

Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs Study Guide

Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs by Albert Speer

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Plot Summary

In *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs*, Albert Speer, Hitler's architect turned Armaments Minister, reflects intimately on his career at the top and the leadership's collective guilt. He worries what the technology unleashed in World War II will bring to humankind.

Albert Speer is born in 1905, enjoys a comfortable childhood, grows up apolitical, and studies architecture. He reluctantly goes to hear Hitler speak, is mesmerized and joins the Party, specifically to follow Hitler and in spite of Joseph Goebbels, with whom he tangles most of his life. Nazi commissions save his floundering career and with the death of Paul Ludwig Troost, he becomes Hitler's primary architect. An amateur architect himself, Hitler bonds with Speer and assigns him the planning of a monumental redevelopment of Berlin. Speer ignores troubling aspects of Nazism that are emerging as he is drawn into Hitler's inner circle in Berlin and Obersalzberg.

As World War II starts, Speer's life changes radically as he succeeds Fritz Todt as Minister of Armaments and Munitions. Speer preaches and practices "industrial self-responsibility," the antithesis of Nazi suspicion, and clashes with those in Hitler's inner circle who see anyone getting ahead as a threat to themselves. He fears being ousted while hospitalized, allowing major plots to hatch. Speer allies ineffectively with oft-time rival Hermann Goering against Martin Bormann, Wilhelm Keitel, and Hans Lammers, whose "Committee of Three" seeks to insulate Hitler from other influences.

Speer works wonders in raising production without raising costs and for a long while keeps production ahead of losses to Allied bombing. When Hitler orders the demolition of the German infrastructure, threatening to throw it back to the Middle Ages, Speer does all he can to circumvent orders. Hitler tells Speer straight out that he is sparing his life only because of their early bond. In the end, although he hates what Hitler has done and become, Speer retains faith in Hitler and pays a last visit to the underground bunker in Berlin.

At the Nuremberg Trial, Speer accepts personal responsibility for the regime's actions and in his final speech warns of the dangers that technology holds for humanity if it fails to act freely. He writes this book after serving his 20-year sentence in Spandau Prison, time he uses to think through all he has done and seen.



Part 1, Chapters 1-4

Part 1, Chapters 1-4 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 1, "Origins and Youth," traces Albert Speer's ancestry, his birth in 1905, upper-middle class childhood, physical problems that teach him adjust to adversity, and schooling. Joining a rowing association develops his self-discipline and joy in taking common action. At 17, he falls in love and plans to marry after university. He eschews politics and social problems, studies architecture, and becomes Heinrich Tessenow's assistant. In 1927, he passes his architect's license examination and marries Margarete Weber .

Chapter 2, "Profession and Vocation," depicts Speer's lean teaching years and first exposure to Hitler's hypnotic personality. Turned off by Joseph Goebbels, Speer nevertheless joins the Party in 1931, without reading *Mein Kampf*. Never does Speer become anti-Semitic, and had he known about Hitler's intentions, and asserts he would have left the party and/or Germany. He chooses, fatally, to overlook unpleasant facts, but now accepts his responsibility for the horrors of Nazism.

Chapter 3, "Junction," shows Speer little involved in the Party and out of work when he is called to rebuild the Berlin district headquarters. His success with Goebbels and Hitler has its ups and downs until he impresses Hitler by his design for the Nuremberg Party Rally. Helping Munich architect Paul Ludwig Troost deal with Berlin contractors in rebuilding the decrepit Chancellery, Speer attracts Hitler's attention, is invited to dinner, and becomes the young man destined to design Hitler's legacy.

Chapter 4, "My Catalyst," describes how Hitler, appreciating Speer's ability to complete projects quickly, has him enlarge his Berlin office and add a balcony. Speer enters Hitler's inner circle in Berlin and at his mountain retreat at Obersalzberg, where he meets Eva Braun. Hitler takes little interest in nature, hates winter sports, but enjoys tramps through the public forest and drives to Königssee, until adoring crowds become too much. In 1934, Troost dies, opening the door to being Hitler's primary architect for Speer at age 28.



Part 1, Chapters 5-8

Part 1, Chapters 5-8 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 5, "Architectural Megalomania," shows Speer's career blossom in 1934, following the "blood purge" of Ernst Roehm. Speer rebuilds the Borsig Palace, designs Pres. Hindenburg's funeral, and redesigns Zeppelin Field in Nuremberg as a Doric-influenced stone structure destined to remain for ages as a witness to the greatness of the builders' epoch. Hitler approves Speer's "Theory of Ruin Value" for future building. When Hitler first meets Margarete at an official reception, he predicts that her husband will erect buildings unseen in 4,000 years. Speer masses 130 searchlights to create the first "cathedral of light" and masses striking swastika flags to disguise drab façades. He finds Hitler's "cultural speeches" incisive at the time but now shallow and repulsive. Meeting filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl at the Rallies, he sees that the leadership can work up the crowds during staged speeches but does not yet understand the dynamics of demagoguery.

Speer's Nuremberg building blends Troost's classicism and Tessenow's simplicity but on a monumental scale. Speer grows prosperous but works too much to enjoy his family. Driving to Nuremberg with Hitler, Speer sees mobs of cheering people slow the car as Hitler brags that only Luther has so stirred Germans. Hitler views grand buildings as a way to restore German self-respect, and Speer notes that great building in antiquity is normally done by despots. Speer also enjoys "beating" the great buildings of history and feels Hitler's awe of Speer's plans even if verbal praise is sparing. Hitler hints at aims for a great Germanic Reich stretching from Norway to northern Italy.

Chapter 6, "The Greatest Assignment," opens with Hitler choosing to ally with Italy over England and seizing the Rhineland while still lacking an army or air force. Germany's prestige rises during the Berlin Olympic Games, and Hitler then turns to building the autobahn and making Berlin surpass Paris and Vienna in beauty. Hitler specifies an avenue 130 yards wide terminated at one end by a great domed meeting hall dwarfing St. Peter's in Rome and at the other by an arch of triumph dwarfing Paris. Speer goes beyond Hitler's "megalomaniacal notions" in planning urban renewal with a free hand and rescues two international events after the original designers offend Hitler's aesthetics: the Olympic Stadium and the pavilion at the Paris World's Fair.

Chapter 7, "Obersalzberg," describes how Hitler encourages servility among his entourage and becomes corrupted by it. Speer enjoys a lodge in the Bavarian Alps sufficient for his family and a few working associates, but Hitler orders him closer, costing him work time because of meals; repetitive, trivial monologues, and movies. Only when Hitler is in conferences can Speer and his associates work on designs. Ruthless Martin Bormann is master of the mountain but no one senses his threat. Speer avoids him but befriends Braun. Talk at Obersalzberg is superficial, with Hitler disparaging absent colleagues. Hitler is self-controlled but stages outbursts for effect.



He talks of making Linz a metropolis and retiring there. He seldom reveals his feelings and knows he is destined either for greatness or condemnation.

Chapter 8, "The New Chancellery," shows Speer building grand halls and salons to impress on dignitaries that Hitler is "one of the greatest men in history." Speer guarantees delivery on 9 Jan. 1933, and the organization and scheduling skills that he develops in achieving this serve him well later when directing the war economy. Hitler hurries the project because of health concerns, which bring Hitler under the influence of Dr. Theodor Morell, a purveyor of vitamins and hormones. Hitler talks of dying while annexing Austria and Czechoslovakia with so little opposition by the West that Germans believe him invincible. The destruction of Berlin synagogues on 10 Nov. 1938 offends Speer's sensibilities but he takes it in stride, confining himself to his job and subconsciously overlooking the vulgarities that he does not want to see in Hitler. Since Spandau Prison, Speer insists that while he knew nothing concrete about camps, he should have been able to guess at the atrocities.

When Speer finishes the New Chancellery two days ahead of schedule, and Hitler praises his genius and appreciates subtle touches that will make diplomats shiver. Hitler delights in leading tours after meals, proud of his mastery of detail. He grants Speer the Golden Party Badge and presents one of his early watercolors. Hitler addresses diplomats on 10 Jan. 1939, as he dedicates the building. Sixty-five days later, Hitler browbeats Pres. Hacha so badly that Morell has to revive him. Some 78 months later, Churchill tours the ruins.



Part 1, Chapters 9-13

Part 1, Chapters 9-13 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 9, "A Day in the Chancellery," describes the activities of the 40-50 people who attend Hitler's daily afternoon dinners at which he is harsher than at Obersalzberg, offering monologues that show little growth since his "fertile" youth. To feel superior, he surrounds himself with "flawed" men. Hitler is mistrustful but can be swayed by those skilled in manipulation. Confrontation is useless. Hitler is careful about his public image. Speer is amazed at how Hitler squanders time; whereas, Speer works for the Reich day and night. An artistic temperament requires sudden insights.

Chapter 10, "Our Empire Style," deals with Hitler's favorite building projects. Through a detailed model of Berlin, Hitler loves to "enter his avenue" to evaluate the future effect and is never as spontaneous and relaxed. In hindsight, Speer realizes that the avenue would have lacked proportion or animating contrasts. Feeling slighted, Goering has Speer design a new Air Ministry, his first blatantly nouveau riche expression of prestige. In 1939, Speer guarantees completion of the five-mile core by 1950, with the massive cost being spread over many budgets. Himmler offers prison and concentration camp workers to make bricks and quarry granite. Speer turns over detail work to associates and Germany's best architects. The East-West axis opens for traffic on the eve of Hitler's 50th birthday, and Speer delivers a two-sentence speech that Hitler praises for conciseness.

Chapter 11, "The Globe," describes the Adolf Hitler Platz, projected to be completed in 1950. On three sides are headquarters for government, military, party, and his Hitler's personal affairs. The new Reichstag would be the world's greatest assembly hall but have no legislative function. The Chancellery envisaged to replace the one just built is a palace, contrasting with Goebbels' propaganda about how simply the Fuehrer lives. They now have to be forced to adulate Hitler, and he orders his headquarters fortified. The new façade expresses remoteness and "self-idolatry," a German version of the "Empire" style that overpowers with ornamentation at the close of the Napoleonic era. In the summer of 1939, Hitler menacingly orders the eagle on the dome to clutch in its claws not a swastika but a globe.

Chapter 12, "The Descent Begins," pictures Hitler's latest small step towards starting World War II. After eliminating an enormous threat by completing a nonaggression pact with Stalin, and with Goebbels and Goering counseling peace, Hitler rapidly conquers Poland and then France. Speer wonders at popular apathy to the victories for which Hitler claims full credit and is disappointed by the mere three-hour "art tour" of Paris that suffices Hitler for life. Afterward, Hitler calls for making Berlin so beautiful that no one will care if Paris is destroyed. This threat of vandalism is as upsetting as the claim that conquering Russia will be child's play.



Chapter 13, "Excess," shows Hitler picturing victory parades on his grand boulevard in 1950, even as he plans the campaign that proves his downfall. Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess, flies to England and Bormann receives his job. Speer concentrates on projects in Berlin and Nuremberg, has priority in iron shipments, and begins learning about mechanisms of production and power relationships. Goering is jealous of the military impinging on his Four-Year Plan but does nothing to prevent chaos. As Dr. Fritz Todt's Ministry of Armaments faces overwhelming tasks, Speer volunteers to assist him. When winter closes in on the Russian front, the Soviets destroy the railroad system, leaving the Germans unable to resupply themselves. Speer's suggestion of diverting construction workers gains grudging approval from Hitler, and Todt puts Speer in charge of the vast Ukraine.



Part 2, Chapters 14-18

Part 2, Chapters 14-18 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 14, "Start in My New Office," describes how Speer comes to run the Armaments Ministry. It begins with a frustrating tour of Dnepropetrovsk and a visit to Hitler's headquarters in Rastenburg. Opting out of a flight to Berlin, he survives the crash that kills Todt and is "thunderstruck" to inherit Todt's ministries and the Todt Organization, which is building the Western Wall, U-boat shelters, and roads in occupied territories. Goering arrives too late to absorb Todt's domains, which creates lasting animosity. Speer marvels at the appointment, being an outsider to the military, party, and industry. Seeing it as fate, Hitler finds Speer far less troublesome than Todt and promises this is but a temporary interruption of Speer's life's work.

Speer tries not to look like an intruder to the staff. He gets no time to acclimate to the job before a conference with the military and industry convened by Field Marshal Erhard Milch. Before it, Goering demands that Speer sign an agreement not to infringe on the Four-Year Plan. Hitler tells Speer to stop the conference if there are difficulties and reconvene in the Cabinet Room where he will straighten things out. When it becomes clear that it has been pre-arranged for Milch to control the whole war economy, Speer appeals to Hitler who demands that they treat Speer as a gentleman. Speer is even allowed to recruit outside the party.

Chapter 15, "Organized Improvisation," shows an architect's three-dimensional vision organizing arms production in terms of discrete weapons and the components common to all. Top figures in industry and government endorse Speer's scheme, and despite Goering's threat to resign as head of the Four-Year Plan and Speer's promise to work within his framework, Hitler gives Speer dictatorial power over the economy. Speer's plan of "industrial self-responsibility" uses committees to allocate supplies and oversee weapons design. He does away with piecemeal production, embraces "industrial mass production," and eliminates department chiefs' setting of independent priorities. Some complain of his "American" methods, but Hitler appreciates impulsive genius. Within six months, production increases without raising costs. Enthusiastic technical specialists take to his "honor system," and Speer protects them against political attack. Still, armament production never reaches World War I levels because of bureaucratization Speer cannot control.

Chapter 16, "Sins of Omission," shows Hitler unwilling to risk a revolution like 1918 and constantly declaring victory certain. Speer warns that victory must come quickly and recommends suspending superfluous building, but selfish functionaries prevent this and reallocating workers to underused factories. Bormann gets the Gauleiter Sauckel named "Commissioner General" for the workforce, but his efforts to provide laborers from the occupied territories is a failure. Hitler refuses Speer's call to employ women in factories. Goering also gains control of "Central Planning," resulting in endless, heated meetings that keep Speer from trimming consumer goods. Unclogging the railroads



goes better and fails again only under Allied bombing in 1944. When Speer champions neglected nuclear research, Goering is again put in charge, but Hitler fails to grasp the potential of fission—"Jewish physics"—and instead concentrates on the Peenemünde rockets, which Speer considers a "misguided project." Speer agrees with Hitler: "the loser of this war will be the side that makes the greatest blunders."

Chapter 17, "Commander in Chief Hitler," examines how Hitler's early victories are audacious luck but the later setbacks are predictable. Speer takes technical experts to "Fuehrer conferences" to keep Hitler from seizing on superficial facts to make unalterable decisions. Stuck in a World War I mentality, Hitler rejects innovation and never understands that adequate spare parts are crucial. In June 1942, the success of a new Eastern offensive raises spirits, but after capturing the Maikop oil fields, the tank columns outrun supplies en route to the Caucasus and ultimately British India. Hitler's relations with his generals chill, and he names Kurt Zeitzler Army Chief of Staff. During 2-3 hour daily situation conferences, Hitler alone sits as Zeitzler explains battlefield maps and then whimsically orders deployments. Hitler grows increasingly stubborn after the autumn of 1942 as his entourage convinces him that he has superhuman powers.

News of the Allied invasion of North Africa is taken as a feint for a thrust at undefended Italy or southern France. Hitler still believes in victory over the "idiotic" Allies and inadequately-trained Soviets. Seeing his forces encircled at Stalingrad, Hitler forbids the Sixth Army to break out. He allows Goering to supply the army by air, but little is delivered. A second Sixth Army formed to restore its glory perishes in 1944. Hitler looks to greater gambles while the Allies realize that Stalingrad is a turning point in the war.

Chapter 18, "Intrigues," shows Bormann, Keitel, and Lammers forming a "Committee of Three" to insulate Hitler from others. Most formidable is Bormann, "Hitler's shadow," who keeps Hitler's civilian appointment calendar and drafts lengthy instructions whenever Hitler says "Agreed" to his proposal. Once named "Secretary to the Fuehrer," Bormann has power in every field. Goebbels warms toward Speer and with fellow academics Funk and Ley discusses restoring confidence in the regime and send Speer to convince Goering to reclaim his usurped power and allow them to start making radical decisions. It marks Speer's first plunge into political maneuvering. Unopposed Allied air raids drop Goering's standing with Hitler. Speer reports Sauckel's inflated figures on foreign workers, but a meeting with Hitler goes against the alliance, and Goering further embarrasses himself, forcing Hitler to restore the government's prestige. Himmler bluntly warns Speer against "activating" Goering again.



Part 2, Chapters 19-22

Part 2, Chapters 19-22 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 19, "Second Man in the State," describes the "dissimulation and hypocrisy" in which the leadership—Speer included—live, as Goebbels writes off Goering and reaches a working agreement with Bormann. Hitler raises Speer's prestige vis-a-vis Goebbels when both are to speak at the Sportpalast in mid-1943, but Speer's calls for big sacrifices fall on deaf ears. As "Operation Citadel" opens, Speer convinces Hitler to spare Russian prisoners to serve as armaments laborers, but there are no prisoners because the Soviets swiftly win the Battle of Kursk. As the General Staff desires, the Todt Organizations begins building defensive positions on the Dnieper, but Hitler orders this "defeatist" work stopped, thereby dooming German forces to a winter without defenses. Hitler also insists on pushing into Persia as the last German units evacuate the Crimea and Asia.

Speer mediates a meeting of Goering, Guderian, Zeitzler, and Fromm to discuss problems caused by Hitler assuming command but not exercising it. When Speer and Guderian suggest to Hitler assigning an army Commander-in-Chief parallel with the autonomous chiefs of the navy and air force, Hitler is offended and it appears that Speer's influence is shrinking. Soon afterwards, however, Speer prevents the sacking of Adm. Doenitz, who is named Grand Admiral and Commander-in-Chief of the Navy. Hitler gives naval armaments first priority, in competition with first-priority tank production. When Doenitz puts naval procurement under Speer, building accelerates. When the Cabinet agrees to put all war production under Speer's control, Bormann warns Hitler against being drawn into rivalries, but Goering and Lammers consent, and Speer is named "Reich Minister of Armaments and War Production." Smelling danger, Bormann calls Speer is an enemy of the Party who intends to succeed Hitler. With the early pretenders discredited or insufficiently "artistic," Speer may have been a viable candidate. Bormann begins working to reduce Speer's power, but Hitler is unwilling to lose Speer.

Chapter 20, "Bombs," shows Speer's exuberance at these successes cool as Allied bombings begin affecting production. The people's morale remains high and increases in production offset the damage, but assignment of anti-aircraft guns in the West diminishes the Eastern war. Had the Allies concentrated on attacking key armaments factories the war would have been lost by 1943, but they fail to destroy all the hydroelectric dams on the Ruhr and the ball bearing plants on which all armaments depend. Hitler likewise ignores Speer's calls to cripple key Allied resources until the German air force is incapable. Instead, Hitler hits Russian railways, causing minimal damage, and civilian London. Hitler calms Speer's fears of an armaments collapse by declaring that Speer will straighten things out again. Thanks to the workers, Speer succeeds, but the Gauleiters prevent his dispersing factories. When the Allies shift to massive bombing of Berlin, Speer watches the "apocalypse," entranced, but when he tries to describe the macabre scenes to Hitler, Hitler is uninterested. Speer and Milch



are alarmed that American bomber production is far outstripping Germany's, but Hitler and Goering insist that it is just propaganda. Goering bizarrely orders Gen. Galland to believe that American fighters shot-down at Aachen do not exist.

Chapter 21, "Hitler in the Autumn of 1943," shows the dictator disappointed, dejected, inaccessible, indecisive, and intellectually sluggish, but he accepts what the Allies mean by unconditional surrender. Hitler works constantly rather than in spurts, delegates nothing, and the quality of his decisions declines. His private circle is dull and unworshipful; his military entourage is matter-of-fact. Hitler occasionally makes alert decisions and even listens to opposing arguments. He suffers acute insomnia and admits only intimates, to whom he talks from 2-4 AM about the "days of struggle" and laments wasting his. He believes he will still be able to retire to Linz and studies plans. He is more shaken by damage reports than casualties and orders impossible repairs of theaters to keep up public morale. He rages against the British and the Jews and demands retaliatory raids without planes or bombs. He refuses to take the long walks that Morell recommends and limits his exercise to playing with his Alsatian dog Blondi, who he numbers with Braun and Speer as his only friends. Speer sees Hitler's life "ebbing away" and his own later experience suggests that Hitler has a prisoner's psychology.

Afternoon situation conferences seize on any positive details. Hitler rejects Jodl's and Speer's attempts at analyzing the enemies' capabilities and makes disastrous decisions in a total vacuum. Communications facilities, which are remarkable for the time, allow Hitler to intervene anywhere on the fronts, robbing commanders of initiative. He believes that he has in greater measure than his generals the ingredients of military leadership: intelligence, tenacity, and iron nerves and regularly insults his General Staff as cowards and liars. Many of those tongue-lashed join the 20 July 1944 conspiracy. As the war drags on, Hitler comes to admire Stalin's endurance but holds to the stereotype of the West as incompetent. Even after the invasions of Africa and Italy, he is certain ground can be regained. He claims that Mussolini's fall and disappearance are a nightmare but annexes Italy north of Verona just before the Duce suddenly turns up and is greeted warmly.

Chapter 22, "Downhill," sees Speer exploiting the captured countries to produce civilian goods, freeing German factories to produce armaments. He meets Jean Bichelonne, France's Minister of Production, to prevent Sauckel transferring French workers to Germany. Hitler approves. When Himmler becomes Minister of the Interior, Speer hopes that government fragmentation can end and speaks candidly about needing to use all German workers for armaments or face defeat. Speer next opposes the Gauleiters' plans to modernize their cities by demolishing damaged castles and churches. When the Soviets surround Nikopol, Speer calms Hitler about stocks of alloy metals for arms, but Hitler is furious to receive the good news in a memo and forbids Speer to send memos to anyone but Hitler. By the autumn of 1943, Speer feels insecure in his own Ministry and begins consolidating his position by assigning deputy heads. Dorsch and Saur go to the Todt Organization.



After Christmas, when Speer inspects Lapland, Bormann calls a major conference to let Sauckel lodge his complaints against Speer. Hitler sharply refuses to let Speer explain himself first, but Keitel and Himmler agree to say that they need no outside workers. Seeing Hitler's mood, they switch to Sauckel's side, but deportations never occur. Bormann follows up with increasingly open attacks on Speer's aides, requiring Speer's intervention. After attending Goering's ostentatious birthday, Speer enters the hospital, exhausted, depressed, and in pain.



Part 3, Chapters 23-26

Part 3, Chapters 23-26 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 23, "Illness," examines the two months that Speer spends in the hospital, being treated by a noted sports doctor, Karl Gebhardt, Himmler's friend, and later by Hitler's physician, Dr. Friedrich Koch. Speer keeps up his busy schedule and, hearing of Bormann and Sauckel's machinations, twice writes Hitler, protesting disloyalty and requesting unconditional authority. Hitler gives no answer, but Goering, Bormann, and Himmler each works to destroy Speer's standing. After coldly rejecting Speer's plan for a joint operation with the air force, Hitler visits the sickroom, hearing that Speer is dying. Speer is repulsed and their estrangement deepens.

While Speer recovers for six weeks with his family, would-be successors vie for his position and key assistants are set up for firing. Hitler makes Dorsch his direct subordinate to build six enormous shelters, which Speer protests and offers to resign if his vision is unacceptable. He hears that he is considered headstrong and is forbidden to resign. Seeing the futility of the war, Speer is tempted simply to disappear, but Walter Rohland begs him to help prevent a feared "scorched earth" policy. Hearing of Hitler's "esteem," Speer agrees to remain—if Dorsch is properly subordinated.

Speer skips tea with Hitler and finds Hitler formal at the audience where he actively "courts" Speer. During the dull evening gathering, Speer convinces himself that he has won the power struggle and still needs to bask in Hitler's light. Goering accepts arrangements; Himmler denies having plotted against him; Bormann pretends to be cordial, and Hitler warns Speer not to rile the Gauleiters. To keep Bormann from presenting it in an unfavorable light, Speer brings Hitler a British article praising him as a sensible technocrat. The distance between them increases over the months, as Speer loses all faith in Hitler's system of rule and begins freeing himself from the past.

Chapter 24, "The War Thrice Lost" opens days after Speer's return to work when the massive Allied bombing on 12 Nov. 1944, wipes out Germany's ability to replace lost arms and produce fuel. Industrialists give sober reports, which Hitler and the generals condemn as pessimistic, but they stand by their data, and Hitler briefly sees reality. Frantic repairs restore production and the Allies knock it out again. With Goering's standing destroyed, Speer asks to take over all air armaments. Speer feels good whenever the production reaches 10% and repeats earlier grim predictions while asking to give fuel the highest priority and shift aircraft production to fighters to protect rebuilt facilities. By the time it is authorized, the situation is farcical.

Assuming that the Allies need a large port to land, Hitler arms the ports but leaves coastal areas sparsely protected. The Allies bypass these within two weeks, as Irwin Rommel warns. Speer is at Berghof when word comes of the invasion but Hitler is not informed until hours later. Hitler withholds crucial tank divisions and continues waiting for the real invasion at Calais to knock out the "flying bomb" launchers aimed at London.



As the Allies advance, the Soviets open a new offensive, but Hitler remains convinced that he is fated to win. Hitler, rather than encouraging industrialists, warns that if Germany is defeated all will be totally wiped out. Win or die in Siberia.

Chapter 25, "Blunders, Secret Weapons, and the SS," watches Hitler further close his mind as the crisis deepens. His worst decisions are using the jet-powered Me-262 as a bomber rather than a fighter and retaliating against England with the large, expensive, but minimally destructive V-2 rockets at the expense of ground-to-air rockets. Speer enjoys mingling with Wernher von Braun and his colleagues at Peenemünde and views the rocket as a technical miracle. Once Hitler sees a military angle, he pushes production and Himmler offers concentration camp prisoners as workers. Speer is reluctant to accept the "Central Works" under SS auspices, but Hitler insists. Speer's efforts to improve living conditions are partially successful, but life remains barbarous. Ley and Himmler both challenge Speer's authority at Peenemünde during his hospitalization. Speer admits being strictly utilitarian at the time and wishes he had investigated Auschwitz when first warned by a shaken Hanke never to visit. Speer confesses responsibility at the Nuremberg Trial.

Chapter 26, "Operation Valkyrie," opens by describing "Operation Valkyrie," which provides for the fast mobilization of the 300,000 men always on furlough in Germany as a "Home Army" to face emergencies. Col. Claus von Stauffenberg, who tries to assassinate Hitler on 20 Jul. 1944, is involved in the planning, and the plotters fail to control this force. At the time, Speer has no idea that the generals with whom he is dealing are doomed conspirators. On the fatal day, Speer is with Goebbels and 200 high officials. Suspicion falls immediately on his Todt Organization, but ignorant of details, Speer regards the coup as a disaster and supports Goebbels. Hearing Hitler's voice, Maj. Remer who commands the troops surrounding Goebbels' Ministry, declares his loyalty and by 7 PM has crushed the plot. Fromm orders summary courts martial and execution of the conspirators, including von Stauffenberg.

On 21 July Speer finds Hitler's entourage decidedly cool but next day Hitler is warmer and without crediting Speer, adopts his idea for "Total Mobilization of Resources for War" under Goebbels. Declaring Stalin right in 1937 to have purged his generals, Hitler is sure of victory after exterminating every traitor. Back in Berlin, Speer learns that his name appears in the rebels' planned government, but the annotation, "If possible?" saves his life. With rumors circulating that he has been arrested, Speer concludes a feeble speech at a "loyalty meeting" with "Sieg Heil!" Bormann's request that he address the Gauleiters shows that Speer is rehabilitated and Hitler praises Speer's accomplishments, allowing him to intercede for two associates wrongly arrested. None of the rebels incriminates Speer, who pleads too much work to avoid watching films of the executions.



Part 3, Chapters 27-32

Part 3, Chapters 27-32 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 27, "The Wave from the West," opens with Speer ready to give in to the Gauleiters' pressure to control armaments production and ready to give in for lack of support unless Hitler clarifies the chain of command. Hitler delegates a decision to Goebbels and Bormann, who subordinate Speer to Goebbels and forbid him influencing Hitler directly. By September 1944, as the Allies are poised to invade Germany, Hitler orders demolition of all industrial installations. Speer holds it off by suggesting that reconquest is still possible and production of needed armaments and fuel must be continued up to the last moment. When Hitler demands ruthless "scorched earth," Speer tries to inspire sympathy for evacuees and reminds him that his order shows a loss of hope. To save face, Hitler goes along. He will not, however, evacuate Scandinavia. As fuel shortages ground aircraft, halt army vehicles, and end training of crews, Hitler orders newly-produced fighter planes to the West; there they are likely to be shot down. Hitler then orders aircraft production ended and flak production maximized. That fighters are more effective is ignored, as is the difficulty of converting factories. Speer disobeys and Hitler later authorizes a limited fighter program. Hitler refuses to debunk rumors of secret super weapons, but Goebbels does, and rumors only increase.

Chapter 28, "The Plunge," opens with Hitler again supporting the Gauleiters against Speer and raises the specter of using the nerve agent tabun against the Soviets. Speer warns Hitler that the end is near but is ignored and told to build bridges to support the decisive offensive Hitler is launching in the West. Bad weather that keeps Allied fighters grounded is the only positive factor, and when it clears, the Battle of the Bulge is lost, but Hitler refuses to believe that the elite SS cannot overrun the Americans. Hitler is euphoric at New Year's 1945, surrounded by his skeptical but polite entourage. Speer objects to the effect of total conscription on collapsing industries but Goebbels rebukes him as a defeatist and Hitler agrees. Lethargy fills the entourage.

The Soviet offensive begins on 12 Jan. 1945 and the German line crumbles. With no inhibition, Guderian demands a retreat but Hitler has the last word. Hitler shows no emotion viewing Speer's photographs of fugitives. After Guderian declares the war lost, Gestapo Chief Kaltenbrunner attends all meetings. Speer arranges for preservation of photographs of architectural designs and prepares for Hitler a realistic assessment of the situation. He is allowed to state his views but forbidden to share them with others. In his last radio address Hitler rejects the Yalta Conference's demands and then withdraws to the old Party clique, grasping at straws and insisting that nothing but desert be left to the victors. The generals take no joint action against Hitler but based on a quotation from *Mein Kampf* about the duty of the people to revolt against state tyranny, Speer plans to kill Hitler, Bormann, Goebbels, and Ley by introducing poison gas into the bunker's ventilation shaft. He obtains tabun, but a tall chimney is added to the shaft, making it inaccessible. He drops alternate plans and concentrates on keeping Hitler



from destroying Germany. He abhors, pities, and is still fascinated by the man who had offered him a career and controls his fate.

Chapter 29, "Doom," shows Speer resorting to lies and deception to prevent Hitler and his henchmen from destroying the economy before the Allies' ruinous Morgenthau Plan arrives. Traveling widely, he finds generals Heinrici in the East and Model in the West in sympathy with his goals. Keitel refers Guderian's unilateral order not to destroy anything essential to supplying the population to Hitler, who orders total destruction. Speer breaks taboo by sending out a circular letter about avoiding destruction on principle. Hearing that civilians are begging the army not to defend their towns, Hitler orders evacuations, regardless of hardships. Speer resolves not to give up the fight, but Hitler informs him icily that if the war is lost so are the people. While touring the Western zone, where most officials see no reason for fanaticism, Speer learns that Hitler has rejected his conclusions and stripped him of all power over industry. Because Germany would be thrown back into the Middle Ages if it were obeyed, Speer races to Berlin.

Chapter 30, "Hitler's Ultimatum," finds Speer being stripped of offices but boldly opposing injustices. Touring the Ruhr as the British begin overrunning Germany, Speer refutes secret weapons, arms plants' defenders, and convinces Gauleiters and generals to interpret edicts mercifully. Speer is apprehensive facing Hitler after this activity, is spared, but told to go on sick leave. Speer insists that if he is a Minister he must do the work. Hitler gives him 24 hours to think about his loyalty and then orders destruction whose horrors only a technician can grasp. Speer writes to Hitler about Fate not condoning harm to the people but promises, if Hitler can revise his policy, to work for him with great energy, and ends by invoking God's protection on Germany.

Summoned to give his answer in person, Speer declares that he stands unreservedly behind Hitler, gains reappointment to his Ministry, and without authorization distributes Hitler's latest decree putting him in charge of measures to thwart the Allies. Speer resumes protecting key facilities and orders food and clothing distributed to civilians. Whenever Gauleiters request instructions, he orders them to cripple facilities but not destroy them. Speer's good relations with state secretaries and generals give him power. Knowing that if Hitler realizes what he is doing he will be executed, Speer stays near Hitler and arranges a hiding place. Hitler's maps bear no relationship to what Speer sees at the front, and contradictory decrees play into the hands of men of good will who are determined to limit future chaos.

Chapter 31, "The Thirteen Hour," concentrates on Speer preparing a radio address about guarding the foundations of civilization against zealots. Hitler guts the draft and the idea is dropped. Franklin D. Roosevelt's death—the miracle for which Hitler has been waiting—offers no hope. Eva Braun arrives to share the end with Hitler, who wants the entourage with him at Obersalzberg. Many Nazis plan suicide, but Speer feels obliged to face Allied justice. With Bormann still scheming, the army provides Speer protection. As the Soviets approach Berlin, Speer appeals to Gen. Reymann not to blow up the bridges and Gen. Heinrici arranges for Speer to broadcast a prohibition against demolitions. Speer writes an uncensored version also ordering the surrender of political prisoners, allowing foreign workers to leave, and forbidding last-ditch "Werewolf"



guerrilla fighting. Speer also makes a last attempt to keep Hitler from destroying Berlin and ruining his reputation.

Chapter 32, "Annihilation," shows Hitler at the end as less rigid, purposeless, and resigned, more insubstantial—void of human emotions—than ever. He lives exclusively in the bunker, cut off from the world. Speer heads to Hamburg, where Kaufmann arranges to record his speech. Speer allows its broadcast only if 1) Speer is murdered, 2) Hitler condemns him, or 3) Hitler dies and his successor continues the annihilation. Speer feels compelled to bid farewell to his almost-friend and colleague, knowing that Hitler must die but feeling sorry for his plight. Hitler shows no emotion as Speer enters. He asks his opinion of Adm. Doenitz and whether he should leave Berlin, speaks apathetically about death and plans to keep his body from being desecrated. He looks forward to liberation from painful existence. During a military conference, Hitler shows amazing optimism but is unpersuasive. Hitler strips Goering of his rights as successor and gives up. Saying goodbye, Eva Braun is "the only person in the bunker capable of humane considerations." At 3 AM Hitler and Speer say goodbye, and Speer heads to the airfield where he runs into Himmler, who talks about the Allies needing him to keep order. Speer moves to Eutin Lake and occasionally visits Doenitz, whom Hitler names as his successor, along with Goebbels as Chancellor. Doenitz refuses to cooperate with Goebbels or Bormann. Speer feels that the fallen rulers must accept collective guilt to spare the German people.



Epilogue, Chapters 33-35

Epilogue, Chapters 33-35 Summary and Analysis

"Chapter 33, "Stations of Imprisonments" opens with Doenitz struggling to think outside the ingrained Nazi framework. He opposes any more offensive measures but wants to expedite refugees reaching the West. Himmler refuses to be excluded from the government. Hamburg surrenders peacefully. Doenitz signs Speer's edict against demolition and encourages him to address the people to counteract lethargy. Speer records it and then encounters Himmler, who wants to censor public announcements, but Doenitz rejects it. Himmler flees to Prague. Following the unconditional surrender, Speer wants a proclamation accepting responsibility for the war and resignation, but Doenitz is convinced to remain until deposed. Government becomes a "tragicomedy." Speer helps the United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS) evaluate the air war in a "comradely" atmosphere. After sneaking away several times to visit his family, Speer is detained in Flensburg, where he more readily adapts to imprisonment than ex-colleagues. Before newsreel cameras they are herded into army trucks and flown to Luxembourg and put up in the Palace Hotel in Mondorf, where they divide into Doenitz and Goering factions. After a trip to Paris and several weeks in spartan conditions in Chesnay, Speer and the others are trucked back to beautiful Kransberg Castle. Speer is hard-hit, learning that he will be tried at Nuremberg.

Chapter 34, "Nuremberg," brings Speer to the Oberursel interrogation camp and on to Nuremberg. Speer wonders if he looks as run-down as the other prisoners. Speer avoids any extenuation and feels trapped. The 21 defendants are separated from other prisoners, given intelligence tests, and handed copies of the indictments. Speer regards his life as concluded. Knowing no lawyers, Speer accepts the court's appointment, Dr. Hans Flächsner. Dressed in suits, the prisoners are assigned seating in the courtroom; Justice Robert H. Jackson delivers a devastating opening address, and nine months of testimony and documents detail the Nazi horror. Speer suffers stage fright on the stand, but Flächsner guides him through his testimony. Prosecutor Jackson acknowledges Speer's courage in opposing Hitler, but Speer insists many do likewise. He returns to his cell in pain and mentally exhausted.

Chapter 35, "Conclusions," covers final statements. Speer points to the ongoing danger of dictatorships in the age of modern technology; another war will end human culture. He says his fate matters little when weighed against the need to unify human beings against misuse of technology. Four weeks later, the verdicts are announced. Speer is guilty of requisitioning foreign workers and not caring for them adequately. Next day, each is summoned up to hear his sentence. Speer waives appeal to 20 years imprisonment. Some 25 years later, he is still burdened by having participated in a plan of world conquest and using his talents to prolong the war. He had never agreed with Hitler's plans to exterminate the Jews but cannot pretend not to have heard his words. Still, he had served his ends. He remembers the human kindness shown by his jailers, all of whom lose loved ones in the war.



Characters

Albert Speer

The author of these memoirs, Speer traces his life and reveals his innermost feelings while focusing on Adolf Hitler as the primary character. Speer is born in Mannheim on 19 Mar. 1905 and enjoys a comfortable childhood, despite the deprivations caused by World War I. He suffers a boyhood disability that helps him learn to deal with adversity. Despite his father's political interests, Speer retains naiveté into his early adult years. He is the third generation architect in the family, studying at the Institutes of Technology in Karlsruhe, Munich and finally Berlin-Charlottenburg. In Berlin he becomes the assistant to Prof. Heinrich Tessenow, a clear-headed, profound champion of simple craftsmanship. Speer is himself fond of Doric architecture. The Institute of Technology is a center of Nazi enthusiasm, and Speer reluctantly goes to hear Hitler speak. He is mesmerized and joins the Party in January 1931 (No. 474,481), specifically to follow Hitler and in spite of fiery Joseph Goebbels, with whom he will tangle most of his life.

Economic depression dictates that Speer's career largely flounder, but he obtains a growing portion of Party construction projects. His ability to deliver swiftly attracts Hitler's attention, and the death of Paul Ludwig Troost, Hitler's mentor in architecture, opens the door to Speer becoming the Fuehrer's primary (but never exclusive) architect. From Troost, Speer draws a lean, Spartan approach. An amateur architect, Hitler provides the basic layout for a monumental redevelopment of Berlin based on Paris' layout but on a scale that shows his intent to conquer the world. Also working on major projects in Munich and Nuremberg, Speer ignores the troubling aspects of Nazism that are emerging. He is drawn into Hitler's inner circle, becoming one of the four property owners at Hitler's Obersalzberg getaway in the Bavarian Alps.

As World War II starts, Speer's life changes radically, again thanks to a key death, when Minister of Armaments and Munitions, Dr. Fritz Todt, perishes in a plane crash—a flight on which Speer had been scheduled. With only a few months experience in the field but with organizational habits drawn from architecture, Speer takes over the Ministry, carefully avoiding any clashes with Todt's associates. He preaches and practices "industrial self-responsibility," the antithesis of Nazi suspicion of disloyalty and sabotage inherent in labor. Speer cannot avoid friction with his colleagues in Hitler's inner circle, who see anyone getting ahead as a threat to themselves. Particularly troublesome is Hermann Goering, the ineffective head of the Four-Year Plan governing the entire German economy. Hitler's secretary, Martin Bormann, decides that Speer is dangerous. Inevitably, Speer's relationship with Hitler cools. The nadir occurs when Speer is hospitalized in critical condition with a probable embolism, and major plots develop to have him disappear. Speer allies ineffectively with Goering against Martin Bormann, Wilhelm Keitel, and Hans Lammers, whose "Committee of Three" seeks to insulate Hitler from other influences.



Having from 1943 onward, complete control over war production as "Reich Minister of Armaments and War Production," Speer works wonders in raising production without raising costs. For a long while he keeps production ahead of the rate of losses to Allied bombing but sees defeat as inevitable long before Hitler. When Hitler orders the demolition of everything that Germany will need to rebuild after the war, Speer boldly argues with Hitler to rescind the order and keep open hopes of victory; in the meanwhile, Speer works with generals and Gauleiters to circumvent Hitler's orders. Hitler tells Speer straight out that he is sparing his life only because of their early bond. A British journalist describes Speer as the most sensible German, flamboyant, picturesque, apolitical, civil, and non-corrupt, seeking only to make his way by means of technical and managerial ability. Later, an American general says that if they had known how instrumental Speer is to the German war effort they would have redoubled efforts to kill him. In the end, although he hates what Hitler has done and become, Speer retains faith in Hitler and pays a last visit to the underground bunker in Berlin.

Speer is arrested by the Allies and tried at Nuremberg. His acceptance of forced labor from the concentration camps on the rocket project and Peenemünde is the most serious charge. Speer tries to improve conditions for them but life remains barbaric. At Nuremberg, Speer accepts that the whole political leadership must accept personal responsibility for the horrible war and never hides behind his efforts to oppose Hitler and ignorance of crimes against humanity in the camps. His final speech warns of the dangers that technology holds for humanity if it fails to act freely. Speer is sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in Spandau, and is forced to serve the full term (the Soviets had sought his execution). From the end of the war, Speer wants to write his memoirs but is forbidden to do so in Spandau. He writes notes on scraps of paper that he smuggles out and later uses to compile this book.

Adolf Hitler

The undisputed central character in Albert Speer's memoir, Adolf Hitler is variously described as simple, natural, modest, hypnotic, persuasive, magnetic, superstitious, given to hysterical outbursts, pragmatic, lacking in humor but fond of laughing himself to tears at others' expense, distrustful of bureaucrats and preferring intuitive, amateur decision-making, gifted at remembering detail, believing in "negative selection," avoiding clear lines of jurisdiction, playing divide-and-conquer, failing to delegate, and megalomaniacal in the scope of his plans.

Speer's first image of Hitler is formed by political posters—posing in uniform and ranting—but his first encounter is with a rationally-speaking man with a vision, and Speer joins the Nazi Party to be part of Hitler the person and his political mission. Speer never reads *Mein Kampf* and says that if he had understood Hitler's agenda, particularly the anti-Semitic and genocidal intentions, he would have departed. Instead, shortly after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor on 30 Jan. 1933, Speer is drawn into Hitler's inner circle through architecture, which is Hitler's boyhood dream profession and continues to be his passion, the "frustrated artist" spending late nights drawing competent plans and sketches. Hitler prepares preliminary plans for turning Berlin into an improved,



monumental Paris (although he opposes the internationalization of art), and also considers in detail restoring the glories of Nuremberg and his birthplace, Linz, Austria. Hitler is utterly indifferent to urban renewal and to the social aspects of architecture. He pushes his building plans even after starting World War II. Hardly a connoisseur of art, Hitler accepts judgment of specialists and at least purchases paintings rather than appropriating them like Hermann Goering.

Heavily influenced by his conniving secretary, Martin Bormann, Hitler grows increasingly suspicious, distrustful, self-delusional, isolated, and inaccessible. He calculates his manner to fit specific situations. Speer repeatedly describes the banal, unvarying social life of his entourage in Berlin and at his getaway, Obersalzberg, in the Bavarian Alps, and in the end concludes that Hitler's dog Blondi is his only friend. Hitler delivers trivial, repetitive monologues during tea time and table talk, ridicules his close associates, and insists on long walks through the forest and late-night, lighthearted movies every night until the war comes.

Hitler never loses the "trench" perspective of a World War I corporal. In his earliest days in power he worries that he will die young and must hurry to achieve what no one else can in order to ensure his successors' power and stability. Dr. Morell's unorthodox herbal treatments doubtless contribute to Hitler's paranoia. He surrounds himself with the ill-educated and intellectually impoverished in order to feel superior. He makes decisions detrimental to the economy and misinterprets popular moods. He believes that the democratic West is weak and that he can conquer it if he is careful to avoid the errors of 1914. The ease with which he remilitarizes the Rhineland (a major cause of worry while it is in progress) and annexes Austria and Czechoslovakia, convince him that he can continue making demands. A pact with Stalin offers the shield he needs to invade Poland. He is surprised when Britain and France declare war, and not simply to save face.

Hitler assumes the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, claims credit for victory over France, but then miscalculates in Russia and the air war on England. He insists on driving through the Caucasus oil fields into India. Hitler is disinterested in air and naval warfare, which play minor roles in World War I, and emphasizes heavy tanks. He is ignorant of logistics and makes decisions in a vacuum. He badly miscalculates the Normandy invasion, assumes he can turn the Allies back in the Ardennes Forest but has already expended all of his military resources. A shell of his former self, Hitler insists on a radical "scorched earth" policy that will destroy a German population that has proved itself worthless. He probably realizes that his architect, who has done wonders maintaining the war economy, is working behind his back to prevent demolition. Hitler marries long-time mistress Eva Braun in his Berlin underground bunker before their joint suicide. He orders his body destroyed, lest the victorious Soviets desecrate it.

Martin Bormann

Nicknamed "The Fuehrer's Mephistopheles" and "Hitler's shadow," Bormann is a Reichsleiter, always at Hitler side, scheming, philandering, and taking notes on



everything and everyone. He is in charge of Obersalzberg complex and handles Hitler's personal finances. Originally Rudolph Hess' secretary, Bormann takes over Hess' functions after his defection to England. Keeping Hitler's appointment civilian calendar, he controls who sees Hitler and drafts lengthy instructions about Hitler's . Bormann is the key participant in the Committee of Three with Wilhelm Keitel and Hans Lammers, seeking to insulate Hitler from outside influences. The Goebbels/Speer group works to dethrone Bormann while Bormann undercuts Speer with Hitler, particularly during Speer's extended hospitalization, when he colludes with Speer's assistant, Dorsch. Bormann opposes Speer's concept of "industrial self-responsibility" and broadly interferes in domestic policy. Frau Bormann is modest, browbeaten and blindly devoted to her husband and the Party ideology. She overlooks her husband's affair with a movie actress.

Eva Braun

Adolf Hitler's longtime mistress, Braun has to live an unseen life, dependent of Martin Bormann, Hitler's secretary/bookkeeper. Small and delicate, Braun is not physically Hitler's type, and is rather shabbily treated but emerges the most dignified of those facing death in the Berlin bunker. Albert Speer finds it incomprehensible why the couple avoids any suggestion of intimacy even in the inner circle that obviously knows the truth. Only after several years of acquaintanceship does Braun drop her reserved manner, which shows not haughtiness but embarrassment at her "dubious position in Hitler's court." The daughter of a schoolteacher, she dresses quietly and wears inexpensive jewelry, has no interest in politics, and rarely tries to influence Hitler. She loves sports, especially skiing, which Hitler hates, and dancing whenever she is allowed a vacation away from Hitler. Speer befriends this unhappy woman who also dislikes Bormann. Speer finally learns that Braun and Hitler marry at the Nuremberg trial.

Karl Doenitz

Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy with the rank of Grand Admiral, Doenitz succeeds Adolf Hitler as the German Chief of State after Hitler's suicide and cancels Hitler's demolition policy.

Friedrich Fromm

Chief of Army Armaments with the rank of General, Fromm is in charge of mobilization, serves as Chief of the Reserve Army, and shows an interest in new weapons. When the 20 Jul. 1944 coup against Adolf Hitler fails, Fromm orders a summary court martial for his subordinates including Col. Claus von Stauffenberg and executes them immediately. This raises suspicions about him and he is arrested. Fromm is executed after Albert Speer refutes charges against his old friend and offers to testify before the People's Court.



Walther Funk

Minister of Economics and State Secretary in the Propaganda Ministry and President of the Reich Bank, Funk allies with the Goebbels/Speer group against Bormann. He is instrumental in placing all war production under Speer but then joins the Himmler/Gebhardt scheme against Speer's life. Funk admits belief in his own lies.

Dr. Joseph Goebbels

Referred to as "The Doctor," Goebbels is Minister of Propaganda, Gauleiter of Berlin, Reich Commissioner for Total Mobilization of Resources for War, and a key member of Adolf Hitler's inner circle. Intellectual, authoritarian, servile, scheming, and intriguing, not as fanatic as his speeches suggest but temperamental, a hard worker, capable of logic, abstract thinking, and cynicism, Goebbels is constrained towards Hitler and free of ambition until late 1942. He looks down on the philistine Munich old-timers, opposes Albert Speer's idea of "industrial self-responsibility" but allies with him against the "Committee of Three" (Martin Bormann, Wilhelm Keitel, and Hans Lammers) when they seek to insulate Hitler from other influences.

In his 18 Feb. 1943 "Total War" speech in the Sportpalast, Goebbels aims at the leadership while addressing Party fanatics on the need to commit domestic reserves and warns that the East poses a greater threat than Germany to the West. Rejecting Goebbels' attempt to replace Ribbentrop as Foreign Minister fails, as does his hope of succeeding Hitler. Goebbels heads the defense of Berlin following the 20 Jul. 1944 coup attempt. Hitler designates Goebbels Chancellor, but he is rejected by Adm. Doenitz, the new head of state. Goebbels commits suicide with his wife Magda after poisoning their children. Earlier, he has an affair with the Czech film star Lida Baarova that causes a separation and his assistant Karl Hanke falls in love with Magda. Hitler forces a reconciliation. Speer characterizes Magda as pleasant and sensible, not caught up in her husband's antics.

Hermann Goering

Ostentatious, sycophantic, scheming, intriguing, lethargic, drug addicted, and utterly corrupt, Goering is a key member of Hitler's inner circle and wears many hats, heading the German Air Force, the Reich Research Council, the Reich Defense Council, and overseeing the entire German economy. He holds the unique rank of Reich Marshal and for most of World War II, is Hitler's heir apparent.

Goering is one of Albert Speer's earliest architectural clients, having him redo and expand his residences at Obersalzberg and Karinhall. When Hitler finds it depressingly dark, Goering has Speer redo it to fit Hitler's taste, money and the use of rare materials being of no concern. Goering sits in a throne of medieval proportions behind an enormous desk facing an oversized photograph of Hitler.



Goering's administrative record is terrible. He refuses to face reality of air warfare and fuel shortages, is forced to relinquish air arms production to Speer, is incapable of handling economic planning but tries to take over Todt's assignments when Todt dies and fights for jurisdiction with Speer. He lauds Speer but schemes against him during his illness. Frau Goering smiles at her husbands "mania for pomp." Blamed by Hitler for failing to resist the Allied bombings, Goering still in the last days declares himself Hitler's successor but is ordered by the not-yet-late Fuehrer to relinquish all of his offices. At the Nuremberg Trials, Goering wants to maintain the "Hitler legend" and plans on posterity viewing him as a martyr.

Heinz Guderian

Inspector General of the Armored Forces with the rank of General, Guderian wants to have a Commander-in-Chief of the Army appointed on a par with the navy and air force rather than having Adolf Hitler assume the role without doing the work. Given the job, Guderian is outspoken with Hitler and tries in particular to block his scorched-earth policy. He is forced to go on leave of absence before the war's end.

Karl Hanke

A young and awkward State Secretary in the Ministry of Propaganda, Hanke offers Albert Speer his first architectural job for the Nazi Party, redecorating his Grunewald villa as a respectable Party headquarters. He later has an affair with Magda Goebbels that Hitler orders ended. As Gauleiter of Lower Silesia, Hanke hints to Speer about horrors at Auschwitz.

Rudolf Hess

Deputy Leader of the Nazi Party, Hess shows interest in urban renewal, thinks of Hitler as his friend, dabbles in homeopathic medicine, loves chamber music, and then suddenly flees to England. Speer sees Hess as ambitious but kept from direct access by Martin Bormann. Speer believes that Hess' flight is an attempt to escape the background and regain prestige. He is too sensitive, receptive, and unstable to deal with Nazi in-fighting. In Spandau Prison, Hess assures Speer that the idea comes in a dream, is meant not to embarrass or oppose Hitler, but to guarantee England that its Empire is secure in exchange for a free hand in Europe—a favorite Hitler theme. Hitler never gets over Hess' "disloyalty."

Heinrich Himmler

Reichsführer-SS, Himmler is a rival to all of the other Nazi leaders, but friends with the dangerous Martin Bormann. Himmler develops the "elitist missionary zeal of the SS" and feels superior to his original comrades. He also serves as Minister of the Interior, briefly as Commander of the Reserve Army and Army Chief of Armaments and the



Vistula Army Group. Himmler plans to form a post-Hitler government but is excluded from the Doenitz government. Himmler fails to support Speer's labor shift plans, schemes against him, and tries to interfere in armament's production, but Speer acknowledges him as both a visionary capable of ridiculous flights of intellectual fancy and a sober-minded realist who knows his own political aims. He can be courteous but never cordial and always has discussions witnessed by a member of his staff. He has the patience to listen to counter-arguments but is petty and pedantic laying out his own views. He seems "slow-minded" and of limited intelligence but runs a well-oiled office. In the end, Himmler commits suicide rather than face trial.

Paul Hindenburg

Germany's field marshal in World War I, revered by the youth of Albert Speer's generation, Hindenburg is President when Adolf Hitler comes to power as Chancellor. When Hindenburg accepts Hitler's "blood purge" of 30 Jun. 1934, it reassures conservatives about Hitler's program. Hindenburg is a "rigid and thick-headed" old man who thwarts Hitler's program until he dies on 2 Aug. 1934. Speer designs the setting for Hindenburg's state funeral at which Hitler delivers a decidedly cool eulogy.

Alfred Jodl

Chief of the Army Operations Staff with the rank of General, Jodl seeks German-British accommodation on Salonika, advocates withdrawal from the occupied territories, prepares the Ardennes offensive, and seeks to prevent the widespread, senseless demolition ordered by Adolf Hitler at the end of the war.

Wilhelm Keitel

Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff with the rank of Field Marshal, Keitel is the consummate "yes-man." He serves with Martin Bormann and Hans Lammers as a "Committee of Three" seeking to insulate Adolf Hitler from outside influences. As the war goes against Germany, Keitel favors the use of poison gas, drafts draconian evacuation decrees for civilians, but tries to prevent the demolition ordered by Hitler. Keitel intends to join a Himmler government and ultimately signs the surrender document. Speer sees him changing from "an honorable, solidly respectable general" into a "servile flatterer with all the wrong instincts." He hates his weakness and Hitler keeps him because he is "loyal as a dog."

Hans Lammers

Reich Minister and chief of the Reich Chancellery, Lammers is State Secretary and presides over the Cabinet in Adolf Hitler's absence. When Martin Bormann, Wilhelm Keitel, Lammers form a "Committee of Three" to insulate Hitler from other influences,



they are opposed by the Goebbels/Speer group. He is in charge of the failed austerity program. Speer characterizes him as cowardly.

Robert Ley

Reichsleiter and head of the German Labor Front, Ley is in charge of Nazi education. He allies with Goebbels/Speer group against Martin Bormann but wants to succeed Speer. Ley is put in charge of medical conditions at General Works (forced labor camps). He advocates "Death Rays" and other crackpot notions. Ley commits suicide before Nuremberg trial.

Erhard Milch

The State Secretary in the Air Ministry with the rank of Field Marshall and also armaments chief of the air force, Milch pushes for priority in aircraft production. He enjoys good relations with Albert Speer and allies with the Goebbels/Speer group against Martin Bormann.

Dr. Theodor Morell

Supposedly a student of Ilya Mecnhikov at the Pasteur Institute, Morell in 1935, becomes Adolf Hitler's physician after tending the critically ill Heinrich Hoffmann. Speer declares that "undoubtedly he was not an out-and-out quack—rather a bit of a screwball obsessed with making money." Morrell's office sign declares he specializes in "Skin and Venereal Diseases" and his rooms are adorned with celebrities' pictures. Hitler follows his prescriptions to the letter, including "Multiflor" capsules. Colleagues worry about addiction. Morell becomes part of Hitler's inner circle, and Hitler recommends his associates consult Morell over the slightest ailments. Speer visits him once to humor Hitler but does not follow his advice. Eva Braun declares him "disgustingly dirty" and does not let him treat her.

Joachim von Ribbentrop

Adolf Hitler's Foreign Minister, previously his ineffective Ambassador to London, Ribbentrop is ostentatious and unpopular among his scheming colleagues. Opposing war in 1939, Ribbentrop negotiates a friendship pact with Josef Stalin that frees Hitler to attack Poland and France.

Ernst Roehm

The brutal leader of the Sturmabteilung (SA a.k.a. Brown Shirts and storm troopers) and the Schutzstaffel (SS a.k.a. Black Shirts), Roehm is an early but rebellious associate of Adolf Hitler in Munich. After the Nazis achieve power in 1933, the SA feels cheated of



the fruits of revolution. Roehm alarms Hitler by plans to launch a "second revolution" in conjunction with the army and is ordered assassinated on 30 Jun. 1934. Roehm's homosexuality is used as an excuse for the "blood purge."

Alfred Rosenberg

Reich Minister for Occupied Eastern Territories and the author of the virtually unreadable *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, Rosenberg is mockingly called "the Reich Philosopher." Like Hermann Goering, Rosenberg loots art. Adolf Hitler says that Rosenberg is as boring as the radical newspaper he edits, *Völkischer Beobachter*.

Fritz Sauckel

A Gauleiter in charge of forced labor, Sauckel consistently intrigues against Albert Speer with help from Martin Bormann.

Karl Saur

A department head in the Armaments Ministry, Saur is one of Albert Speer's major nemeses. He implicates others after the failed 20 Jul. 1944 coup and is chosen to succeed Speer.

Heinrich Tessenow

Professor of architecture at the Institute of Technology in Berlin-Charlottenburg when Albert Speer transfers from Munich, Tessenow is a champion of simple craftsmanship, clear-headed, outwardly unimaginative and sober but profound. His intelligence is "frighteningly acute." Young Speer realizes his goal of becoming Tessenow's assistant. The Institute of Technology becomes a center of Nazism because Tessenow's nationalism coincides with its ideas, despite his anti-Nazi views. Tessenow decries the metropolis and extols peasant virtues. Shown one of Speer's Nazi backdrops, Tessenow finds it "showy."

Dr. Fritz Todt

Albert Speer's predecessor as Minister of Armaments and Munitions, Todt dies in a plane crash on a flight to which he had invited Speer. Speer considers Todt the only individual close to Adolf Hitler who is not a sycophant.

Paul Ludwig Troost

A tall, thin Westphalian, restrained in conversation, Troost becomes Adolf Hitler's mentor in architecture. He revolts against the highly ornamental style of the early 20th century and develops a lean, Spartan approach. Hitler makes Troost a leading German architect. After his death, Frau Troost, an interior decorator, tasteful, idiosyncratic, and obstinate, defends his work heatedly when others modify his designs. Since her views correspond with Hitler's, she becomes the arbiter of art in Munich.



Objects/Places

Berlin

The Federal capital of Germany, Berlin is where Albert Speer completes his education at the Institute of Technology and as a young teacher of architecture is first taken to hear Hitler speak. He is forever mesmerized and superficially joins the Nazi Party. He begins receiving commissions from Party stalwarts and attracts Hitler's attention. Satisfied with the speed with which a new Chancellery is complete, Hitler appoints Speer to build his vision of a city more beautiful than Paris and inspired by the Champs Elysée. It includes an Arch of Triumph 550 feet wide, 386 feet high that would have dwarfed surrounding buildings (Paris' is 160 feet tall). At the other end, a massive Adolf Hitler Platz would have been surrounded on three sides the largest domed building in the world and other official buildings. For a while after the outbreak of World War II, Hitler insists that construction continue, but the cost is prohibitive. Speer walks through the ruins of his work after a last visit to Hitler's bunker in 1945, and in Spandau Prison comes to understand that the scale of the planned city would have robbed it of all humanity.

Linz

Adolf Hitler's Austrian home town, Linz is scheduled for massive building plans before World War II begins, and in his final days in the Berlin bunker, he continues reviewing plans with architect Albert Speer.

Mannheim

A booming industrial town in southwestern Germany, Mannheim is Albert Speer's birthplace.

Munich

The capital of Bavaria, located just north of the Bavarian Alps, Munich is the birthplace of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP: Nazis) and one of the three Institutes of Technology that Albert Speer attends. After establishing himself as an architect in Berlin and joining the Party in a rather casual manner, Speer is assigned to Munich's architectural renewal. Major commissions include the Fuehrer House and the House of German Art. Hitler holds good memories of Munich from his youth and enjoys taking Speer to his favorite places, including the Osteria Bavaria, a small artists' restaurant, the ornate Carlton's Tearoom where people leave him undisturbed, and the rustic Café Heck. In later years, Hitler grows sulky when old party comrades act overly-familiar with him, but he continues celebrating the anniversary of his 9 Nov. 1923 Putsch in the Bürgerbräukeller.



Nuremberg

The ancient Bavarian city of Nuremberg figures prominently in Albert Speer's memoir as the site of his early achievements as an architect and as the bleak prison where he and fellow Nazi war criminals are dealt their fate. Speer replaces the wooden bleachers of Zeppelin Field with a Doric-inspired stone structure twice the length of the baths of Caracalla in Rome. Its model wins a prize at the Paris World's Fair of 1937. Other structures he plans in Nuremberg include the Marchfield at the southern end, bigger than Darius I and Xerxes' palace in Persopolis, Kongresshalle, and the Great Stadium. At the annual Party Rally in 1933, Speer innovates the use of searchlights to create a "Palace of Light."

Obersalzberg

Obersalzberg is the mountainous region of Bavaria to which Adolf Hitler and other top Nazis, including Hermann Goering, Martin Bormann, and Albert Speer regularly retire to get away from Berlin. Their homes are located above the village of Berchtesgarden. Hitler's modest home is called "The Berghof," where he and undercover mistress Eva Braun share adjoining bedrooms. Bormann is the master of Obersalzberg, forcibly buying up farms and tearing down buildings and chapels, confiscating and fencing 2.7 square miles of state forests, laying down roads, and establishing gates for identity checks. Speer likens it to an open-air zoo as locals gawk at them. Bormann's house occupies the mountain top, a luxurious eerie that draws cynical remarks but Hitler does not interfere. Living at the Berghof, which he expands in 1935, using his own funds and based on his own drawings, contributes to Hitler's withdrawal. Hitler has a Bavarian-style building erected at Berchtesgarden to house the Berlin Chancellery when he visits Obersalzberg for months on end; dubbed "Eagle's Nest," it is reached by 165-foot elevator blasted into the mountain. In the last days of the war, Hitler is encouraged to fly to his "Alpine Redoubt," but elects to die in "Fortress Berlin."

Operation Valkyrie

Providing for the mobilization of German soldiers not on active duty to defend the Reich in an emergency, Operation Valkyrie is supposed to be incorporated into the execution of the 20 Jul. 1944 coup against Adolf Hitler. Many of the planners are conspirators. Failure to control communications and seize the Cabinet lead to rapid defeat.

Paris

Architecture buff Adolf Hitler sets for Albert Speer to exceed the beauties of Paris as his goal in redesigning Berlin. The layout imitates the Champs Elysées, but widened and lengthened. Speer wins a grand prize at the 1937, World's Fair for his design of the German pavilion. Hitler takes Speer along for a short visit to the city after the fall of France, disappointing Speer by his narrow interests, primarily the Paris Opera. Speer is



appalled at Hitler's suggestion he may destroy the city. After the war, Speer directs American officers guarding him through the city.

Peenemünde

The test site and launch facility for Germany's V-1 "flying bomb" and V-2 rocket (designated A-4 by the Nazis), Peenemünde is located on the Baltic coast. The project director is the brilliant young Dr. Wernher von Braun. Albert Speer is amazed by the test firing he observes and considers the scientific potentials, but Adolf Hitler wants the technology used to retaliate against London for Allied bombings of German cities. Speer is put in charge of construction at the facility and accepts from Heinrich Himmler forced labor from the concentration camps. Although he tries to get living conditions improved, they remain barbaric, and the heaviest charge against Speer at the Nuremberg Trial is using forced labor.

Ruhr

Germany's richest industrial zone, the Ruhr is heavily bombed by the Allies and is a particular target of Adolf Hitler's "scorched earth" policy as the war is lost. Albert Speer works feverishly to prevent demolition that would cripple the post-war economy.

Schutzstaffel (SS)

Led by Heinrich Himmler is a virtual "State within the state" in Nazi Germany. Also known as the "Black Shirts," the SS creates a mythology about the German race. It runs the concentration camps and provides labor to Albert Speer's work at Peenemünde. Without much success, it seeks to establish business enterprises. It is in charge of persecuting the 20 July 1944 conspirators who nearly kill Adolf Hitler. The Waffen-SS is the organization's military arm, acting as a fourth branch of service. It is active in the Ardennes offensive (Battle of the Bulge), where its failure to crush the supposedly cowardly Americans amazes Adolf Hitler.

Spandau Prison

Spandau Prison, located near Berlin, houses the Nuremberg Trial defendants who escape death sentences. Denied permission to write his memoirs, Albert Speer writes and smuggles out accounts that result in the present book after his release. Speer gives little detail of life in prison but frequently mentions discussions with fellow inmates Walther Funk, Rudolf Hess, Erich Raeder, and Karl Doenitz. Speer is struck by the kindness of his guards, all of whom suffer losses during the war.

Todt Organization

The Todt Organization, named for Albert Speer's predecessor, is charged with construction in the occupied countries, concentrating primarily on the vaunted but ineffective Atlantic Wall. Immediately after the 20 Jul. 1944 attempt on Adolf Hitler's life, the Todt Organization is implicated, endangering Speer's life.

Themes

Responsibility

In *Inside the Third Reich*, Albert Speer insists with almost equal passion that 1) the political leaders of a state that has unleashed a barbaric war and practiced genocide must all face judgment, and 2) the civilian population, having no opportunity to disobey, must not be included in that collective guilt and made to suffer. During his postwar imprisonment and at the Nuremberg Trial he emphasizes this and is gratified that the prosecutors echo his feelings. He mocks fellow defendants who hide behind orders from above. He accepts that he is responsible for lengthening the war by excelling at his job of Minister of Armaments and Munitions and even for talking Hitler into dying in Berlin rather than the Bavarian Alps. The defense of the city would have collapsed more swiftly without the Fuehrer's impotent presence.

Speer skirts the question of Hitler's electoral victories in 1932-33, suggesting that with Communists as the only alternative, the elections are meaningless. He maintains that he is at all times a lukewarm, apolitical member of the Party, never attending meetings and often working at cross purposes with the powerful Gauleiters. He is appalled by the destruction of Berlin synagogues on 10 Nov. 1938, but he takes it in stride, confining himself to his job and subconsciously overlooking the vulgarities that he does not want to see in Hitler. This is a dominant trait of German culture at the time. Whether other civilians are as free of anti-Semitism as Speer claims to be is debatable, but he glosses over it. Since Spandau Prison, Speer insists that while he knew nothing concrete about concentration camps, he should have been able to guess at the atrocities. At one point late in the war he is specifically warned by a Gauleiter friend never to visit Auschwitz and does not.

Speer is accused at Nuremberg of utilizing slave labor from the camps at the Peenemünde rocket site and failing to treat workers humanely. He has earlier in the book explained how they are foisted on him and how he tries to improve their living conditions if for no other reason than to avoid training replacements. Speer accepts his 20-year sentence without appealing, although his lawyer had expected perhaps five years, since he had done so much to mitigate disaster in the final months of the war and cooperated with the Allies in analyzing the effects of the bombing. Speer uses the years to consider his and the rest of humanity's responsibility for using freedom properly.

Architecture

Architecture naturally forms a constant thread through the memoirs of a third-generation architect. Its importance is increased because Adolf Hitler in his youth wants to be an architect and preserves many sketches and plans that he later shares with Albert Speer. Until the final days of the doomed Third Reich, Hitler can be trusted to want to talk about plans for renovating his native city.



Mesmerized by hearing a Hitler speech, Speer joins the Nazi Party while a teaching assistant in architecture at the Berlin Technical Institute, and while never growing doctrinaire, he obtains small commissions from fellow Party members. He attracts Hitler's eye and when Hitler's primary architect, Paul Ludwig Troost, who opens Hitler's artistic eyes, dies, Speer moves into the primary spot. He denies ever being the Fuehrer's official architect or that there is a "Fuehrer's style" of architecture. Sometimes developing Hitler's sketches and sometimes working on his own inspiration, Speer creates plans for Nuremberg and Berlin. His style moves from neoclassical to nouveau riche, expressing Hitler's aim of world conquest. Speer long overlooks this, but admits that the best examples of ancient building come during periods of despotism. Speer is happy to exceed the scale of great buildings, antique and modern. From Greece and Rome, Speer looks ahead to his works' "Ruin Value," thousands of years in the future. They must still reflect the genius of his day.

Another sudden death moves Speer from the world of architecture to that of armaments. As the end approaches and Hitler demands that Germany's infrastructure be utterly demolished, Speer defies the orders, preserving historic churches and castles. He asks former colleagues to preserve photographs of the grand plans and models they work on before the war. Bidding farewell to Hitler shortly before Hitler's suicide, Speer walks through the ruins of the grand Chancellery he designed. Little but the photographs survive.

Bureaucracy

The bureaucracy of National Socialist Germany is a continuation of that of the Weimar Republic but with Party officials (Gauleiters) competing for attention and demanding obedience. At the top, Adolf Hitler is distrustful of subordinates and unwilling or unable to delegate. Trained for no profession, Hitler surrounds himself with amateurs, usually of lower intelligence than he to feed his ego. He discourages fraternization and Germans easily fall into the pattern of concentrating only on their narrow responsibilities.

An exception is Hermann Goering's "Four-Year Plan," supposedly a comprehensive control over the German economy under wartime conditions. Goering is ineffective as an administrator but jealous of his turf. From the start, armaments stands outside his purview and he resents it. When Albert Speer takes over the Ministry he has continually to find ways of pacifying Goering without compromising production. Speer believes in "organized improvisation," which runs counter to Nazi paranoia about spies and saboteurs, but drives production to record levels. Speer has often to protect people in his organization from the Gestapo and SS.

His ability to protect others is hampered by Martin Bormann's determination to remove him as an ideological danger. Bormann is Hitler's appointment secretary and virtual shadow. A peculiarity of Hitler's administration is that if anyone disappears from his sight for any length of time, he is forgotten. Speer fights back from this position several times but realizes each time the danger he faces. As a nominal Nazi, Speer is vulnerable and as he opposes the old Gauleiters—those longtime party members—he realizes that

Hitler's friendship for his architect is not limitless. Nevertheless, he works with generals to preserve Germany from utter destruction in the final days. At the Nuremberg Trials, Speer insists that everyone at the top of the government is responsible for all of the atrocities, even if like he they had little knowledge of the concentration camps.

Style

Perspective

Inside the Third Reich is a soul-searching attempt by a true insider to analyze what happens to the world as a result of Adolf Hitler's obsession for conquest and absolute control. Albert Speer has a unique perspective, first because he is a true intellectual in a world of unenlightened amateurs and second because Hitler shares his love of architect. Speer's career begins by building structures for the Fuehrer, who spends his nights making drawings and dreaming about turning Berlin into a more beautiful and monumental Paris.

Speer overlooks signs of Nazi terrors by locking himself inside his artistic cubicle and enjoying success unthinkable during the Great Depression. He becomes part of the inner circle, attending Hitler's interminable dinners, suppers, nature walks, teas, and movies. An unlikely turn occurs when he is tapped to become the Minister of Armaments and War Production, and he does an amazing job despite rivalries and increasingly devastating Allied bombings. Having fought Hitler's barbaric demands that the German infrastructure be demolished, Speer is determined to accept personal responsibility for the Nazi atrocities.

Speer writes this book after serving 20 years in Spandau Prison, a time he uses for intense introspection. He furtively writes notes and smuggles them out for later use. He blames himself for not investigating things like Auschwitz and for being so good at his job that he helps lengthen the hopeless war. He struggles with his feelings about Hitler, a hypnotic character whom he sometimes hates but from whom he cannot separate himself. He writes for a general audience, hoping to show the dangers posed by technology uncontrolled by free, thinking human beings. His message comes across clearly and powerfully, and his avoidance of hiding his and his colleagues' flaws add to the power of the work.

Tone

Albert Speer's *Inside the Third Reich* present an intimate picture of life at the top as Adolf Hitler leads Germany and the world into a devastating war whose technological advancements create the modern world. An artist turned technocrat, Speer only in the final chapters reveals that his story is a warning against the dangers that face humankind in the last half of the twentieth century.

Speer writes as an insider, revealing what daily life is in the Fuehrer's stifling court, and as time goes on as a growing outsider, squeezed out by determined rivals. He turns into an open rival, using all the tools of intrigue in order to prevent Germany from being demolished at Hitler's orders. He writes not to impress readers with his righteousness because he shares credit with other people of good will, but simply to show what had



gone on. He achieves a blend of objectivity—laying down massive amounts of facts and figures—and subjectivity—analyzing motivations and machinations with the clarity of hindsight.

Speer has clearly made good use of the twenty years he spends in Spandau Prison following his conviction at the Nuremberg Trial. Particularly telling are his reactions to how his fellow defendants, fallen from such great heights, react by posturing and pleading that they have just been following orders. It is hard not to admire Speer's determination to share with great candor his experiences and to wonder what he and Hitler might have been had they stuck with architecture. The book lends itself to "what-if" musings.

Structure

Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs by Albert Speer consists of three numbered but untitled parts and an Epilogue. There are in all 35 consecutively numbered chapters. The text proper is preceded by an Introduction by Eugene Davidson, a Foreword by Speer, explaining how and why he writes it. The memoir generally proceeds in chronological order, but the author frequently looks forward to things he learns only after being imprisoned for twenty years in Spandau, and in the middle years of strife revisits some key incidents multiple times in new contexts, producing some confusion in the reader's mind.

Part 1 consists of thirteen numbered and titled chapters: 1) "Origins and Youth," 2) "Profession and Vocation," 3) "Junction," 4) "My Catalyst," 5) "Architectural Megalomania," 6) "The Greatest Assignment," 7) "Obersalzberg," 8) "The New Chancellery," 9) "A Day in the Chancellery," 10) "Our Empire Style," 11) "The Globe," "The Descent Begins," and 13) "Excess." Part 1 briefly covers Speer's early and formative years, including his admittedly lackluster adherence to the Nazi Party but strong personal attachment to the charismatic Adolf Hitler. He concentrates on his unexpected and heady rise to becoming Germany's foremost architect.

Part 2 consists of nine titled chapters, continuing the numeration: 14) "Start in My New Office," 15) "Organized Improvisation," 16) "Sins of Omission," 17) "Commander in Chief Hitler," 18) "Intrigues," 19) "Second Man in the State," 20) "Bombs," 21) "Hitler in the Autumn of 1943," and 22) "Downhill." Part 2 concentrates on Speer's surprising new assignment as chief of Armaments dealing with party intrigues and Hitler's colossal blunders. The process of disillusionment with Hitler's system begins, but Speer remains devoted to his master and overworked trying to hold the wartime economy together.

Part 3 consists of ten chapters: 23) "Illness," 24) "The War Thrice Lost," 25) "Blunders, Secret Weapons, and the SS," 26) "Operation Valkyrie," 27) "The Wave from the West," 28) "The Plunge," 29) "Doom," 30) "Hitler's Ultimatum," 31) "The Thirteenth Hour," and 32) "Annihilation." The third part opens with Speer being hospitalized and thus left open to rivals' machinations. His estrangement from Hitler deepens until finally Speer rebels

at considerable risk to his own life, convincing generals and politicians to disobey Hitler's demands that the German infrastructure be utterly destroyed.

A brief Epilogue consisting of three chapters: 33) "Stations of Imprisonment," 34) "Nuremberg," and 35) "Conclusion," and an Afterword, extensive Notes, and an Index complete the book. Speer analyzes how the fallen react to the judgment they face, emphasizing his determination to face the collective guilt that the leadership deserve.



Quotes

"Hitler was delivering an address to the students of Berlin University and the Institute of Technology. My students urged me to attend. Not yet convinced, but already uncertain of my ground, I went along. The site of the meeting was a beer hall called the Hasenheide. Dirty walls, narrow stairs, and an ill-kept interior created a poverty-stricken atmosphere. This was a place where workmen ordinarily held their beer parties. The room was overcrowded. It seemed as if nearly all the students in Berlin wanted to see and hear this man whom his adherents so much admired and his opponents so much detested. A large number of professors sat in favored places in the middle of a bare platform. Their presence gave the meeting an importance and a social acceptability that it would not otherwise have had. Our group had also secured good seats on the platform, not far from the lectern.

Hitler entered and was tempestuously hailed by his numerous followers among the students. This enthusiasm in itself made a great impression upon me. But his appearance also surprised me. On posters and in caricatures I had seen him in military tunic, with shoulder straps, swastika armband, and hair flapping over his forehead. But here he was wearing a well-fitted blue suit and looking markedly respectable. Everything about him bore out the note of reasonable modesty. Later I learned that he had a great gift for adjusting—consciously or intuitively—to his surroundings." Part 1, Chapter 2, "Profession and Vocation," pgs. 15-16.

"Hitler usually appeared in the lower rooms late in the morning, around eleven o'clock. He then went through the press summaries, received several reports from Bormann, and made his first decisions. The day actually began with a prolonged afternoon dinner. The guests assembled in the anteroom. Hitler chose the lady he would take in to dinner, while Bormann, from about 1938 on, had the privilege of escorting Eva Braun, to the table; she usually sat on Hitler's left. That in itself was proof of Bormann's dominant position in the court. The dining room was a mixture of artistic rusticity and urban elegance of a sort which was often characteristic of country houses of the wealthy. The walls and ceilings were paneled in pale larchwood, the chairs covered with bright red morocco leather. The china was a simple White; the silver bore Hitler's monogram and was the same as that used in Berlin. Hitler always took pleasure in its restrained floral decoration. The food was simple and substantial: soup, a meat course, dessert, with either Fachinger mineral water or wine. The waiters, in White vests and black trousers, were members of the SS bodyguard. Some twenty persons sat at the long table, but because of its length no general conversation could arise. Hitler sat in the middle, facing the window. He talked with the person opposite him, who was different every day, or with the ladies to either side of him." Part 1, Chapter 7, "Obersalzberg," pgs. 88-89.

"I did not see that more was being smashed than glass, that on that night Hitler had crossed a Rubicon for the fourth time in his life, had taken a step that irrevocably sealed the fate of his country. Did I sense, at least for a moment, that something was beginning which would end with the annihilation of one whole group of our nation? Did I sense that



this outburst of hoodlumism was changing my moral substance? I do not know. I accepted what had happened rather indifferently. Some phrases of Hitler's, to the effect that he had not wanted these excesses, contributed to this attitude. Later, in private, Goebbels hinted that he had been the impresario for this sad and terrible night, and I think it very possible that he confronted a hesitant Hitler with a fait accompli in order to force him to take the initiative.

It has repeatedly surprised me, in later years, that scarcely any anti-Semitic remarks of Hitler's have remained in my memory. Out of the scraps that remain, I can reconstruct what crossed my mind at the time: dismay over the deviation from the image I wanted to have of Hitler, anxiety over the increasing deterioration of his health, hope for some letup of the struggle against the churches, a certain puzzlement at his partiality for utopian-sounding remote goals, all sorts of odd feelings—but Hitler's hatred for the Jews seemed to me so much a matter of course that I gave it no serious thought." Part 1, Chapter 8, "The New Chancellery," pgs. 111-112.

"His illusions and wish-dreams were a direct outgrowth of his unrealistic mode of working and thinking. Hitler actually knew nothing about his enemies and even refused to use the information that was available to him. Instead, he trusted his inspirations, no matter how inherently contradictory they might be, and these inspirations were governed by extreme contempt for and underestimation of the others. In keeping with his classic phrase that there were always two possibilities, he wanted to have the war at this supposedly most favorable moment, while at the same time he failed to adequately prepare for it. He regarded England, as he once stressed, as 'our enemy Number One,' while at the same time hoping to come to an arrangement with that enemy." Part 1, Chapter 12, "The Descent Begins," pg. 165.

"One can only wonder at the recklessness and the frivolity with which Hitler appointed me to one of those three ministries on which the existence of his state depended. I was a complete outsider to the army, to the party, and to industry. Never in my life had I had anything to do with military weapons, for I had never been a soldier and up to the time of my appointment had never even used a rifle as a hunter. To be sure, it was in keeping with Hitler's dilettantism that he preferred to choose nonspecialists as his associates. After all, he had already appointed a wine salesman as his Foreign Minister, his party philosopher as his Minister for Eastern Affairs, and an erstwhile fighter pilot as overseer of the entire economy. Now he was picking an architect of all people to be his Minister of Armaments. Undoubtedly Hitler preferred to fill positions of leadership with laymen. All his life he respected but distrusted professionals such as, for example, Schacht." Part 2, Chapter 14, "Start in My New Office," pg. 197.

"Amateurishness was one of Hitler's dominant traits. He had never learned a profession and basically had always remained an outside to all fields of endeavor. Like many self-taught people, he had no idea what real specialized knowledge meant. Without any sense of the complexities of any great task, he boldly assumed one function after another. Unburdened by standard ideas, his quick intelligence sometimes conceived



unusual measures which a specialist would not have hit on at all. The victories of the early years of the war can literally be attributed to Hitler's ignorance of the rules of the game and his layman's delight in decision making. Since the opposing side was trained to apply rules which Hitler's self-taught, autocratic mind did not know and did not use, he achieved surprises. These audacities, coupled with military superiority, were the basis of his early successes. But as soon as setbacks occurred he suffered shipwreck, like most untrained people. Then his ignorance of the rules of the game was revealed as another kind of incompetence; then his defects were no longer strengths. The greater the failures became, the more obstinately his incurable amateurishness came to the fore. The tendency to wild decisions had long been his forte; now it speeded his downfall." Part 2, Chapter 17, "Commander in Chief Hitler," pg. 230.

"It was also Lammers who from January 1943 on presided over the Cabinet meetings, which were then resumed, in Hitler's stead. Not all members of the Cabinet were invited, only those who were concerned with the subjects on the agenda. But the meeting place, the Cabinet Room, showed what power the Committee of Three had acquired or at any rate intended to acquire.

These meetings turned out quite heated. Goebbels and Funk supported my radical views. Minister of the Interior Frick, as well as Lammers himself, raised the anticipated doubts. Sauckel maintained that he could provide any number of workers requested of him, including skilled personnel, from abroad. Even when Goebbels demanded that leading party members forgo their previous, almost limitless luxuries, he could change nothing. And Eva Braun, ordinarily so unassuming, had no sooner heard of a proposed ban on permanent waves as well as the end of cosmetic production when [stet] she rushed to Hitler in high indignation. Hitler at once showed uncertainty. He advised me that instead of an outright ban I quietly stop production of 'hair dyes and other items necessary for beauty culture,' as well as 'cessation of repairs upon apparatus for producing permanent waves.'

After a few meetings in the Chancellery it was clear to Goebbels and me that armaments production would receive no spur from Bormann, Lammers, or Keitel. Our efforts had bogged down in meaningless details." Part 2, Chapter 18, "Intrigues," pg. 256.

"Goebbels, too, continued to remain in close contact with me, for both of us were still bent on making utmost use of our domestic reserves. Undoubtedly, I behaved much too trustfully in my relations with him. I was fascinated by his dazzling friendliness and perfect manners, as well as by his cool logic.

Outwardly, then, little had changed. The world in which we lived forced upon us dissimulation and hypocrisy. Among rivals an honest word was rarely spoken, for fear it would be carried back to Hitler in a distorted version. Everyone conspired, took Hitler's capriciousness into his reckonings, and won or lost in the course of this cryptic game. I played on this out-of-tune keyboard of mutual relations just as unscrupulously as all the others." Part 2, Chapter 19, "Second Man in the State," pgs. 267-268.



"I have always thought it was a most valuable trait to recognize reality and not to pursue delusions. But when I now think over my life up to and including the years of imprisonment, there was no period in which I was free of delusory notions.

The departure from reality, which was visibly spreading like a contagion, was no peculiarity of the National Socialist regime. But in normal circumstances people who turn their backs on reality are soon set straight by the mockery and criticism of those around them, which makes them aware they have lost credibility. In the Third Reich there were no such correctives, especially for those who belonged to the upper stratum. On the contrary, every self-deception was multiplied as in a hall of distorting mirrors, becoming a repeatedly confirmed picture of a fantastical dream world which no longer bore any relationship to the grim outside world. In those mirrors I could see nothing but my own face reproduced many times over. No external factors disturbed the uniformity of hundreds of unchanging faces, all mine.

There were differences of degree in the flight from reality. Thus Goebbels was surely many times closer to recognizing actualities than, say, Goering or Lay. But these differences shrink to nothing when we consider how remote all of us, the illusionists as well as the so-called realists, were from what was really going on." Part 2, Chapter 20, "Bombs," pg. 291.

"This last letter, with its news that I was dismissing one of Hitler's favorites without asking him beforehand, was particularly imprudent. For I was violating one of the rules of the regime: that personnel matters must be broached to Hitler at the right moment and by skillful insinuation. Instead, I had bluntly come at him with charges of disloyalty and questionable character in one of his men. That I also sent Bormann a copy of my letter was either foolish or challenging. In doing this I was running counter to all I knew about the nature of Hitler's intriguing entourage. I was probably acting out of a certain attitude of defiance, forced upon me by my isolated position.

My illness had removed me too far from the true focus of power: Hitler. He reacted neither negatively nor positively to all my suggestions, demands, and complaints. I was addressing the empty air; he sent me no answer. I was no longer counted as Hitler's favorite minister and one of his possible successors—a few whispered words by Bormann and a few weeks of illness had put me out of the running. This was partly due to Hitler's peculiarity, often noted by everyone around him, of simply writing off anyone who vanished from his sight for a considerable time. If the person in question reappeared in his entourage after a while, the picture might or might not change. It disillusioned me and snapped some of my ties of personal feeling toward Hitler. But most of the time I was neither angry nor in despair over my new situation. Physically weakened as I was, I felt only weariness and resignation." Part 3, Chapter 23, "Illness," pgs. 329-330.

"This phenomenal confidence in victory in a period of repeated defeats cannot, however, be explained on the grounds of his energy alone. In Spandau prison, Funk confided to me that the one reason he, Funk, was able to deceive the doctors so consistently and credibly about his health was that he believed his own lies. He added



that this attitude had been the basis of Goebbels' propaganda. Similarly, I can only explain Hitler's rigid attitude on the grounds that he made himself believe in his ultimate victory. In a sense he was worshiping himself. He was forever holding up to himself a mirror in which he saw not only himself but also the confirmation of his mission by divine Providence. His religion was based on the 'lucky break' which must necessarily come his way; his method was to reinforce himself by autosuggestion. The more events drove him into a corner, the more obstinately he opposed to them his certainty about the intentions of Fate. Naturally, he also soberly understood the military facts. But he transmuted them by his own faith and regarded even defeat as a secret guarantee, offered by Providence, of the coming victory. Sometimes he could realize the hopelessness of a situation, but he could not be shaken in his expectation that at the last moment Fate would suddenly turn the tide in his favor. If there was any fundamental insanity in Hitler, it was this unshakable belief in his lucky star. He was by nature a religious man, but his capacity for believe had been perverted into belief in himself." Part 3, Chapter 24, "The War Thrice Lost," pg. 357.

In my room hung an etching by Käthe Kollwitz: La Carmagnole. It showed a yowling mob dancing with hate-contorted faces around a guillotine. Off to one side a weeping woman cowered on the ground.

In the desperate situation of a war rolling rapidly to its end, I was gripped by increasing anxieties. The weird figures of the etching haunted my fitful sleep. Obsessive notions of my own terrible end, repressed by day or smothered in activity, came to the surface. Would the populace rise in fury and disappointment against its former leaders and kill them as in La Carmagnole? Friends and close acquaintances sometimes talked about our own dark futures. Milch usually declared firmly that the enemy would make short work of the leadership of the Third Reich. I shared his view." Part 3, Chapter 28, "The Plunge," pg. 422.

"At this point I gave my answer to the question he had posed as an ultimatum: 'But I can no longer believe in the success of our good cause if during these decisive months we simultaneously and systematically destroy the foundations of our national existence. That is so great an injustice to our people that should it be done, Fate can no longer wish us well. ... I therefore beg you not to carry out this measure so harmful to the people. If you could revise your policy on this question, I would once more recover the faith and the courage to continue working with the greatest energy. It no longer lies in our hands,' I continued my response to Hitler's ultimatum, 'to decide how Fate will turn. Only a higher Providence can still change our future. We can only make our contribution by a strong posture and unshakable faith in the eternal future of our nation.'

I closed not with the Heil, mein Führer, customary in such private letters, but used my last words to further my point and invoke the one hope that still remained to us: 'May God protect Germany.'

As I reread this letter, I found it a weak performance. Perhaps Hitler decided that anything I wrote at this point would express a rebellious attitude which would force him to take stern measures against me. For when I asked one of his secretaries to type the letter—which since it was meant only for him I had written almost illegally by hand—on



Hitler's special typewriter with its oversized letters, she telephoned back: 'The Fuehrer has forbidden me to receive any letters from you. He wants to see you here and have your answer verbally.' Shortly afterward I was told to come to Hitler at once." Part 3, Chapter 30, "Hitler's Ultimatum," pgs. 453-454.

"During the last months I had hated him at times, fought him, lied to him, and deceived him, but at this moment I was confused and emotionally shaken. In this state, I confessed to him in a low voice, to my own surprise, that I had not carried out any demolitions but had actually prevented them. For a moment his eyes filled with tears. But he did not react. Such questions, so important to him only a few weeks before, were now remote. Absently, he stared at me as I faltered out my offer to stay in Berlin. He did not answer. Perhaps he sensed that I did not mean it. I have often asked myself since whether he had not always known instinctively that I had been working against him during these past months and whether he had not deduced this from my memoranda; also whether by letting me act contrary to his orders he had not provided a fresh example of the multiple strata in his mysterious personality. I shall never know." Part 3, Chapter 32, "Annihilation," pg. 480.

Topics for Discussion

What are Speer's views on Mein Kampf? What are the results of his failure to read it?

How does Hitler's World War I mentality doom Germany to defeat?

What in Speer's background and training help him transition into a successful technocrat?

Looking back over his life, what does Speer see as his greatest accomplishment(s)?

What does Speer most regret in his life and career?

Which of Hitler's traits does Speer rate as best and worst?

Do you accept Speer's sincerity in accepting blame for Nazi atrocities or is he "trying too hard"?