

Year 9 History: How and why did life change for different people in Nazi Germany?

Section 1—Keywords

Anti-Semitic	Hatred of the Jewish people.
Aryan	Person of German or Scandinavian origin, usually fair-haired and blue eyed; the Nazis believed that Aryans were superior to all other races.
Concentration camp	Camp in which people are held under harsh conditions and without the freedoms of the rest of society.
Confessional Church	German Protestant group determined to have nothing to do with the Nazis.
DAF (Deutsche Arbeitsfront)	German Labour Front—a Nazi organisation that workers had to belong to.
Edelweiss Pirates	Rebel youth gang which went camping and sang songs making fun out of Hitler; they even physically attacked Hitler Youth groups.
Eugenics	The science of improving a population by controlled breeding. Race Studies—a lesson on the German curriculum that taught about the superiority of the German Aryan race.
Euthanasia	Deliberate killing of a person
Final Solution	Nazi name given to their attempt to wipe out Europe’s Jewish population between 1942 and 1945.
Indoctrination	Brainwashing—to teach someone to accept a belief without exception.
KDF (Kraft durch Freude)	Strength through Joy organisation; part of the German Labour Front that provided holidays and activities for ordinary Germans.
Lebensborn (Fountain of Life)	A Nazi movement to try to stop the population decline in Germany. Girls were taught in school that it was their duty to produce racially pure children. Women and girls received the best medical treatment at Lebensborn Centres.
Master Race	Elite race of people, to which Hitler believed the Germans belonged.
SDA	(Schonheit der Arbeit) beauty of Labour organisation: part of the German Labour Front that promoted working and workers.
Total War	Phrase introduced by Goebbels: meaning all Germans; soldiers and civilians must take an active part in the war.

Section 2—Young People

Schools were controlled by the Nazis. All teachers had to be Nazis and other were sacked. Textbooks and history were rewritten. They were indoctrinated (brainwashed) to think a certain way which included hatred of the Jewish people. Eugenics (race studies) was taught and there was a real emphasis on PE.



A picture from a German schoolbook showing Jewish people in a negative way.

Outside school were youth groups that were compulsory to join. For boys the ‘Little Fellows’ 6-10, ‘Young folk’ 10-14 and then the Hitler Youth. This included how to march, fight and keep fit. Girls - ‘Young girls 10-14 and League of German Girls 14-17 keeping fit, preparing for motherhood. 7,287,470 members.

Some youth groups resisted including the White Rose, Swing Youth and Edelweiss Pirates.

Section 3—Women



A Nazi poster of the ‘ideal’ family.

Hitler said in 1934: ‘The world of women is a smaller one. For her world is her husband, her family, her children and her house.’ The Nazis had a clear idea of the role of women - Kinder, Kirche, Küche (children, church, cooking). The Nazis wanted to go back to traditional family values and also increase the population. Under the Nazis it was ‘unladylike’ for a woman to wear heels or trousers.

Professional women were sacked from their jobs and then did not count on the unemployment data. To encourage marriage, marriage loans were given to married couples of 1000 marks, then for each child they had they could keep 250 marks. This was linked to the Mutterkreuz (Mothercross), where mothers were rewarded for the number of children they had: bronze cross - 4 children, silver cross - 6 children and gold cross - 8 children.

Lebensborn were also set up for women to give a child to the Reich - 8000 births came from here. Gertrud Scholtz-Klink was the figurehead of the Women’s League which gave advice. The birth rate rose from 970,000 in 1933 to 1,413,000 in 1939, however during the war the women were needed to help with the war effort.

## Section 4—Workers

Hitler had promised 'Arbeit und Brot' work and bread. The National Labour Service was set up for 18-25 year olds. Public Work Scheme built the autobahns, schools and hospitals. Rearmament also provided jobs and conscription for 18-25 year olds was introduced in 1935. Jews were sacked and women did not count in the unemployment figures. Hjalmar Schacht was given the job of getting Germany ready for war with the Four Year Plan. This created jobs in steel, textiles and shipbuilding. Farmers were seen as vital and were supported—Hitler cut taxes and ensured they would not be thrown of their land.. The DAF replaced trade unions and ran the Beauty of Labour (SDA) to improve working conditions and the Strength through Joy (KDF) with rewards (including saving for a VW beetle) to control workers.

Working conditions and pay were poorer and the workers had no voice.



Propaganda.

## Section 5—Christians

There were 20 million Catholics and 40 million Protestants in Germany. Some Nazi ideas matched Christian ideas e.g. marriage, family, moral values and fear of Communism.

In 1933 Hitler signed the Concordat with the Pope; this meant that Hitler would not interfere with the catholic Church but likewise that the Catholic Church would not interfere with the Nazi State. However, Archbishop Galen criticised Hitler and the Nazi policy of euthanasia, he was put under house arrest.

Some Protestants supported Nazi ideas and Hitler appointed Ludwig Müller as Reich Bishop. Other Protestants formed the Confessional Church led by Pastor Martin Niemöller who criticised the Nazis. 800 pastors were arrested and he was sent to a camp.

## Section 6—Jewish People and Undesirables

Hitler believed in a pure Aryan master race of strong, tall, blond haired, blue eyed Germans. Jewish people, gypsies, homosexuals, drunks and disabled were classed as undesirable. (They would all be discriminated against in Nazi Germany). As soon as Hitler came to power they began passing laws to drive out Jews including sacking lawyers and teachers. The Nuremberg Laws 1935 took away more rights and dissolved marriages. November 1938 - Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) saw synagogues burned, shop windows smashed, Jews beaten, arrested and 100 killed. 20 000 were sent to concentration camps. Many Jews left Germany. Once the war started the Nazis used ghettos, execution squads (Einsatzgruppen) and camps. At the Wannsee Conference a Final Solution was planned including 6 extermination camps including Auschwitz where 1.1 million died. There was an uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto and Treblinka in 1943 but both put down. Around 6 million Jews were killed.



Jewish people in a liberated death camp.

## Section 7—The war—1939-45

The start of the war was positive with many victories and luxury goods from the conquered countries. This changed after they invaded the USSR in 1941 and by 1944 Germany was facing a defeat. By November 1939 there was food and clothing rationing e.g. one egg per week. There were many ersatz (substitute) products. Hot water was rationed to two days per week.

1942 - Total War, everything was focussed on making weapons and growing food for soldiers. Factories were open longer, women were brought in and 7 million foreign workers as slave labour. British bombing had a real impact from 1942 disrupting water, electric, transport and there were many unexploded bombs.



German ration book.

## Section 8—Exam Questions

### 4 mark questions:

Describe two ways in which Hitler reduced unemployment in Germany.  
Describe two main features of the education of children in Nazi Germany.  
Describe how the Nazis gained control over German Christians.  
Describe two examples of armed resistance by Jews to the Nazis.

### 8 mark questions:

In what ways were the lives of women in Germany affected by Nazi social policies? Explain your answer.  
In what ways were the lives of young people affected by Nazi policies? Explain your answer.  
In what ways were German workers worse off in Nazi Germany? Explain your answer.

### 12 mark questions:

Which of the following groups were most affected by Nazi policies?  
- Farmers and agricultural workers  
- industrial and factory workers  
Explain your answer with reference to both reasons.

Which of the following groups were most affected by Nazi policies?  
- Women  
- Young people  
Explain your answer with reference to both reasons.