

## NAZI POLICE STATE

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/nazi\\_police\\_state.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/nazi_police_state.htm)



The Nazi Police State was to ensure that everybody did as they were told - or paid the price. The Nazi Police were controlled by Heinrich Himmler and his feared secret police - the Gestapo - did as it pleased in Nazi Germany. Children's loyalty could be developed with a policy of indoctrination via education and the Hitler Youth movement. Time and planning spent in these areas would bring a suitable reward for Hitler.

Adults were a different proposition. Some adults clearly supported Hitler - as the March 1933 election showed. But the same election clearly showed that a substantial number of Germans did not support Hitler and the Nazis. These people were likely to be a constant thorn for Hitler unless they were dealt with. For these people, the Nazis developed a policy of intimidation. Fear became a by-word for those who did not support Hitler. The wrong comment overheard by a Nazi official could have very serious consequences.

Hitler's police state worked on the rule that if you said nothing, no harm, could come to you. If you had doubts about the way the country was going, you kept them to yourself - or paid the price. As nearly 17 million people had not voted for either the Nazis or the Nationalist in March 1933, a large and visible police force was required to keep this sizeable group under observation and control.

In Nazi Germany the police were allowed to arrest people on suspicion that they were about to do wrong. This gave the police huge powers. All local police units had to draw up a list of people in their locality who might be suspected of being "Enemies of the State". This list was given to the Gestapo - the Secret Police. The Gestapo had the power to do as it liked. Its leader - Reinhard Heydrich - was one of the most feared men in Nazi Germany. His immediate chief was Heinrich Himmler. Both men ran their respective branches with ruthless efficiency.

Those arrested by either the police or the Gestapo had less than three minutes to pack clothing and say their goodbyes. Once arrested, they were sent to the nearest police cell. Those in custody were told to sign Form D-11; this was an "Order For Protective Custody". By signing this, you

agreed to go to prison. Those who did not sign it were beaten until they did or officers simply forged their signature. Once a D-11 was signed, you were sent to a concentration camp. How long you stayed here depended on the authorities. The usual rule of thumb was whether it was felt that you had learned your lesson (even if there had not been one to learn) and would behave in an acceptable manner once outside of prison.

The concentration camps were deliberately barbaric. Before 1939, deaths in them occurred but they were not common. The idea was that anybody who had been in one, once released, would 'advertise' the fact that they were not places where people wanted to go. This was another way of ensuring that people kept their ideas to themselves.

The concentration camps were run by men who could disguise their violent nature simply because they wore a uniform. The flogging of inmates was common - 25 strokes was common practice - and the amenities were very basic and sparse. At Buchenwald, 480 men had one water tap between them, which could only be used for 15 minutes on getting up. Any abuse of this rule would lead to 25 lashes. Any arrested Jew would get 60 lashes - a personal order from Hitler. Soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes etc were unheard of in camps such as Buchenwald (which held 8000 prisoners) and Dachau. Food and drink were minimal and the Jews had half the rations of other prisoners

#### Who would get arrested?

The list was intentionally expansive. Anybody considered to be a political threat was arrested; those who made jokes about the Nazi Party were also arrested (jokes about Hitler were punished with death); the "work shy" were also arrested (this fitted in exactly with Hitler's plan to reduce unemployment as an unemployed person would be offered work at a Labour Exchange and if they refused it as too menial for them, they would be arrested as work shy. As no one in concentration camps counted as unemployed, the figures for unemployment had to come down; "Bibelforscher's" were also arrested (these were people who would only seek guidance from the Bible and rejected all Nazi ideas and they also refused to do military service); homosexuals were also arrested and the SS used this as a common tactic to discredit someone. Habitual criminals were also arrested.

In 1936, the Gestapo Law meant that the activities of the Gestapo were free from any review by courts of law. This law effectively meant that the Gestapo became a law unto themselves. This non-uniformed branch of the SS became justifiably feared just as the visible presence of the black uniformed SS men did. Himmler's view on the SS was simple. In 1943 he said:

*"We have always selected the highest and abandoned the lowest. As long as we maintain this principle, the Order (the SS) will remain healthy. After the war, we shall really build up our Order...it will provide Germany with an elite. This elite will provide leaders to industry, agriculture and politics and the activities of the mind."*

# NAZI GERMANY'S DICTATORSHIP

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Nazi\\_Germany\\_dictatorship.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Nazi_Germany_dictatorship.htm)



Nazi Germany under the leadership of Hitler soon became a dictatorship. A dictatorship requires one person and one party to be in control of a nation and a climate of fear - this was provided by Himmler's SS. Personal freedom disappeared in Nazi Germany.

When Hitler was appointed chancellor on January 30th 1933, it was at the head of a coalition government. It was very clear in his mind that it would not remain this way for long. By the end of March 1933, he had acquired much greater powers than the former leading politicians of the Weimar Republic could

ever have foreseen when they supported his appointment as chancellor. The death of President Hindenburg in August 1934, allowed him to combine both chancellor's and president's positions into one when Hitler became the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor.

## How did Germany descend so quickly into becoming a dictatorship?

When Hitler was appointed in January 1933, Germany was a democracy. Germany had fair elections; nobody had their right to vote abused; there were numerous political parties you could vote for etc. To pass a law, the Reichstag had to agree to it after a bill went through the normal processes of discussion, arguments etc. Within the Reichstag of January 1933, over 50% of those who held seats were against the Nazi Party. Therefore it would have been very unlikely for Hitler to have got passed into law what he wanted. Many saw Hitler as a fall-guy politician who would have to shoulder to blame if things got worse under his leadership.

Hitler had promised a general election for March 1933. This would have been, in his mind, the perfect opportunity for him to show all politicians who opposed him where the true loyalties lay in the German people. In fact, 1932 had shown Hitler that there was a possibility that support for the Nazis had peaked as their showing in the November 1932 election had shown. Anything other than a huge endorsement of Hitler and the Nazi Party would have been a disaster and a gamble which it is possible that Hitler did not want to take.

One week before the election was due to take place, the Reichstag building burned down. Hitler immediately declared that it was the signal for a communist takeover of the nation. Hitler knew that if he was to convince President Hindenburg to give him emergency powers - as stated in the Weimar Constitution - he had to play on the old president's fear of communism. What better than to convince him that the communists were about to take over the nation by force?

A known communist - Marianus van der Lubbe - was caught near the Reichstag building immediately after the fire had started. Those that arrested him - Nazi officials - claimed that Lubbe

confessed to them that the fire was a signal to other communists to start the revolution to overthrow democracy in the country. Matches were allegedly found on van der Lubbe and those who arrested him claimed that he smelt of petrol.

Hitler asked Hindenburg to grant him emergency powers in view of the 'communist takeover'. Using the constitution, Hindenburg agreed to pass the Law for the Protection of the People and the State.

This law gave Hitler what he wanted - a ban on the Communists and Socialists taking part in an election campaign. The leaders from both parties were arrested and their newspapers were shut down. To 'keep the peace' and maintain law and order, the SA (the Brown Shirts) roamed the streets beating up those who openly opposed Hitler.

The election took place in March - though Hitler was convinced it would be the last. Hitler did not get the number of votes he wanted but he did get enough to get over a 50% majority in the Reichstag:

Communists	4.8 million votes
Social Democrats	7.2 million votes
Centre party	5.5 million votes
Nationalists	3.1 million votes
Other parties	1.4 million votes
Nazis	17.3 million votes

That 12 million people voted for what were effectively two outlawed parties is remarkable when the intimidation of voters is taken into account.

After the burning down of the Reichstag, politicians had nowhere to meet. The Kroll Opera House in Berlin was chosen. This was a relatively small round building - perfect for meetings. On March 23rd, elected officials were due to meet to discuss and vote on Hitler's Enabling Law.

As politicians neared the building, they found it surrounded by SS and SA thugs who tried to ensure that only Nazi or Nationalist politicians got into the building. The vote for this law was crucial as it gave Hitler a vast amount of power. The law basically stated that any bill only needed Hitler's signature and within 24 hours that bill would become law in Germany. With only Nazis and other right wing politicians inside the Kroll Opera House, the bill was quickly passed into law. The act gave Hitler what he wanted - dictatorial power. What he wanted would become law in Germany within 24 hours of his signature being put on paper.

On 7th April 1933, Nazi officials were put in charge of all local government in the provinces.

On May 2nd 1933, trades unions were abolished, their funds taken and their leaders put in prison. The workers were given a May Day holiday in return.

On July 14th 1933, a law was passed making it illegal to form a new political party. It also made the Nazi Party the only legal political party in Germany.

Germany became a nation of snoops. People were employed in each street, in each building complex etc. with the sole purpose of keeping an eye on others in their 'area' and reporting them to the authorities if they believed that something was amiss. The reputation of the Nazi police and the secret police lead by Himmler was such that no one wished to cause offence. People kept their thoughts to themselves unless they wished to invite trouble. In this sense, Nazi Germany was a nation run on fear of the government. Hitler had created a one party state within months of being appointed chancellor.

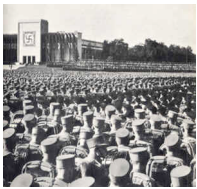
His only remaining problem from his point of view was loyalty within his own party ranks. In June 1934, he overcame this with the Night of the Long Knives.

# PROPAGANDA IN NAZI GERMANY

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/propaganda\\_in\\_nazi\\_germany.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/propaganda_in_nazi_germany.htm)

Propaganda within Nazi Germany was taken to a new and frequently perverse level. Hitler was very aware of the value of good propaganda and he appointed Joseph Goebbels as head of propaganda.

Propaganda is the art of persuasion - persuading others that your 'side of the story' is correct. Propaganda might take the form of persuading others that your military might is too great to be challenged; that your political might within a nation is too great or popular to challenge etc. In Nazi Germany, Dr Joseph Goebbels was in charge of propaganda. Goebbels official title was Minister of Propaganda and National Enlightenment.



As Minister of Enlightenment, Goebbels had two main tasks:

- to ensure nobody in Germany could read or see anything that was hostile or damaging to the Nazi Party.
- to ensure that the views of the Nazis were put across in the most persuasive manner possible.

To ensure success, Goebbels had to work with the SS and Gestapo and Albert Speer. The former hunted out those who might produce articles defamatory to the Nazis and Hitler while Speer helped Goebbels with public displays of propaganda.

To ensure that everybody thought in the correct manner, Goebbels set up the Reich Chamber of Commerce in 1933. This organization dealt with literature, art, music, radio, film, newspapers etc. To produce anything that was in these groups, you had to be a member of the Reich Chamber. The Nazi Party decided if you had the right credentials to be a member. Any person who was not admitted was not allowed to have any work published or performed. Disobedience brought with it severe punishments. As a result of this policy, Nazi Germany introduced a system of censorship. You could only read, see and hear what the Nazis wanted you to read, see and hear. In this way, if you believed what you were told, the Nazi leaders logically assumed that opposition to their rule would be very small and practiced only by those on the very extreme who would be easy to catch.



Hitler came to power in January 1933. By May 1933, the Nazi Party felt sufficiently strong to publicly demonstrate where their beliefs were going when Goebbels organized the first of the infamous book burning episodes. Books that did not match the Nazi ideal was burnt in public - loyal Nazis ransacked libraries to remove the 'offending' books. "Where one burns books, one eventually burns people" commented the author Brecht.



The same approach was used in films. The Nazis controlled film production. Films released to the public concentrated on certain issues : the Jews; the greatness of Hitler; the way of life for a true Nazi especially children, and as World War Two approached, how badly Germans who lived in countries in Eastern Europe were treated. Leni Riefenstahl was given a free hand in producing Nazi propaganda films. A young film producer, she had impressed

Hitler with her ability. It was Riefenstahl who made "Triumph of Will" - considered one of the greatest of propaganda films despite its contents.

What was seen in the cinemas was controlled. "Hitlerjunge Quex" was made in 1933. This film told the story of a boy brought up in a communist family in Germany who broke away from this background, joined the Hitler Youth and was murdered by the Communists in Germany for doing so. "The Eternal Jew" was a film that vilified the Jews - comparing the Jews in Europe to a hoard of rats, spreading disease etc. "Tarzan" films were banned because the Nazis frowned on so little clothing being worn especially by women. One film that celebrated the might of the German Navy was not screened as it showed a drunken German sailor. However, the cinemas were not full of serious films with a political message. Goebbels ordered that many comedies should be made to give Germany a 'lighter' look.

To ensure that everybody could hear Hitler speak, Goebbels organized the sale of cheap radios. These were called the "People's Receiver" and they cost only 76 marks. A smaller version cost just 35 marks. Goebbels believed that if Hitler was to give speeches, the people should be able to hear him. Loud speakers were put up in streets so that people could not avoid any speeches by the Fuhrer. Cafes and other such properties were ordered to play in public speeches by Hitler.

Goebbels and his skill at masterminding propaganda is best remembered for his night time displays at Nuremberg. Here, he and Speer, organized rallies that were designed to show to the world the might of the Nazi nation. In August of each year, huge rallies were held at Nuremberg. Arenas to hold 400,000 people were built. In the famous night time displays, 150 search lights surrounded the main arena and were lit up vertically into the night sky. Their light could be seen over 100 kilometers away in what a British politician, Sir Neville Henderson, called a "cathedral of light".

### Why was so much effort put into propaganda?

At no time up to 1933, did the Nazi Party win a majority of votes at elections. They may have been the largest political party in 1933, but they did not have a majority of support among the people. Therefore, those who had supported the Nazis needed to be informed on how correct their choice was with an emphasis on the strength of the party and the leadership. Those who opposed the Nazi Party had to be convinced that it was pointless continuing with their opposition. The fact that Goebbels had so much power is indicative of how important Hitler thought it was to ensure that the people were won over or intimidated into accepting Nazi rule.

"The essence of propaganda consists in winning people over to an idea so sincerely, so vitally, that in the end they succumb to it utterly and can never escape from it." – Goebbels

*"The essence of propaganda consists in winning people over to an idea so sincerely, so vitally, that in the end they succumb to it utterly and can never escape from it." - Goebbels*

*"Propaganda is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. If the means achieves the end then the means is good.....the new Ministry has no other aim than to unite the nation behind the ideal of the national revolution." - Goebbels*

# EDUCATION UNDER THE NAZIS

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Nazis\\_Education.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Nazis_Education.htm)



Education played a very important part in Nazi Germany in trying to cultivate a loyal following for Hitler and the Nazis. The Nazis were aware that education would create loyal Nazis by the time they reached adulthood. The Hitler Youth had been created for post-school activities and schools were to play a critical part in developing a loyal following for Hitler - indoctrination and the use of propaganda were to be a common practice in Nazi schools and the education system.

Enforcing a Nazi curriculum on schools depended on the teachers delivering it. All teachers had to be vetted by local Nazi officials. Any teacher considered disloyal was sacked. Many attended classes during school holidays in which the Nazi curriculum was spelled out and 97% of all teachers joined the Nazi Teachers' Association. All teachers had to be careful about what they said as children were encouraged to inform the authorities if a teacher said something that did not fit in with the Nazi's curriculum for schools.

Subjects underwent a major change in schools. Some of the most affected were History and Biology.

History was based on the glory of Germany - a nationalistic approach was compulsory. The German defeat in 1918 was explained as the work of Jewish and Marxist spies who had weakened the system from within; the Treaty of Versailles was the work of nations jealous of Germany's might and power; the hyperinflation of 1923 was the work of Jewish saboteurs; the national resurgence which started under the leadership of Hitler etc.

Biology became a study of the different races to 'prove' that the Nazi belief in racial superiority was a sound belief. "Racial Instruction" started as the age of 6. Hitler himself had decreed "no boy or girl should leave school without complete knowledge of the necessity and meaning of blood purity." Pupils were taught about the problems of heredity. Older pupils were taught about the importance of selecting the right "mate" when marrying and producing children. The problems of inter-racial marriage were taught with an explanation that such marriages could only lead to a decline in racial purity.

Geography taught pupils about the land Germany had taken away from her in 1919 and the need for Germany to have living space - lebensraum.

Science had a military-slant to it. The curriculum required that the principles of shooting be studied; military aviation science; bridge building and the impact of poisonous gasses.



Girls had a different curriculum in some regards as they studied domestic science and eugenics - both of which were to prepare young girls to be the perfect mother and wife. In Eugenics, girls were taught about the characteristics to look out for in a perfect husband and father.

Indoctrination became rampant in all subjects. At every opportunity, teachers were expected to attack the life style of the Jews. Exam questions even contained blunt reference to the government's anti-Semitic stance:

"A bomber aircraft on take-off carries 12 dozen bombs, each weighing 10 kilos. The aircraft takes off for Warsaw the international centre for Jewry. It bombs the town. On take-off with all bombs on board and a fuel tank containing 100 kilos of fuel, the aircraft weighed about 8 tons. When it returns from the crusade, there are still 230 kilos left. What is the weight of the aircraft when empty?"

Other questions would also include areas the government wanted taught by teachers in the nation's search for a master race:

"To keep a mentally ill person costs approximately 4 marks a day. There are 300,000 mentally ill people in care. How much do these people cost to keep in total? How many marriage loans of 1000 marks could be granted with this money?"

PE became a very important part of the curriculum. Hitler had stated that he wanted boys who could suffer pain....."a young German must be as swift as a greyhound, as tough as leather, and as hard as Krupp's steel." PE took up 15% of a school's weekly timetable. Boxing became compulsory for boys. Those who failed fitness tests could be expelled from their schools - and face humiliation from those who had passed such tests.

In 1937, pupils were given the choice of studying Religious Instructions or not.

For boys considered special, different schools were created. Those who were physically fitter and stronger than the rest went to Adolf Hitler Schools where they were taught to be the future leaders of Germany. Six years of tough physical training took place and when the pupils from these schools left aged 18, they went to the army or to university. The very best pupils went to Order Castles. These were schools that took pupils to the limits of physical endurance. War games used live ammunition and pupils were killed at these schools. Those who graduated from the Order Castles could expect to attain a high position in the army or the SS.

From 1935 on, after the Nuremberg Laws, Jewish school children were not allowed to attend schools. The Nazi government claimed that a German pupil sitting next to a Jew could become contaminated by the experience.

The sole purpose of this educational structure was to create a future generation that was blindly loyal to Hitler and the Nazis.





# HITLER YOUTH

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/hitler\\_youth.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/hitler_youth.htm)



The Hitler Youth was a logical extension of Hitler's belief that the future of Nazi Germany was its children. The Hitler Youth was seen as being as important to a child as school was. In the early years of the Nazi government, Hitler had made it clear as to what he expected German children to be like:

*"The weak must be chiseled away. I want young men and women who can suffer pain. A young German must be as swift as a greyhound, as tough as leather, and as hard as Krupp's steel."*

Nazi education schemes partly fitted in with this but Hitler wanted to occupy the minds of the young in Nazi Germany even more.

Movements for youngsters were part of German culture and the Hitler Youth had been created in the 1920's. By 1933 its membership stood at 100,000. After Hitler came to power, all other youth movements were abolished and as a result the Hitler Youth grew quickly. In 1936, the figure stood at 4 million members. In 1936, it became all but compulsory to join the Hitler Youth. Youths could avoid doing any active service if they paid their subscription but this became all but impossible after 1939.

The Hitler Youth catered for 10 to 18 year olds. There were separate organizations for boys and girls. The task of the boys section was to prepare the boys for military service. For girls, the organization prepared them for motherhood.



Boys at 10 joined the Deutsches Jungvolk (German Young People) until the age of 13 when they transferred to the Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth) until the age of 18. In 1936, the



writer J R Tunus wrote about the activities of the Hitler Jugend. He stated that part of their "military athletics" (Wehrsport) included marching, bayonet drill, grenade throwing, trench digging, map reading, gas defense, use of dugouts, how to get under barbed wire and pistol shooting.

Girls, at the age of 10, joined the Jungmadelbund (League of Young Girls) and at the age of 14 transferred to the Bund Deutscher Madel (League of German Girls). Girls had to be able to run 60 meters in 14 seconds, throw a ball 12 meters, complete a 2 hour march, swim 100 meters and know how to make a bed.

Balder von Shirach oversaw the whole Hitler Youth movement.

To the outside world, the Hitler Youth seemed to personify German discipline. In fact, this image was far from accurate. Schoolteachers complained that boys and girls were so tired from attending evening meetings of the Hitler Youth, that they could



barely stay awake the next day at school. Also by 1938, attendance at Hitler Youth meetings was so poor - barely 25% - that the authorities decided to tighten up attendance with the 1939 law making attendance compulsory.

# 1936 BERLIN OLYMPICS

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1936\\_berlin\\_olympics.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1936_berlin_olympics.htm)



The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games had been handed to Berlin before the Nazis came to power but now it was the perfect opportunity for Hitler to demonstrate to the world, how efficient Nazi Germany was. It was also the perfect opportunity for the Nazis to prove to the world the reality of the Master Race. The Berlin Olympic Games gave the Nazis an opportunity to show off to the world as 49 countries were competing bringing with them their assorted media. For Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, it was the perfect scenario.

The Nazi Germany team had been allowed to train fulltime thus pushing to the limit the idea of amateur competition. Germany's athletic superstar of the time was Lutz Lang - a brilliant long jumper who easily fitted into the image of blond hair, blue eyed

Aryan racial superiority. By far the most famous athlete in the world was Jesse Owens of America - an African American and therefore, under Nazi ideology, inferior to the athletes in the German team.

The vast Olympic stadium was completed on time and held 100,000 spectators. 150 other new Olympic buildings were completed on time for the event. The anti-Semitic posters that had littered Germany before the games had disappeared. Signs that stated "Jews not welcome here" were not longer visible - anything was done to ensure that the Games went smoothly and caused no upset.

In fact, the upset was caused in the stadium itself. The 'racially inferior' Owens won four gold medals; in the 100m, 200m, long jump and 4 x 100m relay. During the Games he broke 11 Olympic records and defeated Lutz Lang in a very close long



jump final. Lang was the first to congratulate Owens when the long jump final was over. There were 10 African American members of the American athletics team. Between them they won 7 gold



medals, 3 silvers and 3 bronze - more than any national team won in track and field at the Games, except America itself. Hitler refused to place the gold medal around Owen's neck.

The one area where the Nazis seemed to excel was in the use of radio for the reporters. Twenty transmitting vans were put at the disposal of the foreign media along with 300 microphones. Radio broadcasts at the Olympics were given in 28 different languages. A director of NBC in America congratulated the Nazis for this service - a personal



triumph for Joseph Goebbels as he was in charge of this aspect of the Olympics.

Siegfried Eifrig carried the torch that lit the flame at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. To the Nazi regime he personified the Aryan race – tall, blond, blue-eyed and athletic. At the age of 26, Eifrig took the torch at the beginning of Unter den Linden – Berlin's main boulevard – and headed for the Olympic stadium. Though he was a talented sprinter, Eifrig did not get into the German Olympic squad. But he ran with distinction for the Charlottenburg Athletic Club and as a result was given the opportunity to carry the Olympic torch into the stadium.



*"It was an enormous honor to carry the torch, of course it was. I wasn't so much nervous as really concentrating. I had to make sure nothing went wrong. There were so many people there. People said there were 300,000 people watching me on my stretch."*

Eifrig fought in North Africa and ended the war in a British POW camp.

*"The Americans should be ashamed of themselves, letting Negroes win their medals for them. I shall not shake hands with this Negro...do you really think that I will allow myself to be photographed shaking hands with a Negro?"* - Balder von Shirach (head of the Hitler Youth) claimed Hitler said this after the 100m victory of Jesse Owens.

# NAZIS & THE GERMAN ECONOMY

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/nazis\\_and\\_the\\_german\\_economy.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/nazis_and_the_german_economy.htm)



Germany's economy was in a mess when Hitler was elected Chancellor in January 1933. Hitler and Nazi propaganda had played on the population's fear of no hope. Unemployment peaked at 6 million during the final days of the Weimar Republic – near enough 50% of the nation's working population. Now Hitler decreed that all should work in Nazi Germany and he constantly played on the economic miracle Nazi Germany achieved.

This "economic miracle" was based on unemployment all but disappearing by 1939.

But was this true or did the Nazi propaganda machine move into overdrive to persuade the nation and Europe that she had achieved something that other European nations had not during the time of economic depression?

A number of policies were introduced which caused the unemployment figures to drop.

- Women were no longer included in the statistics so any women who remained out of work under the Nazi's rule did not exist as far as the statistics were concerned.
- The unemployed were given a very simple choice: do whatever work is given to you by the government or be classed as "work-shy" and put in a concentration camp.
- Jews lost their citizenship in 1935 and as a result were not included in unemployment figures even though many lost their employment at the start of Hitler's time in power.
- Many young men were taken off of the unemployment figure when conscription was brought in (1935) and men had to do their time in the army etc. By 1939, the army was 1.4 million strong. To equip these men with weapons etc., factories were built and this took even more off of the unemployment figure.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN GERMANY	TOTAL
January 1933	6 million
January 1934	3.3 million
January 1935	2.9 million
January 1936	2.5 million
January 1937	1.8 million
January 1938	1.0 million
January 1939	302,000

With these measures in place the unemployment figure had to fall drastically and many saw the Nazi figures as nothing more than a book-keeping trick. However, many would have been too scared to speak out against the Nazis or pass negative comments on the published figures - such was the fear of the Gestapo.

However, there is no doubt that work was created. The Nazis introduced public work schemes for men who worked in the National Labor Service (Reichsarbeitsdienst or RAD). Their work would have included digging ditches on farms to assist irrigation, building the new autobahns, planting new forests etc. The men of the RAD wore a military style uniform, lived in camps near to where they were working and received only what we would term pocket money. However, compared to the lack of success of the Weimar government and the chronic misery of 1931 to 1932, these men felt that at least the Nazi government was making the effort to improve their lot.

To 'protect' those in work, the German Labor Front was set up. This was lead by Robert Ley. The GLF took the role of trade unions that had been banned. To an extent, the GLF did this. Ley ordered that workers could not be sacked on the spot but he also ordered that a worker could not leave his job without the government's permission. Only government labor exchanges could arrange for a new job if someone did leave his employment.

However, the GLF increased the number of hours worked from 60 to 72 per week (including overtime) by 1939. Strikes were outlawed. The average factory worker was earning 10 times more

than those on dole money and few complained – though to do so was fraught with potential difficulties.

The leisure time of the workers was also taken care of. An organization called "Kraft durch Freude" (KdF) took care of this. Ley and the KdF worked out that each worker had 3,740 hours per year free for pursuing leisure activities - which the state would provide. The activities provided by the state were carefully and systematically recorded. For the Berlin area (1933-38):

Type of Event	Number of events	Number of people involved
Theatre performances	21,146	11,507,432
Concerts	989	705,623
Hikes	5,896	126,292
Sports Events	388	1,432,596
Cultural events	20,527	10,518,282
Holidays and cruises	1,196	702,491
Museum tours	61,503	2,567,596
Exhibitions	93	2,435,975
Week-end trips	3,499	1,007,242
Courses/Lectures at the German Adult Education Office	19,060	1,009,922

Cheap holidays and the offer of them was a good way to win the support of the average person in the street. A cruise to the Canary Islands cost 62 marks - easily affordable to many though most cruises were taken up by Nazi Party officials. Walking and skiing holidays in the Bavarian Alps cost 28 marks. A two-week tour of Italy cost 155 marks.

The KdF also involved itself in introducing a scheme whereby the

workers could get a car. The Volkswagen - People's Car - was designed so that most could afford it. The Beetle, designed by Ferdinand Porsche, cost 990 marks. This was about 35 weeks wages for the average worker. To pay for one, workers went on a hire purchase scheme. They paid 5 marks a week into an account.

Theoretically, when the account had reached 750 marks the worker would be given an order number that would lead to them receiving a car. In fact, no one received a car. The millions of marks invested into the scheme were re-directed into the rapidly expanding weapons factories. This accelerated as World War Two approached. No one complained as to do so could lead to serious trouble with the secret police.

### Did the Nazis produce an economic miracle for Germany?

The Minister of the Economy was Hjalmar Schacht. He introduced his "New Plan". This plan intended to reduce imports, reduce unemployment, channel government spending into a wide range of industries and make trade agreements with other nations. Hermann Goering also wanted Germany to become self-sufficient in all industries so that as a nation she could survive a war. Were these plans successful?

- by 1939, Germany still imported 33% of its required raw materials
- government income had been 10 billion Reichsmarks in 1928. In 1939, it stood at 15 billion. However, government spending had increased from 12 billion Reichsmarks in 1928 to over 30 billion in 1939 - a difference of 15 billion Reichsmarks. From 1933 to 1939, the Nazi government always spent more than it earned so that by 1939, government debt stood at over 40 billion Reichsmarks.
- balance of trade figures had gone into the red by 1939 by 0.1 billion Reichsmarks.
- unemployment had fallen from 6 million in 1933 to 300,000 by 1939 and industrial production in 1939 was above the figure for Weimar Germany before the 1929 Wall Street Crash.
- annual food consumption in 1937 had fallen for wheat bread, meat, bacon, milk, eggs, fish vegetables, sugar, tropical fruit and beer compared to the 1927 figures. The only increase was in rye bread, cheese and potatoes.
- real earnings in 1938 were all but the same as the 1928 figure. Real earnings are wages adjusted to allow for inflation.

# THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN NAZI GERMANY

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Women\\_Nazi\\_Germany.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Women_Nazi_Germany.htm)

Women in Nazi Germany were to have a very specific role. Hitler was very clear about this. This role was that they should be good mothers bringing up children at home while their husbands worked. Outside of certain specialist fields, Hitler saw no reason why a woman should work. Education taught girls from the earliest of years that this was the lifestyle they should have.

From their earliest years, girls were taught in their schools that all good German women married at a young age to a proper German and that the wife's task was to keep a decent home for her working husband and to have children.

One of the earliest laws passed by Hitler once he came to power in 1933, was the Law for the Encouragement of Marriage. This law stated that all newly married couples would get a government loan of 1000 marks which was about 9 months average income. 800,000 newly weds took up this offer. This loan was not to be simply paid back. The birth of one child meant that 25% of the loan did not have to be paid back. Two children meant that 50% of the loan need not be paid back. Four children meant that the entire loan was cleared.

The aim of the law was very simple - to encourage newly weds to have as many children as they could. There was also a more long term and sinister aspect to this: as Germany grew she would need more soldiers and mothers; hence a booming population was needed with young boys being groomed into being soldiers and young girls being groomed into being young mothers. If



"lebensraum" was to be carried out, Hitler needed the population to fill the spaces gained in the Eastern Europe. This attitude of deliberately boosting your nation's population was finding favor in Western Europe and not just in Nazi Germany. France, in particular, feared that its population was falling too quickly and banned abortions and contraception.

Such was the desire to increase the German population that in 1943, a law was discussed among Nazi leaders that all women - married or single - should have 4 children and that the fathers of these children had to be "racially pure". Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, was particularly keen on this idea. If a family already had four children, the father from that family had to be released to father more children outside of his marriage. This law never came into being as even the Nazi leaders realized that this law would create social anarchy.



Women were not expected to work in Nazi Germany. In Weimar Germany there had been 100,000 female teachers, 3000 female doctors and 13,000 female musicians. Within months of Hitler coming to power, many female doctors and civil servants were sacked. This was followed by female teachers and lawyers. By the start of the Second World War, very few German women were in fulltime work. However, such was the skills shortage in Germany, that in 1937 a law was passed in 1937 that meant women had to do a "Duty Year". This meant that they could work 'patriotically' in a factory etc. to help the Nazi's "Economic Miracle". The marriage loan was also abolished in this year.

As housewives and mothers, their lives were controlled. Women were not expected to wear make-up or trousers. The dyeing of hair was not allowed nor were perms. Only flat shoes were expected to be worn. Women were discouraged from slimming as this was considered bad for childbirth. Women were encouraged to have a well built figure as slim women, so it was taught, would have problems in pregnancy...Women were also discouraged from smoking - not because it was linked to problems with pregnancies - but because it was considered non-German to do so.

August 12th had been the birthday of Hitler's mother. On this day each year, the Motherhood Cross was awarded to women who had given birth to the largest number of children. The gold cross went to women who had produced 8 children; silver was for 6 children and bronze was for 4 children.

In Nazi Germany it was not considered a social problem if an unmarried woman had a child. In fact it was encouraged. The Nazis established Lebensborn's, which were buildings where selected unmarried women could go to get pregnant by a "racially pure" SS man. These were not buildings that were hidden away in some back street. The government openly publicized them and they had a white flag with a red dot in the middle to identify them to the public.

*"Take hold of kettle, broom and pan,*

*Then you'll surely get a man!*

*Shop and office leave alone,*

*Your true life work lies at home."* - A common rhyme for women in Nazi Germany

*"In the Germanic nations there has never been anything else than equality of rights for women. Both sexes have their rights, their tasks, and these tasks were in the case of each equal in dignity and value, and therefore man and woman were on an equality."* - Hitler in 1935

*"The mission of women is to be beautiful and to bring children into the world. This is not at all as.....unmodern as it sounds. The female bird pretties herself for her mate and hatches eggs for him. In exchange, the male takes care of gathering food, and stands guard and wards off the enemy."* - Joseph Goebbels, writing in 1929.