Hsiu-Ling Kuo

Monumentality and Modernity in Hitler's Berlin

The North–South Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan

G L C S

German **L**

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Cultural **S**

Studies

The contentious relationship between modernism and totalitarianism is a key element in the architectural history of the twentieth century. Post-war historiography refused to admit any overlap between the high modernism of the 1920s and the architecture of National Socialism, as it contradicted the definition of modernism as the essential architectural expression of liberal democracy. However, National Socialist architectural history cannot be fully explored without the broader historical context of modernity. Similarly, a true understanding of modernism in architecture must acknowledge its authoritarian aspects.

This book clarifies the architectural discourse in which the Greater Berlin Project of the Third Reich was produced. The association of monumentality with National Socialist architecture in the 1930s created a polarization between the classical tradition and radical modernism that provoked vigorous and acrimonious debate that lasted into the 1980s. In the attempt to reconcile the paradoxical and competing aspirations for monumentality and historicity on one hand, and for technological advance on the other, the planning of Berlin is shown to reflect the wider paradoxes of National Socialist ideology.

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Monumentality and Modernity
in Hitler's Berlin

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Introduction

The contentious relationship between modernism and totalitarianism is a key element in the architectural history of the twentieth century. Post-war historiography, as established by émigré scholars like Nikolaus Pevsner and Sigfried Giedion, refused to admit any overlap between the high modernism of the 1920s and the architecture of National Socialism. Similarly, National Socialists never officially acknowledged their connections with modernism, despite being highly influenced by it. What is commonly recognized today as the history of modern architecture was to a large extent created jointly by architects in the 1920s and supported by historians and critics of the Modern Movement from the 1930s onwards. The definition of modernism as the essential architectural expression of liberal democracy precluded the possibility that the modernist agenda might also have informed aspects of totalitarian building practice. National Socialist architectural history cannot be fully explored without being set within the broader historical context of modernity. Likewise, a true understanding of modernism in architecture must necessarily embrace its authoritarian aspects.[1]

 The historiography as established by leading post-war historians such as Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Nikolaus Pevsner and Sigfried Giedion played a key role in defining a modernist International Style that promoted the

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[1]   With the increasing amount of research done on totalitarian architecture, this approach to Modernist architectural history has managed to find a platform for articulation gradually. Jean-Louis Cohen wrote in a field note in recent years that architecture of Nazi, Italian fascist and Soviet can no longer be superficially defined and pointed out that 'it is now clear that, far from being completely banned in 1933, the design strategies of radical modernism prospered under Nazism, most notably in the spheres of industrial architecture and housing.' He also further affirmed that there existed an 'embarrassing continuity' in the architecture of Speer's Berlin to the end of the Second World War. Jean-Louis Cohen, 'Scholarship or Politics? Architectural History and the Risks of Autonomy', *Journal of the American Society of Architectural Historians*, 327.

Modern Movement. Kenneth Frampton and William Curtis, later genera-
tion modernist historians, adopted this view uncritically in their writings
on the general history of modern architecture. Aside from the mainstream
modernists, alternative views have been developed by critical historians
such as David Watkin, Manfredo Tafuri, Francesco Dal Co, Bruno Zevi
and Leonardo Benevolo, who saw modern architectural history in a broader
light and believed that the history of twentieth-century architecture had
more to offer than the Modern Movement. Instead of a pure political
account, the discourse of modernity and the historical context of modern
architecture, from which National Socialist architecture emerged, must
be presented from social and cultural perspectives.

It is undeniable that architecture is widely associated with politics. In
Architecture and Politics in Germany 1918–1945 published in 1968, Barbara
Miller Lane illustrated the way in which architecture had been exploited
by both conservative and progressive groups through political manipula-
tion. Lane's research contributed significantly to an understanding of the
relationship between National Socialist architecture and its political ide-
ology.[2] However, the approach of polemically dividing architecture into
the conservative and the radical, the political and the secular, had been
taken as *the* only appropriate way to interpret National Socialist architec-
ture without a critical distance. It reduces the complexity and the problem
of totalitarian architecture to a simple political issue. Francesco Dal Co
and Sergio Polano pointed out this crisis in their record of interviewing
Albert Speer in 1978:

> For too long the architecture of Albert Speer has been synonymous with 'Nazi
> Architecture.' This is at once a reductive and consoling hypothesis. It has only served
> this game of those who have wanted to keep fenced out of the sacred garden of
> modern architecture (or the Modern Movement) anything that could radically call
> its continuity into question. The history of the architecture of totalitarian regimes
> cannot be allowed to enter into that historiographical mythology. For deviations
> as radical as those represented by 'totalitarian architecture' the blame has fallen on

2   Peter Blundell Jones emphasized this view again in 'Architecture and Political
     Legitimation', *Architectural Review* (July, 1996), 64–5.

those easiest to identify: Speer and Hitler, Piacentini and Mussolini, Zdanov and Stalin. Facile axioms justify moral judgments that could not but be univocal. But architecture is not univocal, nor do its infinite paths lead everyone to the same goals.[3]

Instead of accepting the presumption of the exclusive primacy of the political aspect of architecture and enlarging this misconception, equal attention deserves to be paid to other distinctive themes, such as the social and aesthetic aspects of architecture. One-sided doctrines are to be subjected to criticism. Art, history and philosophy are themselves products of social development. To avoid the danger that they might 'indirectly endorse the processes themselves',[4] their origins and the broader context in which they are embedded must be discerned and critically examined. In his introduction to *A History of Architecture* Spiro Kostof noted that modern historians' mission was to write

> a more inclusive definition of architecture and, consequently, a more democratic view of architectural history. The aim is to put aside the invidious distinctions between architecture and building, architecture and engineering, architecture and speculative development; to treat buildings with equal curiosity whether they are religious in intent, monumental, utilitarian, or residential; … and to have genuine respect for the architectural achievement of cultures regardless of origin and their racial and theological identities.[5]

What Kostof proposed is an objective mind to construct the history of architecture, but the question remains: how to avoid subjective and arbitrary interpretations and adopt a rational approach to reading and writing the history of events in which one has had personal involvement? The subjective and 'mythic memory' of the victims are set against the 'rational' understanding of others, who are not directly related to the historical event.[6] To detach history from moral interpretation of some kind is an impossible task both from the point of communication and of social and cultural prejudices.

3   Francesco Dal Co and Sergio Polano, 'Interview with Albert Speer', *Oppositions*, No. 12 (Spring, 1978), 39. Equally critical view is presented in Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co's *Modern Architecture (Architettura Contemporanea)*.
4   Ted Honderich, *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 290.
5   Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals*, 15–16.
6   Saul Friedländer, *Reflections on Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death*, 11.

Modernist Architecture and National Socialism

Architectural History as Interpreted and Created in National Socialist Propaganda

National Socialist Germany constructed a version of modern architectural history in Germany between 1933 and 1945. This was different from the mainstream architectural history portrayed by Modernist historians in England and in America. In what we recognize as a blatantly propaganda style, the National Socialists' view of history was promoted with ambitious monumental building schemes by the GBI (*Generalbauinspektor*, General Building Inspector) architects and architectural critics in the party propaganda publications including newspapers, art journals and art reviews. Their approach, their usage of terminologies and architectural concepts in the National Socialist press, was strikingly similar to that promoted by the 'progressive' modernist historians in the 1920s and 1930s. The Modernists' theme of searching for and defining 'the spirit of the time' received equal, if not more, emphasis in National Socialist publications.

National Socialist ideology and racial theory culminated in an extremely modern and science-based theory, in particular the notions of health and hygiene. This resembled modernist architects' concern for a white, healthy and hygienic living environment. Goebbels argued in 1930 in an article entitled 'Why are we enemies of the Jews?' that one of the reasons that the 'real' Germans must act against the Jewish, the Capitalist, the bourgeoisie, the Marxists, individualism, and class and rank distinctions, was that they formed the destructive system that hindered the progress of the country and damaged the 'healthy power of the people'. He called for a Socialist Germany of 'all the people' but excluding the 'people' from

the above categories.[1] Concern for the health of the German race was a notorious theme constantly repeated in National Socialist propaganda, including art and architectural publications.

In 1938 in *Das Bauen im Neuen Reich*, Gerdy Troost, the widow of Hitler's favourite architect, Paul Ludwig Troost, accused *Neue Sachlichkeit* architects of propagandizing Jewish Bolshevism and of ignoring the cultural value of the German homeland.[2] In her sophisticated account of architectural achievements in the Third Reich up to 1938, National Socialist architectural history was presented with buildings designed by Troost, German Bestelmeyer, Johannes and Walter Krüger, Werner March, Franz Ruff and others. The combination of the modernist architectural concept and advanced technology in their projects was never acknowledged. Instead of modernist catchphrases such as orientation, sunlight and rational planning, Troost spoke of technology, order, aesthetics and international architectural trends. Industrial buildings for instance must seek to offer the German public a delightful providence and to improve the work environment with the help of technology and craftsmanship.

> Es ist für das deutsche Volk eine glückliche Fügung, daß sich die außerordentliche Vermehrung seiner Arbeitsstätten, ... aus dem Wesen der Technik kann die Kraft einer einordnenden Weltanschauung sinngemäße Formen entwickeln. Bauten von Maß und Ordnung, wirksam durch sparsame und klare Linien, Sinnbild der präzisen sauberen Arbeit, die in ihnen geleistet wird, sind hier gestaltet worden. Sie ergeben eine schöne Gesamtwirkung. Beton, Stahl und Glas treten offen hervor. *Wie hell, wie ideenreich, wie großzügig sind diese technischen Bauten.*[3]

> [It is a delightful coincidence for the German people that there was an extraordinary increase of workplaces. ... based on the essence of technology the work force can develop an orderly world view in a logical form. Buildings of dimension and order, a symbol of clean and precise work, have been constructed effectively through

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1   Joseph Goebbels, 'Why are we enemies of the Jews?' selected in *The Weimar Republic Resourcebook*, 137. [Original edition 'Warum sind wir Judengegner?' in *Die verfluchten Hakenkreuzler, Etwas zum Nachdenken* (Munich: Franz Eher Nachfolger, 1930), 1–28].

2   Gerdy Troost, *Das Bauen im Neuen Reich*, 9.

3   Troost, 72–3 (emphasis in the original).

economical and clean cut lines here. They provide a beautiful overall effect. Concrete, steel and glass stand out freely. *How bright, how imaginative, how broad-minded the technological buildings are*.]

According to what she regarded as the 'world view' (*Weltanschauung*) of the latest architectural development in the 1930s, Troost promoted the use of modern building materials – concrete, steel and glass – to build pleasant workspaces, which stimulated audacious, yet disciplined, creativity in the workers. The idea of modernity, as interpreted here by Troost, was to incorporate the most advanced technology into a highly disciplined and mechanic society. Providing a standard ideal work environment for the workers was to reduce the number of factors that could endanger a smooth, frictionless, productive operation in factories.

In the decades when building technology progressed at a revolutionary pace, the exploration of an architectural style that was appropriate for the time was a task taken on board both by modernists and by National Socialists. In his article 'Stilschöpfung'[4] published in 1939, Erich Stürzenacker argued that the creation of an exceptional contemporary style could be achieved only through the will (*Wille*) and dynamism of architects. Bearing in mind the *Weltanschauung* and world architectural developments and combining them with classical revivals – such as Gothic and Baroque, architects must make good use of advanced technology. Technology was for Stürzenacker 'the servant and inspirer of stylistic developments, which through the example of Gothic architecture becomes particularly obvious to us, where the potentials of technology and material are exploited as unconstructive excesses. The progress of technology and style has always gone hand in hand.'[5] An architectural style was thus evolved with technology logically, according to him.

4   Erich Stürzenacker, 'Stilschöpfung' in *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich*, vol. 3 no. 5 (May, 1939), 220–2.
5   'Die Dienerin und Anregerin stilistischer Entwicklungen, was uns am Beispiel der Gotik besonders deutlich wird, wo die Möglichkeiten der Technik und des Materials bis zu unkonstruktiven Überspitzungen ausgenützt werden. Immer sind die Fortschritte von Technik und Stil Hand in Hand gegangen.' See Stürzenacker, 222.

In September 1943, *Die Baukunst* published 'Vom Beruf des Bau-
meisters' by Rudolf Wolters, the key National Socialist architectural
critic. The article was intended, on the one hand, to illustrate the history
of German architecture and, on the other, to be a manifesto that indicated
the future development of a new national style for Germany. In a tone not
dissimilar to that of Ruskin and of Morris in England in the 1850s, Wolters
argued that modern technology had caused various problems for contem-
porary cities. Architects who over-indulged themselves in new technol-
ogy caused enormous damage to existing organically developed cities. He
described Germany as suffering a cultural decline of which architecture
was a clear example. Architectural development in Germany showed how
landscape and cities had been destroyed, how architects had lost control
over the world they built and over the excessive use of technology, and how
the artistic homeland of Germany had fallen into ruins. He also condemned
the negative consequences of the establishment of the railway network and
of the industrial revolution thus:

> Als der erste Eisenbahnzug von Nürnberg nach Fürth rollte, konnte keiner vorausse-
> hen, was hieraus noch entstehen sollte. In wenigen Jahrzehnten entstand ohne über-
> geordnete Planung ein ausgedehntes Eisenbahnnetz. Der Schienenstrang zerriß die
> Landschaft, eiserne Brücken überspannten Täler und Flüsse, Lokomotiven dampften
> in die gewachsenen oder planmäßig angelegten Städte, Gleisanlagen machten sich
> vor den Toren mit ihren wuchernden Abstell- und Güterbahnhöfen breit, verbauten
> das Vorland der Städte und zerschnitten ganze Stadtteile. Großen eiserne Hallen
> schossen aus dem Boden zur Aufnahme der Dampflokomotiven und standen in
> fremdem Material maßstabslos neben den alten Steinbauten der Städte. Je größer die
> Industrialisierung wurde, um so mehr wuchsen die Lasten und Geschwindigkeiten
> der Bahnen, um so schwieriger wurden die baulich-technischen Lösungen. Der
> Architekt erkannte seine neue wesentliche Aufgabe nicht, er wandte sich vielmehr
> vom Technischen ab und übersah die städtebaulichen Probleme, die täglich mit dem
> unerhörten Wachstum der Städte schwieriger wurden.[6]

> [As the first train from Nuremberg to Fürth rolled, nobody could have foreseen what
> was still to emerge from this. In a few decades an extensive railway network arose
> without overriding planning. The railway line disrupted the landscape, iron bridges
> spanned valleys and rivers, locomotives steamed in the growing or well-planned cities,

6   See Rudolf Wolters, 'Vom Beruf des Baumeisters' in *Die Baukunst* (September, 1943),
      147.

sprawling railway tracks were ready at the gates with proliferating carriage- and freight-depots, the foreland of the city was obstructed and all parts of the city were divided. Large iron halls in alien material sprang up to accommodate the steam locomotives and stood out of proportion beside the old stone buildings of the cities. The further the industrialization went, the more the loads and speeds of the trains grew, and the more difficult the structural and technical solutions were. The architect did not recognize his new task, he drifted further away from the technical and overlooked the urban problem. The unprecedented daily growth of cities had become more difficult to tackle.]

Rejecting the exaggerated fascination with advanced technologies, Wolters was highly antagonistic to the over-indulgence of modernist architects in technology and industrialization. He disapproved of architects who failed to give priority to functional city planning. With the emergence of new technology architects in the twentieth century had lost their way and often lacked a sense of history. After a period of what he called 'eclecticism', there was an urge to find a new style. However, the *Jugendstil*, for example, that emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century was, according to him, a 'bad' innovation. It was a movement created by painters, commercial artists and architects who put more emphasis on form than on content, creative ideas, or 'healthy' constructions ('gesunde Konstruktionen').

Wolters also attacked architects who abandoned the use of ornament and promoted *Sachlichkeit* (functionality). He regarded the dismissal by these architects of the Classical architectural language of columns, ornament, cornices and all other decorations to be evidence of the 'bankruptcy' of architectural achievement. According to Wolters the notion of *Sachlichkeit* accomplished nothing, but reduced the architect's capability to build and to design.

> Die Sachlichkeit, im Grunde nichts anderes als künstlerisches Unvermögen, wuchs sich bald zu einer erstaunlichen Unsachlichkeit aus. Man baute nicht nur nackt und kahl, man versuchte darüber hinaus, die überkommenen Konstruktionen zu verneinen und die neue Form in einer Darstellung der modernen technischen Möglichkeiten zu suchen. Man nahm den Häusern die Sockel, stellte sie auf Beton- oder Stahlpfähle, legte Öffnungen, Fenster und Türen auf die Ecke, das heißt dort, wo sonst die Stütze stand, baute flache Dächer, nahm Glas statt Stein und feierte Orgien in der Anbetung der Maschinen, der Flugzeuge und Automobile, kurz alles neuen Technischen.[7]

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7   Wolters, 150.

[The objectivity, basically nothing more than an artistic incapability, soon grew out of an astonishing lack of objectivity. They not only built bald and bare, but also tried to deny the traditional structures and to look for a new form for the representation of modern technical possibilities. They took houses as a starting point, erected them with concrete or steel piles, installed entrances, windows and doors at the corner, that is, where the support stands, they built flat roofs, took glass instead of stone, and celebrate the orgy in the worship of machines, airplanes and automobiles, in short, all the new technologies.]

Pointing out the Modernists' mistakes in reducing architecture to pure machine and new technology, Wolters presented architects who designed what he regarded as true architecture, namely Heinrich Tessenow, Peter Behrens, Hermann Muthesius, Bonatz and Wilhelm Kreis. In Wolters' view, they had correctly devoted their architectural career to the 'naturally' developed classical styles. Masterpieces in the early 1910s designed by Behrens (Mannesmann Administrative Building, the German Embassy in St. Petersburg), by Bonatz (Stuttgart Central Railway Station, motorway bridges) and by Kreis (the Augustus Bridge in Dresden) were regarded as manifestations of the German architecture of the new century, embodying rationality and the most advanced technology. In exploring new possibilities basing on classical styles, these architects inherited the architectural heritage and continuity that were both recognized and promoted by the National Socialist Party. They were praised for not refraining from applying columns or beams wherever these were necessary.

Wolters denounced criticism of the style created by these architects. Their style was not a simple conservative Neo-classical approach. Instead, they stood for National Socialist artistic creativity that stemmed from the life of their time and was supported by modern technology.

Wer heute von 'Neoklassizismus' spricht, hat das Wesen unseres Bauens nicht verstanden. Dieses Wesen liegt in der neuen Aufgabe, in der neuen großen-allgemeinen Bestimmung unserer Bauten, die in ihren Grundrissen, ihren räumlichen Dispositionen und ihren städtebaulichen Forderungen ohne Vorgang sind und nur aus dem Inhalt unseres nationalsozialistischen Lebens stammen.[8]

8   See Wolters, 159.

[Those who speak of 'neo-classicism' have not understood the essence of our build-ing. This essence lies in the new task, in the new overall major purpose of our build-ings, which are in their layouts, their spatial arrangements and their urban demands without precedent and will arise only from the content of our National Socialist life.]

The architecture of the National Socialist era had to be modern and creative, but not without restraints; with historical insight, but not mere plagiarism. The architectural features favoured by National Socialist architects, as explained by Wolters, paid homage to a highly valued tradition. Architects of different ages had always taken examples from the past and refined them. Plagiarism was ruled out. The need to search for inspirations from past styles and new technology was meticulously justified.[9] What Wolters attempted to define was an architecture that took the middle way among different new architectural trends. It represented everything and nothing – an approach reflecting the way National Socialist politicians advanced their political dogma.

The Modern Movement and the International Style

In discussing modernity and modernism, it is helpful to distinguish the usage of the terms of 'Modernism' and the 'Modern Movement' in recent architectural history. These terms are often confused or used casually without clear differentiation. A movement suggests an organized event or a series of actions aimed at achieving a shared goal by a group of like-minded people. One major difference between the two terms is that while the Modern Movement is a coherent and unique approach, Modernism

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9   'Das Zuvielverstehen vom Technischen oder vom Historischen kann zum Feind des freien Fluges der Gedanken werden, kann die Intuition erdrücken und schließlich zum Plagiat führen.' [Over-interpretation of technology or of history can become the enemy of the free thoughts, can also oppress the intuition and lead to plagiarism ultimately.] See Wolters, 162.

covers a wide range of activities, e.g. Futurism, Art Nouveau, Expressionism, the Bauhaus school and the CIAM (*Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne*) and events whose objectives underpin the general notion of Modernism. Modernism was less related to 'organizations than with the broader Modernist culture, which contained problems that were inherent in Modernism itself.'[10] While the Modern Movement is one major current that has continuously led and influenced architectural development since the first launch of the *International Style* by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in 1932, Modernism involved a larger debate conducted at a deeper cultural level in society. This includes art and architecture as well as film, theatre, literature, music and dance. It is important to point out that Modernism must be understood as a discourse that absorbs new events and developments as they take place.[11] Instead of a simple presentation of a collection of events or movements, discourse seeks to understand the way in which events pass from premises to consequences. A more accurate definition and deeper observation of Modernist culture are conducive to a better understanding of the discourse of architectural Modernism.

In his prophetic *Modern Architecture, Romanticism and Reintegration* (1929), Henry-Russell Hitchcock discussed the latest architectural styles by tracing architectural trends since 1750 – 'the Age of Romanticism' (which continued to be popular until the mid-nineteenth century). Architecture in the decades from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century concurrently encompassed the Classic and the Gothic, forming an art and architectural trend, which Gilbert Scott called the 'New Tradition'.[12]

10   Royston Landau, 'The History of Modern Architecture That Still Needs to Be Written', *Architectural Association Files*, no. 21 (Spring, 1991), 50.

11   Ibid.

12   Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture, Romanticism and Reintegration*, 72–3. For an account of the making of the Modern Movement, see Giorgio Ciucci, 'The Invention of the Modern Movement', tr. Stephen Sartarelli, *Oppositions*, no. 24 (Spring, 1981), 68–91. The article referred to a series of modernist events in the 1920s and investigates in particular the impact of *Weissenhofsiedlung* exhibition (1927), the League of Nation competition (1928), the first CIAM congress (La Sarraz, 1928) and the conflicts among the CIAM architects.

Inheriting this perspective, Hitchcock spoke of the 'New Tradition' with a mixture of styles ranging from Romanesque, Medieval, and Classic to Gothic, from which the 'New Pioneers' of modern architecture were to draw impulses. In his final chapter 'Towards a New Architecture', he analysed the projects submitted to the competition for the Palace of League of Nations; in particular he highlighted Le Corbusier's project as the representative example of the emerging international trend.

Three years later, in 1932, Hitchcock and Philip Johnson collaborated in an exhibition catalogue, *The International Style – Architecture Since 1922*. In an attempt to define what modern architecture is, the two authors created an architectural tradition that was highly selective. They discerned a division between European functionalists such as Hannes Meyer, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Erich Mendelsohn and 'progressive' architects such as Le Corbusier, J. J. P. Oud, Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who, in their opinion, were the leading figures of an international trend that had prevailed in the West in the previous ten years. The 'International Style' was defined in their book in terms of volume, regularity, the use of surfacing materials and decoration. Unlike the European functionalists who 'mistakenly' indulged in the technological aspect of functionality, the 'progressive' architects, as categorized by Hitchcock and Johnson, recognized the existence and the full importance of the new trends. Volume was to replace the effect of mass and solidity, popular in conventional architecture. In contrast to the aesthetics of the picturesque, the 'underlying regular rhythm' in asymmetrical plans was to exist in most buildings to take account of modern standardization.[13] Largely shunning decoration, modern architecture is presented in a purer style of the past with details 'required by structure or symbolic of the underlying structure'.[14]

Nikolaus Pevsner in the *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* in 1936 established a rather improbable lineage for the Modern Movement from Morris to Gropius. In his foreword to the Pelican Edition, 1960, Pevsner proudly reminds the reader of his position as the creator of the history of

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13   Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style*, 58.
14   Ibid., 70.

the Modern Movement: 'It is gratifying to see that a subject which, when I first tackled it, was shunned by serious scholars has now become the happy hunting ground for American and German and indeed some English students busy on theses, dissertations, or otherwise.'[15] What Pevsner called the 'New Tradition' based on the architecture of the 'Machine Age' is a genre consisting of Bauhaus, Mies and Gropius, who inherited the true legacy of the modernist tradition from Pugin, Morris, Sullivan and Wright, and from Beaux-Arts to Art Nouveau. There was no mention of alternative trends which also stemmed from these 'New Traditions' and which were at the time emerging in different countries around the world – the most popular of which was the tendency to create a variety of modern versions of historical classicism.

Another influential figure in the pro-Modern-Movement league is Sigfried Giedion. In his *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941) Giedion differentiated Modernist architects from those in the past according to the way they approached architectural history. Whereas nineteenth-century architects cobbled together their architecture by selecting and copying past designs accumulated throughout history, Modernists worked creatively on how to combine 'past, present, and future … as the indivisible wholeness of human destiny.'[16] He pointed out that the mistake of the nineteenth-century revivalist architects was to treat certain forms of arts as universally valid for every age without making substantial changes to adapt to their time. The task of the historian, as proclaimed by Giedion, was to 'uncover for his own age its vital interrelationships with the past' and not to restrict and to distort the future by basing it solely on the past. Historians must also 'correct an epoch in the light of [their] own opinions' and explain why history evolved in a particular direction.[17] But Giedion ignored his own prejudices towards the history of totalitarian architecture. This prejudgement already precluded any 'interrelationship with the past' to be indiscriminately and positively written in history, despite the fact that Giedion

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15   Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design*, 17.
16   Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, xxxvii.
17   Ibid., 7–17.

himself acclaimed an undistorted presentation of historical events to be one of the important factors for historians to observe.

In their immediate post-war discussions, architects and historians expressed much concern about the extent to which monumentality was a feature of totalitarian political ideologies. Cautious though modernist historians and critics might be, they nevertheless often employed language and strategies not dissimilar to the political and military propaganda of National Socialism. The symposium of the *Architectural Review* in September 1948 brought together leading modernist historians and architects at the time including Gregor Paulsson (University of Uppsala), Hitchcock (MIT and Wesleyan University), William Holford (University of London), Giedion (University of Zurich), Gropius (Bauhaus and Harvard University) and Lucio Costa (Brazil) and Alfred Roth (Switzerland). This can be seen as amounting to an architectural treaty that defined the status and territory of Neo-Classicism and modernism in the dispute over monumentality. The Editor of the *Architectural Review* spoke of a modernist victory and claimed that modern architecture had 'won its battle against' totalitarian revivalism. Monumentality was on the one hand perceived as an urban phenomenon, and on the other hand, as redolent of the images of the totalitarian states of the 1930s.

Democracy and monumentality are perceived by some in the symposium as two ideas that contradict each other. Other commentators maintained that modern architecture could not avoid the controversial aspect of monumentality by simply denouncing it completely. One Swiss art critic, Peter Meyer, for instance, argued in 1938 that instead of adopting the alternative of developing monumentality organically, modern architectural theory had ignored the monumental and forced it into exile. Consequently, the element of monumentality was left to be exploited and misused by 'non-modern' architectural styles.[18] Meyer defended Le Corbusier's monumental design for the *Musée d'Art Moderne* (1927) as a fully modern building that successfully imposed a classic human scale on

18   Christiane C. and George R. Collins, 'Monumentality: A Critical Matter in Modern Architecture', *Harvard Architectural Review*, vol. 4 (Spring, 1984), 21.

technology through architecture. This statement was subsequently rejected by his Swiss counterpart, Hans Schmidt, who believed that the Modern Movement and modernists had imposed the 'human scale of technology' on architecture, instead of the other way round.[19]

Responding to the proposal to reclaim the element of monumentality for modernist architecture, the Swedish architect and critic, Paulsson argued that monumentality was exclusively imperialistic and anti-democratic, and was therefore not desirable: 'Genuine monumentality can only arise from dictatorship because it is an adequate expression of its emotional complexes.'[20] Totalitarian regimes often employed monumentality to strengthen their power to rule society and the people. Paulsson held the view that the nature of democratic society was essentially anti-monumental. He criticized modernist town planning for its logo-centric tendencies and for its exaggerated need for civic centres, whilst neglecting the improvement of general living conditions. To create a civic centre as a monumental focal point unnecessarily exhausts society's limited available resources. Speaking in a tone similar to that of the later post-modernists who called for a diversity of alternatives and differences, Paulsson argued that important aspects of town planning had been neglected by mainstream modernists who had given priority to the development of civic centres. Reconciling the needs of different areas in a town was a complex task that needed to take account of the various organically existing factors in each individual area. According priority to the establishment of a major focal civic centre and compromising the rest of the town to strengthen the central authority tended towards a totalitarian society.

> Architecture has aimed at satisfying human life, but to this life too few dimensions have been given. The human being as a psychological, above all as a socio-psychological part of society has been forgotten. ... It is the character of the natural area in which a human being spends his daily life which determines his way of living, and the formation of his values are bound up with his physical environment.[21]

19   Ibid.
20   Editorial Board symposium transcription, 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, vol. 104, no. 621 (September, 1948), 123.
21   Ibid.