

# World War II – Development of Ultranationalism in Germany

Social Studies 20-1

# World War 2- Overview

- **What:** The second global scale war involving multiple nations (over 60!)
- **When:** Began in September 1939 and ended in September 1945
- **Where:** Europe, Asia, and Islands in the Pacific Ocean
- **Why:** More complicated than WW1 as there were many nations involved for a variety of initial issues. There are multiple triggers associated with the outbreak of the war, including the rise of Fascism around the world, issues of expansions, the Treaty of Versailles, etc.
- **Who:** Various Nation-States
  - Allied Forces = United States, Great Britain and the British Empire (including Canada), France, The Soviet Union etc.
  - Axis Powers = Germany, Italy, Japan
- **How:** Large scale attacks with new technology including weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons, and actions associated with genocide

# The Interwar Years

- Economic depression prevailed in Europe for most of the interwar period and many nations found it difficult to pay their debts without borrowing even more money. This happened at even higher rates and the world economy worsened.
- Germany especially was destroyed economically after WW1 and its aftermath, including the impossibly high reparations outlined by Treaty of Versailles.
- The political atmosphere of the inter-war years was sharply divided between those who thought the extreme left could solve Europe's problems and those who desired leadership from the far right
  - There were very few moderate nations and this situation kept the governments of Britain and France in a constant turmoil - swinging wildly from one extreme viewpoint to the next
  - These extreme viewpoints won out in the form of totalitarian states in Europe during the inter-war period and communism took hold in the Soviet Union, while fascism controlled Germany, Italy, and Spain
- All of this mixed with the issues associated with appeasement, expansionism, and isolationism...

# Development of Ultrationalism in Germany

Many economic, social, and political factors led to the development of deep nationalistic feelings and the rise of Nazism in Germany.



# German Vocab Words

- **Anschluss** = means to join. This refers to the annexation of Austria to Nazi Germany.
- **Führer** = meaning "leader" or "guide"
- **Herrenvolk** = Master people
- **Kristallnacht** = the Night of Broken Glass
- **Mein Kampf** = My Struggle
- **Sudetenland** = is the historical German name for the northern, southern, and western areas of former Czechoslovakia which were inhabited primarily by Sudeten Germans. These German speakers had predominated in the border districts of Bohemia, Moravia, and Czech Silesia from the time of the Austrian Empire.
- **Volk** = people who belong to a community membership based on blood

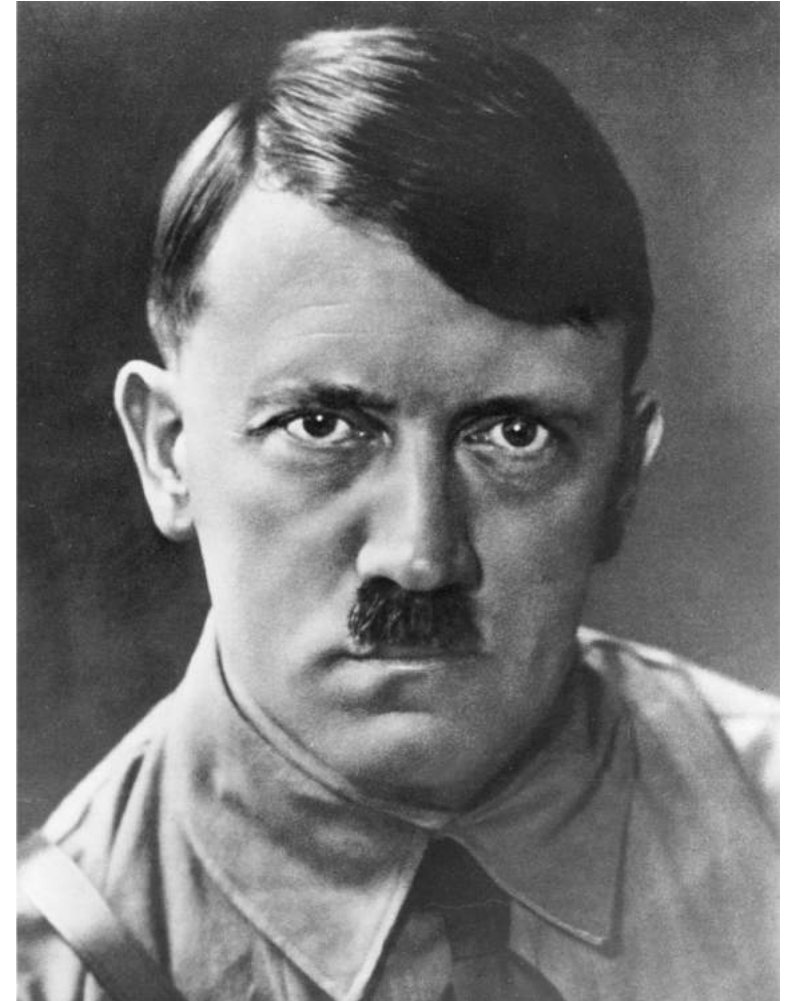
# Adolf Hitler

- A German politician and leader of the Nazi Party.
- He was born in Austria in 1889 and moved to Germany in 1913 where he enrolled in the German Army and served in World War 1.
- In 1919 he joined the German Worker's Party (which would eventually transform into the Nazi Party). He became the leader of the party in 1921. In 1923 the party failed a coup d'état as they tried to take power in Germany.
- He was failed for this and during his imprisonment he wrote the first volume of his autobiography and political manifesto *Mein Kampf* ("My Struggle")



# Adolf Hitler

- After his release in 1924, Hitler gained popular support by attacking the Treaty of Versailles and promoting the superiority of the German bloodline, anti-Semitism, and anti-communism.
- He rose to power as the chancellor of Germany in 1933 and then as *Führer* (leader, guide) in 1934. During his dictatorship from 1933 to 1945, he is considered to be the one who initiated World War II in Europe by invading Poland on in September of 1939.



# The Rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party

In Germany, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party received wide support for the changes they brought to the people and the nation. Hitler argued that Germany needed to regain its great status and promised to liberate Germany from the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Seeing the Treaty as the source of Germany's problems, Hitler pulled Germany out of the League of Nations and began rearming the military.

Hitler's expansionist policies were encouraged by the failure of the League of Nations to stop Japanese aggression in Manchuria in the early 1930s and Italy's aggression in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935–1936. A great Germany would require more land, so Hitler embarked on a policy of *Anschluss*, a union of Austria and Germany. Hitler coerced the Austrian government to legalize the Austrian Nazi Party, which eventually took power.



# The Rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party

While the Nazis completely disregarded the Treaty of Versailles, Britain and France were mired in the Great Depression and had little interest or financial means to do anything to stop the growing Nazi power. In fact, some saw the right-wing Nazi Party as a way to counter the growth of the growing presence of communism in Germany.

Political indecisiveness by Britain and France caused them to follow a policy of appeasement, according to which they did little to stop Nazi actions if they did not directly conflict with their interests.

As a consequence, Hitler felt emboldened to annex the *Sudetenland*, then occupy the rest of Czechoslovakia in 1939, then turn his sights on Poland. Despite British threats and promises to support Poland, Hitler's invasion was quick and decisive, and met with no resistance from Britain. German nationalism soared as new territory populated with Germanic peoples became a reality.



This 1936 poster urges people to vote for Hitler by noting what he has done to promote automobile ownership in Germany.

The caption reads: *The Führer promised to motorize Germany. In 1932, 104 000 motor vehicles were manufactured, 33 000 people were employed, and goods with a total value of 295 000 000 marks were produced. In 1935, 353 000 vehicles were manufactured, Over 100 000 people were employed, and the value of goods produced was 1 150 000 000 marks. The Führer gave 250 000 people's comrades jobs in the auto industry and its suppliers. German people: **Thank the Führer on 29 March! Give him your vote!***

Is the poster an example of propaganda? Why or why not? How would automobile ownership promote feelings of nationalism?

## *Consider This...*

What role did nationalism play in Hitler's rise to power?

How did ultranationalism develop in Germany as an extension or expression of national interests?

Anything/Anyone that endangers the success of Germany needs to be removed

All German people giving in other nation-states, deserve to be under the rule of Germany

The Germany people need room to live in other to have access the adequate resources they need

Germany must be economic independent and self-sufficient

We must preserving the unique Aryan "racial" characteristics with which "nature" had equipped it for success in the struggle to survive



# Nazi Ideology (Nazism)

**Racial Beliefs:** Hitler believed that a person's characteristics, attitudes, abilities, and behavior were determined by his or her so-called racial make-up. In Hitler's view, all groups, races, or peoples (he used those terms interchangeably) carried within them traits that were passed from one generation to the next. No individual could overcome the qualities of race. All of human history could be explained in terms of racial struggle.

This 1938 illustration in Alfred Vogel's text *Inheritance and Racial Hygiene* compares "German Youth" (left) and "Jewish Youth" (right).

It is subtitled "From the face speaks the soul of the race."



# Nazi Ideology (Nazism)

**The Master Race:** Nazi theorists believed that the Nordic race was descended from Aryans who he believed had prehistorically lived on the North German Plain. The Nazis declared that the “true” German people(or Aryan’s as they called them) were superior to all other races. The Nazis believed they were entitled to expand territorially because of this and their race was the superior once and therefore needed room to flourish.

- **Volk:** The Nazis promoted the idea of a *Volk* community, which meant that citizenship was characterized by blood, not by geographical borders. Members of the *Volk* were thought to be part of the superior Aryan race.

# Nazi Ideology (Nazism)

**Social Darwinism:** the Nazis believed that human beings could be classified collectively as “races,” with each race bearing distinctive characteristics that had been passed on genetically since the first appearance of humans in prehistoric times. These inherited characteristics related not only to outward appearance and physical structure, but also shaped internal mental life, ways of thinking, creative and organizational abilities, intelligence, taste and appreciation of culture, physical strength, and military prowess.

The Nazis also adopted the social Darwinist take on Darwinian evolutionary theory regarding the “*survival of the fittest*.” For the Nazis, survival of a race depended upon its ability to reproduce and multiply, its accumulation of land to support and feed that expanding population, and its vigilance in maintaining the purity of its gene pool, thus preserving the unique “racial” characteristics with which “nature” had equipped it for success in the struggle to survive. Since each “race” sought to expand, and since the space on the earth was finite, the struggle for survival resulted “naturally” in violent conquest and military confrontation. Hence, war—even constant war—was a part of nature, a part of the human condition.

# Nazi Ideology (Nazism)

**Targeted Groups (Non-Superior Races):** The Nazis defined Jews as a “race.” Regarding the Jewish religion as irrelevant, the Nazis attributed a wide variety of negative stereotypes about Jews and “Jewish” behavior to an unchanging biologically determined heritage that drove the “Jewish race,” like other races, to struggle to survive by expansion at the expense of other races.

While it classified Jews as the priority “enemy,” the Nazi ideological concept of race targeted other groups for persecution, imprisonment, and annihilation. These groups included Roma /Gypsies, people with disabilities, homosexuals, and other political dissidents. They sought to eliminate domestic non-conformists and so-called racial threats through a perpetual self-purge of German society.



Nazi propaganda poster warning Germans about the dangers of east European "subhumans." Germany, date uncertain.



# The Persecution of Minorities

Many Nazi scientists at this time believed in **eugenics**, the idea that people with disabilities or social problems were **degenerates** whose genes needed to be eliminated from the human bloodline. The Nazis pursued eugenics policies vigorously.

- **Sterilization** - In order to keep the Aryan race pure, many groups were prevented from reproducing. The mentally and physically disabled, including the deaf, were sterilised, as were people with hereditary diseases. Children born to German women and French African soldiers in the Rhineland at the end of World War One were called 'Rhineland Bastards' and also sterilised.
- **Concentration camps** - Homosexuals, prostitutes, Jehovah's Witnesses, gypsies, alcoholics, pacifists, beggars, hooligans and criminals were often rounded up and sent away to camps. During World War Two, 85 per cent of Germany's gypsies died in these camps.

# The Nazis' Persecution of the Jewish People

The group most heavily targeted for persecution by the Nazis were the Jews of Germany. The outbreak of World War Two brought the horror of mass killings and the **Final Solution**, but this began much earlier in period after 1933 saw a gradual increase in persecution, reaching a turning point during **Kristallnacht** in November 1938.

# Persecution of Jewish People Prior to the Outbreak of WW2

## 1933

- Nazis organised a boycott of Jewish businesses.
- Books by Jewish authors were publicly burnt.
- Jewish civil servants, lawyers and teachers were fired.
- Race science lessons were introduced, teaching that Jewish people were sub-human.

## 1935

- The **Nuremberg Laws** formalised anti-Semitism into the Nazi state by:
  - Stripping Jews of German citizenship
  - Outlawing marriage and sexual relations between Jews and Germans
  - Taking away all civil and political rights

## 1938

- Jewish people could no longer be doctors.
- They had to add the name Israel (men) or Sara (women) to their name to be easily identified
- Jewish children were forbidden to go to school.

**Kristallnacht – November, 9<sup>th</sup>, 1938.** The SS organised attacks on Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues in retaliation for the assassination of the German ambassador to France by a Jew.

## 1939

- Jewish people were forbidden to own a business, or even a radio.

**By the outbreak of World War Two in September 1939, the Jews were stateless, their employment options in Germany were severely restricted and they feared for their safety.**

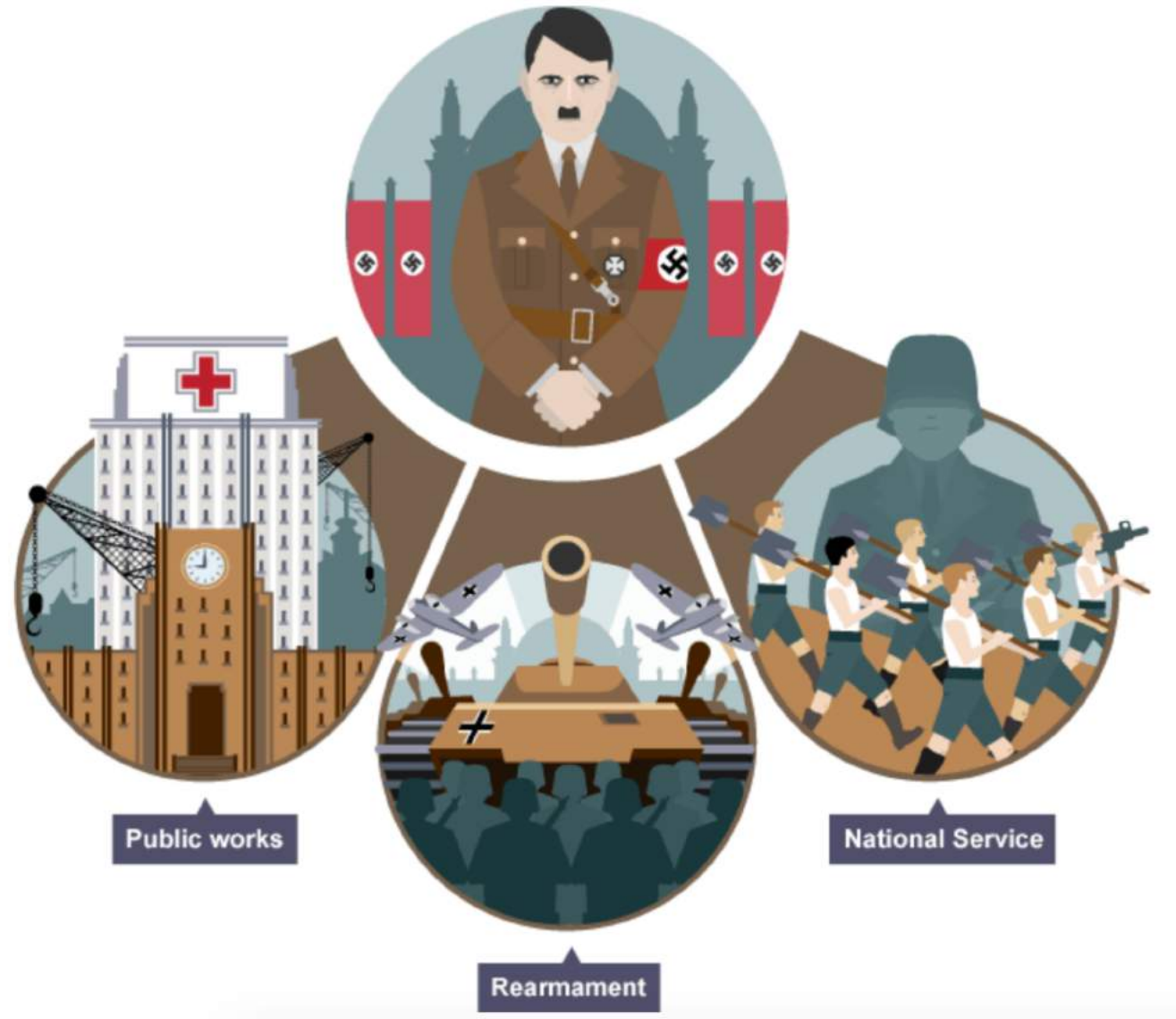
# Kristallnacht

On the night of November 9 into the morning of November 10, 1938, in an incident known as “Kristallnacht” (*Night of the Broken Glass*), Nazis in Germany torched synagogues, vandalized Jewish homes, schools and businesses and killed Jewish People.

German Jews had been subjected to repressive policies since 1933, when Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany. However, prior to Kristallnacht, these Nazi policies had been primarily nonviolent. After Kristallnacht, conditions for German Jews grew increasingly worse. Shortly after, World War II officially broke out and Hitler and the Nazis implemented their so-called **Final Solution** to the what they referred to as the “Jewish problem,” and carried out the systematic murder of some 6 million European Jews in what came to be known as the **Holocaust**.

German citizens in Magdeburg the morning after Kristallnacht looking into a Jewish owned storefront.



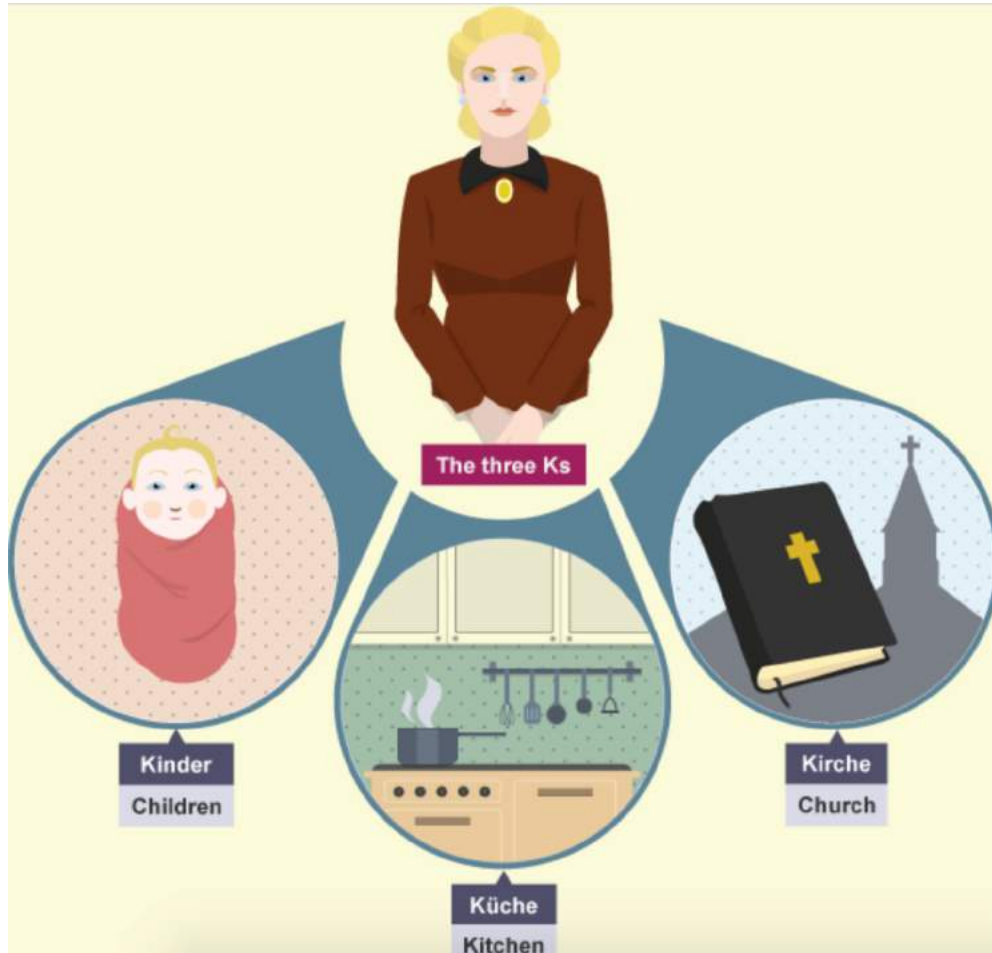


In order to improve the living standards of the German people, We must invest in public works projects (schools, hospitals, and public buildings)

Germans will serve the nation in whatever labor capacity is available so Germany can begin to rebuild

In order for the German people to be protected, they must rearm themselves and strengthen their military powers

# Nazi Views on Women and the Family



The Nazis had clear ideas of what they wanted from women. They were expected to stay at home, look after the family and produce children in order to secure the future of the Aryan race.

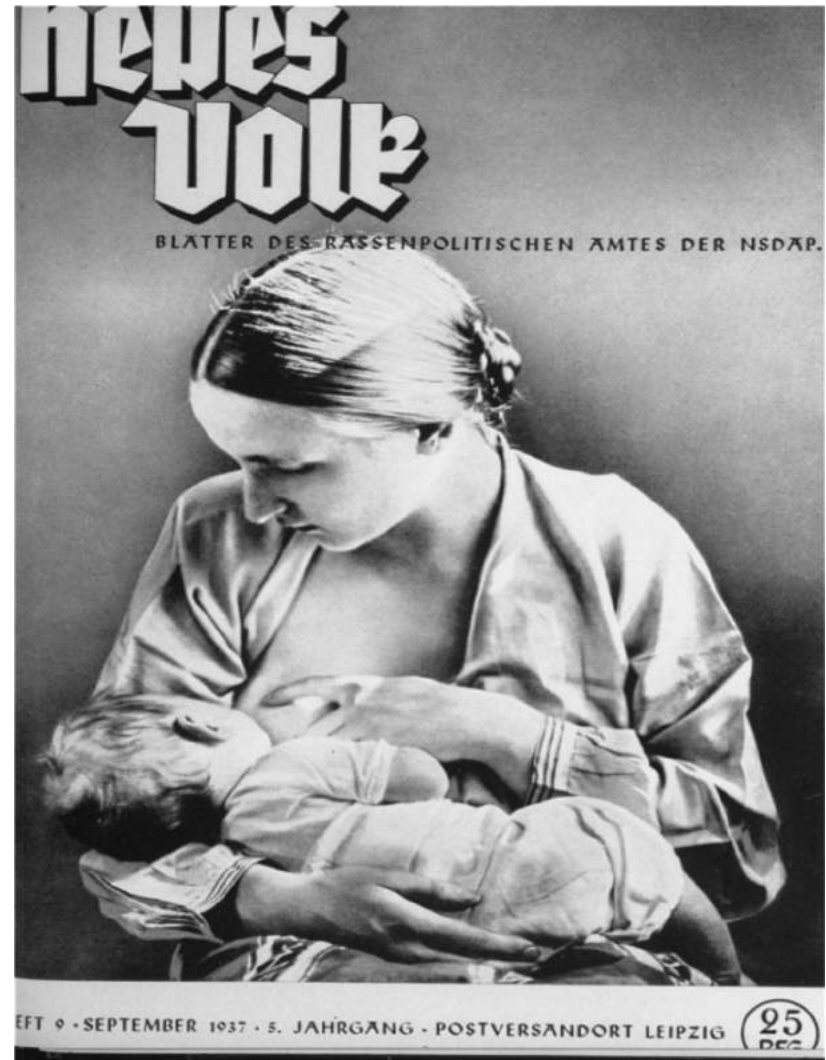
Hitler believed women's lives should revolve round the three Ks.

Hitler wanted a high birth rate so that the Aryan population would grow. He tried to achieve this by:

- ✓ introducing the Law for the Encouragement of Marriage in 1933 which gave newlywed couples a loan of 1,000 marks, and allowed them to keep 250 marks for each child they had
- ✓ Giving an award called the Mother's Cross to women who had large numbers of children. Women who had 5 children were given a bronze medal. A mother of 6 or 7 children earned a silver medal. A gold medal was awarded to women who gave birth to 8 or more children
- ✓ allowing women to volunteer to have a baby for an Aryan member of the SS



*The Aryan Family* (1930) by Wolfgang Willrich



The cover of a Nazi publication on race, *Neues Volk* (New People), portrays motherhood with this ideal image of an "Aryan" mother and child. Germany, April 1937.

# Nazi Policies Towards the Youth

Young people were very important to Hitler and the Nazis. Hitler spoke of his *Third Reich* lasting for a thousand years and to achieve this he would have to ensure German children thoroughly **indoctrinated** in Nazi ideology.

To this end, from the age of 10 boys and girls were encouraged to join the Nazis' youth organisation, the Hitler Youth (the girls' wing of which was called the League of German Maidens). Membership from age 10 was made compulsory in 1936 and by 1939, 90 per cent of German boys aged 14 and over were members.



Eleven-year-old boys in the Hitler Youth organization learning how to fire a rifle.





In January 1933, there were 50,000 members of the Hitler Youth. By the end of the year, there were more than 2 million.

As the 1930s progressed, the Nazis waged war on the groups so popular among German youth. First they banned children's groups associated with political movements like Communism. And in 1936, they banned all youth groups—including the Boy Scouts—and forced members to become part of the Hitler Youth instead.

Jewish children were banned from participation.

Boys wore military-style uniforms

Girls wore a uniform of blue skirt, blouse and heavy marching shoes



The Hitler Youth

The League of German Maidens

Activities centred on physical exercise and political indoctrination

Some physical activity, but mainly domestic skills



Its aim was to prepare German boys to be future soldiers

Prepare German girls for future motherhood

# Nazi Control of the Youth Through Education

As well as influencing the beliefs of young Germans through the Hitler Youth, schools indoctrinated young people in the political and racial ideas of Nazism. All teachers had to join the Nazi Teachers' Association, which vetted them for political and racial suitability. Every lesson started with *Heil Hitler!*

The curriculum was altered to reflect Nazi ideology and priorities:

- **History** - lessons included a course on the rise of the Nazi Party.
- **Biology** - lessons were used to teach Nazi racial theories of evolution in **eugenics**.
- **Race study and ideology** - this became a new subject, dealing with the **Aryan** ideas and anti-Semitism.
- **Physical Education** - German school children had five one-hour sports lessons every week.
- **Geography** - used to show hostile or racially inferior neighbours and where resources lay that were necessary for Germany's living space, Lebensraum.

The aim was to indoctrinate children so that they would grow up accepting Nazi ideas without question.



*"We used a book with page after page showing the physical differences between Jews and Germans in grotesque drawings of Jewish noses, lips, and eyes. The book encouraged every child to note these differences and to bring anyone who bore Jewish features on the attention of our parents or teachers. I was horrified by the crimes Jewish people were being accused of - killing babies, loan-sharking, basic dishonesty, and conspiring to destroy Germany and rule the world. The description of the Jewish people would convince any child that these were monsters, not people with sorrows and joys like ours."*

- Irmgard Paul

A double-page spread of a Nazi textbook on art comparing (c. 1940)

# The Schutzstaffel (SS) and Gestapo

Founded in 1925, the “Schutzstaffel” (German for “Protective Echelon”), initially served as Hitler's personal bodyguards, and later became one of the most powerful and feared groups in all of Nazi Germany as they became a major paramilitary organization.

The **Gestapo** were Secret Police, formed out of the existing state police after the Nazis took power.

Together they managed the treatment of “inferior races” and suppressed partisan activities in the occupied territories and carried out reprisals against civilians



*1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte SS - Berlin 1938.*

Keep in mind that all of this has happened in the years before World War 2 has officially started. These are the conditions and events occurring in Germany prior to what will become known as the Holocaust.

It is important to remember that what happened in Germany did not occur overnight. These conditions laid the foundation for the horrific events that were yet to occur. This was almost a decade of these actions being taken while the world did nothing.

Additionally, everything that was occurring during this period was legal. As the ruling party of Germany, the Nazis created laws that allowed their actions to be seen as a reasonable response and solution to what the nation had endured.