Nazi Ideas about Women and Children

Nazi Germany
What we will learn today

The Nazis took an eager interest in the lives of women and young people.

**Children** would form the next generation of Nazis.

**Women** would be responsible for producing and raising them.

In this presentation you will consider:

1. Why the Nazis were so keen to win the support of each group.
2. How the Nazis tried to win their support.
3. How effective these techniques were.
Nazi Ideas about Women
Introduction

The Nazis believed that there were ‘separate spheres’ for men and women.

Men were expected to work and fight for the Reich, and women were expected to work and fight for the family.

The attitude towards women was summarized by the slogan Kinder, Kirche, Küche (children, church, kitchen).
The 'three Ks' policy had the support of churches and traditional rural groups, but ran contrary to ideas of female emancipation – women in the Weimar period had been able to vote and have careers.

Are there differences between men and women?

If there are differences, does this mean that men and women should have different roles in society?
Hitler’s views in his own words

My Speech, by Adolf Hitler. Nuremberg, 8 September 1934.

When you click start, you will see an edited version of one of Hitler's speeches. Read the speech and then discuss these questions:

1. How would you define the word 'sexist'?
2. How might Hitler's views on women be described as being 'sexist'?
3. How do you think Hitler would respond to these charges?

value and respect each other when they see
Why did Hitler have these views?

**Ideological Reasons**: Hitler’s belief in a peasant-based *Volksgemeinschaft* involved the rejection of ‘modern’ ideas about female emancipation. Women would return to their traditional roles as wives and mothers.

**Pragmatic Reasons**: The birth rate was declining steadily in Germany. This would leave Germany economically weak and unable to expand into foreign territory.

Like many of Hitler’s policies, Nazi policy on women had to alter after the outbreak of war.

After 1936, preparations for war demanded that women be recruited into factories to replace men who had been conscripted. From 1937, women had to do a “Duty Year”, during which they did patriotic work for the Reich.
What did Hitler do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To keep women at home</th>
<th>To increase the birth rate</th>
<th>To increase the 'quality' of births</th>
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Married women excluded from civil service and other jobs
How successful were Hitler’s policies?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>To keep women at home</th>
<th>To increase the birth rate</th>
<th>To increase the 'quality' of births</th>
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<td>Failures</td>
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The desire to raise the birth rate led to an increase in promiscuity.
Other policies on women

Women were also encouraged to **behave** in certain ways to ensure that they were healthy mothers, and that they conformed to the model of an ideal ‘German’ woman.

Make-up and hair dye were discouraged and women were expected to wear skirts rather than trousers.

Women were encouraged to be plump. It was thought that thin women had more trouble conceiving and giving birth.

Smoking was also frowned upon – not because it was unhealthy, but because it was ‘**un-German**’.
Young People under the Nazis
The importance of youth

Hitler aimed for a ‘Thousand Year Reich’. Young people were the future, so it was vital to win their support:

“In my great educative work I am beginning with the young. We older ones are used up … We are cowardly and sentimental … I intend to have an athletic youth … In this way I shall eradicate the thousands of years of human domestication. Then I shall have in front of me the pure and noble natural material. With that I can create the new order.”

Hitler Speaks, Hermann Rauschning, 1939.
Hitler (and other Nazi leaders) placed a higher value on what children **did** than on what they **studied**.

As a result of this, the importance of schools was diminished by the growth of Nazi **youth organizations**.

On coming to power, Hitler immediately took steps to bring the education system under Nazi control. The next slide outlines how this was done.
The Nazi Minister of Education was Bernhard Rust.

He focused on controlling the education of Germany’s young people through three key areas:

- Control of teachers
- Control of the curriculum
- Establishment of specialist schools.
Many teachers were pro-Nazi as they had been poorly paid during the Weimar period. However, others were against the regime.

The Nazis were keen to keep close control over the teaching profession and did so in a number of ways:

- **Appointments**: All teachers had to join the National Socialist Teachers’ League (NSLB). Members had to be Aryan and were vetted for signs of disloyalty.

- **Power**: The ‘leader principle’ meant that head teachers did not consult teaching staff about policy matters.

- **Professional development**: Teachers were made to go on special indoctrination camps where they did PE and attended lectures on Nazi doctrine.
Curriculum

All subjects were taught with a Nazi bias: “The whole function of education is to create Nazis” Bernhard Rust, 1938.

Click on one of the subject icons to see how it was taught under the Nazis.
Specialist schools

The Nazis introduced special boarding schools. There were two main types.

- The National Political Educational Institutions (NAPOLAS)
- Adolf Hitler Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many schools were there?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of students?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods?</td>
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</table>
Youth organizations

All young people were supposed to join a Nazi Youth Movement.

Other youth movements, such as the Scouts and Girl Guides, were banned.

Hitler’s organizations taught them **loyalty** and were designed to prepare girls and boys for the roles they would need to perform in wartime.
## Structure of the Youth Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>Pimpfen (Little Fellows)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–14</td>
<td>Deutsches Jungvolk (DJ) (German Young Folk)</td>
<td>The Jungmädel (JM) (Young Girls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14–18</td>
<td>The Hitlerjugend (HJ) (Hitler Youth)</td>
<td>The Bund Deutscher Mädchen (BDM) (German Girls’ League)</td>
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</table>
The Youth Movements – popular features

- boys' reasons
- general reasons
- girls' reasons
The Youth Movements – unpopular features

- boys' reasons
- general reasons
- girls' reasons
Resistance to the Youth Movements

The youth groups were not universally popular. Many young Germans found them too regimented and militaristic.

By 1938, attendance levels at Hitler Youth clubs was barely 25%, prompting the government to make attendance compulsory in 1939.

Some young people formed their own alternative groups:

- The Edelweiss Pirates grew their hair long and fought with members of the Hitler Youth.
- Members of the Swing Movement defied the Nazis by listening to banned American Jazz music.

During the war, the Gestapo cracked down on these groups. Some members as young as 16 were even hanged.
Read the definition at the bottom and then 'shoot' the right answer... press start to begin.