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"As Blond as Hitler": Positive Eugenics and Fatherhood in the Third Reich

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

“AS BLOND AS HITLER”:
POSITIVE EUGENICS AND FATHERHOOD IN THE THIRD REICH

By

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When I began my studies into fatherhood, I certainly never expected that this investigation would bridge the ideology of patriarchy with the tenets of an international science movement. With this merger, however, I found myself delving into a realm of study that I previously had not known about, and I have emerged from this experience feeling that I have taken one more step in my education toward becoming a historian.

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ABSTRACT

In seeking to build the Thousand Year Reich, the German government under the administration of the National Socialist party constructed many different ideologies to create the foundation for its new community. Although not as highly prominent others, the ideology of fatherhood had a role in the formation of this state. Because of the scientific trends prevalent during the early to mid twentieth century, fatherhood at this time had a strong biological bent; men were mainly regarded as fathers due to their reproductive contributions. Therefore, the Nazi government wanted to encourage each man to sustain his personal lineage because a healthy, burgeoning population would guarantee the longevity of the German nation founded by its leadership.

In seeking a stronger and larger population, the Nazi party adopted a contemporary science movement: eugenics. The government divided people based on racial criteria, and the individuals whom it deemed most eligible to pass on their genes belonged to the “blond hair, blue eyed” Aryan race. After firmly establishing this archetype as the ultimate goal, the state had to disseminate this information to the general population and persuade these people to adopt this racial hierarchy willingly. It propagated this information through both formal education and direct contact with the German people through speeches and publications. This instruction served to inspire healthy citizens to have offspring who would strengthen the position of Germany through racial superiority.

Of the male German population, the men who best personified the Aryan elite belonged to the *Schutzstaffeln* (SS). As the most unwavering followers of the Nazi party and Adolf Hitler, the soldiers of the SS provided the best paternal audience. The leader of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, sought to convince these men that their responsibilities included supplying the Third Reich with an abundance of racially healthy children. Himmler’s directives and other documents substantiated this desire to encourage his men to reproduce copiously and to furnish Germany

with a new aristocracy based on blood. Furthermore, the newspaper of the SS, *Das Schwarze Korps*, publicly correlated many of Himmler's perspectives. Articles, editorials, and letters encourage marriage, link SS men with images of healthy families, and promote fatherhood as a respectable and natural duty. Despite these efforts, the SS did not raise the birthrate in Germany, and the inability to produce enough children resulted in the failure of the eugenical measures.

However, an investigation into the role of fatherhood during this era still addresses many historiographical issues. Beyond showing one way in which the Nazi government attempted to foster a new national community, it demonstrates the changing role of paternity throughout the twentieth century as well as merges with studies of German fatherhood in the post Second World War era. Examining fatherhood also explains the attempted application of eugenics to increase the population of a country. Finally, it dovetails with existing research on motherhood during the Third Reich, and therefore provides a more comprehensive understanding of familial life and parental relations during the reign of the Nazi regime.

INTRODUCTION:

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE “FATHER FIGURE” UNDER THE NAZI REGIME

Helmut Lewenhardt and his better half Anna provide children with outstanding diligence. In these days, the stork made a visit for the sixth time and put the delightful Alfred-Günter as a little present in the cradle. Father Helmut dashed lucky and drunkenly to the desk, chewing at the fountain pen over the difficult question: “What do I say to the readers of the ‘Rhineland-Westphalin’ newspaper in Essen?” If one considers that Helmut already had to wrestle with this same question five times, one will understand that he ran out of breath over it. One does not want to say the same thing every time...After long resting his burdened family head, father Helmut...burst out into the shout: “All for Germany!”...[and] he decided to announce his fatherly efficiency with the oath: “Germany should live even if we must die!”¹

This excerpt, which appears in a July 1936 article in *Das Schwarze Korps*, embodies many of the underlying virtues that the National Socialist government wanted every good German father to embrace. These few sentences expressing one father’s exertion to write a birth announcement for his local paper publicly validate the enthusiasm that a man should feel for his children as well as sanction Helmut’s laudatory boast for his achievements as a father. The end of the passage also unequivocally connects the actions of the individual with the fate of the German nation. The Nazi party could not create its Thousand Year Reich without active

¹ “Der patriotische Papi,” *Das Schwarze Korps*, July 16, 1936, p. 7. “Helmut Lewenhardt und seine bessere Hälfte Anna sorgen mit hervorragendem Fleiß für Nachwuchs. In diesen Tagen hat ihnen der Storch zum sechsten Male seinen Besuch gemacht und als Mitbringsel den herzigen Alfred-Günter ins Steckkissen gelegt. Vater Helmut ist glückstrunken zum Schreibtisch gewetzt, am Federhalter über der schwierigen Frage kauend: ‘Wie sage ich’s den Lesern der ‘Rheinisch-Westfälischen Zeitung’ in Essen?’ Wenn man bedenkt, daß Helmut schon fünfmal mit der gleichen Frage zu ringen hatte, wird man verstehen, daß ihm darüber etwas die Puste ausgegangen ist. Man will schließlich nicht jedesmal dasselbe sagen... Nach langem Aufstützen seines schwer belasteten Familienhauptes hat Vater Helmut... in den Ruf ausgebrochen: ‘Alles für Deutschland!’...beschließt er die Bekanntgabe seiner väterlichen Tüchtigkeit mit dem Schwur: ‘Deutschland soll leben, auch wenn wir sterben müssen!’”

participation from the populace. It needed the biological contribution of Helmut, and millions others like him, to create successive generations of healthy children who would fulfill the government's desire to see the establishment of a stronger Germany. Nonetheless, in the decades following the failure of the Third Reich, the impact of fatherhood and the paternal figure receded as other research about this time period burgeoned.

Among the various subject matters that did receive considerable attention, historians began to analyze the functions of women, including their roles as mothers. This inquisition of women in National Socialist Germany began developing as an autonomous field in the mid 1970's with the two Ruskin History Workshops on Women in History and the subsequent publication of Jill Stephenson's book *Women in Nazi Society* and Tim Mason's two-part article "Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare, and Work" in *History Workshop*.² Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, additional (and primarily feminist) interpretations formed a framework through which many historians have explored the lives of women in Nazi Germany as well as their feminine duties inside and outside of the ideal Nazi domestic sphere. These studies uncover the lives of ordinary women and how the Nazi government sought to educate them with its ideology. With little exception, however, this research often disregards the importance of the father in the family dynamics. The predominant feminist interpretation defining the early articles and books on women extended in the 1990's to include family life. This expansion of the works on motherhood and family provides the means through which it is possible to investigate the often overlooked area of fatherhood.

Determining the role of the father in the Nazi family is a greater challenge than ascertaining the role of the mother. Fewer sources on fatherhood are available because Nazi ideology did not articulate this theme as strongly as it endorsed the maternal role. The Nazi archetype placed racially pure women at home raising large broods of Aryan children. These children, in turn, received "proper" education through National Socialist youth groups such as the Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens. Whereas girls received the physical and domestic education needed to mold them into well-trained housewives and healthy mothers, boys physically and mentally trained for a militaristic lifestyle. For all practical purposes, youth

² Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society* (New York: Barnes and Nobles Books, 1975); Tim Mason, "Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare, and Work, Part I," *History Workshop* vol. 1 (Spring 1976): 74-113; and Tim Mason, "Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare, and Work, Part II," *History Workshop*, vol. 2 (Fall 1976): 5-32.

education for boys included no preparation for fatherhood.³ Yet, men still fathered children, and their presence or absence in everyday life certainly impacted the development of their children. This perception of fatherhood lays the foundation to pose a larger question: What was the role of the father in the family in National Socialist Germany?

This thesis engages the subject of fatherhood and builds upon the scant documentation available, including textbooks, speeches, memorandums, and newspaper articles. In these sources, it becomes apparent that one of the more significant attributes to investigate is the biological side of reproduction; if nothing else, men have a physical role in procreation, and this function serves as a starting point for an examination of fatherhood. This biological aspect not only includes the sexual behavior of individual men, but also involves scientific tenets of the time period. In the mid twentieth century, eugenics served as the primary branch of science concerned with biology and hereditary health.

Developed in the mid to late nineteenth century, scientists cultivated eugenics with a two-fold purpose—to stop the population in a respective country from decreasing and to enhance the health of the human species. To achieve these dual objectives, eugenicists divided this emergent field of science into two branches: negative and positive eugenics. They defined these two sub-fields with language indicative of Social Darwinism. The former focused on measures that prevented individuals whom society had deemed “unfit” from reproducing and was best represented by the sterilization laws passed in more than a dozen countries, including Germany. The latter emphasized measures designed to encourage “fit” members of society to have numerous children.⁴

The Nazi government believed that race determined the fitness of an individual and a nation. It espoused the theory that the “blond hair, blue eyed” Aryan race symbolized the most desirable of the races.⁵ In Germany, the best representative of this racial elite was the *Schutzstaffeln* (SS). Government officials wanted to see the men of this organization pass on

³ Jill Stephenson, Lisa Pine, and Matthew Stibbe all briefly touch on the purpose of the education provided to boys in their respective discussions of education for girls. Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, 120-44; Lisa Pine, *Nazi Family Policy 1933-1945* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 47, 64, 67; and Matthew Stibbe, *Women in the Third Reich* (London: Arnold, 2003), 108-09.

⁴ A more comprehensive explanation of the terms fit and unfit in relation to the eugenics movement is provided in chapter one.

⁵ The term Aryan is almost exclusively associated with race as delineated by the Nazi government. However, many of the sources examined, especially the textbooks in chapter two, use the term Nordic (*nordische*) to refer to race; the term German-blooded was also commonly utilized by the end of the regime. The terms Aryan and Nordic are used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

their superior characteristics to future generations. The birth of these children would, according to Nazi thought, secure the legacy of the Germany constructed by Nazi party leader and German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, and his followers. By promoting the production of these children, the Nazi government applied the precepts of positive eugenics to its citizens and their progeny.

Therefore, the major question to address is: What measures did the Nazi government and its leaders take to encourage those whom they deemed the most fit members of their society, the racially elite SS, to father children? Answering this query raises several additional questions. How did the Nazi government specifically attempt to apply positive eugenical measures? What expectations did the Nazi hierarchy place on SS soldiers regarding both their biological and their hands-on roles as fathers? How successful was the Nazi regime in persuading SS men to accept its expectations regarding fatherhood?

The Nazi government tried to encourage its racially healthy citizens to agree with its perspective regarding population growth. The state started this inculcation in the formal education system where children learned about the value of procreation. Various textbooks provide information on race, the impact of a declining population on Germany, and the necessity of “racially fit” Germans having enough children to sustain the integrity of the nation. The Nazi government wanted to convince the students that each of them had an obligation to continue his or her healthy genetic lineage by supplying the state with four children. Its leaders also sought to persuade the adult population to embrace this same rationale. They aspired to have fit Germans acknowledge the idea of racial struggle; with this acceptance, these leaders subsequently wanted their citizens to work with the government to prevent further biological decay.

Within the ranks of the SS, men received additional encouragement pertaining to producing healthy offspring. This persuasion came through two different avenues. Heinrich Himmler, the *Reichsführer* of the SS and the Police, was extremely interested in fostering the reproductive abilities of his SS soldiers. His official memorandums demonstrate that he sought to spread the ideal of having higher quantities of quality children, and he wanted his SS men to accept this perspective. The newspaper of the SS, *Das Schwarze Korps*, publicly correlated many of the views that Himmler privately expressed. Its articles emphasize the biological aspects of fatherhood as well as employ the experiences of SS fathers to illustrate the honor of fatherhood to those men who had not yet started a family or had not had at least four children. Both of these methods of encouragement blurred the boundaries between public service to the

Nazi party and private family life. They advanced the perception that having these children represented an integral duty of each SS man in his service to the Third Reich.

The notion of fostering the birth of “fit” children concurrently created one of the cornerstones of the national identity that the Nazi party and government wished to construct. These new racially elite Germans would reform the collective character of the country under the regulation of National Socialist criteria.⁶ With a reinvented mindset permeating a biologically superior population, the Nazi leadership would have the human resources necessary to redefine Germany based on its perceptions of what made a perfect community in its archetypal Thousand Year Reich. This stronger German nation would ideally fulfill the legitimate needs that the German people had been clamoring for since the devastation that had ravaged the country following the First World War. It would also hypothetically provide the people with a rehabilitated sense of national pride and thus instill in the population the desire to support the government that could perpetuate the integrity of Germany.⁷

However, a restoration of Germany based on reproduction never came to fruition. Documents generated by Himmler prior to the war and postwar secondary sources have concluded that the Nazi government and the SS did not succeed in raising the birth rate. Nonetheless, examining fatherhood still holds historical significance because it supplements the historiographies of three major areas of study: the history of the eugenics movement; the nascent inquiries into fatherhood and the father figure in Germany; and the previously established research on motherhood under the Nazi regime.

First and foremost, the field of eugenics flourished worldwide for over six decades from the late nineteenth through the mid twentieth centuries. This real-world science was neither the

⁶ With this establishment of an elite based on people historically associated with a state, the Germans under the Nazi government fulfilled two of Eric Hobsbawm’s criteria for shaping a people into a nation. The Nazi state also satisfied the third criterion, the capacity for conquest, with the Second World War. For more information, see E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37-38.

⁷ For general information on the formation of national identity and community, see the following literature: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 4-6; John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, “Introduction,” in *Nationalism* edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3-9; Walker Conner, “A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a . . .” in *Nationalism* edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 36-46; Hans Kohn, “Western and Eastern Nationalism,” in *Nationalism* edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 162-65; Mostafa Rejai and Cynthia H. Enloe, “Nation-States and State-Nations,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 2 (June 1969): 140-58; Louis Wirth, “Types of Nationalism,” *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 41, no. 6 (May 1936): 723-37; and George L. Mosse, “Friendship and Nationhood: About the Promise and Failure of German Nationalism,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1982): 351-67.

parentless test tube babies in the Utopian society of Aldous Huxley's 1932 book *Brave New World* nor the genetically engineered supermen of Gene Rodenberry's *Star Trek*. On the contrary, eugenicists at that time did not have the scientific or technological ability to alter the genetic structure of human beings; scientists would only discover the knowledge necessary for that type of genetic revision in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The eugenics movement dealt with selective breeding among human beings to produce better children.

Most of the scientific and historical literature on eugenics discusses those people who developed and influenced the field, the major premises of eugenics, the necessity for governments to implement eugenical measures, and the impact of the voluntary and compulsory sterilization legislation passed by some countries. This same literature rarely delves into specific measures designed to promote positive eugenics.⁸ The efforts of the Nazi government, however, clearly demonstrate the attempt of a nation to apply the doctrines of positive eugenics. Among the government officials and party members who espoused the promotion of the Aryan race, Himmler most staunchly endorsed the implementation of measures designed to augment the population. With the elite SS under his dominion, he had a ready-made audience with whom he could promote specific proposals in order to create a new aristocracy in Germany; his suggestions included each SS man having a minimum of four healthy children either inside or outside the bonds of matrimony and the promotion of the infamous *Lebensborn* homes.⁹ With his appointment as *Reichskommissar* for the Strengthening of the German People, Himmler also had the responsibility of "Germanizing" the conquered territories and preparing this for settlement by Aryans and worthy non-Germans.¹⁰

The eugenical efforts by the Nazi regime have long since received condemnation. Critics have flippantly decried the eugenical measures endorsed by the party as nonsensical hocus-pocus. The most disparaging, not to mention most legendary, censure of Nazi eugenics comes from the contemporary book *We Europeans* by Julian Huxley and Alfred Haddon:

Certainly well-marked differences of 'national type' are recognized in popular judgement. If, however, we wish to keep our view clear, steady and scientific, we must constantly recall to mind how subjective, how impressionistic, how variable and devoid of standards of reference such judgements constantly are. Our

⁸ A more comprehensive discussion of this literature is provided in chapter one.

⁹ A more comprehensive explanation of the measures promoted by Himmler is discussed in chapter three.

¹⁰ Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 168-69.

German neighbours have ascribed to themselves a Teutonic type that is fair, long-headed, tall and virile. Let us make a composite picture of a typical Teuton from the most prominent of the exponents of this view. *Let him be as blond as Hitler, as dolichocephalic [long-headed] as Rosenberg, as tall as Goebbels, as slender as Goering, and as manly as Streicher. How much would he resemble the German ideal?*¹¹

The sentiment that the Nazi regime wanted to produce broods of Aryan babies “as blond as Hitler,” which has persisted until this very day, holds a great deal of truth. The Nazi government did aspire to populate its country with a healthy stock of Aryans. Nonetheless, in spite of this legitimate denunciation, investigating fatherhood through the scientific lens of positive eugenics provides a stronger understanding of how a nation could find a practical application for the theoretical ideas proposed by eugenicists.

Fatherhood has significance beyond showing an endeavor to utilize positive eugenics. The father figure was not unknown in Germany under the Nazi government, especially among its more prominent officials. With his blond wife and six young children, Joseph Goebbels, the *Reichminister* of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, physically epitomized the ideal family man.¹² In his endeavors to regulate reproduction among his SS soldiers, Himmler placed himself in a father-like position. As historian Larry V. Thompson contends, “Quite literally, Himmler gloried in his role as the ‘father figure’ of the SS. It was his family; their children were his children. He viewed himself as the benign, occasionally severe but always fair, patriarch who was a good provider and did not shirk from his paternal responsibilities.”¹³ Himmler’s professional father role juxtaposed the more personal image of Goebbels while corresponding to the type of representation projected by the Führer.

Hitler had no children, but still embodied a father figure—the father of the German people. A number of articles in *Das Schwarze Korps* publicize this image. On a couple of occasions, pictures show Hitler interacting with children. In the first instance, the illustration depicts Hitler holding up a little girl by the arms; the title of the accompanying article serves as a

¹¹ [Emphasis mine] Julian S. Huxley and Alfred C. Haddon, *We Europeans: A Survey of “Racial” Problems* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1936), 13. Julian Huxley is the older brother of Aldous Huxley.

¹² Lisa Pine, *Nazi Family Policy 1933-1945*, 15. This assessment of Goebbels and his family is one which Pine suggests that Hitler wanted portrayed. It was an interesting choice on Hitler’s part because, while his wife and children conformed to the Aryan ideal, Goebbels did not meet any of the physical characteristics of the Aryan race.

¹³ Larry V. Thompson, “*Lebensborn* and the Eugenics Policy of the *Reichsführer-SS*,” *Central European History* vol. 4, no. 1 (March 1971), 60-61. Further information on Himmler’s familiar life is provided in chapter three.

fitting caption for the picture: “Germany’s Leader and Germany’s Future.”¹⁴ The commentary declares that Hitler’s lifework revolved around the future of Germany, represented in the child with whom he was pictured. The second set of photographs more ardently exemplifies this motif. Four pictures depicting Hitler with German families take up the entire page. Two of these photos show Hitler interacting with children, and in the second one, a smiling Hitler was reaching out to take hold of a toddler. The title of this montage lies in the middle of these shots and provides a strong indication of the persona that *Das Schwarze Korps* wanted to create for Hitler: “Father of the People.”¹⁵ Subsequent articles expand this fatherly role for Hitler. They demonstrate Hitler’s concern for his people, suggested his infallible knowledge, and discuss the leadership principles of the Führer.¹⁶

The perception of Hitler as a father figure carried over into the postwar era. Two independently authorized studies surveyed the German population immediately following the war—*Father Land* by Bertram Schaffner and *Postwar Germans* by David Rodnick. Schaffner worked at a consultation center in the American occupation zone of Germany from October 1945 through August 1946 and spoke with German citizens about recent history to determine who among them was suitable for work. Rodnick did not work for the American government, but carried out interviews in central Hesse, also in the American zone, from December 1945 through June 1946; he wanted to present an unbiased report on the people of postwar Germany. Both investigations have similar opinions regarding the father-like role of Hitler.¹⁷

From his interviews, Schaffner concludes that the German people considered Hitler their supreme parental figure. “Hitler promised them security, work, food and clothing if they would but grant him authority. In effect, he asked them to make themselves his children, and he in return would constitute himself their superfather. . . . To a large percentage of Germans, this was

¹⁴ “Deutschlands Führer und Deutschlands Zukunft,” *Das Schwarze Korps*, May 7, 1936, p. 17. Due to the poor quality of the lenses on the microfilm machines, the pictures described here and in chapter four could not be clearly reproduced.

¹⁵ “Vater des Volkes,” *Das Schwarze Korps* April 20, 1939, p. 11.

¹⁶ Additional articles in *Das Schwarze Korps* that highlighted this leader-like father role for Hitler include the following: “Das Führerprinzip,” February 27, 1936, p. 11; “Das Führerprinzip,” March 5, 1936, p. 11; “Adolf Hitler ist Deutschland!” April 2, 1936, p. 2; “Adolf Hitler: Ein Mann und Sein Volk,” April 16, 1936, p. 20; “Die große Familie,” April 20, 1939, p. 6; “Der Führer weiß alles!” May 7, 1942, p. 2; and “Vater des Reiches,” April 15, 1943, p. 2.

¹⁷ Bertram Schaffner, *Father Land: A Study of Authoritarianism in the German Family* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948) and David Rodnick, *Postwar Germans: An Anthropologist’s Account* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948).

neither absurd nor dangerous, but a natural arrangement between a leader and his subjects.”¹⁸

Schaffner reports that German citizens believed that Hitler’s personal behavior and policies met their criteria for manliness. The Führer had aggressive plans, promised to avenge German honor, trusted his own judgments, did not hesitate when making orders, publicly spoke in a belligerent tone, and wanted to unite all Germans. Furthermore, the Hitler salute signified the strength of the nation to them. The people with whom Schaffer spoke identified these traits as those also present in a traditional German father. They understood that because Hitler had no progeny, the nation could serve as his children without engendering any sense of sibling rivalry.¹⁹

Rodnick spent less time addressing Hitler personally, but he did uncover one strong assumption regarding Hitler. From speaking with German children who were raised in anti-Nazi homes, Rodnick surmises that in spite of recent events in Germany, these adolescents believed that their nation needed a Führer. He states that “there appears to be an identification in their minds between a Führer and a father: just as a father takes care of the needs of his children, so there must be a Führer to take of the unfortunates who exist in German society.”²⁰ According to these children, Hitler had been a bad Führer because he had done many terrible things; nevertheless, these young interviewees could not image a German state without a Führer to guide the country.²¹

These two American studies additionally describe the function of the father in the family, and unlike their depictions of Hitler, these views do not coincide. On many key points, Schaffner and Rodnick have distinctly opposing perspectives. Schaffner asserts that fathers held the primary authority in the family, and even the mother was subjugated to this paternal control. The entire life of the family revolved around the father. “He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, as far as this is possible for a human being.”²² The father must live up to the standards that he created for his children to follow. He had to remain aware that he must always act the part of an admirable father. He had to maintain his authority at all costs, even when he was wrong. Schaffner contends that providing food, shelter, clothing, and education constituted the primary responsibilities of the father. A father did not care if his children loved him; he

¹⁸ Schaffner, *Father Land*, 73-74.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

²⁰ Rodnick, *Postwar Germans*, 57-58.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

²² Schaffner, *Father Land*, 15.

preferred their respect and their gratitude for his supervision, and he wanted them to fear him because fear reinforced his authority.²³

In his interviews, Schaffner has a series of prompts to which he asked his respondents to complete. The answers that he received were indicative of the stern paternal figure that he envisioned. When Schaffer asked, “If a father does not inspire respect (*Ehrfurcht*) in his son,” some of the responses were: “he is a poor father,” “the son will miss something beautiful,” “he has dangerously attacked their faith in any true authority whatsoever,” “his son will be useless to society,” and “the family will go to pieces.”²⁴ These answers exemplified the idea that wielding authority represented a critical responsibility for a father. Without this firm control over his son, a man could not fulfill his natural functions as a father.

A second prompt addresses the issue of discipline. As with the previous statement, the responses were just as extreme.²⁵ After hearing the sentence, “If the father uses no corporal punishment on his children,” the interviewees replied with the following five answers: “he will make his children soft,” “the child will punish the father some day,” “he fails to do his duty while the children are small,” “he is not interested in his children,” and “he may lose authority.”²⁶ Again, the information suggests the perception that the only way a father could properly care for his children was through remaining aloof unless he was penalizing them for some transgression. His word represented the law in the family, and these interviews indicate that the family could not appropriately function without this rigidity.

Rodnick reveals a softer father imagery in his study that discredits the stereotypical view of the German father as a harsh, authoritarian despot. Through his interviews, he discerns that mothers, not fathers, were responsible for disciplining the children; a father deferred to a mother in decisions concerning childrearing and punishment. He was primarily the financial caregiver

²³ Ibid., 15-17, 23-24, 34.

²⁴ Ibid., 17-18. Although Schnaffer defines *Ehrfurcht* as respect, this term indicates a sense of awe and reverence toward another person and also suggests an unquestioning loyalty to an authoritative figure out of fear of the consequences for not maintaining this reverence.

²⁵ Schaffner provides some interesting commentary on the extreme positions taken by the respondents. He noted that few people had moderate views and that one person might show polarity in his answers without feeling that he was being inconsistent. However, Schaffner believed that this type of contradictory behavior might explain the image of the peaceful German men “who lovingly tend their flower gardens and their homes” and “believe in strict military training and periodically resort to war.” He suggested that Himmler especially represented this paradoxical view because Himmler “organized concentration camps for the National Socialist regime and planned the extermination of millions, yet had the reputation among his countrymen of being a good family man, home-loving and tender toward children.” Schnaffer, *Father Land*, 27.

²⁶ Ibid., 22.

while the mother tended to the emotional needs of the children. Even with this deference to his wife, a man still represented a symbol of authority in the household. This patriarchal figure, however, did not have to be aloof or domineering; on the contrary, Rodnick found that German fathers lavished their children with affection. A man found no shame in holding his baby or playing with his older children; there was nothing unmanly about fatherly attention.²⁷

According to Rodnick, a father left the education of young children to a mother without worrying that a mother's affection would make his sons too effeminate. As the children grew older, a father took greater interest in their education, particularly the upbringing of his sons. At that point, the man served as a guide and mentor to his male children. He provided them with proper intellectual and political outlooks. Rodnick discovered that this type of instructional role did not vary by socio-economic class. He moreover notes that while the Nazi government had reinforced the traditional role of the mother, it had taken over many of the father's functions concerning the education of his children.²⁸

As shown above, the idea of the father as a vital figure already existed in the Nazi state, and limited postwar literature has briefly studied the nature of fatherhood. However, these two books only relied on the recent memories of German citizens; furthermore, the results presented by Schaffner must be read with a grain of salt because the people whom he interviewed were seeking employment in the American occupation zone of Germany. This factor may have colored the answers given by his respondents. Even with this issue taken into consideration, both Schaffner and Rodnick's works reveal more about the issue of fatherhood in Germany under the Nazi regime than any other source. They moreover create a solid foundation on which to base additional studies of Nazi fatherhood, research that would supplement the recent scholarship on masculinity and the father figure in postwar Germany.²⁹

²⁷ Rodnick, *Postwar Germans*, 17, 28, 36-37, 124.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-25, 124-25.

²⁹ The following sources discuss fatherhood and the father figure in post-1945 Germany: Robert G. Moeller, "The 'Remasculinization' of Germany in the 1950s: Introduction," *Signs* vol. 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1998): 101-06; Heide Fehrenbach, "Rehabilitating Fatherland: Race and German Remasculinization," *Signs* vol. 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1998): 107-27; Robert G. Moeller, "'The Last Soldiers of the Great War' and Tales of Family Reunion in the Federal Republic of Germany," *Signs* vol. 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1998): 129-45; Uta G. Poiger, "A New, 'Western' Hero? Reconstructing German Masculinity in the 1950s," *Signs* vol. 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1998): 147-62; Susan Jeffords, "The 'Remasculinization' of Germany in the 1950s: Discussion," *Signs* vol. 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1998): 163-69; Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001); and Till van Rahden, "Demokratie und väterliche Autorität. Das Karlsruher 'Stichenscheid'-Urteil in der politischen Kultur der frühen Bundesrepublik," *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2005).

Focusing on men as fathers engages the larger theme of patriarchy, which explores paternal power through a man's position as a husband and a father. The relative strength of this patriarchal role diminished throughout the twentieth century. For example, the Civil Code approved in 1900 by the German government of Kaiser Wilhelm II established the tradition of the state replacing some aspects of paternal power. This trend of weakened paternal identity continued under the Nazi government as a direct result of the biological stance taken by the Nazi leadership on fatherhood and the function of the father. In the postwar era, with a sizeable portion of the adult male population dead or imprisoned, there was a crisis in masculinity in Germany that prompted the divided country to redefine the concept of masculinity, and thus patriarchy. However, the father figure did not vanish entirely; West Germans had in Chancellor Konrad Adenauer another public symbol for the strong patriarch. Men as a whole were no longer solely procreative beings, and fatherhood took on a different meaning as those men who had survived the war wanted to become the ideal father that their children had imagined in their absence. The familial and public personas of patriarchal power changed as two Germanys once again sought new national identities in the aftermath of the Nazi regime and the war.³⁰

Finally, an examination of fatherhood, even one that mainly focuses on the biological aspects, still compliments the numerous studies on women in Nazi Germany.³¹ Within this latter

³⁰ For more information on patriarchy, see Göran Therborn, *Between Sex and Power: Family in the world, 1900-2000* (London: Routledge, 2004), 8, 13-14, 27, 73, 77, 96; R. W. Connell, "The State, Gender, and Sexual Politics" *Theory and Society* vol. 19, no. 5 (October 1990), 514; Moeller, "The 'Remasculinization' of Germany in the 1950's: Introduction," 101, 104; Fehrenbach, "Rehabilitating Fatherland," 109; Moeller, "The Last Soldiers of the Great War," 145; and Jeffords, "The 'Remasculinization' of Germany in the 1950s: Discussion," 163-64, 167.

³¹ A limited selection of literature on women and motherhood in Nazi Germany includes the following books and articles: Gisela Bock, "Antinatalism, maternity and paternity in National Socialist racism," chapter 12 in *Maternity and Gender Politics: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s-1950s*, edited by Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (London: Routledge, 1991); Idem., "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State," *Signs* vol. 8, no. 3 (Spring 1983): 400-421; Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossman, and Marion Kaplan, eds., *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984); Gabriele Czarnowski, "The value of marriage for the *Volksgemeinschaft*: policies towards women and marriage under National Socialism," in *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparisons and Contrasts*, edited by Richard Bessel and translated by Pamela Selwyn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Clifford Kirkpatrick, *Nazi Germany: Its Women and Family Life* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1938); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Mason, "Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare, and Work, Part I;" Idem., "Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare, and Work, Part II;" Pine, *Nazi Family Policy 1933-1945*; Robert Proctor, "The Control of Women," chapter 5 in *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under The Nazis*, edited by Robert Proctor (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Ramona Rose, *Position and Treatment of Women in Nazi Germany as viewed from the perspective of the English language press—1933-1945* (Vancouver: Tantalus Research Limited, 1984); David Schoenbaum, "The Third Reich and Women," chapter six in *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939*,

research, several important familial themes emerge. Some of these works discuss how women used the rise of the Nazi regime to free themselves from the emancipation they had received after the First World War while others highlight women's resistance against encroachment by the Nazi party. Additional pieces delve into why women accepted the National Socialist government. They show the imbalance between women's domestic and public roles by exploring what reasons the Nazi party wanted women at home versus why women felt the need to work outside of the household. Further books and articles describe the separate positions that women held in Nazi society and define what the Nazi regime considered appropriate feminine duties. Lastly, this research oftentimes articulates how the Nazi government attempted to conscript women in its war to raise the country's population.

Any research in the field of fathers under the Nazi regime serves to complement already existing research in other areas of study. It augments over three decades of extensive exploration of motherhood and women. This correlation between men and women especially holds true in the realm of eugenics because the Nazi government did not promulgate measures that impinged solely on one sex. Furthermore, a biological inquiry into fatherhood during the reign of the Nazi party in Germany establishes a strong starting point to understand the overall role of fathers in this same time. It continues the previous research in eugenics, corresponds with one of the major topics of mothers, and advances the relatively small literature available on the subject of fatherhood.

edited by David Schoenbaum (Garden City, New York: A Doubleday Anchor Book, 1967); Jill Stephenson, "Reichsbund der Kinderreichen': the League of Large Families in the Population Policy of Nazi Germany," *European Studies Review* vol. 9, no. 3 (July 1979): 351-75; Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*; Matthew Stibbe, *Women in the Third Reich*; and Cornelia Osborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women's Reproductive Rights and Duties* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992).

CHAPTER ONE:
“ENCOURAGING ‘GOOD’ OFFSPRING”:
SHAPING SOCIETY THROUGH EUGENICS

Although the National Socialist government employed eugenical measures in its crusade to enhance the German population, it did not establish this field of science. On the contrary, by the time the German President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler Chancellor of the Reichstag in January 1933, the term eugenics had existed for fifty years. Over the course of these decades in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scientists around the world developed eugenics with stated intentions of combating declining national populations and improving the quality of the human species. All eugenical measures designed to achieve these dual goals fell into two categories: negative and positive eugenics. Both connected Social Darwinist canon with premises of population policy; whereas negative eugenical measures sought to limit the number of children born to “unfit” individuals, positive ones encouraged “fit” members of society to procreate more.

Once in power, the Nazi party used these already existing ideas concerning eugenics. Germany followed the lead of other countries in Europe and North America and passed eugenics legislation, most notably a compulsory sterilization law in 1933. Post-World War II history has demonized this law; historians and scientists in the second half of the twentieth century have cited it as a brutal step toward the later policy of mass murder.³² With 400,000 people sterilized in less than twelve years, the German law unquestionably had a greater impact than any concurrent law, and the Nazi government certainly received indictment for implementing it. In general, however, sterilization inside and outside of Germany had its advocates and opponents.

³² For example, Henry Friedlander traces the origins of mass murder in Nazi Germany, and he outlines sterilization as one step in the process toward euthanasia and mass murder. Gisela Bock briefly mentions how racial policy in the Third Reich extended to include death during the war. For more information see Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995) and Gisela Bock, “Antinatalism, maternity and paternity in National Socialist racism.”

Furthermore, the inception of the German law and the views of the Nazi party concerning eugenics, were not an aberration or an anomaly, but were instead within the context of the scientific movement.³³

The British philosopher Sir Francis Galton coined the term eugenics in 1883. Eugenics comes from the Greek work *eugenēs*, which means “wellborn.” At the most basic level, eugenics is, as aptly put by John Cornwell, “the science of encouraging ‘good’ offspring.”³⁴ Galton used eugenics to study heredity. He wanted his new science to provide the foundation for producing better children. Through his studies, Galton created the expression “nature versus nurture.” He placed greater emphasis on the former term because he believed that children could inherit certain personal characteristics, such as discernment, imagination, and will. Galton also thought that intelligence passed from parent to child; believing that a genius would beget another genius, he wished to encourage breeding among the intelligent members of the population. Galton, however, did not think highly of all mankind. He held strong racist views and declared that Africans and Australian Aborigines were the lowest groups on his intelligence scale.³⁵

As prejudicial as Galton’s last opinion may seem, his views were not atypical for the late nineteenth century. In general, most Europeans and Americans of European descent believed that Caucasians were racially and culturally superior to the rest of the world’s inhabitants. Some western eugenicists, however, enthusiastically took this idea of white supremacy to an extreme and promoted the concepts of Nordic and Aryan supremacy, theories that the Nazi party later adopted. Other leading western eugenicists decried any radical racial notions past the belief of Caucasian preeminence.³⁶ Nonetheless, eugenicists on both sides of this extreme racial divide—

³³ In his article on eugenics, Peter Weingart briefly discusses how the history of science treats Nazi racial politics as a major anomaly in an attempt to keep science moral and clean when in fact this suggested historical discontinuity between Nazi science and all other science did not exist. Stephan Jay Gould also criticizes the myth of viewing science as “an objective enterprise.” Gould examines science as “a social phenomenon” that cannot divide itself from cultural and social influences. For more information see Peter Weingart, “Science and Political Culture: Eugenics in Comparative Perspective,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* vol. 24, no. 2 (1999), 164 and Stephan Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 20-21.

³⁴ John Cornwell, *Hitler’s Scientists: Science, War and the Devil’s Pact* (New York: Viking, 2003), 85.

³⁵ Mark B. Adams, “Eugenics in the History of Science,” in *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, edited by Mark B. Adams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3 and Marvin D. Miller, *Terminating the “Socially Inadequate”: The American Eugenicists and the German Race Hygienists, California to Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island to Germany* (Commack, New York: Malamud-Rose, 1996), 3-4.

³⁶ Sheila Faith Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904-1945,” chapter two in *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, edited by Mark B. Adams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 10.

especially scientists from Germany, Great Britain, and the United States—established the credibility of eugenics within scientific and political communities around the world.

French count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, Englishman Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and American T. H. Morgan had roles in creating this credibility. Gobineau attributed shifts in history to “racial vitality.” Believing in racial inequality, he placed Aryans at the top of a hierarchical racial pyramid. Gobineau reasoned that interbreeding caused contamination and compromised the purity of Aryan blood.³⁷ Chamberlain also found credence in the idea of racial disparity. He believed that Germans were superior to other races and should serve as the foundation for advanced societies. Among other prodigious works, Chamberlain penned a 1200 page opus in 1899 entitled *Foundation of the Nineteenth Century*; in this book, he predicted that Aryans would rule the world. Both Gobineau and Chamberlain influenced Hitler’s notions of race.³⁸ Morgan contributed to the field, but not to Hitler’s racial theory; with his students at Columbia University, Morgan examined genetic development outside of the role of genes.³⁹

Germans Alfred Ploetz and Wilhelm Schallmayer facilitated the advancement of eugenics in the twentieth century. Ploetz’s medical studies and service in a Swiss hospital led him to believe that he must work not only to preserve the German race, but to improve it as well. His research primarily dealt with the effects of alcoholism, but he still saw the need for a more effective branch of science to combat disease. The major thrust of his argument for this new science resembled the dilemma faced by Charles Darwin in *The Descent of Man*; Ploetz questioned how man could reconcile humanistic ideals and the desire to help others with the interests of race. Ploetz wondered if Germany should continue to expand its social welfare at the expense of the overall health of the nation; he inquired if this policy would increase the number of unhealthy individuals while depriving the nation of healthy ones.⁴⁰

Ploetz concluded that the state should balance the Christian ethics of love and compassion with the need for biological advancement. The state should not abandon its health policies, but should work toward improving the hereditary fitness of its population. He named this improvement race hygiene (*Rassenhygiene*). To Ploetz, race (*Rasse*) dealt with how

³⁷ Cornwall, *Hitler’s Scientists*, 25, 75 and Andre Sofair and Lauris C. Kaldjian, “Eugenic Sterilization and a Qualified Nazi Analogy: The United States and Germany, 1930-1945,” *Annals of Internal Medicine* vol. 132, no. 4 (15 February 2000), 312.

³⁸ Cornwall, *Hitler’s Scientists*, 23, 78 and Miller, *Terminating the “Socially Inadequate,”* 97.

³⁹ Jonathan Harwood, “National Styles in Science: Genetics in Germany and the United States between the World Wars,” *Isis* vol. 78, no. 3 (September 1987), 392.

⁴⁰ Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany,” 15-16.

interbreeding within a group of humans over generations had created similar physical and mental traits among the people, and race hygiene vaguely denoted the health of various groups. The term had a larger scope than eugenics because it focused on both the quantity and quality of a population.⁴¹ Ploetz used his new science primarily to study whites; though he utilized the term Aryan, he was not anti-Semitic. He founded the first journal in the world dedicated to eugenics in 1904: *Archive for race and societal biology*. Ploetz sought articles that discussed the preservation and improvement of the race. The Nazi party managed to incorporate his ideas into its worldview, but only through misrepresenting them.⁴²

Schallmayer staunchly rejected the idea of Aryan supremacy. His work in a psychiatric clinic led him to doubt the ability of medicine to improve the health of a race. He wrote the earliest eugenic tract in Germany in 1891: “Concerning the threatening physical degeneration of civilized humanity.” In this essay, Schallmayer stresses education and propaganda to achieve eugenic goals and introduced the idea of marriage restrictions via state intervention—an idea that Heinrich Himmler later embraced.⁴³

In 1900, Schallmayer entered an essay contest sponsored by Friedrich Krupp, the son of the Essen munitions baron. The question for the contest, “What can we learn from the theory of evolution about internal political development and state legislation?,” allowed Schallmayer to win first prize with his essay “Heredity and selection in the life-process of nations.” In this paper, he discusses how the twentieth century would be called upon to apply Darwin’s theories, which taught society the political lesson that biological vitality formed the basis of a state’s long-term power. Neglecting the biological fitness of a nation could lead to its downfall, and a good politician would wisely manage his human resources. Schallmayer argued that Germany should actively regulate biological efficiency by encouraging the best elements in society to reproduce more. He did not openly approve of state legislation to achieve this goal, but he still emphasized the necessity for taking positive measures to improve German society.⁴⁴ It would be under the

⁴¹ While the British, Americans, and others exclusively used the term eugenics, the Germans more frequently utilized the term *Rassenhygiene* as opposed to the direct cognate *Eugenik*. For the purpose of this thesis, the term eugenics will represent the similar ideas proposed by the concurrent eugenics and race hygiene movements.

⁴² Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement,” 17, 22 and Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 52. The German title for Ploetz’s journal is *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschafts-Biologie*.

⁴³ Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement,” 19. The German title for Schallmayer’s tract is “Über die drohende körperliche Entartung der Kulturmenschheit.”

⁴⁴ Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement,” 19-21. The German title for Schallmayer’s essay is “Vererbung und Auslese im Lebenslauf der Völker.” Schallmayer later published this essay as a book: *Vererbung und Auslese im*

Nazi party, however, that that state would promulgate policies reflecting Schallmayer's idea of reproduction by the "best elements."

The notion of society's "best" members brings up another aspect of the eugenics movement. Who exactly defined what members of society composed the "best" elements? Late nineteenth and early twentieth century scientists, especially those in Germany, saw in Darwinism the importance of biological inequality. In short, fit individuals survived and reproduced; unfit individuals did not. Biological inequality led science to label people as "superior" or "inferior" as well as "more valuable" or "less valuable." But defining superior and inferior was highly subjective. Unlike the members of the Nazi party, who associated fitness with race, eugenicists primarily came from the middle and upper classes and thus connected fitness with socio-economic status and social productivity. They reacted with horror as they saw the top members of society partake in newly emerging birth control techniques to limit family size while the lower class continued to breed with no restraint. The eugenicists feared that the lowest class would eventually outbreed the upper two and that the unfit elements of society would supercede the fittest. They equated this drop of qualitative births with a decline in natural selection and worried that society's humanitarian efforts to care for the less fortunate and to engender equality within a state endangered the fate of the people as a whole.⁴⁵

Therefore, eugenicists saw a redemptive hope in their field. It provided a means to curtail the current "counter-selective" birth trends caused by social welfare and improving medical care. Precluding this trend would prevent the degeneration of the white race. Besides deterring biological decline, eugenicists furthermore believed that eugenics held the answers to other societal ills. They saw the morality in the populace weakening, and this decline gave rise to an increasing number of criminals, alcoholics, and people with tuberculosis and venereal diseases. As eugenicists assumed that parents passed on to their children both negative and positive traits, they promoted the idea of allowing only the fittest elements to reproduce, which in turn would stem the deteriorating morality as those people with loose morals did not procreate

Lebenslauf der Völker: Eine staatswissenschaftliche Studie auf Grund der neueren Biologie (Jena: Verlag von Gustav Fischer, 1903).

⁴⁵ Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler*, 89-90; Weiss, "The Race Hygiene Movement," 9, 10, 28; Dan Stone, "Race in British Eugenics," *European History Quarterly* vol. 31, no. 3 (July 2001), 397, 405-06; Richard A. Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 48, 52-53; and Richard J. Evans, "Social Outsiders in German History: From the Sixteenth Century to 1933," chapter two in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, edited by Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 30-35.

and pass on negative genes to their offspring. Bearing superior children would again increase the quality of the population.⁴⁶

Successfully encouraging the fittest members of the population to reproduce created another benefit: a numerically higher population. The birth of quality children did not aid society if enough of them did not exist. This number of superior offspring had as much to do with the local fear of the lower class overwhelming the middle and upper classes within a particular nation as it did with the global fear of the non-white races outpopulating the white race. Eugenicists worried about the rising populations in Japan and China as well as in Eastern Europe. The First World War exacerbated these concerns; the loss of almost an entire generation of young men further threatened the vitality of Western Europe. For example, in his 1946 book on European population trends, Dudley Kirk estimated that the deficit of men in post-World War I Germany cost the country five million potential new lives.⁴⁷

Through both private and public funding, more than thirty countries across four continents developed eugenics movements between 1890 and 1930 to combat the aforementioned problems.⁴⁸ What had begun in Britain with Francis Galton had now developed into a worldwide phenomenon. Numerous solutions sprang from different countries, but the eugenicists in Germany, closely followed by those in the United States, stood at the forefront of the movement. In fact, by 1933, the scientific community had recognized Germany and neighboring country Austria for their pre-eminent accomplishments; their scientists had received one-third of all science related Noble prizes ever awarded, a number almost as high as those awarded to Britain, France, and the United States combined.⁴⁹

Eugenicists in Germany and the United States kept abreast of their colleagues' accomplishments and often envied one another's advancements. The United States clearly had the upper hand between the two countries when it came to education. Cornell University, the

⁴⁶ Jeremy Noakes, "Nazism and Eugenics: The Background to the Nazi Sterilization Law of 14 July 1933," in *Ideas into Politics: Aspects of European History 1880-1950*, edited by R. J. Bullen, H. Pogge von Strandmann, and A. B. Polonsky (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 79; and William H. Schneider, "The Eugenics Movement in France 1890-1940," in *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, edited by Mark B. Adams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 69-70.

⁴⁷ Weiss, "The Race Hygiene Movement," 27; Noakes, "Nazism and Eugenics," 81-82; and Dudley Kirk, *Europe's Population in the Interwar Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 65.

⁴⁸ Adams, "Eugenics in the History of Science," 4-5.

⁴⁹ Donald E. Saunders Jr., "Lessons from Eugenics for the Neoeugenic Era," *The Journal of the South Carolina Medical Association* vol. 94, no. 9 (September 1998), 386. The official website for the Nobel Prize, <<http://www.nobelprize.org>>, lists all of the past and present laureates.

University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Wisconsin all had postgraduate programs in eugenics by 1913, and fifty-one American universities taught genetics courses by 1916. In contrast, thirteen German universities taught genetics courses, and only the University of Munich and the Agricultural College in Berlin invested in eugenics research. Moreover, until 1945, the German university system only had one chair dedicated to eugenics.⁵⁰

Outside of education, American eugenicists made considerable contributions, but their German counterparts led the field in many regards. The first professional eugenics organization, Society for Race Hygiene, was founded in Wilhelmine Germany on June 22, 1905. Two years later the word International was added to the title when other countries joined. The Society only offered membership to people with physically, ethnically, and intellectually fit backgrounds; then they collected statistics on the members and their offspring to prove how the population of a state would benefit from eugenic principles. Some of the measures espoused by the Society included encouraging fit families to have more than two children, granting economic benefits to fit families with many offspring, populating fit people in areas now settled with unfit people, restricting unfit families from reproducing, and preventing the immigration of unfit individuals.⁵¹

Wilhelmine eugenicists made plans to counter the negative effects of World War I. They primarily concerned themselves with preventing degeneration. As with their counterparts in Britain and the United States, the Germans examined the costs of maintaining the less valuable (*Minderwertigen*). They also placed emphasis on population policy (*Bevölkerungspolitik*) because they wanted to prevent a decline in population growth. The German eugenicists suggested that the Wilhelmine government should provide economic privileges to large families, abolish impediments preventing men in the military from marrying early, permit a bride and groom to exchange health certificates before marriage, and awaken the youth to their future obligations. Despite this encouragement from the scientific community, the government in Wilhelmine Germany did not pass one eugenics related law.⁵²

Germany's defeat in the First World War brought many changes, but this impetus for change did not affect the goals of the eugenics movement in Weimar Germany. Weimar eugenicists aspired to prevent the decline of Germany as a whole. They advocated the concept

⁵⁰ Harwood, "National Styles in Science," 396.

⁵¹ Weiss, "The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany," 22-23. The German title for the society is *Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene*.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 25-26, 28-29.

of *Lebensraum* [living room], which Friedrich Ratzel had introduced into the geopolitical discourse in an 1897 article in *Politische Geographie*. Ratzel defined *Lebensraum* as the “geographic region within which living organisms develop.”⁵³ *Lebensraum* originally had nothing to do with the racial biological ideas connected with the Nazi use of the term; at the time of term’s inception, it was no more or less racist than other imperialist ideologies from the late nineteenth century. *Lebensraum* focused on culture and environment, as seen in one of the primary slogans adopted by German geographers in the Weimar period: Soil of the people and the culture (*Volks- und Kulturboden*). The connection of *Lebensraum* with racial ideology came during the Weimar period and geographers emphasized it with a second popular slogan, Push to the East (*Drang nach Osten*), a theory that the Nazi government later adopted.⁵⁴

German eugenicists during the Weimar period also dominated the research and literature on cytoplasmic inheritance. As the main field of genetic research in the 1920’s at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, cytoplasmic inheritance is the study of genetic material outside of the nucleus and contrasts with Mendelian heredity, where the ovum and the sperm pass on equal amounts of genetic material through chromosomes in the nucleus. Eugenicists researching cytoplasmic inheritance did not disregard the role of the genes in the nucleus. They instead insisted that crucial genetic material existed outside of the nucleus in the cytoplasm. During reproduction, the ovum passed down more hereditary factors because it contained more cytoplasm than the sperm. Weimar eugenicists therefore believed that an embryo developed its earliest traits from the genetic material in the mother’s ovum as opposed to the father’s sperm. Although both German and American eugenicists recognized that they did not clearly understand the basis of heredity, the German research on cytoplasmic inheritance conflicted with the work of American researcher T.H. Morgan, who placed more credence in the Mendelian theory of inheritance.⁵⁵

In the Weimar period, Fritz Lenz stood as the most prominent German eugenicist. He shared Alfred Ploetz’s enthusiasm for the supremacy of the Nordic race and likewise thought that children could inherit physical and mental racial traits from their parents. He projected middle

⁵³ Quoted in Cornwell, *Hitler’s Scientists*, 174.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 176; Henning Heske, “Political geographers of the past III: German geographical research in the Nazi period: a content of analysis of the major geography journals, 1925-1945,” *Political Geography Quarterly* vol. 5, no. 3 (July 1986), 269; and Mechtild Rössler, “Geography and Area Planning under National Socialism,” in *Science in the Third Reich*, edited by Margit Szöllösi-Janze (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 60-61.

⁵⁵ Harwood, “National Styles in Science,” 393; Jonathan Harwood, “The erratic career of cytoplasmic inheritance,” *Trends in Genetics* vol. 1 (1985), 298; and Ute Deichmann, *Biologists Under Hitler*, translated by Thomas Dunlap (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 119, 138-140.

classes values as ideal for the Nordic race and held up Western culture as a standard with which to measure all other cultures. Lenz did not have strong anti-Semitic views, but was nonetheless favorably disposed toward Hitler because he saw Hitler as the only politician who embraced eugenic ideals.⁵⁶

Once again, a shift in government served as the impetus for political change as the Weimar Republic collapsed under the misrule of successive Parliamentary collations and the Third Reich rose with the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor. However, just as there was scientific continuity between Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany, the same scientific trend held true during the Nazi regime in Germany. Eugenics intensified under the Nazi state because of fervent government involvement and legislation, but the core objective of the eugenicists—to improve the quantity and the quality of the German population—remained the same. In fact, amidst these three divergent political periods, German eugenicists continually embraced a positive assessment of the racial potential of their people as they kept in mind the centuries old description of Germans provided by Roman writer Tacitus in his *Germania*:

For myself, I agree with the views of those who think that the inhabitants of Germania have not been tainted by any intermarriage with other tribes, but have existed as a distinct and pure people, resembling only themselves. Consequently, they also all have the same physical appearance, so far as can be said for so numerous a people: fierce blue eyes, tawny hair, bodies that are big but strong only in attack.⁵⁷

It was under the Nazi state, however, that this “blond hair, blue eyed” myth had the most indelible hold.

The Nazi party viewed mankind and society from both biological and Social Darwinist perspectives. Within its ideology, the party upheld the premise that biological inequality divided humanity.⁵⁸ Among its divisions, anti-Semitism soon became the most prominent partition. Despite the rise of this new racist line, eugenics research in Nazi Germany did not drastically change due to the new government. In her article on German science in the first half of the twentieth century, Sheila Faith Weiss contends that surviving documents from 1927-1945

⁵⁶ Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany,” 30-32.

⁵⁷ Cornelius Tacitus, *Germania*, translated by J. B. Rives (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 78.

⁵⁸ Noakes, “Nazism and Eugenics,” 75 and Benno Müller-Hill, *Murderous Science: Elimination by scientific selection of Jews, Gypsies, and others, German 1933-1945*, translated by George R. Fraser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 22.

suggest that Nazi research continued along the same line as Weimar research. German eugenicists mainly concerned themselves with the differential in birthrates among the lower, middle, and upper classes. Eugenicists preserved their positions and funding by paying lip service to the Nazis and by joining the party. They expected this government to help them realize the potential of eugenics, even when they realized that Hitler's views radically differed from their own.⁵⁹

Eugenicists were not the only officials to kowtow to the Nazi government. Criminologists and other law enforcement agents also attempted to bring their views in line with Nazi ideology. When the Nazi regime criticized the Weimar criminal system and demanded drastic eugenic measures against criminals, criminologists distanced themselves from their work under the Weimar legal system. Furthermore, they connected criminal behavior with Nazi biological and eugenical views. The establishment of a national Criminal Biological Service in November 1937 allowed law enforcement agents and doctors to examine prisoners for genetic defects. This work led many officials to conclude that racial flaws predisposed criminals to commit felonies, a conclusion that satisfied the Nazi party's penchant for racial, biological, and Social Darwinist explanations of society.⁶⁰

The Nazi state saw eugenics as a means to get rid of impurities within society and increase the size of the population. In a speech to the Expert Council for Population and Race Politics in June 1933, Dr. Wilhelm Frick, the *Reichsminister* for the Interior, acknowledged these issues. In his address, he showed how attuned the German government was to population problems and the solutions that eugenicists had been suggesting for decades. Frick relayed that in 1900, Germany had 36 live births per 1000 inhabitants; in 1933, this number had dropped to 15 live births per 1000 inhabitants. He claimed that Germany had the difficult task of stopping the national and cultural ruin that had brought about this disastrous decrease. Reducing the mortality rate among those already living would not preserve Germany because with a birthrate as low as 15/1000, no major city or large town could maintain its current population.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Weiss, "The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany," 44-48.

⁶⁰ Richard Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 179-180, 182, 184, 191, 234.

⁶¹ "German Population and Race Politics. An Address by Dr. Frick, Reichminister for the Interior, before the First Meeting of the Expert Council for Population- and Race-Politics Held in Berlin, June 28, 1933," translated by A. Hellmer, *Eugenical News* vol. 19, no. 2 (March-April 1934), 33.

Frick noted that a “healthy” German family had two or less children while an “unhealthy” family one had two or three times this number. He did not define healthy or unhealthy in this address, but as he subsequently spoke about birth control, morality, and family size, it is reasonable to presume that he had the socio-economic values of eugenicists in mind as opposed to racial demarcations. Frick discussed how urbanization and industrialization in the nineteenth century combined with immigration of people from Eastern Europe had disrupted the process of natural selection and the development of Germany’s rural areas. Besides destroying the economy, Frick blamed the First World War for creating an atmosphere that had led to the moral decay of the people. This loss of morals wrecked domestic life and hampered the desire among individuals to become parents. Frick also claimed that the use of birth control was nothing short of committing national suicide.⁶²

He recognized the value of eugenical research and a sound population policy. Frick discussed the costs that the government bore to sustain an unfit individual and claimed that this care for the inferior had the potential to ruin the welfare of the masses. As a solution, he suggested reducing spending on the inferior and preventing them from reproducing, and he relied on eugenics to sustain his argument for government action:

The scientific study of heredity...has enabled us to clearly recognize the rules of heredity and selection as well as their meaning for the nation and the state. It gives us the right and the moral obligation to eliminate hereditary defectives from procreation. No misinterpreted charity nor religious scruples, based of the dogmas of past centuries, should prevent us from fulfilling this duty; on the contrary it should be considered an offence against Christian and social charity to allow hereditary defectives to continue to produce offspring—having recognized that this would mean endless suffering to themselves and to their kin in this and future generations.⁶³

Turning traditional Christian charity on its head, Frick saw the necessity for a German population policy that prevented the unfit from reproducing. Ending the ability of “hereditary defectives” to produce offspring merely applied the already existing principles of negative eugenics. These principles had the intent of improving the quality of Germany’s population, a goal long sought by eugenicists such as Alfred Ploetz and Wilhelm Schallmayer.

⁶² Ibid., 34-35.

⁶³ Ibid., 36.

However, Frick called for more than just the use of negative eugenics. He likewise encouraged legislation that would foster positive eugenical measures—i.e. policies that would promote Germans of sound stock to produce numerous valuable offspring. He implied that easing the economic burdens of fit families and restoring social structure stood as two vital goals of the Nazi government, and he ended his speech with a hopeful note for future possibilities: “I see the greatest aim and duty of the Government of our national revolution in warranting the improvement and preservation of our German people in the heart of Europe.”⁶⁴ These dual goals of improvement and preservation would safeguard Germany and provide the state with potential leaders. It would also fulfill Francis Galton’s ideal of having society beget healthier children. Finally, Fricke’s last statement shows how the Nazi leadership identified the need for biological fitness among their population to preserve their government, a recognition that satisfied the very tenets of Shallmayer’s 1900 essay “Heredity and selection in the life-process of nations.”

Nothing illustrates the Nazi government’s commitment to eugenical principles and the continuity of eugenics research in Germany than the July 14, 1933 Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases.⁶⁵ Authorizing the compulsory sterilization of unfit individuals, this law embodied the principles of negative eugenics and brought to reality measures that German eugenicists had been encouraging for decades. The Nazis, however, were neither the first nor the last government to implement a sterilization law.

Besides preventing the less fit from populating their country with inferior offspring, sterilization also alleviated the burden of the welfare state, and proponents often sited this economic benefit. For example, an American named Richard Dugdale published a study in 1877 on the Jukes family in New York. He had traced the descendents of an original dysgenic husband and wife over seven generations.⁶⁶ He had found the descendents rife with prostitutes, criminals, paupers, and ne’er-do-wells. This study confirmed the worst fears of what happened when undesirable individuals passed on their genes. Shortly after Dugdale’s publication, the American Eugenics Society released a pamphlet that showed the monetary effects of this breeding. If New York State had physically separated the original Jukes couple, it would have cost the state twenty-five thousand dollars. By not taking this course of action, New York had subsequently spent two million dollars on the descendents of this husband and wife as of 1916.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 37-38, quote 38.

⁶⁵ The original German is *Gesetz zur Berhütung erbkranken Rachwuchses Vom 14. Juli 1933*.

⁶⁶ Dysgenic is one of the nineteenth century terms used to designate an unfit individual.

As if those statistics were not enough to convince the harshest critics of the economic need for sterilization, the American Eugenics Society's pamphlet also declared that it would have cost the state of New York only \$150 to sterilize the original Jukes couple.⁶⁷

The oldest European proposal for a sterilization law came from Zurich, Switzerland in 1892, but the first law was implemented on the other side of the Atlantic. On March 9, 1907, Indiana passed the first compulsory sterilization law. It remained in effect until 1921, when the law was declared unconstitutional. The state then adopted a voluntary sterilization law five years later. In 1927, the United States Supreme Court upheld Virginia's sterilization law in *Buck v Bell*; the court noted that "heredity plays an important part in the transmission" of illness and decided that society, in this case the state of Virginia, had a right to prevent the unfit from reproducing.⁶⁸ By this time, the state of California had used its own law, which remained in effect until 1980, to sterilize over 5,000 people—four times more people than the rest of the world combined. German eugenicists during the Wilhelmine and Weimar periods enviously watched these developments in the United States because they could not get the German government to create any semblance of a sterilization program.⁶⁹

It did not take long for European countries to catch up with the American legal process. The Swiss Canton of Vaud passed the first European law in 1928. Denmark followed shortly thereafter in July 1929, making sterilization voluntary for rapists and people with mental defects and mandatory for the feebleminded. Germany approved compulsory sterilization in July 1933, and the free city of Danzig permitted sterilization for the feebleminded, drunkards, and the incurable in December 1933. Latvia allowed abortions for eugenic reasons as of 1933, and Norway passed a compulsory sterilization law in 1934 that affected habitual criminals, vagrants and their children, and the hereditarily diseased. Sweden sterilized the mentally ill, children whose parents could not care for them, and people with transmittable diseases starting in 1935; this law was compulsory, but in reality the state never acted without the proper consent from the

⁶⁷ Information on the Jukes study in Pat Shipman, *The Evolution of Racism: Human Differences and the Use and Abuse of Science* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 114-15.

⁶⁸ The *Buck v Bell* case was argued before the Supreme Court on April 22, 1927, and the court rendered a verdict on May 2, 1927. The majority opinion of the Supreme Court in this case can be found at <http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/search/display.html?terms=Buck%20v%20Bell&url=/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0274_0200_ZO.html>.

⁶⁹ Marie E. Kopp, "Eugenic Sterilization Laws in Europe," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* vol. 34, no. 3 (September 1937), 499; "Human sterilization in Germany and the United States," editorial, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1502; Saunders, "Lessons from Eugenics for the Neoeugenic Era," 384; Miller, *Terminating the "Socially Inadequate,"* 49, 59.

patient. Finland approved a compulsory law for idiots, imbeciles, the mentally diseased, sex criminals, and abnormal youngsters in June 1935, and Iceland joined the aforementioned countries by adopting its own law in 1938. Outside of Europe, Mexico officially ratified a sterilization law, although it remains doubtful that the government ever sterilized anyone. Puerto Rico sterilized mentally diseased, retarded, epileptic, and sexually perverse inmates and allowed for the public to petition voluntarily for sterilization for the same reasons. The Canadian province of Alberta passed a law for prisoners in 1928, and British Columbia approved measures that affected mentally ill and retarded prisoners in 1933.⁷⁰

The German law came at the same time as those in other countries; the Germans did not start the sterilization trend, but its law certainly had a greater impact than any other like it. The 1933 legislation did not originate with the Nazi government, but with its predecessor. The Great Depression had forced a reexamination of state welfare policies. The German eugenics periodical *Eugenik* ran a series of articles positing how sterilization would solve the welfare budget problem. By 1932, eugenicists who had monitored the progress of American laws began exerting pressure on the Prussian government to look into the matter. On July 30, 1932, the Prussian State Council on Health debated a bill entitled “Eugenics in the Service of National Welfare.” Neither the state of Prussia nor the Weimar government, however, had an opportunity to implement the law. Instead, the Nazi government quickly took action in 1933.⁷¹

Sterilization had been illegal in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany. It fell under the part of the penal code that dealt with bodily injury. In May 1933, the Nazi government amended the penal code definition of bodily injury to make voluntary eugenic sterilization legal while keeping voluntary sterilization for contraceptive purposes illegal. The sterilization law it subsequently promulgated in July 1933 completely reflected the Prussian proposal from a year earlier except for two crucial differences. Whereas the Prussian bill allowed for *voluntary* sterilization due to *any* hereditary illness, the Nazi law forced *compulsory* sterilization on individuals suffering from one of *nine* hereditary defects and diseases.⁷²

⁷⁰ Kopp, “Eugenic Sterilization Laws in Europe,” 499 and Miller, *Terminating the “Socially Inadequate,”* 116-18.

⁷¹ Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany,” 37, 39 and Miller, *Terminating the “Socially Inadequate,”* 104, 113.

⁷² Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal*, 237, 255-57. None of the secondary sources directly quote the 1932 Prussian law. I was also unable to find this law in German either. Therefore, for the purpose of this chapter, comparison of the 1933 Nazi law with the Prussian law, as well as the aforementioned laws, will be limited to the information provided in the secondary sources.

Containing eighteen paragraphs, the law began with the premise that anyone suffering from a hereditary ailment could be sterilized if a probability existed that his offspring would suffer from mental and physical disorders.⁷³ The belief in such a probability harkens back to the ideas of many eugenicists; notably, it echoes the view of Francis Galton that if the most intelligent members of society breed the best offspring, then the least desirable members of society must consequently produce the worst offspring. The law defined nine hereditary ailments: congenital feeble-mindedness, schizophrenia, periodic insanity (manic depression), inherited epilepsy, inherited St. Vitus' dance (also known as Huntington's chorea, a degenerative neurological disease that affects the brain and muscles), inherited blindness, inherited deafness, severe inherited physical deformation, and severe alcoholism. A consenting adult requested sterilization either in writing or verbally at the office of the Eugenic Court, but if physically or mentally incapable of making this decision or under the age of eighteen, a legal guardian submitted the request. A doctor's certification accompanied this request; this medical certification avowed that the doctor had fully explained the procedure and effects to the patient and/or guardian. A doctor or director working in a hospital, institution, or prison could also make a request for sterilization to the Eugenic Court.⁷⁴

The Eugenic Court consisted of three members: a magistrate, an official doctor, and a second doctor qualified in eugenics. These three men interviewed the patient, witnesses, and experts in a private court session. Any doctor who testified had to divulge privileged information about the patient. After hearing the testimony, the members of the Eugenic Court consulted with one another, reached a verdict, and put in writing the reasons for their judgment. Once reached, the court passed this judgment down to the patient and/or legal guardian and the doctor. The patient and/or guardian had the right to appeal the judgment within one month of the court's decision. This appeal was forwarded on to the Eugenic High Court. After a decision came down from the High Court, however, it stood as the final ruling.⁷⁵

If the court decided in favor of sterilization, an approved doctor who had no previous connection with the petition or the court performed the operation in a hospital. The doctor had

⁷³ For the English translation of this law, see: "Eugenics in Germany," *The Lancet* vol. 225, no. 1 (2 September 1933), 557-58. For the original German law, see: "Gesetz zur Berhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses Vom 14. Juli 1933," *Reichsgesetzblatt, Jahrgang 1933, Teil I, Ausgegeben zu Berlin, den 25. Juli 1933, Nr. 86* (Berlin: Herausgegeben vom Reichministerium des Innern, 1933), 529-31.

⁷⁴ "Eugenics in Germany," 558, paragraphs 1-4.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, paragraphs 5-10.

permission to use whatever force necessary to carry out the operation—even against the patient’s will. The people involved in the procedure were bound to secrecy, and anyone who broke this silence would be punished accordingly. Finally, the government bore the majority of the costs for the legal and medical procedures under the law, which went into effect on January 1, 1934.⁷⁶

In the introduction to his book on science in Nazi Germany, Benno Müller-Hill astutely points out that “the history of the natural sciences has two themes, one the formation of their foundations, and the other, an account of their effects on society.”⁷⁷ The sterilization laws around the world, including the one passed by the Nazi state, were all grounded in the same basic eugenical foundation. Yet, because of the number of people affected, the Nazi law had a far greater impact on contemporary society than the eugenics law of any other nation. The 1700 special courts and 27 high courts received over 84,500 petitions in 1934 alone. Of that number, the courts decided in favor of sterilization 66 percent of the time. They ordered over 56,000 sterilizations, and both sexes were equally represented in this number. Between 1934-1939, the courts ordered almost 375,000 operations, 37 percent of which were voluntary, 39 percent involuntary (against the patient’s will), and 24 percent nonvoluntary (consent granted by a guardian, will of the patient irrelevant under the law). The commencement of the Second World War in September 1939 slowed down the progress of the courts. Nonetheless, by the end of 1944, almost 400,000 people in the Greater Reich had undergone the sterilization operation.⁷⁸

The operation itself was via vasectomies for men and tubal ligations and x-rays for women. The procedure in Germany became known as Hitler’s cut (*Hitlerschnitt*). The Nazi government sought to popularize the law through propaganda, and they utilized the rising medium of film to target the general populace with movies such as *I Accuse*, *Inheritance*, *Sacrifice to the Past*, and *Mother Love*.⁷⁹ As for the professionals, they needed less encouragement from the government. Doctors in Germany enthusiastically supported

⁷⁶ Ibid., paragraphs 11-13, 15, 18.

⁷⁷ Müller-Hill, *Murderous Science*, 3.

⁷⁸ “Human sterilization in Germany and the United States,” 1501; Marie E. Kopp, “Legal and Medical Aspects of Eugenic Sterilization in Germany,” *American Sociological Review*, vol. 1, no. 5 (October 1936), 766; Sofair, “Eugenic Sterilization and a Qualified Nazi Analogy,” 313; Miller, *Terminating the “Socially Inadequate,”* 178; Cornwell, *Hitler’s Scientists*, 349; and Saunders, “Lessons from Eugenics for the Neoeugenic Era,” 386.

⁷⁹ The respective German titles are: *Ich Klange An*, *Das Erbe*, *Opfer der Vergangenheit*, and *Mutterliebe*.

sterilization. They even outpaced the Nazi government to fulfill quotas. This fervor alarmed the population enough to have them ask the government to control the enthusiastic scientists.⁸⁰

Sterilization legislation sparked worldwide interest. Before and after the passage of the Nazi law, sterilization had its proponents and opponents. The most resolute support continuously came from the eugenicists themselves. Less than one year prior to the 1933 German law, the International Congress of Eugenics held its third meeting at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City in August 1932. Bringing together eugenicists from around the world, this symposium focused on how to improve humanity physically and mentally and highlighted the benefits of eugenics and sterilization.⁸¹ In his opening address, Charles B. Davenport, the president of the association and director of the department of eugenics at the Carnegie Institute, discussed how countries were slowly realizing how they must care for the burden of the socially inadequate. He stressed the seriousness of mate selection as a prime concern of eugenics, which he defined as a science only interested in improving the quality of children born.⁸²

Other eugenicists followed Davenport's speech with presentations that emphasized the importance of eugenics and the value of sterilization. Theodore Russell Robie presented his view that mentally deficient parents would most likely produce mentally deficient children. These defective parents would moreover raise their children in an inferior environment. Selective sterilization therefore prevented these parents from passing on their flawed genes and environments. Inhibiting the birth of individuals with mental defects would in turn raise the average intelligence level of the population. Bernard Mallet argued that sterilization was the only sound solution available to reach mentally unfit people. E. S. Gosney agreed with Mallet's view. Gosney believed that education could not solve eugenical issues fast enough. He added

⁸⁰ Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide*, 30-31; Gisela Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State," *Signs* vol. 8, no. 3 (Spring 1983), 409; Claudia Koonz, "Eugenics, Gender, and Ethics in Germany: The Debate about Involuntary Sterilization 1933-1936," chapter three in *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, edited by Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan (New York: Homes and Meider, 1993), 70; and Saunders, "Lessons from Eugenics for the Neoeugenic Era," 386-87.

⁸¹ The *New York Times* covered this congress in the following articles: "Eugenics Conference Opens Today," August 21, 1932, p. 15; "Average American No Adonis to Science," August 22, 1932, p. 17; "Birth Control Peril to Race, says Osborn," August 22, 1932, p. 1; "Major Darwin Predicts Civilization's Doom Unless Century Brings Wide Eugenics Reform," August 23, 1932, p. 16; and "Genes and Eugenics," August 24, 1932, p. 16.

⁸² Charles B. Davenport, "Presidential Address: The Development of Eugenics," Part I, Section I, Chapter 1 in *A Decade of Progress in Eugenics: Scientific Papers of the Third International Congress of Eugenics held at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, August 21-23, 1932*, edited by Harry F. Perkins, et al. (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1934), 18-21.

that charity and human sympathy had destroyed the process of natural selection, a comment reflective of the speech Reichminister Wilhelm Frick would make two years later and of the content from Alfred Rosenberg's 1935 book *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*. Gosney argued that sterilization kept degeneration in check; humanity should not view it as a punishment, but as a humane way to protect civilization.⁸³

Outside of this eugenics conference, other professionals showed their support for sterilization. Dr. L. Vellguth wrote an argument for sterilization in the British scientific periodical *The Lancet* one month before the publication of the Nazi law. Vellguth called sterilization the most important method of negative eugenics. He saw the procedure as a means to rid the nation of those people too weak to create their own value system. He furthermore claimed that "the healthy stock of our people is in the greatest danger. To decrease it still further was a deadly sin against the people. When the most valuable stock of men on earth had once died out, the creator would not make it a second time." Beyond sterilization, Vellguth believed that healthy people had the responsibility to reproduce.⁸⁴

In his article in the *Journal of Heredity*, Paul Popenoe wrote that the Nazi policy specifically agreed with the views of well-respected eugenicists worldwide. Two editorials in the *New England Journal of Medicine* likewise showed the benefits of sterilization. The first editorial discussed how the burden of disabled people represented one of the health problems of the modern day. It claimed that society had made promising research for those people suffering from various ailments, but society must do more than just alleviate this pain. The author of this first editorial believed that sterilization of unfit individuals would ensure the health of future generations. In the second editorial, the author acknowledged that with sterilization came the risk of losing superior individuals. Overall, the sterilization law would relieve society of the

⁸³ Theodore Russell Robie, "Selective Sterilization for Race Culture," Part I, Section V, Chapter 28 in *A Decade of Progress in Eugenics: Scientific Papers of the Third International Congress of Eugenics held at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, August 21-23, 1932*, edited by Harry F. Perkins, et al. (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1934), 201-02, 206; Bernard Mallet, "The Reduction of the Fecundity of the Socially Inadequate," Part I, Section VII, Chapter 48 in *A Decade of Progress in Eugenics: Scientific Papers of the Third International Congress of Eugenics held at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, August 21-23, 1932*, edited by Harry F. Perkins, et al. (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1934), 366; and E. S. Gosney, "A Discussion of Sir Bernard Mallet's Paper in 'The Reduction of the Fecundity of the Socially Inadequate'," Part I, Section VII, Chapter 49 in *A Decade of Progress in Eugenics: Scientific Papers of the Third International Congress of Eugenics held at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, August 21-23, 1932*, edited by Harry F. Perkins, et al. (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1934), 369-71.

⁸⁴ "Eugenics in Germany: The Question of Voluntary Sterilization," *The Lancet* vol. 224, no. 1 (3 June 1933), 1203-04, quote 1203.

growing burden of defects in the population. This second author asserted that this loss to an individual for the benefit of the nation was the greater good.⁸⁵

In Germany, Dr. W. Weygandt, the chief of psychiatry at Hamburg, argued that drastic measures such as the Nazi sterilization law prevented the unfit from damaging the successive generations as well as provided future eugenicists with valuable biological research. Marie E. Kopp traveled in Germany and spoke with judges, physicians, surgeons, psychiatrists, and social workers about the German law and wrote up her conclusions in the *American Sociological Review* in 1936. She noticed that “aside from religious scruples,” she found minimal objection to the legislation. Kopp discussed the notion that intellectual people with hereditary diseases could voluntarily choose not to have children, but those without the mental capacity had the sterilization law to assist them. Among the professionals interviewed, she found that the operation did not negatively affect the patient’s health, and that the government and the medical profession had taken precautions “to forestall miscarriage of justice.”⁸⁶

As shown above, especially in the conference proceedings, support for sterilization legislation inside and outside of Germany ran strong. However, the German law and the biological views of the Nazi party also came under severe scrutiny. An article from *The Lancet* condemned the German law “for the gravest abuse of human rights.” The anonymous author criticized the German eugenicists who supported the procedure and claimed that these scientists had disregarded the value of the individual and acted on racial prejudice. The author alleged that the data gleaned from this law would not outweigh the harm done to the sterilized people.⁸⁷

Dr. Foster Kennedy believed that sterilization would hurt society in the long run and suggested that the procedure would eventually harm the evolution of civilization. To prove his latter point, he cited the advancement of thought in the days of the ancient Greeks: “Sparta practiced infanticide more widely than other states for a military end. The Lacedaemonians were perfect, as a pack of wolves is perfect, but the glory of Grecian thought did not come out of

⁸⁵ Paul Popenoe, “The German Sterilization Law,” *Journal of Heredity* vol. 25, no. 7 (July 1934), 260; “Do we need further study of the defective classes?” editorial, *New England Journal of Medicine* vol. 204, no. 14 (2 April 1931), 731-32; and “Sterilization and its possible accomplishments,” editorial *New England Journal of Medicine* vol. 211, no. 8 (23 August 1934), 379.

⁸⁶ “An Advocate of Eugenic Castration,” *The Lancet* vol. 225, no. 1 (2 September 1933), 558-59 and Kopp, “Legal and Medical Aspects of Eugenic Sterilization in Germany,” 761, 763, 765, 768 (quote).

⁸⁷ “Eugenics in Germany,” *The Lancet* vol. 225, no. 2 (5 August 1933), 298.

Sparta.”⁸⁸ Unlike Kennedy’s indictment of sterilization in general, *The Times* (London) specifically targeted the Nazi law in many of its articles, oftentimes harshly censuring the law as much as the government. One article called the bill “a logical product of Nazi ideology” designed to purify “a healthy national organization” of the “foreign bodies within it.”⁸⁹ A second article discussed the fears of the British Ministry of Health Committee over sterilization. The Committee saw a sterilization law as a means by which one class could tyrannize another, and they found the compulsory aspect of the German law unjustifiable.⁹⁰

Of the two major Christian religious organizations in Germany, Protestants had little trouble with the sterilization law; it did not interfere with their religious beliefs, and they approved of measures that ameliorated suffering. Catholics, on the other hand, opposed the sterilization law. In fact, the December 31, 1930 papal encyclical *Of Chaste Marriage* condemned sterilization and convinced Italian leader Benito Mussolini to outlaw the procedure.⁹¹ In Germany, Franz von Papen, Hitler’s Catholic Vice Chancellor, opposed the 1933 law and was concerned about objections from Catholics in Germany. When Catholics protested, the Nazi government appeased them by not requiring Catholic judges to serve on tribunals or Catholic doctors to perform operations. However, nurses and nuns still served food to patients, prepared them for surgery, filled out paperwork, cared for wounds from the surgery, and cleaned surgical equipment.⁹²

The harshest condemnation of the eugenical measures implemented by Nazi state, however, did not directly attack the 1933 Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases. Instead, Amram Scheinfeld bluntly denounced the biological foundations of Nazi ideology in his 1939 book *You and Heredity*. He debunked the idea of an Aryan race, a concept that became more pronounced in the Nazi party’s Social Darwinist view of the world the longer it remained in power. Whether defined by class or race, Scheinfeld asserted that even if the Nazi government could use eugenical measures to eliminate all inferior genes from the reproduction pool, it could never completely rid Germany of genetic defects due to mutation. As if

⁸⁸ Foster Kennedy, “Sterilization and Eugenics,” *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* vol. 34, no. 3 (September 1937), 519-520.

⁸⁹ “Nazi Eugenics: Sterilization of the Unfit,” *Times* (London), July 27, 1933, p. 11a.

⁹⁰ “Sterilization of Mental Defects,” *Times* (London), January, 17, 1934, p. 13d.

⁹¹ The Latin title of the encyclical is *Casti Connubii*.

⁹² Koonz, “Eugenics, Gender, and Ethics in Germany,” 74, 76; Miller, *Terminating the “Socially Inadequate,”* 163-65, 170, 180; Noakes, “Nazism and Eugenics,” 87; and Sofair, “Eugenic Sterilization and a Qualified Nazi Analogy,” 313.

discrediting the benefits of sterilization and the Aryan myth had not proven his point well enough, in his final commentary on the matter, Scheinfeld discussed the idea of nature versus nurture, the very same concept coined by Francis Galton:

We believe that most leading anthropologists, geneticists and psychologists would agree to this somewhat far-fetched hypothesis: That if a child fathered by Adolf Hitler were by some whimsy of fate exchanged at birth with the child of a Jewish rabbi, and each were reared unwittingly by the wrong father, in all likelihood Hitler's child would grow up to be 'Jewish' in temperament, behavior and social viewpoint, and the rabbi's child would be goose-stepping, storm-trooping and 'Heil-Hitlering' with the most rabid of Aryans.⁹³

Espousing nurture over nature, Scheinfeld's words predicted failure for all eugenical efforts, most especially those undertaken by the Nazi party.

Despite voices of protest, the Nazi government implemented eugenical measures, and of these, sterilization had the most drastic impact on society. These measures, however, did not deviate from the norms of contemporary science. On the contrary, improving the quantity and quality of the population remained at the forefront of worldwide eugenics research, including in Germany. Regardless of the radical changes in governments within the early twentieth century, the goals of German eugenical research remained the same. When the Nazi party came to power, it used the already existing eugenical ideals for its own means. Although the government de-emphasized the significance of class relations and slowly accentuated the primacy of the Aryan race, it did not change the foundations of twentieth century eugenics. It simply sought to use both negative and positive eugenics to remake the world according to its standards.

⁹³ Amram Scheinfeld, *You and Heredity* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1939), 351-53, (quote) 354.

CHAPTER TWO:
“THE HEAVIEST MORAL BURDEN”:
RACIAL AND REPRODUCTIVE EDUCATION IN THE THIRD REICH

By the time the Nazi party achieved power in Germany, the worldwide scientific community had established eugenics as a credible method for “improving” the quality of the population. Many governments had taken heed of the advice provided by eugenicists to combat counter selective birth trends, most notably through the passage of sterilization laws. However, while governments had the ability to force this negative eugenical measure on the least fit members in their respective populations, compulsion would not successfully encourage the fittest elements of the population to engage in positive eugenical measures. For a government to increase the quality of children born, it had to persuade the best members of society to participate willingly. It needed to convince prospective parents to produce healthy offspring.

The Nazi government awoke its own youth to their future parental obligations through education. It began with children in school, but also successively disseminated information to the general public. Through a combination of written and oral sources, instruction provided by the Nazi regime sought to convince the German people to have more children. Education primarily focused on the significance of race, especially the Aryan / Nordic race, because the Nazi party believed that race served as the basis of German history and heritage. Through education, the government ultimately laid down a racial framework designed to encourage the “fit” German population to ensure the future vitality of the German nation by giving birth to a higher number of racially superior “blond hair, blue eyed” children.

The Germans proudly embraced Tacitus’ description in *Germania* of their ancestors as “a distinct and pure people.” A few pages further in the text, they may have also noticed this simple passage: “Childlessness has no reward.”⁹⁴ The Nazi government certainly believed in the

⁹⁴ Tacitus, *Germania*, 85.

responsibility of all able Germans to raise for the state a healthy brood of racially valuable children. Not only did it want young adults to embrace this duty, but the Nazi government also wanted its children to gain knowledge of their future obligations to the German community. This emphasis on knowledge merged Francis Galton's ideals of nature *and* nurture by using education to instruct superior individuals on why they needed to procreate. The government began this instruction in school and continued its work with extracurricular organizations including the Hitler Youth. This education had four primary goals: one, to teach about racial differences; two, to show the detrimental decline in Germany's population; three, to convince of the need for more children; and four, to persuade of the necessity of having offspring of good racial stock.

In the 1936-37 volume of the women's magazine *Frauen-Warte*, the Nazi government published an article identifying the "iron pillars" of education; first among these pillars was race. As an integral part of German thinking and education, the Nazi party emphasized the teaching of racial concepts within the fields of history, geography, and biology. According to a 1936 speech by the Nazi Minister of Education, Bernard Rust, on Nazi education, this racial curriculum had the purpose of restoring to the German people faith in themselves and their inherent abilities. To emphasize this restoration, the 1936 book *German Education Today* cites a 1933 Prussian education decree mandating that all students had to take examinations on ethnology, heredity, racial hygiene, genealogy, and population policy at the end of their formal schooling.⁹⁵

The prominence of race as the defining characteristic between a healthy and an unhealthy individual delineated the most dramatic break of Nazi eugenics from past German and contemporary world eugenics movements. As noted in the first chapter, eugenicists emphasized class to distinguish between fit and unfit, which reflected their own upper and middle class biases. The Nazi regime accentuated the primacy of the Aryan/Nordic race, and this view likewise echoed the party's personal prejudices. Otherwise, the goal of eugenics in Nazi

⁹⁵ The original source for the *Frauen-Warte* article is "Die Erziehungsgrundsätze des neuen Deutschlands," *Frauen-Warte*, vol. 22 (1936-37). A translation of the article can be found at "The Education Principles of the New Germany: What Schools and Parents Need to Know About the Goals of National Socialist Education," *German Propaganda Archive*, accessed online 10 January 2005 <<http://www.calvin.edu/academics/cas/gpa/frau01.htm>>; "National Socialism and the Pursuit of Learning," in *National Socialist Germany and the Pursuit of Learning*, translated from *Schriften des Reichsinstituts für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands* published under the title *Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Wissenschaft* (Hamburg: N.p., 1936); and Theodor Wilhelm and Gerhard Gräfe, *German Education Today* (Berlin: Terramare Office, 1936).

Germany remained identical with other countries that espoused eugenics: production of better offspring.

History textbooks from the Nazi era stress the relevance of race. *Geschichtsbuch für die deutsche Jugend Klasse 6* has a significant portion of a chapter dedicated to “the question of the origin of the Nordic race” (*Die Frage der Entstehung der nordischen Rasse*). This book traces the history of the Nordic race from a time well before the Ice Age. It claims that a higher race capable of great development concurrently lived beside the Neanderthal man. When the Ice Age came, these superior beings adapted to the hard environment and were able to reproduce. Over the years, the climate eliminated the weakest members, but those who acclimatized to the harsh weather conditions survived to form the Nordic race.⁹⁶

Two other history textbooks similarly highlight the development of the Nordic race. The first item in *Merkbuch zur Deutschen Geschichte* is a map. As noted in the caption underneath it, the map shows “the racial composition of present day Europe” (*Die Rassen des heutigen Europa*). It illustrates how most of northern Europe, including the northern half of Germany, descended from the Nordic race. The first chapter in *Merkbuch* opens with an early history of the Nordic people from 20,000 BCE-1800 BCE. Later sections within this chapter emphasize how the Nordic race interacted with neighboring races. The second history book, *Deutsche Geschichte in Stichworten*, also discusses the precursors of current European races. It describes the primitive times and culture of the Nordic man. *Deutsche Geschichte* calls the Nordic race “specific to the German people” (*Bestimmt den deutschen Volkskörper*), yet claims that from a central location in Germany, the Nordic race expanded into Europe and was the precursor to the Celtic, Indian, Persian, Roman, and Slavic cultures.⁹⁷

This instruction in school textbooks represented a vital first step in introducing children to the importance of race within the German population. By giving race a distinguished history, these books subtly validated the idea of race as the foundation of a healthy population—the very message that the Nazi government wanted the children to receive. By convincing school children that race had an essential role in both the past and the present, the Nazi government

⁹⁶ B. Kumsteller, U. Haacke, and B. Schneider, *Geschichtsbuch für die deutsche Jugend, Klasse 6* (Leipzig: Verlag von Quelle & Mener, 1939), 10-11.

⁹⁷ Alfred Franke and Werner Demelt, *Merkbuch zur Deutschen Geschichte: Vorgeschichte – Alte Geschichte – Deutsch Geschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Berlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1942), 3, 5-7, 7-27 and Walther Gehl, *Deutsche Geschichte in Stichworten: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hart, 1940), 1-5, 214.

sought to have the children accept its views on the supremacy of the Aryan race. However, the Nazi regime did not limit its lessons on race to formal education, but provided further instruction in its youth organizations. Through the Hitler Youth especially, boys received additional lectures on the various races in Europe.

In an article published in the version of the Hitler Youth handbook translated for the American public, former United States Ambassador to Germany William E. Dodd disclaimed that the point of the Hitler Youth and its primer is “to train the young people into the belief that their Aryan ancestors were the most perfect in the world.” As a foreigner assessing the impact of the manual, he argued that the Germans treat the book as if it were a “sacred revelation of the truth.”⁹⁸ The primer borrows the definition of race from Hans Günther’s book *Racial Lore of the German People*: “A race is a collection of individuals differentiated from every other group...by its unique combination of bodily characteristics and soul attributes and continually reproduces its own kind.”⁹⁹ This definition closely corresponds to the one delineated by Alfred Ploetz. *The Nazi Primer* acknowledges that pure races do not truly exist in the modern world. People of different races have mixed with one another and have created racial mixtures both in Germany and in Europe. Nonetheless, the proportions of the races within an individual and within regions of Europe differ, and this variance has preserved pure racial characteristics.¹⁰⁰

With this preservation in mind, the second chapter of *The Nazi Primer* extensively details the physical attributes and mental characteristics of the six races that exist in Germany and Europe: Nordic, Phalic, Western, Dinaric, Eastern, and East Baltic. People of the Nordic race typify the ideal “blond hair, blue eyed” German. An average height of 1.75 meters (5 feet, 7½ inches), along with a slender build and long limbs give them a striking physical beauty. As if good looks were not enough to distinguish them, *The Nazi Primer* adds that Nordic men “are uncommonly gifted mentally...[and] are predisposed to leadership by nature.”¹⁰¹ After lavishing praise on the superlative Nordic race, the chapter describes the attributes of the other five races.

⁹⁸ William E. Dodd, “The Bible of a Political Church: A Commentary on *The Nazi Primer*,” in *The Nazi Primer: Official Handbook for Schooling the Hitler Youth*, trans. by Harwood L. Childs (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938), 260, 280.

⁹⁹ Harwood L. Childs, trans., *The Nazi Primer: Official Handbook for Schooling the Hitler Youth* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938), 14. The original German title of Günther’s book is *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 16-19, quote 20.

The text always compares them to the Nordic race, which serves to underscore the archetypal ideal of the Nordic race.

The Phalic race is most closely related to the Nordic race. Physically taller and broader than its Nordic brethren, the Phalic race has pale skin, wavy/curly blond or reddish hair, and light colored eyes. Phalic men show fewer emotions than Nordic men, and they serve as a powerful and loyal driving force behind Nordic leadership. The Western race scarcely exists in Germany in its pure form. Individuals who have descended from this race have a neat and slender physical form with brown skin and smooth, curly dark brown or black hair. Excitable and passionate, Western men have less patience than either Nordic or Phalic men. They lack creative power and have produced only a few remarkable men. The Dinaric race has a tall and slender build, fine curly black hair, dark brown eyes, and brownish skin. Like Nordic men, Dinaric men are proud and brave. According to *The Nazi Primer*, they make exceptional warriors because they love their homeland. Not known for their thinking skills, Dinaric men often fall prey to moodiness.¹⁰²

The Eastern race has a short, thickset, clumsy, and compact physical build. Eastern men have yellowish skin, stiff and thick hair, and brown eyes. Neither courageous nor warlike, people of this crafty race serve as compliant and submissive subjects. The energetic East Baltic race has short, large boned bodies with light gray yellow skin, thick ash blond hair, and gray, blue gray, or water blue eyes. Like Eastern men, East Baltic men do not produce leaders, but followers. They are cautious and do not exhibit great imagination except in the field of music. Of these six races, *The Nazi Primer* indicates that Nordic men comprise fifty percent of the German population, Eastern men twenty percent, Dinaric men fifteen percent, East Baltic eight percent, Phalic five percent, and Western two percent.¹⁰³

As shown in the physical and mental attributes noted above, *The Nazi Primer* sustains the Nazi belief in the supremacy of the Nordic race. Nordic men represent the best; they are numerically superior among the races in the German population. No other race is as intelligent, as physically beautiful, or as fit for leadership as the Nordic race. Between the information provided in this Hitler Youth manual and in the history textbooks, the Nazi government used both informal and formal education to reiterate constantly who racially constituted the best members of society. The government aimed to affirm in the youth a sense of pride in their

¹⁰² Ibid., 20-28.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 28-34.

Nordic heritage because the Nordic race embodied the healthy German population whom the government wanted to reproduce, and in its efforts to instruct children to have fit offspring in the future, the Nazi state relentlessly affirmed its teachings on racial differences.

The Nazi government also used education to explain what it concluded were the ruinous demographics in Germany, a phenomenon that *The Nazi Primer* calls “the terrifying decline in the birth rate.”¹⁰⁴ The 1943 German geography textbook *Deutschland* discusses how the German population had actually increased between 1816 and 1933. In 1816, almost twenty five million people lived in the territory that would form the Second Empire. On the eve of the formation of this empire in 1871, forty million people resided there. A few years prior to the First World War, almost sixty five million people inhabited Wilhelmine Germany. Territorial loss and war deaths taken into account, a smaller postwar Germany had sixty one million residents. This number grew to sixty two million in 1925 and reached over sixty five million by 1933.¹⁰⁵

Despite the numeric growth, according to the history textbook *Volk und Reich der Deutschen*, the number of live births per thousand individuals had drastically dropped. In 1880, there were thirty-nine children born for every thousand living residents. This rate dropped to thirty-six per thousand in 1900, twenty-seven per thousand in 1920, and reached a low sixteen per thousand in 1931.¹⁰⁶ The population had grown because of greater life expectancy, not because of increasing birth rates. The Nazi regime feared that this reduction in births meant that over time fewer adults would not have the ability to produce the number of children necessary to maintain, let alone increase, the German population. *Volk und Reich der Deutschen* ominously predicted that the German population would plummet to forty-seven million people by 2000, and by 2050, the German nation would be struggling to maintain a population of twenty-five million people.¹⁰⁷ This foreboding fear never came to fruition. Even with an acute loss of men during the Second World War, the population of Germany grew during the second half of the twentieth

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 89.

¹⁰⁵ The original source for *Deutschland* is Reinhard Müller, *Deutschland, Sechster Teil* (München and Berlin: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1943). A translation of selected pages from the text can be found at “People without Space: People and Living Space,” *German Propaganda Archive*, accessed online 10 January 2005 <<http://www.calvin.edu/academics/cas/gpa/textbk02.htm>>.

¹⁰⁶ Walther Hohmann and Wilhelm Schiefer, *Volk und Reich der Deutschen: Geschichtsbuch für Oberschulen und Gymnasien: Klasse 5, Von 1871 bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Salle, 1940), 191.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

century. As of 2005, the Federal Republic of Germany has a population of eighty-two million people.¹⁰⁸

Although the majority of the German population had within them the “best qualities” of the Nordic race, the number of fit individuals born each year was falling. Racial quality could not facilitate the prosperity of Germany without enough individuals carrying superior Nordic characteristics. Therefore, the Nazi government went beyond simply educating children about racial history and population decline. With its third education goal, the government instilled in the children the necessity to plan for a prodigious family in the future. Instruction in geography, history, and biology proved how the deleterious population drop harmed German society; it likewise illustrated the beneficial measures taken by the National Socialist government to aid the people in halting Germany’s ruin.

The geography textbook *Deutschland* proclaims that Germany has to redouble the number of children born to prevent the extinction of the German population. The book austere contends that “a people with no children is a dying people,” a message that mirrors the view on childlessness presented by Tacitus. Following this grim outlook, however, the text continues with a more hopeful message:

The National Socialist government took on the task of maintaining and increasing the German population, and had an educational impact on the whole nation in this regard. Each German must understand that he is nothing, the people everything. Healthy children are the pride of each family. Since every citizen will not have children, each couple must have *an average of four children* to ensure the continuation of the people.¹⁰⁹

With this quote, the textbook writers attempted to insinuate that each child must contribute to the vitality of Germany. Vigorous participation in reproduction entitled an individual to remain a member of the German community and compensated for those citizens who do not place their full pride and confidence in the Nazi government by having enough children. *Volk und Reich der Deutschen* echoes this call for four children from every healthy family as a means to secure a

¹⁰⁸ German Embassy, Washington, D.C., “Germany in Brief,” accessed online 12 January 2005 <http://www.germany-info.org/relaunch/culture/life/G_Kids/g_in_brief.htm>. Further statistical data for Germany from the latter half of the twentieth century through the present day can be accessed on the Federal Statistical Office website at <http://www.destatis.de/themen/e/thm_bevoelk.htm>. Ironically, despite the numeric increase of the population, these statistics show all of the German states are currently experiencing a negative population growth.

¹⁰⁹ [Emphasis mine] “People without Space.”

powerful German nation in the future. To further convince the school children reading the text to have many offspring in the future, *Deutschland* directly acknowledges the efforts of the National Socialist government to help families. The book mentions specific welfare programs inaugurated by the state to ease the financial burdens of those people who had answered the call to create a more prolific population.¹¹⁰

History and geography lessons taught children about their responsibility for preventing the future death of the German population. Education in biology augmented these lessons. The biology textbook *Lebenskunde für Mittelschulen* argues that every creature, including humans, wants to emerge victorious in the fight for survival. Within this struggle, nature has created two vital laws that apply to all living beings. The first law, “the production of numerous offspring,” declares that no species naturally produces only one or two progeny. Parents do not merely replace themselves, but instead have a larger number of children to sustain their species. The second natural law proclaims that “each life form strives to ensure the survival of its species.” Each successive generation produces more offspring. This increasing number also allows a species to survive numerically and to expand into new territory.¹¹¹

According to *Lebenskunde für Mittelschulen*, history has provided a plethora of instances to prove that mankind obeys these two natural laws. The book concisely argues the value of these laws to Germany by stating that “the species is maintained by producing a large number of offspring.” It furthermore makes the case that the National Socialist government has “restored to the German people the will to have children.” This restoration provides Germans with the ability to survive against the inevitable decline brought about when a species ignores the aforementioned laws. If biological and historical lessons did not completely persuade the children to comply with natural laws, *Lebenskunde für Mittelschulen* includes a quote from Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* where the Führer declares that marriage has “the larger goal of increasing and maintaining the species and race. That only is its meaning and its task.”¹¹² The textbook

¹¹⁰ Hohmann, *Volk und Reich der Deutschen*, 192; “People without Space.”

¹¹¹ The original source for *Lebenskunde für Mittelschulen* is Marie Harm and Hermann Wiehle, *Lebenskunde für Mittelschule, Fünfter Teil, Klasse 5 für Mädchen* (Halle: Hermann Schroedel Verlag, 1942). A translation of selected pages from the text can be found at “Biology for the Middle School for 5th Grade Girls,” *German Propaganda Archive*, accessed online 10 January 2005 <<http://www.calvin.edu/academics/cas/gpa/textbk01.htm>>.

¹¹² Ibid. *Lebenskunde für Mittelschule* cites page 275 in an undisclosed German edition of *Mein Kampf*. A translation of the quote can also be found in Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, translated by Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971), 252.

employs the excerpt to reinforce biological education, which in itself buttressed the historical and geographical lessons on the responsibility of producing more children.

Boys received another biological lesson from *The Nazi Primer*. Chapter three dedicates ten pages to the genetic discoveries of the Austrian monk Gregor Mendel.¹¹³ It also explains the importance of male and female sex cells in the transmission of biological inheritance. The boys learned that every cell in their bodies carried chromosomes, and through the chromosomes in their sex cells, they passed on personal biological characteristics. The book further explains that in the process of reproduction, the newly created embryo receives half of its biological information from its father's sperm and half from its mother's egg.¹¹⁴ This lesson on genetic transmission merged well with the previous education the boys received about race because it provided them with a concrete understanding of how one generation transmitted valuable Nordic blood to the next. Biology moreover underscores the liability of both parents in reproduction. Pure racial characteristics could only be preserved if the boys and their equally healthy female partners physically bestowed ensuring generations with their racially superior genes. These biological lessons demonstrate the value of nature in the evolution of the human species.

Of the four educational goals for children in the Third Reich, the first promoted the magnitude of race, which signified the superiority of one group of people over another. The second goal of Nazi instruction taught about the decline in birthrate, which implied a waning future for Germany. Convincing young children of their obligation to improve the birthrate implemented the third goal of Nazi education. The final goal revolved around linking the first three together and persuading students that greater numbers alone could not stop Germany's decline. They had to give birth to enough children of the right racial stock. Only superior offspring endowed with superlative Nordic traits could save Germany. With this encouragement, this last goal emphasized the union of the concepts of nature and nurture; education provided by the Nazi state (nurture) had to persuade the elite Germans to pass along their racially worthy characteristics (nature).

¹¹³ Regarded as the father of genetics, Mendel's work with genes formed the basis of modern genetic engineering. He mixed the pollen from two different types of self-breeding peapods. Through this experimentation, he discovered dominant and recessive genes, which allowed him to study inherited phenotypic and genotypic characteristics in the successive generations of peapods.

¹¹⁴ Childs, *The Nazi Primer*, 37-47, 57-58. Although German eugenicists had led the field in research in cytoplasmic inheritance, the primer only gives credence to Mendelian genetics. For more information on cytoplasmic inheritance, see chapter one.

In his book on the Nazi education system, Gilmer W. Blackburn describes five principles of history as listed by a Nazi textbook writer, Dietrich Klagges: One “life is struggle. [Two], the individual is nothing without the Führer. [Three], the folk is the future. [Four], compatriots are comrades of fate. [Five], the blood is the most valuable inheritance.”¹¹⁵ Of these principles, the fifth one deals with the racial worth of an individual. The Nazi government strove to inculcate this value into school-aged children, and it started this education process at an early age. For example, kindergarten teachers received a syllabus in 1941 with instructions on health education. The overarching goal, according to this syllabus, was to provide the children with a basic understanding “of the national socialist view of the world and of human beings.”¹¹⁶ Teachers had to discuss with their extremely young pupils the concepts of racial identity, racial laws and inheritance, the racial composition of Germany, racial awareness, the population problem in Germany, and the requirements for raising healthy children. They had to encourage healthy lifestyles. The syllabus requires teachers to explain how the children have a responsibility to their ancestors to continue their lineage. Teachers had to provide their kindergarteners with lessons on genetics; the children learned the difference between natural selection and selective breeding.¹¹⁷

Persuading students to prepare for their future roles as parents of racially valuable offspring continued past this health education during kindergarten. Textbooks provide lessons on advancing the racial elite in the German population. They talk about what the Nazi government had done to ensure that the fittest members of society had the requisite means to emerge victorious in the “struggle against the death of the race” (*Kampf gegen Volkstod*).¹¹⁸ In this last educational goal, the Nazi regime wanted the students to comprehend why and how the youth needed to work with them to preserve the German blood from the plagues of racial impurity, diseases, and lack of births.¹¹⁹ The state pushed its racial agenda by presenting foreboding consequences; either the government would successfully compel society to cooperate with its measures or else the German nation would eventually wither away.

¹¹⁵ Gilmer W. Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich: A Study of Race and History in Nazi Textbooks* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 38.

¹¹⁶ Translation of the syllabus can be found in Jeremy Noakes, ed., *Nazism 1919-1945, Volume 4: The German Home Front in World War II, A Documentary Reader* (Exeter, Great Britain: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 274.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Gehl, *Deutsche Geschichte in Stichworten*, 214.

¹¹⁹ Hohmann, *Volk und Reich der Deutschen*, 190-91.

Deutschland describes the role of the state as “only a means to an end, and this end is in preserving and advancing the race. The goal of the state is therefore to create a healthy and growing people.”¹²⁰ The state would accomplish this aim through using positive and negative eugenics, and the textbooks highlight measures taken by the government to achieve eugenical ends. Both *Deutschland* and *Merkbuch zur Deutschen Geschichte* describe the methods used by the Nazi government to promote hereditary health, protect valuable races, and cull the hereditarily weak. The former textbook specifically names two of the laws passed by the government: the July 14, 1933 Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases and the October 26, 1935 Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor.¹²¹ The first law mandated compulsory sterilization and the second promoted marriage among healthy individuals, but both pieces of legislation aimed at staving off the stagnation of Germany.

As with the other goals of education, *The Nazi Primer* reiterates the essential lessons about reproducing hereditarily sound progeny. It provides great detail concerning inheritable diseases prevalent worldwide as well as the fewer number of children reared by genetically sound families as opposed to families riddled with illness. It mentions the legislation passed by the government to curtail state expenses on the hereditarily unfit. More importantly, the primer argues that preventative measures alone could not save Germany; the healthy part of the population had to flourish. To maintain the current population, every family would have to produce 3.4 children. As of 1933, the average family only had 2.2 children, and *The Nazi Primer* observes that without an increase, Germany’s position in the world would drop as its population falters.¹²²

Therefore, *The Nazi Primer* endorses government intervention designed to reawaken the parental instincts in the fittest individuals. It supports the National Socialist state for its efforts to improve Germany and praises the government for encouraging healthy men and women to

¹²⁰ “People without Space.”

¹²¹ “People without Space,” and Franke, *Merkbuch zur Deutschen Geschichte*, 204-05. Information on and citation for the 1933 Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Disease can be found in the first chapter. The German law books show two laws dealing with German blood and honor, but neither is from October 1935. “Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 15. September 1935,” *Reichsgesetzblatt, Jahrgang 1935, Teil I, Ausgegeben zu Berlin, den 16. September 1935, Nr. 100* (Berlin: Herausgegeben vom Reichministerium des Innern, 1935), 1146-47 and “Erste Verordnung zur Ausführung des Gesetzes zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 14. November 1935,” *Reichsgesetzblatt, Jahrgang 1935, Teil I, Ausgegeben zu Berlin, den 14. November 1935, Nr. 125* (Berlin: Herausgegeben vom Reichministerium des Innern, 1935), 1334-36.

¹²² Childs, *The Nazi Primer*, 63-64, 68-71, 74, 90. See page eight of this chapter regarding the growth of the German population in the latter half of the twentieth beginning of the twenty-first centuries.

undertake the responsibility to have families teeming with children.¹²³ *Geschichtsbuch für die deutsche Jugend Klasse 5* also commends the government and calls for the birth of more racially fit children: “The birth decline of the German people must end. Richness in children must as the most exquisite blessing of the people. People are alive eternally if they have the will and strength of sensible race politics.”¹²⁴ These two books seek to enlighten racially sound Germans and persuade them to combine their efforts with the racial policies espoused by the government. Nazi educators used them to attempt to convince school children to embrace their national duty and foster large families. Children should not view parenthood as a future possibility, but as a mandatory obligation.

Once the children had finished their formal schooling at age fourteen, however, the Nazi government wanted to make sure that they did not forget the lessons they had learned about racial differences, detrimental population decline, the need for more children, and the obligation for racially healthy offspring. The government consequently gave each youth a book entitled *Du und dein Volk*. Broken into nine sections, this book reviews all of the major lessons. The second sentence reminds the former students of the high expectations placed on them by the government: “The future of the people is its children – which is you.”¹²⁵ This straightforward sentence conveys to the readers their dual responsibilities to serve the state personally and provide for Germany’s welfare with their own children. Parenting was no longer a matter of personal choice, but of young adults obliging themselves to the will of a government obsessed with racial purity.

The rest of the book continues the theme of service for the benefit of the state. *Du und dein Volk* dispenses to the young adults another lesson on Mendelian genetics, and it reiterates that each one of them had received half of his “physical, spiritual, and intellectual characteristics” from his father and half from his mother. The book additionally reminds the

¹²³ Ibid., 96.

¹²⁴ B. Kumsteller, U. Haacke, and B. Schneider, *Geschichtsbuch für die deutsche Jugend Klasse 5* (Leipzig: Verlag von Quelle & Mener, 1939), 202. “Dem Geburtenrückgang des deutschen Volkes muß Einhalt getan werden. Kinderreichtum muß als köstlichster Segen eines Volkes gelten. Völker leben ewig, wenn sie den Willen und die Kraft zu vernünftiger Rassenpolitik haben.”

¹²⁵ The original source for *Du und dein Volk* is Reichsleitung der NSDAP, Hauptamt für Erzieher (NSLB), *Du und dein Volk* (München: Deutscher Volksverlag, 1940). A translation of the text can be found at “You and Your People (Volk),” *German Propaganda Archive*, accessed online 10 January 2005 <<http://www.calvin.edu/academics/cas/gpa/du.htm>>.

young adults what they shall pass on to their future children and cautions them of the dire reality facing those who choose not to have children of their own:

If you leave without leaving children, the genetic stream ends, the chain breaks; you kill the genetic material within you, which has come to you from thousands of your ancestors, who entrusted you with passing it on the future generations. The kin dies: that is real death! This is the heaviest moral responsibility that a person faces.¹²⁶

The message of passing on one's ancestry weighs heavily in the text, as the book directly implies that someone who could have children but chooses not to is of little value to his people. The most important contribution an individual could make was to ensure the continuance and health of his lineage. This gift would fulfill his moral responsibility to his ancestors and renew the life of the German nation.

Du and dein Volk subsequently has an equally strong lesson on racial purity. It cautions young adults to remain conscious of the pitfalls of racial defilement and to marry a racially sound partner. The book lists the ten commandments of selecting a mate from the Reich Health Office. These commandments succinctly recap the racial, biological, and parental obligations of all healthy Germans. Most notably, these rules caution the young adults to choose a companion from the Nordic race, check the ancestry of this future spouse, marry for love only, and have a bountiful number of children.¹²⁷ As in other places, the book fervently and repetitiously takes every opportunity to promote the delivery of a large quantity of racially valuable offspring to offset the birth decline; having these children is the most crucial responsibility placed on the shoulders of these young adults.

Whereas *Du and dein Volk* represented the last official source of schooling for the newly emancipated students, it was not the final means of education on race and children. Although the Nazi government had started the instruction process at a young age, it did not end its lessons once the students had finished formal schooling. The Nazi state persisted in its informal educational regime by conveying its views to the general adult population. This continuing education did not come from textbooks, but rather through the words of prominent Nazi leaders.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid. Claudia Koonz examines these commandments in her article "Eugenics, Gender, and Ethics in Germany: The Debate about Involuntary Sterilization 1933-1936," 71.

These leaders sought to convince the best adults to engage willingly in positive eugenical measures for the sake of preserving Germany.

Hitler stood as the most influential leader. The authority he commanded, however, most likely had as much to do with Hitler's personality as it did with a pre-Nazi educational trend encouraging citizens to venerate their ruler. As Levi Seeley wrote in his late nineteenth century book about the German school system, two of the nine objects of education outlined by the Minister of Culture of Prussia dealt with promoting admiration for the ruler. Thomas Alexander concurred with Seeley in his early twentieth century book on Prussian education. Teachers spoke praise and criticism of past and present German rulers, but the beneficial aspects of a reign always outweighed the unfavorable ones. They taught their students how much their current Kaiser loved them and persuaded the children to cherish him in return. These lessons designed to foster reverence merged with lectures on patriotism.¹²⁸

Veneration for the leader continued to play a role in education under the Nazis government. This tradition supplied a stronger authority to the verbal and written words of Hitler. History books, such as *Aufriss der deutschen Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert* and *Die ewige Strasse*, praise Hitler for unifying the German people, securing the nation, and fighting for the freedom of Germany.¹²⁹ Outside of school, newspapers reached a broader audience with their lavish approbation of him; for example, the weekly newspaper *Das Schwarze Korps* ran a tribute to Hitler in the edition closest to his April 20 birthday.¹³⁰ The German public most clearly manifested their reverence for Hitler with their repetition of the salute "Heil Hitler!"¹³¹ Historian Gilmer Blackburn concisely elucidates the influence that Hitler held over the German people: "Hitler's words had the force of law in Greater-Germany, and his ideas provided the

¹²⁸ Levi Seeley, *The Common-School System of Germany and its Lessons to America* (New York: E. L. Kellogg, 1896), 77-78, 98 and Thomas Alexander, *The Prussian Elementary Schools* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1919), 396, 406, 414.

¹²⁹ Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Numburg an der Saale, *Aufriss der deutschen Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1939) and Werner vom Hofe, *Die ewige Strasse: Geschichtebuch für die Hauptschule* (Berlin: Deutscher Schulverlag, 1944).

¹³⁰ Specific articles from *Das Schwarze Korps* praising Hitler on his birthday include: "Zum Geburtstag des Führers," April 17, 1935, p. 9; "Zu Führers Geburtstag," April 16, 1936, p. 18; Heinrich Himmler, "Aufruf des Reichführers SS an die SS und die Polizei," April 28, 1938, p. 4; "Mein Führer!" April 20, 1939, p. 1; Heinrich Himmler, "Tagesbefehl vom 20. April 1939 an all Angehörigen des SS und der Polizei," April 20, 1939, p. 2; "Der Quell seiner Kraft," April 20, 1939, p. 9; "Vater des Volkes," April 20, 1939, p. 11; "Ehrfurcht und Dank," April 20, 1939, p. 20; "Geburtstag im Führerhauptquartier," May 1, 1941, p. 6; "An den Führer!" April 16, 1942, pp. 1-2; and "Es ist der Sieg!" April 20, 1944, pp. 1-2.

¹³¹ I. L. Kandel, *The Making of Nazis* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1935), 80. The salute expresses wishes for Hitler's well-being.

intellectual foundation upon which German life rested during the Nazi era.”¹³² In his personal testimonial *Mein Kampf*, Hitler developed the ideas that he would later implement. As he became more prominent in Germany, these ideas gained substantial influence and subsequently educated the public about the core beliefs that the Nazi party wanted the hereditarily sound population to adopt.

One of the central themes of *Mein Kampf* relevant to public education is race. Hitler believed that all true National Socialists fought to preserve the purity of the German race. Every other ideal fell subordinate to this preservation, which if successful, would allow Germany to remain independent. This duty to safeguard racial elements supplied Germany with the assets necessary to refine the German race. The Aryan race represented the pinnacle of purity to Hitler. He asserted in *Mein Kampf* that the creative energies of the Aryans formed all human culture. Without the Aryans, mankind would at best fall into a dark cultural abyss from which they could never emerge and would at worst self-destruct.¹³³ German education echoed these sentiments. The preservation of the Nordic race formed the apex of education, and the loss of racial purity would herald the downfall of German civilization.

Hitler insisted that the purpose of the state was to promote proper race development among the entire population.

*It must set race in the center of all life. It must take care to keep it pure. It must declare the child to be the most precious treasure of the people. It must see to it that only the healthy beget children; that there is only one disgrace: despite one's own sickness and deficiencies, to bring children into the world, and one highest honor: to renounce doing so. And conversely it must be considered reprehensible: to withhold healthy children from the nation. Here the state must act as a guardian of a millennial future...*¹³⁴

The state had to draw on its resources in the service of enhancing Germany. Without using the actual word, Hitler espoused the sterilization of any person with an inheritable disease. He also accepted positive eugenical measures when he proclaimed that conscious state promotion of fertility among the nation's healthiest individuals would eliminate the physical and spiritual decay ravishing Germany. Hitler saw the mixing of blood from different races as a desecration that would destroy humanity, and he believed that the state must educate children about this dire

¹³² Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich*, 25.

¹³³ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 214, 290, 303, 383, 391, 402.

¹³⁴ [Emphasis in original] *Ibid.*, 403-04.

threat. He contended that “no boy and no girl must leave school without having been led to an ultimate realization of the necessity and essence of blood purity. Thus the groundwork is created by preserving the racial foundations of our nation and through them in turn securing the basis for its future culture development.”¹³⁵

Nazi education reflected Hitler’s thoughts in *Mein Kampf*. Race played a central role in his worldview, and he wanted to see a future Germany with a copious population that did not suffer from racial putrefaction. Therefore, as shown above, school lessons and textbooks emphasized race in an attempt to circumvent racial defilement and annihilation. However, *Mein Kampf* served as more than a template for formal education. It outlined for the public the ideas behind the Nazi party, ideas that Hitler often reiterated in his speeches.¹³⁶ Hitler’s personality and popularity garnered him the mass attention through which he used his book and his speeches to instruct the Germans about the Nazi party’s views on race that they should embrace.

Hitler was not alone in his quest to alert the German public about race, blood, or eugenics. Many other Nazi officials publicly educated the German people through repeating the same themes introduced by Hitler and shown in the textbooks. In a speech following the 1933 Nuremberg Rally, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, *Reichsminister* of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, drew attention to the creative capabilities of Aryans. Moreover, he determinedly stated that Germany would not founder when it came to racial matters; instead, Germany would lead the revolution to solve the racial question.¹³⁷ Fellow Nazi leader R. Walther Darrè published eighty maxims detailing the biological struggle between races. In one of these maxims, he avowed that Germany’s “only true possession is its good blood.” Later tenets in Darrè’s book support eugenic laws because they eliminate inferior individuals and uphold moral traditions.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ [Emphasis in original] Ibid., 249, 404-405, 428 (quote).

¹³⁶ For example, Hitler discussed race during a speech to the Reichstag on January 30, 1937 in which he reviewed the first four years of National Socialist rule. Adolf Hitler, “On National Socialism and World Relations: Speech Delivered in the German Reichstag on January 30, 1937,” *German Propaganda Archive*, accessed online 25 January 2005 <<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/hitler1.htm>>.

¹³⁷ The original source for the Goebbel’s speech is “Rassenfrage und Weltpropaganda,” in *Reichsagung in Nürnberg 1933* (Berlin: Vaterländischer Verlag C. A. Weller, 1933). A translation of the article can be found at “The Racial Question and World Propaganda,” *German Propaganda Archive*, accessed online 10 January 2005 <<http://www.calvin.edu/academics/cas/gpa/goeb41.htm>>.

¹³⁸ The original source for Darrè’s book is R. Walther Darrè, *80 Merksätze und Leitssprüche über Zucht und Sitte* (N.p.: N.p., 1937). A translation of selected points can be found in Joachim Remak, ed., *The Nazi Years: A Documentary History* (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1969), 33.

Dr. Walter Groß, head of the Office of Racial Policy, delivered a speech in 1934 about the Nazi government's policies; although originally given to a women's group, the text of this speech was widely distributed later. Groß explained the center ideals of Nazi beliefs: blood and race. He contended that "wherever there is life, it has the longing to bring forth new life." Ignoring this longing would lead a people to ruin and threaten their very existence. Groß noted that if Germans did not heed this warning, they would slowly depopulate the country by the end of the century. Producing a sound stock of children was the only concrete measure to safeguard Germany's longevity. These children represented the only link between past and potential future generations, and each individual had the obligation to continue his lineage.¹³⁹

At the 1936 Nuremberg Rally, Dr. Gerhard Wagner justified the Nazi regime's racial policies. He claimed that they guaranteed peace and coexistence in Europe and the world. Wagner maintained that these policies allowed the Nazi government "to rescue a dying people from the edge of the abyss" and "oppose the three great dangers of racial and biological decline...: the decline in birthrate, the increase in sick and unfit genes in our people, and the mixing of the blood of our people with that of foreign and unrelated peoples." Wagner praised Hitler for placing eugenics in the core of the state's efforts to rebuild Germany. The National Socialist state had terminated the squandering of government money on the genetically ill and had turned its resources toward aiding the healthy population. The main question that Germany now had to answer, according to Wagner, was whether or not the people could raise the average births to three to four children per family and prevent the extinction of Germany.¹⁴⁰

Through their oral and written means of communication, these four Nazi leaders respectively attempted to inculcate the German public with views identical to those presented by Hitler and taught in school. They signified the magnitude of race and accentuated the worth of pure blood in regards to defending the well-being of Germany. They noted the desire to create new life, which parallels the biological lessons on the natural laws of reproduction. Finally,

¹³⁹ The original source for the Groß' speech is "Nationalsozialistische Rassenpolitik: Eine Rede an die deutschen Frauen," (Dessau: C. Dünnhaupt, 1934). A translation of the article can be found at "National Socialist Racial Policy: A Speech to German Women," *German Propaganda Archive*, accessed online 10 January 2005 <<http://www.calvin.edu/academics/cas/gpa/gross.htm>>.

¹⁴⁰ The original source for the Wagner's speech is "Rasse und Bevölkerungspolitik," in *Der Parteitag der Ehre vom 8. bis 14. September 1936: Offizieller Bericht über den Verlauf des Reichsparteitages mit sämtlichen Kongreßreden* (München: Zentralverlag des NSDAP, 1936). A translation of the article can be found at "Race and Population Policy," *German Propaganda Archive*, accessed online 10 January 2005 <<http://www.calvin.edu/academics/cas/gpa/pt36rasse.htm>>.

whether on the abilities of a race or the actions of the Nazi state, the public praise provided by these men served to bolster the faith of the people in their own reproductive capabilities and in the abilities of their government.

Whereas the government could summarily coerce sterilization on those whom they deemed inferior, compulsory methods would not succeed in augmenting the birth rate among superior individuals. The Nazis had to persuade the best members of society, whom they identified by race and not by class, of their responsibility for preserving the longevity of Germany through reproduction. The Nazis awoke the populace to their parental obligations through education. Beginning in school, continuing in extracurricular activities, and culminating with addressing the general public, the Nazis repeatedly instructed racially fit people of their duty to bestow Germany with healthy offspring. Education instilled ideas about the values of race and blood that would supply future leadership to Germany and forestall an otherwise catastrophic self-destruction of the nation. Without these children—at least four per family—Germany’s world status would drop and its very existence would be threatened. Through the words written in the textbooks and spoken by the leaders, the Nazis called upon their racial elite to consent to their national duty and deliver racially healthy “blond hair, blue eyed” Aryan offspring to their nation.

CHAPTER THREE:

“THE BEST BLOOD”: POSITIVE EUGENICS AND THE POPULATION POLICY OF THE *REICHSFÜHRER-SS*

Formal and public education under the Nazi regime instilled into the population of Germany the significance of increasing the number of racially valuable children for the sake of safeguarding the future of their nation. The Nazi government employed this instruction to perpetuate the creation of children who belonged to the now mythical “blond hair, blue eyed” Aryan master race. However, although the government taught everyone the same lessons, not every schoolchild or young adult carried the racial characteristics requisite to generate better offspring. Even among Germans with good blood, some people were superior to others; for example, the boys enrolled in the Hitler Youth did not automatically qualify to join the SS (*Schutzstaffeln*), the elite racial organization of the Nazi party. Education nonetheless provided knowledge that the Nazi government hoped would create a foundation in society to support those fit individuals who would produce the next generation of Germans.

The Nazi party believed that the men who belonged to the SS were the most eligible to pass on their racial characteristics. Within the SS, the men received additional persuasion regarding their obligation to have children. Their leader, Heinrich Himmler, the *Reichsführer* of the SS and the Police, emphasized this responsibility on a formal level. Recalling Wilhelm Schallmayer’s 1900 essay “Heredity and selection in the life-process of nations,” Himmler sought to manage his human resources wisely. Like Schallmayer, Himmler wanted the best Germans to have children who would secure the long-term power of the state. Himmler understood that for racially based positive eugenical measures to succeed, he had to convince the biologically elite members of the SS to reproduce.

Therefore, Himmler used his memorandums to encourage his men officially to improve the biological fitness of Germany through their reproductive activities. Orders, memos, and

statistics from December 1931 through December 1939 show that he concentrated on increasing the qualitative birthrate at all costs because the effective implementation of positive eugenics would produce children of good blood who had the capability to guarantee the future vitality of the Third Reich. They primarily focus on unifying the concepts of biology and duty; Himmler wanted the SS soldiers to accept the belief that their obligations included passing on their superior racial characteristics. These documents cover a range of matrimonial and familial themes, each of which augmented the potential of applying positive eugenical measures. These themes incorporate Himmler's regulatory role over SS marriages, his encouragement for each SS soldier to have children with his wife, his acceptance of illegitimacy, and his promotion of the *Lebensborn* homes.

With his guidelines, Himmler also attempted to define positive eugenics more precisely; for instance, he contended that a healthy family ideally needed to have four fit children. These official documents demonstrate how Himmler sought to motivate his SS men to procreate and often reflect many of the eugenical principles posited earlier by Schallmayer, Francis Galton, and Charles Davenport.¹⁴¹ However, Himmler's ability to interfere in the lives of his SS men had its limitations. Regardless of his continual efforts, Himmler's memorandums reveal that he knew prior to the war that the SS men had extremely few children and that his persistence to have them father a new aristocracy for Germany had ultimately failed.

From its very inception, the SS had the highest expectations placed on it by the Nazi party. Originally assigned to protect Hitler, the numerous faithful acts of these men in the service of their Führer earned them the right to swear the prestigious oath: "SS-Man, your honor is called fidelity!"¹⁴² The purpose of the organization expanded under the meticulous administration of Himmler, who had received from Hitler the appointment of *Reichsführer-SS* in January 1929. Himmler idealized the Aryan race, and because he believed that parents biologically transmitted behavioral characteristics to their children, he contended that the most effective way to shape the future of the German people was through carefully managing the reproduction among the best segment of the population. He aspired to mold the SS into an elite

¹⁴¹ For more information on any of these men and their ideas, see chapter one.

¹⁴² "Die Pflichten des SS-Mannes und SS-Führers," United States National Archives Microform Publications, Microform copy T-175, Roll 15, Frames 2518681-83, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md. The original German oath reads: "SS-Mann, Deine Ehre heisst Treue!"

cadre that would have the ability to replenish the diminishing Aryan stock.¹⁴³ Himmler took this job of finding and managing German blood seriously:

From this realization, the following thoughts may also be understood. All good blood in the world is German blood, [and] what is not on the German side can only be our undoing. Therefore, it is each German with the best blood whom we take for Germany...I really have the intent to get, to rob, and to steal the Germanic blood in the whole world where I can.¹⁴⁴

These personal views on the value of German blood reflected Himmler's staunch adherence to the magnitude of qualities inherent within a person; he placed a greater emphasis on nature as opposed to nurture. His orders regarding admittance to the SS and reproduction among its members shared a similar devotion.

Himmler set high standards for entrance into the SS. Applicants had to descend from almost pure Nordic blood, which meant furnishing genealogical proof of a healthy and Jewish-free ancestry back to the mid eighteenth century. They had to submit to a medical examination and emerge with a clean bill of health. Potential SS men had to meet certain physical standards; Himmler wanted tall men with proper bone structure and no Slavic or Mongolian features. He aspired to have his SS embody Aryan purity. With an impressive stature, striking looks, keen intellect, and athletic prowess, Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*) and direct subordinate of Himmler, represented the ideal Nordic SS man.¹⁴⁵

Through this rigorous selection, Himmler sought to have the SS displace the conventional aristocratic elite. Parents still determined the status of their children in this new German order. However, biological inheritance replaced social birthright. Innate racial characteristics broke old traditions, and reproduction of "good blood" fostered another standard of nobility. According to

¹⁴³ Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide*, 33-34, 51, 245 and Thompson, "Lebensborn," 55.

¹⁴⁴ The quote comes from a document describing Himmler's views on Jews and German blood. United States National Archives Microform Publications, Microform copy T-175, Roll 90, Frame 261259, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md. "Aus dieser Erkenntnis heraus mögen auch folgende Gedanken verstanden werden. Alles gute Blut auf der Welt alles germanische Blut, was nicht auf deutscher Seite ist, kann einmal unser Verderben sein. Es ist deswegen jeder Germane mit bestem Blut, den wir nach Deutschland hold....Ich habe wirklich die Absicht, germanisches Blut in der ganzen Welt zu holen, zu rauben, und zu stehlen, wo ich kann."

¹⁴⁵ Glenn B. Infield, *Secrets of the SS* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1982), 23; Frederic Reider, *The Order of the SS* (London: W. Foulsham Ltd., 1981), 66, 78; Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide*, 34-35; Herbert F. Ziegler, *Nazi Germany's New Aristocracy: The SS Leadership, 1925-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 53-54; Todd Ettlson, "The Nazi 'New Man': Embodying Masculinity and Regulating Sexuality in the SA and SS, 1930-1939," (dissertation, University of Michigan, 2002), 205; and William L. Combs, *The Voice of the SS: A History of the SS Journal 'Das Schwarze Korps'* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), 379-80.

his book on the rise of this aristocracy, Herbert Ziegler examines how its emergence provided mobility for SS men regardless of socio-economic standing. An applicant to the SS did not need any special education or economic prosperity to apply, and once accepted into the organization, his advancement did not depend on either culture or money. With this means of selection, Himmler desired to mold an aristocracy of the blood that constantly replenished itself.¹⁴⁶ His acceptance of racial characteristics emphasized his approval of race over class in the realm of eugenics.

This new elite, which served to perpetuate the Aryan master race, was tinged with a little irony. For all of the stress he placed on Aryan blood and physical fitness, Himmler certainly did not meet the standards to which he fastidiously demanded that others adhere. With a short build, flabby physique, and poor eyesight, Himmler physically represented the antithesis of everything that he glorified in the Aryan race. As Joseph Goebbels, who shared a mutually antagonistic relationship with Himmler, caustically wrote in his diary, “If I looked like him, I would not speak of race at all.” However, considering that the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* acerbically denounced Goebbels as “a bow-legged dwarf with an enormous, ridiculous hook nose who had escaped Nazi anti-sterilization law only by special favor of the Fascist government,” his less than polite assessment of Himmler has a hollow resonance.¹⁴⁷ In spite of this discrepancy between imagined ideal and personal reality, Himmler pursued the creation of his racially elite SS with an absolute passion. The numeric growth of the SS in the early 1930’s gave him the means to accumulate “good” German blood. Once he had built up his organization, he developed practices designed to disseminate the Aryan blood and sustain his aristocracy.

Under the exacting management of Himmler, the SS evolved into what one SS-*Brigadeführer* described as “a crack troop, which physically and philosophically, is up to the highest expectations.”¹⁴⁸ Perceived as the embodiment of potent masculinity, these men stood

¹⁴⁶ Ziegler, *Nazi Germany's New Aristocracy*, xv, 52, 57. Ian Kershaw also refers to the SS an elite who would “be the masters of Germany and Europe.” Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936-1945: Nemesis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 129.

¹⁴⁷ Breitman uses a 1982 edition of Goebbels’ diary to cite the quote from October 30, 1939. I have not been able to find this 1982 edition yet, nor have I been able to find the quote in other German or English editions of the diary. Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide*, 4. The *New York Times* quoted portions of the *Pravda* article. The America paper described the Soviet attack as using “vitriolic epithets” that “cannot be reproduced in an American family newspaper.” Harold Denny, “Goebbels Lashed by Russian Press,” *New York Times*, September 12, 1936, p. 7.

¹⁴⁸ The original source for this quote is the *Berliner Tageblatt*, but it was used in Rolf Tell, ed. [pseudonym], *Nazi Guide to Nazism* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Public Affairs, 1942), 157-58.

unequivocally positioned to serve the state as the racial forefathers of future generations. The Nazi party expected no less from potential SS brides. Himmler wanted racially unblemished marriages and required Aryan ancestry from both partners.¹⁴⁹ His elite men could not produce superior offspring without biologically compatible wives, a view that echoed the lessons on heredity from the Nazi classroom. To ensure that his men complied with this wish, he issued the “Engagement and Marriage Order” on December 31, 1931.

In the first point of this order, Himmler reminded the SS men of the privileged position that he had established for them: “The SS is an association selected from particular German, Nordic men.”¹⁵⁰ Effective January 1, 1932, this edict sustained the National Socialist perspective that the future of the German people lay in the conservation of the fittest members of society—i.e. those individuals with the best blood. The order declared that no member of the SS could get married without Himmler’s explicit consent, and he would assent to or deny applications solely based on hereditary health. Himmler concluded by telling his men to ignore any mockery or scorn they might receive because the future understood their lofty purpose.¹⁵¹

The enactment of marriage restrictions in this command echoed a similar suggestion made by Schallmayer in his 1891 essay “Concerning the threatening physical degeneration of civilized humanity.” It also applied the idea of mate selection that Davenport stressed in his speech to the International Congress of Eugenics. The 1931 marriage order gained further credence when the Reich Health Office published “The Ten Commandments of Selecting a Mate” in 1937. Both Himmler and the Health Office emphasized the duty of a genetically healthy German to wed an equally fit partner.¹⁵² His command moreover demonstrated his exacting nature for details and control. Himmler did not directly select a spouse for each SS man, but did regulate his right to marry freely. This regulation empowered Himmler to supervise the preservation of the best blood in Germany. He continued this administrative role with

¹⁴⁹ Ettlson, “The Nazi ‘New Man’,” 8, 392; Thompson, “*Lebensborn*,” 54-55; and Ziegler, *Nazi Germany’s New Aristocracy*, 54.

¹⁵⁰ A reprint of “Verlobungs – und Heiratsbefehl” can be found in “Die Pflichten des SS-Mannes und SS-Führers,” National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 15, Frames 2518681-83 and in *Nationalsozialismus deutsche Arbeiter Partei und Schutzstaffeln, Rassenpolitik* (Erarbeitung and Herausgabe: Der Reichsführer SS and SS-Hauptamt, N.d.), 57. “Die SS ist ein nach besonderen Gesichtspunkten ausgewählter Verband deutscher nordisch-bestimmter Männer.”

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Koonz, “Eugenics, Gender, and Ethics in Germany,” 71. “The Ten Commandments” were briefly discussed in chapter one.

subsequent orders relating to marriage and family that prompted his blooded aristocracy to produce the next generation of German racial nobility.

The SS and the Thousand Year Reich it served could only prosper through reproduction, and SS soldiers represented the ideal men to father the next generation for the Nazi state.¹⁵³

With permission from their leader, these male biological agents coupled with their wives to sire babies. As with other German families, an SS man and his wife were entitled to obtain the 1000 mark marriage loan granted by the Nazi government if the woman voluntarily left the workforce to attend to her domestic duties. With the birth of each child, the government reduced the loan by one quarter. Beyond this financial incentive, SS families oftentimes received additional benefits for their children. When an SS man and his wife had their first child, Himmler personally sent them a ribbon and a blue silk bib for the baby. When a couple had their fourth child, he presented them with a letter and a silver candelabrum with the inscription: “You are but a link in the eternal racial chain.”¹⁵⁴

Himmler took great pride in these children and the families to which they belonged, but his micromanaging precision went beyond coordinating SS marriages and lavishing newborns with gifts. He carefully sought to persuade his men that as bearers of the proper Aryan characteristics, they had a moral obligation to have many children. He believed that reproduction was among their duties for their Führer and his Reich. As with the education which children received in schools and corresponding to the marriage loan offered by the Nazi government, Himmler likewise espoused that each SS man and his wife should give life to four healthy children. The insistence on this number engendered a more focused definition of positive eugenics. Since the advent of the field by Galton in 1883, eugenicists inside and outside of Germany had asserted that positive eugenics required the best elements of society to have children. They harped on producing high numbers of quality children, but did not specify how the fittest members of society would achieve this quantity or how many children each family needed to produce. They simply emphasized having the right elements in society reproduce for the sake of enlarging the population and saving the nation from decline.

¹⁵³ Ettelson, “The Nazi ‘New Man’,” 392.

¹⁵⁴ Miller, *Terminating the “Socially Inadequate,”* 174. None of the primary or secondary sources consulted indicated that Himmler punished any SS officer or soldier for not having children. Based on these sources, there is no mention of additional taxes levied on a man or a soldier not receiving a promotion within the SS based on the number of children he had.

Himmler attempted to clarify how he wanted to apply positive eugenical measures in Nazi society. With his memorandums, Himmler expected his SS men to obey honorably to help Germany in a way that only those people with the right racial traits could successfully do. Therefore, in a directive from September 1936, he declared that “the question of many children is not the private concern of the individual, but of duty toward his ancestors and our people.”¹⁵⁵ He reiterated the central tenet of his 1931 marriage order, but then reflected that “the foundation for better marriages is pointless if enough descendents do not emerge from them.”¹⁵⁶ In other words, Himmler’s efforts to ensure quality pairings would have gone to waste if these resultant marriages did not provide some type of biological and hereditary benefit for the state. Without the birth of children and without their subsequent instruction under the Nazi education system, the racial nobility that he wanted to create would never flourish. Therefore, in this order, he suggested that each healthy marriage needed to generate four children; if fate denied a couple this many children, Himmler wanted them to adopt valuable children and imbue them with the same racial education that they would have given to offspring of their own blood.¹⁵⁷ This number would guarantee the survival of Aryan characteristics, which in turn would supply Germany with elite leadership designed to perpetuate itself continually and maintain the integrity of Germany.

Himmler began this order by reminding his men of their responsibilities to their ancestors and to the current population of Germany, and he ended it with similar remarks. He declared that an SS man should always remember that he must make personal and material sacrifices in times of struggle. The development of Germany now and in the years to come depended on each SS man fulfilling his “self-evident” (*selbstverständliche*) duty.¹⁵⁸ By evoking this theme of duty, Himmler reminded his soldiers of their obligations to the Führer. These responsibilities required the SS men to blur the line between their personal and professional lives and to use their reproductive abilities to bring forth another generation of Germans.

¹⁵⁵ Himmler’s September 13, 1936 directive to SS officers about having four children, United States National Archives Microform Publications, Microform copy T-611, Roll 7, Order #433, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md. “Die Frage viele Kinder ist nicht Privatangelegenheit des Einzelnen, sondern Pflicht gegenüber seinem Ahnen und unserem Volk.”

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. “Die Gründung gutter Ehen ist jedoch zwecklos, wenn nicht zahlreiche Nachkommenschaft aus ihnen hervorgeht.”

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

A directive published a couple of years later, which contained multiple previously published orders by Himmler, repeated the majority of this September 1936 command.¹⁵⁹ Another order, this one from 1937, also directly commented on the number of children per family. Himmler argued that if at least three children emerged from *every* marriage, then Germany could speak of a positive birth rate. However, this upward trend was not accurate when one took childless marriages and bachelors into consideration. With this problem factored in, Himmler asserted that SS marriages had to carry the burden of compensating for those who had not contributed to the German population with their descendents.¹⁶⁰ This compensation equaled four children per SS family to Himmler. He clarified the role of each child in a December 1938 memorandum; the first two children replaced their own parents, the third one substituted for a loss within the family, and the fourth one made up for those Germans whom the Nazi government had deemed incompetent and unable to reproduce. The attempt to encourage a four-child marriage did not end due to the war. *Rassenpolitik*, a book on racial issues approved by Himmler and published by the SS in the middle of the war, strongly maintains the vital necessity of a bountiful family among the racial elite.¹⁶¹

The idea of SS soldiers counteracting the reproductive inactivity of other Germans reinforced their fidelity. It attempted to hone their dedication to the party and to the government. This biological dedication also would have pleased Hitler, who in his private conversations reflected on preserving the integrity of the German family through children: “The essential thing for the future is to have lots of children. Everybody should be persuaded that a family’s life is assured only when it has upwards of four children—I should even say, four sons. That’s a principle that should never be forgotten.”¹⁶² Although made behind closed doors to a few privileged individuals, this statement shows Hitler’s agreement with the four-child policy

¹⁵⁹ A reprint of “Lebensborn” can be found in “Die Pflichten des SS-Mannes und SS-Führers,” National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 15, Frames 2518681-83 and in Nationalsozialismus deutsche Arbeiter Partei und Schutzstaffeln, *Rassenpolitik*, 58-59.

¹⁶⁰ “Entwurf für die bevölkerungspolitische Schrift an die SS-Führer,” United States National Archives Microform Publications, Microform copy T-175, Roll 201, Frames 2742420-21, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md.

¹⁶¹ “Bevölkerungspolitik in SS-Führerkorps, Stand: 1.12.1938, Bearbeitet von der SS Personalkanzlei,” United States National Archives Microform Publications, Microform copy T-175, Roll 123, Frame 2649251, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md; and Nationalsozialismus deutsche Arbeiter Partei und Schutzstaffeln, *Rassenpolitik*, 32-33. Although *Rassenpolitik* does not list a publication date, documents reprinted at the end of the book suggest that it was most likely published in late 1942 or early 1943.

¹⁶² Hugh Trevor-Roper, ed., *Hitler’s Table Talk, 1941-1944: His Private Conversations*, translated by Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (New York: Enigma Books, 2000), 74.

advocated by the *Reichsführer-SS* and the education system, both of which merely reflected the pronouncements previously made by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* to promote fertility.

The commencement of the Second World War did not diminish the obligation of men to beget children. If anything, the loss of life during the fighting prompted the Nazi government to reinforce the magnitude of this responsibility. In 1942, in his capacity as the head of the *Wehrmacht*, Hitler issued an order whereby he withdrew from the front the last surviving son in every family. Himmler followed suit and announced the “SS Order to the Last Sons” on August 15, 1942. In this edict, Himmler claimed that Hitler had extracted the soldiers “because the nation and state have an interest in your families not dying out.” He gave each man one year to produce racially valuable children so that he was no longer the last member of his family. Once the soldier had safeguarded his lineage, he would return to the frontline.¹⁶³

Besides trying to maintain the morale among the population, Himmler employed the “SS Order to the Last Sons” to protect the blood he had toiled to accumulate. He did not want to risk losing the reproductive capabilities of his SS men to the war before each had the opportunity to secure his biological legacy. In a related manner, he wanted his men to feel confident that if something should befall any of them, then the SS under Himmler’s guidance would provide for the families. In November 1937, Himmler announced the “Principles over the care of widows and orphans.” He called on the SS men to support the wives and children of their dead comrades. This task went beyond financial provisions and included emotional comfort for the women and proper National Socialist upbringing for the children.¹⁶⁴ With both documents, Himmler sought to sustain his aristocracy and guarantee that his efforts to collect and perpetuate good German blood were not in vain. They additionally attempted to inculcate a sense of collective responsibility within the SS and to preserve the model of the SS as a nobility that surmounted traditional socio-economic norms.

Actively influencing familial dynamics formed the cornerstone of Himmler’s population policy. In the aforementioned December 1938 memorandum, “Population Policy in the SS Leader Corps,” he comprehensively expounded on his beliefs regarding past, present, and future

¹⁶³ Order quoted in Nationalsozialismus deutsche Arbeiter Partei und Schutzstaffeln, *Rassenpolitik*, 60 and translated and quoted in Noakes, *Nazism 1919-1945, Volume 4*, 374 “...weil Volk und Staat ein Interesse daran haben, daß Eure Familien nicht aussterben.”

¹⁶⁴ A reprint of “Grundgesetz über die Betreuung von Witwen und Waisen” can be found in “Die Pflichten des SS-Mannes und SS-Führers,” National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 15, Frames 2518681-83 and in Nationalsozialismus deutsche Arbeiter Partei und Schutzstaffeln, *Rassenpolitik*, 59-60.

demographic trends. He availed himself of history lessons to prove his judgment concerning the sound governing of positive eugenical measures. Recalling his Catholic upbringing, Himmler discussed the formation of the Order of the Society of Jesus by Ignatius Loyola in 1534. The Jesuits served in a similar capacity as the SS soldiers—troops faithful to their leader and their organization. The Jesuits have one fatal flaw according to Himmler; they profess a vow of chastity. Loyola believed that chastity gave him the means to reach his ultimate goals, a point with which Himmler staunchly disagreed. To support his position, Himmler compared the Jesuits with the Germanic Order of Knights (*der Deutsche Ritterorden*). Composed of men of good blood, this second association, which had prevailed in Germany and Europe prior to the rise of the Jesuits, disseminated German culture and established German supremacy in Europe. Because its knights had sworn themselves to chastity, however, the order eventually perished without the incorporation of fresh blood. As the valuable bloodstream of these knights dried up, they lost their preeminent position.¹⁶⁵

The atrophy of healthy German blood starkly contrasted with Himmler's fervent views on copious reproduction. "What is the country if the people are missing to use it and to master it?" Himmler contended. "At the moment, the people are probably there, but one can figure out how long it lasts until the offspring is no longer enough."¹⁶⁶ The efforts of every member of the Nazi party from Hitler and Himmler down through the rest of rank and file would be for naught if the right people did not have children. Himmler's analysis of history rendered the German nation incapable of survival without fit progeny—again, an idea that paralleled Schallmayer's views. Himmler could not reinforce this belief that Germany needed more racially valuable children often enough. The greater the emphasis he placed on it, the better the chance that his SS men would learn to accept this opinion as a natural belief. Full concurrence with the *Reichsführer's* perspective would make these soldiers far more receptive to his relentless persuasion to have children. This potential acquiescence bolstered Himmler's position within the SS and the Nazi party because it made him an integral facilitator in the process of securing a strong Germany.

Historical mismanagement of blood alone would not induce the SS men to reproduce, so Himmler once again relied on the susceptibility of his men regarding their desire to serve the Reich dutifully. Using the December 1938 memorandum, Himmler informed his soldiers that he

¹⁶⁵ "Bevölkerungspolitik in SS-Führerkorps," National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 123, Frame 2649251.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. "Was ist das Land, wenn die Menschen fehlen, es zu nutzen und zu beherrschen? Zur Zeit sind wohl die Menschen da, aber man kann sich ausrechnen, wie lange es dauert, bis der Nachwuchs nicht mehr ausreicht..."

wanted German society to associate the sight of an SS uniform with “a healthy flock of children” (*einer gesunden Kinderschar*).¹⁶⁷ Whereas assigning a definitive number of children per family had augmented the concept of positive eugenics, Himmler’s administrative skills once again emerged as he set down a plan for how each family could supply the requisite number of children. Under his arrangement, a SS man and his new wife could have two years to adjust to married life. After this grace period, Himmler expected the couple to have their first child. Taking a three-year break in between each child, Himmler estimated that each SS leader could father five children and thus sufficiently execute his duty.¹⁶⁸

With this reprisal of the theme of duty came a second powerful form of moral persuasion: a guilt trip. Early in the document, Himmler insisted “that Germany can only be alive if all good qualities of the Germans are passed on to children and grandchildren. The order of the SS is no community of sanctimonious loafers, no death chamber of good genetic makeup, but it should become the life cell of the German people.”¹⁶⁹ Without blatantly insulting his men, Himmler implied that an SS soldier who did not fulfill his biological responsibility degraded and ultimately undermined the value of the SS as an organization. This comment also elicited well-known tactics of Nazi propaganda. Himmler sought to make anyone who did not agree with his sentiment feel like an outsider who did not belong in the SS community. He attempted to herd the SS men into a group mentality whereby they all believed in the sanctity of a common ideal. Once he had engendered enthusiasm among them, he constantly reiterated the same idea; carrying out their duty to the Führer primarily consisted of providing Germany with an abundant and healthy population, which would ensure the longevity of Hitler’s Reich. Himmler wanted to convince his men that this service represented the utmost manifestation of their oath of loyalty to the SS, the Nazi party, and Adolf Hitler. He encapsulated this sense of allegiance in the last sentence of the memorandum: “We carry the skull as the sign of fidelity and readiness until death, and when it requires fate from us, we do not die for Germany for temerity or bravado, but because we know that we will live on in our offspring and Germany will live with them.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. “...dass Deutschland nur leben kann, wenn alle guten Eigenschaften der Deutschen sich auf Kinder und Kindeskinde vererben. Der Orden der SS ist keine Gemeinschaft frömmelnder Müssiggänger, keine Totenkammer gutter Erbanlagen, sondern soll die Lebenszelle des deutschen Volkes werden...”

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. “Wir tragen den Totenkopf als Zeichen der Treue und Einsatzbereitschaft bis zum Tode, und wann es das Schicksal von uns verlangt, sterben wir für Deutschland nicht aus Verwegenheit oder Tollkühnheit, sondern weil wir wissen, dass wir in unseren Kinder weiterleben werden und mit ihnen wird Deutschland leben.”

This document and every other aforementioned order issued by Himmler dealt with the same basic principle; namely he wrote in terms of biological growth of the German population and thus advocated the tenets of positive eugenics. Himmler's directives did not revolve around what his men may or may not have wanted. He created them with the underlying assumption that the SS pledge of fidelity meant that each SS man would blindly obey his edict to have children. Each SS family may have physically been able to produce the number of children that Himmler argued was feasible; a woman biologically could have a baby every year. However, this steadfast position maintained by Himmler hardly took anything else into consideration but his belief in the necessity of creating more children of good blood. This December 1938 memo proved that Himmler intended to hold true to his creed that he would collect German blood in any possible manner.

Additionally, Himmler's insistence on increasing the population went beyond the bonds of lawful matrimony. He did not content himself with finding means to persuade his SS men to father children only with their wives. The First World War had left almost half a million healthy and eligible women without husbands and subsequently childless. Homosexuality further retarded the growth of the population as these men withheld their reproductive capabilities. Finally, the escalating number of casualties and deaths on the battlefield threatened the ability of Germany to have enough successors to the current generation.¹⁷¹ Himmler felt as though these situations had perpetuated a crisis in Germany, and he was willing to bend conventional morality to find a solution.

On October 28, 1939, not even two months into the war, Himmler issued an order not simply condoning but actually encouraging his men to have illegitimate children. Once more invoking history to corroborate his position, Himmler wrote that "the old proverb that only he can die in peace who has sons and children must again hold good in this war, particularly for the SS."¹⁷² He explained that a soldier can face death with the comforting thought that all he has fought for will continue in his children. Himmler added that young German girls of good blood had no more honorable role than to provide these brave soldiers with children. To prevent dissent on financial grounds, Himmler assuaged any potential guilt among his men at the thought of leaving widows and orphans with the reassurance that he would personally appoint guardians

¹⁷¹ Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide*, 108 and Ettelson, "The Nazi 'New Man'," 329, 332.

¹⁷² Order translated and quoted in Noakes, *Nazism 1919-1945, Volume 4*, 368.

to protect all racially healthy children, a promise which he reiterated one month later. He ended by asking his men to acknowledge this duty of fatherhood as bravely as they had accepted their duty to risk their lives for Germany.¹⁷³ As with his attempts to persuade husbands and wives to promote the future of Germany through their children, with this command Himmler again highlighted the necessity of an SS man performing his biological duty outside of marriage. He would not allow either moral quibbles or financial ineptitude to derail his plans.

Himmler was not the only prominent Nazi leader to make a public statement in favor of illegitimacy. Rudolf Heß, the deputy to the Führer, commented on the issue when he published a letter addressed to an unmarried mother in the party newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, on Christmas Eve 1939. Heß repeatedly argued that a strong family formed the nucleus of the German state, and as such, the Nazi government had worked and would continue to work to maintain its integrity. Times of crisis, however, inevitably forced people to depart from traditional mores. Eligible young women must push aside moral scruples and guarantee that a healthy soldier did not enter the battlefield without first leaving behind his valuable blood through his children. Because the war prevented the marriage between these mothers and the soldiers, Heß indicated that these women could still receive widows' benefits if the men died.¹⁷⁴

Despite this proclamation by Heß, he and Himmler stood as a minority. Officially, the Nazi government had to reject Heß' letter because of its promotion of illegitimacy, and thus state and party propaganda touted the latter perspective; as noted by Goebbels in a 1941 diary entry on film, "the legitimate child must remain at least the norm."¹⁷⁵ Many people also misinterpreted Himmler's October 1939 order, especially the armed forces. Officers and soldiers in the army vehemently protested the carte blanche that Himmler allowed his men; they feared that it permitted the SS men to pursue their wives, sisters, and daughters at home while they fought on the front. *Fieldmarshal* Walther von Brauchitsch, Commander in Chief of the *Heers*, complained to General Alfred Jodl, the Chief of Operations of the *Wehrmacht*; Brauchitsch understood the need for more children, but he defended the sanctity of marriage and family.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 369 and Reider, *The Order of the SS*, 146. I have yet to encounter sources that describe if or how Himmler implemented this promise.

¹⁷⁴ "Rudolf Heß an einen unverheiratete Mutter," *Völkischer Beobachter*, December 24, 25, 26, 1939, p. 11. A translation of the letter can also be found in Noakes, *Nazism 1919-1945, Volume 4*, 369-71.

¹⁷⁵ Joseph Goebbels, *The Goebbels Diaries, 1939-1941*, translated and edited by Fred Taylor (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982), 321.

Even *Reichmarshal* Hermann Göring, the Commander in Chief of the *Luftwaffe* and a top Nazi official, supposedly disapproved of Himmler's order.¹⁷⁶

When these complaints reached Himmler, he responded in three different manners. First, he replied that Hitler supported the command; because of his venerated status among the people, Hitler's approval of a subject generally pacified any protest. Furthermore, nearly two years later, Hitler commented in a private conversation that because of the high number of unmarried women, the state could not scorn children born out of wedlock. Second, Himmler prepared a written answer in January 1940. He did not apologize for his October edict and countered that anyone who did not believe in the existence of illegitimate children in Germany should read Heß' letter from December. He defended the SS and countered that many SS men served on the front with the army. Himmler continued by commenting that he had not ordered his men to go after married women, and he denounced the people who had falsely interpreted his words. Moreover, he had faith in the ability of German women to protect themselves from unwanted advances. Third, Himmler directly addressed the soldiers on the western front on March 13, 1940. In this speech, he briefly discussed his October order and the necessity of more children due to the demographic impact from both World Wars. Notwithstanding this criticism, Himmler did not regret issuing this order. Almost two-and-a-half years later, he reiterated that the death toll due to the war verified his earlier command.¹⁷⁷

In the case of illegitimacy, Himmler practiced what he preached. With his wife Marga, he had a biological daughter, Gudrun, and an adopted son, Gerhard. Because of her poor health, Himmler remained married to his wife, but as of 1941 he had a fulltime mistress, Hedwig Potthast. In a deposition taken on May 22, 1945, two weeks after the formal surrender of Germany, Potthast admitted that she had served as Himmler's personal secretary from 1936 to

¹⁷⁶ Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Hitler and Nazi Germany: A History*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 189 and Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide*, 109-110.

¹⁷⁷ Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide*, 110-11; Noakes, *Nazism 1919-1945, Volume 4*, 372; and Trevor-Roper, *Hitler's Table Talk*, 352, 434. Notation of Himmler's preparation of the January letter can be found in "Diktat des Nachsatzbefehls zum Befehl vom 28.10.39; Brandt's Log," United States National Archives Microform Publications, Microform copy T-581, Roll 242, R38A, 14 January 1940, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md. The notes that Himmler used for his March 13 speech, which are in an almost indecipherable scrawl, can be found in "13 March 1940 speech," United States National Archives Microform Publications, Microform copy T-580, Roll 242, R37, no frame numbers, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md.

1941. After she had left her job, she bore him two children, Helge and Nanette Dorothea.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, Himmler technically met the four children quota he had repeatedly set for the SS, but he did not have four children by each woman.

As with everything else relating to his views on population policy, Himmler justified the decision to take a mistress based on the biological need for more children:

The fact that a man has to spend his entire existence with one wife drives him first of all to deceive her and then makes him a hypocrite as he tries to cover it up. The result is indifference between the partners. They avoid each other's embraces and the final consequence is that they don't produce children. This is the reason why millions of children are never born, children whom the state urgently requires. On the other hand the husband never dares to have children by the woman with whom he is carrying on an affair, much though he would like to, because middle-class morality forbids it. Again it's the state which loses, for it gets no children from the second woman either. The law is in direct contradiction to our crying need—children and still more children. We must show courage and act decisively in this matter...¹⁷⁹

Neither marriage nor infidelity was about pleasure or happiness. Everything in the belief system proclaimed by Himmler related to reproduction. He did not approve of an affair for the sake of escaping one's marriage, but for the ability to create more children. At least according to his official statements, sex was about the children conceived from the act and not about the intimacy or bond between two people. Sex without tangible results did not support his population policy. In the quote above as well as in the aforementioned orders, the promotion of children for the benefit of the state exceeded all personal desires. Himmler wanted the SS men to have children with their wives and children with their mistresses. He wanted them to forsake middle-class bourgeoisie morality to achieve this end, which would perpetuate the German nation under the guidance of the Nazi government. The Nazi state required an echelon of racially healthy children raised under its education system to survive, an argument that Himmler made in his orders and one which directly concurred with the formal instruction dispensed to school children. Himmler's commands indicated that he believed Germany had no future without more offspring.

¹⁷⁸ "Interview of Hedwig Potthast, 22 May 1945," United States National Archives Microform Publications, RG 238, Microform copy M-1270, Roll 27, R37, Frame 192, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md. and Infield, *Secrets of the SS*, 143.

¹⁷⁹ Quoted in Infield, *Secrets of the SS*, 144-45.

Returning to his views on German blood, Himmler's stance on infidelity and illegitimacy again proved his intention to amass good blood through any means necessary.

This accumulation of valuable children at all costs led Himmler to found the *Lebensborn* homes. Meaning "fountain of life," these homes provided medical care for hereditarily fit pregnant women and their newborn children. Created in September 1936, the SS eventually had six *Lebensborn* hospitals in Germany, nine in Norway, one in Belgium, and one in France.¹⁸⁰ In the order establishing this program, Himmler asserted that these homes would facilitate the adoption of children of good blood by SS leaders and their families. Declaring his personal management of the program, Himmler outlined the four goals of the homes: support of hereditarily valuable families, care for racially healthy pregnant women, care for newborns, and care for new mothers. Himmler expected that all SS men would join this program and make monetary contributions.¹⁸¹ He saw the homes as a means through which healthy unwed mothers could support SS families with the burden of increasing the population.¹⁸²

As with infidelity and illegitimacy, the *Lebensborn* program imparted yet another method through which Himmler could bypass traditional morality in his quest for good blood. The homes also gave him one more entity which he could directly supervise. This oversight allowed him to attempt to foster his population policy and provide those families whom he deemed worthy with equally valuable children. Because the *Lebensborn* program dealt more with the mothers and their children and because the fathers had a perfunctory role, it provided Himmler with greater access to and control over the reproductive capabilities of racially fit women.

Since the collapse of the Third Reich, however, the *Lebensborn* program has represented one of the most scrutinized policies of the Nazi government. The debate has arisen over whether the homes were nothing more than a breeding farm for SS men. Clarissa Henry and Marc Hillel, who advocate the "stud theory," insist that the system allowed the SS soldiers to free themselves from the moral obligations to care for the women whom they had impregnated. It was simply

¹⁸⁰ Gisela Bock, "Antinatalism, maternity and paternity in National Socialist racism," 244.

¹⁸¹ The full text of Himmler's order establishing the *Lebensborn* program can be found in Himmler's September 13, 1936 directive to SS officers about having four children, National Archives, Microform copy T-611, Roll 7, Order #433. A shortened reprint of the order can be found in "Die Pflichten des SS-Mannes und SS-Führers," National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 15, Frames 2518681-83. A translation of the order can be found in Benjamin Sax and Dieter Kuntz, eds., *Insider Hitler's Germany: A Documentary History of Life in the Third Reich* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1992), 381-82.

¹⁸² "Entwurf für die bevölkerungspolitische Schrift an die SS-Führer," National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 201, Frames 2742420-21.

another way for men to prove their fertility. These two authors cite the testimony of a former secretary in a home who declared that oftentimes an SS officer would father an illegitimate child, convince the pregnant woman to come to the home, and then arrange to adopt the child into his legitimate family. This method permitted the officer to increase the population of Germany and enlarge the size of his own family simultaneously.¹⁸³

On the other side of the argument, Gisela Bock and Robert Lewis Koehl counter that the homes were not SS bordellos. Bock describes them as maternity hospitals that assisted carefully screened women who carried the children of SS soldiers. Koehl admits that the homes may have encouraged sexual immoderation by members of the SS and the government may have “winked” at the resultant pregnancies, but Koehl avidly disagrees with viewing the homes as brothels. The *Lebensborn* hospitals simply provided racially fit mothers—both married and unmarried—with medical care for themselves and their newborns.¹⁸⁴

The *Lebensborn* program was not the only less than traditional policy that Himmler supported. Himmler had spoken with Hitler about the possibility of legalizing polygamous marriages for men. This idea predated the Nazi government. German philosopher and eugenics enthusiast Christian von Ehrenfels had recommended polygamy as a natural solution to allow superior individuals to reproduce at a higher rate; eugenicists, including Wilhelm Schallmayer, found the suggestion intriguing, but chose to emphasize other forms of positive eugenics instead. Himmler justified the idea on similar grounds. He argued that one man could have ten children each year with ten different women, but conversely, one woman could only have one child per year by one man. Hitler supported this idea because of the shortage of men, but nothing came to pass from the proposal.¹⁸⁵

Throughout all of his written commands concerning the SS and children, Himmler consistently focused on two elements: biology and duty. Having already selected for his organization those individuals whom he considered the racial elite, everything in his population policy revolved around the biological potential of these people. He attempted to elicit this potential through conveying his plans as one more obligation required of every dutiful SS man.

¹⁸³ Clarissa Henry and Marc Hillel, *Children of the SS*, translated by Eric Mosbacher (London: Hutchinson, 1976), 12, 53, 82.

¹⁸⁴ Bock, “Antinatalism, maternity and paternity in National Socialist racism,” 244 and Robert Lewis Koehl, *The Black Corps: The Structure and Power Struggles of the Nazi SS* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 118-19, 191.

¹⁸⁵ Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide*, 109; Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler*, 140-41; and Spielvogel, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, 189.

With both of these elements, however, Himmler did not take his men into consideration as anything but loyal soldiers of the SS. He failed to realize that while they remained honor bound to Hitler and had accepted his control over their marriages, the men did not agree that their official responsibilities reached into their extended familial lives. While Himmler had employed many of the same propaganda techniques that Hitler and Goebbels had successfully used, the orders did not get the results that Himmler wanted. As Gisela Bock neatly sums, there was a incongruent relationship between adherence to National Socialist belief and carrying it out.¹⁸⁶ Strongly professed loyalty among the SS men to their organization, to its leader, and to their Führer did not translate into action, namely the production of more children.

The statistics from 1936-1939 reveal a failure of birth promotion both in the SS as a whole and within the leader corps. As of early 1937, there were 50,542 total marriages in the SS; with an average marriage age of thirty-two for the men, these late nuptials had only produced 7,035 children, which equaled 1.52 children per marriage. At this time, fourteen percent of the SS marriages had produced no children, seventy-one percent had produced one or two children, and fifteen percent had produced three or more children.¹⁸⁷ By January 1, 1939, each SS marriage averaged 1.1 children. Even with an increase in the number of SS marriages by over 20,000 at the end of 1939, this low number of 1.1 children per marriage remained intact.¹⁸⁸

In his extensive population policy memo from December 1938, Himmler's detail oriented nature manifested itself with a series of charts that thoroughly itemized the marriage and offspring rates among the SS leaders. In table one, he noted that there were 1.22 children per SS leader marriage in 1936, 1.35 children in 1937, and 1.31 children in 1938. Using the marriage and birth statistics for 1937 and 1938 only, he surmised that it took 6.84 SS leader marriages to produce one child in 1937 and 7.63 leader marriages per one child in 1938. In the second table, he showed how the percentage of SS leaders who got married in 1937 and 1938 were both higher than the average marriage rate among all men in Germany.¹⁸⁹

The third, and by far most meticulous, table breaks down marriage and offspring data by the year in which an SS leader was born. The birth years in this table runs from 1897 through

¹⁸⁶ Bock, "Antinatalism, maternity, and paternity in National Socialist racism," 246.

¹⁸⁷ "Entwurf für die bevölkerungspolitische Schrift an die SS-Führer," National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 201, Frames 2742420-21.

¹⁸⁸ "Zahl der Verheirateten und Gesamtkinderzahl in der SS am 1.1.1939 und 31.12.1939," United States National Archives Microform Publications, Microform copy T-175, Roll 25, Frame 2531332, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md.

¹⁸⁹ "Bevölkerungspolitik in SS-Führerkorps," National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 123, Frame 2649251.

1913. Each respective birth year has a miniature chart that illustrates how many men joined the SS leader corps in 1936, 1937, and 1938, how many of these men had gotten married during those three years, and how many children each married leader had. For example, 620 men born in 1905 enlisted in the SS leader corps in 1938. Of these 620 leaders, the chart reveals that 514 (82.90%) were married and 106 (17.10%) were not. Of those men who had taken a wife, 137 (26.65%) had no children, 165 (32.10%) had one child, 142 (27.63%) had two children, 55 (10.70%) had three children, and 15 (2.92%) had four or more children.¹⁹⁰

Within the text of this same memorandum, Himmler discussed the marriage and child statistics for the SS leader corps as a whole. Taking the birth years between 1897 and 1913 into account, the SS leader corps had 9,743 men; from this number, 7,245 (74.36%) had gotten married by December 1938. The married SS leaders had a total of 9,491 children, which equaled 1.31 children per marriage or 0.97 children per SS leader. Dropping the year of birth from his calculations, Himmler then explained the marriage and birth numbers for the SS leader corps as a whole. With 13,746 leaders in the SS, 10,625 (77.30%) were married, and these marriages had produced 15,785 children. This number amounted to 1.48 children per marriage or 1.15 children per SS leader.¹⁹¹ By the end of 1939, this child per marriage rate had dropped to 1.41.¹⁹²

These results baffled Himmler. He had personally set the criteria for the entrance into the SS. He knew that the doctors working for the SS had deemed his men and their wives racially fit. Himmler could not understand how these hereditarily valuable individuals, especially the SS leaders, had failed to come close to creating the four children per marriage that he believed Germany needed for its survival. In his lengthy December 1938 memo, he declared this bewilderment: “How is it possible that the leaders, who still have life left, still have 20.13 percent of marriages childless? By medical examinations and in fact before final reception into the SS, it was determined that the relevant SS leaders are physically and racially healthy.”¹⁹³ This lack of comprehension most likely goes back to Himmler’s strictly biological population policy. He could not see beyond the barriers of racial quality and biological necessity. Professed

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² “Zahl der Verheirateten und Gesamtkinderzahl in der SS am 1.1.1939 und 31.12.1939,” National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 25, Frame 2531332.

¹⁹³ “Bevölkerungspolitik in SS-Führerkorps,” National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 123, Frame 2649251. “Wie ist es möglich, dass bei den Führern, die aus dem Lebensblock austreten, noch 20,13% der Ehen überhaupt kinderlos geblieben sind? Durch ärztliche Untersuchungen ist festgestellt worden, und zwar vor der endgültigen Aufnahme in die SS, dass die betreffenden SS-Führer körperlich und rassisch gesund sind.”

loyalty among the SS did not mean that they accepted every edict dictating the standards for their personal behavior. The SS had permitted his interference when it came to spousal selection, but did not allow this meddling to intrude further into their families.

Furthermore, his encouragement for illegitimate children and persuasion to join the *Lebensborn* homes did not succeed. Scarcely 200 SS men had children outside of marriage, and not even 60% of the SS leaders joined the *Lebensborn* program, something that Himmler had required of them in his original order.¹⁹⁴ As with the attempts to modify familial dynamics, the men of the SS did not wish follow Himmler's influence regarding extramarital morality. Whereas Himmler thought that institutional loyalty to the SS bound its members to follow his every command faithfully, the numeric results clearly indicated that outside of marriage order the members of the SS saw their personal lives as independent from their professional duties. As long as the SS men as a whole remained united in keeping their familial lives separate, no amount of persuasion on Himmler's part would alter their choices regarding family dynamics.

Therefore, the positive eugenical measures used by Himmler in creating his population policy had elements of success and failure. Through rigorous health screening, he effectively brought together the most racially fit men and women in Germany. He did not leave natural selection to chance, but orchestrated couplings based on the racial ideology professed by the Nazi regime. These marriages collected the "good blood" and right Aryan characteristics cherished by the Nazi government and subsequently formed a strong foundation for potential success. Himmler's micromanagement of spousal selection also implemented Wilhelm Schallmayer and Charles Davenport's ideas regarding marriage restriction. The failure of Himmler's planning related to the number of children in each family. He could clearly bring the men and women together, but once married, he could not prescribe to them when and how to establish their families. Nor could he convince his SS men to eschew bourgeoisie morality as easily as he had in regards to taking a mistress for the sake of procreation.

The dearth of high birth numbers prevented Himmler's new blooded aristocracy from replenishing Germany with the Aryan master race. Himmler's relentless repetition throughout his orders concerning reproduction fell on deaf ears. The soldiers of the SS believed that they could loyally serve Hitler without having more children than they wanted. Unlike the

¹⁹⁴ "Entwurf für die bevölkerungspolitische Schrift an die SS-Führer," National Archives, Microform copy T-175, Roll 201, Frames 2742420-21 and Thompson, "*Lebensborn*," 66, 77.

Reichsführer-SS, they mostly kept their professional lives separate from their personal ones. They did not desire to challenge traditional morality when it came to reproduction. Lacking their acquiescence, Himmler's population policies and his attempts to redefine positive eugenics more narrowly failed because his SS men ultimately refused to yield to his attempted encroachment into their familial obligations.

CHAPTER FOUR:
“WHY SHOULDN’T THE FATHER ALSO PROVIDE FOR HIS CHILD?”:
DAS SCHWARZE KORPS AND THE PROMOTION OF FATHERHOOD IN THE SS

Through various formal memorandums, Heinrich Himmler sought to persuade his SS men to adopt his liberal population policy. Himmler wanted a strong German nation led by his handcrafted racially superior aristocracy. The tenor of his orders indicated that he personally had no ethical qualms with eschewing traditional morality to achieve his goal of improving the quality of the population. His insistence on the preeminence of biological characteristics in reproduction paralleled the education on race provided by the National Socialist government. Both Himmler’s directives and the lessons aspired to have elite citizens supply Germany with a stock of healthy children and thus ensure the future existence of the Thousand Year Reich. Nonetheless, Himmler’s commands stood apart from the general education due to one important distinction; whereas the government aimed its instruction toward the entire population, Himmler designed his orders only for his privileged SS men. These documents created an official strategy for the management of the personal lives of the SS by the *Reichsführer*.

These private edicts issued by Himmler had a public counterpart with *Das Schwarze Korps*, the newspaper of the *Schutzstaffeln*. During its ten years of circulation, *Das Schwarze Korps* periodically published articles, editorials, and letters that dealt with the issues of marriage, fatherhood, and children. These pieces overtly discuss many of the same themes that Himmler addressed in an official capacity. Articles in the newspaper also delve into the less scientific and more practical subjects of fatherhood. *Das Schwarze Korps* dedicated an entire series of articles to reporting the birth of children in SS families. Other pieces reveal the pride of fathers, the involvement of fathers in the education of their children, the financial obligations of fathers, and the day-to-day participation of fathers. The newspaper often featured letters from fathers to their sons as well as testimonials from men on the battlefield who talked about finding the motivation to fight in their children because it sought to have its male readers embrace the belief that

soldierly duties did not hinder a man from serving as a father as well. The overarching aim of these publications was to provide open and regular encouragement for the SS men to augment their families. The newspaper moreover suggested that a man should not consider fatherly affection as unmanly, but as a worthy characteristic of a proud SS soldier; it presented a personal father akin to the figure that David Rodnick discovered in his postwar interviews.¹⁹⁵

The Nazi government and its leader held the press in high esteem. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler asserted that the press was a “great power” with the capacity for a strong, penetrating, and repetitive influence on the people. It taught the adult population and was therefore of immense importance to the state. The government had the responsibility to use the press as an “instrument of popular education.”¹⁹⁶ At a dinner almost two decades later, Hitler commented that “it was evident to my eyes that a State which had at its disposal an inspired press and journalists devoted to its cause possessed therein the greatest power that one could possibly imagine.”¹⁹⁷ Dr. F. A. Six, a professor at the University of Königsberg, corroborated many of these views during a speech made in 1937. According to Six, the German press worked to educate citizens about the Nazi philosophy. It sought to promote international understanding and cooperation and to show the world the peaceful intentions of Germany under the National Socialist government.¹⁹⁸

Printed in Berlin on a weekly basis from March 1935 through March 1945 by Franz Eher and edited by Gunter d’Alquen, *Das Schwarze Korps* supplied the SS with a strong and repetitive press influence. It did not educate the SS about the Nazi philosophy, to which these soldiers had already dedicated their lives, but about how they, as elite members of the new German aristocracy, could strengthen the supremacy of the Nazi state. The paper reflected the views of the SS leadership and had the reputation of representing the opinions of Himmler and the SS.¹⁹⁹ This form of public instruction reinforced the idea of a group identity and mentality that Himmler wanted all men in the SS to embrace because the newspaper created a forum that dictated what made an appropriate father. This newspaper of the SS published articles that reiterated the themes covered by Himmler’s official directives. The topics concurrently

¹⁹⁵ For more information on Rodnick’s research, see the introduction.

¹⁹⁶ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 240, 242.

¹⁹⁷ Trevor-Roper, *Hitler’s Table Talk*, 479-80.

¹⁹⁸ John A. Hess, “Free Speech and the Nazi Press,” *The German Quarterly* vol. 11, no. 4, part 1 (November 1938), 192-93.

¹⁹⁹ Combs, *The Voice of the SS*, 22, 32-33, 35.

presented in the paper included encouraging marriage, survival of the German people through reproduction, creating of a new aristocracy based on race, illegitimacy, low numbers of children per family, and linking the image of SS men with healthy children.

As spelled out in his December 1931 “Engagement and Marriage Order,” Himmler wanted to ensure quality nuptials between his SS men and equally fit women. Articles in *Das Schwarze Korps* support this position. The editorial “When should we marry?” encourages early marriage. It contends that a man could consider himself lucky if he had the opportunity to enter into matrimony at a young age. The editorial insists that the nature of man compelled him to establish a family as soon as he feasibly could—a point-of-view, according to this editorial, that coincided with the Nazi philosophy that support marriage as an avenue to increase the proper race in Germany. Therefore, the state should promote early unions because the healthy offspring who emerged would benefit the nation. The editorial conversely argues that late marriages resulted in the loss of an entire generation over the course of a century, a dire fact that would have not pleased Himmler or other Nazi leaders who wanted a robustly populated Germany.²⁰⁰

A second article likewise endorses early marriage and insists that a father had the responsibility to persuade his sons to marry and secure his legacy by providing him with grandchildren. The article contends that the state must remove all obstacles to early marriages because Germany needed the best blood of the unborn youth.²⁰¹ Marriage at a young age created greater opportunity for the newlyweds to have more racially valuable children, and the birth of these children represented the most significant aim of Himmler’s population policy. His policy would, and eventually did, fail without these numbers, but the state of matrimony still afforded the best means to achieve this objective.

Das Schwarze Korps additionally printed pieces that advocated the permanent survival of the population of Germany through reproduction. One article even specifically declares that “the eternal continuance of the German people is our belief and desire.”²⁰² The espousal in these articles for the dawning of a new generation of Germans indirectly supported Himmler’s appeals for more children to safeguard the German populace and nation. Many of them view the challenge to raise the birthrate as a battle of equal importance to the struggle raging in the

²⁰⁰ “Wann sollen wir heiraten?” *Das Schwarze Korps*, September 10, 1936, p. 2. Because all articles in this chapter come from *Das Schwarze Korps*, the title of the newspaper will hereafter be omitted from citations.

²⁰¹ “Die Väter von heute,” April 20, 1944, p. 5.

²⁰² “Familie und Sippe,” June 19, 1935, p. 10. “Unser Glauben und Wollen ist der ewige Bestand des deutschen Volkes.”

theaters of war. The people of Germany had to guarantee that they followed the victory on the battlefield with equal success on the home front because triumph in this former fight meant nothing without a robust, growing population at home who could sustain the military achievements. Sustenance of Germany and its wartime gains required a rejuvenation of the people through proper breeding, and the child cradle represented the most formidable means of obtaining the necessary victory.²⁰³

These articles also discuss how the leadership of the Nazi party fought to revive in the adult population the desire to have children. A healthy flock of children would maintain the heritage bestowed on them by the Führer. As the preservation of this legacy linked the present with the future, the decision whether or not a man wanted to father children could not be left to the individual. The German people had to answer the call to have children; the lack of will to reproduce sufficiently would otherwise endanger the nation.²⁰⁴ One article, “Why no children,” asserts that “there is probably no one in Germany today who does not realize the necessity of an elevated birth rate that National Socialism propagates. There are also very few in Germany who stand ideologically against these demands.”²⁰⁵ As noted in chapter three, however, ideological agreement did not equate fervent participation among the SS to increase the number of children. These articles in *Das Schwarze Korps* nonetheless tout the survival of a racially healthy and growing population as a prerequisite for a total victory of the German nation.

To emphasize ardently the value of a prodigious family and to encourage SS families to participate in the revival of the German population, one article in *Das Schwarze Korps* attempts to elicit the readers’ pride in the past achievements of famous Germans. An entire page of the newspaper showcases eminent Germans who had come from large families. Names mentioned include musician Franz Schubert (twelfth of fourteen children), Prussian King Frederick the Great (fourth of fourteen), musician Johan Sebastian Bach (sixth of twelve), musician Richard Wagner (last of nine), musician Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (last of seven), German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck (fourth of six), and First World War General Erich Ludendorff (third of

²⁰³ Ibid.; “Der Sieg des deutschen Kindes,” November 21, 1935, p. 2; Glück der Soldaten: Die Kinder,” February 26, 1942, p. 4; and “Die Väter von hute,” p. 5.

²⁰⁴ “Kinderreichtum um jeden Preis?” May 11, 1939, p. 14; “Kinderreichtum – Selbstverständlich,” April 6, 1939, p. 6.; and “Warum keine Kinder?” June 22, 1939, p. 6.

²⁰⁵ “Warum keine Kinder?” p. 6. “Es gibt wohl in Deutschland niemand mehr, der nicht der Notwendigkeit einer erhöhten Geburtenziffer einsieht, die der Nationalsozialismus propagiert. Es gibt in Deutschland auch nur noch wenige, die sich ideologisch gegen diese Forderungen stellen...”

six).²⁰⁶ The underlying assumption behind the pictures was that these well-respected and influential Germans would have never had to opportunity to contribute to Germany or to the world if their parents had limited their families to only one or two children. It moreover implies that present-day Germans should follow the lead of their ancestors by producing a bountiful family or else risk losing some of the greatest future contributors.

The point of generating large quantities of children tied in with a third important theme developed by Himmler: the foundation of a new German aristocracy based on the Nordic race. The press referenced the use of racially healthy Germans to form an aristocracy, which one article explicitly defines as “a new aristocratic socialist people community.”²⁰⁷ A second piece, “Child richness at all costs?” discusses the attempt to accentuate families rich with children above others, and it labels a full family as one that ideally had at least four children—the same number which Himmler had repeatedly expressed. However, the state and the newspaper did not see value in every large family. Both “Child richness” as well as a third article stress the necessity of placing biological prerequisites at the center of the policy designed to foster this burgeoning aristocracy. The articles clearly indicate that the nation only wanted biologically and racially healthy children. Big families full of unfit individuals burdened the nation. Reckless multiplication by those individuals whom the state had deemed unfit endangered the mental and physical well being of the rest of the population. Neither biology nor science had magic pills or miraculous surgery that could alter a person’s racial characteristics, and the government consequently had to enforce the sharpest selection possible so as to preserve the right racial qualities in Germany.²⁰⁸

Das Schwarze Korps exclusively argued for the expansion of a healthy population, but only within the bonds of matrimony. Unlike Himmler’s acceptance and endorsement of illegitimate children and the construction of the *Lebensborn* homes, no article printed in the paper advocated illegitimacy. No piece ever spoke against stepping outside of matrimony to have children and none denounced the children from illicit relationships, but the newspaper clearly did not publicly back a cause that the *Reichsführer* believed would support his aspiration to see a flourishing proliferation of children. *Das Schwarze Korps* did, however, contain at least one piece that comments on the status of an illegitimate child.

²⁰⁶ “Der Deutsche Mutter,” January 25, 1940, p. 3.

²⁰⁷ “Familie und Sippe,” p. 10. “Einer neuen adelstümlich-sozialistischen Volksgemeinschaft.”

²⁰⁸ “Kinderreichtum um jeden Preis?” p. 14 and “Warum keine Kinder?” p. 6.

At the beginning of “The Name of the Father,” the article indicates that according to the second point of the laws articulated by the judiciary committee of the Academy for German Law, every child had to take the name of his father. In reaction to this point, a young unwed mother wrote a vehement response to this recommendation by the committee. This woman testified that not all illegitimate children emerged from a love between two mutually conscientious people. While the committee’s proposal might threaten “playboys” who were trying to escape their responsibilities, the woman suggested that this law did not take into account those women who had to bare the responsibility for raising a child without the support of the father. She found it painful to think that her child should have to carry the burden of the name of a negligent man who had no role in her child’s life. His last name would only serve as a painful reminder of the man who never had and would never have anything to do with her child. She believed that because she raised and nourished her child, he should have the right to use her last name.²⁰⁹

Whereas *Das Schwarze Korps* did not openly agree with Himmler on promoting illegitimacy, it did concur with the *Reichsführer* regarding the statistics that showed a low number of children born to each racially healthy couple. In a particular article, “Child richness – understood,” a schoolteacher provided *Das Schwarze Korps* with the familial statistics for his classroom. His forty-one children came from thirty-five families, and over half of these children derived from families with too few children; specifically, 11.4 percent of the families had one child, 32.2 percent had two children, and 11.4 had three children. Only 17.1 percent of the families had the ideal four children, while 19.8 percent had five, six, or seven children. Finally, 5.7 percent of the families had ten or more children. This teacher calculated that each family had an average of 3.1 children—a number lower than the ideal four children, but a statistic over twice as large as the child rate for an SS family. He then computed the number of children per family for the parents of his pupils and found that each parent came from a family with an average of 6.6 children. Furthermore, 85 percent of the families from the parents’ generation had a minimum of four children. This teacher moreover argued that no one could reshape the mindset of the current generation of parents. Instead, one should focus on molding the attitude of the youth and convincing the pupils not to treat the idea of having a large family with hostility.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ “Den Namen des Vaters,” February 4, 1937, p. 4. Point two of this proposed law reads: “Mit der rechtskräftigen Vaterschaftsfeststellung erhält das Kind den Namen des Vaters.” [With the final paternity observation, the child gets the father’s name.]

²¹⁰ “Kinderreichtum – Selbstverständlich,” p. 6.

Two other articles convey corollary evidence concerning the necessity for more children. The first points out that the prolific ancestors of the current generation had not lived under easier circumstances, yet they still had managed to give birth to and care for their many progeny. The second uses the First World War as an example of the deleterious effect of low birth numbers. After the war, over one and a half million German women remained unmarried and childless. Even if each of those women had bore just two children, these births would have raised the population by three million individuals, approximately half of which would have been male. Taking infant mortality and unfit individuals into account, this article claims that these potential male children would have supplied the current German army with another 1,300,000 soldiers; these soldiers would have equaled one hundred divisions, an amount that would have long since rendered the Second World War over in Germany's favor.²¹¹

The information from these three articles acknowledges the lack of children from the current generation of parents. The pieces attest that Germany had suffered and would continue to suffer deadly consequences as a result of this deficiency in reproduction. In a limited manner, the third article suggests that because those people who had reproduced following the First World War had not given birth to enough offspring, the soldiers serving on the front lines now had fewer comrades on whom to rely. This same message served as an ominous warning to those young adults who contemplated starting their own families during the early 1940's; Germany would inevitably face a dismal future if these individuals repeated the past mistake of the post First World War generation and did not have enough children to safeguard the healthy racial lineage of post Second World War Germany.

In his December 1938 memorandum, Himmler stated that he wanted the sight of an SS man in uniform associated with "a healthy flock of children." As a weekly publication, *Das Schwarze Korps* presented an ideal location to see the fruition of this wish. Yet, despite this desired correlation, most of the pictures of children do not contain a father or an SS man in uniform. Generally, the pictures solely have happy and innocent children. Animals such as puppies or bunnies appear in the photos with children more often than a parental figure. In the exceptional cases when the newspaper printed a picture of a father in a domestic scene, the photos always display a happy reunion or bonding between the proud father and his healthy and vibrant young children. A July 1937 picture illustrates an SS soldier kneeling next to a baby

²¹¹ Ibid.; "Warum keine Kinder?" p. 6; and "Die Väter von heute," p. 5.

carriage while a May 1940 photograph shows a father holding his two children while they played with a small toy car. A picture from January 1941 depicts a father sitting at the dinner table with his wife and child, and snapshot in May 1942 portrays a little girl smiling while in the arms of her uniformed father.²¹² Himmler did not take proper advantage of the captive reading audience of *Das Schwarze Korps*: the SS soldiers and their wives. If he had wanted to reach his men pictographically, this newspaper gave him a tailor-made audience. It represented the ideal outlet for him to emphasize to his SS men the benefits of fatherhood, but in the case of using pictures, he failed to take advantage of this optimum opportunity.

Many of the articles published in *Das Schwarze Korps* publicly reiterate the same subjects that Himmler covered in his private memorandums to the SS. Additional pieces, however, deal with supplementary topics relating to the more practical applications of fatherhood and children. One recurrent series of articles, “On Relations and Family,” epitomizes the everyday reality of families and parenthood by providing a section of the paper where SS men could list their recent nuptials and birth of their children.²¹³ This section ran periodically from May 8, 1935 through the last edition of the paper on March 29, 1945. The newspaper halted its publication between August 17, 1939 and May 15, 1941 without citing a reason for the stoppage. As these dates roughly correlated with the weeks prior to the opening of the Second World War through a month before the commencement of Operation Babarossa against the Soviet Union, perhaps the paper felt it necessary to concentrate more on the then successful war efforts of the German armed forces. Moreover, with this continual military triumph, most of the young men were possibly situated on the fronts, and without their presence at home, the numbers of children born in that time frame probably decreased.

Throughout the tenure of the newspaper, the style of this section and its position in the paper varied. In 1935, 1936, and 1937, this series of articles remains consistent. All but one appeared on page four at a time when the length of the paper was more than twenty-five pages per week. At first they were located in a column on the right side of the page, but they were soon more commonly found in a wide row across the bottom of the page. The marriage listings

²¹² The pictures described above can be found on the following dates and pages: July 29, 1937, p. 3; May 30, 1940, p. 11; January 23, 1941, p. 11; and May 21, 1942, p. 3. Other examples of fathers with children can be found on the following dates and pages: July 3, 1935, p. 3; March 19, 1936, p. 11; March 26, 1936, p. 10; February 18, 1937, p. 3; August 10, 1939, p. 13; January 4, 1940, p. 11; January 16, 1941, p. 11; March 20, 1941, p. 3; and February 24, 1944, p. 3.

²¹³ The German title: “Aus Sippe und Familie.”

came first, followed by the birth announcements. During these first three years, each article broke the marriage and birth proclamations down by location of the SS soldier. In the very first “On Relations and Family” from May 8, 1935, the piece arranged the SS marriages between March 1 and April 15, 1935 based one of ten different positions in Germany, such as south, northwest, east, or middle. For example, in the eastern section (*Oberabschnitt Ost*), SS *Sturmbannführer* Hermann Brandt had married Charlotte Schroeder. As for the publication of newborns in this same issue, in the middle section (*Oberabschnitt Mitte*), SS *Hauptsturmführer* Paul Kunze celebrated the birth of his son on March 5.²¹⁴

The page location—a wide row across the bottom of page four—remained intact for the 1938 editions of “On Relations and Family.” Of the eight times it appeared in the paper, however, it only lists births in five issues. For those times when the articles announced births, they follow the same format as seen in 1935, 1936, and 1937. The last appearance of “On Relations and Family” in 1938 is on May 12. After this date, publication of this section halts until 1939, and the newspaper never indicated why this series had stopped, nor if it would resume at a later date.²¹⁵

For the first five issues of “On Relations and Family” in 1939, the sections physically looked different. The title changed to the lengthier “We have the will for the victory of the children and we are gaining this victory.”²¹⁶ There was a frilly ribbon banner across the top and the bottom of the section. These five articles also did not state any marriages; they only recorded the birth of children. This time the newspaper did not list the men by physical location or the children by date of birth, but rather these five sections were randomly organized.²¹⁷

After this change in the first five articles, the title returned to “On Relations and Family,” but the style altered again. This second variation lasted through August 17, 1939, when the

²¹⁴ “Aus Sippe und Familie,” 8 May 1935, p. 4. The following list contains the dates when “Aus Sippe und Familie” appeared in *Das Schwarze Korps* in 1935, 1936, and 1937; all of these articles appear on page four, unless otherwise noted: for 1935 – May 15, June 5, 19, July 3, 17, 24, 31, August 14, 21, 28, September 5, 12, 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, November 14, p. 6, November 21, 28, and December 12, 26; for 1936 – January 9, 23, February 20, 27, March 5, 19, 26, April 2, 9, 23, May 7, 21, 28, June 11, 18, July 9, 16, 23, 30, August 6, October 8, 15, 22, 29, November 5, 12, 19, 26, and December 3, 10, 31; for 1937 – January 7, 21, 28, February 18, March 11, 18, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6, 13, 20, June 3, 10, 17, 24, July 1, 8, 22, August 12, 19, 26, September 2, 9, 23, 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28, November 4, 11, 18, 25, and December 16, 23.

²¹⁵ The following lists the dates and pages of “Aus Sippe und Familie” for 1938; the articles are found on page four: January 6, 13, 20, 27, February 17, March 10, 30, May 12.

²¹⁶ The German title: “Wir haben den Willen zum Sieg des Kindes und wir werden diesen Sieg erfechten.”

²¹⁷ This new format appeared on page four of the following 1939 editions of the paper: February 2, 9, 16, 23, and March 2.

section halted publication again, this time until 1941. This modified “On Relations and Family” now appeared on page five of the newspaper, which still ran over twenty pages per issue, and took up the entire page instead of just a column. It announced both marriages and births, and it did not divide the SS men down by location, but still arbitrarily arranged each of these segments within the article. The most dramatic change, however, was that this section now contained pictures of newborns, infants, and toddlers. Starting with the May 18 edition, one final addition emerged; the articles arrayed the birth announcements by the number of children per SS family. For instance, in the May 18 article, SS *Untersturmführer* Fritz Winkelmann welcomed the birth of his daughter on April 13; the announcement of this birth was listed under five children because this daughter represented the fifth child in the Winkelmann family. Although the number of children per family reached as high as ten children, the majority of babies were listed under SS families celebrating the birth of their first, second, or third child.²¹⁸

When this section of the paper resumed publication on May 15, 1941, it had returned to the text only format from 1935, 1936, and 1937. Most of the articles were located on page six, though they occasionally turned up on pages eight or nine. As of October, they appeared on page seven, which situated them closer to the end of the paper; the total length of *Das Schwarze Korps* had shortened to eight to ten pages per issue, most likely because of the shortage of paper and the frequent bombings of Berlin by the British Royal Air Force. Marriage notices were still placed above birth listings. However, the latter proclamations had a new form of organization. First all of the sons born to SS men were stated and then all of the daughters, and within this gendered division the children were put in order by date of birth. These announcements also gave the first name of the baby.²¹⁹

By 1942, 1943, 1944, and 1945, “On Relations and Family” had developed a standard wartime format. With wide columns at the bottom of the page, the articles still divided the newborns chronologically by sex. Each one declared how many total children an SS man had after the birth as well as how many war children had been born in the family. For example, the June 18, 1942 edition of “On Relations and Family” announced the February 11 birth of Irmin to

²¹⁸ This second format for 1939 appeared on page five in the following editions: March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 13, 27, May 4, 11, 18, May 25, June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, July 6, 13, 20, 27, and August 3, 10, 17.

²¹⁹ The following lists the dates and pages of “Aus Sippe and Familie” for 1941; the articles are found on page six unless otherwise noted: May 15, p. 9, May 22, 29, June 5, June 12, p. 8, June 19, June 26, July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, August 7, 14, 21, 28, September 4, 11, 25, October 2, p. 7, October 9, p. 7, October 16, p. 7, October 30, p. 4, November 6, p. 7, November 20, p. 7, December 4, p. 7, and December 25, p. 4.

SS *Hauptsturmführer* Gotz Walther Barnett; Irmin was the third son in the family and the second war child.²²⁰ The actual page location of this series of articles varied from edition to edition during these years. In 1942, all but one article was on page seven; in 1943, they were predominantly located on page seven; in 1944, they were mainly found on page eight, although they moved up to page six toward the end of the year; and in 1945, every article was on page six. Regardless of the exact page number, “On Relations and Family” was now almost consistently placed at the end of a much shorter newspaper. In fact, in the final edition of *Das Schwarze Korps* on March 29, 1945, “On Relations and Family” was the last article on the last page.²²¹

The series “On Relations and Family” held significance for the themes of fatherhood and family in the SS. First and foremost, this section demonstrates the public pride in the birth of Germany’s new aristocracy. The articles do not state whether every SS man had to announce the birth of his child, but as this part of the newspaper ran fairly consistently for almost the entire duration of *Das Schwarze Korps*, clearly enough SS soldiers consented to the publication of their private affairs. Furthermore, as “On Relations and Family” literally catalogues the naissance of the Nazi nobility, it gave tangible credence to Himmler’s modus operandi. Publicizing newborns demonstrated the success of positive eugenics on a superficial level because, despite the lackluster numbers that existed per SS family according to official documentation, this section illustrated a definitive increase in the number of children in Germany. From the outside looking in, positive eugenical measures had increased the population of the racially fit members of the German population.

This section used the birth announcements to promote the ideal of prolific parenthood. It augmented the merits of having a large family, especially during 1939 when the articles

²²⁰ “Aus Sippe und Familie,” June 18, 1942. p. 7.

²²¹ The following list contains the dates and pages when “Aus Sippe und Familie” appeared in *Das Schwarze Korps* from 1942-1945: for 1942, all of the articles are found on page seven except the first one – January 22, p. 4, February 12, 26, March 12, 26, April 9, 23, May 14, 28, June 4, 18, July 9, 23, August 6, 20, September 3, 17, October 1, 8, 15, 22, November 5, 12, 19, 26, and December 3, 17, 24, 31; for 1943, all of the articles are on page seven unless otherwise noted – January 14, 24, 28, February 4, 18, 25, March 4, 11, April 1, 15, 22, 29, May 13, May 20, p. 9, June 3, 10, 17, July 8, 15, 22, July 29, August 5, 12, 19, 26, September 9, 16, 23, 30, October 7, 21, 28, November 4, 11, 18, December 9, p. 6, December 16, p. 6, December 23, p. 8, and December 30, p. 8; for 1944, all of the articles are on page eight unless otherwise noted – January 6, 13, January 20, p. 7, January 27, February 3, February 10, p. 7, February 17, 24, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13, 20, 27, May 4, 11, 18, 27, June 1, p. 6, June 8, 15, 22, 29, July 6, 13, 20, 27, August 3, 10, 17, August 24, p. 4, August 31, p. 4, September 7, 14, 21, September 28, p. 4, October 5, p. 6, October 12, p. 6, October 10, p. 6, October 26, p. 6, November 2, p. 6, November 9, p. 6, November 16, p. 6, November 23, p. 6, November 30, p. 6, December 7, p. 6, December 14, p. 6, December 21, p. 6, and December 28, p. 6; for 1945, all of the articles are on page six – January 4, 11, 18, 25, February 1, 8, 15, and March 1, 22, 29.

organized the children by how many existed in a family. This type of familial advertisement openly created peer pressure to encourage greater success because publishing the birth of one's child publicly revealed that an SS man and his wife had fulfilled their biological duty for the *Reichsführer*, Führer, and Third Reich. It likewise flaunted the victory of childbirth on the home front as a counterpart to the military triumph on the battlefield during the early years of the war. These children represented the Germans who would safeguard in the future those gains that the soldiers had won in the war.

Finally, "On Relations and Family" kept the ideal of parenthood alive for a decade. Its continuing presence in the newspaper connected children with the sustenance of Germany. The section clearly held greater importance at the start of its run from 1935-1937 when it occupied a position close to the front of the newspaper. It was never headline news, but it warranted considerable attention due to its location within the first few pages of the paper. Its significance grew during 1939 when the articles bolstered the idea of parenthood through the imagery of children within each piece in the prewar months. During the middle and later years of the war, the value of this series fell as it was pushed toward the end of an increasingly shorter newspaper. Nonetheless, once it resumed publication in 1941, "On Relations and Family" remained in the paper until the end, and its presence upheld the idea that children represented a key element to the future success of the German Reich.

"On Relations and Family" signified the theme of life as a consequence of a fertile marriage. Additional articles in *Das Schwarze Korps* exemplified other aspects of fatherhood, including the reaction of men to the birth of their children. The Nazi government wanted fathers to renew their sense of joy over their racial responsibility and take pride in their ability to have children. According to one article, "the most precious and happy goods in life are as follows: health, love, and children; man cannot buy these with money, they are gifts of heaven that we should gratefully and humbly accept."²²² A second article published on the very same day and page as the first reports the immense joy felt by an SS soldier, *Obersturmführer* Jurgen V., when he became the father to both a son and a daughter within two years of his February 1940 marriage. "Through my splendid children," he wrote, "whom I could only hold in my arms a

²²² "Gesundheit, Liebe, Kinder," October 1, 1942, p. 4. "Die kostbarsten und beglückendsten Güter des Lebens, als da sind: Gesundheit, Liebe, und Kinder, kann man sich nicht mit Geld erkaufen, sie sind Geschenke des Himmels, die wir dankbar und demütig hinnehmen sollten..."

few days, I became infinitely rich.”²²³ The newspaper had earlier reported the immeasurable satisfaction of another father, Helmut Lewenhardt, as he attempted to compose the birth announcement of his sixth child for his local paper in Essen. He wrestled to find the right words to express his ecstasy over his third son, and after realizing the benefits that his son would give to Germany, he finally reached the appropriate words: “Germany shall live even if we must die!”²²⁴ Both of these men very gratefully received their children with ecstatic aplomb. Each of their reactions reveal what *Das Schwarze Korps* and Himmler expected of a new father. These articles implied that every father should respond to his newborn child with similar candor and excitement.

Once the fathers had welcomed the babies into their respective families, they had other responsibilities regarding their children. Two different articles illustrate the day-to-day tasks relevant for fathers. The first, “Is this unmanly?” focuses on contributions prior to the war and emphasizes the acceptability of actions undertaken by a father for his children. It plainly avers that a father should not take over the responsibilities of a mother, but Nazi society clearly accepted that a man could help his wife with her domestic duties. With this assistance, a man would lose nothing of his manliness or dignity, but would in fact prove his position as “a genuine man and a proper husband.”²²⁵

This same article contains five pictures demonstrating the acceptable care that a father should provide for his children. The first image on the top left depicts a father pushing the baby carriage while taking a stroll with his wife and son; the caption exclaims, “This father fears nothing unmanly to his appearance. He decreases the troubles of his wife.”²²⁶ The second photograph shows a family outing. The uniformed father carried his daughter, an action which the words underneath the illustration strongly support: “The smallest of the family has become tired from a walk in the forest. Now should the mother...no, our SS-comrade shows that he has no fear.”²²⁷ The third snapshot reveals an SS man in uniform aiding a mother with her baby carriage, and beneath it the footer notes: “Uniform and baby carriage, both rescue the soldier.”²²⁸

²²³ “Ein glücklicher Vater,” October 1, 1942, p. 4. “...durch meine prächtigen Kinder, die ich auch nur wenige Tage in meinen Armen halten konnte, bin ich unendlich reich geworden.”

²²⁴ “Der patriotische Papi,” July 16, 1936, p.7. “Deutschland soll leben, auch wenn wir sterben müssen!”

²²⁵ “Ist das unmännlich?” August 10, 1939, p. 14. “...ein echter Kerl und ein richtiger Mann...”

²²⁶ Ibid., 13. “Dieser Vater fürchtet nicht, unmännlich zu erscheinen. Er nimmt seiner Frau gern einen Mühe ab.”

²²⁷ Ibid. “Das Kleinste der Familie ist auf einem Waldspazie gang müde geworden. Sollte nun die Mutter...nein, unser SS-Kamerad zeigt, daß er keine Angst hat...”

²²⁸ Ibid. “Uniform und Kinderwagen, beides birgt den Soldaten...”

The last two pictures portray a man feeding a bottle to and changing the diaper of a baby. Once again, the caption affirms the encouragement of the newspaper and the party for these deeds: “Why shouldn’t the father also provide for his child...? He thereby loses nothing of his masculinity, but he shows himself in such a case that his love for his wife and his child is not only lip service.”²²⁹

These depictions furnish a persuasive argument with respect to the vital participation of a father in the daily life and upbringing of his children. They impart the vision of an active father who cared for his family. Furthermore, these pictures perfectly match the type of correlation that Himmler proclaimed as ideal in his December 1938 memorandum. They demonstrate the very image that Himmler wanted associated with his SS soldiers: strapping young men with healthy wives and cherubic children. Finally, they publicly state that fatherly admiration and care were acceptable and admirable traits for SS men. There was nothing unmanly in fatherly affection—again the very image the Rodnick observed directly after the war.

The second article, “Father on Leave,” concentrates on the daily interactions of a father with his family while on a reprieve from military service. Neither the father nor his children could conceal their elation at seeing one another. The boys vied for the attention of their father and bombarded him with questions about the front, which the father patiently answered. The article relates how the family found mutual comfort in the presence of one another. Even after the father had returned to the front, the sons did not let his memory slip away. They relived the encounter over and over again and recalled what their father had said and what their father had done while at home. As in the previous article, this one has pictures of the father playing games with his children, tucking them into bed, and demonstrating what he did on the front.²³⁰ These photos prove that even in the middle of a war, a soldier had the ability to serve actively as a father to his young and impressionable children.

Fathers additionally assisted with educating their children. An article from May 1936 affirms that fathers participated in the educational upbringing of their children through their early teenage years. At this time, daughters pulled away from their father’s oversight as they matured, only to grow closer before the nuptials of the blossoming young women. Sons tended to rebel

²²⁹ Ibid. “Warum soll nicht auch mal der Vater sein Kind versorgen...? Er verliert dadurch nichts von seiner Männlichkeit, wohl aber zeigt sich in sollen Fällen, daß seine Liebe zu Frau und Kind nicht nur Lippenbekenntnis ist.”

²³⁰ “Vater auf Urlaub,” January 4, 1940, pp. 11-12.

from their fathers before realizing that they stood behind their fathers as the men who would carry the family lineage into the future. Once the fathers and the sons had reconciled with one another, a later article contends that they could mutually teach one another as the younger generation joined the older in the workforce.²³¹

The obligations of fathers also extended into the realm of finances. Loans and grants given by the government certainly relieved these expenses. Couples also received tax deductions for having children. This courtesy, however, did not extend to divorced fathers when the mother had custody of the children, a problem that upset men who had done their biological duty. A January 1939 article describes this plight of divorced fathers. The tax laws of the nation stated that in cases where the children lived with the mother and the father only provided monetary support, the father was regarded as childless. These laws compounded this slight by awarding fiscal benefits to the mother and the stepfather, a man who had no commitments to the children. The article insists that “this discrimination has a lasting effect damaging to the children, for [the father’s] natural interest is to save them.”²³²

The idea of a father working for the advantage of his children correlated with the belief that fathers needed to have an active role in their rearing, but this article on the financial dealings of divorced fathers demonstrates that even the Nazi system had its flaws. Biological obligations had their drawbacks. On a related note, because *Das Schwarze Korps* did not directly advocate illegitimacy, no clear indication existed of what benefits a father could and could not derive from these additional children. The paper never addressed the issue of whether a man could count these children among his own when attempting to reach the ideal four or when declaring his finances. Then again, as the majority of SS men did not step outside of their marriages to have children, this probably did not represent a vital concern to most of them.

Although the war had physically separated fathers from their children, it also gave rise to a subsequent means of endorsing fatherhood. *Das Schwarze Korps* featured letters from fathers at the front to their children. These personal correspondences permitted the men to influence the upbringing of their offspring in spite of the war. In some of the letters, the father comes across sternly, while in others, he acts benevolently. When a father contacted his son in a letter written in February 1941, this man advises his growing boy to perform his duties thoroughly. As a

²³¹ “Ein Generationsproblem,” May 21, 1936, p. 6; “Wenn der Vater mit dem Sohne...” August 5, 1937, p. 17.

²³² “Gleiches Recht für alle Väter!” January 12, 1939, p. 6. “...und diese Benachteiligung wirkt sich letzten Endes zum Schaden der Kinder aus, für die zu sparen ja sein natürliches Interesse ist.”

soldier in the Waffen-SS, he firmly relates everything in terms of military preparation. He warns his son never to hesitate, but to act decisively, especially when facing an opponent.²³³ This letter granted the father an opportunity to teach his son about the value of vigilance in the real world through using his own front line experiences.

The newspaper reprinted a May 1941 letter that Alfons Putz wrote to his son on his ninth birthday. As in the letter from February, Putz offers some practical advice to his son, such as reminding him to “always be a good and helpful comrade.”²³⁴ However, Putz had a far gentler tone as he spoke to his son. The pride he felt for his child emerges in his opening words: “With much love, I think of you on your birthday. Nine years ago, your mom gave you life and made us all quite happy with you. Because a child is the sunshine in the family. You are a healthy, faithful, and a really good German boy, [who] brings us much joy.”²³⁵ Putz sends his best wishes to his son, and he implores the boy to live righteously. He does not direct this advice in a strictly educational sense, but instead counsels his son as if he understood that this letter represented the last opportunity he possibly had to communicate with his child.

A somber mood permeates a third letter, this one in August 1943 from a war reporter named Walter Serocka to his unborn child. He attempts to encapsulate the entirety of a father’s influence in his child’s life in one brief passage. Serocka wrote as a man cognizant that he might never have the chance to see his child. He sadly acknowledges that his “fate is uncertain because it lies in the darkness of the war. Whether I will see you, whether you will ride on my knees, whether I admire your first step, and whether I can ever be a playmate and comrade for you, I do not know this because death marches at the side of the soldier.”²³⁶ The man explains to his future child that he too had to stand at the grave of his father at a very tender age. As a child himself, Serocka had provided solace to his widowed mother in the days after the First World War, and he recognized that his own unborn child might very well have to give his wife similar comfort.²³⁷

²³³ “Frontsoldat schreibt seinem Sohn,” February 27, 1941, p. 7.

²³⁴ “Der Soldat an seinen Sohn,” May 15, 1941, p. 7. “Sei also immer hilfsbereit und ein guter Kamerad.”

²³⁵ Ibid. “Mit großer Liebe denke ich an Deinem Geburtstag an Dich. Vor neun Jahren schenkte Dir Deine Mutti das Leben und machte uns all mit Dir recht glücklich. Denn ein Kind ist der Sonnenschein in der Familie. Du bist gesund, brav, und ein richtiger Bub, machst uns viel Freude...”

²³⁶ “Dein Vater kennt ihn,” August 5, 1943, p. 4. “Ungewiß ist mein Geschick, denn es liegt im Dunkel des Krieges. Ob ich Dich sehen werde, ob Du auf meinen Knien reiten darfst, ob ich Deinen ersten Schritte bewundern und ob ich Dir je Spielgefährte und Kamerad sein darf, das weiß ich nicht, denn an der Seite des Soldaten marschiert der Tod.”

²³⁷ Ibid.

Serocka describes how close birth and death lay together for him; mortality stood as his daily companion while the baby growing in his wife's womb attended to her every day. He knew that if he died, his child still lived, and through his offspring, a small part of him remained alive. Until his death, he fought to protect his wife and child during the day and at night looked at the stars while kindly thinking of them.²³⁸ Soldierly duties did not prevent Serocka from attending to his fatherly responsibilities, even from afar. His letter encompasses the paternal affection that the earlier August 1939 article "Is this unmanly?" had advocated as appropriate. It reminded fellow fathers of their obligations to their children as well as informed other soldiers that their deaths on the front did not end their lineage. War had taken these fathers away from their families, but as these letters showed, it did not mitigate their importance.

Das Schwarze Korps did not limit these letters from fathers at war to their children at home. The newspaper also published correspondence between fathers on the home front to their sons serving as soldiers in the German armed forces. Unlike previous formal and informal documentation regarding fatherhood, these articles focus on fathers who had had their children prior to the rise of the Nazi government. Despite the differential in age, these older fathers still felt the same attachment to their sons as the younger fathers had for their infant and adolescent progeny and often provided similar guidance regarding a man's duty as a soldier. For example, over three years prior to the war, one father wrote to his son, who had honorably enlisted in the military. This father encourages his son to fight for the Third Reich heroically and to embrace his German heritage. His confidently remarks, "Be proud that you are a German, that your predecessors were German, and that your descendents will be German!"²³⁹ This line echoed passages in history and biology textbooks that called for healthy Germans to honor their ancestors by passing their genes on to future generations. It also represented a more personal plea from a father to his son asking for grandchildren.

During the war, the newspaper printed an article that contained a letter from a father to the youngest of his five sons. The article claims that the words of this letter "could have been written by all German fathers to all German sons."²⁴⁰ With his other four sons already serving the Führer, this father advises that his son should work diligently now so as to later have the

²³⁸ Ibid., 4-5.

²³⁹ "An meinen Sohn," May 7, 1936, p. 11. "Sei stolz, daß Due in Deutscher bist, daß Deine Vorfahren Deutsche waren und daß Deine Nachkommen Deutsche sein werden!"

²⁴⁰ "Vater an seinen Sohn," October 22, 1942, p. 4. "Aber es könnte allen Söhnen Deutschlands geschrieben sein von allen Vätern Deutschlands."

opportunity to work for the Reich. He wants his son to act thoroughly so that his child could earn a position as a reserve officer. He recommends moderation as a means to avoid irresponsible and unmanly behavior and wishes his son well in his undertakings.²⁴¹ Along with the preceding letter, this one conveys that a father's role in the life of his child did not end with adolescence. A man continued to feel pride for the accomplishments of his child, especially when his offspring labored to improve Germany.

Because of almost six years of war, a man provided his greatest service to the government by fighting. Many soldier-fathers found solace in their activities through their children. However, not every soldier believed that he needed to have children in order to fight dutifully and diligently for his country. *Das Schwarze Korps* published a letter from a young soldier named Werner W., who insisted that his duty as a soldier did not have to correlate automatically with fatherhood. He respectfully argues that “you [the newspaper] think that we fight for our children. No, we fight for our eternal Germany. You think one struggles more easily if one has a child at home... I have no children... [but] I know what I struggle for – for Germany. However, Germany is more than our children.”²⁴² He asserts that Germany had to win the war first and then concern itself with raising families in peacetime.

The newspaper intersperses its unmistakably divergent commentary in between segments of Werner's letter. It refutes Werner's perspective by rhetorically asking what would become of a victorious Germany that had no children to succeed the present generation. Germany was losing its best blood in the war, and if these men did not procreate now, then the German nation would forfeit its most valuable racial heritage, a calamity that would undermine every positive eugenical measure advocated by Himmler. The article editorializes: “And therefore every soldier shall, who would like to transmit his blood to the German future, has the right to be a soldier and a father...”²⁴³ A soldier had no guarantee that he would personally survive each day, but by producing children, he ensured that his lineage would persevere long after the war had concluded. The newspaper further reasons that “the German man of the present is responsible not only for victory on the battlefield. Soldiers and Germans can no longer be separate concepts.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² “Soldat und Vater,” March 28, 1940, p. 4. “Ihr meint, wir kämpfen für unsere Kinder. Nein, wir kämpfen für unser ewiges Deutschland. Ihr meint, es kämpft sich leichter, wenn man zu Hause ein Kind hat; ... Ich habe keine Kinder..., ich weiß, wofür ich kämpfe – für Deutschland. Aber Deutschland ist mehr als unsere Kinder.”

²⁴³ Ibid. “Und deshalb soll jeder Soldat, der sein eigen Blut der deutschen Zukunft vererben möchte, das Recht haben, Soldat und Vater zu sein.”

The responsibility for the future of the Reich with all of its demands weighs on all of us.”²⁴⁴ The editorial portion of this article emphatically stresses that one obligation could not supercede the other; both had to mutually coexist and reinforce one another.

The fight to counter views such as those presented by Werner W. did not end with that one article. *Das Schwarze Korps* subsequently published testimonials from fathers on the front line who persuasively maintained that their children gave them the courage and motivation to continue fighting. These men fought for their country just as Werner W. did, but their children provided them with extra incentive. One SS father of four comments that he could speak proudly to his children about his military duties. He argues that those men with children had the right to go to war for Germany. While away from home with this responsibility, he did not need to worry about the financial well-being of his family; he thought it nonsensical that anyone believed that a soldier’s children would not have been well cared for during his absence.²⁴⁵

Two other accounts attest that fighting had a greater meaning because of children. In the first one, the editorial contends that having growing children at home brought happiness to the soldier. No matter what happened to him on the front, he would live on through them. The soldier on the battlefield also knew the satisfaction that men received from speaking about their children, especially as they waited to hear good news from home. The aforementioned SS *Obersturmführer* Jurgen V., who felt such elation after the birth of his children, additionally states that on the heaviest fighting days, he gratefully thought of his two tender children. He accepted with the possibility of dying because he knew that he had done both of his duties, and a part of him would continue via his young children.²⁴⁶

The newspaper wanted to impress upon its readers that serving as a soldier did not preclude a man from performing his paternal responsibilities. Using the testimonials of fathers, *Das Schwarze Korps* sought to promote the notion that fatherhood made an SS man a better soldier. He had greater incentive to fight for his country; his children personally motivated him to tolerate the hardships that accompanied war. These children were moreover his legacy. The superior racial characteristics of this SS soldier stayed alive and sustained his lineage. The lives

²⁴⁴ Ibid. “Aber der deutsche Mann der Gegenwart ist verantwortlich nicht nur für den Sieg auf den Schlachtfeldern. Soldat sein und Deutscher sein sind nicht mehr getrennte Begriffe. Auf uns allen lastet die Verantwortung für die Zukunft des Reiches mit allen ihren Forderungen...”

²⁴⁵ “Familienväter wollen ‘raus’,” June 13, 1940, p. 7.

²⁴⁶ “Glück der Soldaten: Die Kinder,” p. 4 and “Ein glücklicher Vater,” p. 4.

of the children secured the continuation of the best blood in Germany, the very same blood that Himmler wanted to accumulate at any cost.

As the official newspaper of the SS, *Das Schwarze Korps* publicly supplied SS soldiers and their families with articles and letters that addressed the issues of marriage, fatherhood, and children. Over its ten years of publication, it promoted the ideal of fatherhood to the racially elite men of the SS. Many of these pieces in the newspaper reinforce the themes that Himmler had encouraged through his official memorandums. They predominantly focus on the biological and numeric aspects of fatherhood, such as building a new racial aristocracy and discussing the low birth rates among quality families. Other articles engage the more practical aspect of fatherhood. The newspaper endeavored to show how fathers should and could remain involved in the lives of their children on a daily basis. Even after the war had broken out, articles in *Das Schwarze Korps* maintain that a soldier could have an active role in rearing his children; furthermore, they want to convince those soldiers without children that service to the military and to the family was not mutually exclusive. Through its articles, this public mouthpiece of the SS sought to encourage SS men to increase the size of their families, fulfill the population policies of the *Reichsführer-SS*, and thus guarantee the racial future of the German nation.

CONCLUSION:

THE LEGACY OF POSITIVE EUGENICS AND NAZI FATHERHOOD

Of the various ideologies professed by the Nazi party, the one concerning fathers held far less importance than others, including the supremacy of the Führer, the superiority of the Aryan race, and the vitality of the mother in the family. Nevertheless, sources from the time—such as personal documents, textbooks, speeches, and newspaper articles—reveal that German men had paternal responsibilities. These duties, according to Nazi doctrine, primarily focused on the biological role of men. The National Socialist government wanted to encourage each man to sustain his personal lineage because a healthy, burgeoning population would guarantee the longevity of the German nation under its guidance.

In seeking a stronger and larger population, the Nazi party relied on the tenets of a contemporary science movement: eugenics. Over the course of its development, this discipline divided into two sub fields, negative and positive eugenics. The former concentrated on limiting the reproductive capabilities of the least fit members of the population and culminated with the passage of sterilization laws around the world. The latter focused on persuading the fittest individuals to have greater numbers of children. From the time of its conception until the rise of the Nazi government fifty years later, eugenicists around the world based this partition between negative and positive on socio-economic status; the upper and middle classes embodied the most fit elements, and the lower class represented the least fit.

The Nazi state adopted eugenics to manage the growth of its population, but instead of using class to demarcate between fit and unfit when it came to positive eugenics, the government divided people based on race. The individuals whom it deemed most eligible to pass on their genes belonged to the “blond hair, blue eyed” Aryan race, and the German men who personified this racial elite were the members of the *Schutzstaffeln* (SS). As the archetype of the Aryan race, the Nazi government particularly wanted to persuade the men of the SS to embrace this

biological responsibility, which would ensure the longevity of the Thousand Year Reich. This relationship among scientific theory, party ideology, and individual heredity formed the basis of this thesis. It prompted the examination of what measures the National Socialist government and its leaders took to encourage those male citizens whom they believed were the most fit members of their society to father children.

The government attempted to lay the foundation for the national transformation of Germany through public education and began to instruct its population about racial ideas from an early age. Many of the textbooks introduced into the school curriculum during the 1930's informed students about the glorious racial heritage of the German people, the deleterious population decline in Germany, and the urgent necessity to replenish the Aryan stock in order to ensure a future for the German nation and its people. After formal schooling had concluded, Nazi officials continued to educate the population about its reproductive duty mainly through publicly addressing the masses. Through varying and persistent means of instruction, the party leadership wanted its racial ideals to permeate the very mindset of the entire German population.

Within the SS, Heinrich Himmler, the *Reichsführer* of the SS and the Police, undertook the task of persuading his elite men to have prolific families. Himmler sought to achieve this goal through his personal management of the SS; in doing so, he adopted measures designed to foster positive eugenics, including regulating the marriages of SS men and promoting the birth of children both inside and outside of matrimony. The newspaper of the SS, *Das Schwarze Korps*, augmented this encouragement provided by the *Reichsführer* with articles that supported fatherhood as a biological ideal as well as advocated the practical obligations of fathers. However, whereas both Himmler and the newspaper suggested that a man could dually serve as a soldier and a father of a prolific family, most men opted to keep their personal lives separate from their professional duties. As a result, SS families had few children, and SS men rarely had illegitimate children. According to the racial standards set by Himmler, the SS did not succeed in raising the quantitative or qualitative birthrates.

The failure of the Nazi government to reestablish a German aristocracy based on blood meant that the ideal German community—its Thousand Year Reich—did not have a solid foundation. Without this basis, the German nation imagined by the Nazi party could not exist. The inability to create families of “good blood” left the Nazi leadership without a secure legacy that would sustain the Germany that it had labored for over twelve years to construct. This low

birth number also meant that positive eugenics had failed. Shortly thereafter, the global scientific community discredited eugenics. This decline in prestige was partially due to the eugenical measures, both negative and positive, espoused by the Nazi government; in an attempt to keep the life sciences moral and clean from the taint of Nazism, scientists and historians of science distanced themselves from the work done by their colleagues in Nazi-controlled Germany. Non-German eugenicists viewed the research in this period as an anomaly, and scientific exploration under the Nazi government received the reputation as a brief mistake in the otherwise pure and objective realm of science.

Nonetheless, the party did have an ideology concerning fathers. It primarily saw men as biological figures. Through education, the Nazi government strove to inculcate the population of Germany with the view that only those individuals with desirable racial characteristics were qualified to create future generations of Germans. The very selection process to obtain membership in the SS as well as the personal approval of Himmler for all SS marriages further buttressed this perception. The Nazi party wanted all healthy German men to accept its perspective that their most important reproductive responsibility was to employ their biological vitality for the benefit of the nation.

Examining the concept of Nazi fatherhood furthermore offers a crucial link to comprehending the decline of patriarchy throughout the twentieth century. The loss of fathers and husbands due to the war and postwar captivity changed the structure and the nature of the families in West and East Germany. Understanding the role of the father prior to the outbreak of the war through its termination allows historians to recognize the changes that encompassed postwar families. It sets up a comparison and contrast of familial life in Germany during two closely related eras. The relationship between fatherhood during the Nazi regime and fatherhood in the post World War II Germanys especially has relevance because the father figure did not disappear; the idea of the father simply modified itself as the two new countries attempted to redefine their national identities in the aftermath of the collapse of the community that the Nazi government had previously forged.

Discerning the role of the father and the archetype of fatherhood additionally helps to distinguish the personal negotiation between a man's public and private lives in the Third Reich. Himmler had no difficulty blurring the professional and personal identities of his SS men, but a clear line that demarcated when and where the men of the SS would acquiesce to the interference

of their organization and its leader in their personal affairs did not exist. There was no institutional morality that every member of the SS resolutely accepted. For instance, whereas the soldiers seemingly had little trouble accepting the marriage regulations imposed by Himmler, they refused to submit to his encouragement to break the bonds of matrimony and produce children via an extramarital affair. This issue of professional duty versus personal morality defined the internal struggle that each SS soldier had to confront when deciding the point at which his devotion to the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler, and the SS did not supercede his dedication to himself and his family.

Although not as prominent as its maternal counterpart, the ideology of fatherhood had a place in the hierarchy of Nazi doctrine. Because of the scientific trends prevalent during the early to mid twentieth century, the character of the SS as an organization, and the measurement of national strength in terms on numbers of Aryans, the nature of fatherhood at this time had a strong biological bent. Men were mainly regarded as fathers due to their reproductive contributions; within the Nazi ideal, their active participation took a secondary position. Investigating fatherhood, however, still provides a stronger understanding of the correlation among masculinity, paternity, and party ideology. It establishes the foundation for examining one approach through which the Nazi government sought to construct a greater German community. Despite the failure to produce this community, the legacy of the policies of the Nazi government regarding eugenics and fatherhood remain relevant in the formation of the postwar Germanys.

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