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Date: 19.4.1944 F.D.2690/45  
Vol.20.

SPEER Document (FLENSBURG)  
Building Economy.  
Letter of 23 pages.

Text: German

Contents: A letter from Speer, addressed to the Fuehrer, re-  
viewing the Building Economy and proposing to re-plan  
the building organization and work the OT (Todt Organisation) and  
building organisation closely together under the Main Committee  
"BAU" (Hauptausschuss Bau). Reference is made to shortage  
of labour (p.16) and to air attacks (pp.4,11).

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At the outset, uneasiness is expressed at Hitler's  
dissatisfaction about the inadequacy of the building organisation:  
Hitler took "certain steps" whilst Speer had to "stand aside". This is  
the first time, Speer says, that his work has caused dissatis-  
faction.

A self-defence follows by explaining why priority was  
given, with Hitler's approval, to armaments production, which  
caused the building economy to be neglected.

The letter continues (p.3): "When, in the autumn of  
last year, it could be foreseen that the efficiency of the  
armaments industry was secure as a result of the new system of  
self-responsibility of industry and my excellent co-operators I was  
able to devote more attention to the building economy.

I was forced to it, since the air raids in the Reich  
made it essential to change over to a quicker and more elastic  
method of building as was the case with armaments. I knew that  
there were certain difficulties: I was aware that enthusiasm for  
large-scale enterprise was lacking in the building economy, con-  
trary to the OT.(Todt Organization).

Both organizations, O.T and building economy, were  
formed and organised by Dr. Todt. Despite this, there were  
considerable divergencies between the two organisations. The  
reasons for this are that from the organisation of the Reichsauto-  
bahnen Dr. Todt formed the OT to build the WEST WALL. The  
success of this, like the Autobahnen, was due not to the civil  
engineering officials, but to his principle of making the ini-  
tiative of the building economy responsible for active decisions,  
even if directed against the officials. He has often discussed  
this principle with me, and I have learned a lot from it.  
Ultimately this has also been the basis of my organising the  
armament industry into Hauptausschüsse & Rings".

The writer then explains that at the beginning of the  
war, Dr.Todt employed his most able men in the OT (especially  
Herne, Dorsch) and himself devoted much time to it. This re-  
sulted in a neglect of the building economy in the Reich. The  
more attractive working conditions in the OT (uniform, better  
food and pay) attracted all the best building workers to join  
the OT, and this was encouraged by Dr.Todt and later by Speer

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(2)

as well. Thus an anaemic state of the building economy resulted: The old, worn out officials at home were building up an organisation permeated by a host of red tape, causing the remaining energetic workers, young and old, to join the OT. The letter continues:

"Between 1939 and 1941 there was only left the Baustab Speer under Brugmann, composed of labour originally formed to engage on town planning. This organisation has more than tripled the factory space for airplane manufacture during these two years. Such was the situation when, in Dec. 1941, this "Baustab" was also transferred to help the OT rebuilding in Southern Russia and re-organising traffic there: Owing to the activity of Brugmann this plan was rapidly carried out.

Thus, the anaemic remainder of German building economy, stripped of able personages, administered by incompetent bureaucrats, was the constant worry of Reichsminister Dr. Todt. This state I found when I was entrusted with the new tasks, in Spring 1942.

Meanwhile the armament programme was carried out and has even considerably surpassed the target, a feat only considered possible by a few optimists - this despite the fact that, using new systems, I yet used the same Ministry Staff, who had already received similar orders from you. This increase was only possible after rationalization had been exhausted, by vast new construction work in all spheres, starting from new electric furnaces for refined steel production, the manufacture of cog wheels, crankshafts, roller bearings and the like, up to the production of new guns (Geschütze), Panzer tanks etc. It is noteworthy to state that the costs of these constructions from 1942 to the present day amounted to 6.400 million RM. Not included in these are buildings provided for air raid precautions, maintenance of economic life and repairs of raid damage.

It would be well worth the trouble to have Lt. Frentz (Oberlieutenant) photograph the hydrogenation plants (hydrierwerke) that came into being during this period.

It is interesting to study the increases of mineral oil, attained by the construction of innumerable buildings equal in size to the famous LEUNA works, built during the World War.

While reckoned in mineral oil, in 1939 the hydrogenation plants (hydrierwerke) produced 2 million tons (2 millionen) of mineral oil, this figure has increased, owing to new constructions by 1943 up to 5.7 million tons and will reach in this year an annual production of 1.1 million tons by means of further building constructions, due to be completed this year.

About half of all German <sup>building</sup> workers still available are employed with the OT abroad. In every military call up the home building trade was called upon in order to spare the OT. The concrete output of the OT was far behind that of the homeland, in 1943: 8.5 million cbm (against 4.16 million in 1942), compared with 19.5 million cbm for industrial and air raid precaution buildings in the Reich.

It cannot be said that this performance of Reich building industry is poor. Still, with the exception of the Hydro plants, the FLAK towers and the U-boat dockyards there are no imposing undertakings.

As a result of the heavy air war over Germany, the situation of the German building industry has greatly deteriorated since Summer 1943. Labour, hitherto sufficient in number to cope with the tasks set them despite general weariness, is now busy with repair of raid damage to the extent of 320,000 men, i.e. 30 per cent of the total number, and are not available for large-scale new constructions. Moreover,

/labour...

labour employed on air raid damage repairs is considerably below urgent requirements. Great efforts must be made to provide even to the most primitive necessities both for housing the German working population and the foreign workers and for the restitution of our armament factories.

I am now having to stop work on armament factories under construction, and even to stop repair work on damaged factories in order to guarantee the essential conditions for maintaining armament production for the months lying ahead, particularly the fighter airplane production.

Considering the enormous strain on the building economy, I also believe that the capacity of the OT should be used in addition, for large-scale building schemes in the Reich, provided that the OT falls into line with the building methods in the Reich, which can easily be achieved, since I can give instructions to either organisation.

As early as Autumn last year I was deeply concerned with the development of the building trade. I then took the following steps: In order to create more elasticity, I formed along the lines used with success in the armament industry, a Hauptausschuss Bau (Main Committee BAU), a responsible/Industrial organisation for the building trade, thus charging the building industry with a considerable share of responsibility.

At the same time I dismissed the old, worn out heads of the Reich building administration, and replaced them by a young man with initiative, Herr Stobbe-Dethloffsen. Some weeks ago I then ordered a drastic cut in the State Building Organisation at the top and on the intermediate levels and have largely dissolved these.

The new organisation has worked well so far. The high production figures are a result of the energetic aid of the German building economy, assisted by my Jaegerstab (fighter aircraft staff). The former system of organisation could never have performed these transfers of labour and stoppings of building in hand in favour of destroyed airplane factories.

The help we had to give to the airplane factories, and at the same time the demands for caves, underground factories, the removal of bomb damage to transport, have intolerably aggravated the position during the last few weeks. In addition, party member Sauckel was unable to send any labour worth mentioning from abroad to reinforce the German building trade. I have postponed the last emergency measures since, in a meeting early in January, Sauckel promised you, my Fuehrer, 120,000 more workers from abroad, for air raid precaution measures in the towns. I do not think he will be able to keep his promise.

The situation which has arisen for the German building industry, might also be of grave consequences for the armaments production. Building economy and armament are, particularly at this stage of the war, an indivisible unit. It can well be realized that the war situation will present increasingly difficult problems for the building industry. I therefore consider the measures of organisation, taken so far, to be insufficient.

I have not got the young men of initiative who are capable of facing up to any difficulties, and these men will be found in sufficient numbers only in the OT. The tasks to be completed in the Reich nowadays, are purely tasks of war, e.g. removal of bomb damage.

I therefore intend to knit closely together the present Reich Building Organisation and the OT. I beg you, my Fuehrer, to consent to this on principle:

(I) The OT to be organised under my control into:

OT - abroad  
OT - Reich  
Baustab (building staff) OT

/(2)...

(4)

- (2) OT-abroad to be in charge with building in the occupied territories (as before) in co-operation with the Hauptausschuss Bau, my Deputy: Herr Dorsch. - He commands the work of 7 work groups and 800,000 workers.
- (3) OT-Reich to be organised in 4 or 5 work groups and 850,000 workers, and to be increased in due course by at least 150,000 to 200,000 workers in order to cope with the tasks ahead. Also in close co-operation with the Hauptausschuss Bau, the OT Reich performs the most important large-scale building projects and superintends smaller projects. For this increasingly important task I propose Herr Henne to be the leader. He can suggest an able representative for Norway.

Naturally, Herr Dorsch will be able to complete the large-scale building project at present under his supervision.

- (4) For the purpose of combining all questions of organisation and administration, the OT Central Office and the present building administration of the Reich are to form a BAUSTAB, necessary to co-ordinate the programmes, similar to the functions of the general staff of the armed forces.

So far these functions have been performed separately by the OT-Central Office and the Commissioner General for the Building Industry, a system which would, in the present difficult circumstances, lead to disputes. Only one authority will have to deal with distribution of quotas, distribution of labour and senior personnel, supply of equipment, building material, clothing etc. A level-headed man of superior quality is needed for this task. He must not interfere with the engineering side and the actual building.

I could not imagine a more suitable man for this post than Prof. Brugmann who evidently could be dispensed with in his present post, in view of the considerable shrinking of the working group SUED (South). Besides, the study of organising the rebuilding of towns would be entrusted to this BAUSTAB, and thus it would be of value for post-war development to have not a below-surface building engineer or a road builder, but a surface building expert.

- (5) The economic questions of building, those of the OT-abroad as well as of the OT-Reich, will be dealt with by the Hauptausschuss Bau who in close co-operation with the activities of the OT has to see to it that high efficiency is obtained from the building industry. This seeming dualism has undoubtedly advantages, as was the case with armaments. Just as I would never propose the abolition of the armament offices despite the success of "self-responsibility" of the industry, it will in this case be necessary to let the industry, as well as the building offices of the OT, have a say.

I myself shall, my Fuehrer, concentrate on the

/building...

(5)

building activities of the OT in the Reich and abroad, as soon as I resume work.

My absence of nearly 3 months has proved that the organization of armaments production, created by me, is well on its feet, quick to take action, and well able to work. One year earlier my absence would have entailed grave consequences while it can be said that during my illness the industry functioned very well.

You will realize, my Fuehrer, that as I am still your architect and passionately devoted to building, it would be a heavy burden to me in future times, if there were evidence of my not having fulfilled the tasks of my profession in this decisive hour.

Heil Mein Fuehrer!

Always Yours  
(signal) Speer

E.R.

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