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Anti-Semitic Policy in Albert Speer's Plans for the Rebuilding of Berlin

Paul B. Jaskot

Berlin was the preeminent building site in National Socialist Germany through the late thirties and into World War II. Its position at the center of state and Party architectural policy was achieved both through Hitler's direct interest in the redesign of the capital and through the centralization and extension of Albert Speer's control over architectural policy as Inspector General of Building for the Reich Capital Berlin (Generalbauinspektor für die Reichshauptstadt Berlin). Because of the scale of the urban plan, quarries and contractors, architects and bricklayers were all mobilized by Speer's office of the GBI,¹ making his proposals the largest single architectural project in the German building economy. The actual plan, announced publicly on January 28, 1938, included a north-south and east-west axis at the heart of the city, a concentration of subway and train facilities, a redesign of the Königsplatz, and a major housing program. The north-south axis became the core of the urban design and was meant to function as the main ceremonial boulevard of the new Berlin (Fig. 1).² While little of this axis was ever completed, the construction of particular buildings and the actualization of the site as a whole dominated the activity of construction firms and architects in Berlin. Realization of the plan rested on the ability of the GBI to work with every major political, social, and economic institution with interests in the organization of the city.

The few art historians who have analyzed National Socialist art and architecture have consistently turned to Speer's redesign of Berlin as paradigmatic of the overblown schemes of the Party to project its ideological goals through visual form, to create literally the "word in stone."³ Scholars have most often emphasized three key components of the Berlin redesign: the massive scale of the plan, the iconography of neoclassical forms, and the choice of materials, above all stone. Alex Scobie, for example, has argued that the scale, materials, and iconography of prestige projects in Berlin were used by Nazi architects and critics to promote an ideological connection to classical political and social institu-

tions.⁴ Even Speer, in his memoirs, suggests the parameters that have grounded the art-historical debate:

There was no "Fuehrer style," for all that the party press expatiated on this subject. What was branded as the official architecture of the Reich was only the neoclassicism transmitted by [Paul Ludwig] Troost; it was multiplied, altered, exaggerated, and sometimes distorted to the point of ludicrousness. Hitler appreciated the permanent qualities of the classical style all the more because he thought he had found certain points of relationship between the Dorians and his own Germanic world.⁵

Size, the indestructible nature of stone architecture, and the iconography of neoclassicism: with reference to these categories, the art-historical investigation of Berlin has attempted to analyze the reception and interpretation of Speer's designs by a people and Party subject to extreme ideological mystifications.

When considered in terms of anti-Semitism, this scholarly concern with architectural form in general, and with the urban planning of Berlin in particular, has led to an investigation of the specific Party and state institutions that used architecture to reinforce a connection to a specious racial history or some supposed essence of Germanness.⁶ Hence, the destruction of the European Jews has been linked to pseudo-scientific Nazi racial theories as such propaganda was buttressed by art or architectural production and contemporaneous critical response. Yet this interpretive stance, oriented as it is to an interest in the meaning of forms, has avoided the much more brutal connection between architectural history and anti-Semitism. In this essay I propose to study the function of Speer's architectural goals as they were integrated into the creation and implementation of state policy against the Berlin Jews. Certainly, the oppression of the Jews was initially characterized by slurs and stereotypes that were supported by fallacious racial propaganda. But this

I would like to thank Michael Allen, Gregory Dreicer, Sherry Lindquist, Julie Lindstrom, Barbara McCloskey, Alan Steinweis, Nancy Troy, and Joan Weinstein for their critical comments on various versions of this text. Special thanks as well to my former colleagues at Swarthmore College, above all Randall Exon and T. Kaori Kitao, who invited me to present, and who commented upon, the original version of this essay. Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

1. Both Speer and his office were known, from an abbreviation of his title, as the GBI.

2. For the development of the Berlin plan, see H. Reichhardt and W. Schäche, *Von Berlin nach Germania: Über die Zerstörungen der Reichshauptstadt durch Albert Speers Neugestaltungsplanungen*, Berlin, 1986; and Scobie, 97–108. See also the excellent case studies of, respectively, the city building administration and the construction of the New Reich Chancellery in W. Schäche, *Architektur und Städtebau in Berlin zwischen 1933 und 1945: Planen und Bauen unter der Ägide der Stadtverwaltung*, Berlin, 1991; and A. Schönberger, *Die Neue Reichskanzlei von Albert Speer: Zum Zusammenhang von nationalsozialistischer Architektur und Ideologie*, Berlin, 1981.

3. "Das Wort aus Stein" was a phrase used by Hitler to describe the intended effect of Nazi architecture in a speech given at the 1938 German Architecture and Crafts Exhibition in Munich; R. Taylor, *The Word in Stone*, Berkeley, 1974, 14.

4. Scobie, 37–68, 97–118.

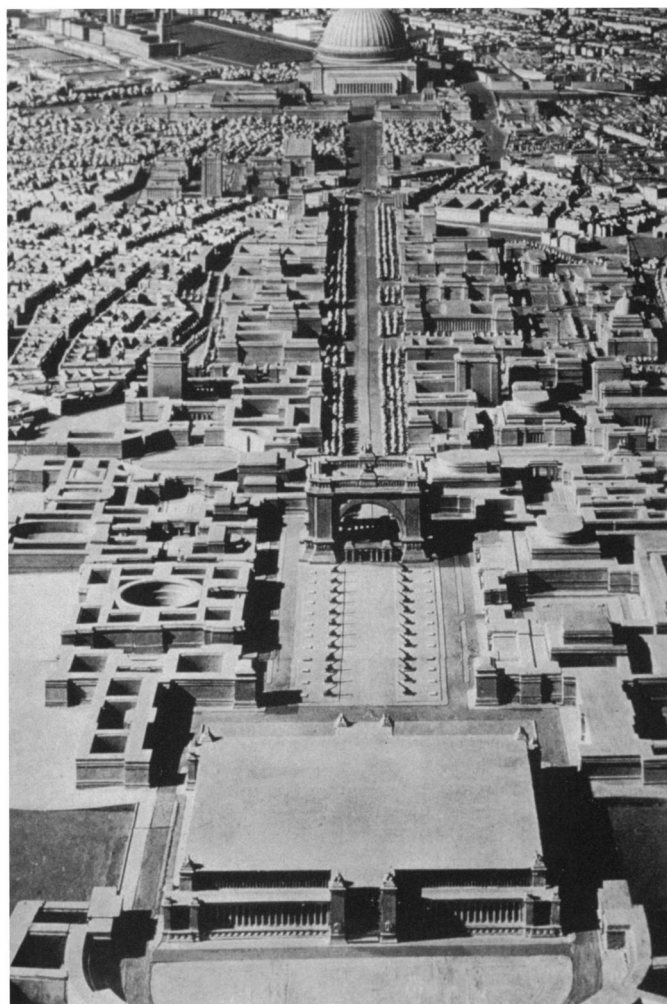
5. Speer, 42. For the most recent assessment of how Speer dealt with and described his Nazi past, see G. Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth*, New York, 1995.

6. Serious scholarly interest in National Socialist art and architecture developed only after the critical reevaluation of the Nazi period began in the 1960s. Hildegard Brenner's work, as well as that of Barbara Miller Lane, was crucial in establishing the parameters of the debate and the scholarly interest in the ideological function of Nazi art and architecture. On anti-Semitic policy and the developing oppression of the Jews, see esp. H. Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1963, 7–63; B. Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918–1945*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, 185–216; and Scobie, 37–41. It is important to note that this

propaganda was quickly backed up by more concrete tactics that concentrated the Jewish community in Berlin and, after 1941, led to its deportation and murder. To grasp how the decisions made concerning the formal design of a monumental urban plan for Berlin functioned as part of a developing anti-Semitic policy, one must go beyond a generalized account of anti-Semitic ideology and concentrate on the implementation of particular economic and social policies aimed at the Berlin Jewish population.

Specifically, anti-Semitic housing policy (concerned as it was with controlling and then removing the Jewish population) became a focus of key efforts made by Speer to complete the monumental plans for the rebuilding of Berlin.⁷ Since the rapid industrialization of Berlin in the late nineteenth century, housing had been a perennial problem and concern of the city's building administration and a factor in every major site plan for monumental architectural projects. Speer was no less preoccupied with the problems of housing than were his predecessors. A lack of suitable housing reached crisis proportions with Speer's attempt to impose a massive urban design on a city that already suffered from an insufficient number of dwellings for the ever-growing industrial working population. Within the context of the housing debate, Speer even interested himself in particular modernist solutions, such as mass-produced housing units. Yet important here is not a stylistic or technical affinity with past administrations, but rather the clear historical distinctions between housing policies in reference to the political uses to which urban planning was put. While the political function of architecture has been a major focus of a critical discussion of, for example, planning in Berlin under Martin Wagner's Weimar Republic administration, an equivalent analysis of National Socialist urban planning has yet to be undertaken.⁸ By focusing on the planning and construction process, the interrelationship between Berlin architectural goals and state anti-Semitic policy can be clearly analyzed.

If absent from art-historical scholarship, anti-Semitic housing policy has been central to historians' debates concerning the destruction of the European Jews. Above all, Raul Hilberg's early systematic analysis of the destruction process and, more recently, Avraham Barkai's focus on the economic exploitation and exclusion of Jews in relation to property rights have shown how the implementation of housing policy directed against the Jews was crucial to their eventual



1 Albert Speer, Model of the north-south axis, Berlin, ca. 1940. Major sites, reading from top to bottom, are: the Great Hall, the Soldiers Hall (with the tower of the army headquarters rising to its left) just north of the Runder Platz, the Triumphal Arch, and the South Train Station (photo: Ullstein Bilderdienst)

concentration and deportation.⁹ Additionally, Matthias Schmidt has done much to point to Speer's role in implementing policies against the Jews in Berlin. Yet, while anti-Semitic housing policy has been a concern of historical studies, scholars have failed to analyze the relationship between the systematic development of architectural interests and the

discussion is by no means limited to architecture but extends to all the visual arts. See, e.g., K. Hoffmann-Curtius, "Die Frau in ihrem Element: Adolf Ziegler's Triptychon der 'Naturgesetzlichkeit,'" in *NS-Kunst: 50 Jahre danach*, ed. B. Hinz, Marburg, 1989, 9–10, 18–19.

7. In relation to Speer and anti-Semitic housing policy, see also the recently published essay by K. Kürvers and J. F. Geist, "Tatort Berlin, Pariser Platz," in *1945: Krieg, Zerstörung, Aufbau: Architektur und Stadtplanung, 1940–1960*, exh. cat., Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 1995, a work that appeared after the present text was substantially written. While the interests of Kürvers and Geist and mine lead to some overlap in documentary evidence, their argument rests on expanding Matthias Schmidt's thesis, i.e., that Speer and the GBI were accessories (*Beihilfe*) to state anti-Semitic policy. With a biographical and institutional focus, they seek to establish the guilt and complicity of Speer and his architects. In the present essay, however, Speer's guilt is not the central issue. Rather, I wish to analyze how the consistency of GBI actions reflects an anti-Semitic policy which was simultaneously independent from and contingent on other state political interests, as well as to indicate how that anti-Semitic policy developed out of architec-

tural and urban planning concerns. Such an analysis takes the focus away from biographical or institutional complicity and moves it instead toward a materialist case study of the political effects of architectural production.

8. For the political function of Martin Wagner's plan for Berlin, see esp. L. Scarpa, *Martin Wagner und Berlin*, trans. Heinz-Georg Held, Brunswick, 1986; and M. Tafuri, "'Radical' Architecture and the City," in *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*, trans. Barbara Luigia La Penta, Cambridge, Mass., 1976, 104–24. An overview of housing policy limited to the war years can be found in T. Harlander and G. Fehl, eds., *Hitlers sozialer Wohnungsbau, 1940–1945: Wohnungspolitik, Baugestaltung und Siedlungsplanung*, Hamburg, 1986. For a convincing discussion of the continuities between Weimar and Nazi architecture and planning administrations (if not their political goals), see W. Durth, *Deutsche Architekten: Biographische Verflechtungen, 1900–1970*, Brunswick, 1987. Speer's approval of mass-produced housing is noted in the minutes of a GBI meeting of Sept. 14, 1938; BA Potsdam, 46.06 GBI 157, 20–22.

9. Hilberg; and Barkai.



2 Wilhelm Kreis, Rendering of the Soldiers Hall (interior), Berlin (from G. Troost, *Bauen im neuen Reich*, Bayreuth, 1943, II, 9)

oppression of the Berlin Jews. For example, Schmidt's analysis relies almost entirely on the GBI *Office Journal*, and avoids a thorough review of other documentary evidence indicating that Speer not only implemented but also attempted to formulate an anti-Semitic policy to serve his architectural interests.¹⁰ That is to say, Speer's agency has been relatively downplayed in the literature covering his architectural career. In addition, because of this avoidance of cultural policy, the unique position of Berlin as the only city slated for major rebuilding efforts in which the concentration of the Jews was tied to the implementation of monumental architectural goals has not been a subject of research.

In relation to this historiography, my claims need to be made specific: the present essay attempts to detail a case study of how connections between a variety of interests (here, architectural) aided in assuring the success of anti-Semitic policy. This study builds on much institutional and political

10. Schmidt's allegiance to a functionalist position in terms of architectural history allows for his characterization of Speer as an architect who opportunistically reacted to the structural political and economic system in which he operated. While I am sympathetic to this position, in the present essay Speer's actions are analyzed as part of the dynamic functional development of anti-Semitic policy, thus asserting his agency as a means of understanding the complex and often contradictory decision-making process at the heart of the Nazi state.

history put forth by historians of Nazi Germany, but it also indicates how architectural policy functioned in the foreground of specific debates concerning the Berlin Jews. Further, the essay attempts to go beyond the by-now undynamic historians' debate concerning whether National Socialist policy was driven by "intention" or was "functionally" determined by structural circumstances. In the most straightforward terms, the scholarly problem here is to analyze how Speer and his staff were active agents, and also to recognize how their actions were subject to conditional limitations as well as structural opportunities.¹¹

Simultaneously, this essay is offered as a critique of revisionist trends in art history that have attempted to relativize the importance of a critical study of institutional and social policy.¹² If the political function of architecture or a work of art is our concern, then institutional and social policies become of central importance to any attempt to characterize the relationship between art and a complex geopolitical situation. An analysis of architectural interests served by anti-Semitic housing policy leads us to inquire how the increasingly severe policy against the Jews was brought about by the pursuit of competing goals of individuals and groups within the systemic political and economic development of Nazi Germany.¹³ Articulating the agency of Speer and the institutional conditions he created and faced allows for an understanding of the function of architecture and urban planning in this historical process. The symbiosis between that which was most prized in Nazi Germany—its culture—and that which proved most criminal—its policies aimed at eliminating specific social and political groups—indicates the extent to which architectural interests were involved with events that culminated in the destruction of the Jewish population in Berlin.

Once established on January 30, 1937, the office of the GBI faced the daunting task of organizing the complex development of its massive urban-planning project. As Speer and his staff began finalizing their designs around two monumental intersecting axes for the heart of Berlin, they focused on several necessary preconditions for the construction process, including the procurement of materials, property, and substitute housing for those displaced. These preconditions for construction were determined by the formal choices that Speer and his architects had made in terms of both particular buildings and the urban plan as a whole. Wilhelm Kreis's Soldiers Hall (Figs. 2, 3), a large neoclassical masonry structure designed to memorialize the German soldier and the war dead, exemplifies these architectural choices. On the north-south axis, Kreis's building functioned as the symbolic façade of the new headquarters of the Army High Command (Oberkommando des Heeres). Speer and his staff formu-

11. For a clarification of the historical debate between "intentionalists" and "functionalists," and a model of getting beyond such polarities, see Browning. The present essay does not argue that without architecture the persecution of the Berlin Jews would not have occurred. Rather, it attempts to describe how the structural conditions of anti-Semitic policy allowed for Speer's pursuit of quite different administrative and cultural goals.

12. See, e.g., Alan Balfour's interpretation of Potsdamer Platz during the Nazi period (*Berlin: The Politics of Order, 1737–1989*, New York, 1990,



3 Kreis, Model of the Soldiers Hall (exterior façade facing the north-south axis), Berlin (from Troost, *Bauen im neuen Reich*, 1, 75)

lated the total redesign of inner-city Berlin based on such high-profile monuments. As in Haussmann's Paris, these monuments would help bring the plan together visually through their consistent cornice lines and their unified, if varied, neoclassical stone façades. Simultaneously, Kreis's hall, with a southern wing facing the important transitional space of the Runder Platz (Fig. 4) and with the tower of the army headquarters complex rising behind, would be a visual and symbolic punctuation point to the middle section of the axis. Hence, the stripped-down classicism and granite stone of the façade would tie the building to its surroundings, while its massive scale and location in proximity to the Runder Platz would separate it from other administrative headquarters on the axis in keeping with its function as an important propaganda site for the commemoration of the military martyr. After the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939, this ceremonial building and headquarters took on increasing symbolic significance; as a result, work continued on the site and in the collection of materials for the project until at least the early months of 1944.¹⁴

What becomes clear from this example of the Soldiers Hall is the way in which the GBI considered the emphasis on particular buildings as part of a massive urban scheme, a scheme developed in terms of key sites chosen on the basis of the changing conditions of prewar and wartime Germany. This also meant that such factors as the scale of a building (the Soldiers Hall alone was to have wall piers over 23 feet [7 m] wide and be built with 125,568 cubic yards [96,000 m³] of granite) and its location would influence other contingencies

of the building process, such as whether and how much of a potential site was to be cleared of its housing.¹⁵ As much as their aesthetic concerns, architects at the GBI involved themselves in precisely these elements of urban planning in order to enact their design decisions. Their formal choices for buildings and the geographic layout of the plan formed the precondition for their broader involvement in state and Party policy.

One of the immediate policies of interest to the GBI was, of course, housing and property ownership, precisely because these issues intersected with the site-specific demands of such massive projects as the Soldiers Hall. Thus, the need to address the laws governing the ownership of property and the need to create substitute housing for those displaced formed two key components of Speer's early strategy to enact the plan. As part of the GBI's original financing agreement, the city government of Berlin was required after August 1, 1938, to purchase properties designated by the GBI as important sites for the rebuilding efforts. This embraced all property near the east-west and north-south axes and particularly focused on the sites around the projected Runder Platz, which was to supplant Potsdamer Platz as the heart of the new Berlin. In 1933, when Hitler came to power, this area bordered on and partially included the district of the Tiergarten, a district that contained approximately 9 percent (about 16,000) of the total residential population of Berlin Jews (about 160,500). A significant section of the Jewish population thus had interests in the renting of housing and ownership of land connected with the proposed

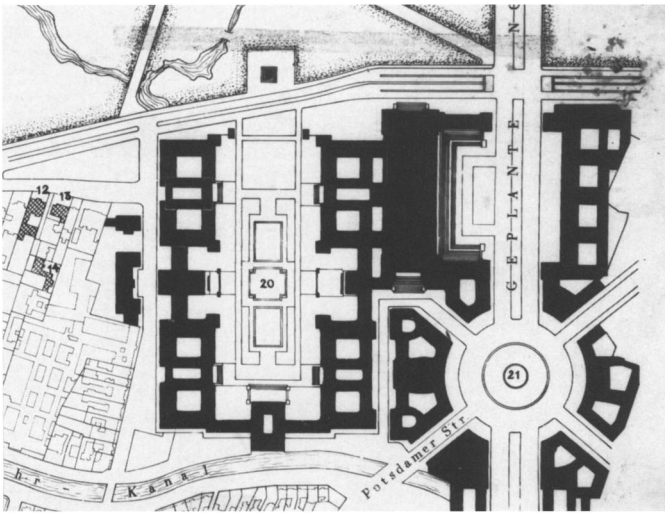
Jews between 1939 and 1941 by Browning.

14. For a more comprehensive analysis of the Soldiers Hall in relation to the material needs of the Berlin plan, see P. B. Jaskot, "The Architectural Policy of the SS, 1936–1945," Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1993, 161–233. See also Scobie, 37–68.

15. The dimensions of the building are indicated on the plan of Feb. 29, 1940; BA Potsdam, 46.06 GBI/KS 3700, 57. For the amount of granite to be used, see Kreis's report of May 1939; *ibid.*, 46.06 GBI/772, 19.

70–106). Balfour reduces and generalizes any specific political or institutional history in favor of creating a broad, theoretically driven argument meant to explain architectural developments in relation to Hitler's psychological desire for "presence and power."

13. For the political dynamics of National Socialist administrations in relation to developing anti-Semitic policy, see Hilberg. See also M. Broszat, *The Hitler State*, trans. John W. Hiden, London, 1981. In addition, my essay is indebted to the precise analysis of the development of the destruction of the



4 Speer, Detail from the plan of Berlin, ca. 1939, showing the Runder Platz (21) with the Soldiers Hall to the north; the back of the Soldiers Hall is connected to the headquarters of the Army High Command (20) (photo: Bundesarchiv, Koblenz)

building site.¹⁶ The GBI had the authority to direct all buying and selling of properties in this district, and construction on the site also had to be approved by the architectural administration. Concomitantly, the GBI could direct the city to purchase, sell, or build on the lands under its influence.¹⁷ Protected by Hitler and independent of other government administrations, the GBI acted in an executive capacity without taking into account the established state administrative hierarchy, and hence was allowed to set funding and property acquisition policy relatively freely.

In connection with its executive capacity to acquire property, the GBI found several solutions to the difficulty of attaining adequate substitute housing for those displaced by site clearing near the Soldiers Hall and elsewhere on the two axes of the Berlin plan. Prominent amongst such solutions was depriving Jews of, first, their tenant rights and then, during the war, their property rights. To understand the significance of this move against rental and property rights, it is important to review the chronology of the destruction of the European Jews. The National Socialists came into office in 1933 with an anti-Communist, antiurban, and anti-Semitic propaganda platform. But it was only in 1935, after they had firmly established one-party rule, that the Nuremberg Laws were enacted as the first sweeping attempt by the government to regulate the political and civil rights of the entire Jewish population. Before the pogrom in November 1938—

the so-called Kristallnacht—attempts in the private sector to isolate Jews from the economy and the government's exclusion of Jews from certain professions resulted in many practical restrictions on Jewish economic rights. Nevertheless, no systematic policy was in place to limit the rights of Jews to own and rent property. Hence, at the time when Speer was working on depriving Berlin Jews of their housing in mid-1938, he was participating in one of the most advanced stages of anti-Semitic policy aimed at excluding Jews from German society. In 1938, the execution of millions of Jews was not yet an issue; the total rejection of their claims to political, social, and economic rights was, however, of central concern.¹⁸

The first laws against Jewish rental rights attempted to separate Jews from dwellings that also housed "Aryans." As Raul Hilberg points out, the practical application of this policy was hardly possible before 1938 since, once evicted, there were few places available in the tight housing market for the displaced person to go. However, in 1938, the courts were extremely broad in their interpretation of tenant law, and those Jews who had the means chose to emigrate, thus allowing for some flexibility in evictions and the availability of replacement housing. Still, though the first eviction law was enacted on July 25, 1938, allowing landlords to end office lease arrangements with Jewish doctors, the year saw no major decree legislating the overall rights of Jews as tenants and property owners.¹⁹

During this period, when it served their pursuit of substitute housing, Speer and his staff took not only a supportive but also a leading role in formulating and enacting laws that deprived Jews of residential rights.²⁰ Even before the pogrom, many administrations attempted to serve their own interests by changing state policy concerning Jewish tenant rights. Speer and the GBI were at the forefront of these attempts to both justify and formulate regulations pertaining to Jewish tenants and landlords in Berlin. With the massive scale of the Berlin plans and Speer's authority through Hitler to carry out his project, GBI interests effectively intersected with those of others promoting anti-Jewish policy.

How the GBI planned to formulate and take advantage of anti-Semitic policy became clear in a meeting called by Speer's office on September 14, 1938, between representatives of the GBI and Berlin city officials (Stadtplanungsamt). Speer began by asking those in attendance what problems had been created by the lack of substitute housing for those displaced by rebuilding projects. The city administration suggested, for example, that new site-clearing dates needed to be set before construction could begin, as the earlier ones

16. Although the number of Jews dropped significantly between 1933 and 1938 (from 160,504 to 127,600), their concentration in any one sector of Berlin remained relatively consistent in this period. The largest concentration was in Berlin Mitte (17.9 percent of the Jewish population), while the greatest percentage in any one area of the city was in Wilmersdorf (12.9 percent of the total population of the district). See the excellent summary of the demographic development and geographic distribution of the Berlin population in G. Alexander, "Die Entwicklung der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Berlin zwischen 1871 und 1945," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für Deutsche Geschichte*, xx, 1991, 287–314.

17. See the documents on financing and compensation of owners displaced from their property in BA, R43II/1176a. For a summary of the jurisdictional authority of the GBI over the city of Berlin, see Reichardt and

Schäche (as in n. 2), 47–49.

18. For a detailed analysis of this process, see esp. Barkai, 56–77.

19. Hilberg, 116. For the law against Jewish doctors, see *RGBl.*, 1, July 25, 1938, 969.

20. Matthias Schmidt describes how Speer and the GBI were responsible in Berlin for implementing part of the anti-Semitic property laws instated after the pogrom of Nov. 9, but stops short of analyzing their attempts to formulate anti-Semitic policy. On Speer's role in displacing Jews, see esp. Schmidt, 181–84.

21. BA Potsdam, 46.06 GBI/157, 210–11.

22. *Ibid.*, 211–12. "Hinsichtlich des Baues von Mittel- und Grosswohnungen entwickelte Prof. Speer einen Vorschlag, der darauf abzielt, die er-

could not be met; this was conditionally approved by Speer. The site-clearing dates for the "most pressing spheres" along the north-south axis were postponed from October 1938 to January 1939. In addition, Speer stated that the area for the Great Hall, the northern focal point of the axis, could not be cleared before May 1939 specifically because of the need for large substitute dwellings.²¹

The next item on the agenda provided a solution for these administrative and temporal difficulties. In a proposal that must have originated in its planning significantly earlier than the date of the meeting, Speer suggested the new idea of displacing the Berlin Jews from their homes as a means of acquiring substitute housing. This proposal would not only allow for the pursuit of architectural plans but would also avoid any demand on the materially pressed prewar German building economy caused by a need to construct new replacement housing. The centrality of Speer's function as a creator of anti-Semitic policy in the interest of his architectural goals is evidenced in the text:

In reference to the construction of medium- and large-size dwellings [as replacement housing] Prof. Speer set out a proposal that is directed toward freeing the necessary large dwellings through the compulsory eviction of the Jews. It would then be necessary to make approximately 2,700 small dwellings instead of 2,500 large dwellings. (The number of small dwellings required is higher than that of the large dwellings obtained because it has to be taken into account that various Jewish households have taken in Jewish families as tenants in their large homes.) These small dwellings would ideally be put at the Jewish families' disposal on a closed block of the GSW [Charitable Home and Settlement Society]. . . .

This proposal is to be treated as strictly confidential as Prof. Speer first wants to ascertain the Führer's opinion. After that, the necessary legal measures would be created.²²

Though consistent with the general anti-Semitic fervor of the Party and state bureaucrats of the time, Speer's suggestion went well beyond even the plans of the Gestapo to that date.²³ He proposed depriving Jews of property and tenant rights, placing them in designated blocks of small dwellings to be closed off as a form of ghetto, and creating the necessary laws and regulations after he had gained Hitler's approval of the project. Speer went on to note the economic advantage of not having to build large dwellings as substitute housing (alleviating pressure on the building economy) and the concomitant ability to realize his architectural plans.

forderlichen Grosswohnungen durch zwangsweise Ausmietung von Juden freizumachen. Es würde dann erforderlich sein, statt der 2500 Grosswohnungen schätzungsweise 2700 Kleinwohnungen zu schaffen. (Die Zahl der erforderlichen Kleinwohnungen ist höher als die der gewonnenen Grosswohnungen, weil damit gerechnet werden muss, dass verschiedene jüdische Haushaltungen in ihren Grosswohnungen auch jüdische Familien als Untermieter aufgenommen haben.) Diese Kleinwohnungen würden am besten in einem geschlossenen Block der GSW [Gemeinnützigen Wohnungs- und Siedlungsgesellschaft] den jüdischen Familien zur Verfügung gestellt werden. . . . Dieser Vorschlag ist streng vertraulich zu behandeln, da Prof. Speer zunächst die Auffassung des Führers erkunden will. Danach würden die erforderlichen gesetzlichen Handhaben zu schaffen sein."

23. For the developing policy and actions of the Gestapo, see R. Gellately,

Speer's proposal depended for its success on the trenchant anti-Semitism of Nazi Germany, the effectiveness of the Gestapo as a police enforcer of anti-Semitic policy, and the ability of the GBI to take advantage of policy goals seemingly outside its area of expertise.

It should be emphasized that the objectives of the GBI were only one set of interests served by the forced displacement of Jews from their houses. The Ministry of Justice was also particularly involved in Jewish tenant and property rights. On the same day as the meeting at the GBI, Dr. Volkmar of the Ministry of Justice wrote a memorandum to the respective ministries of the Interior, Labor, and Economics, and to the Deputy to the Führer, Rudolf Hess, asking whether there was a need for a special law regarding Jews as renters. Volkmar called a meeting on September 22, 1938, to which Speer was invited.²⁴ Remarkable here is how Speer's interests expressed in the GBI protocol formed the partial basis of the discussion and the law that was eventually drafted as a result. The meeting at the Ministry of Justice reveals that the various interests of the different groups coalesced at this point in agreement on the next step to deprive Jews of basic rights, and that the GBI both helped define the measures and profited from them.

Volkmar called the meeting to discuss the necessity of legally regulating the rescinding of tenant protection (*Mieterschutz*) for Jews. The proclaimed need for such regulations came from the overload of cases being decided arbitrarily by the courts where complaints had been filed against Jews because of their presence in communal dwellings. Volkmar posed the following questions to guide the discussion: "(1) Has the time now come to proceed against the Jews in this sphere as well? (2) How should one proceed against them and what consequences of an economic and political nature are to be expected?"²⁵ On the first point—that it was not a matter of whether to move against the Jews but rather when—all parties (including Gerhard Fränk, representing the GBI) agreed that the time was now right.

The second question proved to be more complex, raising as it did several issues including whether too many Jewish homeless would be created, whether a ghetto should be formed, and whether shops could be supported in a ghetto to avoid an increase in the Jewish unemployed population.²⁶ Fränk supported the proposed tightening of anti-Semitic measures regardless of the problems created for the Jewish population and repeated the GBI's need for substitute housing. To persuade the ministerial representatives further, he also related Speer's statistics on the cost saved by evicting Jews from housing which could then be made

The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933–1945, Oxford, 1990.

24. It is worth noting that Speer was invited to the meeting on Sept. 19, 1938, after the GBI meeting cited above had already taken place; BA Potsdam, 46.06 GBI/157, 214–15.

25. *Ibid.*, 46.06 GBI/702; "1.) Ist der Zeitpunkt gekommen, nunmehr auch auf diesem Gebiet gegen die Juden vorzugehen? 2.) In welcher Weise soll hiergegen vorgegangen werden und welche Auswirkungen wirtschaftlicher und politischer Art sind zu erwarten?"

26. These issues were raised by Assistant Secretary Scheffler, Ministry of the Interior. He cited statistics indicating that Jewish unemployment had then reached 25 percent.

available to those displaced by the architectural plans. The representatives overall came to the conclusion that depriving Jews of tenant protection was to be approved and enacted, while the question of the ghetto was to be “worked on further.”

Volkmar’s meeting shows how thoroughly the question of the next step against the Jews was being discussed amongst many (often competing) administrative bodies and how the eviction of Jews from their homes could be linked to Berlin architectural policy.²⁷ Just how complex the interconnection of the interests of various administrative bodies was appears in the minutes of a confidential meeting at the City Planning Office (Stadtplanungsamt) on September 27, 1938. At this meeting, representatives of the City Planning Office, the German Labor Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront [DAF]), the Berlin police, the Party’s District Leadership of Berlin (Gauleitung Berlin), the Statistical Office, and the GBI planned how they could work together to solve the problems surrounding the eviction of Jews. Two parallel concerns of those formulating anti-Semitic policy guided the discussion: the GBI’s great interest in gaining control of large dwellings as quickly as possible; and the attempt already initiated by the Ministry of Justice to relax tenant protection for Jews. Meeting attendees combined these interests in their desire to move the two goals forward. A step that was seen as essential in both cases was the gathering of statistical information on Jewish dwellings in Berlin. With these statistics (and Hitler’s approval), the implementation of anti-Semitic housing policy could begin by identifying and evicting particular segments of the Berlin population. The GBI argued that this information had to be collected as soon as possible in order to move architectural plans forward. It was generally agreed that working together, the GBI and the Ministry of Justice could meet their common objectives. The group concluded as follows:

The DAF will introduce immediate measures through its organization to inquire into [the number of] large dwellings. In view of the urgency of the matter, it hopes to have the results in hand within 10–14 days. The DAF will appoint its local branches and its organizations (or rather its house managers) to register immediately all the Jewish-occupied large dwellings of 4 rooms or more in Aryan-owned property from the administrative districts of Charlottenburg, Tiergarten, Wilmersdorf, Schöneberg, and Steglitz, which will be delivered to us [the City Planning Office] in the form of a list at the conclusion of the investigation. Included will be, for the time being, only

27. The competing and complementary interests of individuals and groups within the Party and state for jurisdiction over anti-Semitic measures are well documented in the historical literature (excluding, of course, a discussion of the role of Speer and his architectural interests); see, e.g., the discussion of the policy of forced Jewish resettlement, 1939–41, in Browning, 213–21. For a summary of the structural dynamics of administrative actions, see Broszat (as in n. 13). For a specific example of intra-administrative competition using art, see J. Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich*, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1996.

28. BA Potsdam, 46.06 GBI/157, 195–97: “Die DAF wird mit ihrer Organisation sofort Massnahmen zur Ermittlung der Grosswohnungen einleiten. Im Hinblick auf die Dringlichkeit der Angelegenheit hofft sie das Ergebnis bereits in 10–14 Tagen in der Hand zu haben. Die DAF wird ihre Ortsgruppen und ihre Organisationen bzw. Hausverwaltungen beauftra-

gen, sofort sämtliche jüdische Grosswohnungen von 4 Zimmern an aufwärts im arischen Hausbesitz in den Verwaltungsbezirken Charlottenburg, Tiergarten, Wilmersdorf, Schöneberg und Steglitz zu erfassen und uns [Stadtplanungsamt] listenmässig nach Abschluss der Ermittlungen zustellen. Erfasst werden vorläufig nur volljüdische Familien.” The DAF’s interest in housing policy was extensive, especially as it attempted to address the issue of workers’ housing throughout the country. Robert Ley, head of the DAF, and his administrators, however, tended to facilitate rather than directly influence the architectural projects overseen by Speer. For an overview of DAF housing policy, see R. Smelser, *Robert Ley: Hitler’s Labour Front Leader*, Oxford, 1988, 200ff.

full Jewish families [as defined by the 1935 Nuremberg Laws].²⁸

Under the guise of the needs of the GBI, the registration of Jews at or bordering key architectural sites and the separation of the Berlin Jews from the rest of the city’s population were to advance.

Hence, in 1938 after the GBI had determined the main aspects of the rebuilding plan, Berlin architectural policy was used to push the rapid development of anti-Semitic policy and was easily tied to the complex goals of other administrations. However, not one to wait for others, Speer also acted independently at this time to formulate a policy against Jewish tenants which would serve his interests. In a letter of October 6, 1938, to the Ministry of Economics, Speer restated his need for 2,500 large dwellings and his attempts to foster a legal regulation for evicting Jews. He did not believe that the legislation being drawn up by the Ministry of Justice would be enacted fast enough and had therefore decided on his own program, which he asked the Ministry of Economics to support.²⁹ The architect’s confidence, in this case, seemed to rest in 1938 on his increasing administrative authority, his ever-closer relationship to Hitler, and Hitler’s desire to move forward as quickly as possible with the major building projects in Berlin and Nuremberg. Hence, Speer and the GBI could take action independently of the Ministry of Justice, emboldened by their high-profile projects to act on other policies related to their architectural concerns. To the Ministry of Economics, Speer proposed building 2,500 small dwellings (each of two to two-and-a-half rooms) in which evicted Jews would be placed. Speer then detailed the economic savings to the state of RM 40 million, estimating the construction cost at RM 25 million rather than the RM 65 million required to build housing for “Aryans” displaced by his architectural plans.³⁰ Owing to the urgency of his site-clearing deadlines, Speer was thus planning to speed up action against the Jews and to overlook any moral qualms he might possibly have had about quartering them in less than adequate housing in a complex that (because of its concentration) appeared to be indistinguishable from the initial stages of a ghetto.³¹

The pogrom of November 9, 1938, however, made further secret administrative meetings and complicated justifications unnecessary. Until this event, the Ministry of Justice and the GBI had worked intensely via bureaucratic channels to push through the particular changes they favored in anti-Semitic housing policy. After the pogrom, the highest officials in the Party and state swept aside an administrative

29. Speer does not state why he doubts the speed at which the Ministry of Justice would formulate anti-Semitic measures. Rather, his letter seems to be less a critique of the ministry than an attempt to use every means at his

conclusion to the debate and formulated a policy meant to be enacted from the top down. But even then, the initial interests of the GBI and the Ministry of Justice were picked up and incorporated in the policy formulated by the highest government officials. While the pogrom sped up the enforcement of eviction measures, the move against Berlin Jewish tenants was in full progress before November 9 and had the support of administrations already mobilized by the actions of the Ministry of Justice and the GBI.

On November 12, 1938, the housing issue reached a top-level meeting of ministerial representatives called by Hermann Göring, who was in charge of state economic planning as Plenipotentiary for the Implementation of the Four-Year Plan (one of several positions he held). Both Reinhard Heydrich (head of the SS Reich Security Main Office) and the Minister of Propaganda, Paul Joseph Goebbels, attended the meeting. The point of the meeting, as Göring made clear, was to advance beyond simply discussing methods of aryanizing the German economy, and to start taking the necessary measures and creating laws that dealt firmly with Jewish business and property rights. While most of the discussion centered on whether the insurance companies should pay for the destruction of Jewish property caused by the pogrom and what to do with factories, department stores, or other property owned by Jews, the latter part of the meeting dealt specifically with forcing apartment houses out of Jewish hands and with the question of ghettoization. Yet Speer's more radical near-ghettoization plan proposed in October was eclipsed by the SS proposal to concentrate the Jews in scattered Jewish housing because of policing considerations. When Göring pointed out the inevitability of all plans leading to a ghetto, Heydrich justified the scattered concentration of Jews as follows:

From the point of view of the [SS-controlled] police, I don't think a ghetto, in the form of a completely segregated district where only Jews would live, can be put up. We could not control a ghetto where Jews congregate amid the whole Jewish people. It would remain a hideout for criminals and also for epidemics and the like. We don't want to let the Jews live in the same house with the German population; but today the German population, their blocks or houses, force the Jew to behave himself.³²

Although here and elsewhere in the meeting Heydrich argued that Jews could not possibly be left living in the same buildings as other Germans, at this point he, Göring, and Goebbels agreed that Jews would be removed from "Aryan"

homes but remain under the watchful eye of non-Jewish neighbors. This decision was justified through reference to the needs of the German economy and the preferred goal of forcing Jews to emigrate, a tactic that the SS was already using effectively in Vienna.³³

The results of this meeting appeared in a classified letter from Göring to the Reich ministers (to be communicated to all levels of the administration and Party) detailing the decisions on the "Jewish question" (*Judenfrage*) concerning aryanization.³⁴ Along with measures banning Jews from the use of sleeping and dining cars in trains, from certain public buildings (e.g., hotels visited by Party members, such as the Four Seasons Hotel, Munich), and from the right to hold patents, Göring also resolved the question of Jewish tenants and property holders. Jews in general were not to be deprived of property or tenant protection; however, it was desirable within specific (and unnamed) circumstances to evict Jews in order to concentrate them in Jewish dwellings and to aryanize Jewish houses. The latter was to happen only as the last stage of the entire aryanization process, that is, after businesses and agricultural property had been aryanized. As the policy of the state toward the German Jews at this time was concerned with attempting to coerce them to emigrate, Göring's letter should be taken as the resolution of the "Jewish question" up to that point within Germany. If they were not to emigrate, they should at least be separated from the other Germans.

Did Göring's decision effectively cut off Speer's attempt to use anti-Semitic policy to help clear the massive sites of some of his most pressing projects such as the Soldiers Hall? By April 30, 1939, when the decree on Jewish housing was finally issued by Hitler,³⁵ the vagueness of Göring's letter had been clarified by a policy that any Jewish tenant could be evicted if the landlord could show that the Jew had replacement housing somewhere else. The decree also stated that homeless Jews had to be taken in by other Jews and that all subsequent rental or owner laws were to be the responsibility of the ministries of Justice and Labor. Yet the retreat from a general eviction of Jews to eviction only in specific cases was hardly a blow to the GBI. With over 50,000 Jewish families in Berlin, Speer had ample room from which to select the 2,500–3,000 houses that he needed. To handle this selection, he created a special office on Jews in his administration (the Main Resettlement Division) and kept a roster of registered Jewish housing in Berlin.³⁶ In fact, after the meeting at which the decisions concerning Jewish tenant

disposal to promote his architectural interests with or without the help of other administrations. Speer's concerns here are clearly architectural (substitute housing) and not the complexities of "racial" tenant law being discussed by the Ministry of Justice.

30. BA Potsdam, 46.06 GBI/157, 191–93. Unfortunately, no archival evidence exists as to exactly what sort of housing was envisioned by Speer. However, other housing projects of interest to the GBI often involved the use of mass-produced components which were then given such supposedly German details as a pitched roof. For an overview of the settlement (non-Jewish) architecture of Nazi Germany, see Miller Lane (as in n. 6), 205–12.

31. On Speer's supposed moral ambivalence, see particularly his own account of the Nuremberg tribunals in Speer, 507–26.

32. As cited and translated by Hilberg, 114. Hilberg, like many scholars who study the destruction of the European Jews, takes this meeting and other post-Kristallnacht policy discussions to be the true beginning of the end for Jewish property rights. As we have seen, the process actually started several months earlier with the GBI and the Ministry of Justice.

33. Minutes of the meeting of Nov. 12, 1938, in documents from the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, PS.1816, 41ff. The Nuremberg documents (assembled by the prosecution, later microfilmed for the U.S. National Archives, and then made available to other libraries) are referred to by their reel number.

34. BA, R2/9181, 18–21.

35. *RGBl.*, 1, Apr. 30, 1939, 864–65.

36. Schmidt, 182.

rights had been made, Göring required in a letter of November 26, 1938, that appropriated Jewish dwellings in Berlin be registered with and at the disposal of the GBI as a related issue of the upcoming April decree.³⁷ Thus, although the larger concerns of the SS and the broader requirements of the prewar German economy ultimately defined the tenant law, Speer's interests nevertheless contributed to the development of the debate after the pogrom. For Göring took these interests up and made them into a specific component of the new measures taken against the Berlin Jews.

As the goals of Speer and his staff had been incorporated into the April 1939 rental law against the Jews, so new opportunities for advancing their cause were soon available through wartime anti-Jewish policy. With the failure of the air assault over England in 1940, the German high command began preparing for a potential British counterattack, raising the need for bomb shelters and substitute housing for those whose dwellings might be destroyed. As a result, Hitler approved the clearing of 1,000 Jewish houses for the Berlin rebuilding efforts, with the stipulation that the houses remain free during the war for those left homeless by air attacks. In a letter from the end of 1941, Speer retrospectively stated that Hitler's decision came directly from his own suggestion of how to further building plans by taking advantage of the wartime expropriation of Jewish housing. Speer's willingness to pursue this policy is also indicated by a private memo announcing Hitler's decision to his staff, in which he stated: "With this necessity [to clear Jews from their housing] the entire site clearing will possibly be justified!"³⁸ Even in the midst of the war, Speer eagerly pursued any opportunity to advance his architectural goals.

The GBI immediately increased its participation in the ongoing debate concerning measures against the Jews. It is important to remember that historians and architectural historians have generally seen Speer's actions in relation to the destruction of the European Jews as opportunistic or as the case of a bureaucrat who simply followed orders. However, Speer and his staff participated not only in carrying out a policy but also in influencing its formulation. Furthermore, at key moments they played a role in enacting this program. Nowhere is the agency of the GBI staff more clearly indicated than in the protocol from a meeting chaired by the GBI's finance expert, Karl Maria Hettlage, on January 28, 1941. Representatives of the city of Berlin, the Main Real-Estate Office (Hauptliegenschaftsamt), a professional association of property owners (Bund des Berliner Haus- und Grundbesitzer-Vereins), the Party leadership (Gauleitung der NSDAP),

the police, and Heydrich's Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) had been called together to discuss the ability to free housing in particular sections of Berlin for those whose homes might be destroyed as a result of the war (*Katastrophenzwecke*). All designated areas were defined by their relative importance to the redesign of Berlin, including notably the Tiergarten site along the north-south axis. At this gathering under the direction of the GBI, the administrators worked out and coordinated the enactment of Hitler's order to procure 1,000 Jewish homes as replacement housing.³⁹

The protocol of the meeting reveals the manner in which Hettlage directed the entire endeavor and how even the SS was called on to serve the pressing wartime and future architectural goals of the state. After discussing the urgency of the situation and the need to start immediately, Hettlage turned to the RSHA representatives and said (as paraphrased in the minutes): "Is the SS in a position to clear 100 residences within 14 days? Altogether 250 Jewish residences must be rerented (and thus be cleared) as of February 28 of this year. The SS will receive a list [from the GBI] for the clearing of the Jewish residences concerned."⁴⁰ The SS replied that it could keep the schedule with little difficulty. Dietrich Clahes, head of the GBI's Main Resettlement Division, further added: "Jews should only be accommodated in Jewish-owned houses. To this end, the SS will receive a corresponding list from the [GBI] Housing Office."⁴¹ At this optimistic juncture in the development of wartime Germany, GBI representatives confidently used anti-Semitic policy to link the formulation of protective measures concerning air raids to their plans for rebuilding Berlin. In this case, GBI administrators directed even the SS as an extension of their own institutional authority.

The GBI simultaneously began to support the work of the Ministry of Labor to devise a law that would extend the April 1939 decree to include Jewish tenants in Jewish-owned housing as well. Through the concerted efforts of the ministries of Labor, Justice, and the Interior, the office of the Deputy to the Führer (Rudolf Hess), and the GBI, the law was swiftly drafted and was published by April 1941. In the previous housing order, only Jews in dwellings owned by a German landlord could be legally evicted. Under the new law, all housing units that became free for whatever reason, including those in Jewish-owned properties, had to be registered with the GBI and could not be rerented without the approval of the architectural administrators. This meant that Speer effectively had the right to control the dispersal and deprivation of housing of the roughly 70,000 Jews still

37. BA Potsdam, 46.06 GBI/157, 145.

38. See the memorandum of Sept. 29, 1940, in *ibid.*, 46.06 GBI/78, 88: "Mit dieser Notwendigkeit kann unter Umständen die ganze Räumung mit begründet werden!" For Speer's claims of authorship of the policy, see *ibid.*, 46.06 GBI/24, 57. Hitler's decision here, as in other aspects of the development of anti-Semitic policy, appears to be an approval of his subordinate's proposals, rather than directly initiated by himself. For a more detailed analysis of Hitler's role in the approval of policies against the Jews, see Browning.

39. BA, R120/1975, 144–48.

40. *Ibid.*, 145: "Ist die SS in der Lage, 100 Wohnungen innerhalb 14 Tage zu räumen? Insgesamt müssen bis zum 28.2.d.J. ca. 250 Judenwohnungen

wiedervermietet und sodann geräumt werden. Die SS erhält für die Räumung der betreffenden Judenwohnungen eine Liste."

41. *Ibid.*, 147: "Juden sollen nur noch in Judenhäusern untergebracht werden. Zu diesem Zweck erhält die SS von der Wohnungs-Abt. eine entsprechende Liste."

42. *RGBl.*, I, Apr. 28, 1941, 219–20. On Speer's distortion of the archival version of the GBI journal concerning the extent of his involvement with anti-Semitic housing policy, see, e.g., Schmidt, 1–22, 183. Population statistics for this period are reprinted in Alexander (as in n. 16), 311. For a brief overview of the attack on Jewish property rights and the partial centralization of Jewish urban populations in 1939–42, see Barkai, 167–74.

43. See, e.g., the letter of May 2, 1941, in BA, R2/19435, from the Ministry

remaining in the Berlin community.⁴² Speer now was able not only to oversee the concentration of Jews but also to extend his authority by ordering the evictions of Jewish tenants from thousands of Jewish-owned houses throughout Berlin.

How was it possible for an architectural administration to gain responsibility over a task seemingly so foreign to its institutional authority? The answer, it seems, lies in the unwillingness of Hitler even by 1942 to condemn the Jews through a direct public decree but to allow his subordinates to contrive policies that served their own interests and that simultaneously led to the destruction of the Jews. Hence, the plans for Berlin became a means by which Speer influenced anti-Jewish policies that cleared the way for the forced evacuations to the death camps. At the height of German military and political power in 1940–41, Hitler approved Speer's architectural policy as it was combined with the wartime fears concerning the potential bombing of German cities as reasons for the renewed campaign against the Jews in Berlin.⁴³

In the summer of 1941, Speer ordered the evacuation of over 5,000 Jewish apartments; 4,500 more were evacuated from October 18 to November 2 of that year. Speer's power in this field was dramatic, as evidenced by his letter of December 12, 1941, to Reichsleiter Martin Bormann in which he explicitly reprimanded Bormann for attempting to appropriate Jewish housing for his own purposes.⁴⁴ When Speer wrote this letter at the end of 1941, it was no longer a case of moving Jews into new housing but, as of October 18, 1941 (the date of the first transport), of deporting them to their certain death in the east.⁴⁵ Architectural planning was not merely a convenient means of implementing the ideological goals of the state; rather, Speer and his staff were involved in influencing the timing and the active pursuit of a more brutal anti-Semitic policy in order simultaneously to realize their plans for the rebuilding of Berlin.

Through such means as the expropriation of Jewish housing, the GBI managed to continue significant architectural activity well into 1942, particularly for the prestige projects along the north-south axis and at the Runder Platz. But, in relation to his architectural projects, Speer's involvement with the oppressive practices of the National Socialist state was by no means limited to anti-Semitic housing policy. The mobilization of materials for specific building sites also led GBI administrators to take advantage of the SS control over forced-labor concentration camps set up around quarrying and brickmaking facilities. With its massive granite requirements, Kreis's Soldiers Hall, for example, became one such

building around which the SS organized its forced-labor operations. Hence, while the Tiergarten site, on which the Soldiers Hall was partially to be built, was very much part of the coerced displacement of Jews from their property, the Soldiers Hall also became a focus of SS attempts to build an economic empire through the output of forced-labor concentration camps set up at stone quarries to punish and kill political and ideological enemies of the state. The production of granite under the brutal working conditions of labor camps such as Flossenbürg contributed to the physical suppression of designated prison populations and the ability to carry on with architectural production even during the war. At Flossenbürg, death for the hundreds of Jews and for thousands of others (whom the SS targeted because of their actual or perceived social and political affiliations) often came together with the orientation of the camp economy to the architectural projects of the Party and state.⁴⁶

By exploring anti-Semitic housing policy and extending an analysis of architecture and urban planning to include how monumental projects functioned to serve oppressive state policies, we can correct Speer's postwar claim that, as an architect, he avoided collusion with the most criminal institutions of Nazi Germany, a claim accepted by the prosecution at the Nuremberg Military Tribunals and in scholarly literature after the war. In his memoirs, Speer stated: "I must have had the feeling that it was no affair of mine when I heard the people around me declaring an open season on Jews, Freemasons, Social Democrats, or Jehovah's Witnesses. I thought I was not implicated if I myself did not take part."⁴⁷ What is clear from the record, however, is that Speer and all the major members of his staff knew quite specifically about the ramifications of imposing sanctions against the Jews and the situation of other social and political groups in the concentration camps. With the rebuilding of Berlin, whatever private feelings they may have had, architectural administrators not only approved but also helped to influence the formulation of anti-Semitic policies as long as these policies favored their architectural goals.

In the past fifty years, art historians and historians have neglected a systematic analysis of the political function of Nazi architecture in relation to the destruction of the Berlin Jews that would have allowed for a more comprehensive critique of Speer. Historians of the period have institutionalized a view that culture, while important, is usually secondary to a serious evaluation of political and economic conditions.⁴⁸ Even Matthias Schmidt, as Speer's foremost critic, documents the architect's implementation of anti-Semitic policy, but Schmidt's archival research and his analysis of Speer's active participation in policy making still focus

of Labor to the Ministry of Finance concerning the dual needs of the population under siege on the one hand, and, on the other, of state architectural policy. On Hitler's management of his subordinates in formulating anti-Semitic policy leading to the death camps, see C. Browning, "Nazi Resettlement Policy and the Search for a Solution to the Jewish Question, 1939–1941" (1986), in *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution*, Cambridge, 1992, 3–27.

44. BA Potsdam, 46.06 GBI/24, 57. Speer's antipathy to Bormann has been well documented including his own discussion of his competitor in Speer, 87–93, 120–28, 252–61.

45. Schmidt, 187–88.

46. For a full analysis of the connection of SS concentration camps to state

architectural policy, see Jaskot (as in n. 14). See also F. Pingel, *Häftlinge unter SS-Herrschaft: Widerstand, Selbstbehauptung und Vernichtung im Konzentrationslager*, Hamburg, 1978, 78–80; and T. Siegert, "Das Konzentrationslager Flossenbürg," in *Bayern in der NS Zeit*, ed. M. Broszat and E. Fröhlich, II, Munich, 1979, 441–44, 489–92.

47. Speer, 33.

48. See, e.g., T. Childers and J. Caplan, eds., *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, New York, 1993, for essays that present an excellent summary of many of the key issues, without, however, including any exploration of culture. For two notable exceptions, see A. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater and the Visual Arts*, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993; and Petropoulos (as in n. 27).

predominantly on the period after 1942 when Hitler appointed Speer as Minister of Armaments. Architecture, in this account, remains reactive rather than central to key policy decisions. Concurrently, art historians have failed to extend their research beyond investigations stemming from the reception or interpretation of an artwork's form. While these analyses have expanded to include artistic careers and institutions headed by artists or art-world professionals, Speer's urban-planning scheme for Berlin demands an account that is much more than a history of reception, institutions, or biographies. Speer's decisions concerning the scale of the plan and his emphasis on neoclassical buildings which required a massive mobilization of stone and brick—that is, precisely those aesthetic elements so often of interest to art historians—had central relevance to other economic and political goals oriented to the building process.⁴⁹ Analyzing this situation is a matter of understanding not only the conditions of production but also how the effects of the production process itself are part of an art-historical problem.

In this analysis of Berlin architecture and anti-Semitic housing policy I have tried to isolate a particularly explosive example of what is essentially political in a history of National Socialist architecture. Political actions are not ancillary but integral to this history. Indeed, in any investigation that takes National Socialist culture as its subject, art and politics become complementary terms.⁵⁰ It is not simply that Speer's architecture was of use to anti-Semitic propaganda, but rather that Speer and his staff formulated an anti-Semitic policy meant to realize key aspects of the architectural plan. The effectiveness of this anti-Semitic policy has been shown to be varied: Speer's goals were sometimes influential, sometimes dismissed, and sometimes integral to the timing of certain policy decisions. Key here, however, is that Speer's deeds can after all be described as a definite and consistent course of action against the Berlin Jews meant to guide aspects of the decision-making process within the GBI. The success or failure of such a policy depended on the ability of

the GBI to maneuver within or affect the structural conditions of the developing political economy of the Nazi state. Whether or not Speer and his administrators were personally indifferent to state and Party decisions aimed at the Berlin Jewish population, their commitment to an urban plan involving specific aesthetic choices led to an anti-Semitic policy that extended their interests beyond their own administrative boundaries and a narrow concern with form. The example of Berlin emphasizes the central need for a comprehensive analysis of the very active process by which artistic decisions function to serve policies that are not disinterested, benign, or exclusively design-oriented. For the Jews in Berlin, it was architectural planning that contributed to the development of measures leading to their destruction.

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49. Robert-Jan van Pelt, "Auschwitz: From Architect's Promise to Inmate's Perdition," *MODERNISM/modernity*, 1, no. 1, 1994, 80–120, has also argued that architectural history needs to consider seriously the destruction of the European Jews. His research, however, has not focused on the monumental state building projects but rather on the design and construction of the death camps in the east.

50. Certainly, art production in National Socialist Germany exemplifies

the philosopher Walter Benjamin's maxim, "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (W. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" [1950], in *Illuminations*, trans. H. Zohn, New York, 1969, 256). Still, Benjamin's dictum needs to be extended to account for the very active agency of architects like Speer and the functional relationship between artistic and political goals.