

# A role of adolf hitler in history of germany

[People](#), [Adolf Hitler](#)



The decade before Hitler's rise to power is a testament to the saying "desperate times call for desperate measures". Following World War I, the state of the Weimar Republic in Germany was incredibly poor. The government had incredibly high war reparations to pay to allied powers, the German economy struggled with the highest inflation in European history, and unemployment of German citizens was commonplace. During this time of depression, many people looked towards extremist political groups for leadership, since the republic had failed to remedy the nation's issues. One such group, The National Socialist German Worker's party or Nazi Party, had grown greatly during the years leading up to 1933. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, the Nazis had campaigned for power in the German Reichstag. The Nazi takeover of Germany's government was completely legitimate by German law. After being voted in as chancellor, Hitler became Germany's dictator after the death of president Paul von Hindenburg in 1934. Germany under Hitler is characterized using totalitarian force to control every aspect of German life. Hitler's domestic policies dictated the state of the military, economy, and education. But an equally important question to explore is "How did Hitler's regime affect his citizens and the numerous groups of people within Germany?"

After research into the aforementioned inquiry, it can be determined that Hitler's domestic policies had very large dictation over the individual lives of women, social minorities, and most infamously, the Jewish.

One important primary source that has helped in understanding how Nazi policy affected women was the film Mutter Liebe (German for "Mother Love"). Mutter Liebe was a German film created in 1939 by Gustav Ucicky. It depicts <https://assignbuster.com/a-role-of-adolf-hitler-in-history-of-germany/>

the various stages of life for German mother, Martha Pirlinger. Ultimately, Martha serves her whole life making sacrifices and guiding her children to be “upstanding adults” for Germany’s future. Being a direct source of propaganda, the film gives good insight into the kinds of ideals for women in Nazi Germany. However, for studying how Nazi policy actually affected women, this film fails to portray the realities of Germany’s women population. Instead, it gives how Nazi wished it to be. To study the truths of this inquiry, other sources had to be utilized.

One heavily used secondary source in this inquiry was the information from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Museum’s website provides great detail about the history of Nazi Germany’s impact on minorities and chiefly, anti-Semitism in Germany. It contains in-depth information of various aspects of these topics. The values of this website come from its credibility, the museum has a vast compilation of secondary and primary sources regarding the holocaust that has been curated by 55 private citizens appointed by the US President. However, the Museum’s main limitation comes from its western (that is, allied) perspective of the holocaust. The bias of the post-war allied response to the Holocaust is a strong limiting factor. What the museum does not cover is the hypocrisies of the allied powers. The Museum does not portray the Nazi’s actions as moral and makes sure to label the regime as inherently evil for its actions.

Women’s lives under the new Third Reich were heavily dictated by the pursuit of traditional roles. Ultimately, what drove the Nazi’s to pursue a return to traditional roles was a need for more citizens in a superior German

race. The values that were sought for women are heavily shown in the film *Mutter Liebe* (1939). *Mutter Liebe*, made as a Reich film-drama, showed the power of women as the mothers of all German society. It was their higher duty to serve as a constant guide of the “ children of tomorrow”, and the tribulations that mothers undergo make them heroic. Other traditional positions that the Nazi’s sought can be seen by other means of agency. One main goal was to remove women from the work force of Germany, and place them into positions as housekeepers and those who tended to children (Williams 2). Nazi control of education reinforced this, girls in school were taught that this was their way of life from an early age. This was also stressed onto girls through their “ compulsory membership in the Nazi league of German Membership” (USHMM 8) Propaganda was a strong factor in portraying the ideal woman, as Nazi’s would utilize emotive pictures of a sole mother and their child, inferring the high honor associated with motherhood. The Nazi regime greatly stressed the roles of mothers. This was due to the realization of the government leaders that Germany would need a higher population for it to effectively establish its supreme Reich in Europe. To motivate procreation, many incentives were created by the government. In 1933, the Law for the Encouragement of Marriage stated that newly wedded couples could receive a government loan of 1000 marks. With every new child a couple had, 250 marks would be removed from their debt (Trueman, 11). Other incentives, such as the National Socialist Welfare Program assisted maternity and child welfare programs. Honors and awards were given to mothers of children. The Cross of Honor of the German Mother was awarded to women who raised 4 or more children in an appropriate way

(Nelson 31). While the government was committed to procuring a large German populous, it wanted to also ensure the racial purity of German offspring. Hitler had a direct influence of racial dogma in the German state. To Hitler, the racially superior humans were the Aryans. Descendants of the Nordic, Aryans were characterized by their strong muscular builds, blond hair, and blue eyes. Nazi policy focused on securing the Aryan's future. Most infamously, this goal was pursued by the Lebensborn Program. Created by Heinrich Himmler and state supported, the Lebensborn program was designed exclusively to produce Aryan offspring. Women could go to special 'centers', where they would become pregnant by "racially pure" SS officers and have these children without the need of marriage. This idea of unmarried women having children posed no social problems in the eyes of Nazi policy and was actually encouraged (Trueman 3). One subsequent effect of the Nazi's pursuit of mothers was a great effort to control women's lives. Most women lost their jobs during Hitler's rule. Within months of Hitler coming to power, many women with jobs as doctors, civil servants, lawyers, and teachers were fired (Trueman 4). Work positions were given away to men in need of employment. But that did not spell the end of female employment altogether. With the outbreak of World War II, German officials recognized the need to expand their diminished labor force. Starting in 1937, women were required to serve in a "duty year" of patriotic labor for their country, which often entailed work at a farm (USHMM 8). In addition to employment limitations, the women of Nazi Germany also had little chance at a higher education equal to that of their male counterparts. Earning a secondary education was discouraged or barred out right in certain schools

(Lynch 2). To ensure traditional values, women were not permitted to wear makeup or trousers, and hair dyes or perms were not at all acceptable. Women were discouraged from practicing slimming or smoking out of fear of harming children during pregnancy (Simkin 34) The controlling of women during Hitler's regime was excessive, limiting education and employment opportunities, and dictating their personal lives.

The Jewish were an infamously oppressed minority in the history of the Nazi Reich. Hitler's anti-Semitism was evident early in his political career. His book, *Mein Kampf*, was written in 1926 – 7 years before he would assume control of German domestic policy. In this book, Hitler laid his ideological foundation, exclusively, his “rabid” racism against the Jewish (Lynch 3). *Mein Kampf*'s last passage is a ringing affirmation of his visions for an Aryan master race at the cost of the many, it reads:

“ A State which, in an epoch of racial adulteration, devotes itself to the duty of preserving the best elements of its racial stock must one day become ruler of the Earth.” (Hitler 236)

Immediately when Hitler came into power in 1933, domestic policies aimed at disenfranchising Jewish citizens began. That year, The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was signed in. This law exclusively barred Jews from holding positions in any civil service jobs (USHMM 1). Restrictions on the Jews would only extend further. Also in 1933, Hitler's militant branch of power, the SA -later the SS- began to openly terrorize Jews, and Jewish businesses were boycotted. Hitler's main goal was

to remove the non-Aryan population from the Reich, and that applied especially to the Jews. Within the first 6 years of Hitler's regime, over half of the Jewish population in Germany moved out of country. By 1937, only 214,000 Jews were remaining in Germany, making them very much a minority (USHMM 2). The reason for the exodus of Jews was the sweeping changes that made life in Germany impossible for them. The most infamous change came in 1935. The Nuremberg Race Laws were hastily written by Hitler and his high command days before a national rally. The laws put the Nazi racial ideology into legal policy. All Jews were no longer German citizens, and it was illegal for Jews to marry or have sexual relations with German citizens (Bard 35). Tensions between non-Jewish and Jewish citizens escalated over the next few years leading up to World War II. On the night of November 9th, 1938, these tensions reached a destructive peak. The assassination of Ernst Vom Rath –a German Embassy Official in Paris– at the hands of a Polish Jew prompted the German public to respond. In one night, thousands of Jewish businesses and synagogues were destroyed, looted, and burned; in addition, hundreds of Jews were detained or killed in the process (USHMM 5). The outbreak of World War II in 1939 prompted a new wave of restrictions on the remaining Jews in Germany and newly occupied territories like Poland. Jews were put under strict curfews and were restricted from specific areas in cities. Jews also faced more shortages of goods than citizens. They were subjected to smaller food rations and were unable to shop for goods at certain times of day (USHMM 12). To “ support the war effort”, Jews were often forced to give up electric accessories, bicycles, radios, and other valuable goods. In 1941, legislation came into effect that required Jews over

the age of 6 years to wear a yellow star of David on their clothes (USHMM 8). The use of concentration camps has become an infamous association with Jews in Nazi Germany. The beginnings of Nazi concentration camps were in 1933, shortly after Hitler's ascension to power. The camps were initially made to detain political enemies of Hitler. As the situations in Germany evolved, the camps were adapted in order to hold "social deviants" as well (USHMM 8). Early in their conception, concentration camps were sites for forced labor. Over time, these camps also became locations where the SS could kill targeted groups of people (Bard 7). In January 1942, the second in command of the SS, Reinhard Heydrich, and 15 other Nazi bureaucrats held the Wannsee Conference in Berlin. The conference was held to organize the extermination of Europe's Jews (Gavin 4). Shortly after, Nazis began mass deportations of Jews to these extermination camps, and in Poland, Jews were moved into ghettos. The systematic killing of millions of Jews during this time, whether through shooting, starvation, gas, or terror, was referred to as the German's "Final Solution" to rid Europe of the Jews (Bard 7). Of the minority groups affected by Hitler's policies during his regime, the Jews had the most abominable impingement.

Many other minorities in Germany at this time were subjected to oppression by Hitler's policies. These minorities included social deviants and racial unequals to the Aryan "Master Race". The goal of Hitler for racial purity is exemplified in his sterilization program. Immediately at the start of his reign in 1933, Hitler signed into legislation the Law for Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring. In effect, sterilizations began of people who were disabled, deaf, or suffered from other specific diseases. By 1939, around



350, 000 sterilizations had taken place (Lynch 5). In August of 1939, a German farm hand asked Hitler that his son, Gerhard Kretschmer, who was born deaf and deformed, be killed. After a review by Hitler's own doctor, the child of 5 months old was killed via lethal injection. This first case of euthanasia provided Hitler with the rationale of "Mercy Killing" to sign into creation a program -code named T4- to oversee the extermination of similar "undesirables" (Zoech 3). These killings centered around hospitals and asylums; and were heavily dependent on the medical profession's cooperation. During the course of Hitler's regime, 70, 000 euthanasia deaths were carried out in this manner (Lynch). Other minorities were persecuted as well. The Roma Gypsies lost 23% of their European population to the Nazi Death Camps. Homosexuality was also persecuted in German men, it was seen as an indecency. Men who did not 'come out' were hunted down. 50, 000 men were convicted, and 15, 000 of those were sent to concentration camps (Lynch 7). Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted for their differing religious beliefs, and during the Third Reich 2, 000 witnesses were murdered. Falling subject to anti-Semitism were the Semitic Arabic population, which included mass numbers of mixed race German children. These children were often the children of black Germans or Germans stationed in the Rhineland area. These children, called by Hitler as "Rhineland Bastards" were one of the first few subjected to sterilizations (Lynch 7). The treatment of "social degenerates" is another defining characteristic of Hitler's domestic policies towards minority peoples.

To conclude, it can be stated that the forces Hitler employed through his domestic policies were highly controlling of the lives of women and

minorities. The policies were heavily based on racist and traditional dogma that manifested themselves through the propaganda and legislation of the regime. For women, that regime sought a return to traditional roles as mothers through removal from jobs and promoting procreation of Aryan children. Minorities such as undesirables, social deviants, and the racially inferior were subject to sterilizations and even “mercy” killings. Of the most oppressed minorities were the Jews, who from the beginning of the Reich were increasingly disenfranchised until their subjection to the Nazi’s infamous “final solution”. Hitler’s policies regarding women and minorities shaped the major characterizations of the Nazi’s Third Reich.