

How did the Nazi policies affect women?

Changes to their employment

Given Hitler's views on women and his idea that women needed to focus on raising more aryan children and he needed those jobs for the unemployed men. The Nazis introduced measures which strongly discouraged women from working, including:

- training girls at school to be housewives and discouraging them from going on to higher education;
- the introduction of the **Law for the Reduction of Unemployment**, which gave women financial incentives to stay at home;
- Firing women from the civil service and the professions of women;
- barring women from being judges in 1936;
- not allowing them to do jury service or be Reichstag deputies because Hitler did not think they were able to "think logically or reason objectively";
- putting single women under pressure to give their jobs to unemployed men. Single women were allowed to work, mainly outside the professions and primarily in "caring" jobs, for example nursing and childcare, and factories.



Their appearance

Women were expected to copy traditional German peasant fashions. They were told to wear plain clothes, flat shoes and have their hair in plaits or buns.

They were not to wear make-up, trousers or short skirts, or dye or perm their hair and they were not to smoke in public.

They were discouraged from staying slim or dieting, because it was thought that thin women had trouble giving birth.



Marriage and Children

Hitler wanted to increase the amount of Aryan marriages and raise the birth rate. He tried to accomplish this by:

- Introducing a law in June 1933 which gave newlyweds a loan of 1,000 marks, and allowed them to keep 250 marks for each child they had;
- Giving incentives to women who had a large number of children, such as the **Motherhood Cross** which awarded bronze for 4 children, silver for 6 and gold for 8 or more. Other examples included tax incentives and welfare benefits, cheap theatre tickets and being allowed to jump queues;
- starting family allowances to help low income families;
- taxing single men and childless families heavily;
- making divorce easier by the **Marriage Law of 1938**. For example, if a man already had 4 children with a woman, he had the right to divorce her so he could remarry and have more children.
- Ensuring contraception was difficult to obtain and making abortion illegal in 1933.
- using propaganda and peer pressure.



He tried to ensure only racially pure Aryan children were born by:

- legalising sterilisation and abortions for those with “disabilities” and those who were “undesirables”;
- Encouraging unmarried women to have babies with Aryan SS men in a **Lebensborn** home. **Lebensborn** means Fount of Life.