

The Propaganda Exhibition “The Beautiful Town–Entschandelung and Design”: Stops in the “German East,” 1940-1942

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ABSTRACT

The traveling exhibition “The Beautiful Town—Entschandelung and Design,” initiated by the Deutscher Heimatbund under Werner Lindner (1883–1964), toured the German Reich starting in 1938. Selected buildings of the organizing municipalities were integrated into the exhibiton. The Lehrschau visualized “bad buildings,” “advertising excesses” and their “ridding of disgraces” (Entschandelung), and attempted to present design principles. Werner Lindner and the German League for Homeland Protection thus positioned themselves alongside the official monument authorities. They succeeded in establishing legal foundations for these measures, which were mostly aimed at the facades of buildings. In 1943, the exhibition was discontinued due to the war, but its traces can still be found in surviving buildings until today. The design goals propagated were significant for German architecture in the postwar period. The exhibition can be seen as a counterpart in the field of architecture to the well-known propaganda show “Degenerate Art.”

The starting point was the *Entschandelung* of Semlower Street in Stralsund in 1937. This term refers to the phenomenon of modern building cleanup, to the ideas of the German homeland security movement, and to the redevelopment of old towns in the first third of the twentieth century, which can only briefly be touched upon here.

The special relationship to the “German East” became clear in Lindner’s design principles. These, with the works of ancient Prussian master builders and examples of site-specific building in the March of Brandenburg, had their basis in a building culture that was seen as inspired by the “German East.” The plans for the reconstruction of East Prussia during the First World War were another factor that has to be taken into account here.

The conception of the “East” as an area in need of reorganization and planned settlement was shared by the exhibition initiators with other National Socialist protagonists of the “German East,” thus “The Beautiful Town” became part of Heinrich Himmler’s *Volksstumspolitik*. The presentations of the exhibition in Poznań (Posen), Łódź (Litzmannstadt) and Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) serve as examples of this.

KEYWORDS: National Socialism, architecture, exhibitions, monument protection, Heimatschutz movement

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Beginning in 1938, a traveling exhibition on questions of town development and heritage conservation was displayed with great success in Gau capitals and many county seats in the German Reich (Fig. 1). Its title “Die schöne Stadt—ihre Entschandelung und Gestaltung” contains a term that does not easily translate into English; an approximate equivalent to *Entschandelung* could be the “ridding of disgraces.” Because of its ideological implications, I will use the German term throughout this paper and discuss the underlying connotations below.

Once the war had begun, this propaganda exhibition also made numerous stops in sections of Europe then occupied by Germany. The show displayed not just existing examples of “beautiful” designs in towns, but always sought as well to stimulate building modifications specific to each of the towns it visited. So, in essence it was a propaganda show and it also served as an active component in National Socialist building policies. This exhibit was, for example, different from the construction plans for “Germania” (a topic already well covered by others), and it remains a topic that historians have yet to deal with in any depth.¹ Although the works of well-known architects from the 1930s and 1940s have been covered in monographs,² the vestiges of this traveling exhibit (still visible in many towns today) often times remain unrecognized.³ The architectural interventions it proposed were often aimed at adapting and harmonizing basic structures of buildings that were already standing; therefore, identifying the modifications today requires a study of the buildings themselves. The focus of the building guidelines promoted by the exhibition was first and foremost on the external appearances of the buildings, and the design of their façades and roofs.

¹ The author has previously presented more detailed information about the exhibition and the concept of *Entschandelung* in: ANJA WIESE: “Entschandelung und Gestaltung” als Prinzipien nationalsozialistischer Baupropaganda: Forschungen zur Wanderausstellung “Die schöne Stadt” 1938–1943, in: *Die Denkmalpflege* 69 (2011), 1, pp. 34–41.

² Compare for example: THOMAS SCHMIDT: Werner March: Architekt des Olympia-Stadions, Basel et al. 1992; ELKE DITTRICH: Ernst Sagebiel—Leben und Werk (1892–1970), Berlin 2005; SYLVIA NECKER: Konstanty Gutschow 1902–1978: Modernes Denken und volksgemeinschaftliche Utopie eines Architekten, Hamburg—München 2012.

³ Given its connection with the German League for Homeland Protection and since the implementation of construction guidelines fell to lower-level administrative offices, the exhibition on its surface was less spectacular and consequently has not gained the attention of researchers. It was initially in the context of studies about renovations in the old towns that comparable studies were undertaken for town constructions and the re-designing of façades in the 1930s, for example, in Kassel, Potsdam, Gdańsk and finally Wien. See HARTMUT SCHULZ: Altstadtsanierung in Kassel: Stadtbau und erhaltende Stadterneuerung vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, Kassel 1983; BIRTE PUSBACK: Stadt als Heimat: Die Danziger Denkmalpflege zwischen 1933 und 1939, Köln et al. 2006; ARMIN HANSON: Denkmal- und Stadtbildpflege in Potsdam 1918–1945, Berlin 2011; BIRGIT KNAUER: Gesunde Stadt: Die Assanierung der Stadt Wien (1934–1938), Basel et al. 2021.

Paying special attention to surfaces and façades can be considered a general phenomenon of modern architectural discourse. As historicism was approaching its end, the argument over ornamentation and function became more and more ideologically charged. The wrangling over this question is also reflected in what the exhibit was proffering as the image of a "beautiful town." The overall ambivalence in this epoch is characterized by its adjusting or catering to the changing goals of what was in vogue at the time to business objectives, and/or totalitarian ideology. While modifying and reconfiguring existing buildings was nothing new, in the years after 1900 and especially after the First World War, there was an accelerated succession of ideas that gave rise to contrasting conceptions of design. The modernization of façades in large cities such as Berlin served primarily business locations and so consequently led to the conversion of buildings' ground floors into shops.⁴ The removal of stucco ornamentation (*Entstuckung*) was seen as a correction of the décor by preserving a flat plaster surface on the front facing of a building (a trend that continued on into the 1960s).⁵ Yet, there was also a movement for *Heimatschutz* (homeland protection) that had arisen in the nineteenth century and which preferred traditional and regional standards, primarily in rural and small-town spaces.⁶

Initiator: Werner Lindner (1883–1964)

After 1933, under the drastically altered conditions of the "total state," sweeping interventions in building construction were possible. The architect Werner Lindner was the initiator and source of such revisionist ideas, and he was joined by the other central figures of the exhibition "The Beautiful Town—*Entschandlung* and Design" in drawing their recommendations out of the homeland protection movement. This campaign took a hostile view toward buildings from the late nineteenth century period of rapid industrial expansion and was also critical of contemporary trends. After 1933, this critical journalism flowed into a feasible design ideology. With the National Socialist state's plenitude of power, and given its (often overlapping) parallel initiatives, Lindner was able to garner support for his ideas.

Lindner was born in 1883 in Eisleben in the Harz region. He grew up in Eberswalde and later studied architecture at the Technical University Berlin-Charlottenburg. In 1912, he received his doctorate for a thesis written on the style of Lower Saxon farmhouses in Germany and Holland. Subsequently, at

⁴ See TORBEN KIEPKE: *Neue Fassaden für die historische Stadt: Fassadenumbauten der Moderne in Berlin*, Berlin 2017.

⁵ See HANS GEORG HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN: *Schnörkellos—die Umgestaltung von Bauten des Historismus im Berlin des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 2013.

⁶ See WILLIAM H. ROLLINS: *A Greener Vision of Home: Cultural Politics and Environmental Reform in the German Heimatschutz Movement, 1904–1918*, Ann Arbor 1997.

the Technical University Dresden, he was an assistant to the architect Emil Högg (1867–1954), who was active in the homeland protection movement. In 1914, Lindner became the managing director of the German League for Homeland Protection (Deutscher Bund Heimatschutz, DBH) and in this capacity, he was engaged in the planning for the reconstruction of East Prussia after 1915.⁷ In the 1920s, Lindner combined his conservative convictions with the impulses of the Werkbund movement and made suggestions regarding design issues in industrial and engineered structures.⁸

He obviously saw in the rise of National Socialism a possibility for the homeland protection movement to gain increasing influence.

“The concepts of German Nationhood [Volkstum] and Homeland are highly valued in the building up of the new Reich. Consequently, homeland protection and the fostering of it take center stage in such construction efforts. While the path there and the final goal continue to be the ones of old, the possibilities for developing them have now grown unimaginably.”⁹

Although Lindner did lose his post as managing director in the wake of the *Gleichschaltung* of the associations and the reorganizations that followed, he was nevertheless still able to initiate numerous activities in his various roles as Reich Commissioned Specialist (Reichsfachbeauftragter), as editor of the journal *Heimatleben*, and as an extremely prolific author. During the construction of the Reichsautobahn, Lindner proffered suggestions for the designs of gas stations, rest stops, and some basic rules for construction which would meld it well with the surrounding terrain. It was in 1938 that he organized the exhibition “The Beautiful Town.”¹⁰

⁷ WERNER LINDNER: Kulturfragen zum Wiederaufbau, insonderheit zum Bürger- und Bauernhaus, in: Ostpreußen und sein Wiederaufbau: Studien zur Frage des Wiederaufbaues zerstörter Ortschaften, Berlin 1915, pp. 17–25.

⁸ In her dissertation about Lindner, Barbara Banck addresses primarily these activities, which were aimed at a new building and industry culture in which tradition, nature, and industry appear reconciled with one another. She also refers to the continuity of the orientation toward the “East” in the discussions of the League for Homeland Protection after the First World War and Lindner’s commitment after 1939. However, she does not cover the exhibition “The Beautiful Town.” See BARBARA BANCK: Werner Lindner: Industriemoderne und regionale Identität, PhD thesis Universität Dortmund 2001, <https://eldorado.tu-dortmund.de/handle/2003/25010> (2021-09-13).

⁹ WERNER LINDNER: Heimatschutz im neuen Reich, Leipzig 1934, p. 5.

¹⁰ After the Second World War, Lindner continued working uninterruptedly on this topic of homeland protection. At the end of the war, he moved to Hermannsburg near Celle, published with Bernhard Saal the *Kleine Baukunde für Jedermann* in 1948, and in 1951, he founded the Committee for Cemetery and Monument (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Friedhof und Denkmal), whose leader he remained until 1959. In that year, he was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit. He died in 1964.

The Exhibition

The name chosen for the exhibition is so typical of the times. The image of the “beautiful town” is laid out as the antithesis to the large city metropolises characterized by their commercial businesses. The word *Entschandelung* (its prefix “ent” is approximately equivalent to the English prefix “dis” or “de”) is an instance of the trend toward dissociating gestures which the National Socialist way of speaking employed (as Victor Klemperer has pointed out).¹¹ This neologism implies the notion of *Schande* (shame) and has an intensely moral connotation implying a violation of honor and being guilty for such. So, getting rid of the shame caused by the introduction of unsightly “un-German” building styles in the towns and indeed undoing them, consequently meant much more “morally” than a mere renovation or restoration of a townscape.

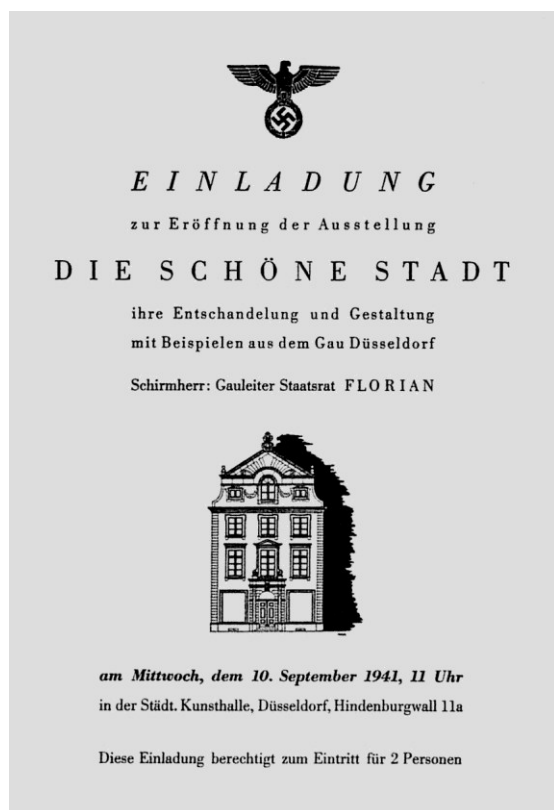


Fig. 1:
 Invitation card to the
 exhibition opening “The
 Beautiful Town” in
 Düsseldorf, 10 September
 1941, in: BArch, NS 25 /
 1626, fol. 2

¹¹ VICTOR KLEMPERER: LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen, Leipzig 1975, p. 7.

The concept itself originated in the Bureau for the Beauty of Labor (Amt Schönheit der Arbeit), an organization within the German Labor Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront, DAF), which already in 1934 had ordered actions such as the “decluttering” of, and later the “riddance of scrap” from, businesses and factories.¹² On the one hand, these campaigns served practical purposes by streamlining and improving production sites; however, under the conditions of the dictatorship, the social discipline connected with that particular motto of “Beauty of Labor” had a far more important effect. This was similarly the case with the exhibition “The Beautiful Town—*Entschandelung* and Design;” its illustrative redesigns as presented at its many stops in the country were intended to propose exemplary models for proper German design. Those who launched the exhibition kept their distance from traditional monument conservation and from people advocating for the preservation of the authentic historical substance of building—a position they considered as backward-oriented. Instead, they sought to move in the circles of individuals who were political decision-makers, and who were in agreement with putting shared ideological goals into practice. In the end, these Homeland Protection initiatives developed ties with the DAF, with Albert Speer, who was General Building Inspector for the Reich Capital (Generalbauinspektor für die Reichshauptstadt), and with the Reich Commissioner’s Office for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (Reichskommissariat für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums) under Heinrich Himmler and the settlement plans being developed there.

Given these efforts and connections, it is surely worthwhile taking a closer look at the exhibition, its propagation, and the network of its protagonists. Identifying the building modifications which were introduced in the wake of the exhibition is also important, both as a part of contemporaneous and architectural history, as well as for today’s building research and the actions intended to preserve historical monuments. In what follows, I will present the exhibition particularly with regard to its stops in what was called “the German East,” where special requirements were in effect. Under the conditions of the occupation and with the goal of revitalizing an “old region of German culture,” the exhibition “The Beautiful Town” was indeed intertwined with the National Socialist policies of German nationhood and settlement.

¹² On 30 January 1934, the Bureau for the Beauty of Labor began its work as a part of the DAF, which was a sub-organization of the National Socialist Fellowship *Kraft durch Freude*. The leader of this office was Albert Speer (who had just turned 30 years old) and his deputy was the architect Julius Schulte-Frohlinde. The office started its work in 1934, and its motto for the year was “De-cluttering of Factories” (Enträmpelung der Betriebe). The motto in 1937 ran “Neat People in a Neat Factory” (Saubere Menschen im sauberen Betrieb).

Lindner and "The East"—From Journalism to Exhibition

The exhibition "The Beautiful Town—*Entschandelung* and Design" had its origin in Werner Lindner's many years of journalistic activity. Starting in 1923, and initially in the Werkbund context, he published his thoughts on the "proper design" of industrial buildings. His research into the history of buildings was already focusing on what in his opinion was the exemplary building culture found in the Mark Brandenburg region, and more generally in the "Prussian East." His particular interest was in the reconstruction plans for East Prussia after the First World War, something in which the DBH¹³ was quite involved. Lindner's dedication to this was at one with the goals of the club, namely, the "protection of the German homeland in its natural and historically developed uniqueness" and the "support of traditional rural and middle-class building styles."¹⁴

After 1933, his activities (with the political support of the DAF) led to the publication of a three-volume series with the titles "The Village—Its Care and Design," "The Town—Its Care and Design" (both in 1939) and "The East" (1940).¹⁵ In his function as the designated expert of the DBH, Lindner collected here in book form his research and the findings of the exhibition "The Beautiful Town—*Entschandelung* and Design," which had been up and running since 1938. The third volume of this series, dedicated specifically to the "East," appeared as mentioned in 1940 with a foreword from the chairman of the DAF, Robert Ley, and an introduction by its architect, Julius Schulte-Frohlinde. The textbook model of example and counterexample, which Lindner had used in the first two volumes to elucidate "the characteristic tasks of *Entschandelung* and redesign"¹⁶ now took a back seat to a thorough depiction of redesign and conceptual planning. The "East" volume was intended to be the prelude to a whole series of further presentations on other regions, but they in fact never appeared.

Lindner describes the "East" geographically as the "wedge between the middle Elbe, the Masurian seas, and the Beskids." The accompanying maps show clearly that he understood this to include the region between Magdeburg and Tilsit (today: Sovetsk), as well as the Wartheland and the General

¹³ Founded in 1904 as the Bund Heimatschutz, the society changed its names several times, so after 1914 it was the Deutscher Bund Heimatschutz and after 1937, the Deutscher Heimatbund.

¹⁴ Satzung des Bundes Heimatschutz von der Gründungsversammlung, Dresden 30.3.1904, in: Mitteilungen des Bundes Heimatschutz 1 (1904), 1, p. 7.

¹⁵ Die landschaftlichen Grundlagen des deutschen Bauschaffens: Buchreihe der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Heimat und Haus. Vol. 1: WERNER LINDNER, ERICH KULKE et al. (eds.): Das Dorf: Seine Pflege und Gestaltung, München [1939]; vol. 2: WERNER LINDNER, ERICH BÖCKLER (eds.): Die Stadt: Ihre Pflege und Gestaltung, München [1939]; vol. 3: WERNER LINDNER, WALTER KRATZ et al. (eds.): Der Osten, München 1940.

¹⁶ LINDNER/KRATZ, p. 11.

Government on the other side of the provinces of Silesia and East Prussia.¹⁷ In Lindner's view, the architectural culture in this "Eastern Space" (Ostraum) had been influenced by "medieval German settlements" and by a few "clannish building styles" that had been passed down over the generations. He especially emphasized the exemplary work of the "Old Prussian architect" of the eighteenth century as the model for municipal and rural building styles. He was a staunch proponent of the exemplary nature of this architectural culture, which he notes had radiated into neighboring areas; the latter, in his view, "on their own bear no distinct nor viable architectural self-identity." The predominantly sober mode of expression in this style is something he finds to be a good "starting point for the effort to allow our building industry to recover its health."¹⁸

In 1943, Lindner published a new and expanded edition of "The Village," offering contributions about the "rural development of the East," which would likewise be applicable to the "whole of the Reich." He drew on material from a contest organized by the Reich Commissioner's Office for the Consolidation of German Nationhood, and in so doing, sought to make explicit the ideational connection to Himmler's nationhood and settlement policies.

The work on actual buildings and evaluating the appearance of localities were tasks Lindner delegated to numerous architects and kindred spirits. After 1938, in his role as the publicist and originator of the exhibit "The Beautiful Town," he collected these examples to turn them into effective propaganda. With such, Lindner sought to involve the provincial conservators of cultural heritage; he sent them his publications in advance and kept up correspondence with them, the goal being to receive appropriate pictorial material from them. He also encouraged them to undertake particular reconstruction projects, but the reactions from these conservators were mixed; many answered evasively or claimed that in their regions there were no "disfigured old monuments in the sense of the examples you have provided."¹⁹ Yet there were others, such as the provincial conservator of the art monuments in Upper Silesia, who wanted "to tackle right away the cases of disfigured buildings."²⁰ In Lindner's view, a narrow focus on preservation, with its obligation to protect building structures and its orientation toward individual monuments, was too limited; for him, such views did not focus enough on being sufficiently expansive to include the overall streetscapes and townscapes.²¹ The DBH, of

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 25, map 19a "Neues Bauen im Deutschen Osten."

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 11.

¹⁹ Letter from the provincial conservator of Hohenzollern to Lindner from 1938-02-02, in: Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BArch), R 8068/2: Akten des Deutschen Heimatbundes.

²⁰ Letter from the provincial conservator Georg Pick to Lindner from 1937-07-23, ibidem.

²¹ The conservationists of heritage sites fluctuated between conservative preservation and images of a "creative preservation of historic monuments," an idea formulated in 1929.

which he was a member, maintained an insistence on proper design and focused on the overall impression presented in the visual appearance.

That being said, Lindner's ideas had only achieved their full initial effect during the first half of the 1930s. Town redevelopment, which started early in the 1930s with modernization measures such as the opening up of "old town" areas and other redevelopment and social policy measures, frequently resulted in the dismantling of historical town structures, for example, in the old town sections of Frankfurt am Main, Kassel, Hanover, or Brunswick. But then, the push-ahead with rearmament efforts resulted in supply shortages that impacted any such architectural modifications, and they ceased in 1936. However, a quite costly major event, namely the summer Olympics in August 1936, led to intrusions into townscapes countrywide. It was in the wake of this "beautifying of townscapes" that ultimately the notion of *Entschandelung* appeared for the first time, when used by the Bureau for the Beauty of Labor. It was the expectation of this subsection of the DAF and its leader Albert Speer that townscapes and landscapes should be rid of "disturbing flaws," with "appropriate measures" taken that would lead to "improvement."²² Through "ongoing propaganda" in coordination with the Bureau for the Beauty of Labor, people were to be "educated in a sensibility against everything that was disorderly and unattractive."²³

In Berlin, the principal focus turned to the street Unter den Linden in the city center, the Heerstraße up to the Olympic Stadium on the western edge of town, and to the area surrounding the regatta course in the Köpenick district. Starting in 1935, the façades were refurbished, and gaudy advertisements either removed or changed.²⁴

The Olympics were the occasion that unleashed an avalanche of additional initiatives, which bit by bit came to encompass the whole country. In that same period, the stigmatizing of out-of-favor architectural periods and styles became increasingly more aggressive. A normative and morally charged perception of beauty was consistently operative here, which is quite apparent in the term *Entschandelung*. Instead of using the term "embellishments" for

The change in the guiding principle included a convergence with the positions of Homeland Protection, the *völkisch* movement, and that of National Socialism, whose embodiment, however, was dependent on one person. See SUSANNE FLEISCHNER: "Schöpferische Denkmalpflege": Kulturideologie des Nationalsozialismus und Positionen der Denkmalpflege, Münster 1999; SIGRID BRANDT: Schöpferische Denkmalpflege? Anmerkungen zu einem Schimpfwort. Vortrag anlässlich des Symposiums Nachdenken über Denkmalpflege, Teil 2, Hundisburg, 16.11.2002, in: *kunsttexte.de* (2003), 1 (4 pages), <https://doi.org/10.18452/6999>.

²² Aufruf zur "Entschandelungsaktion in Stadt und Land", in: Erlasse, Anordnungen, Aufrufe von Partei, Staat und Wehrmacht über Schönheit der Arbeit, Berlin 1937, p. 107.

²³ Ibidem, pp. 103–104.

²⁴ HEINZ WEIDNER: Berlin im Festschmuck: Vom 15. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart, Berlin 1940, p. 144.

municipal areas (a term which originated in France and was also in common use among German experts), the rejected building styles were not merely defined as ugly, but indeed proscribed as unsightly and disgraceful for the individual, the town, and the *Volksgemeinschaft*. This term also carried connotations of “healthy” or “sick:

“Anything that is healthy in life we perceive as beautiful; everything sickly is ugly; that is true for human beings as well as for the composition of a town. In order to have a beautiful town, the starting point is to have a healthy town. Viewed this way, then, the beautification efforts in older city sections in Cologne, Frankfurt, Kassel, Brunswick have their point, since beautifying the externals makes the internal healthy.”²⁵

The National Socialist ascent to power was accompanied by a slew of spectacular exhibitions. They celebrated the supposed superiority of the new German Reich in technical and cultural areas. For example, “German People—German Labor” in 1934 served to elevate the self-confidence of the people and provide propaganda for the economic recovery.²⁶ In June 1936, in the run-up to the Olympics, there was the exhibition “The German Municipality” which promoted the accomplishments of local German self-administration.²⁷ In demonstration, the German communities presented examples of their



Fig. 2:
Model from the Frankfurt Römer, displayed in 1936 as part of the exhibition “The German Municipality” (Die Deutsche Gemeinde) presented in Berlin in the exhibition halls on the Kaiserdamm, in: Archives de l’État en Belgique, Centre d’Études et de Documentation Guerre et Sociétés contemporaines (CegesSoma), Bruxelles, no. 122002

²⁵ KARL SABEL: Wann ist eine Stadt schön? Wege aus dem Alten ins Neue—An das öffentliche Gewissen, in: Rheinische Westfälische Zeitung from 1941-09-14.

²⁶ The best known were primarily the three largest exhibitions, whose designs were essentially influenced by former Bauhaus graduates around Herbert Bayer: “German People—German Work” (Deutsches Volk—Deutsche Arbeit) (1934), “The Miracle of Life” (Das Wunder des Lebens) (1935) and “Germany” (Deutschland) (1936). See SABINE WEISSLER: Bauhaus-Gestaltung in NS-Propaganda-Ausstellungen, in: WINFRIED NERDINGER (ed.): Bauhaus-Moderne im Nationalsozialismus: Zwischen Anbiederung und Verfolgung, München 1993, pp. 48–63.

²⁷ Die Ausstellung “Die deutsche Gemeinde”: Leistungsschau der deutschen Gemeinden und Gemeindeverbände, in: Der Gemeindetag: Zeitschrift für deutsche Gemeindepolitik 30 (1936), p. 449.

activities and modernized management styles in the exhibition halls on the street Kaiserdamm in Berlin (Fig. 2). What is noticeable about this is the large number of scale models of old towns; with great attention to detail, these presented the visual appearances of German towns, primarily those locations which bore the imprint of the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Likewise, the topic of remodeling towns was raised, always propagating the goal that a unified and uncluttered townscape is both attractive and achievable. In his welcoming address, Julius Lippert (appointed the state commissioner for Berlin in 1933) wrote the following:

“Our guests can be sure that not only the Berlin exhibition bureau, but also the Reich’s capital city itself have fulfilled their mission in this year of the Olympics. In all parts of the city the efforts are clearly visible which the Reich and the city administration particularly in this last year have undertaken in order to once again give our beautiful city a neat, worthy, and clean face, now rid of the gaudiness of earlier times, and after the neglectfulness of the *Systemzeit* [Weimar period].”²⁸

Soon there were demands for a statutory basis that would go beyond the 15 July 1907 “Prussian law against the defacement of localities and scenically exquisite parts of the country.” In September 1936, the senior mayor of Berlin inquired of the Reich Minister of Labor as to “when one might expect the declaration of a Reich law against defacements.”²⁹ In November 1936, a “Regulation regarding Building Design” was issued. With paragraph 1 requiring a “decorous building ethos,” a concept was being included that was open to various interpretations, and consequently offered a wide range of possible ways to apply it.³⁰ In two fundamental legal decisions in 1939, the Prussian Administrative Tribunal clarified how “decorous building ethos” was to be understood. According to these two court opinions, “decorous building ethos” related to the “architectural planning” and the

“thoughtful consideration of the whole building as to its form and arrangement, its color, its materials, and the design of its surface area. With any structural changes, the building must show itself in its new form to be architecturally unified in all these aspects.”

The determinative basis for such judgments was to rest on the assessment of “the aesthetically trained observer.”³¹ For his part, Werner Lindner was more than just an observer; based on his many years of experience he could formulate basic principles of design, which as a publicist and through his work with various associations he could promote. In 1939, for example, Lindner (along with the Reich Guild of Commercial Painters) was successful

²⁸ Opening greeting from Dr. Julius Lippert, in: Die deutsche Gemeinde: Amtlicher Führer. Ausstellung Berlin 1936. Ausstellungshallen am Kaiserdamm, Berlin 1936, not pag.

²⁹ Landesarchiv Berlin, A Pr. Br. Rep. 057, no. 707, Der Stadtpräsident der Reichshauptstadt Berlin, Schutz der Stadt Berlin gegen Verunstaltung, not pag.

³⁰ Verordnung über Baugestaltung: Vom 10. November 1936, in: Reichsgesetzblatt (1936), part 1, p. 938.

³¹ Reichsverwaltungsblatt 60 (1939), pp. 742–744.

in expanding the regulations over building design to include “painting guidelines for any measures taken to beautify the visual impression of a place.” In this way, specific paint color requirements became part of the statutory regulations in the Reich.³²

Stralsund as Exemplar and First Exhibition Stop

So that his ideas could be put into practice, Lindner presented his conclusions in countless lectures that also utilized photos; it was particularly in Stralsund (on the Baltic Sea) where he found listeners who were all ears. In 1937, the town of Stralsund, with Lindner’s help and in cooperation with the Reich Guild of Commercial Painters, began to work on all of Semlow Street to make it an “exemplar of *Entschandelung*.”³³ The modification plan was prepared by the young architect Gerhard Waldmann from Hamburg.³⁴

The original idea was to motivate the Stralsund building owners to take on the task of the reconstruction themselves. To that end, a ten-year plan was set up with the goal of an *Entschandelung* of the whole old town. The property owners, however, were not as cooperative as hoped; they pointed out that they were already in possession of valid building permits.³⁵ So, as it turned out, the greatest part of the costs were borne by the organizers. That notwithstanding, the head of the Townscape Beautification Commission (Stadtbildverschönerungskommission), Wilhelm Meyer, still saw the exhibit as a “quite successful project” compared to other municipal development efforts elsewhere:

“Semlow Street as a project had nothing to do with the ‘renovation of the old town.’ It was conducted in order to rehearse the style for building surfaces in a Low-German medium-sized town so it could be a model for the whole of the North and East German area.”³⁶

³² Erlass des Reichsarbeitsministers, betr. Baugestaltung; hier: Richtlinien für Malerarbeiten vom 10. Januar 1939 – IV c 5 Nr. 8900/1. 39, Anlage: Richtlinien für die Malerarbeiten bei den Maßnahmen zur Verschönerung des Ortsbildes im Einvernehmen mit dem Reichsarbeitsministerium bearbeitet und herausgegeben vom Reichsinnungsverband des Malerhandwerks, in: Reichsarbeitsblatt I, Amtlicher Teil, NF 19 (1939), 3, p. 50.

³³ Aufruf: An alle heimatliebenden Stralsunder. Der Oberbürgermeister bittet um tatkräftige Mitarbeit zur Verschönerung der Stadt, 1937, in: Stadtarchiv Stralsund, Rep. 24, no. 3032a.

³⁴ Cf. NIELS GUTSCHOW: Ordnungswahn: Architekten planen im “eingedeutschten Osten” 1939–1945, Basel et al. 2001, p. 150.

³⁵ In the 1920s approval had been given for breaking through walls to install shop windows, which in the wake of the *Entschandelung* effort, were now to be filled back in.

³⁶ Statement from Meyer from 1941-04-29, in: Stadtarchiv Stralsund, Rep. 24, no. 3040, not pag. ALFRED DORN (ed.): Die Semlowerstraße in Stralsund: Entschandelung und Gestaltung, Berlin 1940, summarizes the project.

This makes it clear that *Entschandelung* meant primarily the simplification of surface areas, in other words, a clearing up of the façades of the buildings. From this perspective, the important issues concerned the shape of the roofs, the composition of the plaster coating and the selected colors, the windows, doors, lettering, and metal fittings—in short, all the external forms and materials of the building. The plans for Semlow Street and the examples of modifications carried out in other towns were eventually brought together in the training show exhibited for the first time in the summer of 1938 in Stralsund, namely the aforementioned: "The Beautiful Town—*Entschandelung* and Design."

Among the building guidelines that the exhibit promoted was the filling in of openings in the walls where windows had been cut through in the nineteenth century, the removal of advertising placards, and the removal of stucco designs that were decorative embellishments from Historicism and Art Nouveau. One area of emphasis was on the true-to-form craftsmanship of the building's construction. Among the restyling measures taken on Semlow Street were the selection of subdued colors, ornamentation with "National Socialist markings" such as runes, and a new version of house signs. There were additional ideas for revisions that came from other towns, such as changing the rooflines, the number of stories in each house, or the kind of external surface plaster used.

The exhibit consisted of scale models of buildings and sections of towns, along with around 110 photo boards as well as 20 color charts. For each item, an example of what was ugly was set against an *entschandelt* example after its renovation. This was in keeping with the exhibition being labeled a training show; it pointed out not only negative examples, but also basic principles of design. The polemical captions under the pictures communicated the message not only to experts, craftsmen, and administrative personnel, but also didactically to the owners of private houses and the general public.³⁷

The show (as a travelling exhibition) had 60 stops from August 1938 until September 1939 (Fig. 3), replete with up-to-date examples of buildings that had been set right. Any interested municipalities could apply to host an exhibition, but that also involved a commitment to contributing their own local *Entschandelung* project.

In order to handle the brisk demand from town administrations, duplicate exhibitions began running in parallel through the whole of what was then the borders of the Reich. At the instigation of the district trade union, an added third iteration was supposed to run from 15 to 30 September 1939 in the civic center in Koblenz. An opening evening lecture by Lindner was planned as part of promotional efforts for the event, but with the outbreak of the war, it never took place. On 5 September, the head of town planning and building

³⁷ WERNER LINDNER: Die Wanderausstellung "Die schöne Stadt—Ihre Entschandelung und Gestaltung," in: Heimatleben 2 (1939), 3, pp. 65–68.



Fig. 3: A view into the exhibition rooms for “The Beautiful Town” with a chart of the modifications on Semlow Street. Traffic and Building Museum, Berlin (January 1939), in: LINDNER, *Die Wanderausstellung*, p. 63

control in Koblenz, Hanns Klose, cancelled the event, “given the present circumstances,” and expressed the hope that at some later point in time they would “be able to revisit the matter.”³⁸

Stopping Points in the “German East”

The suspension of the traveling tour lasted only until early summer of the following year. On 2 June 1940, it opened in Gdańsk (Danzig) and the three parallel versions were then to travel to a total of 33 locations within the newly created Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreußen. In view of the “Polish campaign,” Lindner obviously saw the need to become involved in the “East” without delay. Even as early as November 1939, Stralsund’s mayor Werner Stoll was campaigning quite zealously for the exhibition to tour the East. His point was that since the DBH in conjunction with Organisation Todt was to tackle the “preparatory work for the architectural design of settlement areas in East and North-East German,”³⁹ they could take advantage of the experiences from the method developed and used in Stralsund. On 2 November 1939, at a meeting

³⁸ Brief Hanns Klose an Innungsverband des Malerhandwerks, Bezirksstelle Rheinland in Köln, in: Stadtarchiv Koblenz, 623, no. 9087, not pag.

³⁹ Verfügung von OBM Werner Stoll, Stralsund vom 4.11.1939, in: Stadtarchiv Stralsund, Rep. 29, no. 0361, fol. 12.

in Berlin, Lindner and Stoll considered arranging for Eduard Schönleben,⁴⁰ undersecretary at the General Inspectorate for the German Road System, to visit Semlow Street in Stralsund. In Mayor Stoll's opinion, Stralsund should serve "as a radiant point for the correct design and development of the German North-East, Eastern Pomerania, West Prussia," regions on which Undersecretary Schönleben was in fact working to develop designs for buildings.⁴¹ Schönleben, as leader of *Fachgruppe Bauwesen* (specialist group for construction) in the National Socialist League of German Engineering (NS-Bund Deutscher Technik, NSBDT) was enthusiastic about the initiative. Later on, he collected in book-form his impressions of Semlow Street and gave a copy to the *Gaufachgruppenwaltern* (Leaders of the Gau Specialist Groups) as "a model for the *Entschandelung* of a townscape."⁴²

The exhibition's tour through the eastern Reichsgau (as established now in occupied Poland) was intended to effectively propagandize using specific local examples. After the tour restarted in Danzig, the town of Elbląg (Elbing) came next, opening on 11 August 1940. Lindner held a lecture with photos in hand and offered his own observations after inspecting Elbląg and he gave recommendations on how the citizenry "could itself contribute to a good and spruced up townscape."⁴³ The exhibition moved on, stopping as well in Grudziądz (Graudenz), Bydgoszcz (Bromberg) and Toruń (Thorn).

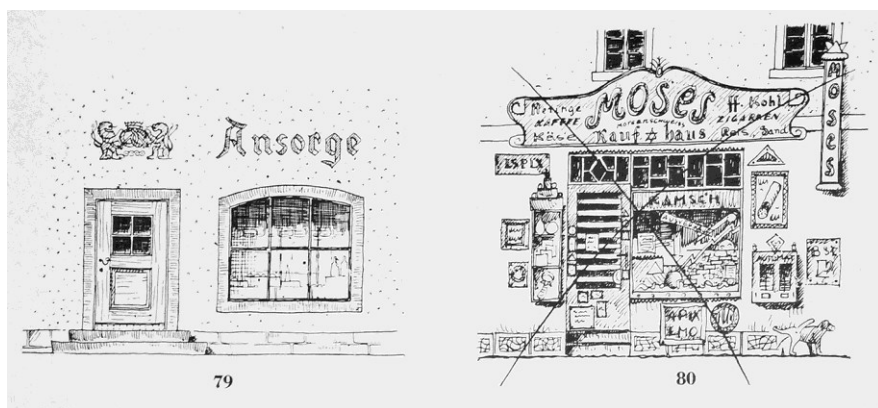


Fig. 4: Two examples of a store door with display window from the illustrated "Ortssatzung über Baugestaltung in den Gemeinden der Kreise Hirschberg, Löwenberg, Landeshut," in: *Baugilde* 23 (1941), 35/36, p. 562

⁴⁰ Eduard Schönleben (1897–1985) was a member of the Prussian Academy for Building Construction and belonged to the research association for roadways, in which capacity he was active in the planning for the German Autobahn.

⁴¹ Verfügung von OBM Werner Stoll (as in footnote 39).

⁴² Letter from Schönleben to Stoll from 1941-01-03, in: Stadtarchiv Stralsund, Rep. 29, no. 0317, not pag.

⁴³ Ausstellung "Die schöne Stadt" in Westpreußen, in: *Form und Farbe* (1940), 9, p. 113.

Poznań

After touring the Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreußen, the exhibit moved on to Reichsgau Wartheland. It opened in Poznań (Posen), the capital city of the Gau.⁴⁴ On 5 August 1940, the Gauleiter Robert Schulz opened the “Beautiful Town” in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum.⁴⁵ As a district capital, Poznań had already come to the attention of Speer, who had consulted with the Reich’s Deputy and Gauleiter Arthur Greiser about plans for redesigning the town. They paid particular attention to the castle designed by Franz Schwechten and built between 1905 and 1910 in a neo-romantic style, with the goal now of remodeling it to serve as the residence of the Reich’s Deputy.⁴⁶ The judgment of the journal *Bauwelt* was that “this Romanesque castle will certainly require considerable modifications.”⁴⁷

For the redesigns and new designs on the town square, the Reich Guild of Commercial Painters sent to Poznań the master painter Alfred Dorn from Berlin, who had also been involved in the work in Stralsund. He submitted what had now become a standard set of changes: “The common storefronts in the upper floors were removed, the roofs along with their structures were adjusted and made regular, and in general an exceedingly thorough *Entschandlung* was undertaken.” Even in the middle of the war, the renovation of the old town square was undertaken “which was at the same time to provide an example for the other cities in the newly acquired East.”⁴⁸ The collaboration on site with head of town planning and building control Gerd Lüers was extremely successful. Lüers was not just responsible for the building commission and town planning in Poznań. As the *Gaufachgruppenwalter*, and person responsible for the specialist group for construction in the Wartheland, he is an example of the staff entanglements between the “*Entschandlung* and Design” being propagandized in the exhibition and the plans for new construction and remodeling in the region, which involved individual buildings, settlements, and the landscaping and layout of green areas.

⁴⁴ As to the different Polish and German redesigns of buildings in Poznań between 1918 and 1950, see MALGORZATA POPIOLEK: Komplexe Beziehungen: Der Umgang mit historischen Stadtzentren in Deutschland und Polen 1900–1950, in: CARMEN M. ENSS, GERHARD VINKEN (eds.): Produkt Altstadt: Historische Stadtzentren in Städtebau und Denkmalpflege, Bielefeld 2016, pp. 93–106, here pp. 98–100.

⁴⁵ Today: Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu.

⁴⁶ See HEINRICH SCHWENDEMANN, WOLFGANG DIETSCHKE: Hitlers Schloß: Die “Führerresidenz” in Posen, Berlin 2003.

⁴⁷ Neugestaltung Posens, in: *Bauwelt* 30 (1939), 48, p. V.

⁴⁸ G[ERD] LÜERS: Umfassende Erneuerungsarbeiten der Gauhauptstadt Posen, in: *Form und Farbe* (1941), 4, p. 45. For the architectural competition for the new design of the town hall on the town square, see the contribution from Aleksandra Paradowska in this issue.

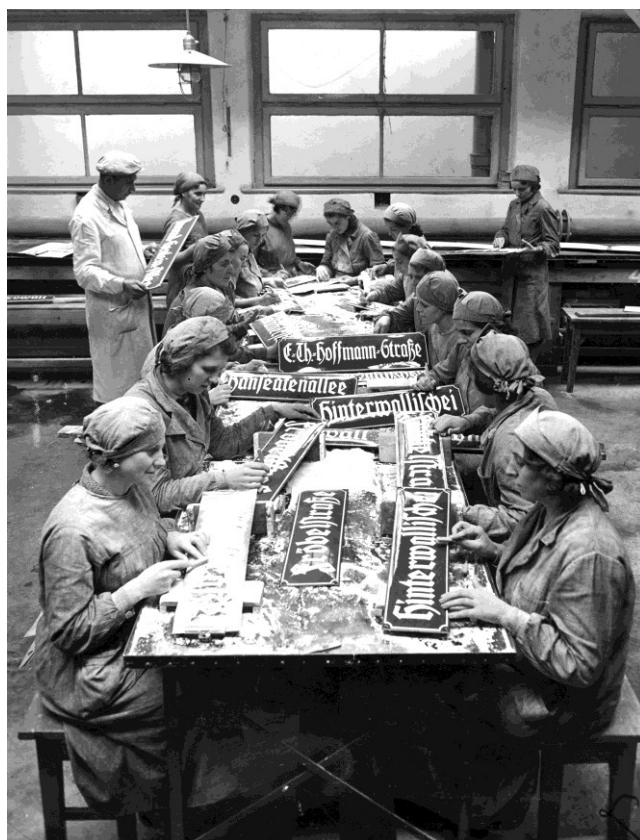


Fig. 5:
After the occupation
of Poland in October
1939 Polish street
names are replaced
by German ones.
"Herstellung der
neuen Straßen-
schilder in Posen"
(1939), Zentralbild
1939-10-22, in:
BArch, Bildarchiv,
183-E11777

Eventually, all the field-tested *Entschandelung* methods flowed into the "Guidelines for the Beautification of Locations in the German East," the compilation of which Himmler in his role as Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood had assigned to those who were involved in organizing the exhibitions.⁴⁹ As far as construction law was concerned, one was given a free hand on 20 March 1941 with the issuing of a "decree regarding the adoption of regulations for the new design of German towns in the annexed Eastern regions."⁵⁰ This expanded the scope of the previous "laws as to the new designs of German towns" from 4 October 1937 and other subsequent executive orders to now include the newly annexed Eastern regions.

⁴⁹ Richtlinien für die Pflege und Verbesserung des Ortsbildes im deutschen Osten: Beilage als Sonderdruck aus der Zeitschrift "Heimatleben," in: Der Deutsche Baumeister 2 (1940), 10.

⁵⁰ "Verordnung zur Einführung von Vorschriften über die Neugestaltung Deutscher Städte in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten" vom 20.3.1941, in: Reichsgesetzblatt (1941), part 1, p. 167.

Litzmannstadt

In September 1940, the other stops for the exhibition in Reichsgau Wartheland were the towns Gniezno (Gnesen) and Łódź (Lodsch).⁵¹ The latter was held from 3 October until 16 October 1940 (Fig. 7; Fig. 9). The Wehrmacht had seized Łódź on 8 September 1939, and in April 1940 the town's name was officially changed, from "Lodsch" to "Litzmannstadt" (Fig. 6) In spring 1940, all Jewish residents had to move into certain sections of the town: Bałuty, Marysin and Stare Miasto, and on 30 April 1940, this area was cordoned off as a ghetto. For the exhibitions in the occupied territories, the conditions were different than at the previous stops, for example, as they had been in Stralsund. Money was available for *Entschandlung* measures, and many houses were unoccupied because of forced displacements and the establishment of ghettos; the pressure to cooperate was significantly greater given the military occupation.



Fig. 6: "By order of the *Führer*, this city is called Litzmannstadt," sign erected in Lodz, ca. 1940, in: BArch, Bildarchiv, 146-1974-151-14

⁵¹ Additional stops in the Warthegau were: Kalisz (Kalisch), October–November 1940; Leszno (Lissa), November 1940; Ostrów Wielkopolski (Ostrowo), December 1940 and Włocławek (Leslau), February–March 1941.



Fig. 7: Visitors of the exposition "The Beautiful Town" in Litzmannstadt (October 1940). Top right in the picture, the display boards from Fig. 8 can be seen. Photograph from the private collection of Barbara Bojanowska (Łódź), by courtesy of Tomasz Bolanowski. Cf. BOLANOWSKI, p. 90

The architect Gerhard Waldmann, who had produced the *Entschandelung* plan for Stralsund, began his stay in Litzmannstadt, it seems, in December 1939. He had been invited to take part for six months in the town's redevelopment and he started with a redesign of a row of textile shops.⁵² Eventually, steps were taken for a reworking of individual sections of "Adolf Hitler Street" (today: Piotrkowska Street), a thoroughfare that was the main business street and a traffic artery in the town, traversing it from north to south for a length of 5 kilometers.

With regard to form, the interventions in these old buildings were aimed primarily at standardizing the height of the eaves (Fig. 8). Yet, even with these completed modifications, the 1943 Baedeker travel guide for the General Government contains criticisms of the "unbalanced townscape" of Litzmannstadt, a town that was considered an important stop on the route into the General Government: "[...] small, one story weavers' houses sit between large tenements, with gloomy factories behind them, randomly scattered

⁵² Letter from Waldmann to Stoll from 1940-05-29, in: Stadtarchiv Stralsund, Rep. 24, no. 3033a, fol. 307.

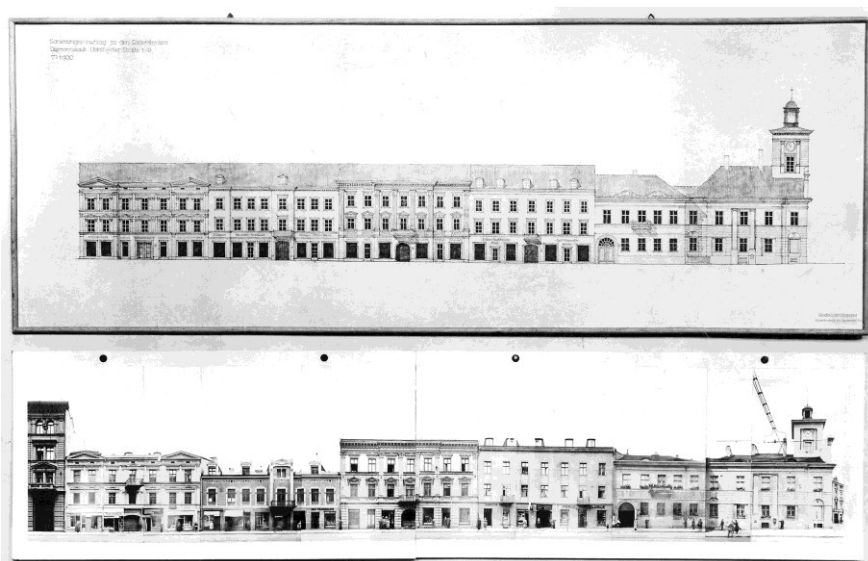


Fig. 8: *Entschandlung* of Adolf Hitler Street 1–9 (ul. Piotrkowska) in Litzmannstadt. Display boards from the exhibition “The Beautiful Town” in Litzmannstadt (October 1940), in: Stadtarchiv Stralsund, Rep. 24, no. 3033a, fol. 249

through the town.” The guide, however, does reference the “large-scale redesign since 1940 according to modern tenets of town construction and social redevelopment.”⁵³ The measures taken in the modifications on Adolf Hitler Street now became the central focus of the local iteration of the propaganda show “The Beautiful Town.” The office of town redevelopment, with Waldmann as the person in charge, organized and set up the exhibit.⁵⁴ In addition to façades and roof designs, the plan was also for an extensive gutting of the thick set of buildings in the back. In drawings and detailed models, the “old state of things” and “the new state” were juxtaposed to each other in the exhibit.⁵⁵ For the tenement houses Numbers 1 through 9, the façades were

⁵³ KARL BAEDEKER: *Das Generalgouvernement: Reisehandbuch*, Leipzig 1943, p. 15.

⁵⁴ TOMASZ BOLANOWSKI: *Architektura okupowanej Łodzi: Niemieckie plany przebudowy miasta* [Architecture of the Occupied Łódź: German Plans of Rebuilding the City], Łódź 2013, pp. 87–88: photographs of these models. GUTSCHOW, p. 153, passes down a photograph with co-workers of the town redevelopment bureau standing in front of a part of the model, with Waldmann in it as well.

⁵⁵ See BOLANOWSKI, p. 86, with the image of the handling of the “proposed reconstruction” of the storefronts on Adolf Hitler Street which was displayed in the exhibit. Bolanowski reports at length about the reconstruction plans and building conversions by the German occupiers. A few photographs show scenes from “The Beautiful Town;” see the photo-

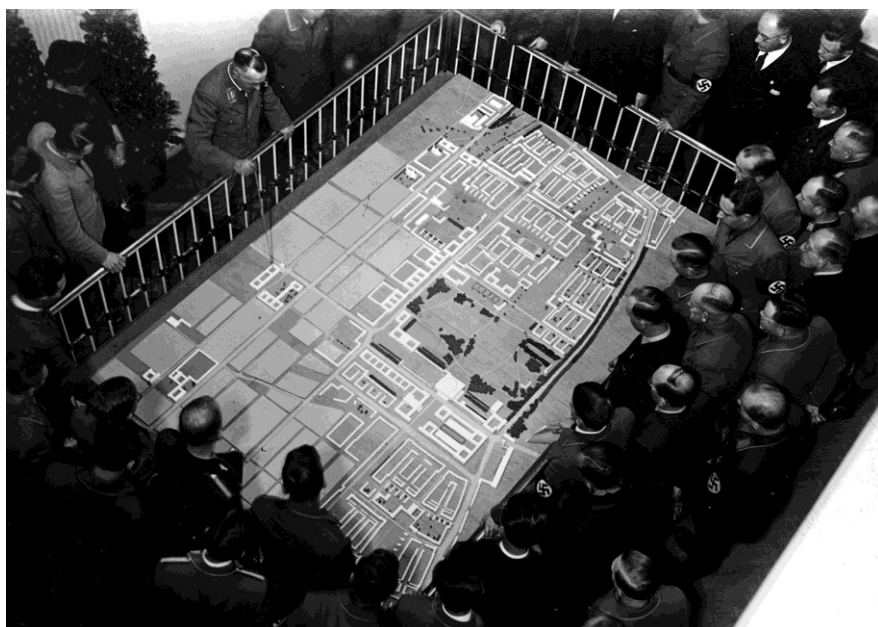


Fig. 9: Explanation to visitors by reference to a model of the city's reconfiguration in the exposition "The Beautiful Town" in Litzmannstadt (October 1940). Photograph from the private collection of Barbara Bojanowska (Łódź), by courtesy of Tomasz Bolanowski. Cf. BOLANOWSKI, p. 92

also altered in accordance with these plans. Yet, for the residential area Adolf Hitler Street 54–72, the plans for the structural reorganization of its inner courtyards evidently were only carried out in a few cases. Also, the desired reshaping to a standardized roofline is not detectable here. Nevertheless, the architectural interventions in the town were extensive and were accordingly used as propaganda.

The tone in the press, of course, was without exception positive, and it tried to a certain extent to even surpass the polemic found on the exhibits' poster boards:

"The Advisory Office for Townscapes [Stadtbildberatungsstelle] and the Town Redevelopment Office [Stadtsanierungsamt] have done everything they possibly can through renovations and restoration to bring some orderliness to the whole circus that lies here before us, with its haphazard mixture of such different styles and impossible combinations, starting with the main street, Adolf Hitler Street."⁵⁶

Other examples that were newly employed and not present in this form at the exhibition's previous stops were the structural shells of new buildings

graphs of the models with the captions "new condition" and "old condition" (pp. 87– 88) and the images of the exhibition room with visitors (pp. 90, 92).

⁵⁶ Litzmannstadt muss schöner werden!, in: Litzmannstädter Zeitung from 1940-10-20.

from the time before the occupation. The *Litzmannstädter Zeitung* showed an example of a library in its early stage of construction (Fig. 10), begun in May 1938 following the plans of the Warsaw architect, Jerzy Wierzbicki (1906–1994).⁵⁷

The incomplete original building was a cubically compact structure with window hinges and a glassed-in ground floor, clearly recognizable as a New Objectivity-styled modern building. The new occupiers' plans seem to call for transforming it into an ensemble of individual buildings, but in reality, they do so merely by giving this impression through a modification of the façade. In the drawings, expansive wall surfaces are divided into smaller sections, and a passageway with an arcade is opened up. The original emphasis on the horizontal line of the windows is tempered by adding framing and additional smaller glass panes. The entry area was to feature some wall lettering and paneled doors. In the end, the "library" became a "people's library." To strengthen the propaganda affect, the drawing of the "German re-design" is presented in greater detail with some framing and vegetation added. The

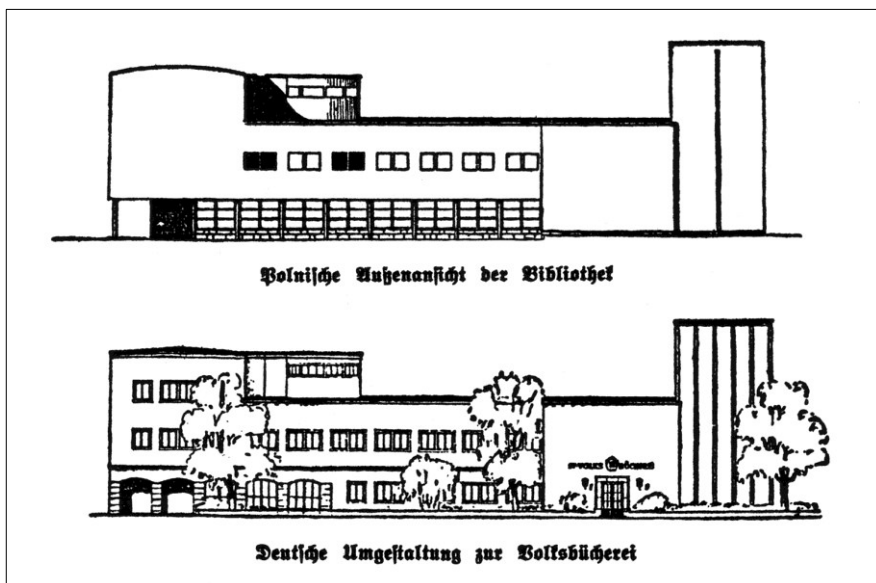


Fig. 10: "Polish External View of the Library" and the "German Redesign of the People's Library." Example of a framed building which was redesigned prior to being completed, as shown in the exhibition "The Beautiful Town" in Litzmannstadt, in: *Litzmannstadt muss schöner werden!*, in: *Litzmannstädter Zeitung* from 1940-10-20

⁵⁷ Today: Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna im. Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego. Cf. <https://www.wbp.lodz.pl/o-bibliotece/kalendarium.html> (2020-06-01).

Litzmannstädter Zeitung reported on the “reworking of unbearable Polish façades on buildings where the structural framing had been started, with the goal being to transform it into something with a more German face.”⁵⁸ But the redesign, in fact, was never executed; the bare shell was used to store the local library’s holdings and the building was not completed until 1949, when Wierzbicki’s original plans were resurrected.

Around 2,000 visitors came to the exhibition in Litzmannstadt, with three 50-person tours once a week. Doubtlessly, many visitors came as part of obligatory tours for business or training. In addition, experts who were working on the planning for new buildings or settlements, or who “had administrative roles in the German occupation came to the exhibit. Treuhandstelle Ost showed a particular interest in the exhibition, since it was financing the building conversions,”⁵⁹ as noted in the newspaper of the Reich Guild of Commercial Painters. In letters to a former colleague in Stralsund, Waldmann reported that because the “first drafts of the *Entschandelung* of the main street” had met with such praise, this led to a “really gratifying and positive collaboration” with the Litzmannstadt representatives of the Advertising Council of the German Economy (Werberat der Deutschen Wirtschaft). Following Lindner’s premiss: “Any advertisements on a house have to blend in with the architecture and the surroundings,” and “the individual store owners have been prepared for and schooled in the impending major modifications to their building.”⁶⁰

Litoměřice

After the show had been presented in Upper Silesia in October and November 1940, next on the itinerary was the Sudetenland (annexed to the German Reich after the 1938 Munich Agreement and since 15 April 1939 administered as a Reichsgau). The kickoff was in November 1941 in Liberec (Reichenberg), the Gau capital, followed then by other towns such as Ústí nad Labem (Aussig) in March and Teplice-Šanov (Teplitz-Schönau) in October 1942. The architect, Oskar Wittek, born in 1906 in the north Moravian town of Krnov (Jägerndorf) and later a student and assistant to the architect Clemens Holzmeister at the Vienna Academy, started in 1941 as the director of the Office of Homeland Protection and Building Preservation (Dienststelle für Heimatschutz und Baupflege) and the Gau Working Group on Building Design of the Specialist Group for Construction in NSBDT Gau Sudetenland

⁵⁸ Litzmannstadt muss schöner werden! (as in footnote 56).

⁵⁹ Ausstellung “Die schöne Stadt“ im Wartheland, in: Das deutsche Malerhandwerk (1940), 22, p. 258. On Haupttreuhandstelle Ost [Main Trustee Office East], see the contribution from Christhardt Henschel in this issue, p. 568.

⁶⁰ Waldmann to Meyer on 1940-11-04, in: Stadtarchiv Stralsund, Rep. 24, no. 3033a, fol. 252.

(Gauarbeitskreis Baugestaltung der Fachgruppe Bauwesen im NSBDT, Gau Sudetenland). He was responsible for the publication of the “Construction Primer” for the Sudetenland. Previously, in 1937, he had gained some experience as a lecturer at the Anhaltischen Landesbauschule, a private school for building trades in Zerbst. When it came to his plans for building alterations in the newly established Gau, Wittek was able to rely on financial support from the Reich.

“In the areas with Sudeten Germans, reliable financial support for the refurbishment and modifications of residential buildings is ensured through subsidies from the Reich. The Reich Minister of Finance has made available an unscheduled amount of 1 million Reichsmark, which the Reich Commissioner for the Sudetenland, Department III., Labor, is to distribute in Reichenberg.”⁶¹

Building modifications were planned for Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), namely the façades on “Adolf Hitler Square” (Mírové náměstí / Market Square) and these were presented in October 1942 in the “The Beautiful Town” exhibition (Fig. 11).

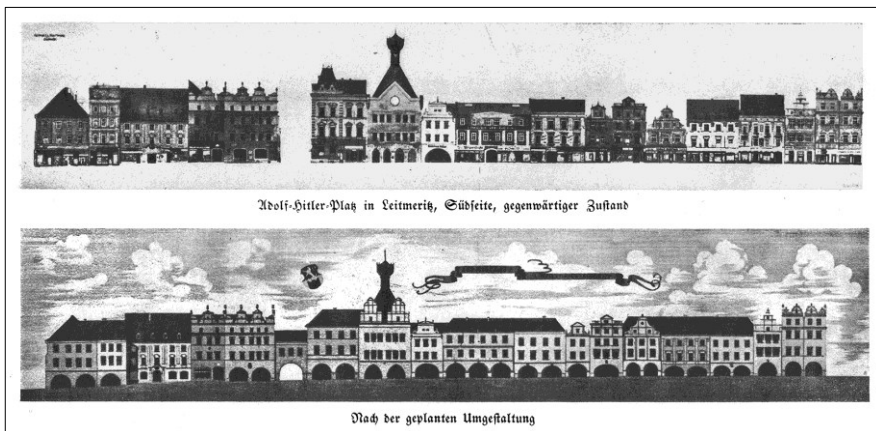


Fig. 11: *Entschandlung* of Adolf Hitler Square in Litoměřice. Example from the exhibition “The Beautiful Town” in Litoměřice (October 1942), in: OSKAR WITTEK: Neugestaltung des Adolf-Hitler-Platzes in Leitmeritz, in: Sudeten-deutsche Monatshefte (1942), pp. 486–491, portion of the figure

In addition to the typical leveling out of the building heights, another evidently popular motif in National Socialism was used: an arcade passageway. The sketch with the envisioned new design of the front of the façade shows that the massive walls were to be opened up and converted into freely accessible ground floor zones, and as a result, the former window openings (especially those of the shop windows) could be eliminated and the business prem-

⁶¹ Reichszuschüsse für das Sudetenland: Für Instandsetzungs- und Umbauarbeiten, in: *Bauwelt* (1939), 5, pp. 99–100.

ises reduced in size. The conversion to open arcades required major intrusions into both a building's core structure and the rights of the individual owners. As a comparison with today's town square in Litoměřice shows, the plans were to a great extent actually carried out. For a few buildings, it would seem, the planners decided to forgo the arcade passageways, or the changes just were not feasible. In addition, the gables on the famous Goblet House (the town hall) with its boldly pitched roof were not redone. The plan to do so had in fact been based on a quite idiosyncratic reinterpretation depicted in an old-copper etching showing the Goblet House with small Renaissance-styled gables.⁶²

"The Beautiful Town" had a recurring catalogue of remedial measures which can be summarized as follows: unify; connect and harmonize neighboring buildings using similar roof designs; position windows, entry ways, or arcades in regular patterns; remove advertising placards; and correlate surface materials and coats of paint.

Additional Stops in the Occupied Territories

The exhibition was probably also presented in April 1942 in what was referred to as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which would include the larger cities of Prague and Brno (Brünn). Already back in 1940, a thorough "*Entschandelung* of Advertisements" had been carried out in Prague. The administration of this area did not belong directly to the territory of the Reich. According to the Vice-Mayor Josef Pfitzner, the local authorities sought advice from both the German architect Konstantin [?] Ahne and the Berlin advertising company ALA (Allgemeine Anzeigen GmbH), so as (in Pfitzner's words) "to ensure the achieving of German tastes."⁶³

The organizers added yet another iteration of the traveling exhibition and ran it in parallel, following the original tour plan from 1939 in the area now referred to as the *Altreich*. Ultimately, the city of Dessau, with its reviled Bauhaus architecture, was to be taught a lesson in "decorous building ethos." Werner Lindner observed that the "conditions of the building culture in Dessau seem to me to be so terrible that in my opinion it would be best if it was Dessau's turn in the foreseeable future."⁶⁴

The effort to present "The Beautiful Town" in all parts of the Reich and in as many places as possible was diligently pursued. Only Bavaria presented its

⁶² P. MICHEL: Der "Kelch von Leitmeritz," in: Deutsche Kunst und Denkmalpflege (1937), pp. 261–263.

⁶³ Tätigkeitsbericht des Primator-Stellvertreters Prof. Dr. Josef Pfitzner für die Zeit vom 25.9. bis 28.10.1940, Prag am 31. Oktober 1940, cited by: VOJTĚCH ŠUSTEK: Josef Pfitzner a protektorátní Praha v letech 1939–1945 [Josef Pfitzner and Prague during Protectorate 1939–1945], vol. 2, Praha 2001, p. 88.

⁶⁴ Letter from Lindner to Hellmut Frincke from the painters' guild from 1941-10-20, in: BAArch, R 8068, 7: Akten des Deutschen Heimatbundes, not pag.

own exhibition entitled “Beauty in the Town and Countryside” (Schönheit in Stadt und Land), with a greater focus on rural building practices. On a related note, in 1937 Bavaria set up the Central Office for General Landscape Maintenance and Building Consultancy (Hauptstelle für allgemeine Landespflege und Bauberatung). In addition, the Bavarian Homeland League oversaw the new Reichsgaue in Austria and organized a show for them entitled “A More Beautiful Homeland” (Schönere Heimat).

Regions in the west with their newly established NSDAP Gaue were also selected for the exhibition. In the Gau Baden-Elsass, some parts of which had only recently come under occupation, the exhibit was presented in July 1941 in Freiburg im Breisgau, and then in Mulhouse (Mülhausen) in September 1941, with the final stop in Colmar (Kolmar) in November 1941. In the Gau Westmark, “The Beautiful Town” was presented in spring 1942 in Thionville (Diedenhofen) and probably in Metz as well. In Strasbourg (Straßburg) the exhibition was held in the Palais Rohan from 9 October to 1 November 1942.⁶⁵

In spite of the ongoing war and the consequent austerity measures, requests for the exhibition continued to arrive from towns throughout the Reich, so one may conclude that it had achieved a rather high profile. It was not until February 1943 that the senior mayor of Niesky in Lusatia received a first cancellation from the DBH since none of the iterations of the exhibition (now four in number) were available. “The Beautiful Town” was still running in May 1943 in the Luxemburg city palace, in conjunction with a photography competition.⁶⁶ A lack of personnel and new air raid regulations in the fourth year of the war did not allow the exhibition to run smoothly, and by the middle of 1943, there are no longer any discernable traces of the exhibition to be found.

Change of the Design Goals—Plans for the Post-War Period

Over the course of the years and with the progressively comprehensive exhibition projects, changes appeared in the design aspirations as formulated by Werner Lindner. From the paragons of the eighteenth century, namely, the Prussian architectural styles, certain motivic components were derived and used time and again. The pretension of creating in the Warthegau a new homeland for arriving settlers, as formulated in the nationhood and settlement policies under Himmler, became increasingly normative in the reconstruction measures and architectural planning. Maxims which Homeland Protection had once invoked as the underpinning for its initiatives, e.g., being rooted in one’s locality and the continuation of regional building styles, were now

⁶⁵ Straßburger Neueste Nachrichten from 1942-10-20, p. 6.

⁶⁶ Zehn Jahre Kunstkreis Luxemburg, Gesellschaft für Literatur und Kunst: 1934–1944, Luxemburg 1944, p. 47.

abandoned in favor of a unified architecture. As a result, the plans for main thoroughfares and town squares as shown at many stops of the exhibition looked correspondingly like a fixed schematic, for example in Krefeld (Fig. 12). The *Entschandelung* measures, as in Stralsund, which involved a modification of every individual house, were steps that five years later Lindner found to be too “romantically overwrought, so not really resolved.”⁶⁷

Dissatisfied with the cumbersome National Socialist administrative hierarchy and in an effort to entrench his ideas of the “beautiful town” in the upper echelons, Lindner already started planning his post-war projects; to do so, he turned in 1942 to the office of Albert Speer. He submitted a proposal that after the war, the DBH (which he himself would lead) along with certain chosen architects under the central leadership of the Reich Minister should be “entrusted with supervising the restoration and *Entschandelung* of the destroyed towns.”⁶⁸ His reasoning was that the efforts of the DHB would only

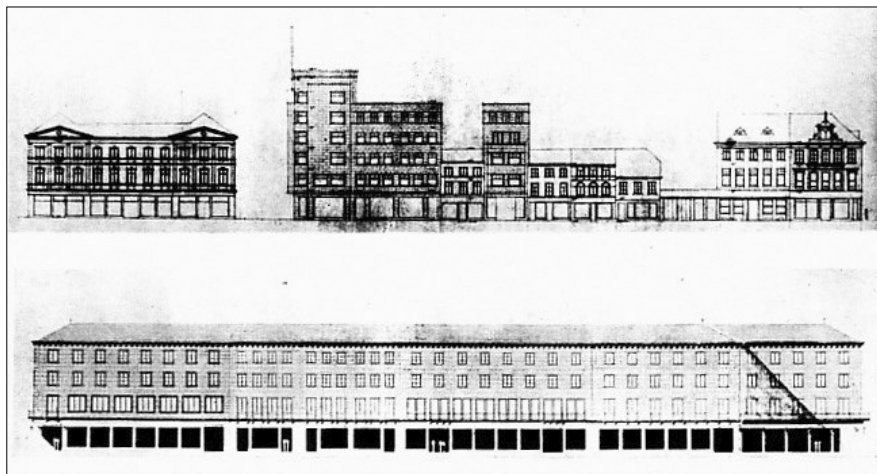


Fig. 12: Selection from the “*Entschandelung* plans” for Krefeld, Gau Düsseldorf, northern side of Adolf Hitler Street (Rheinstraße) from the exhibition “The Beautiful Town” in Krefeld (October 1941), in: WOLFGANG BANGERT: Die Krefelder Abteilung der Ausstellung “Die schöne Stadt, ihre Entschandelung und Gestaltung,” in: Die Heimat 20 (1941), 3, pp. 288–305

have a focused goal (in Lindner’s words) if Speer were to take over its leadership. Up to then (for Lindner’s tastes) too many officials, such as the Reich Curator, the Reich Minister of Labor, and the Reich Minister of Finance, had

⁶⁷ Letter from Werner Lindner to Wilhelm Meyer from 1942-07-03, in: Stadtarchiv Stralsund, Rep. 24, no. 3033a, fol. 123.

⁶⁸ Notes from a telephone call from Rudolf Wolters to Albert Speer from 1942-07-21, in: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voennyi arkhiv, osobyl arkhiv [Russian State Military Archives, Special Archives], Moscow, 1409/2-22, fol. 41.

a say. Speer's response to the proposal was evasive, namely, that such questions ought to be deferred until after the war. "The demands of the war require much more so that only the most essential things be initially repaired in the destroyed towns. But, of course, any crude initial designs should not in themselves hinder any later redesign."⁶⁹ So, this is how the conception of the "beautiful town" and its "*Entschandlung* and design" transitioned directly into rebuilding plans that were already beginning during the final phase of the war.

If one looks at the proposals for rebuilding in East and West Germany after 1945, there are in some cases astonishing conceptual and personnel continuities at play. For example, "national building traditions" constituted from 1950 on the basis of the design in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), which had adopted this instruction from the the "16 principles for town planning" (launched in the Soviet Union under Stalin). Many of the architects and planners influenced by the pre-war modern style, who immediately after the war were at work in the Soviet occupation zone, were now expected to study and digest "in detail the national architectural heritage, the works of the Gothic, the Renaissance, and Classicism." A battle was now engaged against "formalism," and the sprawl of the "broken up towns," and "Bauhaus architecture" was now branded as "imperialist-American." Above all, the "nonnative tendencies of American formalism" were seen as the enemy "of the national culture of the German people."⁷⁰ While this doctrine continued to operate in the GDR in the 1950s and through the beginning of the 1960s, in West Germany there were clashing conceptions at play in its own rebuilding planning. On the one hand were the pre-war modern style and town layouts with a focus on traffic planning while on the other hand, given the strong continuity of personnel, many architects were at work who had participated in the planning of the 1930s and 40s, particularly in relation to the "German East."

"Degenerate Architecture"

The traveling exhibition continued with its modifying and simplifying projects even after the official "ban on new construction" issued in February 1940. The exhibit had visited many regions of the German Reich and occupied territories, and with its integration of local examples, had propagated the building practice of "*Entschandlung* and Design". It was probably not presented in the General Government. Nevertheless, the transmission of the illus-

⁶⁹ Draft of a response from Rudolf Wolters to Albert Speer from 1942-07-21, *ibidem*, fol. 40.

⁷⁰ WALTER ULBRICHT: Das Nationale Aufbauwerk und die Aufgaben der deutschen Architektur, in: *Die Aufgaben der Deutschen Bauakademie im Kampf um eine deutsche Architektur*, Berlin 1952, pp. 15–46, here pp. 25, 39.

trated changes to buildings as in Litzmannstadt and the interaction of the architects and planners certainly had consequences. Even the exhibition's terminology was adopted. In a photo series about Cracow published in 1942, the news agency Siphio wrote:

"The new design of the Cracow cityscape includes above all an architectural *Entschandelung*. In the Polish time, houses were senselessly built on the castle hill, but now today are being torn down, freeing up the castle hill and allowing it to rise again to its true beauty in the town center."⁷¹

Under the terms of the occupation, the exhibition's stops in the "German East" became a part of the National Socialist policy of German nationhood. The show received ideational and financial support from other protagonists in the architectural and settlement planning in these regions. The special circumstances in the occupied areas, it would seem, led to more radical demands for architectural changes and sanctions. However, the more expansive latitude created by the occupiers' control over the town administrations and the conditions of ownership linked to confiscation and forced displacement were limited in time. When in 1942/43 the war reached its inflection point on the eastern front (Stalingrad), the exhibition visited but a few locations.

What deserves closer study is the basis for the design suggestions at the eastern stops of the exhibit. These surely arose from the work done by the principal actors in the DBH as to the rebuilding of East Prussia after 1915. Comparing the exemplary cases from the exhibition that draw on the paradigm of Old Prussian rural architecture and similar ideals from "around" 1800 with conceptions from the First World War, might be insightful. Of note are the simplification and schematization which primarily show up in the examples from the "German East" after 1940.

This view stood counterposed to the prior convictions of those involved in Homeland Protection and their original ideal of regionality. What should be examined are the reasons for this reversal. Was it a consequence of expanded possibilities afforded by the occupation? Were there practical constraints? Or was a new ideal being pursued? In the end, these patterns merged with the post-war conceptions for the rebuilding after 1945, yet they differentiated themselves into East and West German traditions with regard to a continuity of the actors who had been involved as architects in the "German East." Here particularly, the direct connections to the building projects of the traveling exhibit would be interesting. "The Beautiful Town" was not among National Socialism's large spectacular exhibitions. As an exhibit, its features and media circulation were on the smaller side and had more of a regional resonance when compared to the well-known prestige-promoting displays "German People—German Work" or "Germany", the Reich exhibition "A Productive People" (*Schaffendes Volk*) (1937) in Düsseldorf, or "Give Me Four Years" (*Gebt mir vier Jahre Zeit*), touting 1937's four-year plan. In its character as a

⁷¹ CegesSoma, no. 68958.

traveling exhibit (which, as mentioned, had up to 4 iterations running parallel en route), “The Beautiful Town” is comparable more to the similarly conceived notorious traveling shows “Degenerate Art” (Entartete Kunst) (which began in 1937 in Munich, and thereafter continued until 1941 in many large cities in Germany, as well as in Vienna and Salzburg) and “Degenerate Music” (Entartete Musik) (from May 1938 in Düsseldorf, and thereafter in Weimar, Vienna, Frankfurt am Main). Similarly, “The Beautiful Town” was a propaganda show aimed to rectify; through these lenses, one could indeed add the moniker “Degenerate Architecture” to the exhibit’s name.⁷² However, the decisive difference was that the examples of “*Entschandlung* and Design” which the show pointed out also documented those rectifying steps that were taken on how best to alter the buildings and consequently provided some positive substance for the ideas. These intrusions and their ideological implications deserve to be recognized in today’s practice of heritage preservation.

Translated from the German by Philip Jacobs

⁷² ANKE BLÜMM: “Entartete Baukunst“? Zum Umgang mit dem Neuen Bauen 1933–1945, München 2013, chose this catchphrase as the title of her study, which looks primarily at the relationships of the Reich Chamber of the Visual Arts (Reichskammer der bildenden Künste), the Association of German Architects (Bund Deutscher Architekten) and other actors in the dispute during the National Socialist years over the results of the new construction.

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