

Candidate 1 evidence

To What Extent did the Nazis' Policies Towards Women Succeed in
Achieving Their Aims Between 1933-1939?



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Employment

As with all Nazi policies towards women, including education, the Nazis policies regarding work revolved around a women's role as child bearer and homemaker. The Nazis argued that while a woman was in work she was not concentrating on her main objective which was as wife and mother. They also argued that when married women were in jobs they were taking that job away from another man and hence denying another family of an income, these women were known as double earners. For this reason, the Nazis aimed to reduce the number of women in work or move women into jobs that they were more "biologically" suited to. While some such as, Layton argue that the policies achieved some success, Pine and Mason argue the Nazis were unsuccessful in achieving their work aims for women as the policies contradicted the economic need for women to be in the workplace.

It is evident that between June 1933 and May 1939, the total number of all women working for a wage rose from 11.5 to 13.8 million, among whom married women increased from 4.5 to 6.4 million.²⁸ In addition, in 1939 41% of working women were also married.²⁹

Grunberger argues that these statistics were as a result of female labour being cheaper than male labour with professional women earning 60% of men's wages and unskilled women earning only 70%.³⁰ While other historians such as Tim Mason and Dorte Winkler, put forward the argument Nazi policies worked against the realities of society and economy.³¹

²⁸ Geoff Eley, Ibid, pg100

²⁹ Jill Stephenson, Women in Nazi Germany, published by Routledge, pg54

³⁰ Richard Grunberger, Ibid, pg324

³¹ Geoff Eley, Ibid, pg100

The Nazis made it perfectly clear that Women had no place in the industrial labour force³².

Women were encouraged to move into agricultural, social or domestic areas of work.

Evidently this aim was unsuccessful as, despite the Nazis effort, by 1939 every 8th employee in the metalworking industry was female.³³ Layton argues that these policies against women were,

“contradictory and incoherent, and did little to affect the ongoing sociological trends of an industrialised society”³⁴

During the late 1930s the government introduced conscription for men and therefore women were needed to fill the labour gap. Furthermore, as the government’s demands for armaments increased the need for workers in factories and increasingly turned to women to meet the demand. Pine states that

“the regime had to reconcile its ideology with the necessities demanded by the economy.”³⁵

Mason agrees stating that the Nazi government

“found itself in head-on collision with a long term process of social and economic change.”³⁶

³² Geoff Eley, Nazism as Fascism: violence, ideology, and the ground of consent in Germany 1930-1945, published by Routledge, pg100

³³ Richard Grunberger, Ibid, pg 325

³⁴ Geoff Layton, Germany: The Third Reich 1933-45 second addition, published by Hodder & Stoughton, pg84

³⁵ Lisa Pine, Nazi Family Policy 1933-1945, Ibid, pg21

³⁶ Timothy Mason, Ibid, Pg160

The Nazis also led a to ease married women out of work, particularly focusing on those also referred to as double earners, in order that their vacancy could then be filled by an unemployed male.³⁷ Families in which husbands and wife or fathers and daughter both had regular work came under great pressure in the years of 1933 and 1934 to surrender the women's job for the benefit of unemployed married men³⁸ Layton argues that **"Initially, attempts to reduce the number women in work seem to have been quite successful."**³⁹

In addition, the Nazis gave official blessing to the efforts to "persuade" women who had male breadwinners to withdraw "voluntarily" from the labour market.⁴⁰ Mason argues that **"Precisely because these efforts did remain unofficial, it is not possible to say how many women succumbed to them. Some undoubtedly did succumb and were forced by moral blackmail and threats to confine themselves, at least for a time, to a domestic routine."**⁴¹

However, Noakes argues that the problem of double earners had been exaggerated and in fact most women who worked did so out of necessity to provide for their family.

³⁷ D.G Williamson, *Ibid*, pg57

³⁸ Timothy Mason, *Ibid*, pg159

³⁹ Geoff Layton, *Ibid*, pg82

⁴⁰ Timothy Mason, *Ibid*, pg159

⁴¹ Timothy Mason, *Ibid*, pg159

The Nazis also attempted to reduce women in employment through policies such as the marriage loan scheme. From its introduction to 1936, there was a clause which stated that employed women were not allowed to claim this loan. However, this clause was abolished in 1936-1937, showing that Nazi policy was not successful and clearly mirrors the government's need for women to be in work which took a higher priority than combating double earning. Therefore, it is clear that the Nazis were unsuccessful in achieving their aims of reducing women in the workplace and combating double earning. Stackelberg argues,

"the aggressive expansionist goals of the regime that worked against the Nazis' desire to confine women to the domestic sphere."⁴²

Overall the Nazis

"failed to reverse long-term secular trends in women's work"⁴³

They were unable to achieve their aim of removing married women from the workplace while reducing the overall number of women in work due to the fact that, as Pine stated, **"economic necessity triumphed over putative concerns for the primacy of the family, as women, including married women and mothers, were required to take part in the workforce."**⁴⁴

⁴² Roderick Stackelberg, *Hitler's Germany: Origins, Interpretations, Legacies*, published by Routledge, pg129

⁴³ Mary Nolan, *Work, Gender and Everyday Life: Reflections on Continuity, Normality and Agency in Twentieth century Germany*, published by Cambridge University, pg332

⁴⁴ Lisa Pine, *Nazi Family Policy 1933-1945*, *Ibid*, pg23

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