

Life in Nazi Germany 4

How did Nazi rule affect Germans? (NOW YOU)

1 Nazi Party members

were especially happy - they got all the best houses, preferential treatment, good jobs in the government and power over other people.

2 Ordinary people

For ordinary people, life was good, and many Germans even today look back and remember the years before 1939 as happy years:

[Nazi economic policies](#) gave full employment (work programmes/ Strength through Joy), prosperity and financial security - many observers stated that there seemed to be no poverty in Germany, the [Strength through Joy programme](#) (KdF) gave some people fun and holidays, the 'Beauty of Work' movement (SdA) gave people pride in what they were doing, law and order (few people locked their doors).

There were few drawbacks:

Wages fell, and strikers could be shot - the Nazis worked closely with the businessmen to make sure that the workforce were as controlled as possible. Loss of personal freedoms (eg freedom of speech).

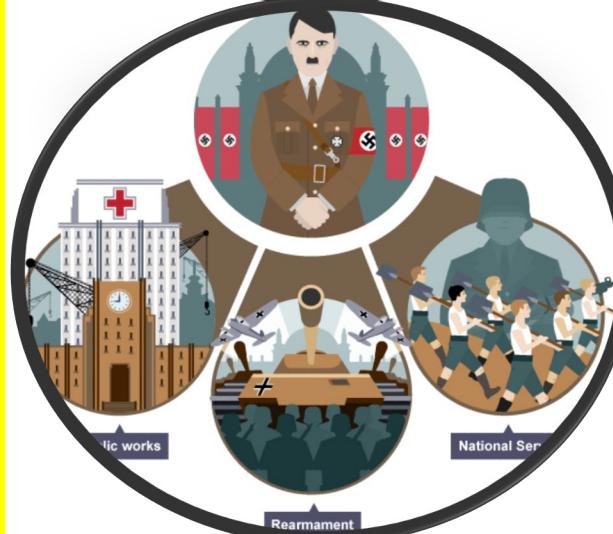
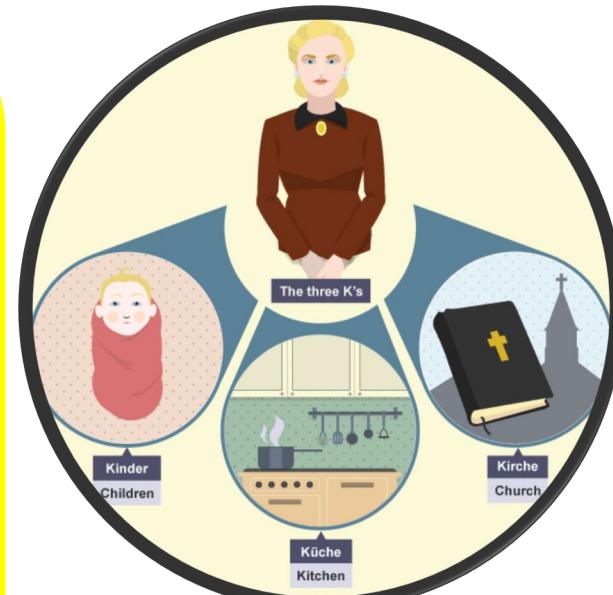
3 Women

Nazi attitude idealised [the role of women](#) as child-bearer and creator of the family:

The Law for the Encouragement of Marriage gave newly-wed couples a loan of 1000 marks, and allowed them to keep 250 marks for each child they had. Mothers who had more than 8 children were given a gold medal.

But not all women were happy with the Nazi regime:

Job-discrimination against women was encouraged. Women doctors, teachers and civil servants were forced to give up their careers.



4 Youth

Most German young people were happy: Nazi culture was very youth-oriented.

The HJ provided exciting activities for young boys.

The HJ and the [BDM](#) treated young men and women as though they were special, and told them they knew more than their parents. Many parents were frightened that their children would report them to the Gestapo, which gave young people a power that they enjoyed.

But not all young people were happy with the Nazi regime:

Towards the end of the war, youth gangs such as the Edelweiss Pirates grew up, rejecting the HJ and Nazi youth culture, drinking and dancing to American jazz and 'swing' music.

5 Opponents

The Nazis used 'fear and horror' against anyone who disapproved of their regime:

Hitler banned all Trade Unions on 2 May 1933. Their offices were closed, their money confiscated, and their leaders put in prison. Communists were put into concentration camps or killed. Many Protestant pastors such as [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#) were persecuted and executed.

Each block of flats had a 'staircase ruler' who reported grumblers to the police - they were arrested and either murdered, or sent to concentration camps. Children were encouraged to report their parents to the Gestapo if they criticized Hitler or the Nazi party.

But remember that:

Many Germans welcomed this because it brought political stability after the Weimar years.

6 Untermensch

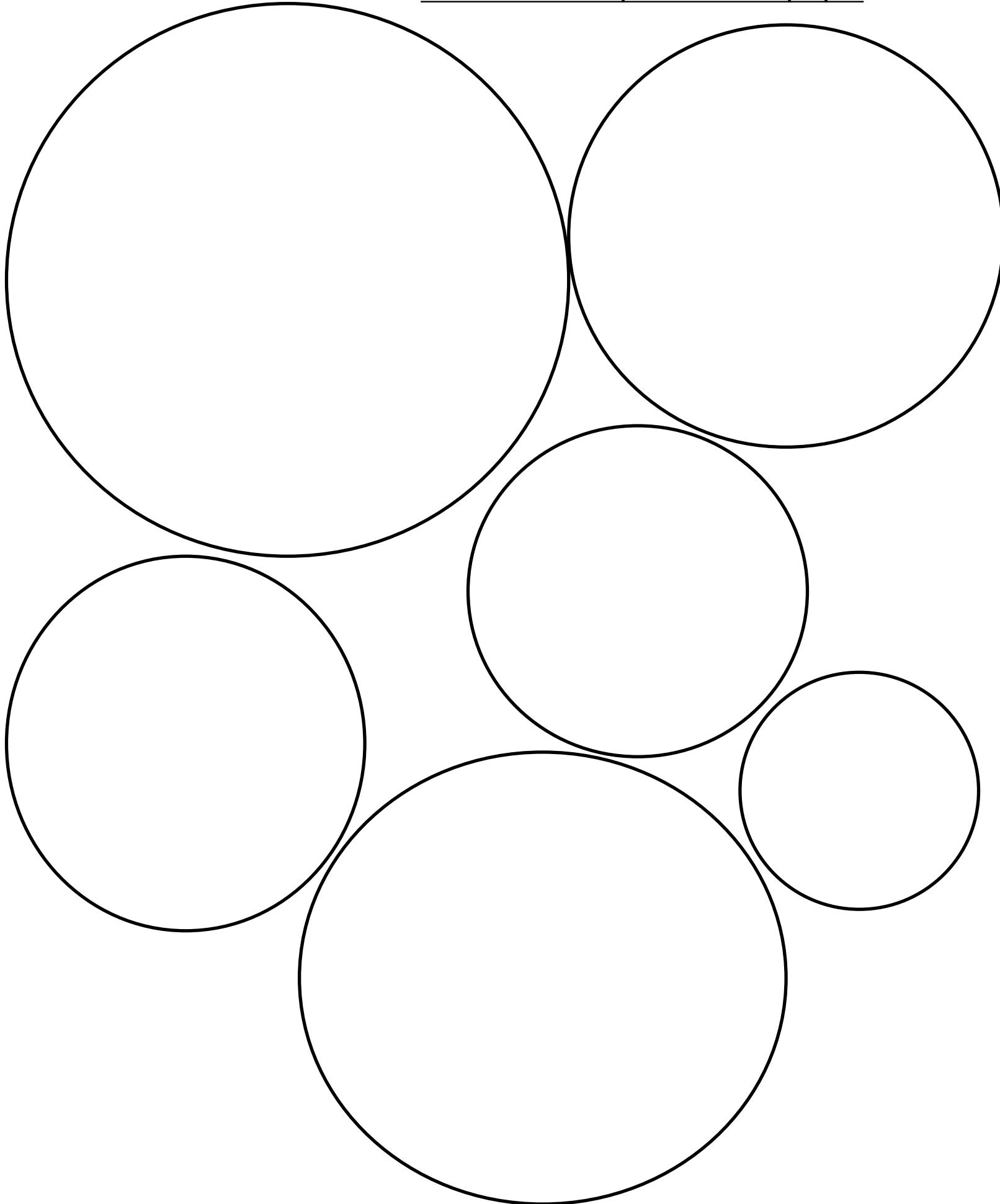
The Nazi regime despised many groups which it thought were racially or socially inferior (*Untermensch* = subhuman) - people they called the 'germs of destruction'.

Groups which were persecuted and killed included:

Jews were forced into walled [ghettos](#), put into concentration camps, and used for medical experiments. In the end the Nazis devised the Final Solution of genocide - it was the Holocaust.

Gypsies, black people, mentally ill patients, physically disabled people and families with hereditary illness, beggars, homosexuals, prostitutes, alcoholics, pacifists, hooligans and criminals were all attacked by the Nazis.

How did Nazi rule impact the German people?



Use the information given to fill in the bubbles.
The bigger the circle, the more significant you think the group was affected by Nazi rule.
e.g. some might say women were most affected, where others might argue that the youth were the most affected.

Groups to choose from:

Nazi Party

Ordinary People

Women

Youth

Opponents

Untermensch = subhuman

Design your own source!

It can be either a picture or text- what would your ideal source say about how Nazi rule impacted the German people.

E.g. Create a letter from a German mother in 1936 talking about the German youth groups and rewards given to her for being a mother.