was triumphantly successful. Indeed, so much so that on May 27, 1942, two young Czechs were sent from London to assassinate him. They fired at him and threw a grenade into his open Mercedes as he drove the twenty kilometers from his residence, the castle of Jungfern-Breschan, to his Prague office in the Hradcin Palace. Although Himmler brought Hitler's doctors, Brandt and Morell, and his friend Gebhardt to Prague to look after him, gangrene set in and Heydrich died a week later. The revenge followed swiftly. On June 9, the SS surrounded the village of Lidice, on the pretext that it had provided refuge for the assassins, and it was razed; 199 adult males were shot; 191 women were sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp, where 50 of them were to die; and the village's 98 children were deported to Germany, where only 25 survived.

But this atrocity was not Heydrich's most terrible legacy to this century. For it is Heydrich, allegedly part Jewish himself* and fanatically anti-Semitic, who is credited with the concept of the extermination camps, and in particular the creation of the Sonderkommandos, groups of strong young Jews who

*Heydrich allegedly ordered his birth records removed from the Halle registry, and erected a new tombstone in Leipzig for his maternal grandmother, omitting the name Sarah.

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on arrival in the killing centers were temporarily kept alive to clean, sort the victims' possessions, burn the corpses, bury the ashes and efface the traces until, burnt out or at the Germans' whim, they too were gassed. Heydrich boasted that he had drawn the idea from his study of Egyptian history, where a similar necessity to preserve the secrets of the tombs of the Pharaohs found the same solution: the immediate death of all those who had built them.*

On January 20, 1942, Heydrich chaired the Wannsee Conference in Berlin, the intra-ministerial meeting at which the organizational and bureaucratic details of the Final Solution were agreed. In June, a few weeks after his death, Himmler named the organization in occupied Poland, which administered the four extermination camps in which two and a half million Jews were to be gassed over the subsequent sixteen months, the Aktion Reinhard in his honor.

Heydrich's nephew and godson Thomas, a well-known cabaret artist who sings and recites, mostly from works by Jewish poets, was eleven years old when his father's much-loved older brother was killed. "I was very angry because at that time I was of course a passionate Pimpf [junior Hitler Youth]," he told me, when I met him in 1990 at the same group meeting where I met Martin Bormann. "He was a hero to us; we didn't know anything about politics, we only knew that he was a fantastic sportsman. And of course he was always in the papers, standing next to our idol, the Führer. I was sad because I knew my father would be very unhappy. My uncle was a very good, tender father," he said, thoughtfully. "It's almost a cliché now, isn't it, about these appalling men? But that doesn't make it any less true. One just doesn't like to think of it. Can you imagine? 'Tender?' " He repeated the word bitterly.



Thomas Heydrich's family lived on the exclusive Prinzregentenstrasse in Berlin when he was small. The large house next door—"It had lovely big steps on which I played as a child"—belonged to Jews. "It was burned down during the Kristallnacht," he says. "I watched furniture being thrown out of a window, including a piano—imagine, a piano! I remember wondering why anybody would do this rather than calling the fire brigade. I mean, our family was musical, and I knew those neighbors were too. I asked, but was told to hush."

Very shortly after that, he noticed placards on shops and park benches: *Juden Verboten* (Jews Forbidden). Again Thomas was told off when he asked questions. He despises the Nazi generation of Germans who insisted, to the end of their lives, that they knew nothing, saw nothing and even suspected nothing reprehensible during the Nazi time.

"I saw all this, and everybody else did too. They are all liars," he said, "a

*One of Heydrich's intelligence officers, Wilhelm Höttl (writing under the name Walter Hagen), tells this story in his memoirs, *Die Geheime Front*.

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generation of liars." He thinks his father, who was a journalist, began to have doubts in 1941. "He suddenly asked for a posting to the Eastern front as a private in an army information unit," he said. "He was by nature a very happy, jolly sort of man. I adored him. Every time he came home on leave after this, he was more depressed. My mother often asked why he was so sad, and he would invariably answer, 'We'll talk about it after the war.'"

Thomas thinks his father only found out the worst things his uncle had been responsible for after Reinhard Heydrich's assassination.

"There is a photograph of my father at my uncle's state funeral in June 1942, standing in his sergeant's uniform between Hitler and Göring. Later that day an officer came, bringing my father a thick letter from my uncle that had been found in his safe. He took it and went to his study. Hours later he came out, ashen-faced, with this sheaf of pages.

"He went into the kitchen, which still had an old wood stove, and burned them one by one, very slowly, almost like a ceremony. There must have been a hundred pages. We all stood there watching, and at the end, when he looked as if he was about to drop and my mother put her arms around him and asked him what was in the letter, he said, 'Don't ever ask. I can't talk about it, ever—not until it's all over.'"

Thomas feels sure that in the letter his uncle explained to his father everything he was planning and offered justification for everything he had done. Thomas's conviction stems from the fact that his father became as of then an active anti-Nazi, using the printing facilities available to him to produce passports and other papers to spirit people—most of them Jews—out of Germany. In late 1944, believing himself discovered, he wrote a goodbye letter to his family and shot himself.

The family never learned about his father's anti-Nazi activities until after the war, when a man who had worked with him told them. "We never knew whether he'd really been discovered," Thomas said, "but a prosecutor had come that evening and they'd spent all night in his study, talking. Soon after the man left, he killed himself." A trade-off, Thomas thinks: the suicide and the family's safety, rather than a scandalous treason trial of Reinhard Heydrich's brother.

Very similar to the young Martin Bormann, a few weeks after the end of the war Thomas read what had been done and saw the photographs. As of that moment "and forever," he says, he carried his family's guilt. "I was, if you like, deputizing for all the others," he said, "my aunt, who, inconceivable as it is, felt proud of her husband; his three children, who, incomprehensibly to me, claim to feel nothing; my mother, who, having always instinctively disliked my uncle, was able to hide comfortably behind that early rejection.

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with the subject, a droplet of it was invariably followed by a convincing rationale for them. In the case of Speer's trial at Nuremberg, none of his statements about slave labor might have been expected—no much of the judicial preparation by Hartley Shawcross, nor the tough questioning of Speer either on what he said in his testimony or what was produced in evidence. We know that he was aware of the evacuation to Nuremberg there was this one moment of knowledge of the intention to remove Jews out of the country, as quoted in the question of the Jewish problem as it followed. In the months of presentation of prosecution afterwards to their defense counsel, present throughout, referred to as

when the Americans, without prior knowledge of concentration camps as the U.S. Army and Navy defendants had cried after all films made by the Allies were shown. Every single one said they had known nothing about it with Dr. G. M. Gilbert, the

American psychiatrist, shortly after the session ended, said only that what he had seen confirmed his belief that the Nuremberg trials were essential.

The second "black day" was February 19, when it was the Russians' turn to show a documentary, this time of atrocities in the East. Dr. Gilbert described it as showing "acres of corpses of Russian POWs murdered or left to starve; the torture instruments, mutilated bodies, guillotines, and baskets full of heads; bodies hanging from lampposts . . . the ruins of Lidice; raped and murdered women, children with heads bashed in; the crematoria and gas chambers; the piles of clothes, the bales of women's hair at Auschwitz and Majdanek."

Göring, refusing to watch, pretended to read throughout the showing; Frank, who had been in on the planning of atrocities in Poland from the start, appeared distraught and blamed it all on Hitler and Himmler; Hans Fritzsche, a middle-rank official at the Propaganda Ministry, who was only in court because the Russians caught him and who would eventually be one of only two defendants to be acquitted, was devastated by the American film and again by the Russian one. Also talking to psychiatrist Dr. Gilbert, he said, "I have . . . the feeling . . . I am drowning in filth. . . I'm choking in it . . . I cannot go on . . . it is a daily execution."

The third "black day" for the defendants was eight days later, on February 27, when Soviet Chief Counselor L. N. Smirnov questioned three survivors of the Nazi genocide.

The first was a survivor of the Vilna ghetto, where two SS actions, the first in the summer of 1941, the second in 1943, had killed all of this beautiful Lithuanian city's eighty thousand Jews, except six hundred of the strongest who survived in the sewers. He told the court how all babies, including his own, were killed at birth. It was always the children survivors talked about first.

The second witness, a Russian woman slave worker, though pregnant on arrival, had survived Auschwitz. She described the treatment women and children received there: babies born in camp, she said, were taken away immediately and never seen again. "In the name of all the women of Europe who became mothers in concentration camps—" she suddenly cried out, all movement in the courtroom stopping dead. "Tell us, you German mothers, where are our children now?"

Then Samuel Rajzman was called to give testimony about Treblinka, the biggest of the four extermination camps in occupied Poland. He was one of fewer than sixty people to survive this camp where more than a million men, women and children were gassed. Twenty-five years later, when I was preparing my book *Into That Darkness*, I went to see him in Montreal, where he had settled. He was a reserved and quiet man, not given to exaggeration or to externalizing his feelings—except when talking about his child, a small daughter.

ter who was killed. When he told me how that happened, how he and his wife, also subsequently gassed at Treblinka, tried to save the child and some others the day she was taken with other young children as they played in the street, and how they eventually failed, he cried. "Ever since," he said, "I cannot bear to look at any child, especially German children. I know that is wrong in me; it is not their fault, but when I was in Germany to testify, every time I saw a little girl, I thought of mine. . . ."

The tenor of the questions he was asked that day in court showed how shamefully little this court, assembled there to judge the Nazis' crimes, knew about this—the worst of all of them. He described how men, women and children, separated by sexes, had had to undress after arrival at Treblinka, and how women had to have their hair shaved off "before they went to the gas chambers."

"Why was their hair cut off?" he was asked.

"According to the ideas of the masters," Rajzman replied, "this hair was to be used in the manufacture of mattresses for German women."

The whole process between beginning to undress and walking to the gas chamber, he said, lasted eight to ten minutes for the men, and, because of the haircutting, a little longer—about fifteen minutes—for the women.

Lord Justice Lawrence, the president of the tribunal, was obviously staggered by this—as a lawyer, thinking literally, he appeared unable to believe it, his skepticism emerging clearly in the tone of his question. "Do you mean that there were only ten minutes between the time when they were taken out of the trucks and the time when they were put into the gas chambers?" he asked.

"As far as men were concerned, I am sure [the process] did not last longer than ten minutes," Rajzman answered.

"Please tell us, witness," asked the Soviet prosecuting counsel, "were the people brought to Treblinka in trucks or in trains?"

"They were nearly always brought in trains," replied Rajzman. "Only the Jews from neighboring villages and hamlets were brought in trucks. The trucks bore inscriptions, *Spedition* [Shipping or Transport] *Speer*."

This was a most startling testimony to come upon when studying the Nuremberg transcripts after Speer's death—it is the only mention of his name in association with the extermination process in Poland.

Knowing Rajzman, it was impossible to doubt his words; moreover, they were so specific that no error in transcription or translation could account for them. Many months later in my research, I came upon some documents in the U.S. National Archives which provided some explanation. These were transcripts of pretrial examinations of Speer by members of the U.S. prosecution in Nuremberg. During one session the interrogator raised the subject

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of the "Legion Speer," and Speer explained that it was part of the Transport Corps of the Organization Todt.

In the course of the trial, in connection with quite different matters, Speer had in fact told the court that trucks from his Organization Todt had "operated in the East under my ministry's authority."

The answer to this riddle therefore appears to be that such trucks were indeed sometimes used for the terrible purpose Rajzman had described, though the logo may have been *Legion Speer* rather than what Rajzman remembered, *Spedition Speer*. This said, there is no reason to think that Speer would or indeed could have had any knowledge of every use the huge arsenal of transport operating under the aegis of his ministry was put to.

But the court simply bypassed the problem. It seems almost inconceivable, but not a single member of that Nuremberg court picked up this mention of a defendant's name by a dignified prosecution witness. No one asked a question of Rajzman or of Speer, or asked that it should be further investigated, or commented on it in any way.

DESCRIPTIONS of Hitler's genocide of the Jews abound; one is therefore reluctant to add to this wealth of accounts. And yet, the apparent void in Speer's consciousness of the violence that was being enacted upon the conquered people of the East, apart from his constant awareness of the gas-sings in Poland, can only be evaluated in the context of the developing events.

By the beginning of winter 1942, Europe had become an ocean of death. Already Barbarossa had cost the German army 371,000 dead and (according to a Russian document found by the advancing Germans) the Soviets more than 11 million dead, injured and missing.

A few months later, Stalingrad was to demand the lives of another 200,000 German soldiers. In addition, of the 91,000 prisoners taken there by the Soviets, fewer than 6,000 would eventually return to Germany, years after the war was over. But the toll among Soviet prisoners of war in German hands was even worse. By mid-year 1942, 3 million Russian POWs, out of the 4 million the Germans had captured in 1941, had died of exposure and starvation in atrocious open compounds.

And then, of course, there were the "civilians" who had come into Nazi hands in the East. According to the Nazis' own figures (Heydrich's statistics and the reports of the Einsatzgruppen commanders), about a million Soviet Jews and non-Jews, including hundreds of thousands of Balts, had been shot by the end of 1941. Ten months later, by the onset of winter 1942, an additional 14,257 Soviet "partisans" and 363,211 Soviet Jews were reported as hav-

ing been subjected to Sonderbehandlung—special treatment, that is, killed—in Russia.

In December 1941, the gassing operations were started in Chelmno (Kulmhof), the first of the four extermination centers of the Aktion Reinhard which the Nazis set up within the subsequent five months in isolated localities in occupied Poland, for the sole purpose of killing the Jews of Europe. The killing of 100,000 Jews in gas vans there (which had previously been used for killing comparatively small numbers of Jewish Serbs) showed insurmountable difficulties when applied to large numbers. One alternative method, gas chambers using diesel exhaust fumes for the killing, was chosen for the other three planned extermination camps of the Aktion Reinhard. The use of Zyklon B cyanide gas was a parallel technique, used only later in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, and on a limited scale in Majdanek, both of which were primarily labor camps, with added extermination facilities.

By the end of October 1942, when Chelmno had been closed, these three Aktion Reinhard installations, all within a 150-kilometer radius of Lublin (Belzec as of March; Sobibor as of May; and Treblinka, the largest, as of June), had already eliminated with terrifying efficiency nearly three-quarters of a million men, women and children. By Christmas, it would be more than a million.

This assembly-line genocide—primarily of the Jews*—was a unique phenomenon in the world's history of cruelty and violence, even within the Nazis' monstrous overall program for murder. The huge losses in human lives from many other causes on both sides were terrible, but somehow conventional. The gas chambers remain unique, an unbearable memory of what human beings can do to other human beings.

The enormous historical, literary and dramatic material produced over nearly half a century about the Final Solution has created a kind of resistance. But it would be perilous if we allowed this "compassion fatigue" to make us forget the singularity of this horror. As all surviving reports demonstrate, and Himmler confirmed in some of his terrible speeches late in the war, two-thirds of the victims were women and children. That, probably more than anything else, is the origin of the Germans—and Speer's—"moral sore" I spoke of in an earlier chapter, and the essence of the trauma, not only for Jews and Germans, but for us all. It is equally important to record, however, that it was at least in part the fervor of West Germany's reaction to this horror after the war which restored morality and gave rise to the renaissance of

*It must not be forgotten that the same methods were applied to one other group of men, women and children from both Western and Eastern Europe: two hundred thousand Gypsies, or Romanies, who died in the same concentration and extermination camps as the Jews, but in whose memory only a few voices have been raised.

civic responsibility in democracies in Europe for the persecution of the Jews.

In spite of this, for almost fifty years we have considered the gassing process of the Jews in Russia by shooting as separate and including most Jews identified with those in Auschwitz between one and two territories has been, rather than not, these wars," an extraordinary hands of the political goals of the chamber murders themselves driven to exist.

Various arguments have been put forward to neo-Nazi thinking of how the Jews did not have been in Aktion Reinhard in Poland. In short time they tried to destroy and force could hardly achieve.

But what finally has so often led to Russian extermination of a million once persecuted people the Nazis.

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civic responsibility, establishing West Germany as one of the most stable de-
mocracies in Europe and, for well over forty years, as the world's leading ref-
uge for the persecuted and the poor.

In spite of these positive reactions, there has been an extraordinary failure
for almost fifty years now, both in Germany and in the rest of the world, to
consider the genocide of European Jewry in its whole context. By some curi-
ous process of psychological selectivity, the two huge acts of mass murder, in
Russia by shooting and in Poland by gassing, until recently have been treated
as separate and different phenomena. As a result, for most of the world, in-
cluding most Jews, the term "Final Solution" has mainly or entirely been
identified with the gas chambers in occupied Poland or, even more narrowly,
those in Auschwitz. For almost half a century, the murder by shooting of be-
tween one and a half million and two million Jews in the occupied Soviet
territories has somehow been treated differently. Grotesquely, more often
than not, these murders by shooting have been neatly classified as "acts of
war," an extraordinary misconstruction of history which plays straight into
the hands of the so-called revisionists, who in the pursuit of their nationalist
political goals must somehow whitewash Hitler. Realizing that the gas-
chamber murders have made him historically unacceptable, they find them-
selves driven to pretend these never happened, that the gas chambers never
existed.

Various arguments about the number of Jewish dead, by no means re-
stricted to neo-Nazis or revisionists, stem primarily from a misunderstanding
of how the figure was arrived at. True enough, six million people could
not have been gassed in the six extermination camps (four of the Aktion
Reinhard in Poland, plus Auschwitz and Majdanek) in the comparatively
short time they existed. Even adding those who died in Germany's concen-
tration and forced labor camps, from epidemics, overwork and starvation,
could hardly achieve that number.

But what finally explains—or approximates—this six million figure,
which has so often been strenuously denied or doubted (and which, accord-
ing to Russian experts, may have to be increased by as much as an additional
million once precise Russian figures become available), is the huge number
of people the Nazis shot in Russia and the Baltics.

ACCORDING to the report titled "The Final Solution of the
European Jewish Question," submitted to Himmler on March 23, 1943, by
Richard Korherr, his Inspector for Statistics, there were, in 1939, 10,500,000
Jews on the European Continent. Of these, 4,600,000 lived in the Soviet
Union and 3,300,000 in Poland. In the preface to his sixteen-page analysis, a

LEIBBRANDT: Impossible.

KEMPNER: Don't you still get cold shudders running down your spine when you think back on this conference? Were you appalled or not?

LEIBBRANDT: . . . You can say I was.

KEMPNER: . . . Did you tell anyone of your shock?

LEIBBRANDT: I told the Minister [Rosenberg] at the first opportunity that I didn't agree with this madness and that the proposals . . . were totally unacceptable.

KEMPNER: Then why didn't you want to recall the conference? Did you want to block it from your mind? . . . You are an intelligent man: reflect back on the discussion, the plan for murder, and the men you talked with. . . . Not one of you stood up and said "Here I am; I can't agree to this." Am I right? [Leibbrandt remained silent.]

Not long afterwards, on March 11, 1947, Friedrich Kritzinger, less restrained or more courageous, provided Kempner with detailed information on the conference. He died a few months later.

We know from Goebbels's diary entry on March 27, 1942, that at least by then, if not before (he gives no precise indication of when their relevant meeting had taken place), Hitler had informed him of the Aktion Reinhard's brief in Poland. He demonstrates here not only his own complete knowledge, as of then, of the genocide of the Jews, but Hitler's responsibility for this "radical solution."

Beginning with Lublin [he wrote], the Jews are now being removed from the General Government, to the East. . . . [By "East" he means the short distance between Lublin, the headquarters of the Aktion Reinhard, and the camps a few dozen kilometers "east" of the city for which the transports were destined—Treblinka, Sobibor and Belzec.] The procedure employed here, not to be described [on paper], is pretty barbaric; there won't be much left of the Jews. In general one can say that only 40 percent can be put to work; 60 percent of them will have to be liquidated. The former Gauleiter of Vienna (Odilo Globocnik), who is carrying out this action, is doing his best to make the procedure as inconspicuous as possible. The punishment the Jews are being subjected to, though barbaric, is entirely deserved. The Führer's prophecy [of September 1939] is being realized in the most dreadful way. One can't allow oneself to be ruled by sentimentality in these things. If we didn't act against them, the Jews would destroy us.

No other government, and no other regime, was able to solve this problem. Again it is the Führer who is the pioneer and constant champion of a radical solution now made possible by circumstances and thus inevitable. Thank God the war offers us possibilities which would have been barred to us in peacetime. These we must now use. As the ghettos of the General

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My warm thanks, July 28. I was especial night there has been

me," he continued. "You know, it was very, very dangerous knowledge for Germans. . . . As Gerstein told me himself later, he did talk about it. But those he spoke to in Berlin were mostly, or perhaps entirely, members of Christian groups he had always been in touch with. You ask about Speer: I have to say that unless Speer shared the very special commitment of that very special group—and I cannot believe he would have—no, I don't think he could have heard about Gerstein. For them, you see, Speer would have been"—he shook his head—"exceptionally dangerous."

Gerstein's life is perhaps the most significant testimonial to the presence of moral convictions and heroism in the midst of the Nazi monstrosities. It is almost impossible to convey the complexity of his personality, or the conflicts which bedeviled him—conflicts between his love of his country (which led him to become a member of the Nazi Party in 1933) and his passionate Christian ethics which, when he heard rumors of monstrous, officially condoned crimes—euthanasia—finally induced him in 1940 to apply to join the SS to try to find out the truth. Amazingly, although he had twice been arrested for anti-Nazi statements and spent short periods in concentration camps, he was immediately accepted. Thereby (as the Protestant Pastor Otto Wehr, a friend of his for many years, would testify in 1949 at the Doctors' Trials in Nuremberg) he entered "the realm of the demon."

As Speer had said when he was telling me about joining the party, the Nazis desperately needed university graduates to join their ranks. Thanks to Gerstein's degrees in engineering, mining and medicine, he rose swiftly in the hierarchy and, in January 1942, was put in charge of the SS Sanitation Service, which included the control and distribution of poisonous substances "for hygienic purposes."

In this capacity this devout Christian, then thirty-seven, whose only motivation in joining the SS was to discover and eventually reveal its members' crimes, found himself drawn into the very heart of the crimes. He was entrusted with Nazi Germany's darkest secret in 1942 in Lublin, where he had been ordered to deliver one hundred kilograms of Zyklon B, which had become the favored means of gassing in Auschwitz and Majdanek. (He promptly sabotaged the shipment and declared it defective, as he did repeatedly over the subsequent years.) He was also taken to see gassing actions in two other camps, Belzec and Treblinka, where the killing was done not by Zyklon B but by diesel fumes from old tank engines.

The next day, August 21, 1942, in the corridor of the overcrowded night express train to Berlin, Gerstein met the tall young Swedish diplomat. Otter had been in Warsaw to visit four Swedish businessmen, who had been imprisoned by the Germans for acting as couriers for the Polish resistance. Like

Gerstein, he had no sitting on his suitcase:

"The train left Warsaw. Paris. "I noticed that looked very nervous; him; it was obvious extraordinary." He snatched feather in my cap if

Less than an hour both got down to get immediately whispered come and see you at conductor who I was:

"I said, 'Why not back on he said, 'I saw a reaction was to see more than ten thousand

Otter said that it told Jews were being man military source satzgruppen at work said, had tried to put such attempts frustrated said, "It must have been

Back on the train, words tumbled out After a while, he became

Later, after Gerstein watched thousands told Otter that it was Wannsee.

Otter had not known Gerstein hadn't attended before this, I had asked identity card, some papers signs, and he drew a

They talked for an hour to do was to get word he thought, drop leaflets people knew what was

* Possible title

von Neurath, Hess was the only one I would have hoped to see again, later. I said this to him once and he answered, very wisely, 'I don't think so. Outside we would fight.' "

Over the four years I knew Speer, it was always he who brought up the subject of the Jews. In our original conversations, when the purpose was to look at all of his life, it came up often enough, but as I've said, I was determined to put off the full confrontation with it he seemed continually to seek until near the end of our three weeks together. In our many talks after that, however, I never sought to avoid it, and he brought it up time and again, on one pretext or another such as when talking about Hess.

Neither Hess nor he, he said, had been what he would call "conscious anti-Semites." He laughed briefly, mocking himself. "I suppose both of us would have considered that *infra dig.*" But both of them, he said, however aware or unaware, had grown up in a society riddled with anti-Semitism. "It was simply *there*," he said, "even where, like, God knows, in my family, it was never overt. Indeed, I don't think my father ever had such feelings. As you know, as boys we had a governess who was Jewish. Later I vaguely recalled remarks against Jews owning this or running that, and I suppose that—just like Hess—I was preconditioned to the anti-Semitic rantings in Hitler's earlier speeches. True enough, I became immune to what was gross or violent in them; I suppose because I didn't want to see him that way. But even so, nothing I ever heard him say made me think, even for one moment, that he had any intention of *killing* them. Killing," he repeated, with awe in his voice, "that was unthinkable. Now we know that he ordered this to happen, first in Russia, then in Poland. I don't suppose he had much to do with the technical aspects, but even the *decision* to proceed from shooting to gas chambers would have been his, for the simple reason, as I know only too well, that no major decisions could be made about *anything* without his approval."

* Summing up, he said once more that Hitler's anti-Semitism in the early years, directed against the disproportionate influence of Jews on Germany's economic and cultural life, even though "discomfiting when it became shrill," was at least politically or propagandistically "understandable. But if you are asking me what it was in Hitler that could issue such an order for the murder of a people, then I can only tell you again, I don't know, and I'm quite convinced that no one else understands it either."

Annemarie Kempf said, on one of the many occasions that we discussed this subject, "I, of course, have come to believe that human beings can be taken over by evil spirits." She smiled, almost apologetically. "It isn't the sort of thing you could say to Speer. Although I think that is the only explanation for Hitler, in a way I too resist it. Because if, in one's inability to understand otherwise, one says that Hitler, who after all started out by doing wonderful

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things for us, must have been taken over by the devil or whatever, then in a way one frees him of responsibility. One sets up a basis for compassion, and that has to be wrong. He has to have been responsible for what he did, just as we were responsible for what we failed to do, even if, closing our eyes to it, we did not 'consciously know' what it was."

It is this "conscious knowledge" I sought in Speer. And I have become convinced that in 1942, even though thousands of German soldiers by now knew something of the murders of Jews and non-Jews in Russia, and even though a number of men working closely with him knew what was being done, first in Russia and then in Poland, Speer was not yet "consciously aware" of Hitler's genocide of the Jews.

WHAT ALMOST entirely occupied Speer's thoughts as the spring and summer of 1942—the hottest in Europe in living memory—ended and the cold autumn inexorably turned into icy winter and Stalingrad loomed was how to increase war production to replace the prodigious losses the German army soon began to suffer in the East.

November 1942 was the real beginning of the end of Hitler's war: first Rommel's defeat at El Alamein, then the Allied landings in North Africa and then, on November 19, the launch of the Soviets' huge winter offensive, incomprehensibly entirely unexpected by Hitler who, rejecting all advice from the General Staff which didn't agree with his opinions—or his wish-dreams—had put himself by then virtually entirely in command of the army.

But did the generals not see what was coming? I asked Speer. And moreover, what about him? He was by now close to many officers on the General Staff and at the same time close to Hitler. Could he not have made him aware of the realities of this desperate situation?

"The central problem," he said, "was between Hitler and the generals. Except for Keitel, who was 'his' man and only told him what he wanted to hear, and Jodl, whose activities were soon severely curtailed precisely because he showed some independence of thought, he accepted information but never tactical advice, and was increasingly surrounded by what I came to call *Nickel* [nodding donkeys]."

As of late November 1942, these yes-men, Speer said, were increasingly the only ones permitted into Hitler's presence by the three men who virtually took charge of his life: Bormann, as Secretary of the Führer, thus virtually his deputy; Keitel, whom he had named Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces; and Lammers, Reichsminister and Chief of the Reich Chancellery, administratively in charge of domestic political affairs.

"As military production was of course at the top of Hitler's priorities,"

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D.T. Speer said, "I continued to have access to him and in fact, except when I was away, saw him at least twice a week, and often daily when he was in Berlin or we were both on the Berghof. But as of that November he became a changed man. He was never the apoplectic personality people later invented for him; all that nonsense about carpet-biting—a silly American invention. Until that awful winter of 1942, I had rarely heard him rage, or even raise his voice in arguments. In fact, he was most dangerous when his voice was softest. But now, visibly exhausted, his body bent over with fatigue and his voice hoarse, his anger and bitterness toward the generals became quite awful, and it was all he would talk about, in that awful rasping voice. Everything was their fault; it was they who had betrayed him, lied to him. (Kurt) Zeitzler, one of the best Chiefs of Staff the army had, tried desperately time after time to get him to see the true catastrophe of Stalingrad, and the need to allow [Field Marshal Friedrich] Paulus and his two-hundred-thousand-strong Sixth Army to retreat westward, to abandon their heavy armaments and to dig in at defensible positions where we could drop supplies and send in reinforcements. He virtually accused him of cowardice. Stalingrad, he decreed, even when the city was totally encircled and the troops nearly out of food and munition, had to be held. Zeitzler, in protest, cut his own food rations to the same level as the Stalingrad troops, and within two weeks had lost twelve kilos, more than twenty-five pounds. Hitler, informed by Bormann, ordered him to return to a normal diet, but banned the serving of champagne and brandy at HQ "in honor of the heroes of Stalingrad."

Speer wrote about this period in Spandau:

* D.T. Crucial to our purpose,
Just before the time when the situation in Stalingrad became completely hopeless, thinking some music might help to clear my brain, I accompanied my wife, who like everybody else still suspected nothing untoward in the Eastern war, to a performance of *The Magic Flute* at the opera. But sitting in our box, in those softly upholstered chairs among this festively attired audience, all I could think of was that same kind of crowd at the Paris Opera when Napoleon was retreating in Russia, and of the now identical suffering of our own soldiers. I suddenly felt violently ill with palpitations and fled to the ministry, back to work, where I tried to suppress my horrible feelings of guilt toward my brother, who as a private in the Sixth Army was caught at Stalingrad, and where I tried to hammer into my brain Hitler's order, "Think of nothing except your own sphere of activity—there is no such thing as collective responsibility."

In *Inside the Third Reich* Speer only briefly mentions his own family's loss at Stalingrad, but he wrote more personally about it both in the Nuremberg and the Spandau drafts. At Nuremberg he wrote,

D.T. I had schooled him to be calm, but now it was all too much. Just as he needed most, he was breaking away

In the middle of Ernst, serving in an They have alarming I dice, and is lying in kidney pains. There The "hospital" is in no heating, the win exhaustion.

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In the middle of it, panic-stricken calls from my parents: my brother Ernst, serving in an advance observation unit, is caught at Stalingrad. They have alarming letters from him: he has the Sixth Army disease, jaundice, and is lying in a primitive field hospital with fever, swollen legs and kidney pains. There is little food and a minimum of drinking water. . . . The "hospital" is in a horse-stable, only partly roofed and without walls; no heating, the wind and snow blow in; the men die of hunger and exhaustion.

"My mother, who never showed her emotions," he told me later, "sobbed into the telephone. 'You can't do this to him,' she said, as if I was doing it, and then my father, sounding like a broken man, added, 'It is impossible that you, you of all people, can't do something to get him out.'"

His Nuremberg account continued,

I had seen my brother last the previous summer when he was home on leave. He came to see me at the office but I had people waiting, an official lunch, meetings scheduled. Even so, going against Hitler's rules which prohibited people holding high rank in government from extending privileges to their relatives, I promised that I would get him out of Russia at the end of this campaign and get him into a construction battalion in the West for the remainder of the war.

Later he told me the rest of that story. "Sitting beside me in my office, phones ringing, people running in and out, he saw I was pressed for time," Speer said. " 'Ah, well, thanks,' he said, and standing up automatically came to attention, to my embarrassment. 'Goodbye then,' he said, and then he was gone before I could even stand up. After a moment I did rush out trying to catch him. I was going to walk out on the luncheon and take him out. But he was gone. I hadn't even shaken his hand."

Göring's planes were incapable of supplying the Stalingrad troops, but they did bring mail in and out. Ernst's next-to-last letter told his parents that he couldn't stand it at the field hospital, couldn't stand to see all the dying. Somehow he had managed to get himself back to his unit and, although all his limbs were now swollen to twice their size and he could no longer walk and felt weak like a baby, he felt better for being with his comrades.

Speer continues in *Spandau*:

In mid-January Hitler, having at last realized Göring's incapacity to act, finally ordered Milch to try to save the day. I drove to the airfield with him when he left for the Luftwaffe HQ south of the encircled city from where he would direct whatever rescue operations were still possible and he promised faithfully to try to find my brother. Despite the Russians' dreadfully effective air defense, he did manage to fly in a few supplies of food

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and medicines and, more extraordinary still, flew out another few thousand wounded. But he couldn't find my brother—the unit was searched for but it, and he, had disappeared. Like hundreds of thousands of other soldiers, my brother was declared missing, presumed dead.

“Dreadfully enough,” Speer told me years later, “no doubt thanks to Milch's planes, my parents had one more letter from him, desperate about life, angry about death, and bitter about me, his brother.”

GERMANY, IN THE second half of 1942 and all of 1943, was a country in the grip of schizophrenia. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than Speer's almost manic drive to help Hitler win his war, which was already lost, and to achieve his goals though he increasingly recognized them as evil. Himmler, Goebbels and of course Nicolaus von Below continuously note their reactions to the success of his efforts. Below wrote,

It was very clear to all of us [as soon as Hitler appointed Speer] that this had to bring about a fundamental change in the management of armament production. And indeed, we could observe this change very quickly, in an astonishingly positive direction.

And Goebbels's diary entries show his increasing enthusiasm for Speer almost from the moment of his appointment:

[He is] the only man capable of replacing—and, one hardly likes to say so—even outdoing the great Todt. [An entry a few weeks later:] Speer is not only approaching his huge task with the finest sense of idealism, but immense expert knowledge. He is beginning to rationalize the apparatus; will get rid of all the far too many dilettantes . . . streamline the whole operation. . . . What luck to have Speer; we work splendidly together—at last a kindred mind.

Within a few short months, this wily politician, perhaps the first in Germany to see in Speer a possible successor to Hitler, would draw him deeply into his political net. Speer, fascinated by Goebbels's flair, didn't realize then—or, as we will see, later—the extent to which this link-up with Goebbels would affect his life.

Hitler's individual communications were always on a carefully selective “need to know” basis, and he now spoke in Speer's presence of matters he would never formerly have mentioned in front of him. Partly this was, of course, because Speer's position was now a political and not an artistic one. Equally, however, Speer's ready collaboration with Goebbels—and their open appreciation of each other—put him into a different category.

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"AT FÜHRER HQ in early 1943," wrote Speer in Spandau, "the two shorthand-writers whose duty it is to record every one of Hitler's words* . . . are looking paler and paler as [their idol] continues to pour dishonor on the army. The fact that Stalingrad, with 108,000 soldiers prisoners of the Soviets, the others missing and presumed dead, was entirely a result of his orders, appeared entirely forgotten: day after day he rails against the 'lazy,' 'cowardly,' 'unimaginative' generals who are to blame for that defeat, for those in Africa, and, as that awful winter went on, for the continuing setbacks in the ice and snow of Russia. . . ."

It is true that 1943 was a decisive year for Hitler, militarily and politically. It was the year Rommel began to lose in North Africa, the Allies won in Tunisia and landed in Sicily, and in Russia Manstein lost the great tank battle for Kursk. In Italy Mussolini was ousted and much of southern Italy joined the Allies, while in Germany itself carpet-bombing reduced Hamburg to ruins, killing seventy thousand people—a shattering blow to Germany's morale. In the course of that year a number of diplomats and generals would advise Hitler to seek an end to the war, and although he refused all such suggestions (by Milch, Ribbentrop, Manstein and, finally, even Goebbels), unofficial feelers were put out via Zurich, Stockholm and Geneva.

I asked Speer at one point whether he had been among those who advised Hitler to seek a negotiated peace. After all, he had known, perhaps better than anyone, what Germany's chances would be in a war which was already on three, and would shortly be on four, fronts.

"To each his own," he replied airily. "I left that to the generals."

This seemed an extraordinarily evasive reply. Was it really possible by that time to departmentalize the handling of the approaching catastrophe in this way?

He gave me one of those penetrating looks. "Well, not quite," he said after a moment. "But there were ways and ways. Hitler—never forget—always acted on impulse, inspiration and emotion. He readily listened to experts,

*This refers to the verbatim record of Hitler's situation conferences (*Führerbesprechungen*) from autumn 1942 to the end of April 1945, not to be confused with his *Tabletalk*.

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but in the end the only people who could really affect his decisions were those closest to him—and they really had no ideas of their own and only mirrored his.

"If one was close to him," he continued, "there were ways of changing his mind, but it had to be done very subtly. The men who were in that position during and after Stalingrad were only yes-men—there was no possible subtlety there. I did try to bring about a change after Stalingrad."

Extraordinarily, it was not only in *Inside the Third Reich* but already in the Nuremberg and Spandau drafts that Speer emphatically downplayed the importance of 1943 in his own life. It was the year when it became clear to him that a number of politicians and generals, and finally apparently even Hitler himself, were considering him as a possible successor. It was not a possibility he had envisaged before, but once it was in the air it had, I believe, an enormous effect both on his actions and on his inactions.

For this was also certainly the year when he was brought face to face both with the slaughter of the Jews in Poland—if almost certainly not the method of their murder there—and the horrors suffered by the slave laborers. To acknowledge the reality of these crimes, first within himself and then to Hitler, would without a doubt have brought about a radical change in his life. Given the unique nature of his relationship with Hitler, the inexplicable emotional side of it might just have survived such a confrontation. As he was by now indispensable to Hitler, I doubt that he would have been harmed, and indeed might even have retained his job. But to identify as crimes what Hitler considered to be legitimate political acts would certainly have cost him Hitler's intimacy—and with it any possibility of the succession which was suddenly dangling before his eyes.

In his writings Speer gave little indication of the momentous discoveries he made in the second half of 1943, but he did discuss the "change" he had tried to effect after Stalingrad, change in the personal conduct by Germany's political leaders, and changes in the authority of the army command.

Since the winter of 1942, which had led toward the defeat at Stalingrad, Hitler was almost exclusively under the influence of what came to be known as the Committee of Three: Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, whom Hitler had made Chief of Staff of the army when he himself assumed overall command of it in 1938; Hans Lammers, Chief of the Reich Chancellery; and Martin Bormann. In December 1942 Goebbels decided that the hold of what he called "this evil trio" had to be broken, and soon turned to Speer for support.

"He really did seem to me," Speer told me when we came to talk of this, his first real attempt to enter the arena of active politics, "the clearest head and the cleverest mind." Goebbels manifestly had the same high opinion of Speer. In his diary of February 5, 1943, he noted,

Speer in Spandau, "the y one of Hitler's words* es to pour dishonor on oldiers prisoners of the s entirely a result of his e rails against the 'lazy,' ame for that defeat, for rthe continuing setbacks

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Speer and his wife to dinner at my house last night. . . . He and I get on extremely well; he is one of the few men around who responds to—and thus can help me toward the realization of—my ideas. And what stupendous things he has achieved so quickly. Bitter though it sounds, one must agree with the Führer in a way that Speer was a very advantageous swap for Todt. In the final analysis, Todt was too much of a soldier, eternally at attention before all generals, which of course in no way applies to that essential civilian, Speer.

Compared to what one must now admit was a primitive armament industry a year ago when he took it over, the production figures now are positively startling: he is an organizational genius. . . .

Having agreed from the start that the influence on Hitler of the "evil trio" had to be eliminated, Goebbels and Speer recruited two others they thought sympathetic to their ideas: Minister of Economics Walther Funk and the Chief of the German Workers' Front, Reichsleiter Robert Ley. Furthermore, they hoped to bring Göring, who when at his best was still a force to be reckoned with, onto their side. The intention then was to set up a Council of Ministers which would advise Hitler, administer the country's inner political affairs and restructure the defense policy. For the sake of the country, they felt, Hitler, manifestly exhausted, now needed responsible support. "What we have," said the ever-realistic Goebbels, "is not a leadership but a leader crisis."

Their main aims, in the order of priority, were, first, to put the country at last on a total-war footing (Goebbels, testing the waters, publicly proposed this to frantic applause on February 18, 1943, in an address at the Palace of Sports); second, to recapture the dangerously dwindling faith of the people by dealing ruthlessly with the corruption on all levels of government and administration and by abolishing the system of privilege the top echelon of the party—the Gauleiter—so openly enjoyed; and third, above all else, to work closely with the army, traditionally Germany's most respected body of men, in order to return to the Army High Command the autonomy without which an army cannot function.

In essence, although planned in a spirit of loyal service to the head of state they all still revered, it was a revolution. The four of them, as yet without Göring, had begun to meet at night at Goebbels's Berlin residence in order to lay their plans. He wrote in his diary, February 13, 1943:

Evening at my house, Speer and Ley. . . . We are entirely of one mind on all fundamental questions. . . . February 27: Speer, Ley and Funk at the house—we talked about everything until 2 a.m. . . . Speer & Funk . . . feel, however, with Göring now so lethargic and resigned . . . I should take over leadership of Council [of Ministers], on the face of it as his deputy. I [tell them] I am quite prepared to do this but we would at least nominally need

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his agreement. He is at present ... yet again ... vacationing. ... Speer offers to get on his plane in pursuit, in order to persuade him to agree. If we get him on our side, I have no doubt we'd very quickly get the Führer's backing and ... could begin work. I would propose a group of ten leading personalities with whom I would then govern, i.e., set up a structure of inner-political leadership. All of us know there will be problems, but on this evening it is perfectly clear to us that if there was ever to be a repetition of events such as we witnessed this past winter on the Eastern front, we would be facing a most severe crisis of public confidence. ... Our only reason for fear is the never-to-be-thought-of possibility that we could lose the war ... but the time to consider this danger and take all measures against it, is now.

The discussion this evening was incredibly productive. What a relief to talk with true National Socialists such as these three.

Throughout this important entry one can read between the lines Goebbels's skillful manipulation of the group, above all of Speer who, although now perhaps no longer entirely a novice at high-level politicking, knew as yet virtually nothing about intrigue as practiced by a master of the art like Goebbels.

True to his offer, Speer flew to Berchtesgaden the next day where Göring, feeling ill used by Hitler's criticisms of his leadership of the Luftwaffe, was sulking at his palatial country house near the Berghof. He received Speer, his face rouged and fingernails lacquered, wearing a trailing dark green velvet robe adorned with a huge golden brooch, in its center "a diamond of rare beauty."

It is strange—and indicative of Göring's fundamentally strong personality—that someone as deeply conservative as Speer was able to take seriously this ludicrous figure. In Nuremberg, where of course he was daily faced with a reborn version of the man, detoxicated, slimmed down and openly admired by the defendants and their German lawyers, as well as the German people who listened to the proceedings on the radio, he wrote that he had found him exceptionally open-minded that day in Berchtesgaden:

He viewed the situation exactly as we did and he was particularly struck when I told him that we were sure Bormann was seeking to succeed Hitler. I was able to present him with a number of details supporting this view. That certainly activated his juices! We reached complete agreement and decided to ask Goebbels to fly up the next day for a second conference.

By the next evening everything was decided: we would set up the Council of Ministers as a joint instrument of power: Goebbels and I would be appointed members.

teaching, energy, implementing the plans of others, effectively self-renewing, lies, etc. — that once the basic energy is gone, we do not have the will to live! #

to build it up. That is in the D. H.'s elephant.

We set a date for a third meeting in Berlin [with Funk and Ley] after which we would proceed together against Bormann and his group. We would stand together, supporting each other in the decisive meeting with Hitler. All was agreed: a small conspiracy.

Speer talked to me about this period with great animation, communicating thirty-five years later the elation they had felt. Almost nothing in our discussions so clearly showed me the chasm in his thinking in those years, the ambivalence which, given the excitement the memory of these events aroused, I thought might well have endured.

Even accepting for the sake of argument, I said, that he was at that time still in some ignorance of Hitler's basic monstrosity—his worst crimes—and of Goebbels's obvious connivance in them, how could he even conceive of helping to set up a group with or under Göring, a man steeped more deeply than anyone else in the very corruption they were dedicating themselves to wiping out? And having just seen Hitler sacrifice without a further thought a whole army group—incidentally including Speer's own brother—how could he co-plan this "revolution," which was intended not to free Germany but basically to continue and intensify an insane war?

"In order to get rid of the terrible trio that was fencing Hitler in," he explained, sounding patient and rational, "we had to offer him the strongest possible alternative. Despite his recent disappointments over Göring, we knew he remained attached to him as he invariably was to all his early comrades. He always saw men as they had been, never as what they had become, so psychologically if not in reality, Göring, almost until the end, remained one of his mainstays and of course, don't forget, until the end of April 1945 his official successor.

"I have to say that I too had a weak spot for Göring. I had known him as a charming and highly intelligent man, and even now saw him more as an individualist, if you like, than as sick or evil. I myself was by then profoundly linked to the army, their interests and their points of view. At Führer HQ the men who were close to me were Colonel von Below and General Rudolf Schmundt, Hitler's principal military adjutant. [Schmundt died in August 1944 from injuries sustained in the July 20 attempted army coup against Hitler.] Outside, the men I saw not only most often but most gladly were Zeitzler, Fromm and Milch. At that particular point, and ever since before Stalingrad, although I considered Hitler ill with exhaustion and hardly compos mentis, he had humiliated and dishonored the army, and this could not be allowed to stand. I'm trying to explain to you not what, seen from the perspective of now, would have been rational and right, but what I felt then. Once a situation could be created in which the army would regain their

The Unbearable Truth

proper place in the scheme would be considered."

And would the next step

He was trying to be honest, after all, Hitler. I did not really being considered w his life—all unsuccessful—the war was in the minds.

The political conspiracy pretext the pressing need in Speer's ministry, with the figures he reported to Speer.

"That meeting, held in the Berlin Chancellery," Speer they could ever begin."

The conspirators not on Hitler and Himmler (who of course, inserted by Goebbels, who attack. "Later I realized," I sibly from Bormann him stayed home!" In Spandau

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And Himmler immed the most likely explanation dead?" he asked equably. numbers of dead in the meant.

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proper place in the scheme of things, and thus their honor, then the next step
would be considered."

And would the next step have been ending the war? I asked.

He was trying to be honest. "I'm not sure how quickly," he said. "There
was, after all, Hitler, I did not know then that assassination of Hitler was al-
ready being considered within the army and indeed, that three attempts on
his life—all unsuccessful—were about to be made. But I *am* sure that ending
the war was in the minds of the generals long before the Twentieth of July."

The political conspirators decided to strike on April 12, 1943, using as a
pretext the pressing need to confront Sauckel, Bormann's man of confidence
in Speer's ministry, with a discrepancy of about a million workers between
the figures he reported to Hitler and those the industrialists provided for
Speer.

"That meeting, held in the Berghof building built specifically for use by the
Berlin Chancellery," Speer told me, "essentially finished our plans before
they could ever begin."

The conspirators not only found themselves confronted by Bormann, Kei-
tel and Himmler (who of course had not been expected), but worse still, de-
serted by Goebbels, who sent a message that he was down with a kidney
attack. "Later I realized," Speer said, "that he must have learned—quite pos-
sibly from Bormann himself—that we had been outmaneuvered; so he
stayed home!" In Spandau he described the fiasco:

Göring showed his true colors at once. Instead of calling Sauckel to task
as he had promised, he immediately launched a violent attack against his
own Undersecretary of State, Field Marshal Milch, who by prior arrange-
ment was the one who raised our objection to Sauckel's labor-bookkeep-
ing. How could Milch accuse that good party comrade Sauckel, who
worked so hard for the Führer, of wrongdoing, Göring thundered. Ironi-
cally, it was he who only two days earlier had proposed our strategy of
spearheading our general attack with an objection to Sauckel's fantasy-
figure reports to Hitler.

And Himmler immediately joined the stifling of our initiative. "Isn't
the most likely explanation for the million missing bodies that they are
dead?" he asked equably. It was only when I learned in Nuremberg of the
numbers of dead in the concentration camps that I understood what he
meant.

"If it had not been so sad," Speer told me later, "it would have been funny.
Before the meeting started, Göring took me aside and warned me against
Milch: 'He is totally unreliable, and if it is to his advantage, he will drop any
friend like a hot iron.' When I repeated this to Milch later, he laughed.
'That's exactly what he told me about you,' he said."

"And much later, in Spandau, Funk said that I had been mad ever to trust Goebbels. 'He was never honest with you,' he said. 'How so?' I asked him. 'Because he was not an honest man,' he replied. 'But who was, in those times? I, after all, went along with it too.' Well, I suppose he was right. The very next day, Goebbels, miraculously recovered, let Bormann know that from then on he would use him as the conduit for his communications with Hitler and would be grateful if, on the other hand, Bormann would see to it that his requests got prompt and favorable attention."

Thus ended their attempt to bring about changes, Speer said. "Except for two things, which had consequences for me later. The first was when Himmler, running into me at Führer HQ a few weeks later, threatened me for the first time. 'I advise you never to try again to recruit the Reichsmarschal [Göring] for your goals.' I wasn't intending to, but still, that was when Himmler began to alarm me personally—the first time I suddenly found him sinister."

"The other development had in fact started when I had first become friends with the three generals, Milch, Zeitzler and Fromm, and they began repeating to me laudatory remarks Hitler allegedly made about me. Already some months earlier Zeitzler had said gleefully that Hitler had told him how glad he was that in 'my person,' as he put it, 'a new sun had arisen next to Göring's.' And only days later, he had said in several generals' hearing that with me, 'a new personality was on the scene who represented hope for the future.'

"Zeitzler had found that very significant, and although I asked him not to repeat it to anyone, I couldn't quite forget it myself. Especially when, a few days after that, when as it happened Himmler and I entered the situation room at HQ together, Hitler exclaimed, 'Ah, here are the two equals. I enjoy it when I can see you side by side.'

"Himmler didn't like that at all. It was only much later, in Nuremberg, talking to Goebbels's former Undersecretary of State [Naumann]," Speer said, "that I realized the importance given to this kind of occasional quip by Hitler. He told me that in the course of 1943 most people had come to assume that I was Hitler's successor-designate."

What had given him most food for thought, however, Speer said, was when shortly after the abortive meeting at the Berghof Chancellery office, General Schmundt sought him out during one of his next visits to Führer HQ. "He sat down next to me, looked around, quite obviously making sure he was not overheard, and then said, 'I'm hearing your name mentioned a great deal these days. The army is entirely behind you. Keep it in mind.' And then he got up and went away, leaving me flabbergasted."

It meant, however, that he was not entirely unprepared when, following a

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meeting with the three generals not too long afterwards, Milch asked him straight out whether he had thought of himself as a successor to Hitler.

"I shrugged it off, with a joke I suppose," said Speer. "But from then on, it was in the air."

The thought of the succession, it appears, remained on Speer's mind. In October 1943, probably the most important milestone month for Speer, as will be discussed, he himself initiated a conversation on the succession with one of the leading men in his ministerial cabinet, Heinz Kehl, the ministry's head of planning, who reported on it in his own memoirs, *Krisenmanager im Dritten Reich* (Crisis Manager in the Third Reich). At the end of a long discussion about who of Hitler's leading men could succeed him, and agreeing that Himmler, Goebbels, Bormann and Göring were out of the question, Kehl writes that Speer asked him point blank whether he thought that Hitler was considering him. Kehl did think so; no one else, he reports his own reply, shared so much with Hitler, including artistic interests, or had such a close personal relationship with him. And then, of course, everyone knew that Hitler was immensely impressed with his achievements as his Armaments Minister. Speer, wrote Kehl, appeared pleased.

But why had he always denied it, including at Nuremberg, I asked Speer. He smiled. "Don't be naive. How could I not deny it there?"

But having said it once, fairly explicitly, in the Nuremberg mini-draft, I said, why didn't he admit to it in print later? Why did he skate around it in *Inside the Third Reich*?

"It seemed wiser to leave it by the wayside, so to speak," he answered. "Let sleeping dogs lie, no? Finally, it wasn't important, was it?"

In fact, it was, of course, immensely important. For where a man engaged in the hopeless task of keeping a war machine functioning for a war he knew was lost might well seek ways to end his commitment, the prospect—however unrealistic at that point—of appointment to the highest place in the state might equally well persuade him to hold on, shutting his eyes to wrongdoing until he himself could take over the reins.

Time and again Germans from that period have said that no one who hadn't lived under that dictatorship could understand what it was like. To a degree this is true. The life and thoughts—and thus finally, too, the reactions and acts of individual human beings—are immensely affected by their environment and their emotions. Therefore, when considering and evaluating the reactions and acts of Speer in those years, it is important to always remain aware—more consciously aware perhaps than he was at the time—of the background against which his actions and reactions took place.

A number of documents describing events in 1943, though possibly demonstrating more Speer's determined ignorance than his knowledge, cer-

- 1) Weight: Full: 800 tons; Empty: 600 tons.
- 2) Both Special Train and empty train to be run to schedule in order to maintain the proper rhythm of loading and unloading. . . .
- 3) In Treblinka the trains are to be cleaned by camp workers.
- 4) Empties not to be put on sidings at any time.

The reason for that last order was that the returning trains, while empty of passengers, were not empty at all. As is shown in a copy of a Wehrmacht cargo certificate dated September 1, 1942, the train, traveling from Treblinka via Siedlce to Lublin (where it would be directed to its ultimate destination), was to carry: "No officers or officials; no civilians; no service dogs; no horses; no Wehrmacht cargo in open wagons, [but]: non-commissioned officers and men, and 50 covered wagons carrying *clothes for Waffen SS*" (author's italics).

This did not mean that the SS intended to dress their soldiers in clothes taken off by the victims before they were killed, but simply that the SS controlled the distribution of all goods taken off them. Clothes, as we will see, went to needy foreign workers and "resettled" ethnic Germans; the food many of the victims brought on their journey toward death—often preserves of jam and honey—was distributed among camp staff. Jewelry and money, of which there was a good deal in gold and every kind of foreign currency, ended up, as the Railway Instruction sheets duly state, "via the SS/HQ Lublin and the 'Führungs Hauptamt,' " in Berlin [they meant the *Führer Kanzlei*, which included T4, the administration of the Aktion Reinhard], in the coffers of the Reichsbank, administered by Minister of Economics Walther Funk.

There was, as I said, no reason for Speer to have seen these train schedules, but if he had, he might have learned what happened to the forty thousand Jews of Bialystok in February 1943: from February 9 to February 13, five trains (Pj 127, 129, 131, 133 and 135) took them to Treblinka, arriving each day at 12:10 p.m., the "empties" leaving at 9:18.

On February 6, 1943, SS Obergruppenführer Oswald Pohl, head of the SS Office of Economic Administration and thus Speer's opposite number in the SS (Pohl was sentenced to death at Nuremberg on November 3, 1947, and executed June 8, 1951), reported on the "Utilization of Textiles: Used Clothes from the Jewish Resettlement":

An attached list shows the amount of material so far obtained from the Jewish resettlement in the camps in the Lublin area, and Auschwitz. Please note that usable material, particularly for men, is much diminished by the fact that many clothes are rags. . . . We are encountering great difficulties in obtaining the necessary transport, especially to the Ukraine where eth-

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On April 9, 194 sonal staff, Dr. R for pregnant Gyp

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He added—an odd mistake—that “a hand-written postscript in Pohl’s report to Hitler appears to indicate that the report I received from my men confirmed that ‘the inspection of the other concentration camps provided an absolutely positive impression.’ ” The fact is, however, that the postscript he quotes was not in Pohl’s report, but at the end of his own May 30 letter to Himmler, written in his own hand.

SPEER AND HITLER were certainly on good terms all that spring and summer of 1943, during which production figures rose enormously even while Germany and Italy suffered defeat after defeat in North Africa, Russia and Sicily. During that unhappy spring and summer, whenever Speer visited Führer HQ, he was invited to share Hitler’s solitary lunch, “which, taken in almost complete silence,” he wrote in Spandau, “was an hour of torture.” Hitler, having wordlessly spooned his soup, would finally remark on the weather while waiting for the next course to be served, after which the conversation was limited to his praise for his vegetarian-diet cook. Toward the end of the meal, there would be the usual outburst against the military.

“Believe me,” Hitler often said, “I would be happy to take this grey uniform off for good—today rather than tomorrow.” And he would then come back to his old dream of years before, to give up the leadership as soon as possible, to leave it to a successor, and to retire to Linz, to the house Giesler was building for him there. How he wished he could have been an architect rather than the politician he became against all his inclinations, he would sigh.

Speer described Hitler’s mood in Spandau (though not in his books): “I think he was so tired and depressed in those months that he really regretted having become the Führer.”

Talking to me about Hitler’s depressive state during that first half of 1943, Speer remembered one occasion, just after one of the situation conferences he attended at Führer HQ, when, with several of the military still present—Keitel, Jodl, Warlimont, Below—the windows had been opened to let in some air.

“Hitler went to stand at the open window while the rest of us remained standing behind him,” Speer said. “I remember—and I don’t know why—the room was very silent. And suddenly he said, still standing at that window, his back to us, ‘Gentlemen, the bridges behind us are burnt.’ He said it very quietly, almost matter-of-factly—no drama, no emphasis. And I felt a cold shiver go down my back; I remember very clearly, I had a dreadful foreboding, a sudden sense of something awesome. . . . I now think,” Speer continued, after a moment, “that he meant what had been done to the Jews.”

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Around that time, in early summer 1943, Speer was able to change Hitler's mind about one dreadful order Sepp Dietrich had told him he was about to issue. It had just been discovered that Soviet troops had killed German prisoners, and Hitler had announced then and there "a thousandfold retaliation in blood." In the new offensive about to be launched, no prisoners were to be taken.

Speer wrote in *Inside the Third Reich*:

For months we had been trying in vain to close a gap of hundreds of thousands in the supply of labor. I therefore took the first opportunity to reason with Hitler on this score. It was not difficult to persuade him . . . he gave me the impression of being glad to give way. That same day, July 8, 1943, he had Keitel prepare instructions to the effect that all prisoners must be sent into armament production.

Three weeks later, from July 25 to August 2, the blanket bombing of Hamburg, which reduced much of that wonderful old city to rubble, put the fear of God into Speer. Six more such attacks on German cities, he told Hitler three days afterwards, would bring armament production to a standstill. Hitler merely said that he was sure Speer would manage. And in fact, Speer did manage. "Not because we were so clever," he told me, "but because, luckily for us, the RAF didn't follow it up with similar raids on other cities, and the Americans, who two weeks later tried and failed to destroy our ball-bearing plants at Schweinfurt, made similar tactical mistakes. If they hadn't, we would have been finished, Hitler's confidence in me notwithstanding."

Over the next critical weeks, when the fate of Mussolini was in the balance and the King of Italy negotiated with the Western Allies, Speer took part in the top-level deliberations at Hitler's field HQ in Rastenburg which, by early September, resulted in SS flying ace Otto Skorzeny and his paratroops spirit-ing Mussolini out of the mountaintop hotel where the King had exiled him, and most of Italy being occupied by the Germans.

Goebbels wrote on July 27, 1943:

The Pope is playing games. The Italian aristocrats and their monarch show their true ungrateful colors. . . . What best to do? Everybody at HQ is confused. Except the Führer, who, always in his element at a crisis, shows total calm and inner superiority, demonstrating time and again his complete mastery of the situation. . . . He proposes that we take over Rome. . . . Ribbentrop and I manage to persuade him of the inadvisability of occupying the Vatican. . . . The situation is too sensitive. . . . It would be dangerous to explain too much to the people . . . there are those here, too, who might decide to take advantage of it. . . . By the evening, the Führer is exhausted and dines alone, while at our table it emerges clearly that virtu-

→ had done, and this was intentional to me. And yet I knew that I could not leave him. They would not allow me. What if I were all to end with his repentance?

It was against this reputation that I now labored, and I succeeded in halting bridges between us as they went. I then let us move forward. Case to 1396-392 (Himmler's report)

ally none of our leading brains assembled there—Ribbentrop, Rommel, Dönitz, Keitel, Bormann—has any concept of the scope of our problem here . . . except Speer, with whom I have a long talk after dinner. Of all the leading men in Germany, he is one of the few whose analysis of the situation is hard, bold and totally realistic. . . .

On September 2, having shortly before named Himmler Minister of the Interior (which did not, however, save his predecessor, the bureaucratic Wilhelm Frick, from the gallows at Nuremberg), Hitler extended Speer's area of responsibility to all of Germany's production. His official title was now Reich Minister for Armaments and War Production (instead of the previous Armaments and Munitions). Even though the new title specified "War Production" as a sop to Göring's possessiveness over his Four-Year Plan (which Speer was anyway controlling through his Central Planning Board), Speer was now in fact in charge of all of the country's production, including all consumer goods. Speer's plan, with which both Hitler and Minister of Economics Funk were in agreement, but to which Bormann, representing the interests of the Gauleiter, took bitter exception, was to turn all of the country's large consumer-goods factories into armament plants, while transferring the bulk of the production of consumer goods to factories in occupied Western Europe, starting with France.

At a conference in Paris in July, he had proposed to the French the setting up of "protected factories" which, producing armament components for Germany, would be made immune from Sauckel's dreaded levies of French workers. The fear of being drafted for forced labor had driven thousands of workers to flee their factories, at least some of them joining the French underground. Now, two months later, Speer understood—with the help of France's young Minister of Production, Jean Bichelonne, a professor at the Sorbonne—that notwithstanding the frankly pro-German faction in the Vichy government such as Premier Pierre Laval, the workers of France would always balk at producing armaments for Germany. But producing only civilian goods for Germany, while offering the workers the same guarantees against deportation, was more acceptable. Shortly after the new addition to his title, he issued a formal invitation to Bichelonne to come on a state visit to Berlin.

Bichelonne, a man his own age who shared many of his ideas, was probably the first foreigner with whom Speer really communicated. "I liked Bichelonne very much," he told me. "He was a passionate nationalist but very sympathetic, as I was, to Pan-European ideas; you may remember that my father was already very interested in [the concept]. Of course, when Bichelonne and I played with the idea of a European Economic Union, we

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thought of it as Utopian. But"—he laughed—"it wasn't all that Utopian, was it?"

It sounds as if with this youngish, like-minded Frenchman, Speer found some lightness of spirit. "We agreed that in the future we would avoid the mistakes of the First World War generation, who were now at the helm. Irrespective of national frontiers, Europe had to be economically integrated; for this, I told him, I would happily oppose Hitler's present plan of carving up France—giving Alsace-Lorraine back to Germany, for example—which I considered entirely unnecessary."

It was treason to say that to a foreigner, he said, "but I trusted him; I think if he had survived, we would have been friends." (Bichelonne died in early 1945, after an operation in Germany for a pulmonary embolism, carried out—extraordinarily enough, as will be seen, on Speer's recommendation—by Himmler's friend Professor Gebhardt.)

Having received Hitler's agreement prior to Bichelonne's arrival, Speer suggested to him the formal creation of a German-French production planning council which could eventually be expanded to much of Western Europe. The last part of their talks took place over the weekend at a country house near Berlin belonging to a friend of Speer's, the sculptor Arno Breker. And here he and Speer agreed on the specifics of this new German-French collaboration: Speer would tell Sauckel that, instead of importing French labor for German factories, his staff in Paris were to persuade French workers to volunteer for the "protected factories" where they would be guaranteed security from deportation. The plants could be given the necessary support in money, transportation and food, while Speer could concentrate all German production on armaments.

The success of this daring initiative, which resulted in the creation of ten thousand new factories in France working for German production, and was then extended by Speer to Holland and Belgium, infuriated Sauckel but delighted Hitler. "He always enjoyed driving a wedge between his people," Speer told me. "It was a childish pastime which he mistook for shrewd management. Aside from this, however, he knew a good thing when he saw it. If we could get Western Europe working for us without the trouble of forcing laborers to come to Germany and housing and feeding them, it was tremendously to our advantage."

What Speer had to do now was to persuade the Gauleiter to collaborate with his "total war" measures. They considered the loss of consumer production and the conversion of these factories into armament plants not only a gross interference with their personal authority but also an immense economic loss to their districts. He was scheduled to address them on the subject on October 6, at a Gauleiter conference in Posen, but he knew their attitude

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net, so that no one could henceforth dare to break ranks, claiming innocence or ignorance. The first group to be initiated in Posen were high SS officers on October 4. Himmler's second address on October 6, virtually identical to the first, was, as already mentioned, to the Reichsleiter and Gauleiter. In January 1944 it was repeated to a group of the highest-ranking Wehrmacht generals.

Notification had been sent from Bormann's Party Chancellery Office at Hitler's HQ on September 30, 1943, to all Reichsleiter and Gauleiter, the Reich Youth Leader Arthur Axmann and two Reich Ministers, Speer and Rosenberg. A special train would leave Berlin's Friedrichstrasse station for Posen at 9:32 p.m. on October 5, arriving back in Berlin October 8 around 8 a.m.

Participants intending to travel from their bases via Berlin were requested to confirm their requirements by telex or phone. Dress would be "Uniform, white shirt, breeches, boots." The train had seven sleeper cars. Forty-six beds were assigned: Speer's was in car 4, compartment 13/14, although it is not known whether he used it or went by car. As the surviving sleeper list shows no reservations for Speer's five associates—one ministry official and four industrialists from his "Dollar-a-Year" group, who would be addressing the Gauleiter before Speer's own speech—they must have made their own way to Posen, by air or road.

Himmler's speech would be the main—and last—address of the conference, late in the afternoon. But the program started at 9 a.m. with brief talks by Speer's industrial experts, the last by Walter Rohland, Germany's steel czar. Goebbels wrote that night in his diary,

They didn't say much that was new for me, but . . . their black on black descriptions of the state of the war . . . and war production . . . were a good introduction for Speer's own fifty-minute address. . . . Based on solid facts and figures, he demonstrates as clearly as can be that nothing will now help . . . except . . . total effort for total war . . . as—for all the good it did—I already said in my speech at the Palace of Sports [in February]. . . .

Speer told them very bluntly that no protests and no arguments would deter him [from converting all plants to war production]. He is, of course, right: The Führer has ordered him to transfer a million workers into armaments at once and, furthermore, to release sufficient young men from the armament industry to form about twenty divisions. The Gauleiter are screaming holy murder, for of course it means the end of most of their flourishing industries. But they'll have to go along with him. . . .

What Goebbels—in total sympathy here with Speer—didn't mention in his diary, was the last sentences of Speer's speech, which caused an uproar in

the sumptuously renovated Golden Hall of the romantic Posen Castle, where the meeting was held. Speer quoted his own speech in *Inside the Third Reich*:

You will please take note of what I'm saying. The manner in which some of the *Gaue* have hitherto obstructed the shutdown of consumer goods production will no longer be tolerated. . . . I can assure you that I am prepared to apply the authority of the Reich Government at any cost. I have discussed this with Reichsführer SS Himmler, and from now on districts that do not carry out within two weeks the measures I request will be dealt with firmly.

The Gauleiter, Speer wrote in his book (as he had at greater length but otherwise identically in the "Spandau draft"), were incensed, interpreting particularly his last sentence as threatening them with concentration camps. Taken aback by their furious reaction, he asked Bormann to let him return to the platform to clarify his meaning. But Bormann, "hypocritically friendly," Speer wrote, told him there was no need. Soon afterwards, however, Hitler gave him to understand that he knew of the Gauleiter's anger against him, and said that it was "unfortunate" that he did not know how to handle them. "Bormann had at last found a way to undermine my standing with Hitler. . . ."

Speer commented bitterly in *Inside the Third Reich* on the Gauleiter's excessive drinking after the conference, but did not mention Himmler's speech to them in the afternoon, which gave Hitler's political leaders good reason to drown their trepidations that night of October 6, 1943.

Himmler arrived at 3 p.m., listened to speeches from Admiral Dönitz, Field Marshal Milch and the new Chief of Staff of the SA, Schepmann. Then, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. he delivered his ominous lecture. It was almost an hour—seventeen typewritten pages—before he arrived at the core of his message. Himmler said,

I want to speak now, in this most restricted circle, about a matter which you, my party comrades, have long accepted as a matter of course, but which for me has become the heaviest burden of my life—the matter of the Jews. You all accept happily the obvious fact that there are no more Jews in your province. All Germans, with very few exceptions, realize perfectly well that we couldn't have lasted through the bombs and the stresses of the fourth, perhaps in the future the fifth and even sixth year of war, if this destructive pestilence were still present within our body politic. The brief sentence "The Jews must be exterminated" is easy to pronounce, but the demands on those who have to put it into practice are the hardest and most difficult in the world.

The Unbearable

You see, I think for a moment addressed on of course all exempted from number of such Germany that cause you will good respect Jew.

I ask that you here today. Women and solution. For living kill or grow up to tal sion-had to be earth. For the most difficult carried out with leaders. The de the two possible respect human vious breakdown narrow.

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You see, of course they are Jews; obviously, they are only Jews. But think for a moment how many people—including party comrades—have addressed one of those famous petitions [to us] in which was written that of course all Jews are pigs, but so-and-so is a decent Jew who should be exempted from whatever was being done. I daresay that according to the number of such petitions . . . there must have been more decent Jews in Germany than there were Jews altogether. I'm only mentioning this because you will know, each one of you, that in your own province there are good respectable National Socialists, each of whom knows one decent Jew.

I ask that you only listen but never speak of what I am saying to you here today. We, you see, were faced with the question "What about the women and children?" And I decided, here too, to find an unequivocal solution. For I did not think that I was justified in exterminating—meaning kill or order to have killed—the men, but to leave their children to grow up to take revenge on our sons and grandchildren. The hard decision had to be taken to have this people disappear from the face of the earth. For the organization which had to carry out this order, it was the most difficult one we were ever given. . . . I think I can say that it has been carried out without damaging the minds or spirits of our men and our leaders. The danger was great and ever present. For the difference between the two possibilities . . . to become cruel and heartless and no longer to respect human life, or to become soft and succumb to weakness and nervous breakdowns . . . the way between Scylla and Charybdis is appallingly narrow.

The immense fortunes we requisitioned from the Jews have been handed over to the last penny to the Reich Minister for Economics. My position has always been that while we have done our duty here, toward our people, our race . . . and our Führer who this once in two thousand years has been given to us . . . we do not have the right to keep one penny of this requisitioned Jewish wealth. My order has been from the start, that any SS man who steals even one single mark, is to be put to death. And I can tell you that I have signed about a dozen death sentences precisely for this in these last days. . . .

I considered it my duty to speak to you, who are the highest dignitaries of the party, of our political order which is the Führer's political instrument, for once quite openly about this question . . . to tell you how it was.

By the end of this year, the matter of the Jews will [also] have been dealt with in the countries under our occupation. . . . You will not doubt that the economic aspect presented many great difficulties, above all with the clearing of ghettos: in Warsaw we fought street battles for four weeks in the ghetto, four weeks of clearing seven hundred bunkers, one after the

other. Because that ghetto produced fur coats and textiles, we were prevented from taking it over when it would have been easy: we were told we were interfering with essential production. "Halt!" they called, "This is war production!"

[Then came a remark, apparently addressed to Speer himself.]

Of course, this has nothing to do with party comrade Speer: it wasn't your doing. It is precisely this kind of so-called war production enterprise which party comrade Speer and I will clean out together over the next weeks. We will do this just as unsentimentally as all things must be done in this fifth year of the war: unsentimentally but from the bottom of our hearts, for Germany. . . .

And with this I want to finish about the matter of the Jews. You are now informed, and you will keep the knowledge to yourselves. Later perhaps we can consider whether the German people should be told about this. But I think it is better that we—we together—carry for our people the responsibility . . . responsibility for an achievement, not just an idea . . . and then take the secret with us to our grave. . . .

Even in this dreadful speech, as in the others he delivered on this subject, Himmler carefully avoided describing the method of these murders—the words "gas chamber" never appeared—and the probability remains that all those who heard him, most of whom already knew about the shootings in Russia, thought that this continued to be the way the Jews were killed. The existence of the gas chambers, in which half of these millions died, and which the so-called revisionists have so busily denied ever since, was apparently unmentionable even for Himmler, Hitler's master of death.

Himmler's speeches revealing to the Reich's leadership the genocide of the Jews are of course part of the historical record. No one who has studied the period can fail to have read them (parts even survive in recordings made at the time) and to realize that here, on Hitler's orders, the Rubicon was crossed.

I had always believed that, given Speer's presence in Posen that day, his presence at Himmler's speech was inevitable. But I had specifically planned to avoid this necessarily disturbing subject, and the whole question of his denial of knowledge about the Jews, until the last few days of our first concentrated three weeks of conversations.

When he brought it up, the last morning of our second week together, it was, curiously enough, the first day when there was no sun and, with snow falling thickly and covering the window, the kitchen where we sat was strangely dark.

We were going to Munich the next day where a book entitled *Albert*

Speer, Controversies about the Holocaust with contributions from various authors.

Had I heard of the book, but why not talk about it?

He shook his head. I stopped me. "Leave me about something but as there was some- thing was likely that it would

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No heat, no ventilation, not the smallest pail to wash in: death touched us with the cold, the sensation of choking, the filth that impregnated us. . . . The latrines were barrels cut in half with planks laid across. They stood at each exit from the rows of sleeping cubicles.

One of the SS guards' favorite jokes, Michel wrote, was to watch the slaves sit on the plank, laugh and push them into the barrel.

We all had dysentery. They laughed and laughed when we tried to get up and out of the shit. . . .

"I walked past these men and tried to meet their eyes," Speer said, despair in his voice. "They wouldn't look at me; they ripped off their prisoners' caps and stood at attention until we passed." From *Dora*:

The deportees saw daylight only once a week at the Sunday rollcall. The cubicles were permanently occupied, the day team following the night team and then vice versa . . . no drinkable water . . . you lapped up liquid and mud as soon as the SS had their backs turned. . . .

"I demanded to be shown their midday meal," Speer said. "I tried it; it was an inedible mess." After the inspection was over he found out that thousands had already died. "I saw dead men . . . they couldn't hide the truth," he said. "And those who were still alive were skeletons." He had never been so horrified in his life, he said. "I ordered the immediate building of a barracks camp outside, and there and then signed the papers for the necessary materials. . . ." Michel in *Dora*:

It was not until March 1944 that the barracks were completed. At Dora, the work was as terrible as ever, but we could at least leave the tunnel for the six hours of rest allowed. . . .

Eventually, thirty-one subcamps surrounded the Dora complex deep under these mountains, Jean Michel wrote, and added bitterly that no one could convince him that General Walter Dornberger (who after the war became a missile consultant to American aviation until he peacefully retired to Buffalo, New York) and his Peenemünde team of scientists, above all Werner von Braun, who equally harvested financial and scientific glories in the United States, did not know who built their rockets and under what conditions. All these men, he says, collaborated with historians and writers after the war and indeed wrote books and papers themselves. "The word 'Dora,' " he wrote, "does not appear in any of those writings." It was, he says, as if that hell on earth had never been. Sixty thousand men were deported to Dora; thirty thousand of them died.

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Ahnenrebe = inheritance
(insight into the universe)
Ahnung - foreboding
dread

DURING THE LAST months of 1943 Speer had finally realized the real nature of Nazi crimes he had previously only suspected or sensed. ("Ahnung" for "sense" was the word he would repeatedly use to describe it to me.) During the first months of 1944, the traumatic effect of this inner—never open—admission allowed him a first understanding of the degree of his bondage to Hitler, the first step toward freeing himself from it.

It would not be possible to exaggerate the extent of Speer's exhaustion when he entered hospital that January, or the aggravation of the underlying illness while he was in the care of Himmler's close friend, Dr. Karl Gebhardt.

It was, of course, entirely consistent with his character that he did not give way to it for a long time. Later he would say that he had been medically mismanaged, and the medical records appear to bear this out. But whatever was wrong with the treatment he received, there can be no doubt that his insistence, for the first twenty days, on conducting—and controlling—the affairs of his ministry from his sickbed did not improve his state of health.

The intrigues at his ministry—basically emanating from those primarily loyal to the party (Dorsch, Todt's former personal assistant; Konrad Haase-mann, whom Speer had recently replaced as personnel chief; Fritz Sauckel, in charge of forced labor; and later the ambivalent Karl Saur)—had simmered throughout the last months of 1943.

"The hyenas," he told me, "had only waited. When my position with Hitler suddenly seemed vulnerable, they made ready to pounce."

Bormann, backed by Himmler, had already used Speer's absence at Christmas to dispose Hitler further against him; Hitler's open rejection of him at the January 4, 1944, labor meeting in Rastenburg had encouraged his opponents. And when they then heard that he was gravely ill, "there was no holding them," Speer said.

He had originally asked his friend Dr. Karl Brandt for advice about his increasingly swollen leg, and it was he who insisted that he should consult Dr. Gebhardt, a leading orthopedic surgeon with a state-of-the-art hospital at Hohenlychen, outside Berlin. "I knew Gebhardt was a personal friend of Himmler's," Speer told me, "but that, of course, wasn't a medical disqualifi-

cation. Until I learned it at Nuremberg, I had no idea that his hospital belonged to the SS or that, much worse than that, [deep freezing] experiments were carried out there on concentration camp prisoners."

Speer went to see Gebhardt in his hospital consulting room on the morning of January 18. He was immediately given a room in the hospital's north wing and ordered to bed. "On admission, January 18, 1944," Gebhardt's clinical notes say, "the patient appeared exhausted. Exceptionally taut swelling of the left knee joint. We immobilize the leg and apply arnica poultices. Diet: vegetarian and fruit."

When there was no improvement after five days, he ordered massive doses of sulfa. Eight days after admission, although Speer now showed general cold symptoms—bronchitis, hoarseness and nasal catarrh—and although the consultant's registrar suspected pleurisy, Gebhardt stuck to his diagnosis of rheumatoid inflammation of the left knee.

Although a retrospective study of Gebhardt's clinical reports clearly establishes that he misdiagnosed his patient, who either already on arrival had the beginnings of an embolism or developed it in the course of that week, it is highly doubtful that, given Speer's determination to continue working, any physician could have done much better.

"In Hitler's Germany," Speer told me, "it was not advisable for a Minister to get ill. First of all, nobody believed it. Because if Hitler, who hated sacking people, did fire one of his higher officials, it was invariably attributed to 'ill health.' The paradoxical result was that if you were *really* ill, you had to pretend to be well in order to avoid rumors of impending dismissal."

He therefore requisitioned three extra rooms in the private wing, had a direct telephone line connected to the Ministry switchboard and moved his two private secretaries, Kempf and Maguira, to Hohenlychen. He instructed the head of his Planning Department, Willy Liebel (who would be one of the first victims of the brewing palace revolution), and Liebel's deputy, Karl Hettlage, that all correspondence would continue to go out over his signature.

"We all tried to persuade him to rest," Annemarie told me, "but he was as if driven. I know what he has told you, and I know that you think that October 6, the Jews, Dora and all that was the cause, but I honestly can't say that my impression then was that specific. Yes, he was depressed, which was unprecedented for him, as indeed was this terrible fatigue. And even though we knew nothing about Himmler's terrible speech in Posen, of course he had told us about Dora, and we had seen for ourselves the effect that experience had, both on him and on those he had taken along.

"But I would be lying to you," she said, "if I said now that this was what I attributed his depression to at the time. No, I thought (naively, I know now)

"It Was Not)

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he was desperate—and desperately angry—about the intrigues against him at the Ministry, with people attempting to come between him and Hitler. These played havoc with the effectiveness of our work at a time when, more than ever before, everything—the whole war—depended on meticulous organization of production."

I asked if she thought then that he still believed in the war.

She shrugged. "That wasn't the point, was it?" she said. "What he could not bear—I think *really* could not bear—was to cease believing in Hitler, because of things like Dora." She hesitated for a moment, and then went on. "And I agreed with that, one hundred percent. Can you not understand that? If we couldn't believe in Hitler, what was there for us?"

She believed that the palace revolution at the Ministry was simply the attempt of the party to get into the one ministry where they had never been able to gain a real foothold. "It really is very difficult to explain the nuances," she said. "Yes, we were loyal National Socialists, certainly by conviction, even those who were not party members—and a lot of us in the Ministry weren't."

I asked how a man such as Dorsch, for instance, from a not entirely dissimilar background to Speer's, with at least some similar interests and talents, differed from Speer. She looked at me, momentarily surprised.

"First of all," she said, "Dorsch was an ideologue and Speer was an idealist. But more important, the difference was of course Hitler. Speer's idealism from the start had been focused, as countless others' were too, on this one man. But where it became different for Speer was when Hitler focused on *him*. This was when, I suppose you could say, Speer became his, body and soul. There really was nothing else—nothing unconnected with Hitler—in his life. Nothing can compare to the intensity of his feelings for Hitler, of their relationship. I wouldn't know how to describe to anyone Hitler's apparent lightness of spirit when they were together in the earlier years, or the quality of Speer's concern for him—concern even when he felt impatience or anger, later."

Everybody else she could think of among the leading personalities in the Third Reich, she said, however devoted they were to Hitler or to his cause, had other dimensions to their lives: their women, their children, their homes, other role models (such as Todt had been for Dorsch, she said) or even, as was the case for the army officers, other ideals. And for those who were totally dedicated to Hitler—such as Bormann, Goebbels and others, like Giesler—there was still the enormous difference that Hitler felt little or nothing for them.

Goebbels often commented in his diaries on Hitler's affection for him, I said.

She shook her head. "From what I read, or saw—never without a condi-

tional remark such as 'I *think* the Führer is fond of me' or even 'I'm so happy; he does *not try to hide* his affection for me.' " She laughed out loud. "Can you imagine Speer writing things like that? For him," she said, "it was all inside. He had no emotional lightning rod. There was no . . . no 'safety net' for Speer. So when he began to doubt, illness was his only answer, his only possible escape."

She was with him all the time at Hohenlychen but didn't notice any overt change in him. "Nothing was so . . . direct," she said. "How could it be? He was so ill, and anyway, I didn't have that kind of perceptiveness, not then. In a way, I was a lot like him: I didn't like sentimentality. It made me uncomfortable to ponder or talk about feelings, my own or other people's. I preferred facts, rationality. So what I saw most of all at that time was that people wanted to harm him. I still thought that 'harming' him meant setting Hitler against him. I was not clever enough to understand all the game playing that was going on.

"I never saw that basically it was about the succession, until months later, many months later, when Speer did things against Hitler for which any other man in Germany would have been executed. And when Speer saw Hitler for"—she paused briefly—"what he really was. . . ." Again she paused. "Can you imagine that I am *still* finding it difficult to say that? Anyway, when he understood that, and yet so obviously still couldn't abandon him. . . ." She paused once more, "They couldn't really give each other up, could they?" That's what it was all about. The people who tried to turn Hitler against Speer didn't know that, didn't understand that. Who could?"

When, lying in his hospital bed, Speer learned of the extent of the palace revolution being waged against him in Berlin, he first orchestrated a thorough investigation of all the circumstances and people involved. He telephoned his closest associates or brought them to Hohenlychen to see him, then wrote letters to the three main agitators against him.

To Dorsch he issued an ultimatum of virtual dismissal if he didn't toe the line. To Haasemann he explained his wrongdoings (and then had him arrested). To Bormann he wrote assuring him of his conviction that he ("who I know would consider it beneath your dignity to have anything to do with such backstairs intrigues") would be as appalled as Speer was by the disgusting means employed by disloyal employees. And on January 31 he wrote to Goebbels to inform him of the disloyalties in his ministry while he was incapacitated, asking for his active support on his return.

At the same time, he was not going to let Sauckel get out from under his control. On January 25 (by which date Gebhardt's clinical notes report a puzzling deterioration of Speer's general health), he dictated two letters to Sauckel:

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Brandt, who was not only Hitler's surgeon but Commissioner for Public Health, immediately ordered Gebhardt to have a room prepared for Koch and to hand Speer's care over to him.

The crisis came within hours, when Speer's temperature went up and traces of blood appeared in his sputum. In the night from February 11 to 12, his pulse went up to 120; his skin went blue, he hemorrhaged repeatedly and was in severe pain.

"We were all there," Margret said. "Koch took me outside and said I needed to prepare myself for the worst. Gebhardt hovered around until Koch more or less told him to go away. Those three days, from the eleventh to sometime on the thirteenth, he was hardly conscious," she said. "He looked dreadful. I thought he was dying."

Describing his illness in his book Speer merely said that while the doctors apparently feared the worst, he had been in a state of euphoria. But, he told me late one night, it had been much more than that.

"I have never been so happy in my life," he said. He was "above" he said, looking down at himself in bed. "I saw everything very clearly. The doctors and nurses hovering, and Margret, looking sort of soft and slim, her face small and pale. . . ."

I had never heard him speak of her like that; even the vocabulary was different from his usual words. "She sat on one side of the bed and kept winding a corner of a handkerchief around a finger. I felt myself smiling and very warm about her, and wondered whether she knew it. . . ."

"Did you see him smile?" I asked Margret later. "Of course not," she said tersely. "It was all in his mind."

"What Professor Koch and the nurses—two of them—were doing," Speer continued, "looked like a silent dance to me. The room was so beautiful. I can still visualize it very clearly now as I saw it then. It was really quite a small room, you know, with white varnished military wardrobes. Well, they changed into beautiful armoires. And the plain white ceiling was suddenly magnificently inlaid. All of it was big and white and airy, an airiness that also surrounded me where I was, quiet and light and wonderfully happy, happier than I ever was before or have ever been since."

He smiled at the memory. "I was not alone; there were many figures, all in white and light grey and there was music. . . . And then somebody said, 'Not yet.' And I realized they meant I had to go back and I said I didn't want to. But I was told I had to—it was not yet my time. What I felt then was not something I know how to describe. It wasn't just sadness, or disappointment—it was a long feeling of loss. . . ."

"Since then I've read books about this. In a way it was reassuring to read

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that other people have had such experiences. But although they sound very much alike, I'm somehow sure that they are actually very different. To this day I think that I felt things in those hours which the man I know myself to be cannot feel, or see, or say. I tell you one thing: I've never been afraid of death since. I'm certain it will be wonderful."

The morning after he told me this I asked Margret whether he had told her about that strange experience. Margret, a very no-nonsense sort of person—she had that in common with Speer—laughed out loud. "Yes, yes, he did," she said, a small note of mockery in her voice. Sitting nearby as we talked, Speer had heard her laugh. "She always laughed about it," he told me a little later when she had gone. "I think it embarrassed her."

Was it so surprising, I asked, that Margret should find something embarrassing that he himself had treated with considerable restraint in his book?

"Well," he said, now mocking himself, "I was supposed to be that super-rational man, you know, writing a definitive book on this terrible history of our time. What do you think readers would have said if in the middle of that book I had suddenly written that I am sure, sure to this day, that I died that night and came back to life? Can you imagine the fun the critics would have had with that?"

Nothing Speer wrote or said, to me or others, about the course of his illness was essentially untrue. The facts as he reported on them in the Nuremberg and Spandau drafts, and in his books, may differ slightly in insignificant details but otherwise coincide. What he saw in a different perspective, in retrospect, are his feelings.

The facts are plain enough. His last night sleeping in the freezing open air in Lapland reactivated an old knee injury, which had occasionally given him trouble ever since his youth. "If I had just taken the weight off my leg and rested until it recovered," he told me, "that would probably have been the end of it. But as you can imagine, that was impossible."

There is no doubt that the inflammation which put him in hospital on January 18, 1944, developed from this old familiar trouble. On two previous occasions overstrain of the troublesome knee had led to a need for bedrest and anti-inflammatory drugs.

What was different here was that this basically simple medical problem was almost fatally aggravated by his state of mind. This was an escalation of the pattern established many years before, in his childhood. As he told me, when his unhappiness about his parents' indifference and his brothers' cruelty became unbearable, he would become "terribly hot, then very cold and then, boom," he would faint. Twenty years later, when Hitler called him the great architect that he knew in his inner being he was not, his terror of being

bentrop replied, "Certainly: they either have to be killed off or sent to concentration camps." After this, Hitler, lecturing the Hungarian head of state in an academic tone of voice, made his one public admission of the massacre of the Jews:

In Poland this state of affairs has been . . . cleared up: if the Jews there did not *want* to work, they were shot. If they *could* not work, they were treated like tuberculosis bacilli with which a healthy body may become infected. This is not cruel if one remembers that even innocent creatures of nature, such as hares and deer when infected, have to be killed so that they cannot damage others. Why should the beasts who wanted to bring us Bolshevism be spared more than these innocents?

Now Horthy was told there was no more room for discussion. An air raid was faked, and all telephone communication with countries to the East was cut, forcing Hungary's head of state to remain at Klessheim for twenty-four hours, the time needed to move in occupation troops virtually to ring the Hungarian capital, and for Himmler to get his SD and SS organizers and Einsatzgruppen to Budapest to begin the deportation of Hungary's eight hundred thousand Jews.

Speer told me he had known nothing of the subjects being discussed with Horthy, though the potential usefulness of the many well-trained Hungarian Jews for German armament production had of course repeatedly arisen in past months. He thought the March conference with Horthy was primarily caused by Hitler's determination to keep Hungary on the Axis side.

Following the events in Posen on October 6 and at Dora on December 10, this was, to put it mildly, a disingenuous reply. It is unlikely that he did not know about German demands for Hungarian Jews for road building as early as October 1942, and the shameful agreement in March 1943 under which the Hungarian government sent thousands of foreign-born Jews into horrific labor battalions on the Eastern front.

Even though the Hungarians had been slow to agree to radical deportations of their own Jews, Hitler's ruthless handling of Horthy at Klessheim that March day in 1944 (the fragile regent suffered a minor heart seizure there) quickly bore fruit. Within days a Jewish Commissariat was established in the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior, the dreaded Arrow Cross (Fascist Party) was given liaison power between the Hungarian police and German security services, ghettos began to be established in all major Hungarian towns (except, at first, in Budapest), and the order was given to deliver 50,000 Jews for labor in the Reich in April and 50,000 more in May. The success of these orders exceeded expectations, and by May 6, six weeks after

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Klessheim, 200,000 grown to 320,000.

More relevant to this question, was that those who had regulated and kept him informed of the construction of huge projects called Jäger Program, opposed by Speer. Himmler to find others. Not only is it in line with Speer, but his mention in his reconstruction program, SS Gruppen.

In reply to Speer, Jews were "on the way" to the bunker sites where Auschwitz did indeed yet again (as Speer lied) children, women, give him considerable Eastern workers already by immediate from Poland and then in factories and on comparatively benefited on faked projects. There they came under increasing construction labor.

Some of these even to Klessheim on March 6 and December to Klessheim.

"By that time the four months," Margot on the nineteenth, so could hardly spend night—Hitler, Saur, how many generals—

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Klessheim, 200,000 people had been deported. By May 15, that number had grown to 320,000.

More relevant to Speer, and his less-than-candid reply to me in 1978 on this question, was the fact that Field Marshal Milch was one of his few associates who had regularly visited him at Hohenlychen, Klessheim and Meran, and kept him informed of all developments. This certainly applied to the construction of huge underground bunkers for airplane construction, the so-called Jäger Program, which had been under discussion for months, though opposed by Speer. Milch was told by Hitler on April 9 that he had instructed Himmler to find one hundred thousand Hungarian Jews to build the bunkers. Not only is it impossible that Milch would not have discussed this order with Speer, but his complete awareness of this plan from the start is documented in his recorded conference with Himmler's supervisor of the Jäger Program, SS Gruppenführer Hans Kammler, six weeks later, on May 26.

In reply to Speer's question, Kammler informed him that the Hungarian Jews were "on the way," and that the first two transports would be ready for the bunker sites within days. When these transports from Hungary via Auschwitz did indeed arrive at the work sites, it was found that they were all yet again (as Speer had complained in his letter to Sauckel four months earlier) children, women and old men. This led to Speer's order—which was to give him considerable trouble at Nuremberg—that a further ninety thousand Eastern workers already in Germany were to be taken into "protective custody by immediate special action" by Himmler's SD. This meant that men from Poland and the Ukraine, many of whom had come voluntarily to work in factories and on the land and had been in Germany for years under the comparatively benign authority of the German Workers' Front, were arrested on faked pretexts or none at all and sent to concentration camps. There they came under the control of the SS, to be assigned to the backbreaking construction labor in the underground bunkers.

Some of these events were, of course, still in the future when Speer came to Klessheim on March 18, 1944. Nonetheless, the basis for them already existed and, together with his memories of what he heard and saw on October 6 and December 10, could not fail to be in Speer's mind when he came to Klessheim.

"By that time the children hadn't seen hide or hair of Albert for nearly four months," Margret told me. "It was going to be his birthday the next day, on the nineteenth, so I brought them down to see him. But even that day they could hardly spend any time with him; he saw people from morning to night—Hitler, Saur, Himmler, von Below, that awful Morell, God knows how many generals—and then of course the usual crowd, his team: Frau



"No, I didn't. Koch had done every possible test, and all vital signs were entirely normal. No, what it showed me, and believe me the very thought made my heart sink, was that the intrigues against me had anything but abated. The party—Bormann and company, and their man Dorsch—dis-trusted me. Himmler quite rightly considered me a threat to his plans and would have had me killed, or let me conveniently die if he could have—and Hitler, well, Hitler had been under tremendous pressure for months from all of them to let me go."

But he himself was deeply discouraged with the whole situation. Obvious questions arose: Why didn't he just use the illness as a convenient and safe pretext to leave? Why didn't Hitler who had, at the very least, come to feel uncomfortable about him, just pension him off with good wishes?

When I put these questions to him, he shook his head as if bewildered. "You are right," he said. "Logically it is inexplicable, from either him or me. This morning, I reread what I wrote about it in my book. It is quite childish, isn't it? Here he had come to see me three times in those five days—at Klessheim that first night, then on my birthday with a huge bunch of flowers, and yet again on my last day to say goodbye—and all I could do in my book was complain about his apparent lack of appreciation for what I had done for him in the past as an architect and Minister. I think I was terribly dependent on him, even then. Not for power, as my critics have written. That really wasn't the point."

I interrupted him, to point out that he himself had told me that power was a major factor.

"It was a factor," he said, "but I now think that Hitler's main effect on me, from the start, was that he gave me faith in myself."

Was that all it was? I asked.

He smiled at me, a real smile. "No, you are quite right; that wasn't all," he said. "There is a lot I have learned to understand since, above all that for some mysterious reason neither he nor I could give each other up. I know now, as long as he lived, I would have been drawn to him. And I suppose as long as I lived, there was something about me he needed."

IN *Inside the Third Reich*—again very different from his "Span-dau draft"—he has little positive to say about that long, happy holiday in Meran. On the other hand his story about Gebhardt's presence in Meran, both in the draft and in the book, conflicts curiously with surviving historical documentation.

Gebhardt, he wrote (in both places), had resisted for weeks Speer's plans to leave Hohenlychen and convalesce in South Tyrol. It was finally only when



occupied territories." And he suggested appointing his best construction engineer, Walter Brugmann, whom Hitler knew well from the building projects in Nuremberg and Berlin, as overall director of construction.

Gerhard Fränk, a longtime colleague of Speer's and chief administrator of a Ministry section, who had been staying with him in Meran, delivered the letter into Hitler's hands that evening, April 19. Hitler's senior secretary, Johanna Wolf, told Speer on the phone later that night that Hitler had been furious about it. "Even Speer has to realize that there is such a thing as political tactics," he said.

("Hitler rejected this proposal," Speer wrote in *Inside the Third Reich*. "Five weeks later, on May 26, 1944, Brugmann was killed like my predecessor Todt in an unexplained plane crash." Speer was being a bit naughty here, for it was an accident, not an "unexplained crash." Wolters in his *Segments of a Life* wrote that "Brugmann's plane, flying low through a mountain pass in foggy weather, collided with treetops and exploded on impact.")

Speer immediately telephoned General Milch, who had just arrived on the Obersalzberg in preparation for Hitler's birthday the next day, and asked him to tell Hitler that he was resigning.

"By the next morning, extraordinarily enough," Speer said, "my offer to Hitler to resign had got around like wildfire. First Göring phoned me to say that I couldn't do that—except, of course, for reasons of health. And then, even before lunch that April 20, Walter Rohland arrived. Was I out of my mind? he asked. How could I even conceive of leaving industry in the lurch, at the mercy of those who might follow me? And then he brought up the specter of a desperate Hitler ordering wholesale destruction of the country's living potential, as Stalin—so admired for it by Hitler—had done so efficiently in Russia. If for no other reason, Rohland said, I would have to stay to do what I could to prevent the worst. Nobody else could."

This was not the first time he and Rohland (or he and Milch) had admitted to each other that the war was lost. "But it was somehow the first time that anyone suggested the madness of 'scorched earth,'" Speer told me. "And somehow that gave me suddenly a different perspective. I don't know how to explain it, but for the first time, I think, I stopped thinking of myself and thought only of our country—of the people. You know, all those terrible months in 1943, when on my many trips I saw so much destruction, can you believe that I never thought of people then? Of what it was doing to them? I only thought of my damned factories. It was as if imagination had died in me—do you know what I mean? Well, that day, as I sat in the garden with Rohland, the unending waves of unopposed Allied planes overhead in that blue sky, my children's voices from where they played and Margret's and Clara's [the housekeeper] in the kitchen, suddenly, for the first time in years,

THE FIRST WEEKS after the invasion in Normandy, Speer said, were among the most extraordinary ones he remembered. On the face of it, one catastrophe had followed another, but at the Berghof, camouflage nets notwithstanding, life returned to its customary cozy superficiality. Generals and politicians came and went but hardly interfered with the normal early summer on "The Mountain." Hitler slept late, hardly ever appearing before noon for the situation report. The ladies, Eva Braun, the secretaries and the intimates' young wives—Margret Speer, Anni Brandt, Maria von Below—took the sun on the terrace. During luncheon Hitler, never a word of present disasters passing his lips, remembered past glories. Even the afternoon walks to the teahouse were resumed, if now under the eyes of guards posted at regular intervals, at a discreet distance from the path. And at night, though films had been forbidden for the duration, there was the usual late tea with music and chitchat around the fireplace, the air scented by the slowly burning logs and the smell of cut grass from the open windows.

"As you can see," Speer said, "it was not only I who lived a schizophrenic existence. We all did, Hitler perhaps most of all."

Nicolaus von Below's description of the strangely unruffled atmosphere at the Berghof in those catastrophic months of June and July is very similar to Speer's. Four weddings were celebrated that spring, in three of them the marriage ceremony performed by Himmler.

Below's wife, Maria, stayed with him at the Berghof from February until Hitler went back to Rastenburg in mid-July, and most evenings Hitler, taking their arms, would take her and Margret Speer in to dinner. Eva Braun, taking Speer's arm, or in his absence, Bormann's (whom she was said to detest), would always sit on Hitler's left, the other two alternately on his right.

"He was actually very good at conversation," Maria von Below told me. "How shall I put it and not be misunderstood? He was very warm, very personal. It is true—though I only realized this later—there wasn't much variety in his personal conversations with us. With me, or Margret Speer or Anni Brandt, he would ask about the children, be quite interested, I thought, in little stories about them, respond with laughter or understanding nods. In my case he often asked me how things were going for my parents who were running their largish estate. I remember once, without meaning to complain or anything, I said they were running short of oil. Later that night, without telling me, he told Bormann to get some supplies to them. He was thoughtful that way.

"He was very, very concerned about the young people around him—you know, like us young wives. He didn't want us to be worried about anything.

It is hard to talk or even think about him so personally now, when I have my own terrible doubts and my own sadness—as Klaus had too, until he died—about what we lived for, and didn't, couldn't do. But for anyone who wasn't there, who didn't share this experience then and therefore our inner conflicts later, it must be entirely unacceptable to have me speak of him like an ordinary man. I know it has to be unacceptable to my children.

"But we were of course quite isolated. We depended entirely on each other, socially and emotionally. Anni Brandt and I went to Salzburg a few times, but even that so rarely that now, after all these years, I remember each occasion. You see, when you stayed at the Berghof, you didn't treat it like a hotel. You were always a community: Hitler's cook cooked for you, his maids took care of your clothes, your mending—you *lived* there and, like in many families, you were never really on your own except in your bedroom."

I asked if her husband told her about decisions that were made, about what Hitler planned.

"Up to a point, yes," she said. "It really wasn't possible to have secrets between us, especially when we were living at the Berghof for extended periods. We hardly saw each other except in Hitler's company, so Klaus and I would really only talk about such things, or talk at all, in our room."

Did they lower their voices, whisper? I asked. She looked at me, surprised. "Whisper? No, we didn't whisper," she said, and then smiled to take the sting out of her tone. "Klaus and I were always pretty quiet, so you know, we just talked. It would never have occurred to us that anyone would try to listen. I assure you, nobody ever did—nobody in that house would ever have listened at doors." She shrugged and then smiled again as if mocking herself for the thought. "Or looked through keyholes. I mean, it's unthinkable; it was all terribly proper, terribly homey."

Homey? Even during those months in 1944?

"Extraordinarily, yes, even then. We were all so glad to be together. . . ."

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He was now clinging to a new plan, a huge new offensive on the Western front with fresh tank divisions and new fighter squadrons. I thought this was quite wrong, and I think anybody else in Germany would have thought the same. I said right away why not use all these fresh troops against the Russians instead? He replied that he could do that later, but not if the Americans got to the middle of Germany. First, he said, he had to secure the Western borders. [Below argued that surely the first priority was to hold the Russians beyond the old German frontiers] . . . but Hitler didn't agree with that: he gave me to understand that he feared the influence of the Jews in America much more than the power of the Bolsheviks.

In the aftermath of the July coup, Hitler, abandoning even the last vestiges of reliance on the army, had appointed Himmler commander of the Replacement Army (replacing Fromm) and Goebbels Reich Commissioner for Total Mobilization of Resources for War. But within less than two months, Goebbels, eagerly supported by the party fanatics Bormann and Ley, and by Himmler, vastly expanded his domain, basically taking on the functions of a defense minister, for which he was entirely unsuited.

Passionately adopting Hitler's own blind spots, Goebbels now made his obsession the enlargement of the armed forces. As his diary entries demonstrate, this put him on a collision course with Speer:

September 2, 1944: Speer rings from HQ [where Hitler had ordered that all services, including the armament industry, had to supply men for the army] complaining once again. . . . He tells me the Führer wants 300,000 men at once. . . . Göring will give us 100,000 from the Luftwaffe, Speer says he [can only find] 50,000. But I intend to persuade the Führer not to let Speer pick the raisins out of the cake.

September 3, 1944: . . . The Führer has decided: Speer has to give us 100,000 men, now.

September 20, 1944: . . . Conference with Speer who brought Field Marshal Milch along for support and becomes very stubborn. I try again to explain to him that the choice is not between having ammunition or soldiers, but to have arms and soldiers. Without soldiers the war can't be carried on . . . and the armament industry is now the only place where we can find large numbers of deferred men. . . . What we are calling up now only covers the most essential needs of the Wehrmacht. We have no intention to confront the enemy with unarmed soldiers. . . . Speer's position is to make sure that the new divisions we are creating are properly equipped. . . .

Speer still hasn't learned: I, in any case, will now be more reserved with him. I think we have allowed this young man to become too big. . . . I'm not impressed with his constant talk of historical responsibility and his threats to resign . . . it is entirely un-National Socialist behavior.

Goebbels's quarrel early 1945 even Goebbels' influence to the fate and in degree of collaboration

THE CLOSING knowledge about guilt feelings about his system he served. In Gauleiter of Lower Silesia green leather easy chair, sitting with many stances, to accept an Silesia, which Speer's

He had seen some moreover could not I did not query Hitler—tigate—for I did not have been speaking Hanke was warning [author's italics]. To the International member of the lead for all that had had tainted morally made me turn from day, responsible for

When we talked that for Hanke the news in the summer of Breslau, its capital, the old city office conference in October

"I can only cite war and weary, as it always do in the book, or in

This was a response had voluntarily accepted the government he had

had done it, no individual in legal history, before or afterwards, had elected to declare himself guilty in principle, even for criminal acts in which he had had no part and of which, by implication, he had had no knowledge.

My skeptical question about Hanke's knowledge, I decided later, was perhaps unfair. It was possible that Hanke *could* have received a shock in Auschwitz that early summer. For although he would certainly have been familiar with this nearby installation, Germany's largest labor-cum-concentration camp, it is very probable that he had never seen Birkenau, Auschwitz's death camp, which was certainly not on the program for visiting VIPs. And although the smell of burning bodies spread "for miles around," all labor camps had a great many dead bodies to deal with, and crematoria to burn them. It is also conceivable that Hanke, while aware of the murder of Jews by shooting, working and starving them to death, had not known about that unspeakable horror that not even Himmler could pronounce: the gas chambers.

But between May 15 and June 30, 1944, 380,000 Hungarian Jews arrived in Auschwitz. More than a third of them were sent to work in the armament industry's new underground factories—the "hundred thousand" Himmler had promised Hitler (and Speer) a few months before. About 250,000 of them—useless for work—were gassed (or when the gas chambers proved insufficient, shot) at the rate of 6,000 a day. To prepare for these huge transports, new commandants had been assigned, both to Auschwitz itself and to Birkenau—Richard Bär and Josef Kramer, crude, ruthless men who could be relied on to dispose of this last mass of Eastern Orthodox Jews from the Hungarian countryside.

Other *Sonderaktionen* (special actions) over the preceding two years had been routinely carried out in Birkenau, fifteen kilometers away from the main camp, but these sudden immense movements of people could not be camouflaged. For their arrival a special branch line of the State Railway—the Reichsbahn—had been laid, with the debarkation point within two hundred yards of the gas chambers and crematoria. Selections were carried out within sight of the women's barracks in the main camp. Not only the one hundred thousand slave laborers and their thousands of SS guards knew about the Hungarian Jews, but so did the railway personnel and the German armament workers, many of them friendly and helpful, next to whom the foreign slaves, both Christians and Jews, worked in the I.G. Farben and Krupp factories in the main camp.

In this situation it is entirely possible that Gauleiter Hanke, on a routine visit to Auschwitz during those weeks, could indeed have received the kind of shock that Speer described. He was not, after all, a brute—Speer said elsewhere that Hanke "had shown himself a man of compassion and directness." Below was also a friend, and wrote, "I valued Hanke . . . we had talked to-

Scorched Earth

gether a great deal over the course of his mind."

But questions still arise about the situation at Auschwitz. And finally, why did we had been focusing so much on the 20 coup attempt?

It was when I neared the end of the war that I realized that this story was what Casalis had called a "despairing knowledge." Under Casalis's guidance, the moral mandate had been to act with unavowed knowledge. In his book, he had tried to show that the world was not as it was in a wholly personal way.

IF SPEER

ordinary young German with a conscience, worth remembering even in the darkest of times.

When I talked to him before the war, in a small room in winter. The windows were closed, but the feeling in the room was busy consulting room between this bearded elderly man and his grown children.

But here, remarkable crimes under the Nazi regime, because of the need ever since to question the past.

His father had held a position that he never got involved with. Munich. "And my mother was a Christian because they were and the Nazis because they were days—otherwise one could not have lived against my whole family and the country to be out of the country."

"I was and am, however, a German," he added. Although assigned early in the war to take over two older doctors' practices, by late 1942 he felt embarrassed to be safe when others were serving in the forces. One day in Munich, he said, he bumped into a former classmate who was in the Waffen SS. "He told me he could get something for me pretty quickly in his outfit, in one of my specialties, pathology."

Within weeks his friend got him an appointment, and after a brief basic SS training course he was posted to Rajsko, a medical institute which was part of Auschwitz. He was told (quite correctly) that he would be conducting research into the control of epidemics. "I was so ignorant," he said, "I let my wife travel with me as far as Auschwitz station; we had a meal there, and then she went back. I just didn't know I was going to a concentration camp."

He certainly found out in a hurry. Apart from one other SS pathologist, the whole staff in the installation he now headed—seventy-one men and a few women—were Auschwitz prisoners. Many of them had been eminent scientists in Poland and France, and 90 percent of them, he was soon told, were Jews. "I wouldn't have known the difference," he claims, and he certainly got on with them well enough.

"He treated us as human beings," one survivor said on German TV later. "He shook hands with us on arrival, and addressed us as '*Herr Doktor*' or '*Herr Professor*'—it was unheard of."

By June 1943, typhoid and typhus epidemics were ravaging the prisoner population (about one hundred thousand people, mostly working in armament factories nearby) and beginning to endanger the seven thousand SS guards. The task of Münch's hygienic institute, about fifteen kilometers from the main camp (as were many of the thirty-one subcamps), was to find effective mass immunization methods. He does not deny that he experimented on prisoners at Auschwitz's infamous Block 10, the barrack where the abominable Dr. Mengele carried out his sterilizations and obscene experiments on twins and others. "But my injections and vaccinations," said Münch, "were totally harmless. On the contrary, the patients got supplementary rations."

He was aware of the other experiments that were being carried out, and soon found out about the gassings at nearby Birkenau, where his patients would end up when he had finished with them, extra rations or not. "One was always aware of the smell of burning," he said. "Everyone for miles around knew about it. I have always been mystified that I had not known about it before. Perhaps because Auschwitz was so huge, with the main emphasis always on getting the maximum of work out of the prisoners, the details of the actual killings in Birkenau, a comparatively small installation, didn't go far beyond the district." But despite the constant enjoiners for secrecy, it would have been impossible not to know about them, he said.

Scorched Earth

He had refused to walk into the gas chambers & death moans. "A sound

All the SS officers, 1 Final Solution, he said, side." He was speaking somehow accentuated doubt of it—of his own many times before, but within, to say it again, officers, while acknowledging Western European social resettlement in remote

I asked if he himself "I knew you would not don't think I can. You soldier life at all. I have no even if I had theoretical would not have associated did take part, I cannot with 'no.'"

But Münch also appeared who, to him, was not a medicine," he said. "For doctor there of quality with," he said with a resolute "He was an ideologue showed no hate or fanatical rational solution, and as not to use them first for

He didn't agree with with that extraordinary unique. I found his mind him, sought him out, so

In mid-1944, by whom Kramer, had taken over that since, with the arrangement, overworked, the two Reich died, and would now have train to Berlin that very chief that doing that was

He had refused to watch gassings, but he had seen victims being pushed into the gas chambers and, on one occasion, passing by, he had heard their death moans. "A sound like no other," he said. "Very soft."

All the SS officers, particularly the doctors, talked endlessly about the Final Solution, he said, "more openly, much more freely than on the outside." He was speaking in a kind of monotonously recitative tone that somehow accentuated the horror, not only of the words but—I had no doubt of it—of his own feelings enunciating them. He had said most of this many times before, but one sensed his need, the pressure on him from within, to say it again, and then no doubt again and again. "Many of the officers, while acknowledging the necessity of removing the Jews from Western European society, deplored the gassings and would have preferred resettlement in remote areas."

I asked if he himself "acknowledged" such a "necessity"?

"I knew you would ask that," he said, sadly. "I would like to say no, but I don't think I can. You see, thinking about that had not been part of my earlier life at all. I have no excuse, I seek no excuses, except I think I can say that even if I had theoretically agreed, as so many others did, I think I somehow would not have associated it to people, to human beings. But I was there, and did take part, I cannot—I don't have the right now to—answer your question with 'no.'"

But Münch also appeared unable to condemn the monstrous Mengele, who, to him, was not a monster. "He was exceptionally knowledgeable about medicine," he said. "From the scientific point of view, he was the only SS doctor there of quality." He paused. "For me, he was very worth talking with," he said with a resigned kind of honesty.

"He was an ideologue, body and soul," he said. "Never any emotion; he showed no hate or fanaticism. And in this way he saw the gassings as the only rational solution, and as the Jews were going to die anyway, he saw no reason not to use them first for medical experiments."

He didn't agree with this monstrous reasoning, he said, yet again added with that extraordinary frankness, "but he fascinated me. He was entirely unique. I found his mind irresistible. I have to admit that I wanted to be with him, sought him out, so I cannot now claim that I didn't like him."

In mid-1944, by which time the brutish new commandants, Bär and Kramer, had taken over, he was finally forced to take a stand. It was decided that since, with the arrival of the Hungarian Jews, all the SS doctors were overworked, the two Rajsko research physicians had been sufficiently coddled, and would now have to take part in the selections. "I took the night train to Berlin that very evening," said Münch, "and I told my department chief that doing that was against all my ethical principles and that I refused.

He said he, too, had children and would have refused, that certainly I didn't have to, and he telephoned Bar then and there and told him so."

A few weeks later Münch's young assistant, Dr. Hans Delmod, fairly recently arrived from an SS elite college, also refused. "But they finally, quite gently and subtly, tricked him into it," Münch said. "First they agreed to excuse him if besides his institute work he took double shifts on the camp roster. Then, when he was exhausted by these triple shifts, they invited his young wife, a beautiful blonde, to come and stay at Rajsko. With some help from her he was talked around, and in the end he agreed to take part in the selections." Delmod committed suicide as soon as the war ended, and one senses a deep sense of guilt in Münch at Delmod's fate.

At the end of the war forty Auschwitz doctors were arrested by the Russians and handed over to the Poles. The trial in Krakow, Poland, ended on December 22, 1947, with twenty-three of the accused sentenced to death, six to life imprisonment and ten to prison for between three and fifteen years. Münch alone was acquitted. Nineteen former prisoners had testified in his favor.

Since then he has not ceased to question himself and to lay himself open to questions from others, even though his wife begged him to stop. "I can't stand it anymore," she said to me. "What is the point of his torturing himself?"

Was she sure that it wasn't an unavoidable need for him, rather than a torture? I asked.

"Well, perhaps," she said. "But then it's self-indulgence, and it is torture for me. Do you think it's nice for me to hear about this day after day? And the children—he owes something to us too."

"I know she feels like that," Münch said. "But how can I stop? To stop talking about it is the same as to stop thinking about it. But I have to think about it; I have to understand. How could I stand it?" he said. "I could have left; I could have deserted, gone to Switzerland. True, I would have had to leave my family behind. I couldn't have got us all across. But even so, how could I, as a human being, bear to stay?"

In an eerie echo of Speer, he added, "I cannot understand myself, and somehow I must understand. I must find the answer, before the end."

BY THE AUTUMN of 1944, all but the most benighted of the Nazi leaders had seen the writing on the wall. Even Himmler, first via General Karl Wolff and then through contacts in Sweden, was using the Hungarian Jews as bait to enter into negotiations with the Western Allies. The worst horrors were nearly over.

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rected from Lublin, had finished their terrible work by the autumn of 1943, and were dismantled by October that year. Majdanek, though an appalling place where many thousands died, some eventually by gassing, was mainly a labor camp and survived until the Russians occupied Lublin in July 1944.

When the Russians announced what they found when they overran Majdanek and the other extermination camp sites, one month after the last of those 250,000 Hungarian Jews who had arrived in May and June were gassed at Auschwitz, Himmler virtually stopped exterminations. The last transports arrived in Birkenau in September 1944; the last selection for the gas chambers was at the end of October. On November 26, he ordered the Auschwitz crematoria to be destroyed. By this time the evacuation of the remaining inmates—a terrifying *Völkerwanderung* (mass migration) on foot in the freezing cold of initially about 30,000 men, women and children to concentration camps further west or south—had long been under way, ending in the deaths of many thousands of them. On January 18, 1945, eight days before the Russians arrived, the last 64,000 Auschwitz "walking" inmates were set en route for camps in the German interior. The Russians upon arrival found only some 3,000 invalids.

The final accounting for the tragedy of Auschwitz includes many hundreds of thousands of slave laborers of all religions and from many nations, not primarily Jews, who died in Auschwitz of starvation, overwork, maltreatment and disease. Gerald Reitlinger, in his classic book, *The Final Solution* (1968), estimated that 800,000 Jews were gassed in Birkenau. Recent figures (1993) from the Polish authorities indicate a total death toll in Auschwitz-Birkenau of between 1,100,000 and 1,500,000, about 90 percent of them Jews.

BY THE END of 1944 Speer was working at full stretch in two almost diametrically opposite directions. On the one hand, even though he knew that the end was imminent and that Hitler's program was evil, he continued his efforts to produce arms for his war. He undertook three trips to the West, combining bolstering visits to industrial centers and conferences with the generals at the front, whom he urged to "clean up" (regain or protect from Allied incursion) areas vital to continued production. He wrote to Hitler on November 11, after returning from the Ruhr:

However problematic the situation now is and however hopeless any improvement may seem, we must absolutely persevere. We will do the utmost to win this battle for the Ruhr, decisive for the fate of our Reich.

On November 15, he flew back to the Ruhr, visiting Krupp in Essen, Dortmund, Bochum, the fuel plants at Scholven and Geisenberg, the power plant

spent most of his time traveling, with Speer and Poser when joint persuasion on the spot was indicated, but also frequently on his own. Putting himself at considerable risk, he used his personal reputation and, just as Speer had hoped, his close contacts with the party administrators to help him stem Hitler's avalanche of destruction.

On December 1, 1944, Speer gave his last speech to the heads of the armament commissions and his ministry, pretending an optimism he certainly couldn't have felt. A week later, having himself overseen the transport to the front of almost ten million liters of fuel wrested from plants temporarily repaired between bombings, he addressed the soldiers at the front in similar terms of reassurance.

By the beginning of January, however, the Ardennes offensive lost, he finally accepted that it was over. Speer and Poser spent the last week of the year at the front, where they found that even the stalwart Sepp Dietrich had lost faith in Hitler. Their return to headquarters on New Year's Eve was nightmarish—constantly taking shelter from fighter planes, it took them twenty-two hours to drive the two hundred miles to Ziegenberg, now HQ for Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, Chief of Staff West.

They were given rooms three miles away at Göring's castle, Kransberg. At 2:30 a.m. at Felsenest, the modest Western headquarters Speer had built when Hitler rejected the lavish Castle Ziegenberg, he found the usual intimate circle assembled. "Adjutants, secretaries and doctors," he said, "all with champagne glasses in hand which had obviously been refilled many times, all valiantly trying to appear to celebrate the turn of the year. The atmosphere was somehow made even worse by Hitler's histrionic optimism and everybody's desperate attempt to appear to believe him." ("The contrast between this grotesque performance," he wrote in Spandau, "and what I had seen over the past days at the front was truly eerie.")

Already for weeks Hitler's moods had been totally unpredictable. Below wrote that around Christmas, anticipating the Ardennes defeat,

Hitler had been in a state of despair. I stayed with him late one night [because] I had never seen him in such a state before, nor ever again either. He talked about killing himself; that the last chance had gone; that the Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht had betrayed him. I know the war is lost, he said. The other side is too strong, we cannot match them. . . .

A little later he made a 180-degree turn—it was frightening. We would never capitulate, he said. We might sink, but we'd take the world with us. I've never forgotten that night, have never mentioned it to anyone until I'm writing this now. This was when I realized for good that he would never compromise and that he would take everyone down with him. . . .

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"That New Year's night," Speer told me, "he seemed to react with an almost hysterical exhilaration to that awful gloom around him. As you know, he never drank—but that night he seemed drunk."

In the armament conference which began January 3, Speer made one more try. When Hitler, enthusiastically seconded by Bormann and Goebbels, said that this was the right moment for total conscription, for putting every male capable of holding a gun into the army, Speer said that that would simply mean bringing all remaining industry to a dead stop. If Hitler wanted to continue the war, industry, the railroad, communications and their workers had to be kept as intact as was humanly possible.

He lost. What was needed was *soldiers*, they said, and if Speer couldn't see that, screamed Goebbels ("Hitler nodding, his eyes glistening," was Speer's description to me), then he would bear the blame for a lost war. "After that," Speer said, "I gave up. I just sat there, and Hitler directed his irrational remarks to Saur."

It was Saur, unfailingly compliant, who would attend the increasingly pointless armament conferences from then on while Speer ("I avoided Führer HQ like the plague," he said), appalled by Hitler's ever more radical orders, traveled from one end of the not yet conquered areas to the other, concentrating on preventing the orders for destruction from being carried out.

On January 19, 1945, reminding the Party Chancellery in a letter of his orders of months before, he succeeded once more in deflecting the destruction of industry in favor of immobilization. But Goebbels was making good propaganda use of the drastic Morgenthau Plan,* and after the Yalta Conference on February 4, when the Allies confirmed their determination for unconditional surrender and announced their intention to break up Germany into three zones (later four) of occupation, Hitler countered with the announcement of all or nothing: Germany must win or be obliterated. From now on, he said, when Speer handed him yet another memorandum telling him that the war was lost and that there was no alternative to negotiation, such an utterance would be considered treason and punished accordingly.

Within weeks, Hitler would decide on a gigantic evacuation program. All Germans, East and West, were to be taken out of the endangered areas. During the last weeks, Goebbels in his diary would question time and again the feasibility of that order:

*The plan drafted by Henry Morgenthau, the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, and initiated by Churchill and Roosevelt, was to convert Germany after defeat into an agricultural country with a minimum of industry, so that it could never again threaten the peace of the world.

it had been altered to have the air intake come in ten feet high, on top of a chimney-like structure.

"That put an end to it," Speer told me, "and you know, I was very relieved. It was an impulse of despair, but I would never really have done it. I couldn't have."

I asked if that was because of his feelings for Hitler, or because of the danger?

He thought for a long moment. "Both, I think." There was a small, uncertain smile I had noticed before when he found himself confronted by a question the answer to which he hadn't really worked out. "I think I was afraid, for myself and also for my family. But I'm not sure that that was the primary reason for my relief. You see, the curious thing, throughout those two weeks when I thought of little else, was that whenever I could get back to Berlin I almost particularly sought Hitler's company. At the time perhaps I thought it was a safety precaution. But later I didn't think that was the answer. I think I needed to be near him; his nearness and his death were in some way"—he suddenly laughed briefly, that nervous laugh I often heard when he was embarrassed hearing himself say something high-flown or emotional—"fused together." He shrugged. "It's again that same thing, isn't it? That division in myself, my"—again that laugh—"my schizophrenia about him?"

I suspect that the weeks he was pondering this fantasy was a very low point for Speer. And it was during this period that he went on a particularly strenuous trip taking in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Danzig and Silesia, in all these places mustering support for his anti—"scorched earth" measures.

At the end of this trip, perhaps at the limit of his strength, he made another trip, which appears neither in the "Spandau draft" nor in *Inside the Third Reich*. This was to Landsberg in Bavaria (the town where Hitler was imprisoned in 1924), where, as an extension of the Dora Jäger Program in the Harz, an engineering miracle had been accomplished with the creation of a series of underground factories for the production of the Me-262 turbojet.

Rudolf Neuhaus, a slight man with an almost aggressively neutral personality, was one of the building engineers in charge of this unprecedentedly sophisticated monster construction. "They called us to Munich in May 1944 to meet with Dorsch, executive head of the OT, Professor Franz Dischinger, the inventor of shell construction, and representatives of the building industry," he told me in Landsberg in 1987. "They told us we were to build three underground factories, the first, in Landsberg, to be ready by November. The five-floor bunkers were to be 27 meters high, 400 meters long and 84 meters wide. Each bunker would require the removal of more than a million cubic meters of earth and used 372,000 cubic meters of concrete, 130,000 tons of cement

Scorched Earth

and 7,500 tons of steel ten thousand German.

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tion when a train arrived for the [labor] camp, and I saw that almost half of the people were dead. I was horrified. I demanded that the train be held there until I could find out what had happened. Telexes went to and fro, between us and Dachau, and then us and the Ministry [Speer's]. Everybody said it was not their fault or not their business. . . . Finally I went back to the train and asked the Jews whether they wanted to go back wherever they had come from. They said, then they would all be dead. So they were taken off the train and over my protests sent to Camp 4, where thirty people were dying every day of typhoid. I knew that; the SS doctors had told me when I enquired about the many absent workers. Organization had simply broken down. We were short of food, medicines, clean clothing and above all, delousing powder. So when a few weeks later, I got a phone call to say Speer was coming to see us, I hoped he'd get it organized, changed.

"He arrived with a whole string of cars following him; we welcomed him at the gate. He immediately noticed an enormous amount of explosives stacked up under the trees. 'What idiot gave the order for this?' he asked. I said 'Dorsch,' and I thought he would immediately order the construction of fortified store rooms, which I had asked for and been denied for months. But he didn't. He seemed quite extraordinarily uninterested."

(Three months later, on May 5, 1945, Kurt Weiller, a German-born industrialist who had emigrated to the United States in 1936 and was posted to Germany as a corporal in U.S. Army Intelligence, wrote a letter to his cousin Max Hermann in the United States. Weiller had been sent to find a reputedly large number of German ordnance depositories in the area of Landsberg. In his letter he first reports coming upon what he called a "*Vernichtungslager* [extermination camp] for Russian, Hungarian and Czech Jews." Almost all Allied soldiers at that time referred to all camps as "extermination camps," but the camp Weiller found had clearly been one of the labor camps Neuhaus had described, to which people were sent to work rather than to be killed immediately, but where many died. His letter continued,

. . . Then two [former prisoners] told me about a plant where they had worked and indicated the way. You wouldn't believe it, but I almost passed it without noticing it. . . . I know this sounds strange, but let me try to describe it: it comprised an area of about 20 square miles and looked like a dense forest of tall pines. . . . The thing was built by . . . the Organization Todt; Todt was the mastermind who built the West Wall. There are several plants at some distance from each other and most of the buildings are underground with tall trees growing on top of them. . . .

If anybody told me about it without my seeing it myself, I would say "Hell, man, you are crazy. That sounds like one of those Orson Welles Martian fantasies." But it was no fantasy.

Scorched Earth

What they had to construct their plant at that place. . . . They [sic; it was actually the dirigible hangar] thickness is a mere another 16 yards of pine trees. . . . The concrete . . . wasn't pulled into a there . . . they "pipe scale engineering y. Boulder Dam. With thought, but 1,500 three main bunkers, running through that incredible pine Just this very minute surrendered to the 7 start sweating out the

I don't think there Landsberg who the work "As we drove from construction that it would be impossible. Parts of the building work. Parts of date, end of November him that it would take over to him. He didn't us as workers were ill feeding them. So he said see what can be done."

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What they had needed was underground installations where they could construct their planes in peace, and surely, no bomb could ever penetrate that place. . . . They first dug a hole in the ground deep enough—4 stories [*sic*; it was actually 5] into the ground to be exact; it is a little higher than the dirigible hangar in Akron, Ohio, to give you a rough idea. Its roof thickness is a mere nine and a half yards of concrete, and on top of that is another 16 yards of earth, and in that they planted or replanted those tall pine trees. . . . The length of the hall is 940 yards: yes, 940 yards! The concrete . . . wasn't put up there by trucks or hand or anything like that. Trains pulled into a separate mixing plant about a mile away . . . and from there . . . they "piped" it to the hall. It's the most wonderful piece of large scale engineering you could ever see . . . a project even surpassing the Boulder Dam. With all the ordnance shops—not 200 as my people thought, but 1,500 throughout the plants—the whole thing, including the three main bunkers, contained about 1,600 buildings. Fine concrete roads running through the entire area, but all of it invisible—camouflaged by that incredible pine forest. . . .

Just this very minute, the news came over the radio that the Krauts have surrendered to the 7th Army. Well, well . . . I'll get myself drunk now and start sweating out the Pacific War. . . .

I don't think there is any doubt that Speer knew that February day in Landsberg who the workers were who were building those planes.

"As we drove from one installation to another," Neuhaus said, "I told him that it would be impossible to meet the deadline for the completion of the building work. Parts of the plant had of course been finished for the first due date, end of November, and planes were streaming out from there. But I told him that it would take three or four months before we could hand all of it over to him. He didn't say a word. So then I said that the prisoners they sent us as workers were ill and starving—that we had no means of dressing or feeding them. So he said to an officer in the car, 'Get in touch with Himmler; see what can be done.'

"That sounded to me like the usual 'passing the buck,' so I asked how the people in Berlin thought we could work with these half-dead people, many of them women and almost-children? I said 'people in Berlin,' but of course I meant *him*. He didn't react except to ask about morale: I presumed he meant ours, not the workers, so I said that we worked thirteen days with one day off, and then another thirteen days; no reaction to that either.

"When we approached the next bunker, he said, 'Is it the same kind of hole as the other one?' *Hole?* I just nodded, dumbfounded, and he told the driver to turn around. It had been obvious from the start that he wished he were elsewhere. I didn't understand why he had bothered to come. Also, though, he gave me the impression of a sick man."

randum contained, he told Julius Schaub, Hitler's adjutant, that he would like to have a photograph of Hitler with a dedication for his fortieth birthday the next day, on March 19. He would attend the late-night situation conference on the eighteenth, he said, before flying that night to confer with his staff at Königsberg, hard pressed by the Russians.

The conference that night was about the Saar, where Field Marshal Albert Kesselring had reported that afternoon that the population wanted the battle to stop. Local representatives were begging his officers not to destroy their villages by defending them against the Americans.

Hitler did not hesitate for a moment. He told Keitel to write an order to Kesselring and the Gauleiter which he would sign at once. The entire population was to be forcibly evacuated. One of the generals tried to argue that it was impossible to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people, without trains, without food, without prepared shelter on the way. "That can't be our concern any longer," Hitler said. "Get them out."

It was past midnight, and Speer's birthday had begun. He asked Hitler whether he could see him for a moment. Hitler handed him the red leather case, stamped with the Führer emblem in gold, in which he usually presented his silver-framed photographs, and congratulated him warmly while apologizing for his handwriting. It was hard for him to write these days with his trembling hand, he said. (He had developed this as a result of his injury in the July 20 bomb explosion.)

Speer opened the case to read the inscription which, though almost illegible, was couched in unusually warm terms, thanking him for his work and assuring him of Hitler's enduring friendship.

Speer thanked him and said that he had decided to drive west that night instead of flying to Königsberg, to see whether he could help Kesselring. Only moments later while, still at the Führer Bunker, he was telephoning for his car and driver, Hitler had him recalled. He had decided, he said, the warmth of the previous minutes gone as if it had never existed, that it would be better if Speer took one of his cars, with Erich Kempka, his own chauffeur, to drive him. ("Speer was appalled," Poser told me. "He was sure Hitler was sending his faithful Kempka, an SS Colonel by then, to spy on him.")

As Speer turned to leave after at least managing to get Hitler to agree to the compromise that he could take his own car, with Kempka sharing the driving, Hitler said icily, "This time you will receive a written reply to your memorandum. If the war is lost, the people will also be lost [and] it is not necessary to worry about their needs for elemental survival. On the contrary, it is best for us to destroy even these things. For the nation has proved to be weak, and the future belongs entirely to the strong people of the East. What-

ever remains after this battle is in any case only the inadequate [Minderwertigen], because the good ones will be dead."

Speer received Hitler's written reply the morning of March 20, during a late breakfast with Field Marshal Model, in a village inn in the Westerwald. Since 4 a.m. on the nineteenth, sharing the driving with Kempka as agreed, he and Poser had driven from Berlin to the Saar to see Kesselring and Stöhr, the local Gauleiter, and then back to the Ruhr to negotiate with Model about the preservation of the railroads. While Kesselring refused to disobey Hitler's orders, the political officer on his staff, the Gauleiter and, some hours later, the SS commander of the northern region of the Palatinate had agreed that an evacuation could not be carried out.

"This concerns you," Model said to Speer, looking embarrassed, when an officer came to the inn and handed him a message.

"I don't think I'd ever seen Speer as surprised as when he read that," Poser told me. The order was that "all military, transport, communication and supply facilities, as well as all material assets in the territory of the Reich," were to be demolished. "It was point by point, deliberately and explicitly, the opposite of everything Speer had suggested in his memorandum," Poser went on. "And if their orders had been carried out, then areas of Germany would have been ruined for years after the war. Furthermore, in this edict, Hitler stripped Speer of all authority in these matters, and revoked all his orders for the preservation of industry. It was a huge shock for him.

"We immediately started for Berlin," Poser said. "I remember, at one point, during a rest stop, he [Speer] and I walked across some fields and climbed a hill. It was misty but sunny; we sat down, the earth around us smelling richly, and looked across the hills and that beautiful countryside. It was to be the only time I ever saw Speer give way to deep depression. 'How can he do it?' he said, drawing a semicircle with his arm. 'How can he want to make a desert of all this? It can't be,' he said then. 'I won't let it be.' We got back to Berlin at dawn."

Speer and Hupfauer were sharing the small flat in the half-destroyed Ministry. "I think it was 5 a.m. when he came into my bedroom," Hupfauer told me. "He turned on the light and sat down on a chair next to my bed. At first he said nothing, just stared at the wall, looking bleary eyed and played out. And then he said, 'Hitler is a criminal.'"

"That was somehow really shocking. You see, he didn't say, 'The Führer is a criminal'—somehow that would have been, how shall I put it? more personal, less sharp, almost . . . warmer. But this 'Hitler is a criminal' was said by Speer, about whom one was never unaware that he was Hitler's favorite, someone he almost looked upon as a son. Well, he'd woken me up out of a deep sleep; his appearance, the way he—whom I had never seen with a hair

out of place—was slung shirt grimy. What he said mustn't be so brutal with anything. And then I understood this order was a criminal.

"On the twenty-third I simply ignored Hitler's rest orders, as all with him, and

With the Americans now decided against any by Goebbels's propaganda to win Germany the war

"I repeated so often, that it was all a weapon, that it was all a And with our peculiar Gauleiter had managed to get the Ruhr industry. Thank Goebbels, and those were un-

With the help of Speer all dynamite, blasting came to make the transport of explosives was recruited to drive

Before returning to Heidelberg, where he stopped more than twelve miles away from who a week earlier had proclaimed Heidelberg a host city. He spent the rest of the night he would see them. His mother in June 1947, his mother in June 1947, told me about his unrequited love for his life, he said, he had taken allowed himself to admit that

"But as a man," he told me Heidelberg when, after my taken my hand and silently of our house watching me

out of place—was slumped in the chair, unshaven, his uniform creased, his shirt grimy. What he said then really alarmed me. When I told him that he mustn't be so brutal with me, he handed me the Hitler order, without saying anything. And then I understood. And I agreed—the man who had issued this order *was* a criminal."

"On the twenty-third," Poser said, "we drove back to the Ruhr. Speer simply ignored Hitler's restriction of his own powers, and of course the industrialists were all with him, and finally so were the generals."

With the Americans advancing on all fronts, both Kesselring and Model now decided against any more destruction, but the Gauleiter, still convinced by Goebbels's propaganda that an all-powerful new secret weapon was about to win Germany the war, was harder to persuade.

"I repeated so often, to so many different people, that there *was* no secret weapon, that it was all over," Speer told me, "I began to feel like a parrot. And with our peculiar German talent for technical improvisation, the Gauleiter had managed to get together a damned good plan for destruction of the Ruhr industry. Thank God, they couldn't put it into practice without explosives, and those were under my control."

With the help of Speer's friend Walter Rohland, it was arranged to throw all dynamite, blasting caps and fuses into the sumps of the mines. And to make the transport of explosives entirely impossible, a squad of reliable drivers were recruited to drive all the Ministry and OT trucks out of the Ruhr.

Before returning to Berlin, Speer did a last service to his hometown, Heidelberg, where he stopped over to see his parents. The Americans were less than twelve miles away when he sent a message to SS General Paul Hausser, who a week earlier had proved helpful to him in the Saar, and asked him to declare Heidelberg a hospital city, to be surrendered without battle. He then spent the rest of the night talking with his parents. It was to be the last time he would see them. His father died almost exactly two years later, in April 1947, his mother in June 1952. When, thirty-three years after that goodbye, he told me about his unrequited love for them as a child, it was the first time in his life, he said, he had talked about it. It was also the first and only time he allowed himself to admit this unhappy childhood to himself.

"But as a man," he told me, "I was allowed to love them. And that dawn in Heidelberg when, after my father had quickly come up to the car once more, taken my hand and silently looked into my eyes, they stood at the front door of our house watching me leave, I think they loved me then."

And—an important concession—“3) Although bridges and other transportation installations must be destroyed to deny the enemy their use for a prolonged period, with industrial installations the same effect can be achieved by crippling [immobilizing] them. . . .”

Speer continued, in Spandau,

Hitler signed the paper, in pencil, almost without discussion, insisting only that everything important—to be listed by me—had to be destroyed. Of course, I was deceiving him. . . . Indeed, there would never be such a list. . . .

But then again, perhaps it wasn't really deceit, as . . . he signed in full knowledge that his orders for destruction would only be conditionally carried out. And I think he was finally relieved. . . .

After the paper was signed, Speer told me, they talked for a few moments. “He asked whether I wanted tea. I said, no, I would have to go. He had them bring in a glass of wine for me which, believe me, was welcome. And then he said very calmly, that anyway, a ‘scorched earth’ policy had little point in Germany, and was only really useful in vast spaces such as Russia. This was of course totally illogical but I drank my wine and kept my mouth shut.”

SPEER'S SINGLE sentence in reply to Hitler's “Well?” that night presented his critics later with rich pickings. From their point of view, it was true he had written the challenging twenty-one-page letter but, luckily for him, Hitler had not accepted it. By the time the ultimatum was up, they claimed, Speer had changed his mind. He was determined to keep his power, and the only way he could do that was by “unconditional surrender” to Hitler's will.

This is nonsense—at this moment of Hitler's apocalypse, what possible use was any “power” conferred by him except, as for Speer, to use it against him?

“Of course I was dishonest with him,” Speer told me, “but only relatively. It was necessary for me to do what had to be done. But at the same time, I think—and Eva Braun would confirm this to me a few weeks later—he wanted me with him just as much as, in the final analysis, I wanted to be with him. And that was not dishonest.”

“That night was unbelievable,” Annemarie said, her voice suddenly quite different, almost joyful. “He came back from the Bunker almost bursting with new energy. Our print shop had been waiting for him. Within half an hour several hundred copies of Hitler's new signed order were ready.”

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He finally decided to play on Hitler's well-known family piety and told him that, until his final decisions were known, he wanted his family nearby and therefore had arranged for them to stay on a friend's estate, about an hour from Berlin.

"When he got used to that, I quietly moved them all to the estate of my parents' old friend Robert Frank, on a peninsula on the Baltic, where until it was all over they lived under a pseudonym."

"Speer had discovered that Bormann, Himmler and Ley went off to the country at night after Hitler retired," Hupfauer told me later. "And using this information, he worked out a plan with his pilot friends Galland and Baumbach to kidnap and put them under arrest before they could have anybody else killed, or for that matter kill themselves. But then my friend Klopfer [Bormann's State Secretary] told me to warn Speer to be careful at all times what he said and to whom he said it. He said mysteriously that 'things were known.'"

"About this time General [Wolfgang] Thomale, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, took me out for a drive," Speer continued, "and told me to give up all these fantasies. 'What you have to do,' he said, 'is survive,' and he assigned me an escort of four heavily armed young army officers. From that moment on, they moved into my tiny apartment and accompanied me wherever I went, excepting the Bunker."

OF ALL OF SPEER'S memories of these last weeks of the Third Reich, three have remained in his mind as if hewn in granite. The first is the final concert given by the Berlin Philharmonic, the second his last meeting with Hitler and the third the day he learned that Hitler was dead.

Earlier that year, he had advised the Philharmonic's conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, whom he knew to be in bad odor with the party chiefs, not to return to Germany from an impending concert tour in Switzerland. "But how can I do that?" Furtwängler had exclaimed. "How about my orchestra?"

The orchestra would have to return, Speer told him, but he would see them safe to the end. He kept his word. When he learned in early April that Goebbels had ordered all the musicians to be drafted at once into the People's Militia for the defense of Berlin, he dispatched Poser to remove all the musicians' cards from the files of the Berlin draft board. He also told the orchestra's manager to schedule a series of last concerts. "When I would ask them to play Bruckner's Romantic Symphony, I told him, it meant the end was near and the musicians should get ready to leave Berlin."

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The Philharmonic Hall was filled to bursting the afternoon of April 12. Nicolaus von Below wrote of the occasion,

It was unforgettable. I sat with Speer and Admiral Dönitz and listened to Beethoven's Violin Concerto, the finale from the *Götterdämmerung* and Bruckner's symphony. Can there ever have been such a moment, such an experience? Silently the three of us walked afterwards across the totally destroyed Potsdamer Platz back to the Reich Chancellery.

"Electricity was of course strictly rationed by then," Speer told me, "but I had it switched on for this occasion. Absurd, I know, but I thought that Berlin should see that lovely hall, miraculously still intact, just once more fully lit."

"What those who didn't attend didn't see," said Annemarie, "were the baskets offered to spectators on the way out—cyanide capsules. Speer was just horrified. We never found out who organized it, but doubtlessly the party. The baskets were offered by Hitler Youths in uniform—children."

"The subject of suicide was being constantly discussed ever since Hitler had declared his intention to kill himself if the war was lost," Annemarie went on. "We heard that everybody around him said they would follow him. Speer said it was not only madness, but cowardly."

"We knew, of course, from listening to the BBC and the American broadcasts in German which everybody heard by then," Speer told me, "that the Allies were totally unforgiving. There had been the Morgenthau Plan and then the British Eclipse, both proposing to reduce Germany to the status of an agricultural nation with only the most basic industries, in order to reduce forevermore her potential for war. And we knew they were determined to hold trials. And I thought that was right; it was why, before I was talked out of it, I had wanted to detain the terrible trio—Bormann, Himmler and Ley. I thought then—and as you know, I never changed my mind—that such trials might offer a chance to deflect the hate and anger away from the German people onto those who really deserved it. Strangely, it never occurred to me that, except perhaps as a witness, I would be—indeed, of course had to be—part of it."

(Later, I would find that he had expressed some of these thoughts, which never found their way into his book, in the "Spandau draft.")

April 12, 1945, was also the day Hitler learned of Roosevelt's death. "He thought it was a sign from heaven," Speer said. "Now we will win," he told me, and a couple of days later Goebbels suggested that as it appeared that I was the only one with any credibility in the eyes of the Americans, perhaps I should get on one of our new long-range planes and fly to see Truman. I said I didn't think it was a good idea."



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"NOT TOO LONG after that," Traudl Junge told me, "Goebbels came and told us that his wife and children were about to arrive. The day before, the orderlies had cleared out a box room and had put up three double-tier bunks for the children. Their parents were given what had been Dr. Morell's room. Goebbels asked us girls to help look after the children."

Lunch that day, which the secretaries took with Hitler and Eva Braun, was, she said, quite extraordinary. The conversation calmly turned to the most convenient and least painful way of committing suicide. Hitler had said that the best way was to put the barrel of a revolver in one's mouth and pull the trigger. "The skull is shattered and death is instantaneous," he said. Eva Braun had been horrified; she wanted to be a beautiful corpse, she said. She was going to take poison, and Hitler had agreed that that was painless and quick. "So Gerda Christian and I asked whether he would give us each one of the cyanide pills Himmler had brought. And after lunch he came and handed us each one of them. He said he was sorry he couldn't offer us a better farewell present."

Right after lunch the Goebbels family arrived and Traudl Junge was put in charge of the six children, who were thrilled to see Uncle Adolf and soon filled the Bunker with their noise and laughter.

"We knew that their parents were going to kill them," she told me. "Of course, they didn't know. One of them told an orderly who played with them that they were all going to have an injection so they wouldn't get sick. So you see, they had prepared them."

"All that day," Rochus Misch said, "Hitler was around. I mean, everything was just entirely different. He walked aimlessly from one room to another talking about his suicide, or else he sat on a bench in the corridor near my switchboard, cuddling one of the puppies his dog, Blondi, had had a few days earlier. I mean, it was as though he was a different person."

"Eva Braun told him she was sure Speer would come," Traudl Junge told me. "She said he was Hitler's friend, a real friend; he wouldn't stay away."*

IT WAS AN ABSOLUTELY beautiful day in the Allgäu when Speer and I decided to take a long walk in the snow which we had promised ourselves for days. "It's the best time for it," Speer had said at breakfast that morning. "If I'm going to tell you about that trip to Berlin I don't need any documents to remind me, and you can make your notes when we come back.

*The direct quotations from Traudl Junge are from conversations with me, but a few descriptions are taken from *Last Witnesses in the Bunker*, Galante and Silianoff, 1989.

guilt, we now know, for suspected but, I'm still sure of it today, not fully known crimes."

Annemarie was both right and wrong; Speer had indeed become aware both of responsibility and guilt, but on separate levels—one that he (like the generals and many other Germans) could quite honorably acknowledge, but then another which for a number of reasons, among them the preservation of his own sanity, he suppressed and resisted. Up to a point, he readily admitted this that day on the Allgäu mountaintop.

"As we approached Berlin," he said then, "I had of course become aware of my responsibility: not for *crimes*—I'm not sure I thought that deeply or clearly then—but for these last years of the war which, let's face it, I had largely helped make possible. I didn't see myself as a 'war criminal'—a term by then quite familiar to us from British and American broadcasts—but I did think that I was at least co-responsible for the war going on so long, with none of us knowing how to stop it, how to stop Hitler."

The co-responsibility for the lost war was all he could face. Neither Hitler's crimes nor his own responsibility for the treatment of the slave laborers had yet been allowed to enter his mind.

"I did think I might be called to account for my part in prolonging the war," he continued, "though of course not to the degree I finally was. As we approached Berlin, I worried very much about my family, and I didn't really care one way or another how this last flight into Berlin would end. If it ended well and I got out, good. If it didn't, if it meant a confrontation with Hitler and a nasty end, well, that was all right too. Perhaps the Allies would count that on the credit side for my family.

"It was odd, though, because although I had announced my imminent arrival by phone, Hitler's adjutants, whom I found drinking upstairs in his Chancellery apartment, appeared quite startled to see me."

"We were amazed to see Speer," Traudl Junge told me subsequently. "There didn't seem to be any reason for his coming back, but we thought it was wonderful of him. And Eva Braun, with whom I had by that time become rather friendly, was really over the moon that he came, just as she had predicted. Everybody knew how much she liked him; he'd really been her only friend among the higher-ups for years. But more than that, she was so happy for Hitler."

"I must admit that I was apprehensive as to how I would be received," Speer continued, "until only moments later, Schaub having announced me to Hitler, I found Bormann waiting for me at the foot of the fifty steps at the deepest level of the Bunker we had built for Hitler. Bormann was unusually polite, the reason emerging very quickly when he suggested that, if the Führer asked for my opinion on what he should do, I would—wouldn't

* D.T. There was no grasp, no matter what their beliefs or deeds, who did not have scenes like this, full of the mildest the gentlest, which is one reason

They are always so completely virtuous in their own eyes.
* among others that I did trust humans

I?—advise him to fly south. In fact, I had no intention whatever of doing that, but I didn't bother to disabuse him.

"Well, I had a comparatively long time with Hitler then. He looked very old, very tired, but you know, he was actually very calm, resigned it seemed to me, ready for the end. First he asked me some very searching questions about Dönitz. That indicated to me that he was going to name him his successor, which was fine with me: I considered Dönitz an honest man and a patriot. And what I wanted to avoid above all was that he would name me.

"After that, it wasn't a personal conversation we had—and yet in a way it was. Not personal in that he showed any interest in *me*, but personal in that he talked a little as he did that terrible night one long month before, on March 29—about the past, the hopes he had had, the disappointments he had suffered. And yet it was different from that other night. Because now, everything he said was imbued with that feeling of the end, his planned suicide. And he assured me that he felt no fear of it but was glad to die.

"Yes, he did also ask whether I thought he should stay in Berlin, or fly south, as Bormann and all the others were urging him to do. I told him that I felt that if Berlin went, everything was lost anyway and that to me it seemed better that he should end it all in Berlin, rather than at his weekend house in Bavaria. He said that had been his feeling too, but that he had wanted to hear what I thought. And then he went into all the details: that Eva Braun had decided to die with him, that he would shoot his dog Blondi before he died."

("Dr. Stumpfegger poisoned Blondi," Rochus Misch told me. "She died right away. And later they killed her puppies too.")

"And he was very precise about the orders he had issued about burning his body," Speer continued. "In retrospect it all sounds very dramatic, but you know, it wasn't. He sounded—how can I explain?—empty, depleted. And suddenly he stopped, as if there just wasn't anything else to say. And then to my surprise, I heard myself tell him that I had countermanded his orders over the past weeks wherever possible. He didn't say anything, there was no reaction. It was mad what I did, and yet I'm glad I went to see him, and I'm glad I did it. It was right. I still think now that it was right."

This "confession," which he first mentioned in *Inside the Third Reich* in 1970, then shortly afterwards in an interview with *Playboy*, and finally to me in 1977–78, is the "decisive exception" I mentioned earlier. In the book he associated it with an offer he says he made to stay with Hitler in Berlin. "For a moment," he wrote there, "his eyes filled with tears."

The same words appeared in *Playboy*, though here he assigned his offer to stay, or return once more to Berlin, to a later moment that night, when he made his final goodbyes to Hitler. This impulsive and touching last-minute confession to Hitler was mentioned by many reviewers and most historians

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What she described that last time we met sounded like scenes from a madhouse. At one point, she, Gerda Christian and Eva Braun, feeling claustrophobic, had taken the dogs up the fifty steps and across the Chancellery garden into the much larger and wilder Foreign Ministry park. "It was so lovely," she said. "The sun was shining; there were snowdrops and crocuses in the new grass; we sat on some rocks and lit cigarettes and the dogs went wild in the freedom."

Eva Braun, who never smoked, lit a cigarette too. "Desperate situations call for desperate measures," she said. Afterwards she sucked a peppermint so that Hitler wouldn't smell the smoke on her breath.

"Down in the Bunker we hardly ever heard the guns," Traudl Junge said, "and there must have been a lull in the fighting when we came up because it was so quiet. But then suddenly the earth trembled with noises and we raced back, down the steps through the upper level, as deep as we could get. I was so frightened I felt sick."

On the twenty-seventh, there was a wedding. One of the kitchen maids married one of the drivers, and a party was held in Hitler's apartment up in the Chancellery, with a lot of champagne. "They danced to an accordion and a violin," she said. "I couldn't bear it—I went back downstairs."

(The day before they married, this young couple, who had apparently worked out a particularly ingenious escape plan, had offered to take the Goebbels children out with them the next day, but to no avail.)

On the twenty-eighth, she remembered, Hitler finally said it was all over. Eva Braun's brother in law, SS Gruppenführer Hermann Fegelein, who a year and a half before had replaced Karl Wolff as Himmler's liaison officer at Führer HQ, was summarily shot that night for having left the Bunker and being found in his Berlin apartment in civilian clothes. "Eva cried. Her sister was about to have their child," Traudl Junge continued. "Hitler said goodbye to a whole crowd of people who had been in neighboring bunkers and came over; they were lined up all along the corridors and up the stairs. He walked along the line, looked each of them in the face, as he had always done, and pressed each hand. Nobody said anything. A few people cried. I asked Eva if this was the end. She said no, not yet—we'd be told; he would want to say goodbye to us separately."

The previous day, Hitler had asked Nicolaus von Below what his plans were. "I told him that my family was safe," Below wrote in his memoirs, "and I would wait and see. . . . He gave me a cyanide pill."

When, four nights before, Speer and Manfred von Poser had left the Bunker and flown back to Rechlin, Speer decided on impulse to drop in on Himmler, who had established himself at his friend Dr. Gebhardt's hospital,

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Hohenlychen. "Grotesquely," Speer said to me, "he received me in what had been my own sickroom, which he had turned into an office."

Speer remembered this meeting as something between Grimm's fairy tales and a painting by Hieronymus Bosch. Himmler told him that he was extremely busy setting up his future government. Europe, he said, would need him as Minister of Interior; Eisenhower would understand this as soon as they had spent an hour together. The fact of Hitler's dismissal of Göring was immaterial: for the people, he said, Göring was the successor, and he and Göring had a long-standing agreement that Himmler would be his Premier. He was in the process of organizing his cabinet; he had already been in touch with various people; Dönitz had been to see him, and Keitel was on his way. Wouldn't Speer, too, like to join his government, he said; that would surely be the best thing for his future.

"Not without malice," Speer said to me, "I made the countersuggestion that he might like to pay a farewell visit to Hitler, and offered him a lift in my *Storch*, which was standing on the hospital lawn." But Himmler said there was no point to it, and anyway he was too busy and his person was too important for Germany's future to risk such a flight. The arrival of Keitel ended the conversation. As he left, Speer said, he heard Keitel assure Himmler of his unconditional loyalty.

"What a sorry spectacle it all was," he said. "This more than anything perhaps symbolized for me the end of the Third Reich. This was the man who had made us tremble, who had coined the motto 'My Honor Is Named Loyalty,' for which tens of thousands died. Were we all painted with that same brush?"

Sometime during this bizarre encounter, Himmler had told Speer that for several days already he had been negotiating through Count Bernadotte the transfer of the concentration camps to the International Red Cross, and an end to the war. But it was to be three more days, in the afternoon of April 28, when the news of these negotiations had been leaked in Sweden, before Hitler, handed a Reuters report by his press chief, Heinz Lorenz, learned that even Himmler had betrayed him.

Below says this was the final and, he thought, decisive blow. Again, Misch had the most immediate impression of it: "He was sitting on that bench outside my switchboard room with a puppy in his lap when Lorenz, whom I had heard arrive at a run, handed him the paper on which he had jotted down the radio dispatch. Hitler's face went completely white, almost ashen. 'My God,' I thought, 'he is going to faint.' He slumped forward holding his head with his hands. The puppy plumped to the ground—silly how one remembers such trifles, but I can still hear that soft sound." But he had rallied very quickly, and disappeared into his study with Goebbels and Bormann.

Later that evening, Hitler tried to dissuade Goebbels from executing his plans. He wanted him and Bormann to survive, he said, and get to Dönitz. And he announced that he was going to marry Eva Braun. "Goebbels somehow located a registrar stationed nearby with the militia, and had him brought to the Bunker," wrote Below. "When he arrived, his face showed that he didn't know what hit him."

On the twenty-ninth, at 2 a.m., when Traudl Junge had at last fallen asleep for an hour, lying on her iron bedstead in a little box-room that had been her quarters for the past three months, she was awakened to be told the Führer wanted her.

"I quickly washed my face and went down to his study. A table in the corner had been laid as if for a party—glasses, small plates, cutlery—but I didn't know for what occasion. He was very quiet when I came in, but courteous as ever. He took my hand. Was I all right? he asked. Had I had a rest? I said I had, and he took me to the large conference room and told me to make myself comfortable, what he had to dictate would take some time, and would have to be transcribed as quickly as possible afterwards. Couriers would be waiting to take it out."

She had felt very strange as she took down Hitler's Political Testament. "You know, here we were," she said, "all of us ~~doomed~~, I thought—the whole country doomed—and here, in what he was dictating to me there was not one word of compassion or regret, only awful, awful anger. I remember thinking, 'My God, he hasn't learned anything. It's all just the same.' " She hadn't known about the imminent ceremony. "It was only when he dictated his private will, in which he explained his last-minute decision to marry, that I found out.

"He stood like this," she said, remembering that night. She stood up, placed her hands on the table on which were the remainders of our tea and leaned forward. "Like this—almost all of the time."

She had taken down his dictation in shorthand and, when he had finished, settled down to typing the thirteen pages in three copies. She was to do it carefully, Hitler told her; there would not be time for any corrections.

While she typed, the marriage ceremony was taking place in the small conference, or map, room, with only the two witnesses, Bormann and Goebbels, present.

"It didn't take me long," she said. "There were ten pages of the Political Testament and just three for the private one. It would have gone even faster if Goebbels hadn't come in in the middle."

Goebbels, she said, had looked distraught. Hitler, he said, had just told him that after all he expected him to leave Berlin. "He said he couldn't; that,

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He then dictated a will of his own which eventually would be appended to one copy of Hitler's testament. All three of them, Hitler, Bormann and Goebbels, were in the room with her when she finished, and hurriedly took the copies to the map room.

"I joined the party in the study. [Magda Goebbels, SS General Burgdorf, Hewel, Axmann, Below, Gerda Christian, Hitler's valet Linge and, on and off, his aide Otto Günsche.] I sat down with them around the table and ate little sandwiches and drank champagne as they had apparently been doing for quite a while," Traudl Junge said. "Nobody said anything. We couldn't very well toast their future."

"They called me to the map room at 4 a.m.," Below wrote. "I was surprised when Hitler asked me to witness his private will, together with Goebbels and Bormann. But I also read the Political Testament and found his self-deception really depressing and his repeated anti-Semitic invectives embarrassing. . . ."

Hitler railed against the Jews five times in these ten pages. The war had not been of his making, he said, but brought about by international politicians of Jewish origin or acting on behalf of Jewish interests. Jewry, he said, was responsible for the death by starvation of millions of Aryan children in Europe, and he had decided on suicide in order not to provide "a show . . . stage-managed by the Jews."

In the second part of his Political Testament, he expelled Göring and Himmler from the party for having disloyally negotiated with the enemy; named Dönitz President of the Reich, Minister of War and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces; Karl Hanke Reichsführer SS and head of the German Police; Paul Giesler (the architect's brother) Minister of the Interior; Goebbels Chancellor; Bormann head of the party; Seyss-Inquart Foreign Minister; Funk Minister of Economics; Schwerin-Krosigk Minister of Finance; Saur Minister for Armaments; Ley Head of the German Workers' Front; and Hupfauer Minister of Labor.

"Above all," he ended, "I hold the leadership to their strict commitment to the racial laws and to relentless resistance against the poisoner of all peoples—international Jewry."

It was said later by Speer's enemies that Hitler dropped him at the last minute to punish him after the "confession." But that confession never took place, and Eva Braun's words to Traudl Junge clearly confirm Hitler's lasting attachment to Speer. So one is tempted to wonder whether just as, by pointedly requesting Below, whom he liked very much, to sign his private but not

his Political Testament, Hitler somehow managed to establish him as a private rather than political entity at his court, he might also have tried to protect Speer by leaving him out of that last damning document. While even suggesting the possibility of such farsighted compassion may be quixotic, the fact is that Speer's exclusion from this final government was considered a point in his favor by the Nuremberg prosecution, and was emphasized in his defense counsel's final address to the court.

Four men left later that day, April 29, each carrying a copy of the testaments. Major Willi Johannmeier, Hitler's last army adjutant, was to take only the Political Testament to Field Marshal Ferdinand Schörner, now the last Commander in Chief of the Army. Press Chief Lorenz, given the top copies of both Hitler's testaments and Goebbels's appendix, was told to make his way to Munich, and to see to it that the documents were safely deposited in order to preserve them for posterity.

SS Colonel Wilhelm Zander, one of Bormann's assistants, was to go to Dönitz, also taking a message from Bormann. Finally, Nicolaus von Below, who received Hitler's permission to leave at lunchtime but only left after the last situation report late that night, also went to Dönitz's headquarters with both testaments, plus an addendum addressed by Hitler to Keitel.

Just before lunch the next day, April 30, Eva Braun took Traudl Junge into her bedroom. "She took a beautiful silver fox cape out of her wardrobe," she said, "and handed it to me. 'Please take it,' she said, 'I want you to wear it and enjoy it.' After that we went into lunch with Hitler, and when it was over, he and Eva spent a little time on their own." She shook her head. "What do you think they could have said to each other?"

Hitler's aide, Otto Günsche, called them soon afterwards to say goodbye. "Hitler shook hands with each of us," Traudl Junge said, "holding our hands firmly as he always did, and looking into our eyes—that special look which people felt got right into them. But not that day," she said. "He looked at me, and murmured something, but I don't think he saw me, and I couldn't understand what he said."

Hitler and his wife then retired to their room. I have heard several descriptions of the minutes which followed, and also of the hours afterwards. The people who were there appear to carry the memory indelibly within them, but less as a sequential story than as something that cannot be real, something almost imagined, or seen in flashes.

How can one believe, for example, that while the suicide was being prepared or even taking place, and all movement had ceased in the Bunker, the sounds of music and revelry were suddenly clearly heard through the open doors from upstairs—a party with dancing and a great deal of

schnapps was in ruined Chancellery.

"They had cleared the room,"

Rochus Misch. "I was

standing guard in the room,

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schnapps was in progress in the by now windowless canteen of the almost ruined Chancellery.

"They had cleared the Führer level of the Bunker before it happened," said Rochus Misch. "The only people there were me at my switchboard, Günsche standing guard in front of Hitler's living room, and two orderlies, one with me, the other within sight of Günsche. That's the one he sent to tell me to phone them upstairs and tell them to be quiet. I rang and rang, but there was no answer; they probably couldn't even hear the phone. So I told the orderly to run up and tell them, but I'm sure he was too late."

Günsche had Hitler's precise orders about what was to be done. He and Eva Braun were to be given ten minutes before anyone came in, and then their bodies were to be carried upstairs into the "Honor Courtyard" and doused with petrol and burnt.

It was the longest ten minutes of his life, Günsche, who loved Hitler, was to say later. But as he stood there, suddenly there was the sound of running and Magda Goebbels, rushing down the corridor, banged against the door of the room. Not wishing to manhandle her, Günsche, at a loss as to how to act, instinctively knocked on Hitler's door as he had always done and opened it to ask him for directions. But the moment it was open, Magda Goebbels rushed past him into the room.

Within seconds she was out again, sobbing deeply. Hitler, Günsche told someone later, had sharply ordered her out. "Axmann came running too, then," Misch said, "but this time Günsche just said no and blocked the way. Then they both stood there. Quite soon afterwards—it was all very quick—Linge came and Kempka, and then Bormann and Goebbels and Burgdorf."

"When that door closed behind Hitler and Eva," Traudl Junge said, "all I wanted was to get out; I felt I was suffocating; I craved quiet and sleep. I wanted terribly not to be so frightened." She found herself rushing up the steps, without really knowing where she was aiming for, but then stopped halfway. "I suddenly remembered the children," she said. "I didn't think anybody had given them lunch." She turned out to be right. When she got back down as far as the kitchen, one small stairway up from the private apartments, she found that they had indeed been forgotten. They were sitting there around a table, she said, for once looking glum. "They said no, they hadn't had lunch. I told them the grownups were just terribly busy and got out some bread and ham and made them sandwiches. It was strange how quickly that cheered them up, how quickly they began to chatter. And then, suddenly, there was the sound of a shot and then dead silence. The children, startled I think, were motionless for a second, and then Helmuth shouted gaily, 'Bang on!' How right he was."

The children now had one night and one day to live. Again it was Rochus Misch who remembered it most vividly. That day had been very busy, he said. General Krebs, who had been military attaché in Moscow and spoke Russian, was sent—optimistically—with a white flag to find the Soviet commander. He was to offer the surrender of Berlin on the condition that those in the Bunker were allowed safe passage out. In the meantime General Mohnke organized escape plans if they became necessary.

The escape was to be attempted in four groups. The first, led by General Mohnke and including the four women, Günsche, Hewel, the navy liaison officer Admiral Voss, and the pilot Captain Baur, would lead the way. The others would follow along the tracks of the subway, eventually surfacing and somehow crossing the river Spree and the Russian lines. Almost none of it worked out as planned. Some people—such as Dr. Stumpffegger, who had helped Magda Goebbels kill her children—were hit by Russian shrapnel and died; some wisely slipped away from the groups and hid; some—such as Bormann—disappeared; some committed suicide. But most of them ended up like Misch, as prisoners of the Russians, spending the next years in prisons and gulags in the Soviet Union.

General Krebs was away negotiating with the Russians at least eight or nine hours, Misch said, when we talked in Berlin decades later. “He came back in the late morning. Of course the Soviets hadn’t agreed. I never understood why those big generals imagined they might. Safe conduct, indeed,” he said contemptuously, and his wife laughed outright. “I think they all lived in never-never land.” But his voice changed when he got to the next part of the story.

“It was only just after 5 p.m.,” he said, “when Frau Goebbels walked past me followed by the children. They were all wearing white nightgowns. She took them next door; an orderly arrived carrying a tray with six cups and a jug of chocolate. Later somebody said it was laced with sleeping pills. I saw her hug some, stroke others as they drank it. I don’t think they knew about their Uncle Adolf’s death; they laughed and chatted as always. A little later they passed me on their way upstairs, Heidi last, her mother holding her hand.”

Misch left his switchboard for a moment and stood at the door; he and little Heidi had become particularly good pals. “Heidi turned around. I waved to her, she waved back with one hand, and then, suddenly, letting go of her mother’s hand, she turned all the way around and, bursting into that happy clear laugh of hers, she scraped one forefinger along the other and chanted that little rhyme she always sang when she saw me: ‘Misch, Misch, you are a fish.’ [*Misch, Misch, Du bist ein Fisch.*] Her mother put her arm around her and pulled her gently up the steps, but she went on chanting it. I still hear it now.” Misch and his wife were silent.

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A little later Magda Goebbels had come back down and gone into her room, he said. "About an hour later I saw her again, going up the stairs with Dr. Stumpffegger." The place had once again become very quiet.*

"Not that long afterwards, not more than half an hour, she came back," Misch continued. "She was crying. She sat down at the long table in the conference room and played solitaire. Goebbels came and went but I didn't see them talk. A little later that evening they came past my door together. Goebbels stopped. He said, 'Good luck.' ['He stopped by me too,' said Traudl Junge. 'He shook my hand and said, 'All the best; you'll make it.'"] And then they killed themselves," said Misch, "upstairs, in the courtyard. The last thing Goebbels said, I think to Günsche, was 'That way you won't have to carry us.'"

Annemarie and I were on our way back along the frozen Alster when she told me about waiting for Speer, hoping against hope that he would return safely. "After Speer left for Berlin," she said, "Edith Maguira and I had just stayed on at the Atlantik, living from moment to moment. At that point I couldn't even think about what might be happening to him. But of course, in the end he was only away for two days, from the afternoon of the twenty-second to the evening of the twenty-fourth when, from the little entrance lobby of our suite, we suddenly heard that nonchalant voice: 'So, what's new here?' I honestly think I could have hit him."

"We had held on to the *Storch* to fly to Hamburg," Speer had told me. "Exceptionally, we could see some Russian fighters back of us on the horizon, so we flew low, using the woods on the Mecklenburg seaboard as a cover."

That low-level flight over precisely the waterways along which he and Margret had canoed twenty-two years before on their honeymoon, he said, suddenly waxing lyrical, was quite wonderful. Was it nostalgia he had felt, I asked. Regrets?

"No," he said. "Joy."

He was to have just one more moment of joy during the next days. "The morning after my return," he said, "we flew the *Storch* to Eutin and moved into our trailers. Cliever had done very well for us, parking them in the most beautiful lonely woods, within sight of the lake."

"There were finally quite a lot of us," Annemarie said. "Baumbach [Speer's pilot] had joined us and another flier; Cliever and two women; and then General Holzheuer from Guderian's former staff arrived bringing

*James P. O'Donnell, quoting Misch in his book *The Berlin Bunker*, provides additional insight into his feelings: "I sat alone, paralyzed, not so much by fear as by frustrated compassion. . . . I began saying my rosary, praying for all six little souls. I prayed for the mother too. I guess I was praying she would relent."

some tank guards. Guderian had got a message through to him that Speer was to be kept safe. It was absolutely extraordinary. Here we were, in these quite primitive trailers—we called the one where we cooked and sat around at night our 'living room.' One, where Edith and I also slept, that served as our office, was our 'headquarters,'" she mocked, "and then one had four bunks for the five men. One had to sleep on the floor—they took turns. But guarding all this mess was this fully armed honor guard for Speer. I mean, it was extravagant, wasn't it?"

"Of course, we didn't *do* anything," Speer had told me. "I mean, there wasn't anything to do except every day or so to visit Dönitz at his naval base, or people from the Chief of Staff who like us had found their way into the area and, also like us, were doing nothing except waiting. We all waited."

("Speer at least knew what he was waiting for," Annemarie said, the disapproval she had felt so long ago still evident in her tone of voice, "Hitler's suicide. But we didn't know. God only knows why he didn't warn us, but he didn't.")

"The most significant event of that week for me," Speer had said, "was taking the *Storch* over to see my family on their isolated peninsula on the Baltic. This was the other moment of joy. I don't think I'll ever forget the faces of the children as long as I live, when that little plane landed, unannounced, on a field next to the house," he said. "They were so happy to see me, they were just delirious with excitement; I think the hours I spent there with them, my wife and those good friends who had taken them in, were the best we'd ever had."

"I think it was raining on May 1," Annemarie said. "Anyway, we were inside our living room trailer when the phone rang. It was Dönitz. One of us took the call—I don't even remember whether it was me or Edith; he didn't ask to speak to anyone in particular. As I remember, he just said, 'The Führer is no longer alive,' and then hung up. I remember I felt, well, taken aback, because of course, I hadn't known. Were we sad? Oh, I don't know. We were no longer in a state of mind where the word 'sad' could apply. Germany was in tatters. There was no future, and now *he* was dead too. Speer left a few minutes later, to join Dönitz, at Plön."

Although the local telephones still worked and radio connection with Berlin functioned until May 2, long-distance telephone communication had long ceased and no one at the "Northern Command" was aware of the drama still continuing in and outside the Bunker. History has recorded, of course, the names of the famous—or infamous—who died at their own hands, most of them with the help of those cyanide pills Himmler so generously distributed in April: Hitler and Goebbels; later Göring, just before he was to be hanged; Himmler himself when caught by the Allies; and the same

He Is the Dream

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In the Bunker it was, Burgdorf and Schedle; and one of Stehr—all shot the And in the neighborhood for days, a number know, found means with his friend Hans the last moment and killed himself a moments, brothers and Walter Hewel, who recently married and of the others became Linge, tried to kill Mohnke tried, too—captivity.

Suicide in those epidemic, as if Hitler's

Martin Bormann's Nazi-elite school fell down on April 23, 1945, find his way home, the name of Martin Berg father's staff from Munich an inn in a neighborhood.

"It was a small inn in 1941. "We sat on benches, the atmosphere.

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for any number of his worst SS when they were captured. But it was to be months, in some cases years, before it became known how very many men, older and young, of high and low rank—many of whom had not been involved in any crimes—had committed suicide after Hitler's death.

In the Bunker itself, besides the principals already named, the two generals, Burgdorf and Krebs; the commander of the Leibstandarte, SS Captain Schedle; and one of his young officers, twenty-four-year-old SS Lieutenant Stehr—all shot themselves soon after the four groups of escapees had left. And in the neighboring bunker, which had been used as an emergency hospital for days, a number of seriously wounded soldiers, whose names we don't know, found means to kill themselves. The flying ace, Ritter von Greim, who with his friend Hanna Reitsch had made a daring flight in and out of Berlin at the last moment and was named Head of the Luftwaffe to replace Göring, killed himself a month later. So did Hanna Reitsch's whole family—her parents, brothers and sisters—immediately after Hitler's death. Ambassador Walter Hewel, who had managed to get out of Berlin, was only in his forties, recently married and certainly not guilty of any crime, killed himself. Many of the others became prisoners of the Russians within hours. Hitler's valet, Linge, tried to kill himself then; Rochus Misch stopped him. General Mohr tried, too—Otto Günsche stopped *him*. They all survived Russian captivity.

Suicide in those early days was hardly an individual act—it was an epidemic, as if Hitler's hypnotic effect had endured beyond the grave.

Martin Bormann's "crown prince" son, Martin, was fifteen when his Nazi-elite school Feldafing (of which his father had been chairman) closed down on April 23, 1945. Each of the other boys was given RM 100 and told to find his way home, but Martin was given false identity documents (in the name of Martin Bergmann) and was driven to Salzburg, where some of his father's staff from Munich and the Berghof had taken over the *Gaststube* of an inn in a neighboring village.

"It was a small inn and a very small *Stube*," Martin said when we talked in 1991. "We sat on benches tightly packed together. It's impossible now to convey the atmosphere. The worst moment was when, at two o'clock in the morning of May 1, the news of Hitler's death came through on the radio. I remember it precisely, but I can't describe the stillness of that instant which lasted . . . for hours. Nobody said anything, but very soon afterwards people started to go outside, first one—then there was a shot. Then another, and yet another. Not a word inside, no other sound except those shots from outside, but one felt that that was all there was, that all of us would have to die."

And so finally Martin took the gun he had been given and stepped outside. "My world was shattered; I couldn't see any future at all. But then, out there,

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And so finally Martin took the gun he had been given and stepped outside. "My world was shattered; I couldn't see any future at all. But then, out there,

in the back of that inn, where bodies were already lying all over the small garden, there was another boy, older than I—he was eighteen. He was sitting on a log and told me to come and sit with him. The air smelled good, the birds sang, and we talked ourselves out of it. If we hadn't had each other at that moment, both of us would have gone—I know it."

Dönitz's headquarters that night was ruled by confusion, rather than despair. The radio signal which transmitted the part of Hitler's Political Testament which named Dönitz his successor and Goebbels and Bormann his principal ministers, was considered unacceptable. "Just imagine," Dönitz said to Speer, "what on earth do we do if Bormann really gets here. One can't work with that man." The decision was made—the first one taken by the new head of state—to destroy the signal, as if that could have destroyed Hitler's intention, Bormann's obedience to it had he really arrived, or the knowledge of what the testaments contained. The next day, Dönitz said, they would move to the larger naval base at Flensburg, and he would begin negotiations with Field Marshal Montgomery.

"That night," Speer told me, "I was assigned a small room in the navy barrack. When I unpacked my overnight bag, I saw that Annemarie Kempf had put in the red leather case with Hitler's portrait, which he had signed for me on my fortieth birthday six weeks before. I was quite all right, you know, until—I don't know why—I opened the case and stood the photograph up on the night table next to the bed. And then suddenly, standing there, I started to sob. I couldn't stop; it just went on and on until, still dressed, I fell asleep on the bed."

For a while, Speer felt that had been a kind of watershed that liberated him, but it wasn't. "That's when the dreams began," he said, "dreams of his knowing what I did, dreams of his saying that I wanted to kill him. They went on for years, and even now they sometimes come back. Sometimes he isn't even in the room in these dreams, but he is in the dreams, or he is the dream."

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Nuremberg, June 21, 1946

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON (cross-examining Speer): I will ask you about Exhibit 398-USA 894 . . . a statement by [former Krupp factory worker] Hofer, living in Essen: "From April 1943 I worked with Lowenkamp every day in Panzer Shop 4. Lowenkamp was brutal to the foreigners. He confiscated food which belonged to the POWs and took it home. Every day he maltreated Eastern workers, Russian POWs, French, Italian and other foreign civilians. He had a steel cabinet built which was so small that one could hardly stand in it." [Jackson presents photographs and describes the cabinets: "Their height was 1.52 meters, width and depth 40-50 centimeters (5 feet by 18 inches); there were a few sieve-like airholes at the top." He continues reading Hofer's statement:] "He locked up foreigners, women too, in the box, for forty-eight hours at a time, without giving them any food. They were not even released to relieve nature. It was forbidden for other people to give them any help. . . ."

We have upwards of a hundred different depositions; here is one more: "The undersigned Dahm [also a Krupp worker] personally saw how three Russian civilian workers were locked into the cupboard after they had first been beaten on New Year's Eve 1945. Two . . . had to stay locked in it the whole night and cold water was poured on them through the airholes. . . ."

There is a good deal more of this, but I will not bother to put it into the record. Is it your view that [these accounts] are exaggerated?

SPEER: I consider [them] a lie. I would say that among German people such things do not exist, and if such individual excesses occurred, they were punished. It is not possible to drag the German people in the dirt in such a way. . . . What is pictured here are quite normal lockers as used in every factory and not some special cabinets . . . and the air vents at the top . . . are ventilation holes. . . .



IT IS ABSURD to presume that Speer would have known about the precise nature of punishment and torture in concentration and labor camps, and his indignation at Mr. Justice Jackson's suggestion would have been entirely sincere.

Nonetheless, and leaving aside such special and specific knowledge, one of the great psychological mysteries about the Third Reich has always been Hitler's ability to convince a nation of culturally sophisticated men and women that wrong was right.

It is too simple to say, as many Germans do, that they "didn't know what was being done" or that they were all benighted and hypnotized. In truth it was, and is, more complicated. Whatever they did not know—and there was much of it—they all knew *something*. The real phenomenon was not that Hitler persuaded the Germans that wrong was right, but that they should accept the legitimacy of forbidden knowledge. As Carol von Poser said, they knew that there was danger in knowledge. Awareness of "these details"—as Hupfauer gratingly referred to the specifics of the SS crimes—of course lurked in the recesses of many minds, but it was determinedly and decisively suppressed until and even beyond the Nuremberg trials.

I discussed this phenomenon with Annemarie Kempf in Hamburg, still during the cold late winter in 1986, when in our talks we reached the period between Hitler's suicide and the wholesale arrest a few weeks later of virtually everybody who had been in his government, or with any semblance of importance in the party. She said the denial of knowledge applied to every single person she could think of, first in Flensburg, the seat of the Third Reich's post-Hitler government for a few weeks in May 1945, then in Dustbin, the V.I.P. camp to which the Americans sent most of the more important prisoners. It also applied to herself, she said ruefully, and of course, until well into the Nuremberg trial, to Speer.

"That second of May, the day after Hitler's death became known, was very busy," Annemarie said. "Dönitz appointed Speer Minister for Economics

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"It really was totally bizarre," she said. "Speer would attend Dönitz's 10 a.m. conference as usual and then come back. The Americans arrived at noon; Speer's guards would present arms—oh, yes, they were still armed—and then, before anything else, the four [later five] had 'breakfast' [actually lunch] prepared by the Duke's cook. They always had at least one interpreter sitting in, usually a rather nice man called Williams, an immigrant to America from Germany. They didn't have any secretarial help, so when they adjourned to a small salon next door, a beautiful room all in gold and red brocade, I would join them to transcribe the proceedings. Afterwards, Williams and Lieutenant Sklarz translated it into English."

"Speer was the one interesting person on the Nazi side," said George Ball. "His knowledge was absolutely astounding. And he was—or at least seemed—quite extraordinarily open. On our second day together, he said he thought it was a great shame the United States had not joined with Germany in the battle against the Russians. That was when we were just at the very beginning of the cold war, and he was touching a very raw nerve when he said that. He also said that one of Hitler's main problems—if not *the* main problem—was that he simply had no understanding whatsoever of foreign countries, and thus had no comprehension of the *power* of the U.S. and did not believe it when he was told."

"When Ken Galbraith arrived, he was very quickly very hard on Speer with questions about concentration camps; I hadn't asked, because I knew so little myself; Ken knew more. But Speer was very evasive about that—very, very evasive."

"But I was very impressed with the consistency of what he told us in Flensburg and what he later wrote in his book. Sometime during that week—during lunch one day, I think it was—I asked him whether he was sorry he hadn't been able to carry out his plans for Berlin and he answered, 'God, no; they were awful!' I thought that was remarkably honest."

"Did I like him? I don't know. For someone so distinguished, he was rather brash. I saw him again later, you know, during his long interrogations in 'Ashcan' [*sic*; he meant the VIP debriefing center Dustbin, near Frankfurt]. And there he said something really odd to me. 'There are going to be some war-crime trials,' he said. 'You are a young lawyer. How would you like to represent me? Many young lawyers have made their reputations defending notorious characters, and you could hardly find anyone more notorious than me.' I wasn't *that* young, just four years younger than he, in fact, but anyway, wasn't that a curious thing to say under the circumstances?"

"I suppose it might have seemed odd to Ball, who was there in his role as the victor," Annemarie told me. "But it wasn't odd for Speer—he probably thought it would be rather a joke if he arrived at a trial represented by an

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American lawyer—that was his kind of humor. It wasn't that odd to me either. I mean, after all, he *was* Speer."

Of the Three Wise Men, as I would think of them later, Nitze seemed to me the most detached, and Galbraith the most bitter—he was the only one of the three who had already seen Dachau, Buchenwald and the awful photographs of Bergen-Belsen. "One was just beginning to hear rumors about Auschwitz," he said, "but the rest of it—Treblinka, Sobibor and the other horrific places—we knew nothing about."

"Do I think that Speer knew about all this? All he ever told us about was that story of one of his friends [Karl Hanke] who whispered to him sometime in 1944 never to visit a certain place in Silesia because something unspeakable was happening there, that's all."

"I asked him what he knew about the extermination of the Jews," said George Ball. "He said he couldn't comment because he hadn't known about it, but he added that it was his mistake not to have found out."

"But, no, I don't believe he didn't know," continued Galbraith. "Certainly he knew all about the slave laborers. I remember his saying to us, 'You should hang Sauckel,' and then, a few weeks later, Sauckel said to us, 'You should hang Speer.' Nice people, weren't they?"

I asked if Galbraith considered it possible that Speer knew all these things but simply decided to eradicate them from his memory.

"It wouldn't have been a 'decision,' and it wouldn't have been simple at all," he said. "But, yes, I think it is entirely possible that by some unconscious process this is what happened in him."

"My first reaction to him? Well, of course he was physically very impressive. But that wasn't it—some of the others we met at Dustbin later looked all right too. It was quite simply, I think, that Speer was another caliber. He exuded personality, authority and—to me somewhat jarringly at times—humor. By any standards, he was quite exceptionally intelligent, with a phenomenal memory and breadth of technical knowledge. It is of course sad," he added, "that while Speer will be remembered as the genius of production he doubtlessly was, the men in Britain and America, such as Bevin, Beaverbrook, Leon Henderson or Robert Nathan, who were quite as brilliant organizers as he, are virtually forgotten."

(The Nobel Prize-winning economist Friedrich von Hayek, with whom I discussed this point in Freiburg in 1985, said the explanation was simple: "The great production geniuses in wartime Britain and America," he said, "were men experienced in finance, industry and economics who during the war worked *with* their governments and as part of them. Speer was a brilliant self-taught amateur who basically accomplished what he did *in spite of* his government; because whatever conventional bodies were set up—ministries

of this and that—in the final analysis the sole ruler of Nazi Germany was Hitler, who was upheld by the primitive nonentities of the party. These were the people Speer had to deal with. He was the prime example of that phenomenon in Hitlerian Germany, though not the only one—a man born to honor, who chose to live in dishonor.”)

“Above all,” said Galbraith, “Speer, very early on, I believe—certainly by the time he was interrogated in Dustbin—had made a conscious plan for survival. While all of them, virtually without exception, said they knew nothing of any crimes, whether slave labor or concentration camps—a manifest lie—and they *all* declined to take any responsibility whatever, Speer from the word go admitted a universal kind of responsibility. At the same time, he adroitly avoided anything that touched even marginally upon these dangerous subjects. We tried to lead him toward them many, many times, but he very, very cleverly managed to divert us to other things, by flooding us with more and more details on air attacks and production statistics, which he knew were of immediate interest to us. I always had the distinct feeling he was holding such things in reserve, against the times he needed them for these—to him—so necessary diversions.

“Don’t forget we had exceptional opportunities for comparison; we eventually saw all the key figures who were still alive: Göring; Funk; Ribbentrop; and the two generals, Keitel—a terribly narrow military mind—and Jodl, not so narrow but obviously distorted by his long exposure to Hitler. I am, you understand, only speaking of their minds, not their morals, although the more one saw the less one felt the two could be separated.

“Göring, of course, was still going through drug withdrawal when we met him, so one couldn’t make an intellectual judgment. The American army method for this was quite ruthless, very different from now—they simply removed all drugs. In his case it meant that he couldn’t even get codeine, with which he had been trying to get himself off morphine.* So no doubt he was going through a rough time. But even so, even in this state of physical distress and mental apathy, his fundamental arrogance showed through. And the others—all the others, including Seyss-Inquart and von Schirach—were, intellectually, terribly ordinary men.

“Speer was simply totally different, and his strategy from the beginning had been to highlight this difference whenever he could. He started this when he talked to us in Flensburg in May, and he maintained it through his many weeks of debriefing, first at Chesnay in Versailles near Eisenhower’s headquarters, then when Ike moved to Frankfurt, at Dustbin, and finally

*According to G. M. Gilbert, after the severe withdrawal of all drugs at Mondorf, Göring was being given reduced doses of paracodeine at Nuremberg.

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for nearly a year in Nuremberg. If he hadn't succeeded in these meticulously thought-out, self-promulgating tactics, he would have been hanged."

Paul Nitze, who by the time we met, had served under many Presidents, from Roosevelt through Nixon to Reagan, though no more approving of Speer, was perhaps just a degree more sympathetic.

"On our tenth day with him," he said, "I think it was the twenty-second of May, Eisenhower's political advisor, Robert Murphy, joined us for dinner. He told us that Speer was going to be arrested the next day and suggested we should get everything we could out of him that night about Hitler in the Bunker, and Hitler's will." ("I got a nice bottle of whiskey," Ball said, "and we talked till 4 a.m.")

"Speer talked for hours then, about Hitler and all those around him, all of whom he appeared to despise," Nitze went on. "Well, another of my favorites on our team was a very bright captain, Burt Klein. Was he Jewish? I don't know; he may well have been. Anyway, he listened as we did for hours, and then he suddenly said, 'Mr. Speer, I don't understand you. You are telling us that you knew years ago that the war was lost for Germany. For years, you say, you have been watching the horrible in-play among these gangsters who surrounded Hitler—and surrounded you. Their personal ambitions were those of hyenas, their methods those of murderers, their morals those of the gutter. You knew all this. And yet you stayed, not only stayed but worked, planned with and supported them to the hilt. How can you explain it? How can you justify it? How can you stand living with yourself?'"

"And Speer was silent for quite a while. And then he said, 'You cannot understand. You simply cannot understand what it is to live in a dictatorship; you can't understand the game of danger, but above all you cannot understand the fear on which the whole thing is based. Nor, I suppose, have you any concept of the charisma of a man such as Hitler.'

"Well," said Nitze, "Burt Klein just got up and left the room. I . . . Well, by then I had served under two honest men—the most honest men I have known: Roosevelt and Truman. And in a way, Speer was right; at that point, I certainly didn't understand the effect that kind of environment could have. Then I didn't understand . . .," he added, and stopped.

Manfred von Poser, not surprisingly, had a different but, one might think, not uninformed view of Speer's goals. "Speer had two very strong beliefs which, now adopted worldwide, were then not only way ahead of their time but dangerous to hold. On the one hand he believed in a maximum of individual initiative; he called it 'industrial self-responsibility,' but what it really was, or what he envisaged it becoming in peacetime, was the separation of

industry—all industry, not only technical—from the state, i.e., a minimum of state intervention and thus of state power.* And the second thing he believed in, and at considerable risk to himself had begun to put into practice as far back as the early autumn of 1943 with the progressive French Minister of Production, Bichelonne, was a European Community. It was in this sense he wanted to talk to the Allies. He was certain that the only way toward a better and peaceful future, not only for Germany but for all of Europe, was if Germany could eventually be part of an economic European entity. And he thought that not only German but European interests could be served if the Allies could be persuaded to leave the industrial organization of Germany as he had so successfully set it up."

Annemarie Kempf hadn't attended that dinner with Murphy and the USSBS, but she had taken down all the previous interrogations. "Every day, after the Americans left," she told me, "he would sit there for a long time and think. I would go next door to transcribe my shorthand notes, and when I came back, quite often two or even more hours later, he would be sitting in exactly the same position, still thinking. Years before, when I first came to work for him, this capacity for intensive thinking had fascinated me. Since then I have met and worked with many remarkable people from many walks of life. But I have never again known anyone with a comparable capacity for concentration."

"Of course, these conversations were very intense, very tiring, I think for all the participants. And yet Speer was curiously relaxed even then. He had not an ounce of servility in him, nor were they the kind of people who expected or, I suspect, would have respected it. He was very impressed by these Americans, and so, frankly, was I. They were so totally different from anything I—or, I think, Speer—had imagined. I think neither of us would have expected them to be such serious people, men of such substance."

"I felt a great sense of affinity with them," Speer told me. "My mind felt closer to them than it would feel to anyone afterwards for years, and I felt a terrible sense of regret, of loss, that in Germany I had known no one of this quality—that there had not *been* anyone of this intellectual stature in the world I inhabited all those years."

"In a way," Annemarie said, "this closeness he felt to those Americans made the shock worse for him when it so dramatically ended, the morning after that convivial evening with Murphy and the others."

Speer had managed to visit his family twice more during those last two

*Interestingly, one of the first clippings Speer sent me after we began corresponding in 1977 was a long article from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on the economic theories of Ludwig von Mises, one of the founders of the Austrian—or Libertarian—School of Economics, who, as it happened, though Speer didn't know this until much later, had been married to my mother from 1938 until he died in 1973.

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of us hoped they wouldn't catch him. And then, would you believe it," he said, "they put me not only in that prison, but in that very cell.

"I reached my lowest point there. It brought back my whole life; my childhood, our delight at the man's escape . . . the capacity for joy and passion one had then . . . and now, here I was. And then, almost as soon as I sat down on the iron cot, a hand grenade exploded right outside my window. I suppose it was ridiculous, but I was sure it was meant for me: that they were trying to kill me. Actually it was a drunk American soldier playing silly games, nothing to do with me at all, but for me it was a kind of nadir, the only point in my life, I think, where I actually considered making an end of it."

Suicide?

"Yes, in a way; perhaps not in so many words, but yes, it was somewhere on the edge of my mind. Was this to be the end, or did I have the energy, the strength, the courage for a new beginning? Then I made myself think about my wife and the children. . . ."

Speer found those first weeks of imprisonment deeply depressing, even though he was neither alone nor badly treated. The "Dönitz government" group was first flown to Luxembourg, to the Palace Hotel in Mondorf, where they were reunited with the rest of the leadership of the Third Reich. Göring and Dönitz engaged in an extraordinary precedence battle, which was only resolved by avoiding having them arrive in a room at the same time, and by having them preside at different tables during meals. "I had a moment's pleasure when I found my friend Brandt there," Speer said. But Brandt, walking with him in the hotel park, told him that when the Americans found out what he had been involved with, "it'll all be over for me anyway."

"I don't think a death penalty was in anybody's mind then," Speer went on, "or, now that I remember Brandt's voice, *did* he perhaps think of it? I remember very clearly that although until quite late I had always had a weak spot for Göring, this changed in Mondorf. He was really quite revoltingly self-pitying and arrogant. One day at lunch, Brandt was talking about the mountains and about how sad he was to have lost their house there.

"'Oh, come on,' said Göring. 'What possible reason can you have to complain when you had so little. But I, who had so much, think what it means to *me*.' I was sitting back to back with Dönitz, and I heard him murmur to his neighbor, 'Yes, and all stolen.' He was of course right—and that was the leadership of our Reich!"

After two weeks, Speer was told he was being transferred. "Somehow everybody thought I was being released, and this created an extraordinary atmosphere of optimism," he said. "'There you are,' Göring said when he saw the limousine waiting for me in the driveway. 'I always knew they wouldn't be able to manage without us.'"

Speer's quarters; was designed for further the small third floor barbed wire for him. 'bothered my sanity was strange men who name—dr where in French art we walked but I bought

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"Porsche, "Speer of course very well treated other and good Speer—spent gymnastics in games in the All of us were together; mine body; after school "I asked him said? He said 'Go on—either

What had originally provoked the demand for a trial was the crimes against human beings the Nazis committed in their extermination, concentration and labor camps in Germany and occupied Europe. But although a number of declarations promised retribution (the St. James Declaration of 1942, the Moscow Declaration of 1943 and the Yalta Declaration of 1945), none of these were at all specific. Neither America nor Britain wanted to provoke Germany into reprisals against the many Allied POWs in German hands, and neither Britain nor America readily believed the tales of horror emerging from Eastern Europe, mainly from Jewish sources. The real preparation for the trial would only begin when the Allies were firmly re-established on European soil, but even then it took countless transatlantic conferences before a legal format was established. Already, deep rifts had become apparent among the four Allies in cultural and legal concepts which would bedevil the trial to the very end.

The eventual agreement, arrived at only reluctantly and with many hiccups, was to conduct the proceedings on the basis of four counts which far exceeded the original intention. (The first two were to remain for many people both logically and legally questionable.) The four counts were

COUNT ONE: "The common plan or conspiracy" to accomplish the planning . . . or waging a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances.

COUNT TWO: "Crimes against peace"—the planning, preparing, initiating or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties. . . .

COUNT THREE: "War crimes"—violations of the laws or customs of war, to include . . . murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labor or for any other purpose of civilian populations . . . prisoners of war . . . persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder . . . wanton destruction . . . or devastation not justified by military necessity.

* COUNT FOUR: "Crimes against humanity"—namely murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war . . . or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds . . . in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal. . . .

Administratively and financially, the United States carried the major burden of the proceedings, and this, while inevitable, created immense psychological problems.

The principal problem, though unavoidable, was the participation of the Soviet Union. Brutally occupied by the Germans, with hundreds of thousands of its people horribly abused, the country had suffered more than any other participant in this war—twenty million Soviet men and women had

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all right in my case; but on the whole they had to give up on that one. Finally quite a few of the defense lawyers had been in the party."

Flächsner was an exceptionally modest and humorous man. I always saw him in his law office, in a large Berlin firm with impressive premises and many wealthy clients. Although well past retirement age, he still handled important cases. In 1945 he had had a one-man practice, and had not immediately agreed to accept the Nuremberg call.

Oddly enough, many years before, Flächsner had briefly been Göring's lawyer. "That was when I was about twenty-four," he said. "I think he picked me out of a hat." Göring had been wounded in the Munich Putsch on November 9, 1923. "He had thirteen bullet wounds," Flächsner said. "Comrades shot him full of morphine and smuggled him into Austria because in Germany he would have been arrested; that's what started his drug dependence. He went through three withdrawal cures after that. None of them worked. That's when I represented him, in three court suits for nonpayment of fees. True to form already then, he felt he shouldn't be asked to pay if the cures didn't work.

"Nuremberg wasn't something one could just decide to do without talking to one's family and one's friends," he said. "Professionally, of course, it was bound to be uniquely fascinating, but socially, well"—he smiled—"no single little lawyer could easily afford to be an island. The risk of alienating everybody one knew was very real. However, when the same man came again at the end of September, I did say yes. It was finally irresistible. But although I asked him, he didn't tell me which one I would represent.

"Then, on November 1, three Americans came—one colonel and two men from the U.S. Department of Justice—and they took me on a plane to Nuremberg and on arrival took me to breakfast at the Grand Hotel. That was fantastic," he said. During the hard first postwar months, Flächsner's weight had gone down to 109 pounds. "It was a lifesaver for me," he said. "I was *hungry*! After breakfast they took me to the court. I was very impressed. The Secretary of the Court, Colonel Williams [*sic*: Harold B. Willey], was a very warm man. I was to find that there were a lot of Americans like that—they were extraordinarily, well, *nice*, even lovable; it was an immensely pleasant discovery for me. They offered me the choice of Speer, Kaltenbrunner or Hess. I said, 'Only Speer.'"

When Flächsner arrived in Nuremberg, Speer had been in the prison there for a full month. "The first week was bad," he told me. "Later I read a good deal of prison literature and learned that all prisoners appear to feel this."

During that first week Speer was left strictly alone in a dark ground-floor cell whose only furniture was a straw pallet on the floor with three blankets—dirty ones, he said. It was across from Göring's cell. "When they opened the

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peepholes in our doors, which they did several times an hour, I could see him pace up and down," Speer told me. Otherwise he saw no one except the mess attendants, who brought a tray of food three times a day, and a German barber who, in total silence, shaved him after breakfast in the presence of a GI guard. He was allowed neither newspapers nor books. "Anyway, the one ceiling bulb would not have been strong enough to read by," he said; the light came on at 6 a.m. and was turned off at 8:30 a.m., "even though virtually no daylight came through the small barred window." It was turned on again at 6 p.m. and off for the night at 8 p.m.

(When I asked him, about ten days into our first three-week conversation, whether this regime had had the effect of reminding him of the slave laborers' suffering in the Krupp camps or in Dora, he looked nonplussed. "No," he said, slowly, he had never drawn such an analogy, and then he looked at me for quite a long time without saying anything. "You are quite dangerous," he said then.

I said that I wasn't trying to trick him. "No, I don't think you are," he said, "but you are asking me 'no win' questions, aren't you? Did you think that it had made me think of the slave laborers?"

I said, frankly, no, that I didn't think it would ever have occurred to him.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because even in the worst circumstances," I replied, "you wouldn't have thought of yourself on the same or a similar plane."

He was again silent for a long time. "That is terrible," he finally said. "And more terrible still, it is true—or at least, it was true then. I can only hope it is no longer true.")

After that first week, he was moved into a cell on the fourth floor which had a clean cot, table and chair and, most important, a window, the small upper pane of which he could open. "The first day I was there," he said, "it was sunny outside; I took a blanket off the bed and spread it on the floor and lay in the sun. I was so happy, I can't tell you—so happy."

Over the next two weeks, he went through six interrogations by members of the Allied prosecution staff; he said he found the American Deputy Prosecutor Thomas Dodd the most aggressive. (Dodd's presentation of the case against Speer on December 11 would confirm the strong antipathy Speer had sensed in him.) He found the Soviets surprisingly polite, an impression he would have reason to modify when on June 21, 1946, he was sharply cross-examined by the Deputy Prosecutor for the USSR, M. Y. Raginsky.

By the time he and Flächsner met, he had known the charges against him for about two weeks. On October 19, Major Airey Neave had come to his cell, as well as those of all the other accused, to serve him with the indictment.

Neave, twenty-nine years old in 1945, had arrived on the British War

the Minister for Labor, "... he would with justification have told you that he had something else to do at the time and no one would have raised a direct accusation against him on that account."

Like many others who would meet or listen to Speer in Nuremberg, Major Neave found himself fascinated by him. In his book he wrote about their first meeting:

Speer was an impressive figure among the broken-down street politicians of the Nazi Party ... a gifted and compelling man. His appearance was striking, even in his prison clothes. He was tall and dark with a strong, intelligent face and large thoughtful eyes. His manner was [that of] ... an athletic university professor who had turned to public service. He was, I felt, a man of considerable distinction. ... That afternoon [when he handed him the indictment], however, I felt repelled by his smoothness—he was, I felt, more beguiling and dangerous than Hitler who had died only six months before in the ruins of Berlin. ...

They could not have done without Speer. He was the exception ... the only man in Hitler's entourage who sacrificed neither his will nor his reason ... a man of great talent who did most to enable the Nazi dream to become a reality. ...

I read him the terms of the Charter of the Tribunal. He looked at me steadily. "There is a common responsibility for such horrible crimes," he said, "even in the authoritarian system."

"I was extremely depressed when I read the indictment," Speer said later. "It suddenly made it all horribly real. What so shook me was that they appeared to be charging me, not individually, but collectively it seemed to me, for everything that had been done."

In *Inside the Third Reich*, writing about his first meeting with Flächsner, he says he was immediately favorably impressed by his "friendly eyes, unassuming manner," and by his "sensible, unhistrionic attitude," and therefore signed the form accepting him as his counsel at once.

Flächsner remembers this somewhat differently. "He told me right away that he really wanted a former Prussian Minister called Schreiber. I telegraphed this Schreiber immediately, and it was only when he didn't answer that Speer agreed to my representing him. But already in that first meeting, he told me that he wanted to admit guilt. I told him then and countless times afterwards that it was madness, that it could and probably would cost him his head. But he was adamant. He would shrug and say, 'So be it.' Are you surprised I came to admire such a man? He had this extraordinary sense of humor—I must admit, I found that quite exceptional under the depressing circumstances.

"Except for his determination to accept general responsibility, we had

really no arguments said time and again, and what Speer really had him. He had though happily left him no doubt highly

Flächsner said in official documents of defending him the Allies named him. "And so he just gave and they ordered them. In this sense anything the prosecution sense. There were lots I wouldn't even have they certainly never

"Yes, that's what sort of fell in love with they wanted. Of course against him in the trial didn't tell him: thanks very much.' cracking and get it in; and also I knew perfectly within reach of the day we did that, and we their interrogations."

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really no arguments. 'There is nothing you can say to change my mind,' he said time and again. 'I'm determined that there must never be a Hitler cult again, and whatever I can do to prevent it, I will do.' " He confirmed that Speer really hadn't expected to be charged. "It was an enormous shock to him. He had thought on the contrary that the Allies would use him, and they had happily left him in that belief for months while he gave them what was no doubt highly useful information, much of it against himself."

Flächsner said it was quite a while before he found out that all of Speer's official documents were in the hands of the prosecution, which made the task of defending him "not so easy." In the Kransberg "Exploitation Camp" (as the Allies named it), he said, Speer had taken a great liking to the British. "And so he just gave them his whole personal archive of ministerial records, and they ordered Annemarie Kempf to get them into shape—to organize them. In this sense Nuremberg really wasn't like an ordinary trial, in which anything the prosecution intends to present has to be disclosed to the defense. There were lots of things I never saw. If it hadn't been for Frau Kempf, I wouldn't even have known about the British having all this documentation. They certainly never let on about it."

"Yes, that's what happened in Kransberg," Annemarie confirmed. "Speer sort of fell in love with the British, and so he said they could have anything they wanted. Of course neither he nor we realized that it would all be used against him in the trial—after all, we didn't know he'd be tried, and they certainly didn't tell him. They just said in their offhand way he so admired, 'Oh, thanks very much.' After he was taken away they told Edith and me to get cracking and get it into some sort of order. Edith and I had nowhere to go, and also I knew perfectly well that if I wanted to help Speer, I needed to be within reach of the documents, and this was about as close as I could get. So we did that, and we also helped some other former ministry colleagues in their interrogations."

Officially, Annemarie Kempf and Edith Maguira stayed in Kransberg from June 1945 to December 1946. "We were correctly treated," she said, "and when I asked for travel permits to go and see my sick mother, they gave me a 'To Whom It May Concern' paper asking all Allied authorities to help me to return to Kransberg. That's how I went to Nuremberg."

"I was dumbfounded when she arrived," Flächsner said. "I mean, can you imagine? This beautiful young woman wandering around occupied Germany in order to come to Speer's help?"

"Well, they had DPs [displaced persons] on security duty where the lawyers had their offices in Nuremberg," Annemarie said. "They couldn't speak German or English, so I just showed them my impressive-looking Eisenhower HQ permit and said I was *Presse*—that's how I got in. Flächsner went

to Speer right away and brought back a note saying I should help him. So Flächsner showed me a list of documents he would need, and he was in luck because some of them were already among those I had brought along just in case, some pinned to my underclothes, others held around my waist with elastic."

"It was unbelievable what she had brought," said Flächsner. "'Do you want any of this?' she said. 'I've got lots more. I photocopied everything I gave to them, as a precaution.' God, what a woman! But above all, it brought home to me just *how* deficient we were in documentation. So she and I worked through the indictment and figured out what else we would probably need."

"The next day I went back to Kransberg and got it all together," Annemarie said. "We had found a room for me in Nuremberg with a nice woman, and that's where I stayed every time I went there after that." She laughed. "My poor mother had a *lot* of pretend illnesses over the next weeks; I went to and fro like a yo-yo."

"Of course, I had been told about some of the prosecution testimony," Flächsner said, "and Speer and I discussed these. You know, like those infamous punishment cupboards. Well, I was inclined to believe Speer that they were probably nothing but clothes lockers, but, on the other hand, it seemed obvious that these workers *had* been treated very roughly. But whatever was the truth about them, Speer cannot have known about that. One always thinks a Minister has to know everything, but it just isn't so, in any country."

He and Speer also discussed the statement by a German physician, Dr. Jäger, which was introduced by Jackson in his cross-examination of Speer. "When that was later written about by the media," he said, "they emphasized everything that was horrible, and they suppressed Dr. Jäger's other comments, such as when he said that in his opinion beatings of workers only happened rarely, and that it was not part of the system. He said that the German workers wouldn't have stood for it, and I think he was right. There was a strong tradition of workers' solidarity in Germany, and during the trial many instances were cited where German workers had intervened for foreigners and helped them with food and medicines."

Given the horrifying statistics of death in the labor camps and the sheer weight of the evidence on brutalities, his defense of Speer was very difficult. "I never thought we could get far—or anywhere—by questioning the integrity of the witnesses. Even when their testimony was perhaps overemotional, or somewhat exaggerated, I always felt that most of it was probably basically true and I didn't think it was in Speer's interest to express doubt. The atmosphere in the court did not encourage this. And the fact is that when Speer, under cross-examination by Jackson, tried to do this, he invariably failed to

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convince, as for example an exchange with Jackson about steel switches. Jackson, rather kindly, I thought, didn't enlarge on what I thought was an absurd reply, but it certainly didn't help Speer."

(On June 21, 1946, Jackson said to Speer during his cross-examination: "I will ask to have you shown Exhibit D-230: It is an inter-office record of the steel switches which have been found in the camp and they will be shown to you. Eighty of them were distributed [in this one Krupp labor camp alone] according to the reports.")

SPEER: Shall I comment on this?

JACKSON: If you wish.

SPEER: Yes. Those are nothing but replacements for rubber truncheons. We had no rubber; and for that reason the guards probably had something like this. . . . But they did not immediately use these steel switches, any more than your police use their rubber truncheons. But they had to have something in their hands. It is the same thing all over the world.

JACKSON: Well, we won't argue the point.)

BEFORE THE BEGINNING of the trial, the defendants remained in solitary confinement, their only whispered contact during the half-hour walks around the prison courtyard, one behind the other at a distance of four feet, or during the Sunday church services which all of them (except Hess, Rosenberg and Streicher) attended. During this period of preparation, all the defendants were given a variety of psychological tests.

"I thought they were totally idiotic," Speer said. "Responding to them in the manner they expect presupposes either the subject's desire to cooperate or an obedient nature. Neither applied to me, so I decided to have fun with them and wrote total nonsense—especially the Rorschach test: inkspots indeed." (However, it seems that he was rather irked when he found out that, as a result, the psychologist Dr. Gilbert had rated him twelfth in intelligence among the twenty-one defendants, with an IQ of 128 against Schacht's 143. "Ridiculous!" Speer said, probably quite correctly.)

On October 24, four days after receiving the indictment, Robert Ley killed himself. He made a noose from the stripped edges of his army towel and fastened it to the toilet pipe. Dr. Gilbert and the prison psychiatrist had found him very agitated when they visited him the previous day. "Stand us against a wall and shoot us . . . well and good . . . you are victors," he had cried, his usual stammer intensified by his emotion. "But why should I be brought before a Tribunal like a c—c—c— [criminal]: I can't even get the word out."

Although Colonel Andrus had tried to withhold the manner of the suicide for several days, most of the prisoners, Speer thought, had somehow heard of

But two months later, on January 12, Speer warned Dr. Gilbert of the influence Göring was gaining over many of the defendants. "It is not a very good idea, you know, to let the defendants eat and walk together," he told the psychologist. "That is how Göring keeps whipping them into line."

It took over a month before Colonel Andrus finally asked Dr. Gilbert to draw up a new seating plan, separating the defendants into five groups, with Göring in a small room on his own.

Now Speer, Fritzsche, Schirach and Funk ate in what came to be called the Youth Lunchroom. Dr. Gilbert hoped that Speer and Fritzsche would wean the other two away from Göring's influence. The Elders' Lunchroom was for Papen, Neurath, Schacht and Dönitz, all old conservatives who, encouraged by Schacht, it was felt, might come to denounce Hitler.

In the third room, Frank, Seyss-Inquart, Keitel and Sauckel were put together, with the double purpose of removing Keitel from Göring and exposing him to impassioned denunciations of Hitler and confessions of guilt by Frank, who had rejoined the Catholic Church.

Room four was for the intractable Nazis: Raeder, Streicher, Hess and Ribbentrop, who, it was felt, would have neither positive or negative effect on each other. The fifth room was for Jodl, Frick, Kaltenbrunner and Rosenberg, who Dr. Gilbert appeared to think were almost prejudged men. "Raeder and Ribbentrop were disgusted to have been put with Streicher," Dr. Gilbert wrote in his *Nuremberg Diary*, "... and Göring was furious to have been isolated. ..."

For Speer, Jackson's opening statement established the quality of the trial forever more. "It impressed me very deeply," he told me. "Much of what he said was what I had come to feel. It was extraordinary for me to hear my thoughts expressed by this American who, I knew perfectly well, would have a decisive influence on my fate." He was particularly glad that Jackson emphasized the difference between the accused and the German people:

The privilege of opening the first trial in history for crimes against the peace of the world imposes a grave responsibility. The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated. That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury, stay the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law is one of the most significant tributes that power has ever paid to reason. ...

We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants is the record on which history will judge us tomorrow. To pass these defendants a poisoned chalice is to put it to our lips as well. We must

Not for a moment had Flächsner felt that Speer's attitude of remorse was a sham—calculated tactics, as so many people claimed later. ("When he admitted guilt in Nuremberg," Leni Riefenstahl said to me once, "I thought that was very clever—clever as he was.")

"My God, if I think how often we went over this question," Flächsner said. "I wanted him to limit his responsibility to those matters over which he had control, and that did *not* include concentration camps. He had no influence there at all; the SS jealously guarded their rights."

Flächsner said that of course he had talked to Speer about the Jews. "I too, after all, knew in the 1930s that Jews were being badly treated, that they could no longer be judges or lawyers. And believe me, I often thanked God that I wasn't a Jew. I had Jewish friends and tried to help, and sometimes one could help. One knew it was miserable to be a Jew in Hitler's Germany, but one didn't know it was a catastrophe; one didn't know what happened to them. Until a day in 1943, when a client of mine who was a medic in Russia came back with photographs of executions of Jews, I knew absolutely nothing of this. I told him to burn or bury the photographs and to tell no one what he had seen. And I didn't tell anybody either, not even my wife. I know," he added quickly, "that wasn't right; but it was prudent. One wanted to survive—it was most unsafe to have seen such photographs."

"I don't think it was a secret that people were being executed; what we didn't know was that they were being systematically mass-murdered. I used to say to Speer that I couldn't understand why he wanted to take responsibility for things outside his competence. And that's when he said to me, 'If we had won the war, we would have shared in these men's triumphs, and this is why we must now share in the responsibility for the horrors.' That reminded me of myself when I saw those photographs, in 1943," he said. "And then I understood what he meant."

Flächsner was certain that the Ministry of Armaments and Munitions must have been informed about the Wannsee Conference on January 20, 1942, even if they didn't participate. It had never come up at Nuremberg, because Todt's death and Speer's appointment only happened afterwards. Strangely, he said, although the shadow of the extermination of the Jews hovered over the trial from beginning to end, it was not much discussed.

"Before Nuremberg," Flächsner said, "I had never heard the names of Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec or Majdanek. I never even heard of Auschwitz. I did once vaguely hear of Mauthausen, but not in such a context."

Of course, Mauthausen was not that kind of camp, I said.

"No," he said, "not an extermination camp—it was a KZ." After sitting through a year of Nuremberg he certainly knew the difference between a concentration camp and an extermination camp, even if most Germans and

lantén) sent to concentration camps,* there was no evidence of any personal cruelty or misdeeds.

Secondly, there was a great deal of evidence, much of it supplied by Speer on the witness stand but supported by others, that he had informed Hitler early on that the war was lost, and that, at considerable risk to himself, he had sabotaged Hitler's "scorched earth" orders.

Thirdly, though never taken any more seriously than Speer's apparently reluctant presentation of it, there was his perhaps halfhearted but nonetheless real enough plan to kill Hitler, about which the court had the testimony of the man whose help he sought, industrialist Dieter Stahl.

For many historians and observers later, however, the most disturbing aspect of what many were sure was a manipulating Speer in Nuremberg was the Western Allies' reaction to his pleasant appearance, his reasonable tone, his apparently penitent demeanor and his openly contemptuous attitude toward the Soviets.

Flächsner was much more perceptive than some people—including Speer—gave him credit for. (Both Lord Lawrence and his deputy, the British judge Norman Birkett, mistook Flächsner's mildness for obtuseness and repeatedly treated him with open contempt.) He was well aware of Speer's manipulative gifts: "Perhaps one of the most extraordinary things about him during that year when, I assure you, he was fully aware of the dangers he was running," Flächsner said, "was that he remained exactly what he had always been: a game player. Of course this meant that he 'used' people, but, in a way, only intellectually or strategically. Because he was emotionally so distanced from others, he never played with them emotionally—if he liked you, he liked you and nothing would change it." He smiled. "Of course, for anyone who *loved* him this was difficult, for he didn't love. But game playing, which he most certainly, and brilliantly, did at Nuremberg, was almost an 'exercise' for him. Under those terrible circumstances, it served as a reassurance, in a way, that he was still what he had always been."

Flächsner often did not have an easy task when questioning his frequently verbose client. "Sometimes, when he quoted figures, which he reveled in," he said, "I just had to hope and pray that the court did not have sufficient knowledge at their fingertips to refute them." At one point, hoping to demonstrate that many prisoners preferred working in comparatively ordinary factories to starvation in the concentration camps—as was doubtless the case—he asked Speer,

*Fifteen years later, in a letter to Wolters from Spandau in which Speer reviewed the Nuremberg evidence with a view to possible negotiations for his early release, he advised Wolters that it would be best to leave the "*Bummelanten* matter" out of any discussions as "it is rather awkward."

oreign workers or prisoners of war at Krupp's were in a particularly bad position. . . .

Speer, talking to me about Jackson's cross-examination, said that in trying to get him to admit that workers were ill-treated at Krupp's, he thought Jackson was after Krupp, rather than him, and read to me one of Justice Jackson's conciliatory remarks. "I am not claiming," said Jackson, "that you were personally responsible for these conditions, but only wish to point out to you what the regime did and to ask you in what way these measures affected your production efforts."

"He added," said Speer, "that what I would tell him about these conditions would not affect my position in the least. Which of course, made me realize that he wanted to use me against Krupp. And I was not going to be used."

Speer agreed, in response to my question, that the conditions and fate of the workers, except for their working capacity, were a matter of comparative indifference to him then. "I certainly can't claim to have been a humanist," he said, with bitter irony, and then added, "I have said it time and again. My objection to maltreatment was because it could not increase efficiency; it was not a moral issue for me. Now I can't even conceive of such conditions, or of feeling or reacting as I did then."

The only part of his own trial he enjoyed talking about was the way he dealt with the Russians. "They came at the end of my case," he said. "I knew I had done well with Jackson, and by that time, of course, one knew how the rest of the court felt about the Russians. By the time their prosecutor started on me, I was in a kind of euphoria, ridiculously cocky; I think I behaved badly. I'm rather sorry about this now. But one saw things differently then. . . ."

One of the first matters General Raginsky turned to was Speer's acknowledgement, in pretrial interrogation on November 14, 1945, that in *Mein Kampf* Hitler had bluntly stated his aggressive plans, in particular for the Soviet Union. Did Speer confirm this now?

SPEER: No. . . . I shall have to tell you that at the time I was ashamed to say that I had not read the whole of *Mein Kampf*. I thought that would sound rather absurd. . . . [so] I cheated. . . .

RAGINSKY: You cheated at that time; maybe you are cheating now?

SPEER: No.

"It's difficult to explain now why I lied to the Russians about this during that earlier interrogation," he told me. "It was stupid: I was irritated by their investigator, who was very uninformed about me—someone from a lower

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RAGINSKY: I will rem of your ministry. "O genetic action, includin are committed agains SPEER: Yes [but] may few sentences in the r RAGINSKY: Yes, yes, I explain [then].

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*The speech is mentioned in Ch are quoted there.

[At the end he wrote:]

Original and 1 copy—Frau Speer, Heidelberg

1 copy—Rudi Wolters

1 copy—A.K. [Annemarie Kempf]

On August 31, the twenty-one defendants, in the order in which their cases had been heard, made their last statements. All of them, except Hess, who rambled, acknowledged the crimes of the regime. Göring said he "could not comprehend the ghastly mass murders the trial had revealed"; Keitel said he would "rather die than be entangled again in such horrors"; Rosenberg said that genocide was a crime which he had never envisaged; Frank warned of the consequences of turning away from God; Streicher condemned Hitler's mass killing of Jews; Funk spoke of feeling profound shame confronted by "these frightful crimes"; Schacht spoke of "the unspeakable misery [he] had tried so hard to prevent"; Raeder philosophized on the value of the Führer Principle; Schirach deplored how the youth of Germany had been deceived; Sauckel was "shocked in his innermost soul"; for Papen, "the power of evil had proved stronger than the power of God"; Seyss-Inquart deplored the "fearful excesses"; Neurath had "worked for the Fatherland"; and Fritzsch saw a "horrifying warning in the murder of five million people."

Not a single one of the defendants accepted personal blame for these crimes. Jodl and Hess were the only ones who defended them in any way, Speer the only one who tried to explain them. In all their cases, no one in court that day could have doubted their final fate.

"In a war such as this," said Jodl, "in which carpet bombing destroyed hundreds of thousands of women and children, and in which partisans used every single means to reach their goals, I cannot feel that hard measures, even when they seem doubtful under international law, are a crime before morality and conscience. Because I believe that duty toward one's people and one's Fatherland stands above all others, it was my highest obligation and an honor to fulfill this duty. I am proud of it. In a happier future, however, I hope that this duty will be replaced by a higher one: the responsibility for humanity."

"Hitler's dictatorship," said Speer, toward the end of his address, "was . . . one that employed to perfection the instruments of technology to dominate its own people. . . . Through technical devices such as radio and public address systems, used as they had never been used before, eighty million people were made subject, uncritically, to the will of one man. One of the results was a far-reaching supervision of the citizen of the state and the maintenance of a high degree of secrecy for criminal acts. . . . In five or ten years the technique of warfare will have progressed so far that it will be possible to fire rockets from continent to continent with uncanny precision . . . to use

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atomic power to destroy one million people in a matter of seconds in New York, without warning. . . . Science will be able to spread pestilence among humans and animals and destroy crops by insect warfare. . . . Chemistry will be capable of inflicting unspeakable suffering upon an increasingly helpless humanity. . . .

"This trial must contribute to laying down the ground rules for living in a humanistic society. What does my own fate signify, after all that has happened and in comparison with such a lofty goal? A nation which believes in its future," he ended, "will never perish. May God protect Germany and Western culture."

"The historians who criticized me for appearing to focus on the technical aspects of Hitler's regime," Speer said to me decades later, "thought that I was trying to present a picture of Nazi Germany as the prototype of a technological society, and myself as the prototype of technological man. And basically their argument was that the horrors Hitler produced—the extermination and concentration camps—had absolutely nothing to do with technology. Of course, if you consider Hitler's Germany from that point of view alone, then that is quite correct—the machinery of murder and the machinery of concentration camps were, if anything, primitive. But the whole point is that eighty million people were *not* persuaded to follow Hitler because they knew he was going to murder people in lime ditches and gas chambers; they did not follow him because he seemed evil, but because he seemed extraordinarily good. And what convinced them of this was Goebbels's brilliant propaganda, his unprecedented use of modern means of mass communication.

"Of course," he said, "when you are criticized, it is usually because you made mistakes, and I made mistakes even in that last statement. I was only interested in using it to re-establish some dignity for the German people who listened to it all on the radio, at the end of many months of listening—as many of them did—to the horrors which Nuremberg revealed. Now I know that I should have included what I felt so very strongly, that whatever was known or not known, it was our society that had produced these horrors or, better said, had given monsters a license for horrors, not as a result of technical perfection, but as a consequence of our moral disintegration. I didn't say it, and I was wrong."

On October 1, four weeks after the final statements, the court returned with the verdicts.

"The extraordinary thing," said Flächsner, "was that when they said twenty years, I honestly think it hit him harder than a death sentence would have. Somehow he had prepared himself for that—a kind of euphoria of guilt, of paying, of so many things. But the thought of twenty years—forty-

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one when he went in, sixty-one when he would come out—that was a tremendous shock. And somehow—it sounds grotesque and *he* never said it; *I* am saying it in retrospect—perhaps the fact that he didn't get the death sentence somehow diminished him in his own eyes.

It was nine months before all the inter-Allied problems were ironed out and the prisoners were transferred to Spandau prison in Berlin. Speer hated to talk about those months. "It was the blackest period of my life," he said. The blackest months of his life were the beginning of his life as a different man.

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Casalis's first services at Spandau—the sermon always, as Karl Barth had advised him, the same for the prisoners on Saturday as he would deliver to Berlin's French Protestant congregation on Sunday—passed tranquilly enough. But on the sixth Saturday he very nearly came a cropper when he chose as his subject Jesus's healing of the leper. "They listened in dead silence," he recalled, "and except for Speer who smiled and shook hands as always—though even he didn't stay behind as he usually did—they filed out, stony-faced and refusing to shake hands. I was very taken aback, and I agonized over it all week. Had I perhaps been wrong? Should I be more careful in my choice of sermons from now on? Had this lost me the only just beginning trust of these men?"

"The next week Raeder stood up at the end of the sermon, which I had again taken from Saint Mark, though choosing a particularly mild parable, and addressed me in the manner of the admiral dressing down the little navy chaplain. 'Last week, *Herr Pfarrer*,' he said, 'you deeply offended us. It is entirely impermissible to address us as lepers. We formally protest. We are here because we have been unjustly condemned; we are men who did nothing except their duty as soldiers who executed their orders. If our protest to you should prove ineffective, we shall be forced to take official actions.' And with that they stalked out.

"This time Speer stayed. 'I didn't stay last week,' he said, 'because I wanted to hear what they had to say right afterwards—the opportunity might not have come again.' And then he smiled that rather special smile of his. 'Well, you certainly threw the cat among the pigeons, didn't you?' But his tone was such that I immediately felt better—you see, another extraordinary gift of his was first of all the ability to put things into perspective and, secondly, to find humor in almost anything. 'All week,' he said, 'nothing was talked about except you.' [By this time they were allowed to talk during work and on walks—now in the garden, where Speer had already laid out a 270-meter-round path.] The whole group referred to themselves as 'the lepers,' he said. 'The lepers have to go in to dinner now; forward march, lepers, outside for the walk; lights out, for the lepers. Gallows humor, of course,' he said, 'but it got it out of their system. But for heaven's sake,' he said then, 'don't stop, don't spare our feelings; don't now start being careful or protective of us. You are exactly on course, exactly what is needed.' It was enormously encouraging for me.

"I was, after all, still pretty young and, pastorally speaking, not that experienced, you know. I had a very wise wife, but we were both thirty years old, with two small babies, living in an atmosphere both of us detested, that of an occupied country, and in a role we despised, that of the victors. I had been at war for all intents and purposes all my adult years, with no chance of any

Spandau: I

experience in order and quiet to the horrors I had confusion, had no peace. And yet, if they admitted, well, and, in a deep sense,

By the following his sermon Jesus's held a great banquet that he should not answered them, "I not come to call the

And here, in the reluctant now to prevent offense with to you? How can you stand that if I speak words, or simply to hear or interpret as member always the sinner and first sinner here, in this inner selves, between what we can accept search."

From that moment occasion," he said, me." On December 1941. "It was surprising saw them the following day and compassion was all of them, so that it wouldn't have been permitted nor

Certainly, the evening and Speer's results program," explains during that time. The Toni Proost quite could have written a

next three years, he took amazingly little advantage of this opportunity. Although the thought of writing "a Hitler biography" was somewhere in the back of his mind, and he did now and then jot down this or that anecdote he remembered, and sent it off to Annemarie Kempf, these were rare occasions.

"I never knew about Speer's writing in Spandau until after he came out," Casalis said. "Of course, he didn't write to any great extent while I was there, but even so, it is quite extraordinary and has never ceased to astonish me that he must already have known then that he would want to write, and didn't tell me.

"It didn't hurt me when I found out, because I know that a prisoner—all prisoners—are always an ambivalent entity; one lives with them in a perpetual state of half-truths or half-reality. And this certainly applied to Speer too. In a way it is the defense of their id: they can't give it up, even to someone they come to trust; if they did, it would destroy whatever 'self' they have retained. So you see, it isn't deliberate or even unconscious dishonesty. It is an instinctive self-protective process. So everything they show is always only partly really open, really true.

"While I was there, I'm quite sure Speer was concentrating on creating and then developing a rhythm of working, thinking and indeed living which would make it possible for him to grow into that 'different man.' That was his intention, of that I am certain. Afterwards, when I left—perhaps *because* I left—he used that rhythm, that discipline he had learned, for the alternate purpose which, I now know, had always been marginally in his mind, though he abandoned it for the brief time we worked together.

"In those first years I knew Speer," he said, "he was resigned to his punishment—that much was absolutely true in him. He talked to me about a great many things: private, emotional and intellectual things. The content of our conversations changed somewhat, became, let us say, less desperate as he began to read, understand and was able to discuss his reading of Barth and of course of other works. But during those years, his reading, his studies, his thoughts originated in and were dominated by his very profound sense of guilt which was entirely centered on the murder of the Jews—to such a degree, indeed, that he seemed oblivious to Hitler's many other crimes."

The Gauleiter conference in Posen, Casalis agreed, had been the decisive moment, even though he believed that Speer knew about the Jews before, if not the gruesome details. But after the war, he had to make a decision about Posen. If he admitted to having been there, then he had to admit to knowledge; if he couldn't admit to knowledge, then he had, at all cost, to maintain his claim that he had neither been present when Himmler made his awful disclosures nor been told about them subsequently. Casalis—like Hilde—didn't see how he could have admitted *that* knowledge and still remain alive.

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rience. I remember many times driving away from Spandau after these talks and saying to myself, 'Merde, what an oddball.'

"Don't forget, for years I had been and still was very seriously involved in politics. To me, in a world like ours, to be religious is tantamount to having a social conscience, and a social conscience means politics. Thus, religion essentially never has and doesn't exist without politics. And I said to myself, how did a man like that, a man with such feelings of love, ever fit into serious politics? And the answer is, of course, he didn't—he fell into it, unknowing. Indulging his emotions, he played at it, never realizing or never facing that it was a most dangerous game. It was not that he didn't come to realize that it could cost him his head—he knew terribly well how to play the game to protect his life. But he didn't know, and until Nuremberg and Spandau didn't admit to himself, that it could cost him his soul."

AFTER SPEER was sentenced, Annemarie went back to the trailer camp at Eutin, which was now her only home. Her troubled family joined her, she said—her mother, who had cancer; her sister, suffering from multiple sclerosis; and her brother, who had come out of the army with emphysema. She and her brother got work on a farm, at thirty pfennigs an hour, and soon afterwards the Eutin community, adopting—as had been the case all over Germany—the self-help building movement Speer had suggested in his last radio speech, gave them a plot of land to build two cottages for themselves. "One for my mother and me, and one for my brother and his family," she told me. "We cleaned umpteen thousands of bricks, and a year or so later, with some help of course from architect friends, we had two little houses."

In Kramsberg she had formed a close friendship with the former director general of BMW, Wilhelm Schärf, a known opponent of the Nazis, who was there as a consultant rather than a prisoner.

"Thanks to his advice," said Annemarie, "the Americans got a lot of the BMW technicians out before the plant was transferred to the Russians. He was a wonderful man and enormously helpful to me. I was very desperate about life then, not because the war had been lost, but because of the terrible unhappiness it had caused—Hitler had caused. Schärf had for years been very interested in anthropology, and he got me involved in it. It filled a void in me and gave me hope. All during the house building in Eutin, I was planning my future, which from the start I knew would somehow have to involve helping children."

But then, toward the end of 1949, one of Speer's former industrialist friends who had become a member of parliament offered her a job in Bonn.

"I think it is fair to say," she said, "that although I had other plans by then, I deliberately went there because I thought that it might be of use to Speer." She stayed there for five years with the sole purpose of being near politicians who might be willing to help obtain an early release for him.

"After a few years, you see," Annemarie said, "his resolution to 'pay his dues,' to serve out every minute of his sentence, gave way to determination—really more in tune with what I call his 'pre-Casalis' personality—to fight the system and get himself an early release. In the course of time all of us were mobilized toward that effort—Rudi Wolters, Hilde, me and anyone we could interest in his fate.

"I don't know how much use my presence in Bonn was," she said. "There were of course small things I could achieve, like getting the decision that they couldn't have newspapers modified and that sort of thing, but most things one tried didn't work out. What one could do, was to try to convey a different image of Speer's personality, and this usually worked. But I think finally it was more of a comfort to me, than of practical use to him."

After Toni Proost's extraordinary offer in October 1947, Annemarie Kempf told me during our first series of talks in Hamburg in 1982, Speer did begin to send her occasional dated notes. "And he quite soon started that Spanish-Illustrated, his to me rather heartbreaking attempt to make it all sound funny for the children," she said. "He addressed these to me, but there was very little of it for the first three years. The first *Cassiber* [secret consignment from a prison] of any size didn't arrive until 1950."

Two years later he began writing to Wolters, she said, and of course in January 1953 he started his "Spandau draft" for his memoirs, which became *Inside the Third Reich*. Once Speer really started to write in Spandau, he very carefully organized to whom he sent what. As of 1952–53 it was Wolters who received the bulk of everything: first the "Spandau draft"—written in up to forty-page letters entirely from memory—and when Speer was through with that, for years appendixes for it, afterthoughts to much he had written there.

"To me," said Annemarie, "he sent everything to do with Bonn—suggestions for easing of the Spandau rules; drafts for letters to and from well-known personalities, to government officials and foreign heads of state suggesting his early release; suggestions—in later years mostly for Hilde, who became very effective in this kind of public relations for her father—for contacts with foreign dignitaries by high-ranking Germans, sympathetic American and British legal personalities, and top journalists. Most of his many communications to me were of that kind.

"His *Späne*,* the Spanish-Illustrated—his collective letters to the chil-

*German proverb: "Wo gehobelt, da fallen Späne" ("Where there is planing, there are shavings").

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In reality, between July 3 and July 12, 1953, he wrote twenty-one pages on the July 20 plot, and then started a new letter: “My dear friend, I now continue with the description of the tragedy of the Twentieth of July. As you will have gathered, in retrospect my sympathy is with the men who tried to do something about the approaching catastrophe. It is very difficult for me now to say what my attitude toward this event was then.” The next mention of his memoirs in *The Secret Diaries* was dated January 4, 1954: “I have by this time reached the Ardennes offensive, which the Americans call the Battle of the Bulge. . . .”

But in fact he had written about the Ardennes five months earlier, July 26, 1953: “In November 1944 Hitler told me in complete confidence that he planned a major offensive in the West. . . . The Western Allies were weak and incapable of hard fighting, and that it must therefore be possible to break through in the center . . . advancing to Antwerp . . . thus forming a huge pocket which would force large parts of the U.S. and British armies to capitulate. . . .”

His description in *The Secret Diaries* of coming to the end of his memoirs was very like that in his draft, except that it was dated one year later. In the draft he wrote, on December 26, 1953, “I have only a final paragraph to write, and an epilogue. This will make a thousand pages—I’m glad I didn’t know how much work it would be when I started one year ago.” His book said,

December 26, 1954: My estimate was pretty close. I wanted to conclude the memoirs on January 1, and today I brought the book to a conclusion as best I could. . . . From Heidelberg, I hear that it mounts up to some 1,100 pages. . . . This is the end of a laborious, sometimes upsetting task that has taken me two years.

It is obvious in studying the “Spandau draft,” from which he created *Inside the Third Reich*, that he had to transform the original material, which jumped from subject to subject with additions thrown in helter-skelter as they entered his mind, into a logical orderly account. His decision to claim that the original took from March 1953 to December 1954 was taken then, and he gives those dates in his Afterword. Then he reinforced it in *The Secret Diaries* with repeated references to how the work was progressing, associating various subjects to specific dates—all of them wrong.

I have consulted the few people familiar with the draft, in Koblenz, in Munich and in Berlin. Everyone agrees that while there is no reason whatsoever to suspect his motivations here, equally there is no rational explanation for this curious divergence from the facts.

But sometimes explanations are simpler than one thinks or seeks. The

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how she was growing, how deep—much deeper than mine—her mind was, and I was so proud of her. You know, I found myself living in and through her; I think I told her this later. I hope I did. But I don't want to lie to you—part of her importance to me was that she was in America; that she met many people who might help me; and indeed that she lived in close proximity to John McCloy, who had become my main hope.”*

Hilde was well aware of her father's hopes for some benefit from her efforts. She had written to McCloy at the very beginning of her American stay; the McCloy's invited her over for tea. The Nuremberg sentence on her father, he told her, was disproportionate. He would do all he could to help get him an early release. Speer replied on October 10, 1952:

It is the most encouraging news you could have given me. McCloy has great influence, as has Eisenhower [elected President soon after this], and I think they are close. If both of them are positively inclined toward me—and I was told in 1946 that Eisenhower was—I really begin to feel hope.

Without doubt Speer's most creative year was 1953. In the twelve months from January 8, 1953, to January 9, 1954, he wrote, as already discussed, the entire “Spandau draft” of his memoirs, which became *Inside the Third Reich*. But in this year he also wrote dozens of other letters, to Wolters, Annemarie Kempf, his lawyers, other members of his family, individual children and many of the collective Spanish-Illustrated letters. And aside from this, he entertained a fairly copious correspondence with Hilde. “It was as if his brain and his energy became almost manic,” Annemarie said later. “I never did understand how he managed it all. I finally just marveled.”

It was during this year that he wrote time and again to Hilde about faith. For example, on January 9, 1953:

My parents didn't go to church . . . and in school the chaplain was in the unintelligent habit of imposing the learning of Psalms by heart as a punishment! You can imagine how that called forth my spirit of contradiction. Your mother and I did marry in church, but I can't claim to have felt anything then: we just did it to please her parents. And so, even though when you were born we were still formally members of the church, we didn't have you baptized. . . . It really wasn't that Hitler forced anything on us—on the contrary, he forbade his closest circle, Hess,

*John J. McCloy had a distinguished legal career before he became Assistant Secretary of War from 1941 to 1945. In 1947 he headed the new World Bank and in 1949 succeeded the U.S. military governor, General Lucius Clay, to become the first civilian High Commissioner for Germany, as well as chairman of the Allied High Commission, until 1952, the period in which sovereignty was being returned to the West German Republic. He returned to the United States in 1953 as chairman of the Chase National Bank. His career of public service continued for the rest of his life, and included working under Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon on arms control and disarmament.

Goebbels, Göring, etc., to leave their churches, and he himself, as you may know, never formally renounced the Catholic Church. You may say that was just political expediency, but I'm not sure I would agree: I suspect that in the way of many Catholics, he somehow couldn't give it up. I think they always believe that renouncing the church would bring God's wrath upon them. When your mother and I did leave the [Protestant] church, it was in reaction to the political opposition of the churches to Hitler—I suppose it was a sort of statement of loyalty. Silly. But we did decide together to make Albert attend Sunday school in Berchtesgaden—perhaps the only sensible thing we did. [His own attitude changed, he wrote, in the summer of 1944, after his illness.]

And then, of course, there was Nuremberg, with two exceedingly kind American chaplains at a time when kindness was in low supply, and . . . then of course, in Spandau, there was Casalis, the most unique man I have known. . . . You write that in your discussions about God, rational consideration argues against rather than for His existence. Well, I am against applying reason to God, for the miracles of nature show that reason has nothing to do with it, or Him. How do you explain that the peas I deliberately planted in the spring in a deep hole unfailingly pierced fifteen centimeters of earth to shoot straight up out of the ground? And what about the fern I planted by mistake upside down? It turned itself around, to grow straight up, bypassing its own root. I know, you can find reasons: the nature of growth; Schopenhauer's "Will for Life" [sic] or whatever. Of course one can always say no, but if you are honest you have to admit that these are miracles, which become more mysterious the more you ponder them. . . . I have read and thought so much by now, and I suppose the knowledge I gain will remain with me later. I only hope though that I won't lose the feeling for faith once I'm back in ordinary life. . . . As you see, it is ethics which particularly interest me. . . . I read again and again what Jaspers said: "Evil will rule unless I confront it at all times in myself and in others. . . ."

This preoccupation with evil—more specifically, with Hitler's evil—is reflected in almost all of the "Spandau draft" and in at least some of his many other letters to Wolters. But Wolters's extreme sensitivity to Speer's fate at Spandau and his consideration for his feelings meant that Wolters only rarely allowed himself any criticism; in all the correspondence I have seen, I have only found three specific instances, and even these were very restrained—"Much more restrained than Wolters felt, I assure you," Marion Riesser said.

The first and most explicit one was in a letter Wolters wrote to Speer in early April 1953. Speer replied on April 20:

I can see you would like me to be more positive about Hitler. But if I'm to write honestly, I cannot do that. That would really be a falsification of

* P.T. Far from wishing to confront it, my best chance comes from me on how to be better at it.

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He had flattered Hilde that he could discuss these personal things with her but not with anyone else, except in the past "with my friend, Pastor Casalis, who is now gone." But then his tone changed and—as would happen so often when he spoke to me—one can sense honesty and pain in what followed. He continued,

I have often asked myself what I would have done if I had come to feel a share in the responsibility for the things Hitler did in areas other than those in which I was directly involved. And unfortunately, if I'm honest, my reply has to be negative—the tasks Hitler had confided to me, first in architecture, then in government, his "friendship," the passionate conviction he radiated, the power his favor conferred on me, all this was quite simply overwhelming and had become so indispensable to me that to hang on to it I would probably have swallowed anything.

True, as you will have read, much later I did oppose him in many ways. But, in the context of your question, that cannot serve as a justification of my previous passivity. . . . The truth is that I only woke up to what he was doing—what he *was*—when I had to acknowledge to myself that he intended to pull the German people down into perdition with him. And really, all I did then was only in an effort to prevent that.

So you see, mine was not a moral opposition. I didn't try to act against him because he persecuted the Jews or started the war. Even then I was able to tell myself that *that* was outside my competence, was not my business.

And the undeniable fact that we had all been conditioned to this attitude is no justification either, I know it. The truth is that my active opposition only began when, by ordering the industries of France, Belgium, Holland—and finally Germany proper—to be eradicated, he extended his evil intentions to *my* area of responsibility.

I hope you will feel that I have said *something* in reply to your question. I have learned to understand that unfettered ambition can destroy one's innate awareness of ethical principles. Can one transmit such understanding, gained through catastrophe, to others? To anyone young one feels close to? [He cannot bring himself to say "loves."] I don't know: I can only wish for you to feel supported not by any ideology, but by faith in the miracle that is the creation.

Very, very affectionately,
your Papa

In a postscript, ambivalent as ever, he recommends once more that upon her return to Germany she should read Dr. Gilbert's *Nuremberg Diary* (which was very favorable to him): "It will broaden your knowledge."

* Here is where Hitler's rage is greatest. How bourgeois was Spandau! It would be nothing for a German to see a country and rebuild it if the latter was

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Spandau: II

HILDE, and a few years later her husband, Ulf, a brilliant young sociologist, were the only members of Speer's family to whom he ever wrote about his thoughts. Besides Hilde, his third child, Fritz, interested both him and Wolters most. Wolters wrote to Speer on August 22, 1953: "I want to congratulate you on Fritz. This child is a genius in mathematics. Intellectually he stands miles above the others. He is, on the other hand, very 'closed,' very much like his father!!"

"The children, especially the boys," said Speer, "needed a father. Rudi did this for some of them—he was especially good with Fritz, though Margret always said that Arnold, who is three years younger, was always trailing after Rudi even more than Fritz. But it was about Fritz that Rudi most often wrote to me. He always said Fritz was the most intelligent of my children." He shook his head. "They all seem terribly intelligent to me. They've all done awfully well, you know." He paused and then added, "Much better, I think, than if I had been there." It wasn't said sadly—just as a fact.

Speer felt enormous empathy with Fritz and wrote him often, the letters even more personal than those he wrote to Hilde and almost entirely focused, not on himself, but on this complicated and—he sensed—unhappy boy. "Sadly," he told me once, "it never worked between us after I came out. I never understood why. He fought me more and sees me even less than any of the others. Yes, perhaps because we are the most alike."

Except for a few letters he would write later, to two of the children at a time after they had been allowed to visit him together, and several congratulations he sent to his eldest son, Albert, after he won architectural competitions, all his family letters were either on practical matters or about his Spandau life—to the younger children, always reported in humorous terms—or they were brief comments about their successes or problems at school and later at university.

Wolters was always the exception. In 1953, even while sending him the long letters which made up the "Spandau draft," Speer also wrote him separately then and later—about his financial concerns for Margret, his irritations with his difficult brother Hermann, his continuous problems with his co-prison-

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middle class gentility, he was for protecting
Prussians.

longing for his German homeland," until he finally managed to return to Germany in 1952. It is an incredible, almost unbelievable parallel between these two men of different faith but very similar upbringing.

After having tried vainly for six years to accommodate himself to life in Israel, Geis and his new wife, Susanne—seventeen years younger than he; they had been married for a year—returned to Europe in 1946. They first stayed for ten difficult months in Britain, where his parents, Moritz and Sitah, had found refuge but where he found no employment. They survived on Susanne's earnings from working in a center for children rescued from concentration camps. After a temporary teaching job in Zurich, he was named in August 1949 rabbi to an immigrant community in Amsterdam where, now parents of a girl, Jael, and a boy, Gabriel, they stayed until at long last he was called back to Germany as provincial rabbi of the state of Baden.

His great wish, to serve as rabbi to a community of camp survivors, was to remain unfulfilled; there was no stable community of Jewish camp survivors, nor did those who briefly stayed in one or another UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) facility wish for the presence of a rabbi. They were restless, angry, deeply suspicious and not infrequently violent people, many of them ravenous for revenge and, as a security of sorts, for possessions, however obtained. Their principal need was to get out of Germany as fast as possible, and most of them were rapidly "processed" by Israeli and U.S. Jewish organizations for immigration to Israel or overseas. Spiritual matters were very low on their list of priorities in those first post-Hitler years.

But by the time Geis finally got back to Germany, his writings and lectures had made him very well known, both as a profoundly spiritual Jew, a born teacher, and as a man determined to work toward Christian-Jewish reconciliation. "He was full of love," Susanne Geis told me, shaking her head. "I could never get anywhere near this 'perfection.'"

Geis had replied to Speer's letter by return mail. No, he said, he saw him as far too masculine to risk being sentimental:

If you find yourself in tears, be grateful for them. When I was a young rabbi in Munich, at the beginning of the Third Reich, I couldn't allow myself tears, because I had to be strong for the confused and frightened Jews in my care. That is how I survived Buchenwald, and I remained as stiffly still when [three years later] I learned of the end of my sister and her family in Auschwitz. Why do I write you this? Certainly not in order to open up a mercifully drawn curtain, but to tell you that my own fate in the Third Reich until 1939 taught me that one cannot categorize human beings. I knew, for instance, high-ranking Nazis whose helpfulness was exemplary, and I knew of Jews who denounced me to the Gestapo. I always

understood about the quality of the world's so-called compassion or conscience. Without the cowardly silence of the great powers, Hitler could never have become the awful reaper of death he became. And in the subsequent years? Vietnam, Greece, Spain, South America, South Africa, the American blacks—the awful dying, torturing and starving that is still continuing? If one does not wish to despair and if one recognizes that the battle is on many fronts, then one knows that the first victory is to say time and again “Yes” to individual human beings. So you see, while there are those whose hand I wouldn’t shake, I can look upon you as a comrade, because I sense you to be true. I should be happy to have your book. And perhaps we can find a way to meet one day—it would be good.

your Raphael Geis

There were to be many more, increasingly warm letters between them, until four months later, in March 1970, they finally met in the Black Forest where Aba and Susanne Geis were on holiday and invited the Speers to join them for a day and a night.

I met Susanne Geis in the early spring of 1986 in Baden-Baden, a lovely spa on the edge of the Black Forest, where she and her husband had lived for years. Susanne is beautiful, quiet, with a wonderful gaiety and warmth. Her husband had died in 1972. She continued to live in the charming apartment in Baden-Baden they had found together and where she and I were to talk many times. “I was very apprehensive,” Susanne said. “To help me, Aba also invited our doctor and his wife, the Sprengers, who were close friends from Karlsruhe. They arrived in the morning, the Speers in the afternoon. I didn’t at all share my husband’s enthusiasm. I was, and remained, very suspicious of Speer. He never quite succeeded in persuading me of his good faith.”

The inn in the Black Forest was relatively simple, and they spent the first hours driving to another village for afternoon coffee. “Then we had dinner, and afterwards stayed talking around the table in the *Gaststube*.” The conversation, she said, was largely about Speer and his time in Spandau. “I was pretty appalled by Mrs. Sprenger, who immediately asked Speer the most direct questions. It made me squirm.

“My husband was a very good pastor. He certainly must have known or guessed what Margret Speer had been through, and he got her to talk. She said her husband had hardly been home throughout the war, or much before then either. He had never been much of a husband or father in the usual sense of the term, so [the Spandau time] wasn’t *that* different for her and the children. She said all this in that light girlish voice of hers, sounding almost as if she felt nothing as she said it. Aside from that, I rarely heard her say anything during the ten times or so we all met over the next two years. But, then,

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I too was fairly silent when my husband was around—that is how women were conditioned then, you know.”

Susanne’s feelings about Speer had not changed over the years. “In a way I found him scary, and it never changed. I don’t mean I disliked him; it energized me—Irritated me, if you like—that he only had the past on his mind. My husband was sad about that too; he wrote him in one of his letters to stop exposing himself eternally to questions about it.

“Aba could put up with all his holding forth, his ‘instructing’ everybody, and his stories about all the people with ‘names’ he met. But I felt it was all partly masochism, and partly just enjoying his fame. I remember one of the stories he told us, about going to a reception at a castle in Bavaria full of past and present dignitaries, including Strauss*—whom we deeply distrusted. I didn’t like it at all that he attended functions like that, and my husband didn’t like it much either.”

Perhaps he did some of these things unthinkingly, out of a curious kind of naiveté, I suggested. “Funny that you say that,” she replied. “Aba also thought that for such a sophisticated man he had an extraordinarily naive side. Actually, if I liked anything about him, I liked that.”

Both Geis children, like much of the Jewish community, deeply disapproved of their father’s relationship with Speer, but never told him. “They only talked to me about it after Aba had died,” Susanne said.

“But there were nice things about him,” she said. “I liked the way he talked about Hilde, of whom he was so proud, and also her husband, whom he admired. He was fascinated by their radically different way of life in a cooperative, living very closely to their baby. And he talked about his architect son, Albert, and his wife, Ruth, who was on television and whom he respected a lot.

“He also spoke of his grandchildren, the children of his youngest son, Ernst, and his wife, Irmgard, with whom they increasingly shared the Heidelberg house. He loved that the grandchildren were entirely unself-conscious about him—he was just their grandfather, and that was very special for him. I thought all that was nice. And then, he loved giving presents, and he really thought about them. One day he arrived bringing two ancient theological volumes Aba had longed to have. They must have cost him untold thousands,” she said, “but that made no difference to him; money in that sense was entirely immaterial to him.”

She pointed to one of the earliest letters in the Geis-Speer correspondence, where Speer, with apologies, asked whether Geis knew of anyone he could

*Franz Josef Strauss, a right-wing Bavarian politician who had been Federal Minister of Defense and then of Finance, and was later Prime Minister of Bavaria.

Markus said that one had to see Speer very much in the context of his background and the time in which he grew up. "The educated *grande bourgeoisie* in Germany were particularly anti-Semitic," he said. "Don't you ever let them tell you they weren't. So whatever his father was—as you tell me, Pan-European or whatever—Speer grew up in such an atmosphere. The potential for National Socialism was particularly strong in that part of German society."

The Speers visited them twice. "And I went to see them in Heidelberg three times," Markus said. "Twice more we met at the conferences Lili Simon organized in Radevormwald, and once or twice afterwards in Maria Laach, with Father Athanasius."

What he had never understood, he said, was how for even a minute Speer could claim ignorance of the Nazi horrors against the Jews. He himself as a young man, sponsored by his father, had become a member of the Swiss Aktion Nationaler Widerstand (Swiss Action Group of National Resistance). "We met regularly," he said, "and we knew about the mass exterminations of Jews by the autumn of 1942. So you see, for me it really is and always has been impossible to credit that our little Swiss resistance group—mostly young people of no 'importance' whatsoever—meeting in deep secret to prepare for a possible German occupation of Switzerland, should have known about these horrors in considerable detail, and that the German Reichsminister for Armaments should have been in ignorance of them."

But he had not put this to Speer. "When I met him I felt it was up to God to forgive. It was not my role to delve into Speer, to ask him whether he had really admitted everything. Of course," Markus said, "he had studied my father's *Dogmatik* so intensely, he may have come to the conclusion that nothing he could *do*—that only thinking—could help him, could lead him to salvation. Perhaps he was right."

"His solution," Rosemarie said, "was not to speak of repentance but of responsibility, and I think that was probably right; he could 'carry'—manage—that."

Geis, she said, with his gift for empathy, would have felt how Speer suffered from his guilt. "And of course, Geis hadn't met many men who *suffered* from having had something to do with the extermination of the Jews, so this must have been a huge experience for him. And to meet a Jew like Geis, this most exceptional spirit," she said, "must have been a truly fantastic thing for Speer. That's the impression he conveyed at that first conference. He seemed so very expectant, so full of hope and trust. It was very, very impressive and touching. Everyone who was there felt it and reacted to it. As I said when we began to talk, he did seem then like a man of innocence, a very honest man, searching."

at Posen that she suddenly said, quite resignedly, "It will never end, will it, this business about the Jews? It will go on and on, won't it?"

She was in agreement with my belief that Speer's feelings of guilt about that one aspect of Hitler's reign ruled all of his postwar life. Did she, I asked her (who, as an unconscious act of contrition, I was convinced, was giving her life to caring for children, some of whom under Hitler's eugenic rules would have been killed), think it was wrong that "the business about the Jews" had permeated not just Speer's conscience—and Germany's—but the world's?

Annemarie, who, with that unlined face and those clear, dark blue eyes, always looked so young, suddenly turned old before my eyes—her next words, more than anything else she had said over the years, showed me how deep her feelings had been, and her distraught face proved how deep they had remained.

"Of course," she said, "if Hitler had this solution of the 'Jewish question' in mind from the start, if *that* solution could even *enter* his mind, then everything he was and did was an abuse of our confidence, our loyalty, our faith. Because then there was *never* any national integrity, any nobility in the movement, in the sense in which we believed we were living it. My God," she said, "if this was in his mind"—she stopped and then went on—"then there was *never* anything pure about it. It means that we were betrayed to the very depth of our beings."

My research into all the circumstances concerning Speer and the events and consequences of Posen in October 1943 was greatly complicated by the fact that no one still alive who had attended Himmler's speech was willing to admit to their presence there that day. In their refusal to confront that memory, they were, of course, not unlike Speer. The difference between him and almost all of them, however, was that they denied not only hearing this dreadful speech and all personal knowledge of these murders, but any suggestion that Hitler had committed any wrong—except the one of losing the war. Speer, on the other hand, who did more than any other man to help him win that war, ended up shattered by its futility, convinced of Hitler's crimes and determined to share the overall responsibility for them.

By the time Professor Goldhagen, citing Himmler addressing Speer directly in Posen, appeared to prove that Speer had been present during that awful speech, Speer had maintained for twenty-six years that he had been in ignorance of the extermination of the Jews until Nuremberg.

Although, alone among the twenty-one accused, he had been prepared and indeed determined from the beginning of the trial to accept a share in the responsibility for all Nazi crimes, this had been a gesture he felt honor-bound to make as a member of Hitler's government. But—so he wrote in

Spandau—it had only been during the trial, listening to the specific testimonies about the murder of the Jews, that this formal acceptance of responsibility became an emotional awareness of personal guilt.

This, I believe, was the beginning of what Alexander Mitscherlich would later refer to as his *Lebenslüge*, the Great Lie of his life.

For while he may indeed not have known about the gas chambers until Nuremberg, and until then, as he told me, may not have been able imaginatively to visualize whole families being killed, I believe that after Posen—whether he actually attended Himmler's speech or not—he knew about the long-planned and almost completed genocide of the Jews, including the women and children. And however far removed he himself was from these systematic murders, once he knew of them and yet continued to work for Hitler, he became an active participant in the crime.

Speer's tragedy, a paradox of Greek dimensions, manifested itself clearly during his illness in 1944. After Posen and then Dora, recognizing both the crimes and, intolerably, his own involvement and thus his guilt, he essentially needed and longed to die. But in the final analysis, his will to live was stronger than his need to atone. His strength was his weakness.

But even that was not all. For even though in that hospital room in Hohenlychen, morality had reawakened in him, and he confronted, one might say in extremis, his personal culpability, there was also still this link, this need, this tie to Hitler, the deepest—perhaps the only real—emotion he had ever felt.

"Who is this man?" he asked himself when he saw Hitler again. "How could I never have seen how ugly he is, his sallow skin, his broad nose?" Thus, for a moment, he tried to reduce the profoundly disturbing moral condemnation he had arrived at, not only of Hitler but of himself, into a question of esthetic perception rather than of shared guilt.

The moment passed. It is almost grotesque to think that with untold thousands dying, emotion continued to rule Speer's actions. His love for Hitler took a long time to wane, and granting himself that time, indulging those emotions, was probably his gravest compromise. For it allowed his final act of self-deception—that he could not give up, could not leave, could not take that all-important moral stand because, so he told himself, all he could do was to work ever harder to try to save the country, the people, from destruction, from dishonor; for Hitler, from Hitler—he no longer knew which.

It was a grinding conflict which did not remain unperceived. Those closest to him—Annemarie, Poser, Below, even Hupfauer—were always aware of it. And the Twentieth of July conspirators evidently sensed it too; hence his name on their list for the future government, with a question mark.

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