

a) Albert Speer was born in 1905 to wealthy, upper middle class parents. His childhood was a happy one, despite sometimes being overlooked by his parents, who, as he says, 'were more interested in work than family!'

When he decided to study Architecture, he began his studies in 1921. Learning under the patronage of Alfred Tennesow at Moscow, where he transferred in 1923, he learned that often the best buildings are simplistic.

Despite hyperinflation in 1923, Speer was not affected & his parents' wealth meant he did not have to suffer like many others did. This security & insulation from the political & economic environment of the time meant that Speer did not have to worry very much about politics - indeed, he professed that those years spent studying, he had no interest in politics.

This lack of interest changed in 1930, when he was convinced by his students to attend a Nazi party rally. Hitler's charismatic way of speaking, as well as his persuasion, intrigued Speer, who after

attending another rally staged by Goebbels in 1931, joined the party. While Speer argues that he did not agree with the party's racial policies, the ^{other} aims & beliefs of the party appealed to him.

Speer's work as an architect in the Nazi party ^{initially} involved redecorating party headquarters & member's homes. His work came to the attention of Hitler, who appointed Speer as chief architect in 1934, after the death of his previous one.

Speer & Hitler formed a close friendship as they bonded over their shared love of architecture.

This friendship, as well as Speer's impressive work as an architect, led to Speer being appointed as ~~the~~ minister for armaments & munitions in 1941.

Speer came to his position when the German economy was beginning to flounder under the demands of war upon a country's economy. However, his skills at organisation &

effectiveness that he had learned as an architect, as well as his position as Hitler's ~~best~~ friend, enabled him to turn the economy around & increase munitions production by 105% by 1943.

As well as increasing production, Speer managed the allocation of raw materials in the industry, helping the ~~scarcely~~ limited supplies to last longer.

Speer's work as Minister for Munitions & Armaments ensured that the German war effort lasted ~~as long as it did~~ until Germany's defeat in 1945.

b)

~~Speers~~ The interpretation of Speer's actions & work as Minister for armaments & munitions is a, at times, contradicting one.

Speer's insistence that he did not know about the Holocaust & slave labour is, at times, called into question.

Slave labour was used on many of his ~~pro~~ architecture projects, & in many of the factories he toured as Minister for armaments & munitions.

As an influential member of Hitler's government, one would assume that there could be no way Speer would not have known about the Holocaust.

Despite Speer's ~~with~~ insistence that he was unaware of the implications of the Nazi racial policies, it is hard to believe that he could be so naive.

Speer's changes to the German economy however, are usually not contradictory.

that his efforts helped to sustain the German economy is true, and his efforts helped to prolong Germany's involvement in the war.

There have been many interpretations of Speer's actions & behaviour during his time as Minister for Armaments & Munitions.

Historian David Kennedy points out that Speer's role in sustaining the economy was a large one, as his organisation & allocation of raw materials helped to prolong the economy's life.

Interpretations of Speer's work as Minister for armaments & munitions, as well as his involvement & responsibility for sustaining the economy, are balanced.

However, this balance does not translate over to his knowledge of the Holocaust & his use of slave labour.

Speer denied knowledge of the Holocaust

at the Nuremberg trials, stating that in his position of Minister for armaments & munitions, he was not privy to knowledge of Nazi policy in other areas.

However, as Historian KJ Mason points out, Speer's knowledge of Hitler's scorched Earth policy ~~can~~ contradicts his, as ~~he~~ if his claims were true, he would not have known of it.

~~Speer's~~ History's interpretation of Speer regarding the ~~the~~ Nazi Racial policy & his involvement in it is not balanced.

Claims that slave labour was used in many factories that Speer visited & that he witnessed the conditions they worked in are commonly made.

On one such visit, to the factory where the US rockets were being produced, Speer witnessed the squalor & disgusting conditions of the slave labourers. Despite his orders ~~to~~ 'clean it up', the patrolling

SA officers made no effort to change conditions.

Nor did Speer bother to follow up his request & ensure that it was followed.

Speer's actions regarding the Nazi racial policies help to create an unbalanced view of history - one that is contradictory, as his claims at the Nuremberg Trials & in his autobiographies are contradicted by historians & other eyewitnesses.