



Women in Nazi Germany

Aim:

To Understand the Nazi policies
And how effective they were

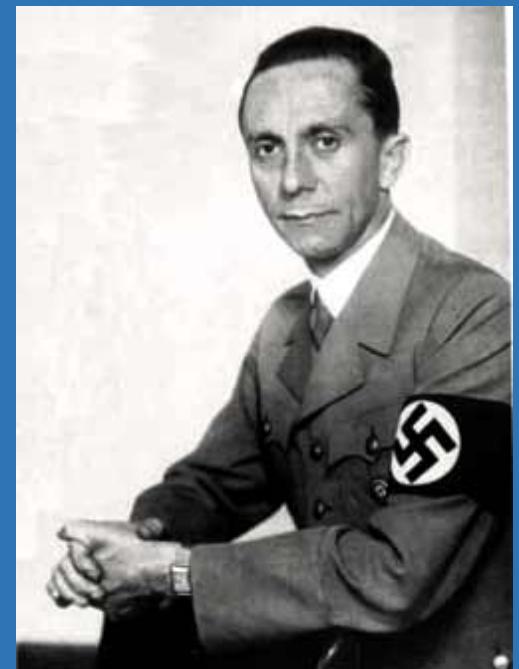


If a man's world is the state, then the woman's world is her husband, her family, her children and her home. It is not correct for women to interfere in the world of man. The National Socialist Women's movement has one single point – the child.

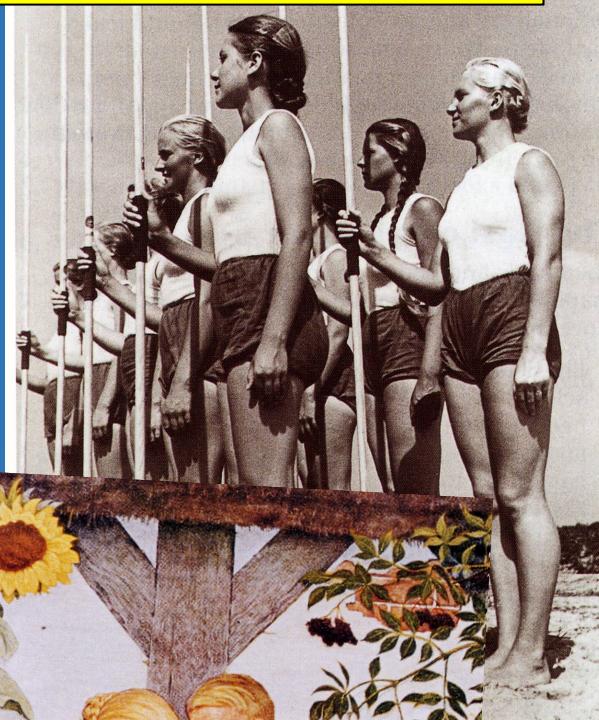
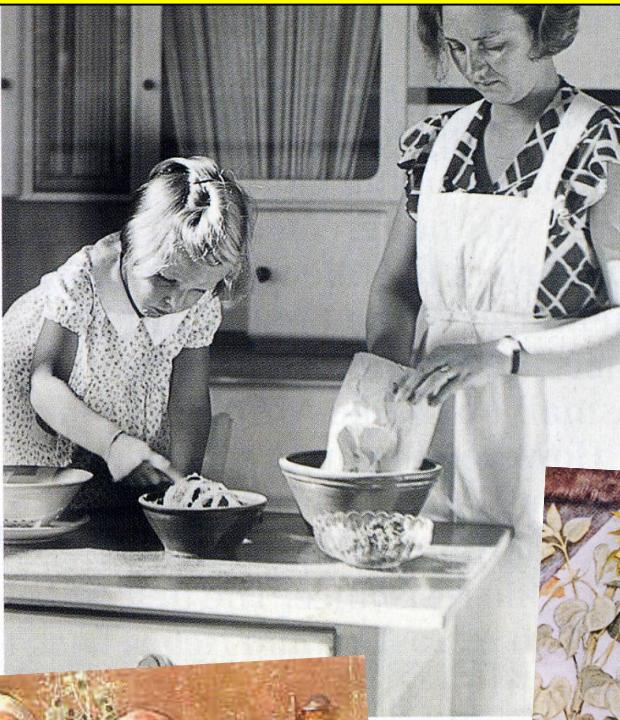
Hitler speaking in 1934

The mission of the woman is to be beautiful and to bring children into the world.

Josef Goebbels 1929



Look at these images, what can you INFER is the role of women in Nazi Germany?



The Nazis had a purpose for women:

Kinder



Kirche



Küche





Employment: The Nazis wanted women to stay at home rather than go to work, so they could raise a family. They believed that men were the main breadwinners, and that any woman in work could be taking a man's job. They disapproved of women in professions such as medicine and the law.

Appearance: women should adopt a 'natural' look, with simple plaited or tied-back hair and long skirts.

Marriage and family: birth rates should increase to make Germany bigger and stronger. The Nazis wanted women to marry and have as many children as possible. They believed that women should devote their lives to feeding and rearing their family. They stressed the importance of housecraft, skills like needlework and cookery.

Figure 4.1 Nazi views on women and the family.

Summarise the expectations of a woman in Nazi Germany

The Nazis believed that woman should adopt a traditional role of mother and housewife while the man provided for the family. It is important to note though that Hitler didn't see women as unimportant.

•did not go to work. In all the jobs they directly controlled they began to get rid of women: 15 per cent of teachers, all women doctors and civil servants were sacked

•looked like this: blonde, heavy-hipped, and athletic, in a full skirt, wearing flat heels and no make-up

•cooked like this: always using up left-overs; once a month on a Sunday they had to prepare a one-dish meal, a sort of stew made of cheap meat and left-overs that everyone was meant to eat. The SA could come round and check on whether this was being observed

•dressed like this: always using home produced substitutes for imported wool, cotton and silk

•behaved like this: there was public pressure to stop women smoking. In many cities police chiefs put up posters in restaurants forbidding women to smoke. One police chief told people to stop women who were smoking

and remind them of their duty as German women and mothers
•brought their children up like this: as loyal Nazis, encouraging them to worship the Führer and join the Hitler Youth.

Stick your summary post it in your books

Nazi policies towards women

All women's organisations would be forced to merge with a new Nazi organisation called the **Women's Enterprise (DFW)**. This gave the Nazis control of all women's groups, eventually reaching 6 million members.

- The DFW delivered courses on childcare, cooking and sewing to which 1.7 million women had attended these courses by 1939

By 1933, birth rates in Germany had fallen to one million, this meant fewer German workers, soldiers and mothers. What would you do to improve this situation...

List 5 of your ideas in your books

1: Law for the Encouragement of Marriage - 1933

- Loans worth up to 1000 marks (app. 8 months wages) when a young couple got married
- Loans were only available if the woman gave up work to look after their children
- For each child the couple had a $\frac{1}{4}$ of the loan was written off
- A woman could often earn more than her husband by having children



Waffen SS wedding

2: Divorce Laws

- If a woman would not, or could not have children the husband could be divorced easily
- If a woman had an abortion, again the husband could divorce his wife

3: The Mother's Cross

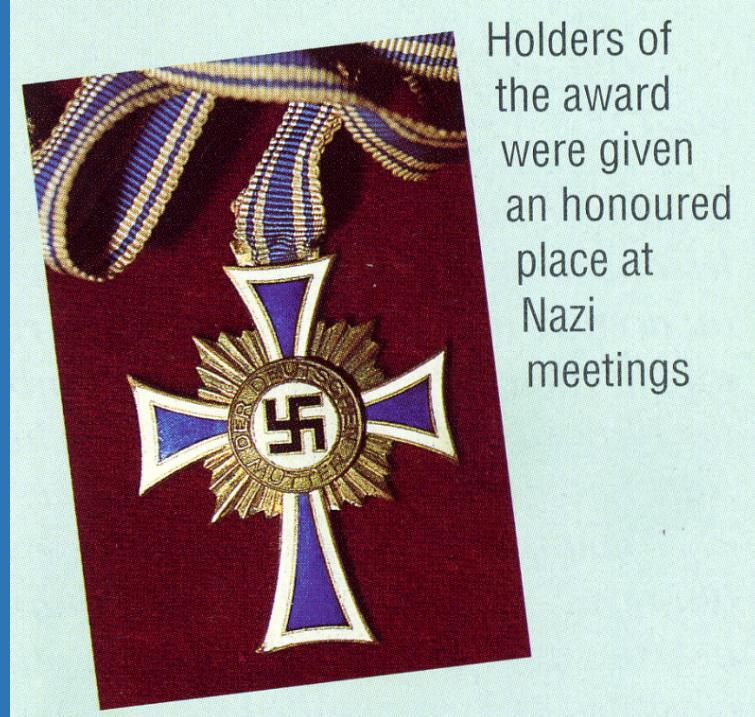
- The Mother's Cross was an award given to women based on the number of children they had:
4-5 = Bronze
6-7 = Silver
8 = Gold
- Hitler Youth saluted women wearing the Gold medal
- Women who had 10 were expected to name the 10th Adolf and name Hitler as its Godfather



Holders of the award were given an honoured place at Nazi meetings

4: Lebensborn

- Started in 1935 by SS leader, Himmler
- Provided nurseries and financial aid for women who had children with SS men
- Encouraged single women to breed with SS men – to create ‘genetically pure’ children for worthy German families



Holders of the award were given an honoured place at Nazi meetings

Lebensborn clip: A child for Hitler

Other policies:

Abortion made illegal.

Contraceptives restricted.

Improved maternity benefits

Improved family allowances

Infertile women could be divorced easily.

Even women who had been made infertile by husbands passing on an STD could be divorced easily.

Glorify the mother image



Which women were sterilised?

'Here is the place where we prove that our interest in the child begins before he is born. This is the *Frauen-Klinik* – a city hospital for women'.

We climbed some stairs and entered a second floor gallery, separated from an...operating room by a glass wall. Down below six doctors were hard at work.

What I saw drove the blood from my face.... Hospital beds came and went with methodical precision. The doctors made quick, deft incisions in white abdomen walls:

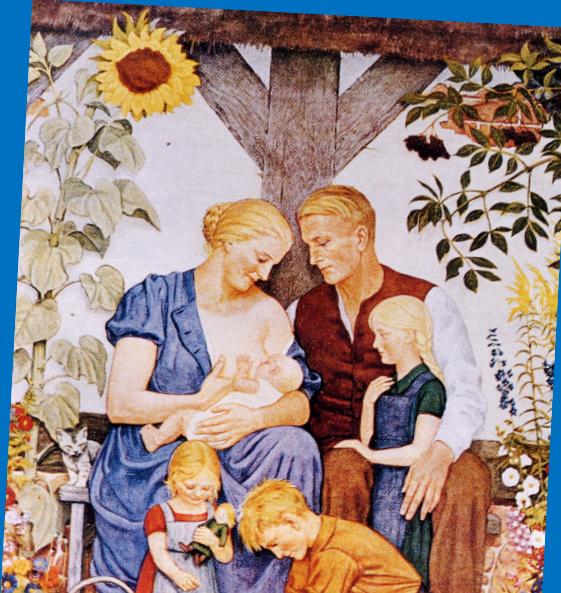
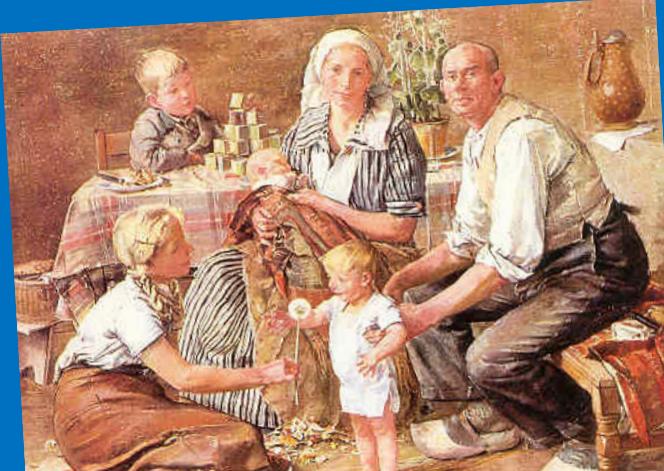
'What are they doing?' I asked.

'...These doctors', he said, 'are sterilising women....'

I asked what type of women...and was informed they were the mentally sick, women with low resistance, women who had proved through other births that their offspring were not strong....

'We are even eradicating colour-blindness...' my SS guide told me. 'We must not have soldiers who are colour blind. It is transmitted only by women.'

Women and employment



In your books, complete this table with examples

Women's lives were better	Women's lives were worse

- Propaganda was used to persuade women that they should be at home not working
- These images were glorified, so those who weren't at home having children were 'questionable'
- From 1933, women were banned from being teachers, doctors and civil servants, by 1934 360,000 had given up working
- 1936 – No woman could become a judge or lawyer
- School girls were trained for motherhood not working
- 1937 – Girls grammar schools were banned, there was no need to go to University, female students fell from 17000 to 6000

How effective were these policies?

Effective	Not effective
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some women were persuaded by Nazi views and were content to accept the policies.• Fewer women went to University (from 17,000 to just 6000)• More women had given up their jobs (360,000)• Birth rate increased• Unemployment among German men fell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many women did not support Nazi ideas about womanhood• Some felt they harmed the family and degraded women• Some women hated the Reich Women's Leader (Gertrude Scholtz-Klink)• Some felt the domestic status of women was demeaning

Source H

Traudl Junge was a young woman in Nazi Germany. Here she is remembering her youth in Nazi Germany.

Gertrud Scholtz-Klink was the type (of woman) we did not like at all. She was so ugly and wasn't fashionable. We didn't bother about joining her organisation. It didn't attract me or my friends. We were interested in dancing and ballet and didn't care much for political ideas.

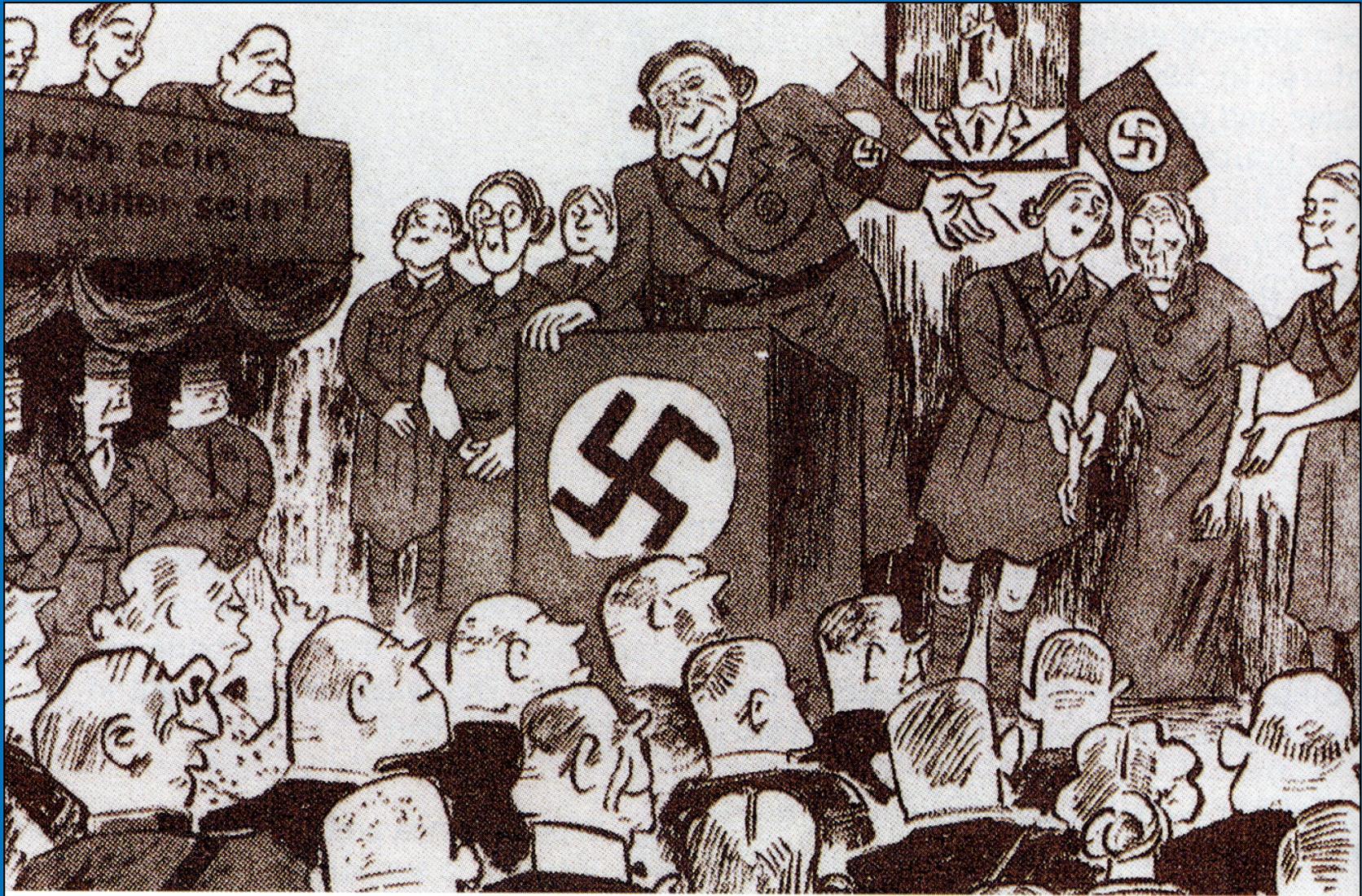
Source I

Extract from a letter to a Leipzig newspaper in 1934.

A son, even the youngest, laughs in his mother's face. He regards her as his servant and women in general are merely willing tools of his aims.

What view do these sources suggest? Give evidence for your points (from BOTH sources).

How effective were these policies?



What is the message of this source?

How effective were these policies?

Do you agree with this interpretation of a woman in Nazi Germany?

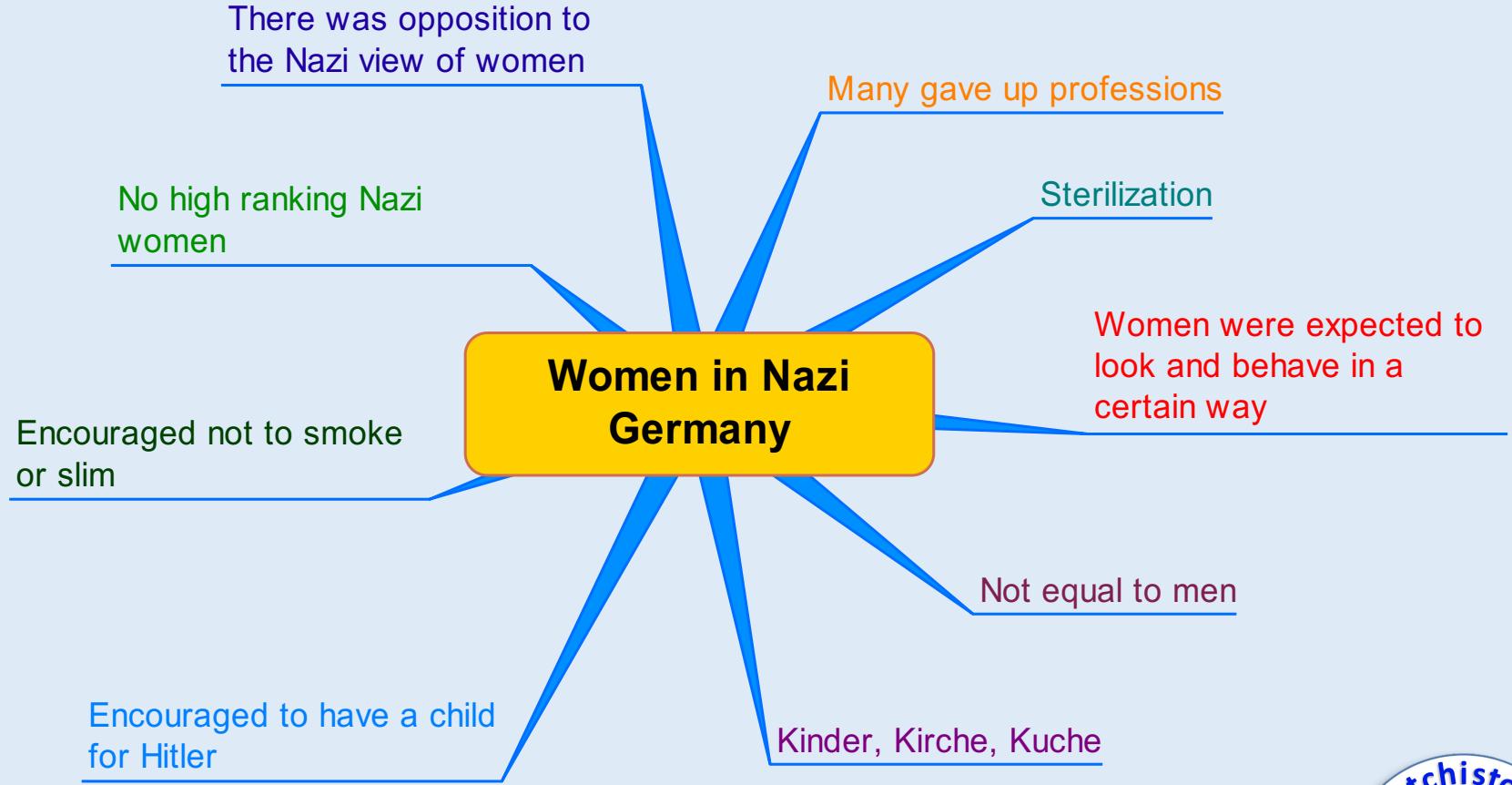
- However, by the end of the 1930s, Germany industry was expanding so fast that the Nazis needed women to return to work
- Some policies were reversed, women with the loans could now work
- There was by 1939, 7 million women working

FRAUEN,

so geht's euch im
»Dritten Reich«!

au muß wieder Magd und
werden sagt der Naziführer
eshalb ist auch in der Haken-
ktion keine Frau vertreten.





"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.

The woman has her own battlefield. With every child that she brings into the world, she fights her battle for the nation.

Adolf Hitler, speech 1935

Hitler believed women should be at home looking after their husband and children. Many female doctors and civil servants lost their jobs when he came to power.

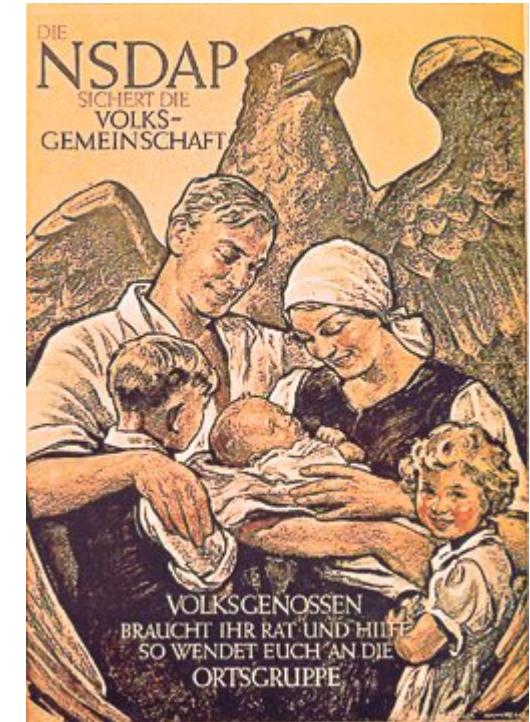
10 rules to be observed when considering marriage

1. Remember you are a German.
2. Remain pure in mind and spirit!
3. Keep your body pure!
4. If hereditarily fit, do not remain single!
5. Marry only for love.
6. Being a German, only choose a spouse or similar or related blood!
7. When choosing your spouse, inquire into his or her forebears!
8. Health is essential to outward beauty as well!
9. Seek a companion in marriage, not a playmate.
10. Hope for as many children as possible! Your duty is to produce at least four offspring in order to ensure the future of the national stock.

German Racial Policy Bureau, 1934

The 1933 Law for the Encouragement of Marriage 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.

LEBENSBorn – building where selected UNMARRIED WOMEN could become pregnant by "racially pure" SS men.



As housewives and mothers, women's 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 child birth. 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.

Summary

- The Nazis believed that women should adopt a modest, traditional appearance, leave professional jobs to men and make marriage and motherhood their duty to the state.
- The Nazis used propaganda and policies to try to put their beliefs into practice.
- The Nazis had several policies to encourage marriage and childbirth. These included the Law for the Encouragement of Marriage, changes to divorce law, the Mother's Cross and Lebensborn.
- The Nazis had several policies to reduce numbers of women in the workforce. These included banning women from some jobs and discouraging women from going to university.
- Nazi policies towards women convinced some Germans and had some impact, but were only effective to a limited or temporary degree.

Checkpoint

Strengthen

S1 What were Nazi ideas towards women regarding marriage, motherhood and childbirth?

S2 What were Nazi ideas about women regarding work and appearance?

S3 What were Nazi policies towards women regarding marriage, motherhood and childbirth?

S4 What were Nazi policies towards women regarding work?

Challenge

C1 Evaluate how much support there was in Germany for Nazi policies towards women.

C2 Evaluate how effective you think Nazi policies towards women were.

How confident do you feel about your answers to these questions? If you are unsure, look again at page 109 for S1–S2, pages 110–111 for S3–S4; for C1–C2, look again at page 112. If you are still unsure about a question, you could join together with others and discuss a joint answer. Your teacher can give you hints.