

4 *The Method of Compulsion*

THE NAZI PARTY'S TOTAL CONTROL

It has been pointed out before that Germany was subject to both state and party rule. The Nazi party could have absorbed the state if it had wanted to, but it never attempted total amalgamation, partly because it had too much respect for the old Prussian civil service, and partly because there were advantages in a double-faced administration. Like the military leaders of Japan, who tolerate a civilian government only to brush aside its decisions if these are not convenient, the Nazi party used government agencies to devise policies which could be disavowed at any time by the party.

The party's big responsibility was the organization of the Nazi way of life. Its own organization was efficient and highly bureaucratized. The Fuehrer of the Reich was also the supreme leader of the party. He had a party chancellery separate from the Reich Chancellery. Second in party rank was the deputy leader who had a chancellery of his own. Immediately beneath these men in the party hierarchy were the twenty-one party cabinet members, each heading a special party ministry. A party minister did not need to be a state minister. For example, the party's head of foreign affairs, Alfred Rosenberg, was never Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The departments in the party cabinet were:

National organization	Foreign office
Propaganda	National youth leader (Hitler Youth)
Press chief	Agricultural office
National leader of the press	Chief of staff of the Storm Troops
Chief party judge	Leader of the Elite Guards
President of the second chamber of the party supreme court	National legal office
Colonial policy office	Leader of the Reichstag
Treasurer	National labor leader
	Municipal affairs office

Subordinate to these main departments were the leaders of districts, counties, local groups, cells, and blocks,¹ and the mass of the

¹ District leader, *Gauleiter*; county leader, *Kreisleiter*; local group leader, *Ortsgruppenfuehrer*; cell leader, *Zellenfuehrer*, block warden, *Blockwart*.

party members, each responsible to his immediate superior. A number of "affiliated groups" with special status were controlled directly from the top because their leaders were in the party cabinet. Such groups were the SA (*Sturm Abteilung*, or Storm Troops), the SS (*Schutz Staffel*, or Elite Guards), and the Hitler Youth. The most comprehensive affiliated group was the Labor Front whose powerful leader, Dr. Robert Ley, was at the same time the national organizer of the party and the Minister of Labor. The national organizer, moreover, and the party treasurer supervised countless additional organizations such as the Industrial Cell Organization, Women's League, Students' League, offices for war victims and public health, associations of teachers, physicians, technicians, and public welfare.

The party, organized in this complex fashion, decided how German subjects should live and interfered with the lives of individuals in a way that defied the imagination of freedom-loving citizens of a democracy. The party's national organizer was like a great octopus "whose tentacles reach into every city and town, into every shore and village in Germany."¹ There was no private life in the totalitarian state; the individual was under the constant observation of the state's secret police and the party's supervisors. The Germans had lost their privacy, and Dr. Ley was delighted with the situation.

Ley, like Hitler, believed that "the peoples and the individual human beings are like children and must be treated as such," and he was proud that the Nazis "have developed a leadership of the people which makes it possible to investigate and examine every last citizen and tell him how . . . he must act . . . in every phase of life. . . . There is no such thing as a private individual in Germany." And if any complained that they wished to be left in peace, Ley would respond, "No, my friend, I shan't leave you in peace. I wouldn't think of doing such a thing."²

The party decided how children should be brought up and what names they should be given, what the position of women should be, how to look, how to dress, what to eat, what to read, what kind of entertainment to enjoy, with whom to be friendly, whom to marry, and what to talk about. The members of a family were encouraged

¹ Wallace R. Deuel, *People Under Hitler*, Harcourt Brace and Company, New York, 1942, p. 138.

² Quoted by Deuel, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

to spy upon one another and report politically or socially dangerous remarks. Husbands, wives, and children denounced one another. The Reich Supreme Court declared that only two kinds of remarks were really "private": soliloquy, and entries in a diary.¹

The terrible agent in all this supervision of domestic life was the *Gestapo* (*Geheime Staats Polizei*, or Secret State Police) who were all-powerful. The decision of a German court was not binding upon the *Gestapo*; people who were acquitted in court might be taken into "protective custody" and held at a *Gestapo* prison or sent to a concentration camp. Before 1936 the regular police did not generally interfere in political matters, and victims of Nazi persecution vastly preferred detention by the police to a *Gestapo* prison. But a decree of February 10, 1936, greatly enlarged the *Gestapo*'s power, and the regular police really became the executive organ of the *Gestapo* throughout Germany, dealing with political "crimes" and matters related to the possession of arms and ammunition. The concentration camps were, however, administered by party police (SS and SA detachments) under the control of the *Gestapo*, and the regular police had nothing to do with them.

The *Gestapo*, led by Heinrich Himmler, nominally subject to the authority of the President of Ministers of Prussia (Goering), was actually independent of restriction. It controlled everything imaginable and had extraordinary power. It could hold a person without warrant as long as it wished. Its methods of "disciplining" were subject to no restraint, and its tortures made the American "third degree" a child's game. It spied upon everyone, even the police and its own members, and operated according to the old Prussian belief that fear begets loyalty and faith. To implement its policy and carry out internal purges, the *Untersuchungs und Schlichtungsausschuss*² was formed. Officially, this body's task was to prevent discord within the party; in reality it "purged" failing party members. The entire system of espionage and counterespionage kept the party, and through it the people, in a mental goose step.

The *Gestapo* also spied on Germans and refugees abroad. *Gestapo* agents, thoroughly trained in Jewish religious customs, "fled"

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

² *Uchla*, or Committee on Investigation and Conciliation.

Germany as Jewish refugees. By threatening violence upon relatives of real refugees still in Germany, they tried to blackmail their victims. In some cases they murdered prominent refugees and kidnapped others, returning them to German concentration camps, to make their threats more real.

Within Germany the party organization, especially the cell leaders and block wardens, supplemented the work of the Gestapo and assured strict adherence to Nazi laws and ideology on the part of every family and every individual. Although every member of the party was a potential agent for the party and the Gestapo, block wardens were particularly enjoined to be acquainted with the lives and thoughts and habits of people within their block. Cell leaders were active in organizations like the NSBO (*Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellen Organisation*, or National Socialist Business Cell Organization), the Nazi substitute for trades unions which were destroyed when Hitler came into power. The cells of this organization, thoroughly nazified, watched over every business enterprise, and the members played the role of political commissars. Both employers and employees, who had to be members of their respective organizations, were thus subject to the constant scrutiny of the cell leaders.

Required membership in the business cell involved even more than this intimate scrutiny. First one had to qualify as a member, be an "Aryan," and have a clear record of obedience and proper attitudes. Nonmembers could not find regular employment and might be drafted by the government for forced labor. This was the fate of most Jews under sixty-five, unless they happened to be conscripted by the armed forces. Moreover, membership involved the performance of certain extracurricular functions, such as participation in demonstrations whether the individual liked to march or not, attending indoctrination lectures, or working overtime if the government so commanded. Members had to attend regular "home" evenings in the local party organization, and they had to accept what was offered them as amusement or recreation.

Under Nazi rule, the citizen was a "social animal" in the worst sense of the phrase. He could never retire into the privacy of his home. And according to Dr. Robert Ley, he might not have the right of privacy even when he was asleep.

SOCIAL WELFARE

The paternalistic state which regards its citizens as "children" does provide some social benefits in return for the surrender of individuality and privacy. The Nazi state furnished social security and regulated relations between management and labor.

The Nazis denied that there existed a natural conflict between employers and employees. A business enterprise is not a private affair, they claimed, but a public trust, and its owner might not do what he wanted with it because the power and leadership which accompany ownership were delegated to him by the state. He was therefore responsible to the state, and the employees shared his responsibility. Both were supposed to work for the same end—the welfare of the community. Article I of the National Labor Law of January, 1934, stated: "In a business undertaking, the employer, as leader, and the employees, as followers, shall work together to further the purposes of the undertaking, and for the common good of the people and of the State."

The leadership principle was thus applied to business as well as to party and government. The National Labor Law required that the leader make all the decisions, and that the followers keep faith with him. He, in turn, was to care for the welfare of his employees. The fact that the owner was a leader automatically changed the relationship between him and his employees. His new status obviated the negotiations which used to characterize relations between workers and owners, both of whom assumed that a basic contradiction of interests had to be overcome. Supplanting the Workers' Councils established in 1920 in the interest of the employees, a *Vertrauensrat*, or Confidence Council, was created for the purpose of "deepening the mutual confidence that must exist within the work-community."¹ The Confidence Council actually represented a check on the business leader's authority.

Another institution which curbed the freedom of the employer was the *Treuhaender der Arbeit*, or Trustees of Labor. These trustees, appointed by the government, could override the will of an employer in case the body of his workers or the majority of the

¹ C. W. Guillebaud, *The Social Policy of Nazi Germany*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1941, p. 23

Confidence Council were against him. They were mediators responsible for industrial peace, and they handled questions involving wages, hours, and working conditions. While there were some negotiated wage contracts up to 1934, changes were made rarely after that year, and then only by order of the Trustees of Labor who knew that they had to keep wages and prices stable.

Strict wage control was begun in 1938. By this time, friendly relations with the great European powers had ceased, and Germany's extended arms program, the expansion of her military highways, and the construction of the Siegfried Line were taxing the labor resources of the Reich to the limit. Wages had to be kept down, but as in Russia, increased pay was provided for better work.

Two newly created courts defend the workers' rights. The "Court of Social Honor" dealt with matters of prestige and "honor." A regular Labor Court prevented unjustified dismissals, and no worker could be dismissed without good cause.

Perhaps the most popular social-welfare institution was *Kraft durch Freude* (KDF), or Strength Through Joy. Participation in the benefits of this organization was limited to members of the Labor Front. There was no compulsion to join KDF, but the membership of twenty-five million attested to the advantages of doing so. Strength Through Joy was much like the Fascist *Dopolavoro* organization.¹ Its best known peacetime undertakings were the holiday cruises in specially built or chartered luxury liners on which thousands of workers traveled to Scandinavia or the Mediterranean at amazingly low rates. This imposing organization provided a modern version of the old Roman bread and circuses for the masses. It also required its members to attend theater performances, concerts, moving pictures, and sports. It took care of the individual's natural urge for relaxation and enjoyment, but it also fostered loyalty to Nazism and served as an instrument of ideological indoctrination. A movement to beautify factories and workshops was also part of the KDF plan to keep the workers contented.

In addition to the operations of the KDF, welfare agencies administered the exemplary health and old-age insurance program begun by Bismarck in the 1880's. Furthermore, the *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (NSV, or National Socialist Peoples Wel-

¹ See below, pp. 168-169.

fare) provided the *Winterhilfe*, or Winter Help for the needy. During the last campaign before the war, over 400,000,000 marks was contributed more or less voluntarily for this fund, but the distribution of the money could not easily be checked. Nazi statements were unreliable because they served propaganda purposes. However, since the number of unemployed diminished, due to slave labor, emergency work, war industry, and military conscription, it was not unlikely that the Nazis used the money to bolster their health insurance program and to help where, from a political standpoint, such aid would bring the best results.

The advantages of Nazi social institutions were, of course, limited to *Volksgenossen*, or racial comrades. Non-Aryans, Poles, Czechs, and other "inferior" minorities were excluded. Labor laws were also inapplicable to Jewish workers, many of whom were drafted for slave work in industry and who, like other minority workers, had to work in segregated units, with little pay, no rights, and no contact with Aryan workers. Nor did Jews receive any Winter Help assistance, although their ration cards allowed them less food, no clothing, and no delicacies (fruit or candy). Furthermore, minorities were restricted to certain shopping hours, and they could buy only what the Aryans left.

BREEDING SOLDIERS AND THE SUPER RACE

The birth rate declined in Germany during the years of the Weimar republic mainly because many parents were unwilling to risk raising children during the prevailing economic and political uncertainties, and also because birth control had become successful and abortions, while officially penalized, had become common. Democratic individualism fostered independent decisions in family matters.

The Nazis took a different view. They began an intensive campaign for more children and outlawed abortion as a crime against the state. They offered substantial loans to penniless young people who wanted to get married. These loans were cancelled and became outright gifts after the birth of the fourth child. In addition, *Kinderbeihilfen*, premiums for families with many children, were provided. These loans and premiums were paid out of a fund raised by bachelors' taxes.

The success of the Nazi population policy was enhanced by denunciation of women without children, the abandonment of traditional morals, and the open recommendation that girls bear children out of wedlock. The Nazis proclaimed that an unmarried mother deserved higher esteem than a married woman without children. Heinrich Himmler declared in 1939, in a message to German women: "A young girl who shirks her highest duty is a traitoress and like a soldier who abandons his flag. For pure-blooded German girls there is a war duty beyond marriage—to become mothers by soldiers going to the front."¹ The German Army promised special advantages to illegitimate children of members of the *Wehrmacht* by Dutch or Norwegian mothers. If such a child were acknowledged by the *Wehrmacht*, that is, if the father were proved to be a German soldier, the German state would pay for the child's maintenance. This provision may also have been extended to other occupied countries.² In the Polish town of Hellenowa, German boys and selected Polish girls were forced to serve for breeding purposes in a "camp for racial improvement." Children born to the girls were taken away from them to receive a state education in Germany. The couples were not permitted to remain together after their purpose had been fulfilled.³

Unmarried German girls who expected children were called "Hitler brides" and were very proud of their status. They were received in beautifully situated rest homes where they spent peaceful weeks before and after the birth. These institutions were under the supervision of the "Mother and Child Movement" (*Hilfswerk Mutter und Kind*). There were more than sixty such homes in which Hitler brides received free board and medical care. These girls were fanatically devoted to Hitler. Gregor Ziemer reports how food was blessed in one of these homes which he visited:

After the white-clad nurses had arranged the food, everybody turned towards the wall where hung an imposing picture of Hitler above a huge swastika. The women raised their right hands and spoke in chorus: "Our Fuehrer, we thank thee for thy munificence; we thank thee for this

¹ *Magazine Digest*, November, 1942, quoted from *Das Schwarze Corps*, official organ of the SS.

² *Svenska Dagbladet*, Stockholm, August 12, 1942.

³ Dorothy Thompson, *Listen Hans*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942, pp. 261–265.

home; we thank thee for this food. To thee we dedicate our lives and those of our children.”¹

The Nazi ideology, which rejected traditional ethics and morality, revolutionized the concept of sex. Mating came to be regarded in true Nazi circles as a mere “biological problem.”² Accordingly, the Hitler brides were not only indoctrinated with Hitler’s ideology but also were told that frequent intimacies with men were necessary to their well-being. “We know from statistics that most of the women who leave here conceive again within a short time,” said the matron of one of these homes. “The separation from their men for several weeks, the daily talks about sex, the stimulating literature we give them when they leave—it all helps to raise the birth rate. And that is our ambition. . . .”³

From time to time the authorities investigated the progress of the children borne by Hitler brides. They expected these “state children” to be reared as staunch Nazis and fearless soldiers. They ran no risk that any mother might “demilitarize” her children, should she, by any chance influence or instinct, change her mind about the cannon fodder she had borne.⁴

In addition to this unorthodox promotion of extramarital procreation, the government encouraged marriage in its traditional form. However, before a marriage might take place, exacting examinations determined whether the candidates were fit to produce children desired by the Third Reich. A Marriage Health Law forbade the marriage of persons under guardianship or those with contagious diseases, hereditary diseases, and mental disorders. Among mental disorders, the Nazis listed criminal attitudes, homosexuality, and a state of mind dangerous for the community. Obviously, this last alleged disorder was subject to broad interpretation by the local authorities and was therefore used as a means of arbitrary restriction in special cases. But marriage was encouraged and the marriage loans, which became gifts if the offspring was numerous, and the premiums for additional children, created a situation in which “it pays to be prolific.”⁵ Mothers with large families were deco-

¹ Gregor Ziemer, *Education for Death*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1941,

p. 34.

² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 42–46.

⁵ Denel, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

rated with special medals in iron, silver, or gold, according to the number of children they had borne.

The party issued *Ten Commandments for the Choice of a Mate* which embraced its ideals and illustrated the objectives of Nazi eugenics. The first sentences of each commandment follow:¹

1. Remember that you are a German.
2. You shall maintain purity of mind and spirit.
3. Keep your body clean.
4. Being of sound stock, you shall not remain single.
5. Marry for love.
6. As a German, choose a mate only of your own kindred blood.
7. In choosing a mate, consider the ancestry.
8. Health is the prerequisite for even outward beauty.
9. In marriage seek not a plaything but a helpmate.
10. You shall desire many children.

The Nazis carried their eugenic principles to the extreme by introducing a notorious sterilization law for the "prevention of hereditarily diseased offspring."² They listed a number of illnesses which, they claimed, were recognized as hereditary by medical authorities throughout the world. Such illnesses were schizophrenia, congenital mental deficiency, manic-depressive insanity, inherited St. Vitus dance, inherited deafness, physical deformity, blindness, and (a controversial point) chronic alcoholism and addiction to drugs.

The law forbade the sterilization of men and women who could prove that their illness was not hereditary, but the number of people who were sterilized after the law came into effect was estimated to have been half a million by 1938, "while about three million more are said to be ear-marked for treatment."³ These figures are probably conservative. Moreover, sterilization is a "privilege" when compared with the inhuman procedure of castration introduced in 1935. By 1939 the Office of Race Policy admitted that about two thousand persons had been castrated. In all probability, the correct figure is much higher.

The practice of euthanasia or "mercy killing" by the Gestapo

¹ They are quoted in full in Lothrop Stoddard, *Into the Darkness*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., New York, 1940, pp. 197-200.

² Law of July 14, 1933. *Reichsgesetzblatt*, I, p. 529.

³ James T. Shotwell, ed., *Governments of Continental Europe*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1940, pp. 498-499.

has been reported. There has been no confirmation by the government, and the evidence available is slight. However, American reporters like William L. Shirer, Joseph C. Harsch, and Wallace R. Deuel heard that up to one hundred thousand unfit patients were killed, before the outbreak of the war, in various parts of Germany. These writers also reported that the Gestapo often used their victims to experiment with new poison gases.¹

This practice seems fantastic, but the Nazi policy of eliminating unfit people rather than caring for them was confirmed during the war by intercepted army orders according to which gravely wounded or maimed soldiers were to be given the *coup de grâce* on the field of battle. Furthermore, the practice of using human beings for deathly experiments and their bodies for chemical purposes was reported in Poland where mass executions of Poles and Jews aroused the horror of the civilized world.²

¹ Joseph C. Harsch, *Pattern of Conquest*, William Heinemann Ltd., London, 1942, pp. 227-228; William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1941, pp. 569-575; Deuel, *op cit.*, p. 220. Cf. Stoddard, *op cit.*, pp. 192-197; Stoddard is sympathetic toward racial breeding.

²The Nazis built so-called "extermination camps," death factories in the literal sense of the word. Such establishments were discovered by rapidly advancing Allied armies before the evidence could be destroyed. Most notorious were the camps at Maidanek and Oswiecim, Poland.