

## GCSE History

### Weimar and Nazi Germany Key Topic Four Life in Nazi Germany 1933-1939



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### Women in Nazi Germany

Hitler had very clear ideas about the woman's role in the Nazi state - she was the centre of family life, a homemaker and mother. Women were considered to be very important because as mothers they would be the ones to give birth to Nazi children to help Hitler establish his '1000 year Reich'.

### The role of women

The Nazis had clear ideas of what they wanted from women. Women were expected to stay at home and look after the family. Women doctors, teachers and civil servants were forced to give up their careers. Women were supposed to emulate traditional German peasant fashions - plain peasant costumes, hair in plaits or buns and flat shoes. They were not expected to wear make-up or trousers, dye their hair or smoke in public.

- **The Three K's** their job was to keep the home nice for their husband and family - their life should revolve round the three K's: church, children, cooking (Kinder, Küche, and Kirche)
- **The Law for the Encouragement of Marriage** 1933 gave newlywed couples a loan of 1,000 marks, and allowed them to keep 250 marks for each child they had. Mothers who had more than eight children were given a gold medal. Unmarried women could volunteer to have a baby for an Aryan member of the SS.
- **The Mothers Cross** – encouraged childbirth. Hitler award special medals to mothers. 4/5 Children = bronze, 6/7 = silver, 8 / more = Gold. Each year from 1939, Hitler awarded medals to women with large families.
- **Lebensborn** – It was an SS breeding programme to encourage women to have Aryan babies with SS men. The leader of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, set it up in 1935. It provided homes, nurseries and schools to mothers and children.

### The unemployed in Nazi Germany

The Nazis had partly won the election in 1933 for promising to end unemployment. The unemployed were potential supporters of the communists or sources of opposition to the Nazis. The Nazis also believed the unemployed sapped the strength of the nation.

### The RAD

The RAD (National Labour Service) was established in 1933. It was voluntary until 1935, then it was made compulsory. All young men had to serve for 6 months.

The RAD provided manual work for the unemployed. It was run like the army. They wore uniforms, lived in camps and did military drills. The RAD not only provided work for the unemployed but also helped to create the Nazi state.

The men in the RAD worked on farms, building large public buildings and building new roads and motorways. By 1939, Germany had over 7000 miles of autobahns.

### Autobahns

The Nazis planned a huge project of roadbuilding. They wanted to create over 7,000 miles of motorways to improve transport around Germany. The first stretch of motorway opened in 1935. By 1935, over 125,000 men were employed.

The autobahn project was just one of several large public works financed by the Nazis. They created huge public buildings, bridges, coastal walls and sporting facilities. These projects created many employment opportunities and therefore reduced unemployment. It also helped boost the wider German economy.

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### Nazi attitudes towards the young

Hitler believed children were very important and the future of the Nazi state. Indoctrination (brainwashing) was necessary to prepare the young to be committed Nazis.

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Teachers:</b> All teachers had to swear an oath of loyalty to Hitler and join the Nazi Teachers League. All teachers had to promote Nazi ideas in the classroom.</p> | <p><b>Textbooks:</b> There were rewritten to fit the Nazi view of history and racial purity. <i>Mein Kampf</i> became a standard text, which all students needed to read.</p> | <p><b>Curriculum:</b> This was changed to prepare students for their future roles. Hitler wanted fit and healthy men and women so 15% of all time was devoted to PE. Boys were prepared for the military. Girls took needlework and home crafts to prepare them to be mothers and housewives. New subjects like race studies were introduced to push Nazi beliefs about the Aryan race.</p> | <p><b>New subjects:</b> New subjects like race studies pushed anti-Semitic beliefs. Geography was taught to show how Germany was surrounded by hostile neighbours. History was taught to show the evils of communism and the Treaty of Versailles.</p> |
|--|---|---|--|

### Hitler youth movement

Hitler also wanted to control the young in their free time so the Nazis established the Hitler Youth movement.

| Ages   | Boys  | Girls   |
|--------|---|---|
| 6-10   | <p>The <i>Pimpfen</i><br/>(The Little Fellows)</p>  |   |
| 11-14  | <p>The <i>Jungvolk</i><br/>(The Young Folk)</p>   | <p>The <i>Jungmadel</i><br/>(Young Maidens)</p>   |
| 14-18  | <p>The <i>Hitlerjugend (HJ)</i><br/>(Hitler Youth)</p>  | <p><i>Bund Deutsche Madel</i><br/>(League of German Maidens)</p>  |
| Skills | <p>Learnt military skills<br/>Athletics and sport<br/>Camping<br/>Marching and map reading<br/>Team work and leadership</p> | <p>Did the same as boys but more preparation for being mothers and wives.<br/>Less emphasis on military training.</p> |

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### **How did rearmament help with unemployment?**

Hitler wanted to expand Germany (Lebensraum) and get rid of the Treaty of Versailles. To do this he would need a large modern army. The economy in Germany was reorganised to support the re-arming and enlarging of the army.

### **How did Hitler rearm Germany?**

- Government spending on the army massively increased from 1933 – 3.5 billion to 1939 26 billion marks. New tanks, aircraft and ships were built.
- Production of iron and steel trebled from 1933-1939]
- They tried to make Germany more self-sufficient (Autarky) by producing more of products like rubber, plastic and oil.
- The German army grew in size significantly- 1933- 100,000 / 1936- 500,000 / 1939- 900,000 – Conscription was reintroduced in 1935.

### **How did rearmament help reduce unemployment and help the economy?**

As the army grew, there was a greater demand for goods like uniforms and army equipment. These were all made in German factories, which created jobs and helped the economy grow even more.

Overall: What were the benefits of Hitler's actions?

- The DAF helped regulate and improve working conditions to help the economy grow
- The RAD provided work for the unemployed to help the economy recover and grow
- Rearmament was a massive boost for the economy – providing jobs and helping the economy to grow

### **Nazi policy towards workers:**

#### **DAF (German Labour Front)**

It ensured that workers served the best interests of the Nazi state. It regulated workers standards and rights. (It replaced Trade Unions which had been banned back in 1933)

#### **What did it do?**

It set out new employment rights for all workers in factories, mines, munitions plants and shipyards.

It regulated working hours and rates of pay. It also had the power to punish workers. It provided minimum working standards to protect workers and prevented exploitation

#### **Invisible unemployment:**

Unemployment appeared to greatly reduce under Nazi control. However, thousands of men had been forced to join the RAD or the army so these people were not counted. In addition, other people had lost their jobs such as women who were no longer expected to have a job. Other groups such as Jews or other minorities lost their jobs. Eventually many political opponents and minority groups would be sent to concentration camps.

This created extra jobs for Germans but it also hid the true figures of unemployed because the Nazis did not count these 'invisible' people. The Nazis also changed the way the statistics were counted. From 1935, anyone in part-time work was counted as being fully employed.

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### **Nazi beliefs about race and minorities:**

Hitler has expressed his racial views clearly in Mein Kampf in 1925. He believed there was a hierarchy of races:

- The Aryan race was superior – it was the master race ‘Pure Germans’. They were portrayed as tall, blonde and athletic.
- Other races such as Slavs of Eastern Europe were lesser races
- Then there were the untermenschen or sub-humans, this included Africans.
- Worst of all were the groups Hitler considered unworthy of life – these were Gypsies and Jews.

### **Persecution of minorities:**

#### **Examples of early Nazi segregation against Jews:**

- From April 1933 there were Nazi boycotts of Jewish businesses
- From April 1933 Jews were banned from Government jobs
- From September 1933, Jews were banned from inheriting land
- From May 1935 Jews were banned from the army
- From June 1935 Jews were banned from restaurants

#### **Examples of Nazi segregation and persecution against Jews:**

The Nuremberg Laws: 15<sup>th</sup> September 1935 (The Reich Law on Citizenship)

- Those of only German blood can be German citizens
- A Jew may not hold any public office or have the vote
- Jews can not hold German passports
- Jews were not allowed to marry Germans

#### **Examples of Nazi persecution against Jews:**

- From 1938 Jews had to register all possessions making it easier for the government to confiscate them
- From July 1938 Jews had to carry an identify card stamped with a large J for Jew.
- From July 1938 Jewish doctors and dentists were forbidden to work for white Aryan Germans
- From August 1938 all Jewish men had to add the name Israel to their first name and women had to add Sarah- this was to humiliate them

NOVEMBER 1938 Kristallnacht ‘Night of the Broken Glass’ – Violent attacks on Jewish businesses, homes and synagogues. **URNS SEGREGATION and PERSECUTION INTO ACTUAL VIOLENCE.**

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### The key features of Kristallnacht: 'Night of the Broken Glass' 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> November 1938

| Causes  | Events  | Consequences   |
|---|---|--|
| <p>7<sup>th</sup> November 1938 a young Polish Jew, Hershel Grynszpan shot a German government official Ersnt von Rath in the German Embassy in Paris.</p> <p>A wave of anti-Semitic angry swept Germany and there was violence against Jews.</p> <p><b>9<sup>th</sup> November</b> von Rath died of his injuries.</p> <p>It was reported in Der Strurmer (Nazi Newspaper) that Hitler had said that if Germans decided to take revenge on the Jews, the Government should do nothing to prevent it.</p> <p>Many members of the SA and SS took this to mean that they should go out and attack Jews and arrest as many as possible.</p> | <p>9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November gangs smashed up Jewish shops, business and property.</p> <p>Some Germans were horrified others watched with pleasure.</p> <p>The following were destroyed in the violence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 814 shops,</li> <li>- 171 homes</li> <li>- 191 synagogues</li> </ul> <p>About 100 Jews were killed.</p> <p>This event became known as 'The Night of broken glass'</p> | <p>Goebbels blamed the Jews for starting the trouble; he said that Jews would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fined 1 billion marks to pay for the damages</li> <li>- Banned from running shops or businesses</li> <li>- Banned from German schools and universities</li> </ul> <p>The SA and SS started to round up Jews as punishment. By 12<sup>th</sup> November 20,000 Jews had been sent to concentration camps.</p> <p>Persecution escalated further when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In January, the Reich Office for Jewish Emigration was set up. Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the Gestago, became its director. He was given the task of getting rid of Jews from Germany by enforced emigration.</li> <li>- From April 1939, Jews could be evicted from rented homes.</li> <li>- After September 1939, Germany occupied Poland and many Jews were deported to Poland and detained in fenced-off areas known as ghettos. Living conditions in these ghettos was very poor.</li> </ul> <p>Eventually Jews were sent to concentration and extermination Camps such as Auschwitz. This would result in approximately 6 million Jews being murdered by the end of WW2.</p> |

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### **Nazi persecution of other minority groups:**

Gypsies, Slavs, the unhealthy or mentally ill, disabled, homosexuals, prostitutes, Jehovah's Witnesses, alcoholics, pacifists, beggars, work-shy, and criminals were also persecuted by the Nazis.

### **Why were other groups persecuted like the Jews?**

The Nazis believed that other racial minorities like the Slavs and Gypsies were sub-human and had no place in Nazi Germany. The Nazis believed these people undermined moral standards and weakened the German bloodline. Hitler believed that like Jews these people were 'undesirable' and diluted the pure German Aryan master race. Nazi policy was designed to remove these people.

### **Euthanasia Campaign**

In 1939, the Nazis secretly started a programme known as 'T4'. It was designed to exterminate the mentally ill through a euthanasia campaign.

Around 6000 disabled babies, children, and teenagers were murdered by starvation and lethal injection. It is also thought that the Nazis conducted many medical experiments on 'undesirables'.

### **Restrictions on relationships and marriage**

1935 – The Nuremberg Laws were used against gypsies- marriage with Germans was forbidden

1935 – Laws against homosexuality were strengthened – laws encouraged voluntary castration to prevent breeding.

### **Concentration Camps / Ghettoes**

Many 'undesirables' such as homosexuals, prostitutes, Gypsies, beggars were sent to concentration camps. 60% of homosexuals died in concentration camps. In April 1939, orders were given to collect all Gypsies within enclosed Ghettoes inside Germany ready to be deported.

### **Sterilisation Campaign**

In July 1933 the Nazis passed the 'Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring' which allowed them to sterilise people with certain illnesses described as 'simple-mindedness' and chronic 'alcoholism'. This would prevent these people from breeding and passing on their 'undesirable' illnesses. Nearly 360,000 men and women were compulsorily sterilised.