Architecture and town planning in the Third Reich: a case study of Munich, Nuremberg, and Linz (1933-1945)

V V Esipov¹, O A Ignateva¹ and T A Sokolovskaya¹

¹Irkutsk National Research and Technical University, 664074, Irkutsk, 83 Lermontov str., Russian Federation

E-mail: essipof@yandex.ru

Abstract. The article considers the philosophy of the architectural design and town planning in the Third Reich in the period 1933-1945, using the cases of Munich, Nuremberg, and Linz. The analysis of the most important architectural projects and structures of the Third Reich shows that the above were intended to embody the military-repressive architectural style suppressing the human as an individual and at the same time, establishing him as a member of the national community. The Nazi architecture established the ideal of collectivism as depersonalizing identity, and served as an instrument for unifying the people.

1. Introduction
The architecture of the Third Reich has always attracted the researchers’ attention. The construction plans of the Nazis were ambitious. The grandiose buildings and structures are the remnants of the fascist state system that tried to embody its constitutive qualities in architecture. Architecture was the undoubted favorite in the Nazi’s culture-related policy. During the period from 1934 to 1940, intensive construction was carried out all over Germany. A big number of objects were built, from the magnificent official buildings to the dwelling houses for the people. It is natural that the architects of the Third Reich were seeking a unified language of the new architecture, with its own expressive forms. The Nazi art experts and architects distinguished two sources of the new architectural style, i.e. the Prussian classicism of the early 19th century and antiquity. A bright example is the House of German Art in Munich that was designed by Paul Ludwig Troost after the Altes Museum by Karl Friedrich Schinkel.

2. Research Relevance and Objectives
There were three main construction sites in the Third Reich: Berlin, the capital city, Nuremberg, the city of imperial party congresses, and Munich, the birthplace of the Nazi movement associated with the stages of the “heroic” battle. In other cities where the party leaders followed the example of the center, construction was carried out on a much more modest scale. The well-known exception is Linz, the birthplace of Hitler, though the plans of the city reconstruction remained only as paper projects. The methodological basis of the research includes the principles of dialectics and historicism that, along with the stylistic analysis of the architectural forms, have allowed an investigation of the architectural phenomena in their development and an analysis of the social events in the specific historical context.

3. Research results and analysis
Munich. It is known that the neo-classicism direction in the fascist architecture originated in the structures designed in Munich by Professor Paul Ludwig Troost. It first of all relates to the House of German Art that was supposed to be the “foundation stone of the new German art” [1, 2]. Adolf Hitler himself actively participated in the development of the city reconstruction projects. In “Mein Kampf”, he criticizes the layout of the city: "After Ludwig I, nothing worthy had been built in Munich” [3, p.289]. The first references to the architectural plans of Hitler can be found in the memoirs by Otto Strasser [4, p.72]. In 1922, A. Hitler developed his idea of creating broad avenues in Munich, with the reconstruction of the downtown area following a star shape, and erecting a tall monument in the center of the ‘star’. In 1933, the project model was created, and A. Hitler eagerly demonstrated it to the guests.

A. Hitler marked the place and role of Munich in the new Reich in his speech when laying the foundation stone of the House of German Art. He referred to Berlin as the capital of the Reich, Hamburg and Bremen as the capitals of sea-going transport, Leipzig and Cologne as the centers of German trade, Essen and Chemnitz as the centers of German industry, and Munich as the capital of the Nazi art [5, p.316].

One of the earliest Nazi projects in Munich was the Palais Barlow in Koenigsplatz that was reconstructed in 1930 at the urging of A. Hitler and the architect P.L. Troost. Since then the building has been symbolically named the Brown House. Koenigsplatz was planned in the first part of the 19th century by the architect Klenze following the order of Ludwig I. The square originally featured two buildings standing next to each other, the Glyptotech building made in the style of classicism, and the New State Gallery. When the Nazi came to power, they started transforming the square into the party forum the eastern part of which would end with the Fuehrer House and the NSDAP administration building. A. Hitler added two Honor Temples to the Troost project. The temples housed the sarcophagi of the sixteen members of the party who had been killed in the failed Beer hall putsch (the "blood witnesses") on November 9, 1923. On January 9, 1947 the main architectural of the temples were destroyed by the U.S. Army as part of denazification. After Troost’s death, A. Hitler often visited his atelier and monitored the work progress.

The administrative buildings in Koenigsplatz were completed in February 1937. The Fuehrer House was rebuilt in September 1937 during the state visit of Mussolini. Every year, on November 9, on the day the führer was born and on other occasions, parades were arranged there. The square performed propagandistic and cult functions: the dead were to serve the living as an eternal reminder.

On October 15, 1933, Hitler personally laid the foundation stone for the House of German Art in Prinzregentenstrasse. He designed the building together with P. L. Troost and chose the place for the construction [6, p.15]. After Troost’s death, the building was completed by Troost’s widow Gerdi Troost and the architect Leonard Gall. The building had an impressive size: 175 meters long, 80 meters wide and 15.5 meters tall.

Today, the building is a separate structure while by the Gall’s original project it was supposed to be balanced by the House of German Architecture on the opposite side of the street in order to attribute a finished form to the architectural ensemble. The final project was demonstrated at the Great German Art Exhibition in 1940. The House of German Art and the Honor Temples in Koenigsplatz belong to the earliest ‘philosophical architectural creations of the Nazi’ [7, p.54].

At the beginning of 1934, a design bureau under Fritz Gablonski was established in Munich with the purpose to develop reconstruction plans for the city. It was only in 1936 that A. Hitler reviewed the prepared plans. In March 1937, when the discussion of the project took place, he mentioned the necessity of building the new main railway station and the metro. In December 1938, A. Hitler appointed Hermann Giesler as General Counselor on the construction of the ‘Capital of the Movement’ and gave an official order on the city reconstruction. Giesler was Hitler’s direct report and in the event of disagreement with the city administration, he would contact an aide-de-camp of the Fuehrer to solve the difficulty. It is noteworthy that the project of new railway station was based on the sketches by Hitler. It was a dome structure with the world’s largest building frame made of steel. The dome diameter (in the final project version) was 285 meters [8, p.233].
In 1940, following the new plans developed for Berlin, the East-West axis was planned in Munich. The axis was an avenue over 6.5 km long and 120 m broad. It began from the new railway station building and ended with the 214 m monument. Albert Speer mentions that one morning, Hitler showed him a sketch for the ‘Movement Pillar’: “...he considered the project his own creation, his personal contribution to the architecture of the new Munich” [9, p.158]. The Monument had a 25.5 m base and was supposed to be seen from the new railway station. The eagle that crowned the monument had a 33 m wingspan.

Besides the sketches of the railway station and Movement Pillars, Hitler made sketches for most of the buildings that were to be situated on both sides of the East-West axis. According to H. Giesler, in 1939, A. Hitler planned the construction of the Party Hall that was to be connected with the Hitler Mausoleum via a bridge. Besides, based on the drawings by A. Hitler, a project of the skyscraper of the ‘Strength Through Joy’ organization was developed [10, p.156]. A. Speer claims that A. Hitler wanted to build a theater for 5,000 seats [11, p.144].

Almost none of the projects planned by the Fuehrer for the ‘Capital of the Movement’ was realized. The reconstruction plans of Munich stayed on paper, in photographs of the models of the buildings and squares.

Nuremberg. The city was an embodiment of the German history, associated with the names of the Hohenzollerns, famous electors, Prussian kings, and Kaiser of the Second Reich. Since 1927, Nuremberg hosted annual imperial congresses of NSDAP. As far back as in 1933, A. Hitler ordered his favorite architect Paul Ludwig Troost to develop the reconstruction project for the so called ‘Party rally grounds’. It was the project that Albert Speer later started to realize. Thus Nuremberg became the first city in the Third Reich where structures for mass events were built. One of the tasks of the architect was to express the relations between the authority and the public.

It is of interest to compare the projects by P.L. Troost and A. Speer as it allows tracing the penetration of the ideological elements in the architectural ideas. The original plans of P.L. Troost presupposed free grouping of the squares and buildings in a limited space, which perfectly blended in with the landscape. The plans of A. Speer introduced austerity and order that were characteristic of the Nazi’s idea of architecture and planning. The general plan and the relationship of its elements based on the Nazi’s idea of order expressed certain relationship between the Fuehrer and the people [12, p.7]. The architect performed his main function in the fascist system, i.e. he conveyed the dominating overall political leadership of the state and made it the architectural language when planning the complex of structures and correlating the buildings and open spaces with each other.

The total area of the ‘Party rally grounds’ covered about 30 square kilometers. It was divided in 5 sections: The Field of Mars, Zeppelin Field, German Stadium, and Kongresshalle (Congress Hall). The ‘Territory’ was supposed to house up to one million people, the German Stadium alone was to have a capacity of 400,000 spectators. In order to realize these plans, ‘The Nuremberg Union for the party forum construction’. The total cost of the projects was about 700-800 million Reichsmarks and was to be funded by the Imperial Ministry of Finances.

The construction began with the grandstand in Zeppelinfeld. The old wooden grandstand built in 1933 for the NSDAP congress (the first one after the Nazis seized power) was supposed to be replaced with a stone one. The main structure measured 390 meters long and 24 meters in height, exceeding the Roman terms of Caracalla by 180 метров, i.e. almost twice. The main building material was granite, and in the interior, reddish and greenish marble. Speer suggested the Pergamon Altar as a model for the architectural design of the grandstand. Before the grandstand, there was a parade ground (the Zeppelin Field) measuring 290 by 310 meters, the area being 89,500 square meters. Every year, celebrations for the congress participants and Wehrmacht representatives were organized on the field. The two massive square-shaped towers rising above the stand resembled military fortifications; the ashlar bastions were peculiar stone frames for the militarized formations of marching people [13]. The fire slit windows and the high unassailable walls augmented the resemblance to a military fortress. Today it looks like an attempt to create the ‘cult architecture’ in which a grandstand is conceived as an altar of the Nazi movement, a synthesis of architecture and man, and the structures are ordering and stabilizing factors.
The Field of Mars situated in the southern part of the ‘Grounds’ was 611 by 955 meters. It was bordered with a small (14 meters in height) grandstand built from stone blocks 8 to 10 tons each and 26 towers each about 40 meters in height. The total area of the structures of the field was supposed to be 170,000 square meters, for which 30,000 bays would be needed. Processing this stone mass would require over 4.2 million man-hours. In the center of the square, there was supposed to be The Tribune of Honor crowned with a colossal sculpture 60 meters tall. The Field of Mars was to serve Wehrmacht as a ground for small-scale maneuvers with around 115,000 participants.

From the north directly toward the old castle of Hohenzollern, the Field of Mars opened with a parade street 2,000 m long and 70 m wide. On both sides of it, there were tribunes from which Hitler and other honored guests could watch the Wehrmacht troops marching. Opposite the parade street, was the grandiose stadium decorated with flags.

The German Stadium was to become the largest structure accommodating 400,000 people. It measured 540 meters long and 455 meters wide, the total area of the structures being 8.5 million square meters. The playing field (55,000 square meters) was surrounded with the towers each 100 meters in height. The construction of the German Stadium was supposed to require 275,000 cubic meters of the red-gray granite, while the existing stone quarries could only provide 8,000 cubic meters. The cost of the stadium was estimated to be 200-250 million Reichsmarks.

The Kongresshalle was designed by the architects Ludwig and Franz Ruff. They started the construction as far back as in 1935. The Kongresshale was 275 meters long, 265 meters wide, and 68.5 meters tall. The construction required 50,000 cubic meters of granite. In the bottom part of the building, an arcade was going along the contour, and in the upper part, there were two rows of profiled windows. The area of the main hall was planned to be about 3 million square meters, housing 50,000 people. At that time, only the Berlin Concert Hall housing 5,000 people could compare with the Kongresshalle [14, p.32].

The project of the ‘Party rally grounds’ included landscaping as well. The plots free of structures or fields were to be planted with fir trees.

The project of the ‘Grounds’ourn demonstrated one of the main features of the Third Reich architecture, i.e. its militaristic orientation. The new architecture was intended to shape the huge masses of people within the stone frames. Before 1933, people could freely set up in space, while after 1933, they could only be within the strict frames of the architectural scenes. The new architecture was the embodiment of the idea of order and community in the Third Reich.

Linz. It is obvious that his native town of A. Hitler was of particular importance for the latter. His dream was to reconstruct the city in such a way that it would outshine Budapest, another famous city on the Danube. Hitler’s boyhood friend A. Kubizek reports that back in the days, the young A. Hitler was dealing with the plans of Linz reconstruction: "When he was 15, he would often make sketches, for example, that of a new bridge over the Danube". [15, p.130]. Kubizek also recalls Hitler’s sketches of the concert hall, theater, and Rathaus [15, pp.117, 122, 236]. The personal collection of A. Speer includes the drawings of some houses, bridges, Rathaus, hotel, theater, military headquarters building, art gallery, library, weapons museum, exhibitions halls, and other sketches made by A. Hitler for Linz.

In February 1939, A. Hitler discussed the plans of a few theaters with the architect Paul Baumgartner in the presence of J. Goebbels. In March 1939, following the order of A. Hitler, H.Lammers gave P. Baumgartner 30,000 Reichsmarks for the preparation of the opera house design. And it was only at the end of 1939 when A. Hitler signed the order for the reconstruction of Linz and charged Roderich Fick to develop the plans.

A. Hitler had an especially soft spot for theaters. That is why in October 1939, he ordered to start the design of the theater in Linz, saying that going to the theater during the war it is especially important. It is noteworthy that A. Hitler calculated the cost of the theater building and the art gallery on his own [16, p.71]. In March 1941, he demonstrated the plans of the new structures to K. Goebbels. In his memoirs, Goebbels points to the “titanic work that can be seen in the works of the Fuhrer”. In Hitler’s opinion, Linz was to be recreated through the industrialization of the culture. However, in spite of all the efforts of the Fuehrer, the development of the projects for Linz was not smooth. In 1942, Roderich Fick had an
argument with Gauleiter A. Eigruber. M. Borman’s letter to H. Lammers says that most probably A. Eigruber had agreed with A. Speer and during their talk with the Fuhrer on October 2, 1942, cast doubt about the competence of R. Fick: “The Fuehrer thinks that the work of Mr. Fick in the construction of Linz should be restricted, and the responsibility for the major part of the structures should be put on the General Counselor on construction Mr. Giesler” [17, p.57]. R. Fick fell out of favor and had frequent arguments with G. Giesler. Every time there was disagreement between them, he addressed A. Hitler who had to review the models and plans. In February 1945, when the situation on the front was critical, H. Giesler would observe A. Hitler having a rest working with the plans of Linz: “I often saw him in the basement of the Reich Chancellery, sitting with the model of Linz. As soon as he had free time, no matter if it was day or night, he would sit in front of the Linz model...”[10, p.215].

4. Conclusions
The study of the Third Reich architecture reveals extremely important and interesting details concerning the embodiment of the Nazi philosophy in the architectural forms, the psychological influence of the architectural space on a person living in a totalitarian society, and the degree of the Fuhrer’s influence on the whole development of the architectural design and construction in the fascist Germany.

The military-repressive style of the Third Reich architecture suppressed the man as an individual person and at the same time established him as a member of the nation. The Nazi architecture was strengthening the ideal of collectivism as depersonalizing identity, and served as an instrument for unifying the people.

That is why Albert Speer saw the “cruelty and the exact expression of tyranny” in the Third Reich architecture [9, p.227]. His belated self-critical evaluation is certainly emotional, yet it reflects the architectonics of the Nazi’s gigantomanic projects intended to suppress man and inspire awe before the ‘daring might of the great Nazi Fuehrer’ and the idea of selfless serving to the state through dissolving the individual in the social.

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