

## Armaments Minister

Speer gained this position after the death of Fritz Todt (often viewed as suspicious) in 1942. By April, Speer had established the Central Planning Board to oversee essential changes to Germany's labour forces and industry in relation to the War. He introduced Reserved Occupations for the skilled German workers, and in 1943 introduced Civil Conscription for women and cut Civilian economy to the bare minimum. His effort in this position is said to have postponed the end of the War by two years.

In 1945, he was made Minister for Economics in conjunction with this position.

## Background and Education

Born 19th March 1905 in Mannheim.

His family experienced hardships in the Turnip Winter.

he excelled in mathematics and graduated high school as a decorated academic and sports man.

1924, Speer was transferred to the Institute of Technology in Karlsruhe to the Institute of Technology in Munich where he studied under decorated architect Heinrich Tessenow.

He joined the Nazi party in 1931 after attending a Student Rally in 1930 in Berlin at which Hitler spoke.

## Charges against the Nazis

1. Conspiracy to commit crimes against peace
2. Crimes against peace
3. Crimes against humanity
4. War crimes

## Early work for the Nazi party

Redecorated Karl Hanke's office (Nazi District Leader - West Berlin).

1932- Redecorated Goebbels headquarters (Propaganda Ministry).

1933- Designed Tempelhof May Day Rally and the Nuremberg Party Rally.

Worked on the private houses of the Nazi leaders such as Goring.

Assistant to Paul Troost.

Refurbishment of the Reich Chancellory.

Head of Building Department of Deputy Fuhrer, Rudolf Hess.

## First Architect of the Reich

This position was gained by Speer after the death of Paul Troost in 1934. He was given the responsibility for planning 'new Germany' or Germania. Also credited with the Cathedral of Light from the 1934 Nuremberg Rally; Expanded Nuremberg Stadium to include 400,000 seats, two large military parade grounds and a 2km processional avenue.

In this position he won an architectural prize for the designs of the 1937 Paris World Fair.

Theory of Ruin Value.

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| <p>The Good Nazi</p>                          | <p>Only Nazi to show guilt or remorse.<br/>         Worked with the Allies following his arrest- soften his sentence?<br/>         His memoir "Inside the Third Reich" is regarded as an apology by many critics.<br/>         In a 1971 letter to a Belgian correspondent revealed that Speer was at Himmler's Extermination Speech.</p>   |
| <p>Involvement in Anti-Semitic Activities</p> | <p>"Law on Resettlement/Rental Contacts with Jews" was passed in Germany. This allowed Jews to be evicted without cause from their flats in Berlin as a part of the expanding Germania project which dislocated German people. All evicted Jews were sent to concentration camps.<br/>         Demand for forced Labour put more strain on concentration camps as they had to supply the forced labour for Speer's ministry and works.<br/>         Gita Sereny suggests it was "impossible that Speer was not informed" about Anti-Semitic activities.</p> |
| <p>London Charter</p>                         | <p>Legitimised the Trials which aimed to "bring to trial and punish the major war criminals of the Axis countries".</p>   |
| <p>New Reich Chancellory</p>                  | <p>Regarded as Speer's greatest work as an architect. Began planning for the build in 1938 to be finished by an 8,000 man workforce in 1939. He was awarded the Gold Party Badge as a result.</p>   |
| <p>Nuremberg Trials</p>                       | <p>1945-1946.<br/>         12 out of the 21 Nazis put on trial are sentenced to death. Albert Speer is found guilty of counts 3 and 4 and is sentenced to 20 years in Berlin's Spandau Prison.</p>  |

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| Quotes                                     | <p>"It was Speer's personal idea to try and get the Jewish homes as flats for people removed from construction areas";</p> <p>"Architectural work is political work; it always has political ramifications"- Dr. Susanne Willems</p>   |
| Relationship with Hitler                   | <p>"One seldom recognises the devil when he has his hand on your shoulder"; "If Hitler had had any friends at all, I certainly would have been one of his close friends".</p> <p>Richard Overy described their relationship as "father and son"- Speer was Hitler's unfulfilled self.</p> <p>After being promoted to Minister for Armaments, Speer found it hard to maintain his relationship with Hitler as he found him to be a "maniac". He rejected Hitler's Scorched Earth Policy, which destroyed their relationship. Could this have effected his loyalty to the Nazi Party during the trial?</p> |
| Scorched Earth Policy 1945                 | <p>After D-Day, Hitler demanded all basic infrastructure of Germany and occupied territories to be destroyed including factories, power stations and farms- the plan was aimed at preventing the invading allied forced from creating bases in Germany. Speer refused to follow orders. He was aware of Germany's impending defeated and knew that the civilian population would need such infrastructure to cope with the losses.</p>   |
| Significance of Work as Armaments Minister | <p>War lasted 2 years longer.</p> <p>Bomb raids from the US had no effect on German industry as Speer moved factories underground.</p> <p>Allies were forced to invade Germany as no raids were successful.</p> <p>His economic policies and introducing women to the work force freed up more men to work in the army, therefore increasing the number available to fight.</p>  |
| Teheran Conference                         | <p>1943. Allies decided that if the Axis was defeated, legal action would be taken against the war criminals of the Nazi Party and other defeated nations.</p>   |

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## Use and Abuse of Forced Labour

Speer's need to use Slave labour due to lack of domestic labour available.  
Russian prisoner's of war were used which violated the principles of the Geneva Convention.  
Living conditions for workers- they were given little food, poor shelter and long working hours.  
The V2 Rocket Project- Relied on concentration camp to expand underground tunnel systems. Conditions were atrocious with high levels of punishment and death; Speer claimed he visited and complained about the conditions.  
Speer said: "I didn't know, I could've known, I should've known but I didn't."  
German Earth and Stone Works (DEST) 1938 exploited forced labour to quarry stone and in brick-making.  
Extermination of the Jews- At the Posen Conference in October 1943, Himmler communicated plans: "We will exterminate this Jewish Bacteria.. Gas will be used."  
Speer claimed to be not in attendance of Himmler's Speech.

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