*This podcast helps you to understand Nazi views on women and the family.*

In the 1920s, the Weimar Republic had created a greater sense of equality between men and women. Women had the right to vote in elections and were members of the Reichstag; many women took up careers in the professions such as the civil service and medicine; and, socially, women had more freedoms. Once Hitler came to power more traditional ideas about the status of women emerged which influenced Nazi policy and women’s role in society.

One of the first actions of the Nazis was to bring all 230 women’s organisations together under one body – The Women’s Front. Gertrude Scholtz-Klink, National Women’s Leader of Germany, stated that ‘it is the mission of women to minister in the home and in her profession to the needs of life from the first to the last moment of man’s existence’. The Nazis did not see this as a menial role, but the greatest task a woman could bestow upon the nation. These words would be echoed in propaganda posters and radio broadcasts across Germany.

The Nazi Party’s vision for the future of Germany was one that would require a surge in the number of young people, who would eventually protect and serve the Reich. This vision required a woman’s central role to be as a child bearer and housewife, while her husband went out to work. Education, as a result, was supposed to be about guiding women to their future role in society and preparing them for marriage and motherhood. According to the Nazi ideal, a woman was blonde and athletic with heavy hips for child bearing. She did not smoke or wear make-up; she did not work or show an interest in politics. Her chief duty was to serve her husband, look after the household and raise children.

Nevertheless, from 1937, the Nazis had to reverse the policy of encouraging women not to work, as rearmament meant men were joining the army, and women were needed to fill their jobs. By 1939 14.6 million women were in work, up from 11.6 million in 1933.

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*This podcast helps you to understand Nazi policies towards women.*

Questioner: Welcome back to ‘List of Three’, the game show where the contestant has to list three facts about a period in time. Today we are looking at Nazi Germany’s policies towards women. Let’s have our second contestant and start with our first question. Instead of going to work, what ‘three Ks’ were women asked to follow?

Interviewee: *Kinder*, *Küche*, *Kirche*. Roughly translated as children, kitchen and church

Questioner: Correct. Question two: describe three Nazi Party measures aimed at women giving up work.

Interviewee: Oh this is an easy one. First schoolgirls were trained for work at home and discouraged from higher education. Secondly, loans were given to help young couples to marry, provided the wife left her job. And lastly, women doctors, civil servants and teachers were forced to give up their jobs.

Questioner: Very good, and for a bonus point, why were some women awarded medals?

Interviewee: They were given The Cross of Honour of the German Mother for having large families – bronze for four to five children, silver for six to seven children and gold for eight or more.

Questioner: Well done – bonus point awarded! Now back to the main questions. Question three: name three organisations created by the Nazis for women.

Interviewee: Ooh, tricky one. One: The *Jungmädelbund* (Young Girls League) for 10 to 14 year olds. Two: *The Bund Deutscher Mädel* (League of German Girls) for 14 to 18 year olds. And three: The *Frauenfront* (Women’s Front) for women over 21.

Questioner: Very well done. You said that you’d never played this game before. You clearly have beginner’s luck. Question four: describe three laws brought in regarding women and the family.

Interviewee: OK – I’ll try to do this in date order. 1933 – the Law for the Encouragement of Marriage. This gave loans to encourage couples to marry and was aimed at reversing the falling birth-rate problem. Another one is… the 1936 law which said that women could not become judges or serve on juries. Finally, the third law I can think of is… the 1938 divorce law, which made it possible for a man or woman to divorce one other if they couldn’t have a child. This raised the divorce rate significantly in 1939.

Questioner: Next bonus point. Can you name a fourth law that stressed racial purity when marrying.

Interviewee: I know that one! It was the Marriage Health Law of 1935.

Questioner: Excellent! That was very fast. This next question is about appearance. What were women encouraged to look like? Can you name three things?

Interviewee: Ooh. Aahh. Erm.

Questioner: I will have to rush you. This is the final question and worth the full jackpot prize.

Interviewee: Erm, let me think. They were encouraged to wear their hair in plaits or buns.

Questioner: That’s one. Two more.

Interviewee: Wear skirts and dresses – not trousers; and no make-up!

Questioner: We have a WINNER!! Congratulations contestant. Enjoy your winnings. Today’s star prize is a hat made from pure velvet!

Interviewee: Thank you!

Questioner: Thanks for joining us and see you again for another ‘List of Three’.

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*Hitler saw the young as the future of the Third Reich. He spoke of the Thousand Year Reich, which could only be achieved if the youth of Germany was converted to the Nazi way of thinking and to Nazi ideals such as obedience to their Führer. The Nazis attempted to do this through controlling education and also through controlling young people’s leisure time by encouraging them to join Hitler Youth. Hitler Youth comprised different youth groups for boys and girls – including the League of German Maidens for 14 to 18 year old girls and Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend*) for 14 to 18 year old boys. This podcast looks at the role of Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens in controlling the young in their spare time, through a recollection of a fictional former member of Hitler Youth.*

We were excited at the prospect of joining the Hitler Youth. Once you turned ten you were old enough to join the German Young People if you were a boy, and the Young Girls’ League if you were a girl – which my sister joined. Then, when we were 14, I moved up into the Hitler Youth, and my sister became a member of the League of German Maidens. To start with, we loved it. We were given uniforms and special flags to wave. All the boys were waiting for the day that they would be given their own dagger to wear. It was a matter of pride and achievement for us.

We learned new skills during our time in the Hitler Youth. We went hiking and learned how to put up tents. We played war games and even pretended to carry our dead honourably back to camp. Some of the older boys marched and read maps. I wanted to be like them when I first joined. It looked so exciting and all my friends were taking part. That is, all except for Arnold, who continued to wear his hair long and listened to jazz music. This type of thing wasn’t allowed anymore so we all stayed away from him.

For my sister, she had much the same to enjoy – she did physical exercise and marches like us, but instead of military exercises she was shown how to sew and cook. It was to help her be like mother. I remember being glad that I was not a girl.

What I liked most about the whole experience was the sense of being part of something; comradeship they called it. Marching to a song surrounded by friends and feeling loved, was a great feeling. We also got to go on so many trips. The problem was that in 1936 the *Führer* made it more or less compulsory for young people to join up. This is when it stopped being fun. But, it did mean that by 1939 there were seven million members.

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*Under the Nazi government everyone in Germany had to go to school up until the age of fourteen, at which point it then became optional. Boys and girls went to separate schools and had a very different curriculum taught to them. New subjects and changes to existing ones were introduced to promote Nazi ideals. Teachers had to swear an oath of loyalty to Hitler and join the Nazi Teacher’s League and, by 1937, 97 per cent of teachers had joined. Teachers that refused to promote Nazi ideals and show they were committed to Nazism were dismissed. By 1936, 36 per cent of teachers were members of the Nazi Party. This podcast gives a fictional account of a teacher who resigned from the profession rather than swear the oath of loyalty to Hitler.*

Dear diary. I write to you on my last day as a teacher. I suppose I can now find the time to write in you properly since I am no longer planning, marking or delivering a curriculum which I disapprove of. Where should I begin?

The curriculum seems the best place to start. Physical education became a driving force, as Hitler wanted healthy, fit men and women. This meant that 15 per cent of time was given over to sports. The boys’ curriculum was given an emphasis on military preparation and girls were taught needlework and cooking.

New subjects appeared like race studies where we were supposed to teach the children about the difference between racial types and population control. We were supposed to be teaching them that the Aryans were superior and should not marry inferior races. Please! It is what we had to say about Jewish children, which scared me. They were supposed to be made to feel inferior and in some classrooms I know that teachers were calling them to the front to point out the differences between them and their classmates.

We had to start and end each lesson with a salute and saying ‘*Heil Hitler’*, and it didn’t stop there. Nazi themes cropped up in virtually every lesson. Math problems dealt with social issues like how many shells of a certain size would be needed to destroy a factory. In Geography children were taught about how Germany was surrounded by enemies and in History, my subject, we had to teach about the evils of communism and the Treaty of Versailles. I thought we had moved past this under the Weimar Republic, but it seems that old hatred breeds future distrust.

The textbooks were next. These were all state approved versions of each subject and, like the lessons, were modelled around the expectations of Nazi policies. *Mein Kampf*, Hitler’s autobiography, became standard reading.

I couldn’t take it anymore. When asked to swear my oath to ‘*Him*’ I refused and have resigned. I feel now, though, that people are watching me and whilst I look for another job I feel like I better be careful whom I talk to. I hope things turn out for the best, but I have little faith in that.

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*This podcast helps you to understand the policies the Nazis put in place to reduce unemployment.*

Hitler promised full employment when he took office as Chancellor in January 1933. Unemployment had been a big problem since the Wall Street Crash and the Great Depression, which had left Germany in financial ruin. Unemployment had reached six million by 1932 and, through a variety of methods, Hitler was able to make good on his promise. However, this would come at a cost.

A number of policies were brought in to take immediate effect and bring the economy under control.

Firstly, the Reich Labour Service was established, which provided young men with manual labour jobs. From 1935 it was made compulsory for all men between 18 and 25 to serve in the corps for six months. Like the Hitler Youth and the army, workers wore uniforms and carried out military drills. They lived in camps and received very low pay. Nevertheless, they were in work and contributing to the rebuilding of Germany.

Secondly, other jobs were created through large state projects. For example, a massive road-building programme was introduced to build 7,000 kilometres of autobahns (motorways), the first in the world to be created.

Thirdly, the idea of invisible unemployment also contributed to keeping the unemployment figures down. For example, Jews and women were dismissed from their jobs and didn’t appear on official unemployment figures. Once their roles became vacant, men could take them on. Unmarried men under 25 were pushed into National Labour schemes and opponents to the Nazi Party were sent to concentration camps, taking them out of the unemployment statistics.

Finally, Hitler was determined to build up the armed forces to have the country ready for a war. A consequence of this rearmament was a reduction in unemployment through the following ways.

* Conscription was re-introduced in 1935, taking young men into military service. The army grew from 100,000 soldiers in 1933 to 1,400,000 by 1939.
* Heavy industry expanded – for example coal and chemical output doubled and oil, iron and steel trebled between 1933 and 1939.
* Billions were spent on producing tanks, aircraft and ships. By 1939 26 billion marks were spent on rearmament, up from 3.5 billion marks in 1933.

All of these measures together meant that, by 1939, there was virtually no unemployment.

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*This podcast helps you to understand the changes in the standard of living Nazi policies brought about for German workers.*

Questioner: Hello ladies and gentleman and welcome back to everyone’s favourite gameshow ‘Q&A’**,** where the contestant has to answer questions about a particular theme. This time around we are looking at changes in the standard of living, especially of German workers, in Nazi Germany. Let’s begin with our first question: what do the initials KdF stand for?

Interviewee: Strength through Joy

Questioner: Correct. What was Strength through Joy?

Interviewee: It was an organisation set up by the German Labour Front to improve the leisure time of German workers.

Questioner: Good. Next question. Name three types of activities the KdF sponsored.

Interviewee: Theatre and opera tickets, sporting events, holidays, museum tours, weekend trips and cruises.

Questioner: Wow. I’ll take your first three and they were all correct. Well done. Now let’s move on to question four. What was the Beauty of Labour movement all about?

Interviewee: Was it a beauty contest for workers?

Questioner: I’m afraid not. It was actually a department within the KdF which tried to improve working conditions. It helped organise the building of things like swimming pools and canteens. It also improved lighting and noise levels for workers in factories. You have one life remaining. Here’s question five. In which year was the People’s Car (Volkswagen) scheme introduced?

Interviewee: Oooh. This is a stab in the dark. Was it 1938?

Questioner: That is correct. It was a scheme which gave workers the opportunity to pay five marks a week – eventually over time allowing them to buy a car. Unfortunately, due to the war, no one received a car and their money was not refunded. Question six: true or false? Average weekly wages rose from 86 marks in 1932 to 109 marks in 1938.

Interviewee: True, that’s definitely true.

Questioner: Outstanding work contestant. We move onto the final two questions. Question seven, give me three problems workers faced under these new schemes.

Interviewee: These are getting more difficult! Okay. One: Beauty of Labour made people resentful as they had to carry out improvements in their spare time and without pay. Two: trade unions and strikes were banned, which meant that workers no longer had a voice to negotiate better pay or reduced working hours. Finally number three is, the average working hours in industry rose from 43 hours per week to 47 between 1933 and 1939. Boom!

Questioner: Amazing! Well done! Now for the final question: What was the *Eintopf*?

Interviewee: I have no idea I’m afraid. If I had to guess I’d say… a brand of milk?

Questioner: Oh, you were so close to winning, but I’m afraid you have lost everything. The actual answer was, a one-pot dish comprising meat and vegetables. It was known as the ‘meal of sacrifice’ among families as the war progressed.

Remember folks. If you want to win the game revise, revise, revise. Until next time. Good bye.

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*This podcast helps you to understand Nazi racial beliefs and policies and the treatment of the minorities.*

Central to the Nazi policy was the creation of a pure German state. Hitler’s racial beliefs were based on the idea the ‘master race’and subhumans.

The Nazis believed that the Germans were a pure race of Aryan descent from the *Herrenvolk* – or ‘master race’. Aryans were shown in art as tall, lean, athletic, blond and blue-eyed. Hitler’s belief was that this race had become contaminated over time by subhumans – *untermenschen*. He branded Jews, ‘Gypsies’ and Slavs as subhuman. Hitler’s view that a pure German state of Aryans would be a *Volkgemeinschaft* – a people’s community – which would work for the good of Germany.

To create the pure German state Hitler believed selective breeding was required which meant preventing anyone who did not conform to the Aryan type from having children. The SS was part of this drive for selective breeding. It recruited ‘typical’ Aryan men and they were only allowed to marry women of Aryan blood.

Ideal Germans were also socially useful ones in that they had a job and contributed to the state. Anyone else was seen as a burden on the community and regarded as ‘asocial’. People in this group included the mentally disabled, tramps and beggars. The Nazis believed they had to be removed as they were worthless and could not contribute to the *Volkgemeinschaft*. Other socially undesirable groups that the Nazis wanted to remove as they were seen as a danger and bad influence on others were homosexuals, alcoholics and juvenile delinquents.

A propaganda campaign made it clear that German people should turn against these groups. Stronger measures soon followed.

In July 1933 the Sterilisation Law was passed, allowing the Nazis to sterilise people with certain illnesses described as ‘simple-mindedness’ or ‘chronic alcoholism’. Between 1934 and 1945 about 350,000 people were sterilised.

Many ‘undesirables’ were sent to concentration camps, including prostitutes, homosexuals and juvenile delinquents. Later in 1938 ‘gypsies’, tramps and beggars were added to the list.

The final measure was the euthanasia campaign, which began in 1939 to secretly exterminate the mentally ill. Around 6000 disabled babies, children and teenagers were murdered.

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*Anti-Semitism had been around for centuries and was certainly not new in twentieth century Germany. However, when the Nazis took power in 1933, Hitler was determined to create a ‘pure’ German state. This did not include the 500,000 Jews who were living in Germany, who he had used as scapegoats for all society’s problems, such as Germany’s defeat in the First World War and the Depression of 1929. He had no master plan for achieving his ‘pure’ state, but a series of anti-Jewish measures were carried out in the years 1933 to 1939 which persecuted Jewish people. This podcast helps you to understand some of these measures.*

One of the early measures was aimed at ensuring future support for anti-Semitic policy. Anti-Semitic textbooks and teaching materials, controlled by the ministry of education, were put into schools, encouraging young people to hate Jews.

Another early measure happened in response to the international press, which criticised the new Nazi regime in April 1933. The Nazis said this was instigated by Jews living abroad and the SA organised a boycott of Jewish shops and businesses. They painted ‘Jude’ (Jew) on windows and tried to persuade the public not to enter. The boycott lasted only one day, and most Germans ignored it, but it was a first step in showing the Jews as a separate body, unprotected by the police.

The next big measure towards persecution came in 1935 with the announcement of the Nuremburg Laws in September. Among these laws was the *Reich Law on Citizenship*, which denied citizenship to Jewish people and therefore legal protection under the law, and the *Law to Protect German Blood and Honour*, which stated that only those of German blood could marry another German. Any marriages that occurred before this law were still valid, but Germans were encouraged to divorce their Jewish partners. Few did.

After a brief easing of persecution during the 1936 Olympic Games, when Germany wanted to create a good impression to the world, persecution began to grow and worsen, and in 1937, for the first time in two years, Hitler publically attacked the Jews.

More Jewish businesses were closed and in 1938 Jews had to carry identity cards as well as change their name to traditional Hebrew names. Women were referred to as ‘Sarah’ and men ‘Israel’, to further humiliate them. Then, in November, there was a violent outburst of anti-Semitism in Germany known as Kristallnacht – The Night of Broken Glass.

A young Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, shot an official in the German Embassy in Paris in response to the deportation of his parents from Germany to Poland. The response from the Nazis was swift. On the night of 9 November Jewish shops, businesses, homes and synagogues were attacked. So many windows were smashed, that the event became known as the Night of Broken Glass. In the end 7,500 businesses were destroyed, 20,000 people sent to concentration camps and 100 Jews killed. The reaction from many Germans was disgust and therefore the Nazis distanced themselves from it, claiming that it was a spontaneous act of vengeance by some German people.

Persecution continued into 1939 and in January the Reich Office for Jewish Emigration was established with the responsibility of forcing Jews to emigrate. In the following months they were required to surrender their precious metals and jewellery, hand over their radio sets and move to designated Jewish accommodation or ghettos. By the summer of 1939, 250,000 Jews had left Germany.

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