**Chapter 3**

**‘The Germ Cell of the Nation’: The Family in the Third Reich**

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**Introduction**

The family, extolled in National Socialist ideology and propaganda as ‘the germ cell of the nation’, played a very important part in the *Volksgemeinschaft* (‘national community’). However, Nazi family policy did not always accurately reflect Nazi ideology. This chapter examines the impact of Nazi policies upon the German family between 1933 and 1945. Based on original primary sources, including Nazi policy documents and legislation, it analyses the policies implemented by the Nazi regime to redress both the ‘crisis of the family’ and the decline in the nation’s birth rate. Its significance lies in its distillation of the essence of Nazi family policy in terms of *Auslese* (selection) and *Ausmerze* (eradication). It clearly shows the extremes of Nazi policy towards those families regarded as ‘desirable’ or ‘valuable’ to the nation, and those which were ‘undesirable’ on grounds of racial, social, mental or physical ‘inferiority’. It examines a whole series of measures and incentives designed to achieve the goal of increasing the birth rate, which had fallen dramatically from 41.8 births per 1,000 inhabitants in 1874 to 14.7 in 1933.[[1]](#endnote-1) These included: the Marriage Loan Scheme; the Cross of Honour of the German Mother; the introduction of a new divorce law in 1938; the banning of contraceptives and the closure of family planning centres; the tightening up of abortion laws; welfare for mothers and children; and the *Lebensborn* organisation. This chapter also explores the more sinister side of Nazi family and population policy, including the introduction of legal measures designed to prevent marriages between Jews and ‘Aryans’ and to prevent marriages between healthy ‘Aryans’ and those deemed ‘unfit’ for marriage due to physical or mental illness, as well as the sterilisation law. It analyses Nazi policy towards families that did not fit into the ‘national community’, especially Jewish families, regarded as ‘racially inferior’ and expendable. The chapter examines Nazi policy towards homosexuals and lesbians. It ends with an analysis of the impact of the Second World War upon the German family.

**Nazi Family Policies**

Point 21 of the NSDAP’s Programme stated that: ‘The state has to care for the raising of the nation’s health through the protection of mother and child.’ Once in power, the National Socialist regime introduced an array of measures and incentives to achieve its goal of increasing the birth rate. By 1936, the number of births per 1,000 inhabitants had risen - from 14.7 in 1933 - to 19.[[2]](#endnote-2) Indeed, Paul Ginsborg notes the ‘extraordinary combination of strategies’ that the Hitler government directed at German families.[[3]](#endnote-3) French historian, Johann Chapoutot, convincingly argues that procreation was central to the Nazis’ overall aims and ambitions: ‘The Aryan race had to be fertile and to produce as many children as possible, especially as a defense against the Slavic enemy; it also had to be attentive to the quality of the biological substance it produced, which was to be free of all foreign and degenerate elements.’[[4]](#endnote-4) Indeed, recent research by Amy Carney has highlighted the importance of family, in particular, in the SS, the Nazi elite formation, led by Heinrich Himmler.[[5]](#endnote-5)

The Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick claimed in 1934: ‘The family is the primordial cell of the *Volk*, that is why the National Socialist state places it at the centre of its policy.’[[6]](#endnote-6) This statement encapsulated the impression that the Nazi regime wished to portray publicly, namely, a firm and solid commitment to family life. With very few exceptions, the Nazi leadership publicly exalted the ideological status of the family throughout the Nazi era. The Nazis attacked the Weimar lifestyle, in which the extravagant enjoyment of the individual had taken precedence over collective moral and national obligations. They argued that the sense of ‘duty’ towards the community and nation had been lost and called for German people to show a renewed sense of obligation to the *Volksgemeinschaft* (‘national community’). They further claimed that the Weimar governments had encouraged egocentricity. Bachelorhood and childless marriages had been acceptable in Weimar society. The ‘two-child family’ had become accepted, whilst large families had been scorned and derided. From 1933 onwards, there was a reversal in attitudes. There was a call for women to become valuable mothers of large families. The Nazi ideal family was termed *‘kinderreich’* (‘rich in children’) and comprised of four or more children. In the Third Reich, parents of large families were to be proud. However, there was a qualitative aspect to this concept and the regime was careful to promote only ‘hereditarily healthy’, ‘racially valuable’, politically reliable and socially responsible families as ‘*kinderreich’*. ‘Racially inferior’ or ‘asocial’ large families were pejoratively labelled *‘Großfamilien’* (‘big families’).[[7]](#endnote-7)

In June 1933, the Marriage Loan Scheme was set up to promote marriages between healthy ‘Aryan’ partners. A loan of RM. 1000 was made to a German couple in the form of vouchers for the purchase of furniture and household equipment. The loan was given to a couple only if the wife agreed to give up her job. In addition, the loan was made only if the political affiliation and ‘way of life’ of the couple were considered to be acceptable. It was denied to couples if either or both partners had connections with the German Communist Party (KPD), or had had such connections in the past, and it was denied to prostitutes and the ‘workshy’. The repayment of the loan was reduced by one quarter for each child born, and was completely cancelled out with the birth of the fourth child. Between August 1933 and January 1937, some 700,000 marriages were assisted by marriage loans.[[8]](#endnote-8) In 1937, the prerequisite that women had to give up paid employment was revoked and this instigated a large increase in applications. In 1939, 42 per cent of all marriages were loan-assisted.[[9]](#endnote-9) However, couples granted a marriage loan had, on average, only one child.

The Nazi regime also attempted to raise the status of motherhood. A woman’s ‘most glorious duty’, according to Joseph Goebbels, Minister for Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment, was ‘to present her people and her country with a child’. A classic example of a symbolic tribute to mothers with large families was the Cross of Honour of the German Mother. This was awarded to prolific mothers, in bronze, silver and gold, for four, six and eight children respectively. There was a slight increase in the nation’s birth rate in the period 1934-39 as compared with the years 1930-33. But this was not necessarily attributable to Nazi incentives to promote procreation. Many couples felt more secure about getting married and having children because the economic climate had improved. Hence, the number of marriages increased, but the number of children per marriage did not. In addition, Nazi incentives andpropaganda were not sufficient on their own to redress the long-term trend in low birth rates.

A new divorce law was introduced in 1938 that allowed for a divorce if a couple had lived apart for three years or more, and if the marriage had effectively broken down. On the surface, this appeared quite liberal. However, the reasoning behind it lay more in perceived benefits to the state than in benefits to private individuals. The objective was to dissolve marriages that were of no value to the ‘national community’. The National Socialists believed that once a divorce had been granted, the two partners involved might then re-marry and provide the nation with more children. Premature infertility became a ground for divorce, as did either partner’s refusal to have a child.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Many other measures were taken to encourage marriages between healthy ‘Aryan’ partners that would result in large families and to increase the nation’s birth rate. Contraceptives were banned and family planning centres were dissolved. In 1941, Himmler’s Public Ordinance prohibited the production and distribution of contraceptives.[[11]](#endnote-11) Inaddition, the abortion laws were tightened up by the re-introduction of Paragraphs 219 and 220 of the Criminal Code, which made provisions for harsher punishments for abortion.[[12]](#endnote-12) Eventually, in 1943, the death penalty was introduced for anyone performing an abortion to terminate a ‘valuable’ pregnancy, as this was considered to be an act of ‘racial sabotage’ during the crisis of the war.[[13]](#endnote-13)

The regime employed an existent organisation, the ‘*Reichsbund der Kinderreichen’* (RdK or National League of Large Families) to put an end to lax sexual and marital morals and to promote the ideal large family as a model for emulation. The RdK offered advice to *‘kinderreich’* families, on issues such as rent, housing and employment. It was also involved in propaganda work. Its leader Wilhelm Stüwe, claimed that ‘the more hereditarily healthy families a nation possesses, the more certain its future is’.[[14]](#endnote-14) There was some concern that the organisation had ‘asocial’ or ‘hereditarily unfit’ families among its members, and in 1940, under a new leader, Robert Kaiser, the organisation was renamed the *Reichsbund Deutsche Familie, Kampfbund für erbtüchtigen Kinderreichtum* (National Association of the German Family, Combat League for Large Families of Sound Heredity). The organisation redoubled its efforts to attain a larger membership of ‘valuable’ *‘kinderreich’* families and to expound the correct ideals for German families to emulate. The Cross of Honour of the German Mother and the Honour Books awarded to large families exemplified the symbolic significance of *‘kinderreich’* families.

Yet, despite the honour and status accorded to *‘kinderreich’* families, the regime was unwilling to undertake major financial expenditure to assist them. Whilst some measures were put in place to redress the inequalities between *‘kinderreich’* families and single people or couples with no children or few children, such as tax reforms and child supplements, these remained insufficient to convince people to have large families. Furthermore, the Nazi administration failed to make adequate housing provision for *‘kinderreich’* families. Propaganda and piecemeal initiatives did not change the inclination of German couples to limit the size of their families. Hence, the promotion of *‘kinderreich’* families was not successful. Indeed, the proportion of married women with four or more children decreased from 25 per cent in 1933 to 21 per cent in 1939.[[15]](#endnote-15) Much to the dissatisfaction of the Nazi leadership, the ‘two-child family’ was perpetuated throughout the Third Reich.

**The *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’***

The *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’* (Mother and Child Relief Agency) was a special agency of the *Nationalsozialistiche Volkswohlfahrt* (NSV or National Socialist People’s Welfare), established on 28 February 1934. The agency’s central concern was with the health of mothers and children, in order to preserve ‘the immortality of the nation’. Four of the most significant aspects of its work were: welfare for mothers; recuperation for mothers; advice centres for mothers; and welfare for small children. The Nazi regime utilised welfare as an instrument to educate the German nation in the spirit of National Socialism. Welfare, understood in population policy terms, was directed at the promotion of the ‘racially pure’ and ‘fit’. Instructors, social workers and staff in the advice centres and in the recuperation homes were trained in the Nazi *Weltanschauung* (‘worldview’) so that they could provide German women not only with material, practical and educational support, but also with ideological guidance.

Welfare for mothers who had recently given birth had existed in Germany since the end of the First World War. However, it was only in the Third Reich that this sphere of welfare became a central element of state policy. Self-mobilisation of the family through Nazi social work benefitted millions of families. Welfare for mothers entailed help in the home. However, this did not usually take the form of direct financial aid. It consisted of material help, such as the provision of beds, linen, children’s clothes or food allowances. In addition, home helps were assigned to pregnant women or those who had recently given birth to assist with household chores. Welfare workers and/or nurses made home visits to pregnant women in order to help prevent miscarriage, premature birth and illness. They educated and cared for expectant mothers. After the birth of the child, regular visits continued and welfare workers gave advice on breastfeeding and childcare. They also observed the general behaviour of the family. It is significant to note that welfare visits to ‘hereditarily ill’ or ‘abnormal’ children were restricted ‘to a minimum’.[[16]](#endnote-16)

The *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’* helped single mothers too, as long as they were ‘racially valuable’ and ‘hereditarily healthy’. Hence, a distinction was not made on the basis of marital status, as all German children were ‘valuable’ to the nation, but on eugenic and racial grounds. The *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’* was involved in the organisation of foster care and adoptions and in the struggle against abortion. The *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’* helped single mothers by trying to procure their marriages to their babies’ fathers or to seek other solutions if this was not successful or possible, including the recommendation of single mothers to *Lebensborn* homes to give birth discreetly and then give up the baby for adoption.

Welfare for mothers also took the form of recuperation measures. Whilst there had been some moves towards recuperation for mothers during the Weimar era, under National Socialism, mother recuperation became ideologically motivated and fundamental to state family policy. Recuperation for mothers took a variety of forms – going to stay with relatives, visiting local convalescence centres or being sent away to recuperation homes. The homes were located in the mountains or by the sea, or at natural springs and spas. The average stay was for 26 days. The type of recuperation for each mother was determined by her medical condition, ‘state of mind’ and social status. The practice of ascertaining the ‘hereditary-biological’ worth of each mother was a dominant feature of this area of work. Recuperation or convalescence was not made available to the ‘hereditarily inferior’. For example, in the period up to the end of October 1941, one-third of applications for entry to recuperation homes in the Hamburg area were rejected on the grounds that the women were ‘hereditarily inferior’ or behaved in a manner that was ‘adverse to the community’.[[17]](#endnote-17)

Other than ‘hereditary health’, the main prerequisite for convalescence was that a mother did not have enough financial means of her own for this purpose. Mothers weakened through childbirth, those with two or more children and those whose husbands had been long-term unemployed were given priority for recuperation measures. During a mother’s absence from home, a relative, neighbour or household help stepped in. Mothers received a 50 per cent reduction on train travel to and from the recuperation homes. Official NSV statistics stated that 40,340 women went to the recuperation homes in 1934, the number rising to 77,723 in 1938.[[18]](#endnote-18)

The homes had a strong educational aspect to them. Copies of the educational pamphlet *Guidelines for the Practical Housewife* were made accessible to mothers. Along with recuperation in the form of good wholesome food, rest and exercise, mothers learned about Nazi ideology, their place in the Nazi worldview and their role in the ‘national community’. Indeed, the aim of mothers’ rest care was ‘to toughen up German women for their tasks in the house and family’. Staff observed the mothers carefully and made reports about their conduct and attitudes. If they behaved in a ‘cantankerous’ or ‘contrary’ way, they were required to leave the rest homes. The work of the recuperation homes ensured that mothers returned home with renewed vigour and spirit in order to undertake their familial tasks and duties. If, on their return home, mothers were still not quite ready to undertake all their household duties, home helps were sent to assist them for up to four weeks.

Letters from mothers expressing their gratitude to the NSV and the *Führer* were proudly used by the *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’* to demonstrate the success of its work. ‘We live as in fairy tales…. It is overwhelmingly beautiful here. I cannot put it into words… This trip, this experience will certainly count as the most beautiful memory of my life.’[[19]](#endnote-19) Another stated: ‘I would like to thank the *Führer* heartily with the assurance that I am aware as a German woman and mother of my responsibility to look after my children … and to educate them into fit, useful people.’ Men also wrote letters to the organisation on behalf of their wives: ‘She has put on 14 pounds, and the strength she was lacking before her trip has considerably come back again … March forward, NSV, flourish, prosper, and the nation will be healthy.’[[20]](#endnote-20)

Many women, exhausted physically by the demands of motherhood, enjoyed their time away. Yet others were reluctant to go to recuperation homes or even outright refused to go because they had no desire to have a ‘strange woman’ run their household and ‘snoop’, because they would not leave their children, or in rural areas because they refused to leave their land. Hence, the impact of Nazi welfare policies on women was not uniform. Furthermore, despite the intentions of the regime, the ideological atmosphere in the homes did not always meet the requirements of inspectors, where staff in recuperation homes either did not introduce politics into rest care or did not pressurise mothers to participate in ideological training if they preferred to sit in a garden chair and relax.

A network of help and advice centres was established throughout Germany to offer advice to mothers. 25,552 centres had been set up by 1935. This number increased to 28,936 in 1941.[[21]](#endnote-21) These centres were an important focus of *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’* work. They offered advice about all aspects of household management, nutrition, health, baby and childcare. The medical profession approved of the work of the advice centres as valuable aspects of state welfare. Educational work was of paramount significance in the advice centres as the staff had direct contact with members of the population. This point illustrates that National Socialist welfare measures were, as Michelle Mouton argues ‘from the outset… intended to be interventionist’.[[22]](#endnote-22) To be sure, in addition to the material, financial and medical advice offered at these centres, ‘the Nazis also viewed the centres as agents for inculcating Nazi ideology and infused racial hygienic thought into all aspects of clinic life’.[[23]](#endnote-23) They advocated *kinderreich* (‘child-rich’) families, of four or more children, claiming that children did not thrive in ‘small families’ with no or too few siblings.

In terms of health policy, special attention was devoted to the prevention of infant mortality by means of wider public education in childcare. The infant mortality rate of 7.7 per cent in 1933 was reduced to 6.58 per cent by 1936. Prevention of childhood disease was also a central aim of *NSV* work – ‘what is prevented in childhood is prevented for life’. It was considered dangerous for the future of the nation for infants and small children to be negatively affected by factors such as lack of care and bad nutrition, hence the promotion of their health was a key function of the *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’*. Advice and consultation centres were essential in contributing both to the population policy objectives of the regime and to a heightened awareness of issues such as prevention of illness, the importance of breast-feeding and correct nutrition. For example, nutritional information was given to mothers, especially the need for fresh fruit and vegetables in the diet, as well as supplementary vitamin and mineral preparations. General health education was also served by a pamphlet entitled ‘The Adviser for Mothers’, of which almost 1.2 million copies were distributed in 1937. Former health-care provisions were frowned upon by the *NSV*, which described the lack of monitoring of the health of small children as ‘completely unacceptable’. The continual health care of growing children was expanded by means of regular medical examinations and more medical advice being made available to mothers.

Childcare was an important aspect of the work of the *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’*. Children under the age of six were sent to day nurseries or kindergartens, where they could be looked after properly, especially if their mothers had jobs outside the home. The day nurseries were clean, spacious, bright and airy, ensuring a ‘healthy environment’ for the children. Each day, on arrival, the children washed and cleaned their teeth, and then were separated into different age groups and supervised by nurses and welfare workers, as they played, exercised, ate, sang and slept. The ‘Guidelines for Day Nurseries’ in 1936 set out the following amongst its tasks: to sponsor the physical, mental and spiritual development of the children, to educate them in National Socialism and service to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and to instil in them a sense of care for the German nation. Hence, the nurseries clearly had the function of socialising small children in the spirit of National Socialism. *NSV* kindergartens were considered to be ‘essential bases... for the education of young German people’. According to official *NSV* statistics, the number of day nurseries rose from approximately 1,000 in 1935 to 15,000 in 1941, although no indication is given about their size and quality.

In addition to ordinary nurseries, ‘harvest kindergartens’ were set up in rural areas. These had a special function. They freed agricultural women from their familial responsibilities during the day, allowing them to carry out their harvesting. The necessity for these kindergartens was demonstrated by the lack of available, satisfactory supervision for children during harvest time. The care for children during the harvest period by the oldest, frailest - and often ill - village inhabitants was considered completely inadequate and unsuitable. ‘Harvest kindergartens’ were first set up in the summer of 1934, to take in healthy, unsupervised children from the age of two upwards. They consisted of one or two large rooms, simply furnished with tables, benches and chairs, and equipped with wash basins and good sanitation. There was also a play area outside. Milk was supplied by local farmers. The kindergartens were run by trained kindergarten workers, who were helped by older school girls and *BDM* (League of German Girls) girls, provided that they were not needed for harvest work. The children were medically examined and a health questionnaire was filled out for each child. Both oral hygiene and general health were regularly monitored. The number of ‘harvest kindergartens’ increased from 600 in 1934, to 8,700 in 1941 and to 11,000 in 1943. They promoted the physical, mental and spiritual development of the children and educated them in the ideas of National Socialism.

***Lebensborn***

The *Lebensborn* agency, established in December 1935, set up maternity homes in which single women could give birth to illegitimate children, in a comfortable environment, distant from their own homes, and thus without the knowledge of their neighbours, relatives and priests. These homes were, according to Himmler, ‘primarily... for the brides and wives of our young *SS* men, and secondarily for illegitimate mothers of good blood’. The aims of the organisation were to support ‘hereditarily-biologically valuable, *kinderreich* families’, to care for ‘racially valuable and hereditarily healthy mothers-to-be’, to care for the children born from such mothers and to care for the mothers after the delivery of their babies. The prerequisite for such care was, of course, fulfilment of the *SS*’s criteria regarding race and hereditary health. The *Lebensborn* did not serve mothers who had been involved in ‘indiscriminate relationships’ that would lead to the birth of ‘racially inferior’ or ‘hereditarily ill’ children. Indeed, of nearly 3,000 applications by unmarried mothers-to-be, less than half were accepted.

The *Lebensborn* organisation was run from its headquarters in Munich, under the personal chairmanship of Himmler. By the end of 1937, it had 13,300 members, of whom 12,500 were from the *SS* and 500 were from the German police. The organisation saw its chief task as ‘the support... of mothers-to-be of good blood’. It played a part in the struggle against abortions, by providing discreet delivery homes for illegitimate births and thereby preventing a number of pregnant girls and women from feeling the necessity to terminate their pregnancies. For if the mother and the father of the baby were both ‘hereditarily healthy’, the child would be ‘valuable’. Hence, the *Lebensborn* provided practical protection for such mothers-to-be in its delivery homes, of which six were established in the first two years of its existence. By 31 December 1938, 653 mothers had used the *Lebensborn* delivery homes. The infant mortality rate in the homes was 3 per cent, which was half that of the national average.

Himmler took a personal interest in the running of the *Lebensborn* homes. For example, he advised the homes about the correct diet for the women, promoting the importance of porridge and wholemeal bread. He also ensured that the homes received priority treatment during the war, in terms of rations of luxury items such as fresh fruit. To prepare the mothers for their future responsibilities, Himmler ensured that *RMD* (National Mothers’ Service) courses were held in each *Lebensborn* home, to train mothers in all aspects of household management and childcare. In addition, the *SS* was responsible for the ‘ideological education’ of the women, which it achieved by holding lectures, film screenings and discussion evenings.

In the homes, mothers had the chance to relax during their free time and to form friendships with the other women. According to a *Lebensborn* pamphlet, a sense of camaraderie developed between the mothers as each was giving a German baby a life. Once she had given birth, a mother who could not take her baby with her could leave it to be looked after in the home for one year. If, after that time, the mother was still unmarried or not in a position to take care of the child, it was given out to foster parents, usually to *SS* leaders who were childless or who had just one or two children. The *Lebensborn* organisation accepted that marriage was the best possible situation in which a man and woman could have children, but it also stated that it recognised that many young men and women engaged in extra-marital sexual relationships for a number of reasons. In such cases, it was the ‘hereditary health’ and ‘blood’ of the parents that were important. In this sense, the *Lebensborn* organisation claimed to protect Germany’s future.

The *Lebensborn* statistics for its home ‘Pommern’ provide an interesting account of the activities of the organisation. Between 23 May 1938 and 1 September 1941, 541 mothers gave birth at this home. Of these, 245 were married and 296 were single - i.e. 45 per cent were married. According to the *Lebensborn* statistics, 71 per cent of those having their first child were unmarried, but only 26 per cent of those having their second child were unmarried, and of those having their third or more child, none were unmarried. Forty-two of the single mothers subsequently got married, 37 of them to their child’s father. In total, only 7 babies were stillborn or died within 24 hours of birth. Hence, the mortality rate was exceptionally low compared with the national average. The length of stay in the homes was on average 71 days, 43.5 days for married mothers and 94.5 days for single mothers. The longest stay was 256 days and the shortest was 9 days.

The *Lebensborn* and its activities have courted a considerable amount of controversy. At the time, the *Lebensborn* homes were unpopular with many ordinary German citizens, especially in rural, Catholic areas, where people were disgruntled with the official condonement and even encouragement of the birth of children out of wedlock. As a result, all sorts of rumours were perpetuated about the *Lebensborn* homes. These included allegations that the *Lebensborn* homes employed permanent ‘procreation helpers’ or that they were ‘stud farms’ for the *SS*. The fact that the homes were set up in secluded areas and shrouded in secrecy served to fuel such rumours. However, although the *Lebensborn* homes were not ‘stud farms’ for the *SS*, their ethics came into question for a different reason. During the war, they played a significant role in the *SS*’s abduction and Germanisation of children from the territories occupied by the *Reich*. In the *Lebensborn* homes, such children were subjected to racial examinations. Those that passed the tests were either reared in the *Lebensborn* homes or sent to live with German foster parents. Their role in this kind of activity is another major reason for the controversy surrounding the *Lebensborn* homes, quite separate from that of their original purpose.The Nazi regime also attempted to establish its *Lebensborn* homes in lands it occupied during the war in western and northern Europe, achieving most success in Norway.[[24]](#endnote-24)

**‘Inferior’ families**

‘More happiness, more relaxation, healthier mothers and children – that is the aim!’ The *Hilfswerk ‘Mutter und Kind’* emphasised its welfare work for mothers and children very strongly. However, as we have seen, welfare was applicable only to those mothers and children who were deemed to be ‘hereditarily healthy’, racially pure and those whose behaviour and lifestyles accorded with the dictates of the regime. Ginsborg rightly notes that: ‘The Nazis laboriously developed the most systematic typology, from the early legislation against the “hereditarily unfit,” to the discrimination against “asocial families,” to the gathering crescendo against all members of racially inferior families.’[[25]](#endnote-25) At the same time as the positive population policies directed towards fit members of the ‘national community’ occurred, another side of Nazi population policy was taking place. Legal measures were introduced to prevent marriages between Jews and ‘Aryans’ (Nuremberg Laws, September 1935); and to prevent marriages between healthy ‘Aryans’ and those deemed ‘unfit’ for marriage due to physical or mental illness (Marriage Health Law, October 1935). In order to marry, it was necessary to undergo a medical examination first. On passing this, the local health authorities issued a ‘certificate of fitness to marry’. The regime was very strict about the implementation of these laws, for the children from ‘undesirable’ marriages would be ‘inferior’. Sterilisation was the principal method used by the Nazi regime to prevent people it considered ‘undesirable’ from having children. On 1 January 1934, a compulsory sterilisation edict, the Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring, came into effect. It called for the mandatory sterilisation of anyone that suffered from ‘congenital feeble-mindedness, schizophrenia, manic depression, hereditary epilepsy, Huntington’s chorea, hereditary blindness, hereditary deafness, serious physical deformities’ and ‘chronic alcoholism’. Between January 1934 and September 1939, approximately 320,000 people (0.5 per cent of the population), were forcibly sterilised under the terms of this law.[[26]](#endnote-26) The majority of them were of German ethnicity, however, they were considered to be ‘hereditarily ill’ or simply ‘feeble-minded’ by the regime and its eugenic experts. The ‘feeble-minded’ made up two-thirds of all those sterilised, of which about two-thirds of these were women. Sterilised women became the objects of sexual abuse, especially in the cities, where soldiers or factory workers asked their colleagues on Mondays: ‘Did you not find a sterilised woman for the weekend?’[[27]](#endnote-27)

Nazi discrimination against ‘asocials’ spanned a whole array of actions, from the symbolic, such as excluding the mothers of ‘asocial’ families from the Cross of Honour of the German Mother, through forced sterilisation, compulsory accommodation in ‘asocial colonies’, to internment in concentration camps, hard labour and physical annihilation. The social policy of the regime reacted against all kinds of non-conformist behaviour, by the implementation of force and terror, and in many cases, ultimately, death. What was new in the Nazi state was the penetrating biological argument that proposed the ‘elimination’ of ‘asocials’ for the future. In this respect, the families of ‘asocials’ were directly affected, for, in ‘asocial clans’, negative traits of every kind - from speech defects to the suicide of distant relatives - were used to purport and to demonstrate that ‘asociality’ was hereditary. This was justification enough for members of ‘asocial’ families to be institutionalised and sterilised for ‘congenital feeble-mindedness’ or ‘annihilated’ just for existing at all. ‘Gypsy’ clans were doubly excoriated by the Nazi regime on account of their ‘asociality’ and their ‘racial inferiority’. Germany’s Sinti and Roma (‘Gypsy’) population experienced wide-ranging discrimination and harassment during the Nazi era, culminating in their annihilation during the war.[[28]](#endnote-28) These families were considered not to belong to the German nation and were therefore expendable.

Germany’s Jews were excluded from the ‘national community’ and were categorised as ‘racially alien’ and ‘racially inferior’. Jewish families were subjected to a wide range of discriminatory policies throughout the Nazi period, culminating in the ‘Final Solution’. There is no clear-cut correlation of the effects of persecution upon Jewish families and their responses to it in the period up to 1939.[[29]](#endnote-29) In many cases, there is evidence to suggest that families pulled together, and that in particular, the Jewish home provided a shelter against the discrimination and growing problems that individual family members had to face outside it. Yet, in other cases, the Jewish home seemed unable to shield its members from the situation, and tensions between spouses and between parents and children arose. Parents often felt unable to maintain their position as protectors of and providers for their offspring, and children sometimes experienced a loss of respect for their parents for not fulfilling this role.[[30]](#endnote-30) Such feelings presented themselves even more strikingly in the transit camps, concentration camps and death camps, where children saw their parents in a different light imposed by the abnormal circumstances and by those in charge.[[31]](#endnote-31)

Contrary to traditional norms of not harming women and children, women’s fertility and ability to reproduce became the ultimate aim of Nazi extermination policy. Pregnant women were searched out and killed in many camps. Rochelle Saidel notes that ‘being female was a significant factor that influenced life and death during the Holocaust in general and in concentration camps in particular’.[[32]](#endnote-32) Physiological considerations - particularly pregnancy - made women ‘especially vulnerable in concentration camps’.[[33]](#endnote-33) For example, from the start, Himmler had insisted that no births were to take place at Ravensbrück. And so, at Ravensbrück concentration camp, until 1942 pregnant prisoners were sent to local hospitals in order to give birth. The new babies were then taken from their mothers, who returned to the camp. In 1943, pregnant women were pressurised to have abortions and many were performed in the camp - some of them up to the eighth month of pregnancy. It is, of course, extremely important to note that this policy was very different from that for ‘Aryan’ German women, for whom abortion was illegal.[[34]](#endnote-34)

From the autumn of 1944, however, with many pregnant women arriving at the camp, the SS allowed most of them to give birth to their babies at Ravensbrück. A maternity ward was established at the end of 1944, with a prisoner nurse, named Hanka Houskova, acting as midwife there. This was the only concession made by the SS to the mothers and their babies. Shortly after giving birth, the new mothers were expected to return to work and roll calls, which meant that the babies remained unfed for many hours at a time. However, most of the mothers were very malnourished in any case and unable to produce much milk. Between 19 September 1944 and 22 April 1945, 551 children were born at Ravensbrück.[[35]](#endnote-35) In many cases, it appears that the newborn babies survived for only a few days. Eliska Valentova, one of the nurses at the infirmary, who tried to look after the new born babies described her efforts to help them with no success, because of their malnutrition. She recalled: ‘And yet there was nothing more that we could do except to watch as the babies lost their appetites, became thin and weak and eventually, but slowly, died.’[[36]](#endnote-36) The dead bodies of the babies were then taken to the crematorium. As Sarah Helm explains, ‘the deliberate starving of babies was a long-established Nazi technique of killing’.[[37]](#endnote-37) In February and March 1945, orders were received to transport all children and pregnant women out of Ravensbrück. Hundreds of children were sent away, mainly to Bergen-Belsen, and almost none of them survived. They died of extreme cold on the train journey or shortly afterwards from starvation.

In the death camps, the Nazis linked the destiny of women and children, as mothers holding the hands of their young children were among the first to be selected for the gas chambers. In addition, women were the targets of sexual assault and rape by their persecutors, even though this contravened Nazi racial policy. Myrna Goldenberg has explored the physical vulnerability of women, both as mothers and as objects of sexual assault.[[38]](#endnote-38) This was partly a response to patriarchal assumptions about the characteristics of women and the capacity of men to appropriate their bodies and reproductive power.[[39]](#endnote-39)

**Homosexuals and lesbians**

Sexual outsiders were also persecuted by the Nazi government and homosexuals remained the ‘forgotten victims’ of the Nazi regime for many decades. Almost nothing was written about the fate of homosexuals under National Socialism after 1945. In addition, prejudice against homosexuals continued and the legal position of homosexuals both in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany remained unchanged from that of the Nazi era until 1968 and 1969 respectively. For these reasons, it was only in the 1970s that the taboo status of the subject was broken, and only since the 1980s that the subject began to be more adequately researched by historians and other scholars.[[40]](#endnote-40) In addition, many homosexual victims were reluctant to relate their experiences.[[41]](#endnote-41) The Nazi position towards lesbianism was not investigated until the 1990s.[[42]](#endnote-42)

Homosexuals were persecuted by the Nazi regime on grounds of their ‘deviant’ sexual behaviour. In 1935, the Nazis amended the law in relation to homosexuality. In addition to Paragraph 175, Paragraph 175a stated that:

Confinement in a penitentiary not to exceed ten years and, under extenuating circumstances, imprisonment for not less than three months shall be imposed: (1) Upon a male who, with force or with threat of imminent danger to life and limb, compels another male to commit lewd and lascivious acts with him or compels the other party to submit to abuse for lewd and lascivious acts; (2) Upon a male who, by abuse of a relationship of dependence upon him, in consequence of service, employment, or subordination, induces another male to commit lewd and lascivious acts with him or to submit to being abused for such acts; (3) Upon a male who being over 21 years of age induces another male under 21 years of age to commit lewd and lascivious acts with him or to submit to being abused for such acts; (4) Upon a male who professionally engages in lewd and lascivious acts with other men, or submits to such abuse by other men, or offers himself for lewd and lascivious acts with other men.[[43]](#endnote-43) Paragraph 175b stated that: ‘Lewd and lascivious acts contrary to nature between human beings and animals shall be punished by imprisonment; loss of civil rights may also be imposed.’[[44]](#endnote-44) Penalties for homosexual acts were made harsher.

In October 1936, the Reich Central Office for the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion, headed by Josef Meisinger, was assigned the task of registering homosexuals. By 1940, this office stored the personal details of some 41,000 men convicted or suspected of homosexuality.[[45]](#endnote-45) Special card indexes were compiled on ‘rent boys’ and ‘corrupters of youth’, who were regarded as ‘incorrigible’ and ‘especially dangerous’. The number of prosecutions increased during this time and the period between 1936 and 1939 marked the high point in terms of the numbers of homosexuals convicted. The number of convictions rose steeply from 948 in 1934, to 5,320 in 1936, 8,271 in 1937 and 8,562 in 1938.[[46]](#endnote-46)

In contrast to their strong revulsion of homosexual men, Nazi ideologues were largely indifferent to lesbian women and most jurists were disinterested in extending Paragraph 175 to apply to them. There were four main reasons for this. First, homosexual men were excluded from the reproductive process, but this did not apply to the same degree to lesbian women. Second, homosexual activity was considered to be less widespread and more unobtrusive in women, and hence less likely to set a corrupting example. Third, intimate forms of friendship between women made lesbianism much more difficult to detect. Fourth, women played a comparatively smaller role in public life.[[47]](#endnote-47) Claudia Schoppmann has argued that there was ‘no systematic persecution of lesbian women comparable to that of male homosexuals’.[[48]](#endnote-48) The Nazis did, however, destroy the beginnings of a collective lesbian lifestyle and identity, which had been developing over the previous two decades.[[49]](#endnote-49) Lesbian meeting places, such as the Dorian Gray, one of the oldest women’s bars in Berlin, and lesbian magazines, such as *Frauenliebe* - established in 1926 and renamed *Garçonne* in 1930 - that had flourished during the Weimar years, were destroyed. This led to the withdrawal of lesbian women into private circles among their friends.

**The impact of the Second World War on family life**

As Ginsborg notes, ‘even for German Aryan families’, the Nazi regime ‘entailed their gradual splitting-up and maiming’.[[50]](#endnote-50) The Second World War had profound implications and consequences for the German family. As fathers and sons were conscripted into the armed services, women were encouraged back into the workforce to replace them.[[51]](#endnote-51) The war created almost impossible circumstances for intimate and stable family life to be conducted. Many women who were accustomed to their husbands making decisions and dealing with family finances had to manage unaided. In rural areas, women had to cope with both their sources of livelihood and their families on their own, as farmers and male farm labourers were conscripted. In urban and industrial areas, women had to bear the strain of industrial work and maintain their families single-handed. Female relatives, neighbours and friends helped each other, providing mutual support and relief. Food rationing, bombings and the destruction of gas and water supplies, were among the difficulties experienced in daily life. Air raids disrupted life and many families were made homeless and dispossessed. Many women and children were evacuated from the cities to the countryside, and families became separated in the process. Hence, the ultimate legacy of the Nazi regime and of the war to German family life was disastrous.

Hester Vaizey has examined the ways in which family members communicated with each other during periods of lengthy separation, using letters and diaries to find out how families stayed in touch. Letters helped to bridge the gap of enforced separation in wartime. Of course, it was in the interests of the Nazi regime to maintain popular morale and so it facilitated letter exchanges, although this process was subjected to heavy censorship. Vaizey maintains that despite the obstacles that confronted family members, they did maintain communication, which was ‘crucial to family cohesion’.[[52]](#endnote-52) Through letter writing, spouses could convey to each other their own separate experiences of the war. Soldiers on the front gained comfort from the letters of their wives. Vaizey argues that even if emotional intensity in letters was not necessarily to be replicated in person, that couples which communicated by letter ‘had good reason to feel optimistic and committed to working on their marriage post-reunion’.[[53]](#endnote-53)

However, Ginsborg notes how ‘service to the state engulfed and destroyed families’ in the war years.[[54]](#endnote-54) Spouses worried about how their loved ones were faring under the conditions of the war. Women feared for the lives of their husbands on the front; men were concerned about how their wives were managing at home without them, especially as they faced food shortages and air raids. Long periods of separation and scanty communication inevitably meant that some husbands and wives questioned each other’s fidelity or were unfaithful. Others were looking forward to a time when they could be together again. Wartime letters show how couples were able to keep their relationships alive and provide an insight into the private world of their marriages. Whilst many letters were nostalgic about the past and painted a rosy picture of the future, some couples were very realistic about their situation. Vaizey notes that: ‘As people learned to cope with less, they adjusted their outlooks accordingly.’[[55]](#endnote-55)

Without their men, women had to make decisions and engage in all sorts of different types of work and activities than before. Their independence impacted upon their subsequent reunions with their husbands. The concept of women ‘standing alone’ on the Home Front during the war and the ‘Hour of the Woman’ after the war, meant a new situation for married couples once men returned from the front. Despite the prevalent image in the historical literature of strong women, who dealt with the realities of war and subsequently cleared up the rubble, many women did feel vulnerable or were physically exhausted by the strains of life. Vaizey argues that ultimately they ‘wanted to return to a sense of normality’.[[56]](#endnote-56) In the end, she maintains, changes in gender roles engendered by the circumstances of the war were not permanent ones, and power dynamics between spouses adjusted back to how they had been previously.

Years of separation took their toll on family life. Both men and women were confronted with changes in the physical appearance of their partners. Feelings of reserve and alienation made it hard for many married couples to communicate with each other. In addition, it was difficult for them to recount painful experiences to one another. Other problems also contributed to the destabilisation of families, such as sexual distance between spouses and difficulties in the relationships between children and their recently returned fathers.Many children were unable to recognise their fathers on their return home. Younger children, in particular, had often had no knowledge of their fathers, sometimes having only seen photographs of them. Elder sons, in the absence of their fathers, had become the confidants of their mothers and ersatz fathers to their siblings. With the homecoming of their fathers, there inevitably ensued a conflict about the recognition and maintenance of this status. Many fathers were unwilling to accept it and many sons were reluctant to give it up. Older children, in general, resented their fathers for treating them still as children, when they had been forced to grow up faster as a consequence of the war. They rebelled against and felt alienated from their fathers, which put mothers in the difficult position of trying to maintain some element of harmony and balance within the family.

**Conclusion**

Whilst Nazi welfare measures were comparable to those introduced in other countries at around the same time, they differed in terms of their application within German society, as certain sections of the population were excluded from welfare measures on racial or eugenic grounds. As Ginsborg notes, the starting point for Nazi family policy was ‘a profound distinction between approved and non-approved families’.[[57]](#endnote-57) The goal, as Goebbels put it, was not ‘children at any cost’, but ‘racially worthy, physically and mentally unaffected children of German families’.[[58]](#endnote-58) Nazi policies spanned an array of initiatives from positive population policies, such as incentives aimed at encouraging early marriages between ‘healthy’ German couples, to the sterilisation of the ‘unfit’ and the extermination of the ‘undesirable’. As Gisela Bock has argued, ‘with respect to the “inferior”, National Socialism pursued a policy not of family welfare but of family destruction’.[[59]](#endnote-59)

The Nazis’ aims of an increased birth rate, racial homogeneity and a regimented social life invaded the private domain of the family deeply. As Mary Nolan has explained: ‘Few regimes have made as extensive an effort to penetrate, politicise and restructure the private, be it in terms of sociability, reproductive behavior, family life, or attitudes toward the relationship of individual to state and society.’[[60]](#endnote-60) Hence, the home was not a safe haven insulated from National Socialism. In the end, the Nazis’ recognition of the importance of the family was as a vehicle for their own aims. Marriage and childbirth became racial duties, instead of personal decisions, as the Nazi regime systematically reduced the functions of the family to the single task of reproduction. As Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann has noted: ‘In the name of restoring tradition, the Nazi state did more than any other regime to break down parental autonomy and to make the family simply a vehicle of state policy.’[[61]](#endnote-61) Quite contrary to their rhetoric about the restoration of the family, the National Socialists atomised family units, allowing for intrusion and intervention in everyday life. The Nazi administration undermined the family in an unprecedented way. Privacy, intimacy and leisure were greatly threatened by the intervention of the Nazi regime into family life. The family under National Socialism became an institution for breeding and rearing children, with its relationships largely emptied of their emotional content. The Hitler government subjected the family to intervention and control, reduced its socialisation function, attempted to remove its capacity to shelter emotionally its members and subjected it to racial ideology. The undermining of the family through racial policies and the policing of families’ daily lives ultimately destroyed the private sphere, in both physical and practical terms. The legacy of the Second World War and of the Nazi regime meant that it was only in the 1950s that everyday family life began to regain any true sense of unity, as we shall see in the following chapter.

1. A. Carney, *Marriage and Fatherhood in the Nazi SS* (Toronto, 2018), p. 170. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid., p. 175. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. P. Ginsborg, ‘The Family Politics of the Great Dictators’, in D. Kertzer and M. Barbagli (eds), *Family Life in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London, 2003), p. 175. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. J. Chapoutot, *The Law of Blood: Thinking and Acting as a Nazi* (Cambridge, MA, 2018), p. 19. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Carney, *Marriage and Fatherhood in the Nazi SS*. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cited in L. Pine, *Nazi Family Policy*, *1933-1945* (Oxford, 1997), p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid., p. 88. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid.,p. 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid., p. 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid., p. 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. P. Ginsborg, *Family Politics: Domestic Life, Devastation and Survival 1900 to 1950* (New Haven and London, 2014), p. 380. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Pine, *Nazi Family Policy*, p. 20. See also, C. Usborne, *Cultures of Abortion in Weimar Germany* (Oxford and New York, 2007), pp. 216-18. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. J. Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society* (London, 1975), p. 69. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Bundesarchiv (hereafter BA) NSD 64/3, *Der RDK: Was ist er? Was will er?*. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. G. Bock, ‘Antinatalism, maternity and paternity in National Socialist racism’, in G. Bock and P. Thane (eds), *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States 1880s - 1950s* (London, 1994), p. 245. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. BA NS 37/1010, ‘Arbeitsanweisung für die offene Fürsorge für werdende Mütter, Wöchnerinnen, Säuglinge und Kleinkinder’, 20 January 1943, p. 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Pine, *Nazi Family Policy*, p. 27. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid., p. 27. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. BA NS 37/1035, ‘Aus Mütterbriefen’. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Pine, *Nazi Family Policy*, p. 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. M. Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation to Purifying the Volk: Weimar and Nazi Family Policy, 1918-1945* (Cambridge and New York, 2007), p. 170. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid., p. 171. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. On this, see K. Olsen, ‘Under the Care of Lebensborn: Norwegian War Children and their Mothers’ in K. Ericsson and E. Simonsen (eds), *Children of World War II: The Hidden Enemy Legacy* (Oxford and New York, 2005),pp. 15-34. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Ginsborg, ‘The Family Politics of the Great Dictators’, p. 181. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. G. Bock, ‘Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany’, in R. Bridenthal, A. Grossmann and M. Kaplan (eds), *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York, 1984), p. 279. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Bock, ‘Antinatalism, maternity and paternity in National Socialist racism’, p. 238. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. On the persecution and destruction of the Sinti and Roma, see M. Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid. Die nationalsozialistische “Lösung der Zigeunerfrage”* (Hamburg, 1996); M. Zimmermann, ‘From Discrimination to the “Family Camp” at Auschwitz’, in W. Benz and B. Distel (eds), *Dachau Review 2. History of Nazi Concentration Camps: Studies, Reports, Documents.* (Dachau, 1990), pp. 87-113. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. # Pine, *Nazi Family Policy*, p. 178. See also, J. Michlic (ed.), *Jewish Families in Europe, 1939-Present: History, Representation, and Memory* (Waltham, MA, 2017).

    [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. For example, on the experiences of Jewish men, see M. Carey, *Jewish Masculinity in the Holocaust* (London, 2017). [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Pine, *Nazi Family Policy*, p. 178. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. R. Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp* (Madison, 2004), p. 204. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Ibid., p. 210. On pregnancy and birth in the Gross-Rosen camps, see B. Gutterman, *A Narrow Bridge to Life: Jewish Forced Labor and Survival in the Gross-Rosen Camp System, 1940-1945* (New York and Oxford, 2008), pp. 170-72. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. On this, see G. Czarnowski, ‘Women’s crimes, state crimes: abortion in Nazi Germany’, in M. Arnot and C. Usborne (eds), *Gender and Crime in Modern Europe* (London, 1999), pp. 238-257. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. J. Morrison, *Ravensbrück: Everyday Life in a Women’s Concentration Camp* (Princeton, 2000), p. 271. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Cited in ibid., p. 273. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. S. Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler’s Concentration Camp for Women* (New York, 2014), p. 416. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. M. Goldenberg, ‘From a World Beyond: Women and the Holocaust’ *Feminist Studies* 22 (Fall 1996), pp. 667-87. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. R. Smith, ‘Women and Genocide: Notes on an Unwritten History’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1994), p. 316. For a greater discussion of patriarchy and patriarchal assumptions, see G. Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York, 1986). [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. The most significant works include: B. Jellonnek, *Homosexuelle unter dem Hakenkreuz. Die Verfolgung von Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich* (Paderborn, 1990); R. Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War against Homosexuals* (New York, 1986); H. - G. Stümke, *Homosexuelle in Deutschland. Eine politische Geschichte* (Munich, 1989); H. - G. Stümke and R. Finkler, *Rosa Winkel, Rosa Listen. Homosexuelle und ‘Gesundes Volksempfinden’ von Auschwitz bis heute* (Reinbek, 1981); G. Grau, *Hidden Holocaust? Gay and Lesbian Persecution in Germany, 1933-1945* (London, 1995); J. Müller and A. Sternweiler, *Homosexuelle Männer im KZ Sachsenhausen* (Berlin, 2000); B. Jellonnek and R. Lautmann, *Nationalsozialistischer Terror gegen Homosexuelle: verdrängt und ungesühnt* (Paderborn, 2002); T. Bastian, *Homosexuelle im Dritten Reich. Geschichte einer Verfolgung* (Munich, 2000); H. Diercks, *Verfolgung Homosexueller im Nationalsozialismus* (Bremen, 1999); F. Rector, *The Nazi Extermination of Homosexuals* (New York, 1981); W. Spurlin, *Lost Intimacies: Rethinking Homosexuality under National Socialism* (New York, 2009). [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. H. Heger, *The Men with the Pink Triangle* (London, 1980); P. Seel, *I, Pierre Seel, Deported Homosexual: A Memoir of Nazi Terror* (New York, 1995); L. van Dijk, *Ein erfülltes Leben – trotzdem: Erinnerungen Homosexueller 1933-1945* (Hamburg, 1992). [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. C. Schoppmann, *Nationalsozialistische Sexualpolitik und weibliche Homosexualität* (Pfannenweiler, 1997) was the first serious study on lesbianism in the Third Reich. See also C. Schoppmann, *Verbotene Verhältnisse. Frauenliebe 1938-1945* (Berlin, 1999). [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Cited in W. Johansson and W. Percy, ‘Homosexuals in Nazi Germany’, *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual* Vol. 7 (1990), p. 235. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Cited in ibid., p. 236. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Grau (ed.), *Hidden Holocaust?* p. 104. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. H. - G. Stümke, ‘From the “People’s Consciousness of Right and Wrong” to “The Healthy Instincts of the Nation”: The Persecution of Homosexuals in Nazi Germany’, in M. Burleigh (ed.), *Confronting the Nazi Past: New Debates in Modern German History* (London, 1996), p. 160. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Johansson and Percy, ‘Homosexuals in Nazi Germany’, pp. 236-37. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. C. Schoppmann, ‘The Position of Lesbian Women in the Nazi Period’, in G. Grau (ed.), *Hidden Holocaust?* *Gay and Lesbian Persecution in Germany, 1933-1945* (London, 1995),p. 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Schoppmann, ‘National Socialist policies towards female homosexuality’, in L. Abrams and E. Harvey (eds), *Gender Relations in German History: Power, Agency and Experience from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (London, 1996), p. 179. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Ginsborg, ‘The Family Politics of the Great Dictators’, p. 179. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. On this, see B. Kundrus, *Kriegerfrauen: Familienpolitik und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg, 1995), pp. 322-347. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. H. Vaizey, *Surviving Hitler’s War: Family Life in Germany, 1939-48* (Basingstoke, 2010), p. 61. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., p. 59. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Ginsborg, ‘The Family Politics of the Great Dictators’, p. 196. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Vaizey, *Surviving Hitler’s War*, p. 92. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Ibid., p. 109. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Ginsborg, *Family Politics*, p. 354. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Ibid., p. 359. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Bock, ‘Antinatalism, maternity and paternity in National Socialist racism’, p. 247. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. M. Nolan, ‘Work, gender and everyday life: reflections on continuity, normality and agency in twentieth-century Germany’, in I. Kershaw and M. Lewin (eds), *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 337. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. I. Weber-Kellermann, ‘The German Family between Private Life and Politics’, in A. Prost and G. Vincent (eds), *A History of Private Life. V: Riddles of Identity in Modern Times* (Harvard, 1991), p. 517. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)